

Hebrew

The United Nations recommended system was approved in 1977 (resolution III/13), based on the official system (1957) proposed by the Academy of the Hebrew Language and used by the Survey of Israel. The table was published as an annex to the resolution¹. The 1977 resolution was the elaboration of an earlier resolution (II/9) adopted in 1972. The system was amended in 2007 (resolution IX/9)² on the basis of a decision by the Academy of the Hebrew Language taken in November, 2006.

The amended system is being applied in Israel to geographical names in maps and on road signs; there is a five-year implementation plan.

Hebrew is written from right to left. The correct romanization of the Hebrew script presumes the presence of fully pointed text, i.e. where all vowels are marked. These marks are usually omitted in everyday writing and print though a method of denoting vowels with certain consonant characters (*ktiv male*) is widely used also in the rendering of geographical names. The romanization is not fully reversible, e.g. *t* and *s* each denote two different consonant characters, and vowels can have more than one way of writing in the Hebrew script.

Romanization

In the romanization table below five consonants have a special final form, which is shown in square brackets in addition to the main character. Superscript numbers refer to the notes at the end.

1 א	'2,9	10 ט	t	19 פ	p
2 ב	b	11 י	y ¹¹	20 פ [ף]	f ³
3 כ	v ³	12 כ [ך]	k	21 צ [ץ]	ts
4 ג (ג) ⁴	g	13 כ [ך ך]	kh ³	22 ק	k
5 ד (ד) ⁴	d	14 ל	l	23 ר	r
6 ה	h ⁷	15 מ [ם]	m	24 שׁ	sh
7 ו	v ¹⁰	16 נ [ן]	n	25 שׂ	s
8 ז	z	17 ס	s	26 ת (ת) ⁴	t
9 ח	h	18 ע	'8,9		

Vowels (א stands for any consonant character)

1 א a	5 א e	9 א i
2 א a	6 א e, é ⁵	10 א i
3 א a, o	7 א e	11 א o
4 א e	8 א e ⁶	12 א o

13 י o
14 א u

15 ו u

Notes

1. The addition of a dot (*dagesh hazak*) within a consonant, except as shown in the list, doubles its value and is represented by doubling the respective Roman letter (with the exception of the digraphs *sh* and *ts*).
2. The sign ' (for the letter א, *alef*) slightly separates two consecutive vowels or a consonant and a vowel; at the beginning and end of a word it is omitted in transliteration.
3. Does not occur at the beginning of a name.
4. At the beginning of a name or of a syllable after *shva nah* these letters carry a dot (*dagesh kal*).
5. In some maps the *tsere* (אָ), if accentuated, is transliterated *é*.
6. The *shva* (אָ) is of two kinds: *shva nah*, which is omitted in transliteration, and *shva na*, which occurs at the beginning of a word or syllable. It is transliterated by *e* only where it is actually sounded. Example: בני ברק *Bne Brak* (not *Bene Berak*), but גאולתם *Ge'ulim*.
7. Final ה, unless vocalized, is omitted in transliteration.
8. The sign ' (for the letter ו, *ayin*) slightly separates two consecutive vowels or a consonant and a vowel; it is not transliterated at the beginning or end of a word.
9. א and ו are transliterated by the same symbol.
10. Serves also as part of two vowels; see table of vowels, 13 and 15.
11. Serves also as part of two vowels; see table of vowels, 7 and 10.
12. According to the previous (1977) version of the official Hebrew romanization system, character 7 (ו) was romanized *w* (= *v* in the present system), character 21 (צ) was romanized *z* (= *ts*) and character 22 (ק) was romanized *q* (= *k*), also a distinction was made between characters 1 (א, romanized ') and 18 (אָ, romanized 'e'). Every *shva na*, whether sounded or not, was romanized by *e*.

References

1. *Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*. Athens, 17 August - 7 September 1977. Vol. I. *Report of the Conference*, pp. 29-30, 32-33.
2. *Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*. New York, 21-30 August 2007. E/CONF.98/136, p. 37.