

IVAN PAGE

1938–2012

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The sudden and unexpected death of Father Ivan Jones Page, M.Afr., on 7 September 2012, deprived Australia of a notable scholar, who contributed greatly to bibliographical knowledge in all fields and particularly enriched our access to the texts previously visible only to visitors to the Archives and Library of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome.

This obituary tribute does not seek to provide a full account of his life and work—that will be written by others—but it concentrates on Ivan's achievements in bringing France and its culture to Australia. A brief chronology, however, does give a picture of a man with an extraordinarily varied life.

Ivan Page was born in Scone, New South Wales, on 17 February 1938, moving with his family to Sale, Victoria, in 1948 and Melbourne four years later. He attended St Kevin's College, Toorak, and obtained his BA at the University of Melbourne, majoring in French in 1957, and worked in the Department of Defence. In 1964 he moved to Canberra and began training for his distinguished career in librarianship. At the time, dozens of new

recruits to the greatly expanding National Library of Australia—including myself in 1965—moved between various departments of the Library while studying part-time for the Registration examination of the Library Association of Australia (now the Australian Library and Information Association). Ivan worked in Cataloguing and Reference and in 1968 was appointed as the first Keeper of Rare Books, a position that enabled him to indulge his talent and passion for bibliography, notably in French materials. In 1971 he gave lectures in historical bibliography at the Canberra College of Advanced Education (now the University of Canberra) and in 1972 published his first paper on the subject, ‘An English piracy’ (*Bulletin of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand*).

The following year saw the publication of his two most substantial bibliographical works, the Supplement to ‘Cameron and Carroll’ and his *French plays, 1701-1840 in the National Library of Australia*.

In 1975 Ivan was appointed Liaison Librarian for Europe of the National Library of Australia, a position based in Australia House in London, which necessitated a good deal of travel on the Continent to represent the Library, as well as work in England connected with relations with other libraries and negotiating the acquisition of collections and notable items on behalf of the Library.

During his four years in London he spent much of his leave in Africa, and, shortly after his return to Australia in 1979, resigned his position and announced his decision to join the Missionaries of Africa. This signalled another period of intimate connection with France and her former colonies as Ivan studied in Toulouse and Fribourg before his ordination in Canberra in 1986 and posting to the diocese of Kaya in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta). There, as well as having ample opportunity to use his excellent French, Ivan came to grips with the local language, Mossi (Mòoré). Sadly, in 1990, an accident on the motor bike presented by his friends on his ordination left him with a badly injured arm, which necessitated trips to Australia and France for treatment.

It was during October 1991 that the University of Melbourne, to which I had moved after my time at the National Library, benefitted most significantly from Ivan’s presence in Paris. The University Library had authorised me to go to France and spend a significant amount of money building its already impressive French collections. During my stay in Paris I was able to make use

of Ivan's considerable expertise in building the collections of the University of Melbourne Library, trawling shops for everything from 18th century books and pamphlets to recent exhibition catalogues. We were undeterred by the financial crash that occurred at the start of my week in France, which meant that we had no way of estimating what the final bill for our selections would amount to, since the accounts would not be paid until the books reached Australia!

Ivan returned joyfully to Burkina Faso, but although he loved the work and the people, it was evident that his health might not long withstand the difficult conditions and, on the death of the incumbent archivist in 1996, he was recalled to Rome and placed in charge of the Library and Archives of the Order. It was there, over the next twelve years, that he produced work of greatest interest to francophone scholars, as he translated and edited numerous texts. A bibliography of his work accompanies this tribute and it reflects his continuing interest in both printing history and the missionary endeavour. The works published after 1996 are highly specialised but all the more valuable for that.

As research in Australia on missionary activity in the Pacific grows, it is not perhaps fanciful to believe that scholarly interest will also turn to such work in Africa, and that Ivan Page, Australian scholar, will have greatly contributed to our understanding of it.

Ivan 'retired' to Bendigo in 2008 where he continued a busy life of ministry and scholarship, continuing to speak and publish on bibliographical matters.

Ivan Page was also a notable benefactor of the University of Melbourne Library. Among his many gifts were several 18th century French texts, including the 1702 edition of Denis Vairasse d'Allais's *Histoire des Sevarambes : peuples qui habitent une partie du troisième continent, communément appelé la Terre Australe: contenant une relation du gouvernement, des mœurs, de la religion, & du langage de cette nation, inconnuë jusques à present aux peuples de l'Europe.*

The University of Melbourne

PUBLICATIONS BY IVAN PAGE

Books

Short title catalogue of books printed in the British Isles, the British colonies and the United States of America and of English books printed elsewhere: 1701–1800, held in the libraries of the Australian Capital Territory, edited by William J. Cameron and Diana J. Carroll, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1966–70. Supplement by Ivan Page, 1970.

French plays, 1701–1840 in the National Library of Australia: a bibliography, edited by Ivan Page, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1973.

Report on the *Conference on the Benefits and Costs of Information Services*, organised by the Institute of Information Scientists, Northern Branch, 22–23 April 1976. Canberra, Policy Secretariat, National Library of Australia, 1976.

Eighteenth century French drama, 1700–1830: a collection of 1,018 original plays, C. C. Kohler, antiquarian bookseller, with introduction by Ivan Page, Dorking, C.C. Kohler, 1980.

Histoire de la Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique : les sources écrites internes à la société, Jean-Claude Ceillier et Ivan Page, Rome, Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique, 2004.

Sainte-Anne de Jérusalem : historique et conditions de la fondation, version officielle de Mgr Lavigerie publiée et annotée par Ivan Page, Rome, Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique, 2004.

St Anne's at Jerusalem: historical account of its founding, official version by Archbishop Lavigerie, published with notes by Ivan Page, [...] Rome, Society of Missionaries of Africa, 2004.

As it was in the beginning: recollections of the missionary labours of Father Louis Jamet, M.Afr. (1849–1919), Louis Jamet freely translated with notes by Ivan Page, Rome, Society of Missionaries of Africa, 2005.

Comme il était au commencement : notes et souvenirs du Père Louis Jamet (1849–1919), publiés et annotés par Ivan Page, Rome, Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique, 2005.

Bishop Anatole-Joseph Toulotte: member of the first community of St Anne's in Jerusalem successor of Cardinal Lavigerie as Vicar Apostolic of the Sahara-Soudan 1852–1907, Jean-Claude Ceillier translated by Ivan Page, Rome, Society of Missionaries of Africa, 2006.

Apprendre la langue pour répandre la Parole. Le travail linguistique des Missionnaires d'Afrique, Rome, Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique, 2007.

Learn the language to spread the Word: the linguistic work of the Missionaries of Africa, Rome, Society of Missionaries of Africa, 2007.

The beginning of the White Fathers' mission in Southern Uganda and the organization of the catechumenate, 1879–1914, Marinus Rooijackers translated by Ivan Page, Rome, Society of Missionaries of Africa, 2008.

The Missionaries of Africa and their printing presses, Melbourne, Ancora Press, Monash University, in conjunction with the State Library of Victoria, 2011. (Text of the annual Foxcroft Lecture on Bibliography and Book History, delivered 11 November, 2010.)

Journal Articles and Chapters in Books

'An English piracy in 1794', *Bulletin of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 1, n° 4, April 1972, pp. 72–76.

'Reporting Europe', *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, vol. 10, December 1979, pp. 237–242.

'Claude-Gilles Lecamus et sa famille, imprimeurs du clergé de Toulouse', *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, vol. 61, n° 74/75, 1992, pp. 77–101.

'Les débuts de l'Imprimerie des Missionnaires d'Afrique : le rôle du Père Albert Vidal', *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, n° 110–111, 2001, pp. 189–215.

'From the Other Side of the Counter: experiences of a librarian turned researcher', *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, vol. 34, n° 3, September 2003, pp. 177–183.

Review of Pierre-Joseph Laurent, *Les Pentecôtistes du Burkina Faso. Mariage, pouvoir et guérison*, in *Le Fait missionnaire*, vol. 15, December 2004, pp. 153–160.

'L'imprimerie des Missionnaires d'Afrique : dix années d'activité', *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, n° 128, 2007, pp. 221–277.

'Origin and Growth of the White Fathers' Press at Bukalasa, Uganda', in Robert Fraser and Mary Hammond (eds), *Books without borders: the crossnational dimension in print culture*, 2 vols, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, vol. I, pp. 107–129.

'New translation is a momentous occasion', *Sandpiper*, July 2011, p. 8.

Review of Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, in *Script and Print*, vol. 36, n° 2, 2012, pp. 55–58.

Manuscripts

Notes for a talk given on 29 July 1970 to the Society for the Study of Religion and Theology on the subject of the National Library's holdings in its field of interest and the Cross Collection in relation to the development of Patristic Studies. NLA MS 2831.

'Impressions faites pour le clergé de Toulouse, 1683–1783, transcription et analyse des factures de l'Imprimeur du Clergé conservées dans la liasse 1G 404 des Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne', Thesis (M. Theol.), Institut Catholique de Toulouse, 1986. NLA MS 2949.

'Material relating to the Ecumenical service to mark Australia Day 1988 and the ANZAC Day ceremony at Villers-Bretonneux', April 1988. NLA MS 7239.

Oral History

Ivan Menzies interviewed by Ivan Page. Recorded 16 February 1976. Summary held in the National Library of Australia. NLA ORAL TRC 508.

Interview with Katherine Grant-Watson, widow of E.L. Grant-Watson. Interviewer: Ivan Page. Recorded 30 April 1976. Transcript held in the National Library of Australia. NLA ORAL TRC 428.

Forthcoming

'Hazardous Lessons: an examination of the prohibited books in the Clergy Library at Ovada', to be published in *Censorship in the Ancien Régime*, Monash University, Ancora Press, 2013. (Texts based on papers given at a conference at the State Library of Victoria on 8 July 2010.)