

COINAGE AND IMPERIAL PROPAGANDA IN THE THIRD
CENTURY ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE USURPER IULIANUS'
ISSUES (283?)

By

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ABSTRACT: In modern historiography there is an argument between supporters and opponents of perceiving imperial coinage as rulers' propaganda. The present paper analyzes Iulianus' coinage in Carinus' times. A programme presented in his coinage is quite deliberate and does not seem to be coincidental. In such a case it is hard to imagine that the emperor's milieu would not be interested in contents of his coinage.

We do not know very much about the usurper Iulianus who lived in the first half of the 280s and tried to seize power¹. The main sources of information about him are Aurelius Victor's *De Caesaribus* (39, 1), *Epitome de Caesaribus* (38, 5 f.), and *Historia Nova* of Zosimus (I 73, 3). Unfortunately, their accounts of Iulianus' usurpation are laconic (the most extensive comprises only three sentences) and contain numerous contradictions. Sometimes modern scholars differentiate between the Iulianus referred to in Aurelius Victor and the Sabinus

¹ It is hard to determine where our sources draw information on Iulianus from. The author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* used Aurelius Victor's *De Caesaribus*. The main source of Aurelius Victor was the *Kaisergeschichte*. Other works which drew from this source (Eutropius, Festus, Jerome) do not mention Iulianus. Perhaps there was no mention of this usurper in the *Kaisergeschichte*. Nicomachus Flavianus' *Annales* have been proposed as a potential source of information about Iulianus in the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (FESTY 1999: 170). This hypothesis seems hardly probable. It is not certain whether Nicomachus Flavianus' *Annales* (we know practically nothing about the work, it is mentioned only in two inscriptions) could be the source for the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (JANISZEWSKI 1999: 71). Most probably, the information about Iulianus in the *Epitome de Caesaribus* comes from a Greek source (BIRLEY 1996: 81). For Zosimus the main source was Eunapius of Sardes. The latter's work is preserved only in a few fragments, and it is impossible to determine whether he wrote about Iulianus. Besides Iulianus and Sabinus Iulianus, referred to in the *Epitome de Caesaribus* and Aurelius Victor, as well as Zosimus, there also appears a mysterious usurper Iulianus (*Epit. de Caes.* 39, 3) who usurped power in Africa under Diocletian during the war against Persia. The other Iulianus commanded the Berber Quinquegentiani confederation and fought against Maximian in March 297 in Mauretania.