



Bust of Gaius

Date
before 1881

Primary Maker
Pietro Bazzanti

Medium
Marble

Description
This marble portrait is a nineteenth-century copy of an ancient Roman bust. The original sculpture, which can be found in the Galleria dei Busti at the Vatican Museums, was thought to be a portrait of a young Caesar Augustus when it was first unearthed in the early 1800s. Scholars later determined that the features better aligned with portraits of the emperor’s grandsons, Gaius (20 BCE–4 CE) and Lucius (17 BCE–2 CE). Surviving depictions of the two brothers are typically similar in style and treatment, but experts such as John Pollini have convincingly argued for this bust’s identification as Gaius based on detailed comparison with other known portraits. Gaius and Lucius were raised by Augustus as his adopted sons, making them joint heirs to the Roman Empire. Tragically, Gaius died of an unknown illness at the age of twenty-three, before he could fulfill his destined role. Several Italian sculptors and workshops crafted copies of the original Gaius bust in the decades following its discovery. This version was created by Pietro Bazzanti, a Florentine sculptor who specialized in reproductions of famous artworks and antiquities. Bazzanti’s

workshop can still be found along the Arno river in Florence, where it is now known as the Galleria d’Arte Pietro Bazzanti e Figlio.

Dimensions
Overall: 17 × 11 1/4 × 9 in. (43.2 × 28.6 × 22.9 cm)