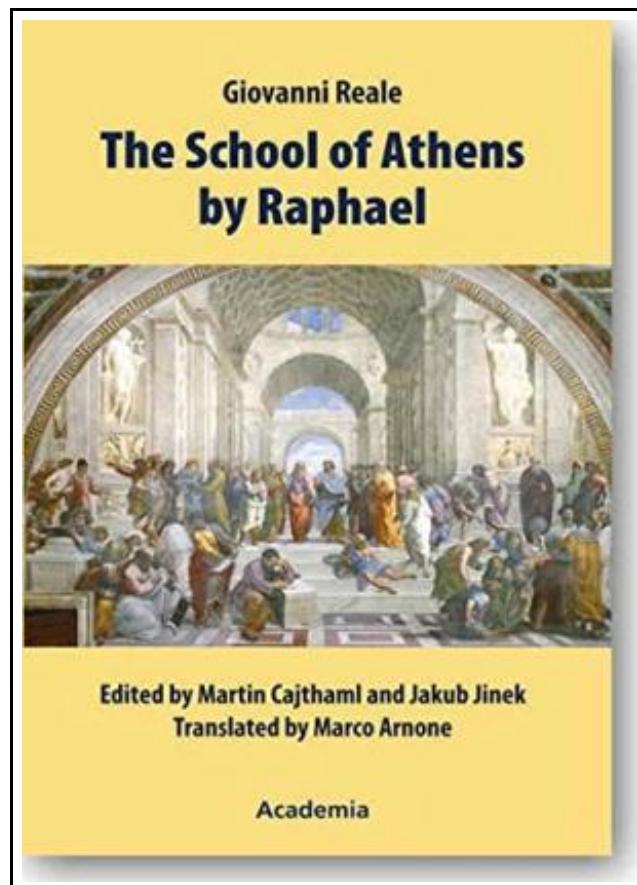


## The Schools of Athens by Raphael



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Academia Verlag GmbH Apr 2008, 2008. Buch. Book Condition: Neu. 21x14.8x cm. Neuware - In his Journey to Italy Goethe writes that one can not look at great paintings like the School of Athens only as a whole, since 'the pleasure derived from the first impression is incomplete; only when one has seen and studied every detail, slowly and part by part, the enjoyment is complete'. In this book Giovanni Reale aims at achieving exactly this, namely studying and describing Rafael's fresco slowly and part by part, with the full reproduction of the cartone. This is the only way to achieve Goethe's complete enjoyment. Reale shows how Rafael proceeds according to a perfectly Platonic scheme, and follows it with the utmost precision. The general scheme (as pointed out by Winner) is the one presented by Plato in book VII of the Republic, where he states that it is necessary to start from those disciplines that 'bring the soul from becoming to being', that is from the mathematical sciences, and through them reach the highest level of knowledge, that brings to the perception of the Absolute. In the lower side of the School of Athens are represented the mathematical sciences: on the left music and arithmetic with the Pythagoreans, on the right geometry and astronomy. The steps painted at the centre of the fresco express the higher degrees of knowledge successively reached with these sciences. With the first group of characters on the lower left side, around the base where a large column should be built, Raphael represents the rituals of an Orphic ceremony. Indeed Orphism had been one of the fundations of Greek thought (as confirmed by Plato in Phaedon). The great Pre-Socratics of the nearby group are those inspired by Orphism: Pythagoras, Empedocles and Heraclitus. In the upper side...

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