

**ALEXANDER
SCHOOLMASTER
HUME**



N. DE FERRELL
MYSTERIOS
DA INQUISICAO
DE HESPAHIA

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**OF THE ORTHOGRAPHIE
AND CONGRUITIE
OF THE BRITAN TONGUE**

Alexander schoolmaster Hume

Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue

**A Treates, noe shorter than necessarie, for the
Schooles**

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PREFACE.

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The following Tract is now printed for the first time from the original Manuscript in the old Royal Collection in the Library of the British Museum (Bibl. Reg. 17 A. xi). It is written on paper, and consists of forty-five leaves, the size of the pages being 5¾ in. by 3¾ in. The dedication, the titles, and the last two lines, are written with a different coloured ink from that employed in the body of the MS., and appear to be in a different handwriting. It is probable that the tract was copied for the author, but that he himself wrote the dedication to the King.

The Manuscript is undated, and we have no means of ascertaining the exact time when it was written; but from a passage in the dedication to James I. of England, it is fair to infer that it was written shortly after the visit of that monarch to Scotland, subsequent to his accession to the throne of the southern kingdom, that is, in the year 1617. This would make it contemporaneous with Ben Jonson's researches on the English Grammar; for we find, in 1629, James Howell (Letters, Sec. V. 27) writing to Jonson that he had procured Davies' Welch Grammar for him, "to add to those many you have." The grammar that Jonson had prepared for the press was destroyed in the conflagration of his study; so that the posthumous work we now possess consists merely of materials, which were printed for the first time in 1640, three years after the author's death.

The Dedication of this Tract is merely signed *Alexander Hume*, and contains no other clue to the authorship. Curiously enough there were four Alexander Humes living about the same time, and three of them were educated at St. Mary's College, St. Andrew's; only two, however, became authors, the first of whom was Minister of Logie, and wrote *Hymnes or Sacred Songes*. There can be little doubt, however, that the present grammar was written by the Alexander Hume who was at one time Head Master of the High School, Edinburgh, and author of *Grammatica Nova*.

From Dr. Steven's History of the High School, Edinburgh, and from M'Crie's Life of Melville, I have been enabled to extract and put together the following scanty particulars of our author's life:—The time and place both of his birth and of his death are alike unknown; but he himself, on the title of one of his works, tells us that he was distantly connected with the ancient and noble family of Home, in the county of Berwick. He was educated at the school of Dunbar, under the celebrated Andrew Simson, and in due time was enrolled a student in St. Mary's College, St. Andrew's, and then took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1574. He came to England, and was incorporated at Oxford January 26, 1580-81, as "M.of A. of St. Andrew's, in Scotland."¹ He spent sixteen years in England, partly engaged in studying and partly in teaching. During the latter part of this term he was a schoolmaster at Bath, as appears from Dr. Hill's answer to him, published in 1592; and the fact of his residence in this city is corroborated at page 18 of the present treatise. He then returned to Scotland, having gained a reputation for the excellence of his learning and for the power he

possessed of communicating it to others. On the dismissal of Hercules Rollock, Rector of the High School, Edinburgh, from his office, Hume was unanimously chosen to succeed him, and his appointment was dated 23rd April, 1596. During his incumbency the High School underwent many changes, and received the form which it retains to the present day. In March, 1606, Hume resigned his office to become principal master in the grammar school founded a short time previously, at Prestonpans, by the munificent John Davidson, minister of the parish. The following document gives an account of Hume's admission to this school:—

“At hadintoun y^e 25 of Junij 1606. The q^{lk} day M^r Joⁿ ker minister of y^e panis productit y^e prēntat^{one} of M^r Alex^r hoome to be schoolm^r of y^e schoole of y^e panis foundit be M^r J^o Davedsone for instructioun of the youth in hebrew, greek and latine subscrivet be yais to quhome M^r Joⁿ davedsone gave power to noiāt y^e man q^{lk} prēntat^{one} y^e prēbrie allowit and ordenit y^e moderator & clerk to subscribe y^e samine in y^r names q^{lk} yay ded. As also ordeanit y^t y^e said kirk of y^e panis suld be visited upon y^e eight day of Julij next to come for admisioun of y^e said M^r Alex^r to y^e said office. The visitors wer appoyntit M^r Ar^d oswald M^r Robert Wallace M^r George greir M^r andro blackhall & M^r andro Maghye to teach.”——“At Saltprestoun July 8, 1606. The hail parischoners being poisit how yay lyckit of y^e said M^r Alex^r w^t vniforme consent being particularly inqwyrir schew y^r guid lycking of him and y^r willingnes to accept and receiv him to y^e said office Q^rupon y^e said M^r Alex^r wes admittit to y^e said office & in token of y^e approba^{one}

both of visitors & of y^e parischonēs p^{rnt} both y^e ane and y^e vother tuik y^e said M^r Alex^r be y^e hand & y^e haill magistratis gentlemen and remanēt parischoners p^{rnt} faithfullie p^rmisit to cōcurre for y^e furtherāce of y^e work y^t yit restis to be done to y^e said schoole as also to keipt y^e said M^r Alex^r and his scholleris skaithlis finallie for farther authorizing of y^e said (*sic*) it wes thought meitt y^t y^e haill visitors & parichonēs p^{rnt} suld enter y^e said M^r Alex^r into y^e said schoole & y^r heir him teache q^{lk} also wes doone.” (Rec. of Presb. of Haddington).²

The school rapidly rose to distinction under Hume, but in 1615 he relinquished his position, and accepted the Mastership of the Grammar School of Dunbar, then in high repute, and the very same school in which he had commenced his own education. When occupied at Dunbar, Hume had the honour of being the first who, in a set speech, welcomed James VI. back to his Scottish dominions, after an absence of fourteen years. The King stopped on his way northward from Berwick on the 13th of May, 1617, at Dunglass Castle the residence of the Earl of Home, and Hume, as the orator of the day, delivered a Latin address.

The date of Hume's death is not known; but he was witness to a deed on the 27th of November, 1627; and later still, in the records of the Privy Council of Scotland, 8th and 16th July, 1630, Mr. D. Laing tells me that there is a memorandum of the King's letter anent the Grammar of Mr. Alexander Hume, "schoolmaster at Dunbar." With regard to his private life, we know that he was married to Helen Rutherford, and had two sons and a daughter born to him in Edinburgh between the years 1601 and 1606. He was the