

COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE
DI SCIENZE STORICHE

GIUNTA CENTRALE
PER GLI STUDI STORICI

CONGRESSO INTERNAZIONALE DI SCIENZE STORICHE

ROMA 4 - 11 SETTEMBRE 1955

Roma, Sept. 8, 1955.

Dear old Ralph,

Thanks for your letter. I enclose a check \$42 for the horses. Have you by now your own palfreys? And have you found a nice apartment? I met Miss ?? of Vassar¹ whom you are replacing—a very charming girl indeed and not bad as a *synthronos* at all should you stay on another year.

The congress is a great Fair, sometimes quite amusing. Bob Benson is here too—he came in his car with two M.G.H. fellows, but without wife. He seems to be doing quite well, or better: [Friedrich] Baethgen was full of praise, and he is on [Stephan] Kuttner's Committee of the "Institute for Canon Law"—the board I am on as well.

Yesterday the medicine man² received the Congress whereby something funny happened: you would have seen your boss walking directly behind the *sedia gestatoria*, flanked by a papal chamberlain & a Swiss Guard, through the whole length of the huge reception hall in the Vatican, every one, right and left, bending his knee before me and acclaiming wildly—probably they took me for the designated successor pope.³ Bob and Felix Gilbert etc., were speechless when they saw me marching directly behind Pio XII, and others were astonished. The full story is too long to be written—but this was the essence. However, to shake hands with my predecessor I refused; but it is a nice feeling to march through crowds in prostration & I shall miss that very much in Princeton. Michael would have loved it.

Tuesday I am leaving for Naples & Ischia. It makes little sense to send more mail. Just let it pile up at the Institute. I am getting homesick and restless & may try to get a reservation a little earlier. Are the Ševs⁴ already in Princeton? It will be strange to return without finding you at the station. The helicopter is no use—thanks (I arrive at 6:45 A.M.).

The keyboards you have designed are the result of a misunderstanding: this typewriter should not have the German type, but the standard English (with all the additional signs I need). You have never written a German letter for me, nor will your successor. And I hardly would use it any-how. For the first weeks, Margy [Ševčenko] might borrow some machine from another office.

Good luck to the positive Vassarman,⁵ & love from

EKa. [Signed]

¹ Miss [sic] James Bruce Ross—"J.B." to everyone—who was Professor of History at Vassar.

² Pope Pius XII.

³ A photograph of this will be found in the Photo Gallery of *Ekaica*.

⁴ Ihor Ševčenko, to be a visiting member of the Institute for Advanced Study in 1955-56, and his wife Margaret (Margie to everyone), who would be Eka's assistant.

⁵ A play on Eka's joking about my having to take a physical examination before I taught at Vassar, which included a Wasserman test: "I hope to you turn out to be a positive Vassarman!"