Supplementary material

One issue touched upon in the paper ‘Roman ‘grand strategy’ in action? Claudius and the annexation of Britain and Thrace’ needs to considered in more depth than was possible in the main text without disrupting the flow of the argument. This concerns the occasion for the construction of the log road through the Eschenloher Moos in AD 43.

**The Eschenloher Moos log road: passage for the Emperor?**

A recent reconstruction of Claudius’ itinerary following his British campaign of *c*. September 43[[1]](#footnote-1) has the Emperor return to Italy over the newly completed log road through the Eschenloher Moos in the Bavarian Alps, following an (unattested) visit to Mainz honouring the memory of his father and brother.[[2]](#footnote-2) This reconstruction is not unproblematic. Firstly, the obvious occasions, namely the yearly *supplicatio* by Gaulish representatives on the anniversary of Drusus’ death in September or the honours for Germanicus on 10 October[[3]](#footnote-3), do not align well with a return in Rome in *c*. January/February.[[4]](#footnote-4) Nor is the itinerary straightforward: in order to avoid the deep re-entrant of the Rhine-Danube the imperial train would have had to travel through *Germania libera*.[[5]](#footnote-5) The dendrodates of the Eschenloher Moos (spring-summer 43) lead Zanier to suggest that the Brennerpass route was especially prepared for the imperial passage. This raises several issues, like the question how a log road over boggy ground (in wintertime!) would have accommodated the weighty and heavily escorted caravan. Moreover, it is the parallel route over the Reschenpass and Fernpass that is identified by the Rabland milestone as the *via Claudia* laid out by Drusus. This alternative route may have seen repairs 12 years earlier, as the Lermoos dendrodates show a distinct plateau in 31[[6]](#footnote-6), just like a bridge on the strategic road from Avenches to Augst.[[7]](#footnote-7) Finally, the implied timetable would have the Alpine crossing planned in wintertime – an unexpected choice. The naval celebration of the British triumph at Ravenna[[8]](#footnote-8), likewise, is unlikely to have taken place in mid-winter, far outside the maritime sailing season.[[9]](#footnote-9) More probably it was part of the triumphal celebrations later in AD 44, which brought several governors over from their provinces. Halfmann has Claudius based at Lyon for the rest of AD 43, his place of birth and the traditional hibernation for imperial commanders operating in the north.[[10]](#footnote-10) Monuments to Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Victoria found there celebrate the Emperor’s victory and safe return from Britain.[[11]](#footnote-11) By the same argument as Zanier’s, several other roads delivered in the northwest in or around 43 could be (and have been) claimed to be part of the imperial itinerary. However, coherent patterns have greater evidential value than single coincidences. For that reason, the present author rests his case about the clustered waves of early Claudian road-building, first along the Rhône-Rhine axis, next towards the Atlantic ports of Gaul and finally over a series of Alpine and Dalmatian passes, with the Eschenloher Moos dendrodates possibly signalling a shift of focus to the east from the summer of AD 43. A duplication of Alpine passes as part of the *via Claudia* would make perfect sense in this context.

**Literature**

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1. Halfmann 1986, 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Zanier 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Levick 2015, 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Claudius was away for 6 months, as our sources state in unison: Suet., *Claud*. 17.2; Cass. Dio 60.231; Orosius 7.6.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Zanier 2018, 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Nicolussi 1998, figs 6, 7 and 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Schwab 2003, 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Plin., *HN* 3.119. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Veg., *Mil*. 4.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Halfmann 1986, 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *AE* 1976, 424, with Bérard, Cogitore and Tarpin 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)