

Witch 053, Jean Febuay 1

B 3365 no 3; witch 053, Jean Febuay de Reillon

12 May 1624; Jean Dediote, Jean Hachon, and Jean Olry, all of Reillon, complain to procureur fiscal about Jean Vaultrin le vieux and Jean Febuay, who are suspected of witchcraft. This is followed by order for witnesses to be heard.

13 May 1624; informations preparatoires (against Febuay)

(1) Nicolas Olry, 43

Reputation 19 years. 12 years ago had called him witch in course of quarrel after Febuay's horses had attacked one of his in fields. Febuay made out he had not heard, and asked wife what he said, then said he was a sot and did not know what he said. Next day offered him loan of a horse to replace the one which was injured, and did borrow it for a few days. Also told of incident previous year when accused seemed to faint in fields while guarding horses.

(2) Zabey femme Dieudenon, 40

Reputation 14 years.

(3) Jeannon veuve Grand Bastien, 54

About 20 years earlier some witches from Reillon were executed, and her husband told her that Febuay's wife asked him in tears if her husband had been accused, to which he replied that he had not. Suspected him over sudden death of her brother Claudon Crousier previous year; had been angry because Crousier's son had been courting his daughter against his father's will.

(4) Jeanne veuve Claudon Crousier, 60

Reputation 14 years. Quarrel previous year, during which Jean had wished husband buried, then he fell ill at church and died in 24 hours. Same story about son courting daughter, which they opposed because of reputation; also suspected him over death of grand-daughter soon after, because son-in-law also discouraged the marriage.

(14 May 1624)

(5) Margueritte veuve Aubertin Lehel, 43

Reputation 20 years. 8 years earlier her husband had refused to mend his shoes, after which two sheep in flock he was guarding were strangled on same day, and he suspected Jean.

(6) Claudotte femme au grand Aulbry, 40

Reputation 12 years.

(7) Nicolas François, 33

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Reputation 8 years (residence). Had not sought reparation when called witch. 6 years earlier had refused to take his lambs when keeping flock, and after quarrel lost a calf, which he suspected had been his doing.

(8) Jean Marchal le viel, 60

Reputation 6 years, and had heard from Anthoine Colas Claudey of Gondrexon that in his youth there he was already suspected.

(9) Jean Marchal le jeune, 27

Reputation 20 years. His late father had told him that he bought a foal Jean wanted at fair of Bruyeres, and that a year later it suddenly died, which he suspected was his doing.

(10) Nicolas Mariotte, 70

Reputation 18 years. About 15 years before had sold 2 horses to late brother of accused, Jacques Febuay of Gondrexon, but refused to sell another to Jean despite several requests. Sickened and died within 3 days after the brothers had looked it over and taken it for a walk - suspected this was his witchcraft.

(11) Claude Crousée, jeune fils, 25

Long reputation. Story about frequenting his daughter, quarrel between fathers, and death of his own father, which he suspected had been his witchcraft.

(12) Claudon Bastien, jeune fils, 27

Reputation 12 years. Had heard his late father threaten to have him burned if he did not cure a sick horse, at which he merely laughed.

(13) Humbert Charier, 36

Reputation 15 years. 10 years earlier Jean had asked witness to help him cart some grain from Domepvre, but he refused on grounds that his horses were sick. Jean said his were too, and it was nothing - but 2 of his horses died, while those of accused recovered. Also suspected him over occasion when he found horse in stable being attacked by cat, which was scratching at its eyes, then disappeared without trace. Previous year had been angry when as bannard he had him fined, then he was ill in bed for 12 weeks; finally went out to take air, Jean touched his head, and he recovered - so thought he had taken off the sickness.

(14) Claudon Marchal. 30

General reputation; had built a house next to his, but had not dared to live there.

(15) le maire Jean Waultrin, 60

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Reputation 10 years. 5 years earlier had been angry when son of witness took horses on his field, touched one of them, and it died a few days later - believed this was his witchcraft.

(16) Nicolas Crousier, 48

Reputation 12 years. 2 years earlier their wives had quarrelled, and next morning a piece of stone fell off chimney and would have injured his wife but for a plank which got in the way, which they suspected was his witchcraft.

(17) George Curien, 40

Reputation 14 years. 6 months earlier found he had encroached on field of witness, but did not dare take action for fear of him.

15 May 1624; interrogation

Said he was laboureur aged about 60, native of Gondrexon. Knew he had been suspected of witchcraft for some 5 years, but did not know reason for arrest.

Agreed he had been guarding horses with Nicolas Olry, but denied allegations about fainting. Denied whole series of other charges. Did agree that le grand Bastien had asked him to cure his horse, but not that he had called him witch. Otherwise made reasonable responses to most questions.

17 May 1624; confrontations

No serious reproaches, but no admissions. Nicolas Crouvesier (witness 16) was his brother-in-law.

18 May 1624; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

20 May 1624; Change de Nancy approves

29 May 1624; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, rack, and tortillons, but finally placed on strappado with 50 pound weight on feet, at which he began to confess. Had been seduced by Poison 10 years earlier, who offered to make him rich, but money turned out to be coal or dust.

Said he had been to sabbats every month or 6 weeks, but it was all abuse, and there was nothing worth eating. Plotted to make hail, which he always opposed. Had seen widow of Claudon Crouvesier, Hellenix femme Colas Mariotte, Meline femme Humbert Charier, Jean Vaultrin (all of Reillon) and Hellenix femme Jean Babillon of Blesmery. Had made hail 3 years earlier which devastated much of land around Reillon.

Said his master had offered him powder, but he had never wanted to use it, seeing how he had been abused. Denied whole list of maléfices suggested to him.

30 May 1624; confirmed confessions, but now discharged all those he had accused, saying he had done so out of hatred.

30 May 1624; procureur fiscal asks for death sentence

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31 May 1624; Change de Nancy approves, subject to reiteration of confessions.

1 June 1624; formal death sentence from court at Blamont