**MANUSCRIPT: THE ANGEL CHRONICLES**

0´08

When Christianity first came to the world, it was without images, only words, only script.

Images were first introduced into the Christians’ assembly rooms, where they were concentrated at the far end of the simple hall, called the Ekklesia.

When the walls of these halls were hung with images as well, they made up a story.

0´44

We want to tell the story of how these images arose and how these stories came about. And what role angels played in this conflict between power and order, between heaven and earth.

1’15 Title

**1) THE ANGEL CHRONICLES**

1’25 Title

**2) A film by Michael Trabitzsch**

1´34

The angels are the messengers of the one god of whom no image exists and on whom no human will ever set eyes.

We worship his words: words that were brought to us by angels, who are closest to him. They are spiritual beings, like him, beings of light. The angels announce what God wishes to tell us; that is their mission. And in this way we are always surrounded by them: they talk to us, they guide and advise us, they judge us. And so they became a central theme of the pictorial history that we call Western Art.

2´42

Once the Roman Empire began to collapse and slowly disintegrate Christianity became the state religion. Rome, the capital of this empire, was a civilised city of around a million people, whose living standards and its art represented the apogee of world history.

3´06

Their emperors placed themselves on the same level as the gods, and still today, we talk of their buildings and legacies as ‘monumental’.

3´21 O – Ton Zinser

Hartmut Zinser: Christianity, whether it likes it or not, is also an inheritor of the Roman Empire. It is in this period that the Roman Empire had a claim to universality. Christianity also has this claim to universality and acted on it: Go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

3´50

When the Christian oratories in Rome were still hidden underground in the catacombs, there arose alongside the script, the first images, the first pictorial symbols.

These pictures were to be different from those of antiquity and portrayed a halo instead of an ivy wreath and also winged messengers. But in the beginning there were very few specifically Christian images.

4´20 O – Ton Zinser

Hartmut Zinser: The Roman religion of antiquity didn’t develop any dogma, and for that reason provided no order. Order first becomes apparent in Christianity, for instance, in the hierarchy of the angels, who we can view quite clearly as a living extension of minor functional gods. And in this way we can detect continuity, as well as transformation.

4´45

But what are the archetypes for the over-dimensional images in Christendom, for the angel figures? Are they the heroes of antiquity? Indeed, early Christian imagery does have its roots in the Assyrian–Babylonian period, with its anthropomorphic creatures. Cherubs, flaming creatures and winged figures belong in this category.

5´16 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: Taking as an example, this concept of demons, which is rather indifferent in the Greek era because demons are really only intermediaries between the deities and humanity. In Christianity though they are newly codified as unclean spirits, known to us from the New Testament, who are really the repudiated and offended gods of the Greeks.

5´43

Instead of the obvious pictorial world of antiquity, Christendom choses the detour through demonic proto-beings.

These then take on the idealised human bodily form, copied from the antique gods. The figures are based on models taken from antiquity and Babylonian demons. Even their name reflects these roots: angelos, the Greek messenger. And cherub, which bears similarities to the early demons.

6´10 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: Pseudo-Dionysius is the ideal author because he imagines the angels’ heaven as a tripartite world, made up of spheres nested in each other until they reach the highest mystery, namely God.

6´35 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: And from this highest mystery, perceived only as a sea of light, glory is radiated to the world below, but it is made up not only of visible light but also of the knowledge of who God actually is. And that this is based in the first level of angels, the seraphs, from there to the cherubs, who pass it on via an almost visible spiritual connection to the throne, and, the masters and so on.

7´02

And thus the portrayal of angels in the late Middle Ages, is, above all, an indication of what Christian images primarily communicate: Order.

7´16 O – Ton Zinser

Hartmut Zinser: These are reflections on questions: how can I portray God, how can I portray the holy that is really something spiritual without it becoming sensual and thus dragged down to the level of Antiquity, which the Christians termed paganism.

7´37

The picture of a hierarchical order in heaven is thus the key to Christian imagery. Order is the pre-condition of perfection.

7´53

The first step towards a self-contained Christian iconography of angels doesn’t take place in Rome. In the 4th century AD the Roman Empire collapsed into two sections: Rome and the western part of the empire was overrun by the Goths, then reconquered by oriental Roman Byzantium. In the mid-6th century, Rome becomes a provincial city of the Byzantine Empire, with Ravenna as its capital.

This is where the first systematic pictorial history of the still-young Christendom, as a synthesis of Greek philosophy and the Christian doctrine of salvation, is developed.

8´37 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: The three is normally reserved as a symbol of the deity. But in the Old Testament we also have angelophany. When the prophet Ezekiel or Isaiah are allowed to look up to heaven they see beings surrounding God. They are either ordered in groups of four or have four facets: for example, eagle-like, lion-like or human-like beings and bull figures.

It is an import from the Babylonian iconography and becomes integrated into Christendom. God is surrounded by groups of four figures, when seated on his throne. And that’s why, alongside the number three, which symbolises God, there is the number four, an extension, symbolising his rule in all four worldly spheres and eras. That’s also why, from the 3 and the 4 all other numbers, namely 12 and then 24, were taken and endowed with a holy systematic significance.

9´44

The oldest mosaics of Christian iconography are to be found in the sacred buildings of Ravenna. Opposite a series of martyrs, is placed a series of holy virgins. Their individual expressions are not of significance, but their row and the number are.

Above them stand 16 prophets, which signify 12+4; and the fact that they are placed above the virgins and martyrs expresses their place in the hierarchy and their high authority within Christendom.

Above them again are scenes portraying Christ’s passion and even this position denotes hierarchy, order. Here in Ravenna the hierarchy is ‘formulated’ and translated into a system of images.

10‘36

The beginning and end of this mural are reserved for the key figures of holy scripture: Mary and Christ. They are positioned formally; alongside each of them are two angels that look out directly on the viewer. The angels are thus the courtly state, the ‘bodyguards’ of Mary and Jesus Christ.

11´01

This simple pictorial system becomes a canon on which everything else is built. From now on, the churches become larger, the apses and domes express the unity and perfection of the Christian cosmos. In the way it arranged its images, the Christian pictorial system took over and transcended the Byzantine court order and its portrayal of power and representation.

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11´38 O – Ton Zinser

Hartmut Zinser: If we read the 30-year-jubilee eulogy on Constantine the Great, we can discern a formula for order in the world: one god, one empire, one emperor. Constantine was an advocate of an egalitarian god with a clear hierarchy, order and subservience, because it reflected natural socio-political relationships.

12´06

Ravenna is therefore the place where the synthesis between the systematic thinking of the Greeks and the Christian doctrine of salvation became translated into imagery.

12´19

Already among the ruins of Rome, new churches had been erected or ancient Roman edifices reconsecrated as such. In Santa Maria in Trastevere the pictorial canon of Ravenna had won through. And the larger the church was, the more imagery could be depicted.

12`50

In this church, for the first time, Mary is depicted directly alongside Jesus Christ as his companion. The mosaic still expresses representation directly, but the angels are missing.

Thus the picture clearly indicates that the central figure of the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the redeemer, is placed above the angels in the hierarchy even though he’s taken on human form.

13´21

The upper church of San Clemente in Rome was built at the beginning of the 12th century. In it the Byzantine courtly order is abandoned; it is the Christian cross that dominates.

The ordering of the spheres expresses, as before, number and order, but more important is the concentration on the Christian visual symbols. They signify the opposite of power. Christ as the holy lamb in the centre of his flock...

13`54

That is God the angel of peace, a merciful God; and that’s why it is a different pictorial message from those of antiquity or the Byzantine imperium.

14´11

Around the turn of the millennium the church order, as expressed in images, enters a deep crisis, identified with increasing worldliness and corruption. The authority of the Pope and with it the message of salvation through the one church is substantially shaken.

14‘30

The radical return of the liturgy to the original message of salvation does not take place in Italy, but in France. In a small chapel, near Orléans, the founding motives of that message of salvation are represented on its byzantine mosaics.

14´51

Over two small six-winged cherubs, two other angels dominate the cupola. They represent the Old and the New Testament. They delivered them to humankind, the mosaic is saying. And the indicated hand of the transcendental god tells us that they have delivered it at his command. And that the path to salvation can only lie in following God’s message.

15´24

This new system of Christian liturgy and message of salvation comes from Cluny Abbey. Founded in 910 by the Duke of Aquitaine as a Benedictine Abbey, Cluny becomes not only the centre of the Christian cosmos during the Middle Ages but the largest and most powerful church of the Christian world. It will only be surpassed later by the building of St. Peter’s. During the French Revolution, almost 900 years later, Cluny is destroyed as being a symbol of God’s approbation of the absolute monarchy.

But still today amid the ruins, the power and significance of this order with its many other churches and monasteries throughout Burgundy is palpable.

16´16

It is no accident that Burgundy was home to the most significant monastic orders and of the biggest cathedrals of the 11th and 12th centuries. The most important pilgrims’ way to Santiago de Compostela takes you through here and along other places of pilgrimage.

16´32

Autun Cathedral houses the most significant pictorial witness to the transformation of Christian iconography of that period. Carved in stone by Gislebertus between 1120 and 1135.

16´51

The main portal, through which millions of pilgrims entered the church, no longer depicts the power of God, but worldly judgement. Christ and the ‘elders’, the angels at God’s throne, sit in judgement over the souls of mankind. They – and this is the general understanding of this period –are threatened by evil more than ever. In order to uphold order and the perfection of salvation, Christ and the angels have to demonstrate that they can differentiate between good and evil.

From this point on the rank of the angels changes dramatically in the imagery. From now on they become the most important representatives of the ‘Ruler of all Things’, who is a beneficent god.

17´38 O – Ton Faure:

*Philippe FAURE : Dans cet univers spirituel médiéval, on a un ensemble qui est très structuré, en réalité. Chacun est à sa place. Dieu lui-même, le père, est un être très lointain, mystérieux et inaccessible. Jusqu’au 12ieme siècle, le Christ est lui aussi considéré très largement comme un être non seulement à part, mais un être difficilement accessible, et en-dessous, on a des êtres médiateurs, la Vierge, je viens de le dire, et puis bien sûr, les saints.*

Philipe FAURE: The spiritual world of the Middle Ages was highly structured and well ordered. Everything and everyone had its allotted place.

God, the father himself is a transcendental being, mysterious and unapproachable. Christ, too, well into the 12th century, was seen as not only abstract, but difficult to reach. And under him, therefore, were mediating beings: the Virgin Mary and of course the saints.

18´14 O – Ton Philippe Faure

*Philippe Faure: Les anges dans tout cela, ils sont périphériques, mais au bon sens du terme, c'est-à-dire qu’ils sont la cour de Dieu, ils sont l’entourage de Dieu, ils participent de la gloire divine, on va dire, et par conséquent, ils sont aussi dans l’entourage du Christ, et dans l’entourage de la Vierge Marie.*

Philippe FAURE: In this world the angels are of secondary importance, but in a positive sense. Because they make up God’s stately court, his entourage. They are an expression of God’s glory and have their place at the side of Christ and the Virgin Mary.

18´41

As Christ’s companions, the angels are allotted the role of completing salvation. The angels are therefore, once again the mediators between God and humanity. They fight for God and for humanity against evil.

18´59

The pilgrims moved within the great naves like in a procession and looked up into the capitals, which bore expressive illustrations of evil in all its incarnations.

The second temptation of Christ, taken from the Gospel of Luke, makes it clear what’s happening here: the decision against heresy and doubt.

19´22

The suicide of Judas also demonstrates what happens as a consequence of turning away from God. And the enormous and monumentally impressive naves signified to the believers that against all these temptations and human weakness only God’s word can help and guide us.

19´49 O – Ton Philippe Faure

*Philippe FAURE*: *Dans l’iconographie romane, on a, pratiquement pour la première fois, une présence de l’enfer, et des démons dans les tympans. Il faut quand même souligner le fait que ce qui domine très largement l’iconographie romane, ce sont les visions de la gloire divine, c’est le Dieu, c’est la majesté divine. Et cette Majesté Divine, elle irradie notamment à travers la présence des anges. Les anges sont là pour manifester en quelque sorte la gloire de Dieu, pour montrer la puissance divine, pour illustrer en quelque sorte ce rayonnement et pour indiquer que le Paradis, ou l’univers céleste est un monde plein.*

Philipe FAURE: In the Roman iconography we find on the tympana in the churches the first representations of hell and demons. However, at the same time the representation of God’s glory is determining, in other words, the majesty of God. And this godly majesty is passed on through the presence of the angels. Angels exist to reveal God’s glory and to demonstrate God’s power. They signal to us that paradise, the heavenly realm, is a perfect world.

20´41

Heading southward, with the mountains just visible on horizon, there lies one of the most important cities of the Middle Ages: Pisa. The modern-day Piazza dei Miraculi was originally a burial place beyond the city walls.

The whole complex with its cathedral, baptistery and Campo Santo was begun in 1300.

21´09

The Campo Santo was the largest cemetery of the Christian Middle Ages and thus a place where death, damnation and redemption played a prominent role. Here we find a monumental representation of the Last Judgement.

21´24

This powerful fresco must have shocked its contemporaries. It begins with the Last Judgement and a wrathful Christ, who reveals his wounds and flings his outrage like lightning in the direction of hell. This anger is offset by the gentle Virgin Mary to his left.

21´46

Beneath them is an angel with two scrolls. At eye level with the viewer is the warrior archangel Michael with his sword.

21´59

Another angel, belonging to the Last Judgement, forces the frightened citizens of Pisa toward damnation. The faces are fretful and pleading but no one can escape this judgement.

It is the same motif of Christendom: in the face of the might of the Last Judgment, the wealth and grandeur of bishops and even the power of monarchs are to no avail.

22´28

But in the fresco’s pictorial arrangement, the artist has paid due tribute to social status: the kings occupy the top tier.

22´38

Even one of the angels reveals its fear in the face of the power and unavoidability of the Last Judgement, announced by trumpets.

On the left we can see the saved. These, too, are portraits of Pisa’s citizens. Their facial expressions are calm, and they all look up to the merciful figure of the Virgin Mary, their intercessor before the judge. Their body language is relaxed, the faces clear and well kempt, and their expressions concentrated, not distracted. Pisa’s citizens are expressing their intense gratitude for the victory of good over evil.

23´24

Seen in its totality it can be viewed as a portrayal of a community. Evil is individual and it distorts each face in a different manner. Those arrayed against it are the upstanding citizens of the city who have joined those following Christ and who will be saved at the day of judgement.

23´46

This battle to save souls is portrayed in the allegory of death. From the mouths of the dead, souls are extracted and are given the form of infants. And at the same time the battle begins between the flying servants of Satan and the angels.

24´05

The epoch portrayed this struggle as completely open ended. Evil is powerful, that’s what this fresco is saying, it is mighty and can even defeat the angels, if the deceased, through his life, did not help them in their struggle.

24´22

Contemporaries were full of fear. And that this was justified, is demonstrated by the figure falling down head-over-heels, who has given in to temptation and is now lost to the angels.

24´36

Only above this struggle does tranquillity reign. These angels receive the souls who have already been saved.

24´47

As if on top of the widely understood concepts of the Apocalypse and the Last Judgement a new orientation is taking place.

24´57

Towards the end of the 12th century, not far from the Reschen Pass on the edge of the Southern Alps, the monastery of Marienberg was established. To this day the Benedictine monks there assemble in a narrow vault, their oratory.

25´10

*The chanting of the monks.*

25´18

Marienberg Monastery is famous for its Roman frescos. In a symbolic series of images, they reinterpret human beings’ path to salvation. They are brought closer to the angels by pursuing their upstanding battle against evil.

25´35

Humans can rise in the heavenly hierarchy by successfully overcoming evil; that is the message of these frescos. We see the angelic seraphs and cherubs, recognisable by their six wings. Alongside is the apostle Peter who holds the key to heavenly paradise. And on his right, a protective angel is allotted him.

26´04

With this constellation, a new link is indicated between apostle and heavenly beings, man and angel again come closer to each other, despite the evil in the world.

26´24

The most important message, though, is portrayed in the arrangement of angels above the Almighty in the mandorla. Here Jesus Christ appears to be standing on his head.

26´35

The real focus is this small angel, smaller than all the other heavenly figures. It represents the new human, who, after fighting a life-long battle against evil is seen by Christ to be deserving of redemption and thus, as a small angel, is taken into the communion of the big angels.

Human beings can rise into the sphere of the heavenly beings and can be redeemed; heaven awaits them. That is what is being expressed in this fresco.

The small angel is messenger and message at the same time, and thus begins a new era in the relationship between humanity and the heavenly sphere.

27´18

From the Marienberg Monastery in South Tirol this message is spread throughout the world.

27´29

South of the Reschen Pass lies Merano and the small pilgrim church of Santa Maria del Conforto, from the 12th century. In its Roman frescos it takes up this theme from Marienberg and develops it further.

27´49

We see the Virgin Mary with a sad, devotional gesture. Her son pleadingly raises his hand towards heaven from where the hand of God appears. This is not to pre-empt the death of Jesus Christ but the death of Mary and the mourning over that.

28´10

The Last Judgement is also depicted. Here the resurrection of the dead is portrayed; they can be recognised by their bare heads. Positioned to the left of Archangel Michael, they are the souls that are being taken towards the open doors of heaven.

Beyond, the death of Mary is shown as the main motif of the church. The mourning taking place around her is depicted in great detail and with much feeling. Her son, the saviour, holds her soul like a child in his arms indicating Mary’s ascent to heaven.

28´49

How can a human enter heaven? They must first be raised above other human beings, even though they too are only human. It is comparable to a coronation and is so depicted together with Jesus Christ at their side and God in the background.

29´24

Thus, the marriage is at the same time, their exaltation through God, and the angels must bear witness, kneeling. Never before had that been depicted, and again the relationship between angels and humans shifted fundamentally.

29´39

Further southward. We reach a place of great importance in Christian iconography: Assisi.

In Burgundy during the 12th century the monasteries had adopted a strictly organised liturgy and had almost completely rejected imagery. In the 13th century new orders arose in central Italy. These orders in Assisi were to be pure mendicant orders, completely dedicated to charity and neighbourly love as the most direct way to redemption.

30´18

The building of the lower church began in the early 13th century. Alongside Thomas Aquinus, Francis of Assisi was declared the renewer of the Christian doctrine of salvation. No building of the late Middle Ages bears testament to this spirit of renewal as that of the higher church of Assisi.

30´41

Its nave is dominated by Giotto’s world famous frescos. Though, the real secret is to be found in the earlier decorated transepts of the nave.

What is here translated pictorially is the Virgin Mary’s bodily ascension to heaven and her final exaltation over the angels.

31´14

In one of the mandorlas, held up by four angels, Jesus and Mary are enthroned in loving devotion.

One of the angels is said to have called out: “Who is she, she who is raised up from the desert, nestling on her lover?”

31´31

Angels, prophets and the saints assemble around the heavenly throne, on which the Virgin Mary as intercessor on behalf of humanity sits alongside her son.

What is important here are the gestures of the protagonists’ hands. Saint Francis, whose face can no longer be recognised, pleads for redemption on behalf of his brothers. This plea is conveyed by Mary to her son, who listens and gives his blessing to the Franciscans.

32´04

The Virgin Mary’s role in the heavenly hierarchy is, in this Franciscan church, newly defined. She is Jesus’ companion and on a par with the angels. At the same time she remains a human being. That signifies: she has been, as the first human being, redeemed and raised to heaven.

32´40 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: Can a human being, who has been so exalted, be the ruler of all the angels? And that is indeed so: Mary is the queen of the angels: ‘Regina Angelorum’, is one of her titles. She is the queen, not only of the apostles, but also of all heavenly beings.

33´00 O – Ton Zinser

Hartmut Zinser: She can thus be depicted as having been a real woman. Even if she is then supposed to have carried out miraculous things, but she is something, a woman, a person, with whom we can identify.

33´16

The rose window in the outer wall is like a wonderful, concluding symbol of this new order. The shape of the sun can be construed as a symbol of Jesus, the rose of the Virgin Mary. Both forms are united as part of a circle that has only once centre, God.

33´42

At the close of the Middle Ages, towards the end of the 14th century, Tuscany became a European stronghold of progress. The Dominican monk Fra Angelico came from the area around Florence and achieves world renown with his portrayals of angels.

34´05

In an inconspicuous chapel near Cortona hangs ‘The Annunciation’, a popular motif.

The message is reproduced on banners, the Virgin Mary’s face, still with a Madonna-like mask, but at the same time already individually defined.

This picture symbolises not only the metaphorical line between the Middle Ages and the New Era, but it also makes clear what follows: humans are represented now as emotional and individual beings, in the face of the story of salvation.

34´52

In the lower part of the picture the marriage between Mary and Joseph is depicted.

What is groundbreaking in this work by Fra Angelico, is the expression with which he has endowed the figure of Mary vis a vis the Archangel Gabriel.

She is his equal; she represents the human striving for salvation. Her face expresses humility and dignity at the same time, yet still powerful, she remains self-conscious, and her gesture expresses not subservience, but surprise, but also knowledge, awareness, of what is happening. She has been endowed with an individual soul and it is for that reason that even to this day we would describe her as beautiful.

35´42

The impact of Fra Angelico’s work remained essentially limited to Tuscany; he travelled little and his ambition was to embellish the sacred places of worship for the brothers of his order.

35´58

The relationship between the history of God’s salvation and the world of the profane changed once more dramatically. The Renaissance first emerged in Tuscany, then in Rome. It was a blossoming of trade and art, no epoch since the downfall of the Classical world had been so prosperous. And that, of course, also influenced the depiction of the angels.

36´23

The Villa Farnesina in Rome was commissioned by the banker Agostino Chigi and executed by Baldassare Peruzzi. It is seen as the conclusion of the high Renaissance and with its ‘Perspectives Hall’ features a room of trompe l’oeil painting.

36´56

The walls are covered with scenes from the life of Alexander the Great. What first meets the eye is a riding messenger with flowing cloak, in the form of a white fan, giving the impression of wings beating. The messenger is part of a historical-allegorical depiction. Its subject is the wedding of Alexander to the Persian princess Roxana. At the centre Alexander appears and hands the princess the crown. The secret centre, though, is occupied by the heavenly messenger – half Hermes and half Christian Archangel Gabriel.

37´38

Alexander stands for the newly awoken interest in mythical-historical figures during the 16th century. The small angels, that look like baroque

cupids are borrowed from the pagan Classical era.

In Classical times cupids were love gods depicted as small boys and the art of Christendom adopts them as anonymous angels and accompanying figures. They reveal for us the sense and aim of the mural. Its aim is to animate the viewer in a sensual manner, not a spiritual one.

38´16

The Villa Farnesina is the high point of the Renaissance. This depiction shows how far images from the Classical era survived into Christendom. The god-like figures and the heroes return in allegorical form. Their aim was to complement the Christian images.

38´43

In Rome at the beginning of the 16th century the foundation stone was laid for the new St. Peter’s Basilica. It was to be a signal that the victorious Christendom had surpassed the Classical era.

38´58

In the mid-17th century a sculpture was made for the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, which had the same aim: of illustrating the final victory of Christendom. The sculptor, Bernini, was a successor to Michelangelo, whose late work marked the end of the Renaissance and beginning of the Baroque... The motif of the ‘Ecstasy of St. Theresa’ is a variation of the Annunciation, as also depicted by Fra Angelico. But with Bernini the decisive transformation is immediately apparent. The presence of the saints is portrayed in dramatic form; Bernini attempts to make the ecstasy tangible, the mouth is emitting a groan, the eyes are twisted, the body open.

39´53

From now on the story of salvation and the motifs derived from it will be presented theatrically by utilising all those pictorial tools available. Among them the Classical heroes and the allegories.

40´10

Precisely at the moment when St. Peter’s Basilica was to symbolise the victory of Christian imagery over pagan Antiquity, it returned in full force into the Christian world.

40´25

In the immense cupola of St Peter’s we find the legend of its foundation expressed in the sentence: ‘And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.’

40´42

The new building claimed nothing less than to become the greatest monument in the history of the world. Time and again they had despaired and doubted whether the immense vaulting would be capable of carrying the enormous cupola.

But they prevailed; the spirit behind this monument was a determination to erect a triumphal and victorious church.

41´18

In 1627 Pope Urban VIII commissioned Bernini to design a tomb that could bear comparison with that of his predecessors. The Pope is enthroned above a massive sarcophagus, to the left and right, the figures of Mercy and Justice rest. Justice lifts her eyes to the figure of the Pope and appears to be in deepest mourning. Left of her stands Mercy: she has a sleeping child at her breast and a second one at her side, that is crying for attention. Death is integrated into the tomb only as a powerful memento mori. Death is here like an orgy, everything is exaggerated and so dramatised as if this moment should be held for eternity.

42´28 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: In the Baroque period, allegory became the representation of something abstract, as a figure. Thus we have the virtue of Charity as an angel carrying a heart or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom and understanding and fear of the Lord. These are then represented as angels, who carry before them a receptacle for instance or a book. That had something to do with the predilection for lists: an attempt to place God’s qualities, human virtues, the evangelists, the apostles as straightforward rows, in an attempt to place them in position to one another.

43´14

The angels give way to allegories. Christian iconography merges with a theatrical dramatisation on the worldly side. The world is out of joint, the religious view of it is shaken, the significance of the sciences has grown and the church is once again divided: this time by the Reformation.

43´35

In order to maintain the unity of the cosmos within the belief system, the Baroque, from now on, utilises every pictorial means to overwhelm the viewer and to demonstrate before his eyes the supreme power and supremacy of the church.

43´51

To do that, pagan gods are also employed, in the guise of allegories. The world famous Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi (Fountain of the Four Rivers) on the Piazza Navona in Rome is an example of this. With the help of massive allegorical ‘gods’ of antiquity, Bernini stylised the Christian motif of the four rivers of paradise into a unique work of art. The fountain stands as a highpoint of Baroque longing and the wish to reconcile the Christian world with history and science.

44´27

In advanced age, Bernini receives a commission from Pope Clement IX to design the entrance to the Castel Sant'Angelo. The building was the mausoleum of Emperor Hadrian and the triumphant entranceway over the bridge was lined with statues of the classical gods of victory. Bernini replaced these with angels, converting the once pagan monument into a Christian one.

44´54

The angels hold Christ’s “Instruments of the Passion” in their hands and in this way the road becomes a symbolic “Way of the Cross”, just like that walked by the pilgrims in Jerusalem.

This path of the cross was converted by Bernini into a triumphal procession and the angels bear witness to it with the symbols of Christ’s passion.

45´18

The angel with the crown of thorns was completed by Bernini himself. The newly sculpted angels stood in the sequence of statues with the apostles, Peter and Paul, who were honoured as martyrs and are here to proclaim the victory of Christendom.

45´37

The mausoleum of Castel Sant'Angelo had always dominated the entranceway to Rome. Looking around now, you could see the miracle of St. Peter that had been dedicated to the triumph of the Holy Roman Church. But the universality of this triumph was being brought into question by knowledge and science.

46´05

The beginning of the battle over the sovereignty of interpretation of imagery, after Bernini’s death, was no longer fought in Italy but in the Habsburg Empire on the other side of the Alps.

46´19 O – Ton Hafner

Johann Evangelist Hafner: Visiting the headquarters of the Hapsburgs in Vienna, the Hofburg, you will see on the left and right a representation of how Austria ruled the world’s oceans and much of the world. You can see it is a plagiarised version of the fall of the angel associated with Michael. In other words, Austria personified, defeating the enemy forces with a lance, exactly as we know it from Michael: Michael thrusts Lucifer into the jaws of hell.

And nowhere is this triumph as clear as in the Michael motif of the Christian tradition, where it is celebrated in one’s own church. That’s why the church directly adjoining the Hofburg is not dedicated to just any saint, but to Michael, the hero, the general of the angels with his soldierly demeanour.

47´20

The fall of the angel was completed in 1726 during the reign of the Austrian Emperor Charles VI. The Michael motif has become much more than merely a central Christian motif, it brings with it God’s forgiveness, and the Emperor’s grandeur. The Church of St. Karl, as the most significant baroque edifice in Vienna, makes that very clear.

47´46

It is a sacred building with imperial aspiration. The church was intended to symbolise the connection between Rome and the Byzantine, between the West and the eastern Roman church. That is why in appearance it looks rather like the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul with its imitation Trajan columns. This too has to be understood in an allegorical way: the absolute rulers wanted to be seen in the glory of the old emperors.

48´22

In the cupola is the ekklesia that depicts the one church in a gorgeous cloak, Holy Grail in the hand and the Eucharist over the Grail. By having the Last Supper positioned at the centre of the cupola in the patron church of Emperor Charles VI, he wishes to signify that his empire will uphold the supremacy of the Christian world view.

48´50

Altenburg Abbey is only one hour’s journey away from Vienna. Towards the end of the reign of Charles VI’s the baroque painter, Paul Troger, was commissioned to decorate the central rooms of the abbey with frescos.

49´12

In the Imperial staircase the architectural concept had already been given symbolic significance. Two flights of steps merge into a single one. That is to signify that two separate spheres can be seen as a unity.

49´32 O – Ton Zinser

Hartmut Zinser: in the Baroque they wanted to show that they could make heaven on earth a visible reality and bathe it in as much glory as possible. And certainly this totality included the attempt to integrate all cultural creation and cultural fields, including knowledge and science.

49´54

Religion with its halo sits alongside science as allegorical figures on the heavenly cupola...; and they get on with each other.

50´07

All figures on the arched roof have, at the same time, allegorical as well as a sacred Christian meaning. The heavenly virtues of Love and Hope are depicted as symbolic female figures; Faith is depicted as masculine and in the pose of victory.

50´27

The angels fill this heaven as an audience. They appear to want to applaud the harmonious order. They are happy, they dance...

50´39

The painting of the Imperial staircase was certainly meant to make visible to the viewer the reconciliation between the sacred and the scientific worlds. Angels play no great role anymore in this harmony.

51´03

Here we conclude our history of angels. More than one and a half thousand years of a dominant religious interpretation of the world with just one centre – God – gave way to an age of absolutism, succeeded by the Ages of Reason and Industry.

51´24

The angels and messengers of an inscrutable god have lost their significance. As advocates for, and counsellors of, humanity they represent perhaps for all time the yearning of human beings not to be alone. And as a perpetually changing motif of art, their image is an inseparable aspect of our culture.

51’45

Credits