The story of Claudius has often been told before. Ancient writers saw the emperor as the dupe of his wives and palace insiders; Robert Graves tried to rehabilitate him as a far shrewder, if still frustrated, politician. Josiah Osgood shifts the focus off the personality of Claudius and onto what his tumultuous years in power reveal about the developing political culture of the early Roman Empire. What precedents set by Augustus were followed? What had to be abandoned? How could a new emperor win the support of key elements of Roman society? This richly illustrated discussion draws on a range of newly discovered documents, exploring events that move far beyond the city of Rome and Italy to Egypt and Judea, Morocco and Britain. Claudius Caesar provides a new perspective not just on Claudius himself, but on all Roman emperors, the Roman Empire, and the nature of empires more generally.

Josiah Osgood is Professor of Classics at Georgetown University. His teaching and research touch many areas of Roman history and Latin literature, but focus especially on the late Roman Republic and early Empire. His first book, Caesar’s Legacy: Civil War and the Emergence of the Roman Empire (Cambridge, 2006), examined the period after the assassination of Julius Caesar. Osgood has more recently published several articles on Caesar, as well as aspects of Roman family life and education. He is currently finishing a Latin textbook for intermediate and advanced students, A Suetonius Reader, and is also co-editing with Susanna Braund A Companion to Persius and Juvenal.
CLAUDIUS CAESAR

Image and Power in the Early Roman Empire

JOSIAH OSGOOD

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Working on *Claudius Caesar* more, and less, intensely over the last five years, I have incurred a number of debts, which I repay not only with this book but also sincerest gratitude. Many at Georgetown University, where I am honored to teach, have given much help. I thank especially my beloved colleagues in the Department of Classics for all their confidence in me, and our students for the stimulation they offer. Jack Carlson in particular kept me on my toes. I also thank Dean of the College Chet Gillis and Provost Jim O’Donnell, as well as Jane McAuliffe (formerly Dean of the College, and now President of Bryn Mawr College), for their generous support; and I thank the Graduate School of Georgetown University for research funding. The American Academy in Rome facilitated a research trip to Rome, and it was a great privilege to work in its superb library, now beautifully restored. I also express my gratitude to the staff of Lauinger Library at Georgetown for their unfailing help, and salute University Librarian Artemis Kirk for her heroic efforts on the Library’s behalf. Finally, Yale University welcomed me back into its embrace in the spring of 2005 as a visiting fellow, and I thank old friends there (as well as new) for their help and hospitality, including Ann Hanson, John Matthews and Veronika Grimm, Kirk Swinehart, and Jay and Gordon Williams.

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to careful interpretation. In Cambridge, Liz Hanlon, Laura Morris, and Rosina Di Marzo have helped shepherd a manuscript of many parts through production. I thank them, and my copy-editor, Anna Zaranko.

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It was Adam who took me to see for the first time Henry Walters’ collections of paintings in Baltimore, including Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s A Roman Emperor AD 41 (1871), which so brilliantly encapsulates the theme of this book. In that painting is shown not one emperor, but three: Caligula lying dead, Claudius cowering behind a curtain, and, finally, Augustus, who, atop his blood-spattered herm, presides over the whole sordid scene. In 1917, Henry Walters purchased this canvas and added it to his father’s collection, a notable piece of which was Gérôme’s The Death of Caesar (1867), a dramatic depiction of an earlier and seemingly nobler assassination, without soldiers, but Senators, in pristine white togas, their swords raised high. Displayed together now in the Walters Art Gallery, the two works invite the viewer to reflect on how much the Roman world had changed from 44 BC to AD 41. For ten years I have been thinking almost daily about the history encapsulated by this extraordinary pair of paintings – and for all who encourage, or even just put up with, my eccentric interests, I am thankful.
Note on abbreviations


Modern reference works are also cited according to the abbreviations of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Note in addition the following:

- **RPC** A. Burnett *et al.*, *Roman Provincial Coinage* (London, 1992–)
Map 1 The Roman Empire in AD 41