

B 8712 no 2; witch 273, Claudette femme Jean Dabo de Grattain

15 March 1614; procureur d'office for Canons of Saint Dié asks for her arrest and for collection of evidence; she had been accused by Jehennon fille Hidoult le Renard of Robache, who claimed that she had taken the form of a wolf and helped to devour a child.

17 March 1614; informations préparatoires

(1) Jehennon femme Demenge le Petit Nicolas de Robache, 40

Some 3 or 4 years before the accused had bought butter from her, and when asked for payment quarrelled with witness, saying 'qu'elle se faisoit bien de la glorieuse d'avoir le moien de vendre du buere, la menassant que l'an suivant, elle n'en venderoit point'. Turned out to be true, for her one cow could not bear a calf, and she blamed this on accused, in view of her long reputation and the threats. Around last St. Jean had asked witness to bring some butter she had bought at market back to Robache where she then lived; then came into house asking to buy cheese, although told there was none for sale. Found three small pots and demanded price of one of them, which she was allowed for 2 sols which she had still not paid; after this her cows again lost their milk. When children were crying after wolf which had carried off Claudon Didier Vagnier's child, saw accused going through meadow and taking 'une caloche ou tuison de bois' which she carried to village - had heard of accusation by la Reynarde.

(2) Mengeatte femme Blaise Marie de Robache, 42

After death of her husband Jean George le Vieux of Robache, she needed procureur to help her settle affairs. Witness's husband had acted for her, and she was due to pay him 'une chopine de vin'. Went to tavern with her, but in the end she did not want to pay full cost, so husband had to pay part of it, and made it clear he was not pleased. On way back to Robache Claudette suggested that he had threatened her, and witness tried to deny this. Subsequently three cows lost their milk, which she believed to be her doing, in view of her reputation, including idea that she had eaten child 'comme le bruict en est fort semé par le vilage'.

(3) Marguitte femme Jean Pierron Colas de Robache, 24

A year before at around last St. John's day, accused had come to offer her some hay, saying 'qu'elle en vouloit faire part, a ceulx qui luy donnoyent comme du lait ou autre charité', but witness refused to take it or give her anything in exchange, to which she replied 'qu'elle estoit bien haultayne'. Her two cows then lost their milk and had to be sold, and she suspected accused in view of her reputation and this refusal. Around Christmas they had killed a fat pig, but when Claudette came to house she did not offer her any meat, intending to give her some soup and boudins the following Sunday. Believed this was cause of sudden illness of her 3-month-old child, which occurred immediately after; so violent they did not believe she would live through the night. Claudette returned to house, and she told her

how child had become sick, to which she replied 'sy elle luy en soubconne le mal'; witness responded 'que non autrement, mais que beaucoup d'autres gens n'y avoient pas beaucoup de fiance'. Child promptly recovered. When plague was at Robache, the witness went to lodge with accused to avoid it, while husband supplied her with food and wine. Claudette usually drank most of the wine, so she removed to another house, but within a week became 'comme demoniacle', and when accused heard of this she said it would not have happened if she had stayed in her house, which made her believe she was cause of illness.

[Qu'il y eut un an passé vers la St Jean Baptiste derniere, ayant icelle prevenue du cercle de foison, c'est a dire de l'herbe, qu'elle avoit tiré de ses meix en cerclant, elle en presenta a la deposante, afin qu'elle luy donna quelque chose en recompense, disant qu'elle en vouloit faire part, à ceulx qui luy donnoyent comme du laict, ou autre charité, ce que la deposante ne voulout recepvoir, dont icelle prevenue luy repartit qu'elle estoit bien haultayne, advint par apres que n'ayant plus voulu prendre dudit cercle ny rien donner à ladite prevenue, ses deux vaches perdirent leur laictz tout à faict, tellement qu'il les convient vendre, lequel desplaisir la deposante soubconne luy avoir été causé par les malefices d'icelle prevenue, accusée, soubconnée, et maintenue pour sorciere comme le bruict en court, en hayne de ce que dessus.

... ayant faict tuer un porceau gras vers noel . . . ladite prevenue entra en leur losgis, a laquelle pourtant elle ne donna aucune chair, differant de ce faire jusques au dimenche suivant qu'elle luy en donneroit avec du pottage et des boudins, a l'occasion dequoy elle soubconne que le mal qui arriva au mesme instant a une sienne petite fille aagée d'un quart d'an ou environ, sy violent qu'elle pensa mourir la nuict, derive des venefices d'icelle prevenue, La raison en estant, pour ce qu'icelle prevenue ayant rentré au logis d'elle deposante, et entendu d'elle que depuis sa sortie ledit enfant c'estoit sy mal porté, elle respartit sy elle luy soubconnoit le mal, a quoy replicqua la deposante que non autrement, mais que beaucoup d'autres gens n'y avoient pas beaucoup de fiance, des ledit jour ledit enfant commenca à se bien porter, et guerit a ce moien.

Dict en oultre, que du temps que la peste estoit audit Robache, elle deposante se retira pour eviter le mal au logis d'icelle prevenue, ors qu'elle fut attainte d'autre maladie, et comme son marit luy fournissoit de vin et autres choses necessaires à son entretien, icelle prevenue luy bevoit le plus souvent la plus grande partie de son vin, subject pour lequel la deposante se retira du losgis d'icelle prevenue, au bout de quelques quinze jours et s'estant retire en un autre, a peine y fut elle huict jours, qu'elle devint comme demoniacle, duquel accident oyant parler ladite prevenue, respondit quesy ladite deposante n'eut quicté son losgis et se retire ailleurs, que tel accident ne luy fut arrivé, d'ou resta une oppinion a la deposante de penser que ledit mal luy avoit esté donné par ladite prevenue.]

(4) Demenge le Petit Nicolas de Robache, 35

Repeated wife's story about butter and cow losing milk.

(5) Jean Colas Pierson de Robache, 35

Had called her witch some years before after quarrel over pears from a shared tree; she had taken witnesses, but proceeded no further. Later one of his children became ill immediately after she had left house; he told wife not to admit her again, but she returned. Then repeated wife's account of conversation and cure of child.

(6) Colas Jean George jeune fils de Robache, 20

His late father had married her as second wife, but witness 'ne se pouvoit accorder avec elle', since she proceeded 'comme marastre faire tout a rebours les affaires de la maison'. Had many disputes with her, partly because his father 'comme viel et caduque' left him in charge of horses and carts. Believed that for this reason she had caused deaths of 4 or 5 horses; this had hardly affected her, since she had brought nothing to the household, and by marriage settlement had merely her keep and a sum of money.

(7) Mengeatte veuve Jean George le Jeune de Robache, 40

During husband's lifetime he had often quarrelled with her as father's second wife; on one occasion had pulled away half his beard, and boasted about it. After this he became 'comme demoniacle' with an illness of arms and legs; believed she might have caused this and subsequent illness from which he died, 'mais ne scavoit dire asseurement sy elle en estoit cause ou non'.

(8) Mengeatte fille feu Mathieu Friderich de Moyenmoustier, servante a Grattain, 19

When accused had wanted to leave village, she asked mistress of the witness if she could be allowed to help her carry her goods. Mistress told her it was up to her to decide, and 'en fin vaincue des prieres, et pour le doute qu'elle servante avoit d'icelle prevenue' she agreed to help. Claudette said she was going back for a 'garde de corps' she had left behind, then reappeared almost instantly, which made witness believe that her devil (if she were the witch she was reputed) had fetched it for her. Said she was leaving because of ill-treatment by husband.

(19 March 1614)

(9) Thomas Vagnier de Robache, 46

Around 2 years before had been obliged by need for money to seek payment of 8 ecus which her husband Jean George owed him. She did not want to pay; had also been quarrel over damage done by her husband's horses. Although he let her off 4 gros of debt, she told him he would repent. Shortly afterwards two pigs worth 50 francs became blind, then died, which he believed had been her witchcraft. Also told of incident previous year when his daughter, aged 9 or 10, had nearly been seized by a wolf; a workman 'qui fouroit des corps de fontaine' saw it and called out, so that it made off. Believed she had been wolf, in view of accusation by her accomplice. He had previously lost two wives, 'se doutant fort qu'icelle prevenue

n'aye grevé a l'une ou l'autre, veu que ladite complice disoit que ladite prevenue avoit bien faict du mal a luy deposant'.

(10) Marguitt femme Colin George de Robache, 40

Some 4 or 5 years before witness had a mare in foal, but Claudette was angry with her because she 'l'avoit decelé d'avoir faict plaisir a un bon compagnon'. Mare then became ill and died as if rabid. When there had been talk of taking la Reynarde she had consulted with accused, saying that she would be arrested too, and suggesting that they flee.

(11) Catherine femme Georgeon Grand George de Robache, 35

Accused had married her father, and she had been in custom of giving them some milk, but could not always do so when she was short herself. Claudette had some petty disputes with her over this, and she had then noticed that her cows were tending to lose their milk; imputed this to her, in view of her reputation.

(12) Catherine servante a Claudel Estienne de Robache, 24

A year before Claudette had threatened her because she believed she had allowed her master's animals to do some damage in her husband's field. Later they met in the fields and she gave witness a quarter of an apple; seemed to stick in her throat, and she became ill for a fortnight. At end of this time one of her master's cows got into Claudette's house, and when she went to fetch it was given some bread, after which she soon recovered. On another occasion was thrown by horse in middle of village, and thought she might be killed; then saw accused appear from behind a wall.

(13) Demenge Diez Schenault, hermite a la Chapelle d'Ursimont, 35

Had heard of Thomas Vagnier's suspicions over loss of pigs, and desire to have her taken; had later told her of this. Subsequently she asked him if rumour was still around, and he told her it was not, but she said that if it was she would flee. The late Jean George le jeune had said she was a witch and had made him ill, calling her witch in the presence of the witness. On occasion when the wolf took Claudon Didier Wagner's child, he had seen her crossing meadow with a 'caloche ou tinson de bois', seeming to have a wolf with her; suspected she had taken child in guise of wolf.

(14) Marie femme Diez Meschat de Saint Dié, 30

When la Reynarde had been in their house awaiting execution she had told them that Claudette had done much harm to the wives of Thomas Vagnier. Also story about wolf.

(15) Honnête homme le maire Nicolas Diez Schenault de Robache, 38

Previous evening at mill had heard Marguittre femme Colas Fallayeux claim that Claudette had given her an illness because she refused her some butter. Had not been able to come and depose because of her illness and distance away at which she lived.

Interrogation - no date, either 19 or 20 March 1614

Said she was Claudette, femme Jean Dabo. Father had been Claudon Bagon of Nompareglise, mother Jehennon from St. Benay near Ramberviller. She was about 60, had been 'artisanne et manouevriere gagnant sa vie comme elle a peu', had lived at Grattain since last St. Jean. First husband had been Didier le Roy (so she was commonly called Royne), second Jean George, with whom she had lived some 10 years at Robache.

Denied all charges, including most circumstantial details. Was told about denunciation by la Reynarde, including suggestion that they had eaten the child's heart.

Continued next day. Said she had absented herself by night from Grattain because of her husband; he had eventually found her begging at Ramberviller and taken her home. Otherwise no admissions, and towards end was refusing to reply to some questions.

21 March 1614; confrontations

Said of Colas Jean George that he had tried to kill her with his axe in the woods. Mengeatte fille Mathieu Friderich added that she had given her a sol for helping carry goods; had furious toothache so long as it was in purse, stopped when she bought some firewood for her mistress with the coin. Thought she had given her toothache, either with coin or with pears cooked in water.

22 March 1614; procureur asks for question ordinaire

24 March 1614; change de Nancy agrees

6 April 1614; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, started to confess when racked. Had been seduced by maitre Napnel 20 years before, on her way back from begging at Ramberviller, telling her that although she was 'fort pauvre et bien necessiteuse', he would give her money and goods 'assez pour vivre'. First used powder to kill a cat belonging to her neighbour Jean George at Robache, which had taken meat from her cooking pot. Since her first husband 'la traictoit fort mal' she killed him. Then admitted to series of other malefices. In case of child of Jean Colas Pierron, this was because parents had turned her out of house where she had previously lived. Had killed Jean George le jeune, because he was always going to his father's house and taking all he could.

Had refused to take host to Napnel, who had beaten her as a result. Napnel had been in her when she was questioned; had only left when she was given holy

water. Told of going to sabbat, where they had danced to sound of flute played by Francois Caillerey, or l'hermite, and made hail. Had also recognized Libaire femme Bernard Chartreux of Saint Dié, Zabey jeune fille of the same, now absent, and the wife of Colas Mongeau of le Viel Marché. Had also been three women from Mazelay, but since she did not frequent the village she could not name them. Had been very often, simply going on foot; claimed that because of her poverty she had never made hail to damage crops.

7 April 1614; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions.

8 April 1614; interrogation

Now discharged Libaire femme Bernard Chartreux and wife of Colas Mongeau.

17 April 1614; procureur asks for death sentence.

18 April 1614; Change de Nancy approves

22 April 1614; sentence carried out.