

"School of Athens" - The figure of Plato

Post by "Eikadistes" of May 23, 2021 at 11:11 PM

I believe **PLATO** is carrying a copy of his dialogue *Timaeus* where he establishes his theory of the cosmos. The Stanford Encyclopedia provides a helpful summary:

Quote

"In the *Timaeus* Plato presents an elaborately wrought account of the formation of the universe and an explanation of its impressive order and beauty. The universe, he proposes, is the product of rational, purposive, and beneficent agency. It is the handiwork of a divine Craftsman [...] who, imitating an unchanging and eternal model, imposes mathematical order on a preexistent chaos to generate the ordered universe."

The largest-scale structures of Plato's cosmos were the heavenly bodies and the various levels they inhabited, so his pointing upward no doubt reflects his metaphysics.

He's directly engaging Aristotle to his left (*our right*), in the middle of the painting (*seen elsewhere*). This reflects the centrality of Platonic and Peripatetic philosophy to Christian theology. It also reflects the Plato-influence *Augustinian* and *Scholastic* schools of theology versus Aristotle-influenced Thomist school of medieval Christian theology.