

## WORKING WITH PICTURES IN ELABORATED SYSTEMS

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*To Herbert Lindenberger at eighty*

The present Internet publication is based on my contribution with the same title in Gerhard Jaritz (ed.), *Ritual, Images, and Daily Life. The Medieval Perspective*, Zürich and Berlin 2012, ISBN 978-3-643-90113-2, pp. 7 - 47. The volume, 246 pages, contains twelve papers from an international conference, modestly called a Workshop, in December 2008, at the *Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Austrian Academy of Sciences), at Krems an der Donau, under the leadership of Prof. Gerhard Jaritz and with the participation of Professors Elisabeth Vavra and Helmut Hundsbichler, both of the Institute.

For many years, the Krems Institute, formerly under the stimulating leadership of Professor Harry Kühnel, through meetings and the publication of the *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*, in German and English, has spearheaded *interdisciplinary* research, in artistic, technical and material culture. The Institute promotes interdisciplinary ideas by inviting specialists from many countries under scientifically groundbreaking programs elaborated at the Institute, and its activities should be widely appreciated, explored and pursued.

Western scholars of today to some extent suffer the handicap of too limited an access to the German language (about one half of the publications in the cited series). I wonder how one can study European culture without some familiarity with one of the central media of documentation and communication. I remember that, at the Institute of Fine Arts in Manhattan, the doctoral candidates were wisely obliged to learn elementary German (and we had to correct their attempts!). I am citing some works by Vavra and Jaritz, published in German. Here is another one, philosophically penetrating and scientifically central: Helmut Hundsbichler, *Alltagsforschung und Interdisziplinarität*, in *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*. 40, Krems, 1999, pp. 7 - 35, also in German. I once asked Wolfgang Braunfels to republish his fundamental book, *Mittelalterliche Stadtbaukunst in der Toskana*. In that case, he said, *it would have to be translated into English*. European culture, *quo vadis?*

A paradoxical, not to say debilitating, situation has arisen. While data technology helps us making scholarship universal, at the same time it seems to condemn us to exclusive reliance on English, making scholarship even more limited than before.

The volume in which the present piece appears, presents interesting introductory notes by Jaritz on rituals and on the papers in the volume; and consists of twelve contributions from Islamic, Jewish and Christian fields,

within the traditions of visual arts, music, drama and rituals, including an especially challenging work, methodologically speaking, on Renaissance portraits of married couples, by Elisabeth Vavra. Jaritz includes the following reference: Sinding-Larsen (from now SL), *Medieval Images as a Medium of Ritualized Communication*, in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, 596, Vienna 1992, pp. 323 - 339).  
Trondheim, August 2012.

## 1 FEELING AT HOME IN KREMS

In his *Der Zauberberg* (a kind of *lübecker Totentanz* acted out in a hilltop abstraction of modern reality), Thomas Mann notes: *Wir schildern Alltägliches; aber das Alltägliche wird sonderbar, wenn es auf sonderbarer Grundlage gedeiht*. Actions become special when human feelings are involved; as with Manzoni's famous *guazzabuglio del cuore umano*. This is common wisdom in modern social and organizational psychology and anthropology. The Krems institute has carried the idea into a wide-ranging, scientific environment populated with historical cases concerning humans, things and pictures.

In his pioneering book, *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit*, Gerhard Jaritz, presenting a fascinating and varied material, discusses parameters such as *Methoden, Zielen, Möglichkeiten, Schwierigkeiten und Sackgassen*, concerning working with visual, physical and literary experiences in Medieval *Alltags-Geschichte*, drawing on modern communication and information (even computerized) paradigms; and evaluating the structural and ideological anchorage of everyday phenomena.

The stated program in Jaritz' book promises vistas but also posits methodological platforms: *Alltag läßt sich nur dann erforschen, wenn auf die überlieferten Wertungen seiner Komponenten und Faktoren Bezug genommen wird. Das Wissen von der Existenz eines Objektes, einer Handlung oder einer Qualität allein ist irrelevant. Von Bedeutung kann dieses Wissen erst dann werden, wenn wir uns zusätzlich mit deren zeitgenössisch-mittelalterlicher Bewertung auseinandersetzen und entsprechende Ergebnisse liefern* (Jaritz, G., *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit. Einführung in die Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, Cologne, 1989, p. 127). He also comments: *Ein "Alltagsverständnis" wird geprägt von Phänomenen, die an sich in keiner Weise alltäglich sind*, and perspectives from a series of modern science paradigms are brought into view.

In the following pages I shall certainly make no attempt to adding new material or novel insights to that impressive achievement. But my effort is related to it. I want to limit the *basic perspective* to scenarios for which the foundations consist in highly developed ideological and ritual *systems*, such as in the Roman Church. Extending the purview to everyday circumstances, I shall use this kind of environment for argumentation about *How to work with pictures*; in other words, for methodological rather than substantive purposes; being concerned with the *How* rather than with the *What*.

## 2 SYSTEMS LEVEL AND ELABORATION LEVEL

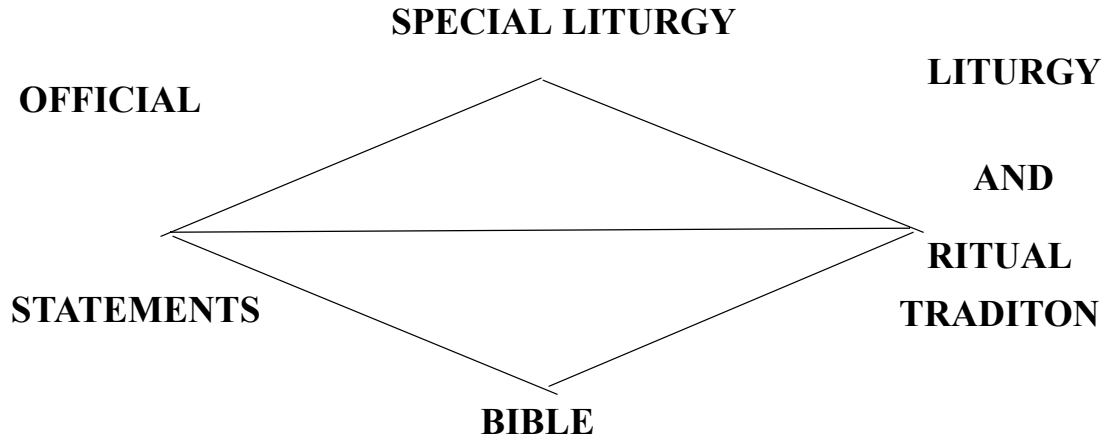
When an institution like the Roman Church put imagery at people's ritual and mental disposal, *what did the inherent programs have to offer to the people?* The question can be briefly stated in the following terms. In communication across visual or other media between an active or dynamic system and the end users, there will be two interfaces. One is where the system provides *content* and *cues*; the other is where the beneficiaries accept (if so they do), digest and possibly use the items. Passing over the multidisciplinary issues involved in *reception*, only referring to SL, *Burden* and *Patterns*, I shall suggest some frameworks for the way the Church system itself prepared and allowed the preparation of the features that were to be transmitted and how, in general lines, the Church prepared, conditioned and coached her congregation as end user.

The agenda cannot be pursued without asking a few more questions concerning pictorial presentation. What requirements and what sort of opportunities did the program-providing system lay out for presentation and elaboration of its contents? In other words, we need a distinction not only between a system and the presentation of it, but also inside the presentation area, a distinction between what the system required and what it may have found adequate and permissible, even useful. I shall return to this model shortly.

### 2.1. Constants and variables.

In this perspective, let me start with considering more closely the Canonical system of the Roman Church and a few specific cases of pictorial programs in liturgical spaces. The system consists of the following factors basic for the teaching and the action of the Church: dogmatics, ecclesiology, theology, Tradition (with a capital T) and liturgy (especially the Mass liturgy). The entire domain is here subsumed under the epithet of the *Canonical system*

(Graph 1). These themes are briefly introduced with extensive bibliographies in SL, *Iconography and ritual*). The following general remarks are based on this material. Music, song or recital, and visual media were used to *present* this actively operating system for the purposes of supporting declaration, promulgation, public, political and congregational appeal.



*Graph 1 The Canonical System*

There is also a *subsystem* consisting in the special liturgies and para-liturgical rites, many of them with strong public appeal, that were celebrated in the periods and dates occurring during the ecclesiastical year. In our discussion of principles, this subject will be bypassed.

A high degree of consistency and semantic logic characterized the self-representation of the Roman Church, the confusion over the issue of imagery veneration, being an embarrassing exception. While in the early sixteenth century, the Protestant documents were vague and hard to understand, those published by the Church were clear and theoretically consistent. Gerosa cites a Protestant document, commenting that *Il documento in realtà era poco chiaro. Era vago e fumoso come tutti i testi dei protestanti, ben lontano dalla lucidità e della chiarezza delle formulazioni della Chiesa di Roma* (Guido Gerosa, *Carlo V. Un sovrano per due mondi*, Milan 1992, p. 209).

The pictorial manifestations of the Roman Church (or, for that matter, of States like the Republic of Venice) were anchored in complex interlocked *systems* of functional topologies, text traditions and rituals, together constituting an orderly, systemic and officially sanctioned grid or structure, which

to a variable extent and depth was accessible to and understood by all who were directly and often indirectly involved - as it was meant to.

At the present stage, we can look at the process as an *elaboration* of the system, leaving the finer points of the process until we have an adequate framework for them. The *distinction between system and elaboration of it* should work as a tool. Whenever the foundation for a program or picture is systemic, the system issue should be kept in view for all elaboration occurrences. That is to say, being concerned with a Crucifixion, it is not sufficient to describe its possible relation to other images *without* assessing its system anchorage.

It must be taken into consideration, finally, that projects and works concerning the *elaboration in the shape of pictorial programs* in response to institutionally established traditions and rules, are not usually recorded in contemporary documents, since they were taken for granted.

The critical factor, then, is the *Canonical System* (including the subsystem, but we let that go for now). The whole of it, at least by implication from some of its sections, is present in each and every case of liturgy-focused (close to an altar) pictorial subjects or programs, in the *Sistina*, at Assisi, Pomposa and you name it. In such cases, the pictorial decorations in many respects differ from one another. These are the *variables*. We cannot study variables without having an idea about the *constants* in relation to which the programs *do vary*. Monitoring the system wherever it turns up and linking the variables to it, we will get some grasp on the programs. *Sine qua non*. This is the rationale linking picture programs in the different places to each other, so as to form a network. So much as a key to the main argument in the present essay.

## 2.2 The popes and the Sistine Chapel

Not all pictorial message programs were accessible to the congregations at large or the general public; a few ones were strictly reserved. The *Sistine Chapel* in the Vatican was intended for being used by an insider élite consisting of the Pope himself, the Cardinals and a few others at the summit of the hierarchy; with a supply of specially selected servants. The chapel is *the* place in which we may be sure that the Canonical System was respected and maintained. For this reason, the pictorial cycles in the *Sistina* offer the best imaginable platform for developing a theoretical and methodological dis-

inction between *systems level and elaboration level*.

Next, the question arises about the possible relations that might hold between the pictorial message programs in such a reserved place, and programs that formed part of more or less open networks in society. Adopting the system paradigm (albeit in a non-formal version), we can "export" the type of case to other scenarios or cases that were more oriented towards the public and the congregation, in short, carried more general appeal. In this manner, the reserved environment of the *Sistina* can serve as a model for approaching *everyday* scenarios. This is my motivation for spending some time over the Vatican program.

The situation and environment for the commission and production of the fresco cycles in the *Sistina* were very special. Well justified enthusiasm over Michelangelo's achievement should not allow us to forget that this was one of the main papal chapels in the Vatican palace complex, functioning for the closed circle of the highest echelons of the Church hierarchy, that is, for the eyes of experts on the Canonical system. It was also used in connection with papal elections, the technical procedures of which took place in the *Cappella parva Sancti Nicolai* (Ehrle, F., and Egger, H., *Studi e documenti per la storia del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano*, Vol. II, Vatican City, 1935, correcting L. von Pastor on this point).

As a Pope, Julius II, commissioning Michelangelo's cycle for the chapel vault, would be obliged to adhere entirely to Tradition. Even a "Renaissance Pope" could not tamper with the essentials of the teaching and action of the Church, could not risk, by employing non-expert advisors and program providers, to flout the very Tradition that defined and sanctioned his position and prerogatives. He had, on top of that, to face the continuing threats from the general council movement, which represented a direct challenge to the doctrine of the *primacy of the pope*, through its insistence on the *frequens* clause; meaning that general Church Councils should be called more frequently than had been usual for a long time. Giulio della Rovere must be expected to make a show of total orthodoxy; or, at the very least, avoid anything that might be used against him by his numerous and powerful enemies. Both in the Vatican context and in international politics, a pope had to tread carefully (I am speaking of *dogmatics and Tradition*, not of papal warlord behavior or of excesses in planning funerary monuments). Considering the *vault frescoes in the Sistina*, it is clear that some sort of sys-

tem there must be, which reflects central themes in the teaching and action - always considered as convergent - of the Roman Church; *something like* the one suggested in my essay of 1969 (SL, *Rereading the Sistine Ceiling, Institutum romanum Norvegiae, Acta*, IV, 1969, 143 - 157), certainly not the last word on the system, merely the first).

No modern fads about the artistic genius of Michelangelo can affect the general program issue. If a genius he was, then he should be perfectly able, as he seems to have been, to create a supreme artistic and emotionally catching work at *elaboration level*, without interfering with the Canonical system. The idea that the artist did what he liked not only on the elaboration level but also on the system one, and sprung the result upon the top hierarchy of the Church, is not to be taken seriously. Contemporary biographies of artists are not reliable sources if taken at face value. It was the age for the *genius* to become marketable, and when an art writer like Condivi credited Michelangelo with the entire work, no one among contemporary people who read such things at all, would misunderstand this, the Canonical system being taken for granted.

A brief look at the Canonical system behind the pictorial program along the *vault axis of the Sistina*, and its relation to the earlier *wall cycle*, should substantiate the suggestions just proposed.

Joining the wall frescoes supervised by Sixtus IV (which Ettlinger analyzed in his *The Sistine Chapel before Michelangelo*) (Ettlingrr, L. D., *The Sistine Chapel before Michelangelo. Religious imagery and Papal Primacy*, London, 1965). Michelangelo's vault frescoes were ordered by his nephew, Julius II. To contrive and develop the vault program without the-matical connection with that of the wall cycle, would violate the most basic principle underlying the dispositions in consecrated spaces in the Roman Church, not to say the norms for *any* spatial decoration program. In this way, Ettlinger's exposition of the papal and ecclesiological program in the late fifteenth-century wall frescoes, provides the basis from which to start out when considering the vault system. The predominant theme in the former is the *primatus pape*, a doctrine, let me repeat, that had been in critical focus for a long time.

This specific subject, of course, is centrally embedded in the general one of *ecclesiology*, that is, the compendium of the teaching on the history, traditions, doctrinal essence, mission and the *work* and *action*, including the

liturgy, of the Church as a God-created universe in heaven and on earth. With this, a theme was given for further development in the vault fresco series, to which we now turn for a closer attention (*Fig. 1*).

We have *two solid handles* by which to get a grasp on the essentials in the vault message system. One is the wall series focusing, as Ettliger has shown, on the Primacy of the Pope.

The other handle is made up by the last three scenes (near the entrance wall) all of them from the story of *Noah*. The code here, too, is *ecclesiology*.

The frescoes along the main axis of the vault consist of three times three scenes, and it is the last three ones that represent events from the *patriarch Noah's* history. The central one shows the Ark in the Flood, a standard symbol of the Church as saving mankind and receiving them into her fold. The Church becomes effective for mankind through the Mass sacrifice, and the first scene shows its prefiguration in Noah's sacrifice.

The event of Noah's drunkenness, depicted in the third and last scene, functioned as a scriptural proof of the divine design for human society to be subdivided into lords and servants, the way God had decreed the world order right since the Creation. This was a benchmark theme in political theory; and used, for example, to illustrate *natural law* on the *Palatium iustitiae* (the Doge's Palace) in Venice (SL, *Christ in the council hall, Studies in the religious iconography of the Venetian Republic*, Rome, 1974 pp. 167ff.). This last scene on the vault establishes a direct link to the wall cycle, in so far as this focuses on the primacy of the pope.

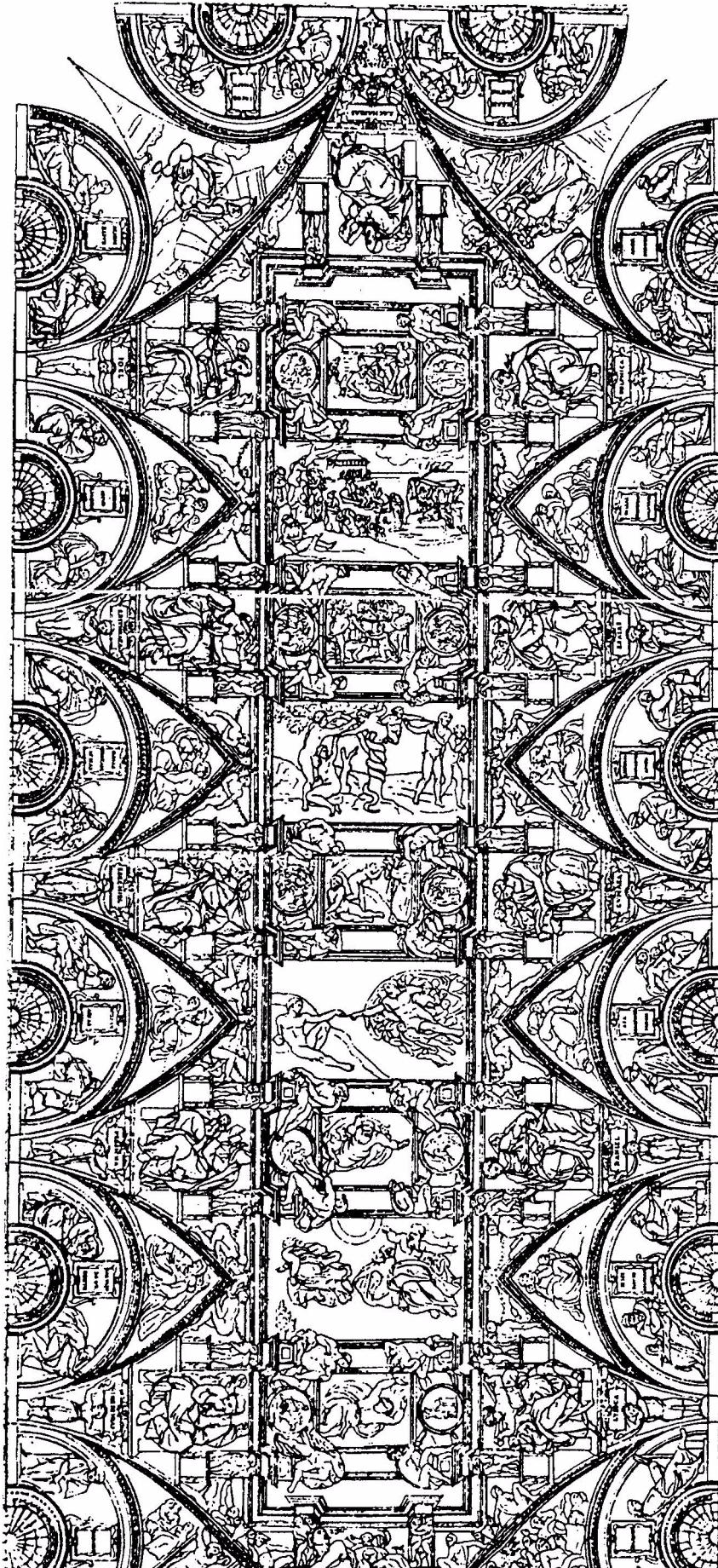
It seems adequate to say that the whole series of pictures along the vault axis has the *Church* as main theme. The program completes the process evolving through the wall series of Sixtus IV by supplying the *historical origins* of the stories reported on the walls. Dogmatically, the Church entered the world at the Creation; this is the way the Biblical account is officially interpreted in the Catholic Tradition (*see below*).

The first scenes on the vault (starting near the altar wall) show God dividing light and shadow, his creation of the universe and soaring over the waters like the Holy Spirit, as we read in the Bible. The *pictorial* order among the three Persons is immaterial, being merely a facet of elaboration, a matter of pictorial conventions that changed over time and in accordance with specific focus (e. g., in the so-called *Gnadenstuhl*). Dogmatically, the



***Trinity as undivided and whole enacted the Creation (Denzinger, H., *Enchiridion symbolorum et definitionum quae in rebus fidei et morum a conciliis oecumenicis et summis pontificibus emanarunt*, Naples 1856 (1.st Italian ed.), pp. 401f. Further: Denzinger, H., Schönmetzer, A., *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, Freiburg i. Br., 1965, B 2e/2ea, and Mart. 1, can. 1; Lat. IV. A, Flor. C. Tolet. XI, p. 84, 87, 88), See also Ott, L., *Grundriss der katholischen Dogmatik*, 8th.ed. Freiburg i. Br., 1970, p. 100). All actions *ad extra* are the work of the Triune God, all three Persons acting in unity. In Denzinger's repertory, we read as follows (synopsis in my translation).***

**God is not triple but triune; any attribute to one of the persons is valid for all three in the unit; the work/action towards the outside is common to the three persons, being one principle for what has been created (*Opera ad extra sunt tribus personis communis, sunt unum principium creaturarum*).**



SIXTINE  
CHAPEL -  
VAULT  
PROGRAM

Noah's drunken-  
ness

The Flood

Noah's sacrifice

Expulsion from  
Paradise

Creation of Eve

Creation of  
Adam

God hovering  
over the water

God creating the  
universe and  
earth

God dividing  
light and darkness

altar-wall with  
Jonah above



The Council of Florence, 1441, had stated that *Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus non tria principia creaturae, sed unum principium*. This, let me emphasize, is one of the many crucial points at which the Bible as interpreted by the Church, is *read and consequently also functions differently* from the various "direct" readings in use, especially in non-Catholic confessions since the Reformation (Gisolfi, D., and SL, *The Rule, the Bible and the Council. The Library of the Benedictine Abbey at Praglia*, Seattle and London, 1998, College Art Association, Monographs, LV, ed. Robert Nelson; with some of the most important canons). Even as late as in Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir*, 1831, we read how Julien Sorel, at the seminary, was slandered as a *Lutheran* because he read the Bible directly. Perhaps most of the interpretive mess over Christian iconography derives from the erroneous conviction, that the Bible as we read it, is a reliable source.

Back to the vault. In the middle three scenes, that of the Fall of Adam and Eve is the crucial one, for it was this "happy failing" (*felix culpa*) which made salvation necessary and made the action of the Church necessary; this had been "programmed" from the outset. The *Tradition* is full of references to the *Church of the Old Testament (ecclesia veteris testamenti)* (See for example Volume II (1583) of Bellarmino's *Controversiae* for patristic and later material..Bellarmino, Roberto, *Disputationum Roberti Bellarmini De controversiis christianae fidei adversus hujus temporis hæreticos*, II, Milan, 1721 [1583], III, Milan 1721 [1592]). Being a pre-nineteenth-century source, Bellarmino's work is especially useful for earlier periods, before the Old Testament aspect of the Church, while still being there, was, however, somewhat toned down in the later synod statements. At the time of the decoration campaigns in the *Sistina*, the dogmatic notion was conspicuously at public display in the city of Rome. The big inscription at the base of the apse mosaic (1116) of San Clemente announces that the *Cross makes the Church flourish, which had "withered" under the Law, like the vine*, which covers the entire mosaic: ECCLESIAM CHRISTI VITI SIMILABIMVS ISTI~ + [inscription concerning the cross relic] + QVAM LEX ARENTEM SET [*sed*] CRVS [*crux*] FACIT ESSE VIRENTEM; there was a cross relic in the apse wall (SL, *Some observations*, pp. 201f.).

In the *Sistina*, we see God, with the female personification of *Ecclesia* (identifiable by subtraction: who else could she be? an old subject in paintings and mosaics) in his arms, creating Adam and, in the second scene, Eve,

represented in the improbably soaring whale-woman. Tradition can fortunately tell us that Eve was to be renewed through the action of the Church (St. Zeno of Verona, for example: *Eva per Ecclesiam renovaretur*). So at this stage in the story, the doctrine of the *action* of the Church is introduced for people in the know to see.

The series is connected with the *liturgy* on the altar below in general ecclesiological terms, and also quite directly through the figure of *Jonah and the whale*, just above the altar. He is, according to the liturgical texts, a *pre-figuration of Christ's death and resurrection* and a *typus dominicae passionis*. The Jonah story prefigures Christ's passion and resurrection and thus in the Mass denotes the Eucharistic sacrifice: *Sicut fuit Jonas in ventre ceti tribus diebus et tribus noctibus, ita erit Filius hominis in corde terrae* (SL, *A rereading of the Sistine Ceiling*, , 148, with the liturgical references). It is, as I have noted, necessary to take into account, *in a liturgical space, the position in which an image is located*. By a mechanism of *positional recall*, the Jonah figure being placed right over the altar activates the Passion motif, supported, as we have seen, by the readings, whereas, if it had been placed somewhere else in the chapel, the figure might have had a significance just as part of a Biblical narrative.

When Perugino's altar painting was removed and Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* fresco came to cover the altar wall, three things were achieved so to speak in one stroke. The *intercession* of the Virgin before Christ, now conspicuously illustrated in the fresco, was no longer visually only *implied* (as in Perugino's original altar painting, depicting the *assumptio* of the Virgin from her dormition); the doctrine now became visually and conspicuously manifest, and this for the critical day of the ultimate judgement. Next, it became possible to include the liturgically correct choice of *saints*. Finally, in a space whose lateral walls and vault were already covered with *monumental frescoes*, this artistic feature now came to occupy the wall in the liturgical focus, as well, completing the decoration layout.

### 2.2.1. Starting at the wrong end

Unfortunately, some of the scholarly studies of the message program in the vault of the *Sistina*, have revealed a low standard of preparedness. That not all institutions teaching Art History prepare their students adequately for approaching a case like this, becomes glaringly evident in the absurd claim, published and widely accepted, that there is a *functional equivalence*

between the configuration of Jonah and the subject of the Assumption of the Virgin. The hope has been to rule out the liturgical denotation of Jonah, since the Assumption was already in place. The figure of Jonah textually denotes the *sacramental action of the Mass*. The liturgically predominant significance of the Assumption, on the other hand, has been the same far back in the ages; that of *the Virgin interceding for mankind*. For a very competent and richly documented account of Marian iconography, the reader is referred to Ingrid Flor, *Glaube und Macht* (Flor, I., *Glaube und Macht. Die mittelalterliche Bildersymbolik der trinitarischen Marien-Krönung*, Graz, 2007).

The pictorial message program in the Sistine Chapel has been subjected to an exceptionally rich flow of interpretive contributions. There has been a predominant tendency to start at the wrong end, by discussing Michelangelo as an artist and then going into a mass of intuitively selected details and trying to find some order among them, even to the extent of trying to identify individual authors for the program, including Jewish kabbalists; instead of starting out from the basic system. A child having a multicolored heap of Lego bricks, can try to arrange them in some order, without understanding the system that makes them all fit precisely to each other. The idea seems to have been that Michelangelo was too big an artist for the Church to stand on her own, even inside the Vatican. Some familiarity with the institution that commissioned, supported or sponsored message programs, in short, was the principal *content provider*, is indispensable. Studying a chapel program requires at least an elementary knowledge about the function and role of a chapel; and an awareness that it is not a picture showroom. The relevant literature is all available, including the fundamental text collections, the *Missal* and the *Breviary* (or earlier corresponding redactions).

Much of the disarray has been brought about also by what I would call a *dictionary attitude* (spearheaded by Erwin Panofsky). The wisdom here would seem to be that if one term is listed (or depicted) already, you do not repeat it; for it would be a strange dictionary that itemized the same entry or word twice. The approach is misdirected when studying messages in the Catholic canonical usage, in which the *position* and the *context of use and action* of a subject is decisive. A Crucifixion in a narrative on a side wall need *not* be the same as one above the altar. The big crucifix, with a large *prie-dieu*, on the floor of San Clemente, Rome, must be evaluated in another

framework, that of popular devotion, than the one depicted in the apse mosaic, right over the main altar, to say nothing of the by then obligatory cross on the altar itself.

To conclude my critical notes. The disarray attestable in contributions on the Sistine Ceiling is mainly due to indiscriminately mixing up of elements from the system and the elaborations of it; to entrenchment behind a blur obscuring the difference between a function and its presentation. It is time to realize that teaching and research institutes on PhD and "advanced" levels, with their enormous cost and often international prestige, have failed to develop standards for scientifically responsible work in their discipline.

The message program of the *Sistina* is simple and basic, every feature reflecting fundamental notions and standard issues in the Canonical system. After I had claimed this at a public lecture I gave in 1969 at the *Institute of Fine Arts* in Manhattan, I was "amended": *Yes, yes, but you can say much more!* No Occam's Razor here. The program for the *Sistine vault* could have been written on a couple of sheets by anyone among the higher clergy. Had such a document been preserved, we would have been spared a lot of noise.

### 2.3 Assisi, the Sistina and Pomposa

As I have noted, experience from the Sistine Chapel can be used as a *model* for studying other, even earlier pictorial programs in liturgical spaces. The extensive fresco and tempera cycles in the Upper Church of San Francesco at Assisi probably represent the program to which the *Sistina* one comes closest, except that the pictorial cycles in San Francesco *were* accessible to a larger public. In fact, the message program here, as well as the one at Pomposa (*see below*), presents an array of subjects which, while emerging from the Canonical System, offers a much richer scope for popular appeal. This is not necessarily a consequence of the larger space availability at Assisi and Pomposa. For if details with a little more flourish had been introduced into the *Sistina* cycle, without any alteration of the subject display, the result would have been the same.

The Upper Basilica of San Francesco at Assisi, too, was a *papal foundation* (even with a small papal palace next door), constructed upon the Lower Basilica, which was (and is) the Franciscans' conventual church and the burial site of St. Francis. The entire complex became an important pilgrimage center. The argument is only briefly outlined in what follows, with the purpose of pointing up a direction for further research; the subject being

much too large and complex to permit a deeper probing at present.

The architectural space is differently articulated - with nave, transepts and a spacious sanctuary - and much larger than that of the rectangular Vatican chapel, and so is the available space for choice and distribution of the program elements. Furthermore, the Assisi sequences differ from those of the *Sistina* by being supplied with a series dedicated to specific local saints, Francis and Claire, the former an ecclesiological archetype by virtue of having founded an order under papal control. The *Sistina* served, as we noted, a closed élite and could convey a subtle and concentrated to-the-bone message system that would hardly have been digestible for the public at large. The Assisi program, less exclusively addressed, brought a normal picture series; in fact, an exceptionally rich one; but, as would be expected from the totally orthodox attitudes of the papal-sanctioned friar community, it is not innovative (SL, *Iconography and ritual*, pp. 128ff., with reference to Kajetan Esser's studies. Excellent plane drawings in Belting, H., *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi. Der Dekoration als Aufgabe und die Genese einer neuen Wandmalerei*, Berlin 1977).

The larger scope of the Franciscan basilica, serving papal as well as congregation liturgies, shows up in the plurality of altars. The original high altar, placed in front of the crossing, no longer exists, but by mid-fourteenth century, if not earlier, a huge crucifix was hung above it in the by then traditional manner (*see below*); the supports for the original beam across the nave can still be seen. There are also two altars in the transept, both with the Crucifixion and typically ecclesiological subjects (such as Sts. Peter and Paul - this is a Papal basilica -, archangels, and scenes from *Revelation*).

In the Upper Basilica at Assisi, the walls are almost totally covered with paintings (three tiers on each of the two long walls). The program is presented with an extraordinary abundance of detail; a picture book for teaching, some of the scenes being based on Breviary texts or narratives about to be included there. The Franciscans, whose original (but not too well documented) radical tendencies were neutralized by the papacy with the well-proven technique of supporting, while at the same time putting pressure on potential opponents or troublemakers. The friars soon came to play a great role in spearheading the papal program for public appeal by circulating in society, carrying with them smaller prayer books (breviaries), by teaching and by introducing the *brevitas moderna* in the liturgy (developed

in the administratively overburdened Lateran) (Van Dijk, S. J. P., and Walker, J. H., *The origins of modern Roman liturgy. The liturgy of the Papal Court and the Franciscan Order in the thirteenth century*, Westminster (MD) 1960. Summary in SL, *Iconography and ritual*, pp. 9f.). By having the Franciscans adopt the modern brevity so as to meet popular demands, the Papacy secured an important instrument for managing pastoral relations, and, to some degree as a consequence, also monitoring social and political tendencies.

Now let us have a brief comparison between the message programs in the Franciscan basilica and the Vatican chapel. Let us recall that the two popes who commissioned the *Sistina* programs, Sixtus IV and Julius II, were both of them Franciscans.

In both cases the entire space terminated with a pictorial focus on the Virgin Mary. In the Assisi basilica, the apsidal area is entirely covered with Marian subjects. The subject of Perugino's painting originally on the altar of the *Sistina*, was the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. What is absent in the chapel as compared to Assisi is the theme of the *Revelation*. Special saints like Sts. Francis and Claire at Assisi, are absent in the *Sistina*. In Assisi, the stories of Noah's sacrifice and his drunkenness, so prominent in the *Sistina*, have been left out.

In *Assisi* we have the Creation of the universe, the creation and story of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel; further Old Testament scenes with the patriarchs Noah (building the Ark); and Abraham; further the conception, life and passion of Christ (end vaults: supplying themes: Evangelists, Latin Fathers); central vault, Christ, Mary and John.

Among the other Church-related subjects that must have been directly understandable to the congregation, there are the following ones: two scenes putting on display the Papal support for and recognition of the Order; St. Francis literally buttressing the church building (read: the Church); the saint kneeling before the speaking crucifix; and the accurately rendered presbytery in which the Miracle of Greccio took place (with the monumental panel crucifix facing the congregation); and, finally, his appearance to the brethren at Arles in a *sala capitolare* of the convent, in a correct rendering (as noted by Julian Gardner).

The first scenes of the upper tiers of the walls at Assisi show the Creation as being enacted by the Christ-like figure which, at that time, still was



the normal representation of God. The subject of the Creation was an indispensable introduction to an ecclesiastical program, as we have noted above. In the *Sistina* we have the Creation, the story of Adam and Eve, stories with Noah, Moses and Aaron as chief protagonists - and history of and typological references to Christ (pictures in the smaller vaults supplying comments, such as the story of the Bronze serpent prefiguring the crucifixion).

In both cycles, the theme is predominantly that of *ecclesiology*, the story of the Church as it was initiated already by the creation of the world. This seems to apply to most pictorial cycles in the churches, but let me submit that no in-depth study is as yet available concerning the *functional* aspects of a reasonable choice among the many large Italian programs from the time of Paschalis I and up to the sixteenth century.

When the program in the *Sistina* is much more concentrated and shorn down to the bone, this of course was due largely to limited space. But the reduction also affects customary details that would *not* have been space-consuming. This reduction is coupled with an unusual abstraction from the normal pictorial repertory in Christian iconography up to this time. There are no wings, no halo or nimbus, no attributes nor small trappings that would not have affected available spaces. Usually the Sibylline books display for reading the respective (somewhat variable) inscriptions; for instance in the Collegio di Commercio at Perugia and the library at Praglia; here they do not. The anatomically equal males bear no identification marks other than *position and action*. Only direction of motion helps us in keeping God and Satan apart. This *reduction down to the fundamentals and consequent abstraction* could work well with the expert clientèle of the Vatican chapel, whereas concessions to popular conceptions and accessibility were possible, in fact, called-for, in the much larger pilgrim basilica at Assisi, in which sections of the people did have access. Here, the entire program can, as in most cases of Roman Catholic iconography, in addition to the systemic core, serve as a narrative picture-book - to the benefit of the lay people and for use in education.

Let me comment briefly on a third program, that of the Benedictine abbey of Pomposa (the painting decorations are usually dated 1351); In normal *monastic* houses, like that of Pomposa, north of Ravenna, the narrative factor was probably developed with educational purposes in view. The decorations are distributed over three tiers along the nave walls with the usual

typologically parallel scenes from the Old and the New Testaments and from *Revelation*. The more sophisticated configurations are concentrated in the two end walls; the figure of the founder of the Order, St. Benedict meets us at the entrance. A full description of the programs on the entrance wall and the altar wall, will show that the systemic, rather than the pragmatic and educational, focus is on *ecclesiology*, here too (SL, *Some observations on liturgical imagery of the twelfth century*, Inst. rom. Nor., Acta, VIII, Rome, 1978, 73 f., Plates LXXXIV and LXXXV).

### 3 PARTICIPATION AND PROTECTION

My initial question was this one: when an institution like the Roman Church put imagery at people's ritual and mental disposal, *what did the programs have to offer to the people?* Assisi and Pomposa appear to answer in terms of offering a systems view *as well as* a rich array of cues that were amenable to being handled ritually, mentally and in veneration by people of greatly diversified competence and inclinations.

In the cases just reviewed, Assisi, Pomposa and the *Sistina*, the central doctrines and actions of the Roman Church provided the foundation. The centrally or *radically* (the "root" sense) positioned system supplied elements that could be extracted, replicated (more or less completely), *distributed* and separately elaborated, all according to circumstances and specific purposes. Templates for adopting and elaborating subjects were passed on vertically along tradition lines and horizontally across towns and countrysides. This is no question of "influence" from A to B. The process works recursively, B fetching resources from A, customizing them for specific needs in the local market.

#### 3.1 Generating networks

One may imagine a large socio-religious network spreading out from many central "nodes". A share in the *absolute center of participation in the Mass celebration*, very frequently on occasion of special annual celebrations, included people in such a network, and this constituted an essential part of their *Alltag* (I am not the first to say this!). Networks of attraction, ritual participation and veneration were being distributed over communities and society at large and brought into focus by imagery.

While in the Roman Church the basic systems remained constant in all fundamentals, on the presentation level, the question was how to elaborate them visually in the different scenario. Solutions developed closely to

the centers of authority or pilgrimage (or both, as at Assisi) seem to have been accessed as models and exemplars. The flexibility of the elaborational issues opened up for notable variations in the specific offerings and corresponding responses from one place to another. The expectations and pretensions were modest. Wolfgang Braunfels showed in his *Mittelalterliche Stadtbaukunst in der Toskana*, that "medieval" conceptions of *imitation* were often instantiated piecemeal and only fragmentary, and seemingly (to our view) as inconsistent replications of original patterns. The mere existence of a St. Peter's church and a Santa Maria Maggiore on opposite sides of Florence, was sufficient to justify the claim that topographically, the town was a replica of Rome, in full correspondence with political theory (Kantorowicz). Just a few cues could be sufficient to qualify one case as the imitation of another (Richard Krautheimer has repeatedly insisted upon the importance of the same mechanism).

It should come as no surprise that *some* of the features in the program layout in the upper, papal, basilica at Assisi (and also the high altar in the lower one) reflect *some of the* patterns in the pre-1506 Vatican Basilica of St. Peter's.

The type of divinity representation in the liturgically defined in the *facie-ad-faciem* modality, made the congregation feel they faced the divine countenance as stated in the Canon of the Mass, whether as entire figures, or as just the Salvator face in San Giovanni in Laterano and the old San Giovanni or Salvator hospital across the way; an image reported to have fallen down from heaven. Politically and also congregationally famous images like the ones in San Marco and at the Lateran became models for similar or comparable images distributed over the social network.

Images of the Virgin Mary and of saints accompany and make mentally more graspable the appeal to the protectors in the Mass liturgy and the Breviary (or corresponding readings). I am referring to the extremely frequent miraculous head-and-shoulder pictures of the Virgin, with or without the *Bambino* (in many Roman churches) and their reflections in similar, often private, imagery in Venice (and elsewhere), especially connected with Jacopo and Giovanni Bellini. In Venice, with her love-hate relations to Papal Rome, the type became very popular; a link to Rome and an insurance *quand-même*. The *Roman Madonna*, originating early in the Middle Ages, and with or without the Christ Child, spread all over the City and far

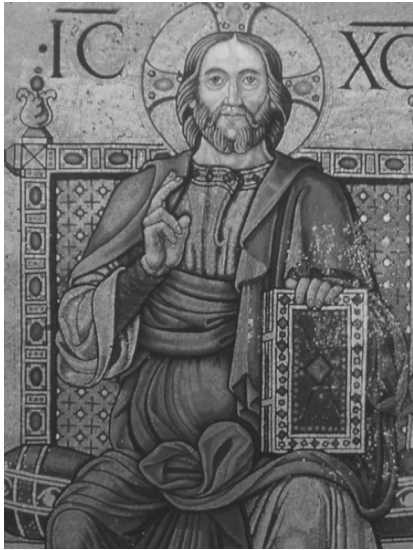
beyond. Amato, in his *De vera effigie Mariae* (Amato, P., *De vera effigie Mariae. Antiche icone romane*, Milan/Rome, 1988). offers documentation, illustrations (also earlier reproductions) and comments on five of them. One of them is the *Salus populi romani*, since the early seventeenth century in the Cappella Borghese in Santa Maria Maggiore, fitted out with the golden trappings, striking symptoms of continued active veneration.

### 3.2 Appealing to people

An effective communication with the people in general or particular groups has always been pivotal for a State; and particularly so for the Church. Imagery has been put to use to render the contact with the people more intense and appealing and. to provide a visually striking confirmation, relying on peoples' realistic image conceptions, of the contents, character and import of the teachings and actions of the Church. Usually, we must imagine, people would not try to scrutinize the images, only recognizing them, with varying degrees of competence for the subjects as they had been taught to understand them as *cues* to essentials they had learnt. Visualization - *Imagine that you see...!* - is the operational principle in the influential "text-book", *Ad monachos de S. Iustinae de Padua modus meditandi et orandi...*, of 1443, by Ludovico Barbo OSB, of the Cassinese Congregation. (Gisolfi and SL, *The rule*, p.76),

The medieval mosaic in the main apse of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice, right above the main altar, shows Christ seated upon an ornate throne and holding the book (*Fig. 2*). The mosaic was damaged and in 1506 restored by a certain Petrus with the result that a modern human-looking figure replicating exactly the stylistic idioms of *contemporary Venetian sculpture* appears in the still preserved medieval, pseudo-byzantine setting; in the Middle Ages synonymous with *Roman*.

The case has been carefully analyzed by Åse Ødegaard, who discovered the drift of the modernization (Ødegaard, Å., and SL, *Osservazioni sul mosaico dell'abside maggiore di San Marco*, in *Celebrazioni Marciane*, unnumbered vol. of 1994 from congress on the nine hundredth anniversary of the present basilica of San Marco, *Storia dell'arte marciana: i mosaici*, R. Polacco, (ed.), Venice, 1997, pp. 56 - 73).



*Fig. 2 San Marco, Venice, central part of the mosaic in the main apse*

The restoration of a damaged ancient and perhaps now too familiar and no longer engaging mosaic was taken as an opportunity to update the human aspect of it, reinforcing the appeal to the then modern congregation, making them feel a more tangible closeness to the celestial majesty.

### 3.2. 1 Face to face with the people

The political implications of this King of everybody (*Rex cunctorum*) in the apse of San Marco (*Fig. 2*), has been discussed elsewhere, and I shall concentrate briefly on the liturgical and pastoral address to the congregation. The appeal invested in the Christ mosaic was eventuated in the very focus of the entire congregation space, in the main apsis above choir or presbytery and right above the main altar, at which not only Mass was celebrated but at which various important political and administrative procedures were liturgically confirmed, usually in full public view (SL, *Christ in the council hall, passim*).

The Mass liturgy in a series of formulas evokes the notion of the congregation finding themselves, when participating in the liturgy, directly before the *holy countenance, the celestial throne and the heavenly altar* (SL, *Burden*, pp. 262 - 69; and *Iconography and ritual*, Part I., with the most important formulas).

The imagery in use for spelling out this ritually enacted relationship were not merely "cult images", a comprehensive and simplifying term. They reflected the Canonical system at its very kernel. This link laid a great weight of obligations and responsibility upon the ecclesiastical authorities in their sponsoring or accepting imagery.

The bottom line for many *special* cases is *vera effigies* (classically: *true likeness*), a qualification applied also to the Salvator images at the Lateran and elsewhere. A huge religio-sociological array of resources was involved, but also severe problems (SL, *Some observations on liturgical imagery of the twelfth century*, Inst. rom. Nor., Acta, VIII, Rome 1978, pp. 193 - 212). A real predicament was caused by the question of the "reality" of sacred imagery

*in general* in a world where one saw that crucifixes could be damaged because they had not answered one's prayers (contributions by Richard Trexler) and, in a socio-political context, *pitture infamanti* (such as by showing your enemy on the gallows; contributions by Gherardo Ortalli).

Venerating the holy images, what did really *happen*? (SL, *Some observations*, with references for the following remarks). The official doctrine was that images of divinity and saints did not in any fashion contain them but only *referred* to the prototype in heaven (*refertur ad prototypa*). Popular understanding, certainly not very actively opposed by the Church, tended to take it for granted that they venerated Christ or a saint as being resident inside the image (a non-canonical and somewhat oblique version of the Eastern *participation entative*, a term developed by Christoph Schönborn in the Greek context). Indeed, the Pope himself washed the feet of the Christ image from the Scala Santa at the Colosseum on Maundy Thursday (until Pius V prohibited the practice). In San Marco, Venice, at Epiphany, the Doge was given to drink some of the water running off the newly baptized cross (SL, *Burden*, Part III, Chapter 2.1).

Determined to settle once and for all the matter semantically *and* pastorally (a tall order), the Church developed an intricate vocabulary mostly of Greek origin (*dulia, hyperdulia*, etc.), culled from Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura and others (For the following, see SL, *Some observations*, with literature and texts). This trapped the clergy in a true *groviglio*, provoking harsh criticism from Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino: *they use highly sophisticated distinctions that they themselves hardly understand - and certainly not the unschooled people (coguntur uti subtilissimis distinctionibus, quas vix ipsimet intelligunt, nedum populus imperitus)*. No wonder the congregations, encouraged by ecclesiastic opportunism or closing of eyes to convenient mistakes, let go of involving themselves in the tricky problems of reality, representation and symbolism in images; a quandary even for us today.

People found no good reason not to believe that the divinity and the saints were directly approachable in pictures of them; not merely "by reference" - how could they grasp such a notion? In fact, by messing up the attempts at a correct image theory in impenetrable terminologies, *and* by performing rites that were hard to understand unless the holy persons were indeed present in the images or objects, the Church offered a priceless benefaction to unschooled people, and probably some learned ones, too. For now

they did not need to bother, but could safely and calmly address the holy persons as if they resided inside the pictures and gain unconditional consolation from their veneration.

The congregations making such experiences, when exiting from church, would not leave behind everything from their encounters with what was for most of them essential values. In city and village and countryside there were plenty of cues to keep the memory active and continuous. People found holy images everywhere, often further activated cognitively in the many processions; there were fixed epitaphs, tabernacles, tombs, crucifixes and crosses at almost every crossroads or village entrance; and later on, the small *santini*, pictures in woodcut distributed among people (Generally on the distribution of "cult images", see Belting, H., *Icons and Roman society in the twelfth century*, in Tronzo, W. (ed.), *Italian church decoration of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, Bologna 1989*. 27 - 41; and his *Bild und Kult, Eine Geschichte der Bilder vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*, Munich 1991).

Communication with the people also could work in the opposite direction, as Jaritz shows in his essay entitled, *The good and the bad example, or making use of "le petit peuple" in late medieval Central Europe* (Jaritz, G., *The good and the bad example, or making use of "le petit peuple" in late medieval Central Europe*, in Bognioni, P., Delort, R., and Gauvard, C. (eds.), *Le petit peuple dans l'Occident médiéval. Terminologie, perceptions, réalités*, Paris-Sorbonne, 2002, pp. 83ff.). In fact, the Catholic system presupposes a give-and-take mechanism in society between the Church and the People of God. This principle is spelled out in funerary monuments which presented people with ideal models of conduct and faith by which to evaluate and guide their own life.

### 3.2.2 The example of the high-ranking

As we saw, the story of Noah became a topos in medieval and later political theory, authenticating, by reference to the divine ordinance for human society, the partitioning in lords and servants. Great men's funerary monuments could be seen as an exemplary display of the qualities vested in these pillars of society.

The funerary monuments showing the defunct kneeling before the celestial throne which, in many cases, is seen as being *unveiled for him*, were found to merit a comment by that eminent canonist, the thirteenth-century Bolognese canonist, Buoncompagno. We see here represented, he tells us,

*how angels and saints lead the souls of the defunct into the presence of the Divine Majesty* (in his *Candelabrum eloquentiae*, chapter on *De tumulorum ornamentis*) - *dipinguntur etiam quomodo angeli vel sancti mortuorum animas divine majestati presentant* (SL, *Iconography and ritual*, 35, note 10).

People not up in the doctrinal tradition of the *beatific vision* (the justified in heaven seeing God directly; Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus*, of 1336); which lent further doctrinal support to the funerary configurations, might more readily understand the unveiling as intended to show *them* the defunct, as he now was received into heaven. These monuments literally showed the way, a road open for everybody. Political rulers, too, could be considered as models - good or even bad ones. *Das Idealbild des guten Herrschers hatte natürlich auch mit Eigenschaften wie Frömmigkeit, Selbstdisziplin, oder der Kardinaltugenden im Verbindung zu stehen* (Jaritz, G., *Die Qualitäten des Herrschers im spätmittelalterlichen Bild*, in Bräuer, H., Jaritz, G., and Sonnleitner, K. (eds.), *Viatores per urbes castraque*, Graz, 2003, pp. 331ff.).

Socially more modest offsprings from this tradition came in the shape of pictures with married couples or families kneeling before the saints who intercede on their behalf, as in the perfect illustration of the intercession algorithm (*Suscipe, sancta Trinitas*, in the Ordinal of the Mass) *from St. Francis to the Virgin to the Christ Child*, in the lower basilica at Assisi (to the left when entering the left transept). The liturgy is inclusive in the ecclesiastical and social dimensions, even though there are variations from one period to another, from one Order to another; the Benedictines having intercessions (*Fürbitte*) not only for the pope and the local bishop, but also for others, including secular authorities (Ebner, A., *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kunstgeschichte des Missale Romanum im Mittelalter. Iter italicum*, Graz 1957, photomechanic reprint of the original Freiburg i. Br., edition of 1896., pp. 398f.).

### 3.3 Conditions for the people's participation

Roman liturgy provides for, and depends upon, *active congregational participation*, in agrrement with the dogma of the Mass being a *work - opus bonum*, all other good works being reflections of it (a dogma explained at length in a book by Johannes Eck). The *liturgy* in which the people participated regularly, with varying abilities of understanding, spelled out the principal teachings, doctrines and notions in Tradition and theology. It is the liturgy and the Tradition that teach *how to understand the Bible*. Sixtus V was to



profess that the liturgy provides the proof of the theology, again following the Tradition: the liturgy is a *verae fidei protestatio* (cf. a synod canon of ca. AD 431: *fons cognitionis theologiae*, to cite an early example).

Having a share in the supreme Good Work, the *opus bonum* of the Mass, is an absolute requirement; faith not being effective if not implemented by action. It was an important aspect of the *exportation of systems*, that everyday good works, such as those of a craftsman or artist, were seen, almost as an extension, in the light of the work (*opus*) character and example in the liturgical participation.

The liturgy confirms the common appeal to God for protection. *We beseech you, O Lord, by the merits of the saints, whose relics are here, and of all saints, that you would be pleased to forgive me all my sins (per merita sanctorum tuorum, quorum reliquiae hic sunt...)* (Mass Ordinal).

Music and song, accompanying liturgical action, participation and prayer, have their primary roles in glorifying God and in assembling the people in a community of assistance which reflected that of the celestial liturgy, celebrated by the angels and the saints. The participational function of the use of song and music in a church in the Roman world is expressed in the Preface in the following invocation: *Cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti iubeas, deprecamur, supplicii confessione dicentes: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Domine Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli, et terra gloria tua... (We pray you, bid our voices to be admitted with theirs [the heavenly hosts, angels, joining together in exultation celebrate your majesty (Common Preface).*

By this function at the celebration of the Canon of the Mass, Heaven and earth are joined together, as taught by St. Gregory the Great (died 604) and repeated later by Pope Innocens III (d. 1216) and Bishop Guillaume de Mende (d. 1296) (*Postremo hic cantica Angelorum [the Sanctus] canimus, quia per hoc sacrificium terrena iungi caelestibus non dubitamus...*). The *viventes*, the four "animals", man, eagle, ox and lion, produced from a combination of texts from *Isaiah 6* and *Revelation 4*, lead the celebration before the Trinity (illustrated with inscriptions in Saint-Sernin, Toulouse) (SL, *Iconography and ritual*, pp. 48, 77f. 92; and *Burden*, p. 185). The *viventes* also, just because of this role, in addition became symbols of the four Evangelists (apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere).

Attention to and participation in the Mass had become a critical issue in the late Middle Ages (For what follows, see SL, *Iconography and ritual*, 9f., 101; SL, 1984, 9f.; Dumoutet, E., *Le désir de voir l'Hostie et les origines de la dévotion au Saint-Sacrement*, Paris, 1926; Nickl, G., *Der Anteil des Volkes an der Meßliturgie im Frankenreich von Clodvig bis auf Karl den Großen*, Innsbruck, 1930). At the Council of Lyons in 1274 and that of Vienne in 1313, great concern was voiced over the frequently attested scarcity of attention and irregularity of presence among the congregations, even among priests when not "on the job". People tended to stay away from cathedrals and parishes and flock to the Franciscans because of the *brevitas moderna* of their rites. Absence and inattention was still a treated as a problem at the Council of Basel in 1435; and so was the growing tendency for people to read their offices in private instead of in church and community (Salmon, P., *The Breviary through the centuries*, Collegeville (MI), n. d. (early 1960,s), 17ff.). Even in far-away Norway a popular ballad of medieval origin depicts the hero telling stories to people assembled outside the church while inside it the clergy kept on with their *lestine lange* (*lectiones lungae*).

Since Carolingian time, barriers had been installed between the altar and the congregation space to as to keep the them from seeing and hearing the Canon performance. To compensate for what they were not allowed to experience directly, big crucifixes or crosses were placed high up between the presbytery and congregation space or on the barrier between the two spaces (illustrated in Assisi, Upper Church of San Francesco: the St. Francis series: Greccio miracle), in Italy, but also in the German-speaking lands; still today visible in the cathedrals of Ratzeburg, SH, and Schwerin, MV. The tradition became gradually discontinued - in many places over a century or two - after the archbishop of Paris in 1210 had ordered the priests to make people *see* the Eucharistic elevation.

Historically, (excuse my stating the obvious) there were variations in the interrelations between the people and the Church in terms of communication mediated through images. The pictures of the Triune God underwent changes that illustrate the point so to speak graphically. Another subject, to be brought up next, *depicted angels*, offers alternatives that relate, respectively, to the reserved environment of the *Sistina*, and to open places like Assisi and Pomposa.

### 3.3.1 Depicting the Triune God

With many people's realistic conceptions of holy images, and the clergy's reluctance to eradicate such errors, since the misconception made pastoral work much easier, the images of *the Triune God* quite naturally became a critical matter. For here the "prototype" in heaven defies any visualization or even description. The topic of *the true content* became especially sensitive when accompanying the big waves of educational investments on the part of the Church. There was such a drive in the twelfth century, described by M. D. Chenu (henu, *La teologia del XII secolo*, Milan 1983; I have not had access to the original French publication). and a second one with the increasing popular desire to *see* the Holy Eucharist (Dumoutet, already cited); and the big wave caused by the Black Death that met people's cravings with new sacrament rituals, dramatic renderings of Christ's sufferings - *and* new pictorial idioms for the *Triune God*, making the mystic entity more directly accessible and conceptualizable, less abstract and condensed.

From the earliest times, people had had to be content with the cross-haloed Christ figure that ruled the field. It was still felt as sufficient to say that, yes, God is spirit, and like the Jews, we do not portray him directly, only through his incarnation in Christ the Man; a man can be visualized and depicted. The enthroned Christ (*Fig. 2*) was a standard image, supported by *Isaiah 6:1: Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium.*

Then came the concessions; various different configurations being introduced, often with accompanying and translatable inscriptions: *Quaeque sub obscuris, de Christo dicta figuris, his apperire datur, et in his Deus ipse notatur* (San Marco, Venice). People could behold the Lamb (in the *scarsella* in the Florence Baptistery) and having the inscription translated, telling them that the Lamb represented God, *tout court: Hic deus est magnus, mitis quem denotat agnus.*

Already in the thirteenth century, however, the authorities who established the cult of the Trinity in the famous pilgrimage cave above Vallepiertra (Monte Livata, east of Subiaco), set up a fresco of *three identical looking males* seated beside each other: the Trinity. This configuration spread out from this center over a large area, and still in the 1950s you could buy small metal plaques with the three Persons seated next to each other; and with the inscription *Ovunque proteggimi* (consonant with Tradition, in the grammatical *singular*).

In the fourteenth century another more approachable and familiar father-type became common: the severe, male and bearded God floating in midair such that *Daniel* (Chapter 9) was believed to have seen in his vision: the *antiquus dierum* (you can depict a *vision*). The idea quickly gained ground, but was hardly ever concretized in such a muscular shape as Michelangelo's God in the *Sistina*, the heavy body hovering over the ocean, and meant to illustrate how *spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas* (*Genesis*, 1:2), and the imposing figures of God creating - and an even more muscular Devil fleeing, relinquishing his angelic nature.

I wonder if such configurations as these, the impressive Sixtine *gigantimachia* that seems to be acted out between God and the Devil, would have been accepted in a public church and presented to a bewildered congregation who had been taught that the Devil started out as an *angel*. But here he appears as just another muscular man without any particular attributes. How to distinguish him from the other males on the ceiling? The configurations nevertheless were contrived in full accordance with Tradition.

### 3.3.2 Elaborated angels

There are other figures in the *Sistina*, too, that meet us unadorned with symbolic trappings and attributes, such as wings and haloes.

Concerning the *ignudi*, the naked males seated around the *Sistina* vault, I was once corrected by a colleague, *No, no, they are not angels!* But he was at a loss to explain why they were not and then what else they could be. Normally, angels would be indispensable in such a program as the one along the vault axis, however you interpret it. Dogmatically, the angels have precise assignments: to act as messengers from God to Man, and as guardians, leading the soul up to the vision of God, thereupon to withdraw. Thirdly, they participate in the celestial liturgy before the Trinity and are thus often, in another effort at elaboration for the popular market, represented as musicians. Connected with this doctrine is the prayer in the Canon of the Mass, that God may command his holy angel to carry the sacrifice up to the altar in heaven before the countenance (*iube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinae maiestatis tuae; Canon of the Mass*); a text that is reflected in many pictorial elaborations: the dead Christ supported by angels, or being elevated by them; angels at the deposition or at the sepulchre, to cite some examples.

The Devil was originally, at the Creation, an *angel*, and thus *good*

(stated by many synods, such as *Quam laudabiliter*, AD.447, and the *Braccarense I*) (Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion*, No. 283 - 2856, and No. 457, of the year 563, respectively). In the *Sistina*, he is wingless - wings being a pictorial devise, nothing more - like the other angels on the ceiling, the *ignudi*; *angelus* being referred to in *masculine* terms; theologically an angel is referred to as a *he*. Wingless are also the angels surrounding the *Ecclesia* in the *Creation of Adam*, and so is, finally, the *Cherub* (later usually identified with the archangel Michael) with the flaming sword in the *Expulsion* story.

*Pictorial* tradition usually represented angels with wings, often also as young girl-like *fanciulle bionde*. Fra Angelico's collection of angels looks like having been taken out of a New England girls' college. This is an elaboration in favor of the people, helping them to sort out celestial spirits from humans, and it was particularly convenient in the case of the "announcing" Gabriel facing the Virgin - to forestall sexy associations like the one acted out in Neapolitan popular plays.

### 3.4 Competence building

The Church and the Orders took care to provide people with competences graded after their respective capacities for grasping the main ideas or, at least, the simpler notions behind such cues for alertness as we have just been considering.

In addition to the regular catechism instruction, the numerous monasteries and convents were active not only in direct teaching but they, especially the Benedictines, also kept large libraries at the disposal of the public (Schneider, K, *Die Bibliothek Katharinenkloster in Nürnberg und die städtische Gesellschaft*, in Grenzmann, L. (ed), *Studien zum städtischen Bildungswesen des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Göttingen 1983, 71 - 82; and Giolfi, D., and SL, *The Rule, the Bible and the Council*). Pictures in the churches and also graphics resembling the graphic models in use today, were employed as teaching devices (Wirth, K-A., *Von mittelalterlichen Bildern und Lehrfiguren im Dienste der Schule und? des Unterrichts*, in Grenzmann, L. (ed), *Studien zum städtischen Bildungswesen des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Göttingen, 1983, pp. 256 - 370). The Roman Church, which was very definite about the injunction to the congregations not to pretend to read the Bible unguided, would use the available imagery to make people grasp the main ideas in accordance with the authorized

interpretation of the Scriptures.

*Competence*, abilities somehow to handle things cognitively, is the crucial factor in the game (More carefully about Putnam's theory in SL, *Burden*, pp. 146ff., 250ff.). The question is how people would succeed in breaking certain barriers to conceptual and cognitive access or were blocked by them. According to Hilary Putnam, concepts used in mentally handling objects or ideas, are not a property but a question of *ability* to handle whatever might be facing one. Conjectures about people's likely *conceptualizing processes* will be too vague to serve an analytical purpose. Following the line of argumentation in the present essay, we can however suggest frameworks for what sort of conceptual openings the system had to offer to the people for accessing the media; *media* here, not only pictures, but also the spectatorial elements in the liturgy.

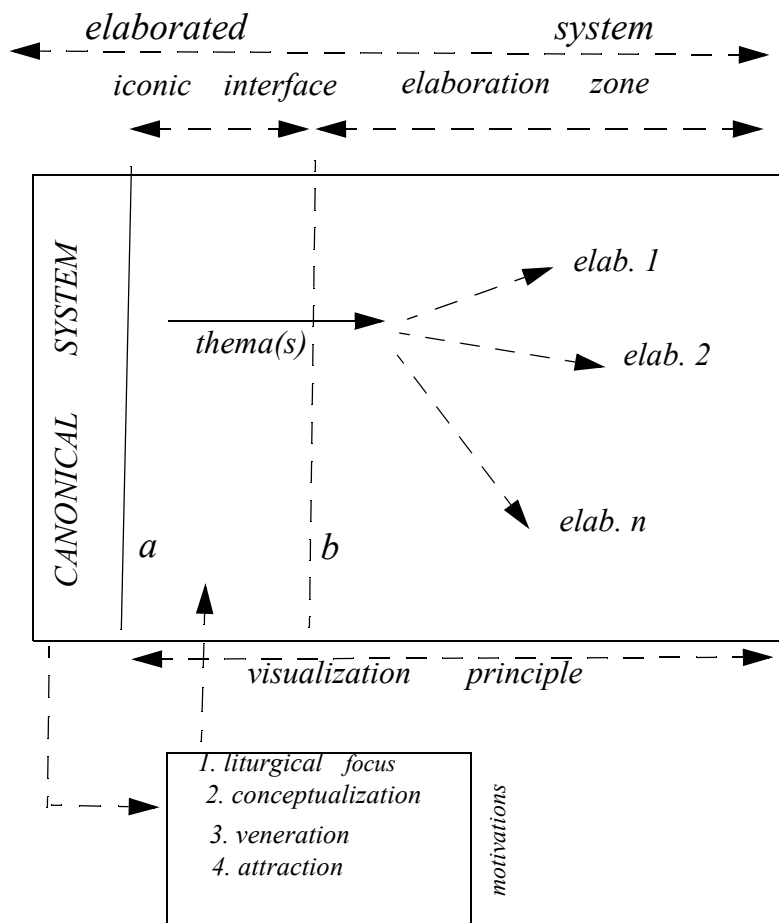
We can postulate *graded access barriers* effective for people and classify people socially by specific categories of concept barriers when they participate in the rites in a church, involving images (SL, *Burden*, pp. 221ff., using the PROLOG program metaphorically).

The special situation and functions of the *Sistina* permitted an extreme reduction to fundamentals on the elaboration level, that was intended to address a highly competent clientèle. In the world at large, this would not have worked at all. A visually graspable cue with traditional and generally understood trappings had proved more catching than an image stripped down to the essentials.

Not only contents but also *artistic style* should be considered in the perspective of *graded barriers*. People in Assisi in the late thirteenth century would probably feel at home with how the so-called *Maestro di San Francesco* depicted the story of St. Francis in the lower basilica. The idiom is extremely simple, not reflecting active engagement in what was later dubbed *maniera*; nor does it seem to aim at individual characteristics, presenting the congregation with a *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*; a person, however, clearly recognizable from his cloak and a tale often told about him connected with other well-known tales in the same picture sequence. At the opposite end of the scale, what about popular reactions to Rosso Fiorentino's provocative *Descend from the cross* at Volterra - presumably made for the élite in this industrial town?

#### 4 SHARPENING THE TOOLS

The perceptive reader will not have failed to realize that the proposed distinction between *system* and *elaboration* suffers from a certain vagueness with regard to *that area of the latter level which stays closest to the borderline of the system itself*. For if we could not postulate an area in the *pictorial or visualuzation zone* that stays closer to the system than the rest of the representation material, then the entire distinction would vanish into one between the system and the large and loose category of "iconography" or even "pictures". Let me use the shorthand term of *iconic interface* for the area that stays closest to the system. This zone should be singled out from the rest of the area of visual presentation (speaking of pictures now, not of celebrations), to represent the *first step* across the boundary from the system level. Postulating such a zone follows from the fact that Church not only encouraged but *demanded* imagery, while regarding with some flexibility the way it was amplified and elaborated beyond the basic structures.



*Graph 2. Process model with inputs-output (no info model, i. e., no feedbacks.)*

#### 4.1 System and elaboration zone

It is common wisdom today that operators built to handle complex scenarios or quantities, such as an *interface*, or a *vector* expressing directional motion, can be understood not by some definite definition, only in terms of the process of its application, not sufficiently by invoking some encompassing but crisp definition (pertinent observations by Banesh Hoffmann in his *About vectors*) (Quoted in SL, *Burden*, p. 29).

The zonal structure needs being grounded in *function and use*. On the system side, this was governed by the Church as the manager of the Canonical system. From the managerial point of view, the two main requirements regarding the iconic interface, let us assume, were *correctness* (which is to say, containing no rejectable configurations) *in dogmatic and liturgical terms*, and, secondly, *sufficient clarity and efficiency of communication of the relevant canonical structure* (of the Mass, for example).

Further out in the area of visualization, in the zone of *elaboration*, in our conceptually centrifugal move, came concessions to situation-dependent pastoral needs and opportunities, and popular demands, as well as artistic disponibility and adequacy for delivering suitable response, all variable factors, as we know. For the communication requirement, speaking of the Church, one might call in Herbert Simon's *satisficing* terminology, since no crisp criteria are feasible here: *Reconciling alternative points of view and different weightings of values becomes somewhat easier if we adopt a "satisficing" point of view: if we look for "good enough" solutions rather than insisting that only the best solutions will do* (Simon, H. A., *Models of thought*, New Haven, CT, 1979, 11 - 14; and *Reason in Human Affairs*, Stanford, CA, 1983, p. 85). When he says "easier", the implication is "more realistic".

The central *thema* is the Mass sacrifice, and therefore the imagery representing or referring to the Eucharist, is pivotal and focus-dominant. I use the term *thema(s)* in order to distinguish from Gerald Holton's *thematics* used in the theory of science (Holton, G., *Thematic origins of scientific thought: Kepler to Einstein*, rev. ed., Cambridge (MA), 1988). Closest to the Canonical System, in the iconic interface, basic configuration types are accepted, and starting out from the *themas* here, elaborations are developed in the freer zone. This is accessible for inputs from society including local churches, commissioners and artists or craftsmen.



An invariable factor in the iconic interface was (is) the concept that an image, say, a Crucifixion, can denote *both* an historical event *and* an ever-recurring ritual action. A second invariable was this: speaking of the principal features, we know that the idea had always been accepted in the Church that all non-human living entities (excepting those being defined "animals") *be rendered visually in terms of human shape*: God, the entire Trinity, demons, angels (including the one about to fall = the Devil). Thirdly, there are various conventional and universally understood signs of identification of position in the hierarchy and the liturgy; normally, nimbus, cross-nimbus for Christ, other attributes (keys for St. Peter). These three sets of features, let me say, represent the stable kernels of the subject at hand. Beyond them, at no point are the differences definite and invariable.

The iconic interface (*see Graph 2* above) is the area in which the *Bildhaftigkeit der Gedanken* is primarily instantiated, in which, to continue quoting Ludwig Wittgenstein, ... *ein Bild...*, *damit er mir zeigen kann, was ich tun soll; damit ich mich nach ihm richten kann* (Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophische Grammatik*, ed. Rhees, R., Suhrkamp Werksausgabe, Band 4, section IX, 163ff.), a formulation precisely targeting Roman action-impelling use of imagery.

The overall structure just indicated is illustrated in the *above process model*. *Themas* arising in the iconic interface, are (usually) enriched by various elaboration alternatives and trade-offs (arrows fanning out), among which priorities would be settled in dependence of actual scenarios. While the borderline between system and visualization (*a*) is neat enough, corresponding to saying and showing, *Sinn des Satzes* and *Sinn des Bildes* (to quote Wittgenstein), the tricky notion is that of the borderline (*b*) between the iconic interface and the elaboration zone.

This is an occasion for emphasizing that *there is no metric* for the internal structure of a dynamical model of this kind (otherwise with an organizational chart); just a non-quantifiable average of probabilities; which in some cases can be boiled down to real-life specifics.

If the system zone represents *saying* and the entire visualization area *showing*, the interface indicates *showing what* and the elaboration zone *showing how*. The latter *how* seems pragmatically justifiable, if not strictly logical, because after having established what kind of thing we have before us, now comes the question how this is being further displayed with the help

of some conventionally accepted and understood signs or symbols (*Probabilities*: in soft environments, not statistical-mathematical; for my use, see SL, *Patterns*, 4.3.2. A probability-quantification has been attempted on such a slippery issue as *belief*; D. V. Linley cited in Howson, C., and Urbach, P., *Scientific reasoning. The Bayesian approach*, 2nd. ed., Chicago, 1993, p. 93).

#### 4.1.1 Conveying the essentials

Let us return for a moment to the *Sistina vault* and to the down-to-the-bone abstraction on the visualization level of the pictorial program, keeping everything more or less in the iconic interface. From a technical *systems* perspective, the case smacks of *fundamentalism*; of wanting, in the face of more and more complex pictorial programs, to pare down to the essentials the conveyance of the message, staying in the *iconic interface*, not wanting to venture into the more unruly elaboration subzone; desiring, possibly, to set an example.

Planning and implementation of even simple programs are never transparent; seemingly good documentation and written contracts do not make the process much more penetrable (Sinding-Larsen, *Patterns*, 1.3 with detailed argument). We shall remain uncertain about which may have been the role of Michelangelo and of other members of the planning outfit in this business. It may be argued, though, that the desire on the part of the Church to keep things close to the ground, coincided with Michelangelo's penchant for stripping his universe of all kinds of trappings, calling forth the essentials. Whoever came up with the idea, it was accepted, and this is the important observation.

#### 4.2 The system tool

When a system is invoked with the purpose of using it for determining elements in the elaborations of the same system, then this system is made to work as a *tool*, not on itself (!) but on extensions from it (Introductions to the systems issue, in descending (deepening) order: Churchman, C. West, *The systems approach*, rev. ed., New York, 1979; Bertalanffy, L. von, *General systems theory. Foundations, development, applications*, rev. ed., New York 1968; Wilden, A., *System and structure. Essays in communication and knowledge*, 2 ed., New York 1980).

A good system is one that works as an *open platform* for the elaboration of widely different separate or interconnected specific programs or message units. An elementary model from computer operation may illustrate

the concept better than normal prose. Let the operating system, say, *Windows XP* or, if you fancy complications, *Vista*, represent the systemic platform. We say it is *open* if we can use various applications on it (*Word* as well as *FrameMaker*, for instance, and a spreadsheet and an entertainment program ). Accessing an application, we are immediately linked up with the operating system. In the non-syntactic environment under consideration in this essay, there can be no such automatism. It is our consciously referring back to the system that replicates the automatism. If we fail to do that, it is, correspondingly, as if the code line in the computer between the application and the operating system were broken.

Let me briefly list some among the most important advantages of respecting and making use of a system.

- *Terms of description.* Systems and systemic rituals (like liturgy) deliver concepts and terminology for our description of the elaborations. Had this been well understood, we should not have been told that a certain painting by Piero della Francesca represented *The Joy of the Bridegroom* - at a time when marriage was political and financial and "joy" was shared with one's mistress.

- *Constraints.* If we run a scientific venture without well understood constraints, we do not know where we are or where we are heading. Something along this line can be said about any good *methodology*, since this will presuppose or artificially create a reference system within which one will be working (Careful discussions of the artificial nature of "soft" research in SL, *Burden* and *Patterns*). The system must be visible, rather than linger in some hazy background unexplored even by the author.

- *Refutable propositions.* A system anchorage can be called in so as to make propositions in a contribution subject to *refutation*, to be distinguished from mere disagreement. That a proposition can be refuted, is a precondition for keeping a significant debate about it going.

- *Process versus conclusion.* The awareness that the objects in "soft" environments like ours, are products of our analysis, means that we should target processes rather than conclusive results. Focusing on elaboration without establishing good system links, makes it too easy to harbor illusions about achieving more or less definite *conclusions*. A system anchorage makes such an aspiration appear as illusory as it really is, because a system usually is an open platform pointing out different interrelated research

courses. In this way, one is forced to recognize the constructive values of participating in an *ongoing process*. These alternatives can be seen in a larger perspective, that of program developments. Such a development shares most of the logistical properties with complex research processes. At a certain point, one of the employees at Microsoft, John Ludwig, confronted the company with the alternatives of *getting the right team with the right culture on the job, or controlling some proprietary intellectual property?* (Bank, D., *Breaking windows. How Bill Gates fumbled the future of the Microsoft*, London, 200, p. 95).

- *Perspective control*. Trying to build bridges between pictures and programs directly on the elaboration level is usually futile. System considerations will lay the foundations for tying things together in a fashion that can pilot the research process.

- *Part-elaboration*. Disregarding the system issue, one runs the risk (as has often happened) of losing sight of the following important occurrences. It has been noted already that the Canonical system is an open platform, on which different alternative elaboration programs can be contrived and explored. Furthermore, very often, a system or sections of it is being expressed in the visual media in simple or complex display programs by *reduction* down to a few configurations (a limited choice of saints standing for the *all the saints* in the Missal), a *pars-pro-toto* mechanism often necessary when limited ritual spaces or small picture frames are concerned. Conversely, one configuration may stand for different subjects, as *aggregates* of several different concepts; usually contingent upon the context and ritual involvement (a crucifix as a historical reference or as a place-marker for the Mass sacrifice). Trying to come to grips with these alternatives directly on the elaboration level, without searching for connections with the underlying system, has been seen to mess up entire projects (SL, *Iconography and ritual*, 66ff., pp. 116ff., with some examples).

## 5 WORKING WITH PICTORIAL OBJECTS.

This has been an argumentation without conclusion and so it will remain. The procedure, to the extent that it seems to work, provides a *platform* for further inquiry; nothing more.

### 5.1 The trajectory of analysis

The title of this essay starts with the words *Working with*. So the assignment would seem to be to discuss what to do with things rather than what they are

or might be. Is there a difference? Not really, for what the thing might be, is determined by what we are doing with it.

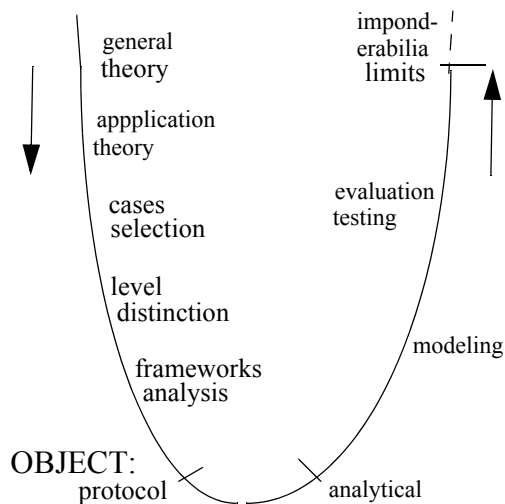
In my book *Patterns and programs in premodern Rome* (under <http://folk.ntnu.no/staaalesl/books.html>), I have argued in some depth (but with no impressive originality) to say that *the object of our analysis is a product of our handling it conceptually and cognitively; the object is an externalization of the analysis process; in other words, that the analysis process is the object on all levels but the trivial ones* (my analysis will hardly make water freeze at 40 degrees centigrades). Thus, except for documentation, there is no difference between what is history, the actual and the future; since everything is transformed by being adopted by *our models* and thus present.

To say such thing is no novelty; the intuition was there in the arts and the letters (Guy de Maupassant, for one) before it arose in science. Ours, then, will, metaphorically speaking, be another *science of the artificial*, to adopt the title of Herbert Simon's ground-breaking and ever-actual book (Simon, H. A., *The Sciences of the Artificial*, 3rd. ed., Cambridge (MA) 1996).

A rich array of methodologies, insights and programs are available to us, at least as idea banks and incitements to constructive and communicable thinking, even though relatively few of them are directly usable as tools.

Let me summarize by loading the structure of my argumentation in this essay into a model in the form of a *parabola with positive range indicating the research trajectory and its main stages*. It is *theory* (general on validity criteria; epistemological platform; and *applied*, on methodology, structure, categorization) that tells me what I am looking at and what I am out to get hold of (More closely discussed in SL, *Patterns*, 1.11). This means starting in the *top-down* modality. Descending, as illustrated in the parabola model, I identify real *protocol cases* and select among them (*see Graph 3, below*).

Thereupon, I make a first-level distinction (*system/elaboration*) and *apply* this to the selected material, which now is to be integrated into some general and some specific *framework* (cultural, for example; and decisions concerning search space). The selected *protocol objet(s) in focus* is/are now described, being a product of the analysis process, absorbed by it: *analytical object(s)*.



*Graph 3 - The trajectory of analysis*

We are now at the bottom level of the model (to stick to the illustration). In the *bottom-up* process, the selected object(s) in focus is/are now *evaluated* by our calling in useful insights, theories and *models* from anywhere, in my terminology, an *open\_source approach* (using information models, for example).

The "upper" end product consists in defining the *limits* of the system's range

and where it borders on the *imponderabilia*, such as artistic values, which elude analysis and for the handling of which one must have recourse to literary tools (without demanding semantic qualifications) - *all hunch and no science*, as Herbert Simon phrased it. The crucial point is, as we saw in the case of the *Sistina*, that one cannot start out from the imponderabilia. One has to start with the system(s) and work one's way up towards the environment which seems to border on the limit for a workable analysis; in other words, from the chosen center, proceed toward the periphery, centrifugally, into an area where the analyzable entities are thinning out, yielding place to fathomable but not graspable experiences - so-called *esthetic* qualities, a subject for social anthropology and social psychology, working on the receiver or end user side of the dynamics (SL, *Burden*, pp. 52ff.).

(The following note was omitted in the printed version)

Normally, a research process will follow a much more disorderly course than suggested in the model. But the ideal model (the one presented here, or a different one) is useful to keep in mind all the time as a controlling device to help us keep the enterprise on course, and for relating one step to the next. Even a disorderly research process must be translatable into an ordered structural abstraction that sets out direction and steps or stages in the drive (SL, *Burden*, pp. 152-4).

## 5.2 Beyond grasp

Can we use the system to gain some control over the imponderabilia? While so-called *strong artificial intelligence* has been more or less abandoned, still *neuroscience* may uncover some of the bases for our softer processes concerning literature and the arts, as Herbert Lindenberger has argued in an extremely stimulating essay that bears promise for the future (Lindenberger, H., *Arts in the Brain: Or What Might Neuroscience Tell Us?*, in *Toward a Cog-*

*nitive Theory of Literary Arts*, ed. Frederick Aldama (Austin University of Texas Press).

To stick to present-day conditions, the query remains open. By applying the systems approach briefly sketched out in this little contribution, and trying to assess the "*purely*" artistic values, a rest still remains after we have pushed the boundaries as much as seems reasonable towards what may be the extreme tolerance limit for analytical grasp.

Science having the last decades entered into areas that lie beyond technical recall, is now believed by some to approach the creative arts. Let me refer to a relevant proposition by Cyril Smith, chrystallographer at Los Alamos: that artists make *meaningful and communicable statements, if not always precise ones, about complex things*; and the scientist's *area of interest will approach that of the humanist* (Full quotation in SL, *Iconography and ritual*, p. 180). A highly suggestive view which today seems further underpinned by recent developments in science.

Particle physics and cosmology, the understanding of the latter depending on the former, today have touched horizons so far removed into unfathomable depths and distances, that the theories no longer are testable by experiments (thus there is no *science*). No machinery or equipment is in sight that could handle the implications of the theories about such spooks as *superstrngs* or *quasars* (see the illuminating and funny book by John Horgan, *The End of Science*) (Horgan, J., *The End of Science. Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of the Scientific Age*, New York, 1996 and later editions).

The idea that science and art are approaching one another, turns out useful otherwise than intended, by offering us a claim that can be *invalidated*. We can settle the issue by the following observation, which is that the drive in our parabola model towards the imponderabilia is *not* comparable to the drive in physics and cosmology towards the spooks. For whatever unfathomable distances one may imagine as holding between ourselves and them, the rules of mathematics and the laws of physics used for the approach remain the same. Our approach in a soft environment towards the imponderabilia, is not supported by any rules at all. Analytically speaking, we seem to have just one, and more general, rule to fall back on: The *Lex Wittgenstein* (if the reader will forgive a hackneyed quotation): *Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen*.

## 6. THE RITUAL FACTOR

The ritual factor has been running as an undercurrent throughout the *decur-sus* in the preceding pages. The distinction between system and elaboration can often, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied also to *rituals*. Like the Roman Church, other large-scope institutions, such as States (the Republic of Venice, a highly developed case), generated and evolved consistent ritualized systems of ideology and self-representation and did so for their internal consolidation and external display. In such cases it can be adequate to speak of *ritualization*, an operational term, rather than rituals, a substantive term, because one often will have to take into account less formalized, even rather vague ritualized actions and behavior of the sort contemplated by Wittgenstein and modern social anthropology, as well as in much of the output from the Krems institute.

Most public institutions, Church, State, municipality and guilds, expressed themselves in rituals and in ritualized ceremonies. The formal rites were all of them rooted in religion and more or less directly derived from relevant *liturgies*. New political or ideological contexts generated *elaborations* of them. Thus, there were hardly any “civic rituals” to be neatly distinguished from their liturgical origins. Reputedly secular public ceremonies - such as those celebrated by Canaletto and Belotto - have to be understood on the basis of canonical ritual systems, that is, the liturgies.

One example of universally valid principles may be cited here.

The spectacular *Wedding to the Sea* in Venice was related in a way presently to be considered, to the government procession, carrying *the Christ*, each Wednesday, from the Palace to the old government chapel of St. Clement Pope and Martyr, in San Marco; a chapel with political inscriptions, and, until the early fourteenth century, with the Doge's throne; a procession by



which the government's allegiance to and granted protection from St. Clement was ritually confirmed.

Long before 1480 (a definite *ante quem*), two individuals, a martyr and the pope were knocked into one (*De sancto clemente papa et Martyre*; thus in the 1564 *Rituum cerimoniale*) (SL, *Christ in the Council Hall*, 1974; *Index, San Marco*; SL Burden, p. 269) His martyrdom had provoked a miracle at the bottom of the Black Sea, qualifying him as a patron of a sea republic like Venice. In Venice, Bibl. Correr, *Orazionale Cicogna*, 1602, fols. 277-8, we read: *Dedisti Domine habitaculum martyri tuo Clementi in mari in modum templi marmorei angelicis manibus preparatum...* : an event illustrated in a twelfth-century fresco in San Clemente, Rome. "Pope" Clement's martyrdom in the sea was recorded in the liturgy (*Dum iter ad mare coepisset...*) (Lodi, E., *Enchiridion euchologicum fontium liturgicorum*, Rome 1979, p. 891).

This is part of the liturgy regarding an individual protecting saint, later forming the Breviary reading for his or her specific day and, like all the hagiographical themes in the liturgy, building on the *general* appeal to *all* the protecting saints in the Mass Ordinal: *Oramus te, Domine, per merita sanctorum, tuorum, quorum reliquiae hic sunt, et omnium sanctorum...* (see below). Thus the paraliturgical ceremony of the procession to the chapel, is an elaboration of a two-steps basic liturgy whose content and actions were verbally codified, and hence transferable to imagery. The Wedding ceremony concerned the universally celebrated seafarer protector, St. Nicholas, internationally a more valid currency than St. Clement as a sea patron. This is a focus shift in line with the international policy and highly articulate diplomacy of the Republic.

There seems to have obtained no canonically codified connection between the Wedding ceremony and the paraliturgical Wednesday procession.

**The ceremony was rooted in a well-attested and variously expressed religious-political ideological system of the Republic, one among whose anchor-points consisted in the formalized Wednesday ritual. The Wedding ceremony is an elaboration of comparable *thematics* in the Republic's tradition, rather than a direct transfer from distinct rituals, and clearly was developed for public appeal, community consolidation and international propaganda. Ritualized scenarios provided meeting grounds for Church and "Secular" institutions and also *thematics* for related pictorial imagery.**

**The entire ritual chain under discussion in the present section could be developed into a general model for ritual interconnections and development.**