

B 3792 no 1; Witch 062, Nicolas Herteman, de Brouvelieures

9 November 1615; interrogation under torture of Georgette femme Nicolas Herteman de Brouvelieures (she was already under sentence of death for witchcraft, and this was to obtain names of accomplices).

Started by telling how Devil had come into her cell the previous night, in the form of a great rat with claws, assisted by Tiriot le Duc of Brouvelieures. Would not identify any accomplices, however, and was finally tortured - thumbscrews and rack. On latter she identified her husband, saying that it was he who had seduced her into going to sabbat some 9 years before. Had also seen there Monzouille, recently convicted and executed, and the wife of Mongeon Voiry.

Then said she had been wrong about time of her own temptation; had been 19 years before, when she was 12. When guarding her mother's sheep at ban de Tendon, prévôté d'Arches, the enemy had appeared to her in the form of a 'grand garçon' in black. Allegant que sa mère l'avoit fort tansé, mais qu'en haine de ce il l'auroit ceste fois, et que l'aient beaucoup de fois tarabusté, il gaigna tant sur elle, qu'elle le promit de croire en lui.' Also confessed to 3 acts of maléfice.

10 November 1615; varied on accusation against husband, but finally maintained it. Also told of occasion 18 months earlier when Devil induced witches to bring down hail on wheat and other crops, by normal method with baguettes; she had not participated, and had been beaten.

Renewed accusation against husband at execution (same day or soon after), but said that in view of her willingness to accuse one so near her, they should accept her denials of having known any other witches.

23 November 1615; PG des Vosges orders secret investigation into her husband's repute and conduct.

7 March 1616; informations préparatoires

(1) Nicolas Gainel de Brouvelieures, c. 80

Thought that losses of children and animals, about which he had already testified in respect of the wife, were equally the responsibility of Nicolas - indeed his reputation was worse than hers. After refusal of 'rays' (?) his son Mengeon had been ill; finally died after languishing for 5 months. Had also lost a horse, whose legs had been all bitten or torn after it had been near meix where accused was.

(2) Claudon Aucel de Brouvelieures, c. 32

Told how Nicolas had complained to him one day at the mill of 'plusieurs affronts qu'on lui faisoit, en lui jectant des pierres contre ses portes et l'appellans sorcier', and said that he was seen 'de mauvais œux'. Witness told him that if he was innocent he could seek redress; unless he did so, he must just have patience. He then said that perhaps he would absent himself for a while until rumours had died down. If he was a witch the witness was not conscious of having received any harm from him, but everyone feared him on account of his reputation.

(3) Claudon fils Anthoine grand Claude de Brouvelieures, c. 19-20

Told of occasion a year earlier when he had set off at 1 a.m. to go to fair at Ramberviller; it was dark, and had been windy with rain. As he passed the ford, he found Nicolas by edge of water; latter claimed he was looking for a hatchet he had lost, and witness told him this was ridiculous. Crossed himself and hesitated before continuing, thinking this an ill omen. Reputation as witch.

(4) Margueritte Nicolas d'Arches, demeurant a Brouvelieures, 30

Was nearest neighbour to Nicolas; knew of reputation, but had no suspicion he had done her harm. Had heard him say two weeks earlier to her brother-in-law Humbert Gagnel, paistre du troupeau des porcs, with whom she lived, and who had warned him of the rumour that he was to be arrested, that he was '*homme de bien*', but that if he knew he was to be arrested he would flee.

(5) Nicolle femme Anthoine Navel de Brouvelieures, c. 25

In her youth, when guarding beasts, let one escape onto Nicolas' property; later he touched her on the shoulder, saying she must make good the damage, and the shoulder subsequently hurt her. In view of his reputation she believed he had caused this.

(6) Laurent Voiry de Brouvelieures, c. 50

Told of quarrel in woods 20 years earlier, when Nicolas was young man; latter had wanted to cart a tree witness had felled. Next day one of his cows fell ill and died while drinking near meix belonging to Hertemans (Nicolas' father had told them off for quarrelling). In view of suspicions against them, believed they had caused this.

(7) Mengel le Duc de Brouvelieures, c. 70

He had deposed against Nicolas' wife, after which he 'en avoit tousiours depuis voulu mal et porté mauvais visage, menassant ceulx qu'estoient cause de la mort de sadite femme.' Had subsequently fallen off a ladder and hurt his leg badly; fell wrong way, in unnatural fashion, and was at first thought to be dead.

(8) Jean Voiry de Brouvelieures, 36

When he had been visiting Bernard Viry, who was ill, Bernard's wife told him that Georgeatte, Nicolas Herteman's wife, was suspected of bewitching him because of hatred she bore him. Georgeatte was always coming into house, and she didn't know how to get rid of her. Had already been there that day, but returned, so he drove her away, beating her with a stick. Next day she was arrested and taken to Bruyeres, where she was subsequently burned. Nicolas had borne him ill-will for the beating, and as one of those who had caused wife's death; said they would all

repent. Soon afterwards had a horse mysteriously drowned in a shallow stream, which only came up to a man's knees. Believed Nicolas had caused this; he and his wife long and heavily suspected of witchcraft.

(9) Nicolas Mongeot Mareschal de Brouvelieures, c. 22

Explained that Nicolas' wife had been charged, among other things, with bewitching his wife. She had been taken to see an Ambrosian Father at Bruyères, who had judged her truly bewitched, and had ordered that her bed be opened to see if there was anything strange among the feathers. When this was done by some women, they found some 'tortillons de plumes' which could not have been made by 'artifice humain'. When they were taken to the Father, he said 'y avoir du sort, et qu'il y apporterait tel tel remede qu'il pourroit.' Soon afterwards his wife recovered, and had no more pain. However, he then met Nicolas, who reproached him 'qu'il estoit cause de la mort de sadite femme, et en quoy on luy avoit faict grand tort, mais que cela ne dormoit encore et n'estoit oblié.' Wife then became ill again, perhaps worse than before. Evil fame of Nicolas; his aunt, wife of an uncle, already executed, as well as wife who had accused him.

(10) Thiriot le Duc, de Brouvelieures, 50

Told of quarrel with Nicolas and his wife after previous harvest; he had been collecting tithe, and had found virtually nothing left in their field. Despite their resistance, took some other sheaves, which they told him would cost him dearly. Soon after an ox became ill and died as if rabid. A fortnight later the animals in his stable became scared, and his daughter found a cat there; it scratched her face as she was driving it away, and within another fortnight she fell ill, languished a year and then died.

(11) Bernard Viry de Brouvelieures, c. 30

One of reasons for execution of Georgette had been serious illness she had given witness. Nicolas was as bad as her, and he now thought he was cause of serious illness afflicting his wife; her legs were so weak she could not stand. Followed episode when witness had 'tansé' one of Nicolas' sons, because in skating on ice he had caused one of his own sons to fall and injure his eye badly. Nicolas had then come to his house in his absence and 'fait le hola', so that his wife was frightened and became ill.

12 March 1616; PG des Vosges orders arrest and opening of formal procedure.

9 April 1616; additional deposition

(12) Nicolas Napuel de Brouvelieures. c. 36

Told how after execution of Georgette a servant had taken a 'chaudiere' from the Herteman's house as a gage, and deposited it with them. A fortnight later their daughter Fleurate came to ask for it back, even just as a loan, but they refused. A

cow then became sick, and was still in a poor state. Also recalled incident some 3 or 4 years before when same girl and a brother had twice allowed animals they were guarding to escape onto his land; he had been angry and called them 'enfants de sorciers'; subsequently heard that they had told their parents, who were thinking of proceeding against him, but they never did so. Subsequently lost some sheep, and suspected them.

8 April 1616; interrogation

Said he was Nicolas Herteman, native of Brouvelieures. Had three children, and another had died. Said of his wife that he had lived with her 'quelquefois en paix, et par autre avec quelque fascherie, comme ordinairement arrive, et qu'il ne vit oncques aucun mal en elle, sinon qu'elle avoit un mauvais courage.' Said he had not been present at her execution, but agreed that he had been told she met her end as a good Christian.

Put under a lot of pressure because of his wife's accusation, he continued to deny being a witch. Agreed that he had made remarks at mill, but his meaning was that if he were a witch he would flee. Insisted that he had been looking for a hatchet by the ford, an hour before dawn. Denied all other charges completely.

9 April 1616; confrontations

No result at all; complete conflict of evidence, with accused denying even threats and quarrels.

28 April 1616; Change de Nancy approves torture.

5 May 1616; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews on hands and feet, and racked three times, but continued to deny all accusations.

8 May 1616; PG proposes that he be renvoyé jusques à rappel.

13 May; Prévôt de Bruyères reports that Nicolas has been released and told he was not liable for costs of procedure; exhorted to live 'paisiblement et modestement' with neighbours in future.