

Preface

The idea of a commemorative volume to form a tribute to the life and labours, as Old Testament scholar and Orientalist, of the late Professor Paul E. Kahle was one which occurred independently to several of his many friends shortly after his lamented death in 1965; and it at once commended itself to the still wider circle of colleagues, former pupils, and pupils of his pupils. The first proposal was to collect a volume of personal reminiscences from close friends and acquaintances of long standing, but this suggestion was subsequently abandoned in favour of a collection of scholarly essays in Kahle's own main fields of learned activity, namely, the Old Testament and Judaica, the volume to be prefaced by a brief personal tribute from one who had known him for many years as fellow-Semitist and friend, Professor Nyberg of Uppsala.

It was felt that any such volume, while it should reflect by representative contributions Kahle's own wide range of interests in the Oriental field, in particular in Islamica, ought nevertheless to concentrate mainly on the field of Old Testament studies and Judaica where Dr. Kahle's most notable contributions to learning had been made.

When Professor Fohrer, Editor of the *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, was asked if such a volume could be accepted for the series of *Beihefte*, he readily agreed and later accepted my invitation to act together with me as joint editor of the volume. While the volume appears under the joint editorship of Professor Fohrer and myself, it is only right to put on record that the main burden of actual editorial labour has fallen to the Editor of the *ZAW*.

As I have written elsewhere¹, Kahle was, for nearly a generation before his death, the doyen of European Orientalists; and that eminence was attained and maintained by an achievement in the field of Oriental study which is in many respects without parallel in this century. The secret of his great distinction is not far to seek: he was

¹ Obituary, Paul E. Kahle, *British Academy Proceedings*, 1965, p. 494.

filled with an unbounded zeal for his subject and in his total dedication to his chosen life work he never spared himself. Zeal for his subject, however, and painstaking industry were only part of Kahle's greatness as a scholar. His achievement lay not only in his ability to uncover historical data but, in the light of them, to open up new and important points of view and above all to stimulate others to follow in the paths he had opened up. He introduced his pupils to fresh vistas of historical understanding and showed us new solutions for problems old and new.

To all his many pupils throughout the world Kahle's scholarly generosity was unbounded: *meum et tuum* did not matter in scholarship — what really counted was the advancement of the subject. The following words were written by a pupil and protégé in a review of the second edition of *The Cairo Geniza*: 'Throughout its pages, it is apparent that the author is not only an indefatigable pursuer of new ideas, but also a generator of new scholars, in that his unselfish love of learning has led him to share with them not only his opinions and knowledge, but even the unpublished manuscripts in his possession. His example is particularly bright and conspicuous in these gloomy times, when dissatisfied students, their work brought to a halt, fret after fragments inaccessible and languish after Scrolls still unseen'². Kahle's scholarly generosity was matched by the great hospitality of his home: his home in Oxford became like his Seminar in Bonn, a centre of learning which attracted students from all over the world.

This volume is not only a tribute to his memory; it is also a token of the immense gratitude his friends and pupils feel for one who himself gave so freely and so unstintingly throughout his long and active life of his scholarly labours and discoveries.

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² G. Vermes, in *NSt* 6 p. 325.