

## 5 Transliterating and Transcribing Ancient Texts

---

### 5. Transliterating and Transcribing Ancient Texts

#### 5.1 Hebrew

##### 5.1.1 Academic Style

###### 5.1.1.1 Consonants

###### 5.1.1.2 Vowels

###### 5.1.1.3 Stems (*Binyanim*)

###### 5.1.1.4 Notes

##### 5.1.2 General-Purpose Style

###### 5.1.2.1 Consonants

###### 5.1.2.2 Vowels

###### 5.1.2.3 Stems (*Binyanim*)

###### 5.1.2.4 Notes

#### 5.2 Aramaic

#### 5.3 Greek

#### 5.4 Coptic

#### 5.5 Akkadian

#### 5.6 Egyptian

#### 5.7 Ugaritic

#### 5.8 Other Ancient Languages

#### 5.9 Transcribing Ancient Texts

##### 5.9.1 Symbols

##### 5.9.2 Abbreviations

The project editor will decide in consultation with the author whether Hebrew, Greek, and other ancient languages will be represented in their own alphabets or transliterated into roman script. In general, there is rarely any reason to transliterate Greek in works intended for scholarly readers; for Semitic languages, transliteration may be preferable when it facilitates comparison of cognate forms. This section provides instructions to authors for cases in which transliterations are to be used. For nonroman fonts, see §3.1.1.1.

### 5.1 HEBREW

The author should select a Hebrew transliteration convention that reflects the level of precision necessary for the argumentation and the intended audience. An author may adopt one of two systems: (1) an academic style,

### 5.1.1 Academic Style

which is fully reversible; that is, the system allows the reader to reproduce the Hebrew characters exactly (consonants and vowels); or (2) a general-purpose style, which is essentially phonetic.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.1.1.1 ACADEMIC STYLE

##### 5.1.1.1.1 Consonants

CHARACTER	TRANSLITERATION	CHARACTER	TRANSLITERATION
א	<i>ʾālep</i>	מ, ם	<i>mēm</i>
ב	<i>bēt</i>	נ, ן	<i>nūn</i>
ג	<i>gīmel</i>	ס	<i>sāmek</i>
ד	<i>dālet</i>	ע	<i>ʿayin</i>
ה	<i>hē</i>	פ, ף	<i>pē</i>
ו	<i>wāw</i>	צ, ץ	<i>ṣādē</i>
ז	<i>zayin</i>	ק	<i>qōp</i>
ח	<i>ḥēt</i>	ר	<i>rēš</i>
ט	<i>ṭēt</i>	שׁ	<i>śin</i>
י	<i>yôd</i>	שׂ	<i>šin</i>
כ, ך	<i>kāp</i>	ת	<i>tāw</i>
ל	<i>lāmed</i>		

##### 5.1.1.2 Vowels

CHARACTER	TRANSLITERATION	CHARACTER	TRANSLITERATION
ֿ	<i>pataḥ</i>	ֿ	<i>ḥīreq yôd</i>
ֿ	furtive <i>pataḥ</i>	ֿ	<i>qāmeṣ ḥāṭup</i>
ֿ	<i>qāmeṣ</i>	ֿ	<i>ḥōlem</i>
ֿ	final <i>qāmeṣ hē</i>	ֿ	full <i>ḥōlem</i>
ֿ	3d masc. sg. suf. <i>āyw</i>	ֿ	short <i>qibbūṣ</i>
ֿ	<i>sēgōl</i>	ֿ	long <i>qibbūṣ</i>
ֿ	<i>ṣērē</i>	ֿ	<i>śūreq</i>
ֿ	<i>ṣērē yôd</i>	ֿ	<i>ḥāṭep qāmeṣ</i>
ֿ	<i>sēgōl yôd</i>	ֿ	<i>ḥāṭep pataḥ</i>
ֿ	short <i>ḥīreq</i>	ֿ	<i>ḥāṭep sēgōl</i>
ֿ	long <i>ḥīreq</i>	ֿ	vocal <i>šēwā'</i>

<sup>1</sup>See Werner Weinberg, "Transliteration and Transcription of Hebrew," *HUCA* 40–41 (1969–1970): 1–32; and idem, "On Hebrew Transliteration," *Bib* 56 (1975): 150–52.

## 5.1.1.3 Stems (Binyanim)

BASIC HEBREW STEMS		
<i>qal</i>	<i>pu<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>hitpa<sup>c</sup>el</i>
<i>nip<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>hip<sup>c</sup>il</i>	
<i>pi<sup>c</sup>el</i>	<i>hop<sup>c</sup>al</i>	
BASIC ARAMAIC STEMS		
<i>pe<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>pu<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>hitpe<sup>c</sup>el</i>
<i>pa<sup>c</sup>el</i>	<i>hap<sup>c</sup>el</i>	<i>hitpa<sup>c</sup>al</i>
<i>pe<sup>c</sup>il</i>	<i>hup<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>šap<sup>c</sup>el</i>
OTHER HEBREW AND ARAMAIC STEMS		
<i>ap<sup>c</sup>el</i>	<i>hitpalpel</i>	<i>nitpa<sup>c</sup>el</i>
<i>etpa<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>hitpo<sup>c</sup>lel</i>	<i>pilpel</i>
<i>etpe<sup>c</sup>el</i>	<i>ištap<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>po<sup>c</sup>lel</i>
<i>hištap<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>itpa<sup>c</sup>al</i>	<i>yip<sup>c</sup>il</i>
<i>hitpa<sup>c</sup>lel</i>	<i>itpe<sup>c</sup>el</i>	

## 5.1.1.4 Notes

- (1) The consonants *hê*, *wāw*, and *yôd*, used to indicate long vowels (vowel letters, *matres lectionis*), are transliterated as a circumflex over the vowel (i.e., *â*, *ê*, *î*, *ô*, *û*); they are also taken into account when a transliteration reproduces an unpointed text (extrabiblical inscriptions, Qumran texts, Ketib, etc.) and for the purposes of alphabetization. Regarding a final *hê*, note the fem. sg. poss. ending (*malkāh*, “her king”) and the feminine ending *-â* (*malkâ*, “queen”).  $\eta$  ( *hê* with a *mappiq*) should be written as *-āh*.
- (2) Always transliterate quiescent  $\text{ʔ}alep$  using  $\text{ʔ}$ : e.g., *lō<sup>ʔ</sup>*, “not”; *hū<sup>ʔ</sup>*, “he”; *rō<sup>ʔ</sup>š*, “head”; Aram. *malkā<sup>ʔ</sup>*, “the king.” This rule holds even though the *ō* is placed over the right side of the  $\text{ʔ}$ .
- (3) Transliterate short vowels written fully as *i(w)*, *o(w)*, *u(w)*: e.g., *hu(w)kkā* for  $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ .
- (4) Do not indicate *begadkepat* spirantization (absence of *dāgēš lene*) unless it is important to the discussion. Exceptions may be shown by underlining the consonant: e.g.,  $\eta\eta\eta\eta = yoqlē<sup>ʔ</sup>el$  (see GKC §21).
- (5) Indicate *dāgēš forte* by doubling the consonant. A euphonic *dāgēš* should not be doubled: e.g.,  $\eta\eta\eta\eta = mah-šēmô$  (see GKC §20).
- (6) A silent *šewā<sup>ʔ</sup>* is not transliterated, including when it is the second of two *šewā<sup>ʔ</sup>*s at the end of a word: e.g.,  $\text{ʔ}att$  for  $\eta\eta$ ; *yādalt* for  $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ .
- (7) Do not mark stress, unless it is relevant to a particular point. If stress is relevant, use an acute mark for the primary accent, and a grave mark for secondary accent.
- (8) Do not capitalize transliterated proper names, although every transliteration should be capitalized at the beginning of a sentence.
- (9) Use a hyphen to indicate a *maqqup*.

## 5.1.2 General-Purpose Style

### 5.1.2 GENERAL-PURPOSE STYLE

#### 5.1.2.1 Consonants

א	<i>alef</i>	' or omit	נ, ן	<i>nun</i>	<i>n</i>
ב	<i>bet</i>	<i>b; v</i> (spirant)	ס	<i>samek</i>	<i>s</i>
ג	<i>gimel</i>	<i>g; gh</i> (spirant)	ע	<i>ayin</i>	' or omit
ד	<i>dalet</i>	<i>d; dh</i> (spirant)	פ, ף	<i>pe</i>	<i>p; f</i> (spirant)
ה	<i>he</i>	<i>h</i>	צ, ץ	<i>tsade</i>	<i>ts</i>
ו	<i>vav</i>	<i>v</i> or <i>w</i>	ק	<i>qof</i>	<i>q</i>
ז	<i>zayin</i>	<i>z</i>	ר	<i>resh</i>	<i>r</i>
ח	<i>khet</i>	<i>h</i> or <i>kh</i>	ש	<i>sin</i>	<i>s</i>
ט	<i>tet</i>	<i>t</i>	שׁ	<i>shin</i>	<i>sh</i>
י	<i>yod</i>	<i>y</i>	ת	<i>tav</i>	<i>t; th</i> (spirant)
כ, ך	<i>kaf</i>	<i>k; kh</i> (spirant)			
ל	<i>lamed</i>	<i>l</i>			
מ, ך	<i>mem</i>	<i>m</i>			

#### 5.1.2.2 Vowels

ֿ	<i>patakh</i>	<i>a</i>	ֿ	<i>hireq yod</i>	<i>i</i>
ֿ	furtive <i>patakh</i>	<i>a</i>	ֿ	<i>qamets khatuf</i>	<i>o</i>
ֿ	<i>qamets</i>	<i>a</i>	ֿ	<i>holem</i>	<i>o</i>
ֿֿ	final <i>qamets he</i>	<i>ah</i>	ֿֿ	full <i>holem</i>	<i>o</i>
ֿֿ	<i>segol</i>	<i>e</i>	ֿֿ	short <i>qibbuts</i>	<i>u</i>
ֿֿֿ	<i>tsere</i>	<i>e</i>	ֿֿֿ	long <i>qibbuts</i>	<i>u</i>
ֿֿֿֿ	<i>tsere yod</i>	<i>e</i>	ֿֿֿֿ	<i>shureq</i>	<i>u</i>
ֿֿֿֿֿ	short <i>hireq</i>	<i>i</i>	ֿֿֿֿֿ	<i>khatuf qamets</i>	<i>o</i>
ֿֿֿֿֿֿ	long <i>hireq</i>	<i>i</i>	ֿֿֿֿֿֿ	<i>khatuf patakh</i>	<i>a</i>

#### 5.1.2.3 Stems (Binyanim)

##### BASIC HEBREW STEMS

Qal	Hiphil
Niphal	Hophal
Piel	Hitpael
Pual	

#### 5.1.2.4 Notes

- (1) For the spellings of common Jewish holidays and liturgical terms, see §§4.14.16–17. When spelling Hebrew terms that begin with the definite article (*ha*), capitalize only the first letter of the word; thus, Birkat Hatorah (not Birkat HaTorah or Birkat haTorah).
- (2) Spirant forms (*dagesh lene*) are optional, based upon convention and appearance. (In modern Hebrew, the presence or absence of the

*dagesh lene* generally affects the pronunciation of only *bet*, *kaf*, and *pe* of the *begadkepat* letters.) The main guideline is that any given decision should remain consistent throughout a manuscript.

- (3) Doubled forms (*dagesh forte*) should be doubled in transliteration (e.g., *hinneh*). The two exceptions to this doubling rule are ט (*ts*) and שׁ (*sh*); these two consonants should not be doubled (e.g., מַשָּׁה = *masha'*).

## 5.2 ARAMAIC

The systems described above for Hebrew are to be followed, even though *šêrê* and *hōlem* are frequently not markers of long vowels in Aramaic.

## 5.3 GREEK

Whereas for Hebrew both academic and general-purpose transliteration styles are provided, for Greek only a general-purpose style is provided; for academic readers, Greek should be given in Greek characters. (In books meant for a broad audience, editors may elect to use a Greek font only in notes and parentheses, transliterating Greek words that are necessary in the main text.) Thus no provision is made for transliteration of iota subscript, diaeresis, digamma, accents, etc.: where these matter, use a Greek font. Note however that in transliteration omega and eta should be indicated with a macron. If your font has no macron, see §3.1.1.7.

α	= a	ο	= o
β	= b	π	= p
γ	= g	ρ	= r
γ	= n (before γ, κ, ξ, χ)	ρ̇	= rh
δ	= d	σ, ς	= s
ε	= e	τ	= t
ζ	= z	υ	= y (not in diphthong)
η	= ē	υ	= u (in diphthongs: <i>au, eu, ēu,</i>
θ	= th		<i>ou, ui</i> )
ι	= i	φ	= ph
κ	= k	χ	= ch
λ	= l	ψ	= ps
μ	= m	ω	= ō
ν	= n	´	= h (with vowel or diphthong)
ξ	= x		

**5.4 COPTIC**

Ⲁ	= a	Ⲡ	= p
Ⲃ	= b	Ⲣ	= r
Ⲅ	= g	ⲣ	= s
Ⲇ	= d	Ⲥ	= t
Ⲉ	= e	ⲥ	= u
Ⲋ	= z	Ⲧ	= ph
Ⲍ	= ē	Ⲩ	= kh
Ⲏ	= th	Ⲫ	= ps
Ⲑ	= i	Ⲭ	= ō
Ⲓ	= k	Ⲯ	= š
Ⲕ	= l	Ⲱ	= f
Ⲗ	= m	Ⲳ	= h
Ⲙ	= n	Ⲵ	= j
Ⲛ	= ks	Ⲷ	= ċ
Ⲝ	= o	Ⲹ	= ti

For the Achmimic and Boharic *hay*, use *ḥ*. For the supralinear stroke, use a raised italic *e* (e.g., *<sup>e</sup>mpjoei*)

**5.5. AKKADIAN**

The transliteration of Akkadian should consistently follow either A. L. Oppenheim, et al., eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Insititue of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956– [= CAD]) or W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–1981 [= AHw]), with the following alphabetic representation: *a, b, d, e, g, ḥ, i, y* (*j* in AHw), *k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, š, t, ṭ, u, w, z*. Sumerian logograms should be set in small caps. Determinatives should be set as superscript lowercase letters. The “two” and “three” values of signs should be indicated by subscript “2” and “3” (instead of acute and grave accents). The rules for the Hebrew general-purpose style (§5.1.2) can be applied when transliterating in a nontechnical format (e.g., *misharum* instead of *mīšarum*).

**5.6. EGYPTIAN**

Egyptian transliteration follows either A. Gardiner (*Egyptian Grammar* [3d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957], 26–27) or Rainer Hannig, *Grosses Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.): Die Sprache der Pharaonen* (Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt 64; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1995), xxxvii–xxxviii: *z, i* (*j* in Hannig), *y, ʿ, w, b, f, m, n, r, h, ḥ, ḥ, ḥ, s* (*z, s* in Hannig), *š, ḳ* (*q* in Hannig), *k, g, t, ṭ, d, ḏ*. For current treatment of the Egyptian language, see Antonio Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguis-*

*tic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Han-nig's *Grosses Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch*, which includes an excellent discussion of various systems of Egyptian transliterations (pp. xxxvi–xlii).

## 5.7. UGARITIC

Ugaritic transliteration follows Cyrus H. Gordon (*Ugaritic Textbook* [AnOr 38; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965] = *UT*), 13–15: *a, i, u, b, g, d, ḏ, h, w, z, ḥ, ḫ, ṯ, ṣ, y, k, l, m, n, s, š, ḥ, ḡ, p, ṣ, q, r, š, t, ṭ, A, i*, and *u* indicate not vowels but the variously vocalized consonantal ʾ.

## 5.8 OTHER ANCIENT LANGUAGES

For transliterating other Semitic languages, consult the pertinent grammars and dictionaries.

## 5.9 TRANSCRIBING ANCIENT TEXTS

When citing or discussing ancient texts, the following guidelines should be followed:

### 5.9.1 SYMBOLS

- [ ] in both transliteration and translation, brackets indicate reconstructed text or gaps.
- ( ) in English translations, parentheses are used for additions to improve the sense and for transliterations immediately preceding translated words.
- \* in discussions of grammatical and lexical items, asterisk indicates an unattested form.
- § section markers may be used to cite a natural division of a text (e.g., Code of Hammurabi §10) or a published division (e.g., *ARAB* 2 §808).

### 5.9.2 ABBREVIATIONS

- col(s). column(s); usually cited as roman numerals, uppercase or lowercase, depending on edition
- ep(s). episode(s); section of an inscription or section of a common narrated event extant in more than one inscription
- line(s) always spell out
- no(s). number(s)
- obv. obverse (front) of a tablet
- rec(s). recension(s)
- rev. reverse (back) of a tablet
- r recto (often superscripted)
- v verso (often superscripted)