January 19, 1955

Memorandum to the Board of Trustees:

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I enclose a brief account of Professor Alföldi's career and scholarship, and a few letters that we have had about him.

This appointment, which is ardently desired by Alföldi's colleagues at the Institute, in some respects replaces the appointment of Professor Herbert Bloch, which was voted last spring. After long hesitation, Professor Bloch has informed us that he prefers to remain at Harvard. We have ascertained that Alföldi will accept a professorship at the Institute if it is offered to him.

Robert Oppenheimer

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ANDREAS ALFÖLDI

Andreas Alfoldi, whose *vita* and *bibliography* (in selection) are attached, is at present professor of ancient history in the University of Basel. He was appointed to this position after having held the professorship at the University of Bern, whither he had fled from Budapest in 1947.

Alfoldi is recognized throughout the world of scholarship as a preeminent, perhaps the greatest, authority in his fields: the study of Imperial Rome, pagan and Christian. Starting as a numismatist and historian, he succeeded in reconstructing, mainly on the basis of coins and their imagery, the full history of the monarchic ceremonial, of the insignia, titles, and costumes of Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors, and in integrating the results of this detailed work with the general history of political and philosophical ideas of Late Antiquity. These studies have opened very surprising new vistas for the evaluation and understanding of the medieval ecclesiastical ceremonial, insignia, and prerogatives of bishops and popes. All students of the period of the transition from Pagan Rome to Christian Byzantium, and of early Church history, are today dependent upon Alfoldi’s fundamental studies, the importance of which rivals that of Franz Cumont’s pioneer work in these fields. While the history of religions is naturally an important element in his studies, he is at the same time prehistorian and archaeologist, and in general a classical scholar whose work covers other periods as well. He has, for example, written essential studies on the history and cults of Pannonia and Dacia.

The international recognition of his achievements is attested to by the fact that at least seven academies have bestowed upon him honorary
membership (l'Institut de France, British Academy, Pontificale Accademia di Archeologia, Bavarian, Danish, Hungarian, Bulgarian Academies), while he is a corresponding member of most archaeological and philological associations in Europe.

Alföldi was visiting professor at Dumbarton Oaks in 1950 and is returning there to serve in the same capacity for the spring term of 1955, after which he will join for a summer session the faculty of the American Numismatic Society in New York.

The scholarly vitality of his written works is a true reflection of the man himself. Great as are the quality and quantity of his published scholarship, he has in fact only just approached the peak of his productiveness.
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Editor: Dissertationes Pannonicae, Dissertationes Bernenses, Archäolog. Ertesità.
Department of Art and Archaeology

January 18, 1955

Professor Ernst Kantorowicz
The Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, N. J.

Dear Professor Kantorowicz:

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Alföldi belongs to that generation of historians who have a deep insight into a certain phase of history because they know how to use competently evidence from many different fields and how to coordinate the results. It is difficult to classify a scholar like Alföldi who is an eminent archaeologist and knows, like any professional in his field, his monuments in a wide field of Roman empire art and, related to and growing out of it, Germanic, Celtic, Scythian monuments and those of many other nations. As a historian, he has increased our knowledge of one of the most critical periods in history—the 3rd and 4th centuries—from so many different points of view, to mention only imperial, ceremonial, religious policy of the Constantinian dynasty and cultural activities alongside of strictly political history. In my opinion nobody can study today, as an archaeologist or historian, this phase of history without coming to grips with Alföldi's writings. Philologists have a high regard for his sound knowledge of literary sources. He has his reputation as an epigraphist, and he is an acknowledged numismatist.

In this diversity of interests in many fields and in his ability lies Alföldi's strength as a humanist who masters and at the same time transcends the study of details.

All this you know, of course, better than I do, but I would also like to take this opportunity to add a personal note. Ever since I met Alföldi many years ago in this country, I have remained in contact with him and have been impressed by his personal charm and willingness to share and to exchange his knowledge with his colleagues. His presence in Princeton would be stimulating to other people's research, including my own, and I also feel sure that he would be most welcome by my colleagues.

With kind regards,

As always, yours sincerely,

/s/ Kurt Weitzmann
Dear Professor Kantorowicz:

You have asked for my opinion of the scholarly attainments and position in the world of scholarship of Professor Andreas Alföldi. I consider him one of the very outstanding scholars in the field of study of Roman imperial history and art. His contribution to the understanding of the symbols of kingship ranges from the earliest antiquity to virtually modern times. He is generally considered the foremost scholar alive in connection with these matters. He is at the same time one of the great scholars in the field of numismatics.

I called him to Dumbarton Oaks as Visiting Professor for the spring term in 1950 because of his eminence in his field and because we felt the need of his assistance. My colleagues in Dumbarton Oaks, now that I am no longer director, have again asked him for the spring term of this current year. After that he is to be one of the chief lecturers at the American Numismatic Society in their well-known summer seminars.

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Au départ il s'était attaché à des études de numismatique et d'archéologie locales, mais, contrairement à tant d'érudits provinciaux, il a voulu "situer" l'histoire locale par rapport à la grande histoire, et appuyer les moindres de ces travaux, sur une documentation exhaustive.

Cette documentation, si complète, lui ouvrit alors la voie aux études qui dépassaient les problèmes pannoniens, sans qu'il ait jamais interrompu la lignée des recherches particulières réservées au passé de son pays et de ses ancêtres Hongrois. Du côté de la grande histoire de Rome, il se manifesta d'abord par deux longs mémoires consacrés aux origines des cérémonies de la Cour impériale tardive, des insignes du pouvoir et des autres manifestations de la conception nouvelle de la monarchie universelle. Avec un sens surprenant de l'histoire, Alföldi réussit à fixer dans ces deux recherches les premières étapes d'un processus qui conduira à la monarchie byzantine et occidentale du moyen-âge, et c'est pourquoi son travail a servi de clef ou de base à d'autres historiens qui, après lui, ont étudié la doctrine et les manifestations extérieures de la monarchie chrétienne.

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