

B 7316; witch 122, Hellenix Hottin, de la Neufville de Nancy

Had been accused by François Roussel, concierge of Comte de Salm.

3 January 1597; informations preparatoires

(1) Catherine Fourier, femme Jheremie Barbier, cordonnier et sergent de justice dans le ban de Lay, 28

6 or 7 years earlier she lived next to them at Eumont; their child aged 2 went over to her house, was 'flatté' by her and given some gooseberries, with request to fetch her some bread from father. Told to avoid touching her by his father, because of suspicions they already had, but did so with finger in giving her the bread. On return started to foam abundantly at the mouth, and eyes sank in head, so that child looked as if he had been ill for long time instead of 24 hours. Father threatened to have her burned if she did not heal son, if it cost him his life. She said he would soon recover, but came to see him, holding chapelet and praying God (or pretending to do so), then said she was going to church to complete prayers. On return child was still ill, but she made sign of cross on his stomach, and in about an hour he recovered to play with other children in streets. Believed she was a witch, and she had been chased out of Eumont as such.

(2) Alizon Bretan, femme Cesar Clement, laboureur d'Eumont, 30

9 years earlier, when Bouillon's army was passing, she refused to boil some milk for Hellenix, and within 3 or 4 hours child she was suckling died suddenly, with lower half of body full of 'humeur noir'. 2 days later a cow lost its milk and died suddenly, then within week a second cow died. Suspected her, and for this reason and other suspicions the maire and gens de justice had driven her out of Eumont.

(3) Claudon Mequin, femme Jean Cuysenier, laboureur d'Eumont, 25

When living in father's house had several times seen late mother refuse her milk, after which they had cows and other animals dead. Met her mother in church of St Nicolas, and said it was a long time since they had any cows dead; touched her on shoulder, and 2 days later another cow died. One Monday her mother refused her some beans on credit, and they had various accidents that week; house caught fire 3 times, and cow fell over in stable. Shortly after she asked mother for a drink, and she replied that she had just come from the spring - next day found a lamb dead. On another occasion told mother she should go and check her child - when she did so found cradle on top of it. Chased out of Eumont because of reputation. Finally told how her late sister Magdelaine had a bad shoulder, and asked Hellenix for cure; she told her a magical prayer, after saying which she was cured.

(4) Barbe femme Demenge Cuysenier, d'Eumont, 50

9 years earlier she had come asking for alms and been refused; next day child aged 15 or 16 fell ill, with body paralysed, and died in 2 weeks. Had heard from Alizon femme Jean Breton that Hellenix had asked whose were horses they saw drinking; was told they were those of witness, and 2 of them died suddenly next day. Suspected all this was her witchcraft.

- (5) Didiere Pensee femme Jacquemin Reverts, d'Eumont, 40

3 years earlier she had refused Hellenix some dough she asked for at oven of Eumont, then her child aged 2 months suddenly died in its cot; thought she was a witch.

- (6) Jacquin Mequin, laboureur d'Eumont, 76

Reputation 20 years, and chased out of Eumont.

- (7) Mengin Jenin, vigneron d'Eumont, 52

He was fourrier of four banal 10 years earlier, and told her to go away because everyone suspected she was a witch, at which she replied that he would repent. Within an hour a hot coal fell on his foot, so that he was in bed for 3 weeks; suspected this was her witchcraft, and asked her for cure, at which she offered to pray for him. A week after cure she came again begging for dough from those at oven, and he threatened to throw her in it; was then unable to get it hot enough, despite using much more wood than usual, until he had chased her away. He spoke to Pierre Arnault, admodiateur at Lay, and she was evicted from Ban by the gens de justice.

- (8) Noel Mequin, jeune fils d'Eumont, 25

Story of late mother Bietrix and her belief that Hellenix had caused her various losses - same incidents as reported by sister.

(4 January 1597)

- (9) Bastien Thieriet, laboureur d'Eumont, 62

Had come to Eulmost 8 years earlier, as vagabond without settled lodging, and went around houses begging. Demenge Cuysenier told witness that for public good she should be expelled, since she was reputed witch and he thought she had caused death of one of his children. Told him he would arrest her if he made himself partie formelle, but he was unwilling, so as maire he and the gens de justice expelled her, and she had not returned since.

- (10) Jean Demenge dit Cuysenier, bouchier d'Eumont, 30

When living at Eumont had been refused alms at father's house by his brother Demenge, and within 2 days his brother fell ill, with body paralysed, and died within the month. Then story of death of 2 horses as told by mother.

- (11) Jheremy Barbier, sergent en la justice de Lay, d'Eumont, 32

Basically same story as wife (witness 1) about illness of child, but he said boy was 5 or 6, and that Hellenix had bitten his finger while he was eating gooseberries. (Good signature)

- (12) Collignon Voiry, vigneron d'Eumont, 55

General reputation, chased out of village.

(7 January 1597)

(13) Claudon Vaultrin, veuve Daniel Jacquemin bourgeois de Nancy, de la Villeneuve de Nancy, 60

Said that week before Whitsun previous year her grandson Daniel de Fricourt was told by his stepfather François Roussel, concierge of Mgr le comte, to go and collect pieces of wood the carpenters had left in house at la Neufville. Found some old women collecting the big ones, and told them not to do so, but said they could take the small ones which were left. Found Hellenix with apron full of big ones, and when he told her to put them down she threw them at him. Next day saw her approaching him in street, and could not get out of way because a cart was passing; she touched him on shoulder, and across legs with a stick she carried, at which he felt his limbs become paralysed. She called in a doctor, the sieur Fornier, who said he could do nothing, but if she suspected anyone of witchcraft she should call them and use soft words to them. Sent for her by neighbour on pretext that it was 'pour tirer le lait d'une femme', but when she arrived Daniel's mother told her it was really 'pour avoir de vous conseil comme je me doibs comporter en la maladie de mon filz Daniel. Vous etes une vielle femme fort devote vous scavez quelque recepte davantage que les aultres. A quoy elle respondit je ne vous scauroys rien dire daultant que tous ceulx et celles qui donnent quelque recepte ils sont incontinent en bruit d'estre sorciere.' She replied she did not think this of her, and winked at servants to make them retire; Hellenix then said she had once had a daughter with 'mal donné', and had made pilgrimage to Beau Bernard, which they should do as soon as possible. Said a 'neufaine' should be made by a widow, and when asked said she was a widow and could make it herself. In fact witness and another woman who was widow took Daniel to church of Beau Bernard at Vic, and while priest 'chantoit l'evangile' he started yawning. Told her it was a wind leaving his body by nose, ears and mouth, and he now felt better. When they got back to the inn he was much improved, although limbs were still weak. After return to Nancy his mother told Hellenix of his improvement, and asked her to make neuvaine, promising to reward her. When she came to house later asking for alms his mother told Daniel to give her a pound of lard, and manage to touch her with his paralyzed arm; he did so (by dropping lard as he gave it to her), and then recovered full use of arm and leg. He was much better until All Saints, when Hellenix came begging at door of witness; she said roughly to her 'tenez voila l'alumosne mais n'y retournez car sy je vous y trouve je ne scay ce que je feray de vous car vous estes une mauvaise femme', to which she replied 'mauause femme je suis aussy femme de bien que vous' then 's'en alla grondant'. Same day Daniel fell ill again with a strange illness, for which doctors could do nothing, and died miserably of a haemorrhage 3 weeks later. Complained of accused during illness, and witness was sure she was a witch.

(14) Epnotte veuve Jean Thouvenin, tisserand de la Neuveville, 55

At last Whitsun had heard Hellenix complain at spring of Grey Sisters that she had been given a pound of lard for making two neuvaines on behalf of Daniel, when she should have had a dinner, which they would repent for having failed to give her. Long reputation.

9 January 1597; interrogation

Said she was Halby Martin, widow of Demenge Odin, who had been tailor at Remoncourt. Was native of Vivier near Dompjulien, aged about 60, and had come to la Villeneuve 3 or 4 years earlier to live with her daughter Jannon Odin, femme Jean Jacquin, cordonnier. Husband had died 20 years earlier, and she had stayed at Remoncourt for 10 years, then went to house of brother Martin at Vivier before coming to present abode. Asked about time at Eumont, said she had spent 6 weeks there when daughter lived there, before she was driven out by maire and gens de justice, who gave no reason.

Asked about reason for arrest, said she did not know and had not been quick enough to ask. Asked if she was not suspected as witch, said she did not know this.

In connection with child of Jeremie Barbier, asked how she could have bitten him when she had not had a tooth in her mouth for 20 years. Denied having been to visit him, being threatened by parents, or saying prayers for him. Then gave series of negative replies to questions about events at Eumont, although did admit asking for alms from women at oven. Judges suggested in course of questioning that she had also been expelled from her native Vivier, but she said nothing about this.

Denied story about touching Daniel, although did say that she had once asked his small half-sister if she could take some wood. Agreed she had been called to see him, and had said she knew nothing, except will of God and the good saints. Did agree that she had advised pilgrimage to Beau Bernard, and had made neuvaine to all churches of Nancy; was given a gros to buy candles and some lard for her pot. Did not think Daniel had touched her when she took the lard, and denied complaining of what she was given, or having visited grandmother's house for alms as alleged. Said she did not know he was dead until after arrest.

18 January 1597; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses (some of whom she said she did not know); denied all charges. Said that when she was driven out of Eumont she was told to return to her native village.

(23 January 1597) Claudon Vaultrin added to deposition account of how when Daniel was on deathbed his sister was brought in so they could forgive one another for disputes they had had. He said they had not amounted to much, but added 'ceste petite femme boiteuse m'a bien faict du mal'; told he should not charge her wrongly, repeated remark, and asked God to forgive her, then died.

No reproaches from accused. She denied having dispute with Daniel over wood, or pushing him in street. Repeated previous statements about what happened during his illness, and said she advised going to Beau Bernard because mother said it was 'mal donné', and she had been advised to do this herself in similar case for her daughter. Did finally admit being refused alms by witness, but said she had returned later.

23 January 1597; Rémy suggests that evidence is already sufficient to condemn her to death, but for greater certainty asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

31 January 1597; interrogation

Immediately admitted that she had been seduced by 'le maling esprit' (later named as Persin) 4 years earlier, when sleeping in street of village called la Grande

Frené; he promised to make her rich. He wanted to take something from her forehead, but she prevented him. Money was nothing, and he told her various lies. Had given her an unknown herb to make Jérémie Barbier's child ill, without explaining reason why he wished her to do this.

Asked about sabat, now said she had been taken there 10 years earlier; were 7 or 8 others dancing, but did not know them. Had given her master her consent so that he could kill a horse belonging to her father. Agreed tht she had healed Barbier's child because he threatened her. Accepted suggestion that she had killed cow of Alizon Breton, femme Cesar Flement, and two cows of Claudon femme Jean Cuisenier. After much hesitation, admitted she had killed child of Demenge Cuisenier, but denied she had harmed child of Didier Pensée.

Admitted she had made the wife and child of concierge ill, by touching them with her stick. Had helped cure him, but when his grandmother abused her she touched him again so that he died.

Questioned again later, confirmed her confessions, and added some other minor details. Said she had been unable to identify anyone at sabat because they were all 'desguisées contrefaictes et de forme hydeuse'. Had to walk there, which took all morning, arriving at midday; master promised food, but there was none, and those who had already eaten said they were dying of hunger whe they left. ('elle y alloit de son pied partout le matin arriroit sur le midy rondioit et bancquetoit. Et depuis a dict que ledit Mre Persin luy avoit promis de luy faire une marande mais qu'il n'en fit rien et que ceulx qui avoient marandé au paravant disoient qu'au partir ilz mouraient de fain.')

Denied causing coal to drop on foot of Mengin Genin, saying he was a liar who would not go to Paradise for that reason.

Was then briefly tortured and asked about accomplices, but she stuck to story that she could not identify them. Released because of her 'viellesse et caducité'.

31 January 1597; Rémy asks for death sentence

1 February 1597; Change de Nancy approves