

The English poet Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909), whose attitudes toward homosexuality were conflicted, dubbed John Addington Symonds and his associates “Calamites,” with a mocking echo of “catamites” and the pejorative nuance of the *-ite* ending. In his book *Greek Love* (New York, 1964), J. Z. Eglinton employed the term to designate the broader school of minor English and American homoerotic poets who flourished under the aegis of Whitman, Edward Carpenter, and Symonds (ca. 1890–1930). Timothy d’Arch Smith, the author of *Love in Earnest* (London, 1970), the standard work on the English poets in this group of writers and their themes, prefers to call them Uranians. However, Donald Mader, in the learned introduction to his edition of the *Men and Boys* anthology (New York, 1978), speaks of the American poets as “calamites.”

Just as Whitman used the calamus to symbolize male homosexual attraction, so some of the English Calamite/Uranian poets favored the plant *ladslove* (*Artemisia abrotanum*), ostensibly because the odor of its sap resembled that of semen, but more likely just because of the name.

**CAMBACÈRES,
JEAN-JACQUES RÉGIS DE
(1753–1824)**

Arch-Chancellor of the French First Empire and editor of the Code Napoléon. Born in Montpellier as the scion of an old noble family, Cambacères became a lawyer in his birthplace and a counselor at the Cour des Comptes. Renouncing his title of nobility in 1790, he became active in the revolutionary movement. As a member of the National Assembly he did not vote for the death of Louis XVI, but did move for the execution of the death sentence. He withdrew from the murderous factional struggles of the 1790s to pursue his legal calling, with such success that following the coup d’état of 18 Brumaire (1799), he became the second consul after

Napoleon Bonaparte. When Napoleon became Emperor in 1804, he named Cambacères Arch-Chancellor and in 1808 conferred on him the title of Duke of Parma. Great as was his influence with Napoleon, he failed to persuade him not to undertake the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812. After the Restoration of Louis XVIII to the throne he was forced into exile, but restored to his civil and political rights in 1818. He lived quietly in Paris until his death.

Cambacères’ greatest achievement was the drafting of the Code Napoléon, which was not a new set of laws but a revision and codification of all the legislative reforms since 1789 into a set of 28 separate codes to which the Emperor then attached his name. He was not responsible for the silent omission of sodomy from the criminal code; this step had been taken by the Constituent Assembly in 1791, and he was not even a member of the legislative committee of the Council of State that debated the draft of the penal code of 1810. But his reputation as a homosexual was such that when the question of allowing bachelors to adopt children arose, Napoleon asked him to speak for the proposal. As early as his days as second consul, the rumors of his homosexuality had reached the ears of the agents of Louis XVIII. Napoleon was fully aware of the truth of these allegations, but was too unprejudiced and astute to attach any significance to them in his evaluation of Cambacères’ character. Various stories, witticisms, and cartoons about the Arch-Chancellor’s proclivities circulated during his years of power, and a number of women prominent during the First Empire—among them Madame de Staël—were his bitter enemies. As a consequence, as late as 1859 the City Council of Montpellier refused to erect a statue in his honor. For the same reason the memoirs of Cambacères have remained unpublished and his family has denied historians access to its private archives.

While Cambacérès was a major figure in the entourage of Napoleon Bonaparte, the reform of the penal laws on homosexuality was not his doing; this action was rather the consequence of the philosophical trends of the eighteenth century and the critique of the criminal legislation of the Old Regime by such writers as Beccaria and Voltaire. No one statesman can be credited with the merit of this advance over the barbarity of previous centuries. The prestige of Napoleon and the force of French arms fostered the spread of the code and marked the dawn of an era of toleration for the homosexuals of France and many other countries.

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CAMBRIDGE AND OXFORD

Residential colleges have dominated England's two ancient universities—sometimes verbally merged as "Oxbridge"—which trace their origins to the twelfth century. Royal and aristocratic patronage, accentuated by the richly endowed, exquisite colleges in which fellows slept and dined, gave them an elite character often, though not always, conducive to academic excellence.

Early Indications. Following the clerical tradition of the Middle Ages, the dons were (until Gladstone's liberal reforms in 1877) forbidden to marry. Temptation beckoned in the form of an endless supply of highborn and attractive undergraduates. After 1500 most trained academically and (homo)sexually at the aristocratic public [i.e., private boarding] schools like Harrow and Winchester on a curriculum of Greek and Latin classics

which, despite careful selection, could not be purged of pederastic motifs.

On early sodomites the curtain of silence lifts only occasionally. In 1739 the Rev. Robert Thistlethwayte, who had served as warden of Wadham College at Oxford for fifteen years, was charged with making a "sodomitical attempt" on William French, an undergraduate. As depositions to the grand jury revealed, Thistlethwayte had shown a previous pattern of homosexual activity, and he fled to France, fearing mortal consequences. John Fenwick, known to have had homosexual relations as a student at Oxford, but not charged until 1797, when he had become a clergyman, also fled to the continent. At Cambridge George Gordon, Lord Byron, already in love at Harrow, had a relationship with a choirboy named John Edleston and formed lifelong friendships with John Cam Hobhouse, the dissipated Scrope Berdmore Davies, and the irreverent Charles Skinner Matthews—his correspondents and defenders when, having discovered a more open homosexuality in Italy and Greece, Byron went into exile.

Reformers and Aesthetes. The Victorians (1837–1901) strove to raise the standards of Britain's decayed educational establishment. In addition to the universities, the feeder system of the elite public schools had to be restructured. Unbeknownst to the reformers, public school boys fashioned a thriving homosexual subculture, with its social hierarchies and special vocabulary, and passed it on to the universities.

The mid-nineteenth century also saw a crisis of faith. Some like Cardinal Newman resolved this by converting to Roman Catholicism. Gravitating toward aestheticism, a creed with strong homosexual overtones, others—unlike the Oxford don Walter Pater, the pontiff of aestheticism, who was most discrete about his sexual longings—became notorious, Oscar Wilde met Alfred Douglas when the latter was a handsome undergraduate at Oxford, and the *Chameleon*—which played