

ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR HEBREW

BGN/PCGN 1962 AGREEMENT

This system, adopted jointly by the BGN and the PCGN in 1962, is based on the Hebrew Academy System as used by the Survey of Israel over a period of many years and as published in *Transliteration of Geographical Names in the Topographic Maps of Israel* (Cartographic Papers No. 4), Survey of Israel, Tel Aviv, 1969.

The first two tables and notes 1 through 5 provide for the romanization of Hebrew names, and notes 6 and 7 provide for the romanization of non-Hebrew names of two types: commemorative names – most commonly of European origin – and Arabic names written in Hebrew script.

CONSONANT CHARACTERS

	Hebrew	Romanization	Remarks
1.	א	'	<i>See note 1</i>
2.	ב	b	<i>See note 2</i>
3.	בּ	v	
4.	ג גּ	g	<i>See note 2</i>
5.	ד דּ	d	<i>See note 2</i>
6.	ה	h	<i>Not romanized in word-final position unless written with a dot (mappiq), i.e., הּ</i>
7.	ו	w	
8.	ז	z	
9.	ח	<u>h</u>	
10.	ט	t	
11.	י	y	
12.	כּ (final)	k	<i>See note 2</i>
13.	כּ or ךּ (final)	kh	
14.	ל	l	
15.	מּ (final)	m	
16.	נּ (final)	n	
17.	ס	s	
18.	ע	'	
19.	פּ	p	<i>See note 2</i>
20.	פּ ף (final)	f	
21.	צ ץ (final)	<u>z</u>	
22.	ק	q	
23.	ר	r	

	Hebrew	Romanization	Remarks
24.	שׁ	sh	
25.	שׂ	s	
26.	תּ ת	t	<i>See note 2</i>
27.	גּ	(ğ)	These three Hebrew characters and certain other modified characters not included in this system are used on Israeli maps to render Arabic and other non-Hebrew names. Names in which these characters occur should be romanized in accordance with notes 6 and 7.
28.	זּ	(ž)	
29.	צּ	(č)	

VOWEL CHARACTERS

	Hebrew	Romanization	Remarks
1.	אֲ	a	
2.	אָ	a	
3.	אִ אֵ	a, o	<i>Usually a; very rarely o.</i>
4.	אֵ	e	
5.	אֶ	e	
6.	אֵי	e	<i>é when stressed.</i>
7.	אֵי	e	
8.	אִי	<i>e, or not romanized</i>	<i>See note 3</i>
9.	אִי	i	
10.	אֵי	i	
11.	אִי	o	
12.	אִי	o	
13.	אִי	o	
14.	אִי	u	
15.	אִי	u	

NOTES

1. Every medial *alef* (א) bearing a vowel character or *shewa* (:) should be romanized; e.g., גְּלֹאֵן → **Gal'on**, בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע → **Be'ér Sheva'**, נְאֻדָּר → **Ne'dar**. *Alef* should not be romanized when initial or when used as *mater lectionis*; e.g., אֵילָה → **Ela**, סָאסָא → **Sasa**.
2. The dot placed within the body of the consonant characters ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, and ת, when they occur at the beginning of a name or after an unvoiced consonant character in the middle of a name, is known as the “weak” *dagesh*. The addition of the dot forms the consonant characters בּ, כּ, and פּ. The phonetic distinction between ב and בּ, ד and דּ, and ת and תּ has now been lost and these pairs of characters should be romanized identically.

The same dot may also be placed within the body of any consonant character (including the six mentioned above but excluding א, ה, ו, ע, and ר) to indicate the “strong” *dagesh*. This is rendered in romanization by doubling the letter; the digraph **sh** is not doubled. The “strong” *dagesh* can be distinguished from the “weak” *dagesh*, since the former is always preceded by a vowel character; e.g., אֶכּוֹ → **'Akko** but פְּרָכּוֹם → **Karkom**. See note 4.

3. If the vowel character ◌̣ represents *shewa nah* (“quiescent” *shewa*), it marks the end of a closed syllable and should not be romanized. If it represents *shewa na'*, which is a short neutral vowel, it should be romanized by **e**.
4. The definite article ה should be capitalized in romanization and written together with the following word. If the initial Hebrew character of the following word bears the *dagesh*, the corresponding Roman letter should also be capitalized but not doubled; e.g., **HaYogév**. If the initial character is ע (*'ayin*), the Roman-script equivalent of the following Hebrew vowel character should be capitalized; e.g., **Ha'Ogen**. If a name is printed in all uppercase letters, a hyphen should be inserted between the definite article and the following word.
5. “Furtive” *patah* (◌̣), which is written under final *he mappiq* (הּ), *het* (תּ), and *'ayin* (ע), but pronounced before and not after those three consonant characters, should be romanized before the character under which it is written in Hebrew script: רוֹקֵחַ → **Roqeah**.
6. The non-Hebrew elements of commemorative names derived from Roman-alphabet languages should be spelled as in the original; e.g., **Kefar Masaryk** (not **Masariq**), **Balfouriyya** (not **Balfuriyya**), **Kefar Szold** (not **Sold**).
7. Arabic names written in the Hebrew alphabet should be romanized according to the following special rules:
 - a. Hebrew consonant characters should be romanized according to the table above with the following amendments and additions:

1.	א	<i>not romanized</i>
2.	ג	j
3.	ד	dh
4.	ד	ḏ
5.	ה	ḥ
6.	(final) הּ הֵ הֶ	-a

7.	ז	dh
8.	ח	kh
9.	ט	ṭ
10.	ע	gh
11.	צ	ṣ
12.	ת	th

b. Hebrew vowel characters should be romanized as follows:

1.	◌ְ	<i>not romanized</i>
2.	◌ֶ	a (ā before word-final א)
3.	◌ִ	i
4.	◌ֹ	u
5.	◌ֻ	ā
6.	◌ֵ	ī

7.	◌ׁ	ū See note (c).
8.	◌ׂ	ei
9.	◌׃	aiy
10.	◌ׄ	īy
11.	◌ׅ	au

- c. Except for א and א, a consonant character containing a dot should be romanized by doubling the equivalent letter or digraph. The character א should be romanized **ū**, unless a vowel character is shown beneath it, in which case it should be romanized **ww**; e.g., אַרְוֶה → **Huwwāra**.
- d. An unassimilated Arabic article is written אַ or אֵ and should be romanized **el**, not **al**. An assimilated Arabic article is written אֶ or אֵ followed by a dotted consonant character, which should be romanized by writing the equivalent letter or digraph once as part of the article and once again as part of the following word, e.g., אֵסַהֵלָה → **‘Ein es Sahla**.
- e. The character sequences אה, אה, אה, and אה, may be romanized **d·h**, **k·h**, **s·h** and **t·h** in order to differentiate those romanizations from the digraphs **dh**, **kh**, **sh**, and **th**, which are used to render the characters א, א, א, and א.

BGN/PCGN romanization

BGN/PCGN romanization refers to the systems for romanization (transliteration into the Latin script) and Roman-script spelling conventions adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN).

The systems have been approved by the BGN and the PCGN for application to geographic names, but they have also been used for personal names and text in the US and the UK.

Details of all the jointly approved systems are outlined in the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency publication *Romanization Systems and Policies* (2012),^[1] which superseded the BGN 1994 publication *Romanization Systems and Roman-Script Spelling Conventions*.^[2] Romanization systems and spelling conventions for different languages have been gradually introduced over the course of several years. An incomplete list of BGN/PCGN systems and agreements covering the following languages is given below (the date of adoption is given in the parentheses).

Systems

- BGN/PCGN Unified Afghan Agreement (for Pashto and Dari, 2009 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Amharic (1967 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Arabic (1956 system; BGN 1946, PCGN 1956)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Armenian (1981 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Avar (2011 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Azerbaijani Cyrillic script (2002 table of correspondences)—note that the Government of Azerbaijan abandoned the Cyrillic script in 1991 and adopted the Roman alphabet to replace it
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Baluchi (2008 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Bashkir (2007 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Bulgarian (BGN/PCGN 2013 system reflecting the official Bulgarian system^[3])
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Burmese (1970 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Belarusian (1979 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Chechen (2008 table of correspondencies)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Chinese (1979 agreement)—Chinese characters are romanized by BGN/PCGN by means of the Pinyin system
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Chuvash (2011 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Dhivehi (1988 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Dzongkha (2010 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Georgian (2009 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Greek (1962 system; PCGN 1941, later adopted by BGN, jointly revised in 1962)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Hebrew (1962 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Japanese kana (1930 agreement)—Japanese is romanized by BGN/PCGN by means of the modified Hepburn system
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Karachay-Balkar (2008 table of correspondences)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Kazakh (1979 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Khmer (1972 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Kyrgyz (1979 system)
- McCune–Reischauer in North Korea (BGN 1943, with PCGN soon to follow); or Korean in North Korea—Korean is romanized by BGN/PCGN by means of the McCune–Reischauer system
- Revised Romanization of Korean in South Korea (2011 agreement) of Korean in South Korea—Korean is romanized by BGN/PCGN by means of the Revised romanization of Korean
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Lao (1966 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Macedonian (1981 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Moldovan (2002 table of correspondences)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Mongolian (1964 system; PCGN 1957, BGN 1964)

- BGN/PCGN romanization of Nepali (2009 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Ossetian (2009 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Pashto (1968 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Persian (1958 system; BGN 1946, PCGN 1958)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Russian (1947 system; BGN 1944, PCGN 1947)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Serbian (Cyrillic script) (2005 agreement)— Serbian is not romanized by BGN/PCGN; instead, the Roman script that corresponds to the Cyrillic script is used
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Shan (1967 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Modern Syriac (1967 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Tatar (2005 table of correspondences)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Thai (2002 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Turkmen (2000 table of correspondences)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Udmurt (2011 system)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Ukrainian (1965 system)—see Romanization of Ukrainian
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Uzbek (2000 table of correspondences)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Yakut (2012 system)

In addition to the systems above, BGN/PCGN adopted Roman Script Spelling Conventions for languages that use the Roman alphabet but use letters not present in the English alphabet. These conventions exist for the following four languages:

- BGN/PCGN romanization of Faroese (1968 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of German (1986 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Icelandic (1968 agreement)
- BGN/PCGN romanization of Northern Sami^[note 1] (1984 agreement)

Notes

1. The original publication refers to the language as *Northern Lappish*.

References

1. "Romanization Systems and Policies" (<http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/romanization.html>) National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency 14 May 2017. Retrieved 14 May 2017.
2. US Board on Geographic Names (1994). *Romanization Systems and Roman-Script Spelling Conventions* (http://libraries.ucsd.edu/bib/fed/USBGN_romanization.pdf) (PDF). Defense Mapping Agency OCLC 31881487 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/31881487>) Retrieved 8 January 2013.
3. Romanization system for Bulgarian: BGN/PCGN 2013 System (http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/Romanization/Romanization_Bulgarian.pdf) National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency September 2014.

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