

THE AEGINRST TRANSPOSAL: PART 1

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All 24 combinations of the letters AEST make a word, from AEST, an obsolete form of 'east' through to TSE-A, a Keresan tribe of New Mexico. The halfway mark has been achieved for AELST (63) and AERST (64), from a possible 120 transposals. These feats are recorded in "Transposing Rates" in the November 1987 **Word Ways** and the current Colloquy. As far as I am aware, no comprehensive study of six-letter or seven-letter sets has ever been undertaken, but at the next level the remarkable transposability of the eight letters AEGINRST has been recognised by wordsmiths for most of this century.

The first published collection of AEGINRST transposals appeared in the November 1925 edition of the National Puzzlers' League magazine *The Enigma*. Howard B. ("Hercules") McPherrin's pioneer set of 21 transposals remained the definitive work in this field for forty years, until the challenge of extending the frontiers was finally taken up by another master logologist.

Dmitri Borgmann's classic Language on Vacation came out in 1965. In this book Dmitri presented a total of 65 AEGINRST transposals made up of 51 dictionary words and inferred words, together with 14 coinages. The 51 terms considered authentic form the basis for "The Ultimate Adventure", a comprehensive two-part analysis of the AEGINRST challenge published in the August and November 1976 editions of **Word Ways**.

"The Ultimate Adventure" features a list of 131 AEGINRST transpositions, of which approximately 25 were found by Darryl Francis in English-language references not readily available to Dmitri. Jeremy Morse came up with a further 23 examples (including 21 Latin ones) in the February 1977 Colloquy, and I submitted another eight in the November 1979 Colloquy. Finally, Darryl added TIR-ANGES in August 1981 and TASERING in November 1993, bringing the corpus to the grand total of 164 transposals. Note that this represents a mere 0.4% of the possible 40,320 combinations!

Regrettably, Dmitri's collection and the subsequent additions include many terms of a highly questionable nature, ranging from foreign words and the use of initials, to coined expressions such as the infamous TEN RIGAS (ten cities such as Riga in Latvia).

Clearly, certain rules have to be established for accepting or rejecting AEGINRST transposals. Standards of course vary greatly among logologists. Some may accept words from standard references only, while others, like Dmitri, admit all manner of inferred and

contrived terms. For the purposes of this particular collection, here are my criteria for acceptability. As you will see, they are quite broad, although nowhere near as lenient as Dmitri's. In fact, I have accepted only 78 words out of the 163 previously exhibited in **Word Ways**.

DISALLOWED TERMS

Foreign Words EINTRAGS (German), INTEGRAS (Latin), SERINGAT (French), TRANSIGE (Spanish), GINESTRA (Italian)
 Duplicate-Letter Arrangements TEARINGS/TEA RINGS, INGREATS/IN GREATS, ARESTING/A-RESTING, TANGIERS/TANGIER'S
 Abbreviated Forms GEN. TRIAS (general), ST. REGINA and ST. REGNIA (saints), ANGITES R. (river), REGINA ST. (street)
 Use of Initials GAINES, R.T., GAINES, T.R., I. STANGER, I.R. AGENTS, STRANGE, I.
 Use of Article A STINGER, A SET-RING
 Phrases GENT: A SIR, NEAR GIST, IT ANGERS, IT RANGES, I STRANGE, TEN RIGAS
 Unattested Old Forms ARTINGES, GRAITNES, GRIATNES, GNAISTER, REGNAIST
 Strained Plurals ARNITE GS, ARNITES G
 Spelling Errors TRIANGES (triangles), STAREING (staring), in print
 Contrived Words such as ReNTiSag (a proposed molecular formula)

Here are some of the more plausible rejected coinages, a number of which appear in Language on Vacation but not in **Word Ways**:

AIR-GENTS knights of the sky; early aviators
 GAINSTER a profiteer
 E-RATINGS very low ratings; failing grades
 INTERSAG to sag mutually or reciprocally
 RIGA-SENT despatched to or from the city of Riga
 STINGARE a tailless stingaree (cryptic crossword clue)
 ANTIREGS against the regulations
 EAR-STING otalgia with a stinging sensation
 GEAR-TINS tins for keeping gear in
 GRETINAS girls named Gretina, a diminutive of Greta (this name has not been confirmed, even in an extensive unpublished survey of given names in the 1973 Los Angeles telephone directory, by Bill Rawlings)
 NEAR-TIGS near-touches in the children's game of tig
 REGANIST supporting the monetary policies of American financial executive Donald Regan, perhaps. Interesting! Merriam-Webster have this word in their citation files defined as 'one who maintains that Regan, a daughter of King Lear, is actually the main character of Shakespeare's play'. Their authority? Language on Vacation! Despite this surprising admission of Dmitri's coinage in the Webster records, REGANIST has not been included in my collection.

ACCEPTED TERMS

Awkward Comparatives such as SATINGER and SIGNATER, which sound odd, but surely no more so than attested examples like beautifuller, serviceabler and hawchemoutheder
 Two-Word Terms when found in a major reference as a separate

entry, such as INERT GAS, GREAT SIN or SEAT RING
Standard Inflections of Old Words ASTERING, GNASTIER, RATEINGS,
TARIENGs, etc.

Apostrophized Words EAST'RING, RAGIN'EST, RESTAGIN'

Second Person Singulars The verbal ending -est, -st was standard from the earliest period of English until the end of the 17th century. It is common in Shakespeare and in the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible. Thou + -est persisted in English poetry as late as the 19th century (Shelley uses word like springest, embracest and chariotest), and is retained today in formal religious contexts. The -est, -st inflection survived in Quaker circles until at least the end of the 19th century, and may still be used in a few traditional North American communities, and in equivalent forms in some Yorkshire and West Country dialects in England. There seems to be no strict rule for choosing between -est and -st. The -est suffix is generally used if the word ends in a consonant, as in 'thou RAIGNEST'; however, the user may deviate from the recommended practice as long as the resulting pronunciation is not distinctly unnatural. For example, 'thou REGAINST' sounds quite reasonable, even though 'thou REGAINEST' would be the preferred form.

Citation Forms Plural As Dmitri points out, a word used as a word is known as a quotation noun or citation form. For instance, when looking at a certain page in A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, we observe five ANGERIT'S. As this example illustrates, the plural of a quotation noun is formed by adding an apostrophe and an 's' to the word being cited. Other examples in the AEGINRST collection are GIANter'S, IGRATEN'S, TAERING'S, TARGEIN'S and TIERGAN'S. There are quite a few more.

Pluralized Proper Nouns such as surnames, place-names and business names: GRATIENS, TRANGIES, GARNITES and others. Of particular interest are some proper nouns ending in 'y' preceded by a consonant. In these cases there seems to be a reluctance to change the spelling of the name, when pluralizing it. Illustrating the problem, do we write of the former two Germanys or Germanies? Dmitri reckons usage is fairly evenly divided, and cites an example of the -ies plural on page 619 of The World Almanac and Book of Facts (1976): 'travel restrictions between the two Germanies were eased slightly...' Even if there was only one place in the entire universe called Germany, we could still wonder how the Germanies of the world might differ from the Englands, Mexicos or Thailand. Since the -ies plural is a permissible form, it may be applied to any proper noun ending in 'y' preceded by a consonant.

Personal Names containing initials, like E.I.S. GRANT and I. SARGENT, are not included; however, full names such as SANTE GRI are quite acceptable. Is Nathaniel Regis (1988/89 Brooklyn NY telephone directory) ever called NAT REGIS, or Antoine Grise (1992/93 Ottawa-Hull Canada telephone directory) ANT GRISE? Step forward, IAN GRESt, REG SAINT, SEAN GRIT and GRETA SIN (perhaps a relation of the well-known Cardinal Sin). Are there any RITA ENGSt or ART GEINSt out there? If so, please let us know!

are suspect. When in doubt, I have generally erred on the side of inclusion, rather than omitting a term some may consider acceptable.

My thanks to those who have helped with my quest to extend the AEGINRST boundaries, especially the people at Merriam-Webster, OWLS (OED Word and Language Service) and the Middle English Dictionary, who readily answered my many questions. One incident I particularly want to mention concerns a letter sent to a New Zealand university English department asking for information on old verbal inflections. A reply was duly received from Mr. R. EASTING - surely a logological sign of success for the project!

A list of Abbreviations and References appears at the end of this treasury of transpositions. If anyone can add further examples, or improve on a definition or source, please let me or the editor know.

AERTING'S c.f.p. of AERTING, pres. part. of AERT, an obs. form of ART, an obs. verb meaning 'to cramp or constrain' (Web 1)

AGINTERS enterprises with the name AGINTER, such as a Spanish customs agency (1989/90 Madrid TD), and AGINTER Press (1983/84 Lisbon, Portugal TD)

ANGERIT'S c.f.p. of ANGERIT, an old Scots past tense of the verb 'anger'. No less than five ANGERIT'S appear in citations under 'anger' in DOST

ANGRIEST most irate, incensed, enraged, furious, irritated (RHD 2)

ANGRITES pl. of ANGRITE, a meteoritic stone consisting essentially of titanite and having no chondrules (rounded granules) embedded in it (Web 3)

ARESTING Old Scots and M.E. variant of the verbal noun ARRESTING; apprehension, capture, especially of a lawbreaker (DOST, MED)

ARETING'S c.f.p. of ARETING, M.E. pres. part. of ARET, an obsolete verb meaning 'to reckon, count; to lay to the charge of, impute as a fault to'. The particle ARETING is suggested by the form ARETED in a 1574 OED quot.

ARGENTIS pl. of ARGENTI, variant of ARGENTIE, an old Scots term for some kind of fabric (DOST); also, persons with the Italian surname ARGENTI (there are more than 50 ARGENTIS listed in the Rome TD)

ARNESTIG the surname of Ernst ARNESTIG, an individual listed in the 1989 Gotenburg, Sweden TD

ASTERING a Swedish surname appearing four times in the 1992 Stockholm TD; also, pres. part. of ASTERE, a 15th cent. form of the old verb ASTIR, to stir up, move, disturb (OED). The past part. ASTERED is used in a citation in MED

- ASTINGER the surname of Lene ASTINGER who is listed in the 1988/89 Copenhagen, Denmark TD
- ASTRINGE to bind together, draw close; to constrict, compress (OED)
- ATERING'S c.f.p. of ATERING, pres. part. of ATER, an obs. variant of ATTER, which in one sense was an obs. verb meaning 'to poison or embitter' (Web 1)
- ATSINGER the surname of Alisa ATSINGER (1992 Houston TX TD) and H.E. ATSINGER (1991 Atlanta GA TD)
- EAST'RING a poetic shortening of EASTERING, shifting eastward (OED), by analogy with the form WEST'RING which appears in a 1747 OED quot.
- ENRAGIT'S c.f.p. of ENRAGIT, an old Scots past tense of the verb 'enrage'; two ENRAGIT'S appear in citations under 'enrage' in DOST
- ENTIGARS persons with the surname ENTIGAR, such as Robert and Janice ENTIGAR who are listed in the 1992 Hartford-Bloomfield CT TD
- ERIGANTS pl. of ERIGANT, an erroneous form of ERIGAUT, variant of HERIGAUT, an obs. word for an upper garment or cloak worn by men and women in the 13th and 14th centuries (OED)
- ESTRINGA the surname of Deolinda ESTRINGA who is listed in the 1983/84 Lisbon, Portugal TD
- GAINTERS uses conceited airs and gestures; an obs. Scots term(SND)
- GAIRNEST poetic 2nd person singular form of GAIRN, as in 'thou GAIRNEST'. GAIRN is a Northumberland (N. England) dialectic variant of the verb GIRN, to show the teeth in laughing, to grin (EDD). Compare SCORNEST, TURNEST in ECTB
- GAIRTENS pl. of GAIRTEN, a dialectic variant of GARTEN, a GARTER (EDD)
- GAITNERS ones who set up reaped corn in single sheaves or 'gaits' to dry (OED)
- GANISTER a fine-grained quartzite used in the manufacture of silica brick (Web 3)
- GANTIERS persons with the French surname GANTIER; there are 14 GANTIERS listed in the 1992/93 Paris TD, and 5 in BMGC
- GANTREIS old Scots term for a four-legged wooden stand for barrels, or the trestles of a bed (DOST)
- GANTRIES pl. of GANTRY, a four-footed wooden stand for barrels (OED)
- GARENIST past part. of GARNISHEN, a ME word meaning 'to decorate, adorn, beautify' (MED)
- GARINETS persons with the French surname GARINET; there are five GARINETS listed in the 1992/93 Paris TD, and Jules GARINET

- appears in BMGC
- GARNEIST variant of GARNIST, properly equipped or furnished; an old Scots term (DOST)
- GARNESIT past tense of the old Scots verb GARNIS, to ornament or embellish, shown in several quotes. in DOST
- GARNETIS old Scots plural of GARNET, a grenade (DOST quot.)
- GARNI-EST awkward or jocular superlative form of the adjective GARNI, garnished, which is listed in CED
- GARNITES enterprises named GARNITE, such as GARNITE Systems Inc., listed in the Thomas Register of American Manufacturers, Company Profiles Section, 1992, and GARNITE Pty Ltd., which appeared in the 1984 Melbourne, Australia TD
- GARSTEIN a surname appearing twice in the 1992 Oslo, Norway TD; Oskar and William GARSTEIN are listed in BMGC
- GASTERIN a preparation of the gastric juice of dogs, used as is pepsin (Gould)
- GASTREIN a French surname borne by Léonel GASTREIN (1992/93 Paris TD) and Jacqueline and Roger GASTREIN (1990 Nice TD)
- GASTRINE a hormone, made in the pyloric glands of the stomach, and supposed to excite secretion of the fundus cells (Gould)
- GENITRAS ME term for the testicles; also the male genitals (MED)
- GERAINTS males bearing the Teutonic forename GERAINT, 'unerring spear' (Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names, E.G. Withycombe, 1977). GERAINT the Brave of King Arthur's court was the subject of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King' (1859), and Sir GERAINT Evans is a Welsh opera singer
- GERSAINT the surname of Edme François GERSAINT, a French antiquary who died in 1750 (A Dictionary of Universal Biography, Albert M. Hyamson, 2nd edition, 1951)
- GERTINAS females bearing the given name GERTINA, such as the 15 GERTINAS catalogued in Förnamnsboken, by Prof. Sture Allen, published in 1979. This work is based on the names of the total population of Swedish citizens as recorded in the national registration files on January 1, 1973
- GE-STIRAN to guide or direct; to restrain; an Anglo-Saxon verb (An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, Supplement, Bosworth and Toller, 1972)
- GIANter'S c.f.p. of GIANter, an awkward comparative form of the adjective GIANT, defined as 'gigantic' in the likes of CED (compare attested terms such as vailianter, ancierter, ignoranter)
- GIERNATS persons with the surname GIERNAT, such as Chester GIERNAT who is listed in the 1990/91 Chicago IL TD
- GIERSTAN a variant of the Anglo-Saxon word GIESTRAN, yesterday (The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon, Henry Sweet, 1967)
- GIESTRAN an Anglo-Saxon word for 'yesterday' (A Concise Anglo-

Saxon Dictionary, John R. Clark Hall, 1962)

- GINESTAR a town in the province of Tarragona, in northeast Spain, noted for olive-oil processing, fruit and wine (Columbia-Lippincott Gazetteer of the World, 1964)
- GINESTRA another name for the broom, a yellow-flowered shrub found on sandy banks, pastures and heaths in Britain and elsewhere in western Europe (OED)
- GIRANTES persons with the Portuguese surname GIRANTE, such as the three GIRANTES listed in the 1983/84 Lisbon TD
- GNASTIER comparative form of GNASTIE, a 17th cent. variant of the adjective NASTY (OED)
- GRAINEST poetic 2nd person singular form of GRAIN, as in 'thou GRAINEST' As a verb, GRAIN has many applications, including to produce grain, to yield fruit, and to feed with grain (OED). (Compare remainest and maintainest in ECTB)
- GRAINETS post offices such as GRAINET in Germany, which is listed in the International Register of Post Offices, 1977 edition
- GRANEIST the surname of Andreas and Gisbert GRANEIST who are listed in the 1992/93 Hamburg, Germany TD
- GRANIEST superlative form of GRANY, a Cornish dialectic variant of the adjective GRAINY, ill-tempered (EDD, Cor. quot.)
- GRANITES certain granular crystalline rocks used in building (OED)
- GRANTIES persons with the surname GRANTIE, such as Brian D. GRANTIE of New Port Richey FL and D. GRANTIE of Madras OR (PhD)
- GRANTISE an obsolete word for concession or permission (OED)
- GRATIENS persons with the French surname GRATIEN; there are three GRATIENS recorded in the 1992/93 Paris TD, and the French bishop and theologian Jean Baptiste GRATIEN (1747-99) is listed in Hyamson's Dictionary of Universal Biography, 1951 edition
- GRATINÉS bakes or broils food in au gratin style, that is, with a topping of either browned bread crumbs and butter or grated cheese, or with both (RHD 2)
- GREATINS 2nd person singular present tense of GREATIN, a variant of the ME verb GRETEN, to greaten, become larger, grow (MED, greten, c1230 quot.)
- GREAT SIN Biblical synonym for a mortal sin, a serious sin (Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments, Alexander Cruden, 1946). A MORTAL or GREAT SIN is usually contrasted with a VENIAL SIN; the interesting nonce-word GNAT-SIN appears in OED
- GRETIANS pl. of GRETIAN, a 16th cent. variant of the noun GRECIAN, a native or inhabitant of Greece (OED)
- GRETINAS persons with the surname GRETINA, such as Margo GRETINA of Ringwood NJ and V.J. GRETINA of Wanaque NJ (PhD)