



Albert Camus

The Raymond Gay-Crosier  
Albert Camus Collection

## Albert Camus Special Collection

### Presentation by Raymond Gay-Crosier

#### 1. A Short History

When I joined the University of Florida faculty in 1967 as a specialist in 20th-century French literature, my task beyond teaching and research was to help upgrade the general library collection in this field. Since the works of Albert Camus had caught my early scholarly interest, I also began to collect items related to this author that could not be displayed in the library's research collection. Some of them were gifts by colleagues such as Germaine Brée's two volumes of Camus's 1938 and 1941 typescripts with handwritten corrections of his play *Caligula* published in 1944. Others included items I found over the more than four decades of activities on this campus. Prime examples would be Camus's unpublished 87 letters to Lucette Maeurer and Yvonne Ducailar, two of Camus's lady friends and theatrical collaborators of the 1930s. Three international conferences that I organized on this campus in 1970, 1980 and, with the cooperation of Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi, in Cerisy-la Salle (France) in 1982, and numerous papers delivered throughout my career at professional meetings became the foundation of many productive and lasting contacts. Some of them helped me with the identification and future location of collectible items. In the early 1980s, with the arrival of Sidney Ives as the first Chair of the Department of Special Collections, I began depositing the most important Camusiana as they could be gathered. Since then, their number and quality gradually having reached a level that qualified them as an autonomous collection, the library staff offered me the opportunity to sort and catalog the materials comprised of a host of seemingly disjointed single pieces.

#### 2. Purpose, Methodology and Organization of the Catalog

To facilitate the use of the highly diverse materials assembled structuring the catalog thematically and, when applicable, chronologically was in my opinion the best way to facilitate the general public's access. Additionally, since the



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anticipated heaviest use has been, and will continue to be, by scholars interested in highly targeted information, particular attention was paid to short descriptive snippets that should facilitate the rapid selection of a particular item. To address the needs of the diverse readership of this collection it had to be both user- and research-friendly. Thus properly categorizing its contents became the first task. My decision was to sequence the categories in terms of

their respective thematic priorities and adopt, when possible and within each section, a chronological order. For easy location of sources and their destination, documents provided by the Centre Albert Camus in Aix-en-Provence always carry their call numbers within brackets and all texts reprised in the four volumes of the *Œuvres complètes* indicate within parentheses their page numbers.

Careful sorting of the very diverse collection yielded five discrete categories:

- I. [Manuscripts, Typescripts, First Editions, Early Documents \(see I.1 - I.7\)](#)
- II. [Correspondences and Related Items \(II.1 - II.10.2\)](#)
- III. [Miscellaneous Documents and Texts \(III.1 - III.2.57.1\)](#)
- IV. [Audio Items \(IV.1 - IV.5\)](#)
- V. [Miscellaneous Addenda \(V.1 - V.15\)](#)
- VI. [Documents Added After February 15, 2015 \(VI.1 - VI.9\)](#)

### **I. Manuscripts, Typescripts and First Editions**

The aforementioned two typescripts of the 1938 (I.1) and 1941 (I.2) versions of *Caligula*, with handwritten corrections by Camus, are among the noteworthy documents featured. At the end of her career, the eminent French scholar Germaine Brée gave me both volumes as a personal gift. Because of their importance as original sources of Camus's editing techniques, rather than keeping them to myself I decided to add them to the University library's special collection. While each volume is hard bound, the brittleness of the paper makes it necessary for readers to use gloves. A set of photocopies of the hardbound oversized original manuscript of *L'Homme révolté* (I.5.1) from Harvard University's Houghton Library offers not only a complete intermediate version of this important and highly controversial second philosophical essay but also a much more complete insight into Camus's method of correction as well as an impressive aperçu of his often difficult-to-decipher handwriting.



The 8 X 11 sized photocopies are actually a reconstruction based on a microfilm of the much bigger original. In the genesis of *L'Homme révolté* this intermediate version precedes the Char manuscript (I.5.4), so called because the author gave it to his close friend, the eminent poet René Char. Rather than a manuscript proper it is actually a combination of an off-print of an article that Camus used for the initial section followed by a lengthy, still heavily annotated typescript covering the rest of the essay. The Char manuscript also was the base for the final text published in 1951. Finally, several rare first editions, some being donations, some having been acquired over many years, complete this section. While non-circulating, they can be consulted in the reading room of the Department of Special Collections.

## II. Correspondences and Related Items

The initial contact with Françoise Maeurer, the first of the two correspondents of the late 1930s, was made with the help of Germaine Brée who provided me with the married name (Lucille O'Neill) and the then current address of the letters' recipient. The history of their acquisition can be traced through an extensive exchange of communications between Germaine Brée, Lucille O'Neill and myself in the section "Contextualizing items" (II.2). For easy consultation photocopies of the 45 handwritten letters (II.1) by Camus are individually plastic-wrapped with a short material description. In the course of my lengthy interaction with Lucille O'Neill, she provided me with the coordinates of Yvonne Ducailar (married name Yvonne Fischer) who lived in Bayreuth. Her epistolary contacts with Camus lasted from the late 1930s to 1942. Initially, she intended to follow the gesture of her friend L. O'Neill and leave us with the 42 original letters. As my correspondence with her shows (see "Contextualizing items" pertaining to her, II.6), she changed her mind and sent us a set of photocopies, which can also be consulted in individually plastic-wrapped sheets (II.5.). Both correspondences with Lucette Maeurer and with Yvonne Ducailar only contain Camus's letters. Those written by the two women have either been lost or could not be found.

The third unpublished correspondence features photocopies of 31 autographed letters (II.8) to Nicola Chiaromonte (1905-1972) whose originals are held by Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library which kindly provided me with the set. They document a long-lasting friendship based on shared values. A decidedly antifascist literary and political critic, Chiaromonte was a member of André Malraux's small republican flight squadron during the Spanish Civil War. The acquaintance and friendship began in Algeria in 1941 when Camus facilitated Chiaromonte's passage as a war refugee to the United States. He became a principal collaborator of *Partisan Review* until his return to Italy in 1947 where he co-founded *Tempo presente*. When Camus visited the U.S. in 1946, he was greeted by his Italian friend who had published in *The New Republic* a favorable review of the English translation of *L'Étranger*. As co-founder, with Sidney Hooks, Nabokov, Mary MacCarty and others of the Euro-American Groups, Chiaromonte deeply shared with Camus a strong opposition to any kind of totalitarianism. Later he assisted Camus at the time of the creation of the Groupes de Liaison Internationale.

Consultants of this epistolary collection will have to follow The Beinecke Library's quite specific guidelines presented among the peripheral items (II.9).

The addressee of the fourth unpublished correspondence is Anne Cornaly, an actress who was at the beginning of her career and who played a minor role as Mucius's wife in a 1957 production of *Caligula*. The

messages are of various length and comprise five letters and five white cards dated between March 1957 and April 1958, one telegram (January 1958) and two postcards (June 1958). In this correspondence, which covers two years (1957-1958), Camus uses a tone of formality ("vous" form) mixed with gentle complicity, and also a tone of encouragement when Anne Cornaly fails to succeed on stage and has to leave temporarily the world of theater. She would return to acting five years later, by which time she had also started a career in cinema.

This correspondence was purchased at an auction, on July 6, 2006, held at the Hôtel Druot in Paris. It is the property of Professor Vincent Grégoire (Berry College, Georgia) who kindly allowed a copy to be deposited in the Special Collections of the University of Florida Library.

Duplicates of all documents mentioned above have also been made available to the Centre Albert Camus, Bibliothèque Méjanès, Cité du Livre, Aix-en-Provence, which houses the vast majority of manuscripts and documents related to the author: <http://www.citedulivre-aix.com>.

### **III. Miscellaneous Documents and Texts**

This section features mainly photocopies of partial manuscripts that I used in my preparation of the Pléiade edition of the *Œuvres complètes* such as the *Carnets* (III.2.10 - III.2.25) and the complete set of the typescript of *L'Impromptu des philosophes* (III.2.9). The University of Florida library owes special gratitude to Catherine Camus, the author's daughter and executrix of his literary legacy, who gave her permission for their inclusion in this collection. Their reproduction in general is prohibited. These documents exhibit visually the sources for the edition of many texts published in the four volumes of the *Œuvres complètes* and range from copies of original manuscripts to typescripts many of which edited by the author in his own handwriting. They also allow the reader to recognize text variations that have not been retained in the Pléiade edition. For easier navigation, some documents are assembled under various subtitles such as "Miscellaneous manuscripts and typescripts by Pléiade volume" (III.2.26 - III.2.50) or "*L'Homme révolté*" (III.2.51 - III.2.51.8) and "Polemic around *L'Homme révolté*" (III.2.52.1 - III.2.52.6). Of particular interest is the archival copy of the FBI Report filed by J. Edgar Hooper on August 13, 1946 on Camus's visit to the United States (V.8).

### **IV. Audio Items**

Two rediscovered original 78 RPM discs of an unpublished 1952 interview of Albert Camus with Jacqueline Franck, a reporter for Radiodiffusion et Télévision Françaises, and its surrounding material open this section. Its core is composed of three records, transferred on three CDs, of Camus's readings from his works. A CD recording the German version of "*Les Silences de Paris*", "*Paris schweigt*", a 1949 radio play by Camus, provides an idea of the special sound effects this play requires. Its first publication occurred in volume III of the *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, Gallimard, Pléiade series, 2008, p. 1153 - 1168.

### **V. Miscellaneous Addenda**

Beyond a host of conference announcements, posters and photographs, section V presents 27 letters by key correspondents who assisted me in my work between 1964 and 2014: 6 letters by Francine Camus, Albert Camus's wife (V.1), 7 letters by Roger Quilliot, the editor of the 1962 and 1965 first Pléiade edition in two volumes (V.2), 1 letter by Robert Gallimard, the former director of Gallimard's Pléiade series (V.3), 13 letters by Catherine Camus, the daughter and executrix of Camus's literary legacy (V.4). Also included in this section are the numbers 3-69 of the first *Bulletin d'information* (January 1984 - October 2003), the organ of the

Société des Études Camusiennes / Camus Studies Association. Starting in 2010, members receive the informational parts of the *Bulletin* as a quarterly under the new title *Chronique*. As of the same date, the Society continues to publish major critical articles in *Présence d'Albert Camus* (University of Florida call number PQ2605.A3734 Z45845), the Association's official research periodical.

#### **VI. Documents Added After February 15, 2015**

In 2014, the auction house Drouot put up for sale unpublished correspondence of 89 letters written by Camus to Blanche Balain. Brissonneau, the agent for the sale, placed transcripts of all letters and photocopies of several originals on the Internet to entice potential buyers. Catherine Camus sued both the agent and the auction house for copyright infringement and lost. During her appeal, Ramond Gay-Crosier provided testimony that the letters had significant literary value. The Tribunal d'Appel of Paris reversed the original decision in 2015. This testimony, copies of both judgments, and correspondence between Gay-Crosier and Catherine Camus are included in Section VI.

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