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Sommario/riassunto

From the trial of Socrates to the post-9/11 military commissions, trials have always been useful instruments of politics. Yet there is still much that we do not understand about them. Why do governments use trials to pursue political objectives, and when? What differentiates political trials from ordinary ones? Contrary to conventional wisdom, not all political trials are show trials or contrive to set up scapegoats. This volume offers a novel account of political trials that is empirically rigorous and theoretically sophisticated, linking state-of-the-art research on telling cases to a broad argument about political trials as a socio-legal phenomenon. All the contributors analyse the logic of the political in the courtroom. From archival research to participant observation, and from linguistic anthropology to game theory, the volume offers a genuinely interdisciplinary set of approaches that substantially advance existing knowledge about what political trials are, how they work, and why they matter.

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