

Witch 161, Claudatte Saulcy 1

Witch 161; B8677 no 7, Claudatte veuve Estienne Jean Saulcy, d'Entre-deux-Eaux

28 October 1596; informations preparatoires taken by St. Dié court against Claudatte widow of Estienne Jean de Saulcy, d'Entre-deux-Eaux.

(1) Jean Gerard d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 29

Long reputation. Claimed that about 10 years earlier, going out to reap an hour before dawn, he had seen two women with a great black dog; he approached them, but was suddenly very frightened, and the women and dog fled towards monctain. Had not known other woman, but did identify Claudatte, who kept no dog or other animal, and lived on alms. About a year earlier she had been to beg at his door (not clear whether with success), and according to his brothers passed her hand along back of a pig, which afterwards became ill. He suspected she had bewitched it, and when she returned to beg next Sunday gave her bread and lard, while asking her to see pig. She passed her hand over its back again, and it immediately recovered.

(2) Francois Mareschal d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 60

Long reputation. Some 3 weeks earlier had heard her say 'que le bruict courroit que l'on la vouloit apprehender pour une sorciere, mais que sy on la prenoit pour telle l'on en prendroit encor bien d'autres'.

(3) Mengeon Jean le Roueyr jeune fils d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 34

Said that 10 years before he and one Henry (now living at St. Margarée) went to see execution of 3 witches of Moyennoustier. On return were talking of them and harm they had done, when Claudatte, who was one of those present, disputed with them, saying there were no witches. He and his companion had been talking of going to village feast a few days later, but Claudatte said 'qu'ilz auroient peut-estre autre chose à faire', touching him on shoulder. Immediately taken with a strange illness, with pains in legs, in which 18 holes appeared oozing something black as ink, which burned him; this lasted 2 or 3 weeks before he recovered. About 18 months earlier his uncle Vincent le Rouyer, maire of village, had been very ill, and believed that Claudatte had bewitched him. During illness she came to house and spoke with his daughter Benite (aged in her twenties), going around house with her for long time. As she left Benite became as if demented, her eyes turned strangely, and they had to take hold of her to prevent her injuring herself. Would not eat, and said nothing but 'Jesus' two times; died in 18 hours. His uncle died some 3 weeks later, and household suspected she was cause.

(4) Demenge fils de Dedier Grand Colin d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 25

His late mother had often told him that she feared Claudatte might cause her some illness, in view of her reputation as a witch. About three years ago in the church at Easter Claudatte had gone to sit next to his mother, and had caught hold of her shoulder, apparently to save herself falling. His mother felt a great pain around her heart, and was forced to take to her bed on return home. Was ill from Easter to St. Remy; around latter time Claudatte came to house on 4 consecutive days. His father asked her what she sought, and when she said she came to see her 'commere' (he had called her witch already) he said she should cure her if she could. otherwise

she could go to all the devils. She left without saying a word; his mother started to get much worse, and died the third day afterwards. Had heard from Gregoire Jean Don that as he accompanied her from the sick woman's chamber, and made sympathetic remark, she replied angrily; 'Qu'elle n'avoit rien que ce qu'elle avoit meritée'.

Also told how some 7 years earlier his brother Colas, now married at Scanrux, had taken his hat off in their house, saying it was very hot; Claudatte passed her hand over his head from back to forehead, and also said it was very hot. Same hour he became ill with great pain in head, and was unable to work for 7 weeks. Had suspected this to be her witchcraft.

(5) Mengeotte femme de Vincent Jeandey d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 30

Some 9 years before Claudatte had asked her brother Jean for some milk; he had replied that it was no good asking him, as he did not have the 'gouvernement' of the milk. She told him he would repent, and same day he fell ill, with great pains throughout his body, and died in 8 days.

A year ago last Easter her sister Benite had died, and the same day Claudatte asked another sister, Colatte, for one of her chemises. She promised it, but before it could be given they had to move their property to the church because a company of soldiers was coming to lodge in the village. As she was taking the goods to the church Colatte became ill, with a headache which spread to the rest of her body, and died three weeks later. During illness maintained constantly that Claudatte had given it to her because she had not given her the garment as promised.

Reputation as long as she could remember; had heard her say 'Que sy elle estoit sorciere c'estoit à faulte de pretres'.

(6) Jehenne femme a Dieudonne Jean Laurent d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 30

Told how 10 years earlier she and her mother had suspected Claudatte of causing illness of a pig which had lost use of back legs; gave her bread and persuaded her to see animal. She passed a little baton she always carried three times over its back, saying 'que ledit porc gueriroit de par Dieu' - it started to recover same day. Long reputation.

(7) Jehenne femme a Colin Dieudonne d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 35

Had heard the late Claudey Laulney claim several times, and maintain until death, that Claudatte had caused him to go blind. Had heard her say 'Que sy elle estoit sorciere cela ne provenoit de sa faulte mais plustost du prebtre qui ne l'auroit pas bien baptisée'.

(8) Marion femme a Claudon le Masson d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 40

A year ago at last harvest she and Claudatte were reaping for Claude Vincent, and she developed leg trouble. Was in great pain for all next year, until her friends advised her to speak to Claudatte (against whom she had some suspicion) and ask her to cure her. When she did so Claudatte told her to have patience a little longer and she would recover - was cured immediately. Long reputation.

(9) Barbelline femme a Dieudonne Jean de la Gotte de Mandray, c. 40

Some 4 or 5 years before her daughter and Claudatte's son had been guarding animals together, and during a quarrel she called him 'fils de genoux'. A few days later she became ill with an abscess on her side, which could not be cured for 2 years, although they spent a lot of money. At end of this time Claudatte came to house unasked, and asked to see the girl; told her to be patient and she would soon be cured. Within a fortnight the abscess healed of itself, which made her suspect Claudatte of having caused it in the first place. Long reputation.

(10) Jean Viole d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 50

Some 14 years earlier Claudatte had told him off roundly because his pigs did some damage in her garden. Some days later he went to her house to make the 'queste' for 'le prescheur St. Humbert'. She touched him along the length of his face, and as he left he felt a pain between the shoulders, same day had to go to bed, and within two days became blind, as he still was. Had been ill for about a year, and suspected Claudatte - long reputation.

(11) Jean George Lulney d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 60

Some 6 years earlier he had been cutting down an oak when it slightly damaged the roof of Claudatte's house; she was furious and told him he would repent. Within less than a fortnight he lost a cow worth 10 ecus. After another dispute 3 years ago had lost a foal and three pigs. Around same time was ill and bedridden for 6 weeks; Claudatte came to house unbidden, and told him he would not die, but would soon be cured. Began to recover same day, and was better in a week. Believed Claudatte had caused all this; reputation more than 26 years.

(12) Marion veuve de Jean Demenge Lienard d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 40

Reputation more than 25 years. Reported remark about fault of priest, made some 2 years earlier.

(13) Didier Grand Colin d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 50

Told of his wife's illness 3 years before; when Claudatte came to see her she asked her either to cure her or to put her out of her misery. Claudatte said there was no way of curing her now, because she had been ill too long. At this point he had told her that she should cure his wife, or 'qu'elle s'en aille a tous les diables'. Also told of his son's illness after she had touched his head, and of remark about priest.

(14) Dieudonne Jean de la Gotte de Mandray, c. 50

Reputation more than 30 years. Told of his daughter's illness, although he put this 7 or 8 years back. Claudatte had advised them to offer a candle-end to St. Martin in the church of Mandray; after this was done the girl recovered in a fortnight.

(15) Jehenne femme a Claude Gabourel d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 28

At last Whitsun, when she had been pregnant, Claudatte had asked her for an 'escuelle' of butter and some wood; she refused, just giving her enough butter for a soup. Some 2 weeks later felt birth pains coming on, and summoned relatives and friends, but forgot to ask Claudatte. Labour lasted 2 days, so that the 'balle' of

women surrounding her had to leave. Finally thought to ask Claudatte, and gave birth as soon as she arrived - but child died.

(16) Marguitte femme a Claude Vincent d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 46

General reputation. Some 11 years before she had given some nuts to her small son in the street, and he then became ill, dying 4 weeks later. Towards the end she came to see him, and said 'ce que Dieu y avoit mis y estoit encore'. She and her husband had always suspected her of causing his death.

(17) Marion vouve de Colas Henry d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 64

About a year before Claudatte had come to ask for alms, offering her two pears. She gave to her, and took the pears, but did not want to eat them because of her suspicions against Claudatte. Put them on a bench; dog ate them, and was ill for 6 weeks, refusing to eat. Long reputation.

(18) Demenge Mathis d'Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 30

Long reputation. Some 6 weeks before she had been to collect 5 gros he owed her, and had spoken of rumour that villages wanted to have her arrested; if she was it was the fault of the priests, and Jean Blaise 'en scavoit autant qu'elle'.

29 October 1596; interrogation

Said she was Claudatte, daughter of Jacquemin Henry Finance of Mandray and his wife Mengeotte. Was aged about 70; 48 years before had married Estienne Jean de Saulcy of Entre-deux-Eaux, with whom she had lived for 24 years, and since then had been a widow. His death had left her charged with 9 children. Had supported herself by day labour and by alms; as soon as her children were old enough they had gone to seek work in Allemaigne, where most of them were married.

Admitted she was suspected as a witch. After hesitation, said 'Que sy elle a esté tentée de l'ennemy, sa esté par colère et mauvaises pensées', and then admitted that 23 years before, soon after her husband's death, she had been ill in bed when two men dressed in black like priests appeared in room where she was alone. They made her promises, and wanted to have her 'cresme', but she refused, even when they offered her money.

Was then interrogated about specific charges. Denied most claims, but made a few minor admissions. Had touched Didier Grand Colin's wife in church, and had been to see her on four successive days, but denied being asked to heal her. Agreed she had asked for chemise which she had not received, although promised it. Had made remark that if she were a witch it was the fault of the priests (did not explain this). Had been to see Dieudonne de la Cotte's child. Had given 2 pears to Marion Henry, but meant no harm.

30 October 1596; interrogation and confrontations

Repeated story about two men in black, then agreed that she had been tempted and abused by them, although claiming that they had not taken her 'cresme'. Questioned further, ultimately said 'que sy elle est sorciere sa esté par mauvaise tentation'; after hesitating admitted receiving powder from the men, one of whom

had been called Mre Persin. She had killed a horse belonging to Jean George Laulney with it, some 20 years before, but had not committed other malefices.

Was then confronted with witnesses. Made no significant admissions at this stage, but when questioned about comment regarding Jean Blaise said that about 4 weeks earlier she had been alone with him in his house, and he had said 'que on parloit de les prendre pour sorciers et sur ce il jura que sy on le prenoit il n'accuseroit jamais elle detenue, surquoy elle fit response qu'il falloit seulement dire la verité.' Pressed to say whether she had been to sabbat, finally admitted that she had, about 22 years earlier. Usual description of dancing and feasting, but added that Mre Percin had intercourse with her in the form of a man. Now admitted that she had caused Jean Viole's blindness, by calling on her master to make him blind, which he had done. There had been about a dozen witches at sabbat, but only one she knew was Jean Blaise.

4 November 1596; procureur d'office for chapter proposes that she be tortured with moderation suitable to her age, to obtain full confession.

5 November 1596; Change de Nancy agrees

7 November 1596; interrogation under torture

In preliminary interrogation admitted temptation - the men promised her money, and knowing her poverty she accepted, but they vanished without giving her any. Repeated confession to two malefices as before, but would say no more until she heard the order for the torture given, when she confessed killing the wife of Didier Grand Colin, who had called her witch. As she would make no further admissions, was placed on rack, and started to confess other malefices as suggested by victims; after first few was given half a turn on rack, and continued confessing. Nothing surprising in these. Now said she had been to sabbat more often than she could remember; apart from Jean Blaise Laisney, had seen la Grande Catellon of Mandray (perhaps Catellon Jean Colin) and Jehenne wife of Claude Didier Martin of Mandray (daughter of Jean Babey of Mandray, already executed).

8 November 1596; interrogation

Claudatte repeats confessions made previous day.

11 November 1596; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

13 November 1596; Change de Nancy agrees, subject to her being reinterrogated in another place without duress.

15 November 1596; interrogation

Again repeated confessions. 'Et prie pour l'honneur dieu qu'on la fasse mourir le plustost qu'il sera possible pour le salut de son ame, et qu'elle voudroit qu'il ny ait plus de sorciers ny sorcieres au monde, qu'elle soit la derniere Affin que les biens de dessus la terre viennent a plus grand perfection qu'ils ne sont, et que tant et sy longtemps qu'il y en aura que ce sera un grand malheur pour le pauvre peuple. Et sur ce a prié d'avoir un bon confesseur pour faire le salut de son ame, et prie a tout ceulx qu'elle a offencés de luy vouloir pardonner.'

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19 November 1596; sentence carried out.