

Romanisation of Arabic (IFAO-IDEO)

Consonants, glides and long vowels

Consonants, glides and long vowels are romanised with the following letters:

' ā b t t ġ ḥ ḥ d d r z s š š ḍ ṭ z ' ġ f q k l m n h w/ū y/ī

Please do not mix up ġ and Ğ, used for the romanisation of the Arabic *ġīm* with the Turkish ğ and Ğ. Likewise, do not mix up *hamza* ' or 'ayn ' with the apostrophe (' and ').

Initial *hamza* is not transcribed, unlike middle and ending *hamzas*:

akaltu and not 'akaltu; but *su'ila*, *šifā'*.

Dagger *alif* is always transcribed:

Allāh, *hādā*, *hādīhi*, *hā'ulā'i*, Ṭāhā.

Alif maqṣūra is transcribed as ā, and the final *alif* for past verbs in the third masculine plural is not transcribed:

hattā, *adnā*, 'ašā; *daḥalū*, *katabū*.

Tā' marbūṭa is not transcribed, except in two cases where it is rendered by *t*, in annexation and after *alif*:

madrasa; *mamlakat Ḥimyar*; *quḍāt*, *ḥayāt*.

Doubled glides are romanised as *ī* and *ū* in final position and as *īyy* and *ūww* in middle position, as is the case in *nisba*:

'arabī, 'ulū; *šamsī* and not *šamsiyy*; *šamsiyya* and not *šamsiya*.

Short vowels

Short vowels are all transcribed, however, for simplicity's sake, declension markers of strong-root substantives and adjectives are not transcribed (e.g. 'āmil, raḡul). Ending short vowel of regular plurals are not transcribed either ('āmilūn, 'āmilīn).

Tanwīn

If *tanwīn* is carried by *alif* or *alif maqṣūra* it is always transcribed:

ḍarabtu maṭalan ḡamīlan, *ra'aytu fatan šuḡā'an*; *šukran*.

It is also transcribed in adverbial complements ending with a *tā' marbūṭa*:

mufāḡa'atan, *ḥaqīqatan*.

In other cases, *tanwīn* is not transcribed:

anša'a madrasa 'azīma; *ma'a raḡul faqīr*; *walad šaḡīr*.

Waṣla

Waṣla, including that of the article, is always transcribed by the short vowel it carries (*a, u, i*):

Abū al-Faraǧ, *maʿa al-nahr, uḥruǧ, al-istiqbāl, fī al-madīna.*

However, it is not transcribed if it is preceded by a one-consonant particle, *wa-, fa-, li-, bi-, a-, ka-, la-*, etc.:

fa-ltamasū, wa-ḥruǧ, bi-l-madīna.

Suffix pronouns

Suffix pronouns are transcribed without a hyphen:

kitābuhu, innaka, laʿallakum, aʿṭānī.

The Quran, poetry, grammar, dialects, Persian, Urdu...

Authors who wish to adapt this romanisation system, in particular to romanise the Quran, poetry, artistic prose or grammatical examples, should specify the modifications they apply to the rules contained in this document.

For phonetic transcriptions, please use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) between square brackets. As for phonemes, please use the romanisation system above.

/ǧurūb al-šams/ [ɣuru:bəʃʃæms], /fī al-dār/[fidˤdˤɑ:r].

In order to romanise other languages written in Arabic script (Persian, Urdu...) we do not recommend any system in particular. We will consult specialists in the relevant fields.