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90/1 (2024)

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Idee, materialità, simbologie

Dipartimento di Storia, Antropologia, Religioni, Arte, Spettacolo



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(Raffaele Pettazzoni 1925)

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Two aspects of *verbena*

In this work, we will discuss two different context of use of *verbena*¹. In the first section, written by Giovanna Rocca, a few observations about the *liba* of the Roman and Umbrian sacrifice will be presented that, because of their characteristics, are fundamental in identifying *tauri* and *verbenae* as *liba*. Then, Festus's *glossa* in which they are listed among the *ficta farinacea* products will be analysed *verbatim*. The second section, written by Giulia Sarullo, will focus on Livy's passage that accounts for the terms that are used for the collection, the presentation and the instrumental use of the herb in the Fetial ritual.

1. Tauri verbenaeque (F. 494L) [GR]

I would like to resume here an issue pointed out in two of my works focused on the sacrificial lexicon and on the relationship between *fictor* and *figulus* which has remained pending and waits to be explored in depth in light of the linguistic, cultural and comparative characteristics it presents². As a premise, a starting framework is offered for the analysis of the Festus's gloss *Tauri verbenaeque*, which must be inserted in the context of the ritual (*in commentario sacrorum*), in the series of *ficta farinacea* products and in the ideology of paired products.

1.1. A foreword

Liba play a central role in Roman sacrificial ritual³. Intended for the divinity, they are specified into two distinct entities but they are associated to form a pair of products made with processed flour, such as *strues* and *ferctum/fertum*⁴. The pair is guaranteed by the structure of the compound *struferctarius* (F. 376L)⁵ and from the information that the *flamen dialis* had

¹ The results of this research were presented in the "Communication Techniques in Ancient Mediterranean Ritual Practices" Panel at the 20th EASR Conference in Vilnius on September 5th, 2023.

² G. Rocca, *Lat. sagina*, in N. Bolatti Guzzo - P. Taracha (eds.), "And I Knew Twelve Languages". A Tribute to Massimo Poetto on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday, Agade Bis, Warsaw 2019, pp. 552-559; Ead., *Ficolos med feced*, in «AION» 9 (2020), pp. 115-124.

³ A.L. Prosdociimi offered some interesting considerations on the issues that are presented in our foreword, see A.L. Prosdociimi, *Le Tavole Iguvine. Preliminari all'interpretazione. La testualità: fatti e metodi*, II, Olschki, Firenze 2015, pp. 478-492.

⁴ Their connection derives from the ancient sources: Cato *RR* 134, *ob struem obmovendam et fertum libandum* and 141, *item cultro facito struem et fertum uti adsiet*; Paulus *ex F.* 75, 17L, *ferctum genus libi dictum, quod crebrius ad sacra ferebatur; nec sine strue, altero genere libi*.

⁵ The compound is made up by a monosyllabic first element: *stru-fercto-asio-* > *struferctario-*.

to have *apud eius lecti fulcrum capsulam [esse] cum strue atque fertō* (Gell. x, 15). The fact that he had to have them always by him – which means that they were not prepared at the moment for a specific ritual – demonstrates a symbolic presence endowed with a strong ideology. These *liba* are characterized by a different preparation, as both the etymology of *strues* from *struō* “to arrange, construct, compose, build”⁶ and Festus’s description (*digitorum coniunctorum non dissimilia; qui superiecta panicula in transversum continentur*) show. Prosdocimi, who focused only on the first part of the lemma, considered *strues* as a dough base on which thin strips of dough are overlaid in the shape of joined fingers, but a more exact description is offered by Holland and Glinister⁷. The etymology of *ferctum*, linked to *farcio* rather than to *ferre*⁸, alludes to a stuffed dough. Therefore, we have two *liba* that are characterised by a different production, form a pair made up by two “things” that are not specific *per se* but express a category inside a wider *genus* (Paulus ex F. 409L. *strues genera liborum*). Some extra-Latin examples in the Iguvine Tablets for the ritual of piaculum and lustration (TI VI-VIIA) confirm the presence of a pair, similar in structure and content, in which we find *struśla* and *ficla*, in the same order as they appear in the Roman ritual and to be associated with the sacrificial parts of the victim. Three testimonies about the ancient Veneti attributed to Theopompus⁹ describe the *auspicium* performed at the beginning of the sowing time that includes, besides the way to feed the birds (here the crows), the offering of a pair of δῶρα, defined as ψαιστὰ ἄττα “kneaded” (with no further specification, perhaps with other ingredients?) and μεμαγμένα μάζαι καλῶς τε καὶ εὖ “well and perfectly kneaded”. The comparison, to be dated to the 4th century BC because of the attribution to Theopompus, is of great importance in that it assures the antiquity of the ritual and shows a hereditary feature. Moreover, it confirms that the Umbrian examples are not the product of recent Romanisation, nor a matter of chance.

Turning back to Rome, *turunda* is another significant example. It has a peculiar status: *ut quoddam libum*¹⁰, but it is also used for domestic purposes¹¹ so it is a pair in itself. Lastly, there is *offa*, which is only partially pertinent

⁶ M. De Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2008, s.v. *struō*.

⁷ L. Holland, *Janus and the bridge*, American Academy in Rome, Roma 1961, pp. 271-273: «a composite form built up of separate finger-like sticks and held together by a strip of the pastry (*panicula*) laid across them»; F. Glinister, *Festus and ritual Foodstuffs*, in «*Eruditio Antiqua*» 6 (2014), pp. 215-227: «*strues* are kind of cakes, not unlike conjoined [or interlaced] fingers, which are held together by a *panicula* thrown on top crosswise» (p. 218).

⁸ A derivation from *ferre* is affirmed in A. Ernout - A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue latine: Histoire des mots*, Klincksieck, Paris 2001, s.v. on the basis of the ancient testimonies. Although it refers to a *ferre* with ritual value, this interpretation is not acceptable because of the structure of *ferctum*, where *-c-* is primary; as compared to *farctum*, it is a back-formation (attested by the weakening of *a* in *e* in compounds). For these reasons, it is separated from the paradigm and can enter the paradigm of *ferre* at a later time.

⁹ *Fr. Gr. Hist.* 115 frg. 274 = Antigonus, *hist. mir.* 173; Ps. Aristoteles, *de mir. auscult.* 119; Aelian., *n. a.* xvii 16. The fragments can be viewed at <<https://www.dfhg-project.org/DFHG/>> (10/23).

¹⁰ Non. 552M: *turundam, ut libum, sacrum quoddam ex farre genus panificii*.

¹¹ Cato *A.C.* 157, 14: *et si fistula erit, turundam intro tradito*.

since it cannot be defined as *liba*, because the latter are specifically destined to the divinity: this is a special food offered to the chickens in a moment of the *auspicium pullarium*, that is important because of the public and military consequences to be drawn¹², but it is also ordinary food. *Offa* and *puls* are still products made with flour of different cereals that are distinguished by the form/variety in which they are prepared¹³.

From this quick overview, the following emerges:

- the *liba* are in pairs
- the pair consists of two names
- the two names are in two categories that are discerned by the ingredients (flours) and/or the way of production
- the two names are linked in *asyndeton* in Umbrian.

1.2. Tauri verbenaeque

Now we are going to see if this scheme can be applied to *tauri* and *verbenae* attested in Festus 494L: *tauri verbenaeque in commentario sacrorum significat ficta farinacea*.

1. *Tauri verbenaeque*. Leaving aside *liba* for a moment, but we will get back to it in a short bit, the first two elements of the scheme are met: we have a pair and it consists of two names. These pose two morphological questions: the plural *tauri* and *verbenae* and the syntax with *-que*. For the first point, there is a comparison in *Manias*, also *ficta ex farina*, and in *turundas*¹⁴ as food for chickens: this depends on the shape of the *libum*, which is first assembled as a single specimen and then, because of its shape, can be replicated. As to the second issue, the conjunction *-que* of the two elements is found in a structure that reproduces the Latin type (*morbos*) *visos invisosque*, and *vineta virgultaque* (Cato, *A.C.* 141). These are examples of an alliterative formula that expresses the complex totality by means of a junction of components of the same totality in a two-member clause with a binary rhythm. This principle is the mechanism by which these formulae work and its recognition is the essential point for attributing a value to the individual elements. The pair of

¹² In the *auspicium pullarium*, usually practiced in military contexts but also for matters of public order, such as political meetings or the elections of magistrates, the consultation concerned the falling of food during the meal, which represented a favorable auspice. What the chickens should eat was identified by *offa* made with *puls*, with some overlapping between the two: Cic. *Div.* II, 35, 73 (*avis*) *nunc vero inclusa in cavea et fame enecta si in offam pultis invadit*; Cic. *Div.* I, 27: *necesse est enim offa obiecta cadere frustum ex pulli ore*; Festus 284L: *Puls potissimum dabatur pullis in auspiciis*.

¹³ Varr. *RR* III, 5, 4: *Deorsum in terram esse aquam quam bibere possint, cibatum offas positas. Eae maxime glomerantur ex fisis et farre mixto*; Col. *RR* 7, 3: *cibus autem praebetur ordeacea farina, quae quum est aqua conspersa et subacta, formantur offae, quibus aves saginantur*; 9, 2: *Hieme offae panis vino madefactae celerius opimant*.

¹⁴ Cato *RR* 89: *Gallinas et anseres sic farcito... Polline vel farina hordeacea conspersa turundas faciat, eas in aquam intingat, in os indat*; Varr. *RR* III, 9: *(Gallinae) farciunt turundis hordeaceis, partim admixtis [e] farina lolleacia aut semine lini in aqua dulci*.

liba struſla ficla is attested in *asyndeton* in several occurrences in the Iguvine Tablets, as if it was a compound built on an ideological and pragmatical basis (and this is evident in *struferctarius*)¹⁵. In *tauri verbenaeque* the pair is joined by the conjunction *-que* that presents the *asyndeton* in a different way for greater clarity. The steps are clear: the technical terms are transparent as lexemes when the formula is created, but at a later time they are no longer clear and the formula is only comprehensible because it is applied to a religious context: “how” the formulae mean something has to precede “what” they mean. The juxtaposition with a coordination puts on the same level two entities whose consistency has to be inquired. Here we are dealing either with a purposely made modification of the *asyndeton* (which was not necessary since *-que* can also be found in the ancient formulae and in Cato), or with an innovation to make the textual contents syntactically more acceptable.

2. *in commentario sacrorum* refers to documents of sacerdotal origin. In Festus’s work, *libri* and *commentarii*, also in the singular form *commentarius*, *-um*, are mentioned in several occasions with various meanings. *Sacra*, in its generic meaning, indicates cults or religious ceremonies.

3. *ficta farinacea* is the nodal point. The action of *fingerere* results in products made of flour, the same by which the *Maniae* are *ex farina in hominis figura*. The action is carried out by the *fictor*: Ennius, Ann. 114 Sk: (*Numa*) *Mensas constituit idemque ancilia <primu>s libaque fictores, Argeos et tutulatus*. Here we have a link between *fictores* and *liba*, which is more evident in Varro’s *LL VII, 44: Liba quod libandi causa fiunt. Fictores dicti a fingendi libis*. The explicit chronological context to which Ennius refers (*Numa*) connects, in a single verse, the existence of artisans for manufactured products (*ancilia*) and artisans *tout court* (*fictores*). As it is well known, *Numa*’s activity is mainly devoted to the organisation of the cult; this operation would have also implied the fixing of what pre-existed, in a *continuum* that sees at its ends the introduction of an innovation or the fixation of a pre-existing element by means of an adequate naming. For the technical figure that is defined by a specific task, a linguistic resource is used that exploits the semantic field of *fingerere* because this has in itself the potential to pragmatically signify the innovation, both in terms of the innovation itself and as a formalization of a “specific manual work”. The *fictores* carry out a function *in sacris* because they “work” *liba*, one of the main elements of the ritual, as we have seen; in particular, they transform a dough by giving a shape to it, so that it becomes a flat bread, *vel similia*. The verb *fingerere* indicates the action of “shaping” a soft mass (of flour, which can be of various grains), turning the contents into a form (*ficta farinacea*) that has a particular use and has different types of

¹⁵ Also in *asyndeton* is *fitilla*, which corresponds exactly to the Umbrian *ficla* and, as *ferctum* is in second position, as attested in *sacra prisca... pulte fitilla conficiuntur*, Pliny, *NH XVIII, 84*. On the other hand, in *boni etiam farre ac fitilla religiosi sunt* (Sen. *Ben. I, 6, 3*) the *asyndeton* is dissolved and another cereal is mentioned.

manufacture. The status of *liba* is then applied to *tauri* and *verbenae* as the following *significat* implies.

4. *significat* is the verb that Festus uses to make the meaning of the word explicit.

5. *Tauri verbenaque*. Who or what are they? As the other pairs that we have seen, they are *liba* with two distinct names, that share the same ingredient (flour) and way of production (*fictum*), presumably worked in two different shapes but apparently they do not belong to the same gender: one is animated, whatever the value of *taurus* may be (man or animal), and the other is inanimate.

This point may be further explored by reflecting on the individual members of the pair, starting from the material, in order to subsequently recover the type-based solidarity of the pair with reflections on the form.

Our analysis begins with *taurus*. Quintilian VIII, 2.12-14, in a noteworthy passage, poses the problem of the disambiguation of the term, with these preliminary remarks:

«Obscurity results from the employment of obsolete words as, for instance, if an author should search the records of the priests. [...] Obscurity may also be produced by the use of words which are more familiar in certain districts than in others, or which are of a technical character. [...] Such expressions should be avoided if we are pleading before a judge who is ignorant of their meaning, or, if used, should be explained, as may have to be done in the case of what are called homonyms»¹⁶.

Then we get to the point we are interested in: «For example, the word *taurus* may be unintelligible unless we make it clear whether we are speaking of a bull, or a mountain, or a constellation, or the name of a man, or the root of a tree». In order to remain in the same natural-physical context of *verbenae*, that would lead us to the choice of *taurus* = *radix arboris*, we could suppose the following necessary steps in order to get to a homologated pair starting from the material used to produce the *Tauri*:

- two moments in time have to be distinguished. First the two “things” *tauri* and *verbenae* are paired because they are made of the same material (woven grass / roots) though they designate two distinct entities. The names derive from an ordinary metonymic process: from the material to the object. At a later time, because of their status of ritual instruments, they are transformed by introducing a different material (flour) that does not involve their name.
- the later moment could be identified in the institution of the *fictores* by Numa: the two “things” used in the ritual are within their purview and, as a consequence, they are *finctae* in the same way. The new technique

¹⁶ The translation of Quintilian’s passages is taken from H.E. Butler (ed.), *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian* (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1921.

is the mean by which the two *liba* are confirmed, but their association in a pair still remains to be explained.

While appealing and not without merit for the homogeneity it grants to the pair, this hypothesis is nonetheless weak on a speculative level. Its weakness lies in attempting to provide historical consistency in terms of the “how, when, and where” to a dimension that is unattainable in its implementation, because the process would only yield the final part (*ficta farinacea*); moreover, it would fail to address the “type” issue.

Furthermore, we have several lemmata from Festus dedicated to the figure of the bull and the *Tauri ludi*, which provide information about their function and form. These lemmata could offer an alternative and more solid interpretative key for the pair.

Besides the *Tauri ludi*¹⁷, in Festus there are a few entries dedicated to *taurus* and in one of them it is associated with *simulacra fluminum*:

F. 494.1L: according to Glinister¹⁸, the ambiguous *Taurium aes appellat, quod in ludos Taurios consumitur* is surely a foodstuff compared by Buck¹⁹ to “animal crackers”. However, this meaning is ruled out by the examination of the *lemmata* in which *aes* is preceded by an adjective and it always refers to the metal.

F. 496L: *Taurorum specie simulacra fluminum id est cum cornibus, formantur, quod sunt atrocita ut tauri*. This particular case is probably associated with the fury of waters, which is why the iconography of river male deities usually includes horns as an essential trait²⁰. If that be the case, Festus’s *tauri* not only would be confirmed as the animated element of the pair, but also provide a useful datum for the definition of *verbenae*.

Verbenae. An example of human figures made up by vegetable material is represented by *Argei* in Varro’s passage *LL VII*, 43-44, where the grammarian mentions them after *liba* and *fictores* in a non-consequential way: *Argei fiunt e scirpeis, simulacra hominum xxvii; ea quotannis de ponte Sublicio a sacerdotibus publice deici solent in Tiberim. Scirpus* is attested in Paulus *ex F.* 444, 21L: *scirpus est id, quod in palustribus locis nature leve et procerum, unde*

¹⁷ Festus 478L s.v. *Tauri Ludi*; Paulus *ex F.* 479L: *Taurii appellabantur ludi in honorem deorum inferorum facti. Instituti autem: videntur hac de causa. Regnante Superbo Tarquinio quum magna incidisset pestilentia in mulieres gravidas, quæ fuerat facta ex carne divendita populo taurorum, ob hoc diis inferis instituti et Taurii vocati sunt*; Serv. *ad Aen.* II, 140: *unde ludi Taurei dicti, qui ex libris fatalibus a rege Tarquinio Superbo instituti sunt propterea, quod omnis partus mulierum male cedebat, alii ludos Taureos a Sabinis propter pestilentiam institutos dicunt, ut lues publica in has hostias verterentur*. F. 480L: *Taurus vacas steriles* refers to feminine animals.

¹⁸ F. Glinister, *Festus and ritual Foodstuffs*, cit., p. 218.

¹⁹ C.D. Buck, *A Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian*, Ginn, Boston 1905, p. 305.

²⁰ Porph. *ad Hor. carm.* IV 14, 25: *omnium fluminum genii taurino vultu, etiam cum cornibus, pinguntur propter impetus et fremitus ipsarum aquarum*. Also Servius, *ad Aen.* VIII, 77, assimilates the noise of the fluvial waters to the mooing of the bulls and the curving of the banks to that of the horns.

tegetes fiunt. The reed grows spontaneously in damp places, especially along the Tiber, it is flexible, elastic, with a knotless trunk, therefore it is inexpensive because of its availability and for the proximity and it is suited to be worked.

The type of material used to shape the Argei as human figures could also shed light on the form of the *verbenae (libae)*, which are made of a different type of plant (verbena, myrtle, olive, or other) but are always classified botanically, bringing both members of the pair back to the same animate genus that is distinguished between animal figures (here *taurus* = bull) and human figures.

The assimilation with the Argei, therefore, consists only in the form because Festus places them in the class of *ficta farinacea* and in the category of *tauri* and *Maniae*, therefore the *verbenae* are a *libum* with a human figure, a figure that elsewhere is not a *libum* but is made of rushes and not of flour, hence the need for the gloss for Festus.

The connection between *tauri* and *verbenae* consists in the ritual homologation that puts them on the same level; this is first given by both the action of “fingere” and the use of flour, and then on the basis of the differentiated preparation it recognizes the compliance to certain dispositions as legitimate and valid and binds together names, things and functions.

The specific ritual use remains unknown, but the deep structure of a pair of *liba* is a fact that emerges clearly.

2. Verbena as element of the fetial ritual [GS]

2.1. Verbena and sagmina

The use of *verbena* in the fetial ritual is documented in all the accounts of this ancient procedure, starting from the passage in which Livy describes the first treaty ever stipulated by the Romans.

Livy (I, 24, 3-6) reports the dialogue between Tullus Hostilius and an unknown fetial priest who asks the king if he wants him to take care of striking a treaty (*foedus ferire*) with the *pater patratus* of the Albans:

Fetialis regem Tullum ita rogavit: “iubesne me, rex, cum patre patrato populi Albani foedus ferire?” Iubente rege, “sagmina” inquit “te, rex, posco”.

Rex ait: “pura tollito”. fetialis ex arce graminis herbam puram attulit.

Postea regem ita rogavit: “rex, facisne me tu regium nuntium populi Romani Quiritium, vasa comitesque meos?”

Rex respondit: “quod sine fraude mea populique Romani Quiritium fiat, facio”.

Fetialis erat M. Valerius; is patrem patratum Sp. Fusium fecit, verbena caput capillosque tangens. pater patratus ad ius iurandum patrandum, id est, sancendum fit foedus; multisque id verbis, quae longo effata carmine non operae est referre, peragit.

This passage is a goldmine of information concerning the legal-religious aspects of the stipulation of the *foedus nec ullius vetustior*, and introduces some technical elements that will constantly be present in all the accounts of the striking of a treaty: *sagmina*, identified as *graminis herba pura*, and

verbena. These elements are the protagonists of the two moments that we can identify in this first ceremony: first the fetial priest asks the king for the *sagmina*, the king orders to take those that are pure and the fetial goes to the *arx* to get *graminis herbam puram*; secondly, the fetial makes another person, Sp. Fufius, *pater patratus* by touching his head and his hair with *verbena*.

The herb is mentioned again by Livy (xxx, 43, 9) in the occasion of the stipulation of the peace treaty after the Second Punic war:

Fetiales cum in Africam ad foedus feriundum ire iuberentur, ipsis postulantibus senatus consultum in haec verba factum est: ut prius lapides silices privasque verbenas secum ferrent; ut, ubi praetor Romanus imperaret ut foedus ferirent, illi praetorem sagmina poscerent. herbae id genus ex arce sumptum fetialibus dari solet.

A few differences between the first passage and the second one are noticeable: in the Republican era, it is the Senate that orders the fetials to go to strike a treaty with the enemy and the praetor is in charge of giving them the *sagmina*²¹. Secondly, the priests have to take with them what is necessary for the stipulation of the treaty, *privos lapides silices privasque verbenas*²². These differences are ascribable to the historical and political conditions that had remarkably changed. What had not change is the use of both *verbena* (or *verbenae*) and *sagmina* and the undeniable association between the two. The type of relationship that links them is already clear in a fragment by Naevius, quoted by Festus: *scopas atque verbenas sagmina sumpserunt*, that is “they took *verbenas* and *scopas* as *sagmina*”²³; this interpretation is endorsed by the grammarian (Festus 424-426L, see also Paulus *ex F.* 425L):

Sagmina vocantur verbenae, id est herbae purae, quia ex loco sancto arcebantur²⁴ a consule praetoreve, legatis proficiscentibus ad foedus faciendum bellumque indicendum; vel a sanciendo, id est confirmando Naevius <“scopas atque verbenas sagmina sumpserunt...”> “Ius sacratum Iovis iurandum sagmine”.

²¹ The role of the praetor is also confirmed by Festus’s glossa (424-426L) that will be discussed further on.

²² In Livy I, 24, 5, the fetial asks the king if he wants him to be a messenger of the Roman people, together with *vasa comiteque meos*, without specifying what the *vasa* contained. H.B. Riesco Alvarez considers *vasa* as the actual symbols of the priesthood, *i.e.*, the *sagmina* and the *lapis silix*. See H.B. Riesco Alvarez, *Sagmina, verbenae y herbae purae*, in «Helmantica. Revista de filología clásica y hebrea» 45, 136 (1994), pp. 153-163: p. 154.

²³ The interpretation of *verbenas* as a genitive, proposed by Leo, Mariotti and other, makes little sense in that Naevius’s verse would have to be interpreted as ‘tufts of grass of a shoot’. See S.M. Goldberg, *Epic in Republican Rome*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995, p. 80, n. 26. Scholars debate on the actual position in the *Bellum Poenicum* of this fragment, that has been assigned to the first, the third or the fourth book, together with the other testimonies about the first Punic war. Schwarte concludes that our fragment concerns the stipulation of the peace treaty at the end of the first Punic war in 241 a.C. See K.-H. Schwarte, *Naevius, Ennius und der Beginn des Ersten Punischen Krieges*, in «Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte» 21, 2 (1972), pp. 206-223.

²⁴ In Lindsay’s apparatus we read: «arcebantur *suspectum*: carcebantur *Mercklin.*: arce dantur *Huschkius*». Wissowa gives an interpretation of the Livian passage from “ex loco sancto arcebantur” amended in “ex loco sancto arcis carcebantur”. G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, C.H. Beck, München 1912, p. 472, n. 2.

In this line of thought, *verbena* is a kind of herb, a pure herb, that is called *sagmina* (*a sanciendo*) because it was taken from a sacred place and then given to the Roman ambassadors by the consul or the praetor when they had to strike a treaty or declare war. Actually, if we look at the etymology, already established by the ancient grammarians and confirmed by modern scholars, *sagmina* are ‘things that are sacred’: *sagmen* < **sak-men* is formed with **sak-*, the same root of *sacer*, *sancio*, and the suffix *-men* used to build the *nomina rei actae*²⁵. The connection of the word *sagmina* with the concept of “sacrificial bundle of grass”, which is the meaning usually associated to it, is probably to be ascribed to the use of this word in the context of the *ius fetiale*, where *sagmina* correspond to *verbena*. As a matter of fact, *sagmina* is only attested in correlation with the fetal rites²⁶.

Another testimony of the relationship between *verbena* and *sagmina* comes from Pliny (*NH* xxii, 5, 6-10):

siquidem auctores imperii Romani conditoresque immensum quiddam et hi<n>c sumpsere, quoniam non aliunde sagmina in remediis publicis fuere et in sacris legationibusque verbenae. certe utroque nomine idem significatur, hoc est gramen ex arce cum sua terra evolsum, ac semper e legatis, cum ad hostes clarigatumque mitterentur, id e<st> res raptas clare repetitum, unus utique verbenarius vocabatur.

At first, Pliny distinguishes the scope of use of the two elements: *sagmina* are used when the safety of the state is at stake, *verbenae* are used in religious rites and embassies. Then he assumes that both words referred to the same referent, that is some grass that was taken from the *arx* with its own clod attached.

Pliny’s account of the different uses of *sagmina* and *verbenae* does not coincide with Livy and Festus testimonies, that attest how both the *sagmina* and the *verbena* were used in embassies. Moreover, Pliny is the only ancient source that specifies the fact, which is definitely noteworthy, that the *gramen* had to be taken from the *arx cum terra sua*²⁷. It is then probable that the naturalist got his information from a source different than Livy’s.

Jurists and historians have debated for decades on the historical value of the sources on the *ius fetiale* and on the time at which the rite was actually in use, and the discussion is still ongoing²⁸. Nevertheless, the fact that Livy

²⁵ See M. Leumann, *Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre*, C.H. Beck, München 1977, pp. 369-371 and M. Weiss, *Outline of the Historical Comparative Grammar of Latin*, Beech Stave Press, Ann Arbor - New York 2021, p. 333.

²⁶ *Sagmen* (singular), is also attested in an adesposta fragment, probably by a tragic author (*trag. inc.* 219), preserved in Festus’s glossa (426L): *Ius sacratum Iovis iurandum sagmine*, where *sagmen* is again attested in connection with an oath.

²⁷ This fact has been variously interpreted: some scholars see the herb collected with its clod as a symbol of Rome’s soil, others consider it as a protection against aggressions for the ambassadors and as an identification of their sacred character of the priests that were involved in the diplomatic mission. See H.B. Riesco Alvarez, *Sagmina, verbena y herba pura*, cit., p. 159.

²⁸ See F. Santangelo, *I feziali fra rituale, diplomazia e tradizioni inventate*, in G. Urso (ed.), *Sacerdos. Figure del sacro nella società romana (Atti del convegno internazionale, Cividale del Friuli, 26-28 settembre 2012)*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 2014, pp. 83-103: p. 84.

underlines that *foedera alia aliis legibus, ceterum eodem modo omnia fiunt* can be considered as a strong indication of the consistency of the procedure, that must have remained the same from the first treaty with the Albans at least up to Livy's time. Moreover, however contradictory or misrepresenting the sources may be, the presence of technical words that do not change in the course of time (*verbena* and *sagmina* as *graminis herba pura*) confirms the validity of these terms and of the technique they describe²⁹.

2.2. *Verbena in the fetial ritual*

The word *verbena* is only attested in association with the actions of the fetials in Livy's work, where it appears twice. There is a noticeable difference in the two uses: in the first occasion, *verbena* (singular) is the tool by which a man becomes *pater patratus*, i.e. it is the means by which a change of status occurs³⁰; in the second occasion, the fetials who are going to Africa have to take *privas verbenas* (plural) with them in order to guarantee the right execution of the ritual and the validity of the treaty. Riesco Alvarez³¹, who refuses both the possibility that *verbena* was a means to protect the fetials when involved in diplomatic missions and the idea that it was a symbol of Rome, affirms that the *verbenae* were «un instrumento a través del cual el *pater patratus* conseguía alcanzar el estado que le permitiría actuar como tal». The different opinions could, perhaps, be reconciled if we take into consideration the possibility of an evolution in the function of *verbena*: at first, it was the tool by which the *pater patratus* by which acquired the status that would allow him to act as such; subsequently, it became the symbol that guaranteed the validity of the treaty.

We notice a difference in number in Livy's testimonies that calls for an explanation. In the first passage, the word is singular because only one fetial is present and only one branch of *verbena* was necessary to touch the head and the hair of the Sp. Fusius. Many hypotheses have been offered to account for the plural in the second instance, where also the reference to the flint is in a plural form (*privos lapides*³²). It has been suggested that more than one

²⁹ See E. Bianchi, *Qualche riscontro di lessico feziale latente nel I libro delle Storie di Livio*, in «Rivista di Diritto Romano» 10 (2010), pp. 1-10: p. 1.

³⁰ A change of status that occurs by means of someone who touches – directly or with a tool – the interested person is not an isolated fact. A comparison, for example, can be found, with due precautions, in the *manumissio vindicta*, one of the possible ways to free a slave during which the *adsertor libertatis* touched the slave with the *festuca* and the subject was declared free. See R.G. Nisbet, *The Festuca and the Alapa of Manumission*, in «The Journal of Roman Studies» 8 (1918), pp. 1-14. But we can also think of the sword-tap on the shoulders of the future knight in Medieval times, or the use of the magic wand to transform people into animals or things that we can see in fairytales.

³¹ H.B. Riesco Alvarez, *Sagmina, verbena y herba pura*, cit., p. 163.

³² The plural form *lapides* has given way to a quite heated debate because of the possible similarities between the fetial rite and the oath *per Iovem lapidem*, see J.H. Richardson, *The Development of the Treaty-Making Rituals of the Romans*, in «Hermes» 145, 3 (2017), pp. 250-274: p. 264, n. 64. The discussion of these issues exceeds the scope of this work; here it will suffice to say that the identification of the *lapis silix* with a single flint preserved in the temple of Iuppiter Feretrius as a symbol of the god contravenes the fact that the stone is actually thrown away during the oath *per Iovem*

verbena was necessary because the priests were embarking in a long trip and it was important that at least some branches of the indispensable herb got to destination³³. But the *senatus consultus* reported by Livy specifies *privas verbenas*, with an adjective that is usually understood as a synonym for *singulus*, as confirmed by a couple of *glossae* in the *De verborum Significatione*³⁴.

In Livy's passage the adjective seems to have a distributive meaning indicating that each priest should carry one *verbena*³⁵ and the plural form *verbenas* accounts for the sum of the single *verbenae* that each priest has to take with himself. This seems to collide with the little we know about the *verbenarius* who, according to Pliny (*NH*, xxii, 5), was one of the *legati* in charge of the *clarigatio* and, as we can surmise from his name, was responsible for the *verbena*³⁶. If the interpretation of Livy's passage that we presented is correct, all the fetials going to Africa, not just one of them, would have been responsible of a *verbena* and, in theory, they would all have been *verbenarii*. It is possible that Pliny's account derives from a comparison of *verbena* with the *caduceus*, because only one *caduceator* took part in the embassies³⁷. As a matter of fact, the word *verbenarius* is a *hapax* and the only parallel form can be found in Nonius Marcellus' description of the word *caduceus* (848 L), where he quotes a passage from Varro's *De vita populi Romani* (76, 1): *verbenatus ferebat verbenam; id erat caduceus, pacis signum*³⁸; *quam Mercuri virgam possumus aestimare*. From a linguistic point of view, *verbenatus* should to be the past participle of a verb **verbenare* that is not attested; a comparison with forms such as *coronatus* indicates that the term should define a person or a an object covered or adorned with *verbena*, as confirmed by a passage by Suetonius (*De vita Caesarum*, *Cal.* xxvii, 2, 5): *alterum, qui se periturum ea de causa voverat, cunctantem pueris tradidit, verbenatum infulatumque votum reposcentes per vicos agerent, quoad praecipitaretur ex aggere*. The substantivized participle, which describes a passive action,

lapidem. It seems more logical to think that *lapis silix* identified a special category of stones that was used for specific ritual or ceremonies and was possibly stored in the temple of Iuppiter Feretrius on the Capitolium (see Paulus *ex F.* 92L). A plurality of stones may also be surmised by Paulus' gloss (102L): *Lapidem silicem tenebant iuraturi per Iove*: the fact that every *iuraturus* had to hold a *lapis silix* implies that more than one *lapis silix* was in use.

³³ J.H. Richardson, *The Development*, cit., p. 273.

³⁴ Festus 252L: *Privos privasque antiqui dicebant pro singulis. Ob quam causam et privata dicuntur quae uniuscuiusque sint*; Festus 224L: *Priviclio es, privis id est singulis*.

³⁵ Ch. T. Lewis - Ch. Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1879, s.v. *privus*. This interpretation of the adjective is shared, among others, by J.S. Reid, *Human sacrifice*, cit., p. 49 and J.H. Richardson, *The Development*, cit., pp. 272-273. See G. Turelli, Audi Iuppiter. *Il collegio dei feziali nell'esperienza giuridica romana*, Giuffrè Editore, Milano 2011, p. 190, n. 18 for further bibliographical references.

³⁶ M. Valesius, the fetial who Tullus Hostilius entrusts with the picking of the *sagmina* and then makes Sp. Fuscus *pater patratus*, is often defined as *verbenarius*, even if there is no trace of this word in Livy.

³⁷ Paulus *ex F.* 41L: *Caduceatores legati pacem petentes. Cato (inc. 4): "Caduceatori", inquit, "nemo homo nocet"*.

³⁸ See Gell., x, 27, 3: [*populum Romanum*] *misisse ad eos [sc. Poenos] hastam et caduceum, signa duo belli aut pacis*.

cannot be acceptable to define the active role of a person who carries the *verbena*. We can suppose an error in the transmission of the information, either on Varro's part, or on Nonius', or else in the manuscript tradition of the *De Compendiosa Doctrina*, but we cannot exclude that Varro's fragment depends on a verse of the *Aeneid* (xii, 120), *verbena tempora vinciti*, where it is implied that the head of the priests were crowned with *verbena*, a fact that has no comparison in the sources³⁹.

As we said, Varro associates *verbena* with *caduceus*. This word is etymologically connected with the Greek κηρύκειον, a neuter noun derived from the adjective κηρύκειος which comes from κήρυξ 'messenger'; κηρύκειον is then the name given to the staff of the herald or of the war messenger. However, it is highly improbable that *verbena* and *caduceus* designated the same object and a difference was already perceived by the ancient scholars; as Servius recalls (*ad Aen.* 4, 242): *unde secundum Livium legati pacis caduceatores dicuntur: sicut enim per fetiales, bella indicebantur, ita pax per caduceatores fiebat*⁴⁰.

An alternative interpretation of the adjective *privus* in Livy's passage has been proposed. In the words of G. Fusinato:

«È molto semplice intendere *privus*, nel suo significato comune, come *speciale, particolare*, [...] e ciò appunto perché non tutte le erbe, perché non tutte le selci potevano servire a quello scopo, ma soltanto quelle erbe e quelle selci che fossero state tolte dal Campidoglio e dal tempio di Giove Feretrio»⁴¹.

The adjective would then be an indication of special – and specific – kinds of herb and stones that would be defined by their provenance. In this view, there would not be the need to postulate the existence of more than one *verbenarius*, and the fact that a plurality of herbs and stones was taken to Africa seems to be of no consequence.

2.3. *The referent of verbena*

What was the actual referent of *verbena*? The answer to this question is not straightforward, and a survey of the ancient sources gives us a varied picture. Pliny (*NH*, xxv, 105, 1-4) gives us some useful insights:

Nulla tamen Romanae nobilitatis plus habet quam hiera botane. aliqui peristereon, nostri verbenacam vocant. haec est quam legatos ferre ad hostes indicavimus; hac Iovis mensa verritur, domus purgantur lustranturque.

³⁹ See J.S. Reid, *Human sacrifices at Rome and other Notes on Roman Religion*, in «The Journal of Roman Studies» 2 (1912), pp. 34-52: p. 49.

⁴⁰ Modern scholars as well reject the possibility of an identification of *verbena* with *caduceus*, see *ibi*, p. 47.

⁴¹ G. Fusinato, *Dei feziali e del diritto feziale. Contributo alla storia del diritto pubblico esterno di Roma*, in «Reale Accademia dei Lincei. Memorie della Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche» s. 3, 13 (1884), pp. 451-590: p. 530, n. 1. More recently, this view has been maintained by A. Calore, *Per Iovem lapidem. Alle origini del giuramento*, Giuffrè Editore, Milano 2000, p. 57 and G. Turelli, *Audi Iuppiter*, cit., p. 190.

Pliny establishes an equivalence between *verbenaca* and what he had previously indicated as the herb taken by the ambassadors, that is *verberna*. From this account a precise characteristic of the herb emerges, that is its purifying power⁴²: it was used to clean the table of Jupiter, to purify the houses and to make the due expiation. In another passage (*NH*, xv, 119, 5), the naturalist remembers that a *myrtea verberna* was used by the Romans and the Sabines to purify themselves after the battle. Interestingly, the first label that Pliny uses in this passage to designate this herb is *hiera botane*, that is ‘sacred/holy plant’, an expression that brings to mind the *graminis herba pura* mentioned by Livy in his account of the first treaty. It is hard to believe that this is a coincidence.

In the dialogue between the fetial and the king, this syntagm is referred to the *sagmina* that the king demands to be picked *pura*. Here again we face a discrepancy in the number: to the plural *sagmina* corresponds a singular *graminis herba pura*. *Herba* could perhaps be intended as a sort of collective noun indicating several blades of grass, but this issue remains unclear.

The expression *graminis herba* is not frequent in the Latin literature but it is attested a few times, for example in Ovid (*Met.* x, 86, *Collis erat collemque super planissima campi / area, quam viridem faciebant graminis herbae: / umbra loco deerat*) and in Virgil (*Buc.* v, 1, 25, *nulla neque amnem / libavit quadripes nec graminis attigit herbam*), among others.

Its repeated occurrences, both in historical and poetical texts, show that this phrase, with a genitive, *graminis*, that has been labeled as “defining genitive”⁴³, had quite a diffusion in the language. Modern scholars usually assign to it the general meaning of “grass”. In fact, it is used as an equivalent of the simple word in the *ThLL*, s.v. *gramen*: «*idem quod πῶα, graminis calamus s. graminis herba*». But a few observations on this matter may be added.

Ernout and Meillet give «nourriture des animaux herbivore, pâturage» as first meaning of *gramen*⁴⁴; in this view, our phrase would mean “grass of the pasture”, a meaning that will fit perfectly in the Virgilian verse, where the subject of the action is *quadripes*, but not so much in the other occurrences. However, a collective meaning for the singular form *gramen* is actually registered in the *ThLL* (*sub* 1, A, 2: *singularis collective*), where the same examples of *graminis herba* that we have mentioned here are quoted. Moreover, *sub* B, the collective meaning of “meadow” («*collect. i. q. pratium, rura* “Rasen”, “Wiese” [*ubi pecudes pascuntur, pastor se sternit, sim.*]») is attested for the plural (1. *pluraliter*) but also for the singular (2. *singul. collect. (nonnullis locis fere i. q. campus)*). Although the phrase is generally translated

⁴² See H.B. Riesco Alvarez, *Sagmina, verberna y herba pura*, cit., p. 158.

⁴³ *Oxford Latin dictionary*, s.v. *herba*.

⁴⁴ Two etymologies have been proposed for *gramen*: Ernout and Meillet connect it to the root of *voro* **gwor-/gwer-* “to swallow”, to which a *-men* suffix used to form the *nomina rei acti* was attached to build a word meaning “the thing that is swallowed”; De Vaan reconstructs the root **g^hrh₁-(s)-mn* ‘grass’, which finds a parallel in the Germanic **grasa-* with a possible substratum origin; see A. Ernout - A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire etymologique*, cit., p. 280 and M. De Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary*, cit., pp. 269-270.

as “blade of grass” or simply “grass”, a more literal translation would be “grass of the meadow” or “grass of the field”.

In Livy’s passage only, the expression is expanded with *pura*. The adjective specifies a fundamental characteristic of the *graminis herba*, that the context requires to be *pura*, and the importance of this emerges from the fact that the adjective is repeated twice: the king demands the *sagmina* collected by the fetial to be *pura* and the priest obeys to this order by picking *graminis herbam puram*⁴⁵. If we interpret this adjective in his primary meaning, that is «*quae libera sunt sordibus, iniquatione aliisve rebus inutilibus*» (*ThLL*, s.v. *purus*, 1), the herb picked by the priest must have been free of dry branches and cleaned up of any possible filth that may have compromised its effectiveness. Besides the fact of being *pura*, this particular *graminis herba* stands out because of the place in which it was picked up, that is the *arx*, a place of primary importance where the *augures* acted⁴⁶. A possible connection between the *augures* and *verbena* may be found in a desperate passage of Varro’s *De Lingua Latina*, vi, 64, that in the manuscript *F* (folio 8r) reads: «*sic augures dicunt “si mihi auctor est verbi nam manum asserere dicit consortes”*»⁴⁷. Some editors, such as Andreas Spengel and Roland Kent⁴⁸, following Bergk’s emendation⁴⁹, read *sic augures dicunt “si mihi auctor es verbena manu asserere, dicit consortes”*, which Kent translates as «So the augurs say: If you authorize me to take in my hand the sacred bough, then name my colleagues (*consortes*)». By accepting this reading, we would have a clear link between the *augures* and the *verbena*⁵⁰ but the absence of other sources confirming this hypothesis prevents us to know if the herb was actually part of the rituals of the *augures*. However, it remains difficult to imagine a role for them in

⁴⁵ In light of the uses listed by Plinius for *verbena*, the adjective *pura* could be interpreted as “purifying” instead of “pure”. This would not be an isolated case; at least two more occurrences of the adjective used in this sense can be found: Tibullus, i, 5, 11-12: *lustravi sulphure puro*, and Ovid, *Fasti*, ii, 19-26, where, in the explanation of the word *februa* the poet mentions a branch: *nomen idem ramo, qui caesus ab arbore pura / casta sacerdotum tempora fronde tegit*, that, according to Le Bonniec’s translation, is «coupé sur un arbre purificateur», “cut off a purifying tree”. See H. Le Bonniec, *Ovide. Les Fastes*, vol. 1, Ed. Orpheus, Catania 1969, p. 78 and H.B. Riesco Alvarez, *Sagmina, verbena y herba pura*, cit., pp. 162-163.

⁴⁶ Cfr. Cic. *Off.* 3, 66: *in arce augurium augures acturi* and Paulus ex *F.* 17L: *Auguraculum appellabant antiqui, quam nos arcem dicimus, quod tibi augures publice auspicarentur*.

⁴⁷ The Ms. Laurentianus Pluteus 51.10, held in Firenze at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, is the archetype of the tradition of Varro’s *De Lingua Latina*. This manuscript can be viewed at the following URL: <<https://tecabml.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/plutei/id/816767/rec/9>> (10/23).

⁴⁸ A. Spengel (ed.), *M. Terenti Varronis De lingua latina libri, emendavit apparatu critico instruxit praefatus est Leonardus Spengel et recognovit Andreas Spengel*, Weidmann, Berlin 1885; R. G. Kent (ed.), *On the Latin Language*, W. Heinemann - Harvard University Press, London - Cambridge 1938.

⁴⁹ Th. Bergk, 9. *Philologische thesen*, in «*Philologus*» 14, 1-4 (1859), pp. 180-187. Both Spengel and Kent accept Bergk’s emendation only in part, in that the German philologist states: «Bei Varro de Lingua Lat. i, 64 ist zu schreiben: “sic augures dicunt: si mihi auctor es verbenam manum asserere.... dicit consortes”» (p. 186).

⁵⁰ In support of this hypothesis, see G. Guillaume-Coirier, *Arbres et herbe. Croyances et usages rattachés aux origines de Rome*, in «*Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Antiquité*» 104, 1 (1992), pp. 339-371: p. 367.

the fetial rite, in that, according to Livy's account, in which the imperative *tollito* is used, it seems that the fetial priest was personally responsible for the picking up of the herb and no other personality was involved.

2.4. *The linguistic data*

In the etymological dictionaries⁵¹, *verbena* is reconstructed as < **werbes-na-*, that is the feminine of a hypothetical adjective **verbenus*, derived from the *-es/-os* stem of the defective neuter *verbera* "twigs for flogging, whip, lashes". There are no observations on the semantic aspect of this derived form in the entries of the dictionaries, although a derivation of the name of a herb from a word meaning "strokes, whip" should not be given for granted. In fact, Szemerényi, in an article on the famous *si parentem puer verberit* law, refuses the given etymology for *verbena* stating that «it is inadmissible on semantic grounds»⁵² in that the primary meaning of *verbera* should be «strikes for punishment»; in his view, *verbena* should then be considered «an indigenous word borrowed from the substratum», although a possible Etruscan derivation should not be ruled out.

Szemerényi's objection is certainly more than plausible, but it rests on the classical meaning associated to the word, «branch, leaves of a plant used for sacral purposes»; it does not take into account what the first use of *verbena* was, that is that of striking the head and the hair of a man who was chosen to become Rome's *pater patratus*. Starting from this ceremony, we can infer that *verbena*'s primary meaning was "thing used for striking", which in the context of the fetial rite is identified with a herb picked on the *arx* and thus the notion of *verbena* = herb is widespread. This might also explain why there is much uncertainty to what species the word designated: myrtle, olive leaves, rosemary, laurel, etc. At first, in fact, *verbena* did not refer to a specific herb, but the herb needed for striking and the species was, perhaps, not so relevant⁵³. Only at a later time, when it became necessary to go abroad to make the peace treaties, the same *verbena*, already closely associated with the fetial rite, became one of the symbols that the priests had to carry with them. The original meaning of the word was then completely forgotten and *verbena* came to simply identify the herb with purifying powers that we now call vervain.

⁵¹ A. Walde - J. Hofmann, *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, Heidelberg 1938, p. 756; A. Ernout - A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, cit., p. 722; M. De Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary*, cit., p. 664.

⁵² O. Szemerényi, *Si parentem puer verberit, ast olle plorassit*, in Id., *Scripta Minora*, vol. II, Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität, Innsbruck 1987, pp. 892-910: p. 899.

⁵³ Servius (*ad Aen.* XII, 120) says that *verbena* is employed *abusive* for any sacred plant and mentions Terence's verse *ex hac ara verbenas sume* (*Andria* IV, 3, 11), highlighting the fact that in the corresponding Menander passage the myrtle was mentioned. J.S. Reid, *Human sacrifice*, cit., p. 49 considers this as an evidence that «the original meaning of *verbena* had been extended as early as Terence's time». Perhaps, we can interpret it as an evidence of the contrary, *i.e.* of the fact that *verbena* did not identify a specific herb yet. See also H.B. Riesco Alvarez, *Sagmina, verbena y herba pura*, cit., p. 160.

3. Conclusions [GR and GS]

Both the testimonies of Festus and Livy place the use of *verbena* in a very ancient time, when it was used as a tool for specific moments of the rituals in which it was involved: in one case as a human shaped *libum* and in the other case in its natural condition. The *explanandum* consists then in the ideology of the use of *verbena*, which is endowed with such qualities that it can function both as a *libum* and as an indispensable tool for the ritual.

ABSTRACT

In Festus's lemma (494L) Tauri verbenaeque in commentario sacrorum significat ficta farinacea an ideological feature emerges that finds a comparison in a pair of liba such as strues and ferctum/fertum. Starting from some morphological notations, such as the plural and the syntax, we will propose an interpretation for tauri and verbenae.

In Livy's description of the fetial rite an important role is played by verbena and sagmina as graminis herba pura, technical words that do not change in the course of time and confirm the validity of these terms and of the technique they describe. Besides the issue of a discrepancy in the number, the explanandum consists in the use of verbena to identify an essential tool for the ritual that may find its justification in its etymological explanation.

Nella glossa di Festo (494L) Tauri verbenaeque in commentario sacrorum significat ficta farinacea emerge un tratto ideologico che trova un confronto nella coppia di liba strues e ferctum/fertum. A partire da notazioni morfologiche quali il plurale e la costruzione sintattica, si proporrà una interpretazione per tauri e verbenae.

Nella descrizione di Livio del rituale feziale hanno un peso significativo verbena e sagmina come graminis herba pura, termini tecnici che non cambiano nel tempo e che confermano la validità di questi termini e della tecnica che descrivono. Oltre alla questione della discrepanza nel numero, l'explanandum consiste nell'utilizzo di verbena per individuare uno strumento essenziale per il rituale, la cui giustificazione potrebbe risiedere nella sua spiegazione etimologica.

KEYWORDS

Verbena, liba, tauri, sagmina, fetials

Verbena, liba, tauri, sagmina, feziali