Arabic

Letters of the Alphabet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Medial</th>
<th>Final</th>
<th>Alone</th>
<th>Romanization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ل</td>
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<td>ل</td>
<td>omit (see Note 1)</td>
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<td>gh</td>
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<td>غ</td>
<td>ف</td>
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<td>f (see Note 2)</td>
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<td>ء، هـ، ه</td>
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<td>h (see Note 3)</td>
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<td>ي</td>
<td>ى</td>
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<td>ى</td>
<td>y</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Vowels and Diphthongs

| ء | a | ء | á (see Rule 5) | ء | i | ء | ā (see Rule 6(a)) | ء | aw | ء | i | ء | ū | ء | ā | ء | ay |
Letters Representing Non-Arabic Consonants

This list is not exhaustive. It should be noted that a letter in this group may have more than one phonetic value, depending on the country or area where it is used, and that the romanization will vary accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ن</th>
<th>g</th>
<th>ج</th>
<th>ch</th>
<th>ف</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ن</td>
<td>ñ</td>
<td>ج</td>
<td>zh</td>
<td>ق</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ب</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>ز</td>
<td>zh</td>
<td>ف</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

1. For the use of alif to support hamzah, see rule 2. For the romanization of hamzah by the consonantal sign ‘ (alif), see rule 8(a). For other orthographic uses of alif see rules 3-5.

2. The Maghribi variations ﬂ and ﻌ are romanized f and q respectively.

3. ّ in a word in the construct state is romanized t. See rule 7(b).

RULES OF APPLICATION

Arabic Letters Romanized in Different Ways Depending on Their Context

1. As indicated in the table, و and ﻋ may represent:

   (a) The consonants romanized w and y, respectively.

      |        |        |
      | wad'   | وضع |
      | 'iwaḍ  | عوض |
      | dalw   | دلو |
      | yad    | يدل |
      | hiyal  | حيل |
      | tahy   | طهی |

   (b) The long vowels romanized ū, ī, and ā respectively.

      |        |        |
      | úlā     | أولی |
      | šūrah   | صورة |
      | dhū     | ذو |
      | ʾimān   | إيمان |
      | jīl     | جيل |
      | fī      | في |
      | kitāb   | كتاب |
      | saḥāb   | صحاب |
      | jumān   | جمان |
See also rules 11(a) and 11(b)(1-2).

c) The diphthongs romanized *aw* and *ay*, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanized</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>awj</td>
<td>أوج</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nawm</td>
<td>نوم</td>
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<tr>
<td>law</td>
<td>لو</td>
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<tr>
<td>aysar</td>
<td>أيسر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shaykh</td>
<td>شيخ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aynay</td>
<td>عينى</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also rules 11(a)(2) and 11(b)(3).

2. *I* (*alif*), و and ی when used to support ء (*hamzah*) are not represented in romanization. See rule 8(a).

3. *I* (*alif*) when used to support *waṣlah* (ٌ) and *maddah* (٤) is not represented in romanization. See rules 9 and 10.

4. *I* (*alif*) and و when used as orthographic signs without phonetic significance are not represented in romanization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanized</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fa'alū</td>
<td>فعلوا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulā'ika</td>
<td>أولائك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ūqīyah</td>
<td>أوّيقة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also rule 12 and examples cited in rules 23-26.

5. *I* (*alif*) is used to represent the long vowel romanized ā, as indicated in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanized</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fā'īl</td>
<td>فعل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riḍā</td>
<td>رضا</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This *alif*, when medial, is sometimes omitted in Arabic; it is always indicated in romanization. See rule 19.

6. Final ی appears in the following special cases:

(a) As ی (alif *maqṣūrah*) used in place of ٍ to represent the long vowel romanized ā.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanized</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ḥattā</td>
<td>خص</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maḏá</td>
<td>مض</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kubrá</td>
<td>كبير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahyá</td>
<td>يحيى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musammá</td>
<td>مسمى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muṣṭafá</td>
<td>مصطفى</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) As ٰ in nouns and adjectives of the form ین which are derived from defective roots. This ending is romanized ی, not ی, without regard to the presence of ّ (shaddah). See rule 11(b)(2).

Raḍī al-Dīn

Compare the ین form of the same root [without shaddah] al-Raḍī.

(c) As ٰ in the relative adjective (nisbah). The ending, like (b) above, is romanized ی, not ی.

al-Miṣrī

المصري

Compare the مصريه al-Miṣrīyah and see rule 11(b)(1).

7. ُ (tā’ marbūṭah)

(a) When the noun or adjective ending in ُ is indefinite, or is preceded by the definite article, ُ is romanized ُ. The ُ in such positions is often replaced by ُ.

şalāh
al-Risālah al-bahiyyah
mir‘āh
Urjūzah fi al-ṭibb

(b) When the word ending in ُ is in the construct state [muḍāf wa-muḍāf ilayh], ُ is romanized ´.

Wizārat al-Tarbiyāh
Mir‘āt al-zaman

(c) When the word ending in ُ is used adverbially, ُ (vocalized ُ) is romanized tan.

See rule 12(b).

Romanization of Arabic Orthographic Symbols Other than Letters and Vowel Signs

The signs listed below are frequently omitted from unvocalized Arabic writing and printing; their presence or absence must then be inferred. They are represented in romanization according to the following rules:

8. ُ (hamzah)

(a) In initial position, whether at the beginning of a word, following a prefixed preposition or conjunction, or following the definite article, ُ is not represented in romanization.

When medial or final, ُ is romanized as ‘ (alif).

asad
uns
idhā
mas‘alah
mu‘tamar
dā'īm دائم
mala‘a ملأ
khat‘ī’a خطئ

(b) َ، when replaced by the sign ﺔ (waṣlah) and then known as hamzat al-waṣl, is not represented in romanization. See rule 9 below.

9. ﺔ (waṣlah), like initial َ، is not represented in romanization. See also rule 8(b) above.
When the alif which supports waṣlah belongs to the article ﺍَل، the initial vowel of the article is romanized َا. See rule 17(b). In other words, beginning with hamzat al-waṣl, the initial vowel is romanized ِ.

Rihlat Ibn Jubayr رحلة ابن جبر
al-istidrāk الاستدرار
kutub iqṭanat’hā كتب أفقتها
bi-iḥtimām ‘Abd al-Majīd باهتمام عبد الмагيد

10. ﺔ (maddah)
(a) Initial ٰ is romanized َأَ.
ālah آلة
Kulliyat al-Ādāb كلية الآداب
(b) Medial َ، when it represents the phonetic combination ‘َأَ، is so romanized.
ta‘ālīf تأليف
ma‘āthir ماثر
(c) ﺔ is otherwise not represented in romanization.
khulafā’ خلفاء

11. ﺔ (shaddah or tashdīd)
(a) Over َ و: ََ، representing the combination of long vowel plus consonant, is romanized ﻋَوَ.

‘ adūw عدو
qūwah قوة
See also rule 1(b).

(2) ﺔََ، representing the combination of diphthong plus consonant, is romanized ﺣَوَ.
Shawwāl شوال
ṣawwara صور
jaww جو
See also rule 1(c).

(b) Over 

(1) Medial ىّ, representing the combination of long vowel plus consonant, is romanized īy.

al-Miṣriyyah

See also rule 1(b).

(2) Final ىّ is romanized ī. See rules 6(b) and 6(c).

(3) Medial and final ىّ, representing the combination of diphthong plus consonant, is romanized ayy.

See also rule 1(c).

(c) Over other letters, ّ is represented in romanization by doubling the letter or digraph concerned.

12. Tanwîn may take the written form ٌ، ً (ًا)، or ٍ، romanized un, an, and in, respectively. Tanwîn is normally disregarded in romanization, however. It is indicated in the following cases:

(a) When it occurs in indefinite nouns derived from defective roots.

qāḍin
ma‘nān

(b) When it indicates the adverbial use of a noun or adjective.

ṭab‘an
faj‘atan
al-Mushtarik wa’d’an
wa-al-muftariq suq’an

المشترك وضعًا
والمفرق صافًا

Grammatical Structure as It Affects Romanization

13. Final inflections of verbs are retained in romanization, except in pause. represent

man waliya Miṣr
ma‘rifat mā yajibu la-hum
sallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-sallam
al-Lu’lu’ al-maknūn fi ḥukm
al-ikhbār ‘ammā sa-yakūn

المعلومون في حكم
الأخبار عما سيكون

صلى الله عليه وسلم
معرفة ما يجب لهم
14. Final inflections of nouns and adjectives:
(a) Vocalic endings are not represented in romanization, except preceding pronominal
suffixes, and except when the text being romanized is in verse.
أصولها النفسية وطرق تدريسها
usūluhā al-nafsīyah wa-ṭuruq
tadrīsihā
ilá yawminā hādhā
(b) Tanwīn is not represented in romanization, except as specified in rule 12.
(c) ٜ (tā’ marbūtah) is romanized h or t as specified in rule 7.
(d) For the romanization of the relative adjective (nisbaḥ) see rule 6(c).

15. Pronouns, pronominal suffixes, and demonstratives:
(a) Vocalic endings are retained in romanization.
anna wa-anta
hādhihi al-ḥāl
mu’alaffātu hu wa-shurūḥūhā
hādhihi al-ḥāl
(b) At the close of a phrase or sentence, the ending is romanized in its pausal form.
ḥayātuhu wa-‘aṣruh
Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, afkārūh,
āthārūh

16. Prepositions and conjunctions:
(a) Final vowels of separable prepositions and conjunctions are retained in romanization.
anna
annahu
bayna yadayhi
بین يديه
Note the special cases: مما mimmā, ممن mimman.
(b) Inseparable prepositions, conjunctions, and other prefixes are connected with what
follows by a hyphen.
bii-hi
wa-ma’ahu
lā-silkī

17. The definite article:
(a) The romanized form al/is connected with the following word by a hyphen.
al-kitāb al-thānī
al-ittihād
al-aṣl
al-āthār
(b) When الل is initial in the word, and when it follows an inseparable preposition or conjunction, it is always romanized ܐ/ regardless of whether the preceding word, as romanized, ends in a vowel or a consonant.

الآن
Abū al-Wafā’
Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah
bi-al-tamām wa-al-kamāl

Note the exceptional treatment of the preposition ل followed by the article:

الشريني
See also rule 23.

(c) The الل of the article is always romanized ܝ, whether it is followed by a “sun letter” or not, i.e., regardless of whether or not it is assimilated in pronunciation to the initial consonant of the word to which it is attached.

الحروف الأبجدية
Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandi

Orthography of Arabic in Romanization

18. Capitalization:

(a) Rules for the capitalization of English are followed, except that the definite article ܐ is given in lower case in all positions.

(b) Diacritics are used with both upper and lower case letters.

الありが
الألوسي

19. The macron or the acute accent, as appropriate, is used to indicate all long vowels, including those which in Arabic script are written defectively. The macron or the acute accent, as the case may be, is retained over final long vowels which are shortened in pronunciation before hamzat al-waṣl.

إبراهيم ، إبرهيم
دافود ، داوود
ابو الحسن
رؤوس
ذلك
على العين

20. The hyphen is used:

(a) To connect the definite article ܐ/ with the word to which it is attached. See rule 17(a).

(b) Between an inseparable prefix and what follows. See rules 16(b) and 17(b) above.
(c) Between *bin* and the following element in personal names when they are written in Arabic as a single word. See rule 25.

21. The prime (ʹ) is used:
   (a) To separate two letters representing two distinct consonantal sounds, when the combination might otherwise be read as a digraph.
   
   Ād’ham
   akramat’hā
   
   (b) To mark the use of a letter in its final form when it occurs in the middle of a word.
   
   Qal’ah’jī
   Shaykh’zādah

22. As in the case of romanization from other languages, foreign words which occur in an Arabic context and are written in Arabic letters are romanized according to the rules for romanizing Arabic.

   Jārmānūs (not Germanos nor Germanus)
   Lūrd Ghrānfil (not Lord Granville)
   Īsāghūjī (not Isagoge)

For short vowels not indicated in the Arabic, the Arabic vowel nearest to the original pronunciation is supplied.

   Gharsiyā Khayin (not García Jaén)

**Examples of Irregular Arabic Orthography**

23. Note the romanization of اللّه, alone and in combination.

   Allāh
   billāh
   lillāh
   bismillāh
   al-Mustanṣir billāh

24. Note the romanization of the following personal names:

   Tāhā
   Yāsīn
   ‘Amr
   Bahjat

25. بين ابن and ابن are both romanized *ibn* in all positions.

   Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abī al-Rabī’
   Sharḥ Ibn ‘Aqīl ‘alá Alfiyat Ibn Mālik
Exception is made in the case of modern names, typically North African, in which the element بن is pronounced *bin*.

Bin Khiddah

Bin-'Abd Allāh

26. Note the anomalous spelling مائة, romanized *mi'ah*. 