

B 7394; witch 125, Pierrot Cosson and his wife Jeannotte, of Malzeville

19 September 1618; taken to Condé (Custines) to be confronted with Idotte Michault, wife of Chrestofle Cordier of Faulx St Etienne. She maintained charges that she had seen them at the sabat.

20 September 1618; C. M. Rémy asks for evidence to be taken against them.

22 September 1618; informations préparatoires

(1) Claude Thoussaint, vigneron, 28

When Pierot was reproached that his wife was a witch he made remark about the devil. (Good signature)

(2) Mengeotte femme du précédent, 27

Had heard late curé say that his horse stopped outside their house and would go no further.

(3) Paul Jenin, vigneron, 45

13 or 14 years earlier was returning from Rozieres with wife of late Mme Jean Solier, chirurgien, in whose house he then lived, who had quarrel with Jeannotte. He asked her why she did this, since latter was reputed a witch; at this Jeannotte threw 'un petit juillon' on his hat, and he became very ill; had great headache and felt as if bellows were being put to his ears. This lasted 6 weeks, and he believed it had been her witchcraft; he had reproached her with causing it, but she took no action. Her reputation 16 years, but had seen no harm in her husband.

(4) Isabillon femme du précédent, 45

Reputation of Jeannotte 16 years (residence).

(5) François André, vigneron, 25

9 or 10 years earlier had gone to fetch his father, who was drinking at Pierot's house, and Jeannotte offered him a drink in a plate, which he refused. She touched him on the forehead, and he then developed a swelling there, which lasted a month. Was not painful, but only cured when a vagabond woman from Metz advised his father of a method. Had forehead bound up as tightly as he could bear for 9 days, and said 9 paternosters and 9 ave marias each day. Recovered after this, and thought it had been her witchcraft - reputed a witch as long as he could remember.

(24 September 1618)

(6) Jean Perrin dit Rechamps, archer du garde de S.A., 44

She was always reputed a witch. Year of death of previous duke he had ridden past her house, and a little black dog ran under legs of his horse; he was thrown to ground and had a foot dislocated. Saw her outside house about 20 yards away, and

asked her to help him, but she refused. Suspected she had caused this; earlier the same year he had quarrelled with her and called her witch. (Good signature)

(7) Nicolas Jean Henry, vigneron, 60

Jeannotte always reputed a witch. A year earlier he had been ill with dysentery, and she had visited him several times, handling his feet and telling him he would not be better for a long time, but he did not think she had caused his illness.

(8) Chrestofle Pierson, bouchier, 38

10 years earlier had bought a cow from Pierot, half for money down and half on credit. Went to collect it, but she did not want to let him do so in absence of husband, and told him the cow 'luy cousteroit bon'. When husband returned he handed it over, but later she passed him as he sat outside house of Jean l'huillier and told him he would repent; threw a stone at him, which missed. 4 days later became very ill; genitals were swollen and limbs paralysed. Several advised him to get bread, salt, and ashes from her house, and after doing so - could not remember how he used them - started to recover after 10 week illness, and believed this was her doing. She had been chased out of la Neuflotte 10 or 12 yeas earlier because of suspicion she was a witch. (Good signature)

(9) Demenge Vosgien, vigneron, 46

6 years earlier his son aged 10 had unknown illness, and Jeannotte came to see him. Handled him, then advised pilgrimage to St Chrestofle; he did this, taking a chicken as an offering. Sent him 5 apples to eat, saying the last must be eaten one half raw and the other cooked. After this was done he recovered, and he believed she had given him illness then cured him; visited house regularly. Reputation 20 years, and had been chased out of la Neuflotte.

(10) Renée fille du precedent, 22

Same story about apples; Jeannotte had told her that brother would not die, but 'qu'il endurast et qu'il estoit trop meschante'. In winter 6 years earlier had asked witness to sleep in her house, which she did; at midnight she got up and made a big fire, saying a black cat came to frighten her every day, and asking if she saw it. Showed her hole in wall it used, and asked if they saw a similar cat in their house. She replied that they only saw their own cat, and was frightened by the affair, refusing further invitations to sleep there. Believed she had made brother ill; he had previously thrown something at one of her fruit trees, and she told him off.

(11) Barbeline femme Demenge Vosgien, 40

Same story about son's illness, after Jeannotte had told him he was bad. Reputation 20 years.

(12) Arnauld, vigneron, 45

Reputation of Jeannotte 7 or 8 years.

(13) Jeanne femme du precedent, 50

Reputation of Jeannotte 8 years.

(26 September)

(14) Jean Vinot, serviteur au Sr de Chandenier, de Nancy, 33

About 6 years earlier his horses were near her garden, and she told him to take them away, to which he replied that they were doing no harm. She said he would repent if he did not do so; since then he had lost 15 or 16 horses, and suspected this was her doing.

(15) Noel Parisot, laboureur, 40

General reputation of Jeannotte.

(16) Nicolas Perrin, menuisier, 32

He had been guarding her when she was taken to Condé to be confronted with Idotte, recently executed. Latter said she had seen her at fontaine des pendus beating water to make 'bruine' and spoil grain. She said she had been there, but in search of something for her husband.

(17) Claudin Houchelot Cosson, 75

6 years earlier she had quarrel with his late wife Catherine about horse which witness had bought from her husband. Wife then fell ill, and died after languishing for 4 years, saying that Jeannotte had bewitched her.

(18) Gerardine Noel, jeune fille, 20

Had been in her house previous week, and on rumour she was to be arrested she said she would demand that they also arrested her neighbour Demenge Vosgien and his wife - said that she had given them apples when they were ill, which they claimed had cured them.

(19) Claudin Burtin, vigneron, 52

Had often called them both witches, but they took no action. 9 months earlier was taking flour home from mill, and she asked for some as he passed house, which he refused. She said he should pass there another time and he would see. Next week fell and injured his side as he was carrying 2 sacks of flour past her door; called her witch and said what she had promised had happened. Did not know what she said in reply because he was too confused. Had called Pierot witch 5 weeks before, to which he said that if he was a witch they should arrest him. (Competent signature)

28 September 1618; interrogation (Jeannotte)

Said she might be about 70; had no real idea about her age, but had been 15 around time of guerre de Brandebourg. Said she did not know reason for imprisonment, and when asked about confrontation with Idotte said she had not specifically claimed to see her at sabat, but only at an unidentified spring.

Asked about leaving la Neuflotte, said the lady of the place had required her to leave because they could not pay taxes, and members of the household were suspected of stealing. Denied knowing anything about charges of witchcraft.

Denied various charges and other details. Said that she had heard about Jean Perrin's fall later; did not hear him call for help, because she and her husband were at supper at the time.

5 October 1618; interrogation

Note that this had been interrupted because of other judicial business. Agreed she had refused to hand cow over to Chrestofle Pierson, but denied threats. Denied advising Demenge Vosgien about pilgrimage for sick child, and business with apples.

6 October 1618; confrontations

Claimed Paul Jenin was a thief, which he denied. She admitted throwing 'thuillon' at him, but said she had not caused his illness.

Agreed that Chrestofle Pierson had bought cow against her will, denied rest of his evidence.

Accused Demenge Vosgien of being a thief; had stolen wood, also some money belonging to curé; he denied this, she offered to prove it.

Said that Claudin Houchelot was 'macerau de ses filles', who were kept by clerics; he said that if they had forgotten their honour this was not his doing, nor in his house.

In reply to Gerardine Noel, said she had wanted to have Demenge Vosgien and his wife as parties formelles.

Was then reproached with having said she was as clean of witchcraft as the Virgin Mary, and told this was 'un blasphème execrable'; she begged pardon of God for making such a comparison.

11 October 1618; C.M. Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

12 October 1618; interrogation

Was taken to torture chamber, and immediately started to confess. Could not remember when she had been seduced, but she was ahead of her husband on the road when she was approached by man with hideous black face, who sympathised with her hard life and offered her gold and silver. Refused, saying her husband was coming, and then made sign of cross, at which he disappeared. Appeared again a week later, but someone came; after another week appeared to her and her husband together around midnight, as they were resting 'sur des ripailles' with their loads. She said she would consent to serve him if her husband agreed; he did, so they both entered his service. Said his name was Percin, and gave her a coin which turned out to be of lead.

2 weeks later she felt such regret at being abused that she fell ill. Devil entered her left ear in form of a flea and tried to strangle her, so she called on her husband to help her, but he would not. She remained in this state, tormented by the devil, for 2 weeks before starting to recover.

During illness she gave Demenge Vosgien's son a gros to buy her some wine; he did not do so, and kept the money. Her master persuaded her to kill him by putting herbs on his arm; she then regretted this, and he told her how to cure him with the apples.

Now remembered seduction was 14 years earlier, in bois de Faulx. Admitted causing illness of Chrestofle Pierson, then curing him with herb advised by her master. Had caused fall of Jean Perrin, in revenge for his having taken caution against her for some wood.

She and her husband had consented to Persin putting herb in soup of Claudin Houchelot's wife, which caused her fatal illness. She had killed child of Nicolas Galletier, her husband's cousin, at solicitation of her master.

Confessed to having been at sabat twice. Gave list of accomplices (see later withdrawal). Usual feasting and dancing; Persin 'leur conseilloit de faire une infinité de maulx et perdre les biens de la terre, a quoy elle n'a voulu consentir'.

Asked if Persin had intercourse with her, said just once, and he was 'pesant et froid comme marbre'. His hands had talons like a bird of prey, feet were like those of a calf. Tried to dissuade her from going to church and praying; would not visit her for a month after she took the sacrament.

Was then confronted with husband, and said she had seen him at sabat. When he denied this she began to vary, and was given thumbscrews; she then renewed earlier claims that he was a witch like her.

13 October 1618; PG asks for death sentence, after confrontation with those she had accused.

On same day was asked to confirm her confessions; now said her husband was not a witch.

When she was ready to be taken to execution, she discharged all those she had accused, saying she had done this out of hatred for quarrels, and they had no such reputation. They were Claude Grand Jean, hardier of Champigneulles, Catherine femme Demenge Maldidier, vigneron of Pisserecourt, and some from Malzeville; Jean Colin, hardier, Anne dite la Violette, Margueritte Cassion dite Marga, and Margueritte dite la Mahaude.

Followed by what must be earlier confrontations with accused, same day; exactly the same group as above.

13 October 1618; definitive sentence from Change de Nancy.

3 November 1618; Rémy asks that Pierrot be renvoyé. Change de Nancy approved same day, specifying that he was not liable for costs.

8 November 1618; François Cordier, of Val de Faulx, who had been convicted of witchcraft, was confronted with those he had accused. Maintained charge against Pierrot; at stake said he was not sure he was a witch, but had seen him beating water.

12 November 1618; C.M. Rémy asks for evidence to be taken against Pierrot. Followed by order for this to be done, but no more documents on the case.