The violent overthrow of a regime causes disjuncture and this can have unexpected outcomes. The combined conspiracies to kill Gaius (Caligula) in AD 41 descended into chaos because of the ferocious reaction of the Germani (the imperial bodyguard) and the discretion of the Praetorians. Claudius emerged from the metaphorical dust and ashes as princeps and this essay will look at how he cemented his position through his exploitation of issuing coinage, one of the permanent ways to disseminate propaganda. In this case it was the distribution of a political manifesto. The essay will concentrate on one iconographic image in particular, the aureus and denarius PRAETOR RECEPT, Praetoriani Recepti, usually translated as the ‘Praetorians Received’ and shows the debt Claudius owed to the Guard; they greet each other in an act of mutual trust, it is one of the seven different issues struck in the early months of Claudius’ rule during AD 41, and the companion to the IMPER RECEPT issue, Imperator Receptus, which can be translated as ‘Imperator Received’, (loyalty/assistance from the Guard who took Claudius to the Praetorian camp after the murder). I will argue that the iconography was confiding and its subtlety had far-reaching consequences for Rome. Initially there will be a brief outline of Gaius’ murder followed by a consideration of the act of succession in the early first century and the subsequent political manoeuvrings of the new emperor, Claudius.

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1 *RIC* 1.38; *BMCRE* I 8–10 are from AD 41/2. Von Kaenel (1986) 7–33, identified it as Münztyp 1. The issues of AD 43/4 (*RIC* 1.39; Münztyp 17) and AD 44/5 (*RIC* 1.40; Münztyp 20) had slightly amended iconography where the figure of Claudius was larger than the Signifer of the Praetorian guard, but both figures are significantly still on the same ground line. See Levick (1990) 33–51 (especially 39); Osgood (2011) 29–32.

2 *RIC* 1.22; *BMCRE* I 5 is from AD 41/2. Von Kaenel (1986) 7–33 identified it as Münztyp 2. There were issues in AD 43/4 (*RIC* 1.23; Münztyp 18), AD 44/5 (*RIC* 1.24; Münztyp 21), and AD 46/7 (*RIC* 1.25; Münztyp 23); Cf Levick (1990) 39, 88; Osgood (2011) 29–32.
The Conspirators Strike

Gaius, Milonia Caesonia and their daughter were murdered on the Palatine by a conspiracy led by Cassius Chaerea, a Praetorian tribune. The immediate imperial family had been extinguished and if Caesonia was to be a rallying point for opposition, this event had removed one arm of potential resistance. The German bodyguard killed Asprenas, Norbanus Balbus and Anteius and then raced through the Palatine arriving at the theatre where the audience became terrified for their lives. The Germani fixed the heads of executed senators upon the altar, and rumour and counter rumour were only quashed by the announcement that Gaius was dead—this also had the effect of subduing the bodyguard. They now had no reason for continuing their revenge as their commander and paymaster was dead. There are differing accounts about how Claudius was found in the palace, the most notorious that he was cowering behind a curtain, but after some debate among the Praetorians, he was removed to the castra. Waiting in the camp may have been rather unsettling but it was probably the safest place, especially as Chaerea issued orders to kill Claudius. In addition, the Senate were supported by the urban cohorts and while Claudius had the support of the Praetorians, and significantly the brutal Germani, it did not stop a trial of strength from gathering pace.

Josephus states that Claudius would not bow to a Senate that had sent envoys demanding he would not use violence to hold power. Claudius should give way to the wishes of the Senate which claimed it represented the majority view (in an assumption that senatorial view took precedence) and that the rule of law should be the demands of governing the empire. The Senate had taken control of the Forum and the Capitol and were determined to restore public liberty communem libertatem, which can be interpreted as a move to restore the republic. The speech of Gnaeus Sentius

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3 See, Suet. Cal. 56–60; Claud. 10; Jos. Af. 19; Jos. Bj. II.184–214; Dio Cass. 59.29–30,60.1; the relevant chapters in Tacitus are missing.
8 The importance of the Senate taking the Capitol was it could be defended and the forum controlled access and egress; Dio Cass. 60.1, 30.3; Suet. Cal. 60; Jos. Af. 19.158; see Wiseman p. 71 for the first meeting of the Senate.
9 Suet. Claud. 10.3.