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# **Plato**

# **The Republic**

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**Edited by**

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**G. R. F. Ferrari**

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**Translated by**

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**Tom Griffith**

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PLATO  
*The Republic*

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PLATO

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*The Republic*

EDITED BY

G. R. F. FERRARI

*University of California, Berkeley*

TRANSLATED BY

TOM GRIFFITH



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## Translator's preface

If you tell people you are translating Plato's *Republic*, the question they almost invariably ask is 'Why? Surely there are plenty of translations already.' The answer is fairly simple. For whatever reason, Plato chose to put his philosophical thoughts in dialogue form, and I believe that when he did so, he intended these dialogues to sound like conversations. Maybe not straightforward, everyday conversations, but conversations nonetheless. And it is still true, though things have improved in recent years, that there are many translations of Plato where you cannot read a complete page without coming across something which no English-speaking person would ever say, or ever have said. So in balancing the conflicting demands of the translator, I have tried to give the highest priority, with only a few exceptions, to the requirement that what I wrote should sound like a conversation. The danger in this, since I am not a professional Plato scholar, was that in trying to make it sound conversational I might commit myself to an interpretation which ran counter to the agreed and accepted views of those who were scholars. That being so, I have been exceptionally fortunate to have had John Ferrari as my academic minder. I would never have undertaken the project without his encouragement and guarantee of help and support. And once embarked on it, I found him ready and willing to give up huge amounts of his time to the task of vetting my early drafts – a laborious task which involved reading the whole text against the Greek, flagging the hundreds (literally) of passages where he did not agree with what I had written, explaining in precise detail why he disagreed, and (bless him) suggesting an alternative in each and every instance. His influence is strongest in those passages where the translation of key terms has been the subject of much critical discussion, but

*Translator's preface*

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there is no part of the translation which has not benefited immeasurably from his comments, advice and suggestions, and it should be seen, to a very considerable extent, as a joint effort rather than mine alone. It has been an enormous labour for him, and I am greatly in his debt for performing it.

TOM GRIFFITH