Successful agricultural production was an important concern for the religious institutions of early Rome, since the security and prosperity of the city was, naturally, dependent upon these resources. Therefore, many festivals on the Roman calendar contained rituals associated with the protection of crops, wine-production, and animal husbandry. Focusing on the Roman festival of Robigalia, which was held each year on April 25\textsuperscript{th}, this paper examines the practice of the sacrifice of puppies to avert harmful disease from their crops. It appears that by the early first century CE, the reasons behind this practice were forgotten, which prompted a variety of ancient authors such as Varro, Pliny, Aulus Gelius, and many others to offer their opinions on its origins. The most detailed description of events comes from Ovid in \textit{Fasti IV}, in which the reader is given a “prayer” recited by the Flamen Quirinalis, which, while full of intertextual references, also provides corresponding information regarding this festival and the choice of sacrificial animal.

The dog, which was often viewed as a liminal figure by both the Greeks and the Romans, was able to cross the threshold, which separated the dead from the living and was therefore thought to have magical abilities. Its’ associations with Sirius, Hecate, and Diana all seem to support this belief in the canine’s supposed supernatural liminality. Using a variety of ancient sources and archaeological evidence, an interpretation for this sacrificial ritual is offered, which suggests this practice was founded in earlier purification and aversion rites.
Bibliography


