

B 5354 no 2; witch 103, Jeanne le Schrempt, femme Guillaume Boucher,  
d'Assenoncourt

12 July 1613; Nicolas Melletz marchal d'Assenoncourt asks for her arrest and taking of depositions against her. Claims that she is generally reputed witch, and feared by all, with infinite complaints about harm she has caused. She was 'de race infecte', her mother and a sister having already been executed as witches. Fearing harm to himself or his family, had constituted himself 'delateur', or if necessary partie formelle. Asked that he should not be imprisoned, since this would cause him hardship in harvest season, and he could produce such good evidence that judges would have had to charge her anyway.

Same day substitut du PG at Dieuze asks for her arrest and taking of depositions.

Followed by brief list of witnesses and evidence they would give - undated, submitted with other material?

16 July 1613; informations preparatoires

(1) Crisman Lampert, laboureur, 40

Reputation 6 years. 4 years ago had bought manure from outside her house, and she had wanted him to take it away immediately so they could do some building; he could not do this, and about a week later lost a horse, over which he suspected her.

(2) Michiel Laboureur, 50

Reputation 18 years. 5 weeks earlier had asked him to plough for her, but he refused, saying his harness was in poor condition. Then had horse sick; it recovered, then she came and asked after it. Wife did not reply, and it died 3 days later - suspected her. 7 years earlier sold a piece of ground to husband to build house, but retained ownership of oven which was in their kitchen. Pressed to sell this to them, then after losing two fine calves over which he suspected her sold it them for 4 francs.

(3) George Villermin, laboureur, 45

Reputation 15 years (residence). Had always taken his animals to drink at well near her house, and she had several times been angry; he had always tried to be at peace with her because of her reputation. Had several misfortunes with horses, but did not blame this on anyone.

(4) Demenge Colas le maire, 36

Long reputation. Over last 5 years had lost horses to value of 1600 francs. Suspected her, and during quarrel called her witch saying he would have her burned; she said he would repent, and he soon lost another horse.

(5) Nicolle femme au precedent, 30

Reputation 7 years. She and husband had called her witch without any action following, although accused said they did her great wrong and it was a great sin. Losses of horses.

(6) Austien le Maire laboureur, 27

Reputation 2 years. After he had her husband fined for damage to garden she said she never wished to see him again, and he had misfortunes to horses, but suspected no-one over this.

(7) Hans le petit Benet, laboureur, 46

Reputation since execution of mother 14 years earlier. As neighbour had often heard her swear by the devil, but knew nothing else against her.

(8) Marguerite femme du precedent, 50

Swearing by devil.

(9) Michiel Beze Michel, laboureur, 42

Reputation 7 years, and 3 years earlier when she came to veillée in his house he said to her 'allé je suis bien sot de vous rechauffer quand vous m'as couté mon bien'. Since then his horses had become 'morceux' and he suspected her.

(10) Didier Chatron, manouvrier, 80

20 years earlier had fist fight with her brother, and called him 'fils de sorcier'; she appeared and told him he would repent. Next day his best horse fell and broke its neck; suspected her, especially because of long reputation.

(11) Cretaille Estienne manouvrier, 28

5 or 6 years earlier he had bought some reeds, and refused to sell her any of them. When he was unloading some grain she arrived and they had argument, during which she said 'tu cause bien maintenant mais tu ne causeras pas tousjours'. 2 weeks later fell ill and was so for 6 months - suspected her. Reputation 6 years.

(12) Jeannon femme Colas le Maire, 29

Always reputed a witch. 2 weeks before she and other women had been on way to market at Dieuze, and speaking of witches accused said 'elle savoit bien qu'il y en avoit, en disant fict fikt au diable il ne les fault pas celer j'en ay trop veu, pourquoi les laisse on tant vivre, elles ne font poinct de bien, il y a vingt ans sy l'on les eust toutes bruslé elles n'eust poinct tant faict de mal qu'elles ont faict.'

(13) Cretienne femme de Couret le petit Feltin, 30

Reputation 5 or 6 years. Around that time she had dispute with witness and mother-in-law about some sowing, after which latter had bad leg, over which she always suspected her, and from which she still suffered. When she found her taking a hen and a basket as offerings to Vic told her she should not make pilgrimage for

her mother-in-law, who had the gout. Witness told her sister-in-law of suspicions, which were passed on to accused, who reproached her, again saying she had gout and should warm herself. About a month before, returning from woods with her, she said she wished the would arrest some witches in village 'pour mettre des gens hors de soupçon', and that she would always hate her mother-in-law.

(14) Mayetté femme Krieer Hans, 60

Some 2 years earlier helped witness harvest flax, and asked her if she had heard that Claudin Boulengier suspected some evil persons of causing him to go blind. Said he had asked her for a root for eyes, but husband had not wanted her to give him one. Later heard she had given him one, but did not know if this had cured him. Reputation 7 years.

(15) Simon Lampert, tisserand, 30

About a year earlier made her a piece of cloth, and when he asked for payment she said 'que les sorcieres de Guermange avoient dit, quand elles estoient au sabat que les riches beauvoient dans des coupes d'argent et les pauvres dans des veres et qu'il y en avoit une qui venoit parmy l'estang de Lindre dans une caroche et que son maistre alloit tousjours devant, lequel avoit une coeu de cheval pour sa barbe et qu'icelle alloit tousjours au cabas avec celles dudit Guermange.' Reputed witch for 10 years.

(16) Blaisse Pierre laboureur, 24

Some 3 years earlier had taken hay from a field previously cropped by her husband, and several said to him that he might have done better to avoid this, and might suffer some misfortune - shortly afterwards lost his best horse, and suspected her.

(17) Claudin Genin, boulengier, 34

2 years before when he had been banyard found her daughter with other children, who had 3 hats full of pears. Threatened to fine them, but desisted when they said fruit belonged to them. Later that day her husband came to his house and threatened him, and same day had trouble with eyes, going blind in a week. Went to doctor at Bocquenon, but could not cure him. When he returned home Mayete femme Krier Hans suggested that accused could cure him. She told him he was a sot to go so far, and that he could be cured at home; took him behind house and hung a root round his neck, saying a prayer. She said that her father had used same method, forbidding him to take anything else, including medicines he had brought back with him. Recovered sight 9 or 10 days later. Suspected she had caused the illness, reputed witch as long as he knew her.

(18) Mongeatte femme Petteman Austien, laboureur, 28

Told of conversation on road; she had said 'quand l'on en a prien une l'on laisse les autres sy l'on en eut prien il y at une vaintaine dans' - witness told her 'qu'elle se taise et qu'elle ne vouldroit pour l'orre du monde en avoit tant dict', and she still insisted, saying 'qu'elle ne craindoit d'estre damnée de dire cela sy elle ne l'estoit aucunement, car elle an avoit trop veu'. Reputation 7 years.

17 July 1613; substitut orders that she be arrested, questioned, and confronted.

18 July 1613; interrogation

Said she was about 50, native of Assenoncourt, daughter of Michel Schreempt and his wife Guele (?). Father died of plague, mother executed as witch about 20 years before. Married at 30 to Guillaume Bouchier, with whom she had lived since - always resident at Assenoncourt.

Called on to renounce Devil and spit him out, simply spat on ground saying nothing. Agreed that they had wanted a field ploughed 5 weeks earlier - had asked 7 who all refused. Asked about reputation, said 'qu'elle n'en scauroit que faire, et que l'on luy fait grand tort.' Denied being called witch and threatened with burning, although did say that Demenge Ballou once called her 'noir gipsine, noir diable ou noir sorciere' - but no witnesses. His wife had also said she wished she were burned like 'la Gaidste' (?).

Claimed she had been put out of veillée because master of house thought her husband had reported him for being in woods. Agreed to remarks she had made on way to Dieuze. Said that around time of mother's execution, 23 years earlier, had been in service of one Schneider, whose wife was in habit of taking light into room, where she also had a lot of candlewax - did not know what she did. Told maire Couret, who asked her to bring him some of this. Later he gave her message for her mistress, that she should heal horse which was lame or he would have her arrested, after doing which he told her it had recovered. Also admitted remark to wife of petit Feltin about burning witches, and saying that mother-in-law had gout, but denied rest of deposition.

Agreed to using roots to cure Claudin Boulengier, although husband had not wanted her to do this second time. Took him outside and said 'au nom du pere et du filz et du St Esprit et de Madame Saincte Odille, et que Dieu luy veille renvoyer sa vue'. Had only heard root called 'racine pour les yeux' - father had already used this, and was found in fields. Treated him before he went to doctor, not after.

Asked about remarks about witches drinking etc., said if she had said this only knew it by hearsay. Over hayfield, said that several of the co-owners had promised that they could have crop for another year, since they had cleaned it, but denied being angry over matter.

23 July 1613; confrontations

Offered natural explanations for deaths of Michiel Laboureur's calves - one had been 'mordu d'une mousatte', the other struck by a bull. Claudon Gemin claimed that he had been one of those who escorted her to Dieuze, and that when they spoke of damage done by hail at Assenoncourt she said she knew nothing about it, but if they arrested 'le vieux marchal' of the village he might be able to tell them (she denied this). No reproaches, apart from depositing against her; agreed to most of conversations, otherwise straight denials.

1 August 1613; C.M. Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

6 August 1613; Change de Nancy approves

9 August 1613; interrogation under torture

Repeated some personal details - said she and husband were 'pauvres manouvriers'. Denied charges, but when they started to give her the strappado she promised to tell truth if they would allow her time. Brought back 3 hours later, started by denying again, but when presented to torture started to confess.

6 years before had quarrel with one named le Baleux, who called her witch; was crying as she went to woods towards dusk, and approached by man in black who asked her to renounce God - beat her when she refused. Came to garden next day, and beat her again on further refusal, after which she yielded. Scratched forehead and had intercourse - was 'plus rude' than her husband. Name was Chierling; offered her money, but when she did not want to take it struck her on ear. Later when Demenge Collas (alias Baleux) had quarrel with her nephew, went with master and 2 or 3 others (masked) to his stable. She held mouth of horse open while another gave it poison in form of liquid.

Several times refused to go with him and was beaten; finally about a year after seduction went to centre of village at midnight, where there were 3 or 4 in the form of cats and other 'laides figures'. Then master made them mount brooms or 'jarons', and they were carried off to place where there were 12 or 13. Table with plenty of meat, but no bread or salt, and what looked like wine in glasses - but she would not eat or drink. All danced back to back, then master took her back home. Could not recognize anyone.

3 years earlier master had told her they must kill calves of Michiel Laboureur (whose oven caused them much inconvenience). Outside house met Jeannon femme Meillard and Imeline veuve Colas Cherier, both of Assenoncourt; signalled her to follow them, took out iron pot from under stone, and filled small pots with powder which was mixture of black and green. Gerardin Marchal was also with them when they made powder with body of a stillborn child which they dug up and burned (except for hands which they kept and took when they wanted to do harm). On this occasion master took them to stable, where they made drink with powder and gave it to calves. On another occasion tried to make hail to waste vines at Gelucourt, but ringing of church bells frustrated them. Asked what she had done at Easter, said she had been unable to swallow host since seduction, so hid it under scarf and threw it away later.

Denied any other maléfices. Interrogated again next day, repeated confessions, while saying she was not sure about identifications of accomplices - had been masked, but thought it had been the ones she named.

14 August 1613; Rémy asks for death sentence, and Change agrees

Note that at execution she declared 'ne scavoir aucun mal sur ceulx qu'elle avoit accusé'