NINE SQUARE WITH PALINDROMIC DIAGONAL

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A few years ago, I produced a few thousand nine squares, but they have lain fallow since, as Chris Cole presented “Modern Nine-Squares” in November 2001 and Richard Sabey presented “A Collection of Nine-Squares” in February 1997. I did, however, look for a square with a word on the diagonal as well. Failing to find one among my few thousand or in Word Ways, I now take pleasure in presenting it, plus a small variation.

All word squares necessarily have a NE-SW diagonal which is palindromic, because the first and last letters are the last letter of the first word, the second and second-last letters are the penultimate letters of the second word, and so on. There are very few nine-letter palindromes, and not so very many nine squares, and the coincidence is only possible because of the work done by Jeff Grant in producing the Palindromicon. The square below is made with words from a single source (except for the diagonal).

A I S L E L E S S OED
I C T E R I D A E OED icterus, meaning 2a
S T R A N G I G E OED STRONG c.1000 quote
L E A D E A T E R OED lead-eater
E R N E S T O N E OED ernestone
L I G AT U R E S OED ligature
E D I T O R E S S OED
S A G E N E S S E OED sageness 1654q
S E E R E S S E S OED seeress

Note that the second G in the third word is in the Anglo-Saxon form in the quotation.

The NE-SW palindrome is SAIASAIAS, plural of SAIASAIA, a transparent fabric in the Maranao language (see Palindromicon). A variant square is created by replacing LEAD-EATER with LEAF-EATER (OED leaf, meaning IIIb).

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