

Adaptations of the Latin alphabet to write fragmentary languages

Adaptaciones del alfabeto latino para escribir lenguas fragmentarias

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to offer an overview of the use of the Latin alphabet to write the so-called fragmentary languages of Italy and Western Europe during Antiquity. The Latin alphabet was created from an Etruscan model to write Latin, but was also used to record texts in other languages: Etruscan, Oscan, Umbrian, the minor Italic dialects, Faliscan, and Venetic in Italy; Gaulish in the Gauls and other provinces in the north of Europe; and, finally, Iberian, Celtiberian, and Lusitanian in the Iberian Peninsula. The use of the Latin alphabet to write the so-called fragmentary languages represents a step before complete Latinisation. In some regions the types of inscriptions analysed here are not simply intermittent uses of the alphabet to write the local language, but rather, there was genuine thought about the appropriateness of the system and, consequently, some changes were made such as the creation of new signs, the use of others that come from the epichoric alphabet, and also the development of some distinctive orthographic norms.

Keywords: Latin alphabet. Latinization. Romanization. Fragmentary languages. Epichoric epigraphy. Bilingualism. Linguistic contacts. Writing systems.

Resumen: El objetivo de este trabajo es ofrecer una síntesis sobre el uso del alfabeto latino para escribir las denominadas lenguas fragmentarias de Italia y el occidente de Europa durante la Antigüedad. El alfabeto romano fue creado a partir del etrusco para escribir el latín, pero también fue utilizado para escribir otras lenguas como el etrusco, el osco, el umbro, los dialectos itálicos menores, el falisco y el venético en Italia; el galo en las Galias y otras provincias del norte de Europa; y, finalmente, el ibérico, el celtibérico y el lusitano en la península Ibérica. El uso del alfabeto latino para escribir las lenguas fragmentarias representa un paso en la completa latinización de Italia y las provincias occidentales. En algunas regiones se produce una verdadera adaptación del alfabeto que incluye la creación de nuevas letras, uso de otras procedentes de la escritura epicórica y el desarrollo de nuevas normas ortográficas.

Palabras clave: Alfabeto latino. Latinización. Romanización. Lenguas fragmentarias. Epigrafía epicórica. Bilingüismo. Contactos lingüísticos. Sistemas de escritura.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to offer an overview of the use of the Latin alphabet to write the so-called fragmentary languages of Western Europe during Antiquity. The Latin alphabet was created from an Etruscan model to write Latin, but was also used to record texts in other languages: Etruscan, Oscan, Umbrian, the minor Italic dialects, Faliscan, and Venetic in Italy; Gaulish in the Gauls and other provinces in the north of Europe; and, finally, Iberian, Celtiberian, and Lusitanian in the Iberian Peninsula. They are documented in almost all the epichoric epigraphies, although there is no unequivocal example in either Messapic or Raetic.¹

The oldest examples are dated to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, although these are exceptions. Only from the third century BCE do we see the increasing use of the Latin alphabet to write other languages in Italy, a phenomenon which does not seem to survive beyond the first century BCE, although the chronology of many of these texts is not sufficiently precise and the occasional Venetic inscription could belong to the Augustan era. This type of text only appears in the provinces in the first century BCE, both in Hispania and in Gaul, and survives into the Imperial period, until the first century AD in the Iberian Peninsula and until the second to third centuries AD — or perhaps even into the fourth — in the Gauls.

The Latin alphabet underwent notable changes during this long period.² Although it is possible that the occasional inscription could be dated before the third century BCE, such as a graffito from Cerveteri (Briquel 2016, n.º 4) and an inscription on a figurine of unknown provenance,³ the majority of inscriptions postdate the creation and introduction of the letter G, as has been highlighted in Prosdocimi 2008, 13-19; 2014, 78, 111, 145.⁴ The use of G

1 It is not certain where in Apulia the SAMADION mint was located, which minted with the Greek legend ΣΑΜΑΔΙ and in Latin alphabet SAMADI (*HNItaly*, n.º 821-822).

2 See a recent review of the history of the alphabet in Wallace 2011.

3 *ImIt*, Marsi (?) / MARSII (?) 1 = Briquel 2016, n.º 116 = *CIL* I² 2387, p. 1147 = *CIL* XIII, 10027,281. There may be an even older piece of evidence, from the sixth or perhaps fifth century BCE: a graffito on pottery recovered in Anagnina (ST, He 2 = *ImIt*, Hernici / ANAGNIA 13) which has been interpreted by Colonna 1995 as a text in Hernican language and archaic Latin alphabet (it uses the digraph *hv* to write *f*), but this is not certain, since Triantafyllis 2011 has suggested that it is an unqualifiedly Latin text.

4 Plutarch (*Quaes. Rom.* 54 and 59), and Q. Terentius Scaurus (*GL* 8.15.7) attribute the invention of G to *Spurius Carvilius, libertus of Spurius Carvilius Ruga* (consul in 234 and 228 BCE) and pioneer in opening a primary school in Rome. On this subject, see

is well documented on the Bronze of Rapino, datable to the middle of the third century BCE;⁵ in contrast, this letter does not appear on the Tablet of Velletri, dated to the same century (ST, VM 2 = *ImIt*, [Latium] / [VELITRAE 1]; fig. 8), but it does in the *ordinatio* prior to the final incision of this inscription: *Ga(ius)* in the draft, *Ca(ius)* in the final text (Antonini 2009; Calderini 2011).

There are also orthographic reforms to the alphabet which are reflected in these inscriptions, for example the gemination of consonants and vowels. The duplication of the former is attested for the first time in the early second century BCE and is only used systematically from the first century BCE. The *geminatio uocalium* is used from the second century BCE and is especially common in the case of A; *i longa* to mark /i:/ is also documented from the second century BCE.⁶ The most significant changes thereafter are the reintroduction of Z and Y in the first century BCE⁷ to write Greek names and the failed reform of the Emperor Claudius, who created three new letters that fell into disuse after his reign.⁸ The gemination of consonants and vowels is attested in the *Tabulae Iguvinae*, written in Latin alphabet, which are usually dated to the late second or early first century BCE.⁹ *i longa* is well documented in Gaulish inscriptions: in La Graufesenque it is used to represent *yod* (consonantal *i*), vocalic *i* followed by *yod* and, less commonly, *long i*, which seem to be the same ways of using it as we find in other long texts (*RIG* II-2, L-93, L-98 and L-100; fig. 5), although it does not appear that all the scribes in the pottery centre knew it, and those that did use it do not seem to have done so systematically (Marichal 1988, 60-65, *RIG* II-2, 381-382). In the Coligny calendar, in contrast, its use is arbitrary, since the same word is written indiscriminately with *i* or *i longa* (*Inis/inis*, *equl/equi*, etc., see *RIG* III, 27-30), and in other texts it is used after I to differentiate it from the cursive form of E, as we see in *RIG* II-1, *L-12 (*ariíos*, *luciíon*, *RIG* II-1, p. 58). There is only

Desbordes 1995, 147-152. The fact that G occupies the place of Z in the alphabet opens the possibility that the invention of one and the elimination of the other are related; the latter is attributed to *Appius Claudius*, see Prosdocimi 2002, 160-170.

- 5 Based on the coins found alongside the bronze: Mommsen 1850, 338; ST, MV 1 = *ImIt*, Marrucini / TEATE MARRVCINORVM 2.
- 6 Wallace 2011, 18; on *geminatio uocalium*: Vine 1993, 267-286, for *i longa*: Oliver 1966, 158-170.
- 7 Cicero does not take them into account when he specifies in *N.D.* 2.93 “*unius et uiginti formae litterarum*” and nor does Quintilian in *Inst.* 1.4.9: *X nostrarum ultima*.
- 8 Tac. *Ann.* 11.13. See Desbordes 1995, 184-191.
- 9 See Sisani 2001, 237-245, who summarises the suggestions for the dating of these inscriptions.

one possible attestation of one of the Claudian letters, a graffito from Roanne, but this inscription cannot be read or interpreted with confidence (*RIG* II-2, p. 367, L-81c).¹⁰



Fig. 1. Gaulish inscription from Alise-Sainte-Reine, *RIG* II-1, L-13 (Mullen and Ruiz Darasse 2018, fig. 14).

Palaeography also evolved over the long period during which the Latin alphabet was used to write other languages. The majority of inscriptions from Italy are dated between the third and first centuries BCE and have palaeographic features characteristic of the Republican era, such as open P, Chalcidian L, O open at its base, and R with a clipped corner (Salomies 2015, 169-170). These features appear, among others, in Marsican inscriptions, which are attributed an early chronology, between 250 and 150 BCE.¹¹ In the provinces, there are examples of stone inscriptions with Imperial palaeography, such as the Gaulish dedication by Martialis son of Dannotalos to Ucuētis (fig. 1), incised on a moulded plaque in the shape of a *tabula ansata* with features characteristic of lapidary inscriptions of the period such as the *o minuta*, letters joined together in a nexus, centring, and *hederae* like interpuncts and ornamentation (*RIG* II-1, L-13 = *CIL* XIII, 2880).

10 Claudian letters in inscriptions found in the provinces are extremely rare: Antolini 2019, 174.

11 *ImIt*, Marsi / MARRVVIVM 1 and 2, SVPINVM 1 and ANTINVM 1.

The use of the *capitalis quadrata* is also well attested, illustrated by the majority of stone inscriptions from *Corfinium* dated in the second and first centuries BCE, among which some very notable examples stand out including the V-section trench, nexuses, and triangular and square interpuncts (fig. 3).¹² The use of cursive capitals is also attested, which is defined by disjointed letters, A with an oblique stroke, E and F executed with two vertical strokes, etc.¹³ It is attested both on rock inscriptions, such as the Celtiberian ones at Peñalba de Villastar (*MLH* IV, K.3), as well as on graffiti on pottery such as the Venetic ones on funerary urns from Este (*LV* Es, 104, 106, 107, 111 and 113) and even on stone inscriptions such as an Umbrian epigraph from Foligno (*ImIt*, Umbria / FVLGINAE 1 = *CIL* I³, 3380). The most notable example is offered by the kiln docketts from the ovens at La Graufesenque (Marichal 1988; *RIG* II-2, L-29-L-34), with a type of cursive letter specific to administrative documentation; these, according to Petrucci 1962, are an early manifestation of Roman lower case letters (*cf.* Marichal 1988, 21, note 3).

This type of inscription has rarely been the subject of specific study and a complete synthesis has never been undertaken.¹⁴ The singularity of these texts, written in indigenous language and Latin alphabet, explains why they have been published both in the *corpora* of Roman epigraphy as well as those dedicated to epichoric inscriptions. Degrassi and Krummrey explicitly state that, conforming to Mommsen's criteria, they have collected Osco-Latin texts: *profecto abundavi in titulis Oscis-Latinis. Sed Mommsen ducem habui qui in primo et nono volumine hos quoque titulos una cum Latinis edendos esse censuit* (*CIL* I², p. V).¹⁵ Not all editors have followed these criteria, however, and other inscriptions written in Latin alphabet, such as the bronze recovered in the city of Velitrae in Lazio, are not included in *CIL* (fig. 8).¹⁶ Hübner compiles some inscriptions in his *Monumenta Linguae Ibericae* which had already been published previously in *CIL* II: texts from the Hispanian west, written in local language and Latin alphabet.¹⁷ Some of these texts are even included in *Exem-*

12 The most notable examples are: *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 23 and 25.

13 The so-called "filone corsivo" (Cencetti 1956-57).

14 Lejeune 1957; Hadas-Lebel 2004; Sisani 2007, 278-285; 2008, 103-108, Simón 2014; 2019a; De Tord 2018.

15 See the observations made on this by Poccetti 1993, 73-74; Dupraz 2010, 187.

16 *ST*, VM 2 = *ImIt*, [Latium] / [VELITRAE 1].

17 *MLI* XLVI (= *CIL* II, 738 = *MLH* IV, L.1.1), *MLI* XLVII (= *CIL* II, 739 = *MLH* IV, L.1.1), *MLI* XLVIII (= *CIL* II, 2565), *MLI* LVII (= *CIL* II, 416 = *MLH* IV, L.2.1).

pla scripturae: two inscriptions from *Castulo* written — at least partially — in indigenous language (n.º 39 and 40)¹⁸, and two Gaulish inscriptions (n.º 38 and 931).¹⁹

The use of epichoric script or the Latin alphabet has been used as a criterion for organising inscriptions in various studies and catalogues. For example, Mommsen 1850 differentiates inscriptions in Sabellian alphabet (South Picene) from those composed in Latin alphabet (minor dialects) in the chapter he dedicates to the Sabellian dialects in *Die Unteritalischen Dialekte*. *RIG* collects inscriptions in Gallo-Greek alphabet in one volume (vol. I) and those written in Latin alphabet in another (vol. II, parts 1 and 2). Jordán 2004, in his work *Celtibérico*, divides the inscriptions into two groups: documents in Celtiberian language and Palaeohispanic script, and documents in Celtiberian language and Latin alphabet. There are no specific norms for transcribing this type of text. In some of the *corpora* and studies the same norms are used as for the rest of the inscriptions, while others are different. For example, Untermann does distinguish in *MLH* between the texts written in local semi-syllabary, transcribed in bold lower case, from those that use the Latin alphabet, for which he employs upper case.

There are problems identifying this type of text, among which two may be highlighted: short texts and mixed texts, that is, those which use two languages.²⁰ The former refers to the briefest texts, especially those reduced to a single term and particularly when that term is a proper noun. Whether it be an anthroponym, a theonym, or a toponym in a local language, if there is no distinguishing desinence it is almost impossible to determine whether or not it represents a Latinisation of that name. This problem especially affects coin legends that frequently only record the name of a city or a personal name. Untermann 1995, 313 has indicated the difficulty in classifying a significant number of legends from the mints of Hispania Vltior, which minted with the name of the city from the end of the third century to the first century BCE. The great majority are vernacular toponyms with some suffixes characteristic of the southern toponymy of the Iberian Peninsula, such as —*ippo* and

18 *CIL* II, 3302 and *CIL* II, 3294 = *MLH* H.6.1.

19 *CIL* XIII, 2733 = *RIG* II-1, L-10 and *CIL* XIII, 5468,4 = *RIG* II-2, L-133.

20 On this, see Lejeune 1957, 149-150. In particular on the mixed texts: Estarán 2016, 35-38. Adams 2003, 40-67, calls texts written in an alphabet which does not belong to or is not customary in a language “transliterated texts”, but his analysis focusses on the study of Greek texts written in Latin alphabet and vice versa.

—*uba*, while others have the Iberian root *Il(t)i-/Il(t)u*, but it is not possible to determine if this is a text in a local language written in Latin alphabet or an entirely Latin text in which the name of the city is already adapted to the language of the conquerors.²¹ This ambiguity also affects some coin legends from Italy such as VES(?),²² abbreviated, and AISERNIM,²³ and likewise the Gaulish ones, some of which have been compiled in *RIG IV* that appear to be completely Latin, such as Q. DOCI SAM F and Q. IVLIVS TOGIRI.²⁴

The second problem is presented by the texts written in Latin alphabet in which two languages — Latin and the local tongue — are mixed. An example is provided by two votive inscriptions: the first from Viseu (Fernandes *et al.* 2009), which mentions the gods and goddesses of the city in Lusitanian language (*deibabor igo deibobor Vissaieigo*), followed by the name of the dedicant (*Albinus Chaereae f.*) and votive formula in Latin (*u. s. l. m.*); the second is from Arrenès (*RIG II-1, L-7*), in which the name of the worshipper (*sacer peroco(s)*), the verb (*ieuru*), and the object dedicated are written in Gaulish language (*duorico*), but it concludes with the standard Latin votive formula (*u. s. l. m.*). This circumstance is repeated on the spindle whorls from Aunton and its surroundings, which bear Latin texts (*salue tu puella*, *CIL XIII, 10019,19*) and Gaulish ones (*moni gnatha gabi buddotton imon*, *RIG II-2, L-119 = CIL XIII, 2827*), and also mixed ones (*nata uimpi pota ui(nu)m*).²⁵ Some of these mixed texts should be included in this study, since the Latin part is minimal compared to the indigenous part, as we see in the Lusitanian inscriptions from Lamas de Moledo and Arroyo de la Luz, headed by similar Latin clauses but written largely in the indigenous language.²⁶ In contrast, Latin texts that contain an indigenous proper noun that keeps the vernacular declension are excluded, such as in the case of the Celtiberian family names

21 For each of the toponyms see: *MLH VI*.

22 *ImIt*, Vestini / VESTINI 1 Coinage = *HNItaly*, n.º 21.

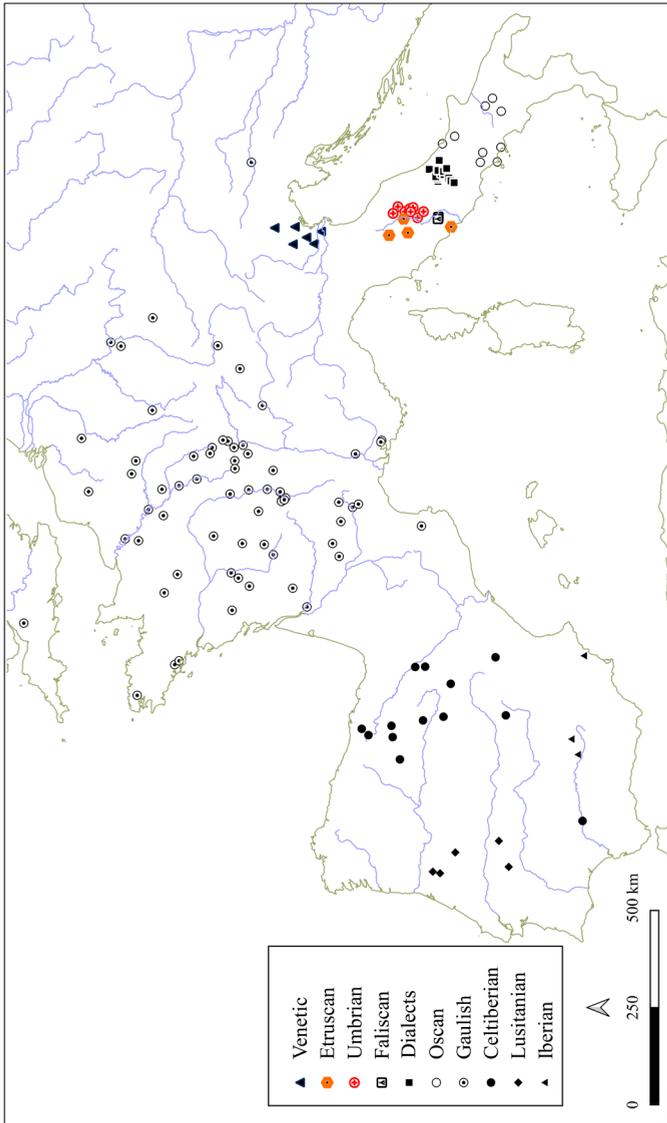
23 *ImIt*, Pentri / AESERNIA 1 Coinage; on AQVINO: Catalli 2007, *ImIt*, Volsci / AQVIN-VM 1 Coinage = *HNItaly*, n.º 432. The legends TIATI, from the mint at *Teanum Apulum* (*HNItaly*, n.º 695-706), presumably use the Greek alphabet: *ImIt*, Daunia / TEANVM APVLVM 1 Coinage. Antonini (REI 1986, 258), however, believes that they were written in Latin alphabet and would have post-dated the alliance with Rome in 318 BCE. Recorded as Latin in ST, nFr 3b.

24 *RIG IV*, n.º 228, 229. The variant DVRNACVS / AVSCROCVS seems to fall into the same category in contrast with DVRNACOS / AVSCROCOS (*RIG IV*, n.º 148).

25 *RIG II-2, L-121 = CIL XIII, 10019,20*, see also Meid 1983, 1029-1043 and Adams 2003, 196-197.

26 *MLH IV, L.2.1 = CIL II, 416* and *L.1.1 = CIL II, 738* and 739.

ending in *-cum*, for example *Seuerus Ligiri f. Coilionqum an. LX s. t. t. l.*, as well as the theonyms recorded in votive inscriptions which retain the vernacular dative in Lusitanian, accompanied on occasion by a similarly local epithet with a non-Latin desinence: *Bandei Brialeacui Seuerus Abruni f. u(otum). s(oluit)*.²⁷ For this same reason, a very similar text from Lagole di Calalzo is also excluded: *L. Apinius L. f. Trum[usia]tei u. s. l. m.*, although the theonym and presumably also the desinence is Venetic.²⁸



27 See Estarán 2016, Lu14, who collects this evidence as a whole.

28 LV, Ca 60, see also Marinetti 2001, 66-71.

Taking into account these observations as well as the classifications made by experts in each of these languages, the catalogue of inscriptions written in Latin alphabet and vernacular languages comes to over six hundred examples (table 1, map 1). These figures should be contextualised, since our Etruscan examples – a little more than eighty – form a tiny part of a corpus that numbers over ten thousand inscriptions, while the six Lusitanian texts are the only ones preserved in this language. There are a very significant number of Gaulish inscriptions written in Latin alphabet – almost four hundred examples – and they form the most numerous group which represents a significant percentage (approximately half) of the entire Gaulish *corpus*.

GALLIAE, GERMANIAE, BRITANNIA	Inscriptions in Latin Alphabet	Total number of inscriptions
Gaulish	139 + 250 coin legends	427 (<i>RIG</i> I and II) + 320 coin legends Now: 200 of 500 (Lambert 2018)
HISPANIAE	Inscriptions in Latin Alphabet	Total number of inscriptions
Iberian	3	2250 (Velaza and Moncunill 2016)
Celtiberian	34	ca. 200 (Simón 2014)
Lusitanian	6	6
ITALIA, GALLIA CISALPINA	Inscriptions in Latin Alphabet	Total number of inscriptions
Etruscan	80 (Hadas-Lebel 2004)	ca. 10.000 (Benelli 2007)
Umbrian	15	54 (<i>ImIt</i> + <i>tabulae Igubinae</i>)
Oscan	13	ca. 800 (<i>ImIt</i>)
Minor Italic Dialects	Vestinian: 9 Marrucinian: 6 Paelignian: 65 Marsian: 5	9 (<i>ImIt</i>) 6 (<i>ImIt</i>) 65 (<i>ImIt</i>) 5 (<i>ImIt</i>)
Faliscan	27	355 (Bakkum 2009)
Volscian	1	1 (<i>ImIt</i>)
Hernician	6	15 (<i>ImIt</i>)

Tab. 1. Census of inscriptions written in Latin alphabet.

2. Adaptations

2.1. Etruscan

The Etruscan epigraphic *corpus* is the most numerous of all the fragmentary languages and its alphabet the oldest and the one from which the majority of scripts used in central and northern Italy derive. Hadas-Lebel 2004, 305-317, has undertaken the most complete work on the Etruscan inscriptions written in Latin alphabet, which he calls ‘latinographs’, and he underlines the difficulties in classifying them since the majority are funerary texts that almost exclusively contain proper nouns.²⁹ Specifically, he emphasises the difficulty in discerning if gentilics ending in *-ia* result from Latinisation or are simply Etruscan feminine gentilics in *-ia* written in Latin alphabet. This author compiles a total of eighty inscriptions, a list almost identical to the one collected by Benelli 2001, note 42, for Chiusi, the city with the most numerous group.³⁰ The most notable difference between the two lists consists of the inclusion by the second author of more epitaphs from the necropolis of Balena, recently reassessed, alongside new finds by Maggiani, who recognises eleven texts in Etruscan language and Latin alphabet.³¹

Almost all this group of inscriptions are funerary and come from four cities: *Caere*, Chiusi, Perugia and Arezzo. From the first are only two texts, each incised on a *cippus*;³² there are five examples on funerary urns from Perugia;³³ and a single inscription from Arezzo, a graffito on a pottery vase (*ET*, Ar.2.4). The most important group, comprising seventy five examples, all funerary except for a stamp (*ET*, Cl.6.11), come from Chiusi, which is the city that has produced the greatest epigraphic set for all of Etruria in the Hellenistic era.³⁴

29 The same doubts concern the graffiti, for example, one found in Rome (*ET* La 3.2), see Benelli 2019, n. 3.

30 Benelli himself (*REE* 2012, n.º 31, 81 and 82) has published several more Chiusan texts of this kind, one unpublished and another two collected in *CIL* (*CIL* XI, 7199a and *CIL* XI, 7199b).

31 Maggiani 2014, n.º 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 28, 29 and 33; 3 and 5 are preserved very fragmentarily.

32 *CIE* 6126 = *CIL* I², 2747 and *CIE* 6133 = *CIL* I² 2733.

33 *CIE* 3346, *CIE* 3691 = *CIL* XI, 1991, *CIE* 4387 = *CIL* XI, 2057 and *CIE* 4445.

34 See Benelli 2001. The inscriptions in Latin alphabet from Chiusi: *CIE* 561, *CIE* 563 = *CIL* XI, 7219, *CIE* 708 = *CIL* XI, 2161, *CIE* 709 = *CIL* XI, 2160, *CIE* 714, *CIE* 718 = *CIL* XI, 2168 = *CIL* I, 2007, *CIE* 818, *CIE* 819 = *CIL* XI, 2457, *CIE* 832 = *CIL* XI, 2291, *CIE* 848 = *CIL* XI, 2304 = *CIL* I, 2017, *CIE* 856 = *CIL* XI, 2438 = *CIL* I, 2029, *CIE* 858 = *CIL* XI, 2509, *CIE* 925 = *CIL* XI, 2148, *CIE* 929 = *CIL* XI, 2154, *CIE* 930, *CIE* 932 = *CIL* XI,

2.2. Oscan

Oscan is the next best documented fragmentary language in Italy, attested in some eight hundred inscriptions with a wide geographic distribution through the centre and south of the peninsula, and a broad chronology which runs from the fifth to the first centuries BCE. The use of two different alphabets stands out: one of Etruscan origin in the north, and another of Greek parentage in the south. The texts written in Latin alphabet are few, around twenty. Only three cities minted with their name written in Roman letters: TIANO (*Teano Sidicinum*), CAIATINO (*Caiatia*) and LADINEI / LADINOD (*Larinum*).³⁵

The Latin alphabet is also used in private inscriptions, such as a group of seven small bronze plaques of uncertain provenance which assemble one or two onomastic formulae,³⁶ and a handful of graffiti, such as two extremely brief ones on loom weights³⁷ and the one from Bragiano, with the same term written in Latin and Greek alphabets on a *tegula*.³⁸ One of the best known texts is the *defixio* attributed to Cumas on which, like in other inscriptions mentioned in the introduction, the Latin language is combined with the local one.³⁹

2147, CIE 935 = CIL XI, 2152, REE 64, n.º 19, CIE 956 = CIL XI, 2174, CIE 988B, CIE 991, CIE 1058, CIE 1068, CIE 1077 = CIL XI, 2193, CIE 1147 = CIL XI, 7167, CIE 1152, CIE 1331 = CIL XI, 2270, CIE 1409 = CIL XI, 2214, CIE 1410 = CIL XI, 2213, CIE 1435 = CIL XI, 2432A, CIE 1455 = CIL XI, 2411, CIE 1488 = CIL XI, 7174, CIE 1571 = CIL XI, 2246, CIE 1572 = CIL XI, 2247, CIE 1577 = CIL XI, 2242, CIE 1580 = CIL XI, 2225, CIE 1591 = CIL XI, 2222, CIE 1592 = CIL XI, 2221, CIE 1496 = CIL XI, 2238, CIE 1600 = CIL XI, 2243, CIE 1604, CIE 1606 = CIL XI, 2245, CIE 1653, CIE 1688, CIE 1772, CIE 1777, CIE 1829, CIE 1841, CIE 1931 = CIL XI, 7198, CIE 2058 = CIL XI, 7200, CIE 2059 = CIL XI, 2319, CIE 2107 = CIL XI, 7186, CIE 2108 = CIL XI, 7187, CIE 2109, CIE 2182 = CIL XI, 2499, CIE 2209 = CIL XI, 2495, CIE 2219 = CIL XI, 2498A, CIE 2278 = CIL XI, 7213, CIE 2303 = CIL XI, 2351, CIE 2543 = CIL XI, 2378, CIE 2563 = CIL XI, 2307, CIE 2564, CIE 2693 = CIL XI, 2415, CIE 2700, CIE 2732 = CIL XI, 2448, CIE 2733 = CIL XI, 7222, CIE 2931 = CIL XI, 2468, CIE 3035 = CIL XI, 2372, ET cl. 1.757, ET cl. 1.761, ET cl. 1.761, ET cl. 6.11, CIL XI 7195 = CIL XI, 7195.

- 35 *ImIt*, Campania / TEANVM SIDICINVM 1 Coinage, Campania / CAIATI 1 Coinage and Frentani / LARIVNVVM 1 Coinage.
- 36 *ImIt*, Italia / ITALIA (?) 2-8, Poccetti 1979, n.º 202. In ST, Lu 48-54 they are attributed to Lucania and Bruttium.
- 37 *ImIt*, Frentani / LARIVNVVM 5 and *ImIt*, Apulia / [FORENTVM 1]. Another graffito on a second loom weight is identified as written in the Oscan alphabet in *ImIt*, Frentani / LARIVNVVM 6 but in Latin alphabet in ST, Fr 10. The interpretation of *ImIt*, Frentani (?) / HISTONVM (?) = ST, Fr 12 is also debated.
- 38 *ImIt*, Lucania / NVMISTRO 2. *ImIt*, Frentani / HISTONIVVM 12 = CIL IX, 6082,111 is an example that is both mutilated and lost.
- 39 *ImIt*, Campania / CVMAE (?) 10 = CIL I, 1614; see the edition and extensive commen-

Only three inscriptions on stone are known: a fragment from Bantia, presumably a terminal *cippus*,⁴⁰ and another two from *Larinum*, the first discovered in Casacalenda (*ImIt*, Frentani / LARINVM 2) and the second reused in a house from Larino (Robinson and Sironen 2013). The most notable of this group is the plaque known as the *Lex* or *Tabula Bantina*, an opisthographic bronze that contains on one side a Latin law which is unidentified (although various attributions have been suggested, Roman Statutes, n.º 7 = *CIL* I², 582) and on the other, in Oscan language and Latin alphabet, a “*lex Osca*” of which six fragmentary sections are preserved (*ImIt*, Lucania / BANTIA 1 = Roman Statutes, n.º 13).

2.3 Umbrian

The Umbrian corpus is composed of only around fifty inscriptions, but it includes the seven *Tabulae Igubinae*, a group unparalleled among other epichoric corpora. The majority of the texts are written in an alphabet that derives from Etruscan and is documented from the fifth to fourth centuries BCE, the point at which the inscription from the Mars of Todi is dated (*ImIt*, Umbria / TVDER 2), and survives until at least the second century BCE.⁴¹ There are, however, a significant number of inscriptions, around twenty, written in Latin alphabet. Giving a specific number nevertheless runs into some of the problems already discussed in the introduction with identifying the types of texts, and even encounters others, such as the challenge presented by the four tiles from Todi. These tiles are inscribed with the epitaphs of four individuals from the same family, posing the question of whether the writing should be identified as Etruscan, Umbrian, or Latin, since one is certainly written in epichoric alphabet (*ImIt*, Umbria / TVDER 5), and another in Latin (*ImIt*, Umbria / TVDER 8), but the other two have been identified as both one thing and the other.⁴²

The majority are monumental inscriptions, engraved on stone or bronze tablets, the only exceptions being a bronze patera with the name of the owner

tary by Murano 2013, 128-140.

40 *ImIt*, Lucania / BANTIA 2. Oscan classification has also been suggested for one of the inscriptions from the *auguraculum* recovered in this city: *flus*, see *ImIt*, Lucania / BANTIA 3.

41 *ImIt*, Umbria / VMBRIA 2, *ImIt*, Umbria / HISPELLVM 1, *ImIt*, Umbria / MEVANIA 1, 2, 3 y 8 y *ImIt*, Umbria / TVDER 5, 6, 7, 8 y 9.

42 *ImIt*, Umbria / TVDER 6 and 7, where the writing is classified as Umbrian alphabet, or on *Screhto Est*, n.º 47-48 where it is considered Latin.

punctured into it, also written in Latin,⁴³ and a graffito on pottery from San Eramo.⁴⁴ Prominent among the inscriptions on stone are a group of six *termini*, four of which come from Bevagna (*ImIt*, Umbria / MEVANIA 3, 4, 5 and 6) and two from Asis.⁴⁵ From San Pietro di Flamignano comes another inscription that records an aedilician initiative (*ImIt*, Umbria / FVLGINAE 1 = *CIL* I, 3380), and also from the vicinity of Foligno, S. Maria in Campis, a stele has been recovered which mentions a divinity only documented in this inscription (*Supunna*, *ImIt*, Umbria / FVLGINAE 2 = *CIL* XI, 5207 = *CIL* I, 2111). The final stone inscription comes from Trevi and is incompletely preserved.⁴⁶

The remaining inscriptions are engraved on bronze: the plaque from Fossato di Vico (*ImIt*, Umbria / TADINVM 3; fig. 2), a fragment recovered in Gualdo Tadino (*ImIt*, Umbria / TADINVM 1), and three of the *Tabulae Igubinae*, two of which are completely written in Latin alphabet (VI and VII) and a third only partially (Vb, 8-18). Their dates are uncertain, although it is commonly accepted that those written in Umbrian alphabet are older than those written in Latin alphabet. The latter are dated to the second or early first century BCE (Sisani 2001, 237-245). It should be emphasised that these three bronzes use an S with an additional stroke in the upper part which is not attested in the rest of the Umbrian *corpus*.

43 *ImIt*, Umbria / VMBRIA 3; *CIL* I², 2873.

44 *ImIt*, Umbria / INTERAMNA NAHARS 2. See also the corresponding record in *Screhto Est*, n.º 63, which also collates a small group of graffiti on pottery from Colfiorito which are interpreted as written in Latin alphabet and local language, with desinences in *-ie* (*Screhto Est*, n.º 66-69 and perhaps also 64).

45 *ImIt*, Umbria / ASISIVM 4 = *CIL* XI, 5431a and *ImIt*, Umbria / ASISIVM 1 = *CIL* XI, 5389.

46 *ImIt*, Umbria / TREVIAE 1. It is possible that a fragment reused as construction material in the convent of S. Damiano in Asis should be added to this group (*Screhto Est*, n.º 28), and perhaps another example from Gubbio, now lost (*CIL* XI, 5905; Sisani 2007, n.º 27).



Fig. 2. Umbrian inscription from Fossato di Vico, *ImIt*, Umbria / TADINVM 3 (Photograph I. Simón; Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria, Inv. 42886 (193)).

2.4 Minor Italic Dialects

The group of so-called minor dialects includes Marsian, Paelignian, Vestinian, and Marrucian. All the texts, around eighty, are written in Latin alphabet. They come from a region that coincides *grosso modo* with South Picene epigraphy, which disappeared immediately beforehand inasmuch as the most recent inscriptions, two graffiti each on a helmet, are dated to the third century BCE,⁴⁷ although the reasons for this change in script are not obvious (Prosdociami 2008, 17; Benelli 2016, 123-124).

The Marsians' Latinisation appears to have been especially early, and it is possible to attribute to them a small group of four texts of religious character and early chronology: three can be dated to the third century BCE⁴⁸ and are the oldest of all the minor Italic dialects texts, since only the Rapino Bronze appears to date back to that century (Letta and D'Amato 1975, n.º 36 and 120).

47 *ImIt*, Paeligni (?) / INTERPROMIUM (?) A and *ImIt*, Paeligni (?) / INTERPROMIUM (?) B; Rocca 2002.

48 *ImIt*, Marsi / MARRVVIVM 1 and 2 = *CIL* I³, 2874a, *ImIt*, Marsi / SVPINVM 1 and *ImIt*, Marsi / ANTINVM 1 = *CIL* I³, 3208. The third of these pieces could be excluded from this study, since only the theonym presents features attributable to the local language.

The editors of *Imagines Italicae* attribute to the Vestinians the inscriptions recovered in *Pinna*, *Aveia*, *Peltuinum*, *Furfo* and *Incerulae*, in total eleven inscriptions to which could be added the coin legend VES, abbreviated and therefore of uncertain linguistic classification (*ImIt*, Vestini / VESTINI 1 Coinage). Except for a graffito on pottery (*ImIt*, Vestini / PINNA 1), they are stone inscriptions, among which may be highlighted a majority of religious texts — four⁴⁹ — and a building inscription from San Benedetto in Perillis, which mentions four *aediles*.⁵⁰

It is possible to attribute to Marrucinian a small group of seven texts from Città Danzica, Rapino, Torre dei Passeri, Chieti and Serramonacesca, of which the longest, most famous and oldest is the Rapino Bronze (*ImIt*, Marrucini / TEATE MARRVCINORVM 2). Of the others, a pair of inscriptions engraved on tombs in Serramonacesca (*ImIt*, Marrucini / TEATE MARRVCINORVM 6 and 7) stand out, as well as two inscriptions of two priestesses.⁵¹ The Paelignian inscriptions constitute the final and richest group, some seventy, which are attributed to the cities of *Superaequum*, *Interpromium*, *Corfinium* and *Sulmo*. Except two religious texts inscribed on metal plaques found in Sulmona,⁵² the rest are texts on stone and, apart from a few exceptions such as the building inscriptions from Tocco Casauria and Pratola Peligna,⁵³ they are either funerary or religious. The most numerous group comes from *Corfinium*, from the sanctuary of Hercules⁵⁴ and, particularly, from the necropolis located on both sides of the Pratola Peligna road, which has a large number of epitaphs incised on blocks.⁵⁵ The longest inscription is the one that records the famous epitaph

49 *ImIt*, Vestini / AVEIA 1, *ImIt*, Vestini / PELTVINVM 1 = *CIL* IX, 7520, *ImIt*, Vestini / FVRFO 1 = *CIL* IX, 3556 = *CIL* IX, 3556, and *ImIt*, Vestini / INCERVLAE 4 = *CIL* I, 394 = *CIL* IX, 3414 = *CIL* IX, 3414.

50 *ImIt*, Vestini / INCERVLAE 1 = *CIL* I, 3268. *ImIt* Vestini / INCERVLAE 2 = *CIL* IX, 7531, has not been taken into consideration, as it is a Latin text in which only the vernacular desinences and a pair of gentilics have been retained.

51 *ImIt*, Marrucini / TEATE MARRVCINORVM 3 = *CIL* I³, 3257, and *ImIt*, Marrucini / TEATE MARRVCINORVM 4 = *CIL* I³, 3260 = *CIL* IX, 3032 = *CIL* IX, 3032.

52 *ImIt*, Paeligni / SVLMO 2 and *ImIt*, Paeligni / SVLMO 3.

53 *ImIt*, Paeligni / INTERPROMIVM 2 = *CIL* I³, 3259, and Paeligni / CORFINIVM 1.

54 *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 2, *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 3 and *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 4 = *CIL* IX, p. 1443, although the latter two texts only present the vernacular desinence of the nominative singular in the gentilic, so should be excluded from this work, an observation that may be extended to *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 5 = *CIL* I, 3237 = *CIL* IX, 6329 = *CIL* IX, 6329. On the epigraphic set for this sanctuary, see Buonocore 1995, 186-194.

55 *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 1, 6, 7 (= *CIL* I³, 3226 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,0 = *CIL* IX,

in verse which, furthermore, uses a special sign: a barred D (*ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 6; fig. 3). In neighbouring Sulmo, a similar group of funerary inscriptions has been recovered, on blocks and also stelae (*ImIt*, Paeligni / SVLMO 4-23), among which the epitaphs of the priestesses of Ceres stand out (*ImIt*, Paeligni / SVLMO 4-11 = *CIL* I, 1773, 3212-3215 = *CIL* IX, 7147).



Fig. 3. Inscription from *Corfinium*, *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 6 (Photograph I. Simón; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 247545).

p. 1434), 8 (= *CIL* I, 3229 = *CIL* IX, 6340 = *CIL* IX, 6340), 9 (= *CIL* I, 3236 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,k = *CIL* IX, p. 1434), 10 (= *CIL* I, 3250 = *CIL* IX, 6634, is a stele), 11 (= *CIL* I, 3230 = *CIL* IX, p. 678 = *CIL* IX, p. 1433-1434), 13 (= *CIL* I, 1779 = *CIL* IX, 3196 = *CIL* IX, 3196), 14 (= *CIL* I, 3232 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,i = *CIL* IX, p. 1434), 15 (= *CIL* I, 3231 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,h = *CIL* IX, p. 1434), 16 (= *CIL* I, 3234 = *CIL* IX, p. 298,a = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 18 (= *CIL* I, 3289 = *CIL* IX, p. 298,c = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 19 (= *CIL* I, 3238 = *CIL* IX, p. 298,b = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 20 (= *CIL* I, 3241 = *CIL* IX, p. 298,e = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 21 (= *CIL* I, 3243 = *CIL* IX, p. 679), 23 (= *CIL* I, 3245 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,n = *CIL* IX, p. 1434), 25 (= *CIL* I, 3249 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,q = *CIL* IX, p. 1434), 26, 27, 28 y 34 (= *CIL* I, 3233). Some of the texts that are usually included among the Paelignian ones could be left out, because they are reduced to onomastic formulae in which all the abbreviations seem to be Latin (the *praenomina* are reduced to the initial letter and there are abbreviations such as L, which should apparently be resolved as *l(ibertus)*); only the gentilics have an ending in *-es*: *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 12, 17 (= *CIL* IX, p. 679,l = *CIL* IX, p. 1434), 22 (= *CIL* IX, p. 298,e = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 29 (= *CIL* IX, p. 298,g = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 30 (= *CIL* IX, p. 298,g = *CIL* IX, p. 1405), 31, 32, 33 and 35. *ImIt*, Paeligni / CORFINIVM 24 = *CIL* I, 3246 = *CIL* IX, p. 679,p = *CIL* IX, p. 1434, can also be included here.

2.5. Faliscan

Faliscan represents an exceptional case because its classification as a language or dialect of Latin has been extensively debated. If one accepts that it is a language, this work should include the inscriptions written in Latin alphabet, which are a minority compared to those that use the epichoric script. If it is in fact a Latin dialect, it would be the only one that created its own Etruscan-origin alphabet and that did not use the Latin alphabet exclusively. The difficulty in classifying Faliscan is reflected in its ubiquity: Faliscan texts are published in *CIL* I and XI, *CIE* II.2.1, and in specific catalogues such as those of Giacomelli 1963 and Bakkum 2009.⁵⁶

Bakkum 2009, 10, 367, compiles 535 inscriptions, but excluding the illegible ones, abbreviations, and those that are clearly Etruscan, Latin, or Sabellian. 355 inscriptions remain that are properly Faliscan, of which around only thirty are written in Latin alphabet, recovered in Civita Castellana, S. Maria di Falleri, Corchiano, Grotta Porciosa and Ponzano,⁵⁷ to which may be added all those that come from the Capenate land, which make seventy two texts from Capena and the *lucus Feroniae*.⁵⁸ The majority are inscriptions painted on *tegulae* used to seal funerary *loculi* in the interior of chamber tombs, and short graffiti on pottery, whose linguistic affiliation is debatable, given their brevity.⁵⁹ They are posited to date after the destruction of *Falerii Veteres*, but there is an inscription on a strigil from Corchiano which is dated in the fourth century BCE.⁶⁰ Various funerary inscriptions have also been discovered in Civita Castellana, which means either the Latin alphabet was introduced before the destruction of the city, or the necropolis continued to be used despite the relocation of the population (Bakkum 2009, LtF 140 and 171-174).

56 The inscription painted on two *tegulae* from Santa Maria di Falleri can serve as an example: *CIL* I, 1312 = *CIL* XI, 3158 = *CIE* 8353 = Giacomelli 1963, n.º 122 = Bakkum 2009, n.º 232.

57 Bakkum 2009: LtF 63, 140, 171-174, 205, 215, 231-233, 239, 277-278, 288, 290, 292, 294, 299-301, 340-345 and 377. He indicates the reservations for including in this group: MF/LtF 21, 253, 277, 278 and 252.

58 Bakkum 2009, Cap 386-388, 390-392, 394-430, 431, 433, 435, 437, 439-455, 457-459, 461-462, 456-466, 474'-476'.

59 Bakkum 2009, LtF 172, 174, 205, 241, 277-278, 294 and 342-345.

60 Bakkum 2009, Lat 268 = *CIL* I², 2437 = *CIL* XI, 8130,1.

2.6. Venetic

Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, published almost 300 Venetic inscriptions of which twenty seven are written in Latin alphabet, although some could be excluded from this work for the reasons given in the introduction.⁶¹ The most numerous group comes from Este (LV, Es 29, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112 y 113), but they are also known in Padova (LV, Pa 6 and 19), Treviso (LV, Tr 3, 4 and 5), Belluno (LV, Bl 1), Cadore (LV, Ca 58, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 73), and Adria (LV, Ad 13, 14 y 15). The most numerous type are graffiti on cinerary urns from Este, among which there are texts in Venetic (language and alphabet), Venetic texts written in Latin alphabet and Latin texts, some of which preserve vernacular onomastics. The only example from Este that does not belong to this group is one of the famous tablets from the sanctuary of Reitia (LV, Es 29), which include votive inscriptions and inscriptions with alphabets and writing exercises, however this particular example has a Latin alphabet and the Venetic votive formula is written with the same writing system: MEGO DONASTO (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Venetic tablet from Este, LV, Es 29. Este, Museo Atestino - Direzione regionale Musei Veneto, su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo.

61 We have only identified one inscription of this type published later: a short and incomplete graffito on pottery recovered in Este: REI 1976, Este 1. But professor Marinetti informed during the conference about the existence of an important group of Venetic inscriptions written in Latin alphabet that is not published.

2.7. Gaulish

Gaulish inscriptions in Latin alphabet constitute the most numerous group of the entire Roman West (*RIG* II), with over two hundred examples, to which may be added coin legends, some 250 (*RIG* IV), although some of those may be excluded because of the problems posed by the linguistic classification of this type of text.⁶² The majority are later than the Gallo-Greek inscriptions which are dated between the third to second centuries BCE and the age of Caesar in Gallia Narbonensis, while in the centre and east of Gaul they are a little later, between the first century BCE and the reign of Nero (*RIG* I, p. 3). The Gallo-Latin inscriptions date from the imperial period, although Lejeune (*RIG* II-1, p. 58) acknowledges that two of them, the only ones that come from the mouth of the Rhone (*RIG* II, L-1 and L-2), could date back to the first century BCE. Lambert dates the majority of the texts on *instrumentum* to the first century BCE (*RIG* II.2, p. 9) and the editors of the calendars believe that that from Coligny is from the late second century AD, by its palaeography and the typology of the figurine of Mars with which it was found (*RIG* III, p. 30). The tile from Châteaubleau (L-93) is dated in the second to third centuries AD or even in the fourth century and the inscribed spindle whorls are of a similarly advanced date. Dondin-Payre 2005, 142 dates them to the second to third centuries AD, and Meid 1983, 1030, believes that they are even later, third or fourth centuries AD. Their geographical distribution also varies, since if the Gallo-Greek inscriptions are concentrated in the south, around the mouth of the Rhone (*RIG* I, figs. 1-3), the Gallo-Latin ones have a broader distribution which spans both the *Galliae* (they are concentrated in the Loire and Seine valleys), and even exceed their limits, with finds in *Germania*, L-129 and L-134, and *Britannia* (*RIG* II-1, fig. 26; *RIG* II-2, figs. 1-2).

Inscriptions on stone form a small group (*RIG* II-1, L-1 - L-16), produced on different types of support and among which are funerary and religious texts (Lambert 2003, 94-106). Notable are the two calendars (*RIG* III), although the inscriptions on *instrumenta* represent the majority of this *corpus*. The previously-discussed graffiti on spindle whorls stand out, as do the kiln docketts from La Graufesenque, sets in which Latin texts, Gaulish texts in Latin alphabet, and mixed texts are attested (Marichal 1988; *RIG* II-2, L-29-34). Also

62 Lambert 2018, 148, indicates that *RIG* collects 156 inscriptions and that there are currently around 200, compared to the 300 Gallo-Greek ones. The numbers invert in the case of coin legends: some 250 in Latin alphabet compared to around seventy in Gallo-Greek (*RIG* IV).

worthy of mention are the potters' stamps and graffiti *ante cocturam* with the verb AVOT (RIG II-2, L-20-23, also published in CIL XIII, 10010), those made on sheets of lead (RIG II-2, L97 -105, L-107-108) like those from Chamalières (L-100) and Hospitalet-du-Larzac (L-98; fig. 5), and, finally, a group of graffiti on *tegulae* (RIG II-2, L-90-96).

The Gaulish texts in Latin alphabet are the most numerous group of all, with the greatest geographical distribution and broadest chronology, which spans from the first century BCE to the late Empire, at a time when the rest of the Palaeo-European languages were no longer used for writing. It is also very striking that they use two Greek letters from the Gallo-Greek alphabet (*theta* and *chi*), a point to which we will return later.

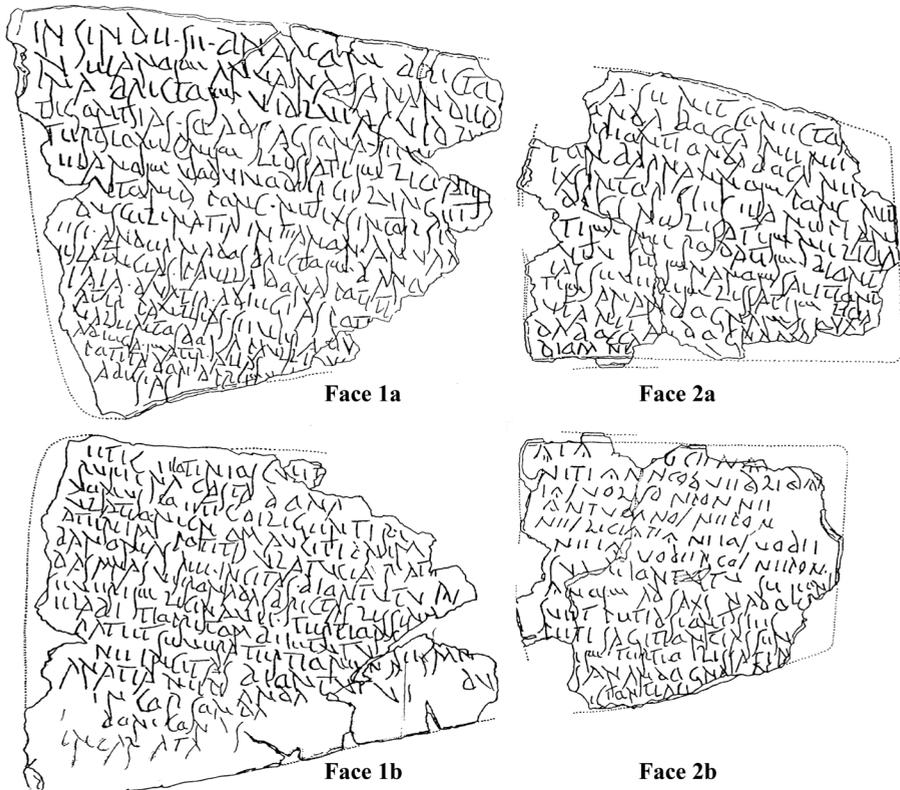


Fig. 5. Lartzac lead tablet, it bears a Gaulish text RIG II-2, L-98 (drawing RIG II-2).

2.8. Iberian

Iberian is the best-attested language in Hispania, being documented in more than two thousand inscriptions written in three epichoric writing systems.⁶³ The earliest inscriptions are dated to the fifth century BCE and the latest to the Augustan era. The few examples written in Latin alphabet are dated in the first century BCE and come from sites in the south. The first is the mosaic inscription from Elche, which is incompletely preserved and for which no satisfactory interpretation exists, although two Iberian onomastic formants are identifiable: *escer* and *adin*.⁶⁴ More complex still is the interpretation of the text from Santisteban del Puerto (Jaén), given that it is a poor-quality graffito the reading of which is debatable (*MLH* III, H.3.4). The third and final example is an opisthographic plaque recovered in Cástulo with two inscriptions written in Latin alphabet. The oldest can be classified as a vernacular text, presumably Iberian although its interpretation is very obscure, while the second is completely Latin (*P. Cornelius P. l. Diphilus*), but concludes with an indigenous term alluding to Cástulo: *CASTLOSAIC* (*MLH* III, H.6.1 = *CIL*, II 3302 = *CIL* II, 3294 = *CIL* I², 3302).

2.9. Celtiberian

Celtiberian is a Celtic language attested in the interior of the Peninsula, between the Middle Ebro and the headwaters of the Rivers Douro, Turia, and Tagus. It is known through some two hundred inscriptions, the majority written in the script adopted from their Iberian neighbours.⁶⁵ A significant number of texts — more than thirty — nevertheless employ the Latin alphabet. The chronology of Celtiberian epigraphy spans the second and first centuries BCE, although it is not impossible that the adaptation of the script may have occurred earlier and that, conversely, a few inscriptions may date to the early Imperial period. The texts in Latin alphabet seem to be from the first century BCE or Augustan period.⁶⁶ The first century AD date for a graffito on a His-

63 A recent census in Moncunill and Velaza 2016, 33-37.

64 *MLH* III, G.12.1, see now Simón 2019c. This site has also produced a graffito on pottery: *ILDI*, presumably the Iberian onomastic formant *ilti*, but given its brevity it is not possible to discern with confidence if it is an Iberian text written in Latin or an already-Latinised Iberian name, Simón and Jordán 2014.

65 There are also a significant number of single-sign graffiti and marks: Beltrán and Jordán 2016.

66 On this question, see Simón 2014, and bibliography

panian sigillata from Numantia is certain; it bears a text, ATTV, which could be interpreted as Celtiberian (Jordán 2019, 846).

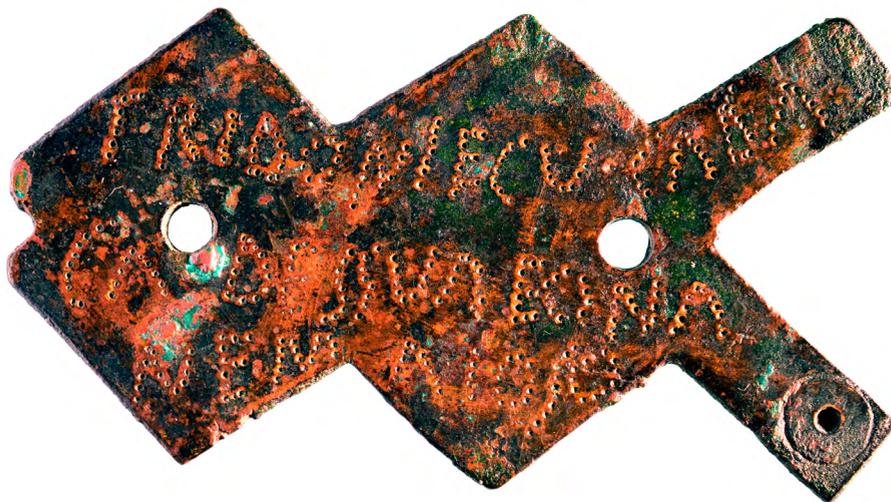


Fig. 6. Celtiberian *tessera hospitalis* from Sasamón, *MLH IV*, K.14.2 (Photograph I. Simón, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. 2007/55/4).

The inscription known as the Novallas Bronze is a fragment of a *tabula aenea* bearing an official text (Beltrán *et al.* 2013). Other documents issued by the cities include two coin legends, CLOVNIOQ and SEGOBRIS (*MLH I*, A.67 and A.89), and part of a group of eight *tesserae hospitales*, one of the most characteristic epigraphic types from Celtiberia (fig. 6).⁶⁷ The Latin alphabet is also used to write two texts on silverware from Tiermes (*MLH IV*, K.11.1 and K.11.2), a stele that is difficult to interpret from Retortillo (*MLH IV*, K.26.1), and a brief grafitto on a small cone from Botorríta.⁶⁸ The rock inscriptions from Peñalba de Villastar are the most numerous group and are classified as religious, since the place is a sanctuary (*MLH IV*, K.3). The one known as the “Great Inscription” (*MLH IV*, K.3.3) stands out, interpreted as a religious dedication, while the rest are much shorter and almost exclusively record

67 On the Celtiberian *tesserae*: Simón 2013, and bibliography. Those written in Latin alphabet are Simón 2013, T2 = *CIL II*, 5762, T5, T8, T18, TS5, TS8, TS9 and TS10, as well as the recent find from Alfaro (Martínez and Jordán 2016).

68 Simón 2015. It is also possible to interpret as a mixed text an inscription from Clunia which has traditionally been classified as Latin: Gorrochategui 2013.

personal names. The abovementioned Novallas Bronze has made it possible to identify a new letter: an S with a horizontal stroke at its base (Beltrán *et al.* 2013, Jordán 2015).

2.10. Lusitanian

Lusitanian is an Indo-European language whose inclusion within the Celtic family is debated. It is attested by a limited number of texts from the west of Hispania, between Guadiana and the Douro: stone slabs from Arroyo de la Luz⁶⁹ and Arronches (Carneiro *et al.* 2008; fig. 7); rock inscriptions from Lamas de Moledo (*MLH* IV, L.2.1 = *CIL* II, 416) and Cabeço das Fráguas (*MLH* IV, L.3.1); and an altar from Viseu (Fernandes *et al.*, 2009). All are written in Latin alphabet; the texts from Arroyo de la Luz and Lamas de Moledo are even headed by Latin phrases (*Ambatus scripsi* and *Rufinus et Tiro scripserunt*, respectively); in Arronches various personal names have Latin desinences (*Apinus Vendicus Eriacainu[s]*); and the whole inscription from Viseu is written in Latin except for the mention of the local deities. They are all religious texts. The classification is obvious in the latter example and also in the rest because they contain theonyms attested in Latin inscriptions from the region: *Crouceai*, *Reue*, *Trebarune*, *Bandi*, *Munitie*, *Cantibidone* and *Laebo*. The chronology of the texts is uncertain and dates between the second century BCE and the third AD have been proposed; there are, nevertheless, some elements like the palaeography of several of them which permits them to be placed between the first centuries BCE and AD.⁷⁰

69 *MLH* IV, L.1.1 = *CIL* II, 738 and 739, as well as a later discovery (Villar and Pedrero 2001).

70 Simón 2019b, with all the hypotheses and the bibliography.



Fig. 7. Lusitanian inscription from Arronches (Photograph courtesy of Dr. J. d'Encarnação).

3. The Latin alphabet and supplementary letters

The number of texts and their length varies considerably in each of the ten languages analysed. Table 2 lays out the letters from the Latin alphabet that are documented in each of these epigraphic sets — we have excluded Iberian, with its rare and brief texts. Some cells are empty, such as the F in Etruscan, probably due to limitations in the evidence; in other cases, like Celtiberian, its absence is explained because the voiceless labiodental fricative is unknown in this language.⁷¹ It can also be pointed out that in several languages there is no evidence for the use of either X or K, a letter that was uncommon in Latin and that the Romans themselves came to consider superfluous.⁷² In terms of Y

71 In K.3.20 it is in all probability an abbreviation of the Latin *f(ilius)*.

72 The evidence is collected and discussed in Desbordes 1995, 152-154 and 173-174.

and Z — the Greek letters reintroduced in the Late Republican period to write names of Greek origin — the former is not attested and the latter only appears in Etruscan, Oscan, and Gaulish texts.⁷³ On the other hand, there are unexpected attestations, such as O, B, D, and G in Etruscan, for example, which have been interpreted as the result of a later hypothetical phonetic evolution in this language.⁷⁴

	Etruscan	Oscan	Umbrian	Minor dialects	Faliscan	Venetic	Gaulish	Celtiberian	Lusitanian
A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
D	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
F		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
G	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
K		X			X	X	X	X	
L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
M	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
T	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
V	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X		X			X		
Y									
Z	X	X					X		
--	-----	-----	-----	-----		-----	-----	-----	-----
	Θ		'S	D			Θ	Ɑ	
							χ		

Tab. 2. Letters used in each group of inscriptions written in fragmentary languages and Latin alphabet.

73 On the use of Z in Oscan: McDonald and Zair 2017, 299-300.

74 On this and all the interpretations proposed: Hadas-Lebel 2004, 311-313.

Finally, there is a series of signs that may be designated supplementary. It is possible to identify two types: one composed by signs that come from the epichoric script (*theta* in Etruscan and *theta* and *chi* in Gaulish), and another formed by Latin letters to which a diacritic stroke has been added. *Theta* is documented in an Etruscan inscription: *Larθi Ti. La.* (CIE, 991) and perhaps also in *Ruti. Thana Larθ. Li*, although it is a variation of the reading that is dismissed in CIE, 2700 (Hadas-Label 2004, 309-311). The same name *Larth/Larthia* is written in accordance with Latin orthography in other inscriptions, that is, with the digraph TH, for example *Larthia Otanis* (CIE, 3035) and *Perpena Lartha* (CIE, 2543).

The use of the Greek letters Θ and X is well attested in Gallo-Latin inscriptions, borrowed from the Gallo-Greek writing system (RIG II-2, 374-375, 380-381; Lambert 2003, 93). X is only used in the groups -XT- and -XS- and represents the unvoiced velar fricative. The former is known as the *tau Gallicum* (Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.28).⁷⁵ It can appear geminated and presents significant formal variants, in some cases it resembles a barred D whereas on various tiles from Châteaubleau (RIG II-1, L-90 and L-93), but a barred S is also used to represent the same sound.⁷⁶ The *tau Gallicum* is widely attested, and is even used in some coin legends from *Britannia* (Williams 2001, 7, Briggs 2011, 100), although its use was not systematic and, for example, it does not appear in the Coligny calendar (RIG III, Lambert 2003, 113), while in the lead from Hospitalet-du-Larzac, in which two scribes have been identified, one uses it and the other does not (RIG II.2, L-98; Lambert 2003, 166; fig. 5). Conversely, in some Latin inscriptions it is used to write Gaulish personal names: *moniminto Aθθedomari Orbiotali o(bit) fili* (AE 1952, 37).



Fig. 8. Tablet of Velletri (*ImIt*, [Latium] / [VELITRAE 1] (Photograph Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 2522).

75 See the work of Eska 1998.

76 This barred S also appears in some Latin inscriptions with indigenous onomastics, RIG II-2, 374, fig. 197, Simón and Jordán 2018.

The second group of signs are those created from a Latin letter to which a diacritic stroke is added, although there is also a unique example: a rotated C, only documented once, on the Tablet of Velletri (*ImIt*, [Latium] / [VELITRAE 1]; fig. 8). The rest correspond to the system described above. The first adds a stroke to the D which divides it horizontally; it is only attested in the famous Paelagian inscription from *Herentas* and represents a fricative or spirant sound (Pocchetti 1979, 90, fig. 3). The other two were created from the Latin S: in Umbria, a diacritic stroke was added to the upper left part and to the lower right in Celtiberia. The former is attested in the three *Tabulae Iguvinae* written in Latin alphabet, but not in any other Umbrian inscriptions. The Celtiberian S is documented in two inscriptions from Peñalba de Villastar and on the Novallas Bronze; its use was also retained for writing Celtiberian personal names or toponyms in some Latin inscriptions, although with the particularity of being geminated (Simón and Jordán 2018).

4. Conclusions

The use of the Latin alphabet to write the so-called fragmentary languages represents a step before complete Latinisation.⁷⁷ The shift has been divided into three phases: local language and script; local language and Latin alphabet; and Latin language and alphabet.⁷⁸ This explanation is plausible and takes into account the final result: the disappearance of the vernacular languages and the complete Latinisation of the written record throughout Italy and Western Europe, with the exception of Greek epigraphy in particular zones and social environments. The process must, however, have been more complex and not necessarily brief and linear;⁷⁹ for example, the use of the Latin alphabet to write Gaulish lasted over several centuries and is contemporary with the great Roman epigraphic culture of the Imperial period. There are also changes to some epichoric scripts that can be explained by the influence of the Latin alphabet, such as vocalic redundancy in Celtiberia (*MLH IV*, 380), which, if correct, implies a coexistence of the two writing systems. Finally, the new bronze fragment that contains the *lex Osca* and the *lex Latina Tabulae Bantinae* has underscored that the Roman text is earlier than the Lucanian one, and

77 Adams 2003, 66-67, Lomas 2008, 126, among others.

78 Venetic: *LV II*, 6; Celtiberian: Ballester 1993-95, 393; Gaulish: Lambert 2003, 119.

79 See Jordán 2007, 139, for Celtiberia, the work of Benelli 1999 in which he compares Veneto with Etruria, and that of Pocchetti 1993 for the whole of Italy.

has served to question the strict linearity of the Latinisation process which undoubtedly must have been more complex.⁸⁰

The use of the Latin alphabet to write local languages is not a phenomenon that occurred in all societies, nor is it homogenous throughout those in which it did occur. It is not documented in the Messapic region, with its ancient written culture, and in the Iberian region, which possesses the most important epigraphic culture of the Iberian Peninsula, it is restricted to a handful of texts that seem to represent a sporadic use of Roman letters to write the local language. In contrast, in Lusitania, illiterate until the Roman conquest, all the few vernacular texts use the Latin alphabet, and there are other areas in which the local language never came to be written.⁸¹ In Umbria and Celtiberia, alongside the inscriptions in epichoric script there are a significant number of texts in Latin alphabet in which the creation of a new letter is documented and, finally, in Gaul it is used in a large number of texts with wide chronology.

Two models are proposed to explain how the use and/or adaptation of the Latin alphabet to write the local languages came about. These are based on an article by Lejeune 1983 on the dissemination of the Greek alphabet throughout the Mediterranean, and the works of Prosdocimi 1990 on literacy. The first author places emphasis on a circumstance that was fundamental for the development of a new script: the existence of a bilingual population, which knows a language that already possesses an alphabet (in this case, Greek) and another which does not possess one and for which the new system was created. In his case study, the bilingual individuals were the sons of unions between Hellenic colonisers and indigenous women; these sons would be literate and, at a particular point, would have decided to use Greek script also to write their other mother tongue.

The second author, Prosdocimi, has emphasised the process of learning the alphabet, which is not limited to the memorisation of letters and the sounds they represent, but is much more complex and requires greater education, since it also demands mastering how to form syllables, a type of

80 Adamasteanu and Torelli 1969, *Roman Statutes*, n° 13, Capelletti 2011, 28-36.

81 Some particularities in the Latin epigraphy from these regions can nevertheless be observed. In the Hispanian North West, an inverted C was used to indicate the term *castellum*, rather than with the value it has in Latin epigraphy (Albertos 1975). There are sequences such as TH and TS to write Vasconic-Aquitainian onomastics that are not part of Latin orthography (Gorrochategui 2010, 412-413, Aquitainian onomastics are compiled in Gorrochategui 1984).

exercise fundamental in the process of learning an alphabet. This is described by Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.30-31) and known in the case of Greek thanks to the student papyri discovered in Egypt.⁸² If the number of signs in the alphabet, approximately twenty, is much fewer than those used in other writing systems such as syllabic ones — in which they are counted by the hundreds — it demands, in contrast, learning how to construct syllables. The latter assumes that every language that uses the same alphabet will develop, in the words of Prosdocimi, their own *regole di uso*, that is, some exercises and norms for constructing syllables according to their specific needs. He also highlights the close relationship between literacy and the knowledge of a particular language. That is, literacy in the Latin alphabet also requires the individual at the same time to know or learn Latin. Ultimately, the use of an alphabet to write a new language must do two things. It must reflect the number of graphemes (elimination of unnecessary ones and creation of other new ones) and the possible changes in phonemes that each of them represents. It must furthermore reflect the norms for creating syllables, which are a fundamental part of the process of literacy and which knit a particular alphabet even more closely to a particular language. Unfortunately, this latter respect is very difficult to detect in the inscriptions, except in rare cases such as the Venetic tablets with writing exercises, and can only be attested by the existence of particular orthographic rules which move away from the Latin norm and which will be discussed below.

The first model would apply to an illiterate society before the Roman conquest, such as Lusitania. Bilingual individuals could only become literate in the Latin alphabet and language, the only one that had a writing system. Later, they could also employ it to write Lusitanian. Lusitanian inscriptions are very rare and, as indicated in De Hoz 2013, 89-91, seem to be sporadic uses of the alphabet to write religious texts, and there was no true adaptation of the alphabet, nor any change in the repertoire of graphemes, nor any development of its own orthographic conventions. No possibility therefore existed for monolingual individuals, speakers of Lusitanian, to become literate; to do so they would have had to have learned the Latin language as well.

In societies which already knew writing, a second model can be proposed. In this case, bilingual individuals could become literate in Latin and in the epichoric script, a possibility that bilingual inscriptions reflect.

82 Plato (*Lg.* 810a) recommends a total of three years for a child to learn to read and write.

The knowledge of the local script also explains the use in Gallo-Latin of two letters that come from the Gallo-Greek alphabet (*theta* and *chi*).⁸³ In the Iberian area, inscriptions written in Latin alphabet are very rare and seem to be, like in Lusitania, used sporadically and episodically; in other regions, however, as we have seen, complementary signs were created that indicate a reflection on the suitability of the Latin alphabet to write the local language. The barred D is attested in a single Paelignian inscription, which makes it difficult to evaluate the depth of this reform. In Gubbio, a new letter was created, a marked S; they also used the digraph RS (which operates as ř in epichoric script), and the gemination of vowels and of the digraph *-ei-* in a way that differs from the Roman norm (Prosdocimi 2015, 75-120; Dupraz 2016). In Celtiberia a new sign was also created by adding a diacritic stroke to S, probably used with the same functions as *sigma* in the local script. This new letter is attested in inscriptions of diverse provenance, which affirms that it was not an innovation limited to a single city, but that it had a wider distribution. To this modification may be added the distinctive use made of the letter Q for writing Celtiberian kinship names, either intact or usually abbreviated, for example COTIRIQVM and CECCIQ(VM) (K.3.17 and K.15.1, respectively; see Simón 2012).

In some regions, as we have just seen, the types of inscriptions analysed here are not simply intermittent uses of the alphabet to write the local language, but rather, there was genuine thought about the appropriateness of the system and, consequently, some changes were made. These changes, such as the creation of new signs, the use of others that come from the epichoric alphabet, and also the development of some distinctive orthographic norms, had a notable geographic and chronological distribution in the case of Gaulish. They are genuine conventions and as such must have been taught and learnt. It is possible that in certain schools they taught not only the Latin alphabet and language, but also the complementary signs and orthographic rules for writing the local language in Latin alphabet. We cannot know if there was also the possibility that monolingual individuals, who only knew the local language, could have become literate without learning the Latin language — that is, whether a real written culture existed in the local language and Latin alphabet beyond the Latin language. Be that as it may, they demonstrate that the use of the alphabet to write local languages is a more complex phenomenon than is commonly supposed. The initiative almost always came from

83 In the inscription from Genouilly there is one Gallo-Latin text and another Gallo-Greek one (*RIG* II.1, L-4, *RIG* I, G-225).

the local population and communities, to judge by the onomastics of those who appear as instigators of the inscriptions, which fits well with the Romans' indifference towards other languages that were not Greek.⁸⁴ The inscriptions include texts made or commissioned by private individuals, such as ownership graffiti and epitaphs, as well as aedilician inscriptions commissioned by magistrates, official documents such as coin legends, *tesserae hospitales*, and even laws such as that from Bantia.

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84 Dubuisson 1981, 280. An exception is L. Mummius' Pompeian inscription written in Oscan (*ImIt*, Campania / POMPEI 1).

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