

## CHAPTER 3

# Nero the Imperial Misfit: Philhellenism in a Rich Man's World

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## Breaking with Tradition

*But he crossed over into Greece, not at all as Flamininus or Mummius or as Agrippa and Augustus, his ancestors, had done, but for the purpose of driving chariots, playing the lyre, making proclamations, and acting in tragedies. Rome, it seems, was not enough for him.*

(Dio 62.8.2–3, trans. Cary).

The emperor seen as an outsider because he forsook the political arena for theatrical spectacle, military prowess for sporting achievement, and cast doubt on Rome's status as centre of the world? Pointedly, this senatorial critic of Nero's penchant for Greek culture was himself from the Greek east, and had even been recalled from Pannonia on the grounds of military incompetence. Cassius Dio's political role models came to Greece as conquerors: T. Quinctius Flamininus (consul 198 and censor 189 BC), victor in 197 BC in the Second Macedonian War; L. Mummius, who had laid waste the flourishing merchant city of Corinth (146 BC); Augustus and Agrippa, victors in the naval battle off Actium (31 BC). In complete contrast, as Elaine Fantham has brilliantly expounded in this volume, Nero's public behavior – for which Tacitus has no words other than “debauchery and opprobrium” (*flagitia et infamia*, *Annals* 14.15.3) – was perceived as shocking, even though poetry and rhetoric before audiences constituted borderline cases juristically and participation in Greek-style contests (*agōnes*) did not strictly speaking incur opprobrium (*infamia*). (The difference between Nero's public contest (*agōn*) and a theater spectacle is defined by Leppin (1992) 143–4: on the *infamia* attached to theater actors, see the Praetorian Edict recorded in Justinian's *Digest* 3.2.1). The status of emperor was incompatible with the roles of artist or chariot-driver: actors in Rome lost their standing as Roman citizens, and the elites were not normally seen at chariot races except as sponsors or fans. What were the thinking and motives behind Nero's

seemingly radical innovations in social practices and rituals, which broke with tradition and fundamentally realigned communication between the emperor and the people? Or are the manipulation and destruction of memory that influence our image of Nero even today (Elsner (1994) 112–27) the explanation for his histrionic self-presentation, which significantly enhanced cultural interpenetration of Greeks and Romans and also brought about a breakthrough in the philhellenism of the adoptive emperors?

## Greek Culture at the Imperial Court

The Roman ideal of practical activity benefiting the state meant that, in spite of the prominence of the “Scipionic Circle” and the customary education of young senators in Greece, engagement with Greek art and culture was seen as the typical activity of foreigners, freedmen, and slaves, and for Romans the stuff of relaxation (*otium*), to be confined to leisure hours. The same applied to sports and Greek gymnastics (Bergmann in this volume). The adjective *φιλέλλην* (*philhellēn*), “Greece-loving,” does not occur as a title of Hellenistic kings; it occurs neither in official communications to Greek cities from Roman magistrates and emperors, nor in decrees of honor dedicated to emperors (Ferrary (1988) 497–526): its attribution to Nero is unique (see below).

Under Augustus, Virgil had famously reserved the art of government for Romans, leaving the less important intellectual and aesthetic arts, the *artes liberales*, to the others (*alii*), predominantly Greeks (*Aeneid* 6.851–52). Nero belonged to these “others.” He sang, painted, tried his hand at sculpture, effortlessly composed poetry for pleasure and played the lyre. But this does not mean that his efforts brought him universal opprobrium. Alexander the Great had played the lyre as well (Suetonius, *Nero* 52.1, 20.1), and mastery of this instrument formed part of upper-class education. In addition, an anonymous panegyric of C. Calpurnius Piso, the Piso who would go on to lead the anti-Nero conspiracy, extolled the young aristocrat’s poetic gift (v. 162–65), his singing to lyre accompaniment (v. 166–77) and his sporting feats (v. 185–89). Martial bestowed on Nero the epithet of learned poet (*poeta doctus*), implying scholarly, formally sophisticated poetic art in the style of Callimachus of Alexandria (*Epigrams* 8.70.8). Nero’s mother Agrippina, who authored her own memoirs, probably encouraged him to read Aratus’ Hellenistic poetry about constellations, in the translation of his grandfather Germanicus, and the eyewitness accounts of his grandfather’s visit to Egypt. (On Germanicus’ authorship of Aratus’ *Phaenomena*, see Sullivan (1985) 79 and for his Egyptian travels, see Tacitus’ *Annals* 2.59–61; for Agrippina’s *commentarii* 4.53.2.) Germanicus, in Egypt without Emperor Tiberius’ permission, had been fêted in Alexandria as benefactor (*euergetēs*) after dispensing corn from the imperial granaries. Transgressing the code of dress and behavior expected of a Roman statesman, he had exchanged the appropriate national garb of boots and toga for sandals and a Greek cloak; and he had sailed up the Nile to Thebes and Elephantine, not out of concern for the province but as a tourist, to see Memphis, the Pyramids, the Colossi of Memnon, and Lake Moeris.

From earliest childhood Nero had individuals around him with personal, official, or intellectual links to Egypt (Nöske 2004). His wet-nurse, Alexandria, was of Greek or Egyptian origin; her son C. Caecina Tuscus, would become prefect of Egypt (*praefectus Aegypti*) under Nero in AD 62–4. In addition, the Stoic philosopher and Egyptian priest

Chaeremon, previously curator of the Musaeum in Alexandria, and author of several books on Egypt, was appointed in 49, together with Alexander of Aegae, to tutor Nero (*Fragments of the Greek Historians* 618). In about AD 50, Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, a native of Alexandria, supporter of Agrippina, and head of the eastern section of the Foreign Office in Rome (*ad legationes et responsa Graeca*), was promoted to head of the Musaeum and high priest (*archiereus*) of the imperial cult in Alexandria: five years later he was made prefect of Egypt. In return, he saw to it when reorganizing the Alexandrian tribes (*phylai*) that the names of the 15 new *phylai* acknowledged Nero, and also had coinage minted showing Nero with a radiate crown (Bergmann (1998) 228). Nero's tutor Seneca also had strong contacts with the province of Egypt through his aunt Helvia, wife of the prefect of Egypt C. Galerius, and had authored a book entitled "On the Geography and Holy Places of Egypt" (*De situ et sacris Aegyptiorum*): he visited Galerius towards the end of the latter's term of office and toured the Nile region (*ad Helviam* 19.1).

Nero's interest in the Hellenistic east and in Egyptian culture contrasted with the Rome-centered conception of the empire under Augustus and Tiberius. Hölscher (2002: 254) has shown that this change is reflected in Nero's iconography. Imperial portraits were intended to convey the self-image of the ruler and ensure his omnipresence, and Nero's portraits as heir-apparent conformed to this dynastic standard. But Nero's imperial portraits present him as ruling over the abundance of life, with a fashionable halo of curly locks like a nimbus surrounding the brow, after the manner of Hellenistic kings (Bergmann in this volume; Hölscher (2002) fig. 134). And in Egypt, Nero was stylized in the "Egyptian" mode after taking office: inscriptions, papyri, and coin legends transmitted new imperial propaganda material by honoring Nero as snake with the double crown of the Pharaohs, the new "presiding spirit" (*agathos daimōn*) of the world (e.g. *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, OGIS 666, near the Sphinx of Giza; Nöske (2004) 233–4).

Nero paved the way, far in advance, for the second great transformation of the Roman world during the Principate, which culminated in the Second Sophistic and the humanitarian *imperium* of the second century (Bowersock (1969) 15–16, 43–44): it was to become "Greco-Roman" in outlook, culture, and learning. It is indicative that Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists* 511–12) attributed the renaissance of Sophistic thinking to Nicetes of Smyrna under Nero, and that his father, Philostratus the Elder, wrote a dialogue *Nero* under the Antonines (Suda entry Philostratus the Elder, no. 422 Adler). The Second Sophistic was preceded by a rapprochement between politics and literature, during which, Suetonius tells us, Nero's first year of rule saw numerous teachers of rhetoric (*professores, doctores*) from the lowest social strata rise to senatorial rank and the highest offices (*On Rhetoricians* 1: cf. Mratschek (1993) 14–40). Nero's tutor Seneca, son of a rhetoric teacher from Corduba, was the first of these new men who owed their wealth and position at the imperial court to their eloquence.

### ***Caesar Omnia Habet: It's a Rich Man's World***

It was tempting for Suetonius (*Nero* 1; 4; 6.3) to suggest that Nero had inherited the bulk of his "faults" from his father's side of the family, the Domitii Ahenobarbi, saying nothing about his maternal, Augustan lineage. His love of horseracing came

from his paternal grandfather and father. He grew up in the household of his aunt, Domitia Lepida, where his tutors (*paedagogoi*) were a dancer and a barber; as guest of his other aunt Domitia he became acquainted with the famous actor, Paris (Tacitus, *Annals* 13.19.3). Nero lived in the glitter of a rich man's world – irrespective of the fact that after his father's death in AD 40 Suetonius downgrades him to “almost destitute and needy,” because Caligula had swindled him out of his inheritance (*Nero* 6.3). The truth was that Domitia Lepida indulged Nero with lavish pocket-money (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.64). His aesthetic culture derived not from Greece itself, but from the Greek-influenced milieu round the Bay of Naples, where the “top ten thousand” had their villas (Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 182–3). Lepida and her sister Domitia owned palatial homes in fashionable Baiae and near Ravenna and Puteoli, large estates in Calabria, and gardens washed by the Tiber (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.65.1 and Dio 61.17.1–2 report on the landholdings of Nero's aunts: see Mratschek (1993) 51–2). In the late 30s, litigation between Nero's father and his sister Domitia had been quashed as vexatious “on grounds of the superabundant wealth of both parties” (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.1.50). At Actium, the Domitii Ahenobarbi had switched allegiance to Octavian's side in good time; and Nero's mother, after returning from exile in AD 41, made two profitable marriages, first to the millionaire Passienus Crispus, then to the Emperor Claudius. Under Claudius, Nero not only regained his paternal legacy, but benefited to the tune of 200 million sesterces through his slave-trading stepfather (cf. Suetonius' *Life of Passienus Crispus*, and the epigraphic evidence from *Die Inschriften von Ephesos (IvEph)* 3025).

Once emperor, Nero was immeasurably wealthy: he not only became Africa's biggest landowner, having “inherited” half of the province, but could afford, thanks to his mother's huge bequest, to put 60 million sesterces of his private income at the state's disposal annually during the Armenia crisis (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.18.3). During Tiridates' state visit to Rome, Nero spent 800,000 sesterces daily and also handed the newly crowned Armenian king 100 million more as a parting present; the latter reciprocated with twice that amount (Suetonius, *Nero* 30.2; Dio 63.2.1, 63.6.5; Mratschek (1993) 52–4). No wonder Seneca could argue that everything belonged to Caesar: the implied equivalence between the imperial treasury (*fiscus*) and patrimony (*patrimonium*) is perfectly clear. “Caesar ‘has’ everything: his *fiscus* only his own private property; and all things are subject to his control (*imperium*), in the *patrimonium* (only) his personal property” (*On Benefits* 7.6.3, see Millar (2001) 198 and Levick (1986) 201). Tacitus indeed considered it immaterial whether funds flowed into the state coffers, the *aerarium*, or the emperor's pocket, the *fiscus* (*Annals* 6.2.1). (On the imperial finances more generally, see Lavan in this volume.)

### Like the Gleaming Sun

The desire to outdo his predecessors influenced Nero's foreign policy and costly construction program (see D. Braund in this volume). Models can be found in his family history both for his eastern policy and for the coronation of the Armenian prince Tiridates. In AD 18, on his mission to the east, Germanicus had solved the disputed succession in Armenia by installing Zeno-Artaxias as ruler (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.56.2, 64.1). Like him, Nero was accorded a semi-triumph, an *ovatio*, following his legate Corbulo's

settlement with the Parthians in AD 55. Or should Tiridates' Roman coronation even be read as a bid by Nero for an Armenian triumph in compensation for that denied long ago by the Senate to his ancestor M. Antonius? Nero's great-grandfather Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus had not only participated in the Parthian War as a member of Mark Antony's general staff, but had also been one of the consuls of 32 BC who had petitioned for a triumph (Dio 49.41.4–5). What is certain is that Nero styled the conquest of Artaxata and expulsion of Tiridates in AD 58 as a victory over the Parthians (Tacitus, *Annals* 13.41).

The theme of Nero as victor is visualized clearly on the marble reliefs in the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, in a typical Hellenistic figuration of Roman imperial authority: the emperor, flanked by a statue of a winged Nike with a trophy (*tropaeum*) is presented in heroic nudity, equipped only with helmet, war-cloak and sword, in the act of taking the province of a personified Armenia prisoner (Reynolds (1981) 325; Smith (1987) 132–3, plate 14, no. 7). Another relief shows him as a general, in armor and military cloak (*paludamentum*), with his helmet lying at his feet, standing before a goddess, Fortuna or Pax, who has the face and the diadem of his mother Agrippina, receiving a laurel crown from her (Smith (1987) 127–32, plate 24, no. 11; Erim (1989) 64, fig. 91). The goddess's gesture as she crowns him victor signifies amity (*concordia*) and the "horn of plenty" (*cornucopia*) in her left hand promises wealth and abundance. The work may well have been officially commissioned, as a comparable scene is depicted on the cameo of the Shrine of the Three Magi in Cologne Cathedral (Eck (1993) 63, with reference to Megow (1987) 213–14, plate 35.1.2: on the front cover of this volume). A further, now lost, relief showed Nero with the sun god Helios (Reynolds 324, no. 9, plate 12d). These sculptures show us divine emperors as the Greek east saw them, evoking a contented Greek world under Roman rule.

Depicting oneself as a "New Helios" was not Nero's invention. Under the influence of Stoic and Greek thinking, Mark Antony, Julius Caesar, and Augustus had all become associated with the solar symbolism that represented the sun god as observer of the human world and guardian of the cosmic order. This solar symbolism served to legitimize the universalist aspirations of Hellenistic world rule and had its origins in ruler cult. Before Nero, both Caligula and Alexander, conqueror of the east, had already played the role of "New Helios": and Octavian too had taken the role of Phoebus Apollo at a Twelve Gods Festival (*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (SIG<sup>3</sup>) 798; Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 13.95; Suetonius, *Augustus* 70.1; Weinstock (1971) 381–4). In addition the sun cult was established in Rome: the calendar under Augustus listed a regular sacrifice to Sol on August 9, whose temple occupied a prominent site opposite the Ara Pacis, near the historic Altar of Providence, and whose priesthood bore the title of priests of the sun (Beard et al. (2000) 259).

Nero was venerated as "New Helios" only in the Greek east, in Boeotia (SIG<sup>3</sup> 814, 1.34) and Pisidia (*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* (IGR) 3.345), and in a Greek epigram (*Anthologia Palatina* 9.178). It seems to have been Seneca, Nero's tutor, who transferred the sun god identification to his pupil and inserted it into the official schedule of events celebrating his accession to the throne in 54 (though see below on the date of this passage).

In the *Apocolocyntosis*, Phoebus Apollo likens the new emperor's arrival (*adventus*) to his own epiphany as the dawning sun; all subsequent visual programs in imperial



panegyrics are anticipated here in the visualization of Nero as Sol's alter ego (4.25–33, trans. Eden):

25        qualis discutiens fugientia Lucifer astra  
              aut qualis surgit redeuntibus Hesperus astris,  
              qualis, cum primum tenebris Aurora solutis  
              induxit rubicunda diem, Sol aspicit orbem  
              lucidus et primos a carcere concitat axes:  
 30        talis Caesar adest, talem iam Roma Neronem  
              aspiciet. flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso  
              vultus et adfuso cervix formosa capillo.

Like the Morning Star, as he rises scattering the stars in flight, or like the Evening Star, as he rises when the stars return (at dusk), like the gleaming Sun, as soon as rosy Dawn has dispelled the shadows and led in the day, as he gazes on the world and begins to whip up his chariot from the starting-barrier: such a Caesar is at hand, such a Nero shall Rome now gaze upon. His radiant face blazes with gentle brilliance and his shapely neck with flowing hair.

Inspiration for this came from Nero's physical appearance and musical talent: the imperial bard with his blue-grey eyes and strikingly blond rows of ringlets sweeping down in the Greek manner, as Suetonius characterizes him (*Nero* 51.1–2), resembled “gold-gleaming Phoebus” (v. 22–3; 30–31). The god prophesied for Nero the things Nero most craved, immortality and imperishable glory (v. 21; cf. *Nero* 55). Memories of the intellectual culture of the past in Virgil's *Aeneid* establish parallels between Augustus and Nero. Like Anchises in the underworld of *Aeneid* 6, Phoebus Apollo here prophesies “happy ages” (*felicia . . . saecula*, v. 23–4) for the future ruler. But there is irony in the fact that it was evidently Nero himself, with a typical artist's narcissism, who launched the solar metaphor into circulation, not on his accession, but in AD 59, after the murder of Agrippina. From that point on, there are rapidly multiplying evocations of a Golden Age in which Nero gave free rein to his creativity as charioteer and singer, and was hailed by Lucan as a “successful Phaëthon” (Lucan, *Civil War* 1.47–52; Champlin (2003) suggests that the song of Apollo in the *Apocolocyntosis* was a late addition to the sketch, interpolated in the 60s; for a contrasting view, see Nauta (2010)).

## Greek Theatrical Culture in Rome

Nero initiated new-style festivals, largely Greek in character, that afforded him the opportunity for artistic performances aimed – unacceptably, by traditional standards – at grandiose self-presentation and constant direct contact with the public. This new self-promotional activity and Nero's claims to power were reflected in a far-reaching realignment of the communicative relations between emperor and people. In AD 59, at the Juvenalia festival (convened to commemorate the shaving of the emperor's first beard), Nero appeared for the first time as a citharode in a semi-public arena. Participants in the stage action had before concealed their identity behind masks, but this anonymity was broken when Nero ordered them to remove their masks and show themselves to the plebs (Dio 61.19.3). An innovation from Greek theatrical culture came only



a year later at the Neronia, in the musical competitions that he introduced alongside gymnastic and horseracing contests “on the Greek model” (Suetonius, *Nero* 12.3; *Roman Imperial Coinage* (RIC) I 171). These disciplines had not been included in the games dedicated to Apollo Actiacus under Augustus, and subsequently gave Nero his chance to appear publicly in person. During contests (*agōnes*), the event manager, *agōnothetēs*, would appear dressed in the Greek manner. Conservative political circles were offended by Rome’s transformation into a Greek city for the duration of the festival. It was considered fashionable to adapt one’s outer clothing at these games in recognition of the special atmosphere, and the majority of the urban population of Rome, according to Tacitus (*Annals* 14.21.4), went about wearing Greek garb. In an effort to induce the reluctant Roman aristocracy to join in, Nero had a gymnasium built near his baths and, following Greek custom, donated the unguents used there (Dio 61.21.1; Tacitus, *Annals* 14.47; see Beste and von Hesberg in this volume). He selected the “Greek city” of Naples for the dress rehearsal of his public debut; and it was from the Alexandrians that he drew the most applause (Suetonius, *Nero* 20.3). Another year passed before he let the Roman public see him on the stage, during the second *Neroneus agōn*, as a citharode, although he modestly declared that he had actually come forward as an orator and had only sung because carried away emotionally by his audience (Tacitus, *Annals* 16.4). It seems that it was not the desire to be accepted by the plebs, but his idiosyncratic conception of himself as a tragic artist with a Greek repertoire that motivated Nero’s support for Greek-style competitions, for he also excluded pantomime, a favorite with the general public (Tacitus, *Annals* 14.21.4: on Nero’s later career as “tragic” artist, see Bartsch (1994) 36–62).

### Lord of the Golden Age

Nero assumed the role of lord of a new Golden Age in the summer of AD 64 when he began the task of transforming the burnt-out city centre into his vision of a new Rome, with a luxurious residence surrounded by 50 hectares of parkland (see Beste and von Hesberg in this volume). The principal building stood on the Oppian hill slope, its 365-meter-long show façade looking down on a lake and park to the south. The few surviving traces of this imperial palace, the “Golden House,” testify to its unprecedentedly expensive and innovative architecture, construction techniques, and furnishings: Suetonius was prompted to comment, “Nowhere was Nero as extravagant as when building” (*Nero* 31.1–2). In the interior, “everything was plated in gold and colorfully decorated with precious stones and mother-of-pearl.” The main banqueting-room, found during fresh excavations in 2009, “was circular, and (its ceiling) revolved day and night like the universe itself.” The Golden House was not a dwelling, but an extensive Roman *villa suburbana* resembling the country houses in the Bay of Naples: it overlooked fields and ponds, “and an air of solitude was given by wooded ground alternating with clear tracts and open landscapes” (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.42.1).

The Domus Aurea was a retreat designed for the cultivated leisure (*otium*) of high society – which by Roman tradition meant literary pursuits – and had its own gymnasium: the Roman villa since the Republic had drawn on the Hellenistic world for architectural ideas, artificial lakes, and parkland with animals, for its art collections, its libraries, its shaded garden pleasantries for philosophical discussion. (On Hellenistic and oriental

models for the Golden House, see Elsner (1994) and Bergmann (1994) 24.) Nero and his architects, using their artistic imagination (*per artem*), simply transplanted this rural ambience (*natura*) into the capital city. Their “error” was that in so doing they converted Rome’s political nerve-centre into a particularly exclusive holiday complex. When Nero declared, “Now, I can at last begin to live like a human being” (Suetonius, *Nero* 31.2), thereby redefining the seat of government as a place of omnipresent *otium*, he raised hackles among his own kind.

Far more disturbing to Nero’s peers than the emperor’s luxurious home and adoption of the Greek lifestyle was the unparalleled act of self-aggrandizement represented by the larger-than-life bronze statue that the Greek sculptor Zenodorus created for the vestibule of the Domus Aurea: it portrayed the emperor, with radiate crown, in the guise of the sun god, his hand on a helmsman’s tiller and globe (reconstruction by Bergmann (1994), fig. 10). Pliny the Elder saw it under construction in the sculptor’s workshop (*Natural History* 34.45). Although it has not been established whether this colossus was in fact erected on the Via Sacra during Nero’s lifetime, the thinking behind it is undisputed. Whereas the Domus Aurea evoked the magical gold-gleaming palace of the sun god in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (2.1–2), here the Nero of Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis* (4.28, 30–31), at once world ruler and salvation-bringer, looked down on Rome from above like Sol on his world. At 119.5 feet (over 35 meters) high, the nude statue with the features of the final Nero portrait type is the largest in antiquity, surpassing even the famous Colossus of Rhodes, which may have been its model; the New York Statue of Liberty, without plinth, measures 46.5 m. Nero’s colossus not only dominated the ensemble of palace buildings between the Palatine and Oppian hills, but gleamed brightly in the sun with its coating of gold, conspicuous from all over the city as the incarnated god of the Golden Age (Champlin (2003) 131–2). The observer would recognize at once that the artificial landscape at its feet, as depicted by Suetonius (*Nero* 31), was a microcosm of the world in a new paradisiacal existence: a lake surrounded by miniature cities, farms and wild countryside, humans and animals, representing the *Imperium Romanum*, with the Mediterranean Sea at its heart. And the emperor was following Greek tradition when in AD 64 he invited the entire city to come there for festivities and feasting (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.3.1; Schmitt Pantel (1997)).

There are further creative discourses between poetic panegyrics to rulers and their visual realizations, prompted by the theatricality of ancient culture. Suetonius (*Nero* 13.1) lists the coronation ceremony for Tiridates, the Armenian prince, among the category of “spectacles” (*spectacula*). These coronation rites, following Tiridates’ triumphal entry into Rome in the summer of AD 66, sealed the compromise under which Armenia became a Roman client kingdom governed by a Parthian dynasty. The fruit of diplomatic communication between Rome and Parthia, the crowning of Tiridates represented a face-saving solution for both major powers. This coronation marked the international recognition of a legitimate monarch when Nero enacted the formal coronation by replacing Tiridates’ tiara, symbol of Armenian rule, with the diadem of an independent Hellenistic ruler (Suetonius, *Nero* 13.2). With the illumination of the city, rejoicing crowds, supplications, games, Nero’s salutation as *imperator* and the dedication on the Capitol of a laurel wreath for Jupiter, the coronation successfully created the atmosphere of a triumph even though none had actually been sanctioned by the Senate. The closing of the doors of the temple of Janus brought back memories of Augustus, and conveyed

the message that the emperor's victory in the eastern war signalled the end of all other wars too (e.g. *Roman Imperial Coins* (RIC<sup>2</sup>) Nero, no. 50–51; Heil (1997) 133–4; D. Braund in this volume).

This “Golden Day” (*dies aureus*) illustrates the depth of Nero's passion for theatrical effects, in particular glamorous lighting. Foggy weather on the day scheduled for the coronation meant swift postponement of the ceremony (*Nero* 13.1). The sun played a crucial role in both stagings, in the Forum and in the Theater of Pompey. Did Nero here stage his own apotheosis, using solar symbolism in the performance of the coronation ritual? Spotlit by the rising sun, Nero appeared at dawn like the vision (*theōria*) of the sun god, representing the culmination of a ritualized process (Elsner (2007) 23–4). Even the normally sober Cassius Dio (63.4.2) was so captivated by the lighting effects that to describe their impact he momentarily forsook the historian's perspective for that of an on-the-spot spectator: Nero, clad in the *triumphator's* purple, appeared in the Forum as the first rays of the rising sun hit the white-clad multitude and reflected off the soldiers' metallic armour, the shimmering weapons and standards. Falling full on the emperor's face, the rays highlighted his fair hair and the purple robe in a memorable image, as Tiridates paid obeisance to him saying: “I have come to you, my god, worshipping you as I do Mithras” (i.e. my sun; Dio 63.5.2). Champlin ((2003) 92, 226–9) and Bergmann ((1994) 17) have shown fascinatingly, although in different ways, that Nero's metaphorical use of light in this theatrical staging did not aim at the unified political or religious concept of a cosmic god-ruler (L'Orange (1942)), but rather at a multi-layered complex of Parthian, Hellenistic, and Roman ideas. The two actors – Nero as “initiant” into the religion of Mithras, and Tiridates as priest of the Persian god of light – here enacted a fusion of Roman triumph and Parthian ceremony which culminated in a resplendent theatrical presentation of the living ruler as the new sun god, and of the eastern magus worshipping the sun. According to Pliny, a tenacious rumour maintained that Nero had been initiated by Tiridates into the religion of Zoroaster and Mithras (*Natural History* 30.16–17).

The virtual theater performance in the Forum continued in the real theater: once again the masses succumbed to the illusion of seeing Nero in the sun's place when they raised their gaze skywards. Exactly as in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, an emblem of Nero embroidered in gold on the purple sun canopy above the Theater of Pompey showed him driving the sun's chariot up the sky amidst a host of twinkling stars and looking down on the gleaming gold of the theater's interior (Dio 63.6.2). The gilding of the theater, the Domus Aurea, the “Golden Day,” and the fire-gilded Nero portrait (Born and Stemmer (1996) on the “golden Nero”) all symbolize the radiance of the sun god, though without thereby implying an oriental solar monarchy. Nero used the interaction of poetry and visual spectacle to suggest that his old tutor's prophecy and the public's expectations as he took up the rule had been fulfilled: Phoebus Apollo, the poetry-making sun god, was the herald (*vates*) of Nero's reign.

### Festival Victor and Benefactor of all Greeks

Since the Republic the Domitii Ahenobarbi, as patrons of Greek cities, had built up networks in the Aegean in places such as Samos, Miletus, Chios, Ephesus, and during

the early Principate, also in Buthrotum in Epirus (Carlsen (2006) 189, 206–13). Nero as emperor continued this family tradition, but in his own way, so that it served his self-fulfillment as an artist. In late summer of AD 66 he left Rome and travelled to Greece, home of musical, dramatic, and equestrian contests, to demonstrate there his skills as charioteer and bard before what could be regarded a connoisseur audience. It was his express will to return home as *periodonikēs*, a circuit victor in all the great festivals. The Grand Tour of the early empire comprised six festivals – the four Panhellenic Games at Olympia (Olympics), Delphi (Pythia), Argos (Nemeia), and Corinth (Isthmia), along with the Actia at Nicopolis and Heraia at Argos (Kennell 1988). For Nero's benefit, all six were exceptionally scheduled for a single year, partly to suit the imperial itinerary, and partly to make it possible to surpass the existing criterion for a *periodonikēs*, which stipulated victory at “only” four of the six festivals in the cycle (Gallivan (1973) 231–2; Kennell (1988) 250).

On his tour, the artist Nero flouted social conventions by recruiting most of his huge retinue from varied social rankings, including a 5000-strong clique made up of musicians and freedmen and called *Augustani* (Dio 63.8.4; Bradley (1979); Meier (2008) 566–7 provides an excellent synopsis of the route taken by Nero and his entourage). Nothing illuminates the shift of political power between emperor and Senate aristocracy more tellingly than the Neronian court's geographic mobility, in that power now resided not with the Senate in Rome but with Nero's travelling entourage in the provinces, mostly composed of persons of low social status. This forfeited the emperor's acceptance by the upper social strata. Nero's obsessive enthusiasm for all things Greek only increased alienation: this became evident, for instance, when he favored the city emissaries over his own compatriots, saying that “only the Greeks really knew how to listen and . . . were worthy of his art” (Suetonius, *Nero* 22.3).

Philhellenes like Cicero had made it a maxim that as the Greeks were the cradle of culture and civilization they merited especially favorable treatment (see, e.g., *Letters to his Brother Quintus* 1.1). It is characteristic of Nero's style of government that he took the opportunity to confer autonomy and freedom from taxation on the province of Achaia by formal proclamation issued as the highlight of his tour at the Isthmus of Corinth. The speech that Nero delivered on 28 November 67 proclaiming freedom for Greece, which is the only imperial speech accessible to us in full and in its official form, may have been personally drafted by the emperor, for Seneca, Nero's speechwriter, had died two years earlier. It has been judged by Griffin (2001) 41) to be “perfectly competent, even elegant at times, if idiosyncratic and somewhat wanting in tact.” Along with this speech, preserved in inscription, the decree of Acraephia in Boeotia, honoring Nero as “philhellene” (φιλέλληνη) – the only decree known to date that honors a Roman ruler in this way – has come down to us. Unlike Augustus and Tiberius, and to the indignation of leading Romans, Nero addressed Greek audiences in Greek and – like the Hellenistic kings – styled himself as their country's benefactor.

A close look at Nero's speech is crucial for unpicking his attitudes to philhellenism:

An unexpected gift (*dōrea*), Hellenes, – though indeed there is nothing which cannot be hoped for from my munificence (*megalophrosynē*) – I grant to you, so great that you would not have dared to ask for it. All you Hellenes who inhabit Achaia and what has up to now been called the Peloponnese, receive freedom (*eleutheria*) and exemption from tribute

(*aneisphoria*), which you did not all enjoy even in the period of your good fortune; for you were subject either to others or to each other. Would that I had been able to provide this gift when Greece was flourishing, so that more people might have enjoyed my favour (*charis*); for that I blame the passage of time for having reduced in advance the magnitude of my favour. And now I do you a service not through pity but through goodwill (*eunoia*), and I give thanks to your gods, of whose care for me I have had proof on land and sea, for enabling me to confer so great a benefit. For other rulers have freed cities, [but only Nero] a province. (SIG<sup>3</sup> 814, Smallwood (1967) no. 64 = Sherk (2001) no. 71, trans. Millar (2001) 430)

Nero here clearly modeled himself on T. Quinctius Flamininus, the conqueror of the Macedonians, who had done exactly the same thing 262 years before, in precisely the same place. Nero's proclamation of freedom for Greece has crucial significance in understanding his philhellenism. Yet opinions differ on the style and impact of Nero's address. Cizek discerns elements of Hellenistic ruler concepts ((1972) 87–8); for Bergmann the speech is an affront to contemporary Greeks and a measure of Nero's "megalomania" ((2002) 273, 281–3). Alcock considers Nero to be propagating here "a new conception of Greece... not as a land of the past, but as part of the imperial present" ((1994) 105).

In reality, the central concern of Nero's philhellenism was his own position as ruler and that of his court as a political and cultural focus. Unlike the philhellene Hadrian, Nero forgot to visit Athens, cradle of Greek culture, and never went to Sparta. Though Alcock ((1994) 105) attributes this omission to Nero's deliberate preference for the new "Roman" province of Achaëa and of Corinth, its capital, we might rather agree with Champlin ((2003) 54) that in fact Nero's "vaunted 'philhellenism' was sharply limited." Nero did not feel the urge to visit and admire the monuments and historical scenes of classical Greek culture, but instead desired to become the subject of admiration himself.

The key to this interpretation lies in the speech's style and in the vocabulary of imperial magnanimity (*megalophrosynē*), which ranked among the virtues of rulers. Nero's address conformed to the conventions and established code of Hellenistic rulers, showing Strabo (9.2.2 C) to have been right in his thesis that Greek educational background (*paideia*) was a prerequisite for the successful exercise of hegemony over the Greeks. Monarchical rule was in Greek eyes unworthy in principle of a free man, and acceptable only if the Hellenistic ruler reacted sensitively and proved in practice to be a benefactor (*euergetēs*) and protector (*prostatēs*) by providing endowments or reducing taxes; the ultimate mark of favor was to declare a town free, a tradition that had been upheld in the past by Sulla, Caesar, and Augustus (Bringmann (1993); Millar (2001) 430). Like them, Nero presented himself to the Greek cities as a benefactor, and brought them favor, seeking to outdo his predecessors by granting tax remission and freedom, not to a single city but to an *entire province*. A further exceptional gesture was that he granted the privilege (*dōrea*) spontaneously, not on petition. Hoping to perpetuate the memory of this exceptional largesse, Nero even renamed the Peloponnese after himself as "Nero's island," *Nerōnos nēsos*.

Euergetism is an anthropological concept denoting exchange of gifts on a basis of reciprocity in both social and political terms. The inscription accordingly is in two parts: the official version of Nero's edict and proclamation of freedom (quoted above); and the decree of Acraëphia honoring the emperor. Nero used the climate of expectancy associated with euergetism as a legitimization strategy for dealing with the provincial

dignitaries, because exceptional benefits bestowed on cities, such as the freeing of a polis, might lead to divine honors for the ruler (Habicht (1970) 160–79; Chaniotis (2006)). Nero here again would have been modeling himself on Flamininus, who at the Isthmian Games of 196 BC had proclaimed the freedom of the Hellenes, thereby earning himself posthumous divinization. This precedent was copied so assiduously that the Greeks even found themselves obliged to repeat the Isthmian Games in the winter of 67 (Polybius 18.46; Pfeilschifter (2005) 278–324). In relation to the empire as a whole, the *princeps* now appeared as “lord of the entire world” (1.31) and “new Helios shining upon the Greeks” (1.33). The decisive point, however, is that the high priest, Epaminondas, expressed communal gratitude for this exceptional bounty by petitioning that Nero – uniquely, on present knowledge, in decrees of honor and official documents – should be honored as “the one and only, the *greatest philhellene emperor* in living memory” (1.40–41: εἷς καὶ μόνος τῶν ἀπ’ αἰῶνος αὐτοκράτωρ μέγιστος φιλέλληνα) and “benefactor of Greece” (1.34–5: προ<η>ρημένος εὐεργετεῖν τὴν Ἑλ<λ>άδα). Nero was accorded an altar and statues in his role as Zeus Eleutherios, inscribed: “To Zeus, the Deliverer Nero, forever.” Statues of Nero and his wife, the “goddess” Statilia Messalina (1.50–53), were to be erected in the temple of the indigenous Apollo Ptoos. Greek intellectuals such as Plutarch of Chaeronea (*Moralia* 32.567F–568A; Swain (1996) 149) – who may have encountered Nero during his Greek travels – came to hold the view that Nero’s crimes would be compensated for by his impressive act of philhellenic magnanimity.

In view of the Roman ruling class’s opposition, it is possible also that Nero’s nostalgic proclamation of Greek freedom was a move towards acquiring a new power base, an alternative body of support in the east to uphold imperial authority. In this he was at least partly successful. Although the Greek elites may well have been angered by Nero’s arbitrary interference in their traditional festivals and by the lavish rewards and Roman citizenships granted to the competitions’ judges, on balance what counted far more was his popularity as a citharode and friend of the Parthians in the east, even after his death. This view is supported by the appearance of no fewer than three “fake” Neroness, of whom one – Terentius Maximus – was known by a young Suetonius in the AD 80s (*Nero* 57.2; cf. Tacitus, *Histories* 2.8–9). The legend of Nero’s return lasted for hundreds of years after the emperor’s death: Augustine of Hippo (*City of God* 20.19, p. 450, 1.18–25 Dombart-Kalb) wrote of the legend as a popular belief in AD 426. Romans however, for their part, were bound to regard Greece’s new legal parity with Italy as an affront provoking outright opposition.

### The Last Act: Triumph and On-Stage Death

In his last years, Nero suffered from a bad press. Examples of his “un-Roman” predilection for Greek culture were becoming abundant, a development trumpeted in self-fulfilling hostile polemic as “evidence” of diminishing acceptance of his rule. The sun’s radiant light, interpreted as a bad omen at the time of Nero’s birth (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.1), nevertheless regularly appeared in the emperor’s radiate crown on his coinage (e.g., later on the “antoninianus” coin: see the cover art, with description, of the *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4 (2011), edited by Ralph W. Mathisen). In AD 143 Aelius Aristides

(*Roman Oration* 103) saw the sun as a metaphor for Roman law and order, personified in the emperor – perhaps Antoninus Pius, who wore a radiate nimbus as a sign of the dawning of a new age (Bergmann (1998) 243–4) – who shone “like a brilliant light” upon private and public affairs. But Nero’s radiate crowns and his unpopular idea, expressed before his death (Dio 63.27.2), of retiring to Alexandria were embarrassingly reminiscent of his ancestor Mark Antony, who reputedly wanted his capital moved there, and who emphasized the cosmic significance of his domination by naming his children Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene. Like Mark Antony, Nero was *philalexandros*: he ordered that a bronze statue of Alexander by Lysippus should be gilded (Pliny, *Natural History* 37.63). But the designation of the emperor’s new legion as “phalanx of Alexander” (Suetonius, *Nero* 19.2) invited ironic reflection on the Macedonian’s martial charisma, as well as on the questionable deaths of his generals by execution. The lavish funeral accorded in AD 65 to Poppaea Sabina – in whose honor Nero reportedly had a year’s supply of incense burnt (Pliny, *Natural History* 12.83) – caused offence, because Nero did not have the empress’s body cremated, following ancient Roman custom, but instead had it embalmed and mummified “in the manner of foreign [i.e. Hellenistic] kings” (Tacitus, *Annals* 16.6.2). Even the emperor’s grand Greek art theft, securing him some 500 bronzes from Delphi for his Golden House, indicates a near-obsessive appropriation of things Greek (Pausanias 10.7.1; 10.19.2; cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 34.84, with Swain (1996) 344–5 and Strocka (2002)).

The canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, for which Nero made the first spade-cut (Suetonius, *Nero* 19.2), was a useful project, intended to spare seamen the hazardous circumnavigation of the Peloponnese and to expedite transmission of materials and information between east and west. Traces of Nero’s endeavors were found as late as the nineteenth century, when the modern canal was cut (Alcock (1993) 141–2, fig. 53). Suetonius (*Nero* 31.7) criticizes the vast expenditure (*impendiorum furor*) that Nero authorized for monumental building projects or for presentation of his art, finally bankrupting the state; to resuscitate it, his successor needed 4,000 million sesterces (following Vacher’s edition of Suetonius *Vespasian* 16.3, which corrects *quadringenties milies* (40,000 million HS) to *quadragies milies* (4,000 million HS)); the most painstaking discussion of the “problem of finance” is Griffin (1984) 197–200. On wealth as qualification for acquisition and maintenance of the Principate, see Mratschek (1993) 40–84; on Nero’s bankruptcy 54–55 and 66).

Yet the pomp and ceremony (*pompa, tryphē*) used in Nero’s image-building, and dismissed in Rome as mere *luxuria*, had its origin in the Hellenistic vision of ideal rule. An integral component in Hellenistic monarchy, it found expression in complex interactions between the expectations of the subjects and the reactions of the ruler (Heinen 1983). A key aspect of Nero’s political suicide, along with financial ruin, lay in the eccentric alienating effects and overall creative remolding of the ancient Roman triumph after his return from Greece. (Meier (2008) 599–600 characterizes this “provocative” and “ludicrous”; Holland (2000) 222 “a blasphemous insult” to the Senate. Beard (2007) 268–72 meticulously lists full details of Nero’s “bizarre triumphal ceremony” and distinguishes them from standard ritual.) Nero’s return to Rome was, as Griffin (2001: 163) and Fantham (in this volume) have demonstrated, “the triumph of an artist”; all Rome was his stage-set. But it was also the role of a *hieronikēs*, a Greek festival victor of classical times, that Nero assumed when he used the triumphal chariot

of Augustus to make his formal entry (*eiselasis*) into the city through a breach in the city walls: first in Naples and then in Rome. To me, the key point in relation to Nero seems to be his reception of Hellenistic elements, observed in triumphal processions even under the Republic (see Flower (2001) 107–9 and Hölscher (1990) 73–84). Hellenism celebrated in this way the arrival of the World Savior (*sōtēr*), to whom homage would be paid under the guise of Apollo or Asclepius (Dio 63.20.5; Versnel (1970) 385). Nero's entry to Rome was "not a real triumph, nor was it a parody mocking the greatest of Roman honours" (Champlin (2003) 234). Both Nero's philhellenism and the sheer unworldliness are evident in his decision to fuse in return to Rome in AD 67 models from both Greek and Roman culture into an artificial new work of performance art.

Suetonius tells us that Nero sought to match Apollo with his singing and Sol with his chariot-driving (*Nero* 53). Accordingly it was only logical that he dedicated his victory prizes, reputedly 1808 in number, either to Apollo, god of song, or to Sol, god of chariot-racers. Suetonius (*Nero* 25.2) also says Nero chose to reverse the canonical procession route of the triumph, driving from the Circus Maximus via the Velabrum to the Palatine Hill. The climax and end of Nero's new-style triumphal procession was not the temple of Jupiter, the state's supreme god, on the Capitol (according to Dio 63.20.4 this was an interim stop that Suetonius leaves unmentioned), but the temple of his own patron, Apollo. A precedent existed in that Virgil, in his shield description (*Aeneid* 8.720; Miller (2009) 54–94), had moved the location of the post-Actium triumph to the temple of Apollo Palatinus, on the threshold of which Augustus would examine the tributes of conquered peoples before having them affixed to the door posts of the temple in dedication. Now Nero, the new victor, would not appear as a personification of Jupiter, but in the role of Apollo: over the purple triumphal robe he wore a cloak (*chlamys*) embroidered with stars of gold; his head bore not a laurel wreath but an Olympic wreath of olive leaves, his hand held the Delphic laurel; the customary ivory scepter, however, is not mentioned (Suetonius, *Nero* 25.1; Dio 63.20.3; Versnel (1970) 56–7).

This Greek recasting – "alienation" or *Verfremdung* in Brecht's sense – of the ancient Roman triumph signaled vividly to the spectators that victory in art and sport was in no way inferior to military victory in politics, and that it was Nero, "as the first among all Romans since the world began," who had won this victory. As "universal victor" (*pantonikēs*) in all the Hellenic contests, Nero had not only outshone the victors of the four classical festivals (*periodonikai*): he also no longer bothered to enumerate his victories in comparison to the threefold triumph of Octavian in 29 BC and of Romulus at the beginning of the triumphal Fasti.

Nero laid out his prizes round the base of the obelisk from the temple of Sol in Heliopolis, then started chariot-racing round it, bringing the games to their climax (Dio 63.21.1). But this new interpretation and the public disavowal of both the Roman and Greek elites' most important rituals – the wall breach, which for the Greeks bound up their very identity with their "sacred" games, and the triumph, which for Romans inalienably represented their claim to rule and their political achievements – cost Nero the consent of the politically influential in both east and west. "What victory could possibly be more futile" asked Senator Cassius Dio, "than that which earned Nero the olive branch (in Olympia), the laurel (in Delphi), the ivy branch (at the Nemean Games) and the pine wreath (at the Isthmian Games), but deprived him of the political crown?" (63.9.3; Blech (1982) 127–38).

Nero died a stacy death by his own hand. His taste for Hellenic culture and Hellenic ostentation was duly reflected in the committal of his body by his Egyptian nurses and his Greek freedwoman Acte, with Greek funerary pomp, to a sumptuous sarcophagus of red-veined Egyptian porphyry valued at 200,000 sesterces (Suetonius, *Nero* 50). Even so, the key to understanding Nero is not simply his philhellenism, which was, as it were, purposefully designed, an “artificial product” that created a symbiosis of Greek and Roman culture with significance for the future. It is also Nero’s aesthetic experimentation, the means by which he persistently extended the projection of a godlike image until it burst the acceptable confines of ambition. Like his great role-model Augustus, he conceived his political role while emperor as a drama, theatrically presented in a series of ever-changing images – as Lord of the Golden Age, Liberator of the Greeks, Universal Victor, and latter-day Phoebus Apollo with his lyre, sun-chariot and radiate crown. (See Suetonius, *Augustus* 99.1 on the *mimum vitae*; Seneca reiterates the conceit at *Epistles* 80.7. For the world as a theater stage (*theatrum mundi*) see Mratschek (2007) 28.) What, after all, did theater mean to the Roman elite, if not a microcosm of power, created, as Pliny put it, to turn the subjects into “applauding spectators of an emperor on the political stage”? (*Panegyricus* 46.4; see Bartsch (1994) 31).

Even in death Nero lived on: ambivalent, fêted, a star. While the Roman populace might have taken to the streets on the news of his death wearing liberty-caps, nonetheless Nero’s grave long continued to be strewn with fresh flowers, his portrait to be displayed on the orator’s rostra (only the popular Marcus Aurelius was similarly honored), and his edicts consulted (Suetonius, *Nero* 57 vs. Fronto, *Letters* 4.12.4). The outsider on the imperial throne would have felt gratified by the thought that with his last words “qualis artifex pereo” (“what an artist dies in me”) he had styled himself for all time in the collective memory of later generations as an artist – while all traces of his political omnipresence (including monumental prestige projects such as the Golden House and his own face on the Colossus of Nero) were expunged. (On Nero’s famous “last words” in Suetonius, *Nero* 49.1, see Connors (1994) 230; for Nero’s artistic self-fulfillment, see Griffin (2001) 160–63, 208–10; Elsner-Masters (1994) 4–5; Champlin (2003) 236; Flower (2006) 196–212; Meier (2008) 573, 603; and Fantham (in this volume). On the *damnatio memoriae*, see Bergmann and Zanker (1981); Eck (2000); Flower (2006) 212–23.)

What survives of Nero includes his theomorphic image as ruler – the image of the radiate-crowned charioteer sun god lent permanence by the activity of the imperial mint, ultimately representing Sol Invictus, the Unconquered Sun (Bergmann (1998) 218, plate 41–42, 46). The newly formulated image adapted from pagan myth had sufficient charismatic power to ensure that in about AD 300, on the gold-hued mosaic from the Vatican necropolis, Christ himself was represented as Helios with radiate nimbus, driving the sun-chariot (Wallraff (2001) 158–62, fig. 13).

### FURTHER READING

*Sources:* Nero’s fascination with Greek culture has been comprehensively documented by Smallwood (1967), in Sherk’s translation (2001), and in the studies by Erim (1989), Reynolds (1981) and Smith (1987) on the excavations at Aphrodisias.

*Imperial image and wealth:* The bibliography of works on Nero is vast and spans centuries. The diverse research methods and interpretative approaches used to analyze Nero are outlined

in Meier's survey (2008) of the emperor's last years. Influential biographies written by Griffin (2001) and Champlin (2003), together with two seminal collections of articles edited by Elsner and Masters (1994) and Croisille and Perrin (2002), all provide invaluable help in decoding the myths surrounding Nero.

Griffin (2001) and Millar (2001) provide careful accounts of Nero's state income and spending. Mratschek (1993) sheds light on the social position of contemporary literati and the relationship between power and wealth at the imperial court. For further reading on literature and politics in the Age of Nero, see Bartsch (1994), Flower (2006), Nauta (2010), and Sullivan (1985).

*Philhellenism*: Of the numerous valuable studies devoted to the historical and ideological background of Hellenistic practices of governance, Bringmann (1993), Chaniotis (2006), Ferrary (1988), and Habicht (1970) offer the most compelling analyses. Nero's extravagant plans for the integration of Roman and Greek culture (Wallace-Hadrill (1983), Griffin (2001), Alcock (1994), Bergmann (1994), Champlin (2003)) have received less attention from researchers than his "un-Roman" philhellenism (Schumann (1930), Cizek (1972), Nöske (2004), etc.). Despite Swain's (1996) commendable efforts, no one has yet written a work that considers the rise of the Greek elites from Augustus to the Second Sophistic in terms of the key role played by education (*paideia*).

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