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THE *BELLUM BATONIANUM* IN
CONTEMPORARY HISTORIOGRAPHICAL
NARRATIVES
IN A SEARCH FOR THE POST-MODERN
BATO THE DAESITIAE

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This work examines small but significant aspects of the *Bellum Batonianum*. In particular it focuses on the perception of the war in the more recent historiography; also, it analyses impositions of modern constructions and perspectives on the past. Furthermore, it discusses the identity of Bato the Daesitiae in light of the most recent studies of identity of non-Mediterranean elite members from his times in the early Principate. This study attempts to contribute to the better understanding of the early stages of the process of so-called “Romanization” in the hinterland of Roman Dalmatia and southern Pannonia.

Key words: Bato the Daesitiae, the Pannonii, the Daesitiae, historiography, acculturation, early principate, ancient identities (*Ključne riječi:* *Baton Dezitijatski, Pannonci, Dezitijati, historiografija, akulturacija, rani principat, antički identiteti*)

The *Bellum Batonianum*, AD 6-9, never achieved prominence in the classical scholarship as were some other, more famous uprisings against Rome, such as that of Boudicca, Arminius, the Batavians, etc. There are only a few modern (the term modern is used as “contemporary”, rather than “modernistic”) works in non-South-Slavic languages in the 20th and 21st century, which focus solely on the uprising.¹ Scholarship in the south Slavic languages gives it a somewhat more prominent

¹ The narratives: Hirschfeld 1890; Bauer 1894; Gardthausen 1904a, 1171-1193; 1904b, 772-789; Rau 1925; Köstermann 1953; Anamali 1987 – should be added also Mócsy 1962, 506-510; Wilkes 1969, 67-77 and Gruen 1996, 176-178. Different aspects: Alföldy 1962; Wilkes 1965b; Nagy 1970; Sordi 2004; Džino 2006. Sources: Šašel Kos 1986, 182-191 (Cassius Dio). The paper will focus only on the more recent works.

place, but it is still lacking more substantial focus, especially in the last few decades.² This study will focus on one small, but important part of this significant event – on the perception of the uprising in modern historiography, searching for and going beyond the existing constructions imposed by different modern narratives. In addition, this paper will try to examine the identity of Bato the Daesitiate outside of the existing historiographical constructions and in the context of similar recent historical and archaeological assessments of Bato's contemporaries from the non-Mediterranean world.

Until the last generation or two, modern historiography attempted to reconstruct the "historical truth", to recognize the "right" narratives of the events, to see the "good" and "evil" historical personalities and "explain" the past. The modern historian and archaeologist critically examined the narratives of the ancient written sources and the archaeological evidence in order to construct his/her narrative of the events. These modern narratives tell us many things about the past, but they also reflect culturally, politically and/or ideologically and nationally pre-determined discourses of the authors, their life experiences and acquired knowledge. They disregard the complexity of the different narratives, which really existed in the past and which are only partially and selectively presented in the existing written and material evidence, the historian and archaeologist of the ancient world has at his/her disposal. Amongst many, good examples of the *zeitgeist* in historiography is the so-called "defensive expansionism", of Maurice Holleaux, which imposes the European colonial framework of his times onto Roman Republican foreign policy, and Edward Luttwak's "Grand strategy" of the Roman Empire, which to a significant degree imposes Cold War strategic thinking into the Roman imperial times. In archaeology, the examples of superimposing modern, often nationalistic frameworks over the past are even more abundant.³

Today it is evident that the sources for the *Bellum Batonianum* are concerned with and display only the Roman narrative of power, and do not inform us much about other narratives besides it, as in fact all the other historical sources from this period are doing.⁴ In other words, Velleius Paterculus and Cassius Dio, our chief narrative sources for these events, are concerned only with military matters, focusing exclusively on the narrative elements related to Roman power: political power, fighting, conquest, control and domination. The sources of secondary importance such as Strabo or Suetonius also exist in their genres – Strabo in ancient "ethnography", Suetonius – biography. In essence, the sources tell us more about the authors and

² Vulić 1911, 200-247; 1926, 55-72; Pašalić 1956; Imamović 1978; Suić 1991/92; Mesihović 2007.

³ Post-modern historiography: Marincola 2007a. Holleaux: Linderski 1984, Luttwak: Isaac 1994, 372-418. Archaeology: Kohl/Faccett 1995; Diaz-Andreu/Champion 1996; Dyson 2006.

⁴ Damon 2006.

their perceptions of the events; not the actual events. The most significant problem is that preserved primary sources were all written by members of the Mediterranean elite. They were written for a specific audience in order to fulfil their expectations and to fit in certain literary genres of their period. Thus, we can say that the primary sources reflect views, stereotypes, cultural discourses and the morality of their authors and their audience. Historical “truth” and “lie” are the categories that imply our contemporary understanding, rather than the original message of these authors, or the understanding of their audience.⁵

In an attempt to see how historiographical constructions of the *Bellum Batonianum* were developed in more recent times, I shall limit this discussion to just a few of the most prominent key narrative portrayals of the uprising in both south-Slavic and non south-Slavic language scholarship.⁶ Nikola Vulić, a Serbian scholar born in Scodra – modern day Albania, gave the first important narrative account on the war in the south Slavic languages.⁷ His account is in essence anti-colonial, drawing inspiration from his personal positive identification with the Pannonii, whom he perceives as the underdogs, and strong condemnation of the Romans as *the enemies*.⁸ He does see the rebellion as a “just” liberation movement against the “unjust” occupation by the colonial power, and the Pannonian defeat as their ultimate “victimhood” – taking at face value Dio’s dramatic depictions of their resistance to the Roman army.⁹ We can see Vulić’s narrative directly stemming from existing historical anti-colonial narratives of his times, in particular the Serbian uprisings against the Ottomans, and Serbian collective experiences in World War I.¹⁰

More recent scholarship of Imamović, Bojanovski and Stipčević reflect the communist and Yugoslav federal discourse arising after 1945, which was applied to ancient history, superimposing the framework of “Illyrianness” over the Yugoslav frontiers, especially before the 1970s.¹¹ Drawing heavily on the same sources of Vulić’s anti-colonial sentiment, but living in a significantly different ideological *zeitgeist*, they all saw the Pannonii as freedom-loving resistance-fighters, who fought the “occupiers” trying to achieve freedom. The construction of the contexts such as *heroic resistance, in-born heroics, desperate fighting, treachery* of Bato the Breucian,

⁵ Marincola 1997; 2007a; Shuttleworth-Craus 1999 – *inter alii*.

⁶ Only Mesihović 2007, 316-318 very recently develops a more consistent criticism of earlier historiographic constructions of the *bellum Batonianum*.

⁷ Vulić 1911, 200-247; 1926, 55-72.

⁸ Vulić uses frequently the word *dušmanin* – a much stronger word for the “enemy” than *neprijatelj*.

⁹ E. g. Vulić 1911, 207-210; 1926, 65-68.

¹⁰ This narrative had a long life span, see Wilkes 1992, 21 for the comparison of Montenegrin-Turkish battles with Pannonian rebels. See also Babić 2001 for the general perceptions of the classical past in Serbia.

¹¹ Džino, forthcoming.

and the perception of the Romans as a *hateful/villainous enemy* (*mrski dušmani*) signifies this point clearly.¹² Aleksandar Stipčević in his synthetic work on the “Illyrians” strongly reflects federal Yugoslav communist “Brotherhood-and-Unity” discourse in his statement that *only united Illyrians can stand against a more numerous enemy*.¹³ The perception of the Pannonii by Ivo Bojanovski on the other hand associates colonial perceptions of the indigenous population as “noble savages”, freedom-loving but uncomfortable with (the colonial version of) civilisation: *Illyrians as: freedom loving people not used to political power of the state-organisation*.¹⁴ Esad Pašalić gave a much more balanced account of the Batonian war than all the other ex-Yugoslav scholars who were writing in the federal Yugoslav context 1945-1990. However, he is not completely free from ideological discourse either. Pašalić rightly rebuffed Köstermann, for superimposing his narrative as the officer of the Wehrmacht (see below), but also imposed his own modernistic exclusivity of the narratives, as either “right” or “wrong”. For him Köstermann is wrong for his: *lack of sympathy for an ethical justification of people’s liberation wars, which are just*. Pašalić’s work is also interesting when looked at the *zeitgeist* context for his strong emphasises of the war narrative in the framework of modern frontiers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, at the same time significantly underplaying the role of the Pannonii from southern Pannonia in the uprising, who are predominantly located in modern Croatia and only a very small portion of the most northern parts of Bosnia.¹⁵

The post-Yugoslav approach just starts to appear in the scholarship. Mate Suić in one of his later scholarly studies, decisively shows that the Liburni and Iapodes did not take part in the rebellion. They did not join the rebellion for a different political position and major historical, cultural and identity differences with the peoples which were opposing Rome. Their differences with the rebelling Pannonii were significant, not minor. The last years of federal Yugoslavia, when his paper was written, probably affected this fresh insight into the problem.¹⁶ Suić also imposes modern stereotypes on the peoples taking part in the war. He sees the Breuci as the *agriculturalists* because they lived on the plains and the Daesitiates as the *shepherds* because they lived in mountainous areas. These impositions directly affect his pre-

¹² Stipčević 1989, 48-51; Imamović 1978, 337-340, 346; much less intensive and less ideologically charged, but still present in Bojanovski 1988, 48-53. All translations are mine.

¹³ Stipčević 1989, 51. Stipčević is “the last Croatian panillyrist”, Periša 2002, 161-162.

¹⁴ Bojanovski 1988, 48.

¹⁵ Pašalić 1956, esp. 269-270 n. 40 criticising Köstermann 1953. Bosnia: 271 ff., esp. 295 *the position of Bosnia before the beginning of the war*. The development of decentralization in c. 1970s, brought the rise of works dealing with the regional pre-histories of the Yugoslav federal republics – see Kaiser 1995, 109.

¹⁶ Suić 1991/92. Earlier scholarship regarded these at best as *suddenly separated* from the rebellion, where they should belong for their cultural similarities, e. g. Pašalić 1956, 284-286.

mise that the Daesitiates were by *their spiritual constitution against any power and paying of taxes* and more used to rapid military movements – for their nomadic (?) background.¹⁷ The post-Yugoslav perspectives also appear in the most recent dissertation of Mesihović. In an otherwise fresh insight into the matter, it is significant to note his melancholic notion of the lack of unity amongst the Pannonian communities, their *damnation of disunity*.¹⁸

In the non-South Slavic scholarship, the studies most obviously influenced by the *zeitgeist* and author's personal experiences are the accounts of Ernest Köstermann and Skender Anamali. Köstermann's experience as an officer of the German Wehrmacht during the World War II fighting against the Yugoslav partisans, influenced him to see the Pannonian uprising essentially as guerrilla fighting, and success of the rebels as due to the impassable terrain of Dalmatian hinterland. He was strongly criticized by Pašalić for that view, though from a different ideological discourse.¹⁹ There is also a more recent narrative by Anamali, which reflects Albanian "Illyrian" discourse, which perceives Albanians as the "rightful Illyrian successors". He was rightly criticized by Benac for his view that the communities in southeastern Illyricum, which corresponds with modern Albania, joined the rebellion.²⁰ There is also a fascinating absence and underestimation of the conflict in Hungarian scholarship until recently, especially underplaying the importance of the events occurring south of the Pannonian plains, as Mesihović rightly warns.²¹

The other modern narratives are more balanced and less ideologically biased, attempting to construct an "objective" narrative of the events, deriving material for the narrative from the colonial perspective of written sources: Velleius Paterculus and Cassius Dio. The narrative of John Wilkes, for example, is the narrative of military events, army movements and battles. The words deriving from the narrative of power, such as the words */force-forces-forcing-reinforcements/* or */strongpoints-strongholds/* dominate his Romanocentric narrative in his *Dalmatia*.²² For Wilkes, the *Bellum Batonianum* is the last stage in the establishment of Roman control over the area. He sees it in the context of the Augustan "grand strategy" and "geopolitics", assuming that the Romans had the same perception of the space we have today with

¹⁷ Suić 1991/92, 56. The archaeology of the Daesitiate communities, although still very poorly explored, shows around 120 known hilltop settlements (*gradine*), a significant portion of which was used for permanent settlements cf. Čović 1987, 481-482, 506-510; Mesihović 2007, 773-782, 917 ff.

¹⁸ Mesihović 2007, 320.

¹⁹ Köstermann 1953, 346-347, see n. 15 above. Köstermann's perception was still alive in Wilkes 1992, 21.

²⁰ Anamali 1987 esp. n. 2; Benac 1991.

²¹ Mesihović 2007, 316-317 n. 5. More prominence the *Bellum Batonianum* achieves in Mócsy 1962, 544-548.

²² Wilkes 1965b; 1969, 67-77.

satellite pictures and precise geographical maps.²³ Wilkes also falls under the spell of the modernistic Yugoslav discursive ideological constructions of “Brotherhood-and-Unity”, and the Second World War parallels between the Yugoslav partisans and the Pannonii in his later work *The Illyrians*.²⁴ The account of Erich Gruen in the *Cambridge Ancient History* reimposes “Illyrian” colonial stereotype over the indigenous population rebelling against Rome at AD 6. For Gruen, *national pride* was one of the reasons for the uprising of the *fierce spirit of a new generation of Illyrian warriors*, assuming colonial stereotypes of the “Balkan” population as warlike, rebellious, nationalistic, not to mention the implications of his use of the cognitive pseudo-ethnic stereotype of “Illyrians”.²⁵ Another example of the colonial approach is the study of Marta Sordi, which also emphasises the Romanocentric notion of “pacifying” Illyricum in AD 6-9.²⁶

Different treatment of the problems begins with Dyson’s article published in the *Historia* Wiesbaden. He argues that the frustration with sudden social change approaching with the Roman conquest is the reason for the other indigenous uprisings against Rome. Dyson’s studies show the significance of exploring narratives different from the Roman narrative of power, although it is worthy to note that his accounts are to a certain degree influenced by his experience of living through the struggle of ex-colonial African and Asian countries against European colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷ Mesihović and Džino recently attempted to infuse the discourse of globalisation into the view on the *Bellum Batonianum*. However, they are both in danger of losing a balanced perspective with their obvious emphasis on globalisation and the frustrations of the indigenous population – both identifying their views too much with the most recent experiences of eastern European countries in the transition after 1989.²⁸

Therefore, we can see that the modern narratives of the uprising exist on their own as their own construction of the events, frequently imposing their own perspective on the past. Sometimes they are narratives deriving from the colonial per-

²³ Wilkes 1969, 46 ff.; 1965a. For the Roman distorted perception of space see Moynihan 1985; Riggsby 2006, 24-45; Nicolet 1991, 57-74 etc.

²⁴ Wilkes 1992, 25 superimposing Illyricum over the map of former Yugoslavia. Cf. criticism of Periša 2002, 155-156.

²⁵ Gruen 1996, 176-178, the quote from 176. He does discuss “The Balkans” imposing another colonial, western stereotype created in the 19th century, Todorova 1997. Mesihović 2007, 361-362, cf. 333 is also not immune from this colonial stereotype, visible in his attribution of the “Dinaric mentality” to Bato.

²⁶ Sordi 2004.

²⁷ Dyson 1971, 260-263 – complementary to this study is Dyson 1975, which does not discuss the *bellum Batonianum*. Anti-colonial struggle: Dyson 1975, 138-139.

²⁸ Džino 2006, 147-148; Mesihović 2007, 319 ff.

spective of the sources, but some accounts also derive from the perspective of the colonized, both of them focusing only on a part of the narrative, mostly determined by the Roman colonial narrative of power, which is reflected in available sources. The earlier assessments of these events are thus to a significant degree affected by the historical, geographical, ideological discourses in which modern authors were making their research. The reasons for the Batonian war still wait for more insightful approaches in future scholarship.



The perception of the role and identity of Bato the Daesitiate is strongly affected by modern historiographical narratives and construction discussed earlier. Bato is either presented as a resistance hero, or the “noble savage”, fighting the invasion of colonial power to recover imaginary primordial innocence and the freedom of his people.²⁹ As Mesihović rightly notices, specific historical circumstances in the region prevented the establishment of a coherent romantic nationalistic discourse which would appropriate Bato as a “national hero”, to the same degree as the personalities of Arminius, Vercingetorix or Boudicca have been used in the past.³⁰ We do not know much about him from the sources, apart from his direct role in the narrative of the events as leader of the Daesitiate, and one of the key leaders of the Pannonii in the uprising. After the final defeat, Bato’s life was spared and he was exiled to Italy in Ravenna by Tiberius.³¹ Modern scholarship without exception observed his identity only in the indigenous context, regardless whether he was seen from the coloniser or colonised perspective. However, I would like here to explore the other narratives of his identity, which were overlooked by earlier scholarship, in particular the notion of Bato’s Romanness, through his social status, military experience and comparative historical context. The issue of the early stages of the process of so-called “Romanization” in southern Pannonia is gaining visible attention in some recent archaeological works, and this short discussion might help shed more light on this issue, exploring the issues beyond the interpretation of material evidence.³²

The recent approaches enables us to treat the terms “Roman” and “indigenous” not as separate and exclusive categories in which one can belong either/or, but rather

²⁹ “Noble savage” was a complex and changing construction that has significant impact in the western thought for a few centuries, Ellingson 2001.

³⁰ Mesihović 2007, 316-318. For the perceptions of Arminius see Benarius 2004; Vercingetorix – Simon 1996; Civilis and the Batavians Hessing 2001; Boudicca – Hingley/Unwin 2006, 123 ff. (all with extensive bibliographies on the subjects).

³¹ Suet. *Tib.* 20.

³² E. g. Majnarić-Pandžić 1996; Dizdar *et al.* 2003; Dizdar/Radman-Livaja 2004.

as inclusive and overlapping categories which can be recombined in different ways in personal identity as both/and. The scholarship successfully broke the notions of "Roman" or "Greek" as homogenous blocks of cultural and ethnic identity in different period of antiquity into a patchwork of different identities.³³ In the same way, we can see the categories of "Roman" and "indigenous" as overlapping and interacting notions of identity in the western provinces of the Roman empire, going far beyond oversimplified divisions of the Romans and "natives", which dominated earlier scholarship.³⁴

The lack of written sources for the events of AD 6-9 left us with patchy evidence of Bato's personality. Even his literary identity constructed in the sources is not plentiful, apart from his brief "speech" in the narrative of Cassius Dio.³⁵ There is only a single fact we can deduct with certainty from the written sources: Bato was the leader of the Daesitiate auxiliaries summoned for the approaching conflict with Maroboduus in AD 6, the group which started the conflict. From this, we can conclude, without need for further evidence, that he was a member of the indigenous elite and that he already had Roman military training and earlier experience in the Roman military.³⁶ Whether Bato had Roman citizenship or not, is impossible to know from the sources, which note only his indigenous name. The sources mention Arminius (Irmin) by the Latinized version of his indigenous name, although he held Roman citizenship, and even equestrian rank.³⁷

Bato's social status and military experience brings him into the position of having close links with the Romans, and exposes him to the prevalent Roman ideological discourses of his era. As a member of the indigenous hereditary elite, Bato and his peers were more inclined to use Roman elite imperial ideology to justify and re-define power-holding and status in their own community in new circumstances arising with its inclusion in the Roman world.³⁸ The Daesitiates were not living isolated from the global processes in the ancient world. Archaeology shows the inhabitants of the area ascribed by written sources as being the "Daesitiates" negotiating their own identity between the influences of the La Tène and the Mediterranean world,

³³ There is a flood of books on the topic, so this is a very selective and perhaps subjectively chosen bibliography. Romans: Dench 2005; Farney 2007; Greeks: Hall 1997; Whitmarsh 2001, 1-38 etc.

³⁴ Woolf 1997; Webster 2001 etc. in ancient literature.

³⁵ Marincola 2007b on speeches in ancient literature; Adler 2008 on speeches in Dio and Tacitus. *Dio's Boudicca oration seems trapped between a condemnation of Roman society tied to romanticizing a "primitive" Celtic culture and a denigration of non-Romans*, Adler 2008, 194 on comparable but longer Dio's "speech" of Boudicca.

³⁶ Vell. Pat.2.110.4; Dio, 55.29.2-3; Wilkes 1969, 69.

³⁷ Vell. Pat. 2.118.2

³⁸ Hingley 2005, 50-51, 68-70. See the good study of the Batavians in this context in Roymans 2004, 227-250.

as in fact did all the other indigenous communities in the Dalmatian hinterland.³⁹ The Daesitiates came into the sphere of Roman power in the context of the last Delmataean war of 34-33 BC, most certainly without actually fighting Octavian.⁴⁰ It was the custom that numerous members of the indigenous elite were sent to Rome as hostages, where through education they were exposed to Roman imperial discourse, which affected the construction of their personal identities in-between Roman and indigenous. It is reasonable to assume that whole generations of elite youth from the region, were brought up in Rome as hostages, some after the end of Octavian's wars in 33 BC, some after the *Bellum Pannonicum* 12-9 BC, which was probably Bato's own generation.⁴¹

In the same context we can note the statement of Velleius Paterculus. He mentions knowledge of the Latin language amongst the Pannonii, which was the Roman common term for the indigenous communities of future southern Pannonia and northern Dalmatia, implying that they became accustomed to Roman ways, in particular the Roman military knowledge. The sentence should be read in context, as Woodman implies, showing intellectual attainment, specific cultural characteristics and some knowledge of Roman language and military craft, especially and mostly amongst the indigenous elites, in what will become southern Pannonia and northern Dalmatia.⁴² Knowledge of the Latin language and culture did not come only through the army, it may have also been the result of something resembling the program of education of the indigenous elites in the Roman west.⁴³ Strabo calls Bato ἡγεμών of the Daesitiates, which in Strabo's terms sounds culturally positive, as he does not use words such as, τύραννος, σκηπτοῦχος or φίλαρχος, these are reserved for those leaders whom he perceives as more "barbarian" and therefore culturally negative.⁴⁴

Bato reveals his Romanness through his military strategy. As shown above, the earlier scholarship frequently imposed guerrilla fighting discourse on the *bellum Batonianum*, indicating that the Pannonii used guerrilla strategy against the Romans. However, the sources show a different picture. They represent the army of the Pannonii using the conventional military strategy of the times, similar, if not identical to the Romans. The finds of weaponry from central Bosnia are not available, however,

³⁹ Paškvalin 2002; Perić 2002. Cf. the comparable study for the Iapodes between the Mediterranean and La Tène in Olujić 2007, 177-194. *Daesitiates* is the name that the Romans gave to the peregrine *ciuitas* in modern-day central Bosnia. Its relationship with pre-Roman indigenous institutions and their political structures remain unknown and insufficiently explored in scholarship.

⁴⁰ App. III. 17. Šašel Kos 2005, 458-459.

⁴¹ See Šašel Kos 2005, 455-458 on hostage taking in Illyricum, and recently Allen 2006 on hostages in general.

⁴² Vell. Pat. 2.110.4. Woodman 1983, 158-159; Mócsy 1983.

⁴³ Roman education of indigenous elites Woolf 1998, 72-73; Hingley 2005, 68 n. 214.

⁴⁴ Van der Vliet 2002, 264-265.

the Roman and La Tène weapons and their recombination (*some kind of bastard of late Republic, Early Principate and La Tène*) show the degree of exposure of southern Pannonia to the most developed military equipment of the time.⁴⁵ Bato is capable of besieging a large settlement such as Salona.⁴⁶ He and his namesake Bato of the Breuci were not afraid to fight regular pitched battles against Messalinus, the commander of legio XX, and Aulus Caecina and Silvanus Plautius in the Volcaean marshes.⁴⁷ Bato manages to maintain significant numbers of soldiers in one place, up to 20,000 men at once, which was impossible without knowledge of logistics.⁴⁸ The fighting in the first year occurred in the Pannonian plains, where it was difficult for the rebels to wage guerrilla war. Guerrilla fighting occurs only in Dalmatia, in the last phases of the war, after the Pannonians (i. e. the rebels from the future Pannonia) surrendered.⁴⁹

Bato can also be placed in the historical context with some other indigenous leaders of his times we know more about. Some very recent studies emphasized the Romanness of Bato's contemporary, the "German" leader Arminius, for whom we have much more evidence, seeing him as a client prince, who belonged to both worlds at the same time: indigenous and Roman.⁵⁰ Arminius is indeed very convenient for comparison with Bato, not only because of the time they both lived in, and their non-Mediterranean cultural background, but also in the ways they recombined their identities and used knowledge of Roman war-craft to fight the Romans. There is a whole pattern of indigenous military leaders such as Arminius or Civilis in Batavia, who were serving as auxiliaries and used Roman military experience to fight the Romans.⁵¹ Iulius Civilis, for example, was a member of the Batavian elite; he was labelled "German" by the Romans, he was a Roman army officer and a Roman citizen. His identity was situational, shifting depending on the circumstances he found himself in, as a Batavian, "German" or Roman.⁵²

There are other indications of Bato's links with the Romans, which might be added to the things previously stated. Bato's exile in Italy and spared life after his defeat does remind one in many ways of the destiny of Maroboduus, who had nu-

45 Dizdar/Radman-Livaja 2004. I disagree with the authors that styles of weapons determined the "Celtness" or "Romanness" of those who used them.

46 Dio, 55.29.4.

47 Dio, 55.30.2 (Bato wins an open conflict, but Messalinus defeats him in an ambush), cf. Vell. Pat. 2.112.2; Dio 55.33.3-4; Vell. Pat. 2.112.4-6 (Volcaean marshes); cf. also (uncertainly dated) the evidence of Frontinus, *Strat.* 2.1.15 that the Pannonii are capable of fighting open battle with Tiberius.

48 Vell. Pat. 2.112.2.

49 Dio 55.34.6 (the withdrawal into Dalmatia).

50 Wells 1999, 230-232.

51 Wells 1999.

52 Slofstra 2002, 29.

merous links with the Roman world, and who spent the remainder of his life at the same place as Bato did – at Ravenna.⁵³



This article attempts to analyse earlier approaches to the *bellum Batonianum* of AD 6-9, and discusses the identity of Bato, the leader of the Daesitiates, and one of the key figures in the war. The earlier assessments of the war, and consequently, the personality of Bato, were constructed through different ideological discourses, especially in scholarship written in south-Slavic languages. Roman narratives of the conflict reflect the Roman perception of events and thus over-exaggerate Bato's indigenesness, as he is a leader of the opposition to the Romans. Bato and the indigenous elites of the Dalmatian hinterland and southern Pannonia of the early principate in general could not be observed exclusively through their indigenesness, so this discussion is concerned with turning the attention to their links with the Roman world, and the elements of their Romanness. Our sources are scant, sorely scant, but the narrative of Bato's Romanness does not contradict them. His position as an indigenous elite-member and officer of the Roman auxiliary troops place him in a highly comparable position to the other indigenous leaders of the Roman West in this period, such as Civilis, Arminius, and Maroboduus; all of them lived in both worlds – indigenous and Roman, shifting their identities according to the situations in which they were.

The *Bellum Batonianum* is underrated and still insufficiently explored by the most recent scholarship, whether general studies of Roman history, or regional historical studies. This is mostly due to the primary sources, which reflect the Roman narrative of power and do not leave much space for modern scholars to interpret other narratives. Modern scholarship is either caught in the *zeitgeist*, or represented colonial or anti-colonial narratives. Examining Bato of the Daesitiates from a different perspective and in comparison with other indigenous leaders, shows us that this uprising was not a simple modernistically perceived rebellion of the indigenous population against the "foreign aggressor", in order to regain their ancestral "freedom", or an uprising of "natives" in Roman Illyricum against Rome. It shows us Roman Illyricum as a region in transition, a region of interaction, and a region of overlapped narratives and complex identities.

⁵³ Vell. Pat. 2.129. 3; Tac. *Ann.* 2.62 – 63; 3.11.

Sažetak

***Bellum Batonianum* u suvremenim historiografskim raspravama – u potrazi za postmodernim Batonom Dezidijatskim**

Batonov rat 6.-9. po Kr. nikada nije postigao veću važnost u historiografiji niti u nacionalnim/nacionalističkim romantičarskim diskursima, poput nekih drugih pobuna protiv Rima kao što su Budikina, Arminijeva, Civilisova itd. Vrlo je skroman broj znanstvenih radova 20. i 21. stoljeća koji se fokusiraju na taj događaj. Ovaj rad bavi se malim, ali znakovitim aspektima tog sukoba, kao što su percepcija Batonova rata u modernoj historiografiji, odnosno diskusija o aspektima osobnoga identiteta Batona Dezidijatskog, jednog od panonskih vojskovođa.

Raniji znanstveni radovi o tom sukobu konstruirani su kroz različite ideološke diskurse, posebice radovi pisani na južnoslavenskim jezicima. Moderni narativi konflikta pokazuju se kao autorske konstrukcije događaja koje nameću vlastite perspektive autorâ na zbivanja u prošlosti. U nejužnoslavenskoj historiografiji neki od narativa stvaraju se kao odraz kolonijalne perspektive rimskih pisanih vrela (Wilkes, Gruen), nacionalnim diskursima projiciranima na prošlost (Anamali), odnosno vlastitim povijesnim iskustvima znanstvenika (Köstermann). U južnoslavenskoj historiografiji primjetna je identifikacija s perspektivom koloniziranoga, tj. s Panoncima, i narativi su uglavnom antikolonijalni (Vulić). Politički korektno preklapanje jugoslavenskoga i ilirskoga prostora te ideološki okvir federalne jugoslavenske države nakon 1945. utječe na gledanje tih događaja iz “panilirske” perspektive (Stipčević, Imamović, nešto manje Bojanovski), odnosno kroz regionalne i ideološke projekcije (Pašalić). Noviji radovi snažno su prožeti iskustvina postkolonijalnog svijeta (Dyson) i počinju reflektirati fragmentaciju jugoslavenskog prostora (Suić), odnosno nameću projekciju vlastitih iskustava suvremenih globalističkih procesa (Mesihović, Džino).

Rimski narativi konflikta odražavaju rimsku percepciju zbivanja i shodno tome preuveličavaju perspektivu Batona kao “drugoga”, koji je vođa opozicije Rimu. No, Baton i indigena elita dalmatinskoga zaleđa, odnosno južne Panonije ranoga principata, u cijelosti ne može se gledati isključivo kroz indigeni okvir, tako da se diskusija bavi aspektima Batonova rimstva, koje se može samo nazrijeti kroz sačuvana opskurna vrela. Njegova pozicija kao pripadnika indigene elite i časnika rimskih augzilijarnih trupa u isto ga vrijeme postavlja u poziciju usporedivu Civilisu, Arminiju i Marobodu, koji su svi pripadali obama svjetovima, indigenom i rimskom, manipulirajući svoje identitete shodno situacijama u kojima su se nalazili, bilo kroz indigeno podrijetlo bilo kroz rimski identitet. Batonov rat još je uvijek potcijenjen i nedovoljno istražen aspekt ranoga principata i s gledišta općih studija rimske povijesti i s gledišta regionalne povijesti rimskih provincija Dalmacije i Panonije. Razlog tomu ponajviše je taj što pisana vrela odražavaju rimski narativ političke moći

i ne ostavljaju mnogo mjesta današnjim znanstvenicima za interpretiranje drugih narativa. Promatrajući dezidijatskog vođu Batona u usporedbi s ostalim indigenim vođama njegova vremena, vidimo da ovaj sukob nije samo modernistički “ustanak” indigenog pučanstva protiv “stranog agresora” za vraćanje svojih “vjekovnih sloboda”. Taj sukob nije niti “pobuna urođenika” iz rimskog Ilirika koje je Rim trebao pacificirati. Novi pogledi otvaraju nove perspektive koje rimski Ilirik ranog principata pokazuju kao regiju koja prolazi kroz ubrzani i temeljni društveni preobražaj, regiju snažnog međudjelovanja različitih kultura, regiju isprepletenih narativa i složenih identiteta.

Prijevod: Danijel Džino

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