



Nero’s Memory on Inscriptions: Afterlife of his Name and its Meanings on *Viae Publicae*

Yuko Fukuyama

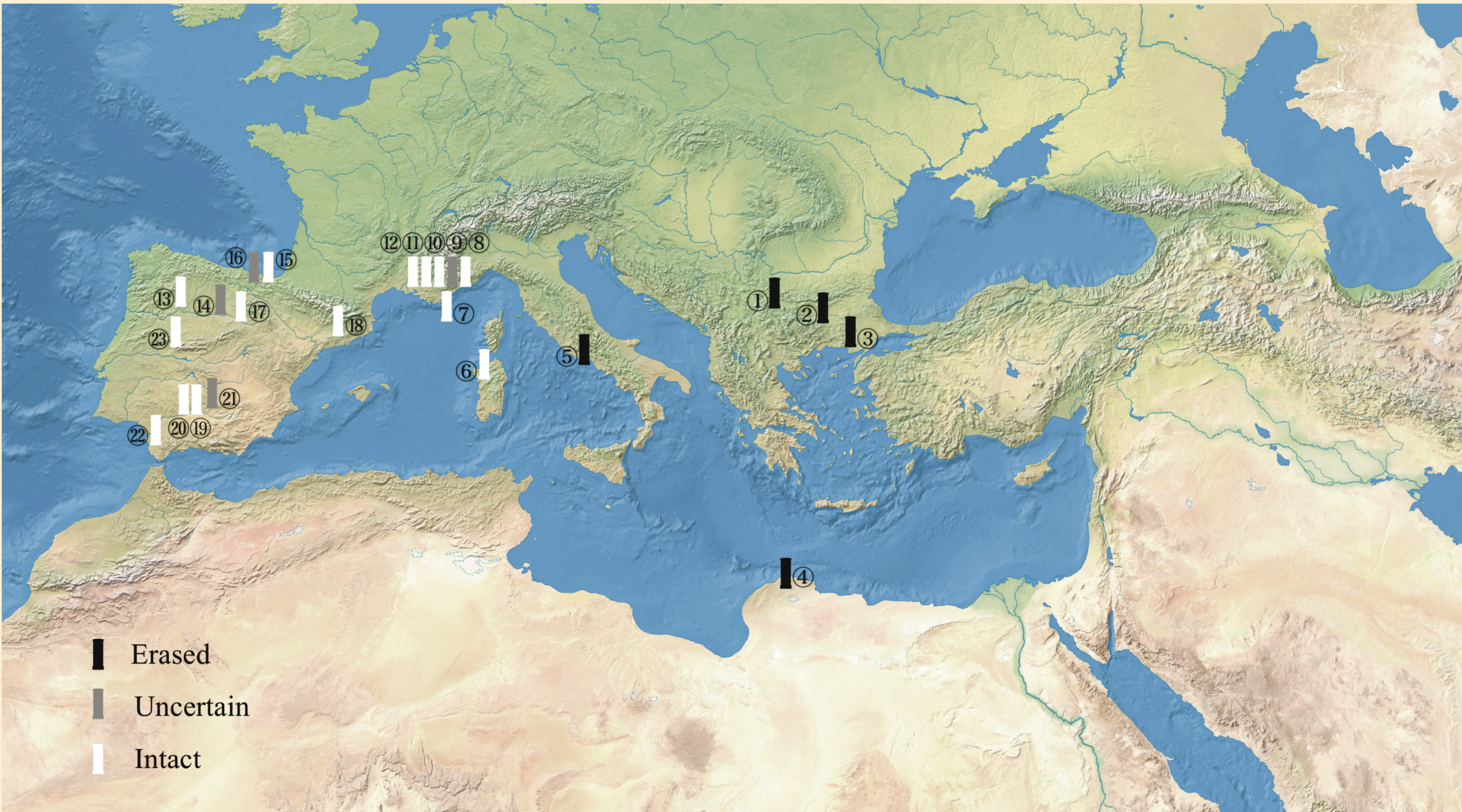


Fig. 1. Nero’s Inscriptions on *Viae Publicae* and its Condition
Based on the map by Flappiehf/ Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 4.0.

Death of Nero and the destruction of his Memory

After Nero's suicide, his memory suffered the condemnation. His statues were pulled down and inscriptions were removed and these events were thought as a sort of *damnatio memoriae* by scholars. Nevertheless, its historical context is not so clear. According to some *sources*, such as Suetonius, the senate declared Nero as *hostis*, but this just meant his loss of legal protection. The attack upon his memory was not included in this declaration. Thus, the problem of how and by whom the destruction of Nero's memory was conducted needs further investigation. Throughout the Empire there stood many inscriptions on roads which recorded Nero's name during his reign, but their treatments after his death varied across the regions. My research examines the context of these inscriptions and reveals some regional differences, and focuses on inscriptions which can be categorized as ‘public’, to reveal the order or attitude towards Nero's memory by the authorities. For this purpose, I collected the inscriptions relating to *viae publicae*, and currently 23 inscriptions remain. (Fig.1, Tab. 1) They were maintained by the local authority and expected to fulfil some public functions. The afterlife of Nero's name on these inscriptions reflects how local authorities responded to the death of a *hostis* emperor.

Nero’s Inscription on *Viae Publicae* in the Eastern Provinces and Italy

In the eastern provinces, Nero's inscriptions remain only in Thracia and Creta et Cyrenaica (No. 1-4, Fig. 2). His names were erased on all of them. In this context, the survival of a Cretan milestone (No. 3) is meaningful because it implies that there had been a series of similar milestones on the roads and most of them were later destroyed. It is not clear when they were removed, but it is obvious that the systematic attack on Nero's memory was carried out there. Italian evidence might also show the same situation because the emperor’s name on an inscription of the road construction was erased (No 5).

Nero’s Inscription on *Viae Publicae* in the Western Provinces

In the western provinces, sixteen inscriptions remain intact. None of them shows the intentional erasure of Nero's name. In Gallia Narbonensis, there were six inscriptions relating to the road repair, and they were set up all at once (No. 7-12, Fig. 3-4). Their survival shows that Nero's names were intentionally preserved along this road and the authorities judged the destruction of Nero's memory was unnecessary. In Hispania, Nero's milestones were found in various places. Although not set up all at once, several milestones from Hispania Citerior preserve the name of the last Julio-Claudian (No. 13-18). In Baetica, his name remains intact on two milestones near the provincial capital, Corduba (No. 19, 20). Lusitania has also brought out an inscription containing his name (No. 23). It is true that many inscriptions disappeared in western provinces as well, but, considering a geographical dispersal of inscriptions bearing his name, the attack against Nero's memory was not so thorough in these regions as in Italy and the East, and the milestones there continued to be used as they had been.

Afterlife of Nero’s Memory

These regional differences may reflect intentions of the successive emperors towards Nero. When Vindex rebelled against Nero, he was a governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, and Galba governed Hispania Tarraconensis. Otho was in Lusitania. It is well known that Vindex and Galba attacked Nero and Otho followed them at the beginning. Nevertheless, in or nearby regions where they occupied, some of Nero's inscriptions remain intact. On the other hand, the foothold of Vespasian was eastern provinces, where the condemnation of Nero’s memory was thoroughly carried out. It is not clear whether his opinion affected these epigraphical results, because the question of when the inscriptions were destructed is impossible to answer. From these evidences, however, it is hard to surmise that Galba and Otho attacked his predecessor's memory immediately after the revolt. The memory of the last Julio-Claudian emperor faded away not systematically. It might have disappeared gradually over time.
* This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI grand number 17J02549

No.	Site, Province	Condition of Nero’s Name	Condition of Inscriptions	Year	Type of Inscription	Publication
1	Buchin prohod, Thracia	Erased	Intact	61	Construction of Road Facilities	AE 1912, 193
2	Mihiltsi, Thracia	Erased	Intact	61	Construction of Road Facilities	CIL III 6123; AE 1990, 18
3	Pheres, Thracia	Erased	Damaged	59-63	Milestone	AE 1991, 1407
4	Shahhat, Creta et Cyrenaica	Erased	Partly Damaged	54-60	Road Construction	AE 1951, 211; SEG 9, 250B
5	Cassino, Latium et Campania	Erased	Intact	57	Road Construction	CIL X 5204
6	Sassari, Sardinia	Intact	Partly Damaged	67	Milestone	CIL X 8014
7	Esterel, Gallia Narbonensis	Intact	Partly damaged	58	Road Repair	CIL XVII-2, 29; CIL XII, 5459
8	Le Cannet, Gallia Narbonensis	Intact	Intact	58	Road Repair	CIL XVII-2, 44; CIL XII, 5468
9	Le Luc, Gallia Narbonensis	Uncertain	Uncertain	58	Road Repair	CIL XVII-2, 45; CIL XII, 5469
10	prope Cabasse, Gallia Narbonensis	Intact	Intact	58	Road Repair	CIL XVII-2, 48; CIL XII, 5471
11	Brignoles, Gallia Narbonensis	Intact	Intact	58	Road Repair	CIL XVII-2, 49; CIL XII, 5473
12	Tourves, Gallia Narbonensis	Intact	Intact	58	Road Repair	CIL XVII-2, 50; CIL XII, 5475
13	Milles de la Polvorosa, Hispania Citerior	Intact	Intact	58-59	Milestone	AE 1987, 612
14	Herrera de Pisuerga, Hispania Citerior	Uncertain	Uncertain	55-56	Milestone	CIL II 4884
15	Castro Urdiales, Hispania Citerior	Intact	Intact	61-62	Milestone	CIL II 4888; CIL XVII-1 219
16	Castro Urdiales, Hispania Citerior	Uncertain	Partly Damaged	61-62	Milestone	CIL XVII-1 220
17	Villanueva de Argaño, Hispania Citerior	Intact	Partly Damaged	58	Milestone	AE 1992, 1035; HEP 4 (1994), 203; 5(1995), 151
18	Lleida, Hispania Citerior	Intact	Partly Damaged	55-56	Milestone	CIL II 4926; 4928
19	Córdoba, Baetica	Intact	Intact	54-68	Milestone	CIL II 4719; ILS 225
20	Córdoba, Baetica	Intact	Intact	54-68	Milestone	HEP 5 (1995), 315
21	Alcurrucén, Baetica	Uncertain	Damaged	55	Milestone	AE 1986, 368B
22	Jerez de la Frontera, Baetica	Intact	Intact	57	Milestone	CIL II 4734
23	Salamanca, Lusitania	Intact	Intact	57	Milestone	CIL II 4683

Tab. 1. Nero’s Inscriptions on *Viae Publicae*



Fig. 2. 2: CIL III, 6123

Nero’s name at the first line was erased

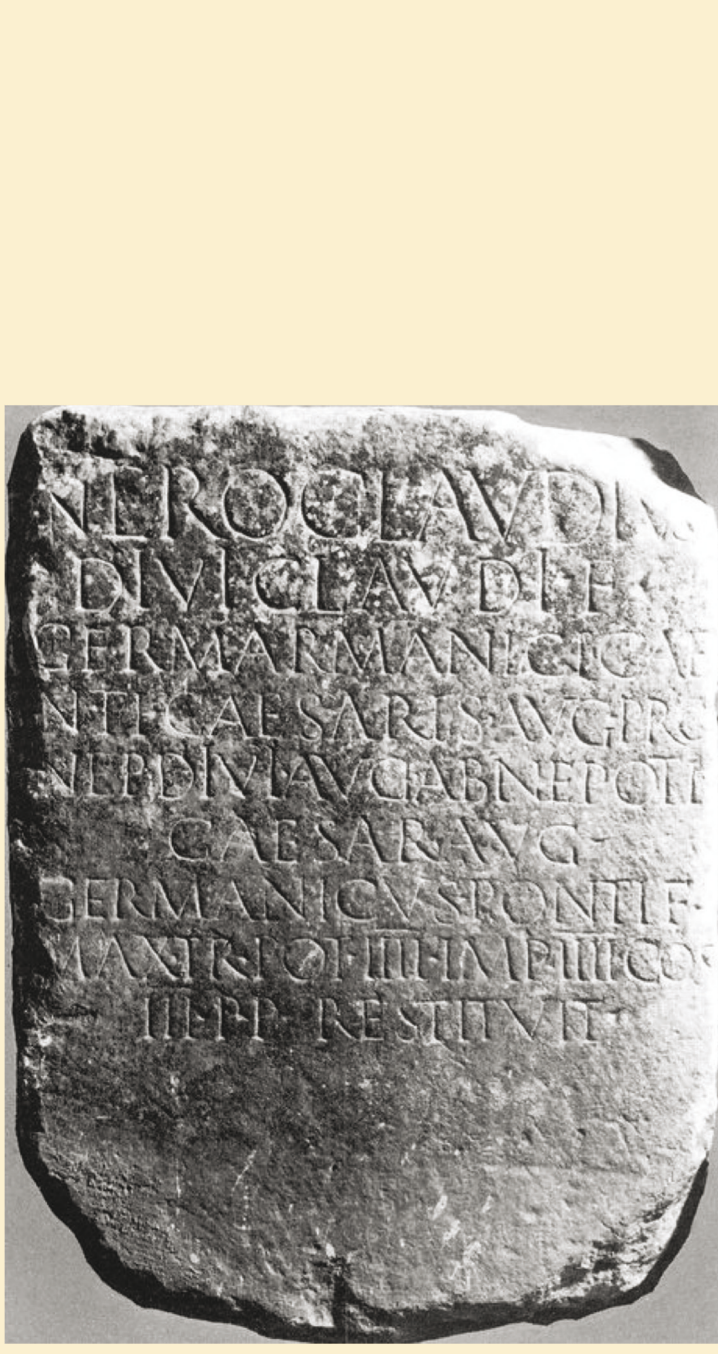


Fig.3. 11 : CIL XVII-2, 49

Nero’s name is intact

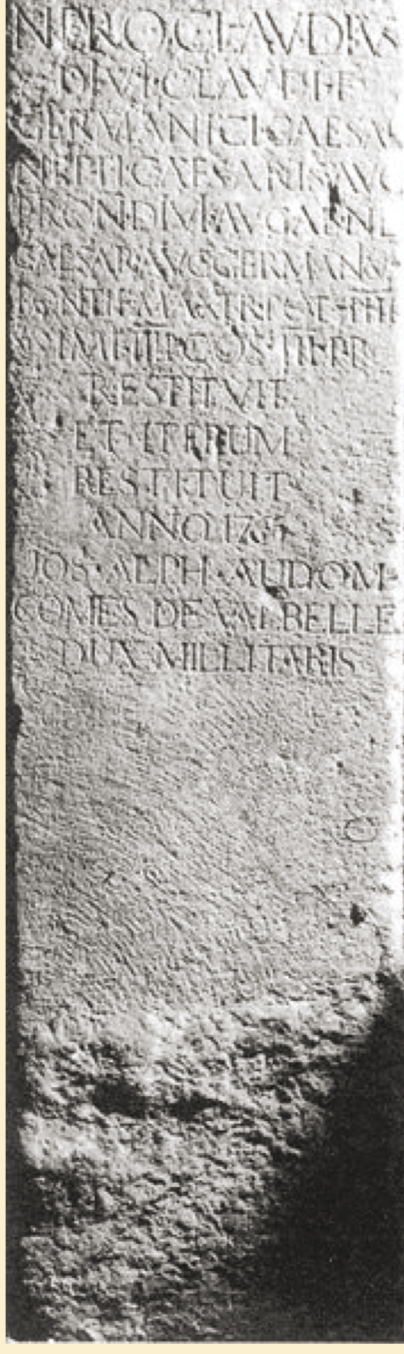


Fig.4. 12 : CIL XVII-2, 50

Nero’s name is intact

Kontakt | contact details:

Yuko FUKUYAMA
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow
Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
yuko.felix@gmail.com