

## **Confession 26**

### **Raimonde den Arsen of Montailou**

Confession and Deposition of Raimonde, widow of Prades den Arsen of Prades, a resident of Arnave, against herself, the rector of Montailou and several others:

The year of the lord 1320, the 23rd of November. Since it has come to the attention of the Reverend Father in Christ my lord Jacques, by the grace of God bishop of Pamiers, that Raimonde, the widow of Prades Arsen of Prades, resident of Arnave, has seen, adored, believed, and given of her goods to the late Guillaume Authié the heretic, and to several others of the Manichaeian sect and that she has seen and known that many others have done these same things; and since the same lord bishop fears with good reason that if he cites her she will flee, he had her brought to him, in order to be able to question her on the above-mentioned facts. The said Raimonde, appearing judicially in the episcopal chamber of Pamiers before my said lord bishop, assisted by Brother Gaillard de Pomiès, substitute of my lord the inquisitor of Carcassonne, took a physical oath to tell the pure and entire truth in the said matter of heresy as much concerning herself as charged as concerning others living and dead as witness.

The oath taken, she said, avowed and deposed as follows:

About sixteen years ago, I think, but I do not recall the time otherwise, I lived as a servant in the house of Bonnet de la Côte of Pamiers, since deceased. Toward the festival of Easter, the late Raimond Belot of Montailou came to Pamiers to buy a quantity of wheat and came to see me at Bonnet's house. He told me that if I came up to Montailou, I could stay with him and his brothers, because they wished to marry their sister to Bernard Clergue of the same place. I said that for the moment I could not leave my master because I was engaged just until the following feast of Saint John the Baptist. When I finished my year, if it seemed to me a good idea to go or not to go to Montailou, I would do so. And he left then.

Later, on the next feast of Saint John, I took my daughter, Alazaïs, whom I was having brought up at Saint-Victor, and I went up to Sabartès and at Aston I left my daughter to be raised by Alazaïs den Prades and continued up towards Prades d'Alion. From there I went to work the harvest in the Arques valley. When the harvest was done, I returned to Prades d'Alion. Raimond Belot and his brother had already given their sister Raimonde to Bernard Clergue. After the harvest at Prades, I went to Montailou and I stayed in the house of Raimond Belot and his brothers, doing there whatever they needed me to.

While I was living in this house, during the following January, Bernard Belot, the brother of Raimond, took Guillemette, the daughter of Guillaume Benet of Montailou as his wife and at the marriage the following witnesses were present: Alissende, sister of this Guillemette, wife of Pierre Roussel d'Ax; Gaillarde, the wife of Guillaume Authié, the heretic, of Ax; Arnaude den Terras, of Mijanès en Donnezan; Alazaïs, the sister of Raimond Belot, who was married at Mijanès, and all of them were in the house of this Raimond Belot of Montailou, as well as Guillemette, the wife of the said Bernard, then married, Guillemette Belot, the mother of Raimond and his brothers, and the brothers

Raimond, Bernard and Guillaume Belot. I stayed behind the fire, holding a daughter of Alazaïs, the sister of Raimond.

And when everyone was near the fire in the main foyer called the foganha, I saw descend from the upstairs room (solier), by the ladder, a man clothed in dark blue or green, who had an over-tunic and tunic of the same fabric. Guillaume Belot had gone to call him at the door of the upstairs room, which was closed.

When this man had descended, everyone rose before him, except for me since I was holding the little girl in my arms. He seated himself on a bench with Raimond, Bernard and Guillaume Belot, and no women were seated on the bench, although they had been so before. And this man spoke then in a low voice, so that I could not understand what he said, with Gaillarde, who was seated on another low bench near to this man and with Arnaude, who was kneeling before him, and with the men. After having rested a moment before the fire, the three brothers conducted this man just to the upstairs room and then closed the door, from my view. When they had descended again, everyone went to bed, except for me and Guillaume Belot, who remained by the fire.

I asked Guillaume Belot who this man was who had descended down to them from this upstairs room. He told me that this man was Guillaume Authié, who had been the husband of Gaillarde, but who had left her, because he had become a good Christian, who led souls to salvation. I replied to Guillaume: "How can a man who hides himself be a good Christian?" He told me to be quiet; this man would not have any other house to go to and he himself and his brothers knew well what they were doing.

-Did you see any of those present adore this heretic? -No, unless it was Arnaude.

-Did this heretic preach that night as far as you heard? -No.

-Did you see this heretic take bread and give it to the others? -No.

-Did you see this heretic give anything to one of those present or did any of those present give anything to this heretic? -The heretic gave nothing to anyone of those present, that I saw, but Arnaude, who was on her knees before him, put a few coins on the bench where the heretic was seated, by his side and he said, when she put the coins on the bench: "May this be for the love of God." And that I heard.

The next day, all the women returned to their houses and I did not know nor did I hear if they saw this heretic the next day. I also did not know or hear tell when the heretic departed.

Later, during the next fortnight, one night at dusk, I came back to prepare my bed in the grange of Raimond Belot, where there was straw. Just at the door of this grange, I saw Guillaume Authié the heretic and Guillaume Belot with another man and it seemed to me that this third man was Arnaud Marty of Junac, who was dressed for studying, and who was a heretic afterwards. He was at that time a great believer in heretics. These three men, in my view, entered into the house of Bernard Clergue and his brother and I saw them enter there, but I do not know what they did or said, nor where they went after.

-Did you see anyone in the house of Bernard Clergue greet these heretics or speak with them at that time? -No.

For about half the time between Lent and now of this year, Guillaume Authié was in the upstairs room often. I was aware of this, because I often saw smoke in the upstairs room and because Guillemette Belot brought bread, wine and other foods and

things necessary for nourishment and cooking to the door of the upstairs room, although at other times there was no fire up there, because no one cooked or ate there.

At this time I saw Arnaud Vital of Montailou and Arnaud Belot enter into this upstairs room and I saw them leave a moment after. At this time Bernard Clergue also came to Raimond Belot's house and talked with his mother-in-law Guillemette Belot in the main foyer. And when they saw me, it seemed to me that they were displeased, because they would often send me elsewhere while they remained there.

Also during this time, Mengarde, the mother of the rector, came often to talk to Guillemette Belot in her house, because the heretics were in the house and she gave as a pretext to come and see Guillemette, that she was sewing shirts, although she was not a seamstress and she did not actually sew any shirts. And since it seemed to me that it did not please them for me to stay with them, I left them and would go somewhere else outside. Thus, I did not see what they did after my departure.

Towards Lent, Gaillarde, the wife of Guillaume Authié the heretic, was cited by my lord the inquisitor of Carcassonne. She came to Montailou with Arnaud Authié, the son of Pierre Authié the heretic and they stayed either with Raimond Maur, or with Guillaume Benet (I do not recall in which of these two houses they stayed.) When it was quite dark, after dinner, Gaillarde came to the house of Raimond Belot and his brothers, where Guillaume Authié had been staying for two days. Then when she was at the fire with Arnaud Authié, Guillaume Authié descended from the upstairs room and spoke, first with his wife Gaillarde and to Arnaud Authié for a long while, in my view. At that time, in the house those present and watching this were the brothers Raimond, Bernard and Guillaume Belot, Guillemette Belot their mother and Guillemette, the wife of Bernard. After the heretic had spoken with his wife for a long time and to Arnaud Authié, they left the house and he accompanied them just to the door.

-Do you know what they said? -The heretic told his wife not to tell the truth and not to denounce him because she would be committing a sin if she revealed the heretics. Gaillarde told him that she had to, at all costs, tell the truth. Guillaume told her that if she wished to believe him, she should not tell the entire truth and at least she should not say that she had seen them. And when the heretic left the house with Gaillarde, he spoke with her again for some time. But I do not know what he said to her. And Raimond Belot took Gaillarde to the house where she was staying, the heretic returned to the upstairs room where he was living and Guillaume Belot climbed up with him. After that, I did not see Guillaume Authié because that same night he departed with Guillaume Belot.

That night when Gaillarde, the wife of this heretic, was in the house of Raimond Belot, to go to Carcassonne, where she had been cited, I heard the heretic say that it was as grave a sin to sleep with or to know carnally one's own wife as with any other woman. And he said this to Guillaume Belot, who had said that he wished to marry. The heretic told him that he would commit as much sin with a spouse as with any other woman, if he knew her carnally. Later, I asked Guillaume Belot, to find out why Guillaume Authié had said that and he told me that what Guillaume said was true. I asked him: "How can this be?" He told me to leave it, that that was what the heretic had told him.

-Who was present when the heretic said these words? -The brothers Bernard, Raimond and Guillaume Belot, Arnaud Authié of Ax, son of the heretic Pierre Authié,

Gaillarde, wife of Guillaume the heretic, Guillemette, mother of the brothers Belot and Guillemette, wife of Bernard.

-Did any one of those present adore or give anything to the heretic? -No.

-Who was present when Guillaume Belot said this to you? -There was only he and I, and we were near the fire, because Gaillarde had already left with Arnaud and gone to bed, either at Guillaume Benet's house or Bernard Maurs' house, of Montaignou; the heretic had gone back into the upstairs room and the others in the house had gone to bed.

At this time when the heretic was in the house of Raimond Belot, I often saw Alazaïs Azéma, coming there to talk with Guillemette, the mother of these brothers and she talked often in secret. But I do not know of what.

-Have you seen this Alazaïs enter the room of the heretic or talk with him? -No.

Between January and Lent, one night after dinner, Guillaume Belot took, in my view, from the house of Bernard Clergue and his brothers a quantity of wheat in a sack on his shoulder and placed it, in the sack, in the room of Guillemette, his mother. I asked him whom the wheat was for. He said that Bernard Clergue, to hide it from his brothers, had given it to him. The next day, I entered into his mother's room where it had been taken, and I found neither the wheat nor the sack, though I knew well that he had neither taken it to the mill, nor sold it. And it seemed to me that the next morning Guillaume Belot was not home, but had left. The heretics were no longer in the house. Guillaume traveled often with them, which gave me to believe that he had brought them this wheat, for the above reasons.

Guillaume Belot told me at the time that many people from the houses of the rector and the rector himself were causing the people of Montaignou to be cited by my lord the inquisitor of Carcassonne and that it would not be long before all the members of the house of the rector would also be in the dungeon of the Wall along with the others of Montaignou.

-Where did he tell you this? -At la Calm, a place between le Donnezan and Montaignou.

-Who was present? -Guillaume and I.

Guillaume also told me at this place that the current rector of Montaignou was not chasing as many heretics, at the time when he did what was about to follow, as now. And thus the rector said that he did not wish to see these heretics, but he sent them money through his intermediary. But he did not tell me how much. He also had sleeves made for one of the vestments for Guillaume Authié the heretic, in the house of this Guillaume Belot and his brothers. He told me also that he had brought a calendar of the heretics to the rector, a calendar belonging to Guillaume Authié and that the rector had this calendar in his possession as often as he wanted, and that Guillaume brought it to him from the heretic that was living with him. He told me also that Guillaume Authié had also sent some gloves to the rector by his intermediary.

-When you heard Guillaume Belot say that this heretic saved souls, and Guillaume Authié say that it was as great a sin to know one's one wife as any other woman, did you believe these things? -Since I saw that the people in the house where I was living believed it, as they claimed, I believed it also.

-For how long? -For the year I stayed in Montaignou.

-During this time that you believed these heretics could save souls, did you believe that they alone had the power to do this, and that the priests subject to the Roman church could not do so, and that one could not be saved in the faith held by the Roman Church? -At the time when I believed this, I believed that one could only be saved in the faith of the heretics, and one could not be saved by the ministers of the Roman Church nor in the faith that it held.

-Did you believe at this time that it was as great a sin to know one's own wife as any other woman? -Yes, but I did not believe that it would be an equal sin to know one's cousins or parents or other women; I always believed it was a greater sin to know one's cousins than strangers.

-For how long did you remain in this belief? -About one year.

-Did you believe at this time that the heretics were good Christians and good men, and what they suffered, they suffered for God? -Yes, and I remained in this belief for about one year.

-At the time when you held this belief, did you have the intention and the will, if you were to have died, to be received into the sect of these heretics? -Yes, but I never said this to anyone, neither the heretics or anyone else and the heretics did not talk to me about it. I would have wished to have been received in the sect of the heretics if I were to have died, because that was the only way I believed I could save my soul and no other way.

-Have you ever given anything to the heretics? -No, and I never intended to.

-Did you make bread for the heretics when they were at Raimond Belot and his brothers' house or did you wash their clothes? -If anyone in the house had asked me to, I would have done it. But Guillemette Belot told me that she herself wished to make the bread the heretics ate, and she did not wish me to do it.

-Have you ever confessed this either judicially or as a sacrament? -I have not confessed it as a sacrament, because I was afraid that the priest would denounce me to the inquisitors or to my lord the bishop, and I was afraid to come before them. I have not confessed it judicially, because I was not cited nor invited to come avow this to the inquisitors or my lord the bishop.

I, Raimonde den Arsen, appearing judicially before you, Reverend Father in Christ, Jacques, by the grace of God bishop of Pamiers, abjure entirely all heresy that rises against the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Roman Church, and all beliefs of heretics, of any sect condemned by the Roman church, and especially of the sect which I followed, and all complicity, welcome, defense and frequenting of these heretics, under pain of punishment which is due in case of a relapse into the heresy here renounced judicially;

*Item* I swear and promise to pursue according to my power the heretics of any sect condemned by the Roman Church and especially the sect that I followed, and the believers, followers, welcomers and defenders of these heretics, and those that I know or believe to be in flight for reason of heresy, and to have arrested and sent, according to my power, any heretic at all among them to my said lord bishop or to the inquisitors of the heretical deviation at all times and in any place that I learn of the existence of the above said or one amongst them;

*Item* I swear and promise to hold, guard and defend the Catholic faith which the Holy Roman Church preaches and observes;

*Item* I swear and promise to obey and defer to the order of the Church, to my lord the bishop and the inquisitors and to appear on the day and days assigned before them or their replacements, at all times and in whatever place that I receive the order or requisition on their part, by messenger or by letter or in some other way, to never flee not absent myself knowingly in a spirit of contumaciousness and to receive and accomplish according to my power the punishment and the penance that they may judge good to impose upon me. And to this effect I engage my person and all my goods.

(After this she took the same vow on March 7th, the same year as above (1320) before the inquisitor in the house of the Preachers of Pamiers.)

Done the year and day as above, in the presence of the religious persons Brother Bernard de Centelles, monk of Fontfroide, master Barthelémy Adalbert, notary of the Inquisition of Carcassonne, and of me Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, notary of my said lord bishop, who has received and written all that precedes.

On the Sunday assigned to the said Raimonde by our said lords bishop and inquisitor, she appeared in the cemetery of Saint-Jean-Martyr, and there our said lords bishop and inquisitor proceeded to pronounce her sentence in the manner that follows: "Let all know, etc." See the sentence in the Book of Sentences of heresy.

And I, Rainaud Jabbaud, cleric of Toulouse, sworn in the matter of the Inquisition, have, on the order of my lord the bishop, faithfully corrected the said confessions against the original.

#### NOTE

Condemned on March 8, 1321 to the dungeon of the Wall (sentence not preserved) she lived to see her punishment commuted into the wearing of double crosses on August 2, 1324.