

B 8684 no 3. Witch 77, Françatte veuve Claudon Jardel de Clefcy

6 December 1599; informations préparatoires (at request of procureur for Chapter of St Dié)

(1) Colas Demenge Jalley de Clemecey, 36

Reputation as long as he could remember.

(2) Humbert le Grand Adam de Clemecey, 46

Reputation 18 years. Some 15 years ago she asked his wife for some cheese, but because of reputation he forebade this; soon afterwards a fine cow sickened and died, and he had always blamed this on her witchcraft.

(3) Pierron Jean le Masson, 56

16 years earlier they quarrelled after her horse damaged his field of oats, and she said he would repent. 2 or 3 days later a horse died in strange manner - had always believed that this was her witchcraft, and she was long reputed a witch. 3 years ago his wife Marion had been with other women outside house of Colas Jean du Vic, when Françatte approached her 'la regardant d'un oeil hideux'. Told him of this, saying she feared she was bewitched, and 2 days later took to bed with a sickness so strange that she died in fortnight, maintaining to the end that she was bewitched by her.

(4) Claudon Voinceney, 60

Reputation 12 years.

(5) Blaison Colas Betrand, 40

Reputation as long as could remember. Quarrel 16 years earlier, when his pigs did some damage in her garden; called her witch, immediately a fine cow sickened and died in 2 or 3 weeks, and he had always thought this was her witchcraft. 3 years earlier refused to let his horse service her mare, and it immediately died - again blamed her. Another quarrel over straying animals 12 years earlier, after which an ox sickened and he quickly sold it to butcher.

(6) Jean Colas de Vic, 24

Was sure she had killed his father Colas Demenge du Vic, who had not consented to her marriage with his brother, and did not attend marriage feast. Witness had told her of his suspicions, but she took no action. On Christmas Eve last year had come to house asking for milk, and his wife told her they had none; he told her off, saying that Françatte would cause them some damage within a few days. A fine ox sickened, so he told Anthoine Claudel, who lived with her, to tell her she had bewitched it and had better cure it - a week later it began to recover. Imputed this to her witchcraft - long reputation.

(7) Colas le Masson, 70

Reputation 18 years. After quarrel 7 years earlier had lost a cow and some piglets, which he imputed to her witchcraft.

(8) Mengeatte fille Michiel Jean le Masson, 28

Some 3 months earlier she had asked for a plate of soup at house of her brother Clement Masson, but there was none to give her. Brother's child promptly became ill, and had still lost use of hand - she and brother blamed this on her witchcraft.

(9) Claudatte femme David Chanal, 36

2 years earlier a cow lost milk after quarrel with her, and blamed her witchcraft - long reputation.

(10) Zabel fille Jean de la Dague, 25

Saiod that Françatte 'estoit fort coustumiere d'aller a leur losgis demander d'emprung ce qu'elle avoit de necessité et comme souvent ilz la refusoient de ce qu'elle demandoit, aussy tost ils perdoient tantost une vache, ung porc, ou quelque aultre bestial'. Imputed losses to her witchcraft - long reputation.

(11) Claude Vincent, 36

6 or 7 years earlier refused to lend her a horse for ploughing - she was very angry and said 'qu'il n'en gaigneroit rien'. Soon a fine cow sickened, with legs rotting, then became rabid, so that he had to kill it - had always suspected this was her witchcraft, long repute.

(12) Claude Orbain, 40

Some 6 or 7 years before had been in her service, but left after 9 weeks because he had been constantly unwell. She allowed this, but said 'qu'elle luy prioit de ne parler de son faict et que jamais elle ne luy feroit mal'. This made him suspect that she was cause of illness; general reputation, and belief she had killed husband - sought no reparation when accused of this in public (by witness?).

(13) Blaisatte femme Colas le Masson, 60

2 years earlier Françatte told her angrily that Valencin Connemant had reported her to gruyer of Fraisse because she had cut more wood than she had paid for, saying 'qu'il luy avoit faict ce plaisir la mais qu'elle luy en rendroit un aultre, qui viendroit bien aaultant de desplaisir' - witness and two other women present were astonished. Soon afterwards Françatte saw him on way to woods with horse, and said 'qu'il s'en aille au bois et qu'il y trouveroit les gruyeres de Frasse', repeating words 'allez allez au bois'. When he was a little outside village was taken with such a violent sickness that it was hard to get him home, and he died in a week. Had suspected this was her witchcraft - reputation 25 years. 2 years earlier had told witness she was thinking of leaving because of suspicions against her.

(14) Didier de la Levee de Herbafain, 30

3 years before had agreed to buy a horse, a cow, and other animals from her, but when he went to collect them she said her procureurs would not agree. He was angry and said that either he would have the animals or she must pay for his day. 2 hours later fell ill, and friends advised him to go and accuse her directly of bewitching him; she denied causing illness, but he said he would have her burned if she did not cure him. Recovered in a week, and had always suspected her witchcraft.

(15) Mengeon Vincent, 35

Reputation as long as could remember.

(16) Pierron Voignier de Scaurux, 40

15 years before had been in her service for 5 years. Already generally reputed witch, 'et disoit on communement qu'elle avoit faict mourir son marit, et l'avoit icelle sy bien en amouraché par (il n'en scait quelz moyens) abusé qu'il estoit contrainct l'espouser, et ne pouvoit durer ny arrester en place qu'il ne la voye, touttefois a la remonstrance de ses plus familiers amys qui luy mectoient au devant le crime de sortilleges dont elle en estoit prevenue, il s'en depetra'.

(17) Jean Jacquot Henry, 34

Reputation 16 years. Some 5 years ealier asked him for loan of horse-comb, which he refused, while offering to sell her one. She was angry, and same night his sole goat started to cry strangely, dying next morning. Same year refused to loan her a mallet, and same thing happened to a sheep - believed these losses were caused by her witchcraft.

(18) Adam Claudon Thiebault, 30

Reputation as long as could remember.

(19) Mengeon Chrestofle, 34

Ditto.

(20) George Jean Durant, 34

2 years before, when there was report depositions were to be taken against her, he was officer at Clemecey and undertook to separate her children's property from hers. She asked him to tell her if he heard she was to be arrested, so that she could flee and not dishonour her children. No personal suspicion, reputation 17 years.

(21) Mengeon Jeannel, 30

Had often heard that she was driven out of Plumieres in belief she was a witch, and that mother was also suspected.

(22) Agatte femme Jean Jacot Henry, 40

Story of Valencin Connemant's death.

(23) Claudon Colas Claude Jardel de Herbarux, ban de Fraisse, 50

3 years earlier had come to his house telling him she intended to flee because people were talking of arresting her as a witch, particularly over death of Pierron Jean le Masson's wife. Begged him to take charge of her children; he pointed out she would be wrong to flee, and would be convicted if she did so, at which she promised she would remain. No personal suspicion.

(24) Agatte veuve Jean de la Dague, 60

Reputation 18 years. Every time they refused her something they had lost an animal; had accused her of causing this and being witch, but she had taken no action.

(25) Mengey des Roses, 36

Some 3 years earlier had lent her horses for ploughing, then asked for loan of her horses to take a load to Contramolin. She refused, and he was angry; immediately one of his pigs died, so he went to see her, saying some witches had killed it after he had quarrelled with her. She said she was not a witch and had not killed it, but he still suspected her. Reputation as long as he could remember.

(26) Nicolas Thomas, 32

Previous Christmas had taken her son into his service, but soon found he was unsuitable and sent him home, at which she was angry. Later his finest ox became strangely ill, and died in a week - believed this had been her witchcraft. Reputation as long as he could remember.

11 December 1599; interrogation

Said she was about 50, daughter of Colas de la Heutte and his wife Yzabel of Plumieres. 36 years earlier had gone into service with Humbert Herquel at Plainfain, for 4 years, then 5 years with Ferry Jean Ferry at Clemecey. Then married Claudon Colas Jardel, who had died some 10 years earlier. Said she had lived wisely with neighbours, 'mais que l'on luy mest des grandes affaires sur elle', admitting she was commonly reputed a witch. Denied she had left Plumieres under fear of arrest for witchcraft.

Series of denials of charges and disputes. Admitted she had been angry with Colas Demenge du Vic because he opposed marriage and would not come to feast, but had done him no harm. Also agreed to incident previous Christmas when she was refused milk, but denied bewitching ox. Admitted that Didier de la Levée had accused her of bewitching him, but said she had told him he was a liar.

Accused of killing husband, denied this saying he was 'le meilleur homme du monde'. Admitted that she had been to see Claudon Colas Claude Jardel to talk of flight, because she feared being tortured. Agreed that Mengel des Roses had accused her of killing his pig, but he had lied.

13 December 1599; confrontations

Made no reproaches, although she did say in response to some depositions that they had lied like thieves and bad men. Admitted she had talked to George Jean Durant about flight. Otherwise no results.

14 December 1599; procureur asks for torture

18 December 1599; Change de Nancy agrees

7 January 1600; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but started to confess when racked. Seduced 18 years earlier by Mre Navel - then said it was 20 or 22. Claudon Jacot Henry of Clemecey had called her witch, and said she had 'enfanté son marit pour l'avoir en mariage'. She called him a thief, and they went to court, where only he was obliged to make reparation, but he was angry and threatened he would kill her. She called on husband to take action, then went off to collect wood; met a man in black with a hideous face, who promised to give her means to avenge herself on Henry if she would renounce God and give herself to him. Finally yielded to his persuasions; he had intercourse with her, and gave her white powder in paper to kill men and animals. Tried it out on hen which died; took good care not to tell husband about temptation or he would have killed her. Killed cow of Humbert le Grand Adam shortly afterwards, following dispute over a fence, by scattering powder on grass.

Master wanted her to kill Claudon Jacot Henry, but she would not agree - merely killed one of his pigs. Had killed Marion femme Pierron le Masson 3 years earlier, after she accused her wrongly of killing horse - master incited her to this, and she threw powder on her. Also admitted earlier killing of his horse, and of one belonging to Blaison Colas Bertrand after quarrel with his wife. Both these were killed by Navel with her consent - in second case made a felled tree fall on horse and kill it outright. Agreed she had been responsible for death of Valencin Connemant, at solicitation of master - agreed that he should go to woods and terrify him so that he died. Also admitted killing cow of Colas le Masson by putting powder in water it was drinking. No other malefices.

Had been to sabbat many times, Had seen Didier Ferry alias de la Maixe, Colatte femme Jean de la Fangue, and wife of Jean Barthelemin, all of Clemecey, and Agatte femme Claude Orbain of Sachemont. Also late Parisat Barthellemin of Anould. Many others present, but were masked.

8 January 1600; interrogation

Repeated earlier confessions, adding killing of a pig belonging to Mengel des Roses. Also said she had been angry with wife of Clement Masson of St Dié, because she said she had lost a dress she had taken to have dyed black. Touched arm of her little child with powder between fingers, intending to paralyze her arm - now regretted this because there was no way to cure her. Added to list of accomplices Jean Lallement of St Lienard, Mengeon Claudey Ferry and Claudatte femme Lambay Claudey Ferry of Vic, and Colas de la Senec le vieux of Hernafain.

Said that to go to sabbat master gave her grease to put on a broom; put this between legs and was carried up through chimney, travelling like the wind to sabbat. Usual dancing and feasting; had only made hail once, previous year, when fields at Daveline were damaged.

10 January 1600; procureur asks for death sentence

12 January 1600; Change de Nancy agrees, subject to final repetition of confessions.

17 January 1600; made further confession that all earlier avowals were true.