

B 8959 no 2; witch 322, Agnes femme Chrestofle Marcoussan, de St Nicolas

26 August 1598; 'la belle Agnes' is confronted with Barbon femme Nicolas Moictrier, who had accused her, and who maintained charges up to moment of her own execution.

29 August; Rémy orders secret investigation; if this produces any charges against her she is to be arrested and interrogated.

3 September 1598; informations preparatoires

(1) Estienne Thomas espingleur de St Nicolas, 46

Some 15 days earlier had advised her 'qu'elle ferait beaucoup pour elle que de s'y comporter plus modestement que de passé', accusing her of causing death of his daughter's hens by witchcraft. Then told how his daughter was nearest neighbour, and their cocks fought one another. Agnes had said to her 'Sy le votre at longue vie il sera bon', and soon it became swollen. Generally expected it would die, but it recovered after eating bread taken from Agnes' house. Also said that daughter had lost a baby when she fell at fair of Belchamps, 3 months before term; suspected Agnes because she had asked previous day where she was going.

(2) Jean Maxeray carpentier de St Nicolas, 56

2 months earlier had quarrel with her over some hens she had provided for marriage feast; she tried to retain 6 gros involved in dispute from rent of house, but when he told her to find another lodging said she would rather pay, 'toutesfois que la fille de luy deposant nommée Mathillon les payeroit bien sans qu'elle en sache rien.' Daughter soon fell ill, paralyzed and unable to eat, until she was cured with bread and salt from Agnes' house. From around same time he had a small daughter aged 6 who was ill and bedridden, with stomach pains, which he also blamed on her.

(3) Mathillon femme Claude Callas hacquebuttier, 24

Some 15 days after her wedding, and dispute with Agnes, suddenly became very ill (as father described). Since 'tous les voisins l'avertissoient qu'elle estoit ensorcelée', and advised her to eat bread and salt from Agnes, she did this and was cured after 3 weeks. During illness neighbours advised Agnes to go and see her, but she said that if she did so she would be accused of causing the illness, and even more so if she recovered. Was reported she said 'on a bien esté querir le maitre des genaix, pour scavoir de sa maladie, mais on ne l'a pas trouvé.'

(4) Claude Gallas hacquebuttier, 30

Gave briefer account of wife's illness; disputed with Agnes on Sunday, fell ill on Monday.

(5) Nicolas Durand Gardener de St Nicolas, 50

Was her neighbour, living in same house; had no quarrel with her. Had been unable to walk for 3 weeks with very swollen legs, but did not know cause or want to charge anyone. Raised hens in his house, but had lost some 20, which had not been ill, but suddenly dropped dead. Agnes had warned him to watch that cats did not get a little 'jallat', which then became swollen as big as his hat, but recovered after eating bread from her house. Did not know whether she was a witch - only 'ouy dire'.

(6) Chretienne femme Demenge Moictrier laboureur de St Nicolas, 40

Some 6 years before, when living at la Vacherie, one of their horses became so wild no-one could approach it, and they suspected it was bewitched; told Agnes about this, whereupon she went up to it and after she had touched it it became quite calm. About 5 years before her only daughter became ill after drinking water in Agnes' house, only cured after Balliat's wife obtained her bread and salt. Believed Agnes was a witch.

(7) Nicolas Noel bonnetier de St Nicolas, 32

She was commonly reputed witch, and he thought she might be to blame for fact that he had lost a lot of hens.

(8) Nicole femme du precedent, 30

Reputation as witch, but although they were always quarrelling over hens did not think she had done them any harm. Some 4 or 5 years ago Laurence wife of Jean Vigealz le jeune, miller of the grands moulins, had been sitting outside mill with other women. Baker's boy came past and gave her two 'conielz' which she shared around neighbours who were with her, forgetting Agnes, who complained, touching her arm. Next day she fell ill, all red from neck downwards, and was only cured after getting Agnes to visit her and make her some soup. Since then miller's wife had often reproached her with being a witch.

(9) Claudon veuve Husson le cordonnier, 30

Said she knew nothing.

(10) Claudon veuve Thiery Didier cordonnier de St Nicolas, 50

Said she knew nothing.

(11) Nicole femme Loys Thiery manouvrier du ban des Rozieres, 48

A fortnight before she had been going harvesting with Agnes, who asked her about Barbon; witness replied that she had accused many, but they would only be

arrested little by little in order to be burned. Agnes was 'toute esperdue, dit ce seroit bien autre chose, et deslors ne voulut plus manger'.

(12) Denise veuve Pierrat Charrier de Valdeures, 60

Described how Agnes had become ill when working in fields; she sat down and said 'pour qui travaille je, je ne scay'.

(13) Marguerite femme Mengin du Puis, jardinier de St Nicolas, 50

When they were neighbours she gave birth to a son, but lost her milk; was advised that Agnes might have caused this because she was not invited to baptism. A neighbour asked Agnes for a remedy, and she suggested cooking fennel in an earthenware pot for 'neuf huict jours durand', then drinking it. Did this and milk returned.

(14) Demenge Henry des Moictrier laboureur de St Nicolas, 60

Gave brief account of horse which went wild and recovered after she had touched it.

(15) Nicolas Bonnier cordonnier de St Nicolas, 28

Some 5 years before had quarrel after he mended her shoes, for a gros, which he even went to her house to demand. After this fell ill, and only cured after eating bread and salt from her house; believed her responsible for illness.

(16) Anne femme Jacques des Fes de St Nicolas, 53

Said she knew nothing.

(17) Anne veuve honorable homme Daniel Charpentier de St Nicolas, 45

7 or 8 years before Agnes had lived behind their house, next to stables. Lost a cow and a horse, of which she suspected her. Before horse fell sick found her in its stable, and she claimed she was going to tie up cows. Horse later covered with spots 'comme frezain'; after it died she called Agnes witch, and she replied 'Sy vous m'eussiez dict que vous aviez opinion que j'aye faict mourir votre vache, vostre cheval ne fut pas morte'. Witness threatened to have her burned, 'mais elle ne fit jamais contenance de s'esmouvoir ains dit dieu vous le veuille pardonner'.

(18) Honorable homme Jean Charpentier mercier de St Nicolas, 20

Had heard his father blame her for loss of horse and cow, and that for this reason she had been expelled from room where she lived.

(19) Margueritte veuve Demenge Charles drapier de St Nicolas, 66

Reported suspicions she had heard from late Daniel Charpentier.

(20) Joseph Vigneulle, bonnetier de St Nicolas, 30

Were neighbours and their daughters quarrelled, followed by dispute between Agnes and his wife. Soon after daughter lost sight of one eye, and Agnes said 'que sy l'on daignoit parler aux voisins l'on pourroit bien trouver quelque remede'. He gave her soup made with bread from Agnes' house, after which eye recovered, but trouble then spread to other eye, which was still affected. One evening when they were in bed was a frightening noise, and he rushed to upper room to check children were safe - found them asleep but half out of bed. After this decided to move house.

(21) Catherine femme Jean Vigneulle, 36

Repeated husband's story, but added that night before eye trouble started a cat with big ears jumped on their bed - saw it by light of moon. When she was crying about child's illness Agnes said 'taisez-vous, dieu luy renvoyera sa santé'. Had also often advised them not to have children sleeping up high as they did.

(7 September 1598)

(22) Barbeline femme honorable homme Dieudonne Philpin, marchand de St Nicolas, 40

Some 20 years before Agnes had been nursing one of her children, and had asked to have next one, since witness was pregnant again. After refusal child she was nursing became ill, 'charge de plusieurs apostumes'. Took child away and sent it to wife of Jean de Ville, who 'faisoit estat de guerir des verrues', but she could do nothing; she was advised to return it to nurse. Continued ill as long as Jean de Ville's wife visited it there, only recovered after she stopped going. After child had been met and kissed in street (unclear by whom) it fell ill again; she and her late husband did all they could to cure it, finally called in Agnes. She said she must seek advice from her mistress at Villers les Nancy, returned advising pilgrimage to St Sidrop at Crence (?), and making three turns round cross of Thiebly with 'ung bourdon a liepvre'. Despite all this child died, and she said she had been called in too late; her husband beat her several times over this.

(23) Francoise veuve Francois Pourat manouvrier de St Nicolas, 50

Said her husband had strange illness which was only cured after they obtained bread and salt from Agnes' house.

(24) Catherine veuve Claudin le Puy de St Nicolas, 34

Said they had been together when doing day labour, and she believed Agnes had made her ill; cured after she obtained bread and salt through agency of Jennon femme Colas Bretel.

7 September 1598; interrogation

Said she was 57, native of Bralleville, daughter of Colas Jeannel and his wife Edelline; had lived with them until marriage. First marriage was to Jacquat Prevost, manouvrier of Bralleville, lasted 15 years until his death, had a son. Second marriage around year 67 to Chrestofle Marcoussan of St Nicolas, by whom she had a daughter who was still alive. Knew she had been accused by Barbon femme Nicolas Moictrier, but said she had done her great wrong. Suggested that she might have born her ill will because shortly before Barbon's arrest they had a dispute at the mill when Barbon tried to get a turn before her.

Implicitly admitted that she was reputed a witch and called such; said that in respect of such insults 'en avoir laissé la vengeance a Dieu'. Colas Bonnetier had called her witch when accusing her over death of a cock. Agreed to having advised pilgrimage for sick child of Jean Forgey, after consulting mistress, who was Hellenix wife of maire Bason; said that two eggs and a 'jallat' weere to be taken, and three turns made around cross of hault de Thieibly. Asked if this mistress had not been a witch, said not. Asked how she knew what illnesses were, said that she had retired into a room with a servant and 'tiroit une serviecte', but did not know what other ceremonies she had used.

10 September 1598; confrontations

Denied all charges. In reply to various accusations about use of bread and salt, said she was often away from house and people could have taken what they liked without her knowledge. Said that the Vigneulle's child had been treated by Didier le Boulengier. Catherine Vigneulle alleged that she had begged her not to tell Jean Maxerey, proprietor of house, about noise in case he drove her out; Agnes denied hearing anything. Argument with Barbelline Phulpin about pilgrimage; latter claimed she had given Agnes, at her request, 'ung bourdon et du fillet pour mettre en escharpe', as well as money she had put under threshold of house. Agnes agreed she had escharpe and candles, while money had been given to poor. Barbelline said a neighbour had come to tell them of terrible noise as Agnes left house, also alleged that when she made a soup for child with milk and it was left to cool she found something like gravel and 'bourbes' in it.

Argument with Marguerite du Puix about whether or not Agnes had been to baptism. Agnes said she did not remember suggesting remedy, but even if she had 'cela ne peult tourner en consequence qu'elle soit cause du mal d'aultant que ce sont accidens qui arrive souvent aux femmes et que le remede n'est incogneu a toutes.' Admitted that she and Nicolle Noel had pulled one another's hair in dispute arising from their chickens. Implicitly accepted that she had been called witch by miller's wife, saying 'que c'est une injure comme que les jeunes gens donnent aux vieilles gens et que l'on luy fait grand tort'. Agreed to conversation in fields with Nicole Thiery, but said this did not mean she was a witch.

Said in reply to Catherine le Goeulx 'voila un belle recompence que tu me donne de tant de bien que je toy fait et a ton marit.' Nicolas Bonnier said that after being cured by eating bread and salt this 'luy donna occasion pour randre sa santé plus parfaites, d'aller soupper au logis d'elle detenue pour en manger tout son

saoux.' In case of Anne Charpentier's horse, said she had been in stable with Justine to treat a sick cow. Anne replied with accusation that when she had been taking 'estuves' to sick cow Agnes had grabbed bucket from hand and asked for two faggots to make another 'estuve'. After this cow recovered, but some days later Agnes asked her servants for wine, which they refused in absence of witness, and next day cow died with hay still in its mouth.

18 September 1598; Rémy asks for torture

21 September 1598; Change de Nancy agrees

22 September 1598; interrogation under torture

In preliminary questioning asked about her mistress at Villers les Nancy, with various suggestions that she had learned forbidden arts from her, but denied this and claimed she had never known how she operated. Repeated story of quarrel with Barbon at mill, adding that latter had told her 'qu'elle s'en souviendrait quelque jour. Qu'elle at dampné son ame en la chargeant innocement.'

Before torture, when seated on rack, 'avisée de ne se laisser desrompre', but to confess. Insisted she was innocent; little reaction to thumbscrews, so she was racked. Still no confessions, so she was threatened with strappado and weights on feet, yet continued denials. Appears to have been rather brief session of torture, although she was racked quite hard - 3 turns.

25 September 1598; Rémy asks that she be renvoyée jusqu'a rappel. Change de Nancy approves same day.

28 September 1598; court at St Nicolas orders her release.