The Latin dialect of the Ager Faliscus: 150 years of scholarship
Bakkum, G.C.L.M.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“On peut se demander s’il y avait lieu d’écrire vraiment un ouvrage d’ensemble sur les Falisques. Leur histoire militaire n’est guère qu’une petite partie de l’histoire romaine, prise à rebours. Leur civilisation, assez rudimentaire, n’était qu’un reflet de celle de leurs voisins du nord, les Étrusques, ou de leurs voisins du midi, les Romains. On la connaît, assez mal, d’ailleurs, et, comme leur religion, surtout par les témoignages cent fois cités des écrivains latins. Les inscriptions trouvées sur leur territoire sont ou étrusques, ou à peu près latines, et ne nous fournissent pour ainsi dire aucun renseignement: la plupart, d’ailleurs, ne contiennent que quelques lettres à demi effacées ou des nom propres souvent d’une lecture douteuse.”

1.1. Introductory remarks

With the biased but not wholly unjustified words quoted above, Duvau (1889:9) opened his review of the first major work on Faliscan, Deecke’s *Die Falisker* (1888), and similar pessimism still sounds through in the words of Deecke’s latest successor, G. Giacomelli (1963:1), “il falisco non è una lingua attraente”. The problems in the study of Faliscan, however, are no worse than those in the study of any fragmentarily preserved language, and in the case of Faliscan there are at least three reasons why the Faliscan material merits the effort of its study: “grande morae pretium ritus cognoscere, quamuis difficilis cluisi hic via praebet iter”, as Ovid (*Am.* 3.13.5-6) tells us.

1. **Faliscan is one of the three best documented Latin dialects** (the other two being those of Rome and of Praeneste). The useable Faliscan material consists of c.355 inscriptions, and although in many cases these contain little more than names, they provide a surprisingly large amount of linguistic data.

2. **The Faliscan material is relatively old.** Most inscriptions date back to the first half of the third or the second half of the fourth century, a period for which there are few documents for most of the other Italic languages, while even for the earliest period the number of Faliscan inscriptions is comparatively large.

3. **The interest of Faliscan is enhanced by the location of the area where it was spoken.** Lying between the areas where Etruscan, Sabellic languages, and Latin were the native languages, and surviving the domination of the Etruscan culture, as well as, for a long time, the expansion of Rome, it is of considerable interest for the study of language contact in ancient Italy.
For these reasons many publications have been devoted to the Faliscan material, including such ‘ouvrages d’ensemble’ as Deecke’s *Die Falisker* (1888), Herbig’s *Corpus inscriptionum Etruscarum* II.2.1 (1912), Buonamici’s *Il dialetto falisco* (1913), Stolte’s *Der faliskische Dialekt* (1926), and G. Giacomelli’s *La lingua falisca* (1963). It is therefore perhaps rather the desirability of a *new* comprehensive study on Faliscan that could be questioned, especially as *La lingua falisca* did not receive an unfavourable press.¹ One obvious reason for a new study is that the results of the many linguistic, epigraphic, and archaeological publications on Faliscan that have appeared in the 45 years since the publication of *La lingua falisca* have not yet been incorporated into a major overview, although *La civiltà dei Falisci* (1990) provides an excellent overview of the new developments, while the more important linguistic points have been the subject of the monographs by R. Giacomelli, *Ricerche falische* (1978) and *Nuove ricerche falische* (2006). The same applies to developments in the study of the Italic languages that bear on the study of Faliscan, most important of which are surely the publication, in 1978, of the *lapis Satricanus* (*CIL* I² 2832a) and the ensuing discussion about the Italic second-declension genitive singular, the work by Wachter (1987) on the early Latin inscriptions, and the discussion of the Italic perfects of *facio* following the publication of two Faliscan inscriptions by Olmos Romera (2003) and Wallace (2004).

There is, however, another, and, in my view, more important reason for a new comprehensive study on Faliscan. For a long time Faliscan has been regarded as in some way related to Latin, and during the last decades more and more authors have come to see Faliscan as essentially a Latin dialect. An overall critical examination of the material that starts from this point of view is –or, rather, *was*– lacking until now. The aim of this study is therefore to argue that *Faliscan is a Latin dialect, and in no respect a distinct language*. In order to do so, the definition of both the term *language* and the term *dialect* must be made clear, and every linguistic feature in the Faliscan epigraphic material addressed, compared and evaluated in this context.

The remainder of this chapter is reserved for a number of mainly methodological preliminary observations. The rest of this study is divided into two parts.

Part I is a discussion of the *linguistic* data in their widest sense. It opens with a discussion of the historical sources and their sociolinguistic implications (Chapter 2). The next chapters deal with the data on phonology (Chapter 3), the inflexional morphology of the nouns and the pronouns (Chapter 4), the verbs (Chapter 5), the lexicon (Chapter 6), the onomasticon (Chapter 7), and the syntax (Chapter 8). This is followed by an assessment of the effects of language contact (Chapter 9). The linguistic part is rounded off with my conclusions on the linguistic position of Faliscan with regard to Etruscan, Sabellic, and Latin (Chapter 10).

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Part II is a presentation of the epigraphic data on which the discussions in part I are based. It opens with a discussion of the material and of the Faliscan alphabet and orthography (Chapter 11). The remaining chapters comprise the edition of the epigraphic material, divided into the earliest inscriptions (Chapter 12), the inscriptions from Civita Castellana (Chapters 13-14), S. Maria di Falleri (Chapter 15), Corchiano and the northern ager Faliscus (Chapter 16), the south-eastern ager Faliscus and the ager Capenas (Chapter 17), the inscriptions of unknown or non-Faliscan or non-Capenate origin (Chapter 18), and the Etruscan inscriptions (Chapter 19).

1.2. Dialect and language

As the main problem of this study is whether Faliscan is a dialect or an independent language, some discussion of the way I define ‘dialect’ is mandatory. It should be noted at the outset that I use the term ‘dialect’ here only for a geographical variant of a language, and not, as is sometimes done, for social or in-group variants (sociolects or idiolects) as well. The material under discussion here simply does not allow isolating such variants, however welcome and interesting this would be.

The question of the definition of dialect can, on the whole, be approached from a sociolinguistic and from a structural point of view. The exclusively sociolinguistic definition of dialect is perhaps best summarized by the wisecrack about a language being ‘a dialect with an army’: in other words, it is the politics behind the language that decide, language being something used by a group that has some measure of political independence, and dialect, by a group that is an identifiable subgroup of a larger community but has no independent status. In this view the notions of dialect and language depend therefore mainly on extralinguistic features, especially the attitudes towards their dialect or language taken by the speakers of the dialect or language in question and by those habitually in contact with them. In such an approach the criteria on which a variant is regarded as a dialect or a language are provided not so much by those dialects or languages themselves as by sources that shed light on how speakers perceive the relation of their dialect or language to their cultural, national, tribal, or ethnic identity. In the case of long dead languages or dialects like Faliscan, this approach can only have a secondary or explicatory role, and then only if there are abundant historical or archaeological sources.

For the Faliscan situation, the criteria have to be provided by the structural definition, where the distinction between dialect and language is made on the basis of the intralinguistic features of the language or dialect in question. This method, in its turn, can be subdivided into a synchronic and a diachronic approach. In the synchronic approach, variants are compared along a number of parameters, traditionally resulting in a map of isoglosses, and are evaluated accordingly. The parameters should preferably
refer to several different layers of the language structure, such as phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax, and may accordingly be given a different ‘weight’ in deciding the degree of difference between one or more variants. This method, too, is virtually impossible to use in the case of such fragmentarily attested languages and dialects as Faliscan, especially as the documents that are preserved can often not be dated with any degree of accuracy (cf. §1.4.3). Most Latin dialect studies therefore apply a mixture of the synchronic and the diachronic approach. The diachronic approach starts out from the assumption, explicitly stated or not, that dialects start off as local variants that gradually become independent (in a linguistic sense), either by retention or by innovation. The degree to which a variant has or has not reached linguistic independence (i.e., to which a dialect differs from the standard or from other dialects of the same language) can then be measured by the relative frequency of the following four parameters:

1. **common retention**: The languages or dialects involved have both retained the same inherited feature.

2. **separate retention**: The languages or dialects involved have both retained different inherited features.

3. **common innovation**: The languages or dialects involved have both replaced the same inherited feature by the same new feature.

4a. **separate innovation (bilateral)**: The languages or dialects involved have both replaced the same inherited feature, but each by a different new feature.

4b. **separate innovation (unilateral)**: One language or dialect has replaced an inherited feature by a new feature, while the other has retained the inherited feature.

(The term ‘innovation’ does not necessarily imply an entirely new feature, but can also refer to the standardization of one of several co-existing variants.)

Usually, these four parameters can be distinguished without too much trouble, especially when the variants involved have few contacts: for it is typical of this approach to look at the variants involved as if they developed in complete isolation from each other, while disregarding the phenomena related to language contact. It therefore runs the risk of regarding a feature as e.g. an instance of common innovation, while it may in fact have been a unilateral innovation followed by spread of the innovation from the innovating to the non-innovating variant. This weakness is of course compensated by the fact that it is far more expedient, and, from a structural point of view, theoretically more justifiable, to study the development of each variant involved independently. The problems of this method lie therefore not so much in its theoretical basis as in its application.

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With regard to the application, there is the problem that not every innovation or retention is comparable to every other, and that not every innovation or retention is as significant as every other. For instance, the fact that in both Faliscan and Latin /oʊ/ was monophthongized to /ʊ/ cannot be treated on a par with the fact that in both Faliscan and Latin the second-declension genitive singular ending /-osjo/ was replaced by /-v/: the former is a fairly frequently occurring phonological development that can also be observed in other Italic languages, while the latter is an apparently unique morphological replacement that is of far greater significance in the evaluation of the degree of difference between Faliscan, Latin, and the Sabellic languages. In the application of this method, there is a general tendency to regard morphological developments categorically as more significant than phonological ones (syntax and other parts of language are often left untreated), and older developments as more significant than recent ones. No doubt this is partly justifiable: yet it should be stressed that every individual instance of retention or innovation is to be evaluated for its relevance, and that the relevance given to any specific instance of retention or innovation will therefore remain a matter of interpretation.

With regard to the evaluation of the data in this method, the main problem is that the results of the diachronic method can rarely be quantified, and, as I shall argue below, the differences between languages and dialects are often gradual rather than abrupt, and can therefore often be evaluated better by quantitative data than by distinctions of the ‘either … or’ type. Furthermore, it is impossible to say that e.g. a certain number of shared innovations followed by a certain number of independent innovations points to a language rather than a dialect: one or two important separate innovations may outweigh a large number of relatively insignificant common innovations, and vice versa. The conclusions that can be reached by this method must therefore necessarily be relative rather than absolute.

With these precautions in mind, the implications for the method followed here are the following. First, as the outcome of the diachronic method is relative rather than absolute, the number of languages or dialects compared should preferably be more than two. To establish the position of Faliscan with regard to (Roman) Latin, it is therefore not enough to compare Faliscan with (Roman) Latin, but Faliscan should be compared also with other Latin dialects and with the Sabellic languages. Then, if Faliscan is indeed a Latin dialect, the result of such a comparison would be expected to be, first, that Faliscan sides with Latin in all cases where Latin has separate retentions or innovations with regard to Sabellic; second, that Faliscan has a relatively large number of important common innovations with at least several Latin dialects, and third, that specifically Faliscan separate innovations would be either recent or of lesser significance.

3 Failure to do so gives Joseph & Wallace 1991 a rather lop-sided conclusion.
A final point worth noting is that during the period under discussion in this study, that is, roughly the sixth to the second century, the dialects of the various Latin towns shifted from being independently coexisting variants of one and the same language (more or less in the manner of the Greek dialects, although with fewer structural differences) towards being variants existing alongside a Roman Latin that was gradually becoming the standard and consolidating its position as such. By the end of the period, if there were still any regional variants, these differed only in the way or in the degree in which they diverged from this standard, and can be regarded as local variants of substandard or ‘rustic’ Latin. This process appears to have been completed by the beginning of the first century BCE, exactly at the moment when the city-states and peoples of Italy lost their varying degrees of independence in the Social War and its aftermath: the Social War was the conclusion, not a catalyst, of this process of ‘substandardization’.

1.3. Languages in contact

1.3.1. Language contact in ancient Italy. In a context like that of ancient Italy, especially during the period of the Roman expansion, it is reasonable to assume even a priori the existence of extensive language contact and of bilingual individuals or even bilingual communities. It is difficult to draw any specific conclusions about the effects of these contacts, however, as they can be observed almost exclusively through phenomena occurring in the written material. Sociolinguistic observations can certainly be derived from archaeological or historical data, and can be used very effectively to explain phenomena in written material, but such observations are not nearly specific enough to predict with any degree of accuracy the effects of language contacts in so far as these do not occur within the written material. Unfortunately, language contact, and especially its corollaries interference and borrowing, have been and sometimes still are used more as a device to explain away apparent irregularities in the material than as an independent fact of language. This is especially so in the case of Faliscan, which many authors have regarded as heavily ‘influenced’ by the Sabellic languages or Etruscan, usually without making clear just what was meant by ‘influenced’. At best, they tacitly placed all interference and borrowing phenomena on one level and equated a high number of features that could be ascribed to other languages with extensive ‘influencing’. It is therefore useful to look at some aspects of language contact that are relevant to the study of Faliscan.

1.3.2. Interference and borrowing. In this section I very briefly touch upon several features regarding interference and borrowing in language contact: a more detailed discussion, looking especially at the epigraphic material, may be found in §9.1. First of all it should be clear that the phenomena that can be resumed under the header of
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‘linguistic interference’ operate on two different levels. The first is that of the individual speaker who, using a second language he or she is not completely proficient in, imports features from one language to the other, usually from his or her first language to his or her second language. As the proficiency in the second language increases, these imports gradually become fewer. On another level stand the interference features that have become part of the language into which they have been imported and are consequently used by a large part or the whole of the language community, even those that speak this language as a first language. It is only to this second type of interference that the term ‘borrowing’ is applied. Unfortunately, in the case of languages that are only epigraphically attested, the difference between interference and borrowing is obscured by the fact that an epigraphic document represents a language or dialect as used by one speaker at one specific point in time. It is therefore impossible to establish whether a non-native feature is due to real borrowing unless it returns in a sufficiently large number of inscriptions. A second point that should be kept in mind is that, although interference can take many forms, even in extensive language contacts not just any form of interference can acquire the status of a borrowing, as borrowings are embedded in the language into which they are imported and are therefore constrained by the structure of the host language. Below, I name a few of the factors that can act as limitations.

(1) Structural difference. The first point is the degree of difference in structure between the languages or dialects involved: where there is a large degree of structural difference, there will be less and more limited borrowing than where it is smaller. If the structure of the language from which the borrowing is taken is similar to that of the host language on the level where the borrowing takes place, the borrowed feature can be embedded more easily into the host language, as it can be fitted into a similar place within the structure. In the case of Faliscan, this is of special interest for the evaluation of the contacts with the structurally very different Etruscan as compared with the structurally not dissimilar Umbrian or Sabine. The question is of course of even greater relevance for the contacts between Faliscan and Latin, for if Faliscan is regarded as a Latin dialect, the structural differences between the two are assumed to be very small. The degree of structural difference seems to be of little account as a borrowing constraint, however, in a so-called Sprachbund. This concept was originally developed for the situation in the Balkans, where, in the aftermath of early mediaeval migrations and the subsequent absorption of the peninsula into the Ottoman Empire, peoples and minorities in every possible sense coexist in a variety of ways, and languages of various Indo-European families exist side by side with altogether unrelated languages. In this situation, languages have been shown to develop along parallel lines even if they are completely unrelated. The existence of an Italic Sprachbund has been posited by Pisani (e.g. 1978:39-55, with literature), but I hesitate to adopt this idea. Existing Sprachbund-situations and the contexts in which they emerged differ greatly from that of pre-Roman Italy, and I am not convinced that there is any feature in Italic linguistics that can be
explained only or better by the assumption of an Italic *Sprachbund*. As far as I can see, the Italic *Sprachbund* has until now usually been invoked to explain unwanted irregularities in the material or in an argumentation (cf. §1.3.1).

(2) **The borrowing hierarchy.** Even where the structures of the languages in question are similar, not everything is possible: *some parts of language can more easily be borrowed than others*, depending on how deeply they are embedded in the language structure itself. This concept is often expressed in the form of a ‘borrowing hierarchy’. Although such hierarchies may differ in details, depending on the languages involved, they tend to show the same general tendencies. As an example I give the original borrowing hierarchy as it was long ago proposed by Whitney (1881:19-20), where elements of language are placed in decreasing order of ‘borrowability’:

- nouns > adjectives > verbs > adverbs > prepositions > conjunctions > pronouns >
- derivational prefixes or suffixes > inflexional prefixes or suffixes > features of grammatical distinction

Later publications have not brought significant changes to this model (see e.g. Haugen 1950:210-32, Appel & Muysken 1987:170-2). I regard the borrowing hierarchy as such a strict constraint on borrowing that in the case of fragmentarily preserved languages or dialects I have ventured to use it *predictively*, in the sense that borrowing on the deeper levels of the hierarchy is indicative of borrowing on higher levels even if this is not *attested in the material*: in other words, the presence of e.g. borrowed derivational suffixes would be a strong indication that borrowing on every higher level of the borrowing hierarchy took place even if for one or more of these levels this is not observable in the material.

As so much of the Faliscan material is onomastic, it should be stressed that onomastic elements are *extremely* liable to be borrowed, but have no place on the borrowing hierarchy as they are not a genuine part of the language structure (§7.1.1). A large amount of borrowing in the onomasticon is therefore linguistically not significant except as a very good indicator of language contact and of the way the users of the languages involved perceive the identity of the communities involved.

(3) **Extralinguistic factors.** A third important point is that borrowing is not something that happens by itself: *borrowing is the result of a process that is brought about by the speakers of a language*, who select one of various modes of expression offered by different languages or dialects at their disposal. Of course, this process is in most cases subconscious, but the fact remains that a choice is *made by the speaker*, as the result of a psychological or psycholinguistic process. The factors that decide this choice are often not intralinguistic, but extralinguistic, the choice normally being made in favour of the variant that belongs to the language or dialect associated with the community of which it is attractive to be regarded as a member, e.g. for economical, social, political, cultural, or perhaps even personal reasons.
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Borrowing is therefore usually not a two-way process, and especially in the Faliscan context, where the contacts were primarily with the languages associated with two dominant political or cultural influences in the area, namely Etruscan (until the fifth century) and Roman Latin (from the third century onwards), borrowing should be expected to take the form of import into Faliscan rather than of export from Faliscan. Note that this implies that even within a strictly structural approach to the definition of language and dialect, it is therefore still necessary to take the extralinguistic factors into account when it comes to an evaluation of borrowing, as borrowing is a primarily social process that manifests itself in a language contact situation.

There is one more point I wish to mention in connection with language contacts in ancient Italy, namely the possible existence of diglossia, much of which has been made by R. Giacomelli (e.g. 1978, 1979). Consulting the literature on the subject, from the seminal article by Ferguson (1959) onward, exposes an inherent contradiction of studying diglossia from data such as those on Faliscan, for it is a standard feature of classical diglossia that the low-level language not only is not written, but in the opinion of its users should not or even cannot be written. It should therefore be impossible to study diglossia from written documents alone, unless there are strong indications for the existence of an unwritten low-level language from other sources, which in the case of Faliscan are not so compelling as to lead to the assumption of diglossia. Furthermore, diglossia normally requires that the high-level language has a long written tradition incorporating such fields as law, religion, and literature, as in the diglossia of Classical and spoken Arabic, or of Greek καθαρά in and δημοτικά. Such a situation is unlikely to have existed in pre-Roman Italy.

1.4. The Faliscan material

1.4.1. ‘Faliscan’, ‘Latin’, ‘Sabellic’. In this study the term ‘Faliscan’ is used for a geolinguistic unit, that is, it denotes the name of a regional variant of Latin spoken in the area known as the ager Faliscus, whose extent is described in §2.1.1. There are no Faliscan inscriptions from beyond this areas, although some have been claimed as such (cf. chapter 18). One consequence of the assumption made in §1.1, that Faliscan is a Latin dialect, is that the term ‘Latin’ should properly be used here as a hyperonym of such local variants as Faliscan, Praenestine, etc. Tradition dictates, however, that ‘Latin’ is used exclusively to refer to the Latin of Latium and the colonies and other emigration areas beyond its confines. I have therefore not without some reluctance maintained this traditional use of the term ‘Latin’. The term ‘Sabellic’ is used here in the modern wider sense to refer to Oscan, Umbrian, the Central Italic languages, South Picene, and Praesammitic, in short all languages that appear in Rix’s Sabellische Texte (2003), South Picene probably being a sort of archaic Central Italic κοινή (cf. Marinetti 1981,
1985:43-4, Prosdocimi 1987, and Meiser 1987a-b). It should be stressed that terms like ‘Latin’, ‘Faliscan’, ‘Etruscan’, etc., are used as glottonyms and therefore refer to linguistic units, irrespective of whether these coincide or overlap with homonymous political or cultural units.

‘Proto-Italic’ is defined as the (chronological) stage during which those developments took place that together set off the Italic languages from the other IE language families, but that precede any developments that occurred only in the Latin or only in the Italic branch (see also §3.1.2). The terms ‘Proto-Latin’ and ‘Proto-Sabellic’ are similarly used to denote the successive stage during which the Latin (or, Latin-Faliscan) and the Sabellic branches of the Italic languages underwent their respective individual developments that preceded any developments occurring only in the individual languages of these branches (see also §3.3.1).

1.4.2. The material. The material for the study of Faliscan consists of inscriptions and glosses. Virtually all our knowledge of Faliscan is based on the data provided by the inscriptions: the handful of glosses (discussed in §6.6) add little to this. The number of inscriptions given by the various authors varies, depending on what is called Faliscan and what not, as well as on whether all or only the linguistically useful inscriptions are counted. The lowest count is 100 (Beekes 1990:49, counting only those that he regards as being of linguistic interest); the highest, 600 (Herbig CIE (1912), publishing exactly 600 texts, including every scrap or trace known to him). If from the 535 inscriptions in my edition I exclude all that are illegible, consist only of abbreviations, or are clearly Etruscan, Latin, or a Sabellic language, and count multiple inscriptions on one object and inscriptions repeated on more than one object separately, I come to c.355 Faliscan inscriptions, most of which contain features that can in some way or other be used as linguistic data.

Most of the Faliscan inscriptions are sepulchral, scratched or painted on the tiles used to close the burial-niches in the rock-cut tombs, or on the wall beside these. They contain the names of the deceased, often followed by a filiation, and, in the case of married women, by the word uxor ‘wife’ and the name of the husband in the genitive: sometimes the words hec cupat/cupant ‘lie(s) here’ are added as well. Others are cut at the entrance to the tomb, and name its owner, sometimes in the genitive with the word cela added, ‘the tomb of ...’: a few also contain statements on burial rights. Most of the remaining inscriptions are on pottery, and are usually either Besitzerinschriften or potters’ signatures, consisting of names in the nominative or the genitive, though several of the earliest inscriptions have considerably more content than that. Dedications are few, and so are official inscriptions: the latter group consists mainly of the names of magistrates cut in the sides of the hollow roads of the area, although there are a few bronze inscriptions from the later periods. For an extensive overview of the material, see §11.1; the formulas used in the various types of texts are discussed in §8.8-12.
1.4.3. The dating of the material. The Faliscan inscriptions span a period from the late seventh or early sixth century to the middle of the second century BCE. The earliest material can easily be identified both archaeologically and epigraphically, but the main group, dated loosely between the second half of the fourth and the early second century, often presents serious dating problems. Dating on archaeological context is difficult, not only because there may be doubts about the reliability of the archaeological context provided (cf. below), but also because burial chambers were often reused for centuries, and, especially in those tombs that were ransacked in antiquity, goods from one burial may well have become associated with another. As a consequence, a reliable basis for orthographical dating is lacking, although the use of the Latin alphabet in an inscription that was clearly written in the ager Faliscus (such as a sepulchral inscription) may be indicative of the period after 240 BCE (see below). Dating on linguistic features, that is, on successive stages of diachronic developments, can of course not be used in a linguistic study because of its obvious methodological disadvantages.

Editors therefore often take the war of 241 BCE (§2.6) as a dating criterion, for it was a result of this war that the two sites that provide the majority of the inscriptions, Civita Castellana and Corchiano, were abandoned, while the new Roman Falerii near S. Maria di Falleri was founded soon afterwards. The inscriptions from Civita Castellana and Corchiano are therefore assumed to date from before 240 BCE and those from S. Maria di Falerii from after 240 BCE. This division is still applicable, although in the case of Civita Castellana there are indications that the tombs and temples continued to be used after 240 BCE (cf. §2.6.2). I have therefore divided the epigraphic material from the agri Faliscus and Capenas into several age/alphabet groups, further specifying the categories proposed by G. Giacomelli (1978:510-1). I briefly introduce these categories here, discussing them further in §11.1.3:

1. **Early Faliscan** (EF) are the inscriptions between the late seventh and the fifth centuries. These constitute a group that differs considerably from the rest both in terms of the contents of the texts and linguistically.

2. **Middle Faliscan** (MF) are the inscriptions between the late fifth century and the war of 241 BCE. This group includes virtually all inscriptions from Civita Castellana and Corchiano, as these sites were apparently abandoned soon after 240 BCE, and few inscriptions from these sites can be shown to be later.

3. **Middle or Late Faliscan** (MLF) are the inscriptions from the smaller sites in the ager Faliscus that continued to exist after the war of 241 BCE, and cannot with certainty be ascribed to either the Middle or the Late Faliscan period.

4. **Late Faliscan** (LF) are the inscriptions datable after the war of 241 BCE written in the Faliscan alphabet and showing linguistic features that are consistent with the Middle Faliscan inscriptions. The inscriptions from S. Maria di Falleri and from the smaller settlements in the northern ager Faliscus belong to this group.
5. **Latino-Faliscan (LtF)** are the inscriptions, mostly dated after the war of 241 BCE, that are written in the Latin alphabet but still contain Faliscan dialect features. They are mostly from the sites at Fabbrica di Roma and Grotta Porciosa.

6. **Capenate (Cap)** are the inscriptions from the ager Capenas that are written in the Latin alphabet but still contain Faliscan dialect features. The majority of these inscriptions appears to date from before the end of the third century BCE.

Beside these categories, there are the **Latin (Lat)** inscriptions, that is, the inscriptions written in Latin alphabet and showing no significant Faliscan features. These are far more frequent in the ager Capenas (especially at the shrine of Lucus Feroniae), as this was Latinized at an early date: in the ager Faliscus, they appear to date almost exclusively from the period after 240 BCE. Finally, there are the **Etruscan (Etr)** inscriptions, which are defined on the basis of linguistic features as well as of the alphabet.

The criteria on which a text is judged to be Faliscan, Latin, or Etruscan, are discussed below: where doubt exists and alphabet and language involved seem to be at odds, inscriptions have been labelled as e.g. Middle Faliscan/Etruscan (MF/Etr).

1.4.4. When is a text Faliscan? Although it is usually not difficult to tell whether an inscription is Faliscan or not, there are cases where there is doubt as to the language used. Editors often solve this problem by looking at the alphabet, the presupposition being that the use of the Faliscan, Latin, or Etruscan alphabet is indicative of the language used. Although this is to some extent true, it is not a conclusive, and, worse, not a linguistic argument: I might choose to write this sentence in the Greek alphabet, but unless I not only transliterate but translate it as well, the sentence remains English. I have therefore looked first at the lexical, morphological, and phonological data present in the text (in that order), and have used the alphabet only as an additional criterion.

The decision whether an inscription is Faliscan or Etruscan is usually not a very difficult one, although even in this case things may turn out to be more subtle than they appear at first sight. A case in point is *umrie* (‘Umbrius’) Etr XLIII, a sepulchral inscription from Rignano Flaminio on the border between the ager Faliscus and the ager Capenas, and, as a sepulchral inscription, not likely to have been written anywhere else. I regard the language of this inscription as Etruscan in spite of the fact that it is written in the Faliscan alphabet, for the cluster *mr* is Etruscan, and not in accordance with Faliscan phonology, as is shown by *upreciano* (‘Umbricianus’) in MLF 363 and 364, from the same tomb as *umrie*: the ending *-ie(s)*, although undoubtedly Etruscan, cannot constitute an argument to call the text Etruscan, as it occurs also as an interferential form (limited to the onomasticon) in otherwise Faliscan texts. On the other hand, I regard *hermana* MF/Etr 264 as Faliscan in spite of the fact that both the name and the alphabet are Etruscan, because in Faliscan the Etruscan gentilicia in *-na* were incorporated into the first declension as borrowings, as they were in Latin: in other words, the inscription could be Faliscan as well as Etruscan.
The differences between Faliscan and Latin are less obvious. An illustrative instance is *med·loucilios·feced* Lat 268, engraved on a fourth-century strigilis found at Corchiano. I regard the language of this text as Latin, but not primarily because it is written in the Latin alphabet. In this case the first criterion is morphological, for Latin *feced* contrasts sharply with the contemporary Faliscan *facet* MF 470* and *faced* MF 471* (since *med* occurred both in Latin and in Early and Middle Faliscan, it cannot count as a criterion), and the second, phonological, namely the spelling *ou*, which at this date is Latin rather than Faliscan, where the spelling *o* was already predominant. But how about the -s in *loucilios*? After all, omission of word-final -s is generally regarded as a stock feature of Faliscan. The weakening of /s#/ after a short vowel and its omission in writing occurred not only in Faliscan, however, but in so many other Latin dialects as well that at the time it was a feature of Latin and Faliscan in general rather than of any specific dialect: a point made even more salient by the fact that in early Latin quantitative poetry /s#/ was treated in a different way than the Greek models for such poetry prescribed. If the material from the various Latin dialects is evaluated statistically, however, it appears that in the Faliscan inscriptions word-final -s is omitted in about 97% of the instances, whereas the percentage of omission in other areas is noticeably lower (§3.5.7d). It is therefore the frequency of the omission, not the omission itself, that constitutes a Faliscan dialect feature, and omission of -s counts as a Faliscan dialect feature only when viewed as part of the whole set of instances of this omission from the ager Faliscus, and not when viewed in isolation.

As a consequence, when judging whether the language of a text is Faliscan or not, such a statistically defined feature can count as a Faliscan dialect feature only if the text is Faliscan in other ways as well (e.g. containing other Faliscan dialect features or specifically Faliscan names, being written in the Faliscan alphabet, or being from the ager Faliscus): an important point where texts from other areas are involved. Thus, *titoio* 483† from Ardea, has been regarded as Faliscan because of the omission of -s, but since there is no other indication of its being Faliscan, I can see no reason to regard it as such (§18.3.2).

### 1.4.5. The reliability of the material

A last point to be made concerns the reliability of the Faliscan material. As far as can be ascertained, the inscriptions themselves are genuine: in spite of the suspicions of some early editors (notably Deecke, who never saw any inscription himself), falsifications are apparently absent.4 There may be some doubt, however, with regard to the data on the archaeological context of many of the inscriptions.

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4 *Ueiueto* MLF 464 is regarded as a fake by many scholars; *cauio | uetulio* LF 335 may be an unintentional double of *cauia | uetulia* LF 334. I myself must admit to having had initial doubts with regard to the authenticity of the Ceres-inscription (EF 1), but I have not been able to substantiate these.
First, there is the possibility that chance finds or material from badly documented private or semi-private excavations at other locations came to be ascribed to Civita Castellana as the central town of the area, as happened to Manzielli’s excavations near the Grotta Porciosa site in 1890 (see §16.6) and to finds from the Principe del Drago’s excavations at Narce in 1891. Second, there is the ‘Villa Giulia scandal’ (see Sforzini 1985:538-9 and Waarsenburg 1994:39 nn.156-7, 159). This affair centred on allegations made in 1898 by Helbig that the existing documentation on the excavations in the ager Faliscus was to a great extent added later, which, if true, would seriously have discredited the scientific value of the publications of this material, especially Barnabei’s overviews in *Monumenti Antichi* 4 (1894). After a period of intense media attention and an investigation by a parliamentary committee headed by Pigorini, the affair ended more or less inconclusively with the temporary closure of the Museo, and with most of the blame being put on the actual excavators, Benedetti and Mancinelli-Scotti. It is useless to speculate now on who was to blame for what (or indeed whether anyone was to blame for anything), but some reservation about the documentation of the finds from the necropoles of Civita Castellana and Corchiano does not seem unjustified. Fortunately, it would not appear that even in the worst case this would have significant consequences for the linguistic assessment of the epigraphic material.

I conclude with a short note on the reliability of the epigraphic material as presented in my edition (chapters 11-19). The scope of this edition was to provide all the material on which my linguistic history of the agri Faliscus and Capenas is based, and therefore to include all inscriptions from this area from before the first century BCE, whether Faliscan, Latin, or Etruscan, to a total of 535 inscriptions. Of the c.440 Faliscan or possibly Faliscan inscriptions in this corpus, including those consisting only of abbreviations, c.420 are presumably still extant, of which I publish 126 from autopsy: this is indicated in the bibliography accompanying each inscription, and a full list is given in §11.1.1. Since many of the inscriptions that I have not been able to see were seen by G. Giacomelli, and vice versa, the two editions between them present the majority of the inscriptions from autopsy. Where I have published e prioribus, I can claim with some confidence to have collated every autopic description and illustration.

1.5. A short survey of Faliscan studies: 150 years of scholarship

Although the ancient sources are not silent on the ager Faliscus and its inhabitants (cf. §2.2-6), the data on Faliscan as a language or dialect are very few. They consist only of a handful of glosses (discussed in §6.6), and of the much-quoted remark from Strabo’s *Geographica* (5.2.9), ἔνιοι δ’οὐ Τυρρηνοῖς φασί τῶς Φαλέσιος, ἄλλα Φαλίσκους, ἵδιον ἐθνός τινές δὲ καὶ τῶς Φαλίσκους τόλμην ἰδιόγλωσσον: ‘Some say that the inhabitants of Falerii are not Etruscans, but Faliscans, a distinct people; and some, too, that the
Faliscans are a *polis* with a distinct tongue. It should be noted that as Strabo made this remark as part of his description of Etruria, expressions like ἡδον ἐθνὸς and πόλις ἱδιόγλωσσος are to be taken relatively, as ‘different with regard to the rest of Etruria’, rather than absolutely.

Although the study of Faliscan antiquities was revived at a very early date with *De origine et rebus Faliscorum* (1546) by Massa, the study of Faliscan did not progress until much later. Cluverius, in his *Italia omnis* (1624:537-8), established most of the correct reading of the passage from Strabo, but did not discuss its implications, and Dempsterus, in his *De Etruria regali* (1723:2.53), still dismissed Strabo as “in rebus peregrinis balbutientem”. The first Faliscan inscriptions were noted down already in 1676 (LtF 205, MLF 206-207, MLF/Etr 208-209, and MLF 210), and the first one to appear in print was published in 1726 (MF 79), but without attracting specific attention: Lanzi, whose opinion on Faliscan (1824:52) was still no more than a paraphrase of Strabo’s, in fact republished it as Etruscan (1824:392).

The first conclusion on Faliscan that was based on linguistic data was drawn by Mommsen in *Die unteritalische Dialekte* (1850:364), where he concluded from the few Faliscan glosses given by the ancient authors that Faliscan was “wahrscheinlich sabinisch oder umbrisch”, although at the same time drawing attention to the similarity between the Faliscan glosses and those of the Latin dialects.

Real interest in Faliscan started with the publication, in 1854, of a group of Late and Latino-Faliscan inscriptions from near S. Maria di Falleri (LF 220-230 and LtF 231-233). This led to Garrucci’s essays ‘Scoperte falische’ (1860) and ‘Epigrafi etrusche anteaugustanee’ (1864) that mark the beginning of the modern study of Faliscan. The inscriptions in Latin characters were subsequently included in Ritschl’s *Priscae latinitatis monumenta epigraphica* (1862) and Mommsen & Henzen’s *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum I* (1863), while the Faliscan inscriptions, augmented by an increasing number of new finds, found their way into Fabretti’s *Corpus inscriptionum Italicarum* (1867), Garrucci’s *Sylloge inscriptionum Latinarum* (1877), Zvetaieff’s *Inscriptiones Italieae* (1884-1885, 1886), Schneider’s *Dialectorum italicarum aevi vetustioris exempla selecta* (1886), and Bormann’s *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum XI* (1888). This period was concluded by the first overall work on Faliscan and the Faliscans, Deecke’s *Die Falisker* (1888). Deecke, gathering all data available in his day, treated Faliscan as influenced by the Sabellic languages, and regarded the ager Faliscus as at least linguistically entirely separate from Latium. In spite of the fact that his edition is nowhere based on autopsy, this work provided the basis for the subsequent publication of the Faliscan inscriptions in Conway’s *The Italic dialects* (1897).

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5 Lanzi’s only Faliscan specimen (1824:459-64) was leipirior · santirpior · duir · for | foveer · dertier · dieir · uotir | farer · uet · naratu · uet · pon | sirtir (= CIL XI, falsae 350*), with the comment that “a Faleria paese indioglotto [sic] ottimamente conveniva un linguaggio né latino né greco” (1824:461): *Faliscum est, non legitur*, as one might say.
The 1880s and 1890s were fruitful decades for the study of Faliscan, mainly because of the many excavations connected with the newly-founded Museo di Villa Giulia. This material has since been gathered in *Formae Italae* II.1-2 (1978, 1982). Even when these were stopped and the Museo temporarily closed in the first decade of the twentieth century (§1.4.5), a great number of new inscriptions were published, including the famous Early Faliscan 'Ceres-inscription' (EF 1). The wealth of new material, most of which was first published in Thulin’s seminal essay ‘Faliskische Inschriften’ (1907), made it quite clear that Faliscan was much less influenced by the Sabellic languages and stood much closer to Latin than had hitherto been assumed. On the other hand, Faliscan now came to be regarded as having been extensively influenced by Etruscan. This theory, already apparent in Jacobsohn’s *Altitalische Inschriften* (1910), reached its zenith in Herbig’s *Corpus inscriptionum Etruscarum* II.2.1 (1912), a reworking of his Habilitationsschrift, *Tituli Faleriorum Veterum* (1910). Epigraphically, this is still the most complete work on the Faliscan inscriptions, with drawings of virtually all inscriptions then known, and virtually everywhere based on autopsies by Herbig himself or by Nogara; linguistically, it has the drawback of not containing a comprehensive evaluation of the linguistic data. Herbig’s work was followed closely by Buonamici’s *Il dialetto falisco* (1913), the third work devoted entirely and exclusively to Faliscan and the Faliscans.

The study of Faliscan then entered a phase in which few new inscriptions were published, with the important exceptions of the inscriptions from Vignanello (MLF 302-323) in 1916, and, in 1933-1935, of three Early Faliscan inscriptions from Civita Castellana (EF 2-4). Interest now began to focus on the linguistic interpretations, resulting in the Inaugural-Dissertation by Herbig’s pupil Stolte, *Der faliskische Dialekt* (1926), the first work to concentrate entirely on the linguistic data. Other linguistic publications were made by Ribezzo (e.g. 1918, 1927, 1930, 1934, 1936), who maintained that Faliscan was heavily influenced by the Sabellic languages.

The importance of the Faliscan material now began to be realized outside the strict field of Faliscan studies, especially in the discussion of the Italic o-stem genitive singular. Vetter’s *Handbuch der italischen Dialekte* I (1953:277-331) contained the first publication of the complete Faliscan corpus since Herbig’s *CIE* (1912). Although he did not comment explicitly on the linguistic position of Faliscan, it is clear from his comments on individual inscriptions that he regards it as at least close to Latin. The 1950s also saw much work in the archaeological field, notably the surveys of the ager Faliscus and Capenas conducted by the British School, published by Ward Perkins & Frederiksen (1957) and G. Jones (1962). A number of these new developments were included in G. Giacomelli’s *La lingua falisca* (1963), the first publication since Deecke 1888 to include both an edition and a linguistic overview of the material. She published many inscriptions from autopsy, often for the first time since Herbig’s *CIE*. As is clear from the title, G. Giacomelli regarded Faliscan as a language closely related to Latin.
After G. Giacomelli’s edition, Faliscan studies went through a revival. A number of inscriptions were published in the second edition of Pisani’s Le lingue dell’Italia antica oltre il latino (1964). A great number of publications appeared in the mid-1960s, of which I name only the many studies by Peruzzi (1963b, 1964a-d, 1965, 1966a, 1967a-b) and Hirata’s monograph on the onomasticon (1967); more extensive studies are the monographs by R. Giacomelli, Ricerche falische (1978) and Nuove ricerche falische (2006). A large number of new inscriptions were published, most importantly the Late Faliscan inscriptions from Pratoro (LF 242-249), published by Renzetti Marra (1974, 1990) and two Middle Faliscan inscriptions (MF 470*-471*) published by Olmos Romera (2003) and Wallace (2004). Important, too, was the publication of the archaeo logical data gathered in the 1880s and 1890s in Forma Italiae II.1 (1972) and II.2 (1981). Archaeological work progressed significantly: I name only the studies by Potter (1976, 1979) and Moscati (1983, 1985a-b, 1987, 1990). A comprehensive overview of the major developments was provided by the publication of La civiltà dei Falisci (1990).

The points of view on the linguistic position of Faliscan since the appearance of La lingua falisca are the following. The view that Faliscan was closely related to Latin was adopted by most scholars, but the degree of difference between Faliscan and Latin remains a matter of debate.

G. Giacomelli reiterated her view that Faliscan is a language closely related to Latin (in her article ‘Il falisco’ in Lingue e dialetti dell’Italia antica (1978), pp.509-542), but now attributed many features of Faliscan to influence from the Sabellic languages. Campanile (Studi sulla posizione dialettale del latino (1969), pp.85-92) pointed mainly to the differences between the two, and seems inclined to award Faliscan a more or less independent position. Solta (Zur Stellung der lateinischen Sprache (1974), pp.45-47) stressed the correspondences between Faliscan and Latin, but also saw a convergence of Faliscan with the Sabellic languages. Wachter (Altlateinische Inschriften (1987), pp.31-2 with n.73) stresses the shared innovations of Latin and Faliscan, and regards the two as “sprachlich … nahestehenden Völker schaften” (p.32). In the evaluation of the question by Joseph & Wallace (‘Is Faliscan a local Latin patois?’, Diachronica 8 (1991), pp.159-186), the conclusion is again that “Faliscan is a separate language from Latin and not a dialect of Latin, though it is the closest sibling to Latin in the Italic family tree” (p.185): their view is shared by Baldi (The Foundations of Latin (1999), pp.170-4). R. Giacomelli (first in Ricerche falische (1978) and recently in Nuove ricerche falische (2006), the most recent contribution on the subject) treats Faliscan on the whole as a Latin dialect, and I must agree with his conclusion, although I disagree on many points with his arguments.

In §10.2 the views of these scholars are debated in detail on the basis of the evaluation of the linguistic data presented in the following chapters.
Map of the ager Faliscus

Map of the ager Faliscus, showing most of the principal sites, the rivers and streams dividing the area into ridges, as well as the course of the three Roman roads (the Viae Cassia, Amerina, and Flaminia) constructed during the late third and early second centuries BCE. Of the two sites not figured on the map, Narce was located about 4.5 kilometres to the north-east of Mazzano, and Grotta Porciosa about 2 kilometres to the east of Gallese, close to the place where the Via Flaminia crossed the Tiber. Note the Monti Cimini that closed off the area to the west and north, and the main route to the west, crossing the Monti Cimini west of Sutri through the ‘Sutri Gap’. (From Ward Perkins & Frederiksen 1957:68 fig.1.)