priesthoods, little opportunity existed for any such “alternative” religious authority to develop. Yet it can still be argued that symbolic means were used to express disapproval of, and resistance to, Roman rule in Achaia.

Periodic eruptions of anti-Roman feeling are known from the province (p. 16), not surprisingly mainly in the early years of the empire (although some flared up well into the second century AD). Athens especially experienced several outbursts of open antipathy to Rome, serious enough to call down the anger of Augustus.

He [Augustus] honored the Lakedaimonians by giving them Kythera and attending their public mess, because Livia, when she fled from Italy with her husband and son had spent some time there. But from the Athenians he took away Aigina and Eretria, from which they received tribute, because, as some say, they had espoused the cause of Antony; and he furthermore forbade them to make anyone a citizen for money. And it seemed to them that the thing which had happened to the statue of Athena was responsible for his misfortune; for this statue on the Acropolis, which was placed to face the east, had turned around to the west and spat blood. (Cassius Dio 54.7:1-3)

“Blood” spattered on a cult image “to give the impression that Athena, the protectress and patron goddess of Athens, had spat blood at Rome,” as Hoff puts it, illustrates dramatically the only potent weapons available to the Greeks: their religion and the revered history of their culture. Other more subtle signs of disobedience or subversion of authority could be sought in odd juxtapositions of images or rituals, exploring the possibility of ambivalence or division within the society. 59

A more deep-rooted and constant form of “resistance,” however, is expressed through cultic geography. Despite extreme vulnerability to external pressures, Greek cities clearly wished to control and to shape their own territorial and social organization, as articulated through the use of sacred space. If Pausanias offers, as Elsner suggests, “a guide to the formation of Greek religious identity as a resistance to the realities of Roman rule,” this tension is visible in the sacred landscape as well. Without violent measures or seeking the overthrow of Roman control, the mute endurance of certain sanctuaries guaranteed that local and traditional priorities continued to be served. On the other hand, different aspects of the sacred landscape were manifestly working to promote the transition to Roman rule, encouraging new loyalties and the acceptance of a new social order. The sacred landscape, then, was no simple construct, but a complex and dynamic reaction to imperial incorporation. What emerges with greatest clarity is the active role played by this landscape in mediating the Greek response to Roman domination, in defining that response, and in transmitting it to subsequent generations.

We began this book with two images of Roman Greece: one of a people largely untouched by Roman domination, the other of a country in decline. The first can be rejected, since we have examined a variety of responses to imperial control, experienced at all levels of provincial society, each of the different sorts of “landscape” defined in this study revealing some measure of profound change. The rural landscape was transformed through the development of a new system of landholding, one that favored the wealthier elements in Achaian society, and by corresponding modifications of the nature and intensity of agricultural exploitation. Change in the countryside contributed to a redistribution of people within the civic landscape of the polis; a preference for nucleated residence emerged as one potential solution to the challenges posed by...
increasing economic pressures and greater social polarities, factors which had become an entrenched part of provincial life. The number and distribution of cities across the province as a whole were also affected by Greece's newly peripheral position within the empire, and especially by the need to provide an administrative organization acceptable to external authority. The notion of population decline (once thought to be the characteristic feature of this period) has been examined and to a certain extent confirmed. We have argued throughout that the causes underlying this demographic trend—usually assumed to be some combination of endemic warfare and moral decadence—need expanding so as to include factors such as the redistribution of land and the preference for residence within larger communities. Moreover, re-evaluation of the magnitude of the trend serves to limit its ultimate role in dictating the course of provincial history. Finally, the sacred landscape, while mirroring many of the social and economic developments observed in other spheres of activity, worked to preserve a sense of Hellenic identity, yet at the same time sought to reconcile Greek provincials to the realities of their new state. This reinterpretation of Greek society under Roman rule emerges very much as a product of the types of data employed. Archaeological evidence, especially the results of a growing number of surface survey projects, provides an essential complement to the more usual sources for the period, and allows fresh insights into the behavior of the "people without history."

If the image of a "static" Greek society can thus be dismissed easily, it is far more difficult to treat the charge of decline. Of course, the accusation of "decadence" can be identified as largely an external reading, forced upon the Greeks in order to explain their "fall" from excellence and to define them in opposition to their conquerors, both ancient and modern (pp. 3, 31–2). To divide history into "good" and "bad" epochs, or periods of "prosperity" and "decline"—a surprisingly common practice among ancient historians and archaeologists—has increasingly come to be regarded as indefensible and counter-productive, given the moral baggage that inevitably accompanies such labels. Yet for all that, is there not some element of truth in the notion of Roman Greece as a "backwater"? In the Roman scheme of things, Achaia assumed the role of a minor province, redeemed only by its antique reputation and the prestige of certain of its inhabitants: With the exception of a few of its leading towns, the land did not flourish to the extent enjoyed by certain other eastern provinces such as Asia. Would it not be fair to admit that the province as a whole (if not some of her leading citizens) really did slip quietly into the background of important events and decisions taking place elsewhere?

If the terms "backwater" or "museum" might seem justified from the point of view of the conqueror and the dictates of political history, where I would disagree is in assigning responsibility for this development. Whereas internal fractiousness and spiritual exhaustion have previously been blamed, we can now see more clearly that conditions in the province were molded by the constant working of imperial influences, both direct and indirect. Decisive factors—new economic priorities, the altered social order, the Roman desire to stabilize the country—all emanated from imperial and local responses to Greece's annexation. The position of Achaia vis-à-vis other provinces within the empire, to be considered further below, is another key element in provincial history (pp. 220–4). Viewing the empire within a core–periphery framework emphasizes this point by stressing that a provincial, peripheral society can never be analyzed outside of the system of domination in which it is set. The direct and indirect effects of imperial incorporation reached deep within Greek society, to a degree not previously acknowledged, transforming not only the way in which people lived and interacted with each other, but also their civic image and self-perceptions, their reading of their past, and their plans for a future.

TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE CHRONOLOGIES

The study of Greek history normally follows a course charted by the documentary sources, in which periods are defined chiefly by events and personalities—battles, regnal years, the deaths of individuals. Although such standard periodizations are widely acknowledged as being essentially arbitrary, for the practical purposes of historical analysis some divisions of this sort are necessary, and the written sources long provided the only basis available for their construction. But the new availability of archaeological survey data I suggest now makes possible, and indeed necessitates, the adoption of substantially different sorts of chronological frameworks which draw instead on the evidence of settlement and land-use patterns. Such a framework is determined by social and economic factors lying deep in society, working at what proponents of the Annals school would recognize as the level of conjuncture. The Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods offer one very good example of the development of such an "alternative" chronology. Typically, the division between the Classical and Hellenistic epochs is recognized as the battle of Chaeronea or the death of Alexander (i.e. roughly the last quarter of the fourth century BC), while in terms of "event-oriented" history, the break between the Hellenistic and the Roman period is taken to be the battle of Actium. Yet examined from the vantage point of the...
survey archaeologist, such distinctions as these appear largely irrelevant. Instead, the Classical and Early Hellenistic periods (down to the third/second century BC) clearly “belong together,” as do the later Hellenistic and Early Roman epochs, while the Late Roman era appears as an entirely different matter again. It becomes awkward to speak of a unified “Hellenistic” or “Roman” period in Greece: far too many changes are masked by such a treatment. Alternative chronologies of this sort, it must be stressed, are not intended to replace more traditional periodizations; the nature of a particular historical or archaeological study must be allowed to dictate the appropriate framework. But it is necessary to recognize that a choice exists between different and equally valid ways in which to order information and structure analysis.

The focus of this book – the early imperial period – springs from just such a revisionist approach. It has been argued throughout that Roman influence left its mark upon Greek society long before Greece’s official incorporation in the empire. Rome was not, however, the only external force at work in the region in the later Hellenistic era, and it is fair to ask what role might have been played by Hellenistic monarchs in the processes we have been considering. Greek interaction (as allies, as enemies, or as the recipients of royal largesse) with eastern kingdoms – the Antigonid dynasty of Macedon, the Ptolemaic of Egypt, the Seleucid of Asia – is well attested. To a considerable extent, the intervention of such powers in Greek affairs fostered many of the same trends as did the actions of Roman authorities: the bolstering of oligarchic regimes, accumulation of landed property, territorial realignments, the growth of league institutions. To distinguish exactly who precipitated which example of each particular development is an impossible task, at least at the level of analysis adopted here. In one sense, Hellenistic monarchs and the Roman state represented the same thing to the cities and leagues of Greece: they were territorially extensive, unified, and more powerful entities working their will on a vulnerable collection of smaller individual political units. Responsibility for initiating the changes visible between the Classical/Early Hellenistic and early imperial period should be assigned to a range of external influences, with Rome as the dominant element, and, of course, the ultimate victor.

A very clear disjunction also separates the early imperial period from its successor. Certainly, wherever the survey evidence is precise enough to tell, Achaia looked very different in Late Roman times. As we have seen, the Late Roman period (generally defined as beginning in the fourth and ending in the seventh century AD) witnessed a high degree of dispersed settlement in the countryside, which could be taken as evidence for a lessening interest in nucleated residence as an economic and social element, and, of course, the ultimate victor.

The third century has, of course, long been regarded as a vital turning point in the social and economic history of the Roman empire. We can begin with the nature of tribute demands, already identified as one major element in strategies of imperial control and of provincial response (pp. 19–24). In the Late Roman period, levels of taxation are assumed to have risen, increasing the financial pressures felt by provincials everywhere. In addition, it is believed that there was a turn from taxation in cash to taxation in kind (although admittedly the degree of this shift and its geographical progression remain unclear). Nonetheless, an inscription from Megara of AD 401/2 reveals something of the mechanics behind this development in Greece:

It was arranged among the Greek cities meeting with common intent in the metropolis of Corinth before the ex clarissimus and the most magnanimous proconsul Claudius Varus, how much each city was required to release into the offices of the hororum praepositus [officials in charge of the state granaries], the cities of Boeotia, Euboea and Aetolia delivering to the (granaries) at Scarphia, the Peloponnesian (cities) to those of Corinth. (IG vii 24, translation by Antony Spawforth)

Several implications for Achaian provincial society arguably follow from these developments. Communities would bear an increasing financial burden; any free cities that had endured until the third century would now, for the first time, feel the pressures of regular and direct taxation (p. 22, fig. 5). One strong motivation for nucleated residence (the need to generate income for cash taxes) was lost, and new economic strategies can be perceived in the repopulation of the Late Roman rural landscape. For Greece, demands in kind would for the most part, as the inscription above suggests, have to be met with agricultural goods; intensification of cultivation, and the return to marginal lands abandoned in the preceding period, becomes a predictable development. Furthermore, it is interesting that coastal site locations are seen to develop at this time (noted, for example, in Melos, Methana, Phokis and the Southern Argolid), presumably as staging points for the transport of produce or other commercial activities.1

The increasing burdens of the Late Roman era likewise affected the behavior of native decuriones, who are thought to have shied away more and more from shouldering magistracies and liturgies; local obligations
once undertaken with enthusiasm now had to be made compulsory. In order to survive, the early imperial city had relied heavily upon the willing contribution of such individuals; but with the lack of such support a decline in the number of functioning cities is hardly surprising. Even where urban units endured, the lack of elite expenditure — for instance, on building, patronage, food distributions — meant that incentives for residence within them declined even further. Other alterations in the social structure of the period — the era of the vir clarissimus — also help to account for the very different landscapes of Late Roman Greece. Harsher distinctions emerged in social and legal privileges and power, with a widening gulf between honestiores and humiliores. Rural residence, to allow intensive cultivation and to increase agricultural production, would be the pattern preferred by local landlords, civic leaders and imperial authorities. Forsibly attaching cultivators (coloni) to the land, through stricter contractual agreements or even coercion, served the dominant interests of the society. In the early imperial period, it was argued that individuals retained a certain independence in their choice of residence, a flexibility which perhaps was denied to them in the later epoch. This ability to “fix” people in space is characteristic of a more authoritarian, feudal mode of exploitation (pp. 114–15).

Among other possible factors involved in the transformation between the early and late empire in Achaia there should certainly be included the selection of Constantinople as an imperial capital in the fourth century, and thus the creation of a new eastern axis of exchange and communication. Greece conceivably could have become a more important resource for the eastern Roman world than had previously been the case, though the archaeological trade studies necessary to verify such a suggestion are sadly lacking. Finally, although the passage of time itself cannot effect change, the sheer duration of Roman rule in this region is worth considering. By the third century AD, Greece had been under formal (let alone informal) Roman control for some two hundred years, decades longer than the North American colonies survived under British dominion, and a century or so longer than the entire lifespan of the Aztec empire. Empires are dynamic, with continual internal shifts and readjustments inevitably calling forth change within all their constituent elements.

**ROMAN PROVINCIAL DIVERSITY**

If empires are dynamic structures, they are also, in almost every case, very diverse in their make-up. Instead of viewing any imperial system as a unitary phenomenon, a more patchwork composition would be closer to the truth. A lack of uniformity in response to conquest and annexation is a recurrent feature in cross-cultural studies, which recognize the existence of “a profound gradation of conditions and policies” across an empire. In the Roman empire, for example, differences between east and west are often highlighted. One attempt to go beyond such relatively crude distinctions appears in debates about the concepts of development and underdevelopment within the empire. In these arguments, some provinces (such as Gaul) are believed to have advanced, while others (such as Africa) were depressed and retarded, each region’s behavior being dependent upon the specific nature of Roman exploitation and the nature of the imperial administrative infrastructure. Objections to such neo-Marxist analyses have been numerous, centering on their “over-modernizing” tone and their poor adaptation from contemporary Third World developmental theory. The quest for an understanding of provincial variability in these terms appears dubious, for in the most basic sense the entire Roman economy was underdeveloped — that is, the mass of the population lived (and had always done so) at or near subsistence level.

Wrongheaded as such inquiries may be in specific details, they at least serve to stimulate the idea of provinces developing in different ways, at different speeds, and subject above all to a specific history of interaction with the ruling power. The physical character and location of each province also is a major determinant of its imperial fate. In recent years, two related conceptualizations of the Roman empire have been put forward, both with individual provinces assigned differing roles. Hopkins envisages three spheres of activity: (i) the cosseted core zone of Italy and Rome, (ii) an inner ring of relatively rich tax-exporting provinces, and (iii) an outer ring of demanding frontier provinces. Garnsey and Sailer likewise propose a threefold division, based on the part each province played in supplying the empire’s needs: the provision of wheat to Rome, of necessities to the army, and of cash for soldiers and officials. Achaia can be placed in that last category, within the “inner ring” of Hopkins. Both formulations stress the relationships which connected a diverse collection of provinces and their interdependent role within the imperial system.

This diversity is reflected in the heterogeneity of responses to Roman domination to be seen in the local agrarian economies absorbed within the empire. As more and more detailed studies of rural conditions in different provincial societies become available, a wide range of patterns has emerged in land tenure systems and in levels of exploitation — some marked by sharp discontinuity with pre-Roman conditions, others by a relatively stable state of affairs. In those areas identified as surplus-
producing regions, marked intensification of production is indeed often seen to take place with the inception of Roman control. Survey evidence testifies to just such a development, for example, in Baetica and in Tripolitania, areas that were both major olive-oil producers and exporters under the early empire. In the Guadalquivir Valley in Baetica, where subsistence agriculture had previously been the norm, villa and farm numbers increased dramatically in the early first century AD, and the size of individual estates is thought to have grown at this time as well. In Libya, semi-nomadic pastoralism of the pre-Roman era gave way to a dramatic explosion in sedentary living and agricultural activity, demanding, among other things, the evolution of sophisticated means of water control. In a sharp break with previous tradition, private land ownership was also encouraged by Roman authorities, cutting across former patterns of tribal ownership.

In the northern frontier provinces, the need to supply the Roman troops stationed in the vicinity often generated a second “army” of producers. As Garnsey and Sailer have noted, however, this was not always a spontaneous development. Direct imperial intervention was sometimes necessary, in order to restructure an area’s rural organization to meet specific military needs. One example of this has been claimed in the forced settlement of Dobrogea in Lower Moesia during the second and third centuries AD. Other parts of this province, on the other hand, seem little affected by the Roman presence. In the neighboring, less exposed province of Dalmatia, the Roman period (100 BC–AD 400) witnessed a significant rise in agricultural exploitation, marked especially by the expansion of cultivated land, yet an underlying continuity has nonetheless been detected between pre- and post-conquest land management and settlement. By comparison, in Britain, no fundamental change in agricultural practice has been associated with the time of the Roman invasion; indigenous cultivation systems were sufficiently productive to accommodate the additional pressures of taxation. Only in the Late Roman era was there a “flowering of the countryside” with an increase in the number of villas and a diversification of agricultural production. The growth of estate sizes, the movement of decuriones to the countryside and the growing pressures of Late Roman taxation are thought to have underwritten this phenomenon. Even this quick examination of a mere handful of regional studies emphasizes the variety of rural landscapes that could be found in different parts of the empire, each formed by the interaction of indigenous social and economic conditions with the specific demands of the imperial power.

For all this heterogeneity in local adaptation and response, however, an overall trend toward increased agricultural production seems to be characteristic of many parts of the empire, a development fostered not only by tributary demands, but by the pax Romana. While this study has raised a number of objections to the standard picture of Achaian “decline,” it does not automatically follow that Greece was therefore like other parts of the Roman empire in the degree of its intensification. To account for this phenomenon, it is helpful to place Greece within its imperial context. Of foremost importance, no doubt, is the province’s location and its cocooned position sheltered from the frontiers of the empire (fig. 1), while other significant factors include such physical characteristics of the province as its small size and limited agricultural potential. Achaia could never serve as an imperial “breadbasket,” as comparison with more fertile provinces (such as Egypt or Baetica) makes glaringly obvious. During the Principate, therefore, underproduction in the region never became a matter for burning imperial concern. The internal structure of the province also affected its economic development: for instance, the number of early imperial “free cities” reduced external pressures upon a not inconceivable portion of the province. Perhaps most important of all, it is clear that imperial strategies in Achaia depended upon the cooperation of local power networks. Decisions taken by the local populations, above all by indigenous elite families, appear largely to have dictated the degree and nature of land use under the empire. The maximization of economic returns from the province, which clearly would have been possible through more active and systematic intervention (as seen in Late Roman times), simply was not an objective during the early empire. Imperial priorities in this minor province were stability and acceptable taxation returns, both ensured through the encouragement of local elite groups.

While recognizing a “gradation of conditions and policies” within the Roman empire, broader categories of provincial behavior can also be identified to some purpose. One such pattern is suggested in John Patterson’s study of Samnium and Lycia, two highland areas blessed with only a limited amount of fertile land and lying, for the most part, “off the beaten track” of the empire. In these regions, Patterson has identified three structurally connected phenomena: settlement change in the countryside (most notably a decline in rural settlement and the growth of large estates), elite mobility (meaning the transfer of the attention of important families to more prestigious locations), and an increase in public building and expenditure in the towns (as a means of elite competition). Urban growth is taken as one consequence of these developments, with the partial in-migration of the dispossessed rural population. Taken together, such developments radically transformed
life within these territories. As Patterson points out, "the isolated mountains of Lycia and Samnium are areas we might least expect to be affected by Roman rule: the fact that the results of Roman control are so apparent even here shows the tremendous impact of the Empire on the Mediterranean basin as a whole."11

There exist a number of useful parallels between Patterson's model and my conclusions about Achaian conditions: the increasing dominance of large estates, the decline in rural settlement, elite interest in supra-local connections and institutions, the dominance of elite expenditure in the provincial economy, the potential growth of towns.12 Above all, both interpretations argue in terms of the redistribution of wealth and population within a region, rather than giving credence to a simple image of decline. The model had originally been formulated to account for the development of highland regions, but it may be extended more broadly, helping to explain the development of areas found to be "relatively unimportant" to the imperial power (being agriculturally limited and lying some distance from the frontiers), yet which were dominated by the presence of active local elite groups. It must be stressed that Samnium, Lycia and Achaia are not identical in their response to imperial incorporation, but to identify similarities between such regions allows some control in understanding processes of imperial and native interaction. Searching for regional variation and regional similarities, drawing on individual provincial studies such as this one, becomes an attractive - and increasingly feasible - study. The Romans themselves were certainly aware of differentiation within their domains, of zones that were central or peripheral to their interests. That, after all, is implicit in the notion of Rome as caput to an immense imperial body.13

**IMAGINARY LANDSCAPES**

As tourists and as students, wealthy and leisured Romans traveled to Greece in pursuit of a world of learning and of culture that they admired and longed to emulate. The interests of individuals in the province were, for the most part, extremely limited, restricted chiefly to places and events where the lessons they sought could be absorbed. Yet one additional attraction was a desire to spend time pleasurably, especially in the company of their elite provincial counterparts. As in the Greek communities of Italy itself, Greece became a place to celebrate the benefits of otium, a place to escape the cares of the world. Both the large cities and smaller communities could offer suitable retreats for visiting Romans and members of the native aristocracy. Plutarch tells us for example:

>Aidepsos in Euboea has become a popular resort for people from all over Greece, particularly because of the place called Hot Springs, which possesses many natural resources for the worthy enjoyment of leisure, and is further embellished by villas and elegant apartment houses. Game and fowl are caught there in abundance, and the sea no less lavishly supplies the market with provisions for the table . . . This resort flourishes especially when spring is at its height, for many continue to come there all that season. They gather together, exempt from every want, and, having the leisure, engage endlessly in conversation. (Quaestiones conviviales 667C-D)

The thermal springs of Aidepsos had been known as early as the fourth century BC, but only in the Roman period did the community flourish; although little formal archaeological work has been done at the site, Roman remains (bathing establishments, sculptures, inscriptions) have been found scattered throughout the modern settlement (which remains a health resort today). Prominent and affluent Romans are known to have found their way to Aidepsos; in 86 BC Sulla, afflicted with gout, "used the hot waters there, taking a holiday at the same time, and passing his time pleasantly with the theatrical artists" (Plutarch, *Sulla* 26.3). In the early first century AD, the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* of the combined province of Moesia, Macedonia and Achaia (p. 16) there received a delegation from the Thessalian *koinon*. Epigraphic evidence demonstrates the presence of the families of *negotiatores* or imperial freedmen as well. Periodic donations reveal that the Roman emperors took an interest in this resort town, one locale where the aristocracy of the empire congregated to play.14

For those interested in leisure pursuits and relaxation, the province of Asia may have offered the visitor more flamboyant pleasures: "Old Greece" first and foremost drew men through the allure of its glorious past, and, for the most part, it was the past in the present the Romans wished to see. To achieve this, they made their way to the important sanctuaries and festivals of the province and to its major cities, above all to Athens. Athens, in welcoming and catering to Roman needs, acquired the aspect of a "college town," a transformation remarked by the classically educated poet Louis MacNeice:

>And Athens became a mere university city . . .
>And the philosopher narrowed his focus, confined
>His efforts to putting his own soul in order
>And keeping a quiet mind.
>And for a thousand years they went on talking,
>Making such apt remarks,
>A race no longer of heroes but of professors . . .
The Glory that was Greece: put it in a syllabus, grade it

(From *Autumn Journal* ix)
Cicero's *De finibus* offers an illuminating vignette of the behavior of Roman visitors to the city. One young aristocrat remarks: "Whether it is a natural instinct or a mere illusion, I can't say; but one's emotions are more strongly aroused by seeing the places that tradition records to have been the favourite resort of men of note in former days, than by hearing their deeds or reading their writings" (5.1.2); the youths go on to compare their particular sights of interest: Plato's Academy, the beach where Demosthenes practiced voice-control, the tomb of Pericles. The thrill of being in Athens lay in the proximity of antique greatness, not in any interaction with contemporary life. Sparta likewise welcomed numerous tourists, who marveled at the revived "Lycurcan customs" practiced there. Such customs were only one aspect of a conscious civic archaism that attracted the curious, in the twentieth century earning the city (in one modern newspaper headline) the title of "World's First Theme Park." In all the country's long history of tourism, the Romans were only "the first travelers to be inspired by the idea of a Greece that no longer was."16

In some aspects of the contemporary literature composed by members of the Greco-Roman élite, conceptions of Greece carry with them a similar air of unreality. Dio Chrysostom, for example, claimed to travel during his exile, spending some time among Greek countrypeople. "At last I arrived in the Peloponnesus, and keeping quite aloof from the cities, spent my time in the country as being quite well worth studying, mingling with herdsmen and hunters, an honest folk of simple habits" (*Oration* 1.51). In this carefully contrived setting, he meets a rustic prophetess, who recounts a tale he is one day himself to tell a great ruler: his oration (*On Kingship*) was probably delivered before Trajan. The *Euboean Discourse*, through its presentation of an idyllic rural community, extolled the virtues of a life lived in harmony with nature. For Dio, placing these episodes in Greece grounded them geographically, while at the same time permitting free use of his imagination in creating highly evocative atmospheres.17 Arcadia is perhaps the best-known example of Roman literary idealization (and manipulation) of the Greek landscape. The land of love, shepherds, poetry and music has nothing, of course, to do with the "real" Arcadia – the landscape studied, most recently, by the Megalopolis survey – but it cannot be entirely divorced from Roman perceptions of Achaia. Arcadia has been viewed, by Snell for example, as a "spiritual landscape," "a land far distant from the sordid realities of the present . . . a far away land overlaid with the golden haze of unreality." Alternatively, Virgil's *Eclogues* can be thought of as employing "an imaginary setting in a poetic world of ideas to insulate and objectify the problems, so that the reader senses, as from a distance, the underlying realities." What emerges from such interpretations is a sense of distance, of Arcadia as a remote and imagined place. Jenkyns has recently remarked, quite rightly, that no fully developed "Arcady" is to be found in Virgil, and that the pastoral world of the *Eclogues* is "teasing, riddling, playfully elusive"; yet at the same time Arcadian allusions cannot be dismissed as simply meaningless.18 To whatever extent Arcadia is evoked in the *Eclogues*, it appears not simply because it was the home of Pan, or because Polybius claimed its inhabitants liked music, or even because of its links to early Rome, but because Roman authors could project their desires or concerns upon that "other" land.

In the imaginations of her conquerors, Greece took whatever roles were assigned, assuming the shape and nature they desired. The ability of the Greco-Roman élite to disregard actual contemporary conditions in Greece, as they walked in (or wrote of) a land of their own imagining, presages the behavior of later visitors to the country. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers to Greece, armed with Homer, Pausanias and their own preoccupations, also saw what they wished to see. Ruins, battlefields and glorious scenery, as well as the deep pleasure of connecting ancient literary texts with physical remains, were the chief delights of these educated individuals (although the opportunity to acquire antiquities scarcely passed unnoticed). Even if some interest in the real landscape and its living people did gradually develop, especially with the growth of European sympathy for the cause of Greek independence, "this aspect hardly ever constituted the principal concern or purpose of their journey":

The travellers visited Greece full of expectations. They were to set foot in the country that could evoke past glories, to recognize a landscape described by Pausanias, to wander in the Arcadia of their dreams, or to identify long-forgotten towns from the existing ruins. In this respect Greece certainly did not disappoint them. For the travellers the country itself was more important than its inhabitants.19

Given the European (and indeed Roman) disdain for the Hellenes of their own time (p. 28), such a focus for these sentimental journeys is hardly surprising.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists also preferred an imaginary landscape to the actual thing, often picturing a moist and softly focused "Arcadian" countryside utterly unlike the sharp reality of the Greek terrain. Classical scenes and ruins in fabulous settings were popular images, catering to the expectations of learned buyers and viewers. If members of the indigenous population were permitted to enter these scenes, they knew their place:

The figures are appropriately small and are integrated harmoniously with the landscape as decorative elements in an aesthetic scheme; dressed in their brightly colored costumes, they either sit nonchalantly with their backs to the spectator
amongst architectural remains, or guard their flocks like Virgilian shepherds. Such pictures are generalized evocations rather than particular images: no contemporary references are appropriate in this dream world. European spectators were thus given an opportunity of escaping into a lost paradise, a happy land of classical perfection which was, nevertheless, geographically real and fairly easily accessible.  

It is all too easy to poke fun at the biases inherent in representations of this sort (e.g. fig. 81). Yet do not modern tourists endlessly photograph the Parthenon, little realizing that the acropolis itself is a modern construction, deliberately stripped of its post-Classical history as something of which to be ashamed? As McNeal rightly says, "Everything has been sacrificed to the age of Pheidias." Although it is rarely acknowledged openly, a kind of imperialist voyeurism still endures today. And it is significant that Umberto Eco, when discussing the ideology underlying the Getty Museum in Malibu, California, evokes the "crocodile tears of the Roman patrician who reproduced the grandeurs of the very Greece that his country had humiliated."  

To recognize certain strong resemblances between modern, early modern and Roman perceptions of this kind returns us to the problem of Roman Greece, that strange mix of glory and despair. At some point, the power of these inherited preconceptions about the country and its people must be ended – or at least explicitly acknowledged. To achieve that, Freeman's anachronistic claim that "no age is without its lesson" (quoted at the head of this chapter) must be faced by ancient historians and archaeologists alike. Nor is this simply an external, European problem. At the time of the Greek Revolution, and with the constitution of the independent nation, legitimacy and ideological vigor were sought through a connection between Classical and modern "Hellas." Leaders of the Revolution drew explicit parallels: "Let us recollect, brave and generous Greeks, the liberty of the classic land of Greece, the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae; let us combat upon the tombs of our ancestors who, to leave us free, fought and died"; the Turks were often compared unfavorably with the barbarous Persians. The Greek uprising, as Michael Herzfeld has termed it, was "revolution as resurrection." The intervening centuries, lived out under various foreign regimes, were to a large extent rejected as a shameful interregnum. This was partly a tactical device to emphasize the pure Hellenic heritage admired by those outside powers whose goodwill was so essential; moreover, it offered one means of encouraging a sense of national pride – for the reminder of defeat was a cruel and seemingly unanswerable taunt:  

Respecting their ancestors their ideas are almost as absurdly inflated as those of an Oxford or Cambridge tutor. This national vanity renders a true Greek the most insufferable animal in the world, and I take great pleasure in pulling him down: I remind him of the subjugation of the Greeks by the Romans and of their degraded situation under the Turks, both of which facts I aver are positive proofs that with all their pretensions to superiority, they are really all an inferior race. To be thought inferior to the Turks, what Greek can endure? Beyond this point, the argument never proceeds.  

Overt arrogance of this sort may no longer be so visible and vocal, but only an acceptance of the country's history under foreign rule can completely defuse such accusations, ending the myth of the Greek "fall from grace."  

In his 1843 preface to the first edition of *Greece under the Romans*, George Finlay wrote that "the same facts afford innumerable conclusions to different individuals and in different ages. History will ever remain inexhaustible." Finlay's "same facts," combined with the fresh insights of archaeological evidence, make possible a new reading of Greece within the empire. The primary advantage of this study lies in its attempt to recover some measure of response to imperial incorporation on the part of the population at large, to make them active participants in their own history, rather than being imagined either as superior beings or as passive
creatures. Undoubtedly these responses were more various and complex than we will ever know; signs both of accommodation and of resistance are visible in the patterns we have traced. Instead of a cultural haven, an imaginary world, or a museum locked in spiritual twilight, Greece under Roman rule must be understood as a society in the process of change, adapting and assimilating itself to a new position within an imperial system—just as countless other subordinate societies have been forced to do throughout the centuries.

Notes

PREFACE

1 Dyson (1981a), 10.

1 THE PROBLEM OF ROMAN GREECE


2 The common treatment of the Byzantine empire as a “fossil” or “ghost” of the Roman world is one result of such perceptions; see Gregory (1984), esp. 268.

3 Mahaffy (1892), 190 wrote of the “senility of the Greeks,” while arguing (pp. 196–7) that Greek history is “intensely modern,” “we have to deal with a people fully developed in its mature life; nay, even in its old age and decadence.” For a discussion of evolutionary frameworks in archaeology, see Cherry (1983a), 35–6; Cohen (1981); Dunnell (1980).

4 Bowersock (1965a), 90–1 echoing Hertzberg (1866–75), 227. For the views of other scholars, see Mahaffy (1890), who speaks of a “fossil society”; Stobart (1911), 261; Thirlwall (1844), 459–69; and Finlay (1857), xii, xviii, 1–106, though this last does admit “the records of enslaved Greece are as much a portion of her national existence as her heroic poetry and her classic history” (p. x). Rostowtzeff too presents the familiar “picture of poverty and gradual depopulation,” though he attributes Greece’s “loss of nerve” to uncertainty of life and general impoverishment, brought about chiefly by warfare and the loss of industry and commerce; he recognizes an improvement in the early years of empire (1941), 604–32, 739–57; (1957), 253–4, 451–2 n. 101. Greek decay was thought to have its roots in the Hellenistic era, when Greece made contact with eastern luxury and lost her most ambitious men to Alexander’s colonies. For a study of the historical preconceptions attached to the Hellenistic period, see Austin (1981); Alcock (in press, a).

5 Grote (1862), 581. Grote, of course, idealized the Athenian democracy; see Turner (1981), 213–34. For other standard histories which ignored the Hellenistic and Roman periods: Beloch (1927); Bury and Meiggs (1975); Glotz (1936); Hammond (1986); Mitford (1820). Mahaffy (1892) staggers on a little