

Witch 146: B8667 no 8, Claudatte veuve Michel Demenge Antoine du Viel Marché

17 September 1592; informations préparatoires

(1) George Tabourin, du Viel Marché, c. 50

Reputation 12 years. No quarrel with her himself, but 'Bien scait Il, que le frere du Curé, qui estoit l'année passée au viel marché, et presentement est promeu de la Cure de Remenoville fut nagueres audit Viel Marché, et cherchoit le moyen, d'avoir du pain et de cendres de la maison de ladite Claudatte, par ce que sondit frere le Curé, languit en extremité de maladie, des l'année passée, et at l'opinion, qu'il est ensorcelé par elle.'

(2) Didier Bergier Bourgeois au Viel Marché, 60+

Reputation 17 years (since residence).

(3) Jean Pierrat du Viel Marché, c. 46

Long reputation. His late wife had languished miserably for 4 or 5 years before her death, blaming illness on Claudatte after a quarrel. Had begged him to fetch Claudatte to see her, but he had never dared to do this. Also thought Claudatte had grudge against him because she had wanted him to marry one of her daughters.

(4) Jean Thierry du Viel Marché, c. 50

Long reputation.

(5) Mengeon Wanier des Trois Maisons faubourg de St. Dié, c. 27

Common repute as witch; he had had several quarrels with her. Believed she had caused loss of a horse worth 18 ecus, which became sick after damaging her 'pave'; after this she had muttered between her teeth. As nearest neighbour he had also had sickness himself, lasting more than 6 months, and had losses amounting to over 200 francs in a year. His late father had already suspected her of being the cause of various losses of animals.

(6) (Unknown witness)

Repeated story about curé and his sickness; had not yet been able to celebrate Mass at Remenoville. His brother had asked the witness to send his wife to Claudatte's house, but he had not allowed this.

(7) Claudon Durant du Viel Marché, c. 30

When he was about to be married Claudatte had passed near him and his fiancée late one evening; he had said 'qu'est ce que ceste vielle sorciere cherchoit ceste part, sy tard'. Didn't know if she had heard him, but he and his wife were for 18 months 'en telle sorte, qu'ilz ne se pouvoient veoir l'un l'autre, mais se battoient et avoient jurement querelle ensemble, sans avoir la moindre amitié'. Could not understand reason for this, but had suspicion that Claudatte might be cause. In order to find 'quelque remede, Il s'addressa, aupres d'une devineresse, demeurant

au Ban de Sapt, a laquelle ayant fauverture de son faict, elle luy dit tousjours, qu il avoit fantaisie et soubcon que s'avoit faict une mauvaise femme, et qu'il ait a la nommer, Ledit deposant toutesfois maintint tousjours que non, qu'il n'avoit nul soubcon, jusques ad ce que ladite devineresse luy dit que sy, et qu'Il avoit opinion sur une femme du Viel Marché, appellée Claudatte, estoit veuve, et que feu son marit estoit nomme Michiel de la Haulte Robbe.' Instructed him to take something (text missing here) from Claudatte's garden for himself and wife to eat; after this he and wife had lived 'en bonne paix, amitié, et mutuelle affection.'

(8) Jacot Bergier Bourgeois du Viel Marché, c. 40

His late wife had languished miserably for several years before her death, in suspicion that Claudatte was cause of her illness. When she was a girl she had lost a chappelet, which she then saw Claudatte's daughter wearing; her 'maimbour' went to law to recover it for her. Claudatte 'en murmura bien fort, et la menaca'; became ill soon after marriage. Testified to long reputation, as a witch whom 'on craint fort'. Had sought counsel of 'la devineresse du Ban d'Estival', who advised that he should obtain bread, salt, and 'jouxte' [cabbage] from Claudatte's house, but he had no way of doing so.

(9) Mengeon Meschat Bourgeois de Saint-Dié, c. 23

He and his wife had quarrelled with Claudatte and her daughter over a hen which they had stolen from the witness. Shortly afterwards their baby was smothered in its cot, and they could find no reason for this.

(10) Catherine femme a Mengeon Meschat, c. 22

Repeated husband's deposition, saying that Claudatte was greatly feared.

(11) Catherine veuve de Nicolas Miclin bourgeois de Viel Marché, c. 37

Her late husband had told her that his first wife had died after illness which lasted a year, during which they had searched for any means to bring her back to health. They had summoned 'ung certain religieux de Haulteseille, qui faisoit estat de deviner', and who came to their house and identified Claudatte as cause of sickness, but said that because his wife 's'avoit muny des Sainctz Sacrements, il n'y eut plus de moyen de la faire revenir en convalescence.' When he fell ill in his turn, he remembered this advice, and didn't have sacrament brought to him. Thought of a ruse, going as well as he could to Claudatte's house, and asking her for some white cheese; she gave him some, with bread and salt, and he was cured.

(12) Marguitte femme Daniel le Marchal du Viel Marché, c. 35

Reputation 14 years (residence).

(13) Bastien des Aulx du Viel Marché, c. 50

Reputation more than 10 years.

(14) Marguitte femme Jean Cordier du Viel Marché, c. 50

Reputation 27 years (since residence) - always much feared.

(15) ? George, bourgeois du Vieux Marché

Long reputation.

(16) Jehennon femme Colas du Haud bourgeois de St. Die, 40 +

Long reputation. During trial of Noel des Aulx as a witch, she 'avoit belle peur d'estre apprehendée'; removed a large part of her goods and fled to witness' house, since her late husband was 'd'elle assez familiale'. 'Et depuis la mort dudit Noel, elle fut toute resjouye, de ce qu'il n'avoit accusé personne, et en remercioit dieu.'

(23 September 1592)

(17) Noble Homme Gilles Padoux lieutenant de bailly à St Dié

Some 4 years earlier his wife had told him that after their animals had strayed into a field sown with oats belonging to Claudatte's daughter, the latter had told her 'qu'avant qu'il fut quatre jours, qu'elle s'en repentiroit'. After this threat he lost the horse he normally rode, worth 40 ecus, and the same day a fine cow. Thinking of the threat, and Claudatte's reputation, he considered that she might have killed them 'pour venger sa fille'.

(18) Annon femme a Gilles Padoux

Repeated husband's story. Claudatte's daughter was married to Colas Mengeat du Vieux Marché; witness had been frightened for herself and her children after threat, in view of mother's reputation.

(19) Honorable homme Francois Petit Demenge, substitut du Procureur General de Lorraine à St. Dié

On one occasion, returning from 'prairie' with the late Nicolas Miclin, they had met Claudatte. Nicolas called her 'vieille sorciere' several times, accusing her of causing death of his wife and children, and giving him a long sickness. She had said he did her great wrong, and that she was innocent, but he had never heard that she sought any reparation.

Order for arrest follows

(? 24 September 1592); interrogation

Said she was widow of Michiel Demenge Anthoine 'dit vulgairement de la Haulte Robbe', aged about 60. Had lived for 8 years at Haillieulle with her husband, otherwise at Le Vieux Marché. Had been widow about 9 years. Asked with whom she had kept company, said with le Petit Prevost and Claudon Demenge d'Euvre, both now dead.

Asked if she had known Messieur Nicolas, who had held parish of St. Martin at Vieux Marché previous year, said 'qu'elle l'a cogneu pour ung homme qui disoit le bien et faisoit le mal, et prenoit ce que luy n'appartenoit.' Had not quarrelled with him, or suffered loss, but 'il avoit des petits garsons, lesquels il envoioit en meix

[gardens] de coste et d'autre prendre ce qu'ils pouvoient, et sa tante qui n'estoit pas trop bonne voisine'.

Asked about his sudden illness, and whether it had not been imputed to her, she replied 'qu'elle ouyt dire a une femme, le marit de laquelle il avoit fait mettre au somme, qu'en malle santé puisse il geser, que jamais homme n'avoit mis son marit au somme, et que c'estoit la femme de Bastien des Aulx.'

Agreed that she had subsequently heard about suspicions; would have taken action if he had not moved away from parish. Said that when she heard of brother's visit from 'la Marliere' she had told them to send him to her house, and she would give him anything he asked. Reproached that they had testified that he had not been able to get anything from her, said this was because he had not come and asked her.

Said of wife of Jean Pierat that 'elle n'estoit pas en son bon sens'. She had not wanted Jean to marry her daughter; it had been he who had sought the alliance. Had not quarrelled with the wife.

Asked if she had difficulties with her neighbour Mengeon Wanier, said 'que tantost paix, tantost guerre, et que c'est une terrible teste d'homme'. Denied causing death of his horse - he had beaten it too much - or his own sickness.

Concerning 'chappelet' belonging to wife of Jacot Bergier, claimed her daughter had bought it for 9 gros from one Challatte 'qui court presentement les champs'. In any case the girl had been ill before her marriage. 'A commencé en cest endroict a maudire et maugreer tous ceux et celles, qui eurent oncques communication aux malings, et que dampné soient ceulx qui luy imposent telles faulcetes et crimes'. She was 'bonne chretienne', and 'musnie depuis longtemps du saint sacrement de confirmation.'

Agreed that she had quarrelled with wife of Mengeon Meschat over a hen, but denied causing her any harm. Had not known 'la Stablatte', whose identification of her as an accomplice had been a falsehood. Asked if any 'bon ange' had appeared to comfort her, said no.

Denied that Nicolas Miclin had called her witch, or blamed her for deaths of his family. Also denied joy when Noel des Aulx was found dead in prison, or moving property - only thing that was moved was 'une couge de bacon' taken by Bastien Jean Myatte, who said that perhaps she would be arrested.

Denied hearing that she had been suspected over loss of lieutenant's horse and cow. Added 'que pour neant luy impute l'on venefice, parce que s'elle eut esté telle, Il y a longtemps qu'elle eut fait mourir son gendre, qui luy at tant faict de mal'.

At end judges told her 'qu'aultres qu'elle ayans Ja usé de mesmes propos, et de mesmes justifications comme elle fait, se sont a la fin trouvées convaincues, ayans tres grand regret d'avoir sy longtemps caché la verité, et que sommes tout accoustumés de telles responce.'

(? 25 September 1592) Confrontations

Pressed again to tell the truth, only addidon she made to previous statements was to say that she had moved property out of house during the imprisonment of Noel des Aulx; this was because her husband had stood 'caution et respondant' for Noel, and they had been afraid of a confiscation 'pour satisfaire a ce cantonnement'.

Generally denied all charges against her, although raising no objection to witnesses. Confronted with Francois Petit Demenge, said that perhaps Miclin had accused her as he said, but she was innocent.

2 October 1592: Change de Nancy orders that she be tortured, but only so as she should 'ung peu sentir les gresillons'.

October 1592; interrogation under torture

Before torture, reproached with accusation made against her previous day by Jean Diey.

Given thumbscrews first on feet, then on hands. Did not confess during this torture, but after being released, after various questions, finally agreed that she had been seduced by Mre Parsin a year before. Had killed pigs of Colas Demenge Willaume of Haillieulle, as a result of a quarrel. Had also given powder to curé, because 'il mena ses porcz a la halle'.

Said she had healing powder, which it was necessary to cook with 'une hostie sacrée' and eggs.

Had given powder to Jean Pierrat's wife, in a glass of wine at a 'banquet des femmes', this 'en desdain qu'il vouloit abuser sa fille et qu'il avoit ja engrossy sa chambrière.'

Admitted various other malefices, and now agreed that she had been seduced 25 years before. Had been many times to sabbat, where they had eaten little birds and made hail; had been present at making of great hailstorm of St. Jean in 1589. Had seen a number of others there; Georgeatte wife of Claudon Prevost des battues, previously wife of Jean Francois, Pierron d'Orbey, Babillon dite la Grand Commere cy-devant femme de Bastien Ozelle, Jean Diez, Colas le Prevost des blettes, Bastien Stablio dit le Bourguignon, L'hospitalliere du Vieux Marché nommée Mengeotte femme a Jean l'Allemand'.

Added further series of malefices committed with powder, most of which had not been alleged against her by witnesses. Included killing little daughter of the 'mayeur soubscript'; had given powder to chambermaid after quarrel, and some fell on the child.

Added two more accomplices; a woman of le Vieux Marché (name missing) and the wife of Colas Curien du Faing.

9 October; interrogations

Repeated all previous confessions; complete list of all crimes and accomplices, no omissions.

12 October 1592; Change de Nancy passes death sentence, subject to repetition of earlier avowals.

15 October 1592; interrogation

When asked to renew confessions, would not do so; said she had told a lot of untruths under torture, and was in fact innocent, 'et sy elle est sorcière tout le monde l'est'.

Said that plenty of others apart from Nicolas Miclin had eaten her cheese, but they hadn't charged her with anything; as for the curé, he 'estoit son bon amy et avoient bon accord.'

Also said 'que pleut a Dieu, que nous sachons aussy bien qu'elle la vérité, qu'elle n'est sorcière, et que s'elle est sorcière, le diable la puisse emporter et eslever a la veue de tout le monde hault en l'air.'

17 October 1592; Change de Nancy orders further torture

21 October 1592; interrogation

Now renewed confessions, saying that she had been 'maladvisée et malconseillée'; did not however respond to judges' suggestion that Devil had been responsible for previous denials.

Added that seduction had been when she was upset at great 'cher temps', and been frightened of being in want - Persin had assured her he would aid her and that she would never want.

Repeated confessions about sabbat; now gave list of accomplices as Bastien Stablo, Jean Diez, le Prevost des Battes de Haillieulle and his wife, the wife of Colas Curien du Faing, the wife of Jean Fleuratte of Ste Margaree, La grande Commine veuve Bastien Ozelle (of St. Remy?), the wife of Jean l'Allemand and 'La noire Catherine' of le Viel Marché.

Agreed that her son-in-law had come to the foot of the tower by night and called out 'qu'elle ait bon courage', but had said nothing else.

26 October 1592; repeated avowals.