

## ROMANIZATION OF NEO-TIFINAGH

### BGN/PCGN 2022 System

The BGN/PCGN system for Neo-Tifinagh is designed for use in romanizing geographic names written in the Neo-Tifinagh script. Tifinagh is the name of the script used to write Amazigh (Tamazight) languages. Neo-Tifinagh is specifically the modern alphabet used for official purposes in Morocco and to a lesser extent in Algeria<sup>1</sup>. Tifinagh script<sup>2</sup> does not distinguish between upper and lower case and reads from left to right. This system is based on the ALA-LC Tamazight<sup>3</sup> and IRCAM (The Moroccan *Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe*) romanization systems with a few modifications, including the addition of the character ⵍ (row 31 in the consonant table), which is used in Algerian Tifinagh but is not part of the IRCAM alphabet.

**Table 1: Consonant Characters<sup>4</sup>**

	Tifinagh	Unicode <sup>5</sup>	Romanization	Example <sup>6</sup> Tifinagh Script	Example Romanized Tifinagh	Approved Name (official Roman script) <sup>7</sup>
1.	ⵍ	2D31	b	ⵍⵔⵏⵏⵓ	Bu'rfā	Bou Arfa
2.	ⵎ	2D33	g	ⵎⵓⵔⵏⵓ	Waregla	Ouargla
3.	ⵎ̣	2D33+2D6F	g <sup>w</sup>	ⵎ̣ⵔⵏⵏⵓ	azgg <sup>w</sup> agh	(red)
4.	ⵎ	2D37	d	ⵎⵏⵏⵓ	Midlt	Midelt
5.	ⵎ	2D39	ḍ	ⵎⵏⵏⵓ	Miḍar	Midar
6.	ⵎ	2D3C	f	ⵎⵏⵏⵓ	Figig	Figuig
7.	ⵎ	2D3D	k	ⵎⵏⵏⵓ	Skikda	Skikda
8.	ⵎ̣	2D3D+2D6F	k <sup>w</sup>	ⵎ̣ⵏⵏⵓ	akk <sup>w</sup>	(all)
9.	ⵎ	2D40	h	ⵎⵏⵏⵓ	ihdumn	(clothing)
10.	ⵎ	2D43	ḥ	ⵎⵏⵏⵓ	Lḥusima	Hoceima

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for a glossary of terms.

<sup>2</sup> The Tifinagh alphabet can be downloaded from IRCAM website: <http://www.ircam.ma/?g-fr>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/tamazight.pdf>; based on a manual published by IRCAM. (ALA-LC Tamazight).

<sup>4</sup> See Note 7 for Unicode of Latin extended characters.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2D30.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Where possible, examples of toponyms containing the subject character are provided. In cases where no toponymic example was available a word or name containing the relevant character has been used as an example, with a translation in brackets in the final column.

<sup>7</sup> This column lists the BGN/PCGN recommended Roman-script spelling of the name in the example. Morocco and Algeria produce Roman-script mapping and BGN/PCGN recommend use of the names on these official products. As can be seen from the table, the local Roman-script spellings often differ from the Romanized-Tifinagh names. Examples in brackets are translations of examples which are words rather than names, as no toponymic example was available for these characters.

	Tifinagh	Unicode <sup>5</sup>	Romanization	Example <sup>6</sup> Tifinagh Script	Example Romanized Tifinagh	Approved Name (official Roman script) <sup>7</sup>
11.	ⵏ	2D44	<i>Note 3</i>	ⵏⵉⵢ ⵏ ⵢⵉⵎⵏⵓ	'In Defla	Aïn Defla
12.	ⵍ	2D45	x	ⵍⵏⵉⵑⵏⵉⵔ	Xnifra	Khenifra
13.	ⵓ	2D47	q	ⵓⵙⵏⵜⵉⵏⵏⵓ	Qsentina	Constantine
14.	ⵓ	2D4A	j	ⵓⵏⵉⵢⵓ	Ťanja	Tangier
15.	ⵍ	2D4D	l	ⵍⵏⵉⵃⵢⵉⵏⵓ	Leblida	Blida
16.	ⵎ	2D4E	m	ⵎⵓⵙⵜⵓⵖⵏⵏⵉⵎ	Mustghanem	Mostaganem
17.	ⵏ	2D4F	n	ⵏⵏⵏⵃⵃⵓ	'Ennaba	Annaba
18.	ⵓ	2D54	r	ⵓⵎⵉⵔⵏⵓⵏⵓ	Bumerdas	Boumerdes
19.	ⵓ	2D55	r	ⵓⵎⵉⵔⵓⵔ	Miḍar	Midar
20.	ⵖ	2D56	gh	ⵖⵏⵓⵕⵓⵃⵓ	Lmghrib	Morocco
21.	ⵓ	2D59	s	ⵓⵏⵉⵃⵃⵓ	S'ida	Saïda
22.	ⵓ	2D5A	ş	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵔ	Taşşurt	Essaouira
23.	ⵕ	2D5B	ch	ⵕⵕⵏⵉⵑ	Chchlef	Chlef
24.	ⵓ	2D5C	t	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔ	Tiznit	Tiznit
25.	ⵓ	2D5F	ţ	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵏⵓ	Tiṭṭawin	Tétouan
26.	ⵓ	2D61	w	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵏⵓ	Wehran	Oran
27.	ⵓ	2D62	y	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵏⵓ	Bgayet	Bejaïa
28.	ⵓ	2D63	z	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵏⵓ	Azmmur	Azemmour
29.	ⵓ	2D65	z	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵏⵓ	Azilal	Azilal
30.	ⵓ	2D6F	w	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔⵓⵏⵓ	amddakⵓ	(friend)
31. <sup>8</sup>	ⵓ	2D35	ğ	ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔ	Ĝanet	Djanet

<sup>8</sup> This character is used to write Tifinagh in Algeria but is not part of the Moroccan IRCAM Neo-Tifinagh alphabet.

**Table 2: Vowel Characters**

	Tifinagh	Unicode	Romanization	Example Tifinagh Script	Example Romanized Tifinagh	Approved Name (official Roman script) <sup>9</sup>
1.	ⵏ	2D30	a	ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓ	Agadir	Agadir
2.	ⵉ	2D49	i	ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓⵣⵓ	Tizi Uzzu	Tizi Ouzou
3.	ⵓ	2D53	u	ⵜⵉⵏⵓⵎⵓ	Tinduf	Tindouf
4.	ⵉ	2D3B	e	ⵎⵉⵣⵣⵓⵣⵓⵣⵓ	Lezzayer	Algeria

**Table 3: Examples of Amazigh terms occurring in Moroccan and Algerian toponyms<sup>10</sup>**

	Tifinagh	Romanization	English
1.	ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓ	Adrar	Mountain
2.	ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓⵎⵓ	Aglmam	Lake
3.	ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓⵎⵓ	Asif	Stream
4.	ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓ	Ayt	People (of)
5.	ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓ	Titt	Spring
6.	ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓ	Tizi	Pass

Spelling variations: Moroccan and Algerian sources often romanize Amazigh toponyms to accommodate French orthography and pronunciation. For example, ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓ, ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓ, and ⵏⵗⵏⵏⵓⵎⵓ, are commonly romanized as Tit, Aït, and Aguelmame, respectively.

### Notes

1. In romanization, each initial letter of a word in a multi-word name should be capitalized, excluding connectors: e.g., ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓ → Tagldit n Lmaghrib (Kingdom of Morocco).
2. The character | (n) functions as a connector, linking the generic and the specific in geographic names. This connector, when romanized, should remain lower case.
  - i. ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓ → Tasga n Tiznit (Province of Tiznit)
  - ii. ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓⵎⵓ → Tagldit n Lmaghrib (Kingdom of Morocco)

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 6.

<sup>10</sup> <http://tal.ircam.ma/dglai/>; *Dictionnaire Général de la Langue Amazighe Informatisé*, published by IRCAM.

3. When a name starts with ⵏ, romanized as ‘ (Unicode encoding: 2018), the following letter is capitalized in romanization. E.g., ⵏⵉⵍⵍⵓⵎⵓ → ‘Ennaba.
4. When the characters ⵍ and ⵎ (rows 3 and 8 in the consonants table) are doubled, the superscript element is not repeated in the Tifinagh script. This should be replicated in romanization. For example, ⵍ+ⵍ is written ⵍⵍ and romanized gg<sup>w</sup>, e.g., ⵎⵍⵍⵓⵎⵓ → azgg<sup>w</sup>agh (meaning ‘red’ in Tamazight).
5. Neo-Tifinagh uses the numerals as used in English, e.g., 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 etc.
6. Occasionally, the character sequence ⵍⵎ occurs. It may be romanized g·h in order to differentiate this romanization from the digraph gh which represents the letter ⵍ.
7. An inventory of letter-diacritic combinations, with their Unicode encoding, in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script is:

	Latin Extended	Unicode		Latin Extended	Unicode
1.	Ḑ	1E0C	10.	ḑ	1E0D
2.	G <sup>w</sup>	0047+02B7	11.	g <sup>w</sup>	0067+02B7
3.	Ḥ	1E24	12.	ḥ	1E25
4.	K <sup>w</sup>	004B+02B7	13.	k <sup>w</sup>	006B+02B7
5.	Ṛ	1E5A	14.	ṛ	1E5B
6.	Ṣ	1E62	15.	ṣ	1E63
7.	Ṭ	1E6C	16.	ṭ	1E6D
8.	Ẓ	1E92	17.	ẓ	1E93
9.	‘	2018	18.	ˆ	02B7

8. The romanization column in tables 1 and 2 shows only lowercase forms but, when romanizing, uppercase and lowercase Roman letters as appropriate should be used.

## Appendix: Glossary of Terms

1. Amazigh: The people/ethnicity (Berber is antiquated and pejorative); also, the Afro-asiatic language family that includes Tarifit (ISO 639-3: rif), Tachelhit (ISO 639-3: shi), Central Atlas Tamazight (ISO 639-3: tzm), Kabyle (ISO 639-3: kab), Chaoui (ISO 639-3: shy), and more. Amazigh languages share varying levels of mutual intelligibility, largely depending on the geographic distance between one speaker and another. This term is sometimes found being applied to the language spoken by the Amazigh people.
2. Tamazight: Literally the 'language of the Amazigh' in Tamazight; endonym often used by the Moroccan and Algerian governments referring to the Amazigh language. The Moroccan and Algerian governments treat Tamazight as one language, with Tarifit, Kayble, Chaoui, etc. as dialects. Some Amazigh, notably those in the Central Atlas and Rif regions of Morocco, also refer to their specific language as *Tamazight*.
3. Tifinagh: The script used to write Amazigh languages all across North Africa.
4. Neo-Tifinagh: Tifinagh is the script, whereas Neo-Tifinagh is specifically the modern alphabet used for official purposes in Morocco and to a lesser extent in Algeria. Tifinagh script employs at least 50 unique characters in total, however only 34 constitute the Neo-Tifinagh alphabet used in Morocco, with 35 characters being used in Algeria.