In the National Puzzlers' League rebus puzzle, a group of letters or other symbols, called a rubric, clues a word or phrase. For example, the rubric XCY clues chiromancy with the reading 'chi, Roman C, Y'. In a phonetic rebus, the sound of the reading is involved: for example, the rubric P clues rhopalic with the reading 'rho, pal, I see'. In an enigmatic rebus, something beyond what is visible in the rubric must be inferred, like the missing ST in the rubric AIN L, which clues stainless steel with the reading 'STAIN less S, tee; L'. In a reversed rebus, or suber, the reversal of the answer is clued: for example, DP clues dessertspoon with the reversed reading 'no O, P stressed'.

I particularly like rebus in which the rubric itself is a word, instead of a meaningless collection of letters or symbols. The first I remember seeing was the lovely CARTS :: concertinas (C once, RT in PS). I have since made a complete collection of such rebus appearing in the National Puzzlers' League monthly publication, The Enigma, as well as a few from other sources. The rebus presented below, taken from issues through June 1979, are labeled with their creators' pseudonyms as is done in The Enigma.

All three-letter rubrics appear as independent uncapitalized entries in the 1953 Merriam-Webster New Collegiate Dictionary. All of four or more letters appear in NI2 or NI3. Without these restrictions, this listing would be swelled to about ten times its present size with less interesting examples. Also, the letters must be written in a solid clump, without intrusive punctuation, special placement, or the like. This rules out ALL placed at the far left of the page (the rubric for West Allis), W I N G S (the rubric for wings widespread), or CON (the rubric for condescending).

One may ask: is any word-rubric itself a rebus answer? A rebus could be constructed for many of the rubrics, and nine have actually been done, all inspired by one-letter work. There is Hoodwink's T = format; Dreamer's, Lateo's and Missile C's E = ice; and Orion's L = lie. Treesong's one-letter liporebi (rebi using the alphabet with one letter omitted) give ABCDFGH..Z = cute and A...RSUVWXYZ = tout. Nightowl turned to the one-letter suber to provide F = fees, C = sic, P = sip, and U = situ.

The rubrics fall off in number very swiftly as length increases. In the list below, there is only one 12-letter example (RUMMAGE SALES),
one 10-letter one (Volkswagen), one 9-letter one (CART HORSE), and a scattering of 7-letter and 8-letter ones. Rebi with very long word rubrics are usually enigmatic. More precisely, they have one of the following characteristics: (1) the answer describes a single word or phrase (CART HORSE = the cart before the horse), often using a clever definition (Janus = Romanian = 'Roman Ian'), (2) the answer defines only a part of the rubric (RUMMAGE SALES = in the Middle Ages), or (3) the answer describes a transposition of the rubric (BLOUSED = mixed doubles). In (2), and to some extent (3), the rebus constructor has considerable freedom in selecting a rubric which fits the requirements of the answer; it is not strictly necessary that the entire rubric is a word, but good constructors usually try to do it. In short, the occurrence of a word rubric in certain rebi is not the fortuitous event that it is in others.

In the list below, = separates rubric and answer; =P, =E and =S identify phonetic rebi, enigmatic rebi, and iber, respectively.

AFT =S terefa (Faro); AGA = agenda (B. Natural); AGE = postage (Fiddle); AIM = am I in the middle? (M. U. Later); AMA = anathema (Hoodwink); Amy = bigamy (Ho Ho); army = Little Mary Mixup (Nightowl); ASIA = asthenia (Hoodwink); ASS = abyss (Hallie Looyah, Molemi).

BAR = brain (Percy Verance); BAR = afterbrain (Hap); BAR = midbrain (Hap); BAS = bananas (Basful); BEAU = bandeau (anon.); BED = be bothered (Blackstone); BEER = before and after (B. Natural); BEET = a bite to eat (Hoodwink); bet =E aboriginally (Awl Wrong); BILLS = sends the bill (Susan); BITS = bones about it (Ho Ho); BLOUSED =E mixed doubles (Brym); BOW = boatwright (Graydoll, Uncle Rebus); BRA =E Brasenose (Hap); BRAN = raisin bran (Cryptox); BUR = rub the wrong way (Livedevil); BURS = bersuits (Paul & Virginia).

Cadillac =E Great Vehicle (Merlin); CART HORSE = the cart before the horse (Nightowl); CARTS = concertinas (Billy Goat, Merlin); CHINCHIN =E double feature (A. Chern); CHIVES = four inches (Midurndist); cod =E oafish (Comrade); CUTE = persecute (Omar); did = dispelled (Rayle Rhoder); DEE =E enamored; DEEF = feedback (Brym); DID = one in a thousand (Orion); DION = disputation (Sour Puss); DIRECT =E letters of credit (Stilicho); DOOM =E a change of mood (Midurndist).

EAGLE = lineage (Sas); ECHE =P Chinese (Quetan); ECOD =P coincided (Arcanus); ECUS = cuisines (Oedipus); ELBA = turnable (Ho Ho); EME = before me, even as behind (Hoodwink); END =P endeavor (Alec Sander); ERE = ether and thee (Captain To); EROS =S senior (Oedipus); ESTE = the esthete (Hoodwink); ETH = the beginning (C. F.).

FAT =P fanatic (Hazy); FEAR = flying by ear (Uncle Rebus); FeES =SE senorita (Merlin); FORM = misinform (anon.); FORMAT = inside information (Stilicho); FRAT = faintheart (Hoodwink).

GAR = gatherer (Hoodwink); GOA = ingathering (Sol); GOD =PE partaken of good (anon.); GRIL = Goneril (Molemi).

HATER =E a change of heart (Midurndist); HEET = letter sheet (Captain Ser hereat/herel gilius); HE~ HOARD =E withhold (Te callithump (ICE =E). ICY = oneiric IDEA = the b INN =P insign Point, K. G. Janus =E.

JUST = read LAD =S i (Winkle); L LEG = P ele Lie = laniate of Tlos (Pro just a little I MANN =E (The Gink)); curtailment METE = mat quarter moo MUCExP yo NANA =T Doc, ARD it togetherness ODDOR =E Rhoder); OBT Pace =E ptsian (Sagit nom de plum backsids (Faro), PRY RECAPS Yercas); RE Middle Ages SAC =S c fires (Ho Ho) Shylock = Jet esthenic (Fun Brutus); SI SMOTE = the =EP parasol! (M. U. Later; SURE = satura TAM =E esting =E in (Fiddle); TH from Shakes THER = there (Evergreen).
HORSE)
very long
have one
(1) a single
often us-
i,
(2) in the
rub-
ment (3),
which
ecessary that
try to do it.
is not the for-
ately.

MANN
four-letter man
(Stefan Burr); MANS
backswordman
(The Gink); MEER
meander
(Amor, anon., Paul &
Virginia); MEN
curtailment
(Evergreen, Minuta);
MENT
readjustment
(B. Natural);
METE
matinee
(Mrs. Ev);
MINK
mannikin
(Pat);
MOO
three-
quar ter moon
(Midurndist);
MOVE
seem overwrought
(Volar);
MUCE
you see in me
(M. U. Later);
MUM
mausoleum
(Mangie);
NANA
cannabis
(M. U. Later);
NARD
endocarditis =
'ten,
Doc, ARD
it is
(I. M. N. Terry);
NEE
entwines
(Gigantic);
NESS
togetherness
(Allez);
ODOR
without the door
(Hoodwink);
OKA
cockatoo
(Rayle
Rhoder);
ORT
the other night
(Oedipus, Osaple);
PACE
postpone
(Neophyte);
PAN
pandan
(Hoodwink),
pañ
ptisian
(Sagittarius);
PEG
Pepsi,
long
(Senor);
pen
Aswan Dam/
nom de plume
(Stilicho);
PER
pai mater
(Nightowl);
PETS
step
(Rayle Rhoder);
pox
smallpox
(Nightowl);
PRY
apandry
(Faro);
PRY
pyramid
(Ho Ho);
PULSE
without the door
(Hoodwink);
POMS
pa parasols;
SULTS
the evening
(M. U. Later, Paul &
Virginia, Tryit); STREAM
mixmaster
(Stilicho);
SURE
saturate
(Oedipus);
SWAB
bad news
(Nightowl);
TAM
the morning after the night before
(Ho Ho);
TEA
interesting
'in tea',
't restig' (Spriggs);
TED
half-witted
(anon.,
Fiddle);
THANKS
I can no other answer make but thanks
(Ho Ho, taken
from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night");
THE
halfillacinate
(A. Chem);
THE
there he is at the end
(Ho Ho),
THE
three quarters of them
(Evergreen);
THING
thing in itself
(Grandmother);
TIC
heretic

(139)
The rebus LEG = elegy in the above list is an example of a pure phonetic rebus in which the letters of the rubric, spelled out one at a time, gives the answer. Words of this type were christened "Literal Words" by Walter Penney, and examples are given in the May and August 1970 Kickshaws: DFI (deify), XPDNC (expediency), NRG (energy), NME (enemy), etc.

Only eight of the rebus in the above list are iber, a fact explained in part by the recent popularity of the latter. Even more recent than the suber is the rebade, a combination of rebus and alternade. In an alternade, alternate letters of a word are taken to form two new words, as in TrleNlaLlY = tinily / renal. In a rebade this alternation is applied to the reading, as shown by the five word-rubic rebades composed to date:

- APT = atrip/feast (after A is PT) (Graydol)
- LAD = land/oil (I.o, A in LD) (Neophyt)
- NIGHTOWL = iota/gong/howl.tut (IGHTO; o, out NW; tag L) (Treesong)
- NIGHTOWL = SP loge/eten/why (N, eye GHTOW, el) (Treesong)
- SPAM = samara/pester (SPA, ém's at rear) (Graydol)

Roots and recombinant is illustrated by the five tense and past transd, as in the tree; there are no interwalled seven-letter words, forward or backward, outward or inward, doorway or worried.

A. ROSS EGIS
Morristown

Take a word and remove one or two letters to form another word. Take the longer or the shorter word, and then remove one of the shorter word's letters to form another word. Continue in this way until a word to be headment is reached, or deleted, or the word is the longest possible word to be headment, or the word is the longest possible word to be headment, or the word is the longest possible word to be headment, or the word is the longest possible word to be headment.

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