

B 8667 No 5 (1) Witch 143, Jean Diez

16 September 1592; informations preparatoires contre Jean Diez of La Bolle, denounced by Jehenne Stablo (marginal note that she had later withdrawn this accusation).

(1) Pierron Demenge d'Orbay de La Bolle, c. 40

No quarrel, but had always heard him reputed a witch 'par le commun'.

(2) Marguutte vefue Jean Morel de La Bolle, c. 36

Reputation 12 years. As a poor woman with no animals, dependant on 'ce qu'elle gagne au travail et à la sueur de son corps', had no losses with which to reproach him.

(3) Georgeatte femme Claudon Prevost de la Bolle, c. 40

Jean had owed her first husband, Jean Francois, some money, and had asked him to take 'une hugette' in payment, as otherwise on account of his poverty he would not be repaid for 7 years. When husband refused this offer, he threatened him 'qu'il s'en repentiroit, avant qu'il fut peu de temps.' During night of same day (a Sunday) he became ill, and remained so for 7 weeks; his father knew of suspicion against Jean, and said publicly around village that if he didn't recover 'il en feroit faire le droit à quelqu'un'. Husband then began to make slow recovery - this was 18 years before. Later, during an argument with Jean's wife, husband was told 'qu'il se taise et que le diable luy cuisoit une soupe'. An hour later he was killed by 'un coup de tonnerre'.

(4) Zabel femme Demenge Gillat de La Bolle, c. 30

Reputation 16 years (since her marriage and residence). Her husband had often quarrelled with Jean, and always had some misfortune within 2 or 3 days afterwards. On one occasion Jean threatened 'Qu'il le mettroit tout bas jusques à la besace [beggar's sack]. Ce que leur est advenu aussy, parce que d'homme riche et bien aysé qu'il estoit, il est reduict à extreme pauvreté par la perte de tant de bestails qu'il a faict' - blamed Jean for these losses.

Previous year one Demenge Ban du Hapt had told her that he had refused to help Jean, and had become ill - was now going off to die because of him. He did die shortly afterwards.

On occasion of husband's first quarrel with Jean she was pregnant - later miscarried, after Jean had threatened that she would repent.

(5) Jean Didier Jeandel de La Bolle, c. 56

Had always reckoned Jean a witch, and had sometimes called him such, without any reparation being sought.

(6) Mengeon Jean Parmentier de La Bolle, c. 30

Previous year he had seen Jean ploughing at a distance, and had reckoned it safe to cut some wood in bois de la Magdelaine, of which Jean was forestier. Only cut what

he could carry on shoulders, having no horse or cart - but Jean appeared and said he must pay 5 francs. Had violent argument, after which he thought of Jean's reputation as a witch. Next week his wife and Jean's wife were returning from St. Dié; latter suggested that they exchange pots of 'composte', with no reference to quarrel between husbands. When witness discovered where it came from, he warned his wife she might be bewitched if she ate it, but she still did so. Developed sore throat in night, then her breast swelled up; child she was suckling also became swollen. Various people came to see this, and he put word about, even with Messieurs of St. Dié. Jean heard about it, and soon the child was cured without any medicine.

(7) Jacot Hocley de la Moictresse des Etignes proche La Bolle, c. 30

Reputation 12 years. Had twice called Jean a witch, without any reparation being sought.

(8) Colas Gagain

Had lost animals to value of more than 100 francs, and suspected Jean. Talking of this in Jean's presence, latter said he was not responsible, but someone else might be. He continued to be suspicious, and had called him witch without reparation being sought.

(9) Toussaint Jean Fresse de La Bolle, c. 40

Common reputation; had several times heard him called witch, but didn't think he had ever sought reparation.

(10) Marion femme à Bastien le Hire, bourgeois à Saint Dié, c. 20

In 1587 'comme sadite feue mere, et elle s'en alloient à l'église ouyr messe par un jour de dimenche, ledict Jean Diez, l'attoucha par le bras et luy demanda s'elle ne vouloit pas achepter une douzaine des pains qu'il vendoit, (lesquelz il alloit acheter et querir ordinairement au lieu de Sainte Marie, et les vendoit par la grande cherté qui lors regnoit). Et elle luy respondoit que Non, qu'elle n'en vouloit point. Cependant, sadicte mere, par ceste attouchement se sentit frappee de maladie, et en montant les degres en allant à l'esglise, commença à s'en plaindre, disant avoir froid et ne laissa ja pourtant, d'aller a la messe et l'ouyr. Mais des aussy tost, que ladite messe fut dicte, sadicte mere voulut s'en retourner, et de fait s'en retourna à la maison, se plaidant d'avoir froid à merveilles, et d'avoir perdu la moictié du corps que ledit Jean Diez avoit touché. Et la mesme soir fut alittée . . ' Died a few days later, maintaining during illness that Jean Diez had given it to her. Before this her mother always had 'grande crainte' of Jean; they had a 'moictresse' at La Bolle, and she was always putting off going to see it because she was afraid of meeting him.

(11) Colas Gerard de La Bolle, c. 50

Long reputation; had called him witch himself after drinking, but no reparation sought.

(12) Jean Mengin de La Bolle, c. 30

Three years before had quarrelled with Jean's wife, after his horse had strayed into field sown with oats. Same night horse broke leg in stable; blamed this on Jean, reputed a witch for 12 years. Mother also suspected.

(13) Marguitte femme à Jean Mengin, c. 40

Repeated husband's testimony.

(14) Claudon Prevost de La Bolle, c. 36

Reputation as long as could remember. Some 6 years before, when he had been 'paistre des chelbres', Jean had upbraided him one day when he took them to fields late. Within a few days developed illness which lasted more than 6 weeks; couldn't work, which he needed to do to live.

(15) Jehennon veuve George Colas Bergier de La Bolle, c. 50

10 or 12 years before she had 2 cows and three calves 'laictans'; Jean's wife asked her to provide milk for her children every day, on payment of 6 deniers. Advised by neighbours to refuse her nothing, on account of Jean's reputation, but couldn't give her so much milk on account of own needs. Told her she would give her enough milk each day for 'bouillie' 'pour l'honneur de Dieu', but soon afterwards the three calves died suddenly.

Some 9 years before her late husband was returning from Saint-Dié in company of Jean, who said to him 'vois tu George, tu es ung homme riche, bien aysé et as beaucoup de bien et je n'ay rien que ma serpette, avant qu'il soit trois ou quatre ans au plus, d'homme riche, que tu es, tu deviendras sy pauvre que tu n'auras pas seulement une louatte de reste, pour mendier ton pain, et moy, viendray à avoir moyen, L'autre luy ayant respondu, Que cela gisoit à la volonté de dieu et estoit de sa disposition d'ainsy le permettre ou non. Ledit Diez, luy respondit, qu'il scavoit et estoit assuré, que cela adviendroit ainsy, et qu'il scavoit beaucoup de choses.' From that moment on, although she and her husband worked as hard as neighbours, and didn't spend excessively on food or anything else, they were slowly reduced to extreme poverty. Believed Jean to have been cause of this.

One day her husband said to Jean's daughter that her father was keen to be paid what was due to him, but less willing to pay others, and that he still owed two day's work to his wife. Next day Jean came to house and reproached him 'bien aigrement', telling him he would soon repent; soon became ill, and after languishing miserably for long time he died.

Once when she had chased Jean's goats out of her garden he had 'grondit bien fort'; next day a child became ill and died in 3 days.

(16) Demenge Gillat de La Bolle, ?

Some 9 years before, when he was with Jean, latter said 'Qu'il estoit bien aysé et bien riche, mais qu'il verroit une fois le jour, qu'il n'avoit pas seulement une louatte pour chercher du pain. A quoy il luy respondit, Qu'il estoit doncques ung genaoux, ou s'il scavoit telles choses, qu'il failloit que le diable luy ait dit.' Never demanded reparation, but witness had indeed become poor; every time he had quarrelled with Jean, some misfortune followed. Also said that Jean had once said to him 'Que par

luy et le grand Colas, il le failloit mourir honteusement, à la vue du peuple, ad cause des charges qu'ils luy imposent'.

(17) George Mengin de La Bolle, c. 26

Reputation as long as could remember.

(18) Mengeatte veuve Demenge Ban de Hapt, demeurant à la moictresse Jean Hanns proche La Bolle, c. 40

A year before at last St. Jean, her husband had refused to go and work some days for Jean. Fell ill, with 'une appostume gros enflé' on back, and died. Twice told her Jean had caused his sickness, although on morning of death said 'qu'il se dechargeoit de tout'. Died during night; sent word to Jean that he should make coffin, as he normally did, and he said he already knew of death, although none of those present had left house.

(19) Collatte femme Demenge Ferry doyen de la Terre de Despezombrey (?), c. 50

She was native of La Bolle, and had lived there with first husband Diaz Francois. Husband had lent Jean 10 francs, saying they must be paid back at end of year because he was due to pay them for house then. Difficulty over repayment led to quarrel; subsequently Jean passed by her husband, who was threshing wheat. No word said, but husband became ill that evening and died after a week. Believed Jean to be responsible; long reputation, and his mother had already been strongly suspected.

Note that Jean was then imprisoned.

23 September 1592; interrogation

Said he was laboureur of La Bolle, aged about 50. Had spent about 16 years in service elsewhere, at St. Quirien, Saint Croix in Val de Liepvre, and elsewhere. Had married about 20 years before and lived in La Bolle since. Claimed to have lived on excellent terms with his neighbours.

Agreed that he had quarrelled with Demenge Gillat, and said he had often complained to the Maire 'susnommé' because Gillat 'estant un homme de petit estoffe, s'ingeroit de l'injurier, l'appellant meschant homme et Genaux.' Had wanted to seek formal reparation, but had been advised that unless he could prove he had said this, he would incur costs in vain. Denied using words alleged by Gillot, but agreed that he might have said 'Qu'encor il fut bien riche, sy estre qu'à ses deportemens, il deviendroit aussi petit que luy.' Admitted making remark about Gillat and Gros Colas causing his death, but claimed this had been to the dean of the maire as he went into prison, because they had disputes with him. (This of course must have been after witnesses had been heard !)

Admitted that Colas Gagaire had called him witch, but said that there had been no witnesses.

Asked about the death of wife of the maire Gregoire Myotte, agreed that he had been accustomed to sell bread, and said that when there was some left over he had often taken it to her house, but denied causing her any harm.

Questioned about his failure to take legal action over accusations of being witch, agreed 'qu'il peult bien avoir faibly en cela.' Judges suggested it had been out of fear that someone would become 'partie formelle' 'et luy adviendrait, ce que luy advient, maintenant.'

Denied threats to George Colas Bergier, saying he had worked more than a hundred days with him, and he was 'ung bon compaignon'. Agreed that he had reproached him over remark made to his daughter, but denied threat that he would repent.

Asked about keeping company with 'la Stablatte de Haillieulle', 'dit qu'il n'a hanté avec elle, qu'en tout bien'. Told of her accusation against him, continued to say he was innocent.

25 September 1592; confrontations

In reply to Georgette femme Claudon Prevost, said that at time of dispute over 'hugette' he had never been suspected of witchcraft; Gillat had been the first to call him 'genaux'. Agreed that his wife had told him she had said to Francois 'que la tonnerre puisse tomber sur luy et sur les veaux.'

Concerning accusations by Mengeon Gillat's wife Zabel, said that Gillat had blamed others beside him for his poverty. Agreed that he might have made the remark about causing him a shameful death, when angry and 'esguillonné par luy'.

Now admitted that Jacot Hocley had called him witch, but had replied with similar insults; judges quickly pointed out that he had denied this during interrogation, and he could only say that he now remembered.

Accepted deposition of Colas Gagaire, although 'sur le bruict de sorcier porté au commencement de sa deposition dit qu'il ne scauroit que faire, ne scauroit estoupper la bouche des gens'. Again reproached with inconsistency since interrogation - same excuse.

Used same phrase about not knowing how to stop mouths again, but made no serious admissions. Threatened at end with being tormented 'de toutes les facons que l'on pourra excogiter', but still maintained innocence.

2 October 1592: Change de Nancy approved torture, although it should only be applied 'mediocrement'.

7 October 1592; interrogation under torture

Racked 3 times by Mre Jean, but did not make any admissions under torture. After second time begged that they should not make him damn himself, by a forced confession that was false. After third time was asked about Marion wife of Gregoire Myotte; said she had been his cousin, and he had done her no harm. Pressed to tell

truth, finally began to confess. Had been seduced by Mre Persin some 12 years before. Had used powder to bring about deaths of Diey Francois, Grand George, and (?) the wife of Henry le Saulnier of Le viel marché. Had been to sabbat on mountain of Ramberg, carried on master's neck. List of those he had seen there largely missing - paper damaged - but included Colas Prevost of Haillieulle and his own wife - had only seen latter once, and they had never talked about it. Had made hail at Sabbat.

Reinterrogated after lunch, he confirmed his earlier admissions. Full list of those seen at sabbat now legible: la Stablatte (already executed), her son Bastien Stablo, Claudatte wife of Michiel de la Haulte Rue du Viel Marché, the wife of Jean Francois, the wife of Jean Mengin, Colas Prevost of Haillieulle, the wife of Colas Curien of Le Faing, and his own wife.

Confronted with Claudatte, already imprisoned, he maintained his accusation against her, and 'l'at advisé de ne se faire tourmenter comme il l'a fait'.

8 October 1592; interrogation

Repeated admissions. Now discharged his wife, and others of La Bolle, from accusations against them, but said he would maintain others to last breath.

12 October 1592; death sentence from Change de Nancy.

15 October 1592; he now discharged all those he had accused, while continuing to admit his own faults.