

B 8702 no 2; witch 241, Jennon femme Jean Petit, de Raon

20 July 1609; informations préparatoires

(1) Sebille femme Denis Bourguignon, 44

Reputation 7 years. 4 years earlier, when she was pregnant, had summoned her but she did not want to do her duty, saying she was not pregnant, although she was more than 5 months gone. Soon after she gave birth to a son, with help of neighbours, and she had to return. Child was still alive, but was baptised at home rather than being taken to church, and died within an hour. Believed that if she was witch as reputed she might have caused this, after some dispute with her mother.

(2) Adam Vaulthien, marchand, 30

6 months earlier had been angry because she was not called when his wife gave birth to a son. Baby fell ill, and as they suspected her called her in; child seemed to recover, but later died. If she was witch as reputed, believed she had caused this.

(3) Catherine veuve Mre Claude Barbe chirurgien, 56

Reputation several years - had been called witch several times by curé's servant without seeking reparation. 2 years earlier her daughter, wife of Lucas Toussaint, was in childbed, and very ill for a week, unable to deliver, then died. Accused abandoned her, yet would not allow another midwife to come and help her. If suspicions were correct witness and others thought she had caused this.

(4) Marion veuve Colas Vanot, 38

Long reputation, accusation by servant of curé.

(5) Sebille femme Didier Lassus, 25

Long reputation, and if this was correct thought she had caused death of 3 children. Witness had lost her milk, although with other children before and after had plenty. During one childbed told her she should not say paternoster, since it had no effect when a woman was in this state. Added that she was 'une femme fort difficile à entretenir'.

(6) Jehenne femme Nicolas Parisat, 30

Long reputation, and husband had quarrelled with her. Had lost 4 children, either before baptism or while she was in house. Had used another midwife since then. In second case had said child was dead, but they insisted on taking it to church to see if it gave sign of life when in hands of other women.

(7) Margueritte femme Colas des Mailles, 50

18 months before had quarrel over fact that husband of witness rang Ave Maria at hôpital where they lived; immediately fell ill, hardly able to walk, and was still in pitiful state. If she was witch as reputed, believed she had caused this.

(8) Nicolas Moictrier, 35

8 years before her daughter had been in his service, and was about to marry a young man called Henry; he persuaded her not to, and mother had hated him since. Was called to his wife in childbed, and she suddenly fell ill, lost speech, and died in 5 days. If she was witch as reputed, believed she had caused this.

(9) Jennon femme Colas Potier, 40

2 years earlier gave birth to a daughter; had to be baptized in house, and died. Believed Jennon had not done her duty, and that if she was witch as reputed she had caused death. 2 weeks earlier had come to house and said that the daughter of the Sr Moiron, wife of Bernard Huel, had asked her to take her child to be suckled, being then in childbed, but she did not want this. Went to house and found Bernard's wife in happy mood; when another woman said that on day of birth some women had headaches Jennon said 'que seroit bien autre chose dimanche prochain'. 2 or 3 days later, around Sunday, Bernard's wife died - in view of what she had heard, suspected her.

(10) Claudette veuve Jean Mereille, 40

7 years earlier had lived with her; found child face down in cradle, which would have died if not rescued. Quarrelled with her, and child did die a few days later. In view of her reputation had always suspected her. Since then had various misfortunes, including death of husband and two children. One of these burned in cradle - found door locked when she tried to rescue it, no fire in chimney. Did not know cause of these disasters.

(11) Jennon femme Jean Grand Didier, 36

Some 12 years before had attended her in childbed, and later claimed she had been badly paid, telling witness she would never raise any children. Feared her, and employed her for next 3 pregnancies, but babies were premature or stillborn. Finally went to another midwife, but with no more success; accused always seemed to approach her and touch her some 6 weeks before term 'par subtile moyen', so that child turned and she gave birth prematurely. Total of 7 children dead, and in view of reputation thought this was her doing.

(12) Alizon femme Demenge Mathiat, 45

Long reputation. 12 years before had called her to help Agnes, femme Mre Didier Vaulthier, but she would not do so until Agnes pardoned her for previous disputes they had had. Moment she did this had miscarriage - Jennon took child, and did not know

what she did with it. Agnes later died, and during illness told witness she feared Jennon, and thought she had made her ill.

(13) Alizon femme Nicolas Liebault, 35

7 years earlier had a child which died at age of 15 weeks; had always suspected that if Jennon was witch as reputed she had caused this. Had heard that she said she would help her in future according to how she paid - gave her a quarter of wheat, because of fear she had of her.

(14) Catherine femme Hango Mandra, 26

Had heard Jeannon's daughter say that if the doctors had not attended Bernard Huel's wife she would not have died, as she had done about a week before. Added that if she suckled baby one or the other of them would die, because her milk was 'fort troublé'.

(15) Alizon femme Didier Bandeca, 40

A year earlier her brother Nicolas Jean Peltre was very ill, and Jennon came to see him (although she did not normally frequent house); said they should put a particular sheet over him. When they did this he became as if out of his mind, and then died suddenly, to astonishment of those present. They thought there was 'quelque meschancete', and during illness he thought he was bewitched. Long reputation, and when Mre Didier's wife was on deathbed she saw her come and put her hand underneath for unknown purpose, which caused her to be suspected.

(16) Jehenne veuve honnble homme Claude Brabant, tabellion, 50

Reputation 12 years. Some 4 months ago her daughter Fleurance, femme Anthoine Sachot, had lost her baby after 3 weeks. Believed she had caused this, discontented because she was not reated as she wished to be, 'et qu'elle est fort difficile de la traicter comme chacun scait'.

(17) Nicolas Parisat, 36

Told of taking stillborn child to church (as in wife's deposition). Thought she had caused this and other misfortunes.

(18) Jennon femme Nicolas Hanna, 27

Told how 7 or 8 years before she had approached her late sister Barbon, wife of Humbert Bastien, in the church. Asked her if she could feel baby; said she could, but after she touched her could no longer do so, and miscarried. Suspected she had caused this.

(19) Jennon femme Demenge Roussel, 30

2 years earlier had lived in same house, and witness's brother Demenge came to see her; Jennon complained angrily that he was sparing his arm, and had not nailed up a chest as she had asked. The same day he was taken by an illness in right arm, which was still paralysed (he was about 18). Had been unable to find healing, and she had said to them 'qu'ils avoient beau faire d'aller en pelerinage, que les saincts ne luy vouloient rien faire'. Believed she had bewitched him, if she were as reputed.

(20) Dion femme Bastien Sachot, 34

Long reputation, and strange incident at recent childbed (seems to be that reported by witness 28).

(21) Jean des Mailles, 49

Told of paralysed arm of his son, as in (19) above.

(22) Demenge fils Jean des Mailles, 19

Same story; believed this was her doing if she was witch as reputed.

(23) Didier Bandeça, 40

Reputation 16 years; suspected her of causing death of his first wife, who had died in chidbirth to his great regret, in hatred over some disputes they had had previously.

(24) Barbe femme Pieron Hermemant, 22

During strange malady of her mother, wife of Colas Salomon, who was bedridden for 2 years, blind and paralysed, heard her say several times that she suspected Jennon was cause, if she was a witch as reputed.

(25) Claudatte femme Demenge Jacat, doyen, 40

Told of illness of Anne femme Bernard Huel, and how Jennon had said either mother or child would die. Anne had suddenly become ill, as if demented, and it took 4 or 5 people to hold her. Throat was swollen, and doctors and surgeons could do nothing to help - she died next day. They judged it was certainly bewitchment, and Anne had displayed such fear of Jennon that they had chased her out of the house. Long reputation.

(26) Alizon servante à Bernard Huel, 18

Similar account of death of her mistress, and suspicion of witchcraft, 'estant ladite prevenue en mauvais predicament, et par le commun bruit qu'elle est sorciere'.

(27) Mongeatte femme honnble homme Nicolas Bernard, 25

Told of illness and death of her daughter-in-law Anne. Jennon had complained that it was not the place for so many doctors, and that she was not even allowed to give her a soup, saying that they had better finish what they had begun, and they would see what profit they got from it. Approached her again later as situation worsened, and she said that if she had been allowed to treat her there would have been good hope of saving her. General reckoning that it had been witchcraft, and Jennon was told several times that she was responsible.

(28) Barbon femme Mre Pierre Barbas, chirurgien, 34

Told how 7 years earlier, after giving birth, she cut 'ung bout de la boudat' from her child. Asked why, she said it was good for colic, and one needed five from firstborn daughters - she already had four. She had never thought well of her after this. Previous Lent had visited her in childbed, and after looking at baby its thigh became all swollen - died 3 days later. If she was witch as suspected, believed she had caused this.

23 July 1609; interrogation

Said she was about 65, wife of Jean Petit of Raon; native of la Bourgonce, father had been Colas l'Hoste, mother Jennon. Had lived at Raon for 40 years, previously at La Neufville. Had been midwife for some 20 years.

Agreed that 'tante du curé' had called her witch, but had not wanted to compare herself with a whore like that. Agreed that she had left Lucas Toussaint's wife when she was in childbed, because 'il y avoit des Barbiers alentour, que luy faisoient beaucoup de mal.' Admitted telling Sebille femme Didier Lassus that she should not say her paternoster, but it had been laughingly, and she had meant no harm - told women that if they had not said it yet they should say it another time.

Asked if she had quarrelled with Agnes, first wife of Didier Vaulthier, said she had. Was told she had perjured herself, since at outset she denied having had any quarrels; said they were too slight to be worth bothering with. As for death of child of Alizon femme Colas Liebault, she had heard her say she suspected wife of Claudon St Remy, already executed.

Agreed she had said if the doctors had not attended Anne femme Bernard Huel she would not have died as she did - repeated that it was not their business to attend women in labour. Also admitted remedy for colic.

Agreed she had said she doubted that Anne femme Bernard Huel and her child would both live, because she was very ill and her milk was 'troublé'. Denied other statements attributed to her, and insisted throughout that she was not a witch.

24 July 1609; interrogation - voluntary confession

Urged to confess and make herself eligible for God's mercy, said that during the night she had decided to do so, to avoid the harsher treatment she knew must result from the accusations against her.

Said that 25 years earlier, when they lived at la Moictresse de la Court, she and husband were depressed because they could not pay debt for a pair of oxen they had bought. Went out to woods, where she met Parsin; promised to give her money and pay

her debts. Gave her money, which proved to be leaves, and powder - black/kill, grey/languish, white/heal. No sexual element.

Confessed killing a cat and 3 cattle, all belonging to themselves, and said she had done nothing else. Judges expressed incredulity, but she insisted this was true. Next time Parsin appeared had made sign of cross, and he vanished. Had visited her just twice more, to offer her powder which she refused, and to take her to sabbat. On second occasion made deal with him to give him a chicken every year, and had not seen him again. Claimed she had been full of regret, had constantly prayed to God, gone to church, and made sign of cross.

25 July 1609; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions, but all she would add was that she had also killed one of their own horses.

27 July 1609; Change de Nancy orders that she be tortured.

30 July 1609; interrogation under torture

Started by saying that previous confession had been made under duress, and that she was not a witch at all. When given thumbscrews promptly asked to be freed, renewing her confessions. Added that about 20 years earlier she had killed her daughter Anthoinette, by whom she was 'fort ennuyée'. Then confessed to killing series of persons and children, mostly because individual concerned 'T'ennuyoit'. These included Jennon femme Nicolas Salomon, who had asked her why she was annoyed with her - felt desire to make her languish, threw grey powder on her, after she had been ill for a year used black powder to kill her. Also Phelipe femme Lucas Toussaint - was angry because labour had gone on so long, put black powder on her stomach while attending to her.

Parsin was always pressing her to kill all the children she delivered, and she had taken more than a dozen unbaptized ones to the sabbat. Killed them by placing black powder on mother's stomach, which produced miscarriages, then dug up bodies to give to her master. He took them and made powder with them, but she did not know how. Then confessed to killing further group of women who had annoyed her or spoken ill of her.

Admitted she had killed Anne Moiron femme Bernard Huel, 'en desdain qu'on ne lui donnaoit a boire, et qu'elle n'avoit le credit comme en une maison bourgeoise telle que celle la, dequoy estant faschée du peu d'entretrement qu'on faisoit d'elle, ledict Parsin son maître la fut trouver au devant de son logis.' He persuaded her to kill Anne, but when she was ill she was full of regret, and would have given last drop of blood to cure her - but master had expressly forbidden her to do so, and prevented her.

Confessed killing series of babies as accused, because she was not paid as well as she desired. Her master had been angry because Nicolas des Mailles rang Ave Maria every morning and evening at the hospital, and persuaded her to make his wife ill. Subsequently felt sorry for her and gave her white powder on some cheese - was sure that if she had not recovered she would soon do so. Admitted causing paralyzed arm of Demenge des Mailles, and said he would have this all his life.

Had killed Colas Jean Peltre because he supported his sister, the tante of the curé, in quarrels with her. Had also killed 4 children of Damoiselle Elizabeth, wife of

Monsieur le receveur, by putting powder on their food, because 'ordinairement elle la chossoit pendant qu'elle estoit en couche; et qu'elle la taryoit sur ce qu'elle ne scavoit son estat.'

Now confessed she had been to sabbat on numerous occasions, carried on neck of her master. Claimed to have seen Didier Grand Claudon, Marie femme Gabrielle Ozelle, and Plaisance veuve Claudon Tout Blanc, and a group of those already executed - wife of Claudon St Remy, wife of Durand, Hannix femme Jean Tixerand, Marguitte femme Chrestofle Jean Pierre, wife of Jean Gerardin, la Digande, Jehenne Remy, and the daughter of Didier de Magnieres (text a little uncertain here, but this seems to be the sense). Had been more than 30 at sabbat, but all masked. Danced back to back, ate unsalted meat, and were then carried up in the air by a great wind. Others had made hail (in response to question). Finally said she had also seen the late Barbe, midwife of the Grand Faulbourg, at sabbat.

In total confessed to having killed 25 children, 8 women, and one man - not counting the 12 unbaptised babies, which probably overlapped with those specifically named.

31 July 1609; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Added that she had plotted with wife of Claudon Remy and wife of Jean Faillé to kill wife of Nicolas Bernard, and in addition she herself killed 2 of her children after birth. Also added (apparently without prompting) that she had had intercourse with Persin on 2 or 3 occasions. At his bidding had sometimes not done Easter duty, on other occasions took part of the host away and gave it to him.

1 August 1609; Change de Nancy recommends that she be burned alive.

5 August 1609; sentence carried out.

Total costs 104 francs, to be shared between duke and abbey of Moyenmoutier.