

## Hebrew

### 1.

#### Origin of the system

The United Nations recommended system was approved in 1977 (resolution III/13), based on the official system (1957) proposed by the Academy for the Hebrew Language and used by the Survey of Israel. The table was published as annex to the resolution<sup>1</sup>. The 1977 resolution was the elaboration of an earlier resolution (II/9) adopted in 1972.

### 2.

#### Implementation

This system is used in Israel and in most international cartographic products. In recent years there have been discussions in Israel on whether to modify the official romanization system but no decision is yet known to have been taken<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.

#### Brief characterization

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 though a method of denoting vowels with certain consonant characters (*ketív malé*) is gaining ground also in the rendering of geographical names. The romanization is not fully reversible, e.g. *t* denotes two different consonant characters and vowels (e.g. *o*) can have more than one way of writing in the Hebrew script.

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<sup>1</sup> *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.

<sup>2</sup> An overview is given by N. Kadmon in *Considerations for and against the revision of a romanization system – the case of Hebrew*. Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. New York, 13-22 January 1998. Document E/CONF.91/L.11.

## 4. Romanization

In the romanization table below five consonants have a special final form which is shown in addition to the main character after a comma.

א	’, - <sup>2</sup>	ז	z	מ, ם	m	ק	q
ב	b	ח	h	נ, ן	n	ר	r
ב	v	ט	t	ס	s	ש	sh
ג (ג) <sup>4</sup>	g	י	y	ע	‘	ש	s
ד (ד) <sup>4</sup>	d	כ, ך	k	פ	p	ת (ת) <sup>4</sup>	t
ה	h <sup>7</sup>	כ <sup>3</sup> , ך ף	kh	פ <sup>3</sup> , ף	f		
ו	w	ל	l	צ, ץ	z		

**Vowels** (• stands for any consonant character)

•	a	••	e	•	i	ו	o
••	a	•••	e, é <sup>5</sup>	י•	i	•	u
•••	a, o	י••	e	••	o	ו	u
••••	e	••••	e <sup>6</sup>	•••	o		

### Notes

1. The addition of a dot (*dagesh hazaq*) within a consonant, except as shown in the list, doubles its value and is represented by doubling the respective letter (with the exception of the digraph *sh*).
2. The sign ’ (Alef) slightly separates between two consecutive vowels or between a consonant and a vowel; at the beginning 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 *sheva nah* these letters carry a dot (*dagesh gal*).
5. In some maps the *zere* (•), if accentuated, is transliterated é.
6. The *sheva* (•) is of two kinds: *sheva nah*, which is omitted in transliteration, and *sheva na’*, which occurs at the beginning of a word or syllable.
7. Final *h* (ה), unless vocalized, is omitted in transliteration.