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THE INVASION OF BRITAIN

Julius Caesar and Augustus

The first invasion was led by Julius Caesar, who on 25 September 54 BC wrote ‘from the shores of Nearest Britain’ to the orator Cicero in Rome.¹ His letter would have been our first written document, had it survived, but Caesar withdrew from Britain, and for almost another century the island remained inviolate and illiterate. When the Roman army returned in AD 43, one of its officers, according to the historian Tacitus – in his treatise on oratory, it must be said – met a native Briton, an old man, a *very* old man, who admitted to having fought against Caesar the last time.² He was living proof of the Greek thesis that Britons lived much longer than Africans because of the cold, living as long as 120 years.³ Throughout his long life, another invasion had been on the imperial agenda.⁴ The opportunity had been offered to Caesar’s adoptive son Augustus, the first Emperor:

<1.01> *Ankara (Ancyra)*

ad me supplices confugerunt [r]eges ... Britann[o]rum Dumnobellaunus et Tin[comarus]

Augustus, *Res Gestae* 32.1 (Cooley 2009)

‘Kings sought refuge with me as suppliants ... (including) Dumnobellaunus and Tincomarus of the Britons.’

The words are taken from Augustus’ own account of his achievements (*res gestae*) which was inscribed on two bronze pillars in front of his tomb at Rome.⁵ These were melted down long ago, but a contemporary copy was inscribed on the stone

¹ Cicero notes its receipt a month later, on 24 October (*ad Atticum* 4.18, 5), *litteras datas a litoribus Britanniae proximae a(n)te d(iem) VI Kal(endas) Oct(obres)* (with Shackleton Bailey’s emendation of *proximo* to *proximae*). It may have been a joint letter with Cicero’s brother Quintus, who was also in Britain.

² Tacitus, *Dialogus* 17.4.

³ ps.Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum* 911 B–C, quoting the doctor Asclepiades of Bithynia who was patronised by the Roman aristocracy at the end of the second century BC (Cicero, *de oratore* i 14.62). He prescribed wine and lived to a great age (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vii 124).

⁴ Analysed in detail by Birley 2008(b), 179–86.

⁵ Preamble to the *Res Gestae* with Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 101.4. *Tin[comarus]* is restored by Cheesman 1998.

walls of the surviving temple of Rome and Augustus at Ancyra (Ankara). This was called 'the Queen of Inscriptions' by Mommsen, but nonetheless it is only a copy of a copy of Augustus' original text, which itself shows internal signs of revision. It is also a masterpiece of self-presentation by a political genius. Therefore, when we study 'monumental' inscriptions, however important they may be, we must bear in mind that they are copies of a written draft now lost; and also ask ourselves why they were inscribed in the first place.

Augustus names other 'suppliant' kings, from Germany and Parthia, who by taking refuge with him admitted Roman suzerainty and provided an excuse for intervention. But the conquest of mainland Europe diverted him from Britain, and his immediate successor Tiberius was 'not interested in expanding the Empire'.⁶ The successful invasion was achieved by an unlikely successor, Tiberius' nephew Claudius, the grandson of Augustus' second wife Livia, who was descended on the other side from Caesar's sister.

Claudius invades Britain: officers and men

We can guess the ultimate time and place of Claudius' decision to invade Britain: it was the afternoon of 24 January AD 41, behind a curtain in the imperial Palace.⁷ Tiberius' immediate successor Gaius (Caligula), great-grandson of Augustus and Claudius' own eccentric and dangerous nephew, had just been murdered by officers of the Praetorian Guard; among the courtiers who fled for their lives was Claudius. A marauding guardsman found him hiding behind the curtain, pulled him out, and persuaded his comrades to proclaim him Emperor: if there were no emperor, the Guard would be redundant. Claudius, long since rejected by Augustus as incompetent and driven into the ignoble company of women and historians, nonetheless belonged to a family which had produced statesmen and generals for many generations; his own father Drusus had led a Roman army to the Elbe, and his late brother Germanicus, whose name he shared, had been wildly popular despite his costly and inconclusive German campaigns. Caligula, the son of Germanicus, had actually planned an invasion of Britain. For personal and political reasons, therefore, Claudius needed military glory. By conquering Britain, where Julius Caesar and Caligula had failed, he would equal his ancestors and justify his accession.

Two years later, in the summer of AD 43, a powerful army had been concentrated under the command of Aulus Plautius, a kinsman of Claudius' first wife. Inscriptions will in due course name many of its non-Roman, 'auxiliary' units, but the nucleus was four Roman legions, about 20,000 heavy infantry and military engineers. They were the Second Legion Augusta, the Fourteenth Gemina (later Martia Victrix) and the Twentieth (later Valeria Victrix) from the two Rhine armies, and the Ninth

⁶ Tacitus, *Annals* iv 32, *princeps proferendi imperii incuriosus erat*.

⁷ Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* 10. See further Wiseman 1991.

Legion Hispana which Plautius brought with him from the Pannonian army on the middle Danube. They were probably supported by detachments from other legions.⁸ With the addition of the Sixth Legion Victrix, which replaced the Ninth in AD 122, they will be responsible for many of our inscriptions. The Second Legion was commanded by a future emperor, Vespasian, and his ancient biographer says that he owed his appointment to Claudius' secretary Narcissus: Narcissus and Vespasian's mistress, Caenis, had both once been slaves owned by Claudius' mother; the epitaph of Caenis even survives, but naturally omits such details.⁹ This again illustrates the limitations of epigraphic evidence: 'monumental' inscriptions are self-conscious public documents which do not retail gossip. But they do name officers and men who accompanied Claudius to Britain, not necessarily Romans from Rome, but Italians and even provincials, including this high-flying man of (Greek) letters:

<1.02> *Ephesus*

[Ti(berio) Claud]io Ti(berii) Claudi
 [...]i f(ilio) Quir(ina tribu)
 [Ba]llbillo
 [... a]edum divi Aug(usti) et
 [... e]t lucorum sacro-
 [rumque omnium qu]ae sunt Alexan-
 [driae et in tota Aegypt]o et supra mu-
 [s]eum et a[b Alexandri]na bybliothece(!)
 et archi[erei et ad Herm]en Alexan-
 dreon pe[r annos ...] et ad legati-
 ones et res[pon]sa ?Graeca Ca]esaris Aug(usti)
 divi Claud[i] e[t trib(un)o milit(um) le]g(ionis) XX et prae[f(ecto)]
 fabr(um) divi Cla[udi et d(onis) d(onato) in tri]um[pho a divo]
 Claudio [corona ... et hasta]
 pura [...]
 [...]

Inscriptionen von Ephesos, VII.1, 3042

'To Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, son of Tiberius Claudius [...]us, of the *Quirina* voting-tribe, supervisor of [...] and the temples of the deified Augustus and [...] and all the sacred groves in Alexandria and the whole of Egypt, and the Museum, the Library at Alexandria, High Priest ... for Hermes of Alexandria, for [...] years; Secretary for delegations and answers in Greek of the deified Caesar Augustus Claudius; military

⁸ As Keppie notes (2000(b), 84), only the Second and the Twentieth are 'firmly documented' in AD 43, but the Twentieth and the Ninth can safely be inferred. For likely detachments of Fourth Macedonica (Upper Germany), Fourth Scythica (Moesia) and Eighth Augusta (Pannonia), see the careers of Julius Camillus (1.06), Vicirius Proculus (1.08) and Claudius' doctor Stertinus Xenophon (*PIR*² S 913) respectively.

⁹ Suetonius, *Divus Vespasianus* 3–4.1. Her epitaph is *CIL* vi 12037; compare Dio 66. 14, 1–3.

tribune of the Twentieth Legion; aide-de-camp to the deified Claudius, and decorated by him in his triumph with a Crown and Untipped Spear [...]

Since Claudius is now a god, the inscription is later than his death (13 October AD 54), and too fragmentary for it to be clear what Balbillus' duties really were, but the accumulation of Egyptian 'cultural' posts is striking, in view of his speedy promotion by Nero to govern the whole of Egypt as prefect (AD 55–59).¹⁰ Tacitus implies that this was due to the influence of another literary figure, Nero's former tutor Seneca; certainly Seneca cites Balbillus as 'a most rare master of every literary form, and author of *The Battle of the Dolphins and Crocodiles*'.¹¹ This epic poem does not survive, but from the perspective of Britain it is the outset of his career which is more interesting. The post of *praefectus fabrum*, despite its title (literally 'prefect of engineers'), was by now an honorary appointment on the staff of a senatorial magistrate, either a consul or praetor at Rome or a proconsul in the provinces, which was sought by young equestrians embarking on a public career. But for Balbillus his chief was the Emperor himself, and his prefecture led to a staff appointment in one of the invading legions. Since he was then promoted to a post at court for which the requisite was a good Greek style, it is difficult to imagine, in spite of his being decorated, that he saw much actual fighting.

Details of this fighting elude us also, for Tacitus narrated it in a book of the *Annals* now lost. Even the army's landing-place is uncertain, although it is likely to be Richborough, where many disconnected fragments survive of the inscribed marble cladding of a monument.¹² We know from Dio Cassius that Aulus Plautius forced a river-crossing and advanced as far as the Thames, his objective being Camulodunum (Colchester), the capital of the dominant tribe of the south-east, the Catuvellauni. Claudius meanwhile had left Rome in the hands of his friend Lucius Vitellius and travelled north with a large entourage; a dozen of his senior staff officers or *comites* ('companions') are known,¹³ including this kinsman of Aulus Plautius:

¹⁰ This Balbillus can be identified with the prefect of Egypt, but probably not with the 'astrologer' Balbillus whom Nero consulted about a comet in AD 60 or 64 (Suetonius, *Nero* 36.1, *Balbillo astrologo*), since the prefect would then have only just returned to Rome from his important governorship, and Suetonius would surely have identified him as such. But the astrologer Balbillus may have been the unnamed son of the famous astrologer Thrasyllus who predicted Nero's accession (Tacitus, *Annals* vi 22).

¹¹ Tacitus, *Annals* xiii 22; Seneca, *Quaest. Nat.* 4.2, 13, *perfectus in omni litterarum genere rarissime auctor de proelio delphinorum cum cocodrillis commisso adfertur*.

¹² *RIB* 46–65. Frere and Fulford 2001 reassert the Richborough narrative against Hind 1989.

¹³ Assembled with full commentary by Birley 2005, 214–23; Birley 2008(b), 191–5.

<1.03> *Tivoli (Tibur)*

Ti(berio) Plautio M(arci) f(ilio) Ani(ensi tribu)
 Silvano Aeliano
 pontif(ici), sodali Aug(ustali),
 IIIvir(o) a(ere) a(rgento) a(uro) f(lando) f(eriundo), q(uaestori) Ti(beri) Caesaris,
 legat(o) leg(ionis) V in Germania,
 pr(aetori) urb(ano), legat(o) et comiti Claud(i)
 Caesaris in Britannia, consuli,
 proco(n)s(uli) Asiae, legat(o) pro praet(ore) Moesiae
 ...

ILS 986; Inscriptiones Italiae iv.1, No. 125

‘To Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, son of Marcus, of the *Aniensis* voting-tribe; pontifex, priest of Augustus, member of the Board of Three for minting bronze, silver and gold; quaestor of Tiberius Caesar; legate of the Fifth Legion in Germany; urban praetor; legate and companion of Claudius Caesar in Britain; consul; proconsul of Asia; propraetorian legate of Moesia ...’

This is the beginning of an unusually long epitaph inscribed on marble in front of the tower-like mausoleum of the Plautius family outside Tibur, still standing in the suburbs of modern Tivoli; it gives a detailed account of Aelianus’ later achievements on the lower Danube – the resettlement of 100,000 refugees from across the river, diplomatic dealings with potentially hostile chieftains, even the export of wheat to Rome – when he governed Moesia in Nero’s reign. The epitaph concludes:

hunc legatum in
 {in} Hispaniam ad praefectur(am) urbis remissum
 senatus in praefectura triumphalibus
 ornamentis honoravit, auctore imp(eratore)
 Caesare Augusto Vespasiano, verbis ex
 oratione eius q(uae) i(nfra) s(cripta) s(unt):
 Moesiae ita praefuit, ut non debuerit in
 me differri honor triumphalium eius
 ornamentorum, nisi quod latior ei
 contigit mora titulus praefecto urbis.
 hunc in eadem praefectura urbis imp(erator) Caesar
 Aug(ustus) Vespasianus iterum co(n)s(ulem) fecit

‘When he had been recalled from being legate in Spain to become prefect of the City, and was holding the prefecture, the Senate honoured him with the decorations of a triumph on the motion of the Emperor Caesar Augustus Vespasian, whose speech included the following words:

“His governorship of Moesia was such that the award of his triumphal decorations ought not to have been left to me; however, his claim is the greater after this delay, since he is now prefect of the City.”

‘The Emperor Caesar Augustus Vespasian made him consul for the second time (AD 74) while he was still prefect of the City.’

Aelianus, as prefect of the City, was responsible for law and order at Rome: it was a senior post of great prestige, recently held by Vespasian’s elder brother Sabinus. In the second century it crowned the careers of two governors of Britain, Lollius Urbicus (6.02) who built the Antonine Wall, and the future emperor Pertinax (7.02). Aelianus was also honoured retrospectively for his governorship of Moesia: no doubt Nero had treated him shabbily, but Aelianus in Britain, as the former commander of a legion who enjoyed the confidence both of Claudius and the commander-in-chief, would have been senior to Vespasian; it is likely that Vespasian was now repaying a past favour. Tacitus omits Aelianus’ Danubian governorship from the *Annals*, but it is a striking instance of the Early Empire’s ability to absorb non-Roman peoples en masse. Later renewed trouble on the Danube forced Domitian to withdraw a legion from Britain (4.03), and thus to bring its conquest to a halt. Indeed, to anticipate three centuries, the ‘decline and fall’ of the Roman Empire in the West was accelerated by its failure to control another mass of refugees from across the Danube. These were the Goths, whose shattering defeat of the Roman army at Adrianople (Edirne) in AD 378 set in train the progressive loss of outlying provinces, including Britain.

But this is to finish the story before it has begun. Aelianus like the rest of Claudius’ entourage arrived in Britain, and the advancing army, which had paused tactfully at the Thames, was now impelled to cross; Claudius entered Camulodunum in triumph. He had reinforced the army with more than elephants and his *comites* in purple-banded clothes, the Roman equivalent of red tabs and gold braid; he was escorted by a detachment of the guardsmen who had made him emperor:

<1.04> *Rimini (Ariminum)*

M(arco) Vettio M(arci) f(ilio) Ani(ensi tribu) Valenti
mil(iti) coh(ortis) VIII pr(aetoriae), benef(iciario) praef(ecti) pr(aetorio),
donis donato bello Britan(nico)
torquibus armillis phaleris,
evoc(ato) Aug(usti) corona aurea donat(o),
(centurioni) coh(ortis) VI vig(illum), (centurioni) stat(orum), (centurioni) coh(ortis) XVI
urb(anae), (centurioni) c(o)ho(rtis)
II pr(aetoriae), exercitatori equit(um) speculatorum, princip(i)
praetori leg(ionis) XIII Gem(inae) ex trec(enario), [p(rimo) p(ilo)] leg(ionis) VI
Vitr(icis), donis donato ob res prosper(e)
gest(as) contra Astures torq(ui)bus phaler(is) arm(illis),

trib(uno) coh(ortis) V vig(illum), trib(uno) coh(ortis) XII urb(anae), trib(uno) coh(ortis) III pr(aetoriae), [p(rimo) p(ilo) II] leg(ionis) XIII Gem(inae) Mart(iae) Victr(icis), proc(uratori) imp(eratoris) [Neron(is)] Caes(aris) Aug(usti) prov(inciae) Lusitan(iae), patron(o) coloniae, speculator(es) X h(onoris) c(ausa), G(aio) Luccio Telesino G(aio) Suetonio Paulino co(n)s(ulibus)

ILS 2648; Dobson 1978, 298, No. 69

‘To Marcus Vettius Valens, son of Marcus, of the *Aniensis* voting-tribe, soldier of the Eighth Cohort of the Guard, attached to the staff (*beneficiarius*) of the Prefect of the Guard, decorated in the British War with Torques, Bracelets and Medallions, decorated with the Gold Crown as an imperial re-enlisted veteran (*evocatus Augusti*), centurion in the Sixth Cohort of the Watch, centurion of couriers, centurion in the Sixteenth Urban cohort, centurion in the Second Cohort of the Guard, instructor of the mounted police (*speculatores*), centurion chief of staff of the Thirteenth Legion Gemina and former *trecenarius*, first-ranking centurion of the Sixth Legion Victrix, decorated with Torques, Medallions and Bracelets for successes against the Asturians, tribune of the Fifth Cohort of the Watch, tribune of the Twelfth Urban cohort, tribune of the Third Cohort of the Guard, first-ranking centurion for the second time of the Fourteenth Legion Gemina Martia Victrix, procurator of the Emperor Nero Caesar Augustus of the province of Lusitania, patron of this Colony, the ten *speculatores* (erected this) in his honour, in the consulship of Gaius Luccius Telesinus and Gaius Suetonius Paulinus (AD 66).’

Vettius Valens was in his mid-50s when this inscription was erected. In AD 43 when he was decorated for his part in the invasion, he was already quite a senior guardsman, since he was attached to the staff of the commander of the Guard before completing his 16 years’ service and being retained as an *evocatus*. Since this was accompanied by a second decoration, the Gold Crown, it looks as if it coincided with Claudius’ triumph. Valens then proceeded to the usual three centurionates of increasing importance at Rome, in the Watch or fire brigade, then the Urban Cohorts or ‘police’ commanded by the Prefect of the City, and finally the Guard, in which he also became the trainer and of its mounted element, a corps d’élite of 300 troopers (compare 8.19). The title *trecenarius* seems to have been applied to officers who had held all three centurionates at Rome, the Watch, the Urban Cohorts and the Guard.¹⁴ Then he went to north-west Spain as the first-ranking centurion of the Sixth Legion Victrix (‘Victorious’), in which he was decorated once more in a ‘colonial’ war against the Astures, a powerful tribe in the north-west which had bitterly resisted conquest by Augustus but now contributed units to the army, including the two cavalry regiments (*alae*) and the two part-mounted cohorts which served in Britain. Valens then returned to Rome, this time as a battalion commander, culminating in the Guard by AD 65. This date can be deduced from his next post, which would have lasted a year: he went back to Britain as the first-

¹⁴ Mann 1983.

ranking centurion of the Fourteenth Legion, originally Gemina ('Twin', because it had been formed by amalgamating two legions), but now 'Martial and Victorious' as well for its defeat of Boudica 4 or 5 years before.¹⁵ This inscription, which honours him in his home town, was commissioned by the legion's ten *speculatores* (legionaries seconded to the governor's staff as couriers and policemen) when news came of his promotion to Lusitania.

As procurator of Lusitania (modern Portugal), the equestrian official in charge of the province's finances, Valens was second in importance to the senatorial governor himself. The latter, as it happens, was Otho, the discarded husband of Nero's empress Poppaea, now eking out a gilded exile like the Duke of Windsor in the Bahamas, but destined to be briefly emperor in AD 69. Unfortunately we do not know whether Valens joined Otho's coup, only that he raised his family to the equestrian equivalent of nobility: this is the term that Tacitus applies to the grandfathers of his hero Agricola, who both became procurators.¹⁶ Valens' own grandson entered the Senate and was even honoured by the province of Britain as its patron (10.24). The family evidently survived and kept its connection with Britain, perhaps because Valens escaped involvement in AD 69; if so, he was a wiser man or more fortunate than a fellow-tribune in the Guard, who may indeed have also been a fellow-guardian in AD 43:

<1.05> Turin (*Augusta Taurinorum*)

G(aio) Gavio L(uci) f(ilio)
 [S]tel(latina tribu) Silvano
 [p]rimipilari leg(ionis) VIII Aug(ustae),
 [t]ribuno coh(ortis) II vigillum,
 [t]ribuno coh(ortis) XIII urban(ae),
 [tr]ibuno coh(ortis) XII praetor(iae),
 [d]onis donato a divo Claud(io)
 bello Britannico
 [to]rquibus armillis phaleris
 corona aurea,
 [p]atrono colon(iae) d(ecreto) [d(ecurionum)]

ILS 2701



'To Gaius Gavius Silvanus, son of Lucius, of the *Stellatina* voting-tribe, first-ranking centurion of the Eighth Legion Augusta, tribune of the Second Cohort of the Watch, tribune of the Thirteenth Urban Cohort, tribune of the Twelfth Cohort of the Guard, decorated by the deified Claudius in the British War with Torques, Bracelets and Medallions, and the Golden Crown; patron of the Colony, by decree of the councillors.'

¹⁵ Only *Gemina* in 2.11, but subsequently famous for defeating Boudica (Tacitus, *Histories* ii 11).

¹⁶ *Agricola* 4.1, *utrumque avum procuratorem ... quae equestris nobilitas est*.

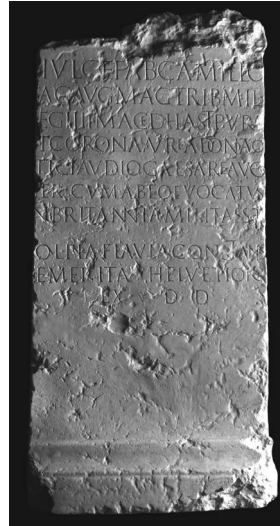
This dedication can also be closely dated, since – unknown to the councillors of Turin – their patron’s career was about to end. As tribune of the Guard in AD 65, Silvanus joined the great conspiracy against the emperor Nero in which he played an ambiguous part: after bringing Nero’s order to Seneca that he kill himself, he was denounced in his turn; despite being acquitted, he chose to follow Seneca into suicide.¹⁷ Like Vettius Valens (1.04), he qualified for the three tribunates at Rome by having been the first-ranking centurion of a legion, but these tribunates cannot have lasted long enough for him to have been *primus pilus* more than 20 years before: the councillors have recorded only the highlights of his career, without specifying what his post was in AD 43. He may have been a centurion¹⁸ already, but it seems more like that he was a guardsman like Valens, if not yet an *evocatus*.

This term *evocatus* is used of legionaries ‘recalled’ to the Colours, but especially of guardsmen, when it is usually qualified as ‘imperial’ (*evocatus Augusti*). But its use has caused difficulty in this third inscription:

<1.06> *Avenches (Aventicum)*

[G(aio)] Iul(io) G(ai) f(ilio) Fab(ia tribu) Camillo
[s]ac(erdoti) Aug(usti) mag(ni?), trib(un)o mil(itum)
[l]eg(ionis) IIII Maced(onicae), hast(a) pura
[e]t corona aurea donato
[a] Ti(berio) Claudio Caesare Aug(usto)
[G]er(manico) cum ab eo evocatus
[i]n Britannia militasset,
[c]ol(onia) Pia Flavia Constans
Emerita Helvetior(um)
ex d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

CIL xiii 5093 = ILS 2697+add.



‘To Gaius Julius Camillus, son of Gaius, of the *Fabia* voting-tribe, priest of the great Augustus, military tribune of the Fourth Legion Macedonica, decorated with the Untipped Spear and the Gold Crown by Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus when he was recalled (*evocatus*) by him and served in Britain. The *colonia* of the Helvetii, Dutiful, Flavian, Constant, Veteran, by decree of the city-councillors.’

The titles of Aventicum refer to its re-foundation by Vespasian (whence *Flavia*) as a ‘colony’ (*colonia*), a new Roman city settled by legionary veterans (*emeriti*), which

¹⁷ Tacitus, *Annals* xv 50, 60–1, 71.

¹⁸ Not necessarily in the Eighth Legion, although Claudius’ doctor Stertinius Xenophon, a tribune in that legion, was decorated in Claudius’ British triumph (*PIR*² S 913, inscriptions quoted by Birley 2008, 197).

means that more than 25 years have elapsed since Camillus was decorated for his part in the invasion of Britain. He probably owed this belated recognition to his daughter Julia Festilla, who provided in her will for a duplicate of this inscription.¹⁹ The use of *evocatus* may only mean that Camillus, like Vettius Valens (1.04), was serving in the Guard when he was decorated; but since the decorations he received are typical of equestrian officers in the pre-Flavian period,²⁰ it is more likely that he was actually tribune of the Fourth Legion Macedonica when Claudius 'recalled' him, a rare instance of this verb being used in its general sense. This would indicate that his legion contributed a detachment to the legionary component of the invading army.

There is less uncertainty about another legionary officer, the camp commandant of the Second Legion Augusta. Anicius Maximus was promoted for his part in the invasion, as we know from the inscription erected in his honour by the capital of Roman Egypt, Alexandria, at his home town of Pisidian Antioch in southern Asia Minor. His origins and career are eloquent of the 'colonial élites' from which many officers were drawn:

<1.07> *Pisidian Antioch (western Turkey)*

P(ublio) Anicio
P(ubli) f(ilio) Ser(gia tribu) Maxi-
mo praefecto
Gn(aei) Domiti Ahenobar-
bi, p(rimo) p(ilo) leg(ionis) XII Fulm(inatae), praef(ecto)
castror(um) leg(ionis) II Aug(ustae) in
Britannia, praef(ecto) ex[er]citu(s) qui est in Aegypto,
donato ab imp(eratore) donis
militaribus ob expeditionem, honorato
coron(a) murali et
hasta pura ob bellum
Britannic(um), civitas Alexandr(iae) quae est
in Aegypto, h(onoris) c(ausa)

ILS 2696

'To Publius Anicius Maximus, son of Publius, of the *Sergia* voting-tribe, prefect of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, first-ranking centurion of the Twelfth Legion Fulminata, camp commandant of the Second Legion Augusta in Britain, commandant of the army which is in Egypt, decorated by the Emperor for the expedition, honoured with Mural Crown and Untipped Spear for the British War, (from) the city of Alexandria in Egypt, to do him honour.'

¹⁹ *CIL* xiii 5094 (Avenches), the same text (as far as ... *militasset*), but ending with *Iul(ia) Camili(!) fil(ia) Festilla ex testamento*.

²⁰ Maxfield 1981, 161.

Pisidian Antioch was a *colonia* founded by Augustus for his legionary veterans. It was a little Rome built on seven hills, a Latin-speaking enclave in the Greek east which even displayed its own copy of the founder's *Res Gestae* (1.01). Anicius Maximus, like Caristanius Fronto (1.11), belonged to the local nobility of Antioch: he received the honour of deputising as 'prefect' (acting-mayor) for Domitius Ahenobarbus when the latter was formally elected to the city's annual magistracy. Ahenobarbus was the head of an ancient noble family which had become entangled with the imperial house (he was in fact Claudius' first cousin), and by marrying Claudius' niece he fathered the future emperor Nero; this *mésalliance* ensured that he was remembered as 'detestable in every part of life'.²¹ His titular deputy, Anicius Maximus, was probably commissioned directly as a centurion because of his high social standing, and rose to be the first-ranking centurion of one of the four Syrian legions; from this he was posted to the other end of the Empire, to be the senior professional soldier of the Second Legion Augusta, where he ranked third after the legate (Vespasian) and the senior 'senatorial' tribune (*tribunus laticlavus*), a young man usually of senatorial family who aspired to a senatorial career. He received the decorations appropriate to his rank for his part in the conquest of Britain, and rose higher still, in the East once more, as camp commandant to both the Egyptian legions combined. He and Balbillus are the first of more than a dozen officers and administrators whose careers are known to have taken them from Britain to Egypt.²²

The victory celebrated

Claudius, although he was guarded in Britain by loyal careerists in the Guard that proclaimed him, and only spent sixteen days on the island, was absent from Rome for six months, where anxiety and pride were felt, or at least advertised.²³ These feelings extended to Italy and 'Roman' towns elsewhere. Claudius in his days of academic obscurity had learnt the Etruscan language to write their history, and now in AD 45 a dignitary in the Etruscan town of Rusellae dedicated a statue of the 'British Victory'. On the plinth was inscribed:

²¹ Suetonius, *Nero* 5.1, *omni parte vitae detestabilem*.

²² Drexhage 1998 (summarising their careers at 185–7). Bowman 2006.

²³ *CIL* vi 3751 = 31282 = 36894. *CIL* vi 917. Dedications are collected with commentary by Bérard, Cogitore and Tarpin 1998, 385–6; Christol, Drew-Bear and Taghalian 2001, 15; Standing 2003; Birley 2008(b), 198–201.

<1.08> *Rusellae (near Roselle in Tuscany)*

voto [s]uscepto
[p]ro salute et reditu et
victoria Britanni-
ca Ti(berii) Claudii Caesa-
ris Aug(usti) Germanici
pont(ificis) max(imi), tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) V, imp(eratoris)
X, p(atris) p(atriciae), co(n)s(ulis) des(ignati) IIII,
A(ulus) Vicirius Proculus
flamen Aug(ustalis), tr(ibunus) mil(itum),
victoriae Britanni-
cae votum solvit

AE 1980, 457

‘Vow made for the safe return and the British Victory of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, pontifex maximus, in the fifth year of his tribunician power (AD 45), acclaimed emperor ten times, Father of his Country, consul designate for the fourth time (for AD 47). Aulus Vicirius Proculus, priest of Augustus, military tribune, has paid his vow to the British Victory.’

Claudius bears the usual imperial titles: *Caesar* and *Augustus* to symbolise his descent from the founders of the Empire; *pontifex maximus* as the elected head of the Roman state religion; and the powers, but not the actual office, of tribune of the plebs, which Augustus regarded as his ‘title of supreme power’ since it symbolised his protection of the People.²⁴ It was renewed annually on 10 December, the day on which the tribunes entered office, so it marked the number of regnal years. In AD 43 Proculus had promised to dedicate a statue if Claudius returned safely, and now he ‘paid’ his vow. (Roman religion, like Roman social life, was a contract which imposed reciprocal obligations upon inferiors and superiors alike.) Unfortunately he does not specify the legion in which he was tribune, but it is tempting to see it as one of the four which invaded Britain; if so, he would have subtly advertised his own contribution to the victory, as well as his loyalty to the new Emperor as a priest of the Imperial Cult. There would also be the intriguing coincidence that another Aulus Vicirius Proculus, presumably his grandson, was governor of Britain in AD 93.²⁵

The question is complicated by the tombstone of one Aulus Vicirius (cognomen

²⁴ Tacitus, *Annals* iii 56, *summi fastigii vocabulum*; i 2, *ad tuendam plebem. tribunicia potestas* is usually abbreviated in inscriptions and may be resolved either as genitive or as ablative, since both cases are found when it is not abbreviated. The ablative has been adopted here, except in 4.13. where the genitive is explicit.

²⁵ Aulus Vicirius Proculus (cos. suff. AD 89), now attested in a diploma fragment (AE 2008, 1754, with Eck and Pangerl 2008). Aulus Vicirius Martialis (cos. suff. AD 98) is probably his younger brother.

now lost), who received a public funeral at Siena; he too was a military tribune, but tribune of the Fourth Legion Scythica. If he were the same man, and were indeed celebrating his own contribution to the victory, it would mean that this legion sent a detachment from Moesia to Britain.²⁶ But he may only have been a kinsman. There was no need actually to serve in Britain to celebrate victory in Britain:

<1.09> *Corinth*

Ti(berio) Claudio P(ublili) f(ilio) Fab(ia tribu) Dinippo
 Ilvir(o), Ilvir(o) quinq(uennali), augur(i),
 sacerdoti Victoriae
 Britann(icae), trib(un)o mil(itum) leg(ionis) VI,
 annonae curatori,
 agonothele Neroneon
 Caesareon et Isthmion
 et Caesareon, tribules
 tribus Atiae

AE 1917/18, 1 (West 1931, No. 86)

‘To Tiberius Claudius Dinippus, son of Publius, of the *Fabia* voting-tribe, joint-mayor, quinquennial joint-mayor, priest of the British Victory, military tribune of the Sixth Legion, curator of the corn-supply, games-giver of the Neronian and Caesarian Games, the Isthmian Games and the Caesarian Games, (from) the tribesmen of the *Atia* voting-tribe.’

Corinth, which had been refounded by Julius Caesar as a Roman *colonia*, was the capital of Achaia, the Roman province of Greece, and in the first century it used Latin as its official language. This is the best preserved of at least ten inscriptions in which the council and the individual voting-tribes honour Dinippus in almost identical terms.²⁷ Like Vicirius Proculus, he too had been a military tribune, and some of the inscriptions call the Sixth Legion *Hispaniensis* because it was in Spain until AD 70 (compare 1.04). Oversight of the corn supply at Corinth seems to have been a special post there in times of shortage. The old Isthmian Games at Corinth had been supplemented by emperors who added their own names; Nero’s in due course was replaced by that of Trajan. All of this means that Dinippus was rich and influential in the AD 40s and 50s, a local magnate with no direct involvement in

²⁶ *CIL* xi 1806. Devijver identified them at first (*PMEV* 111), but later distinguished them (Suppl. I and II, V 111 and V 111 bis) on the grounds that *CIL* xi 1806, by abbreviating *Dis Manibus* to *D M*, must be considerably later. But the stone is broken here, and it is unclear whether it was abbreviated or not. Eck (2000, 486) identifies them, with the implication suggested. An unknown senator from Rusellae served as legionary tribune in the ‘British army’ (*exercitus Britannicus*), but this need not mean the actual expeditionary force: *AE* 1980, 445, with Birley 2005, 277–8.

²⁷ West 1931, Nos. 86, 87, 88, 89, and (very fragmentary) 90, 91, 92. Kent 1966, Nos. 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163. Standage 2003, 284–6 (illustrating Kent No. 160).

the Victory whose priest he was; the cult seems to have died with him, since he is the only known incumbent. Also from Corinth is this inscribed statue-base:

<1.10> *Corinth*

Victoriai
sacrum

West 1931, No. 11

‘Dedicated to Victory.’

But not just any victory. The spelling of AI for AE is not a Graecism, but an archaising affectation also found on Claudius’ Arch at Rome (1.13). This is a victory of Claudius, therefore, and probably a dedication to the British Victory by its priest Dinippus. It is celebrated more elaborately by another Roman ‘colonial’ magnate in the Greek-speaking East:

<1.11> *Pisidian Antioch (western Turkey)*

Ti(berio) Claudio
Caisari Aug(usto)
Germanico
pont(ifici) max(imo), co(n)s(uli) III,
trib(unicia) pot(estate) V, p(atri) p(atriae),
pro incolumitate
eius et victoria
Britannica ex
voto quod susce-
perat cum liberis
suis, statuam, ludos
iuvenales, hostias,
venationem dedit
G(aius) Carista{t}n-
ius Fronto
Caisianus Iullus
duumviralis III,
pontifex, trib(unus)
leg(ionis) XII Fulmin(atae),
praif(ectus) cohort(is)
Bospor(anorum), praif(ectus)
fabrum VI

Tyche 16 (2001), 1–20 (*AE* 2001, 1918)

‘To Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, pontifex maximus, consul three times, in the fifth year of his tribunician power (AD 45), Father of his Country; for his safety and the British Victory, according to the vow he undertook with his children, this statue, Youth Games, animal sacrifices, a wild-beast show, was given by Gaius Caristanius Fronto Caisianus Iullus, duumvir three times, pontifex, tribune of the Twelfth Legion Fulminata, prefect of the Cohort of Bosporani, aide-de-camp six times.’

Like the Corinthian dedication to Victory, this long text pays tribute to Claudius by adopting the ‘archaic’ spelling of AI for AE in the words *Caisari*, *Caisianus* and *praif(ectus)*. It is inscribed on the front of a square pillar, which (with its now missing capital) would have supported a statue of the Emperor some three metres above the ground. Its dedicator was not only rich, as the catalogue of his local benefactions was intended to show, but also influential; not just at Antioch, where he was joint-mayor (*duumvir*) but in the wider Empire: six times aide-de-camp like Balbillus (1.02), like Anicius Maximus (1.07) he twice received the honour of deputising as ‘prefect’ (acting-mayor) for visiting army-commanders when they were formally elected to the annual magistracy. This detail comes from two other inscriptions, one of them the plinth of his public statue, ‘the first ever voted by the Council’; the date of one appointment, it can be deduced, was in AD 4, and the other perhaps even earlier.²⁸ It follows that in AD 45 Caristanius was aged about seventy, an elder statesman, whose equestrian military service was many years ago. Moreover, it was entirely eastern; his legion and cohort were probably then in Syria. Like Claudius Dinippus (1.09), if not Vicirius Proculus (1.08), he had no direct connection with the invasion of Britain, but used it to demonstrate his own loyalty and influence. Coincidentally and unknown to him, however, like Vicirius Proculus he would acquire a British connection many years later: another Gaius Caristanius Fronto of Antioch, probably his great-grandson, achieved senatorial rank and commanded one of the legions with which Agricola conquered the north (3.17).²⁹

Claudius was voted the title *Britannicus* for his conquest of Britain, but modestly passed it to his infant son, who thus became known as ‘Britannicus’. Vicirius Proculus prayed for *his* welfare too.³⁰ But the title died with Britannicus in AD 55, soon after the accession of his rival Nero, who was plausibly thought to have poisoned him.³¹ We know from inscriptions that the title was not resumed by Domitian, Hadrian or Antoninus Pius for their own successes in Britain, although Pius struck coins in AD 143 to celebrate Victory in Britain. This was his own victory, but

²⁸ ILS 9502 (*huic primo omnium publice d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) statua posita est*) and 9503, now AE 2001, 1919 and 1920, with correction of his cognomen to *Iullus*; full commentary by Christol, Drew-Bear and Taşlıalan 2001.

²⁹ Another branch of the family remained equestrian, producing the prefect Caristanius Justinus (6.24).

³⁰ AE 1980, 458, [*p]ro salute Ti(berii) Claudi(i) Caesaris Aug(usti) f(ili) Brittanici*.

³¹ Tacitus, *Annals* xiii 15–17.

coincidentally it was the centenary of the Claudian invasion.³² The title was only resumed by Commodus, and later by Septimius Severus and Caracalla, Carinus and Numerian, Diocletian and his colleagues, and then finally by Constantine. But Claudius' achievement was unparalleled in AD 48, when he rhetorically refused to mention it. We have his very words to the Senate, during the debate on whether senators should be admitted from Gaul, which is why his speech was inscribed verbatim on bronze at Lugdunum (Lyon), the Roman capital of Gaul and Claudius' own birthplace; it also saw a dedication for Claudius' safe return from Britain.³³ In this speech Claudius the historian digresses from his main theme, the widening recruitment of the Empire's ruling class, to the early history of Rome:

<1.12> *Lyon (Lugdunum)*

iam si narrem bella a quibus
coeperint maiores nostri et quo processerimus, vereor ne nimio
insolentior esse videar et quaesisse iactationem gloriae pro-
lati imperi ultra oceanum

ILS 212

'But now, were I to describe the wars from which our ancestors began, and how far we have advanced, I am afraid of giving the impression of being arrogant and of seeking an opportunity to congratulate myself on extending Roman rule beyond the Ocean.'

The Senate, by dutifully voting Claudius a triumph and a triumphal arch for his conquest of Britain, had not allowed this modesty to be an obstacle. Here is the inscription on the Arch when it was erected on the northern approaches to Rome, where the Aqua Virgo aqueduct (newly rebuilt by Claudius) crossed a major road:

<1.13> *Rome*

Ti(berio) Clau[dio Drusi f(ilio) Cai]sari
Augu[sto Germani]co
pontific[i maxim(o), trib(unicia) potes]tat(e) XI,
co(n)s(uli) V, im[p(eratori) XXII, cens(ori), patri pa]triaei,
Senatus Po[pulusque] Ro[manus, quod]
reges Brit[annorum] XI d[evictos sine]
ulla iactur[a in deditionem acceperit]
gentesque b[arbaras trans Oceanum]
primus in dici[onem populi Romani redegerit]



³² BMCRE IV, No. 1613, *sestertius* with the figure of *Victoria* captioned BRI TAN. The caption IMPERATOR II refers it to the only imperial salutation taken by Pius after his accession.

³³ AE 1998, 944, to Jupiter and Victory (with the dedicator's name now lost), *pro salute et reditus(!) Ti(berii) Claudi Caesaris Aug(usti) Ger(manici)*.

ILS 216, with Barrett 1991

‘To Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, son of Drusus, pontifex maximus, in the eleventh year of his tribunician power (AD 52), consul five times, *imperator* 22 times, censor, Father of his Country, from the Roman Senate and People, because he received in surrender eleven kings of the Britons conquered without loss and first brought the barbarian peoples across the Ocean under the authority of the Roman people.’

The Arch has disappeared, but extensive remains were found in 1562 and 1641. Subsidiary inscriptions evidently named members of Claudius’ immediate family like his mother and father, and his brother Germanicus. Quoted here is the main inscription, of which only the left-hand quarter survives intact; the rest has to be reconstructed from a few fragments and another Arch at Cyzicus (see below). Some details of Claudius’ achievement remain uncertain: we are not sure how many British kings there were, and whether they were ‘defeated’ or ‘surrendered’. AI for AE in *patriai* and *[Cai]sari* is the archaising affectation already seen at Corinth (1.09) and Pisidian Antioch (1.11); it was a subtle compliment to the imperial antiquary, but politically more important was the compliment to his generalship. A victorious general during the Republic, including even the unwarlike Cicero in Cilicia, was acclaimed by his army as *imperator* (literally ‘commander-in-chief’, but hence ‘emperor’), and thereby claimed the right to enter Rome in triumph. But the first Emperor, Augustus, the *imperator* par excellence, soon monopolised this distinction for himself and his family; his generals served only as his deputies or ‘legates’ (*legati*), lieutenant-generals with delegated powers, and like Aelianus (1.03) received no more than ‘triumphal decorations’, the outward insignia of a triumph. In a career lasting more than 50 years, Augustus was acclaimed ‘Emperor’ 21 times, a total already surpassed by Claudius in 11 years, sure sign of his insecurity and his need for military recognition.

In Asia Minor on the Sea of Marmara, the expatriate community of Romans at Cyzicus erected an arch of their own with an inscription³⁴ commemorating Claudius’ conquest of Britain; and in the south-west, at Aphrodisias in Caria, a city which prospered from the local cult of Julius Caesar’s divine ancestress Aphrodite (identified with Roman Venus), a marble panel was added to the two-storey colonnade which led to her temple. Claudius, heroically nude, bestrides an Amazon-like figure which wears a short tunic and boots; with one hand he draws back her head, with the other he is about to plunge a spear into her bare breast. Underneath is a double caption:

³⁴ ILS 217.

<1.14> *Aphrodisias (western Turkey)*

Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Βρεταννία
Καῖσαρ

Smith 2013, 145–7, C10 and C-base 12

‘Tiberius Claudius Caesar’ and ‘Britannia’

The spectator is left in suspense as to whether Claudius is going to strike the death-blow, or will relent and raise a fainting Britannia to her place among the provinces of Rome.

