TO HONOUR PROFESSOR DE BOER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY, JUNI 14, 1990, ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF A SELECTION OF HIS ARTICLES. ONLY A WEEK BEFORE HIS DEATH ON AUGUST 5, 1989, HE AGREED WITH THE CRITERION BY WHICH TO SELECT THE WRITINGS THAT WOULD BE INCLUDED IN A CONGRATULATORY VOLUME: THOSE PAPERS OF EXEGETICAL INTEREST WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN DUTCH OR HAD APPEARED IN OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS OR IN PERIODICALS OF MINOR CIRCULATION, AND WERE THEREFORE LESS ACCESSIBLE, WERE TO BE COLLECTED IN THIS VOLUME. IN ADDITION THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF VT XXX (1980), PP. 513–7 WAS TO BE COMPLETED AND BROUGHT UP TO DATE. SINCE THE DISABLEMENT OF HIS LAST YEARS HAD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO CONTINUE WORKING, HE DEEPLY FELT THE DESIRE TO ROUND OFF HIS ACTIVE LIFE IN THIS WAY. HIS DEATH DID NOT CHANGE THE PROJECT AS SUCH. THE BOOK, HOWEVER, HAS NOW BECOME A MEMORIAL VOLUME.

WHILE OTHERS HAVE THROWN LIGHT ON PROFESSOR DE BOER’S ORGANISING ABILITIES ON BEHALF OF HIS FELLOW SCHOLARS AT HOME AND ABROAD1 AND ON HIS PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES BOTH AS A WRITER AND AN EDITOR, I SHOULD LIKE, BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION TO THIS COLLECTION, TO DEVOTE SOME WORDS TO HIS SIGNIFICANCE AS A TEACHER, AND TO THE INFLUENCE OF HIS FORTY YEARS’ PROFESSORSHIP ON SO MANY GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY OF LEYDEN UNIVERSITY. THERE, IN LEYDEN, AT THE RAPENBURG, IN THE GEWELFKAMER (VAULTED ROOM), LAY THE HEART AND CORE OF HIS PROFESSIONAL LIFE, OF HIS DEVOTION TO THE HEBREW TEXTS WHICH IN HIS LECTURES HE MADE THE CENTRAL ISSUE, FOR BOTH TEACHER AND STUDENTS. IN SPITE OF

1 H.J. HEERING, “De Boer, de man van het Oude Testament”, NRC-Handelsblad (15 augustus 1989);
“Professor P.A.H. de Boer”, The Times (September 19, 1989);
P.B. DIRKSEN, “In memoriam prof. dr. P.A.H. de Boer”, Ti-ëf 19/1 (November 1989), pp. 5–9;
G.W. ANDERSON, “P.A.H. de Boer”, VT XL (1990), pp. 1–3;
fashionable trends this is and always will be the classic way to a fruitful relationship between teacher and student.

For the beginning student of theology—whether he had his roots in more liberal or in more orthodox forms of protestantism—the lectures on exegesis of the Old Testament were most literally an eye-opener. The rights of the books of Ancient Israel, as against their interpretation in the New Testament or as against their use or abuse in the Church and in Christendom, were vindicated. One might say that he stood up for the men behind the text of the Old Testament, whose writings had no defence apart from the honesty of later generations. Texts are not utensils. Exegesis *e mente auctoris* basically means respect for the authors of the texts, for people of earlier days. Just as it matters to understand one’s contemporaries, so it matters to understand one’s fellow men of olden time. It is not unimportant, therefore, to know the rights of the matter, however trivial it may seem. Consequently, philological acuity is an essential element of this attitude of respect for the literary legacy of former times. So Professor de Boer taught us to be servants of the written word—which, of course, does not mean to be literalists or verbalists!—, prepared to do the humble ground-work in the service of the understanding of old texts, in order that we may perceive what had been moving minds and hearts. For that, we honour him and his memory—we: I am sure that I can speak on behalf of very many former students of Professor de Boer.

A few remarks about the selected papers may be in order. Some of the originally Dutch articles make accessible also for his colleagues abroad otherwise unknown aspects of Professor de Boer's 'homework'. In his paper about 'A lost biblical text' he illustrates the meaning of text-critical work and the connection of this technical specialism with other disciplines of theology. The didactic tone of 'In search of the meaning of Psalm li 6 (4)’ bespeaks that it was meant originally for students of theology. His many years’ engagement with the text of the Books of Samuel induced him to try to answer the question how the expression *Saul the Tyrant* found its way to the Dutch national anthem. ‘Quelques remarques sur l’arc dans la nuée (Genèse 9,8–17)’ is published here as corrected by Marc Vervenne for the 1989 reissue of *Questions disputées d’Ancien Testament, BETHL* 33 (1974). The updating notes by Vervenne have also been adopted. As there existed no definite version of ‘Egypt in the Old Testament: some aspects of an ambivalent assessment’, a paper
read at the meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study, Oxford, 1975—Professor de Boer had kept working on it—, this valuable treatise had to be composed out of the three or four versions the author left behind.

The lecture delivered at the Göttingen Congress of 1977, "Bemerkungen zu Jesaja xix 24 und 25", could not be included in this volume, as the author marked the file containing this paper niet voor publicatie (not for publication).3

In the bibliography the articles included in this volume are indicated with an *. There the original form of publication is recorded. In the Table of contents the (year) after the title of the article refers to the bibliography.

A considerable debt of gratitude I owe Drs. P.J. Booij (Amsterdam). He translated "Kingship in Ancient Israel" (1938), "An inscription from Soar" (1956), "When David had to flee from Saul, the Tyrant ..." (1963), "A lost biblical text" (1963), "Does Job retract? (Job xlii 6)" (1977), and improved the English of "In search of the meaning of Psalm li 6 (4)" (1969), and of "Egypt in the Old Testament: some aspects of an ambivalent assessment" (1975), of which English manuscripts were extant. He conceived his task broadmindedly and was of great help to the editor. The English translation used in these articles is the Revised English Bible, unless indicated otherwise.

Thanks are due to Dr. G. van der Kooij (Leyden) for supplying a new photograph of the inscription from Soar, and to Prof. Dr. W. Baars for his approval to reprint the article about "Ein neugefundenes Fragment des syrisch-römischen Rechtsbuches" (1968).

I am much obliged to the publishers, all of whom gave permission to republish the articles in this volume.

Acknowledgments are due to Prof. Dr. A.S. van der Woude (Groningen) for including this volume in the series of Oudtestamentische Studiën.

C. van Duin

2 The title, then, was "Aspects of the double, controversial valuation of Egypt in the Old Testament".
3 These manuscript materials have been deposited in Leyden University Library.