Acknowledgments

Historians spend long hours poring over documents that are often nearly illegible. Even so, the pursuit of the past is thrilling whether that results from an unexpected archival find or, in our case, a wintertime adventure over the frosty and foggy mountains of the Ardèche to unravel the mystery of an assassination.

We have been friends for a long time. And that friendship has not only produced some extraordinary journeys across the byways of France but also a goodly amount of published material. It’s a friendship enmeshed in old pieces of paper, stacks of books, maps and GIS technology, and innumerable rental cars that took us to the far corners of the country. Along the way we experienced the culinary delights of each region including their delicious smells and tastes, for this story took place, in no small part, near the lavender fields of southern France and the nougat factories of Montélimar. Together we pursue the darkest of stories, but our friendship fills the scholarly process and deep conversations necessary for co-authorship with adventures steeped in laughter and fun. There’s nothing quite like writing a book with your best friend, and we’ve done it twice.

Every historian owes a debt to the archivists who work with them. In our case, we are extremely grateful to Denis Tranchard who took great interest in our project and facilitated access to documents that were soon to be declassified at the Archives départementales de l’Allier where he is the director. His efforts to expedite our request to see Jeanne Dormoy’s sealed file on her brother’s murder were greatly appreciated. Tranchard’s willingness to send us documents via
airmail when we were in the United States deserves special mention. Among all the archivists we have met over the years, his support and assistance were exceptional. Vincent Tuchais at the Archives de Paris also went out of his way for us, even providing comic strips to entertain Annette’s then-eleven-year-old son who was trapped in the archives while his mother verified citation information. Mathilde Pintault and Boris Dubouis also aided our searches at the Archives de Paris. Local archivist Laurence Debowski helped us identify sources in Montluçon. Special mention goes to Michaël Nicolas, a journalist with *La Montagne*, who shared with us early photographs of Marx Dormoy’s statue from his journal’s archive.

One of our most delightful experiences was a day spent with then mayor of Montluçon Daniel Dugléry who invited us to a marvelous lunch at the Hôtel de Ville and then took us on a tour of Marx Dormoy’s former office. Dugléry has also written a book on Dormoy, and his insight was extremely helpful, especially with anecdotes about Dormoy that never made it into print. We understand why Marx Dormoy so loved Montluçon because our experience of its hospitality seven decades later was extraordinary. The personnel at the Montluçon public library and the Archives municipales were enthusiastic about our pursuits and even the wait staff at the bar *Le Moderne* could not have been more welcoming.

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