

The Buildings and the Images of the Imperial Cult

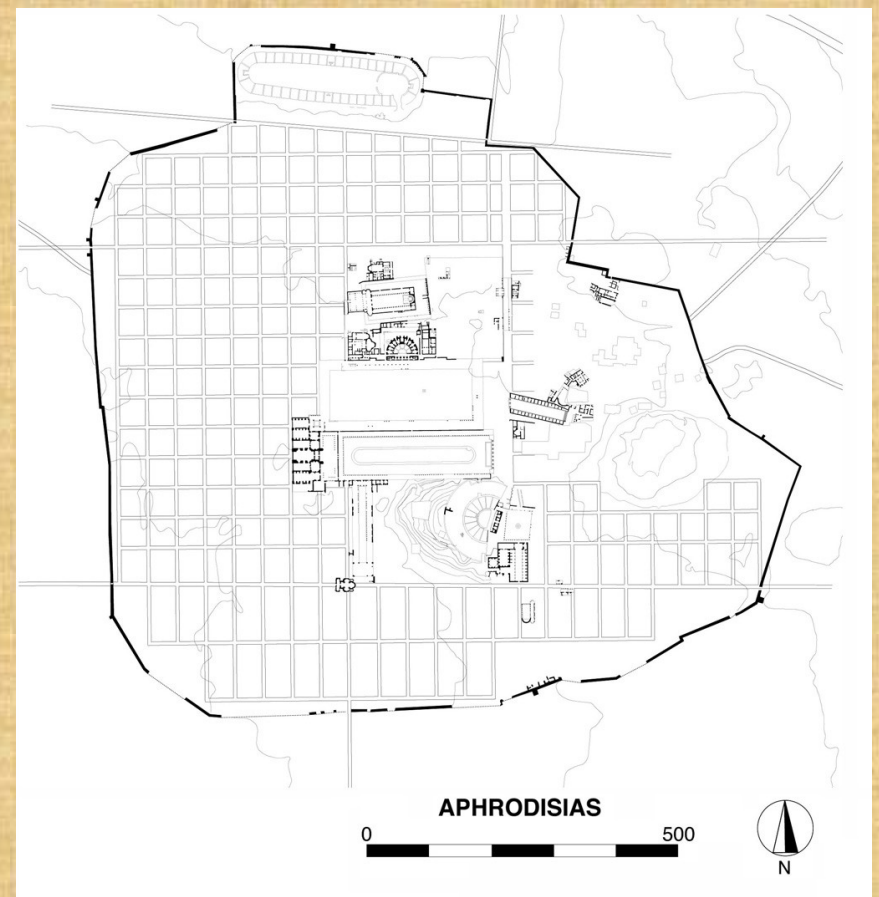


V Aphrodisias – *Sebasteion*

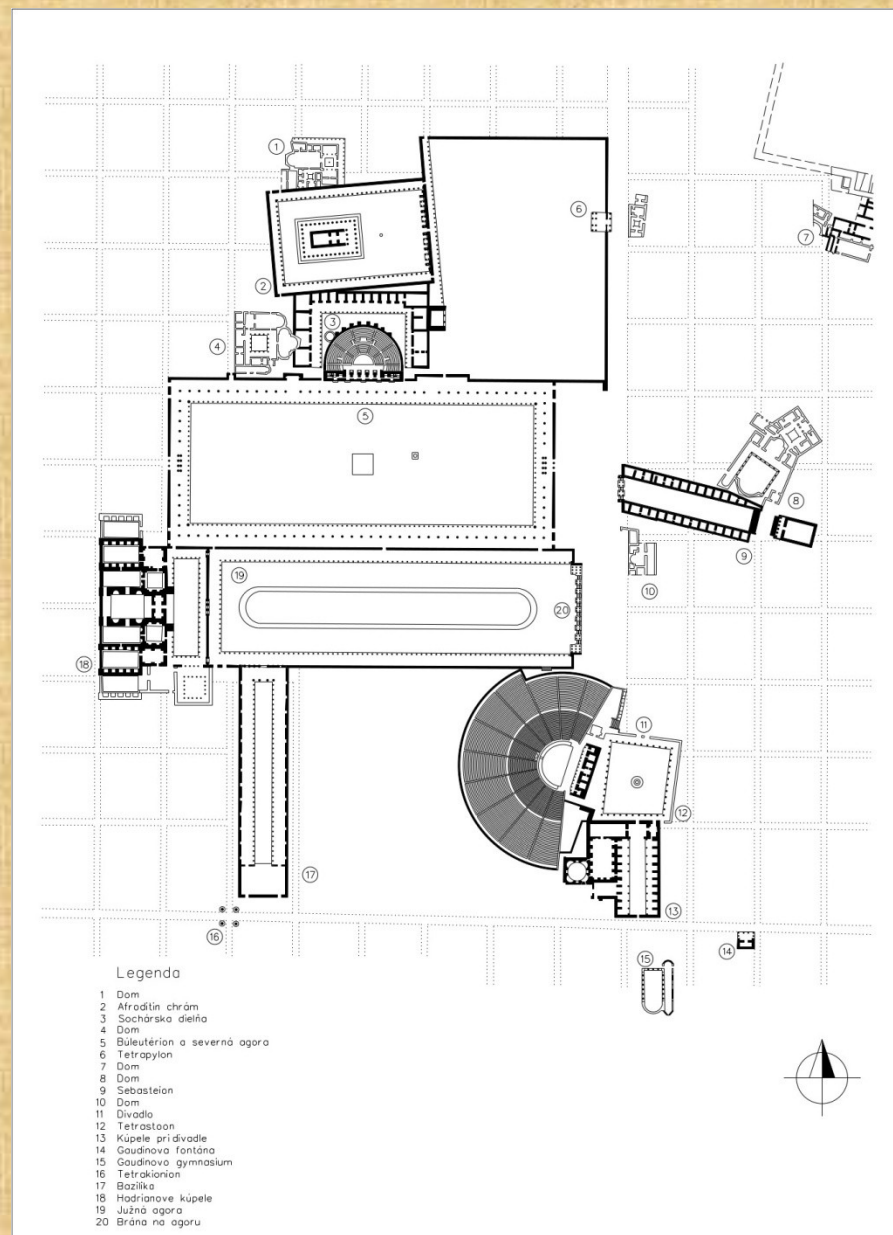
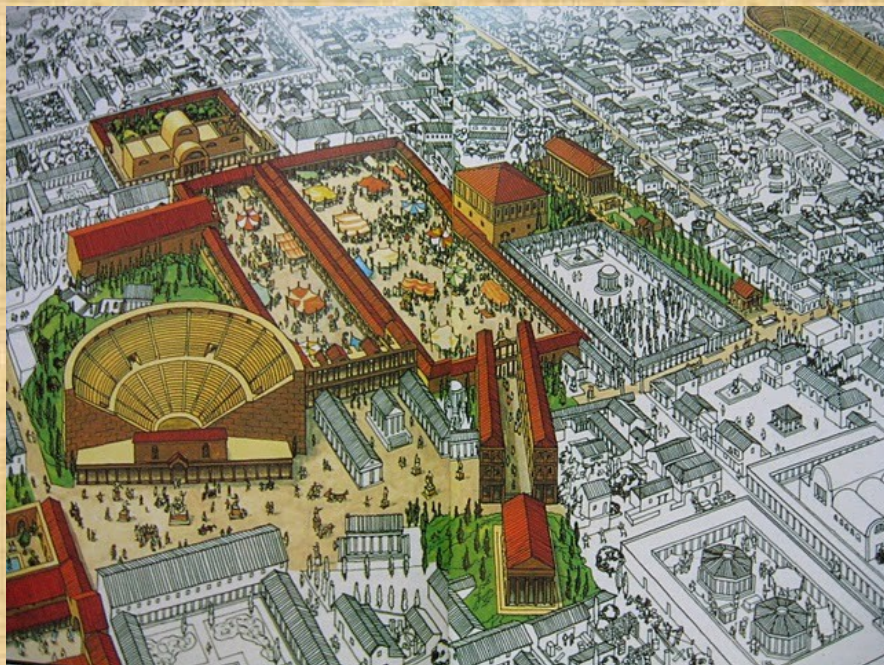
Aphrodisias

- south-western Asia Minor, the Maeander river basin, province Caria, 150 kilometers from the Aegean Sea
- it is situated at the center of the valley, 35 km up the river Morsynus from its confluence with the Maeander at an elevation 500 m
- dominant feature – Kadmos – the source of water
- the principal natural resources of the valley are springs, fertile soils, potter's earth and marble coming from several different quarries
- the site has been known since the 18th century – several expeditions – inscriptions documentation (French, Italian, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Izmir Archaeological Museum)
- free and autonomous city within the Roman province of Asia, best known for the Sanctuary of Aphrodite and marble sculptors
- relative isolation from the main roads (medieval and modern) – well-preserved





- orthogonal planning – found by geophysics (1995-1998), 800 000 square kilometers, the grid 120x162 Roman feet, streets were 12 feet wide
 - medium-sized city, monuments documented in great detail – inscriptions who paid the function, what the honored had done for the community
- Greek features: central organization of the public buildings and places (the Agora and its surrounding)
- Roman features: rectangular shape of the basic city block
- some of the buildings do not fit the regular grid – four streets, stadium, *Sebasteion* and the theatre



Chronology of the city's evolution:

a) *Earliest occupation*: Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (mid. 5th – 3rd millennium BC), small agricultural settlement, pottery – fills the gap in Anatolia

b) *Small settlement* (1200 BC – 2nd century BC) – founding of the city – on the Theatre hill, stray finds, 6th century BC – earliest evidence of the Sanctuary of Aphrodite

c) *Hellenistic and Augustan* (2nd century BC – late 1st century BC) – founding of the city, intensive urbanization – Seleucid kings

- rectangular grid – equitable distribution of land to new settlers

- late 1st century BC – earliest buildings – houses of the residents

- at the conclusion of Roman Civil Wars – extensive building activity, public life: the sanctuary, the Agora, the Theatre, the tomb of Julius Zoiolos



d) *Early imperial* (1st century AD)

- privileged relations with the Julio-Claudian family, massive urban building – Hellenistic plan, local families – some with the Roman citizenship

New buildings: the Stadium, public square between the Agora and the Theatre, *Sebasteion*, Civil basilica (Flavian emperors – finished mid. 90s AD)

e) *High imperial* (100 - 300 AD)

Tetrapylon, W end of S Agora – redesigned – new stoa, Hadrianic Baths, Agora Gate, *Bouleuterion*, the Theatre Baths

- Caracalla 212 AD – Roman citizenship to all freeborn inhabitants, civic activity – inscribed marble sarcophagi





f) *Late Antiquity* (300 – 600 AD)

Long and prosperous second life, 7th century – urban collapse, abandoned

- reasons: Persian and Arab invasions, failure of the imperial government in Constantinople

Small settlement around cathedral of St. Michael (the Theatre Hill)

- local notables – spend more on their houses - Atrium house, The North Temenos House, The Bishop's Palace

- 250 AD – stop to civic buildings, emphasis on maintenance, remodelling for new functions, new building project – City Walls (spolia)

- adaptation of buildings (Stadium – Amphitheatre, The Temple of Aphrodite – Christian Church, *Sebasteion* – defacing)



Excavations:

- the site has been known since the 18th century – several expeditions – documentation of its inscriptions
- systematic research: New York University – Kenan Erim, 1961 - 1990
- 60s – high-quality mapping, excavations on the Sanctuary of Aphrodite, theatre, baths, *bouleuterion*, Christian basilica, *odeion*, *porticus*
- 70s – structures in the centre of the city – *Sebasteion* (1979), basilica, theatre, excavations at the theatre, portico, basilica continued
- 80s - two main projects: *Sebasteion*, *tetrapylon*
- 90s – documentation and publication – sculptural decoration, archaeological works of minor extent – the church with three apses
- the beginning of the 21st century – mapping, documentation, expositions in the museum, excavations – overall characteristics of the city plan, city wall and the agora, conservation of excavated structures and statuary decoration



Sebasteion

- east of the city centre, out of the main street running north-south, orientation east-west (45 meters east of the Northern Agora, 200 meters south-east of Tetrastylon, 200 meters north-east of the Theatre)

- clearly younger than the original town planning (doesn't fit the grid)

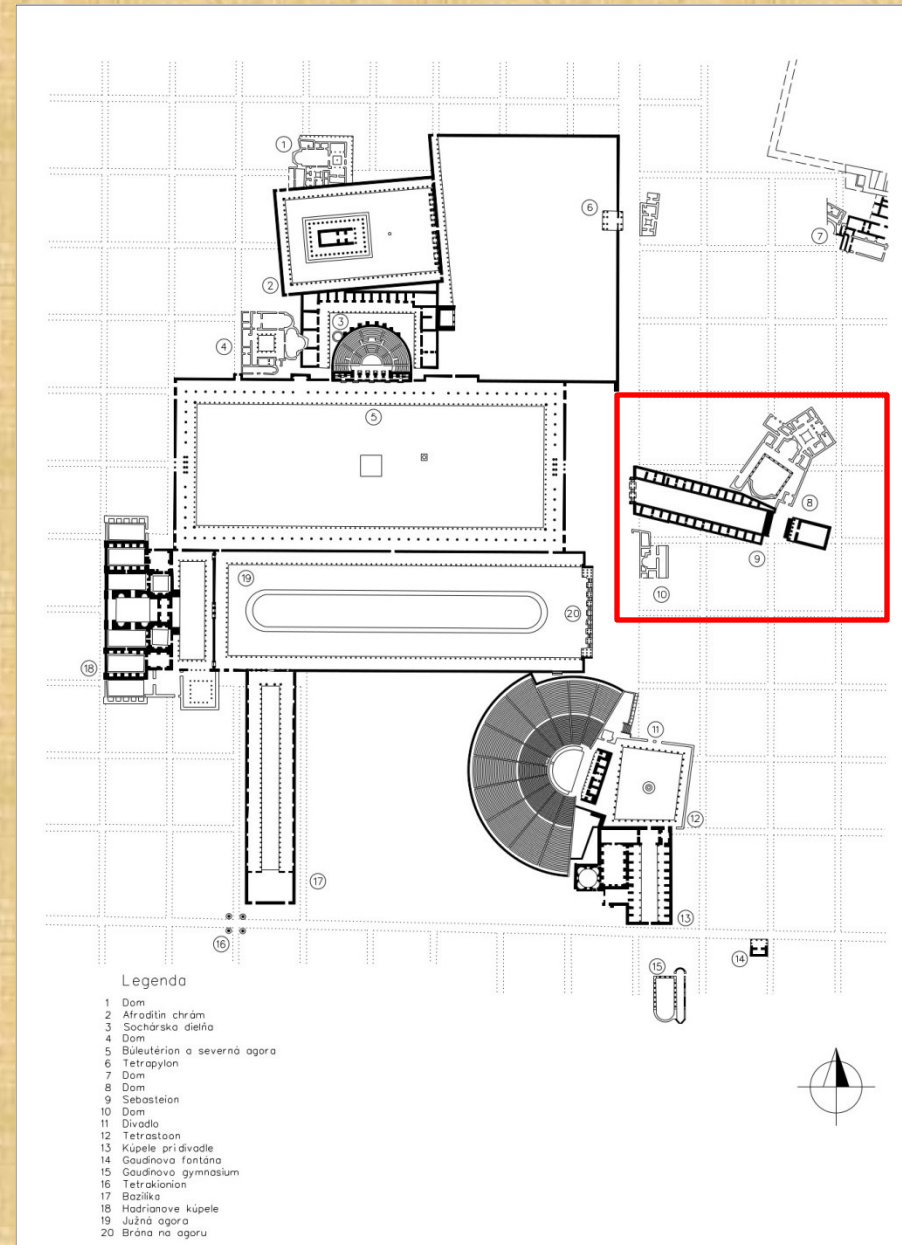
a) The complex was built around an existing house, which is in the maps showed by its late-roman plan, which interfere with the temple

b) The *propylon* was intentionally planned opposite the entrance to the Agora and the direction was given by the slope, where the temple should have been placed

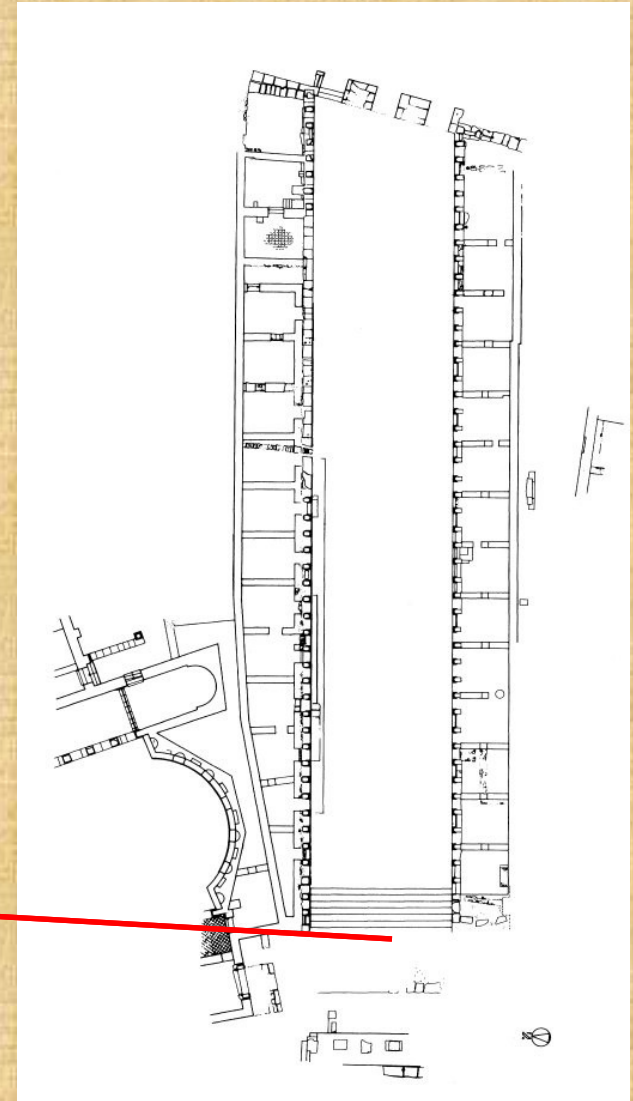
- the complex was paid for by two important families:

a) Propylon and the northern portico – Menander and Eusebeos (brothers)

b) Temple, southern portico – Diogenes and Attalos (more probably his wife Attalis, he was already dead)



- dedicated to the emperor, Livia, *Theoi Sebastoi* and *Demos* (worship of Aphrodite and the emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty)
- 20 – 60 AD conceived by Tiberius (earthquake destroyed part of the building), second building phase during the reign of Nero (absolute chronology – inscriptions and portraits)
- concrete representation of the special relationship with the Julio-Claudians



Excavations:

1979 - a surprising discovery of an architectural feature with a substantial amount of sculptural decoration

- a) Series of rooms – east-western orientation, form two porticoes, at least two storeys high – Doric and Corinthian capitals
- b) Panel reliefs – above each entrance to the room – mythological (meander on the bottom of these panels), imperial, allegorical
- c) Paved courtyard

1980 - further excavations – southern portico, attempts to reconstruct the façade, 3 storeys – different columns in each of them – Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, length 100 meters

1981 - a full length documented, monumental entrance

- 4th century AD – market, 7th century AD some kind of a natural disaster ending the life of the building
- a circular structure found with *images clipeatae* (rotunda?)

1982 - the most intense and richest for findings

- a close study of the *propylon* – three staircases, 2 storeys, Ionic and Corinthian capitals
- rotunda closely searched – a room with an apsidal ending – busts, fragments of statues, *images clipeatae*, at the end – smaller temple, close to the northern portico (a residence of a rich family - marbles used in the decoration were expensive - used from the 3rd to the 7th century AD – a residence of a priest) – bishop's house

Following 10 years – not such a dynamic research, but systematic excavating and evaluating - a complex analysis and detailed mapping, four bases with inscriptions and many pieces of sculptural decoration,

90s - publication and minor field work, restoration, re-building of the porticoes
- understanding the situation in the Byzantine period – the first room of the southern portico – a kiln for glass production, a staircase to the second floor and a low wall running in the middle of the room – evidence of the occupation of the site in the late antiquity, a hoard of coins from the 3-6th century AD

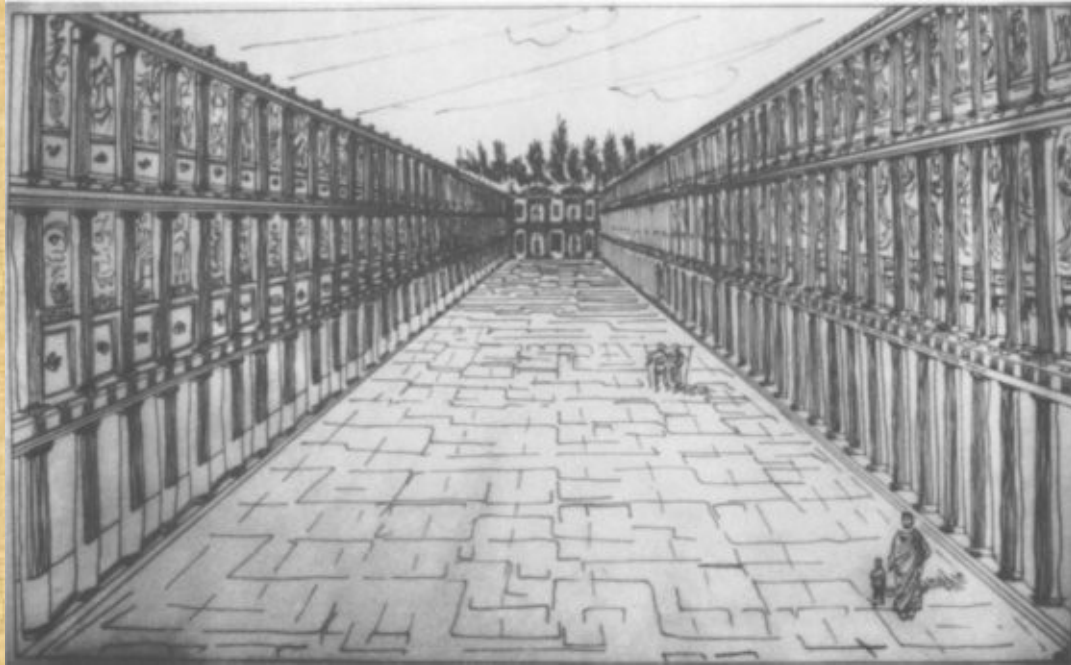
Early 21st century

- overall understanding of the situation in the site and its function, excavations in the area of the temple (podium, fragments of two *acroteria*)



Characteristics:

- consists of 4 buildings: the *propylon*, the temple, two porticoes surrounding a narrow sanctuary
- a combination of Greek and Roman elements in architecture
 - a) Greek: axial placement of a temple in a complex, axial symmetry, BUT not a wide place so that the temple could be visible from all sides
 - b) Roman: narrow courtyard – processional way, the attention of the visitor should have been attracted by the temple in the eastern part, very similar to the roman forum (Caesar's and Augustus' existing at that time)
 - c) Novum: 12 m height - local innovation, porticoes look like a combination of *stoa* and a façade of a theatre building
- unique sculptural decoration, more than 90 panel reliefs documented (assumed number is about 190)
- a combination of buildings, sculptural decoration and inscriptions showing a picture of the roman imperial cult set in the Greek city

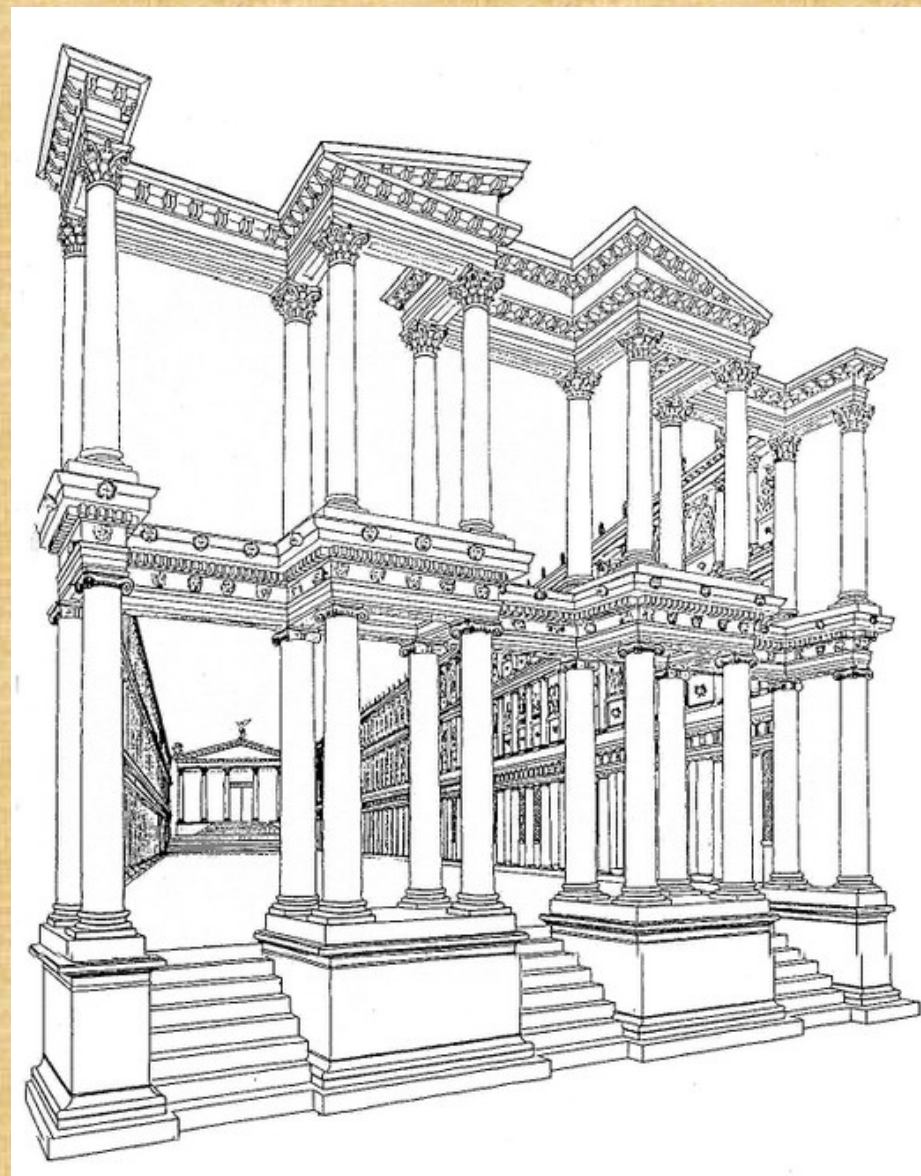


Propylon

- a monumental, two-storey column entrance gate, aediculated façade
- behind the entrance – long, paved courtyard (14 x 90 m)
- built during the reign of Tiberius, it was open to space in both floors
- every aedicule could hold two statues, one facing outside, the other inside the complex,
- lower floor – Ionic columns
- upper floor – Corinthian
- divided by two pillars into three entrances with three staircases

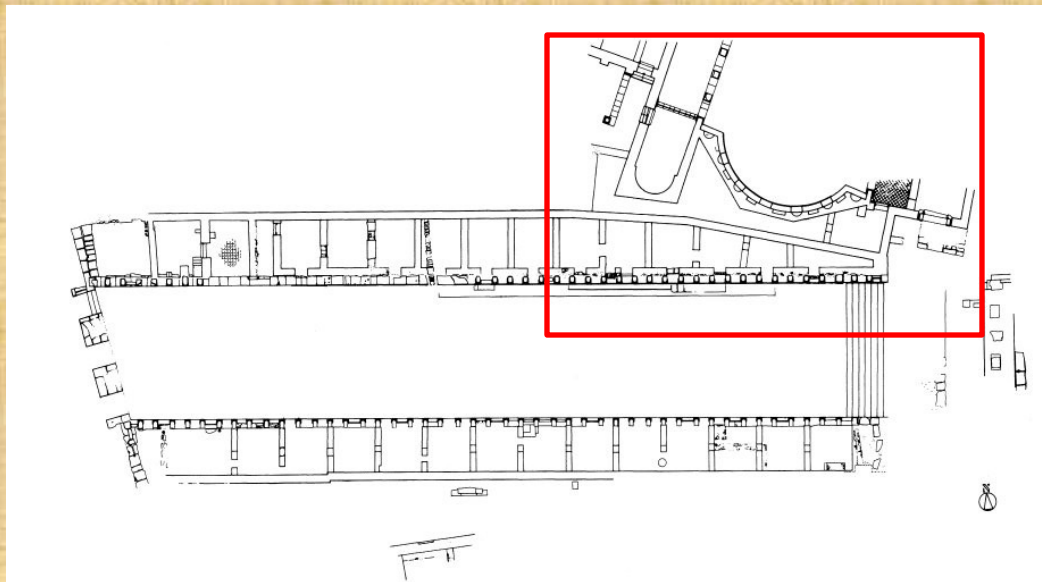
Statues of an imperial family and their ancestors
(also mythical to claim their powers)

- 10 bases with inscriptions
- 4 bases with inscriptions and fragments of statues
- 1 statue and its base



Porticoes

- southern and northern porticoes divided to rooms with the width of 3 intercolumnari
- the rooms not visible at the first sight, the main stress on the aesthetics of the second and third floors, eastern part of the northern portico – asymmetry in the plan (because of reconstructions or earlier structure)
- Doric, Ionic, Corinthian style
- 190 sculptural reliefs (90 preserved and documented)
- the ground floor rooms – shops and workshops, only in the 4th and 5th century, earlier no evidence of usage
- upper floors not even an evidence of a floor or pavement
- originally no practical function, only decorative



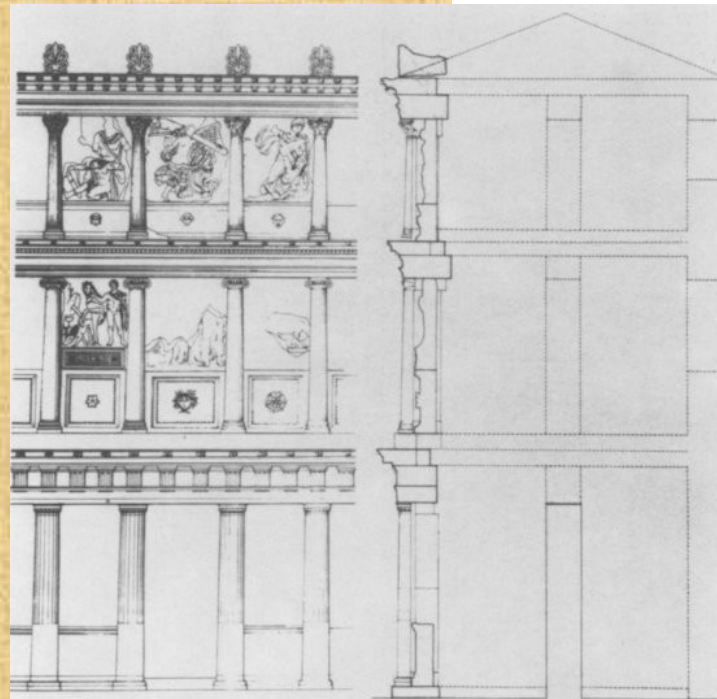
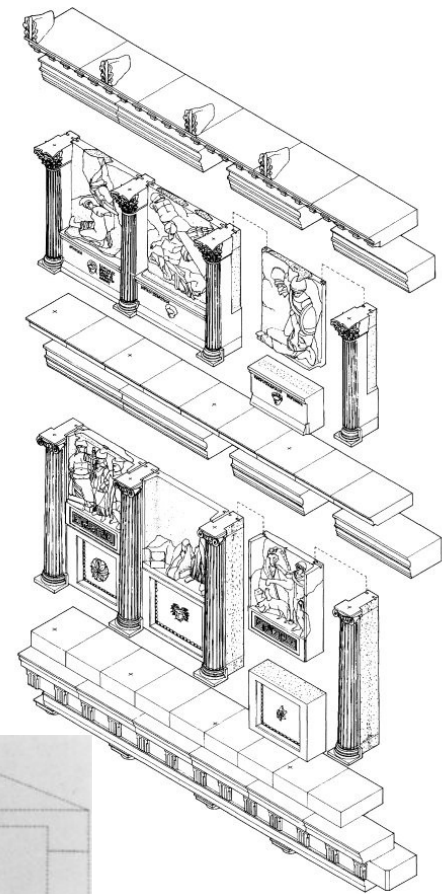
The relief panels have been carved from single blocks of Aphrodisias sculptural marble (white and medium-grained). They have been set with their sides overlapping the back of the half-columns and the relief figures projecting forward between them. They are slightly broader towards the top to match the inward tapering of the columns

Northern portico

- less preserved than the southern portico
- pieces come from its both ends (more from the eastern end),
- the middle part collapsed after one of the earthquakes, the debris used for the theatre reconstruction

Southern portico

- collapsed in late antiquity – a lot of material found in the debris, it wasn't used again, so the most of the sculptural decoration could be collected
- panels: not evenly wide, wider is flanked by two narrower relief panels

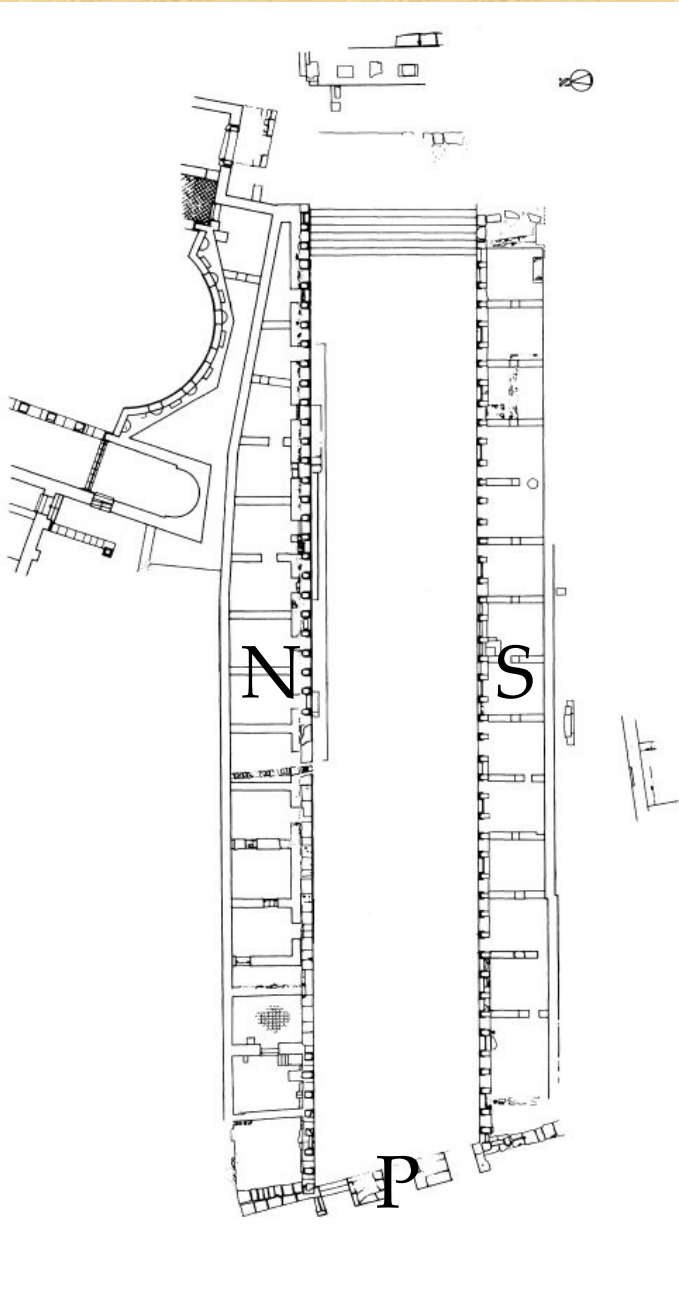


Eastern part of the complex

- the worst preserved part
- only a ground plan documented
- a roman style temple – podium with an entrance to the temple only from the front side, Corinthian style, prostyle, hexastyle porch
- dedicated to Aphrodite and to the imperial family
- sacrifices in front of the temple

Panels: mythological, allegorical, imperial context

Sculptural Decoration in *Sebasteion*



There are two different kinds of sculptural decoration in *Sebasteion*:

Panel Reliefs:

1. Mythological reliefs – south portico (S), 2nd storey, (36)
2. Imperial reliefs – south portico, 3rd storey, (12), north portico, 3rd storey, (1)
3. Traditional gods – south portico, 3rd storey, (14)
4. Series of personified nations (Ethné)– north portico (N), 2nd storey, (6), bases (16)
5. Universal allegories – north portico, 3rd storey, (2)
- two or three central elements in the panels, according to the width

Individual Statues:

members of the julio-claudian dynasty, found in front of the propylon (P) or in the Byzantine wall near the theatre:

1. Statues (or fragments) and bases - 5
2. Bases (only) – 10

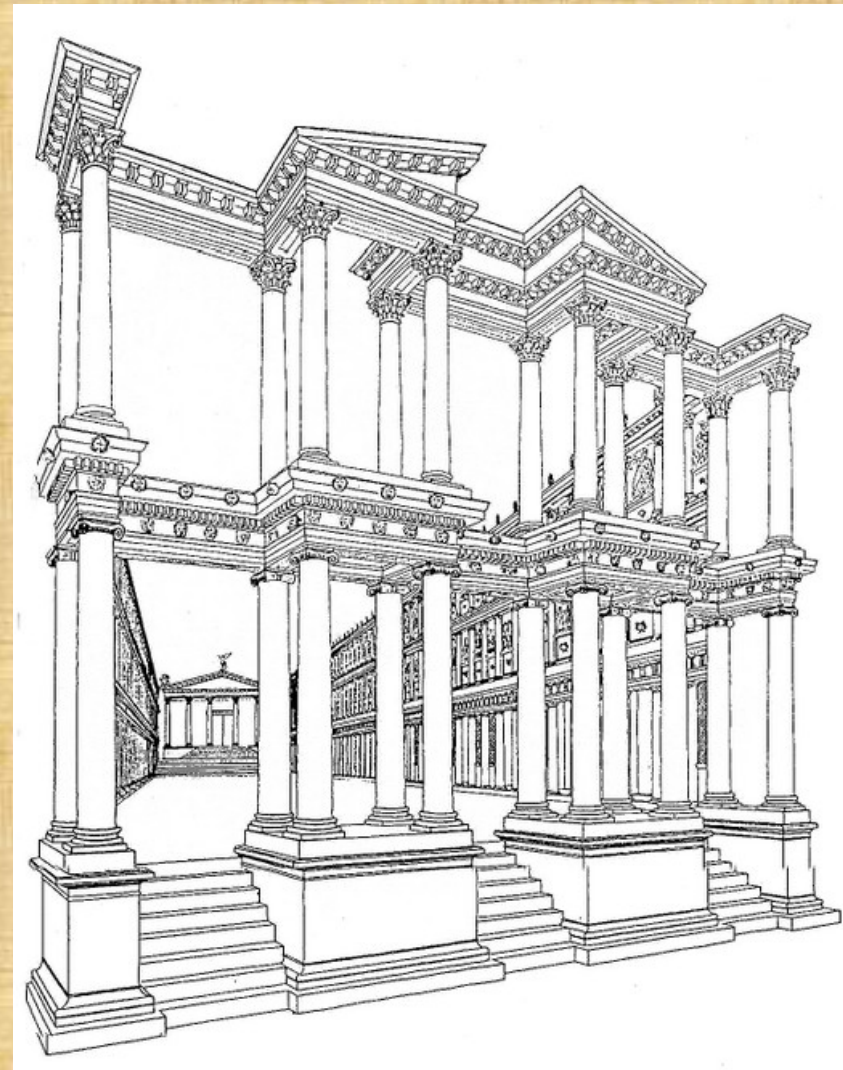
Statues

Bases and statue (fragments):

1. Livia
2. Lucius Caesar
3. Drusus Caesar
4. Aemilia Lepida
5. Agrippina Maior

Bases:

1. Gaius Caesar
2. Aeneas
3. Aphrodite
4. Germanicus Caesar
5. Marcus Lepidus
6. Antonia Augusta
7. Tiberius Claudius Drusus
8. Agrippina Minor
9. Julia
10. Atia (Augustus' mother)



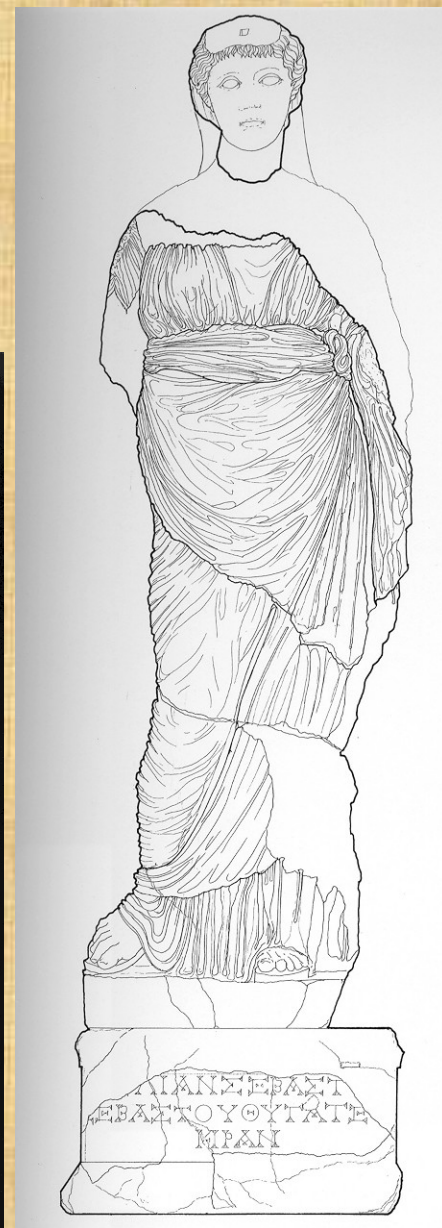
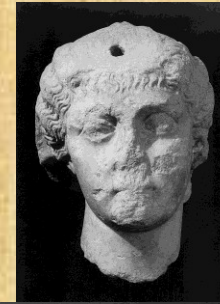
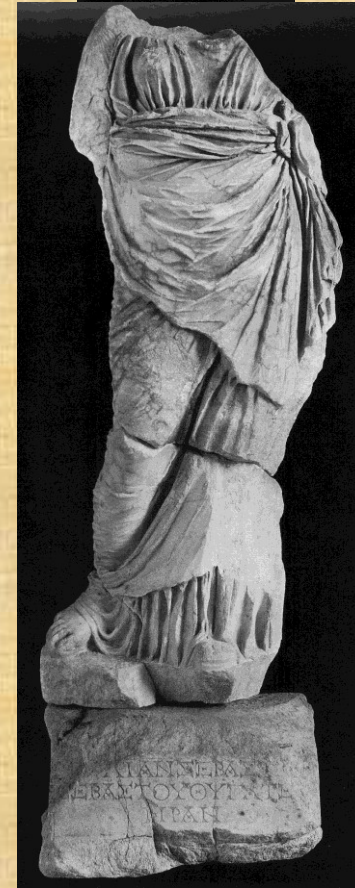
Bases and statue (fragments):

Livia

- found in city wall near the theatre
- the head was originally carved in one piece with the body, the Byzantine builders of the wall selected only the blocks best-fitting the incorporation into the wall, e.g. legs, bases
- bodies were left on the spot
- arms were separately worked – holding patera in her right hand, the left one supporting the *palla*

Lucius Caesar

- found in the north-western part of *Sebasteion*
- heroic nudity



Drusus Caesar

- found near the propylon
- heroic nudity



Aemilia Lepida

- near the Tetrastoon
- base in the entrance
- put together according to the fitting holes



Agrippina Maior

- east of the theatre
- base and head



Bases:



Gaius Caesar



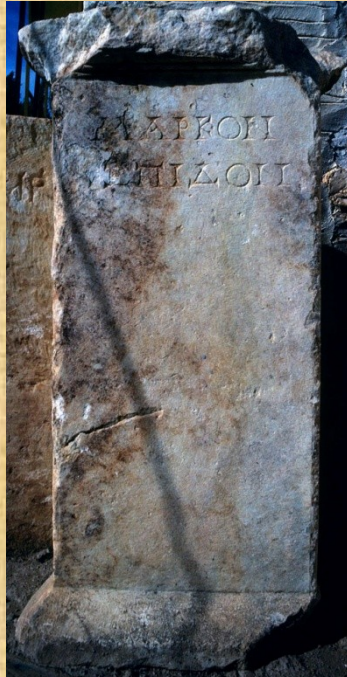
Aeneas



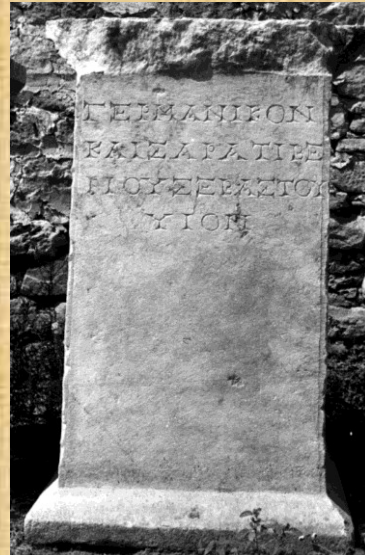
Tiberius Claudius Drusus



Atia



Marcus Lepidus



Germanicus Caesar



Agrippina Minor



Antonia Augusta



Aphrodite



Julia



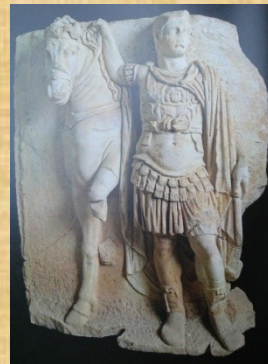
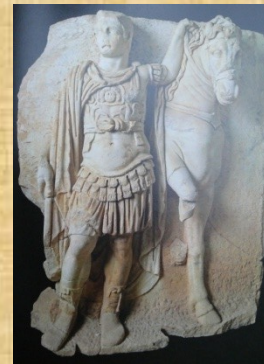
Augustus, Nike and trophy

- the emperor carried a spear and has an eagle at his feet
- winged Victory is crowning a military trophy
- a barbarian captive with his hands tied behind his back is sunk into the plinth
- Prima Porta portrait type but wrongly copied coiffure
- Mistakes: hand, spear, naked emperor, the shield on the trophy
- Imperial and Hellenistic royal iconography, adapting elements of both



Imperial prince as Dioskouros

- the relief is one of a pair that represented two armored princes framing the Augustus relief
- the princes have short-haired portrait heads and Roman armour, while their symmetrical poses, each with a horse, likens them to the Dioskouroi, sons of Zeus
- probably Gaius and Lucius Caesar
- the three reliefs represented Augustus as Zeus with his sons as the Dioskouroi





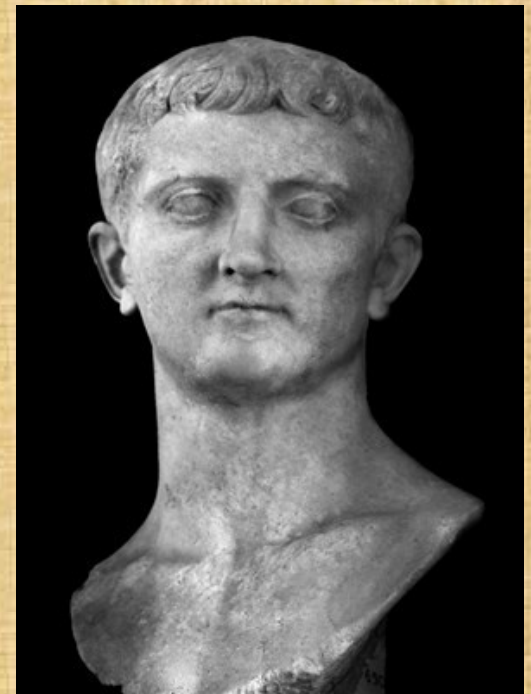
Empress sacrificing (Livia?)

- a draped imperial woman stands in the centre (probably pouring a libation), a sacrificial attendant stands at her side with an offering tray
- the attendant is a real figure with a contemporary hairstyle, guarantees that this is an imperial sacrifice, not an Olympian or mythological (in the south portico reliefs)



Unfinished Emperor (Tiberius)

- the naked emperor, Tiberius, recognizable from his portrait, occupies the centre of the relief. He stands frontally, holding a spear and a shield and wearing a cloak and baldric
- the prisoner wears a cloak and trousers and has his hands tied behind his back
- portrait type: Basel





Germanicus with a captive

- an imperial prince holding an orb in one hand and crowning the trophy to his right with the other
- a small boy-captive in profile standing between the prince and the trophy
- portrait is a combination of all three Germanicus' portrait types: a) adoption, b) Beziers, c) Gabii
- the scene also helps the identification: the globe in the hand means that the person is the heir, the captive wears clothes typical for the north (Germania)



a



b

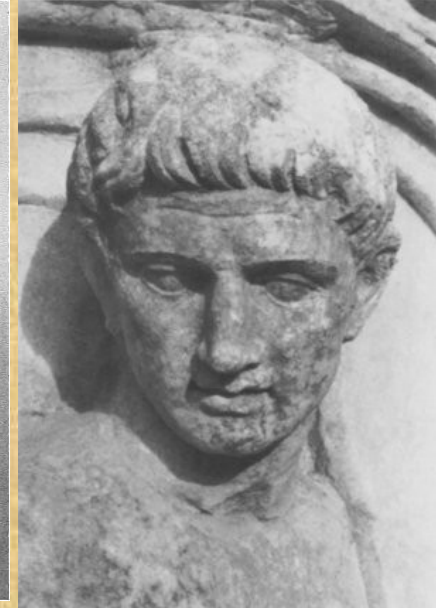
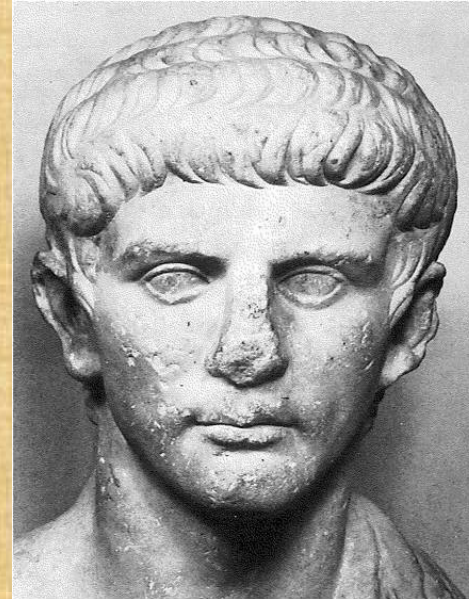


c



Claudius with allegories of Land and Sea

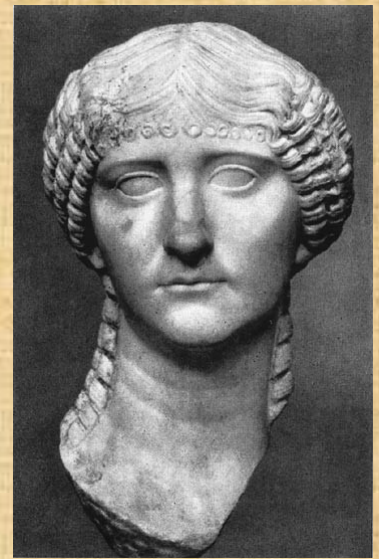
- the emperor strides across the panel, framed by a drapery indicating floating, flying – here it indicates divine epiphany
- receives a cornucopia in his right hand, and a steering oar in his left hand (both mean prosperity of land and sea under the emperor's rule)
- the Roman emperor is shown as a powerful hellenistic-style divinity
- the portrait type: Kassel





Claudius and Agrippina

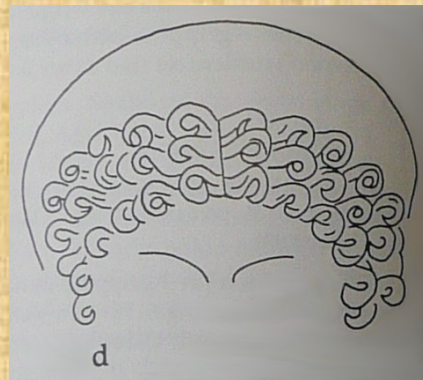
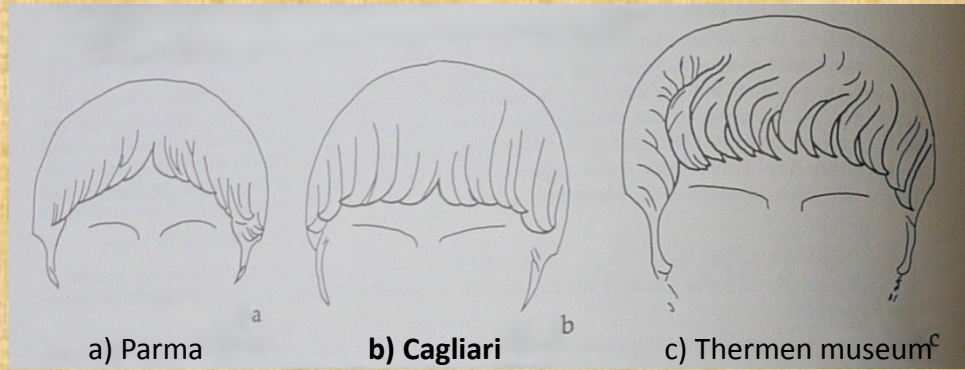
- the emperor Claudius stands in the centre of the relief, shaking hands with Agrippina
- Agrippina holds a bunch of wheat ears in her left hand (assimilation to Demeter)
- both of them recognizable by their portraits and distinctive hairstyles – official portrait types (Haupttypus, Ancona – both from Copenhagen)
- on the right – figure wearing a Roman toga who crowns the emperor with a wreath of oak leaves – a personification of the People or the Senate





Nero and Agrippina

- Agrippina crowns her son Nero with a laurel wreath, she carries a *cornucopia*
- Nero wears the armor and cloak of a Roman commander, he held a spear in his right hand and probably an orb in his left
- helmet lies on the ground
- both figures identifiable by their portraits
- the scene refers to Nero's accession in 54 AD and before 59 AD, when Nero had Agrippina murdered

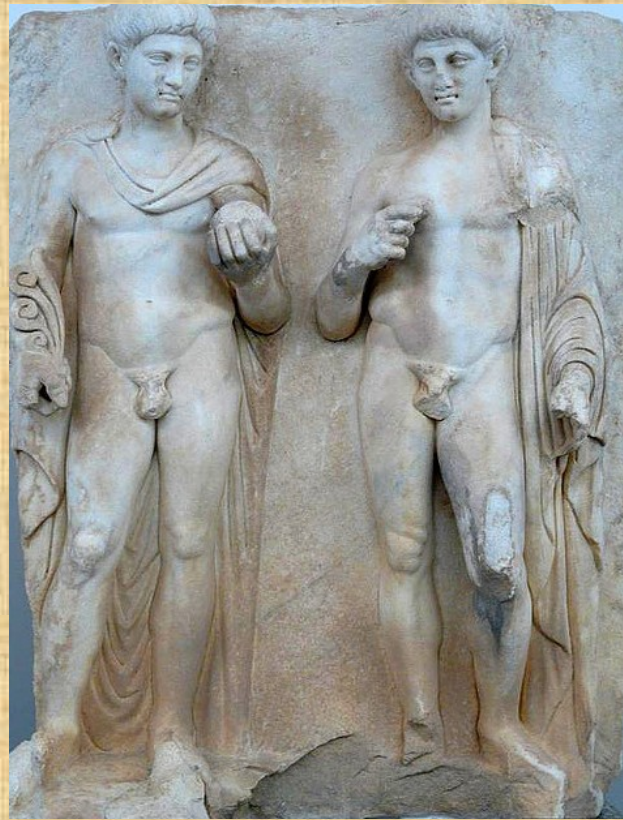


Stuttgart type



Two princes

- two princes stand like statues, naked, wearing cloaks
- the left figure is slightly taller and clearly the senior, holds the orb of the world in his left hand (a symbol of world rule) indicating that he is the imperial heir, in the right hand – aplaston (ship's stern ornament) a symbol of naval victory
- the right figure is younger, doesn't hold any attributes
- clearly individual facial features and hairstyle
- several possibilities of identification:
 - a) Gaius and Lucius Caesar**
 - b) Drusus Younger's sons (twins)
 - c) Nero Caesar and Drusus Caesar
 - d) Nero and Britannicus**



Sometimes two members of the Imperial house appear together in the same relief. According to the surviving panels, it seems that this happens only for the family of Claudius: the marriage between Claudius and Agrippina, Nero and Britannicus, Agrippina crowning Nero.

Another arguments supporting the theory, that the two princes are Nero and Britannicus



Claudius and Britannia

- Claudius is about to deliver a death blow to a slumped figure of Britannia
- Claudius wears helmet, cloak and a sword belt with scabbard
- Britannia wears a tunic with one breast bare – like the Amazon figures on which she was modeled
- the subject is identified by the inscribed base and the imperial portrait (Hauptypus)
- Tiberios Klaudios Kaisar – Bretannia
- the invasion of Britain in 43 AD



Nero and Armenia

- the heroic, naked figure of Nero wearing cloak and baldric supports slumped figure of Armenia by her upper arms
- Armenia wears a soft, pointed oriental hat, and her bow and quiver can be seen in low relief behind her to the left
- composition: a heroic group of Achilles and Penthesilea
- the subject is identified by its inscribed base and eastern iconography of the conquered personification
- Nero's name was erased after his fall in 68 AD (*damnatio memoriae*)





One of the main themes – military triumph of the Julio-Claudian emperors – embodied by the flying Victory, with a trophy on her left shoulder labeled Nike Sebaston (Victoria Augustorum)

-the reconstruction of position (between the panels with Claudius and Britannia and Nero and Armenia) has two reasons:

- a) they represent the farthest west and east of the Roman empire
- b) they suggest that the Roman conquest involved not only submission but also assistance to the conquered

Peter Scherrer suggested: panels are contradictions representing the politics – old, cruel Claudius and his *severitas*, young, unspoiled Nero and his *clementia*.



Composition

- the two reliefs complementing each other
- they show crowning of male and female figure
- the portraits are highly idealized, but it is very likely that the couple represents Augustus and Livia, even though the position is not so close



Aphrodite and Roma

- a draped goddess (Aphrodite) is crowned with a wreath by a female warrior figure (Roma)
- the wreath – double tier of laurel or bay leaves with a central medallion

Emperor and Roman people

- the emperor is crowned by a personification of Roman People wearing toga
- *corona civica* – saving citizens' lives
- the emperor is setting up a battlefield trophy beneath which kneels a female barbarian captive