

Witch 016, Remiere Beustal 1

B 2583 no 2; witch 016, Remiere veuve Bastien Clement Beustal, du Thillot

26 June 1624; informations preparatoires

Taken after denunciation by Chretienne Parmentier (although latter had withdrawn this).

(1) Nicolas Godel, tabellion, 30

Long reputation, and feared as witch, 'prouvenant ledit soubcon, de ce qu'elle s'est tousjours meslée et se mesle de guerir du bestail et de l'asseurer, comme aussy les personnes, leurs donnant des herbes, que pour son particulier il a eu beaucoup de bestiaux morts, mais n'en soubçonne personne, encore que ladite Remiere ait esté alentour pour les guerir ny ayant rien fait.' (Signed)

(2) Delat Godel, 24

Long reputation, on account of activities as healer. 3 or 4 years earlier François Claude Anthoine, moictrier of his late father. had a quarrel with her, then suspected her of killing a cow; told father he did not want to stay there 'a cause du mauvais voisinage'. About 10 years before his father had a horse ill, and his stepmother Valentine suspected her, because she had caught her stealing; sent him to get bread, salt and ashes from her house, which her son Claude gave him, and horse recovered immediately after eating these. (Signed)

(3) Philippe Godel, 28

Reputation 6 or 7 years - suspected because of healing activities. Had heard Chretienne Parmentier accuse her of killing cow of moictrier. (Signed)

(4) Jean Mercier, tailleur d'habitz, 30

Reputation 10 years (residence); had heard that her children were called 'noire pelet' by others who quarrelled with them. She had treated his sick horse, making a neuvaine and using sign of cross in mornings, but it had still become deaf and blind. As soon as animals were lost she was consulted. Story of wife finding her outside house 2 or 3 hours before dawn - claimed she was looking for pig she had lost. 'Au reste qu'elle a les mains tellement crochue qu'elle prent et emporte ce qu'elle trouve' - had seen her steal wood from outside house of Nicolas Cosme.

(5) Magdellaine, femme du precedent, 27

General reputation; 'qu'elle guerit le bestail et l'asseure en sorte que sy aucune beste couche aux champs, le loup ne scauroit encore que tout proche luy nuire'. Same story about finding her in early morning, and claim that she had 'la main fort legere'.

(6) Nicolas fils de feu Mathieu la Breuche, 23

Reputation for witchcraft and theft, healing activities.

(7) Claude Lambert dit Dany, 55

Knew nothing but good of her. Asked if she was relative, said she was his cousin.

(8) Remy Toussain Beustal, 40

Had married his cousin; knew nothing but good of her, but she did heal animals.

(9) Jean Gerard Domecourt, tisserand, 35

Reputation as witch and thief, but had seen no harm in her. Healing activities; had cured his goat by putting an onion and some salt in its mouth, and making sign of cross.

(10) Nicolas Laurent, 45

Had trouble with eyes, which were very red (as they would have seen); small daughter had same trouble. Knowing she had remedies for eyes, sent for her, and she said 'qu'il les falloit signer neufs jours durantz', which she would do in her house. Did not know what she did, but no trouble since. Had also cured a sick calf, making sign of cross in his presence. (Signed)

(11) Barbe veuve Mathieu la Breuche, 50

Long reputation. She had lost numerous animals, but did not suspect anyone.

(12) Mathieu Ongier, 27

Long reputation; had quarrelled with her, but received no harm he knew of, and she was 'une femme qui assure fort bien le bestail'.

(27 June 1624)

(13) François Claudel Anthoine, de la Meline, 30

Had been neighbour for some 4 years; reputation for causing harm to animals of those with whom she quarrelled. Suspected her of causing death of cow after quarrel; servants told him about cat which got into stable at that time. Chretienne Parmentier had been in his service then.

(14) Nicolas Martin Colé, 50

Had always heard she was witch, and had called her so himself during quarrel; her husband had him fined for this.

(15) Delatte femme Jean Martin Colé, 36

Neighbour for 20 years; knew her 'pour une causeuse et menteuse ayant plusieurs fois semé de la zizanie entre elle deposante et ses voisins taschant de les mettre en querelles'. Had sometimes been on point of coming to blows when they

realised cause of disputes was her lies. About a year ago had gone out to pee around midnight, and saw her on a pile of wood; made sign of cross, then saw her go another way than to her house. Next day asked her if she had been looking for pigs, but she denied (by the devil) that she had been there.

27 June 1624; interrogation

Said she was about 50, claimed to have no idea of nature of accusation. Does not sound as if she was in prison.

Questioned on basis of story told by Chretienne Parmentier, she denied it all. Then asked about healing, she recited prayer for sick animals (Delcambre 23), which she said she had learned from wife of Nicolas Lambert, and which others also used. Also gave prayer to protect animals against wolves, bears, and thieves (Delcambre 40), learned from same woman.

Asked about thefts, denied she was a thief. Agreed that her son Claudon, aged 6, had been herding calves with other boys, who had told him 'qu'ils le prendroient, s'il ne disoit, qu'il avoit esté au sabat avec sa mere et qu'on y mangeoit du noir pelat, et millot.'

Gave prayer for eye trouble (Delcambre 24), which she said was 'approuvé par experience'.

Said she had sometimes been out of house at night to try and catch those who were stealing from her. Delatte femme Jean Martin Colé was 'une femme a laquelle il n'y a point d'estime'.

27 June 1624; confrontations

No serious reproaches. Did say Nicolas Godel was 'un homme qui ne tient ses parolles'. Finally confronted with Chretienne Parmentier, who insisted she was 'une genoche et une ribaulde'; accusations were read out and she confirmed them.

1 July 1624; confronted again with Chretienne, who now withdrew all accusations, saying she had made them 'a la suasion de quelque particulier'.

8 July 1624; PG des Vosges suggests that there are very strong presumptions against her, including use of prayers which were 'superstitieuses et diaboliques'; asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

9 July 1624; Change de Nancy asks for case to be held over until that against Chretienne Parmentier has been completed.

15 July 1624; additional witnesses

(16) Estienne Lallemand, controlleur en la gruyerie du val de Ramonchamp, 32

Suspected as witch and thief, primarily as latter. About 18 months before had caught her stealing pears from his tree, and had her fined (through husband, who was still alive). Heard from Didier Boileau that she told him 'que ceux qui boiroient de cet argent, s'en repentiroient'. He bought drinks for his brothers-in-law Nicolas and Philippe Godel; not long after he and they each had a child dead. Boileau, who also drank with them, had a bad leg, and witness suspected her of causing all this. (Signed)

(17) Didier Boileau, meunier, 40

Long reputation, and he had called her witch without reparation being sought. He himself had been ill, and had animals dead, but suspected no-one. Asked about remark reported by previous witness, said he did not remember this, although she might well have said it.

5 August 1624; PG des Vosges reiterates previous demands.

13 August 1624; Change de Nancy recommends that she be renvoyée, unless PG produces additional evidence.

19 August 1624; prévôt of Arches orders that she should be renvoyée as recommended by court at Nancy, with warning not to make any further use of her superstitious prayers.