

# The Buildings and the Images of the Imperial Cult



III Julio-Claudian dynasty



## **Acta Fratrum Arvalum (Arval Acta)**

### The Arval Brothers

- important for studying the development of the imperial cult
- main literary source for the period of Julio – Claudian dynasty

## 1. TIBERIUS (Tiberius Claudius Nero)

Born: November 16<sup>th</sup> , 42 BC

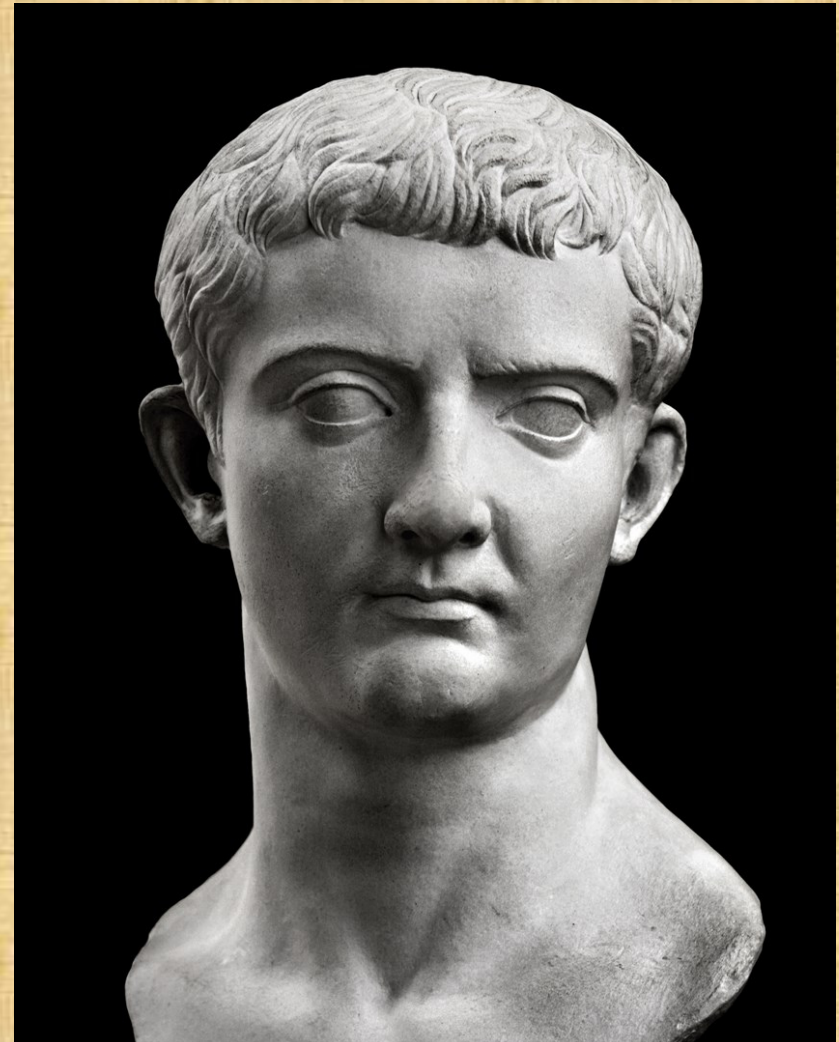
Died: March 16<sup>th</sup> , 37 AD

Parents: Livia, Tiberius Claudius Nero

Accession: Augustus, 4 AD

Reign:

- extremely cautious
- forbade the setting up of his portraits
- final establishing of the cult – the cult of Divus Augustus





## IMAGES

Posthumous portrait – **Tiberius as Jupiter** –  
Cerveteri

## Grand Camée

- eight-layer sardonyx: white the upper, brown the lower.
- irregular shape (not the original)
- appears to be complete
- the largest ancient surviving cameo (H. 31 cm; w. 26.5 cm) in Paris,
- 23-29 AD, Tiberius, or after 50 AD Claudius (different interpretations)

Subject: Enthroned Tiberius is surrounded by various members of the Julio-Claudian family (living and deceased).



1 – Tiberius as Jupiter, holding *lituus*, wearing laurel wreath (not a *corona civica*)  
2 - Julia (Augustus' daughter) but the marriage ended up quickly, never married again, so this is Livia (mother), stressing his succession rights  
3 – Nero Germanici,  
4 - Julia Drusi, Nero Germanici's wife  
5 - Slightly older boy behind Livia – Drusus Caesar, with a trophy  
6 - Agrippina Maior, Germanicus' widow  
7 - Gaius Caesar  
8 - Claudia Livilla, Germanicus' sister and widow of Drusus the Younger

3, 5, and 7 – brothers - sons of Germanicus and Agrippina

9 – Augustus, 10 - Drusus the Younger, 11 – Germanicus, 12 – Eros, 13 – Mithras (Aion – eternal time, Marc Anthony, Alexander the Great, Iulus Ascanius)



## Boscoreale cup

triumph (awarded in 8 BC and celebrated in 7 BC) of Tiberius



The *triumphus de Germanis* of Tiberius,  
Tiberius – *triumphator* with *servus publicus*



The other side:  
The scene of sacrifice





## 2 CALIGULA (Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus)

Born: August 31<sup>st</sup> , 12 AD

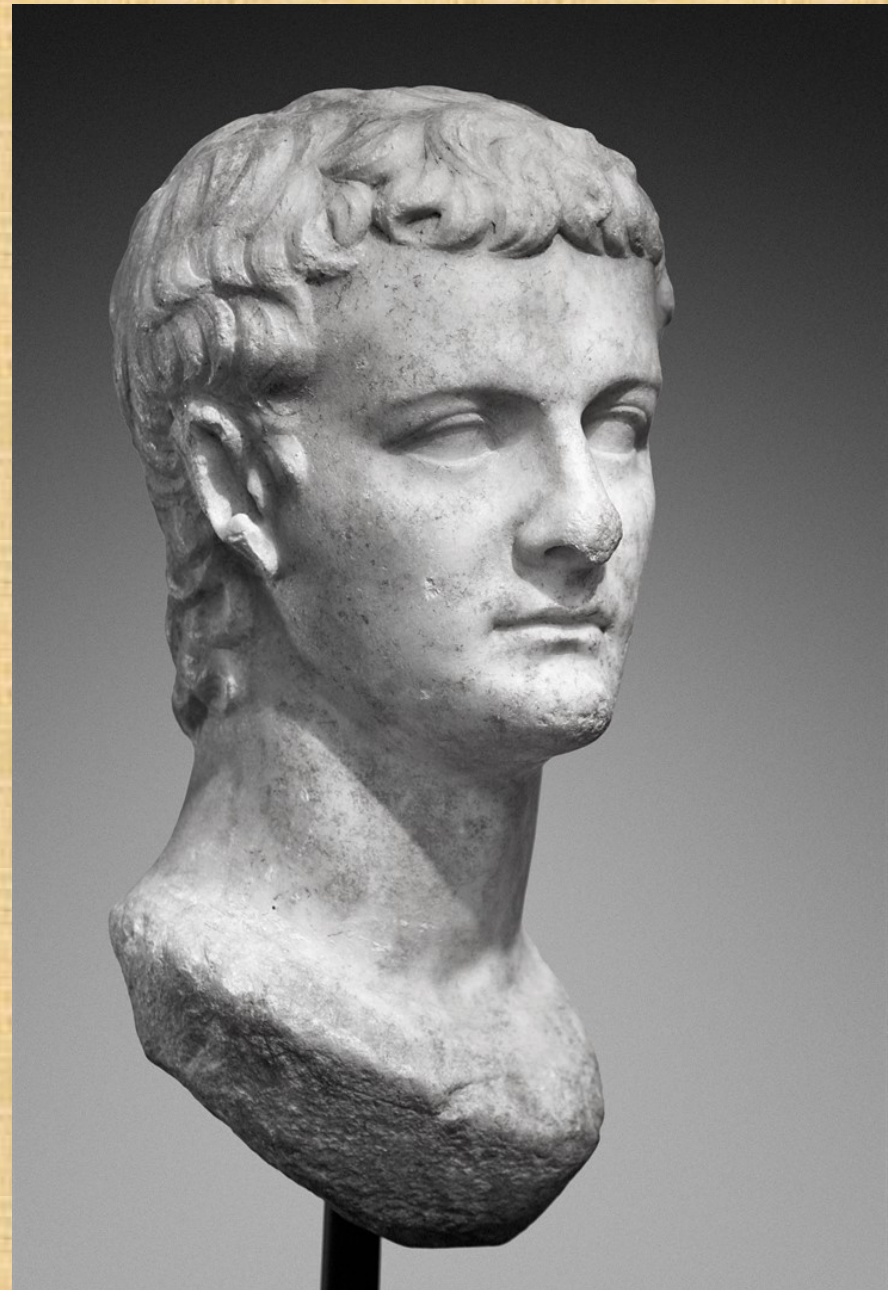
Died: January 24<sup>th</sup> , 41 AD (stabbed 30 times)

Parents: Germanicus, Agrippina the Elder

Accession: Germanicus (father) adopted by Tiberius (died before him)

Reign:

- the beginnings peaceful
- sacrifices to Caligula's Genius vetoed (modesty? fear?)
- then humiliated, emphasized his limitless power



## THE STATE CULT

### Literary sources

problematic nature: Suetonius – sensationalist

Dio – no critical ability

(a habit to generalize from single incident),

Seneca – hatred of the emperor

Jewish writes Philo and Josephus – Caligula's conflict with Jews,  
no other aspects

- impersonating different gods

- the dress used as an emblematic dress to define position without courting death

## THE PRIVATE SPHERE

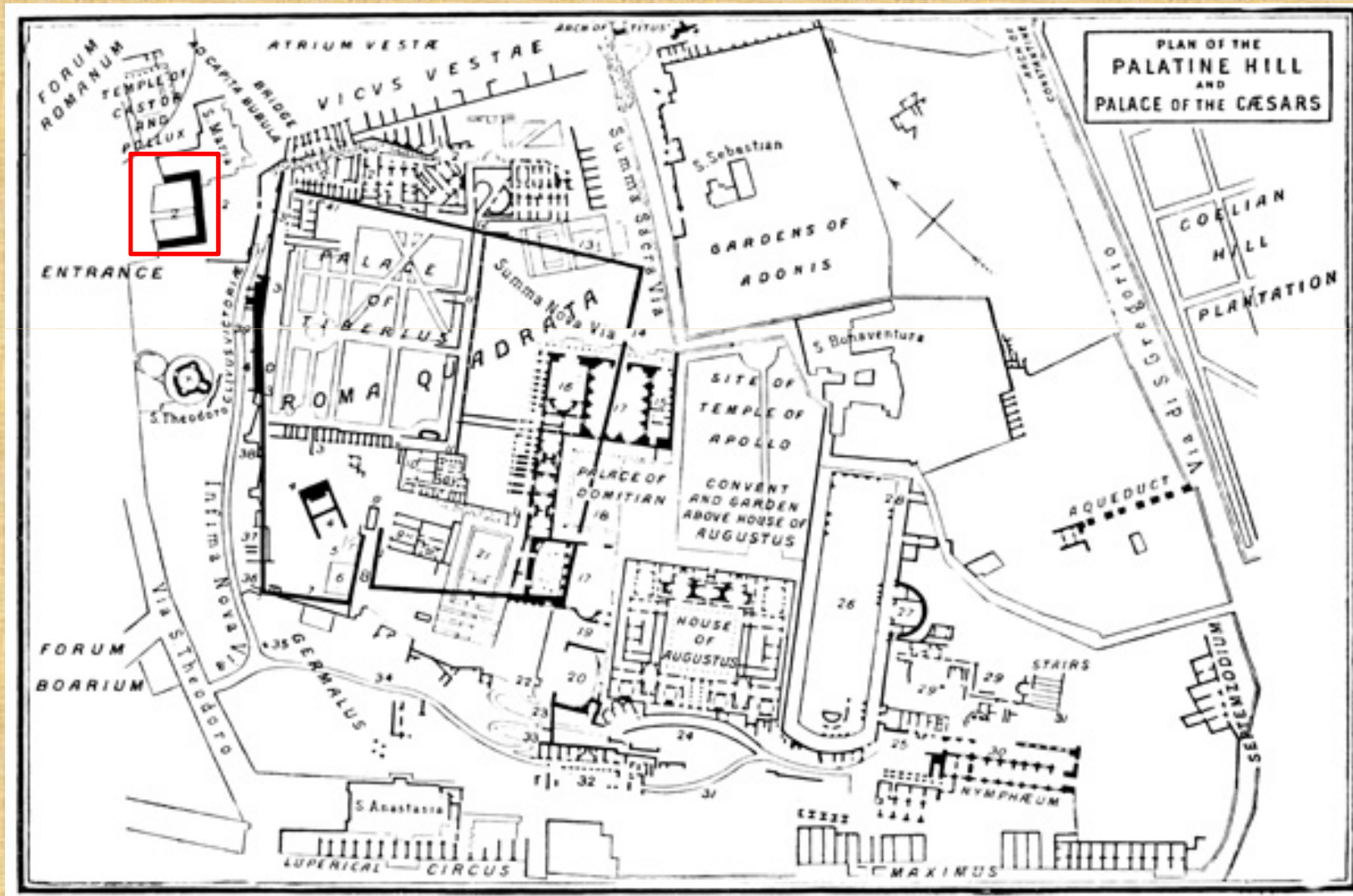
- **the private sphere** - encouraged the phenomenon

- **he never received state deification or divine worship in the Roman state**

## BUILDINGS

The palace of Caligula (Suetonius describes it as a *domus*)

- the northern side of the Palatine





*Problem with the buildings:*

Building (palace) – situated behind the temple of Dioscuri - incorporated into it (literary sources) ?



### 3 CLAUDIUS (Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus)

Born: August 1<sup>st</sup> , 10 BC

Died: October 13<sup>th</sup> , 54 AD

Parents: Drusus the Elder, Antonia the Younger

Accession: after Caligula's murder, he was chosen to be the emperor by the guardsmen (who killed the former emperor)

Reign:

- distanced himself from the absolutist pretensions
- modest as well as legitimate
- Vestal Virgins – duty to offer proper sacrifice to Augustus and Livia
- forbade sacrifice and worship of himself



## THE STATE CULT

- huge changes in the state cult, the most important time in the development of the role of the Genius
- **emperor's Genius joined the state pantheon of Rome**
- beginnings – Claudius wanted to stress himself as the heir of Augustus
- state worship – position of the emperor in the state clearly expressed
- senators became his clients



Archaeological evidence:

### **The Frieze of the Vicomagistri**

- the name: after the four ministry
- a part of a rectangular monument or a statue base

Found: Campo Marzio

Depiction: religious procession



## The togate figures

- “magistri” – only four of them depicted in compital cults

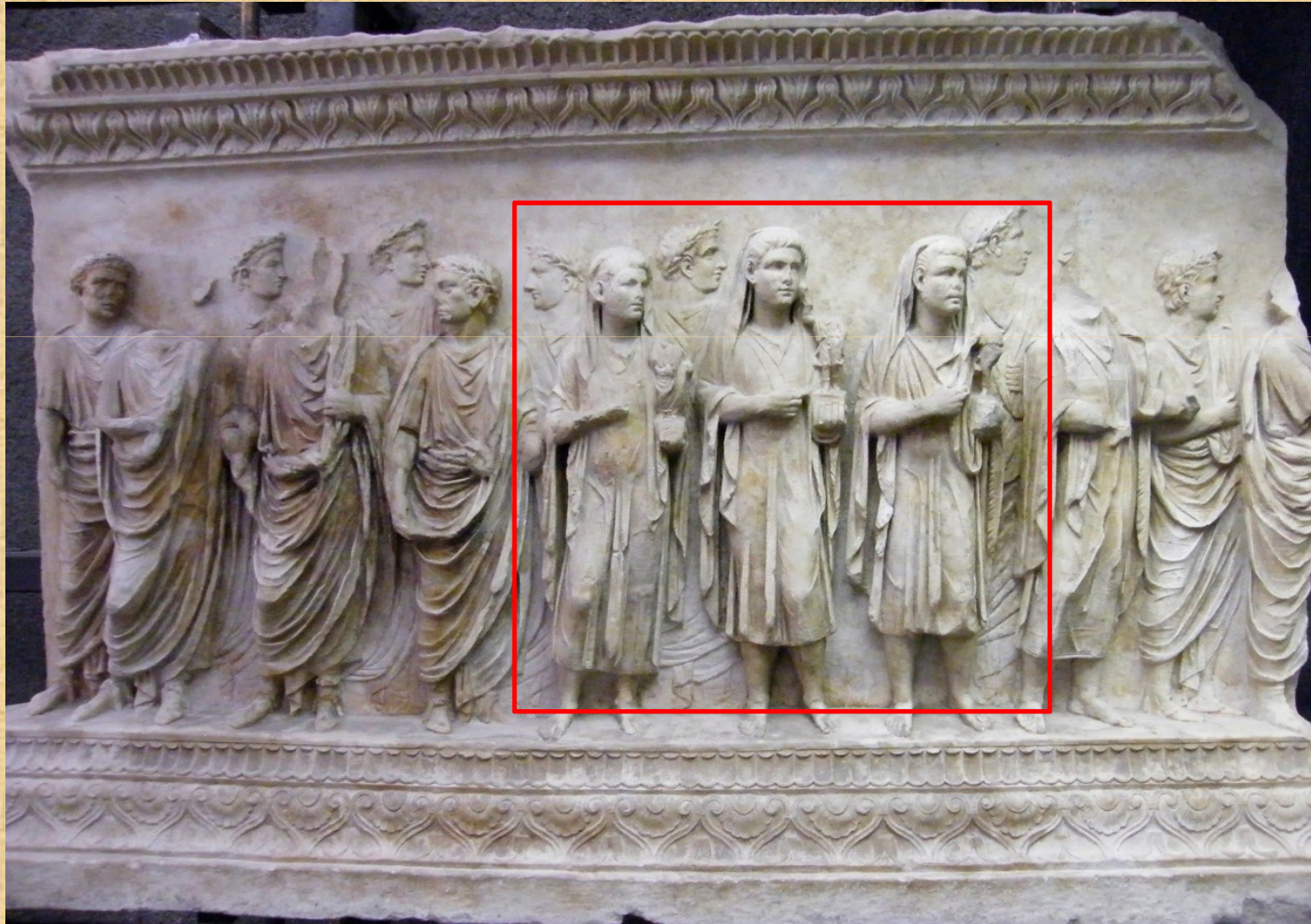
- the only one frontal, the other two looking at him and he is taller - the emperor Claudius



## The *ministri*

-two groups: *publici* (public slaves) and *pueri ingenui patrimi et matrimi* (senators' young sons), who will one day function as priests

-carry statuette of the emperor's Genius and Lares



two almost frontal *togati*, three *lictors*, two tunicate figures, presumably *camilli*, three hornblowers, three bovine victims – a bull, a steer and a young heifer each pulled by a *victimarius*, group of musicians, part is missing

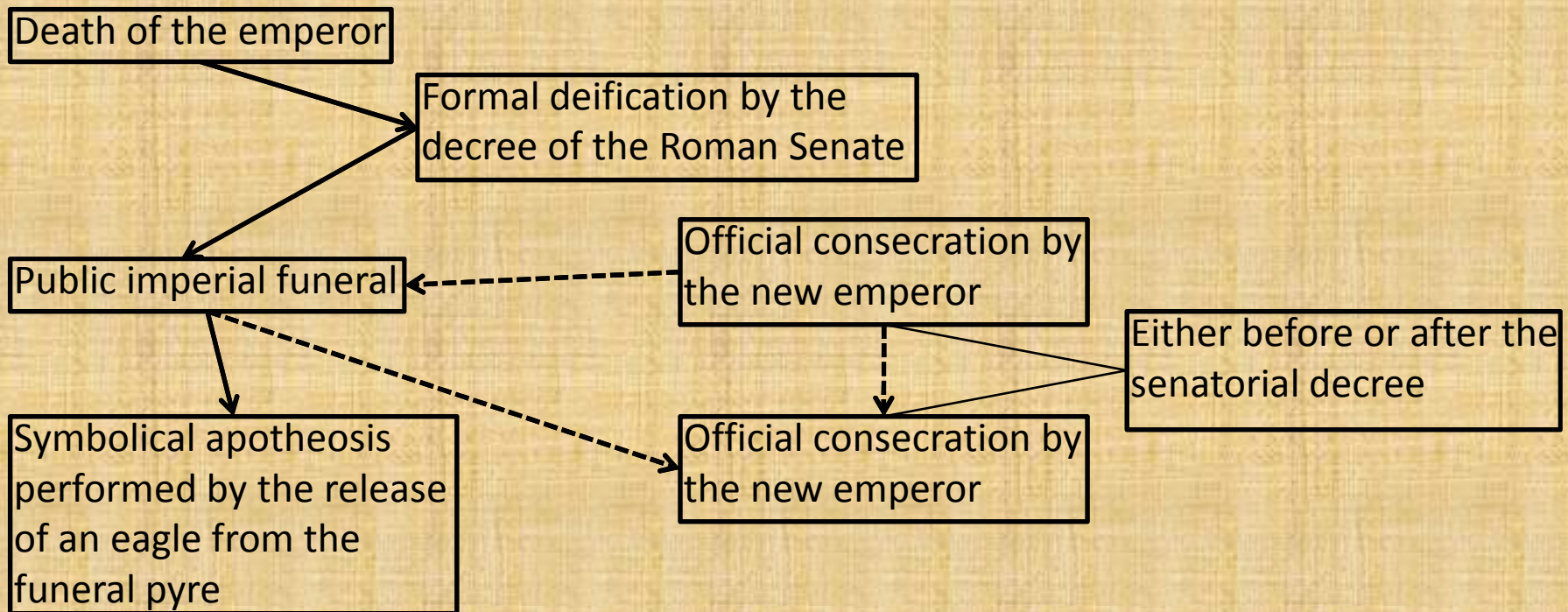
- the background – crowded with several minor figures, e.g. a *victimarius* carrying a tray, other carrying a cauldron
- victims, their nature and order – steer, heifer and bull
- the scene: consecration of Livia and the procession to the temple of *Divus Augustus* with her statue
- **Genius of the living emperor included in the state cult for the first time**



## Deification

Two changes:

- a) conflicting version of achieving his apotheosis
- b) no eyewitness



## **BUILDINGS**

Temple of Divus Claudius – Caelian hill (peripheral site), side of Claudius' private domus  
- 54 AD died – wife Agrippina began the construction



- no trace of the temple above the platform foundations - Severan Marble Plan – prostyle, hexastyle, 3 columns on the sides









## IMAGES

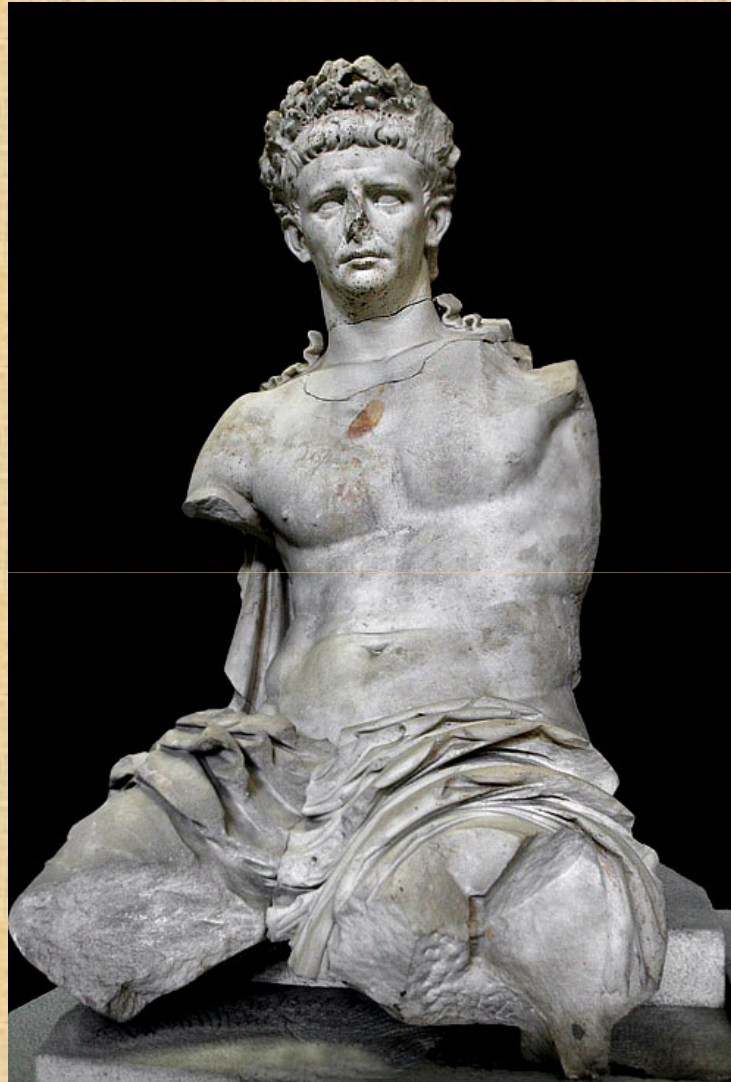
### Portrait from Lanuvium

- the statue was erected in honor of Claudius by the Senate and the people of Lanuvium



Seated statue from Cerveteri as Jupiter

- a part of a Claudian dynastic group – Claudius, **Tiberius**, Agrippina, Britannicus



## Cameos

### **Grand Camée**

- 1 Tiberius
  - 2 Livia
  - 3 Germanicus
  - 4 Agrippina the Elder (in front of Tiberius)
  - 5 Claudius – behind Tiberius
  - 6 Agrippina Younger – Claudius' wife and niece at the same time
  - 7 The child on the left – Nero
  - 8 Behind Nero – *Providentia Augusti*
  - 9 Augustus in the middle, up
  - 10 Drusus the Younger – on the left of Augustus
  - 11 Drusus the Elder – on the right of Augustus (died falling of the horse)
  - 12 Eros
  - 13 Mithra/Sol Invictus – Nero was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> December, close to Mithra's birthday – Nero loved himself showing as Sol, astrological reference to the birth (similar to *Gemma Augustea*)
- Seated oriental figure - Ti. Claudius Balbillus – a personal counsellor of Nero – oriental origin, living on the court, connection to the Claudians



Claudius apotheosis, mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, four layers, sardonyx



The Ravenna Relief (Claudian date between 45-50)

- two marble relief fragments from a Claudian monument, possibly an altar honoring the imperial family

The smaller fragment – sacrifice

The bigger fragment – a series of frontally positioned imperial figures



**NERO (Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, Claudius  
Caesar Augustus Germanicus or Nero  
Claudius Drusus Germanicus)**

Born: December 15<sup>th</sup> , 37 AD

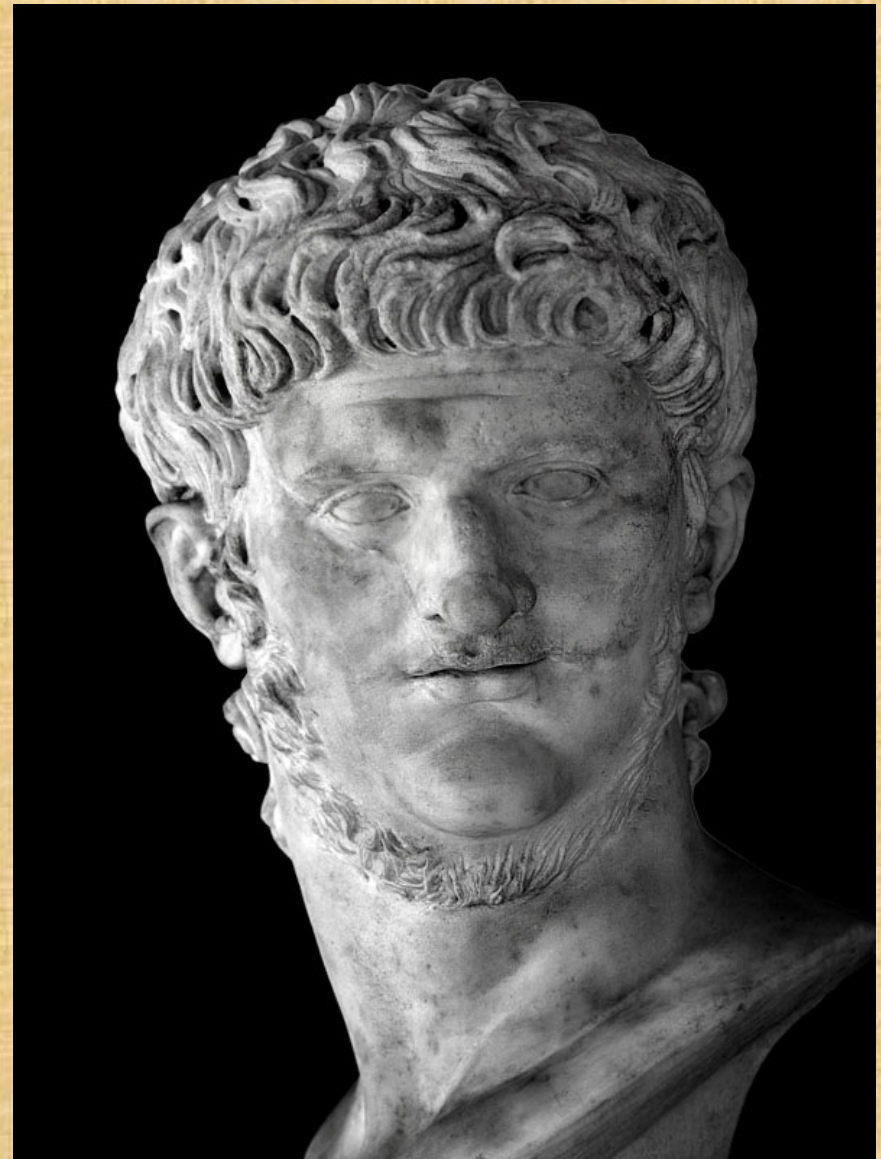
Died: June 9<sup>th</sup> , 98 AD

Parents: Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, Agrippina  
the Younger

Accession: adopted by Claudius  
- the last julio-claudian emperor

Reign:

- influenced by his mother, Seneca and Burrus (Praetorian commander)
- later cruel
- persecuted Christians
- committed an “assisted” suicide



## STATE CULT

-the worship of Genius continued – The Arval Acta

-change of iconography

- reason of the change: difficult to distinguish

- the ***Colossus Neronis*** 30 m bronze statue,  
in the vestibule of his Domus Aurea.





## **PRIVATE CULT**

- the sources fail – texts and monuments created for the public eye, private cults had a well informed insiders – no need of explanatory monuments
- literary sources - Ovid – Augustus, Vitellius
- there is hardly any archaeological evidence of emperor
- Pompeian wall painting
- portraits in private
- sculptured miniature portraits – Herculaneum

## **Imperial libation before private banquets**

- to the living emperor
- 30BC after the conquest of Egypt – the Senatorial Decree – a libation poured to the emperor, not to his Genius, at all banquets, public and private