

daughter Matidia (who died in 119) received the title of Augusta in her place. Deification was also conferred on Trajan's father.



## HADRIAN

117-38

HADRIAN (Publius Aelius Hadrianus) (117-38) was born in 76 – probably at Rome, though his family lived in Italica in Baetica, to which they had originally come from Picenum in north-eastern Italy. He was the son of Publius Aelius Hadrianus Afer (meaning 'African', perhaps recalling official service in Mauretania) and of Domitia Paulina of Gades; his father's father, a member of the Roman senate, had married TRAJAN's aunt Ulpia. After Hadrian's father had died in 85, he was entrusted to the care of two guardians, Publius Acilius Attianus and the future emperor Trajan himself, whose childless household he joined.

Enrolling in the army, he served as military tribune (*tribunus militum*) of legions stationed in Lower Pannonia, Lower Moesia and Upper Germany. Then, following Trajan's accession, Hadrian accompanied him to Rome, where in 100 he married Vibia Sabina, the daughter of Trajan's niece Matidia Augusta. Next he served as quaestor, staff officer, legionary commander and praetor in the First and Second Dacian Wars respectively, subsequently becoming governor of Lower Pannonia and, in 108, consul. He was appointed governor of Syria during the Parthian War of the following decade, and in 117 was designated for a second consulship to take effect the following year.

Trajan died at Selinus on 8 August; on the 9th it was announced at Antioch that he had adopted Hadrian as his son and successor; but it was not until the 11th that Trajan's death was reported. His widow Pompeia Plotina endorsed the adoption, but there were grave doubts as to whether the dying emperor had ever performed it – doubts not resolved by coinages which were immediately issued to proclaim the event, including one describing Hadrian as Caesar but not yet Augustus (HADRIANO TRAIANO CAESARI).

Whether he had in fact been adopted or not, the army hailed him as emperor, and the senate (although some of its members felt that they themselves possessed superior qualifications) had no option but to do likewise.

Hadrian addressed the senators with respectful tact, swearing that he would never put any of them to death and requesting the deification of his predecessor. Then, however, he struck out on his own, putting into effect an eastern military policy in direct contrast to Trajan's. He was convinced by the recent widespread Mesopotamian disturbances that his predecessor's aggressive endeavours had outrun the Empire's financial and human resources; so he abruptly abandoned Trajan's expansionist ambitions, renouncing his newly created provinces and leaving their territories (insofar as Roman authority prevailed there any longer) in the hands of client-kings. On the northern frontiers, however, to which he next proceeded in person to suppress the Roxolani and other Sarmatian peoples (who were of Iranian origin), he confirmed Trajan's annexation of Dacia, which was subdivided into two provinces and then into three.

Even before his intentions about the eastern frontier were fully known, there had been signs of dangerous internal opposition to his régime. His former guardian Attianus, now praetorian prefect, warned him of three powerful figures who might well become seditious. One of them, Gaius Calpurnius Crassus – who had also been no friend of Trajan's – met his death, it was claimed, without instructions from Hadrian. As for the other two possible conspirators, the emperor preferred to ignore them; but in 118 there were reports of a far more serious plot, which caused Hadrian, spending the winter at Nicomedia in Bithynia, to hasten to Rome. By then, however, the senate itself had dealt with the matter by executing four eminent ex-consuls who had been intimate with Trajan, including the military man Lusius Quietus (removed by Hadrian from Judaea) and the wealthy and well-connected Gaius Avidius Nigrinus, who had been considered a possible successor to Hadrian. It is probable that this group had objected strongly to the new emperor's frontier retreat. Hadrian asserted, once again, that he had never sanctioned or known of their deaths, and put the blame on Attianus, who was replaced but promoted to consular rank. The senators remained sceptical and unforgiving, in the belief that Hadrian had broken his promise never to execute any of their number.

Before long Hadrian began to make journeys round the Empire, and he continued to do so, becoming the greatest of all imperial travellers. Between 121 and 132 he spent an enormous amount of time personally touring the length and breadth of the provinces, discovering the problems of their populations at first hand, gaining their confidence and satisfying their needs and requests. Then, during the next year or so, he issued a varied and unparalleled series of coinages celebrating all these regions of the Roman world by name, and distinguishing them by different designs that personified

the salient features of each. The coins refer to his arrival (*adventus*) at the various centres (depicted by scenes of religious sacrifice) or stress his role as their restorer (*restitutor*), raising a kneeling female figure to her feet. On these issues the provinces are represented as women of peaceful or warlike appearance, wearing the costume of their own country and carrying its attributes. Stress is deliberately laid on the local characteristic: the cities of Asia, the games of Greece, the ibis of Egypt, the curved sword of Asia.

Hadrian was the first occupant of the throne to see his territories from any but a purely Roman standpoint. The Empire was to be a living organism not only at its centre but also in all its parts; not merely a collection of conquered, subject lands but a commonwealth in which each individual district and nation possessed its own proud identity. His keen, incessant observation of local conditions was prompted by a desire to show that he appreciated provincial aspirations – of which he himself sought to be regarded as the universal symbol and guide.

Above all else, Hadrian was determined to maintain a constant, expert contact with the armies that he visited, in order to ensure that they remained in a condition of maximum skilled efficiency and readiness. For these armies were now facing a somewhat novel situation. The policy of avoiding external expansion meant an increased reliance on the existing frontiers, which in turn involved a major strengthening of the frontier defences. In consequence, more than ever before the military system of the empire was based on armies permanently located on its borders, along which ever more effective defence works were built. One of the first fruits of this policy, following a minor reverse on the British frontier, was what is today the best-preserved of all the Empire's fortifications, Hadrian's Wall in northern Britain which extends from the Tyne to the Solway – partly of stone and partly of turf, punctuated by towered gates and turrets, fronted by a V-shaped ditch and manned by fifteen thousand auxiliaries watching over the still unconquered Caledonian north. In Germany and Raetia, too, he erected defences wherever no natural barriers, such as rivers, were to be found. These ramparts, including a two-hundred-mile section of the German frontier in the Rhine-Danube re-entrant, consisted of wooden palisades set in steep-sided trenches and fastened together by cross-planking.

Hadrian's concentration on frontier defence created a more and more stationary situation, in which the civilian settlements beside the fortress-camps grew in size and in economic prosperity. Moreover, the peacetime tasks of a non-military nature, which the Roman soldiers themselves undertook as part of their duties, were becoming increasingly varied and extensive: we find them looking after horses, requisitioning clothes, escorting the grain supply, quarrying stones, watching cattle. The growth of these non-operational tasks was encouraged because the legionary forces, which generally stood to the rear of the frontier line fulfilling the role of a reserve, were not normally available

for transfer *en bloc* from one territory to another. Hadrian expanded Trajan's regular or irregular units (*numeri*), converting them into permanent units of the Roman army. This evident distinction between mobile and static troops pointed the way to the division between field and frontier forces which was to take place in the later Empire. Nevertheless, mobility was maintained by temporary transfers of smaller detachments ( *vexillationes* ) from one legionary base to another.

To all these troops Hadrian, on the occasion of his visits, devoted an unflagging personal attention which neglected no possible aspect or detail. He was insistent on military discipline, uniquely celebrating this virtue on his coinage (*DISCIPLINA AVGVSTI*); nevertheless, his recurrent presence among his armies, organizing and sharing their manœuvres and reviews and making himself acquainted with their lives, habits, billets and eating conditions, greatly endeared him to the soldiery. His coinages in honour of the provinces included a unique series commemorating each of his ten principal armies, endowing each with a special character of its own (a numismatic innovation abandoned by his successors, who probably feared it might encourage separatist tendencies).

Fighting during Hadrian's reign was infrequent. But there was one serious war towards the end of his life, a Jewish outbreak – not among the Jews of the Dispersion, as in the previous reign, but a Second Revolt in the homeland of Judaea itself, repeating the rebellion crushed by *VESPASIAN* and *TITUS*. For Hadrian, whose cosmopolitan outlook was unsympathetic to Jewish separatism, had established a Roman colony and temple in Jerusalem, now renamed *Aelia Capitolina* after his own *Aelian* family;\* and this foundation caused great anger among the Jews, who in 132 broke into open insurrection under an inspiring leader, *Simeon Bar Kosiba* (nicknamed *Bar Kochba*, 'son of a star'). The rebels took Jerusalem and issued their own coinage, and it took three years to overcome their uprising. During this period the emperor visited Judaea, once if not twice, and he is likely to have been present when Jerusalem finally fell in 134. The surviving militants were rounded up at *Bethar* the following year, and severe measures of reprisal included a total prohibition of circumcision.

Hadrian's heavy-handed method of dealing with the Jews was untypical, for his imperial administration in general, though not particularly innovative, was careful and helpful. Following on from Trajan's extravagant military expenditure, he took a particular interest in public finance, seeking not so much niggardly retrenchment or confiscation (indeed he burnt the records of huge quantities of bad debts to the treasury) as the elimination of unnecessary costs.

Hadrian was also deeply and beneficially interested in the law, appointing a famous African jurist, *Lucius Salvius Julianus*, to undertake the collection and

\*Or this colony was founded after the revolt.

revision of the successive edicts that the annually elected praetors had for centuries pronounced at the outset of their years of office. Julianus' publication of these edicts helped the poor (*humiliores*), who, although always discriminated against in the courts in favour of the privileged *honestiores*, could at least now achieve some understanding of the legal safeguards to which they were entitled.

Roman law, under Hadrian's initiatives, was entering upon its Golden Age, the most creative and influential period of its history. Jurisdiction, too, displayed significant progress, exemplified by the appointment of four circuit judges to administer law in Italy (a well-meaning measure, despite protests that it weakened the authority of the senate). Moreover, to improve the standard of justice in his own court at Rome, Hadrian gave more formal shape to the group of legal assessors from whom rulers had habitually sought counsel, incorporating them into the imperial council or *consilium principis*. This now assumed a more formal character, in place of the friends whom previous emperors, from AUGUSTUS onwards, had called together less officially for advice. Salvius Julianus, pre-eminent among these advisers of Hadrian, became a leading senator and was elected to a consulship in 175; the assessors also included knights. Nor was this the only important employment Hadrian found for men of this rank, since he often appointed them to the principal secretaryships of the imperial bureaucracy, which took increasingly effective shape. His relations with the senate, on the other hand, unsatisfactory from the outset, became more and more strained as his reign drew to a close, partly, no doubt, because of a deterioration in his health – tuberculosis and dropsy have been conjectured – which affected his temper as well.

The succession was a major problem, for Hadrian, whose relations with his wife Vibia Sabina (who died in 128) were probably cool, had no heir. In 136 the emperor adopted as his son and presumptive successor an elegant, luxurious senator in his mid-thirties, Lucius Ceionius Commodus, thenceforward known as Lucius Aelius Caesar; and he was appointed to the governorship of Pannonia. In the same year, Hadrian ordered the deaths of his aged brother-in-law Julius Ursus Servianus and his grandson, who was being groomed, the emperor suspected, as a rival candidate to Aelius. In January, 138, however, Aelius died. A month later Hadrian adopted ANTONINUS PIUS; and in order to provide for the succession on an even more long-term basis he required Antoninus to adopt two sons in his turn, MARCUS AURELIUS and LUCIUS VERUS (the son of Aelius Caesar), aged seventeen and seven respectively. Then followed the death of Hadrian himself at Baiae, on 10 July. He was buried in the mausoleum which he had erected for the purpose at Rome (and which has survived as the Castel Sant' Angelo). The senate accepted Antoninus' request that he should be deified, but only with reluctance (see ANTONINUS).

The character of Hadrian reflected the key features of the age in an

accentuated form. He was an initiate of religious Mysteries, and took a keen interest in astrology and magic. He shared the contemporary tastes not only for indefatigable sightseeing but also for literary activity, with a flavour of archaism: he enjoyed the company of scholars, and was himself something of a writer; a short, moving poem he addressed to his soul still survives. He was also a good painter, and his interest in artistic matters inspired a whole new trend of Greek-influenced Hadrianic Art. From now on imperial portrait-busts have curly beards, and often show a colourful, idealistic style, based on strongly contrasted highlights and shadows. A few portraits succeeded in reproducing the energetic nervousness of Hadrian himself. But more remarkable are the statues and heads of his favourite youth Antinous, whose dramatic death in the Nile in 130 led to an astonishing wave of religious feeling throughout the east – where he was enrolled in the ranks of the gods. For the portrayal of the new deity, the classical Greek tradition which Hadrian so profoundly venerated was summoned up from the past once again to perpetuate Antinous' dreamy gaze and voluptuous contours, expressing sorrow for youth which passes and beauty which perishes.

Hadrian's aesthetic aims and ambitions also found memorable expression in the architecture of his reign, and most of all in the extensive residence he created for himself on the southern olive-clad slopes beside Tibur in the Roman countryside. The group of loosely related or independent buildings which constituted this 'Villa of Hadrian' was intended to recall the sites and buildings which the emperor had admired on his travels, but this was only a modest pretext for a whole collection of bold and original forms. The creations of some gifted and experimental architect, inspired by the emperor's enquiring, restless brain, these adventurous structures ingeniously exploit the potentialities of an uneven site, displaying total technical mastery of their concrete, brick-faced material. Curvilinear shapes of many varieties abound; there is hardly a straight or obvious line anywhere to be seen.

With the building of Hadrian's Pantheon in the Field of Mars at Rome, his architectural revolution reached its zenith. Completely reshaping an earlier temple (erected by Augustus' friend Agrippa), Hadrian's architect erected a circular building; shrines of this shape had been known from very ancient times, but the discovery of concrete had now made it possible to create round structures of infinitely bolder dimensions and design. Behind a huge, rectangular, colonnaded portico stands the rotunda itself, as broad as it is high. Beneath its floating dome, lit by a sun-like central opening and spangled by reliefs of stars, the interior wall is broken by rectangular and semi-circular recesses and vaulted niches, confidently lightening the weight of the concrete framework. The same assurance is displayed by the five ranges of coffering inserted in the dome, which was so strong that it survived, intact, even the removal of its gilded bronze tiles in 663. The Pantheon was perhaps the first major monument ever to be composed as an interior: the decisive factor had

ceased to be the solid masonry and was now, instead, the space it enclosed. Unlike the temples of the Greeks, which did not admit worshipping congregations to their interiors, Hadrian's Pantheon was a building for people to assemble in.

In a different part of the capital, near the Forum Romanum, Hadrian erected another spectacular shrine of exceptional size, the Temple of Venus and Rome. He also built a huge temple of the deified Trajan, in Trajan's Forum. And at Athens, too, he was responsible for construction work of major importance, notably the rebuilding, on a massive scale, of the Temple of Olympian Zeus. This exhibited to perfection the thought of Hadrian, who although truly Roman was so markedly phil-Hellenic.



## ANTONINUS PIUS

138–61

ANTONINUS PIUS (Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Antoninus) (138–61) was born in 86 at Lanuvium in Latium. His family had come from Nemausus in southern Gaul, but moved to Rome where his grandfather and father (both named Titus Aurelius Fulvus) each attained consulships, the former receiving this honour on two occasions in addition to the office of city prefect. The emperor's mother was Arria Fadilla, whose father Arrius Antoninus, also from Southern Gaul, had likewise twice been consul. When NERVA became emperor, he was said to have offered the new ruler his condolences.

Antoninus spent his youthful years at Lorium, not far from Rome; after his father's early death his education was arranged by his two grandfathers. In his twenties he married Annia Galeria Faustina (Faustina the elder), daughter of Marcus Annii Verus. After holding the quaestorship and praetorship he became consul in 130. Shortly afterwards he was appointed by HADRIAN as one of the four circuit judges whose duty was to administer law in Italy; he acted in this capacity in Etruria and Umbria, where he owned extensive land. As proconsul of Asia (at some date between 133 and 136), he earned an

excellent reputation, and on returning to Rome was appointed a member of the reconstituted imperial council. When Lucius Aelius Caesar, Hadrian's adoptive son and heir, died in January 138, the emperor's choice fell on Antoninus, who, after prolonged consideration, accepted the prospect, and was adopted by Hadrian on 25 February, receiving the tribunician power and a post of supreme administrative power (*imperium*) soon afterwards. Coins were issued for him under the name of Titus Aelius Caesar Antoninus. At the same time he himself was required to adopt MARCUS AURELIUS and LUCIUS VERUS, who eventually became his successors. Throughout Hadrian's illness during the months that followed, Antoninus was the virtual ruler of the State, and when the emperor died on 10 July he peacefully ascended the throne.

His reign began with a certain amount of embarrassment, because when Antoninus requested the deification of his predecessor and the ratification of his official actions, the senate proved unresponsive on both counts, remembering that Hadrian had diminished its authority and executed some of its members. Finally, however, for fear of army intervention if the new régime suffered a setback, the senators complied – in return for the abolition of the unpopular circuit judges in the Italian peninsula. Furthermore, even if some of them regarded Antoninus as no better than themselves in origin and talents, his deferential attitude to their order soon prompted them to confer on him the unusual title of 'Pius', honouring his religious and patriotic dutifulness. In accordance with custom, Antoninus at first thought fit to refuse the title of Father of the Country (*Pater Patriae*), but in 139 he accepted the appellation, together with a second consulship, followed by a third and fourth in 140 and 145.

The *Historia Augusta* lays great stress on Antoninus' love of peace, and it is true that his reign was largely peaceful – yet not entirely so, for some of the provinces experienced unrest, and sections of the frontiers were uneasy. In northern Britain the suppression of an uprising was followed by the expansion of imperial territory, marked by the construction of a new rampart, the Wall of Antoninus, extending for thirty-seven miles from the Firth of Forth to the River Clyde. The wall was of turf, standing on a cobbled foundation fourteen feet wide, behind a deep ditch. The garrison was stationed in small forts only about two miles apart, instead of the larger and more widely separated forts of Hadrian's Wall. However, trouble fomented by the tribe of the Brigantes in about 154 necessitated the temporary withdrawal of certain troops from Antoninus' defences, a step which resulted in the destruction of forts by raiding tribes. These events apparently prompted Antoninus to evict some or most of the population from between the two walls. Transplanted to Germany, they were settled on either side of the River Neckar and required to assist in the defence of the adjoining frontier, which, as in Britain, was pushed forward and marked by forts, standing behind a palisade equipped with stone watch-towers.