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GIF-SUR-YVETTE (SEINE-ET-OISE)

TÉL. : 136 A GIF

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June 8, 1957

Prof. J. Lederberg
Department of Medical Genetics
Genetics Building
Madison 6, Wisconsin
U.S.A.

Dear Josh,

I received yesterday your letter of June 3 and want, first of all, to congratulate you with the new appointment and, second, to wish you the most brilliant success in the new undertaking. I am happy to know that your universally recognized merits have been consecrated by entrusting you with a position of authority which is often thought of, in the academic world, as one which takes a man nearest to the exercise of free will. I leave it to your own experience to find out whether this is an illusion !

I cannot answer as yet the question whether B-26 still retains the cytoplasmic units. In the past the strain B-26 kept them over a period of several years, but the fact that the proportion of cells carrying it constantly declined prevented the important study of the properties of "segregational petites" and of the role of the recessive carried by B-26. We now have this gene in a well marked chromosome. This gives us the possibility of applying the prototroph technique for the study of the proportion of cells carrying the cytoplasmic particles and of the conditions which favor their maintenance or loss. This is a study which I am definitely planning, especially because Hydras are proving to be disappointing in several ways. My feeling today is that I may soon return to yeast and the petite problem, which still seems to me to contain a few potentially important secrets.

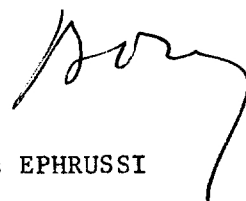
Concerning Wright, I hardly know what to say. There are no french sources which can supply the required funds. What about the Damon Runyon Fund ? They were interested in our yeast work and I had a grant from them a few years ago. The grant was not renewed for a second year, but this was due, I feel, to some "political" incident.

.../...

I am, of course, very much interested in Wright's final write-up. Could you ask him to send me a carbon copy when his thesis is written.

I know nothing about what you call the "Royaumont-Stockholm cycle", but I had on another ground some hope of seeing you here in the spring 1958. As you know, Pontecorvo, Catcheside, Westergaard and I have some funds from the Rockefeller Foundation for the organization of a few genetics Conferences: the one in Glasgow was organized with these means. I have now been asked by the above friends to organize the next symposium. It's subject will be "Extrachromosomal heredity" and I have scheduled it tentatively for March 31 - April 3, 1958. Our funds are very modest and we can afford only the transportation of Europeans or of Americans who happen to be in Europe. However, the participation of some 5 or 6 Americans in the planned Conference appears to me so important that I have asked the US Navy for help in the form of transportation on their planes. The decision is now up to Washington. The list I submitted to them has your name on it. I hope my request will be answered favorably, but I learned a few days ago from Pontecorvo that you are organizing a meeting at a date close to the one I have selected and I wonder whether you would be able to attend in case the Navy offers the transportation (Incidentally I will appreciate keeping all this confidential).

Sincerely yours, *as ever*



Boris EPHRUSSI