

FERDINAND VON MUELLER AND THE FRENCH CONSULS

R. W. HOME and SARA MAROSKE

Some years ago, a substantial collection of French consular records covering the period 1854–1939 was found in a Melbourne garage after having been stored there in 1940 and then apparently forgotten.¹ Before these records were returned to France to be stored with other French diplomatic archives at Nantes, copies were made that are now held by the Institute for the Study of French-Australian Relations at the University of Melbourne.

Included in the collection was a fascinating series of letters from the eminent botanist and explorer Ferdinand von Mueller, Victoria's Government Botanist from 1853 until his death on 10 October 1896, to successive French Consuls-General in Melbourne. These are published here for the first time; later they will also be included in the edition of Mueller's surviving correspondence that we are currently preparing.² Mueller for many years maintained a vast correspondence with fellow scientists in many parts of the world and was especially active in the exchanges of plant and animal specimens that were a feature of nineteenth-century scientific life. His letters to the French consuls shed new light on his plant exchange activities in particular, especially with the French colonies in North Africa, but they also yield interesting new information on various other matters.

The letters in question date from May 1883 to November 1895. They are an incomplete set, since we know that Mueller was in regular contact with earlier French consuls in Melbourne and above all with the Comte de Castelnau, well known for his interest in science, during the Count's long period as the French representative in Victoria from 1864 to 1880. Unfortunately, no letters to Mueller from any of the French consuls of the period appear to have survived—Mueller's immense files of incoming correspondence disappeared and presumably were destroyed some years after his death—and nor do any file copies such as one might, perhaps, have expected to have been kept at the consulate. Yet it is clear that such letters were written, since all of the surviving letters are carefully annotated with the date on which a reply was sent together with information about any other action that was taken, while several of them

are obviously replies written by Mueller to letters he had received. The consuls, it would appear, regularly passed on to Mueller requests from French scientists and scientific institutions for seeds and specimens of Australian plants.

Mueller came to Australia in 1847, at the age of 22, shortly after completing his PhD in botany at Kiel University. He initially intended to stay for only a few years but ultimately stayed for the rest of his life. Inspired by the scientific vision of Alexander von Humboldt, he worked tirelessly to bring the Australian flora, which differed in so many ways from that to which European botanists had been accustomed, under intellectual control—not just taxonomically, by classifying and naming the new species awaiting botanical discovery, but geographically, by establishing their distribution and relationships to other species and to such factors as climate, elevation and type of soil.

Mueller was firmly committed to the view that science should have practical ends and should benefit mankind. Especially was this so, he thought, in the case of scientists such as himself who were employed on the public payroll. Accordingly, he devoted much of his effort to identifying Australian plant species that might be of economic value. He was constantly evaluating species as potential sources of timber and also, as one would expect of someone who was initially trained as a pharmacist, for their medicinal qualities (plants being at that time still by far the commonest source of drugs). He won numerous prizes for the impressive displays of Australian timbers that he mounted at the many local and international exhibitions held in Australia during the second half of the nineteenth century, and for the displays that he sent to exhibitions held in other parts of the world. He was a frequent contributor of papers to the local pharmaceutical journal, *Chemist and Druggist of Australasia*,³ and he also sought to put his botanical knowledge to use in other ways; for example, he was instrumental in the introduction of Marram Grass as a means of stabilizing shifting sand-dunes on the Victorian coast,⁴ and he actively assisted Joseph Bosisto in his attempts to establish a eucalyptus-oil industry in Victoria.

Mueller's practical orientation was the driving force behind his commitment to exchanges of plants and indeed also animals between different parts of the world. Following his appointment as Director of Melbourne's Botanic Garden in 1857, he immediately began exchanging plant specimens and seeds on a massive scale with other gardens

overseas. Species new to Australia were first reared in the Garden and then, if this succeeded, seeds were distributed in large quantities for planting in suitable Australian locales. At the same time, Mueller employed a small army of collectors to gather seed of Australian species that he could send to overseas gardens in exchange. He was also active in the Zoological Society of Victoria and its successor organization, the Acclimatization Society of Victoria, which sought to transfer suitable animal species between different parts of the globe. Indeed, for several years, until its relocation in 1862 to its present site in Royal Park, the zoo maintained by these Societies was located in the Botanic Garden under Mueller's direction.⁵ Following his dismissal as Director of the Botanic Garden in 1873, Mueller no longer had access to the Garden for rearing potentially useful exotic plants for local distribution. As his letters to the French consuls show, however, his efforts to disseminate useful Australian species to other parts of the world continued unabated, and he also from time to time sought exotic species in return such as the rare species of bamboo from the French Indian Ocean colony of Réunion requested in his letter of 30 March 1887 and acknowledged in his note of 2 December of the same year.

Mueller's commitment to the wholesale transferring of species was embodied in his book that in its many editions became a bible for many late-nineteenth-century plant acclimatizers, *Select Extra-Tropical Plants Readily Eligible for Industrial Culture or Naturalisation*.⁶ He was particularly enthusiastic about the usefulness of various species of eucalypt, especially *Eucalyptus globulus*, as a source of timber and also as an anti-malarial agent—their high transpiration rate made them an effective means of draining swampy, unhealthy ground, and also their vapours were thought to have anti-malarial powers—and long before the period covered by the letters published here, as a result of Mueller's activity, this species was well established throughout the Mediterranean region. The research station at Antibes, in the south of France, had the oldest collection of eucalypts in that country, and drawing on this its director, Charles-Victor Naudin, wrote the key scientific monograph in French on the genus.⁷ Later, in 1887, the Parisian Société d'Acclimatation published in Naudin's and Mueller's names jointly a work entitled *Manuel de l'acclimateur ou choix de plantes recommandées pour l'agriculture, l'industrie et la médecine* that was largely based on

Mueller's earlier book, and that became a widely used text for French colonial officials.

Mueller's colleague Frederick McCoy, Professor of Natural Science at the University of Melbourne, justified contemporary efforts at acclimatizing exotic species on the theory, popular for a time during the nineteenth century, that there had been several geographically separated centres of creation of the living forms that inhabited the Earth, and that it was not merely appropriate but was Man's bounden duty, now that improvements in transport had made it possible to do so, to improve on God's handiwork by transferring useful species between centres to fill unoccupied ecological niches.⁸ While Mueller did not systematize his thinking about acclimatization to this extent, there is no doubt that he fully agreed that it was part of his responsibility as a scientist to aid in the transfer and acclimatization of useful species from one geographical region to another, and he worked hard at doing this. Like McCoy, he believed that the role of the acclimatizer was confined to such transferrals; both he and McCoy regarded species as fixed and therefore rejected the alternative rationale offered for their work by the leading French acclimatizers, who held that successful acclimatization involved the transformation of species into new forms under the influence of altered conditions of life.⁹

A fundamental working principle for the would-be acclimatizer, today as in the nineteenth century, is to transfer species into a similar climatic region or, contrariwise, when contemplating introducing new species for a particular purpose, to seek these out in regions of similar climate.¹⁰ Since it was widely agreed in Mueller's day that the climate of much of southern Australia was similar to that of the Mediterranean basin, European enthusiasts looked on Australia as a potential source of useful new plants for the Mediterranean lands. In particular, as the French expanded their empire in North Africa, Australian species were introduced in increasing numbers, often as a result of direct exchanges between Australia and Algeria rather than *via* the respective imperial capitals. Inevitably, Mueller played a central role in these exchanges, whether they were direct or indirect. His correspondence with the French consuls in Melbourne shows that the consuls, too, played an important part in facilitating the work—indeed, they were often the channel by which the exchange took place.

By the 1880s, when the letters here published were written, Mueller had been supplying seeds of Australian species to Algeria in large quantities for over a quarter of a century—that is, since his earliest days as Director of the Melbourne Botanic Garden. In recognition of this, he had been elected a member of both the Société Impériale d'Agriculture d'Alger (1876) and the Société de Climatologie Algérienne (1879). As a result of his activities, as Mueller noted in his letter to Consul Pesoli of 10 May 1883, "all our ordinary trees and shrubs have become common there". There was thus no longer any need for him to supply seeds of these. Instead, we find both Mueller and his French correspondents concentrating on less well-known species from the more remote parts of inland Australia, seeds of which could now be obtained more readily from pastoralists who were penetrating deeper and deeper into the country with their flocks of sheep that would within a few years turn the land into desert. In particular, Mueller sent saltbushes and native grasses that he hoped would acclimatize well in the inland desert regions of Algeria and prove useful there as pasture. He also sent *Casuarina decaisneana*, the only timber tree, he said, that flourished in Central Australia.

A "jardin d'essai" had been founded in Algiers as early as the 1830s and, under its long-serving director, Auguste Hardy, had been the chief avenue for Mueller's Algerian exchanges. In 1891 a new garden was created in the neighbouring French protectorate of Tunisia, and a long list of Australian desiderata was forwarded to Mueller on behalf of the director by the then French Consul-General in Melbourne, Léon Dejardin. As Mueller explained to Dejardin in a letter dated 8 February 1893, the species requested came from all over Australia and so obtaining seed would be a major task. It was, however, one that he shouldered willingly, writing to contacts and collectors throughout the continent and forwarding materials to Dejardin as they came to hand. Mueller's response, and the systematic way in which he went about meeting the Tunisian request, were altogether characteristic of his approach more generally. By 1895, we find him also sending Dejardin, now representing Russian as well as French interests in Melbourne, seeds of various Australian species intended for the Crimea, to help drain swampy ground there, and for the desert regions in transcaucasian Central Asia newly incorporated into the Russian empire.

Mueller's correspondence with the French consuls was not restricted to matters relating to plant exchanges. Two letters refer to

Mueller's major study of Australian salsolaceous plants, or saltbushes—including, of course, the species he had been supplying for the French North African colonies—and reveal how he tried to use the consuls to ensure that copies of this work, which appeared as an official publication of the Victorian Government,¹¹ were forwarded to relevant French institutions. Mueller indicated to Dejardin that he was sure that, if the Frenchman wrote to the Premier requesting copies of Mueller's work, they would be forthcoming; but he also indicated delicately that it might be better not to mention that he had suggested writing! Other letters document Mueller's efforts to enlist the services of scientifically inclined officers of the French shipping company, "Messageries Maritimes", to get packages of research materials to the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. While the ordinary postal services could be relied upon to carry letters to and from other parts of the world, it was a different matter when it came to exchanging bulky collections of natural history materials. Mueller, it becomes clear, cultivated close contacts with individual officers of both mail ships and warships that visited Melbourne, and relied on their help when it came to shipping the large cases of living plants and other scientific materials that he regularly sent to Europe.

In 1895, Mueller received the signal honour of being elected a corresponding member of the Académie des Sciences of the Institut de France. The rules governing election to the Académie were very strict, there being only 100 places for corresponding members in the entire Académie, ten of them assigned to the Botany section. An election took place only when a vacancy appeared. Mueller succeeded to the place that had been filled for the previous quarter-century by the recently deceased professor of botany at the University of Berlin, Nathanael Pringsheim. By electing Mueller, the Académie in effect anointed him as, in its collective judgement, among the world's dozen leading botanists outside Paris. The formal citation describing his life's work, presented to the Académie at the time of the election, was drawn up by his long-time correspondent and erstwhile collaborator, Charles-Victor Naudin, who had been a member of the Académie for many years.¹² Mueller's letters to Consul Dejardin reveal that he had known in advance that he was to be proposed for election, but also his awareness that success was not assured. They also reveal that the information he had about the Académie was seriously flawed. Mueller himself evidently felt that he needed to know more about

this highly prestigious institution of which he had just become a member—he did not even know who the office-bearers were, to whom he evidently wished in his accustomed fashion to write a letter expressing his appreciation of the honour done to him—and so sought further details from Dejardin. The latter was able to give him some additional information, but evidently not enough to dispel various misconceptions.

Perhaps the most interesting of all the letters published here is one that Mueller wrote to Dejardin on 14 November 1890, concerning a paper that had been read at a meeting of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia a few days before, and subsequently reported in the press. Mueller, President of the Branch since its inception in 1884, had as usual been in the chair at the meeting. The paper in question had been presented by Rev. D. Macdonald, a Presbyterian missionary who had spent many years in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), and had been envisaged as supplementing one describing an ascent of the volcano on the New Hebridean island of Tanna. As Mueller described it to Dejardin, Macdonald had "drifted into politics", despite Mueller's warning from the chair. With no European power claiming possession of the New Hebrides, the islands were at the time the scene of a bitter struggle for dominance between French Catholic missionaries and Presbyterian missionaries from Australia. In 1888 the French and British governments, intent on defusing the situation, had signed a convention whereby neither power claimed ownership of the islands and a Joint Naval Commission was established to keep the peace. Tension, however, continued, and Macdonald in effect accused the French of cheating on the agreement: he claimed that while British laws, for example in relation to the sale of guns to the natives, were being strictly enforced on British traders, there were no such constraints being imposed by the French, so that the French traders were at a distinct advantage. France should either agree to a uniform set of laws to be uniformly applied to all European settlers, he argued, or—this clearly being the alternative he preferred—it should yield its claim to the islands in favour of a cession of territory in some other part of the world.

Mueller's response is very revealing. As he assured the French Consul, he not only unsuccessfully cautioned Macdonald to steer clear of political questions, as soon as the missionary had finished speaking, he rose and declared his confidence in the good faith of the French Government. It was his practice, he told Dejardin, to insist that "no

political opinions should be brought before any geographic meeting". Had he seen Macdonald's manuscript beforehand, he would have struck out the offending passages before they had been read, as he had done with another paper on a previous occasion; and Dejardin could rest assured that these passages would certainly not appear in the version of the talk that would be printed in the Society's proceedings. This was, we may be sure, no mere sycophancy on Mueller's part. He would have been deeply concerned about what had happened on both the Society's account and his own, for it would have been fatal to the work of either to be seen as engaging in political controversy. In a larger sense, of course, the work of the Geographical Society was highly political since it promoted and indeed was premised on the expansion of Western influence over other parts of the world; but in late-nineteenth-century Western societies, including Australia, this was uncontroversial and so not "political". Within the confines of Western culture, however, the Society and others like it depended for their success on maintaining an image of being non-partisan and "scientific", of being committed to building up an impartial body of knowledge, available to all, about the less familiar, non-Western parts of the world. Had Mueller as chairman of the meeting remained silent after the offending remarks were made, it might have been thought that the Society acquiesced in the views Macdonald had expressed. Mueller's speaking up and his subsequently telling Dejardin that he had done so were intended, therefore, to protect the Society's reputation for impartiality. He would also have been concerned, though, to protect his own image as a disinterested scientist whose work was independent of all political considerations. For Mueller, botany and politics should not mix, any more than geography and politics should; indeed, his botany demanded, as did his geography, a free exchange of information across international boundaries that would be seriously compromised if scientists became embroiled in disputes between one nation and another. Having shared the platform with Macdonald while he presented his diatribe, it was essential that he dissociate himself as well as the Society from the missionary's opinions.

Thus Mueller's surviving correspondence with the French consuls in Melbourne, fragmentary and incomplete though it be, provides a fascinating window on to Australian-French scientific links in the final decades of the nineteenth century. For many Australian scientists in Mueller's day, their international links, if they had any, were with Britain

alone. Mueller, by contrast, maintained a much wider network. His links with the French scientific community were an important part of this, which the presence of French consular representatives in Melbourne greatly facilitated. The consuls provided a channel that Mueller was able to exploit in order to further the international exchanges of materials that were fundamental to his vision of his science. Indeed, in doing so, they helped sustain that vision.

Our transcriptions of Mueller's letters follow his sometimes idiosyncratic spelling and sentence structure throughout. A few obvious mistakes are corrected for clarity's sake; such corrections are indicated by square brackets.

*Department of History and Philosophy of Science
University of Melbourne*

Notes

1. Colin Nettelbeck, "The Consul's Treasure", *Explorations*, n° 7, December 1988, pp. 18-23.
2. Three volumes of Mueller's selected correspondence, edited by R. W. Home, A. M. Lucas, S. Maroske, D. M. Sinkora and J. H. Voigt are to be published by Peter Lang AG, Bern, Switzerland, during the course of the next three years, together with a new biography of Mueller by Home and Maroske. A CD-ROM containing Mueller's complete surviving correspondence will also be issued.
3. D. M. Churchill, T. B. Muir and D. M. Sinkora, "The Published Works of Ferdinand J. H. Mueller (1825-1896)", *Muelleria*, 4, 1978, pp. 1-120; and "Supplement", *Muelleria*, 5, 1984, pp. 229-248.
4. J. Heathcote and S. Maroske, "Drifting Sand and Marram Grass of the South-west Coast of Victoria in the Last Century", *Victorian Naturalist*, 113, 1, 1996, pp. 10-15.
5. Linden Gillbank, "The Origins of the Acclimatization Society of Victoria: Practical Science in the Wake of the Gold Rush", *Historical Records of Australian Science*, 6, 3, 1986, pp. 359-374.
6. In its first edition (Melbourne, 1876), this work had the somewhat more restricted title, *Select Plants Readily Eligible for Industrial Culture or Naturalisation in Victoria*. Subsequent editions under the new title appeared in 1880 (Calcutta), 1881 (Sydney), 1883 (Kassel/Berlin, in German), 1884 (Detroit), 1885 (Melbourne), 1888 (Melbourne), 1891 (Melbourne), 1895 (Melbourne), 1905 (Porto, in Portuguese) and 1929 (Porto).

7. Charles-Victor Naudin, *Mémoire sur les eucalyptus introduits dans la région méditerranéenne*, Paris, 1883. Cf. Michael A. Osborne, "A Collaborative Dimension of the European Empires: Australian and French Acclimatization Societies and Intercolonial Scientific Co-operation", in R. W. Home and Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, eds, *International Science and National Scientific Identity: Australia between Britain and America*, Dordrecht, 1991, pp. 97-119, see p. 110.
8. F. McCoy, *Anniversary Address delivered at the First Annual Meeting of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, on Acclimatisation, Its Nature and Applicability to Victoria*, Melbourne, 1862.
9. Michael A. Osborne, *Nature, the Exotic, and the Science of French Colonialism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994, chap. 3.
10. R. L. Burt and W. T. Williams, "Plant Introduction in Australia" in R. W. Home, ed., *Australian Science in the Making*, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 252-276.
11. Ferdinand von Mueller, *Iconography of Australian Salsolaceous Plants*, decades 1-9, Melbourne, 1889-1891.
12. The citation is to be found in Mueller's file at the Archives de l'Académie des Sciences, Paris.

83.05.10

*To E. Pesoli*Melbourne,
10/5/83.Mons. E. A. Pesoli,
Acting Consul General for France &c

I find, dear Consul Pesoli, some difficulty of selecting seeds for the Agronomic Institut of Tipaza,¹ because since the last 25 years and even more I have made so many sendings of seeds to Algeria, that all our ordinary trees and shrubs have become common there. It seems to me best, to ask Mr. de Noter first for some further explanation of his requirements; if he will *specify*, what he particularly stands in need of, I will act on any suggestions of his as far as is within my means; but it seems to me unadvisable to send anything from here, that did not *add* to the Australian plants in Algier, as he could of numerous species obtain now locally the seeds.

Ready to render you any services at any time, I remain your
regardful friend

Ferd. von Mueller.

I have latterly not been well, which accounts for the tardiness of my
reply.

¹ Tipaza (or Tipasa) is located on the Algerian coast, west of Algiers.



87.03.30

*To François Bruwaert*¹Melbourne
30 March 1887.

The Consul for France, Melbourne

Sir,

In reply to your enquiry about the *Boussingaultia baselloides*, I have the honor to inform you, that this climber is exclusively a native of South-America, where its mucilaginous tubers are used for food. This plant is cultivated in South-France and Algeria, so that it could easily be introduced from there to Reunion.

In the French enlarged edition of my work on select plants, now brought out by Prof. Dr. Charles Naudin,² also a brief note on the *Boussingaultia* occurs.³

I avail myself of this opportunity to solicit, that a root of the *Nastus-Bamboo* may be sent from Reunion fresh to us here, as this superb *Bamboo* occurs only in high mountain-regions of Reunion and nowhere else; as yet this rare plant, which would live without protection here, has not yet been introduced. If I could learn, what plants or seeds from here would be acceptable at Reunion, it would give me particular pleasure to provide them.

I have the honor, Sir, to be your very obedient

Ferd. von Mueller

The *Nastus*-root would require to be merely packed in an ordinary case quite closed, and would come quite safely here shipped as ordinary merchandise.

Postscript

The *Boussingaultia*-tubers could never for extensive nutriment replace the potato, nor are they as yet reared for practical culinary purposes anywhere in Victoria.

¹ Annotated: "Transmis renseignements à Chambre S Denis le 13 avril 1887". François Edmond Bruwaert was appointed Consul in June 1886 but served for only a year, being succeeded by Paul Maistre, appointed Acting Consul in June 1887.

² C. Naudin and F. Mueller, *Manuel de l'acclimateur ou choix de plantes recommandées pour l'agriculture, l'industrie et la médecine: adaptées aux divers climats de l'Europe et des pays tropicaux*, Paris, Société d'Acclimatation, 1887.

³ The note under *Boussingaultia baselloides* is as follows: "Chénopodée, du Pérou vivace par ses tubercules, qui émettent de longues tiges sarmenteuses et enroulantes. Cette plante, introduite en France vers le commencement du siècle, était préconisée comme un légume nouveau, dont les feuilles pouvaient se consommer à la manière des éouards, et les tubercules comme un succédané de la pomme de terre. D'aucune manière la plante n'a répondu à cette attente, et son rôle se réduit aujourd'hui à celui de plante d'ornement. On l'emploie à garnir des treillis, qu'elle orne de ses grappes de fleurs roses. Elle est tout à fait rustique dans le midi de la France." (p. 170)



87.08.02

To Paul Maistre¹

2/8/87

Having again received some *Araucaria* seeds, dear Consul, which are even better than those last sent, I beg to send some now to you, as you might wish to forward them to Reunion.

Respectfully

your

Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Rép. le 4 août". Maistre was appointed acting consul in June 1887. See C. Thornton Smith, "Paul Maistre: Vice-Consul and later Consul for France in Victoria, 1886-1898, 1901-1908", *Explorations*, n° 17, pp. 3-47.



87.12.02

To Paul Maistre

Melbourne,
2 Dec. 1887.

Sir

It is my pleasing duty to inform you, that the large glass-roofed case with roots of Natus-Bamboos and young Palms and some other plants has safely arrived yesterday from Reunion, and that most of the plants are in an excellent state of vitality. I beg to express to the Agent and Captain of the "Meurthe" and of the French Mail steamer, also to your self my best thanks for the kindness of allowing the case to come free, and to see to its safety during transmission. Arrangements are made already to refill the case with Araucarias and some other rare plants, and I should be grateful, if you again would afford your kind aid in arranging for the return sending of the case by next months French Mail Steamer.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient

Ferd. von Mueller



87.12.17

*To Paul Maistre¹*Melbourne,
17. Dec. 1887.Mons. P. Maistre,
Acting Consul General of France

In reply to your communication of the 12. Dec.,² honored Sir, I beg to state, that I will endeavour to obtain yet this season the grains of the two Anthistiria and of other nutritious grasses and also salt-bushes and other rural plants, fit for the more arid pastoral regions of Northern Africa. It will be necessary to have these seeds collected purposely, and I have made some arrangements now in this respect, without involving the Consulate into expenditure. When any of the grains arrive, they will be successively sent to you.

I beg of you, to assure his Excellency the Minister of foreign affaires, that I will be particularly happy to aid on this and any other occasion in the rural development of the great French possessions in Africa, so far as I can from here, and that I hope his Excellency will in this respect through you, his able representative here, at any time command services.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your very obedient
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Répondu à M. Von Mueller le 20-12-87".

² Letter not found.



87.12.20

To Paul Maistre

20/12/87.

Honored Sir,

The large case, which came from Reunion, has been now refilled with splendid plants of Araucaria and with some other very valuable plants, all in excellent state of growth. Will you kindly inform me, when I must send it, and to what place in Melbourne it should be forwarded.

Respectfully

your

Ferd. von Mueller.



88.04.18

To Paul Maistre¹

Melbourne,
18 Apr. 1888.

Mons. P. Maistre,
Acting Consul General of France &c.

Honored Sir,

In continuance of former correspondence I beg to inform you, that as yet I have been not very successful in obtaining the seeds of the Grasses and Saltbushes from the interior, desired by his Excellency the Minister of foreign affairs of your great country, — owing partly to the advanced season and partly to the devastations caused by the Rabbits widely over the interior of Australia.

For these two causes it became difficult, to send purposely a collector far inland, so that I had to rely on the aid of friends in the interior, to obtain the desired seeds. Every prospect however exists now, to get supplies from different localities, and it seems best, that such sorts, as do come in, be at once fresh despatched, as the arrival of the various kinds will extend over considerable time.

Accordingly I now have the pleasure of sending seeds, just received, of the valuable *Chloris truncata*, which grass will prosper in the driest regions, and which grass is particularly mentioned at page 203 of the "Manuel de l'Acclimateur" of Prof. Naudin & myself.²

Whenever more sorts of Grass-seeds or of other pasture-plants, adapted for North-Africa, shall have arrived, I will always forward them at once to you.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "[...] reception le 23 Transmis aux rapport le 25 Avril".

² C. Naudin and F. Mueller, *Manuel de l'acclimateur* [...]. The note under *Chloris* is as follows: "Genre de Graminées, qui, presque toutes, pourraient être introduites, en qualité de plantes fourragères, dans l'agriculture des pays chauds. Dans le nombre on recommande particulièrement les *Ch. scariosa* Ferd. VON MULLER., *truncata* R. BR. et *ventricosa* R. BR., de l'Australie orientale, toutes trois vivaces et fournissant de bonnes pâtures en vert pour l'été et l'automne. Il y aurait d'intéressantes expériences à faire sur ces plantes." (p. 203)



88.05.30

To Paul Maistre

Melbourne

30/5/88

Mons. Maistre,
Vice-Consul for France

It affords me much pleasure, honored Sir, in continuation of former correspondence to inform you, that I have just been able to secure from Central Australia seeds of the *Casuarina Decaisneana* which tree forms in wide regions towards the Centre of the Australian Continent the only timber tree, it not reaching Shark Bay, where Capt Freycinet explored in the earlier part of this century. This *Casuarina* will therefore prove in the hottest and driest parts of Algeria a valuable acquisition, if finally it became naturalized, as it will grow even best in sandy ground. The timber is of good quality, and the foliage is liked by herds and flocks.

With respectful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller.



88.06.29

*To Paul Maistre*Melbourne,
29. June 1888.To Mons. P. L. Maistre,
Vice-Consul for France &c

In continuation of former communications, dear Mons. Maistre, I beg to send herewith fresh seeds, just obtained, of one of the best Australian Saltbushes, *Kochia villosa*, which is quite celebrated as "Cotton-bush" on the "Sheep runs" of the arid interior. It is only a small quantity, but the seeds are scantily produced, and as the bushes are fed down so much by the flocks, it is difficult to obtain any seeds at all.

Kindly excuse me to the Consul General¹ for not having been able yet to wait on him; but I come rarely to the City, the pressure of my departmental work in the office at South Yarra being so great. But as the Centennial Exhibition will soon be opened,² I shall often have the pleasure of coming to the French division, where I am sure to meet the Chief Commissioner and you frequently.

Respectfully your
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Presumably Mueller meant Léon Dejardin who was the newly arrived consul. In 1888 Melbourne was a vice-consulate under the control of the consul general in Sydney; see C. Thornton Smith, *op. cit.*

² Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne, 1888-1889.



88.09.28

*To Léon Dejardin*¹Melbourne,
28 Sept. 1888.To the Chevalier Lejardin,
Consul General for France &c &c

It affords me much pleasure, honored and dear Sir, to send you an other small quantity of the seeds of the best Central-Australian Salt-Bush, fresh collected; and I shall gladly continue to exert myself for obtaining further supplies, as these kinds of plants would likely become of pastoral importance not only in the subsaline regions of North-Africa, but also for those of the South-West of France.

Let me remain,
dear Consul,
regardfully your
Ferd. von Mueller.

¹ Annotated: "Rép. le 1^{er} Oct."



88.11.02

*To Léon Dejardin*Melbourne
2 Nov. 1888

Let me express my best thanks, dear Consul Dejardin, for your attentive kindness of sending me the Number of the Ministerial Bulletin for Agriculture, containing the valuable Report on the Wattle-Bark of this colony, furnished by Mons. Maistre.¹ Pray convey to him my best acknowledgement for the generous manner, in which he referred to myself on this occasion.

I have retained the publication here for the present; but doubtless it is your only impression; so I will return it in a few days.

At present I have a quarto volume under progress on salsolaceous plants, giving lithographic illustrations of the various Australian species, rather more than 100; so that the *best* kinds for sheep-pastures in saline regions of mild climes might be easily recognized.²

When the work shall have been completed, some impressions will be offered for your friendly acceptance, as the naturalisation of some species will doubtless become of great importance for some tracts of Country in Southern France, Algeria and Tunis.

Let me remain, dear Consul, respectfully your
Ferd. von Mueller.

¹ Maistre, "Rapport sur la production et l'emploi de l'écorce à tan du wattle", *Ministère de l'Agriculture. Bulletin. Documents officiels, statistique, rapports, comptes rendus de missions en France et à l'étranger*, 7, 1888, pp. 431-435.

² The first two decades of Mueller's *Iconography of Australian salsolaceous plants* were published in 1889.



88.12.10

To Léon Dejardin

10/12/88

M. le Chevalier De Jardin,
Consul General for France.

It gives me much pleasure, dear Consul, to send some more seeds of one of the best saltbushes for sheep-pastures, just received from the interior fresh. The species is this time *Atriplex halimoides*. It will grow as well on calcareous as on somewhat saline soil.

Respectfully your
Ferd. von Mueller.



89.07.18

To Léon Dejardin

18/7/89

Herewith, dear Consul, I send the seeds of the *Eucalyptus polyanthema*,¹ of which I spoke as very valuable for dry regions, and as yielding a superior sort of timber. I have promises of Saltbush seeds from various desert places, but none have arrived yet.

With respectful and grateful remembrance
your Ferd. von Mueller

¹ *polyanthemos?*



89.07.25

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

25/7/89

Herewith, dear Consul, a small addition of fresh superior saltbush-seeds of Australia. It is best to send the supplies successively to you as they are obtained.

Respectfully your
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Rép. 27 juillet".



89.11.06

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

Melbourne
6/11/89

It gives me much pleasure, dear Consul De Jardin, to send you an ample supply of well-matured seeds of *Atriplex spongiorum*,² one of the best Saltbushes of Central Australia. The seeds are quite freshly collected, and are sure to germinate. I am all the more glad, to offer these, as seeds of *this* particular species have *never* yet been sent in some *quantity* for actual rural purposes to Europe. In all practicability this Saltbush will become of importance for sheep-pastures with somewhat saline subsoil in S. W. France and Algeria.

Where this *Atriplex* grows, some of the best Merino-Wool is obtained.

With respectful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller

The sad news of the death of my celebrated friend, Dr. Cosson, reached me by the last mail.³ It is a great loss to French Science. He was the author of a splendid Flora of Paris,⁴ and also one of the principle investigators of the vegetation of Algeria.⁵ So one after the other of my oldest friends pass away, and perhaps I am the next!

¹ Annotated: "le 7 Nov j'écris à Paris Je remercierai verbalement".

² *spongiosum?*

³ Mueller's informant was premature. Ernest Cosson, a French botanist (b. 1819), did not die until 31 December 1889. See J. H. Barnhart, *Biographical Notes upon Botanists*, Boston, 1965, vol. 1, p. 384 and "Botanical Necrology for 1889", *Annals of Botany*, 3, 1889-1890, p. 456.

⁴ Cosson produced several works on the flora of Paris and its environs. Mueller's library included: E. Cosson and J. Germain de Saint-Pierre, *Flore des environs de Paris*, 2nd edn, Paris, 1861.

⁵ Of Cosson's publications on the flora of Algeria, Mueller's library included: E. Cosson and M. C. Durieu de Maisonneuve, *Exploration scientifique de l'Algérie: science naturelles, botanique, [II]: Phanérogamie, groupe de Glumacées*, Paris, 1854-1867 and E. Cosson, *Compendium florae Atlanticae seu expositio methodica plantarum omnium in Algeria*, 2 vols, Paris, 1881-1887.



90.02.19

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

19/2/90

To the Chevalier De Jardin,
Consul General for France.

A fresh lot of Saltbush seeds has just arrived, dear Consul, of which I send you the largest portion, as it is a good kind for fodder, and as it is a species, which could easily be naturalized in the drier regions of Algeria and elsewhere about the Mediterranean Sea. The name of this particular species is *Atriplex spongiosum*.

With regardful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller.

¹ Annotated: "Rép. (part) le 21 fev".



90.11.14

*To Léon De Jardin*Melbourne,
14 Nov. 1890To the Chevalier De Jardin,
Consul General for France &c &c

Allow me, dear Consul, to approach you on a subject, which is very painful to me, and which — from what I *suddenly* learn this day — requires some explanation of my own. I notice just from a weekly journal, that at the geographic meeting on Friday last or subsequently some offensive remarks occurred, of which I never heard before.¹ If they were made at the meeting, I *did not hear* them, otherwise I would at once have risen, and pronounced such expressions as highly improper. After the Rev. Mr. Macdonald, who unfortunately against my special request drifted into politics, had read his remarks, I at once rose; and emphatically gave it as my opinion, "that I was convinced, the French Government would with sanctity see the convention maintained, entered into with Britain, and that I felt also sure, the Government of the French Republic would remove any difficulties and any causes, which might lead to injustice or hinder progress of settlement, if clearly pointed out."

As usual the extempore remarks of Speakers are not reported by the press, as they are too long for record, and thus you and your compatriots can not be aware of the position, which in justice to France I took at the meeting.

It was only *this morning*, that I learn of the subjects, brought forward by Mr. Macdonald, having become matter of *official correspondence*,² and I take the earliest opportunity of expressing to you as the dignified representative of France my sorrow, that anything, arising from the last geographic gathering should have hurt your and your compatriotes feelings in any way.

It was only expected, that the Missionary Macdonald, as he happened to be in Melbourne, should supplement the *itinerary* observation [. . .]³ Lindt.

I spoke myself to the Rev. Gentleman, insisting that no political opinions should be brought before any geographic meeting; and had I

been able, to see his manuscript, I would have struck out some of the passages, as I have done on a former occasion, and so far as hurtful they certainly shall not appear in the proceedings of our geographic branch society here.

Be so kind, to convey these sentiments to the Government of your great country, and allow me to reiterate my assurance, that I shall always endeavour, as I have done during the last 36 years, to promote in my small professional and departmental way, also rural and scientific, the interests of the great nation, in which I have so many science-friends, and from which I experienced so many acts of generosity!

Respectfully your

Ferd. von Mueller

¹ The report that aroused Mueller's concern has not been identified. From the newspapers, however, we learn that two papers were given at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victorian Branch) on 7 November 1890. The first was by J. Lindt on his ascent of the Tanna volcano in the New Hebrides and the second was by the Rev. D. Macdonald on the condition of affairs in that group. The *Argus* reported that Macdonald "advocated that France should either join with Britain in framing and enforcing equally upon all Europeans all necessary New Hebrides laws as to land, labour, and trade, or yield any claim to the islands in consideration for the concession of territory in some other part of the world. In the meantime, he urged that Australia should insist upon the spirit of the existing convention or joint protectorate being wholly observed, so that in every respect British subjects in the New Hebrides should be placed on an equal footing with the French, and that France must either grant Australia her rights or recede from the convention." (*Argus*, 8 November 1890, p. 9). From subsequent reports (e.g. *Argus*, 14 November 1890, p. 9, and *Australasian*, 15 November 1890, p. 941) we learn that Macdonald and his colleagues were particularly concerned about the trade in guns and intoxicating liquor.

² Mueller's anxiety may have been prompted by a report in that morning's *Argus* (p. 9) of a discussion the previous day at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria concerning the situation in the New Hebrides. Here, reference was made to agitation in the Victorian Legislative Council by James Service "to induce the French, German and American Governments to come into the same arrangement with regard to the prohibition of these articles" (i.e. guns and intoxicating liquors) as the British Government already imposed on its citizens, and to responses received from those governments.

³ *illegible*.



92.02.01

To Léon Dejardin

Melbourne 1/2/92

To the Consul General for France, Melbourne.

Being aware, honored Sir, that the Government of France is engaged in providing for new rural cultures towards the Sahara in very arid regions, I beg to send seeds, just purposely fresh collected, of two kind of pastoral Saltbushes of Central Australia, which valuable plants should prove of great importance also in the interior of Africa, when naturalized, for fattening herds and flocks. I further beg to send seeds of the Desert-Cypress of Australia,¹ which tree is one of the few, thriving readily in waterless, sandy and very hot regions furnishing durable timber and splendid fuel, and easily naturalized. Promising to send various other supplies as occasion offers, I remain, respectfully your

Ferd. von Mueller, M. D.

¹ Presumably *Casuarina decaisneana*.



92.03.23

To Paul Maistre¹

23/3/92

Only this afternoon, dear Consul Le Maistre, I became aware, that a French Warship was here, otherwise I would have paid my respects earlier to the Admiral and Officers at your Consular Office at once;² and now even I can only do so by letter, as I am not at all well, and thus obliged to keep within my room. I beg however to send for the kind acceptance of the Admiral and the Captain each a book,³ which may be worthy of their acceptance and may prove useful during their voyages occasionally for reference.

That I have not become a stranger to French savants I may show by the fact, that only yesterday I received a most kind letter from Professor Milne-Edwards,⁴ and some few weeks ago a splendid letter from Prof. de Quatrefages, just only some days written before his death.⁵

As I live at so great a distance and the distinguished visitors will have their time so fully occupied, pray let them not trouble about me, because I sent merely these books.

Always respectfully your
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Transmis et Répondu le 24^{me}".

² *Dubourdieu*, a French war cruiser of 3,300 tons and 21 guns arrived at Melbourne on 16 March 1892. Its officers included Rear Admiral Emile Parrayon and Capt. Basson (*Argus*, 18 March 1892, p. 4).

³ These books have not been identified.

⁴ Letter not found. The palaeontologist Alphonse Milne-Edwards (1835–1900) was professor of zoology at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.

⁵ Letter not found. Jean-Louis Armand de Quatrefages de Bréau (b. 1810), professor of anthropology at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle since 1855 and long an active member of the French Société d'Acclimatation, died on 12 January 1892.



92.03.25

To Paul Maistre¹

25/3/92

Let me thank you, dear Consul, for your kind letter,² concerning the books³ sent to the Admiral⁴ and Capt. Basson. I think these books may prove occasionally useful for reference during voyages. Let me hope, that I was not misunderstood in saying, that it seemed perhaps an *encroachment* on the time of the illustrious visitors and their officers, when so much is to be seen here during their *brief stay*! to come on a mere visit of etiquette to my humble place; but if any of the members of the French Navy now here *like* to honor me anyhow with a call, please, tell them, that I shall be *much gratified*. Perhaps they like to have some seeds of Australian plants, or I may be able to do something else for them now or *hereafter*. I feel very poorly, and so I trust, you and your naval compatriots will excuse me for not calling on them. Some of the Officers of the "Messageries maritimes" come to me regularly on *every* voyage!

Always regardfully your
Ferd. Von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Répondu le 28".

² Letter not found.

³ These books have not been identified.

⁴ Rear Admiral Emile Parrayon.



92.07.28

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

28/7/92

Chevalier De Jardin
Consul General for France

Allow me, dear Consul, to send to you herewith fresh seeds of *Atriplex vesicarium*, in continuation of some former sendings of mine. As pointed out in my work on "Select plants for industrial culture and naturalisation"² it is *this* particular *Saltbush*, which is among the very best in the far interior for sheep-pasturage.³ As the French Government is desirous to test such kinds of plants on the stations, established in the Sahara and in other far inland-localities of North-Africa, I beg to offer this particular kind now. This *Atriplex* will bear slight frost, so that it might be naturalized even in South-France; but it will thrive best on ground somewhat saline.

With respectful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "28 juillet Rép. le même jour".

² Mueller presumably sent a copy of the most recent (i.e. 1891) edition of his book, *Select Extra-Tropical Plants Readily Eligible for Industrial Culture or Naturalisation*.

³ The note under *Atriplex vesicarium* is as follows: "In the interior of South-Eastern and in Central Australia. One of the most fattening and most relished of all the dwarf pastoral saltbushes of Australia, holding out in the utmost extremes of drought, and not scorched even by sirocco-like blasts. Its vast abundance over extensive salt-bush plains of the Australian interior, to the exclusion of almost every other bush except *A. halimoides*, indicates the facility with which this species disseminates itself. Splendid wool is produced in regions where *A. vesicarium* and *A. halimoides* almost monopolize the ground for enormous stretches. With other woody species easily multiplied from cuttings also; but, as remarked by Naudin, producing thousands of fruits in less than three months after sowing, and, as stated by Millardet, has become the marvel of the Delta of the Rhone." (pp. 59-60)



92.10.17

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

17/10/92.

Chevalier De Jardin
Consul General for France, Melbourne.

Some former sendings of mine in the rural interests of your great Country, dear Chevalier De Jardin, have met with such very friendly acceptance, even from his Excellency the Minister of Foreign affairs, that I can venture to offer an additional contribution. So I beg this time to forward a quantity of seeds of the *Kochia pyramidata*, a kind of saltbush, of which I could never before obtain a large lot. The seeds are quite fresh, and of one of the best species for some what saline sheep-pastures.

Most respectfully your
Ferd. Von Mueller.

¹ Annotated: "écrit à Paris [...] Rép. 19".



93.02.08

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

South Yarra

8/2/93.

Chevalier Dejardin, Consul General for France &c &c

The list of plants,² all utilitarian, from you for the requirements of Tunis,³ dear Chev. Dejardin, I have carefully perused, and I will try to obtain gradually seeds of as many of these plants, as I possibly can; but only a very limited number of them is under cultivation here, and as a whole these particular plants are scattered over the whole Australian Continent as indigenous species. Therefore the collecting can only be effected gradually, as opportunities arise, I will send you fresh seeds from time to time, as I can secure them, and this will be done without expenditure to the French Government.

Allow me to remark also, that the great Governments Garden at Antibes under the direction of Professor Naudin⁴ many of the plants, contained in this list, have been reared; but whether they ripen seeds there, it is impossible for me to say. I do however not doubt, that some of the desired kinds of seeds could be procured there at once and others at later periods, the venerable Dr Naudin being an experienced and enthusiastic Cultivator and Acclimatiser, and he has the best climatic place in France and all other requis[i]te⁵ means at his command.

Let me remain, dear Consul, most respectfully your
Ferd von Mueller.

¹ On 29 December 1892 a letter was sent on behalf of le Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères to Dejardin: "Monsieur, l'Administration du Protectorat vient de créer à Tunis un jardin d'essai où l'on se propose de réunir toutes les plantes et arbres utiles ou d'ornement dont l'acclimatation pourrait être tentée dans la Régence. On désirait notamment essayer les espèces particulières au pays de votre résidence dont la liste est ci-jointe. Je vous serai obligé de me faire parvenir des semences aussi fraîches que possible de ces espèces ainsi que de toutes celles énumérées sur cette liste qu'il vous paraîtrait utile de signaler à l'attention du Directeur de ce jardin. J'attache un grand intérêt à la création entreprise par l'Administration du Protectorat, et je vous prie de ne rien négliger pour l'aider à atteindre son but. Une loi de protection contre le phylloxera interdisant

l'introduction dans la Régence des plantes vertes des tubercules, bulbes et racines, vos envois devront se borner strictement à des graines, noyaux ou fruits à écorce dure qu'il conviendra d'étiqueter avec soin, de manière à ce qu'aucune confusion ne puisse se produire. Le montant de vos avances vous sera remboursé sur la production d'un état spécial (modèle no. 26), que vous voudrez bien m'adresser sous le timbre de la Division des fonds et de la comptabilité de mon Département. Cet état devra être appuyé des pièces justificatives réglementaires. Une collection des espèces introduites de l'étranger dans le jardin botanique de Melbourne et qui étant dès maintenant acclimatées en Australie s'acclimateraient sûrement dans l'Afrique du Nord. Une part aussi large que l'a permis l'état des connaissances actuelles sur la flore australienne a été faite dans la liste ci-dessus aux plantes fourragères. Aucun essai bien sérieux d'acclimatation n'a encore été tenté dans le Nord de l'Afrique pour les espèces Australiennes de ce genre dont un certain nombre y rendraient sûrement de grands services. Il y a donc un intérêt tout particulier à former avec soin les collections demandées pour le jardin d'essai de Tunis et à la compléter par les espèces qui auraient échappées à l'attention de son Directeur."

² *Acacia acuminata*, *A. aneura*, *A. armata*, *A. decurrens*, *A. cyanophylla*, *A. leiophylla*, *A. melanoxylon*, *A. microbotrya*, *A. pycnantha*, *Achras australis*, *Agrostis solandri*, *Andropogon australis*, *A. erianthoides*, *A. falcatus*, *A. pertusus*, *A. refractus*, *A. sericeus*, *Angophora lanceolata*, *A. intermedia*, *A. subvelutina*, *Anthistiria avenacea*, *A. ciliata*, *A. australis*, *A. membranacea*, *Araucaria bidwillii*, *A. cunninghamii*, *Astrebla pectinata*, *ariticoides*, *Atalantia halimoides*, *Atriplex halimoides*, *A. vesicaria*, *A. nummularia*, *A. spongiosa*, *Backhousia citriodora*, *Bacularia monostachya*, *Baloghia lucida*, *Boehmeria calophleba*, *Brachychiton acerifolius*, *B. polpuneus*, *Bromus unioloïdes*, *Carissa brownii*, *Casuarina quadrivalvis*, *C. tenuissima*, *C. glauca*, *C. equisetifolia*, *C. decaisneana*, *C. distyla*, *C. fraseriana*, *C. suberosa*, *C. trichodon*, *C. heugeliana*, *Cedrela australis*, *Chenopodium auricomum*, *C. nitrariaceum*, *Chionachne cyathopoda*, *Chloris scariosa*, *C. truncata*, *C. ventricosa*, *Citrus australasica*, *C. planchonii*, *Conospermum stoechadis*, *C. triplinervium*, *Corchorus trilocularis*, *C. cunninghamii*, *C. olitorius*, *Crotalaria juncea*, *C. retusa*, *Cudrania javanensis*, *Cycas normanbyana*, *C. angulata*, *Dammara robusta*, *Danthonia bipartita*, *D. nervosa*, *D. penicillata*, *D. robusta*, *Dioscorea hastifolia*, *D. sativa* (and all other species of cultivated yams), *Duboisia hopwoodii*, *D. myoporoides*, *Ehrharta diplax*, *E. stipoides*, *Embothrium wickhamii*, *Encephalartos douglasii*, *Eremophila longifolia*, *Eremodendron cunninghamii*, *Erianthus fulvus*, *Eriocloa annulata*, *E. punctata*, *Eucryphia moorei*, *Eugenia smithii*, *Eustrephus brownii*, *Fagus cunninghamii*, *Festuca dives*, *F. hookeriana*, *F. littoralis*, *Flindersia australis*, *F. oxleyana*, *F. bennettiana*, *Geitonoplesium cymosum*, *Harpullia hillii*, *Hemarthria compressa*, *Hierochloa redolens*, *Hymenanthera banksii*, *Ipomoea calobra*, *I. paniculata* (and all species of cultivated potato), *Jacksonia culpalifera* (and all other species of *Jacksonia*), *Kochia villosa*, *Leptospermum laevigatum*, *L. lanigerum*, *Maba germinata*, (different varieties of *Melaleuca* and chiefly) *Melaleuca styphelioides*, *M. squarrosa*, *Microseris forsteri*, *Neurachne mitchelliana*, *N. munroi*, *Niemeyera prunifera*, *Panicum atrovirens*, *P. coenicolum*, *P. decompositum*, *P. trachyrrhachis*, *P. effusum*, *P. divaricatissimum*, *P. parviflorum*, *P. bicolor*, *P. marginatum*, *P. pygmaeum*, *P. prolutum*, *Pappophorum commune*, *Paspalum dilatatum*, *P. virgatum*, *P. scrobiculatum*, *Pennisetum longistylum*, *Pipturus propinquus*, *Poa brownii*, *P. chinensis*, *P. caespitosa*, *P. digitata*, *Ptychosperma cunninghamiana*, *P. alexandreae*,

Rhagodia billardieri, Rubus rosifolius, R. parvifolius, Santalum cygnorum, S. pressianum, Sesbania aculeata, S. aegyptiaca, S. brachycarpa, S. grandiflora, Stenotaphrum americanum, Stipa aristiglumis, Syncarpia laurifolia, Synoum glandulosum, Pimelea clavata, Trigonella suavissima, Zizyphus jujuba.

³ The Jardin d'essais at Tunis was established in April 1891.

⁴ Charles-Victor Naudin (1815–1899) had been *aide-naturaliste* at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris before being forced by health problems to move to the south of France, where in 1878 he was appointed director of the government-funded agronomic research station at Antibes.

⁵ *Editorial addition.*



93.03.03

To Léon Dejardin

Melbourne, 3/3/93.

Chevalier De Jardin,
Consul General for France &c

Herewith, dear Chev. Dejardin, I beg to send a small lot of seeds as a commencement of what is required for Tunis by the Government, which you so worthily represent. I thought it better, to send off, what I have hitherto caused freshly to be gathered, than wait any longer with contributing, as it may be still some time, before the West-Australian seeds arrive, but I hope to be able, to forward to you further various supplies at short intervals.

With regardful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller



94.04.22

To Léon Dejardin

Private

22/4/94

If you like, dear Consul, to send my large illustrated work "Iconography of Australian Salsolaceous plants"¹ to your Government, I feel sure, that the hon. the Premier on a written request of yours would cause this work to be supplied; but I think it best, that my name not be mentioned as having suggested this.² The Book would prove useful in connection with the Saltbush-seeds, now sent (*Atriplex halimoides*, *A. nummularium*, *A. vesicarium*).

When will the "Australien" be here on her home voyage. I missed calling on the Doctor, to thank him for having taken some rare specimens to the Musée d'histoire naturelle on the ships last home voyage.

With regardful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller.

¹ F. Mueller, *Iconography of Salsolaceous Plants*, 9 decades, Melbourne, 1889-1891.

² While Dejardin does not seem to have taken up Mueller's suggestion, the German Consul General requested of the Premier, and was granted, copies of two of Mueller's works for the Governor of New Guinea, namely his *Eucalyptographia* (10 decades, Melbourne, 1879-1884) and the 1891 edition of his *Select Extra-Tropical Plants* (cf. Public Record Office, Victoria, VPRS 1164, No. 1596, unit 13).



94.09.15

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

Melbourne, 15/9/94.

The Chevalier De Jardin,
Consul General for France

Honored Sir

The vivid interest shown by you in the efforts of naturalizing some of the best pastoral Saltbushes of Australia in the wide French territories of Africa, encourages me, to offer now in addition to former sendings also the seeds of *Atriplex vesicarium* of which species I now only for the first time was able to procure seeds in quantity. This *Atriplex* is sought by Sheep (and also by Horses and cattle) with avidity in Central Australia, and remains on somewhat saline soil fresh and succulent for feed even in the hottest regions and in the driest seasons. Its degree of resistance to a low temperature has not yet been exactly ascertained; but it will bear some frost, and may perhaps endure the winter-cold of South-Western France also. If desired, more seeds can be furnished of this species just now.

Let me remain, dear Consul De Jardin, with respectful remembrance your

Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Transmis par Dépêche en date du 17 Septembre".



94.10.18

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

18/10/94.

Chevalier Dejardin,
Consul General for France.

Herewith, dear Consul Dejardin, I beg to send you for the Tunis-Regency seeds of ten kinds of rare Eucalyptus, freshly collected, enough to raise many thousand trees. The species, now sent, will likely be new to Tunis. I have added good germinable seeds of three species of Bamboos. Other seeds will follow as gradually they will mature in the different parts of Australia. Additional supplies of Atriplex Salt-Bushes-seeds can be furnished, should the Tunis-Regency find, that the quantity, kindly forwarded by you some weeks ago, is not sufficient for the camel-, sheep- and goat-pastures there.

Reverently your
Ferd. von Mueller.

It was Mons. Paul Bourde² who asked for seeds in Tunis

¹ Annotated: "rép. 26".

² Director of Agriculture for Tunisia, at whose initiative the Jardin d'essais at Tunis had been founded.



95.05.17

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

17/5/95

Since some time, dear Consul Dejardin, I intended to send you some more seeds for the Regency of Tunis, but very little did arrive from the various distant localities, at which the particular kinds of seeds were to be collected. But as I offered Sub-Captain Castellan of the Messageries maritimes to procure seeds of the famous *Melaleuca Leucadendron* for Tamatave,² and as some of these seeds have arrived, it seems best that I should despatch them to you, altho' I have very little else to offer. This *Melaleuca* will grow in muddy Mangrove-shores and other somewhat *saline* places, where no *Eucalyptus* could be reared, and is one of the best *antimalarian* trees. More seeds of this sort can be procured gradually, but it grows not in Victoria.

Among the few seeds added are those of the *Eucalyptus incrassata*, the best "Mallee" tree for oil-distillation, and one that would suit for the Sahara and other African deserts, affording fuel and wood for small buildings. Separately these seeds are sent now also. I have also to provide in addition to former sendings seeds for the Russian Government, represented now by yourself. These particular seeds are to be for saline pastures, miasmatic swamps in the Crimea and other [...] places. It may be however some time, before some thing can be ready for Russia.

By the "Australien" last month I forwarded some very rare minerals to the galleries of the Musée d'histoire naturelle, and I will always endeavour to enrich French science establishments to the best of my ability.

With respectful remembrance your

Ferd. von Mueller

I was elected into Alph de Candolles⁴ place at the Ural Nat. Science Society, Katharinenburg⁵ and some other Societies⁶

¹ Annotated: "Répondu le 17 juin [...]".

² Tamatave, on the east coast of the island of Madagascar, was occupied by the French in December 1894 during the first phase of their military conquest of the island.

³ *Illegible.*

⁴ Alphonse de Candolle (1806–1893), the famous Swiss botanist and phytogeographer.

⁵ Uralian Society of Natural Science, Ekaterinburg (Uralskoye obshchestvo estestvoznaniya).

⁶ This postscript is written on a specimen label of the Phytologic Museum of Melbourne.



95.06.15

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

S. Yarra, 15/6/95

Herewith, dear Chevalier Dejardin, I beg to offer some more fresh seeds of *Eucalyptus incrassata* for Tunis. Among them is the seed of *Eucalyptus incrassata* in sufficient quantity for trial culture in many parts of sandy deserts, where it would like in the hottest and driest regions of Central Australia resist the greatest of heat and dryness.

E. incrassata would provide fire wood very soon, but its chief value exists in affording the *best Eucalyptus Oil* by distillation. It can also be used as an antimalarian plant.

With respectful remembrance your

Ferd. von Mueller.

¹ Annotated: "rép. le 17 transmis le 17".



95.08.03

To Léon Dejourdan

3/8/95

The last french mail, dear Consul Lejourdan, brought me a generous communication from the Institut de France,¹ and I have to fill some forms sent to me. Would you be with your usual obliging kindness give me the names of the administrating personal or let me have the loan of a recent printed records, in which details of Office-Bearers of the Institut are contained, if you have such documents or publications at the Consular office.

Very respectfully your
Ferd. von Mueller

A severe attack of Bronchial Catarrh prevented me to be at the dejeuner on board of the Armand Behie,² to which I was kindly invited. I sent a letter of excuse to the gallant Captain.³ Also sent a present of Dicksonia and Todea ferntrees to General Dodds the Captain and for the bot. Garden of Marseilles (Professor Heckel).⁴ To the General I paid also special homage by forwarding a copy of the volume on "Select plants"⁵ to Naumea.⁶

I hope, soon to have more fresh seeds for France and Russia; this time from a very distant interior locality.

¹ Letter not found. Mueller had been elected a corresponding member of the Académie des Sciences of the Institut de France, Paris.

² *Armand Behie*, a French mail steamship, arrived at Melbourne on 29 July 1895 from Sydney *en route* for Marseilles. The commander was A. Poydenot and on board was General Dodds, "who having concluded his inspection of the forces at Noumea on behalf of the French Government is now returning home" (*Argus*, 30 July 1895, p. 4).

³ Letter not found.

⁴ Edouard Heckel (1843–1916) was professor of botany and founder and director of the Botanic Garden at Marseilles from 1877.

⁵ Mueller, *Select Extra-Tropical Plants* [...].

⁶ Noumea.



95.08.05

To Léon Dejardin

5/8/95

Best thanks, dear Chevalier Dejardin for sending the two pages, on which the information is given, concerning the Institut.¹ Altho' I had last year from Prof Chatin² (you saw Prof Chatin's letter last year)³ the official information of my election, there seems to have been a technical obstacle as in the place of Alphonse de Candolle his son Casimir, illustrious also since many years was elected.⁴ Prof Duchartre⁵ (who died since as an octogenarian) wrote me,⁶ that there was no vacancy on the list of corresponding Members, 6 like the 6 ordinary Members for Botany. (The names of the Correspond. Members of the Institut are not given in your Almanac.) The six were Prof Pringsheim in Berlin, Count Saporta, Sir Jos Hooker, Dr Masters, Dr Treub (Java).⁷ Of these this year Prof Pringsheim died, and I received a telegram from Prof Cornu a month ago⁸ that I *was* elected in his place, and by the last french mail the formal letter from the Institut signed by the two permanent secretaries, Bertrand and Berthelot, I learn that I was elected *unanimously*.⁹

Count Saporta died also this year, and in his place as corresponding Member was elected Prof Sachs of Würzburg who holds one of the highest position for physiologic Botany.¹⁰ I feel deeply indebted to the French Savants.

With regardful remembrance
your Ferd. von Mueller.

Would it be possible for you without much trouble to obtain the newest record of the present Status of the Institut? My friend, Sir Rich Owen, Prof Helmholtz¹¹ and some others are also *dead* since the print submitted by you, was issued.

¹ Letter not found.

² Gaspard-Adolphe Chatin (1813–1901), French plant anatomist.

³ Letter not found.

⁴ Mueller's information here is incorrect. There was no vacancy for a new corresponding member in the Botany section of the Académie in 1894. While Alphonse de Candolle had once been a corresponding member of the Académie, he had in 1874 been advanced to the rank of *associé étranger*, one of only eight allowed for in the statutes of the Académie. Following his death in 1893, he was replaced as an *associé étranger* by the mineralogist and polar explorer, Baron Erik Nordenskiöld. Casimir de Candolle was never a member of the Académie.

⁵ Pierre-Etienne-Simon Duchartre (1811–1894), French botanist.

⁶ Letter not found.

⁷ Once again, Mueller's information is incorrect. The Botany section of the Académie had positions for not six but ten corresponding members. Several places were customarily allocated to botanists from other parts of France; leading international figures filled the remainder. Nathanael Pringsheim, professor of botany at the University of Berlin, died in late 1894 and Mueller was elected as his replacement on 1 July 1895. At the time of Pringsheim's death, the other corresponding members of the Botany section were: Jakob Georg Agardh (1813–1901), Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817–1911), Maxwell Tylden Masters (1833–1907), Melchior Treub (1851–1910), and five botanists from provincial France: Dominique Clos (1821–1908), François-Cyrille Grand'Eury (1839–1917), Alexis Millardet (1838–1902), the marquis Gaston Saporta (1823–95) and Simon Sirodot (1825–1903).

⁸ Letter not found. The physicist Marie-Alfred Cornu (1843–1901) was Vice-President of the Académie des Sciences in 1895.

⁹ Letter not found. The Académie had two *secrétaires perpétuels*. At this period they were the mathematician Joseph-Louis-François Bertrand (1822–1900) and the chemist Pierre-Eugène-Marcelin Berthelot (1827–1907).

¹⁰ Again Mueller's information is incorrect. After Saporta died in January 1895, he was replaced by Ferdinand Cohn (1828–1898), professor of botany at Breslau. Julius von Sachs (1832–1897), professor of botany at Würzburg from 1868, was never elected to the Académie.

¹¹ Both Richard Owen (1802–1892), British comparative anatomist, and Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894), German physicist, had been an *associé étranger* of the Académie.



95.09.25

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

25/9/95

Allow me to ask, dear Chevalier Dejardin, whether it could be arranged, that I can send to the jardin des plantes or to the Musée d'histoire naturelle by the Ville de la Ciotat and also by the Polynésien in each instance a case (not very large) to Paris. I have no one on board of these two ships, with whom I am so closely befriended, that I merely have to send my box on board, but by the Armand Behie subsequently I can send a case under Lieut. Castellan and later on by the Australien through the doctor. So far as I can see beforehand I shall have a sending by all 4 ships to Paris in their next voyages, unless in one instance the case will be for Marseille only. I would watch each month for the arrival of the French Mail steamer here on her return voyage and send the respective cases direct on board, if one of the Officers, perhaps the Doctor will see in Marseille, that these valuable sendings are landed and brought to the Railway, and a letter or telegram simultaneously be sent to Paris, so that the authorities in the great French Metropolis can at once send for the goods.

As no bills of lading would be forthcoming, it would be necessary that special arrangements be made for the safe arrival of any of these boxes at their final destination.

If, with your usual kindness, you can aid the arrangements and can obtain permission for these sendings I shall be greatly beholden to you.

With regardful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller

¹ Annotated: "Répondu le 26".



95.09.28

To Léon Dejardin

28/9/95

Accept my best thanks, dear Chevalier Dejardin, for the interest you evince in my intended sendings to the Musée d'Histoire naturelle. The boxes will be rather large and heavy, and therefore freight-good, so that I would send them straight on board, if the Doctor or some other Officer would see that they are transshipped at Marseille safely. As this would be so simple a duty, I would hardly venture to solicit for it the aid of the Office of his Excellency the Minister of foreign affairs. Perhaps difficulties may exist also as regards the freight, altho' the Musée d'Histoire naturelle seems to have made arrangements with the Messageries maritimes concerning transits. In that case, these heavy cases could probably be allowed to be sent merely by me on board, but I have on the next 2 steamers no friend among the Officers as Mons Ailland in the "Australien".

With regardful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller



95.09.30

To Léon Dejardin

Midnight, 30/9/95

It was very kind of you, dear Chev Dejardin to offer your friendly influence for the passage of my case of the dwarf Grasstree (*Xanthorrhoea minor*) to the jardin des plantes.

The case arrived this afternoon; so I thought to send it at once straight on the same cart to Port Melbourne, where the Captain of the Messageries maritimes kindly took it. Thus it will be in Paris before severe frosts commence.

I hope, the Capt. of next months steamer will take a case of minerals to the Musée d'histoire naturelle also. Thanking you for all your friendliness

your Ferd. von Mueller



95.10.17

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

17/10/95

I have a *most valuable* collection of Minerals and Algs ready in a good sized box for the great Musée d'histoire naturelle of Paris, dear Chevalier Dejardin, and would like to send it by the Polynesian, as I shall have an other case getting ready by the Armand Behie. If the gallant Captain of the Polynesian will do me the same favor, as the Commander of the "Ville de la Ciotat", I shall be very thankful, as I would not like to trust the case away unless under some superior surveillance, no bill of lading being obtainable. If however you experience difficulty in kindly arranging this for me, with your usual friendliness, then I must send *two* cases by the Steamer of the Messageries maritimes lines, leaving early in December, trusting to the attentiveness of Lieut. Castellan.

With regardful and grateful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller

I should like to send General Dodds² a lithographed portrait with inscription. Would this distinguished warrior likely accept it as a souvenir from me?

¹ Annotated: "rép. 19".

² Cf. 95.08.03.



95.11.01

To Léon Dejardin

1/11/95.

Finally I found, dear Chevalier Dejardin, that I could not very well get the case for the "Polynesian" ready, concerning which you kindly spoke to the acting Captain. So two cases will be sent by the next French Mail-Steamer for the Musée d'histoire naturelle.

With respectful and grateful remembrance your
Ferd. von Mueller.



95.11.07

*To Léon Dejardin*¹

7/11/95

Allow me, dear Chev Dejardin, to send you herewith the print of a short speech I made in memory of the great Pasteur.² A[s]³ Patron of the Field-Naturalists Club I offered my tribut, but it would only before a larger Union that a long oration could be made. Reverently your
Ferd. von Mueller

I beg also to send fresh seeds of *rare* sorts of Eucalyptus-Seeds for the French Colonies, all the seeds belong to *valuable* species for sanitary purposes and for timber and fuel.

I have also some Euc. seeds for the trans-caucasian provinces and shall soon have some more sorts. I suppose, they can be sent to the Crimea and Turkestan through the Imper. Russ. Consulate.

¹ Annotated: "Répondu le 11 Transmis le 20".

² F. Mueller, "Louis Pasteur", *Victorian Naturalist*, 12, 1895, pp. 74-75.

³ Editorial addition.