

Unicode Technical Note No. 40: Old Italic glyph variation

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The Old Italic script unifies a number of related historical alphabets located on the Italian peninsula which were used for non-Indo-European languages (Etruscan and probably North Picene, which is likely not related to Etruscan), and various Indo-European languages belonging to the Italic branch (Faliscan and members of the Sabellian group, including Oscan, Umbrian, and South Picene). The ultimate source for the alphabets in ancient Italy is Euboean Greek used at Ischia and Cumae in the bay of Naples in the eighth century BCE. Unfortunately, no Greek abecedaries from southern Italy have survived. The alphabets for Faliscan, Oscan, Umbrian, North Picene, and South Picene all derive from an original Etruscan form of the repertoire. The Alpine or North Italic alphabets, which include the Venetic, Raetic, and Cisalpine (Leponitic and Cisalpine Gaulish) alphabets, have also been unified with Old Italic. The North Italic alphabets are thought to be the source for Runic, which is encoded at U+16A0–U+16FF.

The unification of these alphabets into a single Old Italic script requires language-specific fonts because the glyphs most commonly used may differ somewhat depending on the language being represented. This Technical Note provides a chart showing a set of common glyph variants for Old Italic, which may be used to assist in font development, for instance. North Italic scripts are shown to the right. The first symbol (that is, the left-most symbol) listed in each column is the most common; rarer symbols are not listed. The chart covers the many historical alphabets of Italy.

The Messapic alphabet is also found on the Italian peninsula, and was used for a separate Indo-European branch, Messapic. The Messapic alphabet was derived directly from Greek sources, not from an Etruscan prototype. Accordingly, Messapic should be unified with Greek, not Old Italic, and hence is not included on the chart.

Bibliography

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	Mar	Et1	Et2	Osc	Umb	Fal	NPi	SPi	Ven	Rae	Cis
A	Ɐ	Ɐ	ⱡ	ⱯⱰ	Ɐ	ⱡⱱ	Ɐ	ⱡⱡ	ⱡⱡⱰ	ⱡⱡ	ⱡⱱⱡ
BE	Ɫ			Ɫ	Ɫ		Ɫ	Ɫ			
KE	ⱴ	<	<	<		<	<<				
DE	Ɽ			Ɽ			Ɽ				
E	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ	ⱥ
VE	ⱦ	ⱦ	ⱦ	ⱦ	ⱦ	ⱦ	ⱦ		ⱦ	ⱦ	ⱦ
ZE	Ⱨ	Ⱨ	Ⱨ	Ⱨ	Ⱨ	Ⱨ	Ⱨ		Ⱨ	Ⱨ	Ⱨ
HE	ⱨ	ⱨ	ⱨⱩ		ⱨ	ⱨⱩ		ⱨⱨ	ⱨⱨⱩ	ⱨⱨ	
THE	Ⱪ	Ⱪ	Ⱪⱪ		Ⱪ	Ⱪ	Ⱪ	Ⱪⱪ	ⱩⱪⱩ	Ⱪ	Ⱪ
I	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ	ⱪ
KA	Ⱬ	Ⱬ		Ⱬ	Ⱬ	Ⱬ	Ⱬ	Ⱬ	Ⱬ	Ⱬ	Ⱬ
EL	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬⱭ	ⱬ	ⱬ	ⱬ
EM	Ɱ	Ɱ	ⱮⱯⱰ	Ɱ	ⱮⱯ	ⱮⱯ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ
EN	Ɐ	Ɐ	ⱯⱰ	Ɐ	Ɐ	ⱯⱰ	Ɐ	Ɐ	Ɐ	Ɐ	Ɐ
ESH	ⱱ										
ESS								*			
O	Ⱳ					Ⱳ	Ⱳ		Ⱳ		Ⱳ
PE	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ	ⱳ
SHE	ⱴ	ⱴ	ⱴⱵ		ⱴ		ⱴⱵ		ⱴ	ⱴⱵⱶⱷⱸⱹ	
KU	ⱶ	ⱶ				ⱶ		ⱶ			
ER	ⱷ	ⱷ	ⱷⱸ	ⱷ	ⱷ	ⱷⱸ	ⱷ	ⱷ	ⱷⱸ	ⱷⱸ	ⱷ
ES	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ	ⱹ
TE	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ	ⱺ
U	ⱻ	ⱻ	ⱻⱼ	ⱻ	ⱻ	ⱻ		ⱻ	ⱻ	ⱻ	ⱻ
EKS	ⱼ	ⱼ				ⱼ					
PHE	ⱽ	ⱽ	ⱽⱾ						ⱽ	ⱽⱾⱿ	
KHE	Ȿ	Ȿ	ⱾⱿ						Ȿ	ⱾⱿ	ⱾⱿ
EF		8	Ɀ, 8	8	8	↑					
ERS					Ɀ						
CHE					Ɀ						
II				ⱿⱿ				Ɀ			
UU				Ɀ			Ɀ	Ɀ			
YE									<		
N.TSE										↑	
S.TSE										Ɀ	

Old Italic alphabets

Marsiliana
Archaic Etruscan
Neo-Etruscan

Oscan
Umbrian
Faliscan

North Picene
South Picene

North Italic alphabets

Venetic
Raetic
Cisalpine Celtic