

THE ROMAN EMPEROR

GAIUS 'CALIGULA' AND HIS HELLENISTIC ASPIRATIONS

Dr. Geoff W. Adams

*Assistant Lecturer in Archeology & Ancient History
Monash University*

BrownWalker Press
Boca Raton, Florida

*The Roman Emperor
Gaius 'Caligula' and his Hellenistic Aspirations*

Copyright © 2007 Geoff W. Adams
All rights reserved.

BrownWalker Press
Boca Raton, Florida
USA • 2007

ISBN: 1-59942-423-1
13-ISBN: 978-1-59942-423-1

BrownWalker.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication
Data

Adams, Geoff W. (Geoffrey William)

The Roman emperor Gaius "Caligula" and his
Hellenistic aspirations / Geoff W. Adams.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-59942-423-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Caligula, Emperor of Rome, 12-41. 2. Rome--
History--Caligula, 37-41. 3. Emperors--Rome--
Biography. I. Title.

DG283.A43 2007

937'.07092--dc22

[B]

2007006220

Foreword and Acknowledgements

This study originated out of a long-standing fascination with the Emperor Gaius Caligula, who has intrigued a large audience since antiquity. It has not been written to answer all of the questions surrounding the life of Gaius Caligula, which is an impossible task when the limited sources of information are taken into consideration. This book is intended to provide a different interpretation of this fascinating historical character, which will come across as being quite sensible and agreeable to some readers more than others. It has been structured to take into consideration as much of the evidence as was possible in the hope of creating the most viable examination of Caligula and his Hellenistic inclinations. Nevertheless, it is also intended to be quite resolute in its focus: to evaluate the Hellenistic influences that were exerted upon Gaius and to determine how this affected his reign. This idea is not entirely untried, but this work has sought to undertake this issue in an original and more comprehensive fashion. The opinions surrounding how to interpret the life and reign of Gaius Caligula will continue to be divided within modern scholarship, but it is hoped that this *libellum* will provide some interesting ideas for most readers and topical debate among others.

I would initially like to thank several people and institutions that have been instrumental in their assistance for the production of this work. Firstly, I would like to thank Associate Professor Iain Spence and Dr Ricky Tunny for their useful comments and criticisms of key concepts that helped to improve its quality and assisted in the removal of several inconsistencies. I would also like to thank my family [Adams, Sedsman and Greenwell] and friends for their support and consistent encouragement. I would also like to devote this study and all of its labour to my son, Callan, in the hope that in years to come you will find it both interesting and enlightening. Finally, I must thank my wife, Olivia, to whom I dedicate the following pages and thank deeply with the utmost love and gratitude for her patience, understanding and encouragement throughout its development.

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Chapter 1: The Ancient Sources of Evidence	14
Chapter 2: The Influence of Hellenistic Kingship and Culture on the Roman Mentality	26
Chapter 3: Caligula's Heritage and Early Life	62
Chapter 4: The Role of Caligula during the Reign of Tiberius and the Succession	103
Chapter 5: Caligula as Emperor of Rome	141
Chapter 6: The Familial Relations and Religious Policies of Gaius Caligula	201
Chapter 7: Caligula and his Foreign Relations	241
Chapter 8: Conspiracy during Caligula's Reign, his Assassination and an Overall Perspective of his Reign	272
Abbreviations	292
Bibliography	293

Introduction

The life and reign of Gaius Caligula has been the topic of much debate and controversy both in antiquity and modern times. The difficulty with any evaluation of his life is that the sources who wrote about him were from a social group that was diametrically opposed to almost everything that Caligula embodied. The surviving sources, and their anti-Caligulan stance, were written long after the assassination of Gaius and in many ways can be held responsible for the confusion and lack of understanding that arises when examining the life of this Roman *princeps*. Nevertheless, there must be some factual basis for these portrayals of Gaius Caligula because otherwise there would have been little support for these representations in antiquity, regardless of the prevalent anti-Caligulan sentiment among both authors and their senatorial audience. The ‘truth’ should be present somewhere within the evidence.

This difficulty has in turn affected the interpretation of the evidence within several modern studies, which has largely resulted in two schools of thought: those who have followed the line of the ancient literary sources, and those who have rejected them. The first interpretation is often criticised for taking the sources at face value without any critical reading of the texts, whereas the second view has been criticised as being a reactionary tendency that often results in a ‘defensive’ stance for the lives of so-called ‘bad emperors’. In many ways the latter is to be expected: the desire to study the life of an historical figure in any depth indicates an initial interest in the figure that usually results in a great deal of research and often a fair amount of affection for the individual [you’re rarely going to study someone in detail that you dislike].

Nevertheless, neither of these methods are sound practices as they tend to reflect the desire of each scholar to place their individual interpretation upon the evidence. This is clearly a natural tendency, illustrating the subjective interpretation that historians face that has occurred since antiquity, as reflected in the ancient sources. It is impossible to write a purely objective historical work because the interpretation of historians is

inherently subjective,¹ particularly in relation to such a controversial historical character like Gaius Caligula. But nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the researcher to weigh up the evidence and to present the most balanced analysis possible. It is for this reason that the prime focus of this book will be on Caligula's Eastern and Hellenistic tendencies, which are examined as a *possible* interpretation of his views and actions. This study has not been intended to serve as a biography, but rather as an interpretation of the significant aspects of Gaius' life that provide insight into his cultural inclinations and his approach to ruling Rome as the third Roman *princeps*.

Previous Studies of Caligula

In 1903 Hugo Willrich published three lengthy scholarly articles in the *Klio* journal, which for the most part sought to defend the actions of Caligula.² These articles were the first significant modern studies of the Emperor, but Willrich's desire to highlight the positive features of the young Gaius have clouded the interpretation of the evidence. Willrich's work was followed by the significant study of J.P.V.D Balsdon, whose book titled *The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)*³ was published in 1934 and sought to readdress the one-sided argument presented by Willrich. Balsdon's study was more balanced having used a more critical approach to the evidence,⁴ but it is still indicative of historical methods that were prevalent in the first half of the 20th Century. He continued the rather optimistic approach towards Gaius Caligula, with an attitude that if the 'evils' mentioned in the ancient sources cannot be proven, they must not have occurred, which is a fairly limited approach.

It is this author's opinion that Anthony Barrett has provided probably the most comprehensive biography of the Emperor Caligula,⁵ making thorough use of the ancient evidence to create a well-written and easily accessible study of the events

¹ C. Edwards, "The Truth about Caligula?", *CR* 41.2, 1991, p. 407.

² H. Willrich, "Caligula", *Klio* 3, 1903, pp. 85-118, 288-317, 397-470.

³ J.P.V.D Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934.

⁴ K. Scott, "The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)", *CPh* 30.4, 1935, p. 367.

⁵ A.A. Barrett, *Caligula: the corruption of power*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

throughout the life and reign of Gaius Caligula. The study of Barrett has taken a rightly conservative approach to the evidence, taking a restrained attitude when interpreting the ancient evidence that makes many of the conclusions sound, but it would also seem that they could be interpreted a little further. It is in this way that my analysis is different, having taken a few more interpretative ‘risks’, but this is only in order to further the modern discussion of Caligula and to suggest additional possibilities about how this rather eccentric Roman Emperor should be viewed. The main aspect in which this study differs from that of Barrett is the view that Gaius had taken a similar approach in his reign as *princeps* as an Eastern or Hellenistic monarch, which has also been hypothesised by Gagé, Lambrechts and Köberlein.⁶ However, these previous studies have not dealt with this theory in enough depth, which is, however, the main theme within the present work. The initial focus places the question of Hellenism within Rome, and Eastern culture in general, in historical perspective. This is intended to present an analysis of how these cultural ideals were accepted or rejected within Roman society. The present study then moves on to concentrate upon Gaius’ ancestors, with particular emphasis upon his father, Germanicus. The purpose of this is to ascertain and understand the eastern influences on Gaius Caligula and to use these influences as a source of understanding for his reign as Roman *princeps*.

Arthur Ferrill has produced another study of Caligula that has taken more of a psychological approach to the study of Gaius’ life, titled: *Caligula: Emperor of Rome* (1991).⁷ While the methodology that this is based upon seems questionable in itself because of the difficulties in psychologically analysing someone who has been deceased for almost 2,000 years, the main problem is that there is little if any critical analysis of the ancient textual evidence that focuses upon the life of Caligula. The interpretation of how certain events could have affected Caligula is sometimes attempted within the present study, but only after the historical and literary context of the evidence has been taken into consideration.

⁶ J. Gagé, *Basiléia: Les Césars, les rois d’Orient et les ‘Mages’*, Paris, 1968; P. Lambrechts, ‘Caligula dictateur littéraire’, *Bull. Inst. Hist. Belge de Rome* 28, 1953, pp. 219-32; E. Köberlein, *Caligula und die Ägyptischen Kulte*, Meisenheim, 1962.

⁷ A. Ferrill, *Caligula: Emperor of Rome*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1991.

Ferrill has also provided quite a defensive approach when it comes to the main theme of his study, which, for the most part, seems quite impossible to maintain for the entirety of Caligula's life. Gaius was not perfect and we should not try to view him as such.

In 2003, there was another modern biography written in German, by Aloys Winterling, titled *Caligula: eine biographie*.⁸ This study has made good use of the ancient sources, but the central theme focuses upon the references to the insanity of Gaius rather than trying to understand *why* he behaved in such a fashion, assuming that the ancient sources can be trusted. Sam Wilkinson has also recently written a short biography of him, titled *Caligula*, which has attempted to absolve Caligula from any mismanagement during his reign.⁹ This study was not intended to influence the direction of modern scholarship, preferring a wider appeal. Nevertheless, the almost dogmatic approach to the ancient sources and their interpretation follows the most defensive of lines of argument, which in turn limits the reliability of its reasoning. The ancient sources are certainly fraught with inconsistencies and difficulties in their interpretation, but they must be used in a broad-based fashion that allows for elements of both fact and fiction.

Methods Used within this Study

In order to gain the most accurate and comprehensive understanding of Gaius Caligula many different sources of information must be utilised. This entails use of the literary sources as well as archaeological, numismatic and epigraphic data. Archaeological evidence, such as the *Domus Gaiana*, can provide a further insight into both the public and domestic priorities of the emperor. Particularly in relation to the Imperial palace, a statistical method has been used to establish the social priorities of the Emperor,¹⁰ which may in turn cast further light upon the *principate* of Gaius, when compared to the residences of his predecessors and successors. The numismatic evidence, when used

⁸ A. Winterling, *Caligula: eine biographie*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2003.

⁹ S. Wilkinson, *Caligula*, London: Routledge, 2005.

¹⁰ See G.W. Adams, *The Nature of the Villa Suburbana in Latium and Campania: literary and spatial analysis of social and potential entertainment functions from the 2nd Century BC to the 2nd Century AD*, PhD Thesis, Adelaide: The University of Adelaide, 2005.

as a corpus, can illustrate the public propaganda that was clearly important to Gaius. The epigraphic evidence can also illustrate aspects of the reign of Gaius, particularly in relation to his associations with the élite members of Roman society in the first half of the 1st Century AD. This evidence does not add as much to this study in particular, but there are certainly examples, such as the dedication erected in the Greek city of Acraephiae,¹¹ which provide some insight into the religious policies of the Emperor.

It is the numismatic evidence that is particularly important for this study. Numismatic sources provide one of the best portrayals of how Gaius wanted to be seen by the Roman public throughout the Empire, which in turn presents a view of how he may have wanted to [or did] see himself. However, this understanding can only be achieved if the historical and numismatic contexts for each issue are taken into consideration; otherwise this can provide an unrealistic image of the significance of various numismatic issues. So in order for the context to be kept firmly in mind these issues have also been compared to the imagery on the coins of his predecessors, successors and from other relevant societies, particularly in the Hellenistic East.

The aim of this study is to make comprehensive use of all of these varying forms of evidence in order to establish that there was some truth behind the portrayal of the ancient literary sources, such as Suetonius and Dio Cassius, but that it was their lack of understanding for his personal perspectives [or unwillingness to understand them] that resulted in such a biased representation.

The historical biographies of antiquity, particularly those written in relation to the Imperial household, frequently fall into two categories: ‘good’ emperors and the ‘bad’ emperors. These biographies were mostly intended to educate, instruct and entertain their audiences rather than to give accurate accounts of the emperors as they actually were. The ‘good’ emperors were often portrayed in such a positive light that they were ‘super-humans’ whereas the ‘bad’ emperors had evil, wicked dispositions often from the time of their births that were frequently accompanied by portents and omens of the ensuing wickedness that was about to be inflicted upon the world. The actual motives, intentions and

¹¹ *IG VII*, 2711; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Berlin, 1892-1916, no. 8792.

desires of both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ emperors would seem to be somewhere in the murky *ether* that exists between the various pieces of evidence about their reigns.

It is the intention of this work to suggest that Gaius Caligula was not so much insane, as misunderstood. He viewed his role within the political system of First Century Rome in a different fashion to his predecessors, being more in keeping with that of a Hellenistic monarch than a Roman *princeps*. This is not intended to be a defence of his actions or to provide an argument that he was in fact a highly efficient administrator and a brilliant general. Instead the intention is to examine the ‘other side of the coin’: to view some of his more eccentric actions in their historical and socio-political contexts in order to perhaps provide another explanation for them rather than the simplistic view of Gaius as the insane megalomaniac. In his mind, Gaius was descended from a deity, actually several of them, which seems to have affected his view of the *principate*. The idealised view of Augustus that many Roman held during Caligula’s lifetime, and the necessity to draw links with him as *princeps*, would have certainly accentuated the importance of Gaius’ divine ancestry. He was the son of the great Germanicus who was closely linked with the Imperial cult and was seen as the epitome of the great Roman Imperial tragedy at the time of Tiberius’ reign, which further emphasised the divine right for the throne possessed by the young Gaius. Therefore, the religious policies of Gaius Caligula will be a central focus of this study, which highlight his perceived divine associations that were more in keeping with an Eastern/Hellenistic perspective. However, the way in which he came to these views is also a significant feature of this study.

Naturally, when it comes down to it all, this study is inflicted with the same difficulties that have beset all previous analyses of Gaius Caligula: the reliance on the sources and the unfortunate subjectivity that exists in their interpretation. These difficulties are impossible to remove completely, but they have been abridged in this study. By using the widest possible array of evidence it has exhibited a theme that existed throughout the brief reign of Caligula linking him with his esteemed and divine parentage in a similar form to that of the Hellenistic East. The second difficulty has been overcome by an acceptance of not only the evidence that complements this theme, but also the evidence

that is at odds with it. Unfortunately, history will always be influenced by a degree of interpretation/argument – but it is the variance within its reading that makes it ultimately ‘human’.

Chapter 1

The Ancient Sources of Evidence

Any in depth inquiry into the life of an historical figure such as the Emperor Caligula, needs to be undertaken based upon a well-founded understanding of the evidence within its historical context. There are several sources of information that can be used for an analysis of Gaius Caligula: the ancient literary texts, the archaeological data stemming from the reign of Caligula, the numismatic evidence and the epigraphic records that are dated from his reign. Each source of information has particular benefit for the insight that they can provide into the features of Caligula's reign, but none of them are perfect sources of historical reality. The best that can be achieved is through the combined use of each source, intending to balance their advantages and disadvantages while keeping the historical context firmly in mind. This requires the use of a varied number of methodologies which necessitates some caution.

If these methods of historiography and archaeological theory are applied consistently, while not giving overt preference to a particular source of data, this will establish an optimal basis for any historical analysis. Naturally certain types of evidence provide a greater amount of detail for any understanding of Gaius Caligula, such as the ancient literary and numismatic evidence, but they must still be used in conjunction with the other sources in order to establish the most informed type of analysis possible. Therefore, to clearly evaluate the various sources on the life and reign of Gaius Caligula, each has been briefly scrutinised in order to establish their different benefits and difficulties, and thereby providing a solid foundation upon which to analyse this Emperor of Rome.

The Ancient Literary Sources

There are several ancient literary sources that provide evidence on the life and reign of Gaius Caligula, but there are six authors in particular who have focused more comprehensively upon him and provide the greatest amount of information to be

analysed. These authors are: the Younger Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Flavius Josephus, Philo, Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio Cassius. There will be evidence taken from other literary sources than these, but these authors provide the greatest amount of available evidence and need to be analysed both individually and collectively to successfully carry out a comprehensive analysis of Caligula. Each of these authors cover a wide period of time within their works and each of their works were written for different purposes. The intentions behind each piece must be kept in mind in order for each text to be used effectively. The time of composition is also an important factor with the temporal distance, or the lack thereof, having a clear effect upon the reliability of each text. This is also affected by the intended audience for each author, with each biographer or historian being influenced by the disposition of their particular audience. Each of these six authors has been considered in chronological order, followed by a brief overview of other literary sources that provide further important information.

Seneca the Younger, whose proper name was Lucius Annaeus Seneca wrote during the *principate* of Gaius but his works only contained a small amount of political commentary on Gaius' reign.¹² Two letters in particular have been previously cited as exhibiting hostility towards Gaius,¹³ but such a reading of these texts is highly questionable.¹⁴ The central motive to his writings was that of expounding the moralising tendencies that had been encouraged by his father, the Elder Seneca.¹⁵ The writings of the Younger Seneca exhibited the moralising tendencies of many Roman writers,¹⁶ but at the same time he seems to have accepted

¹² V.E. Pagán, *Conspiracy Narratives in Roman History*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004, p. 94.

¹³ Seneca, *Ep.*, 49.2; 78.6.

¹⁴ M. Griffin, *Seneca: a philosopher in politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 54.

¹⁵ T.N. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: writing, identity and empire in ancient Rome*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 140; L.A. Sussman, *The Elder Seneca*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978, p. 26.

¹⁶ Habinek, 1998, *ibid.*, p. 54.

the *status quo* during the reign of Gaius,¹⁷ despite the emperor's jealousy of the high quality of his oratory.¹⁸

The Jewish author, Philo, is another contemporary source for the reign of Gaius, who provides some valuable insight into the dealings of Caligula with foreign communities, particularly the Alexandrian Jews. The main advantage that Philo offers the ancient historian is an actual account of a meeting with the Emperor Gaius, which, despite its clearly predisposed motives, provides a valuable insight into the behaviour of the *princeps*. Philo was born around the year 20 BC and writes from the perspective of a mature Alexandrian, who despises the gradual moral decay, as he saw it.¹⁹ As with the Younger Seneca, his portrayal of Gaius and the Roman State has an understanding of the authority that they possessed throughout the Mediterranean, but, as with the majority of historians from the period,²⁰ he wrote his narrative as a means to distribute his own moralistic message.²¹ This is particularly evident when examining the idealised image of Macro, whose speech was an extended version of Philo's own views of a moralistic society.²²

Another significant Jewish author who provides a significant amount of information about the reign of Gaius was Flavius Josephus. The main text by Josephus that concerns the Emperor Caligula is the *Jewish Antiquities*, which was published in AD 93.²³ As with Philo, the central theme of the work focuses upon issues and events connected with the Jews, in which he tries to portray them in the most favourable outlook possible.²⁴ Nonetheless, there are clear Hellenistic influences on the manner

¹⁷ Griffin, 1976, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁸ Suetonius, *Cal.*, 53; G.W. Clarke, "Seneca the Younger under Caligula", *Latomus* 24, 1965, p. 66; Z. Stewart, "Sejanus, Gaetulicus, and Seneca", *AJPh* 74.1, 1953, p. 70.

¹⁹ D.I. Sly, *Philo's Alexandria*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 9, 13.

²⁰ R.W. Cape, "Persuasive History: Roman rhetoric and historiography", in W.J. Dominik (ed.), *Roman Eloquence: rhetoric in society and literature*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 217.

²¹ P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 798.

²² Sly, 1996, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

²³ Pagán, 2004, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

²⁴ G.A. Williamson, *The World of Josephus*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1964, p. 267.

in which he views the events throughout the work.²⁵ While his praise of the Jewish people is quite resolute,²⁶ he still follows the Greco-Roman historical tradition, with some clear influence from Thucydides and Polybius.²⁷ Owing to the divergent nature of his subject material, which is indicative of his split focus, it is clear to view the grouping within Josephus' discussion of both the Classical and Jewish information. The division between these two areas have made the usefulness of the *Jewish Antiquities* somewhat limited, but it still provides a good source of information upon the reign of Gaius Caligula.

One of the most significant authors for our understanding of the period is Cornelius Tacitus. From a literary perspective Tacitus' *Annals* were the culmination of a long-standing literary career,²⁸ which epitomised his enduring interest in the development of the Roman Empire. The evidence provided by Tacitus on the reign of Gaius Caligula is comparatively meagre, but it is also the most frustrating owing to the missing books from the *Annals* that covered the period of his reign. The first six books of the *Annals* do still provide some valuable insight into the early years of Gaius' life, particularly in relation to the events surrounding him and his father, Germanicus. It is in relation to the events surrounding Germanicus during the early days of Gaius' life that Tacitus is most useful. Germanicus, and the legend that surrounded him after his death,²⁹ was a major influence upon Caligula and affected how he viewed himself and his role within the Roman State. Tacitus himself states that his purpose for writing history is that wicked words and actions should fear their posthumous infamy,³⁰ which highlights his view of the merits of writing history.³¹ The annalistic framework does provide some

²⁵ G. Mader, *Josephus and the politics of Historiography*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000, p. 5.

²⁶ Williamson, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 283.

²⁷ Mader, 2000, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

²⁸ S. Usher, *The Historians of Greece and Rome*, London: History Book Club, 1969, p. 203.

²⁹ c.f. B. Walker, *The Annals of Tacitus*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952, pp. 110-31.

³⁰ Tacitus, *An.*, 3.65.

³¹ H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus*, 2nd. Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1896, pp. 27-8.

literary limitations for the author,³² but the motifs of both Tacitus' historical methodology and ideology are still quite apparent.

The *De Vita Caesarum* by Suetonius is one of the most important ancient literary sources available for evidence on the life and reign of Caligula, especially the biography of Gaius himself. Suetonius had served for a period as *ab epistulis* to the Emperor Hadrian, early in the Second Century AD,³³ which seems to have provided the author with a fair degree of access to the imperial records prior to his dismissal.³⁴ In contrast to the annalistic style of Tacitus, Suetonius has opted for the biographical form, which in many ways represents the direction in which Roman politics had developed by the time he was writing, with the emperor being the sole representative of power.³⁵ That being said, Suetonius was frequently more interested in 'entertaining' his audience,³⁶ which must be kept in mind when considering the reliability of his representations of Gaius.³⁷ There are also instances where Suetonius exhibits some critical evaluation of his sources,³⁸ such as the question that surrounded Gaius' birthplace for example, but he is hardly consistent. The *Caligula* also includes a mini-biography of Germanicus as well,³⁹ which has been of some use for this study.

Dio Cassius was reportedly born around AD 164/5 at Nicaea in Bithynia.⁴⁰ Dio has also provided a great amount of information concerning the lead up to Caligula's reign, as well as the period of his rule. In structure his text is annalistic, but by the time it focuses upon the early Imperial period it becomes

³² R. Syme, *Tacitus*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. 305-6.

³³ A. Mâce, *Essai sur Suétone*, Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1900, p. 87.

³⁴ R. Mellor, *The Roman Historians*, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 147.

³⁵ J. Henderson, *Fighting for Rome: Poets and Caesars, History and Civil War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 259; c.f. H. Gugel, *Studien zur Biographischen Technik Suetons*, Wien: Hermann Bohlaus, 1977, p. 15.

³⁶ P. Plass, *Wit and the Writing of History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, p. 7.

³⁷ B. Baldwin, *Suetonius*, Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1983, 339.

³⁸ c.f. R.C. Lounsbury, *The Art of Suetonius*, PhD Diss., Austin: University of Texas, 1979, p. 23.

³⁹ G.B. Townend, "Suetonius and his Influence", in T.A. Dorey (ed.), *Latin Biography*, London: Routledge, 1967, p. 83.

⁴⁰ C.L. Murison, *Rebellion and Reconstruction*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999, p.

essentially biographical,⁴¹ focusing upon the major events surrounding each of the successive Roman Emperors. It has been argued that the outlook of Dio was essentially Roman,⁴² and yet throughout the *Roman History* it is quite evident that he has combined sympathies: both Roman and Greek.⁴³ This is exhibited not only through his use of Thucydidean style,⁴⁴ but also in his insistence about the influence and importance of Greek culture.⁴⁵ In relation to this research it is pertinent to note this duality in Dio's perspective; this is, for the most part, owing to the eastern sympathies that Gaius Caligula himself possessed, but also the eastern tendencies that were possessed by his father, Germanicus, and other members of his *familia*.

When all of these literary sources are considered there is one theme that binds them together: their audience. For the most part the intended audience for these works would have been the social élites, particularly in Rome. This would have been slightly different for both Philo and Josephus, who would have also had the Jewish audiences in Alexandria and Jerusalem in mind, but, nonetheless, the influential members of Roman society [namely the Roman Senate] would have been the most likely group to have access to their works. Particularly in relation to an anti-senatorial figure like Gaius Caligula this is highly significant. Their audiences would not have been entirely welcoming to a representation of Gaius that portrayed him as a well-respected and balanced *princeps*, which may explain part of the anti-Caligulan stance that continued long after his assassination in AD 41. Nonetheless, the ancient literary sources provide a valuable source of evidence for an understanding of Gaius' perspectives, if these texts are analysed critically in order to gaze beyond their authors' predispositions.

⁴¹ C. Pelling, "Biographical History? Cassius Dio on the Early Principate", in M.J. Edwards and S. Swain (eds.), *Portraits: biographical representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 117.

⁴² Murison, 1999, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

⁴³ S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 404-5.

⁴⁴ F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Swain, 1996, *op.cit.*, pp. 406-7.

The Archaeological Record

The archaeological evidence for the reign of Gaius Caligula is quite problematic due to the numerous changes that occurred to structures that he erected after the end of his reign. One of the most important archaeological features to be evaluated is the *Domus Gaiana*, which was the wing that Caligula added to the Imperial Residence on the Palatine Hill in Rome. This building has been examined using a statistical methodology to analyse the areas that were potentially used for an entertainment function.⁴⁶ Firstly, the finds and layout of each site are examined where possible, including their distance from the respective urban centres, as well as the levels of wealth displayed in the architecture and decoration of the building. This allows for further insight into the social standing and the activities of the owners of these structures.⁴⁷ The most important aspect is the variation in the percentage of space allocated for potential entertainment within the structures. This has been done in a similar way to the study of De Kind on townhouses in Herculaneum.⁴⁸ The statistics have derived from the potential entertainment space, in order to ascertain the possible social role of the *Domus Gaiana*. The statistical analysis is divided in three ways. The first was to gather all of the surface areas for potential entertainment space, including all known open areas, such as gardens and courtyards. The second method excludes all open areas from the potential entertainment space results. The third includes open areas with an element of decorative pretension. The information collected using these methods was then converted into percentages to determine the social emphasis placed upon the various Imperial residences.

There are four reasons why social space has been considered in these different ways. Firstly, owing to the varying

⁴⁶ For further discussion of the uses of this methodology see G.W. Adams, *The Nature of the Villa Suburbana in Latium and Campania: literary and spatial analysis of social and potential entertainment functions from the 2nd Century BC to the 2nd Century AD*, PhD Thesis, Adelaide: The University of Adelaide, 2005.

⁴⁷ P.M. Allison, "The relationship between wall-decoration and room-type in Pompeian houses: a case study of the Casa della Caccia Antica", *JRA* 5, 1992, p. 248.

⁴⁸ De Kind, R.E.L.B., 1998, *Houses in Herculaneum: a new view on the town planning and the building of Insulae III and IV*, J.C. Gieben: Amsterdam.

roles that open areas served within many residences, by considering potential entertainment space in these ways, the most accurate results can be achieved. Secondly, the exclusion of open areas should avoid false interpretations at some sites with incomplete extant floor plans. It also indicates the amount of focus upon internal or external entertainment. Thirdly, due to the varying levels of extant remains at several Imperial residences it allows for greater interpretation at sites with limited information. Finally, the conversion of the results into percentages allows for a comparison of not only how much space was used for prospective entertainment, but also the varying emphasis placed upon entertainment by each Emperor. The results of this have been compared to the extant features from other Imperial residences, such as the House of Augustus and the *Domii Tiberiana*, *Transitoria* and *Flavia*,⁴⁹ which is intended to place the social emphasis of the *Domus Gaiana* within its historical context. In order to not only compare these structures within a broader context, but also to examine the Hellenistic influences upon Caligula, these structures have been measured against several examples of Hellenistic palaces. These analyses have been implemented in order to gain further insight into the provision for social activities that Caligula sought in his Imperial residence, thereby ascertaining his socio-political priorities.

The Epigraphic and Numismatic Evidence

The epigraphic records taken from the reign of Caligula have not added to the development of this study as much as the numismatic evidence, but they have provided some valuable information that supports the other forms of evidence. The inscriptional evidence used in this study has been in relation to various different areas, such as career inscriptions, religious dedications and official decrees. Epigraphic evidence is important because it frequently predates many of the ancient literary texts that are used as evidence,⁵⁰ as well as being dated to the precise period under question, which is in this instance the reigns of Tiberius and Caligula. They can also provide evidence that has not

⁴⁹ The *Domus Aurea* has been excluded owing to its disproportionate size in comparison to the other Imperial residences.

⁵⁰ J.E. Sandys, *Latin Epigraphy: an introduction to the study of Latin Inscriptions*, Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1927, p. 2.

been mentioned in the literary sources,⁵¹ or make mention of buildings that are no longer extant within the archaeological record. The provenance of these inscriptions is important to note,⁵² but this significant piece of information is frequently undocumented, making this impossible. The majority of inscriptions used within this study have been published in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (CIL)* or *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae (ILS)* collections, which are the major sources of reference throughout the study.

The numismatic evidence from the reign of Gaius Caligula has been of great assistance to this study of his reign. The benefits of this source of information have been taken from not only the various Imperial and religious imagery on his issues, but also from the general monetary policies of Caligula, which introduced significant changes to the minting of Imperial and Senatorial issues. The use of numismatic imagery has proven to be of great use when determining the important and prevalent policies of various Roman Emperors,⁵³ with no exception the reign of Gaius Caligula. Considering that the prime focus of this study is the autocratic/Hellenistic views of Gaius, this imagery is of great importance.⁵⁴ These images not only reflect how Caligula himself wanted to be viewed by the Roman public, but also the socio-political themes advertised as being important to his regime. Ancient coinage after all was a useful tool for spreading propaganda,⁵⁵ throughout not only Rome, but also the entire Empire. The importance of numismatic imagery to Caligula is also shown through his general policies for the production of both Imperial and Senatorial issues.

Gaius Caligula changed the conservative monetary policies of his predecessor, Tiberius, which in many ways altered

⁵¹ L. Keppie, *Understanding Roman Inscriptions*, London: Batsford, 1991, p. 9.

⁵² A.E. Gordon, *Illustrated Introduction to Latin Epigraphy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, pp. 4-5.

⁵³ C.H.V. Sutherland, *History and Coinage 44BC-AD69*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; C. Foss, *Roman Historical Coins*, London: Seaby, 1990.

⁵⁴ c.f. W.E. Metcalf, "Coins as Primary Evidence", in G.M. Paul (ed.), *Roman Coins and Public Life under the Empire: E. Togo Salmon Papers II*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999, p. 3.

⁵⁵ C. Howgego, *Ancient History from Coins*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 70-3.

the future development of Roman Imperial coinage.⁵⁶ The most significant alteration to the minting of Imperial coinage was the closing of the mint at Lugdunum – previously the most important centre for the production of gold and silver issues.⁵⁷ The production of these coins was moved by Caligula to Rome in AD 37,⁵⁸ which presented some practical advantages for Caligula, with the most significant of these being the increased control and participation of Gaius in the choice of the imagery of his issues. In due course it also provided greater opportunities for members of the senatorial élite harbouring pro-Republican sentiments to envisage taking control of the Roman monetary system if a move towards a return to the Republic was to occur. This may have added to the increasingly tenuous relationship between the Emperor and his opposing factions within the Senate, leaving Gaius more exposed to potential insurrection. In that sense it is no surprise that there was no Senatorial opposition to the move of the mint to Rome.⁵⁹

This increase in Gaius' fiscal vulnerability corresponded with him taking a greater role in the production of brass and copper issues at the already instated Senatorial mint in Rome.⁶⁰ This would have been seen as a reduction in the prestige of the Senate and its powers, which in turn would have encouraged some of the anti-Imperial sentiments within this highly traditional body of Roman élites. This had not been a frequent occurrence under the reigns of either Augustus or Tiberius, and would have been taken as being even more suspect from a young Julio-Claudian Emperor with limited proven *auctoritas*. This could be viewed as either overconfidence or thoughtlessness on the part of the young Gaius. But it may also be indicative of his personal view of his own importance and superior place within Roman society, perhaps in the same fashion as a Hellenistic monarch rather than a Roman Emperor in the same guise as his two predecessors. This has been

⁵⁶ H. Mattingly, *Roman Coins: from the earliest times to the fall of the western empire*, London: Methuen, 1927, pp. 112-3.

⁵⁷ H. Mattingly, "The Mints of the Early Empire", *JRS* 7, 1917, p. 63.

⁵⁸ P. Bruun, "Coins and the Roman Imperial Government", in G.M. Paul (ed.), *Roman Coins and Public Life under the Empire: E. Togo Salmon Papers II*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999, p. 32.

⁵⁹ Mattingly, 1927, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

⁶⁰ Balsdon, 1934, *op.cit.*, p. 153.

established through the analysis of Caligula's issues as a corpus as well as their comparison with issues from other Roman Emperors and previous Hellenistic dynasties in order to find the correlations. All of these factors within the numismatic evidence clearly illustrate its great import for this study, thus making a significant contribution to its accuracy.

General Conclusions

The ancient literary evidence for the life and reign of Gaius Caligula has always been problematic due largely to the ensuing negative historical tradition that had its origins as early as the First Century AD. The best illustration of how negative this tradition became in antiquity is the examination of how the name of Caligula has been associated with the most depraved or insane activities of other later Roman Emperors, which illustrates how Gaius represented the embodiment of vice and immorality in the ancient mindset.⁶¹ It would be erroneous for the modern viewer to simply take these literary opinions at face value. If these representations were correct it would seem highly unlikely that Gaius Caligula would have been viewed as an appropriate Roman Emperor, regardless of how well he hid his vices until after becoming *princeps*.

In order to gain the most accurate assessment of his life and his influences it is important to use all of the evidence available to us and to examine each piece critically and on its merits. The ancient literary evidence is of the greatest importance, but it should be used with the viewpoints of each author in mind. This involves evaluating their motives for writing about each episode and event that surrounded the life of Gaius Caligula. The ancient sources did not simply catalogue the events of the early Roman *principate*; each author was writing with a specific purpose and audience in mind, which coloured their portrayal of Gaius and must be heeded. The most effective way in which this can be achieved is to pay an equal amount of attention to the other forms of evidence. The numismatic data provides additional insight into the propaganda distributed by Gaius during his reign, as well as an important insight into the state of the Roman finances

⁶¹ For examples see the *SHA*, *Marcus Aurelius*, 28.10; *Lucius Verus*, 4.6; *Commodus*, 10.2-3; *Elagabalus*, 1.1; 33.1; *Aurelian*, 42.6.

at the time of his reign. The epigraphic evidence has been useful to view the public interaction that Gaius had with the people of Rome, which emphasises his views on his role as *princeps*. The archaeological evidence from Rome has also added further insight into the life of Gaius Caligula, not only contributing to our understanding of his public image, but also his inclinations within the private domain. It is through these methods that a greater understanding of Gaius Caligula is possible, removing the unnecessary historical stigma that has surrounded his reign and allowing for a clearer image of how such a character developed into the so-called 'maniac' Roman Emperor.