



Starting to write in Syriac

The following tutorial is a short guide to help you start writing in Syriac. The guide assumes that you have no installed Syriac fonts on your computer or that those fonts you have are not usable under Mac OS X. This guide also assumes that the main language of writing for you would not be Syriac.

What you need to know before you start

Mac OS X does not support the Syriac script, Syriac fonts or writing in Syriac. The only application on Mac OS X that fully supports Syriac is Mellel and this support is given independent of Mac OS X. This means that if you have Mellel you have your main working tool ready for work, but you'll need to get your materials—fonts and keyboard layout—by yourself.

Step 1: Getting the right fonts

To enable you to write in Syriac under Mac OS X, Mellel supports a font technology called OpenType. This means that in order to work with Mellel correctly in Syriac you'll need to get some OpenType fonts.

RedleX site offers a list of sources where you can get such fonts here: <http://www.redlers.com/downloadfont.html>.

The best known source for such fonts is the BethMardutho site which offers several Syriac OpenType fonts that work well with Mellel. You may download those fonts from here: <http://www.bethmardutho.org/support/meltho/download/>.

After downloading those fonts, you should install them into your system using the regular install methods.

*Important **note**: If you read information about the Meltho fonts (and other OpenType fonts for that matter) you may encounter information that suggests that the fonts are meant to be used with Windows or will not work with Mac OS X. You should ignore such warnings.*



Step 2: Getting the keyboard layout

To properly use Syriac with Mellel, you'll need to download and install a keyboard layout that will enable you to enter text using your fonts. To do that, download a Syriac keyboard layout from this page on our site: <http://www.redlers.com/downloadkeyboard.html> or directly from: <http://www.aramaicnt.org/HTML/ARTICLES/AramaicKeyboards.html>.

Again, after downloading the keyboard layout, install it to your system using the regular installation procedure (usually, dragging the keyboard layout to Library/Keyboard Layout/ on your system and logging out and in again).



Step 3: Setting Mellel for writing in Syriac

After installing the fonts and the keyboard layout, you're almost ready to enter Syriac in Mellel.

- 1 Activate the Syriac keyboard layout in your system. If you do not know how to activate this keyboard layout, refer to the [Switching Languages guide](#).
- 2 Launch Mellel. If you're a new to Mellel, the palettes will probably be lined up something like the following:



Figure 1: Default setup of the palettes

- 2 Click in the text area in the document and then press the title of the Secondary Font palette. The palette will open and display the Secondary Font options.
- 3 Press the Script pop-up button and select Arabic from the list.
- 4 The font Arial will be selected (it doesn't matter if another font is selected because you're going to change this anyhow). Press the Font pop-up menu and select a Syriac font from the font list. The Secondary Font palette should look something like the following:

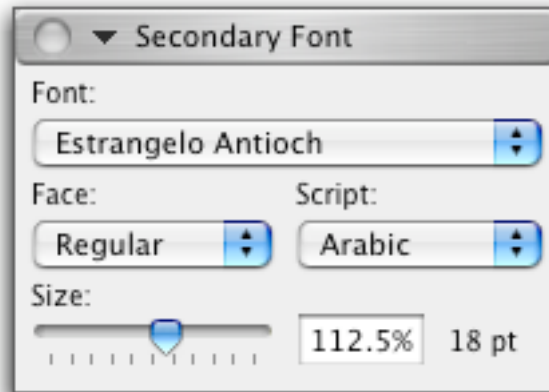


Figure 2: The Secondary font palette

- 5 Choose *Character > Save changes to "Regular"*. Now, you're all set and the adjustment you've created for writing in Syriac are saved and will be automatically ready for use when you run Mellel from now on.

Important note: with step 5, we've been "cheating." There's much more to learn about working with character styles. You may learn more about this by reading the chapters about styles in [Mellel's guide](#).



Step 4: Starting to write in Syriac

Now that you've prepared all the "groundwork" for writing in Syriac, it's time to start writing.

- 1 Launch Mellel. A new document will open using "Regular" as its default style. You can click the Secondary Font palette header to open it and see that it is indeed using the Syriac font you've selected earlier.
- 2 From the input Menu, select Open International and activate the Syriac keyboard layout you've installed earlier. If you do not know how to activate this keyboard layout, refer to the [Switching Languages guide](#).
- 3 **Optional:** If you prefer to work with the Keyboard Viewer, activate it too. It will change the characters ready for input depending on the keyboard currently used.
- 4 **Optional:** If you want to write a paragraph in Syriac from right to left, press the Paragraph direction button (in Mellel's toolbar) to change the text writing direction.