ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR MODERN SYRIAC SCRIPT

The modern Syriac script is used today by Assyrian writers of the neo-Aramaic language. This Romanization System may be applied to any toponyms written in this script as may be encountered in parts of northern Iraq, Syria, northern Iran and eastern Turkey. The Neo-Aramaic language has a degree of locally official status within Iraq, and accordingly some bilingual Arabic and modern Syriac signage may be encountered.

The script is closely aligned to that of both Hebrew and Arabic, and, as these, is written from right to left. In this Romanization System, "strong" consonants have been marked with a sub-dot so as not to give a closer visual relation to either Arabic (which marks such consonants with a cedilla) or Hebrew (which marks these with an underbar). The equivalences where they exist in the Arabic and Hebrew scripts have also been shown only for a guide to the cognate root.

Letters connect to the following letter (to the left) except those marked with [†].

Table 1: Modern Syriac Alphabet

Serial	Syriac script	Letter name	Syriac Unicode value	Proposed Romanization	Arabic script equivalent	Hebrew-script equivalent
1	ܐ[†]	Ālap	0710	', ā, ē[Note 1]	ا	א
2	ܒ	Bēt	0712	b	ب	ב
3	ܓ	Gāmal	0713	g	ج	ג
4	ܕ[†]	Dālat	0715	d	د	ד
5	ܗ[†]	Hēt	0717	h	ه	ה
6	ܘ[†]	Wāw	0718	w, ū	و	ו
7	ܙ[†]	Zayn	0719	z	ز	ז
8	ܚ	Ḥēt	071A	ḥ	ح	ח
9	ܛ	Ṭēt	071B	ṭ	ط	ט
10	ܝ	Yōd	071D	y, ī	ي	י

Serial	Syriac script	Letter name	Syriac Unicode value	Proposed Romanization	Arabic script equivalent	Hebrew-script equivalent
11	ܟ [1]	Kāp	071F	k	ك	כ
12	ܠ	Lāmad	0720	l	ل	ל
13	ܡ [1]	Mīm	0721	m	م	מ
14	ܢ [1]	Nūn	0722	n	ن	נ
15	ܣ / ܤ (when final)	Semkat	0723, 0724	s		ס
16	ܥ	ʽĒ	0725	ʽ	ع	ע
17	ܦ	Pē	0726	p	ف	פ
18	ܨ [†]	Ṣādē	0728	ṣ	ص	צ
19	ܩ	Qōp	0729	q	ق	ק
20	ܪ [†]	Rēsh	072A	r	ر	ר
21	ܫ	Shīn	072B	sh	ش, س	ש
22	ܬ [†]	Taw	072C	t, th[Note 2]	ت, ث	ת

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[1] This is the form in independent or word-final position. The form initially and medially differs but this is not included in a standalone form in the Unicode Standard. The initial/medial form will however be automatically generated in using the letter's Unicode encoding initially or medially in a word. To illustrate the different forms, using the Unicode encoding twice gives: ܟܟ (071F); ܡܡ (0721); and ܢܢ (0722)

Table 2: Vowel pointing marks

Vowels are represented either by the "matres lectionis" ("mothers of reading") ālap (ܐ), yōd (ܝ) and wāw (ܘ), that function both as consonants and vowels, or by pointing marks appearing above or below other letters. The pointing marks are, however, frequently omitted.

Syriac script	Syriac Unicode value	Proposed Romanization
ܲ	0732	a
ܳ	0733	o
ܴ	0734	u
ܵ	0735	ā
ܸ	0738	i
ܹ	0739	ē
ܼ	073C	ī

Notes

1. Ālap (ܐ) has a number of functions in modern Syriac script:
   - It appears word-initially to denote a vowel, and is sometimes followed by yōd or wāw to denote 'ī' or 'ū' respectively.
   - It appears word-medially to denote what historically was a glottal stop. It is understood that this does not now function as a "stop" in speech, though the Ālap still appears in the written form. This is romanized '.
   - It appears word-medially to denote a long vowel ā or ē.
   - It appears word-finally to denote the long vowel ā or ē.

   Given the ambiguity in its function, it is recommended that a reference source be consulted for further guidance as to the appropriate romanization.

2. Taw should be romanized 't' when unaspirated, and 'th' when aspirated. A reference source should be consulted for further guidance as to the appropriate romanization.

3. Numerals in modern Syriac script are represented by letters of the alphabet: Ālap, Bēt, Gāmal = 1, 2, 3 etc.; Yōd = 10, Kāp = 20, Lāmad = 30 etc.; Qōp = 100, Rēsh = 200, Shīn = 300 and finally Taw = 400. Unlike Arabic, composite numerals are written from right-to-left, so for instance 12 is written ܝܒ (10+2). Given the limited number of single-character numerals, other numbers are naturally quite elaborately composed: for instance, 999 may be written as (90×10)+90+9 or as 400+400+100+90+9. Arabic numerals are also used.