George Grote, the great nineteenth century Hellenist, once wrote of Plato's *Apology*: "...it is the speech of someone who deliberately foregoes the immediate purpose of a defense—persuasion of the judges." Seldom have commentators disagreed with Grote's assessment. Citing what they take to be ample evidence of caustic irony and arrogance bordering on contempt, writers on the *Apology* have been virtually unanimous in concluding that Socrates was wholly unconcerned with persuading the jury of his innocence and thereby winning his release. With this contribution to the literature on the *Apology*, Professor Reeve presents a forceful and persuasive challenge to the received interpretation. According to Reeve, "[Socrates'] defense is reasonable, intelligently motivated, nonevasive, and seriously and nonironically tendered. It establishes that he is innocent of the legal changes brought against him" (xiii). Reeve adduces two principal reasons why Socrates thought he must persuade the jury that both the "newer," formal changes and the "older" accusations are false. First, as the servant of Apollo, he must do everything in his power to continue his "mission on behalf of the god" and, second, Socrates' conceptions of justice and fidelity to law required that refute the false charges made against him.

In addition to providing a comprehensive interpretation of Socrates' speech, Reeve also undertakes to solve six interrelated puzzles about Socrates and his philosophical "service to the god": his method of elenctic inquiry, his moral superiority, his denial that he teaches, his politics and his irony. Reeve's "solutions" are invariably and admirably clear, tightly argued, and philosophically sophisticated. Reeve's command of the secondary literature is impressive. With relatively few lapses, he shows—again, with admirable clarity—in just what ways his own views
are similar to and in what ways different from other accounts.

Not all of Reeve's conclusions are novel, however. Many points—including the thesis that Socrates' moral commitments require that he make a sincere attempt to convince the judges of his innocence—have been defended in Nicholas D. Smith's and my recent book on Plato's Apology, Socrates on Trial (Oxford and Princeton, 1989). But, as Reeve correctly notes in the introduction (xiv), our accounts often diverge at crucial points. I should add that even when the conclusions reached are identical, the reasons advanced in their favor are sometimes quite different and even incompatible. Thus, the pictures of Socrates resulting from the two studies, though similar in a number of important respects, are by no means identical.

Any attempt to solve the various puzzles in Socrates' speech will necessarily force one to examine Socratic doctrines developed elsewhere in the early dialogues, doctrines which are themselves often just as resistant to clarification. Reeve's efforts in this regard make a convincing case that many of Socrates' remarks at his trial flow from various philosophical commitments about the nature of moral knowledge, virtue, and the good life espoused elsewhere in the early dialogues. Thus, readers are not only treated to Reeve's intriguing views about the Apology, but also to a coherent outline of the philosophy of Socrates. (The index locorum lists, for example, 53 references to the Gorgias, 52 to the Euthydemus, and 25 to the Protagoras.) Reeve also makes judicious use of other ancient sources to help solve the riddles of the Apology. His use of the Hippocratic treatises On Ancient Medicine and On Craft to illuminate the conception of techne is particularly interesting.

The success of Reeve's overall interpretation of the Apology depends to a large extent on his account of just what Socrates means when he says that he is "wise in nothing, great or small" (21b4-5). Not a few commentators have taken this disclaimer to be an incontrovertible example of Socrates' notorious irony. After all, not only does Socrates later claim that indeed he does