

Caligula Among the Client Kings

Dio (59.24.1) reports that the people of Rome were troubled by the perceived influence on Caligula of kings Agrippa and Antiochus, whom the author dubbed the emperor's instructors in tyranny (*τυραννοδιδασκάλους*). This term suggests that the wrong kinds of teachers might yield a young ruler who was less an emperor than a tyrant. This paper re-examines the social dynamics of Caligula's relationships with the so-called "client kings" and argues that the figure of the client king was used to exert pressure on the living emperor or construct and comment upon the legacies of emperors past.

Caligula's memory in historiography and biography is striking for the prominence of client kings therein. This prominence reflects the emperor's social and political relationships with such kings and their kingdoms (Wardle 1992). Moreover, in life, the emperor's reputation arguably suffered because of choices he made that likened his image and status to kings in the traditions of the East (Firpo 1986) and the *Diadochi*. At times, he seems to have even viewed himself as competing with certain client kings (Suet. *Cal.* 35.1; Malloch 2004). Caligula's memory would, in death, continue to be shaped by the figure of the client king. In that regard, the paper will argue that Caligula's perceived "madness" (Yavetz 1996) led to historiographical fashioning of the emperor using Attalus III, the final Attalid king, as a model.

Bibliography

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