

CLAH4006

**From Village to Empire: An
Introduction to the History of Rome**

Hadrian (AD 117-138)

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Hadrian

- Publius Aelius Hadrianus.
- Born c. AD 76 in Italica in Baetica.
- In AD 85 Hadrian becomes ward of Trajan and Attianus.
- Serves as a military tribune in Pannonia, Lower Moesia, and Upper Germany.
- Accompanies Trajan to Rome when he become emperor.
- Campaigns in Dacian wars.
- Becomes governor of Lower Pannonia in AD 107.
- C. AD 114 appointed governor of Syria.
- Reigns from 10/11th of August AD 117 to 10th July AD 138.



Hadrian's Adoption

- Trajan dies in Cilicia on 8th of Augustus, on 9th Hadrian (in Antioch) is announced as adopted successor.
- Death of Trajan is announced on 11th of Augustus.



Hadrian, AR denarius, 117 AD. IMP CAES TRAIAN HADRIAN OPT AVG GER DAC, laureate head right with slight drapery on the left shoulder / PARTHIC DIVI TRAIAN AVG F P M TR P COS P P, ADOPTIO in ex, Trajan, holding scroll, and Hadrian standing right and left, clasping hands. **RIC II, 3b.**



Hadrian Denarius. 117 AD. IMP CAES TRAIAN HADRIANO OPT AVG GER DAC, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust right / PARTHIC DIVI TRAIAN AVG F P M TR P COS PP, Trajan and Hadrian standing right and left, clasping hands, **ADOP** in ex - **RSC 4.**

“Hadrian had not been adopted by Trajan; he was merely a compatriot and former ward of his, was of near kin to him and had married his niece... he had received no distinguishing mark of favour from Trajan, such as being one of the first to be appointed consul. He became Caesar and emperor owing to the fact that when Trajan died childless, Attianus, a compatriot and former guardian of his, together with Plotina, who was in love with him, secured him the appointment, their efforts being facilitated by his proximity and by his possession of a large military force. My father, Apronianus, who was governor of Cilicia, had ascertained accurately the whole story about him... in particular stating that the death of Trajan was concealed for several days in order that Hadrian's adoption might be announced first. This was shown also by Trajan's letters to the senate, for they were signed, not by him, but by Plotina, although she had not done this in any previous instance.” – **Dio Cassius 69.1.**

Securing Senatorial Approval

“...he wrote to the senate asking that body to confirm the sovereignty to him and forbidding the passing either then or later of any measure (as was so often done) that contained any special honour for him, unless he should ask for it at some time... In a certain letter that Hadrian wrote, in which were many high-minded sentiments, he swore that he would neither do anything contrary to the public interest nor put to death any senator, and he invoked destruction upon himself if he should violate these promises in any wise.” – **Dio Cassius 69.2.2, 4.**

Early Years

- Hadrian arrive in Rome in AD 118 – holds Parthian triumph in Trajan's name.
 - Has to deal with threat to Moesia from Sarmatae and Roxoini.
- “...who were slain at the beginning were Palma and Celsus, Nigrinus and Lusius, the first two for the alleged reason that they had conspired against him during a hunt...” **Dio Cassius 69.2.5.**

Winning Popularity



Hadrian Denarius. IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG, laureate head right / P M TR P COS III, LIBERAL AVG III below, Hadrian seated on platform distributing money to citizen in toga, assistant to right, Liberalitas in background - **RSC 910**.

“...upon many communities and private citizens, senators and knights — he bestowed large sums (of money)...”

– **Dio Cassius 69.5.1.**

“...he aided the allied and subject cities most munificently...” – **(69.5.2).**

“On coming to Rome he cancelled the debts that were owing to the imperial treasury and to the public treasury of the Romans, fixing a period of fifteen years from the first to the last of which this remission was to apply.” – **(69.8.1²).**

Rebuilding

“In Rome, Hadrian rebuilt the Pantheon, the Saepta, the Basilica of Neptune, many temples, the Forum of Augustus, and the Baths of Agrippa. He dedicated all of these buildings in the names of their original builders.” – ***SHA Hadrian 19.10.***



Consolidation of the Empire

- Trajan abandons Mesopotamia and Armenia.
- Dacia kept as a province.

“Thus it came about that the Romans in conquering Armenia, most of Mesopotamia, and the Parthians had undergone their hardships and dangers all for naught, for even the Parthians rejected Parthamaspates and began to be ruled once more in their own fashion.” – **Dio Cassius 68.33.**



The Travelling Emperor

“So fond was he of travelling that he wanted to learn further, at first hand, about everything that he had read concerning the different parts of the world.” – ***SHA Hadrian 17.***

“Hadrian travelled through one province after another, visiting the various regions and cities and inspecting all the garrisons and forts. Some of these he removed to more desirable places, some he abolished, and he also established some new ones.” – **Dio Cassius 69.9.1.**

Visiting the Provinces

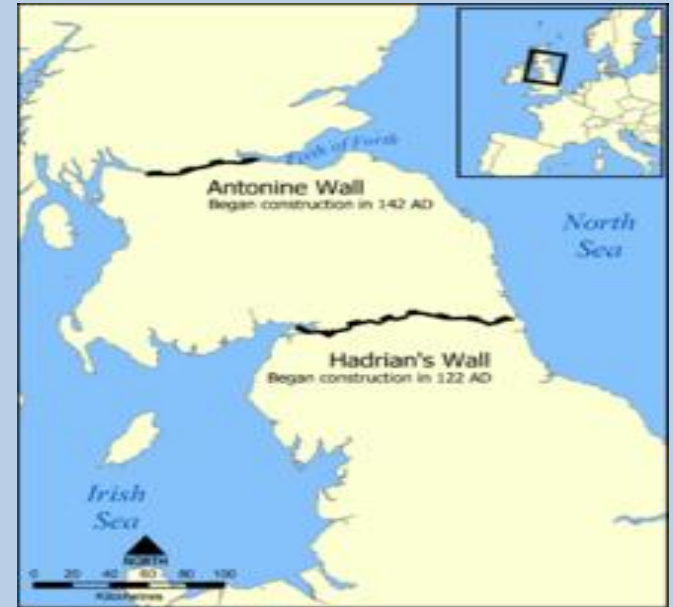
- **Provincial tour in AD 121-5**, taking in Gaul, Germany, Raetia, Noricum (Danube), Britain, Spain, Mauretania, Syria, the Black Sea, across Asia Minor, then 9 months in Greece.
- **A second provincial tour in AD 128-134**— Africa, Mauretania, Numidia, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Judaea, Egypt, back to Asia Minor and Greece, then Judaea again.

Instituting Discipline

“He personally viewed and investigated absolutely everything, not merely the usual trappings of camps, such as weapons, engines, trenches, ramparts and palisades, but also the private affairs of every one, but of the men serving in the ranks and of the officers themselves, — their lives, their quarters and their habits, — and he reformed and corrected in many cases practices and arrangements for living that had become too luxurious. He drilled the men for every kind of battle, honouring some and reproving others, and he taught them all what should be done. And in order that they should be benefited by observing him, he everywhere led a rigorous life and either walked or rode on horseback on all occasions, never once at this period setting foot in either a chariot or a four-wheeled vehicle.” — **Dio Cassius 69.9.2-3.**

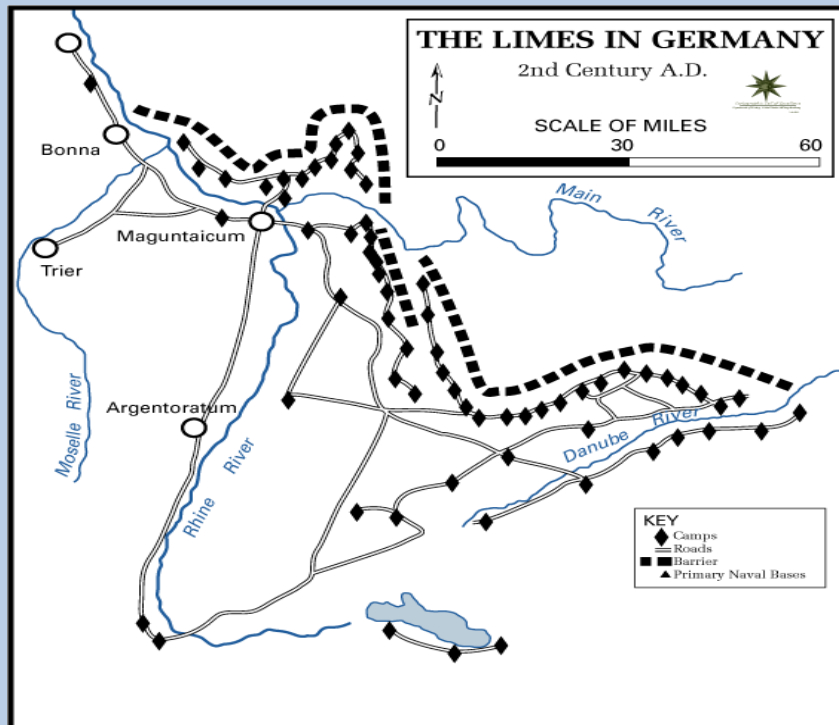
Securing the Frontier - Britain

- Revolt of Selgovae and Novantae of southern Scotland and Brigantes, but insurrection suppressed by Hadrian in AD 118.
- Hadrian visits Britain in AD 122, along with new governor Platorius Nepos.
- Army order to build a 80 mile long wall from the Tyne to the Solway, interspersed with forts, mile-castles and turrets.
- Wall at least 8 feet thick and 12 ft high.
- Large ditch in front of the wall (north) of 27 ft wide and 15 ft deep.
- *Vallum* (ditch) 20 ft wide and 10 ft deep behind the wall.
- Mostly complete by AD 126.



Securing the Frontier - Germany

- Defensive line bridging the gap between Rhine and Danube.



“During this period and on many other occasions also, in many regions where the barbarians are held back not by rivers but by artificial barriers, Hadrian shut them off by means of high stakes planted deep in the ground and fastened together in the manner of a palisade...” – **SHA Hadrian 12.6.**

Antinous

Death of Antinous

“In Egypt also he rebuilt the city named henceforth for Antinous... he had been a favourite of the emperor and had died in Egypt, either by falling into the Nile, as Hadrian writes, or, as the truth is, by being offered in sacrifice. For Hadrian, as I have stated, was always very curious and employed divinations and incantations of all kinds. Accordingly, he honoured Antinous, either because of his love for him or because the youth had voluntarily undertaken to die...” – **Dio Cassius 69.11.2-3.**



Bar Kokhba Revolt

AD 132-35

- Initially Hadrian upholds the traditional rights of the Jewish communities.
- In AD 131 edict against circumcision.
- Foundation of a Roman colony at Jerusalem, “Aelia Capitolina” – with shrine to Jupiter Capitolinus.
- Uprising breaks out in Judaea in AD 132, under leadership of **Bar Kokhba**.

“At Jerusalem he founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of the god he raised a new temple to Jupiter. This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there.” – **Dio Cassius 69.12.**

Course of the War

- Use of attrition and gorilla warfare by Jewish rebels.
- Methodical suppression of rebellion by Romans.

“... all Judaea had been stirred up, and the Jews everywhere were showing signs of disturbance, were gathering together, and giving evidence of great hostility to the Romans, partly by secret and partly by overt acts... Severus did not venture to attack his opponents in the open at any one point, in view of their numbers and their desperation, but by intercepting small groups, thanks to the number of his soldiers and his under-officers, and by depriving them of food and shutting them up, he was able, rather slowly, to be sure, but with comparatively little danger, to crush, exhaust and exterminate them. Very few of them in fact survived. Fifty of their most important outposts and nine hundred and eighty-five of their most famous villages were razed to the ground. 580,000 men were slain in the various raids and battles, and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out. Thus nearly the whole of Judaea was made desolate...” – **Dio Cassius 69.13-14.**

Hadrian and Culture

Hadrian the Polymath

“By nature he was fond of literary study in both the Greek and Latin languages, and has left behind a variety of prose writings as well as compositions in verse. For his ambition was insatiable, and hence he practised all conceivable pursuits, even the most trivial; for example, he modelled and painted, and declared that there was nothing pertaining to peace or war, to imperial or private life, of which he was not cognizant.” – **Dio Cassius 69.3.1.**

“In poetry and in letters Hadrian was greatly interested. In arithmetic, geometry, and painting he was very expert. Of his knowledge of flute-playing and singing he even boasted openly. He ran to excess in the gratification of his desires, and wrote much verse about the subjects of his passion. He composed love-poems too... although he was very deft at prose and at verse and very accomplished in all the arts, yet he used to subject the teachers of these arts, as though more learned than they, to ridicule, scorn, and humiliation – ***SHA Hadrian 14.8-9, 15.10.***

Philhellenism

- Hadrian visits Athens in AD 110/111 – seems to become friends with Epictetus the stoic philosopher.
- Elected archon of Athens in AD 111/112.
- Hadrian undertakes a wider tour of Greece in AD 124-25. Visits Athens and many cities in the Peloponnese.
- Hadrian completes the enclosure of a vast temple of Olympian Zeus/Jupiter in Athens, and an aqueduct leading into Athens from Mt Parnes.

“...He then grew rather deeply devoted to Greek studies, to which his natural tastes inclined so much that some called him ‘Greekling.’” - ***SHA Hadrian 1.5.***



Hadrian AE Sestertius. HADRIANVS AVG COS III P P, laureate bust right / RESTITVTOR ACHAEA, the emperor standing left in toga, raising Achaëa, kneeling right, vase between them – **RIC 938; BMC 1781.**

Hadrian: The Later Years

Strained Relations with the Senate

“And yet he was always ready to listen to whispers about his friends, and in the end he treated almost all of them as enemies, even the closest and even those whom he had raised to the highest of honours...” - ***SHA Hadrian 15.2.***

“Hadrian was hated by the people, in spite of his generally excellent reign, on account of the murders committed by him at the beginning and end of his reign, since they had been unjustly and impiously brought about. Yet he was so far from being of a bloodthirsty disposition that even in the case of some who clashed with him he thought it sufficient to write to their native places the bare statement that they did not please him.” – **Dio Cassius 23.2.**

Securing the Succession

- Hadrian adopts L. Ceionius Commodus Verus in AD 138 – dies at beginning of AD 138.
- Hadrian subsequently selects T. Aurelius Antoninus – high ranking senator.

“So it was that Antoninus became emperor. And since he had no male offspring, Hadrian adopted for him Commodus' son Commodus, and, in addition to him, Marcus Annius Verus; for he wished to appoint those who were afterwards to be emperors for as long a time ahead as possible. This Marcus Annius, earlier named Catilius, was a grandson of Annius Verus who had been consul thrice and prefect of the city. And though had kept urging Antoninus to adopt them both, yet he preferred Verus on account of his kinship and his age and because he was already giving indication of exceptional strength of character.” – **Dio Cassius 69.21.**

Death and Deification

- Hadrian dies on the 10th July AD 138.

“... He had lived sixty-two years, five months and nineteen days, and had been emperor twenty years and eleven months. He was buried near the river itself, close to the Aelian bridge; for it was there that he had prepared his tomb, since the tomb of Augustus was full, and from this time no body was deposited in it.” - **Dio Cassius 23.1.**

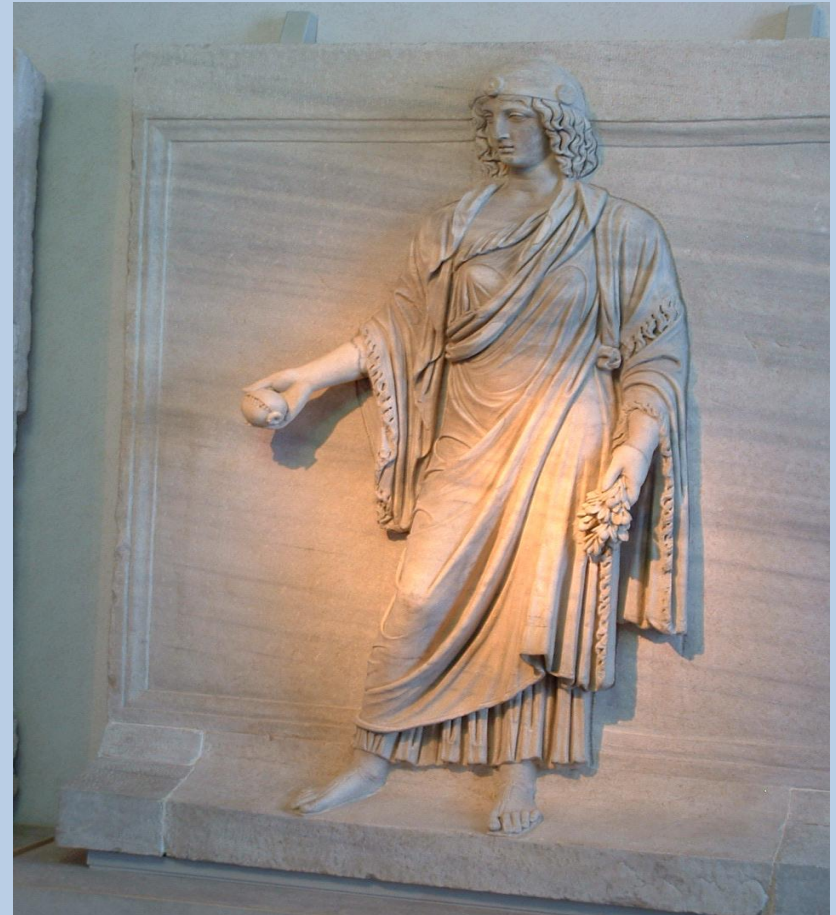
“...the senate persisted for a long time in its refusal to vote him the usual honours...” – **(23.3).**

“Much was said against him after his death, and by many persons. The senate wished to annul his acts, and would have refrained from naming him "the Deified" had not Antoninus requested it. Antoninus, moreover, finally built a temple for him at Puteoli to take the place of a tomb, and he also established a quinquennial contest and flamens and sodales and many other institutions which appertain to the honour of one regarded as a god. It is for this reason, as has been said before, that many think that Antoninus received the surname Pius.” - ***SHA Hadrian 27.***

Hadrianeum

- Temple dedicated to Hadrian in AD 145.
- Contains 21 figures of provinces in high relief panels.

“Of the works built by Antoninus Pius, the following remain in Rome, the Temple of Hadrian, in memory of his father...” – ***SHA Antoninus Pius 8.2.***



Representation of the province of Egypt?

Useful Reading

- Birley, A. R. (1997) *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (London: Routledge). – read chapter 7, 8 and 20.