



John Hart, *An Orthographie* (1569)

John Hart (c.1501-74), the Chester herald of the College of Arms in London, addresses his book to "the doubtfull of the English Orthographie" – those who are uncertain about how the language should be spelled because of prevailing "confusion and disorder". Its full title is *An orthographie, conteyning the due order and reason, howe to write or paint thimage of mannes voice, most like to the life or nature*. Hart's remarkable work was the first systematic exposition of the belief that spelling should reflect pronunciation. Nearly half of the book is written in his phonic system, which gets rid of what he calls a "superfluite" of letters, such as the extra letters at the end of hadde (had). Orthographie is respelled in the running heads. He disliked "silent letters", preferring to show long vowels with diacritics, such as the dot beneath the letter for a long 'i' (as in eye). Hart is unequalled in the phonetic detail of his proposals and, although his particular system was never adopted, his views helped to form the climate that would eventually shape the character of English spelling.

An Orthography.

An exercis ov dat huiſe iz sed: huer-in iz de-
clard, how de veſt ov de conſonants ar mad
bei diſtruments ov de mout: huiſe
uaz omitted in de premiſez, for dat
wi did not muſe abiuze
dem. Cap. viij.

In dis titel abuv-writen, ei konſi-
der ov de i, in exercis, & ov de
u, in instruments: de leik ov de
i, in titel, huiſe de kómon man,
and mani lernd, du ſound in de
diphthongs ei, and iu: ict ei
uld not ſink it mit to ureit dem, in doz
and leik wds, huer de ſound ov de voel on-
li, me bi as uel allowed in our ſpiſe, as dat ov
de diphthong iuzd ov de riud: and ſo far ei álon
obſervation for derivations. / hierbei in me
perſev, dat our ſing& ſounding and ius of let-
ters, me in proſez ov teim, bring our hol naſion
tu on ſerten, perſet and general ſpeking. /
/huer-in ſi muſt bi rivulded bei de lernd from
teim tu teim. / and ei kan not blam ani man
tu ſink diſ maner ov niu ureiting ſtranz, for
ei du konfés it iz ſtranz, tu mei ſelf, doh beſer
ei

An Orthography.

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ei hav ended de ureiting, and in de riding ov
diſ buk, ei drut not bod in and ei ſal ſink
our laburs uel beſtoed. / and not-uid-ſtan-
ding dat ei hav devizd diſ niu maner ov urei-
ting for our ſingliſ, ei mién not dat / Latin
ſuld bi-writ in dez leters, no moy den de
/grik or /hebru, neder uld ei ureit t' ani
man ov ani ſtranz naſion in dez leters, but
huen az ei-uld ureit ſingliſ. / and az ei-uld
gladli konterfet hiſ ſpiſe wid mei tung, ſo-uld
ei hiſ ureiting wid mei hand. / ict huo kuld
let mi t' iuz mei pen de beſt ei kuld, derbei t'
áten de ſuner tu de perſet pronunſiation, ov a-
ni ſtranz ſpiſe: but ureiting ſingliſ, wi me
(az is ſed) iuz for evri ſtranz wrd, de ſam
marks or leters ov de voices huiſe wi du ſeind in
ſpiſe, widout ani-uder regard tu dió bei-urei-
ting huens de-wrd iz boroed, den az wi du-in
ſpeking. / for suſe kuriozite in ſuperfluz le-
ters, for derivation or diſcrens, and ſo furth, iz
de diſordring and konſounding, ov ani-urei-
ting: kontrari tu de lau-ov de perfeſion der-
of, and agénſt aul rezon: huer-bei, it ſuld bi o-
bedient untu de pronunſiation, az tu hir ladi-
and miſtres: and ſo, ad or diminid az ſi ſaul
in sukses ov teim kómaund. / furder bi-in

Nil

ad ver-

An exercise of that which is said: wherein is declared, how the rest of the consonants are made by the instruments of the mouth: which was omitted in the premisses, for that we did not much abuse them. Chapter vii

In this title above-written, I consider of the i, in exercise, & of the u, in instruments: the like of the i, in title, which the common man, and many learned, do sound in the diphthongs ei, and iu: yet I would not think it meet to write them, in those and like words, where the sound of the vowel only, may be as well allowed in our speech, as that of the diphthong used of the rude: and so far I allow observation for derivations. ≈ / Hereby you may perceive, that our single sounding and use of letters, may in process of time, bring our whole nation to one certain, perfect and general speaking.

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