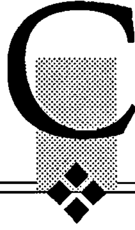

CABARET

See **Variety, Revue, and Cabaret Entertainment.**

CAESAR, [GAIUS] JULIUS (100–44 B.C.)

Roman politician, general, and author. Although of distinguished patrician lineage, Caesar was connected by marriage with the popular party. Accordingly, he found that his political career was hindered by the success of Sulla, who had triumphed over Marius, the leader of the popular forces. Refusing to divorce his wife Cornelia as Sulla had commanded, he found it prudent to join the military campaign in Asia Minor (81 B.C.). Exploiting his youthful good looks, together with the boundless charm for which he continued to be noted, he threw himself with relish into a scandalous liaison with king Nicomedes IV of Bithynia.

Returning to Rome, he maneuvered successfully in the treacherous Senatorial politics of the day, forming an alliance (triumvirate) with Pompey and Crassus. Beginning in 58 B.C. he undertook the nine-year conquest of Gaul, an achievement he commemorated in the *Gallic Wars*, a masterpiece of trenchant Latin prose. Eventually, unfavorable events in Rome forced him to return and, crossing the River Rubicon, he undertook the conquest of Italy itself. Becoming dictator, he initiated a vigorous program of legislation that foreshadowed the empire founded by his great-nephew Octavius, subsequently known as Augustus. On the Ides of March 44 Caesar was killed by a conspiracy headed by his associates Brutus and Crassus.

In addition to his three wives and several mistresses, Julius Caesar had a number of homosexual affairs. After serving as the catamite of Nicomedes, as mentioned, Caesar was (according to **Catullus**) the *cinaedus* or hustler to one Mamurra. Ceaseless in sexual as in every other activity, he earned the sobriquet of "Husband to every woman and wife to every man." Sex and money were essential barter for rising in the troubled period of Rome's Civil Wars. And in fact Octavius in turn was rumored to have ingratiated himself with his great-uncle through sexual availability.

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CALAMUS

This word derives from the Greek *kalamos*, a reed; and by extension a flute, fishing rod, and a reed pen. From the latter usage stems the Latin *lapsus calami*, a slip of the pen. Walt **Whitman** entitled the most overtly homoerotic and self-revealing section of *Leaves of Grass*, "Calamus." He was thinking of one particular variety of plant, the sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), as a symbol of male–male affection. It must have appealed to him also because of the the traditional association of the calamus (= reed pen) with the writer's profession. Yet, from Greek mythology he may have known the story of Calamus, the son of a river god, who was united in tender love with another youth, Carpus. When Carpus was accidentally drowned, the grief-stricken Calamus was changed into a reed.

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.

Cambacérès, 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, Cambacérès 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 Cambacérès 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.

Cambacérès' 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 Cambacérès' 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 Cambacérès have remained unpublished and his family has denied historians access to its private archives.