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PERFORMANCE AND IDENTITY IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD

Performance and Identity in the Classical World traces attitudes toward actors in Greek and Roman culture as a means of understanding ancient conceptions of, and anxieties about, the self. The actor's ability to impersonate different characters might be considered a threat to a philosophical commitment to the stability of the self, or to a political commitment to the stability of the social order. Actors were thus often viewed as frauds and impostors, capable of deliberately fabricating their identities. Conversely, they were sometimes viewed as possessed by the characters that they played, or as merely playing themselves onstage. Numerous sources reveal an uneasy fascination with actors and acting, from the writings of elite intellectuals (philosophers, orators, biographers, historians) to the abundant theatrical anecdotes that can be read as a body of "popular performance theory." *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* examines these sources, along with dramatic texts, and addresses the issue of impersonation from the late fifth century BCE to the early Roman Empire.

Anne Duncan is assistant professor of Classics in the Department of Languages and Literatures at Arizona State University. She has published articles on Greek and Roman comedy, Greek tragedy, and English Renaissance drama.

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ANNE DUNCAN

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521852821

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First published 2006

Printed in the United States of America

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

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Duncan, Anne.
 Performance and identity in the classical world / Anne Duncan.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85282-1 (hardback)

ISBN-10: 0-521-85282-X (hardback)

1. Acting – History – To 500. 2. Performing arts – Greece – History – To 1500. 3. Classical drama – History and criticism. 4. Theater – Greece – History – To 500. 5. Identity (Psychology) in literature. 6. Theater – History – To 500. 7. Performing arts – Rome. 8. Self in literature. 9. Actors – Greece. 10. Theater – Rome. 11. Actors – Rome. I. Title.

PA3203.D76 2005
 792.08'0938'0901 – dc22 2005011726

ISBN-13 978-0-521-85282-1 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-85282-X hardback

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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page vii</i>
Introduction: The Hypocritical Self	1
1. Drag Queens and In-Betweens: Agathon and the Mimetic Body	25
2. Demosthenes versus Aeschines: The Rhetoric of Sincerity	58
3. The Fraud and the Flatterer: Images of Actors on the Comic Stage	90
4. Infamous Performers: Comic Actors and Female Prostitutes in Rome	124
5. The Actor's Freedom: Roscius and the Slave Actor at Rome	160
6. Extreme Mimesis: Spectacle in the Empire	188
<i>Bibliography</i>	219
<i>Index</i>	241

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PREFACE

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHO READ drafts or talked through ideas at various stages of this project: Edward E. Cohen, Joy Connolly, Taylor Corse, Jennifer Ebbeler, Mary-Kay Gamel, Lisa Rengo George, Alexa Jervis, Amanda Krauss, Kevin Lee, Susan McCready, Jess Miner, Alex Purves, Ralph Rosen, and Keith Sidwell. Some of them may not be aware of how helpful they were. Sheila Murnaghan deserves special thanks for reading through the entire manuscript several times, both during and after her tenure as my dissertation advisor. I would also like to thank the two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press, who saved me from many errors of fact and judgment. I can say with both stock formulaicness and utter sincerity that any remaining deficiencies are entirely my own.

This project was also supported by a number of institutions. It began life as a dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania. Chapter 4 was written with the assistance of a Women's Studies Summer Research Grant from Arizona State University. I would also like to thank the Department of Classics at Columbia University for making me a Visiting Researcher for the summers of 2001 and 2002, the Department of Classics at Georgetown University for making me a Visiting Researcher for spring–summer 2005, and the Library of Congress for granting me research privileges in the summers of 2003 and 2004. Finally, a research leave from Arizona State University in the spring of 2005 made it possible to finish this book. I am very grateful to all these institutions for their assistance and support.

Part of the Introduction appeared earlier as an article in *Helios* (Duncan, 2005a); part of Chapter 1 appeared earlier as an article in the *European Studies Journal* (Duncan, 2001); part of Chapter 4 appeared earlier as a chapter in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World* (Duncan, 2005b). I am grateful to all of the publishers for permission to reprint.

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PREFACE

Titles of ancient texts follow the abbreviations listed in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, third edition.

I am afraid I have followed no consistent principle in the transliteration of Greek names and words. Names and words that seemed too familiar in their Latinized version to change (Ajax, Plato) were kept in that form; less familiar names and words were transliterated more closely (*Thesmophoriazousai*, Kleon). All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

This book is dedicated to Eric Berger.