Kludge Cataloging: Cobbling Together Hebrew Bibliographic Records When You Can't Read Hebrew

Angela Kroeger

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Kludge Cataloging:
Cobbling Together Hebrew Bibliographic Records When You Can't Read Hebrew

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NLA C&U/TSRT Joint Spring Meeting, May 22, 2024, Doane University
Director’s Cut Edition: Includes Slides Not Shown During Lighting Round
Kripke-Veret Collection of the Jewish Federation at the University of Nebraska at Omaha

• 30,000+ volumes
• received in 2020
• mostly in English
• 1,700+ in Hebrew
• 200+ in Yiddish
• 100+ in Aramaic
• a few in German, French, Polish, etc.

From left: Jen Conway (UNO), Shirly Banner (JFO), Sharon Comisar-Langdon (JFO), Bob Goldberg (JFO), Dave Richards (UNO), Angela Kroeger (UNO) and Amy Schindler (UNO)

Cataloging challenges

• Left-to-Right text (English) and Right-to-Left text (Hebrew) in same field or subfield not handled well by any system
  • Inserted text, subfield codes, and leading/trailing spaces may jump around unexpectedly (copy and paste may not put things where you expect)
  • Behaves differently in WorldCat versus my local system (Alma)

• When two title pages are present (English and Hebrew), cataloging rules only require transcription of statement of responsibility and publication information from one, omitting valuable information
  • Consider adding notes with transcribed text from added title page

• Some WorldCat records have Hebrew text without accompanying romanization
  • Must add linked fields with romanized text (or derive CatL:eng record, if appropriate)

• Some WorldCat records have romanized Hebrew without the original script
  • Must add linked fields with Hebrew script
Things I look for in (or add to) a bibliographic record for a bilingual text

- Hebrew script and romanization in linked fields
- Transcription of statement of responsibility from added title page
- MARC 041 and 546 fields for languages
The four sheets of paper I keep close at hand

ALA Hebrew and Yiddish Romanization Table

https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cps0/romanization/hebrew.pdf

Aleph Bet Memory Tricks from ReformJudaism.org

Not available on the open web, but a very similar resource can be found here:

Hebrew Alphabet and System of Transliteration [with Hebrew Cursive]


Hebrew Numerals chart

**ALA Hebrew and Yiddish Romanization Table**

Additional resources necessary “for the purpose of supplying vowels.”

https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/cpsoromanization/hebrew.pdf
ALAN Hebrew and Yiddish Romanization Table

• “The principal dictionary used is ha-Milon he-ḥadash (Jerusalem: Ḳiryat-sefer, 1966-1970) by Avraham Even-Shoshan.”
  • Seven volume set
  • We have this . . . somewhere in the boxes of uncataloged materials

  • 2005 edition of Maher’s work is 64 pages long
  • Probably superseded by Hebraica Cataloging RDA, by Joan Biella, Benjamin Fryser, and Heidi Lerner (2019 edition, 90 pages)
  • Assumes user already knows Hebrew basics
Learning the Aleph-Bet

אברבדהווזחטשיפכברלألمנסעפוּףפייצקרשחת

• *Learn to Read Hebrew for Adults*
  • 10-week online course from the Union for Reform Judaism
  • Focused on teaching the letters, with minimal vocabulary and no grammar
  • By the end of the course, I still couldn’t read Hebrew, but I could reliably identify the consonants in most common fonts and the vowels in vocalized text (but, alas, most Hebrew text is unpointed)

• Flash cards
  • Repetition is the key to learning (and the key to learning is repetition)
  • Repetition is the key to learning (so said my high school chemistry teacher)
  • Repetition is the key to learning (I’m having flashbacks to high school)
Learning the Aleph-Bet

- Memory tricks to help associate the letter with the sound
- Resource from the *Learning to Read Hebrew for Adults* class
- Similar Hebrew alphabet mnemonics are available on the open web
- Similar mnemonics are often available for other non-roman languages

### Aleph Bet Memory Tricks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory Tricks</th>
<th>Name + Sound</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks like an “F” and cancels out the sound</td>
<td>Aleph - silent</td>
<td>א</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet has a ball in the middle; belly button</td>
<td>Bet - b as in boy</td>
<td>ב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vav is vacant; dot vanishes</td>
<td></td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gimel has a gap; has little legs that got</td>
<td>Gimel - g as in good</td>
<td>ד</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a sweet; diving board</td>
<td>Dalet - d as in door</td>
<td>ה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a hinge; oak, half a leg</td>
<td>He - h as in hat</td>
<td>ו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical line</td>
<td>Vav - v as in vest</td>
<td>ז</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zayin and zayin</td>
<td>Zayin - z as in zebras</td>
<td>ח</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like a house or a boat or a chuppah</td>
<td>Chet - ch as in Bach</td>
<td>כ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sits on top</td>
<td>Tsva - c as in tile</td>
<td>ק</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The smallest letter; just like the youngest in the family</td>
<td>Yod - y as in yellow</td>
<td>י</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a cough drop</td>
<td>Kaf - k as in kite</td>
<td>ה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not have a cough drop; needs to clear its throat</td>
<td>Qof - q as in Bach</td>
<td>ל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like an elongated version of chet</td>
<td>Cha - ch as in Bach</td>
<td>מ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long neck, long</td>
<td>Len - l as in lake</td>
<td>נ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a mouth, how on the bottom; looks like a mountain</td>
<td>Mem - m as in mom</td>
<td>פ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like a marshmallow</td>
<td>Mem - m as in mom</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice ‘n neat</td>
<td>Nun - n as in name</td>
<td>נ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like an elongated version of nun</td>
<td>Nuna - n as in name</td>
<td>ס</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular</td>
<td>Samekh - s as in sit</td>
<td>צ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like a y, when you sneeze, you can’t talk</td>
<td>Ayin - silent</td>
<td>ע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pei has a polka dot; has a penny in its pocket</td>
<td>Pei - p as in pot</td>
<td>פ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The penny fell out of the pocket, featureless face</td>
<td>Pei - p as in fish</td>
<td>פ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like an elongated version of pei</td>
<td>Pei - p as in fish</td>
<td>פ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like slices of pizza, twisted like a pretzel</td>
<td>Tzaddi - t as in cats</td>
<td>צ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like an elongated version of tzaddi</td>
<td>Tzaddi - t as in cats</td>
<td>צ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like legs of a dancer about to kick</td>
<td>Kaf - k as in kite</td>
<td>ק</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounded</td>
<td>Resh - r as in road</td>
<td>ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s always right</td>
<td>Shin - sh as in ship</td>
<td>ש</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin is never right (pol dot on left), it’s no sin to be a lofty</td>
<td>Sin - s as in sit</td>
<td>ס</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a tail or a tow</td>
<td>Tsva - c as in sit</td>
<td>ת</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ReformJudaism.org

A Jew's life in You & I life
Hebrew fonts
(sampled from random title pages in our collection)

Typical serif fonts

Stylized, easy to read

Vocalized! (Rare)

Sans serif block letters

Stylized, hard to read
Hebrew cursive

• Some letters unrecognizable compared with printed Hebrew
• The ALA Romanization Table is no help here
• This author in print letters: איילת וולדמן
• This title in print letters: אהבה עוד משימות בלתי אפשריות
Hebrew cursive


• Of limited help, when handwriting can vary so widely

• Must convert cursive to printed Hebrew for the bibliographic record
Hebrew vocabulary freebie: מאת

• A word you’ll see on many title pages: מאת
• Romanized: me-et
• Translated: by
• Usually a reliable indicator of where your MARC 245 $c should begin
Yiddish

- Uses the same letters as Hebrew
- Pronunciation and grammar are more closely related to German
- If you see וון (fun) where the title page layout would lead you to expect מעת (me-et), it’s a good indication that the book is in Yiddish
Typing in Hebrew: The Way I Learned

- Do It In Hebrew [https://doitinhebrew.com/](https://doitinhebrew.com/)
- Offers multiple definitions with corresponding vocalizations
- Easy to type because Hebrew letters are matched with English letters that have the same sound (example: ‘י’ is on the L key)
- Not a standard Hebrew keyboard layout
Typing in Hebrew: Hebrew Keyboard

- Might have been better to learn a standard Hebrew keyboard layout
- Gate2Home Hebrew Keyboard [https://gate2home.com/Hebrew-Keyboard](https://gate2home.com/Hebrew-Keyboard)
- Branah Hebrew Keyboard [https://www.branah.com/hebrew](https://www.branah.com/hebrew)
- Neither offers any help with vocalization
- Both Gate2Home and Branah also have keyboards for many other languages
Hebrew numerals written with Hebrew letters

- Page numbers and volume numbers may be in Hebrew letters (in Aleph-Bet order)
- Neither Hebrew Cataloging (2005) nor Hebrew Cataloging RDA (2019) explain this
- Page number קפט = 189
Hebrew dates

• Google Translate will erroneously tell you that the date shown here is 2015

• Hebrew year 5715 began September 28, 1954, and ended September 16, 1955

• Without month and day to clarify, MARC 264 $c would read [1954 or 1955], with fixed fields DtSt q and Dates 1954, 1955
Hebrew dates

• JewishGen date converter: https://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/m_jyear.htm

• Look up the year on Hebrew Wikipedia https://he.wikipedia.org/

• תשט"ו
  = 5715
  = 1954/1955
Gershayim
(the encoding of which caused me many headaches)

• Symbol commonly used in Hebrew abbreviations, including dates
  • Encoded in wildly different ways in various WorldCat records

• *Hebraica Cataloging* (2005 edition) instructs use of the double quote mark for the gershayim

• *Hebraica Cataloging RDA* (2019 edition) instructs use of the “w” key on the Hebrew keyboard
  • Produces a single geresh, so press twice for gershayim
  • Following these instructions produces something that visually looks like a gershayim, but which computers do not recognize as such
  • I have yet to encounter a record in WorldCat with the gershayim encoded this way
  • Examples copied and pasted from the *Hebraica Cataloging RDA* PDF consistently have the gershayim encoded as a single character ("), so they are not following their own instructions

• Hebrew keyboards I’ve looked at have separate keys for the geresh and gershayim, with the gershayim encoded as a single character
Gershayim
(the encoding of which caused me many headaches)

- So how should the Hebrew year 5715 (1954/1955) be transcribed in the bib record?
  - "תשמ"א (copied and pasted from Hebrew Wikipedia, with gershayim as a single character)
  - "תשמ"א (typed in Do It In Hebrew, using the gershayim key; vertical strokes)
  - "תשמ"א (typed in Gate2Home, using the gershayim key; angled strokes)
  - "תשמ"א (typed in Gate2Home, using the “w” key twice as recommended by Hebraica Cataloging RDA)
  - "תשמ"א (copied and pasted from WorldCat record 1296687556, created by DLC in 2022 using RDA, with gershayim encoded as a single character)
  - " seems to be the winner, but I’ve seen a lot of records with ”
Now the hard part: Figuring out the vowels

- Nakdan (נקדן) vocalizer

- Works best in Chrome

- Second button from the right shows common vocalizations
  ( работник = teḳen milah = fix a word)

- A combination of consonants may represent multiple words with different vocalizations
  (context is important in romanization)
Romanization

- ALA romanization rarely matches the romanization that may appear in Hebrew sources, particularly with names
- Follow the ALA Hebrew and Yiddish Romanization Table because the rules require it, but also . . .
- If alternative romanization of a personal name appears on the piece itself, even if not on the title page, add it to a note field to facilitate keyword searching
- If in doubt whether your romanization is correct, look at Library of Congress records for other books that include the same words, to see how DLC romanized them
Romanization

- Name on both title pages: שמעון בן
- ALA romanization: Shemu‘el Katz
- Different people with different authorized forms, neither matching ALA romanization

Authorized name: Katz, Shmuel, 1914-2008

Authorized name: Katz, Shemuel, 1926-2010
Scavenging WorldCat one word at a time
(I should be ashamed of this, but sometimes ya gotta get stuff done by hook or by crook)

• Step 1: Type the word or name using the online Hebrew keyboard of your choice

• Step 2: Copy and paste that word or name into a WorldCat search with the following other search parameters:
  • Source: DLC
  • Apply Language of Cataloging Limiter: English (& box checked)
  • Years: 2011-2024
    • Note: 2011 is the date of the current ALA Hebrew and Yiddish Romanization Table

• Step 3: Look through the search results record by record to see how the word or name is romanized (ideally finding multiple examples with the same romanization)
To prepare for BIBFRAME implementation at the Library of Congress in spring 2025 as part of the LCAP (Library Collections Access Platform) FOLIO implementation, the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA) will be adopting best practices for non-Latin script input for bibliographic descriptions. These best practices will place a greater emphasis on original scripts, and less emphasis on romanization of original script. The best practices will be introduced in a phased approach and will develop over time into official Library of Congress policies for non-Latin script input for bibliographic descriptions.

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“These best practices will place a greater emphasis on original scripts, and less emphasis on romanization of original script.” (Coming spring 2025.)
Other miscellaneous resources

• Google Translate https://translate.google.com/
  • I don’t use these translations in the bib record, but just as an aid to help determine the subject of the book

• Hebrew Date Converter https://www.shiva.com/learning-center/resources/date-conversion
  • Goes both ways from Gregorian to Hebrew and Hebrew to Gregorian
  • Helpful when you’ve got a month and day along with the year

• Converting between Hebrew Print and Cursive https://stevemorse.org/hebrew/printcurs.html
  • Includes both Ashkenazi Cursive and Sephardic Cursive

• Association of Jewish Libraries, Research Libraries, Archives, and Special Collections Division (AJL RAS) Cataloging Community Wiki http://rascat.pbworks.com/w/page/7836007/Home
  • Links to many resources for Hebraica Cataloging
Thank you!

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Metadata Coordinator
Archives and Special Collections
UNO Libraries | Criss Library 107
University of Nebraska at Omaha | unomaha.edu
402.554.4159
akroeger@unomaha.edu
They | Them | Their
References
(title pages used as examples, in order of first appearance; see WorldCat for full citations)

Sefer Yonah / Ya’akov Shteinhart
Book of Jonah / Jacob Steinhardt

1953
OCLC #49191658
UNO call number: Rare OS 223.3 J690

Used as example for:
Hebrew fonts: Typical serif fonts
Hebrew vocabulary freebie: מאת

Devarim le-zikro shel Ze’ev Tishbi
[Memorials to Ze’ev Tishby]

1954
OCLC #1428794995
UNO call number: Rare OS 740.92 T523z

Used as example for:
Hebrew fonts: Typical serif fonts
Hebrew dates (תשמ’ו)

Pesalim / Ya’akov Luts’i’anski
Sculptures / J. Loutchansky

1957
OCLC #54612383
UNO call number: Rare OS 735.92 L936

Used as example for:
Hebrew fonts: Typical serif fonts

Ze’ev Tishbi: shishah ‘asr rishume yeladim

1954
OCLC #1428794995
UNO call number: Rare OS 740.92 T523z

Not shown in the presentation, but this the portfolio to which the above booklet is a supplement, sharing the same bibliographic record
References
(title pages used as examples, in order of first appearance; see WorldCat for full citations)

Megilat Rut / David Davidovitch
Book of Ruth / David Davidovitch

1977
OCLC #25657079
UNO call number: Rare OS 224.42 D280b

Used as example for:
Hebrew fonts: Stylized, easy to read

Seder hagadah shel Pesah / Asher Forst
Haggada of Passover / Siegmund Forst

1941
OCLC #1432310502
UNO call number: Rare OS 262.5 R262hf

Used as example for:
Hebrew fonts: Vocalized! (Rare)
Hebrew vocabulary freebie: מאות
References
(title pages used as examples, in order of first appearance; see WorldCat for full citations)

יום האש / שמואל כץ
Yom ha-esh / Shemu’el Kats
1966
OCLC #19146653
UNO call number: Rare ISC 950.1 K159y
Used as example for:
Romanization
Katz, Shmuel, 1914-2008

ציורים ורישומים / שמואל כץ
Paintings and drawings / Shemuel Katz
1967
OCLC #16314179
UNO call number: Rare OS 755.92 K160p
Used as example for:
Romanization
Katz, Shmuel, 1926-2010

אהבה עוד משימוט בלתי אפשיאיות / איילת ולדמן
Ahavah ye-‘od mešimot bilti efshariyot / Ayelet Waldman
2007
OCLC #137301254
UNO call number: Rare HF Wald
Used as example for:
Hebrew cursive

ッツברוקהנה גראטס / מ. אוליגין
Tsebrokhene graṭes / M. Olgin
1937
OCLC #7412297
UNO call number: Rare 947 OL2t
Used as example for:
Yiddish

цитורים וירישומים / שמואל כץ
Tsiyurim ye-reshumim / Shemu’el Katz
1937
OCLC #7412297
UNO call number: Rare 947 OL2t
Used as example for:
Yiddish

ענבראטיבת גראותש / מ. אליגין
Tsebrokhene graṭes / M. Olgin