

1 **Lies, Spies, and More Damn Lies:**
2 **Jean-Baptiste Marie Froment, an 18th-century French Dancer**
3 **abroad**
4

5 The subject of this article is a little-known dancer called Jean-Baptiste Marie Froment,
6 noted by *A Biographical Dictionary of the London Stage 1660-1800* as flourishing in
7 England between 1739 and 1777.¹ Froment's name appears in the sources also as Fremont
8 and Frument, spelling variations which, although they may indicate an attempt to anglicise
9 his name given that his early years were spent in London's playhouses, probably reflect
10 nothing more profound than printerly confusions. Nothing certain is known of Froment's
11 years before his arrival in London, although as we shall see, it is likely that he studied dance
12 in a professional environment. This article will not only add numerous details to our
13 knowledge of Froment's biography but will show that the dancer was a self-confessed agent
14 for the government of Louis XV. I will argue that while on the surface his London career was
15 that of any other theatre dancer, his position as a dancer made it possible to travel and to
16 make associations without drawing attention to his activities and that he was in fact following
17 a long-term plan to act on behalf of France.

18 No evidence for Froment's year of birth appears to survive, but it was noted that he was
19 aged 70 when he died in 1786 suggesting that he was born in or around 1716.² In the late 17th
20 century, an M. Froment, first recorded in the 1698 *Ballet de Paix* as a young dancer from the
21 Opéra, was active in Paris, and worked between 1719 and 1726 at Collège de Louis le Grand.
22 Given that dancing as a profession tends to run in families, it seems likely that this Froment
23 was his father or perhaps a relative.³ Froment senior's service at the Collège – between the
24 regimes of Blondy and Laval⁴ – was as choreographer, although Marie Demeilliez seems
25 unpersuaded, implying that he filled in when there was no ballet master in office and
26 indexing him only a 'danseur'.⁵ Nathalie Lecomte, writing on the balance of professional and
27 amateur dancers at the Collège, places Froment as a professional based there, noting that he
28 could hold his own with the visiting professionals from the Opéra.⁶ He is credited as 'Danses
29 composition de M. Froment' in a number of Collège livrets: *La Jeunesse d'Achille* (1719),
30 *L'Industrie* (1720), *Les Couronnes* (1722), *Le Temple de la Gloire* (1723), *Le Genie*

1 ¹ Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, '<<John Baptiste L. Froment', in *A*
2 *Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other stage personnel in*
3 *London, 1660-1800*, 16 Vols (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1973-1993); V (1978),
4 417-18.

5 ² Trevor Fawcett, *Dance and Teachers of Dance in 18th-century Bath* (Bath: Alan Sutton, 1988), 37.

6 ³ Régine Astier and Dorothy Pearce, 'Pierre Beauchamps and the Ballets de Collège', *Dance Chronicle*, 6/2
7 (1983), 138-63 (156).

8 ⁴ Judith Rock, *Terpsichore at Louis-le Grand; Baroque Dance on the Jesuit Stage in Paris* (Saint Louis:
9 Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

10 ⁵ Marie Demeilliez, 'Campra maitre de musique au Collège de Louis le Grand de la Compagnie de Jésus', in
11 Catherine Cessac, ed., *Itinéraires d'André Campra (1660-1744): d'Aix à Versailles, de l'Église à l'Opéra*
12 (Paris: Editions Mardaga Pierre, 2012), 61-75 (n. 28, 66).

13 ⁶ Nathalie Lecomte, 'Un danseur d'exception sur les tréteaux de Louis-le-Grand: Michel Blondy', in Edith
14 Flamarion, ed., *La chair et le verbe: les jésuites de France au XVIIIe siècle et l'image* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne
15 Nouvelle, 2008), 137-157 (146).

31 *François ou Les Fêtes Françaises* (1724), and *Le Mariage de Thésée et d'Hippolyte* (1725).⁷
32 The most important of these was *Les couronnes* for the Collège, a ballet with a score to which
33 André Campra (1660-1744) contributed,⁸ and was included in a performance of the play
34 *Mauritius Imperator* by Charles Porée (1675-1741).⁹ The title of the ballet and its possible
35 relationship to the play are reflected in its scenario which is on the theme of 'L'origine des
36 couronnes' (The Origin of the Crowns). It has an Introduction, four entrées each addressing a
37 different type of crown, and a final grand ballet.¹⁰ Froment senior's ballets often celebrated
38 major occasions to which their plots were related and *Les couronnes* was no exception; it
39 marked the occasion of the approaching coronation of Louis XV. No certain traces of
40 Froment senior can be found after his 1726 work at the Collège. There is, however, also
41 record of one 'Froment le jeune' dancing in the Ballet General of the 1725 *Le Mariage de*
42 *Thésée* and a 'J. B. Froment' among the Disciples des Philosophes in *L'Homme instruit par*
43 *le Spectacle* (1726). This indicates that Jean Baptiste Froment, if born in 1716, may quite
44 reasonably have been dancing by this period; he would then have been about 10 years of
45 age.¹¹

47 London to Edinburgh

49 Froment le jeune made his debut in London on 10 March 1739, and if the conjecture of his
50 birthdate above is correct, he was then approximately 23 years old. No record survives of his
51 booking and arrival in London – indeed, it would be exceptional if that was the case – but the
52 fact that he was able to arrive in the capital and start work at one of the playhouses confirms
53 that he had been both well taught and was already an accomplished performer. And it is no
54 surprise to find Froment in London. The English capital received numerous dancers from the
55 Continent, performers who found employment in the opera house, the playhouses, the
56 illegitimate theatres, and elsewhere, and they brought with them not only their skills but new
57 repertory. Dancers from France and Italy were particularly welcomed at the opera house and
58 patent theatres, often providing upmarket entertainment during and after an evening's main
59 shows.¹² Froment's first recorded appearance was in the role of a Haymaker in the 'Grotesque
60 Pantomime Entertainment' *Harlequin Shipwrecked* at Drury Lane.¹³ This was followed by
61 further appearances at that theatre, and before 1740 he had danced engagements at Covent
62 Garden, Sadler's Wells, and Goodman's Fields, a varied roster that shows he worked
63 freelance. Most of his dancing from this early period appears to have been either in

16 ⁷ See Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale* de France, Res YF-1141, Res YF-2602, Res YF-2637, *Bibliothèque de*
17 *l' Arsenal* GD-45550, Arsenal GD-45557, and *Bibliothèque nationale* de France, Res YF-1186.

18 ⁸ James R. Anthony, 'Campra, André', *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 30
19 vols (London: MacMillan, 2001), IV, 895-902 (900), attributes the whole work to Campra; Astier, 'Pierre
20 Beauchamps', 156, has suggested otherwise.

21 ⁹ Judith Rock, *Terpsichore at Louis-le Grand; Baroque Dance on the Jesuit Stage in Paris* (Saint Louis:
22 Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996). The coronation took place on 25 October 1722 at Notre-Dame de Reims.

23 ¹⁰ *Les Couronnes* ballet, a l'occasion du couronnement prochain de Louis XV, sera dansé au Collège de Louis
24 le Grand, à la tragédie de Maurice. *Le Mercredi 5. Aoust 1722. à Middy* (Paris: Delusseux, 1722). *Bibliothèque*
25 *nationale de France*, Res. YF. 2637. The ballet's contents were also listed in detail in the *Mercur* de France
26 (August 1722), 158-66.

27 ¹¹ Nathalie Lecomte, "Les interprètes des ballets dansés au Collège Louis-le-Grand de 1684 à 1699", in Anne
28 Piéjus, ed., *Plaire et instruire: le spectacle dans les collèges de l'Ancien Régime (Plaire et instruire: le*
29 *spectacle dans les collèges de l'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 114-137 (123-
30 24). Pn YF-1186, 7, and Res. YF-721, [2].

64 pantomimes such as *Perseus and Andromeda* (1739) and *Orpheus and Euridice* (1740), or in
65 character roles, although there were also appearances in more conventional dances such as
66 stage minuets. He did not, however, work at the opera house, the London home of elite opera
67 and dance.

68 After his Benefit, taken in September 1740 at Sadler's Wells and in which he partnered
69 Miss Scott,¹⁴ Froment left for Ireland and spent the 1740-41 season at the Aungier Street
70 Theatre in Dublin, starting on 4 December 1740 and finishing on 7 March 1741.¹⁵ He then
71 returned to London, appearing there the next season both at Goodman's Fields and at Sadler's
72 Wells where his repertory included roles in *The Tambourine of Tambourines* and *The*
73 *Triumphs of Love* (both from 1741) and with the 'usual diversions' on the bill which included
74 rope-dancing and other acts. He was still there at the opening of the next season performing
75 in his own 'Entertainments of Dancing', his last appearance being on 17 October 1741. He
76 then disappeared from the bills, to reappear at Covent Garden on 4 February 1743 in *Les*
77 *amants volages* (1743) followed by *Vulcan's Netts* (1743). On 14 May of that year, Froment
78 was granted a solo Benefit at Drury Lane, suggesting that his position in the company and his
79 accomplishments during the season had been both consistent and significant. Not long after
80 that, however, he left this success behind him and departed London for Scotland, where he
81 can be found later that year working and teaching in Edinburgh.

82 Among Froment's motives for the move to Edinburgh seems to have been a partnership
83 with one Madame Dumont. Froment had danced with Monsieur and Madame Dumont in the
84 1740-41 Dublin season at the Aungier Street Theatre, and although M. Dumont returned to
85 London at same time as Froment, Madame Dumont is absent from all the bills, until she
86 reappears dancing with Froment in Edinburgh. They were both first reported there on 6
87 March 1744 performing between the acts of William Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* at Mrs
88 Thomas Este's benefit.¹⁶ Madame Dumont never seems to have danced with her husband
89 again after that 1740-41 Dublin season; she would, though, later dance on the London stage
90 for the 1746-47 season (while Froment was in prison, and her husband absent) and 1747-48
91 season (partnering Froment). She is last recorded dancing in *Apollo and Daphne* at Covent
92 Garden in October 1748, a season in which her soon-to-be-missing husband again did not
93 dance; he is last heard of in the 1749-50 season.

94 The Edinburgh company that Froment and Dumont joined in 1744 was run by the actor-
95 manager Thomas Este, who had had an active if unfocussed theatrical career in London
96 working at Drury Lane, the Haymarket, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Bartholomew Fair, before
97 trying his luck at Dublin's Smock Alley Theatre. There he was recorded working between 14
98 November 1737 and before 21 December 1741, on which date he was advertised as being in
99 Edinburgh.¹⁷ There he ran Tailor's Hall, a still-extant building next door to his residence in

31 12 For the extent of these activities see, for example: Moira Goff and Jennifer Thorp, 'Dance Notations Published
32 in England c. 1700-1740 and Related Manuscript Material', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance*
33 *Research*, 9/2 (1991), 32-50; Sarah McCleave, 'Dancing at the English Opera: Marie Sallé's Letter to the Duchess of
34 Richmond', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 17/1 (1999), pp. 22-46 and *Dance in*
35 *Handel's London Operas* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013); and Michael Burden, 'Dancers at London's
36 Italian Opera Houses as recorded in the libretti', *Dance Research*, 33/2 (2015), 159-211.

37 13 *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 10 March 1739.

38 14 *Ibid.*, 15 September 1740. Possibly Isabella Scott; see *A Biographical Dictionary*, XII (1991), 236-37.

39 15 See John Greene, 'The Repertory of the Dublin Theatres, 1720-1745', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an*
40 *dá chultúr*, 2 (1987), 133-48, for some illustration of how dancing fitted with the repertory here.

41 16 *Caledonian Mercury*, 2 March 1744.

42 17 Highfill, 'Thomas Este', in *A Biographical Dictionary*, V (1978), 102-103 (103).

100 the Cowgate; it was built in 1621 by the Guild of Tailors and used as a playhouse between
101 1727 and 1753.¹⁸ Este toured occasionally to Newcastle,¹⁹ and Froment and Dumont went
102 with them, with a ball being given for their Benefit on 28 May 1744 at the Assembly Rooms.
103 This event was, at least in the billing, very grand indeed, for not only did it feature dancing
104 by those attending, but there were five differently costumed exhibition dances by Froment
105 and Dumont which were ‘intermix’d’ with more general entertainment. These were ‘The
106 Louvre and Minuet’, ‘A Shepherdess Dance’, ‘A Serious Dance’, ‘The Wooden Shoes’, and
107 ‘A New Scots Dance’, with the press notice advertising that ‘The Dresses to each Dance will
108 be entirely New, and the only Time of their performing here for this season’.²⁰ We know little
109 more of the Company than these few advertisements, but back in Edinburgh on 11 February
110 1745, Este died suddenly and was mourned as ‘an indulgent and affectionate Husband, a
111 tender Father, a fine Friend, and a facetious and agreeable Companion’.²¹

112 In the same issue of the *Caledonian Mercury* as Este’s death was reported, there was an
113 announcement of ‘Monsieur Froment’s Ball’ for 18 February at his ‘School in Baillie Fife’s
114 Close’. Froment had opened a dancing school sometime after his arrival in Edinburgh, and by
115 1745, he obviously felt well enough established to risk holding a commercial ball. Or perhaps
116 it was the result of a challenge:

117
118 And whereas it has been suggested, That Mr Froment does not dance so well as certain
119 Masters; it hereby obliges him to perform with any one in Town and to pay down
120 Twenty Guineas, if the Trial goes against him in the Opinion of proper Judges.²²

121
122 One of those supposedly spreading rumours about Froment could well have been the Mr
123 Downie, whose dancing school in Carrubber’s Close was advertised at this time to be let, and
124 who may have been driven out of business by the new master on the scene.²³ Froment’s ball
125 was, however, deferred,²⁴ to be held eventually on 25 February at 5 o’clock with tickets at 5
126 shillings, each of which admitted one ‘Gentleman or two Ladies’.²⁵ Froment seemed to be
127 settling in, for also in that year, his name can be found on the subscribers’ list for the
128 Edinburgh publication of Henry Ward’s *The Happy Lovers, or, the Beau Metamorphos’d*.²⁶

43 18 ‘It was an exceedingly prosperous place of amusement, until a split in the company caused the erection of the
44 Canongate Theatre in 1747, after which the Tailor’s Hall was deserted’. Robert Chambers, *Minor Antiquities of*
45 *Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1883), 297.

46 19 For example, Thomas Este’s play *Methodism Display’d: A Farce of One act... alter’d and publish’d by Mr.*
47 *Este, from a farce, call’d, Trick upon Trick; or, The Vintner in the Suds* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: for the
48 publisher, 1744) was ‘intended to be perform’d at the Moot-Hall’ on 4 November 1743; *Newcastle Weekly*
49 *Courant*, 4 November 1743.

50 20 *Newcastle Weekly Courant*, 12 May 1744; noted also 19 May.

51 21 *Caledonian Mercury*, 12 February 1745. The company appears to have had internal quarrels, and split into
52 two; see ‘Sarah Ward’, in the *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, ed. Elizabeth L. Ewan, Sue Innes,
53 Sian Reynolds, and Rose Pipes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007),
54 367.

55 22 *Ibid.*

56 23 *Ibid.*, 14 February 1745.

57 24 *Ibid.*

58 25 *Ibid.*, 21 February 1745.

59 26 Henry Ward, *The Happy Lovers, or, The Beau Metamorphos’d, an opera* (Edinburgh: R. Drummond, 1745),
60 List of subscribers.

129 However, appearances were misleading, for after performing in his Benefit at the Tailor's
130 Hall on 3 April 1745 with a programme that included 'a Grand Dance call'd PIGMALION',
131 Froment disappeared.²⁷

132

133 **The Foreign Agent**

134

135 By the time we next catch sight of Froment, the country, which had gradually become
136 politically less stable, had been through a tumultuous period. The events which engulfed
137 England and Scotland in the 1740s had their nearest origins in The War of the Austrian
138 Succession. One of the results of the declaration of war between England and France in 1744
139 was the planned invasion of the former by the latter, a plan which foundered when the
140 invasion fleet met with storms outside Dunkirk. The French plan had been to install James
141 Stuart as James III of Great Britain who would then withdraw Britain from the war, thereby
142 empowering France in the European theatre. In further pursuit of this goal, James Stuart's
143 son, Charles, launched the Jacobite Rebellion at Glenfinnan on 19 August 1745, captured
144 Edinburgh, and won the Battle of Prestonpans. On his assurances given to the Scots of
145 English support, the rebels invaded England only to understand that what support had been
146 promised had evaporated. Retreating to Scotland, the Rebellion was finally ended by the
147 Battle of Culloden on 16 April 1746.

148 The first public notice of Froment's involvement in this political and social disaster comes
149 from November 1746, when the *London Evening Post* reported on a scene that had taken
150 place at London's Opera House:

151

152 This Week one Fremont [sic] was apprehended at a Rehearsal at the Opera-House, where
153 he was a Dancer, by Mr. Carrington, one of his Majesty's Messengers, for High-Treason,
154 he being, during the Rebellion, an Officer in the Rebel Army in Scotland; several Letters
155 were found about him from his Friends in Scotland. He was, after being examin'd by the
156 Secretaries of State, committed to the New-Prison; several of the Rebels now in Custody
157 knew him. He says he is an Officer in the King of France's Service.²⁸

158

159 So, Froment's disappearance from the scene in Edinburgh in April 1745 is explained; he went
160 to work on the side of the Young Pretender, Charles Stuart, during the Jacobite Rising of
161 1745-46. And not just as a sympathizer caught up in the Rebellion, but working as an officer,
162 and further, a self-confessed servant 'in the King of France's Service'. This also offers some
163 possible explanation for Froment's earlier 'disappearance' from the theatre between October
164 1741, when he was seen in Edinburgh, and February 1743, when he reappeared in London.²⁹
165 It suggests a period of absence on other business.

166 Where can we place Froment in the Jacobite action of 1745-46? His own recorded
167 evidence suggests that he joined the rebels in Edinburgh 'when They came thither; and
168 attended Them along with the Artillery'.³⁰ Froment is included in Grante's Artillery as

61 ²⁷ *Caledonian Mercury*, 2 April 1745.

62 ²⁸ *London Evening Post*, 6-8 November 1746.

63 ²⁹ There is one supposed sighting of him in Edinburgh in 1742 when he was noted arriving with 'y^c Players to
64 Edinb[urgh] & Danced upon y^c Stage there ab[out] a year & half & then took a Dancing School & Continued in
65 that Employment till y^c Rebels came to Edinb[urgh]'. Walter Scott, *Evidence*, TS 20_109_20, 2. This appears to
66 be either erroneous or an invention for personal reasons for there is no other record of him working in the
67 theatre nor running a dancing school before 1744.

68 ³⁰ TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/2/6.

169 ‘Officer’ where he is listed between the Clerk and the Sergeants.³¹ The Artillery was under
170 the command of Colonel James Alexander Grante, a French mathematician³² and engineer of
171 Scots origin,³³ who arrived in one of the French ships that landed between Montrose and
172 Stonehaven between the 9th and the 19th of October 1745.³⁴ One of the ships, *l’Ésperance*,
173 carried Alexandre de Boyer, Marquis d’Eguilles, an accredited agent of the French
174 Government, who served as an unofficial envoy to Prince Charles during the Rebellion.³⁵ The
175 Jacobite army met no resistance as it moved from Glenfinnian, taking Perth on 4 September
176 and Edinburgh on 16 September, where Froment claimed to have joined the Rebels, and by
177 his own admission stayed with them ‘till After the Battle of Culloden’.³⁶ ‘Evidences’
178 (statements) taken from a number of witnesses - Andrew Johnston, Alexander Russell, John
179 Falconer, James Burnley (sp?), William Clark, David Bell, Edward Gibson, William Wilson,
180 Walter Scott, and Capt Campbell (sp?)³⁷ – as written up are somewhat formulaic, but the
181 variance in the details of each statement suggests there was no coercion. The one given by
182 Andrew Johnstone is typical of the ten witness statements taken:

183

184 This Wit[ness] knew y^e Pris[oner] who kept a Dancing School & Danced at the playhouse
185 at Edinb[urgh] long before y^e Rebellion began, after y^e Battle of Preston pans he saw y^e
186 Pris[oner] at y^e Pretenders Sons Quarters at Holyrood house – with a White Cockade in
187 his Hat – Saw him upon y^e March from Edinb[urgh] to Carlisle with y^e Rebels Train of
188 Artillery with a White Cockade & a Sword by his side & bel^{vs} with pistols before him –
189 Saw him in Carlisle with y^e Rebels with his white Cockade & Sword – March with them
190 to Derby & back again & was said to be Qua[rter] Ma[ster] to y^e Rebel’s Train of
191 Artillery – Marched with them to Glasgow & was with them at Inverness – Saw him
192 upon y^e Moor of Culloden with s[aid] Artillery the Day before & on y^e Day of y^e Battle
193 of Culloden on Horseback with pistols before him, & also on Foot.³⁸

194

195 In one statement, that given by David Bell, there is even a glimpse of Froment’s old
196 profession, claiming that he had seen him ‘with y^e Rebels in Carlisle’ and that he had been
197 ‘often at y^e Pretender Son’s Qua[rters] there playing upon a Fiddle’.³⁹ Whatever variances
198 between the evidences – and they are all we have with which to trace Froment’s movements -
199 they do, however, agree on the essential details: that he had been a dancing master in
200 Edinburgh until the arrival of the Rebels; that he wore the Jacobite white cockade; that he
201 was seen both on foot and on horseback throughout the Rebellion; and that he carried a sword
202 and pistols. The witness statements chart his presence at the major engagements starting with
203 the Battle of Prestonpans on 21 September 1745, and followed by the Siege and Capture of

69 31 Christian Aikman, ed., *No Quarter Given: The Muster Roll of Prince Charles Edward Stuart’s Army*
70 (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishing, 2000), 137.

71 32 Ibid., xix.

72 33 Marchioness of Tullibardine, *A Military History of Perthshire 1660-1902* (Perth: R. A. & J. Hay, 1908), 331.

73 34 Walter Biggar Blaikie, *Itinerary of Prince Charles Edward Stuart from his Landing in Scotland July 1745 to*
74 *his Departure in September 1746* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1897), 21.

75 35 John S. Gibson, *Edinburgh in the ’45: Bonnie Prince Charlie at Holyroodhouse* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society,
76 1995), 47-48.

77 36 TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/2/6.

78 37 TNA: TS 20_109_20.

79 38 Ibid., 1.

80 39 Ibid., 2.

204 Carlisle on 14 and 15 November 1745; at Derby on 4 and 5 December; his return to Glasgow
205 via Carlisle; at the Siege of Stirling Castle from 8 January to 1 February 1746; and at the 2nd
206 Siege of Ruthven Barracks on 10 and 11 February. The battle of Culloden took place on 16
207 April, pitting some 5,400 men for the Prince against around 9,000 for the King, who lost
208 about 50 men. The number of the Prince's troops that were killed and wounded were
209 estimated between 1,500 and 2,000.⁴⁰ Culloden ended the Rebellion, and Froment's own
210 evidence refers to his 'escape' from the area after the action ceased.⁴¹

211 At some point during these events, perhaps as he travelled south, Froment made contact
212 with the London opera house, then in the hands of manager Francesco Vanneschi. Froment
213 reported back to Edinburgh that he had been well received; in a letter sent to him by Stephen
214 Demainbray,⁴² the writer commented that 'only at the Opera in the English theatre does truth
215 reign and whose director believes himself bound to honour his commitments.'⁴³ While this
216 sounds innocuous information about a dancing engagement, it suggests that Vanneschi may
217 well have had Jacobite sympathies, too. He was politically suspect – Walpole, who met him
218 at Calais in 1741 'would rather have talked [...] about the opera' but Vanneschi 'preferred
219 politics'⁴⁴ – and when in the 1754-55 season there was a rumour of a plot to blow up the
220 London opera house when the King was in attendance, Vanneschi and his son were obvious
221 targets for immediate arrest.⁴⁵ These political ambiguities may well be what Mann had meant
222 when, in 1743, he had referred to Vanneschi having 'changed his religion'.⁴⁶ And Demainbray
223 seems to be using the opera house as a 'letter-box', for his note to Froment mentions that if
224 the 'machine' is available, confirmation can be sent in 'a letter made out to me by a Franked
225 letter which one of the directors of the Opera will give you.'⁴⁷

226 What precipitated Froment's arrest is not known. Leaving Edinburgh for London after
227 Culloden was a prudent move, for the English were pursuing known sympathisers in Scotland
228 where around 200 members of the Prince's army were executed or hanged.⁴⁸ The London

81 40 Christian Aikman, ed., *No Quarter Given: The Muster Roll of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's Army*
82 (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishing, 2000), 42.

83 41 TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/2/6.

84 42 Of Huguenot descent, the astronomer Stephen Charles Triboudet (Etienne) Demainbray (1710-1782) was
85 Superintendent of the King's Observatory at Richmond from 1768 to 1782. After studying at Leiden, he
86 returned to lecture on experimental philosophy from 1740 to 1742 in Edinburgh, and during the rising,
87 volunteered for the British army and took part in the battle of Prestonpans on 21 September 1745.

88 43 TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/1/67^v. 'Notre Joyea été inconceivable de vous scavoit si bien place qu'à
89 l'Opera seul Theatre Anglois ou la probité et ou le Directeure se criot oblige de faire honneur a ses
90 Engagements'.

91 44 HW to Horace Mann, 6 November 1741; *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols (New Haven: Yale
92 University Press; London: Oxford University Press), XVII: ed. W. S. Lewis, Warren Hunting Smith, and
93 George L. Lam (1954), 140-41.

94 45 John Lockman, *A Faithful Narrative of the Late Pretended Gunpowder Plot* (London: for the Author, 1755). See
95 Michael Burden, *Regina Mingotti: Diva and Impresario at the King's Theatre, London*, Royal Musical Association
96 Monograph 22 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) for a transcription of Lockman's text (141-55) and some discussion of this
97 incident (36-38).

98 46 Horace Mann to HW, 2 April 1743; Walpole, *Correspondence*, XVIII: ed. W. S. Lewis, Warren Hunting
99 Smith, and George L. Lam (1954), 198.

100 47 TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/1/67^r. 'd'Escriture faites tenir par un Frank de Lettre qu'à au Seigneur des
101 Directeurs de L'Opera vous a donné A'.

102 48 Aikman, *No Quarter Given*, 225-28.

229 opera house should have been a place of safety, a context where Froment's 'foreign-ness'
230 was not a matter for comment and where he could be legitimately present on business. The
231 most likely answer is that some correspondence was intercepted at Edinburgh which revealed
232 his whereabouts. Froment's arrest took place before Demainbray's above-mentioned letter
233 could be delivered.⁴⁹ Froment was listed as 'Taken'⁵⁰ on or before 5 November, the date of
234 the paper containing his 'turned evidence', that is information given to an English court when
235 charged with a crime in exchange (or hope of exchange) for a reduction of sentence.⁵¹ As
236 such, it is (at this period) also referred to as 'King's Evidence' in acknowledgement of the
237 monarch in whose name justice was carried out. The *London Evening Post* that reported
238 Froment's arrest is dated 6-8 November, and the docket of prisoners in the various
239 Messengers' hands that lists him as 'John B. Froment. Committed to the New Gaol Nov^r.
240 turned Evidence' is dated 12 November.⁵² The Messenger who was in charge of Froment, one
241 Mr Carrington, described him as 'A Dancing Master, born in France. Has lived 8 or 9 Years
242 at Edinburgh', a period that is either a scribal error, deliberate misinformation from Froment,
243 or mistaken testimony from a witness. Demainbray's letter from Edinburgh to Froment is
244 dated 8 November 1746, presumably before the news of the dancer's arrest could have
245 reached Scotland and could not have been one of the 'several Letters were found about him
246 from his Friends in Scotland' when he was arrested.⁵³ Demainbray's letter also functioned as
247 a cover letter to three others which he requested Froment deliver. These were letters to the
248 experimental philosopher Erasmus King, the French mathematician Abraham de Du Moivre,
249 and the watchmaker John Gerard.⁵⁴ The survival of these four letters together suggests that
250 the packet containing them was intercepted before it could reach Froment, who in any case
251 was now in prison and would not have been able to undertake the commission.

252 Froment's 'turned' offerings are contained in the Evidences listed in the possession of
253 Carrington on 11 November 1746.⁵⁵

254

255 That Mr Leith who belong'd to the Person Cauuld the Duke of Perth⁵⁶ I saw him at
256 Sterling & other places. He was drest in Hoyland dress, with a broad sword, side pistol
257 and white cockade. This person is in Town.

258 Mr Alexander, a painter at abberdeen, who was in ye Rebellion, that his son lives in
259 Town and knows whear his Father is, and I all soe saw too Gentlemen att Mr
260 Alexander's in this Town, who I had frequently seen in ye Reblion, and have been in
261 thear Company several Times There. The aforesaid Mr Alexander knows thear names
262 and the place whear the[y] stay.

263 I all soe saw in ye Rebel Arme[y] and know them very well

264 Lord Lewis Gordon

265 Sir William Gordon of Park, Laird of McLoud

103 ⁴⁹ *London Evening Post*, 6-8 November 1746.

104 ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

105 ⁵¹ TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/1/27.

106 ⁵² TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/2/6.

107 ⁵³ *London Evening Post*, 6-8 November 1746.

108 ⁵⁴ Abraham de Moivre (1677-1754); Erasmus King (*d.* 1760); John Gerard, said by Demainbray to live in
109 Litchfield Street, Soho.

110 ⁵⁵ The document is listed in the 'Evidences in Mr Carrington's custody,' dated 9 March 1747; TNA: State
111 Paper Office, SP 36/95/1/38.

112 ⁵⁶ John Drummond (1713-1746), from 1720, the 3rd Duke of Perth.

266 Mr Grayham, and several others which time will bring into my memere [memory] or
267 when I see there persons, or names, shall know and will discover all that it is in my
268 Power, upon oath, to doe his Majesty and Government Servis.
269 Endorsed:
270 Paper delivered by Froment to Mr Carrington, Nov. 5 1746⁵⁷

271
272 A later list of the same evidences in Carrington's hand is dated 9 March 1747.⁵⁸

273 Froment's first figure is possibly the Jesuit priest Robert or Patrick Leith, from Aberdeen,
274 who joined the Jacobite army before the Battle of Prestonpans at which he administered to
275 the wounded. He marched into England with the main army, but then disappeared from sight,
276 being absent from the Clergy list of 1746.⁵⁹ However, he reappeared in Rome and is recorded
277 in the company of George Gray and another of Froment's denunciations, the Jacobite artist
278 Cosmo Alexander (1724–1772).⁶⁰ If this identification is correct, it is possible that Froment's
279 description is of a disguise.

280 Cosmo Alexander and his father John (1686–c.1766) were both portraitists, with careers
281 intertwined with the Jacobite cause. John's early background remains obscure, but by 1710
282 he was working in London 'copying portraits of Mary Queen of Scots and other Scottish
283 Historical figures.'⁶¹ He is recorded in Paris and then from 1711 to 1719 in Italy, under the
284 patronage of Jacobite Alexander Gordon, the 2nd Duke of Gordon. An able portraitist, he has
285 been described as producing 'lively recreations... in the spirt of the originals'.⁶² Cosmo, his
286 son by Isobel Innes, was named after Alexander Gordon, the Duke's eldest son. He was an
287 ardent Jacobite and was taken prisoner at Carlisle.⁶³ He was declared a wanted man after
288 Culloden and went to London, and then Rome, arriving by the Easter of 1747.⁶⁴ He began
289 painting portraits of Rome's Jacobite population, work which included a series of
290 commissions from the family of the Old Pretender, James Stuart, who himself also
291 commissioned a portrait of Charles Edward Stuart.⁶⁵ Cosmo was noted as ultimately
292 'discharged,' while John was listed as 'escaped, skulked'.⁶⁶

293 Lord Lewis Gordon (1724 – 1754) was originally in the navy, a career he abandoned in
294 1745 to join Charles Stuart and was appointed a member of the Prince's Council at
295 Edinburgh. The regiment, called Lord Lewis Gordon's, was raised in the North East of
296 Scotland, and while the main army headed South, he remained in Scotland defeating
297 government troops at the second Battle of Inverurie. After Culloden, he escaped to France
298 where he lived in exile, becoming mentally unstable and dying at Montreuil. Both Lord

113 57 TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/89/1/27.

114 58 TNA: State Paper Office, SP 36/95/1/38.

115 59 Jean E. McCann, *The Organisation of the Jacobite Army, 1745-46* (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh,
116 1963), 120-121.

117 60 Patricia R. Andrew, 'Alexander, Cosmo', in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. by Colin
118 Matthew and Brian Harrison, 60 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), I, 662-63 (662).

119 61 David and Francina Irwin, *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 46.

120 62 Ibid.

121 63 Aikman, *No Quarter Given*, 235.

122 64 Andrew, 'Alexander, Cosmo', 662.

123 65 Ibid.; Irwin, *Scottish Painters*, 46-7.

124 66 Aikman, *No Quarter Given*, 235.

299 Lewis Gordon's Regiment and the Duke of Perth's Regiment were in the Second Line at
300 Culloden, made up of 1190 men; it is plausible that Froment had contact with both men.

301 Sir William Gordon of Park, Laird of McLoud, and the 3rd baronet (c.1688-1751), joined
302 the Prince in Perth in September 1745, and in Edinburgh was commissioned a Lieutenant
303 Colonel. He was sent to Paris to ask for help from the French King, marched into England
304 with the rebels, and was present at the meeting which decided on the Scottish withdrawal. He
305 fought at Culloden and remained in disguise in the area of the Castle of Park, but in July
306 1746, he was 'attainted of High Treason' and eventually escaped to France.⁶⁷ Froment's last
307 name, one 'Mr Grayham,' may well be Graham of Balgowan, Thomas Græme, one of the
308 first two names that appears on the list compiled by William Davidson of Auchterarder for
309 Lord Tullibardine on 3 September 1745 of those 'well affected and firm gentry of
310 Perthshire'.⁶⁸ The social standing of these men indicates that Froment must have moved in
311 their circles, perhaps partly through access as a dancing master such as that described above
312 by Bell and which made it possible for him subsequently to identify them, something the rank
313 and file would not have been able to do.

314 While there seems to be no record of what happened to Froment once he was in the New
315 Prison, he is, after turning King's Evidence, listed as 'discharged',⁶⁹ and the next trace of him
316 is at Covent Garden for the 1747-48 season, where (as mentioned above) he partnered
317 Madame Dumont. His return to working in the theatre that season was enabled by the 1747
318 Act of Indemnity, a statute passed to protect all those involved in the uprising from further
319 penalties to which they would otherwise have been subjected. The Act, which included
320 specific protection for Flora MacDonald who famously assisted Charles Stuart escape the
321 Government troops, passed through Parliament in June 1747, and paved the way for Froment
322 not only to return to the stage in the Autumn of that year, but to resume his London dancing
323 career.

324

325 **The Years After**

326

327 As the events of 1745 receded into the past, Froment's life seems to have settled back into its
328 previous routine of working in the theatre and teaching dancing outside it, both in his own
329 institutions and on occasion, privately, but quietly. One of the few mentions of his name
330 around this time in contexts other than the theatre is in January 1755 when Froment was
331 assaulted by Peter Aubert, a surgeon who claimed to 'belong to the French Ambassador'.
332 This was the subject of an affidavit from Abraham Ferron, a watch-case maker, and Charles
333 Lafontaine, a jeweller.⁷⁰ The verbal and physical attack took place on 9 January while
334 Froment was playing billiards with Ferron at the Montpellier Coffee House in Soho, during
335 which Froment was called a thief and a rouge; was accused of stealing Aubert's money; and
336 finally 'was given a violent blow with his hand that struck him [Froment] with such force as
337 to occasion him to stagger and almost fall to the ground and did actually stun him'.⁷¹ In
338 seeking redress, Froment presented his case for justice to the secretary to the French
339 Ambassador, one Mr Boutet, but no response was forthcoming. In the meantime, Aubert
340 seems to have abused Froment all over London, including on one particularly egregious

125 ⁶⁷ <https://thelivesofmyancestors.wordpress.com/2017/01/08/the-jacobite-laird/>; accessed 18 January 2019.

126 ⁶⁸ McCann, 'The Organisation of the Jacobite Army', 51.

127 ⁶⁹ Aikman, *No Quarter Given*, 137.

128 ⁷⁰ TNA: SP 36/129/1/51-3.

129 ⁷¹ TNA: SP 36/129/1/51.

341 occasion at the Royal Exchange on 27 January. It was the inaction of the French Ambassador,
342 then Charles-François de Broglie,⁷² in the face of this last incident that precipitated Froment's
343 recourse to law, and the affidavit was sworn in preparation for the case. However, the
344 diplomatic angle of the matter must have been the cause of some political embarrassment for
345 it was noted that John Sharp, a magistrate, tried everything in his power to resolve the 'affair
346 without its being referred to the Attorney-General'.⁷³ Another glimpse of Froment's character
347 in this period is as a subscriber in 1760 to the edition of Aaron Hill's works, which, while
348 consisting of pieces no longer performed, was a tome to which a serious man of the theatre
349 should be seen to subscribe.⁷⁴

350 In this decade, Froment appears to have fathered a daughter, one 'Miss Froment'. Whether
351 she really was his daughter or was a pupil who took his name as a career move, is unclear.
352 During her debut season, it was claimed that she was born in 1756:

353

354 We are authorised to assure the public that Miss Froment, who danced before their
355 Majesties, with so much applause, at the Opera House in the Haymarket, along with the
356 famous Slingsby, is a native of London, born in the year 1756, and was taught by Mr.
357 Froment.⁷⁵

358

359 There is evidence that Froment husbanded her career, composing dances for her and
360 performing with her. She made her debut with Froment as her partner at Drury Lane on 12
361 May 1762 in *Les Characters de la Dance* as 'a Child six Years old, Scholar of Mr. Froment
362 being the first Time of her appearing on the Stage'.⁷⁶ They were still dancing together after
363 her marriage to one Mr Sutton, when both father and daughter were billed in the entr'acte
364 dances to Aaron Hill's *Merope* at Drury Lane on 24 April:

365

366 End of Act II a new grand Turkish Dance composed by Mr Froment, in which Mrs
367 Sutton will dance as a Sultana. End of Act IV (by particular Desire) the Louvre and the
368 Minuet, and also the Dauphin Minuet, by Mr Froment, and Mrs Sutton, his Scholar.⁷⁷

369

370 If the advertisements accurately reflect the chronology of events, Miss Froment was
371 married on 22 September 1772 for the advertisement for that day lists her as 'Miss Froment',
372 while that for 23 September refers to her as 'Mrs Sutton (late Miss Froment)'.⁷⁸ Her husband
373 Mr Sutton cannot be further identified, although it has been suggested that the performer
374 Giles Sutton, 'The Little Devil', an acrobat, dancer, and equestrian, was their son.⁷⁹ Giles first
375 appears in the list of performers for 1785 as 'Master Sutton', with acts that season including
376 playing favourite airs on the clarinet while dancing on his horse at full speed and performing
377 on the trick horse Chiliby, which he rode dressed in yellow in the theatre's show 'Newmarket

130 72 Charles-François de Broglie, Marquis de Ruffec (1719–1781), Ambassador Extraordinary to London 1754–
131 55.

132 73 TNA: SP 36/129/1/51.

133 74 Aaron Hill, *The Dramatic Works of Aaron Hill*, 2 vols (London: T. Lowndes, 1760), I, List of subscribers.

134 75 *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 7 February 1769.

135 76 *Public Advertiser*, 12 May 1762.

136 77 *General Advertiser*, 24 April 1773.

137 78 *Public Advertiser*, 22 September 1772; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 23 September 1772.

138 79 Highfill, 'Giles Sutton', in *A Biographical Dictionary*, XIV (1991), 344–45 (344).

378 Races'.⁸⁰ Mrs Sutton's career was busy and varied until about 1786, when her name
379 disappears from the London bills. She then found work with Benjamin Handy's equestrian
380 company and was among those drowned when the packet *Viceroy* sank on the way to Dublin
381 in 1798, where Handy had taken over the Dublin Amphitheatre Royal.⁸¹

382 By 1763, Froment can be found running a substantial dance academy in Lambeth. The
383 establishment occupied Carlisle House, formerly a Bishop's residence,⁸² but not used as such
384 after the Restoration. Indeed, it is recorded in 1690 as being partly used as a pottery.⁸³ The
385 pottery closed around 1730 and the building became a tavern. Froment took a lease on the
386 property in 1763, a lease which notes that he was at that point resident in Islington, and uses
387 his third christian name, 'Le Marie'.⁸⁴ The date of 1763 suggests that Froment was resident
388 and working in Lambeth seven years before Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans's date of 1770.⁸⁵
389 The suggestion of this date seems to be a confusion with Froment's renewal of the lease of
390 Carlisle House in that year, a renewal he detailed in a letter of complaint to Andrew
391 Coltée Ducarel, Lambeth Librarian, and Keeper of the Public Records.⁸⁶

392 Some insight into Froment's circumstances at this time can be gleaned from the two
393 insurance policies he held on Carlisle House in the 1770s with Sun Insurance. The first
394 policy, covering goods only inside 'Carlisle House, near the Turnpike, Lambeth Marsh', lists
395 household goods up to £300, printed books up to £25, musical instruments up to £25, clothes
396 up to £100, plate up to £50. It is dated 18 February 1771, also gives 'Lamarie' as his third
397 Christian name and describes him as a 'dancing master'.⁸⁷ The second policy which survives
398 only in part, is dated 14 August 1773, but covers a timber stable and a chaise-house behind
399 the main residence to the value of £50, and a barn, hay, horses and carriages to the value of
400 another £50.⁸⁸ So far, no contemporary illustration of Carlisle House has come to light but a
401 watercolour - describing it as Carlisle House School - from about 1820 by William Beckford,
402 shows it as a small house of three bays.⁸⁹ An undated proof of an unpublished print at the
403 British Museum, somewhat more convincingly, shows it as a larger house nearer the street.⁹⁰
404 Whether these two views are of the same building is unclear; the former is on Westminster

139 ⁸⁰ *Morning Chronicle*, 9 August 1785; *Public Advertiser*, 14 September 1785; *Morning Post*, 3 October 1785.

140 ⁸¹ *London Chronicle*, 9-11 January 1798.

141 ⁸² *Survey of London: Volume 23, Lambeth: South Bank and Vauxhall*, ed. Howard Roberts and Walter H
142 Godfrey (London: London County Council, 1951), 75 and plate 109a.

143 ⁸³ F. H. Garner, 'Lambeth Earthenware', *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle*, 1/4 (1937), 46.

144 ⁸⁴ Church Commissioners: Deeds, 31627; cited *Survey of London*, Roberts and Godfrey, 132.

145 ⁸⁵ Andrew Coltee Duceral, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Lambeth* (London: by and for J.
146 Nichols, 1786), 74.

147 ⁸⁶ 'Letter from Froment to Dr. Ducarel, Carlisle House, Lambeth, May 1770' in John Nichols, ed., *Illustrations*
148 *of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century. Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original*
149 *Letters of Eminent Persons; and Intended as a Sequel to the Literary Anecdotes*, 8 vols (London: Printed
150 for the author, by Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1817-58): 4 (1858), 638-39.

151 ⁸⁷ Insurance Policy No.294564, 74: Supplementary material to Lance Whitehead and Jenny Nex, 'The
152 Insurance of Musical London and the Sun Fire Office 1710-1779', E to I, *The Galpin Society Journal*, 67
153 (2014), 181-216, <http://www.galpinsociety.org/supplementary%20material.htm>, accessed 28 December 2020.

154 ⁸⁸ Insurance Policy No.329073.

155 ⁸⁹ View of Carlisle House School on Westminster Bridge Road. Drawn from a sketch by William Beckford.
156 Pen, pencil, and wash, c 1820. London, Metropolitan Archives, SC/GL/PR/L1/WES/q951687x.

405 Bridge Road, and the latter in Mount Street. Not long after Froment's Dancing School was
406 established, *Lloyd's Evening Post* reported that they had been

407

408 informed that a place of Entertainment, on the plan of Sadler's Wells, is speedily to be
409 erected at Carlisle-House, near the Surrey end of Westminster Bridge, under the direction
410 of one Mr. Froment, a French Dancing-Master, and two or three others, who now
411 exerting their interest, as we are told, to gain a necessary license from the Magistrates.⁹¹

412

413 Froment denied this, and *Lloyd's* was:

414

415 desired to contradict so much of the paragraph in our paper of Monday last, which
416 informed the Public, that a place of Entertainment, of the nature of Sadler's Wells, was
417 intended to be carried on at Carlisle-house, Lambeth; Mr Froment, the Proprietor thereof,
418 having no such thought, his design being of a quite different nature.⁹²

419

420 Froment's denial does not render the report untrue, for he seems to have developed quite
421 an instinct for self-preservation and it may be that the magistrates who would have to licence
422 the venture had dropped a hint or two. One source certainly reports that the move was
423 opposed by Archbishop Secker.⁹³

424 Over the next few years, we glimpse Froment in a number of varied situations. In February
425 1773, he seems to have had bad luck when:

426

427 A Game Cock and Hen were stolen out of the Coach-House belonging to Mr Froment...
428 In order to detect the Person or Persons concerned in said Robbery, Mr Froment
429 promises an award of One Guinea to any Person that will discover the Offender or
430 Offenders who committed said Robbery, and another Guinea on Conviction..⁹⁴

431

432 It does seem that at least by the 1773 theft, the Carlisle House dancing school was a thing
433 of the past, for the report describes Froment as being 'late of Carlisle-House, Lambeth', and
434 his address given as 'next to Mr Abbot's, Coach-maker, near Westminster Bridge, Surrey'.⁹⁵
435 And in 1775, there was the curious incident of a stolen money draft in which Froment
436 charged James Eckley of robbing him of a draft for 32*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.* of Lane Son, and Frazer, on
437 Fuller and Co, payable to the 'Rev. Mr James, of Greenwich, or bearer'. The tangled
438 circumstances were reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, which described Eckley as a former
439 apprentice of the clown Joseph Grimaldi.⁹⁶ In 1776, Froment tried again to establish a
440 dancing school, this time in Blackheath, where his new academy was advertised to open on
441 21 June with this extended announcement:

442

157 90 View of Carlisle House, on Mount Street, Lambeth. Etching, proof before lettering. London, British
158 Museum, 1880,1113.5490.

159 91 *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 19-22 July 1765.

160 92 *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 25 July 1765; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 24-26 July 1765.

161 93 Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury (1693-1768). Thomas Allen, *History and Antiquities of the*
162 *Parish of Lambeth and the Archbishopal Palace* (London: J. Allen, 1827), 335.

163 94 *Daily Advertiser*, 5 February 1773.

164 95 *Ibid.*

165 96 *Morning Chronicle*, 27 April 1775.

443 Mr. Froment, who has had the honour to teach many of the most respectable families in
444 England for 30 years past, begs leave to inform the Nobility and Gentry that at the
445 request of so many friends he has engaged the Assembly Room on Blackheath twice a
446 week, in order to teach the polite art in all its branches. Beside the Minuet, Louvre,
447 Quadrilles, Cotillions, with the proper steps, he also engages to teach that graceful new
448 minuet called the Minuet de la Cour, composed by Gardelle, for the Queen of France,
449 and which has been so much admired at the Opera this season. His days of teaching will
450 be on Tuesday and Friday mornings, at ten o'clock, at the moderate terms of one guinea
451 entrance, and one guinea per month; but those ladies and gentlemen who have learned
452 before at Mr. Froment's are exempted entrance. He continues to teach at home and
453 abroad as usual.⁹⁷

454
455 Assuming it actually opened, the Blackheath dancing school seems not to have lasted long.
456 Froment then decided to try his luck elsewhere and his name disappeared from the London
457 bills in 1777, and by mid-1778 he reappeared in Bath where he advertised himself as a Paris-
458 trained dancer, choreographer and ballet-master. Froment's advertised repertory included the
459 'minuet de la cour, minuet de la reine, minuet dauphin, louvre, gavotte, allemandes,
460 cotillions, and even an early form of quadrille.'⁹⁸ He was first recorded as having a dancing
461 school at 1 Rivers Street which opened on 6 September 1782 'at five o'clock in the
462 afternoon ... which will continue every Monday and Friday at the same hour.'⁹⁹ The
463 advertised terms were a guinea for entrance and a guinea per quarter, with Froment's own
464 pupils being excused the entrance fee. He is later found advertising that his aim was 'to make
465 his scholars dance gracefully and in time, which is in general very little observed - he is sorry
466 to see so many grimaces taught for graces'.¹⁰⁰

467 Bath seems to have been (mostly) kind to Froment. The only non-dancing glimpse we
468 have of him during this period is his offer of a guinea (again) for information concerning the
469 thieves who stole 'a bed of potatoes' from his garden.¹⁰¹ Earlier thefts are mentioned in the
470 advertisement, but the loss of his potatoes seems to have been the last straw, and as with
471 earlier incidents, Froment seemed unwilling to let things go. The dancing flourished, and
472 when he died in 1786 at the age of 70, he left an asset for his otherwise anonymous widow,
473 one in which she appears to have retained an interest. At first, she approached a Mr Astier
474 who had announced in July 1785 that he would establish himself as a dancing master in Bath.
475 His advertised credentials were that he was a 'Dancing-Master (from the Opera House)'.¹⁰²
476 Astier's academy was not announced as open until 24 January 1786. Froment appears to have
477 died between this date and 18 May 1786 when Astier announced that he had removed himself
478 to 52 New King Street remarking that 'Mr Astier has been treated by Mrs Froment with a
479 degree of disingenuity, which his conduct to her by no means merited.'¹⁰³ The reference in the
480 *Bath Chronicle* to the 'half-guinea entrance' to Astier's school being waived for any 'Young

166 ⁹⁷ *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 19 June 1776.

167 ⁹⁸ Fawcett, *Dance and Teachers* 27.

168 ⁹⁹ *Bath Chronicle*, 5 September 1782; and for a view of the school, see West View of Rivers Street and
169 Catharine Place from Upper Church Street, Bath. Watercolour by William Blackmore, c.1785. Hunt, IV, 104.
170 Bath Central Library.

171 ¹⁰⁰ *Bath Chronicle*, 19 February 1784.

172 ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 4 December 1783.

173 ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 14 July 1785.

174 ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 18 May 1786.

481 Lady or Gentleman who has already paid it to another master’ suggests that she double-dealt
482 with him and another dancing master, one Mr Second ‘formerly of the King’s Theatre,
483 Haymarket, sole assistant to Mr Vestris’, who announced that ‘the Academy is removed from
484 Rivers Street, to No 1 West-gate Buildings.’¹⁰⁴ The note at the end of Second’s advertisement
485 – ‘Mrs Froment will attend the Academy as usual’ – suggests a number of reasons for the
486 falling-out with Astier, including a disagreement over a profit-sharing and the possibility that
487 Mrs Froment herself also taught at the Academy and could not work with him. Such is state
488 of the records of the London opera house that the connections between the King’s Theatre,
489 Astier, and Second revealed here are not otherwise known; the role of Second as ‘sole
490 assistant to Mr Vestris’ is a fact of particular significance. Astier does appear to have stayed
491 in the West country, for he advertised a number of institutions and connections where he
492 taught, and his scholars performed at the ‘Annual Ball for Young Ladies at Miss Phelps’s
493 School’ in Wells in 1787.¹⁰⁵ The date of Froment’s death also seems to have had some
494 significance in relation to the Carlisle House lease, since in that year, 1786, it was re-
495 occupied as a private house, although not for long, for it was soon billed as an academy for
496 ‘young gentlemen’.¹⁰⁶

497 498 **Conclusion**

499
500 The dancer Jean-Baptiste Marie Froment now stands before us transformed. His death in
501 Bath in 1786 at the age of 70 points to 1716 as his year of birth, and he now has a possible
502 father, Froment the elder, an early start to his career in the mid-1720s, and a putative dance
503 partner, Madame Dumont. He emerges as entrepreneurial, with dancing schools in
504 Edinburgh, Lambeth, Blackheath, and Bath, but despite his undoubted skill – exercised in the
505 theatre as a composer of dances, rather than as a dancer on most occasions – his institutions
506 discussed here do not seem to have thrived. Indeed, the Blackheath venture seems to have
507 been over before it started, and it is all too likely that at that stage, his Jacobite connections
508 counted against him. Similarly, the assault on him by Aubert, the surgeon from the French
509 Embassy in 1755, may well have arisen from a quarrel over Froment’s turned evidence. And
510 we learn that Froment was a player of billiards for recreation and a vegetable grower in his
511 spare time.

512 But above all, he is revealed as a foreign agent, one whose early appearance in England as
513 a young man suggests that it is possible that he was a ‘sleeper’, an operative planted inside
514 the country not for immediate employment but for activation at the appropriate moment.
515 Having established himself on the scene, his 15 months absence from 1741 to 1743 is
516 suggestive; if, as seems likely, he spent at least some of this time in Edinburgh, those months
517 may have been spent developing contacts. His place as ‘Officer’ in Grante’s Artillery, for
518 example, was swiftly gained and remarkably stable, and later, as one witness reported, ‘he
519 was Aid de Camp to Mireabel,¹⁰⁷ y^c General of y^c French Artillery’.¹⁰⁸ Froment’s role seems

175 104 Ibid., 24 August 1786.

176 105 Ibid., 13 July 1786; 18 October 1787.

177 106 *Survey of London*, Roberts and Godfrey, 75.

178 107 Probably the Franco-Scottish engineer Louÿs-Antoine-Alexandre-François de Gordon, usually known by
179 the possible *nom-de-guerre* of the ‘Marquis de Mirabelle’ or ‘Mirabelle de Gordon’. A receipt from Froment in
180 the Royal Archives RA CP/MAIN/11 f.286 dated 23 February 1746 acknowledges the sum of ‘3 pounds
181 sterling’ from ‘Le Comte e Mirabel’ for appointments for February supports Clark’s evidence.

182 108 William Clark, TNA: TS 20_109_20, 2.

520 in fact pre-planned with Grante's arrival in the same fleet as Alexandre de Boyer in a co-
521 ordination of French interests. What those 'interests' made of Froment's turning King's
522 Evidence when the uprising was crushed is not known, but it is telling that he seems never
523 again to have set foot in France. Ironically, Froment's military career had been pre-figured in
524 one of his stage performances. When he danced at Goodman's Fields Theatre in 1741, he
525 acted out a piece called *The Imprisonment, Release, Stratagems and Marriage of Harlequin*,
526 a title and scenario that seems all too apt for the numerous occasions he had to manoeuvre
527 through the political twists and turns of the Rebellion.¹⁰⁹

183 109 I would like to acknowledge the assistance of The National Archives whose staff provided access to the
184 relevant documents during the COVID-19 pandemic when little else was available. I would like to acknowledge
185 the assistance of Jennifer Thorp and Andrew Counter in the preparation of the appendix. Papers using some of
186 the material in this article have been given at the Oxford Dance Symposium and at the Edinburgh meeting of the
187 International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.