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Deception and Democracy in Classical Athens

This is the first full-length study of the representation of deceit and lies in classical Athens. Dr Hesk traces the ways in which Athenian drama, democratic oratory and elite prose writing construct and theorise a relationship between dishonesty and civic identity. He focuses on the ideology of military trickery, notions of the 'noble lie' and the developing associations of rhetorical language with deceptive communication. *Deception and Democracy in Classical Athens* combines close analysis of Athenian texts with lively critiques of modern theorists and classical scholars. Athenian democratic culture was crucially informed by a nuanced, anxious and dynamic discourse on the problems and opportunities which deception presented for its citizenry. Mobilising comparisons with twentieth-century democracies, the author argues that Athenian literature made deception a fundamental concern for democratic citizenship. This ancient discourse on lying highlights the dangers of modern resignation and postmodern complacency concerning the politics and morality of deception.

JON HESK is Lecturer in Greek at the University of St Andrews.

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Preface

This book is substantially revised and expanded from its original incarnation as my Cambridge Ph.D. thesis begun in 1991 and there are many debts of gratitude to record for help and support with the project since then. But there are people who deserve thanks for inspiration and teaching long before I started the thesis, particularly Andrew Wilson (formerly of Bedford Modern School) and Ewen Bowie (in Oxford).

The thesis was supervised by Simon Goldhill: my warmest thanks to him for intellectual stimulation, patience, humour, good advice and for not putting up with any rubbish. Several scholars read and usefully criticised drafts of chapters which are still in this book, providing encouragement along the way: thanks to Richard Hunter, John Henderson, Malcolm Schofield, Helen Morales and Paul Cartledge. My Ph.D. examiners were Richard Buxton and Paul Millett: their comments, criticisms and advice were most helpful and much-appreciated.

More recently, I have received friendly advice from Stephen Halliwell: thanks to him for reading the first three chapters and for boosting my confidence. I must also thank the three anonymous readers appointed by Cambridge University Press for swift and extremely good advice on structure, tone and content. Audiences in Oxford, Exeter, London, Bristol, Washington, Glasgow and St Andrews have heard and given useful responses to seminar papers containing material which ended up in this book. The participants in the Classics Faculty literary seminars in Cambridge between 1991 and 1998 were particularly stimulating and I gained enhanced perspectives from presenting material to a distinguished international audience at a colloquium on 'Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy' held at King's College, Cambridge in July 1996.

Much of the research conducted for this book was made possible by a British Academy state studentship. When that money ran out, I received financial assistance from King's College's Supplementary Exhibition Fund, the Cambridge Faculty of Classics, the Cambridge University Jebb Fund and my grandmother Evelyn Hesk. I should

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also thank the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge for electing me to a Research Fellowship in 1995 and thereby enabling me to finish the thesis and begin this book. Since my appointment as a lecturer at St Andrews, friends and colleagues in the School of Greek, Latin and Ancient History have been extremely supportive: thanks especially to Stephen Halliwell and Harry Hine for taking a few hours of teaching off my plate when I needed some crucial days of uninterrupted writing.

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Over the years, so many friends have helped me to keep going. I cannot thank them all individually here but they should know who they are. Jenny Young deserves a special thankyou for putting up with and sustaining me and for proof-reading various drafts.

Finally, I wish to offer love and thanks to my parents, John and Glenis Hesk, for all their support over many years. They have always taken an intense interest in my work and I could not have started or finished this study without their constant and unconditional love. The book is dedicated to them.

I should point out that I have not been able to take full account of relevant scholarly material published since 1997: after that date, my references are selective and confined to those works which have been easily available, have come to my attention and whose relevance to my arguments has been high enough to require consideration.