



The New Syriac Primer: An Introduction to The Syriac Language (Gorgias Handbooks)

By George Anton Kiraz

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A truly useful introduction to the Syriac language is a rare find. Honed by years of personal experience with the language, George Kiraz's introduction to the ancient language of the Christian church speaks with clarity and authority. This fruitful integration of scholarly introduction and practical application provides a primer that is more than a simple grammar or syntactic introduction to the language. Written in a style designed for beginners, Kiraz avoids technical language and strives for a reader-friendly inductive approach. The letters are introduced a few at a time and are reviewed in a way that reinforces their identity. Students are next introduced to the concepts of gender, number, and tense as well as how they appear in Syriac. The often troubling prefixes and suffixes of the language are lucidly explained, and readings from actual Syriac texts allow the student to experience the language first hand. Various genres and literary forms are introduced in this section. Bonus words are added at each stage to build an effective vocabulary as the reader works through the lessons. Next the grammar proper is introduced with the phonology and parts of speech of the language. Both Estrangelo and the East Syriac scripts are presented in a separate chapter, in order to avoid confusion. Unlike most grammars, the primer includes a practical chapter on how to use Syriac dictionaries, read manuscripts, and type Syriac on the computer using Meltho. A section on reading Garshuni, Syriac written in Arabic script, rounds out the main text. Appendices of the verbal paradigms make this very practical introduction a must-have for any beginner in Syriac. Glossaries of grammatical terms and Syriac-English comparisons make this book ideal for a textbook in beginning Syriac. The book comes with downloadable material so that readers may listen to all reading sentences and text passages in the book.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

George A. Kiraz is the founder and director of Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute, and the president of Gorgias Press. He earned an MSt in Syriac Studies from Oxford University, and an MPhil and PhD from Cambridge University. He has an extensive list of publications in Syriac studies.

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