National Science Foundation
Workshop for
Documenting Endangered Languages

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Foundation for Endangered Languages

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Foundation for Endangered Languages

FEL's mission is to "support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion of endangered languages".
Languages aided by FEL
Conferences

11 conferences, in 5 continents, so far
- organized by theme, not region,
- attended by local experts and western linguists,
- stressing solidarity among small language communities
Some Live Issues

It’s not so simple — running your own show.
Latin in the 6th Century BC

The Language of Western Europe:

- Dominated all elite discourse from 3rd to 16th centuries AD
- Vulgar Latin > Romance langs, totalling almost 800 million speakers: far bigger than English, smaller only than Chinese

Could easily have been:

- Eliminated in favour of Etruscan
Latin in the 6th Century BC

- Early Rome politically dominated by Etruscans, e.g.
  - 2 Etruscan Kings: Tarquinius
  - Many Etruscan nobles: Claudius, even Caesar

- Culturally dominated
  - Etruscan > Roman alphabet
Long-Term Attitudes

Endangerment is **NOT**
“a Problem to be Fixed”
once and for all.

Each New Generation
will have to take responsibility.
But as to the Future…

L. Frank Manríquez, working for Tongva (S. California)

“How can it be hopeless, when there is so much hope?”
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