

B 8702 no 6; witch 245, Jennon veuve Demenge Napuel, de Raves

She and 3 others (Claudatte femme Jean le Maimbourg, de Raves, Marie femme Andreu Gerardin de Combrimont, and wife of Jean du Prey of Frapelle) had been confronted with Gregoire Mathis of Bertrimoutier, who maintained his allegations against them.

15 October 1609; informations préparatoires

(1) Claudatte fille Girard Jacot Pechey, 25

Long reputation, and had previously been taken to St Dié on charge of witchcraft, but renvoyée - witness had not deposed against her then. 6 or 7 years ago she and her sister Jehennon (now married at Provencheres) were in kitchen one evening when a wind blew through house, and all the animals got up except one ox. Had great difficulty waking their father, but when he finally went to see animals found that ox was very sick, although it had been well earlier. It died within 2 hours, and father, who was very angry, believing she had caused this by witchcraft, wanted to go to seigneur immediately. Mother called in the late maire Bastien Grosmaire and others to calm him down, and Bastien persuaded him to wait and accompany him next morning. Early next morning he sent two of his daughters to see if her father was ready, and they saw a woman outside the house listening, who when she realized she was seen made towards house of accused. There was snow on the ground, and on father's instructions her mother and sister followed the track, confirming that it went in at her back door. (Text damaged here).

Previous year her brother had quarrelled with son of accused at marriage feast, and she was afraid they might renew their quarrel at the dance, so went to watch. On way back Jennon came up without provocation and said that a whore should not go and see the dances; witness replied 'que c'estoit aussi bien à faire à elle, que son putier de fils, et s'elle vouloit dire qu'elle soit putain d'autre que de son fils, qu'elle avoit menty comme une sorciere'. Had been seduced by him under promise of marriage, and had child still living by him. She did nothing to seek reparation on this occasion, or others when she called her witch, and believed that if she were such she could have caused the death of the ox.

(2) Jacot Girard Pechey, 58

Had deposed against her in previous trial. Since then had suffered other losses which he blamed on her. After death of a calf he took an axe and went to her house; she would not come out when he asked her to, but he told her he was suffering many losses, that she was the cause, and was a witch. She told him he was 'un larron et meschant homme', and he started action against her, but friends advised him he would have difficulty proving she had said these words, so he agreed to proposals for an accord. This specifically excluded charges he had made at previous trial.

(3) Blaison Renolbin

Said she was reputed a witch; he would rather abandon his goods than quarrel with her. Was 'fort mauvaise', particularly towards servants; most of those who went into her service soon became ill, although previously healthy, and soon had to leave.

(4) Colas fils Jacot Girard Pechey, 24

Feared her greatly as witch; had often heard Nicolas Cointzelin call her witch as he passed her house, and believed she had heard him. Repeated sister's deposition about death of ox and footsteps in the snow.

(5) Jehennon femme Lyenard Heriet, 40

7 years earlier had a baby, and since she had previously quarrelled with son of accused, did not invite her to baptism. Dreamed that she was with accused, who was crying about their quarrel - although in fact this had not been with her, but with son. When she woke found both she and child were very ill, and communicated suspicions to those with her. Obtained bread, salt, and ashes from servant of accused through her cousin, who later came to her house with these in a piece of cloth, but did not dare tell her what it was because she had another woman with her. When she had gone witness did explain to other woman, who told her she should give them to child in some milk; did so, after which he started to recover. She took a soup made with substances, and also recovered, but did not know whether this was cause of their healing, or whether illness came to natural end, 'et ne l'impute aucunement à ladite prevenue'. Very bad reputation, and previous trial.

(6) Nicolas Cointzelin, 34

Claimed to have lost 5 or 6 horses after quarrels with her son, and in view of reputation as witch he suspected her. Had often called her witch, even in her house, and in presence of her son and other children, without her seeking any redress. Also believed she had tried to harm him personally and kill him if she had been able, since there had been great noise of cats around his room at night, yet they were nowhere to be seen when he got up to look. Had finally built himself a new bedchamber, which had ended trouble. About 4 years before, returning alone from la Croix at dusk, had mysterious fall with horse, which rolled on him, then got up again with him still unhurt in the saddle. Next day found spur stuck in belly of horse, which showed how violent fall had been; in view of previous disputes believed this had been her work, and that he had only been preserved by grace of God. When having problems with son 3 years before had also lost two oxen which were killed by lightning, without any visible injuries. Could not be sure she had caused this, and did not impute loss to her if she were not a witch.

(7) Jean Renouard, 25

Long reputation. Had heard her called witch, and son 'fils de sorciere', without reparation being sought. Claudon Demenge Maimbourg had told him that she had given some milk to his father, who was helping to repair her roof, after which he sickened and died, saying that she had put him on his deathbed.

(16 October 1609)

(8) Colin Jean Magdelaine, 50

15 or 16 years earlier had been in her service for 2 years, but when he told her he wanted to leave she was angry and said he might repent if he did. Nevertheless

he changed to service of the late maire Bastien, but became ill, for every day he was well having 6 or 7 weeks unable to work, so that he had to leave service. This illness lasted some 7 years, and thinking of her threats he believed that if she was witch as long suspected she had given him the illness. When in her service was taking cart to woods with her daughter (already marriageable then, now married at Lubine) who asked him to wait for her, saying there was 'une grosse beste' under cart trying to kill her. The girl, and her brother Claude, often said when they returned home at night that they had seen a great animal which wanted to devour them. their mother told them this was nonsense, and they were 'sottrels' to say such things. Had deposed about this at first trial. Now added that since her release he had lost more animals than he could remember, and at one stage even had to sell his property to move elsewhere, in hope of avoiding such regular losses. If she was witch as reputed, believed she had been responsible for all these misfortunes.

(9) Colas Mandray, 50

Long reputation. Had heard story about death of father of Claudon Demenge Maimbourg after drinking milk.

(10) Claudel Mengeon le Maimbourg, 30

9 or 10 years earlier, working in Allemaigne, called back by father who was ill. Told him about incident with milk; she had invited workers into house, but after drinking plate of milk his face became so hot that he could hardly see, and had to return home. In view of her reputation he believed she had made him ill; became all swollen, and died after 18 weeks or more in this state. She heard of suspicions and visited him to reproach him (text damaged here).

(11) Nicolas le Maimbourg de Ginfosse, 27

About 6 or 7 years earlier her animals were constantly escaping into his hayfield to damage it; was so angry he called her witch several time before numerous witnesses, but she went back to house and never sought reparation.

(12) Claude Jean Demenge Mengin, 60

General reputation, and had heard her called witch, His animals had done some damage 6 months earlier, after which she had threatened him, and he had lost 3 or 4 pigs, which he believed was her doing if she was a witch.

(13) Barbe femme Demenge le Maire

Reputation more than 20 years as witch, but 'sy tant est qu'elle le soit elle s'a gardé jusques icy bien finement et couvertement'. Witness had not quarrelled with her, but had heard from servant that her son Claude had called her witch 2 or 3 times. 20 years before a woman from Burgundy had been living in house owned by accused, now ruined, and had fire going during day, when a big black animal appeared and started to smell and caress her like a dog; vanished when she drove it off. She herself would not have lived in house if she had given it to her. Had heard Nicolas Cointzelin call her witch when in drink; had asked her why she took no action, and she said she was deaf and had not heard properly.

(14) Jehennon, servante à Jacot Rolbé de Layegotte, 22

Told of hearing her called witch by her son when in her service previous year.

(15) Dieudonné Jean Nicolas, hostelain, 40

Although he was close neighbour had never seen any harm in her - knew of reputation.

(21 October 1609)

(16) Didier Anthoine Laurent, d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 50

Some 5 years before his second wife Barbeline had been executed as witch at St Dié, and he had allowed justice to be done. On day of execution went with Jean Colin Dieudonné to see her for last time - on way back met accused on road; she talked about execution, saying 'que l'on n'appelloit jamais une vache grebat, qu'elle n'en tienne des taches'. Believed she meant that anyone who was called witch had some taint, and since he knew about her trial (although she did not know him), he thought that her day might come.

(17) Jean Colin Dieudonné, d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 40

Repeated previous deposition in essentials.

23 October 1609; interrogation

Said she was about 60, widow of Demenge Napuel, native of Quebrux. First husband had been Jean Peteman of Raves, about 40 years before, with whom she had lived for 17 years. 4 children, of whom 2 were living - son who was not married, and daughter Claudatte, married at Lubine. Second husband had been from Bertrimoutier, and had been married to him for seven and a half years. He had died from 'un fil chancrée', which began next to mouth and consumed his lips; a doctor had made great claims he could cure him, but failed - then insisted on being paid.

Said first arrest had been 11 or 12 years before. Arose because moictrier of late escolatre of St Dié had lost numerous animals, and went to devin at Avould. 'Duquel ayant appris, que cela prouvenoit de ses voisins au plus proche, lequels luy causoient ledites pertes', he decided it was her, although they were not nearest neighbours, and were two others nearer. When she was in prison she was also accused by Claudatte fille Gregoire Mathis (?) de Bertrimoutier.

Asked why she had been arrested, claimed not to know; judges pointed out that she had been confronted with Jean Gregoire Mathis. She admitted this, but denied he had made charges they stated.

Asked whether she had not threatened witnesses after first trial, and particularly her neighbour Jacot Girard Pechey, she denied this. Said that Pechey had wanted to marry her when she was widowed; she asked him if he did not realize the dishonour he had done her when she was arrested. Also objected that they had acted as godparents to one another's children - he said he could deal with this by applying to Grand Prévôt, whom he would give a barrel of butter. Denied calling his daughter Claudatte a whore, but would not have done her injury if she

had, since she had had a bastard child; had claimed it was by her son Claude, wanted him to marry her, and had long lawsuit over this. Denied story about footsteps in snow, saying they did her great wrong, because they had not obtained what they wanted from her.

Asked about illness of Lyenard Heriet's wife and her child, denied having been angry with them; said she often helped them, and would continue to do so if she returned to Raves, since they were very poor. Said Colas Cointzelin had been neighbour for more than 20 years - was 'fort bon voisin', and she had never quarrelled with him. Did not know that he had called her witch. Agreed that he had quarrelled with her son at wedding feast of Claude Renouard, beating him and tearing off his collar - son had taken him to court over this, and won his case. If he said she was cause of death of his animals, he lied like a witch, 'que quant a elle, elle n'est pas de la race des sorcieres, mais que ledit Cointzelin en est' - his uncle, le maire Colas of Develine, had been executed.

Said that Claudel Mengeon le Maimbourg had been her brother-in-law, was often in her house, and had frequently eaten there before occasion when she gave him some milk. Was already ill and swollen at the time. His son Claudel had said in house of Nicolas Cointzelin that she had given him the sickness, but he had begged her pardon and said son was a 'cocquin'.

Said that Colin Jean Magdelaine had served her when she was in first widowhood, and had hoped to marry her or her daughter; had not minded his leaving, since there were plenty of other young men willing to take his place. As for Claude Mengin, claimed that the then moictrier had given him 'un bichot de seigle' for his testimony in first trial, and he was a man of no value.

Asked whether house where she resided for first 7 years of marriage had been haunted, said that it had not, and she had left it to her own misfortune, for it was since residence in present house that people had spoken ill of her. Asked about large animal like a bear around it when woman from Burgundy lived there, said she was a weaver, and 's'estoit mis en fantaisie' after her husband left her to live with another woman. When she had complained they told her off, and said she lacked faith, and should cross herself. Gave explanation for present ruined state of house, but text damaged here.

Denied conversation about woman from Entre-deux-Eaux executed as witch. Continued to assert her own innocence.

28 October 1609; confrontations

Repeated allegation that Jacot Girard Pechey would have liked to marry her, and said his son Colas was 'un larron de poisson'. Otherwise no reproaches, but denied accusations, and continued to insist that she was not a witch.

Additional deposition by Claudel le Maimbourg; repeated story that his uncle Mengeon le Maimbourg had believed she had given him fatal illness with plate of milk. Also claimed that her second husband Demenge Napuel, who died with most of his face eaten away, had told him she had given him the illness with an apple. Had heard her called witch without seeking redress.

6 November 1609; substitut for PG asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire. Change de Nancy rules that she should only be threatened with torture unless accused by(?) Claudatte femme Jean Claudel, when she should be given thumbscrews only.

12 November 1609; interrogation

Was shown thumbscrews and rack, but continued to deny charges.

18 November 1609; substitut suggests that she be renvoyée

19 November 1609; Change de Nancy agrees

26 November 1609; released from prison.