

Witch 160: B8677 no 6, Blasotte femme Claudon Collon de La Chapelle

15 October 1596; informations préparatoires taken by maire and gens de justice of ban de Moyenmoustier against Blasotte femme de Claudon Collon of la Chapelle, at request of Noel George of la Chapelle, who had made himself partie formelle against her. Had informed admodiateur of abbey on 12 October, when suspect had been arrested.

(1) Noel George de la Chapelle, c. 30

Long reputation; had several times heard her called witch without taking action. Some 10 years before he had quarrelled with her, and won resulting court case; since then had lost 5 cows and other animals, finding it impossible to raise any up to present.

(2) Claudon Jean Claude de la Chapelle, c. 36

Reputation 12 years; had himself called her witch. Suspected her of causing loss of several sheep, after quarrels.

(3) Demenge Jean Claude de la Chapelle, c. 50

Told how some 3 years before Blasotte had come in a fury to complain to his sister that one of her children had called Blasotte's 'fille de genaxe'. Sister had been beating her daughter when he went up and asked her: 'fault il que tu fasse les meschants le coeur jouyr'. Blasotte said nothing, but threw her arms up in threatening fashion. Next day an ox fell ill, and died as if rabid 5 days later. Also suspected her on other occasions of causing deaths of a calf and a sheep, also as if rabid. Further suspected her of causing illness of his small child, whose godmother she was; a month after baptism developed 'apostumes' on arm and leg, latter apparently permanently damaged. Long reputation, had been called witch.

(4) Claudatte veuve de Nicolas le Rieusse de Moyenmoustier, c. 40

Long reputation. Some 5 years before had been taking sick baby on pilgrimage to St. Gregoire in Ban de cept, and stopped at inn in la Chapelle on way back, where Blasotte put her hand near cradle. On way back child became very ill, and died 3 weeks later - believed that if she were a witch she had caused this.

(5) Marion jeune fille de Moyenmoustier, c. 26

10 years before had been doing day work in Blasotte's house when there had been a thunderstorm; she had come in with a handful of hair which made a great smell when she put it on the fire.

(6) Blason Charpentier de la Chapelle, c. 40

Had always heard that she was a witch. After quarrels with himself and his wife she had told latter repeatedly 'qu'elle ne mourroit d'autres mains que des siennes'. Later she had approached his wife in fields one day with stones in her hands, but

fled when she saw him approaching. Also suspected her in connexion with various losses of animals.

(7) Claudon Valtin de la Chapelle, c. 80

Reputation more than 15 years; often called witch. Had threatened his servant when she would not agree to guard her animals as well as his, after which she had her arm broken and was in great pain.

(8) Valtin Claudon Valtin de la Chapelle, c. 30

Long reputation. Suspected her of causing death of a calf previous year, after he had forced her husband to pay fine for damage caused by animals their son had allowed to stray on his own land.

(9) Jennon femme a Jean Claude de la Chapelle, c. 60

Did not believe she had done her any harm.

(iO) Jennon femme a Claudon Pellier de la Chapelle, c. 50

Long reputation. Had several disputes with her when a girl, after one of which her father lost a pig - she had made threats, and been behind their house. Had quarrelled with her again some 10 years before, when she had been pregnant; Blasotte said 'que mal joye et mal chance puisse tu avoir, et puisse tu retourner de lict'. Had premature child which died before baptism, and was herself unwell for some 6 months. Further quarrels followed, because witness accused Blasotte of being cause of her misfortunes; this time they lost a calf, and a horse which died as if rabid.

(11) Catherine femme a Jean Reullemant de la Chapelle, c. 40

Long reputation. Some 3 years before Blasotte's son had quarrelled with their servant who was guarding animals in fields; heard from Catherine wife of Demenge Simon that she had threatened the girl, saying 'je t'auray toy ou ton maitre' - some time later they had a bull dead. Had also been trouble because her husband alleged he had been overtaxed by witness's husband, and been fined for beasts straying; two successive years saw their field damaged by hail, when those around were not.

(12) Demenge Claudon Gerardin de la Chapelle, c. 50

General reputation; had been called witch without reacting.

(13) Claudon Pellier de la Chapelle, c. 60

Reputation 20 years. Had once refused to take her son with him when he was taking cart to woods, and that evening he was a long time on the road and could not get home. A horse died 8 days later as if rabid, and in succeeding months (after other quarrels) he lost a cow and a calf.

(14) Claudon Colas du Mesnil de la Chapelle, c. 46

Had long heard her suspected when there were animals dead or other misfortunes, but had no personal belief she had caused him harm.

(15) Jean Valtin de la Chapelle, c. 30

Reputation 7 years. Had suffered several misfortunes, but did not suspect her of causing them - had often heard Mongeon Jean blame her.

(16) Barbelline femme a Blason Charpentier, c. 30

Repeated husband's story about threats and attempt to attack her with stones. Also said she had heard that when the daughter of Nicolas George du Mesnil had been guarding the animals of the accused, she had been told by her that Noel George's cow was 'essenat', but would be otherwise by 'les Roys', at which time it duly died. The girl had told the story to others, but when Blasotte heard of this she threatened 'qu'elle feroit seichir ladite fille'. Shortly afterwards girl became very ill 'et n'avoit la figure de gens'.

(17) Claudon Gerardin doyen en la justice, de Moyenmoustier, c. 36

Some 8 years earlier, when he had been marlier of ban, had gone round collecting customary dues. Blasotte said she owed him nothing; he said he had 'bien sonné lors qu'il estoit temps', to which she replied 'qu'il chie sur les cloches, et qu'elle aymeroit aultant qu'il ne sonne pas', and he retorted 'ainsy font les sorcieres'. Some time afterwards, when he took his cart to village to collect what was due she still made difficulties, and on return he had various 'fortunes'. Went and said to her 'Sorciere advise qu'il ne m'arrive encore telle fortune que j'ay heu, ou altrement je te feray mourir', after which they ceased. Some 3 years before had again been in difficulties with her when he had been tithe collector, and she had not wanted to pay; she had then gone and helped his young son to load sheaves, but immediately afterwards the child had an illness 'au col du pied', which surgeons were unable to do anything for.

(18) Jean Reullement de la Chapelle, c. 40

Claimed that when she had been young woman 20 years earlier he had heard her say that if she were a witch she would kill or break necks of those who passed over her father's field. Some years earlier, when he had been levying a tax and had charged her at 3 sols she had come to complain and threaten, after which he lost an ox. Also told of field with hail damage previous year.

(19) Catherine femme de Jean des Auxes, de la Chapelle, c. 40

Long reputation, but did not think she had done them any harm - had always given her whatever she asked from their houee.

(20) Catherine femme de Demenge du grand meix de la Chapelle, c. 36

General reputation only.

(21) Claudatte femme a Jean Simon de la Chapelle, c. 20

Long reputation. Accused her of having killed her mother 8 years earlier; had been taking pears from their tree, when witness saw her and warned her mother. Altercation followed, and mother ate a fallen pear; promptly fell ill, and died after illness lasting a year.

(22) Colas George Mongenat de la Chapelle, c. 50

General reputation only.

(23) Marguitte femme a Claudon Jean Claude de la Chapelle, c. 36

General reputation only.

(24) Fleuratte femme a Jean Barthelemin de la Chapelle, c. 36

Long reputation, and had heard her called witch. Told of incident 4 years earlier when Blasotte had forced her to punish her daughter, who had called Blasotte's daughter 'fille de genaxe', and of how her brother came up and protested; he later lost an ox.

(25) Colas Jean Martin du Paire, c. 60

General reputation only.

(26) Demenge mal fort du Paire, c. 50

General reputation only.

(27) Valtin Jean Coulat du Paire, c. 40

General reputation only.

(28) Gurien Marie de la Chapelle, c. 30

General reputation only.

(29) Demenge Reullement de la Chapelle, c. 40

Reputation more than 10 years. Said that when she had been a widow some 9 years earlier he had gone to buy some planks from her, and she had told him she did not want to remarry, but that people said she was a witch. Since then had suspected her, and always been on his guard with her, so that although he had lost animals did not suspect her. Her husband had sometimes spoken to him about suspicions against her, but without revealing own opinion.

(16 October 1596)

(30) Claudon Valtin le Jeune de la Chapelle, c. 30

Long reputation. One day on way back from Moyenmoustier had heard Blasotte quarrelling with Noel George's wife; latter said to her 'Genaxe tu as eu aultres fois

menassé la fille de Colas du Mesnil que tu la ferois seichir ce qu'elle a esté'. Reply was 'c'est vray, elle a seiché voirement.'

(31) Marguitte femme a Valtin Claudon Valtin de la Chapelle, c. 30

Long reputation; suspected her of killing their bull, which died 8 days after her husband had her fined for straying animals.

(32) Catherine veuve Claudon Demenge Thouvenin de la Chapelle, c. 50

Long reputation. Knew that 12 years earlier Nicolas du Mesnil had suspected her of killing a cow; she herself thought she might have caused her cow to lose its milk since last St. Jean. Also told of incident some 10 years before when she had seen Blasotte walking determinedly away from path, and had followed her, but she had suddenly disappeared. Knew her husband had sometimes called her witch. Also knew story about Nicolas le Rieusse's wife and loss of her baby.

(33) Jean le Maire demourant au Paire, c. 42

General reputation. Told how some 3 weeks earlier she had come to seek his advice, after being called witch. He told her that if she was, she must be burned to save her soul; if she was a good woman she should defend herself. She said she was afraid of being arrested, and thought of fleeing, since she feared 'qu'on la deromperoit' as they had her brother for the same charge. Also told him that her husband called her witch, and others imitated him.

(34) Idoult Marie de la Chapelle, c. 40

Long reputation only.

(35) Fleuent le grand Jean de la Chapelle, c. 32

About a year before had quarrelled with her because he found her taking acorns from his tree. Three days later had a pig sick; went and called her witch, threatening to have her burned if she did not cure it, but it died.

(36) Mongeatte veuve Pieron Endreu du Paire, c. 60

General reputation only.

(37) Jennon veuve Mourice Jean de Lessus du Paire, c. 50

General reputation only.

(38) Demenge du Rat de la Chapelle, c. 40

Reputation 17 years (residence). Had lost 2 sheep within 2 days after reproaching her for taking wood from arund his field. Some 5 years before had lost oxen after dispute over some oats (allegedly stolen from witness)

(39) Mongeatte femme a Noel George, de la Chapelle, c. 36

Told how 12 years before she had heard from Nicolas du Mesnil's daughter of remark Blasotte had made about her cow, which died as she had predicted. Subsequently had heard a dispute between Blasotte and wife of Nicolas George du Mesnil, in which latter complained that she had lost a cow which had been with that of witness, and repeated what her daughter had told her. Blasotte replied 'Ay l'at elle dict Je la feray seichir toute droicte', as had happened when she became fatally ill. Also claimed that after recent disputes they had lost 3 cows, 3 calves, and 6 sheep.

Also claimed that she had given illness lasting 18 months to one of her children; this had suddenly been cured after some other small children took sick child with them on visit to Blasotte's house. Believed Blasotte had caused death of a sheep; she was carrying it on her shoulders to wash it in spring when she saw accused coming. Tried to avoid her because she feared her, but she noticed and said that if the water was not good 'la fortune arriva', and sheep suddenly died same day. Further suspected her over a pig which had become all swollen in fields; she had asked to whom it belonged, whereupon witness threatened her, and pig recovered. Had several times called her witch without reaction.

(40) Catherine femme a Demenge Simon de la Chapelle, c. 30

Believed that she might have killed her ox.

(41) Claudon fils de Jean Simon de la Chapelle, c. 24

Long reputation. Had heard her quarrelling with Mongeon Jean Claude 3 years earlier; said to him 'je t'auray', and next day his ox sickened and died.

(42) Catherine femme de Nicolas George de la Chapelle, c. 40

General reputation only.

(43) Jean Simon de la Chapelle, c. 40

Long reputation, and had heard her called witch. His second wife had suspected her of causing her fatal illness after quarrel over pears.

(44) Jean des Aches de la Chapelle, c. 50

Long reputation only.

(45) Annon femme a Idoult Marie de la Chapelle, c. 40

Long reputation. Had suspected she might have caused sudden although short sickness in foot which struck her as she was passing her house, 6 years earlier.

(46) Colatte veuve Jean d'Estival de la Chapelle, c. 40

Long reputation only.

(47) Annon femme a Demenge Reullement de la Chapelle, c. 30

Long reputation only.

(24 October 1596)

(48) Nicolas du Grand Meix de la Fontenelle, c. 30

General reputation; believed she might have killed 3 of his cows some 4 years before.

23 October 1596; interrogation

Said she was about 40, daughter of Idoult le Chouche and his wife Jelon, of le Paire. Father had died some 6 years before, mother 12 (when living at la Chapelle). Had herself been at la Chapelle some 20 years, since first marriage to Colin Jean Jacquat. Admitted she had been arrested on suspicion of witchcraft, and while denying she was such, admitted she had been reputed a witch for 16 years. Said she had not been able to act against those who called her witch, because she was alone. Generally denied accusations. In connexion with suggestion that she had thrown hail on fire, said she had learned from her father that one should throw some of the hail on the fire to make storm cease. Admitted that she had threatened Blason Charpentier's wife, but her intention had been to kill her with a stone. Threat to Jennon wife of Claudon Pellier had been with same intent. Agreed that her husband had called her witch when he was angry with her. Also agreed that she had been to see Jean le Maire, but denied words attributed to her. Continued denials, apart from admitting to some disputes - periodically reported to have been lamenting and crying (without tears), and wishing herself dead.

(24 October) Interrogation completed, without any progress.

24 October 1596; confrontations

Catherine femme de Demenge Simon added to her deposition that, according to another woman now dead, when one of her cows lost its milk she used a remedy she had been told of, beating the animal with a stick made from 'bois de core', after which it would go to the house of the person who had caused the loss. Her cow went three different times to Blasotte's house, and recovered its milk. This was also reported by Catherine widow of Claudon Demenge Thouvenin - the woman was first wife of Fleurant Jean Grand Jean. He also testified to same effect, saying incident had been 6 years before, and had involved his cows generally.

Late on in confrontations Blasotte seemed to lose consciousness, and had blood on one of her teeth when she recovered - she said this was 'mal St. Jean', to which she had long been subject. Generally denied all allegations without reproaching witnesses - only complaint was against Noel George, whom she said was a 'meschant homme' and had caused her wrongful arrest (he was confronted last with her). At end she said she knew she would never return to her village, and several times wished herself dead or drowned.

30 October 1596; procureur d'office of abbé (Nicolas Bernard) asks for question extraordinaire.

3 November 1596; Change de Nancy agrees, though it should be 'mediocrement'.

11 November; interrogation under torture

Was racked, but judges noted that she did not seem to be suffering greatly. Torture ceased while they remonstrated with her that she think of the salvation of her soul, then recommenced. Marginal note in hand of clerk from Change de Nancy that torture should not be renewed in this fashion without additional evidence. Then racked for long time, but would not confess.

Brought back after dinner, and racked again (another marginal note saying this should not be done). Still persisted in denials, although she did now speak (after being released) of a bird which had been around prison and had encouraged her; believed it had been a good angel.

12 November; interrogation

Started by denying again, but when placed on rack (although not actually tortured) admitted she was a witch, and had been one for 3 years. After describing seduction by Mre Parsin, judges asked her if she had been angry at the time, but she said she had not. In general judges had to ask many leading questions to obtain confessions to standard elements in witchcraft beliefs.

At first only admitted to killing a dog with powder, then under pressure agreed that she had killed a pig belonging to Claudon Peltier, who had accused her of stealing his iron bands. Further confessed to having killed a number of sheep, and (under further pressure) that she had killed a cow belonging to Colas George, who had made her pay a 'passaige' of 30 gros. Denied causing any harm to Noel George, her formal accuser. Then put back date of seduction to 7 years, and started to confess further series of malefices. Had killed son and daughter of Colas George, who had complained that she gave them no bread when they guarded her beasts. Had also killed a ewe belonging to Mengeon Jean. Denied killing child of Nicolas de Rieusse. Had wanted to kill others, but at times when she had no powder.

Said she had been to sabbat 3 times; had been many there, and they had feasted (she had not eaten) but not danced. Had recognised Jehenne Charpentier of la Chapelle, wife of Demenge le Maire, and a woman from St. Blaise. Latter had been identified to her by Jehenne, who had told her her name, but she had forgotten it. Had also seen Blason Charpentier and Idoult Demenge Martin of le Paire.

Interrogated again after dinner, confirmed her confessions. Said she had made a mistake about one of the accomplices; Idoult Demenge Martin was dead, and she had actually seen Claudel Demenge Martin, but made a slip over the name.

13 November 1596; confronted with the three named perons she had accused; persisted despite their denials.

22 November 1596; case presented to 'bons hommes' of ban and seigneurie, who called for death sentence.

23 November 1596; procureur d'office asks for death sentence.

26 November 1596; Change de Nancy agrees, but she should first confirm her confession in a place other than that where she was tortured, and without any intimidation.

2 December 1596; Blasotte repeated both confession and accusations. Was confronted afresh with both Blason and Jehenne Charpentier, and persisted in charging them.