

COMMUNICATING A *CONSECRATIO*: THE DEIFICATION COINAGE OF FAUSTINA I*

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Faustina the Elder, wife of Antoninus Pius, died early in her husband's reign and was consecrated by decree of the senate. The *Historia Augusta* records that Faustina was awarded games, a temple and priestesses, statues of silver and gold, that her statue was erected in all the circuses and an alimentary scheme for young girls was founded in her name.¹ A temple to the divine Faustina was erected in the Roman forum, meaning she became the first empress to have a permanent presence in this traditional seat of Roman power. The unusual location of Faustina's temple is mirrored in her deification coinage: both reflect an unheralded presence by the empress.

Harold Mattingly realised the unusual nature of Faustina's deification coinage, noting that it survived in unusually large numbers and encompassed an extraordinary variety of reverse types.² Strack had also noticed these peculiarities, observing that Faustina's deification coinage was struck at least until Pius's death in AD 161.³ Earlier consecration series had only been minted for a short period of time, as would future issues. Faustina's series was remarkable.

Quantifying Prominence: A Hoard Analysis of Faustina's Deification Coinage

Mattingly's conclusions about the large size of Faustina's diva coinage were based on two hoards: the Valeni hoard in Romania (still largely unpublished) and the Reka-Devnia hoard, also from Romania, which consists of 81,096 coins.⁴ Each hoard gives a strikingly different picture. In the Valeni hoard the coins of Faustina *outnumber* those of her husband, while in the Reka-Devnia hoard Pius portrait types outnumber those of his wife. Given these divergences this study gathered a much larger sample, consisting of twelve gold hoards (containing 563 coins from the reign of Pius), 54 silver hoards (comprising 22,112 coins from the reign of Pius) and 22 *aes* hoards (totaling 2,974 coins from Pius's principate). A full list of the hoards is provided in the appendix.

It is clear from the hoard evidence that Pius struck more coinage in the name of his wife than Hadrian had for Sabina (Table 1). The portrait of Faustina I graced approximately 22.5% of Pius' *aurei*, 30% of his *denarii* and 22% of his *aes* issues, significantly more than Sabina (who constitutes less than 10% of Hadrian's coinage), and slightly more than Faustina the Younger (though not on *aes* coinage). The quantity is even more impressive when we consider that the majority of Faustina's types were diva issues; by comparison the deification coinages of Trajan, Matidia and Hadrian were almost invisible in the hoard sample.

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¹ SHA *Ant. Pius* VI.7, VIII.1-2.

² Mattingly 1948, pp. 147-51.

³ Strack 1937, pp. 10-11.

⁴ Mattingly 1948, p. 148.

TABLE 1. Comparison of Portrait Types between the Reigns of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (to the nearest 0.5%). Percentages for each member of the imperial family express the amount of coinage bearing their portrait in relation to the total amount of coinage struck over the entire reign.

<i>Obverse Portrait</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Aes</i>
<i>Reign of Hadrian</i>			
Hadrian	89%	88.5%	94%
Sabina	4%	8%	3.5%
Aelius	4.5%	2%	2%
Antoninus Pius	1.5%	<1%	<1%
Divus Traianus	<1%	0%	0%
Diva Matidia	0%	<1%	0%
<i>Reign of Antoninus Pius</i>			
Antoninus Pius	54.5%	50.5%	61%
Faustina I	22.5%	30%	22%
Marcus Aurelius	15.5%	12.5%	10%
Faustina II	7.5%	7%	6.5%
Divus Hadrianus	0%	<1%	0%
<i>Reign of Marcus Aurelius</i>			
Marcus Aurelius	42%	58.5%	49.5%
Faustina II	15%	23%	29%
Verus	30%	3.5%	5.5%
Lucilla	5.5%	5%	11.5%
Commodus	2%	<1%	3%
Divus Pius	4.5%	9%	1.5%

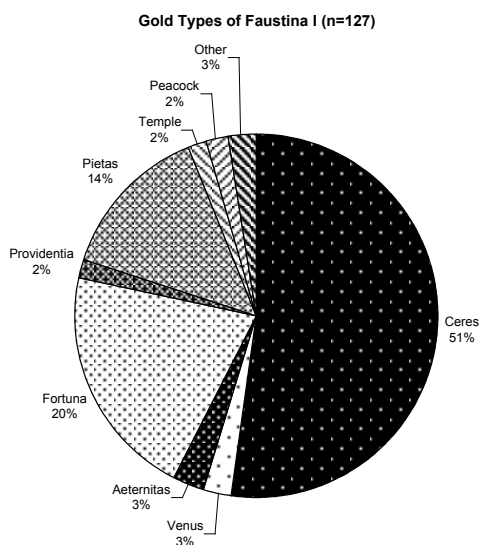


Fig. 1

A breakdown of the reverse types of the coins found for Faustina I in the hoard sample reveals a heavy emphasis on Ceres (Figs. 1-3), a theme that matches the emphasis Pius gave to the corn supply of Italy.⁵ Pius renovated the *pharos* at Alexandria and the wharves at Puteoli, and himself had numerous coin types communicating the idea of *Annona*.⁶ Already connected to the grain supply through the alimentary scheme in her name, the imagery of Ceres on Faustina's coinage meant that the empress, though now divine, remained connected to the emperor's imperial programme.

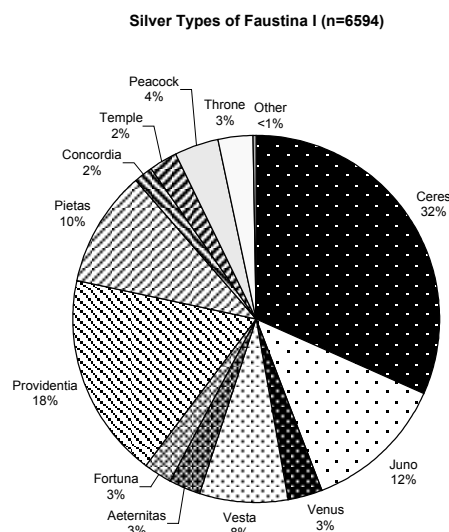


Fig. 2

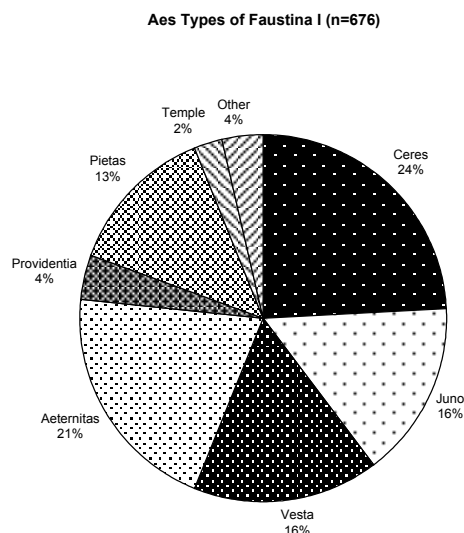


Fig. 3

⁵ The analysis of reverse types is based upon Mattingly's identification of the figures that grace the reverse of Faustina's coinage.

⁶ SHA *Ant. Pius* VIII.3, VIII.11; Segenni 2001, p. 356.

Closer analysis of the hoard sample is illuminating (Table 2). In gold issues, Faustina's lifetime coinage made up approximately 11% of all the coinage of Pius's reign until her death in AD 140, but her deification coinage constituted approximately 22.5% of the coinage of Pius's reign from AD 141. It appears that the mint *increased* the amount of coins being struck for Faustina after she died. Similar increases can be seen for silver and *aes* types (Table 2).

This increase, however, is only apparent in hoards that date to after Pius's reign. In hoards with a *terminus ante quem* of AD 161 (the year Pius died), Diva Faustina types constitute a smaller proportion of Pius's coinage than her lifetime issues (Table 2). This is the case for all three metals. In hoards with a *terminus post quem* of AD 161, Faustina's diva types constitute a larger percentage of coin in circulation than her lifetime issues.

TABLE 2. Faustina's Coinage. Proportion of Faustina's lifetime coinage (expressed as a percentage of all coinage from Pius's reign struck before AD 141 found in the hoard evidence) and deified coinage (expressed as a percentage of all coinage from Pius's reign struck from AD 141).

<i>Obverse Portrait</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Aes</i>
<i>Hoards Dated 161 and Earlier</i>			
Faustina Living (pre 141)	25%	32%	22.5%
Faustina Deified (post 141)	18%	24%	20%
<i>Hoards Dated 162-180</i>			
Faustina Living (pre 141)	9%	16%	0%
Faustina Deified (post 141)	30%	28%	23.5%
<i>Hoards Dated after 180</i>			
Faustina Living (pre 141)	14%	19%	16%
Faustina Deified (post 141)	21.5%	29%	20.5%
<i>Total (all hoards)</i>			
Faustina Living (pre 141)	11%	19%	17%
Faustina Deified (post 141)	22.5%	28.5%	20.5%

We might be tempted to ascribe the discrepancy to the fact that Faustina's diva coinage, struck later, may have taken longer to enter into circulation. However, Faustina's coinage is only considered in relation to other coins struck in the same period (her lifetime coinage is only considered in relation to the rest of Pius's coinage struck before AD 141, and her diva coinage is only considered in relation to coinage struck from AD 141 and after). The change in proportion thus cannot be related to rates of circulation and attrition (coins issued at the same time would enter into circulation and undergo attrition at approximately the same rate).

Since Faustina's diva coinage increases in proportion *only* in hoards dated after AD 161, it is possible that Marcus Aurelius continued to strike coinage for the deceased empress. The diva coinage by itself does not provide any secure mechanisms for dating, so it has all been ascribed to the reign of Pius. This may not have been the case.

Particular types of Diva Faustina coinage only occur in hoards dated to the reign of Aurelius. Coins bearing the legends CONSECRATIO, AVGVSTA and AETERNITAS all occur in hoards

from Pius's reign. Other types, with the legends CERES, VESTA and IVNO only occur in hoards dated after Pius's death.⁷ The change in legends may reflect a change in the ruling emperor. That these coins were struck under Aurelius is also suggested by their style. Strack observed that from AD 160-163 an idiosyncratic style appears at the Roman mint: the lettering of the legend becomes larger and the obverse portrait smaller, resulting in a continuous legend with no breaks.⁸ Strack noted that this style was present on some examples of Diva Faustina coinage (with the legends CERES and VESTA), and believed these types were struck right until Pius's death in AD 161.⁹ Equally, it may be that Aurelius continued the Diva Faustina types, striking them in conjunction with Divus Pius types, some of which are also characterised by larger lettering on the legends.

Marcus Aurelius struck deification coinage for Pius in fairly substantial numbers: Divus Pius types constitute 4.5% of *all* Aurelius's *aurei*, 9% of his *denarii* and 1.5% of his *aes* types (Table 1). These figures are for the coin output of Aurelius's *entire* reign, so the divus types were probably even more prominent in the early years of Aurelius's principate. Striking for both Divus Pius and Diva Faustina fits well with the prominence Aurelius gave to the divine couple and their reunion in the afterlife. Faustina's temple in the forum was rededicated to include Antoninus, a column was set up at Pius's villa in Lorum with images of the divine couple, and the Antonine column was erected showing Pius and Faustina ascending to heaven together on a winged male, a piece of imperial funerary art so unusual that it had to borrow from the mortuary motifs of freedmen.¹⁰ Coins in the name of both Diva Faustina and Divus Pius may also have formed part of the monuments emphasising the divine couple. In this context it is important to observe that Aurelius struck what Mattingly labelled 'Memorial Coins', giving Pius's titles in the nominative case (*Divus Pius*, not *Dio Pio*). It is thus plausible that coins also continued to be struck for Diva Faustina giving her titulature in the nominative.

Contextualising Prominence: a Reaction to Hadrian?

If this hypothesis is correct, Aurelius would only have been continuing the unusual emphasis given to Faustina during Pius's reign. Pius's motivations in granting his wife such honours are difficult to uncover, but it is tempting to see it as a reaction to the reign of Hadrian. Hadrian's reign had been marked by his love for Antinoos; Dio's remark that the emperor set up statues of his lover all over the known world is reflected in the copious amount of Antinoos statuary surviving to the modern day.¹¹ Hadrian was unpopular with the Senate and was only deified upon the insistence of Antoninus, an uncomfortable beginning for the new emperor.¹² The prominence given to Faustina may have been a visual reaction against Hadrian's passion for Antinoos. In his *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius records that Pius taught him to 'suppress all passion for boys', perhaps reflecting the careful contrast Pius created with Hadrian.¹³

Mattingly suggested that Pius's motivations may have been more personal, that grief at his wife's death was reflected in the official media.¹⁴ This may have been a contributing cause (Pius never remarried, though he may have taken a mistress).¹⁵ However, the unpopularity of Hadrian and the decidedly unpopular nature of the decision to deify him meant that Antoninus was unable publicly to emphasise a divine adopted father in the way Hadrian had claimed for *Divus Traianus*. A divine wife provided an excellent alternative, particularly given the contrast it provided with Hadrian's reign.

⁷ RIC 378-379, 391, 400. The die study by Beckmann (in this volume) also places the CERES legend type towards the end of the die sequence.

⁸ Strack 1937, p. 11.

⁹ Strack 1937, plate VI no. 456 and plate VII no. 463.

¹⁰ Kleiner / Kleiner 1978-80, pp. 389-94.

¹¹ Dio LXIX.11.4.

¹² Dio LXIX.23.3, LXX 1.1-3 and SHA *Hadrian* XXVII.1-4.

¹³ Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* 1.16.

¹⁴ Mattingly 1948, p. 150.

¹⁵ Birley 1966, pp. 97-98.

Interpreting Prominence: Diva Faustina in the Provinces

Provincial evidence reflects the imperial emphasis on the new diva. Statues from Timghad and Campana show Faustina in the guise of Ceres, as does a provincial coin of Apameia.¹⁶ A temple to Faustina as the 'new' Demeter was built at Eleusis, and Herodes Atticus constructed a temple to Demeter and Faustina just outside Rome.¹⁷ Though it was common for empresses to be associated with Ceres, the evidence here recalls the emphasis on the goddess on Faustina's coinage (Figs. 1-3).

In Alexandria, where provincial coins can be accurately dated, news of Faustina's death and deification reached the city soon after the event. In AD 140/1 coins were struck at Alexandria showing Pius on the obverse and Faustina on the reverse, with the legend FAUSTINA SEBASTH.¹⁸ The following year (AD 141/2), a similar coin was released, but with the legend FAUSTINA THEA. News of Faustina's consecration had reached Egypt.¹⁹

Antioch in Pisidia also struck coinage in the name of DIVA FAUSTINA.²⁰ Three more uncertain cases are Flaviopolis (Cilicia), Bostra (Arabia) and Sardis (Lydia).²¹ These cities released two different coin types of Faustina, one naming her as SEBASTH, the other giving her the title THEA. Though the coins of these particular cities cannot be dated, it is tempting to see here, as at Alexandria, news of Faustina's consecration. In the case of Sardis, granted a neokorate at the beginning of Pius's reign, Faustina's image graces coinage showing the temple of the imperial cult, and a colossal statue of the veiled Faustina joined that of her husband in the temple of Artemis.²²

Coins in the name of *thea* Faustina were also struck at Adana, Delphi, Myndus, Nicopolis, Perinthus, the koinon of Ionia and in an uncertain province.²³ In these instances there was no change in the titulature of Faustina (she is always *thea*), but this may have been because these cities did not strike coinage until after her death; Faustina died relatively early in Pius's reign and provincial minting practices were intermittent. The fact that many of these same cities struck coinage in the name of Faustina the Younger without granting her the title *thea* suggests that it did communicate a *diva* status. This is not to suggest that empresses could not be granted the title *thea* while living, but to allow for the fact that the title could also function as an expression of the Latin *diva*, particularly on coinage.

Conclusions

The transformation of Faustina's titulature on provincial coinage and her continued presence on provincial issues reflected a wider recognition of the importance of the empress's consecration and her continued visual presence in Antonine rule. Faustina's death and deification allowed Pius to dissociate himself from Hadrian's unpopular regime and connect his rule with the divine. The coinage was probably only one part of a wider visual programme that may have continued under Marcus Aurelius. Faustina's role after death was not, as Mattingly believed, one of a revered lady in a new sphere of eternity, but one concretely bound to the policies and problems of the Roman Empire in the second century.

¹⁶ Keltanen 2002, p. 127; RPC IV temp. 3350.

¹⁷ Spaeth 1996, pp. 179-80; *IG* XIV 1389; Pomeroy 2007, p. 158.

¹⁸ RPC IV temp. 16033.

¹⁹ RPC IV temp. 14240; Geissen 1991, p. 195.

²⁰ RPC IV temp. 7336-7.

²¹ Bostra: RPC IV temp. 6699, 6365, 6700-2, 6704-6; Flaviopolis: RPC

IV temp. 10281, 5803, 3573; Sardis: RPC IV temp. 1427, 1426.

²² Burrell 2004, pp. 103-109.

²³ Adana: RPC IV temp. 5371; Delphi: RPC IV temp. 4601-4, 7853-4, 5056, 7855, 8202; Koinon of Ionia: RPC IV temp. 7773, 952; Myndus: RPC IV temp. 921; Nicopolis: RPC IV temp. 4184-7; Perinthus: RPC IV temp. 8656, 8347; Uncertain: RPC IV temp. 8345-6, 3006.

APPENDIX: HOARDS USED IN THE ANALYSIS²⁴

Gold

Britain: Corbridge (*NC* 12 (1912), pp.265-312); Didcot (*CHRB* X (1997), pp.91-100); Plantation Place (*CHRB* XI (2002), pp.111-114). **Belgium:** Liberchies (Thirion 1972). **France:** Corné (*RN* 24 (1982), pp.72-91); Le Cannet (*RN* 7 (1943), pp.149-159); Troyes (*RN* 31 (1989), pp.113-137); Saint-Nom-la-Bretèche (*TM* 15 (1995), pp.19-21). **Spain:** Italica (*NZ* 34 (1902), pp.29-48). **Portugal:** Braga (*Nummus* 1 (1978), pp.37-98). **Italy:** Via Po (*Bull.Com* 57 (1930), pp.5-119). **Germany:** Trier (*ZfN* 38 (1928), pp.68-72).

Silver

Britain: Allerton Bywater (*NC* 5 (1925), pp.400-402); Barway (*NC* 20 (1960), pp.237-239), Bletchley (*NC* 9 (1969), pp.113-128, *CHRB* IX (1992), pp.60-64); Briglands (*P.S.A.S.* 90 (1956-7), pp.241-246); Bristol (*NC* 18 (1938), pp.85-98); Castle Bromwich (*NC* 12 (1910), pp.149-178); Darfield II (*NC* 8 (1948), pp.78-80); Edwinstowe (*CHRB* IX (1992), pp.46-49), *NC* 12 (1912), pp.149-178); East England (*NC* 18 (1898), pp.126-184); East Stoke (*CHRB* X (1997), pp.88-90); Falkirk (*NC* 14 (1934), pp.1-30); Handley (*NC* 10 (1950), pp.311-315); Lawrence Weston (*CHRB* VIII (1988), pp.23-31); Londonthorpe (*CHRB* I (1979), pp.9-24); Muswell Hill (*NC* 9 (1929), pp.315-319); Shapwick Villa (*CHRB* 11 (2002), pp.169-233). **Germany:** Fickmühlen (*FMRD* VII.4-9, no.8056); Flonheim (*FMRD* IV.1, no.1023); Fröndenberg (*ZfN* 29 (1912), pp.189-253); Herren (*FMRD* X-XIII, no.1103, pp.82-86); Lengerich I (*FMRD* VII.1-3: 68-87, no.1033); Middels Osterloog (*ZfN* 29 (1912), pp.189-253); Neuenkirchen (*NZ* 101 (1990), pp.17-28); Stockstadt III (*FMRD* I.6, no. 6020). **Austria:** Apetlon II (Göbl 1967, *FMRÖ* I.2, pp. 293-302); Carnuntum II (*FMRÖ* 3.1, pp.200-201); Carnuntum III (*FMRÖ* 3.1, pp.201-203); Ostriach (*FMRÖ* II/3, no.1/6) Wallern, Scharding (*FMRÖ* I.2, pp.413-416). **Slovakia:** Vyskovce (Ondrouch 1934). **Romania:** Bârgăuani (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.51); Butoiești (*SCN* 9 (1989), pp.37-42); Cislău (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.61); Covasinț (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.26); Dimbau (*SCN* 1 (1957), pp.113-31); Drăghiceni (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.64); Gostavăț (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.65); Lespezi (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.37); Măgîrești (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.71); Muncelul de Sus I (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.73); Puriceni (*Memoria Antiquitatis* (1972), pp.125-230); Sălașuri (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.43); Simionesti (*SCN* 4 (1968), pp.385-391); Tibru (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.45); Valea (Depeyrot & Moisil 2008: no.47). **Bulgaria:** Magura (Mihăilescu-Bîrliaba 1977); Reka-Devnia (Mouchmov 1934; Depeyrot 2004). **Hungary:** Kecel (*Cumania* 9 (1986), pp.27-74); Kurd-gyulaji (*NK* 34-35 (1935-1936), pp.77-78); Prelasdorf (*JA* 3 (1909), pp.247-250, vol 4 (1910), pp.140-144, vol 5 (1911), pp.211-212, 218); Sotin (*Vjesnik Hrvatskoga Arheološkoga Društva* 2 (1910-1911), pp. 241-277). **Ukraine:** Tokari (*Prace I Materialy* 10 (1993), pp. 37-93). **Slovenia:** Prelasko (*FMRS* II: no.353). **Cyprus:** Larnaka (*NC* 19 (1979), pp.26-35).

Aes

Britain: Croydon (*NC* 7 (1907), pp.353-372); Curridge (*CHRB* XI (2002), pp.147-158); Gare (*NC* 11 (1971), pp.181-188); Leysdown (*NC* 11 (1971), pp.189-202). **France:** Arnouville (*TM* 3 (1981), pp.17-31); Garonne (Barrandon 1984); Pécy (*TM* 15 (1995), pp.23-33); Puy – Dieu (*TM* 7 (1985), pp.33-104); Saint-Léonard (*TM* 21 (2003-2004), pp.1-137) Seyssel (*TM* 16 (1997), pp.15-

²⁴ Bull. Comm. = Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma, CHRB = Coin Hoards from Roman Britain, FMRD = Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Deutschland, FMRÖ = Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Österreich, FMRS = Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Slowenien, JA = Jahrbuch für Altertumskunde, NC = Numismatic

Chronicle, NZ = Numismatische Zeitschrift, P.S.A.S. = Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, RMRve = Ritrovamenti Monetali de età Romana nel Veneto, RN = Revue Numismatique, SCN = Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică, TM = Trésors Monétaires, ZfN = Zeitschrift für Numismatik.

20). **Italy:** Bassano (*RMRe* I, no.2/16(1)); Caminada (*RMRe* II.2, no.13/1(1)); Ca'Noghera (*RMRe* VI.2, no.9/9); Mussolente (*RMRe* I, no.17/6); Paliaghetta (*RMRe* VI.2, no.9/9). **Germany:** Bernbueren (*FMRD* I.1, no.1250); Faha (*FMRD* III, no.1029). **Austria:** Althofen (*FMRÖ* II/3, no.4/1); Gummern (*FMRÖ* II/3, no.6/16(1)); Halbturn (*NZ* 115 (2007), pp.21-32); Illmitz (*FMRÖ* I.2, no.5/9); Kristendorf (*FMRÖ* II/3, no.7b/3).

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