

B 4535 No 1 Witch 086, Denyse Pottier

12 May 1598; informations extraordinairement faictes (by Nicolas Huyn, lieutenant of maire of Neufchatel) against Denyse widow of Anthoine Pottier of Rovres-la-Chetive.

(only witness) Yzabel femme à Claude le Noir courdonnier Bourgeois de Neufchatel, c. 36

In week before last Easter Week, Denyse had entered house to take fire in an earthen pot, and had words with chambermaid Mengeote. She struck her on the arm, saying 'mauvaise garce dieu te veuille garder tes bras et tes jambes pour servir ton maitre et maitresse'. Girl promptly lost use of arm on which she had been struck, and witness and husband spoke to their 'compere' Symon Sallet, asking if he could get Denyse to cure her, since they suspected her of causing the trouble. He knew her because he distributed alms to the poor, of whom she was one. Brought her to house, 'la priant par quelques Receptes pour en pouvoir beaucoup savoir pour estre velle prendre peine de guerir ladite chambrière avec promesse de la salarier et recognoistre.' Embraced girl, with same prayers as before, and she was cured. Some days later, passing in front of husband's 'bouttis', she said to him 'Votre chambrière m'a bien scandalisé'. He told her to go away, and not come near his house again; later told his wife, that she should take care lest Denyse do any harm to them or their children. Soon afterwards a child fell ill and was in danger; she was reluctant to believe Denyse responsible, but all the remedies of the apothecary and surgeon having failed, she suspected that the illness 'n'estoit naturelle et qu'il y avoit du sortilege'. Sallet therefore went to find Denyse again, and asked her if she were responsible for child's illness. After being silent for a time, she denied this, and said that if they had patience the child would recover. When it died, witness went to see her (accompanied by others to witness scene); she started by saying that it would recover, but witness than told her of death 'et qu'elle pensoit cela proceder de ladite Denyse à l'instigation d'une nommée la Colardote soupconnée d'estre sorcière, lesquels propos entendus par ladite Denyse, bien estonnée qu'elle fut, dit parlant de ladite Colardote, O la mauvaise gesnixe, Je me retireray d'avec elle, sans toutesfois dire qu'elle en fust la cause.' Had also told her it was not the masses and prayers said for the child, but the intervention of the surgeon and apothecary, which had prevented a cure. She now had another child in the cradle very sick and likely to die.

Interrogation (same day; she was already a prisoner)

Said she was about 60, widow of Anthoine Pottier (dit Blanc bonnet) of Rovres-la-Chetive. Widowed some 12 years. Admitted that previous deposition was true, and said that Persin had been her master for some 4 or 5 years. Had seduced her while she was sitting on well outside Nicolas Sallet's house waiting for alms; told her he would give her something other than bread. She replied that she only asked for bread, but he said he would return on the morrow. In fact it was two days later that he came and took her to sabbat, where she saw Colardote and her daughter - said she would maintain this if asked.

Asked if she had killed ths child of Claude Gaillot about a year before, agreed that she had, using a herb given her by her master. Had also killed another child, because she had not prevented it coming into contact with the herb. Declared that she could

heal with the same herb, but not if a doctor or surgeon intervened - this was why she had been unable to heal the Le Noir child.

Asked about the 'sabats generaulex', she replied 'Qu'alors le Mre de tous (en forme de boucq, est au milieu de leur assemblée, laquelle dos contre dos dansent alentour de luy puis la danse finie tous avec une chandelle allumée le vont baisser au fondement Ce faict il s'allume et consomme en pouldre de laquelle en prent qui veult, et se couple aussy qui voulut apres avoir le banquet, ou il n'y a point de sel, et n'en y fault porter. Que ledit sabbat ou elle a esté se tient proche d'une croix, ou y avoit grande multitude de personnes soit de ville ou de villages lors qu'elle y estoit, et rescriroit on.

15 May 1598; further interrogation

Asked if she had killed two children of noble Jacques Clausse, agreed that she had done so. Passing by his house, had seen a servant pouring out wine, and asked him to pour a little into her hand. He refused, and the maid shut the door - maid had earlier refused her bread. When maid took little girl outside, Denyse pretended to admire her, and struck her on the shoulder. Met the older girl at house of her grandfather, the 'clerc juré soubscript', and touched her on the arm.

Further admitted that some 4 years before she had done some spinning for the wife of Jean Thomas, 'sergent de ladite justice', and when she was not paid as much as usual she revenged herself by hitting child on head and causing its death.

Asked if she had caused the recent great fire at the hospital of the town, blamed Colardote's master for this.

Said that her master had forbidden them to receive holy water at the church, or to cross themselves with their right hand; had told them they had no power over those protected by Holy water and the host. Had a store of the herb given by her master (in place des Cordeliers 3 weeks before) in a wall near St. Chrestofle's church, 'en intention de s'en servir si quelqu'ung l'eust faschée'.

19 May 1598; confronted with la Colardote (Ysabel) and her daughter Gauthine, maintained that both were witches, despite vigorous denials. Colardote said she was a 'meschante femme', and had previously threatened to make her repent over some stolen bread.

21 May 1598. Report that Denyse had been found dead in prison that morning, quite naked. Body had now been put in barrel of quicklime to prevent putrefaction. No appearance of violence or self-inflicted wounds.

22 May 1598; PG des Vosges orders that she be buried near some cemetery (on grounds that she was not a suicide, and formal sentence had not been passed on her.) Also orders proceedings against Colardote and her daughter.

23 May 1598; Change de Nancy approves