

THE LYONS TABLET AND TACITEAN HINDSIGHT

There is already a copious literature comparing Claudius' oration on the admission of the *primores Galliae* into the Roman Senate with Tacitus' account of the speech and of the opposition's case in *Annals* 11. 23–4. Yet the Emperor's own purpose in speaking as he did still needs some illumination. Scholarly concentration on technical points about the citizenship, on Claudius' antiquarianism and on his debt to Livy has been fruitful, but it has often distracted attention from Claudius' immediate aim. Meanwhile, Tacitus' interpretation has been insidious in colouring our view of what course of action the imperial orator was trying to defend before the Senate.¹

I

Tacitus explains that in the year 48, while Claudius as censor was reviewing the roll of the Senate, a request was received from some leading men of Gallia Comata who belonged to *civitates foederatae* and already held the citizenship as individuals. They were asking for what he calls the *ius adipiscendorum in urbe honorum*, the right to hold office in Rome. The request was hotly contested before the Emperor, presumably at a meeting of his *consilium*. He himself spoke in favour and then summoned the Senate. As a result of his speech, a senatorial decree granted the request, the Aedui being the first to receive what Tacitus calls the *senatorum in urbe ius*, the right to membership of the Roman Senate. Both the original speech, preserved on a bronze tablet found at Lyons, and Tacitus' version make it clear that the fundamental issue was membership of the Senate, for which eligibility to hold Roman magistracies was normally a precondition and certainly a result. There is no reason to think that Tacitus meant to distinguish the substance of the privilege requested from that of the privilege granted, but his language leaves it unclear whether that privilege was the *latus clavus*, which gave men of non-senatorial origins the right to stand for office, or direct adlection into the Senate by the Emperor acting as censor.² On either view, the

¹ Of the vast literature on the Lyons Tablet, I list here those works that I have used most extensively and will cite most often (in abbreviated form): P. Fabia¹, *La Table Claudienne de Lyon* (Lyon, 1929); P. Fabia², 'A propos de la Table Claudienne', *REA* 33 (1931), 118 ff.; 225 ff.; E. Liechtenhan, 'Quelques réflexions sur la Table Claudienne et Tac., *Ann.* XI, 23 et 24', *REL* 24 (1946), 198 ff.; K. Wellesley, 'Can you trust Tacitus?', *Greece and Rome* N.S. 1 (1954), 13 ff.; F. Vittinghoff, 'Zur Rede des Kaisers Claudius über die Aufnahme von "Galliern" in den römischen Senat', *Hermes* 82 (1954), 348 ff.; N. P. Miller, 'The Claudian Tablet and Tacitus: a Reconsideration', *Rhein. Mus.* N. F. 99 (1956), 304 ff.; R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958); U. Schillinger-Häfele, 'Claudius und Tacitus über die Aufnahme von Galliern in den Senat', *Historia* 14 (1965), 443 ff.; D. Flach, 'Die Rede des Claudius de iure honorum Gallis dando', *Hermes* 101 (1973), 313 ff.; A. De Vivo, *Tacito e Claudio* (Naples, 1980). I cite the Tablet according to H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* no. 212, Tacitus' chapters according to the second edition (1965) of E. Koestermann's Teubner text.

² The phrase *ius adipiscendorum honorum* suggests the *latus clavus*, as in *Annals* 14. 50, where it seems to denote a privilege regularly granted to large numbers by the Princeps. It is not, however, incompatible with the adlection because that would make those enrolled in the Senate eligible to stand for offices higher than the rank at which they are admitted. Adlection suits the phrase *ius senatorum* better, and the fact that the request was made during Claudius' censorship favours that hypothesis, as the *latus clavus* could be sought at any time. The *primores*, probably members of the *concilium Galliarum* (as Fabia suggested), would be men of mature years who might not want to stand for the quaestorship. We know from inscriptions that Claudius adlected some Italians *inter tribunicios* (*CIL* 5. 3117; 10. 6520): the *primores* could have been admitted

Emperor could act without asking senatorial permission, but, for diplomatic reasons, he wished to win the Senate's assent to the presence of men from Tres Galliae, a region hitherto unrepresented in that body.

Most scholars would now agree that Tacitus was familiar with Claudius' speech either from the verbatim report in the *acta senatus*, or a published collection of Claudian orations, or, perhaps less plausibly, through a reliable account in a literary source, and that the objections he reports as raised *apud principem* are inferred from the speech itself.³ Most would also accept that many of the discrepancies between the original and Tacitus' version spring from the historian's obligation to condense the speech and alter its style to harmonize with his own.⁴ Then too there is an inevitable difference in the standpoint of the historian whose work is meant to remain intelligible to generations of readers from that of the orator who responds to the feelings of his immediate audience and takes for granted their grasp of the issues in hand.⁵ Therefore Tacitus, though an admirer of Claudian oratory (*Annals* 13. 3), was bound to rewrite the speech if he wished to include it in his history.

Not all readers of Claudius and Tacitus, however, feel that the historian stopped there. But those who agree in thinking that Tacitus made more fundamental changes advance different notions as to his purpose in making them and the actual effect they have.

The most common suggestion has been that Tacitus set out to improve the speech. To this end he omitted irrelevancies and autobiographical details, altered the order and relation of the arguments, and, perhaps, even added points of his own (though the loss of the upper part of the bronze table makes this last assumption profoundly precarious and not all have subscribed to it). The motive of improvement is plausible. For although Tacitus felt that Claudius could compose an elegant speech, he shows us in his treatment of what the Emperor said in A.D. 53, on the not dissimilar issue of granting immunity from tribute to the island of Cos, that he was not always impressed with his argumentation.⁶ He would probably have agreed with Suetonius' judgment, as applied to that Emperor's autobiography, that he wrote 'magis inepte quam ineleganter'.⁷ The points that Tacitus singles out for criticism on the later occasion, excessive antiquarian detail and undue emphasis on the benefits sustained by himself rather than on the services of Cos to the Roman people, have their parallels in Claudius' speech on the Gauls, with his discourse on the early Roman kings and

to that rank or quaestorian rank. I have ignored the thesis, which still recurs from time to time, that the privilege requested was a legal right that some particular category of provincial citizens lacked. The refutation of this view by H. J. Cunningham in *CQ* 8 (1914), 132 ff.; 282 ff. and 9 (1915), 57 ff. and by H. Last in *JRS* 24 (1934), 58 ff. seems to me conclusive. Under the Empire no Roman citizen of non-senatorial origins had a *right* to stand for office: he had to receive the *privilege* from the Princeps.

³ The origin of the objections given by Tacitus was pointed out by Liechtenhan, and is generally accepted. The exception is Wellesley pp. 25-7, who thinks that Tacitus invented a speech for Claudius to match the objections which were actually raised in the Senate after the imperial oration and were recorded in the *acta senatus*. But, as Miller p. 313 notes, the hostile arguments as Tacitus gives them actually fit the speech on the Tablet better than the Tacitean version. For another example of such inference by Tacitus, see R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), p. 707, who points out that at *Ann.* 12. 25 he attributes to the audience remarks actually made by Claudius himself in his speech on Nero's adoption, according to Suetonius, *Claudius* 39.

⁴ The best exposition of this view is by Miller, who seems to regard these literary considerations as a total explanation of the discrepancies.

⁵ These points are well made by Wellesley p. 16 n. 1 and De Vivo p. 29. ⁶ *Ann.* 12. 61.

⁷ Suet. *Claudius* 41. 3; cf. Tacitus' words at *Ann.* 13. 3: 'nec in Claudio, quotiens meditata dissereret, elegantiam requireres'. For *elegantia* as referring principally to choice of words, see D. M. Last-R. M. Ogilvie, 'Claudius and Livy', *Latomus* 17 (1958), 486 ff.

his remarks about his procurator Julius Vestinus and the good behaviour of the Gauls during his father's taking of the census. Tacitus' omission of the clumsy imperial jokes again suggests agreement with Suetonius, who alludes to the Emperor's feeble and contrived humour.⁸

The fact that Tacitus suppresses these very features of the Gallic speech in his version supports the idea that he was aiming to improve the presentation of the Emperor's case. But there is more. He also connives with Claudius in omitting other points that would aid the opposition. Thus, whereas the historian notes that Claudius, in praising Lollia Paulina, deliberately omitted to mention her marriage with Caligula, he does not repair the Emperor's omission of the same evil precedent in discussing his predecessors' policy on senatorial recruitment. Yet Tacitus had already written his account of the reign of Gaius and presumably knew the facts.⁹ Again, in stressing the continuous loyalty of the Gauls since their conquest by Julius Caesar a century before, Claudius passes over the serious rebellion of Florus and Sacrovir, in which the Aedui, soon to be particularly honoured in the senatorial decree, were deeply involved. Tacitus makes the same omission, though he had given extended treatment to the rebellion earlier in his work.¹⁰ Indeed he intensifies its effect by an addition (one that seems certain) – a reference to the ancient Gallic sack of Rome in the fourth century.¹¹ Tacitus' Emperor merely alludes to this objection to the Gauls, saying 'capti a Gallis sumus'. But his opponents on the imperial *consilium* offer a more melodramatic version of that event than the usual one given by Tacitus himself in the *Historiae*: they allege that the Capitol itself was captured.¹² Syme aptly remarks that Tacitus made up this silly argument 'to refute it majestically'.¹³

In fact these critics are generally presented as more narrow-minded and reactionary than the opposition the real Claudius seems to expect. The Lyons Tablet shows the Emperor dealing with the objection that Italians are preferable to provincial senators (col. II. 5): Tacitus allows the spokesmen for the opposition to start from that point of view ('non adeo aegram Italiam') but soon makes it clear that they really speak for Latium and the ruling families of the old Republic, and that the admission of *tota Italia* still rankles with them. Thus the Tablet's 'Quid ergo? Non Italicus senator provinciali potior est?' becomes in Tacitus 'quem ultra honorem residuis nobilium aut si quis pauper e Latio senator foret?'.¹⁴ Indeed the whole way in which Tacitus gives the objections first and allows the Emperor to speak in reply and at greater length

⁸ Suet. *Claudius* 21. 5: 'immixtis interdum frigidis et arcessitis iocis'.

⁹ Lollia Paulina: *Ann.* 12. 22. 2. The facts about Gaius' grants of the *latus clavus* are given by Dio at 59. 9. 5. Though Tacitus leaves out Claudius' references to Augustus and Tiberius, he could have allowed the opposition to mention Gaius, had he wished to strengthen it. Caesar's senatorial adlections are also not signalled explicitly by Tacitus and may well have been omitted by Claudius for diplomatic reasons (Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 705): the references to the Balbi and to the enfranchisement of the Transpadani at *Ann.* 11. 24. 3 relate implicitly to Caesar.

¹⁰ *Ann.* 3. 40 ff. Wellesley p. 23 n. 2 notes that Livy, *Per.* 138 records disturbances while Drusus took the census which Claudius omits in his speech. If Tacitus knew of them, this could be another example of connivance with the Emperor.

¹¹ *Ann.* 11. 23. 4 and 24. 5. Though Miller p. 311 seems to think that this may have been in Claudius' speech, it is difficult to see where it would naturally come, as the section on Gaul and the Gauls seems to begin in Col. II. 10.

¹² *Hist.* 3. 72. See O. Skutsch in *JRS* 68 (1978), 93–4 proposing to read 'qui <capto> Capitolio et arce Romana' at *Ann.* 11. 23. 4.

¹³ Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 624, noting other examples of this technique in Tacitus.

¹⁴ Vittinghoff p. 354 suggests that the objection to Veneti and Insubres voiced in 11. 23. 3 may accurately reflect sentiments in some senatorial circles in Claudius' time, but a plea in favour of preferential status exclusively for the ancient nobility and families from Latium seems unlikely in this period. His other suggestion, that Tacitus is reducing the opposition's case to absurdity, seems more plausible. This view is argued fully by De Vivo, pp. 38 ff., 89.

suggests his sympathy with Claudius' proposal. We may contrast the way he saves his criticism for the end of his account of Claudius' generosity to Cos, or the way his report of Claudius' speech justifying the adoption of Nero by appealing to the practice of his imperial predecessors ends with the telling comment of the *periti* that this was the first adoption in the history of the ancient Claudian gens.¹⁵

But has Tacitus, for all his good will, actually succeeded in improving the speech? Most scholars have held that he does, but there have been dissentient voices. For Wellesley, as for Carcopino before him,¹⁶ Tacitus was engaged in an arid pursuit of form over meaning which led to the replacement of a solid and sensible oration by a futile and artificial school declamation. For Vittinghoff, Tacitus was led into rhetorical clichés by his tendency to replace with generalizations points in the Emperor's speech that no longer seemed relevant or intelligible in the time of Trajan and Hadrian. The transformation of Claudius into an abstract entity, the Roman Emperor, which has struck all readers of Tacitus to a greater or lesser extent, is, in the eyes of these scholars, just a replacement of the colour and concreteness of the original by commonplaces suitable to any occasion.

Vittinghoff, like the other scholars who have compared Claudius' remarks with Tacitus' version, was largely concerned with their relative quality. But his remarks about irrelevancy and unintelligibility point to a different way of looking at some of Tacitus' alterations. He suggested that Tacitus' own origins and marriage connections could help to explain his sympathy for Claudius' proposal, that he omitted the Emperor's implicit concession of Italian superiority as no longer relevant when he wrote and possibly offensive to Trajan and his Narbonese wife. He concluded that Tacitus showed in his version the historical vision of his own day.

The notion that Tacitus changed Claudius' speech radically not only because he wished to improve it, but because he had a different historical perspective, deserves further investigation. For, as I hope to show, it is not only revealing for Tacitus: it can also help us to see the Emperor's oration as the limited exercise it really was, differing from Tacitus', not only in presentation, but in substance. An attempt has recently been made to compare the speeches along these lines by Arturo de Vivo, who argues that Tacitus gave the imperial oration a different ideological content expressive of his own attitudes as a senator in the time of Trajan and Hadrian. My debt to his analysis will be clear in what follows. But I believe that his conclusions go too far in respect to Tacitus, who is alleged to have used the speech to make a covert attack on the philhellenism of Trajan and Hadrian, and not far enough in respect to Claudius, who is still presented, in the well-worn apologetic vein, as a great centralizer effacing differences between provincials and Italians, and a shrewd prince stripping the old nobility of control of the Senate by enrolling provincials more favourable to himself.¹⁷

II

There is no need to burden the reader with yet another full analysis of the differences between Claudius' speech and Tacitus' rendering in *Annals* 11. 23–4, but a summary outline of the principal changes Tacitus has made in substance and arrangement will provide a convenient basis for the interpretation of Claudius' aims.

¹⁵ *Ann.* 12. 25 (see above, n. 3).

¹⁶ J. Carcopino, *Points de vue sur l'imperialisme romain* (Paris, 1934), pp. 159 ff.

¹⁷ De Vivo, especially pp. 23, 30–1; 100 ff. See my review of this book forthcoming in *JRS*. The picture of Claudius he adopts emanates principally from A. Momigliano, *Claudius: the Emperor and his achievement*² (1961), who saw Claudius' move as 'another stage in the transformation of the Senate and the discrediting of the old senatorial families' (p. 45).

The authentic oration is arranged in two columns on the bronze tablet. It is complete at the bottom, but the loss of the top has deprived us of the heading and opening lines and of a section of the middle that occupied the top of column II. The word *civitat[em]* at the bottom of column I indicates that there was some discussion here of the extension of the citizenship, a topic that figures so prominently in the Tacitean chapters. There is no reason to suppose that there was another column, though we cannot rule out the possibility. The only substantial argument in favour of such a hypothesis, namely, that the speech must have closed with the proposal of the *senatus consultum* that was passed as an immediate result of it, according to *Annals* 11. 25, can be met by supposing that the heading we lack mentioned that the view of the Emperor persuaded the Senate to pass such a decree.

A. *Tacitus condenses the speech:*

(1) Claudius opens his argument ('*primam* omnium illam cogitationem hominum quam maxime *primam* occurruram mihi provideo') with a collection of examples from Roman history designed to prove that innovations such as his present proposal are not to be feared ('ne quasi novam istam rem introduci exhorrescatis'). The first and longest group (Col. I. 7–37) consists of different constitutional phases ('*formae statusque rei publicae*'): the progress from kings to annual magistrates, the creation of new magistracies. This passage is inspired by the speech of the tribune Canuleius in Livy 4. 3–4, where the examples are more relevant as the issues there, *conubium* of plebeians with patricians and the opening of the consulship to plebeians, required a change in the law. From this section of Claudius' speech, Tacitus takes only two points, which are mentioned briefly:

(i) 'advenae in nos regnaverunt' (24. 4). (Romulus, named at col. I. 10, is mentioned by Tacitus at 24. 4 but only as the inventor of the policy of making former enemies citizens, and that could derive from the missing part of the tablet which dealt with extensions of the citizenship, as it appears in the same form in Livy 4. 3. 4.)

(ii) 'plebeii magistratus post patricos' (24. 7, cf. Col. I. 36–7: '*communicatos cum plebe honores non imperi solum, sed sacerdotium quoque*').

(2) Another example of change adduced by Claudius, namely, the extension of the Empire by war, is not mentioned explicitly by Tacitus. But he does mention Rome's Italian wars, comparing them with those against the Gauls (24. 5), and he notes foreign victories as the context of the extension of citizenship to the Transpadani (24. 3).

(3) Tacitus omits to mention Augustus' and Tiberius' policy concerning senatorial recruitment from all Italy (Col. II. 3–4), though the general policy is credited to the *maiores* (24. 1–2 '*transferendo huc quod usquam egregium fuerit*'), the inclusion of all Italy in the Senate is mentioned¹⁸ (24. 2) and the magistracies are said to have been opened gradually to Latins and the rest of the Italian peoples (24. 7).

(4) Claudius' concession to the Senate about the superiority of Italian senators is a crucial omission, hardly due to mere carelessness, as is suggested by Fabia and Wellesley (see below, p. 9). For Tacitus also alters the objection to which the Emperor addresses himself (above, p. 3).

(5) Tacitus omits the specific examples of men from Narbonensis in Col. II. 9–25, saying merely '*num paenitet Balbos ex Hispania nec minus insignis viros e Gallia Narbonensi transivisse?*':

(i) The mention of Julius Vestinus from Vienne, who was serving as Claudius' procurator, and the promise of advancement for his children.

(ii) The allusion to Valerius Asiaticus from Vienne, who had been suffect consul

¹⁸ The time indicated is the beginning of peace under Augustus; see Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 804.

in 35 and cos. II in 46 and was then condemned for treason in 47: the identification is based on Claudius' phrase 'palaesticum prodigium', for Asiaticus was given to such 'exercitationes' (*Ann.* 11. 3).

(iii) The reference to the Narbonensian *iuvēnes* who are already in the Senate (Col. II. 24). That these are present senators from Narbonensis and not, as is sometimes suggested, the envoys from Tres Galliae, is shown by the present tense of 'non magis sunt paenitendi senatores', the comparison with Paullus Fabius Persicus, who has the title Allobrogicus, and the way Claudius' argument then proceeds (Col. II. 26–30), only now finally moving beyond the frontiers of Gallia Narbonensis.

(6) Tacitus omits the references to the taking of the first Gallic census by Claudius' father Drusus and to the Emperor's present censorial duties, with which the speech apparently ends (Col. II. 36–40).

(7) Tacitus leaves out Claudius' jokes:

(i) His self-apostrophe about having reached the borders of Narbonensis (Col. II. 2 2). (For the use Seneca made of this, see below pp. 416–17.)

(ii) His sophistry which establishes a parallel between the pride felt by his friend Persicus in the title that commemorates victory over the Allobroges and that which the Senate should feel at having Allobroges among its members (Col. II. 24–6).

(iii) His revelation about there already being senators from Lugdunum (Col. II. 29): Claudius means himself, for he was born there.¹⁹

The omissions in (7) along with the absence of the furious outburst against Valerius Asiaticus raise the tone of the speech considerably.

B. *Tacitus appears to add to the speech* (most of these could have been in Claudius' speech in the missing section, as will appear):

(1) The reference to the entry of Claudius' own family to the citizenship and the patriciate, and that of other Italian families to the Senate (*Ann.* 11. 24. 1–2). Though Claudius seems to have mentioned his ancestor Attus Clausus in his speech on Nero's adoption (Suet. *Claud.* 39; cf. *Ann.* 12. 25), he could have referred to him again as Canuleius makes the same point in Livy 4. 3. 14.²⁰ The list of other *gentes* is in his manner and could have been in the missing section (see B. 3).

(2) The extension of citizenship to all territory up to the Alps (11. 24. 4): an obvious candidate for the missing section.

(3) The reference to the two Balbi (11. 24. 3). L. Cornelius Balbus of Gades was enfranchised in 72 by Pompey; he was made consul in 40 B.C. thereby becoming a senator; his nephew was probably enfranchised at the same time and became a quaestor in 44 B.C. Syme (*Tacitus*, p. 624) suggests that Tacitus added this point to show that the inclusion of provincials in the Senate had started in the Republic. Wellesley (p. 29) thinks that Tacitus carelessly transferred a reference to these much-hated agents of the dictator from an opposition speech. In fact, the grants of citizenship to the Balbi could have been mentioned by Claudius, and he may well have gone on to discuss the broadening composition of the Republican Senate before dealing with Augustus and Tiberius, as suggested by Vittinghoff (pp. 357, 364).

¹⁹ On these jokes, see recently W. Huss, 'Eine scherzhafte Bemerkung des Kaisers Claudius', *Historia* 29 (1980), 250 ff., and below, pp. 411, 417.

²⁰ R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1–5* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 536–7 suggests that Livian terminology from that speech (4. 47) made its way, via Claudius' Gallic speech, to Suetonius *Tib. 1 gens Claudia in patricias cooptata*. Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 707 suggests that Tacitus transferred the reference to his ancestry from Claudius' adoption speech to the Gallic one. See below C (1).

(4) The point about Rome's generous policy being opposed to the exclusive citizenship policy of the Greek city-states (11. 24. 4) was a traditional argument (e.g. Dion. Hal. 2. 14. 6, 17–18; cf. Cic. *Off.* 2. 26–7) and could have been mentioned by Claudius.

(5) The opening of magistracies to freedmen (11. 24. 4) could be a generalization of Claudius' point about Servius Tullius (Col. I. 17 ff.), who, according to Roman tradition, was the son of a war captive, i.e. a slave as Canuleius says explicitly in Livy 4. 3. 12. Syme (*Tacitus*, p. 707) suggests that Tacitus transferred it from the Claudian speech reported by Suetonius (*Claud.* 24).

(6) On Romulus' policy, see A (1) (i).

(7) Elaborations of the point made by Claudius (Col. II. 31 ff.) that the Gauls formerly were enemies of Rome but have a long record of loyalty.

(i) Tacitus adds a comparison with the conquered Italian peoples (24. 5) which may be based on Col. I. 38–40 (above A (2)).

(ii) The reference to the fourth century B.C. sack of Rome by the Gauls as an objection to Claudius' proposal (*Ann.* 11. 23. 4; 24. 5) is added to discredit the opposition (above, p. 406). Tacitus used the same technique at *Ann.* 13. 27; 13. 42; 16. 22.

C. *Tacitus changes the arrangement of material.* There are many minor adjustments but two points are particularly striking:

(1) The first is hypothetical as it involves material that was in the missing middle section. Tacitus' Emperor treats the two issues of extension of the citizenship and broadening of magisterial and senatorial recruitment together.²¹ His opening sentence about Attus Clausus ('*simul* in civitatem Romanam et in familias patriciorum adscitus est') suggests that the two traditionally go together, given that the Patriciate then held a monopoly of office. As the point about the Claudian gens is in the speech of Canuleius ('non in civitatem modo... sed etiam in patriciorum numerum. Ex peregrinone patricius, deinde consul fiat?'), it could have been in the authentic speech, but it may well have had a different function there, perhaps as a transition between the discussion of the citizenship and the history of senatorial recruitment. For Claudius appears, from what remains of his speech, to have treated the two subjects in sequence. The way that Valerius Asiaticus is reproached for having held the consulship before his native town of Vienne had attained full citizenship implies a belief in a gradual progression from enfranchisement to office holding. It may be this feature of the authentic speech that led Tacitus to attribute to Claudius' opponents the counter-proposal that one should stop at the citizenship already given to these men from *civitates foederatae* (11. 23. 4: 'fruerentur sane vocabulo civitatis: insignia patrum, decora magistratuum ne vulgarent').²²

(2) Claudius' opening argument about the tradition of innovation at Rome is saved by Tacitus for the peroration. The use of this idea as a conclusion would in itself suggest a continuation of that process into the future, even if Tacitus did not explicitly make

²¹ A point made forcibly by U. Schillinger-Häfele, 450. Thus we pass from the introduction of families into the Senate to the giving of citizenship to the Transpadanes; from the incorporation of provincials in Roman colonies (where they acquired the citizenship) to the entry of the Balbi and men from Gallia Narbonensis (presumably into the Senate, though 'transvisse' is deliberately vague); from Romulus' enfranchisement of former enemies to foreign kings and freedmen magistrates.

²² As Schillinger-Häfele (note above) points out, the way Tacitus combines the issues is an implicit rebuttal of that suggestion. The *simul* in the opening sentence about Attus Clausus is picked up in the vague phrases 'transferendo huc', 'transvisse', which do not specify if the citizenship or membership of the Senate is meant.

the point that the decision about the Gallic notables, now defended by arguments from precedent, would itself become a precedent.

III

Tacitus' speech is a coherent treatment of the thesis that Roman tradition sanctions the continual infusion of new blood into the citizen body and the governing class. The admission of the leading men of Gallia Comata into the Senate is seen as one step in a process of change that has already allowed the conquered, first from the whole of Italy, then from the nearby provinces of Gallia Narbonensis and Spain, to contribute to the greatness of Rome's Empire.

To produce this unity of theme the historian has omitted from Claudius' catalogue of past Roman innovations the details of the discussion about foreign kings and all of the purely constitutional changes, retaining only the points that are directly related to the theme of new blood (A (1)).²³ He also omits the Emperor's reference to changes in the size of the Empire, which enabled the real Claudius to boast about his conquest of Britain. To be sure, Tacitus includes references to Rome's victories (A (2)), but this is put firmly in the context of the extensions of citizenship to which they led (II. 24. 5) or which are thus shown to be free from external compulsion (II. 24. 3). Though the connection is an obvious one and the juxtaposition of this example of Roman innovation with the discussion of citizenship in Claudius's speech has been taken to show that the Emperor was making the link, he is certainly not concerned to point it out.²⁴ Indeed he indicates that a recital of Rome's conquests would be off the track of his argument by recalling himself to the thesis in hand (Col. I. 40).

The allusion to Britain is only one of the many personal references that Claudius makes and Tacitus leaves out (Col. I. 40; II. 1–2 'avunculus meus et patruus'; II. 12; 15; 20. 2; 25; 29; 38–41). Their absence streamlines the argument and contributes to the impression of timelessness and universality that Tacitus' version conveys. In the case of Claudius' outburst of hatred about Valerius Asiaticus (A (5) (ii)) and the imperial jokes (A (7)), there is also a gain in dignity. Tacitus retains, if he does not add, the mention of Claudius' ancestor because he provides a prime example of how the Roman governing class was enriched by the assimilation of foreigners, the theme that Tacitus pursues singlemindedly.

If Claudius the individual almost disappears from Tacitus' speech, so also do the Gauls. Whereas the Emperor actually devoted the whole last part of his speech to Gaul (Col. II. 10 ff.), Tacitus omits the specific examples of men from Narbonensis (A (5)) and leaves out the elaborate transition from Narbonensis to Comata and the reference to Lugdunum (A (7)). Only the Emperor's opponents refer to particular Gallic wars. All that remains in Tacitus' speech is a vague reference to the conquest and an allusion to the wealth of the Gauls and their cultural, even matrimonial links with Rome, features that make them desirable additions to Roman society.²⁵ Whereas Claudius

²³ Although Claudius' chronological sequence appears to follow the sequence in Canuleius' speech in Livy, Claudius does not make the distinction that Canuleius does between precedents for admitting new blood (Livy 4. 3. 9 ff.; 4. 4. 6–9) and precedents for new institutions (Livy 4. 4. 1–4). Tacitus simply omits the latter as irrelevant.

²⁴ That Claudius was making the connection is held by Fabia¹, pp. 81–2; Miller, p. 309; Vittinghoff pp. 357 and 366; Wellesley, p. 17. Seneca exploited maliciously in the *Apocolocyntosis* 3. 2 (see below p. 417) the juxtaposition in the speech of the allusion to Britain and the mention of the citizenship.

²⁵ The allusion to wealth in Tacitus (*Ann.* II. 24. 6), so strongly criticized by Wellesley p. 31,

made the climax of his speech the loyalty shown by the Gauls to his father when he was (like his son now) engaged in the arduous duties of taking a census, Tacitus' speech ends with Claudius' initial point about innovation being part of the Roman tradition, embellished with the suggestion that the process is to continue beyond this proposed change.

The progressive attitude there attributed to Claudius forms a contrast with the way the authentic Claudius deals with the expected objection that Italians are superior to provincials. After the lacuna at the top of Column II of the Tablet, the Emperor, having presumably traced the spread of the Roman citizenship and said something about the widening of the ranks of the Senate under the Republic, notes the practice of Augustus and Tiberius in encouraging the upper classes of all Italy to enter the Curia, an innovation in its own time.²⁶ With 'Quid ergo?' he marks a possible objection to the implication of his words, that he will thus be following a respectable precedent in admitting the *primores Galliae* to the Senate for the first time: how can admitting more Italians be a precedent for admitting provincials to the Senate when Italians are more worth having there? The Emperor assures his audience that the senatorial list will reflect that evaluation, but he then limits his acceptance of the evaluation ('sed') by urging that not even provincials (the 'ne...quidem' still implying their inferiority to Italians) should be rejected out of hand in cases where they can be a credit to the Roman Senate. This leads directly into the Gallic section of the speech.

This passage, with which the surviving part of Column II opens, constitutes for us Tacitus' most notable omission (A (3)–(4)). The absence of all reference to Augustus and Tiberius by name can perhaps be explained as the result of Tacitus' need to condense and his decision to treat the themes of citizenship and senatorial recruitment together: the progress under Augustus in the assimilation of Italy is certainly noted (A (3)). But the way Tacitus handles the material gives the impression that these Emperors were not responsible for an important innovation, the policy of transferring to Rome outstanding talent from anywhere going back to the early days of Rome. Nor is there any suggestion in Tacitus that generosity to Italians is to be viewed differently from generosity to provincials. It is the Tacitean speech, not the authentic one, that suggests, in the words of Sherwin-White, that 'Claudius seems to be defending something which he has either already done or is going to do, whatever the

is implicit in Claudius' emphasis on his predecessor's admission of *boni viri et locupletes* to the Senate and his plea on behalf of select provincials 'si modo ornare curiam poterint'. There was, after all, a property qualification for senators under the Empire which must be one factor in the Emperor's mind at this point.

²⁶ Claudius' line of argument, as interpreted here, makes it imperative to take 'omnem florem ubique coloniarum ac municipiorum' as a reference to the upper crust in towns all over Italy, and *coloniae et municipia* often denotes the towns of Italy (e.g. *Ann.* 3. 55. 3; *ILS* 214 (Claudius himself)). The clearest exposition of this interpretation is in Last, *JRS* 24 (1934), 59 ff.; see now Schillinger-Häfele pp. 445–6. The problem is that, given the expansion of the Senate in the Republic and the inclusion of the Balbi and other provincials by Caesar and the Triumvirs (especially if Claudius dealt with some of these topics), 'sane novo more' seems a strange way to characterize a pan-Italian policy by Augustus. Syme in *PBSR* 14 (1938), pp. 6–8, found the solution in Claudius' preference for rhetoric over veracity; a less satisfactory solution is to take the phrase 'sane novo more' as ironic (so Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*² (Oxford, 1973), p. 238). Claudius' point was that Augustus and Tiberius completed a long process with a new and conscious policy, and we do know that at least the Paeligni contributed their first senator under Augustus (*ILS* 932). Claudius promises to maintain that policy, to the extent of protecting Italian priority, but he points out that worthy provincials should not be rejected out of hand, and in what follows he shows this has already happened, for senators from Narbonensis already sit in the Curia.

patres think of it – something quite separate from the request of the *primores Galliae*. This was perhaps the adlection of a fair number of new senators from the provincial municipalities and colonies.²⁷ Again, it is Tacitus' speech, not the Lyons Tablet, that can reasonably be seen by Garzetti as foreshadowing the extension of citizenship by Caracalla.²⁸

By contrast, the real Claudius, in the extant part of his speech at least, makes only one allusion to the cause of provincials in general, and that is an echo of the language of his opponents, to whom he is making a concession. The rest of Column II, which probably contains the whole final section of the original speech, is designed to show that the Gallic notables, whose request the Emperor is supporting, are just the kind of outstanding provincials for whom an exception to the general principle of preference for Italians should be made. But Claudius has given his assurance that the principle will not be violated in his censorship, and his remarks about the disloyalty of Valerius Asiaticus show that he did not think all Gauls were worthy exceptions. There is certainly no suggestion that provincials in general are the hope of the future, that the old élite has exhausted its function – views that De Vivo attributes to him.²⁹

Fabia was closer to the truth when he pointed out that while Claudius and Tacitus both treat the particular case of the Gauls as part of a larger category, for Claudius that category is political innovation, not, as for Tacitus, the assimilation of foreign material. Claudius was only urging the addition of one further innovation to the series that formed Rome's political history, whereas Tacitus suggests that the continuous absorption of the best foreign elements should remain the law of progress of the Roman state. Fabia emphasized too that Claudius does not keep the debate on the general plane as consistently as Tacitus.³⁰

Claudius himself gives us the key to the nature of his discourse towards the end when he says, 'But now I must plead the cause of Comata Gallia with firm intent' (Col. II. 31). With the reference to Lugdunum, he had broached his real subject 'timide'; with 'destricte iam' he at last reveals 'quo tendat oratio', the emphatic position of the adjective "Comata" making clear the precise object of his concern. The Emperor had convened a special meeting of the Senate ('vocato senatu' in *Annals* 11. 24. 1). As presiding magistrate he put before the House the question of the petition from some of the Gallic chieftains. Though in the Republic the magistrate was only supposed to define the question for discussion, letting the precise proposals that he would later put to the vote emerge from the senatorial debate, it is clear that this principle had been breached before and during the early Principate.³¹ Claudius himself, a year or two before the present speech, had drawn a caricature of senatorial deliberations in his time, describing how the consul designate, when called first to give his opinion, pronounced a *sententia* taken verbatim from the *relatio* of the consuls, while the senators called on subsequently just said 'I agree'. Clearly the question for debate, as defined by the consuls, is here envisaged as a definite proposal that could be reiterated. Claudius was imagining a session in which the consuls are

²⁷ *Roman Citizenship*², p. 239; Sherwin-White ignores the sequence of thought, and in fact cites the sentences of the imperial text in reverse (Col. II. 6–8): he does not seem to be aware that the Emperor is here making a concession.

²⁸ A. Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines* (Eng. trans. 1974), p. 131.

²⁹ De Vivo, p. 30; see n. 17 above.

³⁰ Fabia¹, pp. 143–4; Fabia², pp. 243; 255.

³¹ Mommsen, *Staatsrecht* III³, p. 962. Wellesley pp. 22, 24 insists that Claudius kept to Republican convention here and that there was a real debate afterwards. But that is to disregard the evidence of Tacitus and of Claudius himself.

presiding. When the Emperor was one of them, or when he presided in his own right, the tendency to follow his lead must have been strong and the absence of real debate common.³²

Claudius had clearly urged acceptance of the petition, but it was perhaps left to the senators when giving their *sententiae* to suggest that priority be given to the Aedui in recognition of their ancient treaty and close friendship with Rome (*Annals* 11. 25. 1). The opposition that Tacitus reconstructed from the authentic oration was probably never voiced in the Senate, but the Emperor was careful to take account of what had been said to him in council. The extant portion of the inscribed speech suggests that the opposition was less narrow-minded than in Tacitus, but the fear that large numbers of Gauls would pack the Senate, which features in Tacitus' chapter, could be authentic, as Claudius does not seem to have urged the merits of particular individuals among the *primores*. It would have been more in accord with Roman tradition, and indeed with his own practice, as illustrated in the Volubilis inscriptions and the edict about the Alpine tribes, to have noted the services to Rome of the particular men he wished to reward.³³ Though Claudius bows to the traditional practice in noting the distinction of the Narbonese Gauls already in the Senate, all he manages for the *primores* is a reference to the peaceful conduct of the region of Comata when his father was there. It is not surprising that the Senate felt its compliance would be more respectable if it singled out the Aedui and added a justification for the privilege granted.

Claudius' discourse, as his own words 'Comatae Galliae causa agenda est' suggest, is an advocate's speech in favour of a particular proposal, not, as it becomes in Tacitus, a programmatic speech in favour of *novi homines*. It is not surprising that, in its cataloguing of historical precedent, its invocation of the general tendency of Roman history in defence of a particular case, it is reminiscent of Cicero's pleas in defence of the citizenship of Archias and Balbus. Suetonius may preserve for us a somewhat parallel case in which Claudius, wishing to make a particular exception to the general principle, which he supported, that only those of free birth through several generations could receive the *latus clavus*, made a speech in which he cited the actions of his ancestor Appius Caecus, in an attempt to obviate criticism.³⁴

Other considerations confirm that Fabia was right to call the speaker 'l'empereur gallophile':

(1) The initiative on this occasion came from the Gauls themselves, probably, as Fabia divined, authorized to petition the Emperor by a meeting of the *concilium Galliarum*. For the great bronze tablet was found outside Lugdunum, at the place where the assembly met once a year. It is true that the initiative for imperial action often did come from Rome's subjects, as Fergus Millar has abundantly demonstrated, and that requests for senatorial status, as for citizenship, were often the basis of grants.³⁵ But Emperors did sometimes try to induce the unwilling, and Augustus is credited by Claudius himself with a definite policy ('voluit') of recruitment from *tota Italia*, just as Suetonius attributes to Vespasian a policy of adlecting the best of Italians

³² BGU no 611, col. III. 10 ff. Note how, according to Tacitus *Ann.* 11. 4, Cornelius Scipio managed to imply his dissent by simply stating his agreement with those before him: that was the nearest he could come to free speech when political charges were involved.

³³ E. M. Smallwood, *Documents illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge, 1967), nos. 407, 368 (ILS 206).

³⁴ Suet. *Claudius* 24. 1, although Claudius here also took the practical step of having the freedman's son he wished to favour adopted by a Roman knight.

³⁵ *The Emperor and the Roman World* (London, 1977), pp. 289 ff.

and provincials when censor.³⁶ It may be that general patterns of this type were sometimes more apparent to later observers than to their supposed architects, but that does not alter the fact that Claudius had the concept of such a general policy when he credited Augustus with one. Yet nothing he says in the extant portion of the speech suggests he was initiating such a policy nor is there any reason to think that he did recruit an unusually large number of outsiders into the Senate, given that the rolls were long overdue for revision owing to the 'obstinate absence' of his uncle Tiberius.

(2) The modest result of the speech was to reward some Gauls in a particular category, and it may be no accident that a copy has turned up only in Gaul. In his extensive remarks about the region, Claudius seems to be addressing the men of Gallia Comata over the heads of the Roman senators.

(3) Claudius' interest in Tres Galliae is otherwise attested.³⁷ The oldest milestones found there bear his name and most of his road-building was concentrated in Gaul and the Alpine lands. In Belgica the construction of roads is probably to be connected with the practical problems of moving troops and supplies for the invasion of Britain. But Claudius spent months in Gaul on his way to Britain and back in 43-4 and this no doubt heightened his concern for the region where, as he was never tired of saying, he had been born.³⁸ His own birthplace Lugdunum received the title Claudia, and other towns of Tres Galliae also received benefits from him as the names Forum Claudii, Claudiomagus testify. Agrippina's birthplace Cologne was to become Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium and receive a draft of veterans in 50, while the institution of titular colonies probably begins with Claudius and, significantly, in Gaul. Vienne was raised in status probably from Latin rank to that of a Roman colony and four towns in Tres Galliae are likely to have received colonial status from Claudius.³⁹ In addition, the prevalence of his name and tribe (Quirina) in Tres Galliae suggests a generous distribution of individual grants of citizenship.⁴⁰

Several passages in Seneca, a senator who lived through Claudius' reign, mostly in exile, might suggest that this limited view of Claudius' aims is wrong, at least as regards the citizenship, and that we must instead adopt the view of Sherwin-White: 'Claudius saw the possibility that a day would come when the *Urbs* would comprise the *Orbis terrarum*.'⁴¹ In *De Beneficiis*, a work composed in the reign of Nero between 56 and 64, Seneca writes, 'If the Princeps should give citizenship to all the Gauls, immunity to all the Spaniards, will the individuals not be in debt to him on this account?' (6. 19. 2). The philosophical problem here under consideration is whether one owes gratitude to the person who has conferred a benefit on one, but only as a

³⁶ Ovid, *Tristia* 4. 10. 27 ff.; *ILS* 6998 (Hadrian), both offers of the *latus clavus*. Adlection: Pliny *Ep.* 1. 14. 5 (Vespasian). Even earlier, Caesar the Dictator offered senatorial rank to the philosopher Sextius, which he refused (Seneca, *Ep.* 98. 13). Vespasian's policy: Suetonius *Vesp.* 9. 2.

³⁷ S.-J. de Laet, 'Claude et la romanisation de la Gaule septentrionale', *Mélanges Piganiol* (Paris, 1966), 951-61; G. Walsen, 'Die Strassenbau-Tätigkeit von Kaiser Claudius', *Historia* 29 (1980), 459 ff. For his general interest in Gaul, A. Grenier, *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, vol. 3 (1937), pp. 521 ff.

³⁸ Claudius was gone from Rome for six months but spent only sixteen days in Britain (Suet. *Claudius* 17. 2; Dio 60. 23. 1). Suetonius mentions his journey through Gaul.

³⁹ On Cologne, Tacitus *Ann.* 12. 27. For Vienne, Gaius is the alternative possibility, for the elevation in rank took place after the first consulship of Valerius Asiaticus in 35. As Claudius mentions the elevation in his speech (Col. II. 16-7), he seems the more obvious candidate. See Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*², p. 244, but some scholars think that the elevation of Augusta Trevirorum is Tiberian.

⁴⁰ De Laet (above n. 37), p. 955.

⁴¹ *The Roman Citizenship*², p. 243.

member of a very large group without having any particular member of it in mind. The problem discussed explains the extravagance of the example, but it is striking that Seneca could use such an example before Nero's grant of freedom to the Greeks and Vespasian's gift of the *ius Latii* to Spain. Rome had, it is true, enfranchised large areas earlier and Nero was given to extravagant gestures at least as early as 58,⁴² but the mention of Gaul in particular is evocative of Claudius. As we have seen, some of the opposition may have wished that he had recommended the Gallic notables as individuals.

The idea that the unnamed lavish Emperor here is modelled on Claudius is suggested by another passage of Seneca, this time from the *Apocolocyntosis*, his satire on the death and deification of Claudius. Here Clotho, asked to cut the thread of the imperial life, is made to remark that she would have liked to give Claudius a little more time on earth to allow him to make citizens of the few foreigners left, 'for he had decided to see all Græeks, Gauls, Spaniards and Britons in togas' (3. 2). Here again we have a patent exaggeration concerning gifts of citizenship to provincials, this time inspired by malice rather than by philosophy. Was Seneca provoked here by Claudian policy? Yet a chapter of the *De Ira*, written early in Claudius' reign (before 51–2), seems to show awareness that the assimilation of foreigners was a Roman tradition, indeed a laudable one that strengthened the Empire: 'What more faithful allies does the Roman people have than those who were her most implacable enemies: what would the Empire be today if a beneficial Providence had not intermingled victors and vanquished?' (2. 34. 4). One can argue that in the satire Seneca was happy to seize on anything about Claudius that could raise a laugh and thus would not have hesitated to ridicule a policy of which he really approved. Sherwin-White has suggested that, in so far as the remark reflects Claudian practice, we must look to the Emperor's institution of auxiliary diplomata, which record copious grants to Galli, Hispani, Britanni, and to his individual grants to deserving Easterners.⁴³ But one wonders how much the inner circles of court who were entertained by the *Apocolocyntosis* knew or cared about certificates for veteran auxiliary soldiers.

The key to Seneca's jibe may lie elsewhere, in another passage of the satire.⁴⁴ Claudius, when he arrives in heaven, is asked by Hercules who he is and where he hails from, in a line of Homeric verse. Claudius replies in kind, indicating that he is Caesar, in a line about Odysseus that mentions his journey from Troy. The god Febris intervenes to clarify matters, 'He's a terrible liar. I have lived with him for many years and I can tell you. He was born at Lugdunum. You see before you a citizen of Munatius (Plancus). I tell you he was born sixteen miles from Vienne, a true Gaul. . . You ought to know that there are many miles between the Xanthus and the Rhone' (6. 1). The joke about Claudius' birthplace not really being Troy is obvious enough, but what is the point about the distance between Lyons and Vienne, a point that seems to be underlined by the reference to the miles between the two rivers? No one who knew Claudius' speech on the *primores Galliae* would fail to remember the extended metaphor of travel which follows the long discussion of the distinguished

⁴² Tacitus *Ann.* 13. 50, a proposal to abolish all indirect taxes as a 'pulcherrimum donum generi mortalium'.

⁴³ *The Roman Citizenship*², pp. 243–7. With regard to Seneca's remark in *De Beneficiis* 6. 19. 2, he remarks that 'it was fashionable in these times to discuss such possibilities' but urges that the 'magnificence of the conception' savours more of Nero since what is known of Claudius' actual citizenship grants does not fit this conception.

⁴⁴ The interpretation of Seneca here proposed was briefly suggested in *Seneca, a Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976), p. 250.

colony of Vienne, or the joke about his birth at Lyons: 'Now is the time, Tiberius Claudius Caesar Germanicus, to reveal to the members of the House where your discourse is going, for you have already reached the last frontier of Gallia Narbonensis... What better argument do you need than my pointing out that the soil beyond the boundary of the province of Narbonensis already sends you senators, since we by no means regret having in our ranks men from Lugdunum? With apprehension, members of the Senate, have I gone beyond the frontiers that are customary and familiar to you...' (Col. II. 20 ff.).

That Seneca is here indulging in literary parody of the famous speech is made more likely by the fact that, in the same work, he pokes fun at the *Res Gestae* and rhetorical habits of Divus Augustus. He also parodies his own flattery of Claudius in the *Consolation to Polybius* written a decade before, and mentions, in the very chapter we are discussing, Claudius' philological interests and his historical writing. Literary parody was one of Seneca's talents, and Claudius was an obvious target.⁴⁵ Indeed Seneca may have imitated him earlier, though flattery was then his aim, for it has been suggested that the speech of comfort that the philosopher puts in the mouth of Claudius in the *Consolation to Polybius* 14-16. 3 is recognizably authentic in style.⁴⁶ Seneca wrote that while in exile on Corsica, but he kept in close touch with Rome by reading and writing, so much so that Agrippina could feel that the literary reputation he had maintained and enhanced would make his recall popular. He was still in exile five years later when the speech on the Gauls was delivered, but there is no difficulty in supposing that a senatorial friend sent him a copy for his amusement, especially when the *Consolation* had shown his interest in Claudian eloquence.⁴⁷ It was a famous, perhaps (to the sophisticated) a notorious speech: Tacitus already knew it either directly or through an earlier historian before he came to write the Claudian books of the *Annals*.⁴⁸

If Seneca is here alluding, not to Claudius' policy or practice, but to his oration, the earlier passage in the *Apocolocyntosis* is likely to have had the same aim, for the speech contained a long discussion of the citizenship. Clotho's Greeks could reflect the passage about the Spartan and Athenian Empires, her Spaniards could recall the reference to the Balbi (Seneca's own origins giving an additional twist), and the Britons could suggest Claudius' reference to the extension of the Empire which led into the section on the citizenship. Clotho's inclusion of the Gauls will have ensured that Seneca's audience did not miss the point. Even the chapter of *De Beneficiis* about Gauls and Spaniards could have been inspired by the Claudian speech.

Seneca then does not provide an obstacle to the interpretation of Claudius' aim we have been advancing. The Emperor wished to justify his grant of a *beneficium* to petitioners from a region he had consistently favoured: it was the act of a 'Gallus germanus'.

⁴⁵ O. Weinreich, *Senecas Apolocyntosis* (Berlin, 1923), pp. 100; 102 n. 1; C. Russo, *Divi Claudii 'Αποκολοκύντῳσις'*⁴ (Florence, 1964), p. 99; *Seneca, a Philosopher in Politics*, pp. 133; 217 n. 1.

⁴⁶ H. Dahlmann, 'Zu Senecas Trostschrift an Polybius', *Hermes* 71 (1936), 374-5.

⁴⁷ The *acta publica*, which would contain at least a summary of the imperial oration (Pliny *Pan.* 75. 1-2, *Ep.* 5. 13. 8), should have been available in the two Roman colonies on Corsica (Sen. *Cons. Helv.* 7. 9, Pliny *H.N.* 3. 80).

⁴⁸ On *Annals* 4. 65, see Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 709; G. Townend, 'Claudius and the Digressions in Tacitus', *Rhein. Mus.* 105 (1962), 358 ff.

IV

It remains to explain how Tacitus came to convert the authentic oration into a statement of advanced cosmopolitanism. He was not exaggerating what the Emperor said for purposes of parody, like Seneca. On the contrary, we have seen that his sympathies were with Claudius. The answer probably lies in hindsight. Whether or not Tacitus was himself of provincial origin, he could not fail to see, as a historian, that Claudius' move was part of a long process, whatever motives had inspired the individual acts that composed it. The Roman governing class had been increasingly penetrated by provincials, to such an extent that an Emperor from Spain ruled as Tacitus wrote. He read the Claudian proposal from this standpoint and used the occasion to give his view of that development, suggesting that the process had not yet come to an end.⁴⁹ If we assume that a historian, then as now, was supposed to interpret the past as well as record it, if we remember that free conventions prevailed then about reporting speeches, this would seem a perfectly legitimate way of treating the episode.

The paradox is that Tacitus was led by his sympathy for Claudius on this occasion and his interest in the issue to invest the Emperor with a dignity and far-sightedness that is often absent from the historian's portrait.⁵⁰ Tacitus has often been accused of following blind senatorial prejudice in his assessment of Claudius. Yet his sympathy with the Emperor on this occasion should give us pause. Is the authentic oration incompatible with the political naïveté and myopic absorption in detail of the Tacitean Claudius? With its antiquarianism, irrelevancies, vindictive outbursts, does it not fit the historian's portrait admirably?

On the other hand, Tacitus's Claudius is not just the henpecked halfwit he appears in the context of political trials and dynastic struggles. Tacitus shows us an active, conscientious Princeps, inventive in finding tactful ways of pruning the Senate, generous towards cities in distress and noble enemies of Rome, capable of presenting his case with some elegance.⁵¹ The documents reveal fairness in sorting out administrative tangles and ethnic disputes, diligent attention to practical matters such as the corn supply or certification of privileges granted to auxiliaries, generosity towards subjects who rendered service to Rome, but also a concern for minutiae and a fondness for systematizing. Do they really suggest wide-ranging policies or breadth of vision ahead of his time? Do they do anything to counteract the view of Tacitus and our other ancient authorities, that Claudius' wives and freedmen could frighten and cajole him into punishing people without due evidence, giving favours to friends of theirs, and putting his own son in a position of deadly peril by adopting an older boy of Augustan descent?

The speech on the Lyons Tablet shows us the same Claudius as we find in the pages of Tacitus: a kind of academic *manqué* or a narrow civil servant with a passion for paperwork, who was out of his depth in the life of politics, for which he was untrained and untalented.

Somerville College, Oxford

M. T. GRIFFIN

⁴⁹ It is unlikely that, as De Vivo suggests (pp. 100 ff.), Tacitus was attacking the philhellenism of Trajan and Hadrian when he stressed the suitability of Gallic and Spanish provincials, while condemning the Greek Empires. The references to Balbus and the Greek Empires need not, as we saw (pp. 406–7), be Tacitean additions, and the peroration of Tacitus' version of the speech suggests anything but a desire to halt the process.

⁵⁰ R. H. Martin, *Tacitus* (London, 1981), p. 150 notes the inconcinnity.

⁵¹ *Ann.* 11. 25; 12. 37; 12. 63; 13. 3. 2.