

en.wikipedia.org


Tifinagh - Wikipedia

13-16 minutes

"**Ж**" redirects here. For the almost identical symbol used in Hong Kong, see [MTR](#). For the almost identical Cyrillic symbol, see [Zhe](#).

Tifinagh (Berber pronunciation: [\[tɪfɪnɔː\]](#); in [Tamazight Latin](#): *Tifinay*; in Neo-Tifinagh: ⵜⴰⴼⵉⵏⴰⴳⴰ; in [Tuareg](#) Tifinagh: ⵜⴰⴼⵉⵏⴰⴳⴰ or ⵜⴰⴼⵉⵏⴰⴳⴰ) is an [abjad](#) script used to write the [Tamazight languages](#).^[1]

Neo-Tifinagh, a modern [alphabetical](#) derivative of the traditional script was reintroduced in the 20th century. A slightly-modified version of the traditional script, called *Tifinagh IRCAM*, is used in a number of Moroccan elementary schools in teaching the Berber language to children as well as a number of publications.^{[2][3]}

Libyco-Berber	
	
Type	Abjad
Time period	2nd millennium BC to the present time ^[4]
Parent systems	Saharan petroglyphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libyco-Berber
Child systems	Tifinagh

Workshop on Tifinagh during WikiArabia 2019 conference in [Marrakech](#).

Origins^[edit]

Tifinagh or **Libyc** was widely used in antiquity by speakers of Libyc languages throughout North Africa and on the [Canary Islands](#). Some authors believe it to be attested from as far back as the 2nd millennium BC, to the present time.^[5] The script's origin is considered by most scholars as being of local origin,^[6] although a relationship between the [Punic alphabet](#) or the [Phoenician alphabet](#) has also been suggested.^[7] An alternative suggestion, by [Helmut Satzinger](#), is that its origin is to be seen in the [Ethiopian script](#).^[8] There are four known variants: Eastern Libyc, Western Libyc, Bu Njem Libyc and Saharan Libyc.^[*citation needed*]

Eastern Libyc or Numidian^[edit]

The eastern variant covers approximately the north-west of Tunisia as well as eastern Algeria, the western limit of its use is placed at the east of Sétif although inscriptions of the eastern type can exceptionally be in Kabylia, it shows a clear Phoenician influence. It is the best-deciphered variant, due to the discovery of several Numidian bilingual inscriptions in Libyan and Punic (notably at [Dougga](#) in Tunisia). Researcher [Lionel Galand](#) maintains that there are two versions of Eastern Libyc: one used for monuments, which he called the Dougga script, and one for funerary steles, which is Eastern Libyc proper. The latter contains only 23 letters, which agrees with observations made by historian

Fabius Planciades Fulgentius. In the Dougga script, 22 letters out of the 24 were deciphered so far.^[*citation needed*]

Western Libyc or Moorish^[*edit*]

The western variant covers **Morocco** and the western half of **Algeria** (country populated by the **Mauri**), as well as the **Canary Islands**. It is more archaic and shows no Phoenician influence^[*citation needed*]. Its inscriptions are fewer and generally shorter and rougher. The characteristic of this alphabet is that it includes additional signs, that the eastern one is unaware of, whose value could not be given. Some of these characters are identical to the **Tuareg** letters of the alphabet.^[*citation needed*]


Bu Njem Libyc or Libyan^[*edit*]

There are graffiti discovered at Bou Njem, the ancient Gholaiia in **Libya**, on the wall of an old monument which dated from the 3rd century. The writing is horizontal, made up of nine inscriptions. This variant was heavily influenced by Latin to the point of constituting a special alphabet.^[*citation needed*]

Saharan Libyc or Garamantian^[*edit*]

This variant was widespread in pre-Saharan and Saharan Libya, territory of the **Gaetuli** and **Garamantes**, where it was used by the inhabitants to engrave their messages. It is mostly unknown and badly located.^[*citation needed*] The ancient **Tifinagh** script was a pure **abjad**; it had no vowels. **Gemination** was not marked. The writing was usually from the bottom to the top, although right-to-left, and even other orders, were also found. The letters would take different forms when written vertically than when they were written horizontally.^[9]

Tuareg Tifinagh^[*edit*]

Tifinagh	
 <p>Entrance to the town of Kidal. The name is written in Tifinagh (ⵝⵓⵍⵍ ⵀⵔⵏⵏ) and Latin script.</p>	
Type	Abjad
Languages	Tuareg
Time period	unknown to present
Parent systems	Libyco-Berber <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tifinagh
Child systems	Neo-Tifinagh

The Libyco-Berber script is used today in the form of Tifinagh to write the **Tuareg languages**, which belong to the Berber branch of the **Afroasiatic** family. Early uses of the script have been found on **rock art** and in various **sepulchres**. Among these are the 1,500 year old **monumental tomb** of the Tuareg queen **Tin Hinan**, where vestiges of a Tifinagh inscription have been found on one of its walls.^[10]

According to historians, the Tuareg are "an entirely oral society in which memory and oral communication perform all the functions which reading and writing have in a literate society... The Tifinagh are used primarily for games and puzzles, short graffiti and brief messages."^[11]

Orthography[[edit](#)]

Common forms of the letters are illustrated at left, including various ligatures of *t* and *n*. [Gemination](#), though phonemic, is not indicated in Tifinagh. The letter *t*, *+*, is often combined with a preceding letter to form a [ligature](#). Most of the letters have more than one common form, including mirror-images of the forms shown here.

Traditionally, the Tifinagh script does not indicate vowels except word-finally, where a single dot stands for any vowel. In some areas, Arabic vowel diacritics are combined with Tifinagh letters to transcribe vowels, or *y*, *w* may be used for long *ī* and *ū*.

Neo-Tifinagh[[edit](#)]

3 sur 7

	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Neo-Tifinagh </div>
Direction	Left-to-right
ISO 15924	Tfng, 120
Unicode alias	Tifinagh
Unicode range	U+2D30–U+2D7F
<div> <p>This article contains IPA phonetic symbols. Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Unicode characters. For an introductory guide on IPA symbols, see Help:IPA.</p> </div>	



Neo-Tifinagh, Arabic and French at a store in Morocco

Neo-Tifinagh is the modern fully [alphabetic](#) script developed from earlier forms of Tifinagh. It is written left to right.

Until recently, virtually no books or websites were published in this alphabet, with activists favouring the Latin (or, more rarely, Arabic) scripts for serious use; however, it is extremely popular for symbolic use, with many books and websites written in a different script featuring logos or title pages using Neo-Tifinagh.

In Morocco, use of Neo-Tifinagh was suppressed until recently. The Moroccan state arrested and imprisoned people using this script during the 1980s and 1990s.^[12] In 2003, however, the king took a "neutral" position between the claims of [Latin script](#) and [Arabic script](#) by adopting Neo-Tifinagh; as a result, books are beginning to be published in this script, and it is taught in some schools. However, many independent Berber-language publications are still published using the Berber Latin alphabet. Outside Morocco, it has no official status.

In Algeria, almost all Berber publications use the Berber Latin Alphabet. The [Algerian Black Spring](#) was partly caused by the repression of [Berber languages](#).^[citation needed]

In Libya, the government of [Muammar Gaddafi](#) consistently banned Tifinagh from being used in public contexts such as store displays and banners.^[13]

After the [Libyan Civil War](#), the [National Transitional Council](#) has shown an openness towards the Berber languages. The rebel [Libya TV](#), based in [Qatar](#), has included the Berber language and the Tifinagh alphabet in some of its programming.^[14]

Letters[edit]



An [IRCAM](#) version of Neo-Tifinagh

The following are the letters and a few ligatures of traditional Tifinagh and Neo-Tifinagh:

Color Key

Basic Tifinagh (IRCAM) ^[15]	Extended Tifinagh (IRCAM)	Other Tifinagh letters	Modern Tuareg letters
--	---------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------

Unicode	Image	Font	Transliteration			Name
			Latin	Arabic	IPA	
U+2D30	ⴰ	o	a	ا	æ	ya
U+2D31	ⴱ	Θ	b	ب	b	yab
U+2D32	ⴲ	⊕	b	ب	β	yab fricative
U+2D33	ⴳ	⧵	g	گ	g	yag
U+2D34	ⴴ	⧶	g	گ	ɣ	yag fricative
U+2D35	ⴵ	⧷	dj	ج	ⵎⵓⵔ	Berber Academy yadj
U+2D36	ⴶ	ⵢ	dj	ج	ⵎⵓⵔ	yadj
U+2D37	ⴷ	⧸	d	د	d	yad
U+2D38	ⴸ	⧹	d	ذ	ð	yad fricative
U+2D39	ⴹ	⧺	ɖ	ض	dˤ	yaɖ
U+2D3A	ⴺ	⧻	ɖ	ظ	ɖˤ	yaɖ fricative
U+2D3B	ⴻ	⧼	e	ه	e	yey
U+2D3C	ⴼ	⧽	f	ف	f	yaf
U+2D3D	ⴽ	⧾	k	ك	k	yak
U+2D3E	ⴾ	⧿	k	ك	k	Tuareg yak
U+2D3F	ⴿ	⫀	k	ك	x	yak fricative
U+2D40	ⵀ	ⵀ	h	ه	h	yah = Tuareg yab
U+2D41	ⵁ	ⵁ	h	ه	h	Berber Academy yah
U+2D42	ⵂ	ⵂ	h	ه	h	Tuareg yah
U+2D43	ⵃ	ⵃ	ħ	ح	ħ	yah
U+2D44	ⵄ	ⵄ	'(ε)	ع	ʕ	yaʕ (yae)
U+2D4E	ⵍ	ⵍ	m	م	m	yam
U+2D4F	ⵎ	ⵎ	n	ن	n	yan
U+2D50	ⵏ	ⵏ	ny	ني	ɲ	Tuareg yagn
U+2D51	ⵐ	ⵐ	ng	ڭ	ŋ	Tuareg yang
U+2D52	ⵑ	ⵑ	p	پ	p	yap
U+2D53	ⵒ	ⵒ	u w	و ؤ	w	yu = Tuareg yaw
U+2D54	ⵓ	ⵓ	r	ر	r	yar
U+2D55	ⵔ	ⵔ	r	ر	rˤ	yaɾ
U+2D56	ⵕ	ⵕ	gh (ɣ)	غ	ɣ	yaɣ
U+2D57	ⵖ	ⵖ	gh (ɣ)	غ	ɣ	Tuareg yaɣ
U+2D58	ⵗ	ⵗ	gh (ɣ) j	غ ج	ɣ ʒ	Air yaɣ = Adrar yaj
U+2D59	ⵘ	ⵘ	s	س	s	yas
U+2D5A	ⵙ	ⵙ	ʃ (ts)	ص	sˤ	yaʃ
U+2D5B	ⵚ	ⵚ	sh (š)	ش	ʃ	yaš
U+2D5C	ⵛ	ⵛ	t	ت	t	yat
U+2D5D	ⵜ	ⵜ	t	ت	θ	yat fricative
U+2D5E	ⵝ	ⵝ	ch (tš)	تش	tʃ	yatš
U+2D5F	ⵞ	ⵞ	t	ط	tˤ	yaɾ
U+2D60	ⵟ	ⵟ	v	ؤ	v	yav
U+2D61	ⵠ	ⵠ	w	ؤ	w	yaw
U+2D62	ⵡ	ⵡ	y	ي	j	yay
U+2D63	ⵢ	ⵢ	z	ز	z	yaz
U+2D64	ⵣ	ⵣ	z	ز	z	Tawellemet yaz

U+2D45	ⵀ	ⵁ	kh (x)	ⵇ	ⵈ	yax
U+2D46	ⵂ	ⵃ	kh (x)	ⵇ	ⵈ	Tuareg yax
U+2D47	ⵄ	ⵅ	q	ⵉ	q	yaq
U+2D48	ⵆ	ⵇ	q	ⵉ	q	Tuareg yaq
U+2D49	ⵈ	ⵉ	i	ⵏ	i	yi
U+2D4A	ⵊ	ⵋ	j	ⵏ	ⵌ	yaj
U+2D4B	ⵍ	ⵎ	j	ⵏ	ⵌ	Ahaggar yaj
U+2D4C	ⵏ	ⵐ	z	ⵏ	z ^ʕ	Tuareg yaḣ
U+2D4D	ⵑ	ⵒ	l	ⵏ	l	yal

						= Harpoon yaz
U+2D65	ⵓ	ⵔ	z (dz)	ⵏ	z ^ʕ	yaḣ
U+2D66	<	<	e		e	ye (APT)
U+2D67	—	--	o		o	yo (APT)
U+2D6F	ⵓ	ⵔ	+ ^w	ʼ +	^w	Labio- velarization mark = Tamatart ≈ <super> 2D61

Digraphs (for which ligatures are possible)

Unicode	Image	Font	Transliteration			Name
			Latin	Arabic	IPA	
U+2D5C U+2D59	ⱦ Ⱨ	ⱦⱧ	ts	تس	ṭs	yats
U+2D37 U+2D63	ⱡ Ɫ	ⱡⱢ	dz	دز	ḍz	yadz

Unicode	Image	Font	Transliteration			Name
			Latin	Arabic	IPA	
U+2D5C U+2D5B	ⱦ Ᵽ	ⱦⱣ	ch (tš)	تش	ṭʃ	yatš
U+2D37 U+2D4A	ⱡ Ɽ	ⱡⱤ	dj	دج	ḍʒ	yadj

Unicode[[edit](#)]

Tifinagh was added to the [Unicode](#) Standard in March 2005, with the release of version 4.1.

The Unicode block range for Tifinagh is U+2D30–U+2D7F:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+2D3x	.	Θ	⊕	X	X	X	I'	Λ	V	E	Ξ	÷	ℋ	ℝ	:	κ
U+2D4x	Φ	Ø	:	∧	†	X	::	ℤ	…	≤	I	Υ	#	W	□	
U+2D5x	≠	!	δ	%	O	Q	Ƴ	:	::	⊙	⊜	℄	+	X	Ⓜ	E
U+2D6x	Δ	Π	>	✖	↑	※	<	--								"
U+2D7x	/														

Notes

- ▲ As of Unicode version 13.0
- ▲ Grey areas indicate non-assigned code points

References[[edit](#)]

Bibliography[[edit](#)]

- Aghali-Zakara, Mohamed (1994). Graphèmes berbères et dilemme de diffusion: Interaction des alphabets *latin*, ajami et tifinagh. *Etudes et Documents Berbères* 11, 107-121.
- Aghali-Zakara, Mohamed; and Drouin, Jeanine (1977). Recherches sur les Tifinaghs- Eléments graphiques et sociolinguistiques. *Comptes-rendus du Groupe Linguistique des Etudes Chamito-Sémitiques* (GLECS).
- Ameur, Meftaha (1994). Diversité des transcriptions : pour une notation usuelle et normalisée de la langue berbère. *Etudes et Documents Berbères* 11, 25–28.
- Boukous, Ahmed (1997). Situation sociolinguistique de l'Amazigh. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 123, 41–60.
- Chaker, Salem (1994). Pour une notation usuelle à base Tifinagh. *Etudes et Documents Berbères* 11, 31–42.
- Chaker, Salem (1996). Propositions pour la notation usuelle à base *latine* du berbère. *Etudes et Documents Berbères* 14, 239–253.
- Chaker, Salem (1997). La Kabylie: un processus de développement linguistique autonome. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 123, 81–99.
- Durand, O. (1994). Promotion du berbère : problèmes de standardisation et d'orthographe. Expériences européennes. *Etudes et Documents Berbères* 11, 7–11.
- O'Connor, Michael (1996). The Berber scripts. *The World's Writing Systems*, ed. by William Bright and Peter Daniels, 112–116. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Penchoen, Thomas G. (1973). *Tamazight of the Ayt Ndhir*. Los Angeles: Undena Publications.
- Savage, Andrew. 2008. Writing Tuareg – the three script options. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 192: 5–14
- Souag, Lameen (2004). "[Writing Berber Languages: a quick summary](#)". L. Souag. Archived from [the original](#) on 2004-12-05. Retrieved 28 June 2014.
- [Encyclopaedia of Islam](#), s.v. Tifinagh.

External links[[edit](#)]



Wikimedia Commons has media related to [Tifinagh](#).

- [lbi-project.org](#), a database of Libyco-Berber inscriptions with images and information
- [ancientscripts.com – Berber](#), a fact file on Tifinagh and a legend of characters
- (in French) [ennedi.free.fr](#), information on Tifinagh
- (in Arabic, French, Tamazight) [lrcam.ma](#), official website of the Royal Institute of the Amazigh Culture
- [lrcam – Online lessons in Amazigh and the Tifinagh alphabet](#)
- [omniglot.com – Tifinagh](#)
- [Unicode character picker](#) for Moroccan Tifinagh
- [Tifinagh Font for Windows](#)