

Witch 065B, Bastienne Brihey 1

Witch 065B; B3801 no 2, Bastienne veuve Jean Brihey, d'Aydoilles

17 November 1615

During trial of Ysabeau, veuve en troisieme noces de Nicolas Demenge Richard d'Aydoilles, accused of witchcraft by George Ferry dit Bien-nelot of the same village (partie formelle), she was questioned about her accomplices. Said she had not recognized anyone at Sabbat, but some 3 years earlier on way back had encountered Bastienne Brihey ('fort agée') and her daughter Marie femme Demenge Plaid - believed they might have been on way, since both were reputed witches.

7 October 1619

Jean de Cugney of Aydoilles complains of Bastienne and her daughters Marie and Georgeatte, who are suspected of witchcraft by most of the inhabitants of Aydoilles, 'et notamment par plusieurs particuliers, qui apres quelques disputes et querelles qu'ils ont heu contre les denommez, et quelques menaces s'estant ensuivyees, ilz s'en seroient tost apres mal trouvez, les uns estantz tombés en maladie, et les autres Interessez en leurs bestailz, dequoy beaucoup de personnes murmurent et se complaignent . . .' notably Jean himself, who had lost many animals. Had also been accused by others previously condemned, so in fear that such execrable crimes will not be punished he now makes himself partie formelle.

Followed by order for their arrest from George Milot, prévôt de Bruyères.

Nicolas Demengeon of Aydoilles stood surety for costs, with promise of indemnity made to him by Cugney and Demenge Thomas.

10 October 1619; informations

(1) Barbon femme Jean Creuchat, 40

Could not claim any damage, although she had quarrel with her over a field; general reputation.

(2) Demenge Mengin, 60

Recounted accusation by Ysabeau 4 years earlier. 10 years earlier a servant of the late Jean Raidat named Jannon had been to see her relatives on the frontiers of the Vosges near Verrieres, and had taken Bastienne's daughter Marie with her 'a son insceu' - she had been very angry, and he heard her say with her hands on hips 'que par le nom de dieu elle l'avoit emmenée, mais si elle pouvoit revenir elle ne l'en remeneroit jamais'. As soon as Jannon returned she fell ill and died, so he and all neighbours thought Bastienne had given her the sickness. 5 years earlier had returned from market at Epinal and taken 3 horses from cart to put them out to grass. One strayed slightly onto her neighbouring garden and damaged crops, then fell ill and died a week later - thought this was her doing or that of one of her daughters. Reputation as long as he could remember.

(3) Antoine Demenge Antoine, previously mayor of Aydoilles, 60

18 years earlier she often cooked bread in his oven, and one day a small dog which had been in woods with him attacked her, barking and jumping up; she was angry, and he told her off, something he later repented. The dog died within a few days, then shortly afterwards an ox became strangely ill as if rabid and died in a week. Also lost a bull, and a horse which became rabid. Blamed all this on her witchcraft, also a very strange illness of his son Anthoine some 6 years earlier, when he was 10. According to two other sons she had touched him on head and remarked how big he was getting; then he became ill as if out of his mind. Took him to see apothecary at Epinal, who said that some evil persons were responsible; hoped to get her to cure him, and by good fortune she came to house. Told child she was ill too, and they must both get better, ate some meat they brought her and gave some to boy, after which he recovered.

(4) Mongeote femme Nicolas Hubert Cugney, 40

Were near neighbours, and had lost many animals over last 9 years, which they firmly believed had been her witchcraft; first loss came after she returned a corset they had lent her for her daughter, and she warned witness to watch out for cow that was about to calve. Had called her witch, and repeated this when she asked if she was prepared to maintain her statement, without any action following.

(5) Nicolas Hubert Cugney, 50

Claimed to have lost animals to value of 500 francs, and believed this was doing of Bastienne and her daughter Marie. Had openly accused them, and once when dragging a dead animal from stable had suggested they should help him move the carrion they had made. Claimed that when people were ill they did not behave like other neighbours, visiting to offer sympathy, but shut themselves up in house and did not go into street. He had also become ill himself, with sickness which lasted 6 months; asked Marie to visit him, which she finally did at fourth request. Gave him a bon chretien pear, after which he gradually recovered, then sold house to move away from them. Illness followed incident when a hare scared horse which threw him, which it never normally did.

(6) Jacot Doron, 50

Reputation only.

(7) George Bastien, 60

4 years earlier had dispute with her about damage done by some of her animals, during which she made remark that he would not eat them. He called on others present to witness threat, and then lost a cow he had bought for 7 ecus, and a horse and an ox which died as if rabid, so he believed this was her witchcraft.

(8) Nicolas Augier, 32

Father and mother had always warned him as child to keep away from their land, because of reputation.

(9) Nicolas George Remy, 30

Accusation by Ysabeau. At time of haymaking in 1617 heavy rain forced him and others to take shelter in woods, where Bastienne and her daughters passed by him, and Marie stopped by where he was. When rain stopped could hardly get back to meadow, falling on hands two or three times, and had to go back to village where he was bedridden for 3 weeks - believed Marie had been responsible.

(10) Jennon veuve Jean Tiriot, 75

House was next to theirs, and they had bad reputation; ever since marriage had lost animals, but had not suspected them, except over death of horse which died 10 months earlier the day after she refused to send it to the woods with Bastienne's horse. Previous winter had been great quarrel between Bastienne and Georgette and Marie's husband Demenge Didier Plaid, after which he was very ill and seemed to have lost his wits; when he recovered he several times told witness that he thought all three of them were witches, and had given him the illness. Bastienne heard of this and asked witness if he blamed her for the illness; when she said yes, replied 'Marie sa femme s'en mesle non pas, qu'elle mouche son né (en prenant le sien entre ses doigts, et bessant la teste) tout bas, tout bas'. Understood this to mean that if she was a witch Marie was one too.

(11) Claudatte femme Nicolas Dodeielle, 30

Bastienne's reputation 20 years (residence).

(12) Barbon veuve Mongeon Didier Marie, 60

Very long reputation; her husband, who had died 20 years earlier, had believed she had caused child to be taken from cradle to fire, where foot was burned. This followed occasion when she and her husband Jean Brihey were taken to Bruyeres on charge of theft, and he was charged with guarding house. 3 months earlier she passed before house several times, touching a chemise which was hanging there; when witness asked what she was doing, she asked if she thought she would get her death from the chemise, to which she answered that it belonged to her son Mongeon. The second night afterwards her grandson fell out of his cot.

(13) Bastienne veuve Claudon Jean Mengeote, 40

Had lost various animals, but did not suspect them, despite long reputation.

(14) Jacote veuve Florentin Jean Rouyer, 36

Some 10 months earlier Demenge Didier Plaid had been taking share of a 'presse à faire verjus' with Bastienne and Georgette; had dispute they could not settle, and finally decided to saw it in two. Demenge asked witness to help him with saw, which she did, only to be told angrily that she had helped to divide their property, and the same might happen to hers. Three days later lost a heifer, and various neighbours suggested this might have been result of the quarrel.

(11 October 1619)

(15) Claudon Demengeon, 29

Had always heard them suspected, especially Bastienne. That year had lost a bull and a cow, and showed them to 'homme expert' who said it was witchcraft, not an ordinary sickness. Herdsman had told him that when one of them took turn to help him, as was normal in village, there had been trouble with the cow - thought this was Georgette.

(16) Nicolas Antoine, 40

General reputation, and accusation by Ysabeau.

(17) Jean Valhey, 33

General reputation, had lost animals, but had not thought them responsible.

(18) Jean Demenge Colin, 36

Said that since marriage 8 years earlier he had lost animals every year; that year had lost a pregnant cow and a small bull, which he suspected had been witchcraft, because animals of several neighbours had been affected similarly, and there were general suspicions of the accused, as well as their long reputation, while there had been several quarrels on trivial subjects between himself and Marie.

(19) Antoine Brian, 40

General suspicion. 14 years earlier had been at market at Epinal one Saturday, when there was an uproar because a toad had been seen by several people coming out of the breast of a woman of Aydoile - saw many looking at Bastienne, so thought it was her.

(20) Demenge Didier Plaid, son-in-law of Bastienne, husband of Marie, 50

Told of quarrel a year ago at next St Martin over division of inheritance, after which she called him 'mechant homme' and wished he might never be able to go to stool until he told the truth; he replied that if she was better than him then she should purge herself of the charges of witchcraft made against her by many. After this he went 5 weeks and 3 days without eating bread, and was constipated for 3 weeks and 3 days, becoming 'demoniacle' - maire and others had to go to his house one night to control him. During fantasies he thought constantly of veal, thinking that Bastienne and her brother Antoine Girard or Marchal of Dompierre did nothing but handle this in various places around the house. Became still sicker, and when she knew his wife was absent Bastienne asked him how he did; suggested he should try to eat some veal, which his wife went to buy at Epinal. Appetite returned, but constipation remained until he drank two glasses of oil, which nearly killed him but finally brought relief. After the threats suspected that Bastienne and her brother (suspect like her) had given him the sickness.

Some 4 weeks earlier had left kitchen where wife was, but she had vanished when he returned, and children could not tell him where she was. On return she said that her sister Georgette had called her to see mother, who was 'fol et frenetique'; sister told her she had asked 'qu'est ce qu'elle droit au malin esprit lors

qu'il la viendroit trouver'. Knew that the two daughters had been to St Humbert d'Aultrey on behalf of their mother, who had been well since.

(21) Ysabeau femme Bernard Mourot, echevin en la justice de Dignonville, 55

First marriage had been at Aydoilles, and had heard suspicions, although she had seen no harm in Bastienne. Had heard about incident with toad from son-in-law Nicolas Humbert.

(22) Jannon femme Demenge Duc, 50

Had lost animals, without being able to find cause, but had some quarrel with Marie and her husband, so had some suspicion against household.

(23) Ysabeau femme Pierat Colas Pierat, marchal, 36

Reputation as long as she could remember. 10 years earlier Bastienne had given an apple to her son in the street (he was about 2 and a half); when he got home she told him not to eat it, saying that if anything happened to him she would know who was responsible. Bastienne heard of this, and when she met child again she said 'mon fils est tu encor par icy'; when witness saw him eating something she was very apprehensive, with good reason because he soon sickened and died.

(24) Barbon femme Antoine Doron, 44

Some 6 years earlier Bastienne had met her son Antoine with 2 others in porch, and said 'tu deviens bien grand Antoine, dieu t'amende'. He then became ill for 15 weeks, and was taken to apothecary at Epinal who said he was bewitched. She and husband spoke of fetching Bastienne, but she thought they should wait for her to come of own accord, as she did. Conversation roughly as reported by husband - 'Antoine nous sommes malades tous deux, il fault adviser lequel veult guerir l'autre'. Brought her wine and meat, which she shared with child, breaking up the meat with her teeth for him; immediately started to recover.

(25) Adeline veuve Colin de Cugney, 30

Some 7 years earlier Bastienne had told her she wanted payment from Antoine Doron for sowing she had done, after which he lost some horses.

(26) Claudon Marie, 26

Long reputation; story from late father about how Bastienne might have been responsible for burning of his foot.

(27) Catherine femme Mongeon Bessat, 30

Story as told by mother-in-law about Bastienne handling chemise husband had put on fence, and child falling out of cot. General reputation.

8 November 1619; interrogation and confrontations

Bastienne was asked if she persisted in confessions she had already made. Repeated that she and daughters were witches, although now denied being to sabbat, which she had previously admitted. Said that they had met the devil in the form of a red calf on way to Epinal some 4 years earlier.

Marie was now brought in, and Bastienne said she was a witch like her; Marie denied this, and Bastienne then seemed uncertain, saying they should investigate the case, and she was not sure she was a witch. At this Marie was taken out, and Bastienne questioned again, since there was uncertainty whether she understood the questions which were being put to her. Answered series of questions about family, birthplace of Dompierre, which villages she and husband frequented and what they sold there - none of these given in detail. Was decided that she answered pertinently, without 'simplicité et imbecillité' she had been simulating.

Agreed that as she had confessed on 22 October she had been seduced by Persin and had intercourse with him. Also admitted to killing various animals, with help of daughters, although again seemed less certain of this.

Now confronted with Georgette, said she was a witch like her. Georgette 'en pleurant, et larmoyant demesurement' denied this.

11 February 1620; note that costs against Bastienne and Georgette, sentenced to death on 6 November and 26 November respectively, came to total of 415 fr, to be taken from confiscated property.