

Guidelines for IFAO's authors

Romanization of Arabic

□ Consonants, glides and long vowels

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

ʾ ā b t ṭ ġ ḥ ḥ̣ d ḍ r z s š ṣ̌ ḍ ṭ ẓ ʿ ġ f q k l m n h w/ū y/ī

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

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

akaltu and not *ʾakaltu*; but *suʾila*, *šifāʾ*.

Dagger *alif* is always transcribed as the long vowel *ā*:

Allāh, *hādā*, *hādihī*, *hāʾulāʾi*, *Ṭāhā*.

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

ḥattā, *adnā*, *ʿaṣā*; *daḥalū*, *katabū*.

Tāʾ 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 romanized as *ī* and *ū* in final position and as *iyy* and *uww* in middle position, as is the case in *nisba*:

ʿarabī, *ʿulū*; *šamsī* and not *šamsiyy*; *šamsiyya* and not *šamsīya*.

□ 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. *ʿāmil*, *rağul*). Ending short vowels of regular plurals are not transcribed either (*ʿāmilūn*, *ʿāmilīn*).

□ Tanwīn

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

ḍarabtu maṭalan ġamīlan, *raʾaytu fatan šuğāʿan*; *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 'aẓīma; ma'a raḡul faqīr; walad ṣaḡīr.

❑ **Waṣla**

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

Abū al-Faraḡ, ma'a al-nahr, uḡruḡ, 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-ḡruḡ, bi-l-madīna (but *fī al-madīna*).

❑ **Suffix pronouns**

Suffix pronouns are transcribed without a hyphen:

kitābuhu, innaka, la'allakum, a'ṡānī.

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

Authors who wish to adapt this romanization system, in particular to romanize 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 romanization system above.

/ḡurūb al-šams/ [ɣuru:bəʃʔæms], /fī al-dār/[fidˤdˤɑ:r].

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

❑ Capitalization

The upper case letter is used:

- at the beginning of a sentence (but not for truncated quotations);
- after a period or a question mark;
- for God and God's names;
- for any proper noun and elements of a proper noun (except for the article and particles expressing the ancestry or any other form of interpersonal connections): e.g. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Yašbak min Maḥdī, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūšī. However, expressions specifying the meaning of the *nisba* stay in lowercase: e.g. al-Qāhirī mawlidan, al-Tamīmī bi-l-walā'.
- for the names of days, months, the adjectives derived from proper nouns or religions or schools of thought.
- for the word *Allāh* which keeps the capital after a one-letter particle: e.g. *li-Llāh*.
- for all the toponym's elements other than the definite article: e.g. al-Madīna al-Munawwara, al-Baḥr al-Abyaḍ.
- for the institutions names treated, according to the context, either as proper nouns (all the words in capital letter or roman) or as common nouns (in lowercase and italics): e.g. Bayt al-Ḥikma; *dīwān al-inšā'*.

NB: The word *Ibn* appearing in a *nasab* is transcribed “ibn” in lowercase (e.g. 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ), except when it is a family name or a person's common name (e.g. Ibn Ḥaldūn); it is transcribed “b.” when written without *alif* in the enumeration of ascendants. The same thing goes for *Bint* which is transcribed “bt” (without period at its end), except in some rare cases when it appears in the family name or in the common name.

❑ Arabic words quoted in an English text

Plural is rendered by a final “s” in roman, unless the Arabic plural is used:

The *waqfs*; the *awqāf*.

Arabic terms that entered the reference dictionaries (Oxford, Merriam-Webster) should be preferred to their romanized equivalent:

Quran, hadith, Sunni, Sufi, Sufism, sheikh, souk, hammam...

Please avoid to mingle romanized forms with English forms:

sūq al-ḡum'a and not Souk *al-ḡum'a*.

Please avoid as much as possible mixed neologisms formed by a romanized Arabic word and an English ending, as in “Abbāsīd” (prefer “Abbasid”). This rule is particularly true for juridical and doctrinal schools, nouns derived from cities and countries' names, dynasties.