

Witch 145, Colas Mengin 1

Witch 145: B8667 no 7, Colas Mengin de Saint Remy

28 November 1591; informations preparatoires. Colas had been accused by some of 'actes de sortilege'.

(1) Colas Claude Jardel, de Saint Remy, c. 30

Could only say that 3 years earlier had heard Jean Marion say that he thought Colas was indeed the witch he was reputed; he had various quarrels with him and had suffered much harm.

(2) Jean Marion de Saint Remy, c. 60

Reputation 6 years. After quarrels and threats arising over a field boundary, had lost an ox and a pig, which he believed to be Colas' doing.

(3) Jean Colas Henry de Saint Remy, c. 40

Reputation 6 years. Some 5 years before Jean Jacques Diez had suspected him of causing his illness. He himself had lost animals after quarrels.

(4) Cesar Colas de Brux, demeurant a Saint Remy, c. 50

Said that Colas' mother Margo, dead for 14 years, had been reputed and feared as a witch. When there had been a rumour she would be arrested, she had begged witness not to help in arresting her.

Around last Whitsun had heard from Demenge le Salpetrier, then working in St. Remy, that when he had been ill in bed Colas had come in through a tiny window no wider than his hand, with two others he couldn't recognise because they kept their backs to him - Colas was wearing a red hat. Told him he would soon be cured, but must speak softly so that his mother didn't hear; then left by ordinary route. He soon recovered, and afterwards told story around village.

(5) Claudon Colas Marion de Saint Remy, c. 30

Some 10 or 12 weeks before had heard from Demenge le Salpetrier about Colas' visit to 'luy oster le mal'.

(6) (woman witness - page damaged)

About 20 years before Colas' mother Margo had been strongly suspected. 10 years before one of witness' cows broke a leg, and she called in the wife of Gerard des Dames, 'fugitive du Ban d'Estivay a cause de mesme crime', who said it was the work of evil persons, and asked if Colas were reputed a witch. She replied that he wasn't, to which her visitor replied 'qu'il en estoit ung des plus parfait.' Some 6 or 7 years a quarrel followed an escape by her pigs and damage; he told her that she was 'bien contre luy' and 'se donroit de garde [should watch out].' Had subsequently had various losses of animals. About 2 years later he had reproached her and her husband Jean Marion with encroaching on his land, and threatened them 'qu'ilz ne s'en souriassent' - lost ox soon afterwards.

(7) (unknown witness)

Could report no ill of Colas.

(8) Jean Didier Cherier de Saint Remy, c. 30

Had failed to pay Colas a 'chopine de vin' due after a 'partage' of beasts on a lease, because animal he had taken had languished and died. Much later Colas complained and threatened to enforce payment, which made him suspicious that he had caused its sickness. Also told story of Demenge le Salpetrier and his illness previous summer.

(9) Colas Ferry de Saint Remy, c. 40

Knew nothing but good of Mengin. (At confrontations said to be dead).

(10) (unknown witness)

For several years had heard 'des particuliers qui cachettement murmoroient ledit Colas Mengin estre genaulx. Lequel bruict s'est fort augmenté' since Demenge le Salpetrier put his story about before the last harvest. Since then Colas had resented fact that her husband Claudon Gerard kept company with le Salpetrier, and had threatened him. He had been ill for some 10 weeks, and during this time Colas had come to see him and reproached him 'qu'il avoit dit qu'il luy auroit donné le mal. Lequel Claudon luy respondant qu'il n'en avoit parlé, repliquoit ledit Colas, Sy tu ne l'as dit, se l'a tu pensé'.

(11) Jean Hanna de St. Remy, c. 40

Mother was reputed a witch; Colas himself reputed one for 6 years.

(12) (Unknown witness)

Knew nothing of Colas.

(13) Margueritte femme de Fleurentin Marron de St. Remy, c. 50

Mother reputed a witch; Colas also regarded as one for at least 4 years. Reported that Jennon wife of Jean Colas Marion had confided her suspicions to her. Also told story dating from last Toussaint; 12-year old girl who guarded their animals had a bad dream about a wolf, and next morning came rushing in crying that her dream had come true (text damaged here - end of story missing).

(14) Missing

(15) Jennon femme a Jean Henry de la Salle, demeurant a St. Remy, c. 30

Reputation 6 or 7 years, but had seen nothing herself.

(16) Colas Hanna de St. Remy. c. 45

Reputation 6 years. 3 years before Jean Jacquot had complained to him that Colas had given him an illness.

(17) Jennon femme a Jean Salleneix de St. Remy, c. 40

Mother and Colas both reputed witches..

(18) Mariette femme a Mengin Gerard de St, Remy, c. 40

Reputation 4 or 5 years; knew nothing herself

(19) Missing

(20) Jean Colas Didier Cherrier de St. Remy, c. 30

Mother's reputation; Colas himself suspected for 6 years. 2 years before Jean Colas Marion had confided his own suspicions to the witness.

(21) Claudon Claude Andreu de St. Remy, c. 60

Reputation 10 years.

(22) Jennon femme à Jean Marron de St Remy, c. 50

Reputation several years; people had said 'en cachette', 'ha les chapeaux rouges soient en mauvais bruiet' since Colas always wore a red hat. Her husband had an illness which lasted a few days, and Colas Hanna later said to her that the accused 'avoit bien ses joyes' since he had caused this; she was astonished, having suspected nothing. Nevertheless Colas appeared later, complaining that she had accused him of causing her husband's death, and denying that he was cause of this.

(23) Mathiette veuve de Colas Marion de St. Remy, c. 60

Reputation 5 years.

(24) Claudatte veuve de Nicolas Chordey de St. Remy, c. 40

Reputation 4 years.

(25) Margueritte femme a Mengeon Moulin, de St. Remy, c. 30

Reputation 4 years (residence).

(26) Claudon Colas Marion de St. Remy, c. 50

Said 'que tousjours la race dudit Colas Mengin a esté redoubtée et soubbconnée de sortilege'. Two years before his brother Jean Colas Marion had told him of his own suspicions.

(27) Jennon femme a Colas Didier Cherrier de St. Remy, c. 26

Reputation several years.

(28) Demenge Neise de Welacourt, salpetrier pour la service de son altesse, c. 25

Around last St. George he and his wife, together with five children (3 from her previous marriage), & his mother, had come to village for him to exercise his profession there. Lodged in house of Colas Cougnolle, close to that of the accused. Wife fell ill so seriously that she died within a fortnight, saying to husband that 'elle estoit ensorcellée, lequel taschoit de la detourner de ceste oppinion avec remonstrances qu'ils ne faisoient que d'arriver audit village ou ilz n'avoient fait desplaisir ne tencez a personne.' He and children also fell ill, and his mother was so upset that she 'crioit et publioit haultement qu'elle feroit par les gens de Monsieur de Haracourt prendre les sorciers et sorcieres de par la.' Overheard at fountain by wife of accused. Three days later had visit at night from Colas Mengin, whom he recognised by his red hat, and another he couldn't recognise. Colas asked about his sickness - he replied that he was tormented by a cough, and was coughing blood - Colas then promised him he would get better, and from morrow he began to do so.

(29) Colas ?

Reputation 7 years. Some 4 years before had heard from Jean Jacquot that accused had given him a serious illness.

Jacquot (7th witness) then produced, and added to his original negative testimony. Some 4 years before had been to law over some property, and Colas had been one of these opposed to him; had wanted case deferred, but decision went in favour of witness. Some 9 weeks later had a serious illness which lasted 13 weeks, and also lost a horse. In view of Colas' reputation he had suspected him, but did not know if he had actually been responsible.

(30) Mengeon Moulat de St. Remy, c. 30

Always had reputation.

(31) Chrepien Cesar Chrepien, de St. Remy, c. 44

Reputation more than 4 years. Two years ago last Lent Jean Marron, who had been appointed to an office previously held by Colas at Christmas, suddenly died. His widow subsequently told the witness that she had warned her husband that evil might come of taking the office, and she held that Colas had killed him.

(32) (Unknown witness)

Some 4 or 5 years before, after dispute arising from damage done by their beasts, Colas had threatened that they would repent. Shortly afterwards wolf killed one of their calves. On account of his evil reputation she suspected him of causing this. Some 5 weeks earlier, on way to market, saw two men running; thought one was Colas. Then thought she saw him change into a wolf and jump a hedge, before seeing him again in normal shape beginning to plough (this was weeks before trial).

(33) (Unknown witness)

Story of argument over a cow whose lease Colas wanted to prolong for a year, subsequent fight, other problems leading to lawsuit, and illness lasting 2 years.

(34) Colas Colin Gerardin de Nompateize, c. 40

Had lived 12 years at St. Remy; both Colas and his mother suspected as witches. Some 8 years before had heard from the late Colas Declain, maire d'Estinay, that Colas' brother Mengin had told him they had another master than God. Later he met Mengin again in company, and asked him to repeat remark - he left quickly without saying anything.

(No date visible) Interrogation

Said he was native of St. Remy, 46 years old, son of Nicolas Mengin. Lived by 'labourage' like his father; latter had died some 20 years before, and he himself had been married some 23 years.

After accusations made by Demenge le Salpetrier, when they 'debatoient sur tels propos, luy deposant dict audit seigneur et le pria que s'il doubtoit de ses faicts qu'il s'en feict informer, ce qu'a esté cause de la presente procedure'.

Among witnesses, said that Jean Jacquot had been 'reprins en justice' and was not fit to be received, while the salpetrier was 'ung vagabond, ivrogne' in whose word one could have no trust.

Generally denied all substantial matters, while agreeing to some quarrels. Said his father and mother had been of good reputation.

Followed by confrontations

After a number of fruitless confrontations, in which he denied everything of substance, was allowed to return home on promise of being there next morning. Didn't turn up, and had eventually to be fetched - admitted that he had felt so reluctant to come that he had had to be forced.

When Demenge le Salpetrier appeared, the judges asked him if he had not made 'amendise' to Colas for his accusation; said that while he was working one evening Colas had appeared, accompanied by others, who surrounded him and demanded that he should say it had only been a dream. He appears to have done so, but now reiterated that it had really happened.

On confrontation Colas said that he held him to be 'ung estranger et incognu', and there was no reason to have faith in anything he said.

18 January 1592; Change de Nancy orders question extraordinaire.

29 January 1592; interrogation under torture.

This was conducted in the great kitchen of the abbey of Estival, in whose court he was tried, and in whose prisons he had been kept. Ducal executioner, Mre. Jean, carried out torture. Was racked, and had water poured into mouth. When he was pulled more strongly, he signalled to be let down, but then said nothing pertinent. On first stretching had said he was no witch, but had stolen 3 quarterons of wheat 'au hault ban'. On being racked again, said he had been seduced at Repy by Mre Persin, but wouldn't go further until threatened with 'chappelet et sonnettes'. Now said seduction had been 8 years before, when he had been angry over death of a cow, and had no money to buy another.

Admitted killing animals, and having given salpetrier sickness through agency of his master, being angry because he had threatened to go and 'bescher sa maison'.

Had later asked his master to heal him, and this had been occasion of night-time visit to give him healing powder.

Also confessed causing deaths of Jean Maron and of Nicolas Jean Arnoult - latter had seized his wheat against payment of a debt.

Said he had been several times to sabbat, carried on master's shoulders; were many people there, dancing and feasting, but he had not participated, only watched.

30 January; repeated confession, and now said he had seen Anthoine Chrepien of St. Remy at sabbat. Anthoine said he and his brother Chrepien were there, and Colas knew they had already been arrested on suspicion of witchcraft, and had heard from Anthoine that he had been tortured 3 times.

31 January; produced before 'les bons hommes' of Ban d'Estival, evidently carrying out an ancient right of jurisdiction, under which accused was to be produced on three different days. Colas was placed on a 'selle' while maire Nicolas Aulbry read out 'proces'. He then started to retract, saying that he had done himself great wrong, had only confessed under fear of more torture, etc. When officers were about to lead him away, he reversed position again, said his admissions were true, and asked to be judged on them. He waived right to three days hearing, saying he wished he was already dead (it seems clear that this was a standard practice, although accused was given chance to exercise full customary rights). The 'bons hommes' then committed him to the mercy of the seigneur.

3 February 1592; death sentence from Change de Nancy, subject to further interrogation.

17 February 1592; Colas was taken from prison, and now denied everything he had previously confessed.

18 February 1592; Change de Nancy orders renewed torture.

22 February 1592; interrogation under torture.

Racked once again, and given water by Mrs. Jean; also made to feel 'chappelet'. Confessed afresh, although saying he had only been to sabbat once, and had recognised no-one. Also denied death of Nicolas Jean Arnoult, but renewed other confessions

25 February 1592; Change de Nancy renews death sentence.

1 March 1592; execution carried out at Saint-Dié