

B 8726 no 3; witch 308, Colatte veuve Colas de la Ruelle alias Girey, de la Bourgonce

19 March 1620; informations preparatoires

(1) Bastienne veuve Jean Mathieu, 40

24 years earlier she had been maid in their house, and witness already avoided her because she was reputed witch. Her mother died, and Colatte was angry because she did not receive plate of millot which she thought was her due. Same day her first child put hands in hot water and was burned; next day asked her for drink, and was given cup with a little of the wine deceased had drunk during illness. Child immediately fell very ill, and died within 24 hours; suspected this was her doing if she was a witch.

Also thought she had given witness fever which lasted 20 weeks, after she refused to give her some seed of 'pasténées'. This was at mill, and she felt ill before leaving. Recovered after Colatte had visited her to console her when husband was taken away to be tried. Sister had already been executed as witch. 7 or 8 years before her husband, who was wheelwright, owed witness money, and she asked him to make her a cart in payment. Her son Noel had gone to their house to argue matter, and refused bread and apples he was offered. That evening became fearful, and as if possessed, so that he had to be held down; started to recover a few days later, after she visited him and said he would not die - blamed her for this too.

(2) Noel fils de la precedente, 22

Long reputation, and believed she had given him strange illness 5 years earlier. Had been to house to insist husband should make cart, which he had been delaying for long time, and refused food for fear of being bewitched. Illness lasted 6 or 7 weeks, and had urged mother to send her something to induce her to visit him; finally did so, and when she told him to be quiet and he would not die he recovered. Believed this had been her witchcraft, if she was as reputed.

(3) Idatte veuve Jean Jeannatte, 34

Long reputation, and when her late father was taking woman convicted of witchcraft to St Dié for execution she accused her as accomplice. If she was witch believed she had caused death of her husband. This followed complicated affair in which husband of accused was supposed to make cart for Ydoux of Blairville, in payment of debts, but he was so slow that latter passed job to husband of accused - also wheelwright - and obliged them to pay over money to him. Husband then fell ill with fever, which lasted 18 weeks. Neighbours advised doing her a good turn, so she sent her some lard and made payment for son who kept animals, after which she consoled her over husband and told her he would not die. Recovered immediately, but had died 3 years later, and if she was witch suspected she had been cause. Had heard Jean Moulat say he suspected her over death of his wife.

(4) Margueritte femme Nicolas Cariolle, 30

Long reputation, and sister at Nompatelize burned some years earlier. Occasion 2 years earlier when her husband had to pass through her garden to cut hay in a small field, and damaged plants slightly; she cursed him over this, and next day a cow died suddenly in fields - suspected this had been her doing if she was

witch. Might also have resented fact that shortly before their husbands had competed for election as marlier, and curé had chosen husband of witness. 5 years earlier her sister Mengeatte femme Jean Moulat quarrelled with her over who should go first at the mill, and died 5 days later. Husband had immediately feared some misfortune when he heard of quarrel, and in attempt to avoid it gave her a loaf; came into house of witness with this and said 'J'ay encor un pain (en despit d'elle) que son marit m'a donné, il n'est pas si mauvais qu'elle'. Suspected her over this too.

(5) Jean Moulat, 36

Long reputation. Story of quarrel at mill, when accused had wanted to go out of turn, and illness, during which wife only complained of pain under one of her arms. Had given her one of two loaves he had in attempt to turn away her 'mauvaise volonté', at which she said his wife would tell him off and be 'mal contante'. Earlier that year had lost an ox after it strayed into her field; suspected her over both these misfortunes.

(6) Georgeon Gerard, 60

Reputation 12 years, and much feared by those who had to deal with her. 9 years before had lost a cow taken by wolves and a calf which died a few days later; suspected her, because he had just obliged her with other neighbours to contribute to cost of a stone surround for his well, which they all used for their animals, and she had uttered various curses on this occasion.

(20 March 1620)

(7) Jean de Blamont, de Nompatelize, 60

She had left Nompatelize 30 years earlier, but was already suspected then, as was her mother. Sister executed 8 or 9 years earlier. Jean Moulat, who was his son-in-law, suspected her over death of first wife.

(8) Demenge Picard, mulnier, 32

Long reputation. Suspected her over sudden death of a pig 3 years earlier; he had refused to sell her bread on credit, then evening before death she passed close by the sty, and could easily have thrown powder on it.

(9) Nicolas Simon, 45

Reputation more than 20 years, and had heard rumours that she had caused the deaths of Jean Moulat's wife and Jean Jeanatte.

(10) Georgeon Humbert, 40

Long reputation; had several times quarrelled with her, but did not think any misfortune had followed.

20 March 1620; interrogation

Said she was about 40, daughter of Colas Mourel and his wife Claudatte, of Nompateize. Lived with them until father's death, when she went into service at St Dié, then at la Bourgonce with Mathieu Claude (subsequently executed by fire). Had married 20 years earlier, and husband had died 3 or 4 weeks earlier.

Knew she was accused of witchcraft, but denied being such, and said she had no idea who had accused her. Agreed her sister had been executed. Was then asked whether she had been seduced when in service of Mathieu Claude, whose son had also been executed; said she had seen no harm in either of them. Son was evidently Jean Mathieu, and she had been servant in household of whole family when events described by Jean Mathieu's widow occurred.

Denied all charges strongly, and at the end evidently bit back; recorded that she 'nous a fort arrogamment investivé de parolles injurieuses, pleins de dementys'.

1 April 1620; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses, but firm denials.

4 April 1620; procureur for ban d'Etival asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire. Notes that she had been confronted with Margueritte femme Cesar le Charpentier.

6 April 1620; Change de Nancy approves

8 April 1620; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews on hands and feet without any effect. Then noted that while her head was being shaved before torture the executioner and his two assistants had found her as if dead in their hands, with throat contorted and face black as iron; they thought the devil was trying to make her kill herself. Was now given mixture of wine and holy water by force, since she would not take it otherwise.

As soon as she was racked began to confess; had been seduced by Persin 20 years earlier. Had been living in father's house at la Bourgonce, and was hungry and miserable about dearth they were enduring. Promised to give her enough to eat, and ensure that she did not want. Gave her money (horse dung) and black powder to kill.

Asked about maléfices, agreed she had killed child of Jean Mathieu by putting powder in drink, after trying to kill him with hot water previous day. Denied other charges, saying she had thrown powder away after this.

Had been to sabat 3 or 4 times, where she had seen Margueritte veuve Cesar le Charpentier, who had accused her, her son Cesar, and Jennon femme Jean Jacquot. Usual feasting and dancing.

Brought back that afternoon, confirmed earlier confessions. Added that she had several times made hail at sabat, including storm which had destroyed young crops around la Bourgonce 5 years earlier. Added name of Anthoinette femme Jean des Courtz to list of accomplices. Still insisted she had committed no other maléfices.

9 April 1620; confirmed earlier confessions, but would still add nothing. Confronted with Anthoinette and Jeannon, confirmed accusations despite their denials.

9 April 1620; procureur asks for death sentence

Witch 308, Colatte de la Ruelle 4

10 April 1620; Change de Nancy approves. At first asked for reiteration of confessions, but then saw act of previous day, and decided this was not needed.