

THE VALÉRY COLLECTION FOR THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA¹

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The State Library of Victoria recently acquired a significant collection of Paul Valéry's books previously belonging to the late Judith Robinson-Valéry, who was a leading international figure in the study of French literature and the first woman professor in Australia to head a university department. In 1963, aged 29, she was appointed Foundation Professor of French and Head of the School of Western European Languages at the University of New South Wales. Her 1963 publication *L'Analyse de l'esprit dans les Cahiers de Valéry* was so highly regarded in France that she was invited to edit an annotated two-volume edition of Valéry's *Cahiers* for the Pléiade collection, published in 1972 and 1974.

In 1974 Judith Robinson resigned from the University of New South Wales and went to live in Paris where she met and married Claude Valéry, the son of Paul Valéry. She was subsequently Research Director at the French National Research Centre (CNRS). When she eventually returned to Australia in 2001 she brought with her the collection of books that Claude had inherited from his father.

Des Cowley, Manager of Rare Printed Collections at the State Library of Victoria, writes that the collection is 'remarkable' because it comprises Valéry's own copies of his books ('some 75 works') and 'a range of books and journals containing contributions by him, and a number of biographical and critical works about him'.

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¹ See also *Explorations*, 36, June 2005, pp. 3-12, 'A Tribute to Judith Robinson-Valéry' by Alastair Hurst, and *State Library of Victoria News*, 48.