

B 8979 no 2; witch 325, Alizon Chardot, veuve Claudin Clement, drappier de St Nicolas

27 August 1609; informations preparatoires

(1) Colin Coural, marguillier en l'église de St Nicolas, 49

Reputation 22 years. About 20 years earlier had quarrel with her son Jean, who had wanted to marry woman whom witness took as wife; accused had also wanted this. Also quarrelled with her daughter Ydatte, then living in same house as him. Shortly afterwards his mother-in-law was holding his child in garden when a whirlwind struck them, and child became humpbacked and deformed. No remedy could be found for 4 years, then advised to get bread and salt from her house - after eating these for 9 days child recovered. Later she had approached him, as 'livreur juré', asking to buy some oats; when he refused put hand on shoulder saying she knew he had some. Went to do duty in church, and started falling about as if drunk., although he had taken nothing to eat or drink that day. Went home complaining, and Ydatte heard him, saying with oaths 'Estimez vous que ma mere soit sorciere'. She told her mother, who came to see him, taking him by shoulder and saying 'meschant pense tu que je sois Jenoxe', to which he replied 'qu'il ne le disoit mais qu'elle sçavoit bien sy ainsy estoit', after which he recovered.

18 months before, when she took communion, she took host out of her mouth, and one of the Ambrosians put it back as if by force. He thought the fathers believed she had done this maliciously. (Clumsy but competent signature)

(2) Barbe Vacuelin, femme du precedent, 48

Similar story to husband about illness and cure of child, but much briefer.

(3) Margueritte veuve George Figeat, de Rozieres, 65

Reputation 18 years. 16 years earlier they were both in market selling cherries and other fruit, and she sold 5 pounds to one person, which annoyed Alizon, who said that those from outside sold more than those of the town. Later gave her some bread, and first two pieces tasted fine, but third was like 'plomb fondu', so that she lost sight and speech, lying prone on ground. After 2 hours accused, who had been absent, returned to find her surrounded by people; pulled her clothes, telling her to take heart and that she had been surprised by a sudden chill. Later went to a garden she rented at Varangeville and had violent nosebleed; next day as she returned from garden with cherries on her head was violently sick, vomiting three black morsels the size of nuts. When she reached market Alizon asked how she was, and later took her home, giving her five bowls of soup, saying 'que dudit pottage un mort en resuciteroit'. Then took her into garden, told her she was accused as witch by 'le larron de Collin le marguillier', but said she was as innocent as the Virgin. Showing her some plants, said 'que sy elle estoit sorciere icelles plantes cultivées de ses mains ne viendroient a perfection'. Then took witness by shoulders and shook her several times, which alarmed her, but soon after she was completely cured. Believed illness had been given and removed by her.

(4) Bastien Grand Jean, menuisier, 25

A year before had been living in her house, and had dispute with her and one of her daughters. Touched his wife's shoulder, after which she had great pain there without any visible sign, until she gave birth 3 weeks later. After this shoulder began to swell and pain increased; finally asked Alizon for a remedy. Told him to take 'de la saulge, de la vanche de cendres de la lessive, du pissset, et mettre le tout dans un petit sac pour l'appliquer bien chaudement sur le mal'. Did this twice without effect, but she told him to continue and wife would recover; then abscess burst and she was cured. While women were with wife before birth window suddenly fell in on them, although there was no wind, and heard cats wailing outside. Believed she had given illness; common reputation. (Reasonable signature)

(5) Jehenne Joly femme Nicolas Fanelin, espinglier, 50

2 years earlier one of her children refused to buy bread from accused, after which she told witness she had instructed child not to take bread from her. She replied that she lied, and same day great illness seized while body, so that she became all swollen; ill for 10 weeks until she obtained bread and salt from her house. Felt better immediately, but continued to take it for 9 days until fully cured. A few days before arrest hands became swollen, and one was still paralysed; asked her for remedy, and was advised to take 'l'herbe St Jean' with ashes and 'petits drappelets', cook then in oven, and apply them to hands and between fingers. Did relieve one hand by this means. Believed she had given her the illnesses; general reputation.

(6) Mengeon femme Demenge Palligny, chaussetier, 56

2 years earlier husband had dispute with daughter of accused - their houses adjoined one another. Returning from church next day developed trouble with thigh, which became very swollen, and surgeons and others could not help. After 3 weeks obtained bread and salt from house, and ate them for 9 days, also rubbing himself with ashes in water. Then began to recover; believed she had been cause. General reputation.

(7) Suzanne femme Benigne Piot, 32

10 years before had bought some pears in market which Alizon wanted, and was told by her that she would repent, to which witness replied that she did not fear her or others. Was 3 or 4 months pregnant, and when she got home had great pain in side; neighbours rushed in to help, but she had miscarriage. Husband, who was in prison as debtor, sent the sergent Michiel Bonnillier to tell her that unless she cured his wife he would have her arrested as soon as he was free. Accused told him that she was not very ill, and would soon recover; illness lasted another 2 weeks, and because of threat and general reputation believed she had given it.

(8) Georgine femme Barthellemin Soran, paticier, 45

Some 17 years earlier, when first husband George du Hault was alive, they lost a cock. Then discovered that accused and husband had sold it to someone else, and put story about. After this he had strange illness, with pains in all his limbs but no outward sign, from which he died 2 weeks later. On first day of illness heard sound in chamber like child crying, and saw great spider outside window; he struck window with broom, and spider fell off making noise like a stone when it fell. Died saying the cock was cause of his death; suspected her in view of reputation.

(9) Suzanne Brunel femme Claude Roucel, tailleur d'habitz, 25

7 years before, when pregnant, had several quarrels with her, and others warned her this was unwise, since she might suffer harm. After birth lost milk completely for 6 weeks, until her servant persuaded Alizon to come to house. Asked for remedy, she brought 'du fleuret de foin et de l'aveine', which she boiled in water, then applied to her breasts in a small bag, saying she should leave it there until the evening. Did this, then had plenty of milk, and in view of quarrels and long reputation believed she had been responsible.

27 August 1609; interrogation

Said she was 99, native of Raville; husband had been drappier at St Nicolas, previously at Haraucourt, and she was 'revenderesse'. Said she had only been resident for a year, and was told this was false, the true time being more like 15 years. Then said it was 3 or 4 years, when husband was still alive.

Asked if she had ever been imprisoned before, denied this, saying she was as good a woman as any on earth, 'affirmans ses dires par juremens et execrations telz qu'aussy vray ce qu'elle dict qu'il n'est qu'un dieu.' Then told she had been in prison 12 years earlier after accusation of witchcraft from Colin Cural, she agreed this was true, and she had forgotten it in earlier reply. Said that she was released after 'appointment' was made, under which he paid all the costs. Told she had been accused by a convicted witch, said she 'avoit menty cent pied dans la gorge'.

Denied that she knew Jacqueline femme Didier Martin, and said 'que ladite Jacqueline l'at aultant veu au sabat come l'un de nous de justice et que le diable luy puisse rompre le col sy elle est sorciere'. Also said she would rather throw herself in fire than admit she was a witch.

Asked about scar on forehead, said this had been result of accident when she was 8, and fell on an 'audier' in the fire. Then told that at beginning of interrogation she had said her husband caused it by pushing her into fire (no trace of this in record).

Then confronted with Jacqueline, who insisted she had seen her at the sabat; she denied this, saying she was 'sorciere dampnée, que l'on luy avoit donné la piece pour dire ce qu'elle disoit contre elle.

Interrogée par ladite Jacqueline qui voudroit estre sy meschant que de l'induire a telle chose.

A dict estre baise cul.'

Jacqueline then asked what she had done with the late Jean Simonnat, echevin, Jean Galletier, and Collin Marguillier. 'luy maintenant qu'elle avoit fait mourir ledit Simonnat, rendu en haxiere ledit Galtier, et ruyné ledit Collin.' She replied this was false, and that if she had been a witch she would have brought about Collin's death.

Final comment is that she continued denials with further blasphemies, 'usante de vilains et deshonestes propos comme botz et baise cul'.

31 August 1609; substitut for PG asks for further interrogation, then question ordinaire et extraordinaire. Change de Nancy approves, with moderation suitable to age.

5 September 1609; interrogation under torture

Depositions of witnesses were read out to her; marginal note, presumably from Change de Nancy., objects to this, suggesting that proper procedure is to draw up list of questions based on depositions.

Placed on rack, but not apparently drawn, was given thumbscrews. Would confess nothing, and comment made that she seemed to feel little pain, although blood was drawn from one of her thumbs. Order given for her to be shaved, but no one could be found in St Nicolas to do this; belief expressed that her master was protecting her from pain of torture. She was sent back to prison waiting for further orders.

16 September 1609; PG de Lorraine (Rémy) suggests that torture was given 'precipitamment', before confrontations, and that it had been so light that she could not be held to have purged herself of charges. Should be confronted, then given torture to extent she can bear, and in any case banished from duchy.

17 September 1609; Change de Nancy asks for further interrogation and confrontations, to be followed by further consideration of her case.

22 September 1609; interrogation

Despite being questioned at length (with enormously long questions which reiterated charges in detail), stubbornly denied them. Did not even admit healing efforts, claimed not to know some witnesses, and commented on impossibility of remembering at such a length of time.

22 September 1609; confrontations

Jehenne femme Nicolas Fanelin added to deposition that 16 months earlier her son aged 9 had been playing in street, and one of grandchildren of accused said she was supposed to be a witch. Son repeated this to Alizon, who tried to hit him with a stick. Could not catch him, but he fell ill soon after, became thin and paralyzed, and died 4 months later - witness was sure this was her doing.

She said of charges by Colin Coural that they were as true as it was true she was Pope in Rome. Otherwise simple denials, no reproaches.

28 September 1609; Rémy asks for torture according to previous request.

29 September 1609; Change de Nancy approves

30 September 1609; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews, then racked, but as rack was about to be given second turn she appeared to suffer 'une suicouppe', and was released. Continued her denials throughout.

1 October 1609; Rémy asks for banishment, but Change de Nancy opts to have her renvoyée.

2 October 1609; court at St Nicolas approves her release