

XXIII.—American Classical Scholarship and Caleb Alexander

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Caleb Alexander has more "firsts" to his credit than possibly any other American classical scholar. Although he did not break fully with the textbook patterns already established, he pioneered in that direction and gave strong support to the nationalistic movement in American life and literature. His career of preacher, teacher, textbook writer, missionary and educational founder exemplified the best American tradition. He deserves an honorable place in the annals of American education and classical scholarship.

Pre-Revolutionary education in America was primarily classical in content and English in tradition and origin. Although many texts were printed in the Colonies before 1776, these were mostly reprints or revisions of English works.¹ Political independence did not immediately put a stop either to this practice or to the importation of school books published in England, but it did create an atmosphere in which comparable American productions were fostered. Among the leaders in this nationalistic movement few have received less attention than Caleb Alexander.²

I

The paternal forebears of Caleb Alexander were among the earliest emigrants from Scotland to America.³ One of these had settled on land bought from the Indians at Northfield, Massa-

¹ Cf. Charles Evans, *American Bibliography*, 1-12 (Chicago, 1903-34). A chronological list of books, pamphlets, etc. published in America between 1639 and 1799.

² For an interesting account of the movement and its principal leader, see Harry R. Warfel, *Noah Webster Schoolmaster To America* (New York, 1936). Unless otherwise stated all references to Webster are taken from this work. Alexander the "Boston textbook maker" is mentioned only once (p. 290) in connection with his *Columbian Dictionary* (see below, pp. 419-420 and note 55).

³ Unless otherwise indicated the statements about Alexander's life and career are based on the following sources: (1) "Caleb Alexander," in *Annals of the American Pulpit*, edited by W. B. Sprague, 3 (New York, 1858) 405-08. This brief account was written by his son William H. Alexander of Syracuse, New York. It contains some errors which are corrected by the other two sources. (2) *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Yale College*, edited by Franklin B. Dexter, 3 (New York, 1903) 644-49. (3) Three letters dated November 11, 1949, January 26, 1950 and March 12, 1950, by Carew Sheldon and Miss Marion C. Sheldon of Buffalo, New York. To the writers of these, who are descendants of Caleb Alexander, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness for their helpful cooperation.

chusetts, and there on his father Simeon's farm Caleb Alexander was born on July 22, 1755. Little is known of his early life and education. When the Revolution began he was a Junior at Dartmouth, but on President Eleazar Wheelock's recommendation he transferred to Yale for his senior year and graduated there in the class of 1777.⁴

Immediately after graduation he began the study of theology under Rev. Ephraim Judson (Yale 1763) in Norwich, Connecticut, and received his license to preach in 1778.⁵ In his first pastorate at New Marlboro, Massachusetts he met and married Lucinia Strong, whose father, Rev. Thomas Strong (Yale 1740), Alexander had succeeded. After serving this church for about three years he was dismissed, apparently because the members did not share his views on the Covenant, but more likely because they did not like the "directness and pungency of his preaching."⁶

The next few years were undoubtedly difficult for the young minister and his wife. In 1785, however, after serving as temporary pastor in Harwinton, Connecticut he received a call to Mendon, Massachusetts and entered upon his duties there early the following year.

At Mendon Alexander, at the age of 31, began what was to be in many ways the most productive period of his life. His accomplishments in the next sixteen years were little short of miraculous. In addition to his pastoral activities he founded a school and began to teach. As an outgrowth of his experience in the classroom and because of dissatisfaction with available texts, he wrote and published with incredible rapidity five grammatical works in English,⁷

⁴ President Wheelock's letter to Naphtali Daggett, acting President of Yale, gives no specific reason for his recommendation. The financial condition of Dartmouth was not good, and opportunities at Yale may have been educationally better. Cf. James D McCallum, "Eleazar Wheelock," in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 20 (New York, 1936) 58-59.

⁵ By the Eastern Association of Ministers of New London County, Groton, Conn.

⁶ The phrase occurs in Sprague and is repeated by Dexter. See above, note 3.

⁷ Only enough of each title will be given to indicate its subject: (1) *A Grammatical System of the English Language*. Boston, 1792. Revised many times, this was the most popular of all his books. The tenth edition was published in 1811. (2) *Grammatical Elements*, or, a comprehensive theory of English Grammar. Boston, 1793. The copyright of this text (Massachusetts had passed a Copyright Law in 1783) was sold to the Printers, I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, for the magnificent sum of \$133.33! Sheldon, *op. cit.* (above, note 3). It may have been issued by them subsequently under a different title. (3) *An Introduction to the speaking and writing of the English Language*, according to grammatical rules. Boston, 1794. Possibly only

two textbooks in Latin,⁸ a Greek grammar,⁹ a complete translation of Vergil,¹⁰ and a system of Arithmetic.¹¹ As if these were not sufficient to evince proper "stewardship" of his time, he became the first American to compile a large English dictionary and to edit the New Testament in Greek.¹² Add to all these his *opera minora* — sermons, Biblical essays and a short "scientific account"¹³ — and it would seem safe to say that few among his contemporaries contributed more to American life and education in the post-Revolutionary period than Caleb Alexander.

Since it is impossible to attempt a complete evaluation of Alexander's contributions in this paper, let us turn to a consideration of his classical texts.

II

- (1) A Grammatical Institute of the Latin Language: Intended for the use of Latin schools, in the United States . . . Published according to Act of Congress. Printed at Worcester, Massachusetts, by Isaiah Thomas . . . 59th Massachusetts District Copyright, issued to Isaiah Thomas, as Proprietor, 24 February, 1794.
- (2) A New Introduction to the Latin Language: Being an attempt to exemplify the Latin syntax, and render familiar to the mind the grammatical construction of this useful language: containing critical and explanatory notes on all the rules of government and agreement. . . . Published according to Act of Congress. Worcester, (Massachusetts) Printed by Isaiah Thomas jun. for Isaiah Thomas: . . . 77th Mass. District Copyright, issued to Isaiah Thomas, as Proprietor, 8 April, 1795.

The second of these two texts, as the author himself stated, was the first of its kind written and published in America. The two

this edition. (4) The Young Gentlemen and Ladies' *Instructor* . . . A Reading Book. Boston, 1797. (5) The Young Ladies and Gentlemen's *Spelling Book*. Providence, 1797. This was revised several times.

⁸ See below, pp. 405-414.

⁹ See below, pp. 414-416.

¹⁰ See below, pp. 414, 416-419.

¹¹ A New and Complete System of *Arithmetic*. Albany, 1802. The second edition was published in Albany in 1806, and a third in 1813.

¹² See below, pp. 419-420.

¹³ "Account of eruptions, and the present Appearances, in West-River Mountain," in *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Memoirs, 1 (Boston, 1785) 316-17. The sermons included one occasioned by the death of George Washington (Boston, 1800), and the essays, *An essay on the real deity of Jesus Christ* (Boston, 1791).

together also formed the first instance of American-written Latin texts designed to be studied in sequence.¹⁴ As the date of publication would suggest, the *New Introduction* was the sequel volume. Since the author was conscious that he was introducing an innovation, in the Preface he set forth his reasons for doing so, the models or sources used, and suggestions for the guidance of teacher and student.

One of the reasons which the author gave reflected the nationalistic movement in American letters, of which Noah Webster was the leading spirit and most articulate spokesman:¹⁵ "To prevent the necessity of sending to Europe for books, that are wanted and used in American schools." In elaboration of this motive he stated the case plainly and boldly:

"To the *Republican Sons of America* this reason will appear not only plausible but conclusive. As our independence is now fully established, as the arts and sciences are now flourishing among us, and men of literature and genius constantly rising up and appearing on the glorious and extensive theatre of knowledge, so we ought not to depend on European pens, for the composition of books, that may be composed by our own sons. If, by blinded partiality for British productions, we neglect our own, the stimulus to genius and exertion will be blunted, and our servility will too clearly appear."¹⁶

Among the many English-written Latin texts long used in America there was one by John Clarke (1687-1734), a reprint of which had appeared as late as 1786.¹⁷ It was dissatisfaction with this text which had given Alexander a second reason and perhaps immediate occasion for writing his own. He used it as his primary model and, in keeping with the established practice, incorporated material not only from it but from two other English-written Latin

¹⁴ It is also the first instance I have been able to find, in which two such texts were written by the same author. John Clarke (1687-1734) wrote his *Introduction* as a sequel for Ward's new edition of Lily (London, 1732?). For the most complete account of Lily, see Vincent J. Flynn's unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The Life and Works of William Lily, the Grammarian* (The University of Chicago, 1939). For a shorter and perhaps more accessible account, see Flynn's edition of William Lily's *A Shorte Introduction of Grammar* (New York, Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1945). This is the famous "Shakespeare" edition, published in 1567. The original of this facsimile is in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D. C.

¹⁵ Cf. Warfel, *op. cit.* (above, note 2).

¹⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Alexander are from the Preface to *A New Introduction* (see above, p. 405).

¹⁷ *An Introduction to the Making of Latin* (from the 24th London edition), Worcester, Massachusetts.

texts as well.¹⁸ "At which it is thought," he said, "that no one will be offended, especially since it is right to profit by the labours of our predecessors."

To give a clear idea of his method and to provide a basis for comparison with Clarke's *Rules*, a chapter from the *New Introduction*, with *Notes* from the Appendix, will be given. The chapter on Relative Pronouns was chosen because it is a good example of the early grammatical approach.

Alexander

Chap. V.

The Relative agrees with its Antecedent, in Number, Gender and Person.

When there is no Nominative between the Relative and the Verb, the Relative is the Nominative.

When a Nominative comes between the Relative and the Verb, the Relative is governed by the Verb, or some other word in the Sentence, on which it depends.

A member of a Sentence is often the Antecedent to a Relative.²⁰

Clarke

Chap. V.

The *Relative agrees with a # Substantive foregoing, called the Antecedent, in Gender, Number, and Person; which, if there be no other, is the Nominative Case to the Verb; if there be, is governed of it, or some other Word in the sentence.

Relativum cum Antecedente, &c.
Quoties nullus Nominativus, &c.
At si Nominativus, &c.¹⁹

* Interrogatives and Indefinites follow the Rule of the Relative.

The Substantive may be found by asking the Question Who or What, with the Verb.

¹⁸ John Mair, *An Introduction To Latin Syntax*, and Nathan Bailey, *English and Latine Exercises for School-Boys*. Bailey's text was reprinted in Boston in 1720. The first American edition of Mair's was published in Philadelphia in 1799. Ironically enough this may have been caused by Alexander's references to it in his own text. If so, he was unconsciously promoting a rival book. The failure of his own book to have a second edition, however, may have another explanation: the Printer apparently owned the copyright. If a second edition was issued it was not under the original author's name.

¹⁹ These are the beginning words of three paragraphs in the section "Concordantia Relatiui & Antecedentis" of Lily's *Brevissima Institutio*. See above, note 14. Although Alexander does not say so, this dependence of the student on the *Brevissima* may have been another reason for his objections to the use of Clarke's text. See following note.

²⁰ The "entire omission of some rules" is Alexander's first stated objection to Clarke's text. Although Alexander's fourth rule as quoted above is not specifically stated by Clarke, it is found in Lily following the first paragraph to which Clarke refers. Because the section in Lily, "Concordantia Relatiui & Antecedentis," is the ultimate source for statements on the Relative by most of the early grammarians, it is quoted in full, except for the illustrations:

(a) Relatiuum cum Antecedente concordat genere, numero & persona: . . .

(b) Nec vnica vox solum, sed interdum etiam oratio ponitur pro Antecedente: . . .

The sentences which follow are taken from Alexander. Of the 19 in Chapter Five only 5 are selected. Three of these are also found in Clarke and one in Mair.²¹

The king is honored, who loveth his subjects; the woman is loved, who hath a fair face.

Rex ille honoro, qui amo subditus suus; mulier amo, qui habeo facies pulcher.

Our country includes all our friends and relations; he, therefore, that loves not his country, is not a man, but a brute. (Clarke)

Noster patria complector omnis amicus noster et cognatus; qui igitur non amo patria, non sum vir, sed bellua.

He is not rich whose money is increased, and whose flocks are many; but he, whose mind is quiet and content. (Clarke)

Ille non sum dives qui pecunia augeo, et qui grex sum multus; sed ille qui animus sum quietus et tranquillus.

He is a good boy, whom glory encourageth and commendation delighteth; he will become an excellent man. (Clarke, Mair)

Sum bonus puer, qui gloria excito et laus delecto; fio egregius vir.

Thou commonly truantest much and art idle, which are pernicious things.

Saepe multum cesso, et sum ignavus, qui sum perniciosus.

- (c) Relatiumu (sic) inter Antecedentia, diuersorum generum collocatum, nunc cum priore conuenit: . . . Nunc cum posteriore: . . .
- (d) Aliquando relatium, aliquando & nomen adiectiuum respondet primitiuo, quod in possessiuo intelligitur: . . .
- (e) Quoties nullus nominatiuus interseritur inter relatiuū & Verbum, relatium erit verbo nominatiuus: . . .
- (f) At si nominatiuus relatiuo & verbo interponatur, relatiuū regetur a verbo, aut ab alia dictione, que cum verbo in oratione locatur: . . .

From the 1567 edition (cf. note 14)

The four rules of Alexander correspond to Lily *a*, *b*, *e* and *f* (so lettered for the sake of clarity). Since the same four are also found in Mair, though not in the same order, it is impossible to say with any assurance which of the two was Alexander's source. Alexander 11 and 3 (below, pp. 410 and 409) correspond with Lily *c* and *d*. These are also found in Mair.

²¹ Chapter V of Clarke contains 7 sentences. This brevity was Alexander's second criticism: "Too few examples for some rules." Alexander's remedy was to print 169 pages as against Clarke's 138 (of the comparable part). The fewness of Clarke's notes, which are given as footnotes, and the length of his book (276 pp.) were Alexander's other objections to it. He remedied the first by 32 pages of notes and the second by omitting the epitomies of Greek and Roman history. The method in the essential part of each text is the same. The sentences in the first half, occasionally only the first third, are shorter than those in the remaining part. Alexander retains the English word order of the Latin sentences throughout. The other two vary that

Although the student's task was obvious and the method one of long standing, the author felt it is necessary to elaborate upon the pedagogical theory involved:

"To those acquainted with the utility of the practice of frequently correcting ungrammatical sentences, either in Latin or English,²² nothing need be said as an inducement of this study. Among the different ways of impressing the docile mind with the nature and beauty of SYNTAX, there is no one more efficacious than the thorough studying of an INTRODUCTION. As the examples can not be corrected without understanding the rules, without feeling, in a sense, the influence and dependence that one word has on another, so this method must clearly have the advantage above all others."

As an aid to the "docile mind" in understanding and applying the rules, "critical and explanatory notes" for each chapter were given in the Appendix. Those for this chapter are typical.

Chapter V.

As the proper construction of the relative is attended with considerable difficulty, it may be suitable to be somewhat prolix in our remarks.

1. If a member of a sentence be the antecedent to a relative; the relative must ever be in *the third person singular and neuter gender*.
3. A pronoun primitive, not expressed, but understood, or a possessive pronoun placed before a relative, is sometimes the antecedent to the relative; and, if occasion require, may have an adjective to agree with it, as if it were expressed.
4. Two or three antecedents singular must have a relative plural, and the relative must be of the same gender and person with that noun, which is the most worthy. And let it be carefully noted, that the first person is more worthy than the second; the second more worthy than the third: Also that the masculine gender is more worthy than the feminine; and the feminine more worthy than the neuter; but if all the antecedents nouns are expressive of things destitute of life, whose genders *in Latin*, are different, then the neuter gender is esteemed most worthy.
5. Interrogatives and indefinites follow the rules of the relative. If a nominative case comes between them and the verb, then they are

order slightly in the second half of the last few chapters and occasionally in the history sections. Clarke alone places the numerals 1-4 before the Latin verbs in his text to indicate conjugation. Many of Alexander's sentences are found in Clarke, and a few in Mair. The rest he adapted chiefly from Cicero, Vergil, Horace and Erasmus. Most of Alexander's notes are found in Mair and Lily. The wording indicates that they were taken mainly from Mair.

²² All the books on English grammar in current use, such as those by Lowth (British), Webster and Alexander himself, had sentences containing "false" syntax.

governed by the verb or some word in the sentence; but if no nominative intervene between them and the verb, then they are the nominative.

6. The antecedent may easily be found by asking the question, who? which? what?²³
7. If *whose* be the English of the relative, then the *Latin* relative must be put in the genitive, either singular or plural, as occasion may require.
8. The antecedent is generally, some substantive noun, either expressed or understood, which goes before the relative, and is sometimes repeated with the relative and ever understood with it, as the word with which it does properly agree. As, cave *voluptatem, quae* est pestis; that is *quae voluptas* est pestis. And again, erant omnino *itineria* duo, *quibus itineribus* domo exire possent: Caes.²⁴
9. The antecedent is sometimes suppressed, in its proper place, and expressed with the relative. As, populo ut placerent *quas* fecisset *fabulas*; for *fabulae* quas *fabulas*: Ter. Sub *qua* nunc recubas *arbore*, *virga* fuit, for *arbor*, sub *qua arbore*: Ovid. *Urbem quam* statuo, *vestra* est: for *urbs, quam urbem*: Virg.
10. The person of the relative is ever the same with that of the antecedent; as, ego, qui doceo; tu, qui discis; lectio, quae docetur; saxum, quod frangitur. The reason is this: The antecedent, which is supposed to be repeated along with the relative, is properly the true nominative to the verb. As, ego, qui *ego* doceo, &c.
11. When the relative is placed between two nouns of different genders, it does sometimes, though rarely, agree with the last. As, animal quem, vocamus hominem: Cic.
12. The relative sometimes, instead of taking the gender of its antecedent, takes the gender of some synonymous word understood. As, earum rerum, *quae prima* mortales dicunt: Sall. *Negotia* is the synonymous word.²⁵

²³ Cf. the last entry under Clarke (above, p. 407).

²⁴ The second example violates Alexander's dictum about "posterior rules," that is, the use of a construction not covered by a preceding rule. He objected to Clarke's occasional practice in this matter, but admitted the difficulty of avoiding it completely. Nowhere in his text does he discuss relative clauses of purpose or characteristic.

²⁵ There is little doubt that Nos. 1, 4, 8-12 were incorporated from Mair (see above, note 18). The eighth edition (Edinburgh, 1777) and the eleventh (Glasgow, 1790) of his *Introduction* each had the same number of pages as the first American edition (1799) which I have consulted. Cf. Alexander's statement (above, p. 407). No. 2 was omitted because it repeats No. 1 for the plural. Nos. 1-5, it is interesting to note, are also found in the *Grammatical Institute* (see II.1.) under *Relatives*, but not in the same order. No. 5 in the earlier book is a simplified version of No. 3 in the later and has a Latin example omitted in the later book: "A possessive pronoun is, sometimes, the antecedent to a relative. As, omnes laudare fortunas meas, qui haberem gnatum tali ingenio praeditum."

To guide the student and help him make proper use of the material the author suggested these three steps, which throw light on his teaching methods:

1. Spend some time studying the nature of the rules at the head of each chapter.
2. Beginning with the first chapter, transpose the examples into *good* Latin, in a fair legible hand, or, if it be more agreeable, it may be read off, distinctly into good Latin. Proceed in this manner through the first chapter. In succeeding chapters read or write about half of each exercise to the end of the book.²⁶
3. Revise the lessons, and finish the remaining part of each chapter.²⁷

It was expected that the student would "obtain considerable information of the Latin Language and Grammar before he shall begin to exercise his genius in correcting the examples of bad grammar." For meeting that need the author's *Grammatical Institute of the Latin Language* was available and recommended.²⁸ The relationship between the two was very close, as he himself implied: "If (students) have my Latin Grammar, (they are requested) to turn to the examples of illustrations, which in the grammar, are given to each rule."²⁹ These illustrations are found in the section on "Syntax," which takes up about one third of the book. The rules given in that section are repeated almost verbatim and frequently in the same order in the *New Introduction*, but without the illustrative sentences.³⁰ The notes or "remarks" on the rules given

²⁶ Sentences in the first part of each chapter are generally much shorter than those in the second (see latter part of note 21). Since the third step calls for a revision of the lessons, which would hardly have been feasible unless the exercises had been written out originally, it seems likely that the oral method was to be used by the better students. Clarke and Mair also suggested supplementary oral exercises.

²⁷ Clarke recommended that students complete half of the first six or eight chapters and then turn back for revision and completion before going on to the next block. Mair's text was so arranged that he found it necessary to give the order in which the rules were to be studied. In this respect his text was far inferior to the others.

²⁸ In the Notes to Chapter 37 of the *New Introduction* he refers the students to the grammar for "my remarks on gerunds and gerundial adjectives." This is one of only two or three specific references.

²⁹ See the preceding and following notes.

³⁰ The sentences omitted from Chapter V (see above, p. 407) are here given:

Homo, qui leges observat, est laudatus; the *man, who* regards the laws, is to be commended.

Foemina (sic), *quae* casta est, amator; a woman, *who* is chaste, is loved.

Deus, quem colimus, *qui* fabricavit mundum, *cujus* munere vivimus, et a *quo* conservamur, est eternus; God, *whom* we worship, *who* made the world, by *whose* favor we live, and by *whom* we are preserved, is eternal.

Amicus meus mortuus est, quod mihi dolori est; *my friend is dead, which* is a grief to me.

in the grammar are also repeated in the later book, often verbatim with examples, and occasionally amplified with material from other parts of the Syntax.³¹

While many of the illustrative sentences were taken from various Latin writers,³² some were made up by the author, and occasionally these reflect the stirring times which had just passed. The following example is found in Remark 3 on Rule II of Pronouns:³³

Ille and *iste* are demonstrative pronouns. When we speak in praise of a person, we use *ille*; as Petrus Czar, *ille magnus*, Peter Czar, *the great*. When we speak in dispraise of a person, we use *iste*: Benedictus Arnold, *iste perfidus*, Benedict Arnold, *the traitor*.

One or two examples introduce local color:³⁴

The distance of one place from another is put in the accusative, or ablative. As, Wigornia distat Providentia *quadraginta millia* passuum; Worcester is *forty miles* distant from Providence.

The most ineffective grammatical treatment, as perhaps was to be expected, is found in the rules and examples given for indirect discourse and use of the subjunctive.³⁵ The distinction between

³¹ Cf. No. 4 (above, p. 409). The first part repeats Remark 3 under Rule IV of Relatives, in the grammar. The part about most worthy genders and persons repeats Remark 2 under Rule VII of Nouns. Mair's text, however, since No. 4 agrees with it, may have been the source for both Remarks in Alexander's grammar.

³² Rule IV (Verbs of gesture: cubo, incedo, etc.) of Nominative with verbs contains the well known "Ast ego, quae Divum incedo *regina*; but I, who move majestically the *queen* of heaven." This is a favorite example from Lily on down.

³³ Rule II reads as follows: "To express possession, or property, the Latins use *meus, tuus, suus, noster, vester*. As, *noster dominus*; *our* master."

³⁴ Noah Webster had found this a useful device to increase the sale of his Speller. Cf. Warfel, *op. cit.*, 63-64. Although Alexander doubtless hoped to achieve the same result, the title page seems to indicate that Isaiah Thomas, the book's printer, owned the copyright. No second edition has been found. Inside the back cover of the *Massachusetts Magazine* (February, 1794) this interesting notice appears under the names of I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews:

Advertising a New Latin Grammar by Caleb Alexander, A Grammatical Institute of the Latin Language. Price 2s3 or 3s in different bindings. To the public: "This concise and comprehensive Grammar is pronounced by good judges, who have examined it, to be the best and most easy introduction to the Latin Language of any now extant; and as a book of this kind has long been wanted, it will no doubt receive that encouragement from Tutors, &c. that it will appear to them to merit. As this book will fully supply the place of a Latin Accidence, and a Grammar of such kinds as are now in use, a considerable saving will be made to the purchaser."

³⁵ Indirect discourse is explained in this way: "A noun or pronoun in the accusative absolute, governs a verb in the infinitive." (Rule VI, Infinitives) This accusative is called absolute "because it is not governed by any word, whatsoever."

gerunds and "gerundial participles" or "gerundive adjectives" would provide early American fodder for Professor Whatmough's "gerund-grinding" mill.³⁶ Another weakness is inherent in the order of presentation. Since rules are given according to each part of speech, the various uses of the genitive, for instance, are treated under several separate headings, noun, adjective, verb, participle, etc.³⁷ Modern grammars offset the disadvantages of this arrangement, which most of them follow, by grouping related constructions in an Appendix.

In the first section of the *Grammatical Institute* the nine parts of speech are presented.³⁸ Each part is defined, its characteristic attributes and functions — case, person, gender, number and the like — set forth with appropriate examples and paradigms. Variations from the norm, whether in form or function, receive a burdensome amount of emphasis calculated to strain the docility of mind with which the student was ideally endowed. The four conjugations are presented simultaneously with active and passive forms facing each other on opposite pages. This was done to facilitate comparison, and according to the author it was the first such arrangement to appear in a classical text.³⁹ Chief variations from modern terminology are found in connection with verbs. *Time* is used instead of *tense*, *conjunctive* instead of *subjunctive*,⁴⁰ and *first* and *second future* instead of *future* and *future perfect*. The two futures appear as separate forms in the indicative, but as one form, now identified as future perfect indicative, in the conjunctive.

The last section of the grammar is an *Appendix* which contains a miscellany of supplementary and new material. Out of a total of 39 pages 14 are devoted to Prosody and 10 to a list of verbs with irregular or defective perfects and supines. The remaining 15 pages include special treatment of gender, irregular nouns, defective verbs, grammatical figures and *Cognata Tempora*. This last term is roughly equivalent to the modern *formation of tenses*. The book

³⁶ Cf. Joshua Whatmough, "On Gerund Grinding," *CW* 43 (1949) 19–22.

³⁷ Clarke criticised Lily's Grammar for such an arrangement, but he did not wholly succeed in breaking away from it in his *Introduction*. Cf. note 17.

³⁸ Lily's classification showed only eight. Nouns were "Noun substantive" and "Noun adjective."

³⁹ This is stated in a letter to Isaiah Thomas which, along with the manuscript of the *Grammatical Institute*, is in the Library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. So far as I have been able to discover it is the first instance.

⁴⁰ The term is still current in many texts published in England.

closes with a list of abbreviations for Latin terms in current use,⁴¹ and for Roman proper names.

Although in the discussion of prosody, rules are given for determining the length of vowels by quantity and position, except for a short statement on accent in the same connection, nothing is said about the pronunciation and accent of Latin letters and words. Since the English method of pronunciation had long been used in America, as can be learned from examination of other texts, perhaps the author felt that no guide was necessary. Or in view of the controversy and confusion aroused by Noah Webster's strenuous championship of an American method of English pronunciation, perhaps the author believed it unwise or useless to present the orthodox rules.⁴² Each schoolmaster who might adopt his book could give the rules in vogue in his own locality.

III

- (1) A Grammatical System of the Grecian Language. Printed at Worcester, Massachusetts, (by Thomas, Son and Thomas) at the Press of, and for Isaiah Thomas: 1796.
104th Massachusetts District Copyright, issued to Isaiah Thomas, as Proprietor, 4 November, 1796.
- (2) The Works of Virgil: Translated into literal English Prose; with some explanatory notes. Printed at Worcester, Massachusetts, by Leonard Worcester, for David West, of Boston, 1796.
100th Mass. District Copyright, issued to David West, as Proprietor, 26 May, 1796.

Each of these two works was the first of its kind written and published in America. In an *Advertisement* of the Greek grammar (p. 3) it is interesting to note a continuation of the patriotic and nationalistic theme:

To simplify the science of Greek Grammar, (the author) has spared no pains. The progress that he may have made, is cheerfully submitted to a learned publick. The Candid, benevolent, reader, without being requested, will forgive inaccuracies and cherish even feeble attempts to promote any kind of *useful knowledge*, in this rising Empire.

⁴¹ E.g.: *C.P.S.* Custos Privati Sigilli; *M.B.* Medicinæ Baccalaureus; *R.S.S.* Regiæ Societatis Socius; *V.D.M.* Verbi Dei Minister.

⁴² Cf. Warfel, *op. cit.*, 64-66; 129-30; 138-39; 310-15.

Most of the Greek grammars in use in this country before 1796 were of English origin and written in Latin. In these texts, which were patterned after the custom possibly originated by Dionysius Thrax, verbs were arranged under thirteen conjugations, six of the *barytone* or *omega* type, three of the *circumflexed* or *contract* type, and four of the verbs in *MI*. Nouns were arranged under ten declensions, five *simple* and five *contract*.⁴³

Five of the eight grammars which Alexander "diligently consulted in composing my own" followed the old pattern.⁴⁴ The other three, however, provided him with a more modern approach.⁴⁵ Using them as guides he kept the five contract declensions, but reduced those of simple nouns from five to three. He kept the three contract and the four *MI* conjugations — as do all modern grammars—but reduced the barytone type to four.⁴⁶

⁴³ Cf. John Pickering, *Remarks on Greek Grammars* (Boston, 1825) 14–18. This brochure was printed anonymously, but its author was identified by Daniel A. White in his *Eulogy on John Pickering* (Cambridge, 1847), p. 59. Although it is brief and incomplete, it is the earliest American account of Greek grammars which I have found.

⁴⁴ Those by Busby, Ward and Ruddiman; the *Etonian* and the *Westminster*. All were written in Latin. The last was probably the one most widely used in America. Its first edition, written by William Camden: *Graecae Grammatices Rudimenta In Usum Scholae Westmonasteriensis* (London, 1597), was based on Edward Grant's *Graecae Linguae Spicilegium* (1575). In 1663 Richard Busby, the famous schoolmaster, published a revised edition of Camden, which was revised many times long after his death. The other three grammars mentioned above were more or less adapted from Busby. Cf. George E. Littlefield, *Early Schools and School-Books of New England* (Boston, The Club of Odd Volumes, 1904) 268–72.

⁴⁵ (1) *A Practical Grammar of the Greek Tongue* (London, 1734), by John Milner. The rules of this first edition were written in English, but many "observations" quoted from earlier grammars were in Latin, and all of the vocabulary. Alexander referred to this work more often than to any of the others, and a comparison of the two texts shows that it influenced him most. (2) *The Greek Grammar* (London, 1735), by John Holmes (given as "Home" by Alexander). The fifth edition (London, 1759) has most of the rules and vocabulary written in Latin, occasionally with an English translation of the former. Explanatory notes are mostly in English. The modern arrangement of three declensions and two conjugations is the earliest instance I have found in an English-written text. Jacob Weller was possibly the first to present such an arrangement in his *Grammatica Graeca Nova* (1635). Cf. Pickering, pp. 18–19. (3) *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (London, 1769), by John Parkhurst. Prefixed to this was a "Plain and Easy Greek Grammar." The second edition (London, 1794) may have been the one used by Alexander. Neither of these apparently had accents. Another edition in 1829 restored the accents and shows Holmes' arrangement of verbs and nouns. The preface indicates the source. A more detailed study of the relationship between Alexander's grammar and all eight grammars mentioned by him will be presented in another paper.

⁴⁶ Verbs with stems that end in a labial mute are in the first conjugation; in a palatal, the second; in a lingual, the third; and in a liquid, the fourth. Included in

Although his grammar, in the words of John Pickering (p. 13), "possessed considerable merit, especially when we consider the little zeal for Greek studies at the time it was published,"⁴⁷ it continued one peculiar arrangement and one inaccuracy which were characteristic of the earlier grammars. Paradigms of the four conjugations include forms which the verbs did not actually have: first and second futures, aorists, perfects and pluperfects, in all three voices. It was pointed out, in explanation, that no verb contained all these forms, and that the paradigms were given simply as models. The inaccuracy was classification of second perfects and pluperfects as middle. Buttmann was apparently the first to revise the paradigms and correct the inaccuracy, but his *Greek Grammar for Schools*, translated by Edward Everett in 1822, was seldom used in American schools before 1825.⁴⁸

It is a rather ironical fact that Alexander's grammar, which filled a long felt need in America for one written in English, was somewhat in advance of the times. Three years after it was published the authorities at Harvard recommended an English translation of the *Gloucester* Greek Grammar for the use of students preparing to enter that "Seminary."⁴⁹ This grammar was undoubtedly chosen because it was written in England and translated into English, and possibly because it followed the old method in treatment of verbs and nouns. The choice of an English rather than an American text by the leading University in the land led to similar action by other colleges, and this was undoubtedly a factor in preventing a second edition of Alexander's pioneer work.⁵⁰

In a short *Preface* to his other and earlier pioneering venture of 1796 Alexander states that the primary purpose of his translation of Vergil was to assist learners, by making the "Poetry of Virgil plain and easy." His attempt to keep the cost of such a book (673 pages) as low as possible, and the "consideration of it being the

the third are verbs ending in omega *pure*, i.e., preceded by a vowel. Contract verbs are essentially in the third, but separate paradigms of these, as found in all modern grammars, are found for the present and imperfect tenses.

⁴⁷ The significance of this remark will be investigated in connection with the paper mentioned at the end of note 45.

⁴⁸ Pickering (p. 12) was not sure whether this was because it was "somewhat in advance of the state of philological studies in this country," or some other reason.

⁴⁹ The first American edition was published by Thomas and Andrews at Worcester in 1800. It contains a statement of the action taken by Harvard in July, 1799.

⁵⁰ The choice fits in with the statement by Warfel (p. 380) that the Anglophile sentiment was still strong at Harvard during this period. Cf. Pickering, pp. 8-10; 28-29.

first AMERICAN translation, will operate, it is hoped, as inducements to bring the book into general use. Why should *Americans* be dependent on European translators and printers for the Latin and Grecian Classics?"

His apology for presenting his translation also shows his "philosophy" of translation. The works of previous writers were not suitable for learners.⁵¹ Those who used verse "were obliged to indulge in great liberties. The prose translators have generally given the sense of the text, notwithstanding they used great freedom, in deviating from its strict and literal meaning." In his own literal translation he had been forced in some measure to "sacrifice elegance to perspicuity and concision"; but the reader "will easily excuse many sentences, . . . which . . . are made less elegant, through a strict adherence to the literal meaning of my author." In view of the "variety of meanings to many Latin words," he admitted that it might be said by some that "in several instances, I have wholly mistaken the sense of Virgil." To these possible critics he would say in the words of "Dr. Trapp: 'I shall . . . be always ready to receive instruction, with thanks to those, who give it me; and to correct my mistakes upon any information, whether it comes from a friend or an enemy. But as to malevolent, ungenerous, abusive censures, and reflections, I have——no manner of ill will to those who make them, and shall be sure never to take the least notice of them.'"

It cannot be said with certainty which text Alexander followed. He listed variant reading from at least five editors and one edition, the Delphin.⁵² These are given as footnotes to the Latin page; on

⁵¹ In parenthesis, following each of these as listed by Alexander, will be given a brief identification of the author with the extent and date of his translation. Unless otherwise indicated London is the place of publication: (1) Mr. Dryden (John, *Works of Virgil*, 1697). (2) Lord Lauderdale (Richard Maitland, *Aeneid*, 1737). (3) Earl of Roscommon (Wentworth Dillon, Sixth *Eclogue*, 1680?). (4) Mr. Pitt (Christopher, *Aeneid*, 1728–1740). (5) Dr. Trapp (Joseph, *Aeneid*, 1718–1731). (6) Mr. Davidson (Joseph. Apparently a London publisher or book dealer, but this identification is uncertain. There were several editions of *Works of Virgil*, with the "Latin interpretation of Ruæus [see following note], and the English notes of Davidson." This, or some other edition, is referred to as "Davidson's Virgil." The matter is being investigated further).

⁵² Editors are mentioned by last name only. After each I shall put in parenthesis a short identification taken from *Sandys*, 2 (Cambridge, 1908). Page numbers refer to that volume. (1) Pierius (Giovanni Pierio, published an edition of Vergil in 1529. He was known also as Valeriano Bolzani. Sandys [p. 122] refers to him as Piero Valeriano of Belluno.) (2) Ruæus (Charles de la Rue. One of the three best known

the opposite page containing the translation a few explanatory footnotes are similarly given. In the *Fourth Eclogue*, which will be given as a specimen of his translation, he lists only four variant readings and two editors, but his text, except for a few differences in spelling and punctuation, agrees exactly with that of the *Loeb* edition. In keeping with the practice of the day he prints in italics words for which there is no Latin equivalent. These are rather numerous throughout, because he also uses this means, in lieu of extensive footnotes, to interpret the poet's meaning. In line 3 of this *Eclogue*, however, without the use of italics, he interprets *silvas*, *silvae* in a way which is entirely new and unexpected.⁵³

Let us sing, O Sicilian Muses, *strains* a little more important and *sublime*. The groves and humble tamarisks please not all. If we sing pastoral odes,⁵⁴ may *these* pastoral odes be worthy of a Consul's *ear*. The last age of Cumean verse is now come. The great order of *rolling* ages begins afresh. And now the Virgin Astraea returns; the Saturnian realms return. A new progeny is now sent *from* high heaven. Do thou, chaste Lucina, even now befriend the infant boy, *under* whom the iron age shall first terminate, and the golden arise *through* the whole world. Now, thine own Apollo reigns. This glory of our age shall enter upon his office, you, even you, O Pollio, being Consul: And the great months shall begin to revolve. You being the chief, if any traces of our guilt remain, they unavailing shall free the world from perpetual fear. He shall receive the life of the gods, and shall see heroes joined with Gods, and he shall be seen by them, and shall rule the peaceful world with his father's virtues. But the earth, *dear* boy, without any culture shall pour forth to thee, everywhere, *her* first presents, creeping ivies with lady's glove, and Egyptian beans mixt with the smiling acanthus. The very goats shall bring home udders distended with milk: Nor shall the herds fear the huge lions. The very cradles shall produce sweet flowers for thee; and the serpent shall be slain, and the fallacious herb of poison shall die: Assyrian amomum shall grow every where. But, as soon as thou shalt be able to read the praises of heroes, and the deeds of *thy* parent; and to know what virtue is; the field, by degrees, shall grow

editors of the Delphin Classics. P. 292). (3) Maittaire (Michel. Edited 33 volumes of Greek and Latin classics. P. 411). (4) Ursinus (Fulvio Orsini. Printed "Greek illustrations of Virgil" in 1567. P. 153). (5) Davidson (Joseph?). In the *Preface* Alexander stated that he was omitting the *Ordo*, to keep down the cost of his book. All Delphin editions had an *ordo verborum* below the text (Sandys, p. 292). Ruæus was undoubtedly the editor of the "Delphin" to which Alexander refers. Cf. above, note 51.

⁵³ Cf. lines 3 and 4 of the translation, and the following note.

⁵⁴ Alexander's note: "*Silvas*, by a figure of speech, appears to be used in this sense." The interpretation is apparently based on a note by Ruæus. In my opinion, except for a few awkward uses of the nominative absolute, in eloquent simplicity and stateliness this translation surpasses any I have read.

yellow with soft ears of corn, and the blushing grape shall hang *from* uncultured brambles, and hard oaks shall distil dewey honey. Some traces of ancient fraud shall, however, remain, which will prompt men to adventure the sea *in* ships, to enclose cities with walls, and cut furrows in the earth. *There* shall, then, be another Tiphys, and another Argo shall carry chosen seamen to *Cholchis*: *There* shall, *also*, be other wars, and *another* great Achilles shall be sent against Troy. Henceforth, when age, already robust, shall have made thee *to become* a man, the sailor himself shall renounce the sea; nor shall the naval pine exchange the profits of trade: Every land shall produce all things. The ground shall not endure the harrow; nor the vineyard, the pruninghook. The sturdy ploughman shall, now also, unloose the yokes from the bullocks. Nor shall the wool learn to counterfeit various colours. But the ram, in meads, shall now tinge his *snowy* fleece with purple blushing sweetly, *and* now with saffron colour. The scarlet, of its own accord, shall clothe the feeding lambs. The Destinies, unanimous by the firm authority of the Fates, have sung to their spindles, ye so *happy* ages run, *haste to the birth*. Approach to *these* distinguished honors, the time will soon be present, O beloved offspring of the Gods, illustrious progeny of Jove. See the world nodding with *its* convex burden, *in sign of gratulation*, the earth, and regions of the sea, and heaven profound. Behold, how all things rejoice in this *golden* age about to come. O, that the last part of a long life may so remain to me, and breath, as much as will be sufficient to sing thy achievements. Neither Thracian Orpheus, nor Linus, excels me in songs: Although *his* mother, Calliopea should assist that Orpheus; and his father, beautiful Apollo *should assist* this Linus. If even Pan, Arcadia *being* judge, should contest with me, even Pan, Arcadia *being* judge, would confess himself *to be* conquered. Begin, sweet babe, to know *thy* mother by *her pleasant* smile: Ten months have brought *thy* mother long qualms. Begin, sweet babe; on whom *his* parents never smiled, neither God *ever* honored him with *his* table, nor Goddess with *her* bed.

IV

In 1800 Alexander pioneered in two other fields. During that year he published the *Columbian Dictionary*, the first large English dictionary compiled by a single American,⁵⁵ and became the first

⁵⁵ The first was published by Samuel Johnson, Jr. in 1798. It had only 196 pages as compared with the 552 pages of Alexander. Besides a dictionary proper, the *Columbian Dictionary* contained a "Prosodial Grammar," which was a "Dissertation on VOWELS and CONSONANTS," and a "Classical Pronouncing Dictionary." The confusion prevalent in American pronunciation at the time is indicated by the compiler thus: "Could any means be used, or plan devised, to alter and unite Americans, in giving similar sounds to all the vowels and consonants, and their various combinations, the event would be happy." But he did not despair of "doing a little to fix an uniform and permanent standard of pronunciation." This was Noah Webster's great ambition as indicated in all of his grammatical writings and exemplified by his two dictionaries, the first in 1806 and the second in 1828. In the *Port Folio*, I. No. 4 (Philadelphia,

American to edit the *New Testament in Greek*.⁵⁶ The dictionary met with a scathing reception by Anglophile editors and apparently did not have a second edition. The Greek New Testament was based on the *exemplar* of John Mill, but did not follow it in all respects. It went through two editions and was widely used.

Alexander interrupted his editorial, teaching and pastoral duties in 1801 to make a missionary survey in Western New York for the Massachusetts Missionary Society. While on this journey, which lasted for several months, he observed educational needs and opportunities which appealed strongly to his pioneering instincts. In Fairfield, New York he made arrangements to open a school, and returned there in 1802 to become its first preceptor or principal.⁵⁷

1801) 247, edited by Joseph Dennie, the following scornful review appeared: "One Alexander, a presbyterian preacher, at a little village in the Massachusetts Bay, has published a ridiculous book which he calls 'A Columbian Dictionary.' This work is a disgrace to letters, a disgusting collection of every vicious word and phrase, chosen by the absurd misapprehension, or coined by the boors of each local jurisdiction in the United States. It is a record of our imbecility. A map and journal of our tottering and imperfect step in the walks of literature. God forbid that any man who has the memory of his ancestors in his heart, or a spark of English spirit, glowing in his veins, or one trace of English style in his memory, should ever recur to this blind Columbian guide! Possessing Johnson's and Walker's Dictionaries, the first filing the mind with the most energetic and elegant words, and the second, filling the tongue to the most accurate and courtly pronunciation, scholars will hardly consult the sectary Alexander, nor, on *his* authority, adopt Wigwam words, or pronounce 'coquette,' ko:kwet, according to the new-fangle gibberish of this village schoolmaster." The excoriators of Webster could have used this as a model!

⁵⁶ H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ. Novum Testamentum. Juxta Exemplar Joannis Millii Accuratissime Impressum. Editio Prima Americana. Wigorniae, Massachusettensi: Excudebat ISAIAS THOMAS, Jun. . . . April — 1800. On page 3 there is a chronological table of the books of the New Testament "carefully and faithfully, collected from the writings of the famous Rev. Nathaniel Lardner, D.D. (signed) Caleb Alexander." This is the only appearance of his name, and is apparently the basis on which bibliographers have assigned the editorship to him. Isaac H. Hall, *A Critical Bibliography of the Greek New Testament as Published in America* (Philadelphia, 1883) 9–13, discusses the problem briefly, and sees no reason to doubt the tradition. He lists some of the differences between this text and Mill's, and says that they are mostly matters of editorial judgment. In his opinion the editor probably "used a *Beza* or late *Elzevir* for variant readings." The text has numerous typographical errors and omissions. A startling instance of the latter makes John 9.39 read: "And Jesus said, For judgment did I come into this world, that those who do not see may become blind"! (My translation.) Neither this omission nor most of the other errors was corrected in the second edition of 1814. This was also printed by Thomas, but without Alexander's name on the "chronology" page. On the margin of a particularly bad page in the 1800 edition (Library of Congress copy), one irate owner wrote: "The printer of this is worthy of a kicking."

⁵⁷ Before he left in 1812, when the Academy became Fairfield Medical College, he had put up eight buildings, three nearby churches and his own home. The College was moved to Geneva, N. Y. in 1841, but the Academy continued under various auspices. Cf. Sheldon (note 3).

During the next ten years he combined, as had become his custom, the duties of teaching with those of preaching and served as itinerant pastor for churches in several nearby villages. There is some indication that he was instrumental in founding one or two of the churches himself. During this same period he somehow managed to take a leading part in developing an academy in Clinton, New York into a college. When the trustees of the new college, Hamilton by name, in recognition of his efforts and of his educational qualifications for leadership, unanimously elected him president, personal considerations forced him to decline.⁵⁸

The next few months found him at Onondaga Hollow, where he had been invited to found a school, and there in the Fall of 1812 he became the first headmaster of the Onondaga Hollow Academy.⁵⁹ Four years later he resigned from this position, possibly because of health, and retired to a farm in the neighborhood. Within a few months, however, he became interested in founding a Theological Seminary, first at Onondaga, then at Auburn, where his efforts were more successful. In 1820 he was engaged in raising funds for the endowment of professorships at the Seminary, and two years later he was appointed Missionary by the Connecticut Missionary Society to the destitute churches within the Onondaga Presbytery. He completed this survey in less than a year, and devoted the remaining five years of his life to preaching and promoting the welfare of the churches and colleges, so many of which he had helped to establish.

Four days after his death on April 12, 1828, this tribute appeared in the *Onondaga Register*.⁶⁰

"Rev. Mr. Alexander . . . chose for his future life the equally laborious employment of a teacher. For this employment he was admirably fitted.

⁵⁸ His short letter of refusal has been preserved: ". . . After maturely considering the subject, and reflecting on my own situation, as also that of my family, I believe it is my duty under existing circumstances to decline. . . ." The letter was written at Paris, New York, July 22, 1812, Alexander's fifty-seventh birthday. The Board of Trustees declared themselves justly indebted to Alexander for his "great and zealous exertions in procuring the charter (on May 22, 1812) and funds of the college." They voted to pay him the sum of "\$1500 as soon as same shall be received into the Treasury, and within a period of six months, with interest from this date, and the further sum of \$5000 in five equal installments, to be computed from this day, with annual interest . . . and to execute to said Caleb Alexander a bond or obligation accordingly under the seal of the corporation." From *Documentary History of Hamilton College* (Clinton, New York, 1922) 120-21. According to Sheldon he raised a little over \$100,000.

⁵⁹ The Academy lasted until 1929, when it was destroyed by fire.

⁶⁰ I am indebted to Mrs. Lester S. Daniels, Librarian of the Taft Public Library, Mendon, Massachusetts, for sending me a copy of this notice. She also sent a copy of

Being himself an excellent scholar, he excelled in this department of usefulness, and may be considered as the founder of several important literary institutions. Many of the distinguished men in each of the professions in this State have been brought up under his instructions. His literary labors, considering the nature of his official duties, have been astonishing. As the correspondent of scientific and religious periodicals, and the author of several systems of education, translations, and essays on various subjects, he has long been well known to the world. But this is not all. As a steward of the mysteries of the Gospel, he was a 'scribe well instructed.' . . ."

Caleb Alexander, in the words of Horace, has built a "monument more enduring than bronze." By his manifold activities he has earned for himself an honorable place in the records of the church and in the annals of American education and classical scholarship.

his epitaph: "His industry and zeal,/ IN THE CAUSE OF LITERATURE AND RELIGION,/ were untiring and benevolent./ 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'" The obituary failed to mention one honor Alexander received during his life. In 1789 he received an honorary A.M. from Rhode Island College. Interestingly enough George Washington received an LL.D. there two years later. Cf. *Historical Catalogue of Brown University 1764-1894* (Providence, 1895) 335. *Baptist Annual Register*, edited by John Rippon, 1 (1790) 95-96 contains a brief account of the 1789 ceremony. I am grateful to Miss Marion E. Brown, of the Brown University Library, for this reference. I should like to express my appreciation to the Staff of the Rare Book Room in the Library of Congress for the helpful courtesies extended to me in the preparation of this paper.