



## 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 exercisz ov dat huiſe iz sed: huer-in iz de-  
clard, bou 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.

**I**n dis titel abuv-writen, ei konſi-  
der ov de i, in exercisz, & ov de  
u, in iſtruments: de leik ov de  
i, in titel, huiſe de kómon man,  
and mani lernd, du ſound in de  
diphthongs ei, and iu: iet 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. / iet 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 diſo 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 perfektion 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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