

PREFACE

I first encountered John Moschus's *Spiritual Meadow* in December 2003. Richard Miles had introduced me to late antiquity while a Classics undergraduate at Churchill College, Cambridge, and as a Master's student Peter Garnsey guided me through the world of late-antique monasticism and encouraged me to pursue Moschus and his circle further. This monograph is the result. It was completed in two distinct stages: first, as a doctoral student at Trinity Hall, Cambridge; and then as Junior Research Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford. The final stages of redrafting, editing, and proofreading were then carried out while holding positions funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the Isaac Newton Trust, and the A.G. Leventis Foundation, whose support I gratefully acknowledge. The thesis was generously funded by grants from Trinity Hall and from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and was supervised by Peter Sarris, to whom I am immensely grateful for all his guidance, encouragement, and hard work. Not least, to Peter I owe also the inspiration to move outside the classical languages and genres with which I was most familiar, a decision that opened up to me entire new worlds. The thesis was examined by Rebecca Flemming and Peregrine Horden, who offered numerous comments and improvements, not least the demand for a deeper contextualization of the intellectual currents that I had identified. In Oxford I then spent three happy years converting the thesis into a monograph. I was privileged to do so in the edifying company of Bryan Ward-Perkins at Trinity, and benefited from innumerable conversations with James Howard-Johnston. To all these friends and mentors at Cambridge and at Oxford I owe an enormous personal and intellectual debt.

I must thank in addition two contemporaries who have had an immeasurable impact on the intellectual shape and content of this book. First, at Cambridge,

Matthew dal Santo, with whom I shared a PhD supervisor and whose own work on the early Byzantine cult of saints has recently appeared with Oxford University Press; and, second, Marek Jankowiak, who arrived in Oxford while I was completing the monograph and whose own book on the monothelite crisis will appear almost simultaneously with this. I cannot overstate the advantage that I have enjoyed in having two friends who shared my general approach to religious texts, who were engaged with precisely the same sources, and with whom I was not afraid to test out new ideas. Without their input, criticism, and friendship, this monograph would have been all the poorer.

Since my first encounter with the *Meadow* I have built up a considerable number of debts to others, not all of whom can be acknowledged. I am extremely fortunate to have benefited from the comments and advice of the two scholars whose work most inspired my interest in the topic and the period. Peter Brown read both the PhD thesis and an earlier version of the monograph, and his encouragement energized the long process of expanding the former into the latter; and Averil Cameron read the entire manuscript, and debated with me various points of method and of substance that helped shape and sharpen my thoughts. At Oxford, Peter Turner read some draft chapters and offered numerous new insights, pushing me toward far greater clarity in my ideas. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the important exchanges of ideas and materials that I have had with Grigory Benevitch, Jean Gasco, Derek Krueger, Richard Price, and Eileen Rubery. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, whose own works on the period provide much of the backbone for this book, were kind enough to read an earlier version for the University of California Press and offered important criticisms and corrections. At the press itself, I am much indebted to Eric Schmidt and Cindy Fulton for all their guidance and professionalism. Paul Psoinos was a model copy editor and saved me from many mistakes.

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