

GRANHOLM GENEALOGY

**EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE
ANCESTRY**



INTRODUCTION

The early Roman Empire described here was a genealogically brief but very tumultuous period during which the Christianity was formed. It begins with Ceasar Julius and ended with Nero, Our lineage diverts to the Frank Empire (See *Frank Royal Ancestry*) which continues with Charlemagne (See *European Recent Royal Ancestry*), when the new Holy Roman Empire was founded. A list is included showing that lineage. Another list shows the actual relationships for the various Emperors. Additional information is for those persons who are **highlighted**.

Lars Granholm
April 2010

Ancient Empires - Rome

by Wayne Blank

The ancient Roman Empire spanned the time period from about 145 B.C. to 476 A.D. At its peak, centered on Rome, and connected by a vast system of Roman Roads, it was one of the most extensive and powerful in all human history. Roman Legions conquered and ruled a vast region throughout northern Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.



Jesus Christ lived His entire human life under the Roman empire, the first half under Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1), who reigned when He was born in Bethlehem, the second half under Tiberius (Luke 3:1)

<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/emprome.htm>

Direct Lineage from: Gaius Julius Caesar to: Lars Erik Granholm

- 1 Gaius Julius Caesar b. 140 BC d. 45 BC m. Aurelia Cotta b. 120 BC d. 54 BC
- 2 Julia Caesaris b. 101 BC d. 51 BC m. Marcus Atius Balbus b. 148 BC d. 87 BC
- 3 Atia Balbus Caesonia of Rome m. Gaius Octavius Rufus b. 100 BC d. 59 BC
- 4 Caesar Augustus (Octavius) Emperor of Rome b. Sep 23, 63 BC d. 14 AD m. Scribonia d. 16
- 5 Julia Major of Rome b. 39 BC d. 14 m. Marcus Vipsanius b. 63 BC d. 12 BC
- 6 Vipsania Agrippina (I) Major of Rome b. 13 BC d. Oct 18, 33 m. Germanicus Caesar of Rome
- 7 Julia Agrippa Minor of Rome b. 15 d. Mar 59 m. Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus b. 17 BC d. 40
- 8 Nero Claudius Germanicus Drusus b. 37 d. 68 m. Antonia Minor of Rome b. 36 BC d. 37
- 9 Tiberius Claudius (I) Nero Emperor of Rome b. 9 BC d. 54 AC m. Julia Agrippa Minor of Rome b. 15 d. 59
- 10 Genvissa Queen of Brittany d. 50 m. Aviragus King of Brittany b. 74
- 11 Marius King of Brittany d. 125 m. Julia of Brittany
- 12 Croilus King of Brittany
- 13 Athildus Queen of the Franks m. Marcomir King of the Franks d. 149
- 14 Chlodmir IV King of the Franks b. 104 d. 166 m. Hafilda Princess of Rugij b. 106
- 15 Farabert King of the Franks b. 122
- 16 Sunno (Huano) King of the Franks b. 137 d. 213
- 17 Hilderic King of the Franks b. bef 212 d. 253
- 18 Bartherus King of the Franks b. abt 238 d. 272
- 19 Clodius III King of the Franks b. bef 264 d. 298
- 20 Walter King of the Franks b. bef. 289 d. 306
- 21 Dagobert 1. King of the Franks b. 230 d. 317
- 22 Genebald Duke of the East Franks b. 262 d. 358
- 23 Dagobert 2. Duke of the East Franks b. 300 d. 279
- 24 Clodius Duke of the East Franks b. 324 d. 389
- 25 Marcomir Duke of the East Franks b. 347 d. 404
- 26 Pharamond King of the Franks b. 370 d. 427 m. Argotta Queen of the Franks b. 376
- 27 Clodio the Long Haired King of the Franks b. 395 d. 448 m. Basina Princess of Thuringia b. 398
- 28 Merovech King of the Franks b. 411 d. 457 m. Verica Queen of the Franks b. 419
- 29 Childeric I King of the Franks b. 440 d. 481 m. Basina Queen of Thuringia b. 438 d. abt 470
- 30 Clovis I the Great King of the Franks b. 466 d. 511 m. Saint Clotilde Queen of the Franks b. 475 d. 545
- 31 Clotaire I King of the Franks b. 497 d. 561 m. Aregund Queen of the Franks
- 32 Chilperic I King of the Franks b. 539 d. 584 m. Fredegund Queen of the Franks d. 597
- 33 Chlothar II the Great King of the Franks b. 584 d. 629 m. Haldetrude Queen of the Franks
- 34 Dagobert I King of the Franks b. 603 d. 639 m. Nanthild Queen of the Franks b. 610 d. 642
- 35 Clovis II King of the Franks b. 637 d. 655 m. Balthild Queen of the Franks b. 626 d. 680
- 36 Theuderic III King of Neustria b. 654 d. 691 m. Clotilda of Heristal
- 37 Bertrada of Prüm b. 670 d. 721 m. Martin of Laon
- 38 Bertrada of Laon Queen of the Franks b. 710/27 d. 783 m. Pepin the Short King of the Franks b. 714 d. 768
- 39 Charlemagne Emperor of Holy Roman Empire b. 742 d. 814 m. Hildegard Empress of Holy Roman Empire b. 757 d. 783
- 40 Louis I the Pious Emperor of Holy Roman Empire b. AUG 778 d. 20 Jun 840 m. Judith Princess of Bavaria b. 800 d. 843
- 41 Charles the Bald Emperor of Holy Roman Empire b. 828 d. 877 m. Ermentrude Empress of Holy Roman Empire b. 830
- 42 Louis the Stammerer Emperor of Holy Roman Empire b. 1 Sep 846 d. 879 m. Ansgard of Burgundy Queen of France
- 43 Charles III "the Simple" King of France b. 19 Sep 879 d. 7 Oct 929 m. Frederuna of France b. ABT 887 d. 10 Feb 917
- 44 Ermentrud Princess of France b. ABT 908 m. Gottfried of Lorraine
- 45 Gerberga of Lorraine b. ABT 925 d. 995 m. Meginoz Count of Geldern and Zütphen b. ABT 920 d. 998
- 46 Ermentrud of Geldern b. ABT 940 m. Herbert I Count of Gleiberg b. ABT 925 d. 992
- 47 Gerberga Countess of Kitzinggau b. 972 m. Henry I Margrave Count of Schweinfurt b. 975 d. 18 Sep 1017
- 48 Judith of Schweinfurt b. ABT 1007 d. 2 Aug 1058 m. Bretislaus I Duke of Bohemia b. 1005 d. 10 Jan 1055
- 49 Vratislav II King of Bohemia b. ABT 1035 d. 14 Jan 1092 m. Adelaïda Princess of Hungary b. ABT 1038 d. 27 Jan 1062
- 50 Judith (Premyslid) I Princess of Bohemia b. 1057 d. 25 Dec 1085 m. Wladislaw I Herman Duke of Poland b. 1042 d. 1102
- 51 Boleslaw III The Wrymouth Duke of Poland b. 20 Aug 1085 d. 1138 m. Salome of Berg-Schelklingen b. 1097 d. 1144
- 52 Richia Sventoslava Princess of Poland b. 12 Apr 1116 d. aft 1156 m. Volodar Glebovitj Prince of Russia b. 1123 d. 1139
- 53 Sofiya Vladimirovna Princess of Russia b. 1140 d. 5 May 1198 m. Valdemar I the Great King of Denmark b. 1131 d. 1182
- 54 Richiza Valdemarsdotter Princess of Denmark b. ABT 1178 d. 1220 m. Erik X Knutsson King of Sweden b. 1180 d. 1216
- 55 Märtha Eriksdotter Princess of Sweden b. ABT 1213 m. Nils Sixtensson Sparre av Tofta b. ABT 1188
- 56 Sixten Nilsson Sparre av Tofta d. 1310 m. Ingrid Abjörnsdotter b. Abt 1220
- 57 Abjörn Sixtensson Sparre av Tofta b. ABT 1240 d. 1310 m. Ingeborg Ulfssdotter Ulf b. ABT 1258 d. AFT 1307
- 58 Ulf Abjörnsson Sparre b. 1348 m. 1330 Kristina Sigmundsdotter Tre Klöverblad b. 1295
- 59 Karl Ulfsson Sparre av Tofta m. Helena Israelsdotter b. 1340 d. 1410
- 60 Margareta Karlsdotter Sparre av Tofta d. 1429 m. Knut Tordsson Bonde b. ABT 1377 d. 1413
- 61 Karl VIII Knutsson Bonde King of Sweden b. 1409 d. 15 May 1470
- 62 Karin Karlsdotter Bonde m. Erengisle Björnsson Djäkn d. bef 1447
- 63 Märta Erengisledotter Djäkn m. Johan Henriksson Fleming b. 1465 d. AFT 1514
- 64 Anna Johansdotter Fleming b. 1435 d. 1505 m. Olof Pedersson (Wildeman) Lille d. 1535
- 65 Karin Olofsdotter Wildeman b. 1465 d. 1535 m. Ludolf Boose b. 1465 d. 1535
- 66 Johan Ludolfsson Boose b. 1526 d. 1596 m. Ingeborg Henriksdotter
- 67 Kirstin Johansdotter Boose b. 1576 d. 1646 m. Bertil von Nieroht b. 1582 d. 1652
- 68 Maria Bertilsdotter von Nieroht b. 1612 d. 1682 m. Carl Henriksson Lindelöf
- 69 Carl Carlsson von Lindelöf b. 1642 d. 1712 m. N.N. Laurisdotter Laurentz
- 70 Anna Maria Carlsdotter von Lindelöf b. 1670 d. 1 Feb 1747 m. Ericus Christierni Orenius b. ABT 1658 d. 2 Mar 1740
- 71 Margareta Eriksdotter Orenia b. 16 Jan 1710 d. 1804 m. Johan Urnovius b. 1706 d. 1783
- 72 Christina Margareta Urnovia m. 20 Dec 1781 Johan Flinck
- 73 Johan (Flinck) Årenius b. 12 Jan 1787 d. 6 Nov 1823 m. 15 Mar 1810 Ulrika Abrahamsdotter Sevon b. 9 Jun 1784
- 74 Johan Gustaf Johansson Årenius b. 5 Jun 1810 m. Johanna Carolina Röring b. 24 Jun 1802 d. ABT 1839
- 75 Charlotta Constantia Renlund b. 4 Jun 1830 d. 28 Jan 1905, m. 19 Mar 1854 Erik Eriksson Käll b. 24 Jun 1829 d. 23 Jan 1905
- 76 Johanna Karolina Eriksdotter Käll b. 9 Jan 1863 d. 8 Nov 1934
- 77 Erik Anton Granholm b. 28 May 1906 d. 29 Jan 1959, m. 20 Aug 1933 Karin Hildegard Kasén b. 3 Jul 1914
- 78 Lars Erik Granholm b. 28 Jul 1934

Descendants of: Gaius Julius Caesar As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

1 **Gaius Julius Caesar** b. 140 BC d. 45 BC (69th great grand father)

m. **Aurelia Cotta** b. 120 BC d. 54 BC p4

2 **Julius Caesar Dictator of the Roman Republic** b. 100 BC d. 44 BC (68th great grand uncle)

2 **Julia Caesaris** b. 101 BC d. 51 BC (68th great grand mother)

m. **Marcus Atius Balbus**

3 **Atia Balbus Caesonia of Rome** (67th great grand mother)

m. **Gaius Octavius Rufus** b. 100 BC d. 59 BC p10

4 **Octavia Minor of Rome** b. 69 BC d. 11 BC (63rd great grand mother)

m. **Marcus Antonius Triumvir of Rome** b. 83 BC d. Aug 30 BC Suicide in Alexandria

5 **Antonia Minor of Rome** b. 36 BC d. 37 (62nd great grand mother)

m. **Nero Claudius Germanicus Drusus** b. 37 d. 68 p18

[son of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus and Julia Agrippa Minor of Rome]

4 **Caesar Augustus (Octavius) Emperor of Rome** b. Sep 23, 63 BC d. 14 AD (66th great grand father)

m. **Scribonia** d. 16

5 **Julia Major of Rome** b. 39 BC d. 14 (65th great grand mother)

m. **Marcus Vipsanius** b. 63 BC d. 12 BC

6 **Vipsania Agrippinia (I) Major of Rome** b. 13 BC d. Oct 18, 33 Pandateria (64th great grand mother)

m. **Germanicus Caesar of Rome**

7 **Caligula (Gaius) Roman Emperor** b. 12 d. 41 (63rd great grand uncle)

7 **Julia Agrippa Minor of Rome** b. 15 d. Mar 59 (63rd great grand mother)

m. **Tiberius Claudius (I) Nero Emperor of Rome** b. 9 BC d. Oct 13 54 AC

[son of Nero Claudius Germanicus Drusus and Antonia Minor of Rome]

m. **Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus** b. 17 BC d. 40

[son of Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus and Antonia Major]

[Children of Julia Agrippa Minor of Rome and Tiberius Claudius (I) Nero Emperor of Rome]

8 **Genvissa Queen of Brittany** d. 50 (62nd great grand mother)

m. **Aviragus King of Brittany** b. 74 ← (62nd great grandfather, see Biblical Genealogy)

9 **Marius King of Brittany** d. 125 (61th great grand father)

m. **Julia of Brittany**

10 **Croilus King of Brittany** (60th great grand father)

11 **Athildus Queen of the Franks** (59th great grand mother)

m. **Marcomir King of the Franks** d. 149

12 **Chlodmir IV King of the Franks** b. 104 d. 166 (58th great grand father)

m. **Hafilda Princess of Rugij** b. 106

[Children of Julia Agrippa Minor of Rome and Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus]

8 **Nero Claudius Germanicus Drusus** b. 37 d. 68 (62nd great grand father)

m. **Antonia Minor of Rome** b. 36 BC d. 37

[daughter of Marcus Antonius Triumvir of Rome and Octavia Minor of Rome]

Gaius Julius Caesar (proconsul)

Gaius Julius Caesar from "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum "



Gaius Julius Caesar (ca. 140 BC–85 BC) was a Roman senator, supporter and brother-in-law of [Gaius Marius](#), and father of [Julius Caesar](#), the later [dictator](#) of [Rome](#).

Caesar was married to [Aurelia Cotta](#), a member the of Aurelii and Rutilii families, and had two daughters, both named [Julia](#), and a son, [Julius Caesar](#), born in 100 BC. He was the brother of [Sextus Julius Caesar](#), [consul](#) in 91 BC and the son of [Gaius Julius Caesar](#).

Caesar's progress through the [cursus honorum](#) is well known, although the specific dates associated with his offices are controversial. According to two *elogiae* erected in Rome long after his death, Caesar was a commissioner in the colony at [Cercina](#), [military tribune](#), [quaestor](#), [praetor](#), and [proconsul](#) of [Asia](#). The dates of these offices are unclear. The colony is probably one of Marius' of 103 BC. Broughton dated the praetorship to 92 BC, with the quaestorship falling towards the beginning of the 90s. Brennan has dated the praetorship to the beginning of the decade.

Caesar died suddenly in 85 BC, in Rome, while putting on his shoes one morning. Another Caesar, possibly his [father](#), had died similarly in [Pisa](#). His father had seen to his education by one of the best orators of Rome, [Marcus Antonius Gniphio](#). In his will, he left Caesar the bulk of his estate, but after Marius's faction had been defeated in the civil war of the 80s BC, this inheritance was confiscated by the dictator [Sulla](#).

In 2007, he was portrayed by [Will Thorp](#) in the *Doctor Who* audio adventure *100*.

Aurelia Cotta

Image of **Aurelia Cotta** from *Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum* (1553)



Aurelia Cotta or **Aurelia** (120 BC-54 BC) was the mother of [Roman dictator Gaius Julius Caesar](#) (100 BC- 44 BC).

Family

Aurelia Cotta was a daughter of Rutilia and Lucius Aurelius Cotta. Her father was [consul](#) in 119 BC and her paternal grandfather of the same name was consul in 144 BC. The family of the [Aurelii Cottae](#) was prominent during the [Roman](#) Republican era. Her mother Rutilia, was a member of the *gens* [Rutilius](#) cognominated Rufus. They were of consular rank.

Three of her half-brothers were consuls: [Gaius Aurelius Cotta](#) in 75 BC, Marcus Aurelius Cotta in 74 BC and [Lucius Aurelius Cotta](#) in 65 BC; they were the sons of her mother, Rutilia's second marriage with her paternal uncle Gaius Aurelius Cotta.

Aurelia married a [praetor](#) [Gaius Julius Caesar](#). Her husband died 85 BC-84 BC. Their children were:

- [Julia Caesaris Major](#)
- [Julia Caesaris Minor](#) (101 BC-51 BC)
- [Gaius Julius Caesar](#) (100 BC-44 BC)

The historian [Tacitus](#) considers her an ideal Roman matron and thinks highly of her. [Plutarch](#) describes her as a "strict and respectable" woman. Highly intelligent, independent and renowned for her beauty and common sense, Aurelia was held in high regard throughout Rome.

Aurelia and her family were very influential in her son's upbringing and security. Her husband, the elder Gaius Caesar, was often away, so the task of raising their son fell mostly on Aurelia's shoulders. When the younger Caesar was about 18, he was ordered by the then [dictator](#) of Rome, [Lucius Cornelius Sulla](#), to divorce his young wife Cornelia. Young Caesar firmly refused, and by so doing, put himself at great risk from Sulla. Aurelia became involved in the petition to save her son, defending him along with her brother [Gaius Cotta](#).

During the [Bona Dea](#) festival, held at Caesar's house, it was she who discovered [Publius Clodius](#) disguised as a woman, ostensibly in order to start or continue an affair with her second daughter-in-law Pompeia Sulla (see, [Pompeia \(wife of Julius Caesar\)](#)). Although Caesar himself admitted her possible innocence, he divorced her shortly after saying, "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion."

After her first daughter-in-law [Cornelia Cinna minor](#) died young, Aurelia raised her young granddaughter [Julia Caesaris](#) in her stead and presided as mistress over her son's households.

Julius Caesar

Gaius Julius Caesar (13 July 100 BC – 15 March 44 BC) was a [Roman military](#) and [political](#) leader. He played a critical role in the transformation of the [Roman Republic](#) into the [Roman Empire](#).

Consul/Dictator of the Roman Republic



As a politician, Caesar made use of [popularist](#) tactics. During the late 60s and into the 50s BC, he formed political alliances that led to the so-called [First Triumvirate](#), an [extra-legal](#) arrangement with [Marcus Licinius Crassus](#) and [Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus](#) that was to dominate Roman politics for several years. Caesar's conquest of [Gaul](#) extended the Roman world to the [North Sea](#), and in 55 BC he also conducted the first [Roman invasion of Britain](#). These achievements granted him unmatched military power and threatened to eclipse Pompey's. Political realignments in Rome finally led to a stand-off between Caesar and Pompey, the latter having taken up the cause of the Senate. With the order that sent his legions across the [Rubicon](#), Caesar began a [civil war](#) in 49 BC from which he emerged as the unrivaled leader of the Roman world.

Caesar tried to resecure Pompey's support by offering him his great-niece [Octavia](#) in marriage, alienating Octavia's husband [Gaius Marcellus](#), but Pompey declined. In 53 BC Crassus was killed leading a failed [invasion](#) of [Parthia](#). Rome was on the edge of violence. Pompey was appointed sole consul as an emergency measure, and married

[Cornelia](#), daughter of Caesar's political opponent Quintus Metellus Scipio, whom he invited to become his consular colleague once order was restored. The Triumvirate was dead.

In 52 BC another, larger revolt erupted in Gaul, led by [Vercingetorix](#) of the [Arverni](#). Vercingetorix managed to unite the Gallic tribes and proved an astute commander, defeating Caesar in several engagements including the [Battle of Gergovia](#), but Caesar's elaborate siege-works at the [Battle of Alesia](#) finally forced his surrender. Despite scattered outbreaks of [warfare](#) the following year, Gaul was effectively conquered.

Vercingetorix surrenders to Caesar, by Lionel Royer



In Rome, Caesar was appointed [dictator](#), with [Mark Antony](#) as his [Master of the Horse](#); Caesar presided over his own election to a second consulate and after eleven days, resigned this dictatorship.

Cleopatra Before Caesar by the artist Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1866.



He pursued Pompey to [Alexandria](#), where Pompey was murdered by a former Roman officer serving in the court of [King Ptolemy XIII](#). Caesar then became involved with the Alexandrine civil war between Ptolemy and his sister, wife, and co-regent queen, the [Pharaoh Cleopatra VII](#). Perhaps as a result of Ptolemy's role in Pompey's murder, Caesar sided with Cleopatra; he is reported to have wept at the sight of Pompey's head which was offered to him by Ptolemy's chamberlain [Pothinus](#) as a gift. In any event, Caesar defeated the Ptolemaic forces in 47 BC in the [Battle of the Nile](#) and installed Cleopatra as ruler. Caesar and Cleopatra celebrated their victory of the Alexandrine civil war with a triumphant procession on the Nile in the spring of 47 B.C. The royal barge was accompanied by 400 additional ships, introducing Caesar to the luxurious lifestyle of the Egyptian pharaohs.

Caesar and Cleopatra never married, as Roman Law only recognised marriages between two Roman citizens. Caesar continued his relationship with Cleopatra throughout his last marriage, which lasted 14 years – in Roman eyes, this did not constitute adultery – and may have fathered a son called [Caesarion](#). Cleopatra visited Rome on more than one occasion, residing in Caesar's villa just outside Rome across the [Tiber](#).

Assassination

On the [Ides of March](#) (15 March; see [Roman calendar](#)) of 44 BC, Caesar was due to appear at a session of the Senate. [Mark Antony](#), having vaguely learned of the plot and fearing the worst, went to head Caesar off. The plotters, however, had anticipated this and, fearing that Antony would come to Caesar's aid, had arranged for [Trebonius](#) to intercept him just as he approached the portico of [Theatre of Pompey](#), where the session was to be held, and detain him outside. When he heard the commotion from the senate chamber, Antony fled.



The senators encircle Caesar.

According to [Plutarch](#), as Caesar arrived at the Senate [Tillius Cimber](#) presented him with a petition to recall his exiled brother. The other conspirators crowded round to offer support. Both Plutarch and [Suetonius](#) say that Caesar waved him away, but Cimber grabbed his shoulders and pulled down Caesar's [tunic](#). Caesar then

cried to Cimber, "Why, this is violence!" At the same time, Casca produced his dagger and made a glancing thrust at the dictator's neck. Caesar turned around quickly and caught Casca by the arm. According to [Plutarch](#), he said in Latin, "Casca, you villain, what are you doing?" Casca, frightened, shouted "Help, brother!". Within moments, the entire group, including Brutus, was striking out at the dictator. Caesar said nothing, pulling his toga over his head when he saw Brutus among the conspirators. The version best known in the English-speaking world is the [Latin](#) phrase "*Et tu, Brute?*" Caesar attempted to get away, but, blinded by blood, he tripped and fell; the men continued stabbing him as he lay defenseless on the lower steps of the portico. According to [Eutropius](#), around sixty or more men participated in the assassination. He was stabbed 23 times. According to Suetonius, a physician later established that only one wound, the second one to his chest, had been lethal.

Afterward, Mark Antony married Caesar's lover, Cleopatra, intending to use the fabulously wealthy Egypt as a base to dominate Rome. A third civil war broke out between Octavian on one hand and Antony and Cleopatra on the other. This final civil war, culminating in the latter's defeat at [Actium](#), resulted in the permanent ascendancy of Octavian, who became the first Roman emperor, under the name Caesar Augustus, a name that raised him to status of a deity.



His bust in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Julia Caesaris (sister of Julius Caesar)

Julia is the name of two daughters of praetor [Gaius Julius Caesar](#) and [Aurelia Cotta](#), the parents of dictator Gaius [Julius Caesar](#). The sisters were born and raised in Rome.

The eldest of the two is sometimes named *Julia Major* (*Major* Latin for *the elder*) by historians (but not to be confused with [Julia the Elder](#), daughter of Emperor [Augustus](#)). Likewise, the younger of the two sisters of Julius Caesar is sometimes named *Julia Minor*, (*Minor* Latin for *the younger*) but not to be confused with [Julia the Younger](#), Augustus' first granddaughter.

First elder sister of Julius Caesar

The elder of the two sisters of Julius Caesar the dictator is only known from a passage in which the biographer [Suetonius](#) mentions her two grandsons,^[1] [Lucius Pinarius](#) and [Quintus Pedius](#). If the two men were actually her sons, as has been conjectured,^[2] she was married, in what order is uncertain, to a Pinarius, of a very ancient patrician family^[3], and a Pedius. It is not known if it was the elder or the younger of the dictator's sisters who gave evidence against Publius Clodius Pulcher, when impeached for impiety in 61 BC.^[4] Nothing else is known about the life of the elder sister.

Second elder sister of Julius Caesar

Julia (101 BC-51 BC) was the second sister of [Julius Caesar](#). This Julia married [Marcus Atius Balbus](#), a praetor and commissioner who came from a senatorial family of [plebs](#) status. Julia bore Balbus two daughters:

- Atia Balba Prima - mother of [Quintus Pedius](#) who served as a general and consul.
- [Atia Balba Caesonia](#) - mother of [Octavia Minor](#) (fourth wife of triumvir [Mark Antony](#)) and of first Emperor [Augustus](#).
- Atia Balba Tertia - mother of [Lucius Pinarius](#), who was a political supporter of Mark Antony.

Julia and her mother had given the court a detailed and truthful account about the affair between [Pompeia](#) (her sister-in-law) and politician [Publius Clodius Pulcher](#). Caesar divorced Pompeia over the scandal. Balbus died in 52 BC and Julia died a year later. Julia's youngest grandson and grandchild then known as Octavian (future Emperor Augustus) at age 12 to her honor delivered her funeral oration as her funeral.

Atia Balba Caesonia

Atia Balba from "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum "



Atia Balba Caesonia (85 BC-43 BC) was a Roman noblewoman. She was the daughter of [Julius Caesar](#)'s sister [Julia Caesaris](#), mother of the Emperor [Augustus](#), step-grandmother of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), great-great grandmother of the Emperor [Caligula](#) and Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#), great-grandmother of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and great-great-grandmother of the Emperor [Nero](#). The name **Atia Balba** was also borne by the other two daughters of Julia Caesaris and her husband [praetor Marcus Atius Balbus](#). They were Atia's older sister Atia Balba Prima and younger sister Atia Balba Tertia.

Atia married the Roman [Macedonian](#) governor and senator [Gaius Octavius](#). Their children were [Octavia Minor](#) and Gaius Octavius Thurinus (later known as [Augustus](#)). In 59 BC, Atia's husband Gaius Octavius died on his way to Rome to stand for the [consulship](#) and Atia married [Lucius Marcius Philippus](#), a consul of 56 BC and a supporter of [Julius Caesar](#). He raised Atia's children alongside his own son and daughter from a previous marriage and arranged Octavia's first marriage, to the consul and senator [Gaius Claudius Marcellus Minor](#). Atia and Philippus carefully tutored and educated their children.

In his *[Dialogus de oratoribus](#)*, [Tacitus](#) notes her to be exceptionally religious and moral, and one of the most admired matrons in the history of the [Republic](#):

In her presence no base word could be uttered without grave offence, and no wrong deed done. Religiously and with the utmost delicacy she regulated not only the serious tasks of her youthful charges, but also their recreations and their games.

[Suetonius](#)' account of Augustus mentions the divine omens she experienced before and after his birth:

When Atia had come in the middle of the night to the solemn service of Apollo, she had her litter set down in the temple and fell asleep, while the rest of the matrons also slept. On a sudden a serpent glided up to her and shortly went away. When she awoke, she purified herself, as if after the embraces of her husband, and at once there appeared on her body a mark in colours like a serpent, and she could never get rid of it; so that presently she ceased ever to go to the public baths. In the tenth month after that Augustus was born and was therefore regarded as the son of Apollo. Atia too, before she gave him birth, dreamed that her vitals were borne up to the stars and spread over the whole extent of land and sea, while Octavius dreamed that the sun rose from Atia's womb.

Atia was so fearful for her son's safety that she and Philippus urged him to renounce his rights as Caesar's heir. She died during her son's first consulship, in August-September 43 BC. Octavian honored her memory with a public funeral. Philippus later married one of her sisters.

Gaius Octavius

Head of statue, thought to be Gaius Octavius, ca. 60 BC, Munich Glyptothek



Gaius Octavius Rufus (about 100 BC-59 BC) was an ancestor to the [Roman Emperors](#) of the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#). He was the father of the Emperor [Augustus](#), step-grandfather of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), great-great grandfather of the Emperor [Caligula](#), great-grandfather of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and great-great-great grandfather of the Emperor [Nero](#). He descended from an old, wealthy equestrian branch of the [Octavii](#) family. Despite being from a wealthy family, his family was plebeian, rather than patrician. As a [novus homo](#) ("new man"), he was not of a senatorial family.

His grandfather, Gaius Octavius, fought as a [military tribune](#) in Sicily during the [Second Punic War](#). His father Gaius Octavius was a municipal magistrate who lived to an advanced age. He was distantly related to [Gnaeus Octavius](#), the [consul](#) of 87 BC who led the opposition to [Lucius Cornelius Cinna](#).

Octavius' first wife was named [Ancharia](#). The two had a child (named [Octavia Major](#)). It is not known how the marriage ended, although it is possible that Ancharia died during child birth. He later married the niece of [Julius Caesar](#), [Atia Balba Caesonia](#). How they met is not known, although Atia's family (through her father, the Balbi) lived close to Velitrae, which was the ancestral home of the Octavii. They had two children: [Octavia Minor](#) and the Emperor [Augustus](#), the latter of which was born in 63 BC.

First Roman expedition to Iberia



Iberian warrior from bas-relief ca. 200 BC. The warrior is armed with a falcata and an oval shield. Iberian tribes fought for both sides in the 2nd Punic War, but in reality most wanted to be rid of all foreign domination. National Archaeological Museum of Spain, Madrid

Octavia the Younger



Octavia the Younger (69 - 11 BC), also known as **Octavia Minor** or simply **Octavia**, was the sister of the first [Roman Emperor](#), [Augustus](#) (known also as Octavian), half-sister of [Octavia the Elder](#), and fourth wife of [Mark Antony](#). She was also the mother-in-law of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), great-grandmother of the Emperor [Caligula](#) and Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#), maternal grandmother of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and paternal great-grandmother and maternal great-great grandmother of the Emperor [Nero](#).

One of the most prominent women in Roman history, Octavia was respected and admired by contemporaries for her loyalty, nobility and humanity, and for maintaining traditional Roman feminine virtues.

Childhood

Full sister to [Augustus](#), Octavia was the only daughter born of [Gaius Octavius](#)' second marriage to [Atia Balba Caesonia](#), niece of [Julius Caesar](#).^[1] Octavia was born in [Nola](#), [Italy](#); her father, a Roman governor and senator, died in 59 BC from natural causes. Her mother later remarried, to the consul [Lucius Marcius Philippus](#). Octavia spent much of her childhood travelling with her parents.

First marriage

Before 54 BC her stepfather arranged for her to marry [Gaius Claudius Marcellus Minor](#). Marcellus was a man of consular rank, a man who was worthy of her and was consul in 50 BC. He was also a member of the influential [Claudian](#) family and descended from [Marcus Claudius Marcellus](#), a famous general in the [Second Punic War](#). In 54 BC, her great uncle Caesar is said to have been anxious for her to divorce her husband so that she could marry [Pompey](#) who had just lost his wife [Julia](#) ([Julius Caesar](#)'s daughter, and thus Octavia's cousin once removed). However, Pompey declined the proposal^[2] and married [Cornelia Metella](#) instead. So Octavia's husband continued to oppose Julius Caesar including in the crucial year of his consulship 50 BC.

Marcellus, a friend of [Cicero](#), was an initial opponent of Julius Caesar when Caesar invaded Italy, but did not take up arms against his wife's great uncle at the [Battle of Pharsalus](#), and was eventually pardoned by him. In 47 BC he was able to intercede with Caesar for his cousin and namesake, also a former consul, then living in exile. Presumably, Octavia continued to live with her husband from the time of their marriage (she would have been about 15 when they married) to her husband's death when she was about 29. They had three children: [Claudia Marcella](#) Major, [Claudia Marcella](#) Minor and [Marcus Claudius Marcellus](#). All three were born in Italy. Marcellus died in May 40 BC.

Second marriage



Mark Antony and Octavia

By a [Senatorial](#) decree, Octavia married [Mark Antony](#), in October 40 BC, as his fourth wife (his third wife [Fulvia](#) having died shortly before). This marriage had to be approved by the Senate as she was pregnant with her first husband's child and was a political marriage to cement the uneasy alliance between her brother Octavian and [Mark Antony](#) - however, Octavia appears to have been a loyal and faithful wife to Antony.^[4] Between 40 BC–36 BC, Octavia lived with him in his [Athenian](#) mansion. She raised her children by Marcellus; Antony's two sons and their two daughters: [Antonia Major](#) and [Antonia Minor](#), who were born there. She travelled with him to various provinces.

The alliance was severely tested by Octavia's second husband abandoning her and their children for his former lover Queen [Cleopatra VII](#) of Egypt. Mark Antony and Cleopatra had already met in 41 BC, and subsequently had twins. After 36 BC, Octavia returned to Rome with her children by Mark Antony. Mark Antony divorced Octavia in 32 BC, after she had supplied him with men and troops in 35 BC (to be used in his eastern campaigns). With Antony's rejection, divorce, and eventual suicide in 30 BC, Octavia became the sole caretaker of their children. She also became guardian of Antony's remaining children from his unions with both [Fulvia](#) and Cleopatra:

- [Iullus Antonius](#) (Fulvia),
- [Alexander Helios](#) (Cleopatra),
- [Cleopatra Selene II](#) (Cleopatra), and
- [Ptolemy Philadelphus](#) (Cleopatra)



Virgil reading Aeneid to Augustus and Octavia, by Taillasson

[Aelius Donatus](#), in his Life of Virgil, states that [Virgil](#)

recited three whole books [of his [Aeneid](#)] for Augustus: the second, fourth, and sixth--this last out of his well-known affection for Octavia, who (being present at the recitation) is said to have fainted at the lines about her son, "...You shall be Marcellus" [Aen. 6.884]. Revived only with difficulty, she ordered ten-thousand sesterces to be granted to Virgil for each of the verses."

She never fully recovered from the death of her son and retired from public life, spending her final years dressing in mourning.

Death



Today's appearance of the [Porticus Octaviae](#).

Octavia died between 11 and 9 BC. She was still alive when her niece [Julia the Elder](#) married [Tiberius](#). Her funeral was a public one, with her sons-in-law carrying her to the grave. She was buried in the Mausoleum of Augustus. Augustus delivered the funeral oration and gave her the highest posthumous honors (e.g. building the Gate of Octavia and [Porticus Octaviae](#) in her memory). Augustus declined some other honors decreed to her by the senate, for reasons unknown. She was one of the first Roman women to have coins minted in her image; probably only Antony's previous wife Fulvia pre-empted her.

Children with Marcellus

Octavia and her first husband had one son and two daughters born late in their marriage:

1. [Marcellus](#)
2. [Claudia Marcella](#) Major
3. [Claudia Marcella](#) Minor

Children with Mark Antony

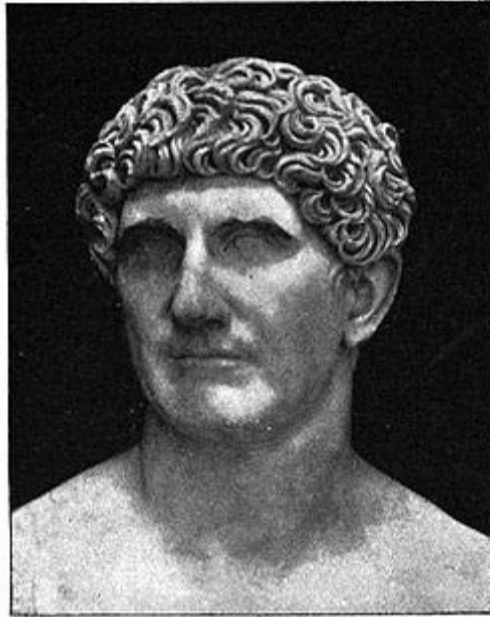
Octavia and Mark Antony had two daughters by their marriage (her second, his fourth), and both were the ancestors of later [Roman Emperors](#).

1. [Antonia Major](#): grandmother to Emperor [Nero](#).
2. [Antonia Minor](#): mother to Emperor [Claudius](#), grandmother to Emperor [Caligula](#), and great-grandmother to Emperor [Nero](#).

Mark Antony

Marcus Antonius (c. January 14, 83 BC–August 1, 30 BC), known in [English](#) as **Marc Antony**, was a [Roman politician](#) and [general](#). He was an important supporter and the loyal friend of [Gaius Julius Caesar](#) as a military commander and administrator, being Caesar's second cousin, once removed, by his mother [Julia Antonia](#). After Caesar's [assassination](#), Antony formed an official political alliance with Octavian ([Augustus](#)) and [Marcus Aemilius Lepidus](#), known to historians today as the [Second Triumvirate](#).

Bust of Marc Antony (Vatican Museums)



M. Antonius.

The [triumvirate](#) broke up in 33 BC. Disagreement between Octavian and Antony erupted into civil war, the [Final War of the Roman Republic](#), in 31 BC. Antony was defeated by Octavian at the naval [Battle of Actium](#), and in a brief land battle at [Alexandria](#). He and his lover [Cleopatra](#) committed suicide shortly thereafter.

Early life

A member of the [Antonia gens](#), Antony was born in winter 83-2 BC¹ probably in Sulla's army besieging Athens during the Mithridates War. His father was his namesake, [Marcus Antonius Creticus](#), the son of the great [rhetorician Marcus Antonius Orator](#) who had been murdered and decapitated by order of [Gaius Marius](#) at the end of 87 BC. His mother Julia was a daughter of Lucius Caesar (consul 90, censor 89), another Marian victim slain with Antonius Orator. His father (praetor

74) died in 71 BC during his command against Mediterranean piracy.

Supporter of Caesar

In 54 BC, Antony became a member of the staff of Caesar's armies in [Gaul](#) and early Germany. He again proved to be a competent military leader in the [Gallic Wars](#), but his personality caused instability wherever he went. Antony and Caesar were said to be best of friends as well as being fairly close relatives. Antony made himself ever available to assist Caesar in carrying out his military campaigns.

On March 14, 44 BC, Antony was alarmed when [Cicero](#) told him the gods would strike down Caesar. The following day, the [Ides of March](#), he went down to warn the dictator but the [Liberatores](#) reached Caesar first and he was assassinated on March 15, 44 BC. In the turmoil that surrounded the event, Antony escaped Rome dressed as a slave; fearing that the dictator's assassination would be the start of a bloodbath among his supporters. When this did not occur, he soon returned to Rome, discussing a truce with the assassins' faction. For a while, Antony, as consul, seemed to pursue peace and an end to the political tension. Following a speech by Cicero in the Senate, an amnesty was agreed for the assassins.

Then came the day of Caesar's funeral. As Caesar's ever-present second in command, co-consul and cousin, Antony was the natural choice to give the [eulogy](#). In his [speech](#), he made accusations of murder and ensured a permanent breach with the [conspirators](#). Showing a talent for [rhetoric](#) and dramatic interpretation, Antony snatched the [toga](#) from Caesar's body to show the crowd the stab wounds, pointing at each and naming the authors, publicly shaming them. During the eulogy he also read Caesar's will, which left most of his property to the people of Rome, demonstrating that, contrary to the conspirators' assertions, Caesar had no intention of forming a royal dynasty. Public opinion turned, and that night, the Roman populace attacked the assassins' houses, forcing them to flee for their lives.

Antony and Cleopatra

Antony and Cleopatra, by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1883)



Antony summoned [Cleopatra](#) to [Tarsus](#) in October 41 BC. There they formed an Alliance and became lovers. Antony returned to Alexandria with her, where he spent the winter of 41 BC - 40 BC. In spring 40 BC he was forced to return to Rome following news of his wife Fulvia's Civil war. [Fulvia](#) died while Antony was en-route to Sicyon (where Fulvia was exiled). Antony made peace with Octavian in September 40 BC and married Octavian's Sister [Octavia Minor](#).

Death

Plutarch tells us of the death of Antony. When his armies desert him and join with Octavian, he cries out that Cleopatra has betrayed him. She, fearing his wrath, locks herself in her monument with only her two handmaidens and sends messengers to Antony that she is dead. Believing them, Antony stabs himself in the stomach with his sword, and lies on his couch to die. Instead, the blood flow stops, and he begs any and all to finish him off.

The Death of Cleopatra by Guido Cagnacci, 1658



Another messenger comes from Cleopatra with instructions to bear him to her, and he, rejoicing that Cleopatra is still alive, consents. She won't open the door, but tosses ropes out of a window. After Antony is securely trussed up, she and her handmaidens haul him up into the monument. This nearly finishes him off. After dragging him in through the window, they lay him on a couch. Cleopatra tears off her clothes and covers him with them. She raves and cries, beats her breasts and engages in self-mutilation. Antony tells her to calm down, asks for a glass of wine, and dies upon finishing it.

Cleopatra's son by Caesar, [Caesarion](#), was proclaimed pharaoh by the Egyptians, after Alexandria fell to Octavian. Caesarion was captured and killed, his fate reportedly sealed when one of Octavian's advisers paraphrased Homer: "It is bad to have too many Caesars." This ended not just the Hellenistic line of Egyptian pharaohs, but the line of all Egyptian pharaohs.

Antonia Minor

Antonia Minor, also known as **Antonia the Younger** was a daughter of [Roman politician Mark Antony](#) and [Octavia Minor](#). She was the younger niece of the [Emperor Augustus](#), sister-in-law to the Emperor [Tiberius](#), paternal grandmother of the Emperor [Caligula](#), mother of the Emperor [Claudius](#), as well as maternal great-grandmother and paternal great-aunt of the Emperor [Nero](#).

The Juno Ludovisi (a portrait of Antonia Minor)



Antonia is one of the most prominent Roman women. She is celebrated for her virtue and beauty. She was the youngest daughter to [Octavia Minor](#) and [Mark Antony](#) and was also the favorite niece of her mother's younger brother, Rome's first Emperor [Augustus](#).

She was born in Athens, Greece and after 36 BCE was brought to Rome by her mother and her siblings. Antonia never had the chance to know her father, Mark Antony, who divorced her mother in 32 BCE and committed suicide in 30 BCE. She was raised by her mother, her uncle and her aunt, [Livia Drusilla](#). Due to inheritances, she owned properties in [Italy](#), [Greece](#) and [Egypt](#). She was a wealthy and influential woman who often received people, who were visiting Rome. Antonia had many male friends and they included wealthy Jew [Alexander the Alabarch](#) and [Lucius Vitellius](#), a consul and father of future Emperor [Aulus Vitellius](#).

Marriage to Drusus

In 16 BCE, she married the Roman general and consul [Nero Claudius Drusus](#). Drusus was the stepson of her uncle Augustus, second son to Livia Drusilla and brother to future Emperor [Tiberius](#). They had several children, but only three survived. Their children were the famous general [Germanicus](#), [Livilla](#) and the Roman Emperor [Claudius](#). Antonia was grandmother to the Emperor [Caligula](#), the Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#) and through Agrippina, great-grandmother and great-aunt to the Emperor [Nero](#). Drusus died in June 9 BCE in [Germany](#), due to complications from injuries he sustained after falling from a horse. After his death, although pressured by her uncle to remarry, she never did.

Antonia raised her children in Rome and had Tiberius as their guardian. Germanicus died in 19CE. On the orders of [Tiberius](#) and Livia Drusilla, Antonia was forbidden to go to his funeral. When Livia Drusilla died in June 29CE, Antonia took care of Caligula, Agrippina the Younger, [Julia Drusilla](#), [Julia Livilla](#) and later [Claudia Antonia](#) (Claudius's daughter through his second wife [Aelia Paetina](#)), her younger grandchildren.

Antonia's children

Germanicus

[Germanicus](#) was very popular among the citizens of Rome, who enthusiastically celebrated all his victories. He was also a favourite with Augustus, his grandfather-in-law, who, for some time, considered him as heir to the Empire. He was married to [Agrippina the Elder](#), daughter of [Julia the Elder](#) (Augustus's own daughter) and [Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa](#). He had nine children by Agrippina but only six lived to adulthood. They were (from oldest to youngest) [Nero Caesar](#), [Drusus Caesar](#), the Emperor [Caligula](#), the Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#), [Julia Drusilla](#) and [Julia Livilla](#). In 4CE, Augustus finally decided in favour of Tiberius, his stepson, but he was compelled to adopt Germanicus as a son and name him his heir. After the death of Augustus in 14CE, the Senate appointed Germanicus commander of the forces in Germania. Tiberius was made emperor, but he was highly unpopular and the legions rioted on the news. Refusing to accept Tiberius, the rebel soldiers cried for Germanicus as emperor. However, Germanicus refused. Germanicus died in [Antioch, Syria](#) in 19CE, a year after he defeated the kingdoms of [Cappadocia](#) and [Commagene](#). His death was surrounded by speculation, and several sources refer to claims that he was poisoned by [Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso](#), governor of [Syria](#), under orders of the emperor Tiberius.

Claudius

After Livilla's death, Antonia's only remaining child was [Claudius](#). Due to his constant illnesses and physical disabilities, she would constantly put him down. She would say "a monster: a man whom nature had not finished but had merely begun" or, if ever accusing anyone of stupidity, would exclaim, "he is a bigger fool even than my son Claudius!". She was said to have done her duty in raising Claudius, but she never loved him.

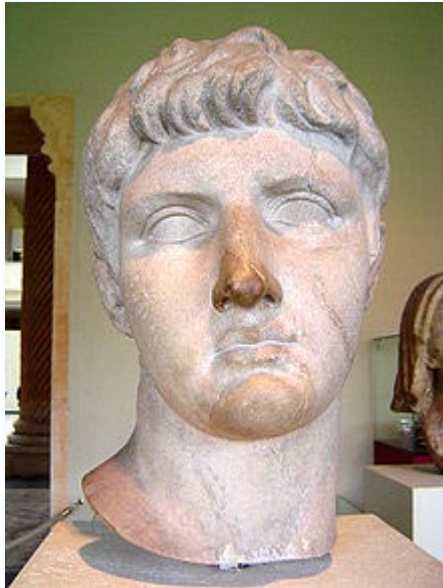
Succession of Caligula and death

When Tiberius died, Caligula became emperor in March 37CE. Caligula awarded her a senatorial decree, granting her all the honors that Livia Drusilla had received in her lifetime. She was also offered the title of [Augusta](#), previously only given to Augustus's wife Livia, but rejected it.

Six months into his reign, Caligula became seriously ill and never recovered, (although according to some sources, the illness was feigned). Antonia would often offer Caligula advice, but he once told her, "I can treat anyone exactly as I please!". Caligula was rumored to have had his young cousin Gemellus beheaded, to remove him as a rival to the throne. This act was said to have outraged Antonia, who was grandmother to Gemellus as well as to Caligula.

Having had enough of Caligula's anger at her criticisms and of his behavior, she committed suicide. Suetonius's *Caligula*, clause 23, mentions how he might have poisoned her.

Nero Claudius Drusus



Bust of Nero Claudius Drusus, in the Musée du Cinquantenaire, [Brussels](#)

Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus (14 January 38 BC - 14 September 9 BC), born **Decimus Claudius Drusus** also called **Drusus**, **Drusus I**, **Nero Drusus**, or **Drusus the Elder** was a [Roman](#) politician and military commander. He was a fully patrician Claudian on his father's side but his maternal grandmother was from a plebeian family. He was the stepson of the Emperor [Augustus](#), brother of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), paternal grandfather of the Emperor [Caligula](#), father of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and maternal great-grandfather of the Emperor [Nero](#).

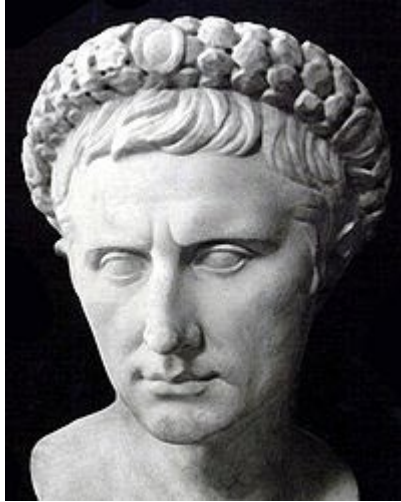
Childhood

Drusus was the youngest son of Roman Empress [Livia](#) Drusilla from her marriage to [Tiberius Nero](#). Drusus was born between 18 March 38 BC and 13 April 38 BC. He was born shortly before Livia divorced Tiberius Nero and married [Augustus](#)

Marriage

Drusus married [Antonia Minor](#), the daughter of [Mark Antony](#) and Augustus' sister, [Octavia Minor](#), and gained a reputation of being completely faithful to her. Their children were [Germanicus](#) and [Claudius](#), a daughter [Livilla \(Little Livia\)](#), and at least two others who did not survive infancy. After Drusus' death, Antonia never remarried, though she outlived him by nearly five decades. Three Emperors were direct descendants of Drusus, [Claudius](#) (his son), [Caligula](#) (Germanicus's son, Drusus's grandson), and [Nero](#) (Germanicus's grandson, Drusus's great-grandson),

Caesar Augustus



Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus (23 September 63 BC – 19 August AD 14) was the first ruler of the Roman Empire, which he ruled alone from January 27 BC until his death in AD 14.

Born **Gaius Octavius Thurinus**, he was [adopted posthumously](#) by his great-uncle [Gaius Julius Caesar](#) in 44 BC, and between then and 31 BC was officially named **Gaius Julius Caesar**. In 27 BC the Senate awarded him the honorific [Augustus](#) ("the revered one"), and thus consequently he was **Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus**. Because of the various names he bore, it is common to call him **Octavius** when referring to events between 63 and 44 BC, **Octavian** when referring to events between 44 and 27 BC, and **Augustus** when referring to events after 27 BC.

Emperor of the Roman Empire

The young Octavius came into his inheritance after Caesar's assassination in 44 BC. In 43 BC, Octavian joined forces with [Mark Antony](#) and [Marcus Aemilius Lepidus](#) in a [military dictatorship](#) known as the [Second Triumvirate](#). As a [triumvir](#), Octavian ruled Rome and many of its provinces as an [autocrat](#), seizing consular power after the deaths of the consuls [Hirtius](#) and [Pansa](#) and having himself perpetually re-elected. The triumvirate was eventually torn apart under the competing ambitions of its rulers: Lepidus was driven into exile, and Antony committed suicide following his defeat at the [Battle of Actium](#) by the fleet of Octavian commanded by [Agrippa](#) in 31 BC.

The Battle of Actium, by Lorenzo Castro, painted 1672, National Maritime Museum, London

Octavian, later known as Caesar Augustus, is only mentioned once in The Bible, when he ordered that a census be taken of the Roman world. That census caused the birth of Jesus Christ to occur in Bethlehem, exactly as prophesied (e.g. Micah 5:2), rather than in Nazareth where Joseph and Mary were then living.



"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (Luke 2:1-7 RSV) (LG: See Biblical Genealogy)

Scribonia

Scribonia from "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum "



Scribonia (68 BC-16) was the second wife of the [Roman Emperor Augustus](#) and the mother of his only natural child, [Julia the Elder](#). She was the mother-in-law of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), great-grandmother of the Emperor [Caligula](#) and Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#), grandmother-in-law of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and great-great grandmother of the Emperor [Nero](#).

Life

Scribonia was the daughter of a [Lucius Scribonius Libo](#). The name of her mother was Sentia According to [Suetonius](#), Scribonia's first two marriages were to former consuls. Her first husband is unknown. Her second husband perhaps was [Publius Cornelius Scipio Salvito](#), a supporter of [Pompey](#).. They had a daughter [Cornelia Scipio](#) who married the censor Lucius Aemilius Paullus. Scribonia may have also been the mother to [Publius Cornelius Scipio](#), consul in 16 BC.

In 40 BC Scribonia was forced to divorce her husband and marry [Octavian](#), who was younger than her by several years. Octavian in turn divorced his wife [Clodia](#), marrying Scribonia to cement a political alliance with her niece Scribonia's husband [Sextus Pompeius](#). Their daughter [Julia the Elder](#) was born in 39 BC, probably in October, and on that very same day Octavian divorced her. Their marriage had not been a happy one; Octavian felt she nagged him too much. She never remarried. [Cassius Dio](#) and [Marcus Velleius Paterculus](#) says that when her youngest child, Julia, was sent into exile for [adultery](#) and [treason](#), she requested that she be allowed to accompany her.

When Emperor [Tiberius](#) came into power, he separated Scribonia from her daughter, and allegedly starved Julia to death. In [Seneca](#), she is mentioned as being alive and in full possession of her wits as late as the end of 16 when she tried to convince her nephew [Marcus Scribonius Libo](#) not to commit suicide and face his punishment.

Marriages and issues

- Her first husband, [Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus](#) (?)
 - Cornelius Marcellinus
- Her second husband, [Publius Cornelius Scipio Salvito](#) (?)
 - [Publius Cornelius Scipio](#) (consul of 16 BC) (?)
 - [Cornelia Scipio](#)
- Her third husband, [Augustus](#)
 - [Julia the Elder](#) (wife of [Agrippa](#) and [Tiberius](#))

Julia the Elder

Julia the Elder (30 October 39 BC - 14 AD), known to her contemporaries as **Julia Caesaris filia** or **Julia Augusti filia** was the daughter and only natural child of [Augustus](#), the first emperor of the Roman Empire. Augustus subsequently adopted several male members of his close family as sons. Julia resulted from Augustus' second marriage with [Scribonia](#), her birth occurring on the same day as Scribonia's divorce from Augustus, who wished to marry [Livia Drusilla](#).

She was the daughter of the Emperor [Augustus](#), stepsister and second wife of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), maternal grandmother of the Emperor [Caligula](#) and the Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#), mother-in-law of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and maternal great-grandmother of the Emperor [Nero](#).

Marriage to Agrippa

Julia from "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum "



In 21 BC, having now reached the age of 18, Julia married [Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa](#), a man from a modest family who had risen to become Augustus' most trusted general and friend. This step is said to have been taken partly on the advice of Maecenas, who in counseling him remarked: "You have made him so great that he must either become your son-in-law or be slain".^[7] Since Agrippa was nearly 25 years her elder, it was a typical arranged marriage, with Julia functioning as a pawn in her father's dynastic plans. There is from this period the report of an infidelity with one Sempronius Gracchus, with whom Julia allegedly had a lasting *liaison* ([Tacitus](#) describes him as "a persistent paramour"^[8]). This was the first of a series of alleged

adulteries. According to Suetonius, Julia's marital status did not prevent her from conceiving a passion for Augustus' stepson, and thus her stepbrother, [Tiberius](#), so it was widely rumoured.^[9]

The newly-weds lived in a villa in Rome that has since been excavated near the modern [Farnesina](#) in [Trastevere](#). Agrippa and Julia's marriage resulted in five children: [Gaius Caesar](#), Vipsania Julia (also known as [Julia the Younger](#)), [Lucius Caesar](#), Vipsania Agrippina or [Agrippina Major](#) (mother of Emperor [Caligula](#)), and [Agrippa Postumus](#) (a posthumous son). From June 20 BC to the spring of 18 BC, Agrippa was governor of [Gaul](#), and it is likely that Julia followed him to the country on the other side of the Alps. Shortly after their arrival, their first child Gaius was born, and in 19 BC, Julia gave birth to Vipsania Julia. After their return to Italy, a third child followed: a son named Lucius.

[Nicolaus](#) and [Josephus](#) mentions that during Julia's marriage to Agrippa, she was travelling to meet Agrippa where he was campaigning, was caught up in a flash flood in [Ilium](#) (Troy), and almost drowned Agrippa was furious, and in his anger he fined the locals 100,000 drachmae. The fine was a heavy blow but no one would face Agrippa for an appeal. It was only once [Herod](#), king of Judaea, went to Agrippa to receive pardon that he withdrew the fine. In the spring of 16 BC, Agrippa and Julia started a tour through the eastern provinces, where they visited [Herod](#). In

October 14 BC, the couple travelled to [Athens](#), where Julia gave birth to her fourth child, Agrippina. Augustus, who took care of their education personally, adopted the boys Lucius and Gaius Caesar after their father's death in 12 BC. Augustus adopted both the newborn Lucius and the three-year-old Gaius in 17 BC.

After the winter, the family returned to [Italy](#). Julia quickly became pregnant again, but her husband died suddenly in March 12 BC in [Campania](#) at the age of 51. He was buried in the Mausoleum of Augustus. Julia named the [posthumous](#) son Marcus in his honor. He was to be known as [Agrippa Postumus](#). Immediately after the boy was born, and while Julia was still in mourning, Augustus had her betrothed and then remarried to [Tiberius](#), her stepbrother

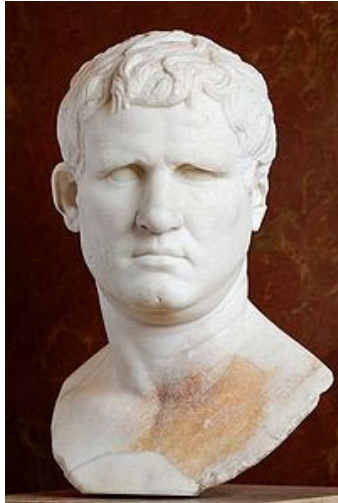
Death

Julia died from [malnutrition](#) some time after Augustus' death in 14, but before 15. With her father dead and no sons to take the throne, Julia was left completely at the mercy of the new emperor, Tiberius, who was free to exact his vengeance. The circumstances of her death are obscure. One theory is that [Tiberius](#), who loathed her for dishonouring their marriage, had her starved to death. Another theory is that upon learning her last surviving son [Agrippa Postumus](#) had been murdered, she succumbed to despair. Simultaneously, her alleged *paramour* Sempronius [Gracchus](#), who had endured 14 years of exile on Cercina ([Kerkenna](#)) off the African coast, was executed at Tiberius' instigation, or on the independent initiative of Nonius Asprenas, proconsul of Africa. Augustus in his will had forbidden Julia to be buried in his own [Mausoleum of Augustus](#).

The entryway to the Mausoleum of Augustus.



Cinerary urn of Agrippina which now rests in the Palazzo dei Conservatori of the [Capitoline Museums](#) near the [tabularium](#).



Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (c. 63 BC–12 BC) was a Roman statesman and general. He was a close friend, son-in-law, lieutenant and [defense minister](#) to Octavian, the future emperor Caesar [Augustus](#). He was responsible for most of Octavian's military victories, most notably winning the naval [Battle of Actium](#) against the forces of [Mark Antony](#) and [Cleopatra VII of Egypt](#).

Bust of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa from the Louvre, Paris

Early life

Agrippa was born between 23 October and 23 November in 64–62 BC in an uncertain location. His father was perhaps called [Lucius Vipsanius Agrippa](#). He had an elder brother whose name was also Lucius Vipsanius Agrippa, and a sister named [Vipsania Polla](#). The family had not been prominent in Roman public life. However, Agrippa was about the same age as [Octavian](#) (the future emperor Augustus), and the two were educated together and became close friends. Despite Agrippa's association with the family of [Julius Caesar](#), his elder brother chose another side in the [civil wars](#) of the 40s BC, fighting under [Cato](#) against Caesar [in Africa](#). When Cato's forces were defeated, Agrippa's brother was taken prisoner but freed after Octavian interceded on his behalf.

Antony and Cleopatra

Statue of Agrippa at the Archaeological Museum of Venice



Agrippa was again called away to take command of the fleet when the war with Antony and Cleopatra broke out. He captured the strategically important city of [Methone](#) at the southwest of the [Peloponnese](#), then sailed north, raiding the Greek coast and capturing [Corfu](#). Octavian then brought his forces to Corcyra, occupying it as a naval base. Antony drew up his ships and troops at [Actium](#), where Octavian moved to meet him. Agrippa meanwhile defeated Antony's supporter [Quintus Nasidius](#) in a naval battle at [Patrae](#). Dio relates that as Agrippa moved to join Octavian near Actium, he encountered [Gaius Sosius](#), one of Antony's lieutenants, who was making a surprise attack on the squadron of [Lucius Tarius](#), a supporter of Octavian. Agrippa's unexpected arrival turned the battle around.

On September 2 31 BC, the [Battle of Actium](#) was fought. Octavian's victory, which gave him the mastery of Rome and the empire, was mainly due to Agrippa. As a token of signal regard, Octavian bestowed upon him the hand of his niece [Claudia Marcella Major](#) in 28 BC. He also served a second consulship with Octavian the same year. In 27 BC, Agrippa held a third consulship with Octavian, and in that year, the senate also bestowed upon Octavian the imperial title of [Augustus](#).

Agrippina the Elder

Julia Vipsania Agrippina or most commonly known as **Agrippina the Elder** or **Agrippina Major** (*Major* is Latin for *the elder*) 14 BC – 18 October 33) was the distinguished and prominent Roman granddaughter of [Augustus](#). She lived between the [1st century BC](#) and 1st century AD. Agrippina was the wife of the general, politician [Germanicus](#) and a relative to the first [Roman Emperors](#). She was the second granddaughter to the Emperor [Augustus](#), sister-in-law, stepdaughter and daughter-in-law to the Emperor [Tiberius](#), mother of the Emperor [Caligula](#), maternal second cousin and sister-in-law to the Emperor [Claudius](#) and the maternal grandmother of the Emperor [Nero](#).

Agrippina the Elder, wife of Germanicus



Family and early life

Agrippina was born as the second daughter and fourth child to Roman Statesman and Augustus' trusted ally [Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa](#) and [Julia the Elder](#). Agrippina's mother Julia, was the only natural child born to Augustus from his second marriage to noblewoman [Scribonia](#), who was a descendant of triumvir [Pompey](#) and dictator [Lucius Cornelius Sulla](#).

Her father's marriage to Julia was his third marriage. From Agrippa's previous two marriages, Agrippina had two half-sisters: [Vipsania Agrippina](#) and [Vipsania Marcella](#) Agrippina. Vipsania Agrippina was the Agrippa's first child from his first marriage to Pomponia [Caecilia Attica](#) and became the first wife of the future Emperor Tiberius and was the mother to Tiberius' son, prince [Drusus Julius Caesar](#). Vipsania Agrippina later married senator and consul [Gaius Asinius Gallus Saloninus](#).

Vipsania Marcella was Agrippa's second child from his second marriage to Augustus' first niece and the paternal cousin of Julia the Elder, [Claudia Marcella Major](#). Vipsania Marcella was the first wife to general [Publius Quinctilius Varus](#).

Her mother's marriage to Agrippa was her second marriage, as Julia the Elder was widowed from her first marriage to her paternal cousin [Marcus Claudius Marcellus](#) and they had no children. From the marriage of Julia and Agrippa, Agrippina had four full-blooded siblings: a sister [Julia the Younger](#) and three brothers: [Gaius Caesar](#), [Lucius Caesar](#) and [Agrippa Postumus](#). Agrippina was born in [Athens Greece](#), as in the year of her birth; Agrippa was in Athens completing official duties on behalf of Augustus. Her mother and her siblings had travelled with Agrippa. Later Agrippina's family had returned to [Rome](#).

In 12 BC, Agrippina's father had died. Augustus had forced his first stepson Tiberius to end his first happy marriage to Vipsania Agrippina to marry Julia the Elder. The marriage of Julia and Tiberius was an unhappy marriage. In 2 BC Augustus had exiled Agrippina's mother, because she had committed adultery and this had caused a major scandal. Julia was banished for her

remaining years and Agrippina never saw Julia again. Around this time, to avoid any scandals Tiberius divorced Julia and left Rome to live on the [Greek](#) island of [Rhodes](#).

In the marriage of Agrippina and Germanicus, they had nine children. Three children from their union died young. The six children who survived to adulthood were as follows:

In AD 6, AD 7, and AD 12, Agrippina the Elder gave birth to her three sons, who were, in order:

- [Nero \(son of Germanicus\)](#)
- [Drusus Caesar](#)
- the Emperor [Caligula](#) (officially Gaius Julius Caesar Germanicus).

In AD 15, AD 16, and AD 18, Agrippina the Elder gave birth to her three daughters. In order, they were:

- Roman Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#) (empress as fourth wife of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and mother of the Emperor [Nero](#))
- [Drusilla \(sister of Caligula\)](#)
- [Julia Livilla](#).

A few months before Augustus' death in 14, the emperor wrote and sent a letter to Agrippina mentioning how Gaius (Caligula) must be future emperor because at that time, no other child had this name.

The letter reads:

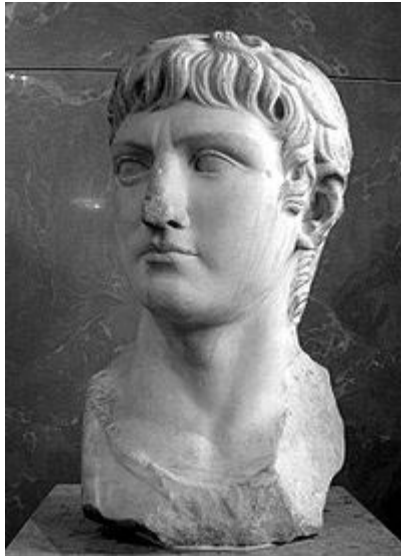
Yesterday I made arrangements for Talaris and Asillius to bring your son Gaius to you on the eighteenth of May, if the gods will. I am also sending with him one of my slaves, a doctor who as I have told Germanicus in a letter, need not be returned to me if he proves of use of you. Goodbye my dear Agrippina! Keep well on the way to your Germanicus!

Agrippina landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus, Oil on canvas, c. 1768.



Agrippina and Germanicus travelled to the [Middle East](#) in 19, incurring the displeasure of [Tiberius](#). Germanicus quarrelled with [Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso](#), the governor of [Syria](#) and died in [Antioch](#) under very mysterious circumstances. It was widely suspected that Germanicus had been poisoned or perhaps on the orders of Tiberius. Agrippina was in grief when Germanicus died. She returned with her children to [Italy](#) with Germanicus' ashes.

Germanicus



Germanicus Julius Caesar (24 May 16 BC or 15 BC – 10 October AD 19) was a member of the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#) of the early [Roman Empire](#). He was born in [Lugdunum, Gaul](#) (modern [Lyon](#)). At birth he was named either **Nero Claudius Drusus** after his father or **Tiberius Claudius Nero** after his uncle. He received the [agnomen](#) **Germanicus**, by which he is principally known, in 9 BC, when it was posthumously awarded to his father in honour of his victories in [Germania](#).

Germanicus was the grandson-in-law and great-nephew of the [Emperor Augustus](#), nephew of the Emperor [Tiberius](#), father of the Emperor [Caligula](#), brother of the Emperor [Claudius](#), and the maternal grandfather of the Emperor [Nero](#).

Germanicus was raised and educated in [Rome](#). His parents were the general [Nero Claudius Drusus](#) (son of Empress [Livia Drusilla](#), third wife of Emperor [Augustus](#)) and [Antonia Minor](#) (daughter of the [triumvir Mark Antony](#) and [Octavia Minor](#), sister of Augustus). [Livilla](#) and [Claudius](#) were his siblings.

Germanicus married his maternal second cousin [Agrippina the Elder](#), a granddaughter of Augustus, between 5 and 1 BC. The couple had nine children. Two died very young; another, Gaius Julius Caesar, died in early childhood. The remaining six were: [Nero Caesar](#), [Drusus Caesar](#), the Emperor [Caligula](#), the Empress [Agrippina the Younger](#), [Julia Drusilla](#), and [Julia Livilla](#).

Germanicus became immensely popular among the citizens of [Rome](#), who enthusiastically celebrated his military victories. He was also a favorite with [Augustus](#), his great-uncle, who for some time considered him heir to the Empire. In AD 4, persuaded by [Livia](#), his wife, Augustus decided in favour of [Tiberius](#), his stepson from Livia's first marriage. However, Augustus compelled Tiberius to adopt Germanicus as a son and to name him as his heir. Upon this adoption, Germanicus's name was changed to Germanicus Julius Caesar.



Germanicus held several military commands, leading the army in the campaigns in [Pannonia](#) and [Dalmatia](#). He is recorded to have been an excellent soldier and an inspired leader, loved by the [legions](#). In the year 12 he was appointed [consul](#) after five mandates as [quaestor](#).

The death of Germanicus, by Nicholas Poussin, laments the passing of Rome's last Republican.

Caligula

Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (31 August AD 12 – 24 January AD 41), more commonly known by his **agnomen** **Caligula**, was the third **Roman Emperor**, reigning from 16 March 37 until his **assassination** on 24 January 41. Caligula was a member of the house of rulers conventionally known as the **Julio-Claudian dynasty**.



Bust of Caligula (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek)

Caligula's father, **Germanicus**, the nephew and **adopted** son of emperor **Tiberius**, was a very successful general and one of Rome's most beloved public figures. The young Gaius earned his nickname Caligula meaning "little [soldier's] boot", while accompanying his father on military campaigns in **Germania**. When Germanicus died in **Antioch** in AD 19, his mother **Agrippina the Elder** returned to Rome with her six children, where she became entangled in an increasingly bitter feud with Tiberius. This conflict eventually led to the destruction of her family, with Caligula as the sole male survivor.

Early reign

Caligula accepted the powers of the Principate as conferred by the

Senate and entered Rome on 28 March amid a crowd that hailed him as "our baby" and "our star," among other nicknames. Caligula is described as the first emperor who was admired by everyone in "all the world, from the rising to the setting sun." Caligula was loved by many for being the beloved son of the popular **Germanicus** but also because he was not **Tiberius**. It was also said by Suetonius that over 160,000 animals were sacrificed during three months of public rejoicing to usher in his reign. Philo describes the first seven months of Caligula's reign as completely blissful.



Caligula Depositing the Ashes of his Mother and Brother in the Tomb of his Ancestors, by Eustache Le Sueur, 1647

Scandals

Surviving sources present a number of stories about Caligula that illustrate cruelty and insanity. The contemporaneous sources, **Philo of Alexandria** and **Seneca the Younger**, describe an insane emperor who was self-absorbed, angry, killed on a whim, and who indulged in too much spending and sex. He is accused of sleeping with other men's wives and bragging about it and killing for mere amusement

Construction

Despite financial difficulties, Caligula embarked on a number of construction projects during his reign. Some were for the public good, while others were for himself.

The Vatican Obelisk was first brought from Egypt to Rome by Caligula. It was the centerpiece of a large racetrack he built.

Assassination and aftermath

Renaissance picture of Caligula.



Caligula's actions as Emperor were described as being especially harsh to the Senate, the nobility and the equestrian order. According to Josephus, these actions led to several failed [conspiracies](#) against Caligula. Eventually, a successful murder was planned by officers within the [Praetorian Guard](#) led by [Cassius Chaerea](#). The plot is described as having been planned by three men, but many in the Senate, army and equestrian order were said to have been informed of it and involved in it.



On 24 January 41, Chaerea and other guardsmen accosted Caligula while he was addressing an acting troupe of young men during a series of games and dramatics held for the Divine Augustus. Details on the events vary somewhat from source to source, but they agree that Chaerea was first to stab Caligula followed by a number of conspirators. Suetonius records that Caligula's death was similar to that of [Julius Caesar](#). He states that both the elder Gaius Julius Caesar (Julius Caesar) and the younger Gaius Julius Caesar (Caligula) were stabbed 30 times by conspirators led by a man named Cassius. The [cryptoporticus](#) (underground corridor) where this event would have taken place was discovered beneath the imperial palaces on the Palatine Hill. By the time Caligula's loyal Germanic guard responded, the emperor was already dead. The Germanic guard, stricken with grief and rage, responded with a rampaging attack on the assassins, conspirators, innocent senators and bystanders alike.

Agrippina the Younger

Julia Agrippina (from AD 50, **Julia Augusta Agrippina**), also known as **Agrippina the Younger** and **Agrippina Minor** (7 November AD 15–19/23 March AD 59) was a Roman empress. She was a great-granddaughter of the emperor [Augustus](#), great-niece and adoptive granddaughter of the emperor [Tiberius](#), sister to the emperor [Caligula](#), niece and fourth wife of the emperor [Claudius](#), and mother of the emperor [Nero](#).

Marble bust of Agrippina



Agrippina the Younger has been described by the ancient and modern sources as ‘ruthless, ambitious, violent and domineering’. She was a beautiful and reputable woman and according to [Pliny the Elder](#), she had a double canine in her upper right jaw, a sign of good fortune. Many ancient historians accuse Agrippina of poisoning Emperor Claudius, though accounts vary. Agrippina the Younger was the first daughter and fourth living child of [Agrippina the Elder](#) and [Germanicus](#). She was the namesake of her mother.

Empress of Rome

On the day that Agrippina married Claudius as her third husband, she became an Empress and the most powerful woman in the [Roman Empire](#). She also was a stepmother to [Claudia Antonia](#) (Claudius' daughter and only child from his second marriage to [Aelia Paetina](#)) and to the young [Claudia Octavia](#) and [Britannicus](#), Claudius' children with Valeria Messalina. Agrippina removed or eliminated anyone from the palace or the imperial court whom she thought was loyal and dedicated to memory of the late Messalina. She also eliminated or removed anyone who she considered was a potential threat to her position and the future of her son (one of her victims being Nero's second paternal aunt: Messalina's mother [Domitia Lepida](#)).

In 49, Agrippina presided over the exercises of Roman legions and [Celtic](#) King [Caratacus](#) assumed that she, as well as Claudius, was the martial leader and bowed before her throne with the same homage and gratitude as he accorded the emperor.

Claudius

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (1 August 10 BC – 13 October AD 54; **Tiberius Claudius Drusus** from birth to AD 4, then **Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus** until his accession) was the fourth [Roman Emperor](#), a member of the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#), ruling from 24 January AD 41 to his death in AD 54. Born in [Lugdunum](#) in [Gaul](#) (modern-day [Lyon, France](#)) to [Drusus](#) and [Antonia Minor](#), he was the first Roman emperor to be born outside [Italia](#).

Emperor of the Roman Empire



Claudius was born on 1 August 10 BC, in [Lugdunum](#), [Gaul](#), on the day of the dedication of an altar to [Augustus](#). His parents were [Nero Claudius Drusus](#) and [Antonia](#), and he had two older siblings named [Germanicus](#) and [Livilla](#). Antonia may have had two other children who died young, as well.

His maternal grandparents were [Mark Antony](#) and [Octavia Minor](#), Caesar Augustus' sister, and as such he was the great-great grandnephew of [Gaius Julius Caesar](#). His paternal grandparents were [Livia](#), Augustus' third wife, and [Tiberius Claudius Nero](#).

Assassination of Caligula

On 24 January, AD 41, Caligula was assassinated by a broad-based [conspiracy](#) (including Praetorian commander [Cassius Chaerea](#) and several [Senators](#)). There is no evidence that Claudius had a direct hand in the [assassination](#), although it has been argued that he knew about the plot — particularly since he left the scene of the crime shortly before his nephew was murdered. However, after the deaths of [Caligula's wife](#) and [daughter](#), it became apparent that Cassius intended to go beyond the terms of the conspiracy and wipe out the imperial family. In the chaos following the murder, Claudius witnessed the [German](#) guard cut down several uninvolved noblemen, including many of his friends. He fled to the palace to hide. According to tradition, a Praetorian named Gratus found him hiding behind a curtain and suddenly declared him [princeps](#).^[8] A section of the guard may have planned in advance to seek out Claudius,

perhaps with his approval. They reassured him that they were not one of the battalions looking for revenge. He was spirited away to the Praetorian camp and put under their protection.



The Senate quickly met and began debating a change of government, but this eventually devolved into an argument over which of them would be the new [Princeps](#). When they heard of the Praetorians' claim, they demanded that Claudius be delivered to them for approval, but he refused, sensing the danger that would come with complying.

Gratus proclaims Claudius emperor. Detail from *A Roman Emperor 41AD*, by [Lawrence Alma-Tadema](#). Oil on canvas, c. 1871.

Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (15 December AD 37 – 9 June AD 68), born **Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus**, also called **Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus**, was the fifth and last [Roman emperor](#) of the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#). Nero was adopted by his great uncle [Claudius](#) to become heir to the throne. As Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, he succeeded to the throne on 13 October 54, following Claudius's death.

Bust of Nero at Musei Capitolini, Rome



Nero ruled from 54 to 68, focusing much of his attention on diplomacy, trade, and increasing the cultural capital of the empire. He ordered the building of theaters and promoted athletic games. His reign included a [successful war](#) and negotiated peace with the [Parthian Empire](#) (58–63), the suppression of the [British revolt](#) (60–61) and improving relations with Greece. The [First Roman-Jewish War](#) (66–70) started during his reign. In 68 a military coup drove Nero from the throne. Facing assassination, he committed suicide on 9 June 68.

Nero's rule is often associated with tyranny and extravagance. He is known for a number of executions, including those of his mother^[4] and stepbrother, and as the emperor who "fiddled while [Rome burned](#)", and as an early persecutor of [Christians](#).

Family

Nero was born on 15 December, AD 37, in [Antium](#), near Rome.^{[9][10]} He was the only son of [Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus](#) and second and third cousin [Agrippina the Younger](#), sister of emperor [Caligula](#).

Lucius' father was the grandson of [Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus](#) and [Aemilia Lepida](#) through their son [Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus](#). Gnaeus was a grandson to [Mark Antony](#) and [Octavia Minor](#) through their daughters [Antonia Major](#) and [Antonia Minor](#), by each parent. With Octavia, he was the grandnephew of Caesar Augustus. Nero's father had been employed as a [praetor](#) and was a member of Caligula's staff when the latter traveled to the East. Nero's father was described by Suetonius as a murderer and a cheat who was charged by emperor [Tiberius](#) with treason, adultery, and incest. Tiberius died, allowing him to escape these charges.^[11] Nero's father died of [edema](#) (or "dropsy") in 39 AD when Nero was three.

Lucius' mother was Agrippina the Younger, who was great-granddaughter to Caesar [Augustus](#) and his wife [Scribonia](#) through their daughter [Julia the Elder](#) and her husband [Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa](#).

Early rule

[Claudius](#) died in 54 and Nero was established as emperor. Though accounts vary greatly, many ancient historians state [Agrippina](#) poisoned Claudius. It is not known how much Nero knew or was involved in the death of Claudius. Nero became emperor at 16, the youngest emperor up until that time.

Ancient historians describe Nero's early reign as being strongly influenced by his mother [Agrippina](#), his tutor [Lucius Annaeus Seneca](#), and the Praetorian Prefect [Sextus Afranius Burrus](#), especially in the first year. Other tutors were less often mentioned, such as [Alexander of Aegae](#).

Very early in Nero's rule, problems arose from competition for influence between Agrippina and Nero's two main advisers, Seneca and Burrus.

Seneca and Nero, after Eduardo Barrón, Cordoba, Spain.



In 54, Agrippina tried to sit down next to Nero while he met with an Armenian envoy, but Seneca stopped her and prevented a scandalous scene. Nero's personal friends also mistrusted Agrippina and told Nero to beware of his mother. Nero was reportedly unsatisfied with his marriage to [Octavia](#) and entered into an affair with [Claudia Acte](#), a former slave. In 55, Agrippina attempted to intervene in favor of Octavia and demanded that her son dismiss Acte. Nero, with the support of Seneca, resisted the intervention of his mother in

his personal affairs.

In 58, Nero became romantically involved with [Poppaea Sabina](#), the wife of his friend and future emperor [Otho](#). Reportedly because a marriage to Poppaea and a divorce from Octavia did not seem politically feasible with Agrippina alive, Nero ordered the murder of his mother in 59. A number of modern historians find this an unlikely motive as Nero did not marry Poppaea until 62. Additionally, according to [Suetonius](#), Poppaea did not divorce her husband until after Agrippina's death, making it unlikely that the already married Poppaea would be pressing Nero for marriage. Some modern historians theorize that Nero's execution of Agrippina was prompted by her plotting to set [Rubellius Plautus](#) on the throne.^[41] According to [Suetonius](#), Nero tried to kill his mother through a planned shipwreck, which took the life of her friend, [Acerronia Polla](#), but when Agrippina survived, he had her executed and framed it as a suicide.



The Remorse of Nero after Killing his Mother, by John William Waterhouse, 1878.

Great Fire of Rome

The Great Fire of Rome erupted on the night of 18 July to 19 July, AD 64. The fire started at the southeastern end of the Circus Maximus in shops selling flammable goods. According to [Tacitus](#), who was nine at the time of the fire, it spread quickly and burned for over five days. It completely destroyed three of fourteen Roman districts and severely damaged seven.

It is uncertain who or what actually caused the fire — whether accident or [arson](#). [Cassius Dio](#) favor Nero as the [arsonist](#), so he could build a palatial complex. It is also said that Nero played the fiddle while Rome burned. According to Tacitus, the population searched for a scapegoat and rumors held Nero responsible. To deflect blame, Nero targeted Christians. He ordered Christians to be thrown to dogs, while others were crucified and burned.

It was said that Nero sang the "[Sack of Ilium](#)" in stage costume while the city burned. Popular legend claims that Nero played the [fiddle](#) at the time of the fire, an anachronism based merely on the concept of the [lyre](#), a stringed instrument associated with Nero and his performances.

In 68 Nero fled Rome with the intention of going to the port of [Ostia](#) and from there to take a fleet to one of the still-loyal eastern provinces. However he abandoned the idea when some army officers openly refused to obey his commands, responding with a line from [Vergil's Aeneid](#): "Is it so dreadful a thing then to die?" Nero then toyed with the idea of fleeing to [Parthia](#), throwing himself upon the mercy of Galba, or to appeal to the people and beg them to pardon him for his past offences "and if he could not soften their hearts, to entreat them at least to allow him the prefecture of Egypt". Suetonius reports that the text of this speech was later found in Nero's writing desk, but that he dared not give it from fear of being torn to pieces before he could reach the Forum.

Nero returned to Rome and spent the evening in the palace. After sleeping, he awoke at about midnight to find the palace guard had left. Dispatching messages to his friends' palace chambers for them to come, none replied. Upon going to their chambers personally, all were abandoned. Upon calling for a gladiator or anyone else adept with a sword to kill him, no one appeared. He cried "Have I neither friend nor foe?" and ran out as if to throw himself into the [Tiber](#).

Returning again, Nero sought for some place where he could hide and collect his thoughts. An imperial freedman offered his villa, located 4 miles outside the city. Travelling in disguise, Nero and four loyal servants reached the villa, where Nero ordered them to dig a grave for him. As it was being prepared, he said again and again "What an artist dies in me!". At this time a courier arrived with a report that the Senate had declared Nero a public enemy and that it was their intention to execute him by beating him to death. At this news Nero prepared himself for [suicide](#). Losing his nerve, he first begged for one of his companions to set an example by first killing himself. At last, the sound of approaching horsemen drove Nero to face the end. After quoting a line from [Homer's Iliad](#) ("Hark, now strikes on my ear the trampling of swift-footed coursers!") Nero drove a dagger into his throat. In this he was aided by his private secretary, [Epaphroditos](#). When one of the horsemen entered, upon his seeing Nero all but dead he attempted to staunch the bleeding. With the words "Too late! This is fidelity!" Nero died on 9 June 68. This was the anniversary of the death of Octavia. Nero was buried in the Mausoleum of the Domitii Ahenobarbi, in what is now the [Villa Borghese \(Pincian Hill\)](#) area of Rome.

With his death, the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#) came to an end. Chaos ensued in the [Year of the Four Emperors](#).