

B 3317 no 2; Witch 024, Jennon veuve Didier Ramaixe alias Virtemberg, de Blamont

18 June 1599; accused confronted with Didie veuve Demenge Pourlat just before execution. At first she did not recognize her and said she was not woman she had seen at sabat, but then changed her mind and persisted with accusation.

24 June 1599; procureur fiscal of county of Blamont asks for preliminary investigation.

1 July 1599; informations préparatoires. (Note that she was being held in 'prisons fermé'.)

(1) Didier l'Enguesse, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 58

Had not suspected Jennon of causing his misfortunes, which he had blamed on 'la Gerardaire', burned at Saulnoy - but heard she had said she had a companion named Jennon from Blamont. Jennon suspected by several, including Didier Saulnier who blamed her for death of three horses. Also claimed that Mesline wife of Symon Rouxiard had warned Jennon that Didie had accused her, and she had said she wished she were already dead if it were not for the shame that would fall on her children.

(2) Jean Cherrier cordonnier bourgeois de Blamont, c. 58

Had lived in suburb of le Vieux Marché close to Jennon for 13 years, and had always heard her reputed a witch. Had once been arrested before, and neighbours had been angry when she was released.

(3) Pierson Poutier bourgeois de Blamont, c. 48

Long reputation; remark about not wishing to live.

(4) Marguerite femme Nicolas Humbert dit de Sercœur, de Blamont, c. 44

Neighbour for 6 years, had never seen any harm in her, but knew of reputation.

(5) Mesline femme Symon Rouxiard, de Blamont, c. 46

Neighbour for 15 or 16 years; had never seen any harm in her, nor heard ill until accusation by la Gerardine (previously their neighbour) at execution 5 years earlier. After this Jennon had been arrested and evidence taken, but she was released. Told how a few days before present imprisonment they had been speaking of Jennon's late husband and of accusation against her; she had said 'que sy ce n'estoit pour les enfans elle ne se soucyeroit de mourir mais qu'elle craindoit la honte d'iceulx'.

(6) Jennon femme Demenge de Merviller, de Blamont, c. 44

Told how her husband kept 'four banal' of Viel Marché, and for last 5 years, since accusation by la Gerardine, other women had been frightened of Jennon, lest she touch their dough etc. Witness had advised her of this several times, asking her to go away but not to bear her ill will; she had replied that 'elle ne luy en scavoit point de mauvais gré qu'elle les entendoit bien elle mesme dequoy elle ne s'en donnoit pas beaucoup de peine n'estoit la honte de ses enfans'.

(7) Alison veuve Jean Henry Michiel, de Blamont, c. 44

Had been neighbour for 4 years some 18 years before; had seen no harm in her. Knew of previous imprisonment and recent accusation.

(8) Babillon femme Hannezo Claudon charpentier (alias Picquon), 40

Some 6 years before had twins, one of which was very ill; called in 5 neighbours to sit around cot. Jennon woke first, and told witness child was dead - she was very upset that none of the 6 women had been awake at crucial moment. After burial Jennon told chambermaid that the other child (to which she had just given some 'bouillies') would not live long; although in good health until then, it died 15 days later. Jennon already long reputed a witch; witness had subsequently avoided her company.

(9) Chrestienne femme a Bernard Faltin de Blamont, c. 46

Said that 5 years earlier her sister-in-law had been ill, and they had been to seek a remedy from the wife of Colas Caillotte of Auricourt. At end of consultation she remarked to witness that she said nothing, but that they had recently had a horse dead, and this would not have happened if she had called her neighbour to her recent childbirth 'et que plus de bien elle luy feroit plus de mal luy advinndroit'. Jennon was neighbour, although she did not suspect her over horse's death. Also told of incident 2 years earlier when they had been in fields; Jennon went to fetch a foal which was eating barley, and it dropped dead. She said 'la malheure suis je icy venu l'on dira que j'ay faict mourir ledit poulain car je suis desja en reputation d'estre sorciere.' Suspected her as witch, but attributed no personal evil to her, as they had not quarrelled.

(10) Catherine fille de feu Jean Henry Michiel de Blamont, femme Jean Henrequel de Blamont, 22

Knew her well, but had nothing to depose except that she knew Jennon was in prison.

(2 July 1599)

(11) Demenge le Comte dit Evron, c. 39

Told how some 9 years earlier an orphan they were housing had a dispute with one of Jennon's sons; she later came to ask his wife to beat the girl, but she replied 'qu'elle ne la nourrisoit pas et qu'elle ne la vouloit pas battre'. Promptly lost own milk, and they suspected Jennon, particularly because both of them approached her house carrying baby, which began to howl as they got near. Wife, whose breasts were very swollen, asked Jennon for advice, and she suggested consulting another woman who had recently had same trouble. This produced no results, and then Jennon suggested that she take some butter and rub it on her breasts in front of the fire, after which her milk should return at dawn. Did so and was cured. Also believed her to have caused death of two cows, all the animals he had, after release from first imprisonment, to take vengeance because he had deposed against her then about wife's illness. One cow found drowned in very shallow stream.

(12) Bernard Faltin, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 50

Repeated wife's story of visit to Annricourt. Also said that after they had a horse dead in the stable Jennon was helping to clear away manure, and his wife said to her that she had been told she had killed it - witness was angry when wife recounted this, for fear that Jennon's husband might take them to court.

(13) Didier de la Cariolle, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 50

Reputation 20 years. Some 6 years earlier, when keeping four banal of Vieux Marché, passed Jennon very early in morning, coming in all wet from fields. At oven found women talking about her reputation, so told what he had seen - general belief she had come from sabat. Soon after had a bad hand, which prevented him working all harvest; finally consulted Domp Jean de Xanrey at Niderhoff, who told him it was witchcraft, and that the intention had been 'de luy faire perdre le bras.' Gave him herbs which cured him, but did not suspect Jennon, since he did not know how illness had occurred.

(14) Jean Claude le jeune, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 30

Knew reputation since he arrived 3 years before. Jennon was neighbour, always in his house, and he suspected her of causing deaths of 6 horses; might have been angry because 3 years earlier had been to fetch wheat from Germany. Everyone had rushed to have some, and one day there had been none for Jennon.

(15) Bietrix veuve Bastien Vigneron, de Blamont, 56

Previous winter, during a quarrel, had heard Jennon wife of Mengeon the herdsman call Jennon a witch, and accuse her of having killed her first husband. Also told of incident at veillée in house of Jean Claude previous winter, when Jennon was looking for something on floor; Jehenne Saulnier said to witness that perhaps she was looking for her master. Didn't reply to question about what she sought, and after 2 hours said she was tired and went to bed.

(16) Jehenne femme Nicolas Saulnier, de Blamont, 50

Also told of incident at veillée, although she said it had only been a quarter of an hour before she left. Added story of accusation by Jennon femme de Mengeon Hardier.

- (17) Barbelline femme Demenge Moictrier, cordonnier bourgeois de Blamont, 32

General reputation; incident at veillée. 3 years earlier some children claimed to have seen her with a wolf under a tree.

- (18) Catherine veuve de Mengeot, de Blamont, c. 50

Incident at veillée; other women did not want to drink after her.

- (19) Hannezo Claudon, charpentier bourgeois de Blamont, c. 40

Told story of death of twins, in accord with wife's deposition. Said he had done all the 'amities et plaisirs' he could to Jennon, in view of his suspicions, which also included deaths of various animals.

- (20) Sebille femme Claude Jean Claude, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 42

General reputation only.

- (21) Annel femme Jean Simonin, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 58

General reputation; feared her more than she loved her, but as she had never quarrelled with her did not blame losses on her.

- (22) Jean Symonin Cordonnier, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 70

General reputation, but no quarrel. For last 18 months Jennon as neighbour had frequented their house; had seen no ill in her, but in view of reputation had wished she had stayed in previous house.

- (24) Demenge Henry Maire, serrurier bourgeois de Blamont, c. 22

General reputation; had heard Margueritte wife of Didier Saulnier blame her for death of numerous horses, her husband having constantly met her as he was taking them out in the mornings. The same Margueritte had told him that 5 years earlier she had refused to sell Jennon some milk, after which she admired child, lifting blanket and saying 'voyla un moult belle enfant'. Same night mother lost milk, and believed this to have been her witchcraft. Also reported conversation with his mother-in-law Mesline, during which Jennon had said that all she had was a 'demi-quarteron' of wheat.

- (25) Nicolas Cherrier, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 40

Suspected her of having caused death of a child - no very clear allegation involved, but incident had been 5 years earlier, and apparently he had testified after her first arrest.

(26) Didier Simonin, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 30

General reputation since accusation by la Gerardaire.

(27) Alison femme Demenge le Conte, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 37

Repeated husband's deposition about her loss of milk after dispute with Jennon, followed by cure.

(28) Henry Fournier, bourgeois de Blamont, 50

Testified to way other women at oven feared her, so that she had to be asked to keep away. Despite reputation had seen no ill in her; he had eaten apples she brought to dry at oven without taking any harm.

(29) Claudon Cesar, tailleur bourgeois de Blamont, c. 50

Reputation 14 years, but had never seen harm in her.

(30) Didier Raimbault de Blamont, c. 40

Reputation 4 years; earlier imprisonment. Had never caused him any harm, although he had quarrelled with her husband and children.

(3 July 1599)

(31) Didier Saulnier, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 33

Reputation 10 years (since his residence). Believed that she had been resentful that his wife testified on her first arrest, and had killed a horse - his servant had called her witch and blamed her for this. Also blamed her for death of two more horses after quarrel over a child.

(32) Noble homme Jean Hannel, residant a Blamont, c. 50

5 or 6 years earlier was having a house built, and Jennon's husband had undertaken carpentry; he did something against will of witness, who therefore stopped employing him. Shortly afterwards had a horse dead, and then heard that Jennon had been accused by la Gerardine, executed at Serbourg. Sent to chatelain to have copy of trial, and then as lieutenant and governor had her arrested - but she was renvoyée after confrontations. Witness had continued to suspect her, however.

(33) Marguerite femme Didier Saulnier, bourgeois de Blamont, c. 43

Told story of child's death after being admired by Jennon, as her husband had - but said Jennon had come to buy salt, and she sold her some. Other women afterwards scolded her for allowing Jennon to look at child, in view of her reputation. After she had testified at previous enquiry Jennon had always borne then 'hayne et inimitié'; they believed her to have killed three horses.

(8 July 1599)

(34) Jennon Jacquot femme Mengeon Jean, hardier a Blamont, c. 40

Some 5 years earlier la Gerardaire had claimed that she and Jennon had been responsible for death of witness's first husband. Talking to Jennon later, she told her that she had kept quiet about the death of her first husband, but would not do so if her present one died (seems to have implied that second marriage was preferable to first). Jennon said that 'on faisait bien tort aux personnes'; shortly afterwards her husband did fall ill, and she suspected this was witchcraft by accused, since it followed refusal of milk to Jennon.

(35) Chrestienne femme Chrestien Jeune Chrestien, laboureur demeurant a Blamont, c. 28

She had been chambermaid to whom Jennon had said that second twin of Hannezo Claudon would die - or rather that she feared it would. Believed that Jennon had caused loss of 6 horses out of hatred, because she had testified against her on previous imprisonment.

(36) Jean Henrequel, cordonnier bourgeois de Blamont, 25

Had never heard ill of her until recent accusation by la Pourlatte.

(37) Nicolas Henrequel, cordonnier bourgeois de Blamont, 22

Repeated deposition of brother.

12 July 1599; interrogation

Said she was native of Blamont, aged about 57. Father had died when she was about 6, and she had then lived mostly with mother, but with short spells in other households. Had married Didier Ramaixe and lived with him 'en bonne paix et concorde' for 37 years, having 10 children; he had been dead for 2 years. Agreed that she had known of accusation by Didie, and that she was expecting to be arrested; also accepted substance of conversation with Mesline, saying that she had said she wished she were already buried, but for the sake of the two youngest children who were in Allemaigne, aged 12 and 14. Claimed that her husband had taken Nicolas Marchal to law for calling her a witch. Agreed to some minor circumstantial details, but denied all accusations, and such conversations as that over second twin.

13 July; confrontations

Babillon wife of Hannezo Claudon added to her deposition that she had found hairs in all the holes of their barn wall; she and her husband had been alarmed, and on Jennon's advice had burned them all.

Confrontations generally quite fruitless; records that she disagreed with witnesses on all substantial points.

20 July 1599; procureur fiscal asks for 'question extraordinaire'

20 July 1599; Change de Nancy agrees to torture 'mediocrement'.

26 July 1599; interrogation under torture

Withstood lengthy torture without making any serious admissions, although she did agree to having advised Alison le Comte to rub her breasts with butter to help recover milk.

28 July 1599; procureur fiscal asks that she be threatened with 'question extraordinaire', and that if she still denies she should be banished for life and goods confiscated.

28 July 1599; Change de Nancy agrees to reinterrogation under threat of torture, but if she does not confess she should be renvoyée jusqu'au rappel.

3 August 1599; interrogation

New evidence was introduced, that some 3 years before Catherine widow of Demenge Courier of Blamont (now living in Nancy) had been unwell, and believed herself bewitched by Jennon. Had been and complained to Prévôt, asking for Jennon to be imprisoned, but he advised her that she was too poor to meet the costs, and that she should try asking Jennon to find a cure for her. Latter was reluctant at first, in view of what Catherine had said about her, but eventually was persuaded by her neighbour Margueritte, wife of Nicolas de Sercoeur. Brought her water from well, and she was cured within two days. Jennon agreed with this story, saying that she had rinsed the cup well, knowing that Catherine believed her to have made her ill, and would be watching to see if she put anything in it. Had heard from daughter-in-law that Catherine had thought of having her arrested. Asked why she had helped her when she was so hostile, said it was from pity. Followed by enormous interrogation, during which she was quite often accused of contradicting herself - usually when she agreed to knowing of deaths of animals, which she sometimes objected she had heard of during confrontations. Said that her husband had withdrawn from bargain with Jean Hannel because he was losing money, and Hannel would not compensate him. Held out stoutly against hostile questioning. Additional deposition by Margueritte femme a Nicolas Humbert (4), that it was she who had persuaded Jennon to help Catherine; Jennon had said she would do it for love of her. Catherine had thanked her after drinking water, and said that it tasted

good. Jennon agreed, and said that Catherine had asked for the drink of the late Oncle Didier, her husband, but she had none, so offered the water.

9 August 1599; procureur fiscal points to new evidence, and to variations during interrogation; asks for 'question extraordinaire'.

9 August 1599; Change de Nancy declares that new evidence is not sufficient for fresh torture, and that she should be released.