

THE ANCIENT AESTHETICS OF DECEPTION

The concept of *mimēsis* has dominated reflection on the nature and role of representation in Greek literature. Jonas Grethlein, in his ambitious new book, takes this reflection a step further. He argues that, beyond *mimēsis*, there was an important but unacknowledged strand of reflection focused instead on the nuanced idea of *apatē* (often translated into English as ‘deceit’), oscillating between notions of ‘deception’ and ‘aesthetic illusion’. Many authors from Gorgias and Plato to Philo, Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria used this key concept to entwine aesthetics with ethics. In creatively exploring the various reconfigurations of *apatē*, and placing these in their socio-historical contexts, the book offers a bold new history of ancient aesthetics. It also explores the present significance of the aesthetics of deception, unlocking the potential of ancient reflection for current debates on the ethical dimension of representation. It will appeal to scholars in classics and literary theory alike.

JONAS GRETHLEIN is Professor of Greek in the Seminar für Klassische Philologie at Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. His publications include *The Greeks and their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge, 2010), *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: Futures Past from Herodotus to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2013) and *Aesthetic Experiences and Classical Antiquity: The Significance of Form in Narratives and Pictures* (Cambridge, 2017).

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978-1-316-51881-6 — The Ancient Aesthetics of Deception: The Ethics of Enchantment from
Gorgias to Heliodorus

Jonas Grethlein

Frontmatter

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JONAS GRETHLEIN

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Acknowledgements

Tragedy is ‘a deception, in which the one who deceives is more just than the one who does not deceive, and the one who is deceived is more intelligent than the one who is not deceived’. This assertion of Gorgias fr. 23 DK did not fail to puzzle me when I first encountered it as an undergraduate, and it has become an obsession of mine since then. It took me a long time to get the feeling that I understood it, and there are still moments when its meaning seems to evade me. For several years, I have been thinking about the entwinement of aesthetics and ethics, trying to explore its significance in antiquity and today. During this time, I have incurred many debts, and the impossibility of listing all my intellectual benefactors should not prevent me from thanking at least some of those who patiently listened to my half-baked ideas and generously enlightened me with their comments and suggestions: Joshua Billings, Eva von Contzen, Casper de Jonge, Monika Fludernik, Bill Furlay, Renaud Gagné, Simon Goldhill, Stephen Halliwell, Henry Keazor, Matthias Konradt, Thomas Kuhn-Treichel, Winfried Löhr, Natasha Peponi, Jim Porter, Martin Revermann, Kurt Sier, Michael Squire, Tim Whitmarsh and Katrin Winter.

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The abbreviations of journals follow *L'Année philologique*, those of ancient authors the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. I have used Latinized forms for Greek names, except where familiarity dictates otherwise.

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