

Hotel Cavour
RomeOctober 9th 1879

Dear Sir,

My friend, Prof.
Rhys Davids of
London, Secretary to the
Royal Asiatic Society,
who first persuaded
me to join the
Congress, has advised
me to address myself
to you in a question
which is closely
connected with my

studies.

Two years ago
the University of
Helsingfors granted
me a travelling
studentship (Reise-
stipendium) for three
years so as to
enable me to carry
on scientific researches
abroad. I have
for a long time
been engaged in
a work on the
origin and growth
of the moral ideas,
according to the com-

parative method, and
am then largely
dealing with the in-
fluence of religion.
My studies in com-
parative religion
made it however
clear to me that
it would be of
great advantage to
make a special study
of some particular
religion, hence I
decided to make the
pre-islametic religion
of the North Africans,
as it is still conspicu-

in the customs
and superstitions of
the people, the
object of my in-
quiries. I went to
Morocco in March
1898, and shall
return there again
next month after
this visit to
Europe.

It is however of
importance to be
able to stay out
travel among the
people for a consider-
able length of
time, hence it is



my intention to ask
my University to
prolong my stipendium
for three years
more, which is
possible according to
the Statutes. The
stipendium being a
fixed one, I anticipate
that my University
would carefully
consider the subject
I am dealing with,
and I am sure that
some acknowledgment of
it on the part of
the Orientalist Congress

would be extremely
useful. Kindly allow
me then to ask
you whether you
think it possible
that the Munhan,
midow section should
believe that it has
taken an interest in
the studies of pre-
mohammedan survivals
in the religion and
superstitions of the
North Africans, especially
the people of Morocco,
which I am carrying
on, and that it
hopes that I shall

bring my researches
to a successful end.
Rhye Davids told
me that resolutions
in a similar direction
are passed by the
Oriental Congresses,
and, not knowing
the custom myself,
I must hold him
responsible for my
troubling you in
this matter. I may
add that I have
an excellent opportunity
to study the
Moorish people,
being always accompa-

used by Theeuf
Abd es. Selam,
belonging to a reputed
family, and whose
intelligence, accuracy,
and faithfulness I
have had all to
test during a year
and a half. Also,
I think that it is
not common that
a traveller among
Mohammedan people
makes it his sole
object to study
and to concentrate his
attention round
the religious views of



the people, and that
he does so after
having made com-
parative studies of
religion at large.
This latter point
seems to me almost
as important as that
the flora of a
country should be
investigated by a
professional botanist,
for there are many
points of interest
that escapes him
who has not pre-
pared himself for
the task.

As regards my
previous contributions to
science I allow myself
self to mention that
I published some
years ago in English
a work on the
History of Human
Marriage (Macmillan & Co)
which has had
two English editions,
and which has
been translated into
French, German, Italian,
Swedish and Japanese.
This I mention because
I must expect to
be respectfully unknown

to Orientalists,
although I am not
so to anthropolo-
gists.

I hope you will
kindly excuse me
for troubling you
with such a long
letter. I shall be
at our section at
3 o'clock to-day and
shall expect your
esteemed answer.

I am, dear Sir,
yours faithfully
Edvard Westermarck.