DROW ROT OR WORD?

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W O R D In the classic tradition of the famous SATOR word square, I
O D E R present at the left one example of what may be considered a
R E D O definitive English-language reversal square—if you accept my
D R O W argument. All the words used are perfectly valid:

ODER n a major European river which runs for 540 miles and forms part
REDO vb to do again (unhyphenated form in the OED)
DROW n a fit of illness, a fainting fit, a qualm [Scottish]; a cold
mist approaching to rain, a drizzling shower [Scottish]

A four-by-four reversal word square is not an especially remarkable
achievement, but that is not the point of this discussion.

Some years ago, Dmitri Borgmann in Language on Vacation attempted to
popularize the coinage SEMORDNILAP to describe a word which, when
completely reversed, becomes a different word. (It appears that the
coiner may have been Martin Gardner, in the "Notes" section of the 1961
Dover reprint of Bombaugh's Oddities and Curiosities of Words and
Language.) Darryl Francis is, perhaps, the only writer who uses this
term (readers of Brandreth's The Joy of Lex should be warned that Darryl
was the principal contributor to that work). SEMORDNILAP has, I suggest,
failed to reach the public domain for two very sound reasons. First, the
reversing of SEMORDNILAP produces PALINDROMES, but a word with reversal
quality is not a 'palindromes'. SEMORDNILAP is simply a word written
backwards and with far less aptness than examples such as LASREVER or
~~G~~A.

Second (and more significantly), the term fails to trip lightly
off the tongue.

Now consider word-reversal coinings which made the grade. First, the
classic OHM-MHO. Lord Kelvin proposed MHO as the unit of electrical
conductance of a body having a resistance of one OHM. MHO is now
regularly found in dictionaries. Second, EREWON. When Samuel Butler
wrote of an imaginary Utopian country, he avoided the coinage EREWON,
an unpronounceable true reversal of NOWHERE. Kelvin and Butler got both
aspects right, and both words became established in the language.

What is the right word? I offer DROW. It already possesses several
meanings; why not give it another? DROW is truly a WORD reversed. Plur-
alize it and it still possesses reversal quality: DROWS-
SWORD. Thus, a drow word square is any square of the
SATOR type. Should its construction contain WORD and
DROW, it has self-descriptive properties in addition.

W O R D I rest my case with the word square at the left.