

Faliscan

Phonology part 2

Geminates and vowel length

Latin has geminate consonants (*ferre, uelle*) and a distinction between long and short vowels (*ānus* vs. *anus*). These phonological distinctions are not always marked clearly in the writing system.

Geminate consonants are occasionally written from the end of the 3rd c. onwards, but only around 100BC does this become consistent. In the SC de Bacchanalibus we find *habuise, ese* etc for *habuisse, esse* etc.

Vowel length is not regularly marked at any period. The original diphthongs *ou* and *ei* became *ū* and *ī* respectively, and so the original spellings can be used for the long vowels regardless of their origin; this is a relatively late phenomenon, as the monophthongization processes began in the 3rd c. A special sign was in use for *ī*, the so-called ‘I longa’, and from Caesar’s time onwards the apex was occasionally used to mark vowel length. A more systematic attempt to mark vowel length by writing double vowels (*aara* CIL *I*² 1439) was made in the period between 140 and 75BC.

Faliscan does not normally mark geminate consonants or vowel length. We do find, however, the forms **putellio** in Ve 292 and *anni* ‘of Annius’ in Gia 6b. Double spellings of vowels are found in Ve 320A (*uootum*) and Ve 320B (*aastutieis*). Both are in inscriptions whose language is essentially Latin.

Since early Latin did not mark geminate consonants or vowel length, even though it certainly had both, it is best to assume that Faliscan also had such phonological distinctions, despite not marking them.

Accent position

In classical Latin accent is by and large regulated by the penultima-rule; however, vowel weakening (*facere* vs. *conficere*) and syncope show that there was a period of initial accent.

Oscan and Umbrian have also syncopated many internal syllables, which again points to an initial accent. Cf. Oscan *actud*, Umbrian **aitu** (both ‘agito’, with **ak* > *ai* in Umbrian). However, it is impossible to say what the accent was like in the historical period.

Interestingly, Etruscan also has vowel weakening and syncope in non-initial syllables, which means that this might have been a regional phenomenon. Cf. *ramatha* and *ramutha* for weakening, and *avile* and *avle* for syncope.

Faliscan, like the earliest Latin inscriptions, shows no signs of vowel weakening or syncope (perhaps **porded** is syncopated, but we could also be dealing with haplology). It is unclear if the reason for this is that Faliscan did not have the initial accent, or if the reason is that it did have the initial accent, but a fairly weak one.

Consonants

Most sound changes are remarkably similar to those found in Latin. Thus we find simplifications of clusters such as **urnela**, Lat. *urna* < **urknā*-, or assimilations such as **dy* > *yy*, cf. **foied** < **hōd dyēd* (L. *hodie* is remade), L. *peior* < **ped-yōs* (this change may actually go back to Proto-Italic).

urnela is interesting because the Latin equivalent is *urnula*, with a conditioned vowel change before dark *l*. Did Faliscan only have one type of *l*?

Rhotacism

The development of *s* to *r*, probably via voiced *z*, is called rhotacism. Latin has rhotacism between vowels, e.g. *arae* ‘altars’ vs. Oscan **aasaí**. This development took place in the historical period. Older inscriptions do not yet show rhotacism, cf. *Numasioi* ‘Numerio’ from the fibula Praenestina or *Lases* ‘Lares’ from the carmen Aruale. Cic. *fam.* 9. 21. 2 says that L. Papisius Crassus (dictator in 340BC) changed his name to *Papirius*.

Classical Latin *-s-* between vowels often goes back to a geminate, cf. *cāsus* < *cāssus* < **kad-to-s*.

Rhotacism has to some extent obscured the connection between related words; cf. *feriae* and *festus*, *careo* and *castus* (originally past participle), *maereo* and *maestus*.

Oscan does not have rhotacism. Next to Latin *careo* and *castus* we find Oscan **kasit** ‘it is necessary’ (< **kasēt* ‘one lacks’), an impersonal verb taking the subjunctive. Occasionally Oscan uses the letter *z* between vowels to indicate that the sibilant is voiced here, cf. *egmazum* ‘of the things’ (Lat. *-arum*).

Umbrian has rhotacism between vowels (**staheren** s-future ‘they will stand’) and in final position (*arsir* ‘someone else’ = *alius*). Because Oscan has no rhotacism and Latin has it relatively late, this development in Umbrian cannot go back to Proto-Italic, but must be independent of the Latin sound change.

Faliscan certainly did not have rhotacism in final position, but it is unclear whether it had it between vowels. Two of the relevant words are **carefo** and **menerua**.

carefo is attested in Ve 244a and b. The texts date back to the 4th c. (Middle Faliscan, note also the *f/h* confusion in **foied** in the same text). If the connection with Latin *carere* and *castus* and Oscan **kasit** is correct, it seems that Faliscan also underwent rhotacism. Those who argue against rhotacism argue that the

Faliscan word is a loan from Latin or that the root contains an original *-r-*. Both hypotheses are unattractive. If the Latin and Oscan forms are connected, the verb goes back to Proto-Italic — unless of course one wishes to argue that Latin has borrowed from Oscan or vice versa. If the verb is Proto-Italic, it is easier to assume that Faliscan retained it than to think that Faliscan lost and re-borrowed it. If the root contains an original *-r-*, the connection between Lat. *carere* and *castus* cannot be maintained — clearly an unlikely situation.

If Faliscan had rhotacism, when did it occur? The form **menerua** has been used in order to argue for early rhotacism predating the Latin rhotacism. In Veii the form *Menerua* is already attested in the 6th c. This is long before Roman rhotacism. *Menerua* (Greek Athena) is assumed to come from **menes-wā*, root **menes-* as in Skt. *manas-vīn-* ‘intelligent’ or Greek μένος ‘courage, anger’. If Faliscan had rhotacism early on, could this be a loan from Faliscan into Latin?

Rix (1981) argues that this is unlikely. The intervocalic development of *-s-* is independent of some other developments of *-s-* before voiced consonant which also resulted in *-r-*:

**-sg-* > **-zg-* > *-rg-*: Latin *mergo*, Skt. *májjāmi* ‘I immerse myself’, or L. *uirga*, Swedish *viska* ‘small broom’

-sw-* > **-zw-* > *-rw-*: cf. *aceruus* vs. *acus*, gen. *aceris* ‘husks of grain or beans’ and *caterua* vs. *catēna* (kates-nā*)

D̄uerbium < **dis-uerbium* is not a real counterexample as the developments between prefix and stem are often different from the developments elsewhere, cf. *d̄igerere* < **dis-gerere*, but *mergere* < **mesg-*.

These sound changes took place earlier than the intervocalic rhotacism, so Faliscan rhotacism need not predate Latin rhotacism and the hypothesis of a loan into Latin is rather unlikely.

Note in this connection the genitive ending *-osio*, attested from the 7th until the 5th c. It did not undergo rhotacism. This means that Faliscan rhotacism, if it existed, must be later.

The pronunciation of *z*

Faliscan has forms such as **zenatuo** ‘of the senate’ or **zextoi** ‘for Sextus’. How was the letter *z* pronounced here?

In Latin, *z* began to be used relatively late, in Greek words, where it stood for voiced *z*.

When Oscan is written in the Latin alphabet, the letter *z* also stands for voiced *z*, normally between vowels, cf. *egmazum* ‘of the things’, where *-azum* corresponds to Latin *-arum*. In the native alphabet, the letter **s** is used for both voiceless and voiced fricatives, cf. <**v**>**ehiianasúm** of unclear meaning, but with the

same gen. pl. ending. In the native alphabet, the letter **z** stands for *ts*, cf. **húr̥z** < **hort-os* ‘enclosure’.

Umbrian written in the Latin alphabet does not have the letter *z*; in the native alphabet **z** also stands for *ts*, cf. **taçez** ‘silent’ < **taketos*.

The native Oscan and Umbrian alphabets have taken over the sound value *ts* for the grapheme **z** from Etruscan.

What is the sound value of **z** in Faliscan? In native words it occurs in initial position, cf. **zextoi**, but here it alternates with **s**; on the same tomb where we find **zextoi** we find the nominative **sextō**. Does the letter **z** indicate voicing? We also find this letter in Etruscan names, e.g. **zuχus** or **aruz** (Lat. *Arruns*), and here it presumably indicates *ts*. Is the variation in native words purely graphic?

Word-final consonants

In the past tenses and the subjunctive Faliscan shows the regular outcome of the secondary endings, which in Latin was replaced by the primary endings; cf. **ffiked** and **douiad** vs. Latin *feced* and *sied*, but later Latin *fecit* and *siet*.

As in many Latin inscriptions, nasals before stops are not regularly written, which may indicate a nasalized vowel rather than a full consonant; cf. **cupat** ‘they lie’ and **ffiqod** ‘they made’.

In the earliest inscriptions final consonants are still written, but later on they are often absent; cf. **mate** ‘mother’, **ouxo** ‘wife’ for loss of final *-r*; cf. **salueto** for loss of final *-d*; cf. **cupa** for loss of final *-t*; cf. **licinio** and **marcio** for loss of final *-s*; and cf. **uino** for loss of final *-m*.

An interesting phenomenon concerns the use of **pretod** instead of a form with final *-r*; the inscription is in the Faliscan script, but the language is essentially Latin. Perhaps we are dealing with an assimilation to the following **de**.

Vowels

Faliscan has not undergone vowel weakening. However, the vocalism is not particularly conservative, especially among the diphthongs. We find the following developments:

au > *ou* > *o*: **aufilio**, **oufilio**, **pola** (‘Paula’)

ai > *ei* > *e*: **caisio**, **ceisio**, **cesi**

ei > *e*: **hec** ‘here’

ou > *oi* > *o*: **loufir** ‘Liber’, **loifirtato** ‘libertatis’, **lofirta** ‘liberta’; perhaps we are dealing with two sound changes, *ou* > *oi* and *ou* > *o*, but the conditions as to when which change takes place are unclear.

i > *e* before vowel: **hileo** ‘son’, **filea** ‘daughter’

$e > i$ before r : not particularly regular, maybe just variant spellings; cf. **loifir-tato**

The dative endings are **-oi** and **-ai**; they did not undergo vowel changes either because they are in word-final position or because we are dealing with original long diphthongs.

In linguistically Latin inscriptions we find **cuncaptum** without internal vowel weakening but with the ending *-um* rather than *-om* and *aciptum* with rather irregular vowel weakening (by Latin standards).