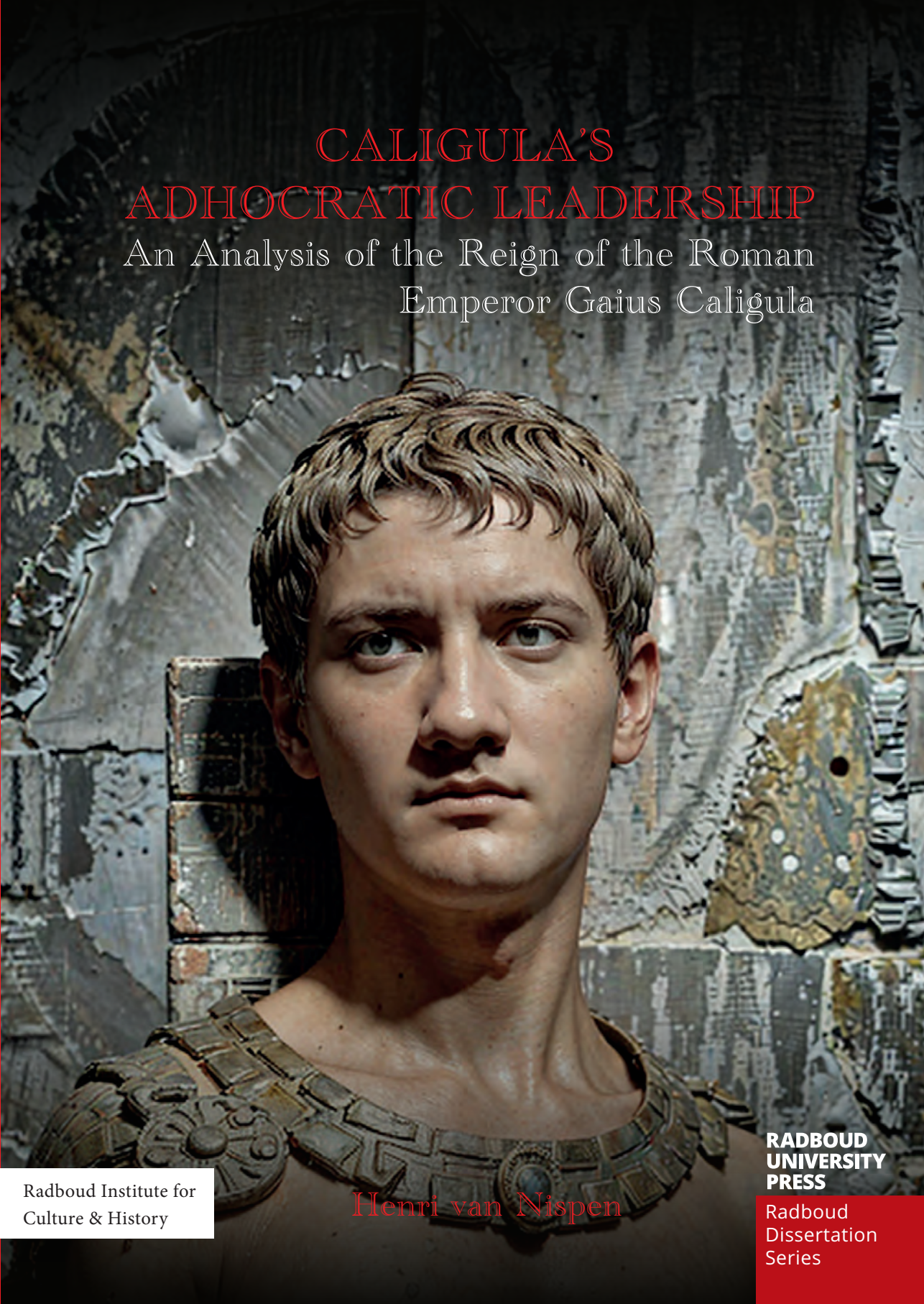


A detailed marble bust of Emperor Gaius Caligula is the central focus. He has short, wavy, light brown hair and a serious expression, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a Roman military cuirass with ornate metal plates and a central circular ornament. The background is a dark, heavily textured stone wall with visible cracks and peeling plaster, suggesting an ancient setting.

CALIGULA'S ADHOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

An Analysis of the Reign of the Roman
Emperor Gaius Caligula

Radboud Institute for
Culture & History

Henri van Nispen

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Henri van Nispen



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An Analysis of the Reign of the Roman Emperor Gaius Caligula

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
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volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
in het openbaar te verdedigen op

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door

Henri Cornelis Maria van Nispen

geboren op 22 februari 1956

te Bergen op Zoom

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according to the decision of the Doctorate Board

to be defended in public on

Thursday, February 13, 2025

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"Whoever can find a meaning in mine is a great magician." Caligula.

- Alexandre Dumas, Caligula. A Play in Five Acts. Act II.

"What is fate but a strategy for ignoring history"

- Louise Glück, Parable of the King, Meadowlands, 1996.

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PREFACE

My interest in ancient history began when I, as a young lad, stumbled upon a book in the local library. Its title: *Byzantium*. Such a strange name. It aroused curiosity. I took it home ... and was lost. Years later, I saw *I Claudius* on television. I read Graves. Then, attracted by the names of Gore Vidal and John Gielgud, I obtained a crumpled VHS tape of the movie *Caligula*. Was this ancient Rome? I wanted to know more. With the internet still far away, I turned to school, only to find classical education, much like today, merely set to translations. I quit gymnasium. A mistake, so I tried to study Latin and ancient Greek when studying Philosophy. But I also studied Anthropology. While doing fieldwork among the curious cult of the Exclusive Brethren in Scotland, I encountered the power of religion. Based on that experience, *neque ulla fidei abundantia factum constituit* became the motto of the novel I would write much later.

How wrong this was, I learned later when working in the allegedly socialist countries of Somalia and Romania. The power of government, of one person, one clan could control whole populations. Thus, I was back in ancient Rome, back with Caligula. But I did not write about Caligula or ancient Rome. I wrote about the days when prophets, seers and charlatans populated the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. While doing research for what became my novel *Het Geheim van de Nazoreeërs. Gedenkschriften van P. Antonius Iulianus* (The Nazorean Secret. Memoirs of P. Antonius Iulianus, 2009, Papieren Tijger) I again stumbled upon Caligula. Fascinated again by the weird Roman emperor, I began to collect material on him and his surroundings. I intended to write a story about my fictive Iulianus encountering Caligula, inspired by one of my favourite authors, Simon Vestdijk. His *De Nadagen van Pilatus* (The Latter Days of

Pilate) challenged my imagination. What was true in all these stories about a man with almost unlimited power? Realising that a novelist can freely fill in the gaps in historical events, I tried to discern fact from fiction. This resulted in a manuscript that, as I naively thought, would perhaps be suitable as a dissertation. I took the plunge and sent it to Professor Hekster. Could the work qualify as a thesis? It did not. Nevertheless, Professor Hekster invited me to discuss the manuscript. Sometime later, my PhD project began. Until this very day, I still hope that he never regretted his decision.

Luck struck. Dr. Martijn Icks appeared willing to join as supervisor too. Next, my application for a grant from the Dutch Research Council NWO was accepted. The grant allowed me to work on my thesis next to my work as a teacher. An intense period began which would last almost six years. During this period, I came across a 'contact wanted' in a German newspaper. The person advertising emphasised her doctors title adding "ansonsten innerlich und äusserlich normal." I fully understood it at the time. But now I am thinking of the Dutch 19th-century politician Abraham Kuyper. After the completion of his thesis, Kuyper had to spend time in a sanatorium. He wrote his thesis in Latin.

A PhD project cannot be done alone. Two supervisors committed themselves to this project. Olivier Hekster whose incredible knowledge is only matched by his endurance, patience and jocundity. Even when he at one moment sighed that he had never before dealt with such a bizarre project, he cheerfully smiled and encouraged me to go on. Martijn Icks was such a congenial and attentive guide whose germane comments on my work were an inspiration by itself. I am lost for words to express my admiration and gratefulness to both of them.

My gratitude also goes to Peter van der Heiden and Suzanne van de Liefvoort, the Graduate School for the Humanities coordinators at the Radboud University, for their encouragement during the progress meetings. I am also deeply indebted to Jan Hadders and Theo Dams, the former principal and vice-principal of the Mencia de Mendoza Lyceum Breda, for their invaluable cooperation. Their support allowed me to effectively manage my time between schoolwork and the PhD project. Thanks also to my students, whose curiosity was sometimes hard to satisfy and, therefore, very challenging. I cherish the hope to have made some of them enthusiastic about the ancient world. I thank the Dutch Research Council NWO for their funding of this project and the Radboud University for providing me with the means to conduct research. Gratitude to the Radboud University Press and its associates Annelies Lips, Guntra Laivacuma, and Guus Gijben for making this publication possible. I am also

indebted to all those scholars whose work on Caligula and the ancient world I came to appreciate so much. Their perseverance in a world in which the study of the ancient world is increasingly challenged continues to be a light in an ever more caliginous world.

Last but certainly not least, I must express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Roxana, and my son, Răzvan. Without my son's invaluable assistance in all things digital, this thesis would have been written with a fountain pen. Roxana, you have been my rock, enduring the long hours I spent in my study, even sacrificing holidays and weekends. My time is yours now. And to Blana, our beloved dog, who always managed to drag me out of my study at her convenience. I am filled with love and gratitude for all of you.

Henri

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Of the children of Germanicus, Gaius, after a reign of distinction, was killed with his wife and child

- Plutarch

INTRODUCTION

This Introduction looks into one and a half centuries of Caligulan scholarship in which several trends are noticed. Although this thesis builds upon the body of Caligulan studies, its approach differs significantly. It will use the concept of adhocracy, and this qualification of Caligula's leadership as adhocratic allows for an emphasis on the context of the reign and how the different actors tried to create the conditions that best suited their interests.

Caligulan scholarship and texts by authors from ancient times

Florian Sittig aptly characterised Augustus' four successors as a perverted neurotic, a sadistic psychopath, an idiotic driveller, and an eccentric monomaniac.¹ Sittig's depiction reflected the judgement of the great 18th-century historian Gibbon when he wrote: "The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid inhuman Domitian are condemned to everlasting infamy."² It makes one wonder how the Roman Empire could endure at all.

Modern scholarship sought to answer the question of Roman enduring emperorship by re-evaluating the image of some of those notoriously Roman 'evil emperors' like Nero, Domitian, Commodus, and Elagabalus.³ Caligula, however, appears to be a different matter. Although several fascinating studies presented a variegated and nuanced picture of Caligula, the image of this emperor as stark, raving mad and extremely cruel still dominates in and outside the field of classics and ancient history.⁴

The extant literature from ancient times on Caligula is characterised by the deeply felt hatred of this emperor. The interpretation of the written sources from ancient

^{1.} Sittig, 2018, p. 13.

^{2.} Gibbon, 1979, p. 94.

^{3.} Examples are Elsner & Masters, 1994. Hekster, 2002. Champlin, 2003. Icks, 2012. Drinkwater, 2019. Cominesi, et al., 2021.

^{4.} Balsdon, 1934. Barrett, 1989, revised 2015. Winterling, 2003, revised 2019. Wilkinson, 2005. Adams, 2007. Frantantuono, 2018. Barrett & Yardley, 2023.

times presents scholarship with many difficulties. To name but a few: who were these authors? How did they know what happened when most of them wrote after the events of Caligula's reign? What were their sources? How about their intentions and audience? Should their stories be taken at face value? Are their invectives corroborated by other non-literary evidence, such as coins and inscriptions? Such questions particularly arise when the literary texts abound with details of excessive and lurid behaviour. The authors from ancient times almost unanimously depict Caligula as a wild, crazy, murderous maniac who transgressed all human perimeters. However, it is important to realise that those texts were written *after* Caligula's death. As Tacitus wrote: "The histories of Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, and Nero, while they were in power, were falsified through terror, and after their death were written under the irritation of a recent hatred."⁵ Tacitus' observation expressed what modern scholarship has identified as characteristic of communication in the Roman autocratic system, its doublespeak or *Doppelbödigkeit* as Winterling called it.⁶ Caligula's successor, Claudius, for example, had to make sure that his nephew's murder was not seen as the result of possible weaknesses in the new imperial system designed by Augustus. Depicting Caligula as an exceptional aberration could silence possible criticism of the imperial system. It would also secure Claudius' own position.

One way of dealing with questions about the trustworthiness of texts from ancient times is to decide on what reasonably *cannot* be believed.⁷ Barton, for example, concluded that the author Suetonius cannot be taken seriously because he wrote invectives which imply a "virtual reality where illusion creates substance".⁸ In other words, the Suetonian picture is too incredible to be believed. I reject this notion of not taking Suetonius, and other ancient authors, seriously. Instead, I attempt to judge each detail and assertion on its merits. Furthermore, a quick glance at history, ancient and modern, shows the reality of the unbelievable. T.P. Wiseman provided another argument in his review of Lindsay's study *Suetonius: Caligula*.⁹ Wiseman observed that Suetonius mentioned one of his sources: his grandfather, who heard from the emperor's confidential courtiers. With a great number of courtiers and staff moving about the palace and around the emperor, some of them were likely to have been sources of information, Wiseman argued. Surely someone inside the palace saw Caligula practising faces in the mirror, moving around sleeplessly,

^{5.} Tac. *Ann.* 1.1.

^{6.} Winterling, 2003, p. 27.

^{7.} Elsner & Masters, 1994, p. 2.

^{8.} Barton, 1994, p. 58.

^{9.} Wiseman, 1995.

uttering threats to Jupiter or catching sight of him dressed as Venus.¹⁰ Although Suetonius might have exaggerated or even invented certain events, there are two reasons why it is unlikely that his account mainly contained phantasies. Firstly, the number of people around the emperor with first-hand information about the goings-on was considerable. Some of these would notice it if someone concocted stories. Secondly, the authors from ancient times wrote for a Roman elite that was aware of its family history and would easily recognise falsifications.

An overview of Caligulan literary sources from ancient times

I haven't replied earlier because I don't have the books you cite at hand and haven't yet found any of them except Pliny and Suetonius. But these two will relieve me of the trouble of looking for the others, because I believe they're all raving in the same way, loving unusual tales and things that make men amazed and astonished. I'm astonished not by the stories but by the people who tell them; that men of intellect and judgment squander and abuse their eloquence to make us believe such trifles—it's amazing!

Spinoza¹¹

Assessing Roman rulers in ancient texts is a multifaceted process that involves moral judgments, rhetorical techniques, style, and the authors' own perspectives and biases. Understanding the cultural and rhetorical context in which these assessments were made is crucial for interpreting ancient texts and gaining insights into the evaluation of Roman rulers. The key considerations in assessing Caligula in the extant ancient literature are the following:

1. Rhetorical influence: Greek rhetoric played a significant role in shaping the assessment of Roman rulers. The art of persuasion and the use of rhetoric in writing influenced how Roman rulers were portrayed. Rhetorical techniques were used to either praise (encomium) or criticise (invective) a ruler.¹²

^{10.} Faces: Suet. *Cal.* 50.1; moving around: Suet. *Cal.* 50.3; threats: Suet. *Cal.* 22.4; dressed as Venus: Suet. *Cal.* 52, Suet. *Cal.* 19.3. Cf. Suetonius' description of Nero frantically running around an empty palace (Suet. *Nero* 47.3) or Vitellius returning to a deserted palace (Suet. *Vit.* 16). An empty palace indicated distress.

^{11.} Spinoza, *EPISTOLA LIV.* 34–58: 1666–1674.

^{12.} Lendon, 2022.

2. *Morality and virtue*: Assessments of Roman rulers often revolved around the notions of morality and virtue. A ruler's character and behaviour were judged based on moral standards, and virtuous actions were praised while immoral actions were condemned.¹³

3. *Style and description*: Ancient texts often emphasised style and lively description. Authors sought to engage readers emotionally and used vivid language to convey the excellence or infamy of a ruler's actions.

4. *Focus on noteworthy actions*: Historians like Tacitus believed that their primary task was to record actions that were either excellent or infamous. This moral judgment guided their selection of events to include in their narratives.¹⁴

5. *Scepticism towards documentation*: Ancient authors were sometimes sceptical of written documents and records, especially when it came to the actions of rulers.¹⁵ They questioned the accuracy and reliability of official documents and sometimes favoured oral accounts or personal observations.¹⁶ Nevertheless, official records such as the Acts of the Arval Brethren or the *Acta Diurna*, daily news publications, were used to give reports an objective appearance.¹⁷

6. *Selective use of sources*: Authors were selective in their use of sources. They chose which documents or accounts to include in their narratives, and this selectivity could impact the portrayal of a ruler.¹⁸

7. *Hostility and bias*: Ancient literature did not always impartially assess Roman rulers. Many texts display a strong bias or hostility towards certain rulers, which can be influenced by the author's personal views or political affiliations.

8. *Conspiracies and plots*: References to conspiracies and plots were common in ancient texts and often used to add drama and intrigue to the narrative. Authors sometimes had limited to no access to the intentions and designs of historical figures, leading to speculative accounts.¹⁹

^{13.} Cic. *De Or.* II.62; Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.19ff.

^{14.} Tac. *Ann.* 3.65.

^{15.} Dio 53.19.1-6.

^{16.} Suet. *Aug.* 57; Plin. *Ep.* 8.6.

^{17.} Suet. *Cal.* 8.2.

^{18.} Tac. *Ann.* 4.32.1; Dio 53.19. 1-6; Cic. *Fam.* 2.4; *Brut.* 91.

^{19.} E.g., Philo, *Leg. passim*.

9. *Elite perspective*: The perspective of the Roman elite played a significant role in the assessment of rulers. Elite authors often had specific expectations of how rulers should behave, and deviations from these expectations could lead to criticism.

10. *Extravagance and elite interests*: Rulers' extravagant spending was often criticised not for the spending itself but for failing to serve the interests of the Roman aristocracy. Ignoring or disregarding the elite's interests could lead to negative evaluations of a ruler.

All of these characteristics are recognisable in the depiction of Caligula by the authors from ancient times. All paint an unnerving picture of an omnipotent emperor and the way in which he could use and abuse his power. I found only one extant exception to the black picture of Caligula in ancient literature: Plutarch, *Parallel Lives III Antony*, 87.4. Plutarch's conclusion on Caligula reads, in John Dryden's translation: "and of the children of Germanicus, Gaius, after a reign of distinction, was killed with his wife and child".²⁰

Contemporary or first-hand literary sources: Philo, Seneca

Contemporary or first-hand literary sources are eyewitness accounts written by persons who personally participated in the narrated events as actors or witnesses or who had access to information from people who were involved in or witnessed the events.²¹ To date, two such contemporary sources about Caligula exist: Philo of Alexandria and Seneca, the Stoic philosopher. Occasional remarks are found in the elder Seneca and Pliny the Elder. There are three second-hand sources: Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius. Additionally: some fragments from Pliny the Younger and Tacitus.

^{20.} Plutarch, *Parallel Lives III Antony*, 87.4. Dryden translated ἐπιφανῶς as 'distinction'.

^{21.} Potter, 1999, p. 22.

Philo of Alexandria, also known as Philo Judaeus (c.20 BCE - c. 49/50 CE)

Little is known about the life of Philo of Alexandria. The little we know about his life comes from Josephus.²² During the turmoil of 38, Philo was a mature man, meaning that he must have been born between 20 to 10 BCE.²³ He was a scion of a wealthy family, and at least one brother is known. This Alexander the Alabarch lent 200,000 drachmae to Agrippa I in 36. Alexander administered the Egyptian possessions of Caligula's grandmother Antonia and was referred to as an old friend by Claudius.²⁴ Alexander gave his son the Roman name Marcus and had him marry Agrippa's daughter Berenice. During the period of the embassy, Alexander was imprisoned by Caligula. Philo is remarkably silent about his important brother.²⁵ Philo played a prominent role in defending the Jewish interests in 38 CE when the Egyptian prefect Flaccus initiated a crisis in Alexandria. He led the delegation of the Alexandrian Jews to Caligula in the winter of 38-39 or 39-40.²⁶ He stayed in Rome until after 41.

Philo was educated in Greek literature and philosophy as well as in Jewish scripture. He worked in the Greek philosophical tradition and presented himself as an orthodox, law-abiding Jew, who considered Judaism as the only true religion.²⁷ Philo's works had a significant influence on later Jewish thought, particularly in the development of Hellenistic Jewish philosophy and the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. His writings also had an impact on early Christian thinkers who sought to bridge the gap between Greek philosophy and Christian theology.

His treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, although describing contemporary events but written or published after Caligula's death, are polemics against the Egyptian prefect Flaccus and Caligula meant for a non-Jewish audience.²⁸ The *Legatio* gives a first-hand narrative of a personal encounter with the emperor told from a purely Jewish perspective. The main reason for Philo's hatred of Caligula was religious. Philo understood Caligula's pretensions of being a living

^{22.} Jos. Al. 18.259-60.

^{23.} Niehoff, 2018, p. 3.

^{24.} Jos. Al. 19.5. 274-5. Claudius bestowed on Agrippa I Judea, Abilene and Samaria, and the former kingdom of his grandfather Herod. To commemorate the event, Agrippa I had several coins struck.

^{25.} Jos. Al. 18.147-167; 18.259; 19.276-277; 20.100.

^{26.} For 38, see Harker, 2008, pp. 10-24; the later date in Smallwood, 1961, pp. 24-27. Barrett followed Smallwood (Barrett, 1989, p. 188). Colson convincingly argued for 38-39 (Philo/Colson, 1962, pp. xxvii-xxx).

^{27.} Moses, for example, had "reached the very summits of philosophy." Philo claimed Moses as the teacher of, amongst others, Pythagoras (Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*. II.80).

^{28.} Philo's dressing down of Caligula in *Leg.* 81-92 (the address to Caligula) could only be published after Caligula's death. For the dating of Philo's works, see Niehoff, 2018, pp. 4-11.

god as blasphemy.²⁹ A faithful believer in Judaism, Philo got panic-stricken by the suggestion of Caligula's image being placed in the Jerusalem temple. Another reason is Philo's conviction that Caligula is strongly influenced by the Greek Alexandrians.³⁰

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c.4 BCE - 65 CE)

Born in Cordoba, Spain, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, commonly known as Seneca the Younger, became a prominent Roman philosopher, statesman, and writer. His life and works are marked by significant interactions with the imperial family. Seneca had connections with Caligula's sisters, Agrippina the Younger and Julia Livilla. He was accused of adultery with Julia Livilla and subsequently banished by the emperor Claudius. He was later recalled from exile by Agrippina the Younger, who entrusted him with the education of her son, Nero.³¹ Seneca's fortunes took a drastic turn when he fell out of favour with Caligula. Caligula's resentment of Seneca is shown in the emperor's labelling of Seneca's rhetorical style as "drunken revelry" and "sand without lime."³² Caligula's attitude towards Seneca grew to be hostile, resulting in the order to execute the philosopher. Seneca's life was saved by the intervention of an unknown woman who pointed out that Seneca was already suffering from advanced consumption (tuberculosis) and would soon die anyway.³³

There has been speculation about Seneca's possible involvement in conspiracies against Caligula, especially due to his connections with individuals who were supporters of the late Praetorian Prefect, Aelius Seianus.³⁴ Seneca's denunciation of Seianus, however, is limited to one work only, the *De Consolatione ad Marciam*. This work was written during Caligula's reign. It contains no criticism of Caligula. In the three other works in which reference is made to Seianus no such sentiments

²⁹. Leg. 93ff.

³⁰. Leg. 165ff.

³¹. Dio 60.8.5; Suet. *Cl.* 29; Dio 61.10.1; Schol. Juv. 5.109; Tac. *Ann.* 13.42.3.

³². Suet. *Cal.* 53.2. Smallwood, 1987, pp.114-132. The expression 'drunken revelry' (*comissationes meras*) is hardly appropriate for literary works with its allusion to undiluted wine (cf., Suet. *Cal.* 53.2). The common expression 'sand without lime' referred to a badly compounded mortar. Three parts sand should be mixed with one-part lime (Vitr. *De Arch.* 2.5.1).

³³. Dio 59.19.7-8. Scholarship still debates the fictitious nature of Seneca's escape, e.g., Balsdon, 1934, p. 56. Also, Sen. *Ep.* 78.6. Stewart equally thinks it Seneca's excuse (Stewart, 1953, p. 81). Griffin suggested that, if the escape is fiction, it is more likely the work of an apologist than of Seneca himself (Griffin, 1976, p. 54). Barrett thinks it a story concocted by Seneca to exonerate his survival, and flourishing, under a mad tyrant he hated so much (Barrett, 1989, p. 112). Seneca himself gave the story another turn; he survived due to his loyalty and patience, biding his time for better days to come and subdued the urge to commit suicide (Sen. *NQ* pref. 4.17).

³⁴. Stewart, 1953, p. 81.

are expressed.³⁵ Whether or not Seneca was directly involved in conspiracies, his writings, written after Caligula's death, clearly reflect his deep resentment and disdain for Caligula. Seneca used various tropes to mock and insult Caligula, highlighting the emperor's cruelty, erratic behaviour, and extravagance.³⁶ Seneca's invective against Caligula often accused the emperor of insanity, which was a common theme in contemporary assessments of Caligula.³⁷ The philosopher also condemned Caligula's blasphemous behaviour, particularly his challenges to the gods, which he saw as a sign of hybris.³⁸

Whether or not Seneca was directly involved in conspiracies, his writings clearly reflect his deep resentment and disdain for Caligula. The following table presents an overview of named victims of Caligula mentioned by Seneca.

Table 1. Victims of Caligula reported by Seneca.³⁹

Seneca	Name	Cause/year
<i>Ep.</i> 4.7	M. Lepidus	executed/39
<i>QN.</i> 4 pref. 15	Lucilius	tortured/39
<i>Ira</i> 3.18.3	Sextus Papinius	executed/39
<i>Ira</i> 3.18.3	Betilienus Bassus	executed/40
<i>Ira</i> 3.18.3	Capito, son of Bassus	executed/40
<i>Tranq.</i> 14.4-10	Iul. Canus	executed/40
<i>Ben.</i> 2.21.5	Iul. Graecinus	executed/40
<i>Ira</i> 2.33.3-7	Son of Pastor	executed/nd
<i>Tranq.</i> 11.10	Sextus Pompeius	starvation/nd

Some modern scholars have raised the possibility that the Seneca referred to in later sources like Suetonius may actually be Seneca the Elder, the philosopher's father, who was a famous orator. The confusion might be either due to Dio, who is rather careless in his references or to Seneca the Younger himself. The suggestion that Seneca the Elder is meant gains strength from a reference to Seneca in Suetonius *Tib.* 73.2, which is a less hostile description of the death of Tiberius than *Cal.* 12. If so, the gentler depiction of Caligula could be a sign of gratitude for

^{35.} Sen. *Vit. Beat.* 11.11, *Ep.* 55.3, *NQ* 1.1.3.
^{36.} In his *Thyestes*, Seneca echoed a ghastly story about Caligula previously told in *De Ira* (2.33). Painstakingly watched by his brother Atreus, Thyestes is forced to devour his children while drinking wine mixed with their blood (Wilson, 2014, p. 67).
^{37.} Sen. *De Ira* 2.28.8; Sen. *Brev. Vit.* 18.5.
^{38.} Sen. *De Ira* 1.20.8-9.
^{39.} Table adapted from Barrett, 1989, pp. 242-3; 2015, pp. xviii- xix.

sparing the rhetor's life. Cynthia Damon observed that the Senecan description of Tiberius' death in Suetonius revealed sympathy for Caligula, which might have been a reason for later historians to neglect the rhetor.⁴⁰

Second-hand or narrative literary sources: Josephus, Suetonius, Dio

Non-contemporary witnesses write second-hand sources, be they ancient or modern. Authors of narrative texts intend to present chronological accounts of events in their day or reconstruct events before their own time by using third-party sources.⁴¹ These are Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio.

Flavius Josephus (37/8 – c. 100)

Flavius Josephus, born as Josef ben Mattijahu, was a Jewish-Roman historian and author who was born in the first year of Caligula's reign, around 37 or 38 CE. He belonged to a prominent Jewish family and had firsthand experience with the Roman Empire. In 63-64 CE, Josephus was part of a Jewish delegation sent to Rome to plead for the release of certain Jewish prisoners. Josephus was deeply impressed by the power and grandeur of Rome during his visit. This experience may have influenced his perspective and possibly contributed to his opposition to the Jewish revolt against Roman rule. Despite his early favourable views of Rome, Josephus eventually became a military commander in Galilee during the Jewish Revolt against Roman rule. His surrender to the Roman forces led to his imprisonment. While in captivity, Josephus gained the favour of the Roman general Vespasian and his son Titus, who later became emperor. His knowledge of Jewish customs and culture proved valuable to the Romans during the siege of Jerusalem. After the Jewish revolt and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Josephus settled in Rome and began his literary career.

His first major work, *Bellum Iudaicum* (c.75), hardly mentioned Caligula. Caligula appears briefly in connection with his friend Agrippa's flattering remarks and wishes for the death of the emperor Tiberius. The suggestion saw him jailed. Josephus' interests in Caligula must have changed over time. In his second major work, *Antiquitates Iudaicae* (before 96), he dedicated a whole book to Caligula, who is presented as the "persecutor of the Jews". Josephus' change of interest in Caligula

⁴⁰. Damon, 2020, pp.123-142.

⁴¹. The third kind of texts distinguished by Potter is illustrative texts. These are concerned with "ideas and habits, not intended to influence specific contemporary events" (Potter, 1999, p. 22).

may be an indication of a hostile tradition about Caligula in existence by the end of the first century. Further works include "*Contra Apionem*," which defends Judaism against aspects of Greek thought and criticism. Josephus' apology for his war record, *Vita*, is a defence against the attacks from the Jewish author Justus of Tiberias.⁴²

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (c.70 – c.130)

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, commonly known as Suetonius, was a Roman historian and biographer who lived during the first and second centuries CE. Suetonius had a career in the Roman government and served in various offices. He was a *studiis* (in charge of the imperial archives), a *bybliothecis* (supervisor of the seven public libraries in Rome). The Hippo Regius inscription (1952) described him as an *ab epistulis*, the head of the Imperial Chancery.⁴³ Suetonius was protected and patronised by prominent figures like Pliny the Younger and Septicius Clarus, the commander of the Praetorian Guard. Pliny referred to Suetonius seven times.⁴⁴ Suetonius fell from favour during Emperor Hadrian's British tour in 122 CE when he was discharged from his position.⁴⁵ This event has led to debate among scholars about whether his dismissal influenced his later writings, particularly regarding his access to imperial archives.⁴⁶

Suetonius was a trained rhetorician, and his writing style exhibited elements of rhetoric. Suetonius wrote biographies in the Hellenistic tradition, which aimed to inform and make moral judgments about the subjects rather than provide purely instructional content. He focused on character and often neglected events that did not contribute significantly to understanding a person's disposition.⁴⁷ Suetonius had access to various sources for his biographical works. He relied on senatorial records and transmitted stories that had been told about the emperors. He used eyewitness testimony and incorporated information from literary sources such as Gaetulicus, the Augustan author Quintus Elogius, and Pliny the Elder, which he even criticised for providing erroneous information. All of this adds credibility to his biographical narratives.⁴⁸

^{42.} Codex xxiii about Justus of Tiberias and Josephus in Freese, 1920.

^{43.} Marec & Pflaum, 1953 with Syme, 1981 and Wardle, 2002.

^{44.} Plin. *Ep.* 1.18; 1.24.1; 3.8.1; 5.10.3; 9.34; 10.94; 10.95.

^{45.} *HA Hadrian* 11.3.

^{46.} De Coninck, 1983.

^{47.} Suet. *Aug.* 9.

^{48.} Senatorial records: Suet. *Cal.* 8.2; 8.4-5; stories about the emperors: Suet. *Cal.* 19.3; eyewitness testimony: Suet. *Cal.* 19.3; 22.4; criticism of literary sources: Suet. *Cal.* 8.1-3, Suet. *Vit.* 2.1. Quintus Elogius: Suet. *Vit.* 1.2.

L. Claudius Cassius Dio Cocceianus (c.163/164– c.229)

Born in Bithynia and a senator since c.190 CE, the Greek-speaking Dio specifically stressed his belonging to the elite class. He fervently defended the Senate's position against any outside threat. After several career moves, the aged, inexperienced Dio was appointed governor of Dalmatia and Upper Pannonia (226–228) with command over three legions. He retired after having served as consul in 229.⁴⁹ Parts of Dio's eighty-volume *Historia Romana*, written some hundred and fifty years after Caligula's death, are only known through epitomes by the Byzantine canonists Xiphilinus (11th century) and Zonaras (end 11th/12th century). Preserved are the texts from books 36–54, dealing with the period 68 – 10 BCE, fragments of books 55–60 (9 BCE – 46 CE) and parts of books 79–80 (217 – 220).⁵⁰ Inspired by Thucydides, Arrian, and Livy, Dio's comprehensive history begins with the arrival of the mythological Aeneas in Latium (before 753 BCE) and ends with the first years of Severus Alexander (r. 222–235).

Throughout his *Historia*, Dio provides several autobiographical details. He, for example, claimed to have read everything available about his subject, which would have been quite an accomplishment given Rome's 28 libraries and senatorial and equestrian archives. However, he faced some difficulties. Favourably suited towards the Empire, Dio had to admit that it was much easier for a historian to gather information during the Republic. In his narrative about Augustus, he inserts an intermezzo complaining that events are now concealed and kept secret.⁵¹ As a member of the elite, Dio held strong feelings about what he considered to be decent imperial behaviour. Augustus formed the template; he was the supreme ruler who stuck to the ideals of the *res publica*. Dio precisely dated the beginning of that glorious period to 2 September 31 BCE, the day of the naval battle at Actium.⁵² Dio's firm belief in imperial rule and the importance of the Senate not only made him examine the functioning of the noble body but it also allowed him to include many fictitious speeches and dialogues to express his personal views about decent imperial behaviour.⁵³ Although Dio stressed his use of exact data, his views on writing history obscured precise dating. His technique when writing about Caligula was to arrange his material "in order to subvert the official strategies of presentation" to demonstrate Caligula's cruelty.⁵⁴ Dio's main intention seems

^{49.} Millar, 1964.

^{50.} Millar, 1964, pp. 1–4.

^{51.} Dio 53.19.1–6.

^{52.} Dio 51.1.

^{53.} Dio 52.2.1 – 52.42.5; Dio 55.14.1 – 55. 21.4; Peer, 2020, p. 225.

^{54.} Havener, 2020, pp.138–165.

to have been to paint a rather gloomy picture of greed and extravagance.⁵⁵ The relevance of Dio's information about Caligula is obfuscated by the fact that his data find no corroboration in other extant works.

Other literary sources from ancient times: Plinius, Tacitus and Plutarch

In addition to the above-mentioned works, several other authors occasionally referred to Caligula. One was Gaius Plinius Secundus (23/4 – 79), of equestrian rank.⁵⁶ Since the days of Augustus, equestrian status carried a moral obligation to serve in the army. Pliny the Elder survived the troublesome decade of Nero's rule and the ensuing civil wars to emerge in 69 as a friend of Titus. His career reached its zenith when he became the admiral of the fleet at Misenum. When Vesuvius erupted, Pliny set out to rescue the endangered villagers but died in the event.

Pliny appeared obsessed with status and public image. Being a member of the governing municipal class, he criticised extravagant luxury and greed. Observing Caligula's consort, Lollia Paulina, during an ordinary dinner, Pliny estimated her jewellery's value at 40 million sesterces. He added that the money was the result of extortion.⁵⁷ As a young man, and a student of the famous soldier-poet Publius Pomponius Secundus, Pliny must on occasion have enjoyed Caligula's presence. Caligula appears in Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* passim either in connection with trees, like the transportation of the Egyptian obelisk, or anecdotally, as in the goby fish's tale, an omen to Caligula's murder. He also referred to the emperor's endeavour to cut a channel through the Isthmus. cursory remarks show glimpses of Pliny's attitude towards Caligula. When discussing birth, Pliny explained that a breech delivery, feet first, is against nature which is why those so born are called Agrippa.⁵⁸ Caligula perfumed his bathtub and was obsessed with gold. The jibe about wearing slippers decorated with pearls, in addition to articles of women's clothing, leaves little doubt about the old soldier's feelings for Caligula.⁵⁹

^{55.} Dio 59.21.

^{56.} Plin. *NH* xxxiii.

^{57.} Plin. *NH* ix, 117-8.

^{58.} It was derived from *aegre partus* (born with difficulty). Pliny wrote that Marcus Agrippa's offspring caused unhappiness in the world, "especially by the two Agrippinas, who gave birth to the emperors Caligula and Domitian Nero, two firebrands to mankind" (Plin. *NH* vii, 45).

^{59.} Pliny's observations: the Isthmus channel: *NH* iv; the perfumed bathtub: *NH* xiii, 22; obsession with gold: *NH* xxxiii, 79; slippers decorated with pearls and articles of women's clothing: *NH* xxxvii, 16-17.

Publius (?) Cornelius Tacitus (c.54/57– c.118)

Tacitus began his rise to 'classic' status sometime in the fourth century when the *Historia Augusta* hailed him as one of four great Latin historians, only to be forgotten for another millennium.⁶⁰ What is known about Tacitus' life comes from his friend Pliny the Younger, some remarks in his works and an inscription from Mylasa (Milas) in Caria.⁶¹ As a senator, Tacitus experienced a harsh period under Domitian (81-96) to become consul in 97. His career ended with the governorship of Asia (western Anatolia). His two monographs, *Agricola*, a semi-biographical description of his father-in-law, Iulius Agricola, and *Germania*, depict some Germanic tribes and their lands, both published c. 98, were followed by two major works, the *Historiae* and the *Annales*. Both works tell the story of the Roman rulers from Tiberius (14 CE) to the death of Domitian (96 CE). Tacitus also wrote about the reign and person of Caligula but since those books are lost, scholars must do with only some dissipated references.⁶²

The *Annals* were arranged according to the seasonal pattern of the Records of the Priests. Although primarily concerned with ritual, the Records began to include references to political and historical events. Tacitus' method allowed for strong moral ruminations. Virtue is contrasted to vice, with the latter being responsible for the decline that befell the realm. The work focuses on the leading elements in Roman society, especially the emperor's entourage, which was decisive for the state's decline or prosperity. The author's personal experience as a senator under Domitian and his fear and indignation during that time is reflected in his descriptions of Domitian's predecessors, especially in the one so much admired by the 'bald Nero' himself, as Juvenal called Domitian.⁶³ It also explains his occasional loose dealing with specific facts. Tacitus was set to explore the beginnings of autocracy and tyranny and found them in Augustus' system to overcome the deep crisis in which the Republic found itself. Tacitus became the reporter of a system set to choke liberty to death.⁶⁴

^{60.} *HA, Probus*, 2.7. The four great historians were Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, Trogus. Also, *HA, Tacitus* (emperor), 10.3.

^{61.} *Plin. Ep.* 1.6; 1.20; 6.9; 6.16; 6.20; 7.20; 7.33; 8.7; inscription: Karya OGIS 437, Meister, 1932, pp. 233-44.

^{62.} Tacitus' judgement on Caligula can be discerned passim and is hostile, as the following passages demonstrate *Ann.* 1.1, 1.41, 1.69, 4.71, 5.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.9, 6.20 (deceitful discretion concealed Caligula's horrible character); 6.32, 6.45-46 (Caligula had all Sulla's faults and none of his virtues; he will kill Gemellus); 12.22, 13.1, 13.3 (Caligula's mental disorders had not weakened his vigorous speech); *His.* 4.15, (the German expedition was a farcical failure), 4.42 (despicable and cruel).

^{63.} Juvenal, *Sat.* IV. 37.

^{64.} Matthews, 2011, p. 291.

Whereas the assessment of a Roman ruler by later authors could tip to both sides of the scale, depending on the writer's interpretation and intention, it always followed the model set by Greek rhetoric. For the Greeks, poetry and history differed, with a preference for poetry, if Aristotle is to be believed.⁶⁵ Good history came close to composing poetry in prose, while the Athenian tragedies' success suggested a powerful emotional approach. In the Roman adaptation, this meant patriotism, and, as Cicero explained, rhetoric.⁶⁶ Rhetoric implied morality, an assessment of a person as either good (encomium) or bad (invective). A virtuous person was acclaimed for his accomplishments, not for any given factual condition, like his high birth or inherited wealth. Invective, basically undignified according to the rhetor Quintilian, should be used with utmost care. Only if the good cause demanded it, no limits were set on deception.⁶⁷ Hence "there was licence for the orator to make *inventio*, the power of discovering all means of persuading by speech, into invention in the rhetorical handbooks" – or, one may add, in the biographies of 'evil' rulers.⁶⁸

Tacitus explained the historian's first task: relating that which was "conspicuous for excellence or notorious for infamy".⁶⁹ Deciding on the one or the other was dictated by morality, derived from rhetoric with its lists of topoi. Here style, as *energeia*, lively description, entered the picture. It explains why elite authors show a particular interest in the lurid details of erotic indulging by high-ranking ladies and gentlemen who were proud to boast their high moral standards. The biographer Suetonius' book *Lives of Famous Prostitutes* is lost, but the emphasis on prostitution, incest, debauchery, and sexual misdemeanour among the elite shows how rare this kind of behaviour was.

A further characteristic of ancient texts concerns the authors' suspicion of the documentary record. This attitude was justified by 'ostensibly aesthetic and ethical reasons'. The knight Suetonius preferred the acts of the equestrian order because he considered the acts of the Senate as untrustworthy. They could either be enforced or "inspired by a sense of obligation" to the ruler. Pliny the Younger did use the Senate's acts in his correspondence, as did Tacitus, although he was quite selective in his use of this documentation. Tacitus admits to being aware of the low value of part of his narrative but stresses that it contains **his** selection. Written documentation was not the first choice for the 2nd/3rd century senator Cassius Dio; such records had no additional

^{65.} Arist. *Poet.* 1451^b.

^{66.} Cic. *De Or.* II.62.

^{67.} Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.19ff.

^{68.} Barton, 1995, p. 69, Trimble, 2014, pp. 115-154.

^{69.} Tac. *Ann* 3.6.

value over other sources.⁷⁰ Furthermore, documents within the same literary genre did not necessarily provide the same data. Texts not intended for publication, like private letters or notes, had another value than those meant for public release, while most speeches appeared to have been written down only after delivery.⁷¹

The ancient literature on Caligula frequently referred to conspiracies. Their nature, the undermining of the fundamental principle of *res publica*, demands *energeia*, but the ancient authors could impossibly have known the intentions, schemes, and designs of the persons they wrote about.⁷² Josephus could provide so many details of Caligula's assassination only because the conspiracy was exposed after successful completion. Tacitus, on the other hand, obsessed as he was with intrigue, tried to construct a coherent narrative about a secret event to warn his readers for the distorting dangers of plots. The inconsistency in his formulation disappears under the heed to remain alert. Characteristic in Caligula's case is the almost unanimous hostility of the extant literature, Plutarch excepted, with most of the accusations being topical.

Methodology: how this thesis perceives texts by authors from ancient times

The basic principle of this thesis is that texts by authors from ancient times, no matter how excessive they might seem, provide valuable information and should, therefore, not be discarded. Obviously, such texts must be used with caution. Upper-class literati wrote these texts for an equally literate audience; others were spontaneous regurgitations such as graffiti. Still, other texts, such as funerary inscriptions, epitaphs, advertisements, and election graphics, provide insight into contemporary popular mentality. Such texts are especially revealing in conditions of social and political uncertainty.

The non-literary material such as centrally produced coinage and inscriptions presented the official picture of what might be called imperial propaganda⁷³ There is, however, also much material evidence from the provinces. Until Anthony Barrett's seminal study *Caligula: the Corruption of Power* (1989, revised in 2015 as

^{70.} Suet. *Aug.* 57. Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 8.6. Tac. *Ann.* 4.32.1. Dio 53.19. 1-6.

^{71.} Cic. *Fam.* 2.4 (letters) and *Brut.* 91 (speeches). In Pliny the Younger's time, the practice was to write the address, deliver it, and then rework it for publication (*Ep.* 2.5.1, *Ep.* 3.13).

^{72.} In no way could Suetonius have known that Augustus seriously considered the restoration of the Republic twice (*Aug.* 28.1), but in reconstructing the story, the author "is handing down to us a tradition that this was the case" (Wilkinson, 2012, p. 6).

^{73.} Hekster, 2007.

Caligula: the Abuse of Power), this locally produced material evidence was hardly considered in Caligulan studies. Yet, it proves to be important in understanding the reaction to Caligula's reign. Particularly revealing in this respect is the material evidence of the memory sanctions issued against Caligula, which shows Claudius' careful dealings with his predecessor's reign, and responses in the provinces to it. The evidence is shown in Appendix A. However, as Hopkins noted, evidence is "not holy: it is itself a social construct, and so should not be taken at face value any more than one should take *The Times* or a contemporary academic political scientist as necessarily right. The historian should interpret his sources actively by trying, for example, to understand what the ancient sources took for granted and so systematically underreported."⁷⁴

Methodology: how this thesis uses visual documents

This thesis uses the term visual documents instead of the more common term illustration or image to emphasise the value-added content of what these documents express about the society that produced them.⁷⁵ With the term visual documents this thesis also refers to coin images, statues, and archaeological materials. The underlying epistemological assumption is that images do not have universal meanings. This presents the historian of ancient Rome with the difficulty of how to perceive and interpret Rome's visual culture without falling into the trap of own preconceptions. The difference between written texts and other material expressions, such as statues and coins, further complicates this difficulty. Suetonius' description of Caligula's physique, for example, finds no corroboration in his statues or coins.⁷⁶ Relevant, too, apart from the type of image, is the producer. Unfortunately, artists are rarely known by name. Imperial propaganda may significantly differ from material constructions by contemporaries or later fabricators.⁷⁷ Coinage was one of the oldest and most effective means of communication, hence of propaganda.⁷⁸ Ignoring the difficult question of agency, i.e. the emperor's personal involvement in coin design, coinage was an essential means to impress imperial propaganda on the population at large. Furthermore, modern representations of ancient figures also influence interpretations. For example, representing American presidents or CEO's as Caligula (Figure 3) or the presentation in popular media of Caligula as an atrocious sex maniac may also influence scholarly interpretations of this emperor. In the Iranian documentary *Broken*

⁷⁴. Hopkins, 1978, pp. 180 – 182.

⁷⁵. Miller, 2017, p. 74.

⁷⁶. Trimble, 2014, pp. 117-8.

⁷⁷. Icks, 2008, p. 16

⁷⁸. On the use of the term propaganda, see Hekster, 2005, pp. 245-7.

Grail: Khayyam debates Caligula, the great poet debates his philosophy with a group of historical figures such as Alp Arslan, Hassan Sabah, al-Ghazali, and strangely, Caligula.⁷⁹ A man deserves to die when he is guilty, Caligula says. He is guilty because he is a subject of Caligula. All men are Caligula's subjects. Therefore, all men are guilty and shall die. This, so Khayyam, is the truth when history is forgotten.



Fig. 3. American presidents are represented as a 'Caligula'. Such representations refer to the common view of Caligula as a mad monarch, thus implying a similar state of mind to the one depicted. From left to right, clockwise presidents Donald Trump, Barack Obama, George Bush Jr., possibly Obama, and meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

<https://carpresearchlab.org/2018/12/22/as-crazy-as-caligula-part-2/> accessed 29-08-2023.⁸⁰

^{79.} Armin Naderi, Noghteh Group, 2021, *Broken Grail* with English subtitles: Documentary- Broken Grail: Omar Khayyam Debates Caligula (2013-2020) - YouTube last retrieved on 01-06-2024.

^{80.} Also, Sintra Wilson's satirical attack on American politicians demanding Caligula for President (Wilson, 2008). Barrett (2015, p. 1) opened with the anecdote of the emperor Commodus casting a man to the beasts for reading Suetonius' *Life of Caligula*. Commodus apparently did not want to be associated with an ill-reputed emperor whose birthday he shared. See, *SHA*, Commodus Antoninus 10.2.

The inclusion of the visual documents with brief descriptions in the captions and references may help to contextualise the literary texts from ancient times. Furthermore, and with a nod to Professor Beard, visual documents challenge the eye of the beholder to look.⁸¹ The weighing of the credibility of the literary texts from ancient times is of particular importance for this thesis. Visual documents and material documentary texts such as inscriptions and coin legends, can provide additional arguments for qualifying these literary texts, as the above-given example of Suetonius' description of Caligula's appearance shows.

Gaius Caesar Germanicus: a note on nomenclature

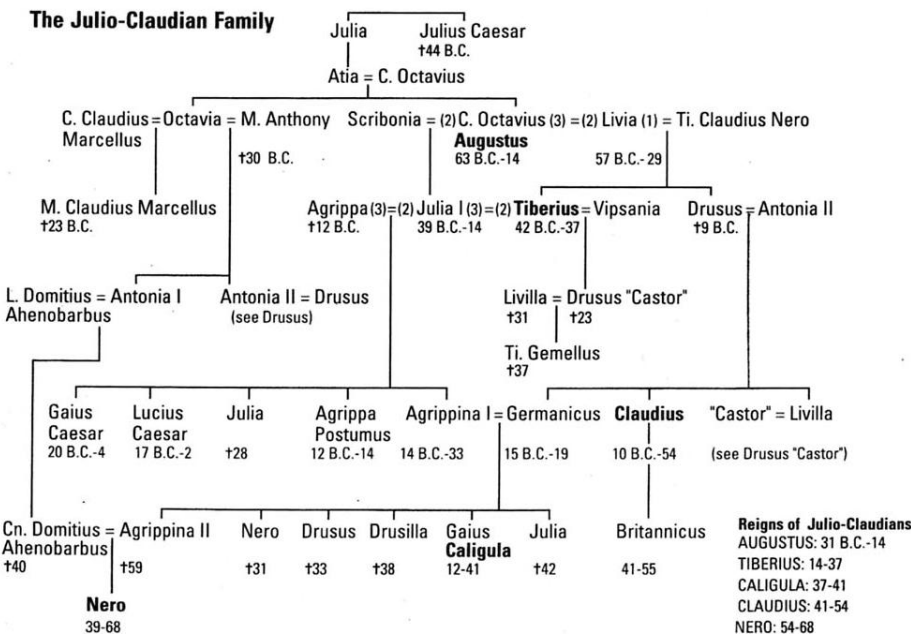


Fig. 4. The Julio-Claudians. © cultus.hk

Gaius Caesar Germanicus was a member of the Julio-Claudian family (Figure 4). He is, however, commonly known by his nickname 'Caligula'.⁸² Using nicknames was, and is, a form of political humour or meant to scold or abuse individuals. In imperial Rome, emperors were known by their formal names and by humorous or derisive

⁸¹. Beard, 2018.

⁸². Nicknames: Suet. *Cal.* 9.1; Dio 57.5.6; Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.3; Sen. *Cons.* 18.4.

nicknames.⁸³ The origin of the nickname 'Caligula' is uncertain. Suetonius wrote that it derived from a soldierly joke while Tacitus blamed Agrippina, who paraded her son as a boy-soldier in front of the mutinous troops, insisting they call him 'Caesar Caligula', the one-booted Caesar (Figure 5).⁸⁴ Caligula reputedly disliked his nickname. He was also said to dislike the name Gaius because he considered it too common.⁸⁵ The addition of Julius to his names is nowhere attested.⁸⁶ Following the conventional usage in scholarship and popular culture, this thesis addresses Gaius Caesar Germanicus by his nickname 'Caligula'.



Fig. 5. Roman caliga. Fragment of a bronze statue of a soldier's foot with a caliga.

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Modern Caligulan scholarship

Modern Caligulan scholarship developed from the late 19th and early 20th century onward. Until recently, most of this research was biographical, with little interest in a structural-historical analysis of socio-political circumstances.⁸⁷ These biographical interpretations mostly revolved around the validity of the extant literary texts. At the same time, these studies dealt with contemporary concerns as reflections of ancient history. The German medievalist Ludwig Quidde (1858-1941) used the term

^{83.} Bruun, 2002; Makhlaiuk, 2020. For imperial names and titles, see Hekster, 2023, pp. 30-45.

^{84.} Suet. *Cal.* 9; Tac. *Ann.* 1.41. 3; 1.69.3.

^{85.} Dio 59.13.6.

^{86.} Barrett & Yardley, 2023, p. 6 n. 33.

^{87.} Ronning, 2011, pp. 253-276.

Cäsarenwahnsinn, imperial madness, in a short pamphlet entitled *Caligula – Eine Studie über römischen Cäsarenwahnsinn* (1894).⁸⁸ Imperial madness in Quidde's view comes about when the elite degenerates so as to allow the ruler to transgress all boundaries of the legal order. Using the notoriously mad but very distant Caligula, the historian had aimed his arrows at no other than the not-so-mad and not-so-distant German emperor Wilhelm II. Unfortunately for Quidde, his contemporaries quickly saw through the intended masquerade.⁸⁹ Although Quidde saw the sudden end of his academic career serving a three-month term in a German prison, his booklet made Caligula a referential figure for contemporary dictatorial powerplay and crazed abuse of power.⁹⁰

Following the attention generated by Quidde's work, the German historian Hugo Willrich (1867-1950) set himself to a re-appraisal in a series of articles entitled '*Caligula*'.⁹¹ According to Willrich, Caligula was a highly talented, rational individual who was very well-equipped to play his imperial role. His political philosophy was clear: he wanted to abandon the Augustan system of joint government between the emperor and the Senate. Caligula favoured an irrevocable return to the monarchist principles of Julius Caesar, including the Hellenistic touch of divine kingship.⁹²

Willrich's vindication was primarily accepted by the Swiss-German classical historian Matthias Gelzer (1886-1974), the contributor to the '*Caligula*' lemma of the 1918 *RE* edition.⁹³ Gelzer, combining the testimonies of Cluvius Rufus, Seneca, and Philo, portrayed Caligula as a young man thoroughly enjoying his position's privileges and pleasures without even once realising the duties and responsibilities involved. Exonerating Caligula's disinterest in state affairs with his lack of preparation for the job, Gelzer concluded that there must have been an iron hand conducting the actual government. Initially, this hand belonged to the Praetorian Prefect Macro, with the wealthy freedman Callistus taking control after the prefect's demise.

^{88.} Quidde (1894) borrowed the term from the novelist Freytag (1864) and the historian Wiedemeister (1875). Freytag's *Die verlorene Handschrift* featured a German professor searching for a lost Tacitus manuscript. Wiedemeister's *Der Cäsarenwahnsinn der Julisch-Claudischen Imperatorenfamilie* depicted Caligula as a victim of heredity who was disposed of insanity, epilepsy, and mental deficiency.

^{89.} The book became a bestseller, with more than a quarter of a million copies sold in thirty editions. English translation: Field, 1915; French translation: Moch, 1928. Details in Fesser, et al., 2001.

^{90.} Panou & Schadee, 2018.

^{91.} Willrich, 1903.

^{92.} Willrich, 1903, p. 466.

^{93.} Gelzer, 1918, pp. 381-423.

The world of the 1930s saw the rise of dictatorship and propaganda. The discussions about tyranny and power were reflected in the work of Oxford classicist John Balsdon (1901-1977). His 1934 study *The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)* was the seminal work on Caligula of the decade. Based on Willrich's work, Balsdon likewise considered Caligula an intelligent, rational young man who tried to implement a clear and consistent policy. Caligula was unfortunate in the execution of his policies and decisions. Representations of him as a stark, raving, mad monarch resulted from deliberate distortions by hostile, senatorial writers. His attempts to curtail the functions and power of the Senate were neither irresponsible nor catastrophic.⁹⁴

Balsdon made fair use of the new numismatic and epigraphic material made available by scholars such as H. Mattingly, E. Sydenham, C. Sutherland, and M. Charlesworth. Inscriptions and coins, for example, showed no official cult of Caligula in Rome.⁹⁵ The period's coinage did not ascribe divine attributes to the ruler, contrary to, for example, Nero's coins which depicted him as *Jupiter Liberator*.⁹⁶ The language of the Arval Brethren did not change.⁹⁷ Caligula's building projects and his foreign policy were praiseworthy. Although Balsdon presented a positive picture of Caligula, he treated the accounts of Suetonius and Cassius Dio with caution. Both writers, so Balsdon, "have a fatal inclination towards unwarranted generalisations, and that they followed different historical traditions. (...) We can only display caution in handling them."⁹⁸

The 1970s–90s saw a fundamental shift in the approach ancient historians had taken to analysing literary sources from the ancient world. Scholars realised that the division between 'good' and 'evil' rulers, with nothing in between, had little to do with historical veracity.⁹⁹ Three reasons may explain this methodological change. Firstly, a revaluation of biography as a genre. Discarding Syme's disclaimer that writing biographies of emperors is "a common and easy approach to imperial history. It is a little late in the day to deplore that fashion", Miriam Griffin's *Nero. The end of a Dynasty* (1984) led to renewed scholarly interest in a biographical

^{94.} Balsdon, 1934, p. 151.

^{95.} See Fishwick, 2002 for the imperial cult in the Roman West.

^{96.} Noteworthy, too, is the omission of the title *imperator* on Caligula's coins, except for the Caesarean mint. See Rassiler, 2022, p. 61.

^{97.} Balsdon, 1934, pp. 157-8.

^{98.} Balsdon, 1934, p. 228.

^{99.} Hekster, 1998, pp. 337-351.

approach.¹⁰⁰ Griffin's thorough comparison of the literary sources from ancient times threw new light on its subject, resulting in a more profound interpretation of the emperor and his reign. Secondly, an interdisciplinary approach broadened the scope of historical research. In this respect, the seminal work was a collection of thirteen articles edited by Elsner and Masters, *Reflections of Nero. Culture, History & Representation* (1994). The book stressed the influence of traditional rhetoric on ancient authors, which led, in the cases of the so-called 'evil emperors', to invective written after a ruler's death. Thirdly, the use of non-historiographical sources as historical tools disputed the status of the ancient literary material. Coinage, inscriptions, archaeological finds, and sculpture, especially those locally produced, challenge the representations sketched by the ancient authors, while they also complement the image emerging from official propaganda.

With the becoming available of such evidence following new discoveries, Anthony Barrett could devise a careful and chronological reconstruction of the intricate details of Caligula's reign. Barrett's study *Caligula. The Corruption of Power* (1989), revised as *Caligula. The Abuse of Power* (2015) replaced Balsdon's study as the seminal work for Caligulan scholarship. Barrett played on Lord Acton's adage that power corrupts.¹⁰¹ Caligula was not the raging madman of lore. He was self-indulgent, unpredictable, lacked any moral responsibility and was in no way fit to rule, but he was a rational young man who found himself in a position of absolute power and had to cope. The excessive overload of honours granted him on the same day by a servile Senate degenerated Caligula's character, turning him into a "Stalinesque figure, capable of rational decisions, capable of statesmanlike acts (when it suited him), but morally neutral, determined to sweep all before him in the pursuit of his own personal ends, and ultimately indifferent to the consequences of his actions on others."¹⁰² If disaster followed, it was of the Roman's own making. Nevertheless, the notion that power corrupts or can easily be abused prevailed, as did the tendency to compare Caligula with contemporary dictators. Barrett's

^{100.} Syme, 1991, p. 247. Sir Ronald drew attention to the scholarly neglect for those persons surrounding the titular of the biography. Too nice not to mention, is Syme's reference to Flaubert's novel *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (Syme, 1991, *RP V*, p. 268). When discussing different topics to include in their intended history, the copy-clerk Pécuchet suggested to include a life of Louis Antoine, Duc d'Angoulême (1775-1844), who reigned for less than twenty minutes. "Si nous écrivions la vie du duc d'Angoulême? Mais c'était un imbécile ! répliqua Bouvard. Qu'importe ! les personnages du second plan ont parfois une influence énorme, et celui-là peut-être tenait le rouage des affaires." (Flaubert, 1910, p. 155; also, Syme, 1971). Recently, Drinkwater acknowledged Syme's point in the title of his book *Nero. Emperor and Court* and his analysis of the establishment team (Drinkwater, 2019).

^{101.} Dalberg-Acton, 1985, p. 383.

^{102.} Barrett, 1989, p. 241.

revised study (2015) reflected that comparison: Caligula was simply not fit for his job. The year 2023 saw the publication of Barrett's and J. C. Yardley's compendium of texts from ancient times on Caligula entitled *The Emperor Caligula in the Ancient Sources*. A similar collection of translated literature from ancient times on Caligula was published by Lee Fratantuono in his *Caligula. An Unexpected General* (2018).

The same period saw a strong reaction against studies and scholars considered revisionist. Some of those who opposed revisionism, mainly Vasili Rudich (2013) and Zvi Yavetz (1996), had personally experienced authoritarian regimes' harsh side. They warned against what Rudich called "liberal historiography", the tendency by scholars to side with the persecutor against the oppressed.¹⁰³ Yavetz vehemently rejected the notion that a biography of Caligula can be written in morally neutral terms: "Someone who has the power to kill and torture and actually does it, is a killer and a torturer, not morally neutral."¹⁰⁴ Despite such subjective generalisations, Yavetz drew attention away from a focus on the emperor's person in favour of an analysis of context, the circumstances that make tyranny possible. Following the decline in numbers after the civil wars, unworthy men entered the Senate who lacked an understanding of traditional, republican values and missed the authority gained on the battlefield.¹⁰⁵ For Caligula's tyranny, senatorial servility sufficed.¹⁰⁶

Later scholars did not ignore Quidde's notion of imperial madness. Over a century of Caligulan studies led to a plethora of articles speculating about the nature of Caligula's madness, which was usually seen as a consequence of the emperor's disease in October 37 CE. However, most of these works are highly speculative, with their authors attempting to explain away some of the more Fustian anecdotes.¹⁰⁷ The same applies to

¹⁰³. Rudich, 2013 used the example of Stalin, who published an article attacking the linguist N. Marr. As a result, all who had written or spoken in favour of Marr were either removed from their positions or disappeared in labour camps. An example of Caligulan liberal historiography is Philipponi, 2008.

¹⁰⁴. Yavetz, 1996, p. 114.

¹⁰⁵. Tac. *Ann.* 3.65.

¹⁰⁶. Yavetz, 1996, pp.120-1. Yavetz basically followed the analysis by Syme, 1986 and Hopkins, 1983. For an alternative view, claiming the Senate's decisive victory, see Dettenhofer, 2002, pp. 643-665.

¹⁰⁷. Jerome (1923) concluded that drinking was the problem. Eitrem (1932) thought that the emperor was the keeper of imperial divine rights, considering himself Godlike. Freud's student Hans Sachs (1932) developed a psychoanalytic interpretation in his study *Bubi Caligula*, emphasising the inevitable repressions of *pupus* Caligula's youth. Momigliano (1932) drew attention to Caligula's ancestry and, much like Gelzer (1918), inadequate preparation for the purple. W. Eck in the edition of *Der neue Pauly* (2003-2012) depicted Caligula as the crazed madman of lore. No essential political measures were implemented during his reign, while he, possibly due to insanity, exceeded all bounds. Hanslik (1979) saw the emperor's illness as the cause for his ensuing despotic capriciousness. The interest in diagnosing Caligula's mental condition led and still leads to a long list of (pseudo) medical and (pseudo) psychological and psychiatric publications.

psychological approaches. The military historian Arther Ferrill takes Caligula's childhood and early environment in the military as its starting point. Out of his turbulent juvenescence grew a traumatised, degenerate, and ultimately mad young man who drove the realm to ruin in a reign of terror.¹⁰⁸ Ferrill's study reflected the psychoanalytic analysis of Hans Sachs' *Bubi Caligula* (1932). P. Renucci, *Caligula* (2011) focused on Caligula's character flaws due to the social environment in which he was raised.

Aloys Winterling, appreciating the limitations of historical biography, took a different turn by conceptualising the socio-political and communicative context of Caligula's reign.¹⁰⁹ The focus of this approach is on communication, propaganda, representation, the constraints of rulership and power politics. Winterling, too, took the notion of Caligula's madness as his starting point, asking what lay behind it. What was diagnosed as madness was merely the conflict between the republican-minded Roman elite and an emperor seeking to legitimise his position through the exercise of absolute power. Even if the senatorial literary texts contain false judgements, they do contain significant historical truths.¹¹⁰

Winterling's central theme concerned the ambiguity (*Doppelbödigkeit*) of emperor-Senate communication and Caligula's breaching it. Suggested is a structural analysis which shows the paradoxical situation within which both emperor and Senate had to operate. The mechanism to deal with this inconsistent state functioned on two levels. Manifest communication implied upholding the suggestion of the still operative traditional *res publica*, while on the latent level, the existence of a pyramidal social hierarchy with the emperor on top was recognised. The traditional socio-political organisation, meant to prevent a dictatorship and centred on the Roman elite and its institutions, clashed with the increasing importance of the *domus Caesaris*, in which the *paterfamilias* had to legitimise his position of power as emperor. Augustus had cleverly balanced his position with the senatorial elite; his successors faced the problem of how to deal with this increasingly strained communication system.¹¹¹

Although neglecting Shadi Bartsch's valuable work on theatricality and doublespeak, Winterling's emphasis on the incompatible coexistence of a republic and emperorship with its ambiguous two-level communication system will prove to be an essential aspect of the analysis presented in this thesis.¹¹² Furthermore, the

^{108.} Ferrill, 1991.

^{109.} Winterling, 2003, 2009, 2011.

^{110.} Winterling, 2003, p. 11.

^{111.} Winterling, 2009, p. 119.

^{112.} Bartsch, 1994.

incompatible coexistence of an autocratic emperor with a republican Senate led to the assumption of Caligula intending to change his role from *princeps* in a republic to an absolute sovereign oriental or Hellenistic style.¹¹³ The assumption was not new. Willrich had been the first to suggest a strong oriental and Hellenistic influence on Caligula.¹¹⁴ The hypothesis finds support in Caligula's public recognition of the Hellenized Egyptian cult of Isis and Serapis. This cult had reached the Greek cities in southern Italy in the third century BCE. Caligula's recognition ended the oppression of this cult, after which it spread throughout the realm. A striking example is the, at first glance, somewhat curious anecdote of Caligula pouring out piles of gold pieces to walk over them barefooted.¹¹⁵ This act may, however, have been an act of divination, Egyptian style.¹¹⁶ Particularly noteworthy is the Egyptian sibling-lovers concept observable in the deification of Caligula's sister, Drusilla. Statues of the Egyptian queen Arsinoë II and her brother Ptolemy II Philadelphus (Figure 6), both of whom were deified as sibling lovers, were erected in the gardens of Sallust in Rome to represent the Roman imperial sibling couple. The monument also drew parallels with the ancient Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris.



Fig. 6. Busts of Arsinoë II Philadelphus and Ptolemy III Evergetes.

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^{113.} Winterling, 2003, pp.115ff.

^{114.} Willrich's assumption was taken up by Lambrechts (1953), Köberlein (1962), Gag   (1968), and Adams (2007).

^{115.} Suet. *Cal.* 42; Dio 59.28.10.

^{116.} Guey, 1977, pp. 443-446.

Overlooking one and a half-century of Caligulan studies several trends are noticeable. Following Quidde's way of turning Caligula and his reign into a mirror of one's age, Willrich instigated the beginning of the revisionist or apologetic Caligula tradition. Characteristic of this trend is the partial or total rejection of the validity of the extant literary texts to replace them with explanations considered more rational. Anti-revisionism was fuelled by those scholars who had personally lived under tyranny. They accepted most of what the senatorial texts from the ancient world reported under the assumption that the use of power to murder makes that person a murderer. Such a person cannot be discussed in morally neutral terms. Other studies take an intermediate position in which evidence from non-literary sources supplements the literary texts from the ancient world.

Although this thesis builds upon the afore-mentioned works, it differs significantly in its approach. This study introduces the notion of adhocratic leadership as distinctive of Caligula's leadership. The emphasis on Caligula's adhocratic leadership allows for an emphasis on the context of the reign, and how the different actors tried to create the conditions which best suited their interests.

The design of this thesis

In order to analyse whether the adhocratic model helps us to better understand Caligula's leadership, this thesis is structured in the following chapters. After the Introduction with the *status quaestionis* and an overview of Caligulan literary sources from ancient times, Chapter 1 analyses the concept of adhocratic leadership. The next chapters analyse the context of Caligula's takeover of power. Chapter 2 looks at the context in which Caesar and Augustus presented their power. Chapter 3 studies Caligula's presentation of his family to legitimise his position. Chapter 4 analyses Caligula's succession. I suggest that Caligula's receiving all powers at once presented an important new step in the development of Roman leadership. The remainder of the thesis examines the way in which Caligula used adhocratic leadership by focusing on his relations with the Senate (Chapter 5) and the different roles the emperor was expected to play. Chapter 6 deals with Caligula's adhocratic manipulation of reality in his military role. In chapters 7, 8 and 9 Caligula's civic role is central. Chapter 7 focuses on Caligula's emulation and transformation of the Augustan political system. Chapter 8 analyses Caligula's restructuring of formal connections, which can be understood as an attempt to adhocratic rule. Whereas the centrality of the leader and his visual presentation are essential aspects of adhocratic leadership, chapter 9 concentrates on Caligula's

visual power. Caligula's adhocratic interpretation of his religious role is the subject of chapter 10. The chapter also presents an example of reactions to Caligula's adhocratic leadership exemplified by Philo's character assassination of Caligula. The last chapter deals with the emperor's demise and aftermath. A summary and conclusion conclude the main text. A selection of damages to material objects related to Caligula and his family are shown in Appendix A. A bibliography and a list of the visual documentation close the thesis.

Adhocratic leadership is set to adapt and improvise rules and structures based on the needs and circumstances of a specific situation as perceived by the leader.

1

ADHOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

This chapter introduces the concept of adhocratic leadership and looks at the nature of Roman emperorship. Augustus, conventionally depicted as Rome's first emperor, had changed the political structure of the Roman Republic to form an autocratic system with a strongman holding absolute power at the top, the Roman emperor. Within this autocratic system, the emperor could exercise his power at will, albeit ideologically constrained by tradition and expectations about his behaviour.¹¹⁷ He could, for example, rule as a bureaucrat or administrator following protocol and strict regulations, as a personal overseer Hadrian-style or as a tyrant such as, according to some, Nero or Caligula.¹¹⁸ However, a style of leadership that appears to do greater justice to the undefined and unarticulated position of the emperor in the Early Roman Principate, the formative period of Roman emperorship, is adhocratic leadership.

^{117.} Hekster, 2023.

^{118.} Administrator: Millar, 1992; personal overseer Hadrian-style: Birley, 1997; a tyrant: Nero: Sen. *Octavia*, 504ff; Caligula: Suet. *Cal.*

What is adhocratic leadership?

Adhocracy is a concept from management theory used to describe the organisational structure of companies and organisations. The McKinsey employees Ridderstråle and Birkinshaw distinguished three organisational models to characterise the management structure of an organisation (Figure 7).¹¹⁹ These are bureaucracy, meritocracy, and adhocracy.

Bureaucratic leadership centres on procedures, regulations and routines, while meritocratic leadership seeks adjustment of activities based on the interpretation of information. Adhocratic leadership focuses on concrete opportunities by reacting to perceived chances. Company-wise, this involves the reduction or removal of middle management layers. Another method is breaking up project teams to allow employees to initiate new projects and follow their interests and skills. Large companies may decentralise their activities to enable staff better to target specific groups of customers in their region. For example, the pharmaceutical and biotechnological multinational GlaxoSmithKline opted for this policy.¹²⁰

Bureaucratic leadership is based on well-defined rules and regulations. Decisions are made top-down through the hierarchy, with superiors telling subordinates what to do. Meritocratic management allows for decisions resulting from argument and discussion, with participants being able to present their points of view. Adhocratic leadership is ad hoc and experimental, following a trial-and-error model. Such leadership includes strong elements of uncertainty, allowing for more significant risks and seeking quick responses. Examples are gentlemen's agreements that are not formalised in writing and allow for the immediate implementation of experimental projects. An example was Costa Coffee's Project Marlow. This project of one of the largest coffee chains in the world intended to develop a new concept for coffee vending machines. The project went ahead after a probative handshake.¹²¹ The example shows that adhocratic leadership strongly relies on the person of the leader. Therefore, the leader's visibility is an essential aspect of adhocratic leadership.

Bureaucratic leadership motivates people through remunerations and financial bonuses; meritocratic and adhocratic leadership motivates through performances and appreciation. A meritocratic leader motivates through interesting work,

^{119.} Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, 2015, n.p.

^{120.} Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, 2015, n.p.

^{121.} Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, 2015, n.p.

enabling personal accomplishments, while adhocratic leadership focuses on challenges. This allows employees the freedom to do as they see fit, albeit within limits defined by company policy. The gaming company Valve, for example, gave its employees full responsibility for implementing their projects.¹²²

The right organizing model often varies according to the business environment in which a company competes.

Three organizing models	Bureaucracy Formal, positional authority is privileged	Meritocracy Individual knowledge is privileged	Adhocracy Action is privileged
Under which conditions is the model appropriate?	Relatively stable environment	High levels of technological progress	High levels of unpredictability
How are activities coordinated?	Rules and procedures	Mutual adjustment and the free flow of ideas	Around a problem or opportunity
How are decisions made?	Through the hierarchy	Via argument and discussion—the power of the idea	By experimentation, trial and error
How are people motivated?	Extrinsic rewards—pay	Personal mastery, interesting work	Stretch goals and recognition for achieving them

McKinsey&Company | Source: Julian Birkinshaw and Jonas Ridderstråle

Fig. 7. Organising Model of Three Management Styles, according to Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, 2015, s.l.

Bureaucratic leadership works best in regulated, low-risk environments, while meritocratic leadership suits service-related companies and professional environments like universities. The adhocratic style is best for start-ups that operate under rapidly changing circumstances and organisations with a flexible, informal management structure. Examples of these last are early 21st-century multinationals such as Amazon, Google and X, the former Twitter, and organisations like NASA.¹²³

^{122.} Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, 2015, n.p.

^{123.} Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, 2015, n.p.

Defining adhocratic leadership

From the characterisations by Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle, I note the following defining aspects of adhocratic leadership for the purpose of this thesis:

1. A focus on challenges.
2. A focus on concrete opportunities by reacting to perceived chances.
3. Ad hoc and experimental, following a trial-and-error model.
4. Strong elements of uncertainty, allowing for risk-taking and seeking quick responses.
5. Strong reliance on the person of the leader.
6. High leader's visibility.
7. Reacting to rapidly changing circumstances.

Of the different leadership styles to which Birkinshaw and Ridderstråle refer, the adhocratic style best matches the governance of a political constellation such as the Early Roman Principate. I note the following characteristics of the Early Roman Principate:

- 1) The Early Roman Principate was a complex system in which emperors often implemented policy and administrative structure changes based on their own assessment of circumstances. Decision-making was arbitrary and impulsive.
- 2) Emperors dealt with various interests and factions within the empire, requiring compromises and alliances to maintain power and stability.
- 3) Emperors adapted rules and structures to respond to political, military, and economic challenges.
- 4) Due to the lack of a formalised political system that defined the position of the emperor, the emperor could rule ad hoc with no one to answer to. Ideally, traditional expectations bound imperial behaviour, but the emperor could overstep these boundaries.
- 5) Due to the emperor's absolute power, governance implied high levels of unpredictability and uncertainty.
- 6) Emperors fostered recognition for their achievements through their visibility expressed in extravaganzas, construction works, and experimental projects.
- 7) Emperors could create their own reality and make others accept it.

This description fits the situation of the Early Roman Principate, the formative period of what would become Roman emperors¹²⁴. Linking the characterisations of adhocratic leadership to those of the Early Roman Principate, I define adhocratic

¹²⁴. The term Early Roman Principate is preferred to Early Roman Empire because the empire already existed before the arrival of the emperor. The use of the term 'emperor' follows scholarly convention. For a discussion of the term, see Hekster, 2023.

leadership as a leadership style set to adapt and improvise rules and structures based on the needs and circumstances of a specific situation as perceived by the leader.

Early leaders such as Lucius Sulla, Julius Caesar and Pompey managed to carry out critical constitutional reforms thanks to their autocratic leadership. Sulla marched on Rome to become a dictator. Pompey the Great broke with what was one of the fundamental principles of the Roman Republic when he became sole consul. After all, one of the republican guarantees against dictatorship was the requirement to have official positions occupied by at least two functionaries. The problem with the leadership of these men was the senatorial resistance to their performances due to their autocratic leadership. Such leadership too much resembled the kingship that republican Romans disapproved of. Furthermore, the political constellation of the late Republic, marked by civil war and general uncertainty, demanded a different kind of leadership than offered by these strongmen. Mary Beard's observation that the Roman Empire "created the emperors, not the other way around" or Hekster's conclusion that "context created emperorship" finds its truth in these examples.¹²⁵

Augustus used the specific context of his victory in the civil war (32-30 BCE) to change the structure of the Roman Republic. In an attempt to not being seen as an autocrat, Augustus developed a kind of leadership which was more set to react and adapt to a period of fast-changing socio-political conditions. I identify his rule as proto-adhocratic.

The relation between autocratic and adhocratic leadership

Autocratic leadership in its most minimal definition means a one-person rule. Different autocrats rule in different ways. One of the ways in which they can rule is through adhocratic leadership. Adhocratic leadership is specifically set to adapt to contextual conditions as perceived by the leader. A 21st-century example is America's 45th President, Donald Trump, whose policies reflected a personally perceived reality. Trump, for example, frequently governed by executive order, alienated allies, claimed the largest turn-out during his inauguration (images showed that it was the lowest) and mobilised his following to attack the Capitol in an attempt to confirm his reality of having won the previous elections.

^{125.} Beard, 2023, p. 32; Hekster, 2023, p. 326.

What is the nature of Roman emperorship?

The Roman imperial system is centred around an all-powerful leader whose function and position are not formally defined. The emperor's all-powerful character defines the system as autocratic. Augustus created the outline of an imperial system, which was ideologically substantively defined by traditional expectations. These expectations referred to the different roles that the emperor was expected to fulfil.¹²⁶ They indicated the bandwidth within which the emperor was supposed to operate.

Although these expectations created a range within which individual emperors were deemed to operate, there remained space for emperors to effectuate these roles in specific ways. Hence, emperorship was, to an extent, an individualised form of leadership. The same space for the individual character of Roman emperorship follows from Millar's famous dictum: "The emperor was what the emperor did."¹²⁷ Although Millar's emperor was reactive, responding to petitions sent to him, he could still choose which problems to address and how to solve them. Whereas Millar's analysis of Roman emperorship left many aspects of leadership aside, as Keith Hopkins pointed out, it did, in this way, catch the fundamental aspect of Roman leadership: the individualisation of leadership and power.¹²⁸ Hekster's enhancement of expected performances not only responds to and complements Hopkins' criticism but accentuates the individual character of Roman emperorship. After all, the way in which the emperor performed his functions depended on personal considerations, which were often defined by contextual conditions and limited by the expectations of what was considered good leadership.

A form of leadership that acknowledges the individual character of leadership within the context of these expectations is adhocratic leadership, as defined above. The Heksterian model of Roman emperorship exemplifies this fundamental aspect of Roman leadership. This thesis assumes that the Heksterian model of imperial roles, in which the emperor appraises his own role within or beyond the limits set by traditional expectations, can refer to adhocratic leadership as defined in this study. The reign of Emperor Caligula serves to verify this supposition.

Considering the non-formalised political situation characteristic of the Early Roman Principate with the ongoing transition from Republic to Empire, the emperors were forced to adapt and improvise rules and structures based on the needs

^{126.} Hekster, 2023.

^{127.} Millar, 1992, p. 6.

^{128.} Hopkins, 1978.

and circumstances of a specific situation, albeit ideally within the limits set by traditional expectations. Governance in this period required ad hoc responses with high flexibility toward different social groups in establishing rules and in defending and legitimating the position of the emperor. Since it is a hallmark of adhocratic leadership to adapt and improvise rules and structures according to the perception of the emperor, Roman imperial leadership during the Early Principate can be defined as adhocratic. The case of the emperor Caligula serves to establish whether the concept of adhocratic leadership allows for another way of understanding the formative period of the Roman imperial system. Further research may show the applicability of the idea of adhocratic leadership for analysing the leadership of later emperors and leadership in other contexts both ancient and modern.

2

JULIUS CAESAR'S ATTEMPTED AUTOCRATIC AND AUGUSTUS' PROTO- ADHOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

Chapter 2 looks at the context in which Caesar and Augustus presented their power. Attempts during the Roman Republic to instigate autocratic rule failed due to senatorial opposition. This chapter briefly describes Julius Caesar's autocratic conduct and Augustus' transformation of the socio-political system through proto-adhocratic leadership. With proto-adhocratic leadership I mean a style of leadership in which several of the elements identified as adhocratic are used but not all of them. Caligula would use this context to develop a fully adhocratic style of leadership.



Fig. 8. The Arles-Caesar. Bust presumed to be Julius Caesar.

Musée départemental de l'Arles antique, Inv. RHO.1984.05.1943.¹²⁹

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Caesar's and Augustus' actions were not without precedence. While Pompey took care not to be represented on centrally minted coinage, Caesar was the first person alive to be depicted on the obverse of coins minted in Rome.¹³⁰ In Roman eyes, such a practice was associated with oriental kingship. When an all-powerful Caesar (Figure 8) ostentatiously refused the kingly diadem offered to him by Mark Antony during the *Lupercalia* on 15 February 44 BCE,¹³¹ the "path that would undermine the republican system was clear."¹³² The name-play Caesar played, substituting Caesar for Rex, demonstrated his intention to personalise power. Caesar's ostentatious denial of kingship was hardly a subtle masking of his autocratic position.¹³³ Cicero

^{129.} For the controversy around the identification of this bust, see Beard, 2021, pp. 43-47.

^{130.} RRC 480; Hekster, 2023, p. 48.

^{131.} Suet. *Jul.* 79.2-3; Plut. *Caes.* 61.1-10.

^{132.} Koortbojian, 2013, p. 23. The event is frequently mentioned in the literature from ancient times. E.g., Cic. *Phil.* 2.85, Suet. *Jul.* 79.2. Dio 44.11.2. See, Koortbojian, 2013, p. 240, n. 27. The *Lupercalia* was an ancient purification festival with fertility rites (Adkins & Adkins, 1996, p. 136).

^{133.} Suet. *Jul.* 79.2, Plut. *Caes.* 61.3. Refusing honours, known as *recusatio imperii*, would become part of expected imperial behaviour. Augustus used this republican tradition to demonstrate his disavowal of full authority (*RGDA*, passim). Caligula's acceptance of all powers at once, except for the title *pater patriae*, was a breach from the Augustan example, one repeated by Nero (Suet. *Ner.* 8).

was not fooled. Referring to Caesar's calendar reforms, Cicero supposedly remarked: "You, Caesar, even forced the stars in the sky to obey you."¹³⁴ Controlling time is an essential example of the exercise of personal power.¹³⁵ Augustus would later follow suit.

Another example of Caesar's autocratic leadership was Antony's setting up of Caesar's statue on the Rostra. It was inscribed with the text *Parenti Optimo Merito* (To the most deserving parent).¹³⁶ Caesar's consent to such acts can be assumed.¹³⁷ Other examples of Caesar's personal power are the wide dissemination of his images, his control of the elections, his show of extravagance in dress like wearing the *toga purpurea*, red shoes and laurel crowns (all references to ancient kingship) and his behaviour. Particularly the exercise of personal power as an expression of divinity with many references to the mythic founder of Rome, Quirinus, emphasised Caesar's singular status.¹³⁸ Essential in all this was that Caesar's personal power went unchecked. It got him killed. His successor, therefore, concealed his personal power in a system publicised as a mixed constitution.

Augustus' proto-adhocratic leadership

In the shifting sands of Roman politics, one concept stood out: the Augustan mixed constitution.¹³⁹ The mixed constitution denoted the collaborative governance of Augustus and the Senate. Augustus, formerly known as Gaius Octavius, navigated the treacherous waters of Roman politics, seeking a delicate balance between traditional republican ideals and a system of sole leadership.¹⁴⁰ The

¹³⁴. Plut. *Caes.* 59.

¹³⁵. Feeney, 2007.

¹³⁶. Cic. *Fam.* 12.3.1; translation: Koortbojian, 2013, p. 37, 245 n. 72.

¹³⁷. For a discussion of the emperor's personal involvement in designing imperial messages (agency), see Zanker, 1987; Ando, 2000; Noreña, 2011; Pollini, 2012; Hölscher, 2018.

¹³⁸. Koortbojian, 2013, pp. 91-3. The question of Caesar's divinity is much debated in modern scholarship. For an overview of the problem, see Koortbojian, 2013, pp. 15-49 with Hekster, 2023, pp. 145-148.

¹³⁹. Whereas the period is conventionally referred to as the age of Augustus, fundamental developments are rarely the work of a single person (Morell et. al., 2019). This study, nevertheless, follows the conventional references to the person of Augustus as the prime instigator of the new political constellation.

¹⁴⁰. Wiseman, 2019, pp. 103, 200. Referring to Appian, Wiseman wrote: "To call him 'Octavian', as modern historians do, is to miss the point entirely, or (worse) to side with the assassins and their friends." (Wiseman, 2019, p. 103). Appian wrote how the new strongman changed both his patronymic and his name from 'Octavius, son of Octavius' to 'Caesar, son of Caesar'. (Appian, *The Civil Wars* 3.11.36-8).

principle that stood central in the concealment of the Augustan autocracy was consensus.¹⁴¹ Consensus refers to “a unanimous intersubjective agreement about social, religious, and political norms.”¹⁴² Augustus sought to reinforce the idea of consensus in the status-conscious Roman society, using various tactics. This thesis identifies these tactics as proto-adhocratic. Augustus is the hinge figure between autocratic and adhocratic leadership. The following Augustan tactics may support the identification.

One tactic concerned the establishment of a consilium, a council of fifteen randomly chosen senators responsible for setting the agenda.¹⁴³ Setting the agenda implies control of the context in which decisions are made. It emphasised the Senate’s responsibility, while actual decision-making rested with the emperor. The consilium was meant to let the senators play their role in government, thereby expressing the ideology and functionality of the new political constitution.¹⁴⁴ For example, the vital right to decide on a deceased person’s *apotheosis* remained with the Senate. So did the inclusion of *Senatus Consultum* on coinage, the right to confer titles and honours, and the issuing of senatorial decrees. Senatorial prestige and authority were thus assured, albeit pro forma. Tacitus provides a nice example of this in the passage where Piso demanded that the emperor Tiberius cast his vote first. “Cneius Piso asked, In what order will you vote, Cæsar? If first, I shall know what to follow; if last, I fear that I may differ from you unwillingly.”¹⁴⁵ Although governmental responsibility could thus be presumed, actual power was not shared.

Another vital Augustan tactic concerned the transformation of the Senate into a unified governing body.¹⁴⁶ No longer able to function as individual political leaders, the *ordo senatorius* became a novel political category that could be addressed as a single social unit.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the creation of a corporate identity for the equestrian order in addition to that of the Senate challenged the singular position of the Senate.¹⁴⁸ Freedmen, too, were allowed to assume roles as imperial agents,

^{141.} Eck, 2019, pp. 78-95.

^{142.} Ando, 2000, pp. 6-7.

^{143.} Drinkwater, 2019, p. 83; Russell, 2019, pp. 331-3.

^{144.} Tiberius let the consilium go dormant (Griffin, 2003, p. 74).

^{145.} Tac. *Ann.* 1.74.

^{146.} Russell, 2019, pp. 325-327.

^{147.} Amy Russell pointed to the discrepancies in Cicero’s claims (Cic. *Sest.* 137) of the *ordo senatorius* as Rome’s “guardian, leader, and defender” (Russell, 2019, p. 329). The loss of individual responsibility and the resulting downfall of family and clan importance was one of the reasons why republican-minded senators saw chances to re-install the republic after Caligula’s ascent.

^{148.} Rowe, 2002.

advisors, and commanders.¹⁴⁹ As a result, the traditional importance of family and clan connections was reduced. With parentage no longer a *conditio sine qua non* for essential functions, the senatorial order now faced competition from other social categories. Individual stature disappeared in the collectivism of unified social groups. Pitting groups against each other defused the influence of authoritative individuals. Caligula would later make good use of these in his conflict with the Senate.

A further Augustan tactic was to present his political system as a continuation of the old republic. Augustus fostered the perception of continuity, an idea that permeated Roman society. The marching of dead ancestors in processions for the deceased exemplified the perception of history as a continuous chain of events.¹⁵⁰ The suggestion of Roman history as a stable, clear-cut chain of events culminating in the Augustan reign was propagated through the reforms of the calendars. Of the forty-eight *fasti* found in Italy, forty-four belonged to the reign of Augustus and Tiberius.¹⁵¹

A notable example of these calendar reforms concerned the *Fasti Capitolini*. This calendar listed the names of every consul, triumph, and ovation. The names were carved onto the Parthian arch, which reflected the republican tradition of Rome. In this way, triumphs became attributed to Augustus and, after his death, to all subsequent emperors.¹⁵² This inclusion not only made the emperor part of the ongoing tradition but also emphasised the singularity of the emperor's position.¹⁵³ This unique position also included the emperor's family.

Rewriting calendars to reflect Augustus' and his family's centrality was a tactic with consequences. With numerous references to his victories, honours, family, marriages, births, festivities, and the like, the calendars conveyed detailed information about Augustus and his family, fictitious and real. As a result, the Augustan family gained such importance that control (*possessio*) of the imperial household became a prerequisite, if not a *conditio sine qua non*, for the emperorship.¹⁵⁴

An important tactic concerned the termination of the publication of the transactions of the state, the *acta senatus*. Augustus, however, kept control by appointing a

^{149.} Plut. *Ant.* 67. 9-10.

^{150.} Flower, 1996.

^{151.} Wallace-Hadrill, 2010, p. 245.

^{152.} Cornell, 1995.

^{153.} Russell, 2019, p. 157; Levick, 2010, p. 219.

^{154.} Wiedemann, 1989, p. 20.

loyalist to keep the minutes.¹⁵⁵ Augustus' control of the calendars allowed for the propagation of continuity.¹⁵⁶ However, temporal continuance must be ideologically substantiated. The presence of an all-powerful leader overruling the traditional elite challenged senatorial compliance and consensus. So did the presence of non-elite members in advisory boards. While non-elite participation in politics was not new, the growing influence of these individuals led to resentment. Freedmen (*liberti*), upstarts (*homines novi*), and provincial notables began to overshadow the traditional elite.¹⁵⁷ As a result, the crisis of competition, the separation between senatorial status and political power, between the emperor and the Senate increased.¹⁵⁸ Senators employing tactics like obstruction, resistance, and delaying decisions to maintain their traditional dominance demonstrate the resistance to the single-person rule.¹⁵⁹ Augustus allegedly wearing a protective breastplate under his toga, even in the Senate, signified these underlying tensions.¹⁶⁰

The decisive tactic in the Augustan creation of a template for the future society was his acceptance of the title *pater patriae*, father of the country, on 5 February 2 BCE.¹⁶¹ The title *pater patriae* was closely associated with that of *paterfamilias*, the head of a *familia*. A *familia* was "a group of persons subjected to the authority of the head of the family *natura aut iure*, by virtue of nature and law."¹⁶² By nature refers to male and female children and descendants of male children; by law refers to the wife, the wives of male descendants and his enslaved persons. The term *paterfamilias* indicated a "legally independent Roman male citizen holding supreme – indeed, sole – rights of property ownership within a defined circle (...) as well as extreme powers over the persons of others within that unit by virtue of his paternal power (*patria potestas*)."¹⁶³ *Materfamilias*, on the contrary, was an honorary title referring to a woman married to a *paterfamilias* but without a similar judicial position.¹⁶⁴

By equating his role as *paterfamilias* with that of *pater patriae*, Augustus not only presented himself as a benevolent father, safeguarding the well-being of the people and the state, but he also created what would become the main criterium for imperial legitimation. Although not challenged due to his *auctoritas*, Augustus' position and

¹⁵⁵. Levick, 2010, pp. 132-133.

¹⁵⁶. Feeney, 2007, pp. 172-193.

¹⁵⁷. Millar, 1992, pp. 69 – 122.

¹⁵⁸. Russell, 2019, p. 336.

¹⁵⁹. Eck, 2019, pp. 78-95; Giovannini, 1986.

¹⁶⁰. Dio 54.12.3.

¹⁶¹. *RGDA* 35; Hillard, 2019, pp. 305-324.

¹⁶². Cantarella, 2016, p. 419.

¹⁶³. Dixon, 2016, p. 464.

¹⁶⁴. Höbenreich, 2023, pp. 752-753 .

his memory would gain considerably if he became the patriarch of a dynastic line. Hence, his primary concern was to secure the dynastic continuation of his house.

Augustus claimed that his rule was based on *auctoritas*. “*Auctoritate omnibus praestiti*” (I excelled all in influence), he wrote in the overview of his life and accomplishments, the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*.¹⁶⁵ This concept was laden with traditional and religious connotations. It is best understood as status based on reputation, charismatic authority and non-coercive power.¹⁶⁶ However, contrary to *potestas* (legal authority) and *imperium* (military authority), *auctoritas* was no transferable commodity. Lineage was (Figure 9).



Fig. 9. Advertising dynastic hopes. Augustus raised and adopted his grandsons Gaius and Lucius to make them heir to the principate. The design failed due to their premature deaths, whereupon Livia's son Tiberius and Antonia Minor's son Germanicus came to the fore. **Obv.** head of Augustus behind lituus; **rev.** heads of Gaius Caesar, Julia, and Lucius Caesar. BM 443406001.

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The introduction of an imperial family of prime importance headed by a *paterfamilias* who, by nature of his position, qualified as leader of the state was a critical step in Augustus' attempt to secure the dynastic continuation of his house. The reformation of the *Ludi Saeculares*, the centennial games, in 17 BCE expressed the new status of the Augustan family. Senatorial confirmation of the status of the imperial family came with the dedication of the *Ara Pacis*, the altar of peace, on

^{165.} *RGDA* 34.3; Rowe, 2013.

^{166.} Whether the concept referred to a specific event, as Greg Rowe argued, or an allocated quality did not diminish its importance (Rowe, 2013, pp. 1-15).

30 January 9 BCE.¹⁶⁷ With this gesture, the Senate confirmed the singular status of the emperor and his family, thereby acknowledging the imbalance of the mixed constitution. Furthermore, notions like consensus and *auctoritas*, which were presented as constitutive for the Augustan mixed constitution, disguised the reality of Augustus' leadership.

The disguise of the Augustan 'reality' is perhaps the most notable in the double-edged language of the communication between the emperor and the Roman elite. Quoting Stephen Greenblatt, Shadi Bartsch wrote how "the gulf between the self-legitimizing rhetoric of the imperial court and the obsessive nostalgia of the former ruling class" led to this class' assumption that "when speech enters the milieu of the court, it is inevitably perverted; indeed, its perversion is precisely the privilege and achievement of power which is itself a form of distorted communication."¹⁶⁸ Referring to Tacitus' view of imperial history, Bartsch wrote how all are forced to endorse "the public script" while the "private truth (...) goes unspoken".¹⁶⁹ Winterling provides an even clearer example of doublespeak. Referring to Caligula, he wrote how the "Senat manifestierte in *einem* Beschluss seine Besorgnis um die kaiserliche Sicherheit und zugleich die Tatsache, dass seine Mitglieder, die diesen Beschluss fassten, dessen Leben bedrohten"¹⁷⁰

Augustus' proto-adhocratic leadership can be summarised as follows:

1. Arbitrary decision-making: Augustus exercised personal leadership by centralising imperial power and making decisions according to his perception of what was necessary. Examples are the creation of new positions and titles to address the complexity of his administration. His arbitrary decision-making led to his acting outside the existing rules and structures of the mixed constitution he had himself installed to achieve his goals.

2. Personal exercise of power: Augustus likely realised the failure of previous attempts at autocratic rule. He developed an ambiguous system using adhocratic aspects to conceal his autocratic power. Although his acceptance of the title *pater patriae* actually confirmed the autocratic nature of the system, his adhocratic policies helped suppress opposition.¹⁷¹

^{167.} Severy, 2004, pp. 95-98; Russell, 2019, p. 341.

^{168.} Bartsch, 1994, p. 190; quote from S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago, 1980, p. 130.

^{169.} Bartsch, 1994, p. 23.

^{170.} Winterling, 2003, p. 131.

^{171.} Acceptance of the title *pater patriae*: RGDA 34.3.

3. *Visual power*: Augustus clearly understood the importance of visual power for disseminating his policies and accepting his new rule.¹⁷² An estimate of the number of statues of Augustus in the Roman world ranges from 25,000 to 50,000.¹⁷³

4. *Promotion of extravagance and excess*: Augustus understood the importance of influencing public opinion and creating a positive image. Propagating concepts such as *civilitas* and *consensus* meant to legitimise his rule and highlight his achievements

5. *Political arbitrariness*: Turning the senatorial and knightly orders into corporate unities created artificial rhetorical unities, which facilitated the pitting of groups against one another.

6. *Power of personal relationships*: Augustus maintained an extensive network of loyal followers, beneficiaries, and non-elite persons he rewarded and supported in exchange for loyalty and services. This provided an informal but effective way of governance, manipulation, and control because it gave beneficiaries responsibility without actual power.

7. *Experimental projects and construction works*: Augustus proudly proclaimed the architectonic changes he made in Rome. A city of bricks was turned into one of marble.¹⁷⁴

In short, attempts during the later Republic at autocratic leadership failed due to senatorial opposition, as the example of Caesar showed. Augustus tried to conceal his autocratic leadership by using adhocratic tactics. The double-edged language system, an essential feature of adhocratic regimes, allowed for the propagation of principles such as *consensus* and *auctoritas* as central to the joint government system. However, the presence of an all-powerful leader and the growing influence of non-elite members challenged these ideals. Augustus' assumption of the title *pater patriae* represented a pivotal moment in the development of imperial rule because it challenged the basic principle of joint rule of the mixed constitution. Although the growing prominence of the imperial family solidified the emperor's authority, it also undermined the principle of consensual rule.

¹⁷². RGDA, Hölscher, 1987; Zanker, 1987.

¹⁷³. Beard, 2023, p. 16.

¹⁷⁴. Suet. *Aug.* 28. 3; Elsner, 1996, pp. 32-53. Cf. The work of Diane Favro for a scrutiny of Augustus' claim. <https://idre.ucla.edu/featured/from-brick-to-marble-did-augustus-really-transform-rome> retrieved on 04-09-2024, Also, Wiseman, 2019 about the Augustan Palatine.

Augustus thus set several steps towards adhocratic leadership but he had to operate within the still dominant traditional structures of the republican political order which prevented the implementation of a full adhocratic style. Caligula would eventually break through these traditional structures to develop a fully-fledged adhocratic rule.



3

CALIGULA'S FAMILY

This chapter analyses how an inexperienced Caligula used his singular descent in his visual programme through the depiction of his parents and siblings. By focusing on the singularity of his family, Caligula could legitimise his position and his personalisation of power, which is a central aspect of adhocratic leadership. Another critical aspect of Caligula's adhocratic leadership was his use of visual power, which is the subject of chapter 9. His relationship with his imperial uncle Tiberius is dealt with in chapter 4.



Fig. 10. A pre-principate portrait of Caligula on coins. The portrait shows a high stern with a small indentation, a strong, lightly bent nose, a small mouth, and a strong chin. The hair falls to the neck, which is muscular. Carthago Nova, Spain. Tiberius. 33-37 CE. Legend: C CAESAR TI N QVIN(Q) IN (or C) V I N K(AR); reverse of RPC 182.¹⁷⁵ Cf. Fig. 31.

SNG Copenhagen 502. © Courtesy forum ancient coins. <https://www.forumancientcoins.com>

¹⁷⁵. Boschung, 1989, p.25. The obverse shows the laureated head of emperor Tiberius with his names and titles in the legend: TI CAESAR DIV(I) AVG(V) F AVG(VST)(V) P M.

Caligula (Figure 10) was a member of the imperial family of Augustus. From the father's side, Caligula was the grandson of the elder Drusus (38 BCE - 9 CE) and Antonia Minor (36 BCE -37 CE). Drusus earned the honorary title 'Germanicus' following his military campaigns in Germania.¹⁷⁶ Antonia Minor was the daughter of Mark Antony (83 - 30 BCE) and Augustus' sister Octavia Minor (†11 BCE). Caligula came under the care of Antonia after the death of his father and the banishment of his mother. Through his mother, Caligula descended from Augustus' comrade-in-arms Vipsanius Agrippa (64/3 - 12 BCE) and Augustus' daughter Julia (39 BCE - 14 CE). The couple had five children, among them Caligula's mother, Agrippina the Elder (Figure 11).¹⁷⁷



Fig. 11. Gemma Claudia. Germanicus Julius Caesar and Agrippina the Elder (detail). Ca. 49 CE. Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Inv. No. IXa 63 © Photo courtesy of Ilya Shurygin.

^{176.} Suet. *CL.* 1.4.

^{177.} Suetonius wrote that Caligula got upset when his Agrippan descent was mentioned, supposedly because of his grandfather's humble origins (Suet. *Cal.* 23.1). However, Agrippa figured prominently on Caligulan coinage. The mint in Caesaraugusta (Spain) issued dupondii depicting Agrippina as Agrippa's daughter: AGRIPPINA M F MAT G CAESARIS AVGVSTI (Agrippina Marci Filia mater Gai Caesar Augustus; RPC 380), while local communities honoured Caligula's maternal grandfather (Barrett, 2015, p. 290 with n.23).

Some scholars see Caligula's exceptional heritage depicted on the Grand Camée de France (Figure 12). Since identifying persons on works of art which are not clearly identified remains at best an educated guess, the identification of the figures on the cameo is still contested. Barrett's assertion that the little boy on the middle left with his raised arm and shield is five-year old Caligula cannot be corroborated.¹⁷⁸ Less doubt exists about the family members presented in Caligula's visual programme.



Fig. 12. Grand Camée de France, Rome, 1st century. Sardonyx. Frame: early 19th century Paris. Cabinet des Medailles, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. 264. [ark:/12148/cb444396783](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:fr:FRBNF444396783), Notice n°: FRBNF44439678. Whether the cameo was a gift for Tiberius to demonstrate or emphasise the status quo of the succession or a misinterpretation of principal intentions is uncertain.¹⁷⁹ © Luca Giuliani, 2006. Wikimedia commons. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 CC BY-SA 4.0

^{178.} Barrett, 2015, pp. 27-8. Also, Beard, 2021, pp. 45- with n.4 chapter II, p. 307.

^{179.} Giuliani, 2010, p. 42 with Brandt, 2021, pp. 132-3; Von den Hoff, 2011, p. 39.

Caligula's father: Germanicus



Fig. 13. Portrait of Germanicus. Musée Saint-Raymond Ra 342, Toulouse.

© Photo: Daniel Martin, Licence Ouverte.

In the winter of 18/19 CE, Germanicus (Figure 13) took his son on a sightseeing trip up the Nile. Despite restrictions on senatorial class visits to the vital grain supplier Egypt without imperial permission, the general's decision met with only a mild admonition from the emperor. There is no indication that Tiberius saw it as more than a breach of protocol. Returning to Syria, Germanicus became embroiled in disputes with Calpurnius Piso, the Augustan legate. When hostilities escalated, Germanicus fell ill and died. Rumours of poisoning swirled, fuelled by the discovery

of magical charms and, as Tacitus put it, “other horrors by which in popular belief souls are devoted to the infernal deities”.¹⁸⁰ While suspicion of murdering Germanicus fell on Piso, Agrippina the Elder carried her husband's ashes to Rome.¹⁸¹ Due to the absence of Tiberius and his mother, Livia (Figure 14), at Germanicus' funeral, speculations about the emperor's role in Germanicus' death spread.¹⁸²

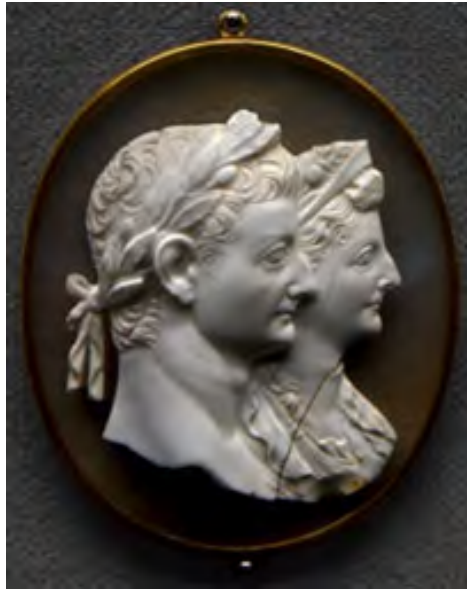


Fig. 14. Busts of Tiberius and Livia. 14 – 29 CE. Florence, National Archaeological Museum, Corridor of Maria Maddalena dei Medici. Inv. 14533. Giuliano n° 159. © Photo courtesy of Ilya Shurygin

While the extent of Tiberius' involvement in Germanicus' death is uncertain, the emperor did not withhold posthumous honours for Germanicus. The bronze tablet known as the *Tabula Siarensis* preserved part of the *Senatus Consultum de Honoribus Germanici Decernendis* (end 19 CE, Figure 15). It confirmed Tiberius' agreement to

^{180.} Tac. *Ann.* 2.59; embroiled in disputes with Calpurnius Piso: Tac. *Ann.* 2.57; other horrors: Tac. *Ann.* 2.69.

^{181.} Piso, charged with arrogant behaviour towards his superiors, sedition, extreme cruelty, corrupting military discipline, and rejoicing in the death of Germanicus, committed suicide; his wife Plancina was charged with blasphemy, but an intervention by Livia saved her life (Gonzalez, 1999, pp.123-142 with Potter & Damon, 1999, pp.13-42). Bequest of Livia: *s c de Pisone*, 113. Speculations about Tiberius' involvement and his fear of Germanicus: Tac. *Ann.* 1.7; Vell. Pat. *Rom. Hist.* Book II, 116, 123, 129. Potthecary, 2002, pp. 387-438; Pettinger, 2012, pp. 183-194. Opposed view: Levick, 1999, p. 50.

^{182.} Tac. *Ann.* 3.1.3.

all honours except for the suggestion of a golden bust among the rhetors' *clipeatae* and shields.¹⁸³



Fig. 15. *Senatus Consultum de Honoribus Germanici decernendis* 19 CE.

Decree of the Senate in honour of Germanicus regarding the funerary honours decreed by the Senate on the death of Germanicus. Rome, 19 CE. The funerary honours for Germanicus closely resembled the *supremi honores* mentioned on the *Tabula Illicitana*, awarded to Tiberius' son, Drusus the Younger, in 23 CE (CIL VI (1879), n. 911 = (1902), n. 31199. *Tab. Heb.* 1-4 in Crawford, 1996, no 37 & 38). Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.83.3) relates a dozen honours, while the *Acta* mentioned over thirty.

© Photo courtesy of prof. dr. Manfred Clauss. Epigraphik Datenbank Clauss/Slaby.

Germanicus' posthumous reputation soared. A third-century CE army unit, for example, still celebrated Germanicus' birthday.¹⁸⁴ He is depicted as an affable and charming person, handsome, brave, a man of letters, an "epitome of moral rectitude", a "radiant figure compounded of all virtues and excellence to set against the dark soul of Tiberius."¹⁸⁵ Some provincial magistrates referred to themselves as priests of Germanicus, highlighting his elevated or even divine status.¹⁸⁶ The regard in which Germanicus was held by the military worked through in the support Caligula would get from the soldiery. For example, it were the praetorians who first hailed Caligula as *imperator* two days before the Senate proclaimed him the Augustus.

^{183.} Tac. *Ann.* 2.83.3; Crawford, 1996, no 37 and 38; Gonzalez, 1999, p. 124.

^{184.} Fink, 1971, no 117.

^{185.} Tac. *Ann.* 1.33.1; 2.73.2-3.

^{186.} See e.g., RPC 3019.

Caligula's portrayal of his father, Germanicus

Caligula's father is depicted on ten out of 36 of Caligula's gold and silver types, but only on four bronze types. Germanicus was portrayed as a noble, popular general. Despite several opportunities to claim emperorship, Germanicus remained loyal to Tiberius.¹⁸⁷ Germanicus' sudden death in Syria under suspicious circumstances had created rumours of imperial involvement. To commemorate his father, Caligula issued a dupondius that depicted Germanicus in a triumphal *quadriga*, with the reverse commemorating his recovery of the lost Varus standards (Figure 16). This symbolism elevated Germanicus to a semi-divine status, associating him with Jupiter (the *quadriga* was the chariot of Jupiter) and Victory.



Fig. 16. Dupondius, Rome, 37 – 41. **Obv.** GERMANICVS CAESAR: Germanicus, bare-headed and cloaked, standing in *quadriga*, right, holding an eagle-tipped sceptre. **Rev.** his recovery of the lost Varus standards is commemorated. Traditionally, the *quadriga* was the chariot of Jupiter. On late 3rd century BCE coins, Jupiter stands in a *quadriga* driven by Victory while obverse, the Janiform heads of the Dioscuri are shown. The *quadriga* was the chariot of the gods.¹⁸⁸ If the design of the Germanicus-dupondius is meant to evoke that of the *carpentum*-sestertius, this would be an indication of a programme suggesting Caligula's parents' divinity.¹⁸⁹ Germanicus, RIC I² Caligula 57.

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^{187.} Tac. *Ann.* 1. 2.

^{188.} Jennings Rose, Dietrich & Peatfield, 2012.

^{189.} Wood suggested that the reason for the higher denomination for the Agrippina coin might be explained by the fact that it was through her that Caligula could demonstrate his descent from Augustus (Wood, 1999, p. 210).

Caligula's intention of raising his father to (semi-) divine status finds further support in the renaming of September to 'Germanicus'. This choice created a dynastic sequence of Caesar-Augustus-Germanicus.¹⁹⁰ Renaming months after relatives was not uncommon, but also not uncontested. When Julius Caesar allowed *Quintilis* to be renamed *Julius*, it was considered excess. Augustus changed *Sextilis* into *August(us)* while Tiberius refused to have a month named after him.¹⁹¹ Of the months named after Caligula's family in Egypt, *Gaeios*, *Drusilleios*, *Germanikeios*, and *Kaisareios*, only the last two survived until Claudius' reign.¹⁹²

Caligula's mother: Agrippina the Elder

Caligula's mother, Agrippina the Elder (16-13 BCE- 18-10-33 CE, Figure 17), was the daughter of Julia, Augustus' only child, and Marcus Agrippa, Augustus' close ally and second-in-command. Agrippina the Elder displayed remarkable courage during her husband's campaigns, notably saving his life while preserving a bridge near Vetera (Xanten), which was about to be destroyed by legionaries fleeing German tribes.¹⁹³ Tacitus had mixed feelings. He praised Agrippina the Elder for saving her husband's life but criticised her for taking command of the soldiers. Agrippina the Elder's return to Rome carrying the ashes of her diseased husband was a display of conjugal fidelity which met with great approbation. Her actions earned her acclaim as the "glory of the country" and a "solitary example of the old times."¹⁹⁴ Despite her acclaim, Agrippina the Elder fell out of favour with the emperor.

The events that led to Agrippina the Elder's downfall are challenging to unravel due to conflicting sources. Tacitus, for example, wrote that the attack on Agrippina the Elder came after the death of Livia in 29.¹⁹⁵ Suetonius wrote that Caligula went to live with Livia after the banishment of his mother while Velleius claimed that Livia died after the fall of Agrippina the Elder and her son Nero.¹⁹⁶ Pliny observed that the trial of Titus Sabinus, a supporter of Agrippina the Elder, took place in 28 and arose 'ex

^{190.} Barrett, 1989, p. 61; Hekster, 2015, p. 124.

^{191.} Quintilis: Suet. *Jul.* 76.1; Sextilis: Suet. *Aug.* 31.2; Tiberius' refusal: Suet. *Tib.* 26.2.

^{192.} Hurley, 1993, p. 48; Barrett, 1989, p. 61.

^{193.} Tac. *Ann.* 1.69.

^{194.} Tac. *Ann.* 3.1-4.

^{195.} Tac. *Ann.* 5.3.1.

^{196.} Suet. *Cal.* 10.1; Vel. 2.130.4-5.

causa Neronis.¹⁹⁷ Anyway, Agrippina the Elder was exiled to the island of Pandateria, where she either starved herself to death or was forced to do so. Caligula and his two younger sisters came under the care of their great-grandmother, Livia, and later, Antonia Minor. Antonia's refusal of the title Augusta did not diminish her prominence within the imperial family. Her death in 37 CE led to the Senate's approval of honours for her, thereby further establishing the female members' significance within the family.¹⁹⁸ Soon after these events, Caligula was summoned to join the emperor on the island of Capri. There, the stage was set for Caligula's rise to power.

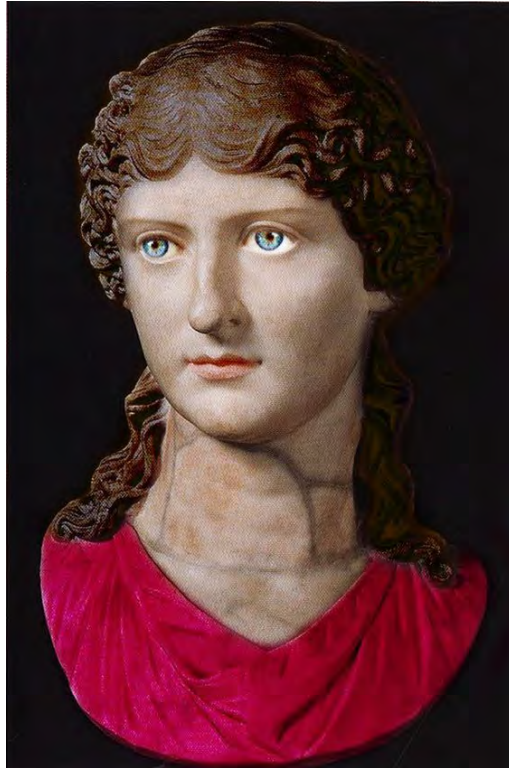


Fig. 17. Coloured bust of Agrippina the Elder. © Photo courtesy of Jesús León. Pinterest.

^{197.} Plin. *NH* 8.145. Modern scholarship has heavily debated the issues. For a summary, see Barrett, 1989, pp. 21-24; Barrett, 1996, pp. 36-39. Barrett follows Meise's theory of Seianus launching his attack in two stages, one before and one after Livia's death (Meise, 1969, pp. 237-244 with Willrich, 1903, p. 97, Balsdon, 1934, p. 13).

^{198.} Antonia's refusal of the title Augusta: Suet. *Cl.* 11.2; honours for Antonia: Suet. *Cal.* 15.2. The eldest sister, Agrippina the Younger, lived with her husband, Domitius Ahenobarbus, who fathered the later emperor Nero.

Caligula's portrayal of his mother, Agrippina the Elder

Caligula's first major public action was an act of filial piety. He went to great lengths to restore the honour of his mother, who had died in exile. The villa in Herculaneum, where she had been held under house arrest, was demolished.¹⁹⁹ An imperial party left for the islands on the coast of Campania to collect the mortal remains of Agrippina the Elder. Caligula approached the burial place in awe and laid her ashes with his own hands into its urn.²⁰⁰ An apparent nefas deed, but Caligula imitated what his father had done when he struck upon the Varus disaster site. Willingness to get contaminated could thus be explained as a deed of *pietas*, devotion.²⁰¹ With Nero's remains scattered "beyond retrieval", collecting them was even more pious.²⁰²

More piety was shown in the remainder of the affair. Since no official witnesses attended the islands ceremonies, the urns were transported to the mainland on biremes with the military *vexillum*, a flag-like military standard, flying from the stem; the burial was a state affair. By way of Ostia and upon the Tiber, the party reached the Campus Martius to land at the exact spot where years before Germanicus' alleged murderer, Gnaeus Piso, had stepped ashore. Most people would remember that same day, seventeen years earlier, when Agrippina the Elder returned with her husband's mortal remains. The burial itself was a great event. Caligula wore a purple-bordered toga and accompanied by lictors. The most distinguished members of the equestrian order carried the two urns on separate litters to Augustus' mausoleum in the middle of the day when the streets were most crowded, and the maximum effect would be guaranteed.²⁰³ The Augustan ancestry was prominently displayed on both urns (Figure 18).²⁰⁴

^{199.} Sen. *Dial* 5.21.5; Suet. *Cal.* 15; AFA 25/6 October 39.

^{200.} Dio 59.3.1-2.

^{201.} Tac. *Ann.* 1.60-62; Suet. *Cal.* 3.3. Tiberius' anger for Germanicus' action: Tac. *Ann.* 1.62, but Cic. *Div.* 2.36 for transgressing the rules of augury or ignoring them. Willrich, 1903, p. 115, n. 5, followed by Barrett, 1989, p. 58, argued that Caligula would not have touched his relatives' bones if he had the *augurium* of an official diviner.

^{202.} Suet. *Tib.* 54.2.

^{203.} Suet. *Cal.* 15.1.

^{204.} The urns of Agrippina the Elder and Nero were found in the mausoleum. Smallwood, *Docs.* 84a, Agrippina the Elder = CIL VI, 40372 = ILS 180. Agrippina the Elder's urn carried the inscription: 'Ossa Agrippinae M(arci) Agrippae [f(iliae)] Divi Avg(usti) neptis, uxoris Germanici Caesaris, matris C(ai) Caesaris Avg(usti) Germanici principis' (The bones of Agrippina (the Elder), daughter of Marcus Agrippa, granddaughter of the divine Augustus, wife of Germanicus Caesar, mother of Caligula Augustus Germanicus, princeps). Nero: Smallwood, *Docs.* 85a8 = CIL VI, 40373 = ILS 183: 'Ossa Neronis Caesaris Germanici Caesaris f(ili) Divi Avg(usti) pron(epotis), flamin(is) Avgvstalis, quaestoris (Bones of Nero Caesar, son of Germanicus Caesar, grandson of the divine Augustus, priest of Augustus, quaestor; translations Braund, 178, 187). Barrett observed that Nero is referred to as the son of Germanicus while Tiberius is omitted (Barrett, 1989, p. 61).



Fig. 18. *Cippus* containing the urn of Agrippina the Elder, prominently displaying her Augustan ancestry. Rome. Capitoline Museums, Palazzo Senatorio, Tabularium. Inv. Nos. S 751/CE 6968/NCE 2924. © Photo: O. V. Lyubimova (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Further honours for Agrippina the Elder included annual commemorations with her image carried around the Circus Maximus in a *carpentum*, a tilt-cart (Figure 19). The design was no novelty. The first depiction of the *carpentum* came from the mint at Rome, issued in 22-23 CE under Tiberius and honoured the emperor's mother, Julia Augusta.²⁰⁵ This was a novelty because only the Vestal Virgins were allowed to use carts for transportation in Rome (although Augustus used a closed palanquin when he left his house and did not wish to be seen).²⁰⁶ As a priestess of the divine Augustus, the widow would be on par with the Vestals.²⁰⁷ It is also possible that the coin was struck to commemorate Livia's recovery from a grave illness. The *carpentum* became a symbol for deceased women until the days of Antoninus Pius (first half of the 2nd century). Claudius used the image to honour his wife, Agrippina the Younger.²⁰⁸

^{205.} Livia; see RIC I² *Tiberius* 50, 51.

^{206.} Suet. *Aug.* 53.

^{207.} Geisseler, 2009, p. 51.

^{208.} RPC 1951.



Fig. 19. Sestertius, 37-41, Rome. **Obv.** Head of Agrippina the Elder, looking to the right. Hair knotted falling on her shoulders. One curl detached from the tail. Legend: AGRIPPINA.M.F.MAT.C.CAESARIS. AVGVSTI. **Rev.** Richly decorated *carpentum* drawn by two mules with the cover supported by four standing figures. Legend: S.P.Q.R. MEMORIAE AGRIPPINAE. The coin commemorates the day when, on orders of Caligula, his mother's image was paraded in a *carpentum*. Agrippina the Elder is consistently referred to as the mother of Caligula: AGRIPPINA MAT[ER] C[AI] CAES[ARIS] AVG[USTI] GERM[ANICI]. She appears on ca. 12.7% of Caligula's coin types, seven issues of gold or silver with only one in bronze. BM, Registration number R.6464, C&M catalogue number RE1 (159) (83) (159). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.



Fig. 20. Aureus, 37-38 CE. Lugdunum. **Obv.** The bare head of Caligula looking to the right. Legend: C CAESAR AVG GERM P M TR POT. **Rev.** Agrippina the Elder, looking to the right. Legend: AGRIPPINA MAT C CAES AVG GERM. Hair falling to the shoulders in a tail. A lovely detail is the loose curly lock playfully separating itself from the tail. Both images are intricately carved. Restraints for depicting women were less in the provinces. Portraits of and legends referring to, e.g., Livia, appeared relatively frequent in the provinces.²⁰⁹ Caligula's precious coinage only showed his great-grandfather, his father and mother, and himself on the reverse.²¹⁰ RIC 1 Caligula 13. © BM, reg.6330. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

^{209.} Hekster, 2015, p. 120; S. Wood, 2000, p. 90. RIC 1² Caligula 7.

^{210.} Metcalf, 2012, p. 343.

The introduction of female ancestors on central coinage suggests the growing importance of the *domus Augusta*. This observation gains strength from the relevant change of obverse and reverse images. Whereas Tiberius' *carpentum* sestertius had the cart on the obverse and on the reverse the legend with his name and titles around SC, the images changed place on Caligula's sestertius.²¹¹ A Caligulan novelty concerned the depiction of Agrippina the Elder on coinage. She became the first woman to be represented by name on a coin (Figure 20).²¹²

Caligula's brothers

Tiberius had presented Caligula's brothers, Drusus and Nero, as potential successors, but both had fallen victim to accusations of treason.²¹³ Caligula sought to restore their honour by depicting them on statues and commemorative coins. The representation of Drusus and Nero on galloping horses with explicit references to the Dioscuri and their representation as *Principes Iuventutis*, leaders of the youth leagues, emphasised their divine connections and familial descent from Augustus (Figure 21).²¹⁴



Fig. 21. Dupondius, 40 – 41, Rome. Obv. NERO ET DRVSVS CAESARES: Nero and Drusus Caesar riding right cloaks flying; rev. C CAESAR DIVI AVG PRON AVG P M TR POT III P P: Legend surrounding S C. RIC I² Caligula 49. © Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18214337. Public Domain Mark 1.0. Photographs by Dirk Sonnenwald.

^{211.} RIC I²Tib. 50.

^{212.} Suet. *Cal.* 15; *Cl.* 11.2.

^{213.} Tac. *Ann.* 4.60.1.

^{214.} Disguised as two young equestrians, Castor and Pollux, known as the Dioscuri, led the Romans to victory in the battle of Lake Regillus (484 BCE). The Dioscuri were considered the protectors of horsemanship.

Provincial coinage also featured representations of Drusus and Nero as Dioscuri, further solidifying their status and emphasising their divine lineage. When developing his adhococratic leadership, Caligula also used the image of the Dioscuri to demonstrate his connection with the order of the knights for whom the Dioscuri were symbolic markers (Figure 22).



Fig. 22. Obv. Laureate head of Caligula looking left. Rev. Dioscuri, with stars above, standing l. and holding wreaths over *pilei* and sceptres. ΤΡΙΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ (Tripolis). RPC 1. 4519. BM 1844,0425.265 © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

Gwynaeth McIntyre drew attention to the parading power of Caligula's family coin types. "Germanicus' 'triumph' coin and Agrippina the Elder's '*carpentum*' coin work together, specifically in terms of the depiction of the vehicle, legend, and overall design, as well as the link between the triumphal chariot as a 'male' vehicle and the *carpentum* as a 'female' vehicle for self-promotion."²¹⁵ The three 'parading coins', the *carpentum*, the triumphal chariot, and the brothers on horseback are visual representations, according to McIntyre, "of different types of procession involving family members: the *pompa triumphalis*, *pompa circensis*, and *transvectio equitum*" (Figure 23).²¹⁶ Through these designs, with their reflection of republican themes and their emphasis on *pietas*, Caligula created an easy-to-understand visual representation of his imperial family in which the creation of their semi-divinity stands out as an important aspect of the emperor's adhococratic visual programme. The representation of his sisters, especially Drusilla, had another purpose.

^{215.} McIntyre, 2023, p. 141.

^{216.} McIntyre, 2023, p. 140.



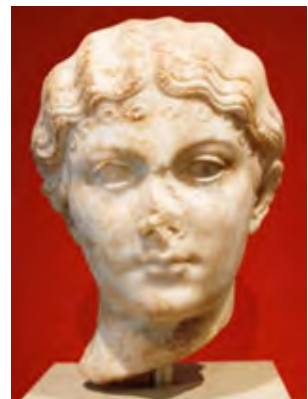
Fig. 23. The three parading coins representing the *pompa circensis* (Agrippina the Elder, RIC I² Caligula 55.), the *pompa triumphalis* (Germanicus, RIC I² Caligula 57) and the *transvectio equitum* (the brothers, RIC I² 34).²¹⁷

Caligula's sisters



Fig. 24. Caligula on top, from left to right Agrippina the Younger, Drusilla, Livilla. These portraits, made of various materials, present ideal-type representations of Caligula and his sisters. Caligula: Cameo. Milan, 1602-1606. Anonymous. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer, INV. NR. Antikensammlung, XII 823 4.

© Agrippina the Younger: https://pantheon.world/profile/person/Agrippina_the_Younger accessed 18-05-2024; Drusilla: Copenhagen National Museet, inv.2017 <https://flic.kr/p/723daK>. Livilla (?), Altes Museum Berlin, sk 1802. Photo: José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro/Wikimedia. CC BY-SA 4.0



²¹⁷. McIntyre, 2023, pp. 137-157.

Caligula's use of familial imagery and symbolism extended to his sisters (Figure 24) as well, marking a significant departure from traditional Roman coinage and propaganda. A bronze sestertius was issued, depicting the emperor's three sisters personifying abstract moral qualities in human form. Agrippina the Younger was shown as *Securitas*, representing the stability and security of the Roman realm; Drusilla represented *Concordia*, concord and harmony, while Julia Livilla personified *Fortuna*, fortune and good luck (Figure 25).²¹⁸ Unlike the usual representations of respectable *matronae*, the sisters were portrayed as *living* family members.

The practice of equating living humans with divine virtues was not entirely new in Roman politics. Rulers had previously associated themselves with ethical and theological concepts, especially in so-called ruler cults, but this became more pronounced in coin design from the time of Augustus. Augustus was linked to *Pietas* and *Pax*, while Tiberius's coinage, for example, emphasised *Victory*.²¹⁹ These messages were primarily conveyed through high-value coins of gold and silver, targeting the elite. However, Caligula's use of copper alloy for the sisters-sestertius suggests a broader audience, aiming to reach beyond the elite.



Fig. 25. Sestertius, copper alloy. Rome, (37- before 10 June 38). **Obv.** Head of Caligula, laureate, left. Legend: C. CAESAR. AVG. GERMANICUS. PON. M. TR. POT. **Rev.** Three sisters, standing facing, draped; left Agrippina the Younger as *Securitas*, head right holding cornucopia in the right hand, right hand resting on column, left hand on Drusilla's shoulder; centre Drusilla as *Concordia*, head left, holding patera in right hand and cornucopia in the left hand, right Julia as *Fortuna*, head left, holding rudder in right hand and cornucopia in left. SC in exergue. Respectable women should demonstrate the different qualities explained in, for example, the *Laudatio Turiae* (CIL VI, 41062 = ILS 8393). They range from *probitas* (virtuousness) and *caritas* (care and dedication) to *pudicitia* (chastity)²²⁰ Only a first emission was struck in 37-38 CE due to Drusilla's death on 10 June 38. The appearance of Caligula's three sisters declined after Agrippina the Younger and Livilla were banished. The mint of Apamea added 'Diva' to Drusilla's name after her apotheosis.²²¹ RIC I² *Caligula* 33. BMC R.6431

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²¹⁸. Hughes, p. 2009, pp. 1-20; Wilson, 1997, pp. 130-1. Cf. Cicero, *De legibus*. 28.

²¹⁹. *Victory*: RIC I² *Tiberius* 5-22, 54, 60, 66, 77, 78. In all, 23 or ca. 16% of 137 Tiberian coin types.

²²⁰. Cf. Caldwell, 2015, pp. 582-604, 530ff; Hemelrijk, 2020, p. 11.

²²¹. Trillmich, 1978, p. 108.

To date, this sestertius is the first example of the official coinage of living humans represented as personifications. Personifications are forms of allegorical images which symbolise abstract moral qualities shaped like human bodies.²²² Abstract concepts were deified in anthropomorphic shapes but never through real living human beings. Wilson observed that these personifications transformed abstract ethical concepts into theological ones. As a result, human worship sustained the gods, who then showed their benevolence to the worshippers.²²³

The depiction of living female relatives as personifications of divine virtues while Caligula himself was portrayed as wholly human without visible references to divinity was revolutionary. It cleverly used a specific social group to distinguish itself, implying that if the sisters were personifications, their brother must be of higher standing, viz. (semi-) divine. Furthermore, the inclusion of the letters S C in the exergue of this coin likely only confirmed its value because the formula was characteristic for all denominations of *aes*. Such intelligent use of a distinct social group for the specific purpose of distinguishing that same group features adhocratic manipulation.

The sisters were also honoured by their inclusion in the annual vows for the state's well-being. The vows for the state's safety were sworn on 3 January and read as follows:

pro salute C(aius) Caesaris Augusti Germanici pont. Max. Trib. Pot. Cos. P.P
for the well-being of Caligula Augustus Germanicus, *pontifex Maximus*,
with tribunician power, consul, father of the fatherland

Those for the emperor and his family ran:

*Iuppiter O(ptime) M(axime) si C(aius) Caesar Augustus Germanicus --- quem me
sentio dicere vivet domusque eius incolumnis erit a.d. III Non(as) Ian(uarias)*
Highest Jupiter if Caligula Augustus Germanicus ---- whom I hear mentioned
will be alive and his family be unharmed on 3 January

The consuls opened their proposals to the Senate with the formula:

Quod bonum felixque sit C. Caesari sororibusque eius
Favour and good fortune attend Caius Caesar and his sisters²²⁴

²²² Hughes, 2009, p. 1.

²²³ Wilson, 1997, pp. 130-131; cf., Cic. *De legibus*. 28.

²²⁴ Suet. *Cal.* 40.3; *Tib.* 54.1; state's safety: *AFA* 3 January 38, *Docs* 1; family unharmed: *Docs* 1; sisters Suet. *Cal.* 15.2-3.

The prayer formulae closely resemble those of the Arval Brethren.²²⁵ The usual Republican private vows for the well-being of an individual and public vows for the state's safety had already merged under Augustus.²²⁶ The misappropriation of these vows, as public honours, were increasingly granted to individuals for their well-being. Under Caligula, voting public honours to an individual for his healing (*vota publica pro valetudine alicuius*) became common practice.²²⁷ Examples were the vows for his safe return when crossing to the islands to retrieve the remains of his mother and brothers and those who offered their lives if only the emperor recovered from his illness.²²⁸ Oath-taking for the personal well-being of Caligula and his sisters underline the growing importance of the imperial family as a *domus Divina*: "And I will not hold myself and my children dearer than I do Gaius and his sisters."²²⁹ The honour of the privileges of the Vestal Virgins that Dio mentioned are not corroborated by other accounts.²³⁰

The evidence from central coinage suggests the creation of a divine family. The arguments are as follows. Firstly, the emphasis on direct descent from the divine Augustus suggests divinity as hereditary. Secondly, the *carpentum*-sestertius for Agrippina the Elder and the Germanicus *quadriga*-dupondius imply the deification of both parents. Thirdly, the sisters-sestertius associated the three sisters, mentioned by name, with personifications of (semi-) divine qualities. Fourthly, the entry in Caligula's family of Drusilla as divine genetrix. Fifthly, the renaming of September into Germanicus.²³¹ Toning in with the emphasis on an exceptional lineage were Caligula's initial activities and policies, which communicated *pietas* and consensus.²³² Consensus refers to an agreement about the basic principles of society, especially socio-political, traditional, religious, and cultural standards. Consensus assured *concordia* as a harmonious agreement, particularly within the body politic at Rome.²³³ It qualified Caligula's prime emperorship. However, Rome's body politic confronted Caligula with a whole set of different problems. Caligula's kinship coinage with the special embossing

^{225.} Reynolds, 1962, p. 33.

^{226.} *RGDA* 9.

^{227.} Daly, 1950, pp. 164-168.

^{228.} Suet. *Cal.* 14.2.

^{229.} Suet. *Cal.* 15.2.3.

^{230.} Dio (59.3.4) may have compared the privileges with those of the Vestals. The reception of the Vestal privileges by the sisters is still regularly accepted, e.g., Barrett, 2015, p. 87 without reference. Also, Foubert, 2015, pp.187-204, 196-7.

^{231.} For an interpretation of Caligula's speech in Philo's *Legatio* as an expression of the emperor's belief in predestined divine rulership, see chapter 10.

^{232.} For the importance of consensus as consensual commitment and the force steering communication processes, see Ando, 2000.

^{233.} Tiberius had the existing temple for Concordia rebuild and dedicated it as Concordia Augusta in 10 CE. Ovid, *Fasti*, 1.637-648.

of his parents and sisters and the explicit reference to his divine great-grandfather are the first suggestions of a development beyond that of the *domus Augusta* towards a *domus Divina*. Making full use of the deification of his great-grandfather, Caligula's creation of a divine imperial family marks an important step in the development of his adhocratic leadership. The next important step in the creation of a *domus Divina* would be the consecration of Caligula's sister, Drusilla, to be dealt with in chapter 10.

Caligula's uncle, Claudius



Fig. 26. Emperor Claudius. Considered the family's dupe, Claudius was both honoured and humiliated by his imperial nephew. Vatican Museums, Inv. 2221. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/571394271452607594/>
© Photo courtesy of prof. dr. Roger B. Ulrich.

Caligula's dealings with his uncle Claudius (10 BCE – 54, Figure 26) showcased his adhocratic practice of challenging opponents through adverse and non-conformist behaviour. For example, Caligula made his uncle suffect consul despite Claudius's physical limitations *and* subjected him to public humiliation.²³⁴ The emperor forced

^{234.} Limitations: *Fasti Ostienses*, 1 July 37; Suet. *Cal* 15.2; humiliation: Suet. *CL*. 3.2; sale of property: Suet. *CL*. 9.2; thrown into the river: Suet. *CL*. 9.1-2. Osgood considered Claudius' consulship a joke and an offence to custom (Osgood, 2011, p. 11).

Claudius into the imperial priesthood, leading to the sale of Claudius's property to meet the associated costs. While at Lugdunum, Claudius, heading an official delegation, was thrown into the river “*ut vestitus advenerat*” (fully dressed).

Caligula's wives

Imperial consorts had no official title or position. Although Ovid's designation of Livia as *Romanae principis*, shaped as Venus and with a face like Juno, may be poetic licence, it does hint at the influence high-placed women could have.²³⁵ Not only women's dynastic relevance but also their proximity to the emperor, especially in the conjugal bed, indicated their relevancy. Although information about Caligula's spouses and their possible influence on their husband is scarce, they never held the same status as his sisters.

Caligula's marriages were marked by intrigue, divorce, and even accusations of witchcraft. Caligula's first wife, Claudia (or Junia Claudilla), was the daughter of his mentor, Marcus Silanus. The emperor Tiberius arranged the marriage, which took place somewhere between mid-33 and the end of 36/beginning of 37 CE. Claudia died in childbirth. Late 37 CE Caligula married Livia/Cornelia (or Orestina/Orestilla). Caligula supposedly abducted her during her wedding ceremony, only to divorce her shortly after. Forced to separate from her husband, too, was Lollia Paulina. The marriage (September/October 38) lasted half a year and was terminated due to Lollia's infertility. Caligula forbade her further sexual relationships. Caligula's sister Agrippina the Younger came to see Lollia as a rival and accused her of witchcraft, whereupon Lollia took her own life. Caligula's last wife Milonia Caesonia was a mother of three daughters (Figure 27). Her fourth, Iulia Drusilla (40 - †24 January 41), was born one month after her marriage with Caligula. Described by Suetonius as extravagant and lewd, Caesonia was accused of having bewitched her husband by giving him poisonous aphrodisiacs. She was killed with her daughter and her husband on 24 January 41, the day of Caligula's assassination.²³⁶

^{235.} *Romanae principis*: Ovid, *Consolatio ad Liviam*, 356, reference in Beard, 2021, p. 238. Also, Dennison, 2018, p. 64.

^{236.} Claudia/ Claudilla: Suet. *Cal.* 12. Syme, 1986, pp. 173; 195. Marriage: Tac. *Ann.* 6.20.1. Abduction: Suet. *Cal.* 25.1; Dio 59.8.7. Suetonius' reported Mark Antony as the source of this slander (Suet. *Aug.* 69). Caligula referred to Romulus and Augustus, who had taken wives in a similar manner (Suet. *Aug.* 69.1). Lollia's forbidden sexual relationships: Suet. *Cal.* 25; accusation of witchcraft: Tac. *Ann.* 12.1; Suet. *CL.* 26. Caesonia accused of poisoning: Suet. *Cal.* 25.3.

Caligula's lineage boasted a rich heritage within the imperial family of Augustus. His early life was marked by his father's military career and his tragic death. This period also saw Caligula's first public appearance. After his father's demise, Caligula's mother played a significant role in her accusations against the emperor, whom she held responsible for her husband's death. After her exile, her son came under the care of the great Roman ladies, Augustus' wife Livia and his sister's daughter Antonia Minor, until the emperor summoned him to Capri. There, he kept a low profile and was nominated joint heir to the imperial possessions.



Fig. 27. AE, 40-41. Caesarea Paneas, Syria. Draped bust of Milonia Caesonia. ΚΑΙΣ[ΩΝΙΑ] ΓΥΝΗ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ. Obverse of RPC 4977.²³⁷

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The impact of the deaths of his immediate family on Caligula cannot be reliably ascertained from the varying reports of the ancient authors. Caligula seemed to have realised the danger to himself if he openly denounced his imperial uncle or, when still in favour, the prefect Seianus. Philo wrote how Caligula had followed a "healthier way of life (...) while Tiberius was alive". Tacitus wrote how "neither his mother's doom nor the banishment of his brothers extorted from him a single utterance."²³⁸ If so, and despite Suetonius' later judgements of the opposite, Tiberius must have seen little reason not to nominate Caligula heir to his possessions. However, he had to share his inheritance with his young nephew Tiberius Gemellus. The details thereof are dealt with in the next chapter.

^{237.} The image of Caesonia is contested by Kokkinos, who prefers Antonia (Kokkinos, 2002, pp. 101-3, 265-7). Tac. *Ann.* 12.1.; Suet. *CL.* 26.

^{238.} Danger of Seianus: Suet. *Cal.* 2.17; healthy life: Phil. *Leg.* 2.14; no utterance: Tac. *Ann.* 6.20.1.



4

SUCCESSION

This chapter analyses Caligula's succession. Pivotal in Caligula's accession was the unparalleled event of the Senate giving him full authority in one and the same moment. I consider this action as an example of adhocratic leadership from the senatorial side because the senators created an unprecedented reality for the new and inexperienced emperor. I shall argue that the tactic backfired because the granting of full authority by the Senate enabled Caligula's development of adhocratic rule. This chapter will therefore look at the way in which Caligula came to power to see the extent to which this created the possibilities for Caligula to rule in a fully adhocratic way.

The first paragraph deals with Caligula's relationship with the emperor Tiberius and the influence the old emperor might have had on his nephew. The chapter continues with the events surrounding Caligula's accession, the murder of his co-heir Gemellus and the remarkable reference to the nomination of the emperor's sister, Drusilla, as heir to her brother's property and throne.

The Emperor Tiberius

Tiberius's absence from the centre of power made the tension between republican political conceptions and sole rule visible. The emperor's absence would allow for more senatorial influence. The senators, however, remained occupied with the possible intentions of Tiberius and were thus restricted in fully using the traditional possibilities of political participation. As a result, respecting the old structures, which was still possible under Augustus, became less possible. It is likely that the senators reacted negatively to this development. Whereas the traditional political structures had earlier obstructed the development of full adhocratic leadership, Tiberius' absence from Rome opened the way for Caligula to do just that. Another consequence of Tiberius' absence was giving way to influential figures striving for power. Such persons, with the Praetorian Prefect Aelius Seianus as the notorious example, further disrupted the imbalance of the joint government (Figure 28).²³⁹



Fig. 28. Tiberius. Æ. Bilbilis (Spain) mint. 31 CE. L. Aelius Seianus, praetorian consul. **Obv:** TI. CAESAR DIVI. AVGVSTI F. AVGVSTVS, Laureate head right. **Rev:** MVN. AVGVSTA BILBILIS TI. CAESERE V L. AELIO SEIANO, Large COS within wreath. RPC 398; SNG Copenhagen 620. AB-284.

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Caligula's arrival on Capri in the late summer of 31 CE coincided with rumours surrounding the death of Tiberius' son, Drusus.²⁴⁰ Drusus passed away on October 10, 19 CE, a few years after the death of Caligula's father, Germanicus. With the deaths

^{239.} Seianus, despite his knightly status, aspired to greater power. He attempted to marry into the imperial family to advance his ambitions but failed. Despite his failure, his involvement in the treason trials that terrorised the Roman elite in the absence of the emperor increased the crisis of competition.

^{240.} The rumours may have been renewed eight years after the event because of Seianus' grown influence and power. Willrich, 1903, p. 100; Barrett, 1989, p. 27; Levick, 1976, p. 175; Winterling, 2003, p. 40.

of Tiberius' two sons, Caligula's elder brothers emerged as primary candidates for the succession. Tiberius initially presented them to the Senate as "the sole solace for my present woes".²⁴¹ However, as his relationship with Agrippina the Elder and her sons deteriorated rapidly, the emperor bitterly complained about including the two boys in the traditional vows for his well-being. Nero, next in line for the succession, was declared a public enemy and died in exile, while Drusus perished in prison. Agrippina the Elder, exiled to Pandateria, starved herself to death or was forced to do so. When Caligula set foot on Capri, he was the sole surviving male relative of Germanicus' family. He was, however, still partial to the popularity his parents had enjoyed among the people.

Amid these events, the name of the Praetorian Prefect Aelius Seianus loomed large in connection with the deaths of Tiberius' son Drusus and members of Germanicus' family. While Tacitus viewed Seianus as the mastermind behind the attacks on Germanicus' family, rumours, mainly spread by his ex-wife Apicata, suggested that he may have been involved in Drusus' murder. Regardless of the veracity of these claims, Tiberius decided to remove Seianus from power (Figure 29). The new Praetorian Prefect, Quintus Sertorius Macro, was pivotal in orchestrating Seianus' arrest and subsequent execution. Drusus' wife, Livilla, accused of complicity in her husband's murder, was starved to death by her mother, Antonia. The old woman must have been convinced of her daughter's culpability.²⁴²



Fig. 29. The name SEIANO is erased. Tiberius. Æ. Bilbilis (Spain) mint. 31 CE. **Obv.** Laureated head of Tiberius looking to the right. TI CAESAR DIVI AVGVSTI F AVGVSTVS. **Rev,** COS in wreath. MVN AVGVSTA TI CAESARE V L AELIO SEIANO. RPC I. 398. © courtesy Heritage Auctions. [heritage.com https://coins.ha.com/](https://coins.ha.com/)

^{241.} Tac. *Ann.* 4.8.6.

^{242.} Mastermind: Tac. *Ann.* 4.17.1-3; involvement: Tac. *Ann.* 4.3.5; 4.40.5; role of Macro: Tac. *Ann.* 6.38; Livilla starved to death: Dio 58.9.3-6; 10; 11.6-7; 12; 13.1; Tac. *Ann.* 4.11.4; 6.2; 23.5; Suet. *Tib.* 60.1.

Tiberius' influence on Caligula according to the ancient Roman and Jewish authors

The views of the authors from ancient times regarding Tiberius' influence on Caligula vary. Seneca is forthright: Tiberius raised a Phaëton for the whole world.²⁴³ Phaëton was the son of Helios, whose recklessness threatened to disrupt the world order when he lost control over his father's chariot and scorched the earth. The Phaëton story was a Stoic metaphor for the loss of order in the world. An impetuous 'youth' undertaking a task way beyond his capacities and creating chaos seemed an appropriate description for what Seneca considered Caligula's misdemeanour.²⁴⁴ Although Tacitus' books on Caligula are lost, the remaining passages depict Caligula as a hypocrite with a savage temper who perfected the skill of assuming the same humour as his imperial master. Tacitus suggests that Caligula learned "the falsehoods of hypocrisy under the loving care of his grandfather." According to Suetonius, Tiberius referred to his nephew as a venomous water snake, a *natrix*, a symbol of hostile aggression. He underlined Caligula's lust for power and summarised his judgement with a quote from Seneca's friend, the orator Passienus Crispus: 'there never was a better slave or a worse master'. Dio described Tiberius as a man of a contradictory character. His reticence inclined him to express the opposite of his true intentions. While ageing, his wariness and suspicion increased, resulting in his delaying the question of his succession.

The Jewish author, Philo, offers a mixed perspective. Philo underlined Tiberius' wisdom and agility in seeing people's skills and character. He noted Tiberius' concern about Caligula's fitness for rule due to his erratic temperament, abnormal tendencies, and inconsistent behaviour. On the other hand, Philo wrote how Caligula lived a reasonably modest and quiet life while his uncle was alive. The Jewish-Roman author, Josephus, portrays the relationship between Tiberius and Caligula as being based on shared scholarly interests. Tiberius' intellectual aspirations induced Caligula to try to equal his tutor and study with zeal. The old man watched with patience and forbearance the occasional odd behaviour of his

^{243.} Sen. *Dial.* 4.31.8; 11.17.3.

^{244.} Seneca must have deliberately used the word 'youth' to connect youthful age with irresponsible behaviour. The common notion in scholarship and popular culture of Caligula as a young man is, in my view, wrong. The calculated expected average lifespan of a Roman citizen depended on the inclusion or exclusion of infant and child mortality. An estimated 25-33% of infants died in the first year. Thereafter life expectancy was 22-33 years. Only 35-45% survived the first 5 years, with a life expectancy of 35-42 years thereafter (Saller, 1997, pp. 22-25; Scheidel, 2001, pp. 1-26). Really young upon ascension were Elagabalus (c. 14 years), Severus Alexander (14), Gordian III (13) and Gratian (8).

great-nephew, claiming that this kind of conduct would eventually mollify the bloodthirsty character of the boy.²⁴⁵

The reports on Tiberius' assessment of Caligula's qualifications for rulership also vary. Philo and Dio suggest that Tiberius found Caligula unfit to rule. The emperor supposedly uttered that the world would be consumed by fire after his death. However, on his elevation to a priesthood, Tiberius highly praised Caligula's *pietas* (sense of duty) and *indoles* (good character), even suggesting that Caligula be his successor.²⁴⁶

Details about Caligula's attitude towards his imperial uncle during his time on Capri remain scarce. Tacitus mentions how Caligula concealed his feelings about the disgrace to his family while curbing his ambitions. Refusing nothing in the hope of attaining power while hiding "a monstrous character beneath spurious modesty", Tacitus wrote, he concealed his true character.²⁴⁷

Succession Issues

The succession issues and the circumstances surrounding Caligula's rise to power were complex, with Caligula, Gemellus, and Claudius being the primary candidates. Claudius, who in terms of lineage would have been the obvious next-in-line for the throne, was considered mainly unfit for the role of emperor due to his physical disabilities, including limping, stammering, and drooling.²⁴⁸ Age and lineage were not decisive in determining succession. Gemellus, born late 19 CE, was 17 years old; Caligula, born in 12 CE, was 24 when Tiberius died.²⁴⁹ In Roman society, there was no fixed legal age for adulthood. One's father decided on the moment of attaining the *toga virilis*, the visible confirmation of adulthood. The ancient references to Gemellus not having received the *toga virilis* by the time of Tiberius' death could, therefore, not refer to his physical age. Whether the failure of receiving the *toga*

²⁴⁵. Hypocrisy: Tac. *Ann.* 6.45; *natrix*: Suet. *Cal.* 11; Pasienuss: Suet. *Cal.* 10.2. Passienus was married to Caligula's sister Agrippina and perished through her "treachery". Illustrious as he was, according to Suetonius, he carefully replied "*nondum*", not yet, as the answer to Caligula's question whether he had slept with his sister (Suet. *Pass*). Tiberius' character: Dio 57. 1-2. Philo: Philo, *Leg.* 33-34 with Champlin, 2008, p. 421. Quiet life: Philo *Leg.* 14. Scholarly interests: Jos. *Al.* 19.209.

²⁴⁶. Caligula unfit to rule: Philo (*Leg.* 33) and Dio (58.23.4). The quote from an unknown Greek poet about the consummation of the world by fire gave Nero a chance to demonstrate his wit by changing the line to "while I'm alive" (Suet. *Ner.* 38.1). Praise: Suet. *Cal.* 12.1; Dio 58.7.4; successor: Dio 58.8.1-2.

²⁴⁷. Tac. *Ann.* 6.20.1-2.

²⁴⁸. Suet. *Cl.* 30; Sen. *Apocolo.* 5.6.

²⁴⁹. Gemellus date of birth: Tac. *Ann.* 2.84.

virilis was due to some sort of slow mental development, protection by Tiberius or Tiberius's suspicion that Gemellus was not Drusus' son is unknown. Philo and Josephus do not corroborate Dio's suggestion that Gemellus, meaning 'twin', is illegitimate (Figure 30). Epigraphic evidence shows Gemellus as a son of Drusus.²⁵⁰



Fig. 30. Sestertius, Rome, Tiberius, 22-23CE. **Obv.** Confronting heads of two boys on crossed cornucopias, possibly Tiberius and Germanicus Gemellus. Winged caduceus; **rev.** large SC, legend DRVSVS CAESAR TI AVG F DIVI AVG N PONT TR POT II. RIC I² 42. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen 18202615. © Public Domain Mark 1.0.. Photographs by Reinhard Saczewski.

Both Caligula and Gemellus had claims to the throne based on their descent. Gemellus was a grandchild of the ruling emperor, while Caligula was Tiberius' grandchild through his adopted father. Although Caligula's adoption by Tiberius is still debated in scholarship, Caligula himself had little doubt about his parentage, as can be deduced from the following details.²⁵¹ The opening honorifics of Caligula in his letter to the people of Acraephiae (Boeotia, Greece) runs: "The Emperor Augustus Caesar, great-grandson of the deified Augustus, *grandson of Tiberius Caesar, pontifex maximus*, holder of the tribunician power, consul to the League of Achaeans, Boeotians, Locrians, Phocians, and Euboeans, greeting." (italics HvN).²⁵² Suetonius' wording in *Tib.* 54.1 suggests the hereditary character of Caligula's adoption. "By Germanicus, he had three grandsons [*tres nepotes*], Nero, Drusus, and Gaius [Caligula], and by Drusus one, called Tiberius [Gemellus]". Referring to Seianus, Suetonius wrote: "This man he had advanced to the highest power, not so much from regard for him, as that he might through his services and wiles destroy the children of Germanicus and secure the

^{250.} Gemellus not having received the *toga virilis*: Philo, *Leg.* 23.30-1; Tac. *Ann.* 2.84.1; 6.46.1; Dio 58.23.2. Slow mental development: Barrett, 1989, p. 39; also 2015, pp. 52-3; protection by Tiberius: Levick, 1976, pp. 209-10. Tiberius's suspicion that Gemellus was not Drusus' son: Dio 58.23.1, Suet. *Tib.* 62.3; Dio 58.27.3. Epigraphic evidence of Gemellus as a son of Drusus: RIC I² 42.

^{251.} Gemellus as grandchild: Philo, *Leg.* 23; *Flacc.* 10; Jos. *Al.* 18.234; adoption: Hekster, 2015, pp. 47-48.

^{252.} *Docs.* 361, BR. 564; LRR II, 526; IG, vii, no. 2711.

succession for his grandson, the child of his son Drusus.” (italics HvN).²⁵³ In his will, Tiberius referred to Gemellus as: “his other grandson [*alterum nepotem*], still a boy.”²⁵⁴ In his will, Tiberius named his *grandsons*, Gaius, son of Germanicus, and Tiberius, son of Drusus, heirs to equal shares of his estate.²⁵⁵ Coin legends also referred to Caligula as the grandson of Tiberius (Figure 31).²⁵⁶



Fig. 31. Carthago Nova, Tiberius. **Obv.** Laureate head of Tiberius, TI CAESAR DIV(I) AVG(V)F AVG(VST) (V) P M; **rev.** bare head of Caligula C CAESAR TI(berii) N(epos) QVIN(Quinquennalis) V(ictrix)I(vlia) N(ova)K(AR)(thago). RPC 182.²⁵⁷ Cf. Fig. 10. SNG Copenhagen 502.

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According to Dio, Caligula contested the will.²⁵⁸ However, Dio's account is inconsistent with the sequence of events. Caligula had already taken control of the imperial household, had assumed the role of emperor, and had legally adopted Gemellus.²⁵⁹ Caligula was, therefore, emperor *before* the instalment of a legal action to annul Tiberius' will. Besides, adopting Gemellus would outdo any legal stipulations in Tiberius' will. His paternal authority gave Caligula complete control over his nephew, who could not make any legal decisions even if he begot his share of the imperial possessions. Macro's argument for contesting Tiberius' will that the emperor had not been *compos mentis* by entrusting imperial authority to a mere boy (Figure 32) also makes little sense in the light of Gemellus' adoption.²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, despite the actual unnecessary contestation of the will, Dio might

^{253.} Suet. *Tib.* 55.

^{254.} Suet. *Cal.* 14.1.

^{255.} Suet. *Tib.* 76; Suet. *Cal.* 24.1; Philo *Leg.* 23; *Flacc* 10; Jos *AJ* 18.234; Dio 59.1.1.

^{256.} Dio 59.3.7.

^{257.} RPC nos 183 and 184 are practically identical with 182; nos 185 and 186 show obverse Caligula laureated with reverse two *duovirii quinquennali*.

^{258.} Dio 59.1-5.

^{259.} Phil. *Leg.* 27.

^{260.} Dio 59. 1.1.

be right if Caligula's contestation of Tiberius' testament is seen in the light of his adhocratic behaviour. The will, in fact, was signed and sealed "by persons of the lowest condition".²⁶¹ Acceptance of a will authorised by what Caligula would consider unworthy persons would detract from the dignity of the imperial position. With the will annulled, Caligula's emperorship would be justified by his being the head of the imperial family. However, Caligula effectively defused his nephew by forcing him into suicide.²⁶²



Fig. 32. Tiberius nicknamed Gemellus, the twin (10-10-19 – 37/8 CE). Son of Drusus Caesar and Livilla. Grandson of Emperor Tiberius. He was condemned to death by his foster father, Caligula, suspected of plotting against the emperor. La Spezia. Archaeological Museum, Italy. Luna IX: Tiberius Gemellus. Flickr © Photo Egisto Sani. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

^{261.} Suet. *Tib.*76.

^{262.} Dio 59.1.3; *CIL* 6892 = *ILS* 172.

Caligula's accession: a novel step in the development of Roman emperorship

Emperor Tiberius died in Misenum on March 16, 37.²⁶³ The same day, the Praetorian Prefect Macro, accused by Suetonius of murdering the seventy-eight-year-old emperor, hailed Caligula as *Imperator*. Two days later, the Senate proclaimed Caligula the *Augustus*. Gaius Augustus Germanicus entered Rome on March 28, 37 CE. On 21 April, the people of Rome acclaimed Caligula as *Imperator* (Figure 33).²⁶⁴



Fig. 33. Dupondius. Rome. 37-8. **Obv.** DIVVS AVGVSTVS S C: Head of Augustus, radiate, left; **rev.** CONSENSV SENAT ET EQ[ue]stris ORDIN[us] P[opuli] Q[ue] R[omani]; Caligula, laureate and togate, seated, left, on curule chair, holding branch in right hand and resting left hand against side. RIC I² Caligula 56. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18200526.

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These events demonstrate a critical aspect of imperial succession: military support. Crucial is the fact that Macro, as commander of the Guard, proclaimed Caligula emperor *before* the Senate's proclamation. The centrality of the military in obtaining and maintaining positions of power was, of course, no novelty. Augustus had perfectly good reasons to commence his correspondence to the Senate with reference to his powerbase: "If you and our children are in health, it is well; I and the

^{263.} Suetonius related four different versions of the passing of Tiberius: he was refused food while ill; Caligula poisoned him; Macro – or Caligula – choked him to death; he dropped death while crying for help. However, a natural death due to old age cannot be ruled out (Yavetz, 2002, pp. 166 -169). Philo would have certainly used any rumours about Caligula's involvement in Tiberius' death. He did not.

^{264.} Caligula hailed as *imperator*: Suet. *Tib.* 73.2; Dio 58.28.3. AFA XLIII, 10 reports the festivities on 18 March 38 held to commemorate the anniversary of Caligula's *dies imperii*. My dating of the following events follows KEH, which differs considerably from Barrett's 1989/ 2015 outline. Entrance into Rome: Dio 59.6.1; acclamation by the people: Suet. *Cal.* 16.4.

legions are in health".²⁶⁵ The recent discovery of a bronze tablet referring to Tiberius' ascension in 14 CE demonstrates the essentiality of military support.²⁶⁶ Macro's declamation of loyalty prior to the Senate's assent showed the diminished actual power of the senators. The unprecedented event of the Senate granting Caligula full authority in one and the same moment seemed, therefore, at first glance a sign of senatorial surrender.²⁶⁷

Caligula's predecessors had received the *ius arbitriumque omnium rerum*, the power and authority over everything, too, but *not* at the same moment. Gaining full authority en bloc was a novel step in the development of Roman emperorship because the senators not only paved the way for the Caligulan adhocracy but created a precedence for later emperors to follow. Joint governmental responsibility did not imply joint powers. Even a *civilis princeps* who proclaimed his intention to govern with the Senate jointly did not share the power he held as emperor. With Caligula having unlimited power, the balance that formed the crux of the mixed constitution was wholly tipped in the emperor's favour. By giving Caligula full authority, the senators toppled the ideology of joint government, thereby uncovering the proto-adhocratic nature of the mixed constitution, which fully depended on the emperor's person. The senatorial move to hand full authority to a new and inexperienced emperor appeared to have been deliberate. Why? What could have motivated the senators to take such a dramatic step after they had just witnessed the effects of leadership no longer restricted by the principles of the old political structure?

The role of the Senate

Modern scholarship has mainly concentrated on the person of Caligula to the neglect of the role of the Senate. For example, the German historian Hugo Willrich saw Caligula as a highly talented, rational individual who intentionally set himself to disrupt the Augustan system of joint government between emperor and Senate. Caligula attempted to return to Julius Caesar's monarchist principles.²⁶⁸ Aloys Winterling followed this thesis in his biography of Caligula.²⁶⁹ According to Winterling, Caligula tried to expose the ambiguity of the emperor-Senate communication inherent in the Augustan system of joint government. Both

^{265.} Dio 69.14.3.

^{266.} Rothenhöfer, 2020.

^{267.} Suet. *Cal.* 14.1.

^{268.} Willrich, 1903.

^{269.} Winterling, 2003.

studies focused on the role of Caligula as the author of an attempt to dismantle the Augustan political system of joint government. However, the critical question that both studies ignored concerned the role of the Senate in enabling Caligula's adhococratic rule.

Anthony Barrett, the author of what to date is the most comprehensive biography of Caligula, did hint at the role of the Senate but in degenerating Caligula's character. The excessive overload of honours granted him by a servile Senate corrupted the new emperor and allowed him to abuse his power.²⁷⁰ These studies, however, ignore that the senators, too, had to operate within the institutional basis of imperial Rome created by Augustus and identified in this study as a proto-adhococratic. Therefore, I suggest a different interpretation.

The experiences of the senators with Tiberius and Seianus made it clear that the effective functioning of the joint government system depended on the emperor's goodwill and preparedness to keep the system afloat. Tiberius' rule had made it clear that the new political order implied a one-man rule. If the senators wanted to regain or keep their part in government they had to point out that they were a *conditio sine qua non* for good government. If a fully-powered Caligula would prove incapable of adhering to the rules of expected government, the Senate could justify its necessity for government. The handing of all powers at once created a reality that acknowledged the existence of a strongman rule while it at the same time would demonstrate the necessity of senatorial cooperation if the strongman proved incapable or unwilling to rule as expected. The accession of an inexperienced and unprepared Caligula provided the opportunity for allowing a possible rejuvenation of the position of the Senate as under the Augustan joint government. Nevertheless, the solid military backing of the son of the famous general Germanicus made it clear from the beginning that a role for the senators in the new government depended on the goodwill of the emperor who, despite his initial sympathetic attitude towards the senators, soon appeared not inclined to share power.²⁷¹ The forced death of the emperor's adoptive son, Gemellus had made that clear enough.

The handing over of all powers at once is generally seen as an example of the lack of senatorial power with the senators merely accepting the new status. However, it is possible to award the Senate some agency here. One can speculate that they developed a strategy intend to see Caligula fail. They may have hoped that

^{270.} Corruption of power: Barrett, 1989; abuse of power: Barrett, 2015.

^{271.} Sympathetic attitude towards the senators: Dio 59.6.1.

the underlying structures of the political republic in which political positions had to be warranted would show that Caligula was not up to the job. I consider this senatorial action as adhocratic. Adhocratic leadership as defined in this thesis is not the prerogative of a sole ruler. In this case, the senators used adhocratic techniques against a new ruler. Although there are several possible motivations behind the Senate's action, it can be best understood from an adhocratic perspective. The adhocratic character of the Senate's move to give Caligula full authority soon showed itself in attempts to tamper with the emperor's power. When Caligula requested the deification of Tiberius, the Senate refused.²⁷² While the Senate had the prerogative to decide on deification, its decision to decline the request may have been a deliberate act to challenge the new ruler by asserting its own authority and demonstrating its independence from the new ruler.²⁷³ The conspiracy of the so-called *protoi*, early 39 (see chapter 5) and the probably anti-government activities of some influential men likely aimed to subvert imperial authority.²⁷⁴ Caligula reacted to these challenges of his authority with a full frontal attack: his denouncement of the Senate. I shall deal with this caesura in the relationships between Caligula and the Senate in Chapter 5.

Caligula's ascent was a complex and politically charged event, with various factors and motivations at play within the Roman Senate. The accession marked a significant departure from the traditional Roman political landscape when the Senate decided to give Caligula all powers en bloc. The concept of adhocratic leadership helps to explain the Senate's motivation because it focuses on challenges and adaptability in uncertain contextual conditions. From an adhocratic point of view, the Senate's creation of uncertainty can be seen as a deliberate attempt to challenge Caligula's authority. By forcing an inexperienced emperor to overstep his bounds, the limitations of the mixed constitution would be exposed. Caligula reacted by elevating the status of the *domus Caesaris* to divine heights.

Caligula's ideological construction of emperorship

Caligula's position as a Roman emperor was marked by his exceptional parentage. Born and bred in the family of Caesar and Augustus, his extraordinary lineage set

²⁷². Dio 59.3.7.

²⁷³. There are no indications for Caligula orchestrating his uncle's failed apotheosis out of revenge for Tiberius' involvement in the demise of his family.

²⁷⁴. Dio wrote how leading senators and "many others" were condemned. Some of these men had been sentenced under Tiberius but were released by Caligula. Their renewed conviction suggests *maiestas* (Dio, 59. 18).

him apart from everyone else. Most Roman emperors refrained from emphasising their family relations to legitimise their rule.²⁷⁵ The reason for this restraint refers to the suggestion that positions of authority and power were given by the Senate and the people.²⁷⁶ The different approach Caligula took is the subject of this part.

Caligula had been out of the public eye for a significant period after the death of his father, Germanicus.²⁷⁷ This absence may have contributed to the misconception of Caligula as a young man (Figure 34). Caligula was 24 when he succeeded Tiberius as emperor. With a general life expectancy after the first year of 35 to 42 years, 24 resembled middle age.²⁷⁸

4



Fig. 34. Portrait of a member of the Julio-Claudian family, possibly Caligula. John Pollini suggested that it may be a portrait of Caligula when he came into prominence around the year 30 CE (Pollini, 1982, pp. 1-12). The Walters Art Museum. Accession number 23.102.

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^{275.} Hekster, 2015.

^{276.} *RGDA* 34.

^{277.} Noreña, 2010, p. 538.

^{278.} Boatwright, 2021, p. 87. Averages for life expectancy in ancient Rome are difficult to calculate due to the unreliability of recorded figures, high infant mortality and general unawareness of age (Gardner & Wiedemann, 1991, p. 86).

To secure his position and deter potential contenders, Caligula sought to elevate the status of the *domus Caesaris* to divine heights. This concept of imperial justification through membership of the imperial family became a form of legitimation and a barrier for aspiring imperial candidates. The visual example to broadcast the exclusiveness of the *domus Caesaris* was found with those Roman rulers who had followed Greek examples in the use of divine attributes for the depiction and legitimation of their power.²⁷⁹ Caesar's claimed connection with Venus as the genetrix of his clan, Augustus with Apollo and Venus, and Caligula with Vesta are some examples of the juxta positioning of rulers with divine counterparts. This close relationship of rulers with a particular deity or divine attributes became especially visible on coinage and in poetry.²⁸⁰ Visual communication through coinage played a significant role in legitimising an emperor's reign, particularly with reference to kinship.²⁸¹

Caligula's visual communication

Where most people are illiterate, the imagery becomes the message. Coinage, due to its function as currency, is the visual medium par excellence; it is also very difficult to interpret. The quantity and diversity of different coins circulating in the vast Roman empire must have familiarised most people with the images on coinage. Still, the way people looked at or interpreted coins evades us. Maybe Jones was right when he argued that most coin types were barely noticed, conventional as most of them were. Those noticed were the ones with unconventional designs or legends.²⁸² If Caligula intended to use coinage as a medium to emphasise his legitimation as emperor, his coin design must have been, at least in part, unconventional.²⁸³

Caligula's coinage is noteworthy for the numerous designs that emphasised his family, as shown in Graph 1. Caligula's efforts to legitimise his rule through familial connections and divine associations demonstrate the importance of symbolism and visual communication in Roman politics. His coinage and public actions aimed to convey the idea of what the poet Ovid called the *domus Divina*.²⁸⁴ The term, as replacement of *domus Augusta*, seems to nicely indicate the completion

^{279.} Rassiler, 2022.

^{280.} Coinage: Howgego, 1995, pp. 78 -87. Poetry examples: Virgil, *Aeneid*, Horace, *Carmen Saeculare*. I am not aware of contemporary laudations for Caligula.

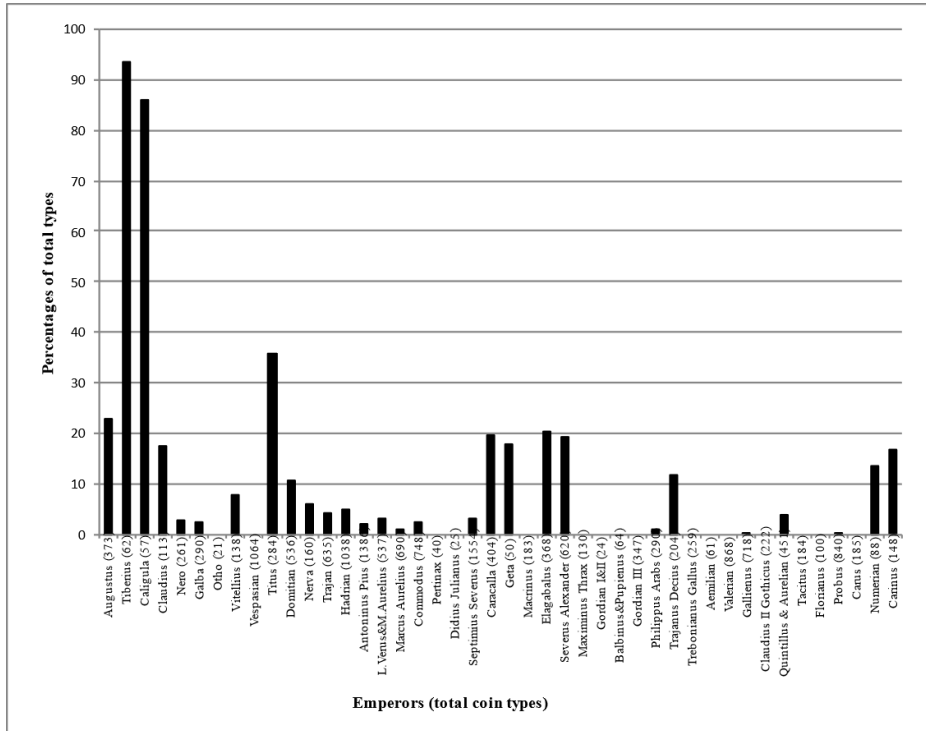
^{281.} Legitimation: Ando, 2000; Noreña, 2011; Hekster, 2015. Kinship references: Claes, 2013.

^{282.} Jones, 1956, pp. 13-33 with Wolters, 1999.

^{283.} Which suggests personal involvement in the design. See, Hekster, 2020, p. 765.

^{284.} Ovid, *Ex Ponto* ii.2.74.

of Caligula's turn toward adhocratic leadership. It again challenged the traditional Roman values and institutions upheld under the Republic.



Graph 1. Proportions of Coin Types Referring to all Ancestral Messages.²⁸⁵

Percentages of coin types referring to all ancestral messages			
	%	n	ntotal
Augustus (373)	23,1	86	373
Tiberius (62)	93,5	58	62
Caligula (57)	86,0	49	57
Claudius (113)	17,7	20	113
Nero (261)	2,7	7	261
Galba (290)	2,4	7	290
Otho (21)	0,0	0	21
Vitellius (138)	8,0	11	138
Vespasian (1064)	0,0	0	1064

^{285.} Graphics, courtesy of Dr. Liesbeth Claes. The high percentage of Tiberius' references is due to the analysis including all ancestral references, including kinship legends. Claes, 2013, p. 43.

Percentages of coin types referring to all ancestral messages			
	%	n	ntotaal
Titus (284)	35,9	102	284
Domitian (536)	10,8	58	536
Nerva (160)	6,3	10	160
Trajan (635)	4,4	28	635
Hadrian (1038)	5,0	52	1038
Antoninus Pius (1386)	2,3	32	1386
L.Verus&M.Aurelius (537)	3,4	18	537
Marcus Aurelius (690)	1,0	7	690
Commodus (748)	2,4	18	748
Pertinax (40)	0,0	0	40
Didius Julianus (25)	0,0	0	25
Septimius Severus (1554)	3,2	49	1554
Caracalla (404)	19,8	80	404
Geta (50)	18,0	9	50
Macrinus (183)	0,0	0	183
Elagabalus (368)	20,4	75	368
Severus Alexander (620)	19,4	120	620
Maximinus Thrax (130)	0,0	0	130
Gordian I&II (24)	0,0	0	24
Balbinus&Pupienus (64)	0,0	0	64
Gordian III (347)	0,0	0	347
Philippus Arabs (290)	1,0	3	290
Trajanus Decius (204)	11,8	24	204
Trebonianus Gallus (259)	0,0	0	259
Aemilian (61)	0,0	0	61
Valerian (868)	0,0	0	868
Gallienus (718)	0,1	1	718
Claudius II Gothicus (222)	0,0	0	222
Quintillus & Aurelian (451)	4,0	18	449
Tacitus (184)	0,0	0	184
Florianus (100)	0,0	0	100
Probus (840)	0,3	3	864
Carus (185)	0,0	0	185
Numerian (88)	13,6	12	88
Carinus (148)	16,9	25	148

Drusilla as heir to Caligula's property and throne

During his illness, Caligula was reported by Suetonius to have designated Drusilla as his heir to his property and the throne (*heredem quoque bonorum atque imperii*).²⁸⁶ Suetonius is the only source for this report.²⁸⁷ Whereas Drusilla's nomination would have posed significant legal and traditional challenges, most modern scholarship assumes that Suetonius' report is a fiction. However, it would align with Caligula's further adhococratic leadership style. Roman emperors were not succeeded by women, and there were legal obstacles to Drusilla's ascension. The emperor or his advisors were surely aware of these objections. However, Caligulan policies already overstepped traditional patterns, for example, with his coin designs and including his sisters in the state's oaths. I suggest that Drusilla's nomination may have been factual, and, if so, that it served dynastic purposes. First, we must look at the legal objections.

The legal implications of Drusilla's marital status were complex, particularly regarding her rights and inheritance. Caligula's marriage arrangements for Drusilla and her husband, Lepidus, were made before his illness, dated to October 37. There are two main reasons why Drusilla could not be emperor: the non-hereditary character of emperorship and, secondly, her gender. Women were prohibited from holding public offices. Therefore, the general gist of Caligulan scholarship is that her husband, Lepidus, was the nominee.²⁸⁸

Aemilius Lepidus (after 12-39) was a member of a gens that would fit the line of succession provided Gemellus was out of the way.²⁸⁹ Lepidus was the great-grandson of Augustus' first wife, Scribonia (by her first husband, Cornelius Scipio), and brother-in-law to Caligula. The 5th-century poet Rutilius Namatianus recalled how the Lepidi (he mentioned four Aemilii Lepidi) brought misfortunes through their swords. Drusilla's husband aimed, so Namatianus "at a stealthy inroad on imperial power, paid the penalty of foul adultery".²⁹⁰ His prominent place in Caligula's innermost circle is shown in the temple complex the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias, where he is present in the imperial group of Germanicus and Agrippina.²⁹¹ Dio

²⁸⁶. Suet. *Cal.* 24,1.

²⁸⁷. Although an important subject for the study of imperial testaments, little to none literature appears to exist. A search, for example, on WorldCat.org showed no results.

²⁸⁸. Barrett, 1989, p. 82; 2015, p. 115; Winterling, 2003, p. 62.

²⁸⁹. Syme, 1989, p.136 with Table IV.

²⁹⁰. Rut. Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, 305-6.

²⁹¹. Smith, 2013. The statue did not survive, but the base on which it stood was still unharmed in the 5th century when it was re-used at the agora gate.

reported how Lepidus had been publicly marked as Caligula's successor, arguing that he had been nominated for office five years before the legal age.²⁹² Such early nominations were a sign of favouritism.

However, Lepidus would only have been able to lay claim to succession *after* Drusilla's death. A testamentary nomination of Drusilla as successor would be rejected by an appeal on legal incapacity, neglect of male relatives (Gemellus) or (temporary) insanity of the testator. It would also fail because of *institutio heredis*, testamentary disposition. This regulation prescribed that a legally valid Roman testament had to mention the name of the heir at the beginning of the will; all dispositions before the exact naming of the rightful heir were invalid. Even if there were a will mentioning Drusilla, Gemellus would have to be mentioned first, which left Drusilla out of the picture because Gemellus was still alive. The legal fiction of the *conceptus pro iam nato habetur* was also not applicable. It implied that an already fathered but not yet born child was conceived as born, provided it was alive after birth and within nine months after the testator's demise.²⁹³ Caligula's wife, Junia Claudia, had died in childbirth with her child stillborn by the end of 36/ the beginning of 37. Caligula was a widower when ill and remained so until his marriage with Livia/Cornelia Orestilla by the end of 37/the beginning of 38.

Furthermore, the first persons to succeed in a case of intestate succession (succession without a will) were those under the *manus* or *potestas* of the testator. That, again, would have been Caligula's adoptive son Gemellus, not the married Drusilla. If Gemellus was, for whatever reason, considered unfit for succession, the next in line would be the closest agnatic relatives, those in the male line of descent.²⁹⁴ There were none. All this points to the only person who could legitimately claim the succession in case of Caligula's demise: Gemellus. This argument gains strength from Gemellus' forced suicide shortly after Caligula's recovery.

Given the impossibility of Drusilla becoming heir, Caligula's nomination of his sister -if true- may be considered another example of the emperor's madness. Was it? Perhaps not. By nominating his sister, Caligula may have tried to prevent the accession of his nephew, who could still be considered co-heir despite the annulment of Tiberius' will. Furthermore, there are indications of a Gemellus

²⁹². Lepidus as successor: Dio 59.22.6-7; early nomination: Dio 59.11.1.

²⁹³. Lokin/ Brandsma, 2022, pp. 54, 330-3331.

²⁹⁴. The authors from ancient times emphasised Gemellus' youth (Tac. *Ann.* 6.46.1. Suet. *Cal.* 13. Dio 58.23.2. Philo, *Leg.* 23,30-31; *Flacc.* 9). Barrett suggested that this referred to his mental state, not his actual age (Barrett, 1989, p. 39).

faction opposing Caligula's legitimization claims.²⁹⁵ However, Caligula's recovery and Drusilla's untimely death ended this possible succession plan. Gemellus, the only person who stood in the way of Lepidus, was killed on orders of Caligula while Lepidus joined a conspiracy to kill Caligula that led to his own death.

Caligula's unique use of his female siblings, including the honours bestowed upon them and their appearances on coins (Figure 35), is an example of adhocratic leadership with its focus on using social groups in a fully novel way. Caligula's use of his sisters departed from traditional norms where women were not prominently placed in the public sphere. Most memorable was the unique position of the emperor's sister, Drusilla. Her life and legacy are marked by her prominence in the court of Caligula, her subsequent deification, and the complex questions surrounding her potential designation as heir. However, Drusilla's story, even if she was not nominated as an heir, exemplifies Caligula's adhocratic decisions in light of his dynastic concerns and particularly the position of Gemellus.



Fig. 35. Apameia, AE. **Obv.** Drusus and Nero Caesares D D; **rev.** Agrippina the Younger, diva Drusilla, Iulia, CIC in exergue. RPC 2014. Ex Numismatik Lanz.

© Coin ID #1644. <http://www.asiaminorcoins.com/gallery/displayimage.php?pid=1644>.

²⁹⁵ Barrett, 1989, p. 77.

For no man living is ruled of his own free will; on the contrary, only so long as a person is afraid does he pay court to the man who is stronger, but when he gains courage, he avenges himself on the man who is weaker

5

CALIGULA'S DENOUNCEMENT OF THE SENATE

This chapter looks at how Caligula used adhocratic leadership by focusing on his relations with the Senate and the different roles the emperor was expected to play. This chapter delves into the conspiracy of several influential men, which led Caligula to expose the doublespeak by denouncing the Senate. This was an important step in the removal of the underlying political structure which until then prevented his predecessors to develop a full adhocratic rule. In an attempt to demonstrate his power, Caligula began preparations for an invasion of Britain. This chapter further examines Caligula's claim of a victory that was none and his persuasion thereof of the Senate.

The conspiracy of the *protoi*

Dio, corroborated by Suetonius and Aurelius Victor, wrote how, as early as 39 CE, several influential men, so-called '*protoi*', were accused of treason. Six of these men are known by name. The praetor Junius Priscus was charged for unknown reasons. He committed suicide. One Titius Rufus killed himself after he had criticised the sheepish mentality of the Senate. The governor of Pannonia, Calvisius Sabinus, was recalled with his wife, Cornelia. Both committed suicide. Lucius Annaeus Seneca was criticised by Caligula for his oratorical skills; he survived. The orator Carrinas Secundus supposedly spoke against tyranny and killed himself while banished.²⁹⁶ The orator Gnaeus Domitius Afer, accused by the emperor, survived, claiming to be overwhelmed by Caligula's eloquence. Afer became suffect consul for 39 CE and later as Nero's *curator aquarum* responsible for the city's water supply. Afer died due to binge eating.²⁹⁷ These accusations raise questions about potential conspiracies and opposition to Caligula's early rule. According to Dio, many of these *protoi* were released from prison only to be punished for the same reasons Tiberius had put them away. The reference to *maiestas* charges is apparent.²⁹⁸ Although the evidence to support Dio's claim of a plot by foremost men in early 39 is meagre, it does confirm the reinstalment of the feared *maiestas* trials. Nevertheless, Seneca and Afer survived; Sabinus and Cornelia committed suicide before a verdict was given; the process took place after 1 July 39. The suicides of Priscus, Rufus, and Secundus cannot be dated, but they are the only known ones that might have occurred before September 39.

²⁹⁶. Corroborated by Suetonius (*Cal.* 15.4) and Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 3.8). Known *protoi*: Dio 59. 18. 4-5; 19. 1-8; 16.5-7. Junius Priscus'suicide: Dio 59.18.4.5. Titius Rufus' suicide: PIR¹ T 201. Sabinus and Cornelia's' suicide: Dio 59. 18.4. Secundus'suicide: PIR² C 449. Dio 59. 20.6. Tac. *Ann.* 4.52. Seneca's survival: Dio 59.19.7. The Seneca referred to is commonly seen as the eponymous Stoic philosopher, but his father is more likely. The first known writings of Seneca the Younger, the *Consolatio ad Marciam*, dates from 39/40 CE. This book contains no criticism whatsoever of Caligula. On the contrary, Seneca is highly critical of Seianus in much the same way as he would be of Caligula *after* the emperor's death. His father, Seneca, the orator, was quite famous, while his son stood at the beginning of his career. Whether Dio's anecdote about this event and Seneca's rescue by some unknown person is fiction, either by Seneca himself or some supporters, or not is still debated. (Sen. *NQ* pr.4.17. Griffin, 2003, pp. 53-57. Wilson, 2014, pp. 66-69).

²⁹⁷. Domitius Afer became one of the most famous orators under Claudius, especially after his defence of Cloatilla. His collected aphorisms were widely circulated in a popular book that is lost to us. Quintilianus regarded him as his teacher (*Inst.* V.7.7). Afer died in 57. Afer: Tac. *Ann.* 4.52, 66; 14.19; binge eating: Saint Jerome *Chronicon*.

²⁹⁸. Winterling, 2003 p. 89.

It has been suggested that these *protoi* formed a conspiratorial group of former friends and supporters of Seianus, a prominent figure in the previous regime.²⁹⁹ This network of so-called *satellite Seiani* supposedly operated after the prefect's death and centred around Seneca the Younger and Caligula's sisters.³⁰⁰ However, Griffin thoroughly rebuts any suggestion of a conspiracy by *Seianiani*. "It would be surprising if they [i.e., the *nobiles*] had allowed Seianus to dictate their friendships posthumously".³⁰¹ The particulars of the different cases make it unlikely that these men joined in a conspiracy against Caligula. However, their cases do suggest opposition from elite circles directed against the emperor. Less doubt exists about Caligula's reaction to this perceived threat; he reinstated the *maiestas* treason trials.³⁰² In so doing, Caligula aimed at consolidating his power and eliminating potential adversaries within the Senate.³⁰³ In order to do that, he used the full authority that the Senate had earlier given him.

Caligula's exposing of senatorial doublespeak

Caligula's response to the opposition culminated in an address to the Senate in 39 CE, as recorded by Dio.³⁰⁴ While caution is required when dealing with ancient speeches and quotations, the speech against the Senate exposed the doublespeak characteristic of the communication between an all-powerful leader and the Senate.³⁰⁵ The speech is critical for understanding Caligula's adhocratic leadership. In his speech, Caligula accused the senators of undermining the joint government and held each senator *personally* responsible for the turbulent decades of terror and denunciation under the previous emperor, Tiberius. His strategy was to make these accusations personal, thereby creating uncertainty and breaking existing group

²⁹⁹. Stewart, 1953, pp. 70-85; Griffin, 2003, p. 51. The *satellite Seiani*: Tac. *Ann.* 6.3.

³⁰⁰. For the suggestion that this group centred around Caligula's sisters: I. Lana, *Lucio Anneo Seneca* (Turin, 1955) referred to in Griffin, 2003, pp. 47-54. However, there is no evidence of Caligula's sisters as members of the *Seianiani*. Livilla was engaged to Quintilius Varus, son of the Varus who had lost his legions in Germania. Young Varus fell victim to Seianus' machinations and was accused, probably of *maiestas*. With the trial postponed, the affair led to the termination of the engagement. Curious is Livilla's engagement in 30 CE with Seianus, who was at the height of his power and working towards the destruction of Germanicus' family. Livilla later married the consul of 30 Marcus Vinicius. The Julia in Dio 58.3.9 is Julia Livilla and not the daughter of Tiberius' son Drusus; that Julia married a certain Rubellius Blandus in 33 CE.

³⁰¹. Griffin, 2003, p. 51.

³⁰². Dio 59.13.2-5.

³⁰³. Winterling, 2003, p. 89.

³⁰⁴. Dio 59.16. Suet. *Cal.* 30.2 seems to refer to the same episode.

³⁰⁵. Miller, 1975, pp. 45-57; on Dio's use of speeches, see Pitcher, 2022, pp. 309-328. Millar, 1964, pp. 78-83.

cohesion— techniques characteristic of adhocratic leadership. To substantiate his claims, Caligula produced "exact documents" (actually copies) of the *maiestas* trials that he had previously ceremoniously burned before the senators.³⁰⁶ He argued that if he, as the new emperor, could not feel secure and protected by the Senate, it was reasonable to break with the mixed constitution as the hallmark of Roman governance. Caligula motivated his intentions by introducing an imaginary Tiberius into his speech.

Caligula's denouncement of the Senate

"In all this," Tiberius observed, "you have spoken well and truly. Therefore, show no affection for any of them and spare none of them. For they all hate you, and they all pray for your death; and they will murder you if they can. Do not stop to consider, then, what acts of yours will please them nor mind it if they talk, but look solely to your own pleasure and safety, since that has the most just claim. In this way, you will suffer no harm and will at the same time enjoy all the greatest pleasures; you will also be honoured by them, whether they wish it or not. If, however, you pursue the opposite course, it will profit you naught in reality; for, though in name you may win an empty reputation, you will gain no advantage, but will become the victim of plots and will perish ingloriously. For no man living is ruled of his own free will; on the contrary, only so long as a person is afraid does he pay court to the man who is stronger, but when he gains courage, he avenges himself on the man who is weaker."³⁰⁷

With this speech, Caligula terminated the notion, or illusion, of joint government that he had upheld during the first one-and-a-half years of his reign. He had lived up to what was expected of the emperor's civic role by tax measures, the returning of elections to the people and construction works such as the Aqua Claudia, the Anio Novus, the improvement of the harbour at Rhegium, a bridge crossing the *Velabrum*, the valley between the Capitoline and Palatine hills, the repair of Pompey's theatre (finished by Claudius), two racetracks in the *Ager Vaticanus*, and the clearance of the Saepta-area for the construction of an amphitheatre. Caligula

^{306.} Suet. *Cal.* 15.4.

^{307.} Dio 59. 16. 5-7. Barrett suggests that Caligula may have ended his speech with the famous words of the poet Accius: *oderint, dum metuant*, let them hate provided they fear (Barret, 1989, p. 93; 2015, p. 131). The 1st-century BCE poet Accius was famous for his tragedy 'Atreus', in which the quote referred to the ideas of Sulla. The expression soon became symbolic of the view of a despot. Tiberius paraphrased it as '*oderint, dum probent*', let them hate me, provided they agree with me (Suet. *Tib.* 59.4). Seneca, too, appeared rather fond of the expression (*Dial.* 3.20.4; 3.20.8; *Clem.* 2.2.2). Nevertheless, the saying was in Caligula's days no more than a cliché.

had also manifested himself in his religious role by dedicating the temple of the divine Augustus and the development of a cult for his consecrated sister Drusilla and, possibly, for himself.³⁰⁸ Caligula, supported by his advisors, had demonstrated his imperial capabilities in these respects, thereby disavowing his supposed unpreparedness for government. However, what he needed after the break with the Senate was a demonstration of his military power. By proving his success in war, Caligula could demonstrate to the Senate that power was his alone. His plans were ambitious and bold. Invading Britain would almost outdo Julius Caesar, and persuading the Senate of a fake military victory was even more audacious.

^{308.} The question of Caligula's divinity is difficult to disentangle. See Barrett, 2015, pp. 190- 205. Below, chapter 10.



6

CALIGULA'S MILITARY ROLE: INVADING BRITAIN

Chapter 6 deals with Caligula's military role. In this chapter we again see how the underlying traditional structures of military rule disappear under Caligula's adhocratic rule. This allowed for personalised decisions that would have been impossible under the previous system. The emperor's adhocratic manipulation of reality is best seen in his claiming of a fake military victory during the Northern expedition.

Caligula made swift political changes after his denouncement of the Senate. The suffect consuls who had assumed office by the end of August 39 were quickly dismissed. The reasons for their abrupt removal remain unknown. Speculations of treason were raised, and the quick succession of consuls suggested a sense of urgency.³⁰⁹ One of the consuls committed suicide, while the other, Domitius Corbulo, survived, possibly due to his familial connection as the half-brother of Caligula's wife, Caesonia.³¹⁰ In the aftermath, new suffects, Domitius Afer and Aulus Didius Gallus, were appointed. With Afer and Gallus left in charge, Caligula's party, including his sisters and brother-in-law Lepidus, departed from Rome and headed north in response to unsettling news from the northern regions.³¹¹

Caligula's military ambitions centred on the invasion of Britain, a significant undertaking that required careful planning and the assurance of security on other borders of the Roman Empire. However, if successful, Caligula would have succeeded where Caesar failed. The success of such an invasion would not only enhance his reputation significantly but also solidify his authority. To achieve this, Caligula took several drastic measures.

He began by withdrawing provincial governors and commanders appointed by Tiberius, indicating his distrust of their loyalty. Lucius Vitellius, the governor of the vital province of Syria, was discharged, although his political arrangements remained intact.³¹² Gaius Calvisius Sabinus, the governor of Pannonia, was recalled with his wife Cornelia. The reason is unknown, but rumours of Cornelia's improper behaviour suggest lax discipline. Claims of improper behaviour were traditional covers for political wrongdoings, which almost always referred to breaches of military discipline.

^{309.} Dio 59.20. Dio gave two reasons for the dismissal: the consuls were accused of having celebrated Caligula's birthday poorly (which meant they were in office before 31 August), and they had called for festivities on 2 and 3 September to commemorate Augustus' victories over Mark Antony.

^{310.} Dio confused father and son Corbulo (Dio 60.30; 62.20; 63.17 the year 39). Cf. Tacitus' reference to events in 21 (*Ann.* 11.18-20; 13.34-41; 14, 15 *passim*). When Pliny summed up the children of Vistilia, young Corbulo was said to have held consular rank 'as if to distinguish him from his father' (Plin. *NH* 7.39. Syme, 1970, pp. 27-39. DNP 3. Barrett, 1989, p. 970). Corbulo, the Elder, was husband number five (out of six) to Vistilia, the mother of Caligula's wife, Caesonia.

^{311.} Sen. *Ep.* 1.4.7. Dio 59.22.8.

^{312.} Barrett considered Vitellius' recall routine (Barrett, 1989, p. 100; 2015, p. 138).

Allowing discipline to grow lax or lowering the troops' morale was a crime. Sabinus and Cornelia committed suicide before their verdict was pronounced.³¹³



Map 1. The Roman Empire under Augustus and Caligula.

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Rearrangements in Mauretania

The invasion of Britain necessitated the concentration of Roman troops in the north-western part of the empire. However, this raised concerns about leaving the eastern and southern borders vulnerable to attacks. The African border was something of an anomaly.³¹⁴ Augustus had secured all provinces where legions were stationed and commanded them by personally nominated legates. Africa, with the Legion III Augusta, was an exception. To what extent became apparent in 17- 24 CE when the Numidian chief Tacfarinas assaulted the province and the Senate proved incapable

^{313.} Dio 59.18.4, Tac. *His.* 1.48.2-3. Tac. *Ann.* 6.9.5-6; 12.52. Dio reported mischief of Cornelia, such as hanging around the guards and watching the soldiers' manoeuvres. Tacitus was less taciturn: Cornelia "urged by a perverse curiosity to view the camp, entered it by night in the disguise of a soldier, and after extending the insulting frolic to the watches and the general arrangements of the army, dared to commit the act of adultery in the headquarters." (Tac. *His.* 1.48. 2-3). Female presence at the manoeuvres was not a penal offence. Their suicide before the verdict suggests charges of *maiestas*. Sabinus, a consul in 26, had been charged with *maiestas* in 32 but was acquitted. Tac. *Ann.* 6.9.3.

^{314.} The Senate did not control senatorial provinces, whereas the proconsuls were not responsible towards the Senate (Millar, 1966, p. 165).

of nominating a suitable governor.³¹⁵ Tiberius let the situation be. Caligula solved the problem by dividing the province with a proconsul ruling the former territory of Carthage and a personally appointed legate in charge of the legion in the western district of Numidia.³¹⁶ The change of command in Mauretania indicated a security concern, while the subsequent execution of the ruling local King Ptolemy, suggested a severe misdemeanour.³¹⁷

Caligula's presence in Germania Inferior

The extant texts often portray Caligula as an inexperienced and incapable commander. They are, however, silent about the reactions of able commanders to the emperor's decisions during the northern campaign. One example to be discussed below is the reported command to collect seashells. Whether the at-first glance incomprehensible command to collect shells raised eyebrows is not documented, but such silence prompts questions about Caligula's leadership abilities and whether he was truly as inept as portrayed. Caligula's policies regarding eastern kingdoms and North Africa had proven constructive, and his handling of what he perceived as untrustworthy commanders appeared diligent. Furthermore, although the invasion was aborted, his successor Claudius's successful invasion of Britain proved Caligula's preparations to have been adequate.

An example of these adequate preparations for an invasion was the raising of two new legions, *Legio XV Primigenia* and *Legio XXII Primigenia*, both stationed in Mogontiacum (Mainz).³¹⁸ Both legions were meant to replace the more experienced

³¹⁵. Tac. *Ann.* 3.20-21, 73-74; 4. 23-26; Tac. *Ann.* 4. 23-6; Tac. *His.* 4.48.

³¹⁶. It would last until the end of the 2nd century before a legate became both governor and military commander. Caligula's policy allowed Carthage to blossom again.

³¹⁷. According to Suetonius, Ptolemy was the only king who was executed for drawing too much attention when wearing a purple *abolla* (Suet. *Cal.* 35.1-2).

³¹⁸. An inscription on a tombstone for the centurion Italicus read: *Ti. Iulio Ti. F. Fal(erna) Italico, 7 leg. VII Macedon, 7 leg. XV Primigen, 7 leg. XIII Gem. p.p., Decuri....* Italicus thus served successively with Legion VII Macedonica, XV Primigenia and XIII Gemina. N.B. XII Germania did not exist (see Barrett, 1989, p. 126). *Legio XXII Prim.* camped in Upper Germany until 40 CE and was afterwards transferred to Pannonia (and, still later, by Trajan to Dacia). *Legio VII Macedonia* carried the honorific title *Claudia Pia Fidelis* since 42 CE for its role in striking down the revolt of Furius Camillus Scribonianus in Dalmatia. Such an honour would certainly have been mentioned on the centurion's tombstone; hence, the centurion had left this legion before 42 CE, meaning that his next unit, Legion XV Primigenia, already existed (Ritterling, 1924, pp. 1244-1249; Riese, 1914, p. 114, nr. 986 (= *CIL* 10 4723). An overview of the many tombstones of *Leg. XV Primigenia* and *XXII Primigenia* in Riese, 1914, nrs. 982-999; 1093-1334.

Rhine armies when these were deployed in Britain.³¹⁹ Assuming that both legions were operative before Caligula arrived, recruitment must have begun early in 39 or possibly even earlier. After a medical examination, a recruit was trained and tested during a *probatio*, a four-month training period. With a legion of 5,000 to 6,000 men, raising two new legions would take over half a year.³²⁰ If one assumes that the time to prepare for the relocation of the emperor and his entourage is equally long, preparations for the northern campaign began in late 38 or early 39.³²¹

Caligula's plans to invade Britain and his personal presence in Germania Inferior, lower Germany, are well-documented in both literary and material sources. Tacitus stated: "That Gaius meditated an invasion of Britain is perfectly clear, but his purposes, rapidly formed, were easily changed, and his vast attempts on Germany had failed."³²² Despite the historian's derogatory formulation, it is an adequate description of adhococratic leadership. A purposeful plan, quickly designed and implemented to meet changed circumstances, fits adhococratic leadership (which the ensuing events would make even clearer). The derogatory character of Tacitus's description is even more visible in his characterisation of the expedition as a *ludibrium*, a trivial game.³²³

Dio, on the other hand, believed that Caligula's true motives for heading north were to exploit the wealth of Gaul and Spain rather than a serious invasion of Britain.³²⁴ Caligula's presence along the *limes* of lower Germany (map 2) and on the North Sea coast is ascertained from the word '*Oceani*', which refers to the North Sea.³²⁵ Material evidence comes from archaeological finds along the Rhine frontier. While the literary sources provide glimpses of Caligula's northern campaign, they read like a series of bizarre adventures, and the details of the events in the North are scarce. Apart from Caligula's imperial itinerary, little information is available.

^{319.} *Leg. XV Primigenia* was dissolved in 70. *Leg. XXII Primigenia* camped from 40 till 70 around Mainz, from 70 till 90 in *Vetera* and afterwards back in Mainz. The legion carried *pia fidelis* since ca. 90 (Pörtner, 1962, p. 321).

^{320.} Van Dale, 2003, pp. 62-67.

^{321.} For the notion of the Roman emperor as a moving capital, see Millar, 1966, pp. 28-40 with Halfmann, 1986. Essential to realise are the complex logistical requirements involved in military campaigns. For example, two legions of 10,000 to 12,000 men with horses, pack animals, camp followers, et cetera required huge amounts of food, fodder, wine, oil that must be produced, transported, and stored (Erdkamp, 1998; Roth, 1999; Breeze et. al., 2018).

^{322.} Tac. *Agr.* 13.4.

^{323.} Tac. *His.* 4.15. 3; *Germ.* 37.5.

^{324.} Dio 59.21.2; 59.21.4-5.

^{325.} Tac. *Hist.* 15 Suet. *Cal.* 46; Dio 59.21.3; 59.25.1.

In brief, Caligula spent the winter in Lugdunum (Lyon), where he met his uncle Claudius, who led a senatorial delegation.³²⁶ In the spring of 40 CE, the campaign season saw Caligula in Mainz, where he inspected the troops.³²⁷ During this time, a British princeling named Amminius arrived. Caligula then travelled along the Rhine as far as Lugdunum Cananefatium (Katwijk, the Netherlands) and returned to Rome by the end of May 40 CE.

The execution of the commander of the Upper Rhine legions

Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus, the long-standing commander of the Upper Rhine legions, had successfully contested his dismissal under Tiberius but had since suffered several defeats. Lack of skill and slackened discipline could have been the cause.³²⁸ Nevertheless, the general commanded four legions or eight if he could mobilise the troops in Lower Germany. Whatever may have motivated him, Gaetulicus involved himself in a plot against Caligula or intended to do so.³²⁹ The entry in the Arval Acts of 27 October 39 confirmed Gaetulicus' plotting: *A.d VI K. Novembr./... ob detecta nefaria con[silia/ in C. Germani[cum] Cn. Lentuli Gaet[ulici]*: On 27 October ... to indicate the detection of the evil plots against C. Germanicus of Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus. Dio, on the other hand, wrote that the general was executed for no other reason than the regard in which his men held him.³³⁰

Noteworthy is the cursorily passing by of the incident by both Suetonius and Dio. Suetonius makes Caligula's brother-in-law Lepidus and Caligula's two sisters a part of a plot he called a '*Lepidi et Gaetulici coniuratio*'.³³¹ Lepidus is mentioned as a victim but without any reference to motives.³³² This literary evidence for a connection between Gaetulicus and Lepidus is thus meagre. Furthermore, Caligula's sisters being involved in a plot to murder their brother, because of which both were removed from the court while Caligula had no official offspring, must have been

^{326.} Suet. *Cal.* 17.1; 26.2; 45.

^{327.} Suet. *Galba.* 6.3-4.

^{328.} Suet. *Cal.* 44; Suet. *Galba.* 6.3.

^{329.} Some scholars suggest a conspiratorial connection between Gaetulicus and Governor Sabinus, his co-consul in 26 (Barrett, 1989, p. 105; Faur, 1973, pp. 13-50). There is no evidence for the two being involved in a conspiracy together. Their only connection is both being on the recall list, possibly for the same reasons. Syme suggested that Sabinus' wife Cornelia may have been Gaetulicus' sister (Syme, 1986, p. 298 n.120).

^{330.} *Docs.* 9; AFA 39; Dio 59. 22.5.

^{331.} Suet. *Cl.* 9.1; *Vesp.* 2.3) Suetonius fails to give any motive.

^{332.} Gaetulicus' regard: Dio 59. 22.5; Lepidus as victim: Dio 59.22.6.

a shattering event. Still, a few cursory remarks only. The silence of the sources suggests that the accusation of a plot involving Gaetulicus is a later addition suggested by or allowed for the memory sanctions against Caligula. Gaetulicus' death appears to have been the result of Caligula's general restructuring of district government. Gaetulicus was about to be dismissed. He revolted and lost his life.

The reorganisation of the Rhine legions

"Disce miles militare, Galba est, non Gaetulicus": soldiers learn to play the soldier, Galba is here not Gaetulicus. This soldier's song reflected the changed atmosphere in the camps after Suspicius Galba, the later emperor, replaced Gaetulicus as the commander of the Upper Rhine legions.³³³ Galba was appointed as *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, which meant that he acted on personal orders from Caligula with full *imperium*.³³⁴ The general arrived in Mainz in late September or early October. A Suetonian anecdote provides a clue: Galba reprimanded the men for not behaving as soldiers when they applauded during a show.³³⁵ This event could have been the *armilustrum* of 19 October, the date traditionally marking the end of the campaigning season.

Galba's take-over signalled a change in the atmosphere in the Roman camps and a shift toward more rigorous military preparations. Generals who were late in bringing the auxiliaries from various places were dismissed. Many of the chief centurions, well on in years of their rank and some just a few days before retirement, were discharged with their age and infirmity as excuses. Galba railed at the men's avarice, reducing the rewards on full-service completion from twelve thousand to six thousand sesterces.³³⁶ In short, the martinet general prepared the men for battle.

³³³. Suet. *Galba*. 6.2. The literary sources referred to Gaetulicus' past as an author of erotic poetry (Plin. *Ep.* 5.3.5. Tac. *Ann.* 6.30. Suet. *Tib.* 41). Replacement of Gaetulicus: Suet. *Galba* 6.3, 6-7; Tac. *His.* 1.5.2; 18.3.

³³⁴. Millar, 1966, p. 157. Galba was close to the imperial family. Livia adopted him while Agrippina the Younger had, as the expression goes, set her cap on him even before his wife had died. It earned Agrippina a slap in the face from Galba's mother-in-law (Suet. *Galba* 5.1).

³³⁵. Suet. *Galba*. 6.3.

³³⁶. Suet. *Cal.* 44.1. The sum of 6000 sesterces was half the amount established by Augustus (Dio 55.23). The time of duty had been extended to twenty years, although, in fact, it was prolonged (Tac. *Ann.* 1.78.2 with Dio 57.4.2 on the uproar of the legions in Pannonia and Germania after Augustus' death). Old age could be a problem, and there were many complaints about old soldiers. The premature dismissal was cost-effective, although not considered sympathetic. With an average wage of 900 sesterces per annum (Tac. *Ann.* 1.17.4), the termination premium of 12,000 sesterces was considerable.

The conspiracy of Caligula's closest kin

Whereas the Arval Acts only referred to Gaetulicus' plotting against Caligula, Suetonius involved Lepidus, the emperor's brother-in-law, and Caligula's sisters. Suetonius referred to the plot as the '*Lepidi et Gaetulici coniuratio*'. Lepidus was executed, and the sisters were exiled.³³⁷ The motives behind this conspiracy remain unclear, but some clues suggest that the sisters may have been motivated by concerns about the succession. The birth of Caligula's daughter, Julia Drusilla (Figure 36), in the summer of 39 posed a threat to the imperial aspirations of Agrippina the Younger for her son, Nero, and the potential offspring of Lepidus and Livilla.³³⁸



Fig. 36. Milonia and baby Drusilla. Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, <https://www.cngcoins.com> CC BY-SA 2.5. © <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=122022461>

As long as Caligula was childless, Agrippina the Younger's son Nero was first in the succession. However, Agrippina the Younger must have known that Nero's succession was not evident. The day of Nero's *lustratio* had made that clear.³³⁹ When Agrippina the Younger asked her brother to name the boy, Caligula suggested the name of Claudius, considered to be the family's dupe. Even if one of Caligula's pranks, Agrippina the Younger would not only not be amused but realised the intimation. Tacitus accused Agrippina the Younger of instigating a sexual

^{337.} Suet. *CL.* 9.1; *Vesp.* 2.3. Lepidus was executed, and the sisters were exiled (Suet. *Cal.* 24. 3; Dio 59.22.6).

^{338.} Birth of Julia Drusilla in the summer of 39: Barrett, 1989, pp. 94-5 (based on a re-interpretation of Dio 59.28.7); Balsdon, 1934, p. 48; Winterling, 2003, pp. 101-2. All scholars emphasise the complexity of reconstructing the events of 39. The birth shortly after (Dio 59. 23.7) or on the day of the marriage (Suet. *Cal.* 25.3) does not mean that Caligula could not have been the biological father. Whether he was is irrelevant. Having a child with his legal wife, Caesonia, sufficed.

^{339.} The *lustratio* was the name-giving ritual held eight days after birth, nine days for girls. Note that Nero's father, Domitius Ahenobarbus, was dismissed in 1 BCE from Gaius Caesar's staff due to cruelty (Suet. *Nero* 5.1-2).

relationship with her brother-in-law, thereby hoping to gain control after Caligula's death.³⁴⁰ Seeing their imperial desires, fears and hopes jeopardised by the newly born, the other sisters may have joined forces with Lepidus too. By participating in the conspiracy, they may have aimed to remove Caligula and secure the succession of their own offspring. However, Caligula displayed insight by not executing his sisters. The emperor surely recognised the significance of his closest kin as potential heirs for the continuation of the imperial line (Figures 37 and 38).



Fig. 37. Aureus. Agrippina the Younger
AGRIPPINAE AVGVSSTAE RIC 1² Claudius 80
© [http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1\(2\).cl.80](http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1(2).cl.80)



Fig. 38. Brass. Julia Livilla.
IOYΛIAN NΞAN ΓΞΡΜANIKOY, MYTI. RPC 2348.
© <http://www.asiaminorcoins.com/gallery/displayimage.php?pid=5530>

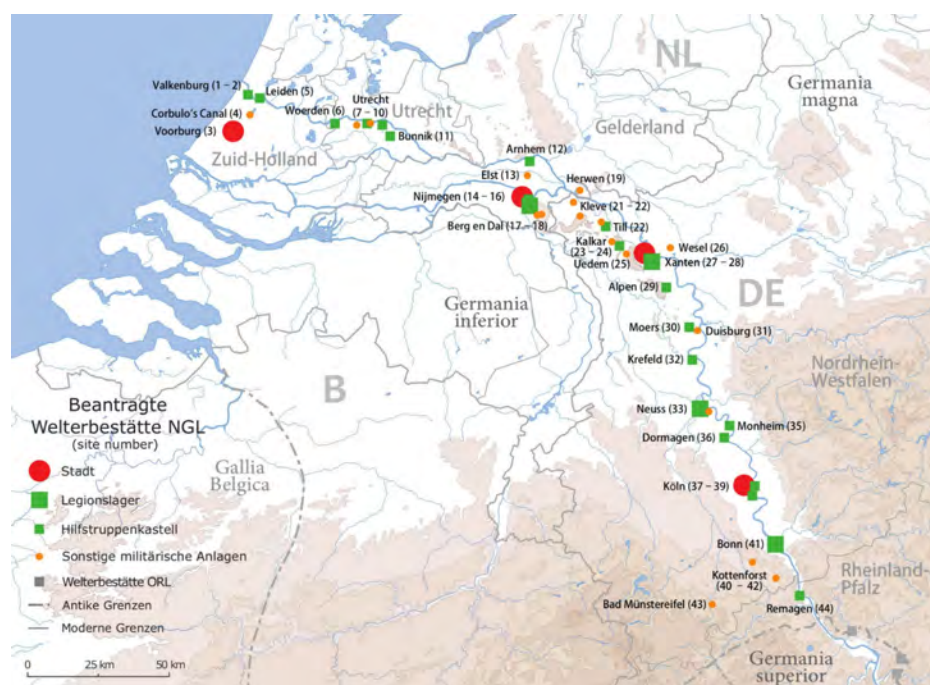
The coastal expedition

This part delves into the precarious nature of Caligula's northern expedition. The expansion of Roman power across the Rhine was fraught with challenges and limited prospects for profit. The memory of General Varus's disastrous defeat at the hands of Arminius and united German tribes still lingered in Roman consciousness. Even Germanicus had narrowly escaped disaster in these lands. In 28 CE, the Frisians revolted, resulting in the crucifixion of Roman tax collectors and the disgrace of General Apronius, who had to withdraw without burying the dead. These events remained hidden, and although Apronius went scot-free until his replacement in Lower Germany by the more capable Gabinius Secundus, later revelations revealed the precariousness of Roman control in the region.³⁴¹

^{340.} Suet. *Nero* 6.2; control after death: Tac. *Ann.* 14.2.2.

^{341.} Tac. *Ann.* 4.72-4.

Although Gaetulicus had not been able to resist the pressure from the German tribes, there is no evidence of serious incursions or occupation on the east side of the Rhine. The Chatti controlled the East side of the Rhine from Wiesbaden to Cologne. The Canninefates occupied territories on the upper reaches of the Rhine. Frontier skirmishes were a nuisance, but nothing suggests serious incursions into or occupation of the lands on the East side of the Rhine. It was no warzone. The activities in the border territories have the appearance of training exercises to restore discipline and get the men battle-fit for the real objective, Britain. To secure the critical supply route of the Rhine, strongholds were concentrated along the river to ensure safe and continuous transportation to the largest concentration of troops in the Roman world.³⁴² This stretch of strongholds is known as the *limes* (map 2).



Map 2. The Limes along the Middle and Lower Rhine

© Grafik: S. Bödecker/ E. Rung, LVR-Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege/ M. Pütz, LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn/ Kartengrundlage: GLOBE Task Team and others

^{342.} To feed a force of about 40,000 soldiers, ca. 2,000 shiploads of grain per year were necessary (Breeze et. al., 2018, p. 62).

Archaeological findings corroborate Caligula's presence with the Rhine armies. Notable discoveries include a coin hoard found in 2001-2 at Fort Albaniana (Alphen aan de Rijn, the Netherlands), where a substantial number of 735 coins from Caligula's reign were unearthed. Of these, 320 were issued in 37-8 under Caligula, with 81 asses depicting Agrippa on the obverse (Figure 39).³⁴³



Fig. 39. As. 37-41 CE. Rome. **Obv.** Head of Agrippa, wearing the rostral crown, looking to the left. M.AGRIPPA.L.F.COS.III; **rev.** cloaked Neptune, standing left between S C, holding a small dolphin in his right hand and a trident in his left. BM, C&M catalogue number RE1 (142) (161) (142). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

Compared to the four other forts along the northern part of the *limes*, the percentage of Caligula's coins is considerably higher.³⁴⁴ A notable amount of the low denomination coins found in Albaniana carried the Claudian countermark *TICLAVIM* (Tiberius **C**laudius **I**mperator, Figure 40). This specific countermark was only found on Caligula's coinage and was typical for the area of the Lower Rhine.³⁴⁵

At the *castellum Laurum* (or Laurium, Woerden, the Netherlands), few coins of Claudius were found, while those of Caligula were quite abundant. This suggests the construction of the fort under Caligula. Excavations in the military facilities in Fectio (Vechten, the Netherlands) and Praetorium Agrippinae (Valkenburg, South Holland) revealed wine barrels stamped with Caligula's name. In addition, one barrel referred

^{343.} Kemmers, 2004, pp. 22-5, Table 4; Figure 54. Agrippa-aes *RIC I² Caligula* 58. The find also contests Suet. *Cal.* 23.1. while confirming Philo *Leg.* 291 where Julius Agrippa refers to Vipsanius Agrippa as Caligula's grandfather.

^{344.} Kemmers, 2004, pp. 31-2; 43.

^{345.} Kemmers, 2004, p. 24. Countermarks were used for several reasons. They could, for example, change or confirm the value of coins (Rowan, 2019, p. 177). The use of the predecessor's coinage suggests the immediate requirement of a large amount of money and, as Kemmers observed, a clear area designation (Kemmerys, 2004, pp. 45-6).

to Caligula's private vineyards, a strong suggestion of his presence.³⁴⁶ Flevum-2 (Velsen), the Roman naval base at the northern outlet of the Rhine, was fortified when Praetorium Agrippinae was built. The *castra flevum*, dated to 39 CE, beyond the *limes*, was the most northern fortification in continental Europe and sheltered thousands of soldiers. Such *castra* were built in strategic locations during important campaigns. Together with those of ships, weapons, and armoury, such discoveries prove not only the Roman military presence but also the strategic importance of the area.



Fig. 40. Caligula, As, 37-38. Rome. **Obv.** Caligula, bareheaded, C CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS PON M TR POT. Below right countermark TICLAVIM; **rev.** Vesta enthroned, sceptre and patera, S-C. RIC I² 38.

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At one point, the imperial party moved to the North Sea coast. Scholars continue to debate the exact coastal location. Katwijk on the Dutch coast and Boulogne-Sur-Mer on the French Channel coast are considered the most likely candidates. Another possibility, one not considered before, is Cap Gris-Nez (*Promunturium Itium*), where the distance of 33 km to the English cliffs is the shortest.³⁴⁷ The remains of a square tower dating to the Roman era could also qualify as the Fare de Caligula. What little evidence there is centres around the possible existence of a lighthouse constructed on orders of Caligula.³⁴⁸ More challenging for scholarship than the coastal location

^{346.} Wynia, 1999, pp. 145-90.

^{347.} Grenier, 1944. Cf. The *Portus Itius* of Caesar. See, Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* 4.21-23.

^{348.} Suet. *Cal.* 46. A 'Phare de Caligula', also known as the Tour d'Ordre, is known to have existed near Gessoriacum (Boulogne-Sur-Mer). The lighthouse had twelve levels, was 65 metres high and stood on a small rock island just offshore. The tower was destroyed in 1644 (Daudry, 1983, p. 434). A similar story about a Caligulan lighthouse is known from Katwijk. The 17th-century Dutch historian Adrian Pars observed how Dutch fishermen from the area referred to a place called Kalla's Tower. Pars interpreted this as Caligula's lighthouse (A. Pars, *Catti aborigenes Batavorum* (1697) reference in Wynia, 1999, p.145). Remains of such a construction have, as yet not been found. Scholars rejecting the Channel/Boulogne option: Bicknell, 1962, pp. 72-74; Bicknell, 1968, pp. 496-505; Byvanck, 1931 although this scholar later allowed for the possibility of Northern France as well (Byvanck, 1943, p. 145).

was the event that set many pens in motion, the collection of spoils of the ocean due to the Capitol and Palatine.³⁴⁹

The spoils from the Ocean

Caligula sailed a short distance from the shore but eventually returned. Thereupon he aborted the invasion. Instead, he ordered his men to collect "*conchas*" as *spolia Oceani*, spoils from the Ocean to be presented to the Capitol and Palatine. A lighthouse was erected to commemorate this event, and boats were transported overland to Rome for a parade.³⁵⁰

The details of this event are puzzling, particularly regarding the meaning of '*conchas*', what purpose they served and who was ordered to collect them. Suggestions for the meaning of *concha* are plentiful, varying from seashells, oysters containing pearls, sapper huts, conquered ships, and symbols for the surrender of the British princeling Amminius to a vulgar insult.³⁵¹ However, the word is mentioned by Marcianus in *Digest*. 33.7.17: *Item pictoris instrumento legato cerae colores similiaque horum legato cedunt, item peniculi et cauteria et conchae* (When the studio of a painter is bequeathed with its equipment, the wax, the colours, and everything of this kind is included in the legacy, as well as the brushes, the implementor finishing encaustic tiles, and the flasks for oil).³⁵² This could refer to the use of mussel or oyster shells as containers for a kind of liquid (powdered metal with glue) applied as paint. It is known in art as mussel gold.

Speculation also abounds about whether the 'shells' were meant as a joke, an insult, or possibly connected to a decimation order against the legions that rebelled under Caligula's father Germanicus. Balsdon's suggestion of a mutiny finds no proof; the literary sources do not mention such an event.³⁵³ Explanations for Caligula's decisions vary from fear of defeat to avoiding a mutiny by allowing the men to collect shells which might contain pearls to a symbolic appeasement of the Gods. Still, others saw the affair as an example of Caligula's madness. More relevant than these speculations is the silence of the authors from ancient times regarding the

³⁴⁹. Suet. *Cal.* 46.

³⁵⁰. Suet. *Cal.* 46; Dio 59.21.3; Aurelius Victor *De Caes.* 3.11-12.

³⁵¹. Sapper huts: Balsdon, 1934, p. 92; conquered ships: Woods, 2000, pp. 80-7; symbols for the surrender of Amminius: Malloch, 2001, p. 555; a vulgar insult (*cunnus*): Aalders 1959, p. 12. The use of the word *concha* as *cunnus* is known from Plautus' comedies and Pompeii graffiti.

³⁵². Translation by S. P. Scott, 1932.

³⁵³. Balsdon, 1934, pp. 91-2.

generals, officials, and recipients of the order. Even Seneca, to go by his writings no friend of the emperor, did not allude to what he would have considered a ludicrous activity. The later authors from whom the anecdote is known describe it as an example of Caligula's whimsicality.

Caligula's manipulation of reality

Adhocratic leadership involves a focus on challenges and adaptability in the context of uncertainty. Caligula's behaviour under the uncertain conditions of the northern expedition shows two examples of his adhocratic leadership. One was his manipulation of reality by creating the narrative of a victory that was none; the other was his ability to convince the Senate to accept this narrative. Both aspects highlight Caligula's ability to control perception and generate belief in his reality and achievements which was possible due to the decline of the former underlying military structures. Although the details of the northern campaign are murky and challenging to disentangle, one aspect stands out: Caligula's creation of his own reality.

The emperor presented the 'capture' of the British princeling Amminus as a military victory and demanded to be honoured with a triumph, the highest honour for a general. The emperor not only claimed a military victory but also managed to convince the Senate thereof.³⁵⁴ Messages in the form of "*tabellae laureatae*", letters covered in laurel leaves, were sent to Rome to be delivered to the consuls during a full Senate meeting in the temple of Mars Ultor.³⁵⁵ The Senate traditionally held the prerogative to decide which generals deserved publicly celebrated triumphs to honour their victories in service to the state. These triumphs were important not only for the recognition of military success but also for the political power they conferred upon the generals. By granting a triumph, the Senate affirmed the general's authority and contributions to the state, which is why Augustus ensured that only imperial family members could celebrate triumphs.³⁵⁶ Caligula's dispatching of the "*tabellae laureatae*" could not have been anything else than an announcement of his intention to celebrate a triumph. This intention presented a challenge for the Senate. If Caligula's manipulated reality was accepted and his "victory" recognised, the senators would effectively acknowledge the emperor's power over theirs, thereby further eroding the system of joint government.

^{354.} Not only the Senate was convinced, or pretended to be, of the emperor's victory. It also found belief in some of the provinces, as the so-called Koula relief from Lydia showed. See Figure 41 below.

^{355.} Suet. *Cal.* 44.2.

^{356.} The *Fasti Triumphales* recorded the last triumph in 19 BCE when Cornelius Balbus celebrated his victories in Africa. Marcus Agrippa refused the offer of a triumph in 14 CE.

Dio's account provides insight into the Senate's dilemma. He noted that the Senate faced a difficult decision, as they couldn't praise Caligula for what they perceived as a trivial or non-existent exploit without appearing insincere. The Senate, Dio wrote, "knew not how it could remain indifferent to these doings, since it learned that he was in an exalted frame of mind, nor yet again how it could praise him. For, if anybody bestows great praise of the extraordinary honours for some trivial exploit or none at all, he is suspected of making a hissing and a mockery of the affair."³⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the Senate refused him a triumph and voted an ovation instead.



Fig. 41. "GERMANIA CAPTA", marble, city of Koula in Lydia, 1st century CE. Whether the relief is a local choice made independently from the centre, as Hekster suggests, is not certain (Hekster, 2023, p. 295) because of the Senate's acceptance of Caligula's victory claim. The relief dedicates a Gaius Germanicus Caesar, showing a Roman cavalryman holding a spear to a woman in the shape of Germania who has her hands tied behind her back. Some scholars, e.g., Hekster, considered the relief a positive representation of Caligula's Northern campaign (Hekster, 2023, pp. 114-5; 194-5). Manipulating reality through trumped-up victories and convincing others of its reality almost seems a trope in the texts from ancient times. Nero held a triumph-like procession celebrating his artistic victories (Suet. *Nero* 25; Dio 62.20). Domitian used treasure from his own palace as a replacement for non-existent booty (Dio 67, Plin. *Pan.* 16). Caracalla invented his victory against the Parthians (Herodian, *History* 4.7), while the celebrations for the victory of Trajan featured a wax model of the already dead emperor (*HA.* Hadrian 6).

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^{357.} Dio 59. 25.40.

Not only the Senate was convinced, or pretended to be, of the emperor's victory. It also found belief in some of the provinces, as the so-called Koula relief from Lydia showed (Figure 41). The relief dedicates a Gaius Germanicus Caesar, showing a Roman cavalryman holding a spear to a woman in the shape of Germania who has her hands tied behind her back.

Upon his return to Rome, the process of what Winterling called 'Entaristokratisierung' (de-aristocratisation) was, for the greater part, completed.³⁵⁸ However, one problem persisted, the crux of it all: Caligula's position, no matter how elevated, formally still depended on the traditional, republican, aristocratic classification. It was the paradox of the Principate before Caligula's accession: the position of the emperor was based on a socio-political order that fundamentally excluded monarchic rulership. This is what Winterling referred to as the "paradoxes of the role of emperor and the socio-political order overall as it had developed since Augustus".³⁵⁹ The paradox was political because Caligula had to refer back for his legitimacy to a legal order that quintessentially excluded autocratic, less alone adhocratic rule; it was social because the ruler's honour must be confirmed precisely by those whom he outranked. Caligula was the first Roman ruler who publicly saw through these paradoxes *and* acted to resolve them. In doing this, two courses of action were taken: establishing a purely adhocratic rule and introducing the already lingering idea of pre-destined divine rulership (see Chapter 10).

By the end of May 40 CE, Caligula sojourned in the vicinity of Rome, taking care to stay outside the *pomerium*, the sacred borders of the city.³⁶⁰ He avoided Rome, perhaps because of the scorching weather, for fear of assassination or because he wanted to escape tedious meetings with foreign delegations.³⁶¹ More likely, given the reaction of the Senate who had voted him an ovation instead of a triumph, is his deliberately circling Rome in an attempt to pressurise an already explosive, taut situation further. There may have been some truth in Seneca's remark that Caligula seriously thought of eliminating the whole of the Senate.³⁶² Caligula delayed his return until his birthday on 31 August. When he entered the city, he assembled the populace and distributed large quantities of silver and gold from an elevated position. This resulted in chaos, with people scrambling to grab the coins and many

^{358.} Winterling, 2003, p. 117.

^{359.} Winterling, 2009, pp. 118-9 with Winterling, 2003, pp. 118-9.

^{360.} The *pomerium* was not a visually recognisable border but a line marked by inscribed stones or *cippi*, which lay inside as well as outside the city walls. Within this enclosed space, no *comitia centuriata* took place. Those holding *imperium* stayed outside the *pomerium* (Tac. *Ann.* 12.23-24).

^{361.} Scorching weather: Balsdon, 1934, p. 96; escape tedious meetings: Barrett, 1989, p. 154.

^{362.} Sen. *Dial.* 5 19.2.

perishing in the process. Some accounts even suggest that he had mixed small pieces of iron with the coins, making the scramble more dangerous. However, Caligula held his ovation on 31 August 40 CE. The ancient reports do not delve into the consequences of the Senate's acceptance of Caligula's reality. However, it can be inferred that by recognising his "victory", the senators made themselves co-responsible for Caligula's adhocratic reign. This was ironic, as their cooperation implied a confirmation of the joint government that they had set to break.

At Rome, business had accumulated during the emperor's absence. He inspected the work on his new circus on the right bank of the Tiber and received various delegations while staying in the gardens of Agrippina the Elder on Vatican Hill. There, he had his first brief encounter with Philo's Jewish embassy. It was a meeting at a distance. Caligula, so Philo, greeted them, waved his right hand, and sent one of his officials to inform the delegation that he would hear their case when he had found a suitable opportunity. This benevolence pleased the delegation, except for Philo, who, quite possibly with the advantage of hindsight, had some doubts about their luck and wondered what Caligula was up to. By the time they finally met the emperor, the delegations had been in Rome for over a year. Now that Caligula had finally returned from his visit to the North, they found him not readily available. Delegations from all over the world wanted his attention, which might explain why the Jews, minus possibly Philo, were elevated by the fact that he even noticed them. This event not only shows the importance of ruler visibility and may be taken to display Caligula's engagement, but it also demonstrates that Caligula was becoming less and less accessible.³⁶³

However, Philo's delegation persisted. After participating in the sacrifices of the Arval Brethren Caligula took off to wander around Campania.³⁶⁴ Philo's delegation followed suit. While waiting for an audience, terrifying news reached them: Caligula proposed to convert the Jerusalem temple into a shrine for his cult. A colossal statue of Caligula in the shape of 'the new Jupiter' was to be placed in the holy of holies in the Jerusalem temple. The governor of Syria, Petronius, was ordered to see to it. This was nothing less than, as Smallwood phrased it, "a fundamental and universal threat to Jewish religious liberty which not only greatly diminished their hopes of getting favourable answers to their requests but made their local

^{363.} Philo *Leg.* 181-183.

^{364.} AFA li = *Docs.* 10. The Acta fragment is lost and is known only from an anonymous 16th-century copy in Florence (Barrett, 1989, pp. 167-168).

grievances pale into insignificance."³⁶⁵ Small wonder, then, that Philo would be less positive in his interpretation of Caligula's actions.

Caligula's reign was marked by political turmoil, opposition from the Senate, and his efforts to consolidate power and assert his authority through military endeavours. His actions, including the reinstatement of the *maiestas* trials, military strategies, and political changes in Rome, reveal the challenges the emperor faced and his determination to maintain control over the Roman Empire. Caligula's response to the opposition within the Senate was not limited to political manoeuvring but extended to his military strategy. He sought to demonstrate his competence and strengthen his position as emperor by filling the military role expected of the emperor. Caligula's manipulation of the Senate and their reluctant acceptance of his "victory" exemplify his adhococratic leadership. Caligula shaped his own reality and compelled others, including the Senate, to acquiesce to his whims.

³⁶⁵. Smallwood, 1981, p. 244. Philo and Josephus contradict each other both in chronology and detail. The standard version is the one given by Smallwood in which Philo, as an eyewitness, is considered more reliable than the later Josephus. Cf. also Philo *Leg.* 184-196.



7

CALIGULA'S CIVIC ROLE: THE EMULATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE AUGUSTAN SYSTEM

In the previous chapters we saw how Caligula reformed his senatorial and military role through adhocratic leadership. This chapter focuses on how Caligula tried to do the same with his civic role. The basis thereof was the emulation and transformation of the Augustan political system. Central in this chapter is the adhocratic way in which Caligula used the important concept of *pater patriae*, the emphasis on his being the great-grandchild (*pronepos*) of Augustus, and his dealings with the patronage system.

One of Caligula's first symbolic acts was the dedication of the temple of the divine Augustus (Figure 42).³⁶⁶ Caligula turned the event into a glamorous occasion with banquets, horse races, games, noble children singing hymns, the typical Julian game of Troy, and an elephant pulling the chariot with the image of the deified Augustus.³⁶⁷ The dedication took two full days, 30-31 August 37. Caligula celebrated his birthday on 31 August which also happened to be the last day of his consulship. A clever scheme because his birthday became the primary reference for the dedication. Such emphasis on the emperor's birthday is a trait in the personalisation of power which was already an aspect of Augustus' proto-adhocratic rule. Augustus has emphasised his birthday but still within the structures of the republican order. Caligula, in his adhocratic style, took the emphasis on his birthday one step further. He even postponed his ovation to celebrate it on his birthday. I also connect this exceptional emphasis on his birthday with Caligula's notion of his pre-ordained emperorship. "He was fated to rule," as the popular verse Suetonius would later quote, phrased it.³⁶⁸



Fig. 42. Caligula, Sestertius, Rome, 37 – 38. **Obv.** C CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS P M TR POT PIETAS: Pietas, veiled, draped, seated left, holding patera in right hand and resting left arm on a small, draped figure, standing on a basis, facing left. **Rev.** DIVO AVG S C: Front view of hexastyle garlanded temple surmounted by a *quadriga*. In front, Caligula, veiled and togated, sacrifices with patera over garlanded altar right; one attendant leads the bull to the altar right; a second attendant holds a patera. RIC I² 36. Re-issued between 39-40 CE. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18204287.

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^{366.} Suet. *Cal.* 21,

^{367.} Suet. *Cal.* 17; 18.2-3; 21. Dio 59.7.1-5. The game of Troy, *lusus Troiae* or *lusus puerorum equestris* belonged to a typical Julian tradition (Virgil, *the Aeneid* 5.545-605). Although mentioned in connection with Sulla, the game seemed first performed during Caesar's triumph in 46 BCE (Suet. *Iul.* 39.2). Noble boys from 6 to 16-17 years, before the *toga virilis* was taken, performed some ritual fighting on horseback. The game must have been quite dangerous and complicated (Suet. *Aug.* 43). Augustus had it performed several times with political motives (Zanker, 2003, pp. 204-217 for the clenching of past, present, and future in Augustus' visual programme). Tiberius disliked it altogether, while Caligula re-introduced the game.

^{368.} Suet. *Cal.* 8.1.

The most significant aspect of Caligula's emulation of Augustus was his appropriation of the titles "*pater patriae*" and "*pronepos*", great-grandchild. This use fitted in the aristocratic practice of emphasising pedigree as justification for contemporary positions. Caligula, however, used these Augustan distinctions as a stepping-stone to create his superiority as a divine living emperor.

Pater Patriae

*Even the father of his country
and what can be more like the behaviour of a fellow citizen?
submits to frequent mention in my verse,
or can he prevent it,
for Caesar is the res publica, and of the common good
I too have a share.* Ovid³⁶⁹

The title "*pater patriae*" held great significance in Roman culture. It was traditionally bestowed upon an individual who had saved the country from war, founded a state, saved citizens' lives, or ruled as a benevolent father figure. The title carried strong associations with *patria potestas*, familial commitment, and virtues such as *pietas*. It symbolised the state as an extended family, complete with its obligations and references to acts of creation.³⁷⁰ It is what the poet Horace expressed when he put Caesar next to Jupiter as father and guardian of the human race.³⁷¹ Augustus himself had initially declined this title multiple times but eventually accepted it at the age of sixty-one, following confirmation by the Senate and the people. Tiberius refused the honour.³⁷²

Augustus' initial refusal of the title *pater patriae* was more than just a symbolic gesture or a curtsy of goodwill by an all-powerful leader. It was an example of ad hoc ratically pitting groups against one another. By defining the amorphous concept of 'the people' as one group on an equal level with the Senate, both groups

³⁶⁹ Ovid, *Tristia*, 4.4.13-16.

³⁷⁰ The first reference to the concept as a title related to Marius, while Cicero was thus honoured by his friends in their gratitude speech after the Catalinarian conspiracy. Julius Caesar got the title *parens patriae* in 45 BCE, or possibly 44 BCE, by decision of the Senate; the title was connected to his name on his coinage since that date.

³⁷¹ The poetical reference from Horace runs: "Dread Sire and Guardian of man's race, to thee, O Jove, the Fates assign our Caesar's charge; his power and place be next to thine". Horace *Carmina* 1.12. 48. Reference from Ando, 2000, p. 400.

³⁷² *RGDA* 35; Suet. *Aug.* 58. 2; Tiberius' refusal: Suet. *Tib.* 26.2.

gained an equal weight. Furthermore, it propagated a republican condition with 'the people' as an ideological third partner in the joint government. In so doing, Augustus forced the Senate to accept the new system of sole leadership under the ideological guise of the republic virtues that the Senate itself propagated (Figure 43).

Even though the Augustan way of accepting the title *pater patriae* meant to express the republican notion of power as temporarily handed over to a single man, the monarchical connotations of the title could not be missed. The later observance of *recusatio imperii*, initial refusal, by *capax imperii*, those capable of holding power, was, therefore, more than merely a demonstration of sensitivity for an honorific title or a display of respectful behaviour.³⁷³ Caligula initially refused the title "*pater patriae*." This refusal may have been an initial gesture of goodwill towards the Senate, emphasising the concept of joint governance and adherence to the Augustan example. Still, half a year later, Caligula accepted the title on September 21, 37 CE.³⁷⁴ Interestingly, the designation "*pater patriae*" only appeared on a re-issue of the *adlocutio* sestertius dated to late 39 CE (RIC I² Caligula 40).



Fig. 43. Marble copy of the *clipeus virtutis*. Musée de l'Arles, inv. 51-195. The golden shield, presented by the Senate and people of Rome to Augustus in 27 BCE, expressed Augustus' cardinal virtues: *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas*. SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS IMP. CAESARI DIVI F. AVGVSTO COS. VIII DEDIT CLVPEVM VIRTVTIS CLEMENTIAE IVSTITIAE PIETATIS ERGA DEOS PATRIAMQVE. (The Senate and the people of Rome gave to Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of the God, consul for the eight times, a shield for *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas* towards the Gods and the fatherland. (translated by Welch, 2019, p. 288). © Flickr. Photo: Carole Raddato, Attribution-ShareAlike (CC BY-SA 2.0)

^{373.} *capax imperii*: Tac. *Ann.* 1.13; Wallace-Hadrill, 1982, p. 36, Stevenson, 2007, p.119.

^{374.} CFA 12c.

Pronepos

Caligula and his three sisters were the last living members of the Julian line, while the *Claudian* gens was more abundantly populated with Tiberius Gemellus, the daughters of Antonia Maior, Drusus' daughter Julia and "half a dozen women of beauty, ambition, and high spirits, from families in the kinship or entourage of the dynasty," and, one may add, their husbands, children, and other relatives.³⁷⁵ Caligula used his coinage to express his direct descent from Augustus by including the previously unused term *pronepos*, great-grandchild, in the legend.

One of the most intriguing numismatic pieces in this respect is the *pileus*-quadrans. The coin, the only quadrans-type minted under Caligula, was first issued between 18 March and 31 December 39 CE, with late 39 as the most likely (Figure 44). It was re-issued three times.³⁷⁶ The quadrans introduced for the first time the combined titles P P (*pater patriae*) and PRON (*pronepos*).³⁷⁷ After that, the reference '*pronepos*' appears on ca. 24% of Caligula's central coin types. Next to the titles, two other features draw attention, the *pileus*, the liberty cap, flanked by the letters S C on the obverse and reverse the letters RCC. However, since the title *pronepos* did not appear on Caligula's earlier family and succession coins, why the late addition of this title? I suggest that the answer lies in the meaning of the design.



Fig. 44. The pileus-quadrans, Rome (late 39 CE). **Obv.** C CAESAR DIVI AVG PRON AVG, Pileus flanked by S C; **rev.** PON M TR P III P COS DES III, legend surrounding RCC large in the centre of the field. *RIC* 1² Caligula 39. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18219412.

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³⁷⁵. Syme, 1986, p. 168.

³⁷⁶. Boschung, 1989, p. 19; *RIC*² 39, 45 and 52.

³⁷⁷. The designation *pronepos* has the appearance of a title.

The *pileus* was a symbol of liberation and had previously been used on the *Eid Mar* denarius, commemorating the assassination of Julius Caesar (Figure 45). The issuance of the *pileus*-quadrans shortly after the disclosure of the Lepidus-Gaetulicus conspiracy in October 39 CE suggests a connection between the coin and the suppression of this plot.



Fig. 45. Eid Mar. 43 BCE - 42 BCE.. Obv. Bearded head of L. Junius Brutus looking to the right in a border of dots. BRVT·IMP·L·PLAET·CEST. Rev. *Pileus* between two daggers. Border of dots. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

The abbreviation RCC, on the reverse of the *pileus*-quadrans, has been the subject of various interpretations ranging from imperial concern about freedom to Caligula's citizenship policy and the suppression of the Lepidus-Gaetulicus conspiracy.³⁷⁸ Assuming that the coin indeed referred to the Lepidus-Gaetulicus conspiracy, this thesis suggests that the abbreviation RCC could stand for "R(epiciendi) C(aius) C(aesar)", signifying the retaking of control by Gaius Caesar (Caligula) following a conspiracy or attempted murder, i.e. the Lepidus-Gaetulicus conspiracy. This interpretation aligns with the idea that any attack on Caligula was viewed as an attack on the state itself, given his status as "*pater patriae*." Lepidus' execution would then be the consequence of his attempt to take control of the empire.

The suggestion of Lepidus' attempted grab for power by plotting against his brother-in-law gains credibility from the Drusilla-as-heir episode. Due to Caligula's

³⁷⁸. Imperial concern about freedom: Stylow, 1971, pp. 285-290; Caligula's citizenship policy: D. Woods, 2010, p.102; suppression of the Lepidus-Gaetulicus conspiracy: Barrett, 1989, pp. 249-250.

recovery from his illness, Lepidus had seen his chances of becoming emperor through his wife's nomination as Caligula's heir dissipate (at least for the time being). His attempt to gain power through what appeared to have been a palace coup (the conspiracy of Caligula's closest kin) failed, and he was executed. The *pileus-quadrans* then commemorated the emperor's survival of what likely was the most dangerous attack on his life. Furthermore, by that time, Caligula and his bay daughter were the sole survivors of the family. Given his family history with its violence against Germanicus' descendants, an emphasis on being the great-grandchild of Augustus could be a psychological defence mechanism to detain aspiring contesters. With the emperor being father of the fatherland and descendant of Augustus, any attack on him would be considered as an assault against the state as well as against the Augustan legacy.

Caligula's emulation of Augustus, highlighted by his dedication of his great-grandfather's temple and his adoption of the titles "*pater patriae*" and "*pronepos*", represented a deliberate effort to shape his image and authority as emperor Augustan style. The *pileus-quadrans* introduced the combined designations P P (*pater patriae*) and PRON (*pronepos*) for the first time. The combination of the illustrious titles with the liberty cap possibly referred to his liberation from an attack on his life. The combination also exemplified Caligula's identification of his person with the state. This identification can be expressed as: an attack on the emperor equals an attack on the state. This is an example of how Caligula visualised his personalisation of power as an aspect of adhocratic leadership on his coinage.

7

Patronage, local kings, and *Pax Romana*

When Caligula assumed the throne, Rome had enjoyed a period of peace lasting nearly three-quarters of a century. During this time, coercive force was only deployed to maintain order. Tacitus' famous remark "*sub Tiberio quies*" also adequately described life under Caligula in which the majority of the population went about their daily lives without major disruptions.³⁷⁹ To emphasise continuity from the Augustan era and avoid references to the troubled period of Tiberius and Seianus, Caligula asserted that he was the consensual choice of the Senate, the people, and the army. The formal handing over of all powers to Caligula occurred in the presence of the three social classes of senators, knights, and the people.³⁸⁰ However, it is essential to recognise that Roman emperorship was not open for election, nor could

³⁷⁹. *Sub Tiberio quies*: Tac. *Hist.* 5.9.1; Tac. *Hist.* 1.89.

³⁸⁰. Suet. *Cal.* 14.1; Dio 59.6.1

any candidate simply declare themselves qualified. Modern scholarship underscores two primary aspects of legitimacy for Roman emperors: the ideological construction of emperors through lineage and the extra-constitutional relationships between aspirants and relevant social groups.³⁸¹ This last aspect was closely connected with a system modern scholarship refers to as patronage.

The Roman patronage system

While the Romans didn't have a specific term for the patronage system as modern scholars understand it, the core elements of personal relationships between persons of unequal status with a dominant patron providing gifts, align closely with the concept of patronage.³⁸² This system relied on reciprocity, represented by the Latin phrase "*do ut des*," meaning "I give that you may give." The patron-client relationship was characterised by the unequal status of the patron and client.³⁸³ It could only be terminated if free-born clients managed to elevate themselves to a position where they could reciprocate the honours they had received. Clients typically adhered to certain traditions within the patron-client relationship. These included formal morning greetings at the patron's house, participation in the patron's entourage, running errands on behalf of the patron, and, if fortunate, attending collective dinner parties or bathing sessions.³⁸⁴

The distribution of honours through the patronage system served as a political tool to mitigate social or political tensions and contribute to *Concordia*, the harmony within society.³⁸⁵ Since it operated in a seemingly non-coercive manner, it bolstered the emperor's authority without relying on force. Moreover, the non-coercive distribution of honours enhanced the emperor's credibility and sincerity.

^{381.} This subject is still widely debated, with growing attention to extra-constitutional aspects. Wallace-Hadrill, 1982, pp. 32-48; Rowe, 2002; Lendon, 2006, pp. 53-63; Hekster, 2015; Flaig, 2019.

^{382.} Saller, 1982, p.1; Roller, 2001, p. 130. Patronage as a face-to-face system of a patron and a client was first described by Dionysios of Halicarnassos (*Dion. Hal.* 2.11.1). Ernst Badian elaborated on the system in his *Foreign Clientelae*, 1958. Also, Ganter, 2015, p. 43.

^{383.} Lendon, 1997, pp. 63 – 67.

^{384.} Hekster, 2019, p. 14.

^{385.} Distributing honours to ease social or political tensions is one of the main mechanisms of a system known as evergetism, distributing wealth by high-status individuals to a community or a maecenatism for a city or a particular association. The neologism εὐεργετέω, 'do good things', was coined by the French scholar A. Boulanger. Paul Veyne (1976) further developed Marcel Mauss' theories on gift-giving and reciprocity (Mauss, 1925). The functioning of evergetism as a political mechanism to deflect social tensions is the central theme of Zuiderhoek's analysis of the concept (Zuiderhoek, 2009. Also, Lomas & Cornell (eds), 2003).

Coercing the Senate to grant honours risked damaging the emperor's reputation. However, given the emperor's unique position, no one could truly repay his benefits.³⁸⁶ As a result, both patrons and clients had to navigate an uncertain and sensitive environment.

Caligula assumed the role of *patronus*, and this shift required both the emperor and the elite to exercise balance and discretion, mirroring the expectations between *clientes* and their patrons. The challenge was twofold: the emperor had to stay within the limits set by consensus to avoid charges of tyranny, while the elite needed to do the same to avoid imperial retribution. This balanced system had worked under Augustus but began to falter during Tiberius's absence and Seianus' power plays.

The delicate balance between Caligula and his clients was most evident in the domestic sphere, particularly during banquet settings.³⁸⁷ Hosting banquets allowed patrons to display their wealth and demonstrate their status. However, it also highlighted the inequality inherent in the patron-client relationship. These dinner parties served as stages for power dynamics, dominance, and vulnerability.³⁸⁸ This may explain why the literary sources rather frequently relate anecdotes about Caligula in the context of (dinner) parties. One anecdote of Caligula's powerplay, as recounted by Seneca, illustrates this principle. Caligula ordered the execution of the son of an *eques* named Pastor out of jealousy for the young man's beauty. Subsequently, the father was invited to a dinner party where he was forced to drink excessively.³⁸⁹ It is also an example of the criticism Caligula evoked from the later senatorial writers. Caligula's behaviour was condemned as outrageous because it occurred in a context traditionally associated with honour and respect. All the more remarkable is that such behaviour is not reported for Caligula's dealings with local kings.

The unique position of the emperor was such that no one was able to repay his benefits. The only option to return imperial favours was through gratitude and unbounded loyalty. Although senators still maintained their social and political influence, the status gap with Caligula widened. Simultaneously, the network

^{386.} The role of the emperor as *patronus* gave rise to debate (Saller, 1982; Crook, 1996, p. 115; Nicols (2013). Relating to foreign clientele: Jehne & Pina Polo (eds), 2015, Jehne, 2015, p. 318. Modern scholarship debates whether Roman emperors after Augustus can be seen as patrons of all inhabitants of the realm (Nicols, 2014). For a summary of the present debate, see Winterling, 2009, pp. 34-58 with Jehne, 2015. However, the emperor as *pater patriae* does justify conceiving of the emperor as *patronus*. Modern scholarship debates whether Roman emperors after Augustus can be seen as patrons over all the inhabitants of the realm (Nicols, 2014).

^{387.} Fertik, 2019, p. 144.

^{388.} Roller, 2001, pp. 135-173.

^{389.} Parties: Suet. *Cal.* 18.2; execution of the son of Pastor: Sen. *de Ira*, 2.33.3.

of social relations of the Roman elite changed as well. To fully realise the effects of these changes, the ongoing monopolisation of the political institutions under Caligula must be considered. With the diminished importance of popular support for a senatorial candidate for office, the significance and meaning of the morning salutations changed.³⁹⁰ Admittance to the emperor's presence became such a status marker that some men were willing to pay generously for the honour. A local man, for example, paid 200,000 sesterces as a bribe to gain admittance to dinner with Caligula.³⁹¹ Combined with the rise in numbers who sought Caligula's eyes and ears, a situation arose in which the different groups of *salutatores* gained admittance according to their prominence of the day.³⁹²

The ensuing hierarchisation of the salutations led to its formalisation, which complicated the possibility of serious communication. Whereas any Roman citizen, women and older children included, could at will salute the emperor, the presence of the senators during the morning salutations was expected. It turned the ritual into an effective instrument of control. The risk of *renuntio amicitiae principi*, the cancellation of imperial friendship, made the proximity to the emperor hazardous. Being banned from admittance implied not only a social death but, occasionally, a physical one as well.³⁹³ Even when admitted, one could still be block-listed by being ignored, refusing to be kissed, or, topical for 'bad emperors', being received by an outlandishly dressed emperor.

The distribution of honours through the patronage system also functioned as a political mechanism to deflect social or political tensions and was thus instrumental in striving for *Concordia*. Since it operated in a seemingly non-coercive way, it increased the *auctoritas* of the emperor. A further advantage of honours given non-coercively was sincerity. If an emperor coerced the senators to vote him all sorts of honours through the threat of force, he ran the risk of losing face and be considered half-hearted.

^{390.} Goldbeck, 2010, pp. 264-5.

^{391.} Suet. *Cal.* 39.2.

^{392.} Sen. *De Ben.* 6.

^{393.} Winterling, 1999, pp. 124-5 with Drinkwater, 2019, p. 97.

Local kings and diplomacy under Caligula

Embassies and envoys were a regular sight in Rome, but the place bustled with them when a new ruler arose.³⁹⁴ These diplomatic exchanges served dual purposes: safeguarding or expanding existing benefits and demonstrating loyalty to the new emperor.³⁹⁵ They also functioned as conduits for news, enabling local communities to stay informed about the latest developments in Rome. In return, the emperor could request additional favours from these communities through diplomatic channels, reinforcing his authority or introducing himself to a broader audience at minimal cost. It was particularly crucial for embassies to ascertain the status of previously granted privileges and benefits, as continuity in imperial decisions was highly valued. Tiberius had ordered that favours and benefits for local communities bestowed by predecessors were only valid if personally confirmed by the new emperor.³⁹⁶ Whether a theoretical matter or practice, ignoring the *Acta* of previous rulers was difficult, if not impossible.³⁹⁷ For example, an authenticated copy of the *Tabula Banasitana*, a bronze tablet from Mauretania dated to the time of Commodus, granted citizenship verified by all rulers from Augustus to Commodus. The list of emperors, including Caligula, testified to the administrative continuity of earlier imperial decisions.³⁹⁸ These examples illustrate the eagerness with which envoys wanted to know where they stood with the new ruler.

Despite many envoys approaching Caligula, only three are notably documented in epigraphical and literary sources.³⁹⁹ These include the embassy of the Alexandrian Jews and Greeks, an embassy from the League of the Achaeans, and an embassy from Assos in Asia Minor. The Alexandrian Jews expressed their loyalty to Caligula

³⁹⁴. Recent scholarship contests the Badian view of the patron-client network as the basis of control after annexation (Badian, 1958). The criticism relates to terminology and methodology. The term 'client' was rarely used and when used then metaphorically, while onomastics (the study of names and naming) of epigraphy is an inadequate tool to analyse the complex situation of local clientele (Pina Polo, 2015, pp. 19-43). This study therefore opts for the terms 'local kings' and 'local leaders' with 'local' referring to any place other than Rome and Italy without pejorative implications.

³⁹⁵. See, for example, I. Sardis 8 (inscriptions by Menogenos) referred to by Wörle, 2004, p.149. For the decree of Maroneia, under Claudius, see Clinton, 2003, pp. 379-417 with Clinton 2004, pp. 145-148. The Maroneian decree notably left Caligula out of the list of rulers referred to, probably because Claudius removed his predecessor from the Senate's annual oath to uphold the acts of the previous emperors (Dio 60.4.5-6).

³⁹⁶. Suet. *Tib.* 8.1.

³⁹⁷. Osgood, 2011, p. 74.

³⁹⁸. Ando, 2000, p. 35.

³⁹⁹. Osgood calculated that if around 1,000 embassies were heard for fifteen minutes each, it would take the emperor about 250 hours (Osgood, 2011, p. 75).

while adhering to their religious laws, with the expectation of preserving their Jewish prerogatives.⁴⁰⁰ The Alexandrian Jews honoured Caligula and declared their loyalty, although restricted by their religious laws. The reciprocal element involved the expected continuation of Jewish prerogatives. The testimony of Philo emphasised Caligula's negative response and his anti-Jewish attitude. The League of the Achaeans sent an embassy to congratulate Caligula and offer him various honours, most of which he declined. Instead, he requested that they limit the expense of erecting excessive statues in his honour. Those near the locations of the Pan-Hellenic games sufficed.⁴⁰¹ The embassy from Assos reminded Caligula of his promise to care for the city, pledged during his visit with his father.⁴⁰² The Assians swore an oath of allegiance to Caligula, which is worthwhile quoting because it demonstrates the importance of the imperial family and the personal commitment to the person of the emperor.

The oath of the Assians read:

We swear by Zeus the Saviour and divine Caesar Augustus and the ancestral Holy Maiden that we will support Gaius Augustus and his whole house and will adjudge as friends whomever he may choose and as enemies whomever he may accuse. If we swear truly, may it be well with us if falsely, the opposite.⁴⁰³

Similar oaths of allegiance existed beyond the Roman East, as exemplified by one from Aritium in Lusitania (Portugal).⁴⁰⁴ The ceremony was conducted in the presence of the provincial governor, an apparently important enough official. This oath consisted of three claims or promises. Firstly, Caligula's enemies are also the enemies of the oath-takers. Secondly, they swear to pursue such enemies relentlessly. Thirdly, Caligula's safety goes before all others. The oath ends with cursing those who fail in their loyalty. These oaths pledged loyalty to the emperor's person rather than to the state, a practice initiated during Tiberius's rule and requiring annual renewal. The nature of these oaths suggests that they could be used by an emperor to attack his enemies. For example, if the emperor declared a senator to be his enemy, did this imply an obligation by the oath-takers to actively pursue that individual? There are, however, no reports of local rulers ordering attacks on Roman senators, suggesting that these oaths were more ceremonial

^{400.} *Jos. Al.* 20.2.11; 19.5.3: 287-291.

^{401.} 19 August 37; *Docs.* 361. Those places were Olympia, Nemea, Delphi, and the Isthmus (Corinth).

^{402.} *Docs.* 33.

^{403.} *Docs.* 33. The holy maiden is Athena Polias. Tiberius is left out because of his non-divine status.

^{404.} *Docs.* 32. González, 1988, pp. 113-127. Barron: n.d. <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/oath-allegiance-caligula-gaius-lusitania-cil-ii-172%20> retrieved 04-05-2024. To date, six inscriptions from the period from Augustus to Caligula have described such oaths (Herrmann, 1969).

than practical.⁴⁰⁵ Embassies primarily reaffirmed their loyalty and commitments, reinforcing the emperor's authority.

Pax Romana

Caligula's interactions with local kings aligned with the Roman tradition of maintaining a *Pax Romana*, or Roman peace. This policy aimed to protect loyal allies without annexing their territories as Roman provinces. Consensus, rather than military might, justified Roman imperium.⁴⁰⁶ Local kings were seen as "bodyguards of the empire" whose allegiance contributed to the majesty and authority of the emperor. They "should join in giving illumination by their own rays, so that the majesty of his [i.e., Caligula] should be the more venerable in this respect also, the kings being unable even if they strongly strove to find equal return for the benefactions, they received from the favour of such a God".⁴⁰⁷ The kings were allowed to retain their positions and dignities and previously confiscated tax revenues. For instance, Antiochus IV of Commagene (North Syria) regained control over the coastal area of Cilicia, demonstrating a departure from Tiberius's reported policy.⁴⁰⁸

Personal relationships played a pivotal role in Rome's dealings with the provinces. The Cyzicus inscription honoured Caligula as the new sun (Helios) in gratitude for confirming the Thracian kings' right to rule. The sons of the murdered king Cotys VIII were installed as the kings of Thrace due to Caligula's favour.⁴⁰⁹ The close

^{405.} Oaths are no formality when connected with legal regulations or considered binding in cultures of honour. For example, a physician is punishable by law when consciously ignoring the obligations sworn to in the Hippocratic oath. The Rome of the elite was ideologically a culture of honour to which non-Roman elites might not have been bound. For example, the praetorian prefect Nebridius refused to swear allegiance to Julian (the emperor aka Apostata, r. 360-363) because "he could not by any means bind himself by an oath against Constantius, to whose kindness he was indebted for so many acts of favour" (Amm. Marc. 21.5.11). Cf. Cassius Chaerea, one of Caligula's killers, for whom his own honour outweighed his oath of allegiance to the emperor. For the loyalty of the soldiery, see Lendon, 1997, pp. 252- 265.

^{406.} Ando, 2000.

^{407.} IGRR. 4.145.

^{408.} Tac. *Ann.* 2.58.1. This example contradicts Suetonius' report on Tiberius' rule of previous imperial acts (Suet. *Tib.* 8.1). Some doubt on Antiochus' reinstatement is called for. Claudius reportedly reinstalled him after Caligula had removed him. Claudius maintained practically all of Caligula's foreign arrangements, while Antiochus' coinage for the newly built *Germaniceia Caesaria* (*Germanicopolis*) referred to 38 CE and not Claudius or Nero. *RE*, Brill, *Germanicopolis*. <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/germanicopolis-e422540> retrieved on 04-08-2022. Josephus, *Al.* 19.276; Barrett, 1989, p. 308.

^{409.} Tac. *Ann.* 2.67.2; *Docs.* 401.

relationship between Caligula and the Thracian king Rhoemetals III (r. 38-46) was reflected in the local coinage (Figure 46).



Fig. 46. Æ. Rhoemetals III, Thrace. **Obv.** Laureate head of Caligula, ΓΑΙΩ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΙ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙ; **Rev.** Caligula in toga seated on the throne, handing an object to Rhoemetals III. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΡΟΙΜΗΤΑΛΚΑΣ ΚΟΤΙΩΣ. RPC 1722. BM, Greek (Tauric Chersonese) (210) (1) (210)

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Similarly, the Armenian king Zeno Artaxias received his crown from Germanicus, further showcasing the significance of personal relationships (Figure 47).



Fig. 47. Caesaria, Cappadocia, didrachme, 18 CE (IKMK) or 37-8 (RIC² Gaius/Caligula 59). **Obv.** Bare head of Germanicus looking right, GERMANICVS CAESAR TI AVG F COS II; **rev.** Germanicus in armour, standing left, holding a spear in left-hand, crowning Artaxias III by placing a tiara on his head with the right hand RIC² Caligula 59. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18200231.

© Public Domain Mark 1.0. Photographs by Lutz-Jürgen Lübke (Lübke und Wiedemann).

Coins such as these pertain to designs from the perspective of the local king.⁴¹⁰ While Caligula's diplomatic practices followed established precedents, later authors sometimes criticised his decisions. For instance, Dio claimed that Caligula sought to

^{410.} Vitale, 2017, p. 308; Heuchert, 2012, p. 30.

appropriate a temple being constructed by the Miletians, though evidence suggests the initiative came from the Miletian nobility, and Caligula merely accepted the honour.⁴¹¹ The Apollo temple meant by Dio is the Didymeion (Figure 48).



Fig. 48. Miletus, Ionia.e Didymeion. **Obv.** laureate head of Caligula, looking to the right; before, star, ΓΑΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΟΣ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ; **Rev.** temple with six columns, ΜΙΛΗΣΙΩΝ. RPC 1. 2707.⁴¹²

© AMC Coin ID #7364 REQ <http://www.asiaminorcoins.com/gallery/displayimage.php?pid=7364>

The patron-client relationship, while lacking a specific Roman term, closely aligns with the modern understanding of patronage. It functioned on the basis of reciprocity, with patrons providing favours and clients showing gratitude and loyalty. This system also served as a political tool to maintain harmony within society, ultimately bolstering the emperor's authority. However, it required a delicate balance between patron and client, often played out in theatrical settings like banquet dinners, where power dynamics and dominance were on full display. Caligula's diplomatic approach with local kings adhered to established traditions. These interactions were characterised by personal relationships and consensus, reinforcing the *Pax Romana*. No significant crises or revolts involving local kings are documented, and they were not utilised in Caligula's power struggle with the Senate. Despite their importance as allies, local kings were not part of Caligula's inner circles.

^{411.} Dio 59.28.1. Suet. *Cal.* 21.

^{412.} See Günther, 2012, pp. 105-125.



8

CALIGULA'S RESTRUCTURING OF FORMAL CONNECTIONS

This chapter looks at how Caligula restructured the formal connections with the different social groups in his attempt to rule adhocratically. The emperor's adept manipulation of social groups through the restructuring of formal connections is another example of the way in which he tried to undermine traditional social structures. This restructuring can be identified by three key elements:

1. Challenging opponents by elevating lower status groups. Caligula's reign witnessed a formalised system of daily meetings, shaping the routines of both clients and patrons. With the extension of citizenship to locals, the number of the emperor's clients and friends multiplied. This increase necessitated a reorganisation of daily receptions, which evolved from communicative functions to status indicators. An example of this shift is the introduction of "*nomenclatores*," enslaved individuals responsible for informing the patron of visitors.⁴¹³

2. Experimental decision-making by bypassing traditional functionaries. Caligula engaged in significant architectural modifications to accommodate the growing number of visitors, especially during morning salutations.⁴¹⁴ Such modifications circumvented admittance to the emperor through traditional functionaries. Extensive renovations included the Palatine Hill housing complex, the Forum, and

^{413.} Winterling, 1999, pp. 117-144; Winterling, 2009, p. 46

^{414.} Philo, *Leg.* 351, 358; Barrett, 1989, pp.192-212; Winterling, 2003, p. 74

the temple of the Dioscuri.⁴¹⁵ Recent excavations confirmed Caligula's substantial modifications of the Forum. The remains of the bridge Caligula built crossing the *Velabrum*, the valley between the Capitoline and Palatine hills, and the temple of the divine Augustus have recently been found (Figure 49).



Fig. 49. Caligula's Bridge. Wikimedia commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anderson,_James_\(1813-1877\)_-_n._373_B_-_Palatino_-_Ponte_di_Caligola.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anderson,_James_(1813-1877)_-_n._373_B_-_Palatino_-_Ponte_di_Caligola.jpg)

Caligula also included the temple of the Dioscuri as a vestibule to his palace, symbolically integrating this important site into his inner circle.⁴¹⁶ The 'inclusion' involved a backdoor opening in the temple to give the impression of the temple as

^{415.} When he took the purple, the housing complex on the Palatine hill became his personal property (Plin., *NH* 36.111). The Palatine 'house of Augustus', i.e., the maze of buildings, streets, constructions, and gardens, was a veritable beehive bustling with thousands of people, part of them working for the *domus Augusta*, part seeking admittance (Wiseman, 2009, p. 533; Wiseman, 2013, pp. 101-109). Enlargement: Von Hase, 2017, p. 51. This complex extension was a clear break with the unobtrusiveness Augustus was reported to have shown, although he could not convince everyone (Suet. *Aug.* 72-4). Also, Winterling, 2003, p. 73. Cf. Ovid, *Tristia*. 3.1.34: 'a house worthy of a God', reference in Fertik, 2019, pp. 66-7.

^{416.} Coarelli, 2013, p.169; Gorski & Packer, 2015, p. 289; Filippi, 2012, p. 172.

a vestibulum to the main house.⁴¹⁷ Caligula supposedly stood between the images of the Dioscuri while passing pedestrians or his clients greeted him as *Jupiter Latiaris*, the ancient god of the Latin bond.

Some scholars see the inclusion of the temple in the palace complex as an example of Caligula's religious megalomania.⁴¹⁸ That be as it may, more relevant was the functioning of the temple as the leading site for the Roman *equites*, the knights. The inclusion of the temple blurred the lines between Rome's elite classes. Senators and non-elite civilians shared space in the temple, reflecting the shifting dynamics of Caligula's adhocratic rule. The emperor also showcased his favouritism toward the knights, visually representing himself alongside the Dioscuri in coin designs (Figure 22).

3. *Making newcomers dependent on the emperor.* Caligula restructured the order of knights, granting some the "*latus*," a mark of a senator, which eventually conferred the right to enter the Senate.⁴¹⁹ These measures solidified loyalty among knights and newcomers. Since Augustus expanded opportunities for equestrians to hold official positions, the *Ordo Equester*, the order of knights, gained prominence as a group from which administrators, magistrates, and commanders were appointed.⁴²⁰ This increase in the role of equestrians blurred the boundary between the senatorial and equestrian orders.⁴²¹ The so-called consensus-dupondius symbolised this shift, showing the Senate, knights, and the people on equal footing (Figure 33). Such coins reflected Caligula's emphasis on tripartite consensus, a concept he likely borrowed from Augustus.⁴²²

⁴¹⁷. Claudius' "return of the temple to the Dioscuri" (Dio 60.6.8) was probably nothing more than bricking up the backdoor opening.

⁴¹⁸. Barrett, 1989, p. 210; Wiseman, 1987, p. 4.

⁴¹⁹. Dio 59.9.5. The *latus clavus* was a 'broad, purple upright stripe (possibly two stripes) stitched to or woven into the Roman tunica' (Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2015). For Tiberius' neglect in filling the knights' vacancies in the decuries (divisions selected for jury duty), see Suet. *Tib.* 41. For the presence of the knights in the Senate house when all powers were handed to Caligula, see Dio 59.6.1; Suet. *Cal.* 14.1.

⁴²⁰. Talbert, 2006, pp. 324-344, 340; Brunt, 1983, pp. 42-75.

⁴²¹. Davenport, 2019.

⁴²². RIC I² Gaius/Caligula 56. Caligula's full authority was realised when he accepted the title *pater patriae* on 21 September 37. The coin may have been struck to commemorate Caligula's acceptance of that title. For the coin expressing the emperor's civil role, see Hekster, 2023, p. 167. Von den Hoff and Clauss suggested a connection with Eastern coinage where Caligula is depicted with a radiate crown. This suggestion cannot hold because central coinage never showed Caligula wearing a radiate crown (Von den Hoff, 2009, pp. 15-43; Clauss, 2001, pp. 89-94 with Fears, 2002, pp. 319-321). It is uncertain whether the person seated on the curule chair is Caligula and not Augustus.

The de-aristocratisation of the social order

Caligula's elevation of freedmen to prominent positions challenged the established social order, particularly the senatorial class. The prominence given to freedmen posed a threat to the traditional elite, who considered them of lower rank. The influx of formerly enslaved individuals into official roles and imperial circles disrupted traditional concepts and moral values. Caligula's use of such freedmen, who were detached from tradition, as a defence against traditional social status groups illustrates an aspect of his adhocratic leadership, pitting groups against each other. An example was the agent provocateur Protogenes. He used fear tactics, leading senators to commit acts of violence based on accusations of treason. Others, such as the actor Apelles and the Alexandrian Greek Helicon, incited anti-Jewish sentiments, influencing Caligula's decision to place his statue in the Jerusalem temple. The freedman Callistus wielded significant power due to his enormous wealth and even played a key role in Caligula's assassination. He later aligned himself with Claudius. One other freedman is known by name. This Homilus (or Homilos) was responsible for attending to embassies. Nothing else is known about him.⁴²³ While some freedmen challenged their former masters, others, like Tiberius Claudius, cooperated with Caligula and went on to have successful careers under his successors.⁴²⁴ These examples suggest that such men were attached to the imperial office and were not the inheritable property of the emperor. This implies that the imperial office was already more formalised under Caligula than generally accepted.

The irregular presence of knights in the Senate house and the entry of the populace in the curia may be seen as an attempt to persuade a reluctant but highly popular Caligula to accept emperorship.⁴²⁵ The notion of Caligula's disinclination is suggested by the two different dates of his ascension. According to one hypothesis, he refused the emperorship offered on 18 March only to accept it on 28 March.⁴²⁶ This hypothesis falls flat for the following reasons. Caligula was hailed as emperor by the Senate on 18 March and granted powers on 28 March. Dio did not distinguish

⁴²³. Suet. *Cal.* 28; Dio 59.26.2-4). Apelles and Helicon inciting anti-Jewish sentiments: Philo, *Leg.* 203-206; influencing Caligula's decision to place his statue in the Jerusalem temple: Philo *Leg.* 206; Dio 59.5.2. Callistus' wealth: Sen. *Ep.* 47.9; Plin. *NH* 33.134; 36.60; Jos. *AI* 19. 64-69; his role in Caligula's assassination and alignment with Claudius: Tac. *Ann.* 11.29.1 Dio 59. 25.7-8; 29. Homilus/Homilos responsibility for attending to embassies: Philo, *Leg.* 28.

⁴²⁴. PIR² C763.

⁴²⁵. Popularity: Philo, *Leg.* 11-13 with e.g., Assos (*SIG*³ 797) and Cyzicus (*SIG*³ 798) inscriptions. The suggestion of Caligula's reluctance to become emperor even entered popular fiction, e.g., Simon Turney, *Caligula. Loving brother. Reluctant Emperor. Tortured soul* (London 2018).

⁴²⁶. Jakobson & Cotton, 1985, 498.

between two different events.⁴²⁷ The literary source material does not mention reluctance. The presence of the knights and the description of the people entering the curia point to nothing but popular enthusiasm. The refusal, this thesis suggests, is related to the title *pater patriae* (PP) due to the initial insecurity of Caligula's imperial position.

Caligula's actions served to challenge the existing social hierarchy and promote lower-status groups, experiment with decision-making outside traditional channels, and foster dependence on his person. His symbolic and tangible changes, such as including the temple of the Dioscuri in his palace, highlighted his pursuit of power and influence over various social groups, ultimately shaping his adhocratic leadership style. Whereas imperial court positions were not institutionalised in Caligula's days, appointees wholly depended on the person of the emperor. Such dependency served as a weapon of defence and attack in dealings with those who challenged the emperor. Caligula's enforcement of his position by demoting senatorial influence and power in favour of the freedmen is a good example of the ideological and factual challenging of opponents through the promotion of lower-status groups which is a characteristic of adhocratic leadership.

The power of proximity: Caligula's establishment team

8

Terms like the conventionally used *consilium principis* were unknown to the Romans.⁴²⁸ Nevertheless, the term establishment team appears to cover the different circles of trust around the emperor. The Roman governmental system was relatively formalised but still operated with a tension between an "egalitarian republican order" and "imperial patrimonial rule". This tension created challenges, especially in appointments, as social status often accompanied old offices.⁴²⁹ Caligula needed individuals with status to assist him in dealing with the aristocracy while also adapting to changing circumstances, such as the increasing number of daily visitors. Caligula's establishment team consisted of several circles of trust, including intimates (immediate family, close relatives, and personal friends),

^{427.} Dio 59.6.1; 30.1.

^{428.} How to refer to the different persons and groups around the emperor is problematic. Although terms like *consilium principis* were unknown, they are used in modern scholarship for convenience (Winterling, 2009, p. 81, n10 with Drinkwater, 2019, pp. 59-70). My discussion follows the outlines of Winterling, 1999; 2009 with Drinkwater, 2019. Also, Crook, 1955; Saller, 1982; Wallace-Hadrill, 1982.

^{429.} Unknown terms: Winterling, 1999, p. 7; egalitarian republican order and imperial patrimonial rule: Winterling, 2009, p. 156; social status of old offices: Winterling, 2009, pp. 100-1.

military prefects, *liberti* (freedmen), and individuals in the outer circle.⁴³⁰ These circles played crucial roles in helping Caligula govern and navigate the complexities of his rule, each serving different functions within the imperial administration.⁴³¹

One of Caligula's innovations concerned the rise of freedmen as advisors. Whereas 'new men' gaining positions of honour and power were no longer exceptional, freedmen were.⁴³² Augustus and Tiberius had relied on *amici* for advice in matters of state, but no board or assembly could officially be termed a *consilium principis*. Caligula did create such a group to function as protection against his aristocratic enemies. In so doing, its members gained enormous power.⁴³³ The primary quality of the formerly enslaved persons was their humble background. The control mechanism: dependency. Dependence on personal relationships is one of the significant characteristics of adhocratic rule, and, due to the versatile character of those relationships, one of its major weaknesses. If Caligula thought that he could keep his advisors under control because of their dependence on him, he quickly learned he could not.⁴³⁴ A brief overview of the known advisors not only illustrates the complexities of court life but also shows how personal interests remained beyond the emperor's control. Noteworthy is the omission in the texts from ancient times of named women other than Caligula's sisters, grandmothers and wives who may have played a part in court politics. Perhaps this is due to what Tacitus has Tiberius remarking: "restraint should be shown in paying honours to women."⁴³⁵ Although the presence of powerful women in the imperial court was customary, their influence on politics other than advertising descent remains cloudy.⁴³⁶

Caligula's *consilium principis*, an advisory board of freedmen, gradually gained so much influence that it actually supplemented the *consilium publicum*, the Senate. Some of the *liberti*, operative under Caligula, are known by name, although little is known about their political or psychological influence. If the authors from ancient

^{430.} Drinkwater, 2019, pp. 59-67.

^{431.} Caligula's successor, Claudius, would reorganise the bureaucracy by grouping different offices together. Thus arose the offices known as the *ab epistulis* (imperial correspondence), *a libellis* (petitions), *a cognitionibus* (judicial matters), *a rationibus* (supervision of financial affairs), and *a studiis* (records and reference).

^{432.} A new man, *homo novus*, was the first in a family elected consul. The prominent example was C. M. Marius (ca. 158/7 – 86 BCE).

^{433.} Philo *Leg.* 26; Dio 59.5.5; 20.2.

^{434.} Contrary to Willrich, Gelzer attributed most of Caligula's supposed excesses to the influence of these freedmen. (Gelzer, 1918, p. 409, Willrich, 1903, p. 466).

^{435.} Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.2.

^{436.} Ginsburg, 2006, p. 62. Dio, for example, connects the influence with female rivalry. Dio 60. 32.4.

times are believed, it must have been a rather unpleasant lot. For example, the *delator* Protogenes. This agent provocateur was said to go around carrying two scrolls entitled 'sword' and 'dagger'. The scrolls contained data on all six hundred senators. One time, when Protogenes appeared in the Senate, he accused the senator Scribonius Proculus of hating Caligula. The senator was denounced as *hostis publicus*, an enemy of the state, and consequently forfeited his civil rights. Thereupon, some of his colleagues stabbed Scribonius with their sharpened *graphia* and handed him over to some of the others to tear him to pieces. Scribonius was dragged through the streets, and only when his intestines and limbs were piled in front of him was Caligula said to feel satisfied. One of Claudius' first deeds as emperor was to have Protogenes executed.⁴³⁷

The tragic actor Apelles and the Alexandrian Greek Helicon function in Philo's descriptions as inciters of Caligula's anti-Jewish sentiments.⁴³⁸ Philo held both men responsible for instigating Caligula to go ahead with his plans to have his statue set up in the Jerusalem temple. Apelles belonged to the entourage that closely circled Caligula.⁴³⁹ The actor received a beating after his hesitation in answering Caligula's query about who was more significant, the emperor or the statue of Jupiter.⁴⁴⁰ Helicon supposedly revelled in puerile humbug while his taste for sarcasm and nasty wit attracted Caligula. The authors from ancient times depict him as a harsh, arrogant, and fear-inspiring person. As chamberlain to Caligula, he controlled admission to the emperor. Claudius executed him for unknown reasons.⁴⁴¹

Josephus described the emancipated Gaius Julius Callistus as possessing power equal to that of a tyrant. He inspired great fear because of his enormous wealth, the bribes he demanded and the injuries "without bounds" that he committed. Seneca gave an example of his arrogance. Callistus once refused his former master entrance to his house when the man was queuing with other clients waiting to be seen by their patron. Another anecdote suggested that Callistus gained his power

⁴³⁷. Suet. *Cal.* 28. Dio 59.26.2-4; execution: Dio 60.4.5.

⁴³⁸. Philo, *Leg.* 203-206. Apelles came from Ascalon, whose population reputedly held an 'irreconcilable hostility' towards the Jews. Josephus (*BJ* 460) confirmed the anti-Jewish attitude of the Ascalonites.

⁴³⁹. Philo *Leg.* 206; Dio 59.5.2.

⁴⁴⁰. Suet. *Cal.* 33. Barrett reasoned the flaying of Apelles, as well as other anecdotes, away as one of Caligula's cruel and ironical squibs that were later turned against him by hostile sources (Barrett, 1989, p. 217). However, the flaying of Apelles might have been an example of the Caligulan wordplay later writers used against him. Combining the Greek 'a' with the Latin 'pellis' gives the meaning of the name as 'skinless'. Though with different results, similar interrogations are found in Dio 59.26.9 (the Gallic shoemaker) and Dio 59.27.6 (with L. Vitellius as the victim).

⁴⁴¹. Dio 59.26.2-4, Philo *Leg.* 166-178; 203-206.

and wealth through his daughter, Nymphidia, whom he prostituted to Caligula. Nymphidia's son, Nero's Praetorian Prefect Nymphidius Sabinus, claimed Caligula as his father and made a futile attempt to become emperor in 68. Callistus' influential position is best seen in the affair concerning the orator Domitius Afer. The orator's life was saved thanks to the intervention of his friend Callistus, who supposedly dared to reproach Caligula for getting it into his head to persecute someone like Afer. Caligula's reply that it would not have been suitable for him to keep such an excellent speech to himself reduces much of the credibility of the story. However, shortly before the end of Caligula's reign, Callistus secretly associated himself with Claudius. Callistus claimed that he had been ordered to poison Claudius but had managed to postpone such a loathsome act. He was well rewarded with his appointment as *libellensis*, the official responsible for handling all incoming petitions. Callistus died in 51, presumably from natural causes although he played a key role in Caligula's assassination.⁴⁴²

All that is known of Smyrna-born Tiberius Claudius, his name is not sure, is that he accompanied Caligula on his northern expedition and made an excellent career after Caligula's death. Claudius emancipated him while Nero appointed him as a *rationibus*, financial secretary. Vespasian elevated him to the ranks of the equestrians. Tiberius Claudius died in the reign of Domitian at the respectable age of ninety years.⁴⁴³ Of the freedman Homilus, or Homilos, responsible for attending to embassies, nothing is known.⁴⁴⁴

Intimates during Caligula's reign

The circle of intimates consisted of Caligula's immediate family, i.e., his sisters, their husbands, his wife and her relatives, his uncle Claudius with his spouse, and personal friends. The second circle contained a miscellaneous group of varying compositions referred to as *familiares*, *intimi*, *proximi amicorum*.⁴⁴⁵ A third circle included the military prefects of the Praetorian and the German guard, and, likely,

^{442.} Callistus' power: Josephus, *AI* 19. 6; Plutarch *Galba* 9)4-69; corruption and wealth: Plin. *NH* 33.134; 36.6; arrogance: Sen. *Ep.* 47.9, cf., Horace, *Epode* 4; Nymphidius: Plutarch *Galba* 9; Afer affair: Dio 59. 19.1-7; Tac. *Ann.* XI. 29; rewards: Dio 60.30.6; 33.3; role in assassination of Caligula: Tac. *Ann.* 11.29.1; Dio 59. 25.7-8; 29.

^{443.} PIR² C763. Tiberius Claudius might have been the son of Claudius Etruscus (see Barrett, 1989, 274 n.46). If so, he was the patron of the poets Martial (*Spect.* 6.83; 7.40) and Publius Papinius Statius (*Silvae* 3.3).

^{444.} Philo, *Leg.* 28.

^{445.} Winterling, 2009, p. 91.

the commander of the fleet and the *praefectus annonae* who was responsible for the grain supply.⁴⁴⁶ Close to this circle were the prefects of the urban cohorts, local governors, and army officers. Identified key players in the first year of Caligula's reign were Junius Silanus, Sertorius Macro, Lucius Vitellius, and Julius Agrippa.

Marcus Junius Silanus (c. 25 BCE–38 CE)

Silanus was a prominent figure from the Junii Silani family who boasted five consuls. Silanus was suffect consul with Tiberius' son Drusus in 15 CE (Figure 50).⁴⁴⁷



Fig. 50. As, Tiberius, Rome, 22–3. **Obv.** Head of Drusus, left, DRVSVS CAESARTI AVG F DIVI AVG N; **rev.** SC, legend: PONTIF TRIBVN POTES ITER. © RIC 1² Tiberius 45. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18211348. © Image files are licensed Public Domain Mark 1.0. Photographs by Dirk Sonnenwald.

Under the Julio-Claudian emperors, the Junii Silani family gained abnormal prominence, and their connections by marriage with the ruling family led them to believe they had a central role in Rome's governance. Agrippina the Younger presented some proof of this supposition when she had Marcus Silanus' like-named son killed in 54 CE. She did not wish him preferred to her son Nero. Tacitus and Dio depicted him as an ideal Roman nobleman, while Philo considered him a man of fine spirit.⁴⁴⁸ Silanus was highly regarded for his wisdom and was even considered the "Father of the Senate," with the honour of addressing the Senate

^{446.} Syme, 1986, p. 196; Barrett, 1996, p. 74. The Praetorian Guard, founded by Augustus, was responsible for protecting Caligula and his family. The non-Roman German guard, *Germani corporis custodes*, was the emperor's personal bodyguard (Osgood, 2011, pp. 25–7; Drinkwater, 2019, pp. 56–66).

^{447.} Dio, 59.8.5; Syme suggested kinship relations with Tiberius through the Claudian side (Syme, 1986, p. 195).

^{448.} Tac. *Ann.* 16.12.3. Silanus daughter, Junia Claudilla, was Caligula's first wife. She died in childbirth. On the nobility and rhetoric of M. Silanus, see Tac. *Ann.* 3. 24. Silanus junior killed: Dio 61.6.5. Ideal noble Roman: Tac. *Ann.* 3.24.1, Dio 59. 8.4–8; fine spirit: Philo, *Leg.* 62–66.

first.⁴⁴⁹ However, Caligula humiliated him by withdrawing his privileges. Silanus faced charges of treason and eventually took his own life. Whether the charge was concocted or Silanus was suspected of involvement in some plot is unknown. The possibility is not without merit if the convergence of Silanus' and Gemellus' deaths indicated a connection. Barrett suggested Silanus' possible involvement in a conspiracy to replace Caligula with Gemellus. Silanus was replaced in the Arval Brotherhood with Calpurnius Piso.⁴⁵⁰

Naevius Sertorius Macro (21 BCE-38 CE)

Macro played a crucial role in Caligula's rise to power. He served as the Praetorian Prefect and was instrumental in the downfall of Seianus. Macro is described as a shrewd opportunist and "the worst villain" who had tormented the state with numerous crimes. He was accused of taking advantage of the death of Caligula's first wife through pandering his spouse, Ennia Thrasylla. Macro allegedly switched allegiances during Caligula's illness, possibly supporting Gemellus. Accused of *lenocinium* (pandering), adultery and likely *maiestas*, Macro and his wife Ennia Thrasylla were forced to commit suicide on their way to a new post in Egypt.⁴⁵¹

Vitellius the Elder (Before 7 BCE-51 CE)

Lucius Vitellius was a Roman of noble birth and enjoyed the patronage of Antonia. He served as consul in 34 CE and showed courage and wisdom in dealing with the threat posed by the Parthian king Artabanus III. As governor, Vitellius dismissed Pontius Pilate in 36 CE. According to Suetonius, Vitellius introduced the eastern custom of proskynesis at Rome and was accused of being one of the first to worship Caligula as a god. Although considered the "most cruelly immoral of all Roman rulers" and "gastronomically lavish" Vitellius became a close ally of Claudius, serving

⁴⁴⁹. Silanus' age is not known. No reliable image of Silanus is known. If 42 years was the minimum age for consuls, Silanus must have been at least 65 when Caligula came to power (Tac. *Ann.* 3.24; 57; 6.20). Dio 59.8.5 is mistaken because Silanus' daughter had already died some years before, so Caligula could not have divorced her after his accession. The expression 'golden sheep', supposedly used by Caligula to refer to Silanus, was, according to Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.1.1), utilised for another M. Junius Silanus, viz., the consul of 46 and proconsul of Asia in 54 and the first victim of Nero (Syme, 1989, p. 192; Barrett, 1996, pp. 153-154; Plin. *NH* 7.58; Dio 61.6.4-5). Grimal argued that Silanus was Seneca's inspiration for his character Creon in *Oedipus*. Creon was accused of obscuring his ambitions (Grimal, 1979, pp. 205-220).

⁴⁵⁰. Humiliation: Philo, *Leg.* 62-63; 71-72, 75; treason charges: Suet. *Cal.* 23.3; convergence of Silanus' and Gemellus' deaths: Tac. *Agr.* 4.1; conspiracy: Barrett, 1989, p. 77; replacement: CIL VI 2028 = *Docs.* 3.34-5; AFA 24 May 38.

⁴⁵¹. The worst villain: Tac. *Ann.* 6.4; pandering: Philo, *Leg.* 39, 61; Tac. *Ann.* 6.45.5; Suet. *Cal.* 12.2; suicide: Dio 59.10.6; Philo, *Flacc.* 16. Dabrowski's suggestion of Macro's death on the instigation of Lepidus and Caligula's sisters is not very convincing. Dabrowski also held the trio responsible for Gemellus' and Seianus' death (Dabrowski, 1972, pp. 114-172; cf. Reinmuth, 1935, p.132).

as consul twice. Vitellius died in 51 CE from a stroke and was honoured for his unwavering loyalty to his emperor with a statue on the rostra.⁴⁵²

Marcus Julius Agrippa (10 BCE-44 CE)

Often confused with Herod Agrippa, Marcus Julius Agrippa was sent to Rome after his father's execution by his grandfather. He befriended Claudius and Tiberius' son Drusus and was initially banned from imperial circles after Drusus's death. Agrippa later aligned himself with Caligula and received the tetrarchy of his uncle, Philip. He was known for advocating Jewish interests and appealing to Caligula to prevent him from placing his statue in the Jerusalem temple. After Caligula's death, Agrippa skilfully mediated between the Senate and the new emperor Claudius, leading to the expansion of his rule. He ruled over an extensive territory, including Judea, and died at the age of fifty-three.⁴⁵³

Caligula's friends⁴⁵⁴

Aulus Vitellius and Asinius Celer were among the friends and associates of Caligula during his reign. While there is little information available about their specific influence on Caligula, it is known that they shared similar interests and pastimes with him, such as horse racing and gambling. Aulus Vitellius was a Roman senator and military officer who would later become the emperor of Rome in the Year of the Four Emperors (r. 2 January – 20 December 69 CE). The extent of his influence on Caligula's decisions and policies during this period is difficult to ascertain. Suetonius wrote how Vitellius gained the nickname *Spintria* while sojourning on Capri with Tiberius. "Stained by every sort of baseness as he advanced in years," Suetonius wrote, "he held a prominent place at court, winning the intimacy of Gaius by his devotion to driving".⁴⁵⁵ Asinius Celer (2 BCE? – †?) was the son of Tiberius' ex-wife Vipsania, which made him a member of the Julio-Claudian family. Celer served

^{452.} Patronage of Antonia: Tac. *Ann.* 11; introducing proskynesis: Suet. *Vit.* 2.5, Dio 59.27.5; worship of Caligula as a god: Suet. *Vit.* 2.5; gastronomically lavish: Beard, 2021, p. 36; death and honours: Suet. *Vit.* 3.2; Tac. *Ann.* 12.4-7; Dio 60. 21.2; 29.1-6; 31.8.

^{453.} Agrippa's praenomen is not recorded, but it presumably was the same as that of his son Marcus. IG II² gives an inscription honouring one of his daughters and calls him 'Julius Agrippa'. He became known as Herod Agrippa, e.g., in Acts of the Apostles 12:20. Agrippa's father, Aristobulus, was executed in 7 BCE, three years after Agrippa's birth, by order of the Judean king Herod the Great. Jewish interests: Jos. *AI* 18, 228-237; appeal to Caligula: Philo *Leg.* 35-38.

^{454.} The use of terms like 'friend' (*amicus*) and 'friend and ally' (*socius ac amicus*) in international relations is a matter of debate (Snowdon, 2015, p. 209). For friendship in antiquity, see Peachin & Caldelli, 2001.

^{455.} Aulus Vitellius: Suet. *Vit.* 3.2; Celer's fish: Plin. *NH.* IX 31: 67.

as suffect consul in 38 CE. He is mainly remembered for once paying 8,000 sesterii for one fish. Like Vitellius, not much is known about the specific influence he had on Caligula during his reign.

Friendships and associations within the Roman elite were complex and multifaceted. While some friends and associates might have had a significant impact on Caligula's decisions and policies, others may have enjoyed more casual relationships. A consequence of the strong position of the freedmen was the loss of value of traditional concepts and moral systems. Personal and ad hoc interpretations replaced the old norms and values. The freedmen's detachment from tradition allowed for their functioning as defences against the traditional social status groups. The freedmen came to prominence during a process of denunciation of the Senate and gained the upper hand while Caligula sojourned in the North. The prominence of men who would not have risen to such a status under the old order, shows that the step towards a full adhocratic reign was taken.



9

VISUAL POWER

This chapter explores how Caligula leveraged visual power as part of his adhocratic leadership. The chapter intends to demonstrate how the focus on the person the emperor and the way in which he represented himself can be seen as essential aspects of adhocratic leadership. Key elements of Caligula's visual power include gaze, gait, dress, speech, and his demand to be worshipped as a living God. The chapter begins with what was perhaps the most obvious illustration of Caligula's visual power, his command of the military as seen on the so-called *adlocutio* sestertius (Figure 51).

The *adlocutio* sestertius



Fig. 51. Sestertius, Rome (37-38). **Obv.** Laureate head of Caligula left legend C CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS PON M TR POT; **rev.** Caligula, bareheaded and togate, standing, left, on a low platform with a curule chair, right hand extended to five Praetorians standing in front of him, helmeted with shields and *parazonia* (long daggers); the two rearmost pairs carry an *aquila* (eagle). ADLOCVT COH. *RIC* I² *Gaius/Caligula* 32, 40, 48. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, 18200530. © Image files are licensed Public Domain Mark 1.0. Photographs by Lutz-Jürgen Lübke (Lübke und Wiedemann).

The *adlocutio* sestertius depicts Caligula addressing a group of Praetorian Guards while standing in front of a magisterial curule chair. His raised right arm and commanding posture emphasised his authority over the Guard. Despite wearing civilian attire and the curule chair symbol on the platform, the image underscores Caligula's military command. This coin, first minted in 37-38 CE, was later re-issued to highlight Caligula as the grandson of Augustus, his role as *pater patriae*, and his third tribunician power.⁴⁵⁶

Interpretations of the design of the *adlocutio* sestertius

Scholars have proposed two interpretations for this design. Barrett suggests it may commemorate a donative to the Praetorian Guard upon Caligula's accession. The new emperor fulfilled a promise of a donation of 1,000 sestertii from Tiberius' testament, doubling the amount to the equivalent of an extra annual salary. This

⁴⁵⁶ Davies, 2010, pp. 51-73, 56. The raised right-arm gesture of the *adlocutio* was only used on centrally designed coins for the emperor addressing the troops from Caligula onwards (Davies, 2010, p. 56 with reference to Brilliant, 1963, p. 67. First issue Rome 37-38: *RIC* I² *Caligula* 32; re-issues 39-40: *RIC* I² *Caligula* 40 and 40-41: *RIC* I² *Caligula* 48).

secured the support of the Guard.⁴⁵⁷ However, the coin lacks references to donations or bequests. The second interpretation by Ritter suggests a connection to an event called the "bridge of Baiae" (see below).⁴⁵⁸ On this occasion, Caligula addressed the Praetorians on a boat bridge to reward them with a *beneficium*, a financial reward for their performances.⁴⁵⁹ However, the coin's earliest issuance predates the Baiae episode (dated after the summer of 39 CE) by at least two years.

A third interpretation

This thesis proposes a third interpretation of the design of the *adlocutio*-sestertius based on the omission of "S C" (*Senatus Consultum*). This abbreviation on coins usually confirmed a coin's value with Senate consent. Its absence may signify Caligula's disregard for the Senate's authority over military matters. Thus, the *adlocutio*-sestertius could signify the Senate's diminishing influence or even loss of control over such matters.⁴⁶⁰ This interpretation aligns with Sommer's interpretation of the *adlocutio*-gesture as a rhetorical, communicative symbol of the patron-client relationship between the emperor and the army. "Während *convivia* und ludisches Ritual zu Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Kaiser und Senatoren bzw. Kaiser und *plebs urbana* wurden, war die *adlocutio* fortan der wesentliche Kommunikationsstrang zwischen dem princeps und der dritten relevanten Gruppe, dem Militär."⁴⁶¹ The *adlocutio*-sestertius was a forceful, highly visible symbol of Caligula's power base.

⁴⁵⁷. Barrett, 1989, p. 248; Sutherland, 1987, pp. 69-70; Dio 59.3.1. The argument in modern scholarship holds that Tiberius supposedly left the treasury with an incredible two or three billion and three hundred million sesterces (Dio 59.2.6). If true, Caligula's paying of the bequests of Tiberius and Livia Augusta could hardly have resulted in financial difficulties, let alone the state's bankruptcy, as Dio (loc. cit.) and Suetonius (*Cal.* 37.3) claimed. To give a broad idea of the bequests of Tiberius: 1,000 sesterces for each member of the Praetorian Guard, which Caligula doubled, 500 for each member of the *Vigiles*, 300 for the men of the night watch, 300 for the legionaries and 45 million to the people. The salary of a praetorian in the first century CE was ca. 30 as per day (*ARF* 71). After the Augustan monetary reforms of 23 BCE, one sestertius equalled 4 assis or a monthly salary of 225 sestertii.

⁴⁵⁸. Ritter, 1971, pp. 81-96.

⁴⁵⁹. Dio 59. 17.7.

⁴⁶⁰. The republican use of *senatus consulta* as a legal expression continued until the third century (Millar, 1992, p. 342). The omission of S C on Caligula's *adlocutio*-sestertius may fit an emperor intending to demonstrate his superiority over the Senate.

⁴⁶¹. Sommer, 2005, p. 350.

Visual power: popular support

On April 21, 37 CE, the people of Rome confirmed Caligula as the Augustus, hailing him as their favourite and harbinger of a golden age.⁴⁶² Caligula aimed to meet these expectations by restoring some magisterial voting rights to the *comitia* and rejuvenating the *collegia*, various plebeian corporations with diverse purposes.⁴⁶³ The first aimed to return some magisterial voting rights to the *comitia*, allowing candidates to be chosen by the emperor rather than recommended by the Senate. The second sought to revive the *collegia*, which had been forbidden during the late Republic for political reasons.⁴⁶⁴ While the success of the latter remains unclear, it provided an avenue to gain support from influential social groups.

To gain popularity, Caligula revived public games and shows, capitalising on Tiberius' previous reduction in such events. He organised thrilling games, often offering free admission. Tokens (*tesserae*) exchangeable for gifts or food were distributed with lavish banquets and monetary donations (*congiaria*) also being common during special occasions. While Suetonius viewed these spectacles positively, Dio criticised Caligula's enjoyment of bloodshed in gladiator shows.⁴⁶⁵ The theatre and arena were unique places where common people could interact directly with the emperor. Imperial attendance and attention were expected. The crowd severely criticised Julius Caesar when he busied himself reading letters and answering requests during the games. Augustus publicly excused himself if he had to leave the games for one reason or another and ensured that someone took his place. When present, he avoided doing something else.⁴⁶⁶ Tiberius, at one time, refused to attend any longer. Although some time apart, Marcus Aurelius was reputedly ridiculed by the crowd for reading and signing documents.⁴⁶⁷ Although present, the emperor rarely presided over the games, even if he had financed them. Instead, the editor or the *munerarius* decided on life and death. The *editor* organised

^{462.} Suet. *Cal.* 16.4; Dio 59.6.1. The two different occasions of the senatorial recognition of Caligula as the successor to Tiberius and the moment when the Senate granted him omnipotence, can explain the different dating in Suetonius and Dio about Caligula's *dies imperii*. Suetonius (*Cal.* 59) gives 18 March, Dio (59.6.2) 28 March. Dio is refuted by the Arval records (KEH, 2004, p. 85).

^{463.} *Comitia*: Suet. *Cal.* 16.2; Dio 58.20; *collegia*: Verboven, 2011, pp. 187-195.

^{464.} Dio 60.6.6. The *collegia* were forbidden in 64 BCE and later by Julius Caesar due to their political involvement. Van Nijf curbs the role of the *collegia* in the Roman East as potentially dangerous (Van Nijf, 1997, p. 244).

^{465.} Reduction in such events: Lendon, 1997, p. 120; Beacham, 1999, p.161; spectacles positively viewed: Suet. *Cal.* 18-21; criticism of Caligula's enjoyment of bloodshed: Dio 59.10.2; 18.1-3; Wiedemann, 2001, p. 174.

^{466.} Suet. *Aug.* 45.1.

^{467.} *HA. Vita M. Aurelius*, 151.1.

and directed the games in the ruler's name; the *munerarius* financed the shows.⁴⁶⁸ Such theatrical gatherings offered opportunities to bolster imperial popularity but also held considerable risks for the emperor. Caligula having spectators thrown into the arena, Nero's theatrical performances or Commodus' powerplay of threatening the senators with the chopped-off head of an ostrich likely made people think about the nature of imperial power.⁴⁶⁹ On the other hand, the theatre was the one place where audiences, protected by its anonymity, could openly show dissatisfaction or outright hostility.⁴⁷⁰ However, if Caligula had humorous placards carried around in the arena suggesting to better make his horse consul instead of the 'rabble' that presently occupied that position, the joke would surely resonate with the crowd.⁴⁷¹

Caligula's passion for horse racing led him to exceed tradition by holding more than ten races per day. To celebrate his 25th birthday on 31 August 37 CE, he organised a record forty races.⁴⁷² Although Caligula's spending on horse-related activities and his fanatical support for the green horseracing team seemed extravagant, possibly even involving luxurious accommodations for his favourite horse, compared to other rulers, it might be considered moderate and not unusual. In a society that depended on horses for military and transport purposes, reverence for horses is common. Mary Beard pointed out that there was "a long-standing tradition in Greece and Rome of leaders honouring their horses" and she continued with a sample of lovely anecdotes. There was Alexander the Great, who buried his Bucephalus with full honours. So did Lucius Verus with his Volucer and Commodus with Pertinax (the horse). Hadrian, however, topped them all when he wrote a commemorative poem for his Borystenes. It elicited Beard a comment about

^{468.} Wiedemann, 2001, pp. 163-183.

^{469.} Spectators thrown into the arena: Suet. *Cal.* 35.2; Nero's theatrical performances: Suet. *Nero*, passim; Commodus; Dio 73.21.1-2.

^{470.} Dio 59.13.3-4; Jos. *Al.* 19.25-26.

^{471.} *Cal.* 55.3; Dio 59.14.6. The suggestion of placards in the arena comes from Lendering, 2002, pp. 115-116. Suet. *Cl.* 21 may have been the source. Suetonius mentions the hearsay of Caligula's plans to make Incitatus, meaning 'Swift', consul. Dio said that Caligula promised to appoint his horse consul. Cf. Dio 59. 28.6, where Caligula is said to have his horse selected as priest-colleague in the service for himself. Woods suggests that the joke is a deliberate misinterpretation of Asinius Celer's name 'swift ass' (Woods, 2014, pp. 772-777).

^{472.} On the dedication of the temple of Augustus, twenty races were held the previous day. By the end of Caligula's reign, the usual number of horse races numbered twenty-four. Games and races were also held in honour of his mother's, his sister Drusilla's and, noticeably, (in 40 CE) Tiberius' birthdays. Suetonius, possibly despite himself, was thrilled about races with senators as charioteers (Suet. *Cal.* 18.7). The events were listed among Caligula's good acts. A senatorial decree of 19 CE prohibited senators from partaking in games, so it might be that Suetonius referred to a special occasion during which young men of the senatorial class were allowed to participate (Rostovtzeff, 1905, p. 72). The same would *mutatis mutandis* apply to knights fighting as gladiators.

the quality of the emperor's poetic proficiency: "a dreadful piece of sentimental doggerel". Next to the multiplication of horse races, the number of festivals also increased. Caligula even paid for games in the provinces, something so exceptional that Suetonius thought it worth recording. Anyway, the emperor had to be present and visible and not only in the theatre.⁴⁷³

The importance of appearance

Appearance is the visible expression of leadership. Leaders, particularly kings and emperors, utilise their appearance to convey messages and establish their presence. Contrary to Roman rulers like Marius, Sulla, Julius Caesar, and Augustus who had also utilised their visibility to challenge traditional norms Caligula stretched the bandwidth of non-conformist behaviour. In so doing, Caligula created the possibility to take ad hoc decisions and to focus attention on his person as the leader. This last aspect drew significant attention. Ancient authors noted his hollow eyes and naturally forbidding and ugly facial expression, which he worked to make even more savage. Seneca slyly remarked that Caligula's grim face would torture those who behold it. While these observations were meant as a criticism, fierce expressions in rulers often signified power.⁴⁷⁴

The power of gaze

A person's gaze is a potent tool capable of controlling behaviour through the mere suggestion of being watched. In Roman society, the gaze held great significance, ranging from admiration to the fear of the evil eye. The Roman elite, visible among their retinues, felt the power of the collective gaze, shaping their behaviour and causing a shift in expected norms. Caligula turned his gaze into a means of control. Avoiding his gaze or appearing too frequently before him could raise suspicion.

A person's gaze had a triple direction – one looked, was looked at, and tried to avoid being seen. In Rome, political life was highly public, and senators were

^{473.} Beard, 2023, p. 286-287; poetic qualification: Beard, 2023, p. 287; increase in festivals: Suet. *Cal.* 15.2. Dio 59.24.7; Caligula paying provincial games: Suet. *Cal.* 20.

^{474.} Facial expression: Suet. *Cal.* 50.1; Seneca's remark: Sen. *de Ira* 3.19 with Benton, 2002, p. 41; fierce expressions in rulers signifying power: Hekster, 2005, p. 159. Another example of the dread imperial looks could induce is the snarl of Epictetus: "You (...) live at his [i.e., the emperor's] nod and gesture, who faint away if he but look at one of you with a scowl on his face' (Epic. *Discourses* 4.1.145).

expected to be visible among their peers. Avoiding this visibility was seen as social suicide, as one's honour depended on recognition by peers. Shunning the gaze of equals disrupted the social fabric of the Roman aristocracy. This social fabric began to break down when all gazes turned to the person of the emperor and when those considered socially unequal came face to face with the elite. However, the emperor could look at the elite through the eyes of lower-class persons such as freedmen. In this way, the emperor could be invisible without losing face.⁴⁷⁵ Tiberius staying out of sight for almost a decade is but one example of the disastrous effects of imperial invisibility. On the other hand, excessive visibility may also lead to disapproving looks. Nero's public theatricality is a case in point.

Visual power and vulnerability

In Roman culture, the act of being seen was central. A person scrutinised by others risked judgment and loss of honour. Being seen, as Carlin Barton put it, was "a basic existential risk". Even self-scrutiny or the inner gaze could lead to similar consequences. Women, too, had the power to violate through the evil eye. The overall presence of *apotropaia*, ritual protection symbols, illustrated the profound fear of the evil gaze. Intense scrutiny could reveal moral deficiencies or effeminacy, the feigned movement of the actor or the *cinaedus*, the lewd dancer. Even the way a man scratched his head was interpreted to establish his suitability for office. Cicero was the first to detect Caesar's temper when he noticed him adjusting his hair with one finger.⁴⁷⁶

Public appearances were critical in the absence of well-defined rules and regulations. They were guided by the emperor's whims or the requests of influential individuals. Being seen was necessary to secure the support of various groups, but it also posed risks due to the unpredictability of mass gatherings. Augustus took great care not to occupy himself with other things, remembering the criticism Julius Caesar had taken upon himself by reading and writing during spectacles. When Caligula ordered the centurion Aesius Proculus, nicknamed Colosseros, to fight against two gladiators, he had him decapitated after the soldier's two successive wins. The adverse reaction of the crowd concerned the emperor's abuse of power,

⁴⁷⁵. Hekster & Fowler, 2005, pp. 153-171.

⁴⁷⁶. Basic existential risk: Barton, 2002, p. 221; evil eye: Suet. *Cal.* 36.2; *apotropaia*: Barton, 2002, p. 224; Caesar's temper: Plutarch, *Caesar* 4.9.

not the cruelty of the act.⁴⁷⁷ Since imperial power has to be constructed, as Slootjes and Manders observed, “in discourse with those over whom he governs, and the military and administrative apparatus on which he is dependent,” such aversive public reactions constituted infringements of the imperial authority.⁴⁷⁸ Negotiating legitimacy through discourse with different social groups was not only crucial to uphold the notion of public support, it also serves in adhocratic leadership as a prerequisite for the technique of pitting groups against each other.

Spectacles and public gatherings provided channels for people to communicate with their leaders. It was also a mechanism for control. Caligula's frequent spectacles, though extravagant, garnered praise, and his participation in them further enhanced his popularity. However, spontaneous situations in public spaces were beyond the ruler's control and carried inherent risks. If a crowd turned against the ruler, he could do little unless willing to unleash a bloodbath. A crowd does not have one neck, as Caligula supposedly once observed when the populace expressed their favour for another faction during the races than his favourite.⁴⁷⁹

Spatiality and symbolic meanings

The way individuals move through space and the placement of objects, such as statues and buildings, hold significant symbolic meanings. Spatiality plays a crucial role in conveying messages of power. Emperors like Caligula expanded their palaces, erected temples, and claimed divine status to express their authority and divine rulership. Caligula's physical appearance and manner of walking significantly influenced how he was perceived by those around him. In Roman society, moving about was not merely a matter of practicality; it was an expression of identity and social status.

Incessus: the art of walking

The way an individual moved, known as “*incessus*,” was not only an expression of their social position but also a reflection of their thoughts and ambitions.⁴⁸⁰ Correct

^{477.} Caesar's reading and writing during spectacles: Suet. *Aug.* 45.1 with Wiedemann, 2001, p. 173. Colossiers: Suet. *Cal.* 35.2; adverse reaction of the crowd concerning the abuse of power: Slootjes & Manders, 2020; Wiedemann, 2001, p.143.

^{478.} Slootjes and Manders, 2020, p. 9.

^{479.} Suet. *Cal.* 30. 2.

^{480.} George, 2008, p. 98.

walking was seen as a manifestation of inner composure. *Incessus* was expected to be slow and dignified, with the hurried movements reserved for slaves and labourers. The ancient authors distinguished between two types of gaits: *incessus affectatus*, or the effeminate stride, and the *incessus naturalis*, or the natural walk.⁴⁸¹ Deviating from the expected norm allowed politicians to stand out. In Caligula's case, according to Suetonius, negative. "He was very tall and extremely pale, with an unshapely body, but very thin neck and legs. (...) at times, because of sudden faintness he was hardly able to walk, to stand up."⁴⁸²

The symbolic function of dress

Clothing served as a complex system of status identification. In an attempt to prevent common folk from occupying the seats in the theatre reserved for the knights, the emperor Domitian compelled the wearing of the toga in the theatre.⁴⁸³ Senators distinguished themselves from *equites* through the broader *laticlavia* on their white, undyed wool cloth in combination with red shoes. A fully purple-dyed toga, known as *toga purpurea*, symbolised the Roman kingship of old and Eastern dress patterns. An incident involving Caesar revealed the strong feelings dress could evoke. Shortly before they killed him, the senators allowed Caesar to wear a *toga purpurea*, together with red shoes and a laurel wreath.⁴⁸⁴ The privilege led to rumours that the Senate intentionally overdid the honour to discredit the dictator.⁴⁸⁵ Velleius Paterculus recounted how Pompey got the right to wear a *corona aurea* and all the paraphernalia of a *triumphator* during the games. He did it once.⁴⁸⁶ Suetonius recounted the story of how the emperor Claudius had a man several times change his toga for a Greek mantle during a dispute about citizenship depended on whether he was accused or defended.⁴⁸⁷ Although the colour purple only gradually became an imperial monopoly, there is evidence of Caligula wearing a purple-dyed toga. Modern reconstructions of the Richmond Caligula dressed in the different togae are shown in Figure 52 below.

^{481.} Corbeill, 2002, p.192.

^{482.} Suet. *Cal.* 50.1-2.

^{483.} Suet. *Dom.* 8.3; Martial. *Epigr.* 5.8.

^{484.} Hekster, 2023, p. 70 with n173; Meister, 2012, p. 114, n. 473.

^{485.} Plut. *Caes.* 57.

^{486.} Vell. Pat. *Rom. Hist.* II.40.4.

^{487.} Suet. *CL.* 15.3.



Fig. 52. The Richmond Caligula in *toga praetexta*, *toga purpurea* and *toga picta*. The images show a confident patrician dressed in a luxurious garment decorated with delicate embroidery. Caligula wears the senatorial closed boots known as *calcei patricii*. His pose is self-assured, while the gestures are those of civic officials. The images also illustrate how the toga, at first glance, appears as a uniform dress. Closer observation denotes the social distinctions.

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Certain forms of dress allowed individuals to demonstrate exclusivity and transition to a higher status. Changing clothes or adapting one's attire implied a shift in status and social obligations. However, anyone who attempted to outshine the emperor in dress or appearance risked severe consequences. When the emperor's cousin Ptolemy entered the theatre dressed in an eye-catching purple *abolla*, Caligula had him executed.⁴⁸⁸ During one of his performances, Nero spotted a woman in the audience dressed in the prohibited purple. She was dragged to the stage and stripped ... of her property as well.⁴⁸⁹

In ancient Rome, an aristocrat's gait was expected to convey dignity and grace, and the traditional toga played a crucial role in achieving the correct bearing. The toga was a symbol of Roman citizenship, especially for the elite, and poets referred

^{488.} Suet. *Cal.* 26.1; 35.1. Although Ptolemy's possible involvement in the Gaetulicus/Lepidus conspiracy could have been another reason for his recall, the main reason was his failed administration. His execution because of his public appearance in a purple *abolla* (Suet. *Cal.* 35.1), if true, would only demonstrate the king's chutzpah. The *abolla* was a purple-coloured garment typical for Hellenistic rulers. Although considered outlandish in Roman eyes, a local king wearing such a cloak would hardly raise eyebrows (Decker, 2023).

^{489.} Suet. *Nero* 32.3.

to the Romans as the "*gens togata*".⁴⁹⁰ Roman citizens were expected to resemble walking statues, with clothing as the primary means of differentiation.⁴⁹¹ *Clientes*, too, wore the toga when moving around with their patron or when on errands for him. For these men, as exemplified in the works of Martial and Juvenal, the toga expressed subordination and the patron's control over "the impoverished little guy in a toga".⁴⁹²

Caligula's unconventional attire

Caligula's choice of attire deviated from the expected norms, drawing criticism and attention. His Greek sandals, actor's slippers, high boots, and special Praetorian boots set him apart from the traditional Roman attire. When describing Caligula's unconventional attire, Suetonius highlighted the symbolic, normative, distinctive, ethical, social, and political functions of clothing. "In his clothing, his shoes, and the rest of his attire, he did not follow the usage of his country and his fellow citizens; not always even that of his sex; or in fact, that of an ordinary mortal."⁴⁹³ Caligula did not dress as a decent *vir bonus* because of his Greek sandals (*crepidae*), actor's slippers and high boots (*socci* and *coturni*), and *caliga speculatoria*, boots worn by Praetorians with special duties. Caligula's dressing as a demi-God represented his unique status as emperor. While his personal convictions regarding divinity may have varied, his outward display emphasised his exceptional position. This differed from incidents like Augustus dressing as Apollo during the playful 'dinner of the twelve Gods', which negatively affected his public image.⁴⁹⁴

^{490.} Virgil, *Aeneid*, I.282; Martial, XIV.124. Cf. Suet. *CL.* 15.2, where a man had to remove his toga when hearing the accusations against him. Quint. *Inst. Or.* 11.3.140-1 on how to wear a toga. The Romans dressed for the occasion in different garments, while the lower classes could simply not afford a toga (Wallace-Hadrill, 2008, p. 42; Rothe, 2019).

^{491.} Barghop, 1994, p. 85. Boys from elite families wore the *tunica praetexta*, also with a purple *clavus*, but in this case, it symbolised their vulnerability. Leaving this state behind was marked by a religious *rite de passage*, known as *tirocinium fori*, during which the *tunica praetexta* was changed for a *tunica recta*, after which the young man received the *toga virilis*. Defendants demonstrated their humbleness by appearing in a *toga pulla*, a squalor dark dress, just like mourners, while their *toga muliebris* identified prostitutes and adulteresses. Those honoured with a triumph and those presiding at the games wore the *tunica palmata* (or *picta*) enriched with embroidery and flowers (Meister, 2012, pp. 42-44).

^{492.} Martial, *Ep.* 2.58, 3.36, 6.82, 12.18; Juvenal, *Satires* 3, 16-21.

^{493.} Suet. *Cal.* 52.1; dinner of the twelve gods: Suet. *Aug.* 70.1-2.

^{494.} Caligula's footwear: Suet. *Cal.* 37, 52; Philo, *Leg.* 79;

The power of speech

Suetonius described Caligula's speech as brutal and filled with crude humour.⁴⁹⁵ His one-liners, such as "Let them hate me, so they but fear me" and "I wish the Roman people had but a single neck", were delivered during social events like dinners and feasts. Tasteless speech challenged social conventions more than it targeted specific individuals.⁴⁹⁶ Despite the coarseness, Caligula possessed remarkable oratorical abilities and a powerful voice. His "mighty voice", especially when infuriated, could be heard at a distance. He composed speeches pro and contra someone's prosecution as prescribed in classical rhetoric, and he disliked the polished style of orators like Seneca and Afer. Tacitus, too, acknowledged Caligula's *vis dicendi*, oratorical power.⁴⁹⁷

Rhetorical education in Rome had practical consequences, as rhetoric played a significant role in shaping public opinion.⁴⁹⁸ Words could have a powerful impact, as seen in the case of Caesar's assassination, celebrated as tyrannicide.⁴⁹⁹ Caligula's banishment of the orator Carrinas Secundus, who spoke against tyranny or his having a poet burned alive for the declamation of an ambiguous stanza, exemplifies the influence of rhetoric in Roman politics.⁵⁰⁰ When the actor Mnester danced the tragedy of Cinyras, a play about the assassination of King Philip of Macedonia, people saw it as a portent foretelling Caligula's death.⁵⁰¹ However, the most prominent example of Caligula's visual power is an episode known as 'The Bridge of Baiae'.

Crossing the Bay of Baiae

The construction of a massive bridge of boats over the Bay of Naples from Puteoli to Baiae, spanning about 3,600 Roman paces (approximately 5.2 kilometres), was

^{495.} Suet. *Cal.* 29; 33.

^{496.} One-liners: Suet. *Cal.* 30. 1-3; social events: Suet. *Cal.* 32. Augustus had the habit of larding his language with unusual expressions, although his speech was considered elegant (Suet *Aug.* 86-7).

^{497.} Dislike of orators: Suet. *Cal.* 53; oratorical power: Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.2.

^{498.} Lendon, 2022, pp. 37 – 50.

^{499.} In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599), Brutus tried to justify the killing of Caesar, arguing that it was necessary to save the Republic: "not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more" (Act 3, scene 2). Cf. Plutarch, *Brutus* 2.4-5 and Cic. *Brut.* 21-22.

^{500.} Dio 59.20.6.

^{501.} Suet. *Cal.* 57. 4.

a remarkable undertaking during Caligula's reign.⁵⁰² This extravagant project involved anchoring merchant ships in a double line across the bay, on which earth was heaped to fashion it in the manner of the Appian way. The spectacle, which lasted two full days, was described by Suetonius in vivid detail.

"Over this bridge, he rode across and back on two successive days, the first day on a horse with military insignia, himself resplendent in a crown of oak leaves, a buckler, a sword, and a cloak of gold cloth; on the second, in the dress of a charioteer in a car drawn by a pair of famous horses, carrying before him a boy named Dareus, one of the hostages from Parthia, and attended by the entire praetorian guard and a company of his friends in Gallic chariots."⁵⁰³

The first day began with sacrifices to Neptune and other Gods to prevent them from getting jealous.⁵⁰⁴ Caligula rode across the bridge on horseback, wearing military insignia. He was resplendent in a crown of oak leaves, a buckler, a sword, and a purple *chlamys*, a short military cloak made of silk and decorated with gold and precious stones from India. He also wore the supposed breastplate of Alexander the Great. This event was symbolically charged, as Caligula's attire, especially the *corona civica*, and actions conveyed the message that he was a saviour of Rome.⁵⁰⁵ The emperor charged across the bridge as if in pursuit of an enemy, followed by his horsemen and foot soldiers. On the second day, the imperial procession was more majestic (cf. Figure 53). The emperor donned a gold brocade tunic and drove a chariot drawn by two famous horses. Accompanying him was a young Parthian hostage named Darius. The entire Praetorian Guard followed, along with his friends in Gallic chariots and a parade of what represented the spoils of war. The event included a stop in the middle of the bridge, where Caligula addressed the crowd and offered donatives to the soldiers. Afterwards, festivities began, and some individuals jumped or fell into the water, leading to drownings.⁵⁰⁶

^{502.} Three different versions concerning the location and length of the bridge exist: Dio (59.17.1): from Puteoli to Bauli with a length of 26 stades (= 4.6 km. Dio has 7.5 stades in 1 Roman mile, ergo 3.46 Rom. miles); Josephus (*AI* 19.5): from Dicaiaarchia (Puteoli) to Misenum over 30 stades (5.55 km. 1 stade equals here 185 meters, but in 18.249 it is said that Dicaiaarchia is 5 stades or 925 meters away from Baiae); Suetonius (*Cal.* 19.1): from Puteoli to Baiae with a length of 4.8 km (or 3.6 Rom. miles). The actual distance from Puteoli to Bacoli is 3.6 km (Barrett, 1989, p. 212). However, the names did not indicate villages or small towns but a maze of villas and estates. Bauli, present-day Bacoli, was the most western point of the bridge.

^{503.} Suet. *Cal.* 19. 1-2.

^{504.} Dio 59. 17. 4.

^{505.} Bergmann, 2010, pp. 135-205.

^{506.} Dio 59.17.8-10.

There is some debate regarding the date of the Baiae spectacle. Most ancient sources date it to mid-39 CE, shortly before Caligula's northern campaign.⁵⁰⁷ The construction of the bridge required a significant number of vessels and workforce. Only freighters or similar vessels could be used. The ships had to be of similar draught, which excluded the largest sailing ships and war vessels. Such ships were about 34 meters long; river freighters had a length of approximately 25 meters. The number of such or similar ships necessary for an over 5 km long double line of boats tied together was at least 400. Withdrawing such a vast number of ships would seriously affect the economy, especially the war economy. Freighters were necessary to supply the troops up North and elsewhere. This is the main reason why a dating of mid-39, i.e. before the Northern campaign is the most likely.⁵⁰⁸

Interpretations of the event also differ. Ancient authors had various interpretations of this extravagant spectacle. Seneca viewed it as an example of Caligula's madness, while Josephus suggested that Caligula was asserting his status as the ruler of the waves.⁵⁰⁹ Suetonius offered multiple explanations, including scaring the Germans and Britons, outdoing Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont, and fulfilling a prediction made by Tiberius' astrologer, Thrasyllus.⁵¹⁰ When the old emperor Tiberius worried about the succession, the astrologer predicted that Caligula had no more chance of becoming emperor than riding over the Gulf of Baiae with horses. Dio saw it as an act of pure arrogance and a cause of financial strain.⁵¹¹ Some modern scholars have suggested that this spectacle had a symbolic aspect, preparing for an invasion of Britain. The spectacle had a strong military character, with the first day resembling an attacking force charging into battle and the second day depicting an imagined triumph with hostages, spoils of war, and donatives to the military.⁵¹² Caligula's attire, including the breastplate associated with Alexander the Great, may have been intended to seek favour from the gods for the upcoming campaign against

^{507.} Suet. *Cal.* 32.1, 52; Dio 59. 17.2, 10; Jos. *Al.* 19.1. 5-7; Aur. Victor *Caes.* 4.3.

^{508.} Seneca connects the episode with the famine of January 41 CE but that could have been the result of the withdrawal of many ships due to the earlier war effort (Sen. *Dial.* 10.18.5-6).

^{509.} Sen. *Dial.* 10.18.5-6, Jos. *Al.* 19.6

^{510.} Suet. *Cal.* 19.

^{511.} Dio 59.18.1.

^{512.} Suetonius means two consecutive days, while Dio has a rest day between the two trips. Triumphant generals wore the tunic of the chariot driver as well. Suetonius reported Caligula wearing Alexander's breastplate not, as one would expect in *Cal.* 19 but in *Cal.* 52. In that passage, it is said that the breastplate came from the sarcophagus in Alexander's grave in Alexandria. Alexander was the role model for every ambitious general or usurper. However, comparisons to Alexander were often meant to discredit someone; cf., e.g., Pompey, who was supposed to have worn the purple cloak of Alexander during his triumph in 61 BCE.

Britain.⁵¹³ The legendary Greek general once made a short boat trip on the Indian Ocean to sacrifice to the Gods, asking for their protection.⁵¹⁴



Fig. 53. Example of a Roman boat bridge. <https://pin.it/3Ss1TGZQ2>

© <http://bitchute.com/channel/WiXYLTyDFzyH> Mysterion. Copyright Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-42)

To date, no material evidence has been found to corroborate the events at Baiae. The show, however, presented many theatrical moments perfectly suitable to exploit in coin and stone. The time between the event, certainly in the dating accepted in this thesis, and Caligula's death was sufficient to produce commemorative materials. If such material existed, memory sanctions would not have erased all bits and pieces. In fact, the only sources we have for the episode are the written stories of the writers from ancient times. However, assuming that the Baiae bridge extravaganza happened as described in the ancient texts, it was one of the more prominent examples of Caligula's visual power.

Caligula's leadership was backed by the military (the *adlocutio*-sestertius) and marked by efforts to gain support and popularity through various measures, including financial rewards, the revival of social groups, extravagant spectacles,

^{513.} Malloch, 2001.

^{514.} Arrian, *History of Alexander*, books IV/V: 254-9; Plut. *Alexander* 6.7.

and extensive horse racing events. His actions are examples of the way in which the emperor used his visual power to secure his position and ensure the people's favour, even if they sometimes appeared excessive or unconventional. Visual power, encompassing appearance, behaviour, and gestures, was a vital tool in Caligula's adhocratic leadership. His gaze, in particular, served as an instrument of control and conveyed his authority. Public appearances and spectacles were channels of communication and mechanisms for securing popular support despite the associated risks. Caligula's physical appearance, manner of walking, and choice of attire were essential aspects of his public image. These elements conveyed his social status, identity, and ambitions. Additionally, his use of speech and oratory had practical consequences, influencing public opinion and political outcomes in ancient Rome. The anecdotes retold in this chapter also serve to show how other emperors also resorted to the use of visual power adhocratic style. Caligula's grand and extravagant undertaking of building the bridge of boats across the Bay of Baiae was symbolically charged, with multiple interpretations offered by ancient and modern authors. The timing and purpose of this spectacle remain subjects of historical debate, but it undoubtedly left a lasting impression on those who witnessed it.



10

CALIGULA'S RELIGIOUS ROLE: HIS CLAIM TO PRE-DESTINED DIVINITY

This chapter deals with what was perhaps the most controversial aspect of Caligula's adhocratic leadership: his claim to be a living god. Scholarship has provided different interpretations of Caligula's religious policies. Most recently, Winterling and Adams interpreted it as an attempt to follow Hellenistic models while most authors dismissed it as merely an example of his insanity.⁵¹⁵ However, Caligula's religious policy with its focus on the person of the emperor as a pre-ordained, divine living ruler, fits in his adhocratic rule. This notion of predestined divine rulership was new and can be understood as part of his adhocratic leadership. Like the other aspects of the reign dealt with so far, Caligula's religious role was an essential part within the totality of his adhocratic leadership. It was also the subject of what could be considered the first attempted character assassination of this emperor: Philo's attack in his *Legatio ad Gaium*.

⁵¹⁵. Hellenistic: Winterling, 2003; Adams, 2007; insanity: Ferrill, 1991, p. 139.

Caligula's perception of his own divinity was complex and controversial. It was also closely connected to the deification attempt of his family and especially that of his sister Drusilla. He adopted the concept of a "*deus praesens*," a living emperor, but not that of a "*divus*," a deified emperor after death.⁵¹⁶ This distinction had important implications for his rule and the way he was perceived.

Suetonius begins his description of the monstrous Caligula with examples of his divine pretensions. Dio took this pretence further. They were not original. The accusation that Caligula insisted on being revered as a living god originated in the writings of Philo and was echoed by Flavius Josephus.⁵¹⁷ Philo pondered upon Caligula's habit of impersonating demigods.⁵¹⁸ He purportedly introduced strange cults into Rome, like the one for Isis and outlandish customs, such as proskynesis.⁵¹⁹ Dio and Suetonius referred to an official cult of Caligula as *deus praesens* with two temples in Rome. Sacrifices were made to him, and he was referred to as Jupiter in official documents.⁵²⁰ The priesthood was recruited from among the richer classes and considerable sums of money must be paid to qualify. Caligula's wife Caesonia and uncle Claudius were priests at considerable expense. Claudius couldn't meet his obligations of around ten million sesterces and went bankrupt. According to Dio, the horse Incitatus was appointed priest too.⁵²¹

Divine mirroring

The religious policy likely forms the most critical aspect of any adhocratic leadership due to its symbolic implications. By mirroring the Augustan religious policy, Caligula would express continuation and stability. However, Caligula overstepped the line set by Augustus and tradition when he not only claimed to be a living god but also alleged that his divine leadership was pre-ordained. First, we must see

^{516.} The pattern of posthumous deification of emperors and their relatives was customised after Vespasian (consecrated between 8 September 79 and 29 Mai 80 CE, KEH, 2017, p. 109).

^{517.} Hurley suggests that the extant literary sources refer to a common, albeit lost, source in which most of this adverse data was collected (Hurley, 1993, p. 86).

^{518.} Philo *Leg.* 75-114.

^{519.} Jos. *AI.* 19.30. Vespasian created the cult for Isis (Scheid, 2016, p. 132).

^{520.} Dio 59.28.2; 4.4; 26.10; 28.8. All references refer to the period of Caligula's return to Rome by the end of August 40 and his death a few months later. It is plausible to assume that the tensions between the ruler and the elite came out into the open in this period culminating with Caligula's assassination.

^{521.} Dio 59.28.2; 59.4.4; 59.26.10; 59.28.8; 59.28.6. Suet. *Cal.* 22.3. Cf. Suet. *Cl.* 9.2. where the price is given as eight million. Incitatus as priest: Dio 59.28.6.

how Augustus used the notion of '*genius*' to personalise his leadership. This thesis perceives this as an important aspect of Augustus' proto-adhocratic leadership.

Genius, numen, and the Lares Augusti

In the aftermath of the battle of Actium, the Senate decided in 30 BCE that during every private or public banquet, a libation should be made to the *genius* of Octavius.⁵²² This fell within the tradition in which bloodless sacrifices of drink, incense or flowers were made. However, what was this *genius* and how could pouring libations for Octavius' *genius* become customary?

The concept of *genius* etymologically connects with the clan, the *gen-itus*, the flow or development of the *gens* as represented by its genitor. For example, the republican personified concept of the *Genius Populi Romani* expressed the cohesion and continuity of the Romans as one people. The hip mantle represented this *genius* to discern it from that of individuals.⁵²³ Nero's coinage, to give but one example, frequented the image of the *Genius Populi Romani* expressed as the *Genio Augusti* (Figure 54).



Fig. 54. As, Lugdunum, Nero 62 – 68. **Obv.** Head of Nero, bare, right; small globe at point of neck. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR P P P. **Rev.** Genius Populi Romani standing left, holding patera over the flaming altar in right hand and cornucopia in left. GENIO AVGVSTI SC. RIC 1² Nero 533. © Bibliothèque nationale de France. IMP-6524.

The quick expansion of sacrificing to the *genius* of Octavius/Augustus was due to its close association with the sacrifices for the *Lares*, the protective gods of the household (Figure. 55). Augustus' rearrangement of the municipal system created some 265 *vici* (districts) in Rome. Besides from being part of a *vicus*, one also

^{522.} Dio 51.19.7.

^{523.} Koortbojian, 2013, p. 210.

belonged to a *collegium* (formal association or guild). Such restructuring simplified identification and control and can be considered an example of Augustus' proto-adhocratic leadership because it allowed for the use and manipulation of the network of people with low social statuses.⁵²⁴



Fig. 55. Altar of the *Lares Augusti*, Morehead State University, Camden-Carroll Library. Altar of the Lares Augusti, Metropolitan Museum of Art Cast Collection. 37.

© https://scholarworks.moreheadstate.edu/metropolitan_art_collection/37 retrieved on 04-05-2024.

The *Lares compitales* were originally the guardians of the row of houses and neighbourhoods and were honoured in their shrines found on street corners and crossings. These shrines were used as meeting places for political gatherings, and despite several prohibitions, they still functioned as such when Augustus, in 7 BCE, introduced a new meaning to the cult. The 'Belvedere altar' (Figure 56) erected for

^{524.} This is a good example of the importance of understanding religion and ritual in its socio-political context. See Van Andringa, 2013, p. 449.

the occasion, shows Augustus presenting statues of the *Lares* to the Vestals in what could have been the forecourt of his house.⁵²⁵



Fig. 56. Belvedere altar. Consecration scene. Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Museo Gregoriano Profano, inv. no. 1115. Rossa; © courtesy DAI Rome, neg. 75.1290.⁵²⁶

Augustus cleverly anchored the old meaning of the *Lares Augusti* to himself by having the statue of his *genius* placed between those of the *Lares*. They became known as the *Lares Augusti*.⁵²⁷ Surviving altars show the sacrifice of pigs for the *Lares* and bulls for Augustus.⁵²⁸ The name refers to a 'well-augured' location, a place

^{525.} Wiseman, 2019, pp. 150-3; Pollini, 2012, pp. 141-2; 360 n48.

^{526.} See Buxton, 2014, pp. 91-111.

^{527.} Wiseman, 2019, pp. 150-1; Clauss, 2001, p. 67.

^{528.} Ovid, *Fasti* 5.143-146.

consecrated by *augurs*. Such naming was a clear reference to the foundation myth of Romulus sanctifying the location of Rome.⁵²⁹ Suetonius reported how Octavius initially considered the name 'Romulus' to be known as the second founder of Rome.⁵³⁰ The 2nd-century author Annius Florus commented that the name raised Octavius "to the level of a god".⁵³¹ The *liberti* (freedmen) also used the small sanctuaries for their meetings. It allowed them to hold the semi-official position of *magistri* of the cult of the *compita*.⁵³² It meant a further intrusion into what once was the privilege of the elite.

It would not be long before the identification of Augustus' *genius* with his person was established, although a theoretical distinction could still be made.⁵³³ Whereas the social function of the *compita* as meeting places remained intact, the meaning of the *Lares Augusti* subtly changed. They were now connected to the person of Augustus, who became the protective god of the household. As such, he was expected to show favour to those who sacrificed for them. How could the new god achieve this?

When Tiberius dedicated an altar to the divine power of Augustus on 17 January 6 CE, the identification of Augustus' *genius* with his *numen* was fully realised. The *numen* was the quality that constituted the divine nature of a god.⁵³⁴ *Numen* (literally, a nod) is a complex concept. Before Augustus, it seemed to have been used only with the genitive of the name of a deity or an entity and signified the expression of a specific will. After Augustus, the concept had three meanings: a synonym for a specific god, the divine force or power inherent in a god/ess as part of his/her divine nature, and a superhuman force signifying the mysterious in the unseen world.⁵³⁵ Since this force defined the essence of a god, it can be used as a synonym. With Augustus considered divine, the worship of his *numen* implied no distinction between this divine substance and the actual person. It put Augustus

⁵²⁹. Warrior, 2006, p. 111.

⁵³⁰. Suet. *Aug.* 7.2.

⁵³¹. Florus 2.34.66.

⁵³². Zanker, 2003, pp. 135-36.

⁵³³. Examples come mainly from poetry: Horace, *Ode* 4.5.32; Petronius, *Satyricon* 60; Statius, *Silvae* 1.1.56-58. Martial, *Ep.* 9.93.3-4, 8 described his libation to Domitian.

⁵³⁴. The concept should not be confused with the connotations given to it by R. Otto in *Das Heilige* (Breslau 1917). For Otto, the numinous was "das ganz andere", a power totally different. The central characteristic of all experiences in confrontation with the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* is numinous.

⁵³⁵. Goring, 1995, p. 376. Clauss remarked that, unfortunately, many scholars play down the importance and meaning of the concept when they merely translate it as 'power', leaving the divine connotation out of their translation (Clauss, 2001, p. 31).

on par with ancient gods like Jupiter and Apollo.⁵³⁶ However, divinity was no inheritable commodity until Caligula made it one.

Adhocratic aspects of Caligula's religious policy: divinely ordained emperors and hereditary divinity

"For he began first of all to liken himself to the so-called demigods, Dionysus and Heracles and the Dioscuri [...]. Then, as in a theatre, he assumed different costumes at different times; sometimes the lion skin and club, both overlaid with gold, to adorn himself as Heracles, sometimes caps on his head when he made himself up as the Dioscuri, or again as Dionysus with ivy, thyrsus, and fawn's skin."⁵³⁷

Philo's description reads as an example of Caligula's theomania. Was it? Gods were assumed to be different from humans in appearance as well. They were larger and more beautiful, with light radiating from them. The same applied to Roman emperors. They, too, possessed an ageless beauty beyond the human form.⁵³⁸ Augustus' images continued to express his eternal youth despite his actual age. Seneca's disparaging description of Caligula's build thus appears to be an invective playing on the notion of a ruler's beauty.⁵³⁹ The description of Caligula's unseemly physique disqualified him as a divine being while alive. Only in apotheosis could a mortal gain his *faciemque novavit*, his new appearance.⁵⁴⁰ When presenting himself as Heracles, Dionysus, Hermes, Mars, Apollo, Neptune, Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite, or Isis, the "divine majesty" played on the Augustan eternal youth theme.⁵⁴¹ Impersonating the gods was merely the visible expression of exalted status.

Caligula's creation of divinely ordained emperors

Although Caligula's ideas about pre-destined divine rulership are mainly reported by Philo, the concept does make sense within the context of Caligula's adhocratic leadership.⁵⁴² The emperor's religious policy was in line with Roman *religio*, which

^{536.} Wiseman, 2019, pp. 112-139.

^{537.} Philo *Leg.* 11.78-80.

^{538.} Clauss, 2001, pp. 264-5; Levene, 2012, pp. 64-5

^{539.} Sen. *Cons. Sap.* 18.1 echoed by Suet. *Cal.* 50.1-3 and Dio 59.26.7-9.

^{540.} Ovid. *Met.* 4.541.

^{541.} Suet. *Cal.* 22.3.

^{542.} Philo *Leg.* 11.

fundamentally was ritual. Ritual is the visible representation of belief set to enforce a sense of community and identity.⁵⁴³ In ritual, the transcendental merges with the earthly. Caligula's ideology of predestined divine rulership presented a transcendental reduction of the all-encompassing Roman reality that included the world of the divine to the realities of the temporary world. This was a perfect legitimation for an emperor who saw himself faced with serious challenges to his person and position. This merging of person and position, already achieved by Augustus, turned Caligula into the emperor-god created in the invectives of later writers. Dio wrote that no one became a god through popular consent.⁵⁴⁴ Arrian is even more clear when he has Callisthenes cautioning Alexander the Great: "Even Heracles himself did not receive divine honours from the Greeks in his own lifetime, nor even after his death till the god of Delphi gave his sanction to honouring him as a god. [...] Consider this too; when you return there, will you actually compel the Greeks as well, the freest of mankind, to do you obeisance."⁵⁴⁵ The total interconnection of religion and politics in the Graeco-Roman world was exemplified by the deification of the emperor, i.e., after his death. Caligula, however, took it a step further by introducing the notion of pre-destined rulership.

Divinity as a heritable commodity

Although Augustus could claim to be the son of the divine Caesar, he only became divine after his death. "For divine honours are paid to emperors only when they are no longer among men," Tacitus wrote.⁵⁴⁶ The historian also told how Nero refused a temple voted to honour him as a *divus*, a state god. Dio claimed that no temple to a living ruler was ever built in Rome or the rest of Italy.⁵⁴⁷ Caligula's initial policy was set to restrict the number of his statues in the sculptural environment.⁵⁴⁸ Writing to the magistrates of Acraephia, Caligula expressed his gratefulness for the honours and sacrifices held for his accession to the throne but strongly insisted that the magistrates refrain from erecting the multitude of statues they had planned.⁵⁴⁹

^{543.} Scheid, 2016.

^{544.} Dio 52.35.5.

^{545.} Arr. *Anab* 4.10.7-8.

^{546.} Tac. *Ann.* 15.74.3. For doubt on the reliability of Tacitus in this case, see Clauss, 2001, p. 101. Augustus allowed the non-Roman inhabitants of Asia and Bithynia to erect sanctuaries dedicated to himself in Pergamum and Nicomedia. This became a tradition followed by later emperors, but only outside Italy and Rome.

^{547.} Dio 51.20.8.

^{548.} Caligula, according to Dio, changed this policy in later years when he demanded cult statues, temples, and sacrifices to his *genius* (Dio 59.4.4).

^{549.} Letter to Acraephia, 19 August 37 CE, *Docs.* 361; see also Dio 59.4.4.

The emperor only agreed to statues for Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and the Isthmus of Corinth, the four most renowned sanctuaries and the sites of the four major Panhellenic festivals. Another part of Caligula's religious policy involved the re-organisation of priestly colleges and traditional cults.

Caligula's religious re-organisations: the *Salii*, the *Flamines*, and the 'King of Nemi'

The priestly college of the *Salii*, neglected by Tiberius, was completed again.⁵⁵⁰ Two colleges of twelve patrician members each formed the *Salii Palatini* (priests of Mars) and the *Salii Collini* or *Agonenses* (priests of Quirinus). They were known as the three-step dancing priests due to the jumping way in which they held their parades.⁵⁵¹ The priests dressed in ancient military attire, wore a pointed hat, a scarlet mantle, a metal cuirass, and held shields and spears. Their religious song, the *Carmen saliare*, would hardly have been understood by anyone in Caligula's time, given the archaic language in which it was composed.

The *flamines* were high priests connected to the service of one singular, autochthonous god. There were fifteen *flamines*, three majors and twelve minors. They held senatorial rank and were appointed for life. Augustus had alleviated the strict set of severe rules to which the *Flamen Dialis*, the high priest of Jupiter, was traditionally subjected.⁵⁵² Caligula forbade the *Flamen Dialis* to take the oath for the New Year, appealing to the ancient belief that it was nefast for a priest to swear an oath. The creation of the *Flamen Perpetuus* could have originated under Caligula. This priest was allowed lifelong office contrary to other officeholders, whose term was restricted to one year.⁵⁵³ Since every later deified emperor received a cult for which a *Flamen Perpetuus* was responsible, the notion of Caligula as a living deity might have been the origin of such an office.

Caligula also revived outmoded religious practices. An example is the 'king of Nemi' cult. This 'king' was a priest to Diana in her temple and sacred grove on Mount Alban. Situated several miles southeast of Rome, Mount Alban held a temple for *Jupiter Latiaris*, the protective deity of the Latin bond, and great estates owned by wealthy patricians, including Caligula. It also was the place where victorious

^{550.} Barrett, 1989, p. 145.

^{551.} Rüpke, 2018, p. 123.

^{552.} Gellius, *NA* 10.15.1-25.

^{553.} Rüpke, 2018, p. 284.

generals held their triumph or *ovatio* when the Senate denied them having it in Rome. Lake Nemi was also known as the *speculum Dianae*, the mirror of Diana, due to the nearby sanctuary of *Diana Nemorensis*.⁵⁵⁴ The 'king of Nemi' was a priest for the service of Diana.

The *Rex Nemorensis* was traditionally a runaway enslaved man. Only a runaway was allowed to break off a branch of a certain tree in the sanctuary to be able to serve as '*nemus*', king of the grove. If the runaway man succeeded in breaking off a branch, he gained the right to challenge the present priest in single combat. If he slew him, he took over as king of the grove or woods.⁵⁵⁵ Caligula revived the cult after having discovered the advanced age of the priest of the day, an indication of the obsolete nature of the cult.⁵⁵⁶ By having a younger and stronger slave challenge the old incumbent, the cult was rejuvenated. Caligula's motive for rejuvenating this particular cult could have been personal. The Diana of Nemi was conceived of as blessing men and women with offspring. A childless Caligula might have seen fit to revive the cult of the goddess with his own personal situation in mind. The location might equally be significant, as Mary Beard suggested. In her documentary *Caligula with Mary Beard*, Beard connected the rejuvenation of the ancient *Rex Nemorensis* cult with the Nemi ships and Caligula's pleasure boats.⁵⁵⁷ The purpose of such boats needs no further explanation in the present context.

Coinage related to Caligula's religious policy

Coinage was one of the oldest and most effective means of communication, hence of propaganda. Ignoring the difficult question of agency, i.e. the emperor's personal involvement in coin design, impressing the notion of Caligula's divinity upon the population at large was through coins. However, to date, not one Caligulan coin has been found with anything even slightly resembling divine attributes in relation to Rome.⁵⁵⁸ The radiate crown derived from Egyptian sun worship later became the hallmark of the deified emperor in Rome.⁵⁵⁹ Provincial coins did show the emperor

^{554.} Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.515; Green, 2007, p. 57.

^{555.} Frazer, 2000, p. 3. That the king of Nemi was burdened by a delayed death sentence is obvious. Hurley interpreted the revival of the ancient custom as an analogy for Caligula as the best of slaves and the worst of masters and a variation on Tiberius' supposed prophecy of "you will kill him, and another will kill you" (Hurley, 1993, p. 136).

^{556.} Suet. *Cal.* 34.3.

^{557.} *Caligula with Mary Beard* (BBC, 29-07-2013).

^{558.} Price, 1984, p. 171; Barrett, 1989, p. 149.

^{559.} Bergmann, 1998.

with radiate attributions which suggests local independence from centrally designed issues (Figures 57 and 58).



Fig. 57. Caligula, 37-41. Lydia, Magnesia ad Sipylum. **Obv.** Caligula wearing a radiate crown, looking to the right; ΓΑΙΟΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΑ ΣΕΒΑΚΤΟΝ; **rev.** Germanicus *capite velato* with patera; Agrippina the Elder as Demeter with grain ears and sceptre. ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΝΑΝ, ΜΑ ΑΠΟ ΣΙΠ(Υ) RPC 2454. Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, <https://www.cngcoins.com>. © Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio.



Fig. 58. Caligula, 37-41, Phrygia, Aezanis. **Obv.** Radiated head of Caligula looking to the right; ΓΑΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ **rev.** standing figure of Zeus with a sceptre and eagle looking to the left. ΑΙΖΑΝΙΤΩΝ ΕΠΙ ΡΟΥΦΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΚΛΑΚΚΙΚΟΥ; RPC I. 3085. Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, <https://www.cngcoins.com>.

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Evidence for an official state cult of Caligula pertains to his statues. In 39 CE the Senate decided to give annual sacrifices for the *Clementia* of the emperor. During this ceremony, a golden image of Caligula was carried to the Capitol. One year later, actors erected statues for Caligula and his sister Drusilla. Although Dio claimed that the action of the actors was not voluntary but staged by Caligula, the statues became centres for official worship.⁵⁶⁰ Whereas the Jews tried to prevent Caligula from having his statue erected in the Jerusalem temple, the Miletians built a cult

⁵⁶⁰. Dio 59. 16.10; 59, 24.7.

centre for the emperor.⁵⁶¹ In what would become his last months, Caligula was said to have tried to bring a variety of statues back to Rome to have them reworked with his own countenance. Amongst them was the famous Zeus statue from Olympia, which Zeus so forcibly resisted.⁵⁶² The critical aspect of Caligula's religious policy, however, concerned the deification of his sister, Drusilla.

Divine Drusilla



Fig. 59. Cameo. Conjugated bust of laureated Caligula with Drusilla in profile right. The emperor wears a cuirass and a *paludamentum* clasped on the right shoulder. Drusilla wears the imperial diadem. The *paludamentum*, a cape fastened on one shoulder, identifies the emperor as the supreme commander since Augustus. The combination of the imperial emblems of the *paludamentum* and the imperial diadem worn by brother and sister gives the impression of an imperial couple.

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^{561.} The Cyzicus inscription, *Docs* 401.

^{562.} Suet. *Cal.* 22.2; Jos. *Al.* 19.1.1.

The public prominence of Caligula's sisters highlighted the importance of the *domus Augusta* and their role in the continuation of the family. Caligula was childless, while Agrippina the Younger's son, the later emperor Nero, was passed over at the time.⁵⁶³ Drusilla was born around 14 CE, although her exact birthdate is uncertain. One notable aspect of her relationship with Caligula was the accusation of incest between the siblings, which was discussed in contemporary and later literary sources (Figure 59).⁵⁶⁴ The erection at Rome of two statues of Egyptian sibling lovers, one representing Drusilla, may have fuelled the rumours of imperial incest. Drusilla died on 10 June 38 of unknown causes.⁵⁶⁵ Her death marked a significant turning point in her legacy as she became the first Roman woman to be deified. On 23 September 38 CE, her deification transformed Drusilla into Diva Drusilla Panthea, the universal Goddess.⁵⁶⁶ This act of deification was accompanied by various honours and rituals that echoed those of other revered figures in Roman history, such as Livia and Augustus.⁵⁶⁷ Drusilla's birthday on February 1st was celebrated with equal festivities as held for Augustus.⁵⁶⁸ Notably, her statue was carried into the circus on a biga drawn by two elephants.⁵⁶⁹ It reflected the seated statue of Augustus on a *quadriga* drawn by elephants from the Tiberian era (Figure 60). Such events mirrored the grandiose displays of divine power associated with the divine Augustus.⁵⁷⁰

Other events emphasised the association with the Augustan era. The senator Livius Geminus, for example, provided 'proof' of Drusilla's divinity. He claimed to have witnessed her ascending to heaven to converse with the Gods.⁵⁷¹ The senator was generously rewarded for his epiphany. The analogy with a certain Nnumericus

^{563.} Suet. *Ner.* 5.1.

^{564.} Eutropius, the fourth-century *magister memoriae* of emperor Valens, claimed that Caligula had a daughter resulting from a union with one of his sisters (Eutropius, *Breviarum*, VII 12.3). He probably confused her with her namesake, Caligula's daughter with Milonia Caesonia.

^{565.} *Fasti Ostienses*, Docs. 31.

^{566.} The name Panthea (fem. of Pantheos) referred to an almighty power in which all sorts of characteristics and powers of known Gods and Goddesses were united. So, e.g., the three-headed Sphinx Panthea or signa Panthea from Amphipolis, which combined different divine attributes.

^{567.} Livia: Suet. *Cl.* 11; Augustus: Wood, 1999, p. 294.

^{568.} Dio 59.11.1-3; 59.24.7. Dio included Tiberius' birthday in this *senatus consultum*. The inclusion of Tiberius with the two divinities, Augustus and Drusilla, is peculiar since he noted that such decisions were ordered by Caligula, who had distanced himself from his uncle (59.24.8). The *Ludi Megalenses* were held during a two-day festival on 4 and 5 April. The festival marked the arrival in the city of the Goddess Cybele, one of the Gods Augustus valued most. The festival lasted two days, equal to the duration of the festivities for Augustus' birthday and was traditionally a feast of hospitality.

^{569.} Dio 59.13.8-9.

^{570.} Herz, 1981, pp. 331-4.

^{571.} Dio 59.11.4.

Atticus, who collected one million sesterces for vowing that he had seen Augustus' soul ascend to heaven, is obvious. Such senatorial testimonies confirmed the *prodigium*, a supernatural occurrence which must be countered by a *procuratio*, an expiatory sacrifice.⁵⁷²



Fig. 60. AE Sestertius. Tiberius 36-7. Obv. Augustus seated on a biga drawn by four elephants, each with rider. DIVO AVGVSTO SPQR; rev: TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F AVGVS PM TR POT XXXIIX around large SC. RIC 68. © Ex CNG 332/272. Courtesy Leu Numismatik AG. <https://www.leunumismatik.com>

Drusilla's divinity was further cemented by the oaths sworn by the *numen*, the divine power or will, associated with her. This was accompanied by the creation of a gold statue in the curia and another statue in the temple of Venus Genetrix, both equal in size to that of Venus herself. Venus Genetrix was considered the foundress of the Julian line, which is why the divine Drusilla also became known as the New Aphrodite.⁵⁷³

A priestly college of twenty priests, both women and men, was installed to worship the new divinity. The college was adapted from the *Sodales Augustales*, the personal priesthood for the worship of the divine Augustus.⁵⁷⁴ The establishment of a priestly college dedicated to the worship of Drusilla demonstrated the acceptance and devotion to her newfound divinity.⁵⁷⁵ Contrary to May Beard's conclusion that there is "hardly a trace of her [i.e. Drusilla] divinity in any other evidence we have", devotion for Drusilla was not limited to Rome but was also observed in provincial regions, particularly in the Roman East (Figure 61).⁵⁷⁶

^{572.} Adkins & Adkins, 1996; Peppel, 2003, p. 71.

^{573.} Herz, 1981, pp. 324-336.

^{574.} Dio 59. 11.2-5. The functioning of women as priestesses outside Rome is not contested. Evidence of priestesses of the ruler cult in Rome has not yet been found (Hemelrijk, 2005, pp. 137-170, 138) . Municipal priests of Caligula in Italy are unknown (Gradel, 2002, pp. 376-7, Appendix 3).

^{575.} Dio 59. 11.2-5.

^{576.} Beard, 2023, p. 382.



Fig. 61. Caesarea Paneas, Judaea, 40/41CE, bronze, struck by Herod Agrippa; **rev.** Drusilla, standing, holding Nike and branch, ΔΡΟΥΣΙΛΛΑ ΘΥΓΑΤΡΙ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ. RPC 4977.

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Beard asked, referring to the deification of Nero's four-month-old daughter Claudia, whether the logic behind understanding imperial power as divine also applied to female members of the imperial family.⁵⁷⁷ However, the case of Drusilla's deification did show a rationale because it basically seemed to refer to the emperor himself. Whereas the rationale behind the sisters-dupondius implied Caligula's (semi) divinity, Drusilla's divinity implied the divinity of her brother Caligula and the whole imperial family. The alignment of Drusilla's divinity with Venus Genetrix, the progenitrix of the Julian lineage, marked a significant development in the concept of the imperial family as a *domus Divina*. This shift in perception was also reflected in coins circulating in the provinces, where Drusilla was depicted alongside other imperial family members. Even after the downfall of her brother, Drusilla's divinity remained unchallenged. In some inscriptions found in Italy, only Caligula's name was erased, indicating the continued reverence for Drusilla (Figure 62).



Fig. 62. Honorary inscription for the divine Drusilla. C(All) CAESARIS erased. Inscription found at Caere (Etruria). CIL XI, 3598 Vatican museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano. Inv. 9957.

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^{577.} Beard, 2023, pp. 380-382.

Drusilla's deification was clearly no 'vanity deification' and did make a considerable impact on religious worship and Roman politics.⁵⁷⁸ Barrett, too, deprecated Drusilla's position and her role in Caligula's religious policy when he wrote that her "only achievement was to be Caligula's sister."⁵⁷⁹ These qualifications may be applicable to, for example, Cicero's daughter Tullia, but the consecration of Drusilla and the orientation towards Venus Genetrix as the progenitrix of the Julian line was an important step in the Caligulan personalisation of power.⁵⁸⁰ Having a divine protective guardian included in the *domus Augusta* elevated the family to a sacred status (Figure 63). It would be a small step to what this thesis considers the ultimate expression of Caligulan personalisation of power, the notion of predestined rulership.



Fig. 63. Bithynia-Pontus, Apameia, bronze coin depicting **obv**—busts of Drusilla under a star, Lulia, Agrippina the Younger; *DIVAE DRVSYLLAE, IVLIAE, AGRIPPINAE*; **rev**. Agrippina, the Elder, seated, left, holding a sceptre and patera, *AGRIPPINA C CAESARIS AVG GERMANICI MATER CIC DD*. RPC 1/ 2012. BM 1846,0910.112

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Divine Caligula

Caligula's role as a *deus praesens* meant that he was perceived as responsible for maintaining the *Pax Romana*, the Roman peace. His position as *Pontifex Maximus*, the elected leader of the priests, made him the custodian of the *Pax Deorum*,

⁵⁷⁸. Vanity deification: Beard, 2023, p. 381.

⁵⁷⁹. Barrett, 1989, p. 87.

⁵⁸⁰. For Cicero's intention to have his daughter deified and his influence on the process of religious change during the late Republic, see Cole, 2013. Noteworthy is that Cicero's listing of earlier examples of divinisation, which includes Hercules and the Dioscuri, is headed by Ino (Cole, 2013, p. 2). The mortal Ino became the goddess Leucothea "at the hands of the gods." (Homer, *Odyssey*, 5.333).

the peace with the gods.⁵⁸¹ During his short reign, Caligula's rule coincided with a period of relative peace in the Roman Empire. The temple of Janus, which was traditionally closed during times of peace, remained shut. This circumstantial condition may explain why Caligula enjoyed the favour of the population but also why his divinity claim would not raise eyebrows. A peaceful reign signified peace with the gods. People held the emperor responsible for their well-being, which was expressed in terms like *pater patriae* and *divus Caesar*. With divinity in the Roman world being relative, imperial claims to a supernatural nature were perfectly acceptable.⁵⁸² Obviously, such claims asserted imperial authority, with the emperor denoted as the giver of benefits and distributor of favours and goods.

The extent to which Caligula internalised the belief in his own godliness remains a topic of debate among historians and should not concern us here.⁵⁸³ Relevant is the outsider's perception. The people, and possibly those around him too, perceived Caligula as a divine being in whatever form. In his comments on Millar's empiricist view of the emperor as one who was what he did, Hekster asserts the basic notion of an emperor as one who was perceived by others as such.⁵⁸⁴ If those around him defined Caligula as divine, voluntarily or because of force, he was divine. Anyway, belief is perception, and vice versa. It is a principle best understood by cult leaders and charlatans.

Outsiders did comment on imperial divinity. Philo, a contemporary philosopher, criticised Caligula for his boastfulness and pride, asking what deeds he had to justify such claims of godhood. Philo used the word *theos* when 'quoting' Caligula's exclamation that he had the nature of a God.⁵⁸⁵ Pondering upon Caligula's habit of impersonating (demi)-Gods, Philo blamed the emperor for not emulating the virtue of the Gods: "What deeds like these [of the Gods] have you, to make you so boastful and puffed with pride?"⁵⁸⁶ Dio also used the term *theos* as a criterion

⁵⁸¹. For the position of the emperor as *Pontifex Maximus* and intermediary between the gods and the human world, see Hekster, 2023, pp. 135-139. Ibidem for the idea that immortality was not an absolute precondition for divinity.

⁵⁸². Hekster, 2023, p. 134. Cole, 2013.

⁵⁸³. For the notion of Roman religion as a *scientia* grounded in observation and efficaciousness (the empiricist approach), see Beard, North, Price, 1998; Ando, 2003, 2008, with the criticism in Mackey, 2022, pp. 339-344. Noteworthy is the omission in these and similar works of a discussion of Caligula. I also found no references to Frits Staal's indispensable work on Vedic rituals (Staal, 1983).

⁵⁸⁴. Hekster, 2023, pp. 1-22. Cicero, for example, raised Pompey to superhuman status in his *Pro Lege Manilia*.

⁵⁸⁵. Philo *Leg.* 367.

⁵⁸⁶. Philo *Leg.* 78 – 86.

for distinguishing between good and bad emperors. According to Dio, only evil emperors sought self-deification while alive.⁵⁸⁷ Dio wrote how Caligula "ordered temples to be erected and sacrifices to be offered to himself *as to a God*" (ὥς καὶ θεῷ).⁵⁸⁸ Dio could criticise those emperors who claimed divine status while alive because the term *theos*, or the conventional Latin translation *divus*, was only used for deceased persons.⁵⁸⁹ Suetonius, in his accounts of Caligula, described how the emperor laid claim to divine majesty.⁵⁹⁰ Caligula ordered the removal of statues of gods from temples, replacing them with his own likeness. He established a temple with a life-sized golden statue of himself, complete with a priesthood that served him.⁵⁹¹ The priesthood was recruited from among the more affluent classes, and serious money must be paid to qualify. Caligula's wife Caesonia and his uncle Claudius were priests at considerable expense.⁵⁹²

It is essential to distinguish between claiming divine emperorship and asserting one's status as a living God. Although the Gods endorsed the emperor, this did not necessarily imply the emperor's divinity.⁵⁹³ Emperors could justify their positions by referring to divine parentage without necessarily claiming divine status during their lifetimes. Caligula himself recognised this difference when he commented on the honours given to gladiators compared to deified emperors. "The people that rule the world give more honour to a gladiator for a trifling act than to their deified emperors *or to the one still present with them.*" (italics HvN).⁵⁹⁴

Caligula's claim to predestined divinity did not come out of the blue. It is likely that he followed the example set by Julius Caesar. The essential notion of predestined rulership was already voiced by Caesar in his eulogy for his deceased aunt Julia. In this speech, Caesar claimed his descent from the gods and asserted his right to rule.

⁵⁸⁷. Antoniou, 2019, pp. 930-948 with McIntyre, 2019, p. 44. The problem of the confusing difference between *deus* and *divus* as the problematic transcription of the Greek *theos* falls beyond the scope of this study. Cf. Koortbojian, 2013, p. 7.

⁵⁸⁸. Dio 59.4.4.

⁵⁸⁹. Price, 1984, pp. 79-95; Hekster, 2023, pp. 145-50.

⁵⁹⁰. Suet. *Cal.* 22.2.

⁵⁹¹. Dio 59.28.2; 4.4; 26.10; 28.8.

⁵⁹². Dio 59.28.2; 59.4.4; 59.26.10; 59.28.8; 59.28.6. Suet. *Cal.* 22.3. Claudius could not meet his obligations of around ten million sesterces and went bankrupt (Cf. Suet. *Cl.* 9.2. where the price is eight million). According to Dio (59.28.6), the horse Incitatus was also appointed priest. The 6th-century Byzantine author John Malalas still referred to Caligula as "*helios Gaius*" (Malalas, 2008).

⁵⁹³. Cf. the pre-ambulatory of monarchic laws. Dutch laws, for example, open with "We [name of king/queen], due to the grace of God, king of the Netherlands, prince of Orange", etc. etc. etc.

⁵⁹⁴. Suet. *Cal.* 35.3. The audience had loudly applauded a gladiator while the emperor caused little attention after a fall down the stairs while leaving the amphitheatre.

"The family of my aunt Julia is descended by her mother from the kings, and on her father's, side is akin to the immortal Gods; for the Marcii Reges [her mother's family name] go back to Ancus Marcius, and the Julii, the family of which ours is a branch, to Venus," Suetonius wrote. This divine ancestry, Caesar asserted, implied the right to rule. "Our stock, therefore, has at once the sanctity of kings, whose power is supreme among mortal men, and the claim to reverence which attaches to the Gods, who hold sway over kings themselves".⁵⁹⁵ Although it is a matter of debate whether Caesar received divine honours during or after his earthly life, his having a statue of himself placed in the temple of Quirinus/Romulus with an inscription suggesting divine status leaves little to doubt about the dictator's perception of his status.⁵⁹⁶

To what extent Caesar's perception was shared by others is debatable. However, as with other aspects of Caesar's rule, the traditional republican structures likely prevented him from too openly exhibiting a superhuman status. Caligula discarded such traditional inhibitions just as he did with other aspects of government. Caligula drew the full consequences from his forebear's views and proclaimed himself a living god by predestined divine right. Scholarship generally connects Caligula's divinity claims with the episode of the emperor's statue ordered to be placed in the Jerusalem temple. Although Caligula's proposal to convert the Jerusalem Temple into a shrine for his cult and place a statue of himself in the holy of holies was met with shock and outrage by the Jewish delegation in Rome, the Romans likely considered it a minor affair. Placing statues of emperors in temples throughout the empire was not uncommon as was replacing the statue's head with that of a successor. Due to the proposal being a practice in line with customary tradition, I do not consider the affair an example of Caligula's adhocratic leadership. Although such incidents were infringements on Jewish religious identity they were not uncommon Roman practices. Besides, Palestine and Jerusalem were part of the empire and not some foreign territory.

Caligula's assertion of divinity while alive marked a significant departure from previous Roman leaders. Julius Caesar made a notable claim to divine status during his lifetime by proclaiming his divine parentage. This was evident in his public statements and actions, such as allowing a statue of himself to be placed in the temple of Quirinus with inscriptions that hinted at his divinity. Caligula

⁵⁹⁵. Suet. *Jul.* 6.1.

⁵⁹⁶. The statue's inscription ran: "to the invincible God". (Koortbojian, 2013, p. 87 with Hekster, 2023, p. 146.) Another statue was placed on the Capitol alongside the former kings while Caesar's statue (later a whole chariot) was carried in the procession of the gods during the games (Dio 43.45.3).

aimed to establish his superiority in a manner that Augustus had only expressed posthumously. While he may not have fully convinced the Senate or the people of his divine status, Caligula's audacious self-presentation challenged traditional norms and showcased his desire for supreme authority.

Caligula's emulation of Augustus, highlighted by his adoption of the titles *pater patriae* and *pronepos* represented a deliberate effort to shape his image and authority as emperor. This image was visualised on the *pileus-quadrans*, which introduced the combined designations PP (*pater patriae*) and PRON (*pronepos*) for the first time. Caligula's calculated use of numismatic symbols and titles are examples of his adhocratic leadership through the demonstration of a keen awareness of the power of imagery and rhetoric in Roman politics.⁵⁹⁷ The clearest example thereof was the emperor's claim to be seen as a living god. Caligula's perception of his own divinity was complex. While he adopted the concept of a living emperor-God, whether he genuinely believed in his divine status or used it for political and ritual purposes remains a subject of historical debate. Ancient authors had varying perspectives on Caligula's claims to divinity, and the terminology used to describe his actions is crucial in understanding the distinction between claiming divine emperorship and asserting personal godhood. The Jerusalem Temple affair demonstrates the complex relationship between Roman imperial power and religious identity within the empire. It also showcases the role of influential individuals like Agrippa in influencing imperial decisions and the potentially dire consequences for Roman officials who defied the emperor's orders, even when those orders were considered deeply offensive to a particular religious group. Overall, this meeting between Caligula and the Jewish delegation reveals a complex interaction between the emperor and a minority group with distinct religious practices. Caligula's jesting attitude and his understanding of Jewish customs and political issues indicate a level of engagement with the delegation's concerns.

Philo's character assassination of emperor Caligula

In this paragraph, I first look at the difference between two methods to deal with someone's memory, memory sanctions and character assassination. Examples of memory sanctions against Caligula and his family are shown in Appendix A. My analysis of Philo's character assassination follows the modern theory of character assassination.⁵⁹⁸ Philo's attack was motivated by his personal belief in what modern

^{597.} Lendon, 2022.

^{598.} Icks & Shiraev (eds) 2014; Samoilenko et al., 2019.

terminology signifies as monotheism. This raises the question of the monotheistic character of Judaism in Philo's days. I therefore take a closer look at Jewish monotheism and Second Temple Judaism. The analysis of Philo's attack centres around the so-called five pillars of character assassination.

The difference between memory sanctions and character assassination

Memory sanctions and character assassination both involve deliberate acts of revenge with distinct purposes. Memory sanctions, or *damnatio memoriae* as scholarship sometimes but wrongly calls it (the term is not Roman)⁵⁹⁹ aim to purge someone from public memory, while character assassination seeks to tarnish an individual's reputation. Memory sanctions rely on purging mediums that carry information about the person from public memory. Character assassination, on the other hand, focuses on publicly exposing an individual's actions and character flaws. It aims to damage the person's reputation and credibility by spotlighting its victim. A consequence of public exposure is that it can backfire. If Caligula had not been publicly blackened, few historians would likely have given the emperor's four years reign much thought.

Jewish monotheism and Second Temple Judaism

The core of the Jewish religion is generally considered to be monotheism. However, the term 'monotheism' in its meaning of belief in one god only is a modern coinage, probably first used by the 17th-century English philosopher Henry More (1614-1687).⁶⁰⁰ However, how monotheistic were the Egyptian Jews in Philo's time, and how did they relate to Palestinian Judaism?

The answer to the question of the characterisation of Jewishness may be found in Avraham (ca. 1813 BCE), commonly known as patriarch Abraham, the legendary founder of Judaism.⁶⁰¹ He was the first with whom god made a "covenant of the pieces." Abraham sacrificed animals by cutting them into two pieces on God's

^{599.} Flower, 2006, p. 19.

^{600.} Henry More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (London, 1660).

^{601.} Theologians might dispute the notion of Abraham as the founder of Judaism because he lived before the exodus from Egypt and the receiving of the Torah, the defining events in creating Judaism. The Jewish status of Abraham does not concern us here; central for this study is the notion of sacrifice.

order.⁶⁰² This sacrifice sanctified the covenant and became the exclusive and distinguishing mark of Judaism. Offering to other gods meant the loss of being Jewish.⁶⁰³ Sacrifice was meant to accommodate the gods. Ritual purity of the priests was essential, and the only place where sacrifices could *officially* be made was the temple in Jerusalem, the symbol of Jewish unity. Profanation of this temple implied desecration of the covenant.

Biblical scholarship generally accepts that the cult for the Jewish god since the reforms of the sixteenth king of Judah, Josiah (640-609 BCE), was limited to the Jerusalem temple alone. However, archaeological evidence shows that this was not the case.⁶⁰⁴ Although the centrality of the Jerusalem temple was not disputed, a sacrificial cult was practised outside Jerusalem and even outside Israel. Occasionally these cults included other deities. The so-called 'Archives from Elephantine', a collection of documents written in Aramaic, describes a Jewish military colony's organisation and community life guarding the southern frontier from Elephantine in the fifth century BCE.⁶⁰⁵ According to Deuteronomic principles, the Jewish sacrificial cult was allowed only in the Jerusalem temple, but the temple at Elephantine was exempted from destruction by the postexilic priesthood despite the continuation of pre-Deuteronomic practices.⁶⁰⁶ Mélèze Modrzejewski suggested that the reason for this exemption may have been the fact that Elephantine was the only place where the temple cult functioned during the Babylonian captivity of 586-521/516 BCE.⁶⁰⁷ A case in point was the cult for Anat-Yahu/ Anat-Bethel. This queen of heaven was the female consort to the god 'YHW', who was worshipped at Elephantine. It was to her that the Egyptian Jews appealed when the prophet Jeremiah threatened them with destruction.⁶⁰⁸ The colony and its temple were destroyed in the fourth century BCE. After the reforms of Josiah (622 BCE), the temple at Elephantine continued with cultic practices which the reformists wanted to abolish. The existence of a temple at Leontopolis during the Graeco-Roman period appears to demonstrate that the Egyptian Jews abided by the Deuteronomic laws but could sacrifice in a temple of their own.

^{602.} *Gen.* 15.9.

^{603.} The documents from Qumran clearly show a preoccupation with sacrifice (Martínez, 1994, pp. 154-184, Martínez & Barrera, 1993, pp. 69-70. See also, Lendering, 2015, p. 120).

^{604.} Eshel and Stone, 2013, p. 95.

^{605.} Porten, 2011.

^{606.} *Deut.* 12. Temples are attested for Arad (southern Judea), Beer Sheba, Lachish, Khirbet el-Kôm, Elephantine, Leontopolis and Sardis.

^{607.} Mélèze Modrzejewski, 2013, pp. 189-211.

^{608.} *Jer.* 44.15-30. Mélèze Modrzejewski, 2013, pp. 190-1.

Nevertheless, the Jewish declaration of faith, *Shema*, leaves no doubt about the credo of one god only: 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.'⁶⁰⁹ However, and despite the *Shema*, in another part of Deuteronomy, Israel's god YHWH is subordinate to the god EL, the Most High, while in Psalm 89, 6-8, he functions as the chairman of something resembling a divine council.⁶¹⁰ Israel's god had Asherah as consort, a Canaanite goddess who later appeared to be the wife of the war-god Ba'al.⁶¹¹

Furthermore, the Mosaic laws strictly interdict to make "any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."⁶¹² However, two bowing cherubs must sit on the cover of the Ark, the seal of the Judean king had a lion depicted, and eagles can be seen on the menorah. An angry crowd stormed the temple to remove a golden eagle, while the temple tax was paid with silver coinage from Tyros with an eagle on the reverse and the god Melqart on the obverse. In 2 Maccabees, a deuterocanonical book not included in the Tanakh, we find a story of Jewish soldiers being buried who wore protective amulets of pagan deities.⁶¹³ The *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* has two inscriptions from an Egyptian temple dedicated to the Greek god Pan of two Jews praising God.⁶¹⁴ The Mosaic books refer to sons of god, angels, fallen angels, *cherubim*, *seraphim*, *nephilim*, giants, and *rephaites*.⁶¹⁵ In the book of *Tobit*, two people threw themselves on the ground in front of an angel.⁶¹⁶ *Acts of the Apostles* mentions a Jewish sorcerer on Cyprus and Jewish exorcists.⁶¹⁷ Magic texts from Syria refer to healing spells.⁶¹⁸ These examples suffice to show that the borders between Judaism and other religions were rather porous. The belief in one eternal God only became characteristic of rabbinic Judaism since the 6th-century codification of the Talmud.

Considering the above, why would Caligula's intention of putting a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple be so disturbing that it incited Philo's wrath? I see three crucial situations that should be considered to understand Philo's reaction.

^{609.} *Deut.* 6.4.

^{610.} *Deut.* 32, 8-10. Schäfer, 2020, p. 141, n4.

^{611.} 1 Kings 18, 18-90. Cf. the inscription of Kuntillet Ajrud in Conrad, 2019, pp. 563-4. Also, Schäfer, 2020, p. 3.

^{612.} *Exod.* 20.4-5.

^{613.} 2 Maccabees 12.40. Lendering, 2015, p. 116.

^{614.} *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 2.1537-8.

^{615.} *Gen.* 6.1-4. *Nephilim* were the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men before the great flood. *Rephaites* (*Gen.* 14.5) were giant-like creatures or dead ancestors in the underworld.

^{616.} *Tobit* 12.16-7. Lendering, 2015, p. 119.

^{617.} *Acts* 13.6-7; 19.13-16.

^{618.} *Israel Exploration Journal* 41, 1991, pp. 270-275.

Firstly, the many uncertainties and differences within the Jewish communities in the diaspora following the Maccabean revolt, the Hasmonaean and the Roman rule. Secondly, the importance of sacrifice as a distinguishing mark of Jewishness, and thirdly, the behaviour of the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate towards the Jews.

The first situation concerned the Maccabean uprising (167-160 BCE), during which the small settlement of Leontopolis, present-day Tell el-Yahudiya, was selected by the high priest Onias IV for the construction of a temple, possibly as an insurance for the continuation of the sacrificial cult, which was under serious threat in Jerusalem.⁶¹⁹ Méléze Modrzejewski noted that rabbinic sources did not consider the Leontopolis sanctuary antagonistic to the Jerusalem one. It was a temple for Jewish soldiers, just as the Elephantine one had been.⁶²⁰ After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, those who survived sought refuge at Leontopolis to continue their sedition until stopped by the Romans by the end of 73.

The Hasmonean king Herod had ruled as an autocrat, conducting a veritable reign of terror. After his death, his kingdom was divided among three of his sons with rather dire consequences. Amongst turmoil and upheaval, only the power of Rome kept them in place, and when things got out of hand, the Jewish lands became part of the Roman province of Syria.

The second situation concerned Jewish sacrifice. Although sacrificing is a common activity, it has the specific meaning in Judaism of ratifying a treaty or covenant with god. The obvious example is the sacrifice of Abraham, upon which god made a covenant to separate the Jewish people from all others.⁶²¹ After the construction of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, this became the only official place for sacrifice.⁶²² Sacrificing stopped after the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE. If sacrifice is intended to bring man either nearer or back to god the Jewish form of sacrifice, limited as it was to a particular place, became a distinguishing mark of Judaism. However, given the uncertainty of the day and the many rivalling Jewish factions, the main question was how to define the distinguishing marks of a faithful Jew. Josephus, for example, distinguishes between four major factions: the Sadducees following the Mosaic laws; the Pharisees following the Tanakh or

^{619.} Josephus, in one instance, described the sanctuary as resembling the Jerusalem temple (*AI*. 13.73; 13.387-8); elsewhere, as looking like an Egyptian tower (*BI* 7.426-30). The Maccabees fought against the Seleucid rule and Hellenistic influence after king Antiochus IV had forbidden Jewish religious practices.

^{620.} Méléze Modrzejewski, 2013, p. 204.

^{621.} Genesis 15. 18.

^{622.} O'Day and Peterson, 2009.

Jewish bible; the sectarian Essenes and the fourth philosophy, a radical group of rebellious Pharisees, known as Sicarii, who refused to pay their taxes. Considering all the different factions, the notion of monotheism as **the** marker of Jewishness can be questioned. Although Philo may have acted out of a monotheistic creed, it was the fear of polluting which would jeopardise the covenant with god that was at stake when Caligula intended to have his statue placed in the Jerusalem temple. Besides, there were precedents.

Installed by Seianus, the Roman prefect Pontius Pilatus antagonised the Jews with for them unacceptable behaviour. He allowed his troops into Jerusalem carrying standards decorated with busts of the emperor, thus violating the practice of his predecessors.⁶²³ He took funds from the temple treasury to reconstruct an aqueduct and he had votive shields inscribed with dedications to Tiberius set up in the Jerusalem palace of Herod.⁶²⁴ Pilate added insult to injury in his coinage by depicting typical Roman religious symbols, such as the *lituus*, representing the augurs, and the *simpulum*, the symbol of *Pontifex Maximus*.⁶²⁵

The five pillars of Philo's character assassination

Modern character assassination theory focuses on so-called five pillars. These five pillars are context, medium, audience, attacker, and target. The pillars collectively create a situation of character assassination.⁶²⁶ All five pillars are recognisable in Philo's attacks on Caligula which can thus be characterised as character assassination.

Pillar 1. The context: Alexandria, Egypt 38 CE

In 38 CE, tensions between the Jewish and local Alexandrian populations erupted in Alexandria, Egypt. These tensions had their roots in a longstanding conflict dating back to Alexander the Great, who had promised the Jews equal rights with Greek citizens.⁶²⁷ These rights were financially and socially significant, as they allowed for participation in various civic activities such as voting in comitia, access to official functions, and exemption from certain taxes.⁶²⁸

^{623.} Jos. *Bl.* 2.169-174; *Al.* 18.55-59.

^{624.} Aqueduct: Jos. *Bl.* 2.175-77; *Al.* 18.60-2; shields: Philo *Leg.* 299-305.

^{625.} Jacobson, 2019, p. 82.

^{626.} Icks & Shiraev (eds) 2014, p. 4; Samoilenko et al., 2019, pp.12-3.

^{627.} Jos. *Al.* 11.8.5.

^{628.} Jos. *Bl.* 2. 487-490.

The Roman occupation of Egypt in 30 BCE had further complicated matters. While some Jews welcomed Roman rule for the security it provided and the freedom to practice their religion, others resented the loss of employment opportunities and the introduction of a per capita tax.⁶²⁹ By the late '30s, extreme Greek factions led by Lampo, Isidorus, and Dionysius opposed both the Romans and aspiring Jews. Lampo, known for his corrupt practices, had been accused of treason in 28 CE but was acquitted. Isidorus, a troublemaker, tried to incite a rebellion against the Roman governor. Both Lampo and Isidorus were eventually tried and executed by Claudius after accusing King Agrippa I of malpractice. Not much is known about the third leader, Dionysius. Philo only mentioned him once, but it is not unlikely that he was Gaius Julius Dionysius, a scion of a noble family and a member of a delegation to Claudius in 41 CE.⁶³⁰

On the Roman side, Avillius Flaccus, a friend of Tiberius and Macro, found himself in a delicate position after Caligula came to power due to his connections with the disgraced Macro. His administration deteriorated, and the Greeks tried to use him against the Jews.⁶³¹ The situation escalated with the arrival of King Julius Agrippa in Alexandria in July 38. Agrippa's presence became known, and he became embroiled in a dispute involving the official declaration of loyalty to Rome. The Greeks used this incident to further their cause against Flaccus.⁶³² Tensions reached a breaking point when Jewish customs were mocked, synagogues were attacked, and the Greeks persuaded Flaccus to declare the Jews 'aliens and foreigners' in the city, leading to their expulsion. In early October 38, Roman soldiers arrived to

^{629.} Exactly how strong these sentiments were, is shown in a fictional work known as *III Maccabees*. In this work, Ptolemy IV, recognisable as Augustus, offers Greek citizenship to those Jews willing to partake in non-Jewish rites (*III Mac* 2:30). Refusal to do so meant paying the *laographia*, the tax every man between 14 and 60 was subjected to (Smallwood, 1981, p. 232; Brenton, 1851). The *boulé*-papyrus contains an appeal by the Alexandrian Greeks to an unknown emperor requesting the restoration of the *boulé*, the city council, abolished by the Ptolemies. The argument is that those liable for the *laographia* could then not escape this tax by way of the *ephebate*, the civic and military training for juveniles (CPJ 150). There was, however, no city council in Alexandria until the days of Septimius Severus (r. 193-211). Since Augustus had abolished the position of *ethnarch* as head of the administrative and judicial system, authority over the Jewish community rested with the seventy-one members of the council of elders known as the *gerousia* (Philo *Fl.* 74; Jos. *Al.* 14. 117).

^{630.} Philo *Fl.* 20. *Acts of the Alexandrian martyrs*: Pap. London 2785, Pap. Cairo 10448. *Acts of the Alexandrian martyrs*: Pap. Oxy. 1089 (= CPJ 154), Pap. London 2785, Pap. Cairo 10448. Dionysius: *Acts of the Alexandrian martyrs*: Pap. Oxy. 1089 (= CPJ 154), Pap. London 1912 (= CPJ 153 = Claudius' Letter to Alexandria).

^{631.} Philo, *Fl.* 20; 125-135.

^{632.} Philo *Fl.* 29-31: Smallwood, 1981, p. 238. Philo explained the reason for this change much later in his story (Philo *Fl.* 97-103).

arrest Flaccus. The governor was banished to the island of Andros, where he met a gruesome fate.⁶³³

With Flaccus gone and a new governor, Pollio, in place, both Jewish and Greek factions remained dissatisfied with the status quo. Delegations from both sides were granted permission to present their cases to Caligula in Rome. The Jewish delegation, led by Philo, sought religious freedom and civic rights in Alexandria, while the Greek delegation, led by Apion and Isidorus, had its own objectives.⁶³⁴ This complex situation in Alexandria underscored the tensions between different factions and the challenges of coexistence during this period.⁶³⁵

Philo's delegation had been waiting for an audience to plead their case with Caligula for over a year.⁶³⁶ When they finally met the emperor, it was after a long and frustrating period of waiting.⁶³⁷ The meeting was brief and without any result. The second meeting between Caligula and the Jewish delegation, as described by Philo, provides insights into the emperor's attitude towards the Jews and their religious practices.⁶³⁸ During this meeting, Caligula was more willing to listen to the arguments of the delegation, although his demeanour was somewhat jesting and detached. The Jews greeted Caligula, bending "to the ground with all imaginable respect and adoration and saluted him, calling him the emperor Augustus."⁶³⁹ This was unusual, not to say impossible, for religious Jews, as they were not supposed to bow to people.⁶⁴⁰ Philo's description may emphasise the delegation's willingness to engage with the emperor respectfully but it sounds like poetic license.⁶⁴¹

⁶³³. Philo *Fl.* 146-191.

⁶³⁴. Jewish objectives: Philo *Leg.* 191; 193; Greek objectives: Philo *Fl.* 20; 135-145; *Leg.* 355.

⁶³⁵. The composition of both delegations is unclear. Josephus says that both delegations consisted of three men with Apion as the leader of the Greek one (*AI* 18, 257-260). Philo mentioned five members, including himself (*Leg.* 370). Neither mentioned Lampo. Smallwood suggested that Lampo was a delegate since he was not in the delegation sent to Claudius early 41, implying that he was still in Rome, with Apion and Isidorus (Smallwood, 1981, p. 242 n87). Smallwood also suggested that Philo's brother, Alexander may have been in the delegation since he was imprisoned on Caligula's orders, possibly in Rome. Claudius released him (*Jos. AI.* 19, 276; Smallwood, 1981, pp. 242-3).

⁶³⁶. This part is adapted from Van Nispen, 2021.

⁶³⁷. Philo *Leg.* 181-3.

⁶³⁸. Philo *Leg.* 349-368.

⁶³⁹. Philo *Leg.* 352.

⁶⁴⁰. In the book of *Esther*, Mordecai refused to do proskynesis because he was Jewish: "And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. (...) for he had told them that he was a Jew" (*Esther* 3: 2-6). The soldiers mocked Jesus' kingship when they did proskynesis before him. (*Marc* 15, 16 -20).

⁶⁴¹. Philo *Leg.* 352.

Caligula jokingly reproached the Jews for not honouring him as a God and questioned their religious privileges. He claimed that he was acknowledged as a God by every other nation except the Jews, which, in parenthesis, is an example of how outsider perception worked. "Are you the god-haters who do not believe me to be a God, a god acknowledged among all the other nations but not to be named by you?"⁶⁴² Caligula stretched his hands toward the heavens and uttered the name of the Jewish God, יהוה, ja'we.⁶⁴³ The Jewish delegation considered this as blasphemy, but it delighted the Greek delegates.⁶⁴⁴

Caligula seemed to understand the essence of pre-rabbinic Judaism, particularly the importance of sacrifice. He carefully distinguished between the giving of sacrifices *for* instead of *to* the emperor: "(Y)ou sacrificed to another God and not *for* (εμοί) my sake; and then what good did you do me? Moreover, you did not sacrifice *to me* (υπέρ εμού)".⁶⁴⁵ This suggests a deeper knowledge of Jewish religious practices than Caligula is usually credited with.⁶⁴⁶ Although Philo later called the audience a farce, he had to admit that Caligula interrogated them about their religious practices and customs with interest. He asked about their dietary restrictions, particularly why they abstained from eating pork. The delegation's answers led to further jokes from Caligula, who then turned to the problem of Jewish political rights in Alexandria.⁶⁴⁷ Caligula listened to the delegation's arguments about their political rights and recognised that their pleas were not "contemptible." While he had doubts about their religious privileges, he decided not to revoke them.⁶⁴⁸ After hearing the delegation's arguments, the emperor dismissed them and continued his walk. Although the delegation may have considered the meeting a farce, it was clear that Caligula had engaged with their concerns and had made decisions regarding their requests.⁶⁴⁹

Overall, this meeting between Caligula and the Jewish delegation reveals a complex interaction between the emperor and a minority group with distinct religious practices. Caligula's jesting attitude and his understanding of Jewish customs and political issues indicate a level of engagement with the delegation's concerns. However, the ultimate outcome turned out to be most shocking for the Jews. While

^{642.} Philo *Leg.* 353.

^{643.} The command not to use the name of 'the Lord thy God' in vain is found in *Exodus* 20:7.

^{644.} Philo *Leg.* 353.

^{645.} Philo *Leg.* 357.

^{646.} Philo *Leg.* 357.

^{647.} Philo *Leg.* 360.

^{648.} Philo *Leg.* 364; 370.

^{649.} Philo *Leg.* 370.

the Jewish delegation was in Rome, they received the news that Caligula intended to place a statue of himself in the holy of holies of the Jerusalem Temple. This was a direct threat to Jewish religious liberty and their exclusive covenant with God. Mary Smallwood called it "a fundamental and universal threat to Jewish religious liberty which not only greatly diminished their hopes of getting favourable answers to their requests but made their local grievances pale into insignificance."⁶⁵⁰ The sanctity of the covenant kept in the innermost part of the Jerusalem temple was Judaism's exclusive and distinguishing mark as expressed in sacrifice.⁶⁵¹ The only place where sacrifices could *officially* be made was the temple in Jerusalem, the symbol of Jewish unity. This unity found expression in the exclusive covenant God made with Abraham after the intended sacrifice of Abraham's son Isaac.⁶⁵² This ideological context makes the shock that Philo and his delegation felt understandable. On the Roman side, there was hardly any problem. Raising statues in temples was as common as were adverse reactions to it. Besides, anti-Jewish sentiment was less a Roman attitude than a Greek one. Despite Tacitus' remark about the Jews revolting after Caligula's order to place his statue in the Jerusalem temple, disturbances are only reported for Syria.⁶⁵³

Although Governor Petronius had received orders to take care of the placement of the statue, he decided on a tactic of respite and dissuasion. Referring to Caligula's intended visit to the area Petronius suggested postponement of the imperial visit. His excuse: the necessity of reaping the harvest in time. Caligula did not buy the excuse, thought Petronius bribed and insisted on the continuation of his project.⁶⁵⁴ Although the emperor changed his mind, he sent a second letter ordering Petronius to kill himself for non-compliance. That order reached the governor when he already knew that the emperor was no more.⁶⁵⁵ Why did Caligula change his mind about the temple project?

According to both Philo and Josephus, it was Caligula's childhood friend, Agrippa, who played a crucial role in persuading the emperor to change his mind. In

^{650.} Smallwood, 1981, p. 244. Philo and Josephus contradict each other both in chronology and detail. Philo, an eyewitness, is considered more reliable than the later Josephus. Cf. also Philo *Leg.* 184-196.

^{651.} The documents from Qumran clearly show a preoccupation with sacrifice (Martínez & Barrera, 1993, pp. 69-70, Martínez, 1994, pp. 154-184).

^{652.} *Genesis* 15:18.

^{653.} Tac. *His.* V.9. The wording of Tac. *His.* V.9 suggests reference to the Jews in the diaspora.

^{654.} Philo *Leg.* 243-260. For Caligula's belief that Petronius had been bribed, see Willrich, 1903, p. 417; Balsdon, 1934, p. 138. On the possible collaboration of Petronius and Agrippa, see Bilde, 1978, pp. 67-93.

^{655.} Jos. *Al.* 18.203, *BJ.* 2.203.

Josephus' version, Agrippa hosted a lavish banquet for Caligula and requested the abandonment of the plan to set up the statue in the Jerusalem temple. Caligula, considering it "a dishonourable thing to be guilty of falsehood before so many witnesses", granted the request and wrote to Petronius accordingly.⁶⁵⁶

Philo's account is quite different. When Agrippa reached Rome, he was unaware of Caligula's intentions. On hearing the news, he fell ill. After his recovery, he wrote his old friend a lengthy and inflated letter in which he bequeathed him to continue the wise and tolerant policies of his predecessors towards the Jews.⁶⁵⁷ The emperor reacted sensibly to Agrippa's letter, according to Philo, and took no offence. He wrote to Petronius informing the governor that the scheme for the cult shrine in Jerusalem was abandoned but explicitly added that no further disturbances would be tolerated.⁶⁵⁸ This instruction and Petronius' letter crossed each other. Consequently, when Caligula learned the contents of Petronius' letter and understood that the Jews intended to continue their threat of revolt, he took no exception to his governor's disobedience and sent him orders to commit suicide. The ship carrying this order got delayed by bad weather, and by the time it reached Petronius, the governor already knew of the death of his master.⁶⁵⁹ Philo attributed the outcome to divine intervention. God had influenced the emperor's mind.

Pillar 2. The medium: Philo's personal account in book form

Philo's book "*Legatio ad Gaium*" is a personal account in book form. The author employed various rhetorical techniques to achieve his purpose of convincing his Roman readers, especially the new ruler Claudius, of the legitimacy of Jewish rights by portraying Caligula as a theomaniac. Some of these techniques, like the use of verbatim quotations and double mirroring, were applied in a scheme consisting of two leitmotifs.

Verbatim quotations: Philo provides detailed accounts with suggested accurate verbatim quotations. Philo creeps into Caligula's head to express the emperor's thoughts, feelings, and motives. For example, when discussing the demise of Tiberius Gemellus, Philo has Caligula explain his "devious" scheme in extenso.⁶⁶⁰ The author notes how Caligula "remembered law and sanctity" but made a "travesty of their true nature."⁶⁶¹ Philo also claims to know things he in no way could have

^{656.} Jos. Al. 18. 289-304.

^{657.} Philo Leg. 261-329. The authenticity of the letter is disputed (Zeitlin, 1965, p. 66).

^{658.} Philo Leg. 334.

^{659.} Jos. Al. 18.305, Bl. 2.203.

^{660.} Philo Leg. 26-28.

^{661.} Philo Leg. 30.

known. Thus, he writes that Gemellus had “never seen anyone else killed.”⁶⁶² The best example of this technique is the long letter Agrippa supposedly wrote to Caligula in an attempt to avert the danger of desecrating the temple. The long letter is an anomaly, as Niehoff observed, in Philo’s use of such ‘documentation’.⁶⁶³ Philo usually only referred to the content of Roman letters, but now one reads a long verbatim quotation of a document that has a central place in his story.⁶⁶⁴

Double mirroring: Philo uses his protagonist, Agrippa, as a mirror image of himself. Through Agrippa’s experiences, Philo conveyed his own sentiments and feelings. Agrippa’s reactions to Caligula’s plans, his letter praising Tiberius, his explanation of traditional Jewish monotheism, and his contemplation of suicide all mirrored Philo’s own sentiments.⁶⁶⁵ The sudden appearance of the king, who is unaware of the present danger, his collapse upon hearing the news about the statue, the content of the letter with its praise for Tiberius and the explanation of traditional Jewish monotheism and, finally, his considering suicide if Caligula’s plans are not aborted; these are all imitations of Philo’s reaction and behaviour. Furthermore, the Jewish Agrippa, king thanks to his old friend, functions as the very antipode of Caligula. Philo, in the shape of Agrippa, explicitly demonstrates the antithesis of the faithful devotee who takes a stand against a blasphemous fiend.

Two leitmotivs: The first leitmotiv involved the depiction of the Jewish Agrippa/ Philo as the antithesis of the Roman Caligula, embodying the universal theme of good (Jewish monotheistic orthodoxy) versus evil (Roman pagan polytheism) in a contemporary context. Notably, and contrary to Seneca, Philo refrained from referencing Caligula’s mental state.⁶⁶⁶ While accusations of insanity are common in character assassination, Philo chose not to use this tactic, as it would shift blame away from Caligula and not align with his scheme of portraying a fundamental contradiction between good and evil. Accusations of insanity can be part of character assassination, but the invective is much more effective if the blackguard can be entirely held responsible for his heinous deeds. If Philo had referred to Caligula as mad, he would have exonerated the emperor’s responsibility for his behaviour and deeds.

The second leitmotiv relates to Caligula’s motives. “He desires to be considered a god, and he conceives that the Jews alone are likely to be disobedient; and that

⁶⁶². Philo *Leg.* 30.

⁶⁶³. Niehoff, 2018, p. 43.

⁶⁶⁴. Philo *Leg.* 261-330.

⁶⁶⁵. Philo *Leg. Passim.*

⁶⁶⁶. Sen. *De Ira III*, 18-19.

therefore he cannot possibly inflict a greater evil or injury upon them than by defacing and insulting the holy dignity of their temple."⁶⁶⁷ The Jewish disobedience was apparently 'proved' in a letter from Capito, the collector of the revenues, and Philo recounts this as the spark that ignited the flame of Caligula's unholy decision. Capito had arrived in Judea as a poor man and quickly managed to collect a substantial fortune. He looked for an opportunity to prevent inevitable complaints about his behaviour to safeguard his back. When the minority of non-Jewish inhabitants of the town of Jamnia in the south of Judea erected a simple altar for the ruler cult, the Jews were enraged and demolished the altar. Capito immediately reported the disturbance to Caligula.⁶⁶⁸ Despite Philo's prejudiced representation of the affair, one cannot but see in this incident an example of the tense relationship between Jews and non-Jews in this part of the Roman realm. Both parties had reached an intolerance that needed little to cause great suffering.⁶⁶⁹

Pillar 3. The audience: the Roman elite

Philo's intended audience was the Roman elite, with a special focus on Emperor Claudius and the governor of Egypt, Vitrasius Pollio. His primary goal was to showcase Jewish loyalty to imperial authority, especially in the face of the earlier challenges by Caligula and the Alexandrian Greeks. Philo stressed the critical notion that god would not desert his people in his preamble. He finds confirmation of this claim in the concluding observation that Caligula met his end through divine intervention. These points must be proven, which is why Philo developed the leitmotiv of Caligula's claim to be a living god. Philo's intended audience should not be mistaken about the intentions of the Jews. the Romans must understand that no people are more loyal than the Jews.

^{667.} Philo *Leg.* 198.

^{668.} Philo presented the Jamnia episode as the one that made Caligula decide on a frontal attack on the Jews. However, it was at Jamnia that rabbinical Judaism could survive thanks to its cooperation with Roman power.

^{669.} Several decades later, things had changed. After the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai requested permission from the Roman authorities to establish a rabbinic school in Jamnia. This was granted, and with that, Johanan, thanks to the Romans, saved rabbinic Judaism for posterity. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into details, but it appears that Johanan was a puppet in a shrewd political play by Vespasian to get definitively rid of the established Jewish opposition and to replace the centre of Jewish power with one that could be more easily controlled from Rome. The system of a hereditary priesthood was replaced in favour of a rabbinical one, and Jamnia became the alternative Jerusalem, out of which grew the codification of the (unwritten) Jewish religious laws in what became known as the Mishnah. The choice of Jamnia was also relevant. Vespasian retook the city in 67 CE, after which it became a centre for those Jews loyal to Roman authority.

Pillar 4. The attacker: the Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria could only safely attack the emperor Caligula after the emperor's death. His main objective was to influence the new ruler, Claudius, to address the unresolved issues related to Jewish rights and privileges in Alexandria. In his writings, Caligula is portrayed as a murderer, a ruthless scoundrel, and a hater of the Jews. Philo's intention was to paint Caligula in the worst possible light, contrasting him with Claudius, who he hoped would be seen as a benevolent ruler. In essence, Philo's message to Claudius was clear: if he wanted to be remembered as a benevolent ruler, he should act in stark contrast to the tyrannical image of Caligula.

Pillar 5. The target: the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula

Philo's primary target in his accusations was the Roman emperor Caligula. He accused Caligula of harbouring a strong hatred for the Jews and of proclaiming himself to be a living god. To support these claims, Philo often "quoted" Caligula's blasphemous speeches and remarks.

The rights and privileges granted to the Jews by Augustus had been threatened during Caligula's reign. It fell to Claudius to address these issues. To ease tensions, Claudius, perhaps under the influence of Agrippa, issued his tolerance edict.⁶⁷⁰ This edict can be reasonably accurately dated to sometime after 42 CE. The edict has an introduction written by the then-governor of Egypt, Aemilius Rectus, who held that position from 41 to 42 CE.⁶⁷¹ The reference in this edict to the religious rights granted by Augustus resembled the argument Philo gave in the letter of Agrippa to Caligula. This is the reason why Agrippa's hand can be seen in the settlement. That Agrippa had such influence with the new emperor is no surprise. They went back a long way, and Agrippa played a significant part in Claudius' coming to power.

Another echo of Philo in Claudius' edict has to do with the Jewish refusal to honour Caligula as a god. Claudius maintained the Augustan policy of religious liberty for the Jews, saying "that the nation of the Jews be not deprived of their rights and privileges, on account of the madness of Caius; but that those rights and privileges, which they formerly enjoyed, be preserved to them, and that they may continue in their own customs. And I charge both parties to take very great care that no troubles may arise after the promulgation of this edict."⁶⁷² The matter of Jewish religious liberty was thus resolved; the question of civic rights remained open.

^{670.} Jos. *Al.* 19. 285.

^{671.} Bell, 1924.

^{672.} Jos. *Al.* 19. 285.

Despite Claudius' efforts, disorder and violence persisted in Alexandria. New delegations were sent to Claudius, and he attempted to definitively resolve the matter with his "Letter to the Alexandrians".⁶⁷³ While this letter did not reduce Jewish civic rights, it emphasised that Jews should refrain from seeking Greek citizenship or enlisting themselves in the *ephebate*, a training institution for young Greeks. This temporarily eased tensions, but the underlying problem persisted even after Caligula's death. The situation had similarities to events two hundred years earlier when the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes had ordered the worship of himself (in the shape of Zeus) at Jerusalem in an attempt to Hellenise the Jews forcefully.⁶⁷⁴ Following a policy of severe suppression of Judaism, Antiochus Epiphanes had an altar to Zeus Olympus erected on the altar of burnt offering in the Jerusalem temple in 167 BCE. The action led to the revolt of the Maccabees (166-160 BCE). Caligula had no intention to Hellenise the Jews. Every foreign occupier could, in principle, jeopardise the Jewish faith and its most holy sanctuary. It is perhaps the primary challenge in Judaism in which the notion of god's chosen people and adhering to his laws consistently came in conflict with the powers of the day. Judaism had to define itself "through opposition to imperial milestones" while its sociocultural context was since long outwardly structured by a non-Jewish kingly outlook.⁶⁷⁵ From a Roman point of view, erecting such a statue was hardly exceptional. Although the ultimate profanation in Jewish eyes, the Romans saw it as business as usual. Suetonius and Dio hardly considered the episode worth mentioning. Tacitus, too, was exceptionally short: "But when the Jews were ordered by Gaius to set up his statue in the temple, they preferred the alternative of war. The death of the emperor put an end to the disturbance."⁶⁷⁶

Caligula's reign did not mark "a turning point in Romano-Jewish relations," as Barrett claimed because there had been disturbances before Caligula.⁶⁷⁷ While Caligula's

^{673.} Bell, 1924 with Smallwood, 1981, pp. 224-235; 247-50.

^{674.} Antiochus IV (ca. 215-163 BC), king of Syria, is known as *Epiphanes* or 'God Revealed'; sometimes nicknamed Epimanes, 'the Mad'. He was held hostage in Rome from 183 BCE until his ascension to the throne in 175. He undertook several military campaigns to consolidate his power and secure the Seleucid territory. In 168 BCE, the Roman Senate ordered him to withdraw from Cyprus and Egypt, but he was allowed to keep his territory in southern Syria. While withdrawing from Egypt, he took Jerusalem and started his campaign to Hellenise the Jews. The temple was plundered (I *Maccabees* 1: 21-24), and the Jews were compelled into Greek culture and religion. The Jewish nationalists reacted in what became known as the revolt of the Maccabees, led by Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers. The rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE is still celebrated in the feast of Hanukkah or Chanukah.

^{675.} Gauchet, 1997, p. 123.

^{676.} Tac. *His.* V.9.

^{677.} Barrett, 1989, p. 191.

actions were different, they still forced Judaism to define itself in opposition to imperial demands, even though the sociocultural context had long been influenced by a non-Jewish outlook. The awkward position of the Jews under foreign occupation was nothing new. It was only a matter of time before the Romans decided to put a full stop to the Jewish insurrection.

Caligula's death did not resolve the issues that had brought Philo's embassy to Rome. In an attempt to incite the new ruler to decide these matters in a way favourable to the Jews, Claudius' predecessor is depicted by Philo as a murderer, an unmitigated scoundrel, a scourge to the realm whose callous and harsh actions turned everyone's life into a joyless, miserable existence. In short, if Claudius wanted to be remembered as a benevolent ruler, he must conduct himself as the exact opposite of the black theomaniac.

Philo's invective was only partly successful. When Flavius Josephus wrote his first great work, *The Jewish War* (ca. 75 CE), he showed little to no interest in the person or reign of Caligula. About twenty years later, this had changed. In his *Ancient History of the Jews* (ca. 94 CE), Josephus devoted a whole book to Caligula's misdemeanours, evil character and the events leading to the assassination of the emperor. This strongly suggests that a corpus of negative literature must have grown during the second half of the first century. Josephus could use this body of texts, which is lost to us. The same goes for the tradition that is favourable to Caligula. Only one fragment is known, a brief concluding remark in Plutarch's *Life of Antony* where it is said, "and of the children of Germanicus, Caius, after a reign of distinction, was killed with his wife and child."⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁸. Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 1152-3 = 87.4.

Nicknamed after the soldier's boot, Caesar Succeeded – more cruel than that master of cruelty, with murders and incest thenceforth stained, and one who went farther than his grandfather besmirched with every vice.

– Ausonius

11

CALIGULA'S DEMISE AND ITS AFTERMATH

This last chapter deals with the emperor's demise and aftermath. Caligula's short reign and his premature end appears to have been a direct result from his adhocratic leadership. It had antagonised too many people, especially those from the upper classes. The development of the Augustan proto-adhocratic system to a full-fledged adhocracy jeopardised senatorial authority and traditional privileges. The military, too, must have been disappointed by the leadership of Germanicus' son. The events in the North with the emperor's fake victory and the humiliation they must have felt, were still fresh in the memory. In short, the two pillars of imperial power decided to get rid of an emperor who had become almost universally hated. Caligula's attempt at adhocratic leadership proved to be unsuccessful in the eyes of Rome's two centres of power.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁹. Ausonius, de XII Caesaribus, 4. 17-20.LCL 96 (trans. Hugh Evelyn White).

The later author Josephus wrote the most detailed account of Caligula's end. According to Josephus, Caligula's death was marked by various omens and predictions. The omens and predictions of Caligula's fate began as early as the Ides of March in 39 CE.⁶⁸⁰ These included incidents such as the collapse of the scaffolding holding the statue of the Olympian Zeus. Lightning struck on a ship sent by Caligula to collect the statue. Lightning also struck the Capitol of Capua and the lodge of the *atriensis*, the palace steward. Lightning was a powerful portent presaging change. This time, lightning struck on the day of Julius Caesar's death and in a place with a temple closely resembling the one of Jupiter in Rome. Little could the meaning of the second lightning bold be doubted: danger came from Caligula's guard. Someone called Cassius appeared at Olympia. He had been ordered in his dream to sacrifice a bull to Jupiter.⁶⁸¹ Thereupon, Caligula ordered the execution of C. Cassius Longinus, the governor of Asia. This Cassius never stopped boasting about the deeds of his like-named ancestor concerning the assassination of Julius Caesar.⁶⁸² Cassius survived due to Caligula being killed before his execution. Like Julius Caesar, Caligula had a predictive dream the night before his last day.⁶⁸³ He stood beside Jupiter's heavenly throne, but instead of flying above the clouds hand in hand with the god as Julius Caesar dreamed, Caligula was kicked out of heaven by the twinkling of the god's big toe. Tumbling down to earth, thrown from the heavens by the mere movement of a toe, "he learned that he was not a god." Predictive dreams are outstanding topical instruments to debauch unpleasant rulers.⁶⁸⁴

On the morning of what would be Caligula's last day on earth, blood splashed on the emperor while sacrificing a flamingo.⁶⁸⁵ While Egyptians and Ethiopians rehearsed a nocturnal play staged in the underworld, the leading character, Laureolus, died while vomiting blood.⁶⁸⁶ The story of Laureolus compared Caligula with a runaway enslaved man and bandit king. At the same time, mentioning the

^{680.} The analogy with Julius Caesar stands out: public assassination, multiple assassins, multiple wounds from stabbing, the involvement of a Cassius, the substitute sacrifice (*Cal.* 57.4). Collapse of scaffolding: Suet. *Cal.* 57.1; lightening: Dio 59.28.4; Jos. *Al.* 19.

^{681.} Dio's allusion to Cassius Chaerea, one of the assassins, is evident just as the reference to the murder in terms of a ritual sacrifice. The same notion is seen in the observation that some even put their teeth into Caligula's dead body (Dio, 59. 29. 7; also, *Cal.* 57.4; 58.2).

^{682.} Cf. Suetonius (*Ner.* 37.1) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 16.7-9) who mentioned the emperor Nero's anger with Cassius keeping a portrait of his notorious forbear among his *imagines*. Nero had him exiled.

^{683.} Suet. *Jul.* 81.3. Dio 44.17.1.

^{684.} Dio 59.30.1. Claudius was similarly thrown out of heaven in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. The topos is repeated for Nero (Suet. *Ner.* 46.1) and Domitian (Suet. *Dom.* 15.3).

^{685.} Germanicus once got blood on his robes while sacrificing and immediately received a clean one (Tac. *Ann.* 2.14.1).

^{686.} Suet. *Cal.* 57. 4.

anxious understudies, the secondary parties in a play, referred to those usually playing a secondary role but on occasion could display excellent proficiency, as, for example, Cassius Chaerea. The nocturnal performance, a *pervigilium*, is a reference to the mysteries of Isis.⁶⁸⁷ The *pervigilium* was a rather bawdy nocturnal religious festival.⁶⁸⁸ Suetonius suggests that Caligula intended to use the loose character of the festival to make his theatrical debut. The actor Mnester danced the tragedy of Cinyras, a play about the assassination of King Philip of Macedonia. The tragedy of Cinyras involved a man living incestuously with his daughter Myrrha. Out of their union, Adonis was born. The play ended in a bloody mess. However, when the Macedonian King Philip II entered the theatre to watch the play, he was murdered by his bodyguard.⁶⁸⁹ Caligula consulted astrologers, including Sulla, who drew his horoscope predicting instantaneous death.⁶⁹⁰ Dio paralleled the story with that of the well-known seer, Apollonius of Egypt, better known as Apollonius of Tyana, who predicted the death of Caligula and was summarily sent to Rome. The magus arrived on the very day Caligula died.⁶⁹¹

To date, only one detailed account of the conspiracy that killed Caligula is left.⁶⁹² That source, Josephus, is hostile. However, is it hostile to Caligula or someone or something thing else? Can Josephus' account of Caligula's death be read as an allegory for what the author perceived as a greater evil?

The known details of Caligula's death on 22 January 41 CE (or 24 January) are easily summarised.⁶⁹³ Caligula left the theatre at the seventh hour (13.00 hrs.) to have a bath and a bite to eat. He took a shortcut to the baths, left his retinue behind, and found himself in a narrow passageway where there were no guards. While watching

⁶⁸⁷. Ethiopians and Egyptians were guardians of the Isiac tradition. These men might be the same as the boys from Asia that Josephus mentioned (Jos. *Al.* 19. 104). Other references to *pervigilia* in Suet. *Vit.* 10.3; *Gal.* 4.3. Other nightly festivities in Suet. *Cal.* 18.2.

⁶⁸⁸. Cf., Suet. *Vit.* 10.3, *Gal.* 4.3. theatrical debut: Suet. *Cal.* 54.2; tragedy of Cinyras: Suet. *Cal.* 57. 4.

⁶⁸⁹. On Philip of Macedon, see Diodorus Siculus. For Neoptolemus: Diod. 16.92.3; Murder of Philip: Diod. 16.91-94. The story of Cinyras and his daughter Myrrha: Ovid. *Met.* 10. 298-502. A certain Catullus (not necessarily the Republican poet) wrote the Laureolus mime (Jos. *Al.* 19.94). Suet. *Cal.* 57.2.

⁶⁹⁰. Dio 59.29.4; 67.18.1; Suet. *Dom.* 16.1; Philostratus VA 8. 26.

⁶⁹². Jos. *Al.* 19. 1-273 with Wiseman, 2013. Hostility: Jos. *Al.* 19. 1-273; also, Suet. *Cal.* 56-60. Dio 59.29.1-30.3.

⁶⁹³. There is no epigraphical data to corroborate the date of the murder. Suetonius (*Cal.* 58.1) claims 24 January 41 while Dio and Josephus make it 22 January 41. Wiseman (2013, p. 57), Barrett (1989, pp. 169-170), and Hurley (1993, p. 207, n.120) accept 22 January. The reason for the different dates is Dio and Josephus calculating from different dates for Caligula's accession.

a group of Asian boys practising their dances, Caligula was stabbed to death.⁶⁹⁴ Shortly after, his wife and baby child were killed as well, after which the Praetorians hailed Claudius as the new emperor of Rome.⁶⁹⁵ Caligula's old friend Herod Agrippa took care of the body. It was dressed, placed on a bier, and taken to the Lamian gardens just outside the pomerium on the Esquiline hill where it was hastily burned and disposed.⁶⁹⁶ Later, Agrippina the Younger and Livilla arranged for a proper burial in the Lamian Gardens or the Mausoleum of Augustus, raising questions about the treatment of Caligula's remains.⁶⁹⁷

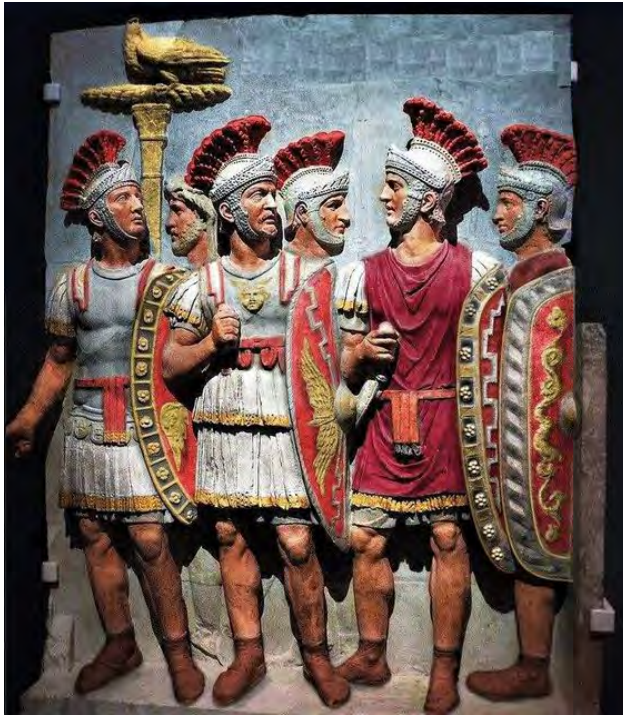


Fig. 64. Coloured relief depicting the Praetorian Guard (originally part of the Arch of Claudius), ca. 51-52 CE. Original non-coloured in Louvre Museum, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, Ma 1079-LL 398. Pinterest photo: courtesy of Jesús León.

^{694.} Jos. *AI* 19. 1-273 with Wiseman, 2013; Suet. *Cal.* 56-60; Dio 59.29.1-30.3. There may have been two groups, one doing the Pyrrhic dances (war dances imitating combat that served as training exercises (Strab. 10.3.8; 4.16) and another singing the hymns during the nocturnal mystery rites (Jos. *AI* 19.104; Dio 59.29.6).

^{695.} Jos. *AI* 19.1-273.

^{696.} Murder victims and persons not correctly buried might become ghosts (Plin., *Ep.* 7.27 9). Caligula's ghostly apparitions kept scaring the gardeners until the corpse was decently buried. Nevertheless, Caligula's palace continued to be haunted until it burned down in the great fire of 80 CE (Suet. *Tit.* 8.3).

^{697.} Jos. *AI* 19.1-273.

However, Josephus' account, as do other sources from ancient times, confuses us.⁶⁹⁸ As with so many stories about Caligula, answers cannot be given. Why was Caligula's body carefully handled only to be disposed disgracefully? Why were Caligula's mortal remains cremated hastily and thrown into a shallow grave? How could the sisters Agrippina the Younger and Julia Livilla be recalled from exile quickly enough to take care of their brother's remains? Why were they allowed to re-bury him? Why would the sisters, who were earlier reported to have plotted to kill their brother and were summarily banished, undo the disgrace that befell their brother? Despite all the questions Josephus' accounts raise, one aspect in his account of Caligula's death stands out: the role of what could very well have been the book's actual protagonist, the military (Figure 64).

The role of the military: "That we obey is our own choice"

Josephus seems to treat Caligula as a secondary figure. His main character is the Praetorian commander, Cassius Chaerea.⁶⁹⁹ Chaerea deemed the military responsible for the pain inflicted upon the Romans by Caligula. In several 'literal' conversations, Chaerea makes the military, including himself, responsible for the pain inflicted upon the Roman people by Caligula. "That we obey", Chaerea exclaimed, "is our own choice."⁷⁰⁰ We gave him power and kept him in power. Thus, we have the power to stop him. They did.

Dio suggested something similar. He mentioned the Praetorian tribunes Cassius Chaerea and Cornelius Sabinus as instigators of the plot to kill Caligula.⁷⁰¹ While the senators debated the chances of returning to the Republic, the soldiers killed Caligula. Just as Macro had been instrumental in Caligula's ascent, the military again decided

^{698.} Suet. *Cal.* 59.

^{699.} Wiseman, 2013, p. xvi.

^{700.} Jos. *Al.* 19. 4.

^{701.} Dio 59.29.1. The involvement of the tribunes raises the question of the position of their superiors, the prefects Arrecinus Clemens and Arruntius Stella. An 'Arruntius' pacified Caligula's German bodyguard, who went on a killing spray after the murder of the emperor. Josephus mentioned a Euarestus Arrentius who calmed the German guard, but he was an auctioneer (Jos. *Al.* 19.145). Dio has the former consul Valerius Asiaticus calming the praetorians, who appeared to have been at a loss about the goings on. If true, the 'discovery' of Claudius hiding behind the curtains becomes more than accidental.

who was to be the new emperor: Claudius (Figure 65 and 66).⁷⁰² How Claudius dealt with the awkward situation of his accession is dealt with in Appendix A.



Fig. 65. Aureus. Rome. Claudius 41 – 42. **Obv.** Claudius, laureated, looking right. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG P M TR P; **rev.** IMPER RECEPT: Battlemented wall enclosing praetorian camp; inside, soldier, holding spear, right; in front, aquila; behind, pediment with flanking walls. RIC 1²7. © Bibliothèque nationale de France. IMP-6037.

Various omens, predictions, and conspiracies surrounded the death of Caligula. Whereas Josephus provided a detailed account, much remains shrouded in mystery. Especially the role of Caligula's sisters and his uncle Claudius raises questions. Josephus emphasised the role of the Praetorian commander, Cassius Chaerea, who believed that the military held the power, perhaps the duty, to stop the emperor's actions. Anyhow, the military's actions had a profound impact on Roman politics as they chose Claudius as the new leader. It created a precedent that would soon be followed. The role of the military was not only decisive in ending Caligula's rule but also led to a subsequent shift in Roman leadership dynamics which I express in the adage 'From SPQR to MPQR', from **Senatus PopulusQue Romanus** to **Miles PopulusQue Romanus**. The expression denotes the replacement of the Senate as a mark of Roman government by the military.

^{702.} Jos. *AI*. 19.4. Claudius' involvement in conspiracies to remove his nephew is a matter of debate. See Osgood, 2011 and Levick, 1990.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis analysed Caligula's leadership as adhocratic, intending to shed new light on the complexities of Caligula's reign and the broader dynamics of Roman politics of the Early Principate. Caligula's imperial position was qualified in the expression voiced by Lepidus in the BBC series *The Caesars*: "So, you can get anyone either way at any time". Two essential factual contextual conditions for Caligula's reign were discerned: the Augustan mixed constitution with its proto-adhocratic elements and Caligula's unique pedigree. The Augustan mixed constitution marked a delicate balance between traditional Roman ideals and the emerging imperial rule. Although the essence of the Augustan mixed constitution was government by consensus between the leader and the Senate, the feasibility of the system depended on the authority of Augustus as supreme leader. Supreme strongman leadership not only forced the Roman elite to find ways to deal with this political novelty but the emperor as well. The Heksterian model of expected imperial roles formed the template for the analysis of Roman imperial leadership. Although Caligula combined the imperial roles, he is not generally considered an exemplary emperor. The contextual conditions under which Caligula saw himself forced to operate, particularly the challenges from the senators, made him cross the traditional boundaries of expectations. Nevertheless, Caligula was exemplary in another respect. His leadership became exemplary for those later emperors who, for whatever reason, also felt the need or were forced to overstep the expected roles.

The inherent difficulty of the mixed constitution came about under Augustus' successor, Tiberius. His long absence from the centre of power deepened the crisis of competition between the emperor and the Senate. When Caligula came to power under acclamation of the people, the senators seem to have attempted to subvert the notion of consensus by handing Caligula all powers en bloc. This study characterised this as an example of adhocratic leadership from the senatorial side. By playing on the inexperience of the new emperor, the senators created a contextual condition set to the failure of the new regime. Such a fiasco could then lead to a boost of senatorial power, and possibly even a return to aspects of the former republican system. Attempts at Caligula's life to hasten this process backfired when the emperor denounced the Senate. Thereupon Caligula created the new reality of his imperial power focused on the creation of uncertainty. The

foremost example of the emperor's new reality was his claiming a victory that was none when, in the midst of the preparations for a real invasion of Britain, Caligula returned home to claim a triumph.

Caligula initially structured his leadership by emphasising his descent. A central feature thereof was the demonstration of his nuclear family as (semi-) divine, with the deification of the emperor's sister, Drusilla, as the apex. Whereas the conception of a *domus Divina* originated in Julius Caesar's claim of divine descent, Caligula took it a step further by claiming divinity as a living emperor. Dissemination of the concept of the divine living emperor required unconventional demonstrations of visual power through appearance, dress and, particularly, extravagant demonstrations such as the crossing of the bay of Baiae by a bridge of boats.

Although Caligula's reign was marked by peace throughout the realm, political turmoil arose through senatorial opposition and the emperor's efforts to consolidate power and assert his authority. Caligula's denouncement of the Senate marked a caesura leading to confrontations with the Senate, which further jeopardised the Augustan system of joint government. Caligula tried to strengthen his position through military endeavours and to seek the favour of the people. His actions, including the reinstatement of the *maiestas* trials, military strategies such as the planned invasion of Britain, abundant shows and spectacles and political changes in the social structure at Rome, reveal the challenges he faced and his determination to maintain control over the Roman Empire.

Other aspects of Caligula's adhococratic leadership were found in his manipulating social groups. With the *Pax Romana* concept as a premise, Caligula restructured the traditional formal connections. Whereas his dealings with the local kings followed traditional policies, his handling of the patronage system did not. Making good use of the proximity of the temple of the Dioscuri to his palace complex, he changed the procedures of the *salutatio* by promoting non-senatorial status groups. Especially the order of the knights gained more prominence while the freedmen were employed in strategies for the de-aristocratisation of the social order. This also changed the composition and role of the emperor's establishment teams fundamentally. Caligula's manipulation of the patronage system and his establishment of the imperial entourage embodied the principle of pitting groups against each other, a hallmark of adhococratic leadership. Patronage functioned on the basis of reciprocity, with patrons providing favours and clients showing gratitude and loyalty. This system also served as a political tool to maintain harmony within society, ultimately bolstering the emperor's authority, particularly in his role as *pater patriae*. However, it required

a delicate balance between patron and client, often played out in theatrical settings like banquet dinners, where power dynamics and dominance were on full display.

A significant aspect of Caligula's adhocratic leadership concerned his use of visual power. The demonstrative, sometimes excessive, use of exuberant dress, behaviour, and gestures meant to demonstrate his singular status. His gaze, both literally and through his entourage, particularly served as an instrument of control and conveyed his authority. Public appearances and spectacles were channels of communication and mechanisms for securing popular support despite the associated risks. The construction of the bridge of boats across the Bay of Baiae was an extravagant and symbolically charged undertaking.

Caligula's perception of his own divinity was complex. While he adopted the concept of a living emperor-God, whether he genuinely believed in his divine status or used it for political and ritual purposes remains a subject of historical debate. Ancient authors had varying perspectives on Caligula's claims to divinity, and the terminology used to describe his actions is crucial in understanding the distinction between claiming divine emperorship and asserting personal godhood.

Caligula's adhocratic leadership included the use of force, which was especially detrimental to the Roman elite. Although he had been backed by the military from the beginning, some influential officers turned against him, leading to his murder. The role of the military was not only decisive in ending Caligula's rule but also led to a subsequent shift in Roman leadership dynamics which I express in the adage 'From SPQR to MPQR', from **Senatus PopulusQue Romanus** to **Miles PopulusQue Romanus**. The expression denotes the replacement of the Senate as a mark of Roman government by the military. Whereas Caligula's father, Germanicus, had refused the throne offered him by the legions, Caligula's uncle, Claudius, became the first in a long line of emperors who owed their position to the soldiers. But then, Rome was a military society after all.

Summary of elements of Caligula's adhocratic leadership

Adhocracy was defined as an organisational structure that is flexible and innovative, with decision-making being informal and decentralised. Adhocratic leadership is set to adapt and improvise rules and structures based on the needs and circumstances of a specific situation as perceived by the leader. However, it

is important to note that Caligula's reign was short, while the extant data on his reign are very subjective and biased. Therefore, caution should be exercised in interpreting these sources and acknowledging that the exact nature and impact of Caligula's adhocratic leadership are difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, by using the concept of adhocratic leadership as a conceptual lens, this study may provide a better understanding of Caligula's leadership style. Thus, the following elements of Caligula's adhocratic leadership could be discerned:

1. Arbitrary decision-making: Later writers qualified Caligula's decisions as whimsical, impulsive, and unpredictable. Caligula, however, made full use of the proto-adhocratic elements inherent in the Augustan mixed constitution, which focused on the leader's person. Caligula's deviations from traditional Roman norms and values posed major problems for the traditional elite.

2. Personal exercise of power: Having full power, Caligula questioned the authority of the Senate, especially after several threats to his life. Decisions such as the abolishment of the invasion of Britain left no doubt about the emperor's absolute power.

3. Promotion of extravagance and excess: Caligula was known for his lavish lifestyle and extravagance. He organised grand events to gain support from the people in his struggle with the Roman elite.

4. Power of personal relationships: Instead of adhering to formal or traditional political structures, Caligula often relied on personal relationships and favours to achieve his goals. He bestowed his favourites with important positions regardless of their suitability, competence, or status. However, they too, were used as pawns in the chess play with the elite.

5. Experimental projects and construction works: Caligula commanded ambitious large-scale projects and construction works, which required considerable expenditures. Examples were the construction of a massive boat bridge across the Bay of Naples, the *Aqua Claudia* aqueduct, and a gigantic palace complex on Palatine Hill.

An evaluation of Caligula's adhocratic leadership

Recent research has focused extensively on the constraints and expectations of a Roman ruler. Bound by tradition, the emperor was expected to play at least three

critical roles: military, religious, and civic.⁷⁰³ Given Caligula's total inexperience in any of these roles when he gained power, the question raises if and to what extent Caligula lived up to what was expected of a Roman ruler.

Caligula's military role

The emperor was the supreme commander. In a military society such as the Roman one, military exploits were highly valued. In Caligula's case, two aspects are noteworthy. The planned invasion of Britain and his claim of a military victory during the Northern campaign. The preparations, as we saw in Chapter 6, were well-executed, with the initial safeguarding of the eastern frontiers, the raising of two new legions, and the reinforcements of the defences along the *limes*. The presence of ships to cross the Channel, the construction of a lighthouse and the concentration of troops along the coast are further indications of an impending invasion. Although it is hardly likely that these plans and preparations were the personal work of the emperor, public perception would allocate victory and defeat to the emperor. The same goes for Caligula's claim of victory. If the Senate could be persuaded to accept Caligula's reality, imperial propaganda would surely convince the people of the emperor's success. Caligula's ovation in Rome on 31 August 40 CE was the public expression of the emperor's success as a conqueror and military leader.

Caligula's civic role

Since Augustus presented himself as senatorial *primus inter pares*, broadcasting his *civilitas*, the principle for successive emperors to follow was that of a *civilis princeps* (Figure 2, inside over).⁷⁰⁴ This was judged by the emperor's ability to uphold important republican qualities. Vital were the emperor's rhetorical qualities, legal fairness, upholding contacts with the clients and local kings, building programmes, and controlled use of force.⁷⁰⁵

^{703.} Hekster, 2015, 2023.

^{704.} Figure 2. *Civilis Princeps*. Emperor Caligula togated and seated on a curule chair to demonstrate his senatorial status. The design and composition refer to republican statesmanship. Rome, after 37 CE. Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines MNE 837; Cp 6406; Ma 1267. © Wikimedia Commons. <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>. See also, Beard, 2023, p. 48 with Hekster, 2023, p. 157.

^{705.} Adapted from Fronto, *The Correspondence of M. Cornelius Fronto. Fronto to Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, 139 CE* with Millar, 1992, p. 203 - 272.

Rhetorical qualities: Suetonius described Caligula's speech as brutal and filled with crude humour.⁷⁰⁶ However, in rhetoric, context matters. His one-liners, such as "Let them hate me, so they but fear me" and "I wish the Roman people had but a single neck", were delivered in the context of social events, which traditional elites considered unacceptable.⁷⁰⁷ Still, Caligula possessed remarkable oratorical abilities by composing speeches according to the models of classical rhetoric, which he delivered with a powerful voice.⁷⁰⁸

Legal fairness: Caligula exhibited his legal fairness shortly after his accession when he returned the elections to the people, recalled those who had been banished, and allowed suppressed literature to be published and distributed again. The accounts of the empire became public again while allowing the magistrates unrestricted jurisdiction without appeal to himself. Charges that had been untried were pushed aside while the documents related to his mother and brothers were ceremoniously burned (keeping the fact that they were copies silent). The list of the knights was revised with those culpable of scrupulous behaviour severely punished while those guilty of lesser misbehaviour were moderately punished. A fifth division was added to enlighten the work of the jurors. Livia's and Tiberius' legacies were fully paid while the taxes on auction sales were remitted. When a fire broke out, he paid for the damages. Caligula, perhaps mindful of his great-grandfather's actions, introduced what may have been a programme of moral revival when he paid 800,000 sesterces to a tortured freedwoman for keeping silent about her patron's guilt. Noteworthy was his refusal to accept a note concerning his safety, saying that he had "no ears for informers."

Whether Caligula officially ended the issuing of local civic coinage in the West or they gradually petered out is uncertain, but it is possible that Caligula wanted to impose a universal coinage system.⁷⁰⁹

Contacts with local kings: Local kings were restored to their thrones while allowed to keep their revenues. Some, such as Agrippa and Antiochus IV Epiphanes, were established as client kings. When required, Caligula acted unconditionally. When his nephew Ptolemy proved incapable of managing the province of Mauretania, a weak but important part of the African defences, he was recalled and summarily executed. The kingdom became an imperial province.⁷¹⁰

^{706.} Suet. *Cal.* 29; 33.

^{707.} Suet. *Cal.* 30. 1-3; Suet. *Cal.* 32.

^{708.} Suet. *Cal.* 53, Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.2.

^{709.} Burnett, 2010, pp. 55-57.

^{710.} Barrett, 2015, pp. 157 – 165.

Building activities: An important part of the emperor's civil role concerned his building activities. Building programmes are part of political civic management.⁷¹¹ The sources from ancient times confirm that Caligula was a keen builder with an eye for architecture.⁷¹² Caligula developed a comprehensive water supply programme with the construction of the *Aqua Claudia*, the *Aqua Anio Novus*, and the improvement of the harbour at Rhegium. Other construction work were a bridge crossing the *Velabrum* (the valley between the Capitoline and Palatine hills), the repair of Pompey's theatre (finished by Claudius), two racetracks in the *Ager Vaticanus*, the clearance of the *Saepta* area for the construction of an amphitheatre, and the expansions of the *Domus Tiberiana* (the imperial palace complex).

The use of force: The ancient texts contain many examples of Caligula's brutality. I calculated the total of his victims to be about 9,000 over a four-year period (i.e. ca. 2,250 per year). Compared to Tiberius, whose reign saw 38,000 casualties in a 23-year period or 1652 per year or Claudius' estimated 3,000 victims, i.e., 230 per year Caligula's casualties were vast.⁷¹³

Caligula's religious role

"Many of the presumed claims of Caligula", Hekster wrote, "resembled honours that had already been given to his predecessors. But by demanding these divine honours, rather than reluctantly accepting them, the emperor crossed a boundary."⁷¹⁴ It is this aspect of Caligula's leadership which is commonly connected with his supposed madness, especially in popular representations and in those authors who are inclined to impose their own (pre-)conceptions on the ancient world.⁷¹⁵ The notion of Caligula's religious leadership also gets distorted by the reports from ancient times about his cross-dressing and anecdotes about challenging gods and his dealings with statues and sacred spaces.⁷¹⁶ The main point, however, was Caligula's

^{711.} Thornton, 1989.

^{712.} Philo, *Leg.* 358.

^{713.} Sulla's proscriptions, for example, resulted in the deaths of approximately 4,700 victims. <http://necrometrics.com/romestat.htm> last retrieved 05-05-2024.

^{714.} Hekster, 2023, p. 153.

^{715.} Such historians may heed Lord Acton's advice: "A historian has to fight against temptations special to his mode of life, temptations from country, class, church, college, party, authority of talents, solicitation of friends. The most respectable of these influences are the most dangerous. The historian who neglects to root them out is exactly like a juror who votes according to his personal likes or dislikes." (Dalberg-Acton, 1985, p. 386).

^{716.} Cross-dressing: Dio 59.26.7-8; challenging gods: Suet. *Cal.* 22.4; dealings with statues and sacred spaces: Dio 59.28.1.

individualisation of his superior status as emperor instead of linking it to Rome, the Senate or the people. Scholars such as Barrett and Hekster perceive this behaviour as an example of deviation from the norm and tradition.⁷¹⁷ However, Caligula's individualisation of his superior position, already included in his being emperor and *Pontifex Maximus*, fits in his adhocratic leadership in which the leader's own perception creates an actual reality, whether or not that reality was accepted or believed by those around him. Numismatic and epigraphic evidence shows the emperor's emphasis on his divine ancestry. The Lugdunum mint produced *aurei* and *denarii*, with Caligula on the obverse and Augustus on the reverse, exemplifying their close connection.⁷¹⁸ An important issue showed the emperor dedicating the temple to the divine Augustus, notably on Caligula's birthday. The event finds corroboration in Suetonius and Dio.⁷¹⁹ The connection was also frequently stressed on other coins by the inclusion of *Divi AVG* in the legend. Noteworthy in this respect is the non-deification of Livia, Caligula's great-grandmother and Augustus' wife. Caligula possibly considered her less useful in his divine descent programme due to her Claudian descent.⁷²⁰ The emperor emphasised his Julian connection.

Worth mentioning is Caligula's building of two temples to himself in Rome, the inclusion of the temple of Castor and Pollux, the claim to the religious space in the temple of Apollo in Miletus/Didyma, the intention to relocate the temple of Zeus, and the intention to have his statue put up in temple in Jerusalem. Epigraphic evidence includes a dedication to Caligula on a cult statue at Didyma and Caligula accepting divine honours offered by the League of Achaeans.⁷²¹

Caligula's claim of personal divinity is closely connected to the presentation of his parents and other aspects of his religious leadership. These are the attempts, mainly through coinage, to present his parents and siblings as divine. His own divinity is then less a derogation from traditional standards and norms but logically fits in the wider context of ancestral superior status. Seen in this respect, Caligula's religious claims were no aberration or deviation but were the logical consequence of a religious and political system following the end of the Roman Republic and the Augustan transformation. Caligula demonstrated his extraordinary relationship

^{717.} Barrett, 1989, p. 143; Hekster, 2023, p. 153.

^{718.} RIC 1² Caligula nrs. 1 to 10.

^{719.} RIC 1² Caligula 36. Cal. 21; Dio 59.7.104.

^{720.} Suet. *Cal.* 23.2.

^{721.} Temples to himself in Rome: Dio 59.28.1-5, Suet. *Cal.* 22.3; the claim to the religious space in the temple of Apollo: Suet. *Cal.* 2, Dio 59.28.1-5; the intention to relocate the temple of Zeus: Dio 59.28.1-5; dedication on the cult statue: *Docs.* 127; honours offered by the League of Achaeans: *Docs.* 361, *IG*, vii, no. 2711.

with the divine, as an emperor should, in safeguarding the *Pax Deorum*. Whereas he did it in ways that were unacceptable to the Roman elite, later authors came to denounce this particular aspect of his rule through accusations of madness.

Caligula's short reign was marked by many examples of overstepping the boundaries of acceptability. It gained him the reputation of a 'bad' emperor. However, Caligula would become exemplary for later emperors in one respect. To paraphrase Olivier Hekster, Caligula had been "playing the wrong role for the wrong people". It was "the best way to become a bad emperor".⁷²²

Do we understand Caligula's leadership better when qualified as adhocratic?

The emphasis on Caligula's visual power, his manipulation of social groups, and his efforts to create uncertainty as a tool of control all contribute to a comprehensive understanding of adhocratic leadership as implemented by Caligula. For one, the one-sided senatorial representation of Caligula and his reign may be overcome by drawing attention away from a focus on the person to that of the context. In this study, the broader context was that of the Early Principate. Syme's warning about the inclination of biographers (ancient and modern) to overlook those surrounding their protagonist can be completed by pointing out the importance of context. That is the addition that the concept of adhocratic leadership may make to the study of leadership in general. Whether it brought a different understanding of Caligula's leadership is for the reader to decide. The example of Caligula was deliberately chosen because his leadership was, and is, considered to have been motivated by a specific mental condition conventionally qualified as insanity. By perceiving Caligula's leadership as adhocratic, emphasis could be placed on the context of the reign. While later hostile writers may have described Caligula's reign as marked by extreme actions and decisions, the present exploration of adhocratic leadership as a framework for analysing Caligula's rule may offer a new perspective on Caligula's leadership and leadership studies in general. Further research on leaders, Roman or other, especially those who are not stigmatised as 'bad' or 'mad' could help validate the concept of adhocratic leadership as a useful framework for analysing leadership in various historical and contemporary settings.

⁷²². Hekster, 2023, p. 182.



APPENDIX A. EXAMPLES OF DAMAGES TO MATERIAL OBJECTS RELATED TO CALIGULA AND HIS FAMILY

In Caligula's case, two aspects are noteworthy. Firstly, the recollection of his mortal remains by his sisters, who saw to it that his ashes were properly buried (although it is uncertain whether his remains were interred in the mausoleum of Augustus).⁷²³ Caligula's friend Agrippa had taken care of the emperor's corps to arrange a preliminary burial. However, it fell to the emperor's sisters to properly bury their brother. It appears that we are dealing with a literary trope concerning the importance of proper burial in antiquity.⁷²⁴ Nero was buried by his lover Acte and his nurses, and so was Domitian. All three gained a reputation as 'bad' emperors. Even in death, emperors considered 'bad' overstepped the lines of proper behaviour and their memory had to be blackened because it could not be erased.

Secondly, the Senate, unanimously, according to Suetonius, saw a chance to reinstall the republic.⁷²⁵ If so, they had to prevent another member of the imperial family from taking power. The only one eligible for the emperorship at the time, at least according to the Praetorians, was Caligula's uncle and Germanicus' brother Claudius. The story of Claudius hiding behind a curtain where he was found by a soldier named Gratus, meaning welcome or thankful, may have been fictional, but it did point to the reality of the decisive role of the military (Figure 67).⁷²⁶

⁷²³. The burial place is uncertain. Smallwood claims a burial in the mausoleum of Augustus (Smallwood, 1970, 190, p. 317), while Barrett finds it unlikely, without explanation (Barrett, 2015, p. 261).

⁷²⁴. The obvious example, particularly in the light of dealings with a powerful strongman, is, of course, Sophocles' *Antigone*.

⁷²⁵. Suet. *Cal.* 60.

⁷²⁶. Jos. *Al.* 19. 217.



Fig. 67. Charles Lebayle (1856-1898) Claude proclamé empereur. 1886. Beaux-arts de Paris, PRP 37/MU 5984. © Public domain.

Hence, the military quashed the senators, leaving Claudius to deal with a hostile Senate. Facing a *fait accompli*, Claudius had to accommodate the senators in their hatred for Caligula as well as the people's support for Caligula while at the same safeguarding the imperial system. A clear example of the latter was Claudius' refusal to have Caligula's day of death added to the festivals although, Suetonius adds, "it was also the beginning of his own reign."⁷²⁷ Caligula was not deified. Claudius blocked the Senate's intention to declare his predecessor an enemy of the state and have his memory officially condemned. With formal condemnation prevented, Claudius ensured and demonstrated the importance of a successor in determining

⁷²⁷. Suet. *Cl.* 11.3.

a predecessor's reputation.⁷²⁸ More importantly, from Claudius' perspective, the principle of emperorship and dynastic succession was safeguarded. Nevertheless, Claudius could not ignore his cousins' reputation with the senators. Caligula's statues were, therefore, secretly removed during the night. Still, several groups or individuals did show resentment against Caligula and damaged the material expressions of his leadership, as the examples below illustrate.

Strong personal feelings may lead to damaging material representations of hated persons, while mere boredom, vandalism or ignorance cannot be ruled out. Damages do not necessarily have to be the result of memory sanctions. For example, the damage to the *aureus* in figure 73 could be the result of deliberate destruction, but it could also be the result of someone checking the gold content. The complexity of memory sanctions can be illustrated with the example of two connected boundary stones from Dalmatia. One stone has Caligula's name erased, while another one keeps the imperial name.⁷²⁹

Still, memory sanctions were ordained by the Senate. If agreed to by the emperor, damages to statues and inscriptions can be understood as following government actions. The erasure of Caracalla's brother Geta from official inscriptions is one of the best-known examples. However, how about individual citizens? A look at the examples below makes one wonder who committed these acts. It is hard to believe that the ordinary Roman if he possessed any coinage, would damage them. It made the coin useless. The obvious answer would be that only those rich enough could afford to destroy their money. Although the image of Seneca frantically hacking away at a piece of Caligulan silver after having heard the emperor's verdict on his writing qualities, it takes some imagination to believe it. Perhaps the only answer to the question is that we simply do not know.

Here are some examples of damages done to Caligulan images (Figures 68-77). Most examples derive from Forum Ancient Coins, selected and photographed by Joe Geranio unless otherwise indicated.⁷³⁰ The damages range from the subtle scratching away of the C(aesar) in Caligula's official name to decapitating statues and anything in between. The practice of re-carving existing images to accommodate for the countenance of the new ruler is no example of a memory sanction; it is economics.

⁷²⁸. De Jong & Hekster, 2008, p. 94.

⁷²⁹. Name erased: ILS 5948; imperial name kept: ILS 5949. Barrett, 2015, p. 278.

⁷³⁰. Cf., also Varner, 2001; 2004 and Flower, 2006. More examples can be found here: <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=Caligula%20-%20Damnatio> last retrieved 30-07-2024.



Fig. 68. Caligula sacrificing in front of the Temple to the divine Augustus has his face erased

© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio



Fig. 71. Damage to the imperial neck. Symbolic decapitation?

© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio



Fig. 69. The obverse of the *adlocutio*- the with the 'C' in "CAESAR" filed away.

© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio



Fig. 72. Caligula's face defiled.

© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio



Fig. 70. The reverse of the *adlocutio*-sestertius scratched.

© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio



Fig. 73. Are the damages done to this aureus memory sanctions or greed?

Caligula's head is cut in half. The place and nature of the cut on the thickest part of the coin are more likely to indicate a checking of the gold content than an intended memory sanction.

© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio



Fig. 74. Bust of Caligula with a battered face, Swiss Private Collection: After Boschung (1989) pl. 27.1. <http://www.digitalsculpture.org/papers/pollini/pollini%20assets/B&W/Fig.%209.jpg> accessed 17-07-2024.

Obliteration also touched Caligula's father and brothers



Fig. 75. Damage done to Caligula's father Germanicus.
© Photo courtesy of Joe Geranio Joe Geranio.



Fig. 76. Dupondius with obverse Nero and Drusus Caesar The C of C Caesar scratched away.
© courtesy forum ancient coins. <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/> Photo: Gary Wilson.



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Abbreviations

Abbreviations for ancient authors and works and modern collections follow those in H.G. Liddell. R. Scott & H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1968), xv-xxxviii; S. Hornblower & A. Spawforth (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, third rev. Edition (Oxford 1996), xxix-liv.

AC	=	l'antiquité classique
AE	=	l'Année Épigraphique
AFA	=	Scheid, J. 1998. <i>Commentarii fratrum Arvalium qui supersunt. Les copies épigraphiques des protocoles annuels de la confrérie arvale</i> (21 av.-304 ap. J.-C.), Rome.
AJPH.	=	American Journal of Philology
ARF	=	N. Guilleray, J. Scheid & M. Melocco, <i>Ancient Rome Infographics</i> (London 2021).
BR	=	D. Braund, 1985. <i>Augustus to Nero. A Sourcebook on Roman History 31 BC-AD 68</i> . Beckenham.
CHJ	=	The Cambridge Historical Journal
CJ	=	Classical Journal Classical Association of the Middle West and South
CPhil.	=	Classical Philology
CPJ	=	Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum
CQ	=	Classical quarterly
CR	=	Classical Review
CRAI	=	Comptes rendus/ Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
DIG.	=	<i>Digesta Iustiniani. The Digest of Justinian</i> , Vol. 1. tr. Ch. H. Monro. Cambridge, 1904: Cambridge University Press.
Docs.	=	M. Smallwood, 1967. <i>Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius, and Nero</i> . Cambridge 1967.
EJ	=	Ehrenberg, V. & Jones, A. 1952. <i>Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius</i> . Oxford
GR	=	Greece and Rome
IG	=	Inscriptiones Graecae (Berlin 1873 -).
IGRR	=	R. Cagnat, <i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes</i>
JAC	=	Journal of Ancient Civilizations
JACT	=	Journal of Classics Teaching
JAHA	=	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology.
JDAI	=	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
JEH	=	Journal of Economic History
JHS	=	Journal of Hellenic Studies

- JRA = Journal of Roman Archaeology
- JRS = Journal of Roman Studies
- KEH = D. Kienast, W. Eck & M. Heil, 2017. *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*. 6. Überarbeitete Auflage. Darmstadt. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Kl. Pauly = K. Ziegler & W. Sontheimer. 1979. *Der kleine Pauly. Lexikon der Antike*. Munich. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.
- LCL = Loeb Classical Library
- LRRC I = N. Lewis & M. Reinhold, 1990. *Roman Civilization. Selected Readings. Vol. 1*. 3rd ed. New York/Oxford.
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- REA = Revue des Études Anciennes
- RGDA = *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (tr. Brunt & Moore).
- RP = R. Syme, *Roman Papers*. Six volumes (1979-1991).
- SHA = *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*
- TvG = Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis
- ZPE = Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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List of Visual Documents

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Documentaries and movies:

The Caesars written by Philip Mackie, 1968, BBC.

Caligula with Mary Beard. BBC, 29-07-2013.

Broken Grail: Khayyam debates Caligula. Armyn Naderi, Noghteh Group, 2021.

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SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift analyseert het leiderschap van Caligula als adhocratisch, met de bedoeling nieuw licht te werpen op de complexiteiten van Caligula's heerschappij en de bredere dynamiek van de Romeinse politiek in het vroege Principaat. Adhocratisch leiderschap werd gedefinieerd als flexibel en innovatief leiderschap waarbij besluitvorming informeel en gedecentraliseerd is. Adhocratisch leiderschap is gericht op het aanpassen en improviseren van regels en structuren op basis van de behoeften en omstandigheden van een specifieke situatie zoals gepercipieerd door de leider.

Twee essentiële feitelijke contextuele voorwaarden voor de heerschappij van Caligula werden onderscheiden: de gemengde constitutie van Augustus met zijn proto-adhocratische elementen en de unieke afkomst van Caligula. De gemengde constitutie, formeel gekenmerkt door consensus tussen Augustus en de senaat, beoogde een delicate balans tussen traditionele Romeinse idealen en de opkomende keizerlijke heerschappij. Hoewel Augustus elementen van adhocratisch leiderschap gebruikte, werd de ontwikkeling tot volledig adhocratisch leiderschap beperkt door de nog geldende traditionele politieke structuren. Onder Tiberius kwam het Augusteïsche systeem verder onder druk te staan door de langdurige afwezigheid van de keizer uit het centrum van de macht. Toen Caligula aan de macht kwam, probeerden de senatoren het begrip consensus te ondermijnen door de onervaren Caligula alle macht in één keer te geven. Deze studie karakteriseert dit als een voorbeeld van adhocratisch leiderschap van de kant van de senaat. Door in te spelen op de onervarenheid van de nieuwe keizer, creëerden de senatoren een contextuele situatie die was ingesteld op het falen van het nieuwe regime. Samenzweringen beoogden dit proces te bespoedigen. Caligula reageerde door zich tegen de senaat te keren en een nieuwe realiteit van keizerlijke macht te creëren, geïdentificeerd als adhocratisch leiderschap, waarbij de traditionele grenzen van verwachtingen en bestaande structuren werden overschreden.

Belangrijke geïdentificeerde kenmerken van Caligula's adhocratisch leiderschap waren willekeurige besluitvorming, verpersoonlijking van macht, het creëren van een goddelijke familie, onconventionele demonstraties van visuele macht, manipulatie van sociale groepen, het creëren van onzekerheid als een controlemiddel en zijn perceptie van eigen, voorbestemde goddelijkheid. De toekenning door de senaat van alle macht op hetzelfde moment aan Caligula opende de weg voor Caligula's adhocratisch leiderschap. Het gevolg was een definitieve breuk met de oude republikeinse structuren en traditionele

verwachtingen ten aanzien van leiderschap. Datzelfde leiderschap had evenwel steeds meer spanningen opgeleverd. Toen ook enkele invloedrijke officieren zich tegen Caligula keerden, was zijn lot bezegeld. Zo werd de rol van het leger niet alleen beslissend voor het beëindigen van Caligula's heerschappij, maar leidde ook tot een daaropvolgende verschuiving in de Romeinse leiderschapsdynamiek te beginnen met de door de militairen naar voren geschoven opvolger Claudius.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Henri van Nispen was born on 22 February 1956 in Bergen op Zoom, the Netherlands. He studied Cultural Anthropology at Leiden University and the Free University of Amsterdam. He also studied Philosophy at Leiden University and the University of Tilburg, where he graduated cum laude in 2010 with a master's thesis on *Onschuldige Schuld. Paradox van de klassieke tragedie* (Innocent Guilt. Paradox of the classical tragedy). In 1994, he obtained his Propaedeutic Degree in Dutch Law at Utrecht University. He holds a first-degree teaching qualification in Philosophy and Social Studies. In 2008, he received the Certificate of Proficiency in English, Grade A, from the University of Cambridge UK, and also completed a Classroom English course at Radboud University Nijmegen.

During his student assistantship at Leiden, Van Nispen was Coordinator and Secretary of the Interuniversity Course on Indonesian Studies from 1980-1983. Between 1980-1988, he taught Social Studies and Religious Studies at the Catholic Technical School in Voorhout and the Marianto Mavo in Rijswijk. He also served as a Supervising Teacher for the teacher training programme in South West Netherlands, Delft. Additionally, he worked on a dissertation on refugee issues, during which he spent time at the Refugee Studies Programme at the University of Oxford. In 1988, he was the Chief Interview Supervisor for Resource Management and Research in Mogadishu, Somalia, conducting a demographic, socio-economic, and medical survey among the refugee population in Somali refugee camps. In 1989, Van Nispen was a Development Expert for the Economic and Social Committee at the European Community-African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries meetings on Vocational Training and Farmers' Training and The Deterioration in the Terms of Trade. From 1990 to 1991, he was a delegate for the Dutch Red Cross, responsible for the multimillion dollar aid programme in Romania. Upon returning to the Netherlands, he became a teacher of Dutch as a Second Language and Social Orientation for newcomers, refugees, and adults at Omnium College in Breda. In 2007 he started teaching Religion and Ethics at Sandrode mavo, Zundert where he, amongst others, took his classes on a working trip to Gambia. The same year, he became a teacher of Ethics with a mentorship at Mencia de Mendoza Lyceum, Breda. There he also developed a Philosophy curriculum from scratch and taught Philosophy until his retirement in May 2024. He also served as a Supervisor for Philosophy for the teacher training programme at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Tilburg and the academic teacher training course in Philosophy of Tilburg University. Since 2018, he has been able to work on his PhD project thanks to a grant from the NWO and the support of the Radboud University, and both supervisors.

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The Roman emperor Caligula generally counts as the prototype of imperial madness. This study highlights the complexities of Caligula's reign in the dynamic context of Roman politics during the Early Principate. Characterized by arbitrary decision-making and personal exercise of power, Caligula's leadership adapted to the unique context of the challenges posed by the Senate. His attempts to consolidate power led to conflict and ultimately his murder. The study identifies two key factors: the Augustan mixed constitution emphasizing consensus, and Caligula's unique lineage, which he manipulated to assert his divine status. His leadership was marked by visual power demonstrations, social group manipulation, and the creation of uncertainty. While conventional narratives often label Caligula's reign as 'madness', this analysis reframes his actions within the context of adhocratic leadership, suggesting that a deeper understanding of Caligula's leadership style can inform broader leadership studies.

De Romeinse keizer Caligula wordt algemeen beschouwd als het prototype van keizerlijke waanzin. Deze studie benadrukt de complexiteit van Caligula's heerschappij in de dynamische context van de Romeinse politiek tijdens het vroege Principaat. Gekenmerkt door arbitraire besluitvorming en persoonlijk machtsgebruik reageerde Caligula op de uitdagingen aan zijn positie door de Romeinse elite. Caligula's pogingen om zijn macht te consolideren leidden tot conflicten en uiteindelijk tot zijn moord. Zijn leiderschap werd gekenmerkt door visuele machtsdemonstraties, manipulatie van sociale groepen, de creatie van onzekerheid en de claim een levende god te zijn. Terwijl conventionele verhalen de heerschappij van Caligula vaak typeren als 'waanzin', analyseert deze studie zijn acties binnen de context van adhocratisch leiderschap. Zo ontstaat een genuanceerder begrip van Caligula's leiderschap en leiderschapsstudies in het algemeen.



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