

B 4576; witch 089, Jeanne veuve Mansuy Magnien, de Neufchâteau

27 June 1611; informations préparatoires, at request of PG des Vosges. General repute as witch, and claim that she has made several people ill.

(1) Jean Humbert tisserand de Neufchateau, 40

Asked what he had heard her son say, replied that 7 or 8 years before they had lived in same house. Had heard her son Jean Gontart, also weaver (unsure if he was then married) quarrelling with her, calling her witch. On another occasion she called witness to her aid, and son accused her of having caused his father's death; said he wanted to throw her down trapdoor into cellar. Asked if thought she was a witch, responded with story of strange noise one night, as if something had fallen, for which he and his wife could find no cause. (Illiterate)

(2) Mongeotte femme du precedent, 32

Said she had seen no harm in Jehenne, and would have spent rest of life living with her.

(3) Jeanne femme Jean Flaman le jeune, tisserand, of Neufchateau, 30+

Asked about cause of her illness, said that it was Jehenne, 'et elle veult mourrir la dessus'. Had been living in Jehenne's house for 3 years, and when visiting house of Visage d'Ange had seen a little girl who was very ill. Witness suggested it might be witchcraft, without naming anyone; servant then reported to Jehenne that she had accused her. Came to reproach witness (this was some 3 years ago), then they both went to house, where servant agreed she had not named anyone. Nevertheless Jehenne's daughter-in-law had beaten servant, and next day witness fell ill, with swellings to head and neck; was still very sick, with swollen legs etc, and no appetite. Asked about illness of her child, said that while still living in house her son, aged 2 months, had swollen testicles and was crying like a dog day and night. Neighbours suggested he was bewitched, and she asked accused to visit him; refused at first, but came after others had left. Inspected him, said he had made himself ill by crying, but advised pilgrimage to Saint Meinefort; others told her she should go to hospital of Neufchateau, which she did, and same evening child recovered. Asked about hearing frightening noises, agreed that she had heard three mysterious sounds during night. Added that accused was in common repute as witch in the street - 'la rue Verdunoise'.

(4) Magdelaine fille feu Florentin Pernot (surnomme Visage d'Ange), 11

Asked about cause of her illness, which had left her with twisted neck and damaged arms and legs. Said that some 18 months before during winter, when coming back from spinning at poisle for dinner, she had found a new carolus in ashes outside Jehenne's house, which she gave to her mother. Later daughter-in-law of accused heard of this, and asked for its return, but her mother refused; Jehenne then said 'Je n'en diray mot pour cela mais tu verras ce que s'en sera'. 6 months later

her father became ill and died in 8 days, then her mother also became ill and died 3 weeks later; those of the street said that Jehenne had bewitched them. Asked about previous quarrels, said that there had been one about a year before when accused killed a vine outside their house by pouring hot water on it. She herself had become ill some 6 months after death of parents, with an 'apostume' on her neck which had gradually spread to rest of head and body; believed Jehenne had caused this, in view of reputation in street.

(5) Anne femme Mengin Claude tisserand en la meme rue, 30

Did not know if she was a witch, but suspected her because of common opinion. Some 4 years earlier her two small children had both become ill, and husband had suggested that she see Jehenne 'et feindre la criasse afin de l'esmouvoir a leur fy quelque chose'. Accused told her she should have patience and they would recover; some days later brought her some millet in 'ung saulssure bien noire', and some tart, saying 'Tenez Annon baillez cela a vos enfans'. Did so after consulting husband, and children slowly recovered. She and husband had never quarrelled with Jehenne, although their servants had sometimes turned her away because of her reputation.

(6) Pierre Roussel tisserand de Neufchateau, 60

Had lived with her for 2 years, then left for another street of own free will. Had a 13-year-old daughter who became ill, all swollen, and died after 2 years. If Jehenne was a witch, thought she was responsible, since she had hated the girl, for no reason he knew. Had often heard her talking when she was alone in her room in evening. (Illiterate)

(7) Didiere femme Pierre Roussel, 51

Repeated essentials of husband's deposition.

(8) Jean Flaman le jeune, 25

Told of reputation in street for making neighbours ill, then curing them. Repeated wife's deposition about her illness and that of small son; believed she was a witch, although they had never quarrelled with her. Told of hearing strange noise one evening from her barn, as though 'on scyoit au hault fer', which lasted over an hour. (Signed)

(23 June 1611)

(9) Jacquot Arnoult chartier de Neufchateau, 36

Told how 3 years before next notre dame of August he had contracted to take her on pilgrimage to chapel of St Anne, near village of Goudancy, near Jouvelle in Burgundy. She wanted to get treatment for eyes from the spring there. Took her, and next day, a Sunday, she went to Mass in village church, while he went to the

chapel; later had quarrel because she wanted to wait and see curé, while he objected that she had only contracted for three days, and they needed to set out. In the end went to see curé, who was dining in company, and told her he would soon come back to the church. In fact he went off to say Vespers at another church which depended on cure. When she went to church there were various people possessed of the evil spirit who were waiting for curé 'pour faire les conjurations'. One of them, a blind girl possessed by a demon called Joly, was dancing and singing; came up to where accused, accompanied by her son Jean Gontar, was kneeling before crucifix. Took her by shoulder and shook her, 'grondant' but saying nothing, then resumed her normal activities without touching anyone else in church. When they saw that curé was not coming Jehennon left church and wanted to return, although night was coming on; believed that she was frightened of 'la conjuration dudit curé' - had heard from another charretier who had taken others there that he did come later that evening. Believed that she had caused various "fortunes" which he had, beginning 3 or 4 months after the journey. Had lost some 6 or 8 horses, including a fine one which would not obey, but became perfectly docile when passed on to someone else. His wife had become ill with an 'enflure' which lasted more than 6 months, and had two children aged 6 and 2 dead, after they became emaciated despite continuing to eat. Another daughter aged 12 had been ill, with body all twisted, and this illness still returned periodically. (Illiterate)

(10) Vacharin Gauthier, serviteur a Bastien Clement tisserand de Neufchateau, 24

Three years earlier, when in service of Mengin Claude, had seen her working in her garden, and saying as if to herself 'Tien tu, ostes tu, petit coquinel, laisse my'. Looked around, but could see no-one, nor any dogs or cats; he was moved to throw a stone at her which hit her on her buttocks. She called out 'O grand fuzelier de Vacharin', and he ran off after throwing a second stone (which missed). Heard nothing more of this episode. Also told of illness and cure of Mengin Claude's children. (Illiterate)

(11) Jacques Amand tisserand de Neufchateau, 45

Some 5 weeks earlier, as neighbour, had heard her saying that she was going to go to court against her son who had beaten her. Son denied this, and told Henry Melnie 'Que par la mort dieu, s'elle s'en va plaindre, je luy feray mettre la main sur le collet, qu'elle ne resveille pas le char qui dort'. Was 'douteux' whether she was a witch or not.

(12) Jean Obry tisserand de Neufchateau, 46

Had lived for 10 months in her house, but had left 6 weeks earlier because there was not enough room. Told of some strange noises like animals. Had been incident some 6 weeks earlier when she had tried to stop her daughter-in-law beating her small child, and had been told to mind her own business, and that they did not want the child to frequent her. She was then pushed into her room and locked in, crying out that she was being beaten; daughter-in-law said that the devil must be beating her. This was followed by quarrel with son as described by

previous witness; Jehenne was threatening to evict him from house and go herself to live with Nicolas Lalleman. Did not know if she was witch, and personally had no such opinion, having seen no ill in her. (Illiterate)

(13) Nicolas Pasquier tisserand de Neufchateau, 45

Had seen nothing to make him suspect she was a witch, but when she was being guarded in her house by arbalestriers after being accused he heard her and her son talking on porch at 6 in evening, while guards were having supper. She was asking if she should go away, to which he replied 'Nyan, Nyan, ou voulez vous aller'. (Illiterate)

24 June 1611; procureur general des Vosges asks for arrest and interrogation.

27 June 1611; interrogation

Said she was 65, had been married first to Claude Gontart, then 13 years later to Mansuy Magnien, masson et laboureur, who had died 9 years earlier. Since then had lived by spinning. Asked about deaths of husbands, said first had died of pleurisy, second 'des esprinsons'. Asked if she had ever been accused of causing death of second, said only by her son when he had been in a fury with her, and had called her 'genaulche'; she held her son as 'homme de bien', although he was not always very obedient. Her reputation came from accusation by Huguette, with whom she had never quarrelled, or kept company. Had been called witch by Jean Flaman when he was drunk on night of Ascension. Told of occasion when sister of Demeuge Guyet (?) had come complaining of bad leg and asking her to heal her - had told her to go and complain in street 'devant les gens et on entendra qui t'a faict malade'; similar request from Magdelaine fille Visage d'Ange, to which she replied 'qui t'a faict malade te guairisse, je ne suis pas une guairisseuse ny faiseuse de maladie, c'est affaire aux genaulches de guairir et de faire malade.' As for millet and tart, it had been a present from wedding feast of her niece, which she had shared out among three neighbours and her son - had no idea about illness of children.

Said she had never heard of Saint Memefort, nor advised anyone to make a pilgrimage there. She herself had been to Sainte reyne and then Sainte Anne for her eye trouble. Had made second visit to latter 'nonobstant que le sieur curé de ce lieu luy ait deffendu, et que ce n'estoit que diablerie, mais ce qu'elle en fait a ce second voyage c'estoit pour estre dechargée des meschans gens qui la chargeoient d'estre genaulche.' On first visit was touched on shoulder by someone who made great noise with sabots, and was told that this person (whose sex she did not know) 'dechassoit ceulx qui estoient sorciers'; when her carter asked person if she was a witch received no reply. On second visit asked curé of Goudance to secure redress against accusations of which she was victim, but he asked if she had permission from her curé, and she had to admit that she had not. Went to hear Mass, and was not touched, 'encor qu'elle oyoit ung grand deduit, d'aulcuns qui battoient les aultres que l'on disoit, que c'estoient sorciers qu'ilz dechassoient.' Agreed to episode with carolus, although not to threat.

"Enquise si estante faschée, et couroucée il luy est point apparu quelque ung pour la consoler, et luy demander s'elle se voudroit donner a luy, et qu'il l'ayderoit.' She denied this, and was sent back to prison.

28 June 1611; interrogation

No further admissions or material of great interest - short completion of interrogation.

4 July 1611; additional witness

(14) Balthazar la Hyre, tisserand, previously of Neufchateau, now living at Secqvaux, 50

Told how some 4 years earlier, when living next door to her, had small son aged 6 who became ill, all bunched up and unable to stretch himself out. Could sometimes talk, sometimes not, virtually unable to eat. Believing her responsible, caught her alone in garden, with a stick in his hand, and handled her roughly, swearing 'que par la mort et par la chair dieu, qu'elle estoit sorciere, et qu'elle avoit faict malade son enfant, que s'elle ne le guarissoit, qu'il l'assommeroit toute a l'heure.' She promised that child would recover; next day came to see him, and told witness he would soon be well, after which he was back on his feet within 4 or 5 days. Two months later his wife and daughter were spinning with other women in the 'cave' of a small house belonging to Jehenne and adjoining hers, occupied by Jean Flaman. Jehenne started to tell daughter how she should behave if her father were to die, at which wife took offence and upbraided her. She sat with head in hands as if asleep, leaning on her knees, and making strange noises. At this point he called wife to look at small child which had fallen out of cradle at bottom of bed. Around same time he became ill with strange sickness which began in shoulders, then affected arms and legs at different times. Believing she was responsible, he again confronted her, this time threatening to hang her from pear tree with a garter; she told him he was 'ung sot', and that it was merely caused by the cold. A couple of days later, when he complained again, she told him he would soon recover, and next week he was cured.

4 July 1611; interrogation and confrontation

Questioned about the deposition of the final witness, denied everything absolutely. Said that some 16 years before when she had been absent a 'ciel du lit' had been stolen, and since Balthazar la Hyre had reputation as 'un debauche' she had accused him of taking it and quarrelled with him. Asked why she had been disposing of her goods after she had been accused by 'Huguette bruslée sorciere', she denied this and said they had already been transferred to her son. Then told that transfer had only been 4 or 5 days before execution, again disagreed. Confronted with Balthazar, again denied systematically; judges noted that she was very pertinacious and arrogant.

5 July 1611; confrontations

Confronted with two witnesses, now admitted some elements in depositions, but denied all important ones.

6 July 1611; confrontations

Again a short session, with no significant admissions.

8 July 1611; confrontations

Agreed to dispute with her daughter-in-law who had been beating her small child roughly, but not to supposed statements by her son.

11 July 1611; confrontations

Agreed to general account of episode with possessed girl, but minimised incident when she touched her shoulder.

12 July 1611; interrogation of son

Jean Gontar was interrogated about the various episodes in which he had been concerned. Said he did not believe she was a witch, and if he had reproached her it had been 'sur le bruit commun'. Claimed to have no memory of damaging statements he was alleged to have made. Asked if he did not attribute illnesses and deaths of several of his children to her, in view of quarrels, he said not, and that they were will of God. Had taken over property because she was almost blind and could not manage her own affairs. He also minimised episode with possessed girl in church. Note that 'n'ayant sceu découvrir aultre chose' against accused, information was being sent to procureur general.

18 July 1611; procureur general asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

23 July 1611; Change de Nancy agrees to torture, with moderation appropriate for her age.

28 July 1611; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews on hands and feet, but made no admission at all. Was then placed on 'la chable', but no statement that she was tortured.

29 July 1611; interrogation

Recorded that it had been thought good to prevent her sleeping all that night. She was still stoutly denying everything, and judges remarked on her 'bon courage'. Undressed herself and placed herself in position for renewed torture, but was apparently not actually tortured despite threats that it would be harsher than previous day.

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30 July 1611; procureur general des Vosges suggests that she be renvoyée jusqu'a
rappel.

31 July; local judges agree.