

B 3335 no 3; witch 045, Babillon Cherier de Blamont

5 May 1608; informations preparatoires

(1) Chrestien du Prey, bourgeois de Blamont, 35

Did not have reputation as witch, but she hated his wife, because her late father had forced the sale of her garden to pay a debt. 7 years earlier, when they were neighbours and she was often in his house, his daughter aged 6 weeks would not suck, and wife lost milk. He told the neighbours he was going to beat Babillon with a stick, but they advised him to call her to see the baby. When his wife asked her she said 'que quant une personne aydoit ung enfant malade que l'on disoit qu'elle estoit une genoche', but despite initial refusal came 3 days later. Looked at child, told mother it was not very ill, and suggested putting a warm cloth on its stomach, after which baby recovered and mother's milk returned. 3 years earlier his maid, amusing herself in the street in the evenings, told him that accused was talking to herself in her room. Babillon heard of this, and came to ask his wife to keep servants in during the evening, which she refused, saying that they would leave her service and she could not replace them. Shortly afterwards his wife suddenly cried out at supper 'Babillon Cherier sorciere c'est toy qui m'a causé cecy', and was 'tout perturbée de son bon esprit' for a week, being visited by coadjutor of Mre Mabriat before recovering.

(2) Didie femme du precedent, 36

Repeated husband's account over illness of baby. Said Babillon told her that the child had a cold stomach; when she told her that her breast was like that of an old woman and would give no milk she told her the milk would return when the child was well. Also told story of dispute over servants and own illness. M. Mabriat had told her to ask pardon of all those she had offended during her madness, and she had done so, except for Babillon. Finally her parents-in-law and her husband had persuaded her to do so, but Babillon refused to accept her apology.

(3) Mengeotte femme Demenge Fournier, 30

No reputation. 3 years earlier she was in service of previous witnesses, and wife told her to beware of Babillon, who might sometime give her 'un mauvais jour', to which she replied that she did not fear her unless she was a witch. Some days later her mistress had a fever, and Babillon gave witness 'une grenouille verte' in cabbage leaves, which she told her to apply to her mistress's arm. Instead she used it on arm of a little girl who had a fever, and Babillon reproached her for this. Illness of mistress followed; confirmed that Babillon had rejected apology.

(4) Barbe femme Jean des Prez, bourgeois de Blamont, 40

8 years earlier, when Didier femme Demenge Pourlat had been arrested as a witch, her husband had seen her pass, and been angered when she said she was as innocent as the Virgin Mary. Babillon had answered that Didier was innocent, and the accusation wronged her. Argument followed in which he said that those who defended such people were hardly better than them, at which she threatened to report this to her brother Jean Cherier. When she met the witness next day, asked her if she agreed with her husband; to keep the peace she answered that Babillon

should take no notice since 'il n'estoit qu'un sot'. This did not satisfy her, and she said threateningly 'qu'elle en auroit la souvenance et qu'il verroit comme il luy en prendroit'. Next day she fell ill, and had to take to her bed. Suspect came to house and offered to make soup for her and her children, which she tried to do despite refusal, only being prevented when children told her their father was about to return. Her husband thought it was witchcraft, and as Babillon passed shouted that if a witch had caused his wife's illness he would have her taken and burned unless she recovered. She then began to improve, but daughter aged 3 developed swellings round eyes and inflammation. Babillon advised putting her outside in the sun, and gave her crust of a cake; she made a temporary recovery, then relapsed and died 18 months later.

(5) Hellenix femme Jean Marchal, bourgeois de Blamont, 32

Long but rather inconsequential deposition, repeating some suspicions of du Prez family, and suggesting rather vaguely that Babillon might have made her ill as well.

(6) Jean Menusier, bourgeois de Blamont, 54

No reputation, save that just over a year earlier a salpetrier living in the same house had accused her of being an evil woman whom he suspected of witchcraft and making him ill.

(7) Bernard Pierson, bourgeois de Blamont, 45

Had heard rumour in town 6 years earlier that she was a witch.

(8) Bastienne veuve Claude Charton, 40

Babillon had employed her husband to prune her vines, and he told her it had been badly done in previous years, so he needed to cut it right back so that it would give good wine in subsequent years. She told him to do as he saw fit, but when witness went to ask for payment she refused to pay, claiming he had ruined it. She tried to explain that it would be good in future years, but only reply was veiled threat; husband then fell ill and died after 9 months, saying at times that she had given him the illness.

(9) Jehennon femme Claude de Metz, bourgeois de Blamont, 40

Rather meaningless story about appearance of Babillon in vineyard, apparently taking no notice of remarks addressed to her.

(10) Melline femme Henry Jean, maire de Blamont, 36

11 years before she had heard cry of young cat in fields, but been unable to find it. She was in company of her mistress and Babillon, and former asked latter why she had left her husband; she replied that she was a good woman, and there was nothing to fear.

(11) Honnete femme Claudine, femme au sieur Pierre Barthelley, controlleur de la recette et gruyerie du comté de Blamont, 50

Repeated story about young cat as told by previous witness.

(12) Jean du Prey, charpentier bourgeois de Blamont, 43

Reputation 20 years. He had argued with her over arrest of Demenge Pourlat's wife 8 years earlier; followed by wife's illness, his threat to accused, and illness of daughter. He claimed the latter had been beaten by Babillon, after she and other children had been throwing stones near her house, and had received a blow in the eye.

(24 May 1608)

(13) Jeannon femme Jean le Rouesson, 43

Reputation 3 or 4 years. They had adjoining pieces of land which were not separated, and accused was always taking things, so they put up a fence, which led to a quarrel. On a subsequent Saturday (market day) she was at her stall when Babillon approached her 3 times, although she did not know if she touched her - then became ill with swollen stomach and weakness in limbs, which lasted 9 months.

(14) Nicolas Haultemant, salpatrier de Marsal, 36

More than a year before (at St Remy) had come to Blamont to make saltpetre, and lodged in same house as Babillon. Heard of reputation, and after she told him that 'il et son mesnage l'empeschoient audit logis' his child fell ill; she visited him, saying it was nothing serious, and leaving something like dust on child, which promptly recovered. Another time his horse became ill on return with load of wood, whereupon she persuaded him not to send for the blacksmith, saying it was nothing serious, and it recovered. He was fattening 2 pigs, which were not adding weight, but did so after he told her about it and added that if they did better 'ils mangeroient par ensembles alors des gros boudins'. On another occasion was returning from woods with a cartload of logs when she said of his horse 'pauvre blasse, tu as bien du mal'; next day the witness was so ill he had to go to bed. During convalescence he was having supper very late when Babillon passed and said 'qu'il souppoit trop tard et que son souper ne luy feroit point de bien'. 3 hours later heard 2 cats making terrible noise outside his bedroom, so that he crossed himself in fear, but fell ill again, although he eventually recovered. After this he wanted to beat her, but when he told other people of this they dissuaded him, saying 'qu'il falloit laisser la vengeance a dieu'. had also heard strange noises and talking from her room, although she was alone. Finally, his wife had found a strange mask belonging to Babillon, which he thought might be one she wore at the sabat - she said she wore it in the vines when it was raining.

24 May 1608; interrogation

Said she was about 65, daughter of Nicolas Cherrier and Catherine Galla of Blamont. Could not say whether she was married or widow, since she had heard contradictory rumours about husband's death, and had decided to go and see next Whitsun; she had left him 9 or 10 years earlier. He was Martin l'Allemand, and lived at Lenigny in comté de Salm. She left because 'il la battoit et tourmentoit sans

cause ny raison et luy disoit qu'elle s'en aille qu'il ne vouloit plus tenir mesnage et ne la vouloit nourrir ce quoy elle a heu longtems en patience allant tous les jours a sa journée a ce d'avoir moyen de se nourrir jusques a ce que n'ayant plus pu supporter elle l'a quitté.'

Asked cause of imprisonment, said it must be because Hellenix had accused her as accomplice. Said she was no witch, but that 5 years earlier one named Jacquotte Gottatz, living in the same house, had stolen linen and other goods worth 30 francs. When she was asked to restore them or pay over money for which she had sold them she called Babillon a witch, and since she had an evil tongue had put this about the town. She had intended to seek reparation, but her brother Jean Charrier had dissuaded her, saying that Jacquotte had a poor reputation and no-one would believe her.

She gave a long account of her relations with the salpatrier Nicolas. His illness began after he had got stuck in a muddy place with his horse, and had exhausted himself getting it out. Passing through the room, she had advised him to go to bed, and it was after this he became ill. Agreed that she had tried to help him during his illness. Asked if she knew he had thought she had bewitched him, said she had been told he had spoken of her, without details of what he said. One day in company she asked him 'qu'il dise pourquoy il parloit d'elle, en son absence, et declarer s'il luy avoit veue faire chose qui ne fut licitte, a ce qu'il disoit choses mal a propos d'elle, elle en puisse prendre temoignage et s'en venger, mais il nya tout.'

Said that on arrival he had not wanted her to stay in house, and talked of having her expelled; had also placed logs so that it was difficult for her to get into her room. She complained politely, and had never quarrelled with him. As for illness of horse, she had advised him he should fetch the smith, who did come, and could testify to this. She might have sent him a bouquet when he was ill, but this was quite innocently, when his little daughter ran after her and pulled at her skirt. On noise from room, 'a dit estre vray que toutes les nuicts elle se plaindoit tantost de dents tantost des bras et des jambes estants le plus souvente sy lasse et recrue d'avoir travaillé aux champs a journée tout le temps du jour qu'elle n'en pouvoit durer de la douleur qu'ils luy faisoient.' As for the 'mask', it was an old hat.

On affair of garden, explained that her husband had bought a house in the faubourgs for 600 francs, and had paid 450 in cash. Then the faubourg had burned down, he had refused to pay the rest, and the garden was taken to pay the debt.

Agreed that Didier femme Chretien du Prey had called her witch during her illness, and that she had not judged form of apology sufficient - her mother-in-law had run after her to say that Didier was not yet fully recovered. Agreed that she had sent her the 'grenouille', since she had heard that this was good for fevers, but denied complaining that it had been used on child. Told of another episode when du Prey, who was a carpenter, came home injured after accident when working on roof. She had heard him make some accusation against her, but next day his wife came to say he did not think her responsible.

Agreed that she had refused to pay Nicolas Charton for his work on her vines, since he had spoiled them; gave similar report of conversation with his wife. Agreed that incident of cat in fields had taken place, and that in consequence her mistress and her servant had formed a bad opinion of her; they had put this around the town, and she had a dispute with her mistress in consequence.

28 May 1608; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses, but denied all charges.

30 May 1608; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

4 June 1608; Change de Nancy recommends that she should be shown the instruments of torture as a threat, but only given the thumbscrews

19 June 1608; procureur fiscal recommends that she be renvoyée, but that he should be allowed to enquire further if necessary

23 June 1608; Change de Nancy approves