THE VALLE PONTI LEAD INGOTS: NOTES ON ROMAN NOTABLES’ COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN FREE ILLYRICUM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PRINCIPATE

Abstract: Most stamps of the Valle Ponti ingots (Ann. ép. 1987, 397) refer to the great (M. Vipsanius) Agrippa and one Bat(o?) libertus or client of Caecilius (Pomponius Atticus). The ingots were obviously produced by the natives of Illyricum and exported to Italy c. 14 BC.

Key words: Illyricum, Augustus, Agrippa, Diocletian, the Valle Ponti Lead Ingots, Metalla Agrippiana, commerce with the “barbarians”.

The present article is based upon complex evidence which is centred around certain aspects of Roman social history. To begin with a rare source, an important quantity of stamped massa plumbeae have been found in a Roman wreck discovered at Valle Ponti, not far from Comacchio (north-east Italy). The ship transported ninety-nine pieces, classifiable in three types and bearing some ten different stamps in various combinations, stamps the fabric of which varies itself. The ingots probably reached Italy through the near-by commercial port of Ravenna. The cargo of the ship included also amphorae as well as some other artefacts of North-Italian and Oriental origins and, roughly, Augustan date. The whole has been preserved in the Museo di Spina, Ferrara (non vidi).

An excellent edition and commentary of the Valle Ponti ingots have been published by Claude Domergue in 1987. I am unaware of any later comprehensive discussion of this instructive find. A number of historico-epigraphical details remain to be elucidated, however. They concern principally the interrelated

1 I was unable to deduce, from all these “non-epigraphic” differences concerning the types (+ variants) and the stamps (their fabric, their combined occurrence on the ingots – cf. Domergue’s careful analysis), much that would help me with my research. So they are dealt with only briefly and rarely on the following pages.
2 Domergue 1987, 136.
3 Ibid. 109 f., note 1.
4 Epigraphica 49(1987), 109-175, figs. 1-10 (Ann. ép. 1987, 397). – Note that, infra, bold italics will be used to reproduce the letters of the ingots’ stamps as read by myself.
5 With the partial exception of Lingots de plomb and F. Berti’s works (both less useful from the epigraphico-historical point of view). Cf. also the brief papers of Nicolás – Rodá 2002 and myself (the proceedings of the XII Congressus Internationalis Epigraphiae Graecae et Latinae held in Barcelona, September 2002: http://www.ub.edu/epigraphiae/PDF/Proograma%20EP%20DEFINITIU.pdf and Dušanić 2004, 266-8).

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problems of (I a-e) reading the stamps, a task which cannot be dissociated from research into the identity, business activities and personal connections of the people whose names are taken to figure there, and (II) locating the area of the mine(s) which furnished the lead of the ingots, a geographical topic with interesting politico-legal and historical aspects. Let us say at once, all the names in the stamps probably ran in the genitive (the normal case for that class of inscriptions; cf. C. Mati (below, I c)) but, for the sake of convenience, they are usually cited in the nominative in the following pages.

I (a) C. Domergue’s analysis starts with Agrippa (fig. 1), which is the most frequent stamp in the Valle Ponti repertory. It occurs 166 times, on 84 ingots; it may have been intended for every item of the series.6 Having envisaged several possibilities of expansion and interpretation of this abbreviation,7 the editor primus has persuasively opted for Agrippa (pa) and M. Vipsanius, Augustus’ famous son-in-law, who died in 12 BC. More than one indication has led C. Domergue to that conclusion: the non-existence of a plausible alternative;8 the name-formula of the owner of the stamp (a formula reduced to the (abbreviated) cognomen, which reduction is not unknown in the great Agrippa’s onomastic practice); the approximate date of the ingots (as suggested by that of the rest of the shipwreck cargo and, somewhat less decisively, by the stamp C. Mati (l c, infra), nothing to say of other stamps); the epigraphical parallel of the marble blocks originating from M. Vipsanius Agrippa’s Numidian quarries (stamped officina) Agrippae;9 the abundant evidence of Vipsanius’ wealth and passion for business (which made him possess i.a. Anatolian10 and African quarries, in a branch of industry quite close to mining10a); and, finally, his socio-prosopographical connections with the Caecilii and C. Matius11 – that is, people12 whose stamps figure (it may be argued) on the Valle Ponti lingots to be examined below. The only major difficulty with this identification of Agrippa stems from the fact that the corresponding letters are stamped (and of a comparatively small size), not moulded (i.e. not reproducing the conspicuous relief legend of mould-boxes), as would be the expected method to register the name(s) of the owner/conductor of a Roman mine and/or of a metallurgical officina. Rare – mostly late – exceptions apart, “l’estampille moulée nommant le producteur est la norme”;13 on the other hand, a man of M. Vipsanius Agrippa’s stature is hard to imagine with a less important rôle in the production of lead ingots and related activities such as that of a minor lessee or, simply, the transport organizer. Moreover, the fabric of the Valle Ponti ingots and their stamps is primitive enough; there is a distinct possibility that they both, or the ingots at least, have been made by the “barbarian” craftsmen.14

(b) As noted in the editio princeps, the stamp (fig.2) L. Cae. Bat. (A,E and A,T in ligature) forms a case numerically close to that of Agrippa. It figures on 85, perhaps even more, ingots (total of at least 106 impressions). Starting from the inevitable hypothesis that the stamp cites tria nomina of a man, C. Domergue has proposed L(lucius) Cae(ciLIUS ?) Bat(… ?). Though some other nomina in Cae- are also possible (“par exemple CaELIUS, CaesIUS”), he has decided – justly, in my opinion – on Cae(ciLIUS ?) because of M. Vipsanius Agrippa’s personal connection (which may have been easily followed by business connections) with the equestrian Caecilius, notably with Caecilia Attica (Agrippa’s first wife, whom he married in 37 BC) and her father (110-32 BC), Q. Caecilius Q. f. Pomponianus Atticus (i.e. T. Pomponius Atticus before the adoption of 58 BC). On the praenomen of Cae. Bat. (L, not T or Q), C. Domergue has assumed that the stamp belonged to the son of a freedman of either Attica or Atticus; he must be basically right, though (for the reasons of prosopographical economy) a Caecilian freedman is perhaps likelier candidate here than the freedman’s son.15 Besides, the possibility of a former

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6 Domergue 1987, 118.
7 Ibid. 118 ff., 137 ff.
8 If one were needed, P. Lurius Agrippa, the III vir monetalis of c. 7 BC (Sutherland 1984, 75 XI; PIR2 L 426), might have been envisaged perhaps. His date is roughly good and the III vir monetales are easily imaginable in a mining business (infra, 1 e). In other respects, however, the great Agrippa is a much better candidate.
9 CIL VIII 14580-2 (Chentou).
10 Cf. Fiehn 1929, 2278 f.
10a He exploited certain plumbariae in Spain, too (Dušanić 2004, 267 f.; Nicolás – Rodá 2002).
11 To focus on the stamps and gentilicia whose reading is certain (C. Matius) or almost certain (L. Caecilius ?) Bat).
12 Strictly, in the case of L. Cae. Bat. (and Mat. ?, below note 21), it was his patronus or patrona, not himself, who belonged to the circle of Agrippa’s friends (relatives). And there is an obvious difficulty of method: prosopographically speaking, the expansion Caecilii (?) and the proposal (persuasive if not above every doubt) of connecting (I a) and (b) with T. Pomponius Atticus’ friends/family support each other but as such involve the danger of a circular argument. When compared to the total of probative indications that danger, though, does not seem too great. Aliter, Lingots de plomb, 19
13 Domergue 1987, 133.
14 Ibid. 140.
15 We know from Cicero (Ad Att. IV 15.1, cf Vitucci 1958, 910 f.) that Atticus did not hesitate to give some of his liberti the praenomina of his friends, not his own. Note, à propos of L. Cae. Bat., that Atticus had at least two Luci (among his friends (L. Scafeius, L. Iulius Calidis).
peregrinus, Atticus’ client, should be admitted, too.\textsuperscript{16} The latter part of the cognomen is impossible to supply with certainty but one would think of an Illyrian name belonging to the well-documented family of names Bat(o), Bat(onianus) and the like;\textsuperscript{17} if anthroponyms of other provenances (e.g. a Batavus or a Bathyllus) cannot be ruled out, they (comparatively scarce as they are) would seem less probable in the present context. This conclusion appears all the more plausible as a Dalmatian knight by name of Caecil(ius) Bato, possibly a distant descendant of \textit{L. Cae. Bat.}, is attested at the end of the third century AD.\textsuperscript{18} Needless to say, Atticus was a rich, highly successful man of affairs (land, money), whose scene of activity were the Balkan provinces (Epirus and Macedonia) among other countries and who frequently employed “Mittelsmänner” in his speculations.\textsuperscript{19} He shared with Agrippa Augustus’ gratitude and complete trust; despite Agrippa’s (dynastically demanded) divorce from Attica (in 28 BC), he remained Agrippa’s friend till his own death (Corn. Nep. \textit{Att.} 21.4). All this may help us explain the occurrence of the names \textit{L. Cae. Bat.} on the ingots produced c. 14 BC;\textsuperscript{20} \textit{L. Cae. Bat.} will have been Attica’s agent rather than an independent businessman, though the latter possibility should not be excluded either. The fact that we have to deal here, again, with stamps and not moulded letters remains worthy of

\textsuperscript{16} The Epicurean Xenon, Atticus’ “Freund und Geschäftsträger” in Athens, was certainly a peregrine (Gundel 1967, col. 1558 f.).
\textsuperscript{17} Mayer 1957, 80-2: Bato, Batonianus; Alföldy 1969, 163-4: Bato, Batonianus; \textit{OEPI I}, 277-9 (Bat-), 278-9 (Bato), 279 (Batonianus). For another conjecture, \textit{Lingots de plomb}, 19.
\textsuperscript{18} ILS 9178 = \textit{PME I C 9}. Caecilius Bato and the equestrian Caecilii in Dalmatia: Wilkes 1969, 336.
\textsuperscript{20} As we shall try to show in sect. II.
attention but it is socially less surprising than in the case of *Agrippa*, if the latter is taken to abbreviate the great Agrippa’s names.

(c) Only three ingots bear the stamp *C. MATI* (M, A in ligature), which must be read *C. Mati* (c 1, the gentile complete). Its owner may appear in three more ingots: the stamp *MAT* (c 2) found there may be understood as an abbreviation of the same nomen, the more so as the stamps *C. Mati* and *Mat* (c 1) have never been impressed together, on the same *massae*. The identity of the man of (c 1) poses no real problem, because he appears to have been the best-known of the late Republican/early Imperial Matii. This conclusion is hard to avoid despite certain hesitation of the modern historians concerning the length of that principal C. Matius’ life and, consequently, the total number of the prominent C. Matii in the first century BC (the alternatives being (a) a longeaval C. Matius [c. 80 – after 4/3 BC] or (b) two C. Matii, between whom the corresponding evidence should be divided). As Professor Domergue implies, the former possibility seems preferable: *C. Matius* of (c 1) was obviously the notable befriended with Caesar and Augustus. Once more, we have to deal with an equestrian who “s’intéressait à des affaires d’argent”; Plutarch, *Caes.* 50, even speaks of his *philarguria*.23

(d) Two stamps, probably containing abbreviated cognomina (d 1: *GEME,* d 2: *MAC*25), have remained unexplained by C. Domergue and do not seem to be explicable on present evidence (figs. 3 and 4). Like the stamp of *L. Cae. Bat.*, they belonged perhaps to the freedman agents of a more important person/persons – either someone of the five dealt with here (I a-c, e-f)26 or a notable or notables who does (do) not figure in the Valle Ponti material under his (their) own name(s). I should add one more item to the present group of stamps consisting of the (?) freedman *cognomina*: the one (d 3) described as “candélabre” by C. Domergue. It has been impressed, two times, on one ingot only. Rather than a “candélabre”, when viewed in a sand-clock, we should perhaps think of the head of a *bipennis*, instrument which is not rare in the list of the monetary control-marks just mentioned. A mining instrument is, in any case, much more difficult to recognize in (d 4).

There remain two monograms (figs. 7 and 8), which seem to provide interesting, fresh in part, prosopographic information.

(e) The commoner of the two (occurring on no less than 39 ingots) has been tentatively read *P(...) Li(...)* R(...) (fig. 7, i.e. as “tria nomina d’un personnage: P. Li(cinus ou –vius ?) R(...), par exemple”27, with regard to the cases of (a-c), however, we should expect to find in (e) the names of an identifiable personage, businessman from a circle close to Augustus in some

21 Or the owner’s freedman, in the case of (c 2).
22 Figs. 5 and 6. Cf. Domergue 1987, 124 f.
23 Nicolet 1974, 947-9 (esp. 948 f.;) Münzer 1930, (nos. 1-2) 2206-2210. As stated in the main text, there are no convincing reasons to assume, in our evidence (as collected by Nicolet and Münzer, *loc. cit.*), two Matii, a father and a son (despite Syme 1988a, 623 f., and some others); even if there were, the assumption of the two Matii would not seriously affect our argument; (f 1) would be the son in that case.
24 Domergue 1987, 123 (M, E in ligature; found on 16 ingots), reading *Gemen(...)*. “Gemen(is), Gemen(linus), Gemenllianus): quel que soit le développement que l’on choisit, l’examen de ce qui est soit un nom d’esclave, soit un surnom d’affranchi ou d’ingénu n’apporte rien au débat”.
25 Ibid. 124 (9 ingots), reading *Mac(....)*. “L’abréviation peut être développée en Mac(ern), Mac(edo), Mac(rinus), Mac(ro), Mac(rio), autant de noms d’esclaves ou de surnoms dont on ne tire rien”.
26 A freedman name *Mac(edo)* would well accord with the importance of Macedonia for Roman post-16 BC activities around Metalla Agrippiana (on them, *infra*, section II) and Atticus’ business interests in that province. His famous *libertas Q. Caecilius Epictota* bore an analogous “geographical” cognomen.
28 Similar ligatures are well attested in the late Republican coinage.
29 See e.g. the Index of Solin 1982, 5 and 1578.
30 A freedman of Terentia ( Cicero’s ex-wife) and an eminent grammarian (Wendel 1948 (no. 3), col. 1819 f.), he was able (like Atticus himself; Xenon also *supra*, note 16) to combine literary and financial interests. Whether Terentia had a rôle in his activities of the latter sort (including the mining business dealt with, if we are allowed to assume Tyrannio’s part in it) it is impossible to say; she was fond of money and lived to be 103.
31 They went back to Tyrannio the Elder, who was a friend of (i.a.) Caesar and Atticus as well as Tyrannio the Younger’s dear teacher (Wendel 1948, (no.2) 1811 – 9).
32 Domergue 1987, 127 with n. 23 (J.-P. Bost’s suggestion).
33 Ibid. 125 f.
tresvir monetalis may be deciphered that the praenomen of the moneyer is unknown otherwise, there may be more or less a similar example. Though the praenomen of the moneyer is unknown otherwise, (e) may be deciphered. The gentilicia abbreviated in two (first) letters are of -

Epigraphically speaking, the letters PLIR belong to the class of simple monograms whose left side contains the beginning of the text, the centre its continuation, and the right-hand side its end; as we shall see, (f) is more or less a similar example. Though the praenomen of the moneyer is unknown otherwise, (e) may be deciphered Publius Li(vineicus Regulus). The gentilicia abbreviated in two (first) letters are often encountered on the contemporary coins; the Cae. of (b) is longer for less than a letter (A, E in ligature and phonetically close to an E).

Despite many uncertainties concerning the careers, names and the family stemmata of the equestrian/senatorial Livinei of the first century BC and the early first century AD, L. Petersen (PIR2 L 290) will have been right on two points of general relevance to our purpose: registering Livineius Regulus, suff. AD 18, she has remarked “idem vel adfinis eius Regulus tresvir monetalis ca. annum 8 ante Chr.” (i.e. the tresvir just referred to in our comment on (e)) and added “e posteris videtur esse L. Livinei Reguli quattuorviri monetalis anno 42 ante Chr.” This implies, first, that the tresvir of c. 8 BC (actually, he must have held the post a year at least before 8 BC) was born into a family famous (and rewarded) for its allegiance to the Julian cause and, second, that the Livinei, twice monetalis within less than 35 years, were both interested in and qualified for that college where “members of banking and commercial families” are especially well represented. With regard to the monetalis’ duty to secure metals necessary for the work of the State mint(s), it may be even assumed that some of the Livinei were engaged in mining business – in other words, the reading P. Li(vinei) R(reguli) of (e) may be insisted upon.

(f) The identification of letters forming the second monogram (registered on seven ingots altogether) has proved difficult. The same may be said of establishing their order. In the editio princeps (p. 126), several possibilities have been considered, all with due reserves: IRA (ARI, “avec une grafie retro”), which was eventually found the least unattractive solution of the monogram; then INRA, INOA, and FNOI (retro). The penultimate possibility, INOA, seems clearly preferable though, as the circular sign in the middle of the monogram should not be taken to be the curve of an R but a little O in ligature with an N; there are quite satisfactory numismatic parallels to confirm this. At the end of the monogram, an A is engraved with a strangely traced top. Its shape reflects perhaps cursive influence. The monogram consists therefore from N, O and A (in that order, rather than O, N and A) preceded by a character which, strictly, does not belong to the monogram itself; that character is identified as an I by C. Domergue, as an L by myself – an L having a very short horizontal, reduced to the serif of the vertical’s bottom.

34 Münzer 1926, 808 ff.
35 Cf. e.g. Crawford 1974, 1 209 f. no. 133, 1-4 (Tamp.). To remain with the same epoch and material, the monogram ibid. 210 f. no. 134, I-6 (L. Pl. H.) is not of the analogous simple structure but resembles (I e) in so far as it contains the abbreviations of the tria nomina, not one name alone.
36 Syme 1988a, 742 and some others thought of Lucius (?). But note that there were bearers of other praenomina among the Livinei close to the moneyer of c. 8-10 BC, e.g. Marci (as recently discovered, Ann. dph 1991, 307).
37 Not Livineius Regulus (praefectus Urb.) as proposed by myself before, on Crawford 1974, I 507 no. 494, 31 (the reverse legend Regulus f. praef. Ub.; the obverse refers to the moneyer’s father, L. Livineius pr(ae)ctor). The moneyer of 42 BC is not my first candidate any more.
38 The first alternative (“idem”) being much more probable: Syme 1988b, 184.
39 PIR2 L 290; cf. Münzer (n. 34; “Livineius” no. 5) 809; Syme 1988 (the preceding note). On the quattuorviri see n. 37 above. In 42 BC their task was extraordinary; according to Crawford 1974, II, 599, it was “the first college in the history of the Republic to strike gold”.
40 To judge from the dates of his (?) praetorship and consulship: Syme 1984, 1352; Syme 1988, 184.
41 L. Livineius Regulus (IIIvir APF in 42 BC), Caesar and Octavian: Münzer (n. 34).
42 Not an unparallelled occurrence, of course (Crawford 1974, II, 708-710).
43 Ibid. II 603 with n. 2.
44 E.g. Crawford 1974, I, 176 no. 84 (1, 4, 6).
45 Cf. monetary countermarks of the Julio-Claudian epoch.
46 Such arrangements are well-known in the epigraphic and, especially, numismatic practice, see Crawford 1974, I, 533 no. 531, 1 (on the left side of the obverse: M. Ant. – the last three letters forming a monogram).
47 Such as found in many coins of the late Republic, e.g. the aurei of C. Numonius Vaala (Crawford 1974, I 522 no. 514, I = PI LXII).
48 See the photographs published by Professor Domergue, Ps. II a and V a. Cf. J. S. and Gordon 1957, 106: “Cutters not infrequently confuse I and L, the serif of one and the serif plus bar of the other somehow coming out the same. Obviously the cutter sometimes misunderstood the letter he was cutting, or misinterpreted the drawn letter”.

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If the foregoing palaeographical comments are not wrong, (f) has the same run (e) and its abbreviations may be expanded to run \textit{Lucius Nonnius Asprenas}. Of the distinguished people sharing these names, I should opt for the father of those Nonius brothers who were the late Augustus consuls, one in AD 6 (also bearing the names L. Nonius Asprenas, born c. 28 BC), the other in AD 8 (Sex. Nonius Quintilianus)\textsuperscript{49}. Their parent was an intimate friend of Augustus' (Suet. Aug. 56, 3); that circumstance tends to assign him to the élite to which the owners of (a-c)\textsuperscript{50} and (e) will have belonged also. Chronologically if not socially, he suits better the context of (f) than does his (elder) son, of the same names.\textsuperscript{51} True, there is no direct evidence of the Senior's business activities (his younger son was a \textit{trevir monetalis} c. 6 BC\textsuperscript{52}) but he was certainly rich in addition to being well-connected; the silence of our sources on the matter of business can be purely accidental.

If the prosopographic identifications just offered prove wellfounded, the date of the Valle Ponti ingots – archaeological evidence connects them safely with the Augustan epoch – may be determined precisely enough. It must have preceded Agrippa’s death (spring, 12 BC; (1 a)) but not for a long lapse of time: P. Livineius Regulus (e), judging from the (approximate) date of his holding the post of \textit{monetalis} (c. 10 BC ?), a young man’s office,\textsuperscript{53} could have been hardly active, in a mining/metallurgical business, during the period much, if any, earlier than (say) 15 BC. Actually, there are reasons to put the production of our \textit{massae} c. 14 BC. This suggestion demands a comment on the whereabouts of mine(s) furnishing the ingots’ metal.

C. Domergue has envisaged several candidates: mining areas (of argentiferous lead) in Africa, the Balkans, Gaul, Sardinia, Spain, even Britain.\textsuperscript{54} For good reason, he has promptly eliminated Laurus (whose exploitation was abandoned at the epoch of Augustus\textsuperscript{38}), Britain (too distant), and despite contrary views, the far-away Spain (whose lead mines’ \textit{officinae} produced ingots – even those bearing the \textit{Agrippa} stamps – of different forms and much better execution). Geographical conditions and the particular features of maritime transport leading to Italy, he argues, do not recommend Gaul, Sardinia or Africa either.\textsuperscript{56} On the other hand, the Balkans “constitueraint la région révée, à cause de leur situation en face des bouches du Pô; reste à savoir si les mines de plomb-argent de Dalmatie, de Pannonie, voire de Mésie étaient alors en activité, ce que pour l’instant nous ignorons”\textsuperscript{57}.

In this connection, the \textit{editor primus} has pointed out the absence of moulded stamps on the Valle Ponti ingots, primitively made as they are, which recommends the hypothesis that the ingots were produced by indigenous craftsmen of a still unconquered part of Illyricum. Indeed, the formation of the imperial province Illyricum – that went together with a considerable expansion of its senatorial nucleus’ territory to the north – took place as late as the closing years of the ninth decade of the first century BC. We can date it either to the winter of 13 (when Agrippa fought the Illyrians) or to 12-11 approximately; in the latter case, it is to be connected (as a programme or an immediate result of the war) with Tiberius’ dangerous \textit{bellum Pannonicum}.\textsuperscript{58} The events of c. 12-11 BC, even those of the late 13 BC (though Agrippa’s expedition was of short duration and consequently inferior in importance when compared to the ambitious operations of 12-11 BC), tend to provide a \textit{terminus ante quem} for our ingots, if these are held to have been products of the “free barbarians”. For, the bulk of the Illyrian mines – which, owing to their position in the deep Hinterland of west Balkans, did not belong to Rome before – either became Roman property or ceased to work as a consequence of Agrippa’s and Tiberius’ successes in the wars of 13 and the following years. The personal name cited by the stamp (1 a), in the light of the fact that the great Agrippa died in the spring of 12, tends to sustain that \textit{terminus ante}. If all this proves relevant, the ingots’ features, epigraphical and others, would not be difficult to explain. We should take them as a sign that the Illyric Metalla Agrippiana – or whatever its original “barbarian” name (see infra) – prospered under Roman control, public or private (\textit{conductio} of a sort, or just a contract covering the entire production), but without Roman formal ownership over the mine and/or its furnaces. Legally as well as otherwise, there would be nothing unusual about such a practice of collaboration between the “barbarian” smelters and Roman commerce, practice which was in complete harmony with the east Illyrican realities of c. 14 BC. An episode described by Polybius shows that the

\textsuperscript{49} Dio LIV 34.4 (about “Dalmatia” and 11 BC). If not quite precise. \textsuperscript{50} For the case of \textit{L. Cae. But}. see supra, note 12. \textsuperscript{51} If we take, with Groag (n. 49), that the son was born c. 28 BC, he was too young c. 14 BC to trade with metals. \textsuperscript{52} Sutherland 1984, 76 XII. \textsuperscript{53} Syme 1988, 183 f.; Crawford 1974, II 710 with n. 1. \textsuperscript{54} Domergue 1987, 137 ff. \textit{Cf. Lingots de plomb}, 3. \textsuperscript{55} Strab. IX 1.23. \textsuperscript{56} Domergue 1987, 138. \textsuperscript{57} Ibid. 139, 140 f. \textsuperscript{58} The events of c. 14 BC to trade with metals. 

\textsuperscript{1} For the case of \textit{L. Cae. But}. see supra, note 12. \textsuperscript{2} If we take, with Groag (n. 49), that the son was born c. 28 BC, he was too young c. 14 BC to trade with metals. \textsuperscript{3} Sutherland 1984, 76 XII. \textsuperscript{4} Syme 1988, 183 f.; Crawford 1974, II 710 with n. 1. \textsuperscript{5} Domergue 1987, 137 ff. \textit{Cf. Lingots de plomb}, 3. \textsuperscript{6} Strab. IX 1.23. \textsuperscript{7} Domergue 1987, 138. \textsuperscript{8} Ibid. 139, 140 f. \textsuperscript{9} Wilkes 1969, (n. 18) 63 ff.; Syme 1971, 18 ff. 35 f. 43 f., and Syme 1986, 65 and 332; Fitz 1993, 23 ff. 42 ff. 48 ff. (esp. 48, 53 ff.). For the beginnings of an Illyricum under the imperial legate cf. Cass. Dio LIV 34.4 (about “Dalmatia” and 11 BC). If not quite precise, Dio’s date could not be off the mark too much, despite Syme’s criticism (Syme 1971, 36; 1986, 332). Cf. below, text and nn. 85 ff.
"Italiots" were ready to exploit mines outside of the Roman territory whenever the political relations with the foreign country seemed promising and the mining area itself proved rich in minerals. Another example – slightly different but still instructive – pertains to AD 47: the then legate of the Upper Rhine army, Curtius Rufus, opened silver-mine in barbarico, in the land of the Mattiaci, obviously in hope to please his Emperor; he was unsuccessful, however, owing to the mine’s poverty and the resistance of the legionaries who were compelled to work there. Indeed, C. Domergue was well aware of Polybius’ testimony implying that the Roman men of affairs sometimes engaged their means in the international undertakings of metal industry and commerce. However, he did not hold it probable that there was, or can be demonstrated at least, such an engagement in the case of free Illyricum; generally speaking, with time, he seems to have inclined to the possibility of identifying the metallo where the Valle Ponti ingots have been made, with a Spanish mine.

A nexus of indications, though, suggests that the mines discussed here were really situated in Illyricum, probably to the south (south-west) of Sirmium. The Illyrian cognomen Batto (–onianus), if correctly read on (I b), can be interpreted as a sign that Caecilia Attica, conceivably, thought that a man with the knowledge of local conditions and language(s) would be her best agent in an Illyrican business. Agrippa’s rôle in the Illyrian wars of 35-34 may have easily made him recognize the advantages of the Balkan mining; Atticus’ contacts with Macedonia and Epirus may have had similar consequences. There is reliable evidence that the indigenes of Illyricum exploited mines in the time immediately preceding the Roman occupation, as the Roman government obviously tended to retain the peregrini in that function, despite their technological inferiority, the exploitation sporadically went uninterrupted throughout the period before and after the formation of the provinces of Illyricum and Moesia. The mines south of Sirmium will have been such a case, to judge from a numismatic find. Actually, there are reasons to believe that Rome’s decision to conquer the whole of Illyricum was not inspired by strategic considerations only. Her need of metals was a secondary but still important motive.

On the other side of the matter, the rest of the cargo of the Valle Ponti vessel, of North-Italian and Oriental provenances, does not speak for a mine from a western province (Sardinia, Gaul, Africa). The Italian goods were probably shipped in Ravenna itself. The Coan amphorae imply that the original transporter arrived to Ravenna sailing from the East, perhaps via an east Adriatic port (e.g. Narona’s). Its route would make it probable that the ingots were shipped in such a harbour, not too far from Ravenna and linked to it by the cheap sea-communications. Let us add that the Illyrian rivers — both those flowing in the (roughly) north-south direction and the southern tributaries of the Save — conveniently made the metals from the Illyrican mines (all situated deep in the continent) easier to reach their Italian consumers — less expensive, to be exact. The logic of geo-hydrography and the origin of the amphorae in the Valle Ponti ship apart, the modern historian ought to stress the close, diverse and traditional connections Ravenna developed with the Illyrian land across the sea. They have left many traces. Suffice it to note the Illyrian (Pannonian and Dalmatian) origin of the magna pars of the sailors serving in the Ravenna fleet in AD 69, sailors some of whom engaged in the Pannonian mining after their honourable discharge at the beginning of the Flavian epoch.

59 For their importance cf. e.g. Livy on Macedonia in 167 BC (45, 18, cf. P. Jal’s comments ad loc. [Budé]).
60 Polyb. XXXIV 10.10 = Strab. IV 6.12 (208), of Noricum and c. 150 BC. Alfoldy 1974, 34.
62 Domergue 1987, 137, 141 ("… la question de leur [sc. the ingots’] provenance reste posée; mais, pour y répondre avec assez de sûreté, nous manquons d’éléments décisifs, entre autres de ceux que pourraient apporter des analyses en laboratoire"). But, for a variety of reasons, the laboratory analysis of the metal content of the lead ingots does not guarantee, by itself, a precise localization of the source of lead; cf. Lingots de plomb, 18-19. Rothenhöfer 2003, 280, note 15. A propos of the differences of the metal content of the Illyrican massae plumbeae note that a letter of 1522 distinguishes the "plumbum dulce de Olovo" from the "plumbum durum Srebernice" (Jirček 1879, 48). Srbrnica (= Argentaria – Donavia) was situated in the vicinity (to the south) of the Cer-Jadar region, the site of Olovo is some 70 kilometres to the west of Argentaria. An analogous distinction may have been made by late Roman alchemists (Dušanić 1977, 66 with n. 69).
64 As Agrippa’s immediate successor in command of the army of Illyricum, T. Statilius Taurus was given estates there by Augustus: Eck – Caballós – Fernández 1996, 205 f. with n. 601.
65 For the iron-mines of Ljubija see my article (p. 148 with n. 4) referred to at the beginning of the next note; for various early mines in the territory of the province of Dalmatia, e.g. Pašalić 1960, 91 ff. et passim; for the silver-mines which have been taken to have provided the Scordisci with the metal necessary for their coinage (the origin(s) of the Scordiscan silver are still disputed), Popović 1987, 66 f.
67 Dušanić 1995, 142 n. 67 and 143 (the ancient forger’s die for M. Antony’s legionary denarius; the die was used for coining the silver from a mine in the Sirmium area late in I cent. BC [the more likely dating, cf. the find of M. Antony’s legionary denarius near Gomolava,“in the remains of Starčević Brdo’s La Tène settlement”]: Popović 1988, 205] or early in I cent. AD).
68 On which see e.g. Wilkes 1969, (n. 18) 245 ff. et passim.
71 Dušanić 1980, pp. 15-16. The numismatic aspect of my demonstration has been questioned by Weigel 1998, 17 f.
What is more, we are entitled to postulate the existence, not far from Sirmium, of a mine (mines) called (Metalla) Agrippi(a)na or (Argentariae) Agrippi(a) nae. It is recorded (but not recognized by the moderns) in the subscription to Cod. Iust. V 12.21, of August 5, 294, as Agrippiniae. Its position should be sought in the vicinity (not necessarily immediate) of Sirmium, where Diocletian promulgated the slightly earlier constitution of August 1, 294 (Cod. Iust. V 16.22) and where he reappears on August 17 of the same year (ibid. VI 24.10). The essential fact is that Diocletian’s itineraries of 293 – 294 – he lived mostly in Sirmium during that longish period – reflect his curiosity for specific centres, those managing quarries (Lugio; Dardagani; Cuppae; Oescus) and mines (Aur(a)riae, De(u)mes(s)um). That remarkable choice served his programme of transformation of Sirmium into another Rome. Practically speaking, places whose interest was of a different order, e.g. purely civilian or military, were not visited by the Emperor in 293 – 294, to judge from the rather complete evidence of the subscriptions to the laws in the Codex. Thus, Diocletian’s Sirmium programme will have resembled his later building up of Nicomedia. Not only did he erect imperial architecture there but also founded a mint and an arms-factory, i.e. institutions which needed metals to function (lead of course was used for water pipes and building works in general, too).

Agrippi(a)na is likely therefore to have been a mine in the southern part of Sirmium’s broader area (in the north of the Drinus valley or in the Cer region to the east), which produced silver and lead among other metals. The remains of Roman life are rich in that part of south-eastern Pannonia, including the evidence of mining of silver and gold in I-III cent. AD. The water courses (upstream of the Drinus and, subsequently, downstream of the Narenta – both rivers having been largely navigable) linked the area to the port of Narona in the east Adriatic; much used pre-Roman (along the Narenta): cf. Popović 1987, 110-3 with figs. 29 and 30. Roman (along the Drinus): Tab. Peut, the route (whose southern section has not been preserved in the Tabula) Sirmium – Gensis – Ad Drinium – Argentaria. It is as yet impossible to trace the line which the transport of the ingots followed between the Drinus and the Narenta valleys (in other words, it is impossible to fix the two crucial points, where [a] the caravans transporting ingots left the Drinus and [b] entered the Narenta valley) in the specific politico-military conditions of c. 14 BC. In Roman times as well as during the Middle Ages, a branch of the Narenta road must have been connected with the Drinus road through (modern toponyms) Glavatičevo, Kalinovik, Miljevina, Foča = Srbinje (cf. Jireček 1978, 83 with n. 290; IIR K 34, a-b I-II; Bojanovski 1987, 95; Patsch 1904, 237, Fig. 110, 261). The port of medieval Narona (Jireček 1978, 79 f.) served the trans-Adriatic traffic of lead obtained at (i.a.) Srebrnica (ancient Doćina – Argentaria, in the Drinus valley and rather close to the Metalla Agrippiana): Jireček 1978, 79 f.

Below, nn. 84-86. True, Cassius Dio briefly notes, under the year 14 BC (LIV 24.3), that “at this time (tine) the Pannonians revolted again and were subdued…” (E. Cary’s translation, LCL). The problem of identity of these “Pannonians” and date of their “revolt” remain insoluble. From the point of view of the inhabitants of the lower Drinus valley, they may have lived in a distant part of Pannonia (cf. the Noricans’ and the Pannonians’ invasion of Istria in 16 BC, Wilkes 1969, 63) but Dio’s using the words νοτοτάτος οικονομίας (if we may press them) would rather speak for the Pannonians defeated or diplomatically disciplined by Tiberius in 15 BC (infra, note 87). On the other hand, neither the context of Dio’s phrase nor the iote modifier guarantee the complete precision of the date. Actually, a rebellion in the south-east Pannonia during the first half-middle of 13 BC would provide a logical explanation of Agrippa’s, M. Vinicius’ and Tiberius’ bellum Pannonicum, enlisting the aid of the Scordisci and starting not earlier than the winter of the year. For a somewhat different view, Syme 1971, 35 f.

Below, note 87.

2 Text and notes 86 ff.

83 Wilkes 1969, 57.

72 The mechanical omission of an (?) originally supralineate) A is easily explicable and paralleled by many toponyms in the Codex. In the present case, it may have been facilitated by the influence of the better-known name of the Rhenseis (Colonia) Agrippina. If not a nom. pl., the MS Agrippi(a)nae will have been a gen. loci (neutr. pl. transformed into a fem. sing., according to a well documented tendency of vulgar Latinity).

73 Mommsen 1861, 441: “… vermutlich … in der naheren Umgebung von Sirmium”. If we assume (a consumption hard to avoid) that the Aurariae (visited by Diocletian on May 3, 294 [Cod. Iust. VI 21. 14]) belonged to the same mining district as (Argentariae) Agrippi(a)nae, the latter should not be sought in an area less close to Sirmium than the Pocerina-the north Drinas region: both geologically (the only auriferous fields of south-eastern Pannonia are to be found there) and with regard to the indications of Diocletian’s itinerary (which are significantly dense: Diocletian was still at Sirmium on May 1, 294 [Cod. Iust. II 36.1; IV 22.3]), these regions are the sole ones where the Aurariae can be situated. We are ignorant as to the precise course of the Sirmium – Agrippinae/Sirmium – Aurariae road(s) used by Diocletian in 294, but there is every reason to believe that the distance(s) were less than 50 Roman miles (i.e., less than two days of a not too fast journey of the court).


75 Cf. Lactantius, De mort. pers. 7. 8-10.

76 Between Sept. 11, 293 and Aug. 20, 294, some 100 of them cite ‘Sirmi’, 5 other places.

76a Under Augustus (Agrippa) as well as under Diocletian: Dušanić 2004, 267-269.

77 Dušanić (n. 74) (with refs.). See also id. (n. 62) 66 f. and 54 (map).

78 Pre-Roman (along the Narenta): cf. Popović 1987, 110-3 with figs. 29 and 30. Roman (along the Drinus): Tab. Peut, the route (whose southern section has not been preserved in the Tabula) Sirmium – Gensis – Ad Drinium – Argentaria. It is as yet impossible to trace the line which the transport of the ingots followed between the Drinus and the Narenta valleys (in other words, it is impossible to fix the two crucial points, where [a] the caravans transporting ingots left the Drinus and [b] entered the Narenta valley) in the specific politico-military conditions of c. 14 BC. In Roman times as well as during the Middle Ages, a branch of the Narenta road must have been connected with the Drinus road through (modern toponyms) Glavatičevo, Kalinovik, Miljevina, Foča = Srbinje (cf. Jireček 1978, 83 with n. 290; IIR K 34, a-b I-II; Bojanovski 1987, 95; Patsch 1904, 237, Fig. 110, 261). The port of medieval Narona (Jireček 1978, 79 f.) served the trans-Adriatic traffic of lead obtained at (i.a.) Srebrnica (ancient Doćina – Argentaria, in the Drinus valley and rather close to the Metalla Agrippiana): Jireček 1978, 79 f.

80 Below, nn. 84-86. True, Cassius Dio briefly notes, under the year 14 BC (LIV 24.3), that at this time (tine) the Pannonians revolted again and were subdued…” (E. Cary’s translation, LCL). The problem of identity of these “Pannonians” and date of their “revolt” remain insoluble. From the point of view of the inhabitants of the lower Drinus valley, they may have lived in a distant part of Pannonia (cf. the Noricans’ and the Pannonians’ invasion of Istria in 16 BC, Wilkes 1969, 63) but Dio’s using the words νοτοτάτος οικονομίας (if we may press them) would rather speak for the Pannonians defeated or diplomatically disciplined by Tiberius in 15 BC (infra, note 87). On the other hand, neither the context of Dio’s phrase nor the iote modifier guarantee the complete precision of the date. Actually, a rebellion in the south-east Pannonia during the first half-middle of 13 BC would provide a logical explanation of Agrippa’s, M. Vinicius’ and Tiberius’ bellum Pannonicum, enlisting the aid of the Scordisci and starting not earlier than the winter of the year. For a somewhat different view, Syme 1971, 35 f.

81 Below, note 87.

82 Text and notes 86 ff.
Though attested as late as the end of the third century AD, the mine of Agrippi(a)na is hard to dissociate from Vipsanius Agrippa. In the light of (I a [probably in the genitive construction]), the name of the mine is best explained if we take that Agrippa was its first Roman owner; the horrea Agrippia[nar] of CIL VI 1002645 provides an analogous name, if such an analogy is needed at all here. The mine did not belong to Agrippa at the time of production of ingots – many of which, perhaps all, were made in its furnaces – for; first, (I a), like the other stamps, have no moulded form and, second, the variety of personal names in the stamps implies the activity of a societas (or a less formal network of collaborators) of conductores/traders rather than Roman individual or collective ownership over the mine, which – as it has been emphasized more than once supra – would have been almost incompatible with the use of stamped marks. The same conclusion concerning the pre-13 BC status of the mine is suggested by the low quality of the ingots’ fabric and, on the other hand, by certain political difficulties which Agrippa’s possessing land in barbarico would have involved, especially with regard to the projects of Roman expansion in the Danubian lands.

In the simplest reconstruction of the history of the mine during the late 1 century BC, it originally belonged to a local “barbarian” factor, was leased or its output bought by Agrippa and his partners c. 14 BC (as the corresponding mining area furnished gold, silver, copper and iron in addition to lead, the company probably traded with all or most of those metals), and became Agrippa’s property at the time of the formation of the imperial province. The lease (buying) will have followed a success of Roman policy in turning certain local peregrini into the socii p.R., and Agrippa with his companions probably needed Augustus’ permission to treat with Rome’s newly-acquired vassals; thence, it appears, all the conductores/traders belonged to the circle of the Princeps’ friends – Roman advance in Illyricum and elsewhere must have been a skilful blend of economic, political and military activities, one centrally controlled to a high degree. As to the socii p.R. and Agrippa’s leasing (vel sim.) of the mine(s), we are inclined to attribute both of them to the context of Tiberius’ Balkan expedition of 15 BC and, especially, its immediate aftermath. The expedition – in all likelihood starting from Macedonia – seems to have pacified i.a. the Scordisci in Srem; there is some archaeological evidence to sustain this.87 The Scordiscan southern neighbours (some of them their allies ?88) in the mining area just referred to probably obtained the same vassal status, judging from the geographical framework of Tiberius’ campaigns89 as well as the output of the Valle Ponti ingots. Tiberius’ arrangements of 15 BC in the lower reaches of the Save and the neighbourhood, however, proved shortlived, or insecure at least, owing to the resistance of certain Pannonians.90 Rome decided on a more ambitious course of action now. It is natural to assume that Augustus gave the mine as a gift to Agrippa at a moment when the Roman politico-military progress of the close of 13 and/or the early months of 12 announced the permanence of Roman rule over Illyricum. Augustus’ generous gesture would perfectly accord with a number

84 Hanslik 1961, col. 1257.
85 Note 77 above.
87 On the expedition: Euseb. Chron. p. 393 (ed. R. Helm); cf. Vell. II 39.3; Cons. ad Luc. 387 F. Premerstein 1898, Beibl. 158 ff.; Papazoglou 1978, 340 ff., Fürz 1993, 23 ff; 48 ff., 53 ff. et alii. Syne 1971, 44 ff. (esp. 66), was unduly sceptical; Tiberius’ campaign of 15 BC obviously presented a reply to the events of the preceding year (Papazoglou, loc. cit.; cf. Syne 1971, 45), which had seen the attacks of the Scordisci and the Dentheletes upon Macedonia, as well as a short-lived “uprising in Delmatia” (Cass. Dio LIV 20.3). Hence our sources refer to “the neighbours of Thrace” as the target of Tiberius’ operations; this “best applies to the tribes west of the kingdom of Thrace – the Dentheletes, Maedi, Dardanians, Triballi and Moesians – who were not yet under direct Roman rule, although they had already suffered military defeat” (Papazoglou 1978, 340 with n. 211). The Scordisci, south-east Pannonians and east Dalmatians (“Delmatia” in Dio’s anachronistic terminology, loc. cit., is much likelier to have meant a part of the future province’s territory – roughly, the valley of the Drinus – than the territory of the tribe of Delmatiae alone, alter, Wilkes 1969, 63) should be included in that number of barbarians defeated and/or intimidated by Tiberius, though it would be wrong to think that they were subjigated as early as 15 BC (as justly observed by Papazoglou 1978, p. 341 ff., in an analysis of the late history of the Scordisci, when they are explicitly recorded to have behaved as Rome’s allies (Dio LIV 31.3, of 12 BC)). In any case, the fate of Gomolava (presumably a Scordiscan village, in the Savus valley, downstream from Sirmium) seems instructive. It was destroyed in a fire, probably by Tiberius’ soldiers in 15 BC (Popović 1988, 205 prefers a slightly later dating, in the interval of Tiberius’ Bellum Pannonicum). After that event, Gomolava “was rebuilt but without the fortifications” and continued to live till the second half of II cent. AD (Jovanović 1992, 53). The post-catastrophe Gomolava used Roman pottery “from the north Italian workshops”, which may recall the rôle of Ravenna in the ingot business.
88 The Celtic element, possibly stemming from the period of the Scordiscan dominance over those parts, was strong in the Drinus valley of I-III centuries AD (S. Loma in a forthcoming book). It is difficult to be precise about the organization and territory of the Scordiscan community (cf. Papazoglou 1978 (n. 87)) after its defeat by Tiberius in 15 BC. Though the site of Gomolava must have had a Scordiscan origin, we are not certain that it belonged to the Scordiscan tribal state after 15 BC (the preceding note). In the Flavian epoch, the territory of the civitas Scordiscorum seems to have been restricted to the bank of the Danube, around Acinumunia.
89 To be exact, their obviously having Thessalonica (the head of the Vardar-Great Morava highway), not Philippi, Salona or Siscia as a starting-point.
90 Such as the Amantini and some of the tribes inhabiting the north of the Drinus valley? Supra, note 80.
of circumstances: Agrippa’s leasing (or just bying an important part of products of) the same mine in the period immediately before the bellum Pannonicum of the last years of the penultimate decade of the first century BC; Augustus’ habit to reward his generals by giving them saltus in Egypt and elsewhere (Statilius Taurus and Cn. Piso received them in Illyricum precisely91); lastly, Agrippa’s (fatal) illness of 13/12 BC. Thanks to the Princeps’ generosity, the mine changed its barbarian name (unknown to us) into the (Metalla) Agrippiana / (Argentariae) Agrippianae; not surprisingly, it retained the name’s Roman version for more than three centuries.92

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Agrippa was obviously the central figure of the whole enterprise producing the Valle Ponti ingots. The stamp (I a) reveals that he did not hide that fact by citing an intermediary. This may prove worthy of note for those studying the much-debated problems of the senators’ right to financial profit and their non-agricultural riches in general.93 Let us stress, in a brief conclusion, two interrelated points only. First, leaving aside the fact that there were senators who (discreetly) co-operated with the publicani leasing mines, we are in a position to cite a parallel close enough: Crassus the Triumvir, notorious for his “avarice”, possessed “numberless silver mines” in Spain.94 (The Principes did the same in the whole Empire, of course, and Agrippa’s quarries have already been cited supra.) Second, for the ancients, mining and quarrying were activities religiously related to agriculture, despite the obvious material connection between metals and coinage.95 If money speculations were considered unseemly for members of the ordo, the exploitation of mineral wealth96 may have been a somewhat less compromising case in popular thinking.

92 Cf. e.g. CIL VIII 14580-2 (supra, text and note 9), stamped (i.a.) OF AGRIPPÆ and dated as late as AD 150. Names as Mons Marianus and the like provide another (if less close) parallel for the long life of mining toponyms derived from the place’s first owner.
93 Important comments on the nexus of social and economic problems that bear on the aspects of the Valle Ponti ingots: Andreau 1995, 305-312.
94 Plut. Crass. 2. 5. I owe this reference to Dr. Žarko Petković.
95 Dušanić 1999, 130-2.
96 Including metal commerce, obviously.
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