A NINE-SQUARE WITH A NON-PALINDROME DIAGONAL

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As explained in my article *Nine-Square with Palindromic Diagonal* (Word Ways May 2002), the SW-NE diagonal must be palindromic. Such squares are rare (say, as common as ten-squares). Distinctly rarer is a nine-square such as follows, which has a frequency I estimate to be around 1 in 300,000 nine-squares.

P L O T T A B L E
L A S H E D O U T
O S T E R M U T H
T H E L L I C H E
T E R L E T H E R
A D M I T T E R E
B O U C H E T I A
L U T H E R I E N
E T H E R E A N S

plottable, OED
lashed out, OED to lash out, see lash, verb 1
Ostermuth, a castle, OED road, c1550 quote
thelliche, OED thellich, 1340 quote
terlether, OED
admittere, OED, Latin origin of admit, admission
Bouchetia anamola spiniceps, ITIS plant
lutherien, French, OED Lutheran
etherean, OED, plural of adjective

ITIS = Integrated Taxonomic Information System, US Department of Agriculture

The diagonal starting in the north-west reads PATLETTES (patlettes, OED patlet, 1522 quote). Its reverse, SETTELTAP, is clearly the tap (faucet) restricting access to a settlement tank (settel occurs frequently in the OED), or a tap to settle a screw in place before driving it home!

ETHEREANS might be justified in the following imaginary book review: “The favourite adjective of the author is etherean, clearly a new toy for the author. Almost every object or person has this quality: indeed there are sufficient ethereans in the book to sink a battleship”.

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