Athenians in the classical period (508–322 B.C.) were drawn to an image of themselves as a compassionate and generous people who rushed to the aid of others in distress, both at home and abroad. What relation does this image bear to actual Athenian behavior? This book argues that Athenians felt little pressure as individuals to help fellow citizens whom they did not know. Democratic ideology called on citizens to refrain from harming one another rather than to engage in mutual support and emphasized the importance of the helping relationship between citizen and city rather than among individual citizens. If the obligation of Athenians to help fellow citizens was fairly tenuous, all the more so was their responsibility to intervene to assist the peoples of other states; a distinct pragmatism prevailed in the city’s decisions concerning intervention abroad.

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THE LIMITS OF ALTRUISM IN DEMOCRATIC ATHENS

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To Sophia C. Goodman
# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ............................................. page ix

Introduction: The Philanthropic Athenian? .................. 1

I Helping Behavior in Classical Athens ..................... 10

Helping Fellow Soldiers .................................. 13
Aiding the Poor ........................................... 17
Nursing the Sick ........................................... 26
Bystander Intervention .................................... 28

Lysias, Against Teisis, fr. 279 Carey (before ca. 380 B.C.) ....... 29
Demosthenes 47: Against Euerus and Mnesibulus (after 356 B.C.) ............... 30

Aeschines 1: Against Timarchus (345 B.C.) ................. 31
Demosthenes 54: Against Conon (355 or 341 B.C.) ......... 32
[Demosthenes] 53: Against Nicostratus (after 368 B.C.) ....... 35
Lysias 3: Against Simon (after 394 B.C.) .................. 36

Helping in Litigation .................................... 41
Volunteer Prosecution ................................... 41
Sunēgoroi ............................................... 44

II Helping and Democratic Citizenship ................... 48

Democratic Citizenship and the Ideal of Homonoia ........... 50
Helping as a Civic Virtue ................................ 67
Citizens Help the City ................................... 68
Military Service ......................................... 70
Financial Service ....................................... 72
Political Service: Rhêtores ............................... 77
Public Prosecution ..................................... 83
The City Helps Citizens ................................ 90
III Helping and Community in the Athenian Law Courts

| Courts as Venues for Helping | 95 |
| Case Studies in Communal Helping | 103 |
| A Community of Kindred Avengers | 103 |
| A Community of Reciprocal Helpers | 106 |
| Community, Solidarity, and Security | 109 |
| The Fragility of Helping | 114 |

IV “Helping Others” in Athenian Interstate Relations

| Athenian Interstate Relations | 120 |
| “Helping the Wronged” in Athenian Civic Ideology | 126 |
| Athenian Helping in the Greek Historians | 137 |
| Helping the Ionians | 139 |
| Helping the Plataeans | 144 |
| Helping Former Enemies | 156 |
| Demosthenes and the Rhetoric of Athenian Helping | 163 |
| Deliberative Speeches | 163 |
| On the Crown: Rewriting the Past | 171 |
| Conclusion: Helping and the Athenian Experience | 177 |

Bibliography | 183 |
Index of Ancient Citations | 197 |
General Index | 209 |
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In this book, ancient passages that are cited on specific points are given *exempli gratia* rather than as comprehensive listings of all testimonia unless otherwise indicated. Abbreviated references to ancient authors and works are based primarily on those used in H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (ninth edition; revised by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie), Oxford, 1996. Abbreviated references to modern scholarship are to the works cited in the bibliography at the end of this book. Abbreviations of periodicals in the bibliography follow the system of *L’Année philologique.*