

***-ōzô** Runic: 𐌿𐌵𐌶 Pronunciation: /ɔ:.zɔ:./

suffix · forms adjectives · an/in-stem

Function

forms comparative adjectives, equivalent to English “-er” or “more”, with the sense ‘more X, X-er’, originally with some a-stem adjectives

Etymology

From a Proto-Germanic innovation built on the model of the inherited comparative suffix **-izô*, with the corresponding superlative **-ōstaz* formed secondarily after **-ōzô* in the same way that **-istaz* was formed from **-izô*. The inherited model ultimately continues Proto-Indo-European **-yos- ~ *-is-*, the primary comparative/relative suffix. In PGmc, the zero-grade **-is-* was generalized in the comparative; since the pre-Verner accent fell on the root, the suffixal **s* became **z* by Verner’s Law, yielding **-izô*. (Fulk 2018: 218–20; Meier-Brügger 2003: 219–22; Ringe 2017: 316–17).

The long vowel of **-ōzô* is specifically Germanic. Fulk (2018: 218) follows the traditional explanation that **-ōz-* originated when comparative **-iz* was added to adverbs in **-ō*, after which the resulting adverbial comparative was extended to adjectives. Ringe (2017: 317) is more cautious, saying that the exact preform is not recoverable, but the suffix complex appears to have arisen by contraction with a preceding vowel and then spread by morphological remodeling. As a result, **-ōzô* has no exact non-Germanic cognate (Fulk 2018: 218–19; Meier-Brügger 2003: 220–22).

In PGmc, **-izô* was used with *i-*, *u-*, and *ja-*stem adjectives and also with some a-stems, whereas **-ōzô* was restricted to *a/ō-*stems. The distribution among *a/ō-*stem adjectives was partly lexical and analogical rather than fully predictable. In the Northwest Germanic branches, **-ōzô*/**-ōstaz* became the normal productive pattern, while **-izô*/**-istaz* often survived only in relic forms (Fulk 2018: 218–20; Ringe 2017: 317).

Paradigm

Strong declension

Case	Sg. Masc.	Sg. Fem.	Sg. Neut.	Pl. Masc.	Pl. Fem.	Pl. Neut.
Nom.	-ōzô	-ōzĭ	-ōzô	-ōzaniz	-ōzīniz	-ōzônō
Acc.	-ōzanų	-ōzīnų	-ōzô	-ōzanunz	-ōzīnunz	-ōzônō
Gen.	-ōziniz	-ōzīniz	-ōziniz	-ōzanġ	-ōzīnġ	-ōzanġ
Dat.	-ōzini	-ōzīni	-ōzini	-ōzammaz	-ōzīmaz	-ōzammaz
Inst.	-ōzinē	-ōzīnē	-ōzinē	-ōzammiz	-ōzīmiz	-ōzammiz

Weak declension

Case	Sg. Masc.	Sg. Fem.	Sg. Neut.	Pl. Masc.	Pl. Fem.	Pl. Neut.
Nom.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acc.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gen.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dat.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Inst.	—	—	—	—	—	—

Descendants

*-ōrō (Proto-West Germanic)

 *-oro (Old Dutch)

 -er (Middle Dutch)

 -er (Dutch)

*-ōrō (Proto-West Germanic)

 -ra (Old English)

 -ere, -er, -ore, -re (Middle English)

 -er (English)

*-ōrō (Proto-West Germanic)

-ra (Old English)

-ar, -ir (Middle Scots)

-er (Scots)

***-ōrō** (Proto-West Germanic)

-ar-, -er-, -or- (Old Frisian)

-er (West Frisian)

***-ōrō** (Proto-West Germanic)

-ôro (Old High German)

-er (German)

***-ōrō** (Proto-West Germanic)

-oro (Old Saxon)

-ar, -er, -or (Middle Low German)

-er (Low German)

-ari (Old Norse)

-ere (Danish)

-ari (Faroese)

-ari (Icelandic)

-ere (Norwegian)

-are (Swedish)

-𐌱𐌿𐌵𐌰 (-ōza) (Gothic)

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Related Words

Words mentioned in this entry

***-istaz** suffix ***-iz¹** suffix ***-iz²** suffix ***-izô** suffix ***-ōstaz** suffix

Entries that mention this word

***-izô** suffix ***-ōstaz** suffix