

Witch 333C, Catherine Ballay 1

B9560 no 2; Witch 333C, Catherine Ballay, veuve Antoine Gablé

Was from l'Allemand Rombach, and imprisoned in château de Zuckmantel.

27 April 1592: depositions

Catherine femme Dieudonné Michiel Blaise, 35

When married to Dieudonné Masson Deschamps they had a sick cow, and before leaving for market at Sélestat he told her to get slaughterman to kill it. When he had left she told her late mother, who suggested that she go to the devin in Val de Viller, and she would find a man to accompany her. Went there with herdsman, and devin gave her something for cow which was cured – believed Catherine was cause, as did her husband. Did not know if she was responsible for other great losses they suffered.

Claudette femme Jean Bourgougnon, 30

Had come to her house one day saying 'Claudette, le hugno at mis une pierre on royx, je luy feray oster ou je la maudiray tant que je la feray seicher tout droict.'

30 April 1592; interrogation under torture

Told that since imprisonment she had confessed to being abused by evil spirit on two occasions, and asked to confirm this. Said that eight years earlier something had come into poisle when she was in bed, but disappeared when she called Jesus Maria. Had said 'Este vous par icy tanté, la femme, voullé vous estre mon amoureuse?' Had said he was Persin, and as he left gave her a sack containing what he said was money, but proved to be horse dung. Asked if she was angry about anything, said she was very angry about the evil things that were said about her which wronged her greatly. Later was carried off in the air at dusk and taken to wood of Challefont where there were many women she did not know. Told that previous Saturday she had said Fleuratte femme Jean Gerard was among them, now said that she was not sure. Then said that all she had confessed was nothing but lies, and she had done no witchcraft.

Was then lightly racked, and asked to be put down. Now confessed that Persin had seduced her with promise to give her plenty of money. At sabbat had given her powder to do evil and kill people and animals. Denied killing anyone, but had killed cow of late Dieudonné Masson, who had damaged her meadow and called her witch when he was drunk. Also cow of Jacob Deschamps, for similar reasons. At sabbat had seen Fleuratte femme Jean Gerard, la grosse Suzanne and la grosse Barbe. Asked if Persin had tormented and beaten her to make her do harm, said he had not done this because she normally carried blessed bread and salt with her. Confessed that she had killed cow of Dieudonné Michiel Blaise. Briefly racked again when she would not say where rest of powder was, said there was only the amount of a nut and she had hidden it in wall of stable for cattle. Admitted to killing calf of Nicolas Venesson.

4 May 1592; formal hearing.

It now appeared that she had withdrawn her confessions, so was sentenced to further torture.

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12 May 1592; interrogation

Started by denying everything except visit by Persin when he left again, and being carried to sabbat which vanished when she called Jesus Maria. When threatened with torture renewed earlier confessions, although no mention of charges against accomplices.

13 May 1592; formal death sentence by burning alive.