

praise for

THE ATHENIAN MURDERS

"Quirky, original, and impressively well informed, *The Athenian Murders* sparkles with wit and intelligence. . . . Succeeds brilliantly as a whodunit, a novel of ideas, a historical novel, and a postmodernist self-reflexive text."

—**Charles Palliser**, author of *The Unburied*

"Brilliant . . . Somoza weaves suspense, gore, a particular corner of Plato's philosophy and layer upon layer of tantalizing reflexivity with ease and obvious relish."

—*The Times* (London)

"An extremely subtle and intelligent work . . . Totally absorbing."

—**T. J. Bignon**, *The Evening Standard*

"A historical thriller in which the demons of doubt prove to be more implacable than any agent of nemesis."

—*The Independent on Sunday*



THE
ATHENIAN
MURDERS
José Carlos Somoza
FSC

THE
a novel
ATHENIAN
José Carlos Somoza
MURDERS

U.S.A. \$24.00

"Wonderful . . . A hurricane of fresh air . . .
Heracles Pontor stands alongside William of
Baskerville as comfortably as *The Athenian
Murders* will take its place next to *The Name
of the Rose*." — Julian Rathbone,
author of *The Last English King*

A translator begins to work on an old text, a story
set in ancient Athens. . . .

One of the pupils of Plato's Academy is
found dead, apparently savaged by wolves. A ver-
dict of accidental death is reached, but the boy's
idealistic teacher, Diagoras, remains unconvinced.
Tramachus had been behaving oddly in the month
before his demise, and Diagoras believes the boy
was living in fear of someone or something. He
asks Heracles Pontor, the famous "Decipherer of
Enigmas," to investigate.

Several more corpses are found, and the two
men find themselves drawn into a dangerous web of
intrigue as their quest for the truth leads them
from the backstreets of Athens to the terrifying
underworld of its most powerful citizens.

Simultaneously, a second plot unfolds: that of
the modern-day translator of the ancient text, who
becomes convinced that the original author has hid-
den a second meaning in the story, one which can
be interpreted through certain repeated words and
images. As his work progresses, the translator is
alarmed to discover references to himself in the
narrative—references which seem to address him
personally in an increasingly menacing fashion.

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(continued from front flap)

Intriguing, ingenious, and mordantly funny,
The Athenian Murders intertwines two darkly com-
pelling riddles, forcing us to confront the ways in
which we interpret fact and fiction, and introduces
a beguiling new talent to an American readership.



José Carlos Somoza

is a psychiatrist and the author of six novels. In
2000, he was short-listed for the Nadal Prize, one
of the most important literary awards in Spain. *The
Athenian Murders* is his first novel to be translated
into English. He lives in Madrid.

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