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## Some Thoughts on the Julio-Claudian Period of Nysa ad Maeandrum in the Light of a Private Portrait from the City

HAVA KESKİN – SERDAR HAKAN ÖZTANER\*

### Abstract

The Carian city of Nysa ad Maeandrum was established during the Early Hellenistic period. Strabo mentioned the city where he was educated in his youth, defining Nysa as a *dipolis* - a double city. Excavations carried out in the city have unearthed a network of streets, numerous buildings, and sculptural fragments. The subject of this study is a marble head recovered as spolia in a Late Antique building located at the intersection of Street 1-plateia (western part) and Street 6W. Despite some discrepancies, the head is coherent with the male portrait types of the Julio-Claudian family. In this context, it represents a private portrait reflecting the public honoring practice of Nysa. The evidence for that period in the city is limited, and the existence of monumental buildings is known by indirect sources, mainly from Strabo's accounts. Besides the public honorings of civic officers, imperial honoring is attested by an inscribed statue base. Numismatic data indicate the Nysaeans' gratitude for Tiberius and provides insight into the city's social context during the Julio-Claudian period. The typological classification of the marble head makes it the first Julio-Claudian sculpture of the city and sheds light on Nysa's history during that period.

### Öz

Karia Bölgesi yerleşimlerinden biri olan Nysa ad Maeandrum, Erken Hellenistik Dönem'de kurulmuştur. Strabon gençliğinde eğitim gördüğü kent olarak andığı Nysa'yı bir *dipolis* - çift yakalı kent olarak tanımlamaktadır. Kent kazıları, caddeler ve onlarla ilişkili yapıların yanı sıra çeşitli heykeltıraşlık eserleri de sunarlar. Bu çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan mermer bir portre, Cadde 1-plateia'nın batı yakası kısmı ile Cadde 6B kesişim noktasında bulunan Geç Antikçağ yapısında devşirme kullanımında ele geçmiştir. Kaliteli bir işçiliğe sahip eser, Iulius Claudiuslar sülalesi erkek portrelerinin saç düzenlemesini izlemekle birlikte bazı farklılıklar barındırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda bir özel portre olduğu ve muhtemelen bir onurlandırma ile ilişkilendirilebileceği anlaşılmaktadır. Kentin Erken İmparatorluk Dönemi oldukça az bilinmekte, mimari yapıların varlığı, Strabon'un da aktarımlarından dolaylı olarak elde edilebilmektedir. Bu dönemdeki imparator onurlandırmaları yazıtlı bir heykel kaidesi ile belgelenirken, memuriyet onurlandırmaların da varlığı anlaşılmaktadır. Numismatik veriler özellikle Tiberius'a duyulan minneti vurgulaması açısından kentin Iulius Claudius'lar dönemi kontekstine dair fikirler sunmaktadır. Çalışma konusu özel portre tipolojik olarak sınıflandırılarak

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**Keywords:** Nysa ad Maeandrum, Caria, Rome, portrait, Julio-Claudian period, social context

stilizistik olarak irdelenmekte ve tarihlendirilmektedir. Eser, Nysa'nın Iulius Claudius'lar dönemine tarihlenebilen ilk heykeltıraşlık bulgusu olup kentin bu dönemine ışık tutmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Nysa ad Maeandrum, Karia, Roma, portre, Iulius-Claudius'lar dönemi, sosyal kontekst

## Introduction

Established in the north of the region of Caria during the Hellenistic period, Nysa is located on the southern foothills of the Mesogis / Aydın Mountains, north of the Meander / Büyük Menderes River, within the borders of the modern district of Sultanhisar in Aydın, Turkey. The city, known in ancient times as Nysa ad Maeandrum (Nysa on the Meander), was built on a challenging topography defined by steep slopes and deep valleys, in close proximity to the fertile plains of the Meander River basin. According to the accounts of Strabo and Stephanus of Byzantium, the city was founded on an existing settlement named Athymbra through synoecism by three Lacedaemonians: Athymbros, Athymbrados, and Hydrelos.<sup>1</sup> Stephanus of Byzantium indicates that the city was established in the Hellenistic period by Antiochus, son of Seleucus, and named after his wife, Nysa.<sup>2</sup> Yet, there is no scientific evidence to support this claim. The city's earliest epigraphic sources suggest that Seleucus I and his son Antiochus I granted the Temple of Pluto and Kore in Acharaca some privileges in the form of *bikesia*, *asylia*, and *ateleia*.<sup>3</sup> These privileges developed the city economically, and the issue of coinage bearing the legend Nysa started in the late third and early second centuries BC.<sup>4</sup> Nysa developed into a wealthy city with fertile land and its location on an important trade route connecting the cities along the Meander Valley, the Aegean coastline, and its hinterland. According to Strabo, who was educated in his youth in Nysa, the city spread on both sides of a gorge formed by a stream so was a *dipolis* (double city).<sup>5</sup> Strabo also mentions that the city had a bridge connecting these two sides, an amphitheater (stadion), a theater, a gymnasium, an agora, and a *gerontikon* (council of elders) during the Late Republican / Early Imperial Period.<sup>6</sup> Recent excavations have revealed that the city's Hellenistic orthogonal plan was composed of rectangular insulae measuring 58.8 x 116.8 m (approximately 200 x 400 Roman feet). The monumental buildings were completed mainly in the second and third centuries AD through the system of *euergesia* during the Imperial Period.<sup>7</sup> The city's urban character remained intact during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages up until the thirteenth century AD.<sup>8</sup>

The main street, Street 1-Plateia, connects the two sides of the city with a central bridge to the north of the stadion. Significant results have been obtained during the excavations

<sup>1</sup> Strab. *Geog.* 14.1.46; Steph. Byz. "Athymbra."

<sup>2</sup> Steph. Byz. "Antiocheia."

<sup>3</sup> Akdoğan Arca 2017; Akdoğan Arca and Gökçalp Özdil 2022a, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Özbil 2022, 357.

<sup>5</sup> Strab. *Geog.* 14.1.43.

<sup>6</sup> Strab. *Geog.* 14.1.43. Recent excavations have revealed that Strabo wrongly identified the stadion as an amphitheater.

<sup>7</sup> Kadioğlu 2011, 108; 2014, 12-13; Kadioğlu and Öztaner 2022.

<sup>8</sup> For the history of the city in late antiquity, see Peker 2022, 76-83.



conducted on the western side and on the eastern side, known as the Colonnaded Street.<sup>9</sup> The limestone / marble stone paved Street 1 / Colonnaded Street is the widest street of the city, measuring 9.5 m. With a row of units behind the colonnades and honorific inscriptions between the columns, this main street constitutes the heart of the city, boasting a monumental and ceremonial character. The conglomerate paved western end of the street measures 6.40 to 6.70 m wide. The street intersects the north-south oriented Street 6W, which is 4.60 to 5 m wide.<sup>10</sup> Located approximately 41 meters northwest of the intersection, the second-century AD library is one of the landmark buildings of Nysa. In 2015, a Late Antique building was partly unearthed during excavations northwest of the intersection of Street 1 and Street 6W. The long side of the building borders Street 1 and the short side Street 6W. The general plan of the building was outlined but not precisely determined. The inside of the building was full of rubble stone, probably due to collapsed walls. A marble statue of a half-naked god (Zeus?) and a marble head of a young male were unearthed in this layer of rubble (fig. 1). These sculptures are different in proportion and do not belong to each other. The statue's height was calculated to be 1.20 m and considered a representation of Zeus that is identical in iconography to gods such as Poseidon and Hades.<sup>11</sup> Evaluated for the first time in this article, the marble head possibly belongs to a statue slightly larger than average human size. The head reflects the Julio-Claudian male portrait typology and is examined in terms of style and date. It is considered to be from the Early Imperial period, which is represented with very few finds in Nysa.

### A Julio-Claudian period private portrait from Nysa

Currently kept at the Aydın Archaeological Museum, the head is made of medium-grain white marble and measures 28.2 cm high, 23.2 wide, and 25.8 deep.<sup>12</sup> The quality of workmanship is visible, despite the thin layer of calcification on the surface. The patina has survived in places such as on the cheeks and neck. The head is broken below the neck and is missing the tip of the nose, the lips, and the chin. Erosion and minor chipping can be observed on the forehead, around the eyebrows, and the eyes. Surface chips are also observed on the cheeks, temples, and ears. The nature of the damage on the head gives the impression that the statue fell forward and received a frontal impact.

The head is slightly larger than average human size and depicts the portrait of a beardless, short-haired young male (fig. 2). He has a broad face, a narrow chin, a fleshy and protruding forehead, and pronounced orbitals. The area of the eyebrows is damaged and survives only on the sides. However, it is evident that the eyebrows were not carved, neither incised nor in relief. The small, almond-shaped eyes are surrounded by thin eyelids and given in depth. Neither the pupils nor the tear ducts are drilled. The shape of the nose cannot be determined because nearly all of it is broken off. The soft nasolabial lines extend from nose to mouth, and the lips in the damaged mouth look firmly closed. There are vertical soft dimples on each side of the mouth. The relatively proportional auricles are close to the head. The hair is shaped in short and slightly curled plastic locks. The short hair is parted in the middle of the forehead

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<sup>9</sup> Öztaner 2022, 110.

<sup>10</sup> Kadioğlu and Öztaner 2022, 96.

<sup>11</sup> For the suggestion of the half-naked male god statue represents the god Zeus, in common iconography with gods such as Poseidon and Hades, see Keskin and Öztaner 2022, 157-79.

<sup>12</sup> Inv. no. 2015 / 141.

and arranged in rows of locks each formed by two thin strands with curved tips. There are six locks on the right and eight on the left, delimited on the sides with opposite curled locks that create narrow “pincers.” Four large locks - each formed by two thin strands - make up the second row of locks above the first row (figs. 3-4). Two locks are positioned in front of the ears and curl toward the cheeks (figs. 5-6). Other than two layers of locks to mark the contour, the hair is not carved from the top to the back of the head (fig. 7). The tips of the long, nape hair are broken and missing.

### Typology, identity, and date

The marble male head is of fine quality and clearly a portrait based on the hair arrangement and individual physiognomy. The smooth complexion around the man’s eyes and the general outlook of the face point to a young person. The general appearance of the face initially reminds one of Augustus. Still, there are no examples similar to the hairstyle of the marble head among the emperor’s well-known portraits.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, an analogy can be observed with Julio-Claudian dynastic members, and the likeness starts with the portraits of Germanicus. In this context, to enlighten its identity, the portrait from Nysa needs to be classified typologically, starting with Germanicus, and examined with reference to portraiture of the period.

Germanicus was born in 15 BC as the son of Drusus Major and Antonia Minor and a member of the Julius family. Augustus did not have a son; and influenced by his wife, Livia, he conditionally adopted his son-in-law Tiberius in AD 4 after the deaths of his grandchildren, Gaius and Lucius. In return, Augustus demanded that Tiberius adopt Germanicus from the Julius family instead of his own son, Drusus Minor. Due to this requirement, Germanicus was adopted by Tiberius in AD 4, yet he died in AD 19. From his marriage with Agrippina Major in AD 5, Germanicus had three sons, Drusus Germanicus, Nero Germanicus and Caligula, and three daughters, Julia Agrippina, Drusilla and Julia Livilla. Germanicus visited Asia Minor and was honored with portrait statues as a well-known imperial family member.<sup>14</sup> The production of his portraits started with his adoption by Tiberius in AD 4 and continued after his death.<sup>15</sup> His posthumous portraits are dated between AD 37 and 54, a continuity that can be explained by the fact that Germanicus is Caligula’s father and Claudius’s brother. Besides official representations, some private portraits of Germanicus, similar to his portrait types, have also been documented.<sup>16</sup>

In his typological classification of the portraits of Julio-Claudian dynasty members, D. Boschung evaluates Germanicus in three portrait types: adoption, Bezier, and Gabii.<sup>17</sup> While the emergence of the adoption type is dated immediately after AD 4, V. Poulsen is inclined to classify the Gabii type as a posthumous portrait.<sup>18</sup> Among these, the Nysa example resembles the arrangement of the locks of the hair around the forehead in the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Boschung 1993, 41-43, figs. 1-7.

<sup>14</sup> See Özgan 2013, 242, fig. 161b-c.

<sup>15</sup> Boschung 1993, 59.

<sup>16</sup> For the three portraits attributed to Germanicus or a Julio-Claudian prince, see Fittschen and Zanker 1985, nos. 23-26. His representations are often evaluated in the context of Julio-Claudian portraiture. See Bernoulli 1886, 230-41; Kiss 1975, 111-30; Fittschen 1987; Boschung 1993, 59-61; Özgan 2013, 239-46.

<sup>17</sup> Boschung 1993, 59-61.

<sup>18</sup> Poulsen 1960, 30.

Gabii portrait type. According to Boschung's study, supported with comprehensive drawings in the Gabii type, Germanicus' hair is parted above the right eye nearer the nose. The row of the locks rises slightly at the sides of the forehead and creates "pincers" as they meet the corresponding curled locks.<sup>19</sup> The Nysa portrait has a similar arrangement to this type, yet the hairs are parted in the middle, and the locks meet the "pincers" at the sides in almost a straight line. With its locks parted in the middle, the Nysa example resembles a now-lost portrait, suggested to be from Nysa's neighbor, Tralleis.<sup>20</sup> According to R. Özgan, the portrait is a replica of the adoption type of Germanicus, and the simple fork motif in the middle of the forehead is a determining feature.<sup>21</sup> More so, he claims another portrait from Assos to be similar in terms of physiognomy and hair arrangement.<sup>22</sup> However, R. Özgan identifies the hairstyle of the Gabii-type portraits as "roughly curved large, hook-shaped, dry and solid curls that form a fork motif almost in the centre of the forehead before extending in opposite directions."<sup>23</sup> The distinctive feature of the type is the hair parted almost in the middle of the forehead, forming two pincers on the sides.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, in her comprehensive study on Julio-Claudian portraits, S. Erkoç defines the Tralleis(?) portrait as a Bezier type and argues that the only difference is the position of the fork motif, which is closer to the center of the forehead.<sup>25</sup> The author also identifies the Assos portrait as Nero Germanicus, the son of Germanicus.<sup>26</sup> The suggestions of S. Erkoç are significant in the context of the Nysa portrait because there are differences in hair arrangement from the Bezier type of Germanicus portraits.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, it bears some resemblance to the Assos portrait suggested to represent Nero Germanicus, as will be explained below.

The portraits of Germanicus resemble those of Tiberius and Caligula in their hair arrangement.<sup>28</sup> In the Chiamonti type of Tiberius portraits, the emperor's hair is arranged in a very short row of locks parted in two from the middle, forming a straight line in slightly curled locks above the broad forehead.<sup>29</sup> The locks form a narrow pincer at the temples, merging with opposite curled locks. A comparison of the Nysa head reveals that they are similar in hair arrangement but differ in length (figs. 1, 4). The locks of Tiberius are very short but are longer in the Nysa example, covering nearly half of the forehead

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<sup>19</sup> Boschung 1993, 59-61, fig. 39 Nc. For another Julio-Claudian portrait suggested to belong to that portrait type Germanicus, see Fittschen 1977, 55-57.

<sup>20</sup> Özgan 2013, figs. 120, 238, 242.

<sup>21</sup> Özgan 2013, 238.

<sup>22</sup> Özgan 2013, 239-42, figs. 160-61.

<sup>23</sup> Özgan 2013, 239-45.

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion see Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 30.

<sup>25</sup> Erkoç 2012, G2, 68-69. She determines that this movement is familiar in Anatolian portraits, in contradiction to the city of Rome examples; see n. 429. Accordingly, Fittschen's "Bezier type" is the most safely attributed type in Germanicus' representations; see Fittschen 1987, 209-10.

<sup>26</sup> Erkoç 2012, 84-85, NG 2.

<sup>27</sup> Balty and Cazes 1995, no. 6, 80-85. For a drawing of the locks' arrangement, see fig. 73.

<sup>28</sup> This hair arrangement is a common feature; see Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 14. Compare no. 13 (Tiberius) and no. 23 (Germanicus?). Although the hair is separated in two sides and restricted by pincers, Tiberius' locks are quite short; see Tiberius suppl. 12-16.

<sup>29</sup> Boschung 1993, 58, fig. 34. Tiberius' portrait found in Caere is one of the best examples representing this type; see Rose 1997, cat. no. 5, pls. 71-72.

in the Germanicus portraits.<sup>30</sup> In this context, the Germanicus-style arrangement is the most similar.

The identification becomes more precise in analogy with the images of Germanicus' successors. The Adolphseck-type portraits of Drusus Germanicus initially resemble the Nysa example in terms of the hair arrangement. Still, it differs primarily in the separation of the swollen locks above the beginning of the inner part of the right eye.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, in two portrait types attributed to Nero Germanicus, which resemble most his father's portraits, the symmetrical combed locks of the hair around the forehead form pincers that merge with the opposite arranged locks.<sup>32</sup> The hair of the Nysa portrait resembles that arrangement. However, the number of the locks of the hair around the forehead and the position of the "fork" that parts the locks differ from the portraits of Nero Germanicus. More precisely, the parting of the hair in the La Spezia type is above the beginning of the right eyebrow. However, it is above the left in the Corinth-Stuttgart type. The number of locks in the Nysa portrait is also greater. The closest analogy can be observed in another Nero Germanicus portrait displayed at the Dresden Museum.<sup>33</sup> The portrait has a broad face that narrows slightly toward the chin. The locks are long enough to cover half the forehead and are parted right in the middle. Each part is restricted at the end by opposite curled locks. The right pincer is narrow, while the left is relatively superficial. With these features, the Dresden example displays the hair arrangement of the Gabii-type of Germanicus, which is also similar to the portrait from Nysa.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, all are different in physiognomy.

In his study, Boschung classifies the portraits of Germanicus' other son, Caligula, into two types. The Nysa portrait resembles his primary type in the arrangement of the hair forelocks but differs in length since Caligula's hair is very short. Furthermore, as in the Nysa example, the emperor's hair arrangement has a second layer on the top, consisting of loose and large locks.<sup>35</sup> Caligula's portraits in the examples of Heraklion, Genua Pegli, and Fasanarie are his primary type and differ from each other only in minor details.<sup>36</sup> The standard features are the symmetric locks parted from the middle of the forehead and above a second row of four large locks with tips pointing down. These features are analogous with the Nysa portrait. This arrangement of locks for Caligula's hair can be observed in the portraits of Claudius and Nero but in a different style.<sup>37</sup> Despite these similarities, Caligula's portrait in question and the Nysa example differ in certain hairstyle features. The locks of the Nysa portrait are longer and flatter than Caligula's and look quite symmetrical,

<sup>30</sup> Boschung, 1993, 59, figs. 37-39. For the Bezier type, see Balty and Cazes 1995, 80-85, no. 6; Smith and Lenaghan 2009, 232, no. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Boschung 1993, 66-67, fig. 50.

<sup>32</sup> Boschung 1993, 64-65. The pincers in the second type are narrower.

<sup>33</sup> See D. Boschung's interpretation of a portrait of Nero Germanicus Caesar in Knoll and Vorster 2013, no. 25, 142-45.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Boschung 1993, fig. 39 Nc, 61.

<sup>35</sup> Boschung 1989, nos. 1-30. Particularly in examples nos. 1-6, the second layer of the hair tufts could be seen clearly; see Boschung, 1993, 67-68, Ta, fig. 51; Rose 1997, pl. 194, no. 85.

<sup>36</sup> Boschung 1989, 32-35, figs. 1, 3, and particularly fig. 5.

<sup>37</sup> See Boschung 1993 for Claudius: Vc, fig. 58; for Nero: Za, fig. 66 and Zb, fig. 67. Due to the Boschung's classification for his Parma and Cagliari types, the tufts of Nero's forelock are arranged with solid and dry tufts, and his forelocks follow a single contour. Furthermore, Fittschen's evaluation of the hair style of Germanicus indicates that he was 25 years old in his image on Gemma Augustea. Nevertheless, similar young male portraits sometimes could be interpreted as images of young Nero; see Fittschen 1987, 211. For a comparison with the portrait of Nero from Aphrodisias, see Smith 2009, fig. 9.

although there are six on the right and eight on the left. Despite specific differences, the hairstyle gives the impression that the portrait's subject preferred the official hairstyle of the period. In the context of the aforementioned examples, the Nysa portrait is closely analogous with portraits of Nero Germanicus. Nonetheless, they differ in the number of locks and the position of the "fork."

Physiognomy is the other aspect that needs to be discussed to determine the identity of the Nysa portrait. According to K. Fittschen, hair arrangement is a more defining detail than physiognomy, but his typology is partly accepted.<sup>38</sup> Fittschen suggests two types for Germanicus: Adolphseck-Malibu and Corinth-Stuttgart. The Corinth-Stuttgart type has a symmetrical hair arrangement. The locks at the forehead are parted slightly on the left and delimited by a pincer at each end that creates two almost equal parts. In this type, Germanicus is bearded. His hair arrangement is also known from late portraits of Tiberius and later in those of Claudius and Caligula.<sup>39</sup> That said, D. Boschung claims that these portraits represent Nero Germanicus, not his father Germanicus.<sup>40</sup>

The close analogy in the portraits of the father and son gives rise to some portraits being identified as Germanicus or Nero Germanicus, such as in the portrait from Assos.<sup>41</sup> As mentioned earlier, S. Erkoç suggests that some differences exist in the motifs of the hair arrangement in provincial reproductions of imperial portraits, especially in Anatolia.<sup>42</sup> In this context, physiognomy is also identical because local changes would be implemented in the hair arrangement. In his verified portraits, Germanicus has a broad face with slightly curved eyebrows extending down to a relatively drooping nose, a slightly receding mouth, and a pronounced, protruding chin.<sup>43</sup> These features are identical to Tiberius and his relatives.<sup>44</sup> The portrait of Germanicus from Egypt at the British Museum and another from Aphrodisias are good examples of his physiognomy.<sup>45</sup> Both have a prominent, protruding chin, receding mouth, and protruding upper lip (figs. 8 and 9). The protruded upper lip creates vertical dimples on either side of the mouth.

The young man in the Nysa example has a broad face and vertical dimples (figs. 2, 4, 5). That would result from the protruding upper lip.<sup>46</sup> Yet it looks impossible to expect a receding mouth and protruding chin. Although the hair arrangement of the Nysa portrait resembles the Nero Germanicus portrait from Assos, their physiognomy is different. Remarkably, while the Assos portrait has a small mouth and pursed lips, the lips in the Nysa portrait are flat. A similar comparison can be made with the well-preserved Nero Germanicus from Dresden.<sup>47</sup> In this context, the Nysa example should be identified as a private portrait based on the hair arrangement and physiognomy, despite the missing parts of the face.

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<sup>38</sup> Fittschen 1987, 209-17.

<sup>39</sup> Fittschen 1987, 217, figs. 44-47.

<sup>40</sup> Boschung 1993, 65-66, Rb.

<sup>41</sup> S. Erkoç identifies the portrait from Assos, called Germanicus by R. Özgan, as a depiction of Nero Germanicus; see Erkoç 2012, NG2, 84-85; Özgan 2013, 242, fig. 161.

<sup>42</sup> Erkoç 2012, 69, no. 429.

<sup>43</sup> Fittschen 1987, 217; Boschung 1993, 60.

<sup>44</sup> Fittschen 1987, 208.

<sup>45</sup> Smith and Lenaghan 2009, 232, no. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Because the upper lip is plumper and protruding more than the lower lip, dimples at each end of the mouth slightly curve upwards; see Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 1-30.

<sup>47</sup> Knoll and Vorster 2013, no. 25.

As pointed out, the typological parallels of the Nysa portrait can be traced from Germanicus to Caligula. Besides the aforementioned hair arrangement, the length of the nape hair supports this claim as it is a typical feature of Claudian dynastic members.<sup>48</sup> The eyes of the Nysa portrait are not drilled, and possibly the pupils were depicted with dye.<sup>49</sup> The hair arrangement and ears are carved in the same way. Consequently, from a technical perspective, the Nysa portrait belongs to the Julio-Claudian Period. In this context, it was likely produced between the adoption of Tiberius and Germanicus in AD 4 and the reign of Claudius when the posthumous portraits of Germanicus were made. The Gabii-type of Germanicus is the closest in analogy. If we accept Poulsen's suggestion that the Gabii-type is a posthumous portrait, the year of his death, AD 19, should be a *terminus post quem* for the Nysa portrait. The close analogy with Caligula in the hair arrangement also suggests a date during his reign. However, no coins from this period have been found in Nysa. As pointed out below, coins with the portraits of Tiberius honoring the emperor with the legend *philokaisar* are known from the city. These coins are associated with his generous contributions to the city. Therefore, it would be best to date the Nysa portrait to the Julio-Claudian Period.

The dimensions, particularly the superficially crafted back of the Nysa portrait, indicate that it once belonged to a statue. It is known that statues displayed above eye level as architectural features were often left unfinished at the back. On the other hand, busts were finished down to the minor details because they were displayed at eye level. The carved hair at the sides suggests that the statue was displayed in a niche or connected with an architectural structure, a building, or in front of a wall. The portrait was found in the rubble of a Late Antique building on the west side of the city. Its original place of display could be investigated nearby; however, it is hard to pinpoint the location because this lightweight item could have been easily brought from another part of Nysa. The Early Imperial Period of Nysa should be further investigated to understand the context of the period to which this portrait belongs.

## Nysa ad Maeandrum during the Julius-Claudian Period

An inscription on a statue base at the theater indicates that Nysaeans enthusiastically welcomed the rule of Augustus.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, knowledge of the city's history during that period is limited and can be evaluated only by indirect data. Besides Strabo's accounts of a theater in the city during this period, epigraphic finds such as the inscription honoring Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus associated with the theater from 48 / 47 BC, as well as statue bases, two corniches, and a Doric frieze from the theater, indicate that the building existed in the Late Hellenistic - Early Imperial Periods.<sup>51</sup> The aforementioned statue base celebrating Augustus' rule is interpreted as a part of the theater's decoration and is dated to AD 9. Considering Strabo's account, the main public buildings of the city - *gerontikon*, gymnasium, stadion,<sup>52</sup> tunnel diverting flood waters, and bridge over the tunnel connecting the *dipolis* - most likely have earlier phases built in the Late Hellenistic-Early Imperial Periods. During his research on the *gerontikon*, M. Kadioğlu found that the existing building was constructed in the second century AD. Although the building

<sup>48</sup> For example, see Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 29-31, no. 23, and 17 that belongs to Nero's second type.

<sup>49</sup> For the crafting of eyes compared with the portrait of Drusus Major from the Claudian Period, see Landwehr 2008, no. 296, pl. 28.

<sup>50</sup> For the inscription see Akdoğu Arca and Gökalp Özdil 2022b, 62; Blümel 2019, 77-78, no. 418. The inscription belongs to a bronze statue base, whose statue was likely a depiction of Augustus.

<sup>51</sup> Kadioğlu 2022a, 199-202.

<sup>52</sup> Strab. *Geog.* 14.1.43; see note 6.



cannot be identified with Strabo's *gerontikon*, the spolia frieze fragments built in the front wall of the building and the double half columns at the rear are dated to the Late Hellenistic Period.<sup>53</sup>

The excavations of the gymnasium of Nysa, conducted only in a couple of trenches by M. Beckmann, did not provide any results about the building's earlier phases.<sup>54</sup> However, Strabo mentions the city's gymnasium in his account of the Sanctuary of Acharaca<sup>55</sup>: "An annual festival to which there is a general resort is celebrated at Acharaca, and at that time particularly are to be seen and heard those who frequent it, conversing about cures performed there. During the feast, the young men of the gymnasium and the ephebi, naked and anointed with oil, carry off a bull by stealth at midnight and hurry it away into the cave. It is then let loose, and after proceeding a short distance, falls down and expires."<sup>56</sup> An inscription on an architrave block indicates that an anonymous person donated oil.<sup>57</sup> The inscription is dated to the first century AD based on the letter character and style, and it is believed that it was initially located in the gymnasium or the agora of Nysa.

Another evidence for this period is that in the Late Roman Republican Period, Julius Caesar reaffirmed the privileges granted to the Temple of Pluto-Kore in Acharaca in the Hellenistic Period. Augustus also granted some privileges to the temple.<sup>58</sup> In this context, the existence of the Temple of Pluto-Kore in the Julio-Claudian Period and its importance for Nysa is quite clear. Another prominent building in the city was the library built around AD 130. However, Late Hellenistic - Early Imperial Period pottery, wall ruins, and a cistern were found during the excavations of the building.<sup>59</sup> Besides the pottery and glass finds that indicate Early Imperial dating, coins also provide essential information.<sup>60</sup> In her study on Nysa's numismatic finds, C. Özbil points out that the minting of a group of coins without portraits started in the Julio-Claudian Period.<sup>61</sup> Among these, coins depicting the God Mēn were issued during the reign of Nero. These coins also indicate the existence of a Cult of Mēn in the city.<sup>62</sup> In this context, the Julio-Claudian Period of Nysa coincided with the foundation or spread of the Cult of Mēn.

In terms of social class, the city had elites such as the Pythodoros family, known as the descendants of Chairemon, who was an ally of Rome during the Republican Period. The family moved to the neighboring city of Tralleis but continued to support Nysa with several *euergesia* in the second century AD.<sup>63</sup> There is no evidence about that family's activities during the first century AD. However, they likely continued their existence. Two honorific inscriptions concerning *panegyriarchai* (festival organizers) have been recorded among the epigraphic finds from this period.<sup>64</sup> The first inscription bears posthumous honors dedicated to T. Cl. Caecilius

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<sup>53</sup> Kadioğlu 2022b, 267.

<sup>54</sup> Beckman 2022, 304-5.

<sup>55</sup> Strab. *Geog.* 14.1.43-44. For the translation, see Gökalp Özdil and Akdoğu Arca 2022a, 42.

<sup>56</sup> This is documented also with numismatic evidence; see Özbil 2022, 369-70, fig. 10.

<sup>57</sup> Gökalp Özdil and Akdoğu Arca 2022b, 130.

<sup>58</sup> Akdoğu Arca and Gökalp Özdil 2022a, 57-58.

<sup>59</sup> Stročka 2022, 323.

<sup>60</sup> For the pottery, see Sönmez 2022, 147. For the glass finds, see Gençler Güray 2022, 413.

<sup>61</sup> Özbil 2022, 365.

<sup>62</sup> Özbil 2022, 374-78, fig. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Akdoğu Arca and Gökalp Özdil 2022a, 58. For the *gerontikon* and the *euergesia* of the Pythodoros family see Kadioğlu 2014, 98; 2022b, 252, 265-68.

<sup>64</sup> Akdoğu Arca and Gökalp Özdil 2022b, 72.

Herakleides. An educated man and respected character, he displayed great generosity towards his hometown and received honors and a statue in return. The second inscription commemorates the honors dedicated to Tiberius Claudius Menippos by the demos and the boule. He was also a *panegyriarches* and honored with a statue commissioned by the two assemblies. Both inscriptions document that statues were used for public honors in Nysa during the first century AD.

Described by Pliny as the biggest earthquake in human history, the Western Anatolian earthquake of AD 17 is one of the most important events of the period.<sup>65</sup> Geological research suggests a magnitude of 7.5 with the epicenter in the cities of Magnesia ad Sipylos and Sardis.<sup>66</sup> This earthquake destroyed Magnesia ad Maeandrum and caused damage in Hierapolis, Laodicea, Tripolis, Aphrodisias, Temnos, Philadelphia, Aigai, Apollonis, Mostene, Hierocaesara, Myrina, Kyme and Bozdağ (Tmolos). Nysa was also affected by this earthquake. Tiberius helped the devastated cities in the form of aid and tax exemptions. According to C. Özbil, Nysa did not receive any help; however, a group among the city's coins issued in the local style could be associated with this event.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the fact that these coins bear the legend *philokaisar* (emperor-loving) could indicate how loyal and grateful Nysaeans were to Tiberius.

## Conclusion

Epigraphic evidence reveals that Nysa was an “emperor-loving city” and that the city's close relations with Rome went back to the Republican period, based on Chairemon's account. The continuity of that bond can be traced to Augustus reinstating the city's privileges and the greeting of his imperium with an inscription for *Pax Aeterna Augusta* by the residents of Nysa.<sup>68</sup> The inscription is dated to AD 9 and belongs to a statue base. Although the statue is not preserved, it was likely an image of Augustus himself. In this context, we suggest that the emperor was honored in Nysa with a statue around AD 9. There is no evidence that Nysa confronted Rome during the imperial period. On the contrary, Sextus Julius Major Antoninus Pythodorus, a descendant of Chairemon and friend of Rome in the first century BC, financed the construction of the *gerontikon / odeion* during the reign of Antoninus Pius in the second century AD.<sup>69</sup> The building was adorned with statues of his family members alongside members of the imperial family.

Findings in Nysa dated to these centuries, especially the first century AD, are very limited, making the subject of this study an important artefact that sheds light on the period. The portrait belongs to a statue which honored a prominent person. The depiction follows the imperial male portrait types of the Julio-Claudian family. However, it should be identified as a private portrait, considering the disparities among the official types. Inscriptions from this period reflect the practice of publicly honoring individuals such as members of the city's elite families, victorious athletes, or civic officers. Two inscriptions from the first and second centuries AD mention two festival organizers (*panegyriarchai*) who were honored by the city. Interestingly,

<sup>65</sup> Plin. *HN*. 2. 86.

<sup>66</sup> Aydın 2022, 430.

<sup>67</sup> Özbil 2017, 474-75.

<sup>68</sup> Kadioğlu 2006, no. 585; Blümel 2019, no. 418; Akdoğu Arca and Gökalp Özdil 2022b, 62, fig. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Kadioğlu 2022b, 267; Akdoğu Arca and Gökalp Özdil 2022b, 63.



one bears the name Tiberius Claudius and could be related to the Julio-Claudian period.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Nysa portrait cannot be associated with this inscription in any way. The inscription serves to reveal that honoring was practiced during that period. According to the material culture finds, Nysa had very close ties with the Roman Empire during the Julio-Claudian period. Presumably, Nysa was affected by the earthquake in AD 17 and received help from Tiberius. In terms of religion, the Cult of Pluto and Kore maintained a following in the city during this period. However, a Cult of Mēn was also established or gaining importance.

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<sup>70</sup> For the origin of the name of the Roman citizens from Asia Minor who bear names Tiberius Claudius, see Dönmez Öztürk 2010, 56: “Gerek Küçük Asya’da gerekse Lykia’da Tib. Claudius isimlerini taşıyan Roma vatandaşlarıyla, c.R.’ye sahip Küçükasyalılar’ın sayısında bariz bir artış yaşanmıştır. Tib. Claudius isimleri bu kişilerin vatandaşlık hakkının kaynağı ile ilgili birden fazla ihtimali akla getirmektedir: Bunlardan biri, yukarıda söylediğimiz gibi, İmparator Tiberius’un Augustus tarafından evlat edinilmeden önce, bazı Asia’lıların vatandaşlık hakkı almalarına aracılık etmiş olması, ikincisi İmparator Claudius’un, üçüncüsü ise Nero’nun Tib. Claudius’ların isim babası olmasıdır. Bir diğer olasılık Gaius-Julius’lara mensup olmasına rağmen, Doğu’da bir Claudius olarak görülen Germanicus’un c.R. için aracılık etmiş olabileceğidir.”

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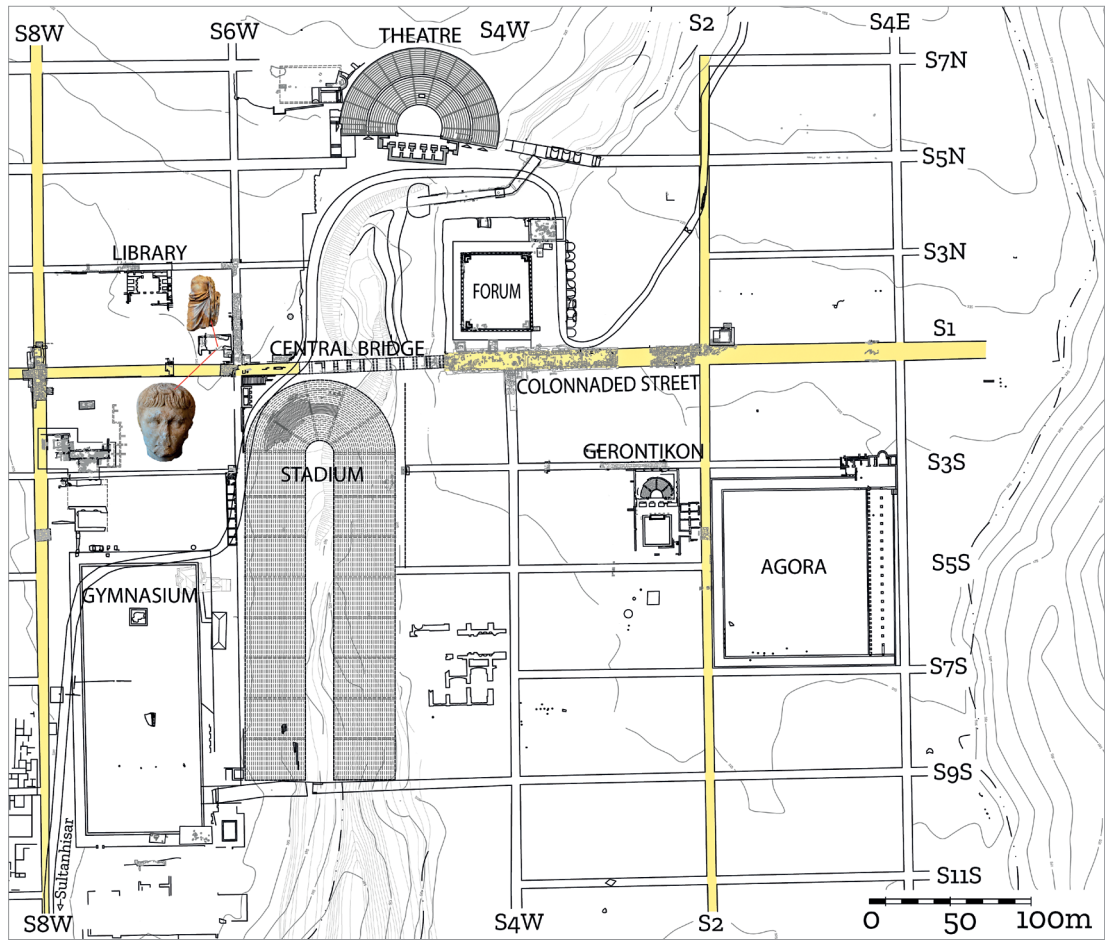


FIG. 1 Findspots of the sculptures on Nysa city map (©Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).

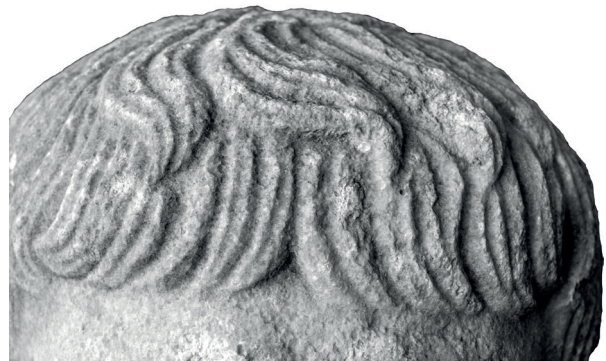


FIG. 3 Marble portrait, hair detail (© Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).

FIG. 2 Marble portrait, front view (© Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).



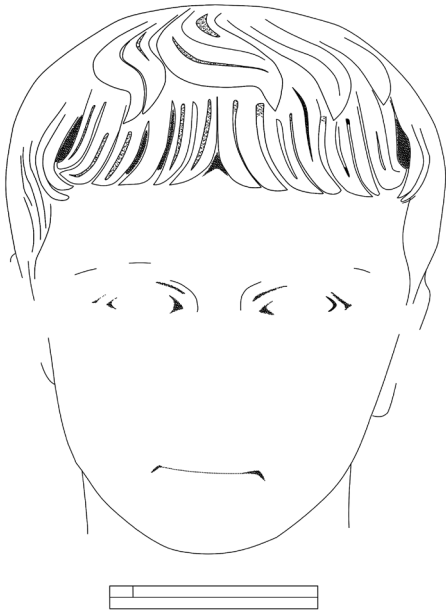


FIG. 4 Marble portrait, drawing of the portrait details (© Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).



FIG. 5 Marble portrait, right view (© Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).



FIG. 6 Marble portrait, left view (© Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).



FIG. 7 Marble portrait, back view (© Nysa ad Maeandrum excavation archive).



FIG. 8 Germanicus, front view  
(© The Trustees of British Museum).

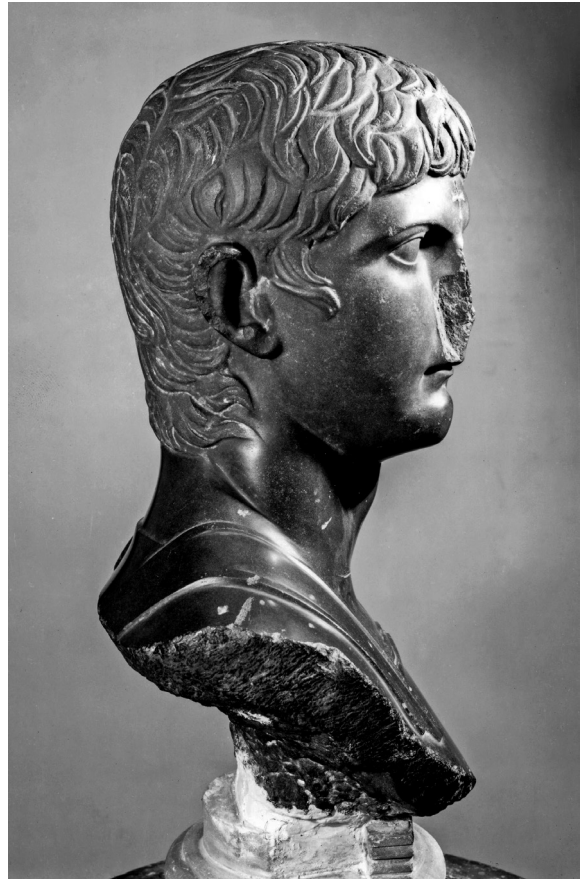


FIG. 9 Germanicus, right view  
(© The Trustees of British Museum).



