

B 9573; witch 334, Barbelline fille Guillaume Jean Chaperey de Ste Croix

18 October 1604; informations préparatoires

(1) Nicolas Marchal bourgeois de Ste Croix, 40

In September 1596, when they were neighbours, she had brought some sheets to wash made by his wife. Next day she claimed they had not returned a chemise, and took best one from their room saying it was hers. They got a seamstress to inspect it, who said it had been made in Germany, thus proving her wrong, but she refused to hand it over, and he called her witch. Later beat her with handle of an axe, and finally he made her reparation, but she had to return the shirt; told him it would have been better for him if he had never seen it, and that he would repent 'cent et cent fois'. Next day she got a lift on his cart, although he had told the boy not to take anyone; horse was slightly unwell that evening, and later in week stopped at point where she had got on. Became blind and died; when carcase was being cut up mark of her hand was visible, so that he suspected her of causing death.

(2) Hanry Wiriat bourgeois de Ste Croix, 54

In 1594, when they lived near one another, had small child one year old. She took it under arm and carried it to house of Nicolas Houppelin; on return became ill, and died after 6 weeks, so he suspected her. Asked about previous quarrels, said that his daughter Jeanne had suspected Barbelline of making her ill, and he had threatened her with a severe beating if she did not heal her, calling her witch. She replied that he would repent, 'et qu'elle luy feroit seicher comme le bois seichit au bois, et qu'elle le mectroit aussy bas que les cendres du feu'. Daughter then recovered, but he made reparation for calling her witch.

(3) Cristienne femme du précédent, 44

Told of illness of child after Barbelline had taken it; had started to cry like a pig, but said it had died of smallpox, while continuing to blame her. Said that when la Cordonniere and her daughter were on trial for witchcraft (executed) accused had asked to stay in their house on pretext that she was frightened of great noise the cats were making around hers, but she had refused. They had sometimes heard a great tumult around her house, but when they rushed out found nothing. Also alleged compromising remark after telling her they had accused many others (text damaged here). Story of daughter's illness; husband had threatened that he would have her burned or kill her. When Nicolas Marchal was beating her Nicolas Houpperlin called out to do it well, 'et qu'il y avoit longtemps, qu'elle estoit sur le rouge papier, et qu'elle seroit la premiere prinse, et que'elle estoit une double sorcière.'

Told of occasion when child of Quentin de Verpelliere, stepfather of accused, was burned; she had been in house of witness, and said she would have been blamed had she not been with her at the time.

(19 October 1604)

(4) Christienne veuve Jean Chenillart de Ste Croix, 57

Told of hearing her and daughter crying and shouting strangely on way home from veillée. Then told of occasion when daughter was still at breast, and when child was asleep she had wanted to leave her on their bed so that she could go dancing. Witness told her she did not dare agree without permission of husband, but when he appeared he refused, telling her to take the child to her own house. Still tried to persuade her again; same evening she became violently ill, feeling she hated husband and wanted to strangle him. Started to vomit, and was ill for three weeks; cure followed occasion when Barbelline passed in front of her at door twice in quick succession. Suspected her of causing illness.

(5) Thomas Matthieu de Ste Croix, 47

Told of occasion when there was a great noise around her house, and neighbours went to see; next day daughter said that her mother had been beaten by a big black man.

(6) George le Remendeur bourgeois de Ste Croix, 36

Some 9 years before she had been getting milk from his wife for her child; at this point his father added 3 cows to the 3 he already had, and he decided to seek larger profit by using milk otherwise. Told wife to stop selling it, so next day warned Barbelline of this. Still came again next day, and when refused asked if she had not paid before, at which wife agreed she had. Same evening best cow stopped giving milk, and subsequently died; called executioner to cut it up and see what it had died of. Found organs all burned, and most of flesh was black, so he told witness it was 'vraie sortilege'; subsequently lost all the other cows and 4 oxen, over which he suspected her.

(7) Jeannon femme Jean Graniere le jeune de Ste Croix, 44

Some 7 years earlier they had quarrelled over the purchase of some butter - she had sold 4 pounds to accused, who then seems to have claimed short weight. Threatened her that she would make no more butter, and then her cow died, over which she suspected her.

(8) Sybille femme Colin Riotte de Ste Croix, 40

Her late husband Estienne Delbois had lost a horse, and found a man who advised him to put a white root he gave him in a sack of flour, then beat it; this would cause the witch to appear, and he should give her a good beating. Did this, and Barbelline appeared, asking what he was doing, but because he owed her some money he stopped without saying anything to her.

(9) Marguerite femme Colas Winssart de Ste Croix, 24

Some 15 months before accused had invited her to her house for supper, and had given her ingredients to make a soup (flour, onions, salt, and a little beef). Fell ill afterwards, becoming bedridden for 3 months; Barbelline looked through window and asked how she was, then gave her a piece of 'bretzelle', after eating which she started to recover. Later went (at request of accused) to help her with work, and she reproached her with having put it about village that she had made her ill; witness denied this and asked her to produce witnesses so that she could justify herself. Barbelline then told her to be quiet, at which she replied that she should not threaten her and had already done her enough harm, since when they had not spoken.

(10) Mre Michel Waldrier homme vil demeurant a Stainbach, 40

3 years earlier his wife had beaten her over petty dispute, and he lost a horse next day; suspected her over this and another he lost a year later. On first occasion was putting horse and cart away after dark when a number of cats got in the way, making a great noise; called for wife to bring light, and drove them off with handle of broom, but unable to hit any of them.

(20 October 1604)

(11) Didielle femme Pierre Charpentier, ?

Told of occasion when she wished her good night, only for her to reply 'que mal soir puisse elle avoir', after which she was never well, and lost twin children with which she was pregnant, three weeks beyond half term. Asked about quarrels, said that when she was being pursued by a certain La Rose she took refuge in their house, and he wounded her husband with a sword, for which he went to court to recover his costs and lost time from her.

(12) Didielle femme Quentin de Verpelliere bourgeois de Ste Croix, 40

Some 8 years before had husband's grandchild (from daughter of previous marriage) in house, when he became ill. Barbelline advised her to give him drink made with 'barbontine', and next day she left him by fire (which was covered) while she took dinner to husband at foundry. Passed house of accused, who asked who was in the house, to which she replied that there was no-one; returned to find that child had been fatally burned. Was punished by justice for this, but suspected accused, and they had some quarrel before which she did not remember.

(13) Quentin de Verpelliere bourgeois de Ste Croix, 60

Her late mother had been his wife, and when in service in Allemaigne with wife of prévôt at Bercheny, who was executed as a witch, she appeared outside house between 11 and 12 at night, begging to be let in. Wife was angry, but she was crying and said if she had not returned 'qu'elle le seroit la fois la'. Then told story of death of his grandchild; when his present wife came out with his dinner she was forced to return by wind and snow. When he was called and passed Barbelline's

house he told her the child was dead, to which she replied 'dieu at l'ame de luy'; he suspected her over death. Her mother had told him that when he was away at foundry of Val de Viller accused had drawn her knife on her, so she had had to get two men to watch her overnight; she had split the door of their room with an axe. When her mother was ill during last wars in Allemaigne she had gone to get something he had placed on church for safety, but had sold it at Ste Marie and never given him any reckoning.

(14) Idatte femme George le Remendeur, 30

Repeated husband's story of refusal to continue selling her milk, and subsequent losses.

(21 October 1604)

(15) Jean Grand Remy, chastelein du chateau de la haulte Eschery, 50

Told how 20 years before he had been invited to supper by Quentin de Verpelliere, but accused would not join them, and made such a noise behind the stove, cursing her mother, that he left.

(16) Toussainte femme Jean de la Voeuvre, demeurant a Ste Marie, 36

Had lived with her for a time at Ste Croix, and after some minor quarrel she had trodden on the hands of two small children of witness, hurting them. She asked Barbelline who were the greater children, at which she started to insult her, and in the end witness took her before the official to obtain recompense. Had to be called three times, and 'ne fut sy femme de bien que d'y comparoir en personne'. Soon after her daughter Odille became blind, then died, 'remectant le tout au jugement de dieu si icelle delinquante est cause de la mort d'icelle ou non'. Later accused was frequenting house of one Corberotte, and they complained of her to witness, but said they could not put her out because they owed her a little money. Wife then became ill and died after a year, losing use of limbs and finally seeming out of her mind; told witness she feared Barbelline had given her the illness. Had earlier told her that accused had been chased away from Fertrux, and she had given her shelter; slept in same bed, but during night was great noise of cats, which frightened her and made her sorry she had offered lodging.

(17) Honn. homme Colin Symon, bourgeois et lieutenant de maire a Ste Croix, 60

Attending the trials of various witches, had several times heard her named as an accomplice. After trial of la Cordonniere and her daughter the late Sieur Aulbald, commis of the sieur Surintendant, had said 'que si ce n'eust este pour l'esgard d'une petite fille qu'icelle detenue avoit qu'il l'eut faict constituer prisonniere pour ledit faict'.

(18) Jeannon femme Didier Saulcette clerc juré au Val de Liepvre, 21

At haymaking time previous year had gone to meadow at Staimbach where accused was living with some of her servants, and found daughter of accused spoiling the hay (text damaged here). Later drank some water which she had brought from house (where she said her mother was ill), and witness became very ill, with headache. Illness lasted 6 weeks, during which she was very hot, could not sleep, and seemed insane, thinking she should leave her husband and commit some crime. Believed accused might have caused her illness.

(19) Marguerite femme Anthoine Menginat bourgeois et doyen de Ste Croix, 30

Some 6 years earlier, three months after her marriage, Barbelline came to house and said to her 'qu'elle pouvoit bien boire et menger, scavoir des poules et aultres bonnes viandes, avec ce faire une bonne bource si elle pouvoit, et que la precedente femme dudit son marit n'avoit gueres heu de santé avec luy, et qu'elle n'en auroit pas moings, mesme qu'elle n'auroit aulcuns enfants avec luy, ny avec aultres'. Said she had not quarrelled with her, but her mother had told her she was angry because she was not invited to wedding feast. Since that time witness had been in poor health in both body and mind, and suspected accused of being the cause.

(20) Didier Saulcette clerc juré au Val de Liepvre, ?

Told of accusations by other witches, including Helaine femme Estienne Delois of Ste Croix. Elizabethe fille Lienard le Parmentier, of St Blaise, had said she was taken to sabbat by Helaine's daughter Claudatte. When Claudatte was convicted she told him privately that unknown woman whom Elizabethe had seen dancing was Barbelline.

When she lived next to his house at Ste Croix had lost many animals, although he did not know if she was responsible. Then told story of wife's illness.

(23 October 1604)

(21) Mathis Bock coupeur de paille de Ste Croix, 36

Some 7 or 8 years before, when he first came to Ste Croix, was living with innkeeper Nicolas Houpperlin. His wife was pregnant, and was buying fruit such as pears from accused; Houpperlin's wife warned witness of reputation for witchcraft, but suggested that he conceal this from his wife for the present, in case she became fearful. After getting more pears she fell ill, and child was born all black, while she could not feed it; given to nurse but quickly died. She had previously asked him if she could be godmother, suggesting that 3 or 4 ecus would suit her well, but he had said that if the child prospered he would want 'gens de bien' to hold it at the font. On another occasion she told him 'que sa femme n'allaiteroit guere d'enfants'; two more had been born, but both died within days, and he firmly believed she was cause of this. He had bought a house from Jean Comta (in which she was living?) and been drinking 'vins de marché' when she came and warned him that shutters and doors had been blown down, adding that he would never have any luck there - he seems to have withdrawn from deal.

(22) Urselle femme du precedent, 36

Basically same story as husband; said that since she did not know French had been glad to find someone with whom to talk German, but not clear if this was the innkeeper or the accused.

(23) Michiel Pilmant de Ste Marie, 60

Previous year his late wife had met her in street, and accused had pulled off a small piece of linen she wore in front of her mouth in the German fashion, saying she should not hide herself like that when it was not so cold. Wife became ill, unable to eat or keep anything down, and died after a year, always maintaining that she had caused illness.

(24) Urselle fille du precedent, femme Hans Henry, 24

Repeated father's story.

(25) Jean Gaultier de Fertrux, 35

Some 18 months before had been at Selestat, where 'la nouvelle hostesse' of Fertrux asked him to look after 3 resaulx of wheat she had bought, and to say that he had bought one of them. The accused came up and told him that she wanted one of them, knowing that he could well afford it, otherwise she would denounce him to the authorities for having bought grain for another person. Argument followed, and he later fell ill. Was finally suggested to him that he should obtain three substances from her house, after eating which he began to recover. Suspected her of causing illness.

29 October 1604; interrogation

Said she was native of Sainte Croix, aged about 35. Had gone into service at Bergheim when she was 15, but had been treated very badly by wife and daughter of prévôt, so had only stayed 6 months. Admitted that mistress had been executed as a witch, but said she did not know if she had accused her (as judges suggested). When she returned had thought she saw shadowy form under nut tree, and called on Jesus, after which it vanished - could only say it had been something long. Had later gone back into service, at Selestat and elsewhere in Allemaigne. Had married 'ung allemand', with whom she had returned to Ste Croix, but he had gone off to war after 6 months and she had never heard from him since. Said it was because of 'meschantes langues' which were already wrongly working against her that he left. Since then had lived as honestly as she could at Ste Croix, but in the year of the wars had a bastard daughter who still lived with her. Said her only disputes had been with hangman, because wife beat her and they called her witch, for which they had been to court and paid reparation.

Exhorted to think of her soul and tell truth, otherwise she might suffer question extraordinaire, and 'les plus grands tormentz qu'il soit possible', she said

she would not perjure herself, and they could do what they liked with her, but she was no witch. Said that executed witches had accused her from hatred, and what witnesses said was merely fables.

? October 1604; confrontations

Said that Nicolas Marchal's wife had given her the shirt, bringing it to her house. Said of Hanry Wiriot 'qu'elle luy avoit faict beaucoup de plaisir et que presentement luy en donnoit son louyer'. He claimed that one called la musniere had come to her house after midnight asking her to heal her; she denied this in exact form, but agreed she had come and asked for three things from house, so she gave her 'chandelle beniste', bread and salt, since she did not want to refuse her. She claimed he had called her witch and had to make reparation. He added that when some witches were prisoners she had asked him to house her and her daughter for the night, but he had refused for fear of being fined; later she asked him if they were going to take other witches, to which he replied that he knew nothing. She denied this, saying that on the contrary he had come to her poisle.

Said she was not cause of death of Jean Graniere's cow, but suspected Jacot le Housse of Ste Croix. Said Marguerite Wiussart was 'une truande'. Said she had nourished Didielle Charpentier previous year, and would have done so again; was not cause of the death of her children.

Judges broke off to exhort her to confess, saying that those like her usually maintained innocence but confessed under torture. She replied 'n'avoir aucun support pour la revenger, et que pour tout ce que les tesmoings deposent contre elle, n'estoit que par hayne et envie'.

Said she knew that Elizabethe, daughter of la Cordonniere, had accused her, but this had been out of hatred; had been enemies since they were both serving at Selestat and she had called her 'larronesse de cousteaux'. Sieur Aulbert had told her about this, and had wanted her to leave the valley.

Said she had been asked to wedding feast of Marguerite Magniat, as wife of cleric juré could testify, but could not go because she lacked the money. After evidence of cleric juré, said that Helaine Delois had hated her, and had thrown a burning branch from the fire across her fingers, after which she had given her a good beating (not clear who did what to whom).

Said she had not caused death of Michiel Pilmant's wife; had met her on way back from Ste Marie; she was trembling all over and said she was dying of cold.

Overall she denied all serious charges, although admitting some incidental details; no effective reproaches to witnesses.

5 November 1604; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire et extraordinaire

8 November 1604; interrogation under torture

Denied at first, but when racked asked to be released and she would tell truth. Said that at time of last wars in Allemaigne, when there was a garrison at Liepvre, she had been seized by 5 soldiers who raped her. On her way back a man appeared to her, saying that she was very sad, and if she would obey him he would provide for her needs, to which she agreed. Would confess nothing more, so was

racked again. Now said that she, Augnenesse femme Jean Crepin of Staimbach, and the widow of le petit Blaise of Ste Croix had caused death of Hanry Wiriat's child; she had put powder in an apple, then had wanted to heal child, but accomplices would not agree. Her cries at night had been to God, to prevent her being beaten by her master.

Said she was not cause of loss of animals by George le Remendeur; this had been doing of wife of Jacot Jean Martin, alias le Housse, who had told her she would have him 'bien en mains', and would kill him if she promised not to accuse her. Same woman had given her grease with which she killed horse of late Estienne Delbois, who would not pay her a debt, so that she lacked money to go to the marriage feast. Said she might have killed children of Pierre Charpentier; had met l'Allemande, widow of Humbert Charpentier, who was also angry with them, and gave her powder with which she poisoned an apple of pear she gave them, but did not know who had eaten it. All maléfices had been at the solicitation or with aid of her accomplices.

Had been angry with 'la corberotte' over occasion when she told accused some lard she had bought was no good; she and wife of Jacot la Housse were also angry because no present was given them when her daughter was betrothed. Latter told her that 'elle estoit faschée pareillement a certains huguenotz', and gave her powder with which she poisoned a pear. Victim died after eating this, but was already ill.

Had made wife of cleric juré ill; one day she met Demenge le Loup, living at L'Allemand-Rombach, who told her he hated him for some harm he had done him, and wished he were a witch so that he could kill him. During conversation Auguenesse appeared, and suggested that she give him something, adding that his wife hated her, which was reason for putting powder in the water she sent her. Was taken by her daughter, who was aged 11. Also said there was another witch at Liepvre, the wife of Didier de Mathaincourt.

Claimed that wife of the 'Rolvier' of Ste Croix had made Anthoine Menginat's wife ill; had also threatened to harm the cleric jure. Another of his enemies was Bastienne Morgande, veuve Demenge Ogier of Ste Croix, who had said that his wife 'n'estoit qu'une glorieuse'.

22 November 1604; Change de Nancy approves death sentence, prescribing that she be strangled after feeling fire.

3 December 1604; interrogation

Asked if she persisted in confessions, replied 'qu'elle avoit confesse davantaige qu'elle n'avoit commis ny perpetué, mais que c'estoit este par la contrainte de la question, et qu'elle n'eust estimé y debvoir avoir tant de personnes contre elle, ce qu'aient consideré, l'auroit induit a icelles confessions.'

None the less persisted in some essential confessions, including seduction and some maléfices. Now said she had not caused death of la Corberotte, nor made wife of cleric juré ill; in latter case it was Le Loup who drank from water first, and she did not know if he had put something in it. Had not killed children of 'le coupeur du paille'. As for what she had said about sabbat, 'elle l'avoit apprin des proces d'autres sorcieres qui l'auroient cy devant confessé'.

When told she must go back to prison, made offers to confess all her crimes, but in fact added nothing. Was reported by officers that she said she had not been compelled to go to sabbat, had only been once, and did not recognize any accomplices.

5 December 1604; Change de Nancy approves further torture, while maintaining previous sentence

8 December 1604; interrogation

Again confessed seduction, but when questioned about some maléfices (not specified which) would not agree. Then preparations were made to torture her again, at which she made a series of admissions to sabbat and some of the maléfices she had denied on previous occasion. Confirmed names of accomplices previously given, said that la Rolbiere was the mistress at the sabbat because she committed more maléfices than the others.

10 December 1604; formal death sentence, by burning alive, which was carried out same day.