

Between Two Malacologists: The Suter – Dautzenberg Correspondence

Klem Ryan – NZSGB & RPSNZ Member

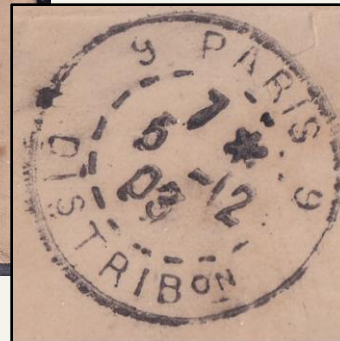


Synprosymma suilla (Bavay & Dautzenberg, 1909) – *Te Papa*

1903 cover: Auckland - Paris

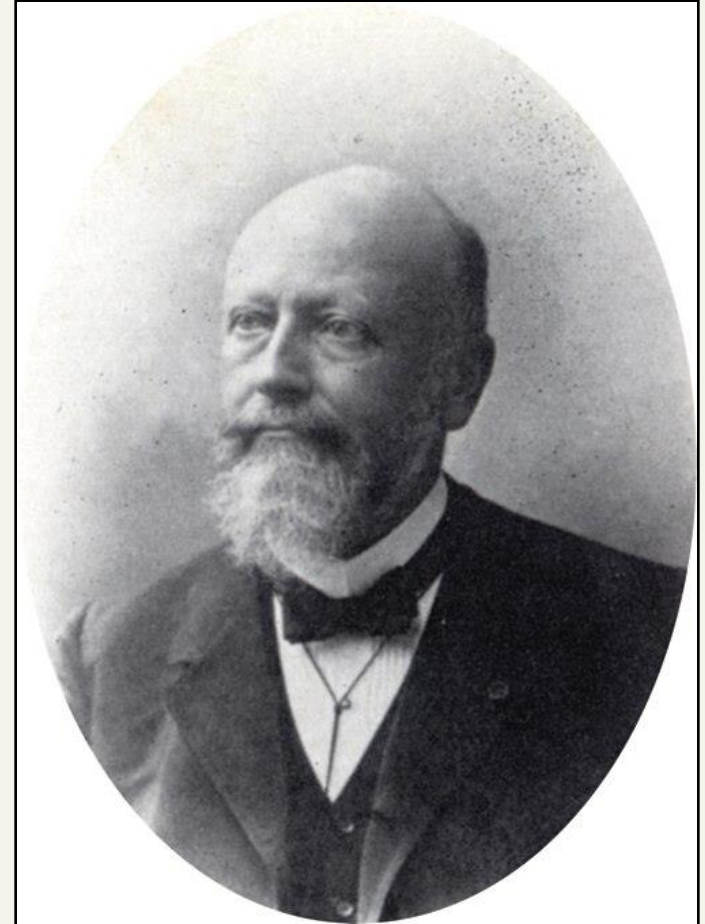


- Cancelled at **Auckland, 26 OC 03**
- '**C class**' date stamp, then **recently introduced in New Zealand**
- Franking - 7½d, **triple the letter rate** from NZ to France - 2½d per half ounce.
- The 6d 'Red Kiwi' is scarce on cover.
- Arrived in Paris, 5 December 1903 - 40 transit.

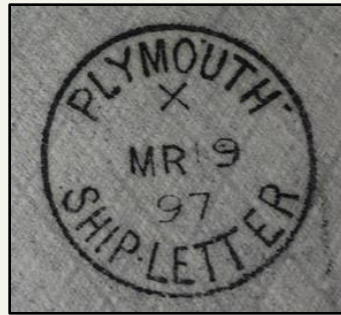


Philippe Dautzenberg

- Born in Ixelles, Brussels, on 20 December 1849, and died in Paris on 9 May 1935.
- **Malacologist** - amateur and largely self-taught
- Collected **4.5 million shell specimens**, a large portion of the collection now held by the *Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences* (RBINS).
- Published **210 works in malacology**, described 1,895 new taxa,
- Participated in the scientific surveys of Prince Albert I of Monaco, and served as president of the *Société zoologique de France*.



1897 cover: Christchurch - Paris



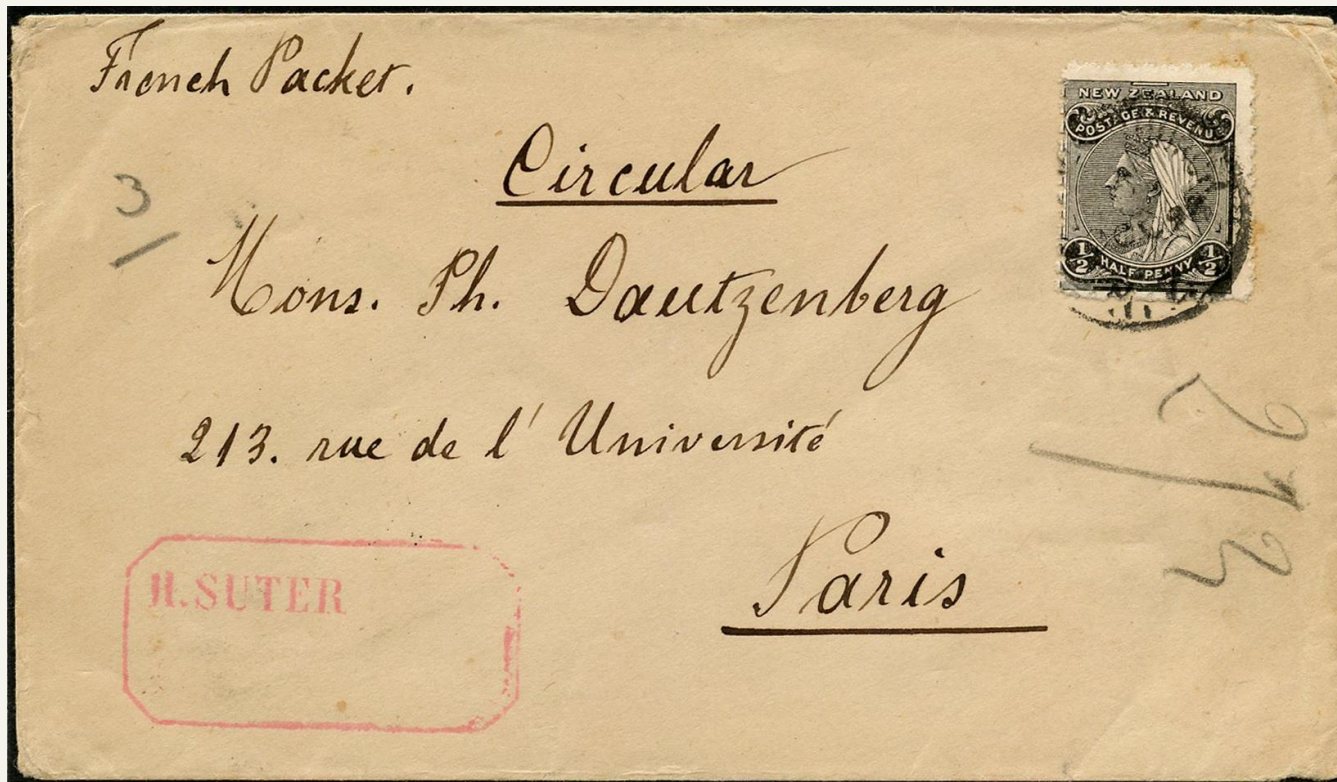
- Single 2½d Blue Second Sideface, paying the single-rate letter to France
- Cancelled with a Christchurch circular ‘G class’ date stamp on **3 February 1897**, sender **H. Suter**
- Carried on the White Star–Shaw, Savill & Albion line aboard the **SS Ionic**, on the “**Two Capes**” route, likely via Rio de Janeiro and Tenerife
- Arrival at Plymouth on 19 March, and Paris a day later — a voyage of 44 days.
- Plymouth “**SHIP LETTER**” mark denotes **non-contract mail**.

Henry Suter



- **Henry Suter** – born Hans Heinrich Suter in Riesbach, Zurich, in 1841
- Son of a prosperous silk manufacturer; **trained as an analytical chemist**
- Emigrated with his family to New Zealand in January 1887.
- Unsuccessfully farmed in the Wairarapa before returning to scientific work focused on New Zealand molluscs.
- **Author of *Manual of the New Zealand Mollusca* (1913)** a 1,120-page work, that described 1,079 species.
- It remains the single most important publication on New Zealand molluscs and **a foundational work in New Zealand natural history.**

1896 cover: Christchurch - Paris



- Cancelled at **Christchurch 20 OC 96**, backstamped Wellington 21 OC 96 and Auckland 24 OC 96.
- Franked at the ½d printed matter rate with a Second Sideface ½d Black. endorsed “French Packet”.
- Route unknown
- **Likely contained an academic offprint or article.**

1897 Customs Declaration Label



- NZ P.O. customs declaration label sent by Suter bearing franking of 5s 11d, cancelled at Christchurch on 3 February 1897,
- Sent the same day as the letter on slide 4.
- Contents - “Natural History Specimens (Shells)” weighing 4lb 4oz, with a declared value of £5.
- Supporting evidence indicates that Dautzenberg was the addressee.
- One of only three Second Sideface era items known with franking of 5/- or higher.

Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences



- Breure (2015) study of the Dautzenberg archives at RBINS identified a **handwritten letter from Suter sent from Christchurch on 6 July 1898.**
- Breure (2016) reconstructed Dautzenberg's broader scientific correspondence network, identifying **476 active contacts across five decades**
- **Oceania represented just 2% of network**, with Suter the only known NZer
- The Suter–Dautzenberg correspondence **documents New Zealand's place in the early international scientific network.**

Summary of correspondence

No.	Date	Origin	Item	Key features	Current location
1	c. 20 Oct 1896	Christchurch	Cover	½d Second Sideface; printed matter rate; ‘G class’ c.d.s.; endorsed “French Packet”; Suter red name stamp	Paul Wreglesworth
2	3 Feb 1897	Christchurch	Cover	2½d Second Sideface; single letter rate; ‘G class’ c.d.s.; carried <i>SS Ionic</i> ; “SHIP LETTER” mark, Plymouth	Author’s collection
3	3 Feb 1897	Christchurch	Customs declaration label	5s 11d (seven Second Sideface definitives); ‘A class’ c.d.s.; contents: shells, 4 lb 4 oz; declared value £5	Paul Wreglesworth
4	6 Jul 1898	Christchurch	Letter	Handwritten; Dautzenberg autograph collection, ref. C:802	RBINS, Brussels
5	26 Oct 1903	Auckland	Cover	7½d (triple rate); ‘C class’ c.d.s.; Paris receiving stamp 5 Dec 1903	Author’s collection

Request to members

Further Suter–Dautzenberg correspondence, likely extending up to at least 1913, almost certainly survives in New Zealand and other collections. **Collectors who hold covers or parcel documents addressed to or from Philippe Dautzenberg or Henry Suter are invited to contact me**

email@klemryan.net



PLATE 10.

- Fig. 1. *Lepidolites Cheloni*, Suter. 2.2×3 mm. p. 179.
 Fig. 2. *Lepidolites Strobili*, Suter. 2.2×3 mm. p. 184.
 Figs. 3, 3a, 3b. *Lanana Maydunki*, Suter. $.55 \times .25$ mm. p. 703.
 Figs. 4, a, b. *Lanana unguinata*, Hutton. $.57 \times .25$ mm. p. 733.
 Figs. 5, 5a, 5b. *Euchelonic Rotundus*, Suter. $.4 \times .2$ mm. p. 724.
 Figs. 6, a, b. *Euchelonic titicacensis*, Suter. $.37 \times .17$ mm. p. 709.
 Fig. 7. 7a. *Lanana elegans*, Suter. $.2 \times .15$ mm. p. 734.
 Figs. 8, a, b. *Lanana lucida*, Suter. $.3 \times .2$ mm. p. 729.
 Figs. 9, a, b. *Lanana spinulosa*, Suter. $.32 \times .2$ mm. p. 737.
 Figs. 10, a, b. *Lanana Mullendorff*, Suter. $.25 \times .15$ mm. p. 755.
 Figs. 11, 11a, 11b. *Lanana Beaudouini*, Suter. $.25 \times .12$ mm. p. 753.
 Figs. 12, a, 12, b, c. *Lanana acicula*, Hutton. $.35 \times .23$ mm. p. 735.
 Figs. 13, a, 13b. *Lanana Chicomani*, Suter. $.15 \times .3$ mm. p. 743.
 Fig. 14. *Lanana ciliata*, Suter. $.17 \times .2$ mm. p. 733.
 Figs. 15, 15a, 15b. *Euchelonic superciliosus munitingo*, Suter. $.32 \times .17$ mm. p. 702.

PLATE 10.



Thank you