

Witch 268, Marguitte Haxo 1

B 8708 no 7; witch 268, Marguitte femme Girardin Haxo de La Fosse

19 May 1611; informations preparatoires

(1) Nicolas Dentandt de la Fosse, 50

Quarrel 5 years earlier, when she and her husband wanted to raise the track leading to their house, which would have been to his prejudice. Called in justice, and after inspection judges found for witness; she bore him great hatred as a result. Shortly afterwards they had a mare worth 18 ecus which was sick, and his wife was crying as they looked at it. Marguitte was standing at door of her house, which adjoined theirs, and laughed to see this; they thought she had bewitched the mare, which soon died, and its foal (also dead). Reputation more than 7 years.

(2) Jean Girardin Haxo de la Fosse, 48

Some 2 years before had dispute with her over insults, which went to arbitration before 'Monsieur d'Etival moderne'. She had to make apologies, and soon after his wife had terrible pain in her leg, which lasted a week, then suddenly vanished; believed this had been her doing. Also suspected her over death of a horse. General repute.

(3) Marguitte femme Mengeon Girard de la Fosse, 45

Some 17 weeks earlier, leaving cemetery at Etival, heard Mengeotte fille Claudon Girardin Haxo of le Vivier, who was on crutches with a bad leg, tell accused that if she did not remove the sickness she had given her she ought to be taken and put straight on the fire. No personal suspicion, reputation 10 years.

(4) Claudatte femme Jean Berquey du Vivier, 30

Some 3 years before Mengeotte fille Claudon Girardin Haxo (now deceased) told her how when she and accused were both guarding animals latter asked her about her leg; she replied that it was getting worse, and gave her more pain in some seasons than others, to which she replied 'qu'elle en avoit pour longtems, sy doncq il n'y avoit quelque personne que luy oste le mal.' Before death previous week her father had consulted wife of Jean Esnel of Baudonviller, who said it was 'mal donné', then saw Marguitte passing and said she had given it. Advised them to take bread, salt, 'joutte du meizey', and ashes from her house; when this was done girl did get some relief. Some 6 years earlier had heard Mengeon Colin threaten to beat her because she had killed his oxen; he chased her with a stick, but could not catch her. Reputation more than 6 years.

(5) Nicolas Aulbry de la Fosse, 28

Had helped Nicolas Dentandt to load dead mare on a cart, and saw her laughing; Dentandt said 'O genaxe tu en ris', but did not know if she had heard, as

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she did not react. Had heard her and Jean Gerardin Haxo quarrelling 2 years earlier; he called her witch, she said he was one himself. Reputation several years.

(6) Georgeatte femme Didier , 30

Some 4 years earlier Jennon femme Claude Gerardin Haxo of le Vivier (now deceased) had told her of conversation while she and accused were watching over dying child of latter. Jennon had said she did not like going across the fields alone by night, and Marguitte replied that when she went to St Dié a man in black accompanied her to suburbs, and escorted her back again. Jennon told witness she would depose about this if called on to do so. During fatal illness some 4 weeks earlier she had said several times that Marguitte had bewitched her and was the cause of her death. Jennon's daughter Mengeotte had also made similar accusations before her death the previous week. Common repute.

(7) Jennon femme Colas Dentandt de la Fosse, 45

Told story of quarrel (which appears to have been over an area for storing manure), death of mare, and laughter of accused.

(8) Claudon Girardin Haxo du Vivier, 49

Some 5 years before had quarrel when she claimed his animals had damaged her crops, he denied it and called her witch. Next day was going to reap with daughter Mengeotte, then 18, when she started to have trouble with leg. Had been on crutches ever since until death previous week, and had always maintained that Marguitte had bewitched her. Told of conversation in field when accused said she would have illness all her life if someone could not take it off. Had finally sent for Jean Esnel from a village beyond Baudonviller 'qui se mesloit d'enseigner quelques remedes a telles malladies qui prouvenoit des sortileiges'. He advised them how to lessen the pain, but said he could not cure her completely, and the accused had caused the illness 'ayant gecté quelque sort, au lieu que ladite Mengeotte devoit passer, et que bien luy estoit advenu de ce qu'elle n'avoit marché sinon d'ung pied sur ledit sort, que sy elle eust marché des deux le mal luy fut arrivé aux deux jambes.' Since he and his wife were sure Marguitte had bewitched the girl, at Easter Week his wife Jennon asked Monsieur d'Etival to start proceedings against her; he replied that he would speak to his officers immediately after the festival. Same week his wife fell ill with strange malady, could not eat at all, only drink, and died after 3 weeks, maintaining always that accused had bewitched her. Long reputation.

(9) ? fils Nicolas Dentandt de la Fosse, 20

Long reputation.

(10) Jean Diez de la Fosse, 36

Long reputation.

(11) Dieudonne veuve Colas Pairson du Vivier, 30

Some 2 years before, at mill of le Vivier, accused had told her how when living at l'Hoste du Bois she had been accompanied on way to St Dié by a man dressed as a messenger, who disappeared as they reached gates - this was 2 hours before dawn. Had heard Jennon and Mengeotte Haxo claim repeatedly that she had bewitched them and was cause of their deaths.

(12) Claudon Jacquot Estienne du Vivier, 50

She had been chambermaid when he kept tavern at l'Hoste du Bois (? 20 years before), and he had sent her early one morning to get provisions from St Dié. On return told story of being accompanied by man in black who said nothing to her. Long reputation.

(13) Jean Thieriot de la Fosse, 30

Some 6 years earlier had made arrangement to plough in common with her husband, but later decided to do it on his own. Next day they passed him as he was preparing to plough, and husband gave him good-day, but she did not, looking angry. Same day he became ill, and had to spend 9 weeks in bed; a day or two later had a cow dead. Blamed all this on her witchcraft; long reputation.

(14) Mengeon Colin du Vivier, 40

Some 9 or 10 years before had dispute when she alleged his animals had damaged her crops; his servant insisted they had not, and when he told her this she said he would repent. passed near his oxen, although did not see if she did anything, but within 3 days one of them sickened, dying in a fortnight. Other was also sick, and he called her in as she passed, saying she had already killed one of them, and should now come and see the other in his garden. She replied 'qu'elle yroit veoir le mal chancre qui le puisse manger, qu'il s'en aille luy et ses boeufs a tous les diables'. At this he took his fork and ran after her calling her witch and threatening to kill her, but could not catch her. Second ox soon died, as did a cow, the 3 animals being worth 50 ecus, and he blamed this on her witchcraft.

(15) Jennon femme Estienne Carriot du Vivier, 50

Some 2 years earlier her husband had been guarding animals for late maire Aulbry, whose daughter-in-law said to her that they might be hungry but he would not give them any money. Accused remarked that he had two fine calves he could sell for a good sum if nothing happened to them; same evening one of them was strangled (by a wolf?), which made her suspect it was her witchcraft.

19 May 1611; interrogation

Said she was Marguitte, wife of Girardin Haxo of la Fosse, aged about 43; native of St Remy, her father Nicolas Mengin had been executed for witchcraft some

18 years before, her mother Jennon was still alive, and sometimes begged her living. Had married some 20 years earlier, lived 3 years at le Vivier, 3 at Deyfosse, then at la Fosse. Said she had lived at peace, except for dispute with her neighbour Nicolas Dentandt. Admitted that she had cursed him on this occasion, but said he had suffered no harm, 'et qu'a Dieu ne plaise, combien que desja on trouveroit a redire sur le pied de notre Seigneur'.

Asked if she had seen any good angel, said that Jesus had visited her in prison. Told elaborate story about how at 'mauvaise heure' between 11 and 12 on Saturday evening a bird had entered through a slit window in her prison and flown around her for two hours, making a lot of noise and an unendurable smell, which hung about her clothes next day. Same smell returned, and she believed 'que ce meschant oyseau vouloit faire quelque chose allentour d'elle, mais que ce n'estoit pour luy le meschant qu'il est'. When dean brought food next day, asked him to block up the window, and gave him bread she had in cell, saying he should feed it to animals after cutting off the outside. Next day cell was all whitened and cleansed of smell, so she thought good angels had done this.

Claimed that when Mengeotte talked to her about her bad leg she had suggested it might be a 'mal de saint' for which she could make a pilgrimage, but Mengeotte replied that a witch was responsible. She then said that if a witch was burned they might learn the truth. Agreed to their exchange in the cemetery, but when she asked Mengeotte to whom she spoke, she said it was to a witch, and as she was not one she reckoned she was not speaking to her.

Asked about man who accompanied her to St Dié, denied story, saying that accusations were 'touttes bourdes, et crains bien que lesdites bourdes luy feront du mal beaucoup'. Otherwise denied all accusations, although agreeing to quarrel with Mengin Colin.

21 May 1611; confrontations

Continued to deny all charges, but made no reproaches against witnesses.

28 May 1611; procureur d'office asks for torture

1 June 1611; Change de Nancy agrees

17 October 1611; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews, then racked; denied at first, but when racked harder said that bird which appeared to her in prison was Mre Persin, by whom she had been seduced 20 years earlier when in service of Claudon Jacquot Estienne at l'Hoste du Bois. Had been man in black who met her on way to St Dié, offering to accompany her and to give her plenty of money. Usual seduction scene, money was oak leaves, two kinds of powder, black to kill and red to heal.

Tried powder on a cat, which died, then used it to kill wife of Demenge Fallajeulx of l'Hoste du Bois, who had called her whore. Had also killed a horse belonging to Jean Galdrimey because he always put it in their stable.

Some 8 years before had been angry with Bastien Hennemant of le Vivier who refused to plough for her, but would not agree when master suggested she kill

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him; instead agreed to kill his son aged 4 or 5, on whom she threw some powder. Had also killed Jacquotte veuve Richard de Laxalbée of le Vivier by throwing powder in front of her, because she had stolen her wood.

Said Persin had promised to protect her during torture, but had deserted her in her greatest need, and was 'ung trompeur et abbuseur'.

Had killed first wife of Claudon la Ruelle of le Mesnil some 20 years earlier for some anger she had borne her. Had been to sabbat 9 or 10 weeks after seduction, between les Gemelz, where there were 10 or 12 men and women, all masked. Ate unsalted meat and danced, but did nothing else. Had also been to sabbat on côte de Repy 8 years earlier, where she had seen Laurence femme Vincent Bandecay, serrurier at Pajaille, Jannon femme Florent Jacquemin of le Vivier, Marguitte veuve Jean Colas Arnoulx alias Mesnil, now living in house of Jean Claude of Deyfosse, Mengeotte femme Jean Grandmont alias du Roval of le Mesnil, and many others who were masked. This time made hail by striking water with sticks given them by Persin.

17 October 1611; interrogation

Repeated earlier confessions, expressed concern for her 6 children. Said that on Saturday before Ascension Day she had been on way to buy salt at Raon when Persin met her and said that Claudatte femme Demenge Jacquot, presently gouverneur of Etival, had spoken ill of her, suggesting that she should kill her. She refused, saying she was her 'commere' and did her much good. Eventually agreed to make her ill with special powder he gave her, which she used by getting next to her in church at Etival on Ascension Day. Did this with intention of making her ill, but was arrested same day; did not know how long she would be ill, nor of any remedy to cure her.

When she was angry against Mengeon Colin because of damage his animals had done Persin wanted her to kill him, but she did not want to agree because he lent corn to the poor, and had lent her some. Finally agreed to kill his oxen.

Added to names of those she had seen at sabbat Florent Jacquemin of le Vivier, Jean Girardin Haxo of la Fosse, and Marguitte veuve Didier Marchal of la Salle. Gave Persin a hen or a duck to be let off attendance at sabbat; when she did go was carried in the air as by a wind.

Judges remarked that she had been in prison for a long time, because of infection at St Dié and difficulty of getting executioner to come.

18 October 1611; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Added that she had killed Mengeotte daughter of Claudon Girardin.

18 October 1611; procureur asks for death sentence, with provision that she should feel the fire before being strangled.

20 October 1611; Change de Nancy agrees

3 November 1611; execution carried out

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