

Brooklyn College

BEDFORD AVENUE AND AVENUE H

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

Dec. 6, 1947

Dear Franklin:

Your letter of Dec. 5 arrived at ten o'clock this morning, making almost as good time as your Special Delivery had made.

About the Symposium--you know I'm delighted at not having to speak, first, because it would ruin my dinner, and second, because I really didn't see how anything I would say would fit into any scheme. I am looking forward to getting the latest information on the really Homeric period. That will be a real contribution to knowledge.

Actually, I have nothing ~~new~~ to add to Minoan yet. I am beginning to get a few glimmerings about the inflection pattern, but nothing to talk about.

By the way, the Linguistic Society of America lists a talk on the Minoan Syllabary by T. B. Jones, Univ. of ~~Winn~~ Minnesota, the third paper on the Monday afternoon program--should be about 2:30. I have never heard of Jones, and am afraid it will be another attempt at giving phonetic values.

I called E. Adelaide Hahn to-day, and gave her the three names. She will write. Edgerton answered my letter immediately. He seems pleased at the idea of recommending me. He writes (and from him that is great flattery):

"As for what I would be willing to say, it would be that you have taken advanced courses in Sanskrit with me, for a number of years and have done excellent work; that you impressed me, in those courses and otherwise, as a person of high intelligence, originality and insight. I could not say from personal knowledge that you know anything in particular about Indo-European comparative grammar, and if they asked me that question, I should have to answer it that way. I don't doubt, however, that you know plenty for the purposes in hand. What you don't know, you would soon learn, so far as seemed necessary, you being what you are."

Edgerton never says anything he doesn't believe. He states the situation exactly. My work in Indo-European has been with specific languages: Sanskrit, Tocharian, Hittite, (Lydian, Lycian, Carian--if I.E.) Celtic, Greek, Latin and assorted modern languages. I know enough about Semitic (Akkadian and Hebrew), also Sumerian and Chinese, to understand how they differ from H.E. I know exactly what to do to prepare to teach specific courses, but wouldn't do it till I had to teach them, since from my viewpoint, it's a waste of time until I know where Minoan comes in.

I'd like nothing better than teaching some archaeology as well,
with you as C.O.

Everybody tells me this job, if it materializes, would be a wonderful opportunity. I know that too. It's too good to be ~~true~~ true. I write letters, and--since your letter came Thursday--talk about it,

6 Dec 1947
but I don't believe it.

All the same, I've been figuring out what I would do if the job actually materializes. I think I would work it this way: I'd take it, and try to get a year's leave without pay from Brooklyn College. In that way, I can find out how it really works out, and if I'm not as good as I think I am, can retire gracefully at the end of the year, to everybody's relief, and come back here. If it works out, I can resign here. While the authorities at College here won't like it, I think they will do it, since it was done recently for the Chairman of the Art Department, who went to one of the Chicago Institutes. I've spoken to the Dean of the Faculty, Mario E. Cosenza, who is also a professor in our Classics Department, and he thinks it can be arranged that way. The business about going to Crete will complicate matters, unless I can work that in during the summer.

I own a house here in Flatbush, and think I'll hold on to it, coming home week-ends, so that Mother won't be completely alone, at least for the first year. I presume the housing situation is as bad in Philadelphia as in New York.

I'll have to figure on doing very little with Minoan that first year--but getting the Minoan Research Library--if that is the official title--into order and plugging away at new courses will be a very valuable experience, and Minoan is at the stage where any new information may be the clue.

All this of course, provided that----.

What I said to Dean Cosenza was in confidence. I haven't mentioned the matter officially, because I have no intention of bargaining. I consider it unethical and undignified.

My own chairman is a fuddy-duf (and you can leave out the fuddy). His first question when a new idea is broached is--what is the precedent for it? If this goes through, he will have a fit.

The thing that really sells me on Pennsylvania is the fact that you are there and that they seem to appreciate you.

I suppose I'll have to check the tenure and pension business.

Well, enough of all that. I'm in the midst of trying to review Bossert's Asia for Artibus Asiae. I never heard of the periodical till the editor wrote to ask me for the review; but I was delighted at the chance to get hold of Bossert's book. You have no idea how it delighted me to find out I could understand what Bossert was talking about. He jumps from Hittite to Egyptian, to hieroglyphic Hittite, Luwian, Hurrian, Lycian, Lydian, Carian, Hattic, Lemnian, Etruscan--and goodness knows what. He even mentions Minoan!

I can't say back to my knitting--because I only knit when I read detective stories, and therefore that's in the field of entertainment.

I've never told you I'm grateful for all you're doing. I am. It's been fun, too.

Alice