



## [The monument of the Aenatores \(CIL VI, 40307\)](#) [1]

**Typology (Honorific / Funerary / etc.):** Honorific.

**Original Location/Place:** North-eastern slope of the Palatine Hill (piazza del Colosseo), Rome.

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):** Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Terme di Diocleziano, sala V, inv. 574363.

**Date:** 55 CE to 56 CE

**Physical Characteristics:** Fragments of a large inscribed statue base from within the *aedicula* of a shrine to the Julio-Claudian family, on the north-eastern slope of the Palatine Hill. The fragments are from three marble panels, which were joined to make the front face of the base, and which contained four columns of the inscription, with a single line of Latin text inscribed beneath all four. Bronze statues of the figures named in the inscription are believed to have stood above on top of the base.

The monument as a whole was destroyed by the great fire of 64 CE.

**Material:** Luna Marble.

**Measurements:** Total dimensions:

Height: 116 cm

Width: 500 cm

Depth: 90 cm

Letter height: 4.5-2.5 cm

Individual measurements:

Column 1. (composed of 47 fragments): 75 x 213 x 35

Column 2. (composed of 19 fragments): 75 x 139 x 35

Column 3. (composed of 8 fragments): 75 x 70 x 38.

**Language:** Latin

**Category:** Roman

**Publications:** *CIL VI*, 40307 (AE 1996, 246)

[EDR 092818](#) [2]

**Commentary:** The fragmentary remains of this inscribed statue base from the city of Rome is an important example of a privately initiated dedication to the imperial dynasty in the capital city. It demonstrates the progressive construction of dynastic monuments, as well as the development of the visible promotion of the imperial family as a means of public benefaction.

The fragments of the statue base were discovered during excavations between the Arch of Constantine and the northeast foot of the Palatine Hill in 1992-3 that revealed a shrine and possibly the remains of a temple. The excavators also discovered the fragments of an inscribed bronze plaque from a statue base (*CIL VI*, 40334) and the marble fragments under discussion here. Once restored, the fragments appeared to be from a long base, designed to accommodate a number of statues, with inscriptions placed in columns along the front side (for a full description of the excavation and restoration of the monument, see Panella, *Meta Sudans I*, p. 40-46, fig. 33-41). The architectural fragments have been identified as coming from a small, tetrastyle temple reconstructed by Claudius after a fire, between 51-55 CE, alongside small *aedicula* in which to display imperial statues (Koortbojian, *Divinisation*, p. 186). These structures may have been part of the complex belonging to the *Curiae Veteres*, an ancient sanctuary of priests supposedly established by Romulus (Richardson, *New Topographical Dictionary of Rome*, p. 105-6). It was a historic location, situated at the foot of the Palatine Hill and along the triumphal route leading to the Capitoline temple of Jupiter.

The marble base identified here was dedicated by the *aenatores*, the bronze wind instrument players who provided the music for military events. The inscriptions on the base are arranged in four columns, and were presumably situated beneath the space where the bronze statue of the individual named in the text stood: the inscription of column I dedicates it to Augustus, during his eleventh year of tribunician power. It was likely set up and inscribed in 12 BCE, shortly before he became *pontifex maximus* in June of that year, and likely in celebration of his acceptance of this role (Morizio, "Le dediche", p. 202). The inscription of column II is for the emperor Nero; his Julio-Claudian ancestry is made explicit through his designation as a son, a grandson, a great-grandson and finally the great-great-grandson of the divine Augustus (*divi Augusti abnepoti*), and he is described as having been



acclaimed *imperator* for the second time, dating this inscription to 13<sup>th</sup> October 55 CE - 12<sup>th</sup> October 56 CE (see *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, 2nd ed., D, 129). The third column of the base is dedicated to Nero's adoptive father, the emperor Claudius; although described in Nero's dedication as having been divinised, his own inscription appears to have been composed before his death, referring to his second consulship and his second instance of holding tribunician power, placing it firmly between 1st-24th January 42 CE (see *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, 2nd ed., I, 492). The final inscription, in column IV, was dedicated to Nero's mother, Agrippina Minor, which must have been inscribed between the deification of Claudius on 13th October 54 CE and her death on 23rd March, 59 CE (*Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, 2nd ed., I, 641). The dedicators of the monument are listed in a single line beneath these columns and unifying the three plaques of marble on which the inscriptions were placed; the *aenatores* – the name given to this association of professional musicians –, and then the specific instrumentalists: the trumpet-players (*tubicines*), horn-players (*liticines*), bugle-players (*cornicines*). They are described as 'Roman' (*Romani*), emphasising the specific role they had in ceremonies and events that took place in the city of Rome. The appellation *Romani* appears twice in the inscription, once at the end of the single line, beneath column IV of Agrippina's inscription, and then again beneath *cornicines* in column III. This is due to the *damnatio memoriae* suffered by Agrippina following her death in 59 CE, in which all inscriptions and monuments to her were destroyed; her dedication on the monument of the *Aenatores* was partially destroyed, including *Romani*, which was not part of her inscription but which belonged to the single line describing the musicians. *Romani* was then replaced beneath the final line of the text in order for the meaning of the original single-line to remain intact.

Although the base certainly formed part of the sacred area of the compound in which it was situated, it was not conceived as a single dedication in this way. Indeed, it is possible to reconstruct – from the titles given to the emperors mentioned in the dedication – the progressive development of the monument and its different incarnations. Vincenzo Morizio has suggested that the base was, in fact, the cumulative version of a number of dedications made by the *aenatores* to the – living – emperors, over the course of more than seventy years ("Le dediche", p. 202-4). First was the statue dedicated to Augustus, in celebration of his becoming *pontifex maximus*, in 7 BCE. Following this, a statue and base were dedicated to Tiberius – the inscribed bronze plaque of which was discovered in the same excavations (CIL VI, 40334); a statue and base of Caius was also likely dedicated, but which did not survive following his *damnatio memoriae*. By 42 CE, the complex had been rebuilt (following fires), and so Augustus's original dedication was copied into a new, larger base that he was to share with the emperor Claudius, leaving the statue of Tiberius to stand alone. Under Nero, the base underwent further restoration, enlargement and re-inscription, resulting in the combination of columns of inscribed text presented here (for a detailed discussion of the progression of monumental development and the precise chronology, see Morizio, "Le dediche", p. 202-3, especially fig. 108).

The different 'statuses' of the emperors in their inscriptions is worthy of comment here, as they reveal a surprisingly fluid approach to the acquisition of divine honours. The inscriptions in columns I and III, to Augustus and Claudius, are clearly dedicated to living emperors; although Augustus is named as the son of the deified Julius Caesar (*divi filius*), both inscriptions focus on the magistracies held by both emperors and there is no suggestion that either had yet been deified themselves. However, in the dedication to Nero in column II, both Augustus and Claudius have been divinised; they are commemorated on the monument as both living and divine. Michael Koortbojian has attributed this unusual combination to the monument being a dedication to the living emperor, which demonstrated how status designations were maintained 'despite changes wrought by subsequent honours' (*Divinisation*, p. 188). When the statue base for Augustus was first enlarged in 42 CE, the *aenatores* chose to associate Claudius with the 'living' version of Augustus alone; when the shrine was enlarged a second, and final time in 55-56 CE, the situation was replicated, with Augustus and Claudius honoured as emperors rather than gods even in spite of the inscription to Nero – the newest 'living' emperor explicitly referring to their divinisation (*ibid*). The monument of the *aenatores* is, therefore, a striking example of the progressive nature of dynastic commemoration; as each of the Julio-Claudian successors acceded to the emperorship they became a visible part of Rome's history, whose combined presence emphasised the success and prestige of the regime initiated by Augustus. The statues that surmounted this inscribed base may not have been conceived of as a 'group', but their gradual assemblage over time resulted in their perception as a single ornament, designed to commemorate the integrity and longevity of the Julio-Claudian line. As Michael Koortbojian states, 'in all the shrine's phases, the inscriptions vividly illustrate how the monument...was devoted specifically to the cult of the *living* emperors and, subsequently, to their memory' (*ibid*). They were essentially 'lifetime' portraits that deliberately focused upon and honoured the emperor 'as he had been, not as the *divus* that he became' (Koortbojian, *Divinisation*, p. 109).

It is also significant that the monument of the *aenatores* was one that originated from, and continued through private initiative. Much like the altars to the imperial cult established at Narbo and Lugdunum, this was a dedication inspired by the will of a specific community. The monument of the *aenatores* was an act of public benefaction that used the continuity of sculptural display as a means of engaging, as an organisation, with dynastic ideology. The inscriptions, and the statues that they described, wrote the history of that dynasty but were not instigated by it; the



*aenatores* were acting as ‘multigenerational corporate dedicators’, who used the imperial ambitions of the Julio-Claudians as a medium for promoting their own, public image (Turk, “Epigraphy and Patronage”, p. 415). This is especially relevant if we consider the location of the monument, along the triumphal route of Rome; the *aenatores* as an association was comprised of musicians whose instruments originated from a military context, but who had come – by the first century CE – to enjoy greater prominence in the capital city for their involvement in religious ceremonies, processions and games. Their work relied upon public events. The different dedications made to the Julio-Claudian dynasty by the *aenatores*, and which resulted in the construction of this monumental, inscribed base, should then be understood as their attempt to protect that legacy of work and their future place in the city; the monument described the longevity of their loyalty to the process of imperial succession and advertised their positive support of the ruling *gens*. The monument represents an astute navigation of the changing world of the Julio-Claudians, promoting dynastic ambition whilst also removing dedications to those who dishonoured it, charting a ‘form of flexible sculptural patronage, designed to promote the interests of a specific group’ (Turk, “Epigraphy and Patronage”, p. 417).

Keywords in the original language:

- [Augustus](#) [3]
- [Nero](#) [4]
- [Claudius](#) [5]
- [Agrippina](#) [6]
- [divus](#) [7]
- [Aeneator](#) [8]
- [tubicen](#) [9]
- [liticen](#) [10]
- [cornicen](#) [11]
- [Romanus](#) [12]

Thematic keywords:

- [Rome \(city\)](#) [13]
- [dynasty](#) [14]
- [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#) [15]
- [Augustus](#) [16]
- [Claudius](#) [17]
- [Nero](#) [18]
- [religious ceremony](#) [19]
- [music](#) [20]
- [succession](#) [21]
- [heir](#) [22]
- [euergetism](#) [23]
- [statue associations](#) [24]
- [loyalty](#) [25]

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## Links

- [1] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/monument-aenatores-cil-vi-40307>
- [2] [http://www.edr-edr.it/edr\\_programmi/res\\_complex\\_comune.php?do=book&id\\_nr=EDR092818&partId=1](http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/res_complex_comune.php?do=book&id_nr=EDR092818&partId=1)
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