

Witch 262, Agathe Urbain 1

B 8708 no 1; witch 262, Agathe femme Claudon Urbain, de Sagemont

12 January 1611; extract from confessions of Claude Mengel Grivey alias des Feignes of Sagemont, convicted of witchcraft. Names as accomplices the wife of Lambert du Vic, his sister Agathe, and Collatte femme Colas Valdezey.

15 January 1611; procureur d'office for canons asks for information to be taken against her, noting that she had previously been imprisoned, then released until recalled, and was again 'deferée par une infinité de malversations'.

21 January; informations preparatoires

(1) Collatte femme Mengel de la Hault de Sagemont, 50

When hail fell and spoiled crops, Agathe (who was helping her reap) told her that when in service of maiesse Masson at St Die (subsequently executed as a witch), she had taught her a 'recepte' against hail; involved going out into field with holy water and blessed candles as storm approached, and fixing candle to fence.

(2) Claudatte femme Fleurant de Delaleaue de Sagemont, 35

Some 10 years before, when spinning together, Agathe told her about occasion when she ws spinning with maiesse, and big black man came in. Then got up and imitated way he had walked, pressing her hands to her sides. Long reputation, much feared.

(3) Colas Claudon Claude de Sagemont, 40

6 or 7 years before had been to see Nicolas Le Vieulx Homme just before his death, who told him she had bewitched him after a dispute. Some 12 or 13 years before he had contracted to do 2 days ploughing for her, but on day he intended to go it rained so heavily he was prevented. His servant told her he might go to woods if it cleared up, and she was angry, saying perhaps he would be prevented. Later same day an ox fell and broke its leg on level ground, after which he went and told her she was a witch, and he would kill her if his ox did not recover. She told him it would recover if God wished, then when he was at a distance mocked him by lifting skirt and showing her behind. Leg was set, but animal was not able to work again, and had to be fattened and sold for a mere 9 ecus. Believed this had been her witchcraft.

(4) Nicolas Charmelle de Sagemont, 35

Some 7 or 8 years earlier had rented garden from her brother Fleurant des Feignes; as his wife was working there Agathe passed and told her she 'se faisoit bien de la glorieuse de labourer ledit meix', but within a year she would not be working it. This began dispute, and within the year Fleurant threw himself in water and was drowned, so that goods were forfeit to seigneur and they lost the garden.

Lost pig around same time, which he blamed on her in view of long reputation and quarrel.

(5) Mengeon Colas le Vieulx Homme de Sachment, 40

His late mother had been ill for long time with wasting disease, during which she had often said the accused had given it to her after they had quarrelled. His sister Magdelaine also had an illness from which she languished for 5 years before she died, which she blamed on Agathe, whom she chased away from their house when she could, because she feared her. Father then accused her of being responsible for their deaths, and fell ill himself after drinking from spring outside her house; died after 6 weeks, saying he charged her with his death. Witness himself had reproached her, and suspected she had caused death of 2 goats and a foal in revenge, but had taken no action after he called her witch. Previous spring had come back from woods on account of rain, to find her in his house, where she had not been for 2 years, telling wife she should fetch back 2 calves which were at pasture; next day one of these fell ill and died in a week, 'pourit tout vif'.

(6) Claudon Colas Le Vieulx Homme de Sachment, 37

One day the accused, who 'ne tenoit grand menage', asked his mother to wash clothes when she did laundry, but on persuasion of his father she refused. Mother then became ill, emaciated and paralysed; when Agathe asked after her one day witness could not help crying, at which she seemed moved and said she was not ready to die yet, but would languish more than 7 years, which turned out to be true. During this time a foreign woman who gave medicines came to village, and said she was bewitched; could not cure her completely, but offered to treat her so she could do household tasks with aid of a stick. Made bath with 'racines de jancine' and wild cress, and for some time her state improved, before becoming worse than ever until she died. Family all believed accused was responsible. Then told of sister's illness, during which she consulted a 'devineresse' in Burgundy who told her she was bewitched, and could only suggest pilgrimage which did no good. Finally gave account of father's death in same terms as brother.

(7) Colas Claudon Grivey de Sachment, 56

Some 6 or 7 years before she asked to sow flax on his land, but he refused, and then lost 2 pigs; suspected her of causing this in view of long reputation.

(8) Claudon Valentin Bertrand de Sachment, 50

Long before a horse had strayed on her property, which she chased off quite naked; when he saw her he called her witch and quarrelled with her, after which he lost various cattle, which he blamed on her if she was a witch. Helping to arrest her previous Tuesday, she said to him he was not taking those responsible for making his cows lame.

(9) Mengin le Petit Anthoine de Sachment, 33

Refused to plough for her because he was too busy with own work; did not notice if she was displeased, but two fine goats then lost milk, so that he had to sell them. Had always believed her responsible, if she were witch she was reputed.

(22 January 1611)

(10) Jean Claude Colin de Habeaurupt, 35

After quarrels with her daughter when they were guarding animals both he and daughter had called her witch - he did so partly because she threatened to beat daughter. Had lost various animals since, and if she were witch as reputed believed her responsible. Had heard her husband say 'qu'elle estoit sorciere ou il n'en y avoit point au monde, et qu'estant deboutée des gens de ce monde, elle alloit encore au diable.'

(11) Georgeatte femme au Gros Colas de Sachemont, 26

2 weeks before Christmas had taken some yarn to accused, who told her she had a 'bien mauvais guercon' who as herdsman of sheep and goats did not keep them from damaging crops, adding that if her goats had not eaten other people's crops they would still be alive. Witness thought this implied she knew something about death of 2 goats previous summer, and that if she were witch she was reputed she had caused this.

(12) Claudon le Petit Anthoine de Voinchere, 36

When he had been keeping 'petit mesnage' before his marriage in house he and his brother owned at Sachemont, he and his sister-in-law were mucking out animals when accused came by and asked at which end of the stable his were kept, then if the goats passed before or behind them. Was already fearful of her because of reputation, and replied that goats passed behind them, while she took good look at his cattle. 3 days later one of these slipped at the spring, and fell 10 feet on its nose, dying in 2 days so 'puante et plaine de poison' that it had to be buried without even the hide being saleable. Had been very angry, and told her brother-in-law Vincent about it, called her witch without any reparation being sought, and would have spent 100 francs to have her arrested had he not been about to be married. At same time 2 hens which did not belong to him passed place where cow fell, and died, so believed she had poisoned it. Remembered that when she had been released some 18 years earlier his father had told her that she had abused the chapter and their officers while in their prisons, 'ou elle contrefit la sotte, declairant qu'elle en avoit eschappé par ce moyen, et qu'un autre y estant fit ce qu'il pourroit pour evader'; witness had always remembered this carefully so that he could report it if she were arrested again.

(13) Jacquatte veuve Jean Claude Vaultier de Sachemont, 50

She and husband had sometimes lived in lower room of Agathe's house, and when her husband was away in service, so that she was alone, heard her get up at night, go to chimney, and talk for a long time. Had thought this might be because she sometimes 'contrefaict la sottte', but now in view of her reputation thought she might have been talking to devil. Had heard her say that her husband reproached her that her devil masters made noise on roof, but that it had been billy-goat of Didier George; asked him if he had such an animal, and he did not.

(14) Mengel Urbain de Sachment, 60

Wife had been ill and unable to work for 4 years before death, and had told husband that he suspected Agathe, who then came to excuse herself, saying she was no witch, and however much of her property she gave her she would not get better. When she was being given communion said that if they thought she was bewitched they should not do this. One day told her he would apply to seigneurs, and if they did not take his side he would do it himself with a stick; she replied he should not presume it was witchcraft, but 'des verges de dieu'.

(15) Royne femme a Bastien Ferry du ban le duc, 24

Accused was 'coustumiere de quereller avec tout le monde'; had attacked witness one day, and she defended herself by using stone to beat her with, while holding her by her hair. Threatened 'que sy elle pouvoit avoir puissance sur elle, elle la feroit mourir'; late Didier George had told her to wash her hands every morning, making sign of cross and commending herself to God. When herding goats Agathe warned her that 'Villemin' might take one, then a wolf did carry one off - next day she said she had warned her, to which witness replied by calling her witch, saying she had taken the goat. Father's other goats then started dying, until she took 'herbes' from her garden and gave them to animals, after which losses ceased. Day after this Agathe beat girl called Georgeatte who had helped witness, until she took her away.

(16) Georgeatte fille le Petit Anthoine de Sachment, 24

Told story of how she had been attacked by Agathe, who had tried to scratch out eyes, until rescued by Royne (previous witness); accused then threatened to cause death of them both. Had been ill for 4 years, although relieved after pilgrimage to Ste Reyne, which she hoped to repeat. After her return from St Dié had suspected her, and called her witch with no reaction. Late father and mother had asked her 'pourquoy elle n'avoit cognu son fait, sy elle estoit sorciere, respondit, que messieurs estoient bien aysé d'appaiser, et qu'elle donnoit a uns des napueaux, et aux autres des noixettes, et contrefaisoit la sottte pour estre hors, mais qu'ils n'en auroient plus.'

(17) Colas George Goenoy de Boselemprey, 65

Had been in his service more than 20 years before, and used to hide herself. Finally hid in hayloft for 3 or 4 days; he was frightened she would die, so pretended

he was going to send her to fair at St Dié with animals. When she was persuaded down, gave her a good meal and dismissed her from service, since when he had lost animals to value of more than 1,000 francs. Could not be sure she was cause, but suspected that if she was witch as reputed she might have been responsible, especially for loss of an ox around time of her dismissal.

24 January 1611; interrogation

Said she was Agathe Mengeon Colas Goiney, aged 55; husband was artisan and woodcutter for charcoal-burners. Lived at Raind d'autrain near Sachment. Father had been Mengeon Colas Goiney, mother Jennon de Bonichere, both long dead of natural causes. Asked if she had always lived at Sachment, said she had spent 5 years at St Dié, last one in house of maiesse Masson; agreed she had heard she had been executed as a witch.

Agreed there had been hailstorm some 20 years earlier, when she was haymaking at Hernafain, but denied telling Colatte femme Mengel de la Hault way of protecting crops. Asked if she could tell them such a way, said one should hold three candles in hand until they were used, then kneel and pray to God - denied use of holy water. Had learned this from Jehennon femme Colas Claudon Grivey; denied it had been from maiesse Masson.

Asked about remark by her husband that she was a witch, said 'qu'il a la langue trop grande, et que c'est un glout, et un trouan'. Admitted that she had been to excuse herself to Mengel and Jacotte Urbain, saying she was not a witch. Agreed to fight with Royne, but denied everything else in testimony, including beating Georgeatte.

Questioned on every specific charge, following order of depositions, she denied everything else, mostly saying she knew nothing of alleged incidents.

26 January 1611; confrontations

In reply to Collatte femme Mengel de la Hault, said she had learned recipe from her aunt at Gerhadel. Witness added that she had told her she had a St Nicolas in her house, which turned in direction where lost beasts were to be found - she agreed to this. Colas Claudon Claude added story of occasion when he had leased her 'regayns', and one animal did damage in her garden. She threatened that it would not eat again, and it began to sicken; he replied by calling her witch, saying he would beat her if she did not cure it. She said he was 'rude homme', and had probably worked it too hard, as his father often did. Advised him to give it ashes from fire, which he did, and it was cured - she admitted this was true.

Claudon Colas le Vieulx Homme backed up Royne's story about threat that Villemin would take goat; she said she had warned that wolf might do so. Otherwise no results, and no reproaches to witnesses.

Judges asked for record of previous trial, but this could not be found. Enquired of their predecessors, who said she had been renvoyée because indices against her were insufficient; she agreed this had been the case.

27 January 1611; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire

31 January 1611; Change de Nancy agrees

4 February 1611; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, then racked, denied for a long time. Said brother who committed suicide had been 'un pauvre mal advise'. Said that when she had been in childbed 'un bocq noir' had come into room and spoken to her, but she had told him to go away, which he did. Judges said they were sure this was devil, who was accustomed to transform himself in this manner; released her, then had her racked harder, after drinking holy water. She now asked to be released and she would tell truth - was told she must first give name of her master. Said he was Percin, and she had been seduced during time of great dearth some 16 to 18 years earlier. Had approached her in form of 'gros marquaire'; first time she sent him away, but on second approach she yielded. Pinched her forehead and right shoulder, made her renounce God, and had intercourse with her - sperm was cold, unlike that of her husband. Gave her black and grey powder, in form of seeds of 'percin et cresson', and money which turned out to be pieces of lead when she tried to buy bread.

Confessed to series of maléfices, corresponding to those alleged by witnesses. Had been talking with master in her room, because she did not want to go to sabbat. Said she had never been to sabbat; judges said devil always began by making his followers go, and had thumbscrews applied again (to arm and thigh), at which she admitted she had been to sabbat 2 or 3 times. Had seen wife of Jacot Charbonnatte and Collatte femme Grand Colas (both dead), and Jehennon Bon Claude of le Souche (still alive). Others were masked, and she had been in a corner, having job of sweeping place where sabbat took place. Had not eaten since she was not 'amatoire de chair'; they had danced to sound of a flute, then gone home. Had also made hail in usual fashion.

Later same day confirmed confessions; said sabbat was in 'bans bois du hault d'autrain'.

5 February 1611; confirmed admissions, and agreed she deserved death, hoping God would give her grace to endure it patiently.

7 February 1611; another confirmation.

10 February 1611; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

18 February 1611; Change de Nancy agrees

22 February 1611; sentence carried out