

## **“ORDO” - ORDER OF THE WORLD AND STRUCTURE OF REASON IN RAFFAELLO'S “STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA”**

**Peter Klein**

Fac. of Education, University of Hamburg,  
Von-Melle-Park 8, D-20146 Hamburg

The “Stanze” are a flight of rooms in the Vatican Palace, ordered by Pope Julius II. to be ornated with frescoes by Raffaello Santi and his disciples. The second of them, called the „Stanza della Segnatura“, was painted first, in 1508-12, by Raffaello himself. Housing the papal library for some time, the frescoes are usually understood as - though brilliant, yet rather conventional representations of the common fields of study for a cultivated renaissance sovereign: science, christian theology and the arts, all of which when working together are supposed to cause virtue in the studying person, as the images of the “Cardinal virtues” on the fourth wall indicate.

Yet, the meaning of the images and their intentions reach much farther, thus making the room a climax of modern European self-understanding, pride, and failure: they are the program of a reasonable reign over the world, intending to do justice to Man and the world, proclaiming autonomy for the reasonable individual, who is guided, and protected, by the merciful self-revelation of God through Jesus Christ.

The threefold order of the world: the laws of nature, divine providence, and esthetic order, is reflected in the threefold structure of reason: by cognition, morality, and esthetic judgment, in the same manner as Kant identified it later in his three „Critiques“.

The complex esthetic qualities of the pictures, the interactions of their symmetries are supposed to express both, the structure of the world and that of reason: symmetry gains a semantic meaning transcending mere artistic beauty.