

## COLONIZATION AND SUBALTERNITY IN CLASSICAL GREECE

In this book, Gabriel Zuchtriegel explores the unwritten history of Classical Greece – the experience of nonelite colonial populations. Using postcolonial critical methods to analyze Greek settlements and their hinterlands of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, he reconstructs the social and economic structures in which exploitation, violence, and subjugation were implicit. He mines literary sources and inscriptions, as well as archaeological data from excavations and field surveys, much of it published here for the first time, that offer new insights into the lives and status of nonelite populations in Greek colonies. Zuchtriegel demonstrates that Greece's colonial experience has far-reaching implications beyond the study of archaeology and ancient history. As reflected in foundational texts such as Plato's "Laws" and Aristotle's "Politics," the ideology that sustained Greek colonialism is still felt in many Western societies.

Gabriel Zuchtriegel holds a PhD degree in Classical Archaeology from University of Bonn. He has been fellow of Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, the German Archaeological Institute and the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation and has conducted fieldwork in southern Italy and Sicily. He has taught courses at University of Bonn (Germany) and at University of Basilicata (Italy). He has worked for the Soprintendenza di Pompeii and is currently in charge of the Museum and Archaeological site of Paestum. Published works include a monograph on ancient Gabii (Latium), edited volumes, journal papers, and articles in newspapers and popular science magazines.

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CLASSICAL GREECE

EXPERIENCE OF THE NONELITE  
POPULATION

GABRIEL ZUCHTRIEGEL

Paestum Excavations, Italy



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## PREFACE

The painted stone slab on the cover is one of hundreds of examples from “Lucanian” tombs from Paestum in southern Italy. It dates to the second quarter of the fourth century BC. From the second half of the fifth century, new burial customs were introduced to Paestum, and in the fourth century official documents at Paestum were written in Oscan, an Italic language. At first glance, the slab may not seem ideally suited to illustrating the cover of a book dealing with “Classical Greece.” Yet Greek-speaking people continued to live in Paestum, as graffiti and inscriptions demonstrate. We have no idea whether the person buried in the tomb on the cover identified herself/himself as “Greek” or “Lucanian,” and what this really meant in this period. Similarly, the identity and origin of the artists are also unknown.

However, the way in which the figures on the slab are portrayed can be viewed as a product of Greek colonial practices and ideologies. While the rider corresponds to the ideal of the victorious youth as known from Athenian and Tarantine grave monuments, the two prisoners shown behind him, especially the one on the left, are clearly presented as non-Greeks or “barbarians.” And while the woman who is greeting the rider has a distinctive headdress that might be of a local type, the vessels she is holding belong to the Greek tradition.

The tomb painting clearly depicts “Greek culture” from a specific standpoint, just as this book attempts to look at Classical Greece from an alternative perspective. By looking at social and economic structures, exploitation, violence, and subjugation in the colonies, it aims to paint a different picture of Classical Greece. Greek settlements of the fifth and fourth centuries BC and their hinterland are analyzed using approaches from the fields of postcolonial criticism and subaltern studies. Archaeological data from excavations and field surveys, part of which is published for the first time here, is combined with literary sources and inscriptions to shed more light on the lives and status of nonelite populations in the colonies.

My original project was far less wide-ranging. When I started fieldwork at Heraclea Lucaniae in southern Italy in 2012, I had no idea of the direction this book would take, nor, I suppose, did those who helped me along the way. I am

aware that not everyone will be persuaded by my arguments, but I hope that my work will at least help stimulate further discussion.

I am deeply grateful to all those who supported me over the last few years, particularly to Massimo Osanna who invited me for a three-year stay at the University of Basilicata in Matera (southern Italy) where I had the privilege and honor to work as a Feodor-Lynen research fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. My faculty colleagues at Matera were extremely generous and helpful in a variety of matters, from organizing the field campaigns to finding a school for our kids: besides Massimo, whose humanity and expertise were fundamental, special thanks go to Dimitris Roubis, Barbara Serio, Francesca Sogliani, Valentino Vitale, and Mariasilvia Vullo. Further, I would like to thank all the students who participated in the fieldwork campaigns, in particular Luisa Aino, Gabriella Gramegna, and Antonia Miola.

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