

ROMANIZATION OF NUMBERS IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

Numbers in the Arabic language are always a problem when it comes to romanization. The Arabic language cataloger has to worry about whether the number is single or compound, and what gender it should take. The following guidelines are a summary of the Arabic grammatical rules as they apply to the spelled-out form of the numbers in the Arabic language:¹

RULE 1:

The gender of the numbers 1 & 2 whether single or compound should agree with the gender of the counted noun. Example:

Single Number

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|----|
| 1. Kitāb wāhid | كتاب ١ | ٠١ |
| 2. Ithnān min al-kutub | ٢ من الكتب | ٠٢ |
| 3. Sūrah wāhidah | صورة ١ | ٠٣ |
| 4. Ithnatān min al-ṣuwar | ٢ من الصور | ٠٤ |

Compound Number

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|----|
| 1. Aḥad ‘ashar kitāb | ١١ كتاب | ٠١ |
| 2. Ithnā ‘ashar kitāb | ١٢ كتاب | ٠٢ |
| 3. Ihdā ‘ashrat sūrah | ١١ صورة | ٠٣ |
| 4. Ithnatā ‘ashrat sūrah | ١٢ صورة | ٠٤ |

RULE 2:

The gender of the numbers 3-9 whether single or compound should contrast with the gender of the counted noun. Example:

Single Number

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|----|
| 1. Thalāthat kutub | ٣ كتب | ٠١ |
| 2. Khams ṣuwar | ٥ صور | ٠٢ |

Compound Number

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|----|
| 1. Arba‘at ‘ashar kitāb | ١٤ كتاب | ٠١ |
| 2. Sab‘ ‘ashrat sūrah | ١٧ صورة | ٠٢ |

¹All numbers used in these examples are romanized in the nominative case.