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  - Claudius     41-54
  - **Nero**     54-68
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• 50 years of near military anarchy (20 emperors) until Diocletian 284-305
• **Cleopatra** (1963)
  • Dir. Joseph Mankiewicz

  • Cleopatra—Elizabeth Taylor
  • Caesar—Rex Harrison
  • Marc Antony—Richard Burton
  • Octavian—Roddy McDowall
How did Octavian finally convince the Roman Senate to declare war on Marc Antony?

- By reading Marc Antony’s will in which he requests to be buried in Alexandria, Egypt.
Publius Cornelius Tacitus (56-117c)

- Senator, historian, orator (aristocratic and conservative)
- Held political office during terror of Domitian (81-96)
- Consulship in 97 under Nerva; Governor of Asia under Trajan c. 112

- Works:
  - *Agricola* (eulogy of father-in-law, governor of Britain)
  - *Germania* (moral contrast: Germany v. Rome)
  - *Annales* (Julio-Claudian era 14-68)
  - *Historiae* (Flavian period 69-96)
Tacitus rewrites the Augustan narrative

- “Augustus found the whole state exhausted by internal dissensions, and established over it a personal regime known as the Principate.”

- “He seduced the army with bonuses, and his cheap food policy was successful bait for civilians. Indeed, he attracted everybody’s good will by the enjoyable gift of peace. Then he gradually pushed ahead and absorbed the functions of the Senate, the officials, and even the law.”

- “Opposition did not exist. War or judicial murder had disposed all men of spirit. Upper-class survivors found that slavish obedience was the way to succeed, both politically and financially.”

- “The country had been transformed, and there was nothing left of the old Roman character. Political equality was a thing of the past; all eyes watched for imperial commands.”
Nero (Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus)—chronology

--49 Agrippina marries her uncle Claudius [novelty; incest]
--50 Claudius adopts Nero [now ahead of his own son Britannicus]
--53 Nero marries Claudius’ daughter Octavia
--54 Agrippina poisons Claudius; Nero becomes emperor at 17
--55 Nero poisons his step-brother Britannicus
--59 Nero has Agrippina assassinated [matricide]
--62 Nero has Octavia murdered for his lover Poppaea
--64 Great Fire in Rome, Christians persecuted
    Nero builds Domus Aurea (Golden House)

--68 Rebellion of generals in provinces, Nero commits suicide
   --”What an artist dies in me.” (Suetonius)
Themes to look for in Tacitus

Moral degeneration

• The emperor’s house and Rome reduced to a site of vice
  – Augustus’s merger of res publica and res privata is undone

• Gender and class confusion
  – aggressive women: Agrippina, Poppaea / scheming freedmen [liberti] in Emperor’s court
  – Nero engages in debauchery and forces others to do so; loves everything Greek

• Virtues such as virtus, gravitas, dignitas, pietas disappear.
  – No corrective virtuous exempla to overcome vice—Octavia v. Lucretia

• Religion (cosmic order) is reduced to superstition and portents
Aureus, 54 CE, **Nero and Agrippina**

Agrippa Augustus Divi Claud Neronis Caeser Matre

Agrippina Augusta, wife of divine Claudius, mother of Nero

Bust of Nero, 60 CE
A rumor had gone forth that, at the very time the city was in flames, the Emperor appeared on a private stage and sang of the destruction of Troy, comparing present misfortunes with the calamities of antiquity... It seemed that Nero was aiming at the glory of founding a new city and calling it by his name....

Nero meanwhile availed himself of his country’s desolation, and erected a mansion in which the jewels and gold...were not so marvelous as the fields and lakes, with woods on one side to resemble a wilderness, and, on the other, open spaces and extensive views...[with] the genius and audacity to attempt by art even what nature had refused.
Nero’s Golden House (Domus Aurea)
Colossal statue of Nero as Sun God
Vespasian replaces Golden House with Colosseum and Baths of Titus
political palimpsest: restores the private to the public
Martial on Vespasian’s building projects on the site of Nero’s Golden House

- Where the starry colossus sees the constellations at close range and lofty scaffolding rises in the middle of the road, once gleamed the odious halls of a cruel monarch, and in all Rome there stood a single house.

- Where rises before our eyes the august form of the amphitheater, was once Nero’s lake. Where we admire the warm baths, a speedy gift, a haughty tract of land had robbed the poor of their dwellings.

- **Rome has been restored to herself** and under your rule Caesar [Vespasian], the pleasures that belonged to a master now belong to the people.
Nero recarved as Vespasian
Domus Aurea (Golden House 64-68 CE) / Severus and Celer
Domus Aurea: **Octagonal room**—dome, vaulting, light
Newest discovery: Nero’s rotating dining room on Palatine

Suetonius: “The main banquet hall was circular and constantly revolved day and night, in imitation of the heavens.”
Roman Architectural Revolution: arch and concrete
(Synergy between Roman ‘civilization’ and Roman building techniques)

Hadrian’s villa: post and lintel vs. arch
The **ARCH** can be expanded in **barrel or groin vaults**

- **CONCRETE**: lime mortar, volcanic sand, water, small stones
- Concrete sheathed in **brick**, and **stucco** or **marble** veneer.
- a consistently solid mass: permits large walls, ceilings and domes; to **mold space**
Aqueducts: Aqua Claudia, Rome
11 aqueducts in Rome from 312 BCE to 226 CE
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2) **Colosseum** [Flavian Amphitheater] 79-80 CE
(Vespasian)
Function: **mass entertainment**

- Constructed on site of Nero's private lake
- Seated 50,000
- 80 entrances
- Travertine, tufa, marble, brick faced concrete
Colosseum: cavea, arena, substructure
Colosseum: **velarium** (awning)
Fig. 133. Colosseum. Reconstruction of seating zones
A day at the Colosseum:

Beast hunting (venationes)

Public executions

Gladitorial games (munera)

Naval battles (naumachia)
An Australian gladiator
Circus maximus
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Pantheon, 125 CE, Hadrian (original 27 BCE, Agrippa)

- **Temple** to all the gods
- **Eclecticism:** Classical temple porch leads into domed circular space
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Baths of Caracalla, 216 CE
The Roman Baths: public leisure [commodae]

- 11 thermae
- 856 balneae
• Core of **Caldarium, Tepidarium, Frigidarium, Natatio**
• Periphery: dressing rooms, gyms, small stadium, libraries, meeting rooms, gardens
Caldarium:
faces south for maximum sun
uses floor and wall heating

- Hollow bricks lead warm air, and store and radiate heat.
- Warm surfaces create a comfortable indoor climate.
- Thermal updraft powers air movement through the system.
- An elevated structure underneath the floor helps to distribute hot air.
Statuary from Baths of Caracala: Farnese Hercules
Mosaics with Athletes
Piazza Armerina (Sicily) mosaics, 4th century CE