

## PREFACE

The title of the present work clearly defines its limited subject matter and hints at the proposed solution to the question it raises. I was first attracted to various aspects of ancient biography while working on my D. Phil. dissertation (Oxford 1971), *A Commentary on Plutarch's Cato Minor*. Some of the more general problems of ancient biography which arrested my attention at the time naturally had to wait for a later opportunity. Among these were questions of Plutarchean *Quellenforschung*, more often than not having their focal point in the Hellenistic period and the widely applied hypothesis of Hellenistic biographies of political personalities. While it was early in the process that I came to reject the prevalent view only at a comparatively late stage did the alternative here offered occur to me. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner-stone (*Ps.* 118.22).

Owing to various academic duties the gestation of this work was longer than may seem to be justified by its scope. During all that time I received generous help from friends and colleagues, among them Ewen Bowie, Nicholas Horsfall, Raanana Meridor, Elizabeth Rawson, Donald Russell and Zeev Rubin. Of course none of these scholars is to be made responsible for its shortcomings.

My most important debt I cannot recall without a deep sense of loss. It is the greatest ambition of this book that it should not have displeased the inspiring teacher, exacting scholar, and fine man who first introduced me to the study of Ancient Historiography and to whose memory it is dedicated.

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