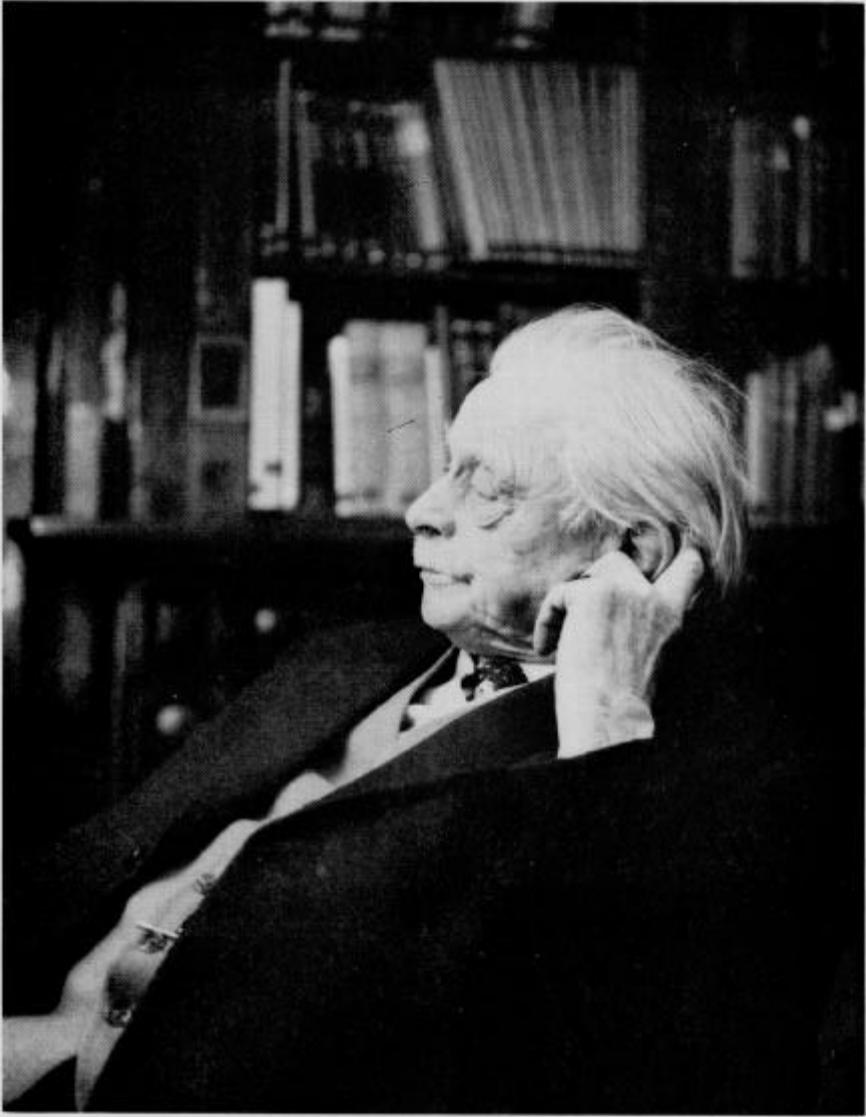


PLATE XCVII



PAUL ERNST KAHLE

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1875-1965

PAUL ERNST KAHLE was born in Hohenstein, in East Prussia, on 21 January 1875, of East Prussian parentage on both sides of the family. His father, Ernst Kahle, was in government educational service (he held the position of an *Oberstudienrat* with the honorary title of Professor). Paul Ernst began his education in Danzig, from which he proceeded to the Universities of Marburg, Halle, and Berlin. Among his teachers the most influential appears to have been Franz Praetorius, the distinguished Halle Semitist, under whom Kahle wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Samaritan Pentateuch.¹ This was an interest which he maintained all his life; his library included a unique collection of *Samaritana*, and he more than once visited the small Samaritan community in Nablus, latterly as a close personal friend of the High Priest and his family.

On completion of his doctoral examination and his Licentiate in Theology, Kahle went as chaplain to Braila in Rumania in 1902, and in the following year to Cairo where he was to remain as pastor to the German congregation for the next six years. It was in Cairo no less than in Halle and Berlin that the foundations were laid for Kahle's future as an Orientalist. It was here too that his gifts as administrator, as well as scholar and teacher, became evident, for he threw himself with characteristic initiative and energy into his work as pastor of the German community in Cairo; during his pastorate a new church and school were built and opened for the congregation. It was in this early period of his career too that he made the acquaintance, at first hand, of the Old Cairo synagogue, and later, in visits to Cambridge, of the famous Taylor-Schechter collection of Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts, which were to occupy so much of his attention in later life. During these years in Cairo, the young German pastor missed no opportunity of extending his acquaintance, at first hand, with Islamic life and customs. He began with the study of Islam in Cairo itself and was later to publish

¹ *Textkritische und lexikalische Bemerkungen zum samaritanischen Pentateuch-targum*, Leipzig, 1898.

some of his results.¹ He also began collecting at this time manuscripts and oriental antiquities, among them a set of fifteenth-century Shadow Play figures, and the latter were to provide him with a lifelong interest and a study on which he was still engaged at the time of his death. He also paid several visits to Palestine during this period, when he occupied himself with the study of Moslem holy places in Palestine and Jerusalem² and with Palestinian folk-tales, the latter published in two volumes after the First World War in collaboration with Hans Schmidt, under the title *Volkserzählungen aus Palästina*.³ To the same period we can also trace his continuing interest in *Samaritana*: some of his Samaritan manuscript material was collated in person in the course of his visits to Nablus.

After a year spent in the German Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem, he was appointed *Privatdozent* in Halle for Semitic Languages in 1909 and was called to Giessen as *ordinarius* in 1914. It was there that he met and married in 1917 Marie Gesevius, daughter of the Professor of Agriculture in Giessen. In 1923 he was appointed Director of the *Orientalisches Seminar* and *Ordinarius* for Oriental Languages in the University of Bonn and it was as Director of the Bonn Oriental Institute, from the years 1923 to 1938, that Kahle spent the most productive years of his life: the Institute and its Director acquired an international reputation for wide learning and scholarly publications, and students from America, Great Britain, and Asia, as well as from continental Europe, found their way there. During this time he also acted as Secretary of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* and Editor of its *Zeitschrift*.

The range of Kahle's erudition and productivity during this long period was remarkable. The Hebrew Bible was at the centre of his interests and remained so throughout his life. He was entrusted with the edition of the Masoretic text of the *Biblia Hebraica* for the Württemberg *Bibelanstalt*, and here he made a major contribution to Hebrew studies; for the first time since the second Rabbinic Bible of Jacob ben-Chaijim a new Masoretic text was published which was to become a landmark in Old Testament scholarship. Since his Cairo days Kahle had been specially interested in the Ben Asher recension of the Hebrew Bible, and, in particular, in the different traditions,

¹ e.g. *Zar-Beschwörungen in Ägypten, und zur Organisation der Derwisch-Orden in Ägypten*, *Der Islam*, vol. iii (1912) and vol. vi (1916).

² *Palästina-Jahrbuch*, vol. vi (1910), vol. vii (1911), vol. viii (1913).

³ Göttingen, 1918-30.

Babylonian and Palestinian, of the pronunciation of Hebrew. As a result of these researches, and by personal visits to the State Library in Leningrad, Kahle succeeded in identifying the Ben Asher recension in a Leningrad codex which represented the oldest dated complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. This codex was made the basis of his Masoretic text of the *Biblia Hebraica*, which has been since 1937 the standard edition. Kahle's new *textus masoreticus* (with its accompanying *masora*) replaced the older ben-Chajjim recension, which had been for more than 400 years the standard text, by a text 600 years older.

The work which had led up to the publication of the *Biblia Hebraica* is contained in Kahle's two books *Masoreten des Ostens* (Leipzig, 1913) and *Masoreten des Westens* (Stuttgart, 1927-30). The importance of these researches, for Hebrew grammar no less than for the text and *masora* of the Hebrew Bible, is now universally recognized.¹ There can be no doubt that it is in this highly specialized field that Kahle's greatest service to Biblical scholarship lay, and he never tired of telling and retelling the personal history of the successive discoveries which led him finally to the recognition of the oldest recension of the Masoretic text in the Leningrad Codex and in the related Old Cairo Codex of the Prophets and the Aleppo manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. His first scientific discoveries in this connexion came from his study of the Tiberian vowel points, which still provide the basis for Hebrew grammar. Kahle showed conclusively in successive studies that the Tiberian system of pronouncing Hebrew was the result of a centuries-old process of development. He distinguished the earlier Babylonian system and the pre-Masoretic Palestinian system from the final Tiberian system of pointing, and, by these pioneering studies, finally arrived at his identification of the authoritative Ben Asher recension.

Masoreten des Westens, Band II, included the publication for the first time of Geniza fragments of the Palestinian Pentateuch Targum, which marked the beginnings of Kahle's contributions to the study of the history of the Targum traditions and their interrelationship and to a fuller understanding of Palestinian Aramaic. In this respect he differed fundamentally from his older contemporary Gustaf Dalman, who had made Targum Onkelos his main authority for the study of first-century Palestinian Aramaic: Kahle argued that the freer and more idiomatic

¹ See Kahle's own study *Das Problem der Grammatik des Hebräischen* (Thurneysen Festschrift, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, vol. xlv (1928)).

language of the Palestinian Targum, especially in the Geniza fragments, was a much more reliable source. Kahle's interest in the history of the Biblical versions in general appears in the Introduction to his *Masoreten des Westens II*, where his views on the character and origin of the LXX, views which were later to be the centre of a stormy controversy, were first set out; according to Kahle's theory the LXX had its origins in the synagogues of the Diaspora as a kind of Greek Targum. He was later to defend this theory in a number of publications and in controversy with many scholars.

During this same period Arabic and Islamic studies were also being enriched by Kahle's extensive researches and by those which he instigated. In collaboration with his pupil, Dr. Mohammad Mostafa of Cairo, he published in the *Bibliotheca Islamica*, vol. v, on the basis of the author's own manuscript, the voluminous Chronicle of Ibn Iyas, a work of the greatest importance for the history of Egypt in the Middle Ages. He was interested in the history of the Crusades from the side of the Arabic sources, and Dr. Aziz S. Atiya of Salt Lake City, the acknowledged authority on this subject, is one of his pupils. Kahle's own acquisition in Cairo of old Egyptian Shadow Play figures from the Middle Ages led him to a study of the Shadow Plays of Ibn Daniyal of Mosul. He published a work on the Arabic writer Al-Biruni, an Arabic authority on precious stones; and he occupied himself with the history of Chinese porcelain in Islamic lands and himself acquired a valuable collection.

His edition and translation of the Turkish nautical writer, Piri Re'is led to the identification of what Kahle claimed was the lost map which Columbus used in his discovery of America.¹ The story of the identification of this map and the history of the map itself is one of extraordinary interest. The recognition of the map was made by Kahle in the manuscript of Piri Re'is which he had acquired in Istanbul in 1929. How the map itself came to Turkey is told by the Arabic author: it would seem that the captain of an Ottoman man-of-war captured in 1501 seven Spanish ships which had just returned from America, and the ships and their crews were brought to Istanbul, and with them

¹ *Piri Re'is, Bahrije. Das türkische Segelhandbuch für das Mittelländische Meer vom Jahre 1521*, hrsg., übers. und erkl. Berlin-Leipzig, 1926; *Piri Re'is und seine Bahrije (Beiträge zur historischen Geographie, Kulturgeographie, Ethnographie, Kartographie, vornehmlich des Orients)*, hrsg. v. H. von Mžik. Leipzig u. Wien, 1929) (S. 60-76) (Oberhummer Festschrift); 'A lost map of Columbus', *Geographical Review*, vol. xxiii (1933), pp. 621-38.

the map they had used in their trans-Atlantic journey. The map was used by Piri Re'is in the making of the world-map which he presented to the Sultan Selim in Egypt in 1517; only the western portion of the Piri Re'is map, the part showing both sides of the Atlantic, has been preserved, and it is suspected that the other half with the Far East, India, China, Malaya, must have been removed by the Sultan himself, possibly for use in military expeditions to the East.

In the Bonn period of his life, when his name was attracting students from all parts of the world, Kahle pursued his work as a scholar and teacher with a single-minded and almost fanatical devotion. He took no active part in political affairs, yet in 1938 his life-work was threatened by the gathering storm of political events. The story of the escape of the Kahle family from Germany has been told by the late Mrs. Kahle in a privately circulated document, completed in the winter of 1941.¹ Mrs. Kahle and one of their five sons had been found assisting a Jewish acquaintance in the outbreak of Jewish persecutions in the Rhineland in 1938. As a result the whole family was obliged to leave Germany and to settle in England as refugees: they lost all their possessions, including the Professor's library and many of his most valuable papers.

An upheaval of this kind at the age of 63 and the major readjustments it demanded might well have daunted a lesser man; in fact it marked the beginning of a new period of activity in Kahle's life and work. He was engaged to catalogue Arabic manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Collection in London and in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Kahle worked in the Bodleian Library for approximately five years (1939/40 to 1944/5), when he was invited by the Curators to prepare a catalogue of the Library's Arabic manuscripts, which were not recorded in the catalogues of Uri and of Nicoll and Pusey. The principal result of his labours was a complete catalogue of the seventy volumes of the Bruce collection: but in addition to this piece of work he catalogued some 444 other Arabic manuscripts. The number may not seem much for four or five years' work; but his catalogues were no ordinary catalogues. The work exists, and is invaluable, as a piece of research which is kept in the Library in manuscript form. It resembles Casiri's vast catalogue of the Escorial manuscripts, devoting an inordinate amount of space to discussions of the works and their

¹ Marie Kahle, 'What would you have done? The Story of the Escape of the Kahle Family from Nazi Germany', 1941, 46 pp.

authors and containing detailed descriptions of the works, accounts of their contents, and even lives of their authors, and so on; such information is now more easily found and presented in more convenient form in bibliographies and literary histories than in a library catalogue, which ought to be restricted to a description of the actual manuscripts in the possession of the library. Consequently, a great deal of labour would have to be expended on Kahle's manuscript catalogue to make it fit for publication; it will, however, be invaluable to anyone who may hereafter be engaged by the Curators to produce a practical modern catalogue.¹

After his arrival in England, honours came to him in rapid succession. He received the honorary degree of D.D. from the University of Aberdeen in 1939, a D.Litt. from the University of Oxford in 1941, and in the same year he was appointed Schweich Lecturer of the British Academy, and it was these lectures that formed the basis of his last and greatest work on the Cairo Geniza. Other honours were to follow, from Europe, America, and from the Near and Far East, as well as from his own country. He was made a Doctor of Hebrew Letters by Union Seminary, New York, and he became a member of the Institute of Coptic Studies in Cairo and of numerous other learned societies (his third son, Paul, who died tragically at the early age of 31, had become a Coptic scholar): he was made a Commander of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and in 1956 he was invited to open the Sixth Congress of the Pakistan Historical Society. After the war Kahle recovered his library and his house in Bonn, and, by way of compensation, received a pension for life from the Bonn Government.

Kahle's most important book was undoubtedly *The Cairo Geniza*, originally published in 1947.² The subject of the book was the significance of the manuscripts in the famous Taylor-Schechter Collection, discovered in the *geniza* of the Fustat Synagogue in Old Cairo. The book appeared in a much enlarged and largely rewritten (second) edition in 1959³ and a German edition was published in 1962.⁴ The work is in many respects a classic of its kind on the history of the text and versions of the Old Testament. It contains the results of a lifetime of research and reflection on these problems, and there is hardly

¹ Professor G. R. Driver kindly obtained this information from Professor A. F. L. Beeston, formerly Keeper of Oriental Books in the Bodleian Library.

² The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1941.

³ Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

⁴ Akademie-Verlag, Berlin.

one of them where Kahle has not some important new insight or contribution to bring. He may not always have been right, but there is no subject in this wide field where he did not carry out pioneering work. In the second edition he extended his work on the Hebrew Bible to include studies on the Dead Sea scrolls, on which he had already written a monograph and numerous articles.¹ In this connexion Kahle sought to establish an historical link between the Qumran writings, the ninth-century Karaites, the Cairo Geniza, and the Tiberian Masoretes. Karaite Judaism was explained as a movement originally brought into existence by the discovery in the ninth century of some of the remains of the Qumran writings. When Karaism was banned, its writings were condemned, but a large number managed to survive in the Cairo Geniza. Even more important for questions of Old Testament text and *masora* was the claim which Kahle made that the leaders of the Tiberian Masoretes, the Ben Asher family, whose text and *masora* formed the basis of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, were themselves Karaites. The view is largely based on a study of Moshéh ben Asher's *Song of the Vine* which is not only characteristically Karaite but bears a close resemblance to the Qumran writings.

Kahle's contribution to our understanding of the origins and history of the ancient versions has been an equally significant one. The most widely controverted of his theories in this connexion is his account of the origin and development of the Greek Old Testament. He remained to the end a resolute defender of his original theory and an opponent of the Lagardian hypothesis of an original *Urtext* of the LXX, on which, for instance, the Rahlfs edition is based. The Aristeas legend was, according to Kahle, a piece of first-century Jewish propaganda in favour of an authorized Alexandrian revision of existing Greek versions of the Torah. The history of the LXX did not differ fundamentally from that of the Aramaic Targums: Greek translations were made in different areas to accompany the reading of the Hebrew text, and the various geographical areas (Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor) had each their own officially authorized version. The standard LXX text, covering the entire Bible, was the outcome of the Church's need for an official, uniform Greek text of the Old Testament. The New Testament quotations, many of which differ substantially from the LXX, reflected, in Kahle's opinion, differences in Greek versions associated with different geographical areas.

¹ *Die hebräischen Handschriften aus der Höhle* (Stuttgart, 1951).

The remarkable thing about Paul Kahle was that, in every branch of scholarship he entered, he soon became, not only a leading authority in that subject, but himself a pioneer, opening up new avenues into unknown and untrodden fields. There was no subject in the field of Oriental learning in which he was content simply to take over, at second hand, or on another's authority, the conclusions of the past, unless he had himself thoroughly proved and approved them. This was most notably true in the areas of Biblical or Oriental study where his major contributions were made, such as his identification of the Ben Asher text, his studies in Hebrew punctuation, or his Islamic studies: it was no less true, however, of his Aramaic studies, and in particular of his contributions to the elucidation of the history of the Aramaic Targums, and to the understanding of their language, and its relevance to the problem of the language of Jesus. The impetus he gave to such studies led to the rise of a 'Kahle' school of Targumic or Aramaic studies, in which pupils of Kahle (or pupils of his pupils) carried forward his pioneering work.¹

Kahle's first interest in the history of the Aramaic Targums and the problems of their language go back to his Semitic studies as a pupil of Franz Praetorius in Halle: they certainly were one of his chief interests in the Semitic field long before the appearance in 1913 of his *Masoreten des Ostens* and in 1930 of his *Masoreten des Westens*, Band II, in which for the first time Aramaic Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza were published by him. It was in these studies, however, that Kahle began his pioneering work in the field of *Targumica et Aramaica*.

The Geniza Targum fragments, according to their first editor, represented a Palestinian tradition of free paraphrasing of the Hebrew Old Testament which antedated the introduction of the official and authoritative 'Onkelos';² the latter was written in an artificial Aramaic which had to be such as could be understood by both Babylonian and Palestinian Jews; it was fundamentally a Babylonian composition. Kahle's views on the history and relationship of the Targums finally crystallized in his Schweich lectures.³ He held that Onkelos had been without importance in Palestine, and, indeed, that it had not even existed there till it was introduced from Babylonia, and then scarcely before A.D. 1000. It was entirely a product of Babylonian Judaism: the

¹ Cf. Kahle's own remarks in this connexion in *Z.N.T.W.*, Band 51, Heft 42, 1960, p. 55.

² *Masoreten des Ostens*, pp. 204 ff., *Masoreten des Westens*, Band II, pp. 11 ff.

³ *The Cairo Geniza*² (Oxford, 1962), pp. 191 ff.

native Palestinian Targums were preserved in his own Geniza fragments and the related 'Jerusalem' Targums.

This was a view in marked contrast to that hitherto held and first propounded by A. Geiger¹ and A. Berliner,² viz. that the Onkelos Targum was a native product of Palestinian Judaism dating to the second century A.D. whence it had been transplanted to Babylon (like so much else, e.g. Calendar, Mishnah, etc.) and where it had undergone a certain local influence.³ Berliner's views had been substantially accepted by Dalman who, also following the Geiger-Berliner tradition, tended to dismiss the so-called Fragment or Jerusalem Targums as late Palestinian compositions of no great value linguistically for the recovery of the spoken language of the time of Christ, and without any authority from the synagogue: they were private Jewish Aramaic paraphrases of the Middle Ages. With the exception of Pseudo-Jonathan, Kahle classed the Fragment Targum with the Geniza Targum as pre-Onkelos Palestinian tradition: Pseudo-Jonathan also belonged to this tradition at a later stage of development, only it included Targum Onkelos, or rather those haggadic expansions, of which Pseudo-Jonathan mainly consisted, had been packed, as it were, into the framework of Onkelos. What held for Onkelos was also true of the so-called Targum of Jonathan to the Prophets or the Targum to the Hagiographa.

Kahle's theory of the Babylonian origin and linguistic character of the Onkelos Targum had important consequences for the question of the language of Jesus. Following the assumptions of Geiger-Berliner about the Palestinian provenance and language of the Onkelos Targum, Gustaf Dalman had argued that its language was our nearest representative, next to the old *Reichs-aramäisch*, of the type of Aramaic language spoken in Palestine in the time of Christ.⁴ Kahle now argued that the language of the Palestinian Pentateuch Targum of his 'pre-Onkelos' tradition was much more representative of first-century Palestinian Aramaic.⁵

¹ *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel* (Breslau, 1857), pp. 162 ff.

² *Targum Onkelos* (Berlin, 1884), pp. 107 ff. Berliner was inclined to the view that the first authoritative written Targums were introduced under the influence of the work of R. Akiba.

³ See especially Berliner, *Targum Onkelos*, pp. 107 ff. Cf. also F. Rosenthal, *Die aramäische Forschung* (Leiden, 1939), pp. 127 ff.

⁴ *Aramäische Grammatik*², pp. 12 ff.

⁵ *The Cairo Geniza*², pp. 200 ff.

For more than twenty years Kahle was 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 filled with an unbounded zeal for his subject, and in his total dedication to his chosen life-work, he never spared himself. The dictum of Ralph Waldo Emerson about the scholar who must know how to 'toil terribly' could not have been more fittingly applied to any single scholar of our time. Zeal for his subject and painstaking industry were only part of Kahle's greatness as a scholar. His achievement lay not only in his ability to uncover fresh data, but, in the light of them, to open up new and important points of view and to stimulate others to follow in the paths he had opened up. He introduced us to new vistas of historical understanding and showed us new solutions for problems old and new. To all his many pupils throughout the world his 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.'¹ His 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.

If Kahle had any hobbies, they were those of the collector of manuscripts or of *objets d'art*, chiefly Oriental, or they consisted of a change of occupation in his work. He was a man of social habits, and was secretary for many years of a small club or society in Bonn which met regularly every week: it was characteristically a gathering of intellectuals mostly from the University and rejoiced in the name of the *Geisterklub*. There was seldom a time when there were no guests staying with him in his home. His only form of exercise was walking, though latterly he found his recreation increasingly in short drives in his car around

¹ Géza Vermes in *N.T.S.*, vol. vi, p. 325.

the Oxfordshire countryside where he had made his second home. Even in his recreation the line of demarcation with work was never very clearly drawn, for most of his visitors were professional colleagues and the subject of discussion on his many walks or visits was always his Oriental interests.

Textus masoreticum curavit Paul E. Kahle: these words from the 1937 (and subsequent) editions of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* sum up Kahle's main contribution to Hebrew learning. But his scholarly range went far beyond Hebraica in the Oriental field and the chief monument to his massive learning and widely diverse interests and enterprises in *Orientalia* will always be his Schweich Lectures on *The Cairo Geniza*. It is by this book that he will be known and remembered.

MATTHEW BLACK