

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY
June 10, 1952

Dear Ralph,

I was very glad to hear that Mr. Giesey has been awarded by some clerical error an A.C.L.S. Fellowship which few students get. My congratulations... I can only say: "You were lucky." You are wrong, however, if you believe I wrote lies about you. I did not praise *you*, but your subject, Louis XIV, and thus I praised myself and may have found so warmly narcissistic words that they went to the hearts of the Committee, and put you in my place. By the way, the outline you wrote about your L.14 project was by far the best thing you did in years—at least, to my knowledge. In the depth of the drawers of your desk you may have even better ones; however, I do not know them and it is always wise to keep some unfinished work a secret. "Ralph knows more than he says."¹

The medallions you mentioned were known to me. I had actually shown them in slides when I read a paper at the formerly American, now Benson Numismatic Association (Bobchen [Benson] is Assistant there, as you may know), whereby the slide operator managed to ball up even the very first slide: word and image were never goose-stepping in good old Prussian fashion, but resembled more our crack divisions at Kojé which have to fight the same fellows once more which they have fought before. The Chamber of Commerce at Kojé² invites for hunting trips (bag limit a day is 15 for native, 10 for naturalized Americans), but I may prefer a few lonely Sierra trout village idiots.³

I have mentioned you to Professor [André] Grabar. He will be glad to see you if you need him. Perhaps you should first go on and collect the material you find in the Cabinet des Médailles and try to find out when the french kings began to issue medallions, and perhaps coins, after the ancient Roman fashion. You will have to study for that purpose also the Roman coins thoroughly—otherwise you don't recognize the types. I was amazed, for instance, to find an Etoimasia on one of the pieces of L. XIV. Also the *Oriens Augusti* on a L.XIII (the one you mentioned) was a surprise. One will have to find out the advisers of the king or the mintmasters. There has been some work done on all that stuff. But it has not been studied in connection with Du Cange* (marginal note: *Du Cange wrote on coins too, as you know) and the whole Byzantine movement around 1700. The various strands will have to be brought together. The papers of [Nicolas Fabri de] Peiresc and of Rascas de Bagarris, which might be in the MS section of the Bibl. Nat. (You will find out where they are) might yield some interesting material as to the general antiquarian atmosphere. Perhaps you might even shed some light on that Provençal clique of scholars—both Peiresc and Bagarris were Provençals. Get yourself plaster casts or photos (casts are probably less expensive) of all the coins and medallions which strike you as relevant specimens, and do keep them in good order. You will have to pick your way alone for the time being. But after all, I said you were able to carry through "independent research."

Of this I should like to have a little evidence. Could you tell me when exactly, on the

¹ A remark, its origin not recollected, that Eka, Michael and Joe Rubinstein often made (more teasingly than seriously) about me.

² An incident in the Korean War.

³ Early on in our fishing adventures we came to differentiate between PhD trout (the large ones too smart to take our flies) and village idiots (the little ones we caught).

basis of your profound research work, the French kings introduced the effigies at their funerals. Before Francis I or after? In other words, when did one begin to display, as it were, the “King’s two Bodies” at the funerals? In art it occurs apparently earlier, for at Brou you have the tombs with the skeleton below and the “majesty” on top of the sarcophagus. I remember to have seen one of those tombs in the Louvre. Could you find out and send me a photo? I am better informed about England and the beginnings there; but about France I need your advice—and the sources, since I cannot go on quoting “Giesey, *ibid.*,” “Giesey, *ibid.*,” before your work has been published. You can mail your letter to the Institute. Monsignore Cherniavsky will spend his summer on meadows of the Institute before starting his new job at Wesleyan. He was rather lucky and it will be good for him to get a toe on the academic ladder. He will forward my mail to Berkeley (1530 La Loma, the Tolman⁴ house—T. is in Europe). I have to finish some work and need a place cooler than Princeton—where else could one go except to Berkeley? You don’t easily find the combination of good library and fog.

Thank you also for your postal cards. You will forgive me, but my approach to art in general is obviously different from yours, and to Roger van der Weyden, Tintoretto, and Ravenna in particular. We were all very curious, however, about the “frescoes” of Ravenna which nobody except you seems to have noticed.⁵ All of us were probably too preoccupied and too excited about the mosaics to record the frescoes. But it was nice of you to think of me, though this time I should say “R. Says more than he knows.”

I hope Mr. and/or Mrs. Giesey⁶ are having a good time in Italy. How long are you going to stay?

All my best wishes,
cordially
EKa [Signed]

[Additional holograph notes:]
Imprimatur. Nihil obstat.

Pax

† Bobchen [Robert Benson]
Archiepiscopus Princetonianus

Ralphchen

I have much to write about, but this has been waiting long enough. Don’t mind the boss! He is really awfully nice! Will write in a couple of days. You did make a horrible gaffe with those “frescoes” (non inveni), M. [Michael Cherniavsky]

⁴ Edward C. Tolman, Professor of Psychology, nominal leader of the non-signers of the University of California Loyalty Oath; the legal case of the non-signers was called Tolman vs. the Board of Regents.

⁵ I had written “frescoes” where I meant “mosaics”.

⁶ In January 1952 I had got married, but it lasted just a year.