

Witch 353: Jennon femme Colas George alias Bonipaire, of Sainte Marguerite

Bibliothèque municipale de Nancy, MS 1200, fos. 5-29, and AD Vosges G 708

11 August 1593; informations préparatoires

Prefatory note says that she had been accused of being a witch several times.

(1) Honneste homme Simon Hougney, 34

Said that five and a half years earlier his late wife Claudatte often went to St Dié to sell butter and other dairy produce. Jennon 'conceut une haine' against her for this reason, because she was buying similar goods to sell there; she said that they were sufficiently well off that they had no need to trade in this way. Immediately after this comment his wife fell ill and died in five days, which he had always attributed to her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(2) Didielle femme Colas d'Avould, 30

Around last St George Jennon had wanted to borrow or buy some flax from her, but she had none. On the feast day itself she can asking for some fresh eggs, which again she did not have. Did not see how she left house, but neighbours said it was by the rear, passing by animals, and the same night a cow died, which she blamed on her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(3) Claudatte femme Anthoine Measure, of Ste Marguerite, 24

A year earlier at last St George her husband had great quarrel with Jennon. A few days later were taking a sow to sell it at St Dié when it fell down near cross of Perichamps, behaved so strangely that all passers-by said it must be bewitched, then died, and they believed this was her doing. Jennon had been leasing a cow from Mr Laurent de la Fosse, which the witness took over; did not know if she was angry, but she told her that she would make good butter. Within a fortnight the cow broke its leg in the herd and had to be killed on Easter Saturday, so they also suspected her over this.

(4) Anthoine Measure, 34

Repeated wife's stories, with no additional details.

(5) Mengeon Demenge Henry, of Ste Marguerite, 36

Ten weeks earlier Jennon came to his house to see the wife of Demenge Ragney, who lived there, and met his own wife in the doorway. She was already frightened of her, and was so terrified this time that she nearly collapsed. Then became so ill that she had to go to bed, languished for a month, and died, saying throughout that Jennon had bewitched her and was the cause of her death. Reputation since she was a young girl – her father had been arrested as a witch.

(6) Jean Didier Cheneviere, of Ste Marguerite, 45

On last feast-day at St Dié she had met him and suggested that he might marry her sister, since they were both widowed. He told others that he would not agree because of Jennon's reputation, then became ill, as he remained, with his whole body enfeebled, so that it had been difficult to come and testify. Believed this was her witchcraft – long reputation.

Returned after next witness to add that she had visited him eight days earlier, since when he had felt somewhat better, and able to sleep at night as he could not do before.

(7) Hidoult Masson, of Ste Marguerite, 40

Long reputation, no personal suspicion.

(8) Jean Hougney, of Ste Marguerite, 25

Previous Holy Week Jennon met his wife taking animals to field, and asked to buy some cheeses – when told that she had none still tried to insist on this. Then his best cow died suddenly, which he blamed on her witchcraft – long reputation.

(9) Demenge Jean Noel, of Remémont, 55

On Tuesday before All Saints, almost two years earlier, he took a sow to sell at St Dié, and she demanded payment of a debt of 3 francs, but he refused on the grounds that the proceeds were already committed to meet another debt. She touched him on right shoulder and told him that he could very well pay what he owed, but did not wish to do so. He could not sell the sow, so took it home, then he fell gravely ill, as he remained until following Lent, being expected to die, and generally thought to be bewitched. Then started to recover, and firmly believed this to have been her witchcraft – long reputation.

(10) Colas d'Avould, of Ste Marguerite, 32

Reputation more than seven years, and suspected her over death of cow three years earlier – she had leased it and then complained that it was difficult to keep.

(11) Jean Maistre Claudon, jeune fils, 20

A year earlier Jennon wanted to buy a garden adjoining hers from his late mother Magdelaine, who said she would sell her shirt rather than the garden. Two or three days later she fainted in the garden and lay there for an hour, before going home to bed and dying within a week, always saying Jennon was the cause of her death. Long reputation.

(12) Benitte femme Hidoult Jean Masson of Ste Marguerite (no age given)

Suspected her of having bewitched two oxen three years earlier; long reputation.

13 August 1599; interrogation [This is not in the Nancy MS, but survives in AD Vosges 708.]

Said she was daughter of Jean Colin Blaise, aged about 36. Previous Tuesday she and her husband had applied to canons for evidence to be taken, so that she might be purged once and for all of charges of witchcraft which were commonly being made against her.

Was asked if she had caused death of the wife of the *maire* Simon Hougney, and said she had not. Also denied causing deaths of a cow belonging to Colas d'Anould or of a sow of Anthoine Masure, or the broken leg of a cow leased by the latter. Denied causing death of wife of Mongeon Demenge Henry, who had maintained until death that she had bewitched her. Agreed that she had tried to persuade Jean Didier Cheneviere to marry her sister, but denied causing his strange illness which had lasted 3 months. Had visited him previous week, with husband and others, to ask if he did truly suspect her; he replied 'qu'il ne vouloit maintenir qu'elle soit sorciere, mais bien la soupconnoit il qu'elle luy avoit causé sa maladie per ce qu'elle avoit ung tres mauvais bruict.'

Denied killing cow of Jean Hougney because his wife refused to sell her some cheeses. Did not remember striking Demenge Jean Noel of Remémont on shoulder after he refused her some money, and had not caused strange illness from which he subsequently suffered. Had not killed Magdelaine, mother of Jean Maire Claude, who refused to sell her a garden, nor bewitched 2 oxen of Idoult Jean Masson.

14 August 1599; confrontations

No objections and no new material.

17 August 1599; Change de Nancy decides there is not enough evidence to justify torture, so she is just to be shown instruments.

21 August 1599; additional witness statements

(13) Demenge Malrammeix, of Ste Marguerite, 22

At previous harvest he and the three sons of Jean Henry had contracted to reap some wheat for her husband; did not know if she had been angry, but when she brought them some soup in the field it was black and bitter, with an evil taste, so they threw it away after trying it. He then became ill, as he still was, and believed this was her witchcraft - long reputation.

(14) Claude Jean Henry, of Ste Marguerite, 30

When helping her at last harvest heard her say that Jean Didier Cheneviere, who was ill, must die this time. Long reputation.

(15) Dieudonnée femme au maire Simon Hougney, 20

Said she knew Jennon had long envied them, and they had lost several animals that died strangely, they believed by her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(16) Bastienne femme Jean Hougney, 23

Same story as husband about request for cheeses and loss of cow.

(17) Polline femme Mengeon Gill, de St Dié, 36

Two years earlier was living in house of Jean du Haut, alias Charpentier, who took Jennon's husband to court for beating one of his sons. An accord was made with a payment of half a bichot of wheat, which Jennon gave him. After eating this Jean became swollen throughout his body, and died miserably after languishing for six months, saying that she had bewitched him and that he cursed the moment he went to seek the wheat from her. General reputation.

(18) Mathis Clement, bouchier à St Dié, 38

Two or three weeks before previous Shrove Tuesday he had bought two oxen from her husband, one immediately, the other to be collected before Shrove Tuesday. Jennon was angry about the deal, and when he went to fetch the second animal she wanted extra payment for keeping it, although he considered this part of the deal and refused. She told him that he did not want to pay, but would not profit from this; he could not get the animal to move once it was handed over, so cursed all those witches who were responsible, and she said nothing. After a long wait the ox suddenly followed him like a lamb, and he believed she had bewitched it. Long reputation.

(19) Catherine veuve Jean du Haut, 40

Repeated story about beating of son, then husband's sickness and death three months after eating the wheat. Long reputation. Marguitte, sister of Jean Didier Lhoste, told of hearing her say 'Au diable soit-il commandé, le meschant homme qu'il estoit, et pourquoy il faisoit tant et parloit des gens de bien.'

24 August 1599; interrogation and confrontations

She was just asked about the new charges. On the story about the soup she was asked whether her husband had not asked her 'quel diable elle avoit mis dans ledit potage' – she said this was true, but she did not know what was wrong with it apart from lacking salt.

At the confrontations Dieudonnée Hougney added that she suspected her of causing the death of a child around the last St Martin.

1 September 1599; additional witness and confrontation

(20) Demenge Valencin le Maire, of Anouzey, servant of Mathieu Blaise of Ste Marguerite, 30

The *prévôt* of Saint-Dié had apparently refused to allow him to testify – no reason is given – then the *procureur-général de Lorraine* (Remy) reversed the decision.

He said that her husband had cut the hay in a meadow early that year, then flooded it without paying attention to fact that there were still haystacks in the

adjoining land belonging to his master Mathieu, which were about to be completely spoiled, so he diverted the water and warned his master, after which her husband reprimanded him rudely in public. A few days later he was at the mill when Jennon came along, and immediately he had a violent headache and started to tremble all over. He took to his bed and told visitors she had bewitched him, then had to go to his brother's house at Anouzey, where he remained sick for some further time before recovering. He was sure this had been her witchcraft, and he had intended to go and call her witch once he was better, only to find that she was already under arrest.

When they were confronted she agreed that her husband had been angry with him, and that she had been at the mill, but denied doing him any harm. [Mathieu Blaise, who was much suspected himself and had been accused in 1592 (w141), would presumably have been a relative, either a brother or a cousin, of her father.]

2 September 1599; Change de Nancy finally approves torture, with moderation.

No record survives of her interrogation under torture, but it would not have been very informative; we know from the later documents that she resisted and was released, *renvoyée jusqu'à rappel*.

16 April 1602; informations

(1) Nicolas d'Anould, of Ste Marguerite, 36

Had testified against her before; no new suspicions.

(2) Didielle femme Nicolas d'Anould, 35

Similar statement.

(3) Mengeon Colas Henriot, of Ste Marguerite, 23

Not heard before; no suspicions.

(4) Anthoine Mesure, 35

No new material since previous deposition.

(5) le maire Simon Hougney, 36

After deposing against her in previous trial he had lost several animals from strange diseases, to the value of 40 ecus, and suspected this had been her witchcraft.

(6) Pierrette femme Dieudonné Henry, 30

Long reputation only.

(7) Jean Maire Claude, 22

No new information.

(8) Claude Malremmeix, 30

Had lost various animals but did not know whom to suspect.

(9) Demenge Ragney, 40

Reputation only.

(10) Mengeon Demenge Henry, 38

Nothing to add to previous deposition.

(11) Demenge Malremmeix, of Ste Marguerite, 25

Since her release she had shown him great hatred, because he had been the first to testify against her; she had told various people that he would not eat her bread, and that although she would put on a good appearance to him he would never see her friendship. The he lost a cow that died in 24 hours, which everyone attributed to witchcraft, and he suspected this was her doing.

(12) Jean Didier Cheneviere, 47

No new information.

(13) Nicolas Hougney le jeune, 24

General reputation only.

(14) Marie veuve Claudon Michel, 36

Long reputation. Six years earlier when her brother Demenge Perry was on his deathbed Jennon went to see him, and he immediately cried out that they should chase her away, because she was the cause of his death.

(15) Jean Hougney, 28

No new evidence.

(16) Jean Colas Goudot, 36

General reputation only.

(17 April 1602)

(17) Georgeatte de la Goutte, living at Bertrimoutier, 50

General reputation only.

(18) Georgeatte femme Colas Grainsse, of le Faing de Ste Marguerite, 50

Last dimanche des fontaines Jennon had asked her to take bread with her after leaving church; the next day she became ill and had been bedridden since. Had come to testify with some difficulty, but could not say with confidence that she had caused the illness, since they had not quarrelled – the new arrest had made her wonder about this.

20 April 1602; interrogation

Jennon said she was 38, and the daughter of Jean Colin Blaise; she agreed that he had been much suspected as a witch and put to the torture, but he had not confessed and been released.

She said she had been arrested because Claudon Didier Perrin of Remémont had accused her as an accomplice, mentioning at their confrontation that he had seen her seven times at the sabbats ‘en hault de la Goutte’.

The judges told her that if she was put to the torture this time she might not be treated ‘sy gracieusement’ as on the previous occasion.

She admitted having great hatred for Simon Hougney because of previous testimony, but denied doing him any harm; similar statement about Demenge Malremmeix.

Was finally sent back to prison.

There are no further documents on the case, but it is most unlikely that she was tortured again, when the evidence was so slight. It looks as if the villagers had little interest in trying for a conviction this time.

The reference to the accusation by Claudon Didier Perrin must have some connection to the case of Claudel Perrin, the boy of 11 who was tried and executed in January-February of 1603 (w 220). His father was named in the trial as Claudon Jean Perrin of Remémont, executed three years before Claudel, so Claudon Didier Perrin was presumably another member of the family, executed in April 1602.