

Witch 082, Claudon la Blanche 1

B 4495; witch 082, Claudon la Blanche, veuve Claudon Aulbry, de St Prancher

7 February 1584; informations preparatoires

Had been accused by Catherine veuve Demenge Parmentier, laboureur de St Prancher, who claimed that 7 years earlier, when begging from village, she had been taken to sabat by Claudon and la Xuillette de Toutainville (appears later to have withdrawn at least some of her accusations against the latter).

(1) Honn homme Panchras Vienot, maire de St Prancher, 50

Long reputation. 2 or 3 years earlier thought she had caused death of his son aged 1, after incident when she complained because his servant had taken wine to another widow and not to her. She had denied this before justice, but he knew she had perjured herself.

(2) Mengeotte, veuve Noel Roucel, de Bricourt, 36

Catherine (which woman were they concerned with?) had come and imposed herself as uninvited guest in a neighbour's house, and when eventually told she would not be fed any more caused death of a child aged 1. Only allowed to stay in first place because she was so feared. Returned later and complained they had not eaten a pear she had given them.

(3) Henry Errard, de Bricourt, 34

General reputation, much feared.

(4) Didier Wiriot, 40

General reputation. His mother had told him that 30 years earlier Catherine had bewitched his sister because she beat one of her children.

(5) Isabel femme Mengin Wiriot, 30

Her first husband had died after a quarrel with Catherine over the division of the commons of the village, in which she had not been given a share - had told him that his father had already attempted something similar, but had died, and he would too.

(6) Jannotte femme Jean Vidier, 33

General reputation. Her aunt had fallen ill after going to aid of her mother's children in a quarrel with those of Catherine.

(7) Alix femme Claudon Bonnier, 50

General reputation.

(8) Mathiotte veuve Claudin Gegoust, 40

Reputation 27 years. 3 years earlier, when witness was working hemp for her, they quarrelled, and she had long illness, which was cured when she ate food Catherine brought her.

(9) George Poirel, 26

Reputation 4 years (residence).

(10) Laurence femme au maire Panchras Vincenot, 26

Repeated husband's deposition - marginal note that on another occasion each deposition should be recorded properly and separately.

(11) Barbe femme Didier Remy, 50

General reputation. Believed that she had caused death of a horse previous Easter because she had not been given enough in alms on Easter Day.

(12) Famion femme Didier Wiriot, 30

20 years earlier she had given illness to a woman with whom she quarrelled, who was all twisted until her death.

(13) Mengin Wiriot, 30

Reputation 8 years (residence). Lost horses after quarrel when he took one of her sons to court for debt of 4 livres. Also claimed that she had confessed to perjury in case with maire, and that she had thrown some powder on the fire on the day of her arrest.

(14) Didier Masselat, 50

General reputation, and story of powder thrown on fire.

(15) and (16) Two unnamed witnesses to same effect as above.

(17) Didier Messel, 30

Ditto

(18) Honn homme Claudin Mourot, marchand de Reppes, 40

Believed her to have caused death of his daughter, 'a raison qu'elle hantoit souvent en sa maison, et qu'il falloit tousjours luy donner quelque chose pour la contenter'. Had also told him that her sons had brought a lawsuit against the curé who accused her of being a witch, but had not continued it because it had already cost 20 francs.

(19) Alizon femme Claudin Mourot, de Reppey, 30

Repeated husband's story; daughter was 6, had died 6 or 7 years earlier.

(20) Cleron, femme Symion Baltaire, 45

General reputation. 5 years earlier she and her husband had been fattening a bull, 'advint en ce temps que ladite Catherine vint a sa porte mendier, comme elle faisoit souvent. Elle deposante luy dit Catherine, allez pourchasser et demander vos aulmosnes aultre part, car je ne vous veulx plus rien donner, a rayson que j'ay des enfans pupilz et pauvres enfans de feu le frere de mon marit qui sont sur mes bras et qu'il nous fault nourrir. Pour l'honneur de Dieu il vault mieux de les nourrir que vous et pour ce allez vous en.' The bull later died, and she attributed this to Catherine.

(21) Mengeotte femme Mathiot Paulot, de Bricourt, 30

General reputation, and she had heard claim that she had caused death of maire's child.

(22) Barbe femme Jean Serge, 29

(23) Claudatte fille feu Claudin Videllot, 18

(24) Gillemain Huet, 60

All merely formal testimonies.

(25) Alix femme Jacquot des Pres, 40

General reputation, 'et comme elle est de longtemps mendicante, elle luy a plusieurs fois donné l'aulmosne a ça porté plus par crainte qu'elle avoit d'elle que pour l'honneur de Dieu' - did not think she had suffered any harm.

14 February 1584; interrogation

Said she was over 60, and had always lived in St Prancher, apart from being in service nearby before marriage when she was 20; marriage to Claudon Aulbry lasted about 30 years. Agreed she had known her accuser Catherine for as long as she could remember 'et hante quelques fois avec elle a mendier leurs vies'. Denied all but the most harmless facts, except that she accepted she had been accused of bewitching child of maire.

15 February 1584; confrontations

Maintained position firmly. Tried to deal with problem of reproaching witnesses by saying in each case that she only did so if they had deposed nothing against her.

There was a great argument about a small sack containing a box of white powder, roots, and a sheet of paper, which had been found in Claudon's house. Denied at first that they had anything to do with her, then said powder was made from nettles to cure fever, and that roots were for jaundice.

Request for torture then approved by Change de Nancy.

1 March 1584; interrogation under torture

Confessed as soon as she was racked. Had been witch for 30 years, when they had been expelled from a house which her husband had bought for 120 francs because of their debts. Was on way to nearby village of Macconcourt to beg bread when she was seduced. In general only reason she gave for various maléfices was that she had been ill spoken of or accused of witchcraft by her victims. Only people she admitted seeing at sabat were her accuser Catherine and la Xuillotte, but she later withdrew this second accusation.

14 March 1594; execution carried out