

B 2574; Witch 014; Claude Hocquart, Mengeotte Hocquart, Catherine femme Romain Hocquart.

4 October 1617.

'Sur le mauvais bruit qui court au lieu de Bussang qu'un nommé Claude Hocquart dudit lieu Mengeotte sa femme et Catherine sa soeur vefue de feut Romain Hocquart sont grandement craintz et redoutez pour estre sorciers Mesme que plusieurs fois on leur a eu appelle sans qu'ilz s'en soient plaintz ny eu demandé radresse en justice' Substitut of Procureur General des Vosges orders Prevost of Arches to undertake preliminary investigation. Substitut was Nicolas Rouyer.

6 October 1617: depositions of witnesses.

(1) Honeste homme Michel Baguel, nre commis en cedit lieu de Bussang, c. 50.

Resident for 14 years, had always heard that Claude Hocquart and his wife Mengeotte were witches. Some 7 or 8 months before Jean Feltin and another of his valets had been threshing in the barn: as Hocquart was passing his horse had taken fright, throwing him and dislocating his arm. As he left, 'commencea a malgreer contre lesdictz serviteurs et contre luy deposant' - Baguel told his servants that 'ilz avoient mal fait, et que mal luy en prendroit.' The next day he had hired his horses to help pull some carts coming from Germany, and Hocquart had done the same. His horses had already been attached when Hocquart arrived, to find there was no work for him - left after 's'estre tancés et disputés' with Baguel's servant. 'Ce que sachant reprint sondit serviteur de de n'avoir cédé audit Hocquart, luy disant qu'il ne devoit prendre dispute avec tels gens qui n'avoient point de bon bruit.' Fifteen days later one of horses became ill: tried to bite ground and anything else, and after 3 - 4 weeks died 'comme enragé'. Dogs would not eat body.

Also testified that several had called the Hocquarts witches without their taking any legal action. 4 or 5 months before a certain Brice Grand Claude of Demprulz (?) had publicly called Hocquart 'sorcier double sorcier, et qu'il estoit content qu'on le meust avec luy a Arches comme partye formelle, ce qu'il avoit enduré sans en chercher redresse. Si bien que Messire Anthoine Serre leur pasteur avec les habitants l'avoient mis hors de l'office de Chastellier disantz ne vouloir endurer telle sortes de gens pour officier en leur Eglise, dequoi il ne se seroit aucunement meu.'

(2) Nicolas Blaise Ribelet de Bussang. c. 55

Testified to long reputation of Mengeotte as witch, and that mother had also been suspect. About ten years before eleven calves had been in his field adjoining one belonging to the Hocquarts: had found Mengeotte beating one of them, perhaps because it had strayed. Had put her out of his field, and she had threatened him that he would repent of it: over next 3 - 4 months all the calves died. Accused Mengeotte of being a witch and killing his cows, but she did nothing to seek redress.

(3) Nicolas Henry laboureur a Bussang, c. 40

Reputation of Claude dated back more than 20 years, of Mengeotte more than 30 - mother also suspect. Often accused, as by Colas Blaise, who said Claude had killed some of his horses. Witness had asked Claude one day why he didn't take action against those who called him and his wife witches 'et que si les Seigneurs le scavoient ils feroient informer de luy' - replied that he was not a witch. Reported recent accusation by Brice Grand Claude.

Some 20 years before Mengeotte's sister had been in front of his house 'touchant et mignardant' his 4 year old son, and said 'voila un beau garçon'. Within an hour or two child was so strangely ill, and given up for dead, which 'l'occasionna de se prendre a elle et luy dire, Sorciere si tu ne guerite mon garçon que tu as touché, J'en avertiray Monsieur le Prevost, deux jours apres sondict Garçon fut guery'.

(7 October 1617)

(4) Jean Demengeon Jacot peltre de Bussang, c. 60

Said that more than 20 years ago, when he had been 'à marier', the late Jeannotte, widow of Demenge Hocquart, 'desirant qu'il fist l'amour à Catherine sa fille' - 'le quoy il ne voulut jamais entendre, d'aultant que la mere et la fille estoient ja fort soubconnée et craintes pour sorcières'. They were angry, and at a 'festin mortuaire' the mother sent Catherine to give him a dish of beans. Six weeks later became tremendously swollen, in body and genitals, and remained so for ten weeks. 'Et ayant apprins que s'il pouvoit avoir quelque viande à manger appartenante auxdites Jeannotte et Catherine, il gueriroit, et n'en pouvant recouvrer sceut qu'ilz avoient des naveaux en un meix hors du village' he ate some and was cured in 4 weeks.

Also testified to reputation of Claude and Mengeotte Hocquart.

(5) Demenge Gané laboureur de Bussang, c. 80.

Some 4 years before one of his sons and one of Claude Hocquart's had gone 'a la montagne' to help voituriers: while waiting for latter had been playing together. On return Hocquart's son told his mother he had been beaten, and mother came to tell him they would repent. Witness replied 'Quoy sorcière nous vient tu icy menasser' - the same day a fine mare became lame and soon died. Suggested that even the grandmother had been accused and taken to Arches. Spoke of general reputation and fear.

(6) Brice Thiebault Grand Claude de Dempruz, c. 38.

Reported quarrel just under a year before, when he and others had been drinking at house of Sr. Baguel, and Claude Hocquart, having joined them, refused to pay his share. Called him a witch, and after his failure to react he was deprived of his office of Chastellier. When they met later Claude reproached him: they went to arbitration by Demenge Grand Demenge and others, and Claude was ordered to pay over 100 francs.

(7) Jean Colin de Bussang, c. 76.

General reputation. Hocquart's grandmother had died in prison at Arches.

(8). Pierre Simonin de Bussang. 50.

After a quarrel with Mengeotte 12 years before, arising from her husband cutting down a hedge, he called her witch and she said he would repent. A month later his six-month-old child became ill and died. Another quarrel 7 or 8 years back, when wife had been guarding horses and one of them strayed into Hocquart's land: a horse then sickened and died.

(9) Demengeon Nicolas Jacot de Bussang, c. 90.

Reputation allegedly went back more than 50 years.

27 October - order for arrest of three suspects.

9 November 1617 - renewed depositions.

(10) Jean Simonin de Bussang, c. 35.

9 years before his horse had 'faily' a mare belonging to Hocquart: Mengeotte was 'indignée' and said to him 'que le diable le prenne, et luy estant reparty que le diable la prenne elle mesme. Repliqua qu'il ne le meneroit plus guere loing sondit cheval'. Found horse dead in stable next day. Also claimed that long before he had heard the two sisters calling one another witch, in company of their mother. Also claimed that his father had died after a quarrel with Mengeotte, and had believed that she had given him the sickness.

(11) Claudon Xalley de Bussang, c. 70.

General reputation; story of grandmother dead in prison.

(12) Catherine veuve de Vincent Xalley, de Bussang, 50.

Reported quarrel with Mengeotte, around previous Easter, when a foal had followed one of her horses, but no evil had resulted.

(13) Adrienne femme de Jean Colin de Bussang, c. 40.

Reported that she had gathered some 'herbes' for her animals from between two pieces of land belonging to Catherine Hocquart: later when drying millet with Catherine the latter wished that 'mal proffit puisse faire le bestail que avoit mangé lesdites herbes' - repeated it when witness said she had gathered them. Two months later had 3 piglets 'morts dans la truye'.

(20 November 1617)

(14) Jean Thiebault Colin de Bussang, c. 45.

Reputation of Mengeotte and Catherine. On one occasion Mengeotte had found one of his sows (pregnant) doing damage in his meix: brought it back saying 'que nul proffict il puisse tirer du fruct de ladits truye' - and indeed the litter was lost.

15 November 1617

Interrogation of Catherine by Philippe Pironel, Prevôt d'Arches.

Said she was over 60, widow of Romain Hocquart of Bussang. Agreed that she had been arrested under suspicion of witchcraft, but denied this. Said she had had 6 children: three living, three dead. Mother had been called Jeanotte Germain - denied that she had been a witch. Generally denied all substantial accusations.

Interrogation of Mengeotte femme de Claude Hocquart.

Said she was about 47. Admitted that she was arrested as a witch, but denied it. Had had three children, but two were dead.

A lot of leading questions suggesting she was a witch. Failed to say paternoster in Latin. No serious admissions.

20 November 1617

Confrontations. No serious result from those of Mengeotte, although she clearly became angry and started saying that witnesses were 'gros menteur' etc.

Catherine equally firm in denials.

Claude denied depositions. In response to Brice Thiebault Grand Claude, said that latter had made reparation to him, and that he had an 'act' to prove it.

28 November: Change de Nancy agreed to torture of Mengeotte and Catherine: Claude could also be tortured if they accused him.

2 December 1617; interrogation under torture.

Mengeotte withstood thumbscrews, and first stage on rack, but then asked to be released, and began to confess. Seduced by devil 5 or 6 years before. Agreed that she had been to Sabbat, 5 or 6 times.

List of those she had seen there: Jeannon femme de Colin Blaise, Collatte sa fille, Marie femme de Colas douillat, Collatte femme de Jean Thiebault, Magdalene femme de Mengeon Collatte, Demenge Gamel, et Catherine sa soeur. Also 'un nommé Colas de la Reine'.

Asked if she had truly accused these, esp. Demenge Gamel. Said she had told the truth, but she had only seen Gamel once, 'et que quelquefois ils avoient de faux visages'.

Catherine also withstood thumbscrews, then confronted with her sister, who maintained her accusation. Eventually made similar confessions after being racked. Identified Jeannon, wife of Colin Blaise, as having been at Sabbat (and sister). Despite further pressure, would not identify others. Said she had heard talk of Magdalaine femme Mengin Collatte, and the wife of Jean Thiebault who had been accused in Germany.

16 December 1617 - sentence of death on the two sisters.

Costs for interrogations and execution of the two seem to have amounted to 33 francs and 139 francs 11 gros.

Noted that they had been 37 days in prison, and gaoler paid 2 gros per person per day: apparently thought an expense needing justification, since they had needed special treatment 'a cause de leur vieillesse' and since it was winter.