

“A Fabric of Infamy”: The Sodomitical Life of Jean François de Rougemont

JEFFREY MERRICK

University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

Men who sought sex with men, unlike women who sought sex with women, often did so in public places in eighteenth-century Paris. As a result the archives contain hundreds of reports about men the police called *infâmes*, “infamous types,” in the 1720s.¹ Michel Rey, who explored sexual relations between Parisian men in a number of articles published in the 1980s and 1990s, used the separate morals series but not the regular prisoners series in the Archives de la Bastille in his research.² The former series includes thirty-six, and the latter series includes sixty-seven dossiers from 1723 alone, with minimal overlap between them.³

I have used complementary documents from both series, especially the two memoirs appended to this analysis, to explore the exceptional case of

¹ On such terms, see Claude Courouve, *Vocabulaire de l'homosexualité masculine* (Paris: Payot, 1985); and Jean Luc Hennig, *Espadons, mignons & autres monstres: Vocabulaire de l'homosexualité masculine sous l'ancien régime* (Paris: Cherche midi, 2014).

² Michel Rey, “Les Sodomites parisiens au XVIII^e siècle” (MA thesis, Université de Paris VIII, 1980); Rey, “Police et sodomie à Paris au XVIII^e siècle: Du péché au désordre,” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 29 (1982): 113–24; Rey, “Justice et sodomie à Paris au XVIII^e siècle,” in *Droit, histoire, et sexualité*, ed. Jacques Poumarède and Jean Pierre Royer (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Publications de l'Espace Juridique, 1987), 175–84; Rey, “Parisian Homosexuals Create a Lifestyle, 1700–1750,” in *'Tis Nature's Fault: Unauthorized Sexuality during the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert Maccubbin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 179–91; Rey, “Police and Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century Paris,” in *The Pursuit of Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Haworth Press, 1989), 129–46; and Rey, “1700–1750: Les sodomites parisiens créent un mode de vie,” *Cahiers Gai-Kitsch-Camp* 24 (1994): xi–xxxiii.

³ The Archives de la Bastille (AB) are located in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris. The 1723 reports in the presorted morals series are located in one carton, AB 10254, but the 1723 reports in the unindexed prisoners series are scattered throughout thirty-seven cartons, AB 10764–10804. The only way to locate the relevant documents is to work one's way through the files one by one. Thirty-two of the cartons are available online through Gallica at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/manuscrits/dossiers-de-prisonniers>. For a critique of Rey's work based on all the cases from 1723, see my “Patterns and Concepts in the Sodomitical Subculture of Eighteenth-Century Paris,” *Journal of Social History* 50, no. 2 (2016): in press.

Jean François de Rougemont, which provides a detailed account not only of the arrest of an *infâme* but also of his adventures during the preceding decades.⁴ The first memoir, four pages of small script, resembles dozens of other records of arrests in some but not all ways. Like most cases, this one involves encounters and discussions in the gardens of the Luxembourg and Tuileries palaces. Unlike most cases, however, this one does not involve a young man employed by the police to entrap sodomites in these locations without actually engaging in “infamous” practices himself. It does involve a third party, an unnamed man whom we might as well call Monsieur X. Monsieur X had already met both Rougemont and Jean Travers, who were arrested together on 22 April 1723. He reported his conversations and their activities to the police. The second memoir, forty pages of large script, is much more unusual if not simply unique. No other dossier from 1723 or perhaps any other year contains such a narrative of previous misconduct constructed through consultations with individuals who had known the *infâme* in question.

Sometime during the weeks preceding 22 April 1723, Rougemont encountered X in the street and invited him into a tavern, where they took a private room and enjoyed some wine. Rougemont entertained X with tales from his own past intended to impress and entice. He discussed his travels through Italy with some noblemen, his conversion to Catholicism, and his relations with a “very pretty boy” named Petit, presumably younger than himself—although we cannot be sure, because the French word *garçon* was and is routinely applied to assistants and bachelors of any age and does not always mean “boy” in the English sense.⁵ Rougemont “wanted to fool around with the man and put his hand into his pants,” but X rejected the overture, so Rougemont left in a huff. Some days before the 22nd, X observed Travers “walking in the areas in the Tuileries where *infâmes* gather, seeking to prostitute himself or to corrupt young folks by showing his cock to them and to all those he judged to be of his taste,” that is to say, those who, based on their appearance and behavior, presumably shared his sexual interest in men. Travers recognized and accosted X in the Tuileries at noon on the 22nd, advised him not to hide “who he was,” that is to say, a sodomite, and assured him that he himself was “up for anything,” a phrase used by more than a few men to describe themselves and interest others. Like other *infâmes*, Travers knew where to go, what do to and say, and how to read gestures and language.

Travers, aged thirty-three and single, had already scheduled a rendezvous with Rougemont, aged thirty and single, in the Luxembourg that night at seven. We do not know, unfortunately, when and where they met for the first time—perhaps in one of the royal gardens or through mutual friends.

⁴ Since the main sources for this analysis are reproduced in full at the end of this analysis, I have provided footnotes only for quotations from the other documents in the two dossiers.

⁵ For examples, see AB 10795, fol. 84, and 10798, 206v.

It was common at the time for sexual connections to involve one older and one younger male, so the modest difference in their ages was somewhat unusual, and so was the fact that Travers invited X to join them. To his mind, three was not a crowd. We do not know why X frequented the Tuileries or why he accepted the invitation to the Luxembourg. He later stated that he went there only “to observe the unfolding of this infamous rendezvous,” but why, if not in order to denounce reprobates? Rougemont probably recognized X when they both showed up in the Luxembourg, and he speedily retreated behind the shrubbery with Travers. When X followed them, he found Rougemont “committing the crime of sodomy” and heard Travers complaining, “You’re hurting me. You don’t know how to fuck right.” This complaint, about his partner’s faulty technique rather than his own passive posture, suggests that he knew how it felt to be penetrated properly. Most conversations in the Tuileries and Luxembourg involved negotiations about acts and roles, and, for the record, none recorded in 1723 suggested denigration of passivity.⁶

Since X did not want to join the sexual activity in progress, Rougemont and Travers told him to leave, which he did, but not without telling Officer Simonnet, who had arrested many *infâmes*, what he had witnessed.⁷ Simonnet, on patrol outside the gardens, caught them in the act, with their pants down. As he led them away, apparently with their pants still down or off, some spectators applauded and commented, “All the scoundrels of this nature should be burned.” Since police reports do not contain much evidence about popular attitudes regarding sodomy, these words require commentary. The spectators invoked the statutory punishment, death by fire, modeled on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah but very rarely applied by French magistrates in the eighteenth century.⁸ But we should not make too much of the word “nature” here, since then, as now, it often simply meant “kind,” “sort,” or “type.” It is also significant that the memoir specifies that it was Rougemont’s resistance to arrest that provoked the outcry. If he had not resisted, perhaps the others would not have reacted as they did? Judging from many other cases, Parisians did not bother sodomites, because sodomites did not bother them.

In any event, Simonnet delivered both men to prison, Travers to the Petit Châtelet and Rougemont to For-l’Évêque. Following the common

⁶ This and other generalizations are based on the full set of cases from 1723, analyzed in my “Patterns and Concepts.”

⁷ As an exempt de la robe courte, Simonnet led one of the brigades under the command of the criminal lieutenant of the short robe, one of many officers in the bureaucracy of the Châtelet, the royal municipal court with jurisdiction over Paris.

⁸ On the unrepresentative cases of Benjamin Deschauffours (1726), Jean Diot and Bruno Lenoir (1750), and Jacques François Pascal (1783), see Maurice Lever, *Les bûchers de Sodome: Histoire des infâmes* (Paris: Fayard, 1985); as well as Claude Courouve, *L’affaire Lenoir-Diot* (Paris: Self-published, 1980); and Jeffrey Merrick, “Brutal Passion” and ‘Depraved Taste’: The Case of Jacques François Pascal,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 41 (2001): 85–104.

pattern, both ended up in the carceral hospital of Bicêtre—within days, in the first case, and within weeks, in the second case.⁹ On the 24th Travers informed Lieutenant General of Police d'Argenson that he had a job in the administration of indirect taxes in Rouen, that he had been in Paris for two months on business, and that he did not know why he had been arrested!¹⁰ In an effort to establish his respectability, Travers added that the duc de Charost had recommended him for his position and that he had resided at the duke's home during his time in Paris. He also dropped the names of the duchesse de Béthune and the tax farmer Lallement. Travers also tried to elicit d'Argenson's sympathy by noting that his widowed mother relied on his salary for subsistence. She assured d'Argenson that "if this son were guilty of the crime of which he is accused, the petitioner would regard his imprisonment," as opposed to execution, "as a mark of grace," but he "maintains his innocence before God, and the deed will most certainly not be proved."¹¹ D'Argenson could not have had any doubts about the deed, but he treated Travers like many others without previous records and whose relatives or protectors had requested their release. He allowed Travers to return to Rouen in August. The police, after all, no longer regarded sodomy, in and of itself and without aggravating circumstances, as a capital offense, any more than they regarded indefinite imprisonment as a practical solution to urban problems.¹²

The case of Rougemont was more complicated than that of Travers because he claimed to be a gentleman from Switzerland and, as it turned out, because he had a lengthy record. The police usually treated men of rank or wealth more gingerly and recidivists more severely than others. When Simonnet submitted his report to d'Argenson on the 23rd, the day after the arrests, he identified this case as "a matter of the greatest consequence, both for the Lord and for the public." Having invoked the interests of Divinity and society, he urged d'Argenson to consult the regent himself, the duc de Orléans,¹³ who understood the necessity of "putting a stop to these infamies."¹⁴ On the 26th Abbé Nicolas Théru, a professor at the Collège Mazarin who had denounced many sodomites in letters addressed to d'Argenson, reported that Rougemont was not a gentleman but a *bardache*, a word used to label the younger, passive, and often venal partner in sexual

⁹ Located in the modern suburb of Kremlin-Bicêtre.

¹⁰ Marc Pierre de Voyer de Paulmy, comte d'Argenson (1696–1764), was lieutenant general of police in 1720 and 1722–24. For more on his life, see Yves Combeau, *Le comte d'Argenson (1696–1764), ministre de Louis XV* (Paris: École des Chartes, 1999).

¹¹ AB 10798, fol. 217.

¹² As argued by Michel Rey in the articles cited in note 2.

¹³ Philippe d'Orléans (1672–1723), regent for the young Louis XV (b. 1710), since the death of Louis XIV in 1715.

¹⁴ AB 10798, fol. 207r–v.

relations between men.¹⁵ “Would a gentleman,” Théru scoffed, “commit such acts, and would he have no occupation?”¹⁶ According to an unsigned memo that was likely composed around the same time, the “abominable” Rougemont boasted about his sexual relations with several cardinals during his time in Rome and prostituted himself in the royal gardens of Paris. The unknown author, Monsieur Y, concluded that Rougemont could not be a gentleman and that d’Argenson should not heed any complicit “protectors” who requested his release, no matter how many or who they were.¹⁷

On 1 May Attorney General Joly de Fleury of the parlement of Paris, the royal appeals court with jurisdiction over a third of the kingdom,¹⁸ informed d’Argenson that he had heard about the arrest of “Martin de Rougemont for a crime that is only too common in Paris.” Fleury advised d’Argenson not to release this man and promised to supply a memoir about “this wretch’s libertine life.”¹⁹ He sent the memoir the next day, with a cover letter in which he characterized that life as “a fabric of infamy” and opined that Rougemont deserved “the most severe punishment,” or at least imprisonment for the rest of his days.²⁰ The parlement routinely involved itself in Parisian affairs, but the attorney general almost never intervened in sodomy cases. He noted that he had known about and looked for Rougemont for a long time but did not explain why. Someone named in the memoir—a clergyman, a judge, or a nobleman or woman, perhaps a personal acquaintance of the attorney general, must have complained to Joly de Fleury, who then consulted others and had the information compiled into the colorful narrative submitted to d’Argenson.

The clever but careless subject of this memoir was baptized Jean François Martin in Protestant Switzerland in 1693, give or take a year. His father owned property in the city of Lausanne, as well as in the village of Rougemont, and gentrified himself by appending “de Rougemont” to his name. A few years after his marriage, the elder de Rougemont threw out his dissolute wife and her young child, whom he refused to acknowledge as his own son. They found refuge over the border in Besançon, until the boy’s conduct caused problems, and then in Dijon, until the mother’s conduct caused problems. They or at least she returned to Besançon, where she died. After five years in

¹⁵ From the Italian bardassa, meaning “young prostitute,” from the Arabic bardag, meaning “young slave,” etymologically related to but conceptually distinct from berdache, the term applied by Europeans to two-spirit individuals among the indigenous peoples of the Americas. See the lexicons cited in note 1.

¹⁶ AB 10798, fol. 209.

¹⁷ AB 10795, fol. 87.

¹⁸ Guillaume François Joly de Fleury (1675–1756) was procureur général from 1705 to 1752. For more on his life, see David Feutry, Guillaume François Joly de Fleury (1675–1756): Un magistrat entre service du roi et stratégies familiales (Paris: École des Chartes, 2011).

¹⁹ AB 10795, fol. 61.

²⁰ AB 10795, fol. 63.

Dijon the orphan's itinerary included Paris (for four or five years), Lausanne, Dijon, Paris, Holland, and Paris again. It is not possible to reconstruct all the dates in the chronology, but it is not difficult to recognize the main themes in the biography. Rougemont found multiple employers and protectors, including a series of elite women who took a liking to him, but his sexual misconduct led to multiple expulsions. Along the way he deceived many people by hiding the fact that he had an unspecified venereal disease, as well as lying about his religious affiliation, both of which play large roles in the memoir.

Rougemont's first protector, who took him into his house, "noticed such bad propensities and such great corruption" in him that "he would have had him imprisoned if he had not left the city of Besançon." The boy fled, at age twelve, to avoid punishment. His second mistress in Dijon threw him out "on account of sodomy." He later confessed that "he had let himself be corrupted by some men" in that city, implying that he had not engaged in sodomy before. One of his Parisian protectors withdrew him from the Society of New Catholics, founded in 1634 to support Protestant converts, after he "made every effort to corrupt" two of his fellow recruits.²¹ The abbot of Sept-fonds expelled this "pernicious character" after three months and "strongly regretted keeping him for so long." The unnamed Abbé Z, who took him in, also threw him out, in January 1718, after he made "infamous propositions" to a young man. Another abbé warned another abbot not "to welcome a pestilence into his seminary." Last but not least, according to the final pages of the memoir, another Parisian protector reported that Rougemont "tried to corrupt her son." The surgeon who treated him at her request reported that "this scoundrel threw himself on" his assistant "in order to make him commit an infamous act."

As he traversed this landscape of protection and corruption, Rougemont lied more than once about his medical and religious history and compounded his misconduct in other ways. He first claimed that he had caught venereal disease in a brothel, which he visited "in spite of himself," and only later confessed that he had contracted it, not once but twice, "through infamous relations with men," which supposedly made it "almost incurable." His mother abjured Protestantism, for herself and her son as well, after they entered France, and Rougemont fulfilled his duties as a Catholic thereafter, but he joined the Society of New Catholics twice and told X that he had only recently converted. He found patrons willing to cover the expenses of his medical attention and religious instruction, but he also treated his own sister badly, spread rumors about one of his protectors, and robbed another one.

²¹ This incident brings to mind the young Jean-Jacques Rousseau's traumatic encounter with a so-called Moor in the hospice for converts in Turin in 1728, recounted in his *Confessions*, book 2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin, 5 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–95), 1:66–67.

Two more passages, both about clothing, deserve comment. Rougemont had “a woman’s outfit, masks, even beauty spots and makeup” in his chest because he attended balls, presumably masquerade balls, “with debauchees like himself.” What type of debauchees? Some men dressed like women, and some women dressed like men for such entertainments, so this costume is not unusual in and of itself. The contents of the chest do not suggest that Rougemont attended gatherings like the ones in the 1730s and 1740s that Michel Rey studied, in which sodomites adopted female attire and manners. When he left Paris in 1718, Rougemont “had nothing but a sorry cloth outfit and an overcoat.” When he returned in September of that year, supposedly from Holland, he had “two magnificent outfits and vests of precious fabric.” He said that he had passed for, that is to say, masqueraded as, a gentleman in that country, but of course he did not have a record of telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Maybe he had located and defrauded other protectors or even sold his services to wealthy Dutchmen, assuming that he had actually spent those months in the land of windmills and tulips at all.

Rougemont acquired or at least flaunted some splendid clothing, but he did not have a secure station or status in society. During his last stay in Paris, one of his female patrons wanted to place him with a merchant “so he could train for trade.” After his return to Paris, he pursued many options, from a place in the Swiss Guards to a job as page to a Protestant ambassador. He had recommendations, presumably from persons in Holland, but inasmuch as he had burned his bridges with many of his Parisian protectors, it is not clear why he thought he could succeed in any of these efforts. It is also not clear how many people Joly de Fleury or his agents consulted, especially about the years since Rougemont’s return to Paris. All of them, of course, portrayed him as a scoundrel, and we do not have his own account of his three decades, just the passing reference to travel in Italy, which is not even mentioned in the memoir.

Rougemont told X that he had traveled through Italy with some noblemen “en qualité de volontaire,” in a voluntary capacity, but it is not obvious what he meant by those words. As a volunteer, of his own free will, not under coercion, obviously, but as a servant or sexual companion to men with titles on a tour of antiquities? He presumably lacked the resources to pay his way to Rome, Naples, and more for any length of time. Y, the author of the unsigned memo, must have heard about Rougemont’s encounters with cardinals from Simonnet, who must have heard about them from X, who heard about them from the man himself. Abbé Thérus provided the only independent confirmation of the Italian journey. He reported that the tonsured but not ordained Jacques Louis Roger de Brenouille, aged thirty-two, had committed “the worst infamies” with Rougemont in Marseille, located on the route to and from Italy, and had also had sexual

relations with him in Paris.²² The same Roger, arrested on 29 May 1723, had a foursome with men, including the “pretty” valet Petit, arrested on 20 May, and another valet named Leblanc, arrested on 30 May.²³ Rougemont knew Petit and may have known Leblanc, who knew Joseph Sardet and Guillaume Gilbert, both unemployed, arrested on 30 May and 14 June. Last but not least, François Mahuet, arrested on 17 May and again on 13 October, acknowledged that he had had sex with Rougemont and also mentioned other *infâmes*.²⁴ Rougemont, in short, had connections not only in respectable society but also in the sexual underworld.

It is most unfortunate that Rougemont was not interrogated about his former and current connections, both high and low. As it is, we have a version of the history of a boy from a broken household, deprived of both parents, who may have sought maternal and paternal figures, which already sounds like an eighteenth-century picaresque or libertine novel. He made his way, as he aged, on the road and in several cities, not to mention a foreign country, through his personal qualities, as well as deception, by sometimes selling himself and sometimes robbing others. He worked as a servant in more than a few households but sometimes called himself a gentleman. He allowed himself to be corrupted, failed in many efforts to corrupt others, and yet ended up knowing how to operate in the sexual marketplace of the capital. Joly de Fleury’s memoir illustrates collective assumptions about rank, work, sex, health, faith, and fraud on the part of the clergy, judges, noblemen, and women who provided information about Rougemont’s checkered career. They tracked his progress through space and time in their world, with detours into deviant relations with men. Simonnet’s memoir, on the other hand, illustrates assumptions on the part of the *infâmes* themselves and the police about the rules of the game in the sexual subculture in which this man played multiple roles—passive, active, and venal—in a variety of circumstances.

With the two memoirs and more documents in hand, d’Argenson had to decide how to respond to multiple petitions, including two from Rougemont himself. He ignored the first one, in which this prisoner, like more than a few others, asked to be released to join the army.²⁵ He granted the second one, in which Rougemont asked to be transferred to more comfortable confinement in Saint-Lazare,²⁶ at the expense of unnamed rela-

²² AB 10794, fol. 11, repeated by Officer Haymier, an exempt de la prévôté et maréchaussée, an officer in charge of one of the brigades of the rural constabulary, who arrested sodomites in the Tuilleries. AB 10794, fol. 21r-v. Abbé Roger also took Sardet’s “virginity on the subject of sodomy” in Marseille. AB 10796, fol. 203.

²³ AB 10794, fol. 3.

²⁴ AB 10787, fol. 56. As the preceding examples suggest, the list of *infâmes* arrested in 1723 includes many servants and a significant proportion of men out of work.

²⁵ AB 10795, fol. 89.

²⁶ A prison populated largely by children who were being punished and maintained by their families, Saint-Lazare (107 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Jacques) was connected to the monastery of the Prêtres de la Mission and had been founded by Saint Vincent de Paul.

tives in Besançon.²⁷ Joly de Fleury expressed misgivings but left the matter in d'Argenson's hands,²⁸ and the transfer of "one of the most notorious sodomites" took place on 15 June.²⁹ In October Abbé Paillet, prefect of boarders at Saint-Lazare, reported that his charge had behaved well and, suggesting that "longer detention will not make him wiser," recommended his release.³⁰ In December Abbé Vandermeulen cited both Prefect Paillet and Prior d'Aillon of the Carthusian monastery, where Rougemont had also spent time,³¹ and criticized Abbé Joly (most likely our Y) for his accusations about the prisoner's "supposed wickedness." Vandermeulen noted that Joly had told Paillet that Rougemont tried to rape his sister but then denied that he had said so, Vandermeulen implied, because Joly assumed that no sodomite (governed by a distinctive and exclusive taste for men?) would try to rape a woman, and he did not want to undermine his case against this "abominable" man. Vandermeulen, for his part, insisted, rather curiously, that all the surgeons agreed that "a man does not get the pox from another man. It must be with the other sex."³² This abbé proposed that Rougemont, once cured, should marry "a good and decent woman," a protégée of the duchesse de Saint-Aignan, the woman whose address Rougemont had given at the time of his arrest, most likely because he was employed there. "If he has lived like a libertine, this marriage, a fortunate one for him, will draw him out of it." The duchess obviously supported the marriage, and so did Vandermeulen's mother, whose doctor intended to marry Rougemont's sister!³³ Joly de Fleury's memoir mentions a sister whom Rougemont guided or rather herded from Lausanne to Dijon, where she was expected to join a convent. Perhaps she changed her mind, or perhaps there was more than one sister.

In any case, Rougemont's high and low lives intersected again during these negotiations. Madame Vandermeulen, who knew d'Argenson, assured him on 23 December that many "persons of honor and distinction" spoke well of the prisoner. She believed that the plan she had devised with the duchess would work even if he did have a history of sodomy: "If he could have given himself over to the horrible vice of which he is accused by Abbé Joly, who fluctuates a good deal on this score, the proposed marriage will

²⁷ AB 10794, fol. 99.

²⁸ AB 10794, fols. 96–97.

²⁹ AB 10794, fol. 100.

³⁰ AB 10794, fol. 108r–v.

³¹ Not documented in AB 10794 or 10798.

³² Vandermeulen cited Petit, that is to say, the surgeon Jean Louis Petit (1674–1750), who discussed venereal diseases in *L'art de guérir les maladies des os* (1705) and *Traité des maladies des os* (1723). In another case, the abbé acknowledged that sodomites should be burned or at least deported to Louisiana but requested an exception for his niece's excellent music teacher. AB 10254, dossier Deu.

³³ AB 10794, fols. 104–5, 106r–v.

draw him out of it.”³⁴ Joly de Fleury, who had observed the physical evidence of Rougemont’s disease during a routine visit to Saint-Lazare, opposed the release and the marriage. He believed that the prisoner, “who has already deceived several people under the pretext of piety and penitence,” was not cured, morally any more than medically, but he once again left the matter in the lieutenant general’s hands.³⁵ Since Rougemont’s relatives could no longer pay his board and he “promises to conduct himself without reproach in the future,” d’Argenson released Rougemont in January 1724.³⁶ On 27 April Simonnet informed his superior that he had observed several sodomites committing “abominations” at the Half-Moon, the roughly semicircular vestige of the former fortifications adjacent to the Porte Sainte-Antoine. He noticed Rougemont there with a “boy” and overheard Rougemont telling his young companion that he had done time in Bicêtre and Saint-Lazare and that “it was not safe in this spot.” Simonnet concluded that Rougemont’s imprisonment had not “converted” him, “since he has begun his wicked affairs and abominations again.”³⁷ D’Argenson consulted the regent and instructed officers Simonnet and Haymier to locate witnesses and collect evidence about the continued misconduct.

The lieutenant general also received another unsigned memo (probably from Y, given the repetition of the charge that Rougemont “prostituted himself”) that mentioned Joly de Fleury’s memoir, which others had evidently heard about. The author reported that the “abominable” man and other known *infâmes* had frequented one Deschauffours at two different addresses and that he also did “a very good business” in Versailles, presumably by selling his services to noblemen.³⁸ Deschauffours, of course, was Benjamin Deschauffours, arrested in July 1725 and executed in May 1726 for abduction, sodomy, procuring, and homicide.³⁹ Between December 1725 and November 1726, the police arrested a dozen of Deschauffours’s “accomplices” and imprisoned them in the Bastille. One of them, the painter Jean Baptiste Nattier, committed suicide, but most of them were released

³⁴ AB 10794, fols. 110–11.

³⁵ AB 10794, fols. 112–13.

³⁶ AB 10794, fol. 116.

³⁷ AB 10794, fol. 118r–v.

³⁸ AB 10794, fol. 120. Deschauffours relocated more than a few times. The addresses cited in the memo are the hôtel de Charny on rue des Barres and the hôtel de Bussy, presumably Buci. For the cases of two Parisian valets, both eighteen, who sold their services at Versailles, see AB 10782, fol. 11, and AB 10796, fol. 2.

³⁹ On this case, see Lever, *Les bûchers de Sodome*, chap. 8. The copies of the trial records in Bibliothèque nationale, Manuscrits, Fonds français 10970, are available online through Gallica and in print in Ludovico Hernandez, *Les procès de sodomie aux XVI^e, XVII^e, et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Curieux, 1920), available online through Hathi Trust at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100171128>. For an English version, see Jim Chevallier, *Sodomites, Tribads and “Crimes against Nature”* (North Hollywood: Chez Jim Brooks, 2010), available online through Google Books at <https://books.google.com>.

sooner rather than later.⁴⁰ Rougemont is not mentioned in any of the relevant documents.⁴¹ But the order for his arrest, issued in February 1726, although prompted by his misconduct, was probably made more likely by the combination of his failure to marry his employer's protégée and his association with a notorious criminal. The printed and online indexes to the Archives de la Bastille list no other references to Rougemont, so perhaps he escaped Paris again and continued his adventures elsewhere.

Most of the research on *infâmes* by Michel Rey and others explores patterns and changes in the subculture, rather than the lives of the individuals who populated it, largely because we do not have much information about most of these people. A few told police decoys a good deal about themselves in order to impress and entice them, and the decoys recorded what they remembered. The garrulous Léonard Gobert regaled one decoy with "the story of his adventures on the subject of sodomy" and assured him that he "did not like women at all, and his whole pleasure was to have something to do with good looking boys, and he had been of this inclination all his life."⁴² Only a modest number of dossiers include such evidence about biography and psychology, and we do not know how much of it was genuine and how much was pronounced and performed for the purposes of seduction. Rougemont, if we accept his version of himself, did not always have a "taste" for men. He acquired it, presumably in Dijon, if not in Besançon, but once he acquired it, he could not be cured of it or converted from it. He cultivated female patrons, but he declined to marry. We know this much and most of the rest not from Rougemont himself but from others who liked and helped but eventually scorned him. His life in the provinces and the capital, in noble households and royal gardens, reminds us that we have more work to do in order to understand the experience of eighteenth-century sodomites as they moved across borders and boundaries. We know almost nothing about same-sex relations in cities like Dijon,⁴³ and we have studied *infâmes* mostly in the underworld without analyzing the multiple dimensions of the familial, vocational, religious, and medical experiences that connected them to the larger world they inhabited. In that regard the remarkable "fabric of infamy" woven in the appended documents provides a useful object lesson.

⁴⁰ Listed in François Nicolas Napoléon Ravaïsson-Mollien, ed., *Archives de la Bastille*, 19 vols. (Paris: A. Durand et Pedone-Lauriel, 1866–1904), 14:40.

⁴¹ Or, for that matter, in the so-called grand mémoire, an unsigned list of names in AB 10895, fols. 154–65, printed in Claude Courouve, *Les assemblées de la manchette* (Paris: Self-published, 1987). Only future research can determine how many other dossiers in the prisoners series, from the years preceding and following the execution, mention Deschauffours.

⁴² AB 10254, dossier Gobert.

⁴³ The parlement of Burgundy adjudicated only one case of sodomy in the eighteenth century. On 23 July 1739 it sentenced Lazare Farcy to the galley and banished François Jacqueron for nine years. Benoît Garnot, *On n'est point pendu pour être amoureux: La liberté amoureuse au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2008), 116.

It remains to be seen if the prisoners series in the Archives de la Bastille includes other exceptional biographies and what the evidence from 1723 as a whole has to do with the context of the Regency, the period of the minority of Louis XV, commonly described as a period of sexual laxity. One dossier mentions an unknown order “against sodomites” issued by the regent,⁴⁴ but the proliferation of arrests, presumably in response to the visibility of the subculture, did not entail a multiplication of executions, as in London and several Dutch cities around the same time.⁴⁵ Throughout the eighteenth century the police of Paris sought not to eradicate sodomy through sporadic exemplary punishment, as in the unrepresentative case of Deschauffours, but to manage it through routine surveillance and confinement. The clergymen and noblewomen who turned against Rougemont, though dismayed if not appalled by his sexual misconduct, did not see him solely and simply as an *infâme* but rather as a disreputable character guilty of various offenses. At least some of them assumed that he could change his ways through conventional matrimony and economic security. Even Joly de Fleury, who knew the whole story, or at least the segments and versions of it that his sources reported, did not demand death at the stake. Despite Parisian repression, in other words, *infâmes*, especially resourceful ones like Rougemont, could locate patrons and partners, elude police, survive prison, and continue their daily lives inside and outside the subculture.

APPENDIX

Du 22 Avril 1723.⁴⁶

[205] Memoire concernant Le nommez Jean francois de Rougemont, qui se dit gentilhomme du canton de Berne en suissee, agé d'environ 30. ans demeurant rue Cassette chez M^{de}. de s^r. agnian Doüairiere et Jean Travert, natif du perche demeurant chés mr. le Duc de Charot, ayant trouvés lesd. nommés au Luxembourg ensemble faire le peché de sod. derriere un Bosquet a huit heures du Soir, Premierement,

Un particulier ayant trouvé aux thuilleries plusieurs fois led. Jean Travert Se promener dans les endrois ou Ses infâmes S'assemblent, cherchant a Se prostituer, ou a corrompre de jeunes gens en leurs montrant Son V. et a tous ceux quil jugeoit de Son goust, led. Jour Susd. Led. Travert trouva ced. particulier a lheure de midi aux Thuilleries et vint a luy, led. Travert luy dit qu'il Estoit ravy de le trouver, et qu'il ne falloit pas dissimuler qui il estoit, et que pour luy, il etoit de tout, led. Travert demanda aud. partie. Sil y avoit longtems quil n'eut decharg. et Ensuite luy dit led. Travert qu'il

⁴⁴ AB 10772, fol. 73.

⁴⁵ For what it is worth, the twelve (of twenty-four) cartons from 1722 available online include eighteen dossiers, and the thirty-two (of forty-one) cartons from 1724 available online include twenty-two dossiers.

⁴⁶ AB 10798, fols. 205–6v.

Author: Please verify that the French in this article looks OK. Neither our copyeditor nor our proofreader are fluent enough to help with this.

avoit faite une belle partie le Soir du meme jour Sur les 7. heures au Luxembourg dans lallée a costé des Chartreux avec led. de Rougemont ou ils [205v] ne manquerent pas de Se trouver au temps marqués, Led. Travert y estant venu le premr. vint joindre led. particulier quil avoit engagé a estre de leur Partye luy disant qu'un 3e. n'estoit point de trop et led. particulier ny estoit venu que pour Examiner l'execution de ce rendés vous infame, et comme Ils discourtoient en semble. led. de Rougemont arriva et aussitot Led. Travert alla audevant de luy et laissa led. particulier, et Se furent assoir tous les deux derriere un bosquet, ou led. particulier un moment apres fut les rejoindre, et les ayant trouvés tous les deux desculotez et led. de Rougemont commettre le pechez de Sod. et led. Travert dit aud. de Rougemont vous me faites mal vous ne Scavez pas fotre. comme il faut et apres dire tous les deux aud. particulier, puisque tu ne veut rien faire laisse nous en repos, et Il Se retira Le Sr. Simonnet vint avec Ses gens accompagné du Suisse du costé de la porte des Carmes, furent arrester de lorde du Roy lesd. nommés et les prirent tous les deux Sur le fait ayant leurs culottes bas, et les conduisirent dans cette Equipage honteux et Infames chez led. Suisse avec laplaudissement de plusieurs Seigneurs et autres qui Se trouverent a cette Tragedie abominable disans d'une commune voix [206] que cestoit bien fait et quil failloit bruler tous les Scelerats de cette nature, ce fut led. de Rougemont qui causa cette huée du peuple ne voulant pas Se rendre aux ordres du Roy et ensuite fut conduit par le sr. Simonnet led. de Rougemont au fort Levêque, et led. Travert au petit chatelet sur les neuf heures du soir,

Led. de Rougemont a dit avoir esté a Rome Naples et partoutte L'italie, avec plusieurs Seig. en qualité de volontaire, et quil ny avoit pas Longtems qu'il Sestoit rendu Catholique, Led. de Rougemont Trouva il y a quelque tems led. particulier cy dessus nommés, dans la rue Dauphine et l'invita a entrer dans un cabaret Et Se mirent Seul dans une chambre et fit venir led. de Rougemont Bouteille et ensuite voula badiner avec led. particulier et luy mettre la main dans Sa Culoe, led. de Rougemont voyant que led. particulier ne vouloit pas consentir a ce quil Souhettoit de rage et de depit Senfut et laissa la led. particulier,

Dans la Conversao. qu'ils urent ensemble auparavent led. de Rougemont dit aud. particulier qu'il connoissoit un fort joly garçon nommé Petit avec qui Il S'estoit diverty quelque fois estant aussy de tout et quil demeuroit en qualité de valet de chambre [206v] Ches Mr. Le Chevallier de Breuil qui demeure rue ste. Dominique au Couvent de St. Joseph et il est a remarquer que le Sr. Simonnet a depuis longtems une ordre du Roy d'arrester led. nommé Petit* pour le fait de Ses infamies Et led. de Rougemont a dit aussy aud. particulier quil avoit decliné Son nom et Sa demeure aud. Petit pour l'aller voir, et que led. Petit a fait plusieurs fois,

Depuis ce memoire escrit Le nommé Travert a dit qu'il avoit des Emplois a Roüen et quil estoit a Paris pour un procés, Il est garçon agé de trente trois ans natif de Ceton au Perche.

*lequel na pu encore joindre

Memoire⁴⁷

[65] Le Sr. Martin de Rougemont, est âgé pres de 30. ans il est nés en suisse dans le cantont protestant de Berne, son pere étoit un bourgeois de Lausane qui avoit un petit domaine dans un village nommé Rougemont, dont celui-cy a pris le nom.

Le sr. martin Pere quelqs. [65v] années apres son mariage chassa sa femme dont il ne pourroit plus souffrir n'y supporter les desreglemens, et elle amena avec elle le fils d'ont il s'agit icy qui n'estoit alors agé que de trois ans, et que le pere ne vouloit pas reconnoître pour son fils pretendant que c'estoit un fruit de debauche de sa femme.

Cette pauvre malheureuse [66] passa en Bourgogne avec son fils, et Elle trouva la protection a Besançon aupres de Mr. Phelipe President a Mortier de ce Parlemt. on fit faire abjuration a la mere et a l'enfant et Mr. le Presidt. Philipe le prist chés luy pour le faire eslever d'une maniere honneste.

Ce jeune homme est resté jusqu'a l'age [66v] de 12. ans ou environs chés Mr. le President Philipe. La crainte d'un chatimt. violent dont ce Presidt. l'avoit menacé le porta a s'enfuir de ches luy, c'est du jeune homme même que l'on tient ce fait, mais il n'a pas voulu declarer le Sujet de l'indisposition du President contre luy.

Ce jeune homme estant sorty de Besançon [67] vint avec Sa mere a Dijon, des dames Charitables, recueillirent la mere et le fils, et l'on mit la mere dans une chambre, et l'on eut Soin de luy procurer du travail, et de tout ce qui estoit necessaire pour sa Subsistance, mais quatre ans après, les dereglemens de cette femme obligèrent les dames qui en prenoient [67v] soin de la faire sortir de Dijon, ou elle étoit un sujet de scandale, elle revint a Besançon et y mourut quelque tems après.

Pour ce qui est du jeune homme d'ont il s'agit Madame Valot le plaça ches sa fille Madame de Cronombour, il y a Servy portant la livrée l'espace de trois ans Madame la premiere [68] Presidente de Berbisy morte depuis peu, et dont le mary est des parens de Mr. de Cronombourg, ayant gouté les manieres de ce jeune homme le demanda a Madame de Cronombourg, et de son agrement elle le prit ches elle, il y a demeuré un peu plus de deux ans, et elle la mis dehors quelques tems après pour des sujets de sodomie.

[68v] Martin estant sorty de chez madame de Berbisy vint a Paris, il y a fait un Sejour de quatre ou cinq ans, il en a passé une partie au service, il a dit luy mesme a Mr. l'abbé Gagne de Dijon qu'il avoit servy et porté la livrée ches madame la Marquise de Villesavin fille de Mr. le President le Gouts de Dijon, il a passé aussi quelque tems [69] pendant ce sejour a la Communauté des nouveaux Catholiques dont madame la Presidente de Nesmond prend soin, il paroist même qu'elle l'avoit pris en affection; il a

⁴⁷ AB 10795, fols. 65–84v. The secretary who drafted the summary sheet underlined passages that “illustrate the worst features of the corrupt actions of Rougemont.”

esté pareillement l'espace de quatre ou cinq mois chés un nomme le Chlir. d'Alincourt, sur le pied d'un jeune homme qu'on instruisoit des Dogmes de la Religion Catholique.

[69v] Martin ayant quitté Paris vint a Septfonds, il y a passé environ trois mois, Chassé de ce Monastere il prist le dessein de retourner a son pays dans l'esperance d'y receuillir quelque partie de la Succession de son pere, il vint donc a Lausane, et y ayant trouvé une Soeur qu'il y avoit, il luy persuada de le suivre en france, et luy fit esperer qu'il luy procureroit une [70] Etablissement, ou elle seroit plus a son aise qu'elle ne l'estoit dans son païs, Son pere l'ayant laissé entre les mains d'une tante qui la faisoit Subsister.

Martin S'estant rendu maître de Sa Soeur la conduisit pendant tout le Cours du voyage avec la vigilance et l'attention d'un Conducteur de Galeriens, Car dans la Crainte que le [70v] repentir, ne la porta a S'echaper, il la faisoit marcher devant luy, en la faisant Souvent aller beaucoup plus vitte qu'elle n'auroit souhaitté, et a peine estoit-elle arrivée dans une auberge qu'il l'enfermoit sous la clef apres avoir eû Soin de bien examiner, s'il n'y avoit pas quelque endroit dans la Chambre par ou elle peut S'echapper.

[71] Martin conduisit de cette Sorte Sa soeur jusqu'a Dijon y estant arrivée, la Providce la fit tomber entre les mains de Madame Valot qui la pre-senta a Mr. l'abbé Gagne, et le pria de l'instruire de la Religion Catholique, cette instruction a eû une Si heureux Succés qu'il y a lieu d'esperer qu'elle sera une bonne Religieuse.

Cependant la Premiere chose que fit Mr. Gagne [71v] fut de separer cette jeune fille de la Compagnie de Son frere, qu'il jugea avec raison ne pouvoir luy estre que tres prejudicable et ce jeune homme Se trouvant sans un Sol prist le parti de Se remettre dans le Service.

Il entra pour cet effet ches Madame la Presidente Bouhier la jeune qui est morte depuis, Comme cette maîtresse l'affectionnoit, [72] Martin prist occasion dela, de reprendre sur le Compte de cette Dame des bruits tres desavantageux a Sa reputation, Mr. l'abbé Gagne qui en fut averty en averty la famille des Bouhiers, et l'on le Chassa honteusement.

Se voyant Sans resource du Costé de Dijon, il Songea a retourner a Paris, et Mr. l'abbé Gagne eut la bonté de luy donner des [72v] lettres de recommandation pour Madame de la Michaudiere la mere cette Dame a eû pour luy une affection de mere, et a pourvû a tous ses besoins pendant plus d'une année, l'ayant trouvé ches elle quatre mois apres son arrivée, elle pria Mr. l'abbé — de travailler de Son costé a placer Solidement ce jeune homme, des la premiere Conversation [73] que Mr. l'abbé — eut avec lui, il luy declara ce qu'il n'avoit osé dire a Madame de la Michaudiere Sçavoir qu'il estoit attaqué d'une maladie venerienne et pria de luy donner le moyen de Se tirer dela, il eut Soin de dire pour engager ledit abbé — a avoir de la bonte pour luy que ce mal'heur étoit la punition de la premire foiblesse qu'il eut eû de [73v] sa vie faisant entendre qu'il avoit été entrainé malgré luy dans un mauvais lieu, ledit Sr. abbé en parlat a Made. de la Michaudiere,

et on le mit Successivement entre les mains de deux Chirugiens dont les remedes luy furent inutiles, les Chirugiens dirent que c'estoit la faute du jeune homme qui par Son incontinance ne faisoit qu'irriter Son mal.

[74] Cependant Martin avoit trouvé moyen par le petit credit qu'il avoit auprés de Made. de Nesmond de rentrer aux nouveaux Catholiques mais quatre mois aprés Sa rentrée Madame de la Michaudiere Sachant l'estat dans lequel il estoit, eut la Charité de d'aller prendre dans son Carosse et de le Conduire a l'hostel Dieu, ou elle le mit entre [74v] les mains d'une mere de Salles qui a sa recommandation eut des soins tres particuliers de luy.

Martin a esté trois mois a l'hostel Dieu, un des Chirugiens de l'hostel Dieu S'aperçut bien tost qu'outre le mal qui paroisoit et qui estoit une grosse fievre continüe, il en avoit une autre qui cachoit, et qui estoit la maladie venerienne [75] il entreprit de le guerir, et Se flattant même pendant quelque tems d'y avoir reussy, au moins cette mere de Salle trompée par le Chirugien assura quelques jours avant Sa Sortie de l'hostel Dieu, que l'on pouvoit compter sur une guerison parfaite. Comptant Sur cette parole le meme abbé — le retira chés luy jusqu'a ce que Madame de la [75v] Michaudiere lui eut trouvé un marchand ches lequel on peut le faire entrer, Car comme il ne manque pas d'ouverture d'esprit, on crut d'evoir le placer chés quelque marchand ou il peut Se former pour le Commerce, mais a peine y fut-il qu'il retomba malade, et le Chirugien qui le vit dit qu'il n'etoit point guery de Sa maladie venerienne, Ce fut alors [76] que Martin declara que c'estoit la Seconde maladie venerienne qu'il avoit eüe, Car comme on vouloit exiger de luy qu'incontinent aprés Son retablissement il Se prepara a passer par les plus grands remedes, il dit alors qu'il ne S'y resouderoit jamais, parce que y ayant désja passé dans le Cours de Son premier Sejour a Paris, il avoit courû risque d'y perdre la vie [76v] il poussa meme Sa Confce. jusqu'a á avoüer que c'etoit dans le Commerce infame des hommes qu'il avoit contracté ces deux maladies veneriennes, et on Sçait que lorsque ce mauvais mal vient par une telle voie, il est presque incurable, il avoüa cencore que ce Crime avoit esté le Sujet qui l'avoit fait Sortir de chés Madame de Berbisy [77] et que S'estant laissé corrompre par quelques hommes de Dijon qu'il nomma, Madame de Berbisy qui en fut avertie l'avoit mis dehors, il fust ensuite (comme poussé par un esprit de penitence) l'histoire de la vie qu'il avoit menée depuis ce temps la et qui n'estoit qu'un tissu d'infamie toutes de cette espece, c'est ce qui fit prendre [77v] la resolution audit Sr. abbé de S'en defaire Sans bruit aussy tost qu'il Seroit retably, Mais ses nouveaux dereglements. hasterent l'execution de sa resolution, car a peine commençoit il a Se mieux porter qu'il Se mit a courir les bals avec des debauchés comme luy, on fit ouvrir Son coffre, et on y trouva un habit de femme, des masques, et jusqu'a des mouches et [78] du fard, il avoüast naivemt. qu'il avoit eü ces habits avant que d'aller a Sept fonds, et que la raison pour laquelle il ne S'en esoit pas defait lorsqu'il entra a Septfonds, c'est par ce qu'il ne Sçavoit pas s'il ne Seroit pas obligé

de quitter cette maison et de retourner au monde, un jeune homme de Sa connoissance qui venoit de tems en tems consulter [78v] le même abbé — Sur un dessain qu'il avoit de Se consacrer a Dieu dans la Religion l'avertit dans Ce tems la même que de puis quelques jours il luy avoit fait des propositions infames, ainsy Sans plus differer ledit sieur abbé le Chassa, c'estoit Sur la fin du mois de janvier 1718. Comme l'abbé Dufranc Se melloit de ce jeune homme, on crust devoir [79] lui communiquer ce qui vient d'estre exposé, et ce fut alors qu'il déclara ce qu'il avoit tû jusqu'a lors, Sçavoir les raisons secrètes qu'avoit eû Madame la Presidente de Nesmond de presser si fort sa Sortie des nouveaux Catholiques. Elle avoit esté avertie qu'il avoit fait tous ses efforts pour corrompre deux nouveaux Catholiques ces deux abbés Convinrent [79v] que le plus Court moyen de S'en debarasser étoit de le renvoyer a Mr. l'abbé Gagne qui pourroit S'il le jugeoit a propos le faire retourner en Suisse, Pour cet effet on priat Mr. de la Michaudiere de Contribuer aux frais du voyage, et il donna le plus genereusement du monde une somme de Cent livres qui fut remise entre les mains de Mr. l'abbé [80] Dufranc, on prist d'abord la resolution de ne point confier a Martin l'employ de cette Somme dans l'aprehension qu'il n'en fit un usage tout contraire de Sa destination, mais ce jeune homme Sceû Si bien faire auprés de Mr. l'abbé Dufranc qu'il en tira 60#. et disparû en Suitte Sans qu'on Sceut ce qu'il estoit dévenû.

A deux mois dela, le Chevalier d'Alincourt [80v] declara que Martin l'avoit trompé d'une maniere indigne, car estant venû ches luy Sur le pied d'un homme encore engagé dans l'heresie et qui veut Se faire instruire, il avoit fait trois mois aprés une abjuration Solemnelle, et qu'il avoit Sceu depuis qu'il avoit esté reuny a l'Eglise incontinent a près qu'il fut passé en france avec Sa mere il avoit constament fait [81] tous les devoirs de Catolique depuis cette premiere abjuration, il adjouta qu'il luy avoit volé diverses choses et enfin que Mr. l'abbé de Septfonds luy avoit dit que c'estoit un Sujet pernicieux qu'il S'estoit fort repenti de l'avoir gardé si lontemps, mais cependant qu'il Se consolloit d'avoir eû affaire a un si mauvais Sujet, par ce que cela [81v] luy avoit donne lieu de faire connoissance d'un des plus honneste homme du Royaume, c'estoit disoit il Mr. le President Philipe d'ont ce jeune homme se renommoit et qu'il avoit vû a Besançon, ce President luy avoit dit entre autres choses (a ce qu'il disoit) qu'il avoit remarqués dans Martin des inclinations Si mauvaises et une Si grande Corruption que s'il n'avoit pas quitté la [82] ville de Besançon il l'auroit fait enfermer.

Au mois de septembre suivant, on voit reparoître Martin sur la Scene, mais dans un Equipage bien different de celuy dans lequel il estoit lors qu'il sortit de Paris, Car il n'avoit a lors qu'un mauvais habit de draps, et un surtout, au lieu qu'il parut avec deux habits magnifiques et des vestes d'etoffes precieuses [82v] il dit a Mr. l'abbé Gagne qui estoit pour lors a Saint Magloire qu'il venoit de holland, il S'estoit fait passer en ce Pays pour un homme d'une naissance distinguée.

Martin muny de plusieurs recommandations a voulû entrer a Saint Magloire sur le pied de Pensionnaire, mais Mr. l'abbé Gagne avertit le Pere la Borde qu'il alloit [83] mettre une peste dans son Seminaire, d'autre part il faisoit prier qu'on le recut aux vertus pour y faire une retraite de 15. jours ou trois semaines, et ne cessoit de presser Mr. le Marquis de Teligny de le placer chés Mr. l'abbé de Clermont, ou d'engager Madame la Princesse a lui procurer une place dans les Suisse Mr. de Teligny estant au fait [83v] de ce jeune homme a compris mieux que personne la necessité qu'il y auroit de faire enfermer un Sujet Si dangereux.

Pendant quil Compromettoit plusieurs personnes distinguées Sous l'aparence de Catolice il prenoit toutes ses mesures pour entrer page ches un Ministre Calviniste de puis son retour a Paris, il a demeure quelque tems ches une nommée Made. [84] de Sourville (elle loge dans la rue de la Comedie au petitmont) voicy le temoignage quelle en a rendû. Premier qu'il a voulu corrompre son fils. Deuse. qu'il lui a declaré qu'il estoit atteint d'une mauvaise maladie. Troise. qu'ayant fait venir un Chirugien ches elle pour luy donner quelques remedes, ce Chirugien estoit venû [84v] la trouver quelques tems après pour luy donner avis qu'elle avoit ches elle un malheureux, il luy dit qu'ayant envoyé un de ses garçon a Martin pour luy porter une medecine ce miserable S'est jetté Sur ce jeune homme pour luy faire commettre une action infame, et que Son garçon venoit de Se plaindre a lui.

Simonnet's Memoir, 22 April 1723

Memoir concerning Jean François de Rougemont, who claims to be a gentleman from the canton of Bern in Switzerland, around 30 years old, living at the home of the dowager Madame de Saint-Aignan⁴⁸ on rue Cassette,⁴⁹ and Jean Travers, native of the Perche,⁵⁰ living at the home of the duc de Charost.⁵¹ These men were found committing the sin of sodomy together behind shrubbery in the Luxembourg gardens⁵² at 8 p.m. First,

A man had encountered Travers several times walking in the areas in the Tuileries⁵³ where infâmes gather, seeking to prostitute himself or to corrupt young folks by showing his cock to them and to all those he judged to be of his taste. On the date above Travers encountered this man in the Tuileries at noon and came up to him. Travers told him that he was delighted to

⁴⁸ Henriette Louise (de Seignelay) Colbert (1657–1733), daughter of Jean Baptiste (de Seignelay) Colbert and Marie Charron de Ménars, wife (1671) of Paul de Beauvilliers, duc de Saint-Aignan (1648–1714).

⁴⁹ In the sixth arrondissement, not far from the Luxembourg.

⁵⁰ Region in the province of Maine, southwest of Paris.

⁵¹ Armand de Béthune, duc de Charost (1663–1747).

⁵² The gardens behind the Luxembourg palace in the sixth arrondissement.

⁵³ Gardens west of the Louvre and the former Tuileries palace, destroyed during the Paris Commune, in the first arrondissement.

see him, that he must not hide who he was, and that, as for him, he was up for anything. Travers asked the man if it had been a long time since he discharged, and then Travers told him he had made arrangements for a good time with Rougemont that night at 7 p.m. in the Luxembourg, in the lane on the side of the Carthusians,⁵⁴ where they did not fail to show up at the set time. Travers arrived first and joined the man, whom he had persuaded to be of their party, telling him a third was not unwelcome. The man had only come there to observe the unfolding of this infamous rendezvous. While they were conversing, Rougemont arrived, and Travers went to him at once and left the man. Travers and Rougemont both sat down behind the shrubbery, where the man joined them a moment later and found them both with their pants down and Rougemont committing the sin of sodomy. Travers told Rougemont, "You're hurting me. You don't know how to fuck right." After they both told the man, "Since you don't want to do anything, leave us in peace," he withdrew. Mr. Simonnet came with his men, accompanied by the Swiss Guard from the side of the gate of the Carmelites,⁵⁵ and arrested the two by order of the king and seized them both in the act with their pants down. He conducted them, in this shameful and infamous attire to the guard's post, to the applause of several lords and others who were there for this abominable tragedy, saying with one voice that it was well done and that all the scoundrels of this nature should be burned. It was Rougemont who provoked the people's outcry by not wanting to comply with the king's orders. Then Mr. Simonnet conducted Rougemont to the For-l'Évêque⁵⁶ and Travers to the Petit Châtelet,⁵⁷ at 9 p.m.

Rougemont said that he had been to Rome, Naples, and throughout Italy, with several lords, in a voluntary capacity, and that he had turned Catholic not long ago. A while ago Rougemont encountered the man mentioned above in the rue Dauphine⁵⁸ and invited him to enter a tavern. They went into a room alone, and Rougemont had a bottle brought. Then he wanted to fool around with the man and put his hand into his pants. Seeing that the man did not wish to consent to what he wished, Rougemont took off out of rage and spite and left the man there.

In the conversation they had before that, Rougemont told the man he knew a very pretty boy named Petit, with him he had sometimes amused himself. Petit was also up for anything and lived, in the capacity of personal

⁵⁴ Carthusian monastery on the southern side of the Luxembourg gardens. Its entrance was located at 64 boulevard Saint-Michel.

⁵⁵ On the western side of the Luxembourg gardens, near the Carmelite monastery, 70 rue de Vaugirard.

⁵⁶ Prison on rue St.-Germain l'Auxerrois, demolished in 1783.

⁵⁷ Prison on the Left Bank, between the Petit Pont and the Pont au Double, demolished in 1782.

⁵⁸ In the sixth arrondissement.

valet, at the home of the chevalier de Breuil⁵⁹ who lives in the convent of Saint-Joseph⁶⁰ on rue Saint-Dominique.⁶¹ It is to be noted that Mr. Simonnet has long had a royal order to arrest Petit, whom he has not yet encountered, on account of his infamies. Rougemont also told the man he had given his name and address to Petit to come see him, which Petit has done several times.

Since this memoir was written, Travers has said he had work in Rouen and was in Paris for a lawsuit. He is a bachelor, 33 years old, native of Ceton⁶² in Perche.

Joly de Fleury's memoir, May 1723

Mr. Martin de Rougemont is around 30 years old. He was born in Switzerland, in the Protestant canton of Bern. His father was a propertied resident of Lausanne⁶³ who had a small estate in a village named Rougemont,⁶⁴ whose name he took.

Several years after his marriage Mr. Martin senior expelled his wife, whose profligacy he could neither endure nor put up with any longer, and she took with her the son in question here, who was only three years old then and whom the father did not wish to acknowledge as his son, claiming that he was a product of his wife's debauchery.

This poor unfortunate headed for Burgundy with her son, and she found support in Besançon⁶⁵ from President Philippe, senior magistrate in the parlement there.⁶⁶ They had the mother and child abjure their faith, and President Philippe took him in to have him raised in a decent manner.

This young man remained with President Philippe until the age of twelve or thereabouts. The fear of a ferocious punishment with which this President had threatened him led him to flee his home. It is from the young man himself that we have this information, but he did not wish to state the subject of the President's unfriendly disposition toward him.

Having left Besançon, this young man came to Dijon⁶⁷ with his mother. Some charitable ladies⁶⁸ received the mother and son. They found a room for her and took care to provide her with work and with all that was

⁵⁹ Unidentified, but perhaps Breuil and Petit had a sexual relationship. Pierre Saget, a handsome blond valet, aged eighteen, lived with Joseph Henri, marquis du Vivier, twenty-six, who passed him off as a friend. AB 10796, fol. 2.

⁶⁰ 10 rue Saint-Dominique.

⁶¹ In the seventh arrondissement.

⁶² Commune in the department of the Orne.

⁶³ Capital of the canton of Vaud.

⁶⁴ In the canton of Vaud since 1798.

⁶⁵ Capital of the department of the Doubs.

⁶⁶ Claude Ambroise Bruno Philippe (d. 1724) of the parlement de Besançon, one of the dozen regional royal appeals courts.

⁶⁷ Capital of the department of the Côte-d'Or.

⁶⁸ The Soeurs de Sainte-Marthe.

necessary for her subsistence, but four years later this woman's profligacy forced the ladies who took care of her to make her leave Dijon, where she was a source of scandal. She returned to Besançon and died there after some time.

As for the young man in question here, Madame Valot placed him with her daughter Madame de Cronenbourg.⁶⁹ He served there and wore livery for a period of three years. The recently deceased wife of First President Berbisey,⁷⁰ one of Mr. Cronenbourg's relatives, liked this young man's manners and asked Madame de Cronenbourg for him. With her consent she took him into her home. He remained there for a little more than two years, and she threw him out sometime later on account of sodomy.

Having left Madame de Berbisey, Martin came to Paris and stayed there for four or five years. He spent part of the time in service. He himself told Abbé Gagne of Dijon⁷¹ that he had served and worn the livery of the marquise de Villesavin, daughter of President le Gouz of Dijon.⁷² During his stay he also spent some time in the Society of New Catholics, which Président Nesmond's wife⁷³ patronized. It even seems she took a liking to him. He likewise spent a period of four or five months in the home of a chevalier d'Alincourt,⁷⁴ on the footing of a young man who was being instructed in the dogmas of the Catholic religion.

Having left Paris, Martin went to Sept-Fonds.⁷⁵ He spent around three months there. Expelled from this monastery, he made a decision to return to his country in hopes of collecting some part of his father's estate. He therefore went to Lausanne and met a sister he had there. He persuaded her to follow him to France and led her to hope that he would secure a situation for her in which she would be more comfortable than she was in her country. Her father had left her in the hands of an aunt who provided her means of subsistence.

Having made himself the master of his sister, Martin led her throughout the course of the voyage with the vigilance and attention of a conductor of galley slaves.⁷⁶ In the fear that repentance might lead her to run off, he

⁶⁹ Unidentified.

⁷⁰ Nicole de la Motte, daughter of Jean François de la Motte and Claudine de Thésut, wife (1715) of Jean de Berbisey (1663–1756), premier président in the parlement of Dijon.

⁷¹ Antoine Bernard Gagne (b. 1687), canon of the abbey church of Saint-Étienne.

⁷² Antoinette le Gouz-Maillard (1686–1765), daughter of Benoist le Gouz-Maillard and Anne Berthier, wife (1709) of Louis Bouthillier, marquis de Villesavin.

⁷³ Marie Marguerite de Beauharnais-de-Miramion (d. 1725), daughter of Jean Jacques de Beauharnais and Marie Bonneau, wife (1660) of Guillaume de Nesmond (1628–93), président à mortier in the parlement of Paris.

⁷⁴ A member of the Neufville de Villeroy family. Saget mentioned the marquis d'Alincourt, François Camille de Neufville de Villeroy (1700–1732), one of the young nobles exiled from court in 1722. AB 10796, fol. 2. See Jeffrey Merrick, "Sodomitical Scandals and Subcultures in the 1720s," *Men and Masculinities* 1 (1999): 373–92.

⁷⁵ Abbaye Notre-Dame de Sept-Fons, Cistercian monastery in the Bourbonnais.

⁷⁶ The captain of the chain conducted prisoners from Paris to the galleys on the Mediterranean coast. The chain left the capital on 25 May and 10 September.

made her walk before him and often made her go much faster than she would have wished. She no more arrived at the inn than he locked her in, after taking care to make sure that there was no spot in the room through which she could escape.

Martin led his sister in this way as far as Dijon. Once they arrived there, Providence made her fall into the hands of Madame Valot, who introduced her to Abbé Gagne and begged him to instruct her in the Catholic religion. This instruction was so successful that there is reason to hope she will be a good nun.

The first thing Mr. Gagne did, however, was to remove this girl from the company of her brother, whom he rightly judged could only be very harmful to her. This young man, finding himself penniless, decided to return to service.

To that end he entered the home of the younger President Bouhier's wife, who has since died.⁷⁷ As this mistress took a liking to him, Martin took the opportunity of spreading rumors about this lady that were very damaging to her reputation. Abbé Gagne, who was informed about it, informed the Bouhier family about it, and they dismissed him ignominiously.

Finding himself without resources in Dijon, he thought about returning to Paris, and the Abbé Gagne was kind enough to give him letters of recommendation to the elder Madame de la Michodiére.⁷⁸ This lady had a maternal affection for him and provided for all his needs for more than a year, having taken him in four months after his arrival. She begged Abbé —, for his part, to exert himself to place this young man securely. In the first conversation that Abbé — had with him, Rougemont⁷⁹ told him what he had not dared to tell Madame de la Michodiére, namely, that he was stricken with venereal disease, and he begged the abbé to give him the means to overcome it. To persuade Abbé — to be kind to him, he took care to tell him that this illness was the penalty for the first slip he had made in his life, explaining that he had been dragged into a bad place in spite of himself. The abbé spoke to Madame de la Michodiére about it, and Rougemont was placed in the hands of two surgeons, one after the other, whose cures did him no good. The surgeons said that it was the fault of the young man, who only exacerbated his illness through his incontinence.

Martin, however, found a way, through the modest influence he had with Madame de Nesmond, to return to the New Catholics.⁸⁰ Four months

⁷⁷ Jeanne Françoise Bourée (1679–1717), widow of Léonard Anne Bouchu de Lessart, magistrat in the parlement of Paris, wife (1702) of Jean Bouhier (1673–1746), président à mortier in the parlement of Dijon, member of the French Academy as of 1727. His correspondence with Mathieu Marais contains several references to Deschauffours. Henri Duranton, ed., *Correspondance littéraire du président Bouhier*, 14 vols. (Saint-Étienne: Université de Saint-Étienne, 1974–88), 2:39–41, 173, 278.

⁷⁸ Madeleine Graffeteau (1655–1727), wife of Jean Betrand de la Michodiére (1645–95).

⁷⁹ I have changed “he” to “Rougemont,” as opposed to Martin, here and there to clarify identities.

⁸⁰ The Communauté des nouveaux catholiques, located as of 1672 at 59–61 rue Sainte-Anne and demolished in 1792.

after his return, Madame de la Michodi  re learned about the state he was in and had the goodness to go fetch him in her carriage and convey him to the H  tel-Dieu,⁸¹ where she placed him in the hands of a matron of the wards, who, upon her recommendation, took very special care of him.

Martin was in the H  tel-Dieu for three months. One of the surgeons of the H  tel-Dieu very soon noticed that, besides the visible illness, which was a sustained high fever, he had another one that he concealed, which was venereal disease. He undertook to cure him and even flattered himself for a while with having succeeded in doing so. At least the matron of the wards, deceived by the surgeon, affirmed, several days before his release from the H  tel-Dieu, that a complete cure could be counted on. Counting on these words, Abb   — took him into his home until Madame de la Michodi  re had found a merchant with whom he could start work. As he did not lack readiness of mind, they believed they should place him with some merchant so he could train for trade. But he was scarcely there when he fell ill again, and the surgeon who saw him said that he was not cured of his venereal disease. It was then that Martin revealed that this was the second round of venereal disease he had had. Since they wanted to require him, immediately after his recovery, to prepare himself to undergo the ultimate remedies,⁸² he said that he would never bring himself to do it because he had already undergone it in the course of his first stay in Paris and had come close to losing his life. He went so far as to confess that he had contracted the two venereal diseases through infamous relations with men. It is known that when this malady occurs in that way, it is almost incurable. He also confessed that this crime was the reason why he was expelled from Madame de Berbisey's home. He had let himself be corrupted by some men in Dijon, whom he named, and Madame de Berbisey, who was informed about it, threw him out. He then (as if driven by a spirit of repentance) recounted the story of the life he had led since that time, which was nothing but a fabric of infamy, all of this sort. This is what led that abb   to resolve to get rid of him quietly as soon as he recovered. His renewed profligacy hastened the execution of this resolution, for he no sooner began to feel better than he started making the rounds of the balls with debauchees like himself. They had his chest opened and found inside a woman's outfit, masks, even beauty spots and makeup. He naively confessed that he had had these outfits before going to Sept-Fonds and that the reason why he had not gotten rid of them when he entered Sept-Fonds was that he did not know if he might not be forced to leave that establishment and return to society. A young man of his acquaintance, who came to consult the same abb   now and then about a plan he had to consecrate himself to God through religious vocation, informed him at this very time that Rougemont had made infamous propositions to him a few days before. The abb   thus expelled him without further delay.

⁸¹ The oldest and largest hospital in Paris, on the Île de la C  te and the Left Bank.

⁸² Involving the application of mercury ointment or consumption of mercury tablets.

It was at the end of the month of January 1718. As Abbé Dufranc⁸³ took an interest in this young man, they thought they should inform him about what had just happened. It was then that Rougemont avowed what he had concealed until then, namely, the secret reasons President Nesmond's wife had had for pressing so strongly for his departure from the New Catholics. She had been informed that he had made every effort to corrupt two converts. The two abbés agreed that the fastest way to get rid of him was to send him back to Abbé Gagne, who could, if he thought it appropriate, have Rougemont returned to Switzerland. To this end they begged M. de la Michodiére to make a contribution to the costs of the voyage, and he, in the most generous manner in the world, gave a sum of a hundred livres,⁸⁴ which was handed over to Abbé Dufranc. It had been first resolved at first not to entrust Martin with this sum out of fear that he might apply it to something wholly contrary to what was intended, but this young man knew his way around Abbé Dufranc so well that he got sixty livres out of him and then disappeared, without anyone's knowing what had become of him.

Two months later the chevalier d'Alincourt declared that Martin had deceived him in an unworthy manner. Having come to him as a man still involved in heresy who wanted to be instructed [in Catholicism], he had made a solemn abjuration three months later. D'Alincourt had since learned that he had joined the [Catholic] church as soon as he entered France with his mother. He had always fulfilled all the duties of a Catholic since that first abjuration. D'Alincourt added that he had stolen various things from him and, finally, that the abbot of Sept-Fonds⁸⁵ had told him that he was a pernicious character and that he had strongly regretted keeping him for so long. At the same time, he consoled himself for having anything to do with such a wicked person because it gave him the chance to make the acquaintance of one of the most decent men in the kingdom. It was, he said, President Philippe, whose name this young man used and whom the abbé had seen in Besançon. The President told him, among other things (according to him), that he had noticed such bad propensities and such great corruption in Martin that he would have had him imprisoned if he had not left the city of Besançon.

At the end of the following September, Martin reappeared on the stage, but in attire very different from that he was in when he left Paris. At that time he had nothing but a sorry cloth outfit and an overcoat, but he reappeared with two magnificent outfits and vests of precious fabric. He told

⁸³ François Dufranc, canon of the Sainte-Chapelle.

⁸⁴ One livre equals twenty sous. A skilled worker might earn fifty sous per day, while an unskilled worker might earn only twenty-five. A four-pound loaf of bread cost eight or nine sous. David Garrioch, *The Making of Revolutionary Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 52–53.

⁸⁵ Abbot Eustache de Beaufort de Mondicourt (1656–1709), Joseph Madeleine de Forbin d'Oppède (1709–10), or Joseph d'Hegenvilliers (1710–20).

Abbé Gagne, who was then at Saint-Magloire,⁸⁶ that he came from Holland. He passed himself off in that country as a man of distinguished birth.

Supplied with several recommendations, Martin wanted to enter Saint-Magloire as a boarder, but Abbé Gagne warned Father La Borde⁸⁷ that he was going to welcome a pestilence into his seminary. At the same time he begged to be received at Our Lady of the Virtues⁸⁸ in order to undertake a retreat of two or three weeks there, and he persisted in urging the marquis de Teligny⁸⁹ to place him with the Abbé de Clermont⁹⁰ or to persuade the Princess⁹¹ to secure a position for him in the Swiss Guards. Monsieur de Teligny, in the know about this young man, understood better than anyone the necessity of having such a dangerous character imprisoned.

While he compromised several distinguished persons under the appearance of Catholicity, Rougemont took all measures to enter the service of a Calvinist minister⁹² as a page. After his return to Paris he lived for a while at the home of one Madame de Sourville⁹³ (she lodges at the Small Mount⁹⁴ on rue de la Comédie⁹⁵). Here is the testimony she gave about him. First, that he tried to corrupt her son. Second, that he informed her he was stricken with a wicked disease. Third, that having summoned a surgeon to her place to administer some remedies to him, this surgeon came to see her sometime later to let her know that she had a wretch in her home. He told her he had sent one of his assistants to Martin to deliver some medicine to him. This scoundrel threw himself on this young man in order to make him commit an infamous act, and his assistant had just complained to him.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JEFFREY MERRICK has published extensively on family, gender, sexuality, suicide, and political culture in early modern France. His current projects include an edition of more than one hundred police reports about the surveillance of sex between men in Paris in 1781 and a documentary volume on male and female same-sex relations in eighteenth-century France.

⁸⁶ Oratorian seminary located in the former Benedictine monastery of Saint-Magloire, 254 rue Saint-Jacques.

⁸⁷ Vivien de la Borde (1680–1748), director of the seminary as of 1708.

⁸⁸ Seminary of Notre-Dame-des-Virtus in Aubervilliers, northeast of Paris.

⁸⁹ Benjamin Augustin de Courdouan de Langey, marquis de Téligny (1666–1750).

⁹⁰ Louis de Courillon de Dangeau (1643–1723), abbé de Clermont and member of the French Academy as of 1682.

⁹¹ A number of noblewomen had this title.

⁹² Presumably the ambassador of Holland or one of the German territories listed in Almanach royal (Paris, 1723), 62.

⁹³ Or perhaps Sourville, unidentified.

⁹⁴ Petit Mont, presumably a hotel or boardinghouse.

⁹⁵ Subsequently rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie.