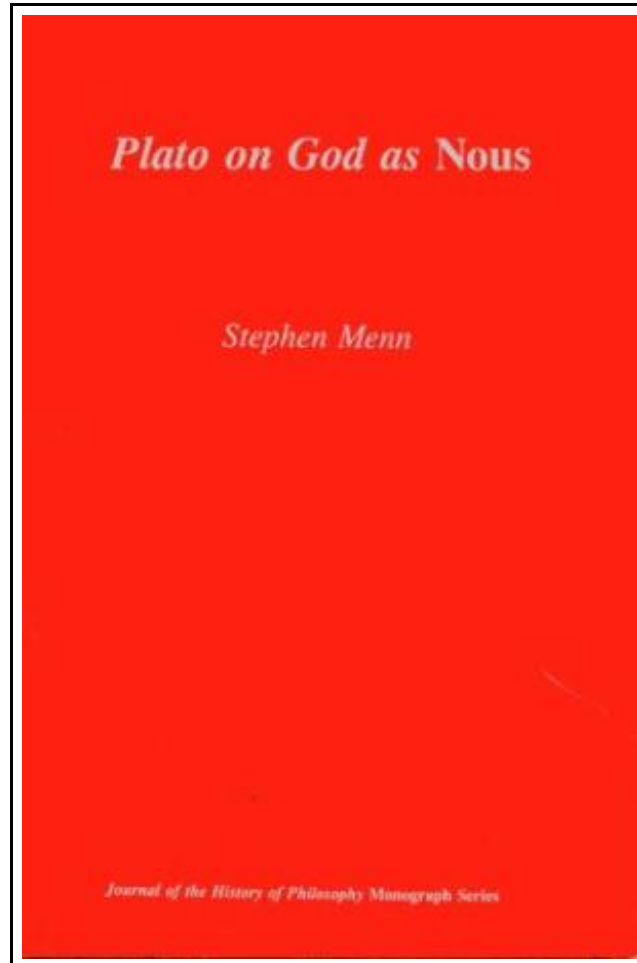


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PLATO ON GOD AS NOUS



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Southern Illinois University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Plato on God as Nous, Stephen Philip Menn, This book is the first sustained modern investigation of Plato's theology. A central thesis of the book is that Plato "had" a theology not just a mythology for the ideal city, not just the theory of forms or the theory of cosmic souls, but also, irreducible to any of these, an account of God as "Nous" (Reason), the source of rational order both to souls and the world of bodies. The understanding of God as Reason, and of the world as governed directly or indirectly by Reason, is worked out in the dialogues of Plato's last period, the "Statesman, Philebus, Timaeus," and "Laws." These dialogues offer a strategy for explaining the physical world that goes beyond anything in the middle dialogues, and gives the best starting point for understanding the cosmologies and theologies of Aristotle, the Stoics, and later ancient thinkers. Menn focuses on the "Timaeus" as Plato's most sustained effort to provide what (according to the "Phaedo") Anaxagoras had failed to deliver: an explanation of the world through Reason, showing that things are as they are because it is best, or because it best serves the order of the world as a whole. Anaxagoras was disappointed because he explained things through their material constituents, without explaining why the constituents are ordered as they are; but the theory of forms has the same defect, since it cannot explain why different parts of the universe participate in different forms according to a particular order. The "Timaeus" and other late dialogues attempt to supply the missing explanation of the ordering of the physical world. These dialogues do not retreat from the middle dialogue theory of forms, nor do they escape into an esoteric...



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