

**EPOCH OF ANCIENT HISTORY.  
THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF  
THE SECOND CENTURY, OR,  
THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649695188

Epoch of Ancient History. The Roman Empire of the Second Century, or, the Age of the Antonines by W. W. Capes

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**W. W. CAPES**

**EPOCH OF ANCIENT HISTORY.  
THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF  
THE SECOND CENTURY, OR,  
THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES**



# EPOCHS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

EDITED BY

REV. SIR G. W. COX, BART. M.A. AND C. SANKEY, M.A.

---

*The ROMAN EMPIRE of the SECOND CENTURY*

---

W. W. CAPES, M.A.

# CONTENTS

---

## CHAPTER I.

NERVA.—A.D. 96-98.

	PAGE
Nerva raised to the throne by the murderers of Domitian . . . . .	1
Treats the agents of past tyranny with forbearance, though Pliny and others cried for vengeance . . . . .	3
Nerva's measures for the poorer citizens . . . . .	4
The mutiny on the Danube appeased by Dion Chrysostom . . . . .	5
The violence of the prætorians caused the Emperor to choose Trajan as his colleague and successor, A.D. 97 . . . . .	6
Death of Nerva, A.D. 98 . . . . .	7

## CHAPTER II.

TRAJAN.—A.D. 97-117.

Trajan avenges the outrage done to Nerva . . . . .	7
After a year's delay enters Rome without parade . . . . .	9
The simple bearing of his wife Plotina . . . . .	—
His respect for constitutional forms . . . . .	10
His frank courtesy and fearless confidence . . . . .	11
His thrift and moderation excite the surprise of Pliny . . . . .	12
His economy could save little except in personal expenditure . . . . .	14
Large outlay on roads, bridges, ports and aqueducts, baths and theatres . . . . .	15
The charitable endowments for poor children . . . . .	18
Which lead others to act in a like spirit . . . . .	20
Trajan's policy with regard to the corn trade . . . . .	21

	PAGE
His treatment of provincial interests as shown in the correspondence with Pliny, A.D. 111-113 . . . . .	22
He would not meddle needlessly or centralize too fast . . . . .	24
His war policy . . . . .	25
On the side of Germany he had strengthened the frontier with defensive works . . . . .	26
The rise of the Dacian kingdom and threats of Decebalus . . . . .	27
Trajan declared war and set out, A.D. 101 . . . . .	28
The course of the campaign . . . . .	29
The battle of Tapæ, advance into Transylvania, and Roman victories bring the first war to a close. A.D. 102 . . . . .	31
Peace did not last long . . . . .	32
Trajan's preparations and bridge of stone across the Danube. The legions converged on Dacia and crushed the enemy, A.D. 106 . . . . .	34
The country was colonized and garrisoned . . . . .	35
The survival of Rome's influence in the Roumanian language . . . . .	36
Trajan's forum and triumphal column . . . . .	—
The conquest of Arabia . . . . .	38
War declared against Parthia, A.D. 113 . . . . .	40
Trajan arrives at Antioch, and marches through Armenia . . . . .	41
Parthamasiris deposed and slain . . . . .	43
Submission of the neighbouring princes . . . . .	—
The great earthquake at Antioch, A.D. 115 . . . . .	44
Trajan crossed the Tigris and carried all before him as far as the Persian Gulf . . . . .	45
But the lately conquered countries rose in his rear, and he was forced to retire . . . . .	46
His death at Selinus, and character . . . . .	47
Taken as a type of heathen justice in legend and art . . . . .	48

## CHAPTER III.

## HADRIAN,—A.D. 117-138.

The earlier life of Hadrian . . . . .	49
His sudden elevation to the throne caused ugly rumours . . . . .	50
His policy of peace accompanied by personal hardihood and regard for discipline . . . . .	52

*Contents.*

vii

	PAGE
He travelled constantly through the provinces . . . . .	53
We hear of him in Britain, Africa, Asia Minor, and in Athens above all . . . . .	55
And in Egypt . . . . .	56
The death and apotheosis of Antinous . . . . .	57
Hadrian's interests cosmopolitan more than Roman . . . . .	58
The levelling influence of the 'Perpetual Edict,' A. D. 132 . . . . .	59
Hadrian's frugality and good finance . . . . .	61
The dark moods and caprices attributed to him . . . . .	61
His suspicious temper, system of espionage, and jealousy of brilliant powers . . . . .	63
His fickleness, superstition, and variety of temper . . . . .	64
Reasons for mistrusting these accounts of ancient authors . . . . .	65
His villa at Tivoli . . . . .	66
Struck by disease, he chose Verus as successor, A. D. 135, who died soon after . . . . .	68
Antoninus was adopted in his place . . . . .	—
Hadrian's dying agony, and fitful moods of cruelty . . . . .	69
His death and canonization . . . . .	70
The mausoleum of Hadrian . . . . .	—
The outbreak in Palestine was at last terribly stamped out . . . . .	71

## CHAPTER IV.

## ANTONINUS PIUS.—A. D. 138—161.

The reign of Antoninus was uneventful . . . . .	73
Why called Pius . . . . .	74
His good-nature was free from weakness . . . . .	75
He did not travel abroad, but was careful of provincial interests . . . . .	—
Wars were needful with Moors, Dacians, and Brigantes, yet he gained more by diplomacy . . . . .	76
His homely life at Lorium . . . . .	77
His easy and forgiving temper . . . . .	78
Tender care of his adopted son, to whom he left the Empire at his death . . . . .	79



## CHAPTER V.

## MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS.—A.D. 147-180.

	PAGE
The early life of M. Aurelius . . . . .	80
His correspondence with Fronto, his old tutor . . . . .	81
His conversion from rhetoric to philosophy . . . . .	82
The jealousy of Fronto . . . . .	83
Offices of state and popular favour did not turn the head of the young prince . . . . .	84
He looked to the Stoic creed for guidance, but without loss of tenderness . . . . .	85
Fronto, like Faustina, had little love for philosophers . . . . .	86
On the death of Antoninus M. Aurelius shared his power with L. Verus, A.D. 161 . . . . .	87
Ominous prospects, floods, dangers on the Euphrates . . . . .	—
Verus starts for the East, where the soldiers were demoralized . . . . .	89
The Parthians were humbled, and Verus claimed the merit of his generals' successes, A.D. 166 . . . . .	90
Fronto's courtly panegyric . . . . .	91
M. Aurelius meantime endows charities for foundlings, appoints <i>juridici</i> , and guardians for orphans, and works unremittingly . . . . .	92
But he is called away to the scene of war . . . . .	94
The fortune of the Roman arms in Britain . . . . .	95
Both Emperors started for the Danube, where the border races sued for peace . . . . .	96
The ravages of the plague, A.D. 167-8 . . . . .	97
The war begins again, but is checked by the spread of the plague . . . . .	98
Verus dies, and M. Aurelius rules henceforth alone, A.D. 169 . . . . .	99
The long and arduous struggle on the Northern frontier . . . . .	100
The Marcomannic war followed by the campaign against the Quadi, in which we read of the marvel of the 'Thundering Legion' . . . . .	102
The revolt of Avidius Cassius, A.D. 175 . . . . .	103
Contempt expressed by him for the Emperor as a ruler . . . . .	105
The speedy failure of the insurrection . . . . .	106
The Emperor showed no vindictive feeling . . . . .	107

*Contents.*

ix

	PAGE
He went to restore order in the East, and Faustina died on the way . . . . .	108
His short rest at Rome, and endowments in memory of his wife . . . . .	109
Recalled to the war in the North, he died at Vienna or Sirmium, A. D. 180 . . . . .	—
Brief of his subjects, and monuments in his honour . . . . .	110
His 'Meditations' reflect his habits of self-inquiry and gratitude . . . . .	112
There is no trace in them of morbid vanity or self-contempt . . . . .	116
He tried to be patient and cheerful in the hard work of life . . . . .	117
Nor was he too ambitious or too sanguine in his aims . . . . .	119
His anticipations of Christian feeling . . . . .	120
The thought of a Ruling Providence stirred his heart with tenderness and love . . . . .	122
His delicate sympathy with Nature . . . . .	123
His melancholy and sense of isolation . . . . .	124
The austere Stoic creed could not content him . . . . .	125
The contrast of the contemporary Christians . . . . .	126
M. Aurelius was unfortunate in his son Commodus . . . . .	126
Was he also in his wife Faustina? Reasons for doubting the truth of the common story, . . . . .	127

## CHAPTER VI.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT  
TOWARDS THE CHRISTIANS.

The Christians at first regarded as a Jewish sect, and not disturbed . . . . .	129
In the time of Nero we trace dislike to the Christians as such . . . . .	131
They were regarded as unsocial and morose fanatics, accused of impiety and of foul excesses . . . . .	132
Christianity was not made illegal till the time of Trajan, whose answer to Pliny determined the law . . . . .	135
The reasons why the government might distrust the Christian Church . . . . .	137
Succeeding Emperors inclined to mercy, but the popular dislike grew more intense . . . . .	139
The rescripts of Hadrian and Antoninus very questionable . . . . .	140

	PAGE
The martyrdom of Polycarp . . . . .	141
The persecution at Vienna and Lugdunum . . . . .	142
Lucian's account of Peregrinus Proteus reflects some noble features of the early Church, A.D. 165 . . . . .	144
The attack of Celsus, A.D. 150, was answered in later days . . . . .	145
The line of argument taken by the Apologists of the age . . . . .	148
The life of Justin Martyr . . . . .	149

## CHAPTER VII.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATE RELIGION, AND  
OF THE RITES IMPORTED FROM THE EAST.

The Emperors respected the old forms of national religion . . . . .	150
The <i>Collegia</i> or brotherhoods . . . . .	151
The official registers of the Arval Brothers, containing a full description of their ritual . . . . .	152
We may note (1) their punctilious regard for ancient forms . . . . .	154
(2) The absence of moral or spiritual influence . . . . .	155
(3) The loyalty to the established powers of state . . . . .	156
The old religion was cold and meagre, and supplemented by exotic creeds . . . . .	157
The civil power only feebly opposed the new rites, which were welcomed by devout minds like Plutarch and Maximus Tyrius . . . . .	159
The mystic reveries and visions of Aristides in his sickness, A.D. 144-161 . . . . .	160
New moods of ecstatic feeling, self-denial, and excitement, and mystic gloom encouraged by Eastern religions . . . . .	161
The rite of the <i>saurobolium</i> . . . . .	163
The new comers lived in peace in the imperial Pantheon . . . . .	164

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE LITERARY CURRENTS OF THE AGE.

The enthusiasm for learning, but want of creative power . . . . .	165
The culture of the age was mainly Greek and professorial . . . . .	166
The various classes of Sophists . . . . .	167
1. Moralists and Philosophers . . . . .	168