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978-1-107-01211-0 - Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution

A. J. S. Spawforth

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CULTURAL REVOLUTION

This book examines the impact of the Roman cultural revolution under Augustus on the Roman province of Greece. It argues that the transformation of Roman Greece into a classicising 'museum' was a specific response of the provincial Greek elites to the cultural politics of the Roman imperial monarchy. Against a background of Roman debates about Greek culture and Roman decadence, Augustus promoted the ideal of a Roman debt to a 'classical' Greece rooted in Europe and morally opposed to a stereotyped Asia. In Greece the regime signalled its admiration for Athens, Sparta, Olympia and Plataea as symbols of these past Greek glories. Cued by the Augustan monarchy, provincial-Greek notables expressed their Roman orientation by competitive cultural work (revival of ritual; restoration of buildings) aimed at further emphasising Greece's 'classical' legacy. Reprised by Hadrian, the Augustan construction of 'classical' Greece helped to promote the archaism typifying Greek culture under the principate.

A. J. S. SPAWFORTH is Professor of Ancient History at the School of Historical Studies, Newcastle University. His distinguished list of publications includes *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities* (1989; 2nd edn 2002 – co-author with Paul Cartledge); *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn (1996; revised 2003 – co-editor with Simon Hornblower, and contributor); *Greece: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (2001 – co-author with Christopher Mee); *The Complete Greek Temples* (2006); and *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* (Cambridge, 2007 – editor and contributor).

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