

Hobbes and the Artifice of Eternity

Thomas Hobbes argues that the fear of violent death is the most reliable passion on which to found political society. His role in shaping the contemporary view of religion and honor in the West is pivotal, yet his ideas are famously riddled with contradictions. In this breakthrough study, McClure finds evidence that Hobbes's apparent inconsistencies are intentional, part of a sophisticated rhetorical strategy meant to make man more afraid of death than he naturally is. Hobbes subtly undermined two of the most powerful manifestations of man's desire for immortality: the religious belief in an afterlife and the secular desire for eternal fame through honor. McClure argues that Hobbes purposefully stirred up controversy, provoking his adversaries into attacking him and unwittingly spreading his message. This study will appeal to scholars of Hobbes, political theorists, historians of early modern political thought and anyone interested in the genesis of modern Western attitudes toward mortality.

Christopher Scott McClure is an independent scholar. His research focuses on the history of Western political thought, particularly the ancient and early modern periods. He has published a variety of articles, most recently in *The Journal of Politics* and *The Review of Politics*.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-15379-0 — Hobbes and the Artifice of Eternity
Christopher Scott McClure
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York NY 10006, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107153790

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First published 2016

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-15379-0 Hardback

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Acknowledgments

Most of this book was written during my time as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University under the supervision of Harvey Mansfield. I am above all grateful to Professor Mansfield for his encouragement, unwavering support and invaluable suggestions. It was an honor to be in the man's presence for two years.

For their financial support, I would like to thank the Foundation on Constitutional Government and the Jack Miller Center. Also, thanks are due to the *Review of Politics* and the *Journal of Politics* for their kind permission to reprint versions of previously published articles.

For helpful comments and suggestions along the way, I would like to thank John T. Scott, Clifford Orwin, Quentin Skinner, Shalini Satkunanandan, Robert Taylor, Joshua Mitchell, Rory Schacter, Alexander Orwin, Gabriel Bartlett, Joe Hebert, Dustin Sebell, Hannes Kerber, Daniel Kapust and Devin Stauffer.

I could never say enough to express the depth of gratitude to my parents, Kim and Seumas. I would, though, like to thank my mother for holding on to her undergraduate texts of Hobbes, Plato and Machiavelli and for reading the *Myth of Er* to me as a child. I would like to thank my father for imparting to me an understanding of the importance of law and civilization.

Finally, this book would not have been possible without the support of my wife, Erica. Her eye for details, both large and small, and her stamina in reading and commenting on every draft have made this a much stronger work.