

Witch 041, Claudatte Chollat 1

B 3329; Witch 041, Claudatte femme Nicolas Chollat, de Repas

7 October 1605; informations preparatoires

(1) Noble Jean Hanna de Blamont, 63

Had no previous knowledge of accused, but some 6 weeks before had heard rumour that there were some small animals hardly bigger than 'un ciron' which fled as soon as a flame was brought near them 'et deslors a ouy dire que beaucoup dudit Repas soubconnoient et reputoient ladite Claudatte pour sorciere'.

(2) Demenge Loys de Repas, c. 40

Reputation more than 20 years; he and many others feared her, and he always crossed himself when he passed her. Some 12 years before had a foal which he had bought from brother for 15 ecus, and which strayed into Claudatte's field - she drove it out 'a grand coups de baston, jurant et malgreant allentour'. Witness rushed up and told her to stop, promising compensation for any damage. She said he had better pay up 'sinon il s'en donroit bien tost de garde' - within a few days, before he had made any compensation, foal died.

(3) Henry Febuay, de Repas, c. 35

Reputation as long as he could remember, as native of village. Qu il est bien vray qu'il a eu beaucoup d'Infortunes sur son Bestail mais ad cause qu'il n'eust jamais querelle avec elle (qu'il sache) qu'il ne luy soupconne et ne scayt sur qui les imaginer.'

(4) Claudatte femme Nicolas des Montagnes de Repas, c. 28

Reputation 8 years. Had been neighbour for last three years, but had seen no evil in her - had never quarrelled with her.

(5) Anthoine Chollat, de Repas, c. 40

Reputation 20 years or more. Was his sister-in-law; had never seen any harm in her. Asked specifically if his brother, during a long illness, had blamed her, said he had heard nothing of this.

(6) Claudatte femme Estienne Rouxiaud (dit le jeune Estienne) de Repas, c. 54

Was native of Repas, but had been resident for many years in Domepvre after marriage. Had returned 17 years before, and heard Claudatte suspected, but for her part didn't blame her for any 'desplaisir sortilegique'.

(7) Royne femme Jean de St, George, de Repas, c. 36

Reputation 17 years (since her residence). Some ten years before she and Claudatte had been returning from market at Blamont when former asked for repayment of debt of 4 gros; was angry when she said she had no money so couldn't pay it back yet. Next week her only cow, in communal herd, was savaged by a wolf and severely injured. Heard that there was a man at Fourcey who knew how to treat such cases; when she returned from visiting him found that a fine billy-goat had also been savaged as troop of pigs and goats was leaving village - had been picked out while they were still bunched together. Goat died two days later, and she blamed Claudatte in view of their violent quarrel on return from Saturday market. Previous year had found one of Claudatte's daughters stealing beans from her garden - minor quarrel ensued. Next day, working in fields, a neighbour came to tell her that they had a calf sick - found it 'comme enragé', and would have harmed her children if she hadn't taken them out of house. It died later and she blamed Claudatte.

(8) Nicolle femme Fiaire Jacquot de Repas, 40

Reputation 26 years, since she had been resident. Had had a dispute with her children previous year, after which she lost 4 lambs and a calf, 'et qu'aucuns dudit Repas luy ayent voulu mettre en teste que ladite prevenue les avoit faict mourir, toutesfois elle ny a jamais heu oppinion'.

(9) Paulus Loys de Repas, c. 30

Long reputation. Retold story of brother's foal. Didn't believe that for himself he had suffered any 'desplaisir sortilegique, aussy n'a il eu aucune querelle avec elle quy luy en ayt peu donner occasion.'

(10) Nicolas Loys de Repas, c. 29

Reputation as long as could remember. 5 years before Claudatte's husband Nicolas had been paistre of the 'rouges bestes a cornes'. At harvest time left them in care of wife and small son while he went off to reap for someone else. Heard that she had kept animals 'a pransier' from 9 in morning until 4 in afternoon, so went to reproach her that they would die of hunger if they weren't put out to pasture. She replied 'qu'il ne se menne sy mal de poeur qu'il ne s'en repente' - next day cow sickened and quickly died.

(11) Nicolas Didier l'hoste dit des Montagnes, de Repas, c. 34

Resident some 10-11 years; a year after arrival 'il ouyt que plusieurs murmuroient que ladite Claudatte prevenue estoit une sorciere'. Some 7 years before had heard her brother-in-law Anthoine Chollat say 'Ceste sorciere nous fera beaucoup de mal', and when he suggested 'qu'il ne disoit bien et qu'il ne falloit ainsi mal soupçonner d'aultruy', Anthoine said his brother believed her to have caused a sickness which had troubled him for a year. Following Sunday heard Anne, wife of Thiebault Hannast and 'soeur germaine' of accused, say 'qu'icelle estoit vrayement une sorciere, ou qu'il n'y en avoit point au monde.' Some 6 weeks

earlier the accused's husband told him he had a sick calf, which his wife 'medicamentoit' 'mais qu'il eust aultant aymé qu'elle l'eust laissé qu'aussy bien s'en alloit il mourir au diable' - this had caused witness to form 'une mauvaise conjecture . . que sondit mary avoit ung soupcon de sortilege contre elle.'

(12) Thiebault Hannast, de Repas, c. 36

Reputation 14 years, since residence. Some 7 years before had sold a horse to Claudatte's husband, who didn't pay at stipulated date; was subsequently obliged against his will to accept another horse in payment. A few days later one of his existing horses died 'comme enragé' - believed this to be Claudatte's doing.

(13) Estienne Cherrier dit le jeune Estienne, de Repas, c. 60

Reputation 14 years.

(14) Bastien Grand Bastien, de Repas, c. 60

Long reputation.

(15) Fiacre Jacquot de Repas, 56

Long reputation. Previous year, when harvesting 'chanvre', had seen that two of their calves, among troop being guarded by two of Claudatte's children, were eating fallen pears. Wife called out to him about this, saying they should protest that it would do the calves no good. Overheard by Claudatte, also harvesting nearby, who called out to children that they should move animals onto cultivated ground. Next evening one of calves went lame, subsequently died. Also blamed Claudatte for death of 3 or 4 lambs.

(16) Jean de St. George, de Repas, c. 50

Some 17 or 18 years before had leased a house and 'gagnage' from late Jean l'allemand; previously occupied by Claudatte and family. Soon after she came back claiming to be looking for hens - had dispute with his first wife 'comme ordinairement femmes font'. Subsequently witness was ill for some 15 weeks, while a horse went lame, and ultimately died 'comme enragé'. Also reported quarrel between second wife Royne and Claudatte some 8 years before over repayment of debt, and subsequent attacks by wolves on cow and goat. Finally, the quarrel the previous year over child picking beans, and subsequent death of calf.

(8 October 1605)

(17) Nicolas Jacquot de Repas, c. 50

Reputation 30 years and more. When she had been their near neighbour, had various disputes; on three separate occasions were followed by death of a horse. Could only remember details of last dispute, some 8 years earlier; after horses had

been found in her field she said he would pay dearly for them - horse which died had cost 21 ecus. Some 7 years before his daughter, aged about 6 or 7, had quarrelled with children of accused, and returned home unwell. Went to bed, wouldn't eat or drink, and died 8 days later. Following year believed her to have caused death of two calves, after further quarrels with her and her husband.

(18) Jean Jacquot de Repas (beau frere à la prevenue), c. 60

Had never heard any ill of her. 'Bien dit il avoir entendu depuis la St. Jean dernier seulement qu aucunes languardees de femmes telles que celle de Jean de St. George et de Nicolas de Perxonne dudit Repas en mettent leurs langues en oeuvres, et en disent leurs bonnes goulées comme il leur plaist'.

(10 October 1605)

(19) Didier Jean Didier, de Repas, c. 50

Reputation 24 years. No suspicion that she had damaged him, but some two years before passage of late duc de Bouillon's army had heard Jean Rachamp, a servant of Jean de St. George from Merviller, tell story about pasturing horses at 2 a.m. Saw Claudatte pass, then one of the horees was attacked by a cat; his dog drove the cat off, and he beat it to death. Subsequently its body disappeared, and when servant met Claudatte a day or two later he accused her of having attacked horse in form of the cat - she denied it, threatening to take him to court at Blamont, but he was contemptuous of this threat, saying she was not sufficiently 'femme de bien'. Believed she had never taken any action against him, although he continued in service until his year was up at Christmas.

(20) Demenge Mougeon de Repas, c. 28

Reputation 8 - 10 years. Had seen no harm in her himself, despite having been neighbour for two years.

(21) Evatte femme Thiebault Hannast de Repas (soeur germaine a la prevenue), c. 45

Had no opinion that Claudatte was a witch, and had never heard it suggested until last wheat harvest, when husband told her that there was talk of accusing her, which astonished her.

(22) Didie femme Demenge Maugeon de Repas, 32

Reputation 12 years or more. No personal suspicion, despite being neighbour for two years.

(23) Allison femme a Didier Jean Didier de Repas, c. 30

Reputation known to her since soon after arrival 10 years before, but had no personal cause to suspect her, and had never quarrelled with her.

(24) Margueritte fille de feu Francois Lebaire de Repas, c. 24

Reputation 12 years. Two years ago at last St. George her mother had taken over guard of 'menues bestes' by outbidding Claudatte's husband. Shortly afterwards fell ill, and languished for 18 months before death, claiming that illness was work of Claudatte.

(25) Jean Francois de Repas, brother of previous witness, c. 28

Reputation 20 years. Told story of cat, and of mother's death. Explained that in latter case she had not obtained guard of beasts, because within the time allowed Claudatte's husband had lowered his own price.

(26) Chrestien fils Estienne Cherrier de Repas, 29.

Reputation 20 years, story of cat.

(11 October 1605)

(27) Nicolas Jean de Perxuanne, de Repas, 50

Reputation more than 20 years. Some 10 years before had a cow in milk lodged with Nicolas Chollat, but only one calf survived. Seeing he was making no profit, proposed that they should end arrangement by sharing value of cow and calf, but Nicolas said he had no money available to pay him. Then agreed that witness should pay 5 francs to recover both animals; next day his wife went to recover them, and brought them back despite protests by Claudatte that she wanted to keep them and needed the milk. Witness was worried by this quarrel, and indeed some weeks later wife became temporarily almost blind, while cow broke leg and had to be killed. About 3 years before, had been warned that a servant was stealing his grain and taking it to Claudatte's house. His wife quarrelled with her over this, and his little daughter then became suddenly ill, with bones coming out of her back. Seemed to be getting better when Claudatte came to house asking to buy a bichot of wheat; wife still hostile, and told her she needed to consult her husband, who was out ploughing, before selling wheat in that season. Went back to her house 'tousjours grondant' - two or three days later the girl became blind, and remained so despite all attempts to heal her 'ains luy ont heu dit tous ceulx quy l'ont heu en mains qu'il est impossible que ce ne fut sorcellerie.' Apparently this was because the strong 'waters' applied to her eyes didn't even make them swell up. At the same moment as first illness of girl, he was in fields with horses, when a 'torbillon' surrounded him, and he felt something prick his left hand. Ill for four days afterwards, while pain moved up arm and all down side, with skin peeling off.

12 October - procureur fiscal orders arrest of suspect.

14 October 1605; interrogation

Said that she was about 40, daughter of Henry Moictrier of Repas and his wife Claudatte; father had died some 8 years before, mother 3. Married some 23 or 24 years; husband had never beaten her (she was asked this) although they had sometimes quarrelled.

Claimed that her sister had called her 'genatte' some 33 years before 'par hayne'. Asked why, 'veu que naturellement l'amitié des freres et soeurs est sy grande entr'eulx qu'ilz s'aydent et secouroient plustost que de se nuyre soit par parolles ou de fait.' Said it arose from an earlier quarrel; she had been ill, and had gone out to stables, where she had become unconscious among pig-muck. Had later been found there, and it was after this that rumours had gone around. Said she had taken no action against sister because she herself was 'trop bonne et trop molle femme'; had in any case only heard of accusation at second hand, when one of village women said 'que sadite soeur luy mettoit un beau chapeau sur la teste de la declairer comme elle faisoit qu'elle estoit sorciere.'

In case of Jean de St. George, said that in bean-picking incident the witness's daughter had asked her own daughter to enter garden, and that the quarrel had been minor. On other hand, had known that they blamed her for death of calf, and had sought to take them before justice at Blamont, but they had not wished to plead.

Denied whole range of other quarrels, or offered quite natural explanations. The whole story of the cat was denied, along with suggestion that next day she had been so beaten up that she had to stay in bed, or that there had been any accusation from the servant.

17 October 1605; confrontations

No objection made to any of the witnesses, and no progress on any substantial point; same events seen from different standpoint, or disputes denied. In case of Nicolas de Perxuanne's cow, said they had been glad to return it, since they were short of feed.

20 October 1605; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

21 October 1605; Change de Nancy approves.

27 October 1605; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews and then racked severely. On rack said she would tell truth if she were released, but then continued denials. Racked again, repeated offer to tell truth if released, but officers wanted her to start confession before release, and this she refused. Finally released until after dinner, but even on return did not confess until she had been racked again. Now agreed that devil had appeared to her during illness when she had gone to stables, but would not confess any maléfice. Subsequently withdrew even this limited admission, despite having 'tourtilions' applied to legs, thighs, and arms.

29 October; further interrogation under torture

Admitted that she had repeated her limited confession previous day before hangman and jailers - but only because hangman had promised her she would be spared further torture. Again racked, and doctor in attendance said that she was enduring such extreme torment (whole turn of rack) without apparently suffering too much that there must be some unnatural explanation. Finally gave in and admitted she was a witch, and had used powder to commit some maléfices - but still denied most accusations. Under pressure agreed to having been once to Sabbat, but could identify none of large number of witches she had seen dancing there. Admitted killing daughter of Nicolas Jacquot, because she had heard her call her children 'filz de sorcier'.

2 November 1605; procureur fiscal asks for death sentence, and for her to feel the fire 'bien vivement' before being strangled. Also asks for power to torture her again in order to extract names of accomplices.

3 November 1605; Change de Nancy approves, subject to voluntary repetition of confessions.

5 November 1605; interrogation.

Repeated essential points of earlier confession, but now said she had been to sabbat twice, still unable to recognise any others. Executed same day.