



HADRIAN

HADRIAN (Publius Aelius Hadrianus), born 76 C.E. of an eminent family of Italian colonists at Italica (near Seville); Roman emperor 117-38 ([Figure 1](#)). Trajan, a cousin of his father, became one of his guardians and looked after his education and career. He was military tribune and quaestor under Trajan, married a great-niece of his, and served with distinction in his Dacian Wars. After a provincial command and a consulship (108), he joined Trajan's staff in the Parthian War and was left at Antioch as governor of Syria when Trajan set out for Rome. After Trajan's death in Cilicia, his wife Plotina announced that he had adopted Hadrian on his deathbed, and he was at once recognized as emperor by the army and later by the Senate. He abandoned the Parthian War and the provinces east of the Euphrates that had been instituted by Trajan but never securely held, and he permanently renounced any intervention in Armenia and Parthia. He later returned to King Զosrow (Osroes) a daughter whom Trajan had held in Rome as a hostage.

He traveled extensively through the provinces and was known for his lavish building activity and for his favorable disposition toward Greek culture, and particularly toward Athens. Hostile to the Jews on account of their frequent revolts, he tried to suppress their religion by forbidding circumcision and installing a Roman colony at Jerusalem. He thus brought about the revolt of Bar Kokhba, which he defeated with difficulty. In Rome he had several senators executed and died hated by the Senate, which was however forced to deify him by his successor Antoninus Pius.



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