

Witch 275, Jehennon Thomas 1

B 8712 no 4; witch 275, Jehennon veuve Thomas Diez Thomas de Mazelay

1 June 1614; procureur d'office asks for depositions

4 June 1614; informations preparatoires

(1) Dieudonnee femme Thoussainct Jalley de Mazelay, 29

Last Assumptiontide villagers of Mazelay had all gone to Saint Dié to be confirmed. Accused had called on her to go with her, but she had excused herself as not being ready, because she did not want to go with her. Nevertheless she and her husband found her waiting for them on road, and were compelled to accompany her, although her husband had said 'que telle compagnie ne luy aggreoit guere'. On the road she became ill, and was still not cured; at one stage had received extreme unction, when she was unable to speak for 3 days. If accused was a witch, as she was reputed, then believed she had caused this.

(2) Claudatte femme Claudel Jean Aulbert de Mazelay, 24

When Jehennon's husband died she had asked witness to sell her one sheet to wrap him in, and lend her another to put on his coffin. Wanted this to be kept secret, but witness could not resist telling another neighbour, who 'pour se venger' after a quarrel, revealed to Jehennon that she had gossiped. She was angry and reproached her; shortly afterwards lost young cow worth 9 ecus, which she believed was her doing in view of long reputation.

(3) Jehennon femme Gerard Choppat de Mazelay, 48

Accused had been midwife of village for last 10 years; although custom was for all women to attend childbed, she had forbidden witness to do so, over which they had quarrelled. Had lost a cow, which she blamed on her witchcraft, in view of her long reputation. This might have been revenge for quarrel, or because of dispute her husband had with Jehennon and her husband, after pieces of ironwork belonging to his cart had been taken by their children and buried under pear tree, where they were found.

(4) Jehennon femme Jean Didier Vagnier de Mazelay, 36

Told of occasion more than 2 years before when her son Jean, aged between 2 and 3, had been sleeping in cradle at bottom of their bed. Cried out that cats were scratching him; father felt around cradle, but there was nothing there. Later cried out more violently, and she took him outside, discovering that he was badly scratched around his eye, so that he could not see for 8 days. Neighbours came to see, but not accused, although she was nearest. Later heard that she had said to wife of Thoussainct Jalley that 'sy elle l'eut bien signé, le mectant au berceau, cela ne luy fut arrivé'. Suspected that if she was a witch as reputation had it, then she might have caused this for some reason unknown to witness.

(5) Jehennon femme Jean Didier Martin de Mazelay, 50

Some 14 years before her daughter, aged 7, had been guarding animals when son of accused had put a dead grass-snake across her back. Had been so frightened that she fainted, and had never been well since, so that she was still unable to go out into service at age of 22. Believed that this was witchcraft by accused, in view of reputation, and a quarrel when her son had struck daughter in eye.

(6) Marie femme Remy Valdeliepvre de Mazelay, 40

Claimed that 'sur le bruit qui couroit que Marguitte fille d'icelle prevenue avoit dit que sa mere prenoit ung ramon, s'engraissoit et puis sortoit de leur cheminée, icelle prevenue dit a elle deposante comme par admiration, excusant neantmoins sa fille de telle parolle, alleguant que c'estoit un dire d'enfant'.

(7) Mengeatte femme Nicolas Humbert de Mazelay, 34

About 7 years before she met Jean Henry, who asked her if wife of Jean Didier Vagnier had been delivered of twins; she said she had arrived late and had only seen one. Later had dispute with accused, who claimed that she had put it about that there had been two children, one born dead, while witness asserted it was Jehennon who had told this story. Became ill for 14 weeks, then met accused, who 'la reprint disant qu'elle luy soubconnoit son mal, a ce respondit la deposant que non, mais que qu'elle avoit chosé avec elle, elle n'avoit gueres heu de santé, la dessus la prevenue luy repartit, qu'elle print peine de manger et qu'elle se porteroit bien.' This duly happened, and she had always suspected her of causing illness, given her reputation.

(8) Collatte femme Adam Bessat de Mazelay, 35

Had heard late Marguitte femme Claudel Jean Aubert say that she suspected Jehennon of causing deaths of her children who had not been baptized, and whom she had delivered.

(9) Colatte femme Colas Henry Valdeliepvre, de Mazelay, 33

Told how accused had quarrelled with the late Marguitte Aubert, who called one of her children 'baille hault', then called Jehennon witch. Next day she alleged that Marguitte 'se garderoit bien de la plus injurier, et qu'elle luy avoit bien leu la legente', giving impression that she had made amends. Marguitte was passing, overheard her, and called through window 'qu'elle avoit fait sa genaxe', to make it clear this was untrue. Subsequently Marguitte, who was pregnant at the time, had child born dead, which she suspected was witchcraft. Witness did not know if accused had heard the denial. Also claimed that when Gerard Jalley's wife had small baby she had been helping her, and Jehennon had been angry because she was visiting her officially as midwife. A bull she had on lease was then attacked by a wolf in middle of herd, and had to be put down, so the only profit was from hide and a little flesh; suspected her of causing this.

(10) Demenge le Maire de Mazelay, 38

Some 8 years before had hired her son to guard animals, but when he and his wife were absent for 2 days found purse and some money had been stolen. Went to see her husband, whom he told that he would forget whole thing if it was returned; he reacted angrily, threatening to seek reparation for the accusation. Later came to beg mercy, returning the empty purse, promising to repay the money which had been spent, but died without doing so. Since then various misfortunes had affected his animals, 'qu'il n'a pu presumer a autre qu'a icelle prevenue', given her reputation and reports that she hated them.

(11) Didier Thomas de Mazelay, 30

Some 6 years earlier had been living in house next to her, which he had inherited. Had various disputes, and she told him 'qu'il ne guarderoit gueres sadite maison, ains qu'il seroit peult estre bien heureux de retourner chez elle, pour y resider'. Had indeed been obliged to sell his share in house and rent another, while he had lost numerous animals so that he had become 'assez necessiteux' and his children had to beg; in view of reputation and threat believed she could have caused him some misfortune.

(12) Adam Bessat de Mazelay, 45

14 years earlier, wanting to come to Mazelay where his mother-in-law lived, had bought a house from her husband. Subsequently refused to sell them back half of it, 'en laquelle maison il n'eut jamais chance, ny peut faire profit, ny en ses bestiaux ny autrement'; lost animals worth more than 100 francs, dead by poison, notably a 'tourasse' which was cut up by hangman of Saint Dié, who found flesh to be rotten. If she was a witch as reputed, then he was certain she had done him harm.

(13) Gerard Choppat de Mazelay, 40

Told how 12 years before her two sons had stolen iron parts from his cart, then told him where to find them. Quarrel, death of cow, as reported by wife. Believed this to be her witchcraft in view of reputation; already thought a witch in native Wisembach before marriage, as he had heard.

(14) Thoussainct Jalley de Mazelay, 40

Repeated wife's story about confirmation, subsequent illness.

(15) Claudon Jalley de Mazelay, 40+

At last Easter he had taken traditional tarts to cook them in oven of Claudel Lallemand, where he found her taking her own out. Remarked to her that as she

was alone she would have to ask neighbours and others like him to eat them; replied that she could find plenty of others without him. Did not know if she had been angry, but a week later fell ill with a fever; was still unable to work properly, and in view of reputation blamed this on her witchcraft.

(16) Claudel Jean Aubert de Mazelay, 38

During lifetime of his first wife Marguitte (dead 4 years) accused had two sons who were generally reputed thieves; during his absence wife had quarrel with Jehennon about them. Later she had twins, one of which was born dead; a subsequent child was also born dead, the accused being midwife on both occasions, so both he and his wife suspected her of witchcraft. When she was pregnant for a third time was planning to go to another village to have child, to avoid having her as midwife, but died suddenly (from fall in garden?) before coming to term. Finally repeated story of his present wife and sheets for burial of husband, followed by loss of cow. Wife had told Gerard Jalley 'voulant plustost excuser la pauvreté d'icelle prevenue', and his wife had told Jehennon.

(17) Jean Didier Vagnier de Mazelay, 36

Told story of child whose eye was injured by cat. When woken up he had lit candle and found nothing, then threatened child and made him go back to sleep. He had already been out to cart hay when wife discovered injury (her deposition said it was around dawn). Claimed that accused had later said 'que des chats a deux pieds l'avoient blessé'. Remarks about what wife should have done were made to Dieudonnée femme Thoussaint Jalley.

(18) Colas Humbert de Mazelay, 38

Last Whitsuntide had been collecting taxes, and she had claimed she was exempt as a widow, but he had threatened action and she finally paid. Since then had fallen ill, and could only walk and eat with difficulty, which he blamed on her witchcraft.

(19) Marion fille Anthoine Colas Colin de Mazelay, 30

Some 12 years before accused had quarrel with Marguitte femme Claudel Jean Aubert, because one of her children had taken bread from their house. Jehennon then blamed witness for dispute, because she had informed Marguitte; she denied this, but was told 'qu'un jour elle en auroit souvenance, et lors qu'elle ny penseroit point'. Later her father fell strangely ill, and after 18 weeks in bed became blind, as he still was. In view of reputation and threats, thought this was her witchcraft.

(20) Jean Anthoine Colas Colin de Mazelay, 26

Repeated sister's story, adding that she had admitted to Jehennon that she had told Marguitte of seeing her children around the house, and that they had gone in to rock her child.

(21) Colatte femme Gerard Jalley de Mazelay, 30

Accused had delivered three of her children; after last delivery had no milk to give her as was customary, so gave her something else. Soon afterwards she fell ill for 10 weeks, which in view of reputation she suspected had been her doing.

(22) Eponon femme Colas Knecht de Gemainfaing au Ban de Sapt, 36

Had heard from the late Marguitte Aubert that she suspected Jehennon of causing deaths of three children, and that she 'la haysoit comme poison'.

7 June 1614; interrogation

Said she was Jennon Aldezey, widow of Thomas Diez Thomas manoeuvrier, aged about 50. Had been midwife at Mazelay for 10 to 12 years. Native of Wisembach, father was Colas Aldezey from Saulcy, mother Beniste Jean Pretre of Wisembach, both of whom died natural deaths. Denied any reputation for witchcraft in native village; knew she had now been arrested as a witch.

Made some minor admissions about quarrels or remarks which had passed, but nothing damaging. In reply to accusations made by Demenge le Maire said 'qu'il est aultant vray de tout cela comme elle est Royne de France'. House had been sold to Adam Bessat by the creditors.

10 June 1614; confrontations

Reproached Jehennon femme Gerard Choppat that she had let herself be called witch; witness claimed she had obtained reparation before officer of 'le doyen des trois villes'. Claudel Jean Aubert added to deposition that he had a sow which had piglets during winter, which he showed to the accused, saying they were 'beaux et bons pour rostir', even though it was said that those born in winter were no good. Same evening two cats carried off one of them and bit it in various places, although sow tried to defend it; a few days later another died strangely twisted. Blamed accused, thought cats had been witches. Otherwise she denied all the charges, without reproaching witnesses.

Same day procureur asked for question ordinaire.

11 June 1614; Change de Nancy suggests thumbscrews only, unless Barbeline femme Colas Mongeot and Jean Lallemand, accused of the same crime, confess and incriminate her, when question ordinaire would be appropriate.

5 July 1614; interrogation under torture

Resisted both thumbscrews and rack; started to confess when given tortillons on left arm, and made to drink some holy water. Said she had been seduced by Persin some 3 years before, who had appeared to her dressed in white on her way to woods, said she was 'fort dolente' and offered to give her 'des moyens suffisamment qu'elle n'yroit plus a journées'. Gave her black and yellow powder, to kill men and animals respectively; black was like 'semence de Napnel'.

Experimented on cat with powder, and it died in 12 hours. Also killed a heifer which gave no milk and a goat which did not return with others. Agreed that she had consented to her master attacking child in cradle, because father did not give her work, and to attacking bull in form of wolf because Colas Holbin had taken her cherries.

Had been to sabbat with some 60 others, many of them masked. Had made hail, and the great wind and rain two years earlier which spoiled some of the oats. Had seen Claudatte femme Demenge le Maire and Catherine veuve Claudon Holbin of Mazelay, Jehennon Bergier and Libaire femme Bernard Chartreux of Saint Dié, Claudatte veuve Claudon Pierron de Robache. Among those already executed la Reynarde de Robache and la Roynne de Grattain.

Later same day was interrogated again, and pressed on subject of various children born dead. Denied any responsibility, but 'au contraire s'a acquité fidellement de son exercice de sage femme, que le plus souvent les femmes qui sont ainsy enceinte y commectant beaucoup de faulte, pour ne se contregarder comme il est necessaire, et non que cela vienne de sortilege ou autrement'.

7 July 1614; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Added name of Dieudonnée femme Thoussaint Jaley of Mazelay to her accomplices.

9 July 1614; procureur asks for death sentence

14 July 1614; Change de Nancy agrees

24 July 1614; sentence carried out