

Witch 229, Idoult Charpentier 1

B 8691 no 18; witch 229, Idoult Charpentier, de la Chapelle

3 September 1603; informations preparatoires

(1) Demenge Simon, de la Chapelle, 60

Idoult had been suspected since execution of his mother Jehenne and his brother Blason 7 years before; when he had quarrelled with him he had lost various animals, but did not suspect him of being cause.

(2) Jehan Simon, de la Chapelle

Reputation 7 years, since executions; no personal suspicion.

(3) Claudon Jean Claude, 40

Reputation 7 years, since executions; no personal suspicion.

(4) Claudon Valtin, 30

Previous year animals had strayed into Idoult's field, after which he threatened servant; had not noticed any result, except that in present year a cow had sickened and been killed - thought this was his witchcraft. Had heard that he threatened the late Fleurant Grand Jean, whom he believed to have stolen fruit from his trees, that he would not be there to pick them the next year - he died 2 weeks later.

(5) Jehan Reulemant, 40

Reputation 7 years, since executions; no personal suspicion.

(6) Demenge Reullemant, 42

Ditto.

(7) Jehan Valtin, de la Chapelle

Reputation 7 years - added that uncle had also been executed. 6 years earlier, when accused was herdsman, he had been angry because witness took 2 cows from herd and sent them to join oxen, and made threat to wife - one cow then became as if rabid and had to be killed, while other sickened so that he made no profit. Had always thought this was his witchcraft, and also suspected him over death of an ox; his servant had been taking it though fields when Idoult told her angrily that the path adjoined his property and she should have taken another way. 6 years earlier his ward Soulatte Colin had died in his house, and he was giving the customary feast; arranged to buy some lard from Idoult, but did not take it in the end. His daughter aged 6 immediately fell ill and lost speech, dying 3 days later, and again believed this had been his witchcraft.

(8) Jennon femme du precedent, 25

Repeated husband's story.

(9) Jean Valentin, 24

Reputation 4 or 5 years. About 4 years earlier his sister Claudatte was guarding herd with him when he found her asleep and beat her. Fell ill after this, almost losing sight, and heard her say numerous times that he had bewitched her.

(10) Nicolas des Grand, 30

A year earlier Idoult had threatened daughter of witness, aged 12, that she would repent for having allowed animals to damage his field; became swollen and horrible to see for 7 or 8 weeks, and he was sure this was his witchcraft. At church last Chandeleur Idoult's candle went out, so he re-lit it from that of witness; latter fell ill and could hardly await end of service, after which he was ill for 7 or 8 weeks. Accused asked news of his neighbours several times, but never came to see him - thought this too was his doing.

(11) François Didier, de Moyenmoustier, 70

Had heard of his reputation that summer, in house of prévôt at Senones.

(12) Jean Demenge, jeune fils du val de Senones, 25

3 years before, when in service with Fleurant Grand Jean of la Chapelle, was sent to take nuts from a tree. Accused protested that he owned share in the tree, adding threats that his master would not be able to collect any next year. Fleurant fell ill 2 weeks later, and died in 3 days claiming he was bewitched by Idoult.

(13) Marguitte femme Colas du Grand Meix, 30

Repeated deposition of husband (witness 10).

(14) Claudon Jean Simon

Reputation 6 years.

(15) Catherine femme Demenge Simon, 40

7 years earlier had lived in same house as accused, and during winter various neighbours attended veillée there. According to custom she decided to offer them a collation, but the accused and his wife were angry and went off to bed. Next day witness said to his wife 'qu'elle avoit bien esté dedaigneuse' - no reply, but a few days later 5 or 6 sheep died suddenly as if rabid, although neighbours had no similar losses. If he was witch as long reputed suspected he had done this.

(16) Jennon femme Claudon Simon, 21

3 years earlier her father had given her a cow at marriage; Idoult looked fixedly at it as it was brought to the house, and it lost its milk same day, so was sold before any greater loss was incurred. Suspected this was his doing if he was witch as reputed.

(17) Marion veuve Mongeon Jean, 40

4 years earlier Idoult had been herdsman for cattle, and others aided him in customary way. She sent her daughter Bastienne, who did not satisfy him, and whom he threatened several times. She lost the use of her lower limbs, which became blackened, but recovered after 12 weeks. Was sure this had been his witchcraft.

(18) Marion femme Jean Valtin, 36

Repeated husband's story.

(19) Claudon Mesnil, 50

Reputation 6 years. Had found him in his cellar one morning 2 years before, and he offered feeble excuse that he had come to see fruits which were stored there. Then disappeared inexplicably; witness thought he did this 'par oeuvre diabolique'. When he told story in village others said they had seen a great hare running all the way down the street at the same time.

(20) Maurice Jean Didier Grand Jean, du Mesnil du val de Senones, 30

Had married Barbeline, widow of Idoult's brother Blason, and accused was angry, because he had not wanted to consent. After marriage lost animals, so that he was impoverished and had to leave la Chapelle, moving to present home. His wife died after the move, and he imputed her death and those of animals to Idoult.

(21) Noel George, 40

3 years earlier Idoult had asked to have one of his daughters as a servant, but he refused and engaged her to Jean Simon. Accused was angry; within a week girl fell sick and died 12 weeks later. 2 years ago had lost another 2 daughters and a son, who became ill together - attributed this to Idoult, after a quarrel 2 months earlier after which his wife became ill, as she remained. About 2 years earlier was cutting hay with Jean Reullement when they heard son of latter, who was guarding animals, cry out. When they reached him he said 2 wolves had attacked the animals, and he had recognized the head of one as Idoult's.

(22) Mongeatte, femme du precedent, 36

Repeated husband's account of children's deaths.

4 September 1603; interrogation and confrontations

Said he was laboureur, native of la Chapelle, aged about 34. Parents were Colas Charpentier, who had died about 24 years earlier, and his wife Jennon. His mother and his brother Blaise had been executed as witches about 7 years before. Some years earlier his wife had warned him that he had a reputation as a witch.

Admitted to various circumstantial details, such as striking Claudatte Valentin when she fell asleep, and dispute over nut-tree, but made no serious concessions. Asked about being in cellar of Claudon du Mesnil, made 'ung long discours tergiversants', finally said he had been fetching a ladder he had left there, and had gone out by the door.

Continued denials at confrontations, but made no reproaches to witnesses. Claudon du Mesnil suggested that he had gone into cellar to steal, but he denied this.

4 September 1603; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

6 September 1603; Change de Nancy approves

17 September 1603; interrogation under torture

Resisted thumbscrews, but confessed when racked. 2 years earlier was very angry with wife because she was not looking after 2 small children properly. Mre Navel offered him money to buy clothes for children and other necessities, at which he yielded. Given money (leaves) and grey powder. Tried latter on 2 of his pigs, which died.

Confessed to series of maléfices after quarrels, but denied killing children of Noel George, or causing any harm to Jean Valtin. Had given annual chicken to be exempted from attendance at sabat, but had been twice. Were about a dozen men and as many women; was carried on master's shoulders. Brief description of dancing and feasting; attempt to make hail frustrated because one of them knocked the pot over. Saw Jean le Maire of le Paire, Bastienne femme Demenge le Maire of le Paire, one called Claudon from la Fontenelle, Jean Marion of St Blaise and Valentin le Souche (last 2 already executed). Navel invited them 'a faire du mal et se venger de leurs ennemys'. Sat at top of table with the principal witches, but Idoult sat towards bottom because he was poor.

Claimed that 2 weeks earlier had been to seek advice from Jean le Maire at le Paire, who told him he should say all the witnesses were 'des faulsaies et meschants gens, et que par ce moien ses affaires se porteroient bien'. His master had caused his senses to be asleep so that he did not feel thumbscrews, but had been driven out when he drank holy water.

Brought back after lunch, he reiterated his confessions. Was asked how he could have seen Valentin la Souche of la Chapelle at sabat, since he had been executed 5 years earlier, or killed Fleurant Grand Jean 3 years earlier, if he had only been witch for 2 years. Then said it might have been 5 years since seduction.

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18 September 1603; reiterated earlier confessions

19 September 1603; procureur asks for death sentence

20 September 1603; Change de Nancy approves