

***-ōstaz** Runic: ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ Pronunciation: /ɔːs.taz/

suffix · forms adjectives · a-stem

Function

like English “-est”; forms superlative adjectives, chiefly from regular a-stem adjectives (cf. the comparative suffix *-ōzô)

Etymology

From Proto-Germanic *-ōzô, remodeled after the inherited pair *-izô : *-istaz. The deeper model is Proto-Indo-European *-is-to-, consisting of the zero grade *-is- of the primary comparative/relative suffix *-yos- ~ *-is- plus an old ordinal/superlative dental element *-tó- (Fulk 2018: 218–20; Meier-Brügger 2003: 219–22; Ringe 2017: 316–18). In the comparative suffixes, PIE posttonic *s regularly became Pgmc *z by Verner’s Law, giving *-izô and *-ōzô, while the *s remained voiceless before *t in the superlatives *-istaz and *-ōstaz.

The *-ō of *-ōstaz is specifically Germanic. Fulk (2018: 218) follows the traditional explanation that *-ōzô arose when *-iz was added to adverbs in *-ō, later spreading from adverbs to adjectives, but notes that it is uncertain; Ringe (2017: 317) is more cautious, stating that the exact preform is not recoverable, but that the suffix contracted with a preceding vowel and then spread by morphological remodeling. As a result, the suffix *-ōstaz has no exact non-Germanic cognate; the IE comparanda belong to the inherited *-is-to- superlative type.

Note that *-istaz was the usual superlative suffix for i-, u-, and ja-stem adjectives and was also used with some a/ō-stems, while *-ōstaz was only used with a/ō-stems. In the Northwest Germanic branches *-ōzô/*-ōstaz became much more productive, while *-izô/*-istaz often survived only as relics (Fulk 2018: 218–20; Ringe 2017: 317).

Paradigm

Strong declension

Case	Sg. Masc.	Sg. Fem.	Sg. Neut.	Pl. Masc.	Pl. Fem.	Pl. Neut.
Nom.	-ōstaz	-ōstō	-ōstaȝ, -atō	-ōstai	-ōstōz	-ōstō
Acc.	-ōstanȝ	-ōstȝ	-ōstaȝ, -atō	-ōstanz	-ōstōz	-ōstō
Gen.	-ōstas, -is	-ōstaizōz	-ōstas, -is	-ōstaizĥ	-ōstaizĥ	-ōstaizĥ
Dat.	-ōstammai	-ōstaizōi	-ōstammai	-ōstaimaz	-ōstaimaz	-ōstaimaz
Inst.	-ōstanō	-ōstaizō	-ōstanō	-ōstaimiz	-ōstaimiz	-ōstaimiz

Weak declension

Case	Sg. Masc.	Sg. Fem.	Sg. Neut.	Pl. Masc.	Pl. Fem.	Pl. Neut.
Nom.	-ōstō	-ōstȝ	-ōstō	-ōstaniz	-ōstōniz	-ōstōnō
Acc.	-ōstanȝ	-ōstōnȝ	-ōstō	-ōstanunz	-ōstōnunz	-ōstōnō
Gen.	-ōstiniz	-ōstōniz	-ōstiniz	-ōstanĥ	-ōstōnĥ	-ōstanĥ
Dat.	-ōstini	-ōstōni	-ōstini	-ōstammaz	-ōstōmaz	-ōstammaz
Inst.	-ōstinē	-ōstōnē	-ōstinē	-ōstammiz	-ōstōmiz	-ōstammiz

Descendants

-ōst (Proto-West Germanic)

-ost (Old Dutch)

-st (Middle Dutch)

-st (Dutch)

-ōst (Proto-West Germanic)

-ōst (Old English)

-ast, -est, -ist (Middle English)

-est (English)

-ōst (Proto-West Germanic)

-ōst (Old English)
 -ast, -est (Middle Scots)
 -est (Scots)

-ōst (Proto-West Germanic)
 -ost (Old Frisian)
 -st (West Frisian)

-ōst (Proto-West Germanic)
 -ôst (Old High German)
 -est (Middle High German)
 -st (German)

-ōst (Proto-West Germanic)
 -ôst (Old Saxon)
 -est (Middle Low German)
 -st (Low German)

***-𐌱𐌰𐌽𐌹𐌸 (*-ostar)** (Proto-Norse)
 -astr (Old Norse)
 -est (Danish)
 -astur (Faroese)
 -astur (Icelandic)
 -est (Norwegian)

***-𐌱𐌰𐌽𐌹𐌸 (*-ostar)** (Proto-Norse)
 -astr (Old Norse)
 -aster (Old Swedish)
 -ast (Swedish)

-𐍂𐍄𐍄𐍅 (-ōsts) (Gothic)

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Related Words

Words mentioned in this entry

***-istaz** suffix ***-iz¹** suffix ***-iz²** suffix ***-izô** suffix ***-ōzô** suffix

Entries that mention this word

***-istaz** suffix ***-ōzô** suffix

