

This book was once my doctoral thesis. I wrote it when I was a graduate student at Brasenose, Oxford, between 2010 and 2013, during which time I lived and worked all over the world, moving between Oxford, Damascus, Paris, Geneva, Kabul, Toronto, St Andrews, and Ottawa. My thesis was perhaps the only element of continuity amidst nearly constant change and constant non-academic work, but writing and translation were rather more akin to the ritual exorcism of a daemon, or an obsessional neurosis, than cathartic self-expression. It was a great relief when the thesis was done, and it is good to see this book finished also.

Above all I am most especially grateful to my wife, Alexandra, whose support and encouragement made this book possible:

...ὄ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον,
ἢ ὄθ' ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχητον
ἀνὴρ ἢ δὲ γυνή: πόλλ' ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι,
χάρματα δ' εὐμενέτησι, μάλιστα δέ τ' ἔκλυον αὐτοί.

Thanks are due, of course, to Prof. Hoyland for his constant help — especially in annotating drafts of my

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Dr Rika Gyselen of the CNRS in Paris has also had a great influence on me, for it was she who approved my work at an early stage, and encouraged me to publish when I finished my MPhil. She was also kind enough to read a large portion of my doctoral thesis before approving its publication.

This book is dedicated to the people of Iran.

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