

B 8684 no 6. Witch 193, Catherine femme Jean Bertremin de Clefcy

21 January 1600; informations preparatoires (taken by prevot following accusation by Françatte femme Claudon Jardel)

(1) Jean Claudel Estienne du Ban le Duc, 40

General reputation. 3 years earlier, as tutor for relative, had sold her some grain, but she failed to pay on due date, and had to sue her, taking manure in payment. Then she came to see him with a man he did not know, saying she would now pay, and looking at oxen he was harnessing. These promptly fell sick, and he went to see her, saying that he had gained a lot from foregoing her debt, and might lose 100 francs, asking what she had been doing around his animals. She asked what she was to do, to which he replied that she knew well; oxen then recovered slowly through his efforts and those of neighbours. His wife believed she had lost her milk after she came to house asking for fire.

(2) Jean Claude Didier du Ban le Duc, 30

Long reputation. 2 years earlier his late father had rented her a house, but it had come to him as part of succession, and he had evicted her when his brother found her stealing peas which were stored there. Could not help talking about this in village, and she was angry when she heard, saying 'que sy elle vivoit quelque temps qu'elle l'en feroit repentir'. Had subsequently lost a sheep and an ox, which he thought she might have caused. 5 or 6 years earlier his father's animals had strayed into her meadow, and after she cursed them an ox began to limp. Finally had to be sold to butcher at La Croix, who told father that one quarter was rotten, so that he threw it away, and that animal had been bewitched. In view of reputation father had blamed her.

(3) Claudel Didier maire au Ban le Duc, 40

Had sen no harm in her, but had been called witch by Colas Vincent Valdezey without seeking reparation.

(4) Simon Vincent Valdezey du Ban le Duc, 30

Reputation more than 10 years. Previous year she had stolen some of the flax his brother had put out to dry; they went to her house and took it back.

(5) Bastien Jeandon du Ban le Duc, 40

General reputation. 7 years earlier his wife had been in childbed, and Catherine came to house to ask for some 'pendant' to make cheese. His wife gave her a pot with some in; 2 days later lost her milk suddenly, and had none for a week. Searched everywhere for remedy, and Billon femme Colas Valdezey of le Souche gave him blessed bread from three great days of the year, after eating which milk returned. Soon wife became very ill, and remained so from Christmas until St James following, even having last sacraments. Made various pilgrimages; finally Catherine came with some strawberries for his wife, but since he suspected her he did not let her near (although did not quarrel with her). Returned a few days later in his absence and persuaded wife to eat 3 strawberries, after which she started to recover.

Both he and his wife thought she had caused the illness. 3 years before, after she had passed while they were unloading hay and he said something about her being witch to his wife, he was in cherry tree when large branch on which he was standing broke, and he fell out. Was in bed for 8 weeks, and could still feel effects of fall when he worked. If she was witch believed she had caused this.

(6) Colas Vincent Valdezey, du Ban le Duc, 34

Long reputation; had various quarrels with her and believed she had caused him great losses. 18 months before, when he was absent and wife in childbed, one of his cows got into her garden; she cursed it and all those of household from which it came. Overheard by his father, who told her off, saying she acted 'comme un beste', and should seek compensation in normal way, 'qu'elle n'avoit que faire de souhaister a personne mal que c'estoit une genaxe et n'avoit trop bon bruict.' On return father told him what had happened, and then as he was watching child, which had been fine and had eaten 'bouillie' given by mother, it suddenly changed colour in cradle and became as if dead. Warmed it by fire, but it died in 3 days.

4 or 5 years before she had been living in house belonging to his father, and had to leave because they wanted it for their own use. She said they would repent, and 5 or 6 weeks later a fine young bull sickened; could not draw any blood from it, and died in a week. 2 years earlier was carting manure in her garden, and father was angry because he worked beasts too long - she was angry when she heard, and said the devil should thank them. An ox became ill and would not eat, and when wife complained of this while Catherine was in house she said she should be quiet and it would recover - began to eat again immediately, although the man to whom he sold it later said he got no profit from animal. Believed she had caused these losses. Also told of theft of flax.

(7) Anthoine Gerard de Clemecey, 70

Knew nothing against her.

(8) Blaison Colas Bertrand, 31

General reputation only.

(9) Humbert le Grand Adam du Ban le Duc, 50

Reputation 12 years.

(10) Vincent Valdezey du Ban le Duc, 80

General reputation. Told story of her cursing when cow did damage, and of telling her off, calling her witch. Subsequent death of grandchild - did not know if she was cause or not.

(11) Colin Claudel Colin du Ban le Duc, 50

Reputation 12 years. Had once quarrelled with her when her animals trespassed, and would have beaten her if she had not been pregnant. 3 years earlier had taken part of a bouquet from his daughter in churchyard without saying

anything; 3 weeks later lost a fine bull suddenly, and thinking of bouquet reckoned that if she were a witch she might have caused this loss.

(12) Colas ?, 30

General reputation

(13) Adam Mengel, 40

Knew nothing against her.

(14) Claudon Claude Didier

3 years earlier his wife was in childbed, and after Catherine visited her became ill, until it seemed she would lose her mind. Suspecting the accused, he spread word around village that he intended to go to the devin to discover cause of sickness. Reckoned she had heard of this, because she came to see wife, bringing some new butter and oats. Told her that if she ate these she would not die and would be able to feed children, but that she would still feel illness for 6 months to a year. Wife then gradually recovered, and it all fell out as she had predicted. Repeated brother's story about ox - it had been eating a new hedge which her husband had planted before it sickened. Also blamed her for death of a pig 4 or 5 years before, after she had cursed it. After another quarrel about straying animals said in front of father's house 'Le diable soit au chastel, qu'il estoit bien hault mais qu'il rabaisseroit'. Soon after lost a fine bull, and believed she was cause.

(15) Laurence femme Colas Masson, 25

General reputation only.

(16) Mengette fille feu Colas Demenge Michiel de Clemecey, 20

General reputation only.

(17) Blaisette veuve Jean Claudel Colin, 35

General reputation only.

(18) Jean Vincent Valdezey, 40

General reputation; various quarrels and losses of animals, which he imputed to her witchcraft.

(19) Mengel Colas des Rozes de la Pelliere, 36

General reputation only.

(20) Jean Gerard Anthoine du Soulche de Clemecey, 50

General reputation only.

(21) Claudel fils Anthoine Claudel de Hervafain, 30

Hearsay that she was witch.

(22) Collatte femme Colin des Gottes de Braçoncel, 60

General reputation only.

(23) Colin des Gottes, 50

Ditto

(24) Jean Humbert Simon de Braconcel, 50

Ditto

(25) Collatte femme Adam Fleurant, 34

Ditto

(26) Colas Didier de la Faigne, 32

Her husband was brother-in-law of witness, and they had been married on same day. Had suspected her since then, having lived some years in same house, but left because he feared her. Of the 8 children he had by his wife, only 2 had lived; 2 of others could not even be baptised in church, and none of the 6 lived to be a year old. In view of reputation suspected her of causing these deaths.

(27) Claudel Holbin, 36

Previous year had stood caution for her husband when he bought some grain from Demenge Ferry, echevin at St Dié, and when he failed to pay sergent came to get satisfaction. He then went to take action against Bertremin, and she 'se demenoit fort, et ne fut sy discrete de s'abstenir de parler qu'elle ne dise a luy deposant qu'il s'en repentiroit'. He and his wife then fell ill, and were in feeble state for 3 months, until he thought of dispute and that it might be her doing. Went to her house and complained that he did not know what to do; she said they should take courage and they would recover, Soon this happened, and if she was witch as reputed thought she had been cause.

(28) Blaisotte femme Colas Jean le Masson de la Pelliére, 60

General reputation only.

(29) Epron femme Claudon Jean le Masson de la Pelliére, 50

Ditto

(30) Catherine femme Jean Vincent Valdezey, 30

Repeated husband's suspicions about losses of animals.

(31) Laurence femme Claudel Holbin, 25

Repeated husband's testimony about their illnesses.

(32) Jean Colin Remy de Braconcel, 40

Nothing against her.

(33) Agathe femme Jean Claude Estienne, 40

Had come to ask for fire 6 years earlier when she was in childbed; feared her as witch, while it was thought a bad augury in village if someone came to ask for fire during childbed, but gave her some. Then lost her milk; gave baby 'lait chassé', and neighbours sometimes fed him, but died after 2 months because he was not properly fed. Believed if she was witch as reputed she had caused this.

(34) Claudette femme Bastien Claudon, 30

Repeated husband's story about loss of milk and subsequent illness, then cure. Also his fall from tree.

(35) Agathe femme Colas de la Faigne, 35

Her brother was husband of accused; had always heard her suspected since marriage. Told of how when still in bed after birth of first child received mysterious blows to head, although alone in the room - sent offering to St Lienard and slowly recovered, although child died in two weeks. Another child was emaciated and lost use of limbs - went to devineresse in Burgundy who told them to make pilgrimage to Beau Bernard. When asked origin of illness she said it would cause a quarrel if she told them 'et que s'ilz avoient bien fait qu'ilz fassent encor mieulx' - this made them think that if she was witch she had caused illness.

(36) Valentin Claude Estaine, 57

Knew nothing

(37) Meline femme du precedent, 35

Ditto

(38) Marion femme Colin Claudel Colin, 45

Ditto

(39) Agathe femme Claudon Barbel, 36

Ditto

(40) Pierron Jean le Masson de la Pelliére, 50

General reputation only

(41) Francois Colas Jean Louys, 30

Knew nothing

(42) Mengel Demenge Michiel, 55

Ditto

(43) Jean Petit Jean Louys, 80

Ditto

(44) Colas Jean le Masson de la Pelliére, 80

Ditto

(45) Agathe femme Jean Petit Jean Louys, 65

Ditto

(46) Barbeline veuve Colas Petit Jean Louys, 80

Ditto

(47) Claudette veuve Claude Didier, 60

Repeated story of threat before house during husband's lifetime, since when various losses of animals had left them 'bien diminué de leurs moyens'. Did not know if she was cause, but believed that if she were a witch then she was.

(48) Mengette femme Michiel Demenge Michiel, 46

Knew nothing

(49) Agathe femme Claudon Claude Didier, 30

Ditto

(50) ? femme Colas Vincent Valdezey

Knew no more than husband had already deposed.

(51) Jehenne femme Simon Vincent Valdezey, 25

In 4 years since marriage had learned that Catherine 'a toujours porté haine aux parens de son marit', and her father-in-law had various quarrels with her. Previous year had sick child which was expected to die, and as she passed Catherine's house she asked it if child was getting better. She replied that it was no better, and Catherine said she should take courage, and she had seen others in similar condition which recovered. Soon after child got better, and was still healthy; could not affirm she had caused illness, but suspected it.

(52) Claudon Demenge Willaume, 60

Knew nothing against her.

(53) Simon Colas Simon, 36

Since her marriage always heard her reputed a witch, and had called her so several times without reparation being sought. Previous year had swollen leg, so painful he thought he would go mad, and finally thought that since he had called her witch she might have been cause. On way to house met her, and said "Entende Catherine tu es une genoxe il m'est venu un mal en une jambe, je crois que tu en es cause, sy elle ne se guarit je te feray brusler, ce qu'entendant elle luy respondit qu'il eut patience qu'elle guariroit' - recovered within 3 or 4 days.

(54) Anthoine Claudel de Herbafain, 80

Knew nothing

(55) Colas Gerard Mourel, 35

General reputation

(56) Colas George Goery de Boslemprey, 60

Some 4 years before, after lawsuit on matter, Catherine (with mother-in-law and others) went to reap for him, and while doing so wished him to the devil. Next day a fine cow suddenly became ill, throwing its legs about and bellowing. Wife went to Ban le Duc to seek help, and met Catherine, whom she told about illness, saying that if cow died 'cela ne se passeroit sans poursuite'. Made no reply, but on way home met her again, and she told her not to worry about the cow. It began to recover, although milk was lost for that year, and he sold it. Believed she had caused illness if she was a witch.

(25 January 1600)

(57) Colas Claudon Petit Jean Louys, 36

Some 3 years earlier she had been angry when his wife or servant chased her sow out of their garden with blows of a stick, and heard from neighbours that she had threatened he would not gain from this. 2 days later put his oxen in field for evening, and after she had passed by one of them had such a bad leg it could hardly walk. Later she arrived uninvited, and said it was nothing, after which animal suddenly recovered. Did however lose a calf which suddenly lost use of legs, and believed she had caused both these misfortunes.

4 February 1600; Interrogation

Said she was about 33, native of Gerbepaulx in prévôté of Bruyères, daughter of Claudon Grand Jean and wife Marie. Married for 13 years, 4 children of whom 3 living. Knew she had been arrested because of accusation by Françatte.

Asked why she had absented herself for a week, said she had been to see brother at Lezey, saying she had been fetching bread, then that it was a saw for

planks. Reproached that it had been in fear of arrest, then said she had intended to move, and told her husband they would make a better living there.

Agreed that she had sometimes had quarrels, but said it had been under provocation, and denied making threats. Also denied she had been called witch, or that she had visited wife of Bastien Jeandon during illness. Said he and his wife were 'fort bonnes gens', and she had never wished them any harm. Otherwise denied all charges, and most of circumstantial detail.

5 February 1600; Interrogation

Continued denials, Said Colas George Goery was a good man, and had once lent them some grain to sow. Otherwise no statements of interest - denied all the face-to-face accusations claimed to have been made against her.

Confrontations

Agathe femme Jean Claude Estienne added that during child's lifetime she had told Catherine that her husband suspected her of causing loss of milk, to which she replied that she was not a witch, and if it had been anyone but him who used such words she would have taught him to speak. No reproaches to witnesses, whom she often described in favourable terms, but denied all charges.

23 February 1600; Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

24 February 1600; Change de Nancy approves

Interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews and rack, but continued to deny charges stoutly, insisting she was a good Christian. Torture said to have lasted some 2 hours.

15 March 1600; Rémy suggests that she be renvoyée. Change de Nancy approves.

20 March 1600; prévôt records that she has been released.