

Witch 065D: B 3801 no 4, Marie femme Demenge Didier Plaid, d'Aydoilles

Informations missing - relevant evidence in trials of stepmother and half-sister, so this may have been most of the material used. A list of those to be confronted shows 7 men and 7 women.

21 October 1619; interrogation

Said she was daughter of late Jean Brihey, aged about 40, married to Demenge Jean Plaid from Moriviller, living at Aydoilles. Had three children living, two sons and a daughter, and one who had died some 3 years earlier. Denied she was a witch, despite charges by her stepmother.

Asked whether she had caused death of small bull belonging to Anthoine Demenge Anthoine around last St George, after it had chased her heifer right into her house - it died same night allegedly after she had struck it. She denied this.

Asked about occasion some 10 months earlier when she had been to woods with other women, then could not be found when it was time for return, and whether her master had not taken her off to sabbat, said she had taken another path, found herself by Croix Broquand on Hault de Rouillier, and abandoned her bundle to go home empty-handed.

Asked whether she had caused death of daughter of Jacquat Doron 'pour quelque haine secrete qu'elle luy portoit', and about 'singeries' she and sister were alleged to have practised. She denied all this, including business with hen, also having caused death of Doron's ox around same time.

On suggestion that 6 years earlier she had made Nicolas Humbert Cugney ill (from St Remy until next Lent), then cured him by giving him a pear, and had also caused losses of animals amounting to 500 francs because he and his wife had called her stepmother witch, so that he finally moved away, she denied all this.

Also denied story about being out at night with sister; agreed to going home at sound of bell, when they opened doors and prayed to God on their knees. Said she knew nothing of incident when stepmother or sister were supposed to have killed Jacatte Rouyer's heifer, Adam Demengeon called them witches, and instead of going to court Georgette tried her utmost to win him over with fine words.

Denied that she had bewitched Nicolas George Remy in 1617 when he sought refuge in woods, or that she had helped kill animals of Jennon Thiriet, particularly a horse she had lost 10 months earlier after refusing to send it to woods for Bastienne.

Asked whether she had not made Nicolas Anthoine's bull sick, then rubbed its back with a herb she said would cure it, only for it to die and her to tell his wife to conceal the herb - she said she had given it 'la mort aux vers' as asked, denied the rest.

Denied she had ever been at poise of Pierat Colas Pierat, where dispute over seating was supposed to have taken place, also having given them apple which allegedly caused death of two goats. Also said she had not killed various animals belonging to Jean Demenge Colin after quarrels, or a heifer belonging to Claudon Ferry dit Busnelot, after her husband was refused the loan of a cart.

Said she had not had any quarrels with Jehennon Duc, nor killed their animals. Denied suggestion that after Georgette gave Pierat Colas Pierat an illness which lasted 15 weeks she had been asked to visit him, and cured him with apples. Asked about evil-smelling drug she had on her three weeks earlier, said it had been sulphur to prevent their animals dying.

Asked about killing bull after Jennon Demengeon refused to sell her some straw, she denied even asking for the straw. Also rejected claim that she had killed Anthoine Doron's bull the previous spring after it chased cow into her house.

Asked 'Sy a l'occasion de ce que Jean de Cugney avoit esté au devin (du moins le croioit) pour scavoir qui faisoit mourir le bestail du village, elle n'empoisonna l'un de ses boeufs qui mourut aussytost.'

A dit n'avoir rien sceu que le denommé ait esté au devin, ny pour ceste cause, ny autre, luy fait mourir son boeuf.'

Denied that after being refused some butter at house of Demenge Thomas 6 weeks earlier she had killed a horse which died next day. Also that 2 years earlier, after Colas Andreu refused to sell husband some wheat. she had caused his daughter to break her thigh.

Asked whether on going to woods with other women there had not been a great noise in the branches, at which she called out that she was lost, denied hearing noise but agreed to having called out.

On subject of husband's illness, had not suspected her stepmother, while she herself was innocent. Denied story of leaving kitchen to attend to stepmother, but agreed that Georgette had reported mother's remark about what she should say to evil spirit when he came looking for her.

Agreed that she had been with the servant Jennon to latter's village 10 years earlier, and that stepmother had been angry, but did not know if she had killed the girl. On stepmother's confession that they had plotted together to kill horse of Demenge Mengin, which had damaged their grain, and that the accused had given it some grain mixed with powder, she denied everything, adding that they did not live together, but in different parts of house. Similar response to other charges resulting from confessions by stepmother.

(24 October 1619). Questioned about report that she had taken bones from cemetery, admitted that on advice of the late Halbix Thouvenin she had taken something which might have been a bone from beside her mother's grave and put it in a cloth to treat her small child which had fever; replaced it as soon as child was cured. When another child was to be buried in same place some of mother's bones were disturbed, so she had Jean de Cugney take them up by charity and then put them in the coffin with the child.

24 October 1619; confrontations

Now agreed to saying words at bedside of sick child as reported by Mengeotte Gugney, claiming that she had denied previously 'par mesgard et pour avoir mal entendu'. On occasion when Didier Creuchat saw her in small hours, now said this was to do with a cloth her husband had bought which she was washing.

Also about case of sick child, said she had only acted 'a bon fin', putting hands on holy scriptures.

Now admitted having suggested that Laurence Anthoine should conceal herb she had given her - it was 'la rutte' which she had taken from her sister's garden.

Denied being cause of death of Adeline Cugney's bull, adding that she had said 'que puis qu'on avoit donné argent audit Cugney pour aller au devin, ou en pelerinage, on leur en debvoit bien faire payer leur part.'

On story about noises in wood, said that they had sinned when they went there on a feast-day.

30 October 1619; PG des Vosges asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire, after confrontation with stepmother.

31 October 1619; Change de Nancy agrees.

7 November 1619; interrogation under torture

Would confess nothing, despite full battery of tortures - thumbscrews, rack and strappado, finally last-named with stone attached.

Note that she was seen two or three times later and urged to confess, but remained obdurate, 'mesme fait mine d'estre troublée de l'esprit, par plusieurs discours et paroles qu'elle tient hors de propos.'

16 November 1619; PG des Vosges recommends that she be renvoyée, with permission for Jean de Cugney to bring forward additional witnesses if he so desires.

26 November 1619; Change de Nancy approves.

20 November 1619; request from Jean de Cugney, pointing out that Marie has been accused by stepmother and sister, also by Ysabel, and that she was the most seriously incriminated of all. Now it seems she may be released, so the petitioner 'qui pour un zelle que la justice soit faicte afin non seulement de se delivrer quand a luy de leurs malefices dont il a resenty des pertes, Mais encor le Publicque, et pour purger leur village de telle semence pernitieuse . . .', wishes to bring forward further evidence. Asks that she be kept in prison to avoid costs of a second arrest.

Substitut for PG des Vosges agrees.

28 November 1619; prévôt asks for witnesses to be produced by next Monday.

29 November 1619; note that costs have been guaranteed by Nicolas Demengeon, against sureties from de Cugney and Demenge Thomas.

2 December 1619; informations

(1) Jean Mengin, native of Aydoilles, now of Jeuxey, 50

27 years earlier, when he lived in village, Marie was already suspected, notably because her late mother 'en estoit grandement redoutée'.

(2) Melynne veuve Dieudonné Barbas de Deyviller, 50

4 years earlier her husband had caught Marie taking apples from their garden, and took her scarf as a pledge; she came to house several times to ask for it back, and they heard of threats by Bastienne. Husband died some 10 weeks later, so she had suspicions against Bastienne, who had long reputation, but never against Marie, 'de laquelle elle ne pense avoir jamais receu aucun desplaisir'.

(3) Mengeotte femme Demenge Barbay, 40

Could depose nothing against her, having suffered no harm that she knew from her.

(4) Jean Thiriot, 30

Two years earlier he had lost a horse after it had been at pasture outside Bastienne's house, and went to reproach her, Georgette and Marie, saying they had caused the horse's death and were witches. Marie heard of this and threatened him, saying that if he had said it in public 'elle l'en feroit repentir et creveroit tous autres qui l'entreprendroient, adjoustante que tant qu'elle d'eust vivre elle en hayroit luy qui parle et s'en souviendroit'. After this soon lost a horse and two calves, which he suspected was her doing.

(5) Catherine fille Demenge Mengin, 25

15 months earlier, when Marie and husband were digging garden, witness saw they were taking earth from adjoining land of her father, and protested that in 4 years, if they carried on like that, there would be hardly any left. Marie was angry, put hands to side and uttered various insults and threats; within a fortnight they lost 3 or 4 pigs, which they thought was her doing. Story of taking bones she said were those of her mother from cemetery 4 years earlier, when burying a child - did not know what she did with them. Then story of occasion when Dieudonné Barbas took scarf as pledge, and would not return it until she settled for damage - she said it would be 'un cher couvrechef pour luy', and he died a fortnight later. That year when harvesting with other women witness saw Marie and Georgette, with Jean Villaune's wife, working some way off for Nicolas Dodeville, and said that Dodeville's wife had collected 'toutes les bonnes ouvrières et Genaxes du village'. They were too far off to hear, nevertheless later Marie reproached her with speaking about her in fields.

(6) Jannon femme Gegoult Brocquart, 33

Reputation as long as could remember. Story of treatment of Jacat Doron's child.

(7) Bastien Lalleman de Dompierre, 36

6 years earlier had taken a good horse to Aydoilles to be shod, and Marie's husband asked to buy some wheat, either for money or some harvesting work. They agreed, and went to drink on the deal, when she appeared saying she could find wheat to buy without paying for the wine. Witness said he had not sought the deal, and offered to cancel it except for the wine, but she kept on protesting and saying he would repent. Next day he found the horse dead in the stable, so suspected her in view of her threats and reputation.

(8) Demenge Marie, 25

General reputation, and when she and Georgette were working in woods collecting fuel for 'faiseurs de chaux' they were often impossible to find.

(9) Jehennon femme Vallentin Pierrat, 40

General reputation.

(10) Jean Gallemart, 50

General reputation.

(11) Collatte veuve Didier Brihel, 50

General reputation. Since widowhood had lost 11 animals, but did not suspect them since she had not quarrelled with them.

(12) Claudatte veuve Mathis George Mathis, 25

General reputation. Previous harvest-time had been with Marie and 2 other women on pilgrimage to Chaulmozel; Marie asked her to take a shorter path with her, and she fell so awkwardly that she tore off a thumbnail, which she thought was her doing.

(13) Nicolle fille George Bastien, 20

General reputation and incident with Jacat Doron's child.

(14) Claudon Ferry, 51

Had been occasion some 4 or 5 years earlier when he laughed on seeing her tangled up with a scarf while drawing water; she complained about this to some other women, then he lost a horse the same day which had been feeding near her house, then died in the stable. Also reminded court about wife's previous evidence over death of calf.

(15) Colin George Bastien, 27

When Marie's husband was very ill previous Lent, his sister Mengeote went to see him several times; Marie gave her some fine apples, and encouraged her to eat them herself rather than giving them to small son of witness as she at first intended. Finally ate them, immediately fell ill and died within 12 or 15 weeks. One Sunday shortly before death Marie came into their house without any occasion, spoke some words in low voice to sick woman, then left by rear. When asked what she had said the patient said she had asked for 'du foing a louer'; at other times said she suspected her of being cause of sickness.

(16) Demenge Mengin le jeune, 25

Suspected she had killed a small bull; this was after he had refused to loan them some straw, and she had admired the animal as it passed before her.

(17) Nicolas Andreu, 50

General reputation.

(4 December 1619)

(18) Mengeon Francois le jeune, 40

Some two weeks earlier had been taking her supper in prison when she called to him in fright that 'le malin esprit la vouloit tuer et la pressoit fort'. Had moved her to another place after that, then on previous Friday had told him she was tired of being in prison, asking that they should go and see her the next morning when she would reveal all she could remember.

(19) Mongeote femme Demenge Colas Goherey, 32

5 years earlier her husband had quarrel with Marie when she took pears from a tree in which they claimed a half share, and witness, who was heavily pregnant, became involved. Marie told her 'que mal griefve joie peut elle avoir du fruct', and she had difficult childbirth, baby dying after being baptised. Still thought that she had caused this. Also blamed her for death of an ox 3 years before, after it had been licking outside her house - had to be fetched home on planks.

(20) Claudon Toussaint, 21

Story about her taking bones from cemetery.

(21) Marguerite femme Curien Goherey, 38

Also story about bones.

(22) Laurence femme Simonin Prevost, 30

Had been ill for a long time, but had no suspicion against Marie, 'qui la traicta beaucoup de foix d'une poitrine interessée, sur laquelle ayant voulu appliquer quelque chose et luy demandé que c'estoit, et que cela luy feroit bien mal, elle respondit que c'estoient des os de Rome, qu'elleacheptoit aux apoticaires, et qu'elle n'en avoit plus que cela.'

4 December 1619; interrogation and confrontations

Agreed that she had been caught taking two plums from Dieudonné Barbay's garden, but denied killing him. On subject of talk in fields, said Jean Villaume's wife had told her about what had been said. Otherwise denied everything.

Asked about treatment of Laurence Prevost, said she had used a mixture of lard, holy water, and 'un rouge d'oeuf', which the late demoiselle des Pillieres had once used to cure her late mother-in-law. On enquiry about 'os de Rome', said these were 'certains os marins' which 'le fils de Ruan' had brought back from St Jacques; she powdered a little and put it with the lard.

Just confronted with one witness that day, remainder were on 5 and 7 December. Continued to deny everything of any significance.

13 December 1619; PG des Vosges asks for renewed torture.

16 December 1619; Change de Nancy approves.

22 December 1619; interrogation under torture

At start said she wished to die as her stepmother and sister had done, and that she had done no more harm than them. After this 'declaration ambigu' she was given thumbscrews, then began to confess.

At first said she had been witch for two years, after lawsuit between her and husband on one hand, and Nicolas Boulengier, then maire of Aydoilles, who had called her witch. When she was in woods feeling angry about this a whirlwind blew up, then a man appeared who asked her what was wrong. Then started to vary, saying he had visited her another day at home, that she had done all that was alleged against her, then retracted, saying that when she told the truth no-one wanted to believe her.

After some more equivocal statements, was racked and began to offer more specific confessions. Said only accomplices she knew were her stepmother and sister. Admitted seduction by Persin, and being three times at sabbat, where they danced and ate tasteless black meat, and drank similar black liquid. Admitted various malefices, but insisted temptation had only been two years earlier.

23 December 1619; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions, added nothing of significance.

2 January 1620: PG des Vosges asks for death sentence.

4 January 1620; Change de Nancy approves.

8 January 1620; confirmation of sentence from bons hommes jugeants.

11 February 1620; prévôt validates claim by Jean de Cugney for expenses of 300 fr to be charged against Marie's goods. Next day contrôleur at Bruyères authorized levy against goods, noting that they were not sufficient to cover whole sum.