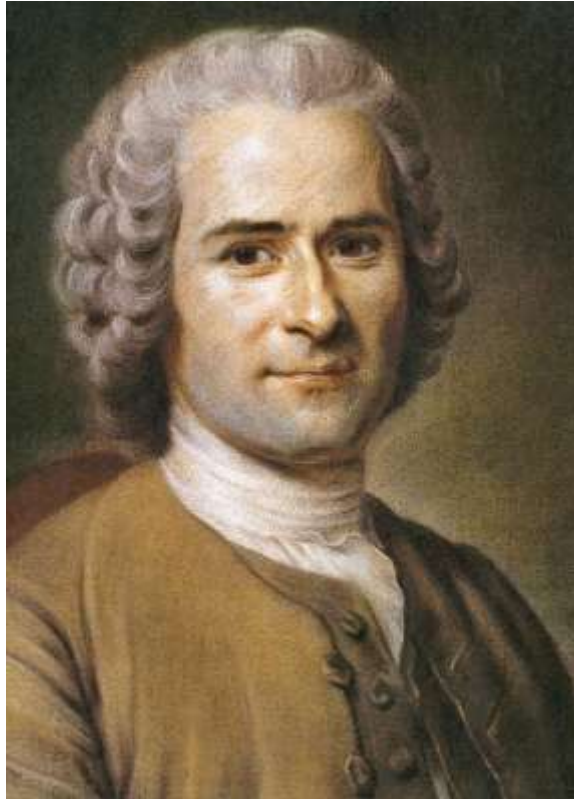


# *Jean-Jacques Rousseau & the game of mail*

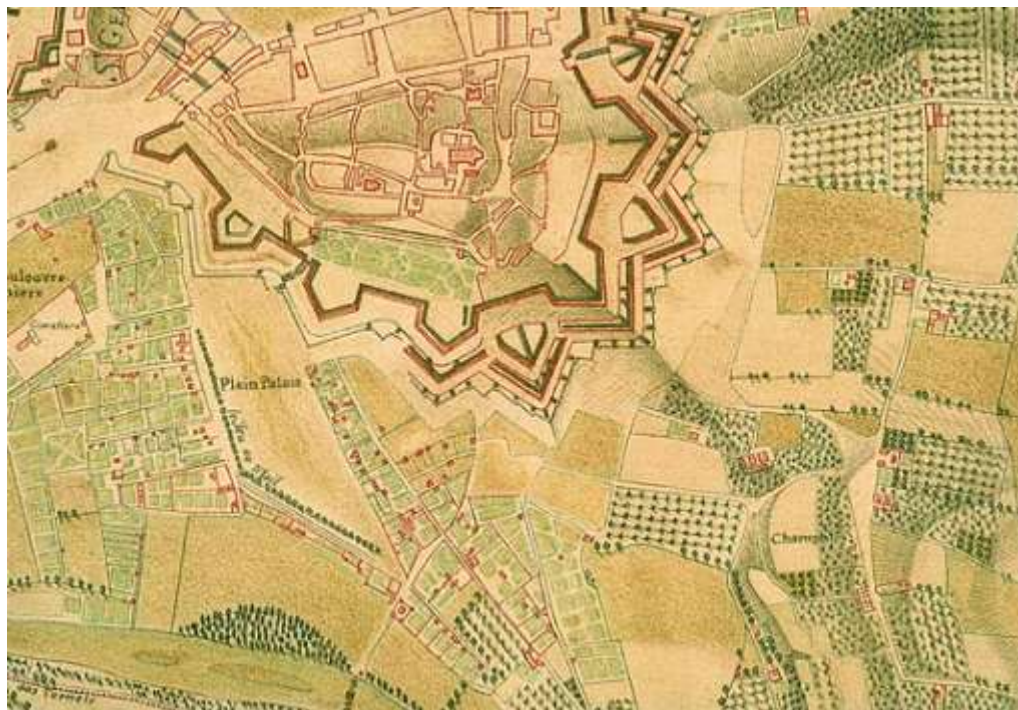
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*Portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau – Maurice  
Quentin de la Tour, 1753 –  
Musée Antoine-Lécuyer, Quentin, France*

Rousseau wrote about the accident on the mail course in his last unfinished work, written between 1776 and 1778. However, following the chronological order of the events, on the following page, I start with this childlike quarrel on the Plainpalais.

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*Map of Geneva (detail) with the Plainpalais and its mail course. – Jacques-Barthélemy Micheli du Crest, 1730 – <https://fr.wikipedia.org>*

Rousseau's childhood was marked by a notable incident when he was still a kid. While playing on the Plainpalais with his mate Pleince, they got into a heated argument, and his friend struck him with the mail club on the head during the fight. Rousseau fell heavily onto the ground, bleeding profusely. His friend, fearing he had caused serious harm, sobbed and took Rousseau into his arms, both crying. Seeing that two handkerchiefs couldn't stop the bleeding, Pleince took Rousseau to his mother, who, shocked by the wound, carefully bandaged his head.

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau – Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire', quatrième promenade, 1778, page 50 – [https://ebooks-bnr.com/ebooks/pdf4/rousseau\\_reveries\\_promeneur\\_solitaire.pdf](https://ebooks-bnr.com/ebooks/pdf4/rousseau_reveries_promeneur_solitaire.pdf)*

There have been other fights on mail courses, such as in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century at Orange in the south of France, involving adolescents.

*<https://ancientgolf.dse.nl/pdfs/orange.pdf>*





*In four volumes, Rousseau gives his ideas about children's education. Still today, it is one of the most read and popular works about the philosophy of education. –*  
<https://www.edition-originale.com>

Rousseau wondered why children were not offered the same games of skill as adults, of which he gave some examples: hand-tennis, mail, billiards, bow, ball and musical instruments. The answer to his question was that some of these games were not suitable for children's development.

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau – 'Emile ou de l'éducation', Livres I et II, 1762, page 299 –*

[https://ebooks-bnr.com/ebooks/pdf5/rousseau\\_emile\\_ou\\_de\\_l\\_education\\_livres1et2-a5.pdf](https://ebooks-bnr.com/ebooks/pdf5/rousseau_emile_ou_de_l_education_livres1et2-a5.pdf)

As far as I know, this is all there is about the game of mail in Rousseau's oeuvre.