

Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set
International Organization for Standardization
Международная организация по стандартизации

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Encoding the Tifinagh script in the UCS is not as straightforward a prospect as one might hope – partly due to the many variants of the Tifinagh used in different parts of the Berber world, as well as the historical script, variously called Numidian, Libyan, or Punic, which can be identified with Tifinagh.

A unified character set for such a script could be based on glyphs regardless of their sounds (as Unified Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics (which is used for many languages) has been), or it could be based on the underlying letter entities and let various fonts deal with the myriad of forms. It is this latter approach which is followed here – because it results in a smaller character set ultimately more useful for lexical work, transliteration into Latin and Arabic scripts, etc.

On the following page a unification repertoire is given, with a notional name based on the names found in Faulmann 1880. The names should be verified. In the columns following, the ancient forms of the script are given, on the left, with traditional modern forms in the centre and the newly-invented forms the right. Arabic equivalents given in the last column are from Tifawt 199x. Signs given in parentheses are extrapolated from the original charts.

In 1994 a revision of the alphabet was proposed, based on modern analysis of Amazigh phonology, which has attained some status and currency among Berbers, certainly on the internet. However, there seems to be more than one version of this new alphabet, or at least of its glyphs, which again is an argument for a letter-based and not a glyph-based repertoire for encoding.

Because there are numerous abecedaries available, it seems clear that alphabetic order of Tifinagh is still very much indeterminate (some of the alphabets are clearly based on Latin alphabetical order, others on traditional Semitic ordering. In this proposal I suggest that traditional order be used (following O'Connor 1996) and that new characters be added to the end of the alphabet. I have no great confidence in the widespreadness or standardization of Latin-based sort orders for this script. At the same time, the order given here for the neo-Tifinagh characters, and indeed their identification at all (I had to guess from a number of fonts with little documentation) is very much in question.

Modern Tifinagh on the internet has LTR directionality. Traditionally it had RTL and TTB directionality. The glyphs here are RTL.

This is an exploratory proposal and should be reviewed by as many experts as possible.

	Ancient Berber		Tifinagh			Neo-Tifinagh				
	Libyan	Berber	Tamashaq	Tifinagh	Tifinagh	Neo-Tif.	Neo-Tif.	Neo-Tif.	Neo-Tif.	
	Faulmann 1880	O'Connor 1996	Faulmann 1880	O'Connor 1996	Tamazgha 1996	Tamazgha 1996	Tifawt 199x	Hellingman 1995	AFS Dig WFS 199x	
TIGHERIT			(·)	·	·	·	·	·	·	
YEB	⊙	⊙	⊠ ⊙	⊙ ⊠	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖
YEJ	⌒	⌒	⌒ ⌒	⌒ ⌒	⌒	⌒		⌒	⌒	⌒
YED	⌒	⌒	⌒ ^ ⌒	⌒ ^	^	^	^	^	^	^
YAH		(≡)	⋮	⋮	⋮	≡	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖
YAW	≡ = ÷	=	⋮	⋮	⋮	≡	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖
YEZ		-	#	#	#	#	×	×	×	×
YEZH	(H)	H	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
YEZZ		^	⌒ ⌒	⌒ ⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒
YAKH		⌒	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	×	×	×	×
YADD	⌒	⌒	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
ILY	⌒	Z	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YEK	⌒ ⌒ ⌒	⌒	⋮	⋮	⋮	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒
YEL	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YEM	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YEN										
YES	⊠ × ⊠	⊠	⊠ ⊙	⊙ ⊠	⊙	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
YESS		⊠ ⊠ ⊠				⌒		⊙	⊙	⊙
YEGH		≡ ÷	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YEF	×	×	H I	I H	I	I	I	⊠	⊠	⊠
YAQ		(≡)	⋮	⋮	⋮	≡	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YEG			×	× ×	×	×	×	×	×	×
YER	⊙	⊙	⊠ ⊙	⊙ ⊠	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
YESH	⌒	⌒	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YET	+	+ ×	+	+	+	×	×	+	+	+
YETT	(⊠)	⊠			⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YU						⋮		⋮	⋮	⋮
YE							⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YI						⋮	⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YO							⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YAHH							⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YERR						⊠				
YECH						⊠		⊠	⊠	⊠
.YEP							⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
YEV							⊠	⊠	⊠	⊠
LABIALIZER			⊠	⊠	BT					
YETH			⊠	⊠	JT					⊠
YEKK			⊠	⊠	ZT					⊠
YEDH			⊠	⊠	LT					⊠
AIN			⊠	⊠	MT			⊠		
YEDZH			⊠	⊠	NT			⊠		
YEDD			⊠	⊠	ST			⊠		
YETS			⊠	⊠	GT			⊠		
			⊠	⊠	RT					
			⊠	⊠	SHT					
			⊠	⊠	NK					
			/		LN					