

CJ FORUM ONLINE  
2009.10.01

*Why Socrates Died: Dispelling the Myths.* By ROBIN WATERFIELD. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. Pp. xxv + 253. Cloth \$27.95. ISBN 978-0-393-06527-5.

Robin Waterfield, a translator of proven elegance and accuracy (e.g., Plato, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, *Symposium*; Plutarch *Alcibiades*), has given us an enormously useful book. Plato's *Apology* is frequently taught in Greek and in English in departments of Classics and Philosophy throughout the United States. Waterfield (W.) provides in lucid prose precisely documented and bereft of theoretical obfuscation the historical context of Socrates' trial, including a bold reconstruction of Anytus' prosecution speech (pp. 197–200), which will be required reading for curious students. Obviously all is not certain, but a putative reconstruction is more effective than endless annotated speculation to inform students and stimulate excited discussion. In short, W. argues that in the context of his time and place Socrates was guilty and deserved execution. His prosecutors were concerned defenders of democracy against oligarchic elitism. The volume begins with a chronological table of Athenian events ca. 630–399 BC, followed by relevant maps of the Athenian agora ca. 399 BC, Greece and Asia Minor, central Greece, and Sicily and southern Italy.

Of especial interest are chapters on the judicial system, on Alcibiades, and on the "Aristocratic Milieu" and "Critias and the Civil War." Popular reaction to intellectuals and "Socratic politics" provides invaluable background that makes specialized material accessible to readers unfamiliar with Athenian politics and law of Socrates' time. Because the author is a farmer rather than a professional academic, his views are not distorted by academic intrigue and petty polemics. He is an educated outsider (one recalls George Grote and W.W. Tarn) who writes *sine ira et studio* that in his historical context Socrates, like it or not, was guilty and tried justly.

I do believe that W. misses the reason (p. 204) for Socrates' last words, "We owe a cock to Asclepius." Socrates is 70 and healthy. The cock is thanks for his health, not a natural state as we take it, but a gift of the god for which Socrates is grateful. [[1]] This shows in a dramatic way the popular piety of a man executed for his impiety. There are minor errata. W. bestows on Gilbert Murray knighthood (p. 15), when in fact, true to his liberal principles, Murray—unlike Moses Finley—declined it. I do not understand why Socrates consistently "subverts" the young (p. 5 and *passim*) rather than corrupting them. All in all we have a most welcome and useful book concluding with a lengthy bibliography consisting (with one French exception) of English secondary literature. I miss Jaeger's *Paideia* and noted only one misprint under Ober, Josiah. There is no index. We read on the back cover that the book concerns "the most famous trial and execution in Western civilization." Surely Jesus wins first prize for that.

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[[1]] See *Mnemosyne* 52 (1999) 562.