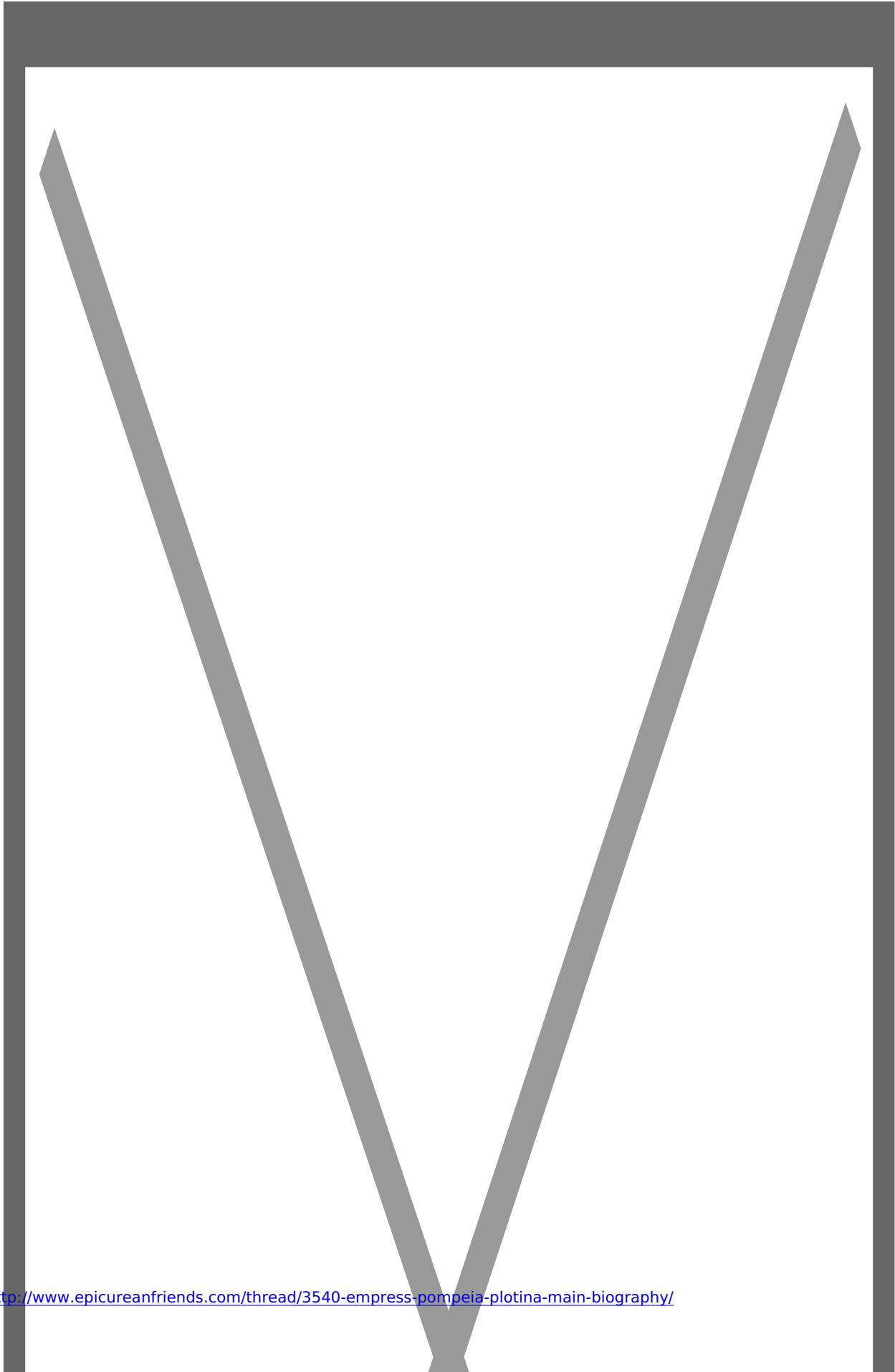


Empress Pompeia Plotina - Main Biography

Post by "Cassius" of November 20, 2023 at 3:49 PM

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[Pompeia Plotina - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

Pompeia Plotina [Augusta](#)



Bust of Plotina, exhibited in the [Vatican Museums](#).

[Roman empress](#) Tenure 98 – 117

Born [Tejada la Vieja](#), [Hispania](#)

Died 121/122

Spouse [Trajan](#)

[Regnal name](#) Pompeia Plotina Augusta

[Dynasty](#) [Nerva–Antonine](#)

Father [Lucius Pompeius](#)

Pompeia Plotina (died 121/122) was [Roman empress](#) from 98 to 117 as the wife of [Trajan](#). She was renowned for her interest in philosophy, and her virtue, dignity and simplicity. She was particularly devoted to the [Epicurean](#) philosophical school in [Athens](#), [Greece](#).^[1] She is often viewed as having provided Romans with fairer taxation, improved education, assisted the poor, and created tolerance in Roman society.

Early life [\[edit\]](#)

Plotina was raised in Tejada la Vieja ([Escacena del Campo](#)) in the province of [Hispania](#). She was possibly born in Nemausus ([Nîmes](#)) during the reign of the Roman Emperor [Nero](#) (r. 54–68), however she could have been born in the 70s. She was the daughter of Lucius Pompeius. Another woman from Nemausus named Pompeia L. f. Marullina may have been her relative;^[2] historian [Christian Settapani](#) proposed that they may have been sisters.^[3] Based on her cognomen Plotina her mother may have been named Plotia or similar.^[4] In Pompeii an inscription names an Ulpia Plotina,^[a] leading to the idea that Pompeia Plotina and Trajan were related. Little is known about Plotina's early life.

Marriage and life as Empress [\[edit\]](#)



Pompeia Plotina coin, celebrating the

[Fides](#) on the reverse. Trajan married Plotina before he became emperor, and their marriage was happy; they had no known children, probably due to the fact that Trajan himself was primarily interested in males.

Upon entering the imperial palace following Trajan's ascension, Plotina is said to have turned to those watching her and carefully announced, "I enter here the kind of woman I would like to be when I depart."^[6] She sought to dispel the memories of the domestic strife that had plagued the reign of [Domitian](#) and the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#). Plotina behaved in the manner of a

traditional Roman matron, and she was associated with chaste goddesses such as [Vesta](#) (the guardian of Rome's sacred fire) and [Minerva](#) (goddess of war and wisdom).[7] In 100, Trajan awarded her with the title of [Augusta](#), but she did not accept the title until 105. Plotina did not appear on coinage until 112.[1]

When the future emperor [Hadrian](#) and his sister were 10 or 11 years old, they lost their parents. Trajan and the Roman officer [Publius Acilius Attianus](#) became the children's guardians. Hadrian was a first cousin-once-removed to Trajan (Trajan's father and Hadrian's paternal grandmother were siblings). Plotina matched Hadrian with his future wife [Vibia Sabina](#).[\[8\]](#)

Death of Trajan and accession of Hadrian[\[edit\]](#)

In 117, Trajan was on his deathbed at [Selinus](#) in Cilicia, where he was said to have written a letter in which he personally adopted Hadrian as successor to the Empire. The letter had been signed by the Empress Plotina, and when it arrived in Rome, it was suspect. Rumour named Attianus and Plotina as lovers—the two were very close to their ward Hadrian and the two had been present at Trajan's death—and they were rumoured to have forged Trajan's will to secure Hadrian's succession.[\[1\]](#)[\[9\]](#)

Annelise Freisenbruch dismisses this accusation: "Plotina, the silent spouse of the second century, thus joined [Livia](#), [Agrippina the Younger](#), and [Domitia](#) in the gallery of Roman imperial women accused of covering up or conspiring in their husband's deaths." Freisenbruch notes that there are many plausible explanations why Plotina's signature might legitimately be on this declaration: Trajan may have simply been too weak to sign the letter himself. Freisenbruch also notes these kinds of accusations have dogged the spouses of rulers through the centuries.[\[10\]](#)

Along with Attianus and [Matidia](#), the grieving widow Plotina accompanied Trajan's body to [Seleucia](#) and his ashes to Rome.[\[9\]](#)

Later years[\[edit\]](#)

While Plotina was a widow, her best-documented act took place. During the year 121, while the emperor Hadrian was inspecting the provinces, Plotina engaged him in a series of letters to discuss who should be the new head of the [Epicurean](#) school of philosophy in [Athens](#). She petitioned for a change in the law, so that Popillius Theotimus, the acting head of the school, could become the official head; in response, Hadrian agreed with her argument, and the relevant letters were preserved in a series of inscriptions. Freisenbruch notes, "In stark contrast to her passive anonymity in the literary record, this inscription from Athens recasts Plotina as a highly educated woman, active on behalf of causes close to her heart and with the kind of access to the emperor once enjoyed by Livia."[\[11\]](#)

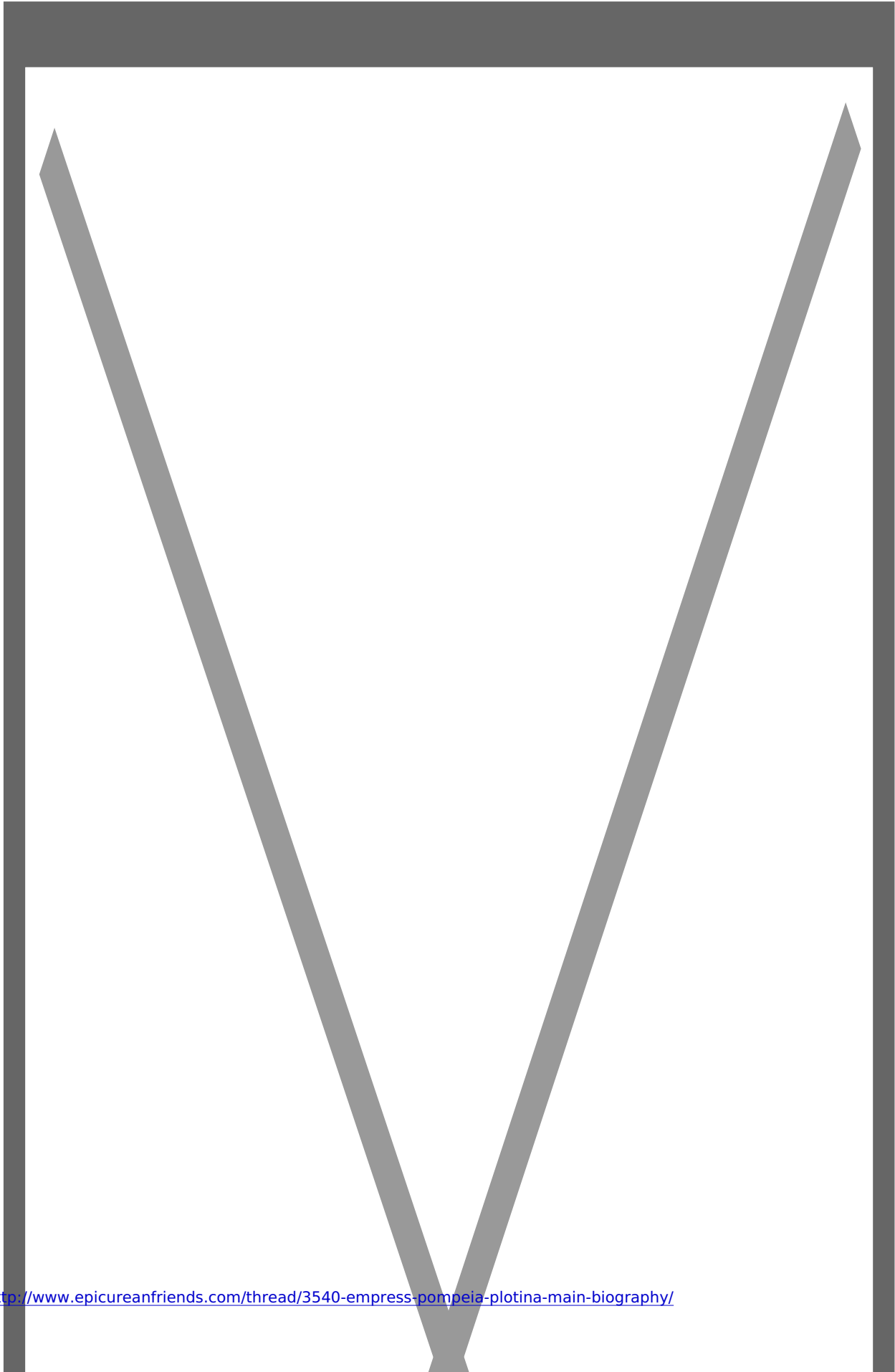
Plotina died of illness, and was [deified](#). Her ashes joined Trajan's in the base of [Trajan's Column](#). In 123, Hadrian built a [basilica](#) in her honor at [Nîmes](#), in [Provence](#).[\[12\]](#)

Post by “Pacatus” of November 21, 2023 at 6:18 PM

From the Wiki article [Cassius](#) linked:

“She is often viewed as having provided Romans with fairer taxation, improved education, assisted the poor, and created tolerance in Roman society.”

“While Plotina was a widow, her best-documented act took place. During the year 121, while the emperor Hadrian was inspecting the provinces, Plotina engaged him in a series of letters to discuss who should be the new head of the [Epicurean](#) school of philosophy in [Athens](#). She petitioned for a change in the law, so that Popillius Theotimus, the acting head of the school, could become the official head; in response, Hadrian agreed with her argument, and the relevant letters were preserved in a series of inscriptions. Freisenbruch notes, ‘In stark contrast to her passive anonymity in the literary record, this inscription from Athens recasts Plotina as a highly educated woman, active on behalf of causes close to her heart and with the kind of access to the emperor once enjoyed by Livia.’”[\[11\]](#)



[Pompeia Plotina - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

A powerful, confident, intelligent woman, then – active behind the scenes.

Re: rumors surrounding her role in securing Hadrian's succession:

"It may also reflect male Roman displeasure that an empress – let alone any woman – could presume to meddle in Rome's political affairs." <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trajan>

Ah, how the times, they do not change! 😞

Post by "Joshua" of November 21, 2023 at 7:59 PM

Yes, and Cleopatra has received similar treatment - a seductress, luring illustrious Roman men away from their duty. Per usual, it is the woman to blame in these affairs.

In the same book in which Boccaccio slandered Leontion, he also heaped abuse on Cleopatra. It was an English poet who finally conceded to show her in better light: Geoffrey Chaucer. He laid the blame for Antony's infidelity at his own feet, and held Cleopatra to have lived and loved more nobly and more faithfully than any man.

What she really was is of course far more inspiring; a wry wit, a student of international politics, a scholar in the tradition of her earlier ancestors, a capable successor to the middling heirs of those same ancestors, a wartime commander in the field at both land and sea, and a strident negotiator with the ruling power in the Mediterranean. While she conversed with these Roman generals in her native Koine Greek, she was also said, though accounts differ, to be the only Ptolemaic ruler to have gone to the trouble of studying the local Egyptian language.

When Antony was slain and with him her last hope for her people's freedom and security, she died, a martyr in Chaucer's words, at her own hand.

Post by "Cassius" of November 22, 2023 at 7:12 AM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

When Antony was slain and with him her last hope for her people's freedom and security, she died, a martyr in Chaucer's words, at her own hand.

I've traditionally also held Antony in low repute but I can't remember if it was the Boeri book or another that made the point that Antony himself had some Epicurean characteristics, so maybe the jury should continue to deliberate on Antony as well.