

Witch 182, Georgeatte Pelisson 1

B 8682 no 4; witch 182, Georgeatte fille Jean Pelisson, de Moriviller

12 February 1598; informations preparatoires

(1) Mengeatte femme Mengeat Marchand, 30

3 years earlier her daughter Marie, aged 16, was guarding horses when Georgeatte called her to get a bird's nest on a willow. Found birds were still too small, so left them, but fell out of tree; no apparent injury, but later head became twisted and she could not speak properly. Remained in this state, getting worse, for more than 6 months, until husband of witness said in hearing of Georgeatte's stepmother that if the girl did not recover soon 'il feroit des choses bien ou mal faictes' - did this deliberately so that she should be told. Same evening girl recovered voice, asked for soup, and drank two plates full, making complete recovery within a few days. Had always suspected Georgeatte, who had always been reputed witch since execution of her mother 10 or 12 years earlier.

(2) Jean Grand Jean, 36

Reputation since execution of mother. Over last 10 years had lost 3 children very young, without suspecting her, but 6 weeks earlier had lost another fine baby, and remark she made on way back from burial caused them to suspect her. This seems to have been that if they had 100 children they would not succeed in bringing up one.

(3) Thoussainct Gomay

Had been nearest neighbour of father for 9 years, and had lost animals to value of at least 100 francs every year; some as if rabid, others with muzzles rotting or as if burned. Only one healed had been a large pig with twisted neck, after he said in deliberately loud voice outside their house that if it did not recover he would do things that would still be talked of in a hundred years. Reputation 9 or 10 years; if she were not brought to justice soon he would have to leave his house. Only reasons for her to cause losses were envy, of fact that when he first came to house he had quarrelled with her father and given him good beating.

(4) Demenge Lienard, jeune fils

After occasion when he seems to have had fright and ignored her, went same evening to sit by her and speak pleasantly to her - but she did not respond in friendly manner as she usually did, saying nothing at all. Became alarmed that she might do him harm, and wished to be far away, then felt ill throughout body. Had to go to bed immediately, and remained ill for 6 weeks, 'sec comme bois'. Georgeatte was summoned 'soubz main' to come and see him with other girls; when she did so he took a poker and gave her a few light blows (since he was so weak), calling her witch and threatening to kill her if she did not heal him. She said nothing, but same evening he began to recover, and was soon totally healed - believed she had caused illness, general reputation.

(5) Claudette femme Jean Grand Jean

Believed she was cause of death of children; reputation since execution of mother.

(6) Zabel veuve Jean Ferry, 60

3 years earlier her daughter Ydatte quarrelled with Georgeatte, immediately after which the witness had strange illness, losing use of limbs and becoming as if possessed. Finally daughter complained to accused that but for mother's illness she would have been able to go to fête at Benamesnil where aunt lived. Replied that she should not get so upset over small things, and that her mother would not die; immediately went to house, sat by bed and said many paternosters, then murmured something between teeth. Witness suddenly recovered, and had always thought she had given her the illness - long reputation.

(7) Cuguin

Had called her and her father witch, and only response was to say he did her great wrong, as they had already done her mother. Soon after son aged 10 fell ill, with stomach blue and swollen, and died after 3 months. Always suspected she had bewitched him - long reputation.

(8) Colin Menginot, de la moictresse de Relecourt, 55

Previous harvest time she had been helping to tie sheaves for Colas Brouvelant, when horses of witness got among them, and she chased them off with a fork, striking one a single blow. Horse then fell down within 2 hours, later started to behave so wildly that he would have had to shoot it if it had not died. Had always suspected this was her witchcraft - long reputation.

(9) Idatte fille de feu Didier Guerry (mother was Jean Ferry's widow, witness 6), 24

2 years before had quarrel with accused, because she came into their house uninvited on feast day. Followed by mother's illness, which lasted for 3 weeks, and cure as described by mother in her deposition.

(10) Marguitte fille de feu Demenge Vicair

Told of occasion on a Sunday when she was dancing with other girls, and a young male servant came and danced with her (this was Jean, servant to maire Galand). Georgeatte glared at her in way which made it plain she was angry, so that she wished she had never seen him, and was frightened of vengeance she might take. At moment she thought this felt something prick her behind ear, then pain spread to throat, and she had to take to her bed, unable to speak properly. Remained in this state for a week, everyone thought she was dying, and she vomited up nut-sized lumps of something like flax, with terrible smell. Other girls begged accused to come and see her; eventually she did so, and lay down beside her without touching her or saying a word. Started to feel better immediately, and was out working in vines next day. Had always believed this was her doing - long reputation.

(11)

Apparently brother of previous witness, testifying to her illness.

(12) Thiebault Vicaire, maire de Moriviller, 30

2 years earlier his sister Catherine, of marriageable age, fell ill with strange malady, crying night and day to God and the saints to help her. This lasted 2 years, and finally he asked her how she had come to be ill; she said she was sure Georgeatte had bewitched her, in envy of fact that a young man, servant of maire Colas of Derleycourt, was making love to her, and she had tried everything to attract him herself. Asked him to get accused to come and see her - then he asked her, she said she wished all those who came to ask her to visit the sick 'fussent crevez' - then he called her witch, threatening to beat her, kill her, or have her burned if she did not cure his sister, but latter died a week later. Insisted to last that Georgeatte had bewitched her; common reputation.

(13) Mengeat Boulengier, 40

3 years earlier his daughter Marye had small dispute with accused, after which she fell very ill, and they suspected she was bewitched. After several months his brother-in-law, le maire Colas Phelippe, said loudly so that stepmother of accused could hear that if she was not cured in a few days he would do things that would still be spoken of in a hundred years. (Rest is missing)

(14) Le maire Dieudonné Galand, 55

Accused had always wished him ill, since he had been one of principal movers in arrest of her mother, who had confessed to making him ill then healing him. Had lost several horses, over which he suspected her, and had even gone to house to speak to her. She was not there, but he spoke to her father, who said he did not know if she was a witch or not, and if she was he wished they should make an end of her.

(15) Marye fille de feu Mengeon Maxant, 18

3 years earlier had slight dispute with her, then fell ill for 5 months, with head twisted to one side as if she was possessed. Everyone expected her to die, and had always thought accused had bewitched her.

(16) Didier Galand

Occasion when she was asked to heal a horse, and said crying that she knew nothing she could do, but immediately afterwards it recovered. This increased suspicion - long reputation.

(17) Lienard Jean Lienard, 40

5 years earlier his wife refused her some milk, and a cow instantly became ill. A few days alter his son took horses to drink at well outside her house, then one of them died suddenly while pulling cart to fields. Suspected her witchcraft - in similar fashion her mother had made a cow sick, then healed it, only to kill a horse, as she had confessed at trial.

(18) Claudette femme Thoussainct Gomay

Section of deposition missing - seems to imply that witness expressed astonishment that she allowed herself to be called witch by a third party, also showed concern about animals drinking at well, to which she said that they could do so in perfect safety, since she had never done her any harm or spoken ill of her, unlike others in village. On New Year's Day Georgeatte had cleaned area round well when their animals went to drink, and left some dung; a cow fell ill, and died 6 days later, which she suspected had been her witchcraft - general reputation.

(19) le maire Colas Philippe

Occasion when his daughter had shut door in her face, and she was angry; told her she would repent, she immediately became ill, and died a month later. He suspected this of being caused by her witchcraft, like the death of 2 horses within the year, and hoped she would admit it if she came to confession.

13 February 1598; interrogation

Said she was 24, daughter of Jean Pelisson; knew she had long been suspected as witch, since mother's execution, but claimed she was innocent. Asked about illness of Demenge Lienard, at first denied knowing about it, then admitted he had hit her with poker and called her witch. In reply to question about reparation, said she had not sought it from him or others who called her witch, and would not answer when asked why she or her father took no action.

Admitted remark to Thiebault Vicaire, that she wished those who called her to see the sick 'fussent crevez'. Explained that she was angry because people immediately said she had bewitched them, then attributed cure to her visit. Also agreed she had told wife of Thoussainct Gomay she could use well safely; would not answer when told her words suggested that she was a witch, and only spared her because she was her friend.

After initial denial, admitted having door closed in her face by daughter of Colas Phellippe, and having told her she would repent, but denied causing her illness.

Brought back later that day, exhorted to confess, since denials would not free her from hands of justice until her deeds were known as clearly as under midday sun. Very few witches confessed, until they had endured torture, which was more painful to them than death.

Then asked to renounce Devil, she refused repeatedly, on grounds that he had never been her master, so she could not renounce him.

Confronted with witnesses, made no reproaches, but denied everything she had not already admitted.

16 February 1598; procureur for canons asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire. Approval presumably given by Change de Nancy, but document damaged here (19 Feb).

9 March 1598; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, then racked, finally given holy water to drink, after which she started to confess. Had been seduced by Persin 12 years before, through

agency of her mother, 2 years before her arrest. Latter asked her if she would like to go to place where they would dance and feast; she agreed, and they set off at midday to a place between two woods. Group of 7 or 8 people with black masks; Persin and her mother persuaded her to renounce God, then they danced before separating.

At second sabat was given powder - black/kill, grey/languish, white/cure. Tried these out on own animals, killing hen, making pig ill then curing it. On another occasion made hail.

After mother's execution Persin told her Dieudonné Galand was main cause of this, and told her to kill one of his horses by putting powder in front of house. Aso killed another later, until one day she met him on road, and he said that if she was cause of his losses he pardoned her if she would stop - so she did. His son Didier accused her several times over these deaths, so she made his horse ill, then cured it after he threatened to kill her.

Admitted further set of maléfices exactly as suggested by witnesses, usually for reasons they had given. In case of Colas Phelippe she had not been paid for work she had done, and with her consent her master made his daughter fall in the fire when she was alone in the house; she was badly burned, but did not die.

Said that at sabat she had seen one named Dedielle, who had come to live at Jean Masson's house 5 or 6 years earlier; husband had already been burned as witch at Mont near Lunéville (presumably Moncel-les-Lunéville). Also her own father, and Parisot Goeury. Had caused great hailstorm 4 years earlier, which fell particularly severely near Lunéville; on return father said it was a great shame, and many poor people would starve, but it was lucky many places were not badly affected.

Asked whether she had intercourse with devil, said so many times she could not remember. Said on day they had sent to arrest her Persin visited her and told her they were coming, but that he had caused one of them to be thrown from his horse. Court noted that this was true, for procureur d'office was thrown from horse and had to be rescued, because he was being dragged along with foot stuck in stirrup.

Brought back next day, confirmed earlier confessions. Said that in case of people only had power to harm them when they had failed to commend themselves to God and make sign of cross in the morning - devil informed witches of those who had not done this. For animals, however, could act whenever they could get close to them.

Procureur then asked for death sentence; confirmed by Change de Nancy on 12 March, carried out on 17 March.