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Brian Joseph Martin. *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France.* Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2011. xvii + 379 pp. $85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-58465-923-5; $39.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-58465-956-3.

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Brian Joseph Martin's *Napoleonic Friendship* is a provocative book. Original and challenging, if not convincing on all points, it forces readers to take a new look at the very male world of life in the Napoleonic armies and, for its veterans, life after their military service. Though historically grounded in the world that emerged from the French Revolution, it has implications for both the historical study of other militaries and political debates today.

In his surprisingly intimate introduction, Martin makes it clear that this is a book that has not only political relevance but also personal resonance for him. Written in the shadow of the debates over "Don't Ask Don't Tell," the book explores the nature of the relationships between fellow soldiers in the Napoleonic army, examining the intimate bonds that grew between men who fought together, and, when they survived, often grew old together. According to Martin, this was a new form of intimacy between men that grew out of both the experiences of the Napoleonic campaigns and the revolutionary spirit of liberty, equality, and–especially–fraternity.

Martin does *not* make the claim that Napoleon's army was rife with homosexuals, closeted or otherwise, but he does show that many of them were something other than straight. To call someone from the first half of the nineteenth century either "gay" or "straight," either "homosexual" or "heterosexual," would be to make these relatively recent ideas into ahistorical or "essentialized" definitions of sexuality. This sort of ahistorical sexuality has been frowned on at least since Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1980), even if identifying essentialisms has become somewhat passé. Martin most often (though not always, about which see more below) follows the trend of looking for historically specific forms of intimacy and identity, rather than looking for evidence of modern forms of sexuality in other societies. That said, this is not a book about buggery. Martin is more focused on emotional bonds than erotic ones–or, as he puts it, he examines the "broad spectrum of masculine affection and intimacy in the ranks of the Grande Armée" (p. 1). Though by the end of the book, in the discussions of Emile Zola and Marcel Proust, Martin examines erotic physical contact between soldiers (and veterans), and even soldier fetishes among civilian men, he spends far more time talking about the ways that men bonded with each other emotionally: sharing bunks, protecting and teaching each other, and sharing houses and pensions through old age.

According to Martin, a new form of relations between soldiers began to emerge during the revolutionary wars, one more fraternal than the relations that had existed in the armies of Old Regime France. No one better exemplified this new form of friendship than Napoleon himself. Martin devotes much of the first part of the book to the relationships between Napoleon and three of his closest friends: Marshal Jean Lannes, and Generals Christophe Duroc and Jean-Andoche Junot. He makes quite a bit out of Napoleon's reaction to Lannes's death: "Napoleon wept," Martin writes, in the first words of the introduction (p. 1). Napoleon inspired a profound devotion from his soldiers, as many have pointed out. According to Martin, though, Napoleon also helped reshape the bonds between soldiers. Treating the soldiers with "fraternal fellowship" rather than "paternal care," Napoleon showed a way for soldiers to bond with each other, and, therefore, to be more effective soldiers (p. 203). After the fall of Napoleon at Waterloo, and the Restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, the newly established Napoleonic friendship lived on among veterans, and among French men like Stendhal's fictional Julien Sorel, born too late to take

part in the Napoleonic Wars but eager to live up to their legacy. The humiliations of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War and the carnage of the Paris Commune helped reshape the legacy of Napoleonic friendship, and the novelist Zola, in particular, was willing to investigate the sexual implications of French soldiers' inability to protect French women from the invasions of German soldiers, and French soldiers' willingness to start to explore the physical implications of their shared intimacy. In his discussion of the arrival of the First World War and the novels of Proust, Martin talks about the "emergence of the homosexual soldier" , which he calls "the homoerotic culmination of a slow evolution in French military culture stretching back to the foundations of Revolutionary fraternity and the century-long tradition of Napoleonic friendship" (pp. 255, 256).

Martin is particularly good at showing the extents and forms of homosocial bonding among soldiers and veterans. He argues that in Napoleon's armies, there were four different kinds of friendship: bedfellows, buddies, hometown friends, and mentors. The first–bedfellows–is the most surprising, but it was army policy for soldiers to share beds, thereby saving space and sharing warmth. Martin points to one episode where Napoleon sees a very tall soldier sleeping in his shared bed, with his feet hanging off the end. Napoleon ordered that one million francs be devoted to making soldiers' beds longer. Such money, Martin points out, could have instead been used to make the beds wider, or even to double their number, making the shared bed unnecessary; Napoleon's choice of longer beds shows how much of an entrenched custom bed sharing had become.

In one of the book's most successful passages, Martin shows just how much entering the Napoleonic army was a commitment to a life of bachelordom. Official policy since the Old Regime discouraged soldiers from marrying. "Military misogyny," as well as homosociality, enforced bachelorhood during military service, and the risks of punishment for having mistresses or frequenting prostitutes meant that bachelorhood often meant celibacy as well. "French soldiers … were expected to repress their emotional and erotic lives to maximize their performance in battle," which Martin sees as an "institutional repression of heterosexuality on a grand scale" (pp. 158, 159). Veterans were freed from the constraints of active soldiers, but had little to offer prospective brides; many veterans were disabled or disfigured, and destitute as well. The Napoleonic regime for which they fought had been replaced by the Restoration government, which was less than grateful, paying most of the veterans only half-pensions.

The result was that the homosocial lives that the soldiers led were not followed by a return to traditional family life, but rather by the creation of new forms of homosocial life in Restoration France. Indeed, well over half of the book concerns French society after Waterloo. Martin uses readings of several novels, as well as a variety of memoirs, to trace the lives of veterans who lived out the rest of their lives as bachelors, in the company of their fellow veterans. This was "a widespread phenomenon that grew out of the tradition of friendship established during the Empire: the shared retirement of many Napoleonic veterans," particularly in "homosocial pairs" (p. 148).

Martin's book poses many challenges to traditional military history. That said, it does not prove all of the claims it makes. The primary issue is that it is in many ways more a part of literary studies than history. The book's subtitle, "Military Fraternity, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France," is misleading; the book has far more to say about nineteenth-century French *literature* than about France itself. Martin's arguments suggest some excellent areas for archival research, particularly oncerning the lives of veterans in the nineteenth century, but Martin does not conduct that sort of research himself. Though the book uses a variety of sources, including memoirs and paintings, the bulk of the book is devoted to readings of canonical French novels. Stendhal and Victor Hugo each get chapters; Guy de Maupassant and Zola split a chapter; and two and a half chapters, comprising roughly one quarter of the book, are devoted to Honoré de Balzac. These are historically sensitive readings of the texts, to be sure, and Martin does an adequate job of using historians' research to situate the texts; what is lacking is any use of the texts to guide historical research, or even to critique historians' findings. It would be nice, for instance, to know if the books that Martin interprets were ones that many veterans were reading.

There are a few other aspects of the book that could have used some more attention. The author has a strong tendency toward repetition, and particularly what seems to be an inability to choose between different examples proving the same point (a tendency present from the very start, with the books' four epigraphs). Given Martin's ability to interpret paintings, some reproductions of some of the images would have helped (though it should be noted that the relative affordability of the book is a plus).

More substantively, there is the question of just how historical Martin's analysis is. For all of his post-

Foucauldian sensitivity to how sexual and emotional identities can evolve over time, there are two ways that Martin's analysis is problematic. The first is that some aspects of the homosocial intimacy that Martin identifies was not necessarily that new in Napoleon's army. While Martin does well to identify the impact of the revolutionaries' emphasis on fraternity in reshaping soldiers' behavior, there was much in terms of the revolutionaries' own behavior that resembled some of the traits Martin identifies as part of "Napoleonic friendship." The repeated embraces of the revolutionaries–most famously in the "kiss of Lamourette," but present quite often–seem to prefigure the homosocial intimacy that Martin identifies, as does the Rousseauist sentimentality that permeates the language of the 1780s and 1790s.[1]

The other element that undermines Martin's claims for historic specificity is his repeated incursions into the realm of myth. Martin sees the archetypes for Napoleonic friendship not only in the friendships between Napoleon and his closest friends, but also between Achilles and Patroclus in *The Iliad*, between Roland and Olivier in the *Song of Roland*, and even between Gilgamesh and Enkidu in *Gilgamesh*. In some cases Martin links those readings to representations of those pairs in nineteenth-century culture; in most cases, however, he does not (pp. 40, 45, 181, 251). It is, of course, possible to argue for a tradition of male intimacy–sexual or otherwise–that stretches from the ancient world to today; but while such readings are not without merit, they undercut Martin's moves toward the historical specificity of Napoleonic friendship.

All of which is to say again that this is a provocative book, and a challenging one. If it provides fewer answers than it claims, that does not diminish the importance of its questions. Martin has most likely taken the search for the answers as far as possible in the realm of nineteenth-century French fiction; for archival research, however, this would seem a realm ripe with opportunity.

Note

[1]. For the kiss of Lamourette, see Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York: Norton, 1990). See also David Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama: Robespierre's Sensibility and the Construction of Political Commitment in the French Revolution," *Representations* 114 (Spring 2011): 103-128.

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