al-ʾAbǧad

Two Wikipedia Articles

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Abjad

An **abjad** is a type of writing system where each symbol always or usually stands for a consonant, leaving the reader to supply the appropriate vowel. It is a term suggested by Peter T. Daniels to replace the common terms "**consonantary**", "**consonantal alphabet**" or "syllabary" to refer to the family of scripts called West Semitic. Abjad is thought to be based on the first letters (a,b,ǧ,d) found in all Semitic language such as Phoenician, Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic. In Arabic, "A" (ʾAlif), "B" (Bāʾ), "Ǧ" (Ǧīm), "D" (Dāl) make the word "abjad" which means "alphabet". The modern Arabic word for "alphabet" and "abjad" is interchangeably either "abajadeyyah" or "alefbaaeyyah". The word "alphabet" in English has a source in Greek language in which the first two letters were "A" (alpha) and "B" (beta), hence "alphabeta" (in Spanish, "alfabeto", but also called "abecedario", from "a" "b" "c" "d"). In Hebrew the first two letters are "A" (Aleph), "B" (Bet) hence "alephbet." It is also used to enumerate a list in the same manner that "a, b, c, d" (etc.) are used in the English language.

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Etymology

The name "abjad" (*ʾabǧad* أبجد) is derived from pronouncing the first letters of the *Arabic* alphabet in order. The ordering (*ʾabǧadī*) of Arabic letters used to match that of the older Hebrew, Phoenician and Semitic alphabets; *ʾ b g d* (read from right to left: د ج ب أ) or أبجد.

Terminology

According to the formulations of Daniels, abjads differ from alphabets in that only consonants, not vowels, are represented among the basic graphemes. Abjads differ from abugidas, another category invented by Daniels, in that in abjads, the vowel sound is *implied* by phonology, and where vowel marks exist for the system, such as nikkud for Hebrew and harakāt for Arabic, their use is optional and not the dominant (or literate) form. Abugidas mark the vowels (other than the "inherent" vowel) with a diacritic, a minor attachment to the letter, or a standalone glyph. Some abugidas use a special symbol to *suppress* the inherent vowel so that the consonant alone can be properly represented. In a syllabary, a grapheme denotes a complete syllable, that is, either a lone vowel sound or a combination of a vowel sound with one or more consonant sounds.

The antagonism of abjad versus alphabet has been rejected by other scholars because abjad is also used as a term for the Arabic numeral system. Also, it suggests that consonantal alphabets, in opposition to for instance the Greek alphabet, were not yet true alphabets.[1]

Values table

The *Abjad gadol* (see below) values are:

Decimal	Hebrew	Glyph
1	Aleph	א
2	Bet	ב
3	Gimel	ג
4	Daled	ד
5	He	ה
6	Vav	ו
7	Zayin	ז
8	Heth	ח
9	Teth	ט

Decimal	Hebrew	Glyph
10	Yud	י
20	Kaph	כ
30	Lamed	ל
40	Mem	מ
50	Nun	נ
60	Samech	ס
70	Ayin	ע
80	Pe	פ
90	Tsade	צ

Decimal	Hebrew	Glyph
100	Qoph	ק
200	Reish	ר
300	Shin	ש
400	Taw	ת
20	Kaph(final)	ך
40	Mem(final)	ם
50	Nun(final)	ן
80	Pe(final)	ף
90	Tsade(final)	ץ

Origins

All known abjads belong to the Semitic family of scripts. These scripts are thought to derive from the Proto-Sinaitic alphabet (dated to about 1500 BC), which is thought to derive from Egyptian hieroglyphs[citation needed]. The abjad was significantly simpler than the earlier hieroglyphs. The number of distinct glyphs was reduced tremendously at the cost of increased ambiguity.

The first abjad to gain widespread usage was the Phoenician abjad. Unlike other contemporary scripts, such as Cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Phoenician script consisted of only about two dozen symbols. This made the script easy to learn, and Phoenician seafaring merchants took the script wherever they went. Phoenician gave way to a number of new writing systems,

A specimen of Proto-Sinaitic script containing a phrase which may mean 'to Baalat'. The line running from the upper left to lower right reads *mt l b^c lt*.

including the Greek alphabet and Aramaic, a widely used abjad. The Greek alphabet evolved into the modern western alphabets, such as Latin and Cyrillic, while Aramaic became the ancestor of many modern abjads and abugidas of Asia.

Aramaic spread across Asia, reaching as far as India and becoming Brahmi, the ancestral abugida to most modern Indian and Southeast Asian scripts[citation needed]. In the Middle East, Aramaic gave rise to the Hebrew and Nabataean abjads, which retained many of the Aramaic letter forms[citation needed]. The Syriac script was a cursive variation of Aramaic. It is unclear whether the Arabic abjad was derived from Nabatean or Syriac.

Impure abjads

"Impure" abjads have characters for some vowels, optional vowel diacritics, or both. The term "pure" abjad refers to scripts entirely lacking in vowel indicators. However, most modern abjads, such as Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic and Avestan, are "impure" abjads, that is, they also contain symbols for some of the vowel phonemes. An example of a "pure" abjad is ancient Phoenician.

العربية

"Al-'Arabiyya", lit. "Arabic." An example of the Arabic script, which is an impure abjad.

Addition of vowels

In the 9th century BC, the Greeks adapted the Phoenician script for use in their own language. The phonetic structure of the Greek language created too many ambiguities when the vowels went unrepresented, so the script was modified. They did not need letters for the guttural sounds represented by aleph, he, heth or ayin, so these symbols were assigned vocalic values. The letters waw and yod were also used. The Greek alphabet thus became the world's first "true" alphabet.

Abugidas developed along a slightly different route. The basic consonantal symbol was considered to have an inherent "a" vowel sound. Hooks or short lines attached to various parts of the basic letter modify the vowel. In this way, the South Arabian alphabet evolved into the Ge'ez alphabet between the 5th century BC and the 5th century AD. Similarly, around the 3rd century BC, the Brāhmī script developed (from the Aramaic abjad, it has been hypothesized).

The other major family of abugidas, Canadian Aboriginal syllabics, was initially developed in the 1840s by missionary and linguist James Evans for the Cree and Ojibwe languages. Evans used features of Devanagari script
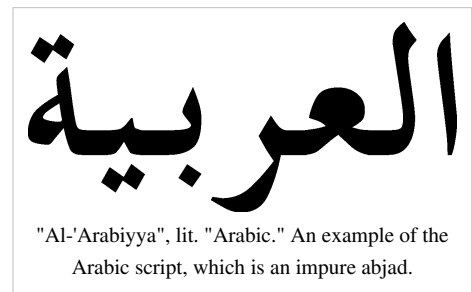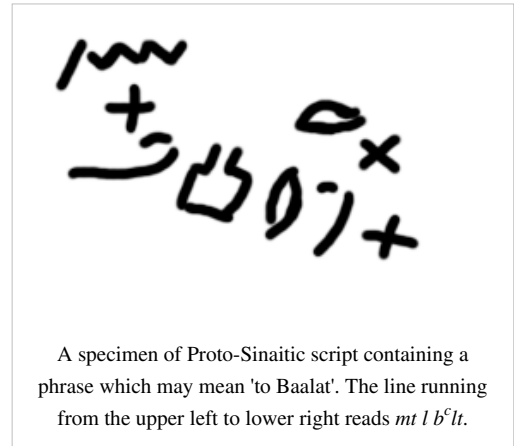
and Pitman shorthand to create his initial abugida. Later in the 19th century, other missionaries adapted Evans' system to other Canadian aboriginal languages. Canadian syllabics differ from other abugidas in that the vowel is indicated by rotation of the consonantal symbol, with each vowel having a consistent orientation.

Abjads and the structure of Semitic languages

The abjad form of writing is well-adapted to the morphological structure of the Semitic languages it was developed to write. This is because words in Semitic languages are formed from a root consisting of (usually) three consonants, the vowels being used to indicate inflectional or derived forms. For instance, according to Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, the Arabic root ذ ب ح *D-B-Ḥ* (to sacrifice) can be derived the forms ذَبَّحَ *ḏabaḥa* (he sacrificed), ذَبَحْتَ *ḏabaḥta* (you (masculine singular) sacrificed), ذَبَّحَ *ḏabbaḥa* (he slaughtered), يُذَبِّح *yuḏabbiḥ* (he slaughters), and مَذْبَح *maḏbaḥ* (slaughterhouse). In each case, the absence of full glyphs for vowels makes the common root clearer, improving word recognition[citation needed]Wikipedia:Disputed statement while reading.

Comparative chart of Abjads, extinct and extant

ID	Name	In use	Cursive	Direction	# of letters	Country of origin	Used by	Languages	Time period (age)	Influenced by	Writing systems influenced
1	Syriac	yes	yes	right-left	22 consonants	Middle-East	Syrian Church	Aramaic, Syriac, Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	~ 700 BCE[2]		Nabatean, Palmyran, Mandaic, Parthian, Pahlavi, Sogdian, Avestan and Manichean
2	Hebrew	yes	no	right-left	22 consonants + 5 final letters	Middle-East	Israelis, Some Jewish diaspora communities, Ancient Hebrew Tribes	Hebrew, Ladino, Bukhari, Yiddish, Judeo-Arabic	> 1100 BCE	Proto-Hebrew, Early Aramaic	
3	Arabic	yes	yes	right-left	28	Middle-East	Over 200 million people	Arabic, Bosnian, Kashmiri, *Kurdish, Kyrghyz, Malay, Persian/Farsi, Pashto, Balochi, Turkish, Urdu, Uyghur, others*	~ 500 CE	Nabataean Aramaic	
4	Aramaic (Imperial)	no	no	right-left	22	Middle-East	Archaemenid, Persian, Babylonian, and Assyrian empires	Imperial Aramaic, Hebrew	~ 500 BCE	Phoenician	Late Hebrew, Nabataean, Syriac
5	Aramaic (Early)	no	no	right-left	22	Middle-East	Various Semitic Peoples		~ 1000-900 BCE	Phoenician	Hebrew, Imperial Aramaic.

6	Ancient Berber	no	no	top-bottom, right-left	22 (right-left) 25 (up-down)[3]	North Africa	Women in Tuareg Society	Tifinagh	600 BCE	Punic, South Arabian	Tifinagh
7	Nabataean	no	no	right-left	22	Middle-East	Nabataean Kingdom	Nabataean	200 BCE	Aramaic	Arabic
8	Middle Persian, (Pahlavi)	no	no	right-left	22	Middle-East	Sassanian Empire	Pahlavi, Middle Persian		Aramaic	Psalter, Avestan
9	Mandaic	no	yes	right-left	24	Iraq, Iran	Ahvāz, Iran	Mandaic	~ 200 CE	Aramaic	Neo-Mandaic
10	Psalter	no	yes	right-left	21	Northwestern China	Persian Script for Paper Writing		~ 400 CE [4]	Syriac [citation needed]	
11	Phoenician	no	no	right-left, Boustrophedon	22	Byblos	Canaanites	Phoenician, Punic	~ 1000-1500 BCE	Proto-Canaanite Alphabet	Punic(variant), Greek, Etruscan, Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew
12	Parthian	no	no	right-left	22	Parthia (modern day equivalent of Northeastern Iran)	Parthian & Sassanian periods of Persian Empire	Parthian	~200 BCE	Aramaic	
13	Sabaean	no	no system	right-left, boustrophedon	29	Southern Arabia (Sheba)	Southern Arabians	Sabaean	~ 500 BCE	Byblos	Ethiopic (Eritrea & Ethiopia)
14	Punic	no	no	right-left	22	Carthage (Tunisia), North Africa, Mediterranean	Punic Culture	Punic, Neo-Punic		Phoenician [citation needed]	
15	Proto-Sinaitic, Proto-Canaanite	no	no	right-left	30	Egypt, Sinai, Canaan	Canaanites	Canaanite	~ 1900-1700 BCE	In conjunction with Egyptian Hieroglyphs [citation needed]	Phoenician, Hebrew
16	Ugaritic	no	yes	left-right	30	Ugarit (modern day Northern Syria)	Ugarites	Ugaritic, Hurrian	~ 1400 BCE		
17	South Arabian	no	no	right-left, left-right (reversed letters)	29	South-Arabia (Yemen)	D'mt Kingdom	Amharic, Tigrinya, Tigre, Semitic, Chushitic, Nilo-Saharan [citation needed]	900 BCE [citation needed]	Proto-Sinaitic	Ge'ez ((Ethiopia)(Eritrea))
18	Sogdian	no	no (yes in later versions)	right-left, left-right(vertical)	20	parts of China (Xinjiang), Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan	Buddhists, Manichaens	Sogdian	~ 400 CE	Syriac	Old Uyghur alphabet, Yaqnabi (Tajikistan dialect)

| 19 | Samaritan | yes (700 people) | no | right-left | 22 | Mesopatamia or Levant (Disputed) | Samaritans (Nablus and Holon) | Samaritan Aramaic, Samaritan Hebrew | ~ 100-0 BCE | Paleo-Hebrew Alphabet | |

References

[1] Reinhard G. Lehmann: "27-30-22-26. How Many Letters Needs an Alphabet? The Case of Semitic", in: The idea of writing: Writing across borders / edited by Alex de Voogt and Joachim Friedrich Quack, Leiden: Brill 2012, p. 11-52, esp. p. 22-27

[2] (http://www.omniglot.com/writing/alphabetic.htm), http://www.omniglot.com/writing/alphabetic.htm.

[3] (http://www.ancientscripts.com/berber.html), http://www.ancientscripts.com/berber.html.

[4] (http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/pahlavi-psalter), Encyclopedia Iranica.

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• Wright, W. (1971). *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press. v. 1, p. 28. ISBN 0-521-09455-0.

External links

• Actual photo of the specimen of Proto-sinaitic script (http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/6_04.html)

Abjad numerals

Arabic alphabet
ي و ه ن م ل ك ق ف غ ع ظ ط ض ص ش س ز ر ذ د خ ح ج ث ت ب ا
Arabic script
•   History
•   Transliteration
•   Diacritics
•   Hamza
•   Numerals
•   Numeration

The **Abjad numerals** are a decimal numeral system in which the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet are assigned numerical values. They have been used in the Arabic-speaking world since before the 8th century Arabic numerals. In modern Arabic, the word *abjadīyah* means 'alphabet' in general.

In the Abjad system, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, alif, is used to represent 1; the second letter, bā', is used to represent 2, etc. Individual letters also represent 10s and 100s: yā' for 10, kāf for 20, qāf for 100, etc.

The word *abjad* (أبجد *abjad*) itself derives from the first four letters in the Phoenician alphabet, Aramaic alphabet, Hebrew alphabet, etc. These older alphabets contained only 22 letters, stopping at taw, numerically equivalent to 400. The Arabic Abjad system continues at this point with letters not found in other alphabets: thā'=500, etc.

Abjad order

The Abjad order of the Arabic alphabet has two slightly different variants. The Abjad order is not a simple historical continuation of the earlier north Semitic alphabetic order, since it has a position corresponding to the Aramaic letter *samekh / semkat* ס, yet no letter of the Arabic alphabet historically derives from that letter. Loss of *samekh* was compensated for by the split of *shin* ש into two independent Arabic letters, ش (*shīn*) and س (*sīn*), which moved up to take the place of *samekh*.

The most common Abjad sequence, read from right to left, is:

و ز ح ط ي ك ل م ن س ع ف ص ق ر ش ت ث خ ذ ض ظ غ أ ب ج د ه

’ b j d h w z ḥ ṭ y k l m n s ‘ f ṣ q r hs t ht hk hd ḍ ẓ hg

This is commonly vocalized as follows:

- abjad hawwaz ḥuṭṭī kalaman sa‘faṣ qarashat thakhadh ḍaẓagh.

Another vocalization is:

- abujadin hawazin ḥuṭiya kalman sa‘faṣ qurishat thakhudh ḍaẓugh

Another Abjad sequence (probably older, now mainly confined to the Maghreb), is:[1]

و ز ح ط ي ك ل م ن ص ع ف ض ق ر س ت ث خ ذ ظ غ ش أ ب ج د ه

’ b j d h w z ḥ ṭ y k l m n ṣ ‘ f ḍ q r s t ht hk d̲ ẓ hg hs

which can be vocalized as:

- abujadin hawazin ḥuṭiya kalman ṣa‘faḍ qurisat thakhudh ẓaghush

Modern dictionaries and other reference books do not use the Abjad order to sort alphabetically; instead, the newer *hijā’ī* (هجائي) order (with letters partially grouped together by similarity of shape) is used:

أ ب ت ث ج ح خ د ذ ر زس ش ص ض ط ظ ع غ ف ق ك ل م ن ه و ي

’ b t ht j ḥ hk d hd r z s hs ṣ ḍ ṭ ẓ ‘ hg f q k l m n h w y

Another kind of *alfaba’ī* order used to be widely used in the Maghreb until recently, when it was replaced by the Mashriqi order:

و ي أ ب ت ث ج ح خ د ذ ر ز ط ظ ك ل م ن ص ض ع غ ف ق س ش ه

’ b t ht j ḥ hk d hd r z ṭ ẓ k l m n ṣ ḍ ‘ hg f q s hs h w y

Persian dictionaries use a slightly different order, in which و comes before ه instead of after it.

Uses of the Abjad system

Before the introduction of the Arabic numerals, the Abjad numbers were used for all mathematical purposes. In modern Arabic, they are primarily used for numbering outlines, items in lists, and points of information. In English, points of information are sometimes referred to as "A", "B", and "C" (or perhaps use Roman numerals: I, II, III, IV), and in Arabic, they are "أ", then "ب", then "ج", not the first three letters of the modern *hijā’ī* order.

The Abjad numbers are also used to assign numerical values to Arabic words for purposes of numerology.[*citation needed*] The common Islamic phrase بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم *bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* ('In the name of Allah, the most merciful, the most compassionate' – see Basmala) has a numeric value of 786 (from a letter-by-letter cumulative value of 2+60+40+1+30+30+5+1+30+200+8+40+50+1+30+200+8+10+40). The name *Allāh* الله by itself has the value 66 (1+30+30+5).

Letter values

Value	Letter	Name	Trans-literation	Value	Letter	Name	Trans-literation	Value	Letter	Name	Trans-literation
1	ا	alif	ʼ / ā	10	ى	yāʼ	y / ī	100	ق	qāf	q
2	ب	bāʼ	b	20	ك	kāf	k	200	ر	rāʼ	r
3	ج	jīm	j	30	ل	lām	l	300	ش	shīn	sh
4	د	dāl	d	40	م	mīm	m	400	ت	tāʼ	t
5	ه	hāʼ	h	50	ن	nūn	n	500	ث	thāʼ	th
6	و	wāw	w / ū	60	س	sīn	s	600	خ	khāʼ	kh
7	ز	zayn/zāy	z	70	ع	ʻayn	ʻ	700	ذ	dhāl	dh
8	ح	ḥāʼ	ḥ	80	ف	fāʼ	f	800	ض	ḍād	ḍ
9	ط	ṭāʼ	ṭ	90	ص	ṣād	ṣ	900	ظ	ẓāʼ	ẓ
								1000	غ	ghayn	gh

A few of the numerical values are different in the alternative Abjad order. For four Persian letters these values are used: ژ=7 پ=2 چ=3 گ=20 .

Similar systems

The Abjad numerals are equivalent to the earlier Hebrew numerals up to 400. The Hebrew numeral system is known as Gematria and is used in Kabbalistic texts and numerology. Like the Abjad order, it is used in modern times for numbering outlines and points of information, including the first six days of the week. The Greek numerals differ in a number of ways from the Abjad ones (for instance in the Greek alphabet there is no equivalent for ص, *ṣād*). The Greek language system of letters-as-numbers is called isopsephy. In modern times the old 27-letter alphabet of this system also continues to be used for numbering lists.

References

[1] Alyaseer.net Ordering entries and cards in subject indexes (http://alyaseer.net/vb/showthread.php?t=8807) Discussion thread *(Accessed 2009-Oct-06)*

External links

- Overview of the *abjad* numerological system (http://bahai-library.com/lewis_Abjad_numerological_system)
- Sufi numerology site (http://www.nurmuhammad.com/IlmHuroof/IlmHuroofArticles/welcometothescienceofhuroof.htm)
- Numerical Value of an Arabic Text as per "Abjad" Calculation - www.alavibohra.org (http://alavibohra.org/abjad arabic calculator/arabic numeric value.php)

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Abjad numerals *Source*: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=565437309 *Contributors*: 2001:470:C622:32:5916:5607:27EC:6854, 2601:9:2100:54:FDDF:5D1E:AE7E:B7BF, Abjiklam, Annielogue, AnonMoos, Aris riyanto, Astrolog, Bekir89, Bidabadi, Binyamin Goldstein, Caiyu, CaptainIron555, Cbdorsett, Cfsenel, Ciphers, Dan Pelleg, Darkwind, Dbachmann, Deeptrivia, Dennette, DerBorg, Ecolatur, Enaya g, Epson291, FilipeS, Grenavitar, Hairy Dude, Hezare, IanOsgood, Jaksmata, Jeff3000, Joe Kress, Johanna-Hypatia, Jonah22, Kbdank71, Kblive, Koavf, Kwamikagami, LjL, Lockesdonkey, MZMcBride, Mahali syarifuddin, Mahmudmasri, Michael Hardy, Moali68, MrOllie, Mschlindwein, Muhandis, Oneeyedboxer, Rahulmothiya, SchreiberBike, SimonP, Sirmylesnagopaleentheda, Stephen Morley, Sundberg, Texteditor, The Thing That Should Not Be, Thnidu, Tiamut, Verdy p, Voidvector, Wiki-uk, Yamaha5, Yekrats, Zeimusu, Калач, رهگذر غریب, خالد حسني, 71 anonymous edits

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