

Witch 291, Jennon Etienne 1

B 8719 no 2; witch 291, Jennon femme Jean Jacquot Etienne du Menil

Extract from 1614 trial of Mongeatte femme Vincent Yclon of Pajaille, in which she accused Jennon as one of her accomplices.

27 September 1617; informations preparatoires

(1) Catherine femme Demenge Jean Arnoulx du Mesnil, 45

Dispute between their husbands 12 years earlier, when husband of accused ploughed beyond boundary of their fields. Her husband was ill when he got home and had to go to bed, while a calf became strangely ill and died next day; believed this was doing of accused if she were witch, as she was long reputed.

(2) Jacquotte femme Jean Helley du Mesnil, 70

Had heard from Mengeon fils Mengeon Girard Francois of La Fosse that when she passed before cart he was driving one of his master's horses went blind and died; they had had dispute over some geese. No personal suspicion, but reputed witch for some time.

(3) Girard Franceon du Mesnil, 36

Sone 6 years before his wife had quarrel with accused over 'paroles dites et rapportées', and she said to his wife, who was pregnant, 'qu'elle luy souhaitoit n'avoir jamais bien joye, ny contantement du fruit qu'elle portoit en son ventre, jusques a ce qu'elle auroit dict la verité'. Soon after wife fell ill, and had difficult labour which lasted 2 days; child died after 3 months. If she were witch as she was long reputed, and had been accused, then believed this was her doing.

(4) Curien de Champ du Vivier, 33

Some 9 years before had found her geese eating grass in his field, and had killed one of them with his fork. Met her some days later, and she reproached him, saying 'qu'il avoit des chevaulx qu'ilz alloient pasturer en grabix, mais qu'ilz n'y yroient plus'. Same day a mare worth more than 20 ecus died, followed shortly by her foal. Believed this was her doing - common reputation, accused more than 12 years before.

(5) Claudon Colas Colin du Vivier, 55

Some 7 years before had warned her to keep geese out of his meadow, or he would have them killed by his servants. She passed before his horses and held out her arms, whereupon one of them fell down, dying a few hours later. Next day his servant was ordered to chase away any geese; met her, and she said 'Toy, et ton maitre se repentiront de ce que tu faict', after which another horse died suddenly. Was sure this was her doing if she were witch as long reputed.

(6) Colin Dentandt officier a la Fosse, 30

Had been quarrel when his pigs and other animals escaped into her garden, which was next to his, and she told his wife she would stop them using it as a path. Some months later wife became ill and died; did not know if she was cause, but had always heard her reputed a witch.

(7) Jean de Sombois demeurant a l'Hermitage des Dames, tixerand, 30

About a year before had dispute because he had not woven some cloth for her as quickly as she wanted. A cow then became lame, and he cut off affected part of foot, at which it recovered, but he cut his finger, and it was very painful for 3 months, despite efforts of surgeon. Thinking it might be her witchcraft, he told her in presence of her husband that she had given him the trouble, and if she did not heal it 'il feroit ung mauvais coup sur elle'. Immediately recovered, but the cow died, and he imputed all this to her witchcraft in view of long reputation.

(8) Mengeon Bandedapt du Mesnil, 40

Some 2 years before his horse had broken fence and got into her field, which was sown with barley. She told him that the horse regularly did this, adding 'que le diable luy puisse rompre le col'; 2 or 3 days later horse fell strangely ill, with head all swollen, so he had to have it killed. Imputed this to her, if she was the witch she was long reputed to be.

(9) Mengeotte femme Girard Franceon du Mesnil, 32

Repeated husband's deposition; dispute had been when they were returning from funeral of maire Nicolas le Duc at church of Etival.

(10) Mengeon Jean Arnoulx du Mesnil, 50

Repeated wife's deposition; illness had lasted a week, began when he felt himself struck by a warm wind. Later occasion when he had rented a field and went over boundaries himself, because he did not know them well; another quarrel and threats followed. After this lost a mare and a foal, mare becoming so wild that they did not dare approach her. Believed this had been her doing, if she was a witch as she was long reputed.

(11) Nicolas Haxo de Deyfosse, 40

Assisted by wife Mengeotte, aged 40, as interpreter because of his difficulty in speaking. Some 4 years before husband of accused had stolen some fish from a pond behind house of maire Nicolas le Duc, and been fined. Borrowed 100 francs from witness, but when a year later he asked him for security was refused by both him and his wife (the accused); immediately fell ill as if out of his mind, and his wife imputed this to her witchcraft. About a year later passed behind her house, and saw 2 'civieres'; asked for one, and said it was for interest on his loan. Thought she had

been angry, and some 4 hours later was thrown to ground by whirlwind; lost all speech and feeling for 9 weeks, and still needed his wife to interpret what he said. Believed her to have been responsible, in view of numerous threats she had made them.

(12) Claudon Hennemant mulnier au Vivier, 40

Some 7 years earlier his brother had been arranging marriage with her daughter, and witness had been angry about this; Jennon heard of this. and he had then lost a mare which he believed had been strangled by her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(13) Jennon femme Bastien Mathis du Vivier, 40

Some 5 years before had obtained reparation from husband of accused for insults after quarrel at mill of le Vivier; this created a particular hatred, and for a year witness, her husband, children, and servants were tormented by illness. Had heard from her sister Catherine, wife of Colin Dentandt, that accused was cause of her fatal illness, which lasted a year. Had also heard from Claudon Hennemant of his suspicions. Long reputation.

(14) Barbeline femme Claudon Haxo du Vivier, 46

Also sister of Catherine Dentandt, who had told her that accused was angry at her marriage with a relative.

(15) Mengeon fils Mengeon Francois de la Fosse, 20

Had been in service of Claudon Colas Colin some 7 years before, and had witnessed quarrel over geese, when she told him that if he enclosed his field they would not go there. Told of death of two horses.

(16) Nicolas Marquis de Pajaille, 24

Some 2 years before had heard her son Franceon say that his mother had been accused of witchcraft, 'et qu'il n'y avoit point de bonne fiance'. Said his father was normally ill, and if she was a witch she might have given him illness 'affin qu'elle soit maistresse, et qu'elle jouysse du bien, et qu'elle estoit d'ung tres mauvais courage'.

(17) Mengoen Jean Clerc du Mesnil, 36

Told of threat to horse of Demenge Bandesapt and its subsequent death.

4 October 1617; interrogation

Said she was about 50, wife of Jean Jacquot Estienne alias de la Scye, and had been resident at le Mesnil since marriage some 32 years before. Admitted accusation by Mengeotte 3 years before, but said they had quarrelled over some verjus.

Admitted threats to Mengeotte femme Girard Franceon, who had called her 'mechante femme'. Said Claudon Colas Colin had long been angry with her. Agreed to quarrel with wife of Colin Dentandt, who had been using her garden as way to the water, and was making a track there. Otherwise made firm denials to all charges, and commonly said she had no memory of disputes alleged.

5 October 1617; confrontations

No progress at all; she admitted same disputes as before, continuing to deny everything else. No reproaches to witnesses, as judges pointed out when trying to persuade her to confess at the end of the session.

7 October 1617; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

20 October 1617; Change de Nancy approves

30 October 1617; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, then racked, but continued to deny all charges. Threatened with tortillons, asked to be allowed to think overnight, and sent back to prison.

31 October 1617; interrogation

Threatened again with tortillons, finally started to confess. Had been seduced by Mre Persin when angry with her daughter. Had given her money which turned into leaves, and black and grey powder, both to kill people and animals. Tried powder out on her own calf and pigs. Then agreed to a number of the maléfices with which she had been charged.

Judges questioned time of seduction, pointing out that she was confessing offences committed earlier - now plain that anger with daughter had been because she had a child 'avant le coup', which had not been recorded in earlier confession. Said it had been 9 years before, and that she had only been to sabbat once, because she was lame and had difficulty in walking. Usual dancing and feasting, making of clouds which did not produce hail. Was not sure of identifications because of masks, but thought she had seen Claudatte femme Jean Michiel du Vivier, and Catherine femme Claudon Pairson de Mesnil. Gave master a white hen around St Martin each year to be excused attendance at sabbat.

1 and 2 November 1617; interrogations

Repeated earlier confessions.

3 November 1617; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

Witch 291, Jennon Etienne 5

4 November 1617; Change de Nancy approves

7 November 1617; sentence carried out at St Dié (interrogation and torture had been at abbey of Etival).