

B 8680 no 5; witch 175, Mongeatte femme Claude Tendon, de Saulcy-sur-Meurthe

(1) Jean Blaise Laisney, 70

Reputation more than 40 years; had always tried to give way to her and her husband, and had no personal suspicion.

(2) Blaisette femme du precedent, 55

Long reputation.

(3) Jean Colynot, 50

Reputation over 30 years. 15 years earlier had lawsuit with her husband about a discharge of water which latter wanted him to allow in his garden. Heard that she was very angry about the case, uttering various threats, and within days started to lose cattle, which he suspected was her doing. Later put animals out in meadow behind house for some air on winter day, and cow started coughing; heard Mengeatte, who was in garden nearby, say 'Thousse que tu puisse crever bien tôt apres les aultres', so told her she was a bad woman to wish him losses in this way, at which she left without saying a word. Cow died within a week, and between All Saints and Candlemas he lost animals to value of 100 ecus, over which he had always suspected her.

(4) Marguitte femme du precedent, 45

Reputation already strong when witness was married 20 years earlier. Then story of losses of animals; added that she asked man who cut up final cow to look at it, and was assured its death resulted from witchcraft.

(5) Magdelaine femme Jean Grand Didier, 60

Reputation over 30 years. After quarrel between husbands had lost animals in strange fashion, and believed this had been her witchcraft.

(6) Jehenne fille feu Colas Chastel, 30

Long reputation. 4 years earlier her father was collecting tithes, and husband of accused was caught evading them, at which she quarrelled with father of witness. Languished for a year before dying, saying that he believed she had bewitched him, and if he recovered he would have revenge if it cost him all his goods. Some 16 of 18 years before her mother was suckling her brother, aged about one, who was flourishing, when Mengeatte went to house and said she was not feeding him well, and should avoid black soups. After this immediately lost her milk, and after 9 days her father threatened Mengette with arrest unless she made milk come back, having caused its loss. Did not know what reply she made, but milk did return.

(7) Jean Demenge Noel, 50

Long reputation, but had not quarrelled with her. Some 10 years earlier had various losses of cattle (with strange illnesses) after occasions when he found her outside his stable, claiming to be looking for her hens. 8 years earlier Mengeatte had asked his wife for some dried pears for her children who were sick; she refused, but he was worried she might harm them and told his wife to send her some. Sent daughter aged about 5 with them, and Mengeatte gave her bread and cheese - she then sickened and died 3 weeks later, which he had always suspected was her witchcraft.

(8) Demenge Grand Ferry, 40

Reputation over 20 years. Previous year his son had quarrel with hers, whom he found pasturing animals in their field; he and Claude Tendon sent officers to one another, then made settlement. Soon lost a fine cow, and person who cut it up assured him this was witchcraft. Since then had suffered various misfortunes to himself and his animals, which he suspected were result of her witchcraft.

(9) Jean Demenge Jacquot, 35

After quarrels with her lost several animals. Previous year had dispute over fruit trees, during which he expressed hope that witches would be burned, saying he would pay 2 ecus; she said they would be dear ecus for him, and he then lost a foal worth 7 ecus, which he suspected had been her doing.

(10) Claude Mongeau, 30

2 years earlier Claude Tendon had encroached on his land, and had to make satisfaction; Mengeatte was angry, and told his wife he was 'ung meschant homme'. He reproached her for this, saying she was commonly reputed a witch and her husband a thief; several people heard, but she did not seek reparation. Within a few days lost a foal and a bullock, while best cow lost its milk; was sure this was her witchcraft.

(11) Jennon femme du precedent, 27

Similar testimony.

(24 July 1597)

(12) Demenge Grand Didier, 60

Long reputation. 18 years before had been a great thunderstorm which had done great damage to oats, which were mostly cut and stacked. He and others went out to survey damage, and saw Mengeatte all wet; her fields were virtually unaffected, while crops of others were scattered everywhere, which increased his suspicions. Called witch several times without seeking reparation.

(13) Didier fils du precedent, 24

Long reputation, and had called her witch without reparation being sought.

(14) Blaisette femme Didier Aulbert, 40

Long reputation. After a quarrel 7 years earlier called her witch, and she replied with threats witness did not hear properly; her only goat then sickened and died in a day as if rabid, which she suspected had been her witchcraft. After another quarrel 5 years earlier had lost a pregnant sow.

(15) Claude le Compte, salpetrier demeurant a Contramolin, 40

Previous year had wanted to work in an old room in her house, under terms of his patent from duke, and she and her husband wanted to prevent this. He and his wife called her witch in public, threatening to have her taken to St Dié, but she and her husband never sought reparation.

(16) Jennon femme du precedent, 36

Same story; said she had obtained reparation for various insults from Mengeatte's daughter. Witness had accused her of killing cow of Grand Ferry and foal of Claude Mengeat.

(17) Colas Colnot d'Aulbripare, 45

Reputation over 30 years.

(18) Didier Demenge Aulbert, 45

18 years earlier she had found some geese and a pig belonging to him in her meadow; came to tell him about it, saying she did not want to seek reparation, but would get even with him in another way. He said she was already reputed a witch, and must be one, to which she said he would repent. Pig died as if rabid within a few days, and he accused her of being cause, but she simply wished him and his pig to the devil. Uttered similar wish over goat whaich she found eating her hedge; again would not accept compensation, and animal died. Thought all this had been her witchcraft - long reputation.

(19) Marie femme Jean Masson, 24

Evidently wife of witness (9); similar deposition about the 2 ecus and death of foal. 2 years before she had remarked that a cow would soon calve; did so, but calf would not suck and died in 3 days; thought this too might have been her witchcraft.

(20) Mengeatte veuve Didier Babel, 60

Long reputation. 3 years earlier had 7 cows which miscarried, and suspected her witchcraft. 5 years earlier had sent witness some milk for a sick daughter, but she said she would rather fast than eat anything which came from her house. Mengeatte was told one of her sons had said this, and he then became strangely ill - illness moved around from head to arms and legs, then back again. This lasted 4 years, and again suspected her witchcraft.

(21) Barbellon femme Blaison Richard, de Mazeville au ban de Fraisse, 35

Before marriage 15 years earlier had lived with her father, le maire Claude Aulbry, at Saulcy; always heard her reputed a witch. At one time lost so many animals that they were almost in poverty, and Mengeatte found witness crying. When she explained reason she said that perhaps there were heads and bones of animals buried under their threshold, and that house would be unlucky unless they had it blessed by a priest. Told her father, who did get curé to bless the house, but was not willing to look under threshold; said he was ruined and had nothing more to lose anyway. 2 years later her parents and brothers and sisters all died; could not say that Mengeatte had caused all this, but if she confessed she might tell truth about it.

(22) Thoussaint fils feu Colas Chastey, 24

Same story as sister (witness 6) about quarrel over tithes and death of father.

(23) Jennon femme Colas Grand Didier, demeurant a Mandray, 40

2 years earlier had lived for a month in house of George de Hault at Clingotte, and she and husband were talking of rumour that both the Tendons were witches. George said she was a witch but he was not; a few days later George himself was arrested and burned as a witch, but she did not know if he accused Mengeatte.

(24) Colas Grand Didier, de Mandray, 40

Same story as wife.

(25) Dieudonné Colas Grand Didier, doyen du ban de Saulcy, 50

Reputation over 35 years. Some 15 years earlier had lawsuit with her husband over a meadow, which witness won, and then lost various animals with strange illnesses. Suspected her witchcraft, and told her she was a witch or there were none in Saulcy, but she did not seek reparation.

30 July 1597; interrogation

Said she was about 56, native of Fouchifol, married to Claude Tendon for some 40 years during which they had always lived at Saulcy. Knew she was accused of witchcraft, but insisted she was innocent.

In case of cow of Jean Colnot, said his losses of animals had been caused by Jean Babey, who confessed this during trial; was told this was untrue.

After denying various other charges, said she asked God's mercy for her faults, and begged them to make her peace with the chapter, saying her husband would give them satisfaction. Then said that 2 years earlier one of her sons had been taken prisoner to St Dié, accused of making cousin pregnant and being a 'sodomiste'. She was weeping in her garden when hideous figure in black, with claws, appeared and offered to get son out of prison if she would believe in him. She said she only wished to believe in God, and her son would be released if he wished it, but asked visitor his name. He said he was Percin, and tried to give her powder to kill people and animals when she was angry, but she refused it, also his offers to kill them for her if she gave her consent. Had not seen him since.

Under pressure to confess that she had renounced God, and taken powder to commit maléfices, she now admitted this, although 'ce fut bien malgré elle et n'estoit d'ung bon coeur'. Had intercourse with her, and gave her black powder, which she tried on a kitten and on one of their sheep, which died.

Denied committing any other maléfices, or being asked to go to sabat. Asked about specific cases, continued to deny.

31 July 1597; interrogation

Repeated earlier statement, and was then told that her reputation was more than 30 years old; it was impossible she had not done more. Remained obstinate, and was sent back to prison.

1 August 1597; procureur asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

3 August 1597; Change de Nancy approves

8 August 1597; interrogation under threat of torture

When shaved and prepared for torture she finally changed her story. Some 30 years earlier her daughter Marguritte, now married to Jean Bonipaire of Chanoy, was 7 or 8, and was lost one night when looking for animals. Was still looking for her after noon next day when husband returned from St Dié and said that he heard a girl had been eaten by animals, who had only left her head. Thought this might be her daughter, and was in despair when Percin appeared and promised to find her daughter if she would give herself to him. Gave promise, and he then found the girl sleeping under a bush, so she had to keep her part of bargain. He made her renounce God, had intercourse with her, and gave her black powder to kill animals, saying he needed meat for his people.

Told girl off for causing such trouble; she said she had been afraid to return because previous night her father had been angry when she could not find animals, and told her not to return home without them.

Used powder to kill a bullock and a horse of their own, then a cow of the late Jean du Ban. Had made contract to give Percin a black hen every autumn so that he would not see her as often as the others.

2 years later he met her as she was looking for animals one evening, and took her to sabat - carried through air on his back. Found several people beating water to make hail, and joined them, but it did not do much harm. Then sat in circle with Percin in centre, and he gave them meat, but it was horsemeat and not very good; no bread or salt. Were three musicians, and Percin started dance with a woman who had a large silver belt, while she danced with Jean Babey of Mandray. Finally they all passed before him and made reverence, while he gave them powder and exhorted them to kill men and animals.

Recognized Didier Pierrat, Catherine veuve Dieudonné Alzey, Mongeatte veuve Didier Babey (all of Saulcy), Claude Andreu of Fouchifol, the mairesse of Mandray (executed previous year), Jean Blaise and Estienatte of Entre-deux-Eaux (also executed), and George Cayel of Taintrux (executed).

Had killed cow of Jean Colynot after quarrels, and another of Colas Noel after his pigs damaged her garden and he called her witch. Denied any other maléfices.

Percin later gave her some grease and a small broom; when it was time appointed for sabat she greased it, put it between her legs in front of chimney, and said 'hault de par le diable', at which she was carried up chimney and through the air to the sabat.

At second sabat on Cambas near Taintrux were a dozen persons. Apart from some she had already named, included Colatte Villon and Didier Vincent of Taintrux (both executed), Jean Claude Colin and wife of Claude Andreu, of Fouchifol, Colas Girard of Saulcy, Colas Cayel of le Faing, and the wife of Colin l'Hoste of Contramolin. At other sabats had seen widow of Mathis Viney of Coinche, Valentin Dion of la Goutte de Coinche and his wife Colatte, and the daughter of la Malraymatte of Ste Marguerite - she was married to man whose name she did not know, but whose mother had been burned, as had la Malraymatte. Also Dieudonné Rohay of Coinche, and wife of one Flandrey of le Faing.

Then said her husband was a perfect witch. Some 16 or 17 years before had told her he too had been to sabat. Had been seduced when upset over great storm which had scattered the oats. Had been to sabat together on 3 occasions, but generally only one went at particular time.

3 years earlier Percin had persuaded her to take her daughter Marguitte to him; she was complaining of bad treatment by her husband Jean Bonipaire, and was persuaded to go to sabat on grounds that she would meet a man who would make her happy. Once there started by refusing to renounce God, but mother persuaded her to do so - had since seen her 3 or 4 times at sabat. Also saw a man from Ste Marguerite whom she knew as Demenge de la Leau, who had no children.

Husband had told her of a few maléfices against animals.

9 August 1597; interrogation under torture

Said she had not slept a quarter of an hour all night, praying God and the Virgin to remind her of all the maléfices she had committed, but could remember no more.

Confirmed all her accusations, saying she was particularly sorry for her husband and daughter, but she would urge them to confess without torture. Also said she regretted that her children would be poor, since all their property would be

confiscated. Emerged that Jean Claude Colin of Fouchifol, whom she had named, was her brother. Added name of widow of Claude Colnot of Mandray, who was already under arrest.

Would not confess any more maléfices, so was lightly racked. Then gave list of animals she had killed as result of typical minor quarrels with neighbours. Also story of how 16 years earlier cartload of wood was bogged down, and when Claudatte fille Dieudonné le maire of Aulbripare passed with father's horses she refused to help. Was angry and wanted to harm her; a few days later Percin gave her a stick which he told her to put in the river at place where Claudatte would pass barefoot, saying it would hurt her foot and kill her. As soon as stick was in place she came along chasing pigs, and hurt her toe on it; infection spread and she died miserably some 6 months later.

Had also killed her nearest neighbour Claude Maire Aulbry when angry with him; again Percin told her where to put powder, and he slept there, developed bad knee, and died in a month as was predicted. 12 years earlier had killed Jennon fille Richrd d'Anouzey by putting stick in field so that she hurt her foot - no reason given this time.

Asked why she had not confessed all this before, said that Percin had visited her in prison and tried to make her renounce all confessions. She said she would not because she wanted to save her soul, so he then urged her not to confess killing the three people and other animals. Also told her there was a witch from le Faing in prison, who would not confess as easily as she had done.

Now admitted she and her husband had made mutual promise not to accuse one another, about a year earlier, but she was now determined to save her soul.

11 August 1597; interrogation

Now discharged her daughter Marguittre and Dieudonné Alzey of Saulcy; latter had insulted her several times, and she had accused him in hatred because he was cause of her arrest.

Added name of Mathieu Blaise of Ste Marguerite to accomplices - had previously identified him only as an old man with grey beard, whose name she had forgotten. Then discharged Colas Girard and wife of Colin l'Hoste.

11 August 1597; procureur for chapter asks for death sentence

12 August 1597; Change de Nancy approves

19 August 1597; sentence carried out