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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1800-1800

A COMMON WRITING

(A Collection of Facsimile Manuscripts)

Edited and Printed by



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

ENGLISH LINGUISTICS
1500—1800

(A Collection of Facsimile Reprints)

Selected and Edited by
R. C. ALSTON

No. 147

THE SCOLAR PRESS LIMITED
MENSTON, ENGLAND
1969

FRANCIS LODOWYCK

A COMMON WRITING
1647



A Scholar Press Facsimile

THE SCOLAR PRESS LIMITED
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THE SCOLAR PRESS LIMITED
20 Main Street, Menston, Yorkshire, England

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ABe 23 Apr 69



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Printed in Great Britain by
The Scholar Press Limited
Menston, Yorkshire, England

NOTE

Reproduced (original size) by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. Shelf-mark: E.378 (16).

Francis Lodowick's *Common Writing*, although brief, is nevertheless an important contribution to the study of language in the seventeenth century, in so far as it "hath no reference to letters, or their Conjunctions in words, according to the severall Languages, but, being rather a kind of hieroglyphical representation of words".

Although the imprint bears the date 1647, Thomason's copy (here reproduced) is marked "March: 2d. 1646". The initials "F.L.W." at the end of the preface stand for "Francis Lodowick Well-willer".

For further notes on Lodowick see the companion work *The Ground-work of a new perfect language*, 1652, reproduced as no. 103 in this series.

Five copies of the original are known: British Museum (E. 378 (16) and 63.1.19); Bodleian Library (Ashm. 1070/7); New York Public Library; Huntington Library; Leiden University.

References: Wing L2814; Alston, VII, 280.

c.m. 4/14/69

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To the Reader.

Courteous Reader, Thou hast here presented to thy view and censure, an Essay of a Common Writing, invented, that may be common to all Languages, that is, that one skilled in the same, shall have no need, for what is written with this writing, to learne any other Language then his mother Tongue, which he already hath; although the writing were written by one, who understood not the readers Language, and writ the said writing according to his owne Language. So that what is once written with this writing, will be legible and intelligible, in all Languages whatsoever, although the reader in any Language, understood but his owne Language, provided as before, he understood this manner of writing.

The reason hereof is, for that this writing hath no reference to letters, or their Conjunctions in words, according to the severall Languages, but, being rather a kind of hieroglyphical representation of words, by so many severall Characters, for each word a Character, and that not at Random, but as each word is either Radical, or derivative, the Radical, have their radicall Cha-

To the Reader.

raçters, the derivatives beare the Character of the Radix of their descent, with some differentall addition, whereby they may be differenced, from other derivatives, proceeding from the said Radix.

The feasibility I shall illustrate by two familiar instances. The first is of the Arithmeticians, whose numericall characters are still the same, although described by those of differentall Languages, as the figure of five (5) is still alike described, whether written by a Dutchman, Englishman, Frenchman; &c. the second instance is of the Physitians, whose medicinall weights are alike characterised, whether in French, English, or Latin Authors. Thus much for the intent of the work.

The manner of handling thereof is this; it is divided in three parts.

The first containes the ground-work of the fabrick, wherein is made use of the Grammaticall distinctions (so farre as they serve our purposes) for a help to shew where the Radix remaines simple, and where it requireth distinctionall additions, in respect of verb or noune.

The second containes the Charactericall description of the distinctionall additions with their manner of application, also a charactericall description, of the undeclined parts of Grammer.

The third containeth a practicall application of the whole work, in an exemplary demonstration of writing,
with

To the Reader.

with notes referring to the two first parts, which parts are so divided, as that they Answer one the other in number of Sections, and in their order.

The harshnesse of the stile, I hope, will be Corrected by the readers ingenuity, who may be pleased to accept this for my apologie in that regard, that this work cometh not from a Scholar, but a mechanick, who notwithstanding, is willing to Contribute of his thoughts, which may in the least tend to the advancement of knowledge, I doubt not this subject might have beene better handled, by some more learned pen. Yet hoping the meannesse of the Attire, will take none off from the perusal thereof, I have adventured it to the common light and censure, thereby to allure a more abler wit and Pen, to a compleate attyring and perfecting of the Subject, that so some benefit may accrue unto the Common-wealth of Learning. Which is the desire of, &c.

F.L.W.

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A



A Common VVriting, &c.

The first Part, and first Section.

Language, the expression or outward representation of the mind, is considerable
 in the } Radixes.
 } Derivatives.

The Radixes are those } Action.
 which signifie } No Action.

Those which signifie Action, are the Verball Radixes, as *to write, to stand, &c.*

Those which signifie no Action, are comprehended under foure sorts :

1. Nounes Substantives, as *hand, foot, &c.*
2. Pronounes, as *I, thou, we, &c.*
3. Nounes Adjectives, as *good, bad, &c.*
4. The foure undeclined parts of Grammar, as *Adverb, Preposition, Interjection, and Conjunction.*

Of the Nounes Substantives and Adjectives, are to be framed Verbes, and the said to be looked on as Radicall, as hereafter will be said. These with the rest being collected, (which will be the subject of a *Lexicon* intended) the number of them may be contracted, thus:

Many



