

Notes on Ossetic orthography and transliteration

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Ossetic is written using a variant of the Cyrillic alphabet presented in the table below. The sign “n/a” means that the phoneme/letter under question is not present in Digor.

Ossetic letter	IPA (Iron)	IPA (Digor)	Translit (Iron)	Translit (Digor)	Notes
А а	/a/	/a/	a	a	
Æ æ	/e/	/e/	æ	æ	Does not actually correspond to IPA /æ/
Б б	/b/	/b/	b	b	Unvoiced when geminate (/p:/, see below)
В в	/v/	/v/	v	v	
Г г	/g/	/g/	g	g	Unvoiced when geminate (/k:/, see below)
(Гу гу)	/g ^w /	n/a	g ^w	n/a	Only occurs before /ə/ (ы), e. g. <i>гумиры</i> /g ^w əmirə/ ‘idol’ but <i>дагуат</i> /dagwat/ ‘ravine’
Гъ гъ	/ɤ/	/ɤ/	ɤ	ɤ	
(Гъу гъу)	/ɤ ^w /	n/a	ɤ ^w	n/a	Only occurs before /ə/ (ы) e. g. <i>агъуыз</i> /aɤ ^w əz/ ‘colourless’ but <i>аргъуан</i> /aɤɤwan/ ‘church’
Д д	/d/	/d/	d	d	Unvoiced when geminate (/t:/, see below)
Дж дж	/dʒ/	n/a	dʒ	n/a	Unvoiced when geminate (/tʃ:/, see below)
Дз дз	/z/ (/ts:/)	/dʒ/ (/dʒ/)	z (dʒdʒ)	dʒ	/ts:/ when geminate Digor: palatalised before front vowels
Е е	/e/	/e/	e	e	In Iron: usually occurs only in /æ/ + /æ/ sandhi
З з	/z/	/z/ (/ʒ/)	ž	z	Digor: palatalised before front vowels
И и	/i/	/i/, /i:/	i	i	
Й й	/j/	/j/	j	j	
К к	/k ^h /	/k ^h /	k	k	Unaspirated when geminate (/k:/)
Къ къ	/k’/	/k’/	k’	k’	
Л л	/l/	/l/	l	l	
М м	/m/	/m/	m	m	
Н н	/n/	/n/	n	n	
О о	/o/	/o/	o	o	
П п	/p ^h /	/p ^h /	p	p	Unaspirated when geminate (/p:/)
Пъ пъ	/p’/	/p’/	p’	p’	

Р р	/r/	/r/	r	r	
С с	/ʃ/	/s/ (/ʃ/)	š	s	Iron: only pronounced as /s/ in forms of the enclitic pronoun <i>cæ</i> /sə/ Digor: palatalised before front vowels
Т т	/t ^h /	/t ^h /	t	t	Unaspirated when geminate (/t:/)
ТЪ тЪ	/tʰ/	/tʰ/	tʰ	tʰ	
У у	/u/, /w/ (after vowels)	/u/, /w/ (after vowels)	u, w	u, w	
Ф ф	/f/	/f/	f	f	
Х х	/χ/	/χ/	x	x	
ХЪ хЪ	/q/	/q/	q	q	
Ц ц	/s/ (/ts:/)	/ts/ (/tʃ/)	s, cc	c	/ts:/ when geminated Digor: palatalised before front vowels
ЦЪ цЪ	/tsʰ/	/tsʰ/ (/tʃʰ/)	cʰ	cʰ	Digor: palatalised before front vowels
Ч ч	/tʃ/	n/a	č	n/a	
ЧЪ чЪ	/tʃʰ/	n/a	čʰ	n/a	
Ы ы	/ə/, /i/	n/a	ə	n/a	

Some Russian letters are absent from this alphabet, however the newer Russian loanwords are written as they are in Russian.

Note on geminates: Geminates for obstruents in Ossetic do not have a voiced-unvoiced opposition but are rather always ‘tense’ (and unaspirated), so *mm*, *ðm*, *ðð*, *mð* are all orthographic/morphemic variants of /t:/ etc.