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**M. CLAUDIUS GLICIA,
QUI SCRIBA FUERAT, DICTATOR**

Jaakko Suolahti

In the *Fasti Capitolini* 249 B.C. the names of the consuls: *P. Claudius Ap. f. C. n. Pulcher L. Iunius C. f. L. n. Pullus*, follow with the names of two dictators but only one *magister equitum*: *M. Claudius C. f. Glicia, qui scriba fuerat, dictator coact(us) abd(i-cavit) sine mag(istro) eq(uitum)*. In eius locum factus est *A. Atilius A. f. C. n. Caiatinus dict(ator) L. Caecilius L. f. C. n. Metellus mag(ister) eq(uitum)*.¹ Apart from this the first dictator M. Claudius Glicia is mentioned by name only by two ancient authors.

The *Livius-periocha* (19) records how the consul Claudius Pulcher neglected the *auspicia* and lost the naval battle against the Carthaginians. It continues to relate events for the year 249 as follows: *et revocatus a senatu iussusque dictatorem dicere Claudium Gliciam dixit, sortis ultimae hominem, qui coactus abdicare se magistratu postea ludos praetextatus spectavit. A. Atilius Calatinus (mss Calanus) primus dictator extra Italiam exercitum duxit*.

In his *Tiberius vita* (2,3) Suetonius takes P. Claudius Pulcher like Claudius Regillianus and Claudius Russus as an example of those Claudii, whose *sequius admissa in rem p. extant*. After the account of the neglecting of the *auspicia* he continues: *superatusque cum dictatorem dicere a senatu iuberetur, velut iterum inludens discrimini publico, Glyciam viatorem suum dixit*.

No other ancient sources show any knowledge of the dictator M. Claudius Glicia,² which is strange considering that the account is a very picturesque one and thus suitable to popular Roman historiography. Furthermore, the name *Glicia* is not attested to in any of the other sources;³ that is why the older *periocha*-editors altered it without any support from the mss to *Glaucia*, a cognomen also quite uncommon in the inscriptions.⁴

Livius-periocha and Suetonius have the same nucleus as the *Fasti Capitolini*: the appointment of (M) Claudius Glicia by Pulcher for the dictatorship and, by Livy — but not Suetonius — his abdication. They were not aware that he had no *magister equitum*, which is only found in *Fasti Capitolini*.

There are, however, even some discrepancies in the sources. The *scriba* of *Fasti Capitolini* is in Suetonius only a *viator*. *Livius-periocha* describes him more vaguely as *sortis ultimae hominem* and says that after abdication he preserved his *insignia*: *postea ludos praetextatus spectavit*. These discrepancies may be merely stylis-

1 A. Degrassi, *Inscr. It.* XIII, pp. 42f.

2 *Id.*, pp. 43f.; Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (=MRR) I, 215.

3 I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, 393.

4 T. Livi Patavini - - ad usum Delphini XIX, London 1828, 12450f.

tic on the part of Livy and Suetonius. The account would be a better one if the protagonist was made as humble as possible.

Where Livy got the notion that Glicia preserved his *insignia* after abdication, is uncertain. It may be a mere logical deduction but may also depend on firm tradition, as it fits in well with the political situation (see later page 101).

Anyway, the Late Republic apparently had a sound tradition, based perhaps on earlier *fasti*, of a dictator in 249 B.C., M. Claudius Glicia, who had earlier been a *scriba* and who abdicated. His social origin is revealed by all the existing sources even if it was perhaps not regarded by his contemporaries as exceptional or as worthy of mention as it was by Livy, and Suetonius. The social gap had widened and a *scriba* in the last years of the Republic was only a salaried official in the civil service even if a high one.⁵ It was a tradition that fitted in well with the colouring of Livy's popular history and with Suetonius' examples of the evil members of the arrogant family of the Claudii.

The account is naturally cited frequently in modern historiography, but has not been interpreted thoroughly. There are two points in particular that need discussing, namely the qualification of Glicia and why he was nominated.

Most modern scholars have only mentioned the dictatorship of Glicia as an example of the arrogance of the patrician Claudii,⁶ which, according to Mommsen, was for the most part a later and malicious interpretation of their reforming activities.⁷ Very little attention, however, has been drawn on the legal side to the appointment. At all events M. Claudius C. f. Glicia had the formal qualifications for a Roman magistrate. He was apparently a Roman citizen as his official name and patronym attest. The *Fasti*, it is true, do not give the name of his grandfather. There are, however, other such cases in the *Fasti*, and Degrassi following K. Cichorius thinks that they were either sons of new citizens coming from outside Roman territory or were sons of freedmen; in the latter category he puts our Glicia.⁸

There are, however, three possibilities in all. 1) The compiler of the *Fasti* did not find the name of Glicia's grandfather in the earlier documents. This is not a very probable explanation, since he could always invent it, if he thought Glicia had a grandfather who was a Roman citizen. So perhaps the absence from the sources of the grandfather's name meant something to him, and so he did

5 M. Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik*, 10.

6 E.g. Münzer *RE* III (1899) 2724 (166): zum Trotz; Lange, *Römische Alterthümer* II² (1881) 136: von dem . . . störrigen und übermütigen P. Claudius Pulcher; G. De Sanctis, *Storia* III (1916) 177f.

7 Mommsen, *Römische Forschungen* I (1864) 314-17; Münzer, *RE* III (1899) 2858.

8 Degrassi, pp. 21f.; K. Cichorius, *Römische Studien* (1922) 127; Id., *Untersuchungen zu Lucilius* (1908) 19ff.

not bother to add it. 2) Glicia could have been son of a freedman of the Claudii. This is the interpretation of most modern scholars.⁹ It is possible, but evidently does not conform to the opinion of antiquity, because neither Livius-periocha nor Suetonius mention this detail, even though it may well have suited their purposes to do so. So perhaps we should take into serious consideration the third possibility. 3) The father of Glicia was a foreigner, who obtained his citizenship from a certain Claudius. In the first line one thinks of the father of Pulcher Ap. Claudius Caecus, who throughout his long career had many opportunities to reward eminent allies in this way for the services rendered to him and his family. It is worth mentioning that as censor he admitted sons of freedmen to the Senate, and conferred full citizenship on citizens with no land property.¹⁰

One way or another Glicia was eligible for the position of Roman magistrate even if his grandfather had not been a Roman citizen. In the third century B.C. there are other cases, too, of new citizens 'promoted' to the Senate as the gap between prominent allies, of whom many were 'promoted' to the status of Roman senator or gave their daughters in marriage to some Roman noble or other, was not yet very wide.¹¹

The Fasti accentuate *qui scriba fuerat, dictator factus* since it was unusual even at this period and especially so in the compilers' own time. It was not, however, illegal since the consulship had never been a prerequisite for dictatorship. In earlier times it was quite usual to appoint a capable non-consular man as dictator, and as late as c. 300 B.C., we know of two other dictators who had not held the post of consul.¹² The sources do not mention any other magistracies held by them, but naturally they could have been senators, even praetors because we have little knowledge of the non-consulars of this period. Glicia could even have been a senator after he resigned his position as *scriba*. We have a parallel in Cn. Flavius Cn. f. (15), who was a *scriba* of Ap. Claudius Caecus (91) and afterwards was elected as curule aedile for 304;¹³ in his case, too, no mention is made of the name of his grandfather. As Gelzer points out the *scribae* were very close in rank to the *ordo equester*; some were even *equites* and were thus in a good position for promotion to the Senate, if they did not wish to remain in the more lucrative profession.¹⁴ One is tempted to suppose that P. Clodius Pulcher or anyway the author of the source of Fasti Capitolini

9 Degrassi, pp. 21f.

10 Münzer, RE III (1899) 2681-85; Broughton, MRR I, 160; Suolahti, Censors, 220-23.

11 F. Münzer, Römische Adelsparteien (1920) 46ff.

12 Mommsen RSt II³, 146: *Q. Poetelius Libo Visolus* 313 B.C., *Q. Hortensius* 287 B.C.; *M. Minucius Rufus* (52) dict. 217 B.C. is perhaps the consul in 221 B.C.

13 Broughton, MRR I, 160.

14 M. Gelzer, Die Nobilität, 10.

had in mind the *scriba* of his father when he nominated Glicia. The father of our Claudius could perhaps have obtained his affranchisement from Ap. Claudius Caecus (91), even if his forename was not Appius, which seems to have been reserved for the patrician members of the gens.¹⁵ Other possible patrons are the plebeian (?) C. Claudius M. f. Cn. Canina (98) cos. 285, 273, who conquered the Lucanians, Samnites and Bruttians,¹⁶ or certain of the plebeian Claudii Marcelli with praenomens C. M. There is even a slight possibility that his father should be identified with C. Claudius (18) who fought courageously as military tribune in Messana.¹⁷ The attempt to identify our *scriba* with the unlucky legate of C. Licinius Varus, M. Claudius Clineas (115), handed over to the Corsi by the Senate in 236 is also only a guess without any corroboration in the sources.¹⁸

Livius-periocha and Suetonius evidently suppose a close link between P. Claudius Pulcher and M. Claudius Glicia and most modern scholars follow them, but strictly speaking there is no evidence for it. Claudius is a very common gentilicium and there are various patrician and plebeian branches, not perhaps all connected with each other, and also a large number of their freedmen early in the Republican period. Naturally the fact that Claudius appoints as dictator another Claudius excites our suspicion that there existed between them a closer relationship than that of namesakes. Anyway, the same nomen may well have been sufficient for the sources of Livius and Suetonius to interpret details and hint at the relationship.

Neither does the cognomen *Glicia* help us much, since it is a *hapax legomenon*.¹⁹ There is no need to correct it to *Glaucia*, as was once the case.²⁰ It can rather be read as *Glitia*, since *Glitia* is attested to both as nomen and cognomen.²¹ The sources know a *lex Glitia* from an unknown period,²² but it cannot bear any relation to our Glicia, who was a Claudius. *Glitii* can be seen in a Brundisian and some Cisalpine inscriptions²³ but their local origin is unknown.

Neither have modern scholars paid enough attention to the appointment of Glicia and the other dictator A. Atilius Caiatinus (36). Most of them strictly follow the *Fasti Capitolini* stating that Glicia

15 S. Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (1969) 57.

16 Broughton, *MRR* I, 197.

17 Broughton, *MRR* I, 203; Münzer, *RE* III, 2669 (18); Suolahti, *Junior Officers*, 175; Cassola, *Gruppi politici* (1962) 205ff.

18 *RE* III, 2696 (115).

19 Kajanto, *Cognomina*, 393; H. Solin, *Beiträge*, 88: *Glaucia*: *Thes.* VI, 2121.

20 T. Livi Patavini - - *ad usum Delphini* XIX, 12450.

21 Forcellini-Perin, *Onomasticon* I, 71.

22 *Dig.* 5,4,2; Niccolini, *Fasti dei tribuni*, 447f; *RE* V Suppl. (1931) 577 (Weiss); T. Livi Patavini - - *ad usum Delphini* XIX, 12450f.

23 Schulze 232, 572.

was forced to abdicate and *in eius locum* A. Atilius A. f. A. n. Caiatinus was nominated, who chose L. Caecilius L. f. C. n. Metellus as his *magister equitum*.

Because the Fasti state that Glicia was *sine magistro equitum*, it was assumed that he abdicated so soon that he had no time to appoint *magister equitum* for himself.²⁴ This is quite surprising, because it did not require much time to choose a *magister equitum*, if someone was willing to be nominated. So it seems that Glicia should have been more willing from the beginning to collaborate with the Senate than Pulcher was, and became the weak link in Pulcher's plan. Perhaps he thought more of his career than of his possible ties to Pulcher. To make up for this, according to Livius, he retained his position and the *insignia* of *ex-dictator*.

There is, however, one other possibility. We do not know why Glicia was appointed dictator. The Fasti Capitolini reveal nothing. His successor Atilius was clearly appointed *rei gerundae causa*²⁵ and also functioned as the first dictator we know of outside Italy.²⁶ But they do not state why Glicia was nominated. Suetonius, to emphasize the arrogance of Pulcher says: *velut iterum includens discrimini publico Glyciam viatorem suum dixit*, but this is probably only colouring on his part and his own interpretation of the sources. It is not very probable that Pulcher in his precarious position after his defeat should against the recommendation of the Senate have appointed as dictator an inexperienced man, who would wield supreme power. He gained nothing by such a nomination and was liable to lose all his remaining popularity, if Glicia did not succeed as commander in a very difficult military situation. That Pulcher chose Glicia as dictator only in arrogant self-assertion against the Senate, does not sound very convincing. De Sanctis' interpretation that Pulcher chose a man of the plebs to perform the task where so many nobles — including himself — had not succeeded, does not attribute him with very sound motives.²⁷

The question of Glicia's dictatorship depends on the chronology of 249 B.C. According to Livius-periocha, Claudius Pulcher was recalled and asked to appoint a dictator. We are not told when this happened, or whether his return coincided with the appointment of the dictator, because Polybius' narrative of the events is rather confused — for example, he dates the elections of the new consuls after the battle of Drepana, and has one of them, Iunius Pullus, who was in fact Pulcher's colleague, succeed him in the Sicilian

24 Mommsen RSt. II³, 159 n. 2; there is place in the Fasti for Glicia's *magister equitum*, so it is intentionally omitted.

25 Fasti 249.

26 Liv. per. 19.

27 De Sanctis III, 177.

campaign.²⁸ On a critical examination of the sources, De Sanctis has constructed the facts as follows:²⁹

When Pulcher's consular year began on the first of May (18. 6. in our calendar) he wasted no time in joining in the siege of Lilybaeum where shortly after he attacked Drepana and lost in a naval engagement. It must have been about midsummer, when there is only about 4-5 hours³⁰ of darkness.

Polybius then places the elections in 248, clearly a mistake caused perhaps by the unusually late departure of the other consul Iunius Pullus to Sicily. The latter had enough time left of his consular year to wind up many military operations, and was eventually taken prisoner by the Carthaginians.³¹ Therefore, it is quite improbable that Pulcher was asked to appoint a *dictator rei gerundae causa* so soon after the Drepana battle, when the other consul was in a position to command the armies in Sicily, as the sources tell us he did. The need of a *dictator rei gerundae causa* appeared only after Iunius had lost another fleet and especially when he was captured by the enemy.

Therefore, either Pulcher was not immediately recalled from Sicily after the battle of Drepana, or anyway after the arrival of his colleague, who could take over his armies and the remaining fleet and continue the siege of Lilybaeum, or he did not nominate a dictator soon after his arrival.

There are two possibilities. Either Pulcher was not asked to nominate a dictator immediately but only when the news of the loss of the fleet by Iunius and/or the latter's capture by the enemy arrived in Rome, or the task of the dictator was not *rei gerundae causa*.³² Soon after the departure of Iunius it was clear that the consul who would conduct the elections would be Pulcher, and in any case after the imprisonment of Iunius he was the only choice. Now, after his defeat Pulcher was not a favourite among the *plebs*, who were tired of supporting an everlasting war with its aristocratic but inefficient generals. The tribunes of the *plebs* for the following year were ready to prosecute him and his colleague for high treason. When Iunius later committed suicide, Pulcher was the only target left for the people's hatred. Therefore, the Senate or at least the opponents of Claudii there were probably anxious to prevent him from conducting the elections and securing the consulship for his own followers. It was tempting for his adversaries, particularly the Fabii, to profit from the situation and secure the high magistracies for themselves. The gossip concerning the

28 Polyb. 1,52,5.

29 De Sanctis, 263f.

30 Polyb. 1,49,6-7.

31 Polyb. 1,52,6-55,10; Zon. 15.

32 De Sanctis III, 177, 74.

sacred chickens Pulcher had ordered to be cast into the sea, when the birds refused to eat, was perhaps spread by Claudius' adversaries. It was eagerly taken up by the people, because it absolved the brave Roman soldiers of the responsibility for the defeat and placed it as a punishment of the gods on the shoulders of one impious man.³³

The only way to prevent Pulcher from holding the elections was to have a dictator nominated for this purpose. He had no obligation to perform this task, but the will of the Senate was always obeyed in this respect.³⁴ We do not know when Pulcher returned to Rome, and if he was there during the elections. Perhaps the dictators were appointed at the same time. If so, Glicia did not have to appoint a *magister equitum*. Anyway, M. Fabius Buteo was 216 *dictator sine mag.eq.*, when there was another dictator in power, M. Iunius Pera (126) with a *magister equitum*.³⁵ The Senate very probably also made a recommendation as to a suitable person, but Pulcher could ignore this, and perhaps did so.³⁶ His choice, Glicia, was soon forced to resign, but we do not know if he did so before or after performing his task. At all events he achieved something during his term of office. He or Pulcher had had to nominate A. Atilius Calatinus as dictator, an experienced man of consular rank of the Fabian group, probably recommended by the Senate. But as the Fasti shows there was clearly a compromise between the factions. In 248 as in previous wartime years consuls from both factions alternated and only after the condemnation of Pulcher in 248 was the balance of power disturbed for some years by a preponderance of the Fabian faction (247-241).³⁷

The interpretation offered here is, of course, only a hypothesis, but it does perhaps make the few sources more intelligible. Pulcher's appointment of Glicia as dictator was not a foolish attempt to insult the Roman Senate where he himself sat, but an attempt to secure in the elections the support of the succeeding consuls — support he knew he certainly needed. Nor was his choice so very strange, as later and tendentious sources indicate. It was a natural move in the intricate play between the various factions and ended like most conflicts in a compromise. Perhaps we can see in the choice of Glicia by Pulcher an imitation of his father's liberal policy toward the new citizens and urban population.

33 Id., 170.

34 Mommsen, RSt II³, 148f.

35 Fasti 216; MRR I, 248; cf. Liv. 23,23.

36 Id., 150f.

37 Scullard, Party Politics, 32, 34, 37.