

B 3335 no 2; witch 044, Hellenix femme Barthelemin le Reytre, de Blamont

22 September 1606; informations preparatoires

(1) Claudon le Cerf, bourgeois de Blamont, 32

12 years before, after a quarrel with Hellenix (when he was soldier in castle, around time of his marriage) he had been ill for a month. His wife fetched accused, who told him it was not serious, and that with God's grace he would recover. 7 years earlier she had come to his house seeking for fire; it was harvest time, and child a year old was alone in house - it later sickened and died. His house was a long way from hers, and she could have sought fire nearer home.

(2) Nicolas Colon, bourgeois de Blamont, 35

Reputation 22 years. Suspected that 7 years earlier she had been responsible for his wife losing her milk so she could not feed baby; subsequent children also had to be put out to nurse. Complex story of debts owed him by her son-in-law, after he had paid for drink they all shared. Eventually took payment in salt, since son-in-law (Nicolas de Lency) was fermier of magasin de sel; his wife said it would be a dear demi-quarteron of salt, and soon after lost her milk.

(3) Zabillon veuve Didier de Dompierre, 56

Husband had fallen ill 5 years earlier, sickness beginning with eyes and moving to right side. Before death 'il avoit consulté son mal aupres d'un nommé le Blanc Gregoire de Marienviller, Iceluy luy dit . . . qu'on l'avoit pensée faire aveugle, mais que n'y ayant sceu advenir on l'avoit attrappé par autre moyen'. Husband had then suspected Hellenix, with whom he had had some disputes; asked witness to bring her to him, saying that he would be content to die if he could tak with her. 'Mais elle qui depose n'eust jamais la hardiesse de luy en tenir parole, tant parce que le plus souvent ladite Hellenix estante au devant de son logis, disoit qu'elle avoit desja heu cinq proces et les avoit tous gagné, Qu'elle seroit encore bien aysé d'en avoir ung autre pour y faire conformer quelques personnes jusques a leurs chemises'. Once when Hellenix passed the house her husband had cried out to her that if she had given him the illness she should come and take it away, but she was not sure if she had heard him. Never visited during illness, although she was nearest neighbour.

(4) Barbe femme Jean de Prey, 34

Reputation 18 years. Repeated story of suspicions by Didier de Dompierre, adding that she was well aware of common rumour that she was a witch; had said at veillée that people did her wrong to suspect her.

(5) Philippe femme d'honorable Didier George, maitre echevin de la justice de Blamont, 46

Reputation 27 years (since marriage). 12 years before was visited by Hellenix, who was renting one of her husband's houses in Blamont; that evening found she had lost her milk (text makes it clear that she and husband slept in different beds in same room). Sent for Hellenix and asked for advice on cure;

suggested she might visit woman at Boudonville 'qui avoit le bruict de scavoir quelque remede et moyen de faire rentrer le laict.' Said she would, but asked for a bottle of wine - gave this willingly even though it was dear - then said that witness should be patient, and God might restore her milk. It did come back same evening, but the child later sickened and died.

(6) Annon femme Adam de Mouney, bourgeois de Blamont, 46

Reputation 22 years. A year earlier was working in garden when Hellenix and a certain Claudatte approached her; Hellenix began a violent quarrel, during which they accused one another of barking like dogs. Afterwards began to feel unwell, and went inside to get something to eat, but first mouthfuls fell into her stomach as if it were a well. Ill for 3 months, with much vomiting, was sometimes expected to die. Among other things, brought up a 'tourtillon' full of hairs like those of a cat, of which the surgeon Jean Marchal could make nothing. Husband then called in Hellenix, who was passing; she said that illness was not serious and would soon mend. During convalescence Hellenix entered house, but her husband took her by the arm and pushed her out, threatening to have her arrested as a witch.

(7) Claudon femme Claudon le Cerf, 40

During husband's illness Hellenix had shown her how to make charcoal from chestnut logs, place it inside sheet, and then put this between his legs - he had then recovered. Also story of child's death as told by husband.

(8) Jennon femme Jean Diez, 41

Reputation 11 years. Husband had displeased her by giving evidence against her husband in lawsuit over the magasin à sel which her son-in-law had formed. 3 months later her son aged 5 became very ill, and died after languishing for a year. Tried to get Hellenix to come and see child, but could not find her, or she refused to reply. Later she heard of their suspicions, and threatened to sue them, but failed to do so.

(9) Zabel femme Nicolas Colon, 39

Reputation 18 or 20 years. Repeated husband's story about loss of milk.

26 March 1608; further depositions

(10) Jean Danjou, chevaucheur des salines, 31

Reputation 24 or 25 years. 9 years earlier, on day wife of Demenge Pourlot was executed as a witch, he heard that late Nicolas de Lezey (son-in-law of Hellenix) had left some salt at Aultrepierre. Witness brought it back to Blamont on a cart, and Hellenix was angry when she heard of it, saying it would be 'du cher sel pour luy'. Some time afterwards she came round houses selling fish; witness, who was newly married, tried to deter wife from buying, but Hellenix was very pressing. He and his mother-in-law didn't eat the fish, but wife did, and died after languishing illness which lasted 18 months. Called her witch in public, and asked her to remove the illness she had given, but to no effect. Mother-in-law later became ill with terrible pain in throat after passing close to accused; found Hellenix at fair of Badonviller,

and threatened to have her arrested if she did not cure her. Took her to a woman selling brandy, after drinking some of which she recovered.

(11) Claudatte femme François Pelletier le jeune, bourgeois de Blamont, 44

Reputation 20 years. Elaborate story of how some 18 years earlier she and Hellenix lived in same house, and agreed to rise early to bake a tart. Going to call her, witness fell down stairs and hurt herself. Also said that more than 2 years earlier her husband owed Hellenix 10 gros; when she met their small daughter she told her to ask her father to send the money, then a few days later called her 'petite punaise' and blamed her for not asking him. Child fell ill and died after languishing for 18 months, and several times repeated the words Hellenix had used to her.

(12) François Pelletier le jeune, 52

About 18 years earlier had asked to rent room in his house. She was a 'remanderesse', and had bought an old 'paume' to resell it; she asked him to remedy certain faults, but there was argument over price for this, with him asking 16 gros, but she would only give 14 and told him he would repent. Later suffered heavy losses when the hides he had in store turned out to have rotted, and he finally did the work she asked for 14 gros. Still had another hide damaged, although less seriously; she advised him to keep them in his cellar in future, away from other people, and he found this successful. Story of wife's fall, and how earlier in the night, when he was working, his shutters rattled so violently he was frightened. Soon afterwards Margueritte, wife's daughter by first marriage, fell seriously ill, and he suspected Hellenix. She came to see him, saying she had been told of his suspicions; he confirmed them, saying he intended to visit Dom Jean de Xanrey 'qu'on estimoit devineur'. Hellenix promptly taught his wife certain remedies, and the girl recovered.

(13) Colin le Comte, 28

Long reputation. Some 16 years earlier his mother had told him that if he found a kitten he should bring it to deal with the mice which were causing a lot of damage. Found one and did as she said, but later their neighbour, wife of Jean Thiebault le vieulx, told them that it belonged to Hellenix and she knew where it was. Mother asked him to return it, but he didn't dare and excused himself; she feared it would bring them harm. Later mother saw Hellenix in street, cried out 'la voici qui vient', and fell into 'telle frayeur et apprehension' that she took to her bed and died in a week. Could not be held down, and tried to throw herself at priest who was confessing her. During illness his sister asked Hellenix to come and see if she could identify the illness, and she made a soup, but this did no good. Later came to house and said she had heard they were accusing her of causing the death; his father said this was true, and although she threatened legal action she took none.

(14) Jehenne femme Demenge Conrard (sister of previous witness), 32

Repeated story about cat, mother's illness, and visit by Hellenix to complain of their accusations. Did not speak of visit during illness.

(15) Odille femme Nicolas Pistollet, 50

Reputation 24 or 25 years. Had never quarrelled with her, but suspected she had caused illness of her daughter Susanne, aged 7. 2 years earlier she had passed their house with a basket full of apples, and asked if witness wanted some; when she refused them she gave a handful to Susanne. Complained of pains in head, stomach, and legs as soon as she had eaten them, and next day was so swollen she could not wear her clothes or walk. Remained in this state until Sunday, when Hellenix passed on her way to Vespers. Witness asked if she could help, and she said she would give the child some dried pears and plums, and some nuts. On return she took child to house and gave her these, after which she slowly recovered. Hellenix called again to ask after her, and when told she was better but still swollen gave her a 'boutenbras' to eat, telling her to pray to God for recovery, and swelling promptly went down.

(16) Huguette femme Jean Grigoire, bourgeois de Blamont, 50

Long reputation. Shortly after her son-in-law Nicolas de Lezey had been 'reprins' by Jean Danjou witness went to her house to buy some apples and nuts; there was no-one there, but suddenly Hellenix returned in a rage, saying 'fault-il que par eulx je perde tout mon bien'. 'Juroit et affirmoit par la Mere dieu qu'elle les feroit aussi sec, que le corps d'un trepassé, et les rendoit en tel estat qu'ils n'auroient la force de monter le soeuillet de la porte de leur logis.' said all this 3 times, and when witness asked of whom she spoke said it was 'sur ledit Danjou et lesdites siennes'. Soon afterwards Danjou's wife, her sister, and her brother all fell ill and died 'toute etiques et secqs comme bois'.

(17) Damoiselle Rose Collée, femme au Sieur Claude Seard, prévôt de Blamont, 42

Long reputation. 8 or 9 years earlier her husband had fined Nicolas de Lezey for offences in the distribution of salt. Shortly afterwards her daughter Rose, aged 5, fell ill and died after a year 'secq comme bois'. 2 years earlier Hellenix had again seen her husband about the salt affair, after appealing to the Chambre des Comptes; this time daughter Anniel, aged 14, fell ill and died after 5 or 6 months. Also reported threat to her sister Annon (or Agnes) after she refused to sell her milk.

(18) Didier femme Chrestine du Prey, bourgeois de Blamont, 36

Reputation 22 years. 'Il y a assez longtemps qu'elle deposante la craint et fuyt aultant qu'elle peult'. Thought that she had lost her milk after Hellenix had touched her on the breast while giving her good-day some 4 years earlier - child was already 7 weeks old, and milk did then return little by little. Had woken at 2 a.m. from a dream in which she told Hellenix she was a witch and must leave her house; husband went out and found Hellenix in street, saying she wanted to come and spin with witness in their 'poisle', and this was agreed. She then asked witness 'comment il se falloit confesser, et que l'on disoit qu'il falloit confesser tous les maulx que l'on avoit faict'. Witness said 'Tante Hellenix, vous le savez bien, vous l'avez ouy dire a Monsieur Mabriat, il est vray qu'il fault confesser tout ce que l'on a faict'.

(27 March 1608)

(19) Jean Diez, dit le Racussen, bourgeois de Blamont, 40

Long reputation. Difficulties had arisen when her husband had given caution for Nicolas de Lezey as fermier of magasin à sel, and he had been called as a witness. Hellenix was angry, came to his house at suppertime 'et l'en tensa rusement, et luy dict qu'elle s'en souviendrait et luy feroit un affront'. Shortly afterwards his son, aged 5, fell ill and died after a year.

(1 April 1608)

(20) Anyon veuve Claudon Tuppinier, de Lannoy, 34

Long reputation. Had heard Didier de Dompierre accuse her of causing his fatal illness; after death she came to house and asked about this, at which her husband became angry and told her not to involve his wife in such matters. She tried to persuade her 'de ne prendre tel rapport à coeur et d'avoir patience'. Shortly after this her husband fell ill with sickness that came and went, dying after a year.

(21) Jehenne fille Jean Gabriel, bourgeois de Blamont, 23

Long reputation. Told how 9 years earlier she and other young people had been going to market at Lorquin; although they hurried to get in front of Hellenix she arrived before them, claiming to have taken short cut. 3 years before had bought some cloth from her, and was unable to make full payment at time; was then pressed for remaining sum every time they met, although she repeatedly told her she had no money. Then became ill for 18 months, and finally decided to go out and beat Hellenix. When she found her Hellenix asked how she was, to which she replied that she was ill, and wished someone would cure her or kill her. Was told she should take courage, and that illness was not serious, after which she began to recover.

(22) Barbe veuve Jean Sellier, de Blamont, residant à Nosoncourt, 51

9 years earlier her son-in-law Jean Danjou had pursued Nicolas de Lezey for abuses in the distribution of salt. Hellenix came to where she and her daughter Catherine were sitting outside house; struck latter on knee claiming she had been cheated of 2 sheaves of wheat in tithing of finage de Cougney, which they collected. Before she was 20 yards away Catherine collapsed and had to be put to bed; a week later, as Hellenix passed, witness called her witch and Catherine demanded that she cure her or kill her - latter died 7 weeks later. Also story of how she became ill after eating a piece of chicken and was given brandy at fair. That same day had been to house and accused Hellenix of causing death of baby during period when mother was ill.

27 March 1608; interrogation

Said she was about 52, native of Migneville; father was Jean de Colbay, mother Didiere. Father had died when she was only about 5, mother had lived another 9 years. Was in service with brother-in-law Henry Masson of Audepierre for two and a half years, then spent 6 months back at Migneville with her tutor Noel le Chappelier before marriage to Colin Courtot of Blamont, where she had lived since. He was captured and killed by passing soldiers 18 months later, and after 6 months she remarried with Didier Roy jeune. This marriage lasted 20 years, then she was widow for 7 years until marriage to present husband.

Said she did not know what she was accused of, but was told this was impossible, since she had fled as soon as she heard depositions were being taken, and had only returned when persuaded 'soubz couleur de belles parolles'. Agreed that she had fled, because her children had told her she would be arrested and imprisoned, but claimed to have returned willingly from St Avol. Asked why in that case she had spent 14 months there, and not returned when her husband visited her, said he wanted her to return but a nephew from Vic advised her to be patient; she had given the latter a 'procuration' to sell her property in Blamont. Also agreed she had been calling herself Margueritte in St Avol, because Hellenix 'n'est un beau nom en allemand', and that she had pretended to be a widow, since 'l'on a plustost pitié d'une veuve', telling husband not to reveal identity when he visited her.

Asked about brothers and sisters, said she had one brother, Jean de Gournay, executed as witch at Migneville 37 years before, and 4 sisters. Mengeotte, whose second husband was vigneron of Lunéville, had been imprisoned there as witch, but was released and died natural death in a village near Metz. Second, Allison, married to Henry Masson of Autrepierre, was executed there as a witch. Same fate for third, Jehenne, who was executed at Migneville, and fourth, Didier femme Didier Aubry of Autrepierre.

Agreed that she had long been suspected as a witch, but said only time she had been openly accused was by Daniel Mongenot, who was dead drunk at the time. In respect of wife of Nicolas Collon, who had lost her milk, she said that 'elle estoit sy fiere et d'une tel mauvais courage que son mary et sa mere ne pouvoient compatir avec elle, et qu'il n'y avoit rien pire pour faire perdre le lait a une femme comme elle avoit desja ouy a sa Mere qui estoit sage femme.'

Generally denied all serious charges. Agreed that she had heard herself suspected of causing death of Colin le Comte's mother, but claimed that when she went to their house and threatened action the charges were withdrawn.

(1 April 1608) In respect of Jehenne fille Jean Gabriel said that she owed her 29 gros; claimed illness was result of being beaten by Henry Chrestian and one of his sons.

28 March 1608; confrontations

On reproach of not having visited Didier de Dompierre during his illness, claimed she was present when he received last rites.

6 April 1608; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

9 April 1608; Change de Nancy approves

23 April 1608; interrogation under torture

Was shown instruments and invited to confess forthwith, to save her soul and avoid torment. Said she had been seduced 7 or 8 years earlier, on way back from pursuing case against Jean Danjou at Nancy. Lamenting fact that she had only 3 deniers in purse, was promised riches. Given powder to kill and to cure.

Had killed Jean Danjou's wife by putting powder in 'vert-jus' she gave her to cook fish with. Confessed various other maléfices, resulting from anger against those who testified against them or failed to pay her. In case of Annon femme Adam de Moneux, made her ill because she refused her when she asked for money. In this case, like some others, she finally recovered without any intervention by Hellenix.

Some 6 years earlier, going to fair at Fricourt, had asked late Jean Ferry to take a packet for her; when he refused because he already had a full load she sprinkled powder where his horse would pass, and it died soon after.

Originally denied having been to sabat, then when given thumbscrews said she had been 3 times, but had not recognized anyone. Under threat of further torture later in the day named Jean Pinadel, Babillon Cherier, Claudatte femme Nicolas Thoussainct, and Demenge de Barbey. Usual description of sabat and attempts to damage crops.

23 April 1608; procureur fiscal asks for death sentence

25 April 1608; Change de Nancy approves

26 April 1608; execution takes place. Confronted with first 3 she had accused, maintained charges, but discharged Demenge de Barbey (who was not present).