

# Syriac / ܣܘܪܝܝܬܐ Sūryâyā

romanization: BGN/PCGN 2011 with KNAB extensions

## I. Consonant characters

1	ܐ	’,ā,ē	9	ܦ	t	17	ܦ	p <sup>A</sup>
2	ܒ	b <sup>A</sup>	10	ܘ	y,ī	18	ܨ	š
3	ܓ	g <sup>A</sup>	11	ܟ	k <sup>A</sup>	19	ܩ	q
4	ܕ	d <sup>A</sup>	12	ܠ	l	20	ܪ	r
5	ܗ	h	13	ܡ	m	21	ܫ	sh
6	ܘܘܐ	w,ū	14	ܢ	n	22	ܬ	t <sup>A</sup>
7	ܙ	z	15	ܣ	s			
8	ܚ	ḥ	16	ܥ	‘			

<sup>A</sup> “Soft” variants of these characters: ܘܘܐ v, ܓܗ gh, ܕܗ dh, ܟܗ kh, ܦܦ (ܦ) f, ܬܬ th.

## II. Vowel characters (ܐ stands for any consonant character)

	W	E		4	ܐܝ	ê	8	ܐܘ	o
1	ܐܘܐ	ܐܘܐ	a	5	ܐܝܐ	é	9	ܐܘܐ	u
2	ܐܘܐ	ܐܘܐ	â	6	ܐܘܐ	i	10	ܐܘܐ	ū
3	ܐܘܐ	ܐܘܐ	e	7	ܐܘܐ	ī			

## Notes

- Syriac script is represented by three styles: Classical or Estrangelô (ܐܘܪܝܝܬܐ *estrangelâ*) and two newer styles, Serto or Western (ܣܘܪܝܝܬܐ *serṭâ* or ܦܫܝܬܐ *pshîṭâ*) and Eastern Syriac (ܡܕܢܗܝܝܬܐ *madhnḥâyâ* or ܣܘܪܝܝܬܐ *swâdhâyâ*). Table I gives the consonants in Estrangelô, Table II gives the vowels in Western and Eastern varieties, as in Estrangelô vowel points are rarely used. For a comparative table of consonants in three styles see a table at the end.
- Syriac script is used to write Aramaic, Classical Syriac and its modern descendant, Modern Syriac (more precisely Assyrian and Chaldean Neo-Aramaic).
- The script runs from right to left. Some characters have several shapes depending on the position in a word (initial, final, independent). Table I shows some characters combined with the same character (e.g. No. 11 *kk*), to indicate the different shapes.
- Vowels are usually marked by *matres lectiones* (ܐܘܐ *lālapl*, ܐܘܐ *lyōdl*, ܐܘܐ *lwāwl*) or by dots under or above the character (in Serto also by special signs); vowel points are often omitted. (The romanization of vowels in the table is adapted from ALA-LC, not BGN/PCGN.) Examples of vowel points: Western ܐܘܐ → *īda*, ܐܘܐ → *iyâlā*, ܐܘܐ → *kul*, ܐܘܐ → *meṭul*, ܐܘܐ → *hâlén*, ܐܘܐ → *bét*, Eastern ܐܘܐ → *aprém*.
- The character ܐܘܐ (*ālap*) has a number of functions:
  - it appears word-initially to denote a vowel, or a long *ī* or *ū*, if followed by *yōd* or *wāw*; romanized by ' (ܐܘܐܘܐ → 'izg "*adē*) if followed by *ī*, *o*, *ū*;
  - it appears word-medially to denote a historical glottal stop, romanized by ' (ܐܘܐܘܐ → *mi'mrā*), or a long vowel *ā* or *ē* (ܐܘܐܘܐ → 'Īsrāyel);
  - it appears word-finally to denote a long *ā* or *ē* (ܐܘܐܘܐ → *Sūryā*).

6. Part of Syriac consonants may be divided into “hard” (ܩܘܫܝܐ *qūshayā*) and “soft” or fricative (ܪܘܟܟܝܐ *rūkakhā*) consonants; the first group is marked by a dot above, the second – by a subdot: ܒ b, ܓ g, ܕ d, ܟ k, ܦ p, ܬ t; ܘ v, ܓܗ gh, ܕܗ dh, ܟܗ kh, ܦܦ f, ܬܬ th. In the second group, the BGN/PCGN system distinguishes only *th*. In international romanization the characters are marked by an underline. These signs are often omitted, esp. when vowel points are added.
7. In foreign words of Eastern Syriac the following characters with a tilde (ܡܝܟܠܝܢܐ *majliyanā*) are used: ܕܝܝ [dʒ], ܟܝܝ [tʃ], ܝܝܝ [ʒ], ܝܝܝܝ [ʒʰ].
8. In some words the diaeresis (*seyame*) denotes a plural stem: ܡܠܟܝܝܢܐ → *mʹalkē*.
9. A line above denotes that the character is not pronounced: ܠܘܘܝܐ → *hʹwāyā*, ܬܐܝܝܐ → *ʹatā*.
10. The consonants are not doubled: ܩܩܩܩ → *qaṭel*, ܙܙܙܙ → *zadīqā*.

### Comparative table of Syriac styles

Estrangelo	Western	Eastern	
ܐ	ܐ	ܐ	,ā,ē
ܒ	ܒ	ܒ	b
ܓ	ܓ	ܓ	g
ܕ	ܕ	ܕ	d
ܗ	ܗ	ܗ	h
ܘ	ܘ	ܘ	w,ū
ܙ	ܙ	ܙ	z
ܠ	ܠ	ܠ	ḥ
ܦ	ܦ	ܦ	ṭ
ܩ	ܩ	ܩ	y,ī
ܟ	ܟ	ܟ	k
ܠ	ܠ	ܠ	l
ܡ	ܡ	ܡ	m
ܢ	ܢ	ܢ	n
ܣ	ܣ	ܣ	s
ܥ	ܥ	ܥ	,
ܦ	ܦ	ܦ	p
ܩ	ܩ	ܩ	ṣ
ܩ	ܩ	ܩ	q
ܩ	ܩ	ܩ	r
ܩ	ܩ	ܩ	sh
ܩ	ܩ	ܩ	t

### Sources

1. *Romanization system for Modern Syriac script*. BGN/PCGN, <http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/romanization.html>, 2012-10-04.
2. *Syriac*. — ALA-LC Romanization Tables, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/roman.html>, 2012-10-04.
3. *Syriac alphabet*. — Wikipedia, [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), 2012-10-04.