

Witch 333D, Prinson Francois 1

B9560 no 3; Witch 333D, Prinson, femme Villaume Francois, de Sainte Croix

29 April 1592; depositions

Jean Roussel, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 42

In autumn of 1590 he and Nicolas Jacot had taken animals and carts behind château of Zuckmantel to cart hay for Francois Farrant, when Prinson appeared dressed only in chemise two hours before dawn. Animals stopped and would not budge; when he tried to give her good-day she did not reply, and he thought of striking her, but did not. An ox then sickened and died within two days, over which he suspected her.

Demenge Colin Gerardin, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 50

Had been in dispute with accused and her husband because witness and his late wife were always coming and going past their house. His wife was unwell, and was riding a horse they had bought to get to her garden. Was using a stone staircase at side of their house to help her mount, but accused objected, and witness told wife not to do this because he feared her in view of reputation. Next day horse suddenly fell down, and died within twelve hours, which he suspected was her doing.

Barbe femme Demenge Colas Humbert, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 46

Some four years earlier had been taking cow past house of accused to drink, and saw her looking out of window. Noticed wood her husband had cut, and said to her that if her own husband had cut as much he would have been fined. She replied that he did bring it back but was not seen, which witness denied. Hated her after this, and the next day the cow suddenly became ill and died within a day, which she suspected the accused had caused. When the late mayor Jean Wiriat and Jean Deslois had a dispute over insults, Prinson came to her house at about two in the afternoon, and said more than seven times 'Commere, belle commere, je suis en gros soulcye et auroux'. Said that if la grosse Ballaine were once taken, she would do great harm, 'et que maudit soit elle, et qu'elle detenue dit par plusieurs fois qu'elle avoit offensé par trois fois, et qu'icelle en estoit cause, la maudisoit toujours.' Then put hands together and asked witness that if something should befall her one morning or evening, that she and her neighbours, the late wife of Demenge Gerardin and late wife of Andreux Mengin, 'luy fussent bons tesmoins, et que jamais maux elle ne leur avoit fait et qu'encor maux jamais ne leur feroit, priant luy voulloir porter bon tesmoignaige, comme dit est, et que voullant partir, dit encor 'belle commere, le mauvais tesmoignaige que mon frere me veult porter.' Next day came again to say she regretted these words, asking her not to reproach her with them or talk about them again. Then sent for some wine and wanted to drink with her and Demenge Colin Gerardin's wife, but they told her they would not drink with a woman such as she had declared herself to be.

Demenge Nicolas Humbert, 36

Repeated wife's story about loss of cow.

Laurent Stowenatt, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 45

His late wife had been ill for nine months before death, and during this time told him two or three times that accused had brought her a drink in a pewter cup when in her [Prinson's] garden behind church; had immediately become very cold and ill, which she suspected was her doing. Asked if they had quarrelled, said that she had wanted his wife to help her pay for wine for carter who brought some manure to the garden, and she had refused.

Margueritte femme Blaise Johel, homme mineur de Musloch, 33

Mother had been ill for 18 months before death, and told her that accused had given her a drink from her window, after which she had never been well, and suspected she was cause of her sickness.

Bastienne femme Claude Guyat de Sainte Croix, 34

Nearly four years earlier husband had been away working and she wanted to go to grape harvest in Allemagne, so arranged for the mother of one Annette to feed children. Returned after five days to find one of them had trouble with right side, as he still did – had been sent to take two shirts to accused, who gave him some bread; immediately felt ill and could hardly get out of her house.

Jehennon fille Laurent Stowenat, 18

Told of how late mother had been given drink 8 years earlier; during illness has obtained something from Prinson's garden, and felt better while taking this. Suspected she had been cause.

30 April 1592; interrogation under torture

Held witnesses to be good people, but denied doing any harm. Was then tortured three times, but would admit nothing. Court decided she should remain in prison while further enquiries were made.

29 May 1592; interrogation

Asked about conversation with wife of Demenge Colas Humbert, said that she did not remember saying these things, but if she had then she begged God's pardon, that at that moment she had not known what she was doing, but she had told lies about her. Was then allowed a little time to think matters over, and brought back.

Said that one autumn a long time before had gone to her garden at Martingotte, to find that fruits had been taken and trees broken. Was very angry, and while she was lamenting a man dressed all in black asked what had upset her. Told her she must be his, and although she said no he threw her down and had intercourse with her. While she was defending herself he put what he said was money in her hand, then when she felt he was cold and realised he was not a natural man she called out Jesus and he vanished, leaving pieces of glass instead of money. Agreed that he had made her renounce God, and said his name was Sathan. Gave her grey powder like mustard, which she put on 'treixe' near house, causing death of the lanternier's horse and the cow of Demenge Lacquee – latter had called her witch.

Later that year she was having trouble with a load of wood when Sathan appeared again and had intercourse with her, then gave her black powder and told

her she could use it to kill anyone who displeased her. Then explained dispute with Laurent Stowenat's wife; he had provided manure, then they jointly arranged for carting. She gave the carter wine and Laurent's wife gave some bread and jam, but she was angry because she would not help pay for wine, and put some powder on bread which caused her fatal illness.

Had been to sabbat two or three times, and saw Catherine femme Christlin Klotz, Houtman at Musloch, Helaine femme Estienne d'Eslois, and la grosse Mengeatte of Musloch. Would not confess anything further.

26 June 1592; sent back to prison while executioner was summoned.

10 July 1592; death sentence by burning alive