Dr. M. E. Kronenberg occupied such a uniquely prominent place in the history of bibliographical studies in the Low Countries that her sudden death on 15 August 1970, at the age of 89, was occasion for Quaerendo to pay more than usual attention to her work and her personality. Professor L. Brummel has already provided his personal reminiscences of this unusual woman¹. Professor and Mrs. Hellinga will be contributing an appreciation of Dr. Kronenberg’s scholarly work². And in the article which follows, Dr. A. C.-F. Koch, since 1949 librarian of the municipal library (Athenaeumbibliotheek) at Deventer, endeavours to give an account of Dr. Kronenberg’s youth and her first steps in the field of scholarship. Dr. Koch’s article is the English translation of a speech delivered on 10 April 1962. On the evening of that day Dr. Kronenberg received from the hands of the burgomaster of the city where she was born, where she spent her youth, and where she made her first acquaintance with bibliography, the ‘Golden Eagle’, the annual cultural award which takes its name from the bird ornamenting the arms of the city of Deventer. The original Dutch text of Dr. Koch’s address was printed in 1963, in a relatively unknown regional journal³. The tone of the original text, that of a spoken address, has been retained deliberately.

A. C.-F. Koch

Doctor Maria Elisabeth Kronenberg

Now that the city of your birth and youth, Dr. Kronenberg, has taken its place in the long line of those who have offered you their admiration and tribute, it seems a fitting occasion to review your life and work during the years - thirty-eight in all - you spent in this town. Nor in so doing are we unaware of what a Frenchman once aptly said round about the time you were born: ‘on rouvrec toujours avec un battement de coeur les premières pages de sa vie’. Let us then, Ladies and Gentlemen, try to provide a sketch of the period from which the quotation comes, and more particularly the year 1881, by taking a number of isolated facts and putting them side by side.

The struggle between the great powers for overseas territory was fully under way. France was engaged in conquering Tunisia. England was extending its dominion over Egypt, but on the other side of Africa was experiencing its first clashes with the Boers. Bebel and Liebknecht had been expelled from the city of Leipzig. In the field of Dutch literature the new was elbowing aside the old:

² Forthcoming in 1972.
Nicolaas Beets was still publishing his *Najaarsbladen* (Autumn leaves), but Pol de Mont had already brought out his *Lentesottenieën* (Spring follies). The same year saw both the literary debut and the death of Jacques Perk.

On the 12th of July of that same year 1881, at the moment when (on the other side of the ocean) bullets fired by an anarchist were being removed from the abdomen of 'Mr. Garfield, President of the United States', Mrs. Kronenberg-Putman Cramer was successfully giving birth to a daughter. The father, Mr. Hendrik Gerhard Kronenberg, a lawyer and, since an hour or two earlier, temporary alderman of the municipality of Deventer, gave this, his third child, the names of his mother, Maria Elisabeth Duymaer van Twist. The latter was herself from Deventer, and the sister of a well-known ex-governor-general of the Dutch East Indies, Albertus Jacobus Duymaer van Twist, spending his retirement at his country residence of Nieuw Rande. The grandmother, Maria Elisabeth, had inherited her names in her turn from her grandmother, Maria Elisabeth Hofkes of Deventer. These few facts in themselves are enough to suggest the ties between the Maria Elisabeth Kronenberg we are honoured to have with us today and the Deventer of the 18th and 19th centuries. She is the descendant both of the Deventer professor of law, Albert Jacob Duymaer van Twist (circa 1800), and of the 18th-century Deventer town-clerk, Adolf Hendrik Cramer, the scion both of the Van Loghem family and of the Iordens. Here we have a typical conglomeration of families who, supplying as they did members of the bench and the bar in a 19th-century town like Deventer, had a good many fingers in what was then not a very large pie. If one opens a 19th-century register of Deventer one finds the Kronenberg family and its related clans occupying a large number of positions in the magistracy. Together they helped to determine the political and social atmosphere of the town. What exactly that atmosphere was like, round about 1880, in a town of 20,000 inhabitants far from the stage of world affairs and the wider movements of the mind, is hardly determinable now. As it happens, a document recently came

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1 1814–1903.
2 1857–1931.
3 1859–1881.
4 *Deventer Courant* 1881, No. 28, p. 1.
5 *Verslag der handelingen van den Raad der gemeente Deventer over het jaar 1881*, meeting of July 11, p. 254.
7 On the subject of secondary education at Deventer we have – for the years 1880–1883 – the personal reminiscences of R. A. Kolverijn (1857–1942), the man who later initiated the revision of Dutch spelling (*Herinneringen, Santpoort* 1932, pp. 97–111).