

The Writing of Parts

Before we take in hand the instruments wherewith to write an epistle or letter, we haue to consider these pointes following: to wit, the estate, dignitie, or qualitie of hym vnto whom we write: whyther he bee a publike person, or a priuat, whyther he be rich or poore, a friend or an enemye: also whyther he bee well known vnto vs, or but little.

Fulwood, Enemye of Idleness

Salutatio (the opening; within text body)

My dear heart, swete harte,
Right worshipful Lady
Honourable/good/noble lord
Right welbeloued frinde, I greet you well
Unto the right worshipful and full singuler gode lord
Right trusty and welbeloued I commend me humbly unto you
Souveraine Lorde, yn as humble wise as any true liege man can thinke or devise
Of Alle erthely Princes Our most dred souereigne liege Lord and noblest Kyng
Most Gratijs Souereigne.
...To the most perspicacious lord, golden candlestick of the seven liberal arts, shining peak of thinkers, ever gleaming lantern of prowess (Erasmus taking the mickey)

Narratio (the body, no paragraphs)

I thank you/thee for...
Desirous to shew my selfe thankfull.
I am become a great debter vnto youre goodnesse.
Acknowledging my selfe deeply bounde vnto you for manye sundry fauours.
I hope I may render some recompense vnto the benefites from you receyued.
I thank you hertely of the grete besynesse that ye do for me and for the reaulme.
By our faithful wittnesse, the vertues whiche are in you should be knowne vnto all men
Hauing sundry tymes receiued benefites from your honour, I thank thee well.
If I should take vpon me to thanke you, all my wordes would not be able to suffice that which my heart willeth & desireth.

Conclusio (endings, spaced bottom right)

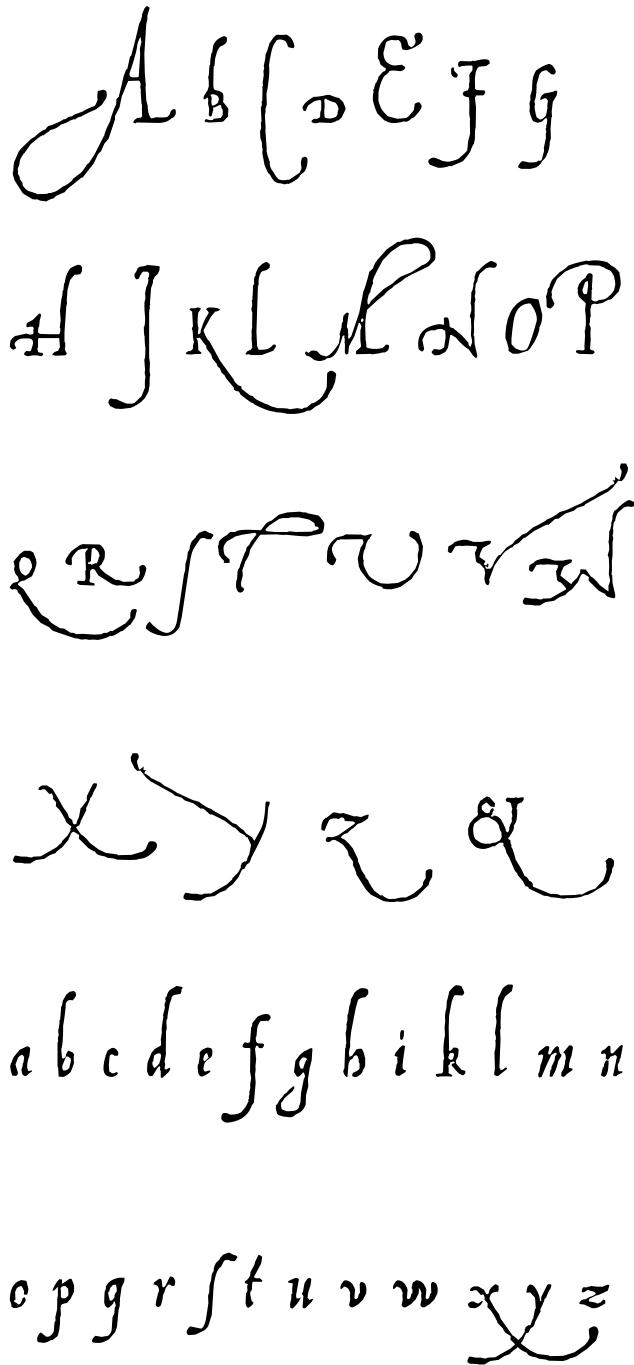
By yours &c.
Your mystrys
No more at this time
Yours as a brother
Youre owne assured
I say my déere adieu
By your faithfull frende for euer
Youre humble subgit and trwe ligeman

By your most humble & obedient seruant with moch worchyppe
So praying for your health, and the increas of your happynes I end
Wishing youre healthe and prosperitie euen as mine owne. &c.
My heartie commendations vnto you remembred.
Reioycing not a little at the health of you and all other our friendes
Whose regarde stretcheth vnto your worship more then vnto any others.

Supercription (addressee on the outside)

...the letter being closed, sealed and packed vp after the finest fashion, whereupon must be written his name to whome the letters shold be addressed, & his dwelling place, (if it be not notoriously knowne) placing therewith the name of his dignitie, Lordship, Office, Nobilitie, or Parentage

To the right Noble & singular good Lord
To my very louing frend, S^r [initials] knight
To my good lady [name] be thys delyueryd
To the moste noble and towardly young gentleman [name] of [place]
To my verie good ladye [name] geffe thys
To the worshipfull his especiall good Maister [name]
To the Quenes most excellent Maiestie



Rough Spelling Conventions

- Use an ordinary s at the end, otherwise long s: *ſ* ; join top to following h, t: *ſh* *ft*
- Generally v at the start, u otherwise (eg vnto = unto; euer = ever)
- i replaces j (eg iuell = jewell; Maiestie)
- i and y can be interchangeable (eg myne = mine)
- i and a j terminal are used in Roman numbers (eg iij = 3; xxvij=27)
- I is the capital for J (eg Iames = James)
- superscript abbreviations (eg w^{t/th} = with)
- double the lls (eg faythefull, littyll, humbill)
- add e at the end (eg frende = friend)
- use a macron to indicate a dropped n (eg demād = demand)
- / = a full stop or change of thought
- no apostrophes, few paragraphs

Example texts from BessofHardwick.org:

...may yt please yow to vndearestand that m^r nyngfeld bath deleuered yow veneson to the quenes magsty n^t my lords most humbill comendacyons (L096)

...I harde nott from you offe All this tyme tyll now whyche drove me in dumpes but now Reryved Agen by your wrytenge vnto me (L065)

My swete harte your trewe & fethefull sole you bere me is more commfortabull to me than Any thyng I can thynke Apon & I gyve him thanks dayly for his benyfates he hathe bestoud of me/ (L071)

Dating/Location

(at the end of the letter within the text body)

- from the courte this munday at noone the xxth of Ianuary
- And so fare you well. Sheffield the xvijth of Ianuary
- this present fryday late at nyghte. the xiiijth of february
- at nonsuch wensday this xxiiijth of marche
- Sonday. xjth of apryll
- Shefelde tuesday mornynge being the xviiij of maye
- /from Hardwyck the second of Iune
- Iuly xv/[year]
- / ydes xj off Awgust
- I wyll sease troblynge you with my crebelynge frome my poore howse at Chattysworthe the laste of September. [year].
- And so I take my leave, from London the xiiijth of October.
- god kepe your honour well 7th nouembr.
- at sheffield this sixth of desembar

Other Dating Formats

Saints Days: Feast Days, Eve of,
Translation of (movement of relics)
Nones and Ides: 5/13 or 7/11 days
May 1 2020 starts Anno Societatis 55

katherine kerr: <http://webcentre.co.nz/kk>