

Witch 166, Mongeatte de la Woeuvre 1

B 8677 no 12; witch 166, Mongeatte veuve Jacques de la Woeuvre, de St Blaise

Accused by Jehenne femme Demenge le Maire, of la Chapelle.

25 November 1596; informations preparatoires

(1) Claudon Biberat, 38

Reputation 1 year.

(2) Fleurence femme du precedent, 40

Reputation 6 years.

(3) Jean Bresson, 24

Reputation 6 or 7 years; had heard she put a toad under animals to take away parasites.

(4) Valentin Jean Andreu, 30

Reputation 6 years.

(5) Demenge le Clerc, 30

Suspected she had caused loss of a cow 4 years earlier, after dispute over payment of her son for looking after village animals. Also suspected her over loss of a calf 3 years earlier, because while they searched for it she told chambermaid they were wasting their time, and it was lost. Reputation 6 years.

(6) Barbe veuve Jean Curien, 35

2 years earlier had been incident in church of Moyenmoutier at Easter, when Mengeotte made difficulties over taking host, and had to be given some wine by priest before she completed this. Previous week had heard from sister-in-law of accused that when husband sold some property to his brother she was very angry, went alone at night to their house at Raon, and said that if she was a witch he would be cause.

(7) Noelle femme Adrian le Parmentier, 30

Suspected her of causing death of a cow 6 years earlier, when guarding animals of village. Around same time had been devin in house of Mengeon Bourald, who identified her as cause of his death. A few days before her arrest had told her about putting toad under animals for vermin. Witness had found a small bottle in field of accused previous year - she said it contained holy water.

(8) Janne femme Claudon Curien, 30

8 years before had been doing day work for accused with wife of Nicolas Lallemand, when they saw large toad in field; witness was going to kill it, but accused arrived, said these animals were good, and caught it with her scarf before taking it away in a pot.

(9) Thoussainct Chappelle, 40

Reputation 6 years.

(10) Nicolas Clerc, 30

Suspected her over loss of a horse 6 years earlier, when it was her turn to drive them into fields, and of an ox 5 years earlier, after she had remarked they were eating well.

(11) Jean de la Woeuvre, 40

No deposition recorded.

(26 November 1596)

(12) Idoult Jean Martin, 27

Reputation 5 years; had heard about devin and Mongeon Bourald. Also story about difficulties with host at Easter - priest said he had never seen anything of kind, and witness 'presume qu'elle estoit empeschée de l'ennemy sy elle est telle'.

(13) Claudon Piernille, 50

Reputation 6 years, story about devin.

(14) Claudon Curien, 40

Reputation 6 years, also told story about devin, with detail that he had said the first woman to enter the house would be the one who had given the illness.

(15) Adrian Idoult Jean Martin, 30

Had lost a cow 5 years earlier, and suspected her, since she was always complaining about how he kept the village animals.

(16) Jean Hanry, 25

2 weeks earlier she had told him that a man had been in her house who taught her various remedies for illnesses of animals, including use of first toad one found. This should be put among animals, so that 'aussy tost la poison attire l'autre et regarder combien il vindroit'. When she found one she hung it beneath animals

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for 5 days or more. She had also said that after betrothal feast of Bourald's daughter she heard she was blamed for his death, with the widows of Colas Noisatte and Chrestaille.

(17) Jacquat Adam, 55

General reputation, and story about devin.

(18) Jennon veuve Colas Bresson, 40

2 years earlier had heard the late Jenon Noisatte call her witch, saying her pig was going to die; Mengeotte later told witness she was not a witch. Reputation 6 years.

(19) Jennon veuve Colas Lallemand, 40

Story about toad in fields some 10 years earlier. Also story about host at Easter, and occasion 6 years before when witness was returning from Moyenmoutier with husband of accused. She suddenly appeared, and he suggested she had come from being with the devil. Long reputation.

(20) Georgeatte femme Valentin Chapelle, 24

General reputation.

(21) Babillon femme Hanry Jean Hanry, 40

Reputation since death of Mongeon Bourald. Previous year witness and other labourers broke bottle in her field, and she was angry, saying it contained holy water and 'pougnérons St Curien'.

(22) Claudatte femme Nicolas le Clerc, 30

Suspected her of causing 2 cows to lose milk 3 years earlier, when she did not go to work for her as she had promised, also over serious illness in current year which lasted 2 months.

(23) Catherine femme Mongeon de la Woeuvre, 28

A few days before her arrest told her that if she was arrested she should look behind fireplace, where she would find a Good Friday egg, some wax, holy water and holy bread - these had been for fire. Also told her about using toads against vermin, and how she had once had two beneath animals.

(24) Babillon femme Jean Bresson, 17

During illness of her father Mongeon Bourald 6 or 7 years before a devin had come to their house, and said that a neighbour was cause of his illness; since accused

was nearest neighbour she suspected her. Also told how Anthoinette daughter of accused (now married) had told her 6 years earlier how witches attacked babies in their cradles when mothers were not watching, so that they died, then dug up their bodies to make powder.

(25) Sebille femme Idoult le Parmentier, 26

Reputation 6 years.

(26) Claudatte fille Jacquat Adam, 18

Told how 4 years before, reaping oats for accused, she found a 'potat' in field, containing water, small candles, 'des pampies et du jolis bois'. When she told Mengeotte about it she said it was holy water and candles of St Curien as well as other items, and it was to prevent vermin attacking the crop. Also told of bottle of holy water which had been broken that year. Reputation 6 years.

(27) Marion fille Jean Hanry, 20

Also told of bottle being broken; said Mengeotte laughed about it, saying her husband had put it there.

(28) Valentin Chapelle, 30

Reputation 7 years.

(29) Jennon femme François de Veze, de Moyenmoutier, 43

When she lived at St Blaise had heard Mongeon Bourald's widow say several times that accused was cause of husband's death, claiming that 2 devins had identified her.

(30) Venerable et religieuse personne Domp Jean de Triollier, prieur de Moyenmoutier, 52

6 or 7 years before had visited Mongeon Bourald and exhorted him to think of his soul; latter said that Mengeotte had been with him an hour before, and told him to confess because he must die. Had only just left house when he was called back to witness death - she was present holding candle for him. Also suspected her over death of horse 4 years earlier - she met him on way back from Raon and admired the horse, touching its back, and it died same day.

(31) Claudatte femme Colas Valtin, de Moyenmoutier, 27

7 years before had been in house of Mongeon Bourald, who told her the devin had said his nearest female neighbour was cause of illness; had also shown him her daughter, saying she was daughter of the person responsible. He was all swollen, but seemed a little better, and went out to house of accused, 'pensant de

deffendre du mal', but immediately became worse, and when devin arrived he told him he should not go there. He then died. Some 18 months earlier accused had told her that the first time cows drank from the trough was when evil persons had the power to take their milk, so the herdsman should say nothing when he came with his animals.

25 November 1596; interrogation

Said she was about 54, native of la Neufville-les-Raon, daughter of Jean and Anthoinette Petit, and had been married some 34 years earlier to Jacques de la Woeuvre. Knew she was suspected of witchcraft, but they did her wrong.

At first said she did not know when suspicions began, but under pressure (told she knew well she had been suspected for 15 years) said 'que par sa bonté elle est réputée telle'. 6 years earlier had often gone to help her neighbour Mongeon Bourald, but then a devin called Thoussainct came to house. Husband came back and said to her 'Mongeatte voila ung devin au logis dudit Bourald, lequel dict que demain la premiere femme qui entrera du matin en chez eulx que que c'est celle que luy at eu donné sa maladie'. Next day she did not want to go to house, but husband finally persuaded her to do so - she often went as much as 7 times a day. That day no-one else went at all; she saw devin, who said it was 'fait de genoxerie'. She had said to others that he was going to die, but meant no harm by this. During illness he said 'que c'estoient toutes genaxes qui estoient alentour de luy'; as he died she held candle between his hands as a good neighbour.

Explained incident with host; priest saw he had given her two, and tried to get one out of her mouth with his finger, but was unable to do so, and finally gave her some wine.

Agreed that husband had sold some land to his brother 14 years earlier, but denied going to protest.

Said that she had always been willing to find herbs for sick animals when asked, and had also helped women when she attended them as midwife of village.

6 or 7 years before one named Jean Huat, who had been begging in her house, told her she should take the first toad she found and put it under her animals 'et que le venin et poison attire l'autre'. Had done this twice in successive years, around 6 years earlier, since when she had suffered no misfortune with her animals. Soldiers had thrown them away 2 years earlier; Huat was a vagabond who had been with the 'sarracins'. When taking toad one had to say 'bestes je te leve au nom du pere et du fils et du St esprit', making sign of cross and saying 5 paternosters and ave marias; also had to avoid kneeling as one picked them up.

Agreed that she had put the bottle with holy water and candles in field at Easter that year - did not know exactly what it did, but had seen elders do likewise.

(26 November 1596) Said that 6 year earlier Claudatte veuve Chrestaille had warned her that they were accused of causing death of Mongeon Bourald, with Jennon veuve Colas Bresson. Had heard that during his illness he said it was impossible she could be a witch, but the devin said she had only been such for 6 months. Asked why she did not seek reparation, said 'qu'elle estoit peu fine, qu'elle ne pouvoit se venger a cause qu'elle ne pensoit aux affaires, mesme qu'elle estoit bien nette'.

As for other 'potat' found 4 years earlier, her husband had been responsible for that, and she did not know what it was about, except for protecting field.

Admitted that during illness of Mongeon Bourald she sometimes 'l'engraissoit'; at that time he was not very ill, but stomach sometimes became swollen at night.

Had heard from old women that when cows came back to village witches used cords to get their milk the first time they went to the trough.

Continued to deny all charges.

28 November 1596; confrontations

No results; did not reproach witnesses, denied all charges.

28 November 1596; procureur asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

30 November 1596; Change de Nancy approves, with moderation suitable to her age.

4 December 1596; was confronted with Jehenne femme Demenge le maire of la Chapelle, who maintained accusation that she had seen her at sabat.

5 December 1596; interrogation under torture

Started to confess when given thumbscrews. Had been seduced by Parsin when on way to Raon 7 years earlier. No explanation given, but persuaded her to renounce God. Given money (oak leaves) and powder to harm men and animals when she was at enmity with anyone. Used this in soup she gave Mongeon Bourald, whom she hated because he did her harm and was always angry with her.

Had killed horse of prior, because he was hostile to her 'et qu'il doubtoit les genaxes'. Killed cow of Adrian le Parmentier, which had hurt one of her own, and calf of Mongeon le Clerc, who would not help her husband with carting. Killed child of Nicolas le Clerc, after dispute because she did not assist his wife as midwife.

Killed a cow of Jean Chapelle, who had assigned a horse she had kept back to the soldiers. Had made Jehenne femme Mongeon Noixatte ill, because she gave her a bad name, but then felt sorry and cured her with white powder in soup.

Repeated story of seduction; Parsin had seemed like a gentleman, had gone back to house and spent night with her. Made a pact to give him black hen every year to be exempt from sabat - was anxious not to be there when she was needed for duties as midwife.

Then admitted she had been at sabat twice. Saw Claudatte Noixatte, veuve Chrestaille, of St Blaise, Claudatte femme Claudon de St Remy in ban d'Etival, Barbeline la Bertrichauve veuve Richard Colas des Mailles, de Raon, Jehenne Rocte femme Micquel Marchal du faulbourg de Raon, and Zabel femme Jean Paticier de Raon. Danced to sound of flute, and ate 'tripes de boeuf' with white or black bread, beat water to make rain, which prevented haymaking.

Added name of Nicolle Brandecq femme Jean Gerardin, of la Neufville-les-Raon, to those she had seen. Named some of same women as present at second sabat, but now discharged Claudatte Noixatte. Others present were masked.

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Confirmed confessions later same day .

6 December 1596; confirmed confessions again.

8 December 1596; procureur asks for death sentence

10 December 1596; Change de Nancy approves, subject to reaffirmation of confessions without any threat of torture.

12 December 1596; confirmed that earlier confessions had been true. Trial was then read out to her in presence of inhabitants of ban.

13 December 1596; sentence carried out