

B 8730; witch 309, Fleuratte veuve Anthoine Valdexey, de Clefcy

Undated copy of accusation by Colatte femme Mengel des Roses of le Souche (almost certainly executed 1621). This also names Marguitte wife of Jean Carset, of les Graviers, Lambert du Vic and his wife, Coinchatte veuve Colas de la Maize, Georgeon Jean Durand, Claude Vincent of le Souche, and Didier de la Levée of Herbafaing.

5 November 1621; informations preparatoires

(1) Colas de la Maize, 31

Had been angry because he had denounced her husband (tried June 1615), often saying that without him and his companions he would not have been burned. Soon after these reproaches a cow became as if rabid, and had to be buried alive, then another sickened. Was advised to get bread, salt, and leeks from her, and after eating these the cow recovered. Believed this had been her witchcraft, and that similar treatment might have saved first cow.

(2) Marie femme Claude Hidoulf, 30

At previous harvest had been reaping in field which they had bought from seigneurs when it was confiscated from husband of accused; when she had finished witness asked Fleuratte, who was doing same in her part of field, if she had taken too much. She said she had not, but at that point a wind seemed to get up with a great noise and frightened the witness. Fleuratte said 'Chay, Chay', at which it ceased, so she thought it had been her master; before arrest of husband she had been more feared than him.

(3) Germaine veuve Mengel Colas Demenge Durand, 55

When she had been left a widow with 7 small children had dispute with them about a wall they wanted to put up, and after they had been prevented Fleuratte said 'qu'ilz ne plaideroient davantage mais qu'ilz en auroient bien la raison d'autre faceon'. After this lost many animals, and finally was advised to burn the heart of a mare which had died; if it was witchcraft she would see the person who had done it. Same day she came to knock on their door, telling them it was about to rain and they should get their hay in, so believed this had been witchcraft by both of them - she was already as much suspected as husband.

(4) Pieron Urbain, 34

Believed she had caused death of his uncle Colas Valdexey, who had been killed by fall from cherry tree. He had just quarrelled with her, and she went to give news before anyone else knew. That year one of her daughters had been sewing in his house, and told them her mother said there would be no fruit that year, which turned out to be true. Had heard from Vincent Claude Vincent that he had obtained bread and salt from her house to cure his wife, also that if he knew it would only cost him 100 francs he would have her eldest unmarried daughter arrested.

(5) Colas Mengel Durand, 36

During the lifetime of her husband his mother suffered great losses of animals, which they blamed on her witchcraft.

(6) Demenge Jacquat, 32

Some 2 years before they had lost a cow, and he and his wife complained of this to accused, who was his aunt. She said it had not been any negligence of their part, and that the misfortune came from elsewhere. This troubled him, and in view of reputation suspected she might have been cause. Buried cow in enclosure so that other animals would not be infected, and piled stones on it, but next day found these all in disarray.

(7) Dieudonnée femme Jacquat Didier Valdexey, 55

When she heard that husband had been witch for 10 years she was talking to Fleuratte and expressing sympathy; she said he had been witch for much longer, which made her suspicious how she could know this, particularly since she was also reputed a witch.

(8) Colas Claudon Bertrand, 60

Claude Vincent had told him how he had openly accused her of being a witch and killing his horse, without any reaction. Had also claimed to have heard her and husband talking over dinner shortly before his arrest, when she told him to eat his fill, because they might not be left together much longer.

(9) Mengeon Mengel Durand, 34

Story of mother's losses (6-700 francs), and burning of mare's heart. When Fleuratte came to tell them about rain servants called her old witch and she left. Also told of going to get leeks for cure of Colas de la Maize's cow.

(10) Mathiatte femme Mengeon Christophe, 50

Some 15 years before had bought a goat, and when passing by her house discussed it with her. A week later it fell ill, and finally had to be killed; suspected her, in view of reputation (30 years).

(11) Marion femme Colas de la Maize, 50

Same story as husband about resentment after trial, death of cow and cure of second.

(12) Jacquat Didier Valdexey, 55

During lifetime of his brother Anthoine, later burned as witch, she had been more reputed a witch than he was.

(7 January 1622)

(13) Epron femme Mengeon le Marchal, 50

At time of husband's arrest most of those from village suspected and feared her more than him.

(14) Zabel femme Bresson Jeandel, du ban d'Anould, 50

30 years earlier Fleuratte had bought a field of oats to reap, and invited witness to join her in cutting it. Went to sleep in barn of Anthoine Ferry, and accused did not want her to be close to her on the hay, making her move away 3 times. Later something like a wind came into barn, smelling of sulphur, after which it seemed to her that someone was with Fleuratte talking to her. She was not reputed witch then, so she commended herself to God. Before dawn pressed witness to get up and go on with work, although she objected that it was still not light. On way to field witness looked behind her, and there seemed to be a cart coming up, drawn by 4 oxen and a black horse. As it approached, however, it disappeared and a wind rushed past them. After they had finished work Fleuratte asked her to say nothing about what had happened, and as she had no suspicion she readily agreed. In view of subsequent reputation thought she might have been visited by her master, and been a witch already.

14 January 1622; interrogation

Said she was weaver, aged 50, daughter of Mengeon Claudel Vaultier of Clefcy and his wife Seville, daughter of Demenge de la Levee of Hervafaing. Lived at le Souche de Clefcy, had two children by her only marriage. Knew she was suspected of witchcraft, but insisted she was innocent.

On occasion when she had said 'chay, chay' in field she had seen a black and grey cat, of which there were many in fields; rejected suggestion that it had been her master. Had heard of business with heart, saying that 'pour ladite jument l'on avoit esté au devin ainsy qu'on disoit'. Had quarrelled with Nicolas Valdexey over 'retraicte' he wanted to use on some land she and husband had bought, but this had been 12 years before his fatal fall. Had known about this because she heard Claude Vincent's wife cry out when her daughter also fell, and rushed out to see what had happened.

Agreed she had said her husband had been witch for long time; this was because long before the 10 years one Blaise Colas Bertrand of Plainfaing had called him witch and he did not seek reparation.

17 January 1622; confrontations

Said of Nicolas de la Maize that he was the son of a thief, and his mother had been accused by Colatte, recently executed. Father of Marie femme Claude Hidoulf had said she made him die more than a week before his time. Marie replied that she had been a little in disgrace with him because she wanted to marry against his will, but God forbid she had been cause of his death. Germaine veuve Mengel Colas Demenge Durand was reputed a whore, having twice given promises of marriage she had not kept.

Said of Zabel femme Bresson Jeandel that it was said 'qu'elle at esté au devin nommement Michiel Colin Michiel et qu'a ce moyen l'on dit qu'elle est sorciere et qu'elle a fait tomber ledit Michiel de ses corbes ou il eut un bras rompu, et qu'un nommé Jean Bruyeres demeurant on Vic luy mescroyeroit la perte de beaucoup de son bestail qu'il perdoit.' Zabel denied this, and when Fleuratte said she did not

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remember any deal for reaping, insisted it had been for two named persons, and they had 2 francs and a loaf each for the work.

On 19 January was asked to justify accusations against last witness, and name her own witnesses. Claimed to have heard them from wife of Jean Bruyeres and from Mengel des Roses, but this was not regarded as sufficient.

19 January; procureur for chapter asks for question extraordinaire

22 January 1622; Change de Nancy approves

25 January 1622; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews and rack, she continued to deny she was a witch. Finally asked to be released and allowed to think it over until the morning, so was sent back to prison.

26 January 1622; interrogation

At first continued denials, including suggestion that it had not been her but her sister who had been with Zabel. Was then placed on rack, although not actually racked, and threatened with renewed torture, at which she started to confess.

When she had been in barn 30 years earlier a person dressed like a 'marquaire' had appeared, asked if she would be his 'amoureuse', promising he would be a good match. Kissed her, but she made equivocal answer, to which he said he would see her again soon. Was seduced a week later outside house at dusk by Persin, who gave her a ribbon and what he said was money, but turned out to be pieces of glass. 2 weeks later gave her powder - black/kill animals, red/kill people, green/cure. Tried this out on cat and calf, which died.

After quarrel with Colas Valdexey her master persuaded her to allow him to take vengeance, and caused his fatal fall. Had made Jennon Bon Claude ill, then healed her. Had been to sabat, where there were about 20 people of both sexes, some of them masked; conventional dancing and feasting, some hailmaking. Gave master a cock each year to be let off more frequent attendance. Had seen Claude Vincent and Jehennon Bon Claude of le Souche, and Didier de la Levee of Hervafaing. Among those now dead were her husband, her accuser, Claude des Feignes and his sister Agathe, and Franceatte femme Claudel Jardel.

Confirmed confessions that same afternoon, adding name of Georgeon Jean Durand of le Souche to list of accomplices.

27 January 1622; further reiteration of confessions

28 January 1622; procureur asks for death sentence

29 January 1622; Change de Nancy asks for repetition of confessions

3 February 1622; final repetition of confessions, and approval for execution from Change de Nancy same day