

B 3789 no 4; witch 061, Ysabeau veuve Nicolas Demenge Richard, d'Aydoilles

17 November 1615; prévôt of Bruyères records that he has received a request from George Ferry dit bien-nelot of Aidoile, who from 'un zèle de justice' renders himself partie civile against Ysabeau, widow of Nicolas Demenge Richard of the same village. She is suspected of witchcraft against various persons in Aidoile and the surrounding villages she frequents. According to normal practice both parties have been arrested and brought to Bruyères. A preliminary interrogation and confession follow.

The accused said she was Ysabeau, daughter of Vincent Vinot of Exeguey in the bailliage of Epinal, aged about 65. Had been married three times; to Colas Hiey of Exeguey, to Jean de Cugney of Aidoile, and finally to Nicolas Demenge Richard, also of Aidoile, who had died three weeks earlier. Had only one child, by first marriage, who died three days after birth. Said she knew she was accused of witchcraft, and when asked if she was a witch, said she wished to save her soul, and therefore admitted that she was. Had been seduced 16 years earlier, when returning to Aidoile after begging for bread at Dagneville. 'Qu'elle a été du depuis souvent au sabbat, qui ordinairement se tenoit le mercredy au pre dit en Coyes entre les bois du Chapitre d'Espinale, avec plusieurs autres qu'elle ne cognoist et en trouvoit un grand nombre de personne, que les gros et ceux de plus d'apparence estoient preservés, aussy bien audit sabbat, que parmy le monde, et les pauvres pareillement rejestés.'

Qu'audit sabbat tous dansoient au son d'un tambour et d'une flute qui estoient sonnez par deux particuliers d'entre eux, et cela fait y bancquoient, en y mangeant de la chair sans goust ny saveur, et ny vit oncq' pain ny sel, Qu'elle y auroit aussy veu du feu comme brun et tanne, et non splendide ainsy que le commun elementaire, que l'on a peine, comme elle a eu d'y bien certainement reconoistre les particularitez, pour ce que les plus riches et apparentez estoient d'ordinaire assis a table, et les plus pauvres comme elle signamment esloignées et rejetés.

Enquise du nom du demon son maître et comme il paroissoit plus ordinairement audit sabbat

A dit qu'il s'appelloit Mre Romari, qui paroissoit parfois noir en forme d'homme a d'autre fois rouge et jaulne, et qu'il y avoit tant d'autres demons si divers en apparence, que parfois on ny pouvoit rien remarquer de certain.

Qu'a l'arrivée audit sabbat tous faisoient la reverence au malin, les hommes plus aisez signamment a teste descouverte, que dela ils bancquoient, et puis s'entremesloient avec beaucoup de confusion, en criant et menant de grand bruit.'

Asked about maléfices, said that two days before she had made the horse of Bietrix widow of Demenge Borion of Aidoile sick, using powder her master had given her, because Bietrix had made public incident three years before when her late husband had refused to loan Ysabeau a horse.

Told that she had been for years under rule of Devil, who 'n'a plus grand soin que de faire faire le plus de mechanceté aux siens qu'il peut', she then confessed to having also made Bietrix's 9-year-old daughter Mongeote sick on same occasion - she had touched powder. Claimed she had committed no other maléfices, and had not known any accomplices. Was then sent back to prison, with exhortation to think about both malefices and accomplices.

Note that her accuser was then released, on condition that he returned when asked.

Was asked again later that day about other matters, but said she had had recourse to prayer when she saw she had been abused, and this had prevented the enemy making her do other harm.

23 November 1615; PG des Vosges orders fuller information to be taken about her other misdeeds, without prejudice to confession already made.

17 November 1615; prévôt notes that although unable to identify those who had been at sabat, Ysabeau had said that 3 years before, when returning from sabbat, she had found herself next to Bastienne wife of Jean Brihey of Aidoile ('fort agée') and Marie wife of Demenge of the same place (about 30), and had thought they had been there too, both having been 'en bruit d'estre sorcieres'.

27 November 1615; informations

(1) Jacat Doron d'Aidoile, c. 50

Reputation 18 years, since residence; her family were 'nottez dudit crime.' 10 years earlier she had asked to borrow some grain from him, but he had refused on grounds that he only had enough for own needs. Soon after one of his servants was taking grain to the mill; Ysabeau saw him pass, and remarked that they had claimed to have none to give her, but now they had found plenty. Next day horse was found ill in stable, and later died. Two years before had lost another horse after it had strayed and done some damage on her land.

(2) Anthoine Demenge Anthoine d'Aidoile, c. 50

Reputation over 10 years.

(3) Georgeon Prevost d'Aidoile, c. 30

Only resident a short time; no deposition.

(4) Nicolas Guenguez d'Aidoile, c. 45

Long reputation. Some 4 years before had refused to cart some hay for her, and horse had become ill next day 'comme enragé'. She happened to pass by, and he called her witch, saying he would have her burned if she did not cure the horse; she passed her hands over its head and back, and it promptly recovered.

(5) Mengeotte femme Nicolas Guenguez, c. 40

Repeated husband's deposition.

(6) Claudon Ferry d'Aidoile, c. 48

Had heard rumour of her reputation six years before, and that she had been chased from previous home. Around last St. Jean his wife had sent some fish caught at his mill to particular friends who lived with Ysabeau; thought she had caused death of a cow from herd she was keeping 2 days later in anger at not receiving any herself.

(7) Mengeon le Duc d'Aidoile, c. 36

Reputation 7 years.

(8) Jannon femme Mengeon le Duc, c. 36

Said that after her marriage her mother-in-law (who lived at Brouvelieures) had warned her of Ysabeau's reputation, and told her to avoid quarrels with her. They had had a number of dead horses, but did not particularly suspect her. Mother had told her that Ysabeau had been driven out of her birthplace.

(9) Demenge Didier Blot d'Aidoile, c. 30

8 days before his daughter aged 7 had died after 9 week illness of a strange kind, during which she had seemed to have some kind of animal in her stomach. Had been told by Mongeotte Grounisse, who shared his house, that Ysabeau had taken something from her apron, and thrown it over the child, then gone off saying 'qu'on feroit encore quelque chose, mais que les gens estoient trop mal parlans.' Had taken bread, salt, and ashes from Ysabeau's house for child, but they did not have any effect.

(10) Marie Demenge Jean Priay femme du precedant, c. 30

Told how finding Ysabeau in her house, she told her 'franchement' that several said she was a witch; 'dequoys elle s'offenca et s'en alla tout grondant sans aultre certaine response.' Then gave account of daughter's illness in same terms as husband. Also told of incident on pilgrimage 13 years earlier when she had been frightened by thunderstorm and said to Ysabeau that they must commend themselves to God, to which she replied gesturing 'que tous les malz disans fussent au devant de leur chemin'.

(11) Nicolas Anthoine d'Aidoile, c. 36

Ysabeau and her late husband had lived in same house as them for last 3 years; knew of reputation, but had no specific suspicions of doing him harm. When two witches from Brouvelieures and Docelles had been burned she had been 'sombre et pensive', wearing as many clothes as she could, and he thought she had feared the same fate.

(12) Laurence femme Nicolas Anthoine, c. 35

Said that it had been against her will that her husband had let part of house to them, in view of reputation, but had no particular suspicion. Also repeated account of behaviour after executions.

(13) Jehennon veuve Jean Thiriot d'Aidoile, c. 65

Had lost two pigs and a calf a year before; thought Ysabeau might have caused this out of resentment for pigs straying and damaging her crops.

(14) Mengeotte femme Jean Villaume d'Aidoile, c. 35

Knew nothing against her.

(15) Jannon femme Claudon Masson d'Aidoile, c. 30

Some 13 months earlier had been to Ysabeau's house as usual to collect milk, and had spoken to her about a 'droit de douaire' which her mother-in-law was still claiming. Ysabeau said she was still getting what was due to her from property of her previous husband, and it appeared that she was 'malle contante pour se veoir contrariée en sa pretension'. Witness promptly became unwell, unable to feed her baby; returned next day and told Ysabeau of her illness 'au dessein d'en estre soulagée', and then recovered.

(16) Ydatte femme Claudon Andreu d'Aidoile, c. 28

General reput. Recently her husband had bargained with her for her to undertake a pilgrimage to St. Curien on behalf of their daughter who had been on crutches, but did not believe her responsible for illness.

(17) Bietrix veuve Mengeon Richier d'Aidoile, c. 50

On the 14th or 15th of the present month a horse had become ill, and subsequently died; at same time 9-year-old daughter who had been leading it became ill. Witness and others suspected witchcraft, and girl said only person she had met had been Ysabeau. Witness had been trying to remember any way in which she could have offended Ysabeau, but could only remember occasion some years earlier when her late husband had refused to cart some wood for her.

(18) Mengeotte fille a la precedente

Deposition to same effect as mother.

3 December 1615; interrogation

Repeated earlier confessions, then made series of further admissions about acts of maléfice. Had either performed these because of small grievances alleged, or at instigation of her master. Said she had also seen one called Nicolas from Dompierre, whose surname she thought was Vaney, on way from sabbat, although

she had not actually seen him at the assembly. Asked about two women she had accused earlier, confirmed this statement.

7 December 1615; PG des Vosges asks for death sentence

9 December 1615; Change de Nancy concurs

14 December 1615; prévôt de Bruyères states that bons hommes have confirmed death sentence, which has now been carried out.