

B 8939 ; witch 316, Claudon Charniere, femme François Picquet, de St. Nicolas-de-Port

4 October 1572; statement made at Rosieres in house of noble homme Jacques de Luppi by Demenge Olry, bourgeois of St Dié, resident at Rosieres, to Nicolas Fournal. 'Que il auroit heu son fils, dernièrement mort, duquel il estoit en doeuil et amertume et que scavoit estez par le mal a luy donnez par une sorciere demeurant a St Nicolas, nommée la Picatte, laient trouvez par ces jours dernieres par les chemins en presence de gens notables et luy disoit qu'il la feroit brusler ad quoy elle s'en fuait et absentat.' Claimed he had known she was a witch for 10 years.

27 October 1572; interrogation

Statement that she was under arrest, accused of being witch by Demenge Olry, who was also in prison.

Said she was about 60, native of Dombasle. Had left home when she was 7, then spent 10 years at Loupole (?) with one master, and 4 and a half years at Flenville with two masters. Had committed no thefts or other crimes during that time. Then married Martin Picquot and spent 2 years in his native Vielle (?), before moving to la Petite Rosieres, then to St Nicolas, before spending 20 years at St Dié. Had finally returned to St Nicolas and lived there since. Husband had died 12 years earlier, whereupon she had remarried with François le Clerc.

Asked about healing people by means of pilgrimages, agreed she did so. Description of use of garter to establish which saints were responsible for illness (given by Delcambre, p. 34); sometimes she made pilgrimage for the sufferer, sometimes not. Gave list of those for whom she had made pilgrimages: Mongette Guillemain, the mother of Pieron Robert, son of Jehan Canot, daughter of Jean Fournier. Admitted she had been paid 'de ses journées, peines et labeurs'.

Asked if she had given sickness to the son of Nicolas Fournal, denied having caused him any harm. Said his illness came from Bon Bernard and St Denis. Asked if she had told him 'qu'il avoit trop tardé de la mander et que c'estoit une mauvaïse gens qu'il luy avoit donné le mal', replied she had told his wife 'que si elle avoit suspition sur quelques uns qui auroit donné le mal a son enfant qu'il le voist appeller et que peult estre dieu les ayderoit.'

Asked whether all those for whom she had made pilgrimages had recovered, said some had been cured, others had died. Asked 'si elle ne sceit bien qu'elle faict mal d'user de telle charmes enchantement et superstition de la jartiere qu'elle use et que c'est pour abuser tromper et attraper les deniers des paouvres personnes qui s'adresse a elle. Et que les curez excommunient tous les dimenches tous sorciers et sorcieres, devins et devineresses et tous ceulx qu'ilz usent des charmes et contrevenant contre l'honneur de dieu. A dict et respond qu'elle n'en scait rien et qu'elle n'y pense aucun mal non plus qu'il seroit de sa teste.'

Said she had learned her practices from one Thoussaince of Flainville, who was now dead. Asked if she knew Demenge Olry of St Dié, who had accused her of being a witch, denied that she knew him or that she was a witch.. He took oath, then said he had known her more than 10 years and she was a witch; was prepared to live and die by this claim. She denied the charge vigorously.

Said she had been using garter for last 5 years; was told 'que c'estoit mal faict d'user de telle chose abusive et qu'elle faisoit mal d'en user et d'abuser les personnes avec une telle livreson de son bras le quel bras elle faisoit grant et court pour parvenir de trouver le saint qu'elle desiroit de trouver et que c'estoit le mal qu'il

estoit entachez. Laquelle a dict qu'elle ne scavoit que dire sur les articles et qu'il ne scavoit ny pensoit aucun mal.'

9 November 1572; Change de Nancy asks for further investigation, and questions to be asked of Demenge Olry about accusations made at the end of his trial.

10 November 1572; informations

(1) Jehan Andreu, 56

Had lived two houses away from her for 14 years; she and her husband had often employed him to work in vines. Had long found them good people of good repute, and seen no harm in them.

(2) Claudon des Clochettes, 56

Had known her more than 30 years as close neighbour, and seen no harm in her, although he had heard she was a witch.

(3) Jehan Guillegot, tixerand, 40

Close neighbour for 15 years, had worked for her and husband and eaten with them, but never seen any harm in them. Had heard she was a witch, but knew nothing of this. Had seen her using garter to identify illnesses, and heard that she had caused deaths of animals (but did not know who had said this).

(4) Nicolas Guillet, tixerand, 36

Had been neighbour for 11 years, and never seen harm in her or husband. Had heard that in youth she had been 'ung peu desbauchée de son corps', and that she was reputed witch, but knew nothing about this. Had heard about use of garter but not seen her do this.

(5) Francois Berniquet, chartier, 50

Neighbour for 18 months; had seen no harm in her, although had heard about garter and suspicion of witchcraft.

(6) Didiere femme Jehan Andreu, 60

Repeated husband's deposition. Had heard of reputation as witch, and seen her use garter.

(7) Ragonne femme Remy Tixerand, 40

Neighbour for 9 years, had seen no harm of her, although had heard she was a witch. Late husband had been ill, all swollen, and Claudon had used garter to determine it was 'mal St Quentin et St Denis', after which she said they should sent one of his shirts, some money, and candles as offerings. She and husband made pilgrimages, but on return said she had seen from way candles burned that he was very ill, and soon he died.

(8) Sebille veuve Claudon Manouvrier, 36

Neighbour for 14 years, had seen no harm in her, but heard suspicions of witchcraft. Had called her in when she had swelling to use garter; was told pilgrimages should be made to Bel Bernard, St Quentin and St Denis. These were expensive and did no good.

(9) Anne femme Nicolas Lambert, 23

3 years earlier had falling sickness, and went to Claudon to ask what 'maladye de saint' afflicted her. Told it came from St George, St Chrestaille, and St Martin; she should make pilgrimages to latter two, and Claudon would undertake that to St George. That night had 'fantasy' that she saw Claudon by her with a strange figure lacking arms and legs. They seemed to be speaking to her, although they did her no harm; she was trembling with fear and did not know where she was, fearing Claudon because she had given her nothing for costs of her journey.

(10) Rose veuve Jehan Bourelle, 60

Claudon had used normal technique to say she had mal de Bel Bernard et de St Denis, and she and husband made pilgrimages. Brought back vinegar from Bel Bernard which she drank for 9 days; made her vomit and she recovered. Had heard she was a witch.

(11) Rose femme Claudon Cordier, 40

6 months before was suddenly ill, and fell down. Sent daughter to fetch Claudon, who apparently used garter at this stage, then visited witness. Told her 'que c'estoit mal donné par mauvaise gens et si elle se magynoit pinct qui scavoit fait', to which Rose replied 'que non, sinon qu'il y avoit euz une femme de Warangeville que l'avoit demande l'aulmosne du mattin et qu'elle l'avoit refusé'. Claudon asked her who it was, then said the woman 'estoit mal famée et qu'elle ladite depposante estoit entaché de mal de St Pian, du bel Bernard et de St Denis'. She and husband undertook pilgrimages, but witness was not cured. Had heard she was a witch.

(12) Mongette femme Joseph Guillemin, 23

Neighbour for 3 years; had seen no harm in her, but heard she was a witch, about which she knew nothing. 6 months earlier had consulted her when she was ill, and she used garter; aid it was mal donné, and asked her if she suspected anyone, but she said she did not. Ascribed it to same 3 saints as in previous case, and when pilgrimages by herself and her husband did not work, told witness she would only be cured if she made them herself.

(13) Nicolas Fournal, marchand, 36

Had only known her 2 or 3 months; had heard she was witch, but knew nothing about this, apart from accusation by Demenge Olry. Had called on her to see his small son, who was ill; she said it was 'mal donné', asking if he had any suspicion, and saying she had been called in too late. Said it was mal de St Denis, and took candlewax the size of the child as offering, making neuvaine. On return

said the candles had burned well, and child would recover; when it did not used garter, now said it was bel Bernard, St Maurien, and St Pian. Despite further pilgrimages made by her and her husband, child finally died.

(14) Didier Phelipe, de Dombasle, 30

Previous St Jean had sent for her when he was ill; she told him he was 'engenoiché'. Used garter to determine that illness came from bel Bernard, St Pian, St Remy and St Barthelemeu.de Belchamps. Advised pilgrimages, saying that if he had been given illness on right side as well as on left he would have died, but that it would be difficult to cure him because he had received last rites. Pilgrimages were made, but he was still ill.

Confrontations followed. Denied all details in Didier Phelipe's story; claimed to have said nothing about bewitchment or difficulty. Admitted that deposition by Rose femme Claudon Chartier was true, as were those by Mengette femme Joseph Guillemin and Nicolas Fournal; had used garter in all cases. Not confronted with other witnesses.

15 November 1572; Change de Nancy rules that she has not been sufficiently charged to be pursued as a witch, and should be renvoyée, but strictly forbidden to use her garter in future under threat of corporal punishment.

18 November 1572; confirmation by local court that she is to be released, but in view of confessions about 'abus et superstitions' must first pay costs of her trial and imprisonment.

On 27 October her husband was also interrogated. Said he was François Picquot, aged 36, native of Deuxvallées near Mirecourt. Had worked for various masters, and finally come to St Nicolas as carter. There 'il s'en amoura' of Claudon, and had married her 11 and a half years earlier. Were no children of marriage. Gave his own account of use of garter and pilgrimages; was admonished in same way as she had been. Apart from bel Bernard at Vic, had been to St Pian at Moyenvic.

On 13 November he was told he had allowed his wife to undertake healing for money, which had been nothing but 'illusions, tromperye et superstition'. Was to avoid this in future, and to pay costs of trial and imprisonment.