

B 3343; witch 046, Margueritte femme Claude Martin, de Leintrey

23 August 1607; procureur fiscal of comté de Blamont asks prévôt to get echevins to conduct an enquiry into her reputation and conduct, as secretly as may be done, and report back. States that she is so feared, on account of belief that she has killed both people and animals, that the people will not even speak to her for fear of further events.

30 August 1607; informations préparatoires

(1) Margueritte femme Mengin Godat, 40

Reputation 7 years. Accused had struck her daughter Jennon on cheek after she quarrelled with her own daughter, then she had earache for several days. Had also heard accusations by others - Demenge de Conna and his wife over death of daughter, and Margueritte, who thought she had killed first husband after he refused her something.

(2) Izabel femme Jean Mongeat, 55

Reputation 20 years. No personal suspicion, but previous summer the witness had been called as midwife to assist Françoise femme Demenge Jacquemin. Child was in good position and she expected an easy birth, when Margueritte entered uninvited and proceeded to take charge of matters by force, despite protests from witness. Child was then born dead.

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(3) Missing apart from conclusion. Witness was Allison veuve Jean Hellenix, who told how 6 years earlier she owed accused small sum of money; when she came to ask for it pointed out that daughter had done several day's work for her, which cancelled it out. Then drank some water from pot, and had throat trouble which prevented her eating until she went to Beau Bernard. Daughter Jennon was betrothed to her nephew Demenge, but she mocked her when they met and said she was not worthy of him. Had child by him before marriage, and she drowned it - believed she was cause of this disaster, and called her witch in the fields.

(4) Jennon veuve Claudon Jacquemin, sister of accused, 54

Reputation 7 years. They had quarrelled over division of inheritance from parents, in which witness claimed Margueritte had behaved unfairly, and thought that as a result she had caused sudden death of a horse. Did help her to prepare 'estuve' for it, but without success. Also believed she was cause of illness which had afflicted her youngest son Pierson for last 5 years; began at harvest time, when he lost use of limbs and could not work, and had returned annually, except for previous year. 2 years earlier came to house (as she did not usually do) when he was ill, and asked what he had, to which witness replied that it was 'mal donné'. When she asked who had done it, replied 'que sy elle le savoit elle parleroit a elle d'une bonne façon'. Did in fact suspect her, and son hinted this by saying she had given him an apple, at which she asked what he meant. Also told story of childbirth of Françoise femme Demenge Jacquemin (her other son); it had been third stillbirth, which was why they had not wanted her to be present.

(5) Hellenix femme Demenge Michiel Vallance, 50

Reputation 12 years. Believed she had caused death of her daughter Barbelline, aged 12, who had often quarrelled with her children. She complained about this, saying she was an only child and parents 'la faisoient troupe mignotte'. One day gave her a pear, after eating which she immediately sickened; ill for 2 years, complaining of her right side, where there seemed to be a void, so that it made a sound like a drum. Took her to consult doctor Odet at Blamont, who said it was witchcraft, and advised getting water from Badonviller - but next day she died.

(6) Françoise femme Demenge Jacquemin, 24

Reputation 5 years (residence). Story of miscarriages; suspected her of wanting to ensure that all the property reverted to her, especially since she was suspected of causing illness of her brother-in-law. Had been heard saying they were the two richest young men in village. When she was pregnant first time sent her a roast, which husband advised her not to eat, but she was tempted and did so, after which she felt no sign of life from child. Similar event second time, but they burned the gift. Then third childbirth, when she arrived early although not summoned, and interfered with midwife; when she suddenly felt cold insisted on putting feet in hot water. Visited her 3 days later, and when she was lamenting what had happened told her it would not occur again - which she could not possibly know, and this encouraged her suspicions.

(7) Demenge Jacquemin, 29

Reputation 10 or 12 years. Argument with mother had been 6 years earlier, and she had struck her, bruising her arm. This caused him to go and upbraid her, calling her witch; she sought no redress, but suspected she had avenged herself by causing miscarriages of his wife. Repeated other details from her deposition. Also story of death of mother's horse 5 years earlier, when she had come to house and helped with 'estuve', although she never came otherwise. Had told them to put oat straw and a cushion on its back, and put it in a separate stable.

(8) Henry Claudon, 40

12 years before heard that she had fallen onto threshing floor in barn of her neighbour, and someone said the devil had done this; she claimed she was frightened of soldiers who were expected, and had been putting her cock in the hayloft. Suspected since then, and 10 years earlier had been incident towards end of winter when cattle were not yet in fields. They were neighbours, and cows were in street to feed from 'fumiers'; he had a five-year-old cow which had yet to calve, which pushed some of hers and knocked one of them over. She struck it with a stick, after which it went into a decline, and finally had to be killed. Over the 3 months this took he lost 4 other cows and 14 sheep, over which he had always suspected her, because of previous incident and quarrel they had about it. 2 days earlier saw she was trying to beat Françoise femme Demenge Jacquemin, and ran to protect her; at this she said 'que c'estoit eulx qui lui donnaient ung mauvais fame, que c'estoit ung beau chapeau qu'ils mettoient sur la teste de ses enfans que c'estoit assé pour la faire devenir genoixe et que sy il lui survenoit quelque chose qu'elle en donneroit la charge a lui deposant'.

(9) Claudon Marchal, dit Marye

Reputation 15 years. 9 years before had quarrel, and she said to him 'qu'il estoit bien hautain mais qu'en peu de temps son cacquant luy rabaisseroit'. Thought she then killed a cow worth 30 francs, which died after lying in straw for 6 weeks, and a horse which died suddenly. A year later she went to house of her sister, and his son Claudon, aged 3, went in; made fuss of him and gave him a quarter of a 'chemelle' to eat. Immediately became ill, refusing all food, and died in a week - he had always suspected her over this.

(10) Demenge Grand Colas

Reputation 11 or 12 years. 9 years earlier had quarrel over pigs which ate some fallen fruit from trees, after which he became gravely ill; after 4 or 5 days she came knocking on door, asking if his wife was there. He called out she was his witch, and she left hurriedly, after which he recovered. 4 or 5 years later had been returning in evening from Embermesnil when he heard 3 women making mocking remarks about chapelet, and was sure she was one. About 4 years earlier was cooking for marriage feast of one of her daughters, and complained she did not have spices he needed for soup; she said she did not want to be 'gourmandé' in her house, and a cauldron of water immediately fell, putting out every coal.

(31 August 1612) Five year gap!

(11) Mongin Godat, 45

Reputation 12 years, but claimed he did not fear her. Quarrelled with her 6 years earlier, when he owed her some money and she wanted him to sow a field of wheat; threatened to throw a stool at her head, calling her witch and telling her to get out. She made no complaint about this. Listed some people she was alleged to have killed.

(12) Thiebault Jean Thiebault, 44

Reputation 10 years. 9 years before had been dispute over a goose which her children thought was theirs, in course of which his wife intervened and called her witch. Did not seek redress, but 2 weeks later a horse died suddenly, and thought this was her doing if she was witch as reputed.

(13) Demenge Conna, 50

Reputation 15 years. 8 or 9 years earlier had returned from working as mason in neighbouring village, where he had been for 3 or 4 weeks, to find daughter Barbelline, aged 12, was ill. Wife told him this followed eating pear given her by accused, but he told them off for such an idea. Then told of diagnosis by doctor at Blamont and death; after this he went and blamed her, calling her witch in presence of her husband and others. She called on daughter to bring her an axe to kill him, but he left. Husband did not take him to law, but they were called before prévôt, who called on them to forgive one another and make peace.

(14) Margueritte femme Jean Colotte, d'Avricourt, 60

Until 4 years earlier had lived at Leintrey, where she had been married to Didier de Vacourt. Reputation 10 years, and were near neighbours. 7 years earlier had come asking to borrow large cauldron for washing, but on advice of husband she refused. Shortly after he was 'surprin d'un aeir' as he left house, feeling very cold, and died in 10 days. She and her daughter Sebille were also ill, but she recovered after 3 months. A woman from Metz who 'se mesloit de deviner' came to house, and told daughter that illness had been given by a woman to whom they had refused a cauldron - indeed accused had gone off grumbling all the way after refusal. Since she was the only person they had refused, and in view of reputation, suspected her.

(15) Melline veuve Anthoine Grand Anthoine, d'Avricourt, 45

Had left to live with son 2 years earlier. Reputation 12 years, and at time when there were other prisoners from Leintrey accused of witchcraft heard Margueritte veuve Colas Vautrin (later executed) say that the accused should be taken there with the others. Had been angry when her husband refused to repair a cradle some 4 years earlier, then gave him some bread as she passed house. Became ill as soon as he had eaten some, and died 2 weeks later; had always suspected her of being cause.

(16) Claude Vautrin, femme Claude Mal Didier, maitre d'école de Xousse, 24

Husband had been schoolmaster at Leintrey previous year. Had small girl aged 2 who had often gone to play with children of accused, then became ill. Went to ask Margueritte if she knew a cure, and she suggested pilgrimage to Beau Bernard, bringing back candles, and performing neuvaine. Did this, and the girl recovered - but she suspected her of giving her the illness.

(17) Claude Mal Didier, maitre d'escolle a Xousse, 21

Had been schoolmaster at Leintrey for 2 years. Within 3 weeks heard of her reputation, but she was neighbour and often in house; told wife she was lucky to have such a nice little girl, and child often played in her house, where she would give her bread and other things. Child became ill for 3 months, spitting blood, with stomach swollen, and having difficulty breathing - then advice about cure and recovery.

(18) Demenge Mongeat, 40

Reputation 7 years. 6 years earlier had been quarrel over some meat he had sold her (she kept tavern). Next day was playing cards with others including her son when she came and reproached him - immediately affected by eye trouble, and spent 2 months in bed, unable to see and crying with pain. Everyone came to see him and console him except accused, despite invitations, and heard she had said that however much treatment he had, he would never see so well again. Suspected she had been cause.

(19) Demenge Bon Claude, 50

Reputation 12 years. About a year before her son was courting daughter of witness, but she was angry because his cousin Claudon Marchal had often

quarrelled with her, and said she would stop him coming to the house of the witness. Soon after this 3 horses fell ill, with such an unpleasant illness they could not be eaten, but had to be killed; everyone who saw them judged they were bewitched, and he suspected her. Also lost 2 cattle, which he blamed on her. Had been drinking in house 3 years earlier when Demenge Michel Valence called her witch, without her husband taking any action.

(20) Margueritte femme Demenge Bon Claude, 40

Reputation 7 years. Told of how she came to house to tell witness that she did not want her son to frequent her daughter, and would not give him in marriage to her. She replied 'qu'elle luy ferme la porte au né quant il y yroit' - did not know if she took this in bad part, but then lost horses.

(21) Jehenne femme Demenge Gadel, 28

2 weeks earlier had come to ask them if they would reap for her, but could not agree on price - they wanted a gros more for each journal than her husband offered. Went off near Embernesnil instead, taking daughter aged 3 with them; had hardly started work when she disappeared. They and many others searched for her all day without success, although it was an open place. Returned to Leintrey that night lamenting, and Margueritte said to her 'qu'elle ne se lamente sy croit que son enfant n'estoit perdu, et que s'il estoit bien signé du signe de la croix il failloit croire qu'il retrouveroit aydant dieu qu'il estoit ausy seure aux champs qu'a la ville'. Looking for her again next day, met woodcutters who told them she had been found with herd of cows, and taken to Remoncourt, where they found her. Was too young to explain, and could only say 'la petite Mongeotte a été perdue'. Suspected she had caused this, since it was impossible for a small child to get so far.

(22) Odille femme Claudon Grand Claude, 48

Reputation 7 years.

(23) Catherine veuve Claudon Thomas, 40

Reputation 7 years. They had suffered various misfortunes, but did not suspect her.

1 September 1612; substitut for procureur fiscal asks for arrest, interrogation, and confrontations.

12 September 1612; interrogation

Said she was about 45, and had been married to present husband some 27 years. Native of Leintrey, father was Pierson de Waxaville, laboureur, and mother Allison Pierson, also native of village.

Asked if she knew reason for arrest, said sergeant had called her witch, and that she had been taken from fields quite unexpectedly. Had only heard herself called witch recently, when Simon Marie was drunk; had asked husband to act, but he was 'ung pauvre bon homme ne desirant de arrester a aultruy'. A few days later Marie had begged her pardon in house of Demenge Parmentier and in presence of prévôt - she was promised 'acte de justice', but did not get it.

Asked about hitting Jennon fille Mengin Godat, denied this, saying she had always been great friends with her own children, while many suffered illnesses which should not be attributed to witchcraft. When told that Godat's wife suspected her, said they did her as great wrong as had been done to Virgin Mary - marginal note of outrage at comparison.

Questioned about stillbirth of nephew's wife, said she had been asked to go, and had done her best to help, but denied doing anything wrong. Claimed she had only sent them some meat during third pregnancy.

Asked about proposed marriage between her nephew and Jennon Hellenix, said she had favoured it, since she was 'une bonne mesnagere et une bonne ouvriere'; when she knew she was pregnant had urged him to hurry it up. When Allison called her witch would have killed her if she could have done.

Claimed that when they shared father's goods her husband offered to exchange with her sister if she wished, and they had not quarrelled. Agreed that she had fallen 12 years earlier while trying to hide her cock from soldiers in a hole by side of fireplace belonging to neighbour - this was in kitchen - but denied doing any harm to animals of Henry Claudon.

Michiel Vallance had come and told her she was not a good woman, but did not call her witch; had to make reparation, and there was a written document to show this. Could not remember asking to borrow any cauldron - had enough of her own, and lent them to others. Didier de Vaucourt had been working for them, and was 'ung pauvre bon homme', was 'groz rompu, et estoit temps qu'il s'en aille d'autant qu'il s'ennuyoit de plus vivre pour le mal et tourment qu'il enduroit luy ayant oy descrier par plusieurs fois qu'il pleust a dieu qu'il fut mort'.

As for daughter of Claude Mal Didier, had advised pilgrimage because she had done same herself for one of her sons, who recovered. Agreed that her son had been courting daughter of Demenge Bon Claude; for 6 years had been trying to discourage him from marrying into a 'lignée des sorcieres'. Demenge's father Jean had been thought a witch, and banished from duchy for this.

Asked whether she had not said on way to Blamont 'qu'elle ne craindoit ny dieu ny diable, et qu'elle estoit aussy nette du crime de sortilege que nre Seigneur' said she had been so upset she might have done so, but she begged mercy from God.

14 September 1612; confrontations

The midwife claimed that when child was born dead she wanted her to baptize it, which she refused to do since it gave no sign of life.

Said of Claudon Marchal that he was always quarrelling, and that he had long sought to dishonour her. Demenge Grand Colas was a liar and 'renyeur de debte'. Demenge Mangeot was 'larron manifeste'. Otherwise no serious reproaches, but denied all charges.

16 September 1612; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire; also complains about 'blasphemies execrables' in comparisons with Christ and the Virgin.

17 September 1612; Change de Nancy approves

19 September 1612; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews and strappado, but continued to deny charges. After last, although she had endured it with 'bon courage', was unable to stand, and

was taken to warm herself by fire. Then said to have pretended to be unable to speak; surgeon was sent for, and said she was not suffering from fever or illness. Finally recovered speech and insisted she was not a witch. Made difficulties about renouncing devil, so surgeon put hat on her stomach and said he would not leave until she did - then made renunciation as if by force. Now racked, but still refused to confess; denied some compromising remarks she was alleged to have made in prison. Finally ordered to be taken back to prison; to be shaved 'affin de pouvoir facilement tirer la vérité d'elle, et empêcher que l'ennemi ne s'y cache et l'empêche de dire la vérité'.

20 September 1612; interrogation under torture

Was racked again. Marginal note that this was 'contre le droit et la pratique', unless there was new evidence and specific approval, and that court should abstain from such practices in future.

Would still confess nothing; surgeon judged that she could not be racked harder, and she was released. Again would not speak for half an hour. Then given tortillons on leg, thigh and arm on right side (another marginal protest here); still no confession.

In afternoon put back on strappado, with stones tied to feet (although these do not seem to have been lifted from ground). Another marginal comment here. Finally said that it was thought reasonable to send her back to prison 'pour sa débillité'.

21 September 1612; procureur fiscal admits that she has purged herself of charge of witchcraft. On charge of blasphemy, however, asks that she make amende honorable, be whipped, and banished in perpetuity.

24 September 1612; Change de Nancy (6 signatures this time) agrees that she should be renvoyée on witchcraft charges. As for blasphemies, prévôt and court at Blamont should point out enormity of these to her, ordering her to seek pardon from God and the Virgin, and never to repeat them.

26 September 1612; formal sentence from court at Blamont ordering that she be renvoyée.