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0521607582 - Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in Cultural Receptivity

Margaret C. Miller

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It is a commonplace of modern scholarship that the Athenians hated and despised the Persians, but the claims of contempt are disproved by the evidence of archaeology, epigraphy, iconography, and literature, all of which reveal some facet of Athenian receptivity to Achaemenid Persian culture. The Athenian response was as richly complex as the spheres of interaction: both private and public, élite and sub-élite. It appears in pot-shapes, clothing, luxurious display, and monumental architecture. This innovative study, the first comprehensive collection of evidence pertaining to the relations between Athens and Persia in the fifth century BC, aims to make this evidence better known and in so doing to argue that the social culture of classical Athens was not the monolithic construct it might appear.

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*This work is dedicated to my mother,
whose courage, love, and faith
are a constant source of inspiration.*

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Preface

This book needed to be written, though I have had occasion over the years to doubt whether I should be the one to write it. The task required expertise in more fields than it was possible to master and I might have reduced the scope of the work or given up altogether were it not for the generosity of colleagues in giving advice and information. Some answered questions relating to their excavations or research while others read entire chapters. To them all I am profoundly grateful; responsibility for any misunderstanding must remain mine. Though some details may be wrong, I am confident that the overall picture that emerges reflects some kind of historical reality. I trust that readers criticising out of their own expertise will help refine the argument or expand its scope.

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I am particularly indebted to my husband, E. Csapo, for many stimulating conversations and timely exhortations.

Note: Throughout this work, unless otherwise specified, all dates are BC and all figured vases are Attic red-figured ware.