

TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM FOR GREEK
BGN/PCGN 1962 System

The BGN/PCGN 1962 System for the transliteration of modern Greek is a simplified version of the system originated by the PCGN in 1941 and later adopted also by the BGN. In 1962 the BGN and the PCGN agreed to joint adoption of certain changes in the original system; specifically the omission of special rules for the treatment of Greek geographic names of Albanian, Bulgarian, Italian, Macedonian, and Turkish origin. This had the effect of removing ambiguity in the romanization of many Greek words of foreign origin and of some others merely suspected of being foreign.

The system is based on the pronunciation of modern Greek and is not intended for use in the romanization of classical Greek.

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Greek letter or combination		Name of letter	Transliteration	Example
Α	α	álfa	a	Ἄρτα - Árta
	αι		ai	Ἀθῆναι - Athínai
	αυ		av	Μαυροβούνι - Mavrovóuni
Β	β	víta	v	Βόλος - Vólos
Γ	γ	gámma	g before α, ο, ου, ω, and consonants other than γ, ξ, and χ.	Γαράζον - Garázon
				Γούρα - Góura
				Ἄγκντα - Ágnanda
				Γλυφάδα - Glifádha
			y before αι, ε, ει, η, ι, οι, υ, and υι.	Πηγαί - Piyai Ἁγία - Ayía
	γκ		n before γ, ξ, and χ.	Λόγγος - Lóngos Ἀγκhίαλος - Ankhíalos
			g initially	Γκοριτσά - Goritsá
			ng medially	Λαγκάδα - Langádha
Δ	δ	dhélta	dh	Δάφνη - Dháfni
			d between ν and ρ.	Δένδρα - Dhéndra
Ε	ε	épsilon	e	Ἐρέτρια - Erétria
	ει		i	Πειραιεύς - Piraiévs
	εῖ		eï	Μαρινεῖκα - Marinéika
	ευ		ev	Λευκάς - Levkás
Ζ	ζ	zíta	z	Ζεμενόν - Zemenón
Η	η	íta	i	Ἡράκλειον - Iráklion
	ηυ		iv	(extremely rare)
Θ	θ	thíta	th	Θεσπιαί - Thespiaí
Ι	ι	ióta	i	Ἰρία - Íria (for ióta subscript, see note 4)
Κ	κ	káppa	k	Καλαμάκι - Kalamáki
	γκ		g initially ng medially	Γκοριτσά - Goritsá Λαγκάδα - Langádha

Greek letter or combination	Name of letter	Transliteration	Example
Λ λ	lám bdha	l	Λίμνη - Límni
Μ μ	mi	m	Μαραθών - Marathón
μπ		b initially mb medially	Μπέχρος - Békhros Τέμπη - Témbi
Ν ν	ni	n	Νεστάνη - Nestáni
ντ		d initially nd medially	Ντία - Día Παντάνασσα - Pandánassa
ντζ		ntz	Βιτζέντζος - Vitzéntzos
Ξ ξ	xi	x	Ξάνθη - Xánthi
Ο ο	ómikron	o	Όθος - Óthos
οι		oi	Οίτη - Oíti
ου		ou	Βούναργον - Vounargon
Π π	pi	p	Πάυλος - Pávlos
μπ		b initially mb medially	Μπέχρος - Békhros Τέμπη - Témbi
Ρ ρ	ro	r	Μερόπη - Merópi
Σ σ (finally ς)	sí gma	s	Άσος - Ássos
Τ τ	tav	t	Τίρινς - Tírins
ντ		d initially nd medially	Ντία - Día Παντάνασσα - Pandánassa
Υ υ	ípsilon	i initially and between consonants	Υλίκη - Ilíki
		v after α, ε, and η	Μύλος - Mílos
		u after ο	Λευκάς - Levkás
		i	Μαυροβούνι - Mavrovouni
Φ φ	fi	f	Άγυιά - Ayiá
Χ χ	khi	kh	Φιλοθέη - Filothéi Χαραυγή - Kharavyí

Greek letter or combination	Name of letter	Transliteration	Example
Ψ ψ	psi	ps	Ψαρά - Psará
Ω ω	oméga	o	'Ωρωπός - Oropós

NOTES

1. The apostrophe and reversed apostrophe, one or other of which is written in Greek above all initial vowels (in front of uppercase vowels and above the second vowel in digraphs) are omitted in transliteration, e.g., Ἀθῆναι - Athínai, Ἡράκλειον - Iráklion, Οἰνόφυτα - Oinófitá. These apostrophes must be distinguished from accent marks when they occur together, e.g., Ἄβατον - Ávaton, Ἡλία - Ília, Οἶτη - Oítí. The reversed apostrophe is sometimes found also with ρ, and should likewise be omitted: ῥέμα - réma.
2. Stress is shown in Greek by the use of the tilde or circumflex accent, the acute accent or the grave accent; all will be represented in transliteration by an acute accent, e.g., Ἀθῆναι - Athínai, Ντία - Díá, Ζεμενόν - Zemenón.

If the stressed vowel is written as a digraph in Greek the second vowel of the digraph will carry the accent; in transliteration the acute accent will similarly be placed over the second vowel, e.g., Οἰνούσαι - Oinoúsai, Οἶτη - Oítí, Θεσπιάι - Thespiáí.

Where a syllable containing one of the combinations αυ, ευ, or ηυ carries the stress, this is marked in Greek on the υ; in transliteration it will be shown on the preceding vowel letter, e.g., Πειραιεύς - Piraiévs, Ἀύρα - Ávra.

Where the apostrophe and the accent are written together in front of initial uppercase vowels, the apostrophe will be omitted and the accent shown above the letter in transliteration, e.g., Ἄβατον - Ávaton (see note 1 above).

In rare cases a Greek word will be found written with two accents; the second of these should be omitted in transliteration.

Accents and apostrophes are sometimes omitted in Greek, particularly in words and names printed wholly in uppercase letters; but in transliteration the stress should always be determined and marked with an acute accent.

In abbreviations and monosyllables any accent which may be found written in the Greek should not be shown in transliteration.

3. The dieresis will be shown in transliteration where it occurs in the Greek, e.g., Μαρινέϊκα - Marinéïka, Ἀχαΐα - Akhaíá; and over the second vowel in transliteration of the following Greek vowel combinations: αε, e.g., Ἀετός - Aëtós; αη, e.g., Αἰδών - Aïdhón; οη, e.g., Οἶνός - Oinóï; ωο, e.g., Ἡρώων - Iróön.
4. The letter ι (iota) is sometimes found written under or, in uppercase, to the right of the vowels α, η, and ω. This "iota subscript" should be omitted in transliteration, e.g., Μυρτώων Πέλαγος or ΜΥΡΤΩΙΟΝ ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ - Mirtóön Pélagos.