

The Great Medievalists of the 20th Century and Me

Strayer influenced me as an undergraduate and directed my PhD. Mommsen taught me at Cornell Graduate School until his suicide. Ernst Kantorowicz gave me my PhD topic. I knew them all as well as Norman Cantor did, and more than Bob Lerner did. I met Lerner when he began graduate studies at Princeton. Each of those guys wrote about the great medievalists of the twentieth century. Norman claimed it was Teddy (a name I never called Theodore Mommsen Jr. by) and Lerner insisted that it was EKA, as Kantorowicz's intimates called him, but not I. Norman Cantor, whom I met as an undergraduate, was crucial in getting me a job at UMass Boston. I got Bob Lerner the contract for his first book, *The Age of Adversity* (1968).

Emile Karafiol, like Ralph Nader, was only sixteen when me as freshman in the class of 1955 at Princeton. I abandoned my elegant prep school friends for those two oddballs. My friends were working to marry appropriate debutantes to get into law school, particularly Harvard. They weren't really interested in intellectual things. Emile Karafiol became the first of a number of Jews who dominated my thinking for decades. One thing that Emile taught me was that I should learn about medieval history, which Princeton specialized in. I was taking, as a freshman, advanced courses in Latin, which also covered Greek civilization. Middlesex had taught me a lot about modern times, but I knew

almost nothing about medieval times.

Emile was the first of several Jews who influenced my intellectual and cultural life. Emile's mother, who I got to know quite well, was the daughter of the head orthodox rabbi in Warsaw. She defied customs by insisting on attending university. His father was from a family of merchants who imported timber from the Baltic states to Danzig. He volunteered to fight for the Spanish Republic and was imprisoned by Franco. Emile's mother went to Spain and got him out. Fortunately, they were on vacation in France when WWII broke out. Emile joined the French army but was interned in Switzerland when soldiers in the Maginot line retreated there.

He escaped and joined his wife and two children (Emile had an older sister) in Lisbon. From there, they went to Rio, and then they migrated to Montreal. Because his father had been associated with the Mensheviks, he was therefore regarded as a dangerous communist. He was therefore never able to enter the United States. Emile and another outsider in our class, Ralph Nader, would stay up late studying while most of the gentiles were concerned with securing suitable engagements to heiresses. Our threesome was concerned with intellectual pursuits.

Two other upwardly-mobile Jews, Norman Cantor and Bob Lerner, have discussed the great medievalists of the twentieth century in their books *Inventing the Middle Ages* (1991) and *Ernst*

Kantorowicz: A Life (2017), respectively. Norman and Bob disagreed about the great medievalists of the twentieth century. In *Inventing the Middle Ages*, Norman called Frederich William Maitland, of Pollock and Maitland, saintly. He hated Ernst Kantorowicz. He lumped Kantorowicz together with Percy Ernst Schram, describing them as Nazi twins. Bob, however, called Kantorowicz the greatest medievalist of the twentieth century, an accolade Cantor gave to Teddy Mommsen. Teddy left his library to Norman, his favorite, but homophobic, graduate student. Kantorowicz never liked Norman, who was physically unprepossessive and rather crude socially, though all the other professors at Princeton wanted to become Norman's doctor father.

While I was freshman at Princeton and met Norman, I met Bob Lerner during his graduate studies there and became his closest friend. I'm in a unique position to discuss his recent biography of Kantorowicz as I was the last student to whom Ernst Kantorowicz gave a thesis topic, as I will explain later. I got Bob the contract for his first book, *The Age of Adversity: The 14th Century* (1968), in the series edited by my good friend Edward Whiting Fox.

While both Norman and Bob were Kinsey zeroes (i.e. males who have sex with only males), many of the great medievalists fell in the range of Kinsey 3 to Kinsey 6, that During the 1950s, homosexuals were as scorned and persecuted as the so-called "pedophiles" are today. That has recently changed. The term "pedophile" now refers

to those who prefer adolescents, whereas earlier the term referred to those who prefer pre-adolescents. Full of burning hormones and designated as a homosexual, I, like the others of my ilk, lived in constant fear of exposure and ruin, as do today's "pedophiles." This destroyed many excellent homosexuals of my generation as it is today destroying many who prefer adolescents.

When I came back to Princeton, after graduate work at Cornell, I told Kantorowicz I wanted a quick Ph.D. He told me to look up the Angevin Archives. They had recently edited by Prince Filiangieri. A team of Neapolitan archivists were enlisted to restore the records the Nazis had destroyed.

I will take this occasion to discuss the relative merits of the great medievalists of the 20th century. I had particular relationships with the following: Theodore Mommsen, Jr., Ernst Kantorowicz, Norman Cantor, Eugene Rice, Emile Karafiol, Karl Morrison, Bennett Hill, Edward Whiting Fox, Joseph R. Strayer, and the Honorable Sir Steven Runciman, and James Kritzeck. I knew each of them quite well, but I never met Kritzeck. While their scholarly pursuits are often what they are most remembered for and considered to be most important, I, like Freud and Kinsey, believe that one's sex life is equally, if not more important, to an individual. In my experience, many Medievalists, more so than others in different fields, tended to be gay. While I will describe my academic pursuits in what follows, I will provide a description of these men on the

Kinsey scale at the conclusion of this work.

Much of what follows is based on my deep emotional and intellectual inspiration with Emile Karafiol as well as our former professor, Theodore Mommsen, Jr., both of whom I met as a freshman at Princeton (1951). I became the closest friend of Emile, the smartest boy in my undergraduate class and the first to graduate in three years since World War II. Emile and I remained the closest of friends for over a decade. At Princeton, I was enrolled in the elite Special Program in the Humanities. In it, you spent your entire last year writing a senior honors thesis. However, I never got there. I dropped out of Princeton after my sophomore advisor, E. Harris Harbison, one of the twenty-one elders who ran the Presbyterian church, refused to let me study my junior year in Paris. He asserted that I was too young and too "immature," immature then being a code word for gay.

Instead, I volunteered to serve in the army for three years (1953-1956). I spent six months at the Army Language School in Monterey, California learning Norwegian, which earned me credit when I later attended the University of Tennessee, where I graduated in 1957. At that time, Emile was already pursuing graduate studies in history at Cornell. He persuaded me to join him there. He had already studied there for a year and worked with Mommsen. Mommsen had moved there from Princeton a few years before.

I spent the summer of 1957 in Europe, using up some money I'd

saved in the army. I chaperoned the grandson of retired University of Tennessee president James Dickason Hoskins (1934–1946). It was a frustrating experience. James was eighteen and gorgeous, but mulishly straight. In Knoxville, he insisted, against my wishes, that we rent a Peugeot to tour the continent. On our vessel, the Dutch ship *Oldenbarneveldt*, I made friends with two charming and handsome graduates of Williams College, both twenty-one at the time. I arranged for them to join us, subletting half of the car to them.

We spent about ten days in Paris before picking up the Peugeot and departing for the south. Hoskins had ignored my subtle advances in the sweaty bed we shared in the stuffy Paris hotel room. Driving out of Paris in the strange car was a nightmare. Hoskins and the two graduates proceeded to drive far too recklessly from Paris to the Riviera. When we got to Nice, I sold my share of the Peugeot and they all continued on their reckless way. In fact, they eventually crashed the car in Germany. Hoskins actually broke his leg and had to be flown home on a stretcher.

Once rid of them, I set off for Germany to improve my command of that language. In the fall of '57, I entered the history Ph.D. program at Cornell. The reading exams in German and French presented no problem. Contrary to recent trends, Cornell still granted assistantships to promising first-year grad students. I handled three discussion sections of thirty students of a very large lecture course. I had to grade the undergraduates in the once-a-week Western

Civilization section of 30 students. I also took two graduate seminars, with only four students in each, as well as lecture course in Hellenistic and Renaissance history.

Emile informed me that with the university's recent addition of our former professor, Theodore Mommsen, to its faculty, it possessed perhaps the finest European history department in the country. I trusted Emile's opinion on such matters. I also looked forward to continuing my friendships with both him and Mommsen. Little did I know that they would prove to be important to me for reasons other than their stimulating company, brilliant analytical abilities, and spectacular reputations.

Players in the higher levels of higher education, I quickly learned, bore no resemblance at all to my naïve conception of professors as servants like prep school masters. A wholly different academic world existed at Cornell from the one I had inhabited at Princeton. Unlike at Princeton, Cornell was a milieu in which it didn't matter if professors dressed sloppily, behaved gauchely, or even were suspected of having a gamy sexual nature. Cornell wasn't as elegant as Princeton — it didn't set out to make gentlemen of its students — but it had a tradition, established in the middle of the late 19th century by its founding president, the great, gay, Andrew D. White. Cornell recruited the best scholars in each field regardless of their social standing or even ability to speak correct English. Furthermore, because Cornell was affiliated with New York's

education system, it offered subsidized tuition to state residents, which attracted many up-and-coming Jews from New York City. They would take two years at the cheap agricultural/mechanical college. They would then switch to the expensive Ivy League College of Arts and Sciences for their last two years. Cornell was unique in that way. The place seethed with cerebral vitality.

The professors were devoted to making a mark in their fields, to producing scholarship of the first quality, marks that would leave legacies, even fame. Caretakers they were not, generally speaking, except insofar as they nurtured protégés who might help them advance their careers. They were devoted to achieving intellectual breakthroughs, to truth itself, in contests as fierce as could be found in any arena that didn't actually draw blood. The potential stakes, in their opinion, rivaled or even overshadowed those of big business and politics, for the simple reason that fortune and power expire, but knowledge endures. Academic superstars literally made history when their interpretations of the past superseded those of the dominant predecessors. They also stood a long-shot chance of making plenty of money. The most successful textbook authors, for example, earned millions or more, as R.R. Palmer did at Princeton with his summaries of the famous French series, *Peuple et Civilisation*.

To garner lasting respect in academia, one had to know one's stuff. To know one's stuff, really *know* it, required a dedication

and diligence, even a kind of reverence, that I'd almost never before encountered, except a little at Princeton. Especially for classicists and medievalists, this meant mastering as many relevant languages as possible, beginning with Greek and Latin. It meant reading as many original sources as possible. It also instilled skepticism of trendy new theories, as well as long-received wisdom. The most dazzling recent work and the most venerable interpretations, I learned, could always be challenged on the grounds that the authors hadn't quite grasped the thrust of the basic evidence, written or physical.

This is not to say that evaluating which practitioners were first-rate and which were not, operated along entirely rational lines. Mystique, even a kind of cult, played a role like the one around Socrates. Measuring erudition is a tricky business. The German and Middle-European tradition of *Altertumswissenschaft*, (the exhaustive study of all aspects of classical antiquity), the model for the kind of history I learned at Cornell, had not yet taken firm root on this side of the Atlantic. English and French scholarly traditions still prevailed here. The *Altertumswissenschaft* model required not only an encyclopedic knowledge of original sources, but also the ability to marshal that knowledge into an interpretive lens. It wasn't just the facts, in other words, but how you used the facts to shape understanding. Subject as it was to different approaches, rivalry created furiously divergent schools of thought.

In consequence one had to be careful in one's choice of a mentor, to be aware of his factional allegiances, of his admirers and detractors, of his "academic pedigree." How good had your mentor's mentor been, how good would those still further back matter in your academic genealogy? Fine distinctions and tribalistic loyalties governed such debates, particularly in the insular world of medieval historians, who at the time numbered just a few hundred in the entire country. It has been said that the only politics more bitter than academic politics are ecclesiastical politics, both of which are storms in a teacup. Medievalism, moreover, had churchy aspects that may have made its internecine conflicts the bitterest of them all, as I learned when I returned to Cornell from Naples.

Robert Lerner's biography of Kantorowicz titled *Ernst Kantorowicz: A Life* (2017) contrasted with Norman Cantor's insightful but contentious *Inventing the Middle Ages* (1991). A recent biography of the honorable Sir Steven Runciman, *Outlandish Knight: The Byzantine Life of Steven Runciman* by Mino Dinshaw (2016) treats another eminent gay medieval historian.

Mommsen in every way was the ideal mentor, the ideal contact through whom to network. The best description of him came from his top student, Norman Cantor, who wrote "unprepossessing, double-chinned, overweight, a heavy smoker, disheveled in clothes that didn't quite fit, he exuded a warmth and sense of caring quite unusual for a scholar of his stature." Teddy always insisted that

he hoped that his students would excel him. He was a truly nurturing mentor. One had to make the best use of mentors and contacts while one could, because you never knew when they might drop dead or go insane, leaving you in the lurch, or, worse, at the mercy of hostile enemy camps.

At the same time, Mommsen possessed an academic pedigree nonpareil. His grandfather, Theodore Mommsen Sr. (1817-1903), is widely considered the greatest historian who ever lived. The preeminent professor at pre-World War I University of Berlin, arguably the world's greatest university during his era, Mommsen Sr. took *Altertumswissenschaft* to new heights and dominated numerous fields, including Roman law, numismatics, epigraphy, and archeology. He also guided the production of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, a compendium of original sources on medieval German history still thought of as the finest set of national historical sources ever assembled. In 1900, his scholarship and brilliant style garnered him the Nobel Prize in literature. The only other historian to share that honor was Winston Churchill.

But that wasn't all. Mommsen Sr.'s eldest daughter, Maria, married Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, arguably the greatest Greek philologist who ever lived. Mommsen's son, Ernst, a physician who fathered my professor, married the sister of Max Weber – who, if not the greatest sociologist/political economist who ever lived, certainly ranks very near the pinnacle. These family connections

had reinforced the aging Mommsen's command at Berlin.

My Mommsen, "Teddy," as many, but never I, referred to him, honed this peerless academic background with the typical German practice of spending each year at a different university to acquire the broadest possible learning. In his year in Vienna, for example, he studied Chinese history. He thus was poised to launch a European career in the tradition of his family. Then the Nazis took over.

Teddy fled to America with his frail, dwarfish, effete second cousin, Felix Mendelssohn Gilbert, the lisping grandson of Mendelssohn the composer and a great-grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, the most famous Jewish intellectual of the German-Jewish Enlightenment. Toward end of the 18th century, Moses had converted to Catholicism, the faith that his descendants kept. Mommsen wasn't Jewish, but Felix's ancestry put Felix at risk.

Teddy's flight was a microcosm of a larger phenomenon that, ironically, may have denied the Nazis victory in World War II. His fellow refugees included the cream of continental Europe's physicists and mathematicians. Figures like Einstein, about whom I had originally planned to write a biography as my senior honors thesis, as well as Hans Bethe, to whom I was introduced by Edward Fox while I was at Cornell. Vladimir Nabokov as also at the Institute. Nabokov, a Russian noble, taught at Cornell, where he enjoyed collecting butterflies. The runaway success with his novel, *Lolita*, allowed him to leave Cornell, just a year before I arrived there. The

royalties had thus allowed him to return to the luxurious life he had known before the revolution in Russia. He spent his time in Switzerland and on the Riviera. Fleeing Mussolini, Enrico Fermi also contributed crucially to the development of the bombs. It is quite possible that had the Nazis and Mussolini not forced this brain drain, London, rather than Hiroshima, would have come to symbolize the terrible turning-point yet in the history of warfare. But Germany's loss was America's gain in ways beyond the hard sciences.

Founded in 1930 by a rich Jew, Abraham Flexner, The Institution for Advanced Studies at Princeton originally had four fields: iconography, Greek epigraphy, physics, and math. It was primarily a refuge for Jewish scholars fleeing Hitler. It produced not only Einstein, but also the mathematician Einstein admired, Kurt Godel.

Los Angeles also became another center for refuges. Thomas Mann lived near Christopher Isherwood, along with many other actors and directors.

When he came to the United States, Teddy taught briefly at Yale. When that university downsized in preparation for the war, it dismissed all its professors without Yale degrees – an enormous mistake because the faculty it let go generally turned out to be brilliant. The Yalies it kept were not-so-great. Let go from Yale, Teddy went to teach at Groton, which some think is the most elegant prep school in the United States. It graduated Franklin Delano Roosevelt under the headmastership of Endicott Peabody. After

Groton, Teddy then went to Princeton, and finally Cornell. He liked to joke that, socially speaking, his career had taken him steadily downhill.

Many scholars agreed with Emile that Cornell had the best history department in the country. Carl Becker had been the chairman of the department, as well as president of the American Historical Association. Edward Whiting Fox, who married Elizabeth Simon, the niece of Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, replaced him. I didn't get to know Fox until the end of my first year. Emile advised me to befriend him. Later, Fox and I became close, providentially as it turned out. Of the other professors of mine in Greek and early Medieval studies, Wolfgang Laistner was the eldest and most famous. He was a scholar of the English old school, educated at Cambridge. He never married, and lived with his mother until she died. The young Eugene Rice, a Renaissance scholar, eventually became the most successful of the group at Cornell. He moved to Columbia where he chaired the history department for many years. He also became the vice president of the American Historical Society. Gene also edited *The Renaissance Quarterly*.

But Teddy, in 1957, then at the height of his powers, outshone his colleagues. He had a passion for teaching. I still marvel at memories of the small seminars he led, their excitement, the fervor with which he initiated us to the importance of the skull and bones of history, the original texts – for example, the *Libelli de lite*,

a humongous three-volume Latin set published in the *Monumenta* about the Investiture Controversy between popes and (Holy) Roman Emperors during the 11th and 12th centuries. It contained the pamphlets and harangues between the representatives of the two powers: Was the pope the "sun" and the emperor merely his pale "moon"-like reflection, or were there two, coequal suns? Teddy assigned me my MA thesis, which I never finished, on Petrus Crassus, an imperial pamphleteer.

Emile and I roomed together for a year and frequently shared meals at the faculty club. It was staffed by students at the Cornell hotel-management graduate school, ranked second in the world next to a school in Switzerland. Supervised by its professors, it not only offered exquisite cuisine, but also sported something of a gay tone. Professors, especially the bachelors, often ate with us. There was an easy atmosphere of mingling, unlike at Princeton, which disapproved of homosexuality and close fellowships between faculty and their graduate students, who were isolated from undergraduates and faculty members at a remote, cloistered graduate college.

I loved Cornell, loved living with Emile, and, I slowly came to realize, I loved Ted Mommsen. The man exemplified virtues and strengths that opened my eyes to academic vistas that I hadn't known existed. For the first time I understood that the pursuit and transmission of knowledge is essential to the preservation of the human race, a vocation that people like my father (I realized with a new

increment of contempt for him) did not appreciate or even understand.

Teddy liked to throw musicales at his modest, simple apartment once a week or so, at which we'd take seats and solemnly listen to selections from his extensive collection of classical records. The music didn't do much for me. I knew little about it. Teddy loved Carmina Burana by Carl Orff. I had never learned to play an instrument, and possessed not much aptitude to learn. But I attended regularly out of deference to my mentor, grateful for the liquor he served and trying not to interrupt the proceedings with too much talk. After one such occasion, Mommsen, when bidding me adieu, took the liberty of patting me on my rump. I was quite startled.

Part of me resented the show of affection. I'd never been attracted to men much past thirty, and certainly not to old, fat geezers. So the idea of having sex with Mommsen seemed grotesque. Teddy was older and even more out of shape than Alton Childs. Alton was the grandson of Princeton president James McCosh (1811-1894). He was also the heir of the chain of Childs' restaurants. I had a brief affair with him when I was a sophomore and found it very unpleasant. I only knew Alton briefly. He had been a professor of classics before the war. Like many other professors of history and classics, he then entered the OSS, which morphed into the CIA. Alton had a wife and two children, but after he had retired and he was living in the guesthouse of a princess who had a big house in

Princeton. I surprised myself with a sudden awareness that I would do almost anything for Teddy – including, if he desired it, go to bed with him. That never came to pass. However, even the possibility revealed to me the depths of my devotion.

Toward the end of that first year, Mommsen had lunch with an old friend of his, Mario Einaudi, scion of the eponymous publishing house, the best in Italy. Mario, the younger son of the Italian president Luigi Einaudi, had engineered his country's postwar "economic miracle," a feat comparable to what Adenauer had done for Germany. Mario Einaudi mentioned to Teddy that Italy's cultural attaché had asked him to appoint a recipient for a scholarship at the University of Naples sponsored by the Italian government. None of Mario's students were interested, so he asked Mommsen if he knew of a worthy candidate. Mommsen himself was scheduled to spend the next year on sabbatical first in Germany where he was scheduled to deliver a series of lectures at various universities. He intended to visit the Middle East during the spring.

Teddy recommended me, in part I think because he liked the idea of having a protégé within visiting distance. Furthermore, a year in Italy would expand my language sophistication and my research skills. I think Teddy realized that I would be introduced to the famous charms of Neapolitan youths, know as *sconuzzi*. At any rate, I got the scholarship. I also had the GI bill and my father sent me a little extra, so the small monetary amount of the scholarship did

not bother me. I spent the summer in Rome learning Italian, and then moved to the University of Naples for the academic year. This coup was a classic instance of networking. It fell into my lap because Mommsen had had lunch with a friend of his.

The day before I left, Mommsen and I walked up the steep hill from which Cornell overlooks Lake Cayuga. It's quite a hill, the escarpment of a huge gorge. Mommsen, huffing and puffing, then wheezing and coughing, had trouble making the climb because he smoked and ate too much. He had to stop to rest. I said, "You really should stop smoking." He replied with startling matter-of-factness, "Oh, no, I actually think I might commit suicide." That stopped me short. I snorted with disbelief. He gazed at me affectionately, as if he'd said nothing untoward. I relaxed, then remarked that I had many relatives who had killed themselves for one reason or another, some of them because they couldn't tolerate terminal illness, a not irrational reason. But that wasn't the case with him, I pointed out, then added that he was at the height of his career, with much still to contribute to scholarship. Mommsen nodded. We resumed the climb.

At Princeton, Teddy had always played second fiddle to the domineering Joseph R. Strayer. At first, he shared an apartment with the gay art historian Albert Friend. Friend was too aggressive, clinging to Mommsen, as Teddy told me. Teddy became angry for some years because Strayer, who spent weekends and summers in Washington working with Allen Dulles, an old friend of

his, and head of the CIA. Strayer was more interested in power rather than scholarship. Mommsen was offered a professorship at Cornell. There, he came to dominate the department with great gay historians Laistner and Rice, as well as the Cornell medievalist Carl Stephenson who had died after going mad. Teddy was able to gain considerable influence there by allying in his first year with Knight Biggerstaff. Biggerstaff had managed to get out of China with many valuable documents before the Communists took over in '47. Teddy and Biggerstaff took over the department from the WASP hegemony which consisted of Frederick Marcham and Fox. Marcham had been a boxer in the British Navy and edited a book with Strayer of some importance about the source of English constitutional law.

Teddy loved running that department. He refused an offer to go to Columbia the next year, claiming that he didn't think it proper to move so soon a second time. But I think he really liked running that great and gay-tolerant department.

A couple of months later, in Rome, I picked up my mail at the American Express office and sat on the Spanish Steps. My mail included a letter from Emile bearing tragic news: Mommsen had killed himself with an overdose of sleeping pills. It was a sunny day, aswarm with tourists and lovely youths cruising for fun or cash. Mommsen dead? The world seemed to deflate. I couldn't begin to gauge the loss, both personal and professional. I regretted, bitterly, having remarked that wretched health might make suicide reasonable.

Over the years, I have heard a number of different theories as to why Teddy did it. Mommsen hadn't seen his family since he left Europe, and may not have looked forward to the reunion that his upcoming German university tour would have entailed. As with many German families, conflicting loyalties under the Third Reich had brought bitter divisions. One brother had managed the Thyssen steel works for the Nazis; another was an admiral; a brother-in-law had been imprisoned for opposing the regime.

Others thought that Felix Gilbert, Mommsen's epicene cousin and reputed lover, had devastated Mommsen when he married a Byrn Mawr grad student much his junior. Yet another theory held that Mommsen had been jilted by someone else, a gay former student, James Kritzeck. Kritzeck had received his Ph.D. at age twenty-one partly under Mommsen's tutelage. Kritzeck landed a prestigious junior fellowship at Harvard, a position sometimes used for prodigies too young to teach. Kritzeck, who taught at Notre Dame, had promised to spend the summer with Teddy at Cornell, but cancelled at the last minute. Mommsen had adored this man, as much for his intellect and boldness as for his physical charms.

More likely, however, at least in my opinion, Mommsen felt a sense of inadequacy about delivering the lectures scheduled for his university tour. Depression ran in the family. His Nobelist grandfather had lamented on his deathbed that he'd accomplished nothing worthwhile. Did Teddy dread being compared, unfavorably, to

his famous relatives? It's possible. Perhaps the real reason had to do with something as mundane as blackmail.

Regrettably, when I came back, I needed another ally. Laistner had retired and Gene Rice had moved to Columbia. Ed Fox took me in. He got me into Johns Hopkins, but then Sidney Painter died and his partner, Frederick Lane, who was in Renaissance and Reformation studies told me that without Sidney, that he couldn't take on anymore students. Sidney was a medievalist and Lane was a Renaissance scholar. Reluctantly, I went back to Princeton to see if I wanted to re-enroll that fall.

At Princeton, I went to talk with Joseph Strayer, my former professor and CIA reference. We had a nice chat during which he welcomed the idea of my return. I also called on an old friend of Mommsen's who was at the Institute for Advanced Studies: Ernst Kantorowicz. I'd never met him before, but had attended some of his lectures and knew from the ever-reliable Emile that he was the genuine article, a first-class scholar. The gay scion of one of Germany's richest schnapps-brewer families, Kantorowicz, like so many other intellectuals, had fled Hitler. In his youth, Kantorowicz belonged to a recondite circle of artistes, presided over by Stefan George, which paid ritual obeisance to the beauty of George's eighteen-year-old lover: a cult devoted to the divinity of the Radiant Boy.

Kantorowicz was seventy when I met him, but vestiges of his youth-worshipping past remained poignantly, if rather creepily, apparent. He refused to receive visitors before 7:00 p.m., kept the lighting very dim, and wore copious amounts of make up, calling to mind the neurasthenic vanities of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice's* Baron von Aschenbach. Years before, Kantorowicz famously scandalized Joseph Strayer with a casual remark that when vacationing in the Virgin Islands, he limited his attire to a jockstrap. I was petrified he'd try to make me.

For the times he granted me an audience, he behaved like a gentleman. I was too small and not butch enough to appeal to him, but he gave me advice that proved essential to my career. He also put me at my ease with regard to the rebuke I'd received from Mommsen's successor at Cornell, Brian Tierney. A very good-looking Irish Catholic, the young Tierney had volunteered as a Spitfire pilot, and thereafter he could do no wrong in the eyes of the English establishment. I mentioned to Kantorowicz Tierney's brag that some scholars had compared him to the "great Mommsen." Kantorowicz laughed, then told me with flamboyant glee that he himself had once complimented Tierney with an extravagant comparison to Mommsen the elder, but had done so sarcastically, for Tierney's slim volume on the English Poor Law (1959), his primary claim to distinction, bore no resemblance at all to the magisterial work of the Berlin Nobelist. It reassured me that a fellow queen could so effortlessly puncture

Tierney's grandiosity.

I mentioned that I wanted to work on the Kingdom of Sicily's Norman period, which began in the 11th century. Kantorowicz shot down that idea with the observation that because Sicily previously had been ruled by Byzantines and Arabs, I would have to learn both Greek and Arabic, a far too time-consuming task. He suggested working instead on Charles of Anjou, who ruled Sicily from 1266 to 1285 after dispossessing and killing Manfred, son of the successor to Frederick II, the greatest of Sicily's Norman rulers on whom Kantorowicz himself had published an acclaimed biography in '27 (initially derided as trivial ephemera from a gay nobody, the book won stunned acceptance in '29, when Kantorowicz published a brilliant set of footnotes to substantiate his interpretations, among them the possibility that Frederick II was a pederast). "Why Charles of Anjou?" I asked.

Kantorowicz explained that the documents pertaining to Charles of Anjou had recently been reconstructed from fragments and notes, an extraordinary labor of scholarly devotion. The Nazis, in a fit of inflicting horribleness, known as *Schrelichkeit*, following Italy's defection to the Allies during World War II, had destroyed the priceless originals, which had been removed from Naples and moved to a remote, mountainous location. It was a monstrous act of spite intended to wipe out one of Italy's most esteemed historical treasures.

The reconstruction had preserved the original Latin and Old French wherever possible, but had rendered everything else in Italian, all of which few American scholars in the field could read. A light bulb went off in my head: this material was perfect for me, a trove inaccessible to most of my colleagues, and one that hadn't yet been worked over.

Thus, Kantorowicz came up with my dissertation topic in all of five minutes. I would write on the Angevin taxation system. In a practice typical of Normans, according to Charles Homer Haskins, they made a point of embracing superior systems whenever conquest brought them within reach. Frederick II had adopted the finance, taxation, and administration practices of his Byzantine/Arab/Norman predecessors. They were far more sophisticated than the Catholic rulers of Europe at the time.

Charles of Anjou followed suit years later. In short, I would be exploring a period of remarkable cultural assimilation that had major effects on Europe's emergence from the bogs of the Middle Ages. The topic dovetailed nicely with Kantorowicz's specialty, medieval Naples and Sicily, and with Strayer's focus, medieval taxation. Furthermore, both men were regarded as the world's leading scholars in these areas. It thus was quite a coup when they agreed to oversee my dissertation. I had no choice now: Fox had been right as well that Princeton was the place for me. So I re-entered in the fall of '60.

All of the scholars listed here made great academic contributions, but what continues to be interesting is where each of them fall on the Kinsey scale on which I will take the liberty to rate them. The scale ranges from 0 to 6, 0 including those who have never had sex with the same sex, to 6, which includes those who have only ever had sex with the same sex. Bob Lerner and Norman Cantor were obviously Kinsey 0s, that is one who is exclusively heterosexual. Lerner regrettably categorized Kantorowicz as a Kinsey 3, one who is equally heterosexual and homosexual. Kantorowicz was not a Kinsey 6 like Teddy and me. Gene Rice, however, was more like a Kinsey 4 or 5. He had been married to a lesbian for 30 years and had three children before coming out as gay, with my help. Many of the great Medievalists, like science fiction writers and interior decorators, as it seems, were predominantly gay to some degree or another. Strayer's students, including Bennett Hill, John Coughlin, who never finished his PhD with Strayer, all were gays that were questioned.