The article traces the technical and cognitive careers of the (printed) book and the (mechanical) clock. They were the earliest mass industrial artefacts and both would have a far-reaching impact on modern culture and science. At the end of the fifteenth century they became "pocket size", triggering industrial production and a wealth of commercial activities. Important elements of European cultural development arose from the economic and technical development of timekeeping and printing. Less known is the parallel career of the two products as icons, not so much in painting, as in marquetry. Representations with this sophisticated technique are present in two particular architectonic spaces: the choir and the 'Studiolo'.

The earliest literary/scientific mythology of the book and clock was perhaps forged in the 'Studiolo'. Curiously, historians Einsenstein and Gimpel, when referring to the book and clock, respectively, speak of a silent revolution: in reality, the two technical products are not at all lacking in voice. One only has to seek it.

Nel 1271 all’università di Parigi Roberto Anglico, in margine al Trattato della sfera di Sacrobosco, osserva che «gli orologiai tentano di realizzare una ruota, o un disco, che si muova esattamente come il circolo equinoziale, ma non riescono nel tentativo (sed non possunt omnino completare opus eorum). Se essi, tuttavia, vi riuscissero, avrebbero un orologio di maggiore valore dell’astrolabio e di qualsiasi altro strumento astronomico per segnare le ore»1. Chierico inglese, insegnante nelle università francesi, Roberto si interessa alla ricerca astronomica e meccanica e anche alla progettazione dell’(imminente) orologio meccanico, che migliorerà «la cro-