

B 8669 no 1; Witch 148, Jeanne femme Jean Lienard le maimbourg, de Ginfosse

20 November 1592; informations préparatoires

(1) Margo veuve feu le maire Nicolas, 60

Long reputation; believed she was cause of losses of animals worth 300 francs over last year. Her late son Nicolas had called her witch several times. Last Tuesday had come before their fire asking for alms, and asked if their animals were already 'en ville'. Told they were, and given some bread, she went out of house and turned back beside it instead of passing on into village. Next day a horse was found dead; she had stayed with Jean Lhoste that night, then gone on towards Coinches. Believed she had killed the horse.

(2) Georgette femme Jean Lhoste, 27

8 years earlier, when married to Colas Claudel le maimbourg, they had many quarrels with her, primarily because they had bought a third of a house from Jean Lienard's father; so long as they lived there could not keep animals alive, and had many losses. Around that time had baby in a cradle, and hearing faint noise in night found it lying face down in corner. Unharmed, but previous night the maire Nicolas had had a child dead in the cradle. Previous year she had been helping with sowing, when servant said she had heard there was a woman who called on Mme Persin to come and fetch her; did not name woman, but Jennon wanted to leave, saying she was being mocked. Mostly slept in their house, and she feared her greatly; always wanted to sleep by animals, talking in her sleep, and sometimes calling out she was being killed - gave her anything she asked.

(3) Colas Mandray de Raves, 40

Some 8 years before he had been serving late maire Nicolas, and had bought some manure which Nicolas Brexon had by court judgement against her and her husband. She told him he would repent if he took it, but despite his wife's pleas he did so - one of his oxen started to limp, and infection spread up leg, until it died. Also occasion when she wanted the maire Nicolas to cart some hay, but he said he had his own to deal with. On way back horse went berserk, as if rabid, and died same night. His master had called her witch, accusing her of killing his own horses and those of his mother Margo; witness had also called her witch in presence of her husband without any action being taken. Master had lost 30 animals, including 5 horses and 4 oxen. Witness had forbidden his wife to take anything from her, having had various disputes with her and husband. One day his wife offered him milk, but he said he did not want it if it came from Jennon, although she could drink it if she wished. She said it did, but still took some, and following evening became ill. Died a week later after raving, sometimes saying she saw Jennon bringing her a white shirt. Believed she had caused her death, in view of reputation.

(4) Bastienne veuve feu le maire Claudel le maimbourg, 60

Reputation as long as she could remember. 8 years before had found her up a cherry tree in their garden, and when she refused to come down called her a witch, saying this could be seen 'en son front'. She replied 'He que voulez vous belle tante

Bastienne s'at faict le bien que j'ay heu'. Also knew she had been called witch by Nicolas le maire.

(5) Demenge Louys de Raves, 36

5 years earlier had been in his house (he had married her sister), and he told her she was a witch, asking why she always threw stones in the water as she passed. She said she had learned a 'recepte' from some 'sarazins', that she should take stones from beneath her door and place them at the head of her bed. Did this, but then felt as if her hair was being pulled out, and was advised to go and throw them in water at Laulnay. When she did this a wind came up and she felt as if she was being dragged into water by the hair; since then only dared pass water if she threw one of these stones in first. Witness told her he heard that the maire wanted to arrest her, 'et que luy mesme n'y auroit guiere honneur'. She replied that if she could have bread and salt from somewhere she would make a neuvaine [9-day religious observance] and he would not have time; 3 weeks later the maire died, which astonished him. When witness asked her why she often came to sleep in their house and not with her husband, she said there were too many dogs which wanted to take her. Another time he told her that the maire Collayel of Laveline was saying she had killed his ox, and asking why she claimed that she had prevented the corn of Laveline being damaged by hail when that around was. She replied that she said this to get more alms in the village.

10 years earlier Demenge Houllanel of Stampaumont in Val de Viller, married to another sister, told him she had been found 3 times in his house at night wet and dishevelled. Accused her of being a witch, and she said she only had to visit him to discover that not much good was said of her. Witness thought she was a real witch.

(6) Jean Comand, mareschal de Rayegoutte, 36

General reputation, and everyone at Rayegoutte feared her - he did not like her to approach him.

(7) Catherine veuve Jacot Rouyer de Rayegoutte, 40

General reputation, and when she came begging she gave her alms as soon as she heard her, for fear she might enter house. Had heard she always threw stones in streams or rivers before daring to pass, and had once seen her do this.

(8) Dedielle femme Michiel Jean Michiel, 25

Long reputation, called witch without seeking reparation. No disputes because she feared her.

(9) Claude Jean Didier de Laulnay, 33

At time of death of maire Nicolas 3 years earlier witness was in his service; Jennon came to house to ask if he was dead, then heard her say 'que le diable l'en avoit porté et qu'il en emporteroit encor d'autres'. Always spoken of as witch, and master called her this and beat her when he found her stealing from garden.

(10) Catherine de Launay, 56, spinster

3 years earlier Jennon had asked her to go and sleep in her house; she did not want to, and said she had her children with her, so why did she want witness to come? Replied that there was a black animal like a dog there, promising her some oats if she would go - but she refused.

(11) Jehennon fille de feu Jean Aulbert de Layegoutte, 22

3 years before had been in service of maire Nicolas, and after he caught her in his garden, beat her, and called her witch they had a cow sick. He threatened to have her burned unless she cured it, after which it recovered; he had said that 's'il savoit les moyens pour la faire brusler qu'il le feroit et y mectroit de son bien'.

(30 November 1592)

(12) Colas Demenge la Poire, doyen de maire à Neufviller, 50

About 3 years earlier had been loading manure outside house when she came begging; his wife was helping him, and said 'que dieu la veulle ayder qu'elle y revenoit assez souvent, et qu'elle n'avoit lors loisir de luy faire l'aulmosne'. At this she 'commenca à gronder', and passed by horses as she left. A horse immediately sickened, and died in exactly 24 hours. Believed she had caused this - always reputed a witch.

(13) Mengeon Demenge Everard de Layegoutte, 31

Had rented a meadow belonging to her from her husband, heard that she was discontented, and within a week lost 2 cattle. Suspected her because of reputation.

(14) Claude Mengeon Jean le maimbourg, de la Treux, 28

Had lived in Ginfosse until previous Easter, and she would come and ask to sleep in their house, saying there were black animals in her own which frightened her. Long reputation; 2 years earlier heard her quarrel with maire Nicolas. He threatened to have her burned, she said 'qu'elle le feroit bien aller en ung autre lieu devant, que ce n'estoit a luy de la faire brusler', and he died shortly after.

(15) Colas Jean Robin, de Laveline, 30

His aunt Jehennon, wife of maire Colayel, who was now very ill, had told him that accused had said 'qu'elle luy pouvoit bien faire de bonnes aulmosnes, et pour ung peu de pain qu'elle luy donnoit qu'elle avoit preservé les bleus du ban de Laveline d'estre greslez [spoiled by hail], lors que les autres villages voisins le furent il y a trois ans, que c'estoit pour ce que la vierge marie estoit en l'eglise dudit Laveline'. Everyone feared her, and for himself 'il aymeroit aultant veoir ung loup qu'elle quand elle vient en son losgis y demander l'aulmosne'. Had also seen her throw stones in water before crossing bridge.

(16) Colas Claude le Voisin, de Laveline, 30

She often begged at Laveline, and one day he refused her, saying she came too often. She replied 'qu'il ne debvoit faire mal a ceulx dudit Laveline de ne luy bailler l'aulmosne, qu'elle leur avoit bien valu davantage et qu'elle avoit preservé leurs bleus de la gresle lors que ceulx des autres villaiges furent gastez et perdus et qu'elle les avoit

laissé gresler pour ce qu'ils ne luy donnoient rien signamment ceux de la grand paroisse.' Everyone feared her as a witch.

(17) Jehenne femme Demenge Jacquemin de Laveline, 40

Same story about begging daily, and talking about saving crops when reproached - gave her alms to be rid of her.

(18) Jehenne femme Jean Colas Robin de Laveline, 32

Similar deposition to those above.

5 December 1592; Rémy asks for arrest and interrogation

8 July 1593; interrogation

Said she was about 50, daughter of Jean Andreu of Raves, married to Jean Lienard for some 30 years. 7 children, of whom 4 were living. In great dearth some 18 years earlier husband had sold her property, and she had then been obliged to go about begging. That same year had been gypsies in village, and one of the women told them there was a great treasure buried in their house, a pot of silver. Dug a hole in the kitchen, filled it with holy water, and told them the treasure would appear little by little; took some household goods and promised to come back in 2 weeks to share the treasure, but never did so.

[Combien d'enfans elle at heu avec ledit le Maimbourg depuis qu'elle est mariée avec luy

A respondu sept desquelz sont encor quattro vivans

Si elle luy at tousjours tenu compagnie et tenu mesnage avec luy

Respond qu'elle luy a tenu tousjours compagnie fors que jusques as ce qu'il eust despensé son bien qu'il luy convient aller demander son pain et fut au gros cher temps qu'il feit y a environ dixhuict ans

Si pendant qu'elle estoit en mesnage avec ledit son marit elle n'at veu ou ouy des esprits en leur losgis et des visions d'anges comme elle s'at heu compté a de ses voisins

Dict que ladite annee qu'elle fut contraincte aller demander son pain y ayant des Egipciens au village de Ginfosse vint en leur losgis une Egipciennne qui commenca a dire qu'il y avoit heu ung gros mesnage en ladite maison et qu'il y avoit ung gros tresor caché en la Cuysine qu'estoit ung pot d'argent enterré et feit ung troux en ung certain endroict de ladite cuysine qu'elle y meit de l'eau benoiste, Luy disans que ledit argent viendroit petit a petit hors Mais que pour ce faire il luy convenoit avoir une saage, une serviette qui valoit mieulx de quinze gros, ung bas de chausse dudit Jean Lienard, et que au bout de quinze jours qu'elle reviendroit pour partager ledit argent, ce qu'elle luy accorda Neantmoing elle n'en ouyt apres nouvelle, d'ou elle veit qu'elle estoit trompée Laquelle apres avoir jecté de ladite eau benoiste, print ung ver plain d'eau, et meit son doigt dedans y en faisant aussy mettre ung d'elle deposante et commencea a dire la patenostre, laquelle eau devint ung peu rouge, ce faict elle l'emporta et le ver avec, et estoit parmy le temps de Karesme.]

Day after next Easter found 3 palms in front of her door, which she thought might have been put there by her friend Dedielle femme Michel Jean Bellier - these frightened her in

some way, and she first put them on the dung-heap, then in river, before recommending herself to St Nicolas and St Idoult. After this she felt she was in paradise, then on returning home saw a black crow, and had idea of throwing 3 stones wrapped in cloth in the river.

Asked about other visions, said she had seen a large woman in white going towards church at Bertrimoutier, which she thought had been a ghost - then corrected herself and said it was one of her children who had seen this. On another occasion her daughter Marie, looking after a sick child, told her he had been visited by a small figure in white like a priest, so short he seemed to have no feet - looked out and saw him making towards church.

Said that when Nicolas le maire found her in garden he punched her so hard in the face that she lost consciousness. Could not have given Colas Mandray's wife milk because she had had none, except as alms, for 7 years.

(9 July 1593) Said that it was a gypsy woman who had taught her to throw stones in water. Admitted remarks about protecting crops at Laveline, but said she knew no way to do this, and had wanted to persuade villagers to give her alms. Also admitted that she had been frightened of something which made noises in her house, but had not known what it was. Asked again about stones in river, said she had no longer felt need to throw them after making pilgrimage to St Idoult.

19 July 1593; confrontations

Admitted that Bastienne Claudel had found her in cherry tree, and at first said she had made response as stated because she was very angry - then said she had not said this. Said she had thrown stones in water because she had a bad head, and had been told it would not turn as she passed if she did this. No reproaches to witnesses, simply denied having done any harm.

24 July 1593; Rémy asks for question extraordinaire

26 July 1593; Change de Nancy approves, with proviso that torture be moderate.

10 August 1593; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but as soon as she was racked said her master was the devil and his name was Persin. Seduced 6 years earlier; rather spare account, no promises or money, given white powder. Tried this out on ox of maire Colas, which died. Confessed killing series of other animals, most of them as suggested by witnesses, usually when she was refused alms. Persin had told her to throw stones into water to make hail and rain. Killed maire Colas after he beat her, putting powder in tart she gave him on Easter Monday.

11 August 1593; interrogation under torture

Started by denying previous confessions, saying she had been made to tell lies. Then placed on rack, and talked of seeing a big man with a leather collar and a dagger near Laveline, but that was all. Said previous confessions had been extorted by torture, even when it was pointed out she had talked of killing many animals she was never asked about.

18 August 1593; Rémy asks for further torture

19 August 1593; Change de Nancy indicates that enquiries should be made to discover whether the crimes to which she had confessed were real, and only if evidence was produced should she be tortured again.

25 August 1593; informations

(19) Claude le Clerc de Bertrimoutier, 40

Had lost an ox 5 or 6 years earlier, and a cow previous Christmas (which butcher had said was not poisoned) - did not know cause.

(20) Claude Didier Alix, gendre de George la Barre, de Raves, 35

Had lost his best cow suddenly a year before, then a total of 8 cattle, which he suspected witches had killed. Feared her more than a wolf, and always gave to her; she had been at his door day cow died asking for meat, but did not know if she had it.

(21) Jean Trexon maire de Bertrimoutier, 50

He had lost a cow and a bull the previous year. Knew Jennon was reputed to be a witch.

(22) Jacquot Gerard Bechay de Raves, 40

Shortly after last Easter had lost 2 oxen, one of which died in a day, the other in a week, and believed this could only be work of witches, although did not know who. Poor opinion of Jennon, who was reputed a witch; he had lost animals to total value of 1200 francs.

(27 August 1593)

(23) Jennon femme Thomas Lucke de Coinche, 25

Had been wife of Colas le maire; agreed to account of quarrel after he found her and 2 children stealing his cabbages, and said her mother-in-law had lost animals to value of 1200 francs. Had feared her, but did not know if she had caused husband's death.

(24) Margo veuve Colas le maimbourg, 40 (first witness)

Told of her many losses, but said she did not know the cause.

(25) Claudon Colas Claude, beau-fils de la precedente, 40

Had been living with Margo for last 2 years; confirmed losses, did not know cause. Feared Jennon and thought she was a witch.

(26) Georgeatte femme Jean Lhoste, 30 (witness 2)

Losses of animals; did not know cause, but she might well have been.

(27) Colas Babillon alias la Poire, 50 (witness 12)

Repeated earlier deposition.

(28) Bastienne veuve le maire Claudel, 60 (witness 4)

Attributed losses of animals by her son to her witchcraft.

28 August 1593; interrogation under torture

Said she had only had relations with her husband and an unknown man by 'les grandes aulnes'. When threatened that she would be tortured again, said 'qu'elle aimoit aultant dire des bordes [lies] ou elle estoit qu'a ladite question, et qu'elle voulloit bien que l'on tienne pour bon ce qu'elle avoit dict'. Said she could not remember what she had said.

Given thumbscrews and rack, but still refused to confess she was a witch, insisting that earlier confessions had been lies.

3 September 1593; Change de Nancy recommends that she be renvoyée

9 September 1593; released from prison