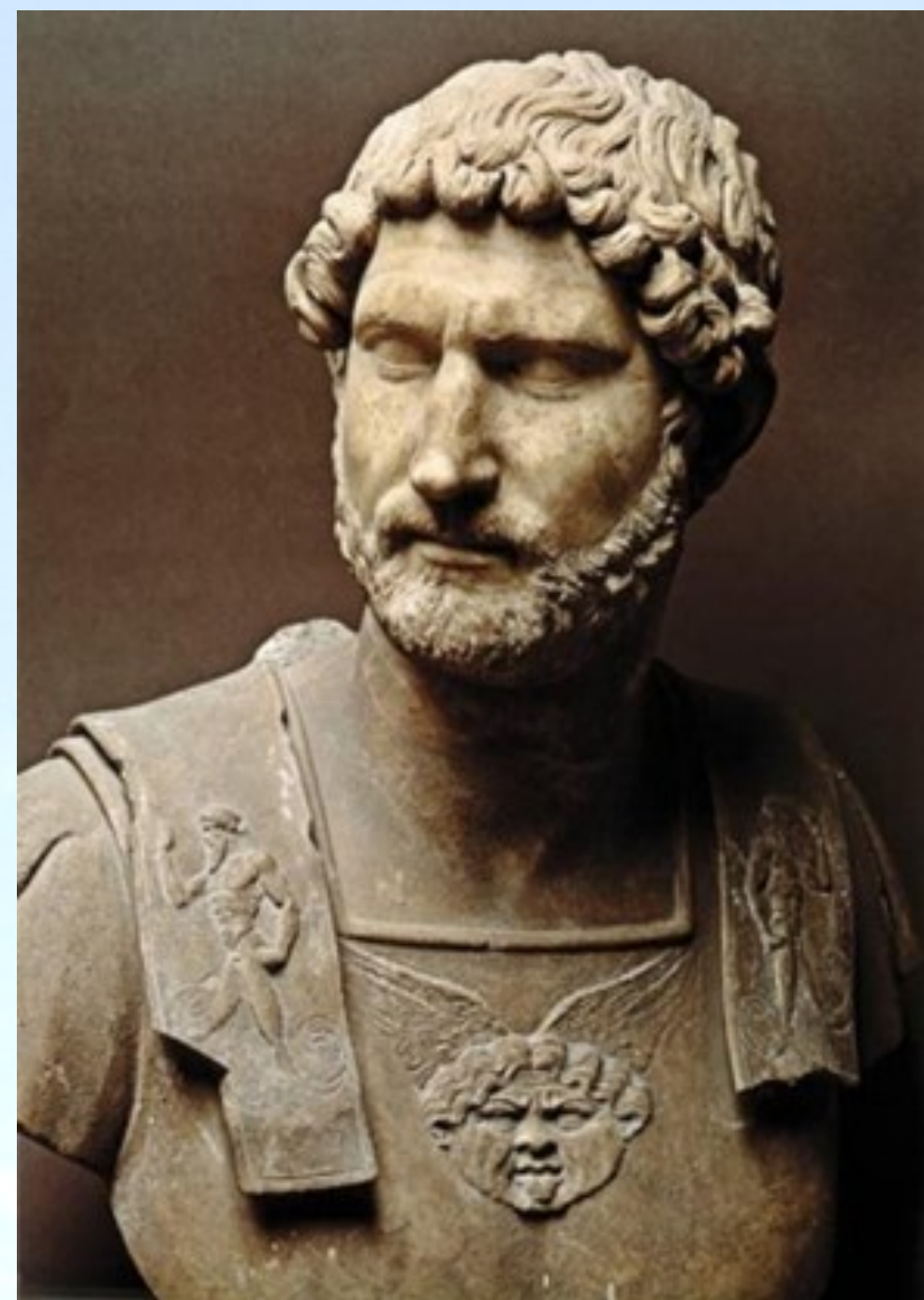
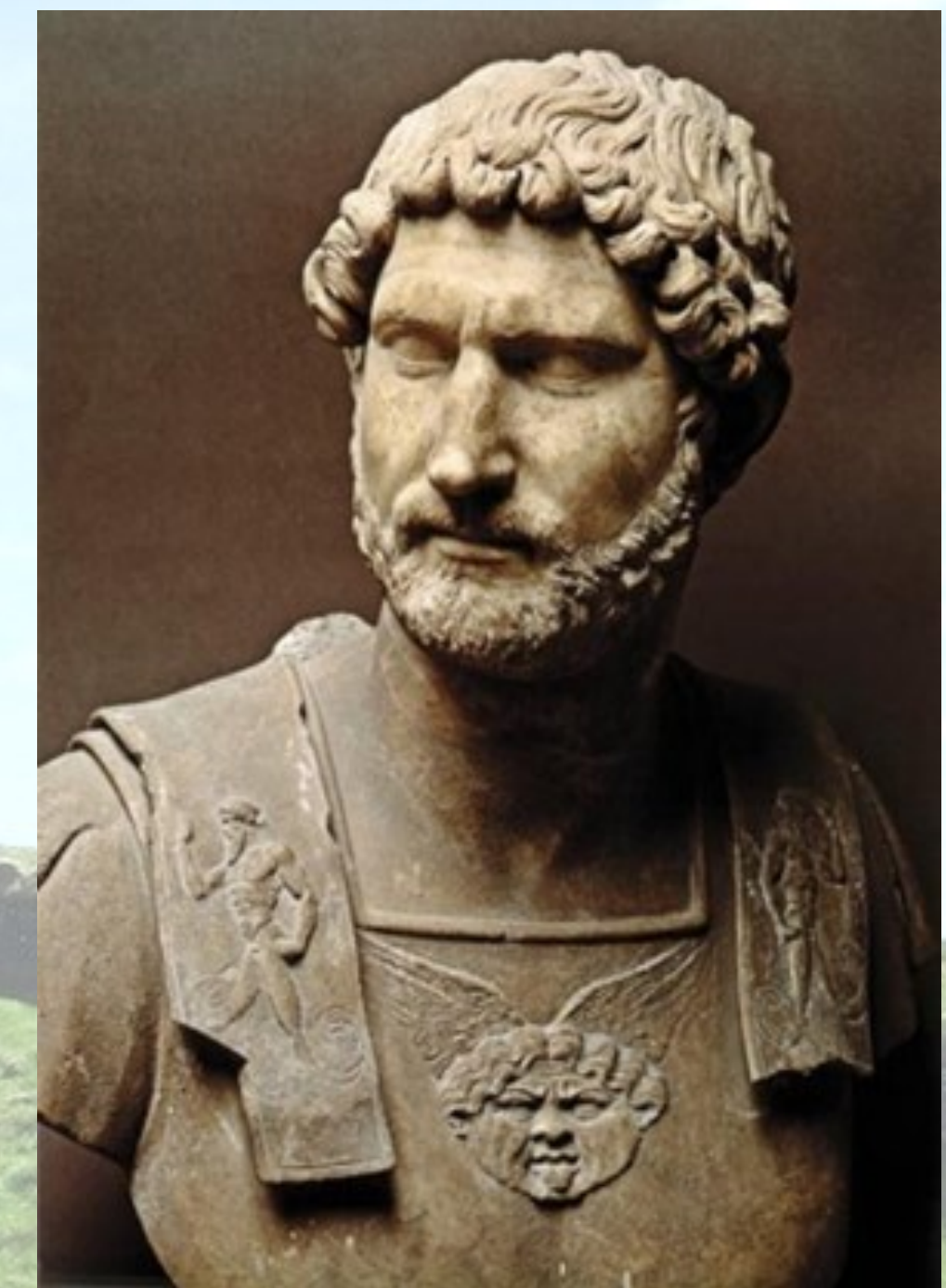




Emperor Hadrian

76 AD to 138 AD

Reigned from 10 August 117 AD until 10 July 138 AD



Early Life

- Hadrian was educated in Italica Hispania (his hometown) before leaving for the capital aged 14.
- ‘When Trajan was consul in 91, Hadrian began to follow the traditional career of a Roman senator, advancing through a conventional series of posts. He was military tribune with three Roman legions.’ (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).
- Hadrian’s move towards the position of emperor began under the rule of Emperor Nerva and continued under Trajan.
- Hadrian was Trajan’s nephew and became his adoptive son after Trajan’s wife Pompeia Plotina did not conceive a male heir.

Rise to power

- Hadrian was a military consul three times and took part in numerous campaigns.
- After Trajan’s death, his widow Pompeia announced that her husband had chosen Hadrian to be his successor shortly before his death.
- Trajan’s wife signed the papers of succession and it is believed that it was her and not her husband the emperor who was responsible for Hadrian’s adoption
- The military and the senate approved of Hadrian’s appointment making him the new emperor.
- Hadrian’s popularity is often attested to his absence from Rome during the majority of his reign
- He was devoted to his army and often slept and ate amongst the common soldiers

Hadrian in Britain

- Hadrian arrived in Britain in 122 AD following two years of major rebellion.
- The emperor decided ‘in AD 122 that the Empire should be given artificial boundaries where no natural ones existed; and that in Britain the boundary should take the form of a wall, effectively to divide the inhabitants, willing or unwilling’ (Dobson, B and Breeze, D.J)
- Hadrian’s wall is the largest archaeological artefact from Roman Britain and was the 1st of two Roman walls to be built to separate the Roman citizens from the Scottish who were harder to control, threatening Roman rule.
- The wall covers a total of 73 miles across Northern England, a few miles from the current Scottish border.

Hadrian’s death

- Hadrian ended his reign in Rome whilst his health gradually failed him.
- It is suspected that the emperor was suffering from heart failure.
- Shortly before Hadrian died he adopted Antoninus Pius as his heir, continuing the line of ‘good’ emperors.
- Hadrian died peacefully at the age of 62 following a 21 year reign.

Impact on Roman history

- Emperor Hadrian is remembered as being one of the five ‘good’ emperors who were seen to be the most just in action.
- He was responsible for many building projects throughout the Roman Empire such as Hadrian’s wall.
- ‘Hadrian transformed the urban fabric of Rome through a massive building programme. Some of his monuments, like the Pantheon and his Mausoleum, now the Castel Sant’Angelo, form distinctive architectural landmarks to this day, while many still lie buried underground.’ (Oppen, 2008)
- ‘[Hadrian] spent most of his reign (twelve out of twenty-one years) traveling all over the Empire visiting the provinces, overseeing the administration, and checking the discipline of the army. He was a brilliant administrator who concerned himself with all aspects of government and the administration of justice.’ (Ancient History Encyclopaedia, 2009)

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hadrian earned the title of ‘good’ emperor by being a just emperor who managed to keep relative peace throughout his 21 year reign. He ensured a smooth change of emperor after his death due to his choice of Antoninus Pius, the 4th of the five ‘good’ emperors. Hadrian rose through the ranks, patiently following the path the emperor and acknowledging those who protected him and his empire. He made sure to keep the empire united and make use of his time in power by travelling around the empire to make sure everything was running as he intended.

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