

Witch 277D, Fleuratte Chappouxat 1

Witch 277D; B 8713 no 4, Fleuratte femme Jean Chappouxat, de Pajaille

Extracts from confessions of Laurence femme Vincent Bandesapt of Pajaille, November 1611, and Marguitte veuve Jean Colas Arnoulx d'Ayefosse, December 1611, in which accused is named as having been at sabat. Was confronted with second, who maintained her charges. Then further accusation by Claudon Marchal of le Vivier, with confrontation on 3 July 1614 at which he maintained charges.

9 July 1614; informations preparatoires

(1) Mengeon Colin, du Vivier, 40

6 years before, when it was necessary to elect a midwife at la Vivier, the wife of the late maire Nicolas le Duc had tried very hard to get Fleuratte chosen. His own wife Agathe had objected strongly, on ground that she was reputed a witch; he himself went to maire to protest about 'le grand malheure qui en pouvoit arriver, sy l'on mectoit une sorciere en ceste charge'. She was very angry at being excluded, and shortly afterwards his wife had a stillborn child. This happened twice in succeeding years, which he suspected was her doing - long reputation, and accusations.

(2) Agathe femme du precedant, 40

12 years earlier her late father Demenge Haxo bought a house at la Fosse from husband of accused, about which she was very angry. He then had it rebuilt, after which she said 'que ce n'estoit plus une maison mais un diable de chasteau' - next day the house was ruined. Soon after her father became violently ill and died in a fortnight; believed both these misfortunes were her doing, in view of reputation. Also told same story as husband about position of midwife and stillbirths.

(3) Catherine veuve Jean Grand George, 40

No personal suspicion, but heard Catherine fille Claudon Durand say 2 years earlier that she had seen accused fall from a cloud behind her house.

(4) Jacquette femme Jean Aulbry, 28

Story about occasion 2 or 3 years before then she refused to sell her some 'milot' and ox died. This was exactly the same story as she told against Mengeatte Yclon - was this a copyist's error? She did admit the refusal, however.

(5) Zabel femme Demenge de l'Estang, du Mesnil, 30

No personal suspicion, but knew her sister (now at Epinal) suspected her of causing death of a cow.

(6) Alizon veuve Claudon Durand, 70

12 years earlier had been living in room in her house, and was in bed with 2 children when there was a great noise and something like a stone fell in the room. When she told her about this next day she said it was only cats, and she need not be afraid - but thought in view of reputation that it might have been her master coming

to fetch her to the sabat. Around same time she asked to buy some butter from witness, who told her she had already promised it to someone else. Same night a cow sickened, and died a week later, which she suspected was her witchcraft.

(7) Catherine fille feu Claudon Durand, 26

12 years earlier had been guarding a pig when she saw accused in the air, coming from the main river, and going towards her house as fast as a bullet; made sign of cross and she disappeared. After she told story accused came to see her and threatened to seek reparation at Etival, but witness insisted she was only telling truth, and no action followed.

(8) Jehennon femme Jean de Sambois, de l'hermitage des Dames, 30

No personal suspicion, but had heard from her late mother-in-law that Fleuratte had learned witchcraft from an aunt at Raon, who had been executed.

(9) Mengeon de l'Estang, du Mesnil, 40

Same story about suspicions of sister-in-law over dead cow as told by wife.

(10) Mengeon Clerc, du Mesnil, 40

3 years earlier she had wanted to exchange a heifer and a calf, but he refused because they were not of equal value. 4 days later a wolf attacked one of his cows in middle of herd, which died 2 days later; suspected this was her doing, in view of reputation. Laurence femme Vincent Ban de Sapt had told him it was Fleuratte, not she, who was responsible for his losses of animals.

(11) Jean Holbin, du Vivier, 38

6 years ago he and his brother were collecting tithes, and storing them in her house. Brother told him that she was taking some oats for her pigs, so he had dispute with her, and a week later a foal died suddenly. Had its skin drying outside house, but it was taken in the night, so he asked her if she knew who had taken it. She said it might be cats. Shortly afterwards lost a second foal, and suspected she was cause of both losses.

(12) Nicolas Arnoult, forestier juré, 50

6 years earlier he had fined one of her children in woods of Benay, after which he lost a calf which died in a week. Later lost a second calf, and blamed this on Fleuratt - long reputation and accusations.

(13) Louys Chappon, 50

Long reputation and accusations.

10 July 1614; interrogation

Said she was about 46. Her father was named Demenge, but did not know other name, and he had died long ago keeping animals at abbey of Haute Seille. Mother had died when she was 9 weeks old, supposedly killed by witches.

Knew she was accused of witchcraft, but denied this. Said she had been resident for 30 years at Deyfosse and Pajaille.

Denied series of charges, but did agree that Jacquotte Aulbry had refused her 'milot', although not that she had done her any harm. Asked about aunt at Raon, said 'conviendrait bien mal, que tous ceulx qui demeurent chez des sorcieres le soient aussy.'

11 July 1614; interrogation

When it was proposed that she be confronted with witnesses, she said she wished to make a full confession. Had been seduced 8 years earlier in her garden, by man in black who offered her money. Refused first time, but he returned 3 days later. Usual seduction scene; money was leaves, powder black/kill, red/heal, yellow/languish. Tried powder out on a hen and a pig of her own, which died. When Percin wanted her to kill animals of neighbours she preferred to kill her own, so also killed a cow.

Denied killing children of Mengeon Colin, but had killed Demenge Haxo and ruined his house, because he did not give her a camisole he had promised. It was pointed out that he had died 12 years earlier, at which she said she had been seduced 16 years before. Admitted that Catherine had seen her in the air on her way back from sabat near côte de Repy.

Asked about accomplices, said she had seen 4 already executed, and Marie Perrin who was dead; only living person she had seen was her fellow prisoner Mengeatte Yclon. Usual feasting, dancing, and hailmaking; latter had been against her will because of her poverty. Had given a hen each year not to be obliged to go more often.

Admitted 2 more maléfices as stated by witnesses; said she had kept powder in hole in wall of house, but had none left. Finally added that she had killed a goat belonging to Vincent Yclon 3 years earlier, because his children were always quarrelling with hers.

Repeated confessions later same day. Said Percin had ordered her not to receive the host, but she had refused. He had never asked her to take it to him.

Further repetition next day.

12 July 1614; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

14 July 1614; Change de Nancy approves

24 July 1614; execution carried out at St Dié