

B 8272; witch 127, Jeannon femme Didier Collignon, de Pargny

10 June 1594; informations préparatoires

(1) Françoise femme Chrestofle Thirion, 36

Said that one day she had dispute with her over some barley Jeannon claimed was due in payment of small debt. 2 weeks later came to see her and asked her in presence of others if she charged her with anything; she replied that she did not, but since their dispute she had been unwell. She felt a great pain where she was swollen, but Jeannon told her she would do well, but must be patient since she was not yet at term - she replied that she was a month past it.

(2) Chrestofle Thirion, 48

Described quarrel , which had been previous March; she had said to his wife 'je suys pour vous faire des choses qu'autres ne vous scauroient faire'. He had chased her out of the house calling her witch, after which his wife had never been well; she went 7 or 8 weeks beyond term before surgeon helped deliver a child which he heard was putrified.

(3) Françoise veuve Humbert Jouenot, 30

Had been present some 12 days earlier when she came to visit Thiriot's wife; after she touched a bed the child in her belly descended suddenly, later to be born black and putrified, such as none of the women present had ever seen.

(4) Cathin femme Claudin Laurent, 35

Similar but briefer account of visit to sick woman.

(5) Jeannon veuve Mengeot Brichelot, 40

Another account; said that accused told sick woman that her brother had asked her to come.

(6) Lucyé femme Mengin Saulvaige, 55

Also described visit to sick woman, although she claimed she had not seen much because there were others in the way. She had tried to deliver child previous day, and could only find head, while rest of body seemed to be a mass of flesh. Surgeon was called in, and at first thought there were twins rather than a single child; delivered her of dead child with much difficulty, and said he thought she was bewitched.

(7) Mengin Couillot, 33

About 7 years earlier his child, which had previously been quite normal, was suddenly found with feet reversed when it was about 9 months old - seemed to feel nothing when they were touched and handled. Thought it would never walk, but a few days later wife took it to Jeannon, who gave her hope, and it was cured. Had suspicions against her - long reputation.

(8) Lucye femme du precedent, 28

Told same story; had put child in cradle well tied up while she went to vines, then found feet distorted and swollen. 2 days earlier - a Sunday - Jeannon, who was neighbour, had held the child on the porch; suspected her because of reputation. Took child for her to see, and she said 'ce n'est rien, tu es une beste', and assured her he would walk. Rubbed feet and told her to tie them up tightly; recovered within 2 weeks.

(9) Mengeotte femme Estienne Thuillier, 35

Had seen child described in previous depositions, and Lucye had told her of cure by Jeannon. Asked if she had seen anything else suspicious, told of illness of Mariotte femme Gergonne Mengin, who made sudden recovery after being given last rites - vomited up two large black and white lumps.

(10) Mariotte femme Gergonne Mengin, 48

Some 12 years before had dispute when she refused to 'ferrier' for her in winter, and was told she would repent. They rented house from her husband, and next Easter Jeannon asked her to bring some 'estoupes pour filler', to be deducted from the rent. Took these with 'une veille de pasques fleury', and under pressure agreed to eat bread, cheese, and wine with her. Felt ill same evening, and remained so for 6 months; suspected Jeannon, so asked her for some milk, and after drinking this she vomited up strange objects described in previous deposition. Then recovered, but arms were still very weak, so had them rubbed daily by Jeannotte, who assured her they would soon recover. She gave witness various presents of fruit, and after 3 weeks she was completely recovered.

(11) Gergonne Mengin, 50

Told story of wife's illness; treatments recommended by apothecaries to make her bring up what she felt in body were unsuccessful. Had then consulted a woman at la Vanolbe, since convicted as a witch, who told him it was 'mal donné'; refused to name her, but said he should tell his wife 'que c'est d'une, avec laquelle elle a heu dispute, elle entendra bien quelle elle peult estre'. When he told his wife she immediately suspected Jeannon. She was so ill and losing speech that she received last rites, and some 9 days later he saw Jeannon slipping into house; went back to find her alone with his wife. Asked her if she had something to make her evict what was inside her body, and she said she had not at present, but promised it for next day. Sent girl round next day with drink like yellow milk, and that evening she vomited up strange things.

(12) Allix le Gardens, veuve Jean Maire Mengin, 60

Long reputation. Had witnessed Mariotte's illness - she suggested that she had been vomiting up strange things for more than a week.

(13) Jehanne femme Jacquot Maulvais, 26

5 years earlier, during the 'mortalité' in the village, had several times asked witness for loan of an axe, which witness refused - her father was in the 'loges' and she was left in the house. Fell ill within 2 days, and miscarried after carrying child for 15 weeks; illness lasted almost a year, until she gave Jeannon some milk she asked for. She then brought her some 'orge pillée', saying she would have brought her some better if her daughter-in-law had not been in the house, adding 'elle ne faict aultre chose que d'estre chez nous, et quant je luy trouve, j'aymeroys aultant y trouver cinq centz diables'. After cooking and eating the barley she recovered; as for her reputation, when she came to live at Pargny 'elle en entendit assez'. 4 years earlier they could not complete payment for house they had bought from her husband, and her husband promised to plough a field for them. She asked father-in-law when they would do this, and he said they were not ready and had only one horse - after this their best horse died suddenly, and they suspected her. 2 babies had died within 3 weeks of birth, and Jeannon had visited second one, saying 'Vela Didier qui est en hassiere et sy jamais ne fit mal a personne couse tu l'heure viendra que ton enfant passera' - he died a week later.

(14) Agnelz femme Bastien Pieton, 37

9 or 10 years earlier had been at mill, and had row with her about whose turn it was, after which Jeannon said she would repent. 3 days later a cow which had not shown any signs of illness died on way to fields, which she suspected had been her witchcraft.

(15) Toinotte femme Colas Collin, 25

6 years earlier she had been servant in house of Martin Boeuvelot, and in present season Jeannon came to house at dawn, 'tout morfondue' asking for fire and saying she was cold, although the weather was warm. She asked her why she had come so far to fetch it, and when she said there was no other door open said she could see that of the smith open. Accused said she did not dare, adding that she must not tell her master and mistress she had been there. Later complained because witness had told others in household, and a week later she saw her standing still in the garden, only to leave when she saw her mistress.

(16) Mengeon femme Collignon Bouchier, 30

5 years before had quarrel with her, because she demanded some of the wood from a pear tree, and when witness rejected claim said she would have done better to agree. Later came to house to complain further, and touched daughter aged 6, saying 'voicy une moulte belle fille', and ruffling hair on right side. The girl fell ill 2 days later, with pains on side where she had been touched, and died in 9 days; suspected this was Jeannon's doing.

(17) Laurent Holbin, 28

Some 12 years earlier his late father had quarrel with her, and became ill for 3 months; only cured when she gave him 3 peaches to eat. Also told of occasion when she had found him and his sister on her 'fumier' and came after them with a stick. He ran off, but sister did not; did not know what happened, but that evening she complained of a thorn in her foot. Mother could find nothing, but swelling then appeared and spread, so that she died 9 months later.

11 June 1594; arrest of Jeannon on orders of substitut for PG

13 June 1594; interrogation

Said she was about 75, native of Arnaville, daughter of Symon Broche, vigneron, and his wife Yzabel. Had been married for 36 years to Mengin Estienne, who had been echevin in the justice of St Gergonne at Arnaville. He had died 27 years earlier, and a year later she had married her present husband.

Knew she had been arrested because certain 'malicieuses personnes' accused her of being a witch. Denied all that they had said against her. Asked to explain a bruise across her nose, said it had been caused by a fall in her garden a fortnight before; was then taken to show the place, and there seems to have been some dispute about her account - text far from clear here.

13 June 1594; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses, but continued to deny all charges.

15 June 1594; Rémy asks for torture

16 June 1594; Change de Nancy agrees

18 June 1594; interrogation under torture

Before interrogation was pricked for the mark by the executioner, a mark the size of a coin having been seen at the base of her spine. A pin was twice pushed in violently enough to bend it, but she felt nothing. Was then placed on rack, while apparently being confronted with the witnesses and having their depositions read out. Now said she had been seduced 14 or 15 years earlier, when so hungry she thought she might die. Man in black appeared, promising she would not want if she served him. had intercourse with him, and he gave her white powder to give illnesses, grey to cure, black to kill animals, also some grease to cure. When she got home she found he had taken these back, so saw she was abused, and returned to God - had never done any harm to anyone.

29 June 1594; interrogation

Now admitted that her master had returned again 3 years later, and again had intercourse with her. After this she said 'retire toy diable de moy', and he replied 'vielle diable, vielle chienne, j'en trouveray bien de plus belle que toy'. Since she was 'se desconfontant de plusieurs ennuy et haynes que plusieurs personnes avoient contre elle', he again gave her powders and grease to avenge herself.

Admitted series of maléfices exactly as alleged by witnesses. Did say she had not killed sister of Laurent Holbin.

Then said that in May that year her master had taken her to assembly, where there were 9 or 10 women; made mists which froze vines. Master asked if she wanted to preserve her own, but she said not, in case this caused her to be suspected. Everything then vanished and she found herself among the vines; saw Parrotte femme Voictrin le Treixe, who was now dead.

Asked how she avoided being seen by her husband, said they had not been sleeping together for 7 years. Did not see what happened when master carried her

off, but on return found doors open - did not know if her master had done this. Now said master's name was Percinet; he had been with her throughout time in prison, preventing her confessing her misdeeds.

1 July 1594; interrogation

Renewed earlier confessions

4 July 1594; Rémy asks for death sentence

5 July 1594; Change de Nancy approves

11 July 1594; definitive sentence by court at Preny