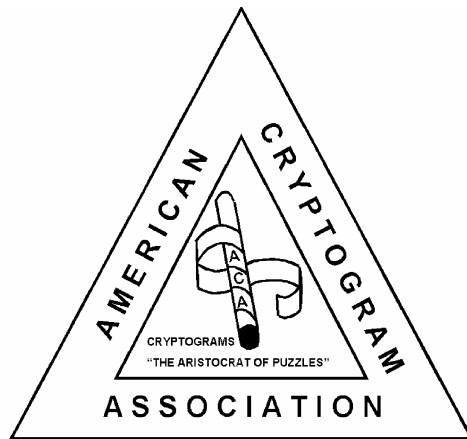


The ACA and You

A HANDBOOK FOR THE MEMBERS OF
THE AMERICAN CRYPTOGRAM ASSOCIATION



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WELCOME!

It is a great pleasure to greet you as a new member of the American Cryptogram Association. Draw up a chair and take your place at our round table to participate in the various activities of your organization. We are a strictly volunteer organization and expect members to help.

You should have received a copy of the ACA membership directory when you joined; find a member living near you who is willing to talk, or write to a member who may live across town, across the state, across the country, or even in another country. Many members have email addresses and that has become a good way for many to contact each other. Fellow members can often answer your questions, or you may enjoy a solving session together, exchanging tips and tricks.

Please feel free to write, email, or phone any of the Officers or Editors about any questions you may have or any problems on which you may be stuck. The mailbox and the door are always open.

Make yourself at home – and Good Solving!

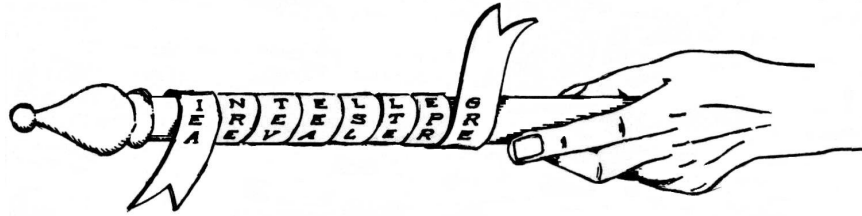
Preface to the 2005 Edition

This publication is not meant to be a how-to-solve book. However, over the years there are many members who have successfully used it toward that purpose. It is intended as an introduction to the ACA: history, terminology, and descriptions and guidelines for encrypting the various types of ciphers used in *The Cryptogram*. It is a handbook, and to expect more is to expect too much.

This edition differs from the 1988 edition in corrections to and re-ordering of the text, the addition of details of the Monome-Dinome cipher and Headlines, updated reading lists, and activities. A more comprehensive Table of Contents should make finding what you are looking for easier. Care has been taken not to split the description of a particular cipher across page boundaries. Feel free to use the extra space for notes or doodles. At the back are appendices containing Morse code symbols, Vigenère, Variant, Beaufort and Porta Tables.

For ease of use, the various tables are printed as an insert on heavier paper. It is hoped that this will cause less flipping frustration when trying to figure out a cipher in another part of this publication. It might prove handy to carry with you as you travel.

To the volunteers, known and unknown, who assisted with the production of this publication, thank you.



WHAT IS THE SCYTALE?

Scytale (fr. Gr. skytale). Spartan message in (transposition) cipher. The meaning of the Greek term is stick, staff, club, or pole.

The scytale is the official symbol of the ACA and is the center of the ACA emblem found on the front cover. The word is Greek and is pronounced sitaly, (as in Italy) or perhaps as skitaly – but never as sky-tail.

Originally it described a rod or baton carried as a badge of office. It is still used by military officers today. Used as an early enciphering device, a parchment was wrapped spirally around it, and the text was written-in lengthwise. A similar rod at the receiving end permitted correct decipherment. The word scytale is now used for the message as well as the media.

A reference to a scytale is found in an Ode by Pindar in 468 B.C.; and an early English reference is in North's translation of Plutarch's "Life of Lysander", dated 1595. North did not bother to translate the term. The Romans used the word "scytala", changing only the suffix to make the word behave according to the rules of Latin grammar.

Above is an artist's impression of how it might work in practice. We've added a Latin tag reading INTELLEGERE EST PRAEVALERE. To understand is to succeed. As with all good mottoes, it reads as well backwards as forwards.

(For a more detailed discussion of the history of the scytale, and how to pronounce it, please refer to DENDA's article in *The Cryptogram* JA75 et seq.)