

B 8682 no 6; witch 184, Colatte veuve Jean le Parmentier, de Girompaire

29 May 1598; informations préparatoires

(1) Jean Colas Lienard, de Sarrux, 33

3 weeks earlier had heard her daughter Dieudonnée say that a great black man had pinched her forehead, since when she had not been a good Christian. She also suspected her mother of killing her late husband by witchcraft. 4 weeks earlier his wife had quarrelled with her over some yarn, and immediately became ill, as she was still; suspected this was her doing, reputation as long as he could remember.

(2) Barbelline femme Jean Claudel

Death of someone to whom she had given bread, and who said he would tell her mother-in-law if he did not die in 2 days - died on third day. Previous year had refused to come and winnow, saying they had not called her husband to cut hay, so they could look for other winnowers. Next day an ox fell ill, and they sent for woman from ban de Fraisse to cure it; Colatte said 'qu'ilz n'avoient guiere de patience, que peult estre leur boeuf s'eust guery en peux de temps mais qu'il ne gueriroit plus'. After 20 weeks forced to sell it for very little, and had always suspected this was her witchcraft. A month earlier her husband had refused to mend Colatte's shoes, saying he was too busy, and she had been angry; became ill, then recovered. Firm belief she had bewitched him; general reputation.

(3) Jehenne veuve Colas Chalgotte, 50

7 or 8 years earlier Colatte's late husband had told her how he had found accused holding on to fireplace; told him someone was waiting for her above chimney, to go to hault de Renaulmont and make hail, at which he beat her soundly. Also told of accusation by daughter Dieudonnée 3 weeks earlier; previous Saturday Dieudonnée had left village and gone to Allemaigne, for no known reason, so could not be questioned. Also thought she had bewitched a cow, which had been leased to her, but which they took back after death of her husband. Immediately lost milk after leaving her control, but recovered after use of bread, salt, and leeks from her house; reputation 25 years.

(4) George Claudel, 60

20 years earlier she asked to borrow bread from his house and was refused, immediately after which his late wife became swollen like a drum; had to be carried around in a sling by several people, died after 6 months believing Colatte had bewitched her. 6 years earlier had come to buy bread, but he refused because she had no money, then his daughter Jennon (of marriageable age) fell ill, and nothing could be done for her. Long reputation, mother already reputed to be witch.

(5) Marguerite femme George Jean le Clerc, 36

Previous Easter her husband had been to visit Claude Mourel, son-in-law of accused, who was ill. Told him she had given him bread, and as soon as he ate it he felt something in stomach which became as big as an egg. Said he was sure she had bewitched him to death - died 2 or 3 days later. Long reputation.

(6) Barbelline veuve Jean le Maire, 50

Story of accusations by daughter, also claim about bewitching ox after helping witness clean out stable (damage here). Reputation more than 30 years.

(7) Bastien Mengeon Bastien, jeune fils, 20

Story about illness of ox belonging to his master Jean le Clerc and her claim that after consulting woman from Fraisse it would not recover.

(8) Colas Jean le Maire

Missing section, long reputation. Accusation by daughter.

(9) Jennon fille Mengeon Bastien, 25

6 years before had come to ask for milk, but mother said they had none; next day a calf died, over which they had always suspected her - general reputation.

(10) Claudatte femme Jean Henry, 33

4 or 5 years earlier her husband quarrelled with Colatte, and then became ill, unable to walk without crutches. Finally told her husband she had bewitched him, and unless she healed him he would beat her to death with his crutches when he met her. Within a few days he began to recover; had always suspected she was cause, and long reputation.

(11) Jehennon femme Jean Hugo, de St Lienard, 30

Long reputation.

(12) Jacquot Jean le Maire, 36

No personal suspicion, but long reputation.

(13) Jean Henry

After quarrel he instantly had trouble with legs, and could only walk with crutches. Her husband came to see him, and said that he was putting it about she had bewitched him, but one of them must be wrong, and he thought she was a good woman. Witness threatened to kill her if she did not heal him. A few days later he was sitting on bench in church when she passed and stepped on his feet without saying a word - was frightened she might have done something to cause his death. Rest of deposition missing.

(14) Jean Claudel, 40

Story of how he had refused to mend her shoes a month earlier, saying 'qu'il n'en avoit le loisir', at which she was very angry and replied 'qu'elle luy feroit bien prendre le loisir de mourir'. Next day became so ill that everyone thought he was dying, was as if rabid and had to be tied to bed, crying that he was burning. After 8

days they obtained bread, salt, and leeks from her house; soon after eating these he made rapid recovery. This was why he had asked maire of St Lienard to arrest her and have evidence taken; reputation more than 25 years.

interrogation

Said she was about 50, then immediately said she was not a witch, and was within laws of God. Husband Jean le Parmentier had died at beginning of year; had kept animals at Ste Marguerite for several years at start of marriage, then done same at Girompaire. Denied various charges against her. Did admit threatening Jean Henry 5 years earlier; said he had been suffering from 'mal de sainct'.

Confronted with witnesses that same day, she made no reproaches, but continued to deny charges; only admitted some disputes and minor threats. Jean Claudel was unable to appear because he was too ill.

30 May 1598; procureur for Chapter asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

3 June 1598; Change de Nancy approves

interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews, then racked. Recorded as saying 'que faisons grand peché d'ainsy la faire tourmenter, parce qu'elle ne pourra plus aller mendier son pain et serons contraintz la nourrir.' Asked questions while on rack, kept saying that the great devil might carry off those responsible, or the fire burn them. Still would not confess, and finally sent back to prison since it was getting late.

Next morning brought back and asked if she had thought better of it, to which she said she had, and began to confess. Said that 24 years earlier husband had beaten her severely simply because she had not brought him his food - this was because they were so poor she had nothing to bring him. Since he regularly beat her, decided to leave him and go begging, but on way was met by Persin. Persuaded her to renounce God, gave her money (leaves) and black powder. Told her not to wash hands in morning, go to church, or use holy water; she also made agreement to give him hen every year so that she did not have to go to sabat so often. After he had vanished like the wind her husband appeared, begged her pardon, and persuaded her to return home.

Tried out powder on her own cat, which died. Then confessed series of maléfices as alleged by witnesses. Also said that she had put powder in soup of a beggar from Burgundy, who cursed her for not giving him enough bread, but did not know result. Also admitted killing some animals belonging to people from neighbouring villages, after minor disputes. In case of cow belonging to Demenje Colin of Gerhaudel this was because he told her off when she came begging at his door. Admitted making Jean Claudel ill; said that her master had told her that bread, salt, and leeks were a sure remedy.

Also admitted killing her son-in-law Claude Mourel around previous Easter, because he did not want to feed her any more, and was preparing to send her out of his house.

Said she had been to sabat more times than she could remember. Had seen Jean Babey of Sarupt and his wife, Georgeatte femme Jean Colatte of Sarupt, and la Treixatte of Gerhaudel; others were masked. At later sabats also saw Adam Jean

Lienard, Jean Colatte, Mengeon Martin, and Georgeon Demenge Babey, all of Sarupt; Jean Lallemant and widow of Demenge Treichey, of St Lienard; Jean Cosson and his daughter Barbon, and the wife of Mengeon Regnauldin, of Contramolin. More than 40 others from ban d'Anould and elsewhere, but all were masked. Finally added name of a mercier of le Paire d'Anould, called Parisot. Conventional description of dancing, feasting, and hailmaking.

Later same day she repeated her confessions and accusations. Added to names of those from Contramolin Colatte l'Hoste. In description of sabat now said that when they made hail they mounted black bulls to guide the clouds to their intended destination. On other occasions they made caterpillars or other 'meschantez' to cause loss of crops.

Further reiteration of confessions 2 days later. Change de Nancy seems nevertheless to have required a final confirmation (damage here).

20 June 1598; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Expressed wish not to be confronted with those she had accused, for fear they might beat her; assured that she would be protected.

Same evening she was found dead in prison, with no sign of violence; noted that she had eaten perfectly well that morning, and made no complaint. Surgeon reported that cause of her death might have been combination of her age and catarrh caused by dampness of prison.

21 June 1598; Change de Nancy orders that she should be buried under gallows.