

**Rafael Ferber:**

## **Why Didn't Plato Write the "Unwritten Doctrines"?**

The debate over Plato's "unwritten doctrines" which he communicated only to a small circle of trusted disciples has caused a stir among philosophers in recent decades. Rafael Ferber assumes a differentiated position in this controversy. He is convinced that the "unwritten doctrines" actually did exist but that Plato, for reasons inherent in the process of gaining knowledge, was unable to communicate these doctrines even to his closest disciples. In this book Ferber outlines the discussion and summarizes the standpoints of greatest interest.

Ever since Aristotle we have known that Plato did not put his most important teachings into writing, but instead communicated them only orally to the inner circle of his disciples. While the extant dialogues merely pass down Plato's "exoteric" doctrines, his most important "esoteric" insights were not meant for the general public. In the meantime, the contents and significance of Plato's "unwritten doctrines" have become the subject of debate in philosophical circles.

Fifteen years ago, at the height of the controversy over the "unwritten doctrines", Rafael Ferber entered the fray with a small book. He proposed that Plato was also unable to communicate the "unwritten doctrines" because the highest principles (i.e., the subject of the "unwritten doctrines") cannot be known through logical operations due to an epistemological paradox. Ferber's differentiated position met with great respect and acceptance, although in individual cases it was also rejected.

Ferber's new book again presents the text of 1991, but significantly expands it through new perspectives and an outline of the discussion it triggered. In this book the reader learns what is meant by Plato's "unwritten doctrines" and what the controversy is actually all about.