

B 7309 no 2; witch 121, Nicolas Fontaine d'Einvile

13 September 1593; interrogation

Had been brought before Change de Nancy after original trial at Einvile, at request of Claude des Fours, commerçant of Einvile, made to the duke.

Said he had been made prisoner at Einvile 8 weeks earlier; suspected this had been at request of Jean Hacquart, but when he asked prévôt latter told him he was commonly reputed a witch. Agreed he had admitted to being a witch, and confessed various maléfices; had been seduced by Mre Jean. Had killed Marie, wife of prévôt, with a stick poisoned by his master, also various animals belonging to Jean Hacquart, Demenge Vieulxbois, and others, with black powder. No-one had assisted him in these crimes. Had previously used stick to kill daughter of Joannes de Dieuze, who had prevented him being admitted as bourgeois there.

Asked why he had denounced Claude des Fours, his wife, and his aunt, when by his own admission he had no accomplices. He changed colour, but claimed to have seen them at sabats; asked how he knew them, said it was because he saw them as he returned home, or in the clouds. Judges objected that it was impossible to identify people in clouds because of obscurity, and that he contradicted himself over the dates. He claimed that des Fours had promised him 2 resaulx of wheat if he did not accuse him.

Asked if he had been told why he was brought to Nancy, said that prévôt and judges at Einvile said it was because of his accusations against the des Fours, and that he should tell the truth. Was then asked if during interrogations he had been encouraged 'd'accuser des gens de moyens, opulentz, et riches'; he denied this. Did however agree that he was specifically asked if they had been at sabats - marginal note 'abus en l'exercice de la justice'.

Asked whether he had been promised the return of a cow and other personal property if he maintained charges, denied this, but said that prévôt had promised to return these to his wife as charity. Asked if as he passed through St Nicolas he had not said in public that he would maintain charge against des Fours, and had been incited to do this, denied doing so.

15 September 1593; interrogation

Had told prévôt that he wanted to confess something he had concealed. Claimed that on night of previous interrogation his master had appeared to him and demanded why he had not accused des Fours and his family of being his accomplices in the various murders and other crimes he had committed. When he made sign of cross he disappeared, striking him twice on the back. This made him think of his conscience, and of how he had made accusations out of hatred. Now withdrew all charges, not only against the des Fours but against others - these were Nicolas Toussaint and his wife, le gros Colas, the wife of Didier Marlier, Jean Houart, pastre of Maixe, and the wife of Jean Hacquart.

Said that devil his master knew he hated des Fours, who had not given him some wheat he had promised for feeding his animals, so advised him to accuse the family. Had charged others because they called him witch.

15 September 1593; Rémy orders that the des Fours and all others he had charged should now be renvoyés, and that to clear them of all suspicion he should be required to renew his declaration of their innocence immediately before execution, at the stake.

17 September 1593; interrogation

Said he was Nicolas Fontaine, native of Neufmaisons near Badonviller, aged 40. Devil called Mre Jean had seduced him 20 years earlier when he was shepherd at Moyen, offering him a purse full of écus, and saying he would never want. Gave him powder with which he killed horse belonging to one Jean of Moyen, who was his enemy. Had then lived at Chambrey, where he killed 2 horses belonging to men who beat him. Living near Château-Salins he killed cow belonging to miller, who blamed him for not keeping animals better. At Dieuze had killed daughter of Joannes Messager, because latter prevented him becoming bourgeois; would have liked to heal her, but could not find master to obtain white powder. Lived at Tarquimpol for 2 years, where one named Jean fined his animals - made his son ill, then cured him with white powder. Then was period of 9 years, including 6 at Einville, during which master did not appear to him - he did Easter duty and commended himself to God. Then Jean Hacquart dismissed him from his service, and he wanted to avenge himself; master appeared and gave him powder to kill all Hacquart's animals, but he only killed 2 cows. 2 years earlier had killed a child of Philbert le Boulengier of Einville, because latter refused to give him wine on credit. Also killed Agnes Petit, wife of prévôt of Einville, because she accused him of not loooking after the herd properly. Had killed wife of maire des Cailles of Einville because she would not let him stop for a moment outside her house when he had animals with him. Killed all these people with stick; when asked how it could have power to do this, said his master had greased it.

Had been to sabats, where they made hail to damage crops. Could not recognize anyone, particularly because his master put a hat on his head, which seemed to be made of wolf-skin. Asked why he had accused many others, some of whom were still in prison at Einville, said this was at suggestion of his master. Added that he had accused aunt of des Fours, who was in religion, because she raised rent of a house he occupied.

18 September 1593; Rémy asks for death sentence. Change de Nancy approves.