Acknowledgments

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The book tries to revisit the central questions of the Homeric poems—the problems of human identity, the value of human life, the logic of heroic ideology. Perhaps because of this, most of the arguments I put forth here have sprung directly from debates in the classroom over the last decade, with both graduate and undergraduate students alike. Though I am happy to take responsibility for all that is said, this text now seems to me to be a composite,
written version of all those classroom conversations. I am thus immensely grateful to the students who made it such a pleasure to teach and reteach these poems.

Finally, I would like to make special mention of James Porter. I have long stopped trying to puzzle out where his thinking ends and mine begins in this manuscript, but a thousand footnotes could not do justice to his influence. Thanks.