

B 8712 no 3; witch 274, Mengeatte femme Jean Frampart de Saint Dié

15 March 1614; procureur for canons orders taking of depositions about suspect, who has been accused by Marion femme Claudon du Hault and Jennon fille Hidoult le Renard, both recently executed.

17 March 1614; informations préparatoires

(1) Mathis Gregoire Hidoult bourgeois a Saint Dié, 34

His wife had been suckling second child, but was losing milk, so he went to Mengeatte's house to buy milk. After a week his wife decided it was not good enough, so he ceased going; accused then 'sembla se formaliser tacitement, disant simplement a la femme de luy deposant que l'on alloit plus querir du lait chez elle'. Wife continued to try and feed child, which languished for 9 months before death. Suspected her, since she had reputation as a witch.

(2) Marie femme du précédent, 22

Repeated husband's account. Had sent third party on pilgrimage to Beau Bernard, immediately after which child died - implication that this was a deliverance, otherwise it might have languished longer. Also believed her to have been responsible for her own 18-week illness, was cured after eating mixture of bread, salt, and ashes from her house.

(3) Polnie femme George Bademenil drappier de Saint Dié, 40

Previous year at time when plums were good her son-in-law Francois and his nephew Bastien had been to collect plums from a tree behind her house. She had chased them away, although tree did not belong to her, and they had fled. Seems to have made threat 'que l'an prochain ils ne seroient empeschés ny l'un ny l'autre, d'y cueillir desdites prunes, sy dieu luy faisoit la grace de vivre'. Witness went to reproach her, but she was not there, so had to wait until she saw her next Sunday, warning her 'que s'il leur mesadvenoit, ou a eux, ou audit arbre' they would take action against her. Mengeatte denied she was such a person, to which witness replied 'qu'il avoit failli faire courir le feu pour nettoyer sa race, et que dieu luy fit la grace qu'elle fut du tout nettoyé'; plenty of witnesses, yet no action followed.

(4) Mathiatte femme Pierre Grosmaire de Saint Dié, 25

Had served her for two years, and when working in vines near Robache was frightened when a wolf came near. Called out to Mengeatte, who said it had thought she was a sheep.

(5) Nicolas Vagnier bourgeois de Saint Dié, 38

Quarrel over a debt which he and her husband had both inherited; subsequently lost a fine horse.

(18 March 1614)

(6) Francois Marlier tisserand a Saint Dié, 36

Had been to law with her husband over his house, and had eventually won his case; had ceased to see one another, although they were relatives. Some 5 years later had a child apparently mortally ill, and a neighbour reminded him of her bad reputation. Was invited to visit child, which she did, and had completely recovered, so was still living. Suspected her in view of reputation and the accusations against her.

(7) Collate veuve Diez Colas Colin Peltre de Saint Dié, 50

Told of quarrel previous year when she had reproached accused because she did not want to attend wedding of one of her husband's relatives. When on way to church witness thought that Mongeatte had touched her arm; subsequently had trouble with it, unable to work during harvest, and it was still not much better. In view of her reputation and the quarrel, suspected her of causing this. Also told of illness of George Bergier, who had died within a week after accused had taken him some soup as he was threshing, saying that she had poisoned him.

(8) Claudon Mongenety bourgeois de Saint Dié, 60

Some 4 or 5 years before Mongeatte's husband had made some cloth for the late Mr Brissony, canon of Saint Dié, and his late wife, as seamstress, was called in to measure it. She found it was short measure, which led to a quarrel; later she was cutting it up to make shirts and other garments when she became so ill he had to half carry her home, where she became 'comme demoniac', then swollen, dying in some two months. Had eaten bread from Mongeatte's house, and during illness said she had bewitched her to death. Also thought she might have killed his small child by second marriage, which died after she had given him two 'oeuf de bonne estrenne'.

(9) Jean Camus bourgeois de Saint Dié, 50

Some 9 weeks before was just recovering from illness which had lasted 6 months, and went to house of Francois Marlier. Accused was there, and gave him some pears, which he was afraid to eat because of her reputation. Finally did eat them, and in fact felt much better, which made him suspect she might have given him the illness, then used pears to remove it.

(10) Dion femme du precedent, 32

Claimed 'avoir ouy dire a ladite prevenue que sy une certaine femme en bruict d'estre devineresse, et aupres de laquelle la femme de Mathis Gregoire Hidoult estoit en bruict d'avoir esté pour scavoir d'o venoit le mal de son enfant, et elle eut dit que cela vienne d'elle prevenue, et qu'elle en deut estre bruslée, qu'aussy

viendroit icelle femme au feu.' [Had heard the accused say that if a woman reputed to be a white witch, whom the wife of Mathis Gregoire Hidault was said to have consulted about the cause of her child's sickness, had said that she was the cause and ought to be burned, she would be brought to the fire in this way.]

(11) Jean Pierron de la Bosse, 25

He had been threshing with George Bergier, whose daughter had taken milk to Mongeatte's house, then returned with soup which included lentils, barley and peas. He drank it with no ill effect, but Bergier was sick and said he was 'frappé a la mort', after which he died within a week.

(12) Mengeatte veuve Nicolas Rossat bourgeois de Saint Dié, 80

Had been at mill with Mongeatte one day, speaking of three wolves which had eaten the dog of her son-in-law; she replied with account of occasion when she was guarding animals and 80 hares appeared, one of which appeared to be dragging skin after it, but her dog would not chase it (document damaged here). After she had left the miller's mother said that this was not the talk of honest people.

(13) Magdelaine femme Demenje Colin (alias Sauvage) de Saint Dié, 30

Quarrel over a debt owed by her husband, after which she had been stricken by an illness which paralysed her from the waist down, so that she had to go on crutches. Believed the accused had given her this, in view of her reputation and the dispute.

20 March 1614; interrogation

Said she was Mengeatte femme Jean Frampart (tisserand), aged about 50. Was native of Hallieulle, father Colas Demenje Willaume (dead 20 years), mother Mathiatte (dead 2 years), both of natural causes. Admitted mother had been accused of witchcraft by an individual of La Bolle. Had gone to live in ban d'Estival more than 30 years before, then come to Saint Dié on marriage. Agreed in general terms to dispute over plum tree and words between herself and Polnie Bademesnil; reference had been to her aunt Claudatte of Viel Marche, wife of Michiel Haulteroue, executed as a witch. Also admitted accusation by two convicted witches, Marion femme Claudon du Haud and Jehennon la Reynarde. As for accusation over child of Mathis Gregoire Hidoult, she had not half the milk to satisfy those who asked for it, so was not angry with him; charge had come from 'la bossenatte' of Hallieulle.

Appeared from questions that George Bergier had married husband's niece Dedielle, and that he had been seeking payment of 200 francs which were due to her as a legacy. Agreed to telling story about hares at mill, but had said there were nine, and had only been repeating what her father and others told her.

(?) 21 March 1614; confrontations

Generally denied all charges. Agreed to testimony of Dion femme Jean Camus (about devineresse). Magdelaine femme Demenge Colin added to deposition that she had asked Mongeatte to send her something from her house, but she said 'que c'estoit trop tard, et qu'elle ne l'avoit voulu payer. La priant au surplus en l'honneur de dieu, luy vouloir oster ledit mal, autrement elle sera contraincte d'aller mendier son pain avec ses enfans et languir le reste de ses jours sans pouvoir rien gaigner'. Accused claimed it was her husband who had stopped her going; witness said she was sure he knew nothing of it, and that she had been prepared to pay money for a cure.

21 March 1614; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire

24 March 1614; Change de Nancy agrees

4 April 1614; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but agreed to confess when racked. Said her master was called Napnel, but had to be briefly racked again before she would say more. Said that a year back at last St. Jean had been in field outside Saint Dié when she was surrounded by 'un air chaux', which she made the sign of the cross to drive off. 2 or 3 days later same thing happened when she was in bed with her husband, angry because he had been drinking that day at house of Claudon du Haud. Typical seduction scene followed, although his member was so cold 'que cela luy fit plus de desplaisir que de volupté'. Had been given powder, with which she had killed one of her hens, but denied having committed any other malefices. Agreed she had been to sabbat, but had seen no-one there. Since it was late, judges decided to leave her in the tower under guard overnight.

5 April 1614

Confirmed previous confessions, but still denied maléfices until she was placed on rack again and threatened with more torture. Then made series of confessions following the claims in the depositions. Had made child of Francois Marlier ill because he had often caused her husband to beat her. Death of wife of Claudon Mangenety had been in revenge for incident when she said daughter of accused had plague and should be avoided, when she only had 'des esprinsons'. Had only been to sabbat twice, and had given her master some hens to be dispensed from attending more often. Had seen Libaire femme Bernard Chartreux of Saint Dié and Bastien des Aulx of le Viel Marché, as well as the two women who had accused her and were now dead.

Brought back later same day, she confirmed all her confessions.

7 April 1614

She now denied the whole series of confessions, saying she had only made them to be released from the rack.

17 April 1614; procureur d'office asks that she should be interrogated again, and if necessary tortured. In the event that she renews her confessions, and repeats them in the proper manner away from the torture chamber, she should be executed.

18 April 1614; Change de Nancy agrees to torture, but wants normal forms to be followed after that.

22 April 1614; interrogation under torture

At first repeated denials, but was then placed on rack and given tortillons, at which she broke down again and reiterated confessions. Now said she had been seduced by Napnel, dressed in red, in a field some 5 years earlier. Also changed her story about illness of Magdelaine femme Demenge Colin; previously her master had inflicted it with her consent, now she herself had used powder. Said she would soon recover, since it was nearly 6 months since she had done this. Her retraction had been under influence of her master, who had come to visit her in prison. Repeated confessions about sabbat; said that during dance 'estoit elle prevenue fort arriere des autres comme estant des moindres en qualité, et en avoient qui estoient habillé avec des grosses ceintures d'argent', but masks made it impossible to identify them. Usual account of making hail, to which she never consented 'ad cause de la pauvrete du peuple'. Added to those she had seen the wife of Colas Mengeat of Le Viel Marché, and Claudatte femme Jacot le Cosson of Haillieulle, as well as Claudatte Mengin of La Bolle (already executed). Confessed to giving her master part of consecrated host from Easter communion.

Confirmed confessions later same day.

23 April 1614; interrogation

Agreed she had told the truth and would abide by it.

24 April 1614; interrogation

Another confirmation of her confessions.

24 April 1614; procureur asks for death sentence

26 April 1614; Change de Nancy approves