

## FOUR EARLY FRENCH TEACHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY\*

BY MARGARET KERR

THE men who taught French at Sydney University in the years 1854 to 1886, as well as illustrating by their careers the problems and uncertainties of an era in modern language teaching in universities, constituted in themselves a remarkable variety of human types. They could even be given labels, such as "the scholar", "the *débrouillard*", "the confidence-man", and "the honest work-horse". Perhaps that would be somewhat unjust: their real contribution cannot be summed up so easily.

There is no doubt that most of the work done in French in these early years was of a low standard and that the teaching of this subject within a university was difficult to justify. Some such assertion as this would also apply to any British university of the period. However, repeated statements by the Sydney University authorities showed that they were well aware of the shortcomings of modern language studies in the University. They tried various changes, but none proved satisfactory. Then, early in the 80s, after hearing the news of the Challis bequest,<sup>1</sup> the Sydney University Senate decided to reorganize completely the teaching of modern languages by appointing a Professor of Modern Literature, and by combining the modern subjects English, French and German into one Department under his direction. This change was effected between the years 1887 and 1889 with the appointment of Mungo William MacCallum to the Chair, the creation of the Department of Modern Literature, and the arrival in 1889 of Dr Emil J. Trechmann, appointed Lecturer in French and German.

### RICARD

From the beginning of the University it was the intention of the authorities to establish the teaching of modern languages. A statement that "the French

\* An article based on research ancillary to that for the author's M.A. thesis, *The Teaching of French Literature at the University of Sydney, 1887-1955* (Monash University, 1972).

<sup>1</sup> A bequest of £180,000 by a Sydney merchant.

and German Languages and Literature" were to form part of the teaching of the Faculty of Arts appeared in all the early *Calendars*. It is interesting also that the Act of Incorporation placed Literature first among the fields of study which were to be the concern of the new University.<sup>2</sup>

At a meeting of the Senate on 22 August 1853, less than a year after the first University teaching had commenced in the buildings of the old Sydney College, it was proposed and carried: "That it is expedient to establish a chair of the French and German languages and literature . . ."<sup>3</sup> On 3 October the Senate decided to appoint Anselme Ricard, Ph.D. (Jena). They also resolved that he would not be entitled to a seat on the Professorial Board.<sup>4</sup> This clause is the first indication of grave hesitation on the Senate's part as to the status of the post they had created. In a letter from Ricard to the Senate dated 30 August, shortly after their first decision, Ricard applied for the position of "professor for the french [*sic*] and german [*sic*] languages and literatures, at the Sydney University".<sup>5</sup> This was perhaps in answer to a very promptly-inserted advertisement in the Press; perhaps as the result of an unofficial approach from the Senate. Yet, in the letter informing him of his appointment, the position was referred to as "Reader in the French and German languages and literature". The Senate added that he was appointed for a period of one year, and that his salary was to be £150 per annum<sup>6</sup> plus £1 from every matriculated student and £2 from every non-matriculated<sup>7</sup> student.<sup>8</sup>

After he had been at the University for almost a year, on 12 September 1854, Ricard sent a strongly-worded letter to the Hon. Sir Charles Nicholson, Provost of the University. He referred to the original terms of his appointment, and said: "I dare hope that, at the renewal of my engagement for the coming terms, the Hon. Provost and Members of the Senate may agree again

<sup>2</sup> W. Milgate, "The Language and Literature Tradition" in *One Hundred Years of the Faculty of Arts* (Sydney, 1952), p. 43. The statement is also to be found in the terms of the Select Committee of 1849. (See David S. Macmillan, "The University of Sydney—The Pattern and the Public Reaction, 1850-1870", *Australian University*, I, i, July 1963, p. 23.)

<sup>3</sup> *Votes and Proceedings of the Senate of the University of Sydney*, Vol. I, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* (No longer paginated.)

<sup>5</sup> In *Letters Received*, No. G3/82 Sydney University Archives.

<sup>6</sup> This salary was decided upon at the meeting of 22 August, when the Senate first voted in favour of establishing a "chair". Indeed the meagreness of the salary compared with those of the three founding professors in the University should perhaps be considered the first indication of an ambivalent attitude to the new position. John Woolley, the Professor of Classics, had a salary of £800 a year plus a residential allowance and a proportion of the fees. (K. J. Cable, "John Woolley: Australia's First Professor", *Arts*, V, 1968, p. 62.) The other professors may have received considerably less. Ian Westbury, "The Sydney and Melbourne Arts Courses, 1852-1861", *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 1961-2, p. 270, states that the Sydney professors received £550 less than the £1000 offered to candidates for the Melbourne chairs. £450 is nevertheless a different matter from Ricard's £150.

<sup>7</sup> Non-matriculated students were allowed to attend courses, but not to take the degree.

<sup>8</sup> *Senate of the University of Sydney. Letter Book No. G3/45.*

with [*sic*] my services, and if so, may take into consideration the exiguity, if not the insufficiency, of the above referred [*sic*] salary."<sup>9</sup>

The reply was apparently in the negative, and Ricard's resignation, dated 18 April 1855, said simply that private affairs compelled him to leave Sydney. He asked for the resignation to date from the end of Lent Term.

The circumstances of Ricard's short career at the University of Sydney seem to reveal that the authorities were in a quandary. They intended to establish modern language studies as part of University work—any idea that French and German should be taught as merely commercial or useful subjects runs completely counter to the whole spirit of the founding of the University—yet they were perhaps overcome by timidity in the absence of any clearly successful<sup>10</sup> models in the British Isles, and finally compromised by imitating Oxford and Cambridge, giving an inferior and undefined position to modern languages, excluding them from the list of examinable subjects for the B.A. degree, yet continuing their teaching within the University for the benefit of any students who were interested.

Thus Anselme Ricard taught at the University of Sydney for only one year and one term. No information is available about the course he prescribed or the examinations, if any, that he set. Yet it is possible that David Scott Mitchell, who was one of the first batch of students to pass through the University, was one of Ricard's students. Whatever the influences at work, Mitchell at some stage acquired two volumes of Baudelaire: the *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1868-9) and the 1874 edition of *Les Epaves*.<sup>11</sup> This can be taken to indicate a genuine interest in Baudelaire's work.<sup>12</sup> Mitchell also acquired many other French works now in the Mitchell Library: 17th-century editions of Ronsard and Saluste du Bartas, 18th-century editions of Crébillon and Voltaire, later editions of the works of Corneille and Racine, and much more.

<sup>9</sup> *Letters Received*.

<sup>10</sup> The three Colleges of the Queen's University of Ireland had instituted modern languages as part of the B.A. course in 1850. There was a professor in charge from the beginning—at least at the Belfast College. But this group of subjects, although never abandoned, found itself in difficulties chiefly owing to the lack of preparedness of the students. See T. W. Moody and J. C. Beckett, *Queen's, Belfast 1845-1949: The History of a University* (London, 1959), pp. 167 ff. Trinity College, Dublin, had established a Professorship of French and German as early as 1842. However, in 1865 the modern languages taught were still not part of the Bachelor course, and there was as yet no Moderatorship in these subjects. It seems unlikely that Owens College, Manchester, had a chair of modern languages in the 50s since there was none in 1886. London University listed no professor of modern languages among its examiners in the 50s. Neither Durham in England, nor the Scottish Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrew's had chairs in these subjects until after 1900.

<sup>11</sup> Wallace Kirsop, "Notes on Brennan's Reading of Baudelaire", *Studies in Honour of A. R. Chisholm*, ed. Kirsop (Melbourne, 1970), p. 203, n. 21.

<sup>12</sup> See G. D. Richardson, "David Scott Mitchell", *Descent*, I, 1961, Part Two, pp. 4-14.

Before departing finally for Europe, Ricard apparently applied for a teaching post at the University of Melbourne,<sup>13</sup> but was informed by the Council that it did not intend to include French and German in its curriculum at that time.<sup>14</sup> So Ricard continued his journey back to Europe, where he published a number of works.<sup>15</sup>

#### DUTRUC

In June 1855, after the departure of Ricard, Monsieur Pierre Ambroise<sup>16</sup> Dutruc was appointed Reader in the French language and literature at a salary of £100<sup>17</sup> per annum plus two guineas a term from every student.<sup>18</sup> At the same time or soon afterwards a Mr J. H. Scott was appointed Reader in German; but the German Readership seems to have lapsed after 1856 until 1866, when the Rev. T. Schleicher was listed in the *Calendar*.

No qualifications were given for Dutruc in the *Calendars*. Although Monsieur P. A. Dutruc's scholastic attainments remain in doubt, as a personality, and perhaps as a teacher, he was far from negligible. The spheres of his activity were many, and he published a number of works which appear to have been very successful.

The Sydney Directories of the period show that Dutruc was originally<sup>19</sup> a wine and spirit merchant, and that he returned to this occupation after his twelve and a half years at Sydney University, when the Senate had dispensed with his services.

He was appointed Chancellor of the Sardinian Consulate in Sydney in 1855, and was Consul-General for Sardinia for the years 1858-9 and 1861.

In the Directories Dutruc appeared now as "Professor of French at University" or "Professor of French" (in spite of the paragraph in the *Calendars*

<sup>13</sup> The University of Melbourne commenced teaching in 1855.

<sup>14</sup> Olive Wykes, "The Teaching of French in New South Wales and Victoria 1850-1958" (Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1958), p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> The titles of two of these give pause for thought about what Ricard might have contributed to French studies in Australia had he been encouraged to stay. As listed in the catalogues of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale they are: *Système de la quantité syllabique et de l'articulation des sons graves et des aigus, recherches orthoépiques et phonétiques sur la phonométrie et les tons de la langue française*. [Prague, G. N. Neugebauer, 1887.] *Manuel d'histoire de la littérature française depuis les origines jusqu'à la fin du XIXe siècle, à l'usage des maisons d'éducation et des aspirants au diplôme de professeurs de français*, 5<sup>e</sup> édition, revue et augmentée. [Prague, J. G. Calve, 1898.]

<sup>16</sup> The spelling of the second Christian name is uncertain. It was also written as "Amboise". (From a document on Dutruc presented to the Sydney University Archives by the National Library of Australia.)

<sup>17</sup> This already ungenerous salary was cut to £30 p.a. in 1860, and a request by Dutruc the next year for an increase was refused. See *Letter Books*.

<sup>18</sup> *Letter Book* No. G3/45.

<sup>19</sup> Of Dutruc's life before 1855 only one detail is known to me: he was at one time a resident of Glasgow. *Vide infra*.

expressly forbidding this), now, after he had left the University, as "Professor of languages". His wife also taught; in fact Dutruc and she together may have had many private pupils, even an academy.<sup>20</sup>

Dutruc's private address was in Randwick, where a street was apparently named after him.<sup>21</sup>

The following publications of Dutruc were listed by Morris Miller:<sup>22</sup>  
*Theoretical and Practical French Grammar, on a new and original plan* [Edinburgh, Black, 1844],  
*French Conversations; L'Echo de la bonne Société* [London, Allan, 1846],  
*Literary Dialogues in French and English* [n.d.],

and

*Comedies and Dramas, Part I: A Desirable Quarantine,*  
*Fame and Fortune in Twenty-four Hours, Nightingale of Plomeur* [Sydney, F. White, 1878].

The *French Grammar*<sup>23</sup> is a very solid work, comprising 303 pages of very small print and xvi pages of introductory matter. It seems to be an early attempt to be the complete text book. In his *Introductory Address to the Stereotyped Edition* Dutruc said: "the work supersedes to a very great extent the necessity of placing either a dictionary or reading book in the student's hands". The book has some excellent points, for example, a section headed *Mercantile Correspondence* (pp. 245-64), with vocabulary of terms and forms attached, where business letters, accounts, etc. are printed side by side in French and English.

Judging by the notices on three inserted leaves which follow the title page, the book was a huge success. *Tait's Magazine* called it: "The most complete Grammar of the French Language we have ever examined"; the *Glasgow Herald* said: "After a careful examination of Mons. Dutruc's Grammar, we feel bound to give it the warmest praise"; and the *Glasgow Citizen*: "We must congratulate Mons. Dutruc on his Grammar having fairly taken rank as a standard work of the first class", etc.

There are also notices about Dutruc's *Literary Recreations* which perhaps give some insight into the author's understanding of the concept "literary". It is that of a bygone age. The *Glasgow Citizen* said:

<sup>20</sup> In 1864, while Dutruc was still Reader in French at the University this listing appears in *Sands and Kenny's Commercial and General Sydney Directory*: "Dutruc, Mons. Pierre and Madame, teachers of French, 67 William Street". In 1873, when Dutruc had gone back to the wine and spirit trade, his wife is listed in *Sands* thus: "Dutruc, P., Madame, ladies' school, Avoca st., Randwick".

<sup>21</sup> The address was usually given as Avoca Street, Randwick. However, *Sands and Kenny's*, 1861, and *Sands* 1877 gave Dutruc Street (spelt "Dutrué", as was the name, in 1877). Both a Dutruc Street and a Dutruc Lane are to be found in Randwick at the present day (see *Gregory's Street Directory*).

<sup>22</sup> E. Morris Miller, *Australian Literature from its Beginnings to 1935* (M.U.P., 1940), Vol. I, p. 381 and Vol. II, p. 928.

<sup>23</sup> The following remarks apply to the copy in the State Library of Victoria.

In this little volume by our townsman, M. Dutruc, the path to a thorough knowledge of French conversation is literally strewn with flowers. It comprises 'An Evening Party in Paris', abounding in happy anecdote and graceful repartee, and introducing, for the purpose of amusement, a kind of allegorical representation of the flowers, called 'The Parterre of Flora'. In this pleasant dramatic sketch, each member of the party personates a flower, emblematic of some particular sentiment, such as love, hope, grief, modesty, and innocence; and the dialogue which ensues is often elegant, poetical, and beautiful. Two other dramatic anecdotes, 'Millevoye, or Maternal Love', and the 'Dinner of Delille'<sup>24</sup> complete the contents of the volume. . . .

For ten and a half years of Dutruc's long period at Sydney University French was not part of the degree course for the B.A., but was purely an extra, taken by those students who for some reason were interested in it. Greek, Latin, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics, and sometimes Ancient History and other subjects, were required for the B.A., but never French or German, the latter not even being taught during most of the period. It was not until 1866 that either French or German could be taken for the degree.

Thus Dutruc's term at the University consisted of two periods: a long early period where he is referred to in the *Calendars* as "Reader in French", and presumably taught elementary language (in the absence of examination papers one cannot be sure), and a very brief later period of two years, when Dutruc became in the *Calendar* the "Reader in the French Language and Literature", when literary texts were prescribed for study and examined for the degree of B.A.

From the evidence available, chiefly that of the *Calendars*, it seems that in the early period French was taught throughout the year as a two-year course for First and Second Year students.

On 27 July 1855, shortly after his appointment, Dutruc was informed in a letter from the Senate that "at a meeting of the Professorial Board held on Friday last it was resolved that the days to be devoted to lectures in French be Monday, Wednesday, & Friday from 8 A.M. to 9 A.M."<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the incentive for arriving at the University at 8 a.m. three mornings a week for an hour's French was provided by the custom, started in 1855, of giving any student who gained First Class Honours in French a prize—a

<sup>24</sup> Charles Hubert Millevoye (1782-1816) and l'Abbé Jacques Delille (1738-1813), although they achieved fame as poets in their time, are now known chiefly in connection with the history of pre-Romantic verse. Dutruc's conception of "literary recreations" and his choice of the above writers make it appear likely that his own education was along neo-classical or, in any case, pre-Romantic lines.

<sup>25</sup> *Letter Book* No. G3/45.

book stamped with the University arms—and of recording his name in the *Calendar* for posterity. The prizes appear to have been discontinued after the year 1861.

The *Calendars* gave no textbooks or other indications of the content of the French course in this early period, and no examination papers.

In 1866 change was suddenly in the air at the University of Sydney.

Early in this year the death had occurred of John Woolley, the first Professor of Classics. The Chair remained vacant for the remainder of 1866, and was filled in 1867 by Charles Badham. Both these men were outstanding in their abilities and dedication. In the first decades of the University the Professor of Classics, also known as the "Principal", had an overwhelming influence upon University affairs.

An interesting explanation for the changes that were taking place at this time was advanced by David S. Macmillan.<sup>26</sup> He showed that the founders and the Fellows of the original Senate, although handicapped by their own background of studies in unreformed British universities, and their lack of experience in university government, were in fact well aware of the changes taking place in Britain and were surprisingly open to suggestion, as was shown by their acceptance of a number of Woolley's recommendations.

Nevertheless, the University attracted very few students in its first twenty years, and by 1860 the whole fabric of society had changed, making the University appear a bastion of privilege, and the Fellows of the Senate, who had lifelong tenure, out-of-date conservatives. The result was that the Senate was constantly under attack for "exclusiveness".<sup>27</sup> In 1865 the radical press, led by J. Sheridan Moore,<sup>28</sup> redoubled their attacks, and the Senate was forced to act.

Macmillan continued: "The scope of the matriculation examination was enlarged by the addition of an alternative between French and German, and Readers in English, Political Economy and Geology and Mineralogy were appointed. To conciliate Sheridan Moore and his supporters, the concession was made that, in future, undergraduates could secure exemption from attendance at lectures. None of these 'reforms' proved successful and the enrolments remained low. By 1871 there were only about seventy students, and the Readerships in English and Political Economy had lapsed."<sup>29</sup> Macmillan did not mention that the Readerships in French and German, the former of which had been in existence almost since the inception of the University, had also been discontinued.

<sup>26</sup> Article cited.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-1. Macmillan refers (p. 31) to J. Sheridan Moore, *University Reform, Its Urgency and Reasonableness* (Sydney, 1865).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Macmillan attributed the attacks against the University to "political prejudices, social differences, and distrust of innovation", and said, "the basic causes of Sydney's slow development were in fact seldom referred to. These were the crippling lack of finance, and the absence of good secondary schools, which could supply a flow of students."<sup>30</sup>

Under the new scheme for the B.A. in 1866, the first two years of the degree course remained the same, but a number of new subjects were introduced into third year. In the By-Laws of the Faculty of Arts appeared the following outline of the new third year: "Candidates for the Degree of B.A. shall, at the commencement of their third Academic year, elect to be examined for that Degree in two or more of the following groups of subjects, viz.:—

1. Classics,—that is,—the Greek, Latin, and English, with the French or German Languages.
2. Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.
3. Chemistry and Experimental Physics, and such branches of Natural Science as may at any time be taught in the University.
4. Logic, Mental Philosophy, and the Constitutional History of England, and such branches of Political Science as may at any time be taught in the University."<sup>31</sup>

For the first time, texts were specified for French and the other modern subjects:

*English.*—The English Dramatists of the 16th Century, more especially John Lyly, Christopher Marlow [*sic*], and Ben Jonson.

*French.*—Moliere [*sic*]—"Le Tartuffe", Acts 2 and 3; Guizot—"Revolution D'Angleterre" [*sic*], Books 4 and 5.

*German.*—Fredrich [*sic*] von Schlegel's first three Lectures on Literature; Schiller's Song of the Bell.<sup>32</sup>

In 1866, then, the University of Sydney launched into the teaching of modern literature. However, the new departure was perhaps rather premature; in any case, it was destined to be short-lived.

There was no University French examination paper included in the *Calendar* until the year 1867, but in the 1866 *Calendar* there was a Matriculation and Scholarships paper. The candidates were required to translate into English the famous scene from *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* where M. Jourdain discovers that all his life he has been speaking in prose. Even in the absence of any indication of the time allowed, or of what kind of translation the examiners

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>31</sup> *Calendar*, 1866, p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v.

expected, it can be said that this is not exactly a stiff test for Matriculation students.<sup>33</sup>

The pattern of the B.A. paper in French for 1866<sup>34</sup> was exactly the same. Candidates were required to translate some fifty lines of *Le Tartuffe*. The Guizot text was not tested in this paper.

1867 was Dutruc's last year of teaching at Sydney University. In an Appendix of the *Calendar* for 1868 there is a B.A. paper in French set for his students of 1867. This paper is of a different design, requiring the conjugation of verbs, the formation of adverbs from adjectives, and the translation into French of tricky and artificial English sentences. Candidates also had to translate into English a passage from *L'Avare*, the only set text for this year, and make some remarks on the orthography and accentuation of this piece of seventeenth-century French. The Matriculation examination for the same year also showed the new concern to test an active knowledge of French grammar.

In the *Calendar* for 1868 *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* was set for study, but, since no *Calendar* was published for 1869, it is not known how this was tested.

On 6 February 1868 Hugh Kennedy, the Registrar, addressed the following letter to Dutruc:

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Senate are of opinion that the lectures in the French Language and Literature cannot be continued with any advantage by reason of the fact that but few students come to the University with sufficient knowledge of the language to enable them to derive benefit from the higher kind of instruction which should be furnished by an University course of lectures. Under these circumstances it has been determined that for the present the teaching in French should be discontinued, and that the office of Reader should remain vacant. I am instructed accordingly to notify to you that for the ensuing Academical year no appointment to that office will be made.<sup>35</sup>

Presumably the Readers in English and German received similar letters at the same time, since in the 1870 *Calendar* all three subjects had disappeared, not only from the degree course, but from the University.

Thus ended an early experiment in teaching modern literature. In the case of French it does appear to have remained at the level of the translating

<sup>33</sup> It is interesting that translation was given at this time. E. L. French, Vol. II, Chapter XI, pp. 363-6 of his thesis, "Secondary Education in the Australian Social Order" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1958), shows that in the entire period 1852-98 translation was generally considered of little importance: schoolchildren were supposed to concentrate on learning the grammar and syntax of the language, rather than gain an insight into its use.

<sup>34</sup> This is found in an Appendix of the 1867 *Calendar*.

<sup>35</sup> *Letter Book* No. G3/45.

of a set text; nevertheless it is interesting that the Senate were willing to try it at this time. The reasons for its failure were no doubt complex, but the lack of background knowledge mentioned in Kennedy's letter would probably in itself have sufficed to doom such a venture.

After this no French was taught in the University of Sydney for more than fourteen years.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY BEFORE THE CHALLIS BEQUEST

An interested observer, R. E. N. Twopeny,<sup>36</sup> painted a dismal picture of the University of Sydney at the end of this period.<sup>37</sup> He said:

. . . although the principal, Dr Badham, is a better classic than any that the Melbourne University possesses, there is an indolence and *laissez-faire* about the Sydney University which must long keep it in the background. Not until there is a thorough reformation in the whole style, tone, and management of the university will there be any real progress, and the centripetal influence of successful Melbourne is so strong, that I do not believe Sydney will ever be able to catch up lost ground, or even to considerably decrease the interval between itself and its rival, advance though it may, and undoubtedly will, when the present governing body has died out, and the public insists upon an entirely new regime.<sup>38</sup>

Twopeny went on to say that both Sydney University and the new University of Adelaide would benefit by federating with Melbourne.<sup>39</sup>

Macmillan's statement of the real causes of Sydney's stagnation needs to be kept in mind in a consideration of the above account. Melbourne had enjoyed a government endowment of £9000 p.a. from its inception, whereas Sydney over the same period had only £5000 p.a.

In 1880 Sydney University heard the news of the great Challis bequest, the funds of which it did not actually receive until 1890. Nevertheless, with the aid of an extra grant from the Government of £5000, plus £1000 already received for the employment of Assistant Lecturers, the authorities started on a plan of expansion.

The *Calendar* for 1882-3 outlined a scheme for establishing full courses in Science, Engineering, and Medicine. Students in these disciplines were to

<sup>36</sup> Twopeny, or Twopenny, according to Philip Mennell, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography* (London, 1892), p. 475, was born in England, but arrived in Melbourne in May 1876. He was secretary to the South Australian Commissions to the Paris, Sydney, and Melbourne Exhibitions of 1878, 1879 and 1880 respectively, and later held other positions of the same kind. He spent some years in New Zealand, and then settled in Melbourne. In 1879 he had been created an "Officier d'Académie".

<sup>37</sup> R. E. N. Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia* (London, 1883), pp. 143-6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>39</sup> *Loc. cit.*

do at least the first year of the Arts course. The University also planned to admit female students in the near future, and to grant degrees to them in the same way as to men.

French and German had been brought back into the Arts course, and candidates had to take one of these languages for at least two years of their course, and pass in one of them to gain their B.A.

#### THIBAULT

On 13 June 1882, Etienne Thibault was appointed Lecturer in Modern Languages by the Senate.<sup>40</sup> He was listed in the 1882-3 *Calendar* as "Docteur-es [sic]-Lettres, University of Paris". This is certainly what he claimed to be: in a letter to Sir Henry Parkes written in 1894, he signed himself "Dr. Lit. Paris. Univ."<sup>41</sup> However, it appears almost certain that he did not have this degree.<sup>42</sup> Badham, after working with him for eighteen months, recommended that he be given six months' notice;<sup>43</sup> this may have been for professional incompetence or for the faults in character so glaringly evident in an article in the *Melbourne Review*, 1881,<sup>44</sup> and in the letter to Parkes. That Badham's recommendation was not due to a change in the policy of the University seems clear from the fact that French and German continued to be taught after Thibault's departure.

As with the other early French teachers, one must deduce, mainly from the evidence of the *Calendars*, the scope and emphasis of Thibault's teaching.

The 1882-3 *Calendar* shows that the *Siècle de Louis Quatorze* was set for First Year French. This is the only text mentioned. In fact the main emphasis once more seems to have been on grammar: under *Lecture Subjects*:— *Modern Languages*, there is simply the statement: "Lectures are delivered on the subjects of Examination, including Grammar and Composition."<sup>45</sup> The examination paper consisted of two passages from the *Siècle de Louis Quatorze* (less than twenty lines in all) for translation into English, plus the conjugation of French verbs and the translation of simple English sentences into French.

If any literature at all was taught by Thibault during that year, it was certainly incidental to the programme of work revealed in the *Calendars*.

The *Calendar* for 1883-4 went into more detail about Matriculation language requirements, indicating, perhaps, that the University had already struck diffi-

<sup>40</sup> *Letter Book* 1880-4 No. G3/46/1.

<sup>41</sup> Parkes correspondence in Mitchell Library, Vol. XL, pp. 164-7.

<sup>42</sup> Thibault is not listed in M. Ath. Mourier et M. F. Deltour, *Notice sur le Doctorat ès Lettres suivi du Catalogue et de l'Analyse des thèses françaises et latines admises par les Facultés des lettres depuis 1810* (Paris, Delalain Frères, 1880). No thesis by him appears in the *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque Nationale*.

<sup>43</sup> *Minutes of the Senate*, 6 February 1884.

<sup>44</sup> *Vide infra*.

<sup>45</sup> p. 123.

culties with inadequately prepared University students. The background required of Matriculation candidates was, however, extremely elementary.<sup>46</sup>

In this year, for the first time, a timetable was included in the *Calendar* for Faculty of Arts lectures. It can be seen here that First Year French was allotted two hours a week throughout the year, and Second Year French three hours. The next year, Second Year French was cut to two hours, and Third Year French was allotted three hours.

For the second year of Thibault's teaching, 1883, no prescribed texts are given. There is simply the statement that First Year students were to study "Grammar and Syntax", and Second Years "Grammar, Syntax and Idiom".<sup>47</sup>

The examination papers show the same emphasis as the previous year. First Year seems again to have studied *Le Siècle de Louis Quatorze*. Second Year, apart from answering grammar questions, had to translate three texts into English: A. is from *Le Siècle de Louis Quatorze*; B. is a passage of seventeenth century prose, possibly from Pascal or La Rochefoucauld; C. consists of eleven lines of verse from the *Henriade* of Voltaire, Chant 10.

The set books for 1884 were: Erckmann-Chatrian: *Une Campagne en Kabylie* (First Year); Favare: *Racine*<sup>48</sup> and *l'Avare* (Second Year) and *Maître Gaspard Fix* (Third Year). The examination papers show no notable developments; literary passages continued to be set for translation: *l'Avare* for Second Year, and fifteen lines from Hugo's *A Petite Jeanne* (30 sept., 1870) for Third Year.

All the papers were very short, as Olive Wykes has remarked,<sup>49</sup> for the set time of three or three and a half hours. The standard was really very low, and, except for a slight increase in the amount to be covered in the papers, one searches in vain for any progression in the standard from First Year to Third Year.

At a meeting of the Senate on 6 February 1884: "Upon the recommendation of Dr Badham it was resolved that six months' notice be given to Dr Thibault Lecturer in Modern Languages and that his engagement with the University be then allowed to terminate."<sup>50</sup> The *Minutes* record no reason for the recommendation, and no discussion of it. Nor is there any discussion of the matter in the *Minutes* of the Professorial Board.

<sup>46</sup> p. 190: "The French required at the Matriculation will be an accurate knowledge of the first part of French Grammar, viz., Genders and Inflexions of substantives, adjectives and pronouns, the conjugation of the regular verb, and that of *avoir* and *être*; the construction of negative and interrogative sentences; and the position of the pronouns."

<sup>47</sup> *Calendar*, 1883-4, p. 220.

<sup>48</sup> There is no author of this name listed in the *Cat. Bibl. N'le*. Favart was an eighteenth-century playwright, but no work of his on Racine is listed. The name could possibly be a misprint for *l'Avare*.

<sup>49</sup> Wykes thesis, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> *Minutes of the Senate*.

However, at a meeting on Friday, 9 May, the Senate reconsidered the length of the notice:

A memorial from Dr Thibault praying for a reconsideration of the Senate's decision of February the 6th by which he was informed that the Senate wished his engagement to terminate in 6 months was considered.

Mr Macleay gave notice that he would move at the next meeting:—

1. That the teaching of French and German should not form a part of University Education.
2. That the Lectureship in Modern History should be abolished.
3. That a Chair of Modern Languages and Literature should be established as soon as possible.

It was then resolved that in view of a possible change in the system of instruction in the Department of Modern Languages, Dr Thibault be requested to continue in his office up to the 31st of December.<sup>51</sup>

This meeting reveals profound dissatisfaction with the study of modern languages in the University; but, in the event, they did continue to form part of University education in Sydney. However, from this time on the Senate appears to have kept a firm hold on the idea that the situation must be changed, and a Chair be established, until, in the years 1886-9, its purpose was accomplished with the appointment of MacCallum as Professor of Modern Literature, and of Dr Emil Trechmann as Lecturer in French and German. The teacher of French and German, Trechmann, was this time chosen from overseas, and was selected from among thirty-four candidates.<sup>52</sup>

On 12 May 1884 a letter was sent to Thibault informing him of the coming change,<sup>53</sup> and of the Senate's decision to extend (or re-extend) his appointment to the end of the current year.<sup>54</sup>

In a letter of 18 June 1884 Thibault learnt that the Senate had decided to relieve him of his German classes as from that date.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile the Senate had entered into correspondence with Dr Rudolph Max, of Sydney Grammar School, and had ascertained his willingness to take over the German classes. On 18 June 1884 Max was appointed to the combined office of Lecturer in German and Evening Lecturer in French.<sup>56</sup> Evening lectures had just begun as the result of a letter to the Press by Badham, supported by a petition from the citizens of Sydney.

<sup>51</sup> *Minutes of the Senate*.

<sup>52</sup> See *Minutes of the Senate*, 5 November 1888.

<sup>53</sup> Here the Senate is said to have decided: "to combine the teaching of English, French and German Literature, and Modern History under one Professorial Chair."

<sup>54</sup> *Letter Book*, 1880-4, No. G3/46/1.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> See letters dated 27 May and 18 June 1884 in *Letter Book* No. G3/46/2.

Thus Thibault continued until the end of 1884 to lecture to the day students in French. Further correspondence, recorded in the *Letter Book* for the year 1885, shows that Thibault wrote at least one letter of complaint to the Senate about his "dismissal", and that in March 1885 he was refused permission to set the examination papers in French.<sup>57</sup>

Shortly before his appointment to Sydney University, Thibault published, in Victorian journals, two articles on University affairs.<sup>58</sup> One of these, "Modern Languages at the Melbourne University", gives some insight into Thibault's views and attitudes as a language teacher.

A large part of the article is devoted to an attack on the Council of the University of Melbourne for their management of the proposal to create a Chair of Modern Languages. It is impossible not to see behind this an unsuccessful application by Thibault for the Chair.<sup>59</sup>

At the end of the article Thibault expounded in more detail his own aims and attitudes in language teaching. He said: "I am one of those who strongly hold that the study of modern languages in our days—but especially when made part of a liberal education and of a university course—must decidedly end in some practical result. They should be taught so that the student may be brought to speak and write them. Speaking and composition should be constantly cultivated."<sup>60</sup> The question of foreign teachers was brought up again, with Thibault saying that only a native can explain the fine shades of a language.

He went on to say that literature also should be taught by a native:

And in the German and French literature how many beauties—what a multitude of points in the life of an author, of the surroundings in which he lived, of the circumstances that determined or influenced the composition of his works, can be known to his fellow-countrymen, which will, as a rule, be unknown to a foreigner? The understanding of a great many things is received traditionally, and is not to be found in books. We can challenge any foreigner to explain as well as a native Frenchman, for instance—'Les Martyrs', by Châteaubriand [*sic*]; 'L'Esprit des Lois', by Montesquieu; the whole works of Victor Hugo or Lamartine. Will it be said that a foreigner can explain to me Dante as well as an Italian, Lessing as well as a German? To suppose so would be childish.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> See letters dated 5 January and 19 February, *Letter Book* No. G3/46/2.

<sup>58</sup> The articles are: "Modern Languages at the Melbourne University", in *The Melbourne Review*, VI, January to October, 1881, pp. 303-21, and "The University Constitution Bill", in *The Victorian Review*, III, No. XVI, February 1, 1881, pp. 505-17. Thibault was at this time a resident of Melbourne.

<sup>59</sup> Thibault becomes almost hysterical at times, and seems to believe in a conspiracy to persecute foreigners. Edward Ellis Morris, a graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford, and a former headmaster of Melbourne Grammar School, was appointed in 1884 to the Chair of English, French and German Languages and Literatures.

<sup>60</sup> p. 318.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 319-20.

This passage really needs no comment, so clear an example is it of a number of approaches to literature in vogue throughout the nineteenth century: the "beauties", the understanding received traditionally, biographical details, "influences". There is no evidence that Thibault taught literature—as such—at all at Sydney University. But had he set out to infuse some French literary culture into his students, even by way of incidental commentary on the text being translated in class, he gives a vivid idea in this passage of the approaches he would have used.

Whether he was trying to teach literature or not, Thibault was forced to leave the University, apparently very disgruntled,<sup>62</sup> at the end of 1884.

Dr Max continued as Lecturer in German. During the next twelve years he was to fill a variety of offices at the University, sometimes lecturing in French as well as German. He apparently held a degree from a foreign university which the Senate, after inquiry, found itself unable to recognize;<sup>63</sup> nevertheless, from that time on letters from the Senate are usually addressed to "R. Max Esq. L.L.D.". The last recorded letter to Max is dated 3 November 1896. He was granted leave of absence during Lent Term (1897) for reasons of health.

#### BULTEAU

In 1885 Thibault's French teaching was taken over by Monsieur A. V. A. Bulteau.<sup>64</sup> Bulteau was to be Lecturer in charge of French for two years, then, for a further period of two years, he was Assistant Lecturer in French under MacCallum. In 1890, after he had left the University, he replaced Max as Evening Lecturer in French during Lent Term.

The Bulteau family came originally from Roubaix in France. Part of the family, at any rate, apparently moved to Paris: during the Siege, when Bulteau was a child, he and his mother were allowed to leave during a three-day truce. They fled to England, where Bulteau completed his education. He came to Australia at about the age of twenty-eight.

Apparently, when he was putting his papers in order for the journey he discovered that his father, who appeared simply as "Négociant" on the son's birth certificate, had previously been a priest. The effects of this discovery can be seen to this day in the name of his grandson, Dr Volney Bulteau, of Sydney.

<sup>62</sup> Apart from the evidence of the *Letter Books* referred to above, Olive Wykes mentions a lengthy correspondence involving the Minister of Public Instruction, and lasting from 1884 to 1888, where Thibault asked that an inquiry be made into his teaching (Wykes thesis, p. 12). The source given is *Minutes of the Senate*, 4 February 1884.

<sup>63</sup> See Letter dated 8 March 1886 in *Letter Book* No. G3/46/3.

<sup>64</sup> The biographical details which follow were obtained from M. Bulteau's son, Dr A. W. J. Bulteau of Mosman, in an interview on 23/4/71. Dr A. W. J. Bulteau was a contemporary of A. R. Chisholm at Sydney University. They tied with equal first place in French at the end of their course. Dr Bulteau told me that he regrets not having asked his father more about his life.

Bulteau senior never entered a Catholic church again, and became a Freemason. In actual fact he loved "recueillement", and would go into any church except a Catholic one to sit and meditate if not to pray. The custom of the "prière de famille" was kept up in his own home, and the family (minus Bulteau *père*) had to go to church (not Catholic, of course) every Sunday.

His son described him as very un-French, or, in any case, distinctly "rangé". He was very quiet, reserved and controlled, and appeared to have no sense of humour, except that Molière appealed to him. He was, according to his son, "a pedant", in the sense that he was completely immersed in his work.

He read a great deal and had a large library. He was very keen on the great Romantics, particularly Hugo, on whom he lectured to a local organization, and he called his son Alfred, after Musset. Every week he received a copy of one of the French literary reviews,<sup>65</sup> many piles of which had somehow to be disposed of after his death. He was also interested in German.

The story of his tragic death in 1910 seems typical of the man. After he left Sydney University he taught at various schools, including The King's School, Newington College, and the Burwood Ladies' College. He also taught for many years at the Sydney School of Arts, where he had classes two nights a week. He lived at Gordon, and would take the Milson's Point ferry across the harbour. He spent the ferry trip correcting papers. One night a gust of wind blew some of his papers over the side, and in his efforts to save them he himself went over and was drowned. He was fifty-three years old.

Before MacCallum's arrival in Sydney, in February 1887, Bulteau had done much to diversify the course and raise the standard. He achieved this mainly through the Honours work; Honours courses in each year were instituted in 1886.

A small number of texts was set for study by all students, with additional work for Honours. In 1886 all First Year students read "Oeuvres de P. L. Courier" and Molière's *l'Avare* and *le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; Second Year read Fontenelle: *la Pluralité des Mondes* and Corneille: *Horace*; Third Year read Montesquieu: *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains*, Molière: *les Femmes Savantes*, and Racine: *Iphigénie*.<sup>66</sup> It is noticeable that there was emphasis on seventeenth-century work in every year; there was not yet a historical division of the course according to centuries, with a particular year concentrating on one century. This was perhaps adumbrated, however, in the course for Third Year Honours.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> This may have been the *Revue politique et littéraire* (or the *Revue bleue*, as it was called for a time), founded in 1863. Other possibilities, although none of them appeared weekly, are perhaps the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1828), the *Revue blanche* (1889) and the *Mercur de France* (1890).

<sup>66</sup> *Calendar*, 1886, pp. 231-2.

<sup>67</sup> *Vide infra*.

The additions for Honours consisted of extra texts to be studied (mostly additional seventeenth-century texts), Brachet's *Historical Grammar* (in First and Second Years), translation at sight from French into English and English into French, original composition in French (for Second and Third Years), and Third Year Honours students were to read for themselves the history of seventeenth-century French literature in Saintsbury's *Short History of French Literature*. In conjunction with this they were to use the same author's *Specimens of French Literature*. They were also advised to do some extra reading in the principal authors of the period.

The greater diversity of the course (that is, for those who took Honours) can be clearly seen in a comparison of the examination papers for 1885 and for 1886. In 1885 the papers were all straight grammar-translation tests, with one or two embryonic literature questions.<sup>68</sup> But the Honours examinations for 1886, when students had to do two extra papers, contained, as well as much translation and historical grammar, numbers of context and more general literature questions. For instance, Paper I for Third Year Honours abounded in more general literary questions:

IX. Tell what you know of the following men, *La Rochefoucauld*, *Per-rault*, *Voiture*; and of the following books, *Astrée*, *Le menteur*, *Lettres Provinciales*.

X. How did the style of Des Cartes [*sic*] influence French prose?

XI. Define the word *caractère* as a species of literary composition. Sketch any of those by La Bruyère.

XII. Describe any one of the chief *Oraisons Funèbres* of Bossuet. How do they escape the change [*sic*] of being mere panegyrics?<sup>69</sup>

The papers of 1886 were very long for three hours, in marked contrast to Thibault's examinations.

Thus Bulteau had begun to teach literature in earnest. The course had more variety, and the standard had been raised. MacCallum, however, during his first year at the University, found that these processes had not gone far enough. In the Report which he submitted to the Professorial Board at the beginning of 1888<sup>70</sup> he said that although the standard had risen since 1884, the rise had been very gradual, whereas drastic change was required. He said: "At present, the work done in modern subjects, from matriculation to the end

<sup>68</sup> These occurred in Second and Third Year. For instance, students were asked first to translate part of the "prose" scene in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, then: "Who are the speakers in the above passage? Give a brief sketch of the plot." Third Year students were asked to name the *Dramatis Personae* of *le Cid*, and were then given a number of passages, which they had first to translate, then to explain in terms of the action of the play. (See *Calendar*, 1886, Appendix.)

<sup>69</sup> *Calendar*, 1887, Appendix, p. lxxxvii.

<sup>70</sup> See *Minutes of the Professorial Board*, 19 March 1888.

of the course, is trivial compared to what a University student should do, and in the other departments actually does."<sup>71</sup>

With MacCallum's arrival, then, a new era was to begin in modern language teaching at Sydney University.

The careers of the early French teachers, Ricard, Dutruc, Thibault and Bulteau, illustrate the problems of a long period of modern language teaching, when its standing was as uncertain as its aims, and the practical difficulties facing it seemed almost insuperable. Other countries had already attempted (or were still to attempt) to overcome these problems in their own way and in their own time; at the University of Sydney it fell to MacCallum's lot to reorganize the teaching of modern languages on the pattern of the best overseas models he knew. He then devoted himself to the teaching of English, and delegated the French and German studies to the Lecturer in charge. Thus the future of French teaching in the University was to be determined by these men, E. J. Trechmann and then G. G. Nicholson.

<sup>71</sup> Loc. cit.