Preface

The idea for this book began life long ago when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Aarhus and formed a reading group with two fellow-students to read the third book of Polybius’ Histories in Greek. It has come a long way since then: through a Masters thesis on moral values in Polybius, a PhD thesis on the changeability of fortune as a moral topos in Greek historiography, and much teaching, thinking and writing, to the larger and more fundamental topic of Greek historiography as a moral-didactic genre. Along the way I have incurred many debts, and this is the place to acknowledge them.

Firstly, I must thank the man without whom none of this would have happened: my Greek teacher at Odense Katedralskole, Henrik Nisbeth, who showed me the beauty of Greek and the joy of studying Classics. Secondly, my surrogate family for seven years of studying at the University of Aarhus, the students of Classical Philology from 1995 to 2002, and especially the members of my Polybius reading group, Jesper Thomsen Lemke and Thomas Hemming Larsen. From those same years, I am grateful to my teachers Erik Ostenfeld, who hired me as editorial assistant and introduced me to the world of academic publishing, and Marianne Pade, who didn’t laugh when I said I wanted to study for a PhD, and who supported my decision to do so abroad. I must also thank Mogens Herman Hansen, who, although he had never taught me, helped me make contact with a potential PhD supervisor in Britain and supported my application.

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