Plato’s *Republic*

Plato’s *Republic* has proven to be of astounding influence and importance. Justly celebrated as Plato’s central text, it brings together all of his prior works, unifying them into a comprehensive vision that is at once theological, philosophical, political, and moral. These essays provide a state-of-the-art research picture of the most interesting aspects of the *Republic*, and address questions that continue to puzzle and provoke, such as: Does Plato succeed in his argument that the life of justice is the most attractive one? Is his tripartite analysis of the soul coherent and plausible? Why does Plato seem to have to *force* his philosopher-guardians to rule when they know this is something that they *ought* to do? What is the point of the strange and complicated closing Myth of Er? This volume will be essential to those looking for thoughtful and detailed excursions into the problems posed by Plato’s text and ideas.

Mark L. McPherran is Professor of Philosophy at Simon Fraser University. He is the author of *The Religion of Socrates* (1996) and of numerous articles on ancient philosophy.
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For my wife, Neda
Trojan, Anchises' son:
The descent into Avernus is easy.
All night and all day long the doors of Hades stand open.
But to retrace the path, and come up to the sweet air of heaven,
That is the task, that is the toil.
Some few whom God was right to love
Or whose innate virtues singled them out from the common run
Have done so.  

_Aeneid_ 6.10
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Acknowledgments

This book began to take shape in July, 2007 when Hilary Gaskin, the philosophy editor at Cambridge University Press, and I began to discuss the possibility of there being a Cambridge Critical Guide to the Republic in that new series of Guides. The timing was ideal, since I was then laying plans for the Thirteenth Annual Arizona Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, whose exclusive focus was to be Plato’s Republic. The Colloquium was subsequently held February 15–17, 2008, at the University of Arizona, Tucson. I wish to thank Julia Annas and Rachana Kamtekar, and, in particular, the Colloquium Assistant, Michelle Jenkins, for their invaluable assistance in arranging the details of our very productive meeting. I want to give special thanks as well to the Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Arizona, Christopher Maloney, for his enthusiastic support of the Colloquium over its fifteen years of existence. The volumes’ contributions by Julia Annas, Rachel Barney, Hugh H. Benson, Zena Hitz, Rachana Kamtekar, J. H. Lesher, C. D. C. Reeve, Malcolm Schofield, and Nicholas D. Smith are based on versions of papers they presented at that Colloquium. I was lucky to be able to secure later contributions from G. R. F. Ferrari and Christopher Shields. My own essay on the Myth of Er was at that point in the planning stages and is the seventh entry contained herein.

Besides all the above, I want to thank my student Jennifer Liderth, for her preparation of the Bibliography and indices, Hilary Gaskin for her support of this project, Nicholas Smith for our many years of collaborative friendship, and all those others in ancient philosophy who have helped me along in my joyous and sometimes rough sojourn in this ἀγῶν ἄιου. My gratitude, finally, to Simon Fraser University for its generous assistance, and to Dennis Bevington, Nicholas Smith, and David Zimmerman for their comments as this project developed.
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Abbreviations

I. PLATONIC TEXTS

Ap. Apology
Chrm. Charmides
Cri. Crito
Criti. Critias
Euthyphr. Euthyphro
Euthyd. Euthydemus
Grg. Gorgias
Lys. Lysis
Phd. Phaedo
Phdr. Phaedrus
Pol. Politicus (Statesman)
Prt. Protagoras
Rep. Republic
Smp. Symposium
Soph. Sophist
Theag. Theages
Tht. Theaetetus
Ti. Timaeus

II. ARISTOTELIAN TEXTS

E.E. Eudemian Ethics
Meta. Metaphysics
N.E. Nicomachean Ethics
Pol. Politics