

B 8669 no 2; witch 149, Mengeatte femme Jean Lallemand de l'hopital de St Dié

21 July 1593; information preparatoires

Note that she was commonly called l'Hospiteliere, reputed a witch, and accused by Claudatte Haulte Rolbe of Viel Marché, recently executed.

(1) Claudon Jean, marchal du Viel Marché, 55

Some years earlier heard her and Claudatte quarrelling, and calling one another witch. Had some vines adjoining those belonging to her husband, who encroached by claiming hedge was his; was going to take him to court, but did not dare when neighbours warned him about her reputation.

(2) Claudon Dollemaire, du Viel Marché, 40

General reputation; had heard from late wife about her being called witch and accused of endangering a child by wife of Fleurent Bazelaire.

(3) Georgeatte femme Jean Hardier du Viel Marché, 36

3 or 4 years, knowing her bad reputation, was frightened when she saw her pass on her way back from the fields. Went to light fire, and on kneeling felt pain in knee as if stung by a bee. So painful that she had to call surgeon, but when he lanced swelling it only produced a little blood. Mengeatte asked other women around church about her, then brought her some apples, telling her to eat them and she would recover. After eating them gradually recovered - did not know whether this was the apples or the surgeon.

(4) Anthenatte femme Claudon Jean marchal du Viel Marché, 50

Had helped to nurse late maire Gregoire Myotte during long illness; he believed she had given this, and sent to her for remedies. Sent drinks which he swallowed 'de bon courage', but finally died in belief that she had bewitched him. Thought this had been because as principal farmer for moictresse de l'hopital was obliged to provide a load of wood each week, and was sometimes very late with this.

(5) Fleurent Bazelaire, du Viel Marché, 40

The accused, or late husband, had witnessed baptism of one of his sons; later complained that he never called them godmother or godfather. Child then became strangely ill, always eating, yet with noises in stomach as if a toad were eating his bones. Had to eat several times during night, and he was desperate to find remedy. Mengeatte told his wife to fetch water from river by night and bathe him; since she did not dare go alone agreed to accompany her. Told her to take no notice of anything that happened on way, and performed various 'ceremonies' over water, making sign of cross in different ways. After this child was cured, and she said to his wife 'que comme elle prenoit peine de guerir leur garson, sy pour cela on vouloit dire, qu'elle fut sorciere, que ce luy seroit un grand reproche Ladite sa femme luy respondit que ce seroit bien aultre chose sy toutes les personnes qui se meslent d'apporter quelques remede ez maladies d'aultruy, estoient sorcieres, et soubyroit

disant cela.' Had experienced other misfortunes with his children, in particular one whose legs were twisted. Surgeons wanted to amputate, but his wife promised Mengeatte some oats and took him to her house, from where he returned cured, as he still was, for which he praised God. Said he was forced to suspect she had cured him. Reputed witch more than 15 years; had various misfortunes with animals, but did not know cause.

(6) Catherine femme du precedent, 34

Told of illness of her stepson, who was 10 or 12 when he died. Described use of water as husband had done; after this she told witness it was a collection of worms, and that she should buy 'la morte aux vers' from the apothecary - did this and he recovered completely. Also illness of other child, after refusing her some oats she had asked for; after advice from surgeons sent her some, and sought her opinion. Told them to have a leg made in iron, and make a pilgrimage to St Lienard, while using some 'herbes grasses' to rub the leg. Only followed last part of advice, and he recovered completely in 3 or 4 days.

Told of death of another child, still in cradle, after Mengeatte had come to fetch some cream from house, and been close to it - started to cry immediately after, and continued for 6 months until it died, seeming as if its skull had collapsed, to the astonishment of neighbours who saw it. After birth of another child felt something jump on bed at night, then lost her milk; in morning the child was covered with small marks, which gathered into one large one on a thigh. This was lanced, but child languished miserably for a year and died.

Said she was firmly of the opinion that accused was cause of all her misfortunes, in view of her bad reputation. Would have accused her openly but for her fear that her husband might suffer some harm from husband of accused.

(7) Pierron George du Viel Marché, 40

8 or 9 years earlier, when she was guarding the herd of cattle from Viel Marché, two of his cows were attacked by wolves; one died, and the other was only saved with difficulty. Protested to her about this without losing temper, but when she offered no valid explanation could not prevent himself calling her witch. She replied 'que c'estoit bien peu de cas de cela, et qu'il s'en menoit toutesfois bien mal, mais qu'en bref il verroit bien des aultres choses.' After these threats lost numerous animals, so that he was reduced to poverty; thought this was her doing, and she was generally reputed a witch.

(8) Toussaint Aubertin du Viel Marché, 38

Reputation 12 years. Had called her witch during an argument without any action following. Many people complained of her, but did not personally suspect her, despite losing several animals.

(9) Henry le Saulnier du Viel Marché, 55

No personal suspicion, but long reputation, and many feared her.

(10) Jeanatte femme Colas Colin du Viel Marché, 50

Had sometimes quarrelled with her, and since then they had lost animals worth more than 1000 francs, but did not know if she was cause.

(22 July 1593)

(11) Claudon Dion du Viel Marché, 40

Had found her ringing bell at hospital during bad weather, and called her witch, saying she had no business to ring, and was unworthy to do so. Some days later she reproached him, saying that she knew where to complain if he did it again. Soon after found her ringing again, in presence of her husband, and although he once more called her witch she did nothing, except to reproach him later, saying if he repeated this she would complain to Monsieur l'Escolatre. Since then had lost many animals, and suspected her - long reputation.

(12) Demenge Pajay du Viel Marché, 32

His father-in-law Gregoire Myotte had suspected her of giving him fatal illness, and obtained drinks from her, but unsuccessfully.

(13) Mengeon Parmentier du Viel Marché, 25

Some 2 years before he had been very ill, all swollen so that he could not work. One day when he was in her house he thought of the invalids she had in the hospital, and consulted her. Told him to make pilgrimage to St Curien and drink waters, but this did not do him much good. Approached her again, and she taught him to get water from river by night, unseen by anyone, then turn three times in name of Trinity. After this he was to heat water with certain herbs and to bathe himself. Told him she had used same remedy for boy of Fleurent Bazelaire, but had been thanked for her pains by imputation of witchcraft, as they also said 'chez Dolmaire' and elsewhere. Witness had no suspicion that she had caused his illness.

(14) Catherine femme Nicolas Goury du Viel Marché, 40

Long reputation. Had lost many animals, and did not know if she had caused this; la Haulterobe had already confessed to causing them losses of children and animals, of which they had no previous suspicion.

(15) Marion femme Bastien la Hiere, de St Dié, 23

Gregoire Myotte was her father; had often quarrelled with her about the load of wood he was supposed to take to the hospital every month, and after a quarrel became ill, unable to use hands and feet. All the 'clysteres' and other prescriptions of the surgeons were no help. Her mother-in-law suspected Mengeatte, and since they needed to use any possible method the witness approached her to ask if she knew a cure. Told her to use 'cresson du fontaine et du raisse' to make drink, only taking the cress from her garden. This drink did give him some relief, but then asked for more help, and was recommended to get water from river in her usual fashion. Forbidden to speak - she said it had snowed heavily, so they had to start again. After this she refused to treat him further, saying he intended to have her arrested as a witch if he recovered, and this would be the thanks she would get.

22 July 1593; interrogation

Said she was about 50, wife of Jean Thierry, hospitalier du Viel Marché. Had been married to him some 3 years; first husband was Blaise Francois berger de La Bolle, with whom she had been some 20 years. Native of Sarupt, daughter of Henry Chretien and his wife Jacotte. Had come to Viel Marché when she was 5, and lived for 20 years in house of Dion Chastenoy, then with le maire Hanns and le Grand Cellier.

Asked how she lived during marriage, and if she had not experienced 'quelquefois faim, ou necessité', said she had always lived happily with her husband, and had only ever had one blow from him - always worked hard. Told it was impossible that in 20 years of marriage 'elle n'ait heu quelques cholere, despit, ou courroux avec luy, principalement estantes personnes, de basse estoffe, comme ils sont' - said quarrels had never lasted 2 or 3 days.

Asked about quarrels with neighbours, said only one had been with Fleurent Bazelaire's wife, about ten years before. Told about how she had treated boy (after reproaching stepmother that she was unkind to him and beat him), using technique learned from a woman at Rougeville. Involved taking 3 lots of water from 'rux de St Martin' at dawn, in names of Trinity, adding 'fernaie' and holy water, and making bath. Her reward was to be called witch, although there were no witnesses and she could take no action; they said she had given the sickness then taken it off. Remedy also included taking 'neuf couppons de chandelle' and placing them before first crucifix one found - she did this on their behalf, saying 9 paternosters and 9 ave marias. Agreed she had later told them to get barbotine from apothecary. After saying she did not remember child with twisted legs, then said she had recommended having iron leg made, but this was in honour of God. Asked if child had not subsequently died, replied 'que le bon dieu, envoye bien souvent plusieurs afflictions aux humains, et que ce n'est pas a dire que les humains en soient cause.' Said she knew they blamed her for the afflictions of their children, 'mais, qu'ilz preuvent qu'ainsy soit, et elle aura patience, qu'ilz sont à delivre et elle prise.'

Said that Jean Hardier's wife had been cured by apothecary, having a thorn in her knee. Hardier himself had told her that he suspected Haulterobbe over wife's illness, 'et qu'il n'en faut charger deux personnes.' Denied knowing that she had been accused by la Haulterobe, was then told that this was impossible when 'toute la ville en estoit pleine'; she did not respond to this, except to say that if accused she should have been confronted with her. Denied series of other accusations, and that she had been called witch by anyone other than Bazelaire's wife. Claudon Dion had said a lot of things when drunk, but did not call her witch. Had used same remedy for Mengeon Jean Parmentier; asked if it was good for all illnesses, said this was what she had been told. Was taught it at moulin de la Court, at St Dié, by Collatte Marlier of Rougeville, dead for 7 years.

23 July 1593; confrontations

Judges suggested that remedy, with requirement for night and secrecy, could only have been taught by the devil, called 'prince des tenebres'. She denied this, saying that when someone was on their deathbed widows were often sent on silent pilgrimage, and there was no 'art diabolique' in this. Asked if, as result of keeping animals, she knew means to protect them, said that herdsmen did know such things. Pierron George had not brought his animals in time, so they were not protected - custom was to make sign of cross over herd, and her husband said prayers, but she did not know these.

Made no reproaches to witnesses, but denied those matters she had not already conceded during interrogation. Suggested that Catherine Bazelaire was cause of all her troubles, saying that if she had been wise she would have sought reparation from her. It was not her fault if she treated children badly.

26 July 1593; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

9 August 1593; interrogation under torture

Was suggested to her that remedy must have been taught to her by an evil spirit, not by a person 'ayant la crainte de dieu devant les yeulx.' Was asked whether she had caused deaths of wife, daughter, and son-in-law of Claudon Dollemaire. During preliminary questioning said their own mother might be the cause of the troubles of Fleurent Bazelaire's children. Was then racked. Said treatment she had given Gregoire Myotte had been taught her by a 'fromagier' of St Nicolas. Refused to make any admissions, even when racked a second time - judges noted she was in great pain. At the end said 'qu'elle voit bien qu'elle est desmembrée, qu'on luy appresta a ceste fois une besace [beggar's sack], pour aller mendier son pain, plaidant son pauvre marit.'

Interrogated again without torture 2 hours later, began to waver, saying she did not know if the woman who taught her the remedy might have been an evil spirit. Then said she had been seduced by Persin, when angry over losses of animals 12 years earlier. Had told her she must avenge herself on her enemies. Gave powder to many people, 'mais s'a gardé d'en donner à ses voisins, affin qu'ilz n'ayent occasion de la soubçonner, et la faire prendre.' Had given powder to some beggars, and did not know what had hapened to them; had also used it on Fleurent Bazelaire's children, because his wife was hostile to her, and he tried to strangle her. Also had powder to cure, which she used in some of these cases. When she was afraid to act herself, Persin operated on her behalf, as with Georgeatte and with Gregoire Myotte. Had wanted to cure the latter, but gave up when Persin told her she would not succeed.

Said she had been to sabbat, and had seen Jean Diez and Claudatte Haulterobe, already executed. Then said she had seen le Grand Masson de Molinet and la Grand Commis; were others there, 'mais les Gros et Riches, font ce qu'ilz veullent et se mettent en telle guise qu'ils veullent, y en avoit plusieurs desguisés.'

Asked about deaths of wife and daughter of Claudon Dolemaire, said they had done her much good, but Persin had persuaded her that the wife, despite this 'beau semblant', hated her. She agreed that he could harm them, and although she wanted to cure them could not do so. Then said she had always mocked her, and accused her of being a witch. Had made other daughter ill by giving her piece of bread while praying she might have as much ill as she suspected her of. Asked if she could be cured, said she might try pilgrimage to St Idoult. Also said she had sent her some pears 3 weeks earlier, which she had not eaten - might still do her good, or she could take ashes from her house and 'jouxte' [cabbage] from garden, and keep this in right shoe for 9 days.

Said that Pierron George's animals had been victims of her late husband, who was also a witch, and went to sabbat with her. Agreed that she had thrown powder on horse belonging to Claudon Dion; asked if it would have harmed another if it fell on it, said no, only where it was intended. Said that she had only been to sabat twice. On second occasion there was a multitude of devils, but Persin was the principal. Danced to a 'musette', once led by Jean Diez, the other time by a

devil. Persin was dressed in red and sat in a chair surrounded by many devils, who were black except for their eyes and teeth. Then a cloud separated them and carried them home; some made hail and directed it where they wished.

Saw Jean Diez, le Grand Masson, Pierron d'Orbay de la Bolle. Also Catherine femme Jean Diez, Georgeatte femme Jean Francois de la Bolle, la Grand Commis, Barbeline femme Claudon Anthoine of St Dié, and Claudatte - did not know her name or that of husband. Asked about powder, said there had still been some wrapped in a cloth in bread cupboard.

11 August 1593; interrogation

Was suggested to her that she had implied that at sabbats there were 'plusieurs aultres des grosses de la ville, estantes masquées, et que celles qu'elle a accusé les denommeront, ainsy est à presupposer qu'elle les cognoit bien.' Had also said that if she named them she would be obliged to discharge them later.

Repeated story about bewitching Dollemaire family; said that although she repented of harming his wife, 'n'avoit puissance de la guarir, pour que son Mre Persin y avoit mis la main, et qu'il est par dessus elle, auquel en tout ce qu'il commande, il fault obeyr, autrement il tourmente les personnes, Et par aultres fois, elle fut bien battue de luy, parce que du commencement elle ne vouloit point faire de mal, Et encor, qu'elle eut bien volontiers y apporté du remede, sy est ce que ledit Mre Persin ny voulut rien entendre, sur ses prieres.'

'Quant à l'autre plus jeune fille dudit Dolemaire, Ça elle faict qu'elle luy a donné de ladite pouldre et dont elle est constituée en extremité de maladie, Et ce en desdain, qu'elle ne tenoit compte de sa mere pendant sa maladie, ains jouoit ça et la aultres les aultres enffans, neantmoins ce ne fut pas à intention de la la faire mourir. Elle fit porter des cerises en chez ledit Dolemaire, affin que ladite fille en mengeat. Que sy elle en eut mangé, elle eut esté guarie, par ce qu'il y avoit dessus de la pouldre blanche.

De laquelle maladie, sy ladite jeune fille veult guerir il fault prendre ung filet aussy grande qu'elle, et l'aller offrir a Saint Hidoulf, y faire une neufiesme. Moyennant quoy et par l'intermission du Benoist Saint, elle pourra estre guarie, et que les Benists Saints, quant ils sont bien priés ont moyen de faire beaucoup de soulagemens.

Laquelle recepte, et celle qu'elle nous à ja declairé en son audition precedente, son Mre Persin luy à apprins.'

'Quant ils hayent bien une personne, ilz le font languir et s'ilz ne la hayent pas trop, ilz la font mourir promptement. Que sy une personne porte le mal quarante jours, il n'y a plus moyen d'y donner remede.

Dit qu'il y a encor ung peu de pouldre en sa maison, en l'armoire du pain au desoubz. Toutesfois quant bien on en mangeroit maintenant, elle n'auroit plus de force, des qu'elle est en la main de Justice'

Dolemaire himself had been ill for a long time, but she had never agreed to Persin's demands that she cause him harm because he was 'trop bon homme'. It was Persin's custom to exterminate a whole household once he had started, and he constantly pressed everyone to do harm.

Passed on some things the devil had taught her. Could negate force of holy water by saying 'I take you in the name of the master whom I serve.' Method of protecting household in storms by making cross with holy water in front of fire. A man who could not bring up children should build a bridge in a place where it was difficult to pass, in name of God and St Nicolas, at moment of wife's delivery, then

evil persons would have no power to harm child. A baby could be protected from being seduced by devil as she had been by making cross in cradle with wax from blessed candle at hour of birth.

Claimed she had sometimes wanted to harm prévôt of Saint-Dié, but neither she nor her master had power to harm him because he was 'homme de justice'.

20 August 1593; Change de Nancy asks that she be interrogated again; death sentence if she maintains her confessions.

23 August 1593; confirmed her own confessions, but discharged all those she had accused of being at sabbat.

24 August 1593; execution carried out