

# From Typist To Seminary Professor

How mastery of a dozen languages led to writing the biography of America's best-known 20th-century biblical archaeologist.

by Leona Glidden Running

I HAVE OFTEN BEEN REFERRED TO AS "THE FIRST Adventist woman teaching biblical languages." I *was* the first woman to become a full-time faculty member of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. However, I am pleased to say that I am not a pioneer in the area of teaching biblical languages. Winifred Holmden taught Greek and Hebrew at Walla Walla College, and several women have held part-time teaching or librarian positions in the seminary.

I am thankful for many things, among them to have had work to do for a living that I love so much. Even yet, it seems I shouldn't be paid for doing that! To do what one would rather do than eat or sleep, and be paid for it—the opportunity to use one's God-given talent—

---

*Leona Glidden Running, professor emerita of Biblical Languages at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, Andrews University, is the author of William Foxwell Albright: A 20th-Century Genius (Andrews University Press, 1975). This article is adapted from the chapter entitled "The Making of a Seminary Professor," which appeared in In Our Own Words, (Adventist Women's Institute, 1993), edited by Iris M. Yob and Patti Hansen Tompkins. Reprinted by permission.*

what a blessing! And to work with young ministers in training—occasionally with their wives—and now increasingly with women in training for ministry—what a joy! What fun to have opened a door into a room they never before could have entered, and let them see all the treasures stored there.

I began by taking two Hebrew classes while working in the General Conference Ministerial Association on *Ministry* magazine. After a lapse of a couple of years and recovering from an illness, I registered at the end of 1954 for full work in the seminary next door. As I seriously began my M.A. work, I plunged into exegesis courses in Romans and Galatians under Dr. Roland E. Loasby. Sakae Kubo was in the same classes and just completing his B.D.—that was the kind of competition I had. My knowledge of Greek consisted of having read through a friend's Davis grammar book in my hammock in the hot summer evenings a year and a half earlier! I survived by cramming Greek grammar and syntax books and writing out everything until I could not help knowing it. But



Sakae could sail through, understanding everything Dr. Loasby was saying. He then returned to Emmanuel Missionary College to teach. After the seminary and graduate school of Potomac University moved to the banks of the St. Joseph River and joined EMC to become Andrews University, Sakae moved over to the seminary New Testament department. From then on, Sakae was my valued and highly appreciated colleague. We were often in the same carload going to scholarly meetings.

After I earned my master's degree in August 1955, majoring in biblical Greek and minoring in biblical Hebrew, the seminary considered hiring me to teach the beginning and second levels of biblical languages. That way, the male seminary teachers could offer more courses in exegesis and theology. However, the administrators at that time felt that men would not come to the seminary and study under a woman. In spite of these objections, thanks to the influence of good friends and mentors under whom I had studied—Drs. Loasby, W. G. C. Murdoch, and Siegfried H. Horn—I was hired. However, I was put on probation to see whether or not this arrangement would work out.

## On Probation

During my period of probation, I was made to clearly understand that I was *not* a faculty member and was *not* to attend faculty meetings or faculty social events. When one of my three classes failed to fill during the second term (as frequently happened to all the professors), my already meager salary was cut by a third. I had to take in typing to earn my living. Under these pressures, my ulcer started up again.

In spite of these setbacks, one administrator saw that the experiment was succeeding and recommended to the board that I be put on year-to-year review. Then another administra-

tor (who had personally told me that I was not invited to the faculty Christmas party) wrote me a kind letter informing me that I could now attend faculty meetings and other functions as a regularly appointed member. Thereafter, he sent me a yearly letter confirming my appointment and expressing appreciation for my work. And rather suddenly—they must have taken into consideration my four years of teaching French and German on the academy level—I was given permanent tenure and a small increase in wages.

That first year, one of my mentors urged me to start a doctoral program, as I was the only faculty member who did not yet have a doctorate. The only possibility I could see was an Ed.D. program at American University in Washington, D.C. I registered for a three-hour class in educational sociology, sharing rides Monday evenings with Ruth Murdoch. After a couple of weeks, my department chairman learned what I was doing and "hit the ceiling." Dr. Horn was not only my colleague but also a former teacher. "Leona," he exclaimed, "if you can do that, you can go to Johns Hopkins and get a proper degree in your proper field!"

I could? It had never occurred to me that it was possible. As far as I was concerned, Johns Hopkins was on the moon! But that fall I made a trip forty miles north to Baltimore. I visited with a professor who outlined the course work and said, "At your oral defense you will sit at the end of the long table and they will give you Akkadian words and you will tell them what dialect of Assyrian or Babylonian they belong to."

I will? Wow! I thought. Can it really be?

I learned that most classes in the famous William F. Albright's department (what was then called the "Oriental Seminary" is now known as the Department of Near Eastern Studies) met for only one hour a week. Thus, it was feasible for me to structure half a study load around my full-time seminary teaching schedule.



In the spring of 1956 I began to get acquainted with the department. I took Hebrew Rapid Reading from the professor, Thomas O. Lambdin, who later became my main teacher. In January, Dr. Horn went with me to Johns Hopkins for my language examination. I passed all my language requirements in one pleasant hour by conversing with Dr. Albright in German, switching to French and Spanish, then translating several selected Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. He didn't ask me to translate from the Latin Vulgate, although I had been studying Latin on my own for six weeks. On the basis of my knowledge of the other languages, he accepted my simple statement that I could read the Vulgate as well.

I had used my knowledge of French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and had learned Portuguese during the four years I worked in the Foreign Language Division of the church's radio program, "The Voice of Prophecy." There, I typed scripts in Spanish and Portuguese, and cared for German Bible lessons from the U.S. and Canada during the latter half of World War II. After the war, I instigated the creation of German Bible correspondence schools in Europe. In the midst of that time, in August 1946, my beloved husband, Leif ("Bud"), died during lung surgery.

In the summer of 1957, Dr. Horn was scheduled to conduct his first study tour of Europe and the Bible lands. I was given the summer off to go, with half pay and no other assistance. I'd get the other half of my salary if I returned from the trip healthy enough to continue teaching, which one administrator

doubted would happen. To earn money for the trip, I worked half-time on the Review and Herald's *SDA Bible Commentary* editorial team. Everyone shut their eyes to the fact that I was earning one and a half denominational salaries.

I was fascinated by Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, the West Bank, and Greece, particularly with Dr. Horn's expert leadership and teaching. I did come back to the seminary healthy, though completely penniless. I also faced a tuition charge for half-time course work at Johns Hopkins. I was responsible for paying my own tuition until the time a new president was appointed. After that, my tuition was paid each semester. Years later, after I earned my Ph.D., I was given retroactively the amount of tuition I had paid out of my own pocket. However, from the 1950s until the seminary moved to Michigan, I earned extra money by

typing theses for veterans—Air Force captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels attending area universities. I had to follow the different thesis-typing rules of all the various institutions in the Washington area.

Just at the point when I returned from my overseas trip and had several weeks free before classes began, the *Commentary* editors were pulling in all possible helpers to edit the index. I had indexed the biblical language words appearing in the seven volumes before leaving on my trip. But now I found myself working full-time for several weeks helping edit the general index. I earned the highest rate of pay I had yet received from the denomination, and succeeded in earning the

---

*I had to write the 147 pages of Syriac by hand—twice—with enough pressure of the pen to make a readable impression on two carbon copies. I needed six copies, and we didn't yet have photocopy machines! My right thumb was numb from October 22 to the end of January.*



amount needed for my tuition.

The two following school years I taught a full load in the seminary while taking a half load at Johns Hopkins University, driving to Baltimore twice a week. After the decision was made to move the seminary from Takoma Park to Berrien Springs, Michigan, I gave up all thoughts of a lighter load in favor of registering for the additional seminar I would need to complete my course requirements before moving. I paid for the stress of that year's heavy schedule with nerve problems in my upper back. My beginning students in Greek and Hebrew felt I was sympathetic to them, as I was myself beginning the study of Akkadian and Syriac!

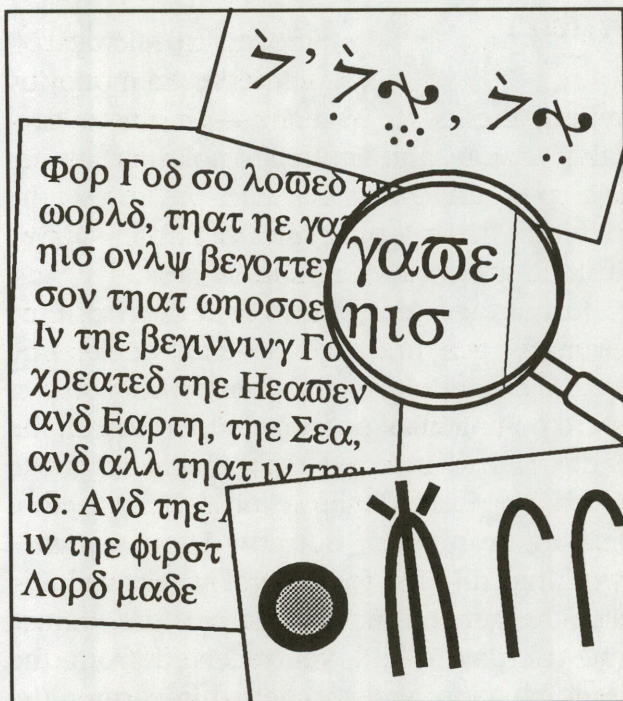
During the next year, when half the seminary faculty were finishing with students in Takoma Park and half were beginning with students in Berrien Springs, I was making three trips a week to Baltimore to fulfill my required full-residence year. For that year, I had been granted a university tuition scholarship. Dr. Albright had retired in the spring of 1958, and my main teacher, Dr. Lambdin, had felt obligated to stay by as acting chairman and

to continue his three-year lecture cycles for those of us already in process, rather than immediately moving to his more lucrative position at Harvard.

I thought I had taught Hebrew to all who would need it the previous year. But new students came who had to have it. Without consulting either Dr. Horn or me, the seminary administration hired an elderly man to teach Hebrew part-time. By Christmas the students were in such a state of mutiny that I was called upon to take back the class. I was already taking credit courses at Johns Hopkins in Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian hieroglyphic, Arabic, and Ugaritic. In order to teach this early-morning class, I tried auditing Arabic and Ugaritic, but had to drop them second semester. If one is not working along with the others, the class soon becomes incomprehensible.

Before moving to Michigan in August of 1960, I took three more of my six comprehensive examinations—Syriac, Hebrew Historical Grammar, and Comparative Semitic Grammar—all day, at home, on my honor. I had already taken my comprehensive exam in Akkadian in order to have it from a familiar teacher instead of the new man, a formidable scholar who came from England to be department chairman. Then I moved my belongings to a small house at the edge of the campus of what was soon renamed Andrews University. Over Thanksgiving vacation, I took my comprehensive exam in Ancient History. Then, while teaching three classes, I spent a year preparing for my last exam, in Hebrew Bible and Critical Studies. I am probably the only graduate of the Oriental seminary who didn't dare try the Hebrew exam until after reading the entire Old Testament in Hebrew—all 1,100-plus pages. That's how scared I was of my excellent Jewish professor!

For my dissertation, I began research on Syriac manuscripts of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The world's leading Syriac scholar





was located at a seminary in Chicago, and had agreed to guide me through the research process. As it turned out, he was too busy with his own research and teaching, and really held me back (reactivating my old ulcer). He let me stumble around in the field, beginning backwards with patristic quotations and allusions (for which I had to make weekly trips to spend Fridays in the library of the Oriental Institute) whereas I should have been saturating my mind by collating the biblical text in Syriac manuscripts. Finally, I knew more or less what I was doing, and transferred myself under the wing of another scholar at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He took one look at what I had collected and said I had already done enough work for three dissertations! Under his guidance I dropped my work on Jeremiah and Ezekiel and continued with the more promising manuscript studies of Isaiah alone.

My summer was a much-needed, fun-filled, relaxing one of swimming and picnicking (besides teaching) awaiting the arrival of the microfilm copies of Isaiah manuscripts which I had ordered from the British Museum, the Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Vatican Library, and other libraries and museums in Europe.

When the films finally came, I spent all possible time outside of my three classes with my head in the big old microfilm reader that the library let me keep in my office. When I compared an entire Isaiah manuscript with my model text, letter by letter, recording all variants, my head was in that machine a whole week! Fortunately, a small minority of the manuscripts contained the entire book. Some manuscripts were in two columns, others in one or three or even four. Some were very tiny. Some were black on white, while others were white on black, which is very hard on the eyes. Sometimes I had to use a magnifying glass all over the reading surface. The oldest

fragment was a fifth-century vellum palimpsest (a rewritten manuscript). In the 10th century, the single column had been mostly obscured by two columns of text from a choral book, written in the opposite direction. I nearly went blind from studying the fragment, but I did find three variants in the faint, underlying older text.

Part of the time I was doing this research, I was also teaching an extra class. For the benefit of review before my oral examination, I wanted the experience of teaching Akkadian (cuneiform), Egyptian (hieroglyphic) and Syriac (close to the Aramaic that Jesus spoke).

When I was ready to type the final copy of my dissertation, I needed a "padded cell"—a place out of the mainstream of office traffic and noise. I volunteered to trade offices with a colleague who was anxious to move to the top floor of Seminary Hall, where he would be in a suite of two offices with a secretary between. So I traded, and for the next 10 years occupied a single office near the door beside the front steps of Seminary Hall, looking up through the window at a treetop against the sky. I saw their feelings of guilt at being unwilling to trade offices; all my top-floor colleagues gave me an undeserved halo. Actually, I needed the seclusion of a quiet office to in order to make my final copies of the 400-page dissertation. It included 147 pages of handwritten Syriac presenting the 3,339 significant variants I had found. While I was working on it, a dear colleague (who had first been a student of mine in beginning German and French when he was 15 years old) used to tell people, "When Leona gets through, there will be only five people in the world who will know what she is talking about!"

For lack of technology to help me, I had to write the 147 pages of Syriac by hand—*twice*—with enough pressure of the pen against a metal ruler (to carry along the line that goes under most Syriac letters) to make a readable



impression on *two* carbon copies. I needed six copies, and we didn't yet have photocopy machines! My right thumb was numb from October 22 to the end of January.

## A Rite of Passage

January 30, 1964, was the memorable day of the oral examination. I drove to Lapaz, Indiana, parked and locked my car, and took a roomette on the Baltimore & Ohio train bound for Baltimore. My department chairman took me, along with several departmental faculty members, to lunch in the Johns Hopkins Club. At that time, only men could eat in the university's main dining room, which they entered through the front door. A meal involving all women or mixed company had to take place in a small side dining room, which the women had to enter by way of the back door through the kitchen and then a winding passageway lined with steam pipes. How does that make a woman feel? Yet even the few women faculty members tolerated it. (I don't know if such blatant gender discrimination still exists there today. At the Johns Hopkins Medical School at the turn of the century, female medical students had to sit in the hallway or behind a door or a curtain to take class notes, so as not to distract the serious male medical students!)

After lunch, I went into the same classroom where I had sat for many stimulating lectures and language classes, and where I had also given my seminar papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Phoenician inscriptions. As fore-

told, I was seated at the end of the long table, which was for me the end of the line. What would be the outcome?

We students knew the examiners could ask us anything in world history, world philosophy, and world literature. I had been reading assiduously in these subjects since mailing copies of my dissertation to the committee. At that time, my right thumb was just getting over the numbness it had suffered since I had begun to write the Syriac portions of my dissertation. I had offered to design a typewriter ball with Syriac letters for IBM, but they didn't think there would be much demand for it! Now there are computer programs available with all these ancient scripts.

---

*At my doctoral examination I took with me one particular analysis I had written on lengths of adding-machine tape, all rolled together. I managed to unroll it and fling it out on the table before my time was up. There was a smile on every face. I thought, Maybe this is going to be all right!*

At my doctoral examination, the examining committee sat around a long table. I had only met two members of the committee before. Opposite me sat the chairman of the committee, the chairman of the Classics Department. At my right sat my department chairman, and to my left the new Arabist scholar. The lone woman, chair of the German Department, sat to the right, knitting. To the left was an economics professor, included because my dissertation contained more than 30 pages of statistical tables of percentages, figures hard-won from weeks with my head in the microfilm reader and each page having taken half an hour to produce.

My advisor at the University of Chicago had told me I would probably have five minutes at the beginning to tell of my research. He said to be sure in that time to unroll one particular analysis I had written on various lengths of



adding-machine tape, all rolled together and held with a clamp. I managed to unroll it and fling it out on the table before my time was up. As I glanced around, there was a smile on every face. I thought, Maybe this is going to be all right!

In fact, it was fun! Each person was allowed 10 minutes to question me. My chairman began with easy questions to get me started. The time slipped by rapidly; the experience felt very satisfying. When anyone was pressing hard or I was running out of steam, the chairman would say "Time's up!" and turn to the next person. An advanced research fellow in the department waited out in the hall with me while the verdict was being decided. That didn't take long, and they soon called for "Dr. Running" to enter.

Friends and colleagues helped me celebrate my achievement. The night after my exam I stayed with a former student and his family in Takoma Park. They invited a few friends of mine for the evening, and a huge floral bouquet arrived from some dear colleagues. The next day, a friend took me to visit retired Dr. Loasby. Then she put me back on the B & O train in Silver Spring, along with a good sack supper. Before the train left, I made up my roomette berth and lay down. I didn't move for three hours, until I regained enough strength to sit up and eat.

At a chapel service and at the faculty-board banquet that soon followed, the university president and the seminary dean ostentatiously called me "Dr. Running" as they announced the successful completion of my doctoral work. It seemed to me that I had been liberated from seven years of bondage.

Yet I did not really feel "finished" until June, when I drove with my parents to Baltimore to receive my rolled mock diploma (my real one had come by mail in April) from Dr. Milton Eisenhower, president of Johns Hopkins and brother of former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. After going through the cer-

emony in front of Gilman Hall (built the year I was born), I realized why even civilized people need ceremony and ritual—it does something for one emotionally. At last I felt "done." I am sure that each of my colleagues who has a doctorate has a similar tale to tell.

## A Woman Seminary Professor

Aware of the danger that has sometimes been experienced in doing doctoral work at various universities, I thought I was "protecting" myself by concentrating on linguistic and ancient-language studies. Although I had several ancient-history and archaeological courses also, nothing theological had been in my program at Johns Hopkins, and whatever came up that I could not at once agree with I simply set aside as non-relevant. Thus, I delayed my own enlightenment. Later I came face to face with certain questions, such as chronological ones, which made me realize I did not already have all the answers, and perhaps never would. Higher education is a humbling and enlightening experience!

The seminary faculty is often under suspicion from people who are not theologically trained and/or do not make the effort to really understand issues, discussions, and published material. At one faculty meeting where we all felt "under fire," I finally spoke up and explained to the president just how I taught the first chapters of Genesis in my second-level Hebrew classes. He looked at me kindly—we had known each other many years—and said, "Leona, I think exactly the same way; you are not under any suspicion!" Dr. Siegfried Horn, sitting beside me, immediately reached over and shook my hand, congratulating me on this public vindication of me from any taint of heresy! My students were looking at the original biblical text, Hebrew in the Old Testament, Greek in the New, for the first time, and seeing things they had never noticed before. I always



told them, and wanted to be able to tell them, "Don't be afraid to look and see what is—and what is not—really there; truth can stand any investigation!"

I probably gave myself a mental block when I joined the seminary faculty, restricting myself to language, methods of teaching, and geographical courses. I left the exegesis and theology courses for the men, who preferred that kind of teaching and would not welcome me if I were encroaching on their "territory." I thought they would be glad to have me there to teach courses they were much less interested in teaching.

I was not involved in hallway discussions of deep theological questions, though I did have one or two fine students who refused to let me get away with saying I did not have a "theological mind"!

It did not especially bother me to be the only woman in classes at the seminary and Johns Hopkins, but what was really difficult was going to banquets and other affairs that were obviously and overwhelmingly for couples. Rather isolated on campus, I did not always have a close friend among the single women faculty members, and no colleague thought to add me to his twosome, regardless of what good friends we were.

Otherwise, my colleagues, most of whom had been my students at one time, accepted me very well. Early on, Dr. Horn nominated me for membership in the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis (the last two words were later dropped from the name). When the seminary moved to Michigan, he nominated me into the Chicago Society of Biblical Research. The year after my "retirement" (1981-1982) I served as the first woman president of that venerable society. My colleagues were always kind about including me when they drove to society meetings or annual conventions. And the outpouring of concern and affection from the seminary family when I had a difficult surgery in spring of 1981 was very

touching.

It was the assignment from my church in 1971 to write a paper on "The Role of Women in the SDA Church" that awakened me to the discrimination that not only I, but all other women workers, had suffered for years. In September 1973 I was included in the conference at Mohaven, the junior camp in Ohio, where a dozen men and a dozen women spent several days discussing the papers we all had prepared and considering the roles of women, particularly the question of ordination. Several theological papers had concluded that there was no biblical evidence against it, and none from Ellen White's writings. Most of the people and their papers were positive toward ordination of women. I was on Elder N. R. Dower's committee appointed to hammer out resolutions, and sat at a typewriter to record our conclusions. The whole group voted the list of resolutions enthusiastically and passed it on for consideration at the Annual Council the following month.

We had faith in the rightness of our conclusions and naively thought they would be passed. We really expected the door would be immediately opened to women being increasingly called by God and trained at the seminary to be pastors. A few weeks later, of course, reality came crashing in. It was not until several years later that "Associates in Pastoral Care" were established (not on the ordination track, however). Doubtless our pioneering helped accomplish this, though later and less than we had hoped.

In the mid-1960s, the Andrews University president strove to get equal pay for women teachers, and he succeeded. This was a great help when in 1967 I was given the 60-plus-year-old house I had lived in if I wished to move it to make way for the new science complex. When the basic wage was made equal that year, it amounted to quite a raise. When I was teaching in the summer session at Newbold College in England in 1974, the



fringe benefits were also made equal. Again it meant a significant raise for the women teachers—an indication of the size of our former forced sacrifice. Those benefits still continue, for which I am deeply grateful.

## Travels and Writing

In the Depression I went to school at Emmanuel Missionary College with made-over clothes and poor shoes, and never had any idea that my yearnings for European travel would ever be gratified. Yet I've since had the great privilege of five trips to Europe, three of which continued throughout the Middle East.

On my first trip, I visited seven countries, traveling with my friend Del Delker, who sang for the Voice of Prophecy at the 1951 Paris Youth Congress. It was such a fulfilling trip that I wrote it up in the 1953 Senior Reading Course book, *36 Days and a Dream*. The 1957 trip with Dr. Horn's group resulted in *From Thames to Tigris*, a sort of diary of the group's trip. In 1965, with a bit of financial help from the seminary, I spent a summer crossing Europe on Britrail and Eurail passes. I then sailed by ship from Venice to Haifa to spend seven weeks studying modern Hebrew and touring Israel. Afterward I visited five of the seven churches of Revelation, as well as Troy and Istanbul, in western Turkey. In 1970, I spent three weeks in southern Greece with an erudite, elderly friend from Edinburgh, Scotland, and cruised the Greek islands. After that, I spent eight days touring Iran (ancient Persia) with the help of two missionary families. Following my teaching stint at Newbold College in 1974, I was able to visit France again and both parts of Germany, including East and West Berlin, and our seminary at Friedensau. (I had earlier visited our Adventist schools in Bogenhofen and Marienhoehe.)

Whenever I return from 13 to 16 weeks of overseas travel, it takes a while to climb back

up to zero financially! But such travel gives a person something that can never be taken away. Now when I look through a new book on the Bible lands, I invariably find that I have visited almost all the sites pictured. The Bible really comes alive. How lucky I have been! And how thankful I am!

When I returned from the 1965 trip, I moved into a furnished apartment in Baltimore during a year's leave of absence from Andrews University to serve as Dr. Albright's research and editorial assistant. He turned 75 that year, and had a 10-year backlog of material to publish. I also worked with him during vacations between summer and fall quarters. On May 24, 1971, I was present for the great celebration of his 80th birthday, and later, in September, attended his funeral.

After I returned from the funeral, Dr. Horn told me I must immediately write Dr. Albright's biography before interest in him and his life work in biblical archaeology waned. My automatic response was, "Not me, no, never!" But by the next summer, I was back in Baltimore gathering materials for the biography, which I wrote in collaboration with Dr. David Noel Freedman. *William Foxwell Albright: A 20th-Century Genius* was published in the fall of 1975. A new centennial edition came out in late 1991 from Andrews University Press. What a privilege was mine, not only to have taken a few classes under the "Dean of Biblical Archaeologists" and a leading Semitist, but to have helped him publish so much in his final years, and finally to absorb his whole inspiring life as I wrote his life story! I only wished I had known I would do that, so that I could have asked him some strategic questions while there was time.

Though I no longer teach Greek classes, which gave me an overload for a quarter century, nor beginning Hebrew, I still teach three classes a year and am scheduled for three in 1994-1995, my 14th year since "retiring."

To God be all praise and glory forever!