

# ISO

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

## ISO RECOMMENDATION R 843

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSLITERATION  
OF GREEK CHARACTERS INTO LATIN CHARACTERS

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/930330d6-cb21-4c36-983b-2030398fd40/iso-r-843-1968>

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## BRIEF HISTORY

The ISO Recommendation R 843, *International system for the transliteration of Greek characters into Latin characters*, was drawn up by the Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Documentation*, the Secretariat of which is held by the Deutscher Normenausschuss (DNA).

Work on this question by the Technical Committee began in 1952 and led, in 1964, to the adoption of a Draft ISO Recommendation.

The first Draft ISO Recommendation (No. 315) was circulated, in October 1959, to all the ISO Member Bodies for enquiry. As the results of this consultation were not considered satisfactory, the Technical Committee successively put forward a second and a third Draft ISO Recommendation, which were circulated in December 1960 and on 20th March 1964 respectively.

The third Draft ISO Recommendation was approved, subject to a few modifications of an editorial nature, by the following Member Bodies :

Argentina	Hungary	Romania
Brazil	India	Spain
Canada	Israel	Sweden
Chile	Italy	Switzerland
Colombia	Netherlands	U.A.R.
Czechoslovakia	New Zealand	United Kingdom
France	Poland	U.S.A.
Greece	Portugal	

Four Member Bodies opposed the approval of the Draft :

Belgium	Germany
Denmark	Japan

The third Draft ISO Recommendation was then submitted by correspondence to the ISO Council which decided, in October 1968, to accept it as an ISO RECOMMENDATION.

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## INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSLITERATION OF GREEK CHARACTERS INTO LATIN CHARACTERS

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE CONVERSION OF ONE WRITTEN LANGUAGE INTO ANOTHER

One important function of conversion of one written language in the characters of another, particularly in bibliographic, documentation and library work, is to facilitate classifying, in alphabetical order, documents or cards in languages using differing alphabets. Conversion permits also the reproduction of texts written in various alphabets by readily available mechanical devices, such as the typewriter.

The methods of conversion most commonly used are the following :

*Transcription.* The operation of representing the elements of a language, either sounds or signs, however they may be written originally, in any other written system of letters or sound signs.

*Transliteration.* The operation of representing the characters (letters or signs) of one alphabet by those of another, in principle letter by letter. This method of conversion is applied specifically when representing one purely literal alphabet such as Cyrillic by another literal alphabet, such as Roman.

These methods are applicable to conversion from any alphabet to another, resulting in Romanization, Arabization, Cyrillization, etc.

Romanization, for example, is a form of conversion in which letters of the Roman alphabet are made to represent languages using other characteristics or signs.

In conversion, it is important to avoid ambiguity and at the same time to maintain the utmost simplicity and the most direct relationship of each letter or sign to its counterpart.

In transliteration, letter for letter equivalence is ideal, but absolute consistency of application may not be possible. In some cases, diacritical marks or letter groups may be used, but they should be kept to a minimum. In designing any system of transliteration, a particular effort should be made to achieve direct reversibility insofar as this is possible, to facilitate reconstitution of the text in its original form should this be necessary.

Eventual acceptance by a substantial number of users should be kept constantly in mind while developing such a system.

Further, if there is in existence a widely accepted system of conversion, it should be used as the basis for establishing an international Recommendation, unless some other better system appears likely to gain general acceptance.

**TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION  
OF GREEK CHARACTERS INTO LATIN CHARACTERS**

No.	Greek to Latin			No.	Greek to Latin		
1	A	$\alpha$	A, a	13	N	$\nu$	N, n
2	B	$\beta$	B, b	14	$\Xi$	$\xi$	X, x
3	$\Gamma$	$\gamma$	G, g	15	O	o	O, o
4	$\Delta$	$\delta$	D, d	16	$\Pi$	$\pi$	P, p
5	E	$\epsilon$	E, e	17	P	$\rho$	R, r
6	Z	$\zeta$	Z, z	18	$\Sigma$ $\varsigma$	$\sigma$ (final)	S, s
7	H	$\eta$	E, ē	19	T	$\tau$	T, t
8*	$\Theta$	$\theta$	Th, th	20	$\Upsilon$	$\upsilon$	U, u
9	I	$\iota$	I, i	21	$\Phi$	$\phi$	F, f
10	K	$\chi$	K, k	22	X	$\chi$	H, h
11	$\Lambda$	$\lambda$	L, l	23*	$\Psi$	$\psi$	Ps, ps
12	M	$\mu$	M, m	24	$\Omega$	$\omega$	$\bar{O}$ , $\bar{o}$

\* The exceptional combinations  $\tau\chi$  and  $\pi\sigma$  should be separated in transliteration by a dot, thus t.h and p.s.

## 1. SPECIAL SIGNS

- (a) The smooth breathing sign  $\cdot$  is omitted.
- (b) The rough breathing sign  $\cdot$ , represented by  $'$  (apostrophe), should precede the vowel; in diagraphs like  $-ou-$  the apostrophe should precede the first vowel  $'ou$  (not  $o'u$ ). When it occurs over  $\rho$  the rough breathing sign is omitted in transliteration.
- (c) A diaeresis  $\ddot{\cdot}$  in the Greek text is reproduced in transliteration. The various stress accents (acute, grave and circumflex) may also be reproduced as they stand, namely :

acute  $'$   
 grave  $`$   
 circumflex  $\sim$  or  $\hat{\cdot}$

- (d) The  $\iota$  (iota) subscript, even when postliteral adscript in capitalized Greek texts, is always rendered by postliteral  $j$  (respectively  $J$ ) in Latinized transliteration.
- (e) Two special Greek punctuation marks are always rendered in Romanized or Latinized transliteration as follows :

the  $\cdot$  (single point high, alternative to the double  $\colon$ ) by a colon :

the  $;$  (interrogation mark) by the question mark  $?$

*Examples*

(a)	Ἀγαμέμνων	=	Agamémnōn
(b)	Ἡσίοδος	=	Ēsíodos
	Εὐρημα	=	Eurēma
(c)	Κουμέϊκα	=	Kouméika
	Ἠλέκτρα	=	Ēléktra
	Ἀττικὴ	=	Attikē
	Κῦρος	=	Kūros or Kūros
(d)	Μυρτώων πέλαγος	=	Murtōjon pélagos
	ΜΥΡΤΩΙΟΝ ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ	=	MURTOJON PELAGOS
(e)	Ὀνομασία:	=	Onomasía :
	Ὀνομασία	=	Onomasía
	Γιατί ὄχι;	=	Giatí óhi ?

## 2. RETRANSLITERATION IN GREEK

- (a) A word beginning with a vowel (Nos. 1, 5, 7, 9, 15, 20, 24) or a vowel combination (Nos. 1 + 9, 1 + 20, 5 + 9, 5 + 20, 7 + 20, 15 + 9, 15 + 20, 20 + 9) not preceded by a rough breathing sign  $\cdot$  should be retransliterated into Greek with the smooth breathing sign  $\cdot$  placed just before an initial capital and over a small vowel, in vowel combinations over the second Greek vowel (see example (a)).
- (b) In retransliterating, the rough breathing sign  $\cdot$  should be placed just before a capital and over a small letter, in vowel combinations over the second Greek vowel, and should be restored (since omitted in transliteration) over initial  $\rho$  (No. 17) and the second of medial doubled  $\rho$ .
- (c) In retransliterating words beginning with a capital vowel, the accents and the breathing signs should precede it; in words beginning with a vowel combination they should be placed over the second Greek vowel. In both cases, the breathing sign should precede the accent.

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