

Roman Civilization

22: Nero



Homework

Read:

- Suetonius: *Galba, Otho, Vitellius*

Administrative Stuff

Paper III Outline

Due: Thursday, April 14

Midterm II

- Thursday, April 28

Paper III

- Due: May 10, 5:30 p.m.

Fall Semester:

- Greek Civilization
 - *MW 5:30-6:45*
 - *Registration opens April 18*

Paper III

Instructions and Details

Paper Outline

- Due Thursday, April 14 (two weeks)
- Graded (out of 20 points)
 - *Topic*
 - *Thesis*
 - *Outline of major supporting points*
 - *List of sources*

Paper III

Instructions and Details

Paper Outline

- Your paper should be approximately 1250-2500 words (5-10 pages), though you will be graded on writing and content, not length.
- You **MUST** use at least **three sources** and at least three direct quotes from your sources. You must use at least one primary source.
- The final paper is due **May 10, 5:30 p.m.**, submitted at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted. There will be no opportunity for re-writes.

Paper III

Instructions and Details

Possible topics (but you must find your argument):

- Classical Tradition (Ancient Rome in America)
- Rebuilding ancient monuments/buildings
- Augustus and propaganda
- **Women in Rome**
- Death and succession of emperors
- Entertainment in Rome (gladiator games)
- Christianity
- Literature/architecture
- Sources: written vs. physical
- Rewrite/expand a previous paper

Paper III

Finding a topic and thesis statement

Topic: Women in Rome

- Finding a thesis statement:
 - *“Women played an important role in Rome.”*
 - Too broad
 - *“Messalina was promiscuous.”*
 - Too narrow, too focused
 - *“Agrippina played in important role in the reign of three emperors.”*
 - Better scope, not very argumentative
 - *“The women of the Julio-Claudia dynasty were more powerful than the emperors.”*
 - *“Agrippina was a shrewd political player who manipulated her way to power.”*

Paper III

Thesis statement and supporting points

“Agrippina was a shrewd political player who manipulated her way to power.”

- Supporting points
 - *Was she shrewd?*
 - *Was she motivated by political power?*
 - *Did she manipulate her way to the top?*

Timeline

Julio-Claudians



27 BCE

0



14 CE



37 CE



41 CE



54 CE

Claudius

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus
(r. 24 January 41 – 13 October 54)

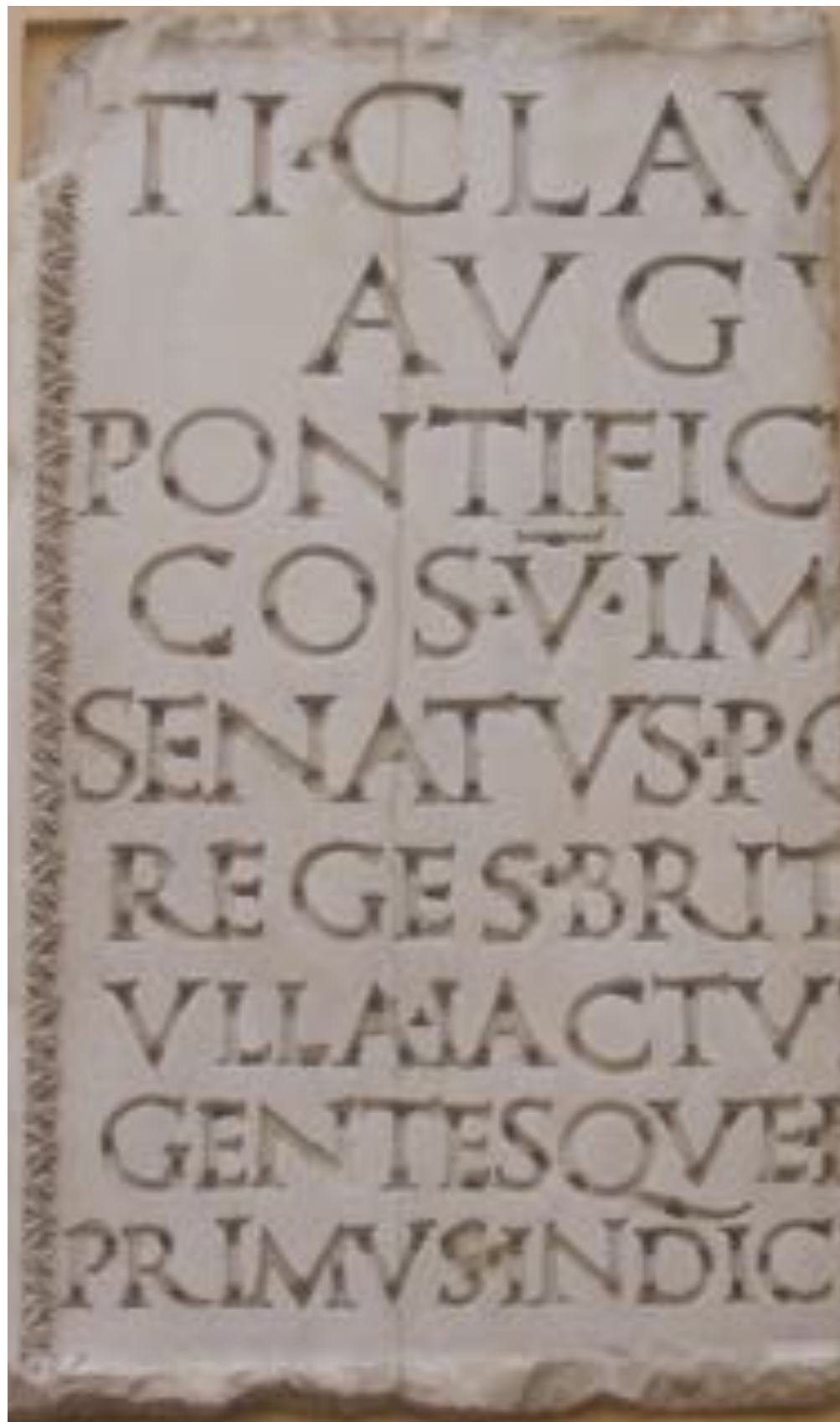


Claudius

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

The Scholar

- Three new letters:
 - \oslash
 - Antistigma
 - To replace “BS” and “PS”
 - Similar to ψ or ξ
 - \exists
 - U
 - \vdash
 - Similar to greek upsilon, υ



When was it built?

Women in Rome

The Roman Empire

As the Roman Empire became more established, imperial women gained more power.

Why?



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AGRIPPINA DRUSILLA IULIA SC

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Agrippina the Younger

- Daughter of:
 - *Agrippina the Elder (granddaughter of Augustus)*
 - *Germanicus*
- After Germanicus died (19), Agrippina lived with her mother and great-grandmother, Livia (wife of Augustus)
 - *BTW, Livia lived to be 87*

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Agrippina the Younger

- At age 13, Agrippina married Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus
 - *“a man who was in every aspect of life detestable.” (Suetonius)*
- [Caligula became emperor on March 16, 37]
- Agrippina and Domitius had one son:
 - *Born December 15, 37*
 - *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus*
- At the birth, Ahenobarbus claimed:
 - *“I don't think anything produced by me and Agrippina could possibly be good for the state or the people”.*

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Life with Caligula

- Possible incest with Caligula
- In 37, possible failed plot to assassinate Caligula
- Agrippina was exiled by Caligula
- Agrippina's husband Domitius died in 40

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Second Husband

- Claudius became emperor on January 24, 41
- Claudius was Agrippina's uncle (Germanicus's brother)
- Exile was lifted by Claudius
 - *Agrippina is reunited with her son, Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus*
- Agrippina married Gaius Sallustius Crispus Passienus
- Crispus died in 47
 - *Poisoned by Agrippina (?)*
 - *Agrippina inherited his estate*

Meanwhile, Claudius marries Messalina...

Messalina

Valeria Messalina

Third Wife of Claudius

- Married Claudius in 38
- Reputation of promiscuity
 - *Competition with a prostitute for the most partners in 24 hours*
 - Messalina won ...
 - *25 partners (according to Pliny the Younger)*
 - *Also worked as a prostitute?*

Messalina

The “she-wolf”

*When his wife, Messalina, knew he was asleep,
She would go about with no more than a maid for escort.
The Empress dared, at night, to wear the hood of a whore,
And she preferred a mat to her bed in the Palatine Palace.
Dressed in that way, with a blonde wig hiding her natural
Hair, she'd enter a brothel that stank of old soiled sheets,
And make an empty cubicle, her own; then sell herself...*

taking She-Wolf for a name...

*Then she'd leave, exhausted by man, but not yet sated,
A disgusting creature with filthy face, soiled by the lamp's
Black, taking her brothel-stench back to the Emperor's bed.*

—Juvenal

Satires 6.114

Messalina

Valeria Messalina

Third Wife of Claudius

- Claudius and Messalina had a son:
 - *Britannicus*
- Married Gaius Silius? (while Claudius was out of town)
 - *Plotted to murder Claudius*
- Claudius offered her another chance
 - *But, his guards had her murdered*
- *Damnatio memoriae*

Back to Agrippina...

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Life with Claudius

- After Messalina was murdered, Agrippina made her move
- In Claudius married Agrippina
 - *Agrippina was his niece*
- Agrippina became Empress of Rome

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Life as Empress

- Agrippina became Empress of Rome
- Agrippina was given the name *Augusta*
- Agrippina ordered the murder of *her* rivals
- Agrippina appointed Sextus Afranius Burrus head of Praetorian Guard

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Life as Empress

- Agrippina convinces Claudius to name her son as heir to the throne:
 - *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus*
- Agrippina poisons Claudius (?)
 - *October 13, 54*
 - *Mushrooms*

Is Agrippina a shrewd political power player?



Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus
(r. 13 October 54 – 9 June 68)

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Early Life

- Born December 15, 37 in Antium
- Born Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus to:
 - *Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus*
 - *Agrippina the Younger (sister of Caligula)*

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Rise to Power

- Adopted by Claudius in 50
- Name Change:
 - *Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus*
- Claudius died in 54
 - *Poisoned by Agrippina?*
- Nero was declared Emperor



Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Emperor

- Nero is emperor at 17
- Heavily influenced by others:
 - *Seneca (Stoic philosopher, his tutor)*
 - *Sextus Afranius Burrus (Praetorian Prefect)*
 - *Agrippina (his mother)*

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Mother of Nero

- Priestess of the Deified Claudius
- Allowed to attend Senate meetings
- Made an alliance with Britannicus to help him become emperor
 - *Nero had Britannicus murdered*
- Agrippina tried to maintain control over Nero
- Nero forced Agrippina from the palace and had her stripped of power

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Death of Agrippina

- Tacitus:
 - *Nero thought about stabbing or poisoning*
 - Too suspicious
 - *Collapsing ceiling*
 - *Self-sinking boat*
 - She survived
 - *Murdered*

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Death of Agrippina

- Suetonius:
 - *Poison*
 - *Collapsing ceiling*
 - *Collapsible boat*
 - She survived
 - *Murdered*

Agrippina the Younger

November 7, 15 - March 13, 54

Death of Agrippina

- Cassius Dio:
 - *Boat with open bottom*
 - She survived
 - *Collapsible boat*
 - *Murdered*
 - *Last words:*
 - “Smite my womb.”

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Marriages

- Claudia Octavia
- Poppaea Sabina
- Doryphorus
- Statilia Messalina
- Sporus

Quote of the Day

“Things could have gone well in human affairs if his father Domitius had had a wife like that.”

—Suetonius

Nero, 28.1

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

The Entertainer

- Singer
- Played the Lyre
- Participated in competitions
- Held a triumph back in Rome for victories in his singing competitions
- Participated in the Olympic Games in 67
 - *Chariot Race (nearly died)*
 - *Singing*
 - *Acting*

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Sexual Indecency

- Sex with his mother
- Sex Rest Stops
- Nero's Animal Game

Great Fire of Rome

July 18–19, 64

Great Fire of Rome

- Started July 18-19, 64
- Burned for 5 or 6 days



Great Fire of Rome



Great Fire of Rome

Great Fire of Rome

July 18–19, 64

Great Fire of Rome

- Causes
 - *Nero sent drunk men to start the fire. Nero watched from his palace on the Palatine Hill singing and playing the lyre. (Cassius Dio)*
 - *Nero openly sent out men to set fire to the city. Nero watched from the Tower of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill singing and playing the lyre. (Suetonius)*
 - *Nero sent out men to set fire to the city. Nero sang and played his lyre from a private stage. (Tacitus)*
 - *The fire was an accident. Nero was in Antium. (Tacitus)*
 - *The fire was caused by Christians. (Tacitus)*

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

“To dispel the gossip Nero therefore found culprits on whom he inflicted the most exotic punishments. These were people hated for their shameful offenses whom the common people called Christians. The man who gave them their name, Christus, had been executed during the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate.”

—Tacitus

XV.44

Nero

Nero and Christianity

Treatment of Christians

- Blamed for Great Fire of Rome
- Tortured:
 - *Arrested*
 - *Mocked*
 - *Crucified*
 - *Covered in animal skins, fed to beasts*
 - *Dipped in oil, and used as lanterns*



Great Fire of Rome

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

*“There was nothing however in which he was more ruinously prodigal than in building. He made a **palace extending all the way from the Palatine to the Esquiline**, which [he] rebuilt, the **Golden House**. Its vestibule was large enough to contain a colossal statue of the emperor a hundred and twenty feet high; ... There was a pond too, like a sea, surrounded with buildings to represent cities, besides tracts of country, varied by tilled fields, vineyards, pastures and woods, with great numbers of wild and domestic animals. In the rest of the house all parts were overlaid with gold and adorned with gems and mother-of-pearl. There were dining-rooms ... fitted with pipes for sprinkling the guests with perfumes. The main banquet hall was circular and constantly revolved day and night, like the heavens. He had baths supplied with sea water and sulphur water.”*

—Suetonius

Nero 31.1-2



Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Death of Nero

- Died June 9, 68 at the age of 30
- Suicide, but he forced a freedman secretary to kill him
- Last Words:
 - *"What an artist dies in me."*
- End of the Julio-Claudian dynasty