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JULIAN’S STRATEGY IN AD 361

Both Roman generals and modern historians have tended to find Julian’s moves in the civil war of AD 361 hazardous as well as difficult to understand. This is especially true of his long, ultra-rapid and semi-clandestine journey down the Danube, which was carried out by a dangerously small corps (under the command of the Usurper himself!) and ended with a very brief visit to Sirmium. A competent and, otherwise, cautious general, Julian must have had strong reasons for the risky haste that led him to Sirmium. These reasons were not primarily of a military nature, though enlistment of fresh troops and formation of vexillationes was among the measures he undertook/ initiated in the Pannonian metropolis. A (neglected) passage (13. 287 a) of his Letter to the Athenians (?) mainly written during the river journey but sent from Sirmium itself) implies that his visit to Sirmium was chiefly caused by his urgent need to secure the rich mines of precious metals managed by that city (mines situated in the Drinus valley and the Mt. Cer area), as well as silver and gold objects (coins, ingots, plates etc.) stored in Sirmium, which had a mint and the metal officinae of its own. All this would help him i.a. distribute the donativa, already promised to his soldiers and officers. Analogous strategies, inspired by the old experience that the pecunia and/or metalla is/are nervus belli civilis, left traces in the sources describing the wars between Constatine I and Licinius, Vitellius and Vespasian, Otho and Vitellius — to cite the most illustrative examples only.

I. In the spring of 361, Julian, then in Gaul, finally broke off the negotiations with Constantius II, who had already made a series of preparations for open hostilities. The Civil War had become inevitable, and the three corps of the Caesar’s army began their march in the direction of Illyricum (Sirmium, to be exact\(^2\)), which divided Julian’s West from Constantius’ East. (Determined to defeat Sapor before dealing with his own rebellious co-ruler, Constantius had stopped in the Syrian Edessa). The first of Julian’s three corps, under the command of Jovius and Jovinus, was ordered to advance through North Italy, the second, led by Nevitta, through Raetia Mediterranea.

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\(^1\) On the problem of chronology see the notes by F. Paschoud in his edition of Zosimus (Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle, CUF, tome II, Paris 1979, 92 sqq. et passim.

\(^2\) Zos. III. 10. 2.
The third, by far the smallest (c. 3,000 men\(^3\)), was commanded by Julian himself. With his soldiers he boarded the vessels of the Danubian fleet somewhere in the vicinity of modern Ulm, where the river becomes navigable. After eleven days of ultra-rapid and semi-clandestine navigation (they covered a distance of some 1,300 kms\(^4\)) down the Danube, he reached Bononia, the northern port of Sirmium; the same night, he entered the great Pannonian city unopposed (Amm. Marc. XXI. 10. 2). Julian’s stay in Sirmium lasted two days only. Fresh soldiers were recruited there and the *vexillationes* of Pannonian and Moesian troops ordered to be formed or their formation initiated (Zos. III. 11. 1; cf. Amm. Marc. XXI. 12. 22).

On the third day he proceeded to the strategically crucial pass Succi, between Serdica and Philippopolis\(^5\), which was left with a reliable garrison to prevent — if necessary — Constantius’ army forcing its way west and north. Before long, the Caesar returned to Naissus, where he must have spent several months awaiting the arrival of the bulk of his regiments, old and new\(^6\), and engaging in diplomatic as well as the literary activities begun in Sirmium\(^7\). No doubt, the news of Constantius’ death (at Mopsucrenae, Cilicia) early in November reached the Caesar while he was still in Naissus. His next moves were both predictable and simple. Starting from Dacia Mediterranea, Julian marched through Thrace to enter Constantinople, without delay or resistance, as sole Emperor, on December 11\(^8\).

II. The Usurper’s actions of AD 361 deserve to be examined in some detail. Though misinterpreted by certain Roman generals\(^9\) and all the scholars of our time, Julian’s Illyrican expedition is actually quite instructive and modern students of Roman *bella civilia* may even find it typical, considering the logic of his military priorities and the superior quality of strategic judgment which distinguished him at all times (Amm. Marc. XXV. 4. 7). The examination of a (neglected) passage in Julian’s *Letter to the Athenians* is instructive in this context, because it provides us with the core of his strategic thinking. Put simply, Julian’s strategic priorities were the sources of good soldiers and the mines of precious metals. Moreover, there are illuminating if unrecognized analogies in the events described by Tacitus (the *bella civilia* of AD 69) and the *Excerpta Valesiana* (the conflict between Constantine and Licinius) to sustain the following analysis. It will not be, I hope, out of place in a volume dedicated to a great his-

\(^3\) Ibid.


\(^6\) Nevitta was quick to arrive, cf. Amm. Marc. XXI. 10. 2; Zos. III. 10. 3.

\(^7\) Zos. III. 10. 4. *Paschoud*, op. cit. (supra, n. 1) 94 sq.

\(^8\) Our main narrative sources for the events of AD 361 are Ammianus and Zosimus; a useful survey of the complete evidence can be found in e.g. *K. Rosen*, Flavius Claudius I, DNP 6 (1999) 11 sq. For a succinct biography of Julian, with a list of references to modern works, see *Rosen*, op. cit., 11–14 (14).

\(^9\) On the Count Lucillianus’ criticism, and its modern echoes, text and note 15 below.
torian who has done so much — among many other topics — for our understanding of the socio-political aspects of early mining industries.

III. Julian’s concentration in 361 on Illyricum (instead of Italy for example) is well paralleled in similar situations and seems strategically the only possible course of action bearing in mind Constantius’ whereabouts as well as the fact that an important part of the exercitus Illyricianus fought in the East at that time. This made it an easier task for Julian to conquer the Danubian lands and enlist (the procedure, we are permitted to assume, produced not quite voluntary recruits) fresh soldiers and organize expeditionary vexillationes. There are reasons to believe that all the principal elements of his strategic plan were formulated as early as his stay in Gaul. But it is difficult to understand his seemingly excessive haste and the resulting decision to use boats manned by a very small escort. These were highly dangerous choices to make, because the long river journey, carried out in all haste, was exhausting as well as unduly hazardous from the navigator’s point of view. In addition, the politico-military implications of being accompanied by a small group of soldiers, in a potentially pro-Constantius quarter of the Empire, must have appeared equally unattractive for the commander-in-chief of the naval operation, a post which must have been reserved for the Caesar himself, for several obvious reasons. It should be stressed that the normal cooperation between the fleet and the land troops, and the synchronisation of their efforts (cf. e.g. Amm. Marc. XXIV.1. 4), was impossible in the conditions of 361.

According to Ammianus Marcellinus’ description of the Sirmian episode in 361 (XXI. 9. 8), Count Lucillianus’ succinct comment on Julian’s recent piece of navigation was clearly critical if, perhaps, partly inspired by an autoapoletic tendency: ‘inaeque inquit ‘imperator et temere cum paucis alienis partibus te commissisti’. The Caesar’s answer ridiculed Lucillianus’ prudence in a superior way, which alluded to the Count’s dynastic allegiance and psychological vulnerability (‘haec verba prudentia serva’ inquit ‘Constantio. Maiestatis enim insigne non ut consiliario tibi, sed ut desinas pavere porrexi’), but did not, and could not, defend the daring river journey itself as a sound measure. Though civil wars, in certain moments, demand swift reactions, their tempo, scene and the size of the units engaged (Lucillianus implies) should be reasonably adjusted to dominant realities. Tradi-

11 Amm. Marc. XXI. 5. 6. Most of Italy was not left unprotected by Constantius (the loyalty of his troops, however, was doubtful?), cf. Zos. III. 10. 3, and the foregoing note.
12 Cf. Amm. Marc. XXI. 5. 6 (‘Daciarm ... finis extimos’).
13 The Danube in the spring will have been both swollen and rapid.
14 Zos. III. 10. 3; Amm. Marc. XXI. 11. 1–2.
15 Lucillianus, just caught asleep, had ingloriously failed in his task to defend Sirmium from Julian’s army (Amm. Marc. XXI. 9. 7). But modern scholars (who are conceivably free from that tendency) are inclined to agree with the Count’s critical view (E. A. Thompson, Three Notes on Julian in 361 A.D., Hermathena 62, 1943, 88–93 [non vidi]; Paschoud, op. cit., 96 sq.).
16 Amm. Marc. XXI. 5. 1.
tionally, much was thought to depend on tactical circumstances, on the degree of the risk, and the mentality of the army commanders involved.

On all these criteria, Julian's moves of 361 (spring) seem surprising enough. By contrast, in a slightly earlier speech to his soldiers in Gaul, he stresses the advantages of his customary cautious course in military matters (Amm. Marc. XXI. 5. 5: 'in crebritate bellorum ... consideratus et cautus'). We may assume that Julian was in a position to demonstrate his caution and unite (somewhere in west Pannonia?) his complete force — about 23,000 men all told — in one or two land corps. Indeed, such an action would have been quite logical since the army shared a common goal, Sirmium. Had he pursued this course of action he and his 3,000 men (part of a land corps and not a naval unit in this case) would have been spared the exhaustion and risks of a waterborne expedition in spring. Alternatively, he could have synchronised the last phase of the land corps' march with the advance of his fleet, at the cost of slowing the latter down. No disadvantages of a purely military order can be attributed to either of these less risky strategic plans. On the contrary, both have obvious advantages. The panic of the enemy and the repute of Julian's victories would have been the allies of the Usurper's army even if it proceeded at a reasonable pace and/or without a naval unit. His future stay in Naissus (summer-autumn, 361), rather inactive and quite long, suggests that he had little motive — or better, in view of his ability as a general, that he had motives of a special sort to opt for a plan spurning the safety of the (relative) slowness of his soldiers' march through Illyricum. It was no secret that the Persian War held Constantius in the East; the legitimate Emperor found it inadvisable, militarily (and diplomatically?) speaking, to attack Julian before eliminating the menace of Sapor.

IV. Now, Sirmium was a large and famous city, urbius mater populosa et celebris (to quote Ammianus, XXI. 10. 2), traditionally associated with the presence

17 Ibid. 7 ('nequit agatur inconsultum'), 8 ('ne impetu gliscentsis ardoris ...').
18 Ibid. 8. 2 and 9. 3–4.
19 Ibid. 8. 3; Jul. Ep. ad Ath. 8. 279 b sqq.
20 For a parallel, Tac. Hist. II. 83. 1.
21 Zosimus' explanation of it, recalling Ammianus' chapter XXII. 1 (at XXI. 10. 5–6, however, the stay at Naissus is connected with political affairs), reckons with the motives of Julian's superstition (III. 11. 1, cf. Paschoud [op. cit.] 96). Probably, the Caesar's delaying in Dacia points to a combination of political and 'spiritual' factors. As to the former, it should be noted that Amm. Marc. XXI. 10. 5 calls Naissus coptosum oppidum; that could imply the continuation of Julian's interest in the "gold and silver" subject; there were mines of considerable importance in the entire neighbourhood of that city (S. Dušanić, Aspects of Roman Mining in Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia and Moesia Superior, ed. H. Temporini — W. Haase, Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, II 6, Berlin — New York 1977, 69 sqq. 87 sq.), which was rich in itself and also famous for producing silver and gold plates, ingots et sim. (P. Petrović, IMS IV nos. 129–134).
22 Amm. Marc. XXI. 7. 1.
23 For his part, Constantius seems to have sought a rapprochement with the Alemanni to detain Julian in Gaul (Paschoud, op. cit., 90). He may have believed in a similar understanding between Sapor and Julian, which would make his own expedition against the Usurper all the more dangerous at a time before the Persian conflict was finally settled.
of Emperors as well as with civil wars\textsuperscript{24}. Julian's nocturnal and (in the first instance) unceremonial entry, however, left no trace of his wish to insist seriously upon the propaganda or related aspects of Sirmium\textsuperscript{25}; after all, he spent no more than two days there. Neither can what might be called military considerations in a strict sense\textsuperscript{26} explain his decision to reach Sirmium in a dangerous way and in an extremely short time. Its garrison was very modest in size\textsuperscript{27}, its opportunities to organize a pro-Constantius action were limited enough\textsuperscript{28}. The city presented little threat to Julian, nor was it the only Illyrican centre from which recruitments could be organized and where the expeditionary \textit{vexillationes} could be rallied; Singidunum and/or Viminacium were as suitable as Sirmium to fulfill such tasks. Julian could have continued his journey to one or both of these cities, leaving the Save to the attention of his corps commanded by Jovius or Nevitta respectively. However, the fact remains that he obviously needed Sirmium, and at the earliest possible moment of his rebellion, to the point of accepting the grave risks of the journey by river. As I shall try to show here, his reasons were financial rather than military or those of prestige; the success of the whole enterprise largely depended on the control of the sources of gold and silver — to be precise, on Julian's ability to repay his soldiers promptly\textsuperscript{29}. His risks were calculated, not the matter of a \textit{gliscens ardor}, to use Ammianus' expression (XXI. 5. 8), and the calculation started from the axiom that money is \textit{ferro validior} in time of civil strife (Tac. Hist. II. 32. 4; note 55 below).

V. This can be concluded from Julian's own words in his \textit{Letter to the Senate and People of Athens}, which — probably written during his sail of 361, — was despatched from Sirmium itself\textsuperscript{30}. Among other things, it notes two main points of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{M. Mirković}, Sirmium — Its History from the 1 Century A.D. to 582 A. D., ed. \textit{V. Popović}, Sirmium I, Beograd 1971, 37 sqq.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Significantly, Sirmium does not figure in the \textit{Ep. ad Ath.} if the passage 5, 273 c is put aside (it adds nothing to the glory of the city).
  \item \textsuperscript{26} During a period which saw Illyricum half-depleted of soldiers.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Mirković}, op. cit., 44.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} The mutiny of formerly Constantius' two legions and a \textit{sagittariorum cohors} 'quas (Julian) invenerat apud Sirmium' (Amm. Marc. XXI. 11. 2 sqq.) was a comparatively late development, whose first phase took place far to the west from Sirmium; the news of it reached Julian while at Naissus, at an advanced season of his stay there. The mutiny was caused by the soldiers' fear of the German enemy (Amm. Marc. XXI. 11. 2; Julian had sent them to Gaul) rather than sincere pro-Constantius sentiments; it came as a surprise for Julian (Amm. Marc. XXI. 12. 1: 'nihil a tergo timens adversum'). All this shows that — despite certain doubts of his as to the loyalty of the three units — he had no strong reason to distrust the garrison of Sirmium. It should be noted that the short time at Lucillianus' disposal (ending with Julian's entry into the city) did not allow him to collect important forces in the neighbourhood of Sirmium to fight the Usurper (Amm. Marc. XXI. 9. 5).
  \item \textsuperscript{29} While still in Gaul, he promised them 'quinos omnibus aureos, argentique singula pondo' (Amm. Marc. XX. 4. 18). Conceivably, such a promise was binding — especially so in the politico-military circumstances of AD 361, despite all the difficulties of public finance (cf. Amm. Marc. XX. 11. 5 and XXII. 3. 7–8).
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Thus Zos. III. 10. 3–4 (cf. \textit{J. Bidez}'s edition of Julian's works, CUF, tome I, 1ère partie, Paris 1932, 210 and 215 note 1). Some scholars (e.g. \textit{Paschoud}, op. cit., 94, 96) take it, against Zosimus, that the \textit{Letter} was sent from Naissus but no conclusive argument can be cited in favour of that late dating.
\end{itemize}
Julian's strategic plan as formulated immediately before the beginning of the expedition and wrought into his project of reconciliation with Constantius (whatever the project's precise date, sincerity and feasibility31) at a moment when the Caesar's rule over Illyricum was more or less secured32: 'I thought that I ought to add to my forces certain very powerful (provincial) nations (provincial armies)33 and to obtain, legitimately, the revenues of silver- and gold-mines34. Moreover, if even now he (Constantius) would welcome a reconciliation with me I would keep to what I at present possess ...' (ὁ θεός δείχνει ἐθνὴν τα προσλαμβανία τὰ δυνατότατα καὶ χρημάτων πόρους δικαιοτάτων ἐξ ἀργυρῶν καὶ χρυσίων καὶ εἰ μὲν ἁγαπήσειν ἐτι νῦν γοῦν τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς δόμονοιαν, εἰσώ τῶν νῦν ἐχομένων μένειν ...).

Both points corresponded with Julian's early decision to occupy and hold the pass of Succi35. The δυνατότατα ἐθνῆ, 'very powerful (provincial) nations (provincial armies)', meant the people of Illyricum — Pannonia and Moesia in the first place, whose legions were justly famous for their martial value. We already know from Zosimus that Julian strengthened his troops in Sirmium through recruitment as well as transfers of experienced soldiers from Pannonian and Moesian fortresses and forts — a measure that would take some time (i.e. impossible to complete by the beginning of the march to Succi) and insufficient to explain, on its own, Sirmium as the destination of Julian's river journey36.

The other point presents a different case, though an aspect of the problem of precious metals in 361 immediately concerned the exclusively military issues (~ the imperial donativa). Sirmium was indeed a key, geographically and administratively speaking, to the Illyrian argentariae et aurariae, and that fact may explain, alike, the haste and secretiveness of Julian's journey down the Danube. First, there were mines of silver and gold in the south of the Sirmian territory (the area of Mt. Cer)

Considering the importance of Athens — for Julian himself and the whole Graeco-Roman world as well — it was natural that his series of letters, intended for a variety of addressees, opened with the Letter to the Athenians precisely and did that at an earliest possible date (Ep. ad Ath. 2, 270 a–b; Amm. Marc. XXI. 10. 7. provides a terminus ante quem). Most other letters may really have been a fruit of his stay in Naissus. The urgency of the Ep. ad Ath. — whose text is developed and sophisticated enough — suggests that the bulk of the Letter was written in a boat on the Danube rather than during the short interval of Julian's stay in Sirmium.

31 Cf. Paschoud, op. cit., 95.
32 I.e. after the Sirmians went over to Julian's side. He was entitled therefore to plan the exploitation (soldiers, minerals) of the whole Illyricum, including the parts which were still Constantius', legally speaking. It was difficult, for the modest effective left by Constantius in the Balkans, to resist him. The course of events confirmed Julian's expectations.
33 For the meaning of ἐθνὴν here cf. e.g. the immediately preceding phrase, Ep. ad Ath. 13, 287 a. The translation by Bidez (op. cit., 235), 'nations', is less precise; the translation by W. C. Wright, The Works of the Emperor Julian (LCL), II, London — Cambridge, Mass. 1913, 289 ('tribes'), is wrong.
34 ‘... revenus des mines d’ argent et d’ or’ (Bidez ‘translation, probably based on a suggestion by W. Koch, Kaiser Julian der Abtrünnige, Jahrb. für class. Phil., Suppl. XXV, Leipzig 1899, 469 [non vidi]). Wright translated, inaccurately, ‘... supplies of money, which I had a perfect right to coin, both gold and silver’.
35 Supra, text and note 12.
36 Text and notes 11 and 26 sqq.
and — especially rich and well documented workings — in a not very distant part of the Drina valley. Some aspects of the administration of all these mines were quite probably situated in Sirmium, which was connected to them thanks to good roads. Also, the city may have served as the seat of the dignitary responsible for the mining activities in the whole of Illyricum, precious as they were, under the title of the *comes metallorum per Illyricum* (Not. Dign. Or. XIII. 11).

During his stay at Sirmium, however brief, Julian was able to issue orders concerning the Pannonian and, generally, Illyrican mines and their immediate operation. The future of production also mattered. As *Ep. ad Ath*. 13, 287 a shows, the proposal of reconciliation implied the possibility of a protracted Constantius — Julian diarchy, giving the East to the former and the West — metalliferous as well as militarily strong — to the latter. In the crisis of the Civil War Julian obviously made, as his first message to the mining officials, a political demand; *exempli gratia*, its essence may be formulated as follows: ‘Constantius, who badly needs precious metals, must not have them from the Illyrican *metalla*. The products of these mines belong to me, who has already promised the best soldiers of the *Res publica* their donatives in silver and gold’. This order was legally controversial, evidently, but there is no doubt that Julian was powerful enough to enforce it at a moment when he held Sirmium.

Julian’s initiative bearing on the *aurariae* and *argentariae* obviously complied with the transephocal experience that ‘mines/money are/is the sinews of civil war’ (see *infra*, text and n. 53). Our sources for the dramatic events of AD 361 mention explicitly neither the initiative nor the mining considerations in general (we are somewhat better informed on the question of the donatives, fortunately) but their si-


38 See the articles referred to in the preceding note.

39 Note the road (incompletely recorded) which led from Sirmium, via Gensis and Ad Drinum, to Argentaria and Domavia (Tabula Peutingeriaca). The existence of others (e.g. Sirmium — Aurariae, Sirmium — Agrippiana) may be postulated on indirect evidence concerning Diocletian’s moves in 294 (see my article of 2003 cited above, note 37).

40 The post in existence from the third century, if not before (*HA*, Vita Claudii 15. 4; *Cod. Theod*. X. 19. 3 = *Cod. Iust*. XI. 6. 1; cf. *Dušanić*, The Roman Mines of Illyricum: Organization and Impact on Provincial Life, ed. C. L. Domergue, Minería y metalurgia en las antiguas civilizaciones mediterraneas y europeas (Madrid 1985), II, Madrid 1989, 154 with note 89); its locality is uncertain and has been variously identified, Sirmium being the likeliest possibility. The *Comes metallorum per Illyricum* of AD 361 may have assisted Julian’s men in their contacts with mines — contacts which need not have been quite simple — by providing them with corresponding documents. For an analogous situation and procedure, in the sphere of provincial finances, Amm. Marc. XXII. 3. 7 (*litterae*).

41 Constantius lacks gold and silver: Amm. Marc. XXI. 6. 6; XX. 11. 5. — Julian’s promise: note 29 above.

42 Thence the qualification δικαιοτέτων at *Ep. ad Ath*. 13. 369 a? Probably, it polemizes against the thesis that the mines, formally, are the (legitimate) Emperor’s property. The decency of the (pro-Constantius) reaction of the Senate in Rome to Julian’s letter, as noted by Ammianus (XXI. 10. 7), suggests that such theses may have had some influence in 361.
lence should not surprise; it reflects the ancient writers’ usual disregard of most aspects of economic factors which influence historical processes\textsuperscript{43}.

To revert to the problem of strategic alternatives, if Julian’s army had marched through Illyricum as one unit, openly, and at a normal pace, Constantius, though in a remote quarter of the Empire and too busy with the Persian campaign to appear in Sirmium personally, with the corresponding effective, would have been informed in time\textsuperscript{44} and would have been able to send urgent messages\textsuperscript{45} to the city and/or his loyal soldiers in the Danubian lands; he may even have left instructions at a centre such as Constantinople, comparatively close to Succi, as to what should be done against the public enemy. (Constantius might also have written then, in addition to the Comes metallorum in Sirmium, to certain other mining regions of Illyricum.) Having arrived before Julian, the messengers would have been free to foment difficulties to the new regime and its mining policy; the miners were notorious for their readiness to upset the established course of work \textit{intra fines metallorum} whenever an occasion arose\textsuperscript{46}. Worse still, these imaginary messengers would have immediately organized the transport of gold and silver from the mines of Illyricum and Sirmium itself to Constantius’ East. The recent production of Roman mines was usually stored in the forts of mining regions (before being transferred, under the protection of periodical convoys, to great urban centres); on the other hand, there were State treasury chests in Sirmium — which possessed a mint of its own and \textit{officinae} producing gold/silver ingots, plates and other such objects\textsuperscript{47} — whose contents were used to reward soldiers and army officers in the first place. In the light of Ammianus’ testimony XX. 4. 18, referred to in the foregoing paragraph, and a number of historical parallels, it seems likely that Julian himself took with him certain quantities of precious metals from the Illyrican mines and/or Sirmian treasuries when leaving the city to march toward Succi. In any case, he does not appear to have coined in the Sirmium mint during the interval of his usurpation.

\textsuperscript{43} Mines especially have received little attention in ancient literature, quite disproportionate to their general importance.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{N. Purcel}, Postal Service, OCD (3rd ed.), Oxford 1996, 1234: ‘50 miles per day was a not uncommon speed for messages, but the news of the revolt of the Rhine army travelled to Galba at the rate of c. 150 miles per day’.

\textsuperscript{45} Constantius’ use of the \textit{nuntii certissimi}: Amm. Marc. XXI. 13. 6.

\textsuperscript{46} Dušanić, Army and Mining in Moesia Superior, ed. G. Alfoldy — B. Dobson — W. Eck, Kaiser, Heer und Gesellschaft in der Römischen Kaiserzeit, Gedenkschrift für E. Birley, Stuttgart 2000, 347 sq. The civil war of 68–69 (adduced \textit{infra} as a parallel for the events of 361) obviously provoked troubles in the rich mining area of Kosmaj to judge from a coin-hoard, \textit{V. Mikhailović}, A Hoard of Roman Aes Augusti — Nero from the Mining District of Kosmaj, Numismatica 17, Beograd 1994, 25–32. This was all the more natural an event since Moesia was quite unstable at the time (\textit{P. A. L. Greenhalgh}, The Year of the Four Emperors, London 1975, 134 et passim). — \textit{IMS} I 168 (if dated AD 196) may be connected with the impending war between Albinus and Septimius Severus (in a delicate situation, the latter presented the \textit{mella} of Rudnik with a large temple of Terra Mater).

VI. As announced supra, there are two authors, describing two civil wars, whose testimony — imperfectly understood so far — tends to complete each other and sustain the foregoing deductions.

First, we might examine the war of Constantine and Licinius in 314, which is, of the two events just referred to, chronologically closer to Julian’s revolt and explicitly concerns the metropolis of south-east Pannonia, also. After his defeat at Cibalae, Licinius fled to Sirmium, took his wife, child, and (the State) treasures, crossed the Save (the bridge was destroyed behind him) and in all haste retreated to Dacia (Mediterranea): ‘…cum magna parte equitatus nocticis auxilio pervolavit ad Sirmium. Sublata inde uxore ac filio et thesauris tetendit ad Daciam’ (Exc. Val. 5. 17) 48. It is true, modern scholars are inclined to see in thesauris a reference to Licinius’ own valuables 49 (though the possessive pronoun is not cited!), but the plural form of the word and its administrative connotations (~ imperial treasuries 50) suggest gold of public rather than private origin. (We are led to believe that the bulk of silver was left behind by the defeated cavalry, in an emergency that did not allow much time for the cartage of heavy materials 51.)

This interpretation of the Excerpta squares with the fact that a considerable part of the State treasuries’ contents and/or Licinius’ private goods remained in Sirmium, where Constantine captured them before sending his infantry in pursuit of the remains of Licinius’ army 52. The whole episode corresponds with that of 361 in illustrating the importance of Sirmian precious metals in civil wars; both Licinius (whose highest priorities, characteristically, proved to be just three: uxor, filius, and thesauri) and Constantine took care of them before dealing with the purely military demands of the situation, regardless of its importance.

VII. Second, we can look to Vespasian’s war against Vitellius for an instructive strategic parallel. In a variety of ways it affirmed the principle (frequently insisted upon by Mucianus, the leading Flavian general) that ‘money is the sinews of civil war’ (‘belli civilis nervi’) 53. So ‘gold and silver were minted in Antiochia’ in the spring/summer of 69 (Tac. Hist. II. 82. 1). Shortly later, at Aquileia, the

49 O. Seeck, Licinius, RE XIII(1926) 225; Mirković, op. cit., 38, et al.
50 Seeck, Comites (no. 50), RE IV (1901) 657 sq.; Baratte, op. cit., 69 no. 12, etc.
51 Cf. Zos. II. 18. 4.
52 Zos. II. 19. 1: κατασχόν δὲ Κωνσταντῖνος ... τὸ Σίρμιον ... καὶ πάντα ὅσα φεύγαν ὁ Λυκίνης ὁδίστω κατέλειπεν, πέμπει πεντακοσιάλλος δηλιτάς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ διαζιν.
53 Tac. Hist. II. 84. 1: ‘Igitur navium militem armorum paratu strepere provinciae, sed nihil acque fatigabat quam pecuniarum conquisitio: eos esse belli civilis nervos dicitans Mucianus non ipsis aut verum in cognitionibus, sed solam magnitudinem opum spectabat’. The figurative expression belli (civilia) nervos is older than Mucianus (Tacitus); H. Heubner’s Kommentar (P. Cornelius Tacitus. Die Historien, II, Heidelberg 1968, 284) cites several attestations, i.a. from Cicero and (in Greek) one of Pindar’s scholia. It was in use during the Middle Ages also (thanks to Cicero’s influence?): A. Bartal, Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis regni Hungariae, Lipsiae 1901, 438, s.v. nervus belli (~ pecunia). In a letter (quoted by V. Simić, Istoriski razvoj našeg rudarstva, Beograd 1951, 231 and 236) the Serbian despot George Branković (XV cent.) wrote of the famous medieval mines of Novo Brdo ‘ob mineras nervus belli’.
Vitellians’ camp treasury was taken by, and divided among, the new adherents to the partes Flavianae (ibid. 85. 2, recalling in some aspects Exc. Val. 5. 17 and Zos. II. 19. 1). Even a mint of denarii (aurei and sestertii also?) was opened in Illyricum (Poetovio?) or Aquileia, for the period August — December, AD 69. There is no doubt that it coined metals which were supplied by Illyrican mines.

As in case of AD 361, the importance of the metalia Illyrici inspired most of the usurpers’ conceptions. Vespasian planned a safe and rather long war, relying upon the advantages of his position which included the Balkans and Aquileia: in the letters to his Danubian leaders (? August—September, 69), he pointed out that ‘since they (i.e. his men) held Egypt, controlled the grain supply of Italy, and possessed the revenues of the richest provinces, the army of Vitellius could be forced to surrender by lack of pay and food’ (‘... quando Aegyptus, clastra annomas, vectigalia opulentissimarum provinciarum obtineretur, posse Vitellii exercitum egestate stipendii frumentique ad deditionem subegi’).

Modern commentators of Tacitus’ Histories tend to equate the opulentissimae provinciae with the eastern ones, but that tendency should not be followed. Mainly if not exclusively, the opulentissimae provinciae are to be identified here with Moesia, Pannonia and Dalmatia since these ‘richest provinces’ resources, in Vespasian’s/Tacitus’ view, guaranteed the soldiers’ pay (stipendium), which in turn presupposed the payer’s easy access to metals and mints in Illyricum or areas close to Illyricum, where the largest and best part of the Flavian troops was stationed: in the seasons of bella civilia, money must be available to the generals without any loss of time. Let us note also that the East possessed no mines worthy of mention, to enable the Emperor and the provincial authorities to obtain precious metals in a politically innocuous manner — i.e. without compelling the Flavian forces to resort to dangerously unpopular measures, which included war contributions et sim. The exaction of money from private persons, intensely disliked among the provincial population, had already been applied to Flavian Syria and its neighbourhood and, practically speaking, had exhausted local possibilities. Like Julian, whose artisans were ready to discuss a compromise with Constantius once they had taken control of the


55 A similar strategy had been propounded by Suetonius Paulinus, Otho’s excellent general in the war against Vitellius (Tac. Hist. II. 32; cf. Plut. Otho 8; on those two passages, Heubner, op. cit., 119 sqq., esp. 126). Paulinus pleaded for delay, not haste, citing various long-term advantages of Otho’s position which included (C. H. Moore’s translation of the Histories, LCL) the control of “Pannonia, Moesia, Dalmatia and the East” as well as “public and private resources and an enormous amount of money, which in time of civil strife is more powerful than the sword” (“et immensam pecuniam, inter civilia discordias ferro validiorem”).


57 The wide meaning of ‘opulentus’ (cf. e.g. Tac. Hist. II. 32. 4, and Ann. III. 43. 1) implies i.a. mineral wealth; Lewis — Short cites (s.v.) Plaut. Ep. 2. 2. 117: ‘opulentus auro’ (= rich in gold).

58 Tac. Hist. II. 84. 2–3.

59 Read: to wait with the decisive battles till the newly raised additional troops become operative?
legions and the mineral wealth of Illyricum, Vespasian had opted for a prudent strategy in 69, conscious of the advantages which his rule over the all-important *metalla Illyrici*\(^\text{60}\) gave him. Owing to Antonius Primus' audacity, not to say temerity, Vespasian's advice (shared by Mucianus) remained ineffective, and the Flavian victory was accomplished in a comparatively short time. However, the logic of the advice, wherein the mining factor had prominent, though not quite an explicit, rôle, will have been valid regardless of its failure to convince Antonius Primus.

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To conclude briefly. The mining factor can explain concrete aspects of a number of Roman civil wars — their strategy as well as the course of specific events. This is especially true of the factor presented by the *metalla Illyrici*, the richest complex of mines in the whole Empire. But the chief lesson to be deduced from the scrutiny of the part miners and mines played in the history of the *bella civilia* concerns major issues of a social, political and economic nature. Two points of that order should be reemphasized. The army of the Empire was not a citizen army any more, for several centuries; the loyalty of its soldiers had to be payed for promptly and heavily, especially in the delicate seasons of civil wars and in provinces such as those of Illyricum — variously important but notoriously difficult to command. These soldiers and the Romans in general did not accept token money; consequently, *argentarieae* and *aurariae* were necessary to all the candidates to the Principate whose ambition led them to fight for the supreme power. The use of the *moneta comitatensis* and the appearance of State mints in many provinces — their concentration in Illyricum and its neighbourhood being especially strong — belong to the same complex of politico-economic phenomena, which reflected the increasing frequency of wars, both internal and external, in the post-Severan age.

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\(^{60}\) Most of them were active as early as the beginning of the Principate, see my papers referred to supra, note 37.
неоправдана; Јулијан је важно за одличног војсковођу који не преузима беспотребне ризике. Стога се антички и модерни судови о Јулијановој стратегији 361. углавном крећу од неразумевања до неодобравања. Ипак постоји рационално објашњење за Јулијанову одлуку (показаће се: мудру и вредну посредног помена у Писму Атиљанима [13. 287 a]) да се дочепа Сирмијума што се брже могло и без обзира на опасности. Тако је поступио да би себи обезбедио контролу над богатим рудницама сребра и злата у Подрињу и Поцерини, као и над предметима од драгоцених метала (новац, слици, посуђе и тп.) који су се чуvalи у Сирмију и сирмијској ковници. Сребро и злато су му били потребни да би исплатио већ обећана donativa своjoj војсци, као и за друге трошкове грађанског рата, увек скупог. Без сребра и злата његова узурпација није имала изгледа на успех, те се одступање од смотрене стратегије наметало као неминовност. Речите паралелe пружају извори који говоре о грађансkom ратовима из 314. и 69. године. Оне се могу сажети у познату формулу да кованu новац односно рудници племенитих метала чине нервни систем у организму грађанског рата (belli civilis nervi).