

Chapter 1 : Nero - Wikipedia

Nero (/ ˈnɛr oʊ /; Latin: Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus; 15 December 37 - 9 June 68 AD) was the last Roman emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. He was adopted by his great-uncle Claudius and became Claudius' heir and successor.

Travel Tips Nephew of the insane, incestuous Caligula, Emperor Nero acceded the throne in the year 54 at the age of 16. By that stage his mother had been exiled by her brother, Emperor Caligula and given a reprieve by her uncle Claudius two years later when he became emperor after Caligula was murdered. Nero was then adopted by his great-uncle Claudius who elected him as his successor over his own son Britannicus, three years younger than Nero. Statue of Emperor Nero Complicated right? Such and such married his sister, killed his father then divorced his sister in favour of his daughter. And we wonder why they were all so crazy? For one, the fiddle was not yet invented so he was in fact, much more likely to be playing his lyre. Rumour has it that he may even have set the fire himself or had a servant do it as an underhanded way to speed up the demolition process. Get the most up to date travel insights from the City Wonders team delivered directly to your inbox. Sign up today to have exclusive offers with the latest travel news at your fingertips! Subscribe Congratulations, your first City Wonders email is on its way! Immediately after the fire Nero returned to Rome to help with the relief effort. He waded through rubble to find survivors and offered his palace to the homeless. Opinions vary on whether the Domus Aurea was 100 or 200 hectares in size but all agree that it was blooming massive. It was spread out over the Palatine, Oppian and Caelian Hills. One of the other lasting impressions historians have of Emperor Nero was that he was a little blood-thirsty although nothing like the extent to which Caligula was – apparently he once had an entire section of a stadium audience thrown into the ring to the animals because he was bored. It is said that Nero killed his step-brother Britannicus the day before Britannicus officially became an adult in order to ensure that he would have no competition to the throne. The reason behind the killing is a point of debate among historians although she was really one for meddling in his affairs, always telling him to dump this girl or be faithful to his wife. The story goes that he had captured Christians set on fire in his garden at night to use as outdoor lighting. He also tried to shoulder the blame onto the Christians when the citizens of Ancient Rome accused him of starting the Great Fire. He had a huge number of them burned, crucified and executed when they confessed to the arson – presumably under duress. Some sources even hold Nero responsible for the murder of Apostles Peter and Paul. On a lighter note, Nero was also an Olympic champion. Apparently Nero did some good things too. He also brokered a reasonable level of peace with the Parthians over the question of the control of Armenia. In the end Nero was held accountable for his actions, abandoned by all of his friends and declared an enemy of the public by the Senate whose power he spent his life diminishing. Finding no other option, he killed himself before he could be executed by the people of Rome. If you want to hear a little more about Nero and see the products of his reign, why not come along on our Colosseum and Ancient Rome walking tour.

Chapter 2 : Nero the Singing Emperor of Rome by Arthur Weigall

Illustrated. Weigall chronicles the life and reign of the Emperor Nero, who in character was a strange mix of paradoxes; artistic, sporting, brutal, weak, sensual, erratic, extravagant, sadistic, bisexual-and later in life almost certainly deranged. One of history's more intriguing stories.

A few years before his death, Domitius had been involved in a political scandal that, according to Malitz, "could have cost him his life if Tiberius had not died in the year Caligula then banished his two surviving sisters, Agrippina and Julia Livilla, to a remote island in the Mediterranean Sea. Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus. Tacitus says that Locusta prepared the poison, which was served to the Emperor by his food taster Halotus. In Apocolocyntosis, Seneca the Younger does not mention mushrooms at all. She was also able to convince Claudius to replace with a single commander, Burrus, two prefects of the Praetorian guard who were suspected of supporting Britannicus. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Greek historian Cassius Dio. This made him the youngest sole emperor until Elagabalus, who became emperor aged 14 in During this speech, Nero spoke about "eliminating the ills of the previous regime". Scullard writes that "he promised to follow the Augustan model in his principate, to end all secret trials *intra cubiculum*, to have done with the corruption of court favorites and freedmen, and above all to respect the privileges of the Senate and individual Senators. The Senate also allowed Agrippina two lictors during public appearances, an honor that was customarily bestowed upon only magistrates and the *Vestalis Maxima*. Malitz writes that in later years, Nero panicked when he had to make decisions on his own during times of crisis. In *Histories* Tacitus writes that the affair began while Poppaea was still married to Rufius Crispinus, but in his later work *Annals* Tacitus says Poppaea was married to Otho when the affair began. For example, Nero promoted the exploration of the Nile river sources with a successful expedition. Malitz writes that "Nero abandoned the restraint he had previously shown because he believed a course supporting the Senate promised to be less and less profitable. Faenius Rufus and Ofonius Tigellinus. Politically isolated, Seneca was forced to retire. The fire started on the slope of the Aventine overlooking the *Circus Maximus*. Tacitus is the only surviving source which does not blame Nero for starting the fire; he says he is "unsure. Suetonius wrote that Nero started the fire because he wanted the space to build his Golden House. Upon hearing news of the fire, Nero returned to Rome to organize a relief effort, which he paid for from his own funds. Houses built after the fire were spaced out, built in brick, and faced by porticos on wide roads. To find the necessary funds for the reconstruction, tributes were imposed on the provinces of the empire. He reduced the weight of the denarius from 84 per Roman pound to 96 3. He also reduced the silver purity from Furthermore, Nero reduced the weight of the aureus from 40 per Roman pound to 45 7. Ara Pacis on the reverse. Her body was not cremated, as would have been strictly customary, but embalmed after the Egyptian manner and entombed; it is not known where. Verginius refused to act against Nero, but the discontent of the legions of Germany and the continued opposition of Galba in Spain did not bode well for him. The prefect of the Praetorian Guard, Gaius Nymphidius Sabinus, also abandoned his allegiance to the Emperor and came out in support of Galba. In response, Nero fled Rome with the intention of going to the port of Ostia and, from there, to take a fleet to one of the still-loyal eastern provinces. After sleeping, he awoke at about midnight to find the palace guard had left. Upon going to their chambers personally, he found them all abandoned. When he called for a gladiator or anyone else adept with a sword to kill him, no one appeared. He cried, "Have I neither friend nor foe? An imperial freedman, Phaon, offered his villa, located four miles outside the city. Travelling in disguise, Nero and four loyal freedmen, Epaphroditos, Phaon, Neophytus, and Sporus, reached the villa, where Nero ordered them to dig a grave for him. At this time, a courier arrived with a report that the Senate had declared Nero a public enemy and that it was their intention to execute him by beating him to death and that armed men had been sent to apprehend him for the act to take place in the Forum. The Senate actually was still reluctant and deliberating on the right course of action as Nero was the last member of the Julio-Claudian Family. Indeed, most of the senators had served the imperial family all their lives and felt a sense of loyalty to the deified bloodline, if not to Nero himself. At last, the sound of approaching horsemen drove Nero to face the end. However, he still could not bring himself to

take his own life but instead he forced his private secretary, Epaphroditos , to perform the task. An illustration of the alleged tomb of Nero; actually tomb of proconsul Caius Vibius Marianus. Chaos would ensue in the year of the Four Emperors. Artwork portraying Nero rising to divine status after his death. Varner, over fifty such images survive. Vitellius began his reign with a large funeral for Nero complete with songs written by Nero. Augustine of Hippo wrote of the legend as a popular belief in The first, who sang and played the cithara or lyre and whose face was similar to that of the dead emperor, appeared in 69 during the reign of Vitellius. He was supported by the Parthians, who only reluctantly gave him up, [93] and the matter almost came to war. The client state arrangement was unlikely to survive the death of the former Emperor. The governor of the province Gaius Suetonius Paulinus assembled his remaining forces and defeated the Britons and restored order but for a while Nero considered abandoning the province. Classicianus advised Nero to replace Paulinus, who continued to punish the population even after the rebellion was over. Romanâ€™Parthian War of 58â€™63 Nero began preparing for war in the early years of his reign, after the Parthian king Vologeses set his brother Tiridates on the Armenian throne. Tigranes was chosen to replace Tiridates on the Armenian throne. The Roman victory came at a time when the Parthians were troubled by revolts; when this was dealt with they were able to devote resources to the Armenian situation. A Roman army under Paetus surrendered under humiliating circumstances and though both Roman and Parthian forces withdrew from Armenia, it was under Parthian control. Given imperium over the eastern regions, Corbulo organised his forces for an invasion but was met by this Parthian delegation. An agreement was thereafter reached with the Parthians: Rome would recognize Tiridates as king of Armenia, only if he agreed to receive his diadem from Nero. Dio reports that Tiridates said "I have come to you, my God, worshiping you as Mithras. Artaxata was temporarily renamed Neroneia. He both sang and played the cithara a type of lyre.

Chapter 3 : Nero Biography - Childhood, Life Achievements & Timeline

The third of Rome's emperors, Caligula (formally known as Gaius) achieved feats of waste and carnage during his four-year reign (A.D.) unmatched even by his infamous nephew Nero.

The Olympic Games were in full swing. The amphitheater was packed with thousands of breathless fans who gazed on as the chariot racers took the starting line. Among them stood a foreigner who loved the heroes of the Greek Culture so much, he was determined to share in their glory and admiration. In defiance of the Olympic regulations, he stood behind his 10 horse chariot, while his opponents manned only four steeds. The Olympic officials were enraged at the defiance, but they dared not question him. The palaestra of Olympia, a place devoted to the training of wrestlers and other athletes. The charioteers burst from the starting line. As they rounded the first corner, the slightly overweight Nero found his ten horse vehicle too bulky to maneuver. He was thrown from the chariot and injured so badly, he almost died. But that would come later. Nero had no business competing in the Olympics. He was no athlete. And while he loved and admired the romance and the valor of the Greek heroes, his love would prove no match for his insatiable vanity. Shoulder of an Attic black-figure hydria. Though not of Greek origin, he was captivated by the Greek culture from the time he was a boy. He spoke fluent Greek and considered himself a great poet and performer. As a young kithara singer, he began performing for his close friends. While he loved the applause of being an artist, for years he had watched the Olympic contenders and dreamed of becoming one himself. Statue of Nero as a boy. He started by establishing the first Greek games in Rome. Next, since Nero was a poet and a singer, not a trained athlete, he would need to change the nature of the games to accommodate his own talents and tastes. So he introduced competitions which involved acting and singing, lyre-playing and trumpeting. Bust of Nero at the Capitoline Museum, Rome. No doubt, his influence as the emperor an office he held from 54 to 67 might have helped him as well. But it was also the bore of political life that made Nero seek the applause and admiration he desired through becoming an Olympic competitor. In 65, he performed as a poet and kithara singer during the second Neroneia. Finally, he appeared as a ten horse charioteer in the Circus Maximus. Each appearance and many of his victories came as a result of him using his wealth and political power to literally change the rules of the game. But that was not the worst of his offenses against the games. Nero also forced the Olympics to be held in 67, during his final tour of Greece. This way, he could participate in the games as part of his grandstanding abroad. His vanity also caused him to disregard the opponents who had fairly defeated him in the chariot race. In his quest for victory and admiration, Nero had trampled these traditions. But his victory would be short-lived. Forced to enter his own city in disguise, Nero soon found himself in a perilous situation. Would he risk the pain and humiliation of a public execution at the hands of the people who had grown to hate him? In the end, he chose death as a way out. Thus passed the man who admired the valor of the Greek heroes, but who clung to his own vanity until the end.

Chapter 4 : The Roman Empire: in the First Century. The Roman Empire. Emperors. Nero | PBS

Nero (A.D.) became emperor of the Roman Empire after the death of his adopted father, the Emperor Claudius, in A.D. The last ruler of what historians call the "Julio-Claudian.

But his early promise gave way to wild extravagance and murder. His rule ended as violently as it had begun. When he became emperor, Nero was a young man who enjoyed the theater, music and horse racing. His dominating mother, Agrippina, had already murdered Claudius to see her son on the throne. Encouraged by his former tutor, the writer and philosopher Seneca , he began to make his own decisions. Relations with his mother became frosty and in 56 AD she was forced into retirement. Early hope dashed Nero started well. He ended secret trials and gave the Senate more independence. He banned capital punishment, reduced taxes and allowed slaves to sue unjust owners. He provided assistance to cities that had suffered disasters, gave aid to the Jews and established open competitions in poetry, drama and athletics. However, like Caligula before him, Nero had a dark side. His impulses began as simple extravagance. Before long, however, stories were circulating that he seduced married women and young boys, and that he had castrated and "married" a male slave. He also liked to wander the streets, murdering innocent people at random. Getting rid of mother Both Seneca and Agrippina tried hard to control Nero. Seneca tried to be subtle, but his mother was not. Relations between mother and son grew worse and Nero decided to kill her. He invited her to travel by boat to meet him at the seaside resort where he was staying. When their reunion was over, Agrippina left for home. She was never meant to get there, but the murder attempt failed and Agrippina swam to safety. Finishing the job Annoyed that his plot had failed, Nero abandoned subtlety and sent some soldiers to complete the job. He claimed that his mother had been plotting against him, but fooled nobody. The Great Fire of Rome lasted for six days and seven nights. Sing-along with Nero Nero offered to house the homeless, but it was too late. Rome was now victim to the arbitrary desires of a mad tyrant: Murder and mayhem In 65 AD, one plotter, a freed slave named Epicharis, found a dissatisfied officer who had access to the emperor. She secretly asked him to kill Nero. Instead, the officer betrayed Epicharis and she was captured. Rather than give up the names of her fellow plotters, she killed herself. Not knowing who was involved, Nero redoubled his guard and unleashed terror on Rome. Huge numbers of people, including Seneca, were executed or forced to kill themselves. Public enemy But Rome had had enough. A revolt in the northern territories quickly spread and the Senate declared Nero a public enemy. This meant that anyone could kill him without punishment. Terrified, Nero fled to the country with his few remaining slaves and killed himself. Without any heirs, the Roman Empire now had no leader. With the ultimate prize up for grabs, rival generals began moving their troops towards Rome and civil war.

Chapter 5 : Emperor Nero and the Burning of Rome | About History

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His mother Agrippina the Younger married Emperor Claudius, who later adopted Nero and proclaimed him heir. After his adoption from Claudius, he took the name Nero. Until the age of 62, the young Emperor remained under the influence of the prefect of the Praetorian guard, Sextus Afranius Burrus, and his mentor, Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Nero promised to use as a model, the reign of his ancestor Octavian Augustus. He also attacked the Senate and the consuls stating that they could really rule the state during the times of the republic. Initially, the plans of Emperor Nero were quite conventional. The government took measures to guide public order, to fight against counterfeiters, and reform the treasury. The provinces were relieved of paying huge sums of money to conduct gladiatorial performances. In 54, he allowed the Jews to return to Rome. They were expelled from there in year Nero himself, having grown up, seriously engaged in state affairs, especially his judicial duties, in the course of which he implemented useful procedural concepts. Gradually, Nero began to emerge from under the influence of the political environment, and manifested his inexhaustibility, immense selfishness, and cruelty. He first poisoned his brother-in-law, Britannica, according to legend, because he was better spoken, though he probably just got rid of the contender for power. His mother Agrippina the Younger, hated him. At first, Nero deprived her of all honors, after which she was expelled from the palace. He later killed her. As an excuse, Nero told the Senate that Agrippina had made an attempt on his life, and he was forced to kill her. The year 62 began a new stage of his reign: Seneca and Burrus left the political scene. Inspired by the flourishes of Seneca, Nero imagined himself as a great artist. Later, this was consumed by a passion for sports. Nero considered himself an unsurpassed musician and an athlete. The emperor began to perform in public, which in itself was a shameful thing for the Romans. While he sang, nobody was allowed to leave the theater, even if necessary. Nero demonstrated his unlimited power with a frequent change of wives. In order to marry another woman, Nero sent one into exile and then ordered her to be executed, his first wife Octavia, daughter of Claudius, who had helped him get to power. It burned 10 of 14 districts of the city, even the imperial palace. A few days after the fire, Christians were accused of arson. This became the pretext for mass torture and murders of Christians. Because of this, some ancient historians claim that Nero set fire to the city. However, modern scholars tend to believe that it is rather an attempt by political opponents to attribute another sin to a bloody tyrant. Large-scale construction projects and games devoured huge amounts of money. It should be noted that the repression affected only a fairly small group of the capital nobility. He defeated the rebellion in Britain. On the other hand, a great campaign against the Parthians secured the Roman domination in Armenia. At the end of his reign, Nero was not involved in state affairs, so he stated that only the Hellenes would be able to appreciate his talent and went to Greece in the year 67 and performed in various competitions as a singer, actor and a chariot on various competitions. The Emperor brutally violated the Olympic ideals and universally accepted principles even went so far as to break the chronology of the Olympic Games. In March 68, the governor of Central Gaul raised up against Nero. The same was done in Spain and in northern Africa. The Emperor could overcome the crisis if he acted decisively and vigorously. But Nero seemed to be able only to dream of fantastic acts of retribution or a miraculous change in the mood of rebellious forces under the influence of his artistic talents. On June 9, 68, Nero committed suicide. His time was marked by victories and stability, but later history will mark him as a mad Emperor. Historians in his time were influenced by changing politics. Modern times and popular culture often use him as an example of how unlimited power corrupts a man. He is often blamed for burning the city of Rome, but there is no proof. Nero remains an interesting Emperor and historical figure to this day. Lord of the earthly hell Share:

Chapter 6 : Nero: Emperor of Rome by Joelle Marston on Prezi

Nero. Nero is perhaps the most infamous of all Roman rulers, and is seen as one of the villains of the ancient calendar. The science.com of Rome from AD 54 to AD 68 Nero's reign has been associated with extravagance, oppression and brutality.

Explore more from this episode More The emperor Nero ruled from 54 to 68 AD, when he lost his power and committed suicide. Nero became the emperor of Rome at age 16. Several years later, Nero had his power-hungry mother moved to a separate residence; shortly thereafter, he allegedly had her killed. One of his grandest plans was to tear down a third of Rome so that he could build an elaborate series of palaces that would be known as Neropolis. The senate, however, objected ardently to this proposal. Exactly what happened next has remained a mystery for nearly 2,000 years. On the night of July 19, 64 A.D. In a city of two million, there was nothing unusual about such a fire – the sweltering summer heat kindled conflagrations around Rome on a regular basis, particularly in the slums that covered much of the city. Knowing this, Nero himself was miles away in the cooler coastal resort of Antium. Yet this was no ordinary fire. The flames raged for six days before coming under control; then the fire reignited and burned for another three. Two thirds of Rome had been destroyed. History has blamed Nero for the disaster, implying that he started the fire so that he could bypass the senate and rebuild Rome to his liking. Much of what is known about the great fire of Rome comes from the aristocrat and historian Tacitus, who claimed that Nero watched Rome burn while merrily playing his fiddle. Gangs of thugs prevented citizens from fighting the fire with threats of torture, Tacitus wrote. There is some support for the theory that Nero leveled the city on purpose: Indeed, Tacitus was still a boy at the time of the fire, and he would have been a young teenager in 68 A.D. Nero himself blamed the fire on an obscure new Jewish religious sect called the Christians, whom he indiscriminately and mercilessly crucified. During gladiator matches he would feed Christians to lions, and he often lit his garden parties with the burning carcasses of Christian human torches. Yet there is evidence that, in 64 A.D. Perhaps the fire was set off by someone hoping to make the prediction come true. Archaeologists, historians, and contemporary fire investigators try to pinpoint the cause of this monumental tragedy of the ancient world. More from The Great Fire of Rome 4.

Chapter 7 : Did Nero really play the fiddle while Rome burned? | HowStuffWorks

He was Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, and he was the emperor of Rome. The palaestra of Olympia, a place devoted to the training of wrestlers and other athletes. The race began.

Author of books on ancient civilizations and supernatural folklore Nero and the Burning of Rome Nero Nero is perhaps the most infamous of all Roman rulers, and is seen as one of the villains of the ancient world. Very few surviving ancient sources give favourable impression of him, he is said to have had his mother, adoptive brother and first wife Octavia executed, and, most famously of all, played his fiddle while the ancient city of Rome was burning to the ground. Some ancient sources blame the Emperor himself for starting the great fire of Rome in AD 64, and then afterwards blaming the Christians for the act. Is there any truth behind this story? And how reliable is the picture we have today of Nero as a deranged, sadistic tyrant? Through his mother Agrippina, he was a great-grandson and the only surviving male descendant of Caesar Augustus, the first Roman Emperor. When he was two years old Nero and his mother were banished by his brother the Emperor Caligula to the Pontian Islands off the west coast of Italy on charges of treason. The following year Agrippina persuaded the Emperor to marry her and make Nero his adopted son and heir, at the expense of his natural son Britannicus. From then onwards her son became known as Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar. Nero Emperor of Rome On 13 October, AD 54 Claudius died allegedly after eating some poison mushrooms given to him by Agrippina, and the same day, Nero, still only 16 years of age, succeeded to the throne. But Nero did not wish to share power with anyone and soon had his mother moved to a separate house away from the imperial residence and the corridors of Roman power. What followed was a series of brutal assassinations allegedly arranged by Nero himself. In February of AD 55 Britannicus died at a dinner party in the palace – probably poisoned by Nero, who viewed the son of Claudius as a constant threat to his power. In AD 59, Agrippina was clubbed and stabbed to death on the orders of Nero. Octavia was then banished to the island of Pandateria modern Ventotene on a false charge of adultery, probably on the insistence of the new empress Poppaea. She was later executed and her severed head sent back to Rome. Under the influence of his tutor and adviser Seneca c4 BC – AD 65 and Praetorian prefect Roman official, responsible for the imperial guard and the administration of justice Burrus AD 1 – AD 62 Nero often followed a somewhat liberal policy. He allowed slaves to file complaints against their masters, frequently gave criminals clemency rather than sign their death warrants, banned capital punishment, helped cities that had suffered from disasters, and lowered taxes. The Emperor also devoted himself to his long-held artistic and literary interests, organizing poetry competitions and singing to the harp, at first only for a private audience, but later on, much to the alarm of the Senate, in public too. As Nero was emperor, no one was allowed to leave the auditorium during his performances, the historian Suetonius mentions women giving birth during Nero recitals, and of men faking death in order to be carried out.

Chapter 8 : Nero and the Burning of Rome | [Brian calendrierdelascience.com](http://Brian.calendrierdelascience.com)

In July of 64 A.D., a great fire ravaged Rome for six days, destroying 70 percent of the city and leaving half its population homeless. According to a well-known expression, Rome's emperor at

See Article History Alternative Titles: He became infamous for his personal debaucheries and extravagances and, on doubtful evidence, for his burning of Rome and persecutions of Christians. Upon the death of Claudius, she at once had Nero proclaimed emperor by the Praetorian Guard , whose prefect, Sextus Afranius Burrus , was her partisan; the Senate thus had to accept a fait accompli. For the first time, absolute power in the Roman Empire was vested in a mere boy, who was not yet Early reign Agrippina immediately eliminated the powerful freedman Narcissus , who had always opposed her aims. In 56 Agrippina was forced into retirement. From that time until 62, Burrus and Seneca were the effective rulers of the empire. Nero, portrait bust; in the Roman National Museum, Rome. The testimony of contemporaries depicts Nero at this time as a handsome young man of fine presence but with soft, weak features and a restless spirit. His government forbade contests in the circus involving bloodshed, banned capital punishment , reduced taxes, and accorded permission to slaves to bring civil complaints against unjust masters. Nero himself pardoned writers of epigrams against him and even those who plotted against him, and secret trials were few. The law of treason was dormant: Nero also inaugurated competitions in poetry, in the theatre, and in athletics as counterattractions to gladiatorial combats. He saw to it that assistance was provided to cities that had suffered disaster and, at the request of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus , gave aid to the Jews. Artistic pretensions and irresponsibility While directing the government themselves, Burrus and Seneca had largely left Nero uncontrolled to pursue his own tastes and pleasures. At first Nero hated signing death sentences, and the extortions of Roman tax collectors upon the populace led him in 58 to unrealistically suggest that the customs dues should be abolished. Even later Nero was capable of conceiving grandiose plans for conquests or the creation of public works , but for the most part he used his position simply to gratify his own personal pleasures. His nocturnal rioting in the streets was a scandal as early as 56, but the emergence of real brutality in Nero can be fixed in the month period between the putting to death of his mother at his orders in 59 and his similar treatment of his wife Octavia in June He was led to the murder of Agrippina by her insanity and her fury at seeing her son slip out of her control, to the murder of Octavia by his having fallen in love with Poppaea Sabina , the young wife of the senator and later emperor Otho , and by his fear that his repudiated wife was fomenting disaffection at court and among the populace. He married Poppaea in 62, but she died in 65, and he subsequently married the patrician lady Statilia Messalina. Seeing that he could do what he liked without fear of censure or retribution , Nero began to give rein to inordinate artistic pretensions. He fancied himself not only a poet but also a charioteer and lyre player, and in 59 or 60 he began to give public performances; later he appeared on the stage, and the theatre furnished him with the pretext to assume every kind of role. To the Romans these antics seemed to be scandalous breaches of civic dignity and decorum. Nero even dreamed of abandoning the throne of Rome in order to fulfill his poetical and musical gifts, though he did not act on these puerile ambitions. Beginning about 63, he also developed strange religious enthusiasms and became increasingly attracted to the preachers of novel cults. During the fire, Nero was at his villa at Antium 35 miles 56 km from Rome and therefore cannot be held responsible for the burning of the city. According to the Annals of the Roman historian Tacitus and to the Nero of the Roman biographer Suetonius , Nero in response tried to shift responsibility for the fire to the Christians , who were popularly thought to engage in many wicked practices. Hitherto the government had not clearly distinguished Christians from Jews. Almost by accident, Nero initiated the later Roman policy of halfhearted persecution of the Christians, in the process earning himself the reputation of Antichrist in the early Christian tradition. Howard Hudson The approaching end Meanwhile, the imperial government had had some success in the east. The great foreign-policy problem of the time was that of Armenia. Prolonged military operations by Corbulo led in 66 to a new settlement; Tiridates was recognized as king, but he was compelled to come to Rome to receive his crown from Nero. A revolt in Britain was headed by Queen Boudicca Boadicea in 60 or 61, and an

insurrection in Judaea lasted from 66 to 68. Nero had many antagonists by this time. The great conspiracy to make Gaius Calpurnius Piso emperor in 65 reveals the diversity of his enemies—senators, knights, officers, and philosophers. That the conspiracy included military officers was an ominous sign, but Nero did not give way to panic; slaves kept him out of danger by warning him of plots that were hatching among their masters. And he did not altogether abandon his lenient attitude. Out of 41 participants in the Piso conspiracy, only 18 died including Seneca and the poet Lucan, either by order or from fear; the others were exiled or pardoned. At the end of the year 66, Nero undertook a long visit to Greece that was to keep him away from Rome for 15 months, and during his absence he entrusted the consulate to one of his freedmen. On this trip Nero engaged in new displays of his artistic prowess, and he walked about garbed as an ascetic, barefoot and with flowing hair. His enthusiasm for Greek culture also prompted him to free a number of Greek cities in honour of their glorious past. In the four months following his return to Rome in February 68, his delirious pretensions as both an artist and a religious worshipper aroused the enmity not only of the Senate and those patricians who had been dispossessed by him but also of the Italian middle class, which had old-fashioned moral views and which furnished most of the officers of the army. Even the common soldiers of the legions were scandalized to see the descendant of Caesar publicly perform onstage the parts not only of ancient Greek heroes but of far lower characters. Meanwhile, the revolt spread and the legions made Galba emperor. The Praetorian Guard, his palace guard, abandoned him, and his freedmen left to embark on the ships he kept in readiness at Ostia, the port of Rome. Nero was obliged to flee the city. According to Suetonius, he stabbed himself in the throat with a dagger. The Roman populace and the Praetorian Guard later came to regret that they had lost such a liberal patron, but to his subjects in general Nero had been a tyrant, and the revolts his misrule provoked sparked a series of civil wars that for a time threatened the survival of the Roman Empire and caused widespread misery. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

Chapter 9 : Did Nero really fiddle while Rome burned? - HISTORY

They blamed their emperor -- Nero. Some rumors speculated that Nero himself had set the fire, others that he had ordered it. As Nero rebuilt Rome in a new style more to his liking, some believed he used the fire as an excuse for new construction.