

Witch 037, Chrestienne Barret 1

B 3327 no 1; witch 037, Chrestienne femme Nicolas Barret de Domjevin

18 December 1603; informations preparatoires

(1) Didier Thirion de Domjevin, c. 60

Reputation 12 years, but did not suspect her himself.

(2) Jennon femme Jean Mongeot de Domjevin, c. 35

Reputation 15 years (since residence), but no personal suspicion.

(3) Yzabey femme Didier Doyen de Domjevin, c. 40

Reputation 12-13 years, but no personal suspicion.

(4) Jean Claudon de Domjevin, c. 60

Reputation 13-13 years, but no personal suspicion.

(5) Catherine femme Didier Thirion, c. 40

Reputation 12-13 years, but lived a long way from her, and didn't suspect her personally.

(6) Jean Virion de Domjevin, c. 30

Reputation 12 years. Some 15 years before his father had sold a field to Chrestienne's husband, but latter had eventually withdrawn from purchase, so his father took possession again against will of Chrestienne. Soon afterwards became ill, and remained so until death 4 or 5 years later 'secq et decrepité'. Witness considered the accused responsible.

(7) Annel veuve Virion Bergier de Domjevin, c. 60

Reputation 12-13 years. Said that 7 or 8 years before her husband had owed money to Nicolas Barret, who was not willing to wait for payment. Had therefore sold him a field, but had repossessed it within year and a day (presumably exercising right to repurchase). Some 4 or 5 months later became sick with illness from which he died 3 or 4 years later. (Evidently more accurate description of events in previous testimony).

(8) Bastienne femme Colas Simonatte de Domjevin, c. 30

Reputation 13 years. 5 years earlier witness had given birth to son, and on third day of 'couches' Chrestienne had come in, asking to buy a 'cresche des chevaux'; leant on bed that was ready for use. When witness took child into bed that night she found that he 'tremissoit et herissoit et son petit corps tousjours sautellait

sans aucun repos, estimant qu'il en mouroit' - this lasted 3 days and nights. Shortly afterwards 'son mary entra en une inimitié contre elle sy grande qu'ils ont esté plus de trois ans sans coucher ensembles' - believed accused might have resented marriage, as otherwise succession might have gone to a brother married to her niece. Might therefore have 'causé par son sortilege telle irreconciliable inimitié entre eulx deux Ou bien que cela soit venu de quelque autre fantaisie de son mary Lequel n'est encore pour le present trop bien reconcillié avec elle Ne scachant autre chose.'

(9) Jean Henry de Domjevin, c. 72

Reputation 30 years. Some 4 years before had sold a field to her son-in-law for 26 francs - was cheap because he wished to repurchase it within year and a day. Was fattening up cow to sell it, and reckoned it worth 10 ecus - Chrestienne remarked more than once that it was a pity to fatten such a good milk animal. Cow's legs became 'debilités', so that he had to kill it and distribute meat among poor, receiving only 9 francs and being unable to buy back his field.

(10) Nicolas Goudot de Domjevin, c. 60

Reputation 12-12 years. A year or two before his wife had died after three month illness, during which she told him that Chrestienne was responsible for sickness. Didn't explain why, and they had not quarrelled with her or her husband.

(11) Jean fils Demenge Jean Jean de Domjevin, c. 20

Reputation 12 years. About 10 years ago, according to his mother, his uncle Gerardin became ill, 'forcené et hors de son esprit', through bewitchment by Chrestienne. Was eventually cured by pilgrimage to Vergaville, and was still in good health. During illness his mother 'envoya aupres de feu Domp Jean de Xanrey au lieu de Niderhoff pour scavoir d'ou elle (the illness) procedoit Qui luy donna des herbes pour faire tenir par quelque moyen a ladite prevenue, avec certaine instruction qu'elle luy donna, ce qu'estant faict ladite prevenue se voyant scandallisé le princnt au point d'honneur et les mit en action et s'en fit faire reparation par devant la justice.' Had always suspected her since.

(12) Jean Diez de Domjevin, c. 45

Reputation 12-13 years. At that time his late wife Chrestienne (in fact executed as a witch in September 1603) had been accused by Mengin Lours before his execution at Blamont, and imprisoned. Had often been to Nicolas Barret's house, because he was then maire, and he was asking him to get the officers to do quick justice. One evening Chrestienne was there 'fillant sa quenoille', and said 'qu'il se taise, et moyennant que sadite femme ne se gaste de soy mesme, qu'elle retourneroit et qu'il n'en falloit point douter' - this made him have 'une mauvaise opinion' of her.

(13) Nicolas Bon Demenge de Domjevin, c. 60

Reputation at least 20 years.

(14) Gerardin Jean Thiriat de Domjevin, c. 34

16 years before Mengin le Xeru of Domjevin told him that several witches executed at Manonviller had denounced Chrestienne. 12 years ago his sister Jehenne, wife of Demenge Jean Jean, quarrelled with Chrestienne, telling her she was 'excessive en mauvais propos.' Then story of his illness, some 8 days later, and visit by parents to Dom Jean de Xanrey; he told them accused's name, and gave herbs for her to touch. This was achieved through services of Zabey Masson, who asked Chrestienne to tell her what they were. Further quarrel between sister and Chrestienne followed, and they went to law, but then came to an accord. Had started to become better once she had touched herbs, and completed cure by pilgrimage to Vergaville - had enjoyed good health since.

(15) Jennon femme de Bernard Parmentier de Domjevin, c. 40

Reputation 12-13 years. Some 9 or 10 years before her husband had sold a field cheaply to Nicolas Barret, intending to repurchase it; Chrestienne had given them a demi-quarteron of wheat in an attempt to persuade them to leave field in her husband's possession, but witness's husband was angry that it was of such poor quality. Accused heard of this. Next Sunday witness took son aged 5 or 6 to visit brother next door to Chrestienne's house, and latter gave him some bread and cheese. That evening became ill with headache, and next day was demented, calling mother a witch and father a devil; when the then curé, Messire Demenge, the child's godfather, was called to house, the child pushed him away, calling him 'un gros diable'. Died after a month.

(16) Allison Colas Estienne de Domjevin, 20

Reputation 4 years. Around that time, being a poor orphan, she had stolen cabbages from Chrestienne's garden, and cooked them in house of her sister, the wife of Colas Diez, who supported her. Hadn't finished eating them when she was taken with an illness which made her 'comme insensée' - only recovered after pilgrimage to Vergaville.

(17) Bernard Parmentier de Domjevin, c. 55

Reputation 12-13 years. Repeated essential of wife's deposition, concerning sale of field, refusal of poor wheat which was owing to him, and illness of child.

(18) Zabey femme Claude Pierson de Counay, c. 30

Reputation as long as could remember. Told of Gerardin Thiriot's illness, and her own offer to see that Chrestienne touched herbs - she asked her what they were, and she took them in her hand. Didn't remember whether Gerardin recovered immediately.

22 December 1603; interrogation

Said she was over 50, native of Domjevin, daughter of Mengin le Xeru and his wife Allison. Had been suspected some 12 or 13 years before because Mengin Lours had denounced a Chrestienne from Domjevin - the one executed most recently - and she had been confused with her. On marital problems of Colas Simonette and his wife, said 'qu'elle scayt bien qu'ilz se haissoient voirement, mais que c'estoit desja auparavant leurs nopces.'

30 December 1603; confrontations

Said of Bastienne wife of Colas Simonatte 'qu'elle contoit bien souvent des mensonges'. Jean Henry added to his deposition that he had heard from Colas Bon Demenge of a conversation between the accused and Jehenne wife of Jean Simonatte le jeune. Jehenne said 'Helas on nous veut prendre aussy bien que les autres, a laquelle ladite prevenue respondit et dit Tay toy, l'argent est aussy bon qu'il fut jamais, et pour de l'argent on en eschappera'. Jean Diez also told this story, from same source, adding that Jehenne was niece of accused - in his version she said 'Je doute morte', although reply was the same. In replying to his testimony Chrestienne was crying, but observed to be shedding no tears - judges questioned her about this, which they regarded as sign of a witch. In general tried to deal with witnesses by saying they were good or bad according to their testimony.

On return to prison she confessed to the sergent Francois Cherier that she was a witch - he told authorities, but interrogation was put off until after New Year's Day.

2 January 1604; interrogation

Said she had become a witch some 6 or 7 years earlier, when angry because some were calling her witch. Had been given powder, which she tried out on one of her own cows, worth 7 ecus, which died. Judges asked why she didn't try it on some less valuable animal - could only say 'que l'advis ne luy vint point autrement'. Then claimed to have thrown powder away. Had been once to sabbat, but had not recognised anyone there. Would not make any further confession, despite threats of greater rigour.

3 January 1604; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

4 January 1604 Change de Nancy approves.

8 January 1604 interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews on hands and feet, then racked. Added little to earlier confessions at first, except to confess making hail at sabbat with Jehenne de Frumesnil (already executed). When released until next morning, said she was not a witch at all; the sergent had told her that if she confessed she would not be tortured, and would be released from prison.

9 January 1604; interrogation

Now repeated earlier confessions without torture. Added that she had received more powder, with which she had killed animals and people. Had killed Virion Bergier because she had 'un desdain' towards him, after he had hindered her husband in his duties as maire, because his wife was 'fort robuste et luy portoit mauvais visage', because he was old and her master having ordered her to kill someone, she chose him.

Admitted numerous visits to sabat, but still denied knowledge of other accomplices. Maintained innocence of most other charges made against her, despite being briefly hoisted on strappado.

Marginal notes suggested that she tried to withdraw even some of these confessions later.

12 January 1604; procureur fiscal asks for execution.

14 January 1604; Change de Nancy agrees, subject to repetition of confessions.

Executed 29 January 1604