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978-0-521-88429-7 - Knowledge and Politics in Plato's *Theaetetus*

Paul Stern

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Knowledge and Politics in Plato's *Theaetetus*

The *Theaetetus* is one of the most widely studied Platonic dialogues because its dominant theme concerns the significant philosophical question, what is knowledge? In a new interpretation of this dialogue, Paul Stern provides the first full-length treatment of its political content, particularly its relationship with the epistemological theme. Stern argues that this approach sheds significant light on the distinctiveness of the Socratic way of life, with respect to its initial justification and its ultimate character. More specifically, he argues that Socrates' revolutionary decision to subject political life to philosophic reflection, the decision that leads directly to his trial and execution, is his awareness of the elusiveness of comprehensive knowledge and the implications of that elusiveness for the validity of philosophic inquiry. This view of Socrates' rationale has important consequences for our understanding of political philosophy and of the desirability of the life of reason.

Paul Stern is professor of politics at Ursinus College. He is the author of *Socratic Rationalism and Political Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's "Phaedo."*

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To Lisa

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