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CLAUDIUS AT BAIAE*

On 15 March 46 Claudius published at Baiae an edict enfranchising the Anauni, Tulliasses and Sinduni.[1] The citizenship of these tribespeople in the Italian Alps had previously been uncertain: they were attached to the nearby *municipium* of Tridentum, which already enjoyed Roman citizenship, but were themselves no more than *de facto* Roman citizens. Claudius now confirmed their legal status as Romans.

The date and place of the edict are securely fixed by the opening (lines 1–6):[2]

M. Iunio Silano, Q. Sulpicio Camerino cos., | Idibus Martis Bais in praetorio edictum | Ti. Claudi Caesaris Augusti Germanici propositum fuit id | quod infra scriptum est:
|| [5] Ti. Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus pont. | maxim. trib. potest. VI imp. XI p. p. cos. designatus IIII dicit:

In the consulship of Marcus Iunius Silanus and Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus [A.D. 46], | on the Ides of March [15 March] at Baiae in the imperial headquarters, an edict | of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus was published, | which is recorded below.
|| [5] Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, pontifex | maximus, holding the tribunician power for the sixth time [A.D. 46], imperator for the eleventh time, father of his country, consul designate for the fourth time, declares:

The edict in fact deals with two separate issues. Claudius first discusses a problem concerning Comum and the tribe of the Bergalei. The controversy has apparently been rumbling on since the reign of Tiberius (lines 7–21):

cum ex ueteribus controuersis pe<nd>entibus aliquamdiu etiam | temporibus Ti. Caesaris patrui mei, ad quas ordinandas | Pinarium Apollinarem miserat—quae tantum modo || [10] inter Comenses essent, quantum memoria refero, et | Bergaleos—isque primum apsentia pertinaci patrui mei, | deinde etiam Gai principatu, quod ab eo non exigebatur | referre (non stulte quidem) neglexserit, et posteac | detulerit Camurius Statutus ad me agros plerosque || [15] et saltus mei iuris esse; in rem praesentem misi | Plantam Iulium amicum et comitem meum, qui | cum, adhibitis procuratoribus meis qui{s}que in alia | regione quique in vicinia erant, summa cura inqui|sierit et cognouerit, cetera quidem, ut mihi demons||trata [20] commentario facto ab ipso sunt, statuat pronun|tietque ipsi permitto. (*uacat*)

Since, because of old and long-pending controversies, even in the | time of my uncle Tiberius Caesar, [when] he had sent Pinarius Apollinaris to settle them | —these controversies were only, || [10] if I remember correctly, between Comum and the Bergalei— | [since] he [i.e.

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[1] *CIL* V 5050 = *ILS* 206 = E.M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge, 1967), no. 368.

[2] Text from Smallwood (n. 1); translation from R.K. Sherk, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge, 1988), no. 52, with slight modifications.

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Pinarius Apollinaris], at first because of the persistent absence of my uncle | and then in the rule of Gaius because it was not demanded of him, | had neglected to send in a report, not because of foolishness I may add, and [since] later | Camurius Statutus had informed me that several fields || [15] and forest-pasturelands were within my jurisdiction, I dealt with this immediate situation by sending | Iulius Planta, my friend and companion. | Since he has conferred with my procurators who were either in other | areas or in the immediate vicinity, and since he has with the greatest care inves|tigated the matter and has held a hearing, in regard to these various matters, as they have been brought to my atten||tion [20] by the written report made by him, I grant him permission to decide them and to de|liver verdicts.

The emperor then comes to the matter of the Tridentine tribes (lines 22–37):

quod ad condicionem Anaunorum et Tulliassium et Sinduno|rum pertinet, quorum partem delator adtributam Triden|tinis, partem ne adtributam quidem arguisse dicitur, || [25] tametsi animaduerto non nimium firmam id genus homi|num habere ciuitatis Romanae originem, tamen, cum longa | usurpatione in possessionem eius fuisse dicatur et ita permix|tum cum Tridentinis, ut diduci ab is sine graui splendi<di> municipi | iniuria non possit, patior eos in eo iure, in quo esse se existima||uerunt [30], permanere ben<e>ficio meo, eo quidem libentius, quod | pleri{s}que ex eo genere hominum etiam militare in praetorio | meo dicuntur, quidam uero ordines quoque duxisse, | nonnulli <a>llecti in decurias Romae res iudicare. |

quod ben<e>ficium is ita tribuo, ut quaecumque tanquam || [35] ciues Romani gesserunt egeruntque aut inter se aut cum | Tridentinis ali<i>sue, rata{m} esse iubea<m>, nominaque ea, | quae habuerunt antea tamquam ciues Romani ita habere is permittam.

Concerning the status of the Anauni and Tulliasses and Sinduni, | some of whom, an informant is said to have proved, are attributed to the Triden|tini, while others are not attributed, || [25] although I understand that this class of people do not have a very strong case | for Roman citizenship, nevertheless, since by long | usage it is said they are in possession of it and are so associ|ated with the Tridentini that they cannot be withdrawn from them without serious injury to that splendid municipality, | I permit them to remain in that legal status in which they believed they were. || [30] I do this as a favour to them, indeed I do it all the more freely because | many of this class of people are said to be even soldiers in my Praetorian Guard, | some actually line commanders, | and some few enrolled in panels at Rome to judge cases at law. |

I do them this favour so that in regard to whatever things they have done as if || [35] they were Roman citizens, or whatever measures they have taken either among themselves or with | the Tridentini or with anyone else, I may now order those things or measures to be legally binding. And the names, | which they had before acting as if they were Roman citizens, I now permit them to retain.

The nature of Claudius' relationship with the Senate is one of the most disputed aspects of his principate. Sensitive to its initial hostility towards him, 'Claudius was an eager participant in meetings of the House, more so than any other emperor between Augustus' prime and the reign of Vespasian'. Yet he also had an 'indubitable taste for doing things himself', something which marginalized the Senate.[3]

According to an unpublished suggestion of C.E. Stevens' reported by Barbara Levick, Claudius' actions on 15 March 46 were calculated, 'a snub to the Senate, which in conservative constitutional theory was supposed to control Italy (Tac. *Ann.* 13.4.3), and one which he aggravated by issuing the edict on the Ides of March'; Levick comments that this observation by Stevens, although at first sight it appears trivial, 'throw[s] a flood of light […] on the policies of Claudius (Caesarian and hard on the Senate)'.[4] Certainly Claudius' personal management of civic affairs in Italy, a senatorial

[3] B.M. Levick, *Claudius* (London, 1990), 94, 82; cf. J. Osgood, *Claudius Caesar* (Cambridge, 2011), 193.

[4] B.M. Levick in ead. (ed.), *The Ancient Historian and his Materials: Essays in Honour of C.E.*

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prerogative,[5] suggests insensitivity towards the House. Equally crass was Claudius' pontificating from his headquarters at the holiday resort of Baiae, where the edict was subsequently posted up (line 2).[6] For Stevens, these slights against the Senate's *maiestas* were intentional; but it may be that the emperor's behaviour was tactless rather than malicious.

How was Claudius being 'Caesarian'? Caesar had extended the Roman citizenship to Cisalpine Gauls in 49 B.C., and Claudius here asserted his authority over the same matters in the same geographical area. Stevens also saw significance in the date: Claudius was pointedly reminding the Senate, on the anniversary of its most forceful show of resistance against an individual who had sought autocratically to dominate it, that the emperor was still in charge. The events of the Ides of March 44 B.C., and Caesar's association with northern Italy, will not have been forgotten by any emperor, least of all by the antiquarian Claudius. But Stevens' interpretation of the evidence is not the only one possible. I wish to suggest an alternative reconstruction of events, one from which Claudius emerges rather differently: not viciously opposed to the Senate, but anxious to show deference towards that august body. Central to this reassessment is a new explanation of the date of the edict.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 35) reports a ruling of Augustus' that, in the months when a *legitimus senatus* was to be held, it should be convened not more than twice, on the Kalends and the Ides. Claudius' insult might, then, seem to be all the greater, since he would not merely be usurping the Senate's prerogative but would be doing so on the very day of its session, though absent from the House himself. However, in his account of the aftermath of Caesar's assassination Suetonius (*Iul.* 88) records that the following decisions were taken:

> curiam, in qua occisus est, obstrui placuit Idusque Martias Parricidium nominari, ac ne umquam eo die senatus ageretur.
>
> It was voted that the hall in which he was slain be walled up, that the Ides of March be called the Day of Parricide, and that a meeting of the senate should never be called on that day. (trans. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library)

Dio (47.19.1) supports Suetonius on this last point. We know that in A.D. 69 and 129 the Senate duly met on 14, rather than 15, March; a possible instance from 203 is less certain, but the prohibition was still being observed in the fourth century.[7] There is every reason, then, to think that the ban was strictly adhered to from the outset. The Senate was therefore not in session on 15 March 46, and the timing of Claudius' edict cannot have been designed to undermine the House by suggesting its redundancy on the very day of its session.

Nor, in light of this, need we assume that Claudius in selecting the Ides intended to evoke the shade of Caesar.[8] The date of the edict may have been determined by

Stevens on his Seventieth Birthday (Farnborough, 1975), 1–2; cf. also ead., 'Nero's *quinquennium*', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, vol. 3 (Brussels, 1983), 211–25, at 218 n. 35.

[5] Cf. W. Eck, *Die staatliche Organisation Italiens in der hohen Kaiserzeit* (Munich, 1979), 8.

[6] Cf. F.G.B. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1977), 24–8 and esp. 27 n. 32. Our copy of the inscription was found at Tridentum, a town to which the relevance of the matter is obvious.

[7] Cf. R.J.A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton, 1984), 209.

[8] Prof. Gibson asks whether parallels can be found for other edicts issued on the Ides of March by

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primarily practical considerations. Claudius' informant had brought to his attention a problem that had languished unresolved since the time of Tiberius (lines 7–21). It is not clear whether the citizenship of Anauni, Tulliasses and Sinduni had also been in dispute for this long, but Claudius wished to deal with the first issue as a matter of urgency. Let us suppose that the report had reached Claudius too late for it to be referred to the Senate. He knew that the next opportunity for this was a full fortnight away, which, given that the resolution of the first problem was long overdue, was an unacceptable delay; he needed to deal with it then and there, and the rights of the Senate would have to take second place to the troubles of the emperor's long-suffering subjects. In a spirit of administrative zeal and efficiency, Claudius also decided that he would sort out the second problem at the same time. That his personal protection force included some strapping men from the Alpine tribes whose future was in question (lines 31–2) perhaps tipped the balance; this emperor in particular will not have forgotten how much he owed to the support of the Praetorian Guard.

Why the Ides, if not to evoke Caesar? Perhaps in fact Claudius was trying to show deference towards the House. He can hardly have been in Rome for the Senate's session on the 14th, since the journey from the capital to Baiae will have taken more than one day.[9] We may on this assumption reconstruct a plausible sequence of events: the emperor, already installed at Baiae by the 14th, receives his investigator's report a little in advance of the Senate's meeting but too late to refer the question to the House; Claudius is arrogant or thoughtless enough to assume the Senate's control of Italian affairs, but he is at least aware that dealing with a properly senatorial matter on the day of the House's meeting will cause unnecessary offence; so he decides to delay the edict until the first available date after this, the Ides of March. Unfortunately, Claudius' efforts backfire hopelessly: although he steers away from the Scylla of issuing an edict on the day of the Senate's session, he lurches into the Charybdis of evoking its greatest agitator and adversary in history.

Stevens' interpretation may be correct. But it is also possible now to regard the edict of 15 March 46 not as a calculated snub by Claudius but, at least in part, as a clumsy attempt to show respect to the Senate.

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other emperors. Unfortunately I find none in J.H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri* (Philadelphia, 1989) (a work whose lack of a proper index makes it difficult to consult), nor via EDCS. But it is certainly possible that something has escaped my notice.

[9] I owe this point to Dr Kantor.

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