

Witch 315, Margueritte Perisc 1

B 8741; witch 315, Margueritte femme Didier Perisc de Mouriviller

26 July 1628; informations preparatoires

(1) Dieudonnée femme Jean Saulnier de Mouriviller, 50

Some time before Margueritte had garden behind their house, through which she had habit of taking short cut because it was long way round otherwise. Then there was row when cows of witness strayed into her meix, and she wanted to take action for compensation, although witness thought they had done no damage. Told her that if she did this she would not allow her to continue going through house; subsequently a cow died, and she suspected it was her witchcraft. Same year Nicolas Monzey came to serve as valet de charrue in their house, and told her she had been unwise to quarrel with her. Previous year he and Didier Parisc had been serving maire Vernier of Remenoville, and Didier was courting accused, who had been in service of George Grand George, shortly before executed with his wife for witchcraft; master opposed marriage because her father and sister had been executed as witches at St Dié, and shortly after had his best horses dead.

(2) Jean Saulnier de Mouriviller, laboureur, 50

She had been strongly suspected for last 2 years or so, but he had never seen any harm in her. Had several times heard Demenge l'Huillier call her witch, without her reacting at all.

(3) Claude Grand Jean laboureur de Mouriviller, 40

Had suspected her for 4 years, since dispute with her husband, who was local herdsman. One of his cows had become mingled with herd from Clayeures and been killed by a wolf; he blamed Didier Parisc and wanted repayment. A fortnight later he lost a cow, and believed she might have caused this.

(4) Jean Masson le jeune de Mouriviller, 50

Had been told 3 or 4 years earlier by Claudon Vicaire, serving Gerard Cherdot, and Colas Masson, that her small son had told how his father and mother went sometime to speak to a black animal at their trough. When she heard of this she gave the child a severe beating.

(5) Marie femme Claude Grand Jean de Mouriviller, 34

Repeated essential of husband's deposition; said she thought he had received a quarter of value of cow killed by wolf. Cow which subsequently died worth over 60 francs.

(6) Gerard Cherdot, laboureur de Mouriviller, 30

Had heard her suspected for some time, and believed she might have killed one of his horses about a year earlier which was 'comme enragé', and died after 3 or 4 days. Knew her father and sister had been executed at Saint Dié as witches.

(7) Catherine femme Poirson Poirson de Mouriviller, 60

Suspected her of causing death of two of her cows previous year, after she had failed to give husband customary tart given to herdsman on Easter Day - this was because he failed to take animals out that day. Her maid had told her that he had said death of cows was by witchcraft.

(8) Claudon Vicaire jeune fils de Claude Vicaire de Mouriviller, 18

Previous year her eldest son had told him how his small brother had been severely beaten for telling story about parents talking to black animal.

(9) Le maire Thiebault Vicaire de Mouriviller, 56

Could say nothing specific because he did not keep company with her, but knew she had been strongly suspected for 7 years.

(10) Nicolas fils Jean Masson le vieux de Mouriviller, 18

Some 5 years before he and his father had been with accused and her small son in a copse when a thunderstorm came up; father said to her they should return to village, but she did not reply and led herd into the wood.

(11) Francois Vicaire fils Claude Vicaire de Mouriviller, 16

About a year before her son Nicolas had told him the story about a black dog; she was widely suspected of witchcraft in village.

(12) Francoise femme Jean Quezel de Mouriviller, 46

Some 3 years before they had a young ox which died suddenly in herd, and husband reproached husband of accused, asking for compensation. Witness then persuaded him not to pursue claim, but 6 weeks later he went to warn herdsman to keep animals off his field off wheat. Parisc was angry and took no notice, so he had to take him to court for reparation when field was spoiled; he eventually gave them grain that had been adjudged. Believed that accused had caused death of a cow which fell dead while eating shortly afterwards; mentioned execution of father and sister.

(13) Francoise Query de Mouriviller, 50

Long reputation; had been accused of killing a horse when she was at Remenoville. After argument with her husband had a cow fall ill suddenly, which he eventually had to have killed. Subsequently another was seriously injured by

other animals while in the herd. Suspected her of being cause, given reputation; also had dispute with her over 4 gros she claimed were still owing for small piece of land he had bought from her husband. (Signed)

(14) Sebille femme Demenge Broulland de Mouriviller, 46

Thought she had killed a cow after dispute over rent of a garden, also mentioned execution of father and sister.

(15) Catherine fille Vaultrin Anthoine de Haudouville, 20

Had been in service of Poirson Poirson previous year, when cow had been ill, and she had been to ask her husband to come and see it. He gave cow a drink, but it died, and he later suggested it had been bewitched. Her master and mistress thought so too, but witness 'n'y a jamais heu soupcon qui ce soit parce qu'elle n'y avoit nul interest'.

(16) Jean Quezel de Mouriviller, 40

Told story of death of ox, already recounted by his wife; suspected her of causing other losses.

27 July 1628; procureur d'office asks for her arrest and interrogation.

31 July 1628; interrogation

Said she was 36, wife of Didier Perise, paistre des bestes armellines; daughter of Jean Simon alias Pelleson of Mouriviller, executed for witchcraft when she was 7, along with her sister Georgeatte. Had married when she was 20, after being 2 years in service of George Grand George at Remenoville; shortly after she left he was executed at Gerbeviller. Had previously lived with her mother, who had remarried with Thiebault Doyen of Mouriviller, then gone into service with Didier Martin tabellion at Clayeures, Claudon Cherdat at Mouriviller, and Claudon Raqueste at Borville.

Said she had been arrested on account of her father, to which judges replied that it was a question of her own behaviour. Replied 'que mesme elle a heu demandé a son marit s'il en avoit quelque clameur lequel luy auroit assure que non'. Agreed that she had been called witch by Demenge l'Huillier, but this had been when he had too much wine; asked why she had not taken him to court, explained that he had called her 'fille de genat', which she was. Challenged by judges, could only say she had not heard them properly the first time.

Agreed that maire Vernier had tried to discourage husband from marrying her, because of her ancestry; said that since she heard of suspicions over death of his horse 3 years earlier she had several times asked her husband if Vernier suspected her at the time, and he said that he had not. Denied causing deaths of animals at Mouriviller.

Said 'ne scavoit la cause pourquoy elle est diffamée sinon que par commun bruiet des personnes qui s'entrecommuniquent les uns aux autres'. Said she was a

good catholic, who confessed and communicated at Easter and Christmas, 'et scait qu'elle est redoutée pour ledit crime, et se seroit declairé a ses peres confesseurs et leur en demander advis.'

Agreed that at Easter previous year herd had not been taken out, because weather was too bad; several people had not given them tart, saying it had already been eaten, often gave bread instead. Catherine Poirson had given them nothing, but had not killed her cow; death was her own fault, because she had sent it out to field when she should have kept it in stable. Did not know that two and a half years earlier Demenge Broulland had complained of way her husband was managing herd, and wanted to have him removed from his position.

Agreed that Jean Quezel's field had been damaged, but said she thought his ox had died of natural causes. Denied knowing anything about his field being damaged by a whirlwind which did not affect his neighbours. Said she knew that Francois Query 'luy porte hayne', but not the reason why, unless it was over request for 4 gros for 'les vins' after sale of land.

2 August 1628; confrontations

Said that Francois Query had stolen 'halbellai' belonging to a tennelier from house of miller at Clayeures - he denied this. Catherine Poirson added claim that she had heard from Margueritte's maid that after husband told her cow was dead she replied 'qu'elle en estoit grandement aisé, et qu'il n'auroit plus de mal a l'entour de ladite vache'.

Said of Francois Vicaire that he had wanted to stab her husband with a knife the previous year. He admitted that there had been a dispute when he allowed the pigs and sheep he was guarding to get among the cows; Perise had been threatening to beat him with a stick, and he took knife in hand to cut a stick for himself, saying that if he attacked him he would defend himself.

Accused Marie femme Claude Grand Jean of maltreating her stepchildren, and leaving them hungry; witness denied this, saying she treated them as well as she did her own children. Said that Françoise femme Jean Quezel had cheated over payment at oven, and had stolen a courbillon; witness responded with detailed account showing herself to be innocent.

Said that two weeks before she had learned that Gerard Chardot was commonly reputed to have had intercourse with Anne femme Mongeot Maxant. He denied this and demanded to know authors of rumour so that he could take action against them; she said she had heard it from his wife among others. He said that his wife had been angry and did not know what she said, and if anyone had the courage to accuse him he would take vengeance by justice. As for the accused, 'elle dit ce qu'elle veut, pour tascher de trouver les moyens de sortir de son affaire.'

Said she had heard that Jean Quezel had killed a horse in anger; he explained that horse had been trespassing, and boy with it had driven it off when he tried to arrest it and get damages - it ran off and he later heard it had died.

2 August 1628; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

4 August 1628; Change de Nancy says that evidence is insufficient and she should be renvoyée, unless procureur produces additional evidence.

19 August 1628; interrogation

Was heard after she had escaped from prison on Saturday 12 August, and had also been accused by her sister Ydotte, subsequently executed. Said that on the Thursday she had broken her irons off hands and feet by herself, and gone to her house an hour before dawn, but husband persuaded her to return to prison. After hearing of her sister's death she was frightened and escaped again; this time she went to her brother-in-law Laurent l'Hollier at Remenoville, but neither he nor Demenge Marchal, whom he asked, would shelter her. Decided to take refuge in territory of bishopric of Metz, and was guided by Laurent's son to Serainville, from where she made way to Moyen. Went to house of Francois Louys, where her husband found her about one on Saturday afternoon; later the maire's officials came to house, and took her back secretly to avoid being seized by officials of bishopric.

Had fled in fear of being put to death; preferred 'aller par les champs faire sa penitence' and to serve unknown in some place. Judges tried to insist she must have had some help with irons, but she said she had broken them easily.

19 August 1628; procureur asks for torture

23 August 1628; Change de Nancy reiterates previous decision

28 August 1628; information amplicative

(17) Le maire Francois Louys de Moyen, 50

Some 15 years before she was in his service as grande chambriere, when she had fit in the fields. Could not revive her, and she was groaning; after recovering said it was 'une debilité', and 'qu'estant en cette sorte elle pensoit estre bien loing'. In view of execution of father and sister this made him suspect her. Similar incident later when she failed to get up before dawn.

She had arrived after escape a fortnight earlier, and begged to be allowed to stay for 2 or 3 days, until she had news of her husband, since she feared he might be imprisoned in her place. He objected that if she was a witch and did not purge her crime she would damn herself, to which she replied that this was true 'et que pour endurer la mort en sy peu de temps que ce n'estoit la peine qu'il failloit endurer la question, et que si elle venoit jusques a la qu'elle scavoit bien que aussi tost, qu'elle auroit dit ung mot qu'on luy feroit tout dire.' Shortly afterwards a neighbour came in and told his wife the witches of Mouriviller had made 'brouillartz' to destroy grain and vines, but accused said to him that these mists had not been to destroy crops. He was in hurry to get to fields, and did not ask what other purpose they had, but she then begged him to wait and she would tell him all. Then she started to tremble and said nothing, so he thought the devil might have prevented her.

(18) Didier Galland lieutenant de maire de Mouriviller, 68

Told of finding her at Moyen with her husband, and of her agreement to return. Husband said that if she was a witch he thought she had once terrified his

herd, 'et que si elle scavoit que quelqueune de ses enfans fut entaschés du crime de sortilege qu'elle ait a luy dire et qu'il y proumoiroit, esperant d'y avoir de remede'. She made no reply, but later said 'qu'elle ne diroit rien, sinon tant qu'elle ne pourroit plus'.

(19) Marie femme a Claude Grand Jean de Mouriviller, 35

Told how accused had been angry after confrontation, asking why she had not asked her to cure her cow, Also why she did not suspect Jean Cherdot le vieulx and George Parisot, and knew well that former had long been highly suspect.

(20) Barbon femme au maire Jacquot Grimont de Mouriviller, 46

Confrontations had been in their house. Had heard her say that she should have been called to heal animals, and that 'l'on prenoit les pauvres, et laissoit on les riches', naming the two as above.

(21) Claude Grand Jean laboureur de Mouriviller, 40

Repeated previous witness's testimony.

(22) Estienne Humbert sergent du chapitre, de Mouriviller, 50

Also told of remarks at confrontations.

(23) Demenge Thouvenin de Mouriviller, 30

Told of arrest, when they had found her on some hay with her husband. Had followed them at distance until out of territory, then accompanied them. Accused said to witness 'que si elle scavoit qu'on ne luy doibvent faire grand mal, et que l'on ne luy fasse recognoistre dautres ses complices, qu'elle diroit qu'elle est telle comme on la tient, et que si elle l'avoit dit que l'on luy feroit beaucoup de mal, pour dire qui sont sesdits complices'. Later said she knew he would report conversation, but she would say nothing until forced to do so.

(24) Jean Masson le jeune de Mouriviller, 50

Repeated story of accusation against rich, but said he had never heard any suspicions against George Parisot.

29 August 1628; interrogation

Said she had 'mal de teste' when with Francois Louys, but denied rest of his account. Said she had never spoken of fear that husband would be imprisoned in her place. Explained her flight by fear of torture. Denied other claims about what happened in his house, but admitted remarks made by husband about herd and children. Agreed that during confrontations she had said they should have asked her to cure animals, but denied accusations.

Confrontations

Said of Francois Louys that in his service 'elle a receu du mal grandement et qu'elle a heu faim fort souvent'; he replied indignantly that she had been cherished as much as his own children. Said of Didier Galland that he had bought a wife, to which he replied that he had done no such thing, and did not know what she meant. On subject of her husband's remarks, said 'qu'elle fut en volonté de faire ung mauvais party a sondit marit en passant le bois pour luy avoir tenu tel discours'. No other admissions.

2 September 1628; procureur d'office asks again for torture

4 September 1628; Change de Nancy agrees, just question ordinaire and with suitable moderation

5 September 1628; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews on hands and feet, she cried out but confessed nothing. Then racked, asked to be taken down so that she could confess, but did not do so and process was repeated. Said she had been seduced by Mre Sathan 3 years before, when angry that husband had sold grapes from vines at low price. Asked again about name, said it had been Persin. Said she had seen her sister at sabbat, but others had all been masked; under pressure finally said she had seen Claudatte veuve Toussaint Gornay; later added name of Anne femme Nicolas Guery. Admitted killing some animals; in case of cow of Jean Saulnier this was because he was 'farouche', and had damaged vines with his plough, while Nicolas Broullant's wife was 'grondeuse et malaisée a contenter'. Asked why she had made hail when she was poor, said this had been at her master's command.

6 September 1628; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Added names of Jean Cherdot le viel, Jean Cherdot le jeune, and Claude Cagniel gendre de Jean Masson le viel to her accomplices. Otherwise no serious additions.

6 September 1628; procureur asks for death sentence

9 September 1628; Change de Nancy approves

11 September 1628; formal death sentence