

Osthoff's Law which has been formulated by Hermann Osthoff as a rule explaining the alternation of the long and short vowels (diphthongs) in some Ancient Greek paradigmata in a better way than the assumption of an old ablaut does is investigated in the present study by considering the possibilities of reconstruction and the alternatives of historical development of the paradigmata in which is the Osthoffian vowel shortening usually supposed.

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The results are e. g. that Greek nouns in - have used the generalized full grade suffix -- in original inflection, that the desinence of the accusative plural of -stems -ans can be derived immediately from the Indo-European *-ah₂ns and that the desinence of Indo-European thematic instrumental plural was *-oh₁is.

The general conclusion reached is that there is no need to postulate the former operation of Osthoff's Law in any of the considered morphological issues. The Law, in consequence, is losing his utility at least in the field of Greek historical morphology.