

Alamande Guilabert of Montailou Confession 33

Confession of Alamande, widow of Jean Guilabert of Montailou

The year of the Lord 1321, the 2nd of April, Alamande, widow of Jean Guilabert of Montailou, coming spontaneously to the Reverend Father in Christ my lord Jacques, by the grace of God bishop of Pamiers, having taken an oath on the holy Gospels of God to tell the pure and entire truth, as much concerning herself as warned, as concerning other death and alive as witness, with the assistance of Brother Gaillard de Pomiès, substitute for my lord the inquisitor of Carcassonne, in the presence of my lord Guillaume Audibert, licensed in Law and bachelor in Statutes, and of the religious persons Brothers David and Bernard de Centnelles, monks of Fontfroide, and of myself Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, notary of my said lord bishop, witnesses for this convocation, said, deposed and confessed as follows, after numerous variations along the way:

About 16 or 17 years ago, I had a son of about 16 years old, named Guillaume Guilabert, who was a shepherd and watched the sheep and was quite familiar with Guillaume Belot and Raimond Benet, who were great believers in the heretics and commonly reputed to be such. My son was sick and he coughed blood and it was generally thought that it was inevitable that he would die of this sickness.

One day, when my son was thus sick, Guillaume Belot came to visit him and he told him, while I was listening: "Comrade, do you want me to go find you a doctor who can save both your body and soul?" My son replied that he wished that very much. Guillaume told him that he would go and bring him a good Christian who would receive him into his faith and his sect, and would bring him to a good end. Upon hearing this, I said to my son, understanding that this Guillaume was peaking of having the heretics brought to my son: "My son, do not do this! It is enough that I am losing you. I have no other son. I do not need to lose all my goods because of you!" My son said to me: "Mother, I ask you to agree that a good Christian come to me and save my soul!" I told him: "My son, do not do this!" He said: "Mother I ask you to agree to this, and not to impede it." This took place around mid-day and I did not wish to consent to what my son was asking me. Toward the hour of vespers, my daughter Alazaïs, the wife of Arnaud Faure of Montailou, came to me and said: "Mother, if you would like the soul of your son to be saved, then let a good Christian come, who will receive him into his faith and his sect and make him a good Christian, because those who are received by them will be saved, and these good men absolve them of all their sins, and the souls of those who are received by them will go straight to paradise after the death of the body and only those who are received by them will be saved." And I believed that what my daughter said was true, and I believed these heretical articles and rested in this belief for one year.

And since I believed that my daughter spoke the truth, I told her that I would like my son to be received by the heretics into their faith and their sect, believing by this that if my son was a heretic, his soul would be saved. A moment later, Guillaume Belot arrived and I believe that he spoke to my daughter.

Then, the following night, around the time of dawn, Guillaume Belot came, bringing and introducing into the house the heretic Prades Tavernier, and I was present and saw him. I knew that he was a heretic. Then Guillaume Belot approached the sick boy and tried to talk to him but he was not able. Then Guillaume took the sick boy, made him sit up in the bed and since he could not speak even like that, the heretic said that he could not receive him because he could no longer speak.

Guillaume Belot and my daughter Alazaïs who were present, said then to the heretic that the sick boy had spoken when he was in his senses and had asked and prayed to be received in the faith and the sect of the good Christians (that is to say, the heretics) and when we bore witness to this, the heretic made numerous genuflections. I did not see, nonetheless, nor remark whether he put a book on the head of the sick boy, because I was so upset by the death of my son. While the heretic was doing this, he stood at the foot of the bed of the sick boy and Guillaume held him seated in the bed.

When the heretication was done, Guillaume Belot said that my son had been made a good Christian, and that I should never more have fear about the well-being of his soul, because he had been saved. And I believed this.

Present at this heretication were: myself, Alazaïs my daughter, Guillemette, the wife of Jean Clémens of Gebetz, my daughter, who was there, sick in another bed with a child, Sibille, the wife of Guillaume den Fort, Esclarmonde, the wife of Raimond Clergue, Guillaume Authié, Arnaud Faure and Guillaume Belot of Montailou.

And after the heretic had hereticated my son, at the request of Guillaume Belot I adored this heretic by bending my knees before him; but I did not say "Bless us" because no one told me to.

-Did you eat any bread blessed by this heretic? -No.

-Did you signal any intention to this heretic that you wished to be received into his faith and his sect? -No.

-Did you have the will and the intention, if you were to become sick, to be received into the sect of these heretics? -No.

-Did you give or send anything to these heretics? -No. But my daughter Alazaïs, one day, after the death of my son, told me, in a room attached to my house, that I would do well to give or send something to these good Christians (that is to say, to the heretics) because it was a great charity to do well for them, because they did not dare work, because they would be arrested immediately and that they suffered persecutions for God. I told my daughter that they were not going to eat of my goods and that I would not send them anything and in the future she spoke no more of this to me.

-Have you ever confessed this in true penance or for justice? -Not until now, because, even though I believed I had sinned, I did not think it was that serious.

-Why have you come to confess now, since you have not confessed elsewhere? -Because I have understood that Bernard Clergue and his wife Raimonde have gone to Carcassonne to confess in this matter of heresy to my lord the inquisitor. This Bernard has brought with him Bernard Benet of Montailou, and has hired him and promised him some land if he will avow and depose on the subject of the heretication of my son, against me, my daughter Alazaïs, Guillaume Authié and Arnaud Faure. This is why, having fear of being cited by my lord the inquisitor of Carcassonne, we have come to my lord the bishop to avow this, figuring that we will find greater mercy with him than with my lord the inquisitor.

-From whom did you hear that Bernard Clergue has promised some land to Bernard Benet if he will go to Carcassonne to confess the heretication of your son before my lord the inquisitor against you and the others? -From Pierre Azéma of Montailou.

-Have you seen this heretic elsewhere or any others? -No.

-Why, in the beginning, have you not told the entire truth, and have you not wished to remember it except with the greatest difficulty? -Because I was very afraid.

-Have you been bribed, have you been instructed by anyone or any persons not to tell the truth in the beginning? -No.

-Do you know any other person who is guilty in the matter of heresy and who has not yet confessed? -No.

-Did Guillemette, your daughter, who was in bed when the heretic arrived, get up when he arrived or when he hereticated the sick boy or after? -No.

-Did any of the others present adore the heretic after the heretication, except for you? -No.

And she said nothing more that was pertinent.

(The 6th of April, before the bishop and Brother Gaillard, witnesses Guillaume Audibert, Brother Arnaud du Carla, and the notary Guillaume Peyre-Barthe.) Her preceding confession was read to her intelligibly in the vulgar tongue and she was asked if she wished to persist in it. She said yes, but added that which follows:

A few days after the death of my son, Guillemette Benet of Montailou came to my house and found me speaking at the door of my house. She told me that I would do a great act of charity if I would send something to these good men (that is to say, the heretics) who did not dare to work out of fear of being arrested, and suffered numerous tribulations for God, saving the souls of men and women, who never did evil to anyone at all, and are good Christians and the friends of God. Hearing this and believing it to be true, I gave Guillemette two woolen fleeces, so that she could give them to the heretics, so that they might pray God for the soul of my son. Guillemette took these fleeces, put them into the bosom of a cloak she was wearing and went on her way. Later, I do not know what she did with them, because I did not speak to her any more about what she did with them and because a short time after this she was arrested.

And she said nothing else pertinent.

After this, the same year as above (1321), the 7th of April, the said Alamande, appearing judicially before my said lord bishop in the bishop's palace, in the presence of my lord Guillaume Audibert, licensed in Law, Brother Bernard de Centelles, and myself Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, notary, said and avowed, under the faith of an oath previously taken, that Guillaume Fort, his brother, was present at this heretication, but she hid the fact because she did not wish that anything bad would come to him because of this.

She also said that the second day after she had made her first confession, Pierre Clergue, the rector of Montailou, passed before the granary of the bishop's palace of Pamiers, in which she was imprisoned. He asked her: "Have you confessed?" She said yes, and with this said, the curé passed on, and she heard him say, after he had passed, that her daughter and her son-in-law had been killed.

And she said nothing else pertinent.

After this, the same year as above (1321), the 17th month of April, the said Alamande appearing judicially before my said lord bishop in the presence of my lord Guillaume Audibert, of Brother David and of myself Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, her preceding confessions were read to her intelligibly and in the vulgar tongue.

(Here follows a very long abjuration, detailing all the facts reported in her deposition)

I, Alamande Guilabert, 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, the same year as above (1321), Thursday the 30th of July, the said Alamande, appearing judicially in the episcopal chamber of Pamiers before my said lord bishop, in the presence of the discreet person master Bernard Faissier, official of Pamiers, of my lord Guillaume Audibert, canon of Limoges, licensed in Law, of the discreet person master Bernard Gaubert, jurist, of the religious persons my lord Hugues du Breuil, sacrist of the church of Pamiers, Brother Jean Gailhard, monk of Fontfroide and of myself Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, notary of my said lord bishop, witnesses for this convocation. The preceding confessions she had made were read to her intelligibly in the vulgar tongue and she was asked if they were true and if the things had actually happened in fact and reality as were reported therein. She said yes. Asked if she had confessed that which precedes under the influence of any other person or suborned by anyone, she said no, but that this was the truth. Asked if she wished to add or retract or propose anything for her defense, she said no, renounced and concluded and asked that sentence be given.

Done in the presence of the venerable and discreet persons my lord Guillaume Audibert, canon of Limoges, Brothers Gaillard de Pomiès, prior, Arnaud du Carla, O.P., of the convent of Pamiers, Pierre d'Annoires, companion of my said lord inquisitor, and of us, Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, rector of the church of Vira in the diocese of Pamiers, and Menet de Robécourg, of the diocese of Toul, who have written and received that which precedes.

After this, the same year as above, the 2nd of August, Bataille de Penne, notary of my lord the bishop, came on the order of the said lords inquisitor and bishop to the tower of Pamiers of my said lord bishop, and there the said Bataille cited precisely and peremptorily the said Alamande, who was detained, to appear the same day before tierce in the cemetery Saint-Jean of Pamiers before them, there to hear sentence by reason of the above-mentioned facts avowed by her, and otherwise perform what was appropriate, an assignation which the said Alamande accepted of her own free will and spontaneously in the presence and witness of the rector of Génat, Jean Routinier, priest, of Jacques de Montsaly and of Pierre Rega, jailer of this tower.

On the day assigned above to the said Alamande, she appeared in the cemetery of Sain-Jean-Martyr as she had been ordered by the said Bataille and there the said lords bishop and inquisitor proceeded to pronounce the sentence on the said Alamande in the following manner: "Let all know, etc." The said citation and also the sentence on this Alamande were received by the said Bataille and he received them in his protocol because I, Guillaume Peyre-Barthe, notary commissioned by my lord the bishop in the facts touching the Catholic faith, was not able to be present because of the malady from which I am suffering. But I have brought them out of the notes of the said Bataille and have written them and inserted them in the present book on the order of my said lord bishop.

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.

NOTES

Her condemnation is contained in the same sentence as that of Alazaïs Faure, *Hist. Inquisitionis*, p. 287; Doat XXVII, folio 148 recto)