

B 8687 no 4; witch 202, Penthecoste femme Georgeon Didier Miette de la Rochatte

18 May 1601; confronted with Mengeotte veuve Colas Lienard de la Rochatte, who maintained her accusations. These included trying to kill Jacotte femme Georgeon Jacot Didier Simon, who had called them witches; devil undressed them and gave them skins like grey cat, but she must have been well protected by sign of cross because they could not harm her when they got on her bed. She denied all this.

24 May 1601; informations preparatoires

(1) Jacquin Thiebault, 50

Had been nearest neighbour for 20 years, had numerous quarrels with her, and even fought; had suffered numerous losses, including 3 wives who had died within a short time, as if rabid. Believed these deaths had resulted from her witchcraft.

(2) Jennon femme Claudon Bresson, 50

2 years before had quarrelled with her and called her witch; she was very angry, but did not seek reparation. Soon fell ill, and remained so for 6 months; had always suspected this was her witchcraft - general reputation. About 2 years earlier she and neighbours were talking of numerous witches who had been arrested, and saying it was a shame to hear so much about them, when accused arrived and said 'qu'elle avoit estimé l'espace de sept ans que tous ceulx et celles qui estoient sorcieres et sorciers faisoient at avoient tous ce qu'elles desiroient, mais qu'elle cognoissoit par experience que cela n'estoit pas vray.' Then left, while others said she had used 'de terribles propos' and must be a witch 'et seroit bon de se donner garde d'elle'.

(3) Claudatte veuve Diey Jacot Simon, 58

Reputation several years, and called witch by several people without seeking reparation.

(4) Billon femme Jean du Sal, de St Dié, 40

Report of same conversation as by second witness, virtually word for word, except no mention of experience. Long reputation, and had heard her daughter Mengeatte, femme Colas le Hauvenaie, say some money had been stolen from her house, and if she was a witch as reputed she would ask her to find out from her master who had taken it.

(5) Jacotte femme Georgeon Jacot Simon, 40

6 years earlier had been in service of late Mr Nicolas Alexandre, canon of St Dié, and daughter of accused had taken choux from their garden, so she went to tell her these must be returned or her master would go to court. After early denials she returned them, but threatened she would remember and have her revenge. Soon afterwards witness married and went to live near her, and was then afflicted with trouble in her left leg, which became shorter than the other and gave hr great pain. After 2 weeks in this state started to tell visitors she was sure Penthecoste had bewitched her; with 2 days she came to visit without being asked, and touched place

wher trouble was, saying she would soon recover. Was better in 2 days, and had always suspected it had been her witchcraft.

A year ago previous Lent husband had got up before dawn to practice trade as huillier, and when alone in bed she felt something press down on her, so that she could not even move arms to make sign of cross. Recommended herself to God and made sign of cross with tongue, calling to husband for help. Managed to lift head a little and saw accused at foot of bed, but no reply when she spoke to her. Husband then came in with light, and saw two cats 'gros et hideux a merveille', one black and the other grey, which left room with great noise. Was sure this was accused and another witch, and put story about so that she and her husband heard it and threatened they would seek reparation. but they did nothing.

(6) Dieudonnée femme Jacquin Frampart, 50

Long reputation, and called witch without seeking reparation.

(7) Clemence femme Hidoulf Cognolle, 27

Her late father Georgeon Jacot Simon had died after illness lasting 6 months, during which he said he thought she had bewitched him, and had also caused losses of animals. Around last All Saints passed by her; did not know if she touched her, but within a few steps fell down in road. Did not appear to hurt herself, but next day a very painful abscess appeared on left thigh, and she was ill for some 6 weeks. Accused visited her and said it was not possible it could last much longer, after which she recovered in a few days. had always suspected this was her doing - long reputation.

(8) Georgeon Jacot Didier Simon, 34

Father, who died after 6-month illness, always maintained she had bewitched him. Same story as wife about cats he had seen running from bedchamber.

(9) Colas de Lavelline, 45

4 months earlier, when she married her daughter, they refused to attend, and she was very angry. Wife then developed great pains in legs, and was still unable to walk without great difficulty; suspected this was her witchcraft - long reputation.

(10) Mengeotte femme Colas Rolat, de St Dié, 50

4 years earlier had asked to buy pig, but witness refused, saying they had 30 and wanted to sell them together. She was very angry, and immediately the pigs began to die; lost more than 100 écus worth, and could not raise any more, which she was sure was her witchcraft. 18 months earlier her son stole fruit from garden of late Grand Doyen, who threatened him with prison and punishment, so that he left town for a while. She was very angry, saying 'au diable soit son jardin, et que jamais n'y puisse il entrer'. After this he became ill, and died after languishing for long time; hearing curses made witness wonder if she might have bewitched him. 2 years before had been angry because husband of witness rather than own husband was given job of carting dung for Colas Aulbertin, after which their horse sickened and went blind. Long reputation.

(11) Marguitte femme Nicolas Xallay, de St Dié, 30

4 months earlier her husband, as banyard, had caught her daughter in a garden, and she was angry at having to pay fine. After this witness became ill, unable to eat or drink, until after 3 months she dragged herself to church. Met Penthecoste, who told her she should try to take a good soup and would soon be cured; when she got home she vomited strangely, then began to eat a little, before complete recovery in 3 days. Suspected she had caused this if she was witch as reputed.

(12) Colas Voignier, 24

4 years earlier had courted her daughter, but on hearing mother's reputation he gave her up, and married daughter of Colas Rollat. Accused was angry at this, and when she saw him with 2 horses he had bought to earn living as carter said 'qu'il n'estoit a luy a faire de manier telz chevalz, et qu'il feroit tout, et eulx plus rien'. Within a few days they sickened, and one died, while the other went blind. Had always thought this was her witchcraft; long reputation.

(13) Nicolle femme Colas Mengeot, 27

6 years earlier her father Georgeon Jacot Simon had died after long illness, claiming she had bewitched him.

(14) Lougdevic Thoussainct, 35

2 years earlier her husband had been breaking stone in mountain for receveur and prévôt, but witness offered better price, and was given contract for 600 cartloads. She was angry and said 'que malchance puisse il faire et avoir a sa marchandise et qu'il se puisse rompre le col en rompant ses pierres, que sans luy son marit y eut gagné bonne somme d'argent.' A few days later when he was working in mountain a great hideous cat went to eat his bread, and when he threw hammer at it jumped at his throat. He made sign of cross, took an axe, and said 'ho, meschante sorciere tu ne m'as pas encor', at which cat jumped back 20 feet and disappeared. As he was looking where it had gone a great stone came rushing down the valley, and he only just escaped it, but fell over and hurt his leg. Had always believed that she had been trying to kill him by witchcraft.

At last haymaking had worked for her for 5 days, but always refused offers of food in her house because he was afraid she would bewitch him. On last night she pressed so hard that he did have supper in her house, but felt ill as soon as he returned home, and became swollen for 8 days - finally recovered after vomiting up 2 pieces of leather, and believed this too had been her witchcraft. Last carnival she asked to buy 5 young pigs for her daughter's wedding, but he said they were too young; she was angry, and following week they all died. Suspected this too was her witchcraft - long reputation.

(15) Barbon femme Colas Voignier, 22

Long reputation; reported on conversation in which she said that experience showed witches did not get all they wanted.

29 May 1601; interrogation

Said she was about 50; no other personal details apart from husband's name. Knew she had been accused, but denied charges. Series of denials that she had harmed anyone. Also denied conversation about experience of witches, but did say she might have said about wall of Dean's garden that it was too high and 'le diable y ayt part', because it shaded her own garden. Asked whether she had killed horse of Colas Rollat, said 'que tous les maux qui sont este faitz parmi la ville, l'on voudroit dire que s'a elle fait.'

Agreed she had been angry at Loudevic Thoussaint's refusal to eat with them for a week, but he had come on last evening and she had not done him any harm. Otherwise denied everything.

30 May 1601; confrontations

No reproaches to any witnesses, but continued outright denials.

1 June 1601; procureur for canons asks for torture

2 June 1601; Change de Nancy approves

6 June 1601; interrogation under torture

Was put on rack and drawn lightly. Refused to renounce devil, saying he was not in her body, after which her throat became swollen and face black and hideous, so it was judged that he was in her. Was also thought she might suffocate, so she was released, at which she returned to normal state. Then racked again, and finally said she wanted to renounce devil, and that Persin had been in her throat preventing her from speaking.

Said she had been seduced 8 years earlier, when angrily driving out hens which were damaging her garden, and calling on devil a hundred times as she did so. Persin appeared, promising to keep them away if she would serve him; gave her money which was earth, and black powder. Tried latter out on Georgeon Jacot Simon, who had quarrelled with her husband, when she was at veillée in his house where women were spinning - sprinkled it on him as he sat by stove. Had been angry with grand doyen because of shade cast by his wall, and because he made them cut down trees which shaded his garden; Persin urged her to harm him, and she caused fatal illness by sprinkling powder on his clothes as he passed house. Asked how just throwing it on clothes could have done this, she said Persin had told her this would be enough, and he would do the rest; throwing powder on clothes was sufficient whenever there was such an agreement with Persin. Had not been able to heal him because he had made Easter confession and taken communion.

Had killed last wife of Jacquin Thiebault, and pigs of Colas Rollat. Angry with Georgeon Jacot Simon because he had outbid them for a meadow, caused cows to butt him in genitals when he came to tie them up, putting him in danger of his life. His wife Jacotte often called her witch, so had tried to attack her in form of cat, with aid of Meneotte Lienard, but frustrated by arrival of husband with light; Persin put skin over head of each of them as they returned from veillée. Had made wife of Colas Lavelline ill, and killed pigs of Loudevic Thoussaint.

Had ben to sabat more times than she could remember. Saw Jean Gaixotte le vieux and Guillaume le Bonnetier, of St Dié, Jean Cailleré alias Larmithe of Trois Maisons, Marguette femme Loudevic Thoussaint of la Rochatte, Claudatte femme

Claudon Bandaça of Vieux Marché, and Mengeotte Lienard. Danced to flute, feasted, and made hail; taken through air by master to attend.

7 and 8 June 1601; repeated previous confessions

14 June 1601; death sentence from Change de Nancy

17 June 1601; declaration that she had been found dead in prison that morning, although there had been nothing obviously wrong with her the previous night. Visited by surgeon, who could find nothing to explain death apart from dampness of the prison (dungeon of Tour Mathiotte).