

Witch 155, Jehennon Napuel 1

B 8675 no 2; witch 155, Jehennon Napuel, veuve Demenge Mourel de Combrimont

1 June 1595; confrontation between Claudatte femme Simon Colas Toussaint Xailley of Lesseux and those she had accused. Maintained charges against Jenne Napuel of Combrimont, her father Gregoire Mathiel, Jean Gomel and his wife, and Marguittte femme Colas Collacte of Combrimont.

16 June 1595; informations preparatoires

(1) Jean George de Combrimont

Had known her for 20 years, had never seen ill in her nor heard her reputed as witch.

(2) Demenge Michiel de Combrimont, 40

Had known her for 30 years. Some 8 or 9 days before, when at Lusse for execution of a witch, had heard Valentin Micqua of Quebrux say that one day Jehenne had asked for alms at his house, but was turned away by his wife, who said she was begging but had means to support herself, which made her angry. Shortly afterwards wife had leg trouble, and asked him to get Jehenne to cure her; he called her witch and threatened to kill her if she did not heal his wife, to which she replied that he should have patience and she would recover, as she did.

(3) Claudette femme Jean Didier le Marchal de Combrimont, 30

Had known her a long time, and had often lodged her in house from charity, without seeing any harm in her. Had only heard her suspected as witch over past 5 or 6 weeks.

(4) Claudette veuve Demenge le Marchal de Combrimont, 50

Previous winter they had quarrel over debt of a franc, and Jehenne had said 'Hola, je feray du tintamaire', after which she had animals ill. Asked if she believed this was her witchcraft, said no. Had often kept company with her and lodged her, seeing no ill in her. Added that her daughter Collocte had also had a cow sick, and when bringing it to drink said she wished it were dead; Jehenne comforted her, saying 'tais toy, elle garira, moyennant Dieu', after which cow gradually recovered.

(5) Barbelline femme Girardin Didier Girardin de Combrimont, 40

Some six years before Jehenne's son Marck had spent a year in their service; had dispute with mother when he left because she withheld a shirt from his pay against a fault he had committed, and she said they would

repent. Was not aware of any misfortune, unless it were that some 18 months later one of their children fell ill and had proved incurable despite pilgrimages and other measures. Had only heard her reputed witch very recently.

(6) Collocte fille Demenge Didier le Marchal de Combrimont, 18

Told story of sick cow and remark Jehenne made to her; no disputes, and had only heard her reputed witch since recent accusation.

(17 June 1595)

(7) Barbelline femme Valentin Micqua de Quebrux, 50

Told how some 8 years before Jehenne had come to her door begging, when she was hurrying to go to mass, and she had told her to come back another time. Was angry, although she used no threats, and then had trouble with a leg, which lasted 15 or 16 weeks; tried to get Jehenne to come to house, but although she was always around villages begging she avoided their house as much as possible. When they finally saw her she fled, but husband caught her and threatened her that he would kill her on the spot if she did not heal his wife; asked him to have patience and she would be healed. Promptly started to recover, although did not know how since she had not come to house, and believed she had given her the illness.

(8) Valentin Micqua de Quebrux, 56

Told similar story to his wife; said he had taken an axe and threatened her, but had only caught up with her outside village. According to him wife had refused alms because she thought Jehenne had sufficient means to support herself.

(9) Nicolas Jean Martin de Combrimont, 40

Had never hear her suspected as witch until now.

Some 19 other witnesses appeared, but were not examined individually (although named); all agreed that she had never been reputed a witch until present rumour began.

17 June 1595; confronted with Gregoire Mathiel, who maintained his accusation that he had seen her at sabbat and danced with her.

23 June 1595; interrogation

Said she was aged about 60, native of Bertrimoutier, daughter of Demenge Napuel and his wife Marion. Father was laboureur; were six

children, of whom only she and her brother Demenge Napuel, living at Raves, now survived. Had been married 42 years before to Demenge Mourel of La Croix aux Mines; had three sons, of whom only survivor was Marc, now manouvrier at Sainte Marie aux Mines. Had been widow some 22 years, and had always lived at Bertrimoutier and Cambrimont, except when she was around the villages begging.

Had quarrelled some 3 years earlier with wife of Colas Martin of Combrimont, who accused her of stealing some clothes; real thief later executed at Val de Viller. Had been called larronesse, ribaulde, et meschante femme, but not witch. Around same time had also been in dispute with Barbelline femme Girardin Didier Girardin, who was angry because Jehenne had been employed on day work with husband when she felt preference should have gone to her; called her 'meschante femme' and said she should go and live in village of which she was native. Agreed that her son Marc had served Barbelline some 17 years earlier, and that there had been quarrel over shirt - reason for keeping it back was that a small tree had been broken by animals he was guarding. She had lost her child subsequently because she had taken family to Val de Viller despite knowing that there was plague there.

Agreed to dispute with Valentin Micqua, although in her version it was much gentler; he had accused her, but she had denied it, and he went away. Judges said this was implausible, since he was a robust and courageous man, and she then agreed that he had threatened to cut off her arm or leg if she were cause of illness.

Only explanation she could offer for accusation by Gregoire Mathiel was that some 6 months earlier he had told her off when finding her with some dead wood taken from hedges.

24 June 1595; confrontations

No results, and she made no reproaches against witnesses.

2 July 1595; Rémy asks for torture

3 July 1595; Change de Nancy agrees

5 July 1595; interrogation under torture

Withstood long interrogation, then thumbscrews, finally started to confess after some time on rack. Said she had been seduced 3 years earlier; apart from Gregoire Mathiel and his daughter, those present were the wife of Colas Collatte, her serorge named la Petermatte, and 'la bouchiere de Visembach'. Her master was called Persin, and had given her powder - varied over colour.

After being released said she had been seduced 20 years before, when as widow she was begging and very hungry and cold. Master had intercourse with her, gave her money which turned out to be 'escailles de verre'. Now said powder was white and black (to kill people and animals),

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or reddish grey to cure. Admitted having made Barbelline Micqua ill, then healed her. Had made Collatte's cow sick, later curing it, and had also used powder on horse of Colas Babillon of Neufvillers, who had said she could go the devil because she came too often.

Later same day confirmed confessions without torture; judges suggested that if she had been a witch so long she must have committed more maléfices, but she confessed none.

6 July 1595; interrogation

Confirmed confessions of previous day.

8 July 1595; Rémy asks for death sentence

8 July 1595; Change de Nancy agrees

11 July 1595; interrogation

When court visited her to pass sentence said she was not a witch, and withdrew previous confessions. Said they could put her to death by any means they liked, but banging hands on knees asked that she should not be burned, and that she should be buried in consecrated ground.

22 July 1595; Rémy asks that she be tortured anew

22 July 1595; Change de Nancy approves

No further documents on her case