

B 5312 no 5; witch 095, Senelle femme Waisen Petter, de Bisping

11 July 1594; substitut for PG associates himself with Royne femme Demenge Marchal. She had alleged that she had woken at night to see her kneeling on her husband, with a candle with a strong blue flame in her hand - was unable to move or call out to wake him. Senelle had sought reparation, but Royne refused, saying there was sufficient proof that she was a witch.

13 July 1594; informations preparatoires

(1) Barbe femme Faulhanns, 60

8 years ago, when plaids were held 'sous l'orme', had great dispute with her late husband Faulhanns over rent payable for a barn they shared, with 32 francs at issue. He called her 'bastarde', and she cursed him; soon sickened, and died in 6 months - had always suspected her over this.

(2) Le maire Michiel, 60

4 or 5 years before had summoned her son to guard fort at Dieuze while ditches were being cleaned, and fell ill for 8 weeks as soon as he reached house. Suspected her because of curses she gave him.

(3) Margueritte femme Grand Austien, 25

Reputation 3 years.

(4) Eve femme Grand Bauer, 36

When she had been quarrelling with Petter Stürten over an inheritance had said he and his wife were both witches. 4 weeks before had told witness she had heard from a woman of Guermange (since executed) that if clothes were left on a bench or a chest with 4 legs at night the devil could come and take them so that witches could wear them when doing ill. She habitually put hers on a bench, and thought that he night have taken them, so that she had been wrongly identified by the blacksmith's wife.

(5) Sibille femme Rebenhanns, 40

14 years before had been at a childbed, where accused quarrelled with Geys Salonné, who told her she was a perfect witch. She replied 'sy une sorciere se fut teü ce jourd'huy l'on n'en eust point ouÿ parler'.

(6) Christienne femme Nickel Marchal, 30

Some 4 years earlier Messire Jacques Guedmon, curé of Bisping, had been asked by Steffen Faulhanns to do him honour by accompanying him and his relatives when he went to seek daughter of Muttervillig in marriage. They arrived early in the morning before he was out of bed, so he had to rise hastily; as they went witness saw Senelle looking over her door at them. Passed along the wooden walkway through village to avoid mud, and curé started to complain; on return said 'O dieu qu'ay je faict, je ne me suis point signé ce matin et aye mauvaise oppinion

sur ladicté Synnelle, pour ce que j'ay assisté audit Steff, pour luy faire avoir ladicté fille'. Became feverish, then had to take to his bed, with a swollen leg; finally died, still maintaining that Synnelle had given him the illness. Witness objected that as churchman he should have crossed himself and commended himself to God, but he said the others had been in a hurry and had not left him time to pray or wash his hands.

(7) Anthoine fils Berkerhanns, 24

On a day when roads were muddy had been to Dieuze with 2 horses, and as he left Synnelle, daughter of accused, asked if she could ride one of the horses back. Told her to walk, but as he approached village both his knees became painful; remained so for 3 weeks until he had pilgrimage to Beau Bernard made on his behalf.

(8) Beckerhanns, 40

2 years earlier she had asked his wife to sell her some 'leavette' to make cheese; although she feared her replied at first that she had none to sell, but eventually sold some. That evening a cow sickened and died following night, since when he had a poor opinion of her.

(14 July 1594)

(9) Laurent Hoch d'Angviller, 50

Said that 15 years before a travelling tailor had been working for him, when he lived opposite her in Bisping. She came to house and asked the tailor, as if he were a devin, what could be the cause of the great losses they were experiencing with their horses. He replied 'qu'elle mesme le sçavoit bien, et que ce faisoit elle mesme'; she did not reply and left.

(10) Margueritte femme Niclaus Baller, 30

Some 9 years before, when she lived in house of Pierron Dommeré, his wife Georgeatte sickened and died; during long illness told witness and others that Synnelle had given her the sickness.

(11) Doctor Nickel, 34

Some 14 years earlier his father-in-law Pierron Jean Domeré had been taking fish from Gros Etang de Lindre to Etang d'Angviller, and husband of accused was supposed to help him. When valet arrived with 3 horses he refused to attach them with his, saying that if they did not send better ones he would do the job himself. During absence Synnelle came to house and quarrelled with mother of witness, saying 'qu'elle avoit veu aultrefois perdre ung meilleur bien que le leur, et qu'elle pouloit encor bien veoir aultant en arriver a leur endroit'. Following night a mare which had a swelling on its leg suddenly began to decline, and died in 3 days, and Pierron had always suspected her of causing this.

(12) Margueritte femme Hermans Hanns, 60

Some 9 or 10 years earlier the women had been choosing a midwife, and went to tavern to eat and drink; Georgeatte femme Pierron Domeré joined them, saying that she would willingly eat something good, since she was pregnant. When at table she said she felt unwell; at midnight her husband called witness, who found she had given birth prematurely, and child was dead. Next day she told witness that Synelle had come to her bedside and pulled her big toe, so that she called out in distress, and her child died of fright. Witness suggested that she had been dreaming, but she insisted it was true.

(13) Didier Moictrier, 50

Reputation 18 years, and had heard Pierron Domeré say she had killed his wife.

(14) Chrestophe Charpentier d'Angviller, 40

13 years earlier he had been warming himself by fire in her house after supper, when he and others were putting up new building for her husband. She said 'que une personne qui auroit quelque hayne, fut sur aultre personne ou sur une piece de bestial qui prendroit une esguelle avec laquelle seroit esté cozu le linceul d'ung corps mort, et icelle poulsée ou fischée dedans la passée de la personne ou bestial qui auroit passé et cheminé en quelque lieu, fauldroit puis apres qu'icelle personne ou piece de bestial (quel elle soit) en vienne boyteuse et par apres en meurt, et n'y auroit moyen aucun que personne vivant les puisse secourir ny ayder.' Husband agreed this was true. (Marginal note that this section of trial should not be read out.)

(15) Pierron Jean Dommeré, de Berthelming, terre de Fenétrange, 43

(Now lived 8 km away). 20 years before had dispute with her husband when he was taking 'ellevin' from étang de Lindre; they fought when latter tried to take away his cauldron. She then came and quarrelled with him, saying he should watch out, and within 3 days a horse fell ill - died after 3 months, and he thought her responsible. Second quarrel 3 years later, when he was again required to transport elvers; he had a bad leg, so sent his boy to Waysenpetter, who was supposed to join him, asking him to do it. He refused, but sent 3 horses, at which witness said he would rather do it himself, so sent them back. During absence Synelle came to house and told his wife 'que son mary estoit ung grand seigneur et qu'il charroyoit seul, mais qu'il n'y charroyeroit guiere'. On return mare became ill and died same night, for which he blamed her. 10 or 11 years ago, when he was cattle herdsman, she had an old cow which lagged behind, and one day he told her it had been left behind. She then gave some bread (his payment) to his wife, who immediately felt pain in stomach (she was about a month pregnant). She later aborted, and died after being ill at least 3 months. Asked if she had made any accusation, said that after receiving sacraments she told him she thought Synnel had made her ill, and that she had seen her by her bed.

(16) Alizon femme Beckerhanns, 40

Same deposition as husband (marginal note that it should be recorded in full).

(17) Mayette femme Anthoine Charpentier, 42

Some 20 years earlier she had asked Synelle to be godmother to her child, and when she visited witness one of her other children was on her knee. Synelle asked why she put up with this, and she should put child down, to which she replied that she should leave it alone, and it did not trouble her. Next night child sickened, and died in 3 days - suspected no-one but her.

(18) Barbe femme Steffen Faulhanns, 30

2 years earlier she had come to house asking to buy some flax, which witness refused, saying she had too many children. One child then embraced her, saying 'voicy ma tante', to which she replied 'je suis une belle tante je ne te donne rien'. 2 or 3 days later child had neck twisted, and she asked Synelle to see it and suggest remedy. She rubbed neck, saying child would be well, and neck recovered, but had lost use of limbs and was unlikely to recover this.

(19) Bride femme Klein Nickel, 21

Previous year, after dispute over some money she owed husband of witness, his mare had its leg broken, which she attributed to her. Had heard story of her kneeling over Roynes husband with a candle from Roynes as they were going to market.

(20) Roynes femme Demenge Marchal, 32

Told story of how a year before around previous Christmas she had woken in night to find Synelle kneeling over her husband in bed - room was lit by blue candle. He was so deeply asleep that pushing and pinching him had no effect, then Synelle looked at her and she was unable to speak, and had to close her eyes. Hoped that God would protect her and children in cradle, then heard catch of kitchen door - opened eyes and saw that light had gone out.

8 years earlier, when she had only been resident a week, Synelle approached her and asked if Steff's wife had said she had killed Faulhanns. She said she had heard nothing, and Synelle said she had taken him before bourgeois to obtain 'plus valeur' on a 'partage' they had made, and he had refused to pay, after which she cursed him, and he sickened and died.

1 August 1594; Rémy asks for arrest, interrogation, and confrontations

16 August 1594; interrogation

Said she was about 40. Asked about dispute with Faulhanns, said he was her 'frere germain', and that he owed her 16 florins for a house and barn they had inherited jointly. She had helped him with building work, but when he would not pay had caused him some trouble, so that he cited her before justice. Heard he had said 'que s'il esut volu qu'il l'eust fait bastarde', and she cursed him, saying 'le diable luy puisse rompre le col'. Denied knowing anything about his illness.

Asked about claim that devil could take clothes left on bench or chest with 4 legs, said she had heard this, in company with 3 other women, from a beggar-woman who had since been executed, but denied having told anyone else. Admitted that she and Geiss Salonné had called one another witch during a quarrel.

Denied any involvement in death of curé - suggestion was that her son had been unsuccessful suitor for the girl's hand. Also denied suggestion about how to make enemies lame and kill them, although a little ambiguously, saying she did not know whether she had said it or not, and had never done it.

Agreed she had quarrelled with Pierron Domeré, although could not remember cause - denied various charges by him, and said that he killed his own horses by beating them too much. Said that horses died after working hard, and she had lost them in this way. Denied all other charges.

20 August 1594; confrontations

Asked how maire Michiel could know she had cursed him; he replied that neighbours told him. Now admitted telling Eve femme Grand Baure about clothes left on bench. Did not remember threatening Pierron Domeré's wife, but it would not have been much in any case; did admit saying she had seen greater wealth than theirs lost. She might well have said things attributed to her by Chrestophe Charpentier, having heard them from a boy of Fribourg who was in their service (now dead). More or less admitted much circumstantial detail, while denying causing any harm, and suggesting that remarks attributed to her were not significant.

26 August 1594; Rémy asks for torture

27 August 1594; Change de Nancy approves

1 September 1594; interrogation under torture

Interrogated again, said there was a presumption that the curé had died 'de la contagion'; she had never asked him to help her son. Denied other charges, and then lifted by rope, although toes were still touching the ground. No confession, and she was sent back to prison overnight.

2 September 1594; interrogation

Agreed that she had rubbed the neck of child of Barbe femme Steffen Faulhanns, but with no ill intent; said child had fallen off a dungheap (had already suggested this in confrontations). After further denials executioner was called to place her on the rack, but she then offered to confess. Said she had been seduced 7 years earlier, when two women, one of whom was Mayelle femme Hermanns Hanns, told her they had found 'ung beau jeune homme', and that she should believe in him and do as he said. Asked why she agreed so lightly, said she had lost several horses, and wanted to know why, in order to avoid similar troubles in future. Then went behind a house, where she was seduced by Federbusch; given money which turned out to be pieces of pottery and horse-dung. 2 or 3 years before, when the soldiers (about 20) had been in the village, they were taking off 2 horses belonging to her at night, but her 'amoureux' appeared and promised to recover them, which he did.

3 months later (about 18 months before) had met her under the elm where court sat, with Ennel fillate Faulhanns, femme Conradt, Barbe femme Stophle, and Alizon femme Hanns Becker, and told them to go by night to blacksmith's house and kill him with a drink. This was because Barbe had a grievance against him; drink was made with powder from stillborn child, which she had gone to fetch from

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cemetery at Albestroff on a distaff. Said she had not given her brother a drink, but she had cursed him, and he then became ill. Agreed she had made hail in usual manner. Admitted that she and Mayelle had caused Georgeatte femme Pierron Doméré to abort, by holding her big toe. Also killed a couple of horses.

Asked about Easter, said she had not swallowed host, but kept them and finally threw them away.

6 September 1594; Rémy asks for death sentence

7 September 1594; Change de Nancy approves