

# DRAFT

## PROPOSED ALA/LC SYSTEMATIC ROMANIZATION FOR JUDEO-ARABIC

Joan Biella of the Library of Congress and Heidi Lerner of Stanford University have been working for several years to develop a romanization table for Judeo-Arabic. We are proposing a romanization which represents the long vowel *ā* when marked medially or finally with the letter alif (א), and otherwise provides a one-to-one representation of the consonants in the text, including "y" and "w" which sometimes represent long vowels and sometimes consonants. Thus an accurate version of the original text can be reconstructed from the romanized version.

After working with many vocalized and unvocalized Judeo-Arabic texts from various parts of the world, we concluded that we could not recommend, when the short vowels are not represented in the text, a treatment of them which would be useful and reliable across all dialects. Nor could we recommend that catalogers attempt to provide vowels matching those of Standard Arabic, because of the frequent difficulty of matching Judeo-Arabic lexical items to equivalent Standard Arabic forms. Even if we were to provide a complete "normalization" of Judeo-Arabic morphology for all the parts of speech, a kind of artificial "cataloging dialect," neither catalogers nor patrons could be expected to study it in enough depth to make it useful, nor could it agree in all points with any actual dialect.

If the text to be romanized is vocalized with Tiberian Hebrew vowel points, we propose that the full text with vowels be represented in the transcribed fields of the bibliographic record (245, 250, 260, 4XX), and that a 246 "variant title" field be added to such records with the consonantal romanization of the 245<sup>1</sup>a.

When Hebrew words or phrases are embedded in a Judeo-Arabic context, we propose that they be romanized in Judeo-Arabic style--that is, without short vowels and with Judeo-Arabic consonantal values (thus /Hgdh šl Fsh/ not

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/Hagadah shel Pesah/). An independent string of Hebrew words, e.g., in the title proper of a work, may be romanized as Hebrew, but we recommend added a 246 giving the Judeo-Arabic consonantal transcription:

245 10        Sefer V̄a-tagid li-vene Yiśra'el  
246 3        Sfr W-tgyd l-bny Yśr'l

Name authority work presents a problem when specifically Judeo-Arabic names are involved—e.g., the forename /Mqyqş/. We don't know an authoritative source for vocalizations of these. Occasionally found romanizations provide a solution, as for the author Mkikets Chelly. We propose keeping an online list of found romanizations and coding such headings (romanized as seems reasonable) “provisional” until they can be added to the list of authorized forms. Hebrew or Standard Arabic forenames and surnames should be established according to the rules in AACR2 and the LCRIs for those languages, and references in systematic ALA/LC Judeo-Arabic romanization should be provided.

Please address comments on this proposed romanization table to Policy@loc.gov by June 1, 2009.

### Proposed ALA/LC Judeo-Arabic Romanization Table

(Draft, Jan. 14, 2009)

Judeo-Arabic	Roman	Examples
א	initial:	אל /'l/ “the”
	,	אבן /'bn/ “son”

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א	medial or final: ā	ראחא /rāḥā/ “rest” כראג' /krāj/ “tax”
ב, ב	b	בנין /bnyn/ “sons” ארבע /'rb'/ “four”
ג	g	גרק /grq/ “he suffocates” (cf. Standard Arabic /ghariqa/)
ג'	ḡ	ג'ינא / ḡynā/ “we came” (cf. Standard Arabic /jīnā/)
ד	d	דם /dm/ “blood” (cf. Standard Arabic /dam/) דכרת /dkrt/ “she remembered” (cf. Standard Arabic /dhakarāt/)
ד'	ḏ	ד'הב / ḏhb/ “gold”
ה	h	הום /hwm/ “they”
ה'	ḥ	מדינה /mdynḥ/ “city (of)”
ו	initial or medial: w	ואחד /wāḥd/ “one” ארואח /'rwāḥ/ “spirits”

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וּ	medial: w <sup>1</sup>	כוּאכּבּ /kwwākb/ “stars” נבוּא /nbwwā/ “prophecy” לוּרא /l-wwrā/ “after, behind”
ז	z	זוג'תוּ /zwgtw/ “his wife”
ח	ḥ	חייאת /ḥyyāt/ “life” בּחַר /bḥr/ “sea”
ט	ṭ	טול /ṭw/ “length” עטא /'ṭā/ “he gave”
זְ	ẓ	זְהר /ẓhr/ “he appeared”
י	initial, medial, or final: y	יד /yd/ “hand” ביות /bywt/ “house” ידי /ydy/ “my hand”
יֵי	medial or final: yy <sup>1</sup>	אייאם /'yyām/ “days” לייג'יב /l-yyḡyb/ “that he may come” רג'ליי /rḡlyy/ “my (two) feet”

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כ כ, כ, כ, כ	k	כאנת /kānt/ “she was” ד'אלך /dālk/ “that” כבז /kbz/ “bread” (cf. Standard Arabic /khubz/)
ל	l	לייאלי /lyyāly/ “nights”
מ, מ	m	מן /mn/ “from” אסם /'sm/ “name”
נ, נ	n	נפס /nfs/ “soul” בין /byn/ “between”
ס	s	סמע /sm'/ “he heard” ישראל /Ysr'y/ “Israel”
ע	'	עביד /'byd/ “servants”
פ, פ פ', פ'	f	פי /fy/ “in”
צ	ṣ	צנע /ṣn'/ “he did”
צ', צ'	ṣ̄	ארץ' /rṣ̄/ “earth” (cf. Standard Arabic /arḍ/) צ'אלם /ṣ̄ālm/ “wicked” (cf. Standard Arabic /zālim/)
ק	q	קאל /qāl/ “he said” מקדס /mqds/ “holy”

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ר	r	רבי /rby/ “rabbi”
ש, ש	š	שעב / š'b/ “nation” משרק /mšrq/ “east”
ש	ś <sup>2</sup>	ישראל /Yśr'yl/ “Israel”
ת, ת	t	תקול /tqw/ “you say” סבת /sbt/ “Sabbath”
ת	ṭ	מתל /mṭl/ “proverb” (cf. Standard Arabic /mithl/)

Ligature		
ל	initial: 'l	ל /'l/ “the”
	medial: āl	מל /māl/ “property”

### General notes

1. Note use after prefixed preposition.
2. Only in Hebrew loanwords.