

B 8682 no 1; witch 179, Barbelline femme Holbin le Jalley, des Trois Maisons

This case is badly damaged, and no microfilm was ordered - a section of each page has rotted away.

Barbelline was accused by Libaire femme Guillaume Bouchier, who maintained the charges to her death.

? 1596; informations préparatoires

(1) Mengeon Guichard jeune fils, du Vieux Marché, 30

Some 6 years before they had both been at a marriage feast, and she had suggested that he should marry her niece, who would have goods worth more than 1,200 francs. He had said he did not want to marry yet; later became ill, and put it about how this had happened - was advised to speak to Barbelline and ask her advice. She told him to contact devineresse de Tanviller; he sent a message, and reply was that he was bewitched but would not die. Subsequently called Barbelline witch, but still not fully recovered - believed she had made him ill because he would not marry her niece.

(2) Nicolas Claudon Lamblat, jeune fils de St Dié, 21

Previous Lent had been in house of brother-in-law Adam Bassat, near neighbour of Barbelline at Trois Maisons; in course of playing with other youths took end of a stick from her garden, and she told him off. Subsequently became ill, and only recovered after she came to visit him.

(3) Mengeon Wanier, bourgeois de St Dié, 30

Told story of how his cousin Germaine Phelisse, wife of Jean Gillet of Trois Maisons, had bought some goods from husband of accused 3 years earlier. She had been very angry with Phelisse, and shortly afterwards she became ill in a fashion 'aultant estrange que possible de raconter'. Swollen as if pregnant, just as if she had animal inside her. Sought a remedy, and was told that on Friday the witch responsible would come to see her - but died on Thursday, having always suspected Barbelline of bewitching her.

(4) Nicolas Miette, jeune fils de St Dié, 24

Serious illness of Mengeon Guichard of Vieux Marché some 4 years before, who had told him to get bread, salt, and ashes from house of accused . . .

(5) ?

(6) Claudon du Haut - partly missing, but see below

(7) Marion femme Claudon du Haut, 40

Told how previous harvest time, when she and husband were going to fields, she had small child around neck. Barbelline asked why she was doing this, suggesting she might make the child ill. After this the child, previously healthy, sickened, and

was now only skin and bone; suspected Barbelline, who had touched it, and had long reputation as a witch.

Husband said Barbelline had taken child in arms and kissed it; they told her they had it with them because there was no-one 'en ville' to look after it.

Interrogation

Said she was about 75, currently wife of Holbin le Jalley of Trois Maisons, aged about 75. Had been married for 49 years to Dion Chastenay, and 8 or 9 to present husband.

Told how she had gone off to consult her nephew Jean de Sarrux; he was not at home, and his wife told her that he was 'desja assé contristé de la prise de la mairesse Maistre'. Decided not to go back home, but to go on and consult her brother Adam de Sarrux at Sarrux. On way saw a man coming after her fast, and was afraid it was an officer coming to arrest her. Hastened on, but when man did catch up it was Pierre Parisot, whom her nephew's wife had sent to accompany her. On the way he advised her how to reply when charged, 'mesme de la forme qu'on luy pourroit donner la question' (he had previously been doyen in the court). Told her about how she would be racked, and 'enduroit beaucoup de tourmens, mais sy elle les pouvoit endurer que ce seroit bien faict et quele eschapperoit avec autres propos . . . mais elle estoit sy esperdu, qu'elle n'a retenu ce que ce pourra estre.'

After confrontations - fairly summary - Change de Nancy approved suggestion that she be shown the 'appareils de la question' (15 October 1596)

Next she was confronted with Meline veuve Martin Gentilhomme, who claimed to have seen her at the sabat.

The procureur asked on 9 November that she be given question ordinaire, with allowance for her age, but the Change de Nancy recommended on 15 November that she be renvoyée.

The case was reopened on 2 September 1598, with depositions from 4 more witnesses.

(8) Nicolas fils Holbin le Jalley, de Trois Maisons, 24

Said that if she was a witch as commonly reputed, he believed she had caused illness from which his father was now suffering. He himself had left home because he was so frightened she might bewitch him. Suggested that father had fallen ill after drinking some soup which tasted bitter, after which he lost power to feel or speak. Asked Barbelline what had been in the soup, adding 's'il ne guerissoit en bref, il s'en iroit aupres d'ung devin s'il apprenoit qu'elle l'ayt ensorcellé il la feroit prendre et brusler' - as soon as he had said this his father became a little better, although still far from well.

(9) Nicolas Lambert, bourgeois a St Dié, 22

Had become ill, with holes in his arm, since going to fetch fish from Trois Maisons for his relatives 2 months before; believed her responsible, in hatred for his previous deposition.

(10) Jennon fille feu Colas Michiel de Marzelay, servante à Holbin le Jalley, 24

Told of soup, and how master told her he knew his wife had put something in it, because it tasted bitter. Also story about mysterious noises in kitchen at night, finding Barbelline standing in middle with a stick - she then told witness she had been chasing out a big black dog.

(11) Adam Jalley des Trois Maisons, 28

After disputes with her had lost animals, although he did not know if she was cause - long reputation. Also told story of noises in kitchen, some 5 or 6 weeks earlier.

Further confrontation with 'la Malreannaix', who declared she had seen her at sabat.

Interrogated, when asked about husband's illness, said 'que sy son marit a eu quelque maladie, c'est dieu qui le print, pour ce qu'il a retenu deux francs pour le loyer d'une sienne chambrière.'

Was now subjected to question ordinaire. At first continued denials, but then started to confess. Had been seduced 20 years earlier, after great quarrel with wife of Bastien le Sellier, of le Vieux Marché; devil had appeared and offered to teach her 'les moyens d'en avoir la raison'. Then disappeared, but next day came back when she was in her garden again. Said to her 'qu'elle estoit bien en peine de faire des pellerinages pour avoir des enfans. Mais si elle vouloit croire a luy, et renoncer Dieu, il luy enseigneroit bien les moyens pour avoir des enfans. A quoy elle respondit, que vrayment elle avoit fait faire beaucoup de pellerinages pour avoir des enfans, et tant prié dieu, mais puis qu'il ne l'avoit aydé pour en avoir, elle estoit contente de croire à luy, et renoncer dieu'.

Had used powder to kill a small dog of her own, then to kill wife of Bastien le Sellier - this was a week later, and she died within a week. Also killed Valentin Sagant de la Bolle, who had failed to repay debt he owed her - sprinkled powder on his clothes when she met him on road. Had made Claudon le Tisserand of la Bolle, who had accused her of theft, ill, then cured him by sending bread and salt. Another victim was Pasquatte, femme Colas Pelletier boulanger du Vieux Marché, who had refused to cook easter tart for her; she was thirsty working by oven, so put some powder in a drink for her.

Mad made Mengeon Guichard ill, then cured him - Persin had told her that bread, salt, and ashes from house of a witch brought healing. Phelisse femme Jean Gellat had been wrong in accusing her of making her ill; was angry at this falsehood, so did put powder on her clothes, causing her to swell up and die. Also confessed to making a woman named Jeanne lose her milk, so that her children had to be put out to nurse, and to killing one of them.

Admitted she had put powder in husband's soup, since 'il luy estoit fort rude, et farouche'; asked if he could be cured, said that 'le mal est trop enraciné', and that he was in great danger of death.

Said that 's'ennuyant d'aller sy souvent aux sabbats', she had given a cow to her master to be eaten there.

Those she had seen at sabbat were Jean Gauxotte le vieu, Jean Lessenatte, Georgeatte femme Jean Cailleré des Trois Maisons, Jennon femme Didier Piernot (who had fled), the wife of Guillaume le Bouchier (executed), her daughter Jennon

(who had fled), Libaire sister of Guillaume le Bonnetier (who had also fled), Jacotte fille Michiel Hault Rue, of VIEL Marché. Also later Dion femme Colas Babon, who had accused her.

Said that at sabat devil had given them powders to destroy crops (this was after dispute between those present, when majority declared they should carry out destruction). Were put in earthenware pot, stirred with a stick, and created mist when thrown into the air by 'ceux qui estoient de ce complot'. This created a plague of small caterpillars which ate all the leaves of the trees.

Added that she had seen a man with a black face at sabat, who might have been Bastien des Aulx of VIEL Marché.

Death sentence from Change de Nancy on 25 September 1598