

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 erne-stone
L I G A T 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).