

Witch 195, Mengeatte Babé 1

B 8684 no 8. Witch 195, Mengeatte femme Jean Babé, de Sarupt

March 1600; confronted with Jean Lallemand, who maintained accusation that he had seen her at sabbat

24 March 1600; informations preparatoires

(1) Lyenard Adam, 28

Reputation 4 or 4 years.

(2) Jacotte femme Georgeon Demenge Babey, 40

Reputation 13 years (residence). Blamed her for loss of a pig (details missing).

(3) Marion femme Colas Jean Lienard, 35

2 years before her son Colas had been going daily to put water on their meadow, which meant that there was no water for that of accused. Complained angrily to witness, who was frightened of her, and promised to tell son, but he would not agree to stop; 2 days later had leg broken in strange accident, and had always blamed this on her witchcraft. In another quarrel she had wished they might have 'mal proffict' from their animals, following which they had a horse lose an eye, a cow break a leg, and some pigs ?. Reputation 9 years.

(4) Claudatte femme Claude Maire Aulbric de Sachemont, 50

Reputation 7 years.

(5) Mengeatte veuve Lienard Demenge Lienard, 54

Some 18 months previously her son Colas had charge of the village horses, and took them to pasture without waiting for horse belonging to accused, which was wandering somewhere in the fields. Later she took it to join others, cursing him and wishing he should have 'le diable dans son corps, et dans ses membres'. Soon afterwards became ill, and sickness finally went to legs - still in pitiful state, and unable to find remedy. Blamed Mengette, particularly since in another dispute she told witness 'qu'elle pensoit bien donner guerison a son fils, mais que le diable le puisse guerir, puis qu'elle la soubçonnoit estre cause de son mal.'

(6) Marguitte veuve Colas Francois, 45

Reputation 15 or 16 years, since accused came to village on marriage.

(7) Mengeon Colas Lienard, 30

Reputation 15 or 16 years. 12 years before his parents died within a week, and he had a quarrel with her during which she said 'que le diable en avoit desia porté les uns, et s'il en avoit encore emporté les autres, la seigneurie se porteroit mal'. At this he called her witch. (Damage here)

(8) Claude Demenge Maire Aulbric, 36

Reputation 15 years.

(9) Mengeon Martin, 48

Reputation 12 years.

(10) Mengeon Jean Demenge Lienard, 40

A year before several of his cows lost milk, and because of her reputation and fact that her mother-in-law said she had already caused similar loss, thought she was responsible. Late Colas Henry had told how she beat one of his cows which strayed, and wished him 'mal proffict' . . (damage)

(11) Agatte femme Mengeon Demenge Lienard, 40

Reputation 12 years. 7 years before she had complained to witness that Jean Colas Lienard was saying she had become pregnant by soldiers who were lodged in village, and uttered various curses, wishing him 'mal proffict'. Then had cow with broken leg, horse which went blind, and 2 pigs carried off by wolves, all of which he blamed on her witchcraft. Witness herself suspected that she had several times caused her cows to lose milk; also told how Colas Henry believed she had bewitched his cow. Report of her dispute with Mengeon Colas Lienard after death of his parents.

(12) Colas Lienard jeune fils, 18

Told story of missing horse, threats, and his illness. Had great difficulty coming to make deposition. Also claimed that her son Jean, aged 8, had talked of dreaming that he and his mother left house by chimney. Those who heard this asked him for details, and he said they stood a broom up on hearth, then left through chimney, but when pressed would say no more.

(27 March 1600)

(13) Valence fille Colas des Roses, servante a Lienard Adam, 26

2 years earlier had been servant to Mengel Colas Lienard, who became very ill, and she heard him say that if she was witch as reputed, she had surely made him ill.

(14) Honneste homme Jean Colas Lienard, 34

8 or 9 years before some soldiers lodged in village, and rumour was that child she had next year was by one of them. He talked of this in company, and she was informed; became very angry and made threats to his animals. Next day servant came to tell him that wolf had killed two of his pigs, which it had selected among group, then his best cow had leg broken in strange fashion, and his finest horse became blind (all same day). Thinking of her threats, concluded she was cause, and went to speak to her husband. Threatened to have her tried, and she 'cria mercy' for threats, but would not admit causing losses. 2 years before came to tell

him of suspicions by Mengeotte veuve Lienard Demenge Lienard over illness of her son Jean, saying she was afraid she would be arrested and taken to St Dié. Asked him to help her get reparation, and he advised her that she must start formal action - did so, and 'ladite pauvre vefue n'ayant moyen se deffendre luy fit reparation'. Around same time his servant Claudon Florance (now living in ban de Fraisse) took cherries from her tree, and she cursed him; he became very ill, and asked witness to have her arrested because of this. She heard of this, and servant suddenly recovered. Reputation 12 years.

(15) Colas Voignérat

Damaged - appears to claim that after eating some of her cherries (given by her?) girl aged 5 sickened and died the next day - witness had always blamed this on her witchcraft. Long reputation.

10 April 1600; interrogation

Said she was about 35, married to Jean Babé for some 14 years. Native of Gerbepaulx, father Jean Grand Jean still alive, mother Jennon dead long ago. Knew she had been accused as accomplice by Collatte de Girompaire, and recently by Jean Lallemand. Agreed there had been argument over use of water by son of Jean Colas Leonard, and said that when he broke leg parents spread rumour that she had bewitched him. Suggested that she had made him poor by causing losses of animals. She admitted he had been to see husband, threatening to have her arrested, and that she had been to see him about accusation 2 years before. Also agreed to curses against his servant - said 'maudit soit elle qui a souvenance de tout cela . . . mais qu'elle ne pensoit que ces maledictions puissent sortir leurs effectz'. Agreed to threats against boy after he failed to take her horse to pasture, but not to causing illness. Admitted remark to Mengey Colas Lienard after death of parents, saying he had provoked this.

Judges then said that her son Jean would testify that she had taken him twice to sabbat, and that it was impossible he should talk of such things if he had not seen them. She begged that they should pardon her this time, and if she had committed any fault fine her, but if they heard any more about witchcraft then they could try her. They pointed out they could not pardon her when she had confessed nothing; she insisted she was not a witch.

Confrontations

Only reproach was to Jean Colas Lienard, whom she accused of having tried to seduce her and take her into his bedroom. Otherwise admitted various threats, but denied any witchcraft or harm.

Was then confronted with her son Jean, whom she said was 6. He started to cry, while she called him 'meschant cocquin', asking what he was doing there. Exhorted to tell truth, he then said that she had taken him with her twice in plain daylight; they both mounted 'une perche', then went out of chimney to place near village where there were many people. Had only recognized Mengeatte George, Jean Pezey, and wife of Jean Colatte. Ate unsalted meat, but did not see them do anything else.

14 April 1600; procureur asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

25 April 1600; Change de Nancy agrees

27 April 1600; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but started to confess when racked. 16 or 17 years earlier, still living with father, had found a ploughshare in field she was harrowing. Father said it had been put there by his mortal enemy Voignier with intention of defaming him, and told her to put it about village that she had found it. Next day she went to seek pears and forgot to do this, while Vagnier went to get new ploughshare made at Clemecey, while proclaiming that her father had stolen his and hidden it in field. Father was furious, told her to leave house and threatened to disinherit her. While she was lamenting this Persin appeared, offering to give her so much money she would not miss her father's goods. Seduced in normal fashion; money was horse-dung, and given black powder to kill men and animals, which she tried out on one of father's sheep. Was taken to sabbat; most of those there were masked, but did recognize Colatte femme Didier Marcot and her daughter Billon - did not know if they were still alive.

Confessed series of malefices committed with powder at Sarupt, along lines suggested by witnesses. Was given brief taste of tortillons when she said there were no more, then added further group. Had been to sabbat more times than she could remember, and had seen Jean Lambay alias Pezey, Georgeatte wife of Jean Colatte, and Mengeon Martin of Sarupt, Estienne Francois, Claudatte veuve Jean Steuchey and her son Jean, and Jean Goeury of St Lienard, and wife of Mengeon Renardin of Contramolin. Had made hail, but had not done much harm, and she had never consented to waste grain because she feared dearth.

28 April 1600; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Also agreed that she had taken son Jean to sabbat, but said she had not given him to Persin. Latter had asked her to do so, but she had said he was too young, and they should wait until he was 12. Asked judges to take care of him. Said that to go to sabbat used broom treated with special grease, and said 'hault de par le diable aux sabbatz', at which they were carried up the chimney and through the air. At other times she went on foot; had paid annual hen in order not to go so often as others. Repeated all accusations. Finally said she thought she was pregnant, and that but for this she would have withstood torture.

15 May 1600; interrogation

Now said she was not pregnant, and had had period since last interrogation, but denied all her previous confessions.

16 May 1600; procureur asks for renewed torture

20 May 1600; Change de Nancy approves, with death sentence if she repeats her confessions, then confirms them freely.

25 May 1600; interrogation

Now repeated confessions, saying that her renunciation had followed visits by Persin in prison; he told her that the executioner had left and would not return,

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and as long as she denied she would not be burned. Said she now renounced him completely, and asked to be executed same day or next if possible.

27 May 1600; executed at St Dié