

The Mari Cyrillic Alphabet

Community of Practice in Uralic Studies (COPIUS), www.copius.eu

Introduction to Mari

Jeremy Bradley, jeremy.moss.bradley@univie.ac.at

Last updated 30 November 2021



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Consonants

| | | Bilabial | Labiodental | Alveolar | Postalveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|--------|
| Stop | Voiceless | p <п> | | t <т> | | | k <к> |
| | Voiced | b <б> | | d <д> | | | g <г> |
| Fricative | Voiceless | | f <ф> | s <с> | š <ш> | | |
| | Voiced | β <в> | v <в> | z <з> | ž <ж> | | χ <х> |
| Affricate | | | | c <ц> | | č <ч> | |
| Nasal | | m <м> | | n <н> | | ń <нь, ...> | ŋ <нг> |
| Lateral | | | | l <л> | | l' <ль, ...> | |
| Trill | | | | r <р> | | | |
| Approximant | | | | | | j <й, ...> | |

Vowels

| | Front | | Central | | Back | |
|-------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|
| | Unrounded | Rounded | Unrounded | Rounded | Unrounded | Rounded |
| Close | i <и> | ü <ÿ> | | | | u <у, ю> |
| Mid | e <е, э> | ö <ö> | ê <ы> | | | o <о> |
| Open | | | | | a <а, я> | |

Vowel signs - Russian

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| “Hard”: | а /a/ | у /u/ | э /e/ | ы /ɨ/ | о /o/ |
| “Soft”: | я /ja/ (~ /ja/) | ю /ju/ (~ /ju/) | е /je/ (~ /je/) | и /i/ (~ /i/) | ё /jo/ (~ /jo/) |

After consonant

са /sa/ ~ ся /sja/

су /su/ ~ сю /sju/

сэ /se/ ~ се /se/

сы /si/ ~ си /si/

со /so/ ~ со /so/

After vowel

уа /ua/ ~ уя /uja/

уу /uu/ ~ ую /ju/

уэ /ue/ ~ уе /ue/

уи /ui/

уо /uo/ ~ уё /jo/

Word-initially

_а /a/ ~ _я /ja/

_у /u/ ~ _ю /ju/

_э /e/ ~ _е /je/

_и /i/

_о /o/ ~ _ё /jo/

Vowel signs - Mari

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|
| “Hard”: | а | у | е, (э) | и | ы | о | ö | ÿ |
| “Soft”: | я | ю | е | | | | | |

Group 1: Like Russian

Group 2: The confused group

Group 3: й & ь

Vowel signs - Mari

Group 1: Just like Russian (/a/, /u/)

| | | #_ | ь_ ; ъ_ | в_ | с_ |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| а /a/ | | ава /aβa/ 'mother' | - | руаш /ruaš/ 'dough' | уна /una/ 'guest' |
| | я /ja/; /'a/ | ял /jal/ 'village' | Пүнчеръял /pünčerjal/ (village name) | поян /pojan/ 'rich' | арня /arña/ 'week' |
| у /u/ | | ур /ur/ 'squirrel' | - | тау /tau/ 'thank you' | лу /lu/ 'bone' |
| | ю /ju/; /'u/ | юж /juž/ 'air' | йыръюж /jêrjuž/ 'atmosphere' | омыю /omêju/ 'drowsiness' | лювык /l'uβâk/ 'messy (person)' |

Vowel signs - Mari

Group 2: The confused group (/e/, /i/)

| | | #_ | ь_ ; ъ_ | в_ | с_ |
|-------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|
| э /e/ | | э̄р /ēr/ 'morning' | - | шүэ̄м /šuēm/ 'I throw' | - |
| | е /je/; /e/; /'e/ | е̄р /jēr/ 'lake' | пöръе̄н /pörjēn/ 'man' | шүе̄м /šujēm/ 'I stretch' | не̄ле /nēle/ 'difficult' не̄ле /nē'le/ '(s)he swallowed' |
| | и /i/; /'i/ | ӣр /ir̄/ 'wild' | - | кукуӣге /kukuigē/ 'young cuckoo' | нӣне /nīne/ 'these' нӣгунам /nīgunam/ 'never' |

Vowel signs - Mari

Group 3: й & ь (/â/, /o/, /ö/, /ü/)

| | /j/_ | ь_ |
|-------|--|--------------------------------------|
| ы /â/ | йылме /jâlme/ 'tongue; language' | кресаньык /kresañâk/ 'peasant' |
| о /o/ | йорло /jorlo/ 'poor' | когыльо /kogâ'l'o/ 'pie' |
| ö /ö/ | йөн /jön/ 'method' | күртньö /kürtñö/ 'iron' |
| ÿ /ü/ | йÿла /jÿla/ 'custom' | - |

Exercises

Write these words in Mari Cyrillic

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------|
| /paša/ | ‘work’ | > паша |
| /taŋ/ | ‘(romantic) partner’ | > таҥ |
| /teŋge/ | ‘rouble’ | > теҥге |
| /keče/ | ‘sun; day’ | > кече |
| /bande/ | ‘gang’ | > банде |
| /finn/ | ‘Finn’ | > финн |
| /səlne/ | ‘beautiful’ | > сылне |
| /βer/ | ‘place’ | > вер |
| /vagon/ | ‘wagon’ | > вагон |
| /tuge/ | ‘yes’ | > туге |
| /iza/ | ‘older brother’ | > иза |
| /žap/ | ‘time’ | > жап |
| /χimij/ | ‘chemistry’ | > химий |
| /cunami/ | ‘tsunami’ | > цунами |
| /jêlme/ | ‘tongue; language’ | > йылме |

Write these words in Mari Cyrillic

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| /nele/ | 'difficult' | > неле |
| /nel'e/ | '... swallowed' (3SG) | > нел'е |
| /nine/ | 'these' | > нине |
| /nígunam/ | 'never' | > н'игунам |
| /lijaš/ | 'to be(come)' | > лияш (йа) |
| /lijše/ | 'be(com)ing' | > лийше |
| /liješ/ | '... wil be' (3SG) | > лиеш (лийеш, лийэш) |
| /lijən/ | '... was/became' (3SG) | > лийын |
| /βuj/ | 'head' | > вуй |
| /βujən/ | 'of the head' | > вуйын |
| /βujem/ | 'my head' | > вуем (вуйем, вуйэм) |
| /βujat/ | 'and the head' | > вуйат (вуйат) |

Write these words in Mari Cyrillic

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|---------------|
| /imńe/ | 'horse' | > ИМН'е |
| /imńән/ | 'of the horse' | > ИМНЬЫН |
| /imńem/ | 'my horse' | > ИМН'ем |
| /imńat/ | 'and the horse' | > ИМНЯТ (нья) |
| | | |
| /kogəl'o/ | 'pie' | > КОГЫЛЬО |
| /kogəl'ән/ | 'of the pie' | > КОГЫЛЬЫН |
| /kogəl'em/ | 'my pie' | > КОГЫЛ'ем |
| /kogəl'at/ | 'and the pie' | > КОГЫЛЯТ |
| | | |
| /sugəń/ | 'blessing' | > СУГЫНЬ |
| /sugəńән/ | 'of the blessing' | > СУГЫНЬЫН |
| /sugəńem/ | 'my blessing' | > СУГЫНЕМ |
| /sugəńat/ | 'and the blessing' | > СУГЫНЯТ |

Write these words in Mari Cyrillic

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| /ak/ | 'price; value' | > ак |
| /jal/ | 'village' | > ял |
| /ur/ | 'squirrel' | > ур |
| /jumо/ | 'god' | > юмо |
| /oto/ | 'grove' | > ото |
| /jot/ | 'foreign' | > йот |
| /er/ | 'morning; early' | > эр |
| /jer/ | 'lake' | > ер |
| /jen/ | 'person' | > ен |
| /biznesjen/ | 'business person' | > бизнесъен |