

## 22 irrefutable evidences indicating the falsification of the biography of Nero

1. Evidence: Britannicus, the son of Emperor Claudius, was epileptic. The consequences of this boy's disease were clearly visible. At an early stage already, it was clear that he would not be able to reign over a global empire after his father's death. For that reason, Emperor Claudius married his niece Agrippina, since she had a healthy son. The whole tissue of lies in the >annals< of Tacitus, about the supposed intrigues of Agrippina in order to become empress, are pure assumptions and absurd propaganda. It was an exceptional godsend for Agrippina that her predecessor, Empress Messalina, staged a coup against her husband Claudius and so killed herself.

2. Evidence: The next logical step was the adoption of Domitius Ahenobarbus, Agrippina's son, by Emperor Claudius. Thanks to the adoption and since he was older, Nero was closer to the line of succession than his adoptive brother Britannicus, Claudius' biological son. The adoption of Domitius was virtually impossible to reverse and an almost irrevocable decision of Emperor Claudius. Claudius did not make this decision because of Agrippina's intrigues or any other machinations, but solely because of the fact that Britannicus was neither physically nor mentally able to accede to the Principality, as a consequence of his epilepsy.

3. Evidence: Nero's succession to the throne in the Roman Empire was made public on coins and with honorary titles awarded by the Roman Senate.

4. Evidence: In order to strengthen family ties between Claudius and Agrippina, they even married a daughter of Emperor Claudius to Agrippina's son. This should unify the imperial family to a strong family, securing the lives of Emperor Claudius' children, providing them the highest possible welfare and at the same time strengthening Nero's succession to the throne. Most probably, Nero's first wife Octavia was not the daughter of Empress Messalina, but a daughter of Urgulanilla Plautia, the first wife of later Emperor Claudius. Octavia was definitely not murdered by her former husband, Emperor Nero; not even was she banished from Italy.

5. Evidence: In no way, Emperor Claudius was poisoned by Empress Agrippina. On the contrary: Well, Agrippina did everything possible to prolong Claudius' life, since her son Nero was almost too young to accede the reign over a global empire. When Claudius finally died – his health had been very delicate during the last years – Empress Agrippina reigned together with her very young son Nero the Roman Empire.

6. Evidence: In no way, Emperor Nero let his adoptive brother Britannicus be poisoned, as the antique Roman propagandists Tacitus, Sueton and Cassius Dio suggest. These are really absolutely incredible propaganda lies. There wasn't any single reason to order his assassination - Britannicus was absolutely no danger to the already enthroned Emperor Nero, because of his grave epilepsy.

7. Evidence: The succession in the Principate quasi was bought in case of the Praetorian Guard. Already Claudius promised the Praetorian Guard a donation if they nominated him to become princeps. This was also the case for Emperor Nero. The propaganda lie about Empress Agrippina's plan of degrading her own son Nero and raising Rubellius Plautus to the princeps is an absurd fairy tale, which is completely unfounded with respect to the historical reality. Wherefrom should Agrippina have taken the money to „buy the throne“ again within such a short period of time?

8. Evidence: If Emperor Nero did not murder Britannicus – I ask: why should he? - Empress Agrippina did not have to fear any assassination attempt by her son Nero.

9. Evidence: The death of Empress Agrippina is related to a tragic naval accident. The propaganda story about the folding trireme is simply grotesque. For that reason, it's really surprising that people believed this appalling fairy tale for a period of two thousand years.

10. Evidence: In connection with the investigation of the naval catastrophe the security forces maybe got on to the track of a conspiracy to murder Emperor Nero.

11. Evidence: A macabre drama developed. Oppositional senators commanded their slaves and clients to go to the streets of Rome, cheering the death of the dowager empress. Nero noted these activities with amazement, yes with a growing sense of alienation and with grudge in his heart. Nero's relationship with the senate was strained up to broken. Political trench warfare emerged, culminating in two big coup attempts against Nero's Principate.

12. Evidence: Only four years after the death of Empress Agrippina, Nero ventured to get divorced from Octavia, the daughter of Emperor Claudius. Most probably, the marriage remained childless. Nevertheless, a successor was indispensable for the continued existence of his Principate. For that reason, there isn't any motive for the supposed matricide.

13. Evidence: In the course of the so-called Pisonian conspiracy, the putschists assassinated several loyalists of Nero, in order to damage Emperor Nero. The alleged murder victims of Emperor Nero, such as the stoical philosopher Seneca and consul Plautius Lateranus, in fact, were murder victims of the putschists.

14. Evidence: In the autumn of 65, Rome and Italy were afflicted by an awful epidemic. According to Sueton, >Nero< 39, more than 30,000 dead persons had been recorded in the account books of Libitina. According to Tacitus, annals, XVI 13, there „wasn't any gender, any age invulnerable to" that disease. "Slaves as well as freedmen" and also senators died of the disease. There is one fact which has not been considered by any Nero-researcher, so far: Tacitus, Sueton and Cassius Dio do not mention any prominent victim of that disease. Instead, they constructed again alleged murder victims of Nero, who lost their lives because of trivial reasons, namely because of the emperor's supposed desire to kill.

15. Evidence: In times of the smallpox epidemic, the pregnant Empress Poppaea died, allegedly, because of a kick to the stomach. Again, Poppaea was pregnant and Emperor Nero was hoping to finally get a natural heir and successor to the throne. Under these circumstances he should have kicked to the stomach of his pregnant wife? That's absolutely absurd! In reality, Empress Poppaea died due to the consequences of the confinement or as a consequence of the smallpox.

16. Evidence: Tacitus deliberately concealed the second military conspiracy, the so-called Vinician conspiracy so that he could make the involved military personnel appear as allegedly innocent murder victims of Emperor Nero. Rubellius Plautus participated in the Vinician conspiracy and therefore, as the law stands, he was sentenced to death. With him the head of conspirators, Annius Vinicianus, and his father-in-law Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo, supreme commander of the Roman legions in the East. These three (and several other senior militaries) were in no way innocent murder victims of Emperor Nero, but putschists and therefore they forfeited their lives.

17. Evidence: According to Sueton, >Nero< 50, the allegedly dead Emperor Nero (in truth it was an assassinated lookalike) was buried with an expenditure of 200,000 sesterces. The body was wrapped in white, gold-embroidered blankets. If Emperor Nero had been declared hostis (political offender), his body would have been defiled officially, put down the Gemonian stairs and then be thrown into the Tiber (see Sueton, >Vitellius< 17), as in the case of his successors Galba and Vitellius.

18. Evidence: Almost one year after Emperor Nero's escape from the Principate he had been recognized in the East of the Empire, in Greece. But first under Vespasian Nero was declared „hostis publicus“, following a Senate decision, and he fell into „damnatio memoriae“. In the eyes of Roman senators and the successors of the Julio-Claudian Caesar dynasty, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, the former Emperor Nero was a “traitor” in the issue of Rome. Not least because Nero just found shelter and asylum at the Parthians, the enemies of Rome.

The proclamation of the hostis for Nero is literally a main indication for my theory that Emperor Nero did not die by suicide. As long as Emperor Nero resided in Rome, the senator did not risk to act against him, since the Praetorians were loyal to him. In my opinion, the mysterious disappearance and the alleged death of Nero must have happened within a very short period of time; I assume within three or four days. The emperor's disappearance could not be hidden any longer.

Only after the supposed death of Emperor Nero, meaning after having found his assassinated lookalike, the senators risked to proclaim the „damnatio memoriae“ for him. And only several months later, when Emperor Nero appeared in the East of the Empire and was recognized (the senators' official version: a “wrong Nero”), former Emperor Nero was declared “hostis publicus”. Declaring a dead emperor an enemy of the state would have been nonsense. The proclamation of the hostis by the senate released the Praetorians and legionaries from their oath of allegiance towards the still living former emperor. Furthermore, this proclamation obliged every single Roman, whether Praetorian or civilian, to assassinate the disappeared and fleeing Emperor Nero.

There are three evidences that are indicative for the fact that a proclamation of the hostis for former Emperor Nero could have not been realized before Vespasian: 1. Nero was buried with an expenditure of 200,000 sesterces and entombed in the grave of the Domitii. 2. Otho added his name the byname „Nero“. 3. Vitellius hold official obsequies for Nero on the Campus Martius. According to Mommsen, >Roman criminal law<, page 989-990, this is absolutely impossible in case of a political offender.

Obviously, sooner or later the proclamation of Nero as a political offender had to be justified. Thus, it was indispensable to distort Emperor Nero's biography heinously, as they did not dare to communicate the real reason, namely the emperor's escape to Persia, to the ordinary people and legionaries, since they did not want to stir up the danger of a civil war. Furthermore, Nero's mother Agrippina, his adoptive father Emperor Claudius, his wife Poppaea Sabina as well as other relatives of Nero inevitably fell a victim to the “damnatio memoriae”.

19. Evidence: According to Sueton, >Otho< 7, Otho, Galba's successor and second soldier emperor, let again erect the statues of Nero. He put Nero's procurators and freedmen back to their former positions and he even took the byname „Nero“ to his own name. This would have been absolutely impossible, if Emperor Nero had already been declared a „hostis“ at this time.

20. Evidence: Vitellius, the third soldier emperor, hold obsequies for Nero on the Campus Martius – with all priests of the state present (according to Sueton, >Vitellius< 11). This would have been impossible, too, if Nero had already been declared a political offender at this time (see Mommsen and Vittinghoff).

21. Evidence: The philosopher Dion von Prusa is an independent rapporteur, called Chrysostomos. In the 21<sup>th</sup> discourse, paragraph 10, he reports about Emperor Nero: „Indeed the truth about this has not come out even yet; for so far as the rest of his subjects were concerned, there was nothing to prevent his continuing to be Emperor for all time, seeing that even now many people wish Emperor Nero was still alive. Many people even do believe that he is“.

22. Evidence: In the Odes of Martial with the title >Liber de spectaculis<, see above, former Emperor Nero is described as an „unfaithful“ or „renegade“ and „traitor“; and it is said even more clearly: „The traitor [Nero] lives as fugitive of the capital of Ausones [Rome] in exile“. A suicide would hardly be described as unfaithful, renegade or traitor; this may be the case for a deserter – and in the eyes of many Romans, especially the military, former Emperor Nero was exactly this.

## Indications for my theory that Emperor Nero abdicated the Principate voluntarily

In early summer 66 A.D., Emperor Nero concluded a peace treaty – maybe even a friendship treaty – with Tiridates, the king of Armenia. Perhaps also with Tiridates' brother, the Parthian king. It is possible that Nero even received an invitation of the Parthian king for a return visit.

The journey through Greece, which took over one and a half years, may be the reason for Nero's fundamental change of mind. He recognized more clearly than ever before that his purpose of life was no longer compatible with his obligations as Emperor of the Roman Empire. Put clearly: Nero was disgusted by the reign over the Principate. For artistic and philosophical reasons, Nero didn't see any sense in his actions as Roman Emperor. I am convinced that in this respect the influence of the Stoic Annaeus Seneca played a crucial role.

Nero's comment „art will feed us“ is a strong indication that he secretly toyed with the idea of abdicating the reign.

Cassius Dio reports that Nero had planned to travel to Alexandria. He indicated: *“Even if we are chased away from our imperial office, this modest talent [playing the cithara] will help us in this situation”*. In this context, Cassius Dio said: *„So far, his mind had left him [Nero] so that he really thought he could live just like that as private citizen and even as a citharist.”*

Nero had lost everything which could have animated him morally to bear the efforts and the personal sacrifice of his Principate any longer: His mother Agrippina was dead, she died during a shipwreck, L. Annaeus Seneca, Emperor Nero's political philosopher was assassinated by the military during the Pisonian conspiracy, his wife Poppaea died of smallpox and he was not granted to have biological children, as they died in infancy.

Sueton reports about Nero's alleged preparations for a military campaign. Most probably, these preparations were not aimed to prepare an attack, but rather to prepare his retreat. Sueton reports that Nero's *„first worry was about choosing the vehicles with which he would transport his stage equipment, respectively his musical instruments”*.

Emperor Nero dismissed the consuls ahead of time and also took possession of their sphere of political power.

Tigellinus, the prefect and head of the Roman imperial bodyguard, was sent on sick leave by Emperor Nero, since he had been ailing for some time. Tigellinus still lived in the year 69. In the health spas of Sinuessa, near Naples, he tried to find healing of his sufferings.

Nero levied emergency taxes, or, to be more precise, a war-tax. People who had private- or rented houses had to pay an annual rent to the imperial treasury. According to Sueton, in this respect Nero turned out *„being enormously embarrassing and hard “*. He only accepted new coins

of „finest silver and purest gold “. In this way, Emperor Nero obviously earned the necessary „travel money “for his escape.

However, raising the grain prices would have thwarted Nero’s escape intentions by the danger of a popular uprising. So, the raising of the prices and scarcity of foods occurred in the time *after* his escape, when the civil war broke out.

One of his last official appearances was the „pompous“ inauguration of the finished and embroidered sanctuary – meaning the temple – of the deified Poppaea Sabina. An inscription at the entrance of the temple states:

*Raised by women, honouring the deified Sabina, the venus.*

About Nero’s ingenious and coldblooded way of planning and realizing his escape, and about the feints Nero invented to cheat the Senate, Cassius Dio reports the following: „*One night, he [Nero Caesar] suddenly called the most renowned senators and knights to come to him, as if he wanted to tell them something important about the current [political and military] situation. Then he told them, I [Cassius Dio] quote: ‚I have found a possibility of making the water organ sound louder and more musical.‘ Even in times of that crisis he [Nero] made such jokes.*“

Obviously, Emperor Nero had fun calling some senators and knights, who might have been in opposition to him, out of their beds, frightening them enormously and forcing them one last time to listen to his organ playing.

Yes, Nero Caesar was not a decadent coddle, but on the contrary, he had a cool and clear-headed mind - a man who was game for anything.

Somewhere at the coast of Italy, there had been several ships already prepared for Nero, just waiting for his arrival in order to set sail. Tacitus reports that at Nero’s command the Germanic lifeguards had been shipped to Alexandria. The escaping Emperor Nero was on an unobtrusive freighter, escorted by the Roman battle fleet.

Nero’s escape from Rome was a masterful and with military precision prepared distraction tactic. However, it could not succeed without a sacrifice, a human life. At the latest since the Pisonian conspiracy, Nero Caesar might have thought about having a lookalike as a useful and lifesaving measure. A poor slave who had many similarities with the emperor - referring to the strawberry blonde hair, height and even the face (he must have had a so-called „vigorous“ chin) – suddenly experienced the unexpected fortune of becoming part of the Emperor’s bevy of household servants. Maybe, the role of lookalike has even been offered to him officially by Tigellinus, the prefect of police. Nevertheless, at the beginning, this young man was not really aware of the danger he put himself into.

The false Nero, namely the lookalike, had to die so that the real Nero was able to go off the imperial stage, yes even go off the stage of the world, in order to live a relatively safe life under a civil incognito.

Nero Caesar escaped in a litter, or e.g. disguised as a simple Praetorian, under cover of the night, accompanied by some loyalist, unnoticed from Rome. He rode quickly to the coast, where his ships were ready for his escape.

Apparently, the drama of the lookalike just began in the night thereafter. Four of Nero’s friends, the freedman Phaon, the young Sporus Sabinus, the freedman and minister for petitions Epaphroditus and maybe – according to Schiller – the freedman Neophytus took the lookalike and

rode with him to Phaon's cottage, located about five kilometres from Rome, between the Via Salaria and the Via Nomentana.

Sueton reports that the supposed Nero was *barefoot and only dressed in a tunic*. They consciously quit the lookalike's shoes so that he was not able to run away at the last minute – in fear of his live- and so disclose the escape of Nero Caesar.

After the Emperor had not been seen for one or two days, a delegation of senators betook themselves to Palatin. Nobody knew where the Emperor was. Servants of the senators were ranging the town and searched house by house to find the Emperor, but in vain. In the meanwhile, the “patres conscripti” had been debating fiercely in the senate about what this could mean.

Finally, someone started the rumour – obviously, according to the plan – that Emperor Nero was on the country estate of Phaon. A cohort of Praetorians was sent out in order to verify the gossip.

When the Praetorians were coming closer, Epaphroditus put a dagger through the throat of Nero's lookalike. According to Sueton, he was already half-dead when an officer came in. The supposed Nero Caesar was lying in a pool of blood, having his last convulsions. With a knife thrust the lookalike was not able anymore to reveal Emperor Nero's escape in the very last moment.

The Praetorians, holding faith with their Emperor up to this moment, stood deeply shocked in front of the dead body of the alleged Nero Caesar. The freedman Phaon and the minister for petitions, Epaphroditus, told the officer of the Praetorians the fairy tale that Nero Caesar committed suicide because of his despair and hopelessness caused by the riots in Gaul and Spain. The Praetorians brought the supposed corpse of the Emperor to Rome.

Hearing the notice of Nero Caesar's supposed suicide Rome again was like a madhouse. The followers of Nero fell into deepest despair when hearing about his supposed death. The senatorial opposition sent out their clients and slaves to the streets in order to celebrate Nero's death.

Icelus, a partisan and spy of Galba, who probably had come to Rome to get an overview of the political situation, had been arrested and was in prison. After the supposed death of Nero, he had been released. First, he ascertained with his own eyes, if the Emperor was really dead. Only then he returned to Galba in Spain to bring the joyful message of his unexpected fortune. In astonishment, Galba heard about the alleged suicide of Nero Caesar and could not believe it at the beginning.

The prefect of police Tigellinus as well as the Praetorian prefect Nymphidius Sabinus could even assert their positions of power for several months.

The supposedly dead Emperor Nero – in reality it was his assassinated lookalike – was buried with an expenditure of two hundred thousand sesterces. The body was wrapped into gold-embroidered, white clothes, which the real Emperor had worn recently. The body was cremated, as it was a burial custom in Rome. Nero's nurses Egloge and Alexandria saved the ashes and – will wonders never cease- even his supposed former beloved, Claudia Acte, was in Rome and went to the funeral of the alleged Nero Caesar.

The ashes were preserved in the burial place of the Domitii, which in ancient times „*could be seen on the garden hill [Monte Pincio] from the Campus Martius*”, according to Sueton. “*Therein is a sarcophagus from prophyry, overhead an altar of Lunensian marble, everything surrounded with marble from Thasos*“.

Most probably, the supposed corpse of the Emperor had been burnt as fast as possible, at the instigation of some loyalists of Nero. So, nobody could come up with the idea of examining the dead body in greater detail.

Sueton reports that there were many people coming to decorate the supposed tomb of Emperor Nero with spring and summer flowers even a long time after his supposed death.

There were loyalists of Nero, who „put statues of him, dressed with the senatorial toga, to the rostra “. They even shew around edicts – letters – of Nero, „as if he was still alive and would come back in the near future in order to ruin his opponents. Even Vologaesius, the Parthian king, advocated actively to care for Nero’s memory, on the occasion of sending a delegation to the senate in order to renew the alliance”.

In the Roman Empire, a civil war broke out. The senate had designated Galba as successor of Nero to the Caesar’s throne. Nevertheless, this did not please the Praetorian prefect Nymphidius Sabinus, the natural son of Emperor Caligula.

Nymphidius just predicted to be a follower of Galba. In reality, he was also aspiring to the throne. He participated in the persecution of Nero’s loyalists, and when he finally believed that his position of power was strong enough, he tried to raise the Praetorians for a coup against Galba. At midnight, he wanted to go to the Praetorians’ barracks together with some followers.

The plan must have been betrayed. The military tribune Antonius Honoratius already assembled the Praetorians before the arrival of Nymphidius Sabinus, and according to Plutarch, he gave the following speech: first, he chided himself, Antonius Honoratius, then the soldiers, as they had changed too often the political position within a short period of time, from Nero to Galba and from Glaba now again to Nymphidius. Furthermore, he complained that they had not acted according to a well-considered plan in order to decide for the better one, but “because a demon drove them from betrayal to betrayal”. Literally, Plutarch reports about the speech of Antonius Honoratius: “Despite such crimes [the „fumus“ about Nero’s alleged matricide and murder of his wife could be meant], we would not have dared to let that one [Emperor Nero] down, but we believed in the words of Nymphidius that he [Nero] first let us down and then escaped to Egypt“

Plutarch reports explicitly that Nymphidius Sabinus, the Praetorian prefect, was not at all convinced of Nero’s death. He blamed the Emperor for having abandoned his Praetorians and having escaped to Egypt.

Also Piso, who had been chosen by Galba as his successor, talked to the Praetorians when Galba’s reign started to crumble (Tacitus, >Historien I, 30): „your faith, your reputation have not been undermined till this day; and well, Nero left you, it was not you who left Nero”.

Some historians assume that the senate had proclaimed Emperor Nero as a political offender and afterwards the Praetorians had distanced themselves from Nero, but this is a great mistake. The Praetorians as well as the majority of the legionary commanders remained steadfastly at their Emperor’s side. The senators had never dared to intrigue in public against the Emperor, as this would have had bad consequences for them.

Sueton reports that Nero had sent Tuscus, the son of his foster mother, into exile, because he - as governor of Egypt - allegedly took a bath in the baths which had been built for the occasion of a visit by Emperor Nero. If Emperor Nero had not travelled to Alexandria, the governor of Egypt, Tuscus, would have had the possibility to bath in there as often as he wanted to do so. Maybe he took a bath in those baths just before Nero arrived, and the baths had been filled with fresh, meaning hygienically clean water specially for the Emperor. So, Tuscus acted against a personal

order of Nero. This may not be the only reason why he had been deposed from his post as governor of Egypt.

The military tribune Antonius Honoratius called the Praetorians up to punish Nymphidius for his coup attempt, in order to act as Nero's avenger and as good and loyal wardens of Galba.

When Nymphidius entered the barracks at midnight with several followers, the Praetorians' attitude towards him had changed already to his disadvantage. When the gate closed behind him, he was assassinated by followers of Galba.

Galba took drastic measures. He ordered to assassinate friends of Nymphidius Sabinus, without a trial. Plutarch reports that *"all expected a different way of reign" from Galba "because, as usually, they were deceived by the promises made in the beginning. They even exacerbated more because of the order to execute a former consul, who had always been loyal to Nero: Petronius Turpilianus."*

Galba was assassinated because he refused to give money to the Praetorians when he acceded his Principate, in contrast to Claudius and Nero, who did so before. Otho, his successor, committed suicide after having lost a battle, in order to prevent Rome and the Empire from the total civil war and the then coming destruction. In his last speech to the loyalists he remarked a concrete accusation against Nero. According to Cassius Dio, Otho said the following to his soldiers: *"As far as I'm concerned, I want to free myself alone, so that everyone will see: You have chosen such a man as Emperor. A man who did not give up on you [the soldiers] in order to save his own life [as Emperor Nero did], but who has given up on his own so that you could stay alive!"*

Vitellius entered Rome as third barracks emperor. Vitellius had been trapped, besieged and defeated by Vespasian's brother in Rome. The conquest of Rome in the year 69 A.D also caused serious damages in the city.

Tacitus reports in the *>Histories<*, II. 8, that already under the rule of Otho an alleged lookalike of Nero appeared: *"Just at this time [approximately at the beginning of the year 69A.D] Achaia [Greece] and Asia [...] got alarmed by the news of Nero's arrival, since there were different rumours about his death..."*

According to Tacitus it allegedly was *"a slave from Pontus or, as others reported, a freedman from Italy, versed in playing the cithara and singing. In addition to his quite identical appearance, this fact caused even more authenticity, after he had won some deserters over to his side. Deserters who he had bribed with tremendous promises, since they wandered around impecuniously."*

Cassius Dio reports *"Back then, a man, who posed as Nero because of his likeness to him, threw almost the whole of Greece into turmoil; he built a troop out of criminals and with them he took action against the legions in Syria. But when he came to Kydnos, Calpurnius detained him and ordered his execution."*

From these reports of Tacitus and Cassius Dio we can conclude that Nero turned towards Greece. Here he had been recognized as the former Emperor Nero, by accident. Apparently, he did not succeed in protecting his incognito. Afterwards, Nero had to be accompanied by a flock of armed men in order to avoid a detention by the Roman army. Obviously, he tried to beat his ways through Asia Minor and over the Euphrates towards Armenia to the Parthian Empire. By no means, he had been arrested and executed by Calpurnius. This is proved by a paragraph in the Sibylline Books and Nero's return about twelve years later.



In the so called Sibylline oracle, fourth book, is written:

*„And then, a powerful Emperor [Nero Caesar] will flee from Italy, unexpectedly, / like an escapee, flee, disappeared, lost without trace, over the river Euphrates,/ Who once committed blood guilt by the awful murder of his mother./ And much more [„fumus“ about Nero’s alleged crimes], following the evil’s hand./ However, many will sully the ground around the throne in Rome with blood, / After yon [Nero Caesar] escaped beyond the Parthian country ... and too the fugitive of Rome will come with raised spear / Over the Euphrates accompanied by many thousand comrades.“*

And in the fifth book we can read:

*„Hellas thrice wretched shall the poets weep, / When one from Italy shall smite the neck / Of the isthmus, mighty king of mighty Rome, / A man made equal to God, whom, they say, / Zeus himself and the august Hera bore / He, courting by his voice all-musical / Applause for his sweet Songs, shall put to death / With his own wretched mother many men. / From Babylon shall flee the fearful lord / And shameless whom all mortals and best men / Abhor; for he slew many and laid hands / Upon the womb; against his wives he sinned / And of men stained with blood had he been formed.“*

The evidences referring to Nero are unmistakably. The “powerful Emperor of Italy” does unquestionably refer to Nero Caesar. The “fumus” of the supposed crimes of Nero had really been used as a public vendetta against him. And all those who had sullied the ground around the throne of Rome, namely the barracks Emperors Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian. He fled over the Euphrates up to the Princes of Persia. We can state that Nero’s escape had also been well known to the authors of the Sibylline oracle, before the Principate.

At Cassius Dio’s epitome of book 66, we find the hint that about eleven or twelve years later, under the reign of Titus (79 – 81 A.D.) again an – allegedly wrong – Nero appeared, called Terentius Maximus, who had a very similar appearance and voice to Nero. Maybe, he was just about seeking refuge at the Parthian king- *„ Because of his grudge against Titus, this one [the Parthian king --Artabanos] did not only welcome this man [the former Emperor Nero] very friendly, but he also prepared [militarily?] to bring him back to Rome.“*

In the so called complementary report to Cassius Dio (source: Joann. Antioch. fr. 104 (Muell.) it is written even clearer:

*„Under the reign of Titus,[...] a man posed as Nero and claimed that he once was able to escape from those soldiers who had been sent out against him and that he had been living somewhere in secret, so far. Indeed, he seemed to win many people from Asia Minor as followers because of this information. And while he was now going to the Euphrates he even increased his entourage by another big number of people. Finally, this man found refuge at the Parthians and he explained that they owed him a certain compensation because of the transfer of Armenia ...“*

More than twelve years after Nero’s successful escape from Rome, again we get new information about him, in connection with the reign of Emperor Titus. It is stated that he found protection and refuge at the Parthians.

Cassius Dio reports about Emperor Domitian that he had ordered to kill Epaphroditus, Nero’s freedman and former minister for petitions, under the pretext that he had „not helped“ Emperor Nero, meaning he had stopped him from committing suicide. Nevertheless, we know that Epaphroditus and three other loyalists even *helped* his Emperor *actively to escape*, -assassinating a lookalike of Nero and posing this one as the dead Emperor. More than thirty years after Nero’s

escape, the freedman Epaphroditus had to die a cruel death, as Emperor Domitian perhaps feared a Neronian opposition. Obviously, Emperor Domitian wanted to punish Epaphroditus because he had helped the former Emperor and present political offender to escape.

It is also remarkable that Flavius Josephus had dedicated his work >Jewish Relics< to Epaphroditus, Nero's freedman and former minister for petitions.

The philosopher Dion von Prusa is an independent rapporteur, called Chrysostomos. In the 21<sup>th</sup> speech, paragraph 10, he reports about Emperor Nero: "*The issue [namely the death of Nero] has not been elucidated up to this day. Because on the one hand there were those ones who would have never stopped him [Emperor Nero] to continue his reign for all eternity. Today, there are still many who wished that Emperor Nero would still be alive; many even believe in it [that he is still alive].*"

In the Odes of Martial with the title >Liber de spectaculis< former Emperor Nero is described as an „unfaithful“ one or „renegade“ and as a „traitor“; and then it's even said clearer: „*The traitor [Nero] is living as refugee from the Ausonian capital [Rome] in exile.*“ Certainly, a suicide would not be described as an unfaithful, renegade or traitor; this is rather true for a deserter.

### *Liber de Spectaculis 2*

*Hic ubi sidereus propius uidet astra colossus*

*et crescunt media peggmata celsa uia,*

*inuidiosa feri radiabant atria regis*

*unaque iam tota stabat in urbe domus;*

*hic ubi conspicui uenerabilis Amphitheatri*

*erigitur moles, stagna Neronis erant;*

*hic ubi miramur uelocia munera thermas,*

*abstulerat miseris tecta superbus ager;*

*Claudia diffusas ubi porticus explicat umbras,*

*ultima pars aulae deficientis erat.*

*Reddita Roma sibi est et sunt te preside, Caesar,*

*deliciae populi, quae fuerant domini.*

*Translation:*

*Just here, where Nero's skyey colossus sees stars,*

*and the scaffolding towers up high, right in the way,*

*once shone the nasty halls of that cruel king,*

*and only the one Golden House in all of Rome.*

*Just here, where the Amphitheatre's honoured pile*

*rises, towering before our eyes, was Nero's lake.  
Just here, where we gaze at Titus's thermal baths,  
swift gift, proud acres razed the poor man's roof.  
Where the Claudian colonnade spreads wide its shade,  
that golden palace's outermost corner came to an end.  
Caesar, Rome's back to herself, now you're in charge,  
and the master's pleasures are the people's now.*

#### *Liber de Spectaculis 4*

*Turba grauis paci placidaeque inimica quieti,  
quae semper miseras sollicitabat opes,  
traducta est Getulis nec cepit harena nocentis:  
et delator habet quod dabat exilium.  
Exulat Ausonia profugus delator ab urbe:  
haec licet impensis principis adnumeres.*

*Translation:*

*A crowd dangerous to peace and hostile to the peaceful silence  
Which had always looted hapless treasures  
Was led into the arena, but the arena did not provide enough space  
for the guilty ones:  
And the traitor [Emperor Nero] gets the banishment he usually imposed.  
The traitor [Emperor Nero] lives as refugee from the Ausonian  
capital [Rome] in exile:  
You are free to assign this to the costs [merits] of our princeps  
[Emperor Titus].*

The rumour about Nero's escape from Rome and the fact that he would „still be alive“ survived up to the 11<sup>th</sup> Christian century.

Hermann Schiller wrote in his biography of Nero, page 290: „Augustin still thinks it necessary to protest against the opinion that Nero had not died; however, even at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, under Paschal II, the spirit of Nero still troubled the surroundings of Monte Pincio [in Rome]. Only

*the strongest exorcisms and the construction of the church S. Maria del Popolo could calm the superstitious population, since they feared the shade of the pagan emperor...“*

The Italian legend about the return of Emperor Nero has a counterpart in the German legend of Emperor Barbarossa, who *„is said to come back one day to free his enslaved people from the torturers“*.

Well, such hopes of a nation can only be based on a good and just reign. This is another very important evidence for the fact that Nero’s Principate *„was the best era Rome had ever seen.“*

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