

B 8717 no 2; witch 285, Marguitte femme Chrestien Colas Thierry, of le Chanoy de Saulcy (Saulcy-sur-Meurthe)

1 June 1616; depositions

(1) Didier Babel de la Barde de Saulcy, 36

Some 12 years earlier her brother Claude Tendon had beaten her, leaving her bedraggled and bloody, after a dispute over a shared field of grain. She complained to witness, who suggested that she seek redress by law, but she said her brother had 5 small children and she had 3; in addition he was a witch, and would denounce her as such, which made her fear lest her children be left poor and deserted.

Told story allegedly heard from her that her brother had committed bestiality with a mare, and that their father had been watching lest it give birth to a monster. When father had been arrested for witchcraft brother did not show similar concern for him 'lequel il ne print pas peine de rachepter'. She had further claimed to know her parents were witches, before their execution, because there were many cats in their house. A small brother had also been involved in witchcraft; mother was afraid he would reveal something to other children, so forced him to drink something which killed him instantly.

5 years earlier his wife had quarrelled with Marguitte over the terrace between the latrines behind their houses; fell ill and died 18 months later, always believing herself bewitched. Suspect was reluctant to visit during this time. Another dispute over a claim for minor damages to a field belonging to her husband was followed by 10-week illness of his son, who became as if possessed. Slow cure began when she gave him a plate of millet. Claimed her present husband called her witch, and the first said she must have enchanted him to persuade him to marry her. She had beaten her stepdaughter by her first husband, Jehennon, who told her during her fatal illness that her stepmother had given it to her.

(2) Claude Vincent Lyenard du Chanoy, 32

4 or 5 years before his sister Claudatte had married Claude Tendon, brother of accused. When she was lying in Marguitte was afraid she would not be asked to attend, because of great quarrel with brother, so sought reconciliation. Came to childbed. to distress of his sister, who seemed to lose her wits afterwards. Went on pilgrimage to St Idoult at Moyenmoustier, but died there; told him the accused had bewitched her.

(3) Barbey femme Laurent le Masson du Saulcy, 50

When working at house of accused previous Easter had asked her why she made no gift to village herdsman; replied that she had once given a cake to Barbelline Hecquin, who kept the sheep, only to find herself blamed for her death, so was determined not to give again.

(4) Claudatte femme Jean Hocquart de Contramolin

Some 4 years before Marguitte had carried her across a stream on way to market at Saint Dié, against her will because she feared her. Fell suddenly ill and had to be taken home on a cart; a neighbour advised her to drink 'sur du rasse', and she was cured within 2 hours. Later heard that accused had been told of her suspicions.

(5) Jeandel Babel de Lalebarde de Saulcy, 30

Previous year had dispute over latrine of his house, and over clash between their cows, after which his animal had died. Another quarrel because she claimed he had not paid enough to her son for minding his animals was followed by the death of another cow.

(6) Beniste femme Claude Jeandel du Chasnoy

Told story of how 5 or 6 years before her daughter, aged about 2, had been left alone while she was harvesting. Went back to find her near Marguitte's house, where she had been given some bread; put her on bed to rest and went back to work. When she came back again could not find her, so thought she had gone to grandfather's house. When making beds that evening found that she had somehow strangled herself with 'le lien de sa coiffe'; if accused were witch then she believed her to blame. Another incident with two pigs which did some damage, then died. Some years before when she had been ill Marguitte had brought her some beef, which she had eaten and found good, then promptly recovered. Yet another illness had followed occasion when she reproached accused, because when one of her sons did not want to go into service she said 'que le diable n'avoit rien que ce qu'on luy bailloit'.

(7) Jean Demenge Noel du Chanoy de Saulcy, 80

Had previously been tutor to her children by her first husband Jean Didier Babel; had often quarrelled because he could not make payments she wanted without breaking his oath. Did not go to law, and 'feignant la bonne amye', she sent some 'patenes' to his house. Neither he nor servants ate them, so were given to sow, whose piglets were later born dead 'pourris et enfles'.

(8) Mengeon Maire Aulbry de Labarde de Saulcy, 60

When at a feast in their house during her first marriage, for which he had provided fish, she suggested that he did not want a second helping of soup because he feared her.

(9) Martin Tatay de la Warde de Saulcy, 32

3 years before, 'allant hacquer en Allemaigne' with her husband, latter told him that he suspected her of being a witch, and 's'il venoit une bonne année, et eut un peu de grain avant main' he would have her arrested.

(10) Nicolas Mongeat de la Warde de Saulcy, 60

Loss of 3 pigs which had been eating in her meix.

(11) Claude Jean Noel du Chanoy de Saulcy, 30

Blamed her for death of his 2-year-old son some 2 years before; had apparently had smallpox, and became all swollen; also for blindness of cousin's daughter (they shared a house). Although 'elle leur fit bonne misne' and they had not quarrelled they feared her. Had also lost animals suddenly, and suspected her 'ad cause de l'envie qu'elle leur portoit a la prosperité de leur mesnage'.

(12) Elizabeth femme Dieudonné la Brux de la Warde de Saulcy, 50

18 years before Marguitte had complained to her that her first husband called her a witch.

(13) Hidoult Jean Noel du Chanoy, 40

Often called witch without any recompense being sought; indeed her husband himself called her such. Told story of daughter's blindness, and of losses of animals.

(14) Claude Mengeot de la Warde de Saulcy, 50

Had previously rented meadow belonging to pupils of her first husband, which she wanted herself (at lower rent); various disputes ensued. When she asked to know why he had taken the meadow, he replied 'que c'estoit pour savoir a la verité sy elle estoit sorciere, comme la bruict en estoit, et la faire brusler par la justice s'il luy mesadvenoit par ses maléfices.' Had in fact lost several animals.

(15) Jehennon femme Jacquot Ferry du Chasnoy, 50

12 years before had been quarrel because they were crossing her land to get their vegetables, and making a path. Followed by loss of animals which she estimated at a thousand francs. Also told story of how Marguitte's first husband had a bad eye, and witness tried to cure it with a hot egg; gave extraordinary fart as she broke it open, which scared her. Lost use of eye despite remedy.

6 June 1616; interrogations

Said she was 44, her husband was manoeuvrier. Agreed that mother, father, and maternal uncle had all been executed as witches. Had also been denounced by Jean Goenoy of St Lyenard. Agreed she had been beaten by her brother, but denied saying anything about witchcraft. Also denied that she had killed her first husband because she hated him. Had beaten stepdaughter to make her learn paternoster. Had not sought recompense when called witch because her husband did not wish

her to do so. Agreed to conversation about lease of meadow in which Mengeat had suggested she was a witch.

8 June 1616; confrontations

Claude Mengeat added story that she had disappeared in woods for 5 days as a young girl, before being found by her father. Her account was that she had been afraid to return home after losing her father's cows, and had been found following day by her grandmother.

9 June 1616; procureur for chapter of Saint Dié asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

11 June 1616; change de Nancy agrees

13 June 1616; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews but confessed when racked. Had been seduced 20 years before when her first husband Jean Bonipaire beat her - after she had beaten her stepdaughter. Persin promised that the girl in future 'ne seroit sy fascheuse et luy feroit du bien'. Gave her three kinds of powder; black for death, 'taynée' to make animals sick, grey to make people sick. Admitted series of malefices. Killed sister-in-law because she told husband she had given Marguitte 'un bichot d'aveyne' secretly, after which he quarrelled with her. Resented fact that Claude Jeannel had bought father's house, confiscated and auctioned. Admitted that her current husband had said several times that if he had the means he would have her burned at his own expense. Generally admitted most of the maléfices attributed to her, with no specific denials.

Agreed she had attended sabbat, where she found unsalted meat uneatable. Cook was first Didier le Charpentier of Remeymont, since executed, then Babelon Estienne. 'Y a dancé au son d'une fleute . . . quilz sont beaucoup de personnes et des bien braves avec des panaches sur la teste'. Made hail with white wands with which they struck earthenware pots. Avoided going to all sabbats by giving Persin a lamb or a hen at Martinmas and St George. Recognized Jehennon femme Claudon Mariotte of Baccarat, Didier Babel de la Warde, Magdelaine femme Bon Didier d'Entre-deux-Eaux, Demenge Mathis de la Calmeuche, Claudatte femme Claude Aubert de Fouchifol, la femme Claude Mengin of Fouchifol, Nicolas Laurent and Bernard Regnaudin of Contramolin. Asked about making hail, 'dict comme elle estoit pitoyable envers le pauvre monde, elle empeschoit a cela, et n'en a aydé a faire pour gaster les biens qui estoient aux champs pour ce subject'.

14 June 1616; interrogation

Confirmed previous confessions. Claimed she had always refused Persin's demands that she take him consecrated hosts, and had been beaten for this.

15 June 1616; procureur asks for death sentence

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20 June 1616; change de Nancy agrees.

28 June 1616; executed at Saint-Dié.