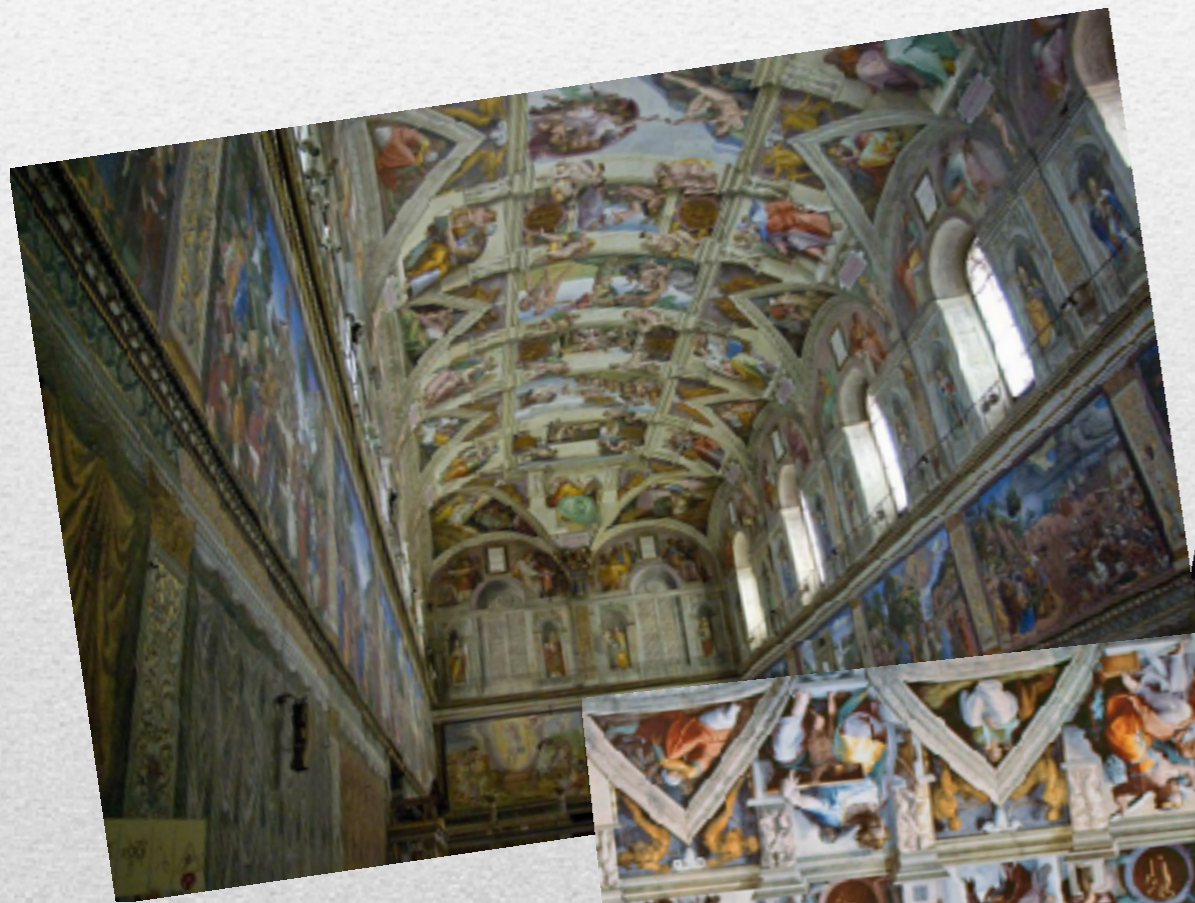


The ceiling



Michelangelo's original idea was to portray the twelve apostles in the vaulting cells, and a series of architectural elements on the vault, but then he decided to represent the history of mankind before the coming of Christ, thus linking the ceiling decoration with that of the walls. Without seeking illusionistic effects, he divided up the vault by painted monumental architecture into panels enclosing a separate scene

- Contrary to custom, Michelangelo began painting the ceiling from the entrance end, working towards the altar, probably because the crowded scenes in this area presented fewer technical and compositional problems to an artist as yet unfamiliar with the fresco technique.

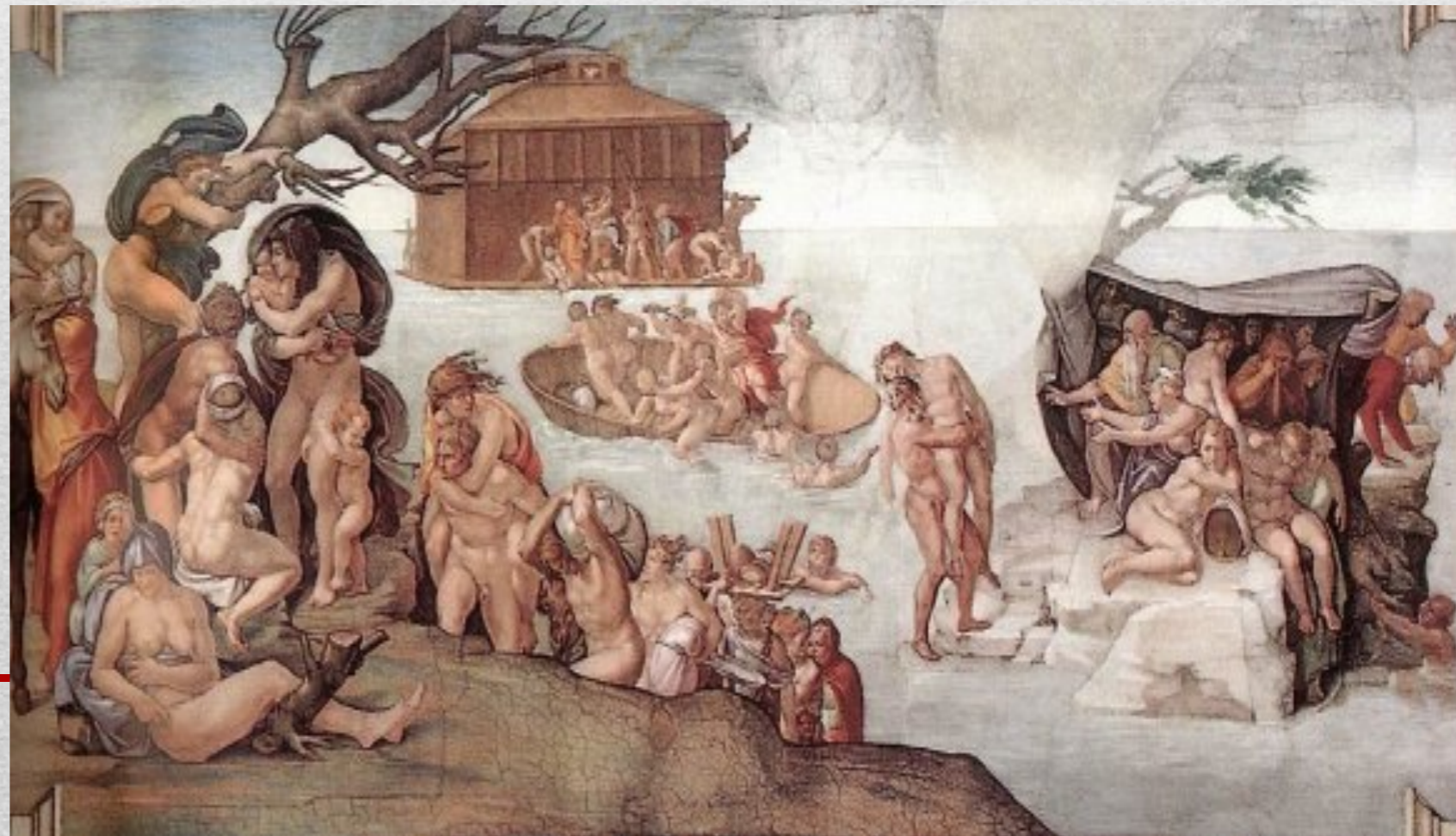


Central Panel



The Drunkenness of Noah: Cam, in the foreground, his head turned away from the viewer, mocks his sleeping father, while Japheth covers his father, and Shem reproaches Cam; on the left, Noah plants the vine. On the right, the Delphic Sibyl.

The Flood: in the background, centre, the ark represented as a house; in front of the ark, a boat sinks for excessive weight; on the right, the multitude of selfish prevents others from reaching dry land; on the left, in the foreground the multitude of the generous, among which in a series of famous groups: the embracing lovers awaiting death together, the mother with her terrified children.



- *Noah's sacrifice after the flood*: the episode follows the Flood in order of time, but was placed here because it requires less space.



The fall: on the left, Adam and Eve are tempted by the demon in the guise of an anthropomorphic serpent; on the right, the Expulsion from the Eden.



- *The creation of Eve:* next to Adam is the stump of a tree, a symbolic allusion to the Cross. The wrinkled female figure is the Cumaean Sibyl.

- *The Creation of Adam.*
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- *The Division of the Land from the Waters:* the nude youth at the base of the panel



- *The Creation of Heavens:* on the right, God creates the sun and the moon, while on the left, he creates the plant life on Earth.

The Division of day from the night.

