Harry A. Hoffner, Jr.

The Society of Biblical Literature wanted to celebrate and publicize the inauguration of its new series, *Writings From the Ancient World*, which offers translations of ancient Near Eastern texts. With travel grants awarded from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Society of Biblical Literature sent the editor of the new series accompanied by Professor Harry A. Hoffner, author of *Hittite Myths*, the second volume in the new series, to make presentations at the International Academy of Religion Conference in Melbourne, Australia (July 12–18, 1992). While there, Hoffner was interviewed on Australian radio. In early January 1993, he flew to Philadelphia to serve as one of the University’s two delegates to the annual meeting of the American Research Institute in Turkey. In late May he lectured on the history and culture of the Hittites to a large touring group on board a Greek ship in the Mediterranean. In late June he presented a lecture at the Second International Congress of Hittitology in Pavia, Italy, and a week later another lecture at the International Congress of Assyriologists meeting in Leiden, the Netherlands.

The August issue of *The Atlantic* contained a witty and urbane article by editor Colin Murphy based upon a telephone interview with Hoffner. The article introduced a new term into the lexicon, “necrolexicography,” which according to Murphy means “one who writes dictionaries of dead languages.” This means, of course, that the Oriental Institute is well represented by “necrolexicographers”! The *Atlantic* article generated a follow-up interview with Hoffner on National
Public Radio on August 10th. The program was a radio “magazine” show. The interview with Hoffner about the Chicago Hittite Dictionary followed a new recipe for a broccoli dish! In October 1992, he and his colleague Hans Güterbock were photographed by Chicago Magazine as a prominent part of their photographic essay on the University of Chicago entering its second century.

On May 13th, after months of advance planning, he and his associates held a very successful surprise 85th birthday party for Professor Hans Güterbock in Breasted Hall, which was attended by not only Chicago friends but also by visitors from as far away as the Netherlands.