

# Maurice Girodias Collection MS 4054

32 letters to Paul Kahane and 1 letter to Michael Allen

The Collection covers the year's 1961-1994.

The physical extent of the collection is c. 81 items.

#### Introduction

Maurice Girodias was born in 1919, the son of Jack Kahane, who came from an Anglo-Jewish family in Manchester, and his French wife, Marcelle Girodias, whose family had made their fortune building railways in Argentina. Jack Kahane set up in business in Paris as a publisher and founded the Obelisk Press which produced the work of writers prevented by censorship laws from being published in their own countries, such as Henry Miller, as well as more conventional pornography. The young Maurice assisted his father and designed the cover for Miller's Tropic of Cancer when he was around the age of fourteen.

After his father's early death in 1939, Maurice used his father's Paris office to start a business publishing art books, and at the age of 20 managed to survive Paris, World War II, Occupation and paper shortages. Girodias took his mother's non-Jewish maiden name during World War II.

After the war, with his brother Eric Kahane, Girodias expanded operations, publishing Zorba the Greek (in French) and Henry Miller's Sexus, among other texts. The latter volume touched off a firestorm in France, with trials and arrests for obscenity. The 'Affaire Miller' ended with Girodias out of jail, but bankrupt and no longer in control of his company.

After a period of near destitution living in dingy hotel rooms with his brother on a diet of bread and potatoes, Maurice recovered sufficiently to start a new publishing business, the Olympia Press, in 1953 and employ his brother as a translator. He repeated their father's formula, publishing pornography, and commissioning struggling writers to produce these DBs, or Dirty Books, while at the same time issuing literary works by writers such as Henry Miller, Samuel Beckett and William Burroughs who could not find publishers in their own countries. The enterprise flourished and when Nabokov's Lolita was reprinted in America Girodias made a lot of money and diversified into restaurants and a nightclub.

Unfortunately his business sense had not improved and he had also made many powerful enemies through his activities and his crusade against censorship. His nightclub was closed down and Girodias was forced to leave France with several



convictions hanging over him. He went first to England and then to America where he set up another press and again became bankrupt. In order to avoid deportation he married again and lived in Boston but he was frustrated and unhappy there and returned to France in the 1970s.

Throughout the 1980s Girodias, his health gradually deteriorating, lived a precarious poverty-stricken existence in Paris, staying in cheap rooms or with friends and family. He was always talking of grand projects which would make his fortune, but these usually came to nothing. In 1990 his two volumes of autobiography, which for many years he had negotiated to have translated but could never agree what seemed to him reasonable terms, were reissued in French. It was while giving an interview about his life and struggles to a Paris radio station that Maurice Girodias collapsed and died of a heart attack at the age of 71.

MS 4054/1

Personal correspondence - chiefly with Paul Kahane 28 February 1978-30 November 1994

35 items

MS 4054/1/1

A letter from Paul Kahane, Maurice Girodias' cousin, to Mike Bott, Keeper of the Archives at the University of Reading detailing the donation of the letters of Maurice Girodias. 30 November 1994

1 item

MS 4054/1/2

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Catching up with Paul, his cousin, after a long absence of communication. Details the progress of his book, 'J'Arrive'.

28 February 1978

In the letter, Girodias is catching up with Paul, his cousin, after a long absence of communication. Details the progress of his book, 'J'Arrive'.

1 item

MS 4054/1/3

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Michael 'Mike' Allen. Fondly recalls his Aunt and Uncle, Nell and Fred Kahane. Includes some information on the progress of his book and his wife's career.



15 April 1978

In the letter Girodias fondly recalls his Aunt and Uncle, Nell and Fred Kahane. Includes some information on the progress of his book and his wife's career.

1 item

MS 4054/1/4

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. A short letter; wishes for a reunion.

15 April 1978

In the letter Girodias wishes for a reunion.

1 item

MS 4054/1/5

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Contains a brief description of his life including his past business ventures. 5 January 1979

In the letter Girodias gives a brief description of his life including his past business ventures.

1 item

MS 4054/1/6

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. On the passing of [his mother?]
20 January 1979
In the letter Girodias comments 0n the passing of [his mother?]

1 item

MS 4054/1/7

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Details a planned trip to London and his desire to visit Paul. 27 April 1979

In the letter Girodias details a planned trip to London and his desire to visit Paul Kahane.

1 item

MS 4054/1/8

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Learns of Michael Allen's death and details his plans for a new publishing venture.

30 March 1980

In the letter Girodias talks of Michael Allen's death and details his plans for a new publishing venture.



1 item

#### MS 4054/1/9

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. On his poor condition and the failure of his book in the U.S.

10 October 1981

In the letter Girodias discusses his poor condition and the failure of his book in the U.S.

1 item

## MS 4054/1/10

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Discusses a new book he is writing, and details his life to now including his immediate family.

14 November 1981

In the letter Girodias discusses a new book he is writing and details his life to now including his immediate family.

1 item

## MS 4054/1/11

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Refuses the kind offer of money and details the future prospects of his many old projects.

30 November 1981

In the letter Girodias refuses the kind offer of money and details the future prospects of his many old projects.

1 item

## MS 4054/1/12

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Regrets not being able to reunite yet, and details some of his current projects as well as a proposed trip.

5 March 1982

In the letter Girodias regrets not being able to reunite yet, and details some of his current projects as well as a proposed trip.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/13

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. His proposed trip is postponed but has strong hopes for the rest of the year.

29 March 1982

In the letter Girodias states his proposed trip is postponed but has strong hopes for the rest of the year.



A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. His trip is once again postponed. The note is handwritten on another letter to Maurice Girodias from Iradj Bagherzade of Time-Life which details plans for a publishing ideas meeting.

In the letter Girodias states his trip is once again postponed. The note is handwritten on another letter to Maurice Girodias from Iradj Bagherzade of Time-Life which details plans for a publishing ideas meeting.

1 item

c. 14 April 1982

## MS 4054/1/15

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Details of his negotiations with Time-Life which can be found on the rear of this letter from Iradj Bagherzade dated May 18 1982. 8 June 1982

In the letter Girodias gives details of his negotiations with Time-Life which can be found on the rear of this letter from Iradj Bagherzade dated May 18 1982.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/16

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Information about further Time-Life projects and trips involved with it. Also seeks accommodation for his grandson Seigfried's trip to England.

5 July 1982

In the letter Girodias gives information about further Time-Life projects and trips involved with it. Also seeks accommodation for his grandson Seigfried's trip to England.

1 item

## MS 4054/1/17

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Details of various projects including Time-Life. Requests lodgings for his sister and niece.

9 December 1982

In the letter Girodias gives details of various projects including Time-Life. Requests lodgings for his sister and niece.



A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. New Year wishes and thanks Paul for the hospitality given to Sylvie et. al.

5 January 1983

In the letter Girodias gives New Year wishes and thanks Paul for the hospitality given to Sylvie et. al.

1 item

MS 4054/1/19 A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Requires surgery on his cataracts and discusses lodgings for Paul's trip to Paris. 19 March 1983

In the letter Girodias explains that he requires surgery on his cataracts and discusses lodgings for Paul's trip to Paris.

1 item

MS 4054/1/20 A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Still awaiting surgery on his cataracts, and hopes to visit England soon.

21 May 1983

In the letter Girodias is still awaiting surgery on his cataracts, and hopes to visit England soon.

1 item

MS 4054/1/21 A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Advises Paul on his trip to Paris.

23 June 1983

In the letter Girodias advises Paul on his trip to Paris.

1 item

MS 4054/1/22 A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Details of his

Time-Life project; asks for a £500 loan from Paul.

18 August 1983

In the letter Girodias gives details of his Time-Life project; asks

for a £500 loan from Paul.

1 item

MS 4054/1/23 A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Thanks Paul for his loan of £300 and has plans to visit him on his way to

America.

24 September 1983



In the letter Girodias thanks Paul for his loan of £300 and has plans to visit him on his way to America.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/24

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Thanks Paul for a further £200.

2 November 1983

In the letter Girodias thanks Paul for a further £200.

1 item

## MS 4054/1/25

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Problems have returned to his right eye. Details family and project developments the latter of which he hopes to sign a contract for in the Spring.

7 February 1984

In the letter Girodias explains that problems have returned to his right eye. Details family and project developments the latter of which he hopes to sign a contract for in the Spring.

1 item

## MS 4054/1/26

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Hopes to repay the loan by August or September. Details numerous contract prospects including his project on 'Human Beauty' and the remaining parts of his autobiography.

19 May 1984

In the letter Girodias hopes to repay the loan by August or September. Details numerous contract prospects including his project on 'Human Beauty' and the remaining parts of his autobiography.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/27

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Comments on a very hectic period in both his personal and professional life. Hopes to finally have enough money to pay Paul a visit. 24 August 1984

In the letter Girodias comments on a very hectic period in both his personal and professional life. Hopes to finally have enough

money to pay Paul a visit.



A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Apologises for the delay in replying to Paul's letter in January due to personal ailments and professional setbacks.

16 August 1985

In the letter Girodias apologises for the delay in replying to Paul's letter in January due to personal ailments and professional setbacks.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/29

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Further developments concerning his autobiography and the possibility of a new contract deal on his 'Atlantis' project.

27 February 1986

In the letter Girodias details further developments concerning his autobiography and the possibility of a new contract deal on his 'Atlantis' project.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/30

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Some setbacks with the 'Atlantis' project. Also writes of some genealogical pursuits.

17 May 1986

In the letter Girodias details some setbacks with the 'Atlantis' project. Also writes of some genealogical pursuits.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/31

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Details of various projects and financial troubles.

9 June 1987

In the letter Girodias gives details of various projects and financial troubles.

1 item

#### MS 4054/1/32

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Hopes to meet

Paul soon. 16 May 1988

In the letter Girodias hopes to meet Paul soon.



A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. Discusses a family photo and further contract/project problems.

22 August 1988

In the letter Girodias discusses a family photo and further contract/project problems.

1 item

MS 4054/1/34 A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. In talks with Philip and Michael Wilson over publication of Vol. 2 of his autobiography.

13 January 1989

In the letter Girodias states he is in talks with Philip and Michael Wilson over publication of Vol. 2 of his autobiography.

1 item

# MS 4054/1/35

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Paul Kahane. A letter on the back of an article written by Maurice Girodias entitled 'President Kissinger' reporting 'on his run-in with Scientology, U.S. Immigration and the greatest German diplomat since Metternich.'

23 February [1989?]

A letter on the back of an article written by Maurice Girodias entitled 'President Kissinger' reporting 'on his run-in with Scientology, U.S. Immigration and the greatest German diplomat since Metternich.'

1 item

MS 4054/2

Correspondence with Secker & Warburg.

12 October 1961 - 20 May 1963

This section of the collection comprises of copies only of original letters sent between Maurice Girodias and Secker & Warburg.

22 items

MS 4054/2/1

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Thanking him for the lunch and conversation and is considering taking on Girodias' autobiography.

12 October 1961

In the letter Warburg thanks him for the lunch and conversation and is considering taking on Girodias' autobiography.



MS 4054/2/2

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Further consideration on Girodias' autobiography.

24 October 1961

In the letter Warburg gives further consideration on Girodias' autobiography.

1 item

MS 4054/2/3

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg. Replying to the letter of Oct. 24 on his proposed autobiography.

8 November 1961

In the letter Girodias replies to the letter of Oct. 24 on his proposed autobiography.

1 item

MS 4054/2/4

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Echoes Girodias' concerns of finding time for completion of the autobiography.

15 November 1961

In the letter Warburg echoes Girodias' concerns of finding time for completion of the autobiography.

1 item

MS 4054/2/5

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Interested in Girodias' progress on a book about censorship and freedom. 30 July 1962

In the letter Warburg is interested in Girodias' progress on a book about censorship and freedom.

1 item

MS 4054/2/6

Copy of Maurice Girodias' 4-page article in Books and Bookmen (August 1962), entitled 'Pornography is my Business' referred to by Frederick Warburg in the letter of Jul. 30 1962 (see 2/5). July- August 1962

Copy of Maurice Girodias' 4-page article in Books and Bookmen (August 1962), entitled 'Pornography is my Business' referred to by Frederick Warburg in the letter of Jul. 30 1962 (see 2/5).



MS 4054/2/7

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg in reply to the letter of Jul. 30 1962 (see 2/5 and 2/6).

4 August 1962

In the letter Girodias replies to the letter of Jul. 30 1962 (see 2/5 and 2/6).

1 item

MS 4054/2/8

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Urges Girodias to prioritise his autobiography.

8 August 1962

In the letter Warburg urges Girodias to prioritise his autobiography.

1 item

MS 4054/2/9

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg. A 7-page letter containing a proposal for his autobiography and many biographical details on his life and family.

2 January 1963

In the letter Girodias gives a proposal for his autobiography and many biographical details on his life and family.

1 item

## MS 4054/2/10

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. In response to the letter of Jan 2 1963 (see 2/9). Thinks there is good material for publication but is dubious about Girodias' fee expectations. Hopes that his editor, Roland Gant, will be in touch with Girodias.

11 January 1963

In the letter Warburg, in response to the letter of Jan 2 1963 (see 2/9), thinks there is good material for publication but is dubious about Girodias' fee expectations. Hopes that his editor, Roland Gant, will be in touch with Girodias.

1 item

## MS 4054/2/11

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg. Understands Warburg's apprehensions but informs him of some prospect of success with American publishers including Macmillan, Doubleday, and Dutton. 7 February 1963



In the letter Girodias understands Warburg's apprehensions but informs him of some prospect of success with American publishers including Macmillan, Doubleday, and Dutton.

1 item

## MS 4054/2/12

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Still apprehensive towards committing to a large advance. Has been in talks with Corgi regarding publication options.

18 February 1963

In the letter Warburg is still apprehensive towards committing to a large advance. Has been in talks with Corgi regarding publication options.

1 item

## MS 4054/2/13

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg. Further discussion on the involvement of Corgi and hopes to have a finished manuscript by summer.

22 February 1963

In the letter Girodias gives further discussion on the involvement of Corgi and hopes to have a finished manuscript by summer.

1 item

# MS 4054/2/14

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Looks forward to the completion of the book and Girodias' trip to London.

26 February 1963

In the letter Warburg looks forward to the completion of the book and Girodias' trip to London.

1 item

# MS 4054/2/15

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Further to his letter of Feb. 26 (see 2/14) requires draft chapters of the proposed book.

28 February 1963

In the letter Warburg, further to his letter of Feb. 26 (see 2/14), requires draft chapters of the proposed book.



## MS 4054/2/16

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg. Discusses a trip to London along with some of his business plans for the day.

12 March 1963

In the letter Girodias discusses a trip to London along with some of his business plans for the day.

#### 1 item

# MS 4054/2/17

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Michael Legat. Hopes that Legat remains firm on fee payment and that no money should be given to Girodias before submission of a substantial part of the manuscript.

19 March 1963

In the letter Warburg hopes that Legat remains firm on fee payment and that no money should be given to Girodias before submission of a substantial part of the manuscript.

#### 1 item

# MS 4054/2/18

A letter from Michael Legat to Frederick Warburg. Reiterates that no commitment was made on his part with relation to Girodias.

20 March 1963

In the letter Legat reiterates that no commitment was made on his part with relation to Girodias.

#### 1 item

# MS 4054/2/19

A letter from Frederick Warburg to Michael Legat. In response to the letter of Mar. 20. Is not surprised about developments regarding Girodias.

22 March 1963

In the letter Warburg, in response to the letter of Mar 20, is not surprised about developments regarding Girodias.

#### 1 item

## MS 4054/2/20

A letter from Maurice Girodias to Frederick Warburg. Presenting first segment to be included in book. With some handwritten notes.

6 May 1963

In the letter Girodias presents first segment to be included in book. With some handwritten notes.



MS 4054/2/21 A letter from Alice Watson (secretary to Frederick Warburg) to Maurice Girodias. Acknowledges safe receipt of Girodias

typescript 'Headache in the Caviar'.

15 May 1963

In the letter Watson (secretary to Frederick Warburg)

acknowledges safe receipt of Girodias typescript 'Headache in

the Caviar'.

1 item

MS 4054/2/22 A letter from Frederick Warburg to Maurice Girodias. Response to Girodias' piece referred to above (see 2/20 and 2/21) but is

not at all happy with it.

20 May 1963

In the letter Warburg responds to Girodias' piece referred to above (see 2/20 and 2/21) but is not at all happy with it.

1 item

MS 4054/3

Autobiographical/Bodley Head editorials 12 August 1977 - 21 September 1978

24 items

MS 4054/3/1

A letter from James Michie to Guido Waldman. Memo regarding the first volume of Maurice Girodias' autobiography, which is being considered for publication.

11 October 1977

In the letter Michie gives a memo regarding the first volume of Maurice Girodias' autobiography, which is being considered for publication.

1 item

MS 4054/3/2

A copy of the review of 'J'Arrive' by Maurice Girodias (his autobiography) from The Economist.

12 August 1977

A copy of the review of 'J'Arrive' by Maurice Girodias (his autobiography) from The Economist.



MS 4054/3/3 A letter f

A letter from James Michie [?] to Jimmy Wax. Has decided not to publish 'J'Arrive'.

25 October 1977

In the letter Michie [?] has decided not to publish 'J'Arrive'.

1 item

MS 4054/3/4

Review of 'J'Arrive'. Presumably the review referred to as enclosed in the correspondence dated Oct. 25 (see 3/3).

20 October 1977

Review of 'J'Arrive'. Presumably the review referred to as enclosed in the correspondence dated Oct. 25 (see 3/3).

1 item

MS 4054/3/5

Review of 'A close encounter of the first kind' by Maurice

Girodias [by Guido Waldman?]

17 January 1978

Review of 'A close encounter of the first kind' by Maurice

Girodias [by Guido Waldman?]

1 item

MS 4054/3/6

A letter from James Michie to Jimmy Wax. Expresses further concerns over the prospect of publishing Maurice Girodias' autobiography.

24 January 1978

In the letter from Michie expresses further concerns over the prospect of publishing Maurice Girodias' autobiography.

1 item

MS 4054/3/7

A letter from Guido Waldman to James Michie. Displays certain reservations over publication of Maurice Girodias'

autobiography. 28 February 1978

In the letter Waldman displays certain reservations over

publication of Maurice Girodias' autobiography.



MS 4054/3/8

A letter from James Michie to Jimmy Wax. Confirms his offer for British Commonwealth volume rights.

7 March 1978

In the letter Michie confirms his offer for British Commonwealth volume rights.

1 item

MS 4054/3/9

A letter from Guido Waldman to James Michie. Concerning a debt of monies to be paid to Cape by Girodias.

13 April 1978

In the letter Waldman writes concerning a debt of monies to be paid to Cape by Girodias.

1 item

MS 4054/3/10 A letter from James Michie to Jimmy Wax. Asks for developments regarding Girodias' payment of Cape debt.

6 June 1978

In the letter Michie asks for developments regarding Girodias' payment of Cape debt.

1 item

MS 4054/3/11 A letter from Jimmy Wax to James Michie. Waiting for a reply from Tom Maschler regarding the above (see 3/10).

8 June 1978

In the letter Wax is waiting for a reply from Tom Maschler regarding the above (see 3/10).

1 item

MS 4054/3/12 A letter from Jimmy Wax to James Michie. Further to his letter of Jun. 8 (see 3/11), encloses his letter to Tom Maschler.

16 June 1978

In the letter Wax writes further to his letter of Jun. 8 (see 3/11), encloses his letter to Tom Maschler.



MS 4054/3/13 A letter from Jimmy Wax to Tom Maschler. The enclosed letter described above (see 3/12).

16 June 1978

A letter from Jimmy Wax to Tom Maschler. The enclosed letter described above (see 3/12).

1 item

MS 4054/3/14 A letter from James Michie to Jimmy Wax. Further developments regarding the Girodias-Cape problem.

16 June 1978

In the letter Michie writes regarding further developments regarding the Girodias-Cape problem.

1 item

MS 4054/3/15 A letter from Jimmy Wax to James Michie. Relays Girodias' anxiety over the number of volumes published, hoping for two volumes instead of one.

20 June 1978

In the letter Wax relays Girodias' anxiety over the number of volumes published, hoping for two volumes instead of one.

1 item

MS 4054/3/16 A letter from Maurice Girodias to James Michie. Regarding both the volume and the Cape problem.

27 June 1978

In the letter Girodias writes regarding both the volume and the Cape problem.

1 item

MS 4054/3/17 A letter from James Michie to Guido Waldman. Memo hoping for comments on a draft letter to Jimmy Wax. Includes the draft letter with amendments.

6 July 1978

In the letter Michie is hoping for comments on a draft letter to Jimmy Wax. Includes the draft letter with amendments.



MS 4054/3/18 A letter from Guido Waldman to James Michie. Memo detailing payment arrangements.

7 July 1978

In the letter Waldman detailins payment arrangements.

1 item

MS 4054/3/19 A letter from James Michie to Jimmy Wax. Lays out the new terms for Girodias' books based on two volumes.

11 July 1978

In the letter Michie lays out the new terms for Girodias' books

based on two volumes.

1 item

MS 4054/3/20 A letter from Jimmy Wax from James Michie. Expresses some

concern about new terms. 16 August 1978

In the letter Wax expresses some concern about new terms.

1 item

MS 4054/3/21 Memo from James Michie to Maureen Rissik and others.

Requests final views on Girodias terms.

17 August 1978

In the memo Michie requests final views on Girodias terms.

1 item

MS 4054/3/22 Memo from Maureen Rissik to James Michie and others. Agrees with the view expressed by James Michie (see 3/21).

18 August 1978

In the memo Rissik agrees with the view expressed by James

Michie (see 3/21).

1 item

MS 4054/3/23 Memo from James Michie. Confirms the new terms that were laid out above in a phone call to Jimmy Wax (see 3/21, 3/22).

24 August 1978

In the memo Michie confirms the new terms that were laid out

above in a phone call to Jimmy Wax (see 3/21, 3/22).



MS 4054/3/24 A handwritten note by James Michie stating that Girodias has sacked Jimmy Wax as his agent.

21 September 1978

In the note Michie states that Girodias has sacked Jimmy Wax as his agent.