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URBANISING THE COUNTRYSIDE: *TERRITORIUM EMERITENSIS* IN PERSPECTIVE

LA URBANIZACIÓN DEL CAMPO: *TERRITORIUM EMERITENSIS* EN PERSPECTIVA

Urbs y *ager* estaban intrínsecamente relacionados dentro del mundo romano. Por lo tanto, es imposible entender uno sin comprender el otro. La *civitas* y el *ager* formaban un universo común, con las vías de comunicaciones actuando a modo de arterias del *territorium*. Combinando fuentes clásicas con el registro arqueológico pretendo estudiar, para una mejor comprensión, el entorno de *Colonia Augusta Emerita* y el *ager publicus* controlado y administrado por la colonia lusitana; al igual que los límites de la provincia de Lusitania y la frontera sur de *Emerita*.

Palabras clave: *Emerita Augusta*, Lusitania, territorio, agrimensores, *ager publicus*
Keywords: *Emerita Augusta*, Lusitania, territory, land surveyors, *ager publicus*

General configuration of Roman land planning

The relationship between *urbs* and *ager* within the Roman world is that of symbiosis, therefore it is not completely possible to comprehend the *pars urbana* without looking at the rural component. As Bendala Galán and Abad Casal (2008: 20) wrote, the *civitas* is the core of a universe formed by the *ager*. Considering the Roman conception of *civitas* as a combination of city and countryside, we can prove that the traditionally established dichotomy, set up in order to explain the alleged animadversion between *urbs* and *ager*, was non-existent (Cordero Ruiz 2013: 77). *Urbs* and *ager* were, hence, part of a common universe, a duality conforming a sacred space. The arteries of the Roman settlement were also the main roads of the *territorium* (Rykwert 2002). As Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera (1993) have discussed, the location of the settlement in the center of the *ager*, as if we would refer to Copernicus' Heliocentrism, was only possible when both *urbs* and *ager* were established at

a similar date. This was not a common scenario as settlements founded during republican times, as *Metellinum* (Medellín, Spain), would have its *territorium* increased in a much later date, during the Flavian dynasty, when the *ager publicus* of the colony was increased (Cantó 1989: 153–156). Therefore, this case does not follow this ‘rule’ when the settlement aforementioned does abide by the colonial status.

Laying beneath the cosmological view of the municipal grid planning, was a more practical scenario: the delimitation of the territory to be managed and exploited by the colony located on the center. As well as the delimitation of the area of influence-authority of the magistrates of said settlement (Cordero Ruiz 2013). However, this is not a unique theory among archaeologists. As Morris (2016: 127) pointed out, centuriation was not only the division of the countryside assigned to a settlement into smaller plots to share with the new settlers. It is necessary to look into the land distribution in a bigger picture. Although there are not many traces of redistribution, or reorganization, of the landscape by the new Roman authorities, it involved the creation of infrastructures to guarantee the prevalence of the new Roman order. This implied the creation of road grids, man-made structures to signal borders where there were none beforehand. It was another component on the use of the landscape around a colony. Tarpin (2002) and Gargola (2004), among other scholars, argued that centuriation was an administrative tool rather than a form of extensive control of the territory, although the second one is implicit in the first assumption. They discuss the former idea of distribution of land claiming it was rather an instrument facilitating the settlement of veterans, payment of taxes and recruiting of new soldiers (Morris 2016: 127–128). This could apply to some cases throughout the Roman Empire, but it definitely could not be extended to all settlements throughout Roman territory.

According to Dilke (1971: 88), Romans favored a system of squares in which to draw surveys. In an urban context those squares were named *insulae* while in rural areas the squares were known as *centuriae*, most commonly consistent of 2.400 feet by 2.400 feet (731,5 metres by 732,5 metres). Each *centuria* was formed, in theory, by 100 allotments approximately, and each allotment was 200 *iugera* – 50,5 ha –, as it can be observed in the chart (Fig. 1). The main difference with the case of *Emerita* (Mérida, Spain) is that the Lusitanian colony was granted allotments of double the size of a regular *centuriatio*. This phenomenon has been discussed among scholars and varied from a compensation from Augustus to the veterans to an alternative approach of extending the settlers throughout the whole *territorium emeritensis* (Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera 1993). However, this practice would die out within a few decades after the widespread process of Augustan foundations in *Hispania*, due to, probably, the lack of territory prior the *Germania* campaign.

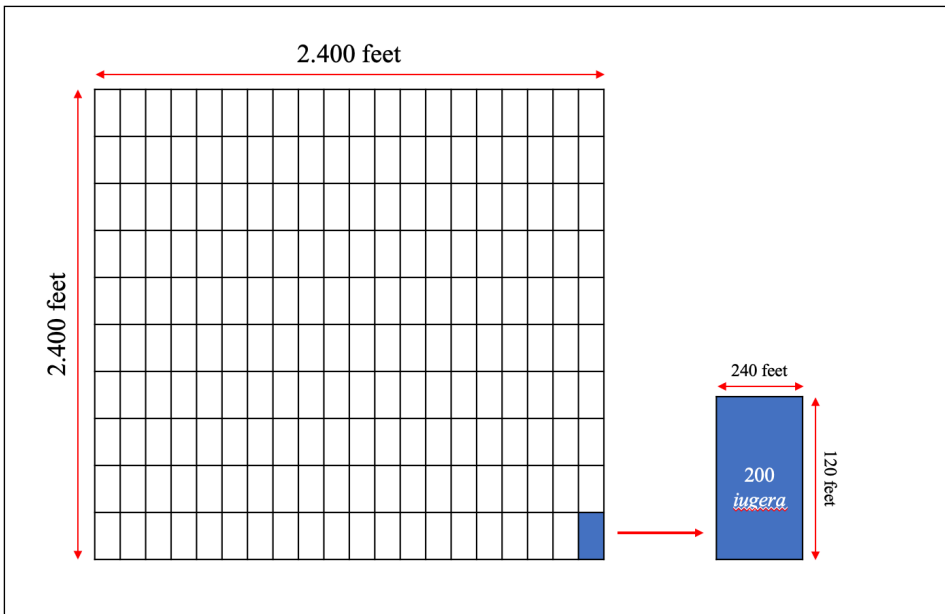


Fig. 1. *Centuriation* system. Author: Carlos Cáceres-Puerto, based on Dilke 1971: 88–90.

The difference between urban and rural *limitatio* would be a paved road, instead of a line to separate plough fields. Land distribution in the Roman Empire was not a widespread topic of research until 1833, when Dane C.T. Falbe became aware of a rectangular pattern on the fields surrounding Carthage, in Tunisia (Dilke 1971). Thereupon, the main problem archaeologists have found throughout the process of researching the land distribution policy followed by Rome, not only in *Hispania*, but in the Empire as a whole, is the lack of homogeneity. They do not follow the same pattern as each model pursues the best exploitation of the land surrounding a settlement. The paradigmatic case of Roman land distribution is the example of the North African city of *Ammaedara* (Haydrah, Tunisia) where the beginning of the *pertica* is the node formed by the city's *decumanus maximus* and *kardo maximo* (Fig. 2), dividing the *ager publicus* of the settlement, consequently, in 4 areas with a similar size (Dilke 1971; Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera 1994: 34). But as multiple studies demonstrate, this was the exception, not the rule. As a matter of fact, *Emerita*, the most documented case by Roman land surveyors, with the city itself placed in the northern bank of the Guadiana river, has over 75% of its territory in the northern valley of said river. Although it is in the allotments situated in the southern bank where most studies had taken place as it is the only portion of the *pertica* with a consistent archaeological record. The aforementioned case of *Ammaedara* does not occur in *Hispania*, being the most similar case *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza, Spain). This colony, as well as *Emerita*, was another Augustan foundation.

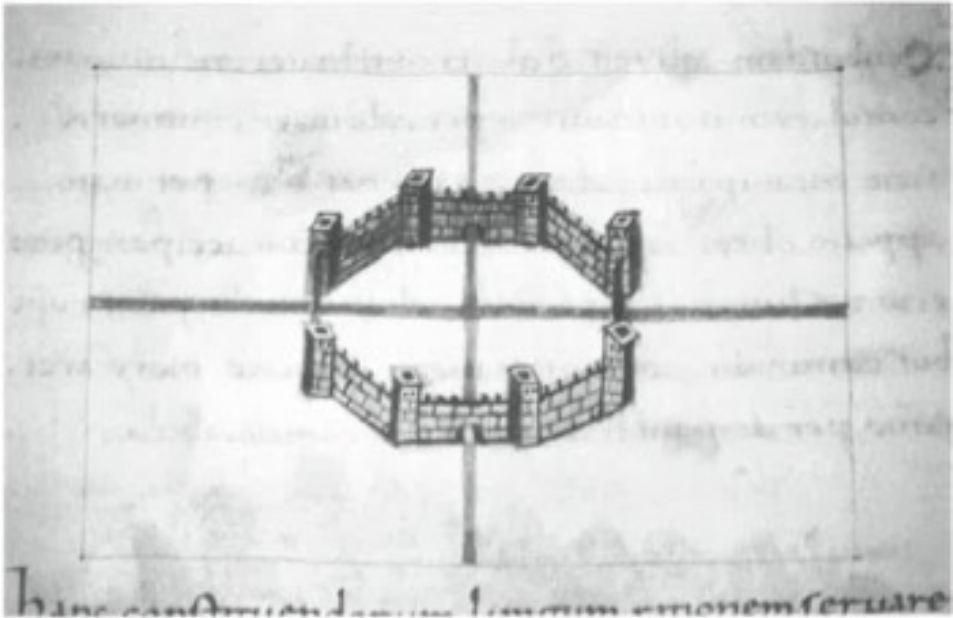


Fig. 2. From Thulin (1913: 22, Fig. 93)

The only common factor shared by the successive distribution processes, is the dispossession of the primitive land owners when the Roman State decided to develop a reorganization of the field grid. Such as Capua, when the settlement had the land confiscated and turned into *ager publicus* under the state's management as a revenge for supporting Hannibal against Rome, or like Mantua, for instance, after the defeat in the battle in 42BC, the Roman troops took over the *ager publicus* of the city distributing it among new settlers. This example is notorious because Virgil's father lost his allotment on the new *deductio*. One of the most famous cases is Carthage, after its defeat in 146BC Rome took Carthage's land possessions as *ager publicus*, dispossessing the former owners from the titularity of the *territorium* (Dilke 1971).

The grid of the territory of a settlement does not obey the preexistent *ethos*, but tends to adapt to the terrain to obtain the most efficient model for the city and its inhabitants, regardless of the previous settlers of said area. Therefore, regardless of the implantation of the centuriation in order to control the territory, settle settlers, or both, the surveyors looked for the most beneficial system. As a matter of fact, in *Tarracina* (Terracina, Italy), founded in 396BC, each of its 300 settlers was granted 2 *iugera* – 0,500 ha –, complemented with public pasture lands. H. Gromaticus refers to this aspect: “in some colonies they set up the *decumanus maximus* in such a way that it contained the trunk road crossing the colony, as at *Anxur* (Terracina) in Campania; the cultivable land has been centuriated; the remainder consists of rugged rocks, bounded as unsurvey land by natural land-

marks” (Dilke 1971: 93). Gromaticus also mentions how the inhabitants chose the locations, hinting that maybe the work of the surveyors was to divide the land where the settlers have already settled, and not the opposite case: “Men of old, because of sudden dangers of war, were not content to wall cities, but also chose rugged, hilly land to provide a natural defense. Such rocky areas could not be centuriated, but were left either as state forests or, if barren, unoccupied” (Thulin 1913; Dilke 1971).

References in classical sources to *Ager Publicus Emeritensis*

Whether it is not common to have references about the *ager publicus* of a particular settlement, *Colonia Augusta Emerita* is an unusual case within the study of Roman surveying system, due to various references from different classical authors¹. Classical sources such as *Iulius Sextus Frontinus*, *Hyginus Gromaticus*, *Aggenus Urbicus* or *Siculus Flaccus*, depict with great amount of detail the system the *gromatici*, or surveyors, developed in this specific settlement. They described the dimension of the *ager*, the length of the *pertica*, the size and extension of *centuriae*, and even an indigenous-Roman sanctuary located in one of the edges of the *territorium* of *Augusta Emerita*. Although the exceptionally good number of sources are not matched by the archaeological record. Not many carved evidences have been found regarding to the limits of the territory of *Emerita*, and, when found, they all belong to the southern stream bed of the river Guadiana. Thus, it has not been easy to establish the limits of the territory of *Emerita* (Fig. 3), especially in the northern Guadiana valley, due to the lack of strong archaeological features signaling evidences of land distribution. However, new approaches like the use of LIDAR are enabling new finds of the rural structure of *Colonia Augusta Emerita*.

The extension of the area held and controlled by *Emerita* is given by Frontinus (Th., 9). He described the territory being of “great extension and length”. Because of him we know that the entire area of public land was not distributed to the settlers.

[...] Multis enim locis adsignationi agrorum inmanitas superfuit, sicut in Lusitania finibus Augustinorum. (Th., 9).

[...] in many regions a large amount of land was left over from the allocation of plots, for instance, in Lusitania, in the territory of the colonists of *Augusta [Emerita]* (De Nardis 1994: 55).

¹ Whether the Roman scholars did have their own texts, I will be following C. Thulin 1913 edition of *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*.



Fig. 3. Map of the Iberian Peninsula with the limits of the provinces. *Colonia Augusta Emerita* is highlighted in red. (Keay 2003: 167)

The *ager publicus emeritensis*, as it will be seen further on, was large enough to undertake 3 different processes of land distribution. Even after the third *deductio*, there were still allotments to be assigned to new settlers (Cordero Ruiz 2013: 78). The size of each plot was favored by the abundance of territory in the mid Guadiana valley, rather than a specific Augustean policy of over rewarding the veterans from the Cantabrian Wars. This hypothesis is supported by López Melero (1984: 84–86) and Saquete Chamizo (1997: 49–50), among other scholars. Besides Frontinus, also Tacitus mentions the extent of the land granted to the colony and its settlers (Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 78).

Regarding to the size of the allotments of *Emerita's territorium*, as well as the orientation (see Fig. 2) and limits of the *ager publicus*, it is described by Hyginus Gromaticus (Th., 135–136). Gromaticus explanations have been proven right by different scholars, especially E. Ariño Gil and J.M. Gurt (1993, 1994a, 1994b), for instance. Various archaeological features prove H. Gromaticus right, such as different parts of the *via* connecting *Emerita* and *Italica* (Santiponce, Sevilla), where the path of the roads coincides in some points with the layout of the *decumanus maximus* of the colony (Gorges 1986; Cerrillo 1988; Ariño Gil and Gurt 1993, 1994a). One aspect to discuss is the reason why the entire layout of

the grid does not align perfectly with the urban grid, considering the countryside belonging to the city, *ager*, an extension of the *urbs*. Gromaticus also described the size of each allotment: “Augustus granted 400 *iugera*” – 100 ha – (Gorges and Germán Rodríguez 2006: 95) to Emerita. Following this division, the *decumanus* are 40 *actus* long, and the *kardines* are 20 *actus* width’.

Divus Augustus in Veturia Emeritae iugerum CCCC, quibus divisionibus decimani habent longitudinis actus XL, kardines actus XX [...]. (Th., 135–136).

Divine Augustus granted 400 *iugera* to Emerita in Baeturia, on this division the *decumanus* have a length of 40 *actus* and the *kardines* 20 *actus*.

Gromaticus also mentions the existence of “*limitem novum et veteres*”, old and new frontiers. This has been a matter of discussion among scholar, setting a date for the different processes of distribution of land. This is consistent with the theories of Cordero Ruiz (2013), among other scholars, as well as with the scripts of Frontinus, when stating that the vast territory belonging to the colony was not distributed all at once. Gromaticus treats a common feature within *centuriation*, otherwise unlikely to be corroborated by archaeological record: *praefecturae*. According to him, parts of the territory of *Emerita* used to belong to other settlements, and therefore, its orientation does not concur with the grid of the capital. We have two names for the *praefecturae*, ‘*Turgaliensis*’ and ‘*Mullicensis*’ (Th., 136), both with equal allotments of those areas belonging to *Emerita* originally.

The location of the first *deductio* amongst the veterans is described by Aggenus Urbicus (Th., 44). According to him, the first wave of veterans would have been settled on the edges of *Emerita*’s *ager publicus*, to set the borders of the colony’s territory. Only a few allotments were given nearby the colony and the river *Anas* (Cordero Ruiz 2013: 82). A. Urbicus also disproved Pliny and Mela with this comment: “the river *Anas* (Gadiana river) flows through the middle of the *pertica* of the colony”. Both Pliny and Mela had established the limits of the Lusitanian province at the river *Anas* (Pliny, *NH*. IV, 1, 6, 22, 115; Mela, *De. Chor.* II. 87).

Aggenus Urbicus also mentions the existence of a sacred forest – *Lucus Feroniae* – in the vicinity of *Emerita*, with an area of 1000 *iugera* (Th., 37). This has been misplaced in various locations: Rodríguez Bordallo and Ríos Graña (1976) in Medina de las Torres (Badajoz), Álvarez Martínez (1988) in the Proserpina dam, nearby *Emerita*. Cordero Ruiz (2013: 83–84) signals the most probable location the area that nowadays occupies the early medieval church of Santa Lucía del Trampal (Alcuéscar, Cáceres), where a shrine consecrated to *Ataecina* (Fig. 4), commonly identified with the deity *Feroniae*, was found. More evidences point at this location as the most probable, like two *termini augustales* found nearby the church establishing the edges of the territory of *Emerita*.



Fig. 4. Pre-Roman figurine representing the goddess *Ataecina*.

Photo: Ángle Briz, Diario HOY, 12.02.2017.

Finally, comments written by Siculus Flaccus confirm the existence of *praefecturae* (Th., 124–125). A *praefecturae* were those territories incorporated to the area administrated by a *civitates*, but it did belong to a second city beforehand. It was different from the area assimilated during the *centuriationis* process, although the determined area was under the administration of the colony with no distinction from its *ager publicus*. It was a separated unit created when the land assigned to a city was not enough to settle its inhabitants. It usually happened when the city had not enough plots to divide between its inhabitants, not the case of *Emerita* whatsoever (Ariño Gil and Gurt 1993: 46). As the segregated land would remain named after the city it originally belonged to, different scholars have argued which areas could have been *praefecturae*, like *Lacimurga*, western *Emerita*.

Limits of the Lusitanian province

The frontier between Lusitania and *Baetica* was placed along the Guadiana river, according to Pliny the Elder and Mela, even though Aggenus Urbicus located it southernmost, as “*per mediam coloniae perticam ire flumen Anam, circa*

*quod sunt adsignati qua usque tunc solum utile uisum est*² (Th., 44). That is, referring to the *pertica* of the colony.

By defining the territory controlled and managed by *Colonia Augusta Emerita* we are, also, referring to the frontier of Lusitania and *Baetica* as well, on its south and southeastern side at least. Although ancient sources, such as Mela and Pliny, refer to the limit among provinces, it has been a substantial debate regarding to whether both references were accurate enough to be taken into consideration, or not. During the past 30 years, it has been an increasing number of researches on the southern Lusitania – *Baetica* border (Cantó 1989: 149–153; Ariño Gil and Gurt Esparraguera 1993: 45–66; Ariño Gil, Gurt Esparraguera, Palet Martínez 2004; Ariño Gil 2005: 95–112; Cordero Ruiz 2013), favoured by the epigraphical study of the *termini augustales*. The boundary marker of Montemolín (Badajoz), for instance, signals the southernmost point of the Lusitanian province. It marks the boundary 100 km southern Emerita (Fig. 5), exceeding *Baetica* settlements such as *Nertobriga Concordia Iulia* (Fregenal de la Sierra), *Contributa Iulia Ugultunia* (Medina de las Torres) or *Regina Turdulorum* (Casas de Reina) (Pliny, *NH*, III, 13–14; Cantó 1989: 150).



Fig. 5. Montemolín boundary mark. Photo: Hispania Epigraphica.

² “In the middle of the *pertica* of the colony flows the river *Anas*, alongside this river the plots have been allocated as far as fertile land can be seen” (Ariño Gil *et al.* 2004: 147).

Ariño Gil, Gurt i Esparraguera and Palet Martínez (2004: 139) also established typology of areas in the Lusitanian province. This remarks an uneven level of both integration and population that can explain a dichotomy between the southern and western side and the hinterland. The reason why there is a decompensation between both sides, and more archaeological features had been identified in the past in some places while in the hinterlands there are lacking a substantial number of evidence backing up the theories some scholars have about the frontier between Lusitania and *Tarraconensis*. Southern Tagus river, until the border with *Baetica*, there are fertile lands containing the major number of settlements of the province; and in northern Tagus river there are colonies scattered throughout the hinterland. Those settlements are slightly bigger in the coast line. *Olisipo* (Lisbon, Portugal), the main harbor of the province was located in the division between both. Meanwhile, the hinterland is inhabited by remnants of pre-Roman population, *Vettones* (Álvarez-Sanchís 2003) and Lusitanians (Martín Bravo 1999), mostly, with a lower degree of integration amongst the new Roman order.

Therefore, this epigraphical evidence does not reflect the real boundary with the *Baetica* province; although it needs to be taken into consideration that the boundaries did probably change throughout 400 years. It is possible that the Montemolín boundary mark was right in an earlier stage of the process but was outdated when the cadaster was modified, such as the last centuriation developed during Vespasian's reign, in *Emerita* (Hinrichs 1974; Ariño Gil, Gurt Esparraguera 1993: 49). As it has been pointed out before, Pliny and Mela set the border along the river *Anas*, even though this statement was disproved by Prudentius (*Peristephanon*, Hym. III) when describing the runaway of Eulalia from *Emerita* crossing the *Anas* towards *Metellinum* (Medellín, Spain), remaining in Lusitanian territory (Arias 1967: 370). However, Prudentius' accounts cannot be trusted any more than Pliny or Mela's, academics tend to admit this text as more accurate as it concords with the archaeological records. Some scholars have even used *Peristephanon* as an evidence in their attempt to clarify *Emerita*'s – and, therefore, the southern border of Lusitania – limits. García Iglesias (1972), Sillières (1982) and Arias (1967) himself adduced Prudentius to prove that the border between Lusitania and *Baetica* was 30–38 miles southern *Emerita* (Cantó 1989: 195).

Although as Alicia Cantó argues, by using Prudentius' hymns we can only establish the borders at the 4th century AD. Hence, it might be perfectly possible that Pliny and Mela's texts were correct if they were taking into consideration the first stages of the colony, when the Lusitanian province had not been yet created and the *territorium* of the colony could have been smaller that it was as a provincial capital. However, this theory refutes the postulate proposed by Le Roux (1982) and Ariño Gil (1993, 1994, 2004). They argued that the colony was officially founded by 24BC, according to the first *deductio* and election of the first *duumviri*, but *de facto* established when the Lusitanian province was set up. Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera (1993) argued that the relation between the foundation of

Augusta Emerita and the establishment of Lusitania as a province is that strong, that one cannot be understood without the other. Thou *Emerita* would have a large *ager* since the moment it was founded, as it was conceived as a provincial capital from the start.

The frontier would have been placed 50 km southern *Emerita*, in the area comprising Villafranca de los Barros, Zafra and Los Santos de Maimona (Fig. 6). Other scholars, such as Gorges (1982, 1983), Sillières (1982), or Enrique Ariño Gil and J.M. Gurt i Esparraguera (1993, 1994), locate the frontier between both provinces 45 km southern *Emerita*, where they have distinguished a change in the pattern of construction in the road from *Emerita* to *Italica* (Santiponce, Sevilla). Regardless this lack of consensus, the scope of the limit line has been narrowed down consistently, as well as the border of the *ager publicus* of *Emerita*, as both share the border line in the southern part. However, as Alicia Cantó (1989) argues, it is unlikely that colony like *Emerita*, consistent of such an extensive territory, was not affected by the political, economic and demographical crisis underwent by Rome since the end of the second century until Diocletian's reign. Therefore, the extension of its *ager publicus*, often unpopulated, would have definitely been affected. *Emerita* and its *ager publicus* did not stay untouched, and changed, possibly rearranging the deserted allotments after the third *centuriation* even if that implied reducing the territory of the colony when the colony experimented difficult times.

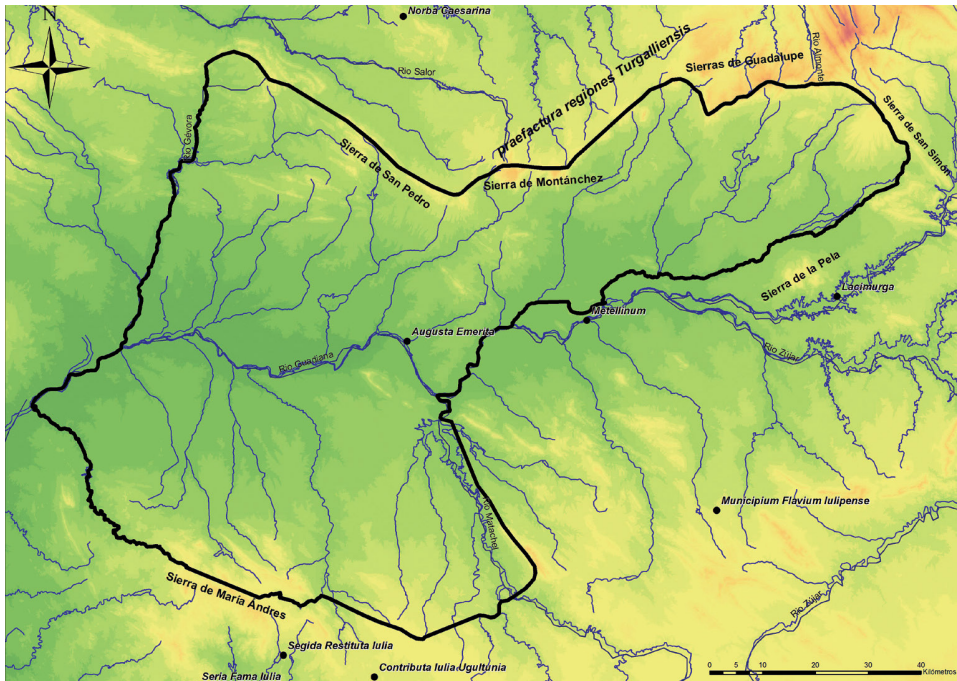


Fig. 6. Map of the limits of the *ager* of *Augusta Emerita*. (Cordero Ruiz 2018: 452)

Limits of the southern section of *Ager Publicus Emeritensis*

In order to comprehend the urbanism of *Emerita Augusta*, as a Roman *civitas*, colony and provincial core, it is crucial to understand the surroundings; the territory directly administered not only by the city, but its inhabitants themselves. *Emerita Augusta's ager publicus* has been broadly studied, not only by scholars nowadays, but by Roman *gromatici* as well. It constitutes the best case to understand the land distribution system applied by Rome throughout the Empire, as authors like Frontinus or Aggenus Urbicus, amongst others, described it thoroughly. The reason of such a large *territorium* has to be looked after the magnitude of the land within reach, rather than a form of compensation to the veterans (Fig. 7) (López Melero 1984; Saquete Chamizo 1997; Cordero Ruiz 2013). Although the existence of *praefecturae* in such a big area, when authors like Frontinus (Th., 9) referred that after three different *deductio* there were still land available, is still an unknown feature for researchers. Thus, it is the location of those *praefecturae* comprised in the *ager publicus* of *Emerita*, or in a separate administrative unit depending on the colony.



Fig. 7. Limits of *ager publicus emeritensis* southern river *Anas*, according to Ramírez Sádaba (2004: 111)

Although it has been an historiographic debate during the past decades (Cantó 1989; Ariño Gil 1993; Ariño Gil *et al.* 2004), Aggenus Urbicus (Th., 44) pointed out that the *pertica* crossed the river *Anas* (Fig. 8), despite of what Pliny (*NH*, IV, 1, 6, 22, 115) and Mela (*De Chor*, II, 87) had stated. This is proved by the *termini augustales*.

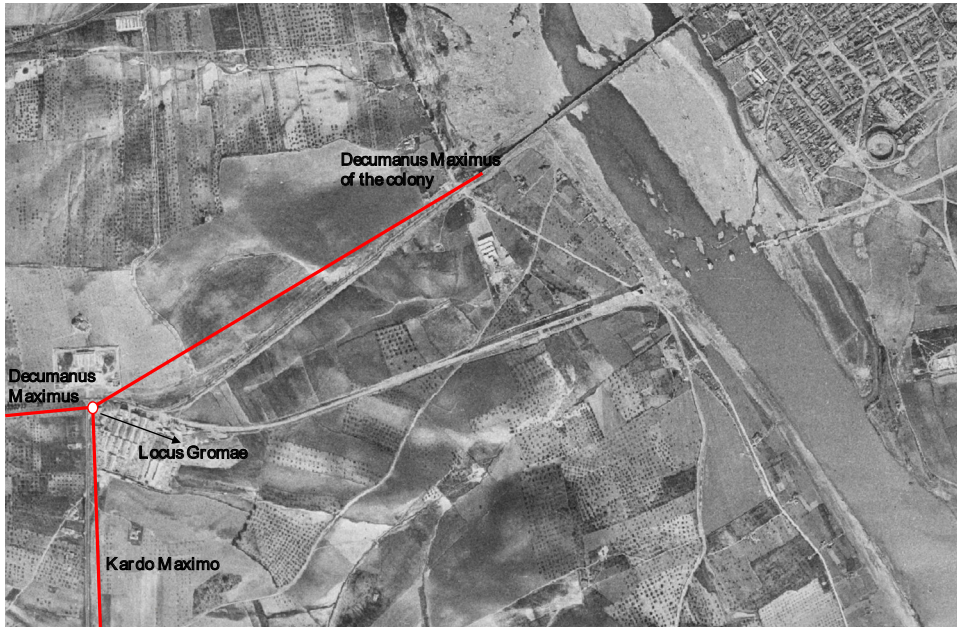


Fig. 8. Location of the *Locus Gromae*, after Gorges and Rodríguez Martín (2004).

Author: Carlos Cáceres-Puerto

The foundation of *Colonia Augusta Emerita*, according to the textual evidences, in 25BC (Dio, *Roman History*, LIV, 25, 5) is intrinsically related to the establishment of the Lusitanian province (Ariño Gil *et al.* 2004; Cordero Ruiz 2013), for this reason the limits of both territories are linked. Especially in the southern part. Without getting into much detail about *who* occupied this territory, it is important to establish the occupation of the area by the first settlers in order to determine the magnitude of the task of establishing new boundaries in an area with no previous major Roman settlements. The first inhabitants were responsible of determining the frontiers of both the colony and its *ager publicus*, and the province and its *territorium*. According to Le Roux (1982, 2006), the status of the colony was already set up by the end of the first century BC, as well as the borders of the city and the province.

The limits of *Augusta Emerita* are unclear in the northern façade, regarding whether it exists, or not, a *praefecturae* in surrounding *Turgallium*. The southern limits have been set by different researches, like Alonso Sánchez *et al.* (1989), Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera (1993) and Ariño Gil *et al.* (2004).

Hyginus Gromaticus' reference to the orientation of the grid allows us to unveil the limits of the centuriation. As stated beforehand, Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera (1994: 51–57) determined a change of pattern in the stonework of the road from *Emerita* to *Italica* (Fig. 9), in what appears to be the border mark

between Lusitania and *Baetica*. Some parts of this road follow the same orientation as the *decumanus maximus* of the colony (Gorges 1988; Cerrillo 1988; Ariño Gil and Gurt i Esparraguera 1994; Cordero Ruiz 2013).

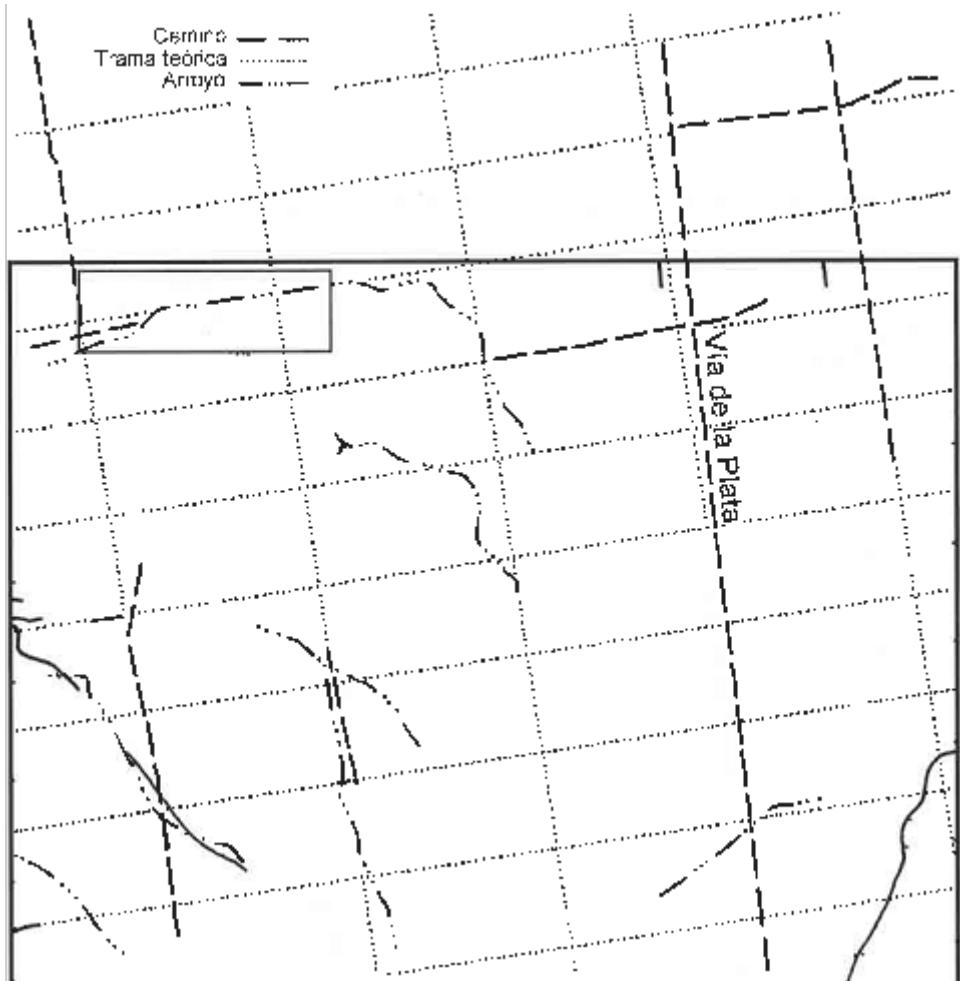


Fig. 9. *Iter ab emerita asturicam* in relation to centuriation next to modern-day Almendralejo (Badajoz), according to (Ariño Gil *et al.* 2004: 71)

Therefore, this is the southern edge of the *ager publicus emeritensis*. The border would follow an arch-line in the region of Tierra de Barros, among the Arroyo of St. Serván Sierra and the Guadajira river on the west, sierras of Calera, Feria, María Andrés and Los Santos on the southern side and the Matachel River on its eastern façade (Cordero Ruiz 2013). The river Zapatón is the westernmost frontier of the colony. From this river, the border would flow along until reaching the mouth of the river Gévora –with nowadays marks the border between Spain

and Portugal, near Badajoz (Spain) – until the Guadiana river. The Guadiana river would be the frontier, as it currently is with Spain-Portugal, the border line until the Guadiana meet the river Olivenza.

Conclusion

The accounts of *Colonia Augusta Emerita* in classical sources prove the importance the Augustan colony enjoyed in ancient times, as well as a sufficient enough *territorium* to settle a vast population. The magnitude of the *pertica* and its allotments prove nearly impossible to inhabit on its entirety, which follows different theories regarding a bigger territory on an early stage of the colony in order to demonstrate its value as the capital of a newly established Roman province under Augustus' reign. This is corroborated by the existence of, at least, three *prae-fecturae*, increasing the *ager* of the colony seizing territory from other Roman settlements, like *Norba Caesarina* (Cáceres) or *Metellinum* (Medellín), although the size and location of some *prae-fecturae*, like *prae-fecturae Turgalliensis* needs to be reconsidered, as different archaeological evidence point out in a distinct direction. Nonetheless, this is a topic for further research.

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