

**Report on Research Travel to Paris, France, Supported by the Centre for European Studies  
Research Travel Award**

**May – June 2025**

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In the summer of 2025, I had the incredible opportunity to spend a month in Paris, France, because of the support of the CES Research Travel award. This research trip has been a dream of mine, and a fundamental part of my research, for over five years now. I completed both my cumulative undergraduate work, and am now in the process of writing my master's thesis, on the French homosexual group Arcadie. My thesis work seeks to explore how members of the group formed sexual and social identities, and to understand whether the term they used to refer to themselves: 'homophiles,' is truly a relic of the past, or whether its complex and intricate identity formation has subsisted into present iterations of queer group identity and citizenship. To be given the opportunity to go to the former location of the club, view archives and collections relating to their activities, and to be able to meet former members of Arcadie, has shaped me not only as an academic, but also as a citizen of the world. Being able to touch and interact with material that has shaped my research for nearly my entire university career fundamentally changed my perspective on my thesis: turning it from an abstract project into a living, breathing thing, infused with meaning and purpose because it affords previously marginalized individuals a safe space to share their experiences and recollections.

During my time in Paris, I visited two archives: the La Contemporaine Archives at the Université Nanterre, and the Conservatoire des Archives et des Mémoires LGBTQI, located at the Centre LGBT de Paris et l'Île-de-France. The Conservatoire has an extensive collection on Arcadie, including materials not referenced in the one existing full-length historical publication on the topic. The collection is overseen by a former member of Arcadie, and we had the opportunity to meet and go through the collection together at the Centre LGBT in Le Marais – a community hub for queer people in Paris, the top floor of which has been converted into the largest library of LGBTQI literature in France. Being able to turn through pages of archival documents, while being given context by a person who had experienced the events they were referencing, was incredibly meaningful for me as a scholar – and reminded me of the stark realities, joys, and fears of the individuals whose stories I have been tasked with representing. It also gave me the opportunity to hear directly from a former member about what mattered to him that I included in my thesis – something that will shape every step of my research process. We were also able to arrange for a future meeting online in the autumn, where I will be able to conduct a formal interview with him about his experiences in Arcadie. This would not have been possible had we not had the opportunity to meet in person first.

At the La Contemporaine collections in Nanterre, I was able to go through the personal files of another former member of Arcadie, who later joined with CUARH and FHAR, the radical activist groups that many academics have termed Arcadie's replacements. Because this member preserved documents from both his time in Arcadie and in CUARH and FHAR, I was able to trace the change in ideology and identity that occurred as he slowly moved away from one organization and towards another. There was a clear shift in his mentality and priorities, evidenced through the papers he saved, and the articles he authored for a wide variety of gay publications from the early 1980s onwards. He had also saved several copies of Arcadie's periodical, which, while I have been able to access these online, was a powerful and memorable thing to hold in my hand, especially after having studied the group for so long.

Overall, my month in Paris served as an important cornerstone of my thesis research. However, from an emotional and personal standpoint, it taught me much more than how to successfully complete archival research. When I left the Centre LGBT Paris, I remember feeling both the weight of responsibility, and also the incredible joy of having a wealth of unique material – material that mattered to a former club member – that I could now work with. Those hours I spent working through the Fonds Arcadie fundamentally changed the nature of my thesis, and they also reminded me why I believe doing historical work is so important. To be in a position to be a storyteller, especially when those stories are previously untold or lacking context, is truly the greatest privilege an academic can be afforded.



*My photo of a series of Arcadie's later periodicals, taken at the Centre LGBT de Paris et de l'Île-de-France, Courtesy of la Conservatoire des Archives et des Mémoires LGBTQI*