Translating Troy
Mueller, Alex

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ergo age, care pater, ceruici imponere nostrae;
ipse subibo umeris nec me labor iste grauabit;
quo res cumque cadent, unum et commune periclum,
una salus ambobus erit. (Virgil, Aeneid, 2.707–10)

[Come then, dear father, clasp my neck. I will carry you on my shoulders; that load won’t burden me. Whatever may happen, it will be for us both: the same shared risk, the same salvation.]

THIS SCENE in the Aeneid, when Aeneas offers to carry his father, Anchises, away from the smoldering ruins of Troy, has often come to mind as I have written this book. After all, this image of the legendary founder of Italy bearing forth the remnants of Troy offers a stunning synecdoche of translatio imperii, the translation of one empire into the birth of the next. Perhaps more significantly, though, I have personally felt a bit like an Anchises, who has been supported and carried forth by many virtuous Aeneases. While I would like to believe, as Aeneas suggests, that the many readers who offered advice and encouragement for this book did not consider their support to be burdensome, I feel nonetheless grateful to them for their willingness to shoulder some of the weight and risk of this project.

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English department and Center for Medieval Studies offered invaluable feedback that helped me establish the tenets of my core argument. In particular, I would like to thank Ana Adams, Matthew Desing, Ruth Karras, Stephanie Lohse, Andrew Scheil, John Watkins, and Ellen Wormwood, whose careful reading and constructive criticisms greatly strengthened the early versions of each chapter of this book.

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success, continually performing acts of generosity that I hope I can repay one day.

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