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P O R T R A I T S O F H A D R I A N

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Introduction of the Book by the Editors

Andreas Pangerl

Hadrian – Emperor of a Golden Age for Rome

Hartwin Brandt

Hadrian and the Greeks.

Dave Michaels

Hadrian and the Roman Army

Andrew Birley

Hadrian and Britannia: Hadrian’s Visit and His Wall’s Legacy from Roman to Modern Britain.

Werner Eck

Hadrian and Bar Kochba – The War in Judea.

Carole Raddato

Hadrian as Traveler.

Hans Christoph von Mosch

The Restless Mint. On the Trail of the So-Called Alpheios Master

Wayne Kimber & Andreas Pangerl

Hadrian’s Journeys and Focus on Provincial Development Reflected in the “Provinces Series”.

Fae Amiro

Imperial Women in Hadrian’s Reign

Richard Abdy

Hadrian as Generous Benefactor? LOCVPLETATORI ORBIS TERRARVM

Peter Franz Mittag

Roman Medallions

Charlotte Mann

The Fruits of Victory: Visions of the *Pax Augusta* on Hadrian’s Imperial Coinage

Hadrien Rambach

Rejuvenated hadrian *aurei* of the *divis parentibvs* types, and the illustration of an unidentified example on a seventeenth-century manuscript

Charlotte Mann

Dr. William Gale and the Gale Collection of Hadrianic Coinage at the Australian Center for Ancient Numismatic Studies.

Wayne Kimber

The Eric ten Brink Collection of the coins of Hadrian

Wayne Kimber & Andreas Pangerl

Hadrian Coinage in the Rick Beleson Collection

Wayne Kimber

Memoirs of a Hadrian Collector



Figure 3a1: View on ruins of the double temple from the Eastern 'Venus' side.

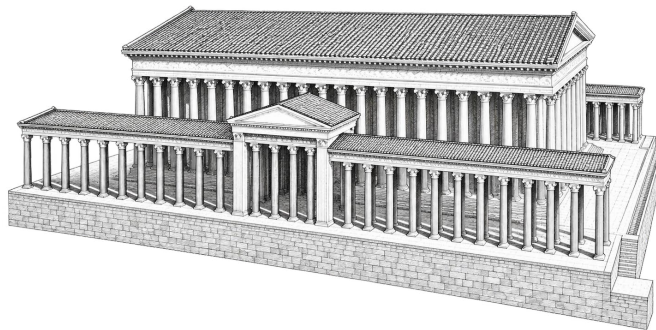


Figure 3a2: Reconstruction of the Roma and Venus Temple from the South.



Figure 3: Coins: a–c On the occasion of the opening of the new Venus and Roma double temple in Rome, Hadrian had coins and medals minted with the reverse sides “ROMAE AETERNAE” and “VENERIS FELICIS”. The facade of the temple was also presented, the construction of which was begun by Hadrian and completed by Antoninus Pius.

b. AE Sestertius showing the facade of the Temple of Venus and Roma, Rome, AD 137–138, *RIC II.3 no. 2427*.

c. ROMAE AETERNAE, sitting Roma holds Palladion in her hand; AR Denarius, Rome, AD 137–138, *RIC II.3 no. 2341–2*.

d. VENERIS FELICIS, sitting Venus holds Victory (?) in her hand; AV Aureus, Rome, AD 137–138, *RIC II.3 nos. 2365–2366*.

Hadrian's Golden Age:

3. Hadrian's Religious Building Activity in Rome: The Venus and Roma Temple

The emphasis on the founding myths of Rome and Rome's religious traditions is also evident in Hadrian's building program, especially in the city of Rome. Hadrian's largest and most important religious structure there is new double temple of Venus and Roma (fig. 3b).¹² Hadrian began this grand construction, which could only be completed by his successor Antoninus Pius.¹³ However, Hadrian himself probably consecrated the temple shortly before his death in AD 136–137.¹⁴ The goddess Venus played a central role in Rome's founding myths, as she was the protector of the Trojans on their flight from burning Troy to Latium in Italy.¹⁵ Venus Genetrix was the protector of the gens Julia. The Italic element of Rome's origin, in turn, embodied the goddess Roma. To honor the opening of this double temple, Hadrian issued special coins for VENUS FELICIS and ROMAE AETERNAE. These dedications were first issued by Hadrian in Roman numismatics. Roma Aeterna (also Roma Felix) and Venus Felix¹⁶ were then further depicted on coins of his successor Antoninus Pius.¹⁷ Hadrian also showed the facade of the Temple of Venus and Roma (fig. 3b) on coins. As mentioned above, it is recorded that Hadrian emphasized the Italic element of Rome's origins by erecting statues of the ancient Laurentine kings in front of the temple side of Roma.¹⁸ These statues were certainly bearded, just like now Hadrian and later Antoninus Pius.

In addition to this new monument, Hadrian restored numerous temple buildings in Rome. The Pantheon, originally built by Marcus Agrippa¹⁹, is a well-known example in this context. The new construction of Hadrian shows an unusual phenomenon on the day of Rome's mythical birthday: at noon on April 21, the month of Venus, and on the birthday of Rome, as well as of Numa, the sun shines through the oculus in the dome directly onto the entrance of the temple. This too is an indication of Hadrian's connection with the origins of Rome.

It is also important to remember Hadrian's construction activities in the east of the empire. In addition to countless buildings in Greek cities Hadrian initiated in the East, he also promoted Roman gods there, for example building the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), which may have been one of the causes of the bloody Bar Kokhba revolt.²⁰



1 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR denarius, Antioch/Eastern mint, *RIC II.3 no. 2959*



2 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR denarius, Antioch/Eastern mint, *RIC II.3 no. 2959*



3 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR denarius, Antioch/Eastern mint, *RIC II.3 no. 2959*



4 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR Denarius, Rome *RIC II.3 no. 9*



5 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR Denarius, Rome *RIC II.3 no. 15*



6 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR Denarius, Rome *RIC II.3 no. 22*



7 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AV Aureus, Rome *RIC II.3 no. 28*



8 Hadrian, COS, Titles corrected, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 53*



9 Hadrian, with Traian's titles appropriated, AR Denarius, Rome *RIC II.3 no. 54*



10 Hadrian, COS, Titles corrected, AR denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 60*



11 Hadrian, COS, Titles corrected, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 65*



12 Hadrian, COS DES II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no.81*



13 Hadrian, COS DES II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 88*



14 Hadrian, COS II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 108*



15 Hadrian, COS II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 114*



16 Hadrian, COS II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 117*



17 Hadrian, COS II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 125*



18 Hadrian, COS II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 129*



19 Hadrian, COS II, AR Denarius, Rome, *RIC II.3 no. 134*



20. Hadrian with Traian's titles appropriated, AR Denarius, Antioch/Eastern mint, *RIC II.3 no. 2960*. Portrait type II with full beard/anulus hair hair was used on coins in parallel to type I (with free chin/anulus hair)



Hadrian as Caesar, AV Aureus. Rome or Antioch? *RIC III no. 1926*;
Background the dome of the Pantheon in Rome rebuilt by Hadrian



Hadrian, FELICITATI AVGVSTI on sail; S C in field; COS III P P in exergue; Ship r. under full sail. AE Sestertius, Rome, 129–130, *RIC II.3 no 1341*. Ex Magnaguti and Mazzini collections.

Hadrian as Traveler

CAROLE RADDATO¹

Introduction

Hadrian's travels stand out as one of the most remarkable aspects of his reign. The number of years he spent away from Rome far exceeded that of any other emperor of the first and second centuries AD. These journeys undoubtedly served multiple purposes: military, political, administrative, economic, cultural, and also deeply personal ones. In the latter sense, Hadrian appears to have genuinely enjoyed traveling. He possessed an insatiable curiosity and frequently combined official duties with visits to celebrated sanctuaries, historic cities, monuments, and other places of cultural significance. This article follows Hadrian's journeys across the Roman Empire, examining how he used travel as an instrument of government while exploring the intellectual, cultural, and administrative interests that shaped his reign.

Ancient writers consistently portrayed Hadrian as an emperor driven by an insatiable desire to see and understand the world firsthand. The author of the *Historia Augusta* states that the emperor was "so fond of travel that he wished to inform himself in person about all that he had read concerning all parts of the world"². Likewise, the Christian writer Tertullian describes Hadrian as *omnium curiositatum explorator*, "an explorer of all curiosities"³. Cassius Dio similarly emphasizes the emperor's inquisitive nature, observing that "he personally viewed and investigated absolutely everything"⁴.

Wherever Hadrian traveled, his presence was marked by acts of benefaction. Cities received temples, aqueducts, theaters, roads and honorary monuments; military frontiers were inspected and reorganized; provincial communities were granted privileges or financial assistance; and imperial visits were commemorated by inscriptions, statues and coinage. These journeys helped strengthen the relationship between the emperor and the provinces while reshaping the physical and cultural landscape of the Roman Empire.

Despite the scale of these imperial expeditions, no detailed itinerary listing every location visited by Hadrian and the precise dates of his movements has survived from antiquity, assuming such a document ever existed. Nevertheless, a considerable body of evidence allows us to reconstruct his travels. Literary sources, particularly Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta*, provide the principal narrative framework, while epigraphic, papyrological, and archaeological discoveries, including marble inscriptions, military diplomas, and papyri, continue to refine our understanding of his move-

ments. We also lack detailed information about the size and composition of the imperial retinue that accompanied him. It is likely, however, that members of the imperial administration, military officers, architects, engineers, poets, writers, and even the engravers responsible for producing commemorative medallions traveled alongside his wife Sabina (see von Mosch article). In effect, the imperial court became a traveling government, whose progress required careful planning and placed considerable demands on the provinces through which it passed.

Meeting these demands required an immense logistical effort. Cities along the emperor's route had to prepare accommodation, food, fodder, transport animals, and venues for official business, while provincial authorities organized ceremonial receptions and public audiences in anticipation of the imperial arrival. Such journeys were made possible by the Roman Empire's sophisticated transport and communications network, which combined an extensive system of roads with maritime and river routes. Official travel was further facilitated by the imperial posting service (*cursus publicus*), which provided relay stations and accommodation along the principal roads. Cassius Dio records that Hadrian "walked or rode on horseback on all occasions, never once at this period setting foot in either a chariot or a four-wheeled vehicle"⁵, adding that he habitually went bareheaded in both heat and cold. Aurelius Victor likewise remarks that the emperor "made a circuit of all the provinces on foot, outstripping the accompanying retinue"⁶. Fronto similarly emphasized the purpose behind these journeys, observing that Hadrian "journeyed not only into frosty lands, but also into other lands in southern regions, in order to safeguard the provinces..."⁷.

For Hadrian, travel was not merely a means of inspecting the empire but one of the principal ways in which he exercised imperial authority, maintained contact with provincial communities, and projected the presence of the emperor throughout the Roman world. Although many details of his journeys remain elusive, the surviving literary, epigraphic, papyrological, numismatic, and archaeological evidence allows us to reconstruct one of the most remarkable series of imperial journeys in Roman history. Together, these sources reveal not only where Hadrian traveled, but also how his continuous presence throughout the provinces became one of the defining characteristics of his reign and one of the clearest expressions of his imperial personality.

