

False testimony and other witnesses' witlessness
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1. The data, arranged chronologically in each group.

1.1. Deverbals

mercimōnium 'item of merchandise' Pl.+ ← *mercārī* 'trade'
parsimōnia 'thrift, temperance' Pl.+, *parsimōnium* *CIL* 9.8449 (171–300 A.D.) ← *parcere*
'spare; be sparing' (with irreg. -s-)
querimōnia 'complaint, protest' Pl.+ ← *querī* 'complain'
mendīcimōnium 'beggary' *Laber. ap. Gell.* ← *mendīcārī* 'beg'
moechimōnium 'adultery' *Laber. ap. Gell.* ← *moechārī* 'commit adultery' (or ← *moechus*
'adulterer')
alimōnium and *alimōnia* 'food, nourishment; nurture, upbringing' *Var.+* ← *alere* 'nourish'
regimōnium 'direction, control' *CIL* 4.918, *Pompeii*, ← *regere* 'direct, rule'
gaudimōnium 'joy' *Petr.* 61.3 ← *gaudēre* 'rejoice' (cf. semantics of §1.3 below)
parcimōnium 'savings' *CIL* 5.95+ (3rd cent. A.D.), *parsimōnia* *CIL* 2.6278 ← *parcere*

1.2. Desubstantivals (base is a personal noun)

testimōnium 'evidence given by a witness, testimony; token, proof' XII+ ← *testis* 'witness'
mātrimōnium 'marriage' Pl.+ ← *māter* 'mother'
uadimōnium 'guarantee that a defendant will appear in court' Pl.+ ← *uas* 'surety'
patrimōnium 'property of the *pater familias*' *Rhet. Her.+* ← *pater* 'father, head of household'
flāmōnium 'office of a *flāmen*' *Liv.+* ← *flāmen* 'flamen'

1.3. Deadjectivals (mostly) expressing negative emotional states

aegrimōnia 'mental distress, agony' Pl.+ (← *aeger* 'sick')
falsimōniīs 'tricks, treachery' Pl. *Bacch.* 541, standardly lemmatized as *falsimōnia* (← *falsus*
'false')
ācrimōnia 'caustic quality, harshness; vigor' *Cato+* (← *ācer* 'sharp')
miserimōnium 'wretchedness, misery' *Laber. ap. Non.* (← *miser* 'wretched')
trīstimōnia 'sadness' *Bell. Afr.+*, *trīstimōnium* *Petr.* 63.4 (← *trīstis* 'sad')

1.4. Deadjectivals expressing states of ritual purity

sānc̄timōnia 'sanctity, probity' *Rhet. Her.+* (← *sānc̄tus* 'holy')
caerimōnia 'respect for the sacred, reverence, holiness; (pl.) rites, ceremonies' *Caes.+* (prob.
← **kairos*, cf. *sinc̄erus* 'ritually intact'; Hiltbrunner 1958:146–54, with earlier lit.)
castimōnia 'ritual purity' *Cic.+* (← *castus* 'morally unpolluted')

Some previous lit. on the suffix: Stolz 1894–5:497–8, Zimmermann 1906, Roloff 1952:128–34, Leumann 1977:297. A couple of individual word-studies: Cressman 1915:47 (*alimōnium/a*), Roloff 1952 (*caerimōnia*), Hiltbrunner 1958:146–54 (id.), Panayotakis 2010:166–8 (*miserimōnium*), Gladhill 2023

(*querimōnia*). Not relevant, probably: *molemonium* (\bar{o} ?), plant that produces a milky-white latex used as an emetic (Plin.), cf. perh. various Greek-derived plant names in *-mōnia* like *argemōnia*, *scam(m)ōnia*, *līmōnia*.

1.5. Diff. between *-mōnium* and *-mōnia* secondary and largely predictable, agrees with *-ium/-ia* pattern more generally (Leumann 1977:291–6): *-ium* usu. deverbal or denominal from personal nouns (types *gaudium*, *arbitrium*), *-ia* usu. deadjectival, sts. denom. from personal nouns or deverbal (types *audācia*, *mīlitia*, *exsequiae*).

1.6. Sabellic: Osc. **vaamunim** 5x (Po 80–84 = Pompeii 28). Surely native and not borrowed. Weiss 2017:381–2: < * μ αβmunim < * μ αβemōnim < * μ αβemōnijom < * μ αfemōnijom < * μ adhe°. Contrast Latin loans like **kvaísstur** ← *quaestor*, **aídil** ← *aedīlis* (NB intact *-d-*), **lígat[ús]** ← *lēgāt-*, **senateís** *senateis* ← *senāt-*, *ceus* ← *ceiuis* or *cīuis*. Suffix thus inherited into both Latin and Sabellic.

2. The prehistory.

2.1. Usual view: *-mōnium/a* < * \circ *mōn-ijom/ā* to animate stems in (Ital.) nom. *-mō*, stem *-mōn-* (← PIE **-mō*, **-mōn-*). But not totally straightforward.

2.2. **-mon-* orig. in exocentric internal derivatives to deradical neuter *men-*stems (Iir., Gk.); usage then variously extended to produce both adjs. and nouns, to form both adjectives and nouns, the latter both personal and non-personal, derived both deradically and depreentially.

Some lit. on *mon-*stems in (P)IE and in individual branches: Debrunner 1957:355–8 (*-imán-*), 753–68, Stüber 1997, Stüber 1998, Melchert 2003:131 n. 3, Pinault 2008:520, Weiss 2017:386–7; Yates 2022.

2.3.1. Celtic: Suffix mostly appears as renewed **-amon-*, **-ijamon-*; found in deradical, depreential, and desubstantival forms in OIr. and MIr., e.g. inherited deradical OIr. *talam* ‘earth’ < **telh₂-mon-*, depreential MIr. *foídem* ‘messenger’ (← *foídid* ‘sends’), desubstantival OIr. *brithem* ‘id.’ < **britijamon-* (← *brith* ‘judgment’ < **bhr₂-ti-*). See Watkins 1962:182–5, Stüber 1998:146–65.

For the phonological development of **eRa* > *aRa* in Celtic reflected in *talam*, see Schrijver 1995:75–93, esp. 84–5.

2.3.2. Desubstantival type innovatory; so also Tocharian A, but no trace in Brittonic. Maybe a deadjectival example that’s old in Celtic if Weiss 2017 is correct: Gallo-Lat. dat. (*Marti*) *Segomoni*, Ogam gen. *Segamonas* < virtual **segho-mon-* ‘the strong one’ to **seghó-* ‘strong’, also yielding Lat. *Sēmō*, Osc. **seemuneí**. No textual support for Lat. *Sēmō* being internal deriv. to *sēmen*; his sphere is martial. Pushes (at least one) deadjectival *mon-*formation to pre-Italo-Celtic.

A little differently Watkins 1962:184, who takes it as deverbal to **segh-*.

2.3.3. Does this help with deadjectival *-mōnium/a* formations (§§1.3–1.4 above)? Not really. In **segho-mon-* ‘the strong one’, **-mon-* is an individualizer; but a putative (virtual) **aigri-mon-* ‘the sick one’ or **kaire-mon-* ‘the holy one’ as base for *aegrimōnia* or *caerimōnia* difficult. Italic didn’t use **-mon-* as individualizer; used **-on-*, or simply substantivization. Semantics also off:

caerimōnia is ‘reverential attitude towards something/someone else that is holy’, not ‘the state being the holy one’. Deriving adjectival state from an individualization also seems fishy. My view: *-mōnium/a* already a unit when these deadjectivals were formed.

2.4.1. Italic *mon*-stems: besides *Sēmō* and *Tellumō* (see below), only *sermō* ‘speech, conversation’ (*ser-ere* ‘string together in a row’, cf. **ser-mŋ* in TB *šarm*, TA *šurm* ‘cause, origin’ Pinault 2008:493, Adams 2013:s.v.), *tēmō* ‘yoke-beam’ (prob. **tenksmō* ‘*the puller’, cp. Germ. *Deichsel*, or to a similar root; de Vaan 2008:s.v.), and *pulmō* ‘lung’ (: Gk. *πλεύμων*). *Salmō* ‘salmon’ prob. < **sal-mon-* ‘leaper’ (: Toch. B *salamo* ‘flying’), but a loanword (salmon found only in rivers north of the Alps and along the Atlantic).

2.4.2. *Tellumō* (Aug. *Civ.* 4.10, 7.23). Maybe = OIr. *talam* ‘earth’ (Weiss 2017:386 n. 51), influenced by *tellūs*.

Weiss *ibid.* actually claims that “perhaps *Tellumo* represents **Telumo*, the exact match for OIr. *talam* m. ‘earth’ < **telh₂mōn-*.” But **telh₂mōn-* (> **telamōn-*) would have given Lat. *§Tolumō* or (with syncope) *§Tulmō* because *-e-* plus “dark” *l* became *o* (> *u* if another consonant followed the *l*; Leumann 1977:47, Weiss 2020:150). This may weaken the meaningfulness of Weiss’s claim, since getting from *§Tolumō/§Tulmō* to *Tellumō* involves a more fundamental recreation of the word and leaves only *-mō* as part of the original form. None of this changes the overall picture, though.

2.4.3. Sabellic: nothing to add; U. **ar̥mune** Ilb 7 is a candidate, but interpretation unclear.

2.4.4.1. **alimō?* *Alimones Anth. Lat.* 19.9 (“Praefatio”), Gloss. Plac. (*CGL* 5.6.17 = 5.46.9). Very obscure. Both texts 6th cent., North Africa. Placidus only says: *Alimones ex alimento*. Meaning uncertain. See Cristante 2005–6, esp. 250–51.

2.4.4.2. *Alemona* Tert. *De animis* 37, listed alongside Lucina and Partula as pagan goddesses of gestation and childbirth. Maybe fem. of masc. **Alimō*, or maybe back-formed to *alimōnium/a*. Note *-ōna* in other (tutelary) goddesses (Angerona, Bellona, Latona [← Dor. *Λᾱτώ*], Bubona, Intercidona, etc.).

Aug. *Civ.* 7.23 mentions alongside Tellus and Tellumo two other divine principles of the earth, Altor and Rusor. Altor is the nourishing principle. Could *Alemona*/**Alimo* be a variant of Altor with similar morphology to Tellumo?

Another unhelpful form is *Vadimonis lacus*, lake with floating islands considered sacred to the Etruscans: unknown morphology, vocalic quantities, or etymology.

2.4.5. Interim result: no solid evidence that *mon*-stems were productive in Italic.

2.5. Forms in *-mōnium* do not obviously presuppose intermediates in *-mō* to the same types of stems. Dubious in deadjectivals (as per above); impossible in desubstantivals to personal nouns (*testimōnium* ← **testimō*? No *-mō*, Nanette!). Works better for deverbals, but Irish deverbals mostly names of professions (*flaithem* ‘ruler’, *medam* and *brithem* ‘judge’, *airem* ‘plowman’, *cairem* ‘shoemaker’, *ollam* ‘scholar, master of a skill’, *mraithem* ‘traitor’, *orbam** ‘heir’, etc.) or temporary but societally important roles (*féchem* ‘creditor; debtor’, etc.). (Virtual) **querimō* (**k^wesimō*) ‘kvetcher’, etc. would be different.

2.6.1. Exception: *flāmōnium*. Stolz 1894–5:498, Skutsch 1909:400 claimed this was the origin of the other desubstantivals in *-mōnium* and that it points to a **flāmō*, later replaced by *flāmen*. This itself is taken as < **flāmēn* (type ποιμήν), leading to discussions of fate of **-ēn* (e.g. Leumann 1977:371, Weiss 2020:330–1 with n. 48).

2.6.2. So two questions: (a) Could *flāmōnium* have generated *-mōnium*? (b) Does *flāmōnium* necessarily presuppose a **flāmō*? My answers: (a) Probably not, and (b) no, viz.:

2.6.3. *Flāmōnium* first securely attested in Livy in lit.; in inscr., Flavian era+. But note adj. *flāminius* (Paul. *ex Festo* several times), *flāminicus* Metellus Pius+, and esp. nomen gentil. *Flāminius*. Attested saec. ii B.C.+ , but dating back much earlier. Central Italian system of gentile names prob. fixed by 7th century (Solin 1996). No other derivatives built to *flāmōn-*.

See Mommsen 1872:221–2 on philology of *flāmōnium* and its ms. variant *flāminium*, which actually appears earlier (most mss. of Cic. *Phil.* 13.41), though he strongly doubts its evidentiary value (followed by *TLL*, *OLD*, and many text editors, but may need reinvestigation).

2.6.4. *Flāmōnium* can be haplologized from **flāmi-mōnium* (for **flāmi-* rather than **flāmini-* cp. *homi-cīda*, *nun-cupāre* < **nomi-cupāre*, etc; for haplology cf. **sēmi-modius* > *sēmodius*). Or a blend of *flāmen* and *-mōnium*, perh. under infl. of *praecōnium* Pl.+ ‘heraldship’.

2.6.5. *Flāmen* < neut. (*‘divine inspiration’? *‘prayer’? whatever) → ‘the person associated with the inspiration/prayer’. Cp. *ōrāculum* ‘divine utterance’ → ‘mouthpiece of the divine utterance’. Change of gender as in *Venus* (neut. → fem.), *Cupīdō* (fem. → masc.). Tells us nothing about fate of **-ēn* in Latin.

But could derivational stem *flāmin-* instead continue **flāmōn-*, from before **-mōn-* → *-mōn-*? Not chronologically possible. Generalization of *-ō-* in *-(m)ōn-* pre-Latino-Sabellic, but creation of gentile names centuries later. Would be weird if other derivatives of *flāmen* were from **flāmon-* while *flāmōnium* was created a little later, but still before *-mōnium* could be abstracted.

3. Other possible approaches to think about.

3.1. Option 1. There used to be more derivatives in **-mon-*, and to more kinds of stems. But why did only a very few of the more archaic deradical sort (besides *Sēmō* and maybe **alimō*) survive? Irish *mon-* derivatives still only deverbal or formed to non-personal nouns. Intermediate stage with more productive use of **-mon-* seems therefore unlikely.

3.2. Option 2, the *am-mōnia* or bleach(ed) compound¹ approach: *-mōnium/a* was once a SCM like Eng. *-ship* or *-hood*. Appealing, but methodologically suspect; unconstrained hypothesis-space. (If orig. compound had verb as FCM, it would have been a *pickpocket*-type compound, excessively rare in Italic: Leumann 1977:396, Bork 1990:241–2, Nielsen Whitehead 2012:114–32.)

¹ Yeah, I know, technically ammonia isn’t used in bleach, but many people think it is. By the way, you should never mix bleach and ammonia or you’ll die from the chloramine fumes.

3.3.1. Option 3. While *mon*-stems are marginal in Italic, very common are *men*-stems and their derivs. in *-mentum*. Often deprential, e.g. *certāmen* ‘contest’ ← *certāre* ‘contend’, *monumentum* ‘commemorative object or structure’ ← *monēre* ‘remind’, *integumentum* ‘covering’ ← *integere* ‘cover’, *farcīmen* ‘sausage’ ← *farcīre* ‘stuff’, *uolūmen* ‘roll’ ← *uoluere* ‘roll’, even occasionally denominal (*sincipitāmentum* ‘half a head’ ← *sinciput* ‘id.’). Well-known *Nebeneinander*s: *alimōnium/a* ~ *alimentum*, *regimōnium* ~ *regimen(tum)*, *testimōnium* ~ *testāmentum*.

3.3.2. *men*-stems could form collectives in **-mōn*. On the various meanings these forms can take, see in detail Nussbaum 2014a:287ff. and 2014b:239ff. Collectives/possessives are derivatives and therefore separate lexical items (cf. on this also Melchert 2014:258), and thus can come to replace their bases as the basic word for the concept, in Gk. ὕδωρ ‘water’ (: Hitt. *uidār* pl. ‘waters’) replacing **uód-ṛ*, Gmc. **namō* ‘name’ replacing **h₁nóm-ŋ*. Such collectives could become derivational bases, e.g. TB *ytārye* ‘road’ alongside TA *ytār* ‘a journey’ < coll. **h₁i-tōr* to **h₁i-tṛ* (> Lat. *iter*).

3.3.3. Nussbaum 2014b: Gk. τέκμωρ ‘sign’ and τέρμων ‘boundary’ are lexicalized “collectives” of homosemous τέκμαρ and τέρμα, respectively.

3.3.4. Collective **termōn* also in Italic: Ven. *termonios deivos* ‘gods of the boundaries’ (Lejeune 1974:no. 125, 350–175 B.C.).

3.3.5. ...and maybe in Latin too: Fest. 498.1–4 L.:

Termonem Ennius Graeca consuetudine dixit, quem nos nunc terminum hoc modo: “Ingenti uadit cursu, qua redditus termo est.” et: “Hortatore bono prius, quam iam finibus termo.”

Ennius said *termo*, following Greek usage, when we now say *terminus* [turning post], in this way: “with immense speed it goes to where the turning post is duly set,” and “with a good coxswain before it at the boundaries the turning post.” (tr. Goldberg and Manuwald, Loeb)

Ennian fragments difficult to understand, but ‘turning-post’ is not *terminus* or τέρμων, but *mēta* or τέρμα.

See Girardi 2018 on local inscr. attestations of the boundary-gods. For τέρμων ‘finishing-line of a race’ cf. Eur. *Med.* 1182. Note also *Terminibus* *CIL* 3.5036 (950–150 A.D.), AE 1948:238 (saec. ii A.D.); cf. Marinetti 2008:48 (*-u-* a Celticism). [*Ter*]munibus restored at *CIL* 1².2436, saec. iii B.C., by Vetter 1953:330, but there are many other competing restorations and reading of letters after *muni* uncertain, for which see EAGLE database, no. EDR145860, http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/res_complex_comune.php?do=boook&id_nr=EDR145860, accessed June 7, 2024.

3.3.6. Another lexicalized *mōn*-collective, perhaps: *sermō* ‘speech, conversation’? Semantically different from other (active) *mō*-nouns (already Zimmermann 1906:262: “Vielleicht lautete der nominativ zuerst *sermen*...war dann...in *sermo* umgewandelt worden”). Cf. again TB *šarm*, TA *šurm* ‘cause, origin’ < **ser-mŋ*. See Nussbaum 2014b:251–5 on masculine gender of τέρμων; same would apply to *sermō*.

3.3.7. So perhaps a couple of lexicalized forms in coll. *-mōn(-) spawned derivs. in *-iġo-/-iġā-, whence substantivizations as abstracts in *-iġom/*-iġā. Adjective type already in Ven. *termonios*. Or abstr. *-iġom/*-iġā added directly to *-mōn, but that seems harder to justify.

Nussbaum 2014b:239–40 (esp. §6.2.2 alongside §6.2.3.3), if I understand him correctly, seems to equate *mon*-agentives and *mōn*-collectives as the same formation. If true, it might render this whole thought-experiment pointless; but surely not true anymore in the attested histories of the languages. Cf. the fact that stem τέρων- from the collective is distinct stem -μων- for regular nouns in -μων.

3.3.8.1. *Sermō* maybe “inspiration” for the group. Verb of speech; speech is common thread at least with *querimōnia*, *testimōnium*, and *uadimōnium*. Sketch of development: On the basis of or parallel to coll. **ser-mōn* ‘bunch of talking’ → **k^wese-mōn* ‘a lot of complaining/protesting, (legal) protest’ → adj. **k^wesemōniġos* → (subst.) **k^wesemōniġā*.

3.3.8.2. *Querimōnia*/**k^wesemōniġā* really useful: (a) it refers to speech, often of a legal significance, so could have led to *testimōnium*, *uadimōnium*; (b) it is deprential, so it could have provided a model for deprentials; (c) it comes pretty close to expressing a negative emotion, so could have led ultimately to deadjectivals: possibly **k^wesemōniġā* → **ākromōniġā* (> *ācrimōnia* ‘bitterness’) → *aegrimōnia* ‘distress’, etc., and one way or another → *caerimōnia*.

3.3.9.1. Possibly relevant: *calumnia* ‘trickery, deceit, false testimony’ *CIL* 1².583+ ← *caluī* ‘deceive’ XII+ (Ernout-Meillet *s.v.*, Leumann 1977:322). Usually taken as ← middle participle in (pre-Lat.) **-m(a)no-*. But only such participles that have become lexicalized serve as bases for derivation, e.g. Gk. οἰκουμηνικός ‘of/from/open to the whole world’ ← οἰκουμένη ‘the inhabited world’, ἐρωμένιον dimin. of ἐρώμενος ‘eromenos’, Skt. *yajamānatva-* ‘office of the *yajamāna-*’ ← *yajamāna-* ‘ritual officiant’, *kāyamānika(-niketana)* ‘grass hut’ ← *kāyamāna-* ‘id.’.

3.3.9.2. *Calumnia* and *querimōnia* refer to negative speech that can have legal significance. If *querimōnia* is **k^wese-mōn-iġā* to **k^wese-mōn(-)*, perhaps *calumnia* < **kalV̥e-m(e)n-iġā* to **kalV̥e-mġ*. Cf. formally *sēminium* ‘begetting; breed, stock’ Pl.+ ← *sēmen* ‘seed’. (**kalV̥e-mġ* would have > Lat. §*scalūmen* like *uolūmen* to *uoluere*, etc.)

Another, older view on *calumnia*: Debrunner 1957:277 (comparison with Ilr. abstracts in *-mna-*).

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