

22 ALEXANDER STREET
PRINCETON, N.J.
Dec. 21, 1961

My poor Ralph,

The Royal Riveras are, so far, my only gift to you and I am glad they at least arrived; for the case of Alsatian Riesling, 1959, which your other friends and colleagues in the Apostolic succession received—even Michael [Cherniavsky], I assume—can reach you as little as the frozen pheasant will reach me. How could we do it? To take a case of wine on the plane would be connected with forbidding charges and might even get you into trouble. What can we do about it? A rain check for the wine? I am rather unhappy. On the other hand, you will freeze to death sitting in Washington on the frozen pheasant. It is a rather funny situation, resulting from that awful Christmas which [Otto] Maenchen now calls Buddha-mas.

Maenchen, that is, Berkeley. You have heard probably that Leonardo Olschki died ten days ago. Had suffered for a few weeks from angina pectoris, then got a thrombosis, and that was the end. It was rather a shock to me, since I knew him so well and for so very many years. Moreover, my former assistant, your great-grand-daughter Lilo de'Negri, who is now with her husband in Berkeley, kept me informed as though I had been present. Not to mention other things, a great scholar is gone. He was 76, however, which is a worthy age.

As opposed to that, another former assistant, Margie [Ševčenko], is going to have a baby. She wrote a quite funny letter about it and calls me "Grambomboss." I have not seen the Sevs for a long time because I was in New York only twice and each time for a few hours only.

I am leaving on Dec.27th for the Virgin Islands and almost envy myself, because the winter, though not quite as rough and rude in Princeton as it must be in Minnesota, is still disagreeable enough. It will be wonderful to sit around in shorts again and swim with the fish in pleasantly warm water.

You are getting excellent reviews all over the place: *EHR* and others. So it was worth while, after all and I am glad it was. Have you seen Michael's book? At first I thought it was rather crazy, but it is not and it is never dull. But here I do wonder what the reviews will be like. [Bobby] Benson, however, is or must be rather crazy. He promised everyone who was interested to listen, that the book would go to the press by October; but nothing happens. He cannot cut the umbilical chord from his baby, regardless of the fact that his position in Middletown is not at all safe and that he will find it difficult to find a job without having published anything.

Have a pleasant Christmas and dilute your turkey with some other liquid other than Alsatian. Greetings to Norah who will also need a rest after the semester. John Phelan gave an amusing description of your stuffing the turkey, but the result lived apparently up to the travails.

Love,
EKa. [Signed]

