

PREFACE

This issue of the Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology is being published as a Festschrift to honour the sixtieth birthday of Colin (E.C.B.) MacLaurin, Head of the Department of Semitic Studies at the University of Sydney since 1945.

It was intended at first that this volume, contributed by friends, colleagues and former students, should be centred on the field of Ugaritic studies, a field in which Colin MacLaurin has researched, taught and written for more than a quarter of a century. Chance, perhaps happily, made this intention impossible to fulfil, and the volume now contains a range of contributions whose scope testifies to the widespread scholarly interests of the recipient. There is no need here to dwell on his contribution to the cause of Semitic Studies, in its widest sense. That is described in the brief history of the Department he has led since his first academic appointment. What is equally important is his stature as a man—as a colleague and a friend to those who work with him.

Colin MacLaurin is one of a dying breed of Australians whose lives are centred on the city but whose roots and hearts lie in the country. In all aspects of his life he has maintained long-standing family traditions of contributing to the academic, pastoral and political life of this country. To his credit, he has managed to encompass all three, drawing on his incredible energies to run three separate careers as successful grazier and cattle breeder, leading member of the Liberal Party machine and Executive and academic. Perhaps it is his remarkable ability to recite from memory volumes of English (and military!) verse which enables him to maintain his incredible energies and hectic pace of life.

In running his Department at the University Colin MacLaurin has always been a generous man and a friend to his staff. Friendly and good humoured, he has given them every encouragement and incentive to develop academically and has seen that they had every facility which he could procure by the power of persuasion to undertake the research tasks they set themselves. He has often stepped forward as a genuine friend to give his staff his personal, friendly help.

A. D. CROWN.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Alan D. Crown for assuming the editorship of this issue, because of his long-standing association with Colin MacLaurin.

Eugene Stockton,
Editor