

CLAH4006

**From Village to Empire: An
Introduction to the History of Rome**

Gaius (AD 37-41) and Claudius (AD 41-54)

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Sources for Gaius and Claudius

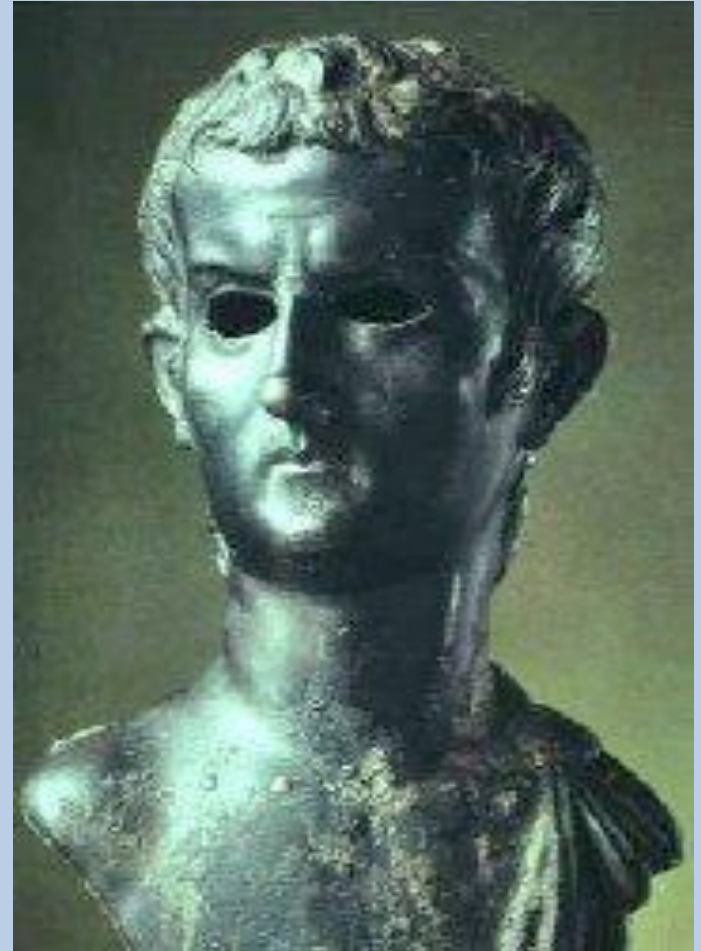
- Biographies of Suetonius.
- **Relevant sections of Tacitus' *Annals* are lost - period between AD 37 and 47** - resumes with the downfall of Messalina.
- Dio Cassius book 59 (Gaius) and 60 (Claudius).
- Philo of Alexandria *Embassy to Gaius* and Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.8, 19-20.7.

Gaius “Caligula”

AD 37-41

“Caligula”

- Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (AD 12-41).
- Reigned (AD 37-41).
- Caligula = “little-boot” - *caligae = boots*.
- “He acquired his cognomen Caligula from an army joke, because he grew up among the troops and wore the miniature uniform of a private soldier.” – **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 9.**



Family of Gaius



Tiberius

- grandfather via
adoption of
Germanicus
- paternal great uncle



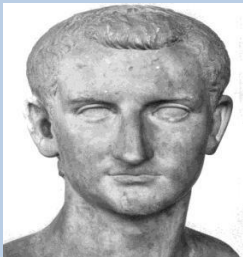
Germanicus



Agrippina the Elder



Nero Caesar



Drusus Caesar



Gaius (Caligula)



**Agrippina the
Younger**



Julia Livilla



Drusilla

The Accession of Gaius

- Gaius secures the support of Macro the Praetorian prefect.
- Tiberius had made Gaius and Tiberius Gemellus co-heirs, but the Senate sets aside his will.
- Gaius becomes emperor in March AD 37 - he 25 years old upon becoming princeps.
- Claudius is appointed Consul with him.

“A similar bid for popularity was to recall all exiles and dismiss all criminal charges whatsoever that had been pending since the time of Tiberius. The batches of evidence in his mother’s and brothers’ cases were brought to the Forum at his orders and burned...” – **Suetonius**
Gaius Caligula 15.

Bid for Popularity

- Organises spectacles and games
- Asks formal permission of Senate to increase the number of gladiators.
- Elections returned to the assemblies.
- June 1st and July 19th, 75 sesterces distributed to citizens.
- Donatives to military.
- Major building works.
- Recalls exiles and dismisses *maiestas* charges pending from the time of Tiberius.



Caligula laureate head (Obv) and SPQR P P OB CIVES SERVATOS (Rev) - AE Sestertius – **RIC 37**.

“...[he] abolished the tax of one per cent...” – **Dio Cassius 59.9.6.**



Gaius Caligula. AE Quadrans. Struck 39 AD. C CAESAR DIVI AVG PRON AVG, S-C flanking small pileus / PON M TR P III P P COS DES III, legend around large RCC. **RIC I 39; BMCRE 56.** RCC = “The Half-Per-Cent Remitted”.

Family Connections



Caligula & Divus Augustus AV Aureus, RIC 15, Cohen 1, BMC 16



Caligula & Germanicus AR Denarius, RIC 12, RSC 4, BMC 12



Caligula & Nero + Drusus AE Dupondius, RIC 34

Dynastic Affairs

Securing the Succession

- Gaius marries four times, including (1) Junia Claudilla, (2) Livia Orestilla, (3) Lolliia Paulina, (4) Milonia Caesonia.
- “... but he would not allow her [Caesonia] the dignified title of wife until she had borne him a child, whereupon he announced the marriage and the birth simultaneously. He named the child Julia Drusilla...” – **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 25.4-5.**

Removing Rivals

“He sent a military tribune to kill the young Tiberius [Gemellus] without warning, on the pretext that Tiberius had insulted him by taking an antidote against poison... and he forced his father-in-law, Marcus Silanus, to cut his own throat with a razor, the charge being that he had not followed him when he put to sea in a storm, but had stayed on shore to seize power at Rome if anything happened to him... Gaius preserved his uncle Claudius mainly as a butt for practical jokes.” – **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 23.**

“So much for Gaius the Emperor; the rest of this history must deal with Gaius the Monster.” – Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 22.

Gaius “Caligula” as Tyrant

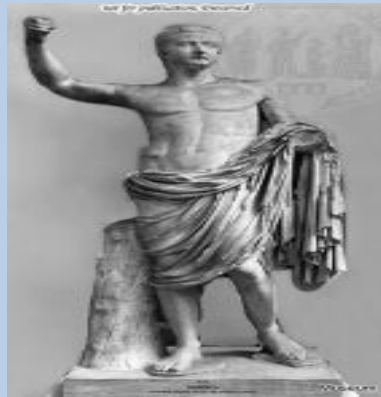
- Reportedly depletes vast store of wealth that had built up under Tiberius - **Dio Cassius 59.2.6.**
- Anecdote about wanting to take the royal diadem and become “King” - **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 22.1.**
- Becomes more arrogant towards the senate – forces some senior officials to run behind his chariot - **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 26.**

Divine Pretensions

“...he insisted on being treated as a god – arranging for the most revered or artistically famous statues of the gods, including that of Jupiter at Olympia, to be brought from Greece and have their heads replaced by his own... **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 22.2.**



Augustus with figure of Cupid



Tiberius – Heroic pose
- Following Augustan module.



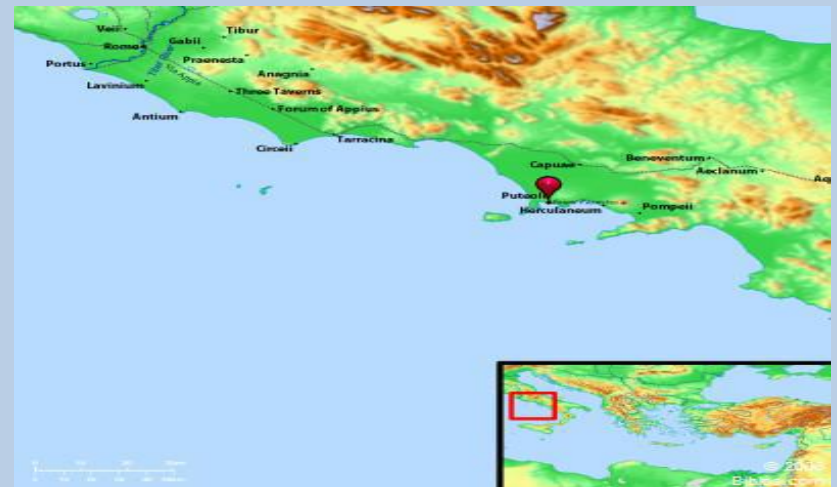
Claudius as Jupiter



Commodus as Hercules

Megalomania

“One of his spectacles was on such a fantastic scale... He collected all available merchant ships and anchored them in two lines, close together, the whole way from Baiae to the mole at Puteoli, a distance of three miles and some 600 feet. Then he had the ships boarded over, with earth heaped on the planks, and made a kind of Via Appia along which he trotted back and forth for two consecutive days...” **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 19.**



Insanity and Depravity

- **Rumours of Incest** - “It was his habit to commit incest with each of his sisters... They say that he ravished his sister Drusilla before he came of age...” – **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 24.**
- **Cruelty** – feeding prisoners to animals to avoid paying for food - **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 27**; Compels a knight to fight in single combat for insulting his mother - **Dio Cassius 59.10.4.**
- Restores charge of *maiestas* – **Dio Cassius 59.16.8.**
- **Incitatus** – supposedly promised to appoint his horse as Consul - **Dio Cassius 59.14.7.**
- Planned “**British expedition**” – orders soldiers to collect shells - **Dio Cassius 59.25.1-2.**

Assassination of Caligula

- Gaius Caligula is assassinated on the 24th of January AD 41.
- The plot involved - principally Cassius Chaerea and Sabinus, and possibly some officers of the Praetorian Gaurds
- Killed on a covered walkway leading to a theatre.
- His wife and daughter were also subsequently killed.
- Not a widespread plot, no planning for the aftermath.

“The terror inspired by Gaius’ reign could be judged by the sequel; everyone was extremely reluctant to believe that he had really been assassinated, and suspected that the story was invented by himself to discover what people thought of him. The conspirators had not planned to bestow power on anyone in particular, and most senators were so bent on restoring the republic that the consuls summoned the first assembly not to the Senate House, because it was named the Julian Hall, but to the Capitol. Some wanted all memory of the Caesars obliterated and their temples destroyed. People commented on the fact that every Caesar named Gaius had died by the sword, beginning with the one murdered in Cinna’s day.” – **Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 60.**

Claudius – AD 41-54

Aftermath of the Assassination

- No immediate successor – leaves field open.
- The Senate debate the issue, Annius Vinicianus put himself forward as a candidate - Consul Secundus Pomponius invites other candidates for consideration.

“After the murder of Gaius the consuls despatched guards to every part of the city and convened the senate on the Capitol, where many and diverse opinions were expressed; for some favoured a democracy, some a monarchy, and some were for choosing one man, and some another. In consequence they spent the rest of the day and the whole night without accomplishing anything.” – **Dio Cassius 60.1.1-2.**

Praetorians Support Claudius

- Chaerea subsequently executed by Claudius.

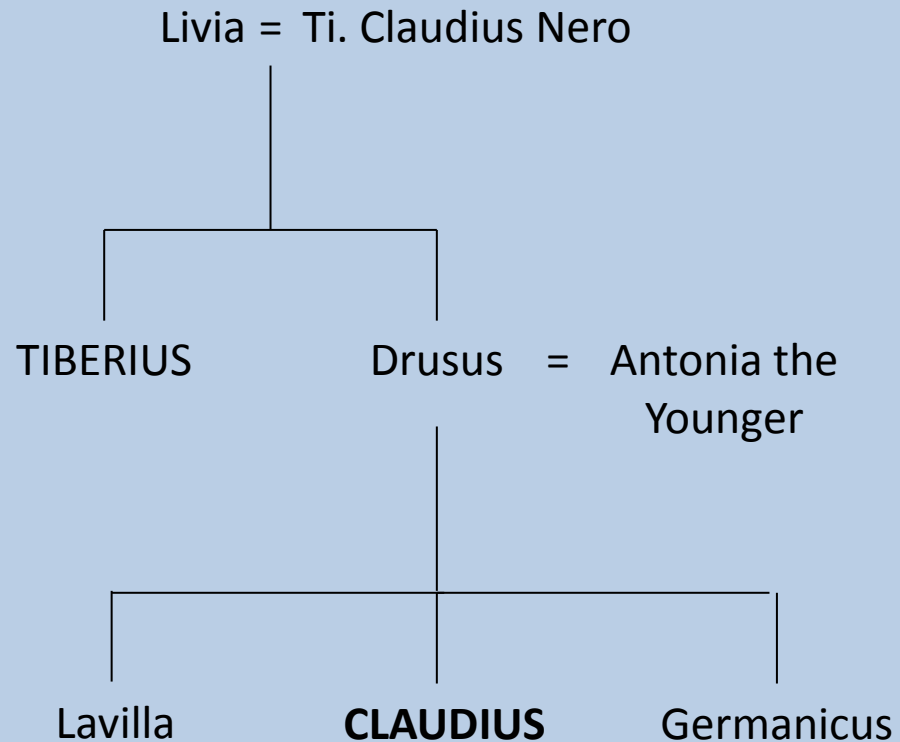


Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1871)
"A Roman Emperor Claudius"

"Meanwhile some soldiers who had entered the palace for the purpose of plundering found Claudius hidden away in a dark corner somewhere... fearing the tumult, was crouching down out of the way. At first the soldiers, supposing that he was some one else or perhaps had something worth taking, dragged him forth; and then, on recognizing him, they hailed him emperor and conducted him to the camp." - **Dio Cassius 60.1.2-3.**

Claudius

- Born **Tiberius Claudius Drusus**, later called **Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus** (lived from 10 BC–AD 54).
- Becomes **Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus** (reigning from AD 41-54).
- Claudius had little previous political and no military experience (considered unable). Gaius promoted him to consulship at the age of 46 (AD 37).



Descriptions and Representation of Claudius

Claudius as Described in the Literary Sources

Dio Cassius

- Grew up in illness and prey to fears, feigned greater “stupidity” than was the case (**60.2.4**).
- Good mental capacity but faltering voice and subject to tremors. (**60.2.1-2**).
- Enjoyed gladiatorial games, aroused criticism for excessive enjoyment (**60.13.1**).

Suetonius

- Troubled by disease in youth, grew up “dull-witted” and with little physical strength (**2-3**).
- Hid from limelight by his family, scorned by members of his family (**2-4**).
- Presented as very gluttonous (**33.1**).

Claudius Representation in Portraiture



Power, Support and Governance

Claudius and the Praetorians

- The fiction of an “elected” or “appointed” princeps put under strain by the manner of Claudius accession.

“At last he allowed the soldiers to swear allegiance to him and promised every man 15,000 sesterces, which made him the first of the Caesars to purchase the loyalty of his troops.” – **Suetonius *Divine Claudius* 10.**



CLAUDIUS. 41-54 AD. AV Aureus (7.69 gm). Struck 41-42 AD. Laureate head right / Battlemented wall inscribed IMPER. RECEPT enclosing praetorian camp in which Fides Praetorianorum stands, spear in right hand, aquilla in front of him; behind him a pediment with fortified flanking walls. **RIC I 7; BMCRE 5.**



PRAETOR. RECEPT. (AD 43-44) – Praetorians Received. RIC 24.

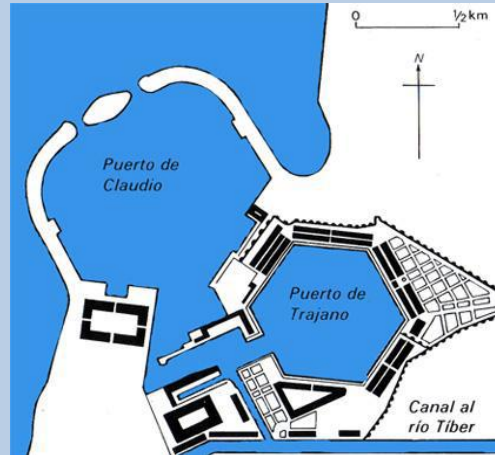
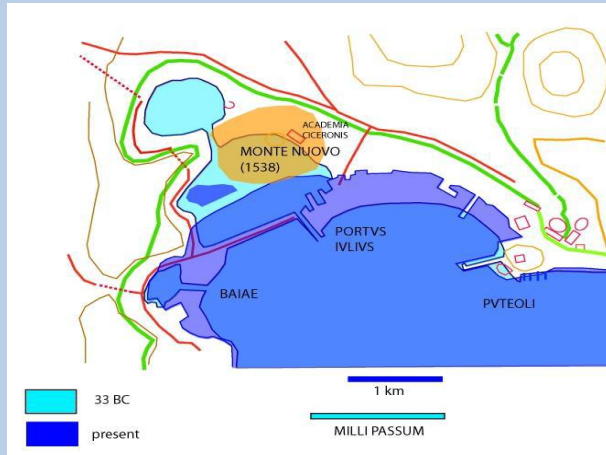
Strained Relations with Senate

- Claudius attempts to be collegial and respectful of the senate - Restores Achaëa and Macedonia as Senatorial provinces in AD 44 - made attendance of senate compulsory (**Dio Cassius 60.11.8**).
- Frequently involved in judging cases, sometimes in imperial household - **Dio 60.4.3-4; Tac. Ann. 11.1-3**.
- Camillus Scribonianus, the governor of Dalmatia, rebel but soldiers quickly renege their support for Camillus.
- Some members of the elite from Gaul are admitted into the Senate – **Tac. Ann. 11.23-25**.

Reliance on Freedmen

- *Topoi* of weak men dominated by wives and freedmen – Claudius frequently represented as such in sources.
 - Freedmen used by Claudius to help manage the imperial household.
- “It was not these infirmities, however, that caused the deterioration of Claudius so much as it was the freedmen and the women with whom he associated; for he, more conspicuously than any of his peers, was ruled by slaves and by women.”
– **Dio Cassius 60.2.4.**

Supplying the Population of Rome



- Harbour built at Ostia by Claudius to help import grain into Rome.
- Also other measures enacted like promising to insure ships sailing in winter season.

“He furthermore desired to make an outlet into the Liris for the Fucine Lake in the Marsian country, in order not only that the land around it might be tilled but also that the river might be made more navigable. But the money was expended in vain.” – **Dio Cassius 60.11.5.**



[In AD 52] the Emperor Claudius... had the water of the Claudia brought to Rome from the springs called Caeruleus and Curtius at the 45th milestone, and likewise the Anio Novus from the 62nd mile-stone both at his own expense. – **ILS 218 = CIL 6.1256**

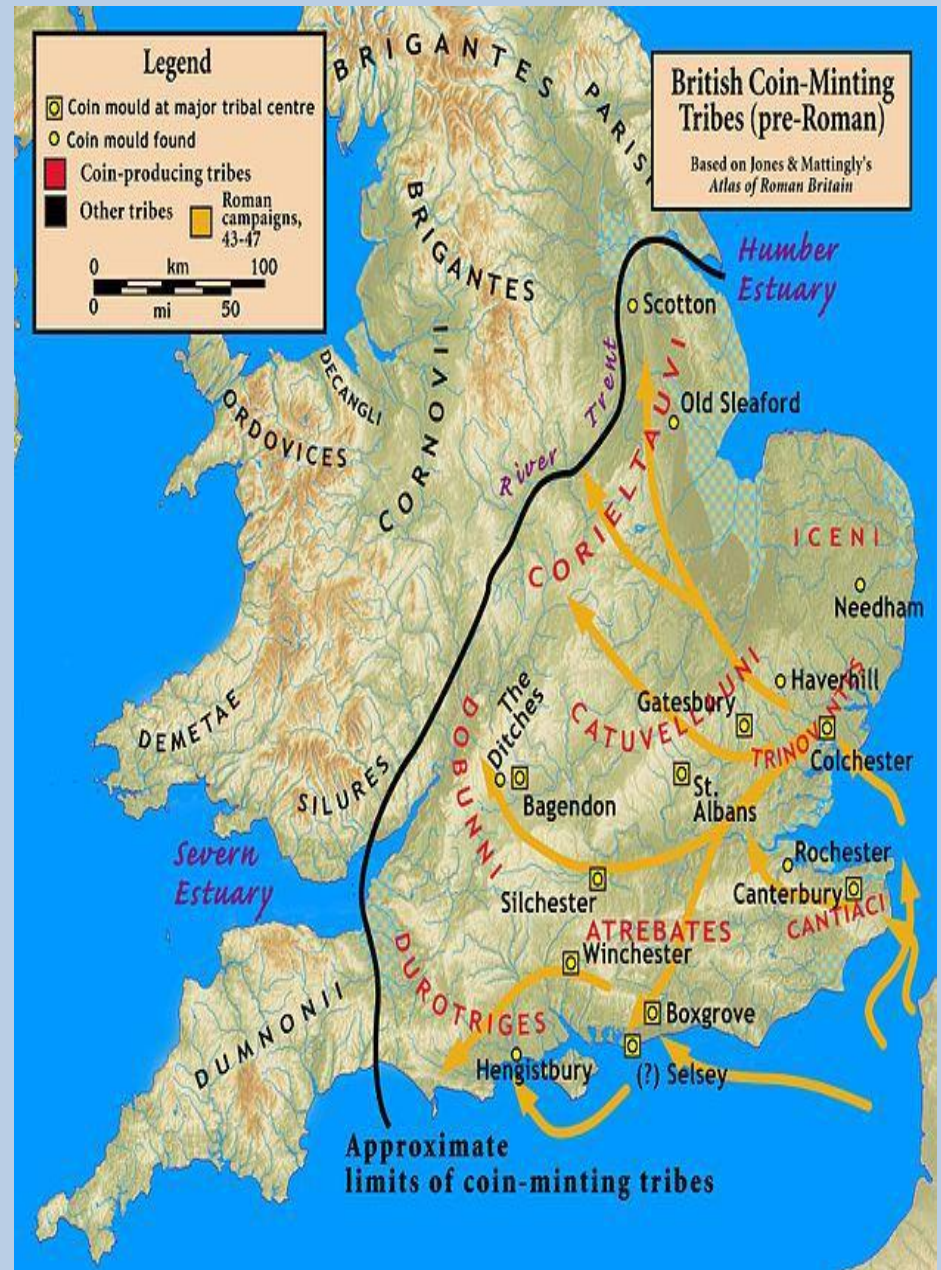
Client Kingdoms

- Under Claudius the kingdom of **Mauretania**, **Lycia**, **Noricum** and **Thrace** were converted into provinces.
- Stable kingdoms, such as Bosphorus and Cilicia, were left untouched.
- Judaea left as client kingdom- Herod Agrippa I.



Invasion of Britain

- AD 43 – four legions under the command of Aulus Plautius and auxiliary troops are sent to Britain – paper strength of 40,000.
- Defeat of Caratacus, chieftain of the Catuvellani.
- Claudius receives the submission of the southern Tribes.
- Provincial capital established at Camulodunum (Colchester).



Triumph

- Claudius' son Tiberius Claudius Germanicus is renamed Britannicus.



Claudius Denarius. 49-50 AD. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG P M TR P VIII IMP XVI, laureate head right / DE BRITANN on architrave of triumphal arch surmounted by equestrian statue left between two trophies. **RIC 45, RSC 19, BMC 50.**



Claudius and Britannia – Aphrodisias (Caria)

Family and Dynastic Succession

Wives of Claudius

- (1) Plautia Urgulania, (2) Aelia Paetina – gives birth to a daughter called Claudia Antonia; (3) Valeria Messalina (cousin of Claudius) – Claudia Octavia and Britannicus; (4) Agrippina the Younger (niece of Claudius).
- **Messalina** - Adultery with Gaius Silius – is accused of attempting to do away with Claudius. Messalina's plot is reported to Claudius by Narcissus.
- Claudius marries his niece **Agrippina**, mother of Nero.

Useful Reading

- Potter, D. (2009) *Rome in the Ancient World* (London: Thames & Hudson) pages 183-186.
- Barrett, A. A. (1989) *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd.) – read chapters 10 and 11. (Library e-book).
- McAlindon, D. (1957) 'Claudius and the Senators', *The American Journal of Philology* 78 (3): 279-286. (Available on JSTOR).
- Kleiner, D. E. E. (1992) *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press). – read chapter 3.