

Emperor Claudius' Promotion of Haruspicy in 47 CE and its Historical Meaning*

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ABSTRACT This article aims to re-examine the historical significance of Emperor Claudius' promotion of haruspicy. In his speech, which Tacitus transcribed an indirect discourse, Claudius contrasted "Italian art" with "foreign superstition", and urged the Roman people to remember the role of the art of divination in times of need. On this basis, he proposed to the senators that they establish a college of haruspices. By expanding the practice of haruspicy from an Etruscan art, that was alien to the Roman mindset, to an "Italian art", Claudius simultaneously elevated the status of haruspicy and used it to gain access to the high priesthood. This framing is similar to another of his speeches the following year, in which he sought to bring Gallic patricians into the Roman senate.

Claudius' proposals were motivated by the threat of rebellion, as well as the reorganization of the imperial order. After the triumph of the Britannia expedition, he consolidated his direct control over the empire, reorganizing the hierarchy between the city of Rome, Italy, and the provinces. At the beginning of this process, Claudius sought to recognize the religious authority that the Etruscans had previously lacked. In doing so, his aim seems to have been to expand the centrality of the city of Rome, while also supporting his regime through prophecy. Although his actions did not lead to positive results, the work enabled him to move forward in 48 CE with a measure that would allow Gallic patricians to join the Roman Senate.

Keywords Claudius, Haruspicy, Etruria, Tacitus, Roman Empire, Imperial Order

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1. Introduction

Claudius, the fourth emperor of the Roman Empire, came to the throne abruptly under the extraordinary circumstances of the assassination of Gaius Caesar (Caligula); however, through both internal and external measures, he laid the foundations of the principate.¹ His religious measures during his reign, in relation to both Jews and Christians, have been the subject of numerous studies. However, due to the lack of sources, his measures related to the state religion of Rome have only been mentioned in the context of his personal character and have not been studied in detail.

In particular, Claudius' speech promoting haruspicy, which is said to have taken place around 47 CE, is only mentioned in the context of his fondness for the Etruscans or the development of the state religion in the Imperial era. Cineira (1999) argues that Claudius' fondness for the Etruscans led him to elevate them to the status of guardians of traditional religion. On the other hand, Levick (2015) suggests that Claudius' desire to organize a *collegium* of haruspices was to bring them under official control. However, few studies have specifically examined his speeches and actions themselves.

Recently, Haack (2003) has studied the development of haruspicy in the Imperial period, focusing on the "sixty haruspices" in epigraphs (*arispex ex sexaginta: CIL VI 32439*), and arguing that Claudius, who faced a rebellion at the beginning of his reign, sought to reform the group of haruspices

1 For biographical studies of Claudius, see Momigliano (1961), Levick (2015), Osgood (2011), and others. Assessments of Claudius' reign are divided between studies that emphasize his reforms in terms of "Centralization," and those that argue that Claudius pursued an antiquarian regression, making judgments as circumstances.

established under Augustus in the form of a *collegium* based on his enthusiasm for Etruria. While his analysis is significant for highlighting the link between the haruspicy measures and the status of Etruscan aristocrats, it is limited because the connection to Etruria is still linked to the emperor's personal favoritism.

Shannon-Henderson (2019), examines the religious elements in Tacitus' *Annals* and critically perceives the religious tendencies of Claudius' reign. He criticizes the emperor's seemingly fruitless attempts to restore tradition as a kind of escapism from reality and sees it as a bridge between the uncertainty of Tiberius' reign and the impiety of Nero's rule. He particularly discusses the revival of haruspicy, criticizing Claudius' perception of reality in the speech as myopic, blind to real problems, and rarely showing his reliance on that practice after the speech. Although his discussion is significant as it goes beyond the scope of enthusiasm for the Etruscans, it is limited by the fact that it examines only a single case.

Despite this tendency, Claudius' discussion was new enough for Tacitus or the Roman ruling class to reconstruct it as a separate speech in *Annals*, and it needs to be examined in the context of the changing imperial order following the establishment of the Principate. Therefore, this study will examine Tacitus' discussion of Claudius' promotion of haruspicy in relation to the imperial policies of the time. To do so, I will first examine the perception of haruspicy in the pre-Claudian period through the writings of Cicero and others and then go through the contents of the speech presented by Tacitus in the *Annals*. Then, in conjunction with the political and social context of the era in which the speech was delivered, we will infer the context and meaning of the emperor's advocacy of haruspicy.

2. The Status of Haruspicy in the pre-Claudian Era

Haruspicy is a type of divination that attempts to predict the will of the gods by observing the morphology of animal organs, such as the liver. It is believed to have originated in the ancient Near East and was likely brought to Etruria via the Mediterranean world (de Grummond 2013). In particular, since the Etruscans were known for their religious leanings, including sacrificial rituals, and the early institutions of Rome developed under Etruscan influence, it is likely that fortune-telling influenced the Romans as well. However, the Roman religious ethos was centered on maintaining peace with the gods (*pax deorum*) through ritual, so haruspicy as a way to predict the future was foreign to them.

Haruspicy was introduced in earnest when Rome was threatened by Hannibal during the Second Punic War, and subsequently military commanders and provincial governors used haruspices on the battlefield or in the provinces (Beard et al. 1998, 320). Nevertheless, the Romans did not incorporate these into the regular priesthood, but called upon Etruscan haruspices whenever the Senate needed them.

In *On the Laws*, Cicero describes the occasion when the Senate called in Etruscan haruspices as follows (Cicero, *De Legibus*, II. 21).

“Prodigies and portents shall be referred to the Etruscan soothsayers, if the Senate so decree; Etruria shall instruct her leading men in this art. They shall make expiatory offerings to whatever gods they decide upon, and shall perform expiations for flashes of lightning and for whatever shall be struck by lightning.” (translated by Clinton W. Keyes)

When such prodigies occurred, the Roman Senate summoned the Etruscan haruspices to interpret the meanings and discuss the rituals of atonement. In addition, the Roman Senate was concerned that the Etruscan arts were losing their religious authority due to poverty, so it sent six of the children of the patricians to each tribe in Etruria to learn the arts (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I, 92). Furthermore, towards the end of the Republic, Etruscan books began to be translated and adapted to Roman conditions. This has led some to believe that haruspicy was becoming a part of the official Roman religion (Guittard 2012).

However, Quintus, who discusses prophecy in Cicero's writings, does not see haruspicy as a traditional Greek or Roman ritual. He notes that "the art of prophecy was not neglected even by the barbarians" (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I, 90), and places Etruscan prophecy on the same level as the Druids of Gaul and the Magi of the Near East. As such, haruspicy was recognized for its utility at the political and military levels, but it remained distinct from the religious mindset of the Romans.

Moreover, the end of the Republic was a time of turmoil for the authority of haruspicy and prophecy in general. In *On the Divination*, Cicero describes an instance where haruspicy was discredited (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, II, 24).

"For how many things predicted by them really come true? If any do come true, then what reason can be advanced why the agreement of the event with the prophecy was not due to chance? While Hannibal was in exile at the court of King Prusias he advised the king to go to war, but the king replied, 'I do not dare, because the entrails forbid.' 'And do you,' said Hannibal, 'put more reliance in pieces of ox-meat than you do in a

veteran commander?’ Again, when Caesar himself was warned by a most eminent soothsayer not to cross over to Africa before the winter solstice, did he not cross? If he had not done so all the forces opposed to him would have effected a junction. Why need I give instances—and, in fact, I could give countless ones—where the prophecies of soothsayers either were without result or the issue was directly the reverse of the prophecy? Ye gods, how many times they were mistaken in the late civil war! What oracular messages the soothsayers sent from Rome to our Pompeian party then in Greece! What assurances they gave to Pompey! For he placed great reliance in divination by means of entrails and portents. (…)”
 (translated by William Armistead Falconer).

Criticizing Quintus’ argument, Cicero cites examples from the Punic Wars and the civil war between Pompey and Caesar where the interpretation of haruspices did not match the actual outcome. Furthermore, he criticizes the idea that haruspicy is subject to interpretation based on haruspices, citing Cato’s comment that it is weird for a soothsayer not to laugh at another soothsayer.

Cicero’s discussion in the second half of the *On the Divination* is based on the Neo-Academic discussions, and the end of the Republic that saw the influx of these skeptical ideas. Livy criticizes many historians for neglecting to record omens (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, XLIII. 13), but amidst the expansion of the empire and the influx of new ideas, traditional Roman religion on a ‘polis’ scale was entering a new phase.

By the end of the Republic, the traditional Roman state religion was being debated. The socio-economic contradictions, continuous wars, and civil wars that had emerged during Rome’s expansion into the

Mediterranean world took a toll on the lives of its people. Meanwhile, as Choe (1997) points out, although Roman priests strictly performed the existing rituals, the religious meaning of these rites had faded and was mired in formalism. The lack of emotional stability led Roman citizens to turn to various Eastern religious rituals and the skeptical philosophies of the Hellenistic world. Even the augurs, who were the highest authorities, had been degraded to the point where they became the object of cynicism in literature (Lucius Accius, "Astyanax," *Tragoedia*, 134-5).

Along with the formalism and conservatism of the Roman religion, the interpretation of haruspices was also becoming politicized. In 56 BCE, when the ground was heard rolling in the suburbs of the city, the Senate called upon the haruspices for interpretation. The haruspices noted that gods needed to be appeased because sacred rites and sacrifices had been defiled, envoys to Rome had been killed, and oaths had been ignored. Cicero delivered a speech in which he reconstructed the interpretation (*responsum*) of these misfortunes as being caused by Publius Clodius' misdeeds (Cicero, *De haruspicum Responsis*).² In doing so, the former transformed the religious element into a political speech by criticizing the latter for losing his Roman identity (Cairo 2020).

As Cicero mentioned above, it is also noteworthy that haruspices, including Spurinna, gave unfavorable interpretations to the dictator Julius Caesar (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I. 119; II. 37; Plutarchos, *Caesar*, 43). Rawson (1978) points out that the Etruscan aristocracy, represented by haruspicy, politically connected with the Roman Optimates. Meanwhile, in 36 BCE, when lightning struck the site of Hortensius' house, which Octavian had

2 For the structure of the Cicero's speech, see Corbeill (2023).

purchased, the haruspices' interpretation was that the god Apollo wanted the site; hence, Octavian built a temple to the god on the site based on this response (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 29). Even if Etruscan rituals had excelled at interpreting omens such as lightning, it was unprecedented for the haruspices, who were traditionally responsible for interpreting omens and performing atonement rituals, to decide on the site of a temple (Hekster and Rich 2006). In other words, Octavian had arbitrarily used haruspicy.

Moreover, securing religious authority was a key component of gaining political legitimacy for Augustus. He had the city's temples repaired in 28 BCE (*Res gestae divi Augusti*, XX, 4) and assumed the position of Pontifex Maximus upon the death of Lepidus, the previous holder, in 13 BCE. With this title, a symbol of religion and tradition that had already monopolized much of Rome's political power, the authority of Augustus could be compared to that of a king.

With this authority, the emperors imposed sweeping controls on prophecy, including those that could threaten the regime. Augustus forbade the practice of predicting deaths and burned all prophetic books except those of Sibylla (Dio, *Historia Romana*, LVI, 25; Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 31). Tiberius continued the control over prophecy by banishing astrologers from the city (Tacitus, *Annales*, II, 32). These actions, along with the traditions of the Etruscan oracles, can be seen as a step toward giving haruspicy sole authority. Nevertheless, haruspicy is rarely foregrounded in historical texts that deal with the pre-Claudian period.

3. Claudius' Speech and its Context

3.1. Claudius' Speech in Tacitus' Annals

Haruspicy in the pre-Claudian period had a different orientation from the Roman religious ethos of seeking peace with the gods, and its foreignness was clearly recognized. Researchers have pointed out that haruspicy was incorporated into the realm of state religion around the time of the establishment of the Principate (Beard et al. 1998, 101). However, the role Augustus assigned to it was also highly political and did not change in any essential way.

The promotion of Claudius' haruspicy is unique to Tacitus and is not found in the works of other historians and biographers. At the beginning of Book 11, Tacitus discusses the political situation in Rome in 47 CE, which can be summarized as follows.

- 1-3 Trial and execution of Valerius Asiaticus
- 4 The execution of the Petra brothers
- 5-7 Debate over strengthening the laws of Cincius [...]
- 11-12 Holding of the centenary festival and Messalina's conspiracy
- 13-14 Claudius' actions as censor
- 15 Promotion of haruspicy

Thus, Tacitus' account of the year 47 CE describes a situation in which liberty was fading amidst the intrigues of Messalina, the tyranny of the accusers, and the policies of Claudius. This sets the stage for criticizing the emperor's rule for his lack of perception of reality, as evidenced by

Tacitus's comment that "Claudius was exercising his power as censor without knowing anything about his wife" (Tacitus, *Annales*, XI, 13).

However, the promotion of haruspicy is presented as an irrelevant element in this narrative. It could be argued that Tacitus used the expression "next" (*deinde*) and that Claudius, as censor, proposed to the Senate the revival of haruspicy as a traditional art form in order to preserve the customs of their ancestors (*mos maiorum*) (Ryan 1993; Osgood 2011). However, it is debatable whether the censor could deal with religious matters and, whether it was the kind of "Guidance of Roman morality" (*regimen morum*) that Livy referred to (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, IV, 8).³ Moreover, even during the suppression of the Bacchanalia in 186 BCE, the role of the consuls and the senate was emphasized over that of the censor (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, XXXIX, 18-19), and the religious policies of his predecessors, especially Tiberius, were carried out without censorial authority. Furthermore, the revival of divination in 49 CE also took place after his term as censor (Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 13). Therefore it is reasonable to view this discussion in terms of his role as a *princeps*.

The following is Claudius' speech, written by Tacitus in the form of an indirect discourse (Tacitus, *Annales*, XI, 15).

"He next consulted the senate on the question of founding a college of diviners, so that "the oldest art of Italy should not become extinct through their indolence. Often, in periods of public adversity, they had called in diviners, on whose advice religious ceremonies had been renewed and, for the future, observed with greater correctness; while the Etruscan nobles,

3 For the role of censor in the Roman Republic, see Tarwacka (2024).

voluntarily or at the instance of the Roman senate, had kept up the art and propagated it in certain families. Now that work was done more negligently through the public indifference to all liberal accomplishments, combined with the progress of alien superstitions. For the moment, indeed, all was flourishing; but they must show their gratitude to the favour of Heaven by making sure that sacred rituals observed in the time of hazard were not forgotten in the day of prosperity." A senatorial decree was accordingly passed, instructing the pontiffs to consider what points in the discipline of the haruspices needed to be maintained or strengthened."⁴

(translated by John Jackson)

Tacitus makes it clear that Claudius brought the subject of haruspicy to the "senate", and that the object was to establish a college (*collegium*) of haruspices themselves and not merely encourage them. The *collegium* itself refers to a college of priests, who were responsible for organizing the celebration of rites and festivals (Lintott 1999). The colleges of pontifices and augurs, the highest-ranking priests of Rome, were the principal colleges of the Roman state religion, and Claudius attempted to elevate the haruspices to a status comparable to that of the pontifices.

However, the Senate does not seem to have voted as he intended.

4 Rettulit deinde ad senatum super collegio haruspicum, ne vetustissima Italiae disciplina per desidiam exolesceret: saepe adversis rei publicae temporibus accitos, quorum monitu redintegratas caerimonias et in posterum rectius habitas: primoresque Etruriae sponte aut patrum Romanorum impulsu retinuisse scientiam et in familias propagasse: quod nunc segnius fieri publica circa bonas artes socordia, et quia externa superstitiones valescant. Et laeta quidem in praesens omnia, sed benignitati deum gratiam referendam, ne ritus sacrorum inter ambigua culti per prospera oblitterarentur. Factum ex eo senatus consultum, viderent pontifices quae retinenda firmandaque haruspicum.

Tacitus tells us that it merely required the pontifices to find a way to maintain or strengthen haruspicy, and we are not told whether this led to the establishment of the college. Haack (2003) suggests that an *ordo* of haruspices had been established in the previous period and that Claudius sought to unite them into the college. But the specifics of this order (*ordo*) are also unknown.

In his speech, Claudius refers to haruspicy as “the oldest art of Italy” (*vetustissima Italiae disciplina*). He further refers to it as a part of the “liberal arts” (*bona arte*), giving it the authority to be of interest to the Roman people. Given that haruspicy has traditionally been referred to as the ‘Etruscan discipline’ (*disciplina Etrusca*), Claudius’ or Tacitus’ reconstruction of the speech intentionally uses the term ‘Italy’ with political connotations.⁵

Although Augustus invoked the term “all of Italy” in the justification of his regime (*Res Gestae divi Augusti*, XXV. 4: *Iuravit in mea verba tota Italia*), the term “Italy” was still a discriminatory phrase raised during the Social Wars, to distinguish it from the city of Rome (Syme 2002). In this speech, Claudius or Tacitus used the term “Italy” rather than “city of Rome,” even though haruspicy had been used by the latter. This suggests the status of Italy, had moved beyond its specific Etruscan character, but had still not been assimilated into the city of Rome.

This positioning of haruspicy is in stark contrast to the “alien superstitions” that were popular at the time. It is not known exactly which religion Claudius is referring to. However, he continued the suppression of some exotic religious practices during his reign; he banned the rites of the

5 Grimal (1989) concludes that the phrase “the oldest art of Italy” is more a judgment of Tacitus than a speech of Claudius.

Druids in Gaul and expelled Jews and astrologers from the city of Rome (Suetonius, *Divus Claudius*, 25; Dio, *Historia Romana*, LXI, 33).

However, Claudius' proposal was not simply to revive haruspicy and suppress the religious practices of foreigners; his proposal was not that all Roman citizens should learn this art. He clearly asked the Senate to establish a college based on haruspices' services in the midst of the rise of foreign superstitions. Thus, although the Senate voted to retain haruspicy, there was no imposition of it outside of the city of Rome, no new writings, and no suppression of superstition. Furthermore, as Shannon-Handerson (2019) notes, Claudius does not appear to have resorted to haruspicy despite the troubles during his reign. In the end, his promotion of haruspicy was not a widespread religious policy in the empire, but rather a product of a ruling order centered in urban Rome.

3.2. Context of the Speech in the Religion and Historical Writing

To examine the context in which Claudius' speech emerged, we first need to look at his religious policies. The Second-Century biographer Suetonius describes Claudius' religious measures as follows (Suetonius, *Divus Claudius*, 22, 25).

- (A) "Touching religious ceremonies and civil and military customs, as well as the condition of all classes at home and abroad, he corrected various abuses, revived some old customs or even established new ones. In admitting priests into the various colleges he never named anyone until he had first taken oath, and he scrupulously observed the custom of having the praetor call an assembly and proclaim a holiday,

whenever there was an earthquake within the city; as well as that of offering up a supplication whenever a bird of ill-omen was seen on the Capitol. This last he himself conducted in his capacity of chief priest, first reciting the form of words to the people from the rostra, after all day laborers and slaves had been ordered to withdraw.”
(translated by J. C. Rolfe)

(B) “He utterly abolished the cruel and inhuman religion of the Druids among the Gauls, which under Augustus had merely been prohibited to Roman citizens; on the other hand he even attempted to transfer the Eleusinian rites from Attica to Rome, and had the temple of Venus Erycina in Sicily, which had fallen to ruin through age, restored at the expense of the treasury of the Roman people. He struck his treaties with foreign princes in the Forum, sacrificing a pig and reciting the ancient formula of the fetial priests.” (translated by J. C. Rolfe)

(A) lists Claudius’ so-called “antiquarianistic” religious policies. Suetonius assesses Claudius as reorganizing traditions and creating new forms, and it is worth noting that the emperor’s focus here is on the appointment of priests and the interpretation of prodigies. Some measures related to religious rituals are also mentioned in (B), which refers to Claudius’ actions against foreign tribes. He revived the rituals of the *fetiales*, the priests who were in charge of diplomacy while signing treaties with the foreign tribes. Claudius also brought the rite of Eleusis to Rome, rebuilt the temple of Venus in Sicily, and, following Augustus, suppressed the Druids in Gaul.

These actions were not commonly announced or proclaimed as laws. As

can be seen in (A), Claudius was acting as 'chief priest' (*pontifex maximus*), and therefore the pontifices' consideration of measures to preserve or strengthen the haruspicy was well within the *pontifex maximus*' authority without the need for a Senate vote. Nevertheless, his decision to refer the matter to the Senate may have been influenced by the fact that the establishment of the *collegium* had been subject to Senate approval since the Principate (de Ligt 2001).

Furthermore, in contrast to the negative attitudes towards "alien superstition" mentioned above, Claudius' acts as described by Suetonius show a relatively receptive attitude towards foreign religions. In particular, the Eleusinian rituals, despite their secretive nature, were actively brought into Rome, unlike other religious rites. Claudius suppressed several religious rituals, including the Druids in Gaul, but he did so within his own political and social context. In other words, Claudius' purpose in promoting haruspicy was to create a new privileged group for his own political and social purposes.

In addition to the religious nature of his measures, Claudius' speech on the promotion of haruspicy can be compared to another one in Book 11 of the *Annals*, which is the speech on the admission of Gallic patricians to the Senate. In 48 CE, when the Senate debated the issue of Gallic patricians demanding admission to the Roman Senate, Claudius delivered a speech that won them this privilege (Tacitus, *Annales*, XI, 24). This speech was partially confirmed by a bronze excavated in Lyon, France, in 1528 (*CIL* XIII, 1668 = *ILS* 212). Comparison with this tablet allows us to see how Tacitus adapted Claudius' actual speech.⁶

6 For the structure of the Claudius' speech in 48 CE, see Malloch (2020).

In Tacitus' reconstruction of the speech, Claudius argues that Rome has traditionally welcomed talent from the outside of the state and that the Gallic patricians are loyal to it. He also points out that, compared to the wars with other foreign tribes, the war with Gaul was fairly short, and that the inhabitants there were already at peace and friendship with the Romans. He urged them to set a new precedent by admitting Gallic patricians to the Senate, as they had done with others in the past.

Thus, Claudius' search for precedents in Roman history for accepting foreigners and emphasizing the loyalty of Gallia was counterbalanced by the precedent of the haruspicy, where the Etruscan aristocracy, willingly or unwillingly, sought to preserve the practice. The suggestion to set a new precedent of accepting Gallic nobles into the Senate as earlier is also a counterpoint to the suggestion to observe old religious rites in the context of a prosperous state.

The voices of the "Italian" senators opposing the admission of the Gallic patricians, especially in the context of Tacitus' reconstruction of the speech, hint at the political status of "Italy" as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, in this version, Claudius describes the expansion of Rome's boundaries as follows (Tacitus, *Annales*, XI. 24).

"For I am not unaware that the Julii came to us from Alba, the Coruncanii from Camerium, the Porcii from Tusculum; that—not to scrutinize antiquity—members were drafted into the senate from Etruria, from Lucania, from the whole of Italy, and that finally Italy itself was extended to the Alps, in order that not individuals merely but countries and nationalities should form one body under the name of Romans."
(translated by John Jackson)

Here again, the identification of the Etruscans among the various regions of the Italian peninsula implies that, from Rome's perspective, they were "foreign people" distinct from them. Although the Etruscans were incorporated into the Roman sphere of power in the 3rd century BCE, they resisted Rome on several occasions, and it was not until 6 BCE that they were organized into Regio VII in Augustus' administrative reorganization.⁷ Even then, they maintained their own identity, remaining in the Etruscan League and holding their own religious festivals (Ceccarelli 2016).

Eventually, in Tacitus' version, Claudius refers to the services of the foreign people, both Etruscan and Gauls to the empire, and embodies the logic of granting new honors to recognize these services. The new honors Claudius grants, i.e., the right to enter the heart of the existing order, are the result of their cooperation in the construction of the imperial order.

4. Claudius' Reorganization of the Imperial Order and Promotion of Haruspicy

Claudius' speeches as presented by Tacitus in the *Annals* are structured in such a way as to recognize the services that non-Roman peoples had rendered to the empire and to grant them privileges that they had not previously enjoyed. What incentive would there be to grant another set of privileges, like the Gauls, to the Etruscans? This would have been motivated

7 In Plinius Maior, *Historia Naturales*, III, 8–9, the Etruscan Region consisted of 54 communities and 27 colonies.

by the ongoing foreign wars and the reorganization of the imperial order during Claudius' reign, along with the problem of rebellion that Haack (2003) has already pointed out.

Upon his ascension to the throne, Claudius had to stabilize the situation in the empire that his predecessor Gaius had caused; the immediate military task was to stabilize the changes in Germania, especially deal with the problem of Judaea, and to quell the turmoil in Mauretania (Dio, *Historia Romana*, LX, 8). Later, in 43 CE, he quelled a disturbance in Lycia in Asia Minor, annexing the region as a province, and mobilized four legions for an expedition to Britannia. Thus, from the beginning of his reign, Rome was engaged in numerous wars, that were accompanied by the mobilization of human and material resources from the provinces.

Even after Claudius' campaigns in Britannia ended with the fall of Camulodunum, wars continued on the island. In addition, the territories that had previously been governed by client kingdoms, such as Judaea and Thrace, were annexed and ruled directly. During these large-scale wars and changes in the imperial order, haruspices would have been accompanied to assist the Emperor or provincial governors. In the beginning of Britannian expedition, in particular, the soldiers were agitated about crossing the ocean (*Oceanos*) (Dio, *Historia Romana*, LX, 19), and the progress of the war was tied to the emperor's security; the role of the haruspices would have been even more important than in peacetime. Like the rituals of the *fetiales* mentioned by Suetonius, their exploits would have been recognized both before and after victory. The phrase "For the moment, indeed, all was flourishing" (*Et laeta quidem in praesens omnia*) in Claudius' speech is indicative of this situation.

The various rebellions that occurred during his reign increased Claudius' sense of political crisis. In addition to suppressing the revolts in

the early years of his reign, he was able to increase his authority through several military achievements, including the expedition to Britannia. However, even after the success of these expeditions, there were still several attempts at revolt that threatened his regime.

This was best exemplified by Claudius' fear of a solar eclipse. Cassius Dio recounts this event as follows (Dio, *Historia Romana*, LX, 26).

“Since there was to be an eclipse of the sun on his birthday, he feared that there might be some disturbance in consequence, inasmuch as some other portents had already occurred; he therefore issued a proclamation in which he stated not only the fact that there was to be an eclipse, and when, and for how long, but also the reasons for which this was bound to happen.” (translated by Earnest Cary and Herbert Foster).

He places this event after mentioning the successes of the Britannia expedition and the emperor's other reform measures. Although the success of this expedition had strengthened Claudius' political position, the emperor still had misgivings about maintaining his regime.⁸ As haruspices were mobilized in such ominous situations, their political position should have been preferential or otherwise controlled, as Haack (2003) suggests.

However, as seen earlier, the Etruscans had already been incorporated

8 Along with the prodigies, Claudius' favorite tool for the removal of political enemies was the nightmare. Early in his reign, Claudius had Gaius Silanus, governor of Hispania who had three legions, removed on the basis of a “dream of Narcissus” that he had attempted to assassinate the emperor (Dio, *Historia Romana*, LX, 14), and in 47 CE, the year of the speech of haruspicy, men named Petra were executed because they saw a vision that “Claudius crowned with a garland of wheat, the ears of which were turned downwards”, and connected it with the grain crisis (Tacitus, *Annales*, XI, 4).

into the political power of Rome, and the only way to elevate their status was to recognize their religious authority. The Etruscans also wanted to emphasize their religious status, as evidenced by the reliefs found at Caere. In these reliefs, which appear to date from the Julio-Claudian era, the Etruscans personified their city, with the figures wearing robes worn by Roman priests instead of the traditional Etruscan attire.

This suggests that the Etruscans, symbolized by the haruspicy, were just as eager to gain new authority as the Gauls, who hoped to join the Senate.



[Picture 1] The marble of Caere. The person who symbolized the Etruscans, especially Tarquinians, wear the robes.⁹

9 Sources of Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Personnification_de_trois_peuples_étrusques_MBALyon_2018.jpg (Searching at 2025. 2. 1.)

Based on these aspirations, Claudius wanted to give the Etruscan haruspices a major prophetic status by allowing them to organize a college, just like the pontifices, and augurs.

Ultimately, Claudius organized the haruspices into a *collegium* to gain the support of the Etruscan aristocracy, who would make up the majority of the haruspices, and to steer their interpretations of omens in a direction that would benefit the regime. This was in line with the emperor's desire for imperial expansion, which would expand the imperial center beyond the city of Rome. However, Claudius and the Etruscans failed. Politically, it was still not in line with the religious ethos of Rome, and it did not gain much buy-in, as it would have strengthened the position of haruspicy.

However, Claudius' attempts to expand the imperial order did not stop there, and he secured the admission of the Gallic patricians to the Senate in 48 CE. In this speech, in particular, there was an emphasis on economic aspects usually found in the haruspicy speeches.¹⁰ This practical aspect may have been a major factor in convincing the conservative Roman patricians of the Senate. As Lee (2022) later recounts, it was the expansion of the *pomerium* of the city of Rome in 49 CE that spatially embodied this expansion of the imperial order.

Meanwhile, the activities of the haruspices would still have been taking place on at a personal level, but Claudius' reliance on the haruspicy is not shown in the historical sources. It was only toward the end of his reign that records of haruspices began to appear, linked to the grain crisis at this time which led to criticisms of his government. Nevertheless, Claudius

10 Tacitus, *Annales*, XI, 24: "let them bring among us their gold and their riches instead of retaining them beyond the pale!"

did not undertake any religious acts such as summoning haruspices or performing atonement rituals. This suggests that his antiquarianism or Etruscan identity was strictly political and lacked any real significance, and that the consolidation of imperial power under Nero would later be seen as bordering on impiety.

5. Conclusion

This research article aims to re-examine the historical significance of Emperor Claudius' action to promote haruspicy. His action, as described in the *Annals* of the historian Tacitus, has been attributed to the emperor's personal disposition. However, given that haruspicy itself was an "Etruscan discipline" and was not highly favored within the Roman state religion, as Cicero and others have shown, Claudius' action cannot be explained solely by antiquarianism or enthusiasm for Etruria.

In his speech, as given by Tacitus, Claudius argued for the establishment of a college of haruspices. In his argument, he contrasted "Italian arts" with "alien superstition" and urged the people to remember the role of the haruspicy in times of national need. By expanding haruspicy to include Italian rather than Etruscan skills as traditionally perceived, Claudius made it comparable to other high priesthoods. He also focused on the formation of a privileged group, the *collegium*, rather than the mere promotion of haruspicy, which he could promote as 'chief priest'. The structure of this speech is similar to that given by Claudius the following year when he admitted the Gallic patricians into the Roman Senate. In the latter speech, Claudius cited the precedent for accepting foreigners, reminded the Senate

of their service to Rome, and argued for granting them the privilege of joining the Senate.

Claudius' proposal was likely motivated by foreign wars, in addition to the threat of rebellion that had threatened the regime since the beginning of his reign. Before and after the victory of the Britannia expedition in 43 CE, Claudius consolidated direct control over the provinces, reorganizing the hierarchy between the city of Rome, Italy, and the existing provinces. As a precursor to this reorganization of the imperial order, Claudius sought to promote the religious authority of the Etruscans, which they had not previously had. In doing so, he seems to have aimed to expand the political centrality of the city of Rome and stabilize his regime through prophecy.

The Senate's response in the debates was not positive and did not go beyond a consideration of incentives, i.e., the preservation and strengthening of haruspicy. This may have had more to do with the conservatism of Rome's state religion, but it was on the basis of this work that Claudius was able to move forward in 48 CE with the measure of granting Gallic patricians into the Roman Senate.

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초록

서기 47년 클라우디우스 황제의 장점술 진흥과 그 의미

고한석*

본고에서는 클라우디우스 황제의 장점술(臧占術) 진흥 조치가 가지는 역사적 의미를 재검토하고자 했다. 역사가 타키투스의 연대기를 통해 전해지는 이 조치는 그동안 황제 개인의 성격에서 기인한 것으로 평가되어 왔다. 그러나 키케로 등이 전하고 있듯, 장점술 자체가 '에트루리아의 학예'로서 로마 종교 내에서 크게 우대받지 못했다는 점을 고려한다면, 클라우디우스의 조치를 전통주의 혹은 에트루리아에 대한 애호로만 설명하기에는 부족한 점이 많다.

타키투스가 간접화법의 형태로 전하고 있는 그의 연설에서 클라우디우스는 '이탈리아의 기예'와 '외래의 미신'을 대비하면서, 국가가 어려움에 처했을 때 장점술이 수행했던 역할을 기억할 것을 역설하였다. 이를 근거로 그는 장점술사들의 조합을 설립할 것을 원로원 의원들에게 제안하고 있다. 이러한 구도는 이듬해 클라우디우스가 갈리아의 귀족들을 로마 원로원으로 편입하기 위해 했던 연설의 구도와 유사하다. 한편 로마의 심성에서 이 질적이었던 장점술을 에트루리아의 기예가 아닌 '이탈리아의 기예'로 확장 시킴으로써, 클라우디우스는 장점술이 가지는 위상을 높이는 동시에 이를 바탕으로 고위 사제단으로의 편입을 의도했던 것이다.

클라우디우스의 제안은 치세 초부터 정권을 위협했던 반란의 위협과 더불어, 대외 질서와 제국질서의 재편이 동기가 되었다. 브리타니아 원정의

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승리를 전후하여, 클라우디우스는 속주에 대한 직접지배를 강화해 갔고, 이 과정에서 도시 로마와 이탈리아, 그리고 속주들 사이의 위계가 재편되었다. 이러한 제국질서 재편의 시작으로 클라우디우스는 그동안 에트루리아인들이 누리지 못했던 종교적 권위를 인정하고자 했다. 이를 통해 클라우디우스는 도시 로마에 국한된 중심성을 확장하는 한편, 예언을 통해 정권을 뒷받침하는 목표를 세웠던 것으로 보인다. 그의 조치는 긍정적인 결과를 이끌어 내지는 못했지만, 이러한 작업을 바탕으로 클라우디우스는 48년 갈리아의 귀족들에게 로마 원로원 입회 자격을 부여하는 조치로까지 나아갈 수 있었던 것이다.

주제어 클라우디우스, 장점술, 에트루리아, 타키투스, 로마제국, 제국질서

