

# Heads or Tails

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Representation and Acceptance in Hadrian's Imperial Coinage



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Course code: (LET-GESM4300-2018-SCRSEM2-V)  
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## Introduction

Publius Aelius Hadrianus, better known as emperor Hadrian, was one of the adoptive emperors in the Nerva-Antonine dynasty. He ruled the Roman Empire from 117 until his death in 138 AD. The emperorship, developed under Augustus, and given more shape by later emperors, was just over a century old at the time of Hadrian's rule. During that century, structures of government adapted step by step to meet the changes in society. Adaptive governance implies that organizational structures and decision-making adapt to changing expectations in society. But, society consisted of multiple groups, each with their own expectations about how their rulers should act, expectations that were set by deeds of earlier emperors.

Although the power of the Roman emperor seemed limitless, his position was not inviolable. Earlier, emperors such as Nero and Domitian had been deposed brutally. These emperors would not have acted according to the expectations of the different groups.<sup>1</sup> In order to retain power, each emperor had to take into account the expectations and interests of different important political sectors within Roman society, namely the army, the élite which was organised in the Senate, the *plebs urbana*, and the provincial élites, which I will call acceptance groups.<sup>2</sup> He should commit himself to the expectations of these groups, as that would ensure their loyalty and acceptance.<sup>3</sup> However, Hadrian's rule stood out because he seems to have been neglecting some of these expectations.

Historical precedent determined that at the beginning of the second century an emperor had to play a number of roles in order to meet expectations. The tasks of the emperor in the second century included the administration of justice.<sup>4</sup> The fact that Hadrian was confronted with the enactment of justice is best illustrated in a passage by the later author Cassius Dio. Dio describes how Hadrian was approached by a woman while traveling, the woman asked for his attention. The emperor replied that he had no time, to which the woman responded: "*Then don't be an emperor!*"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Griffin, M., *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (London, 2002), 1-12.; Matthews, K.D., 'Domitian: The lost Divinity', *Philadelphia* 8:2 (1966), 30-37, in particular 33.

<sup>2</sup> Mann, M., *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 1, A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (New York, 2012), 259-282.

<sup>3</sup> Lendon, J.E., *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford, 1997), 7-24.

<sup>4</sup> Millar, F.G.B., *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1992), 203-272.

<sup>5</sup> Dio, 59.6.3.

An emperor also had to be a successful general.<sup>6</sup> Rulers who did not have military triumphs had a precarious power base. In addition, an emperor was also expected to incorporate new territories in the Roman Empire. Finally, expectations had arisen, in Rome and the provinces, about the respect that a good emperor had to demonstrate to local elites.<sup>7</sup> In particular, in Rome, proximity of the emperor was expected. The Roman *plebs* expected of the emperor that he took care of the well-being of them.<sup>8</sup> And the Senate expected the emperor to reside in Rome, to govern from there and to participate in specific Roman traditions. Imperial presence was the key to maintain legitimate authority over Rome and the Empire.<sup>9</sup>

It is, therefore, striking that when there was no military necessity, Hadrian chose to travel during more than half his reign. His journeys surely must have influenced his relationships with the acceptance groups, as due to his absence, it would have been difficult to improve relationships with the Roman Senate and the people of Rome. The choice not to reside in Rome, when he was in the neighbourhood, but to settle in a villa 20 miles away is telling. Besides, Hadrian's relationships with some of the acceptance groups already at the beginning of his reign were poor. Hadrian's accession was accompanied by several problems. Rumours appeared about his legitimacy, and four ex-consuls who were opponents of Hadrian were murdered.<sup>10</sup> As a result, during his first years as an emperor, Hadrian was quite unpopular amongst the Senate.

Out of the aforementioned facts, it becomes clear that Hadrian seems to have been indifferent to live up to the expectations of some acceptance groups. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate how Hadrian managed to stabilize and strengthen his relationships with these groups. Research into how messages on coins may have contributed to the strengthening of the relationships with the acceptance groups helps us to understand how imperial power functioned. Therefore, in this thesis, I will investigate how Hadrian managed to strengthen his relationship with the army, the Roman Senate, the Roman *plebs*, and the

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<sup>6</sup> Campbell, B., 'Teach Yourself how to be a General', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987), 13-29, in particular 23-29.

<sup>7</sup> Lendon, *Honour*, 6-8.

<sup>8</sup> Flaig, E., 'A coherent model to understand the Roman Principate: 'Acceptance' instead of 'legitimacy' and the problem of usurpation', in: Ferrary, J.L. & Scheid, J. (eds.), *Il Principe Romano: Autocrate o Magistrate? Fattori Giuridici e Fattori Sociali del Potere Imperiale da Augusto a Commodo* (Pavia, 2015), 81-100, in particular 89-90. 'Panem et Circenses'

<sup>9</sup> Cooper, K. & Hillner, J. *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900* (Cambridge, 2007), 39.

<sup>10</sup> Speller, E., *Following Hadrian: A Second-Century Journey through the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 4-5. 'Affair of the Four Consuls'.

provincial élites via his coinage. Coinage, as I will explain later, acted as a vehicle of imperial communication. Therefore my main research question will be: How did Hadrian with the messages on his coin types appeal to the different acceptance groups? In order to analyse this question, it is important to explain the system of acceptance. Therefore in the upcoming section, I will explain what the acceptance groups were, and I will elaborate on how the political system, in which the acceptance groups were so prominent, came into being.

### Acceptance Theory

During the Republic, the people of Rome were governed by an oligarchy. The Roman Senate was the embodiment of the oligarchy, in which several important Roman families ruled.<sup>11</sup> The Senate had a proxy to act at its own discretion, but this proxy was dependent on the trust of the *plebs*. However, as a result of the deficiencies that were inherent to the Senate, this institution lost its legitimacy and therefore the acceptance of the people.<sup>12</sup> The Roman Senate had become an illegitimate institution as prime social groups within the Roman community became reluctant to tolerate that institution.<sup>13</sup> Eventually, the loss of trust and legitimacy gave rise to the so-called ‘great individuals’ (Julius Caesar, Pompey, and Augustus) who further undermined the authority of the Senate. In the end, civil wars broke out, and the Roman state adapted to a new system of government, namely the Principate.

As a result of this transition to the new system, social relationships in Rome were reconstructed. Sophisticated socio-political mechanisms which organised the distribution of Roman political power and which had taken shape during the Roman Republic through the engagement of the *plebs urbana* and the Roman elite in governing the Roman state, were now remodelled.<sup>14</sup> A monarchy was instituted in which a single person held absolute power, namely the emperor. Although the emperor had absolute power, this did not mean his position was inviolable. He had to be ‘accepted’ by relevant political sectors. As Egon Flaig explains:

*“‘acceptance’ means the fact that the relevant sectors of a political community support the rule of a specific person by their explicit or implicit consent.”<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> Syme, R., *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 2002), 7-8.

<sup>12</sup> Meier, C., *Res Publica amissa* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), 5-7.

<sup>13</sup> Flaig, E., ‘The Transition from Republic to Principate: Loss of Legitimacy, Revolution, and Acceptance’, in *The Roman Empire in Context: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Arnason, J.P. & Raaflaub, K.A. (Oxford, 2011), 74-76.

<sup>14</sup> Ewald, B.J. & Noreña, C.F., *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation and Ritual* (Cambridge, 2010), 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Flaig, E., ‘Coherent model’, 86.

The willingness of the ruled to conform to the wishes of the ruler made the emperorship possible and facilitated the functioning of it.<sup>16</sup> A great part of the political process consisted in mutual expression of consent.<sup>17</sup> Acceptance was thus closely linked to loyalty, which was vital for the emperor's position, as loyalty was the basis of the emperor's power.<sup>18</sup> However, to be accepted, an emperor had to meet the expectations of the various relevant political sectors. Whenever an emperor failed to live up to the expectations of the different political sectors, he could be deposed. In order to prevent this, it was important for the emperor to build up and maintain good relationships with all relevant political sectors. But what exactly were these different relevant political sectors? What were their expectations of the emperor? And why were these groups politically relevant?

### Acceptance Groups

In scholarship, there is a lack of consensus about what exactly were relevant political sectors during the Principate. Starting with Paul Veyne, according to him the emperor was in constant interaction with two groups within Roman society, namely the Roman *plebs* and the Roman Senate.<sup>19</sup> He distinguishes two different relevant political sectors. Egon Flaig, however, distinguishes three groups that the emperor had to cope with, namely: the *plebs urbana* of the capital, the senatorial aristocracy and that half of the Roman army made up of Roman citizens.<sup>20</sup> Elkins distinguishes yet another relevant political sector. According to him, the imperial powerbase consisted of the military, the inhabitants of the provinces, the Senate and the urban masses of Rome.<sup>21</sup>

The works of Veyne, Flaig, and Elkins give a good indication of the groups that the emperor had to take into account. These groups were political relevant because they exerted influence on the complex Roman imperial system. Relevant political sectors were capable of meaningful collective action in the public sphere.<sup>22</sup> That is to say, relevant sectors were political groups within Roman society which could threaten the position of the emperor. Concerning political decision-making, the emperor had absolute power. However, he was dependent on the acceptance of various groups in Roman society to retain his position as

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<sup>16</sup> Weber, M., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen, 1980), 122.

<sup>17</sup> Flaig, 'Coerent model', 89.

<sup>18</sup> Lendon, *Honour*, 7-24.

<sup>19</sup> Veyne, P., *Le Pain et le Cirque: Sociologie Historique d'un pluralisme Politique* (Paris, 1976), 589-729.

<sup>20</sup> Flaig, E., 'Coerent model', 85.

<sup>21</sup> Elkins, N. T., *The Image of Political Power in the Reign of Nerva AD 96-98* (Oxford, 2017), 10.

<sup>22</sup> Noreña, C.F., *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge, 2011), 7.

emperor. Therefore these politically relevant groups acted as acceptance groups. The conceptual consequence is that the Roman Principate functioned as a system of acceptance.<sup>23</sup>

Based on the criterion that acceptance groups were capable of meaningful collective action in the public sphere, I have chosen to regard the Roman elite, which was organized in the Roman Senate, the army, the Roman *plebs* and the provincial elite as acceptance groups.

First, I regard the Roman elite, which was organised in the Senate, as an acceptance group. The Senate had a lot of influence within the daily management of the empire.<sup>24</sup> Members of the Roman elite occupied important positions within the organization of the empire. However, there were few members of the Roman Senate, all of which were known by name. Acts of disloyalty, therefore, were easily noticed. Only if all senators revolted, the emperor had a serious problem. However, the emperor certainly had to take into account the expectations of this group, as the Senate could cause serious problems for the emperor.<sup>25</sup>

Second, the military (generals and legionaries) also functioned as an acceptance group. The army could play an important role in overthrowing the emperor's regime. The defection of legions often was accompanied by a contender for the throne. Therefore, if legions defected, there was an immediate political crisis.<sup>26</sup>

Third, I also consider the Roman *plebs* as an acceptance group. The Roman *plebs* was an acceptance group which consisted of the inhabitants of the city of Rome. According to Flaig, the *plebs urbana* could easily express critique.<sup>27</sup> However, only the expressing of critique was not enough to overthrow the emperor. Without support of the army, they were no imminent danger to the position of the emperor. However, as the *plebs* could freely criticize the emperor, they were able to exert pressure on the regime of the emperor.<sup>28</sup> Too much criticism on the emperor led to revolts. For that reason, an emperor had to take into account the expectations of this acceptance group.

Finally, the provincial elite can be considered as the fourth acceptance group. Flaig does not consider the provincial elite as an acceptance group. However, I have chosen to do

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<sup>23</sup> Flaig, 'The Transition', 74-77. For further explanation of Flaig's argument see: Flaig, E., *Den Kaiser Herausfordern: Die Usurpation im Römischen Reich* (Frankfurt- New York, 1992), 174-207.

<sup>24</sup> Morris, I. & Scheidel, W., *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2009), 181; 187-195.

<sup>25</sup> Morris & Scheidel, *The Dynamics*, 187-195.

<sup>26</sup> Flaig, 'Coherent Model', 90.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, 90.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, 90.

so for several reasons. First, the prosperity of the Roman empire was largely based on the revenues that the provinces had brought.<sup>29</sup> Subsequently, the support of the provinces was necessary for the well-being of the empire.<sup>30</sup> Second, during Hadrian's reign, the provincial elite became increasingly powerful.<sup>31</sup> For example, Hadrian himself was, in fact, a member of the provincial elite. Ordinary people living in distant provinces, away from Rome were not important to the emperor.<sup>32</sup> As Aristides stated: "*There is no need of garrisons holding acropolises, but the most important and powerful people in each place guard their countries for you*".<sup>33</sup> Therefore, only having the provincial elites at the emperor's side was sufficient to safeguard order in the empire.<sup>34</sup> As the provinces were important for the well-being of the empire, and as the provincial elites became more important in the government of the empire, the expectations of the provincial elites certainly had to be taken into account. For that reason, I have chosen to consider this group an acceptance group.

These four acceptance groups had different expectations of the Emperor, and all asked for different imperial performances.<sup>35</sup> However, it was not easy for an emperor to meet all expectations. The Roman *plebs* wanted a friendly *patronus*, but they declined to behave like a *clientela*.<sup>36</sup> The Roman military wanted a competent *imperator* with many victories on his account. At the same time, the Roman elite asked for imperial presence and for a decent head of state who acted as *primus inter pares*.<sup>37</sup> The provincial elites, however, wanted an emperor who not only resided in Rome but who was present in the provinces too.<sup>38</sup> It was not easy for an emperor to meet the expectations of all different acceptance groups, but it was certainly necessary. As Egon Flaig states:

*"Roman emperors had to build up and maintain their good image in the eyes of these groups, and to entertain very special relationships with each of them. For the public persona of the monarch was dependent on their acceptance."*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lendon, *Honour*, 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> Boatwright, M.T., *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 2000), 203.

<sup>31</sup> Varga, R. & Rusu-Bolindet, V., *Official Power and Local Elites in the Roman Provinces* (London- New York, 2016), 1-6.

<sup>32</sup> Lendon, *Honour*, 14.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, 7. Aristides, 26.64 (Behr; trans. Behr); cf. Jos. BJ 2.569-571.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Flaig 'Coerent Model', 90.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, 90.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Boatwright, *Cities of the Roman Empire*, 3-17.

<sup>39</sup> Flaig, 'Coerent Model', 89.

As a result, the emperor was in constant dialogue with the acceptance groups.<sup>40</sup>

### Communication of imperial ideology in coinage

In order to answer the main question, it is important to know how the emperor could have appealed to the acceptance groups via coins. Therefore, a central topic that needs to be clarified is the communication of imperial ideology in Roman coinage. Relationships with the acceptance groups were, besides the emperor's actions, shaped through communication. As Manders states: *“The representation of imperial power was necessary to legitimize the authority of the emperor which is, in turn, vital for his keeping of supreme rule.”*<sup>41</sup> By communicating imperial ideals the emperor could improve his acceptance.<sup>42</sup> Acceptance, for the mass of the population, was based upon their belief that the ruling emperor was right for them and that they needed him. Therefore, it was important for a Roman emperor to spread messages which created that belief, messages which took into account the expectations of the different acceptance groups. The most useful medium which could spread these messages was via centrally minted coins.

Coins in Roman times, in addition to being a means of payment, had an important ideological role. Coins were an important medium in order to formulate Roman imperial rule.<sup>43</sup> By displaying imagery and legends, the coins spread a varied set of messages and ideals to the Roman citizens. These messages could influence groups in Roman society.<sup>44</sup>

Scholars have often debated the motive, intent, and authority behind the formulation of the imagery on the coins.<sup>45</sup> However, there seems to be a consensus that the messages came from the center of power and that these messages did not go against the wishes of the emperor.<sup>46</sup> The imagery and legends on the coins created a framework of how an emperor wanted to be seen. Images on widely used coins acted as propaganda messages. Therefore, the messages on coins had great ideological value.

To fully understand the impact of messages on coins in Roman times, it is necessary to reflect upon the impact of visual imagery on coinage in modern times. Our modern society is

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<sup>40</sup> Noreña, *Imperial ideals*, 7

<sup>41</sup> Manders, ‘Mapping the Representation of Roman Imperial Power in Times of Crisis’, 279, in: Hekster, O.J. & de Kleijn, G. & Slootjes, D. (eds.), *Crises and the Roman Empire* (Nijmegen, 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Noreña, *Imperial ideals* 19.

<sup>43</sup> Hekster, O.J., Slootjes, D. & Manders, E., ‘Making History with Coins: Nero from a Numismatic Perspective’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 45:1 (2014), 25-37, in particular 1.

<sup>44</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 14-21.

<sup>45</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Manders, E., *Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage AD 193-284* (Leiden, 2012), 31-33.

saturated with visual references to all sorts of things.<sup>47</sup> There is an overkill of politically/economically charged images. In Roman times, on the other hand, there was much less visual imagery in the usual life of a citizen. As a result, the scarce amount of charged messages were much likely to be registered by receivers. Important in that is, that the images on the coins were drawn from a common visual vocabulary.<sup>48</sup> Therefore the messages on the coins were intelligible to a broad audience.

Coins could determine the image of emperors among the mass of the population, so it was of great importance to send the right messages to the right recipients. In addition, displaying messages that directly related to one of the acceptance groups was a way for the emperor to honour these groups. According to Veyne, bestowing honours led to political obedience.<sup>49</sup> In other words, by displaying messages on coins which related to certain acceptance groups, the emperor could gain more acceptance. Therefore, as a result of the communication of coins, an emperor could create a broad acceptance among the population from all classes. By communicating messages via coins an emperor could regulate his relationships with the different acceptance groups. Therefore, in investigating how Hadrian could have appealed to the acceptance groups, it is necessary to research his coinage.

### Historiography on Imperial Representation

In recent years the ideology behind coinage and the imperial representation within coinage receives more and more attention.<sup>50</sup> Scholars, such as Hekster, contributed to the subject of imperial representation in coinage.<sup>51</sup> Hekster has shown that there are differences within the imperial representation of emperors, which relates to the expectations of different groups within the Roman Empire. Hekster, for example, shows how different emperors, in order to meet the expectations of the various groups that made up Roman society, adjusted their policy concerning their coinage.<sup>52</sup> He cites an example of emperor Vespasian, who among the Roman population was depicted on coins as a friendly, somewhat stingy old man, while on

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<sup>47</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 4-5.

<sup>48</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 5-6.

<sup>49</sup> Veyne, *Le Pain*, 589-729.

<sup>50</sup> Zanker, P., *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (Munich, 1987); Hölscher, T., *Römische Bildsprache als Semantisches System* (Heidelberg, 1987). Zanker and Hölscher are pioneers in the field of research into material culture.

<sup>51</sup> Hekster, O.J., 'Coins and Messages: Audience targeting on coins of different denominations?' in Blois, L. de; et al. (ed.), *Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power* (Amsterdam, 2003) 20-35.; Hekster, O.J., Slootjes, D. & Manders, E., 'Making History with Coins: Nero from a Numismatic Perspective', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 45:1 (2014), 25-37.; Hekster, O.J. 'Imagining Power: Reality Gaps in the Roman Empire', *BABESCH* 86 (2011), 111-124.

<sup>52</sup> Hekster, 'Coins and Messages', 27.

the other hand, he was depicted much more dominantly on coins that were struck for the Roman soldiers.<sup>53</sup> This way, Hekster shows that coinage was a fine medium to spread messages. Especially for Hadrian, whose relationship with several acceptance groups was precarious at the beginning of his reign, the constructing of a good image on his coinage might have been necessary in order to retain power.

### Hadrian('s Coinage) in Literature

Hekster has shown that by communicating specific images on coins, emperors could influence acceptance groups.<sup>54</sup> However, the trend to research how emperors influenced groups in Roman society through the communication of messages on coins is not long going. One notable emperor who has not yet been investigated this way is Hadrian, although Hadrian is a popular subject of research.

There are many works written about Hadrian and his life.<sup>55</sup> Especially his journeys have received a great deal of attention within scholarship. Halfmann's *Itinera Principum* extensively described the journeys of Hadrian.<sup>56</sup> Also in a more recent period, Hadrian's journeys receive attention in scholarship. A recent major work which discusses Hadrian's life and his journeys is written by Birley.<sup>57</sup> In *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* Birley describes everything that is known about Hadrian's life and journeys. The information from Birley's work was of great value for this thesis.

Another important scholar, Boatwright, has written two important works on Hadrian. In her first work, she focuses on the urban development of the city of Rome under Hadrian.<sup>58</sup> In her second work, she focuses more on Hadrian's interactions with provincial cities and on power relationships. This work contains much information on how Hadrian dealt with the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, 28-29.

<sup>54</sup> Hekster, O.J., 'Coins and Messages: Audience targeting on coins of different denominations?' in Blois, L. de; et al. (ed.), *Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power* (Amsterdam, 2003) 20-35; Crawford, M., 'Roman Imperial Coin Types and the Formation of Public Opinion', in: Brooke, C.M. et al. (eds.), *Studies in Numismatic Method Presented to Philip Grierson* (Cambridge, 1983), 47-64; Noreña, C.F., 'The Communication of the Emperor's virtues', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001), 146-168; Wallace-Hadrill, A., 'Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 76 (1986), 66-87.

<sup>55</sup> Henderson, B.W., *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Hadrian AD 76-138* (Methuen, 1923); Perowne, S., *Hadrian* (London, 1960); Boatwright, M.T., *Hadrian and the City of Rome* (Oxford, 1987); Boatwright, M.T., *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 2000); Speller, E., *Following Hadrian: A Second-Century Journey through the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Halfmann, H., *Itinera Principum: Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich* (Stuttgart, 1986).

<sup>57</sup> Birley, A.R., *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (London, 1997).

<sup>58</sup> Boatwright, M.T., *Hadrian and the City of Rome* (Oxford, 1987).

provincial elite. Therefore, it is very useful in order to research Hadrian's relationship with the provincial elite.

Other works, such as Speller's, describe Hadrian's relationships with the various acceptance groups. According to Speller, Hadrian right before his death was quite unpopular. His unpopularity was due to events occurring in the last years of his reign, during which misjudgments and a sequence of ill-health, damaged Hadrian's reputation.<sup>59</sup> Besides, Hadrian's older age turned good characteristics into bad characteristics. Ultimately, this underpinned his good achievements.

In addition to works that discuss Hadrian's relationships with political groups, there are also works written on Hadrian's coinage. One work is written by Toynbee.<sup>60</sup> In his book, he examines all kinds of aspects of Hadrian's coin types. Toynbee combined Hadrian's imperial ideals and its expressions in coinage. His work, although it is quite old, still is a very useful book while researching Hadrian's coinage.

Other scholars have also analysed Hadrian's coinage, such as Amandry, who focusses upon provincial coinage under Hadrian.<sup>61</sup> And Beckmann, who focussed on the coinages of Trajan and Hadrian.<sup>62</sup> In addition, other authors have discussed specific aspects within Hadrian's coinage while emphasizing single concepts, such as Noreña. He has written a work that deals with the representation of the virtue *pudicitia* in Hadrian's coinage.<sup>63</sup> However, since there are so many works written on Hadrian's coinage, it is remarkable that no studies have conducted a quantitative analysis of Hadrian's coinage with regard to Hadrian's relationships with the important political sectors within Roman society. Research into how Hadrian's messages on coins may have contributed to the strengthening of the relationships with these important groups helps us in order to understand how imperial power functioned. Therefore with this research, I will try to fill this gap.

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<sup>59</sup> Speller, *Following Hadrian*, 3. "hated by the people; some even called him a tyrant. The Roman Senate delayed a decision as to whether to accord him the posthumous imperial honours which were usually a matter of routine."

<sup>60</sup> Toynbee, J.M.C., *The Hadrianic School: A Chapter in the History of Greek Art Volume 1* (Cambridge, 1934).

<sup>61</sup> Amandry, M., 'The Coinage of the Roman Provinces through Hadrian', in: Metcalf, W.E., *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>62</sup> Beckmann, M., 'Trajan and Hadrian' in: Metcalf, W.E., *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>63</sup> Noreña, C.F., 'Hadrian's Chastity', *Phoenix* 61:3/4 (2007), 296-317.

## Method of Research

There is an increasing number of scholars who adapt quantitative methods while studying the imperial representation of coin types. Noreña can be regarded as a pioneer in this field of research. In his work, he analyses types of imperial coins while investigating the emperor's representation concerning imperial virtues.<sup>64</sup> Another important work is written by Manders, she has conducted quantitative research of coins in order to investigate imperial representation. In her work, she analyses the messages on coins of third-century emperors.<sup>65</sup> She has demonstrated that, by employing a quantitative analysis, developments and patterns in history can become more clearly distinguishable. Manders shows that quantitative analysis can be useful in researching imperial representation.

To investigate how the messages on Hadrian's coinage may have contributed to the strengthening of the relationship between him and the different acceptance groups, I will carry out a quantitative analysis. In order to understand the complex symbolic system centered on the figure of the emperor, it is necessary to consider larger sets of interrelated imperial ideals.<sup>66</sup> Quantification gives a better insight into the messages that Hadrian wanted to spread, as it becomes visible which messages were (less) important during his reign. Therefore a quantitative method can be very useful in order to map the messages that Hadrian wanted to spread. On the basis, of the results coming from the quantitative analysis I will set out how Hadrian's coinage could have developed his relationships with the different acceptance groups.

In this research, I will evaluate what messages on coins were in circulation, and what these messages may have meant to the different acceptance groups which saw these messages as reflective of policy, expectations, and imperial ideals.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, I have examined the reverses of 2434 imperial coin types which have been issued during Hadrian's reign from 118-137.<sup>68</sup> In investigating these messages I analysed the coin types from the database of

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<sup>64</sup> Noreña, C.F., 'Coins and Communication', in: Peachin, M. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (Oxford, 2011).

<sup>65</sup> Manders, E., 'Coining Images'.

<sup>66</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 21

<sup>67</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> A trend within scholarship states that doing research into coin types, in contrast to coin hoards, is not reliable. As, for example, according to Clare Rowan, catalogues like the RIC do not accurately reflect what coinage was circulating in the Roman Empire. Manders, however, has shown that the RIC can provide, roughly, a reliable guide to relative quantity. Rowan, C., 'Images of Emperors', *The Classical Review* 63:2 (2013), 550-552, in particular 551, in a review of: Manders, E., *Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage AD 193-284* (Leiden, 2012).

OCRE (Online Coins of the Roman Empire).<sup>69</sup> I have divided coin types into several categories of representation based upon the coin's reverses. To formulate an answer to the question it is important to explain how Hadrian's coin types can be used in order to research how coins can have developed relationships. Therefore it is useful to expand on what was presented on the reverses and obverses.

On the obverses of coins usually, a portrait of the emperor or his family is depicted, and the titulature of the emperor is presented. The imperial titulature transmits the functions of the emperor and it underlines additional significant achievements such as military successes.<sup>70</sup> In contrast to the obverses, the reverses contain all sorts of messages.<sup>71</sup> Therefore the reverses are far more various, less static, and host more specific information. Because of this variety, I have chosen to only categorize the reverses of Hadrian's coinage. However, that does not mean that I have completely overlooked the obverses. I have also looked at the legends on the obverses. I did, however, not include the obverses in the quantification.

In order to map the imperial messages of Hadrian, I have constructed representational categories. Following the imagery and legends on the reverses of the coin types, I have divided coin types into eight delineated categories which can be viewed in the chart on page 32. The categories, which are based upon the categorization of Manders, are selected on the commonness of information.<sup>72</sup>

Based on the results coming forth from this quantitative analysis, I will establish what were important, and less important imperial messages on the coins of Hadrian. Subsequently, I will fit the results from the quantitative analysis in the context of his reign by combining several aspects of the coin types such as the year of minting, remarkable legends, or special images displayed on the types. In addition, I will pay special attention to coin types that seem to have a clear connection with specific acceptance groups. However, I am aware that a study focused on audience-targeting is, considering the scope of this research, too ambitious.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ocre is a joint project of the American Numismatic Society and the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. The project records every published type of Roman Imperial Coinage (RIC) from Augustus in 31 BC, until the death of Zeno in AD 491.

<sup>70</sup> Jones, J.M., *A Dictionary of Ancient Roman Coins* (London, 1990) 224-225.

<sup>71</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 34. "*On the reverses, the legend and design present an image of the emperor or his reign in a broader sense. Wishes or promises concerning the future, a special connection between the emperor and one or more deities, important deeds of the emperor, significant events; all kinds of messages were put on the coins' reverses.*"

<sup>72</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 40-49.

<sup>73</sup> Like Fleur Kemmers did. She investigated coin types with regard to the spread of certain messages to different areas. Kemmers, F., 'Not a random: Evidence for a regionalised coin supply?', in: Bruhn, J., Croxford, B. &

Because coins communicated specific ideals and messages, were issued constantly throughout the Roman imperial period, and were used by all layers of Roman society, they are a unique source to investigate Roman imperial ideology.<sup>74</sup> By considering the iconography on the coinage of Hadrian as a reflection of the contemporary ideological and political context and rhetoric, this analysis will give important information about how Hadrian's coinage might have appealed to the different acceptance groups.

In the first chapter, I will answer the question: How did events which occurred during Hadrian's life or during his predecessor's reigns affect his relationships with the different acceptance groups? Therefore, I will discuss Hadrian's youth and how he came to power. I will elaborate on the struggles and challenges he encountered during his reign. I will discuss his relationship with the different acceptance groups, and I will give a summary of his journeys. In this chapter, I will also put him in chronological order with his predecessors, and I will briefly describe the lives of Domitian and Trajan, as I will discuss their coinages in the last chapter.

In the second chapter, I will answer the question: How did the messages on coin types issued under Hadrian's reign appeal to the different acceptance groups? I will analyze his coinage by conducting a quantitative method and in-depth analysis of his coin types. Consequently, I will give contextual information about his coinage and titulature, before discussing the representational categories and how these categories fit into the context of his reign. Besides, I will pay specific attention to coin types which could have been appealing to one of the acceptance groups.

In order to embed the results of Hadrian's coinage into a comparative framework, In the third chapter, I will answer the question: How do the coinages of Domitian and Trajan relate to Hadrian's coinage? Only by placing Hadrian's coinage in changing historical contexts, chronological patterning, and degrees of prominence in relation to one another it is possible to fully grasp the impact of the messages on his coin types.<sup>75</sup> Therefore I have chosen to investigate his direct predecessors.<sup>76</sup> In this chapter, I will compare the coinages of Domitian and Trajan with the coinage of Hadrian. I have analysed 942 coin types under the authority of Trajan, and 859 coin types under the authority of Domitian. Just like in chapter

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Grigoropoulos, D. Eds., *TRAC 2004: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Durham 2004* (Oxford, 2005), 39-49.

<sup>74</sup> Hekster, Slootjes & Manders, 'Making History', 1-2.

<sup>75</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 21

<sup>76</sup> Aside from Nerva.

two, I will conduct a quantitative analysis based on the same categories of representation. Finally, in the conclusion, I will answer the main research question: How did Hadrian with the messages on his coin types appeal to the different acceptance groups?

## Chapter 1: Hadrian in Historical Context

It is essential to obtain more knowledge about the context of Hadrian's life in order to investigate how his coinage might have developed his relationships with the acceptance groups. Events that occurred during his life might have influenced his relationships with the acceptance groups. Besides, events that took place during the reigns of earlier emperors also affected his rule. Therefore in this chapter I will first, shortly, discuss the reigns of his predecessors, Domitian and Trajan. Afterwards, I will discuss written sources that go deeper into the life of Hadrian. Much of our knowledge about Hadrian's life comes from written sources. However, these works must be handled with great caution, as the historical accuracy often is debatable. Nonetheless, these sources may not be neglected while researching Hadrian, as they hold vital information about Hadrian's life. In describing Hadrian's life, I will quote elements from these sources. In this chapter, I will discuss aspects of Hadrian's youth and early career, his rise to power and his emperorship, and I will also expand on his journeys. When discussing all these aspects, I will pay specific attention to events during his reign, or during his predecessor's reigns which might have affected his relationships with the different acceptance groups. In this chapter, I will answer the question: How did events which occurred during Hadrian's life or during his predecessor's reigns affect his relationships with the acceptance groups?

### 1.1 Domitian and Trajan

The rule of emperor Hadrian must be viewed in line with his predecessors. Only in this way is it possible to reflect upon how Hadrian's coinage might have influenced his relationship with the acceptance groups. The differences between the coinage of Hadrian and the coinages of the other emperors directly show the emphasis of the messages specific to Hadrian. For that reason, in this section, I will provide contextual information about the rule of other emperors.

Emperors I have chosen to compare Hadrian with are Domitian, who ruled from 81 to 96 and Trajan, who reigned from 98 till 117. In order to be as consistent as possible in interpreting the messages on coins of other emperors, I have chosen Domitian and Trajan. Their reigns came closest to the rule of Hadrian, both in regard of time period as in length of reign. Both emperors lived, like Hadrian, around the transition from the first- into the second century AD and both emperors ruled for a comparable length in time.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Therefore these emperors are more comparable than, for example, Nerva, who only ruled for a couple of years.

The last Emperor of the Flavian dynasty, before the Nerva-Antonine dynasty came to power, was Emperor Domitian. His failed reign caused a set of actions in motion in which Trajan became the new emperor. Domitian became the new emperor in the year 81. His reign was not undisputed.<sup>78</sup> He was unpopular among parts of the Roman elite as he stated that the Roman Senate was inferior to him.<sup>79</sup> As a result of his unpopularity among the Roman elite, Domitian's rule abruptly ended after 15 years in 96 when he was assassinated by staff members of the imperial court. On the same day of the murder, he was succeeded by Nerva. Nerva died in 98 and was succeeded without problems by Trajan.<sup>80</sup>

However Trajan was not of Roman origin, the election of Trajan as successor did not come out of the blue.<sup>81</sup> Trajan's father was one of the first non-Italians in the Senate. As a result, Trajan's family had considerable respect within the city of Rome.<sup>82</sup> Certainly, Trajan's long military career contributed to his popularity amongst the Roman elite. Trajan seems to have been an excellent emperor. Pliny extensively elaborates on all Trajan's excellent qualities in his work *Panegyricus*.<sup>83</sup> Besides his popularity among the Roman elite, he was also popular among the army. Trajan, above all, has become known for the lands he conquered. He annexed several areas, such as in Egypt, Arabia, Dacia, Armenia, and Mesopotamia. During the last part of his reign, a Jewish uprising broke out. This war ended in 117, after which Trajan returned to Rome. However, Trajan would never arrive there. He became incurably ill during the trip and died. Hadrian, as his adoptive son, seemed to be his only logical successor.

## 1.2 Ancient Sources

There are only a couple of works on Hadrian which surpassed the test of time. Nevertheless, our image of Hadrian has mainly been shaped by two literary sources.<sup>84</sup> The two most influential works are the *Historia Augusta*, which is a biographical sketch included in a large collection of imperial lives, and the *Roman History* written by Cassius Dio.<sup>85</sup> In this chapter, I

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<sup>78</sup> Pleket, H.W., 'Domitian, the Senate and the Provinces', *Mnemosyne* 14:4 (1961), 296-315, in particular 296-297.

<sup>79</sup> Pleket, 'Domitian', 298.

<sup>80</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Trajan was born in Hispania.

<sup>82</sup> Bennett, J., *Trajan: Optimus Princeps* (London, 1997), 35-38.

<sup>83</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, transl. by Radice, B. (Cambridge, 2015). According to Leonard Thompson, Pliny wrote the *Panegyricus* in order to contrast the reign of the 'good' emperor Trajan, with the reign of the 'bad' emperor Domitian. As a result, Pliny's work about Trajan is highly biased. Therefore, his works have to be interpreted with caution. Thompson, L., *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford, 1990), 114.

<sup>84</sup> There are, however, also other written sources, such as the works of Pausanias, Fronto, and Favorinus.

<sup>85</sup> *Historia Augusta, Hadrian*, transl. by Magie, D. (Cambridge, 2015); Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 69. transl. by Cary, E. & Foster, H.B., (Cambridge, 2015).

will discuss these two sources as they provide the most complete account of the life of Hadrian. When interpreting these works it is important to be cautious, as these works often are not historically accurate.

Starting with the *Roman History*. In this work, Dio states that he documented extensively while writing the book.<sup>86</sup> Dio was not a contemporary of Hadrian, but he still lived in a period in which the documentation on emperor Hadrian was relatively recent. He was born 20 years after Hadrian died. Dio's view on Hadrian is broadly positive. However, in several aspects, he is quite critical of Hadrian.

Dio seems twofold about Hadrian's personality. On the one hand, Hadrian was arrogant and demanding. He thought he was good at everything, including writing literature, sculpturing, and painting.<sup>87</sup> Besides, he wanted to surpass everyone in everything, and hated people who excelled in something.<sup>88</sup> Here Hadrian seems to get some traits of a 'bad emperor'. On the other hand, the emperor compensated for his flaws, with plenty of good things: Hadrian "would be pleasant to deal with and he would possess a certain charm".<sup>89</sup> In addition, he would take good care of everything, and he was generous and competent. He did not start any new wars and ended the existing conflicts, treated cities and civilians fairly, and maintained excellent discipline in the army, by setting a good example.<sup>90</sup> Hadrian had all major affairs arranged through the Senate, and the emperor himself wanted to burden his subjects as little as possible.<sup>91</sup> Dio also provides some other details, which are sometimes significant for Hadrian's reign: Hadrian never drank wine during his breakfast, he organized games with a hundred lions, he took measures against decadent practices such as mixed baths.<sup>92</sup> Some of these aspects are standard elements of a 'good emperor'.

The image of Hadrian in the *Historia Augusta* broadly corresponds to the image of Hadrian in Dio's work. In the *Historia Augusta* Hadrian's life is described. The biography is not very profound, and sometimes gives the impression of a list of anecdotes. Besides, this work is historically not very reliable and it is of moderate literary quality.<sup>93</sup> In this work too,

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<sup>86</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 69.

<sup>87</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.3.2.

<sup>88</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.3.3.

<sup>89</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.2.6-2.

<sup>90</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.5.1.

<sup>91</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.7.

<sup>92</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.7.3.; 69.8.3.

<sup>93</sup> Syme, R., 'Guard prefects of Trajan and Hadrian', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980), 64-80, in particular 67. "The *Vita Hadriani* is a messy product. The basic source was ruthlessly abridged and casually supplemented. Doublets and contradictions disclose two strands."

Hadrian is described as a powerful, energetic figure. Some striking details are consistent with Dio's account, such as his measure of separate baths.<sup>94</sup> Also, the description of his personality corresponds to the description of Dio. In general, Hadrian was kind to the Senate. However, his personality still had some dark sides. For example, in a social context, he would like to hear gossip about his friends. In a professional context, he sneaky enacted unpopular measures, and multiple times he thwarted his former guardian Attianus.<sup>95</sup>

After a brief analysis of these sources, it can be concluded that both works correspond to a certain extent. However, given the fact that these sources do correspond, does not mean that their descriptions were actual reality. Both authors are biased about Hadrian to a greater or lesser extent. Nonetheless, these sources are still of great value, as they are the only sources in which the person of Hadrian is clearly described. Therefore, these sources cannot be neglected in researching Hadrian. Instead, they have to be interpreted with caution.

### 1.3 From Youth to Emperorship

Publius Aelius Hadrianus Augustus was born in the year 76, in modern-day Spain. He was part of an important Roman family that lived on the Iberian Peninsula. When Hadrian's father died, Hadrian's custody passed onto Marcus Ulpius Traianus. Trajan was the great uncle of Hadrian and a member of another important family in Hispania. Hadrian, thus, belonged to a network of important Spanish-Roman families, who were expanding their influence in Rome at the end of the first century.<sup>96</sup> Almost nothing is known about the youth of the later emperor.<sup>97</sup> His career probably followed the standard course of Roman elite members: the *cursus honorum*, after which he would probably become a high-ranking Roman politician.

However, in the fall of 97, Hadrian's position changed dramatically. Trajan was adopted by the ruling emperor Nerva. In January 98, Trajan even became emperor. Less than two years later, Hadrian married Sabina, the daughter of Trajan's cousin. In the following years, he held important civilian and military positions and participated in Trajan's campaigns. When Trajan died without an official successor in 117, there was hardly any alternative to Hadrian as a new emperor.<sup>98</sup> Hadrian was Trajan's closest male relative and had been married

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<sup>94</sup> Historia Augusta 18.10

<sup>95</sup> Historia Augusta 15.2; 9.1-2; 9.3-4.

<sup>96</sup> Bennett, *Trajan*, 35-38.

<sup>97</sup> Opper, T., *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* (Cambridge, 2008), 34-36.

<sup>98</sup> Den Boer, W., 'Trajan's Deification and Hadrian's Succession', *Ancient Society* 6 (1975), 203-212, in particular 206-210.

into Trajan's family. Besides, Hadrian had been under the guardianship of Trajan since he was nine. However, Hadrian's accession was accompanied by several problems.

The most evident problem for Hadrian was how he was proclaimed emperor.<sup>99</sup> Immediately after the death of Trajan, Hadrian was proclaimed the new emperor by Roman legions situated in Syria. That was not strange in itself, as Hadrian was the obvious successor. However, he had not yet been adopted by Trajan and was not officially declared his successor. Presumably, Trajan would have done that just before he died in the presence of a limited number of loved ones. Not Trajan, but his wife Plotina is said to have signed the letters announcing this.<sup>100</sup> Hadrian seems to have been aware of the precarious situation. As Birley states: "There was, no doubt, widespread opposition to the idea of Hadrian becoming Trajan's successor."<sup>101</sup>

In primary sources, the problems regarding Hadrian's accession are mentioned. According to the *Historia Augusta*, the new emperor sent a cautious letter to the Senate.<sup>102</sup> In it "he asked for forgiveness for the fact that he had not left the appointment of a new emperor to the Senate." Soon suspicions appeared about the legitimacy of Hadrian as emperor. Dio writes about intrigues during the succession.<sup>103</sup> Hadrian was said to have been put forward by Trajan's wife Plotina because she was in love with him. According to Dio, by killing four ex-consuls, Hadrian had eliminated important political opponents. The execution of these men had displeased the Senate, and the emperor defended himself for this. He had even sworn that he was not involved in the plot.<sup>104</sup> Besides that, Hadrian replaced several high-ranking Romans which formerly had been loyal to Trajan. For example, Hadrian deposed general Lusius Quietus. Quietus was responsible for crushing the Jewish uprising, therefore he was very popular within the army. Depositions and eliminations of high-ranking Romans and generals would certainly have upset the acceptance groups 'the army' and 'the Roman elite'.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to this political context, Hadrian also had to deal with the context of the empire that he inherited. In order to win over the army, Hadrian needed to prove himself to his soldiers as a competent military leader. However, immediately after taking office, he

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<sup>99</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 73-76.

<sup>100</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.1.4.

<sup>101</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 75.

<sup>102</sup> *Historia Augusta*, Hadrianus, 6.1.2.

<sup>103</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.1.2.

<sup>104</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.2.5-6.

<sup>105</sup> Chaniotis, A., *Age of Conquests: The Greek World from Alexander to Hadrian* (London, 2018), 255-261.

ordered the withdrawal of Roman legions within Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Armenia. The withdrawal of Roman troops from areas conquered under Trajan was remarkable. Soldiers, who a couple of years earlier fought on life and death to conquer these territories, would not have been enthusiastic to abandon these territories.<sup>106</sup> Especially since Hadrian did not even try to present this decision as a necessary measure.<sup>107</sup> With the open declaration of giving up on territory, Hadrian went against 100 years of expectations of what an emperor had to do, namely retaining to newly conquered territories and conquering new ones.<sup>108</sup>

Out of these facts becomes clear that Hadrian had been indifferent to live up to several expectations at the start of his reign, it is therefore not surprising that the relationships with the acceptance groups ‘the army’ and the ‘Roman elite’, at the beginning of his reign, were poor. In order to retain power, it must have been necessary to improve his relationships with the different groups. The relationships with the Roman elite and the *plebs* could have been improved by staying in Rome, and by governing from there.<sup>109</sup> However, in 121, Hadrian decided to travel through the empire. As a result, he would not have been able to win over these groups through his imperial presence. This journey, however, was one of many.

#### 1.4 The Restless Emperor

The many journeys that Hadrian undertook is a surprising element about his reign. It was not unusual for emperors to travel in the early Empire, however, only when there was a military necessity.<sup>110</sup> Roman emperors rarely travelled through the Empire without military necessity. Especially Hadrian, who only played a small military role (since he withdrew Roman troops in large parts of the Empire), was expected to be present in Rome to govern his empire. The difficult relationship with the senators present in Rome might have played an important role in Hadrian's unique decision to travel through the provinces during large parts of his reign.<sup>111</sup> In the section below I will briefly describe his journeys.

Hadrian arrived in Rome in 118. He remained in the city till the year 121 before embarking on his first trip. His decision to stay in Rome for so long seems to be a logical decision as Hadrian might have felt that his position might have been in danger.<sup>112</sup> There had

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<sup>106</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 1.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibidem*, 77-79.

<sup>108</sup> Campbell, B., *Warfare and Society in Imperial Rome c. 31 BC-AD 280* (London, 2002), 105-108.

<sup>109</sup> Cooper, & Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty*, 39-40. Imperial presence was the key in order to obtain legitimate authority over Rome and the Empire.

<sup>110</sup> Casson, L., *Travel in the Ancient World* (New York, 1974).

<sup>111</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 110-118.

<sup>112</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 93-112.

been no emperor in Rome since the year 113 in which Trajan departed to conquer territories in the east. As imperial presence was expected it might have been a tactical decision of Hadrian to stay that long in Rome, before embarking on his journeys.<sup>113</sup> Eventually Hadrian, in 121, embarked on his first trip to provinces in western Europe, all along the western part of Northern Africa to the eastern parts of the Empire, while eventually returning to Rome in the year 125. He stayed in Rome for a couple of years till in 128 he left again. From 128 till 134 he, mainly, visited the African and Greek provinces. From the year 134 onwards Hadrian seems not to have travelled anymore. In 136 Hadrian became ill and slowly languished till he died in the year 138.

Hadrian seemed to have had multiple reasons to travel. The travelling of Hadrian was a way in which he could show himself to his troops.<sup>114</sup> The emperor systematically visited legionary camp after legionary camp during his journeys. This way his travels were somewhat military in nature, which in turn was beneficiary for his image as a military leader. In addition, these journeys were a means of fulfilling the role of a personal present judge, at a time when the provincial elite was playing an increasingly important role in the empire.<sup>115</sup> This increasement in importance of the provincial elite made Hadrian less dependent on the elite in Rome. Regarding his troublesome relationship with the Roman Senate, this decline must have been an additional advantage.

Another additional effect of the journeys was that there seems to have been a reduction in the difference of status between Rome and the rest of the empire.<sup>116</sup> During his journeys, the legal status of a large number of provincial settlements was upgraded to *municipium*, which in turn led to building activities initiated by local elites. Often Hadrian donated large sums of money to adorn the cities where he came. “*He built something in almost all cities.*” For that reason, several provincial cities benefited from his presence.

The explicit role of the provinces during Hadrian's reign ensured the popularity of the emperor in those provinces.<sup>117</sup> There is no other Roman ruler of which so many statues were erected in cities outside the Italian peninsula as for Hadrian. There are 418 remaining statue bases for Hadrian. Most of it was set up by cities which Hadrian had visited and helped during

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<sup>113</sup> Ibidem, 111. “Senate and People should have no ground for resentment that he was neglecting or slighting the Eternal City by his departure.”

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem, 115-120.

<sup>115</sup> Schiller, A.A., *Roman Law: Mechanisms of Development* (New York, 1978), 416-418.

<sup>116</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 305-306.

<sup>117</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 305-306.

his travels.<sup>118</sup> The fact that the provinces during Hadrian's reign became more important was beneficial for the provincial elites. Provinces became more prominent because provincial elites gained more important positions within the Roman government. As the emperor had a large say in this, the provincial elites were thankful to him. Therefore, due to the rise in importance of the provincial elites, Hadrian enjoyed popularity among this acceptance group. Popularity which Hadrian needed, since he was quite unpopular among the Roman elite.

### 1.5 Conclusion

Despite that after Trajan's death, Hadrian seemed the only logical successor. At the start of his emperorship, Hadrian still had to deal with a precarious political situation due to doubts about his legitimacy. He was far from Rome in a world where the emperor's proximity was expected, in a military context in which Trajan had achieved impressive victories, but where Hadrian decided to go against what was expected of a new emperor, namely retaining new territories and expanding the empire.

The over twenty-years reign of Hadrian as emperor of the Roman Empire was fundamentally different from the reign of his predecessors. Hadrian was the first emperor who voluntarily gave up Roman territory. Besides, Hadrian made extensive journeys to various regions, even when there was no immediate military necessity. The absence from Rome could have led to dissatisfaction within important acceptance groups in Rome. In addition, already from the beginning, there was tension between the Senate and himself as a result of the murder of four former consuls. There was also tension between the army, as Hadrian deposed an important general and ordered the retreat from recently conquered territories. Out of this becomes clear that the relationships with the military acceptance group, and the Roman elite, was delicate already at the beginning of his reign.

Even though emperors were dictatorial rulers, no emperor ever managed to rule without support from the different acceptance groups. How did Hadrian, despite his (in large periods) absence from Rome, and his unpopularity during the beginning of his reign, succeed in maintaining that support? A possible explanation which could have contributed to the strengthening of his relationships with the acceptance groups could lie in the communication of imperial ideology on coins and the effect which that had on the different acceptance groups. It seems plausible that by representing himself in a certain way, contributed to the realization of various acceptance groups that Hadrian was capable to rule the empire.

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<sup>118</sup> Højte, J.M., *Roman Imperial Statue Bases: From Augustus to Commodus* (Aarhus, 2005), 137; 638.

Therefore, in the upcoming chapter, I will analyse whether Hadrian's coinage might have contributed to his relationships with the different acceptance groups.

## Chapter 2: Hadrian's Coinage

In the first chapter, I provided contextual information about Hadrian's rise to power and about his rule. Considering Hadrian's successful rule in the eyes of many modern scholars, he must have somehow succeeded in establishing support among these groups.<sup>119</sup> In this chapter, I will investigate if and how Hadrian's coinage might have contributed to the strengthening of the relationships between him and the different acceptance groups, the Roman army, the Roman Senate, the Roman *plebs*, and the provincial elite. In order to investigate this, I will quantify the coin types into representational categories, which I have based on the messages displayed on the reverses. I am aware that the categorization is an arbitrary demarcation. However, as a result of the demarcation, it becomes clearly visible what the most important messages and ideals were that Hadrian wanted to disseminate. Therefore this particular method of research, which has its disadvantages, is helpful in order to map imperial representation. Further, I will discuss the results from the quantification. In addition, I will pay special attention to how these results fit into the context of Hadrian's rule. I will emphasize coin types that could have had an impact on the various acceptance groups, to come to a better understanding of how Hadrian tried to appeal to the acceptance groups by means of his coinage. But first of all, I will start with considering the titulature on Hadrian's coinage, as, in order to correctly interpret his coinage, his titulature needs more clarification.

### 2.1 Titulature

It was common for Roman emperors to put a legend on their coins that contained information such as a list of titles and functions. The choice which functions and titles an emperor put on his coins reflects how he wanted to be seen.<sup>120</sup> Emperors until Hadrian duplicated titles of predecessors in order to create continuity. By duplicating titles, emperors continued a tradition that was beneficiary for the position of the emperor. Based on the titulature an emperor used, subjects could get to know the new emperor, and how the new emperor wanted to shape his rule. As a result, this would bring a certain degree of stability. Hadrian, however, chose to abandon this tradition. He, in contrast to earlier emperors, chose to adopt titles that only characterized his own reign.<sup>121</sup> That is precisely why Hadrian's titulature is so interesting. Abandoning the tradition in which emperors adopted predecessor's titles is

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<sup>119</sup> Cassius Dio 69.23.2. Scholars have based this on the writings of Cassius Dio. Cassius Dio states about Hadrian's rule: "a generally excellent reign".

<sup>120</sup> Wolters, R., 'The Julio-Claudians' in: Metcalf, W.E. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, (2012), 340-342.

<sup>121</sup> Wolters, 'The Julio-Claudians', 340-342.

significant and tells a lot about how Hadrian wanted to characterize his rule. Therefore in my analysis, I will pay special attention to Hadrian's titulature. In the upcoming section, I will map the changes and I will elaborate on the effects that these changes could have on the acceptance groups.

After a brief analysis of Hadrian's titulature, I have distinguished three periods: from 117 till 121, from 125 till 128, and from 132 till 138. What is noteworthy about the first period of Hadrian's rule is that from 117 to 121 there appeared an extensive titulature on his coins. Hadrian was awarded many honorary titles such as P(ater) P(atriciae), P(ontifex) M(aximus) and TR(ibunica) P(otestas). Coins containing these titles were minted during the first years of his reign, and because of Hadrian's absence from Rome in the first years, they were probably minted without Hadrian's authority.<sup>122</sup> As soon as Hadrian arrived in Rome, these titles disappeared from his coins.<sup>123</sup> The title *Pater Patriae* was one of the greatest honours a Roman could be granted. Therefore it seems remarkable that Hadrian refused this title. However, according to Stevenson, this can be explained quite logically. Hadrian had been accused of having ordered the murder of several ex-consuls. According to Stevenson, because of these allegations, Hadrian seems to have chosen to keep a low profile.<sup>124</sup> By refusing such an honorary title Hadrian showed to the people that he was humble, which was an important characteristic of a 'good emperor'.<sup>125</sup> There are also other explanations such as, according to Bennett, by refusing the title, Hadrian would have imitated Augustus, as Augustus too, would have refused it several times.<sup>126</sup> By imitating Augustus, Hadrian wanted to link his reign to Augustus' reign.

From 125, the titulature on the coins was greatly shortened and simplified. Eventually from the year 128 onwards, the title 'HADRIANUS AUGUSTUS COS III' retained. With the combination of 'HADRIANUS' and 'AUGUSTUS', Hadrian, again, wanted to emphasize his connection with the 'good' emperor Augustus.<sup>127</sup> The emphasis on Augustus' reign would be very profitable as Augustus still was an extremely popular Roman figure. By creating the

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<sup>122</sup> Bennett, J., 'Hadrian and the Title *Pater Patriae*', *Britannia* 15 (1984), 234-235, in particular 234.

<sup>123</sup> Bennett, 'Pater Patriae', 234-235.

<sup>124</sup> Stevenson, T., 'Roman Coins and Refusals of the Title '*Pater Patriae*''', *The Numismatic Chronicle* 167 (2007), 119-141, in particular 120.

<sup>125</sup> Stevenson, 'Roman Coins', 129-130.

<sup>126</sup> Bennett, 'Pater Patriae', 234.

<sup>127</sup> Favro, D., 'Pater Urbis: Augustus as City Father of Rome', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51:1 (1992), 61-84, in particular 61-64.

association with Augustus' reign, Hadrian wanted his subjects to believe his reign was like Augustus' reign. Therefore, by creating this link, he wanted to gain popularity.<sup>128</sup>

After the year 128, the title P(ater) P(atriciae) appeared again on Hadrian's coins. Hadrian might have seemed it the right time to adopt such an honour. *Pater Patriae* meant 'Father of the Fatherland', therefore the one wielding this title was responsible for the well-being of all Roman citizens.<sup>129</sup> Therefore the title and its meaning was directly linked to the Senate and the people of Rome. The taking over of this title, therefore, might have had a positive effect on these acceptance groups.<sup>130</sup>

From the year 132 onwards Hadrian's titulature becomes more diverse. His titulature has been extended on many coins with the honorary title P(ontifex) M(aximus). However, the diversity in the coinage is mainly visible in the variety of references to all sorts of phenomena. For example, there were provincial personifications, personifications of several different virtues or personifications of various gods and goddesses put on coins.

It is striking that the changes within the titulature on the coins correspond to the different periods of Hadrian's presence and absence from Rome, as the return of Hadrian in Rome corresponds with the changes in titulature of the coins. The coins show that Hadrian intervened personally in designing his coins.<sup>131</sup> He seems to have made very conscious choices in adjusting his titulature when he returned to Rome. It seems likely that the purpose of the changes in his titulature, was to simplify the messages on his coins.<sup>132</sup> This simplification made it possible for a greater audience to understand his messages, which in turn, could be beneficiary for his relationships with the acceptance groups incapable of understanding more complex messages, such as the Roman *plebs*. Therefore, the simplification, likely, must have affected his relationship with the Roman *plebs*.

## 2.2 Categorization

In order to investigate if and how Hadrian's coinage developed his relationships with the acceptance groups, I have chosen to categorize the messages on his coins. As to the categorization, I have based the demarcation of the categories of imperial representation on

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<sup>128</sup> Bennett, 'Pater Patriae', 234-235.

<sup>129</sup> Ibidem, 234-235.

<sup>130</sup> Favro, 'Pater Urbis', 61-63. "Augustus assumed the role of pater patriae. As benevolent father, he exerted control over the Roman people at every level."

<sup>131</sup> Mattingly, H., 'Some Historical Coins of Hadrian', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 15 (1925), 209-222, in particular 212-215.

<sup>132</sup> Thornton, M.K., 'Hadrian and his Reign', 441-442. in: Temporini, H., *Politische Geschichte (Kaisergeschichte)* (Berlin, 1975).

the prevalence of particular messages within the 2434 coin types of Hadrian's coinage which are put together in the OCRE database. The division of coin types is based upon the reverses. Sometimes, there are several messages displayed on the same coin. Therefore in my analysis, the overall percentage of the coin types will surpass 100%. In this study on the coinage of Hadrian, the percentage comes down to 101,9%.

In the succeeding part, I will give an overview of the eight categories I have determined, in the form of a table. The categories in this thesis follow Manders' categories of representation. Manders distinguishes thirteen types of messages which she put in categories. In this thesis, however, I have slightly adapted her categorization for research purposes.

Manders' categorization is based on the messages of coins of third-century emperors. These emperors used slightly different messages on their coins. Therefore, the employment of exactly the same categories as Manders will give an anachronistic view. However, parts of her categorization are applicable when discussing the coinages of Hadrian, Trajan, and Domitian. Accordingly, I have chosen to merge categories Manders uses, in order to create more balanced categories.<sup>133</sup> However, I will adopt her definitions of the categories.<sup>134</sup> In addition, I will also adopt the criteria that she has used in her categorization.<sup>135</sup> The incorporation of the categories, I have based upon the extent to which categories radiated similar messages. For example, *Aeternitas*-messages, which spread messages of eternal continuation, are too messages which feature the (enduring) prosperity of the empire.

This categorization clarifies the results and creates the opportunity for a more in-depth analysis of the various coin types. The overview will contain definitions regarding the several categories, and besides that, it also displays in which of the categories the coin types are assigned. The table specifies the criteria for dividing the coin types of Hadrian into eight different categories.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> I have combined the categories: *Aeternitas*-messages and *saeculum aureum* messages; Elevation messages and Divine association messages; Paradeigmata messages and Dynastic representation messages.

<sup>134</sup> If necessary, I will also adopt her definitions of the categories when merging categories.

<sup>135</sup> Unless otherwise indicated with a footnote. In addition, I only included criteria that are actually put on coins from either Hadrian, Trajan, or Domitian. As a result, many of the criteria which can be found in the chart of Manders, I have not included.

<sup>136</sup> Manders, *Coining*, 41.

## 2.3 Chart

<b>Dynastic Representation</b>	All forms of representation promoting the family of the emperor, his descent (of humans, <i>dei</i> and <i>divi</i> ) and his (intended) successors. And all forms of representation reflecting attempts of the emperor to associate himself with great past emperors. <sup>137</sup>
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of members of the imperial family / successors</li> <li>2. Images of the emperor together with a member of the imperial family/ successor / predecessor</li> </ol>
Coin types with a different Legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AVG PATRI AVG MATRI</li> <li>2. PRINCEPS IVVENTVTIS</li> <li>3. CONSECRATIO (of family member)<sup>138</sup></li> </ol>
<b>Military Representation:</b>	All forms of representation emphasizing the armed forces, military victories, and the role of the emperor as general.
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of the emperor depicted in military dress or with military attributes/ barbarians/ enemies/ captives/ soldiers/ standard bearers/ Victoria</li> <li>2. Images of Victoria</li> <li>3. Images of the emperor in triumphal quadriga</li> <li>4. Images of a galley</li> <li>5. Images of soldier(s)</li> <li>6. Images of a trophy with captives</li> <li>7. Images of captive(s)</li> <li>8. Images of legionary eagle between standards</li> <li>9. Images of legionary eagle on thunderbolt<sup>139</sup></li> <li>10. Images of Roma holding Victory/ military equipment<sup>140</sup></li> <li>11. Images of the emperor on horseback<sup>141</sup></li> </ol>
Coin types with a different Legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IOVI VICTORI</li> <li>2. COH PRAETOR</li> <li>3. EXERCITVS/ EXERC/ EXER</li> <li>4. CONCORDIA EXERCITVVM</li> <li>5. Imperial military titulature (e.g. GERMANICVS, DACICUS, PARTHICUS, ARAB)<sup>142</sup></li> <li>6. ADLOCVTIO</li> <li>7. PROFECTIO</li> <li>8. ADVENTVS<sup>143</sup></li> </ol>
<b>Divine association</b>	All forms of representation connecting the emperor and his reign with the gods/ the divine. And all forms of representation placing

<sup>137</sup> I have merged the categories of ‘Dynastic Representation’ and ‘Paradeigmata’. Because, in *Paradeigmata*-messages, an emperor (just like with dynastic representation) also tries to align himself to previous emperors.

<sup>138</sup> Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors*, 223. ‘‘Consecratio coins were normally issued to commemorate actual members of the imperial family, or emperors about whom kinship claims were constructed.’’

<sup>139</sup> I have added ‘Images of legionary eagle on thunderbolt’ in this category. The eagle is a symbol of victory. Jones, *Dictionary*, 106.

<sup>140</sup> I have added ‘Roma holding Victory/ military equipment’ in this category.

<sup>141</sup> Manders categorized images of the emperor on horseback in the category of ‘Non-specific Representation’, but according to Sear, the coins on which the emperor is depicted on horseback, related to the military. Therefore I have regarded images of the emperor on horseback as a military message. Sear, D., *Roman Coins and their Values: Volume 5* (London, 2014), 49.

<sup>142</sup> Hadrian used military titles for dynastic representation, not for military representation. Therefore, in contrast to the other emperors, these titles do not count as a form of military representation for him.

<sup>143</sup> Adventus coins, in contrast to the other emperors, in Hadrian’s rule were no form of military representation.

	the emperor or members of the imperial family beyond the human ranks. <sup>144</sup>
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of gods</li> <li>2. Images of (emperor with) religious attributes</li> <li>3. Images of the emperor and/ or other members of the imperial family sacrificing</li> <li>4. Images of temples</li> </ol>
Coin types with a different legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. VOTA PVBLICA/ PVBL</li> <li>2. VOTA SVSCEPTA</li> <li>3. Names of deities</li> <li>4. Images and/or names of deities together with CONSERVAT/ CVSTODI/ OLYMPIVS</li> <li>5. PROVIDENTIA DEORVM</li> <li>6. Images of the emperor with divine attributes (<i>quadriga</i> (no triumphal <i>quadriga</i>), club)</li> <li>7. Images of the emperor's Genius</li> <li>8. FORTVNA REDVX/REDUCI</li> <li>9. Image of crescent with stars<sup>145</sup></li> <li>10. Images of Sol<sup>146</sup></li> <li>11. Images of attributes related to gods (caduceus).<sup>147</sup></li> <li>12. Images of mythical creatures (Griffin, Pegasus)<sup>148</sup></li> </ol>
<i>Saeculum aureum</i>	All forms of representation featuring the prosperity that the emperor will bring/ has brought including forms of representation propagating eternal continuation of the reign of the emperor at that time, and the existence of Rome. <sup>149</sup>
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	Images of personifications which do not refer to material matters (such as Annona, Moneta) but to abstract matters such as Aeternitas, Pax, Fortuna, Fides, Salus, Felicitas, Abundantia, Spes, Securitas, Concordia, Laetitia, Libertas, Uberitas, Bonus Eventus. <sup>150</sup>
Coin types with a different legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of a Phoenix<sup>151</sup></li> <li>2. SAEC AVR</li> <li>3. TELLVS STABIL</li> <li>4. Names of personifications that do not refer to material matters (such as ANONNA, MONETA) but to abstract matters such as PAX, FORTVNA, SALVS, FELICITAS, ABVNDANTIA, SPES, SECVRITAS, CONCORDIA, LIBERTAS, BONVS EVENTVS, FIDES, often together with additions such as PVBLICA.</li> <li>5. ORIENS</li> </ol>

<sup>144</sup> I have combined Manders' categories of Divine association and Elevation.

<sup>145</sup> I have added 'Image of crescent with stars' in the category 'Divine association'. Jones, *Dictionary*, 77. According to Jones, crescent was closely associated with Luna, the moon goddess.

<sup>146</sup> I have added 'Image of crescent with stars' in the category 'Divine association'.

<sup>147</sup> I have added 'Image of Sol' in the category 'Divine association'. Jones, *Dictionary*, 291-292. Sol was the Sun-god

<sup>148</sup> 'Pegasus' Manders categorizes in the category of 'Unica'. However, I regard mythical beings as a reference to the divine.

<sup>149</sup> I have combined Manders' categories of *Saeculum aureum* and *Aeternitas*-messages.

<sup>150</sup> I have added *Aeternitas*.

<sup>151</sup> I have added 'Phoenix'. For further explanation see page 51-52.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. LIBERTAS RESTITVTA<sup>152</sup></li> <li>7. Images of attributes related to Abundantia (cornucopiae).<sup>153</sup></li> <li>8. ANNUM NOVUM, FAUSTUM FELICEM<sup>154</sup></li> <li>9. ROMA AETERNA</li> </ol>
<b><i>Euergesia</i></b>	All forms of representation promoting social-economic achievements accomplished by the emperor.
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of Moneta</li> <li>2. Images of Annona</li> <li>3. Images of buildings (e.g. Coliseum, Column of Trajan, Basilica of Trajan, Via Trajana, Basilica Aemilia, Portum Traiani, triumphal arch, bridge (without soldiers))</li> </ol>
Coin types with a different legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MONETA</li> <li>2. ANNONA</li> <li>3. Attributes linked to Annona and Moneta (such as Modius with corn-ears/ corn-ears)<sup>155</sup></li> <li>4. CONGIARIUM TERTIVM/ CONGIAR SECVND<sup>156</sup></li> <li>5. LVDI SAECVLARIA</li> </ol>
<b>Non-specific representation</b>	All forms of representation in which the emperor (or someone else) assumes a ‘neutral role’ and fulfils no specific function. And all forms of representation that do not fit in the other categories. <sup>157</sup>
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of the emperor with ‘neutral’ attributes (e.g. scepter, globe, branche)</li> <li>2. Image of a woman</li> <li>3. Images of a wreath</li> <li>4. Images of a winged-thunderbolt</li> </ol>
<b>Virtues</b>	All forms of representation promoting the virtues of the emperor, the army, or the people (of Rome or of other regions).
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	Images of personifications of Aequitas, Clementia, Hilaritas, Indulgentia, Iustitia, Liberalitas, Munificentia, Patientia, Pietas, Providentia, Pudicitia, Virtus. <sup>158</sup>
Coin types with a different legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Images depicting personifications of) AEQVITAS, CLEMENTIA, HILARITAS, INDVLGENTIA, IVSTITIA, LIBERALITAS, MVNIFICENTIA, PATIENTIA, PIETAS, PROVIDENTIA, PVDICITIA, VIRTVS.</li> </ol>
<b>Geographical Messages</b>	All forms of representation referring to (personifications of) geographic entities such as the city of Rome and provinces.
Coin types with standard imperial titulature:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Images of Roma</li> <li>2. Images depicting personification of Achaea</li> <li>3. Images depicting personification of Aegyptos</li> </ol>

<sup>152</sup> I have added ‘Images of attributes related to Abundantia (cornucopiae)’ in the category ‘*Saeculum aureum*’.

<sup>153</sup> It is (says Millin, *Dictionnaire des Beaux Arts*), the characteristic attribute of Abundantia.

<sup>154</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 736. For further explanation see page 52.

<sup>155</sup> I have added ‘Attributes linked to Annona and Moneta (such as Modius with corn-ears/ corn-ears)’ in the category ‘*Euergesia*’. ANNONA, a provision of victuals for one year. This word particularly applies to corn.

<sup>156</sup> I have added ‘CONGIARIUM TERTIVM/ CONGIAR SECVND’ in the category ‘*Euergesia*’. Jones, *Dictionary*, 66. Congiarium was a distribution of money for the people.

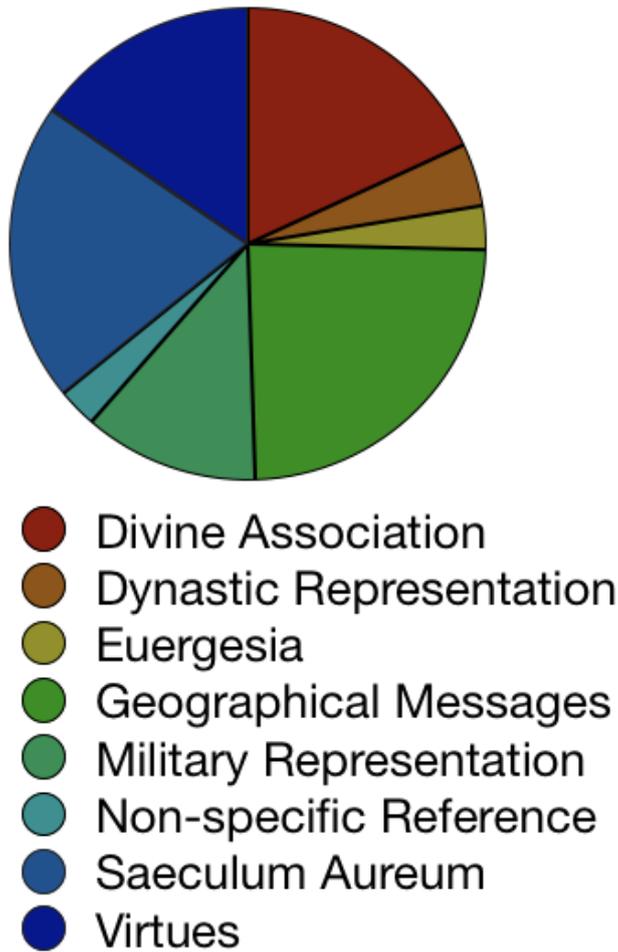
<sup>157</sup> I have combined Manders’ categories of ‘Non-specific Representation’ and ‘Unica’.

<sup>158</sup> I have added Hilaritas.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Images depicting personification of Africa</li> <li>5. Images depicting personification of Alexandria</li> <li>6. Images depicting personification of Arabia</li> <li>7. Images depicting personification of Asia</li> <li>8. Images depicting personification of Bithynia</li> <li>9. Images depicting personification of Britannia</li> <li>10. Images depicting personification of Cappadocia</li> <li>11. Images depicting personification of Cilicia</li> <li>12. Images depicting personification of Dacia</li> <li>13. Images depicting personification of Gallia</li> <li>14. Images depicting personification of Germania</li> <li>15. Images depicting personification of Hispania</li> <li>16. Images depicting personification of Italia</li> <li>17. Images depicting personification of Judaea</li> <li>18. Images depicting personification of Libya</li> <li>19. Images depicting personification of Macedonia</li> <li>20. Images depicting personification of Mauretania</li> <li>21. Images depicting personification of Moesia</li> <li>22. Images depicting personification of Nicomedia</li> <li>23. Images depicting personification of Nilus</li> <li>24. Images depicting personification of Noricum</li> <li>25. Images depicting personification of Pannonia</li> <li>26. Images depicting personification of Phrygia</li> <li>27. Images depicting personification of Sicilia</li> <li>28. Images depicting personification of Thracia</li> <li>29. Images depicting personification of Tiber</li> </ol>
Coin types with a different legend:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DARDANICI</li> <li>2. DANVVIVS</li> </ol>

## 2.4 Representational Categories

**Figure 1: Proportions of Coin Types Hadrian**



N = 2434

Through the categorization of Hadrian's coin types, it becomes possible to identify patterns of imperial representation during his reign. Which messages were most common and which messages were rarest on Hadrian's coinage. It becomes apparent that the categories 'geographical messages', 'saeculum aureum', 'divine association', 'virtues', and 'military representation' contain the most coins (figure 1). Of the coin types which I have analysed, 24,5% contain a geographical message, 20,9% of the messages relate to the prosperity which Hadrian had brought or would bring. Another 18,4% of the messages have a divine character, 15,7% of the coin types promote the emperor's virtues. And another 12,1% represent the emperor in a military way. The rest of the coin types, which is around 10%, conclude the other categories. Consequently, in Hadrian's coinage, there are several distinct messages which he, during his reign, wanted to spread. In the following part of this chapter, I will elaborate, in different sections, on all the categories. I will fit the results of the quantitative

analysis into the context of Hadrian's reign by showing how the messages, related to these categories, might have influenced relationships with the acceptance groups. I will also pay special attention to remarkable coin types which might have influenced these relationships. In order to further clarify the developments within the different categories, some sections are accompanied by graphs.

## 2.5 Dynastic Representation

In 117, Hadrian had not been adopted yet by Trajan. As a result, questions arose about his legitimacy as an emperor. How Hadrian dealt with this in his coinage, is visible when analysing his coin types. Despite the fact that just 4,4% was dedicated to dynastic representation, these coin types clearly show how Hadrian tried to gain more acceptance. In these types, imperial family members of Hadrian are depicted.<sup>159</sup> The depiction of members of the imperial family on coins was an important tool for the emperor to create legitimacy.<sup>160</sup> Claes has shown that succession following a dynastic principle, seems to have been preferred by the Senate, the Roman people and Roman military, as it guaranteed more stability and welfare.<sup>161</sup> The intended effect of displaying members of the imperial family was that the acceptance groups connected Hadrian to a dynastic principle which, in return, would have shown that the emperor's rule was just. Therefore, coins with an emphasis on dynastic representation must have been an appealing message to the military, the Roman elite, and the Roman *plebs*.

However, there is something remarkable about this category. When analysing these coin types in-depth, it becomes apparent that most of the messages relating to dynastic representation were minted on precious-metals coins. 39,3% of all types within this category are minted on silver, and yet another 24,3% of the types are minted in gold. This is a great amount, which indicates that Hadrian, especially, wanted to spread this message among the higher classes, as coins of precious metals were mainly used by the (senatorial) elite and the army.<sup>162</sup>

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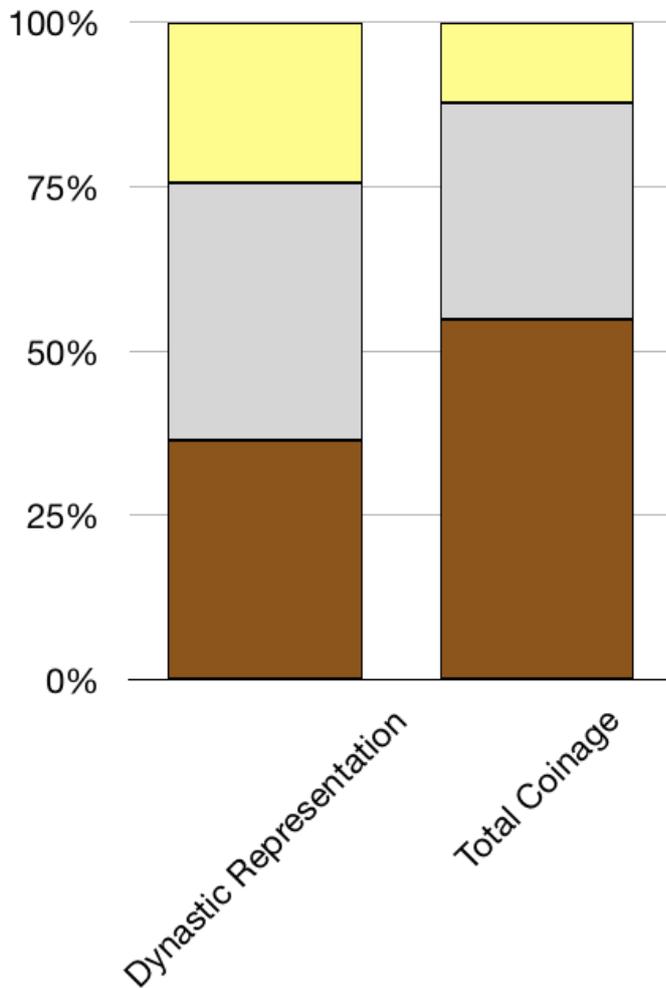
<sup>159</sup> On these types are Trajan, Lucius Aelius Caesar, Antoninus Pius, Sabina, Plotina and Matidia depicted.

<sup>160</sup> Claes, L., *Kinship and Coins: Ancestors and Family on Roman Imperial Coinage under the Principate* (Nijmegen, 2013), 236.

<sup>161</sup> Claes, L., *Kinship*, 236.

<sup>162</sup> Claes, *Kinship*, 245.

**Figure 2: Dynastic Representation in comparison**



N *euergesia* = 107

N Total coinage = 2434

Besides, it is not surprising, that the coin types relating to dynastic representation were mainly minted during the first year of Hadrian's reign, given the fact that the legitimacy of Hadrian as emperor in his first years was disputed. It seems that Hadrian wanted to emphasize his dynastic line during his first years in power, in order to gain more acceptance. Because of this, the titulature on the coins of Hadrian in his early years as emperor extensively referred to his predecessor, Trajan. For example in 118, coins were issued at Rome displaying Trajan on the obverse and Hadrian on the reverse accompanied by the titles 'HADRIANO TRAIANO CAESARI'.<sup>163</sup> Other coin types showed Hadrian as the new emperor accompanied by the honorary titles of Trajan 'OPT. GER. DAC.', and on the reverse of these coins the legend

<sup>163</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 1.

explicitly stated 'ADOPTIO'.<sup>164</sup> This reinforces the idea that there was much debate at the beginning of Hadrian's rule.<sup>165</sup> However, it also clearly shows that Hadrian seems to have wanted to create acceptance among the classes in society which used precious-metal coins. this category.

Within this type of coinage is clearly visible that Hadrian wanted to spread a message which would gain him more legitimacy by showing messages, especially to the Roman elite, provincial elites, and the army, that he was the rightful ruler.<sup>166</sup>

## 2.6 Euergesia

In the category of 'euergesia' is also clearly visible that Hadrian wanted to appeal to certain acceptance groups via his coinage. Coins in this category show the socio-economic achievements of the emperor. Socio-economic achievements (such as the construction of buildings intended for the community), were a great way to gain support from different social classes. However, for an emperor, it was necessary to have the people know that he put effort into the socio-economic well-being of these groups. Therefore the depiction of these achievements in coinage was a good way to create support from these groups, as via the depiction of the achievements the greater mass of people would get to know about the emperor's achievements.<sup>167</sup>

What is striking then, is that there is only a small proportion of Hadrian's coin types that show socio-economic achievements. Within Hadrian's coinage there is 3% of his types dedicated to his socio-economic achievements, although, according to Cassius Dio, Hadrian achieved many socio-economic achievements:

*'While upon many—communities and private citizens, senators and knights—he bestowed large sums.'*<sup>168</sup>

Despite that, only 3% show these achievements. However, when analyzing some coin types in-depth, it becomes clear that some of these types articulated particular messages, which certainly could have appealed to some of the acceptance groups.

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<sup>164</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 3A; 3B; 3C; 3D; 3E.

<sup>165</sup> Roman, Y. & Rémy, B. & Riccardi, L., 'Les intrigues de Plotine et la succession de Trajan à propos d'un aureus au nom d'Hadrien César', *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 11 (2009), 508-517; Hekster, O.J., *Emperors and Ancestors, Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford, 2015), 59-61.

<sup>166</sup> Claes, *Kinship*, 236.

<sup>167</sup> Noreña, 'Coins', 249-254.

<sup>168</sup> Cassius Dio, 69.5.2-3.

For example, a coin type which shows Hadrian's generosity. A bronze coin type on which a lector can be seen, setting fire to *syngraphi* (tax documents) commemorates that Hadrian remitted all unpaid debts to his treasury. As Dio stated, Hadrian bestowed large sums of money to different layers of society. Not only the Roman *plebs* but also knights and senators profited. Even the debts of some provinces were remitted. To reinforce this action, Hadrian had issued the burning of the tax documents on Trajan's forum. According to Birley, this act was an effort of Hadrian to win popularity.<sup>169</sup> The legend 'RELIQVA VETERA HS NOVIES MILL ABOLITA', states the revoking of debts worth 9000 *sestertia*.<sup>170</sup> This seems to have been quite a favorable measure, as the Roman *plebs* and Senate collectively erected a monument in honor of the event.<sup>171</sup>

Remarkably, the *euergesia* messages have been minted mainly on bronze coins, 65%, and almost none on gold.<sup>172</sup> This contrasts with Hadrian's actual division of coin types in which 55% was bronze and around 30% on gold. This shows that Hadrian wanted to spread this message, in particular, to the lower classes, as the bronze denominations were, in particular, used by the lower echelons of society.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 97. "Now that he was face to face with public opinion in the capital, he decided that large outlays were essential, whatever the state of the imperial finances."

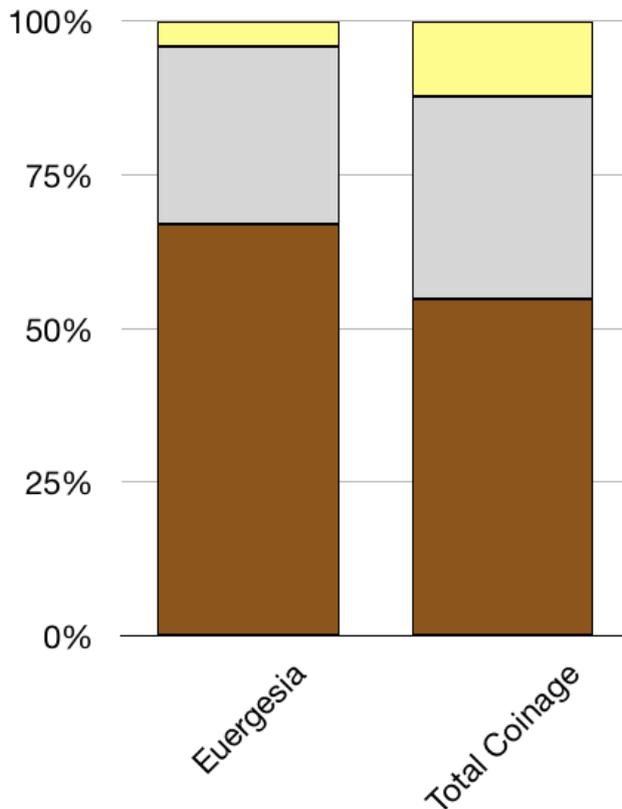
<sup>170</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 590A; 590B; 591; 592A; 592B; 593.

<sup>171</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 97-98.

<sup>172</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 90. "It has been suggested that the correspondence between image and denomination might have been the result of an official attempt to advertise the emperor's generosity in different ways to different social classes."

<sup>173</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 97-98.

**Figure 3: Euergesia in comparison**



N *euergesia* = 73

N Total coinage = 2434

Besides this type, there is another type which displays a socio-economic achievement of the emperor. In order to reinforce a child-support program set up by his Trajan, Hadrian supported the *alimenta*. The *alimenta* was a fund intended for children from poor families.<sup>174</sup> Hadrian raised the age-limit of the fund, therefore, Romans, for a longer period could claim the support. This measure, which was an effective way to gain popularity, is commemorated on his coins.<sup>175</sup> The image shows Hadrian on the *sella curulis*, who raises his right hand. The legends states ‘Liberty restored’.<sup>176</sup>

Despite the fact that there are not many coins that are classified in the category of *euergesia*, the coin types which do communicate such messages, display very clear information on the way Hadrian wanted to spread certain messages. As the imagery related to

<sup>174</sup> Sear, *Roman Coins*, 57.

<sup>175</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 99. RIC II *Hadrian* 568.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibidem*, 99.

*euergesia* was, foremost, minted on bronze coins, it becomes clear that the messages within this category were, especially, relevant to the Roman *plebs*.<sup>177</sup>

## 2.7 Virtues

Within imperial self-representation, the moral excellence of the emperor as a human being was very important.<sup>178</sup> This moral excellence was, mainly, articulated through the display of the virtues of the emperor. That the display of virtues was important in creating a good image also becomes evident from the analysis of Hadrian's coin types. 15,7% of his coin types emit a message of Hadrian's virtues. In order to be a 'good' emperor, the ruler should display multiple virtues.

An emperor could pick specific virtues that he wanted to spread.<sup>179</sup> Therefore by investigating the virtues on the coinages of the emperors, it is possible to decipher a lot of information about how they wanted to be seen.<sup>180</sup> However, before I will elaborate on virtues in Hadrian's coinage it is necessary to explain the concept of 'virtue'.

For this thesis, I will adhere to the explanation of Noreña en Manders. Noreña states that virtues are moral qualities inherent in men.<sup>181</sup> These moral qualities were embodied in human figures which represented several abstract concepts. Roman virtues can be regarded as personal qualities of the emperor.<sup>182</sup> Personifications such as *Pax* and *Securitas*, cannot be translated as being personal qualities of an emperor and therefore these matters do not act as virtues.<sup>183</sup> Noreña delineated eleven personal qualities of an emperor: *Virtus*, *Pudicitia*, *Providentia*, *Pietas*, *Patientia*, *Munificentia*, *Liberalitas*, *Iustitia*, *Indulgentia*, *Clementia* and *Aequitas*. Together with *Hilaritas*, they form the representational category of 'Virtues'.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 10.

<sup>178</sup> Noreña, C.F., 'Hadrian's Chastity', *Phoenix* 61:3/4 (2007), 296-317, in particular 296-297.

<sup>179</sup> The emperor, together with some other high-ranking Romans in the financial system, decided on what messages were put on the coins.

<sup>180</sup> Potter, D.S., 'Political Theory in the Senatus Consultum Pisonianum', *AJP* 120:1 (1999), 65-88, in particular 71.

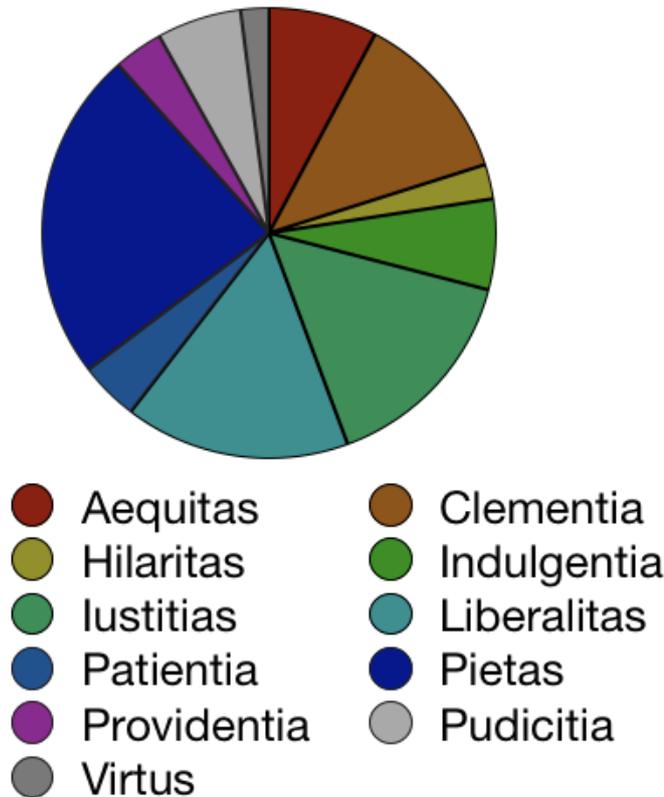
<sup>181</sup> Noreña, 'Emperor's virtues', 153.

<sup>182</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 156.

<sup>183</sup> Noreña, 'Emperor's virtues', 153.

<sup>184</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, A., 'The Emperor and his Virtues', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 30:3 (1981), 298-323, in particular 312; 322. 'Hilaritas is more ostensibly a *'res expetenda'* (therefore not here classed as a virtue), but it is undoubtedly conceived of as produced by the Hilaritas of the emperor.' Therefore, *Hilaritas* can be considered as a quasi-virtue,

**Figure 4: Virtues**



Considering Hadrian’s coinage, a series of virtues which circulated from the year 128 is remarkable. That year, there were several coin types issued which contained various virtues such as *Iustitia*, *Indulgentia*, *Clementia*, *Patientia* and, *Tranquilitas*. This series displays Hadrian’s wish to symbolize a ruler who possessed endless virtues.<sup>185</sup> During Hadrian’s rule, there was an increase of interest in virtues, because of the *Panegyric*. In the *Panegyric* Pliny praises emperor Trajan by quoting twenty moral qualities possessed by Trajan.<sup>186</sup> As a result, Pliny created a framework of a ‘good’ emperor.<sup>187</sup> Therefore succeeding emperors followed the example of Trajan and had to represent these virtues in order to be seen as a ‘good’ emperor.<sup>188</sup>

In Hadrian’s coinage the virtues *Iustitia* (16%), *Liberalitas* (16%) and *Pietas* (25%) are the most numerous. His emphasis on these virtues seems to correspond with aspects of his reign. For example, *Pietas*, which communicated the dignity of the emperor. *Pietas* was the

<sup>185</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, ‘The Emperor’, 312.

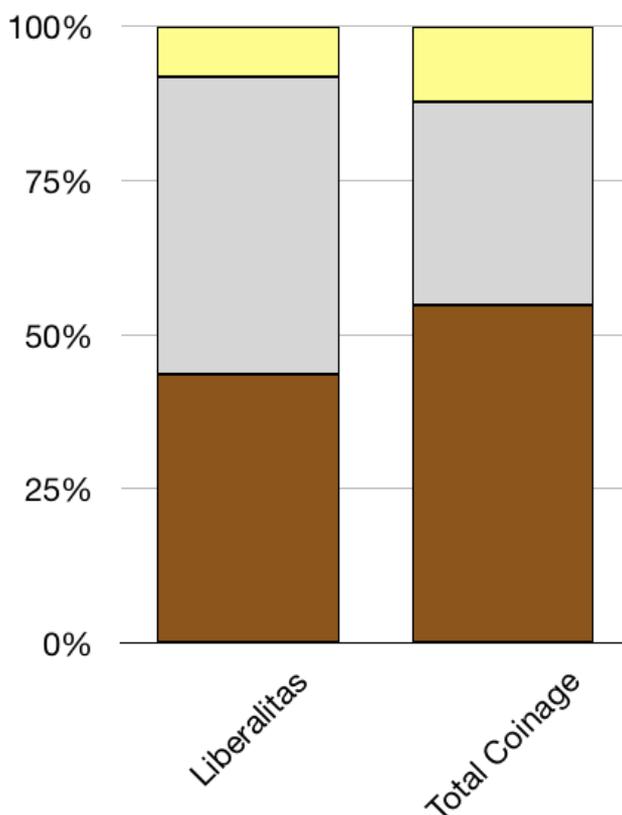
<sup>186</sup> Pliny is highly biased, as a result, he is very positive about Trajan. Therefore, his works have to be interpreted with caution.

<sup>187</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, transl. by Radice, B. (Cambridge, 2015).

<sup>188</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, ‘The Emperor’, 314.

virtue of fulfilling one's responsibilities to anyone or anything.<sup>189</sup> It was expected of an emperor to fulfill his responsibilities to his subjects. Therefore, by displaying *Pietas* on his coins Hadrian showed to the acceptance groups that he was worthy to rule. Already from the beginning of his reign, Hadrian displayed this message on his coins. 29% of the *Pietas*-messages of which dating is known was minted during his first three years as emperor. Probably, because of the problems which surrounded his accession, Hadrian wanted to show to the acceptance groups that he was a worthy emperor. The display of *Pietas*, thus, must have been an appealing message to all acceptance groups.

**Figure 5: Liberalitas in comparison**



N *Liberalitas* = 62

N Total coinage = 2434

Another virtue which has been depicted a lot on his coinage is *Liberalitas*. Hadrian on his coinage seems to have emphasized the material welfare of his people by showing *Liberalitas*.<sup>190</sup> *Liberalitas* was the personification of the generosity of Hadrian. Regarding

<sup>189</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 71-72.

<sup>190</sup> Mattingly, 'Some Historical', 212.

Hadrian's coinage, there seems something remarkable within this type of message, namely that *Liberalitas* mainly has been put on silver coins. Around 48,4% of the coins related to *Liberalitas* were minted on silver coins. According to Manders, *Liberalitates* were part of subjects' expectations of their leader.<sup>191</sup> By displaying this message, especially on silver coins, Hadrian wanted to appeal to acceptance groups of higher-class by showing through his *Liberalitas* that he was a generous emperor. *Liberalitas* connoted the broader idea of imperial generosity to the users of these coins.<sup>192</sup>

Another striking result is the material on which the virtue *Iustitias* was minted. Nearly 71% of these messages were minted on bronzes. The depiction of this virtue, probably, expressed Hadrian's personal attitude.<sup>193</sup> By depicting this message, Hadrian wanted to spread, especially to lower-classes that he would maintain justice. This particular message was in line with the expectations of an emperor, namely the administration of justice. By displaying this message on bronze coins, Hadrian seems to have appealed to the Roman *plebs*.

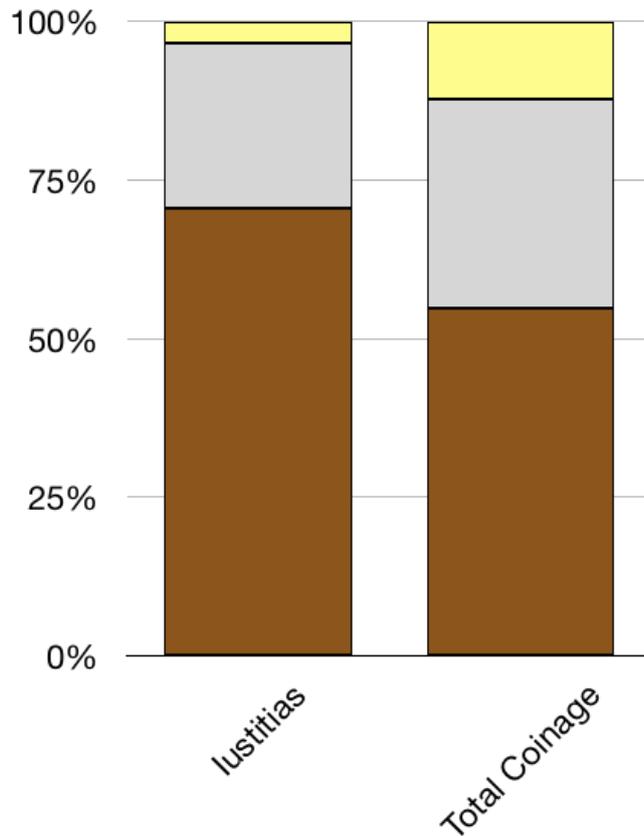
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<sup>191</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 165

<sup>192</sup> Elkins, *Nerva*, 10. "While a brass sestertius might bear an image of the emperor presiding over a distribution of money to the plebs to denote a specific event reflective of imperial generosity to a plebeian audience, a more generic message is conveyed through the personification of *Liberalitas* on gold and silver coinage to connote the broader idea of imperial generosity to the users of those coins."

<sup>193</sup> Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 62.

**Figure 6: Iustitias in comparison**



N *Iustitias* = 61

N Total coinage = 2434

## 2.8 Military Representation

Besides his virtues, also the military aspect had a prominent role in Hadrian's coinage.

Although Hadrian was not involved in offensive wars, and therefore did not need the army in that regard, yet 12,1% of the coin types have a military aspect. It may seem strange that Hadrian still refers so much to military aspects, while he did not wage offensive wars. However, this seems to have a logical explanation.

The support of the army was of great importance for a Roman emperor. Just 50 years earlier, in the year of the four emperors, Vespasian had shown that popularity amongst the army was essential.<sup>194</sup> Therefore it was important for an emperor to secure this powerbase.

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<sup>194</sup> Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by many legions due to his popularity among the army. As a result of the loyalty of these legions which caused him to win wars, he was able to seize power in Rome and eventually became the new emperor in 69.

The fact that Hadrian did not fight offensive wars did not mean that he neglected the army. Hadrian constantly paid attention to the discipline and power of the Roman army. During his journeys, he inspected legionary camps, fortifications, and infrastructure. The presence of the emperor was appreciated by Roman soldiers. According to an epitaph, a deceased soldier had once performed to cross the Danube in full gear in the presence of Hadrian in order to impress him.<sup>195</sup> By paying attention to the army, Hadrian gained support from this acceptance group. Hadrian must have realized that he had to secure this important powerbase.<sup>196</sup> By displaying military acts and events in his coinage, Hadrian tried to appeal to the army.

Within his coinage, Hadrian refers to the military aspect in several ways. The bulk of the references are military mentions such as 'Exercitus', and 'Victory'. Hadrian had few major military victories, however, there are a lot of the messages on the coin types which do refer to 'Victory', 20% of the military coin types. This indicates that victory types do not always resemble actual military victories.<sup>197</sup> However, the association with the concept of victory could help the emperor to legitimize his power.<sup>198</sup> Hadrian seems to have wanted to create an image in which he was regarded as a competent military leader. By showing images of him as a general, the emperor found a new way to prove his necessary military qualities.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> *CIL* 8.2532.

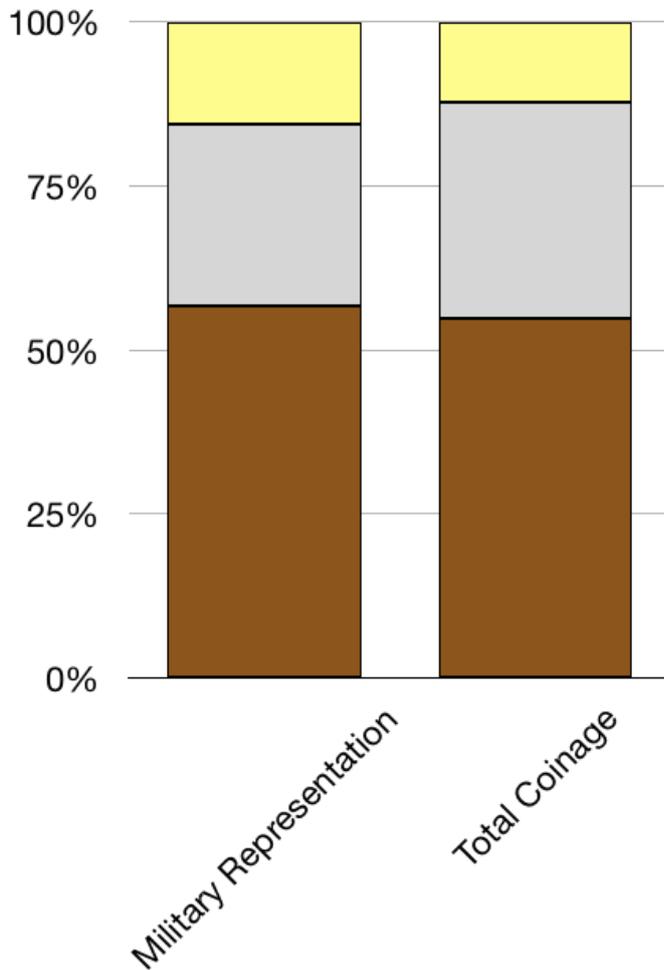
<sup>196</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 113-122.

<sup>197</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 79. Manders also shows this for third-century emperors.

<sup>198</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 79.

<sup>199</sup> Campbell, B., 'Teach Yourself', 23-29.

**Figure 7: Military Representation in comparison**



N Military Representation = 289

N Total coinage = 2434

Soldiers primarily were paid in silver (and gold) coins.<sup>200</sup> what is striking then, is that in this category only 27.7% of the military messages were minted on silver coins. More than half (56.7%) is minted on bronze. Therefore, it can be stated that Hadrian did not focus military messages specifically on the army. However, there might be possible explanations. First, my quantification focuses only on reverses. After a brief glance at the obverses, it becomes clear that Hadrian was depicted much more often as a military man. Second, 25,7% of the types within this category contained a depiction of a Galley. The depiction of a galley on Roman coins was, in fact, the depiction of a warship.<sup>201</sup> Of this particular image, nearly

<sup>200</sup> Claes, *Kinship*, 245.

<sup>201</sup> Jones, *Dictionary*, 124.

74% was minted in bronze, and none were minted in gold. Therefore, when disregarding this type of message, it becomes clear that 50% of the types were minted in silver and gold. Nonetheless, this is still no conclusive evidence that indicates that Hadrian targeted this message, especially on the army. However, to make a statement about this, it is necessary to also consider the obverses of Hadrian's types in the analysis.

## 2.9 Divine Association

The coin types regarding divine association make the connection between the emperor and the divine clear. I have classified mentions of Olympic gods and goddesses, sometimes together with- or apart from their attributes, mentions of the sacrificial ritual, a reference to the crescent with stars and mentions of temples into this category.

The main references to the divine, are personifications of gods and goddesses. Hadrian refers to Jupiter, Diana, Juno, Venus, and Minerva. A total of 58% of the entire category is dedicated to references to deities. Another important way to refer to the divine was by depicting himself or imperial family members as priests. By depicting deities on his coins Hadrian showed his divine character.

Roman citizens were always looking for divine support and justification in their actions.<sup>202</sup> It was especially in times of crisis that the people of the Republic, and later of the Empire sought support from their gods.<sup>203</sup> The worship of gods on coins played an important role. However, during the reign of Hadrian, there was no such thing as a crisis. Yet, still 19% refers to the divine character of Hadrian's rule. The visual program relating to the divine was communicated to a broad audience. The communication of these messages was intended to make the acceptance groups believe that Hadrian was destined to rule.<sup>204</sup>

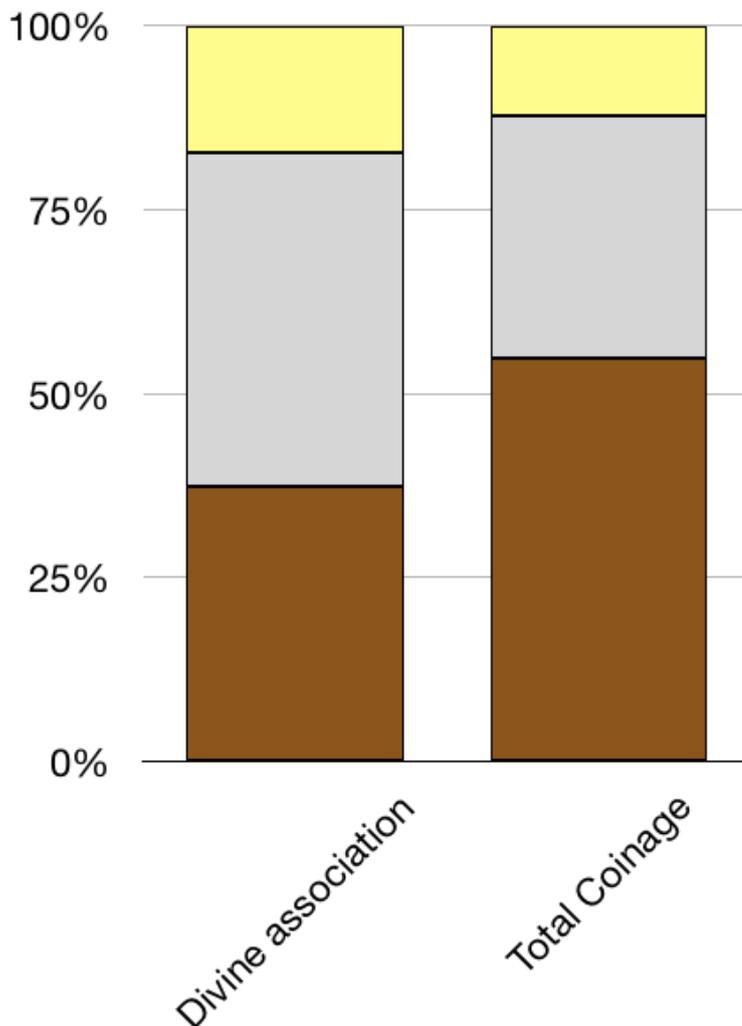
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<sup>202</sup> Garnsey, P., Saller, R. & Saller, R.P., *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Los Angeles, 1987), 163.

<sup>203</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 95-96.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibidem*, 96.

**Figure 8: Divine Association  
in comparison**



N Divine Association = 466

N Total coinage = 2434

It is striking that within this category 45,5% has been minted in silver. Therefore, it can be concluded that Hadrian wanted to spread the message relating to divine character, especially to the acceptance groups ‘the Roman elite’, ‘the army’ and the ‘provincial elites’, as these messages were mainly minted on silver coins. As a result, messages within this category must have convinced these groups that Hadrian was destined to rule.

### *2.10 Saeculum Aureum*

A golden age, this was the promise that Hadrian and with him, many other emperors throughout history promised their subjects. Promising the arrival of a golden age, or *saeculum*

*aureum*, had its origin under Emperor Augustus.<sup>205</sup> When Hadrian rose to power, he proclaimed a golden age on the coins minted under his authority. Concepts such as freedom, prosperity, peace, and happiness which were connected to the rule of Hadrian were deployed as a means of legitimization, as well as a promise for better times.

Based on several personifications that appeared on Hadrian's coinage, I have made the category '*saeculum aureum*'. The personifications which I subdivided into this category are: Abundantia, Aeternitas, Concordia, Felicitas, Fides, Fortuna, Libertas, Pax, Salus, Securitas, Spes, and Tranquilitas. There are, however, also other notions of *saeculum aureum* which are not embodied by human personifications such as the phoenix. Besides these notions of *saeculum aureum*, I have also regarded forms of representation referring to the eternal continuation of the empire and the emperor as messages of prosperity. As the display of eternal continuation, indicates prosperity.

In Hadrian's coinage, 20,5% of his coin types refer to the prosperity that Hadrian had brought or would bring. The appearance of these messages shows that this was an important aspect of Hadrian's coinage. Hadrian wanted to show that his reign would bring prosperity to the Roman empire. This starts with a coin type of the year 119 in which the legend 'RESTITVTORI ORBIS TERRAR' states that Hadrian is the restorer of the world.<sup>206</sup> Through this message, Hadrian already from the start of his reign wanted to convey the message that he brought prosperity.<sup>207</sup> However, his plans to travel, would probably, not have reinforced this idea for the people and Senate in Rome. These groups would have expected the proximity of the emperor near Rome, as imperial presence was beneficiary for the prosperity of these groups.

However, Hadrian seems to have countered the belief of the Roman elite and *plebs* that, that as a result of his journeys, through his absence the city of Rome would be neglected.<sup>208</sup> In the year 121, Hadrian issued several coin types which predicted a fortunate era. For example, the type which commemorated the *dies natalis* of the city of Rome. Displayed on this type is the legend 'SAEC AVR', accompanied by the depiction of a phoenix.<sup>209</sup> The depiction of the phoenix on Hadrian's coinage symbolized his rule as the

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<sup>205</sup> Zanker, P., *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, transl. by Shapiro, A. (Michigan, 1990), 215.

<sup>206</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 594A; 594B; 603.

<sup>207</sup> Toynbee, *Hadrianic School*, 140. 'Hadrian's *Restitutori Orbis Terrarum* type had set forth the Imperial programme for a general revival and restoration of the prosperity of the civilized world on a basis of universal peace after Trajan's wars.'

<sup>208</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 110

<sup>209</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 136.

beginning of a new, fortunate, era.<sup>210</sup> The mythical creature which died in fire, and was reborn in ashes, was a powerful symbol referring to the golden times which Hadrian would bring, that he will not have disdained.<sup>211</sup> However, this coin was minted just before his departure in 121. Therefore, it is likely to assume that Hadrian, before he went travelling, wanted to spread the message that even without his presence, the people were assured of a prosperous future. Another remarkable coin type is the type with legend 'A(num)N(ovum) F(austum) F(elicem)'.<sup>212</sup> This coin type mentions the wish of a joyful, and flourishing new year. On this type, the Roman *plebs* and the Senate wish the emperor a happy and auspicious year.<sup>213</sup> This message must have been, especially, appealing to the Roman *plebs* and the Senate as they were directly addressed.

Regarding this category, Hadrian minted 58% of these coin types in the year 134. It is quite remarkable that such a high percentage was minted this late in his rule, as it seems more logical that Hadrian wanted to spread the idea of him bringing prosperity during the first years of his reign. By displaying this message during the early years of his reign, the different acceptance groups might have been reassured of having a bright future under Hadrian's rule. However, the great number of coin types in this category seem to correspond with Hadrian's idea of having completed his journey throughout the empire.<sup>214</sup> Coins which date from 134 register Hadrian's return with Fortune, the home-bringer.<sup>215</sup> As this message was directly linked to Rome, it must have been in particular appealing to the acceptance groups which resided in Rome, namely the Roman *plebs* and the Roman Senate

By displaying his reign as a Golden Age, Hadrian tried to give citizens of the Roman Empire a secure feeling. He wanted to convey the message that under his authority the empire would prosper. Therefore, this type of message must have been appealing to all acceptance groups.

## 2.11 Geographical Messages

I have subdivided coin types with a geographical message into two parts, as the messages within this category were appealing to different acceptance groups. First, I will discuss coin types with a provincial focus. Second, I will discuss types that focused specifically on Rome.

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<sup>210</sup> Bellen, H., *Politik, Recht, Gesellschaft: Studien zur Alten Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1997), 137.

<sup>211</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 83.

<sup>212</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 736.

<sup>213</sup> Burnett, A., 'Zela, Acclamations, Caracalla – and Parthia', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 59:1 (2016), 72-110, in particular 75.

<sup>214</sup> Birley, *Hadrian*, 280.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibidem*, 280.

It is important to mention that, with the latter, I will also discuss coin types that explicitly refer to Rome, but are not categorized in the category of geographical messages.<sup>216</sup> This section, therefore, has to be disregarded from the categorization. The reason to add this section is that, of the four acceptance groups, two had a direct link with the city of Rome, namely the Roman *plebs* and the Roman Senate. It might, therefore, have been important for the emperor to pay special attention to the eternal city in his coinage.

### 2.11A Provincial Focus

In Hadrian's reign, the difference in status between Rome and the provinces became significantly smaller. This theme is clearly reflected in his coinage. Within Hadrian's coinage, just over 24% has a provincial focus. The vast majority of these coins were minted in the last five years of his reign when Hadrian returned to Rome from his second tour. The coin types within this category include depictions of most Roman provinces and several geographical indications. Not all provinces are recorded on the coin types as, for example, the personification of Hispania covered three provinces. On the provincial coin types, Hadrian is displayed while interacting with the personifications of the provinces. There are several series that consider a provincial focus. First, the *Adventus* series, in which Hadrian is greeted by the provincial personifications or in which he raises the personifications. Second, the *Restitutor*-series in which Hadrian is displayed as the restorer of the provinces. Third, the *Exercituus* series in which Hadrian is displayed visiting military camps.<sup>217</sup> However, because of its military character, I have divided the *Exercituus*-series into military representation.

According to Mattingly, the provincial coin types were no announcement of a new policy, they served primarily to crown an achievement, namely the return of Hadrian after his journey throughout the entire empire.<sup>218</sup> However, the direct consequence was that, as a result of the journeys, the provinces between 134 and 137 were depicted on central coins in a highly innovative way. No longer as subdued regions of the empire, but as independent, iconographical recognizable personifications. Each personification was characterized by, for that region, typical features. For example, Arabia was depicted with a camel, and the personification of Africa was depicted wearing an elephant-skin headdress. For the first time,

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<sup>216</sup> For example, I will discuss types which I have categorized into other categories such as coin types that refer to the myth of the founding of Rome. This type I have categorized as a non-specific reference, although these types do specifically refer to Rome.

<sup>217</sup> RIC II *Hadrian* 581A; 581B; 581C; 581D; 581E; 690; 912; 913; 914; 915C; 915F; 915H; 915J; 916; 917; 918; 919A; 919AF; 919AH; 920; 921; 922; 923; 924; 925; 926; 927; 928C; 928F; 929; 930C; 930F; 931; 932C; 932F; 933C; 933F; 934; 935; 936A; 936F; 937.

<sup>218</sup> Mattingly, 'Some historical', 220.

the provinces of the empire were displayed as a family of sister peoples.<sup>219</sup> These personifications decorated a temple (the Hadrianeum) in the center of Rome.<sup>220</sup>

The provincial series revealed the commitment of Rome to the diverse cities and provinces of the Roman empire. They seem to have gone hand in hand with the upgrade of the status of the provinces in relation to Rome. The development, that the provincial elite had more to say in the government of the empire in the first century, continued in the second century. Therefore the provincial elite became increasingly important. Eventually, this development culminated in Hadrian's reign, as he was the first emperor in whose rule there were provincial senators from all parts of the empire.

As only the provincial elite was regarded as an acceptance group, it is remarkable that more than two-thirds of these types were minted on bronze (66,8%). Provincial elites, primarily, made use of precious-metal coins. Given the fact that 66,8% has been minted in bronze indicates that Hadrian did not only want to spread these geographical messages to the elites, but also to all inhabitants of the provinces.

By manipulating his presence, as a result of the many statues which were erected, and the coins which circulated, Hadrian made himself more accessible in the provinces.<sup>221</sup> This must have been advantageous for his popularity in the provinces. Other source material shows that the emphatic role for the provinces during Hadrian's reign ensured the emperor's popularity in those provinces. For no other Roman ruler, there have been so many statues erected in cities outside the Italian peninsula, as for Hadrian. The relatively high number of bases for sculptures bears witness to the continuing popularity of Hadrian in his empire. Types containing messages with provincial personifications must have been appealing to all provincial citizens, including the provincial elites. These types show Hadrian's dedication to the provinces. Therefore, these messages must have been appealing to the provincial inhabitants.

### 2.11B Roman Focus

Coins referring to Rome are more complex because references to Rome on coins are more various. There are many coin types of which the link to Rome is not very clear. For example, the personification of Tellus can, in some way, be regarded as a reference to Rome. The

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<sup>219</sup> Mattingly, 'Some historical', 220.

<sup>220</sup> Hughes, J., 'Personifications and the Ancient Viewer: The Case of the Hadrianeum 'Nations'', *Art History* 32:1 (2009), 1-20.

<sup>221</sup> Speller, *Following Hadrian*, 5.

*Tellus stabilita* types communicated a message of stabilizing agriculture, on which the urban life of the Empire, and more specifically, the life of the capital itself, ultimately depended.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, the depiction of *Tellus stabilita* must have been an appealing message to the acceptance groups which inhabited Rome, like the Roman elite and the *plebs*. Another example, the Capitoline Triad gods had a special link with Rome, and therefore images of them could be considered as a reference to Rome. However, because it is very difficult to draw a clear line when considering these vague references, I have decided to disregard such mentions and merely focus on explicit notions. As a reference to Rome, I have regarded specific notions such as images of specific Roman buildings, the goddess Roma, and depictions of myths related to the founding of the city as a reference to Rome.

Based on the set criteria, it appears that out of the analysis of Hadrian's coin types, just 7% refers to Rome. I expected that it was important for Hadrian to highlight his relationship with Rome in his types, as two of the acceptance groups are directly linked to the city of Rome. Certainly, for Hadrian, who was absent in Rome for more than half of his reign, it should have been important to show that he did not neglect the eternal city. However, 7% seems not much. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will compare this result with the other emperors.

## Conclusion Chapter 2

In this chapter I have constructed an overview of the imperial messages on Hadrian's coinage, and how these messages fit into the context of his rule. In addition, I have tried to highlight elements that elaborate on the relationship with the acceptance groups. I did this based on quantitative analysis. I have distinguished, within my own constructed categories, what his most important ideals and messages were, and how these messages could have influenced his relationship with the acceptance groups. This analysis revealed that the categories 'saeculum aureum', 'Divine association', 'Provincial Focus', and 'Virtues' were his most important messages. However, given the fact that these categories are biggest, does not mean that the messages within these categories were most appealing to the acceptance groups.

Especially, the coin types within the categories of 'euergesia', 'dynastic representation', 'military representation', and 'geographical messages' clearly show how messages could have affected the acceptance groups. In the categories of 'virtues', and 'divine association' this is less clear. However, within these categories, just as in the category of

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<sup>222</sup> Toynbee, *Hadrianic School*, 140-141. RIC II *Hadrian* 276A; 276B; 276C; 276D; 276G; 276H; 277A; 277D; 278; 791C; 791D; 791F; 835C; 835D; 835F.

*saeculum aureum*, there are certain coin types that appeal to certain acceptance groups. In the section below, I will briefly explain how messages on coin types could have appealed to the acceptance groups.

To begin with the category of dynastic representation. It is clear that within coinage focused upon dynastic representation, Hadrian addressed the classes which used precious-metal coins, as 63,6% of these messages were minted in silver. As a result of problems related to his accession, it must have been useful to emphasize explicitly that he was the rightful successor. By adopting Trajan's titles and portraying predecessors and imperial family members, Hadrian showed that his accession was following a dynastic principle. That Hadrian was part of a dynastic family would, in particular, have been appealing to the army, the Roman elite and the people of Rome. As succession, following a dynastic principle, seems to have been preferred by the Senate, the Roman people and Roman military, as it guaranteed more stability and welfare.<sup>223</sup>

Another category in which the link between coin types and the strengthening of relationships is clear is the category of *euergesia*. From this category, it seems clear there was a certain degree of audience targeting. Coins within this category were mainly minted on bronze, which is no coincidence, as the message on the coins were particularly relevant for lower-class people. Therefore, the combination between material and the messages on these types strongly suggests that Hadrian, in particular, tried to appeal to the acceptance group 'the Roman *plebs*' within this category.

Also in the category of military representation, it becomes clear that Hadrian wanted to appeal to a certain acceptance group, namely the army. The messages within this category related to military aspects. By portraying himself as a competent military leader, Hadrian showed the army that he was a capable emperor. However, since the coins within this category were mainly minted on bronze, there is no clear evidence that suggests audience-targeting. However, as the messages on these types were military in nature, this category must have been appealing to the acceptance group 'the army'.

Within the category of 'geographical messages', it is also clear which acceptance group Hadrian tried to appeal. The display of geographical personifications as equals to Rome

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<sup>223</sup> Claes, *Kinship*, 236.

must have been appealing to the provincial elites, as this attested the improvement of the status of the provinces.

There are also categories in which the effect of messages, and the improvement of relationships, is not evident, are the categories of 'divine association', 'virtues', and '*saeculum aureum*'. Within these categories, the overall messages are not appealing to specific acceptance groups. However, certain types do clearly link to the improvement of relationships. For example *Liberalitas*, of which almost half was minted in silver. Therefore, can be concluded that this message was especially appealing to higher-class acceptance groups such as the Roman Senate and the provincial elites.

In a more generic sense, messages within the categories of 'divine association' and 'virtues' must have been appealing to all acceptance groups. For example, the belief that Divine Providence was achieved through the emperor must have appealed to all acceptance groups. Thus, the emphasis on the divine character of his rule is important to all groups in Roman society. Hadrian also addresses all acceptance groups in the category 'Virtues'. By showing his virtues, Hadrian showed that he possessed moral excellence which was also important to all acceptance groups. However, an emperor could choose to emphasize certain virtues. This is mainly a result of the context of his reign.

The choice to highlight certain aspects more than others on his coinage was dependent on the context of Hadrian's reign. Only by placing his coinage in changing historical contexts, it becomes evident what messages were specifically Hadrian's messages. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will place Hadrian's coinage in the context of the coinages of his predecessors.

## Chapter 3: Hadrian in a Comparative Framework

In the previous chapter, I have shown the proportions of the different categories within Hadrian's coinage. From this analysis, it seems that messages in the categories of '*saeculum aureum*' and 'divine association' were important within his rule. However, in order to fully grasp the meaning of the messages on Hadrian's coin types and which messages were prominent during his reign, it is necessary to put him in a comparative framework. Therefore, in this chapter, I will compare the messages on the coin types emphasized in Hadrian's rule with the messages on the coin types that were emphasized in the reigns of other emperors. I chose to analyze the emperors Domitian and Trajan, as they were the direct predecessors of Hadrian.<sup>224</sup> I have used the same representational categories within the analysis of their coins. In this chapter I will, first, show the results of Domitian. Then I will show the results of Trajan. In addition, I will briefly discuss the most remarkable messages within their coinages, and I will give a brief explanation of the results of both coinages. Thereafter, I will compare these results with the results of Hadrian's coinage to get a better understanding of the messages that Hadrian, in particular, wanted to spread. Finally, I will answer the question: How do the messages on the coins of Hadrian correlate to the messages on the coins of Domitian and Trajan?

### 3.1 Domitian's Coin Types

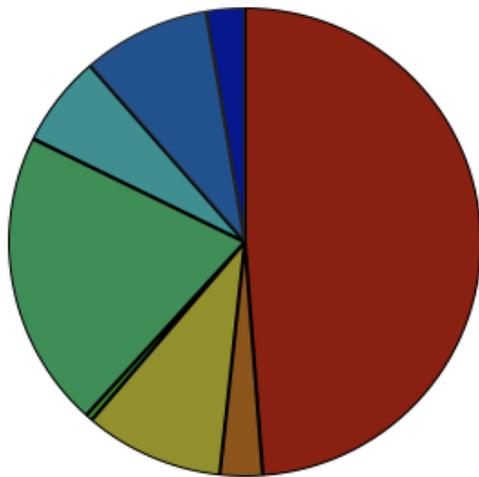
The total number of messages on the reverses of Domitian's coin types is 105,5%. Domitian's coin types are divided into the categories as follows. The vast majority of his types relate to 'divine association', namely 52,9%. Next comes 'military representation' with 21,1%. Then there are some categories, '*euergesia*', '*saeculum aureum*' and 'non-specific representation', all of which are around 10%. The categories of 'virtues', 'dynastic representation', and 'geographical messages' do not contain many types.

What is particularly striking within Domitian's coinage are the types that refer to divine association. This category covers more than half of all messages on his coin types. Through deeper analysis of this category, the reason becomes apparent. Namely 67% of all the coin types within this category has a direct link to the goddess Minerva. The goddess Minerva is said to have been Domitian's favorite goddess, therefore she is so often depicted on his types. However, Minerva is so often depicted, that there must be another reason.

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<sup>224</sup> In addition, I have disregarded Nerva's coinage as his rule is less comparable to the other emperors as a result of his short reign.

**Figure 9: Proportions  
of Coin Types  
Domitian**



- Divine Association
- Dynastic Representation
- Euergesia
- Geographical Messages
- Military Representation
- Non-specific Reference
- Saeculum Aureum
- Virtues

N= 859

According to Morawiecki, the prominent place of Minerva in Domitian's coinage shows that she played a major role in the imperial cult of Domitian.<sup>225</sup> Domitian tried to establish a link between him and Minerva. As a result of the established link, the portrayal of this goddess means much more than just divine association. Minerva's presence on the coinage of Domitian can be reasoned from Domitian's desire to promote his own cult.<sup>226</sup> Therefore by depicting Minerva on his coins, the inherent effect must have been that his own cult, too was promoted. The consequence was that, through the promotion of Minerva and (thus) his own cult, Domitian actually tried to gain more favor of the different acceptance groups.<sup>227</sup>

<sup>225</sup> Morawiecki, L., 'The Symbolism of Minerva on the Coins of Domitianus', *KLIO* 59:1 (1977), 185-193, in particular 190.

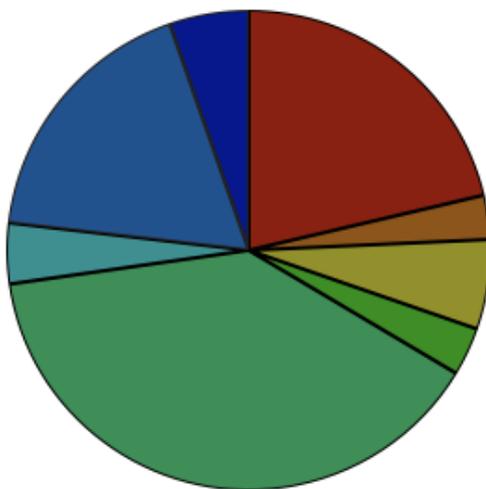
<sup>226</sup> Morawiecki, 'Minerva', 190.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibidem*, 190-191.

Another result, which is not represented in the figure, is the degree to which Domitian referred to Rome. Domitian referred in just 1% of his coin types to Rome. On just 9 types, the goddess Roma is depicted. This seems to be a very small number.

### 3.2 Trajan's Coin Types

**Figure 10:  
Proportions of Coin  
Types Trajan**



- Divine Association
- Dynastic Representation
- Euergesia
- Geographical Messages
- Military Representation
- Non-specific Reference
- Saeculum Aureum
- Virtues

N= 942

The total number of messages on the reverses is 110,2%. Out of the analysis of Trajan's coin types, it becomes apparent that Trajan had a focus upon 'military representation'. Slightly more than 42% was focused upon a military aspect. Also, the messages in the categories of 'divine association' (25,3%) and 'saeculum aureum' (19,2%) have been displayed often. The rest of the categories, 'euergesia', 'geographical messages', 'non-specific representation', and 'virtues' all contain more or less the same quantity of coin types, namely around 5%.

What is significant about Trajan's coinage, is his extensive reference to his military character. It is known that Trajan fought many offensive wars and that he was a capable military commander. This military character is clearly reflected in his coin types. In the category of 'military representation', there are numerous references to the peoples that Trajan conquered. Not only in the titulature, but especially also on the images on the reverses. On 85 types, 22% of the entire category, a personification of a defeated people is depicted. In addition, 118 types, 30% of the total category, have a reference to victory. It is evident that the events that took place in the context of Trajan's reign, seems to have been reflected in his coin types. For example, coin types depicting a Dacian are often struck between the years 103 and 111. The period in which two major wars were fought between Trajan and the Dacians. Also in the year 114, when the war over the Parthians was won, several coins were minted on which the victory over the Parthian people was commemorated. The legend is: 'PARTHICA CAPTA', while the picture shows a trophy between two Parthians.<sup>228</sup>

Trajan refers to Rome in 6,8% of his coin types. The references are mainly buildings that he had erected in Rome, such as the Column of Trajan, or the Basilica of Trajan.

### 3.3 Comparison

Now the results of the quantification of the messages of Trajan and Domitian are known, it is possible to compare their results with Hadrian's results. This analysis will show what specific messages were that Hadrian wanted to spread. In comparing the messages on the coins of the emperors, I will look at relative proportions. Otherwise, the comparison would be invalid, as Trajan's total percentage of coin types is 110%, Domitian's total percentage is 105%, and Hadrian's total percentage just 101%.

The comparison shows that several aspects of the emperors coinages correspond. Hadrian's number of divine association types (18,1%) broadly corresponds to Trajan's number of divine association types (22,9%). Domitian's types focussed on divine association are exorbitantly high (50,1%). His focus on the goddess Minerva, in particular, creates a distorted image.

Regarding the category of 'dynastic representation'. Here, the degree to which Hadrian refers to his dynastic line (4,3%) seems to correspond to the degree to which Domitian (3,1%), as well as Trajan (3,2%), refer to their dynastic lines. I had expected that Hadrian would have referred more often to his dynastic line, as he, in contrast to the other emperors,

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<sup>228</sup> RIC II *Trajan* 324; 325.

had a major problem regarding his legitimacy. However, this is not symbolised in his coin types. Another category that seems to correspond reasonably well between all three emperors is the category of 'euergesia'. Here the percentage is slightly lower on Hadrian's coinage (3%) than on the coinages of Domitian (9,3%) and of Trajan (5,9%).

Aforementioned categories do, to a certain extent, correspond.<sup>229</sup> However, there is also a number of discrepancies within the coinages of the emperors. These discrepancies are particularly reflected in the categories: 'virtues', '*saeculum aureum*', 'military representation' and 'geographical messages'. Notwithstanding, the differences between the coinages are all logical consequences of events that took place.

The difference in the number of virtues on the coin types can mainly be explained by the effect of the work *Panygericus* written by Pliny.<sup>230</sup> As already stated in Chapter 2, Pliny has written a work about Trajan in which he mentioned twenty of his virtues. By doing so, Pliny set an example for all future emperors. Later emperors were to be expected to show their virtues. For this reason, Hadrian, in contrast to Trajan (5,2%), and Domitian (2,5%), emphasized his virtues much more on his coins (15,4%). By displaying many virtues, Hadrian showed that he, like his predecessor Trajan, possessed moral excellence which was an important characteristic of a 'good emperor'.

Moreover, under Hadrian's authority slightly more has been referred to *saeculum aureum* (20,5%). A possible explanation might be that, in contrast to Trajan (17,4%), and Domitian (8,5%), Hadrian still had to prove to the acceptance groups that his reign would be prosperous. Trajan, had been an excellent ruler who had brought a great deal of prosperity to Rome and the empire. His successor, on the other hand, still had to prove himself.<sup>231</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Hadrian referred so much more to messages relating to *saeculum aureum*.

Another aspect that is cited more frequently under Hadrian is the references to geographical messages. In Hadrian's coin types 24,1% contain a geographical message. In contrast to Trajan (3,2%) and Domitian (less than 1%), 24,1% is a huge amount. Hadrian's new policy of creating unity in the empire seems to have had an impact on his coin types. As

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<sup>229</sup> Aside from Domitian's divine association.

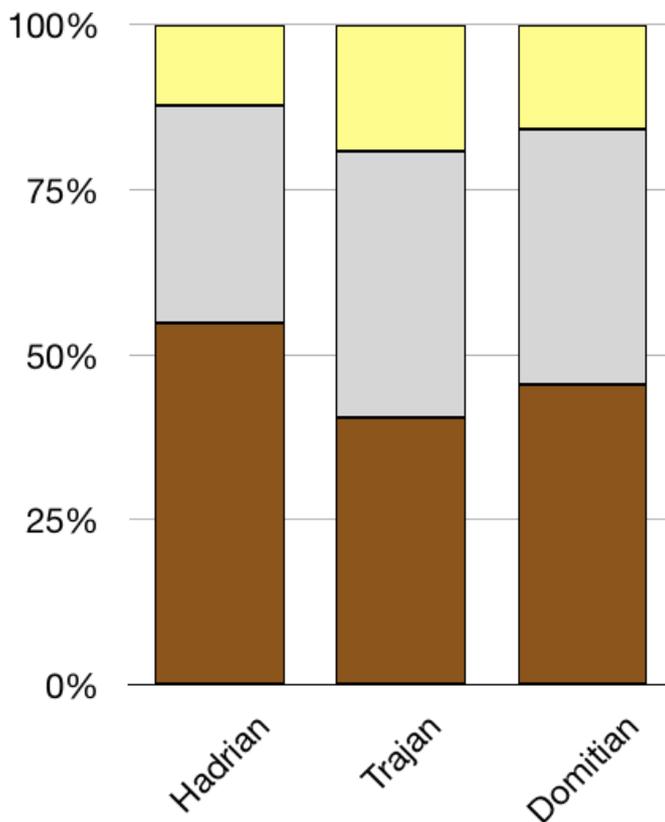
<sup>230</sup> Roche, P., *Pliny's Praise: The Panegyricus in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2011), 104-108.

<sup>231</sup> Boatwright, *City of Rome*, 217-218.

a result of his journeys, and the coins he had made in honour of these journeys, there are much more geographical messages in his coin types.

There is also an important difference between the categories relating to military representation. Whereas Hadrian only refers to his military role in 11,9% of his coin types, Domitian (20%) and Trajan (38,2%) refer more often to their military role. This is probably a consequence of the difference in which the army played an important role in the reign of the three emperors. Hadrian was known for withdrawing troops from multiple areas, while Trajan, for example, waged multiple offensive wars. This difference is clearly reflected in the messages on the coin types.

**Figure 11: Material in comparison**



N Hadrian = 2434

N Trajan = 942

N Domitian = 859

Another interesting fact is that Hadrian's types (54,9%), in contrast to Trajan's coins (40,4%) and Domitian's coins (45,4%) were primarily minted in bronze. Besides, coin types under Hadrian (32,8%) are also less minted on silver than types of Trajan (40,4%), and

Domitian (15,8%). The percentage of types minted in gold, is lowest under Hadrian (12,3%), in contrast to Trajan (19,2%), and Domitian (15,8%). This indicates that Hadrian's types, in comparison to Trajan's and Domitian's types, were targeted less on the higher-classes. As a result of the scope of my research, I had to limit myself to the broad lines. However, in-depth research on Trajan's and Domitian's coin types would lead to a better comparison.

To conclude, from the comparison there emerge several striking results. Foremost, the proportion in which Hadrian referred to each category differs from the other emperors. Hadrian, in contrast to the other emperors, mainly emphasized the categories 'virtues', '*saeculum aureum*' and 'geographical messages'. The reason might be that, due to the context of his reign, he had to focus on other things within his coinage to appeal to the acceptance groups than Domitian and Trajan. Where Domitian and Trajan showed their military achievements. Hadrian did not extensively refer to this aspect, as during his reign he did not fight many wars. I expected that Hadrian, in comparison with the other emperors, would focus more on dynastic representation in his coinage. As already during the first year of his reign, he was confronted with difficulties concerning his legitimacy. Therefore I had expected that he would have emphasized his dynastic line much more in comparison to the other emperors, in order to create legitimacy that way. This is, however, not reflected in the comparison of the coin types.

At last, I also expected Hadrian to refer much more to Rome in comparison to the other emperors. As I thought that, because Hadrian was absent in Rome for a long period of his reign due to his many journeys, he would have emphasized that aspect much more than the other emperors. However, the number of Trajan's references to Rome is more or less the same, namely 7%.

The comparison of the coinages of the emperors sheds a clear light on the proportions of messages radiated during the different reigns. Finally, in the conclusion of my thesis, I will elaborate on how Hadrian appealed to the different acceptance groups via his coinage.

## Conclusion

In this study, the aim was to assess how Hadrian's relationship with the acceptance groups could have been improved via his coinage. Therefore my main question was: How did Hadrian with the messages on his coin types appeal to the different acceptance groups?

Within this research, I made use of Flaig's theory of acceptance. According to this theory, the emperor's position depended on the acceptance of various important political sectors within Roman society. "'acceptance' means the fact that the relevant sectors of a political community support the rule of a specific person by their explicit or implicit consent."<sup>232</sup> I considered the Roman army, the Roman elite, which was organized in the Senate, the *plebs urbana*, and the provincial elites as relevant political sectors.

To be accepted, an emperor had to meet the expectations of these groups. If an emperor failed to live up to those expectations, he could be deposed. In order to prevent this, it was important for the emperor to build up and maintain good relationships with all relevant political sectors. Among other things, by means of constructing a positive image, an emperor was able to meet the expectations of these groups. Coins provided the perfect vehicle of imperial communication, as the images on coins functioned as imperial messages, as coins reached a broad audience.<sup>233</sup> Subsequently, in this thesis which focusses upon the relationship of Hadrian with various acceptance groups, I have studied Hadrian's coin types.

The situation in which Hadrian came to power was problematic His relationship with various acceptance groups was immediately disrupted by events that occurred, and by decisions taken by Hadrian. With this in mind, I wanted to investigate whether Hadrian spread special messages within his coin types that might have improved the relationship with the acceptance groups.

In researching this, I have quantified the messages on Hadrian's coin types based upon the categorization of Manders. By doing so, I created more insight into his messages. The quantification has shown that the messages related to the categories '*saeculum aureum*', 'Divine association', 'Geographical messages', and 'Virtues' were Hadrian's most important messages. In itself this is an interesting fact to discover, however, I wanted to know how the

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<sup>232</sup> Flaig, E., 'A coherent model to understand the Roman Principate: 'Acceptance' instead of 'legitimacy' and the problem of usurpation', in: Ferrary, J.L. & Scheid, J. (eds.), *Il Princeps Romano: Autocrate o Magistrate? Fattori Giuridici e Fattori Sociali del Potere Imperiale da Augusto a Commodo* (Pavia, 2015), 81-100, in particular 86.

<sup>233</sup> Manders, *Coining Images*, 303.

messages in these categories might have influenced his relationship with the different acceptance groups. Thus, within the categories, I have looked at the deeper meaning of the messages on the coin types. Notwithstanding, this cannot be investigated separately from the context of Hadrian's reign, as the messages on his coinage were related to the context of his reign. Therefore, in the last chapter, I have compared Hadrian's coinage to the coinages of Domitian and Trajan, as only by placing the coinage of Hadrian in a comparative framework and paying attention to the changes in imperial communication during a longer time-span it becomes apparent which messages were characteristic for Hadrian's rule.

Before I will continue to discuss the results, it is necessary to mention that the messages on the coins were not the determining factor on the success of an emperor. There is no indisputable relation between the success of Hadrian's rule and the messages on his coins, as, of course, there are also other factors that determined the success of his rule. However, coins could certainly have influence on the image of an emperor. It is impossible to state that Hadrian managed to maintain his position as a result of the messages on his coins, however, it is possible to investigate what the messages on his coins may have meant to the different acceptance groups. Therefore, in the section below, I will explain how the messages on the coins of Hadrian could have appealed to the different acceptance groups. By investigating this through an in-depth analysis of coin types, this study contributes to our understanding of the functioning of relations of power within the complex imperial organizational structure of the Roman Empire.

First, I will discuss which messages were appealing to the acceptance group 'the Roman army'. Of course, the messages within the category of 'military representation' must have been appealing to the Roman army. Hadrian explicitly addresses the army as these messages were all related to military achievements or military attributes. Hadrian, however, in contrast to Domitian and Trajan, did not extensively refer to this category. This is probably because Hadrian did not fight many wars. However, Hadrian does still refer in 12,1% of his coins to this type of message. This could be an attempt to appease the army, as for the army it was important that an emperor lived up to the expectation of being a competent military commander. It is known that soldiers were paid in silver. Therefore, it is strange that just 27,7% of the coins within this category have been minted in silver. Out of this can be concluded, that the messages relating to the category of 'military representation' were especially appealing to the acceptance group 'the army'. However, Hadrian does not seem to have spread these messages in particular to this acceptance group.

Second, I will elaborate on the messages which were appealing to the acceptance group 'the Roman elite'. Regarding the categories appealing to the Roman elite, it is more difficult to demonstrate which categories, in particular, could have specifically influenced the senate. However, as the coins within the categories of 'dynastic representation' and 'divine association' were primarily minted on precious-metal, suggests that these categories were most important to this acceptance group. Regarding the category of 'dynastic representation', it seems that it was important for Hadrian to show that he had a legitimate claim to the throne. His position seems to have been precarious at the beginning of his reign, as Hadrian murdered several consuls. He must have felt threatened by some important high-ranking Romans. As Hadrian was proclaimed emperor by some legions in Syria, it seems that he did not have to convince this acceptance group of his legitimacy. Therefore, it seems plausible that he, especially, wanted to show to the higher-classes within society that he was the rightful ruler. Therefore, the acceptance group 'the Roman elite' must have been appealed to the category of 'dynastic representation'. There are also examples of specific coin types, which must have been appealing to this acceptance group. For example, the personification of *Liberalitas*. *Liberalitas*, mainly, has been minted in silver. By displaying this message, especially on silver coins, Hadrian wanted to appeal to acceptance groups of higher-class by showing through his *Liberalitas* that he was a generous emperor.

Third, the category of 'geographical messages' seems to have a clear link with the acceptance group 'the provincial elite'. As messages within that category directly focus upon provinces, these messages for certain must have appealed to the provincial elites. Certainly, Hadrian's journeys influenced his relationship with the provincial elites. Never before, a Roman Emperor made that extensive journeys to all regions of the empire. As a result, Hadrian was very popular within the provinces. The many statues which have been erected in his honour give attest to this statement. During Hadrian's reign, the difference in status between Rome and the provinces became significantly smaller. This is also clearly reflected in his coinage, as for the first time provincial personifications were depicted as equals to Rome. This will certainly have influenced the way how the provincial elite viewed Hadrian. Therefore can be concluded that messages within the category of 'geographical messages' must have been appealing to the acceptance group 'the provincial elites'.

Lastly, I will discuss the messages which were appealing to the acceptance group 'the Roman *plebs*'. Just like with the acceptance group 'the Roman elite', there is no conclusive category which, in particular, was related to the Roman *plebs*. However, certainly, the

messages within the category of *euergesia* must have been appealing to this group. The lower-classes such as the Roman *plebs*, primarily, made use of low-precious metal. In general, bronze coins tend to bear images that were relevant to these lower-classes. This is also the case within the category of *euergesia*. Messages within this category showed socio-economic achievements of the emperor. Lower-class citizens were most amenable to this message, as they, often, depended on the charity of the emperor for their well-being. Therefore, it is striking to see that Hadrian, especially, minted images of him as benefactor of the Roman *plebs* on coins which were mainly minted in bronze. Out of this can be concluded that there was a certain degree of audience-targeting within this category. As a result, it seems that the messages on the coin types in the category of '*euergesia*' were intended to improve his relationship with the Roman *plebs*. Another example of coin types that suggest audience-targeting, are the types that show a personification of *Iustitia*. More than 70% of these types have been minted in bronze. The combination between denomination and the messages on these coins, indicates that some of these messages were specifically targeted at lower-classes.

There are, however, also categories in which it did not become evident that Hadrian wanted to appeal to specific acceptance groups. For example, the messages within the category of '*saeculum aureum*' must have been appealing to all acceptance groups. By displaying his rule as a prosperous rule, Hadrian wanted to spread a message of reassurance to the people of Rome. The communication of this particular message seems to have been appealing to all acceptance groups. As all groups would have wanted to have a bright future.

I did not include the focus on Rome in coinage into my categorization. Before I began writing this thesis, I expected that Hadrian would relatively refer much more to Rome, as I thought that, because Hadrian was absent from Rome for a long period of his reign due to his many journeys, he would have emphasized that aspect much more than the other emperors. However, by comparing Hadrian's coinage with Trajan's it becomes clear that there was hardly any difference within messages targeted at acceptance groups in Rome.

To conclude, the analysis of the coinage of Hadrian indicates that some messages on his types tried to appeal to specific acceptance groups. However, some categories were more targeted at acceptance groups than others. The category of geographical messages, for instance, is a category in which it is very clear that messages on the coins were appealing to the acceptance group 'the provincial elite'.

The results of this study, thus indicate that Hadrian seems to have been aiming to appeal to some acceptance groups within his coinage. However, as this study is based upon coin types, and not on coin hoards, it does not entirely accurately reflect upon the coins that were circulating in the Empire. Therefore, this study should be repeated using coin hoards. By researching coin hoards, it becomes possible to study audience-targeting. Fleur Kemmers, for example, studied audience-targeting in-depth.<sup>234</sup> By looking at patterns of circulation and the combination of the messages and denominations, it becomes clearer how coinage could have developed the relationship between emperors and acceptance groups. In this thesis, I have shown for a number of coin types, that there might have been a certain degree of audience-targeting. However, through a deeper analysis of the entire coinage, and by discussing the combination between the messages on the types and denominations more thoroughly it becomes possible to come to a better understanding of how Hadrian's messages on his coins appealed to the acceptance groups. Besides, comparing research on coin hoards with research on coin types also gives a better idea to what extent studies on coin types are. Hopefully, in the future, scholars will investigate more on these aspects.

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<sup>234</sup> Kemmers, 'Not a random', 39-49.

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