

B 3358; witch 050, Jehenne femme Joseph de la Moictresse, de Nutting

3 May 1621; statement from maire, sergent, and cleric juré at Nutting that she had lived there for 10 years after marriage. After St Martin in 1619 she and her husband were accused by Denis Louis, who maintained charges up to execution. They had then fled.

4 May 1621; interrogation

Said she was about 42, native of Autrepierre; husband was from Nutting. After leaving Nutting they had gone to Bischey in Allemaigne, where they had lived for a year in separate houses, her husband as day labourer, herself partly as servant, partly doing day labour. Had then spent 3 weeks at Chalpach near Nutting, where she was spinning and husband traded in grain from Strasbourg. From there went to Moussesey, where they spent 6 weeks, then on to Autrepierre. Claimed not to know cause of imprisonment, but agreed she had been accused by Denis Louis. She said that at execution she and her husband were told he had discharged them.

Agreed that her mother, her aunt at Autrepierre, her aunt Hellenix at Blamont, and another aunt at Migneville had all been executed as witches. Claimed to have left Nutting by day, saying farewell to those she saw.

5 May 1621; procureur fiscal asks for evidence to be taken against her

12 May 1621; prévôt orders sergent to proceed

14 May 1621; informations préparatoires

(1) Barbeline veuve Demenge Henriot, d'Autrepierre, 55

14 years earlier had been called in to deliver baby for daughter of maire Jean Parmentier, wife of late Claude Jean Clerc. Witness wanted to prevent Jehenne making soup for her after the birth, in view of reputation, but she insisted on doing so. Clerc's wife then went all blue, and died in 3 days, which she had always suspected was her doing.

(2) Jean Parmentier, maire à Autrepierre, 60

Same story about daughter's death - were immediate rumours about accused. She was sent on pilgrimage with 2 other servants to St Paul at Repas, and they said she made great fuss about the sick woman. When they said others were very ill, she replied that they did not have the same sickness.

(3) Annon femme Remys Masson, 40

14 years earlier Jehenne had asked to be godmother to her child, but because of her reputation she chose another. Lost her milk for 2 weeks, which she suspected had been her doing; general reputation.

(4) Remys Masson, d'Autrepierre, 80

Reputation 10 or 12 years.

Confrontations followed immediately. She denied having any memory of making soup, and claimed that sick woman had 2 or 3 midwives around her. Denied remark about illness alleged by Jean Parmentier, and said he was 'un faussaire'.

15 May 1621; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire. Elaborate reiteration of all the evidence against her, which suggests a certain unease about its limitations.

18 May 1621; Change de Nancy says that she should be shown the instruments, and may then be given thumbscrews only.

21 May 1621; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews on hands and feet, but would confess nothing, and was finally sent back to prison.

28 May 1621; procureur fiscal asks for more witnesses to be heard

3 June 1621; informations amplicatives

(5) Jacques Gerard, de Nutting, 50

Reputation 9 years. Had suffered many losses, but only blamed one on her - this was 4 years before. Had a foal which annoyed her by going to lick ground outside her house, and she often drove it away. One day his valet brought animals back to stable to escape a storm, and then foal was found dead between other horses which were unscathed. Smell of sulphur in barn, and when neighbours came to see Jehenne claimed to have seen a bolt of lightning strike the barn. No sign of damage to building, so he suspected it had actually been her witchcraft. Also told of her flight after accusation, saying she had not made farewells.

(6) Mongeate femme du precedent, 45

Similar deposition to husband.

(7) Nicolas Charier, sergent à Nutting, 50

Told how after execution of Louis witness and others went to Salbourg on business; her husband saw them there, went home hurriedly, and they then left fearing arrest.

(8) Jehenne veuve Louy Denys, de Nutting, 40

18 or 20 years earlier, when they were both in service at Benamesnil, Jehenne was already reputed a witch. Said to have killed wife of her master, Ms Caba, in hope that he would marry her. Also remarked on flight.

(9) Jean Pellerin, de Nutting, 57

Reputation 3 years (residence) for both her and husband. Suspected they had caused death of his son 2 years earlier, after the young man had been threshing for

brother-in-law of Joseph; one called gros Claude warned them that Joseph had been angry that they were taking away work he normally did, and that they should watch out for some misfortune. He felt secure because he commended himself to God, but 6 months later his son died suddenly.

(10) Barbe femme du precedent, 52

Similar deposition; added that after son's death Jehenne had laughed and said 'qu'il estoit bien employé; qu'il estoit trop prest de saulter et courir par tout'.

(11) Claudatte femme Anthoine du Prey, de Nutting, 30

Reputation 10 or 12 years. Suspected her of causing illness of her child 3 years earlier, which lasted 6 months; was told that whenever she met child 'elle disoit par ironie, qu'il n'y coustoit rien, comme sy elle en eut esté marrie que la deposante eut esté sans peine'.

(12) Chrestienne femme Nicolas Macon, de Nutting, 23

Had come to Nutting in service 5 years earlier, then married, but had lived in house of accused as servant. Suspected her of causing death of her first child - seems to have tried to keep her away from baby after birth, then it would not suckle, and died in 5 days. Suggestion that as hostess she did not want a baby around. Also said she was 'fine et rusée extremement', and that she had told her 'que lors qu'elle estoit fashée a quelqu'un elle ne luy en faisoit aucun semblant, et qu'il falloit qu'elle en face de mesme'. After witness had attended execution of Louis Denys she asked her if during reading of trial there had been mention of death of Jacques Gerard's horse - she replied there had not, then Jehenne said 'que sy elle eut esté riche que l'on ne l'eut accusé mais que l'on l'avoit ravaudé pour ce qu'elle estoit pauvre'. Then told about flight, after her sister, the wife of Jean le Fort, arrived and spoke to her; she put on her new shoes and left hurriedly. A week earlier she and her husband had moved out their belongings by night, so that there was nothing left but the bed and a few utensils.

(13) Jehenne femme Demenge la Forge, de Nutting, 30

Reputation since residence. When in childbed 3 years earlier Jehenne offered to help her - there was no midwife at Nutting and she was always offering herself to help - but she refused, preferring to send to Hesse. Suspected that a great mass of hair which she found under her pillow 3 or 4 days after birth was put there by her, and was cause of her losing her milk for some days. Also told of flight.

(14) Thiery Faltin, de Nutting, 30

Reputation 6 or 7 years, and Pellerin family suspected her over death of son.

(15) Anthoine du Prey, de Nutting, 34

General reputation, and repeated wife's suspicions over illness of child. When it was said the child would die, Jehenne said it would not.

3 June 1621; interrogation and confrontations

Agreed that foal of Jacques Gerard was supposed to have been killed by thunder, but denied saying she had seen this. As for child of Anthoine du Prey, it had died of smallpox. Denied all charges firmly. Said she had left Nutting when she heard her husband wanted her to do so; had left goods behind, and his relatives had sold them to pay a debt.

At confrontations made one or two suggestions of theft, but no serious reproaches. Thiery Faltin now added that he had been on point of becoming partie formelle against her when she fled, but she claimed to know nothing of this.

6 June 1621; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

7 June 1621; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire only

9 June 1621; interrogation under torture

Told she had been accused by wife of Gerardin Marchal, also being held in prison. She denied this, but was then confronted with her. The other recognised her and named her; she denied knowing her, but then did give her name, and judges thought they had caught her out here.

When racked she asked to be put down; asked name of her master, said several times Persy, then le diable. Had been seduced 10 years earlier, when angry because her husband was drunkard who beat her and took her property. Appeared first in form of great black goat standing on hind legs, saying he would kill her husband if she would believe in him. Disappeared when she made sign of cross, but soon reappeared as man in black. Gave her black powder to kill her husband, and money which was leaves. Agreed she had renounced God, but denied having intercourse with him.

Denied killing foal of Jacques Gerard, but had used powder to make Anthoine du Prey's child ill - would have healed it, but did not know how. Denied other maléfices, but agreed she had fled because sister warned her she was about to be arrested, and that during previous week husband had taken their linen out of the house by night.

Racked to find out about other maléfices, said she had killed her nephew, son of Jean le Fort, because he took her cherries - put powder on some bread for this. Did not think her husband was a witch, but he had tried to persuade her to leave for 2 weeks before they did; she had said she might as well die there as elsewhere.

Had only been to sabat once, with Denys Louys; agreed to make people languish and die, and Louys gave her a share of the powder. Then agreed she had been a second time near Autrepierre, with Jennon femme Gerardin Marchal, where there were 5 or 6 masked persons, and they danced back to back. Jean Didier of Autrepierre was the musician, using a large piece of wood. Asked how she got there, said she did not know, but arrived there in an instant.

Finally admitted going to various other sabats. Had been 4 times in first year, near Nutting, and saw la grande Babillon and la Pancée (or le Pancré) of Nutting. Food was horse-dung.

Now agreed she had killed foal of Jacques Gerard. Denied killing son of Jean Pellerin, but said that husband had wanted to harm him, and had asked her for some of her powder; he sprinkled this on his path, after which he died. Agreed that from this time she had thought husband was a witch. Had been to another sabat near Autrepierre, where she saw Jean Didier, his sisters Alison and Rose, Gerardin

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Marchal's wife, and her husband. Told of making hail, also caterpillars to spoil the acorns.

Confirmed confessions the same afternoon.

10 June 1621; procureur fiscal asks for death sentence

11 June 1621; Change de Nancy approves death sentence, subject to final repetition of confessions.

12 June 1621; formal sentence from court at Blamont