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NEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPERIAL RELIEFS FROM THE SEBASTEION AT APHRODISIAS AND THE PORTRAITURE OF CLAUDIUS, BRITANNICUS, AND THE YOUNG NERO

by John Pollini

Among the most notable discoveries in Roman archaeology in more recent years are the sculptures that once decorated the impressive architectural complex at Aphrodisias in Asia Minor known as the Sebasteion of the imperial cult (figs. 1–3)¹. Represented in its statues and reliefs are members of the Augustan and Julio-Claudian house, as well as subjects of a religious nature, scenes from myth and legend, and figures of conquered and other peoples of the empire (τα ἔθνη). The construction of the Sebasteion, which was dedicated to Aphrodisias' patron goddess Aphrodite, Roman emperors, and the Demos of Aphrodisias, has been dated from roughly A.D. 20 to 60; that is, from the time of Tiberius to that of Nero, with most of the work apparently carried out in the Claudian-Neronian period (see further the Appendix). The Sebasteion featured a relatively narrow processional way (ca. 90 m × 14 m) with a monumental two-story Propylon serving as the main entrance at its west end. At the opposite east end of the complex, raised up on a terrace, once stood a Corinthian prostyle hexastyle temple² that was dedicated to Tiberius and Iulia Augusta (Livia) in the Principate of Tiberius, as in the case of other temples in Asia Minor³. Flanking the processional way between the Propylon and the temple were the parallel three-story-high North and South Buildings (ca. H. 12 m, L. 80 m, W. 7 m) that were decorated with an estimated total of 203 relief panels (e. g., figs. 2–4)⁴.

The extant reliefs representing members of the imperial family were primarily located on the uppermost story of the South Building. The genitals of all the nude or semi-nude male fig-

¹ All translations of Greek and Latin are by the author. The excavations of the Sebasteion took place largely from 1979 to 1984. Although some of the sculptures and inscriptions had been published previously, Smith's 2013 monograph represents the most complete study to date of the Sebasteion. The numbering/lettering system used in this article for reliefs, bases, inscriptions, etc. is based on Smith's monograph. For a history of the excavations of the Sebasteion, see esp. Smith 2013, 49–53 figs. 1–4. I thank Bert Smith for providing me with a pdf of his book when our university library copy went missing and a hard copy of his book was unavailable elsewhere during the Covid-19 crisis.

² For the temple itself, its cult statues, and its relation to the porticos, see Smith 2013, 11 f. 28–30 figs. 5. 10–12 pls. 11. 12.

³ For its dedication to Tiberius and Livia: Smith 2013, 7 f. 21 (Ded 7) figs. 11. 12 pl. 12. For other temples that also included Livia in the dedication in Asia Minor, see Burrell 2004, 20 f. (at Pergamon). 39. 40. 61 (at Smyrna).

⁴ See Smith 2013, 37, and under individual panels for their recorded dimensions. My fig. 4 combines Smith's figs. 261. 262 and adds labels to the panels.

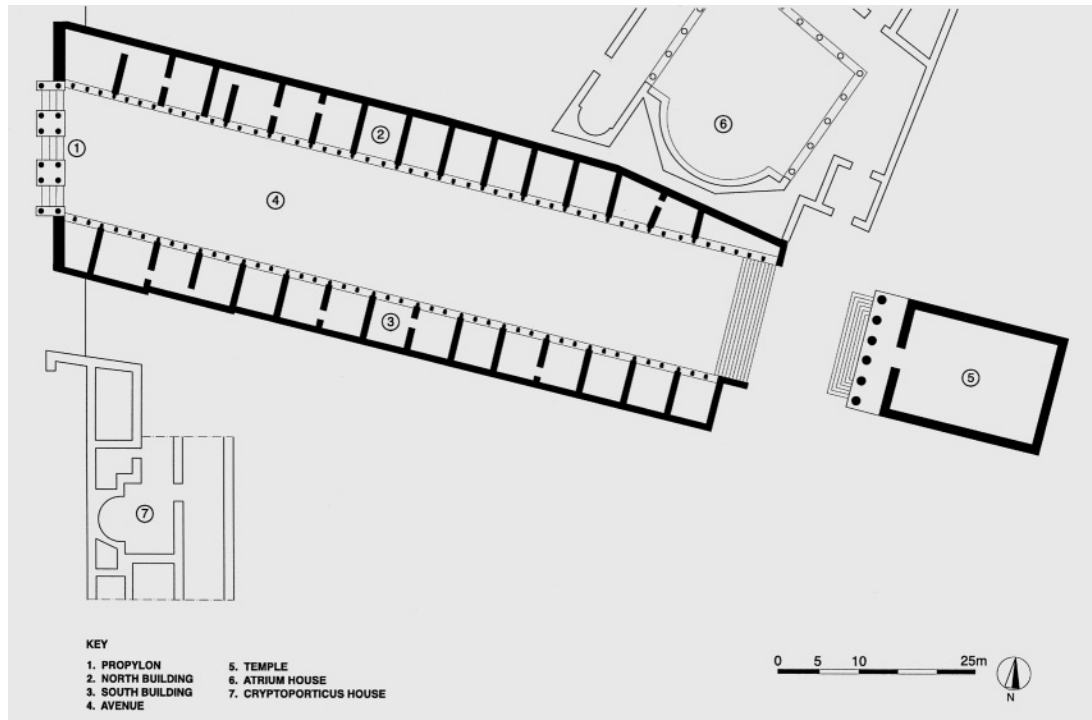


Fig. 1. Plan of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias

ures in these panels were systematically mutilated in Late Antiquity by Christians, as was also the case with the Great Altar of Zeus in Pergamon⁵. Some of the Sebasteion reliefs have bases inscribed in Greek to identify the individuals in them⁶. Viewed together, the panels would have appeared like a painting gallery⁷, one of the best examples of which is from the grand *oecus* of the Villa of Fanius Sinistor at Boscoreale near Pompeii⁸. The majority of figures in

⁵ For Christian mutilation of the Sebasteion reliefs, see Smith 2013, 44–49. As for the Great Altar of Zeus, in the 140 years or so since its excavation, I know of no publication that has mentioned the Christian mutilation of the Altar's relief figures. I first reported my findings with regard to this mutilation at an International Symposium at Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia) in 2000 and in several public lectures thereafter. In 2014, I studied and photographed with a tall ladder details of this mutilation, which will be discussed in my book (in progress), *Christian Destruction and Desecration of Images and Temples of Classical Antiquity*. For various forms of Christian destruction and mutilation, see Pollini 2013, with further bibliography. I thank Andreas Scholl for permission to use a ladder in the Pergamonmuseum and Volker Kästner for confirming my observations when we looked at the Altar together.

⁶ See, e. g., the surviving base for the panel representing the emperor Claudius subjugating the personified Britannia (BRETANNIA), which is discussed below with n. 61. See also Smith 2013, 145 (C-base 12) fig. 90 pls. 61. 62. 96.

⁷ Although Greek and Roman statues and reliefs were commonly painted, there is no mention in Smith (2013) of any traces of pigments being found on the relief panels or statues of the Sebasteion complex. In correspondence with him (10.12.2020), he indicated that »little to nothing can be seen with the naked eye«, but that the reliefs would be further examined in the future with the latest scientific detectors.

⁸ For these paintings and a reconstruction of them in their setting in the room, see esp. Andreae 1975, with fig. 59. For examples other than these paintings, see Smith 2013, 32–36.

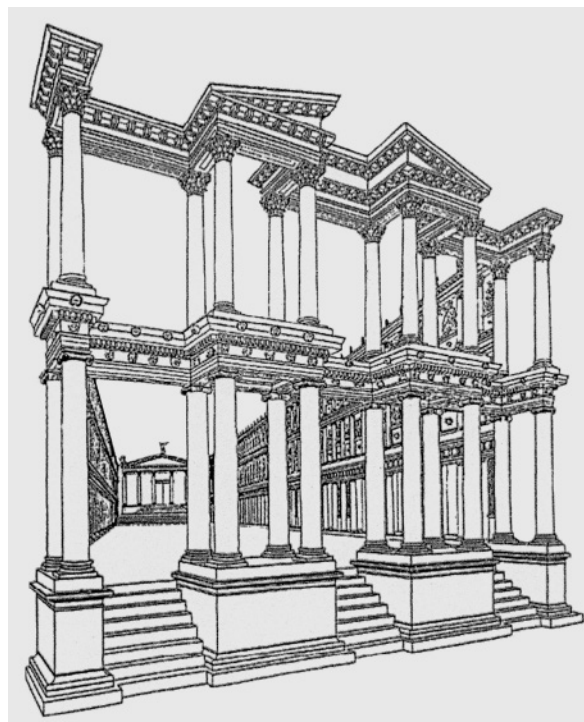


Fig. 2. Reconstruction of the Sebasteion
(view looking east through the Propylon without its statues)



Fig. 3. Site of the Sebasteion (from temple terrace looking west)

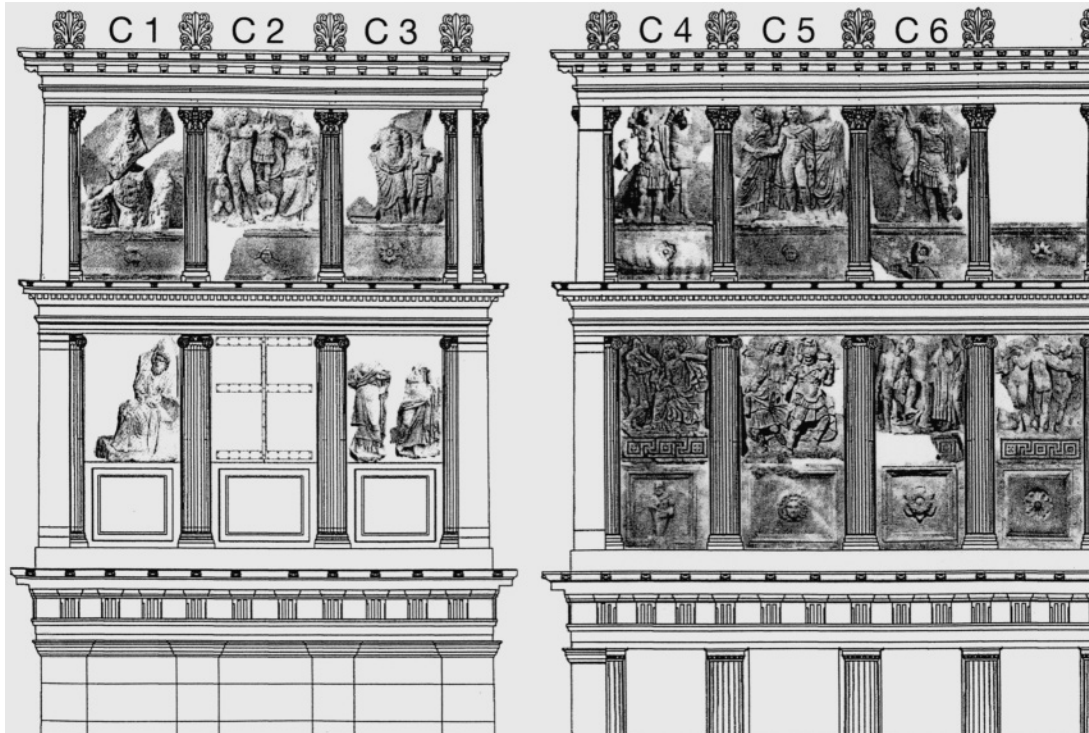


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of South Building panels: east-facing C 1–C 3 and north-facing C 4–C 6

the Sebasteion's relief scenes are approximately life-size⁹. The fact that the male members of the imperial family are represented for the most part as nude or semi-nude is typical for the Greek world and its traditions of heroization or divinization of leaders. This ›naked display‹ of leadership, placing those represented on a higher plane, was perfectly acceptable, even desirable, everywhere in the Empire, including even at Rome but only in private or non-official contexts. However, such imagery was contrary to the official modes of representation of the state government of Rome, at least during the lifetime of the emperor or members of the imperial family. Generally speaking, it was only after death, and usually deification or heroization, that imperial personages were represented nude or semi-nude in official media of the Roman State¹⁰.

The panels of both the North and South Buildings were of two standard widths, with the narrower panels flanking wider, central ones. Their arrangement within the facades is largely based on where the panels fell and such technical considerations as the correspondence between the widths of relief panels and of the intercolumniations in which they were set¹¹. Because a number of the reliefs are no longer extant, there are gaps in the sequence on the

⁹ Smith 2013, 38, gives the average size of the heads (from chin to crown) as 23–25 cm.

¹⁰ On the rather complex distinctions between the official Roman State view and private and non-official (i. e., local, municipal, colonial, and provincial government) modes of representation of members of the imperial family, see Pollini 2012, 69–161.

¹¹ See, e. g., Smith 2013, 189–191.

South Building, and most of the figural panels on the North Building are missing¹². Where the sequence of the reliefs is better preserved and the panels by and large fixed in their locations, it is evident that in a number of cases the placement of the reliefs defies any chronological arrangement¹³. In part, this may have been the result of certain panels being completed sooner than others and then set in place. From the jumbled chronology and the manner of representation of the imperial figures, especially nude males, it is clear that the focus of the sculptural program was largely symbolic, stressing familial connections and lineage, as well as the beneficence of the Julio-Claudian rule that now guarantees the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Roman Empire, of which Aphrodisias was an integral part.

Offered in my study are new interpretations of the imperial figures in several important reliefs of the Sebasteion and their role in the context of Julio-Claudian dynastic propaganda. New arguments are also advanced in identifying some of the personified figures associated with the imperial personages and in some cases help identify these individuals as well. In addition, the portrait typology of Claudius is discussed in light of a reconsideration of the portraiture of Britannicus and the young Nero. Of Claudius' three official portrait types, one has been particularly difficult to explain and to date. The employment of this particular portrait type in one of the Sebasteion panels that references a specific historical event suggests a reason for its creation and its likely date, as well as its influence on the portraiture of Claudius' natural son, Britannicus, and later of his adopted son, the future emperor Nero. Based on a reconsideration of the historical situation, ancient sources, and numismatic evidence, the puzzling absence of three-dimensional sculptural portraits of Britannicus, which have been commonly and in my opinion incorrectly identified as early images of Nero, can now be explained. With the establishment of Britannicus' portrait typology and the revision of that of the young Nero, new conclusions can also be reached about the Sebasteion's much debated ›Two Princes‹ panel.

Directly related to difficulties in identifying the Sebasteion's imperial relief figures, based on their portrait features and/or hairstyles, is the provincial style of the carving, which ranges from clumsy or mediocre to occasionally quite good, reflecting the different abilities of the large team of sculptors commissioned to work on this enormous public sculptural project. Some of the sculptors were fairly competent in carving portraits, while others were less so. Many were probably apprentices, presented here with the opportunity to learn and practice their profession¹⁴. The daunting nature of so vast a project as the Sebasteion sculptural program over many years ultimately resulted in some reliefs not being fully completed, but whether that was because of dwindling funds or a desire to finally finish the project is unknown. Other complicating factors are that portraits of members of the Augustan and Julio-Claudian families were frequently idealized, and, especially in provincial art, physiognomic features and/or hairstyles, simplified.

¹² Smith 2013, figs. 262–269.

¹³ For example, in the sequence of panels (from left to right) in the long expanse of the facade of the South Building, panel C 8 shows Nero already as emperor defeating Armenia in ca. A.D. 58 (Smith 2013, 140–143 figs. 88, 263 pls. 58, 59), while farther to the right, panel C 10 presents Claudius subduing a personified Britannia in A.D. 43 (here figs. 19, 20), and still farther to the right, panel C 16 commemorates a victorious Tiberius (here figs. 13, 14), long before the events referenced in the panels to the left.

¹⁴ See also Smith 2013, 39, as well as 37–41, for various technical aspects of the construction of the South and North Buildings.

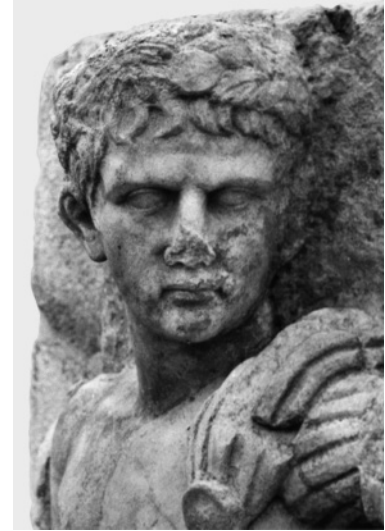


Fig. 6. Detail of Augustus

Fig. 5. Panel C 2. Augustus crowned by Nike

An example of the lack of adherence to official portrait types is a figure in panel C 2 (figs. 4–6) of the South Building. The individual represented can be clearly identified as Augustus on the basis of his physiognomic features¹⁵ but with a hairstyle that differs somewhat from his most common and distinctive one, namely, the ›Prima Porta‹ type¹⁶. The deviations in the configuration of the fringe of hairlock in this specific case therefore privilege to some degree the facial features over the ›Lockenzählmethode‹¹⁷ in identifying this figure. Nude except for a cloak and crowned by Victoria, Augustus appears god-like, with a Jovian eagle – now also the imperial Roman eagle – at his feet and wearing the *corona civica*, symbolic of having saved the lives of citizens (*ob cives servatos*), an honor that the Roman Senate accorded him in 27 B.C. (R. Gest. div. Aug. 34.2)¹⁸. The theme of savior and benefactor of the

¹⁵ Inv. 80-133: Smith 2013, 128–131 (C 2) fig. 82 pls. 46, 47; Boschung 1993b, 153 cat. 103 pls. 185, 1. 2; 218.

¹⁶ For the portraiture of Augustus in general, see Boschung 1993b; for the ›Prima Porta‹ type, 38–65.

¹⁷ For portrait typology and problems regarding variation and assimilation in imperial portraiture, see, e. g., Pollini 1999, 731–733 with further literature on the subject.

¹⁸ See also Cass. Dio 53.16.4. For the *corona civica* in general, see Bergmann 2010, 135–188, 192–212. This oak crown had a long history, having been awarded already in the Republic to a Roman soldier for saving the life of a fellow soldier in war. Beginning with Augustus, it appears to have increasingly become a prerogative of the imperial house, though it continued to be used as a military award for soldiers until the third century. For Augustus' wearing of the *corona civica*, see Bergmann 2010, 159–161 figs. 71–78. Although Augustus is represented as victorious in panel C 2, it should be noted that the *corona civica* was not used in the Roman triumph and therefore does not designate him here specifically as a *triumphator* who wore a simple crown of fresh laurel leaves (*corona laurea triumphalis*), while the state slave (*servus publicus*) held the *corona Etrusca* over his head during the triumph. Although debated in the past (see Bergmann 2010, 58–94; Bergmann 2020, 219–223), the *corona Etrusca* – unlike the oak civic crown – was a golden laurel crown with a large medallion in front and *taeniae* dangling behind. This type of crown is, in fact, represented along with the other *ornamenta triumphalia* on *denarii* of



Fig. 8. Detail of Drusus Maior

Fig. 7. Panel C 4. Drusus Maior

oikoumene (the civilized inhabited world) was also adopted and perpetuated in Sebasteion panels representing other members of the Julio-Claudian family.

It was originally believed that on either side of the Augustus panel were located two narrower relief panels (C 4, figs. 4. 7. 8; C 6, figs. 4. 9. 10) representing mirror-reverse figures in armor standing next to their horses¹⁹. Because of their pairing in this way they were considered to represent the Divine Twins, Kastor and Polydeukes (the Roman Castor and Pollux), also known as the Dioskouroi (Roman Castores)²⁰, who were generally represented in Greek and Roman art as nude or semi-nude adult males, sometimes accompanied by their horses. Although the heads of both equestrian figures are badly damaged, enough remains of them to see that they were meant to be idealized members of the imperial family. Unfortunately,

Augustus dated to 18 B.C. (Bergmann 2010, 87 f. figs. 31 a. b; 385 f. cat. 58a. b; Bergmann 2020, 220–223 figs. 5. 6 a). When the *corona Etrusca* is shown with three spaced medallions (one in front and two on the sides), it is no doubt a symbolic reference to Augustus' triple triumph in 29 B.C.; see, e. g., on his coinage (Bergmann 2020, 220–223 fig. 6 b) and his portrait in-the-round in the Capitoline Museum (inv. 495) (Bergmann 2020, 221 f. 228 [I.13] fig. 7 a. b). In Roman art and numismatics, the emperor is sometimes shown (with artistic license) wearing the *corona Etrusca* instead of a simple laurel crown and/or with Victoria or the *servus publicus* behind him touching the crown or the back of his head, as on a magnificent Augustan *dupondius* of 7 B.C.; for this coin, see Pollini 2012, 80 fig. 2, 9. See also the 'Tiberius Cup' from the Boscoreale Silver Treasure in the Louvre, on which the state slave touches the top of Tiberius' head: Bergmann 2010, 90–92 fig. 32 a. c; see also Pollini 2012, 85 f., esp. fig. 2, 18 c, with further bibliography. The touching of the head or crown serves as a symbolic artistic substitute for actually holding the *corona Etrusca* over the head of a *triumphator*.

¹⁹ Equestrian panels: inv. 80-38: Smith 2013, 133 f. (C 4 to the left) fig. 84 pls. 50. 51; inv. 80-80: Smith 2013, 138 f. (C 6 to the right) fig. 86 pls. 54. 55.

²⁰ So Smith 1987, 132. For the role of the Castores/Dioskouroi in Augustus' dual heir system, beginning with Gaius and Lucius, see Pollini 2012, 420–454.



Fig. 10. Detail of Germanicus

Fig. 9. Panel C 6. Germanicus

because of their badly damaged facial features and lack of any clear iconographical hairstyles, especially the missing fringe of hairlocks on their foreheads, they cannot be identified on the basis of portraiture alone. These two panels were once thought to have formed a triptych, with the wider panel with Augustus between them, at the very beginning of the uppermost level of the north-facing façade directly above room 1 of the South Building (fig. 4)²¹. This arrangement had been based on the fact that these three fragmentary reliefs were all excavated in close proximity to one another in room 1²². However, more recent technical considerations with regard to the anastylosis (i. e., the block-for-block reconstruction of the building) have led to different conclusions as to the location of all three panels. Although both panels with the equestrian figures are still located in the same place as originally thought, they now flank a different panel (C 5), correctly identified as celebrating the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina Minor (figs. 4. 11. 12)²³, fragments of which were also found in room 1²⁴.

Because panels C 4 and C 6 form a triptych with the marriage panel, it has been assumed that the two armored equestrian figures with their horses would be Claudius' natural son Bri-

²¹ Smith 2013, 189, indicates that it was earlier hypothesized that the figures in C 4 and C 6 were »princes as the Diokouroi«. If, as originally supposed, these panels flanked the one with Augustus, then the figures in C 4 and C 6 would likely be Gaius and Lucius, as Smith 2013, 59, suggested as one of the possibilities.

²² Smith 2013, fig. 80 (C 2. C 4. C 6).

²³ Inv. 80-139: Smith 2013, 134–138 (C 5) fig. 85 pls. 52. 53, and fig. 262. For the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina: Tac. ann. 12.5–7. See also Levick 1990, 69; Ginsburg 2006, 17–22; Osgood 2011, 213 f.

²⁴ For the findspots of these relief panels, see Smith 2013, 189 figs. 80 (C 4. C 5. C 6) and 261.



Fig. 12. Detail of Claudius

Fig. 11. Panel C 5. Marriage of Claudius and Agrippina Minor

tannicus and Agrippina's son Nero, whom Claudius adopted in 50²⁵. However, it is unlikely that these two clearly adult and robust-looking figures represent either of these two youths. Unlike Augustus' adopted sons Gaius and Lucius, neither Britannicus nor Nero ever served in the military, even though Nero is sometimes shown wearing a cuirass as *imperator* of the armies after he became emperor. Moreover, Britannicus died shortly before his fourteenth birthday, prior to assuming the *toga virilis*, which marked the transition to manhood, and becoming *princeps iuventutis* (»Leader of the Youth«)²⁶. And although Nero became *princeps iuventutis* in 51 at the age of thirteen, the *principes iuventutis* are shown wearing either togas or tunics and cloaks, not armor²⁷. As we shall see, Britannicus and the young Nero are represented in the »Two Princes« panel (C 19, fig. 24) farther to the right in the imperial relief series, next to the panel (C 18, fig. 21) showing a victorious Claudius.

Far better suited than Britannicus and Nero for representation as the two adult-looking armored equestrian figures on either side of the marriage panel of Claudius and Agrippina

²⁵ So Smith 2013, 134. See also below with n. 89.

²⁶ On the *toga virilis*, especially with regard to Britannicus, see further below with Ov. fast. 3.771–772.

²⁷ *Principes iuventutis* led the Equestrians in the *transvectio equitum*, a parade through the City of Rome on July 15. They did not wear armor, since wearing armor within the Pomerium of the City was forbidden. The *transvectio equitum* is also represented on monuments in the provinces. For the iconography of the participants in the *transvectio equitum*, see Veyne 1960, 100–105. 108–112; Pollini 2012, 429 f. with nn. 104. 105 fig. 9, 21 (relief from Como). For the coin type with togate Gaius and Lucius with their silver shields and spears, marking them out as *principes iuventutis*, see below with n. 173. For a representation of Nero Iulius and Drusus Iulius, the two older brothers of Caligula, as *principes iuventutis* wearing tunics and cloaks on horseback on a Caligulan *dupondius* (A.D. 37–38): RIC I², 111 no. 49 pl. 14; for an excellent enlarged image of this coin type: Kent 1978, 282 no. 169 pl. 49.

Minor would be Drusus Maior (in the panel to the left: figs. 7. 8) and Germanicus (in the panel to the right: figs. 9. 10). Drusus was the father of both Claudius and Germanicus, while Germanicus was not only Claudius' beloved brother but also the father of Agrippina Minor. Both Drusus Maior and Germanicus were celebrated military heroes who died as young men – Drusus Maior at the age of 29; Germanicus, at the age of 33 – and received cult worship, especially in the Greek world²⁸. Although much has been lost at Aphrodisias, a tall base for a statue of Germanicus has been found that may have been set up near or even somewhere within the Sebasteion complex²⁹. Moreover, since Germanicus was Tiberius' adopted son and Drusus Maior was Tiberius' beloved brother, both young men were undoubtedly also once represented in portrait statues in the large dynastic sculptural program of the Tiberian aediculated Propylon of the Sebasteion (fig. 2)³⁰. Most importantly, the representation of Drusus Maior and Germanicus would have served to underscore the relation of Claudius and Agrippina Minor to both Augustus and Livia, who in A.D. 14 was adopted in Augustus' will into the Julian House as Iulia Augusta.

Panel C 2 with Augustus is now correctly located on the upper level of the short east-facing end of the South Building (figs. 3. 4), flanked by two narrower panels. In panel C 1 to the left are images of Aphrodite, a worshiper, and an altar that suffered substantial damage at the hands of Christians in Late Antiquity³¹; in panel C 3 to the right, Augustus' wife Livia, now Iulia Augusta and priestess in the cult of Divus Augustus (Cass. Dio 56.46.1), is shown, assisted by a boy ministrant, sacrificing at an altar most likely to her deified husband, who looks in her direction from panel C 2³². Represented closest to Livia, just around the corner on the

²⁸ For the birth and death of Drusus Maior: Suet. Claud. 1.1. 13; 11.3; for Germanicus: CIL VI, nos. 2028.31; 32347.5; Suet. Cal. 1.2; Tac. ann. 2.69. Although there is sculptural and inscriptional evidence for images of Germanicus at Aphrodisias, no positive identifications have thus far been made there for Drusus Maior, though there is much sculpture at the site that has been damaged or lost. For the portrait bust of Germanicus (inv. 82-99) that was found in the area of the Sebasteion: Smith et al. 2006, 229 f. cat. 109 pls. 84–86; Smith 2013, 69 (S2) pl. 18. For the tall statue base inscribed with his name: Smith et al. 2006, 77 cat. H13 pl. 2; Smith 2013, 62. 64. 69. Cult worship of members of the imperial family in the provinces was unlike official policy at Rome. There is also inscriptional evidence at Aphrodisias for Germanicus' being honored with a festival. On these matters, see Lozano 2007.

²⁹ Unlike the short inscribed statue bases from the Propylon, the tall base of Germanicus and one of his wife Agrippina Maior came from a secondary context, the seventh-century so-called *spolia* wall behind the theatre at Aphrodisias. The inscription for Germanicus (inv. 72-237) indicates that he is the son of Tiberius Augustus (*Sebastos*): Smith 2013, 62 f. (P-base 14) fig. 31 pl. 15. Smith postulates that the tall base of Germanicus, as well as that of his wife Agrippina Maior, who is called the mother of Caligula, and another tall base of the same type of Marcus Lepidus, the brother-in-law of Caligula, may have been set up during the Principate of Caligula around A.D. 38 somewhere in the large area in front of the Sebasteion's Propylon: Smith 2013, 62–64. It is also possible that they were set up in the Caligulan period within the Sebasteion complex itself.

³⁰ For the Tiberian Propylon: Smith 2013, 50–68. For the base of Agrippina Minor (inv. 84-41): Smith 2013, 60 (P-base 9) fig. 26 pl. 15.

³¹ Inv. 80-191. For this panel, see Smith 2013, 46. 126–128 fig. 81 pl. 45. Christians also cut an apotropaic cross in the lower left part of the altar.

³² Smith does not indicate to whom the sacrifice is being made. For Livia's adoption into the Julian house and becoming priestess of Augustus (with representations of her as priestess), see Bartmann 1999, 102–105. For panel C 3: Inv. 80-121: Smith 2013, 131–133 (C 3) fig. 83 pls. 48. 49. The woman in C 3 is described by Smith 2013, figs. .3. 4 as »the Empress (Livia ?)« sacrificing with the assistance of a boy ministrant. However, Smith questions the identity of this figure, indicating that her hairstyle does not conform to that of Livia in her lifetime. Although the bottom part of the female figure's face is missing, it is clearly Livia based on her »Nodusfrisur« with a hair knot over the middle of her forehead and with large wavy hairlocks on either side; for the hairstyles of Livia, see Bartman 1999; Pollini 2005a, 104–111. In this case the hair knot is not distinctly formed but merges into the

north-facing side of the South Building, her son Drusus Maior in panel C 4, as I have proposed, looks back to the left in the direction of his mother, while Germanicus in panel C 6 looks to the right toward the Claudian and Neronian sides of the family farther on in the relief series³³. Since both Drusus Maior and Germanicus were great generals, their appearance here would draw attention to the illustrious martial history of the family of Claudius and Agrippina, especially since Aphrodisias was rather unusual among the cities of Asia Minor in presenting such an extensive sculptural history of the imperial Julio-Claudian dynasty. The representation of Germanicus would have also served to emphasize the bloodline connection to Augustus that was strengthened through Claudius' marriage to his niece Agrippina Minor. These important familial associations were not lost upon the designers of the Sebasteion and were, in fact, highlighted especially in Claudius' gold and silver coinage, which was circulated throughout the Empire. As C. H. V. Sutherland once observed, Claudius began his Principate »without personal or practical experience of imperial administration. However, his lineage stood him in good stead. Son of the great Nero Claudius Drusus [i. e., Drusus Maior], and through him grandson of the revered Livia, wife of Augustus, and related by the marriage of his brother Nero Claudius Germanicus [i. e., Germanicus] to the Julian line, he [i. e., Claudius] combined powerful strands of dynastic power and prestige«³⁴.

Claudius greatly honored his father Drusus Maior and his mother Antonia Minor, who was the niece of Augustus, and soon after his accession held games in the circus in honor of both of them on their birthdays (Cass. Dio 60.5.1). Beginning also in 41 just after Claudius' accession, Drusus Maior's portrait appears on the obverse of a large number of *aurei* and *denarii*³⁵ from the mint of Rome with three different reverse types: 1) a triumphal arch surmounted by an equestrian statue between two trophies, each with seated and bound captives, and a spear in the rider's right hand³⁶; 2) vexillum, shields, spears, and trumpets³⁷; and 3) a seated togate Claudius surrounded by arms³⁸. It is reasonable to expect that these numerous official issues of

wavy locks in a simplification of the type. There is also a row of multiple thin S-locks extending down somewhat over the middle of her forehead. This row of S-locks, an embellishment of her »Nodusfrisus«, represents a variant popular in Asia Minor. Although not to my knowledge commented on in the scholarly literature, the fact that this particular regional hairstyle is not based on a Rome prototype suggests that the model for this subtype was created and distributed on request from some major workshop in Asia Minor, probably Ephesos, the Roman administrative center of the province. For other portrait variants of this type, see those from Ephesos, Marmaris, and even Aphrodisias: Inan – Rosenbaum 1966, 60 f. (no. 11: Marmaris, pl. 7, 3. 4); Inan – Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1979, 61 f. (no. 5: Ephesos, pls. 4, 2; 5, 1. 2; no. 6: Aphrodisias, pl. 5, 3. 4). See also Bartman 1999, 170–173 cat. 58–62. A more finely rendered version of this hairstyle is found in another portrait in-the-round of Livia that was excavated behind the theater of Aphrodisias but belongs to the aediculated Tiberian Propylon, where the base with her inscribed name was found: inv. 72-314; 73-240; 82-101; 82-224F: Smith 2013, 65 f. (P 1: Statue of Julia Sebaste Hera, i. e., Livia) fig. 34 pl. 16. For the statue base: Smith 2013, 58 (P-base 5). 132. This portrait type was probably also used for her cult image that was set up in the Temple of the Sebasteion, as indicated in the temple's dedicatory inscription mentioning her and her son Tiberius: Smith 2013, 30.

³³ Smith 2013, pls. 263–266.

³⁴ RIC I², 114.

³⁵ Sutherland 1976, 115, refers to the »emphatic number of gold and silver issues honouring the memory of Nero Drusus [i. e., Drusus Maior], Claudius' father«.

³⁶ BMCRE I, 178 f. nos. 95–103 pl. 33, 11–14; see also 199* (didrachm from Asia Minor); RIC I², 125 nos. 69–72; 128 no. 98; 129 no. 109; 130 no. 114.

³⁷ BMCRE I, 179 nos. 104–108 pl. 33, 15–17; RIC I², 125 nos. 73. 74 pl. 15, 73. See also BMCRE I, 199 no. 241 (drachm from the mint of Caesarea in Cappadocia).

³⁸ BMCRE I, 186 f. nos. 157–159; 192 f. nos. 208–211a pls. 35, 7; 36, 8; RIC I², 127 no. 93; 129 no. 109; 132 nos. 125. 126 pl. 16, 93.

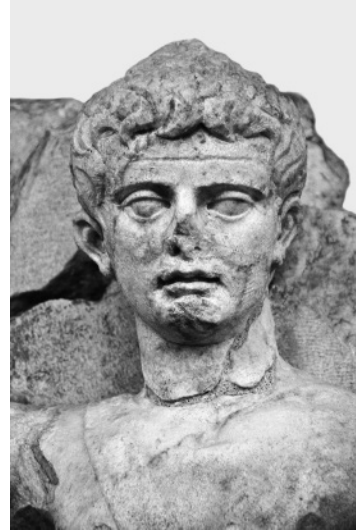


Fig. 14. Detail of Tiberius

Fig. 13. Panel C 16. Tiberius and captive

aurei and *denarii* would have been known at Aphrodisias and would have served to make the point that the great military leader Drusus Maior merited inclusion in the vast sculptural program honoring Claudius' family. From about 50 to 54 Germanicus, too, appears on coinage, following Claudius' marriage to Germanicus' daughter Agrippina Minor³⁹. The representation of Germanicus in armor in a panel next to the marriage scene in a triptych at the beginning of the imperial series on the north-facing facade of the South Building would therefore have drawn attention both to Germanicus' well-known military prowess and to his connection to Agrippina Minor, who was herself the great-great-niece of Augustus.

A rather idealized figure in panel C 16 (figs. 13, 14), farther to the right in the imperial relief series of the South Building⁴⁰, has been difficult to identify, though comparisons with other portraits support the conclusion that this figure, nude save for a cloak and with a bound northern barbarian type by his side, most likely represents Tiberius⁴¹. However, because this figure bears some resemblance to Augustus in facial features and hairstyle and because the fringe

³⁹ Mint of Rome: rare *sestertii* and common bronze issues with the obverse head of Germanicus and the legend GERMANICVS CAESAR TI AVG F DIVI AVG N, referencing Germanicus' relation to both Tiberius (F = son) and Augustus (N = grandson), and a reverse legend with Claudius' titles and SC (*Senatus Consulto*) in the center: BMCRE I, 193 f. nos. 214–218 pl. 37, 2. 9; RIC P, 129 nos. 105. 106. See also the issue of the mint of Antioch (where Germanicus died): RPC I, no. 4281.

⁴⁰ Smith 2013, fig. 264.

⁴¹ Inv. 79-160: Smith 1987, 120–125 no. 8 pls. 18. 19 fig. 9, who originally took this figure to represent »imperator (Tiberius?)«. See, however, Boschung 2002, 196 f. n. 1462, and Smith 2013, 152–154 (C 16) fig. 97 pls. 68. 69, who now takes this to be Tiberius.

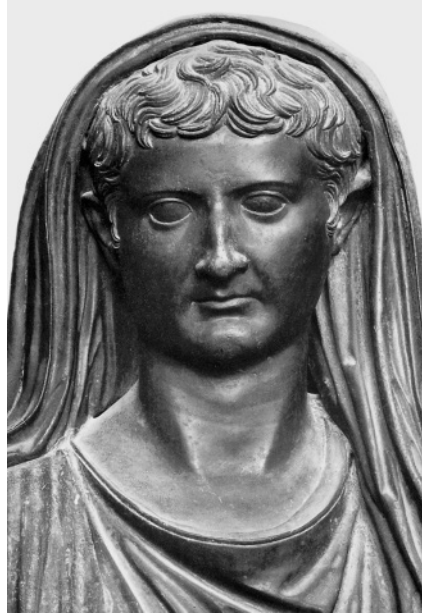


Fig. 15. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples.
Detail of Tiberius from Herculaneum

of locks on his forehead does not follow closely enough one of the established hairstyles of Tiberius, the possibility that this figure represents Augustus has not been ruled out altogether in the principal study of Tiberius' portrait typology⁴². In my opinion, any perceived resemblance to Augustus is very slight and would instead have served to stress that Tiberius was his destined successor as Princeps, since the Principate was not in theory a hereditary monarchy. Any physical resemblance would of course have been fictitious, since Tiberius was not a blood relation of Augustus, but it would nevertheless have suggested at another level that they were very much alike. Though it has not been noted, a particularly close parallel for the figure in panel C 16's hairstyle is provided by a handsome, high quality bronze portrait of Tiberius from Herculaneum (fig. 15), which is a simplified version of his ›Chiaramonti‹ type⁴³. The relief figure and the Herculaneum Tiberius both have hairlocks coming about halfway down the forehead and similar, too, is the formation of the lips. The simplification of hairstyle of

⁴² In his catalog on the portraiture of Tiberius for the series *Das römische Herrscherbild*, Hertel 2013, 214 cat. 171 pl. 131, expresses some doubt about the identity of this figure and the type of hairstyle that he sports. Hertel is of the opinion that this figure is Tiberius but is less certain about which iconographical hairstyle was being represented. He posits that it may be a simplification of Tiberius' ›Basel‹ type, or his ›Copenhagen 623‹ type, or perhaps even his ›Chiaramonti‹ type. However, in his final analysis, Hertel also does not rule out this figure as being Augustus: »Allerdings ist auch nicht ganz auszuschließen, daß hier ein Bildnis des Augustus vorliegt [emphasis in the original].«

⁴³ Pollini 2005b, 67 f. 71 pl. 13, 1. 2. For diverse opinions on the portrait typology of Tiberius, including his ›Chiaramonti‹ type, see especially Boschung 1993a, 56–58; Pollini 2005b; Hertel 2013, 52–68. For the Herculaneum Tiberius, see also recently Risser – Saunders 2017, 61–68 (= <<https://www.getty.edu/publications/artistryinbronze/large-scale-bronzes/7-risser/>> (21.07.2020)).

the Sebasteion figure is in keeping with what we would expect from a non-specialized portrait carver of provincial reliefs.

THE PORTRAITURE OF CLAUDIUS IN THE RELIEF PANELS OF THE SEBASTEION

The imperial figure far to the right in the South Building's relief series (C 29), originally identified as Augustus with billowing mantel passing over personified representations of land and sea⁴⁴, was later correctly recognized as the emperor Claudius on the basis of the hairstyle (figs. 16, 17), which does not reflect – even generally – any of Augustus' three main types and two subtypes⁴⁵. Yet some have continued to regard this figure as Augustus⁴⁶. Although this imagery does recall Augustus's famous boast in his *Res Gestae* (13) that »throughout the entire empire of the Roman people, both on land and sea« he brought »peace through victories« (*per totum imperium populi Romani terra marique ... parva victoriis pax*)⁴⁷, this figure in fact presents Claudius as the »New Augustus« with an imagery that could be understood as a visual translation into stone of the Augustan notion of the Roman leader who as savior and benefactor has also brought »peace through victories« to the Roman World⁴⁸. As such, he is the guarantor of the health and welfare of mankind, also underscored by the panels of Asklepios (C 28) and Hygieia (C 30) on either side of this central panel with Claudius⁴⁹. In the case of the hairstyle of this figure, it most closely resembles Claudius' first official portrait type, known as the »Kassel« type (fig. 18), as represented in a few extant portraits in-the-round, as well as in images on military glass paste *phalerae*⁵⁰. This hairstyle is characterized by a forking of the fringe of locks on the forehead, with the locks then brushed to the left and right from the fork, though in the Sebasteion's image of Claudius the tip of a single hook-like lock at the right temple turns back toward the middle – a difference that probably constitutes a personal artistic touch on the part of the sculptor.

Contributing to the misidentification of this relief image of Claudius as a portrait of Augustus is the provincial style and the fact that the facial features appear more youthful and ide-

⁴⁴ Inv. 79-108: Smith 1987, 104–106 no. 2 pls. 6, 7, 1, 2. See also Rose 1997, 164–166 (cat. 105: no. 1) pl. 199.

⁴⁵ For the portrait typology of Augustus, see above with n. 16. For the figure in this panel as Claudius instead of Augustus, see Boschung 2002, 196 f. with n. 1459, and now Smith 2013, 171–173 (C 29) fig. 110 pls. 88, 89.

⁴⁶ See, e. g., Rose 2015, 790.

⁴⁷ For the *Res Gestae*, see Cooley 2009, 6–22, who includes both the Latin and Greek texts of these inscriptions. The principal inscription was inscribed on bronze tablets located on either side of the entrance to Augustus' grand Mausoleum in Rome. For a new model of his mausoleum with reconstructed pillars bearing the inscribed texts of the *Res Gestae*, see Pollini 2012, 248–256 figs. 5, 33 a–35 pls. 19, 20, 23, 26–28.

⁴⁸ For the Roman notion of »peace through victories«, see in general Pollini 2012, 178–187, and as embodied in the sculptural program of the Ara Pacis, see Pollini 2012, 204, 209 f. 216, 239.

⁴⁹ As plausibly identified by Smith 2013: Asklepios (inv. 79-104): 170 (C 28) fig. 109 pl. 87; Hygieia (inv. 80-68): 173 f. (C 30) fig. 111 pl. 90.

⁵⁰ The line drawings of Claudius' hairstyles in Boschung 1993a, 70 are amended here in fig. 18 to include the names of Claudius' three portrait types. For the so-called Kassel type, see Boschung 1993a, 70 f. (56 Va). See also a veiled head of a youthful Claudius of this same type in the Schloss Fasanerie bei Fulda: von Heintze 1968, 34 f. cat. 24 pls. 39, 116 b; 117 b. For other portraits of this type, including images on the *phalerae*: Boschung 1987, 215 with n. 93. For the bust of Claudius, recut from a portrait of Caligula, in Kassel, see also Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel (inv. Sk 116): Gercke – Zimmermann-Elseify 2007, 230–232 cat. 73 fig. 73, 1–5 (N. Zimmermann-Elseify).



Fig. 17. Detail of Claudius

Fig. 16. Panel C 29.
Claudius over land and sea

alized – as in the case of Augustus throughout his Principate – than in a number of Claudius' other portraits, undoubtedly reflecting a portrait type created before he became Princeps in 41 at 50 years of age. Although Claudius was not in line for succession because of his evident handicaps⁵¹, his portrait images are nevertheless attested in the epigraphical record as early as the Augustan period⁵². When he was made co-consul with Caligula in 37 (Suet. Cal. 15.2), Claudius would have had an official ›Consular‹ portrait type, which appears to have been the ›Kassel‹ type, though it is unknown whether this type antedated his consulship. In any case, this type continued to be used at least initially when Claudius was unexpectedly hailed as Princeps by the Praetorians following the assassination of Caligula in 41. Because Claudius' hold on power at that time was precarious (Ios. ant. Iud. 19.212–263; Suet. Cal. 10; 11.1–2; Cass. Dio 60.1–2.1; 60.3.2–7)⁵³, the last thing on his mind would have been the creation of a new portrait type to celebrate his new position in the State. The initial continuance of the ›Kassel‹ type is, moreover, confirmed by its appearance on Claudius' earliest official coinage as Princeps and by the fact that this type was used for images of Caligula that were recut into those of Claudius when he first became Princeps⁵⁴.

⁵¹ With regard to Claudius' handicaps, see Ferreira Camargo – Afonso Ghizoni 2018, 56 f.

⁵² For this inscriptional evidence, see Boschung 1993a, 70 n. 157. Claudius was represented, e. g., on the Arch of Germanicus in Rome in A.D. 19 when he (Claudius) was 28 years old.

⁵³ See also Levick 1990, 29–39; Osgood 2011, 29–41.

⁵⁴ See, e. g., Boschung 1993a, 70 n. 158; see also Boschung 1987, 215 n. 92 and in general, Varner 2004, esp. 25–30.

The ›Kassel‹ type's presentation of a rather youthful and idealized Claudius would have served a two-fold purpose in the critical and unpredictable period of transition of power right after his accession: First, it would have satisfied the immediate need for a model for the portraits of Claudius that now had to be distributed quickly; second, the somewhat Augustus-like facial features of this type would have helped legitimize Claudius as a Julio-Claudian successor related by blood to Augustus by virtue of being the son of Augustus' niece Antonia Minor. The ›Kassel‹ type therefore presented Claudius as the New Augustus, both figuratively and even literally, in that the *cognomen Augustus* had by now become part of the formal titulature of Julio-Claudian emperors. Also, this Sebasteion panel's visual appropriation for Claudius of the Augustan theme of peace through victories both on land and sea served to equate Claudius' great feat in conquering Britain with Augustus' own military achievements. As we shall see, the subject of the conquest of Britain was underscored in two other panels in the Claudian series from the Sebasteion. The reality, of course, was that despite Claudius' successes in Britain, its actual pacification lay in the future, resulting eventually in Britain's becoming a true Roman province⁵⁵.

In addition to relief C 29 representing Claudius as the New Augustus over land and sea, he is shown in his two later portrait types in other panels from the Sebasteion's imperial relief series on the South Building. Claudius' second portrait type, his ›Haupttypus‹ or ›Accession‹ type (fig. 18), is associated with his consolidation of power as Princeps in 41⁵⁶. He is consequently represented in this type with more mature facial features than in the ›Kassel‹ type in keeping with an image designed to inspire confidence and insure stability, in marked contrast to his immature nephew and predecessor Caligula. The hairstyle of Claudius' new official portrait type (II) intentionally recalls both that of Tiberius as Princeps and that of his own brother, the very popular and beloved Germanicus. At Aphrodisias Claudius is represented in his ›Haupttypus‹ not only in a now fragmentary, colossal, high quality portrait in-the-round, which is likely to have been a cult image of Divus Claudius in the Sebasteion's temple⁵⁷, but also in the panel commemorating his marriage to Agrippina Minor in 49 (figs. 4. 11. 12)⁵⁸. Shown crowning Claudius in this panel (C 5) is a togate, headless figure that is undoubtedly intended to be a youthful, beardless Greek version of the personified Roman Senate (*Theos Synkletos*), who, as we shall see, is also represented in panel C 18. The iconography of this personification differs markedly from the older, bearded type of *Genius Senatus* typically represented in Roman art⁵⁹.

Claudius' third and last portrait type, the ›Turin‹ type (fig. 18)⁶⁰, is attested in panel C 10, in which he appears helmeted and nude, except for a cloak, subduing an already fallen personified Britannia (figs. 19. 20)⁶¹. Though portrait specialists have been uncertain about why

⁵⁵ For the process of Britain's becoming a province, see de la Bédoyère 2014, 38–96.

⁵⁶ For Claudius' second official portrait type (›Haupttypus‹): Boschung 1993a, 70 f. (Vb); Boschung 2002, 196 f. with n. 1465.

⁵⁷ Inv. 71-67 (H 47 cm; W 31 cm): Smith 2013, 69 (S 5) pl. 19.

⁵⁸ Inv. 80-139: Smith 2013, 134–138 (C 5) fig. 85 pls. 52. 53.

⁵⁹ For the iconography of this new youthful *Senatus* type in Asia Minor, see further below with nn. 69. 71.

⁶⁰ For this type, see Fittschen 1977, 57 f. with n. 8 for a list of replicas of this type. See also Boschung 1993a, 71 (58 VC); Boschung 2002, 197 n. 1457.

⁶¹ Inv. 80-137: Smith 2013, 145–147 (C 10) with C-base 12 identifying the figures, fig. 90 pls. 61. 62. 96.

and when this final portrait type was created⁶², panel C 10 provides important evidence about this matter that has been thus far overlooked. Following his victories in Britain in 43, Claudius received from the Roman Senate the honorary *agnomen Britannicus* (»Conqueror of the Britons«) and the right to celebrate a triumph, which he did in the following year. He was also awarded a triumphal arch, the Arch of Claudius, which was set up on the Via Lata in Rome (Cass. Dio 60.22.1) and dedicated in 51 on the occasion of the *decennalia* of his accession⁶³. Like his father Drusus Maior, who was awarded the *agnomen Germanicus* but transferred it to his son, whose *cognomen* it became, Claudius did not take the *agnomen Britannicus* for himself but accepted it instead for his own son (Cass. Dio 60.12.5), who had been born two years earlier in 41 and whose *cognomen* it then became. The conquest of Britain was especially momentous because it had never before been achieved⁶⁴, not even by Julius Caesar, who made two forays into Britain in 55 and 54 B.C. but then precipitously withdrew⁶⁵. This watershed event in Claudius' life and his accrued honors for it would have been more than enough to necessitate the production of a celebratory new portrait type, notwithstanding the fact that Claudius' »Haupttypus« had been created only a couple of years before⁶⁶. Claudius' last portrait type (Type III), the »Turin« type, did not replace his »Haupttypus« (»Accession« = Type II) but coexisted with it throughout the rest of his Principate and after his death and deification in 54.

One other panel (C 18) from the imperial relief series also represents a heroic, semi-nude figure (figs. 21–23) whose correct identification has thus far eluded scholars⁶⁷. He is undoubtedly an emperor because, like Augustus in panel C 2, this individual wears the *corona civica*⁶⁸. The distinctive oak leaves of the crown worn by the figure in panel C 18 are clearly visible, especially on the left side of his head. His facial features are idealized, far more so than in the previously discussed relief panel C 10 showing Claudius subduing Britannia (figs. 19, 20). The imperial figure in panel C 18 has been more difficult to identify because of the degree of idealization of his physiognomic features and the fact that the top of the head, including the central part of the iconographical fringe of hairlocks on the forehead, has broken off. Nevertheless, his idealized facial features resemble those of the heroic nude image of Claudius

⁶² See, e. g., Fittschen 1977, 57 with nn. 8–10, who suggested that this portrait type was probably created to coincide with Nero's first portrait type (ca. 50/51), an opinion followed by Boschung 1993a, 71; Boschung 2002, 189. But as we shall see below, it is more likely that Claudius' final (»Turin«) portrait type served as the model for the earliest portrait type of Britannicus and only later for that of Nero.

⁶³ Fragments of this triumphal arch are now in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome. For the arch and its inscription, as well as associated inscriptions with the names of various members of the imperial family, see Rose 1997, 42, 113–115 cat. 42.

⁶⁴ The initial conquest was actually carried out by Claudius' legate Aulus Plautius, but since the victory was achieved under the *auspicia* of Claudius as supreme *Imperator*, the victory legally redounded to Claudius: Pollini 2012, 85, 230.

⁶⁵ de la Bédoyère 2014, 30–32, 447.

⁶⁶ The creation of a new portrait type for Claudius shortly after a previous one is analogous to the situation with Augustus' fourth (»Louvre MA 1280«) and fifth (»Prima Porta«) portrait types, which were only a few years apart. For these two types, see Boschung 1993b, 27–37, 129 pls. 1, 4; 36, 37, 51, 1 (»Louvre MA 1280«: cat. 44); 38–50, 60–65, 179–181 pls. 1, 5; 69, 70, 82, 1; 148, 1; 213 (»Prima Porta«: cat. 171). See also Pollini 1999, 727–731.

⁶⁷ Inv. 79-126: Smith 1987, 112–115 (no. 5) pls. 12, 13, 1, 2, e. g., first identified the figure in C 18 as an »imperator«, suggesting the possibility of his being either Divus Augustus or Germanicus; cf. Smith 2013, 156–158 (C 18) fig. 99 pls. 72, 73, who now tends to favor a young Nero. However, the preserved face of this figure does not, in my opinion, resemble that of Nero, especially in the optimum view.

⁶⁸ See n. 18 above.

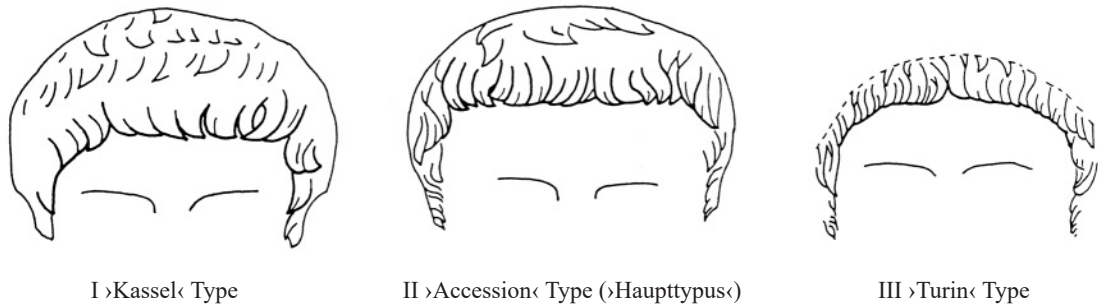


Fig. 18. Portrait types of Claudius

passing over land and sea in panel C 29 (figs. 16. 17) that may have been carved by the same sculptor. Moreover, it is clear that the locks on the left side of the head of the figure in panel C 18 are consistently brushed toward his left ear, while the locks on the right side of his head, which are not as well preserved, appear also to be brushed toward his right ear and probably reflect – as in panel C 10 – Claudius' third portrait type, the ›Turin‹ type (fig. 18).

As already noted in the case of the god-like Augustus in panel C 2 (figs. 5. 6), the *corona civica* marks out the imperial figure in C 18 as »savior of Roman citizenry«, bringer of »peace through victories«, and benefactor of the entire civilized world, the *Oikumene*. Crowning the imperial figure here is a youthful, beardless, bushy-haired togate figure, who is undoubtedly the same personification as the one (now headless) crowning Claudius in panel C 5 celebrating his marriage to Agrippina Minor (figs. 11. 12). Both togate personifications would constitute a Greek version of the *Genius Senatus*, who in the art of the City of Rome is represented differently, as an older bearded togate figure⁶⁹. From the time of Tiberius, the Roman Senate came to play a more important role in the ratification of grants of provincial temples and was even worshiped in these temples, as in the case of Smyrna in Asia Minor with its imperial temple dedicated to Tiberius, his mother Livia, and the Senate⁷⁰. On coins of Smyrna, a draped bust of a youthful, beardless personified Senate (*theos synkletos*) with a full head of hair appears on the obverse with a facing bust of Livia wearing a diadem, while on the reverse is a standing togate Tiberius holding a *simpulum*, or sacrificial ladle⁷¹. The imperial figure in panel C 18 in turn appears to place a helmet, now largely broken away, on a *tropaeum* symbolizing his military victory (fig. 21)⁷².

⁶⁹ See, e. g., recently Pollini 2017, 117 f. figs. 1–4. 12 (no. 8). 15, with further bibliography.

⁷⁰ Burrell 2004, 3 *et passim*.

⁷¹ Klose 1987, 212–214 (XXVI. Livia, Senate, and Tiberius) bottom of pl. 18: V1–V6. top of pl. 19: V7; RPC I, no. 2469; Burrell 2004, 39 pl. 20 fig. 59. For other examples of provincial coinage with this youthful personified Senate, see Smith 2013, 136 n. 37. For the importance of the Roman Senate in the imperial cult in Asia Minor and its worship in provincial temples, see also Burrell 2004, 367–370. Cf. Smith, 2013, 135 f., who leaves open the possibility that this youthful personification may be a representation of a »collective of the Senate and People«, a sort of Demos of the Roman people. However, I think this is unlikely because the *Populus Romanus*, usually represented in Roman art as a youthful nude figure carrying a cornucopia, plays little role – unlike the Senate – in the imperial cult in Asia Minor.

⁷² All that is left of the helmet are the remains of what must have been the cheekpieces. The type of helmet was probably intended to be like that on a trophy borne by a winged Nike/Victoria in another relief panel: inv. 79-131: Smith 2013, 160–162 (C 20) fig. 101 pl. 76.

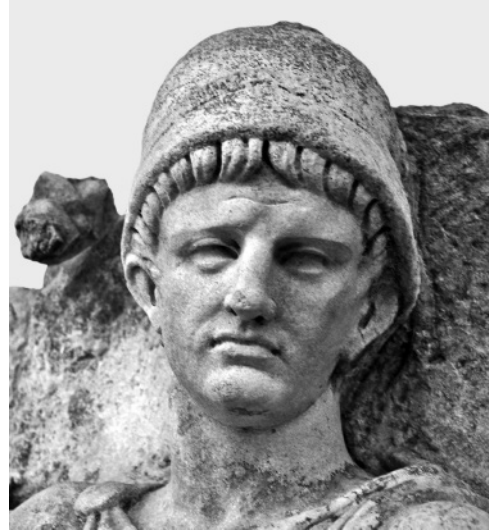


Fig. 20. Detail of Claudius

Fig. 19. Panel C 10. Claudius subduing Britannia

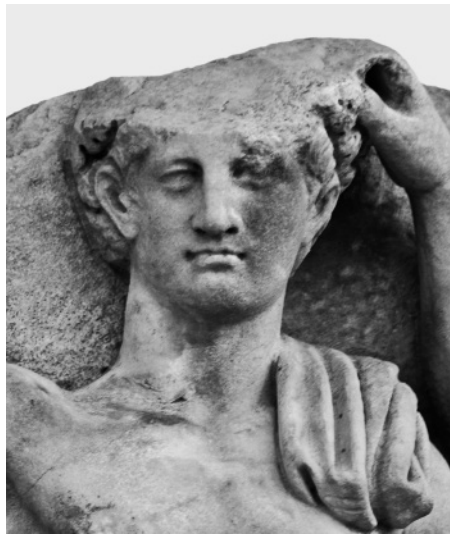
Important for the interpretation of panel C 18 is the kneeling figure beneath the trophy. It has not previously been pointed out that she resembles so closely the female figure in the panel showing Claudius subduing Britannia (C 10, fig. 19) that she is clearly intended to personify the same defeated region, only here she is no longer being actively struck down but is now a captive with hands bound behind her back. Furthermore, exactly like the dejected personified Britannia in panel C 10, she has long hair and appears like an Amazonian figure, wearing an *exomis* with one breast exposed, as well as long pants, the ultimate symbol of barbarian dress – here specifically of the barbarian Celtic inhabitants of Britain. Being represented wearing both an *exomis* and pants, she is an example of the conflation of Greco-Roman and barbarian elements in a personified figure⁷³. Although not commented on in other studies, all the other captive figures in the extant imperial relief panels of the Sebasteion are represented in different ethnic costumes than the personified female in this panel (C 18, fig. 21) and in the one showing Claudius actively subduing Britannia (C 10, fig. 19). Because these two personifications are represented in essentially the same way, they further support the identification of the imperial figure in panel C 18 as Claudius, now finally victorious over Britannia (figs. 21–23).

To the left of C 18 is a narrower panel (C 17) showing a personified Virtus crowning a figure that is usually identified as the goddess Aphrodite wearing a heavy laurel crown, but who

⁷³ Cf., e. g., the unique figure of the Romanized syncretistic Celtic god Cobannus with Greco-Roman aspects – totally idealized facial features, Alexander-like *anastole* hairdo, Greek style *chlamys* over a long-sleeved tunic and long barbarian pants, and a Roman legionary helmet of the Niederbieber type on his head; for this figure, see Pollini 2002, 7–10 figs. 27–40.



Fig. 21. Panel C 18. Claudius crowned by personified Senate with Britannia conquered



Figs. 22 and 23. Details of Claudius

might instead be the City of Aphrodisias personified⁷⁴. Although personified city goddesses typically wear a mural crown, this attribute may have been omitted either because of the lack

⁷⁴ Inv. 79-120: Smith 2013, 154–156 (C 17) fig. 98 pls. 70. 71. Smith identifies the Amazon-like figure here as Roma (?), who in the Julio-Claudian period wears a long *chiton*, not the girded up, double-belted *chiton* of Andreia/Virtus. See also Tabelaing 2020, 238–241 fig. 101, who takes this figure to be Andreia. In panel C 24, Roma is instead shown wearing armor: Smith 2013, fig. 105 pls. 80. 81.

of room in the panel for this type of tall crown or to distinguish her from the cult image of Aphrodite of Aphrodisias in panel C 1 (fig. 4)⁷⁵. On the other side of C 18 is another narrow panel (C 19) referred to as the ›Two Princes‹ relief (fig. 24), which is one of the most interesting and problematic panels in the imperial series in terms of portraiture and the attributes of globe and *aplustre/aphlaston* held by the figure to the left (A) in the scene (figs. 25. 26)⁷⁶. Like many other Sebasteion male figures, both youths in this panel are shown heroically nude except for their cloaks. Together, these three panels (C 17. 18. 19) formed a triptych over room 6, where three bases (bases C 19. 20. 21) that bear no inscriptions were found in close proximity to them⁷⁷.

In the initial publication of the ›Two Princes‹ relief, it was suggested that the heroic-looking youths might be Gaius and Lucius Caesar⁷⁸, the two grandsons of Augustus, whom he adopted in 17 B.C. and who died in early manhood⁷⁹. However, the facial features and hair-styles of the figures in C 19 do not agree in any way with those of either Gaius or Lucius⁸⁰. Moreover, by the time of the actual construction of the North and South Buildings of the Sebasteion, both youths were long dead and of no importance in the dynastic politics of the later Julio-Claudian period. It would therefore be unlikely for them to have been included in the Claudian-Neronian relief series of the South Building, though their statues had been set up in the earlier Julio-Claudian period in the Tiberian aediculated Propylon based on the discovery there of inscribed statue bases for them⁸¹. Of the various pairs of other potential successors of the Julio-Claudian house, only Britannicus and Nero make sense in terms of the youthful appearance, portraiture, and attributes of the two figures in C 19. The apparent age of the two in this panel is unhelpful in differentiating them because of the High Classical manner in which their heroized body types are rendered⁸². Further complicating the question of which figure is Britannicus and which is Nero is that most scholars have over the years followed Ulrich

⁷⁵ The cult image of Aphrodite is usually represented wearing a cocoon-like ›overtunic‹ (*ependetes*) and a tall mural crown circled with a wreath, probably of myrtle rather than laurel. A number of these cultic images of Aphrodite were found at Aphrodisias and elsewhere. See in general Brody 2007. As is evident from the many innovative figural representations in this relief series, a personified city with a laurel crown might be an example of the same sort of iconographical flexibility that we see elsewhere in the Sebasteion, as, e.g., in the representation of the Greek version of the Genius of the Senate in panels C 5 (representing the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina Minor: fig. 11 with n. 59) and C 18.

⁷⁶ Inv. 79-118: Smith 2013, 158–160 (C 19) fig. 100 pls. 74. 75.

⁷⁷ Smith 2013, 183 fig. 264 pl. 97, 131 (C-base 19). 132 (C-base 20). 133 (C-base 21).

⁷⁸ So Smith 1987, 123–125 no. 9 pls. 20. 21, who originally favored Gaius and Lucius after considering the various pairs of possible Julio-Claudian youths. At that time, he concluded (p. 124) that »it is not possible to tell whether we have a pair of generic, invented Julio-Claudian portraits, or simplified versions of defined but idealized types«. Cf. Smith 2013, where he considers Britannicus and Nero but still favors Gaius and Lucius, although indicating that their hairstyles are problematic. See also Rose 1997, 71 f. 164–166 (cat. 105: no. 8) pl. 205, who correctly identifies this panel as representing Britannicus and Nero, but considers the figure on the left (A) holding the globe to be Nero, and the figure on the right (B) to be Britannicus, while I have concluded the reverse of these identification: see below with nn. 194–203.

⁷⁹ Lucius died in A.D. 2 at the age of about 18; Gaius in A.D. 4 at the age of about 23. For the dates of their births, see Pollini 1987, 1 n. 1 (Gaius) and n. 2 (Lucius). For the evidence for their life and careers, see also Pollini 1987, 1–5.

⁸⁰ For the portraiture of Gaius and Lucius, see Pollini 1987; Boschung 1993a, 53 f.

⁸¹ For the statue bases of Gaius and Lucius, see Smith 2013, 58 f. (P-base 6) fig. 23 pl. 14 (Gaius); (P-base 7) fig. 24 pl. 14 (Lucius).

⁸² Cf., e.g., the representation of Eros as a very young boy with well-developed musculature in the east frieze of the Parthenon: Brommer 1979, 106 pl. 6.



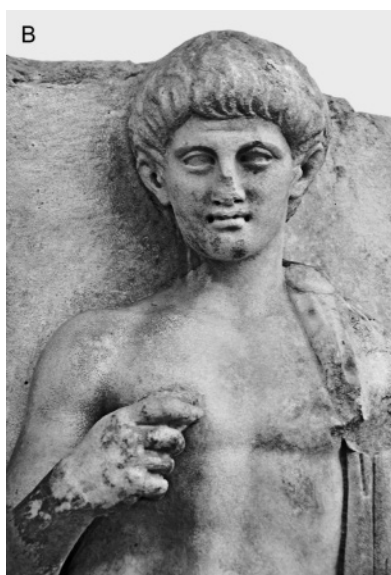
Fig. 24. Panel C 19. Britannicus (A) and Nero (B)

Hiesinger's fundamental 1975 study of the portraiture of Nero⁸³, which only very cursorily considered the portraiture of Britannicus and did not ask an important question: Where are at least some of the images in-the-round of Britannicus that both the numismatic and epigraphic record attests were set up early on throughout the Roman Empire? Correctly identifying the childhood portraits of the many young members of the Julio-Claudian family has proven to be especially difficult not only because so much evidence from the classical past is missing or fragmentary but also because those being promoted as possible successors were often shown with similar hairstyles and with familial physiognomic characteristics that were emphasized or even exaggerated. The notion of *qualis pater, talis filius* is certainly applicable in the case of both Britannicus and Nero. Therefore, a reconsideration of the portraiture of Britannicus in relation to images of the young Nero is long overdue and merited before returning to the ›Two Princes‹ relief panel of the Sebasteion.

⁸³ For Nero's portraiture in general, see also Jucker 1981, 284–309; Bergmann – Zanker 1981, 321 f.; Fittschen – Zanker 1985, 17–19; Born – Stemmer 1996, 70–92; Rose 1997, 297 s. v. Nero; Boschung 2002, 218 s. v. Nero; Varner 2004, 46–85, especially for recutting Nero's portraits into those of other imperial figures or removing his images, as well as in some cases rehabilitating his memory.



Figs. 25 and 26. Details of Britannicus (A) in fig. 24



Figs. 27 and 28. Details of Nero (B) in fig. 24

THE PORTRAITURE OF BRITANNICUS AND THE YOUNG NERO

Britannicus was born Tiberius Claudius Caesar Germanicus to Claudius and Valeria Messalina on February 12 in 41⁸⁴, less than a month after his father's accession as Princeps. Britannicus' earliest extant sculptural image is probably as an infant being held in his mother's

⁸⁴ Suet. Claud. 27.1; see also Osgood 2011, 207.

arm in a statue in the Louvre⁸⁵. Based on the size of this infant (with a head that is a modern restoration), Britannicus would be about four to five months old in this sculpture⁸⁶. The earliest identifiable portrait of him as other than an infant is a marble head, possibly from a relief⁸⁷, in the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Villa portraying a child who is about four to five years old (figs. 29–31)⁸⁸, far younger than Nero was when he first came into prominence following his adoption by Claudius at the age of twelve on February 25 in A.D. 50 (Tac. ann. 12.25.1)⁸⁹. That the Getty child is a very important member of the imperial house is made clear by the *corona civica* that he wears. There is no evidence that this crown was ever officially bestowed upon Britannicus or any other young family member in the early imperial period, including even Gaius and Lucius Caesar, who were declared *principes iuventutis* but are not represented either officially or non-officially/private wearing this crown⁹⁰. The Getty head in fact constitutes the earliest example known to me of a child wearing the *corona civica* as an imperial symbol, which to this point had been worn only by the Princes, beginning with Augustus in panel C 2 (e. g., figs. 5, 6), as a badge of honor as the savior of the entire Roman citizenry (*ob cives servatos*)⁹¹. In the case of Britannicus, his representation with the *corona civica* would serve as a reference to his status as a future savior, like Augustus and his own father Claudius,

⁸⁵ Inv. 1224: de Kersauson 1986, 200 f. cat. 94; Wood 2000, 276–279 figs. 123–125.

⁸⁶ Although the statue itself could date anywhere from Britannicus' birth to his mother Messalina's downfall, death, and damnation in 48, this statue would more logically have been commissioned when Britannicus was an infant, since otherwise he would have been shown as an older child.

⁸⁷ Along the left jawline are traces of a rounded, slightly flaring-out beveled edge (not visible in photos) that, together with the unfinished upper back of the head (raw stone) and the break below, suggest that this may have been part of a high relief. In that case, the head would have been turned toward its left side and looked down, like several heads in the Sebasteion reliefs. Cf. also the downcast head of Gaius in the north processional frieze of the Ara Pacis, which was set relatively high on the precinct wall of the altar: Simon 1967, pls. 2, 1; 16, 1; 23 (Gaius); Pollini 1987, 96 cat. 4 pl. 6, 2–4. Although larger, the Getty head is also stylistically not unlike some of the heads in the Claudian Smaller Cancellaria (>Vicomagistri<) Reliefs in Rome; for this relief, see Pollini 2012, 309–368. The less careful manner of carving of the Getty head would also be consistent with its being from a relief.

⁸⁸ Inv. 82.A.A. (H. 20.3 cm). I tentatively identified this head as Britannicus in an exhibition catalog on select portraits from the Getty Museum: Pollini 1990, 30 f. with n. 7 cat. 9 (with E. Engle). Except for this special exhibition and first publication, the head has been in storage in the Getty Museum and not mentioned in any later publication. Consequentially, it did not figure in Hiesinger's 1975 study of the portraiture of Nero or in Boschung's 2002 book. Other portraits have sometimes been taken as representing Britannicus as a baby or a very young boy, though they are somewhat problematic because very young children are more difficult to identify with confidence. See, e. g., Amedick 1991, 375–378; see also Wood 2000, 284. After I had received proofs of this article, my colleague Matteo Cadario brought to my attention an article he had recently written about a togate statue of a young boy in Luna (Carrara) marble that had been discovered north of the Capitolium in the Forum of ancient Luna (modern Luni). I thank him for his generously providing me with the proofs of his article. This statue's fragmentary head (found in 1970) and body (found in 1972) have been rejoined. The boy wears the *toga praetexta* of a child, a large *bulla* around his neck, and a ring on his left hand, presumably the gold ring of the senatorial and equestrian classes. The statue probably once came from a basilica located near the Capitolium and was part of a Julio-Claudian dynastic group, datable stylistically to the time of Claudius. For various reasons, Cadario suggests that the statue might represent »Britannicus (?)«. Although the head is fragmentary, with only parts of the hair preserved and lacking the fringe of locks over the forehead, the facial features, especially the weak chin, make it virtually certain, in my opinion, that this is a portrait statue of Britannicus as a child, based on a comparison of the facial features and the similar age of the Getty Britannicus. For the statue from Luni, see Cadario 2021.

⁸⁹ Nero was born on December 15 in A.D. 37: Smallwood 1967, 21 (Acta Fratrum Arvalium 55–60); Suet. Nero 6.1. See further Barrett 1996, 234.

⁹⁰ See Pollini 1987, 20, 37, 52, 83, 90, 92. For the *principes iuventutis* beginning with Gaius and Lucius and in later imperial propaganda, see also Pollini 2012, 423–444.

⁹¹ See above with n. 18 for the discussion of Augustus and the *corona civica*.

both of whom are represented wearing the civic crown in the sculptural relief program of the Sebasteion⁹².

Further confirming the identification of the Getty head as Britannicus is that the hairstyle and particularly the facial features compare well with Claudius' portraiture, especially his third ›Turin‹ type (fig. 18). As in that type, the hair of the Getty child is brushed continuously to either side of the head from a fork in or near the middle of the fringe of locks on the forehead, though in the case of the Getty portrait the forehead locks are longer than in Claudius' ›Turin‹ type. In terms of physiognomy, the Getty head shares with Claudius a triangular face, recessive lower lip, and relatively small chin. In fact, Tacitus notes in a passage in his *Annals* (12.68), that Agrippina said to Britannicus, when he was about thirteen years old, that he was the very image of his father (*veram paterni oris effigiem*). Her reported comment supposedly took place just after the death of Claudius in 54, when Agrippina is said to have detained Britannicus in a room in the palace so that her son Nero could exit the palace gates to be hailed as *Imperator* by the Praetorians. Notwithstanding the strong familial resemblances in the portraits of the Julio-Claudians, we should of course allow for exaggeration in Agrippina's purported remark to Britannicus, especially in view of the context in which she supposedly said it.

It is unfortunate that the Getty portrait of Britannicus is not well known, having never been on public display at the Getty Villa and not published until 1990 in a small exhibition. In his 1993 typological study of members of the Julio-Claudian family, Dietrich Boschung identified as a boyhood portrait of Britannicus a head from Ercavica, now in the Cuenca Museum in Spain (hence the ›Cuenca‹ type), which he also saw in the head of Britannicus as an infant on glass paste *phalerae* that were awarded to soldiers and thus functioned like today's military medals⁹³. These *phalerae* are dated to the outset of Claudius' Principate and show Claudius' head in frontal view, sporting his ›Kassel‹ type hairstyle (fig. 18). Arranged in a circular fashion around his head on the *phalerae* are very small heads of his three children. However, because of their size and the simplification of their facial features and hairstyles, these images are not particularly useful iconographically. In any case, Boschung has given up the ›Cuenca‹ type as representing Britannicus and has now identified the portrait from Ercavica in the Cuenca Museum as a boyhood image of Gaius Caesar⁹⁴.

Another little known portrait, in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève (figs. 32–34)⁹⁵, represents in a better quality work the same child as the Getty head, also wearing the *corona civica*, but at a slightly older age. As in the Getty sculpture and Claudius' portraiture, the face of the Geneva head is somewhat triangular; his lower lip is recessive; and his chin, though now partially gone, would not have been large. The fringe of locks of the Geneva portrait is somewhat higher on the forehead than in the Getty head and forms a slight arch with a peak where the hair forks, characteristics that are also seen in Claudius' ›Turin‹ type related to his victory over Britain – an appropriate association in a portrait of his son, whose very name celebrates that military achievement. The prototypes for the Getty and Geneva portraits would

⁹² See Augustus in panel C 2 (here figs. 5, 6) and Claudius in C 5 (here figs. 11, 12) and in C 18 (here figs. 21–23).

⁹³ For this ›Cuenca‹ type (= ›Béziers-Split‹ type), see Boschung 1993a, 74 f. (65 Ya); for the head on the *phalerae*: Boschung 1987, 213–218, 248–253 cat. 35–42.

⁹⁴ See Boschung 2002, 135 no. 56.1; 186 f. with n. 1342.

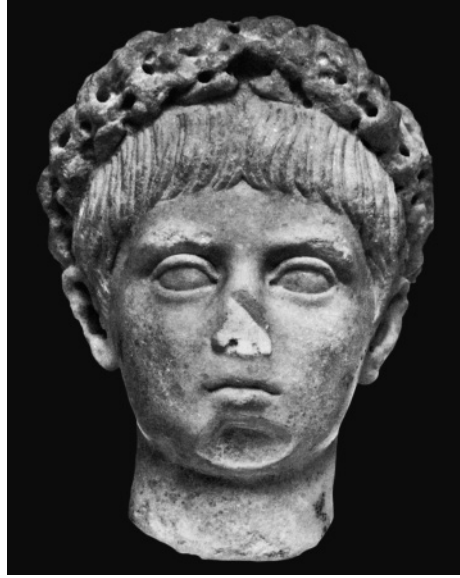
⁹⁵ Inv. C 186: Chamay – Maier 1989, 10 pls. 18, 19 (misidentified as Nero); Pollini 1990, 30 with n. 10. This head is not mentioned by Hiesinger in his 1975 study of the portraiture of Nero (and Britannicus), although it has been known since 1901.



Figs. 29–31. J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Portrait of Britannicus

not have been represented with such a crown, since official models did not include attributes. The child in both the Getty and Geneva heads also appears in two statues commonly misidentified as a young Nero. One of these statues, from an imperial cult shrine in Velleia (modern Velleia), is now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Parma (figs. 35. 37–40)⁹⁶, while the

⁹⁶ Inv. 826: Saletti 1968, 49–52. 91 f. 122 f. pls. 35–38; Hiesinger 1975, 115 f. fig. 29 (Nero); Jucker 1977, 205 f. 211 f. 238 (Nero); Rose 1997, 121–126 pls. 133. 150. 151 (Nero); and Boschung 2002, 26 no. 2, 10 pls. 19, 1. 3; 20, 1 (Nero), with further bibliography. The dedicator of this imperial shrine was either some prominent local aristocrat or may even have been a member of the Roman nobility who had some connection with Velleia. The latter may have been L. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 15 B.C.), who appears among statues of the imperial family in the basilica at Velleia, probably because he was a patron of the town. For the statue of Piso from the basilica at Velleia, see Boschung 2002, 25 no. 2.3; 32 f. pls. 13, 2; 15, 1.



Figs. 32–34. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève. Portrait of Britannicus

other, from Antium (modern Anzio), is in the Louvre (figs. 36. 41–43)⁹⁷. With a hairstyle very similar to that of the Getty head and especially of the Geneva portrait, the boy represented in these two statues wears around his neck the *bulla*⁹⁸ that children put aside when they donned

⁹⁷ Inv. Ma 1210: Hiesinger 1975, 115 f. figs. 25–27 (Nero); de Kersauson 1986, 210 f. cat. 99 (Nero). The statue, which was part of the Borghese Collection and was catalogued by de Kersauson as being of »unknown provenance«, has been recently identified as coming from the area of the »Imperial Villa« at Antium: See further Cellini 2019, 32. 84 f. (II.1.1.b.3), fig. 1 (I thank Matteo Cadario for bringing this reference to my attention).

⁹⁸ For the *bulla* in Roman art and culture, see Goette 1986, esp. 143–151.



Fig. 35. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma.
Statue of Britannicus from Velleia

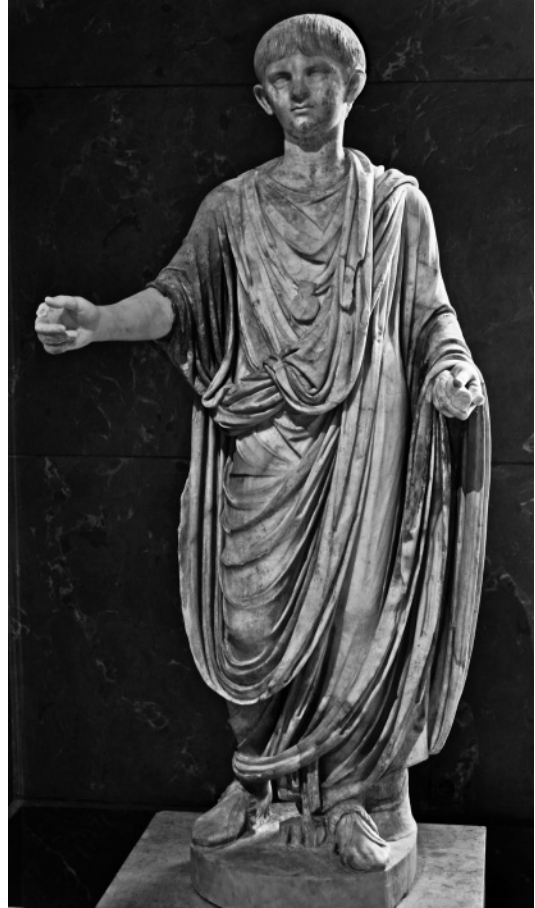


Fig. 36. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
Statue of Britannicus

the *toga virilis*. This event, marking the passage from boyhood to manhood, usually took place between the ages of 14 and 16 in a ceremony that traditionally occurred at the festival of the *Liberalia* on March 17 (Ov. fast. 3.771–772).

The Parma statue is of particular significance because it clearly represents a boy about seven to eight years old, which was Britannicus' age in 48–49. Confirmation of the Parma boy's age is provided by his height in relation to the adult figures around him in the Velleia group (fig. 37)⁹⁹, a relative size that compares very closely with that of Gaius at the age of seven in the north processional frieze of the Ara Pacis¹⁰⁰. When Nero was seven years old in 44–45, significantly before his mother's marriage to Claudius in 49 and his own adoption the follow-

⁹⁹ Compare the size of the statue of the boy with that of Agrippina Minor (probably transformed from an image of Messalina) to the left: Rose 1997, pl. 133.

¹⁰⁰ For Gaius in the Ara Pacis frieze: Pollini 1987, 24–28. 42 pl. 6, 2 no. 37. Cf. also, e. g., the other children displayed in the north and south processional friezes of the Ara Pacis: 21–28, esp. 23 (the chart of heights of the children represented). The designer of the Ara Pacis friezes would probably have used some artistic scale in determining the size of the children in relation to the size of the adults represented in the same scene.



Fig. 37. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma.

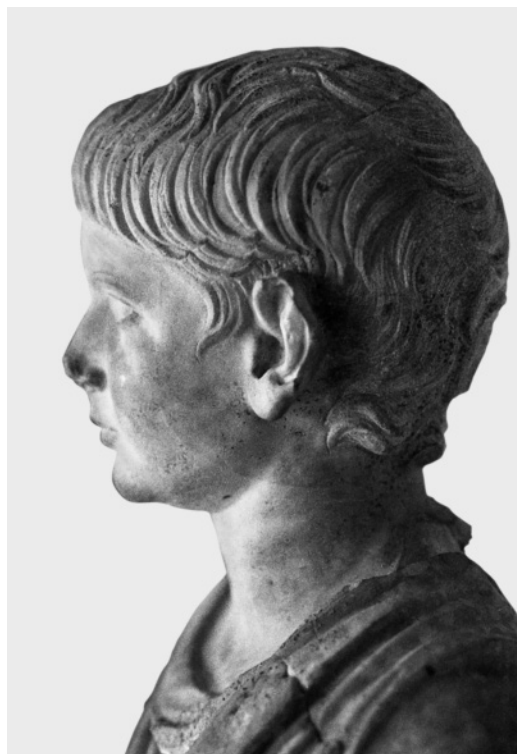
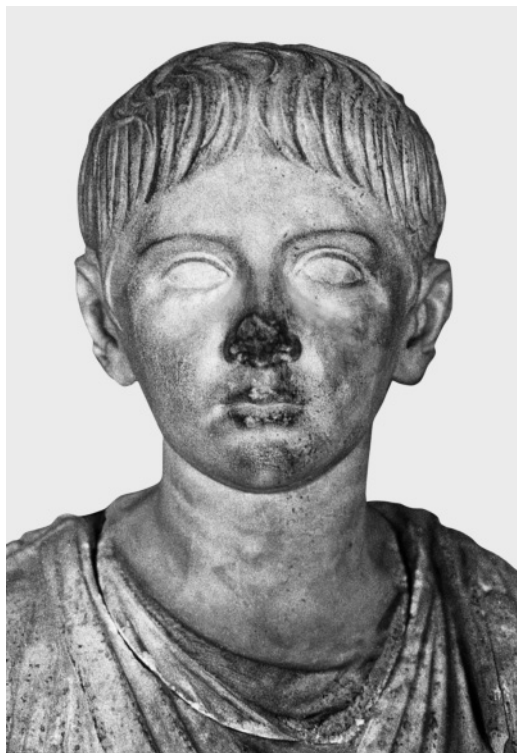
Statues of Agrippina Minor (previously Messalina) and Britannicus from Velleia

ing year, he did not matter at all dynastically, so his statue at that age would not have been included in the Velleia cult shrine. By contrast, there would have been an important reason to add the Parma portrait of a seven to eight year old Britannicus to the pre-existing sculptural group there. Up until the age of seven a boy in Roman law was technically considered to be an *infans*¹⁰¹. It was at seven in 13 B.C. that Gaius participated for the first time in the *Ludi Troiani*, the same age that Britannicus in 48 also took part in the Troy Games (Tac. ann. 11.11)¹⁰². In both cases, this formal introduction to public life may have prompted the creation of their early official portrait types¹⁰³. It would have been at this time that Britannicus' portrait

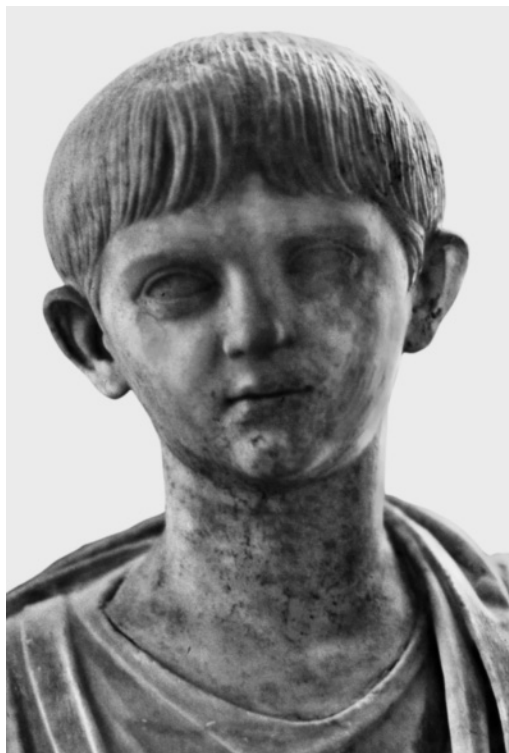
¹⁰¹ Smith et al. 1890, 999 f. This concept is not unlike that of the Roman Catholic Church, which maintains that at seven a child has reached the 'age of reason' and so is ready for the First Communion ceremony.

¹⁰² Tacitus also mentions that in 48 Nero (then known by his pre-adoption name of Lucius Domitius) took part in the same Troy Games as Britannicus, along with other boys of the Roman nobility. At that time Nero was ten years of age.

¹⁰³ For the first portrait type of Gaius at about age seven, see Pollini 1987, 42–44. 89 pls. 3–5, as well as pl. 6, 2–4 specifically for his representation in the south frieze of the Ara Pacis.



Figs. 38–40. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma. Details of fig. 35



Figs. 41–43. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Details of fig. 36

statue was added to the Velleia group¹⁰⁴. This group already included an image of Claudius, whose head replaced that of Caligula¹⁰⁵, and a statue that is very likely to have originally represented Messalina that was altered to become an image of Agrippina Minor after Messalina's execution in 48 and Claudius' marriage to Agrippina in 49¹⁰⁶. The fact that other portraits in the Velleia group are variously reworked or replaced is not significant in assessing the statue of the boy because, as Eric Varner points out, such difference may simply reflect the fact that this childhood portrait »had been created *ex novo* in the Claudian period, whereas the Claudius and Agrippina Minor have been reworked from pre-existing images of Caligula and Messalina«¹⁰⁷. Whether a statue of the young Nero was also added to the group at some point after his adoption by Claudius in 50 is unknown, but if it had been – as is likely – it was probably removed from view following the damnation of his memory, an event that prompted the head of the later cuirassed statue of Nero as emperor in this same statuary group to be reworked first into a Domitian and finally into a Nerva¹⁰⁸.

Unaware of both the Getty and Geneva portraits, Hiesinger did not explore in greater depth the possibility that the Parma and Louvre statues might be portraits of Britannicus rather than Nero, especially since they both represent a boy who is younger than Nero was when he was adopted by Claudius in 50 at the age of twelve and first began to matter dynastically. In fact, the only possible extant sculptural image of Nero in the period between his adoption and his donning of the *toga virilis* in the following year would be one of the two headless togate statues of boys wearing large *bullae*¹⁰⁹ that were found together with a somewhat taller statue of a girl wearing a *toga praetexta* over her long dress¹¹⁰ in the S. W. corner of an *Augustalium*, or imperial cult shrine of the College of the local *Augustales*, in the Forum at Rusellae (modern

¹⁰⁴ Some have seen the head of this portrait statue as not belonging to the togate body, which was supposedly from another statue and into which the tenon of the present head was set. However, there is no clear evidence that this head is a replacement, as Boschung 2002, 33 no. 2.10 has noted. Perhaps part of the reason for thinking that the present head replaced a previous one is that part of the drapery of the tunic is carved onto the lower front part of the neck (here figs. 35, 38). However, the fit of a head into a statue body is not always perfect because those who specialized in carving portrait heads for insertion into mortises would probably not have also carved the body of the statue. The oddity here may be the result of some flaw in the stone around the top front edge of the statue body, since flaws in the interior of blocks of stone were generally not discovered until the carving progressed close to the final finished surface, at which time alterations would have to be made, including using marble dust stucco to fill any interstices. This could explain the lack of hem of the tunic on the upper front part of the body, for which reason the upper part of the tunic was carved as part of the lower front part of the neck. If the tenon were somewhat irregular and left any gap, it could have been filled in with marble dust stucco.

¹⁰⁵ See Boschung 2002, 26 no. 2.9; 33 pls. 17, 2; 18, 4.

¹⁰⁶ With Messalina's downfall, her name and many of her images, both in public and private, were removed, according to Tacitus (ann. 11.38). For this reused statue from Velleia, see Boschung 2002, 26 no. 2.11; 33 pls. 19, 2, 4; 20, 2; Varner 2004, 258 no. 3.4.

¹⁰⁷ Varner 2004, 79 n. 293, who assumed, however, that this was a portrait of Nero.

¹⁰⁸ For this statue, see Boschung 2002, 26 no. 2.12; 33 pl. 21, 1–3; Varner 2004, 263 f. no. 5.13.

¹⁰⁹ See Boschung 2002, 70 nos. 20.15; 20.16 with additional bibliography.

¹¹⁰ Her dress can be seen (under her toga) falling over her shoes onto the plinth between her legs and at the back of the statue. Unlike the two boys, she does not wear a *bulia*, the protective amulet worn by males. Boschung 2002, 70 no. 20.11, however, took this figure to be a »Kindertogatus«, not a girl. Cf. Goette 1990, 36, 80, who rightly considered her to be a girl, as well as Rose 1997, 118. As we know from some literary references and representations in Roman art, girls are sometimes shown wearing the *toga praetexta*, probably on more formal occasions, as in the case of little Julia Minor in the processional frieze on the north side of the precinct wall of the Ara Pacis. For Julia Minor wearing a *toga praetexta* on the Ara Pacis, see Pollini 1987, 23 f.; Goette 1990, 80 pl. 70, 2, and for other girls wearing the toga, see further Goette 1990, 80–82, 158 f.; Olson 2008a, 144 figs. 6, 1–5; Olson 2008b, 15, 17.

Roselle)¹¹¹. Along with a number of other portrait statues of adult members of the imperial house, they are now in the Museo Archeologico e d'Arte della Maremma in Grosseto¹¹². Because the female figure is identifiable from her surviving portrait head as Claudius' daughter Claudia Octavia¹¹³, the two togate boys wearing *bullae* are undoubtedly her natural brother Britannicus and her stepbrother Nero. In fact, one of the surviving inscriptions references a statue of Britannicus from the *Augustalium* that was set up by Aulus Vicirius, the *flamen Augustalis* of the cult¹¹⁴. In addition, the fact that both headless statues are almost the same height at the shoulders would be an implied acknowledgment of Britannicus' greater importance, especially in the time before the older Nero gave up the *bulla* of childhood and donned the *toga virilis* in 51. The historical circumstances therefore indicate that these three statues of the children of Claudius were either set up together, or Nero's image was added to a pre-existing group already containing statues of Britannicus and Octavia. In either case, Nero's portrait would have been included only after he was adopted in 50 and, because of the *bulla*, definitely before he assumed the manly toga in the following year¹¹⁵.

When Nero donned the *toga virilis* in 51, he also received a number of other honors, including becoming *princeps iuventutis* and being designated consul five years before he could hold that office, as well as receiving *proconsulare imperium* outside of Rome¹¹⁶. In addition, there was at that time a donative given in his name to the military (*donativum militi*) and largess to the plebs (*congiarium plebei*) (Tac. ann. 12.41.1). In celebration of these honors, Nero is represented for the first time on the official coinage (*aurei* and *denarii*) of the mint of Rome, with the initial issue probably beginning in 51 in connection with the payments to the troops and to the urban plebs. In two issues he appears on the obverse, with the reverse noting that he was *princeps iuventu-*

¹¹¹ For an excavation photo of the findspot of the three figures, see Laviosa 1971, 598 (24) fig. 12, and for a more updated assessment of the site and its finds, see more recently Romanò 2013, with plans (fig. 1, 2). For a legible plan of the Forum of Rusellae and the location of the *Augustalium* (no. 3), see Boschung 2002, 73 fig. 13.

¹¹² For the statues from the *Augustalium*, as well as from the Basilica and an apsidal building north of the Forum, see Boschung 2002, 70–76 fig. 13, with further bibliography.

¹¹³ Octavia's hairstyle is somewhat boyish-looking, except for long locks extending to the nape of her neck. Her locks are brushed consistently to each side from a fork in the fringe of locks over the inner corner of her left eye, not unlike the fringe of locks over the middle of the forehead of her brother Britannicus. Her portrait features are strongly Julio-Claudian, and this hairstyle is found in other portraits of the same girl; cf., e. g., one in the Museo Civico di Storia ed Arte in Trieste (inv. 2176); another in a Spanish private collection: Amedick 1991, 378–380 pls. 99, 100 (respectively). A superb portrait of her at a younger age is from the unusual *triclinium-nymphaeum* in a sunken part of the imperial villa of Claudius at Baiae (modern Baia) at Punta Epitaffio: Amedick 1991, 378 f. pl. 98. For the *triclinium-nymphaeum* and its statuary: B. Andreae and F. Zevi in: Tocco Sciarelli 1983 and more recently Miniero 2000, 78–82 (P. Caputo). 82–89 (P. A. Gianfrotta). 90–102 (F. Zevi). The Rusellae togate girl is also identified as Claudia Octavia by Rose 1997, 118.

¹¹⁴ See Saladino 1980, 232 no. 25. It should be noted that this inscription is not from the Basilica (pace Rose 1997, 118) facing onto the Forum of Rusellae, but from what is described as the *Augustalium*: Saladino 1980, 215 f. (i. e., »edificio non si accedeva direttamente dal Foro«); see also Romanò 2013, figs. 1, 2. The dedication was made in connection with a vow taken by the dedicant, a military tribune, who served in Claudius' British campaign of 43. The Britannicus inscription reads as follows: [e]x voto suscepto | [p]ro salute Ti(beri) Claudi Caesaris | Aug(usti) f(ili) Britannici, | A(ulus) Vicirius A(uli) f(ili) Proculus | tr(ibunus) Mil(itum), flamen [A]ugustalis | posu[it].

¹¹⁵ Cf. below with n. 136 for the addition of a statue of Nero to a pre-existing statue group of Claudius' children at Troy.

¹¹⁶ i. e., extra urbem (Tac. ann. 12.41.1). According to Osgood 2011, 232, the goal of these honors »was to suggest that Nero was ready – or would be soon – to be emperor, not to state explicitly that a boy would inherit the throne«.



Fig. 44. Silver drachm of Britannicus
from Pontus (rev.), A.D. 55–56



Fig. 45. Aes of Britannicus
from Aegeae (rev.), A.D. 53–54

*tis*¹¹⁷ or, alternately, referencing his supernumerary priesthoods by depicting their symbols¹¹⁸. In another issue a bust of Agrippina is on the obverse and a bust of Nero on the reverse¹¹⁹, while a fourth issue has an obverse bust of Claudius and a reverse bust of Nero¹²⁰. In both of those issues the reverse bears a legend with Nero's full name and the title *princeps iuventutis*. Unlike Nero, Britannicus was not honored with any official state coinage minted in Rome because he died in 55, shortly before he was scheduled to receive his *toga virilis*, at which time – had Claudius not died the year before – Britannicus, too, would have undoubtedly received the same honors as Nero¹²¹. But, as we shall see below, Britannicus was represented from an early age on many provincial numismatic issues and in sculptural images, as indicated in the epigraphic record. After Britannicus' death, there would have been no reason for his portraits to be destroyed or removed from public view, since his memory was never damned. In fact, extant bases for an imperial statuary group set up between 63 and 65 in the city of Amisos (modern Samsun) in Pontus on the Black Sea indicate that a statue of Britannicus, then dead for at least eight years, was placed on display here along with those of Nero and his second wife Poppaea¹²².

Part of the difficulty in confirming Britannicus' portraiture has been that his provincial numismatic images are generally crude and/or badly worn¹²³. There are, however, coin portraits of Britannicus that were unknown to Hiesinger¹²⁴ that are in very good or better condition

¹¹⁷ BMCRE I, 177 nos. 90–94 pl. 33, 9, 10; RIC I², 125 nos. 78, 79; 129 no. 108 pl. 15, 79.

¹¹⁸ BMCRE 176 nos. 84–89 pl. 33, 6–8; RIC I², 125 nos. 76, 77; 129 no. 107 pls. 15, 77; 17, 107; Levick 1990, 72 f. fig. 29.

¹¹⁹ BMCRE I, 176 nos. 82, 83 pl. 33, 5; RIC I², 125 no. 75 pl. 15, 75.

¹²⁰ BMCRE I, 175 nos. 79–81 pl. 33, 3, 4; RIC I², 126 nos. 82, 83 pl. 15, 82; Hiesinger 1975, 113 f. fig. 2.

¹²¹ It is often said that Britannicus' portrait appeared on official Roman SC coinage under Titus, his boyhood friend, but this supposed 'restoration' issue, with the head of Britannicus on the obverse and the figure of Mars on the reverse (BMCRE II, 293 no. 306 pl. 57, 1), was most likely produced in Thrace when it became a province under Claudius. Since some of these coins were modern forgeries, the authenticity of all of them was questioned, for which reason they were not included in RPC I, 319. However, see further below nn. 141, 142.

¹²² For this group of statue bases, see Rose 1997, 48, 161 cat. 98; Boschung 2002, 157 (I-no. 76).

¹²³ Hiesinger 1975, 116 n. 15.

¹²⁴ Hiesinger 1975, 116, indicated that the provincial coin images of Britannicus known to him then did not agree with the Parma and Louvre portraits, and so he focused instead on ways in which Nero's images at an older age compared with the two boyhood statues.



Fig. 46. Aureus of Nero (obv.), A.D. 51–54

and agree favorably with the Geneva, Louvre, and Parma portraits. These numismatic images represent Britannicus at an older age but are likely based on the same portrait type. In particularly good condition is a silver drachm with the portrait head of Britannicus that was issued by Polemo II, King of Pontus, around the time of Britannicus' death in 55, just before he turned fourteen. On the obverse of this coin is the head of Polemo II wearing a diadem; on the reverse is Britannicus, facing right and crowned with a laurel wreath (fig. 44)¹²⁵, with the fringe of locks on his forehead angling down slightly and brushed continuously to the right side of the head and locks at the nape of the neck turning up towards the ear¹²⁶. Also very similar to Britannicus' image on the Polemo II coin and in the Geneva, Louvre, and Parma portraits are his facial features and hairstyle on an issue from Aegeae bearing his name and datable to 53/54 when he was 12 to 13 years old (fig. 45)¹²⁷.

Physiognomically, a distinctive difference between Britannicus and Nero is the size of the nose: Nero's nose tends to be larger and often with a cartilaginous dorsal hump on it, as in a very fine official Roman state *aureus* issued between 51 and 54 (fig. 46)¹²⁸. As we shall see,

¹²⁵ See also RPC I, no. 3837. This coin image of Britannicus has sometimes been wrongly identified as Nero. This coin type was probably produced just prior to Britannicus' death and would have continued to circulate afterwards as a sort of memorial issue for the natural son of Divus Claudius.

¹²⁶ These characteristics are also visible in other provincial bronze coin images of Britannicus, the majority of which are not as well preserved as the silver drachm of Polemo II. For some of the better examples of these bronze coins, see RPC I, nos. 2041, 2371, 2915 and esp. 1914. Although his facial features in this last example are rather stylized, the pattern of hair strands is clearly rendered like that on Polemo II's silver drachm.

¹²⁷ Leu Numismatik AG. Auction 2. 11 May 2018 (Winterthur, Switzerland); RPC I, no. 4045.

¹²⁸ For another excellent example of this same issue showing the dorsal hump, see Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett (Rö 5453): <<https://www.ikmk.at/object?lang=en&id=ID57563>> (07.08.2020). For Nero's portraiture in general in the period 51–54, see, e. g., Hiesinger 1975, 113 f. fig. 2 (Coin Type I); RIC I², 125 no. 78; Kent 1978, no. 188, 54.

this is also true of his portraits in-the-round¹²⁹. By contrast, the well-made and well-preserved coin portraits of Britannicus datable to the period 53–55 show a nose that is smaller and straighter. Nero's face also tends to be fleshier and his chin more prominent than that of Britannicus. Since the boy in the Parma and Louvre statues is the same child as in the Getty and Geneva heads, both of whom wear the *corona civica*, all four portraits are to be identified as Britannicus, not Nero, who was clearly older than the boy represented in all of these images at the time of Nero's first prominence in 50 and 51, when he was 12 to 13 years of age.

No images of Nero are attested epigraphically prior to his adoption in 50, and in the case of at least one inscription that probably dates to about that time, Britannicus' name is placed before that of Nero, as is customary in distinguishing who was regarded as more prominent¹³⁰. In addition, there is evidence for a good number of images of Britannicus as a young boy having been set up publicly in the Empire perhaps as early as 43/44, based on an inscription at Arneae in Lycia (Turkey), when he would have been only two to three years old. In that statue group he was represented with his father Claudius (as »god manifest«) and his birth mother Messalina¹³¹. And as noted above, Britannicus was probably represented already as an infant of four to five months being held by his mother in a statue in the Louvre. A monument to Claudius and Britannicus at Aizanoi (Aezani) in Phrygia is datable to the period 43–50, since there is no mention of Nero in the inscription¹³². The same is true of an inscription at Akmonia, also in Phrygia, referring to Britannicus as the son of the new Zeus¹³³, and in the Forum of Corinth for a statue base for images of Britannicus and Claudius in the period 45 to 54¹³⁴. In addition, there are inscriptions for images of Britannicus, Nero, and other members of the imperial family for a monument near the Arch of Claudius on the Via Lata in Rome that was probably dedicated in 51¹³⁵.

Particularly interesting is the epigraphical evidence for the addition of Nero's portrait statue to a pre-existing group of imperial images at Ilium (Troy) honoring Claudia Antonia, Claudia Octavia, and Britannicus¹³⁶. Antonia, the daughter of Claudius and his second wife Aelia Paetina, was born some time in the period 27–29¹³⁷, while Octavia was born to Messalina in

¹²⁹ Cf. below, e.g., the Syracuse and Terme sculptural portraits of Nero (here figs. 47–51) that were likely created soon after his accession in 54. For the Syracuse portrait: Hiesinger 1975, 115–118 fig. 32; for the Terme head, inv. 616: Hiesinger 1975, 115–119 figs. 37, 38.

¹³⁰ ILS 220 (inscription from the Grove of Diana Nemorensis near Aricia). See also Barrett 1996, 221 no. 12.

¹³¹ Smallwood 1967, 51 no. 136; Rose 1996, 170 f. cat. 108; Boschung 2002, 157 (I-no. 65). This inscription is usually dated between 44 (the year that Britannicus supposedly received his *cognomen*) and 48 (the execution of Messalina). However, it could date as early as 43, the year when Claudius was offered the title by the Senate and was voted an arch in Rome and in Gaul: Cass. Dio 60.22.1. It is not clear if he immediately refused the title for himself, awarding it instead to his son at that time or in the next year, when he celebrated his triumph in Rome: Cass. Dio 60.12.5. Cf. Germanicus, who was also represented publicly when he was only two years old in the south processional frieze of the Ara Pacis; for his date of birth (May 24, 15 B.C.): CIL VI, 28028.31, and for his representation in the frieze, referring to an event of 13 B.C., see Pollini 1987, 23 f. pl. 6 (no. 36).

¹³² IGR 4.559; Smallwood 1967, 50 no. 134; Rose 1997, 237 n. 35; Højte 2005, 311 no. 110.

¹³³ Smallwood 1967, 51 no. 138; Rose 1997, 41.

¹³⁴ Boschung 2002, 66, 157 (I-no. 68).

¹³⁵ Rose 1997, 42, 113–115 cat. 42.

¹³⁶ Smallwood 1967, 44 f. no. 101; Rose 1997, 178 f. cat. 120 pl. 216. Cf. Boschung 2002, 157 (I-no. 72). See also Osgood 2011, 226.

¹³⁷ According to Barrett 1996, 78, Octavia was born no later than 29; according to Wood 2000, 321, her birth was in 27.

39 or 40, a year or two before Britannicus¹³⁸. The statues of Claudius' three children were set up at Troy on a single base that survives with their names nicely inscribed in Greek below where each of their images would have stood. Britannicus' statue was initially at the end on the right, but with only part of his name remaining on the original base. A short section of another base, which was added to the right side of the original base, included the missing part of Britannicus' original inscription, as well as a new inscription for Nero, whose statue would have been added at that time to the pre-existing three-figure group. The careless carving of the inscription for Nero on the second block is an indication that it was done in haste. Two possibilities stand out as the reason for the inclusion of Nero's image – either to honor him as Claudius' newly adopted son in 50 or in recognition of Nero's speech in the Senate in 53 in support of Troy¹³⁹. The latter occasion seems on the whole more likely, since Nero is specifically singled out in the inscription as »kinsman of the city«. A three-year interval between Nero's adoption and the addition of his statue would suggest that he was not necessarily perceived here as Claudius' destined successor simply by virtual of having been adopted, since Claudius' natural son Britannicus was still alive then and would himself soon reach maturity. But whether or not Nero's statue was set up on this base as early as 50, it is clear that he was of no importance prior to that time. Aside from the absence of evidence for any datable sculptural images prior to his adoption¹⁴⁰, he also does not appear before then on the coinage of Rome or the provinces.

Although Britannicus was not represented at all on official state coinage produced by the mint of Rome because he died before donning the *toga virilis* indicative of having reached manhood, he does appear on official SC coinage probably minted in Thrace, which became a Roman province under Claudius¹⁴¹. A particularly fine example of one of these *sestertii*, dated to 50–54 and used to pay the Roman civil service and legionaries in that region, has an obverse portrait of a very adult-looking Britannicus at a time when he was only between the ages of 9 and 13¹⁴². His facial features on this coin are not just inappropriate for his age but very much like those of his father Claudius¹⁴³, indicating that the mint that produced this coin type simply used as a model the features of Claudius, whom he was presumed to resemble.

¹³⁸ Messalina married Claudius in 38. That Octavia was slightly older than Britannicus is indicated by her representation as slightly taller than he is on a silver didrachm from Caesarea in Cappadocia, with each of the figures labeled: BMCRE I, 199 no. 242 pl. 34, 8; RIC I², 132 no. 124 pl. 17, 124; RPC I, no. 3627. She is also shown as slightly taller in the imperial Julio-Claudian statue group from Rusellae discussed above with nn. 110, 113.

¹³⁹ See Tac. ann. 12.58.1 (for the date of 53 for this speech). Cf. Suet. Claud. 25.3 and Nero 7.2. See also Rose 1997, 239 n. 80; Osgood 2011, 226.

¹⁴⁰ For Nero's pre-Principate images, whether known through inscriptions or the images themselves, see Højte 2005, 232 no. 16; 238 f. nos. 53, 56; 295 no. 5; 312 no. 115; 315 no. 132; 319 nos. 1, 2, 6, 7; 320 no. 8; 324 f. nos. 33, 37; 325 nos. 40, 42; 326 nos. 45; 327 nos. 49, 51.

¹⁴¹ See von Kaenel 1984, 131 (B5: fig. 5). 137–141, 146–149, who thoroughly researched these Britannicus coins, as well as SC coins of Agrippina Minor and the young Nero from the Balkans, and convincingly demonstrated that they were most likely issued in the newly created province of Thrace under Claudius. That Claudius does not also appear on this SC coinage is irrelevant, since his image was on gold and silver coins that would have also circulated in that region.

¹⁴² See Pangerl 2017, 50 fig. 100. I thank Dr. Andreas Pangerl of the Bavarian Numismatic Association for his discussion with me about this coin type, which he considers to be genuine (correspondence: November 19–20, 2020). He also concurs with von Kaenel's conclusions about the authenticity of much of this coinage and about the probability that it came from the province of Thrace.

¹⁴³ Cf., e.g., a particularly close correspondence between this numismatic image of Britannicus and a portrait of Claudius on a *cistophoros* from Ephesos in Pangerl 2017, 54 fig. 104.

Britannicus also appears on a number of non-official provincial issues undoubtedly to honor him as the son of the Princeps and as his potential successor. Many of the provincial issues, however, are unfortunately of rather poor quality, being worn and/or with generalized facial features, so that they qualify as little more than symbolic portraits. Like the SC coinage from Thrace, these non-official provincial images also show Britannicus with adult-like features. These obviously invented numismatic portraits are found, for example, on the obverse of coins from Aegeae in Cilicia (in 43–48, when he was only two to six years old)¹⁴⁴, Nicaea in Bithynia (47–48, at age six to seven)¹⁴⁵, Caesarea in Cappadocia (48, at age seven)¹⁴⁶, and Nicomedia (47–49, at age six to eight)¹⁴⁷.

At least some of the issues produced around the time Britannicus turned seven (though without his accurate portrait image) may have been prompted by his having arrived at this important age, marked by his participation for the first time in the Troy Games (*Ludi Troiani*)¹⁴⁸. His head also appears on the obverse of issues with reverse images of his sister Octavia and half-sister Antonia as facing busts¹⁴⁹ or standing figures¹⁵⁰. Britannicus himself is shown standing between his taller older sisters (all clearly identified by legends next to their images) on the reverse of a fine silver didrachm of Caesarea, on the obverse of which is a bust of Messalina¹⁵¹. A statue group like this may have been set up at Caesarea, as they were at Troy and in other places in the Empire. The two statuette-like figures being held by Messalina on the reverse of tetradrachms of Alexandria, datable from 41 to 46, may also have been meant to refer to her own two children, Britannicus and Octavia¹⁵². On silver didrachms from Alexandria, datable to 42/43, as well as copper coins minted in the same period at Patras (Achaia), the head of Claudius appears on the obverse, while on the reverse is a small profile head of Britannicus in the middle of two crossed *cornucopiae* topped with small profile heads of Octavia and Antonia¹⁵³. Britannicus' importance from a very early age is made particularly clear by his appearance on coins on which his father is represented, as Claudius is on the obverse of coins of Troy (in perhaps 41–42), while the head of Britannicus is on the reverse¹⁵⁴. Such coinage clearly reflects the perception of the provincial minting authority that Britannicus is Claudius' destined successor¹⁵⁵. Of unknown date are issues from Caesarea Paneas with an obverse head of Claudius and a reverse head of Britannicus¹⁵⁶, as well as from Alabanda with

¹⁴⁴ RPC I, no. 2431 (standing Zeus on the reverse).

¹⁴⁵ RPC I, nos. 2039. 2041.

¹⁴⁶ RPC I, no. 3656.

¹⁴⁷ RPC I, nos. 2075. 2077. 2077A.

¹⁴⁸ See above with nn. 100–102 for the importance of the age of seven and the Troy Games, marking the entry of Gaius and Britannicus into public life.

¹⁴⁹ RPC I, no. 2248 (an undated coin of particularly poor quality from Cyzicus).

¹⁵⁰ RPC I, no. 3656 (from Caesarea in Cappadocia, datable to 48).

¹⁵¹ RPC I, no. 3627. See also Rose 1997, 41 pl. 32; Wood 2000, 282 fig. 120; Osgood 2011, 207 fig. 45. Britannicus holds the hand of Octavia, who stands to the left.

¹⁵² RPC I, nos. 5113–5116. 5131. 5132. 5145. 5146. 5162–5165.

¹⁵³ RPC I, nos. 5135 (Alexandria). 1255 (Patras); Lichocka 2013, 428–431 figs. 1 (Alexandria). 2 (Patras).

¹⁵⁴ RPC I, no. 2314. See also the staters from the Kingdom of the Bosphorus that in all probability also have Claudius on the obverse and Britannicus on the reverse: RPC I, nos. 1912 (A.D. 45). 1914 (A.D. 49).

¹⁵⁵ Claudius was clearly delighted with the birth of his son, whom Suetonius (Claud. 27) reports he would hold in his arms and display to the soldiers, as well as to the people at the games. Britannicus' birthday was also celebrated by the praetors: Cass. Dio 60.17.9. See further Cass. Dio 60.34.1 about Claudius' continued affection for Britannicus and his supposed plan to declare him his heir after Britannicus had donned the *toga virilis*.

¹⁵⁶ RPC I, no. 4843.

obverse facing busts of Claudius and Britannicus¹⁵⁷. Among the undated provincial coins on which Britannicus – but not Nero – is represented are other issues from Alabanda, Apamea, Caesarea Paneas, Clazomene, Cyzicus, Hierapolis, the Kingdom of the Bosphorus, Laodicea ad Lyceum, and Tomis¹⁵⁸.

By contrast with Britannicus, Nero does not appear at all on provincial coinage before his adoption in 50¹⁵⁹ or more importantly before his donning of the *toga virilis* in 51, officially marking his becoming a man and entering political life. In 50/51, both boys appear together for the first time as standing figures on the reverse of bronze coins of Corinth, the Roman administrative center of Achaëa¹⁶⁰. The head of Claudius is on the obverse of some of these coins; the head of Agrippina Minor (facing either right or left) on the obverse of the others. Both Nero and Britannicus are represented about the same size, though Britannicus was then 9 to 10 years old and Nero 12 to 13¹⁶¹. In better preserved examples of the issue with Agrippina on the obverse, Britannicus and Nero each appear to hold a small globe in the right hand, which would suggest a level of equality¹⁶². However, when obverse and reverse portraits of Britannicus and Nero are represented on the same provincial issue, Britannicus' head appears on the obverse, the side of priority, while Nero's is on the reverse, as we find on the coinage of Pergamum (dated broadly to 50–54)¹⁶³ and of Sinope (dated more closely to 54)¹⁶⁴. Also at Sinope, in obverse jugate portraits on coins datable to 51/52, Britannicus' head is placed in front of Nero's¹⁶⁵. By comparison with Britannicus, the earliest provincial coin with only Nero represented is a *cistophorus* from a mint in Asia Minor (either Pergamon or Ephesos) with his bust on the obverse and a shield on the reverse with the inscription *consul designatus* and *princeps iuventutis*¹⁶⁶, honors that Nero received in 51 (Tac. ann. 12.41). Other provincial issues showing Nero but not Britannicus come from Antioch, Cidrama, Elaea, Ephesos, Hierapolis, Laodicea ad Lycum, Mostene, Philomelium, Sestus, and Thyatira¹⁶⁷ in the period

¹⁵⁷ RPC I, no. 2819.

¹⁵⁸ RPC I, nos. 2818. 2820. 2821 (Alabanda). 3135 (Apamea). 4844 (Caesarea Paneas). 2502. 2503 (Clazomene). 2248 (Cyzicus). 2971 (Hierapolis). 1926 (Kingdom of the Bosphorus). 2915 (Laodicea ad Lyceum). 1834 (Tomis).

¹⁵⁹ A leaded bronze issue from Ephesos dated to 49/50 bears an obverse bust without any identifying inscription but with facial features more like those of Britannicus than Nero: RPC I, no. 2625.

¹⁶⁰ RPC I, no. 1182 (with obv. head of Claudius); 1183–1184 (with obv. head of Agrippina).

¹⁶¹ Nero was born on December 15 in A.D. 37 (Suet. Nero 6.1). See also n. 89 above.

¹⁶² The globes are discernible in only a few examples of this generally badly worn issue: Amandry 1986, pl. 31 (Rb2. Rg2. Ri2. Rbb). Among the best representations of this issue are RPC I, no. 1184; Amandry 1988, 73 no. 2 pl. 31; Rose 1997, 43 pl. 33; Osgood 2011, 232 fig. 55.

¹⁶³ RPC I, no. 2371.

¹⁶⁴ RPC I, no. 2135, with the date indicated as 54/(55). At one time this leaded bronze issue was thought to come from Hippo Diarrhytus in Africa, but the discovery of a better preserved example established that it definitely came from Sinope; see Amandry 1986, 72–74 pl. 5 a. b. Cf. a coin of 54 from Judaea (RPC I, no. 4971) on which neither Britannicus nor Nero is represented, but with an obverse legend with Nero's name and a reverse one with Britannicus' name; for this coin, see further Jacobson 2019, 87 f.

¹⁶⁵ RPC I, no. 2132. Cf. Jessop Price 1971, 125 no. 8, with incomplete information about the obverse legend of this issue, based on what was a newly found coin at the time of the publication of his article.

¹⁶⁶ BMCRE I, 198 no. 236 pl. 34, 5 (Ephesos, 51?); RIC I², 131 no. 121 pl. 17, 121 (Pergamon, undated); Giard 1988, II 114 no. 307 pl. 31, 307 (Pergamon, undated); RPC I, no. 2225 (Ephesos, 51). See also Sutherland 1951, 144 f. pl. 13, 3.

¹⁶⁷ RPC I, nos. 4169–4171 (Antioch). 2879 (Cidrama). 2403 and 2404 (Elaea). 2625 (Ephesos). 2972 (Hierapolis). 2916 (Laodicea ad Lycum). 2462 (Mostene). 3248 (Philomelium). 1744 (Sestus). 2381 (Thyatira). See also RPC I, nos. 1952. 1956 for two undated issues of Thrace and Bithynia referencing Nero as *princeps iuventutis*.

from 51 to 54 or 50 to 54 (if there is no legend or inscription referencing the honors accorded Nero in 51), while an issue from Magnesia ad Sipylum appears to date more closely to 54¹⁶⁸.

Although some have assumed that Nero's appearance on the official coinage of Rome between 51 and 54 is an indication that the older Nero was being marked out then as Claudius' sole successor, there is no evidence for any verbal or written declaration by Claudius that Nero alone was to succeed him. It may, in fact, be more likely that he intended Britannicus and Nero to become co-*Principes*/co-*Augusti* if both proved to be capable¹⁶⁹. We find such an arrangement later when Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus shared power as co-*Augusti*, as Hadrian had intended, while eight years after the death of Verus in 169, Marcus Aurelius made his son Commodus co-*Augustus*¹⁷⁰. As in the case of Marcus Aurelius, Nero – in joint governance with the younger Britannicus – would probably have been the senior partner, with Nero presumably becoming *Pontifex Maximus* and having greater *auctoritas*. In any case, there was no pressing need for Claudius to make a decision about the succession when the boys were still young and untried. At the time that Claudius died under suspicious circumstances, he was 63 years old, long before the age at which senior members of his family had died – Augustus at nearly 76, Tiberius at 77, and Livia at 86. It therefore seems likely that Claudius would not have been anticipating his own imminent demise, with associated urgency about who his successor/s should be. In this regard, Claudius may have been following the example of Augustus, who himself did not make any formal declaration about a sole heir and may in fact have considered a dual heir system of succession, as did Tiberius after him¹⁷¹. Augustus, after all, had promoted both Gaius and Lucius equally as each advanced in age: Gaius donned the *toga virilis* and became *consul designatus*, *princeps iuventutis*, and *pontifex* in 5 B.C. at age 15; Lucius donned the *toga virilis* and became *consul designatus*, *princeps iuventutis*, and *augur* in 2 B.C., when he too reached the age of 15¹⁷². Beginning also in 2 B.C., both boys were celebrated on official state coinage of the ›Crossed Shields‹ type, on which they were represented with the silver shields and lances that they received from the Equestrians¹⁷³.

There was no reason for Claudius not to follow a model that the divine Augustus had established and to honor Britannicus in the same ways that Nero had been honored once Britannicus donned the *toga virilis*. There is, however, one notable difference between the Augustan and Claudian approach – Gaius' multiple honors were advertised on official coinage (the ›Crossed Shields‹ type of 2 B.C.) only after Lucius had received his own honors, but those of Nero were commemorated without delay. This departure from Augustan precedent suggests the hand of Agrippina Minor behind the scenes, though only time would tell who would eventually succeed Claudius. Because of the youth of both Britannicus and Nero, no

¹⁶⁸ RPC I, no. 2456 (A.D. 54?).

¹⁶⁹ Osgood 2011, 226 f. believed that the recognition that Nero was getting was largely due to his being older and – unlike Britannicus – to his having already donned the manly toga; cf. Bradley 1978, 54–56 and Levick 1990, 71–78, who point out the likelihood of Claudius' considering joint succession of Nero and Britannicus.

¹⁷⁰ OCD⁴, 210f s. v. Aurelius, Marcus.

¹⁷¹ For the dual heir system: Pollini 2012, 420–445.

¹⁷² For Gaius and Lucius and their role in Augustus' program, see Pollini 1987, esp. 1–5. For the various honors received by Gaius and Lucius in 5 and 2 B.C.: 52 (Gaius). 83 (Lucius). See also Cooley 2009, esp. 161–167.

¹⁷³ In the ›Crossed Shields‹ type, the portrait head of Augustus is on the obverse; standing figures of Gaius and Lucius, on the reverse. The symbols of their religious offices were shown next to their heads: the *simpulum* (ladle) of the pontifical college next to the head of Gaius; the *lituus* (augur's staff) next to the head of Lucius. For this coin type, see MacDonald 1978/1979; RIC P, 28. 55 f. nos. 205–215 pl. 4; Giard 1988, I 9. 18. 52 (nos. 226–229) pl. 66; Cooley 2009, 166 f. fig. 19; Pollini 2012, 428 f. 432 pl. 39.

one knew what their political abilities and potential for leadership would be, or what role Fate would play in their lives. Augustus, after all, initially pinned his hopes on his nephew Marcellus' succeeding him, but Marcellus died in 23 B.C. at the age of about 19 (Cass. Dio 53.30.4)¹⁷⁴. Gaius and Lucius also died as young men (Lucius in A.D. 2 at the age of about 18; Gaius in A.D. 4 at the age of about 23)¹⁷⁵. Since the Principate was not in theory a hereditary monarchy, as Tacitus acknowledged (ann. 1.9), there is no reason to assume that Gaius was intended to succeed Augustus as sole Princeps just because he was the older son. After all, before the establishment of the Principate, the two highest political positions in the State were held by consuls who were co-equal in power. And if Gaius and Lucius, who were both designated *principes iuventutis*, had proved themselves to be equally competent and not died prematurely, both might have become co-*Principes*/co-*Augusti* after Augustus' death. This at least is what Augustus appears to have intended when he wrote a personal letter to Gaius, cited by Aulus Gellius (15.7.3), in which he states that it was his hope that Gaius and his brother Lucius would both play their part as honest men and prepare themselves to succeed to his [Augustus'] position (ἀνδραγαθούντων ὑμῶν καὶ διαδεχομένων *stationem meam*).

Suggesting that Claudius might have intended or at least considered dual succession for Nero and Britannicus is his last meeting with the Senate before his death. At that time, Claudius urged Britannicus and Nero to get along with one another and earnestly commended them both, in their youth, to the Senators (Suet. Claud. 46)¹⁷⁶. In his will, which was never made public and was destroyed shortly after Nero came to power, Claudius may not have designated either Britannicus or Nero as his sole successor, which would have disadvantaged Nero as the elder of the two and would have been a likely reason for the will's destruction¹⁷⁷. The suppression of the will was probably due to Agrippina's goal of promoting her natural son Nero over Britannicus, who had his own supporters, even among the prefects of the Praetorian

¹⁷⁴ Marcellus was also honored in Verg. Aen. 6.860–885.

¹⁷⁵ For the deaths of Gaius and Lucius, see above n. 79. After the death of Gaius, Augustus adopted in A.D. 4 his grandson Agrippa Postumus, along with his mature and well-seasoned stepson Tiberius: Suet. Aug. 65; Tac. ann. 1.3; Cass. Dio 55.13.1a–2. That temperament, stability, and leadership qualities played a key role in who would succeed Augustus was borne out by his removal of Postumus as a potential successor because of the youth's growing intemperance and even violent behavior, leaving only Tiberius, with whom Augustus had a rather rocky relationship, as the only possible successor. Although Tacitus (ann. 1.6) terms Agrippa Postumus' death the *primum facinus novi principatus* (»first crime of the new Principate«), Tiberius had little choice, lest Postumus end up the tool of other ambitious players in Roman politics who could use him to challenge Tiberius' accession and cast the State again into the political chaos that so characterized the Late Republic. This was also the reason that Octavian could not allow Caesarion, Caesar's son by Cleopatra, to live, not that the youth would have himself opposed Octavian, but he would have served others as a political tool. As it was, notwithstanding Augustus' *auctoritas* and power, assassination plots were hatched against him.

¹⁷⁶ Tac. ann. 12.25 presents Pallas' argument to Claudius (who presented the same to the Senate) that by adopting and advancing Nero, Claudius would be helping the younger Britannicus, since Nero would undertake a share of Britannicus' responsibilities. Tacitus (ann. 12.9) indicates that following his betrothal to Octavia, Nero began to assume equality with Britannicus. See also Barrett 1996, 146; Ginsburg 2006, 21.

¹⁷⁷ Cf., however, Tac. ann. 12.69, who supposed, probably in hindsight, that Claudius intended Nero to succeed him, though Cassius Dio's claim (61.1.2) that Nero destroyed the will implies that he had not been named the sole successor. Unlike in Claudius' case, the wills of Augustus and Tiberius were read before the Senate after their deaths: Suet. Aug. 101.2; Cass. Dio 56.32.1a (Augustus); Suet. Tib. 76; Cass. Dio 59.1.1–2 (Tiberius). In his will, Tiberius named both Caligula and Tiberius Gemellus as heirs to equal shares of his estate, with each to be sole heir if either died: Suet. Tib. 76; Cass. Dio 59.1.1.

Guard¹⁷⁸. According to Cassius Dio (60.34.1), Claudius had been preparing to end Agrippina's power and to declare Britannicus his heir once his son had assumed the *toga virilis*. At least a rumor of such thinking on Claudius' part may have been a factor in his death and in that of Britannicus a few months later, just before he was to turn 14 and don the manly toga (Tac. ann. 13.15). The roles of Agrippina and Nero in the deaths of Claudius and Britannicus have been much debated by modern historians and remain open questions, though if there were foul play, there seems to be more evidence of that in the case of Britannicus¹⁷⁹.

During the Principate of Claudius, notwithstanding the machinations of Agrippina and her son, there remained an element of uncertainty about the succession. Especially in the Greek East, which had long been under Hellenistic kings, there may have been the sense that the natural son of the ruler might take precedence over an adopted son. This sentiment about the succession may have been partially reflected in the following comment of Cassius Dio (61.1.1), a native of Nicaea in Bithynia, who served as a senator under the more monarchical dynasty of the Severans: »With the death of Claudius, the hegemony most justly belonged to Britannicus (for he was the son of Claudius by birth and was physically advanced for his age), yet legally it [i. e., *hegemon*] also fell to Nero because of his adoption« (Ἀποθανόντος δὲ τοῦ Κλαυδίου κατὰ μὲν τὸ δικαιοτάτον ἢ ἡγεμονία τοῦ Βρεττανικοῦ ἦν (γνήσιος γὰρ τοῦ Κλαυδίου παῖς ἐπεφύκει, καὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἀκμῇ καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸν τῶν ἐτῶν ἀριθμὸν ἦνθει), ἐκ δὲ δὴ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῷ Νέρωνι διὰ τὴν ποίησιν ἐπέβαλλεν).

The need to cast first Britannicus and then Nero in the mold of their father Claudius would have exerted a significant influence on the portraiture of both youths. In the case of Britannicus, I have suggested that Claudius' ›Turin‹ portrait type (III), adopted for Claudius' image in the Sebasteion panel (C 10, figs. 19. 20) for his great victory in Britain in 43 and his award of a triumph, served as the basis of the first portrait model of his son, now known as »Britannicus«¹⁸⁰. Moreover, Claudius' ›Turin‹ type, recalling his great success in Britain, would have been a more appropriate choice for Britannicus than Claudius' primary type (›Haupttypus‹, Type II), which specifically served as his ›Accession‹, or ›Princeps‹ type. Claudius' ›Turin‹ type appears to have also influenced Nero's first official portrait, which appears on coinage between 51 and 54 (fig. 46)¹⁸¹, with locks brushed to the side from a fork in or near the middle of the forehead. In this respect, Nero's coiffure was also like that of Britannicus, only in Britannicus' case the fringe of locks on the forehead was typically worn higher, resembling more than in Nero's case the fringe of Claudius' ›Turin‹ type (fig. 18). We can see this difference when comparing the coin profiles of Britannicus (figs. 44. 45) and of Nero with the portraits in-the-round in Geneva (figs. 32–34), and Parma (figs. 35. 38–40). The younger-looking Getty

¹⁷⁸ The prefects Rufrius Crispinus and Lucius Geta, who had favored Britannicus, were both removed at Agrippina's instigation soon after Nero's adoption. See also Ginsburg 2006, 28.

¹⁷⁹ Tacitus (ann. 12.67) and others indicate that Agrippina was responsible for the death of Claudius to clear the way for her son Nero to succeed him as Princeps and for her to exert influence on him as a source for her own power. Levick 1990, 77, believes that Agrippina may have had a hand in Claudius' passing, though it cannot be proved. See also Griffin 1984, 32 f. 47. 74; Barrett 1996, 140–142. 171 f.; Osgood 2011, 233. 242–245. 250. In this matter Tacitus may have drawn upon Pliny the Elder (nat. 22.92), who discusses the mushrooms supposedly used to kill Claudius. Tacitus (ann. 13.15–18) indicates that Nero, not Agrippina, was responsible for Britannicus' death. See also Ginsburg 2006, 43.

¹⁸⁰ Claudius' ›Turin‹ type might even have influenced the portrait of Britannicus that (as noted above with n. 131) was set up, according to inscriptional evidence, at Arneae in Lycia (Turkey) perhaps as early as 43/44, when he was two to three years old.

¹⁸¹ For the first portrait type of Nero, see above with n. 128.

head (figs. 29–31) with a lower and straighter fringe of forehead locks, was likely based upon a model associated with his being named Britannicus. That model could have then taken on new meaning and been updated on the occasion of his formal introduction to public life with his participation in the Troy Games at the age of seven. By 54, the year of Claudius' death and the accession of Nero as Princeps, the fringe of locks on Nero's forehead begins to be slightly higher than in his earlier portraits¹⁸². This modification of coiffure is found on coins dating from 54¹⁸³ to 59¹⁸⁴, after which time there is a change up to 64 only in the direction of the locks¹⁸⁵. In his final type, from 64 to 68, he adopted his last, flamboyant *coma in gradus formata* coiffure¹⁸⁶.

In sculpture in-the-round, perhaps the earliest image of Nero at about the time he became Princeps is a fragmentary high-quality portrait from an imperial statue group in the Forum of Syracuse, now in the city's Museo Archeologico Regionale ›Paolo Orsi‹ (figs. 47–49)¹⁸⁷. On the head of the Syracuse sculpture is a *corona civica*, associated here with Nero's accession, hence the appropriateness of designating this portrait as belonging to his ›Accession‹ type. Notably, it is only after his accession that Nero is shown wearing the *corona civica*. Enough of the nose and chin are preserved to indicate that the nose is large, with a dorsal hump on it, and the chin is prominent, as in other numismatic and sculptural images of Nero. Showing him at about the same age is a *capite velato* head from the Palatine, now in the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Museo Nazionale Romano (figs. 50. 51)¹⁸⁸, while he appears to be a few years older in a portrait from Olbia, now in the Museo Nazionale in Cagliari (›Cagliari‹ type)¹⁸⁹, that has been compared with his coin portrait on an issue of 58¹⁹⁰.

Commonly identified as an early sculptural image of Nero is a statue in the Detroit Institute of Art (figs. 52–55)¹⁹¹ representing him shortly after he had given up the *bullā* and the *toga praetexta*, which were symbols of childhood, and donned the *toga virilis*. Unlike the significant way that in Nero's ›Accession‹ type the locks fork over the middle of the forehead or over the inner corner of the left eye, the long linear hair strands on the forehead of the Detroit portrait form a rather small fork near the middle of the forehead. In addition, the Detroit portrait's fringe of locks, which in frontal view forms a roughly trapezoidal shape with the hair at the sides of the head, is somewhat higher on the forehead than in most of Nero's ›Accession‹ type portraits, suggesting that the Detroit statue belongs to a first portrait type that evolved with slight variations into the ›Accession‹ type to celebrate his becoming Princeps.

¹⁸² See, e. g., Hiesinger 1975, fig. 1 (Coin Type II).

¹⁸³ E. g., the numismatic issue of 54 with an obverse jugate portrait of Nero and his mother Agrippina: Breglia 1968, 68 f. (with a large photo of this coin); RIC I², 145 (no. 9) pl. 9, 139.

¹⁸⁴ Hiesinger 1975, 118 figs. 3–8 (Coin Type III).

¹⁸⁵ Hiesinger 1975, 119 figs. 9–14 (Coin Type IV).

¹⁸⁶ Hiesinger 1975, 120 figs. 15–24 (Coin Type V).

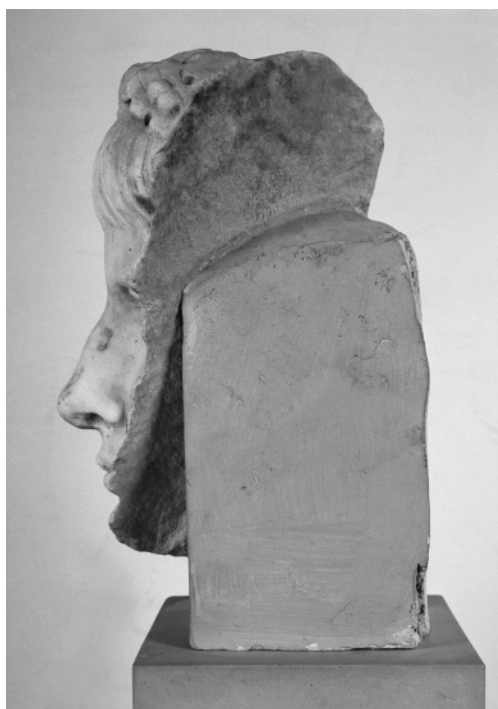
¹⁸⁷ Inv. 6383: See Poulsen 1954, 294 figs. 1. 2; Hiesinger 1975, 115 fig. 32. See also Boschung 2002, 141 no. 74.1.

¹⁸⁸ Inv. 616: Hiesinger 1975, 115 figs. 37. 38.

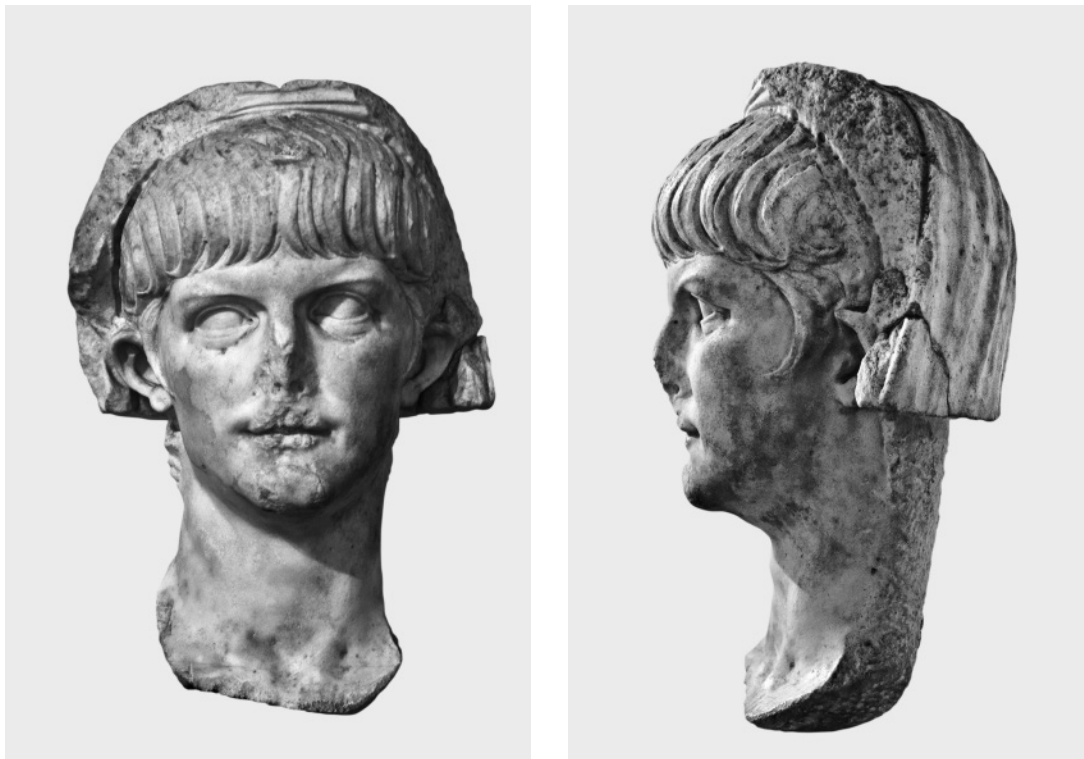
¹⁸⁹ Inv. 35533 (the bust below the neck is modern): Hiesinger 1975, 114 f. figs. 33. 34; Boschung 1993a, 76 (67 Zb). See also the head of Nero in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua representing him at about the same age: Hiesinger 1975, 115 figs. 35. 36.

¹⁹⁰ Hiesinger 1975, 114 f. figs. 6. 7.

¹⁹¹ Inv. 69.218: Hiesinger 1975, 116 figs. 30. 31 (Nero); Inan – Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1979, 86–88 cat. 35 pls. 28, 1–3; 30, 1; see also Kleiner – Matheson 1996, 63 cat. 15 (Nero) (E. R. Varner). Cf. Goette 1990, 125 no. B a pl. 11, 3, who questions whether this is Nero, recognizing, unlike others, that it is different from the boy that I have identified as Britannicus in the statues in Parma (here figs. 35. 38–40) and the Louvre (here figs. 36. 41–43).



Figs. 47–49. Museo Archeologico Regionale »Paolo Orsi«, Siracuse. Portrait of Nero



Figs. 50 and 51. Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome. Portrait of Nero

The Syracuse head, with the fringe of locks at a height similar to that of the Detroit statue and a distinctive dorsal hump on the nose that was already beginning to develop in the younger Detroit portrait, represents Nero at an age between that of the Detroit statue and the Terme and later portraits. The earlier type represented by the Detroit statue would have served for the sculptural images and coin portraits created in the period between Nero's adoption and accession¹⁹². Since the youth in the Detroit statue is shown without a *bulla* around his neck, it is clearly not Britannicus, who did not live long enough to put aside that symbol of childhood. In terms of hairstyle and facial features, the Detroit statue also differs in other respects from the portraits that I have identified as Britannicus. In the Detroit statue, as well as in Nero's other sculptural and numismatic images, the hair comes down lower on the neck than in the Geneva head and in the Parma and Louvre statues (that part of the Getty head is missing). By comparison with Britannicus, Nero's facial features, even in his earliest portraits, tend to be heavier, his nose somewhat larger and sometimes with a dorsal hump on it, and his chin more prominent. Some of his physiognomic features that diverge from those of his mother Agrippina's side of the family likely derived instead from his natural father Gn. Domitius Ahenobarbus¹⁹³.

¹⁹² Cf. e. g., BMCRE I, 175–177 pl. 33, 3–10; RIC I², 125 f. 129 pls. 15, 75, 77, 79, 82; 17, 107. Cf. also a damaged portrait of this same type in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen: Hiesinger 1975, 116 fig. 28.

¹⁹³ For the likely portraiture of Gn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, see Pollini 1981, 122–137 pls. 31, 35, 1; 36 (Ravenna fig. D). 37–39, and possibly 40, 41.



Fig. 52. Detroit Institute of Arts. Statue of Nero

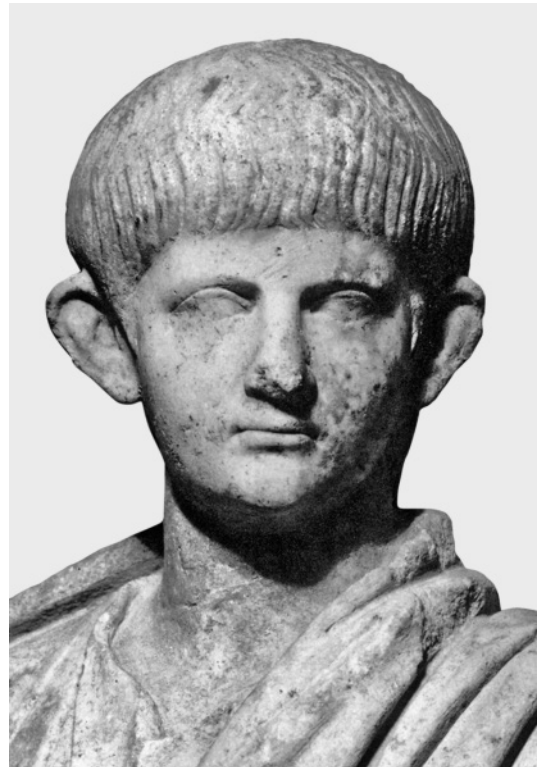
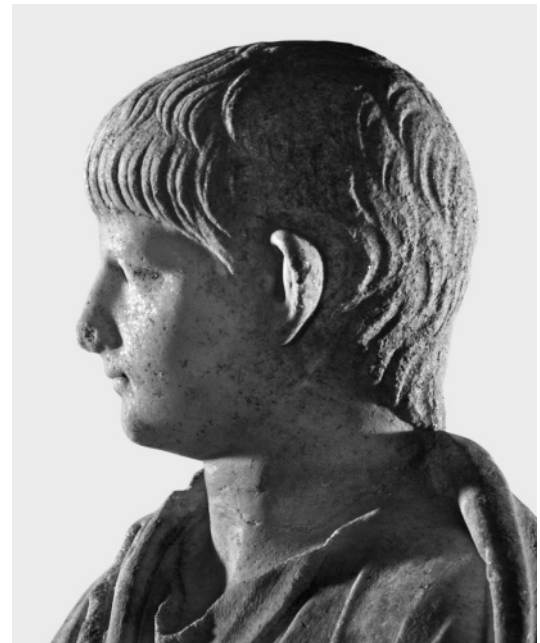


Fig. 53. Detail of fig. 52



Figs. 54 and 55. Details of fig. 52

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE ›TWO PRINCES‹ PANEL OF THE SEBASTEION

Having considered the portraiture of Britannicus and Nero and the prominence of Britannicus' image in the provinces based on the numismatic, epigraphic, and historical evidence, I turn once again to the youthful, heroically nude figures in the ›Two Princes‹ panel (C 19) from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias (fig. 24) that I believe represents Britannicus (A) to the left (figs. 25. 26), holding a globe and an *aplustre* (*aphlaston*), and Nero (B) to the right (figs. 27. 28), looking toward these symbols of power. Although their facial features are idealized, the shape of the face of the figure to the left is somewhat triangular, while the one to the right is rounder and fleshier, in keeping with the portraiture of Britannicus and Nero respectively. In terms of hairstyle, the fringe of locks of the two youths forks on opposite sides: to the left side of the forehead of figure A and to the right side of the forehead of figure B. Though this helps to establish that two different youths are represented here, there is variability in the portraiture of both Britannicus and Nero as far as whether the fork is to the left, the right, or essentially in the middle. There is, however, an important distinction between the two insofar as the shape of the fringe of locks is concerned. In Nero's portraiture in the period before his accession, as noted above, the fringe tends to come lower on the forehead than in the case of Britannicus. An additional factor is the general shape of the fringe. In Nero's portraiture the fringe is straight across the middle of the forehead, and when the fringe intersects the hair at the sides of the head, the hairline forms a trapezoid-like shape in frontal view. In all but the Getty head, representing Britannicus at the age of about four to five, the fringe of locks on the forehead tends to form an arch that almost comes to a point where the fork occurs, like an ogee arch. These differences in the fringe of locks in the portraiture of Nero and Britannicus are discernible in the ›Two Princes‹ relief in that the fringe of the figure to the left that I have identified as Britannicus (A) arches up to a point at the fork, like an ogee arch, while the hairline of the figure that I have identified as Nero (B) is somewhat trapezoidal in shape. One final element of Britannicus' hairstyle is also evident in figure A; namely, the hair at the nape of the neck (fig. 26) is brushed up toward the ears, as in the well-preserved coin portraits of Britannicus from Pontus (fig. 44) and Aegeae (fig. 45). These elements of his hairstyle are unlike what is seen in much of Nero's portraiture, where the hair is typically rather long at the nape and not brushed up toward the ears. In the figure to the right (B) in the ›Two Princes‹ panel, the hair at the nape of the neck is rather unfinished, but enough remains that a lock near the lobe of the ear can be discerned to turn down slightly (fig. 28).

The globe held by the figure to the left (A) in the panel is the principal symbol of power and world rule, while the *aplustre*, the stern ornament of a ship, in his other hand typically refers to a maritime victory. Both symbols appeared long before on the coinage of Octavian/Augustus following his great sea victory at Actium in 31 B.C.¹⁹⁴ In the Sebasteion panel the globe would indicate that this figure was to be Claudius' successor as ruler of the earth, while the *aplustre* would serve as an allusion to Claudius' successful mastery of the seas, more specifically of the treacherous English Channel in effecting his victory in Britain¹⁹⁵. A few panels to the right, the conquest of land and sea is also highlighted in relief C 29 showing

¹⁹⁴ See Pollini 2012, 73 f. fig. 2, 3 with further bibliography.

¹⁹⁵ See Osgood 2011, 91 with n. 49 for inscriptional evidence.

Claudius passing over personifications of land and sea (fig. 16)¹⁹⁶. Like the *corona civica* that Britannicus wears in his early boyhood portraits (figs. 29–34), the globe and *aplustre* in his hands would reflect the provincial sense that it was he – the heir of Claudius’ own blood – who would succeed Claudius, in keeping with Hellenistic traditions of kingship¹⁹⁷. In the ›Two Princes‹ panel, both figures are represented at about the same height, notwithstanding the three years and two months in age that separated Britannicus and Nero. Had there been some official declaration that the older Nero was to be Claudius’ intended successor, it would have been Nero who held the globe and *aplustre* and perhaps been represented somewhat taller than Britannicus, reflecting more accurately their age difference. But, as I have discussed, there is no indisputable evidence that Claudius had in fact made a decision as to his successor – or dual successors – when both Britannicus and Nero were young and untried, not unlike Augustus’ refraining from designating Gaius as his sole successor just because he was the older of his two adopted sons.

As in the case of Gaius and Lucius, who were also three years apart in age¹⁹⁸, Nero by virtue of being older than Britannicus was publicly honored first because he assumed the toga of manhood first. The fact that Nero appeared after that time on the state coinage of Rome, while Britannicus – still officially a boy – did not, has led some to conclude (in hindsight) that Nero was marked out as Claudius’ sole successor. However, the inscriptional and numismatic evidence from the provinces tells a different story, with Britannicus from earliest childhood receiving provincial honors as the son of the Princeps, years before – and after – Nero’s adoption. As we have also seen in the case of provincial coins from Pergamon dating to 50–54 and from Sinope dating to 54/[55], Britannicus takes the position of greater honor in that he is shown on the obverse, while Nero’s portrait is on the reverse¹⁹⁹. The priority of Britannicus over Nero that I have argued is also reflected in the ›Two Princes‹ panel of the Sebasteion and is understandable in light of both the longer period of time that Britannicus had been important dynastically and the great significance of bloodlines in the East.

In view of the vast scope of the Sebasteion’s sculptural relief program, the ›Two Princes‹ panel may have been planned and executed some time before actually being installed on the South Building. A *terminus post quem* is established by the representation of both Britannicus and Nero, indicating that it would have been created after Nero’s adoption in 50 following the marriage in the preceding year of his mother Agrippina to Claudius, an event that led to the creation of panel C 5 celebrating that occasion (fig. 11). Because the setting up of the panels would have had to progress from left to right for technical reasons²⁰⁰, the fact that the panel showing Nero victorious over Armenia (C 8) precedes the ›Two Princes‹ panel in the series on the South Building is an indication that the previously carved panel with the two youths was actually set in place after Nero had already come to power. Since no names were inscribed directly under the figures on the base for the ›Two Princes‹ panel, it would have been a simple matter for a viewer to interpret or reconceive the figure to the left (A) as Nero, holding the symbols of rulership, and the figure to the right (B) as Britannicus.

¹⁹⁶ See above with nn. 44. 45.

¹⁹⁷ For this tradition: Cass. Dio, quoted above. Cf. Osgood 2011, 233.

¹⁹⁸ Pollini 1987, 1 n. 1 (Gaius, born in 20 B.C.); n. 2 (Lucius, born in 17 B.C.). Both were adopted in 17 B.C.

¹⁹⁹ See also above with nn. 163 (Pergamon). 164 (Sinope). On the obverse jugate issue from Sinope, Britannicus’ profile is represented in front of that of Nero.

²⁰⁰ Smith 2013, 39.

Facilitating this new interpretation – aside from the fact that the heads of this relief were displayed high up (ca. 11 m from the ground)²⁰¹ – would have been the similarity of the hairstyles of both figures and the fact that their idealized facial features were not especially different from one another before Nero's later years. Moreover, Nero's final portrait types, with more flamboyant hairstyles and porcine facial features that started to appear around 59 in his coin portraits²⁰², are not in any of the extant Sebasteion reliefs. The reconception of Britannicus as Nero and vice-versa in the ›Two Princes‹ panel would have been further aided by Nero's appearance as a nude young Princeps holding a globe in another panel (C 26) farther to the right in the relief program of the South Building²⁰³. In that panel he appears with a military trophy and bound captive boy wearing an *exomis* over pants. With both the Armenia panel and the one with trophy and captive underscoring Nero's status as a world ruler after his accession, the reinterpretation of which prince was which in the already carved panel representing both Britannicus and Nero would not have been problematic in the provincial city of Aphrodisias.

APPENDIX: THE DATING OF THE SEBASTEION

As noted at the outset, the Sebasteion has been dated between A.D. 20 and 60²⁰⁴. However, some of the evidence suggests to me that it may in fact have been conceived in the late Augustan period to honor Augustus and his family. After all, a number of temples and shrines were set up to him throughout the Empire while he was alive, as well as after his death²⁰⁵; moreover, he granted Aphrodisias special privileges already in the 30s B.C., including the tax-free status that was a major factor contributing to the city's wealth and building programs like the Sebasteion²⁰⁶. Indicative of at least a possible planning stage in the later Augustan period are some of the statues and their inscribed bases from the aediculated columnar screen of the sanctuary's Propylon²⁰⁷. Among these were bases for statues of Augustus' two grandsons and adopted sons – Lucius Caesar, the younger of the two, who died in A.D. 2, and Gaius, who died in A.D. 4²⁰⁸. Most of the portraits of the two youths were set up in the Empire during their lifetimes or soon after their deaths, with relatively few images being created as late as the earlier Tiberian period²⁰⁹. More unusual for an original Tiberian statuary cycle is the inclusion in the Propylon's sculptural program of a statue base of Augustus' mother Atia, who appears to have been rarely represented in imperial statuary groups and was of no consequence to

²⁰¹ According to the scale provided in Smith 2013, fig. 264.

²⁰² Nero's Coin Type III (A.D. 59–64) shows a modification (in the second coiffure type) of his earlier first coiffure type and greater fleshiness, while Coin Types IV and V (A.D. 64–68) show his flamboyant third coiffure type and porcine features: see above with nn. 185. 186.

²⁰³ Inv. 79-97 and 79-98: Smith 1987, 110–112 no. 4 pls. 10. 11, originally took this figure to be Germanicus. Cf. Boschung 2002, 196 f. n. 1464, who rightly identified this as Nero represented in his ›Accession‹ type. Smith also now identifies this figure as Nero: Smith 2013, 168 f. (C 26) fig. 107 pls. 84. 85.

²⁰⁴ Smith 2013, 1. 3. 15.

²⁰⁵ For temples of Augustus, see in general Hänlein-Schäfer 1985; Burrell 2004.

²⁰⁶ For these privileges, see Smith 2013, 4 f.

²⁰⁷ Smith 2013, 55–70 figs. 8. 9.

²⁰⁸ For the statue bases of Gaius and Lucius, see above n. 81.

²⁰⁹ Gaius and Lucius were no longer of any dynastic importance after the death of Augustus and the early Tiberian period: Pollini 1987, 3 f. 63.

Tiberius or his successors²¹⁰. This in itself may indicate prior planning during the Principate of Augustus, though actual work on the Propylon of the Sebasteion complex and its Temple dedicated to Tiberius and Livia would probably have taken place at some point after cities had recovered from the devastating earthquake in western Asia Minor in A.D. 17 that was recorded by Tacitus (ann. 2.47)²¹¹. Notwithstanding the Tiberian parts of the Sebasteion complex, most of the reliefs, as indicated, date to the Claudian and Neronian periods²¹².

In the reliefs of the South Building, as well as in one panel of the North Building in which Nero is shown being crowned by his mother Agrippina Minor²¹³, he is represented as a young and trim Princeps sporting his ›Accession‹ hairstyle, datable to the period 54 to 59²¹⁴. Because of the absence in the series of any surviving images of Nero in his two later and more flamboyant portrait types, dating from 59 to his death in 68²¹⁵, a likely *terminus ante quem* of about 60 has been established for the major completion of the Sebasteion's sculptural program. However, since much of the imperial relief series in the uppermost level of the North Building is no longer extant, it is of course possible that he was originally portrayed there in one or more of his post-A.D. 59 hairstyles. If so, then work on the North Building (with images apparently devoted primarily to Nero during his Principate) may have continued a little later than 60 but probably not beyond 68²¹⁶, when Nero, having been declared a public enemy (*hostis*) by the Senate, committed suicide and his memory was later condemned (Suet. Nero 49.2–4)²¹⁷. Although there is no evidence for the mutilation or destruction of Nero's portrait images in the Sebasteion reliefs as a result of this damnation, his name and titles were erased from two of the base inscriptions from the South Building²¹⁸, while his name was preserved on the base of the relief with Nero and his mother Agrippina on the North Building. As for later images of imperial personages, we have evidence only for Vespasian and Nerva, whose statues appear to have been set up somewhere in the complex, based on some fragmentary statuary remains²¹⁹.

²¹⁰ For the statue base for her portrait image, see Smith 2013, 57 P-base 3 (Atia Balbou) fig. 20 pl. 14. For a possible extant portrait of Atia, see Pollini 1990, 22 f. cat. 5 (with M. Clure).

²¹¹ For the earthquake of A.D. 17, see recently Graham 2019, 1–20.

²¹² Inscriptions pertaining to the North Building mention some damage to it as a result of earthquakes, followed by its restoration, possibly in the Claudian period: Smith 2013, 17 f. (Ded. 4). 44 pl. 5.

²¹³ Inv. 82-250: Smith 2013, 74–78 (A 1) fig. 39 pls. 20. 21.

²¹⁴ Based on his official coin types: Hiesinger 1975, 114 figs. 4–8.

²¹⁵ The first of these two later types dates from 59 to 64, based on Nero's official coin types (Hiesinger 1975, figs. 9–14) and is exemplified in a marble head from the Palatine in the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (inv. 618: here figs. 50. 51); Hiesinger 1975, 119 figs. 43. 44; Boschung 1993b, 76 f. (68 Zc). The last of his portrait types, the ›Munich – Worcester‹ type, dates from 64 to 68, again based on his official coin types (Hiesinger 1975, figs. 15–24) and represented in marble heads in the Munich Glyptothek (inv. 321) and the Worcester Art Museum (inv. 1915.23); Hiesinger 1975, 120 figs. 45–47; Boschung 1993a, 77 (69 Zd).

²¹⁶ For the North Building and its reliefs in general, see Smith 2013, 71–121. 309 f.

²¹⁷ See further Varner 2004, 46 f.

²¹⁸ See Smith 2013, 41. 141 (C-base 10) fig. 88 pls. 58. 59; 181 (C-base 8) fig. 124 pl. 95.

²¹⁹ See Smith 2013, 41. 69 (S 7) pl. 19 (Vespasian); 70 (S 8) pl. 19 (Nerva, possibly from the Sebasteion's temple).

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Abstract:

John Pollini, New Observations on the Imperial Reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias and the Portraiture of Claudius, Britannicus, and the Young Nero

This article reconsiders the identification of several imperial personages and personifications from the Julio-Claudian Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. Certain of these reliefs also offer insight into the likely reason for the creation of one of Claudius' portrait types that influenced the hairstyles of his natural son Britannicus and his adopted son Nero. Reevaluated too are portraits in-the-round that have long been attributed to the young Nero but which I show represent instead Britannicus. Even though the epigraphic record proves that many portraits of Britannicus were set up, there has been no agreement about the identification of any of his images. My new observations establish his portrait type, based on numismatic evidence and especially on two little-known sculptural portraits representing him as a child wearing the *corona civica*. The establishment of Britannicus' portraiture and revision of the portrait type of the young Nero also lead to new conclusions about the Sebasteion's problematic ›Two Princes‹ relief.

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