



# Magical Alphabets and Occult Ciphers

by *Trithemius Novus*

Most occultists know the official story of the founding of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. In 1887 Dr William Wynn Westcott, a London coroner interested in the occult, acquired an apparently ancient manuscript written in a cipher. He discovered the key to the cipher and made a transcription. This revealed the fragmentary outlines, written in English, of five mystical, Masonic-style rituals. Westcott invited his friend, S. L. MacGregor Mathers who was, like Westcott, an occultist and a freemason, to expand the material so that the rituals could be performed.

The cipher or code used for the Golden Dawn manuscript was apparently very simple, involving no more than the substitution of one letter for another on some regular basis. It might have been more difficult to decipher if the original author of the cipher manuscript had used the Poly-alphabetic system described in this article.

## Simple Codes and Ciphers

A code is a system whereby the letters of a message are changed into different letters or symbols to disguise the original meaning of the message. Whereas a code can use any kind of symbol, a cipher involves only the manipulation of letters. Popular books on occultism often publish magical alphabets, which are the simple codes used by medieval and renaissance magicians to conceal the Names of Power they used in their spells and talismans.

For example, the talismans which appear on the cover of each issue of *Magic Pentacle* use the magical alphabet which was printed in "The History and Practice of

Magic" by Paul Christian [1870]. He says that it was used in 1785 by the Sicilian occultist, freemason and revolutionary Cagliostro. The Magical Alphabet of Cagliostro is illustrated in Figure 1. You can use it to decipher the talismans. Figure 2 shows what Cagliostro is said to have described as the true and original symbol of the Rose-Cross. It incorporates several letters from the same Magical Alphabet.

## Temurah - Cipher of the Qabalah

Advanced students of the Qabalah will be familiar with the method of Temurah, or Exchanges, which is nothing other than a system of simple ciphers whereby one letter is exchanged for another. For example, the Temurah known as Athbash, turns the Hebrew alphabet over on itself, thus:

A B G D H W Z Ch T Y K  
Th Sh R Q Ts P Ay S N M L

Letters in the plaintext (the original text) are exchanged for the equivalent letters in the other line.

The ancient Jewish prophet, Jeremiah, used this cipher when preaching against the conquering Babylonians, turning BaBeL, the Hebrew name for Babylon, into SheShaK.

## Solving simple ciphers

Such simple substitution codes and ciphers are easily cracked, especially if the message is long enough for the solver to make use of frequency tables. A frequency table lists how often, on average, the letters of any alphabet are likely to appear in any long message. The following Frequency Table is from a book about





spies' use of codes, "Cloak and Cypher" by D. T. Moore and M. Waller [Harrap, 1964] It shows how often each letter of the English alphabet is likely to appear in any group of 1000 letters, reading down the columns:

E 131	S 61	U 25	K 4
T 105	H 53	Y 20	X 2
A 82	D 38	P 20	J 1
O 80	L 34	G 20	Q 1
N 71	F 29	W 15	Z 1
R 68	C 28	B 14	
I 63	M 25	V 9	

**Poly-alphabetic ciphers**

In 1586, a brilliant French nobleman, Blaise de Vigenere, who was also an alchemist, an astrologer and an occultist, developed a remarkably simple but very successful cipher system, known by his name to this day. In simple ciphers, each

letter of the plaintext is always represented by the same letter of the enciphered text. However, the de Vigenere system uses a table of alphabets, which is shown in Figure 2, and a key word or phrase, which is known only to the sender and receiver of the message, so that any letter of the plain text could end up as any of several different letters in the cipher.

**The Illuminati File**

Expert cryptanalysts have all sorts of methods, many of which are described in Moore and Waller, to decipher even the complex poly-alphabetic ciphers like De Vigenere's.

One of the earliest documented decipherings of the De Vigenere Method is recorded in a file, named The Illuminati Conspiracy, originally opened in 1805 by the British Depot of Military Knowledge,



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Figure 2: THE DE VIGENERE ALPHABET TABLE

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
A	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B
B	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C
C	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D
D	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E
E	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F
F	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G
G	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H
H	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I
I	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J
J	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K
K	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L
L	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M
M	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N
N	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O
O	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P
P	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q
Q	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R
R	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S
S	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T
T	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V	U
U	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W	V
V	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X	W
W	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y	X
X	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z	Y
Y	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	Z
Z	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A

the first permanent British intelligence service. It includes a book, enciphered by the De Vigenere Method, which contains the names of conspirators who plotted a revolution in England, financed by Napoleon, but master-minded by the leaders of a masonic group which called itself the Illuminati. The founder of the Illuminati, Adam Weishaupt, is named. All the members of the U. K. branch of the Illuminati conspiracy executed.

**The de Vigenere Method**

Let us encipher the following piece of occult wisdom, from the secret teachings of the 23rd degree of the ancient magical order, the Dragons of the Dungeon:

*FIVE ARE THE SPELLS IN SORCERY*

The Keyword will be the Name of the Angelic Intelligence which rules the 23rd Grade from the Inner Planes of Power, a Coptic demon of the hierarchy of Mercury:

MAKS-ED-RUM.

**Step 1:**

Print the message across your worksheet, putting Xs for the spaces between words. Underneath it write out the Keyword, over and over again, to make a second row.

FIVEXAREXTHEXSPELLSXINXSORCERY  
 MAKSEDRUMMAKSEDRUMMAKSEDRUMMAK  
 HSPOHDAQPTTGVAONJBUDCFHLDDKIJM



**Step 2:**

In a third row, fill in the letters for the cipher-text. You will find them in the De Vigenere Table in Figure 2, where the rows refer to the Keyword and the columns refer to the plaintext.

Put a ruler across the Table under Row M, the first letter of the Keyword. Look across the top of the Table until you find Column F, the first letter of the plaintext.

Run your eye down Column F until you reach Row M. There you will find the letter H. This the first letter of the cipher. Write it in at the beginning of the third row of your worksheet.

Next, you look along Row A [second letter of the key word] until you find Column I [second letter of the plaintext]. Row A and Column I intersect at the letter S; and so on. In practice, experienced cryptographers will fill in the ciphers for all the plaintext letters above the Key letter M first, then do all the letters of the plain text above A; then all those above K; and so on.

**Step 3:**

Spies usually break the message up into groups of five letters for transmission to their masters by secret courier. However, because this is magical wisdom and will be written in a Grimoire, the message might be arranged in the form of magic squares.

**Magic Squares**

There is some evidence to suggest that many of the mysterious magic letter squares to be found in the grimoires and alchemical texts are in fact cipher messages, requiring only knowledge of the Key word to solve them.

In addition to the phrase, "Five are the spells of sorcery", already enciphered as an example, I also enciphered the names of the five different kinds of spells. I ended up with 79 letters, to which I added an X to

make it 80 and then divided the 80 letters into 8 groups of 8 and 4 groups of 4.

**MAGIC SQUARES**

from *The Grimoire of the Great Dragon*.

**A MAGIC SQUARE OF MERCURY**

as revealed by the Great Intelligence of the 23rd sphere.

H	S	P	O	H	D	A	Q
P	T	T	G	V	A	O	N
J	B	U	D	C	F	H	L
D	D	K	I	J	M	V	C
D	A	B	V	E	L	O	M
T	D	F	G	S	V	D	I
Y	N	L	N	X	I	Z	Y
D	S	R	K	F	Q	Z	T

**A MAGIC SQUARE OF JUPITER**

D	G	F	M
P	A	S	I
B	P	G	G
A	Q	Y	X

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