

Witch 224, Catherine Charpentier 1

B 8691 no 13; witch 224, Catherine femme Didier Jean Charpentier, de Remémont

13 February 1603; informations préparatoires

(1) Mengeon Jean du Treux, 40

After accusation by Jean Claude Colin of Fouchifol, executed some years earlier, she had fled, only returning to village at last Christmas. Previous year her husband had closed off a public way, so witness and one other were elected as procureurs for village to seek its reopening. Had quarrel with Catherine, during which he told her he had no faith in her; when she replied she had little more in him, he told her he would use all his means to have her burned. Shortly afterwards lost a pig. Had previously lost a cow, which he suspected had been either her or Gaulvolff's wife. Reputation over 20 years.

(2) Demenge Jean Noel, 50

Said that 15 years before her father-in-law had told him she was a witch, and that when his son had great losses of animals and could find no remedy he decided to go to devin at Epinal. Catherine was waiting with soup on evening of his return, but when she asked him what news he brought back, he said 'que le feu qu'elle seroit bruslée', because devin had said 'quil ne failloit chercher les sorcieres, qui faisoient mourir son bestail, plus loing, qu'aupres de son feu.' She said 'Que ledict son marit avoit esté au diable, et qu'elle y vouloit aller aussy, et aussy tost empoigna son couvrefeu et sortit.' Seemed to be taking road to Ste Marguerite, but a big man in black appeared and took her another way; those in house rushed out to bring her back, then she told story as above, which witness heard from father-in-law who shared house. Reputation since then.

(3) Marguitte femme du precedent, 50

Suspected since arrival in village; repeated husband's story.

(4) Jean Bertremin, 36

As young boy returning from herding animals, saw her running off pursued by father-in-law, who said 'ou veulx tu aller grosse sotté'; she replied 'Il a esté au diable, je y veulx aller aussy'. Later heard of husband's visit to devin, and of his remark that she ought to be burned. 18 years earlier had been climbing tree which belonged to her in order to reach another tree; she saw him and said that if he took her apples she wished he might be strangled. After she left he did eat an apple, but something stuck in his throat so that he felt as if he was being strangled. One of her daughters came by, so he told her what had happened, threatening to have her mother burned; soon after this he vomited and recovered. Believed she had bewitched him; long reputation.

(5) Jean Clement, 50

Some years earlier had heard Catherine telling Claudon Didier Perrin that he was a witch and had killed their horse; he replied 'Tais toy, tais toy, ta cuisine n'est

gueres plus nette que la mienne. Je ne scais rien du faict de sorcerie, que ce que tu m'as apprins'. Shortly afterwards Perrin was executed as witch. Witness had lost animals to value of over 100 écus, and suspected witches 'desquelles il n'y a moyen se garder, mais bien des larrons'. Suspected her particularly over a calf which died after she visited house on pretext of searching for a hen. When Claudon Perrin confessed he accused her as accomplice, and of helping him cause witness to fall from a roof - was still feeling effects of the fall. Added that if the chapter had not ordered her arrest, he would have had to ask for it 'pour les ravages et pertes qu'ilz font et endurent journellement, et viennent notoirement de sorcerie.' Long reputation.

(6) Marguitte femme Claudon Thouvenat, 60

Losses of animals, some of which she attributed to accused because they had followed on some of her frequent quarrels with husband of witness.

(7) Claudon Thouvenat, 60

After quarrels and threats previous summer lost a cow. Reputation 7 years.

(8) Marguitte femme Claudon Grand Ferry, 40

Quarrels with her and husband had gone so far that they gave witness a good beating. 6 or 7 years earlier had been so ill that she was troubled in mind, and wandered around village - they mocked her when they saw her, and she suspected it had been her witchcraft. General reputation.

(9) Catherine femme Jean Clement, 50

Had always attributed their losses of animals to witchcraft of several in village, but particularly Catherine; reputation over 20 years.

(10) Barbelline veuve Jean Vinel, 50

Had refused to do some hoeing for her 6 years earlier; soon afterwards leg became swollen and painful, and suspected this was her witchcraft if she was as reputed. Also suspected her over various losses (unspecified).

(11) Claudon Grand Ferry, 50

Long reputation. Had lost animals after quarrels with her and husband, also suspected her over illness of wife.

(12) Jehennon femme Colas Ancel, de Vanifosse, 60

Was sister to husband of accused. 5 or 6 years earlier Catherine had been ill in bed, and brother asked her to go and help, since illness made others unwilling to enter house. One night was cleaning out cowshed, but brother said they should stop because it was late; Catherine was angry and insisted she finished the job. Handle of her

implement broke, and she fell and hurt herself; because of great reputation as witch 'elle ne fut hors de soubçon, et sans fantaisie, qu'elle ne soit esté cause de cette fortune.' Had arranged that during time of service she would go to wine harvest in Allemaigne to see her daughter there, keeping whatever she earned. 3 times fell ill as she was about to set out, and when she did leave had attack on road which forced her to return. Suspected that this was her doing because she did not want her to leave house, and made this public in village. About a year later Catherine reproached her with this, and after various insults were exchanged threatened her. On way home got a splinter in her leg, which became very swollen - but no blood came out when she pulled out the splinter. Suspected this too had been her witchcraft.

(13) Meline femme Colas Jean Charpentier, 50

Husband was brother of husband of accused. Said that when Jean Claude Colin of Fochifol was on trial Catherine 'avoit l'oeil au boys, et avoit son fils en ce lieu, pour espier s'il viendroit a confession. Et comme elle deposante estoit ce jour avec elle, elle fut toute esbahie, qu'elle appercevant son fils venit, dit, chose seure que le meschant homme la m'aura accusé, que sy une fois il a parlé de moy, me voyla fricassée. Et sur le mesme jour ladite Catherine gagna les champs, et fut longtemps absente, pour la crainte qu'elle avoit d'estre apprehendée.'

17 February 1603; interrogation

Said she was about 40, native of ban d'Etival. Said she had absented herself when her husband was imprisoned, admitting that this was 'le plus grand mal qu'elle ait oncques fait, que de s'absenter, comme elle fit'. Was pointed out that she gave grounds for believing that she was an accomplice in her husband's wrongdoing. Denied saying she would be 'fricassée' - had actually said that Jean Claude Colin was a liar.

Had tried to persuade husband to open up the public way he blocked. Denied all knowledge of alleged consultation of devin. Agreed she had been accused by Claudon Didier Perrin, executed some year earlier. Also admitted some quarrels with Claudon Thouvelier and Claudon Grand Ferry. Her sister-in-law had put about reports, and she had reproached her, getting a denial. Said she had been absent 10 weeks, and had stayed at moictresse of Mazerulle, near Azerailles, and also near Blamont.

Had also been accused by Claudon fils Claudon Jean Perrin, and confronted with him.

19 February 1603; confrontations

Said of Demenge Jean Noel that she had heard the late Marceau, tabellion at La Croix, say he was on his papers; he replied that he had obtained reparation for this remark. As for Jean Bertremin, when le Sachot and Claudon Thouvenat were tried for theft they named him as accomplice - he denied this, asking for the procedure to be consulted.

Said that Jean Clement was a thief, and that he had been forced to make an accord with the late Ferry Casiel, also that he had talked of stealing tithes; he denied all this. Claudon Thouvenat was a thief and had been obliged to make an accord, while

she heard it said that he would not have gone thieving without his wife, and that she carried the proceeds away.

In response to Meline, femme Colas Jean Charpentier, now admitted that she had said that if Jean Claudon Colin had accused her, she would flee.

21 February 1603; procureur for canons asks for torture

26 February 1603; Change de Nancy approves thumbscrews only

1 March 1603; interrogation under torture

Called on to confess. she said 'qu'elle est dampnée, que son ame est perdue au jour d'huy, que l'eschelle est sa mort, et a prié qu'on l'y appliqz promptement et qu'on l'estrange, qu'elle pardon ne sa mort, au reste qu'elle est dampnée eternellement'.

When thumbscrews were applied she called out loudly and at length; said she would tell truth, and then said she was a good woman. Was then placed on rack, but not drawn, and suddenly agreed to confess. Said she had been seduced by Persin 16 to 20 years earlier, when angry and upset over results of husband's visit to devin at Epinal. Offered her means to avenge herself on those who caused her this dishonour; had claws on hand and feet, and horns on head. Gave her money (oak leaves) and powder - grey/kill animals, red/kill people, yellow/languish, white/cure.

Had been to sabat every fortnight on Thursdays, carried up chimney on master's back - did not think her husband knew anything of this. Saw long list of people; Mathieu Blaise and Colas Andreu of Ste Marguerite, Dieudonné Rehay of Coinche, and Valentin Thiehay of Remomeix were the rich who sat at the top. She and the others were lower down as the poor; included Marguitte femme Colas Clement, Jehennon femme Henry des Aulnée, and Demenge Noel, of Rememont, Claudon Perrin and his son Claudel, now executed, Jehennon femme Claude Bonipaire and Claudatte fille Claude Malremmeix of Ste Marguerite, Barbelline femme Didier Anthoine of Entredeux-Eaux, and Marguitte femme Jean Babel of Saulcy.

Said 'qu'encor, Mathieu Blaise et ses consors les riches qui disoient avoir encor des bledz assez en provision, fussent en volonté, et proposoient, de gresler et gaster les bledz et les biens de la terre, Que jamais quant a elle, elle n'y voulut consentir, pour la crainte qu'elle avoit d'avoir besoing cognoissant, comme elle faisoit, la pauvreté de son marit, aussy, elle a esté par plusieurs fois battue, dudit son maitre Persin, qui enclinoit a la volonté des autres.' Added that hailmaking was spoiled as soon as they heard the sound of bells.

Had been forbidden to go to church and perform duties of true Christian, and was often beaten because she disobeyed. Used holy water and blessed bread to discourage him, although it was apparently not a complete protection. Had been in her during torture, until she was given holy water on the rack, when he left, and she confessed as she had originally intended to do.

Asked why she had wanted the doyen of the maire to visit her in prison, said her master had promised that if she got him to come he 'luy monstreroit ung tour de son mestier', but he had been wise enough not to come. Had also agreed that Persin might strangle her when she was being tortured.

Questioned about use of powders, denied having used them at first, but was then persuaded to confess. Then admitted series of maléfices; in the case of Barbelline

veuve Jean Vinel it had been the work of Claudon Perrin, 'et y avoit telle correspondance entre eulx, qu'ilz faisoient et executoient l'un pour l'autre.' Responses were to series of detailed questions put to her, so she had to do no more than agree to what was suggested. No denials at this point.

3 March 1603; interrogation

Added name of wife of Didier Henry of Fouchifol to those she had seen at sabat. Said 'que l'an passé, comme l'on publioit, les Indulgences et remission plainiere de tous peches et crimes quoy qu'enormes Ilz fussent voire de sorcerie, a ceulx qui iroient a Saint Nicolas gagner le Jubilé, elle se disposa d'y aller aussy, affin d'obtenir pardon et remission de ses fautes, et de pouvoir estre restablie et reincorporée en la Bergerie de Jhesus Christ, de laquelle elle estoit esgarée et retranchée, par la communication qu'elle avoit avec le diable, duquel elle estoit servante, subjecte et ministre.' Had confessed to a father in 'blanc gris', not knowing his order; told him of her witchcraft, and he made her promise to abandon the devil, then absolved her. Felt the devil leave her, and knew that she had been taken back into true church. She was told to carry holy bread and candle wax with her, and to confess her past faults to curé next Easter-time, after which she should confess every three months. 'Et encor que lors, elle auroit tres bonne volonté, et ferme propos de satisfaire et accomplir ceste penitence, sy est ce que venu a la maison et le temps de se confesser au Curé arrivé, la honte de s'en reveler a luy, et la crainte qu'elle eut, qu'il la deceleroit et diffameroit, gaignerent tant sur elle qu'elle n'en dit mot a sondit Curé.'

Subsequently her master, whom she had not seen since her confession, came to her again and made her renounce God anew. Judges remarked on 'Ceste histoire sy estrange et admirable, plainement demonstrant l'assurance qu'il fault avoir aux Sacremens de l'eglise et qu'il fault y recourir en necessité, contre les assaux de cest ennemy'. Was urged to bear death patiently, and pray to God, so that she 'obtiendra facilement misericorde'. Asked to have guards or other prisoners with her, because she was afraid that in view of earlier agreement Persin might try to strangle her.

4 March 1603; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Was confronted with those she had accused, and maintained charges (no list of names here, so not clear exactly who was produced).

5 March 1603; procureur asks for death sentence

8 March 1603; Change de Nancy approves