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Guide to the Agnes E. Meyer Collection of Paul Claudel

GEN MSS 456



by Karen M. Spicher

February 2000

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 456

CREATOR: Meyer, Agnes E., 1887-1970 , collector

TITLE: Agnes E. Meyer collection of Paul Claudel

DATES: 1897-1957

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.42 linear feet (4 boxes) + 1 portfolio

LANGUAGE: French

SUMMARY: Chiefly ALS written by Claudel to Meyer and writings by Claudel, including a holograph of the second version of his play *La ville*, poems, and religious writings. Also present are two photographs of Claudel, a small amount of letters to Meyer from other correspondents, printed material, and clippings. Letters from Claudel concern his friendship with Meyer, their discussions about religion and Claudel's ardent Catholicism, and his writing and travels. Many letters discuss Catholic doctrine and Claudel's beliefs at length, urging Meyer's conversion to Catholicism and addressing her questions about religion, including five letters later published in his *Positions et propositions* (1934). Letters also discuss production of his dramatic works, collaboration with Darius Milhaud and Arthur Honegger, his views on the United States, his experiences in France during the Second World War, and family news. Other correspondence includes single letters from Milhaud and from Paul Petit, a few letters from Claudel's daughter Reine Claudel and his illegitimate daughter Louise Vetch, and a letter and printed pamphlet from L. Droüart de Lézey, concerning the Léproserie de Kōyama, Japan. Also present are holograph notes regarding *La ville* and holograph poems written for Meyer; additional poems are enclosed with Claudel's letters.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.meyercla>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.meyercla>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box

f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gifts of Agnes E. Meyer and her children, ca. 1960-1972.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Portfolio, folder 43 :Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Use

The Agnes E. Meyer Collection of Paul Claudel is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Agnes E. Meyer Collection of Paul Claudel. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

AGNES ELIZABETH ERNST MEYER (1887-1970) AND PAUL CLAUDEL (1868-1955)

Agnes Elizabeth Ernst, journalist, author, and lecturer, was born in New York City. In 1910 she married Eugene Meyer, a financier who purchased *The Washington Post* in 1933. The Meyers lived in Mount Kisco, New York, and Washington, D.C., where Agnes Meyer was active in government service and social reform.

Meyer met the French writer and diplomat Paul Claudel in Washington, D.C., early in his term as ambassador to the United States, 1927-1933. They began a friendship and correspondence which continued after Claudel's return to Europe in 1933 and lasted until his death in 1955. Meyer discussed her relationship with Claudel in her autobiography *Out of These Roots* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953).

Scope and Contents

The Agnes E. Meyer Collection of Paul Claudel consists of correspondence, writings by Claudel, and a small amount of printed material, clippings, and photographs. The collection documents Claudel's friendship with Meyer, their discussions about religion and Claudel's ardent Catholicism, and Meyer's interest in his philosophy and writing.

The collection is housed in two boxes, two oversize boxes, and one portfolio and is organized into three series: *Letters to Agnes E. Meyer*, *Writings by Paul Claudel*, and *Other Papers*. The portfolio contains Restricted Fragile materials.

[Series I, *Letters to Agnes E. Meyer*](#), consists of two subseries, each arranged chronologically: Letters From Paul Claudel and Letters From Other Correspondents. Letters from Claudel concern his friendship with Meyer, his religious thought, and his writing and travels. Most letters were written in 1929-1933,

with a concentration during 1929-1930, when Claudel wrote frequent letters urging Meyer's conversion to Catholicism and addressing her questions about religion. Many of these letters discuss Catholic doctrine and Claudel's beliefs at length, including five letters, 1929 Dec-1930 Apr, which were published by Claudel as "Cinq lettres à Madame A. E. M." in his *Positions et propositions* (1934). Claudel also discusses production of his *Christophe Colomb*, *The Satin Slipper*, *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, and other dramatic works, collaboration with Darius Milhaud and Arthur Honegger, and other literary matters. Some letters include holograph poems written by Claudel for Meyer, of which many were written in honor of the feast day of Saint Agnes. Other enclosures include a typescript of a speech given by Claudel at the opening of the Rodin Museum, Philadelphia, 1929, and part of a proof of *The Satin Slipper*, with holograph corrections, 1931. Letters also discuss Claudel's views of the United States, his experiences in France during the Second World War, and family news, particularly regarding Meyer's and Claudel's children. A few letters are accompanied by notes written by Meyer regarding their contents or by typed transcripts. Also present is a copy of a single letter from Meyer to Claudel, carbon typescript, 1939.

Letters From Other Correspondents includes a few letters from Claudel's daughter Reine Claudel and from his illegitimate daughter Louise Vetch, discussing her relationship with Claudel and her mother Rose Vetch, a single letter from Darius Milhaud concerning the production of *Christophe Colomb*, and a single letter from Paul Petit. Also present is a letter from L. Droüart de Lézey, a missionary to leprosy patients in Japan, enclosing a printed pamphlet about the Léproserie de Koyama, to which Claudel and Meyer gave support.

[Series II, Writings by Paul Claudel](#), includes a holograph of the second version of his play *La ville*, [1897-1900], bound in a volume and accompanied by holograph notes written for Meyer about the play. The volume also contains several holograph poems. Also present in this series are additional holograph poems written for Meyer and a few published and manuscript writings on religious subjects. Other poems and religious writings are present in Claudel's letters.

[Series III, Other Papers](#), consists of a printed pamphlet containing a speech made by Claudel at Georgetown University, with holograph corrections; two photographs of Claudel; clippings relating to him; a copy of an essay written by G. K. Chesterton, typescript; and a printed pamphlet containing a lecture given by Chesterton at College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Collection Contents

Series I: Letters to Agnes E. Meyer, 1928-1954

0.63 linear feet (1.5 boxes)

LETTERS FROM PAUL CLAUDEL

| | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | Letters | 1928 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | Letters | 1929 Jan-Apr |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Letters | 1929 May-Jun |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Letters | 1929 Jul |
| b. 1, f. 5 | Letters Includes an enclosed letter from an unidentified correspondent, possibly to AEM | 1929 Aug |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Letters | 1929 Sep-Nov |
| b. 1, f. 7 | Letters | 1929 Dec |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Letters | 1930 Jan-Feb |
| b. 1, f. 9 | Letters | 1930 Apr-Jun |
| b. 1, f. 10 | Letters Includes an enclosed letter from Louise Vetch to PC See also: Oversize, box 4, folder 48 | 1930 Jul-Aug |
| b. 1, f. 11 | Letters Includes an enclosed wood carving of a cross | 1930 Sep-Dec |
| b. 1, f. 12 | Letters Includes postcards showing PC and patients of the Léproserie de Koyama, Japan | 1931 |
| b. 1, f. 13 | Letters | 1932 |
| b. 1, f. 14 | Letters Includes an enclosed note from Sir Winston Churchill to AEM | 1933 |
| b. 2, f. 15-16 | Letters | [1928-33?] |
| b. 2, f. 17 | Letters | 1934-36 |
| b. 2, f. 18 | Letters | 1937-39 |
| b. 2, f. 19 | Letters | 1940-42 |
| b. 2, f. 20 | Letters See also: Oversize, Box 4, folder 49 | 1944-49 |

LETTERS FROM PAUL CLAUDEL (continued)

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| b. 2, f. 21 | Letters Includes an enclosed photograph of a drawing of PC in an unidentified hand | 1950-54 |
| b. 2, f. 22 | Letters | n.d. |
| LETTERS FROM OTHER CORRESPONDENTS | | |
| b. 2, f. 23 | Claudel, Reine | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 24 | Drouart de Lézey, L. With <i>Koyama Leper Hospital</i> (1928), printed pamphlet | 1929 Jan 23 |
| b. 2, f. 25 | Meyer, Ruth | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 26 | Milhaud, Darius | 1930 Sep 11 |
| b. 2, f. 27 | Petit, Paul | 1929 Sep 10 |
| b. 2, f. 28 | Vetch, Louise | 1950-51 |
| b. 2, f. 29 | ----, [René?] | n.d. |

Series II: Writings by Paul Claudel, 1897-1950

0.1 linear feet (.25 box)

| | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| | "A Madame A. E. M.," poem, holograph, signed Stored in: Oversize, box 4, folder 50 | 1931 Dec 25 |
| b. 2, f. 30 | "A Madame A. E. Meyer," poem, holograph, signed | 1932 Dec 24 |
| b. 2, f. 31 | "After Chinese Patterns," poems, holograph, signed With a typed transcript | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 32 | <i>Deux apôtres...Image saintes de Bohême</i> ([Paris]: Rivière), no. 43 of an edition of 150 | 1911 |
| b. 2, f. 33 | "Farewell!," poem, holograph, signed | 1937 Jun 11 |
| | Inscription to AEM, holograph, signed Stored in: Oversize, box 4, folder 51 | 1950 Nov 20 |
| b. 2, f. 34 | <i>Le jardin aride: parabole</i> (Paris: [Nouvelle revue française]) | 1934 |
| b. 2, f. 35 | <i>Non impediatis musicam</i> (S.l.: Éditions du Cerf), offprint, inscribed to AEM | 1936 |
| b. 2, f. 36 | "Sainte Agnès," poem, holograph | 1932 Jan 21 |
| b. 2, f. 37 | "Sainte Agnès," poem, holograph | 1938 Jan 21 |
| b. 2, f. 38 | "The Speech-Tree Ballad," poem, holograph, signed | 1929 Sep 11 |
| | "La ville," play, second version, holograph, in bound volume, with notes written for AEM Stored in: Oversize, box 3, folder 47 | [1897-1900] |
| b. 2, f. 39 | "Le voleur volé," typescript | 1928 Nov |
| b. 2, f. 40 | "Les XV mystères du rosaire," holograph With brief holograph notes | n.d. |

Series III: Other Papers, 1930-1957*0.1 linear feet (.25 box)*

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| b. 2, f. 41 | Chesterton, G. K. "'The Twelve Men' from Tremendous Trifles," typed transcript | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 42 | <i>Chestertoniana: Mr. Chesterton at Holy Cross</i> (Worcester, Mass.), no. 110 of an edition of 200 | 1930 |
| b. 2, f. 43 | Clippings | 1930-57, n.d. |
| | <i>Le Figaro littéraire</i> . "Numéro spécial sur Paul Claudel" Stored in: Oversize, box 4, folder 52 | 1955 Mar 5 |
| b. 2, f. 44 | Georgetown University. <i>Founders Day</i> , printed pamphlet containing a speech by Claudel, with holograph corrections | 1930 |
| b. 2, f. 45 | Two reproductions of a photograph of PC made by Edward Steichen and inscribed to AM | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 46 | Photograph of PC made by Yeghi Art Studio, mounted print | n.d. |

Oversize*2.59 linear feet (2 boxes)*

| | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| b. 3, f. 47 | "La ville," second version (in Series II) | [1897-1900] |
| b. 4, f. 48 | Letter from PC to AEM (in Series I) | 1930 Jul 14 |
| b. 4, f. 49 | Letter from PC to AEM (in Series I) | 1946 Sep 20 |
| b. 4, f. 50 | "A Madame A. E. M." (in Series II) | 1931 Dec 25 |
| b. 4, f. 51 | Inscription to AEM (in Series II) | 1950 Nov 20 |
| b. 4, f. 52 | <i>Le Figaro littéraire</i> . "Numéro spécial sur Paul Claudel" (in Series III) | 1955 Mar 5 |

Restricted Fragile

(1 portfolio)

Box 2 Portfolio folder 43: Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

b. Port, folder 53 Box 2, folder 43

Box 2 Portfolio folder 43: Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Authors, French -- 20th Century --
Correspondence
Missions to leprosy patients -- Japan

Genres / Formats

Photographic prints

Names

Claudé, Paul, 1868-1955
Claudel, Paul, 1868-1955 (Positions et
propositions)
Claudel, Paul, 1868-1955 (Ville)
Claudel, Paul, 1868-1955 -- Religion
Claudel, Reine
Honegger, Arthur, 1892-1955
Lézéy, L. Droüart de
Meyer, Agnes E., 1887-1970
Milhaud, Darius, 1892-1974
Petit, Paul, 1914-1981
Vetch, Louise

Corporate Bodies

Catholic Church (Apologetic works)
Léproserie de Kōhama

Contributors

Meyer, Agnes E., 1887-1970 , collector
Claudel, Paul, 1868-1955