

B 2203 no 1; witch 009, Catherine femme Claudon Malgrais, de Champegnoult

19 May 1618

Procureur d'office for Prior and monks of St Epvre at Toul, having received information of the ill behaviour of Catherine wife of Claudin Malgrais of Champegnoult, orders maire et gens de justice to investigate.

21 May 1618; informations preparatoires

(1) Martin Bourdon laboureur de Champegnoult, c. 28

General repute only.

(2) Nicolas Boucher de Champegnoult, c. 40

General repute. 4 years before had quarrelled over agreement he had made to plough for her husband - claimed he should do more. He twice called her witch very clearly, and although she had means, she took no action against him.

(3) Noel Warin manoeuvrier de Champegneult, c. 36

General repute. Told of incident previous summer when she had been seen by his valet apparently talking in fields, and subsequently two cows died after straying to point where she had been (one of these belonged to Sr Handel). Subsequently one of her own cows went there; he chose not to drive it away (he was guarding village herd), and it too sickened and died. His sister-in-law had quarrelled with Catherine some time back, and after illness for one or two months she died, claiming that she had been bewitched by Catherine.

(4) Jean Melain, jeune fils de Champegnoult, c. 30

8 or 9 days earlier had witnessed quarrel between Catherine and Sr. Philippe George, advocat a Nancy, who had repeatedly called her a witch, accusing her of killing his father and sister. He said to her 'qu'elle prenne tesmoignage de tels propos cy dessus sy elle estoit femme de bien sur quoy elle prevenue respondit n'avoir assez de moyen pour le faire'. Two horses belonging to her accuser died same day. General reputation.

(5) Epve Thouvenin jeune fils de Champegnoult, c. 23-4.

General repute. Some two years earlier his sister Marie had quarrelled with one of Catherine's daughters at poisle when spinning, and had subsequently fallen ill. Languished for a year, then died, claiming that Catherine had given her illness.

(6) Nicolas Warin manouvrier de Champegnoult, c. 40

Common repute. Some 9 years earlier he and his wife had quarrelled with Catherine over a goat which she claimed they had not brought back from fields (he was paistre); in 'haulte colere' she said to his wife 'qu'elle prioit a dieu qu'elle puisse devenir en haxiere et qu'elle y puisse mourir'. Soon afterwards fell ill and died, claiming that Catherine had bewitched her.

(23 May 1618)

(7) Demenge Perey jeune fils de Champegnoult, c. 20

General repute. Previous year, taking cart to hay harvest, had passed Catherine in a narrow place. She had stroked horse, saying 'il est bien paisible la pauvre beste'; fell ill same day, and died two days later. Man who skinned it said it was poisoned and 'enginoxé'. Carcase then lay round for 15 days but no dog or other animal wanted to touch it. Believed Catherine to have caused this, both because of her reputation and because his father had quarrelled with one of her sons-in-law 3 weeks earlier over a debt of 6 gros.

(8) Nicolas Perey, laboureur, 60

Repeated essentials of son's testimony (previous witness).

(9) Jacques Doyen laboureur de Champegnoult, c. 36

Some 3 years before Catherine's son-in-law Bastien le Reistre had asked to borrow a horse to attend fiancailles of one of her sons; he refused, and three days later horse died without having been ill. About 6 months later had a dispute with her other son-in-law Claudon Mauffrois, whom he had found cutting down a pear tree. Catherine was angry at agreement for compensation payment, and threatened that he would pay for it in a way he did not expect; a month later lost a mare.

(25 May 1618)

(10) Nicolas Cathon de Champegnoult, c. 40

General repute. Some 8 or 9 years before someone had told her that witness had said 'qu'elle estoit tousiours a l'espie pour escouter sy on parloit d'elle (d'aultant qu'une nommée la Grosse Catherine estoit prinse pour sortilege)'; she then quarrelled with him, and 10 or 12 days later one of his cows died, for which he suspected her.

(11) Claudon Corbel, femme a Didier Crusenier de Champegnoult, c. 50

Some 18 years earlier Catherine and her husband Claudin Malgrais had sought to borrow some hay from her father, but had been unable to agree on terms, and had gone away grumbling and angry. Two or three days later her father fell from hayloft and was killed. Catherine was not then reputed a witch; had she been, witness was sure death would have been imputed to her.

(12) Colas Grand Colas, laboureur de Champegnoult, 29-30

General repute. 2 years before at harvest time had refused to give Claudon Malgrais a drink of water from his earthenware bottle (he was cutting corn); same day a horse fell ill, and died next day.

(13) Jean Mercier, laboureur de Champegnoult, c. 46

General repute. Some 5 years before had lost a mare, after (according to his valet) it had eaten a little hay which Catherine had been drying - she drove it away with a fork, and it died next day.

(14) Claude de Montigny, jeune fils, 14

Previous year, when serving Noel Warin, had been guarding herd of cows. Two of them had died after straying on to land of accused and eating a little oats; he and his master, who suspected her of using 'poudre veneficielle', then sent one of her cows to same place. It died three days later, 'enflée' like other two.

(15) Margueritte Faulcet, femme a Didier Grand Didier de Champegneult, c. 55

Two years before had been approached by a woman from La Garde who asked about prosperity and reputation of accused and her husband, since their son was seeking her daughter in marriage. Witness replied that they did not have much property, and that Catherine had been accused by some witches of being witch herself. The woman told Catherine of this, and she quarrelled with witness, who soon after lost a mare.

28 May 1618; interrogation

Said she was Catherine Maulgras, wife of Claudon Malgras, aged about 70 (judges noted she seemed less than 50, and was 'forte et robuste'). Father had been Le maire Barthelemy Saulsure, mother Zabel Saulsure. Knew she had been arrested for witchcraft. Also knew she had been accused by some convicted witches, but said she had never been confronted with them, because they had withdrawn accusation. Agreed that Nicolas Bouchier had called her witch in public some years before; she had not had the means to avenge herself at law. Admitted public accusation by Sr. Philippe George, docteur en droict advocat a Nancy, some days earlier; had also been accused by wife of Sr. Handel, but again had no means to avenge herself. Otherwise simply denied all specific charges.

29 May 1618; confrontations

Said of Margueritte wife of Didier Grand Didier that she had tried to strangle her previous husband, Jean la Tresse. Margueritte admitted that they had quarrelled violently because he had returned from war with 'une garce' whom he kept, but denied using any violence. Alleged thefts of flax and grain against Nicolas Perey,

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who denied them strongly. Otherwise deadlock, with no movement by either witnesses or accused.

29 May; procureur d'office (Sr. Handel) asks for torture (ordinaire et extraordinaire). Notes that she had not 'suffisamment repproché' the witnesses.

31 May 1618; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews on hands and feet, then rack, strappado with a weight, and 'braquillons' on arm and thigh. Denied still, saying she would damn her soul if she admitted to being a witch. Told that Jean Parmentier, also in prison, said he had seen her at sabbat, said that if he was a witch she was not. Record gives impression that she probably lost consciousness during final period on strappado - she was 'en extaze sans vouloir parler aulcun mot', and had to be awoken 'comme d'ung sommeil'.

Some 2 hours later told executioner (Demenge Marchal) that she was ready to confess rather than endure further torture. Confessed that she had been seduced by Mre Persin when angry that her children had stayed too long out in fields. Had been to sabbat, but had only recognised Jean Parmentier - he had said he would see if his wife also wished to come. Parmentier and an unidentified companion had worn masks. Said she had been given powder, but had not wanted to use it. Denied having plotted destruction of crops at sabbat. Others had danced back to back, and they had made promises not to accuse one another. Denied killing cows belonging to Sr. Handel and Jean Roussel - this was the first 'malefice' question. Said she had killed wife of Nicolas Warin, then withdrew this - placed on rack, said she had indeed killed her, because her husband had sought to beat Catherine's husband on way back from Mazereulle. She had done this with powder - when judges said this was contrary to earlier claim she had not taken powder, said she had denied it for fear of shame. Denied various other malefices - Marye daughter of Laurent Thouvenin was one she had always 'bien aymé'. Had however killed horse that Jacques Doyen had refused to lend her son-in-law.

1 June 1618; freely confirmed earlier confessions

Same day; procureur d'office requests death sentence; Change de Nancy approves

7 June 1618; formal death sentence by court at Champegnoult.
Carried out same day.

Notes. Trial followed within a year of accusation that she had been responsible for death of cow belonging to procureur d'office. No attempt made to press her on question of accomplices.