

B 3323 no 6; witch 030, Pierson fils Petit Pierson, de Leintrey

30 May 1602; informations préparatoires

(1) Nicolas Vaultrin, laboureur, 34

Long reputation, and one day there had been talk of taking him to bishop to be confirmed. 8 or 9 years earlier, in presence of several others, had said when a cloud came up that it was useless to ring the bells, to which witness objected that 'qu'elles estoient benistes, et valloient pour detourner le mauvais temps.' No other suspicion.

(2) Mengin Godot, 34

Long reputation, and heard that he had been taken to Domepvre to be confirmed. Claimed that he had made compromising remark about hail some 26 years earlier.

(3) Claudon Thoussaint, laboureur, 40

When accused was 'fort petit, on parloit de le rebaptiser, toutesfois l'on trouva qu'il ne se pouvoit faire, ains fut confirmé en l'abbaye de Domepvre parce qu'estant aux champs avec d'autres enfants il disoit qu'il feroit bien du bruit et de la gresle, sy bien qu'il fut en reputation depuis ce temps la qu'il est sorcier.' 3 years earlier had quarrelled with him when he tried to take horses and plough across field of wheat belonging to witness; 2 horses died soon afterwards 'qu'il soupçonne depuis que le prevenu est accusé qu'il luy a fait mourir, mais auparavant il ne pensoit pas et ne se resouvenoit de ladite dispute.'

(4) Jean Hellenix, jeune fils, 25

Had quarrelled with accused some 5 years before over theft of a cart-rope taken at night from cart of Jean Cartier; witness was suspected and tried to accuse Pierson. Mutual insults followed, and he tried to take Pierson to justice, but the affair was settled by local mediation, since they were both young men. His master subsequently lost a horse. Had recently quarrelled with him again, but suffered no misfortune.

25 June 1602; interrogation and confrontations

Said he was about 30, native of Leintrey, son of late Pierson le Petit Pierson and his wife Catherine. Had no memory of his father, 'et fust contrainct des qu'il eust un peu de connoissance de servir a garder les chevaux, aujourd'hui en un logis demain en un autre Jusques a ce qu'il fust en age de discretion pour se gouverner, qu'il se loua a plusieurs laboureurs de Leintrey'. 10 years service in this manner, then went to la Garde, Vacourt, and Mulcey for total of 5 years. 2 years in mother's house at Leintrey, followed by a year at St Martin. Returned to serve brother-in-law Jean Courtier for 3 years, and Michel Hellenix for one. Then went to widow of Nicolas Pierson at la Neuveville for a year, and had been with his sister Jennon veuve Claudon Grand Demenge for 2 years at time of arrest. 'Et en nous discourant des parents et de ses feus pere et mere a pleuré amerement.'

Agreed that he was imprisoned because of allegations made by la Jobarde, but said she did him great wrong. 'Interrogé s'il ne scait les moyens pour faire de la gresle A dict en pleurant que non et qu'il scavoit bien ce que cela vouloit dire, Car estant petit guerson le bruict courroit qu'il disoit scavoir les moyens de faire de la gresle dequoy il n'a memoire.' Denied other remarks about hail and bells.

Asked about rebaptism or confirmation, said 'qu'il a bonne memoire que feu sa mere et feu Claudon Mengin son paraine le menerent a l'abbaye de Domepvre il y a fort long temps (pour estre de la plus longue memoire qu'il ayt) la ou ung prestre luy plia un bandeau sur le frond et avoit on adverty audit Leintrey que s'il y avoit quelqu'un qui eust des enfants desquels ils avoient quelque doute ils les y menassent, et y en eust plusieurs de leur village.'

Agreed that he had quarrelled with Claudon Thousaint over passage through field; had been angry when Claudon said 'que ce n'estoit pas grande chose de ceulx qu'on avoit voulu rebaptiser', so replied 'qu'il se taise et qu'il estoit sy vertte luy mesme'. Told long story over quarrel with Jean Hellenix over stolen rope, arguing that latter had stolen it, then arranged to return it. Quarrelled with him next Sunday, but later made it up.

Objected to Nicolas Vaultrin that because his mother (la Jobarde) had been executed 'il pouvoit bien alleguer chose qui seroit contre la verité a cette fin d'en faire ressentir d'autres'. Judges objected, saying 'n'estant a inferer que sy sa mere estoit sorciere il fust mechant pour cela.' A line they might have taken more consistently!

26 June 1602; confrontations

Claimed he had heard that Mengin Godot had been caught stealing wheat in the church, and raised question of theft of rope against Jean Hellenix. Denied 2 specific charges of killing horses.

30 June 1602; procureur fiscal asks for question extraordinaire in normal way - no sign of awareness that evidence is very thin.

1 July 1602; Change de Nancy recommends that he be renvoyé.