The Philadelphian Public Ledger announced in the morning edition of 14 January 1902 the "death of a noted scholar and scientist": Cornelis Petrus Tiele, who had died three days earlier in his native city Leiden. The obituary noted the fact that Tiele was held in high honour in the United States. "He was a member of the American Philosophical Society, whose rooms are at 104 South Fifth Street, and of the American Oriental Society and the American Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. About two years ago the American Committee for Lectures on the History of Religions [...] invited him to come to this country and deliver a course of lectures in the prominent cities of the United States; but his engagements at that time were such that he was obliged to decline the invitation". This announcement was probably due to Tiele's American friend and colleague, Morris Jastrow, Jr. (1861-1921),2 at the time professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) and on the Committee mentioned above. On the occasion of Tiele's seventieth birthday Jastrow had already written an exceptionally favourable "commemoration", which placed Tiele on a par with other Leiden scholars such as Scaliger, Boerhaave, J.H. Scholten, C.G. Cobet, R.P.A. Dozy, and Abraham Kuenen.3 Jastrow pointed to Tiele's many international contacts and regretted the fact that Tiele had not accepted his invitation to visit some leading American universities and to hold the Annual Courses of Popular Lectures in the History of Religions. In fact, as far as I know,

1 The research for this article was made possible by a generous grant of the Vera Gottschalk-Frank Foundation (The Hague) which enabled the appointment of a research assistant, Ms. Tessel Jonquiere.
2 For an overview of his work, see Bibliography of Morris Jastrow Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of Pennsylvania 1885-1910, Philadelphia (privately printed), 1910 (a copy of this item is in the Leiden University Library). Jastrow dedicated his book The Study of Religion (London, Walter Scott, 1901) to Tiele.
Tiele never crossed the Atlantic ocean; the efforts of J.H. Barrows to persuade him to attend the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 were in vain, too. Tiele is mainly remembered as a pioneer of the scientific study of religion. He campaigned energetically for this new field of study and saw his efforts rewarded, when he was offered the first Dutch chair in history of religions in 1876. His Leiden inaugural lecture of 10 October 1877, on the meaning of Assyriology for the comparative history of religions, marked the institutional beginning of the field in the history of the Dutch university system. My aim in this contribution is to offer a short sketch of Tiele’s life and to introduce the Tiele Collection of the Leiden University Library to a wider (international) audience. The Collection contains not only important materials for the study of the history of science of religion or comparative religion, as the field is often called, but also for historians of (Dutch) ecclesiastical and intellectual history of the nineteenth century in general.

II. Tiele’s Life

Cornelis Petrus Tiele was born on 16 December 1830 in Leiden. He was the first child from the marriage between the bookseller and printer Cornelis Tiele (1794-1847) and his wife Maria Johanna van Kampen (1809-1846), who probably died in the aftermath of childbirth (Tiele’s youngest brother David Louis survived his mother for only five days).

4 Tiele did, however, write a contribution (Tiele 1893a), which was read by Rev. Frank M. Bristol (Chicago) on the Parliament’s session of 15 September 1893 (Neely 1893: 245). Cf. the correspondence between Barrows and Tiele in the Leiden University Library (BPL 2709E). On the Chicago Parliament, see Ziolkowski 1993. 5 Tiele 1877b, 1878a. 6 Cf. Molendijk 1998. The Vera Gottschalk-Frank Foundation of the Remonstrant Brotherhood (a small, currently liberal church in the Netherlands, to which Tiele belonged) made available the means to further research the Tiele Collection. Tessé Jonquière took stock of these materials. The project was supported by staff members of the Leiden University Library. I would like to thank them all. The present essay does not aim to provide a full description of either Tiele’s life or the collection which was donated to the Leiden University Library. It is still too early to fulfill these two tasks which would require a huge effort in view of the largeness of the collection and the limited knowledge we have of Tiele’s biography.

8 In this context I will not go into terminological niceties, important as they may be; for the sake of convenience, I will use “science of religion” as a covering term for the new field in all its ramifications.

9 She was the daughter of N.G. Van Kampen (1776-1839), professor of Dutch literature, and the sister of the publisher P.N. van Kampen (1818-1888; cf. NNBW III: 662); cf. De Ridder 1900a: 324. Tiele published several of his books with P.N. van Kampen. A short list with abbreviations is included at the end of this essay, before the bibliography.