

October 28, 1941

Dear Professor Levi della Vida:

Professor Panofsky has showed me your letter to him and I have discussed it with several members of our School of Humanistic Studies. We are, of course, all of us familiar with your outstanding qualifications for research in your chosen field, but I regret to say that the financial situation of the Institute is such as to make it impossible for us to make any addition to our permanent staff in the field of Humanistic Studies at the present time.

I deeply regret that you do not find conditions more satisfactory where you are and realize the loss to scholarship which is occasioned by the fact that you cannot make better progress with your researches. I regret, however, that there is no possibility of our offering you an appointment at this time.

Yours sincerely,

FRANK AYDELOTTE, Director

Professor G. Levi della Vida
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

FA/MCE

Levi della Vida

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

September 19, 1941

Dear Professor Herzfeld:

I enclose a letter which I have just received from Della Vida, via Panofsky. When you have had time to read it over I should like very much to talk to you about it. I see no possibility of our making a place for Della Vida at the present moment, but nevertheless I should like to know what you think about him.

Sincerely yours,



Professor Ernst Herzfeld
Fuld Hall

FA:MR



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
ARTS AND SCIENCES

Oriental Studies
Semitics

September 9, 1941

Dear Professor Panofsky,

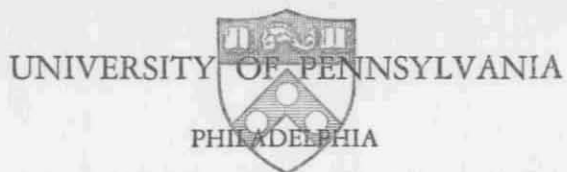
I feel encouraged, by your sympathetic attitude towards me, to write you for advice and help.

I am considering the possibility of becoming connected in some way with the Institute for Advanced Study. This desire of mine may appear too ambitious, indeed, and people are likely to wonder why I should wish to shift from my present position as a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. I believe, however, to have many reasons for being dissatisfied with it.

When I was appointed by the U. of P. as a successor to professor Montgomery (who retired in the summer of 1939) I was told that my main task would have been teaching Arabic and Islamic Civilization. The title of my teaching, which originally was "Semitic Languages", has been changed into "Arabic". Since the very beginning of my work, however, I realized that, in the Oriental Department of the U. of P., Arabic was only assumed as subsidiary to the other Semitic Languages, instead of being considered, as I think it ought to be, as an independent branch of Oriental scholarship.

The Semitic section of the Oriental Department being chiefly, if not exclusively, interested in Assyriology and Linguistics, students are directed towards these two fields rather than towards the study of Islamic Civilization, in which the knowledge of the Arabic Language only represents a first step, introducing into a deeper understanding of History, Literature, Religion and Science. As a consequence of this attitude, I failed to get any students who elected Arabic and Islam as their major subject, and am doubting whether I shall get any in the future. My teaching has been confined to the elements of the Arabic language.

Furthermore, the financial situation of the U. of P. seems to be



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very difficult, at least in what refers to the Division of Humanities. New research fields and new teachings never can improve without a proper financial support, which is entirely lacking at the present time. The University Library is inadequate in all branches of learning and its accommodations are amazingly poor; but it is absolutely miserable for what Arabic books are concerned, since many of the most necessary are not to be found, nor there is any hope of a sensible improvement of this sad situation. At present, I am unable to carry on the different works which I had begun (my private library has unfortunately remained in Europe) or to suggest to my students any profitable reading ~~subjects~~ subjects, and, even for the short and unpretentious articles which I have prepared during the last two years, I have been compelled to use the libraries in Princeton and New York, with much waste of time and money.

Finally, on account of the lack of funds available, no scholarships of any kind have ever been awarded to students who might have been interested in Arabic and Islam. Two or three young men, residents of cities other than Philadelphia, came to me in the past years, and expressed their wish to attend my classes, but were unable to do so, since their applications for scholarships were refused.

Things being as they are, the hope which I had nourished when I settled in this country has been nullified, and I feel deeply disappointed, as I am getting more and more convinced that my work as a teacher is being impaired and my activity as a scholar handicapped.

I am not at all sure, I confess, that the Institute for Advanced Study may be interested in having me among its members, and I understand that it is confronting, too, some financial problems. Above all, however, I am

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PHILADELPHIA

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far from claiming a scholarly standard as high as that of the present members of the I.A.S. Nevertheless, I dare hope that, if I were given the opportunity of serving in the Institute, my capacity might prove useful for several purposes.

1. An outstanding scholar in the field of Oriental Art, Dr. Herzfeld, is now a member of the I.A.S. He might be pleased to have as his colleague a scholar who would use for his own purposes the same literary sources which he is using in an entirely different field, and the joint presence of two oriental scholars (although differentiated in their approach to Eastern Civilization) may develop into a peculiar feature of the Institute, among other. When my library will be moved to this country, it may implement Dr. Herzfeld's library.

2. The students of Princeton University who attend Dr. Hitti's courses in Arabic would meet an adviser who might help them in their research work. Having numerous teaching obligations, Dr. Hitti cannot cover the whole subject of Islamic studies, which is very wide, and I am confident that he would appreciate the support which I would give him by advising his advanced students. The study of Arabic and Islamic civilization at Princeton University, which already is ahead of all other American Universities, would be substantially improved, by the presence of another scholar in the vicinity.

3. Living in Princeton, I would be given the opportunity of keeping in touch with the important collection of Arabic manuscripts in the University Library (the largest in the United States) and would be able to select the most significant items, either for the purposes of my personal work or as research topics for other students.

4. Finally, since I could avail myself with a good Arabic library



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Semitics

and enjoy the necessary leisure, I would be able to carry over some plans in which I have been interested for a long time, but which have been discontinued as a consequence of the mischances of my scholarly life. One or two of those plans are likely to keep me busy for several years, and I venture to say that the learned body which would have sponsored them would not be disappointed by their results.

Before I undertake any step, I would like to have your opinion. May I pray you to approach, quite informally of course, President Aydelotte and explain him my situation. You may well imagine how embarrassed I feel in being forced to extol my own merits, about which my opinion is rather negative. I feel even more embarrassed in pointing out that a call by the I.A.S. might be assumed as a compensation for what I have lost in Europe, for a reason about which I do not feel ashamed. You know that, as early as in 1931, I was dismissed from the University of Rome for no other reason (Racial discrimination did not exist at that time either in Germany or in Italy) but my steady opposition to Fascism, at a time when few men and women, in Europe as well as in America, had realized what it meant to our civilization. Of course, I do not presume to be a hero and a martyr, and still maintain that scholars should be given positions for their achievements in their special fields and not for their political past.

Please don't get mad at me on account of this oversize letter, and tell me frankly what you think of it. Even if your answer should be disappointing, I would be thankful for it.

I enclose a short report on my career, my last published works, and some of my plans for the next future. Perhaps you may use ^{it} ~~them~~ in dealing with

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
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Oriental Studies

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President Aydelotte, to whom, of course, I am entirely unknown. I am sending you two copies of a little book of mine, one for yourself and the other for President Aydelotte: it deals with a general topic and contains no technicalities. Its only value, incidentally, is to be a bibliographical rarity. The copies I am sending you are the last which I possess, and I am wondering whether the copies at the publisher's store, in Paris, are still extant, or whether they have been confiscated or destroyed.

With my innermost thanks and best regards

very sincerely yours

G. L. Della Vida

Giorgio Levi Della Vida

born at Venice (Italy) on August 22, 1886

Ph.D. University of Rome, 1909

1908-1911 in Egypt and Greece (in the latter country, as a member of the Italian School of Archeology)

1911-1913 assistant to Leone Caetani in his great work "Annali dell' Islam"
1914-1917 professor of Arabic and Islamic civilization at the Istituto

Orientale, Naples (did not teach in 1915-1916, being on military duty)

1917-1919 professor of Semitics at the University of Turin (did not teach in 1917-1918, being on military duty)

1919-1931 professor of Semitics at the University of Rome

1923-1927 Director of the Oriental School in the University of Rome and

Editor of the Rivista degli Studi Orientali edited by the Oriental School

1927-1931 Editor of the Rivista degli Studi Orientali

1931-1939 (after dismissal from the University for political misconduct)

associate with the Vatican Library .Lecturer in Granada (Escuela de Estudios Árabes, 1935), Brussels (Institut d'Histoire et de Philologie

Orientales et Byzantines, 1937), U.S.A. (Yale University, Hartford

Theological Seminary, Harvard University, University of Chicago, Pres-

byterian Theological Seminary, University of Wisconsin, University of Iowa, Catholic University of America, Princeton University, Columbia University, 1937),

Paris (Collège de France, 1938)

1939-1941 Visiting professor of Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania

1941 professor of Arabic at the University of Pennsylvania

Foreign Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America (1933)

Regular contributor to the Encyclopedia of Islam (Leyden) and the Enciclopedia Italiana (Milan)

Main field of research: Arabic History and Literature. Other fields: Semitic origins, Phoenician and Aramaic Epigraphy, Syriac Literature, History of Oriental Studies

Major works recently published:

Elenco dei mss. arabi della Biblioteca Vaticana (1935)

over

Il califfo Mu'âwiya I (in collaboration with Olga Pinto) (1938)
Les Sémites (1938)

Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei mss. orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana (1939)

Major works in the press or advanced in Manuscript:

Documenti per le relazioni della Santa Sede colle Chiese Orientali durante il pontificato di Gregorio XIII (to be edited by the Vatican Library).

A forgotten Scottish Traveler and Orientalist of the 17th Century: George Strachan.

Arabic Literary Nationalism in the 10 th Century: The "Mudâhât etc." by Muhammad ibn 'Omar al-Yemenî, edited and translated.

Major works planned:

A Key to Arabic glossaries (would collect, digest and elucidate the lexicographic material of scores of partial glossaries, and substantially implement the Arabic Lexicon)

Edition of the "Jamharat ansâb al-'Arab" by Hishâm Ibn al-Kalbî (the oldest and most comprehensive work on the genealogy of Arabic tribes (end of the 8th Century), containing thousands of biographical entries. Has been copied, more than twenty years ago, from two unique fragmentary mss., and an index of about 40,000 cards has been prepared; the edition could not be carried over for lack of leisure)

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

SCHOOL OF HUMANISTIC STUDIES

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

September 18, 1941

Dear Dr. Aydelotte:

Yesterday I received the enclosed letter from Professor Giorgio Levi Della Vida, together with a pamphlet, likewise enclosed, which he asked me to present to you. To be the recipient of this letter is both an honor and somewhat embarrassing for me. Levi Della Vida, whom I met years ago while working in the Vatican Library and have seen again two or three times in this country, is, in my opinion, one of the great humanistic scholars of the age. I cannot, of course, pass judgment on his work from the point of view of the specialist, but the fact that he was Professor of Semitics at the University of Rome and Director of the oriental school in that city seems to bear witness to the fact that his work has been recognized by his fellow orientalists. I personally can only say that I have never met a man so widely read in all literatures, so proficient in all dead and living languages, and so impeccable as a person as Levi Della Vida. He speaks French, German, Spanish and English like a native, and his general humanistic erudition is something unique. The fact that he resigned his post in Rome as early as 1931 when anti-Semitism was absolutely unknown in Italy merely because he profoundly disagreed with the principle of Fascism, and that he was later hospitably received and personally befriended by Pope Pius XI may also be adduced as proof of his importance and integrity.

As he has, in addition, great personal charm and natural dignity, I do believe that there could not be a more splendid addition to our permanent faculty than Mr. Della Vida.

On the other hand, I feel that the person who should be consulted in this matter is Dr. Herzfeld -

-2-

respectfully referred to in Della Vida's letter - rather than myself, and I hesitate to approach you without having spoken to him. But since Mr. Della Vida has asked me, as you see, to get in touch with you and not with anyone else, I don't feel authorized to mention the matter to Professor Herzfeld of my own accord. The only course which I can take is, it seems to me, to submit the letter to you such as it is and to leave it to you whether or not you care to discuss the matter with Professor Herzfeld. I, in turn, shall be grateful to you for letting me know what your, and possibly Mr. Herzfeld's, reaction has been so that I can answer Mr. Della Vida accordingly.

Very sincerely yours,

Erwin Panofsky.

Dr. Frank Aydelotte
Fuld Hall
Princeton

June 22, 1939

Dear Professor Levi Della Vida:

I have your most interesting letter of June 10. I am only sorry that the Institute for Advanced Study has not been in financial position to offer you a post. However, you have done very well to make a beginning at the University of Pennsylvania and I have no doubt whatsoever that your career in this country will be a brilliant and successful one.

My impression is that under a recent ruling of the State Department you are still considered a professor. If on applying for a visa you find that there is difficulty I shall be very glad if you will write me in order that I may take the matter up with the State Department in Washington.

Needless to say, Philadelphia is only an hour distant from Princeton and we shall expect you to make this as well as Philadelphia your headquarters.

With all good wishes and genuine congratulations,

Sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Professor G. Levi Della Vida
Vatican Library
Rome, Italy

Rome, June 10, 1939.

Dr. Abraham Flexner.
Institute for Advanced Study.
Nassau Street.
Princeton, N.J.

Dear Dr. Flexner,

As you always proved to be kindly interested in what concerns me, I am sure you will be glad to hear that I have been appointed as a Visiting Professor in Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania, beginning on the next fall term.

The position I have been offered, quite unexpectedly, is a splendid one from a scientific and social point of view, as I have been called to succeed Professor Montgomery, who is one of the most brilliant Semitic scholars not only in the U.S., but all the world over. Although the salary which could be put at my disposal was not particularly high, I was happy to answer the call, and hope I shall succeed in improving my financial situation too. What does matter is that I shall be given the opportunity of carrying on my study under circumstances incomparably more favorable than those under which I have been compelled to work during the last sixteen years. I think, the device of every true scholar ought to be: "Primum philosophari, deinde vivere".

If I can obtain the permit of entering the U.S. (which seems to be more difficult than I would have thought, as I cannot be considered as a "Professor", having ceased to teach officially since seven and half years), I shall land at New York about September 20. I hope, soon after my arrival in the States, I shall have the opportunity of seeing you, and look forward to it with the greatest pleasure.

Believe me, dear Dr. Flexner,

very sincerely yours


G. Levi Della Vida.

Vatican City, February 19th, 1939.

Biblioteca Vaticana.

Dear Dr. Flexner,

Please accept my innermost thanks for your letter of January, 25th. I am sure that through your invaluable help I shall be able to succeed in securing in the latter part of my lifetime a better opportunity of a peaceful and intensive scientific work than I could enjoy in its first part.

The general situation here is getting every day more unpleasant. In order you may have an idea how things are, I will inform you that a book of mine which has come out from the press a few months ago is not permitted to be sold in Italy, and that I was obliged to supersede the issue of another book which is to be published in France, because it contains a few hints on the racial question, which I reasonably fear would cause me some harm here.

I take the liberty of sending you a copy of the first book referred to.

In deep thankfulness, I remain

yours very sincerely



G. Levi Della Vida

The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars

2 WEST 45TH STREET · NEW YORK CITY · Telephone: VAnDerbilt 3-1924 · Cable Address: EMERCOM NEW YORK

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Please address all Communications to the Secretary

January 31, 1939

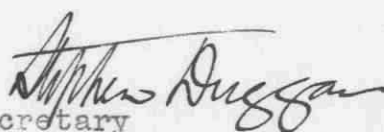
Dr. Abraham Flexner
The Institute for Advanced Study
20 Nassau Street
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Flexner:

Let me thank you for your letter of January 21 concerning Professor Levi della Vida, formerly of the University of Rome.

Miss Drury tells me that she has received a later note from you to the effect that you would like us to take no steps for the present in regard to Professor Levi della Vida. We shall, of course, hold this matter in abeyance until we hear further from you.

Cordially yours,


Secretary

SD: OD

January 30, 1939

Dear Miss Drury:

Thank you for your kind letter of January 28 in reference to Professor Levi Della Vida. I was just about to write a letter to Dr. Duggan, for on reflection I should like to ask that your Committee take no steps in regard to Professor Levi Della Vida at the moment. If it is necessary to invoke your assistance I shall write you again later.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Miss Betty Drury
The Emergency Committee in Aid of
Displaced Foreign Scholars
2 West 45th Street
New York City

AF/MCE

The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars

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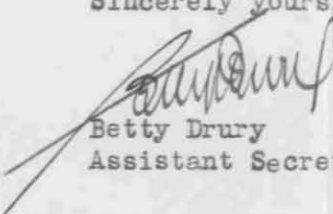
January 28, 1939

Dr. Abraham Flexner, Director
Institute for Advanced Study
20 Nassau Street
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Flexner:

Let me acknowledge provisionally your letter of January 21 addressed to Dr. Duggan which has been forwarded to him. I find on going through our files that we do not have any material about Dr. Levi della Vida's case, and I wonder if we might have a little more information to place before the members of our Committee when they meet next Friday (February 3)?

Sincerely yours,


Betty Drury
Assistant Secretary

BD:EH

January 21, 1939

Dear Professor Levi della Vida:

Professor Herzfeld has been kind enough to show me your letter of December 17. I cannot explain how it happened that I failed to answer the letter to which you allude. I am very regretful that such was the case. In any event, I have already begun to take steps to see if it will be possible to bring you to this country. If such proves to be feasible your post would for a year or two be a modest one, but I have such confidence in your splendid scholarship that I feel sure you will make your way in America and that if the proper arrangements to bring you here can be made you would enjoy conditions favorable to your happiness and your productivity.

I shall let you hear from me again as soon as my present inquiry brings an answer.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Professor G. Levi Della Vida
Biblioteca Vaticana
Vatican City
Rome, Italy
AF/MCE

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

January 21, 1939

Dear Duggan:

Professor Herzfeld has recently had a letter from a fellow worker in his own field, Professor Levi della Vida, formerly of the University of Rome. Levi della Vida refused to take the fascist oath and was dismissed in 1931. Thereupon the Pope gave him a small post in the Vatican Library - surely a high tribute to his scholarship. Herzfeld tells me that he is really first rate. I myself met him on one occasion and found him personally a most charming and delightful man. He is eager to come to America and Herzfeld is eager to have him here at the Institute.

I am wondering whether your Committee is in position to provide with outside cooperation a salary of \$4000 for two years. I believe that at the end of that period I could contrive to carry him until he found an opening elsewhere or until we ourselves gave him something more worthy of his scholarship and deserts.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Stephen P. Duggan
Emergency Committee in Aid of
Displaced German Scholars
2 West 45th Street
New York City

I, Giorgio Levi Della Vida, was born in Venice (Italy) on ~~Aug~~ August 22d, 1886. I took my degrees at the University of Rome in 1909, spent the two following years in Egypt and Greece (where I took part in the Italian excavations in Crete), and from 1911 to 1913 was associated in the great work of Duke Leone Caetani, "Annali dell' Islam": vols. 9 and 10, the last issued, are almost entirely my work.

At the end of 1913 I was appointed as a professor of Arabic and Islamic culture at the Istituto Orientale of Naples. After having been on military service during the war 1915-1917, I was appointed as a professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Turin; in November, 1919, I answered a call from the University of Rome, where I remained until December, 1931. Having refused the oath of allegiance to the Fascist Regime, I was dismissed from my chair: since then, I have lived as a private scholar. I am associated, without any official position, to the Vatican Library, in order to describe its Oriental Manuscripts.

My scientific work has been chiefly devoted to Semitics in general, to ancient Syriac and Arabic Literature, Arabic History, Islamic Religion, North-Semitic Epigraphies. I have contributed many articles to the Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leyden) and the Enciclopedia Italiana (Rome).

For several years I have been Director of the Oriental School in the University of Rome, editor of the Rivista degli studi orientali, member of the board of the Istituto per l'Oriente and of the Societa Italiana per il Progresso delle scienze. In 1922 I was elected corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Turin, and in 1933 foreign fellow of the Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass.

I delivered lectures at the School of Arabic Studies and the University of Granada (Spain) in 1935, at the University of Bruxelles (Belgium) in 1937, in several Universities of the United States, in 1937, at the College de France at Paris, in 1938.

Two short accounts of my life and works have appeared in the Enciclopedia Italiana and in the International Who's who.

via Po, 9, Rome
or
Biblioteca Vaticana
Citta del Vaticano

Rome, September 1st, 1938.

Dear Dr. Flexner,

Some months ago, I asked you if you had in view the possibility that I might come to the United States in a next future; your secretary, who had the bounty of answering my letter during your absence, informed me that there was none. Nevertheless, I venture to ask you again if you do not see any ~~possibility~~ way by which I might settle in America.

You know that, since seven years, my position in this country has been very difficult. I now fear that it may soon become quite impossible for me to go on in my work, even in the precarious situation in which I have lived since my dismissal from the University.

I know too well that I am far from possessing a world wide reputation like that of, say, Einstein, Herzfeld, Panofka or Jaeger, which would open me the doors of any University or Scientific Institute; but, although on a much more modest scale, I dare say that I might do some profitable work in my particular field, either as a teacher, or as a research fellow, or even as a librarian.

I enclose a short account of my scientific career.

I feel rather embarrassed in asking you to help me, and assure you that I would not apply to you nor to anybody else, if I did not consider my future with a serious apprehension.

Believe me, dear Dr. Flexner,

yours very faithfully

Levi della Vida

June 10, 1938

Professor G. Levi Della Vida
Via Po, 9
Rome, Italy

My dear Professor Levi Della Vida:

In the absence of Dr. Flexner I wish to thank you for your most kind letter of May 24, which I shall bring to his attention when he returns to Princeton after his vacation. He was very sincere when he expressed the hope of seeing you again in the near future, but he had no definite lectureship in mind, only wished that he might have the privilege of hearing another of your stimulating lectures soon.

Very truly yours,

ESTHER S. BAILEY

Secretary

ESB

Rome, May 24th, 1938.

Via Po, 9.

Dear Dr. Flexner,

I have been pleasantly surprised by your letter from April 19th. The two trifling pamphlets I had sent you only in order to give you a token of my friendly remembrance did not deserve the honor of a particular answer. The last sentence of your letter gives me the courage of asking you a question, although I fear that you may find it indiscrete.

You write: "Trusting that we may have the opportunity in the near future of seeing you again in the United States". May I ask, whether these words are to be taken as the expression of a general wish (for which I should feel very grateful to you) or if they are referring to a positive possibility?

I must frankly emphasize that I would be exceedingly happy to be given the opportunity of spending again some time in the States. There are two serious reasons which make me desire this: firstly, my financial situation, which is far from being satisfactory, as my work at the Vatican Library, although it ~~be~~ very interesting and pleasing, is rewarded at a very low rate; secondly, I feel anxious to breathe some free air, at least for a short while, and would be glad to have some leisure for working out of any compulsion.

I think I already told you that I do not sympathise with lectures: they are neither scientific enough as to form a real improvement to science, nor of such a general interest as to constitute an attraction for a wide public. I believe I could better help ~~in~~ the progress of Semitic and Islamic studies, if I could work in connection with a selected number of students, dealing with a few definite subjects.

I am not aware if there would be any possibility of that kind, nor am I so self-conceited as to think that my teaching would have sensational results on the advancement of learning. I only wish to express my point of view on the way in which I think that my limited knowledge could be rendered profitable for the general progress of science.

If you find that my question was out of place, please do not take any account of it. I shall not be angry for that.

Believe me, dear Dr. Flexner,
yours very sincerely

Vida
Levi della Vida.

April 19, 1938

Dear Professor Levi Della Vida:

Please accept my very warm thanks for your kind favor in sending me the reprint of your article, Artefius and his Clavis Sapientiae, which I shall have great pleasure in reading. I am equally grateful to you for a copy of the memorial to Le Pere Henri Lammens.

Trusting that we may have the opportunity in the near future of seeing you again in the United States,

Sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEASER

Prof. G. Levi Della Vida
Via Po 9
Rome, Italy
AF/MCE

January 21, 1937

Dear Professor Hitti:

In consequence of the steady fall in interest rates, involving of course a corresponding decrease of income from endowment, we are not yet making any commitments for next year. I feel sure that we shall be able to keep up everything that we have started, but I do not wish to be embarrassed by undertaking anything further at the present time. If it turns out, as I hope it may, that the resources of the Institute are increased, I shall be very glad to do anything in respect to Professor Levi Della Vida that you and Professor Herzfeld recommend. I shall talk to Professor Herzfeld on the subject when I next see him.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Professor P. K. Hitti
106 Fitz Randolph Road
Princeton, New Jersey

AF/MCE

Hertzfeld (Copy)

*Referred to
referred to Mr. Hertzfeld*

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U.S.A

January 15
1937

Professor Philip . K. Hitti
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Professor Hitti:

I am sorry that a misunderstanding seems to have arisen in our correspondence on the proposed lecture tour of Professor Giorgio Levi Della Vida. In my letter of December 4, 1936, I wrote you as follows

The usual appropriation for a lecture is about \$100 plus a small sum for traveling expenses. The appropriation for two or more lectures would be between \$150 and \$200.

It is, of course, possible that this letter did not reach you.

In answer to your request I can give you the following information. As announced in the News Bulletin of the Institute of International Education, November 1936, page 12, the professor is ready to give the following lectures: "The beginning and Development of Arabic Historiography," "Arabic Literature and its Importance for the Understanding of Christian Medieval Culture," "The Survival of Phoenician Language and Culture in Roman Africa." He is also available for a lecture entitled "East and West: A Study in Cultural Relations," not announced in the Bulletin. The dates for the lectures are not settled yet. The professor will be in this country in March and April. As soon as I receive a definite answer from you, I shall send it to New York where his itinerary will be tentatively prepared.

The professor is not active in any political movement. In 1935 he made a successful lecture tour of the universities of Spain without the slightest political difficulty from any side. For your personal information I can state that he does not belong to the Fascist party.

The professor is scheduled to lecture at the following Universities: Columbia, Yale, Hartford Seminary, Harvard, Michigan, Chicago, Washington, Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Pennsylvania and Princeton. At the University of Chicago, e.g., he is to give three lectures, two public ones and one for a restricted number of specialists in the field.

Concerning Professor Levi Della Vida's knowledge of English, I can give you the assurance of one of the professors at the University of Chicago who has met him lately in Rome. He says that the professor is a very good lecturer and that he speaks English fluently.

According to information I had received from Miss Olga Pinto, I was counting your University among the ones that would surely accept the services of Professor Levi Della Vida for one or two lectures. We need badly an invitation from your University, and I shall not be exaggerating if I say that a negative answer from you might cause us considerable financial difficulties -- perhaps even to such an extent that we would be forced to give up entirely the plan of bringing the professor to America. I most sincerely hope that for the sake of science you will do everything in your power to give us a favorable reply. I shall be glad to give you any additional information which you may require.

With kindest regards, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Ignace T. Gelb.

Miss Pinto, a student of della
Vida stopped at the Institute
office last summer to
recommend her professor.
It is not often that we can
get Orientalists in this
country to address meetings.
Hille

Dear Dr. Flexner:

Dr. Pinto, who is spending some months in this country to study libraries, came to the office some weeks ago, at the suggestion of Professor Hitti, to talk about the possibility of Prof. Levi Della Vida giving some lectures here while he is in this country next winter on a lecture tour. I understood from her that he is lecturing at Harvard, Chicago, and several other universities, and she said that Prof. Hitti is interested in the possibility of his giving some lectures here under the joint auspices of the University and the Institute.

She said she would give us detailed information about him in a letter, and this letter evidently is written at her suggestion. I answered it saying that you were away on your vacation; that the letter would be brought to your attention at the first opportunity; and that he would doubtless hear from you in due time.

M.C.E.

July 21, 1936

Prof. G. Levi Della Vida
Via Po 9
Rome, Italy

My dear Professor Levi Della Vida:

Your letter of July 4 has come while
Dr. Flexner, the Director of the Institute, is away
on his vacation. I shall bring it to his attention
at the first opportunity and you will doubtless hear
from him in due time.

Very truly yours,

MARIE C EICHENBERG

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR

Ann Arbor July 9th 1936

Dear Madame,

I hope that you remember
our meeting in your office June 23rd
I wrote to Professor Leo della Vida in
Rome and I suggested him to send a
short "curriculum" of his life directly
to "The Institute for advanced study."

I think you in advance for all
that the Institute can make for ~~of~~ some
conferences of Prof. della Vida in this
country.

Yours sincerely
Agastiny

Prof. G. Levi Della Vida.
Via Po 9. = Rome (Italy).

July 4th, 1936.

The Secretary,
The Institute for Advanced Study.
20 Nassau Street.
Princeton, N.J.

Dear Sir,

I hear from Miss Olga Pinto that you would take some interest into the plan I have formed of delivering ^{in the Winter Session 1936-37} some lectures on Arabic and Semitic subjects in different Universities and Scientific Institutes in the U.S.A. I therefore give you the main elements relating to my previous scientific career and submit the titles of four lectures (among which ~~may~~^{om} may of course be chosen those which would seem most fitting).

I was for 18 years professor of Arabic and Semitic Languages at the Oriental Institute of Naples and at the Universities of Turin and Rome; on January 1st, 1932, having refused the oath of allegiance to Fascism, I was dismissed from my place by order of the Government and am now living as a private scholar.

My published books and papers deal mainly with Semitic Civilization, Arabic Literature and History, Syriac Literature, Phoenician Epigraphics. I am Correspondant of the Academy of Sciences, Turin, since 1922 and Foreign Member of the Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass., since 1934. In the spring 1935 I was invited to give some lectures at the University of Granada (Spain).

The subjects of the proposed lectures are following:

- 1) The Beginning and Development of Arabic Historiography.
- 2) Fiction and Reality in Ancient Arabic Poetry.
- 3) The Arabic Literature and its importance for the understand

ding of Christian Medieval Culture.

4) The Survival of Phoenician Language and Culture in Roman Africa.

In the hope you will be so kind as to let me know something about the possibility of realising this plan, I remain, in deep thankfulness,

yours sincerely

G. Levi della Vida

COPY

Prof. G. Levi Della Vida
Via Po 9, Rome, Italy

July 4, 1936

The Secretary
The Institute for Advanced Study
20 Nassau Street
Princeton, New Jersey

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