

LIVIA AND THE “INSTITUTIONALIZATION” OF THE ROMAN WOMAN

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Abstract

For this work, previous analyses and thoughts on patriarchy by investigating it in the Roman past should be considered. In this sense, this paper aims to invite the reader to the thought and the reflection on the position of women in the ancient society through the investigation of the case of Livia and the hypothesis of how she was "institutionalized". She was the wife of Augustus, but had previously been married to Tiberius Claudius Nero, with whom she had two sons, Tiberius and Drusus. Octavian arranged a divorce for her to marry him, who was married to Scribonia. He knew how to unite a line of Livia's need to show herself with traditional gifts and power within the *domus*, and her role linked to state affairs. Her position turned out to be dubious, since she was someone who had a public role, but did not have a public position. Livia's presence and performance could be linked to religious issues, which will be reported in this study through textual sources from authors such as Tacitus, Cassius Dio and Suetonius, and material sources, such as coins.

Keywords

Roman women; coins; goddess; patriarchy; public/private; masculine dominance.

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Resumo

Para este trabalho, é fundamental atentar para o que já foi comentado até hoje sobre o patriarcado, averiguando-o no passado romano. Nesse sentido, este artigo tem como intuito realizar um convite ao pensamento e à reflexão acerca da posição da mulher na sociedade antiga, averiguando o caso de Lúvia e a hipótese de como ela foi “institucionalizada”. Ela foi esposa de Augusto, mas anteriormente tinha sido casada com Tibério Cláudio Nero, com o qual teve Tibério e Druso como filhos. Otávio arranjou o divórcio para ela se casar com ele, o qual estava casado com Escrívônia. Ele soube unir uma linha da necessidade de Lúvia se mostrar com dotes tradicionais e poder dentro da *domus*, com seu papel ligado às coisas do Estado. Sua posição acabava por ser dúbia, pois era alguém que tinha um papel público, mas não tinha uma posição pública. A presença e a atuação de Lúvia poderiam estar atreladas às questões religiosas, as quais serão reportadas neste estudo através de fontes textuais, de autores como Tácito, Diano Cássio e Suetônio, e de fontes materiais, como as moedas.

Palavras-chave

Mulheres romanas; moedas; deusas; patriarcado; público/privado; dominância masculina.

Introduction

As the reader can figure out by the title, this is a study on the woman of Antiquity. Despite the criticism concerning this kind of theme, the reason for carry on investigating women in the past will be listed here. In general, studies on women or even on gender have been criticized when it was introduced into the humanistic disciplines, throughout their existence and even in the clamour for its end today. Such studies should not be seen as a “fashion”, but rather as a new perspective or a new way of interpreting these topics in the early 1980s by Human Sciences. This point of view only tends to be developed, since the agenda regarding these issues are those of “minorities”, who have not yet resolved their efforts to fight in contemporary society. The study of these topics in the past is a way of raising awareness and deepening the position and contrast of different social groups.

For this work, previous analyses and thoughts on patriarchy must be considered. This concept has already been useful for political mobilization, which portrayed problems regarding the historicity of the female condition. It was important when it distinguished forces for the maintenance of sexism, in the feminist attempt to show female subordination. However, if patriarchy had a beginning, it could also have an end. Feminist thought sought in patriarchy the idea of an origin, when the history of women’s oppression would have begun. The conditions posed by the term could bring problems, as they could prevent clarifying the gender relations of any group under study, since the concept would already demonstrate a pre-existence of masculine domination in all societies. In this way, it is criticized for being too broad or for universalizing a form of masculine domination situated in different times and spaces, apart from always considering the physical difference between men and women as an invariable universal aspect (Piscitelli, 2002: 15–16).

Hence, in order to think about patriarchy in the Roman past, in which gender assumptions were fundamental for the construction of the basis of that society, with devices that confirmed a structural patriarchy, it is essential to build a rationalization according to its similarities and divergences with current patriarchalism. Such types of patriarchalism present different mitigating temporal contingencies, which should not be confronted. However, reflecting about both is essential. Thus, this paper aims to invite the reader to the thought and the reflection on the female

position in ancient society by investigating women in the Roman past through Livia and the hypothesis of how she was "institutionalized".²

Livia (59/58 BC–29 AD) was the wife of Augustus (27 BC–14 AD), but previously she had been married to Tiberius Claudius Nero, with whom she had two sons, Tiberius (42 BC–37 AD) and Drusus (38 BC–9 AD) (Tac. *Ann.* 5.1). Octavian, who was married to Scribonia, arranged a divorce to Livia, so that she would marry him. In his first marriage, Octavian had a daughter, whose name was Julia. This marriage was characterized as a political strategy, but it ended up in a disgust which only lasted a year (Barrett, 2002: 20).

Octavian kidnapped Livia while she was pregnant with the son of her husband Tiberius Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 5.1), who loved and esteemed her unconditionally. She, who had no children with Octavian (Suet. *Aug.* 62.1), belonged to a distinguished family, of the *gens* Claudii. Her father, Marcus Livy Drusus Claudianus, was adopted by the *gens* Livii, suggesting Drusus was his adoptive father. Furthermore, he ended up being a tribune of the pleb (Tac. *Ann.* 5.1). Because of her father, Livia inherited the surname of Drusilla and her ancestry helped Octavian strengthen his ties with distinguished families in Rome. Livia's first husband, Tiberius Nero, appointed Octavian as guardian of his children with Livia before her death in 32 or 33 BC (Barrett, 2002: 8; 22; 27).

Due to her eminent position as wife and mother of the emperor, Livia's great prosperity resulted in great power. Her authority was used not only for political issues, but also in her exercise of patronage, since she became known for her public constructions and philanthropic acts (Hemelrijk, 1999: 108). Therefore, she was the best-represented woman of the Julio-Claudian family and her name appeared in ports, markets and even shrines. She also had her image stamped on coins. The presence of the figure of Livia in these celebrations is unprecedented. This demonstrates that she had a "career" as Augustus' wife and suggests that she had a keen political sense, which led her to considerable power and influence (Zager, 2014: 54–57). Livia, like Octavia, sister of Octavian, was a model of Roman matron to be followed. This was evidenced through motherhood, fidelity, prudence and prosperity, making her a symbol and a social figure of political influence. According to Harvey's (2020) reading, Cassius Dio and Tacitus appoint her as the "first lady of the Roman Empire", as Livia was

² This term was placed in quotation marks throughout the text for didactic purposes, as this "institutionalization" is not evident and is not commented on written sources.

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promoted through visual media as the most important female member of the imperial family (Harvey, 2020: 2; 8).

The public and the private for Livia

Augustus knew how to unite Livia's need to show herself, the traditional gifts and power within the *domus*, having her role linked to State affairs. This must have been difficult to do, since women of this period could only influence their husbands in matters concerning the family. However, with the emergence of the *domus Augusta*, matters of family and State were inextricably linked (Barrett, 2002: 130). For these tasks, Livia should have received an excellent education, which may have given her virility to her rational power. Consequently, for such women there was an obstacle to their full participation in intellectual and political life (Hemelrijk, 1999: 87-88).

Authors such as Tacitus point Livia as responsible for several crimes (Tac. *Ann.* 6.2). Cassius Dio claimed that she opened the way for her children (Cass. Dio, *Roman History* 60. 5. 1) as well as played political and public roles that crossed female boundaries, as if she shared powers with Tiberius (Cass. Dio, *Roman History* 57. 12. 1-6). Suetonius declared that she claimed equality with the role of ruler over her son (Suet. *Tib.* 50.1) and Tacitus said that she lacked self-restraint (Tac. *Ann.* 1.4.5).

However, she knew how to live according to the Roman constitutional system without creating identifiable enemies. She did so by also demonstrating what was expected of Augustus' wife, which is dignity with majesty, in addition to modesty and domestic virtues. Her position turned out to be dubious, as she was someone who had a public role, but not a public position. She was a person who was supposed to dominate the private sphere, hoping to represent domestic values and a citizen's morals. She was the silent obedient wife behind the scenes, never in the forefront (Zager, 2014: 54-57), as Augustus did not promote her. Instead, he gave prominence to his sister Octavia due to rivalry with Mark Antony during the second Triumvirate (Harvey, 2020: 1).

During the rule of her son Tiberius (Barrett, 2002: x), Livia's position became more ambiguous, due to the titles she won and for acquiring privileges only granted to the Vestal Virgins. This ambiguity could be related to a social polarization established in the interpretation of the Vestal and the married woman, which was created according to the

structuring of society. This brought about a whole repertoire of female religious behaviours and experiences (Chartier, 1995: 41).

After the death of Augustus, under Tiberius, much of her husband ceremonial dignity passed to her. As Julia Augusta, she oversaw the *gens Iulia* and Augustus' rite of deification. In addition, she ended up occupying a position of paramount importance in the State, but this did not happen instantly. Before Augustus's death, during his Principality, she shared the honours with her husband by having statues erected, administering her husband's properties and being endowed with sacred inviolability. With Augustus, she also had the privilege of dining in the temple of Concordia. Her influence at court was like that of any Augustus' ambassador. The fact that she shares the image of "ceremonial dignity" of the emperor cult clearly demonstrates her in a cult of honour and tribute of a divine nature, which was offered to her and allowed her to accept. The honours to her started at the beginning of the Principality and continued even after her death. Her cult also extended from the beginning of the Principality to the Antonine dynasty (Grether, 1946: 222-223).

As widow and priestess of the new *divus*, Livia was in the public spotlight shortly after Augustus' death and consecration. She planned the construction of a new temple for Augustus and instituted the *Ludi Palatini* in honour of her husband. Their wedding anniversary became a public holiday. Coins commemorating the consecration of Augustus had a female figure with a *patera* and a sceptre on their reverse aiming to demonstrate a priestess of his cult (Grether, 1946: 235-236).

In addition to leaving two-thirds of his inheritance to Tiberius and the rest to Livia (Cass. Dio, *Roman History* 56. 32. 1), it was Augustus' will that Livia be adopted by the *gens Iulia* to receive the title of "Augusta" (14 AD) (Cass. Dio, *Roman History* 56. 46.1). Octavian had received his nickname "Augustus" in 27 BC, with his powerful religious association as an alternative to the name "Romulus". In 14 AD, the name acquired the strength of a title, like Caesar, who bore him as *princeps* (Barrett, 2002: 151). Furthermore, the *gens Iulia* was part of the most remote times of the Roman people and their descendants were linked to the goddess Venus through her son Aeneas and, consequently, through her son Julius, who gave the name to the *gens* (Barrett, 2002: 150). This way, it marked religiosity linked to status, considering this title expressed its sacred nature and its religious character (Martins, 2011: 75). For a woman of the imperial family, the title conveyed a new political structure. In the first two centuries, it was used both as a dynastic adornment and a title for mothers of emperors when the

child prospered (Temporini, 1978: 23-34; 44; Perkouning, 1995: 131; Flory, 1998: 115; Barrett, 2002: 152).

The title of Augusta could have conferred to Livia an imperial, political and power attribute, which could have made her a companion in the government of Tiberius (Barrett, 2002: 153) or a rival, by adding to her domestic virtues such as dynastic continuity, harmony and State stability. This was the first time that a male title was transferred to a woman, which honoured Livia and granted her a high social status (Flory, 1988). This title appeared on coins in Greek and Latin and was increasingly frequent in inscriptions. The title maybe has been Augustus' desire to strengthen Tiberius, considering that Tacitus made it clear that both Livia and Tiberius were his heirs. This could have also to do with the fact that Augustus had asked the Senate twice to grant tribunal powers to Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 1.8 and 10) and also the possible fact that he could have seen in Tiberius a weak or rebellious ruler, who would have been against his own imperial system by giving his mother public roles to help him in his power.

On the other hand, the presence of Livia and the non-predilection of Tiberius as a ruler were probably felt in a dimension of his masculinity which should always be proven (Kimmel, 2016: 102). However, the mother's presence would make a weak government and the denial of honours attributed to Livia would be an attempt to maintain dignity in the game between men. Barrett (2002) points out that Tiberius refused the title of Augustus, but continued to have the right to use it (Barrett, 2002: 152). This fact also suggests that Augustus passed the title down to Livia in order to guarantee the dynastic succession, so that Tiberius could use that title occasionally.

Probably, the public sphere that Livia took part in would be an arena in which masculinity was tested and proved. This was a space in which tensions between men and, now, between a woman and different groups of men were pondered through meanings. These tensions suggest that cultural definitions of gender were exhausted on a contested terrain and defined as power relations (Kimmel, 2016: 104). In ancient Rome, especially for the emperor, a hegemony of masculinity should be considered, in a consciously symbolic way, for his role, which would be the man in power, a man with power and a man of power, the one who would be strong, victorious, conquering, capable, reliable and in control, since he possessed the power over other men, over women and over children. However, the Roman man should accumulate cultural symbols that would denote masculinity, signs that should have been acquired, which would also frame the standards used against women to prevent their inclusion in public life

and their maintenance in the devalued private sphere (Kimmel, 2016: 105). However, Rome's aristocratic and dynastic form of government gave the family a centralized structure of the political system, which tended to blur the distinction between the private and the public (Hallett, 1984; Wood, 1988: 409). This could have been, in fact, much more complex after female positions such as Livia's.

Despite all the disagreement between mother and son, Livia ensured that her son was a powerful example to succeed Augustus, making her husband adopt him. However, the title of Augusta could also be rather linked to the fact that Augustus raised her status to that of an emperor. It seems that this is how the Senate interpreted her. As a consequence, it ended up granting her extraordinary privileges. This way, it was voted that an altar would be erected in honour of Livia's adoption by the *gens Iulia*. In addition, she would receive the title of *mater patriae*. It has also been suggested that Tiberius would be given the title of *filius Iuliae*. Livia's honours also seem to have upset authors such as Tacitus, who mentions that Livia was being greatly flattered, which resulted in the emperor's request that honours should be paid to a woman only to an extent. Tiberius also did not let a *lictor* to be assigned to her and forbade the building of an altar in memory of her adoption as well as any other attribution of distinction regarding her (Tac. *Ann.* 1.13). In other words, Cassius Dio mentions that she won the *lictor* by being declared a priestess of the Augustus' cult (Cass. Dio, *Roman History* 56.46.2; Barrett, 2002: 161). However, Tiberius discouraged the establishment of cults for living people, but in some provinces, he tried to regulate his own cult (Grether, 1946: 233–234).

Furthermore, Augustus could have imagined that his family was the empire. This thought would not fail to praise Livia and would end up putting her in public and in benevolent activities, evidencing the union of the entire imperial family with the rest of the Empire. However, with preconceived ideas about the Roman woman, this ideal did not take hold, as the tensions of power and gender were already strong during the reign of Tiberius. This occurred because virility, in its ethical aspect, as the quiddity of *vir*, *virtus*, reveals a matter of honour in a patriarchal society. This leads men to want to experience everything concerning the principle of conservation and the increase of honour, which is inseparable from physical virility and related to sexual potency (Bourdieu, 1998: 20).

In Roman society, there was a sexual differentiation that established a link between the *phallus* and the *logos*. The male body was part of the public and active uses, as well as speaking publicly. These actions that were

monopolized by men. In this perspective, women were expected to be kept away from public places or to renounce public activities and even the public use of their own face, in addition to not using their words. Antagonistic relations, like those of the elite of Roman society, always resulted in relations of domination, in which the practices and representations of the two sexes were by no means symmetrical. Thus, the social relations of domination in this type of society were embodied in a clearly differentiated *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1998: 26–34), in which the risk of investing in the difference between the sexes was always present, driven by a universal explanatory force (Chartier, 1995: 39).

Religiosity

It should be borne in mind that gender assumptions are the ones that create major social problematizations. In the Roman context, they were present at the base of the foundation of society with mechanisms for the existence of a structural patriarchy, which were especially outlined by three bases: the discourse, which would involve the educational, family and, mainly, the religious discourse, which seems to have influenced the two first ones; the historical one, considering the “myths of origin”, such as the rape of Rhea Silvia, the abduction of the Sabine’s women, the rape of Lucrecia and the intention of rape of Verginia, considering that “history” was taken as an experience; finally, the juridical one, which was formed according to religious norms and as a consequence of historical events, which made it understood that women should be protected in some way, resulting in laws such as the *lex Iulia de adulteriis* and the *ius (trium) liberorum*.

The religious discourse was essential for Roman society, and the divine sphere had to be in accordance with the human sphere. The *pax deorum* and the *pax hominum* were at the centre of Roman religion. Rituals and cults were essential to maintain Rome's success. When Rome had problems, they were treated through religiosity and the reintegration of the *pax deorum* and *pax hominum* was crucial. However, when a woman or a Vestal behaved inappropriately, the Roman system could break down and the resolution would involve political-religious action by the elite, the Senate and the priests (Takács, 2008: 90).

Livia's presence and her role in Tiberius' government could be linked to religious issues, since it was notable that the religious presence of women was used to calm down the divine anger during events of a crisis or during a weak government such as Tiberius'. In such circumstances, male, religious and political leaders resorted to matrons to appease the gods

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through female gifts, spectacles and processions. In those moments, women were trusted to restore social and political stability (Cid López, 2011: 62–63).

In Rome, when women wanted to intervene in politics, they did so within religious activities, because they could leave their homes to attend religious ceremonies, honour deities on certain dates of the year, and in times of crisis men resorted to them to honour the deities more diligently, which gave political importance to religious activities and female deities. This kind of activities made women as “pious”, whose idealization served to shape legal norms (Cid López, 2011: 61). With this feminine ideal, it was understandable that the public activities chosen for Livia had been linked to the religiosity.

According to Barrett (2002), the restoration of the shrine of Bona dea and the title of sacrosanct that Augustus granted to her, and his sister Octavia show Livia's connection with Vestal rituals. During the Republic, women did not have political powers, but they had social, economic and religious ones. When married, they also had the priesthood and public rites, in which elite men and women could participate. The religious ceremonies of which they took part in the public sphere were rites that took place in favour of Rome and the empire. Within these sacrosanct roles, women reinforced the establishment of order. Private female affairs, such as procreation and the education of children, were projected into the public sphere through religious ceremonies performed by matrons and Vestals. Thus, many of these rituals advocated the agricultural cycle, which was important because it considered fecundity and the continuation of life. Actually, women maintained Rome through religiosity, having rituals as crucial for the protection of the State. They played an important role in carrying out such cults inside and outside Rome. However, the emergence of an imperialist Republic and then the Empire changed their roles, especially among the Roman elite (Takács, 2008: xix-xx). Such women ended up being linked to religiosity, which was different from a direct action in the public sphere.

In this perspective, to enter public office or to raise the hypothesis of a possible “institutionalization” of Roman women as Livia, they needed to be associated with a status that could represent and keep an aspect linked to *pudicitia*. This fact demonstrates an attempt to control and even limit the female actions by the State and by the emperor; and it indicates the existence of a male and controlling power mediated by the agency of a structure of thought articulated and built throughout history and facts. Those were culturally amalgamated and helped shape a conception

restricted to women of the elite of that society, which resulted in the agency of cultural conceptions, actions and ideas for the maintenance of certain power and gender relations.

A hypothesis that Augustus wanted to convey the idea that the imperial family would be the empire could have made Livia linked to public services, especially as a benefactor. This same idea could have been absorbed and implemented by the Senate, which voted to grant several titles to Livia after the ruler's death in order to continue Augustus' ideal. Thus, even denying her some titles, her son Tiberius, who was resistant to her "institutional" and public work, needed the Senate to rule. This fact may have made him accept the granting of some privileges to his mother, in a way that it did not affect him, especially if she was linked to Vestal activities. Such action resulted in a political strategy that possibly demonstrated the haughtiness of the imperial family to preserve senatorial spirits.

Ultimately, Livia gained the privilege of *ius (trium) liberorum*, which was only granted to her because of the death of her son Drusus. Three other Vestal privileges were granted to her after Augustus' death: the *lictor* in AD 14; the *carpentum* in AD 22; and the right to sit in the theater's low chairs in AD 23 (Barrett, 2002: 143-144).

Livia's coins

The first Roman women to be represented on coins appeared with characteristics or personifications of goddesses and were differentiated as mortal women due to elements such as the type of hair, which can be seen on the coins of Fulvia and Livia, but not on those of Octavia. The coins show how the Romans associated Livia with religiosity.

At the age of 80 in AD 22, Livia became very ill. For her recovery, the Senate decreed offerings and games for her grace, which led her to be represented on coins as *Salus augusta*, which was the personification of well-being. For Barrett (2002), the allusion to *Salus* to represent Livia's well-being is indirect, since the scholar points out that feminine abstractions, such as *Salus* or *Pietas*, modified by *Augusta*, do not refer to Livia, but to a relationship of the abstract personification with the house of Augustus. The association with *Salus* has a long history, as in 16 BC Augustus' coins celebrated vows taken from the *Salus* of the Emperor. Such association was identified as the *Salus* of the Republic, so oaths were taken by *Salus*

augusti. There was also a cult of Augustus' Salus during his lifetime (Barrett, 2002: 93).

However, the personification of Livia as Salus augusta may be linked not only to her health, but also to her religious activities, since Salus may relate to the goddess Bona dea, to whom Livia was often associated, in addition to the fact that she had restored this goddess temple. Several statues of Livia with a cornucopia resemble the statues of Bona dea. Furthermore, according to Takács (2008), the base of a small figurine of a seated woman connects Bona dea with Hygia, goddess of health, who often appears as a consort of Asclepius. Thus, Salus, which was linked to the meaning of bodily health, was the Latin equivalent of the Greek goddess, Hygia (Takács, 2008: 102).

According to Harvey (2020), the series of coins of Livia as the personification of Salus was one of the first to be minted by Rome with her face. In several other provinces, they were minted in a similar way (Harvey, 2020: 4–8) by copying the style and pattern, not only of Livia as Salus, but also of other series in which she is personified as Pietas and Iustitia, as did the mints of Thessalonica and Amphipolis (Harvey, 2020: 114). Thus, it is known that, in the same year of Livia's coin as Salus augusta, the tribute to Pietati augustae was paid on coins containing the caption *Pieta*, along with its idealized image, which sometimes appeared as Iustitia (Grether, 1946: 236–237).



Figure 01: Dupondius of Livia or Julia Augusta as Salus, with her face turned to the right, minted in Rome, dated 22 - 23 AD, during the Roman Empire, bronze, 28 mm in diameter, weight of 14.06g, minted during the rule of Tiberius, 14 - 29 d. C., caption: SALVS AVGVSTA; caption on the reverse: TI CAESAR DIVI AVGV F AVGV TR POT XXIII (Tiberius Caesar Divi Augustus Fili Augur Pontifex Maximus Tribunicia Potestate Vicesimum Quartum = Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Son of the Divine Augustus, augur, Supreme Pontiff in charge of the Twenty-Fourth Tribune Power³); Larger caption on reverse:

³ Our translation.

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S(enatus) C(onsultum) (coined by the consent of the Senate⁴).⁵ © The Trustees of the British Museum.

In this dupondius of Livia as *Salus augusta*, her image appears only on the obverse, which is the most important side of the object, with no reference to the emperor. However, such reference is only illustrated in the caption on the reverse, showing Livia as the most important figure at that time. Harvey (2020) said that there was another coin with a seated female figure, previously minted, in the period of Augustus, that appears to be Livia (Harvey, 2020: 121) and was associated to her in other governments.

Barrett (2002) argues that the Senate made an additional gesture by honouring Livia during the year she was ill, giving attention to her children of *pietas*, a Roman concept that involved a responsibility to both the gods and the family. The construction of the *Pietati augustae*, that was also referred to as the *Altar of Pietas Augusta*, was voted on (Barrett, 2002: 94) by the Senate.



Figure 02: Dupondius⁶ with a veiled bust and with a diadem on Livia's head like *Pietas*, looking right, dated 22–23 AD, minted during the rule of Tiberius, with the consent of the Senate on the reverse, *S C* (*Senatus Consultum*) and with smaller captions: *DRVSVS CAESAR TI AVGVSTI F TR POT ITER* (*Drusus Caesar Tiberii Augusti Filius Tribunitia Potestate Iterum* = Drusus Caesar, son of Tiberius Augustus, with tribunitial power for the second time⁷).⁸ Courtesy of the *Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.*

⁴ Our translation.

⁵ Registration number: R.6361. Bibliographic reference: RIC1 47: 97; RE1 83: 131. C&M Catalog: RE1 131: 83. Available on: https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_detail.aspx?objectId=1202443&partId=1, accessed on 10th November 2019.

⁶ Referência: RIC I 43, *Corpus Nummorum Romanorum VIII*.

⁷ Available at: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces247290.html>, accessed 13/10/2022.

⁸ Available at: <https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?term=Livia&category=1&en=1&de=1&fr=1&it=1&es=1&ot=1&images=1¤cy=usd&order=0>, accessed on: 9th March 2020.

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Hence, the Senate arranged for the minting of a series of dupondius, in which Livia is represented as Pietas. She appears with a veiled head and a diadem, demonstrating aspects linked to *pudicitia* and Vesta, honouring her role as a Roman matron. The coin was done without the male presence, but with the reference to the son of Tiberius, Drusus, on the reverse. Still according to Harvey (2020), the reverse of this Pietas coin depicts the title of Drusus the Younger, son of Tiberius and his successor, while the reverse of the Salus and Iustitia coins depicts the title of Tiberius (Harvey, 2020: 165). In addition, in this series of coins of Livia such as Pietas, she is associated with her role as a priestess of the cult of Augustus (Harvey, 2020: 187).



Figure 03: Dupondius⁹ of orichalcum¹⁰, minted in Rome, 21-22 AD, during the rule of Tiberius. The obverse contains the bust of Livia, as Iustitia (caption), with a tiara (stephane, which is a divine attribute¹¹); the reverse contains the smaller caption: TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F AVG P M TR POT XXIII (*Tiberius Caesar Divi Augustus Fili Augur Pontifex Maximus Tribunicia Potestate Vicesimum Quartum*¹² = Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, augur, Supreme Pontiff with the twenty-fourth tribune power¹³), large caption: S C (*Senatus Consultum* = minted with the consent of the Senate).¹⁴ Courtesy of Heritage Action, HA.com.

⁹ Reference number: RIC 46

¹⁰ A yellow metal prized in ancient times, likely a form of brass or similar alloy (Lexico, powered by Oxford), available at <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/orichalcum>, accessed on: 5th September 2020.

¹¹ The crown or tiara confers the distinction of Livia and is linked to goddesses such as Hera/Juno and Aphrodite/Venus. (Harvey, 2020: 137).

¹² Consulted at: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces56149.html>, accessed on: 05/09/2020.

¹³ Translation by the author.

¹⁴ Available on <https://coins.ha.com/itm/ancients/roman-imperial/tiberius-ad-14-37-orichalcum-dupondius-1385-gm-/a/231446-62053.s?ic16=ViewItem-BrowseTabs-Auction-Archive-ThisAuction-120115>, accessed on: 5th September 2020.

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Another series made in honour of Livia was that of dupondius, from the rule of Tiberius, dated 21–22 AD, in which she is personified as Iustitia. The object was characterized as a way of honouring her for her acts of help, which would possibly be linked to her patronage activity. This would also guarantee a connection with the government of Tiberius through the caption on the reverse, demonstrating the mark of the consent of the Senate and of the emperor, by showing a family harmony, a dynastic heritage related to Augustus.

Barrett (2002) emphasizes that a care should be taken in the interpretation of figures such as Salus, Iustitia and Pietas, which could reflect Livia's appearance. For the scholar, the female figure of Salus, with the name Augusta would not have a specific connection with Livia, as Salus would have idiosyncratic personalized elements. Outside Rome, the Salus coin was used as a type of portrait of Livia, but this does not prove that it was an accurate record of her appearance, although it does reflect her features (Barrett, 2002: 104). Representations of these women in antiquity often did not correctly show their appearance, but some elements were repeated in poor or good forms of representations. Those elements could characterize certain people, no matter their quality (Harvey, 2020: 119).

In that same year, 22 AD, another series of coins that referred to Livia was minted in Rome and showed a *carpentum*, which was composed of a cart with two mules used by the Vestals for public activities. In it, the caption S.P.Q.R. IVLIAE AVGVST(AE), concerning the *supplicatio*, so that the Senate decreed to Livia the Vestal right to use the *carpentum*. She also ended up winning a public celebration in Rome for her birthday (Grether, 1946: 236-237). The permission to use the *carpentum* came in 22 AD, when she became a priestess of the deified Augustus and was consequently granted a seat in the Vestal theatre (Tac. *Ann.* 4.16.4; Wood, 1999: 82; Winkler, 1995: 53–54). Those elements composed her character of modesty, prudence, mother and feminine virtues (Harvey, 2020: 186).



Figure 04: *Sestertius*¹⁵ of copper alloy, dated 22 - 23 AD, 33 mm in diameter, 27.7 g, minted in Rome during the rule of Tiberius. On its obverse is a *carpentum* facing right with two mules, with caption: SPQR/IVLIAE/AVGVST(ae) (*Senatus Populusque Romanus Iuliae Augustae* = The Senate and the Roman People for Julia Augusta¹⁶). Reverse: TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F AVGVST P M TR POT XXIII (*Tiberius Caesar Divi Fili Augustus Pontifex Maximus Tribunicia Potestate Vicesimum Quartum* = Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus, Supreme Pontiff invested with the Twenty-Fourth Tribune Power¹⁷), S C (*Senatus Consultum*). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

This *sestertius* with the *carpentum* on the obverse, together with the name IVLIAE AVGVST(ae), shows a Vestal respect to the character, since this type of carriage was only used by the Vestal Virgins and reveals a religious aspect to the image of Livia. Harvey mentioned that (2020), this is one of the few coins minted in Rome, like the one in which she is represented as *Salus augusta*, which also has the function of honouring her. This demonstrates her privilege to walk on a *carpentum* (Harvey, 2020: 160). Harvey (2020) also declares that she would be crossing gender norms when using *carpentum*, in the face of a status that had no antecedents (Harvey, 2020: 121), attributing a masculine feature to that use. However, the *carpentum* was something used by Vestal Virgins and was considered too feminine for a special female status. This fact does not remove the exclusive characteristic of Livia, it only adds honours. For Barrett (2002), the coin should be linked to Livia's illness so that the scene could be related to the procession of supplications, which the Senate must have decreed (Tac. *Ann.* 12. 42. 2; Barrett, 2002: 95).

In the 20s AD, Livia and Julia were associated with the cult of Hestia, the Greek goddess equivalent to Roman Vesta (Barrett, 2002: 144). Elements such as the sceptre, the *patra*, the veil covering the head, in addition to her seated images, show an iconography linked to the goddess Vesta, which contributes to her position as priestess and mother (Harvey, 2020: 184). Livia's identification with other goddesses continued in the provinces, as did her personification as Hera, which persisted on Tarsus coins. In Athens, she gained an epithet linked to the name of Hera, which suggests

¹⁵ Reference number: R.6358. Bibliographical references: RE1 / Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, vol. 1: Augustus to Vitellius (77: 130), RIC1 / The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. 1 (51: 97). RIC *Tiberius* 51. BMCRE *Tiberius* 76. CBN *Tiberius* 55. C 6. [Rome, AD 22 -3]. Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_R-6358, accessed: 21/08/2020.

¹⁶ Translation of the author.

¹⁷ Available at: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces66003.html>, accessed on: 18/08/2020.

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Roman Providence and demonstrated that where Livia was not divinely identified, she was associated with a goddess (Grether, 1946: 241-242).



Figure 05: Silver Tetrachma¹⁸, from 14 - 37 AD, 14.43 g, from Tarsus, Turkey, from the rule of Tiberius, with his laureate bust facing right on the obverse and caption: ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ, transliteration SEBASTOU TIBERIOU KAISAROS (From Tiberius Caesar Augustus¹⁹); on the reverse is Livia, as Hera, seated on a throne facing right, holding ears of corn and poppies, with caption: ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗΣ ΙΟΥΛΙΑΣ ΗΡΑΣ ΜΗΤΡ, transliteration: SEBASTES IOULIAS ERAS METR (Julia Augusta, mother Hera²⁰). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

This tetrachma shows Tiberius on the most important side of the coin, the obverse, with his bust turned to the right and laureate head, demonstrating his glories. On the reverse, a secondary female figure appears, with characteristics of the goddess Hera, who seems to be representing Livia. According to Harvey (2020), she also looks like Demeter/Ceres through grains and poppies, symbols linked to fertility with maternal roles (Harvey, 2020: 137; 174). Livia was celebrated as the “new Hera” in Assos and Pergamum; “new Isis” in Egypt; “new Aphrodite” in Cyprus; and “new Hestia Demeter” in Lampsacus (Spaeth, 1996: 169–170; Harvey, 2020: 138–139).

The coin illustrates Tiberius' power and a tribute to his mother's virtues in order to demonstrate a family harmony. Livia appears as a Roman matron, as the ears of corn she holds can be linked to fertility and abundance, often agricultural production. In addition, poppies are a symbol related to death and are common in burial altar figures. This demonstrates that she could still be watching over the death of her husband, Augustus. This Livia's coin associated with goddesses linked to fertility can be compared with another coin of the goddess Vesta, from the time of Caligula. This coin shows

¹⁸ Reference number: 1970,0909,225. Bibliography: RPC1 / Roman provincial coinage. Vol.1, From the death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius (44 BC-AD 69) (4005). Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1970-0909-225, accessed: 17/08/2020.

¹⁹ Translation by Juarez Oliveira.

²⁰ Translation of the author.

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similar elements, such as her sitting position, the sceptre, the veiled head and, in this case, a *patera* instead of the branch of grain.



Figure 06: The copper alloy²¹, Rome, 40 - 41 AD. Obverse: bust of Caligula, C.CAESAR.DIVI.AVG.PRON.AVG.P.M.TR.P.III.P.P (*Gaius Caesar Divi Augusti Pronepos Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Quarta, Pater Patriae*²² = Gaius Caesar, great-grandson of the divine Augustus, Supreme Pontiff, holder of the *tribunicia* power for the fourth time, father of the nation²³). Reverse: Vesta and S C (Senatus Consultum = minted with the consent of the Senate).²⁴© The Trustees of the British Museum.

The fact that Livia was linked to a religious environment with attributes granted only to the Vestal Virgins seemed a way of “institutionalizing” her activities and acts within the State. Livia's association with Vesta seems to have been prudent, as Vesta was the goddess of the home or hearth in her temple, near Regia²⁵, in the forum, where the sacred fire was guarded, which the Vestal Virgins protected. According to Barrett (2002), perhaps Augusto used Livia's association with Vesta to reinforce the image of his wife as a symbol of chastity and an appropriate representative of the home, the *princeps* and the house of a nation (Barrett, 2002: 143). In this way, Livia's public presentation should be linked to a feminine morality that imposed itself on all parts of the body and that exerted continuity through coercion in terms of clothes and hairstyles. The antagonistic principles of

²¹ R.6458. Number in the C&M catalogue: RE1 (158) (73) (158). Bibliographic references: RE1 / Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, vol. 1: Augustus to Vitellius (73: 158), BER1 / The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. 1 (54: 111), NM 2003.249 (BMC 45 - 8). RIC 38. BMCRE 46. CBN 54. C 27. [*Rome, AD 37 - 8*].

²² *Pater Patriae*, appears as P P in coin legends. This honorable title, which means "father of the land", was conferred on Augustus in 2 BC, and was assumed by most of his successors, but not all, as Tiberius did, and others only accepted it when he was already ruling for some years, like Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius (Saer, 2000: 73).

²³ Available at: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces247171.html>, accessed on: 21/07/2021.

²⁴ The state cult of Vesta had an association with the emperor as *Pontifex Maximus*. Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_R-6458, accessed: 21/07/2021.

²⁵ *regina sacrorum* was the wife of the *rex sacrorum* (Boatwright, 2011: 112).

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masculine and feminine identity were inscribed in permanent ways of using the body or maintaining a posture (Bourdieu, 1998: 36).

Livia appears on other coins with the same attributes of female fertility, but interpreted as other goddesses. Grether (1946) associates her with Pax/Ceres and mentions that her representation would have been associated with the deity of agricultural abundance. Coins of Augustus, from 2 BC to 14 AD, had the image of a seated figure holding ears of corn and a sceptre on their reverse, which continued to appear in other later governments, including those of Tiberius and Claudius, when Livia would have been deified (Grether, 1946: 226-227; 238).



Figure 07: Aureus,²⁶ 14-37 AD, Lugdunum, from the rule of Tiberius, showing his laureate bust facing right. Caption: TI CAESAR DIVI AVGVSTVS (*Tiberius Caesar Divi Augustus Fili Augustus* = Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus²⁷). On the reverse: a female figure that could probably be Livia, seated, turned to the right, with a branch of a plant in her left hand and a sceptre in her right. PONTIF MAXIM (*Pontifex Maximus* = Supreme Pontiff²⁸).²⁹ © The Trustees of the British Museum.

In this aureus of the government of Tiberius, the emperor is honoured as a *divus* due to his precedent adoptive father Augustus. On the reverse, there is the image of Livia, reminiscent of Pax/Ceres. Once again, she is associated with a goddess, with a branch of a plant in her left hand, which may be related to her son's governmental prosperity, fertility and agricultural abundance, as well as productivity and success in hierarchical succession. It also shows a tribute to the reign of his son Tiberius, who celebrates the role played by his mother in helping him come to power. According to Harvey (2020), the imagine of Livia seating with the attribute

²⁶ Reference number: 1985,0421.38. Bibliographic references: CHRB VI / Coin Hoards from Roman Britain Volume VI (38: 3), RIC1 / The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. 1 (29: 95).

²⁷ Translated by author.

²⁸ Translated by author.

²⁹ Available at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1985-0421-38, accessed on: 17th August 2020.

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of Pax or Ceres, with a branch of ears of grain, demonstrates her role as a mother of the imperial family and her stable presence in the imperial dynasty. In Lepcis Magna, Colonia Romula and Tarsus, she was directly referred to as a mother (Harvey, 2020: 132; 134). For Barrett (2002), the seated female figure that appears in the government of Tiberius exchanges the sceptre for a spear and the ears are grains of wheat (Barrett, 2002: 141).

Livia's popularity continued to exist after her death in AD 29, aged 86. Her sculptures survived and continued to be erected during the government of the emperor Claudius so that were many plaques attested to her honour (Harvey, 2020: 4-8). Only in 41 AD, with Claudius Emperor, in order to strengthen his connection with the imperial house, he not only undertook new honours to Augustus, but also deified his grandmother Livia (Grether, 1946: 247-249). This makes the minting of coins with her figure to be more common in Rome (Harvey, 2020: 121), in addition to having himself a political guarantee to receive the title of *divus*. It was probably only after Livia was deified in 42 AD that the coins with her image appeared accompanied by the *diva* caption and the cult of her began to appear.



Figure 08: Dupondius,³⁰ dated 41 - 50 AD, 16.33 g, from the rule of Claudius of Rome. Obverse: bust of Augustus facing left, caption: DIVVS AVGVSTVS (Divus Augustus = Divo Augusto³¹) and S C (*Senatus Consultum* = minted with the consent of the Senate). Reverse: Livia seated on the left, with an ear of corn in her right hand and a sceptre in her left, caption: DIVA AVGVSTA (Diva Augusta = Diva Augusta³²). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

³⁰ Registration number: R.9873. Number in the C&M catalogue: RE1 (195) (224) (195). Bibliography: RE1 / Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, vol. 1: Augustus to Vitellius (224: 195) PCR / Principal coins of the Romans: Volume I: The Republic c. 290 - 31 BC; Volume II: The Principate 31 BC - AD 296; Volume III: The Dominate AD 294 - 498. (395) RIC1 / The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. 1 (101: 12). Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_R-9873, accessed: 17/08/2020.

³¹ Translation of the author.

³² Translation of the author.

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In this dupondius Claudius' reign, which marks the consecration, in 41 AD (Barrett, 2002: 222) and the consequent deification of Livia, the seated female figure appears once again following the pattern linked to the figure of Ceres (Barrett, 2002: 141; 210) or Vesta. There is a celebration of the divine couple, when the deification of his grandmother Livia granted Claudius the status of *divus* and the demonstration of his family's past which helped him to come to power. The coin has the image of Augustus on the obverse as the main figure, and that of Livia with an ear of corn in her hand on the reverse as a secondary figure, symbolizing abundance, agricultural production, fertility and other virtues of a Roman matron. These also demonstrates the guarantee of a dynastic longevity. The sceptre would be linked to respect, wisdom and the goddess Vesta. According to Harvey (2020), Livia is represented on this coin as Ceres/Demeter, an aspect that also appears with similar shapes on some coins of the government of Tiberius, but with some different attributes such as the *patera*, the sceptre and, occasionally, the ears of grain in place of the sceptre, as on Galba government coins (Harvey, 2020: 124).

With Galba, Livia appears as *Diva Augusta* and was recognized as a goddess and as an important ancestor (Harvey, 2020: 121). During Titus' Reign, she appears as Iustitia and Pietas. During Antoninus Pius' government in 159 AD., the temple of Divus Augustus was renovated and received a statue of Livia (Grether, 1946: 251; Harvey, 2020: 121).



Figure 09: Silver Denarius,³³ of Catalonia, province of Tarragona, town of Tarraco, Spain. Obverse: laureate bust of Galba, facing right, with caption: SER GALBA IMP CAESAR AVG TR P (*Servius Galba Imperator Caesar Augustus Tribunicia Potestate* = Serbian Commander Galba Caesar Augustus invested in the Tribune Power³⁴); reverse: draped figure of Livia, facing left, with a *patera* in her right hand and a vertical sceptre in her left hand, caption: DIVA AVGVSTA. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

³³ Museum reference number: 1928.0120.128. Bibliographical references: RIC1 / The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. 1 (52: 235). Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1928-0120-128, accessed: 16/08/2020.

³⁴ Translation of the author.

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This denarius celebrates the government of Galba and honours Livia on its obverse, as an image used to strengthen his power, since its representation appears with a *paterna* in his hand. These elements can be interpreted as a symbol of fertility, agricultural abundance and of a prosperous government. She is not seated, as in the previous figures, but standing, with elements already known. Besides, the longevity in honouring Livia would be linked to a prolonged respect for her person, as well as the result of the expectation of keeping the memory of an important character. This suggests high acceptance of her representation in periods when she was alive and after her death.

According to Harvey (2020), both Claudius and Galba saw Livia as a divine ancestor, since Claudius had her as a grandmother and Galba had received favours from Livia early in his career. Galba claimed to be related to her through his adoptive mother Livia Ocellina, who also declared to be connected to her somehow. This was Galba's excuse to legitimize his Reign as one that was linked to the first *princeps*, Augustus, after the fall of Nero, ending the Julio-Claudian dynasty. However, there has always been a doubt regarding Galba's connection with the Julio-Claudian's family (Harvey, 2020: 124).



Figure 10: Dupondius,³⁵ in copper alloy, AD 80 - 81, 14.39 g, from the government of Titus of Rome. Obverse: bust of Livia; caption: PIETAS. Major reverse caption: S C (*Senatus Consultum*), minor caption: IMP T CAES DIVI VESP F AVG RES[T] (*Imperator Titus Cæsar Divi Vespasiani Filius Augusti Restituit* = Commander Titus, son of the divine Augustus Vespasian, was restored³⁶). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

³⁵ Reference number: 1857.0812.19. Number in C&M catalogue: RE2 (287) (291) (287). RE2 / Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, vol. II: Vespasian to Domitian (291: 287) BER2.1 / The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol.2 part 1: From AD 69 to AD 96: Vespasian to Domitian (426: 227). Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1857-0812-19, accessed: 18/08/2020.

³⁶ Available at: <https://www.bidder.com/auctions/cgb/browse?a=924&l=981372>, accessed on: 18/08/2020.

Titus must have had a similar interest of Galba to honour Livia in minting this dupondius, in which she appears on the obverse as the main figure on the coin. However, its obverse celebrates the government of Titus and its coinage is, even in this period, with the mark of the consented by the Senate. The homage that describes her as *pietas* may come from a respect for her *pudicitia* as a Roman matron and her virtues.

Conclusion

The Roman monetary elements could represent a mark in the power and gender relations, family system and its values. In addition, coins were objects that could have been the corollary of political changes, since private and domestic demand was on the agenda of women minted in coins in the face of public visibility that still based on morality and values close to the most traditional ones. The images of Livia were attributed to the personifications of goddesses with symbols representing fertility, religiosity and *pudicitia*. The religious boundary has the capacity to strictly define the patterns of men and women that are linked to a studied society, their activities, ritual forms and devout practices that suit each of the sexes (Chartier, 1995: 41).

As a result of the symbolic elements related to fertility demonstrated by the monetary iconography, it can be inferred that there was a sexual topology of the socialized body, which had the female body as the one recognized for procreating. Bodies, in the face of their displacements and movements, are embedded with social meanings. The differences between the male and female body could have led to the use of different practices and metaphorical elements to interpret them. These were used for each sex and equally differentiated in their appearance, being linked to the agents' *habitus*, which functioned as schemata of perceptions, thoughts and actions. This experience apprehended the social world and its arbitrary divisions by starting with the social division between man and woman, seen as "natural", a thought that legitimized such divisions. In the face of this "naturalization", the patriarchal view was imposed as neutral, making masculine domination symbolically grounded, creating a sexual division of labour, its instruments and spaces (Bourdieu, 1998: 16-18).

The "naturalization" of female subordination has already received several feminist criticisms, as it is held that the subordination of women stems from the ways in which women are socially constructed, as it is believed in the underlying idea that whatever is constructed, can be modified. In this way, by changing the ways in which they are perceived, it would be

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possible to change the social place they occupy (Piscitelli, 2002: 10). However, for other social changes, there would have to be an awareness of such subordination by the women themselves. In this understanding, Bourdieu (1998) comments on such “naturalization”, and claims that when this awareness is not recurrent, such female actions are seen as “right” to be performed in each social group.

Another issue that was raised in this work was Livia's place of work, which seems to have been religious, essential for female performance. Certainly, both within the public and private arenas, women had limits of performance. In this context, the interpretation of the spaces of action can define and make such places objects of reflection and definition of what political action would be by taking into account that coins could also be seen as a public space to carry out a discourse through its symbols. However, the local space, and in particular the way in which the public and private arenas were delimited, can define a certain value and become objects of reflection (Alvarez et al., 1998; Scott et al., 1997), as well as the redefinition of what is “political” action (Goddard, 2000: 10). The “institutionalization” of the Roman woman, linked to religion, may have made a political camouflage itself through religiosity, opening space for Livia's agency and guaranteeing her a place of action. Even so, women tended not to be so well accepted, but it could count on a new establishment of their presence in both public and private spheres, especially after Livia.

However, this does not mean that masculine domination was not in full swing. It should be borne in mind that such structures were not so easy to modify and that the condition of men was affirmed by the objectivity of social, productive and reproductive structures. These structures divided activities between men and women of the Roman elite, giving an *habitus* to men that was shaped by conditions that functioned as matrices of perceptions of thoughts and actions of all members of society, which was something instilled and shared historically and universally. In this sense, masculine dominance was invested by common sense, of which women themselves were a part. Even in power relations, they found themselves involved in schemes of thoughts that were products of the incorporation of these relations and that expressed crucial oppositions of symbolic order (Bourdieu, 1998: 45). However, the performances of elitist women were still managed in such a way as to be rooted into a masculine order, which was both material and mental (Bourdieu, 1996: 30-31), giving them a character of relative freedom.

By Livia's performance, there was an indirect reconceptualization of spaces, with new limits and new circumstances in which the public had to reorganize itself as a result of a private one, which previously associated women with it. That being said, what could be considered private in Livia's time came because her agency was public, at a time when there seemed to be illogical to keep such activities private. Masculine domination was renewed in a way that the performance of Livia and other elite women became part of the current order, which does not mean that there were not tensions between the parties.

The vision and use of the “public/private” division can restrict the interpretation of the investigated society in a way that would lead to believe in the existence of only these two types of places of action. This division is merely didactic, as a way of limiting the focus of the object under study, since Roman society was probably much more complex. The very designation “public/private” can itself bring a great tangle of parts that intersect, counting on the example of Livia, who had to assume a religious position in order to act publicly. This allowed the private (Livia) intertwine with the public (Livia's activities). This division can also be linked to the written sources we have access to and how they describe Antiquity. Roman women in general are outlined in family environments, but there are also exceptions, which form an opposition between the public and the private dimensions. The house would be a place where they would be inserted most of the time and men are described as those who are hardly associated with domestic places, with an image of toughness and virile rudeness (Bourdieu, 1998: 72).

When spaces are not neutral and recognized as having gender differentiation, men are linked to the public sphere and women to the private sphere, the redefinition of this space can be significant (Goddard, 2000: 17). It can be assumed that Livia must have been very intelligent and skilful to be able to deal with such advents, like Agrippina Minor and other women who provided activities in this environment who were potentially criticized, such as Fulvia. The examples of elite Roman women in public life can demonstrate an arena of gender perspective of such an Era and a place of power. In addition, the presence of women in public places created an agency of negotiation, directly or indirectly, of the limits and the ways in which these places were used. Consequently, such agencies presumably led to a redefinition of the meaning and value of such spaces that were intended to be kept separate, or that were seen as separate, or that we see as if they were separated.

In the meantime, it can be mentioned that Livia's feats represented a challenge to the boundaries between the public and the private. Consequently, it brought about a reinvention of the domestic and the recognition of the importance of gender for cultural and political phenomena, so that the coins exemplify it. In view of this fact, this study aimed to highlight the Roman identity constructions and the importance of the agency for building complex processes of change through the coins and textual sources. The gender focus helped to bridge the conceptual gaps between change processes, public settings and the everyday lives of men and women (Goddard, 2000: 20). However, further comprehensive work would be needed in order establish the presence of different women in this past, in different places and how they were perceived, also counting on the subaltern world.

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