

March 12, 1952

Dear Dr. Nobel:

Please pardon my tardiness in answering yours of the 21st last; I was away at meetings part of the time and could not find time sooner.

Your photographs, and more important, your confidence in the newfound zygotes of *E. coli* were received with the utmost interest. I am most eager to learn enough about the matter (as you must be) to see whether some genetic tests by way of confirmation can be formulated. If you have managed to control the conditions of zygote occurrence, could you send us sometime a) a slide that gives some idea of the disposition of the material, and b) some concrete account of the details of the observations. We should like only to be the more intelligently prepared for your visit when it materializes.

A year^s ago, I should have thought that the absence of the zygotes in the parental cultures themselves would have been conclusive evidence against their significance. More recently, we (this includes Cavalli, at ~~Milan~~ Milan, as well as ourselves: there is quite a UN flavor to this) have been accumulating evidence that these particular cultures are, in a sense, sexually differentiated, and that self-matings occur infrequently, if at all. I should venture to predict, however, that if the zygotes are valid, you will find them ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ 58-161, although to a somewhat lesser extent than in 58-161 x W-677 or x W-1177. The latter two cultures should, as my first guess, not have them at all. In a sense, this would be the first genetic confirmation.

Following your suggestion, I have written to the Rockefeller Foundation. As they have been supporting the work of this laboratory, I am sure your application will receive sympathetic consideration. There will be time enough later to consider financial alternatives. Under any circumstances, however, you would ~~not~~ probably have to find some way of financing your passage. Have you looked into what we call the "reverse-Fulbright" program?

Of course we shall be most delighted to have you spend some time in our laboratory. As I may have mentioned, our space situation is such as to recommend some period about one year from now, rather than earlier in the 1952-53 academic year. But by then, perhaps you will have completely solved the cytological problem of sex in K-12!

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg