

B 8702 no 11; witch 250, Marguitte Lairain femme Mengeon Moullot de la Vacherie (St Michel-sur-Meurthe)

Begins with extract from confession of George Danouzey of le Paire, made in 1602 at Taintrux, in which he claimed to have seen her at sabbat and danced with her. Mentioned that she had recently been married in ban d'Etival. Also denounced a number of other local men and women, including Jean de Lairain, father of accused, who was later executed.

27 November 1609; informations preparatoires

(1) Nicolas Jean Ferry, 60

Reputation 10 years, since marriage.

(2) Claudon Ydoux, 32

Around last St Martin his maid Georgeatte warned accused not to allow her horse to do more damage to his field; immediately afterwards fell strangely ill, and was in bed for a week. Cried constantly, said Marguitte had bewitched her. Finally called out one evening that she was on bed trying to strangle her, and seeing there was no hope of cure had to send her home. Accused and her neighbour Catherine had called one another witch when quarrelling.

(3) Mengeon Grand Didier alias Vennegey, 28

Reputation since residence.

(4) Colas Charpentier, 25

Had heard Colas du Mont of Brehimont say that he had advised Mengeon Moullat not to marry her, but to leave her in ban de Taintrux, because she was already reputed a witch.

(5) Didier Thiebault de la Vacherie, 50

Around St Jean a mare had become sick, and remained so for 3 months, unable to stand properly. Once accused had come to help get it up, and when his wife was crying about prospect of loss she comforted her, saying it would recover in a few days. Did so, and he suspected she had bewitched it, then cured it. 3 years earlier had come to house and asked to see their geese, because she thought some of hers were among them; forced her way to see them despite denials, and after this they all sickened and died - again suspected her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(6) Damaged.

(7) Nicolas Moullot, 50

She was sister-in-law; had major quarrel with her 5 years earlier about a 'fontaine' they shared, and he called her witch. Soon wife became strangely ill, and remained so for 3 months; all those who visited her said she was bewitched. She and the witness were certain that this was doing of Marguitte, and one day he met

her in doorway after she had visited his wife. 'Il commença de l'appeller sorciere, et luy dict que c'estoit elle qui tenoit ainsy sa femme en langueur, et sy elle ne luy donnoit guarison il la feroit prendre et brusler, ne scait quelle responce elle luy fait parce qu'il ne la peut entendre'. A few days later wife told him she had come to see her and asked 'sy elle desireroit bien de nourrir veu qu'elle avoit ung mary qu'estoit sy bon mesnagé, elle luy fait responce que sy c'estoit la volonté de Dieu, elle desireroit bien de demeurer quelque temps avec son mary, et qu'elle puisse nourrir son enfant qu'ilz avoient estez contrainct mettre a nourrice ad cause de sa grande maladie qu'elle ne le pouvoit allaicter.' Marguitte then persuaded her to eat a little, which she had not done for some time, after which she gradually recovered. Long reputation, and he also suspected she had caused death of his first wife Jennon 7 years earlier.

(8) Catherine femme Jean Demenge Willaume

Threat 'qu'elle leur feroit tant de mal et la mettroit sy bas qu'elle n'auroit du tout rien', followed by numerous losses of animals.

(9) Claudatte femme Claudon Ydoulx, 25

Repeated husband's story about illness of maid.

(10) Elizabeth femme Jean Colat, 26

Long reputation; had heard from Catherine femme Colas Moullot that she suspected her over great illness 4 years earlier, and had given her plate of 'millasse' to heal her.

(11) Marion femme Mengeon Claude Mariatte

Dispute over damage done by animals of accused in field, followed by trouble with eye, which became completely blind after 9 months. No cure despite all efforts, and believed this was her witchcraft - long reputation.

(12) Catherine femme Nicolas Moullot, 30

Told same story as husband, about illness for which doctors could find no cure. Said she had forced herself to eat some of 'millasse' because she desired to be cured, and 'estimoit qu'icelle prevenue luy avoit envoyé pour luy donner guarison.' Also suspected her of causng death of her stepdaughter Marguitte, aged about 18; had heard her say that girl would not serve her for two years on end, and was often punishing her.

(13) Marguitte femme Didier Thiebault, 54

Repeated husband's story about mare which recovered, and about death of geese.

(14) Catherine femme Jean Jeandey, 22

Had heard Catherine femme Jean Demenge Villaume claim that accused had killed Demenge le Tixerant, 'et s'estoit mise en guise d'icelle Catherine pour luy donner charge'.

(15) Marguitte femme Nicolas Wennequey

Mutual accusations between Marguitte and Catherine. One day had told witness that she ordinarily held plough, and was reason why she (the accused) was blamed by her husband for not doing so. Next day a horse died; did not know if she was cause, but if she confessed she might tell truth about this. General reputation.

(16) Marguitte femme Ydoulx Grand Didier, 25

Story of illness of sister-in-law's maid Georgeatte; witness had been there when she called out she was being attacked. Claimed accused had come through small window to do this, but they saw nothing. Previous year witness and Chrestienne femme du mareschal had promised to help her with harvest one day. but latter went elsewhere. Threats against her followed by loss of baby she was carrying (damage here). Once when in field with husband of accused he complained of great losses of animals, saying he did not know whether to blame his wife or their neighbour Catherine femme Jean Demenge Villaume. 6 weeks earlier had quarrel over pigs of accused damaging garden, and next week a foal died, which she suspected had been her witchcraft.

(17) Ydoulx Grand Didier, 30

Same story as wife about pigs and death of foal; she had said his wife 'avoit donné des maledictions a ses porcqs, mais qu'il s'en repentiroit.' Long reputation; had heard from Demenge Drolbin of St Dié that he and his wife had been to her house to card some wool, and wife had quarrelled with her. Fell ill same day and died 2 days later claiming she was bewitched by her.

(18) Mongeon Claude Mariatte, 40

Long reputation and loss of eye by his wife (damage).

(19) Jean Demenge Villaume, 50

Numerous quarrels between her and his wife (nearest neighbours); threatened several times 'de leur faire tant de mal, qu'elle les rendroit sy pauvres qu'ils seroient contrainctz aller mendier leur pains'. Had lost several animals, which he was sure was her witchcraft. General rumour in village that she had killed her stepdaughter.

(20) Chrestienne femme François Camon marechal, 25

Story of failure to help as promised at last harvest, followed by threats reported to her by Marguitte femme Ydoulx Grand Didier. Soon afterwards her child was stillborn and could not be baptised, while she herself was in danger; if she was witch as reputed suspected her of causing this.

? , interrogation

Said she was about 35, native of le Paire de Taintrux. Father Jean de Larrain had been executed as witch 7 years earlier, mother Claudatte was still alive. Had been married 7 years before at last St Jean. Admitted she had been accused by George Danouzey in 1602, but insisted she was innocent. Denied that father had taken her to sabbat, adding 'qu'elle ne pensoit guere qu'il fut entaché de ce crime'. Did not want to renounce the devil, arguing she had never had anything to do with him.

Agreed that she and her neighbour Catherine had called one another witch. Also agreed to some other circumstantial details. Said she thought her stepdaughter had died 'de la grace de dieu'; her neighbour Catherine had spread rumour she had killed her, but perhaps she had done it, since she was reputed a witch. Said she did not remember that her brother-in-law accused her of bewitching his wife; had sent her plate of 'millasse' but had not put anything else in it to heal her.

Asked about death of brother-in-law's first wife Jennon 7 years earlier, again claimed this accusation originated with Catherine, and she might be real cause. Asked about threat to Catherine, said she was not worthy to be believed, and reckoned she 'a fait plusieurs mallefices a l'instance d'elle prevenue pour luy donner charge.' Also blamed Catherine for accusation that she had caused loss of eye to Marion femme Mengeon Claude Mariatte. Insisted to end that she was a good woman, innocent of charges.

? confrontations

Again made difficulty about renouncing devil. No reproaches to witnesses, but repeatedly suggested Catherine was responsible for acts attributed to her. Not confronted with Catherine then, but separately - latter had already confessed she was a witch. Now claimed to have seen Marguitta at numerous sabbats; she was 'une sorciere des plus parfaites' and 'il n'y en avoit point de plus meschantes en toute la troupe'. She had killed Demenge le Tixerant, having taken form of Catherine to implicate her. Marguitta denied all this, claiming charges were made 'par haine et malveillance'.

30 November 1609; procureur for abbot of Etival asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

3 December 1609; Change de Nancy agrees

10 December 1609; interrogation under torture

Said that George Danouzey had accused her from hatred, but would not be more specific, while saying that Catherine had damned herself. Was given thumbscrews and racked, but would confess nothing. Brought back after lunch, put on rack and given tortillons. Marginal note 'c'est contre le droict et la pratique que la question a esté reiterée a la prevenue'. Still would confess nothing.

11 December 1609; confession

Now made voluntary confession, saying she had been thinking of her children and her husband when she denied being a witch. Said she had been seduced 12 years earlier, when still young woman living with father, and distressed because he was under arrest in château of Taintrux as a witch (not executed on that

occasion). Persin promised to find her 'ung beau jeune guerçon pour la marier, et l'assister en tout et partout en sorte qu'elle n'auroit aucune nécessité'. Gave her money (leaves), and powder (black/men, grey/animals); normal seduction scene. Had great claws on hands and feet.

Tried out powder on dog belonging to prévôt, which died. Angry with George Danoulzey, who had obtained reparation after they alleged he had killed an ox, killed one of his cows. Only other malefice while resident there was to kill Collatte femme Demenge Pieron, who had told her off for taking apples - gave her an apple with black powder inside. Had been to numerous sabbats, and named list of witches already executed. Her father, Didier Vincent and Marguitte femme Dionnel, of Taintrux, wife of George Yolle and George le Clerc of Chabry, and George Cajel of Ginfaing.

Had been to sabbat 5 times since marriage, but had only recognized neighbour Catherine because of masks they wore; gave 2 annual black chickens to avoid attendance. Conventional description. Confessed several more maléfices at la Vacherie, including trying to kill the maid Georgeatte - failed because she did not have enough powder. Her master had been into room, but had no power over her because she was too well protected by sign of cross.

Killed horse of Nicolas Wennequey because she lent him three loads of straw and he only returned one. Had made sister-in-law ill, then felt sorry and obtained yellow powder from Persin to cure her. Had killed wife of Demenge Drolbin because she objected to sleeping with her children.

Repeated confessions later that day, begging M. d'Etival to look after husband and children, making sure children were brought up in Christian faith.

Marginal note that confessions ought to have been confirmed again next day.

11 December 1609; procureur asks for death sentence

13 December 1609; Change de Nancy asks that she repeat confessions freely before sentence is carried out.

14 December 1609; repeated earlier confessions

15 December 1609; executed at St Dié