



Cast of a coin depicting the emperor Hadrian. This is one of a series of similar casts which can be viewed on the GNM website

<https://collectionssearchtwmuseums.org.uk/#details=ecatalogue.519513>

Another key resource is the Portable Antiquities Scheme

<https://finds.org.uk/>. Start with their brilliant Roman coin guide: <https://finds.org.uk/romancoins>

From the reign of Caligula, the head of the current Emperor or one of his relatives was depicted on the obverse ('heads' side) of most of the coins minted in Rome and its provinces. In this way – long before cameras, TV and Facebook - the image of the ruler was disseminated across the Empire. The portraits themselves were often artistically outstanding: these were faces of power, depicted 'realistically', but also idealistically: the portraits rarely show the effects of age, and the laurel wreath – a symbol of victory and triumph – painted an Emperor in a heroic light. Hadrian was the first Emperor to adopt the Greek practice of wearing a beard!

MY RESEARCH

How were images of Emperors used for mass communication and visual propaganda in the Roman Provinces?