

Coinage as a space for female representation:

Livia and Goddesses of Abundance in Lusitanian provincial coinage



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1. Introduction

The representation of the empress Livia on the coinage of the Roman province of *Lusitania* is not trivial and its iconographic configuration can be traced back to earlier issues, in which female divinities associated to fertility and abundance were adopted.

2. The goddesses of fertility and abundance on Lusitanian coins

During the Augustan period, the Lusitanian mints of *Augusta Emerita* (Mérida, Spain), *Ebora* (Evora, Portugal) and *Pax Iulia* (Beja, Portugal) minted various monetary series. Only the first one, which coincides with the capital of the province, minted a series with the presence of a goddess associated with fertility and abundance on the reverse. The name and defining elements of this divinity are the result of a fusion of different elements. On the one hand, a hybrid cultural tradition present in the area (indigenous and Italic world). On the other hand, syncretism with purely metropolitan concepts, in which the diadem is the defining element.



Fig. 1. As minted at *Augusta Emerita* under Augustus (RPC I, 7) (Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid, 1993/67/10892).

Augusta Emerita was not the only mint to choose this iconological type. In fact, the presence of this icon on coins minted by *Emerita* is much lower than that documented in other contemporary and western mints, in which these female representations are abundant.

Mint	Roman Province	Period	Identification and iconography
<i>Augusta Emerita</i>	<i>Ulerior Lusitania</i>	Augustus's government	Diademed aquatic divinity
<i>Irippa</i>	<i>Ulerior Baetica</i>	Augustus's government	Divinity with cornucopia and pinecone
<i>Osset</i>	<i>Ulerior Baetica</i>	Augustus's government	Divinity with cornucopia and pinecone
<i>Emporiae</i>	<i>Citerior Tarraconensis</i>	End of the 1st century BC- beginning of the 1st century AD	Artemis-Diana with bow and quiver
<i>Turiaso</i>	<i>Citerior Tarraconensis</i>	Augustus's government	Diademed aquatic divinity
<i>Antipolis</i>	<i>Galia</i>	Triumviral period	Diademed Venus
Italian or gallic mint		Triumviral period	Diademed Venus
<i>Paestum</i>	<i>Italia</i>	Tiberius Government	Artemis-Diana with spear and bow
<i>Henna</i>	<i>Sicilia</i>	Triumviral period	Demeter-Ceres with ear and torch
		Triumviral period	Persephone/Proserpine
<i>Melita</i>	<i>Sicilia</i>	Augustus's government	Tanit-Astarte veiled with a diadem
			Isis crowned by Nike, wearing a <i>modius</i>
<i>Cirta</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Tanit-Astarte symbol
			Diademed Diana
<i>Hippo Regius</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Veiled and diademed Tanit- Astarte- Juno
			Demeter-Ceres diademed and with and without <i>caduceus</i> and torch
<i>Paterna</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Demeter-Ceres with two torches
<i>Hadrumetum</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Veiled Tanit-Astarte
<i>Thapsus</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Veiled Tanit-Astarte-Juno
<i>Achulla</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Diademed Tanit-Astarte-Juno
<i>Thaena</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Augustus's government	Diademed Tanit-Astarte-Juno
			Diademed Tanit-Astarte-Venus
<i>Tingi</i>	<i>Mauritania Tingitana</i>	Triumviral period	Demeter-Ceres with crown of ears
<i>Babba</i>	<i>Mauritania Tingitana</i>	Augustus's government	Diademed Demeter-Ceres
<i>Cartenna</i>	<i>Mauritania Tingitana</i>	Augustus's government	Diademed Venus

Fig. 2. Western provincial mints that selected the image of a goddess associated with fertility and abundance.

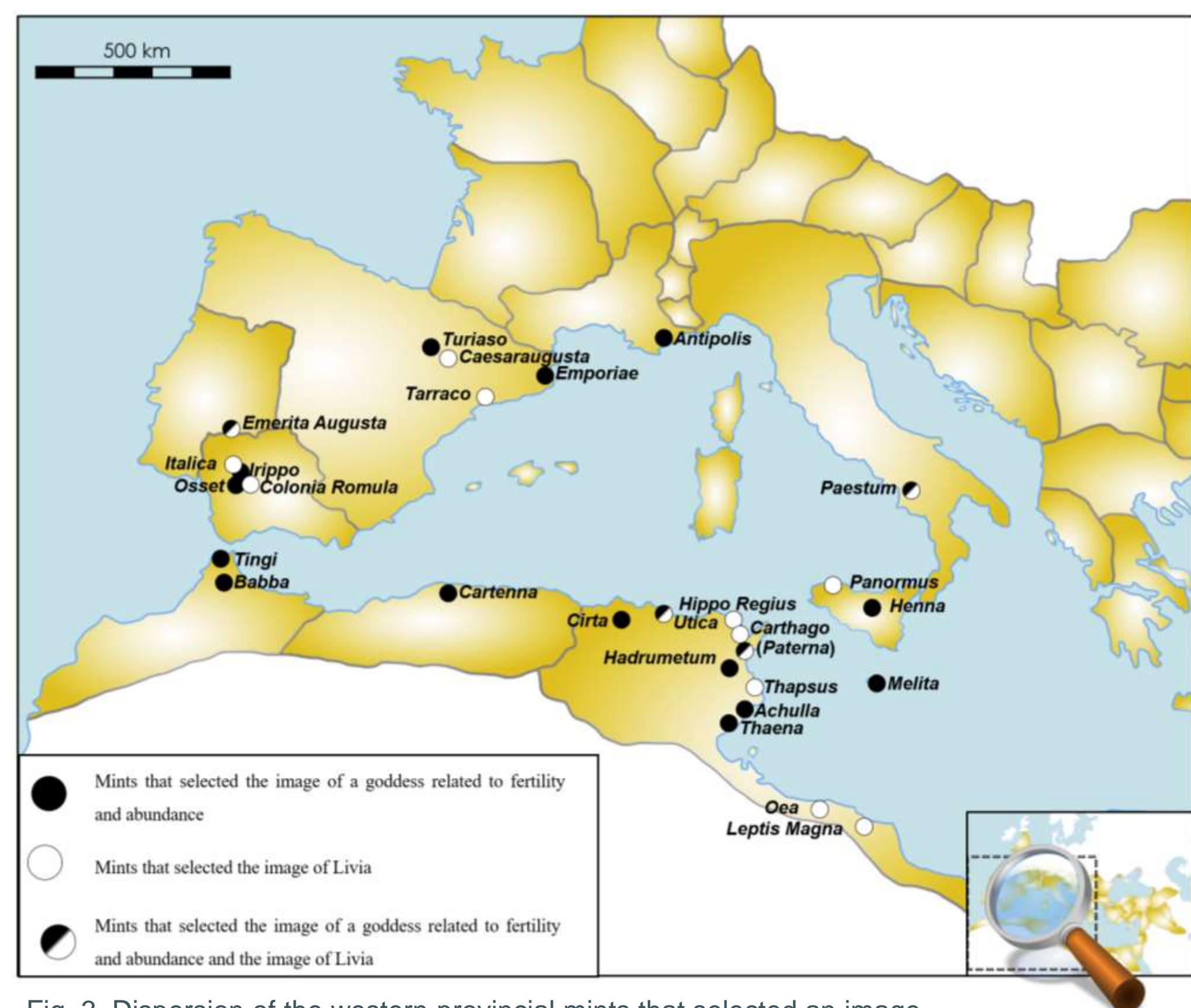


Fig. 3. Dispersion of the western provincial mints that selected an image of a goddess associated with fertility and abundance and the image of Livia.

3. Livia on Lusitanian coins

During the rule of Tiberius, almost all western mints abandoned the representation of female deities of fertility and abundance. This decision contrasts with the maintenance of other divinities, in this case male, with which to express different concepts.



Fig. 4. *Dupondius* minted at *Augusta Emerita* under Tiberius (RPC I, 39) (Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid, 1993/67/11045).

As was the case in the rest of the provinces located in the western region of the Empire, several Hispanic mints from the time of Tiberius selected members of the Imperial family icons. In this context, the Empress Augusta Livia assumed a prominent role. In Lusitania, the mint of *Augusta Emerita*, the only active centre during the reign of Tiberius, minted several bronzes dedicated to this female figure.

Mint	Roman Province	Period	Head/bust	Full body representation
<i>Augusta Emerita</i>	<i>Ulerior Lusitania</i>	Tiberius Government	Laureate	Diademed and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and two ears of corn
<i>Italica</i>	<i>Ulerior Baetica</i>	Tiberius Government		Diademed and seated on a throne holding a <i>patera</i> and two ears of corn/cornucopias
<i>Colonia Romula</i>	<i>Ulerior Baetica</i>	Tiberius Government	Over globe and under crescent	
<i>Tarraco</i>	<i>Citerior Tarraconensis</i>	Tiberius Government	Diademed and in front of Drusus' head	
<i>Caesaraugusta</i>	<i>Citerior Tarraconensis</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
Gallic mint	<i>Galia</i>	Tiberius Government	Veiled	
<i>Paestum</i>	<i>Italia</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Panormus</i>	<i>Sicilia</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Hippo Regius</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Utica</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Carthago</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Paterna</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government		Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Thapsus</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government	Veiled	Veiled and seated on a throne, holding a <i>patera</i> and a sceptre
<i>Oea</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government	With peacock and ear of corn	
<i>Leptis Magna</i>	<i>Africa Proconsularis</i>	Tiberius Government		Velada y sentada sobre sobre trono sosteniendo patera y cetro

Fig. 5. Western provincial mints that selected the image of Livia.

On almost all coins minted by Western mints, Livia was represented as an empress linked to sacred elements. These include the ornaments of the veil and diadem and the attributes of the *patera* and sceptre. In addition, many of these cities positioned the image of the empress seated on a throne. For this reason, it could be deduced that this icon was a prototypical religious-political image of wide extension. However, the Lusitanian selection dynamics were quite particular. The iconography of the coins minted at *Emerita* on which the image of Livia was engraved was quite original. On these bronzes, the empress was depicted holding, in addition to the *patera*, two ears of wheat/cornucopiae, reminiscent above all of the main attributes that identified the goddesses of fertility and abundance so widespread on earlier coins. This circumstance and the evolution in the monetary selection allows us to consider the possibility that, at least in *Emerita*, the icons chosen were a reflection of a complex political-cultural process which connected the devotion to the empress and the cult of the goddesses associated with fertility and abundance. A process that we have also been able to document in other western territories, such as Africa, where, as the table above shows, numerous examples are known.

4. Conclusions

The inclusion of the image of the empress Livia on the coinage of some western mints can be seen as a personification of female deities associated with fertility and abundance; a political-ideological and religious relationship that opens up new interpretations of the presence of other members of the imperial family on the coinage of the 1st century AD.

5. Bibliography

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