

Witch 331, Appoline Belz 1

B 9554 no 1; witch 331, Appoline femme Bastien Belz mineur de Ste Marie

8 December 1580; interrogation (in chateau de Zucktmantel at Ste Croix)

Said she was daughter of Lienard le Fondeux of Ste Marie, aged about 40. Asked about witchcraft and use of various medicines. Said that when her mother was alive she had cured the son of Marx le Clerc of Ste Marie, who had trouble with his hands, with 'fleurs de foing et des thuilles neuves', without any other ointments or witchcraft. Had later sent her daughter who was ill, on basis that mother had been such a good healer. Child was all black, as if she might die immediately; had 'prins le mal le soir des bures et froidures', and later she found a swelling under arm which made her think it was plague. Asked about suspicions that she had caused death of le Clerc's wife, said that 3 weeks after delivery of her last child she had hurt her foot at market, and Appoline had been asked to help with swelling. Used 'fleurs de foing' and an ointment called 'alde' in German; tended her for 4 days until she recovered.

Asked about story that she had given bread to wife of Colas des Pommettes, whose dog had died after eating it, said that when she heard the story she went to see her, and she said she had not told the story, nor had she had any bread from her.

13 December 1580; informations

(1) Marx le Clerc bourgeois de Ste Marie, 50

When his son Henry was 18 months old became ill, and remained so for 18 months, with head twisted back. A neighbour told him and his wife that she had heard Appoline and her mother talking; said that although he had not wanted to believe them before, if he asked them they would heal the child. Were invited in, and asked everyone to leave kitchen, after putting child on table. Maid looked through hole in door, then he and wife did so; saw them standing at each end of child and moving from one to the other, in turn they had 'soufflé par dessus le corps et au fondement d'iceluy'. Was cured in fortnight, and still well.

Then told of fatal illness of wife about a year later, which began in foot and rose to her heart. Had sent to various devins for remedies which did no good, then heard from several that accused had said that he 'alloit querir bien loing les medecins et qu'il les laissoit bien pres.' Called her in, and she put small piece of oak on fire, fetched water from stream, and used burnt wood to make 'estuve' with which she treated foot. Wife was able to walk around again after being treated for 15 days; some time later accused was making her a soup when his daughter aged 10 saw her put some 'ordures et chose non honneste' in it and warned her mother, who would not drink it. Next day, which was Sunday of Brandons, she gave the girl a piece of cake, after which she became ill that day and died the next. Had told her mother that accused told her off for informing her about the soup. While he and his wife were crying for her death, Appoline told wife 'qu'elle ne devoit estre contristée pour la mort de sadite fille, allegant qu'elle l'avoit rachepté, et que s'elle n'eust mouru qu'elle eust convenu mourir.' When she went past maison de ville was asked if his wife was recovering, and said 'qu'elle regueriroit ainsy qu'elle l'avoit bien payé'. Seeing wife getting worse, witness sent sister to ask her to come and

visit again, 'et qu'il la paieroit et contenteroit bien, et qu'il ne luy feroit mal ny desplaisir'. Said she could not come at present, but might do so tomorrow, and that night his wife died; was convinced she was responsible for both deaths.

(2) Daultzinom de la Croix bourgeois de Ste Marie

Had two children who became ill on same day, and his mother-in-law suggested that Appoline knew several 'bonnes oraisons et guerissons', so he sent for her. Took daughter into stable and shut all doors, so did not know what she did; daughter later told him she spoke in German so she did not understand, but heard her say 'differ'. Afterwards she told him that within three days his daughter would change one way or another, and in three days she died. Saw her at church on Sunday, and she said he should pay her some wine, since without her child would have languished much longer. Came to house and said that with God's grace she would cure other child, explaining that it would become swollen, starting with feet. This did happen; child was swollen like a barrel, and died after 3 months; each time she wanted to treat it took it to stable. Asked to be paid three and a half francs, but he said this was too much and gave her 33 gros. After this had two cows dead, but did not know if she was cause.

(3) Anne femme Loys de Chastenot hostelier de Ste Marie, 30

Some 17 weeks after she had a baby boy, he did not want to eat and became emaciated, with shoulders twisted. Women advised her to consult accused, and after delaying she went to see her with Marie Masson femme Nicolas Gadel. Made some difficulty about coming, despite promise she would be well paid, but finally came one morning before dawn. Took naked child to upper chamber, where she touched him and blew on all parts of body, turning him round on a table. Then put him back in cradle, wrong way round, and put herbs under pillow; came back later and burned these, and did same for 3 days. Soon afterwards child began to vomit green matter, which witness thought was 'son fiel', then recovered and was still well. Asked what illness was, and was told it was 'mal donné' by someone who was not far from the house.

About a year after child recovered, she herself became very ill, and sent for accused again. Said she would try to help, because she had been so well paid for curing child, but could not do so until following Wednesday, because she needed to collect herbs far away. Came on Thursday, made two kinds of drink with herbs, and told her to take a lot of them. Before dawn next day came with a lump of earth, which she put in fire, then added different kinds of wood, ashes, salt, and wax from church candles; made her breathe smoke, then carried it round her as long as smoke lasted. Went on her knees and spoke in German, making various signs of cross; did this three times, finally put it all back on fire, saying it must not be touched until it had burned away. Did not get better, and some days later one of her workers told accused that she was abusing her by letting her languish, and if she had given her sickness she should take it off. Came before dawn next day, and went through long process of cooking bread, washing her feet, then putting them on dough, making signs of cross and speaking German, then went outside door waving arms and

saying several times 'Gang him dur düffell'. Told her to cook dough and give it to dogs, and that she would not die; eventually she was cured.

Finally told of seeing her coming back from Marx le Clerc's house with some wine; on asking what she was doing she explained. saying 'qu'ilz avoient bien courru es devins et medecins de ca et de la et qu'ils avoient beau a courrir qu'elle en avoit assez'. Witness said it would be very good if she could heal her, to which she replied 'elle est bien, elle est bien'.

(4) Benicte femme Fiacre Vincent de Ste Marie, 55

Her daughter had been very ill for 3 years, and one day witness saw Appoline passing; on enquiry said she was going to see wife of Demenge de Raves, who was doing well since she had been attending her. Witness replied 'qu'elle estoit bien esmerveillée qu'elles se portoient toutes bien sinon ladite fille et paieroit bien une personne qui la pourroit aider'. Appoline said that she could no longer heal her since she had been ill too long. In response to question whether they had quarrelled, she said that day before daughter's illness began she had been informed that accused had taken some of her 'esxandres' from butchers, and had taxed her with this, only for it to turn out she was wrong. Child had died after 3 years, and she suspected Appoline.

(5) Francoise femme Jacques Rozel de Ste Marie, 26

Some 3 years before had been very ill, 'impotente et sec', and called in Appoline. She made an 'estuve' with root of 'genavre' which she cut up and boiled, and while using this rubbed her body with an ointment which was 'fort puant', warning that no light must get near or she would be burned. Later wanted her to eat a raw egg, then some beans cooked in a pot with wax, but she was unable to manage either.

(6) Barbe veuve Jean de la Fraise de Ste Marie, 40

Told of illness of wife of her brother Marx le Clerc. While she was being treated by Appoline latter took some 'buquetz' to house, and it was after eating some of these that daughter sickened and died. Reported remark that they should not weep for her because if she had not died mother would have done so. Also testified to how she and her mother had treated child with twisted arm and head. Had taken child of the late Colas de la Basse to her on three successive Fridays; she put it on a table, then licked and blew all over it. After this spat, saying it was 'tout sel et ordure de son corps', speaking in German. Child died on night of final Friday, and she said 'qu'une femme l'avoit pinsez au coste droict et qu'elle fait bien de l'apporter car aultrement il eust demeuré ainsy plus d'ung an et qu'ils la devoient bien payer.'

(7) Claudette femme Delot le Marchal de Ste Marie, 46

Some 6 years earlier her daughter Pierrette had illness which lasted two years. Having tried everything she could to find healing, turned to Appoline, who

told her to come on Easter Day before dawn and she would heal her. She duly recovered, only for brother Pierre to become ill, all swollen, and this lasted 2 years, until Appoline came to house and said they were leaving him to languish 'a l'appetit d'ung trois gros'. Husband said they would give 40 to find healing, to which she replied it would not cost them so much. She then made child a drink after taking 'pelle de terre', melting wax into it, and adding raw egg yolk on three consecutive days; had to take drink for 3 mornings, after which she said he would not die, but sickness would go out under finger and toenails, which would become red. Child then started to pass out small creatures which looked like 'coupes oreilles' for next week.

When she was sewing a 'couvrecol ou haltzmentel' Appoline asked her for one, but she refused, saying she did not have one, to which she replied that she would repent. Then had trouble with her leg, until accused came asking where she was, and at husband's invitation came to visit her, after which she recovered. Also told of occasion when her husband was invited to drink in her house, where he stayed until midnight. About a week later became ill, and remained so for 22 weeks; Appoline's mother offered to heal him, but had no success. Accused then said that she had known her mother could do nothing, and was asked to come herself. Put bread on stomach, then gave him soup, after which he vomited and started to recover.

(14 December 1580)

(8) Margueritte femme Colas des Pommettes bourgeois de Ste Marie, 30

Some 3 years earlier husband had been harvesting hay at Colroy when accused asked to borrow their horse; witness told her she did not dare lend it in his absence, and was told she would repent within 3 days. Same day a pig sickened, dying on third day.

(9) Colas Bagre de Ste Marie, 45

Had quarrelled with her that year, and she had demanded reparation for words he had used, but when they could not obtain it she and her husband had threatened him several times. About 6 months later his wife had fallen ill, and was so still.

(10) Colas Jean Denise bouchier et bourgeois de Ste Marie, 25

Some 2 years ago previous May she had been having meat from him, and each time she came gave him some fruit. One day brought two apples, which his wife took home, then intended to throw away, but one was accidentally eaten by a pig, which became ill same day and died 3 days later.

(11) Estienne Chastelet dit Larchier, de Ste Marie, 60

Told of illness of grandson 6 years earlier, and failed attempt at cure by Appoline and her mother; usual story of blowing in anus and under back, which he

had seen by looking through a hole. Child had later died. Had also been called by wife of Delat le Marchal to see small creatures which her son was passing out - they were like those found in springs. Some two and a half years before husband of accused called him into a garden as he passed for a drink of wine; while he was there she told him that the 'schichtmeister' had hidden four men in his house to overhear what she said, and had later excluded her from house, although he had paid her well. Said his wife would not be healed unless they called her back, but said she would not go - then said 'qu'elle le pourchasseroit tant qu'elle l'auroit seule en son champ'. Husband said, grinding teeth, that if he spoke with schichtmeister, and was asked something, 'il le feroit menteur'. Finally told of hearing her say of illness of Jacques Guarabin's wife 'que de sa vie elle ne seroit guerie, que pour le moing elle ne dheust estre boiteusse'.

(12) Demenge Mulnier masson de Ste Marie, 30

Had a continuous fever for 4 or 5 years, for which he could not find healing. Appoline undertook to cure him, and took him out on three mornings before dawn into garden, where she made him twist and squeeze willows while on knees declaring faith in God. This did not help, and later she gave him a drink, but he could not swallow it. Later gave him bread she steeped in egg broken in dish, saying more than 7 times that if a dog or other animal ate what was left in saucer it would die.

(13) Anne veuve Gulg le Menuisier de Ste Marie, 60

Some 3 years before she had been getting milk from house of witness, who warned her that as her daughter was about to give birth she must find it elsewhere in future. Still kept coming for another week, and last time looked through window and saw mother and child; said in German words meaning 'bonne heure, sans santé'. That evening mother felt as if some spirit came and laid on her so that she could not move; struck out at it three times, and last time felt a hand, but was nothing there when she lit a candle. Next day witness saw that she had black marks on breasts which looked as if they had been made by fingers, but these disappeared once baby was suckling. Child fell ill and died 6 weeks later. Then told long story about loss of two cows, which followed a quarrel with Appoline's mother. Had asked her to dye a sheet, but she had not replied, so got another dyer to do it, but she was then angry and blamed witness for depriving her of earnings. She had subsequently been near house (watching a wedding) when two cows strayed while awaiting herdsman, and disappeared for 3 days. Asked Appoline if she had seen them, to which she replied that she had not, but suggested throwing an axe on to a roof three times, after which they might hear news. She told husband of this, but did not want to do it because it was witchcraft; he said it could cost nothing, and instructed her to do it. When she did so the axe nearly came down and hit her in the face, but early the next day they heard news of the cows, which were eventually found at Wisembach.

(14) Honneste homme Pierre Quenault, schichtmeister aux mines du val de Liepvre, costé de Lorraine

After his late wife had been in childbed she went 'a la poursuytte ung nomme Hanno Crutz' (burial procession), where she saw Appoline; on return said she had thought that 'la teinturiere' had pushed her, and became ill, unable to get any rest for a week. Then told him she believed that Appoline could cure her, so he sent for her. She made something with bread, honey, and other things which she put on wife's stomach, and made her drink with herbs he did not know. Told her she was 'esbahie' because she had gone out too soon after birth 'et qu'il y avoit des mauvaises gens qui pouvoient donner du mal a une personne en jectant ung os ou une espingle par devant elle en son chemin, et qu'elle la guerriroit s'elle pouvoit'. Wife was peaceful while she was present, ill again as soon as she left, so he asked her to stay in house and continue treatment. Did this, even making her a soup with 'crottes de raths', saying she would recover in 8 days, as she did. Said she must not go by 'grand chemin' immediately after this, but 2 or 3 days later her sister was in childbed, and she did go out across main street to visit her. Immediately fell ill again with what proved mortal illness, so Appoline was called back, and told her off for not following her instructions. Chambermaid had put up 'ballet ou haudleure toute neuve' behind front door, and when Appoline left house she said 'est ce pour m'esprouver sy je suis sorciere, est ce le paiement que vous me vouldriez faire et sy le diable ne vous emporte vous n'y avez pas tout mis ce qu'il y failloit'; after this would not return to house despite repeated requests.

16 December 1580; interrogation

Asked about technique with children said 'qu'avec des bonnes oraisons qu'elle disoit elle souffloit le mal hors desdits enfants'. Said she only put 'des bonnes epiceries' in her soups.

Asked about 'bouquets' she had given wife of Marx le Clerc, said she had been returning from a feast given by relative with basket containing these as well as roast meat and ham, and his wife had asked her what was in basket. Had given 'bouquets' to two of her sons as well, who had taken no harm, and the girl had been ill from 'mauvaise aire et froidure' after running around town all day with other children. Had given them in just the same state as they had been put in her basket, so would not have been responsible for anything wrong with them.

Asked about treatment of daughter of Vaultrimon de la Croix, said mother had been with her in stable. Had put child in manger because this was what had happened to Jesus, and had hoped to cure her with good prayers and blowing, but she had been ill too long already.

She had given apples to a number of people beside Colas Jean Denise, who had taken no harm. Agreed that she had told Demenge Musnier to give what was left in dish to a black dog, then said it did not matter what colour the dog was.

Since she would make no more admissions, was sent back to prison with a warning that they would be obliged to send for the executioner to put her to the torture.

20 December 1580; interrogation

Asked whether she had not been tempted by evil spirit, said that some 5 years before her husband (a miner) had gone to his pays, promising he would be back in 10 weeks. In fact stayed away twice as long, and during this time her mother was also away for a while. Had no means of supporting herself, and over period of 3 weeks had only 2 gros of bread, so was distraught and tearing out her hair. One night when she was in bed was visited by a spirit in form of an ugly black man, who told her that her husband was dead, and if she would believe in him she would have enough to eat and drink. She agreed that she would serve him if he taught her honest things and not evil, safeguarded child in her womb, and would not desert her. He promised her this if she would renounce God; had intercourse with her, but was unnaturally cold, called himself le Grand Follonde. Gave her money which turned out to be pieces of glass, so that she knew he was evil spirit and she had been abused. Told her that she already knew many good medicines, and if she could not do what she wanted she should call him and he would aid her.

Did not want to confess anything else, so was presented to torture. Told of occasions when her master had put powder in soup she made for patients, who were then cured. Agreed that he had put some on 'bouquets' given to children, but did not know if this had caused death of girl, since others were still alive. Said that after wife of Gulg le Menuisier refused her milk her master told her to embrace her daughter on the breast, putting powder in her hand; had gone in and done this while wishing her good health, and did not know if it was cause of death of child. Agreed she had told her about use of axe to find missing animals, something she had used herself.

Had seen late wife of Pierre Quenault at funeral, who had not replied to her wish of good health; was angered by this, and said to her 'Au diable te commande, ne suis je pas aussy bonne que toy'. Her master said to her that she should grasp her in his name and she would have her payment, so she did so, but did not know if this was cause of her illness and death.

Would not make any more confessions; stated that at first opportunity she should be taken to Liepvre to be heard by jurés of the three justices of the valley, and in the meantime interrogated again next day.

21 December 1580; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Said that when she gave apples to Nicolas Jean Denise he turned to other people and said that 'qu'il en prendroit un bot', after which her master advised her to put powder on them. Otherwise added nothing of consequence.

22 December 1580; condemnation

Taken before three justices, sentenced to death by the fire, but to be interrogated under torture on the morning of her execution.

3 January 1581; interrogation under torture

Said her temptation had been ten years earlier. Did not want to make other voluntary confessions, so presented to torture, then actually tortured. Asked to be put down, promising to tell truth.

Asked about deposition of Anne femme Loys de Chastenoy, that she had said the woman responsible for illness was not far away. Said that after she had made 'une recepte avec de la cire, paulmes et encens benis, et de la mouse qui croit es croix qui sont sur les chemins, celui ou celle qui avoit donné le mal a une personne malade estoit contrainte se presenter en la maison ou ledit malade estoit, et que ce pendant qu'icelle faisoit ladite recepte pour l'enfant d'icelle Anne' la Grosse Margo had come to house twice, second time she had been there herself to see her.

Denied having been to sabbat, so was racked again. Now said that when she was with La Grande Fleurette and la Grosse Bouchiere of Ste Marie, former said to her 'qu'elle scavoit bien que c'estoit de leurs compagnes et qu'elle estoit du haut pays'. Fleuratte also said that she had a sister at Grand Romberg who was one, like her late mother who had been driven from her native place for this. Then told of meeting this group with her master in Fleuratte's house, but being called away because she had to get her husband his dinner. Told of feasting with them on another occasion, where la grande Barbelline of Petit Rombach was also present, but refused to go with them so that they were angry with her. Would not confess anything else, despite being racked again.

4 January 1581; condemnation

Formal confirmation of sentence that she be burned alive at place where witches were normally executed.