

Dieleman's reflection in the introduction shows that he is aware of this issue, but one wonders why he did not opt to incorporate other archival sources to complement his analysis (even though, admittedly, these are likely to be scarcer in small rural communities than in populous cities). Second, it is regrettable that the consistorial records for each of the villages central to this study have not been mined more systematically so as to detect patterns that, possibly, could be compared and contrasted with the patterns discerned in urban congregations. Even if the study of the *acta* of urban consistories was simply not possible within the scope of this project, a more sustained interaction with the relevant secondary literature on urban congregations would have been helpful in highlighting the differences and similarities between urban and rural Reformed communities (although at times this has been done, for instance on pp. 118–19, 179–82, 190, 215). The analysis of the *acta* is also marred by the absence of a clear temporal scope – several remarks towards the end of the book (pp. 211, 220) suggest that the end of the Synod of Dordt (1618–19) functioned as some sort of cut-off point – as a result of which developments over time are not tracked, traced and examined.

A more thorough comparative approach in which the six case studies were compared with each other as well as with urban congregations would have increased the book's analytic muscle and further increased its scholarly value by bringing out the specificities of rural congregations to a greater extent. As it stands, the many examples drawn from consistorial and classical *acta* are often presented in a contextual vacuum. For example, no information is given about the presence and (numerical) strength of other confessions in each of the case studies. To what extent was Wemeldinge's church order, with its emphasis on Sabbath observance and education, a direct response to the activities of rival confessions? Despite these imperfections, Dieleman's book does show the importance of focusing on religious developments in the countryside (which is lacking in the historiography on early modern Dutch Catholicism as well) and is likely to stimulate future research on this topic.

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Moi, Louis Gaufridy, ayant soufflé plus de mille femmes. Une confession de sorcier au XVII^e siècle. By Thibaut Maus de Rolley. Pp. 380. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2023. €23.90 (paper). 978 2 251 45454 2

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Loudun remains the most famous of the seventeenth-century French convent possession cases, culminating in the conviction and execution of the priest Urbain Grandier in 1634. The story of Grandier and Jeanne des Anges, who led the accusations that he had sent devils to possess the Ursuline convent, inspired a novel by Aldous Huxley (*The devils of Loudun*, London 1952) and a landmark documentary history by Michel de Certeau (*La Possession de Loudun*, Paris 1978), not to mention plays, films and even an opera. Thibaut Maus de Rolley's book turns to the less well-remembered precedent, set two decades before, in Aix-en-Provence in 1611. Like Loudun, the Aix possession centred on the relations between an Ursuline – a

teenage noble, named Madeleine de Demandolx – and a priest – Louis Gaufridy. Like Grandier at Loudun, Gaufridy was suspected not only of witchcraft and a pact with the devil, but all kinds of debauchery and immorality, in Gaufridy's case including sexual relations with Madeleine. Like Grandier, Gaufridy paid with his life. Like Loudun, or the later Louviers possession case in the 1640s, the Aix case echoed across the kingdom of France, and even across the rest of Europe.

The unusual thing about the Aix case is the document at the heart of Maus de Rolley's book, and included as one of three appendices: Louis Gaufridy's confession, written in the first person, as if taken from the raw material of the case itself, and printed after Gaufridy's execution (1611). There is no suggestion that this text came from the judicial proceedings proper. Rather, it is an edited version of the confession he made to two Capuchin monks in his prison cell, which was then communicated to the court, as chapter ii explains. This is in many ways an extraordinary document. Unlike judicial records or learned demonologies, the confession appears to give voice to Gaufridy himself: the prince of magicians speaks directly to the reader. Maus de Rolley emphasises the parallels with the parricide Pierre Rivière whose 1835 confession owes its posthumous fame to the collective edition and commentaries published by Michel Foucault and his collaborators in 1973. The opening line of Rivière's confession gave Foucault's book its title: *I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother*. Maus de Rolley's title echoes this: *I, Louis Gaufridy, having blown more than a thousand women*.

Maus de Rolley's book shares with Foucault's edition a fascination with the impossibility of the authorial subject, the criminal, confessing. But where Rivière's memoir was voluntary, indeed going far beyond what the investigators needed or wanted for the purposes of the prosecution, Gaufridy's 'confession' was coerced. Not, Maus de Rolley points out, simply extracted during the dramatic physical torture that readers might associate with witch trials, but the result of psychological and material isolation and physical deprivation. Like other accused witches who confessed, Gaufridy tried to retract his confession. But since the foundational work of Lyndal Roper (*Oedipus and the devil*, London 1994) and Diane Purkiss (*The witch in history*, London 1996), scholarship on the early modern trials has also grappled with the possibility that some of the accused may have come to sincerely believe in their own guilt. Chapter iii of the book takes up this problem: who is the 'I' of this apparently autobiographical text? There are many reasons to argue that the 'Louis Gaufridy' of the confession is what Maus de Rolley calls an 'illusion', not least that the text is in French, while Gaufridy likely spoke in Provençal during the proceedings.

And yet, like Roper and Purkiss, Maus de Rolley believes Gaufridy himself played some role in fashioning the fantastical narrative of the witches sabbath found in the confession. Readers learn, for instance, that the witches devote different days of the week to their different perversions: 'Thursday is sodomy; Friday is the day of blasphemy; Saturday is for bestiality, etc.' The temptation is to argue that this level of detail and systematisation in the confession, which was unrivalled in contemporary French accounts, comes from Gaufridy's own imagination. Or at the very least, from the 'negotiation' between interrogators or confessors and the accused witch, 'author in spite of himself'.

Maus de Rolley also draws attention to two printed texts about the case that other researchers have not discussed. The first is a French account of Madeleine de Demandolx's tribulations, published the same year as the trial. The second is a pamphlet published in English in London the following year. Along with the better-known print sources about the case, these two pamphlets provide evidence for Maus de Rolley's detailed arguments in chapters i and iv about the role of print culture in spreading ideas about witchcraft and possession, and perhaps inspiring the later, more famous cases at Loudun or Louviers. The book reproduces these two pamphlets along with the printed confession written in Gaufridy's voice as appendices.

There are important assertions here about what this case reveals about witchcraft and possession more broadly. Perhaps most importantly, the book emphasises the fluid relationship between the witchcraft of judicial process and the witchcraft of the literary tradition. Given the focus on printed pamphlets, it is not surprising that a core argument concerns this intertextuality. There are other points of importance, too, such as the role that love magic played in witchcraft cases: Gaufridy's gift from the Devil was the power to seduce women with his breath. This is a good reminder to specialists of a widely shared sense that important as distinctions are between types of historical magical practice might be for academic arguments, microhistories tend to blur any categories historians can impose.

The story had an astonishing epilogue. During the exorcisms and the trial that followed, Madeleine de Demandolx confessed to succumbing to Gaufridy, attending the witches' sabbath and becoming a witch herself. In exchange for her testimony against him, she was not prosecuted, with the bizarre consequence that she lived most of her long life under the shadow of a public admission of witchcraft, recorded in pamphlets, and disseminated across Europe. More than four decades after Gaufridy's execution, her past caught up with her again. In 1652, she was accused of witchcraft by a young neighbour. Found guilty the next year, she was sentenced to confinement, but lived another seventeen years in a nunnery, and then with a relative. Her trial generated its own pamphlet accounts, but they are footnotes to the problem of Maus de Rolley's book: the elusive subjectivity of Gaufridy's apparently direct confession.

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A widower's lament. The pious meditations of Johann Christoph Oelhafen. By Ronald K. Rittgers. Pp. xviii + 318 incl. 9 ill. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021. \$22.99. 978 1 5064 2480 4

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This book is doubly a labour of love. The editor, Ronald Rittgers, one of the most insightful, subtle and humane writers on early modern Christianity that we have, makes no bones about how deeply he has been drawn in by the text he edits for us here, and about his sense of connection with and obligation to its author. And the text itself, the 'Pious meditations on the alas, most sorrowful bereavement of Johann Christoph Oelhafen', almost all of it written in eleven months during 1619–20, is a wrenching glimpse into the spirit of a man almost broken by the