

The Bronze Statue of Germanicus from Ameria (Amelia)

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Although discovered more than 50 years ago near Amelia (Italy), a bronze cuirassed statue of Germanicus has gained relatively little attention. Represented on its elaborate breastplate is the death of Trojan Troilus at the hands of Achilles. The author of the principal monograph on the statue proposes that it originally portrayed King Mithridates VI, who saw himself as a new Achilles in his war against Rome. According to this theory, the depiction of the defeat of Troilus would have served as a reference to Mithridates' victory over Rome, which traced its origins back to Troy. In the end, Mithridates was himself defeated by Sulla, who supposedly brought the statue back to Rome, where its head was replaced first with a portrait of Sulla and eventually with one of Germanicus. In this article, I argue that the portrait head of Germanicus was indeed a substitution, but not for a head of Mithridates or Sulla. The original portrait would instead have represented Caligula, whose head would have been replaced with that of his father, Germanicus, after Caligula's assassination and damnation. My interpretation is based on decorative motifs, technical considerations, and a very different appraisal of the meaning in this context of the defeat of Troilus.¹

INTRODUCTION

Discovered in 1963 just outside the modern Italian town of Amelia (ancient Ameria) in Umbria (fig. 1) was a somewhat over-life-sized bronze statue with part of its original travertine base (fig. 2).² This sculpture is now the pride of the Museo Archeologico di Amelia.³ There is no inscription on the

¹This article is dedicated to the memory of Anna Marguerite McCann. It is an expansion of an unpublished paper that I presented at the International Bronze Congress at the Getty Center in Los Angeles (2015). I thank the Soprintendenza Archeologia dell'Umbria for permission to photograph the Germanicus statue for publication, when it was in the 2011 exhibition "Ritratti: Le tante facce del potere" in the Musei Capitolini. I am indebted also to Claudio Parisi Presicce, direttore della Direzione Musei, for facilitating my work at the museum. I thank as well Editor-in-Chief Jane B. Carter and the anonymous reviewers for the *AJA*. Figures are my own unless otherwise noted. All translations are my own.

²More precisely, the findspot of the statue was just off the Via Rimembranze, ca. 130 m outside the Porta Romana, the main south gateway of Amelia. Only about half of the original base of the statue (ht. 88 cm x width. 75.5 cm) is preserved; the rest of the present base is modern travertine (Rocco 2008a, 481, 484, 528, 657–60, figs. 2 [with part of right foot still in place], 11–14, 124–29). There are no dowel holes or clamps of any type for the attachment of marble revetment or an inscription. A hole at the bottom of the center of the base with a large dowel in it at the time of its discovery indicates that this block sat on another architectural element, which probably once carried an inscription. For an abbreviated version of Rocco's monograph-length article, see Rocco 2008b.

³Amelia, Museo Archeologico di Amelia, inv. no. 50207. Total ht. of statue ca. 2.09 m (Rocco 2008a, 493, 553 n. 102, figs. 11–14); ht. from top of head to base of neck 36.8 cm; ht. from chin to top of head 25.8 cm (Rocco 2008a, 528 n. 43, figs. 59–62). The average thickness of the bronze is ca. 4 mm (Lahusen and Formigli 2001, 90–2, cat. no. 41). The dimensions of the Amelia statue are rather comparable to those of the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta (total ht. 2.06 m; ht. from chin to top of head 27.5 cm; Pollini 2012, 278 n. 28). In the case of the Amelia statue it is, however, difficult to determine the precise total height because of its ancient deformation and modern restoration.



FIG. 1. Plan of the town of Amelia with findspot of the statue of Germanicus outside the town's walls (modified from Feruglio et al. 1988, 6).

statue's base, nor is there any indication that it had been revetted with marble slabs.⁴ The only definitive connection between the statue and the base is the attachment to it of the figure's right foot.⁵ Also found with the Amelia sculpture was a travertine column capital of the Augustan period decorated with trophies and prows of ships from what was probably once an imperial cult shrine.⁶ Although this statue was excavated more than 50 years ago, very few scholars have written on this major work of art. In addition to exploring various aspects of its history, I present in this article some new ideas not only on iconographical and tech-

nical facets of this image but also on the meaning and significance of the rather elaborate figurative language of its magnificent cuirass (lorica, or thorax).

The statue was found smashed into numerous fragments, suggesting that it had not fallen accidentally from its base. Among the indications that this sculpture had instead been intentionally attacked are various contusions, such as the large dent in the right leg, which appears to have been hit by a heavy, metal, bar-like object.⁷ This form of statue destruction was most likely the result of assault by Christians, who in late antiquity destroyed, mutilated, and desecrated a great

⁴Rocco 2008a, 488.

⁵Rocco 2008a, 481.

⁶Rocco 2008a, 484, 487–88, fig. 3.

⁷For the condition of the statue when it was found, see Rocco 2008a, 485–90, esp. 718–19, figs. 1, 7–9. For the head, see also Rocco 2008a, 727–29, figs. 18–21.

deal of the material culture of the polytheistic peoples of the former Roman empire.⁸ In fact, the late fourth-century author Libanius (*Oratio* 30.8) specifically mentions Christian monks using iron bars and rocks in their attacks.

It cannot be determined whether the Amelia statue was originally set up in or near the area in which it was found or had instead been brought there from some other location within the town. However, because of the statue's typology and the fact that it clearly portrays a member of the Julio-Claudian family, it is likely to have originally been in an imperial cult shrine, as suggested above, possibly in connection with the *Ludi Iuvenum*. These games of the local pre- or paramilitary youth organization known as the *Iuventus* would have taken place in the *campus* of Ameria just outside the *Porta Romana*, where the town's amphitheater was located and near where this badly fragmented statue was discovered.⁹ The later presence in this area of the Abbey of San Pietro in Parlasco and the Church of San Crispino further supports the idea that the statue may have suffered attack by Christians, who often built churches in, over, or near ancient Roman temples and shrines, including those of the imperial cult.¹⁰

THE PORTRAIT HEAD

The distinctive facial features and iconographic hairstyle of the portrait head, which is slightly averted



FIG. 2. Over-life-sized bronze cuirassed statue of Germanicus from Amelia, Italy, found with part of its original travertine base. Amelia, Italy, Museo Archeologico di Amelia, inv. no. 50207.

⁸ Although it is likely, as was so often the case, that local Christians caused the original damage to the Amelia statue, Christian barbarian tribes, like the Visigoths who besieged Ameria in the fifth century C.E., may have also contributed to the mutilation of this sculpture. With regard to Christian Visigoths, see Heather 2006, 227–28. Rocco (2008a, 486) does not suggest an agent for the extensive intentional damage to the statue, only that by Medieval times any artistic interest had become secondary to the intrinsic value of the metal. However, the statue was obviously not melted down. On the subject of Christian destruction and desecration of images of classical antiquity, see Pollini 2013. Early Christians often destroyed or mutilated non-Christian images not only because they considered them to be “idols” but also out of fear that they were possessed by demons. Unfortunately, many classical archaeologists are unaware of how extensive Christian destruction was in the Late Antique period.

⁹ For the use of this area outside the town's walls, see Rocco 2008a, 489–92, fig. 1. For the imperial cult, the *Iuventus* organization, and their games, see Pollini 2002, 70–3 (with further bibliography).

¹⁰ For the location of these later Christian buildings, see Rocco 2008a, 489–90. For the complex issue of “temple destruction” by Christians (by which I mean not just the physical destruction and desecration of a holy place but above all the destruction of the ancient cult), cf. Hahn et al. 2008.

to its right side, clearly identify the honoree as Germanicus Iulius Caesar (15 B.C.E.–19 C.E.) (fig. 3, left, middle).¹¹ He is represented here in his third portrait type, known as the “Gabii” type after the life-sized marble portrait statue of him from Gabii (18 km east of Rome) in the Musée du Louvre (see fig. 3, right).¹² Although this distinctive portrait type is usually dated to some point after Germanicus' death, the most likely time for the creation of the prototype was at the outset of the principate of his son Gaius (Caligula) in 37 C.E. Germanicus, who was the son of Tiberius' brother, Drusus (Maior), was adopted by his uncle, Tiberius,

¹¹ Born Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus, he became Germanicus Iulius Caesar after his adoption (Tac., *Ann.* 4.57); see also *OCD*⁴ 760–61, s.v. “Iulius Caesar, Germanicus”; *RE* 10:435–64, no. 138, s.v. “C. (Iulius) Caesar, Germanicus” (Kroll).

¹² Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. Ma 1238 (Rocco 2008a, 539–54). Ht. 1.89 m. For the identification of Germanicus and his three portrait types, see esp. Fittschen 1987, 205–15; cf. Boschung 1993, 59–61; Rose 1997, 64–5.



FIG. 3. Statues of Germanicus: *left, middle*, over-life-sized bronze cuirassed statue from Amelia, Italy (Museo Archeologico di Amelia, inv. no. 50207); *right*, head of marble statue from Gabii, Italy (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MA 1238).

in 4 C.E. at the behest of Augustus (Tac., *Ann.* 4.57), thus becoming a Julian by adoption. Later, Germanicus won distinction as a military commander and was awarded a triumph by Tiberius in 17 C.E. for his victories in Germany (Tac., *Ann.* 2.41). To the Roman populace, Germanicus was a much-loved military hero, who died at the age of 33 while on a military mission to the eastern part of the empire. Although many statues of him were set up throughout the Roman empire in his lifetime, others were erected posthumously.¹³

THE STATUE AS A WHOLE

The statue, composed of more than 20 pieces (including appliquéés to the breastplate and backplate of the cuirass), was largely cast by means of the indirect “lost wax” method.¹⁴ Because of its high quality, this sculpture is unlikely to have been created in a town as minor as Ameria. Instead, it was probably produced in a workshop in Rome and then transported to Ameria (ca. 100 km north of Rome), where it was then set up.¹⁵ The statue represents a military commander (*imperator*) with his general’s cloak (*paludamentum*) draped over his left shoulder and his lowered left arm.¹⁶ His right

arm is raised as he makes the typical Roman gesture of address (*adlocutio*). In the restoration of the statue, however, the right arm should probably have been raised somewhat higher, by comparison with the Prima Porta Augustus, on which it appears to be essentially modeled, as well as other statues in the *adlocutio* pose.¹⁷ In his left arm, the Amelia Germanicus cradles a spear (*hasta*), symbolic of his legal military command (*imperium*). The point of the spear is turned downward to signify peace through victory (see figs. 2, 4a), as in the case of a coin image of the emperor Vespasian carrying a spear with the point down and the butt end (*sauroter*) turned up.¹⁸ The unusual triple-barbed point of Germanicus’ spear is highly decorative and is either a total invention

¹⁷There are no traces of attachments that would definitely establish the inclination of the right arm; cf. Rocco 2008a, 533. The correct positioning of the hand and arm in relation to the body as a whole was of great importance in the Roman custom of appropriate oratorical gesturing. See Brilliant (1963, 65–9) and Pollini (1995, 265–72, esp. 271–72) for Cicero’s discussion of an orator’s correct demeanor and gesture; see also Rocco 2008a, 562–69. For the Prima Porta Augustus, see Pollini 2012, 174 (with n. 64 for further bibliography), fig. 4.15a, b; see also *infra* n. 42.

¹⁸For the significance of the downward-pointed spear with reference to the image of Vespasian on the coin, the bronze statue of Germanicus, and the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta, see Pollini 2012, 190, fig. 4.25; see also Weber 2013, 44–6. A great mass of lead was used to fix the spear to the hand of the Amelia Germanicus.

¹³*Infra* n. 57.

¹⁴For technical aspects of the statue, see Rocco 2008a, 717–38, appx. 1, 2.

¹⁵Rocco 2008a, 669.

¹⁶Rocco 2008a, 571–75.



a



b



c



d

FIG. 4. The statue of Germanicus from Amelia, Italy: *a, b*, spear point and patrician shoes (*calcei patricii*); *c*, left side of cuirass, showing sword (*xiphos*, or *parazonium*) and figure of winged Victoria; *d*, breastplate of cuirass (*lorica*, or *thorax*).

or some sort of special parade weapon with no close parallels in actual Greek or Roman weaponry.¹⁹ Under his cuirass he wears a military tunic (see fig. 2), and his feet are shod in double-knotted, high-laced patrician shoes (*calcei patricii*) (see fig. 4a, b).²⁰ Under Germanicus' left armpit is his sheathed sword (*xiphos*, or parazonium), which is fastened to his cuirass by a fringed, sash-like baldric, or sword belt (*balteus*) (see fig. 4c).²¹

DECORATIVE CUIRASS AND PTERYGES

The style of the muscle cuirass, with its distinctive double row of semicircular *pteryges*, or decorative metal lappets (see figs. 4d, 5a), ultimately goes back to Late Classical models. This breastplate is essentially of the "Butrint" type, which first appears in Italy and Greece from the time of Augustus.²² The breast- and backplates are decorated with a plethora of figures: some of these, such as the principal central figures in the upper and middle part of the breastplate, are in relief; others, along with some decorative elements, are appliqué. All the elaborate ornamentation of the cuirass symbolizes various aspects of victory. The figures in the middle depict the great Greek hero Achilles ambushing the Trojan youth Troilus, son of King Priam (see fig. 5b).²³ Represented directly above on the breastplate and rising out of a series of stylized sea waves is a winged version of the sea monster Scylla, who hurls a rock with

her upraised right hand (see figs. 4d, 5c).²⁴ Flanking either side of the central motif of Troilus and Achilles and located just under the cuirass' arm openings are winged *Victoriae* (see figs. 4c, 5d).²⁵ On the backplate of the cuirass is represented a large incense burner (*thymiaterion*) flanked by two Spartan female dancers (*saltantes Lacaenae*), who perform a victory dance, each with a basket (*kalathiskos*) on her head (see fig. 5e).²⁶ Circling the bottom edge of the cuirass are two rows of *pteryges* (see fig. 5a): the upper row of short lappets features alternating heads of lions and of the god Pan, which were designed to cause panic in the ranks of the enemy (hence serving an apotropaic function), while the lower row of longer lappets are inlaid with victory palmettes in copper.²⁷ Many of the motifs for the figures represented on the breast- and backplates of the cuirass go back to classical and Hellenistic models that show a great variety of forms and artistic trends ranging in style from classicizing to baroque. All these motifs were adopted and adapted eclectically by artists, particularly Greek craftsmen from Greece proper and Asia Minor who had been working in Rome and Italy, especially since the Late Republic.²⁸

¹⁹ Rocco 2008a, 569–71, 644–46, figs. 11–14, 49, 50, 55. For the normal Roman *hasta*, which had a double-bladed, leaf-shaped point, see Pollini 2012, 190, fig. 4.25.

²⁰ The double-knotted, high-laced patrician boots, which were red in color, are often confused with the black senatorial shoes (*calcei senatorii*). The wearing of these boots by military figures of patrician rank argues further for their being symbolic of the patriciate rather than membership in the senate. For these two types of footwear, see Pollini 1993b, 434–36 (with further bibliography); Rocco 2008a, 575–77, figs. 51–4.

²¹ For the sword, see Rocco 2008a, 646–47. Greek-style swords were adopted by the Romans, especially for the visual arts.

²² For this type of cuirass, see Cadario 2004, 120–35 (sec. 2.1), fig. 1.d; cf. Rocco 2008a, 587.

²³ Cadario 2004, 177–78. See esp. Rocco (2008a, 605–24) for several examples going back to the Hellenistic period that establish the type. For the iconography of Troilus' death at the hands of Achilles, see further LIMC 1:72–95, esp. 80–7, s.v. "Achilleus (VII: Troilosabenteuer)" (Kossatz-Deissmann); 8: 91–4, s.v. "Troilos" (Kossatz-Deissmann). See also Smith and Hallett (2015, 154–61, fig. 46) for an over-life-sized, fragmentary Graeco-Roman statuary group of Early Imperial date from Aphrodisias that was reconstructed on the basis of the established type known in other media. For the legend of Achilles and Troilus in Greek myth, see Gantz 1993, 597–603.

²⁴ For the Scylla motif, see Rocco 2008a, 592–605. Scylla is rarely represented with wings in art. For her iconography in general, see LIMC 8 Suppl.: 1137–45, s.v. "Skylia I" (Jentel).

²⁵ Rocco 2008a, 624–27.

²⁶ Rocco 2008a, 627–31. Cf. these figures with those represented at the top of the great acanthus column that supported the tripod of Apollo at Delphi, which dates to the fourth century B.C.E. Spartan dancers are also found on Roman cuirassed statues and represented in various other media (Pollini 2012, 289–90 n. 145, fig. 5.9a–d).

²⁷ Rocco 2008a, 642–44. For the palm in Roman art, also signifying victory over death, see Pollini 2012, 281–83.

²⁸ For the Hellenistic motifs and models, see Rocco 2008a, esp. 592–655. However, her attempts (Rocco 2008a, 621–24, 648–55) to assign a date using stylistic criteria to a more restricted period of time (from the late second to mid first century B.C.E.) and place (Asia Minor, Pergamon in particular) are overly optimistic, in my opinion, because so much has been lost, not only comparanda from this period but also those from later in Roman Imperial times. The motifs and styles of the various figures and decorations found on the cuirass of the Amelia statue, as discussed by Rocco, can serve only as a terminus post quem for the introduction of such elements. We should remember that the Late Hellenistic period in art did not come to an end with the advent of the Augustan principate; it continued on into the first century C.E. and even later. E.g., Kraus (1953) showed that the scroll ornamentation on the Ara Pacis was based on Pergamene models and was probably carved by Pergamene sculptors working in Rome. Moreover, although numerous marble cuirassed statues with relief figures have come down to us, there are very few extant bronze ones with which to compare the



a



b



c



d



e

FIG. 5. The statue of Germanicus from Amelia, Italy: *a*, detail of double row of semicircular *ptyeryges*; *b*, detail of breastplate, showing the death of Troilus at the hands of Achilles; *c*, detail of cuirass, showing winged Scylla hurling a rock; *d*, right side of cuirass, showing figure of winged Victoria; *e*, backplate of the cuirass, showing Spartan dancers (*saltantes Lacaenae*).

THE REUSE OF THE STATUE

The only publication that deals extensively with the Amelia statue maintains that the cuirass underwent three phases of change over a long history. In phase I, it is argued, the portrait represented Mithridates VI, King of Pontus (134–63 B.C.E.), who had slaughtered thousands of Roman and Italian residents in Asia Minor in

cuirass of the Amelia Germanicus. The best comparanda for the figures on it are to be found on metal vessels and small bronze figurines of the Roman period, which show in their eclecticism a great diversity of forms and styles.

88 B.C.E., thus precipitating the so-called Mithridatic Wars (88–63 B.C.E.).²⁹ According to this theory and based on its style, the statue was originally set up in one of the Greek cities of Asia Minor, possibly Pergamon. Then, after the defeat of Mithridates, it is postulated that this sculpture was brought back as war booty to Rome, where it was transformed into an image of the victorious Roman general Sulla (138–78 B.C.E.) after his triumph in 81 B.C.E. but before he relinquished his

²⁹Rocco 2008a, 661–68.

dictatorship in 79 B.C.E.³⁰ In phase II, essentially only the cuirass would have been reused for the putative statue of Sulla, with the addition of his portrait head, a Roman paludamentum, new arms, and a new lower section consisting of a short Roman military tunic and legs wearing Roman *calcei patricii* (see figs. 2; 4a, b). The *calcei patricii* presumably replaced Greek-style military shoes, either the *krepides* or *embades* that Mithridates would probably have worn.³¹ At this time, too, some of the appliquéés (including the *saltantes Lacae-nae*) would have been added, and the spear would have been reversed so that its head pointed down. In phase III, about a century later, the statue would have theoretically undergone another makeover in which the head of Sulla was replaced with that of Germanicus.³²

On the whole, the postulated double reuse of the statue over a long period of time appears far too complicated and assumes too many variable and unnecessary factors. For one thing, given the rarity of the Butrint cuirass type before the Augustan age, one would think that Mithridates would have worn the more popular Hellenistic non-muscle, lightweight cuirass, with its rows of short and long fringed *pteryges*, in imitation of cuirassed images of Alexander and his successors, the Diadochs.³³ The author of this theory also argues that the proposed double reuse would explain the slightly small size of the head in relation to the body.³⁴ However, there are many examples in Roman sculpture of bronze heads being somewhat too small (or necks being disproportionately thick or long) in relation to the body.³⁵ Although there is no need to postulate that the original head was replaced twice, it is nevertheless likely that there had been one replacement. As the author points out, there is a gap between

the base of the finished neck and the semicircular opening of the breastplate.³⁶ In addition, three bronze posts on the inside of the cuirass, around the rim of its circular collar (fig. 6, left), used to solder the neck of the original bronze head to the cuirass, were at some point in time broken off, as would have been the case if that head was removed and replaced. Further substantiating this conclusion is the fact that two posts (one to the viewer's left and the bottommost one) are located too far away on the inside of the breastplate to attach to the corresponding lower preserved part of Germanicus' neck (see fig. 6, right).³⁷ The original portrait head, in my opinion, is likely to have been that of Germanicus' son Caligula (12–41 C.E.), who became emperor in 37 C.E. only to be assassinated just four years later, in 41 C.E. (fig. 7).³⁸ Because of his largely unofficial *memoria damnata*, many of Caligula's statues were removed from public view, destroyed, mutilated, or refashioned into images of other imperial individuals, as is likely to have been the case here.³⁹

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE STATUE AND PROGRAM OF THE CUIRASS

As already noted, in pose and in the wearing of an elaborate figural cuirass, the Amelia sculpture recalls the famous marble statue of Augustus from Prima Porta,⁴⁰ or at least a lost official bronze version of it that was displayed in public and on which the marble

³⁰Rocco 2008a, 695–706. According to Rocco, it is less likely that the statue would have been reused for Pompey, who also celebrated his triumph over Mithridates in 61 B.C.E. She notes in support of this opinion (Rocco 2008a, 699–706) some philo-Sullan associations of Ameria, where she believes the altered statue—with new arms (in the Roman *adlocutio* gesture) and legs (with Roman *calcei patricii*)—was set up.

³¹Rocco 2008a, 668–70.

³²Rocco 2008a, 670, 706–14.

³³As in the case of the Hellenistic king in the Pompeian painting (Rocco 2008a; Pollini 2012, fig. 4.24). For the different Greek cuirassed types, including those of Alexander, see Cadario 2004.

³⁴Rocco 2008a, 528, 670.

³⁵For such awkwardness in proportions, specifically for bronze statues, see, e.g., Lahusen and Formigli 2001, figs. 14.1–6, 17a (color), 17.7, 17.8, 39.1, 73.1, 73.2, 183.1, 183.2.

³⁶Rocco 2008a, 528–30, 670, figs. 57, 58.

³⁷Rocco 2008a, esp. 530–31, figs. 57–9.

³⁸For Caligula (Gaius Iulius Caesar Germanicus) and his image, see Barrett 1989; Boschung 1989; Pollini 2012, 369–411 (with further bibliography). See also the entry in *OCD*⁴ (598–99, s.v. “Gaius [1]”) and articles in the recent exhibition catalogue (Coarelli and Ghini 2013). My colleague Matteo Cadario and I independently came to the conclusion that the head of Caligula was later replaced with that of his father, Germanicus. For Cadario's exhibition entry, see *infra* n. 45.

³⁹Varner 2004, 21–45; Pollini 2006, 591. Although Claudius had initially prevented the senate from officially damning the memory of his nephew, he did later allow them to melt down only senatorial coinage that bore Caligula's image. For the various ancient sources and the distinction between an official and unofficial damnation, see Pollini 2010, 34 (with n. 64). For other cases in which a bronze head was added to a preexisting bronze cuirass, see the portrait of Hadrian from Beth Shean (Scythopolis) in Israel (Rocco 2008a, 555, fig. 69 [with further bibliography]).

⁴⁰Vatican City, Braccio Nuovo, Musei Vaticani, inv. no. 2290 (Pollini 1995; 2012, 174–78, fig. 4.15a–c [with extensive bibliography]).



FIG. 6. Detail views of the statue of Germanicus from Amelia, Italy: *left*, three bronze posts around the interior rim of the cuirass collar (after Rocco 2008a, fig. 57); *right*, disparity between the bottom rim of portrait head and the location of the three posts around the interior rim of the cuirass collar, as seen from the exterior (after Rocco 2008a, fig. 58).

Prima Porta statue was modeled.⁴¹ Like the Prima Porta Augustus, the Amelia statue evokes in its iconic stance not only the great legendary Greek hero Achilles, probably as embodied in the lost bronze statue of the Doryphoros by Polykleitos,⁴² but also most likely a lost cuirassed statue by Lysippos of Alexander the Great—who himself emulated Achilles—in a Doryphoric pose.⁴³ In Latin literature, Achilles was a model for great Roman leaders. For example, in his messianic fourth *Eclogue*, Vergil foretells the birth of a

⁴¹ For the long-held general assumption that the marble Prima Porta statue is based on a lost bronze original, see Pollini 1978, 44–5, 339–42 (with further references).

⁴² Pollini 1995, esp. 273–76; 2012, 162–203, esp. 189–90 (with further bibliography). As discussed in these studies, the stance of the Prima Porta statue indicates that unlike the Doryphoros, who moves forward in space, Augustus is coming to a halt, in keeping with the beginning of his oratorical gesture. The stance of the Doryphoros became iconic and was imitated or adapted in many sculptures, often as a way of citing the Doryphoros.

⁴³ Similar to an image of a Pergamene king, as represented in a painting from Pompeii (Pollini 2012, 188–89, fig. 4.24 [with further bibliography]).



FIG. 7. Head of Caligula, ht. 28 cm. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. 2687.

mysterious child, who in the end (and possibly Vergil had no particular child in mind) actually turned out to be Augustus, the savior of Rome and bringer of peace and stability to a war-torn world after his military victories on land and sea.⁴⁴ In the context of the wars that preceded the advent of this new Golden Age of peace and prosperity, Vergil (*Ecl.* 4.35–6) likened Augustus to Achilles: “Erunt etiam altera bella / atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles” (There will also be other wars and a great Achilles [namely Augustus] will be sent again to Troy [the East]).

Since Roman commanders esteemed great Greek military personalities of the past, the representation of the legendary hero Achilles on the cuirass of the Amelia statue is not surprising. His depiction slaying one of Rome’s ancestors, the Trojan prince Troilus (see fig. 5b),⁴⁵ might nevertheless seem inappropriate—at least to a modern viewer—for a victorious Roman commander’s breastplate, since the Romans claimed descent from the Trojans.⁴⁶ However, the choice of this motif becomes understandable in the context of the prophecy that Troy would not fall if Troilus reached the age of 20.⁴⁷ In the scroll reliefs of the Ara Pacis, there is an allusion to Troy and its fate: the motif of the snake beneath the great acanthus calyx slithering up to a nest (Troy) of fledglings (Trojans), while one bird alone escapes the nest (fig. 8)—a visual metaphor referencing Aeneas’ escape from Troy. His descendants (the Aeneadae), who included Augustus and members

of his Julian house, are represented in the monument’s great processional frieze above the floral scrolls.⁴⁸

Rome was destined to rise out of the ashes of Troy, or as the Roman poet Propertius (4.1.87) succinctly put it, “Troia cades, et Troica Roma resurges” (You, O Troy, shall fall, and you, Trojan Rome, shall rise anew). Propertius’ words may, in fact, have inspired the phrase “Ilios en surgit rursus inclita” (Behold, famed Troy rises anew) in a Latin funeral epigram of Roman vengeance (*Anth. Lat.* 1.2.708).⁴⁹ The epigram, addressed to Hector, may very well have been written by Germanicus himself at Troy in the year 18 C.E.⁵⁰ In the *Aeneid* (1.206), Vergil, too, recounts “illic fas regna resurgens Troiae” (there [in Latium] by divine will Troy’s sway would rise again). To the Roman mind, this was indeed all part of a divine plan, according to which Rome in the end would also avenge the destruction of Troy. In fact, Lucius Mummius’ sack of Corinth in 146 B.C.E. was cast in such terms of vengeance in an epigram by Polystratus (*Anth. Pal.* 7.297).⁵¹ Although the subject of Achilles’ killing Troilus is not found on cuirassed figures of the Hellenistic period, it was apparently used in Roman art on at least one other Early Imperial Roman cuirass from Oftering (modern Oderzo, Italy), in the form of a 35 cm high bronze appliqué of Achilles in the very same pose as that on the Amelia statue.⁵² In addition, by virtue of his early death, Germanicus could be likened not only to Troilus but also to Achilles, as well as even to Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.), who died at the same age as Germanicus. In any case, the clearest proof that the visual motif of Achilles slaying Troilus was totally acceptable in a Roman context is

⁴⁴ Speculation in scholarly literature has continued for generations as to whom Vergil intended the mysterious child to be; there is no need to rehearse those ideas here. As early as the Constantinian period Christian propagandists even tried to claim that Vergil had predicted the birth of Christ. It is sufficient to cite the comment by Galinsky (1996, 91 with n. 32) on the futility of this research, together with his references to several leading sources for the massive literature on this subject. For a discussion of the important Roman concept of “peace through victory,” see Pollini 2012, 178–90, 204–41 (with further bibliography).

⁴⁵ Cadario (2004, 177–79) interprets the Amelia statue as originally representing Germanicus soon after his death in 19 C.E. He considers the choice of the Troilus and Achilles scene to be a reference to the premature deaths not only of Troilus and Achilles but also of Germanicus, who died at the age of 33 (coincidentally the same age as Alexander when he died). Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.73), in reporting the funeral of Germanicus, compares him to Alexander in various respects, including their premature deaths. Cadario (2011) later dates the statue to the time of Germanicus’ son Caligula; cf. Rocco 2008a, 673–82.

⁴⁶ Rocco 2008a, 676–82.

⁴⁷ Plaut., *Bacch.* 951–54; *Myth. Vat.* 1.210.

⁴⁸ This visual motif was also undoubtedly intended to recall and transform the evil omen of the snake’s consumption of all the nestlings and the mother bird in the *Iliad* (2.308–20), which prefigured the destruction of Troy in 10 years’ time. For the visual language and complicated symbolism of the Ara Pacis’ scroll reliefs, see Pollini 2012, ch. 6 (esp. 271 nn. 1, 2 [which cite most of the significant publications on the scroll reliefs]; 296–98, fig. 6.1a–c). For the snake and fledgling interpretation, see also my earlier work (Pollini 1993a, 214–15), on which ch. 6 of Pollini 2012 was based.

⁴⁹ Riese 1870, 159, no. 708.

⁵⁰ For this reference, I thank Rolf Schneider, who supports my interpretation of the central scene of the cuirass; see also Schneider 2012, 111–12.

⁵¹ For Mummius’ sack of Corinth, see Cadario 2014, esp. 87.

⁵² Though the other figure is not preserved, it, too, was most likely Troilus being unseated from his horse (Beschi 1994, 279–80, 282–85, figs. 1, 2; Rocco 2008a, 609–10, figs. 95, 96; Cadario 2011, 229).



FIG. 8. Detail of the great acanthus calyx on the north side of the Ara Pacis, showing a snake approaching a nest of fledglings, with one escaping (at right).

that Germanicus is in fact represented wearing a cuirass with this figural scene.

Above the breastplate's central motif, the menacing sea monster Scylla brandishing a rock in her right hand (see figs. 4d, 5c) serves a dual purpose—apotropaically protecting the wearer of the armor from evil and at the same time striking fear into the enemy. Scylla's placement on the breastplate is where the head of Medusa was commonly located, as in the case of the Gorgoneion on the cuirass of Alexander the Great on the so-called Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun at Pompeii.⁵³ At another level, Scylla can refer to victorious battles fought in the context of the sea or rivers, where fearsome monsters like her were thought to dwell.⁵⁴ This figural program would have been suitable

⁵³ For the Medusa on the cuirass worn by Alexander on the Alexander Mosaic, in which the Gorgoneion serves to protect him while menacing the enemy, see Cohen 1997, 20, 162, pl. 2; Cadario 2004, 32–3, pl. 3.1. For the Gorgoneion on cuirasses on Greek and Roman statues, including that of Alexander, see in general Cadario 2004; cf. Rocco 2008a, 672–76, 688–90.

⁵⁴ For references to the monsters of the sea, see Cadario 2004, 174–76.

for a portrait statue originally honoring Caligula, as well as for one of Germanicus. Despite his aborted invasion of Britain in 39 C.E., Caligula celebrated his purported military victory with a triumph in Rome, for which his troops gathered seashells on the coast of Gaul.⁵⁵ These were to be displayed as the “spoils of Ocean” (*spolia Oceani*) in his triumphal procession in Rome. The Amelia cuirass, with its prominently displayed figure of Scylla heralding victory at sea, conveniently served as well to honor Germanicus, who won battles against the Germans on the Rhine and Weser and along the coast of the North Sea, for which he, too, had been awarded a triumph.

As noted at the outset of this article, the Amelia sculpture was discovered with a travertine column capital of the Augustan period decorated with trophies and prows of ships—most likely references to Augustus' victories at Actium and Alexandria. As symbols of military success they would have complemented references to sea and land battles on the cuirass of the Amelia statue, in what was probably an imperial cult

⁵⁵ Cass. Dio 59.25.1–4; Suet., *Calig.* 46–7.

shrine, dedicated originally to Augustus and to which images of his Julio-Claudian successors would have been added, as was commonly done throughout the empire. The transformation of this sculpture from an image of Caligula to one of Germanicus could have taken place only after Caligula's death in 41 C.E., at which time his uncle, Claudius (10 B.C.E.–54 C.E.), became emperor.⁵⁶ As part of his dynastic propaganda, Claudius did much to promote not only Divus Augustus, the founder of the empire, but also Claudius' own beloved brother, Germanicus, along with other esteemed members of his family.⁵⁷ The principate of Claudius is, in my opinion, the most likely period in which this portrait statue would have been transformed into one of Germanicus. The simplest explanation for its previous identity is, therefore, the damned Caligula. Appropriate in any case would have been the Amelia sculpture's clear evocation of the very similarly posed cuirassed statue of Augustus from Prima Porta—a suitable model for the expression of the new

⁵⁶ Cf. Rocco (2008a, 712–14), who proposed that the transformed Germanicus would have been set up either after his death in 19 C.E. or during the principate of his son Caligula. Because of the Augustan-period column capital (see supra n. 6), one of the anonymous reviewers of my submitted manuscript suggested that the statue might have originally been a statue of Augustus that was later damaged and then transformed into Germanicus. This, of course, is highly unlikely, and would have been especially so in the Julio-Claudian period, given that Augustus was deified. Had a statue of Divus Augustus been damaged, it would have been repaired as a statue of Augustus. Based on the written or archaeological evidence, I know of no instance of the permanent replacement of a head of Augustus—damaged or otherwise—with that of another individual in the Julio-Claudian period. We know that the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta was damaged at some point in antiquity and repaired, but it remained a statue of Augustus (Kähler 1959, 11). To replace the head of Divus Augustus with the head even of a member of the Julio-Claudian family would have been anathema, if not dangerous, as Granius Marcellus, the proconsul of Bithynia, learned the hard way. Probably as a gesture to honor Tiberius on his accession to power in the year 15 C.E., Granius Marcellus imprudently replaced the head of a portrait statue of Augustus with that of Tiberius (Tac., *Ann.* 1.74.1–4). This faux pas was one of the criminal charges of treason brought against him. Such a high-profile case no doubt sent a chilling message throughout the empire that images of Divus Augustus were to be handled with great deference; see further Pollini 2010, 35–6.

⁵⁷ For Claudius (Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus), see in general Levick 1990; see also *OCD*⁴ 323–24, s.v. “Claudius”; Osgood 2011. For the sculptural representations of Germanicus in imperial groupings, including under Claudius, see Rose 1997, esp. 64–5; Boschung 2002, esp. 153, 216–17.

heroic ideal and the Roman values and virtues embodied in the founder of the Roman empire.⁵⁸

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⁵⁸ Pollini 1995, esp. 273–76; 2012, 162–203, esp. 189–90.

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