

Witch 133, Jehenne Medexin 1

B 8535 no 1; witch 133, Jehenne Medexin veuve Bastien de Neufviller, de Rozieres

13 November 1603; informations preparatoires

(1) Barbe femme Colin Gillet Garonnier de Rozieres, 50

Previous Friday, the 7th, Jehenne had come up to her at market and asked to buy 'cendres', to which she replied she had none. Accused then said, breathing over her face, 'Ha tante Barbe vous vous en repentirez, et vous en donnez de garde'. Started yawning, then on return home fell down and became deaf, dumb, and blind; wanted to tell how she had been afflicted, but could not. On the Monday Jehenne came to house and after she touched and handled witness she recovered use of faculties, then said to her 'Je suis bien tenue a toy de m'avoir donné ce mal', to which she replied 'Barbe sy tu pensois que s'eusse je faict, tu me devois bien envoyer querir ausytost qu'il te print'. Was still paralyzed down left side, and believed accused reponsible.

(2) Colin Gillet garonnier, 50

Repeated essential of wife's deposition.

(3) Estienne Gros Jean, 56

Had heard exchange between Barbe and Jehenne when visit was made; confirmed account by former.

(4) Richard Gontiere le jeune, beau fils de Colin Gillet, 22

Also witness to the exchange; according to him Jehenne had said 'He Barbe, tu t'abuse, il n'en est rien, Dieu m'en garde' before remark about sending for her sooner.

(5) Bietrix jeune fille a Colin Gillet, 14

Similar testimony to others.

(6) Gerard Barlet marechal de Rozieres, 32

Said that just before her arrest on Wednesday Jehenne had come to his house and said to his wife (in his presence) 'regarde sy je ne te dis pas bien hier que l'on diroit que j'ay donné le mal a la femme Colin, je y vas veoir, et a son retour . . . dict . . . regarde s'il n'est vray qu'elle ne l'a maintenue que je luy ay donné ce mal, mais qu'elle l'en avoit crié mercy, et qu'avoit esté ledit mal que luy avoit faict dire'.

(7) Françoise femme du precedent, 30

On Tuesday Jehenne had said to her 'Je m'en va veoir Barbe femme a Colin Gillet, ores que j'ouy dire qu'elle estoit malade, je me doubta bien que l'on diroit que

s'avoy je fait.' Next day returned and said 'devinez, s'il n'est vray ce que je te dis hier, que l'on dict que je luy ay donné le mal, et me jureray jamais, que je le sois, et que je ne le sois pas, s'il leur semble que je le soye, qu'ils me facent prendre, et me facent mourir, je leur pardonne ma mort'.

(8) Margueritte femme Claudon Pierre Loys de Rozieres, 30

Previous Tuesday had heard her say before Gerard Marechal's house 'qu'elle venoit de Blainville, et que sa belle fille l'avoit appelé genoxe, et qu'elle luy replicqua que son marit estoit un couquou, mais que jamais ne jureroit qu'elle ne le fut, ny qu'elle le fut'.

(9) Demenge Marchal de Rozieres, 44

Some 3 years earlier his wife had employed 'la petite Chenne' to sew by the day at their house. While waiting for scarves which were with weaver, got a neighbour to prepare some sheets for her to sew, and Jehenne was angry when she saw her doing this outside house, saying 'je les eusse aussy bien taillé qu'elle'. Next day wife fell ill, and had to be carried to and from bed for next month. Meanwhile 'il se conseilloit par tout pour scavoir comme il en pouvoit user, et entre aultre chose luy fut dict qu'il y avoit une femme a St Nicolas qu'enseignoit de plusieurs affaires'. Visited her and told her of suspicions that it was 'mal donné', to which she replied 'allez vous en, et s'il est ainsy, avant que vous soyez a votre logis vous trouverez la personne que s'a fait'. First person he met was Jehenne, whom he suspected, and she asked him where he was coming from. Told her he came from business at St Nicolas, asked her to come to house on pretext of inspecting a scarf which had come from weaver. When she was there a neighbour attending his wife persuaded her to look at her; she said 'que c'estoit mal ains que Dieu vouloit, et que quand il luy plairoit qu'il s'en yroit'. After further persuasion touched her thigh, which was cold as marble, then said they must find a 'patteneye tonna', make a hole in it, then take water which would form in hole with a small spoon and rub it on her skin. This was done same day, and next day she began to walk.

(10) Claudon femme du precedent, 40

Repeated story told by husband. Wanted sewing to pass time when she was pregnant.

(11) Mengeotte femme Didier Pougant de Rozieres, 50

Her brother had been first husband of accused. Some 4 or 5 years ago had sent her daughter Claudon to learn sewing with her, and one day she was approached by 'la moictriere de Cuyttefebre' complaining that her hens were being stolen, although they had a claw cut to mark them. Daughter told her that her lodger had sold some fine ones to her aunt in recent days, so woman went to look at them. Jehenne was furious with daughter and reproached her, after which she became ill, with whole body and face twisted, so that she was more like 'un monstre, qu'une creature'. Suspected Jehenne, so asked her to visit girl; she did so in her

absence, and brought her some yellow lard, after eating which she partially recovered, although she was still twisted.

(12) Claudon fille Didier Pougant, 18

Repeated mother's deposition with some extra details. Jehenne had told her that she alone should eat the lard. Later the moictrier de Cuyttefevre had visited her, and promised her to make the pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Fricourt. Next day accused came back and said 'qu'est ce que ce langard de Cuyttefevre fut hier faire icy, il dict et fait des besognes qu'il vaudroit mieulx qu'il se tienne et qu'il se teut', even though she had not seen or heard him. Believed she had both caused and taken off illness.

(14 November 1603)

(13) Laurent Laurent vigneron de Rozieres, 50

Some 6 years his daughter had died after strange illness which only lasted 24 hours, so stiff she could not even bend limbs. When Jehenne came to sprinkle body with holy water she said to him 'vous l'aviez heu mis aupres de moy pour l'apprendre a coudre, et puis me la roté, et que peut estre s'elle fut encore esté aupres de moy, qu'elle n'eut esté morte'. Drew no conclusions from this.

(14) Philippe Mongenat, femme Poincelat Poincelat de Rozieres, 21

Some 11 years before she had a room in their house, and after a quarrel with her mother (now dead) a child became ill and died after 2 months. Had always heard her mother say that she suspected Jehenne.

(15) Estienne Eulry de Rozieres, 40

5 years earlier his late wife had taken their daughter, aged 3, to church with her, and she had been chattering; Jehenne struck her on shoulder and said 'pas petite langarde pas'. Immediately afterwards child became strangely ill, died after 9 months quite emaciated but with stomach swollen. When wife was on deathbed he asked her to pardon Jehenne for opinion she had against her, to which she replied that if she had done it she pardoned her, if she had not then God should pardon her (his wife).

(16) Hellewix fille feu Pieron Bouchier de Rozieres

Some 7 years before she had been learning to sew with Jehenne, and the wife of the sieur Clicon at Portesieulx had employed the girls she was teaching and two of her sons for a week. Then told accused she did not need sons any more, and just wanted witness and her companion, daughter of Richard Gontiere, to continue. Next day (Sunday) accused asked her if she was going there tomorrow, to which she said yes, but she replied 'tu n'y yras guere'. Went next day, but had violent pain in back which prevented her working, and this lasted some 3 weeks. Finally a girl who

was her neighbour obtained bread and salt from Jehenne's house, after eating which she recovered; still believed she had given her illness.

(17) Catherine femme Demenge Bernel boulangier de Rozieres, 50

Told how some 7 years earlier many women and girls had been at poisle of the second Echevin, and the girls were playing with a pig's bladder. Didon, the chambermaid of the house, put it among Jehennon's flax - she was not there at the time. When she found it she was angry and said she would know who had done it. Didon confessed and asked her pardon, but she replied 'tu en auras une esbuche'. Later that evening she and other girls left, but she suddenly returned crying and saying she was ill. Witness asked if she was ill when she left, and she said no, to which she replied (in presence of Jehenne) 'tu as la buche maintenant'. Didon died 15 days later, and she believed it had been Jehenne's doing.

(18) Catherine femme Jean Atiatte de Rozieres, 20

Told same story about poisle - 6 years earlier, according to her, and during illness Didon said that Jehenne was cause of her woes.

(15 November 1603)

(19) Dieudonnee femme Claudon Montoille de Rozieres, 26

Story about poisle 7 years earlier. Witness (17) was her mother.

(20) Plaisance veuve Nicolas Gerard de Rozieres, 50

Same story.

(21) Nicolas Ozelle de Rozieres, 48

About a year before had quarrelled with her about some cloth he alleged she was trying to steal. Small son aged 5 was with him, and immediately became ill; died six months later 'aussy sec qu'une buche de bois'. If she was a witch he believed she had caused his death.

(22) Claudon femme Claude Laudart (second echevin), 40

Some 6 years before she had been at oven when Jehenne came by and asked her for 'un chaude', but she made 'sourde oreille' and did not reply. Same evening became ill, as if she were burning; suspecting Jehenne, sent for her after 3 or 4 days, and after she had moved her pillows 'la plaidant et disant qu'on ne tenoit guere de compte de ceste pauvre femme' she immediately recovered. About 6 months before had a small boy who became very ill, all swollen and expected to die, and suspecting Jehenne she sent for her. Looking at him and touching him she said 'il ne meure pas, c'est le mal qui meure sur luy', and he immediately started to recover. Suspected her because shortly before she had offered to say chapelet every day in exchange for

regular 'choppine ou demy choppine de vin', to which she replied 'qu'elle ne donnoit son vin pour des chappeletz'.

(23) Barbon femme Mathieu Fachat de Rozieres, 30

4 years before the accused and her son Villemin lived in kitchen of same house as witness. He often beat her and called her witch; at night cats were always fighting on roof and making noises as if they were being strangled, something which happened neither before or after their residence.

(24) Nicolas Claudin jeune fils de Claudon Colas de Rozieres, 19

6 years earlier he had been attending school with her son Bastien, who stole his Life of Jesus; found him reading it at poisle, but he would not give it back. Bastien complained to mother who ran out of house threatening to throw stones at him; immediately became ill from 'petits roys' to Easter. Was advised to take some eggs and 'les aller rougir' at her house; did this with her son, and ate bread and salt, after which he slowly recovered, believing she had made him ill.

(25) Jean Dran tailleur d'habitz de Rozieres, 40

Some 2 years before she had always been in his poille sewing, and once he heard her say 'le xouaille' instead of 'le diable'. Exchange followed in which he implied she was a follower of the devil. Some 9 months later his daughter, aged 3, was burned when her mother left her alone by the fire one Sunday and her clothes caught light. Also lost a cow suddenly; had not had dispute with any but accused, who was generally suspected as a witch.

16 November 1603; interrogation

Said she was Chenne Medexin, aged 51, native of Blainville-sur-l'eau. Father was Jean Medexin tixerand, mother Billon. First marriage to Nicolas Thieriat lasted only 3 years, then widow for just a year. Had been at Rozieres 'depuis le Prince d'Orange'; second marriage was to Bastien de Neufville, who had no profession, and was often in prison, 'd'autant qu'il estoit mal sage'. This lasted 5 or 6 years, then he went off with army of duc de Bouillon, and had heard they were all drowned.

Agreed that Colin Gillet's wife had accused her, but blamed her illness for this. Admitted she had beaten Claudon Pougant after visit about chickens, but denied making her ill. Denied killing Laurent Laurent's daughter, saying 'qu'elle l'aymoit trop'. Admitted various disputes, but denied wrongdoing. If her son had called her witch, it was when he was drunk.

19 November 1603; confrontations

Started with visit to Barbe Gillet who was ill in bed; repeated accusations, said she pardoned her for love of God, but it would have been better if she had killed her outright. Jehenne denied doing her harm. In confrontation with Françoise Barlet they agreed that accused had said that Barbe Gillet 'luy cria mercy'.

Mengeotte Pougant claimed that during first marriage Jennon had deliberately starved husband (her brother), although the prévôt had two journals of wheat baked for them; she hid this at mother's house, and witness took brother bread secretly. He died after 3 years 'sec comme bois', never having been on good terms with wife; Jennon denied this, saying that he 'luy estoit sy bon'.

Hellewix fille Pierron Bouchier said that when she and her mother were quarrelling with accused after illness, she called her mother 'peu yeulx, peu regard', after which she had always had trouble with eyes, previously perfectly good.

(20 November 1603)

Barbon femme Mathieu Fachat added to her deposition that son of accused called her witch after dispute which arose when he took a shirt she kept in a small chest. He threw her goods out of the door and his wife said to her 'genoxe il y a une tache au hault chemin, qu'il y a plus de sept ans que tu y deusse estre brullée'. Jehenne repeated claim that he had been drunk, while his wife was not 'sage', and was a whore.

She claimed that dispute with Nicolas Claudin had been on account of his failure to sprinkle holy water at her house for 5 or 6 Sundays, as he should have done as cleric.

Jehennon denied giving remedy with 'patteneye' to Claudon Marchal, who said she was reputed witch since she arrived 22 years earlier. Then in confrontation with husband he said she had suggested they consult wife of Claude le Cordonnier, who had used the remedy, and this she seemed to accept, while denying causing illness.

20 November 1603; voluntary confession

On way back to prison asked not to be returned 'au fond de fosse'. Said she had been angry with Demenge Marchal's wife when she found her sewing, for not giving her work, and went on to her 'meix' where she fell asleep among beans. 'Et pendant ce se trouva sur sa gorge une chose espouvantable forte pesante, qu'estoit rude comme poy de loup, et estoit comme un sottre, et l'empoigna par ladite gorge en bruant ce qu'oyans luy demands qui qu'il estoit, et il luy respondit comme elle luy semble mieulx, fremy mre fremy, luy demandant s'il vouloit faire mourir la femme dudit Marchal qui l'avoit fachée, et elle luy respondit que non'. Asked to be taken back to room where she had been questioned, so she could think things over. Had already attacked her on 3 or 4 nights some 16 years earlier, when she lived in house of Jean Mongeon, and tried to strangle her. Was taken back to room and kept under guard for night.

21 November 1603; interrogation

16 or 17 years earlier, living in house of Jean Mongeon, a widower wanted to marry her, but she did not dare because husband had gone to war year before, and she had no news of him. Around midnight when she was in bed a very ugly man of middling build, with grey beard, dressed in grey like wolfskin, appeared and gave her some money. Persuaded her to renounce God and take him for master, after

promising she would not lack for money. Gave her three kinds of powder, black to kill, grey to make ill, and white to cure, telling her 'que s'elle en vouloit a quelqu'un ou quelqu'unes, qu'elle en preigne vengeance de quelle sorte qu'elle voudroit' - or ask him to do it on her behalf. Had intercourse with her, but was not natural man because he was so cold. Called himself maitre Romary, said he would return in two or three days. Money turned out to be only dust.

Did return as promised, and took her to sabbat at fontaine de l'enderchamps, where masked men and women were dancing and feasting.

Admitted she had made Hellewix ill, then cured her; she was 'une petite glorieuse, ne considerant comme elle l'avoit apprin, en estoit trop haultaine, sans luy porter honneur'.

Had got her master to kill Didon at poisle; 'et si Catherine Bernel eut sorty du poille la premiere qu'elle eut heu le mal au lieu de ladite Didon, et qu'il falloit qu'elle fut ferme a la foy'. Marginal note that she later admitted to having placed powder in doorway herself.

Said she had made Claudon wife of second echevin ill because she refused to sell her some patteneyes, then cured her for love of her mother who had done her so much good.

Her master had made Barbe Gillet ill because she had not paid her properly for some work she had done - again later changed admission, now had used powder herself after refusal to sell 'cendres'. Asked if she could cure her, said she would have done so had she not been 'scandalysé par la ville'. De Louppy told her 'qu'on la chargeoit d'avoir donné le mal a ladite Barbe, et qu'elle feroit bien le la reguerir', but she said she had thrown all her powders into river under bridge for fear they be found in her house; had also burned mask of black cloth she wore at sabbat.

Said that when great hailstorm took place two and a half years before, and Romary had wanted to carry her off, she went behind house of her neighbour Andreu Tantette, who was praying to God, and thereby prevented him, but was later beaten for this. Had been to sabbat on numerous occasions, numbers there varied from about 10 to 20.

Was then asked how by own account she had not used powder for some seven years after initial seduction. Thought about this for around an hour, then suddenly denied all her confessions, said she feared she was damning herself. Sent back to 'fond de fosse'.

4 December 1603; Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

Change de Nancy approves

10 December 1603; interrogation under torture

Immediately said that her confessions had been true. Added that some 18 years before she had been working for Prévôt, and had reproached him because he often rebuked and beat his wife on account of a chambermaid named Margueritte. He beat her, and she then tried to kill him by putting powder in doorway by well, where he usually passed. Did not harm him, but his pregnant wife passed, and was promptly brought to bed of a stillborn child. Had also sought to kill his 17-year-old daughter, partly because she did not treat her well, partly because she had no power

over her father (unclear whether girl died). 7 years earlier she had killed a grandchild of the prévôt by putting powder in apron of wetnurse; bore him grudge because he had chased away her husband, but had no power over him. Had also killed several of his dogs.

Confessed to series of further maléfices against persons, some of them not mentioned in depositions. Motive usually quarrels, after they had prevented her doing something, accused her of theft, etc.

Described hail-making at sabbat, and how their masters carried them up in the air in an attempt to direct clouds over Rozieres. Thought she had seen Jean Degatte's mother-in-law and the widow of Claudon Aubert.

When she would confess no more, was given thumbscrews. Now said her mother had taken her to sabbat when she was 12 or 13, and had there been given in 'marriage' to Romary by Devil. Confessed new series of maléfices. Had killed some of her brother's cows because his first wife was hostile to her. After whole family had moved to Rozieres she killed first husband Nicolas des Bordes because he was a bad manager, and had sold a house and some vines without her knowledge.

Two years before had killed Claudon wife of her brother Nicolas Thiery, because she had been responsible for his imprisonment, after he had cheated when making cloth for Demenge Marchal.

Begged to be released from thumbscrews, and she would tell all she knew. After release made another confession of killing a person, then judges asked if she had never killed any animals at Rozieres. Said she had not, 'et qu'elle n'avoit envye faire mourir aucun bestailz, ains les personnes qui chosoient contre elle'. Asked about accomplices, said she had only seen two already named.

Now racked, and added more names; wife of Olry Go, widow of Claudon le Cuffre, wife of Mengin Lamourou, although could not maintain this definitely. Suggested that first two she had named would be able to tell the judges more. After being taken down said finally 'que lors que le Sr prevost la chassit hors de la ville y a quelque quatre ans, pour la soubconner sorciere, qu'il eut desia beaucoup mieulx vallu et eut bien desiré qu'on fit son proces, et qu'elle a faict beaucoup de mauix depuis, qu'elle n'eut pas faict'.

11 December 1603; Rémy asks for execution by burning alive, since she is guilty of parricide among other crimes.

12 December 1603; Change de Nancy approves

20 December 1603; court at St Nicolas passes definitive sentence that she should be burned alive.