

Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century France

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By

Jeffrey Merrick

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in memory of

John Eastburn Boswell (1947-1994)

Dorothy Moser Medlin (1931-2011)

Eugene Franklin Rice (1924-2008)

Michael David Sibalís (1949-2019)

Jack Undank (1928-2020)

and

for my husband Steven Douglas Atkinson,
who has endured my obsessive interest in another place and time
for more than thirty-eight years

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PREFACE

When I taught French history, nobody assumed I am French. When I taught LGBT history, everyone assumed I am gay. I am, but I did not know it or at least did not see it and say it for a long time, not until the age of thirty. These recollections and ruminations about my experience as a gay man in academics might interest some readers of this volume. For the record, I graduated from high school just weeks before the Stonewall riots, which *The Meadville Tribune* did not report. I received my B.A. from Princeton and my Ph.D. from Yale, both not far by bus or train and subway from Greenwich Village, which I frequented later.

During my years in graduate school at Yale (1973-79), I worked as a teaching assistant with John Boswell, who published his controversial book on homosexuality in the Middle Ages in 1980.¹ A male student in one of my discussion sections asked how old the professor was and if he was married. Another male student responded, “Why, are you interested?” Call me clueless, but I did not know what to make of this exchange because I did not know that Jeb, as his friends called him, was gay. My fellow TA enlightened me. Many years later, not long before his untimely death from AIDS at the age of forty-seven, we visited Jeb in the apartment on York Street he shared with his longtime partner.

During my three-year terminal appointment as an Assistant Professor at Yale (1979-82), I taught courses in History and in the interdisciplinary History, Arts, and Letters program, in which I learned as much from colleagues in other departments as our students did. In spring 1981, I had a conversation with an HAL major turned History major, not about his senior thesis but about his coming out to his difficult family. I told him I did not know much about such things but had gay friends who could help him more than I could. “But I came to talk to you because I thought you are. I are what? Gay. Me? No!” After he left my office, I called Jeb and told him that a student had just told me that he thought I was gay. After a short pause he

¹ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), evaluated in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

asked, “Well, aren’t you?” It took me a few weeks to recognize and acknowledge the fact that I had admired and indeed desired males since adolescence. I did not like “Gunsmoke” or “Rawhide,” but I enjoyed watching handsome Robert Conrad in “The Wild Wild West.”

Thanks to a Morse Fellowship for junior faculty, I spent fall 1981 in Paris, where I knew no one, met no one, and lost myself in my work. In spring 1982, I told my parents (my father, unlike my mother, was surprised and displeased), siblings, and friends what I had figured out about myself. One of Jeb’s friends, whom I remembered from lunching and dining at Stevenson Hall, informed me that my roommate in 1971-72 had hosted the first meeting of LGBT students at Princeton during spring break. After this revelation I recalled the day when I returned to our room unexpectedly because an indisposed professor had cancelled class. When I put my key in the lock, my roommate slammed the door and asked me to come back later. While I waited at the bottom of the staircase, an attractive young man rushed down, by, and out into the cold.

Before I moved from Fountain Street in New Haven, I placed a personal ad in the *New York Review of Books* (incipit “endangered academic”). My future husband Steve, a librarian at SUNY-Albany, answered it, and we exchanged letters for several months. After I moved to Tenth Street in Hoboken, we met in Grand Central Station. We took the subway uptown to the Cloisters, downtown to “Little Shop of Horrors,” and the rest, as they say, is history. Our marriage certificate, issued in Ripley, believe it or not, is dated 23 May 2014, a year before the Supreme Court decided *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

During my years at Barnard College (1982-89), I taught a seminar on LGBT history and got to know Eugene Rice, who taught a lecture course on the same subject across the street at Columbia. Given the modest number of books and articles in print at the time, it did not take us long to select readings. When I taught early modern Europe, I assigned excerpts, including several about sodomy, from a documentary volume on Renaissance Florence. One of my students exclaimed, “I can’t believe these cases about these sodo-mites. I mean, you know what the Bible says about that, and they didn’t even burn them.” Talk about teachable moments!

At Gene’s suggestion, I agreed to coordinate the national Committee on Lesbian and Gay History,² through which I met scholars across the country, old and young, as well as activists in cities where the annual conferences of the American Historical Association took place. I worked with allies on the Council to encourage the organization to relocate the upcoming conference

² <http://clgbthistory.org/>.

in Cincinnati after the adoption of antigay Amendment 2 there in 1993. I have never forgotten the public session in which president Thomas Holt declared that if the AHA met in Cincinnati, he would not attend.

It was my work for CLGH that eventually led me to explore same-sex relations in eighteenth-century France. I wrote my senior thesis on Denis Diderot (1713-84), who penned some bold lines about sexuality, and my dissertation on the desacralization of the monarchy, in which I mentioned sodomy and suicide in the chapter on the religious obligations of French kings. After my gradual transition from intellectual to political to social history, during my time at Barnard, I was ready to research both subjects not in the silent stacks of Firestone, Sterling, or Butler Library but in the noisy streets of pre-Revolutionary Paris.

After our third-year reviews, the three Assistant Professors in the Barnard department, hired on tenure-track lines, learned that we no longer had tenure-track jobs. I applied for many jobs over the next three years and finally got one. An Americanist and a Europeanist from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee interviewed me at the AHA, in the vast room filled with makeshift booths, a vision and version of hell on earth. When I had dinner with them in Milwaukee before my campus interview, I asked about local theater, music, and dance. When I tackled another topic the Americanist objected, "You haven't asked about sports!" Nope. Years later the Europeanist revealed that his colleague had suggested to him that "we wouldn't want to hire someone like that."

The department instructed me to discuss my projects in progress during my audition in Holton 341. I outlined my completed research on the gender politics of the beehive and my ongoing research on political and familial order and disorder under the Ancien Régime. According to one of my former colleagues I squealed with delight when I informed the faculty that the Dutch entomologist Jan Swammerdam (1637-80) discovered that the so-called king of the bees was a queen!³ She later told me that the Americanist mentioned above tried to tell her that there was something different about me by recalling, from the AHA interview, that I enjoy ballet (but not baseball). I got the job, but the institution had no spousal hiring policy at the time and treated Academic Staff employees like chattel. Steve, who left tenure behind in Albany, worked the library reference desk for an hourly wage for a few years. Even after he transformed himself and research services operations, he never had the position and salary he deserved.

³ Jeffrey Merrick, "Royal Bees: The Gender Politics of the Beehive in Early Modern Europe," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, No. 18 (1988): 7-37.

During my years at UWM (1989-2011), I chaired the task force on LGBT issues, founded the LGBT studies program, offered a lecture course on LGBT history, and received the University of Wisconsin System's award for LGBT service. The task force collected some horror stories, and the program provoked some outrage on and off campus. A colleague in another department, who had changed his stripes since the days when I took an undergraduate course from him, denounced it in the right-wing student paper. A local right-wing radio talk show host declared that it was intended to turn students gay. As French studies are intended to turn students French? The Governor reportedly called the Chancellor to ask what the hell was going on.

After tenure I served the Department, College, University, System, and professional societies in many capacities. At the same time, my involvement in first-year seminars, general education reform, writing across the curriculum, interdisciplinary studies, undergraduate research, program assessment, and teacher education completed my conversion from instruction based on "what to know" to "how to think." As far as I can tell, my tenacity and efficiency consistently trumped my identity in the minds of colleagues in Milwaukee and elsewhere. In moody moments I felt marginalized in academics not because of who I am or what I do but because I never secured a big job or published a big book. This volume and the next one, on suicide, may compensate somewhat for my modest output (many edited volumes and dozens of articles but just one monograph) over the last forty years.⁴

When I retired in 2011, after three taxing if not toxic years as Associate Dean for the Humanities, I was not sure what to do with myself, but I soon returned to eighteenth-century France, my home away from home, and to my study, also known as the article factory. For no good reason I decided and attempted to publish as many articles as I have years under my belt. I made steady progress until I received perplexing rejections from two journals in which I had published more than once. I was especially annoyed by the reader who informed me that it was my job to use evidence from the past to prove or disprove models and theories in the present. Nope. I submitted one of the articles in question to another journal, which accepted it quickly, and transformed the other into a chapter in this volume.

⁴ After many years of systematic exploration of sodomy, suicide, and separations, my three s's, I expected to produce a third volume, on marital dissension. I intended to compare the ways in which wives and husbands presented their grievances to the lieutenant general of police or neighborhood commissaires. Who took which route, with what complaints, language, and results? Given my age, as well as the expense and headaches (inevitable and interminable slowdowns and shutdowns at the AN) of research in Paris, I abandoned that project.

This book is not the blockbuster someone will produce someday, once the database under construction at Colorado College includes information about thousands of cases in several series of Parisian police records. As far as I am concerned, my job here is to tell you what I have learned about same-sex relations thus far, during more than two decades of research in the archives, without recourse to models and theories, to revise what scholars (including myself) have written about the subject, and to make more sources available in English so readers can study the texts for themselves. I have tried to understand the men who people these pages in and on their own terms, without making them sound like aliens or ancestors, and to translate their words into accurate and readable English.⁵

I have more to say about the process of inquiry, in all its complexity, than about the larger meaning of its results, but I trust that explorations of diversity in the past make some modest contribution to the struggle for social justice in the present. I completed this volume during months of confinement and contention in spring 2020 that none of us will forget. During that time the Supreme Court banned employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. When I came out, forty years ago, I never expected to see so much progress on this front in my lifetime, in the polls and through the courts, but we obviously have a very long way to go to ensure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for everyone in this country.

Retired in sunny southern Florida, without winter and without access to any sizeable academic library, I could not do my work without Gallica and other internet resources. I thank the inter-library loan offices at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for digital delivery of articles and the Lee County Library System for physical delivery of books. I also thank Eric Albrand, Benjamin Bernard, Nina Kushner, Bryant Ragan, and Stephen Shapiro for taking and sending photographs of documents in Paris.

I am profoundly grateful to friends who took time from their own work to read one or more chapters and send comments that improved this volume: Benjamin Bernard, Olivier Blanc, Joan DeJean, Lisa Graham, Julie Hardwick, Nina Kushner, Kathryn Norberg, Bryant Ragan, and Julius Ruff. Merry Wiesner-Hanks generously read the entire manuscript.

⁵ I have left titles (as well as Madame, Mademoiselle, and Monsieur), place names, some other nouns (e.g. “commissaire”), and the preposition “chez” (at the residence of) in French. I have translated “raccrocher,” used intransitively/transitively, as to cruise/pick up. I have also simplified legalistic language, for example by rendering “ledit particulier” not as said individual but as this man.

INTRODUCTION

In November 1724, the widow Bombarde and her other tenants filed a complaint against Jean Baptiste Tartarin Guyot, thirty-three, single, who occupied a room on the sixth floor of her house on rue l'Evêque.¹ After his dismissal from the Opera, the disturbed if not deranged dancer “took it into his head to write operas that lack common sense.”² The libretto of his “Bourgeois Musician” combined pastoral, classical, and exotic elements. The characters included shepherds and spirits, not to mention the king and queen of the antipodes. The distracted composer paced and sang at all hours of day and night for two whole weeks. In one of several bizarre letters drafted at this time, he complained about hostile siblings and unnamed others: “ces les Zomme enfin qui Mon a quZé démér Sodome; — ie pren dieu a tes Moin; que ce la est fos; puise la foudre — Me réduire, en Sandre; Cy ie Suy un tel Monstre.”³ In proper French, “C’est les hommes enfin qui m’ont accusé d’aimer Sodome. Je prends Dieu à témoin que cela est faux. Puisse la foudre me réduire en cendres si je suis un tel monstre.” In plain English, “They are the men, in short, who have accused me of loving Sodom. I take God as my witness that this is false. May lightning reduce me to ashes if I am such a monster.” The dossier contains no elaboration or corroboration of sexual aspersions about Guyot. Some may have accused him of “loving Sodom,” before his face or behind his back, or he may have imagined it. After all, he claimed that his neighbors moved furniture during the night in order to convince him that the building was haunted and, no doubt, to persuade him to move out. In any event, the lieutenant general of police ordered his confinement, for his own welfare and peace in the house.

As in so many cases retrieved from the archives, we do not and cannot know for sure what “really” happened, not in complete detail. No matter who said what about whom in November 1724, why might neighbors, siblings, or others accuse the talented bachelor of “loving Sodom,” or why might he believe that they did so? Because he was old enough to be married

¹ Later rue des Moulins.

² AB 10830, f. 320. This summary is based on the undated complaint, ff. 310-11, addressed to Louis Jérôme Daminois, commissaire, 1690-1759, and his report, f. 313, dated 22 November 1724.

³ AB 10830, f. 316v.

but remained single, because he was musical and eccentric, because he worked in the artistic demimonde, because he frequented suspect persons or places, because he assumed that such slander worked in the house and the streets? We know what Parisians were supposed to think about sodomy, even though clergymen rarely discussed it, in catechism, confession, or sermons, and magistrates rarely publicized it through prosecution, but what did they actually know and feel about it? Did they locate it in remote countries and centuries or in their own place and time? Did they regard it as a sin or crime that anyone might commit or as a type of misconduct that certain people or even certain sorts of people committed? What did such people think or at least say about themselves? How did they meet others like themselves? What did they do together? What risks did they run?

This volume explores some of these issues in several series in Parisian archives that document relations between the police and men they arrested for sodomy.⁴ Those who have read Michel Foucault in translation may be surprised to learn that he never characterized sodomy as “that utterly confused category.”⁵ His parenthetical words, “cette catégorie si confuse,” mean “that so confused category” or, more simply, “such a confused category.”⁶ We are not obliged to accept the French phrase, any more than the English version cited so widely and wrongly. The fact that jurists grouped masturbation, anal and oral intercourse (with men or women), and bestiality together under the umbrella of sodomy does not mean that the “category” was “confused” or that the word itself confused Guyot’s contemporaries. We may not know what “loving Sodom” meant in the mind of the discomposed composer or in the mouths of his alleged enemies, but we do know what sodomy meant, without any ambiguity, in thousands of dossiers from pre-Revolutionary Paris. More often than not, it meant mutual or (less commonly) reciprocal masturbation rather than anal or (less commonly) oral intercourse. French police records, like many other early modern sources, confute Foucault’s simplistic distinction between sodomitical acts before and sodomitical identities after the mid-nineteenth

⁴ For background on the police see Alan Williams, *The Police of Paris, 1715-1789* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Vincent Milliot, *Un Policier des Lumières, suivi de Mémoires de J. C. P. Lenoir* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 2011), and “L’Admirable police”: *Tenir Paris au siècle des Lumières* (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2016).

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 101.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 1: *La Volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 134.

century.⁷ As many scholars in several disciplines have demonstrated, the fact that men who desired men in the eighteenth century did not have modern physiological and psychological models of homosexuality at their disposal does not mean that they could not have some consciousness of sexual difference, but what sort of consciousness?

This introduction is not the place to review and assess the history of the history of same-sex relations in early modern France over the course of the twentieth century, before and after Foucault, at least not in any detail.⁸ Before the First World War a dozen pioneers, some of whom used pseudonyms, produced articles in German sexology journals as well as collections of documents extracted from the Archives of the Bastille and anecdotes extracted from nouvelles (collections of news and gossip) and libelles (libelous publications). After the Second World War the homophile journal *Arcadie* included many relevant essays, mostly about writers, artists, rulers, and other notables. Claude Courouve published several documentary pamphlets in French before David Coward published the first significant article in English.⁹ Marie Jo Bonnet's landmark but jumbled volume on women appeared in 1981, and Maurice Lever's synthetic but prosaic book on men appeared in 1985.¹⁰

All these works and more contain useful references and suggestions, but it was Michel Rey, an academic historian, who initiated serious exploration and analysis of same-sex relations in eighteenth-century Paris. He outlined and addressed central questions, about surveillance and repression, behavior and attitudes, identity and community, in five scholarly articles published from 1982 to 1994, the year after his untimely death from AIDS at the age of forty. These articles, riddled with mistakes, must be regarded, decades later, not as the last word but as first tries. Rey modified his views over a dozen years, but he did not exhaust the sources he located, not to mention others he did not locate. His version of the sodomitical subculture requires

⁷ On Foucault's legacy, after decades of debate and research, see David Halperin, "How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, No. 6.1 (2000): 87-123, reprinted in *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁸ The PMH website includes a comprehensive bibliography.

⁹ Claude Courouve, *Les Gens de la manchette, 1720-1750* (Paris: Self-published, 1978), *Les Origines de la répression de l'homosexualité* (Paris: Self-published 1978), and *L'Affaire Lenoir-Diot* (Paris: Self-published, 1980); D. A. Coward, "Attitudes to Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century France," *Journal of European Studies*, No. 10.4 (1980): 235-55.

¹⁰ Marie Jo Bonnet, *Un Choix sans équivoque: Recherches historiques sur les relations amoureuses entre les femmes, XVI^e-XX^e siècles* (Paris: Denoël, 1981); Maurice Lever, *Les Bûchers de Sodome: Histoire des "infâmes"* (Paris: Fayard, 1985).

substantial revision not only because he did not use all the extant records but also because he mixed empirical conclusions with speculative assertions inspired, presumably, by his own experience of gay liberation after Stonewall.¹¹ As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, he highlighted unrepresentative examples and projected modern thinking into the past. My criticism of his work, in the notes appended to this introduction and elsewhere, is intended not to deny his bravery in his time or his influence since his time but to question his historical deductions and inferences on the basis of archival evidence.

A few other scholars produced relevant publications in several languages in the 1990s, without challenging Rey.¹² In my first substantial article (1998) on this subject, I aggregated information from three years of commissaire Foucault's papers without asking myself enough questions about the material. Back then I accepted Rey's assertions about identity and community. After I read his sources for myself and found other sources he did not use, all in the Archives of the Bastille, I finally and formally rejected his assertions, in an article (2016) on all the extant cases from the year 1723.¹³ Older and wiser, I subjected police reports to more aggressive scrutiny, which yielded more scrupulous conclusions. After more work on other decades, from the 1730s to the 1780s, I have more to say, with more caveats, and thus this book, in which I have listened to voices in the archives and attempted to understand what they do and do not tell us, as Andrew Ross has done with nineteenth-century police records.¹⁴

The members of the team involved in the "Policing Male Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century Paris" project in progress have discovered and

¹¹ See Scott Gunther, *The Elastic Closet: Homosexuality in France, 1942-Present* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Julian Jackson, *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics, and Morality in France, from the Liberation to AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹² Paolo Piasenza used the morals series in the Archives of the Bastille in *Polizia e città: Strategie d'ordine, conflitti e rivolte a Parigi tra Sei e Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 206-35. Fayçal El Ghoul and Angela Taeger sampled the larger prisoners series. *La Police parisienne dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle (1760-1785)*, 2 vols. (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1995), 2: 677-85; *Intime Machtverhältnisse: Moralstrafrecht und administrative Kontrolle der Sexualität im ausgehenden Ancien Régime* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1999).

¹³ See app. 2 for corrections and additions to the list of men appended to this article.

¹⁴ Andrew Israel Ross, "Sex in the Archives: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris," *French Historical Studies*, No. 40.2 (2017): 267-90; *Public City/Public Sex: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019).

photographed numerous relevant documents that no one else has sought, found, read, or digested. The database under construction at Colorado College will include information about thousands of men from all the extant sources, from the files used by Rey forty years ago to the ones not yet located in the Archives of the Bastille. It will provide reliable answers to perennial questions and permit multivariable analysis of the subculture in all its variety and complexity.¹⁵ It will allow scholars to study, for example, clergymen, couples, day and night, foreigners, friendship, married men, noblemen, other cities, popular attitudes, prostitution, religion, resistance, soldiers, students, taverns, Versailles, violence.¹⁶ Research about such topics will highlight the many ways in men who desired men were connected with, not divided from, other Parisians.

Pierre Legal, twenty-one, wigmaker's assistant, had been "debauched" in Nantes and was "picked up during the first days after his arrival in Paris" in 1785.¹⁷ Jean Naudin, twenty-seven, tailor's assistant, arrested a month later, had been "given over to" pederasty in his native region (Perche), but he "surrendered himself to it" in Paris.¹⁸ We know more about same-sex relations in the capital than in the provinces (before or after residence in the capital) thanks to the extensive records of surveillance and detention utilized in this volume. Investigation of same-sex relations in any city is of course informed by a long list of local studies based on archival research on other countries and centuries. Historians such as Michael Rocke, Randolph Trumbach, and George Chauncey have taught us to think diligently about age, rank, and role and creatively about urban spaces, to delineate patterns without disregarding evidence that does not fit those patterns, and to locate sex between men within multiple social, cultural, and political contexts.¹⁹

¹⁵ My article published in 2016 includes some premature reflections on changes in patterns based on my previous research in the reports of commissaire Foucault (1780-83). The more numerous reports of commissaire Convers Desormeaux (1783-89) do not confirm my remarks about locations, servants, prostitution, age, or nicknames. Convers Desurbois arrested more individuals outside the Tuileries than anywhere else, including the more fashionable Palais Royal. The 425 men arrested in 1785 include 103 servants (thirty-two unemployed) as well as eighty-eight assistants (twenty-seven unemployed). A larger number expected and accepted money, and a smaller number had feminine sobriquets than in 1781.

¹⁶ For one example see app. 3.

¹⁷ Y 11725, 7 May 1785.

¹⁸ Y 11725, 12 June 1785.

¹⁹ Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sodomites: Homosexual Behavior and Western Culture in the 18th Century," *Journal of Social History*, No. 11.1 (1977): 1-33, and many other

Under the Ancien Régime, as throughout early modern Europe, church and state regarded sexuality not as a private matter but as a public concern.²⁰ They promoted and protected morality and matrimony by stigmatizing sex outside marriage and sex acts, within as well as outside marriage, that could not result in procreation. The long list of sins and crimes included everything from adultery to zoophilia or, more specifically, from masturbation to prostitution, both of which played large roles in the sodomitical subculture. The extensive records of surveillance and punishment of sex between men in eighteenth-century Paris provide raw material not only for analysis of who did what with whom but also for speculation about assumptions and attitudes.

This volume is focused on the archival evidence about sexual consciousness, gender, networks, decoys, and prosecution in one place and time. By “sexual consciousness” I mean self-awareness about sexual desire and conduct, without supposing that positive, neutral, or negative thoughts produced a sense of identity that inspired a sense of community. Chapters 1 and 2 address the uses and limits of police records and revisit Rey’s generalizations. Chapters 3 and 4 explore the ways in which men formed and police tracked liaisons, not only through solicitation in public spaces but also offstage, less visibly but more commonly, through connections and procurement. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the mechanics of entrapment and the incidence of judicial proceedings. All six chapters include documents and/or appendices. The last two chapters include some especially significant documents in French as well as English.

articles; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994)..

²⁰ See Katherine Crawford, *European Sexualities, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2020).

Appendix 1

Notes on Michel Rey's Articles

These notes include comments on numerous misstatements as well as serious misjudgments. For discussion of misjudgments about identity, community, and effeminacy, see the first two chapters.

page/paragraph//note

1. "Police et sodomie à Paris au XVIII^e siècle: Du péché au désordre," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, No. 29.1 (1982): 113-24.

- 113/1 We do not know if the boy assaulted by Pascal died in the Hôtel-Dieu. At least six sodomites were burned, and one was hanged. Four, not five, of the seven were charged with other offenses as well. The observation attributed to Lenoir should be dated 1726, not 1725, and footnoted.²¹ The quotation from the *Mémoires secrets* is from 1783, not 1780. The police used the language of contagion, not invasion.
- 114/1 Rey did not realize that the prisoners series, from which the seven cartons in the morals series were extracted, contains many more cases.
- 114/2 Arrests took place outside, not inside, the gardens, more often after rather than before the sodomite committed some acts, such as attempting to shove his hand into the breeches and tongue into the mouth of the decoy. We do not know if "the reported words" are "more or less exact." Some decoys recorded exchanges in detail, but others did not.
- 114/3 Some records from these years do include narratives of arrest. The numerous depositions constitute condensed sexual autobiographies, which include much more than lists of names.
- 114//3 AB 10260 includes one report from February and one from May 1750.
- 114//4 Pederasty patrols began in 1780 and yielded many arrests throughout the decade.

²¹ Jacques Peuchet, *Mémoires tirés des archives de police de Paris pour servir à l'histoire de la morale et de la police depuis Louis XIV jusqu'à nos jours*, 6 vols. (Paris: A. Levasseur et C^{ie}, 1838), 1: 289. Peuchet used Lenoir's notes without enclosing his words in quotation marks. Rey cited this source belatedly and incorrectly in 118//13.

- 115/1 Simonnet made more arrests outside one royal property, the Luxembourg, than elsewhere. A modest number of men offered bribes for release, and a smaller number accused police agents of extortion. The prisoners series includes documents from 1739 and 1740. The police invoked public order, more than king and religion, from the 1720s on. The quotations from documents in this paragraph and throughout the article should be footnoted by carton and page or date.
- 115/2 Framboisier had the title of inspector before Berryer. How did the interrogation of men named by others, few of them punished, dismantle “organized groups”? The police interrogated more than a few men named by others within days or weeks, so this method does not seem slow.
- 115/3 Simonnet also arrested notables.
- 116/2 The documents do not indicate that the secretary made decisions.
- 116/3 Théro himself did not engage in spying. What “new” urban space?
- 116/4 The police expressed concern about males of different ages more frequently than about males of different ranks. The scandal at Versailles took place in 1722, not 1277.
- 117/1 Richelieu did not write the memoirs attributed to him. The quotation from the *Mémoires secrets* is from 1783, not 1723.
- 117/2 This paragraph is based on the unreliable sources published by “Ludovico Hernandez,” not footnoted. Hérault did not judge the case alone. He chaired the commission that sentenced Deschauffours. What “philosophes, pamphleteers, and sodomists of the street” criticized the police? See ch. 6.
- 117/3 Voltaire did not draw this lesson, in 1764, from the case of Deschauffours alone. The play and the pamphlet, both fictional and satirical in nature, do not document the attitudes of Parisian sodomites. What fear, expressed in what memoirs? AB do not support the claim that fear “thus led sodomites to a more radical expression of their desire; they begin to imagine a community founded upon sexuality, which would unite persons of different social classes.” If sodomites had some sense of community, it developed through sex, which united them, not through fear, which divided them, but sex did not trump rank.
- 118/1 The prosecution of Deschauffours did not “fail” insofar as (which?) “folks believed it,” namely, as Frémanteau asserted, that “they tried in vain to prevent these kinds of pleasures, that they would never succeed in doing so.” The police knew that they could and would never eradicate sodomy.

- 118/2 The police knew that Parisians would not “stay at home.” They tacitly recognized “private space” insofar as they rarely bothered sodomites where they lived.
- 118/3 It seems unlikely that no one worried about youngsters before. The police did not ignore all cases involving adults and minors within traditional structures. They assumed that older males corrupted younger males, but they knew from their own records, like this one, that many youngsters sought sex for pleasure or profit. The case of Bergeron does not illustrate corruption of youngsters by adults.
- 119/1 The word “comrade” does not suggest “a type of couple.”
- 119/2 Workingmen shared beds throughout the century.
- 119/3 Tissot’s book was published in French in 1760, not 1765. The police did not express concern about “loss of semen.” Did the police think that one thing (masturbation) led to another? Most sodomites did not engage in intercourse.
- 119/5 The police did not expect youngsters to avoid the streets. The numbers, based only on the moral series, are useless.
- 120/1 The police (as opposed to Théro) rarely invoked religion, from the 1720s on. Compare 116/3, 119/1, 121/2. What alienists at the end of the century?
- 120/2 Some sodomites did receive absolution. See app. 3.
- 120/3 Hérault served as lieutenant general from 1725 to 1740. His secretary did not question sodomites about confession.
- 121/2 Hérault did not routinely question sodomites about their religious sentiments. More than a few depositions from 1748-50 mention confession.
- 121/3 The penalty should be commuted according to whom? The police did not catch Lecrivain in the act in 1741. AB 10260 includes dossiers from 1750, and the prisoners series includes dossiers from the 1750s and 1760s.
- 122/1 AB include more than a few references to deportation.
- 122/2 Many sodomites were detained and released, not “neutralized” through exile. We do not know if exile actually prevented them from seeking sex with men in their native regions.
- 122/3 The transition from acts to taste to personality requires careful study over time.
- 122/4 All such men were not sent to Bicêtre. Men enlisted to avoid prison during times of peace as well as war.
- 123/1 It is impossible to analyze detention comprehensively because most of the relevant prison registers have not survived. The numbers, based only on the morals series, are useless.

- 123/2 A few notables were imprisoned. La Riotterie's father was the grand bailiff, not governor, of Melun.
- 123/3 Parents routinely charged sons with debauchery or libertinism but rarely mentioned sodomy, perhaps because they wanted to have them punished without defaming them?
- 123/4 The grand mémoire, composed by a servant who was not a sodomite, does not include all the sodomites known to the police. See ch. 3.
- 124/1 The police had no mission or methods to contain "all deviant sexualities." No one defended the death penalty for sodomy. Who defined sodomy as a "passion," more dangerous than other passions?
- 124/2 The older word "sodomite" did not disappear. The newer word is not "péréraste" but "pédéraste." The shift from sodomite defined by acts to pederast as a type of person must be demonstrated quantitatively, not simply asserted impressionistically. The police never refused to listen. They were always interested in more than urban geography. Surveillance had nothing to do with fascination. The police talked about "curing" much more in the early than in the later decades of the century. No one suggested that sodomites in general were insane. Psychiatry emerged at the end of the 19th, not 18th, century.

2. "Parisian Homosexuals Create a Lifestyle, 1700-1750: The Police Archives," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, No. 9.3 (1985): 179-91²² [translated by Robert Day and Robert Welch].

- 179/1 What "lack of documents"? We have thousands of records. The use of the words "homosexual lifestyle" is unfortunate. The word "heterosexual" should be qualified by the word "non-procreative." AB do not suggest that "most often . . . an attraction to boys did not preclude other tastes." Why just boys? Tastes or acts? In the 1720s, some married men sought sex with men, but more sodomites expressed no interest in women. As for the court, noblemen were more likely than workingmen to marry, for the sake of property and progeny. Why suggest that sodomy trickled down? "A taste that sets one apart from other men," with regard to sex, perhaps, but more generally? What "refinement"?

²² This volume was also published as *Tis Nature's Fault: Unauthorized Sexuality during the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert Purks Maccubbin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

- 180/1 All sorts of people frequented the gardens. Most of the sodomites arrested throughout Paris were workingmen, period.
- 180/2 Many men did seek privacy, even if not guaranteed by locked doors. Many had sex where they lived, and the police rarely bothered them there.
- 180/3 How do we know encounters multiplied in 1749?
- 180/5 The police did not “equate” sodomy in general with female prostitution. They did not pursue “all types of errant sexuality.” They did not routinely express scorn for sodomites. What “law of supply and demand”? Many nobles, and some non-nobles, offered money. Why does payment replicate “the master-servant model,” as opposed to the seller-buyer model? More than one sodomite said he sought sex for pleasure, not profit.
- 181/1 In this context “métier” suggests not trade but skill. The objective was not to avoid “being considered a novice” but to secure a partner. Which practitioners? Cruising did not distinguish “homosexuals as a group similar to an important social configuration of the period: la corporation,” which is a legal, not social, “configuration.” No one compared techniques of solicitation with techniques of artisanal production.
- 181/2 Solicitation typically involved gestures before conversation. The “pissoirs” were constructed in the 19th century.
- 181/3 It is not true that nobles alone or nobles of the sword alone employed violence.
- 182/1 Men exposed themselves from the 1720s on, and one case cannot prove that the police substantially influenced practices of solicitation. It is not true that sodomites assumed that men who would not expose themselves were decoys and therefore abandoned them. The police did make arrests based on nothing more than suspicion.
- 182/2 Police records tell us about cases that involved the police, not about cases resolved by neighbors without police involvement, so we do not have representative evidence about popular reactions. We have documentation about some men who complained about sodomites who accosted them but not about others who did not. Most men sought men not in their neighborhoods but elsewhere, in public spaces, where they operated more anonymously. Of course “communication between sexual deviants and their neighbors had not been severed,” and it was not severed later. The examples suggest more than “silent reproach” on some occasions. If Parisians did not regard sodomites as different and dangerous

because of their desires, then the alleged emergence of sexual identity should have provoked more hostility, but police records suggest less hostility in the second than in the first half of the century. The case of Gobert suggests not that Parisians handled cases by themselves but that they involved the police.

- 183/1 What “professional scorn”? A modest number of cases involve popular reactions, and some of them involve the police as well. If exposure and disrepute sufficed, why did Parisians ever involve the police?
- 183/2 What “milieu reserved exclusively for sodomites”? Parisians consulted commissaires throughout the century. The lieutenant general, not the populace, involved commissaires in surveillance of sodomy in the 1780s.
- 183/4 The numbers, based only on the moral series, are useless. The list should include fondling and masturbation, which men mentioned more frequently than any other sexual activity. Some men initially declared they were “up for anything” but subsequently expressed preferences. No one, not sodomites, not police, expressed negative sentiments about passivity.
- 184/1 No one gendered these roles. Yes, sodomites and police regarded a man who played the active role as an infâme. How does effeminacy [sic] in assemblies confirm anything about cases in public spaces? The case from 1738 is completely unrepresentative, and the servant used male as well as female pronouns. The case from 1723 suggests nothing about effeminacy. Nothing in this paragraph supports the last sentence.
- 184/2 AB include many references to kissing and tonguing and more than a few to oral sex, as well as some expressions of affection. Why does the distinction between active and passive roles hinder tenderness?
- 184/3 The compressed discussion of aversion for women does not belong here.
- 185/2 The numbers, based only on the morals series, are useless. Marriage, in and of itself, did not assure [sic] respectability.
- 185/3 Some sodomites invited other men to live with them not as brothers but like husband and wife.
- 185/4 AB include more than a few references to relationships. The abbé in question is named Candot, actually Candeau, not Candor.
- 185/5 This example of intimacy is not “the single gesture of tenderness” in police records.

- 186/2 AB document some assemblies before mid-century. The word “surnames” should be replaced by “nicknames.” Assemblies did not demonstrate “a closing in of the group” and did not resemble the court. Most men continued to seek men in public spaces. The extant evidence does not indicate that assemblies required initiation.
- 186/4 La Manchette (cuff) is not a place, like la Courtille.
- 187/1 Most nicknames had nothing to do with nobility.
- 187/2 The numbers, based only on the morals series, are useless. Servants outnumbered all other categories.
- 187/3 What “festivities of the court”? Sodomites did not have an agenda “to fashion a transgressing identity and to become organized.”
- 187/4 The examples of effeminacy in the streets in the first half of the century are completely unrepresentative. Police records document no “obvious consciousness of belonging to a group.”
- 188/1 Men who attended assemblies did not adopt a public female role. The casual reference to men who “occasionally sold themselves” understates the large role of money in the sodomitical subculture.
- 188/2 What “educated people”? What medical student and priest? “Seen as a tolerated difference” by whom? “Felt to be a mode of thought” by whom? The shift from non-exclusive “sodomites” to exclusive “pederasts” requires demonstration. In and of itself the later label does not suggest more “acceptance” than the older one does, since the police continued to arrest and punish men who sought sex with men. Many sodomites in the 1720s expressed interest in men alone. Sodomites and police used “la Manchette” from the 1720s on.
- 189/1 The police did not conduct focused patrols during the second half of the century, just in the 1780s. The records from the 1780s include a modest number of references to pederastical attire. Parisians could regard fancy attire as effeminate without regarding nobles as effeminate. Pederasts in general did not link refinement with effeminacy.
- 189/2 Police records do not support the claim that “during the entire eighteenth century, homosexual men tried to group on the basis of an exclusive and minority sexual desire.” Most men did not engage in deception in gender or status. Documents from the 1720s include the language of “passion” and “taste.” What does “social sin” mean? This article contains no evidence about immutable characteristics. The prisoners series contains more cases from 1765.

- 190/1 The phrase “crime against nature” does not mean that sodomites naturally committed sodomy. The phrase “antiphysical taste,” used before 1765, does not mean that it had physical origins. Sade and forensic pathologists are irrelevant here. Police records do not document bodily, let alone genetic, explanations of sexual preference.
3. “Justice et sodomie à Paris au XVIII^e siècle,” in *Droit, Histoire, et Sexualité*, ed. Jacques Poumarède and Jean Pierre Royer (Villeneuve-d’Ascq: Publications de l’espace juridique, 1987), 175-84.
- 175/1 The last clause is colossally understated.
- 175//2 Antoine Buquet, hanged in 1727, was not charged with other crimes.
- 176/1 The riots in 1750 did not provoke the execution of Lenoir and Diot.
- 176/2 Every single magistrate and philosophe did not express repugnance. The magistrates themselves feared that executions not only deterred some but also provoked curiosity (not just “a complicitous fascination”) in others. The debate about capital punishment for sodomy continued even after the magistrates abandoned the letter of the law.
- 177/2 Literary texts from the 1730s cannot and do not demonstrate the emergence of a “social identity” among Parisian sodomites “at the beginning of the eighteenth century.” There is no evidence that the execution of Deschauffours reinforced it. Note the change from #1, 117/3: “in spite of fear.” What “defensive arguments” for sodomites “of all ranks”?
- 178/1 Nothing in the lines attributed to Lenoir suggests the distinction between “profound nature” and “desire for excess.” Fear of punishment obviously did not deter sodomites. Social causation did not preclude social punishment. The word “éthymologique” should be spelled “étymologique.” As Beccaria’s comments about libertine nobles and corrupted students suggest, intellectuals had little or nothing to say about the lives of workingmen who populated the sodomitical subculture.
- 179/2 Most sodomites were not excluded from society. The shift in language seems significant here but not on the preceding page. Police records do not document “a group that attempts to constitute itself inside society.”
- 180/1 Entrapment continued beyond 1750. The police arrested more men before than during the act. Officers collaborated with commissaires

- from the 1720s on but did not always involve them in processing arrested sodomites.
- 180/2 The lieutenant general routinely chastised notables but not others.
- 181/2 Hostility to groups “based on a passion, an excess, that would disrupt the ideal image of a well-ordered society” requires documentation.
- 182/2 AB do not show “more and more that sodomites refute the police argument about corruption.” The remarks about blood and lifelong taste are completely unrepresentative. Men did not claim “individual liberty in the usage of their bodies,” at least not in so many words, and did not form “a group conscious of a specific identity.” Sodomites did have a manner of speaking to each other but not of moving. In the 1780s, some but not most dressed differently.
- 182/2 The police were not preoccupied with protecting Parisians from specifically aristocratic debauchery.
4. “Police and Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century Paris,” *Journal of Homosexuality*, No. 16.1-2 (1989): 129-46²³ [revised version of #1, translated by Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma].
- 131/2 The papers of commissaires Foucault and Convers Desormeaux include not only reports of pederasty patrols but also many other relevant documents. The reports are not included in the papers of the Swiss Guards. The dates for those papers are not 1777-81 but 1777-91.
- 131/4 Simonnet did not have the title of inspector.
- 133/4 Théro was an abbé, not abbot.
- 134/2 The scandal at Versailles took place in 1722, not 1720.
- 135/1 The added sentence about the “more realistic perspective” requires revision of this section. The police were more concerned about mixture of ages than about “collusion between different ranks.”
- 137/1 Sodomites never used the word “inborn.”
- 142/3 What “smoldering conflict” in 1750?
- 143/2 Compare the original French version (“They no longer punished an act but a taste, [and] soon they would punish a personality”) with the revised English version (“The police were not persecuting individual acts but were trying to control a particular social group and specific public behaviors”). The police arrested men for acts

²³ This volume was also published as *The Pursuit of Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Haworth Press, 1989).

as well as men whom they expected to commit acts, throughout the century.

144/1 The word “quichets” should be spelled “guichets.”

144/2 The phrase “sodomy was considered ignominious” wrongly suggests that many parents charged their sons with sodomy.

5. “1700-1750: Les Sodomites parisiens créent un mode de vie,” *Cahiers Gai-Kitsch-Camp*, No. 24 (1994): xi-xxxiii [revised version of #2].

11/1 We cannot assume that Michael Rocke’s model of stages in “the construction of masculine identity” in Renaissance Florence applies to early modern France. There is no “close tie between sodomy and effeminacy” in police records. Note the addition of the phrase “no longer an especially serious sin that could be committed by all.”

11/2 AB include more reports about the Luxembourg than the Tuileries.
12/2 Of course the word “métier” does not mean prostitution, any more than trade. Practices of solicitation did not create a “virtual community.” Why did “enormous social disparity” provoke compensation, rather than unpaid exploitation? After insisting, elsewhere, that sexual relations between men of different ranks undermined social order, Rey here suggests the opposite, at least when one man paid the other. One man’s rejection of money does not document “a distinctive sodomitical identity.”

12//1 Rey should have cited the papers of commissaires Foucault (1780-83) and Convers Desormeaux (1783-89).

13/2 What is “sentimental psychology”?

14/1 Moralists insisted that humans could or at least should control passions and never suggested, any more than police did, that sodomites were not culpable. The distinction between desire and passion deserves careful study.

15/2 The prostitute protested, but the valet did not. This case involves violence against a woman, not a man, and many men, not just nobles, committed violence against women.

15/3 Entomologists study insects.

16/3 Note the added sentence in which Rey suggests that Parisians who scorned sodomites did not express “hatred toward a corrupter regarded as different.” His argument about identity might lead one to expect more specific, as opposed to more generic, abuse in the course of the century.

18/2 What “more distinct territories”?

- 19/2 Men declared that they were “up for anything” not to save face about passivity but to secure partners. A modest number of sodomites were married. Some abandoned their wives, and others may have had sex with both sexes.
- 20/1 Note the change from the generalized “shame of passivity” to shame in reversals of relations structured by age and rank. Some notables did play the passive role.
- 21/1 Oral “acts” were not necessarily “testimonies of love.”
- 21/2 This article includes more about women than the English version. Instead of taking expressions of aversion at face value, as vestiges of Christian misogyny, consider them as scripted performative statements.
- 23/1 Some men did denounce bedmates. After suggesting more than once that religious aversion to sodomites declined in the 18th century, Rey suggests that some might have denounced them as “black followers of Evil who draw down the wrath of God upon communities.”
- 23/2 Many men had sex with men more or less of their own age. The last sentences reads too much into the word “fantasy.” Gobert specified that he lived with his young man like man and wife, following the conventional model.
- 24/1 Friendship traditionally involved men of the same status. Police records contain many examples of friendship between equals as well as some examples of relationships of supposed friendship between unequals. The language and gestures of friendship deserve careful study.
- 24/2 Sodomites who talked about couples used both models, spouses and brothers, not just the one. Gromat complained not about passion but about possessiveness.
- 25/1 Several men invited others to live with them as woman/wife.
- 25/2 Religion did not mark police language throughout the 1720s.
- 28/1 Note the added rejection of the traditional characterization of sodomy as a “vice of nobles.”
- 28/3 Sodomites used the phrase “to be in on it” from the 1720s on, before assemblies.
- 29/1 What on earth is the anachronistic last sentence doing here?
- 29/2 Most sodomites agreed with the artisans about sodomy and effeminacy.
- 30/1 “We are not far from the idea of a minority,” and “their taste is central to the definition of a group,” but difference in sexual desires does not mean that some men thought themselves different from

others in the same way we do. No sodomites declared anything comparable to the quotations from Diderot and Sade, who spoke more boldly than most philosophes did.

30/2 The unrepresentative remarks cited by Rey do not mean that the typical pederast was “also someone who organizes his life around his minority taste.”

32/2 Police records do not support the added phrases “but fully legitimate,” at the end of the first sentence, and “the expression of a specific nature,” at the end of the fifth sentence. Most dossiers contain no references to aristocracy or femininity, so it is wildly irresponsible to suggest that sodomites in general adopted “a doubly transgressive identity.”

33/2 It is utterly inappropriate to conclude with Sade and Hirschfeld, as if police records as a whole, as opposed to a few unrepresentative dossiers, contain the seeds of modern attitudes. They do not.