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 Hirsch Library Research Guide



Imperial Portrait of the Emperor Caligula, God and Ruler

Unknown Roman

Roman, Julio-Claudian Period, 37-41 AD
 Gilt Bronze: 15 x 8 7/8 x 10 1/8 in. (38.1 x 22.5 x 25.7 cm)

Museum purchase funded by the Alice Pratt Brown Museum Fund

The Roman literature tells us that the Emperor Caligula proclaimed himself a god and erected a golden statue of himself in a temple in the Capitolium in Rome. His personal correspondence says that this emperor also intended to place his golden image in the great temple of Jerusalem. Ancient inscriptions provide evidence that cults worshipped Caligula as a god in eastern parts of the Roman Empire.

This magnificent gilt bronze head was probably the focal point of a temple. It combines the classic good looks of portraits of this Caesar's dynasty with his own well-known features. In this way, Caligula distinguished himself as a descendent of gods and rulers as well as a god/ruler in his own right. Coins minted during his brief and turbulent reign do so as well. The bronze sestertius clearly shows this likeness.

Online Resources:

[Hirsch Library Online Catalog](#)

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#)

Articles: (full-text access available on-site; off-site access available through your school library or Houston Public Library)

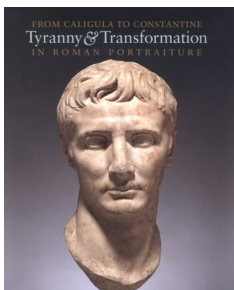
[Pollini, John. "A Pre-Principate Portrait of Gaius \(Caligula\)?" *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 40 \(1982\): 1-12.](#)

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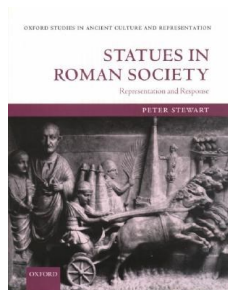
[Strong, S. Arthur. "A Bronze Bust of Julio-Claudian Prince \(? Caligula\) in the Museum of Colchester; With a Note on the Symbolism of the Globe in Imperial Portraiture." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 6 \(1916\): 27-46.](#)

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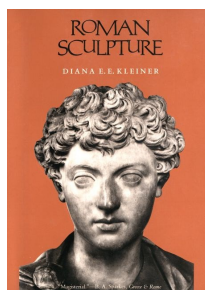
Print Resources:



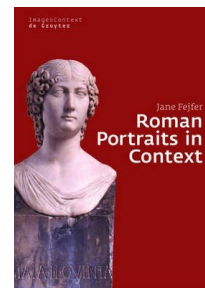
[From Caligula to Constantine](#)



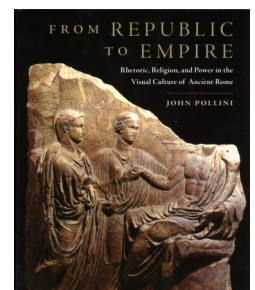
[Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response](#)



[Roman Sculpture](#)



[Roman Portraits in Context](#)



[From Republic to Empire](#)

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General Surveys of Roman Art

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- [Janson, H. W., and Penelope Davies. *Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007. N 5300 .J3 2007 Ref.](#)
- [Stokstad, Marilyn, and David A. Brinkley. *Art History*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. N 5300 .S923 2008 Ref.](#)

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- [Mitten, David G., and Suzannah F. Doeringer. *Master Bronzes from the Classical World*. Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1967. NK 7907 .M5](#)

This reference guide is just the tip of the iceberg on helpful resources in the library's holdings. Many of the suggested resources above have their own bibliographies. Each of these may lead you to another resource that would also be helpful in your research here in the museum or in another library. To find additional resources, use keywords such as "Roman portraiture" and "Emperor Caligula" in the online catalog and in periodical indexes. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay attention to the subject headings to identify similar materials. Examples of useful subject headings are:

Portraits, Roman
Bronzes, Roman
Coins, Roman
Art, Roman

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk. At every stage of your work, please allow the library staff to help you. Contact us at 713-639-7325 or hirsch@mfa.org