

Witch 022B; B 3136 no 2, Anne femme Girard George de Hellingen

1 October 1619; informations préparatoires

(1) Messire Jost Bayer, curé de Bedviller, 40

8 years earlier had been called to assist witch called Kühthans, executed at Bitche, who had named Anne as an accomplice. Shortly after this she appeared with face scratched and blackened, and dried blood coming from mouth. Told story about how her husband was in barn before dawn (threshing) when she was attacked by a great dog which came through window, and would have suffocated her if her adopted daughter had not come into the room, at which it fled.

Had come with a relative, Adam Tailleur of Rimblingen, to speak to him about accusation; asked whether she was on roll of witches, and when he said she was told him about the other woman. He told her to go and get her name removed, but had never heard that she had done so. 3 weeks earlier her brother-in-law Nicolas Jacque had called her witch, but she had made no complaint.

(2) Jean Jacque Stömmmin, sergent en la sergenterie de Hellingen, 39

Story about attack by dog, some 6 or 7 years earlier.

(3) Nicolas Thiebauld, 37

Long reputation. Jean Tisserand of Giesingen, who had been servant in her house for a long time, had told him that one evening on way to Erchingen he had gone with her to Bedviller, where they saw a fine black horse saddled and tied to fence outside house of curé. She told him to mount it, but he refused and went on his way. Dietry le Roman had accused her of being a witch without any action being taken. 3 years earlier he and her husband had been delivering grains for tithe to Bitche, then in the inn he was negotiating to buy some sheep, but had dispute with vendor. George said that if he did not keep his bargain he should pay 4 pots de vin, which angered him so that he said 'Sy vous et vostre femme eussiez receu voz droicts, il y a long temps que ne seriez plus icy', then left. Next day George wanted him to return to Bitche, but he told him that if he could not bear such words he should take him before his superiors. George did not want to sue, but sought private accord, which his wife also supported, so went to seek arbiters at Bitche. Drank together, with George paying a third and witness two thirds. A few days later a cow which he valued at more than 37 francs had its neck broken in the stable, and the master who cut it up said it was bewitched.

(4) Jeanne fille de Maulhenry, 16 or 17

Some 3 or 4 years earlier she had been servant in their house, and they had gone to Bitche leaving her to make cheese, with instructions not to leave spoon in the pot. Was curious why mistress gave such instructions when she herself usually left spoon in, so she put it back when cheese was made, then shut house and went to fetch feed for animals from garden. On return found that pot was full of cheese, so went to tell neighbour Marie femme Nicolas Thiebauld, who told her to cross herself well and make the cheese. When master and mistress returned she said she had made two cheeses, and Anne was furious with her, saying she should say nothing on

her life. Story went round village and came to ears of officers; Anne wanted her to deny it, but she did not. Anne did nothing but sell cheese, although she had only 4 cows.

Note that Anne was absent for about a month, and no-one knew her whereabouts; returned after Marguerite la femme du porchier was renvoyée, but then seemed to be about to flee again, so placed under arrest.

31 January 1620; interrogation

Said she was daughter of Pasquin Mulnier of Archingen, was long resident at Hellingen, and aged about 50. Knew she was reputed witch, but this wronged her.

Admitted that she had asked curé whether she had been accused; had then told him there was another woman of same name in village, now dead, who had been greatly suspected as a witch. Attack on her had not been by a dog, but three cats with a blue candle between them. Did not know if she had been bruised because she had not seen herself, nor what kind of witchcraft this might have been. Responded to suggestion that it seemed likely she had been beaten by her master by saying that other accidents happened to people who were not witches.

Asked why she had fled from house if she was a good woman, said that inhabitants had been circulating rumours that she would be arrested, and on Christmas Day her sister told her she would be taken the next day. Was frightened of being imprisoned in cold weather and then tortured, so had been absent for 3 weeks then returned. If she did not cry that was because they did her wrong.

8 February 1620; Change de Nancy approves confrontations.

17 February 1620; additional depositions

(5) Nicolas Jacques, 60+

Previous July she had come to complain that he had called the son of her niece a bastard, and that if he said this he was 'un schelm et un larron'. He replied that she had lied like a witch, but she took no action, any more than she had over the story of the cheeses.

(6) Dietry le Roman, habitant de Bedviller, 40

8 years earlier, when in service with her neighbour, the widow of the sergeant of Hallingen, had been very ill for 10 weeks with unknown sickness. Had no suspicion against anyone until he was healed by 'une pelerine de St Jacques', who told him it was Anne's witchcraft. Later he and Pasquin were returning from Rederchingen when they encountered Anne and her husband who were also going home after a baptism; did not want to identify themselves, and when they finally did so he told her she was the one who had bewitched him. Although she saw him daily after that, she never took any action to clear herself .

(7) Pasquin de Hellingen, 27

Same story; also told of seeing her looking out of window of house, when Dietry told him she was a witch, and she hurriedly shut the window.

(8) Claudel le Suisse de Rederchingen, 30

Husband of her adoptive daughter. At time of affair of cheeses 5 or 6 years earlier his wife told him that she and her husband were packing up to leave, so he went to dissuade them. They told him they were only frightened of being taken as witches and subjected to torture.

(9) Catherine femme Claudel le Suisse, 37 (adoptive daughter)

Story of how she had heard her complain and found her on bed bruised and scratched - had no idea what had been cause.

(10) Jean le Petit, 26

Married to niece of Girard George; was native of Kuschl in Palatinate. Told how they had planned to flee rather than purge themselves at Chancellery of Bitche, and collected their effects in two sacks; one of these was very heavy, and he thought it contained money. Also elaborate arrangements for selling a small ox in the stable. Had asked him to take them to his country, or beyond Deux-Ponts, but then Claudel had come in and said that if they left they would lose their property, so they put it off. Also claimed that at previous Christmas Anne had asked him to take her away, but he refused, saying he would not do it for 25 francs.

17 February 1620; interrogation

To suggestion that attempts at flight showed she was guilty, said it was 'les gens du village' who were the cause, because they had frightened her. No other admissions on material from new depositions.

18 February 1620; confrontations

Only real argument was with Jeanne; she said the spoon was wooden, Anne that it was of iron. After she had left Anne said 'qu'elle se repentoit que lors que ladite Jeanne servoit aupres d'elle, et descouvrit le secret desdits frommages, quelle ne l'avoit jetté contre l'apparoye que la cervelle luy soit demeurée apres estant tant parlé'.

Additional witnesses also met with series of denials.

28 February 1620; Change de Nancy approves torture (ordinaire only)

5 March 1620; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews, strappado, rack, and brodequins, but would not confess. Account lays stress on her 'arrogance', and suggests that if they had not been restrained by orders of Change de Nancy they would have extracted a confession.

Witch 022B, Anne George 4

20 March 1620; Change de Nancy orders that she be renvoyée.

28 March 1620; sentence that after enduring torture she should be renvoyée.