

B 8673 no 2; witch 153, Jehennon femme Jean Perrin de Girovillers-sous-Montfort

6 October 1594; informations preparatoires

Taken at request of procureur for Chapter of St Dié.

(1) Nicolas Alexis, laboureur, 60

5 or 6 years before one of his cows was lost from herd, and herdsman suggested it might be in neighbouring village, so they went out to look. Passed her house on the way, and she and her husband said they were foolish to do this, and that it would be in some stream. After 2 days was found dead in a stream with neck twisted, although there was not enough water to cause this. In view of long reputation and remarks believed she had caused this; had called her witch, and husband witch and thief, without their taking any action.

(2) Zabel femme du precedent, 50

Repeated husband's deposition, adding that they suspected her over some later losses.

(3) Catherine femme Francois Grillat de Mathchey, 25

12 years earlier, when living with parents at Gervillers, she and her husband had killed their cat, after which there were numerous arguments. 3 or 4 years later mother fell ill, and suspected her of being cause; Jehennon gave her some perry, but she became worse, dying some 4 months later quite emaciated. A few days before death told her husband that it was the perry which had killed her. Long reputation.

(4) Demenge Perrin, laboureur, 44

Had lost a horse suddenly after quarrelling with her and her husband, and 'medecin' he called to see it said it had been bewitched by a woman. Believed this had been her witchcraft - long reputation.

(5) Jehennon femme Holbin Jean Holbin, 40

Had often quarrelled with her, and suspected her over various misfortunes. Previous year had touched her when she was heavily pregnant; child was pulled from her stillborn, and she was still unwell. Had heard her called witch without reacting.

(6) Françoise veuve Nicolas Micquel, 40

Around previous harvest her son-in-law had beaten a foal belonging to late husband, who retaliated by beating him. When witness met Jehennon she warned her there would be trouble if anything happened to the foal, and they quarrelled. Soon afterwards the foal injured itself by jumping against a post, and her husband wrapped it in a sheet to cure it. As soon as it recovered her husband fell ill and died within a day, which she blamed on her witchcraft (had happened just 3 weeks earlier).

(7) Holbin Grand Holbin laboureur, 30

Told of wife's labour and stillbirth.

(8) Michiel Grillat, 25

2 years earlier when his father had a sick horse, he said some witches would be arrested if it did not recover - and it promptly did. One of his then sickened, and while he was tending it she passed; he called out that she was the witch who had made it ill, but she passed on without any reply.

(9) Demenge Curien, 35

Had allowed her in his 'craigne' (where people gathered to keep warm) winter before last, but next year would not have her back because of her reputation. Believed that because of this she had caused loss of cattle to value of 200 francs at least. After quarrel with her husband, who had stolen some hay from him, his wife suddenly became ill among the vines, unable to straighten her back; recovered after making neuvaine to Beau Bernard. Previous year one of his cows butted another belonging to her husband, who struck his with a stick; 2 days later cow gave birth to stillborn calf. Believed all these losses were caused by her witchcraft - long reputation.

(10) Didier Thierry, laboureur, 30

Had heard them both called witch by Colas Collenat and his wife, and pretend not to hear.

(11) Catherine femme Colas Poirel, 32

When they had been working for her father Jehennon asked her which of his horses he valued the most. Since she suspected her, gave a false answer, but her husband realized this, said she lied, and named the best horses. Soon the best horse became ill, as if mad, and ran through fields until they had to kill it. General reputation.

(12) Jean Cossoy, 30

4 years earlier heard her called witch by wife of Colas Gobellat without seeking reparation. Around same time lost a horse, and suspected her or her husband, since he had just quarrelled with him.

(13) Didiere femme Demenge Perrin, 40

Repeated husband's story about horse.

(14) Hellony femme Pierron Demenge Gerard, doyen de Messieurs, 45

Although they had no quarrel with her, had lost more animals than one could believe possible. Were therefore forced to believe she had bewitched them; witness feared her so much that she gave her anything she could to ensure peace.

Had recently lost a cow after she had passed through house. Sometimes, from fear rather than friendship, lodged her when her husband had driven her out.

(15) Nicolas Grillat, lieutenant de maire, 70

12 years earlier had found her husband stealing tithe sheaves, and later grapes; after this lost various animals, which he suspected he or she had caused, in view of reputation.

(16) Le maire Colas Lolbiat, echevin, 60

Told of death of wife 8 years earlier, and how just before this she told him how she became much worse after drinking perry given her by Jehennon. Had lost 4 fine horses, all dead in same fashion, after quarrelling with her and her husband. Also thought they had caused death of a small pig; was next neighbour, and had to take animals to water past their house, but always did so with fear and trembling.

(17) Honneste homme Jean Hacquart, maire du chapitre, 29

Year of Bouillon's army, she and husband were working for father, and when talk turned to witches witness spoke harshly against them. Shortly afterwards he became ill, and was bedridden some time, but his father advised him to treat her well so that she would heal him. After giving her legs of mutton she made him a soup, and he immediately recovered, so suspected she had given him illness and cured it.

(18) Pierron Demenge Gerard, doyen du chapitre, 45

Some 3 years earlier had gone into his stable by the back door, after which he lost a fine cow. In a 6 month period had lost 14 animals, and was 'quasi contraint' to blame her for this - long reputation.

(19) Thierry Jean Thierry, 66

Had lost various animals; no direct suspicion, but had been supposed to collect fine of 30 gros, and heard her husband was angry about this, so might have caused his some damage.

(20) Demenge Hurault alias Masson, 60

General reputation.

(21) Claudon de Grand Pray, laboureur, 60

Year when husband was sergent he had fined horses of witness unjustly, and he had reproached him with this, asking if he wanted to impoverish him. Soon after he lost a horse, and suspected him or Jehennon over this - general reputation of both.

(22) Honneste homme Nicolas Grillat, maire de la seigneurie, 44

2 years before her son had done threshing for him, and heard she was very discontented over what he was paid, and made great fuss about it. Then lost 4

horses, which all became 'morveux', so suspected her. Seeing her passing he said 'Qu'il en failloit mourir des sorcieres icy, qui luy faisoient ainsy mourir ses chevaux, et qu'on voioit bien que faisoient elles' - no reaction, or demand for reparation.

(23) Mengeatte veuve Simon de Récourt, 50

9 years earlier she and her husband came to reap for them, but when it rained at lunchtime were sent home. Later weather improved, and she and 2 daughters went out to continue reaping. Terrible wind came up, after which they all had fever for a month - believed she had caused this.

(24) Bietrix femme George Mengin, 25

Same story as above.

(7 October 1594)

Jehennon femme Holbin Jean Holbin, fifth witness, returned to add that 6 years earlier, when driven out of house at night by husband, she had seen 2 men in black passing through village. Said she had been frightened 'et qui ne vouldroit pas craindre, voyant telles choses, et qu'on ne scait comme les fortunes arrivent.'

Note that at this point she was arrested and interrogated; then to be taken to St Dié.

8 October 1594; interrogation

Said she was about 40, native of Clezentaine, daughter of Jean Aulbry laboureur. Had come to Geriviller on marriage to Jean Perrin 18 years earlier. They were poor, but had lived on good terms with neighbours, apart from minor disputes about animals and land with Colas Lolbiat and Jehennon Micquel, wife of Holbin Jean Holbin, their immediate neighbours.

Agreed she had been called witch by Nicolas Alexis, but husband had told her she knew they were poor, and lacked means to seek redress by justice. Asked about the perry, denied she had put anything in it, and said that if she had been a witch she would have fled long before, and not waited to be arrested. Nicolas Alexis had told her that Demenge Perin thought she had killed his horse, but when she spoke to him he denied having said this. Had realized that Michiel Grillat referred to her when speaking of witches as she passed, but lacked means to pursue him. Asked about exclusion from craigne of Demenge Marchal, said he had not held one the winter in question. Thought that gifts of meat from Jean Hacquart were for her husband, who was then ill, and regularly helped them; had made soup at request of his wife, but not for the reasons they attributed to her. Her son had threshed for Nicolas Grillet, but had been paid normal rate. Agreed that she had sometimes been driven out of house by husband and had to sleep elsewhere, but denied seeing men in black at night.

8 October 1594; confrontations

She said that since she had no children living she had no reason not to confess she was a witch, had this been the case. No reproaches to any witnesses, but denied everything apart from the odd dispute.

15 October 1594; Change de Nancy approves torture

19 October 1594; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews, then racked. Told that her husband had confessed that morning and named her as accomplice. Continued to deny she was a witch; eventually asked to be set down, promising to tell truth, but then insisted that she was innocent. Racked again, said that one evening returning from the craigne she had seen a white figure going towards church, which gave her good evening, but nothing else. Then said he was called Colas; when asked if he had wanted her to believe in him, said yes, then immediately retracted. Was now given tortillons, and said that Colas had told her her husband treated her badly, asking if she wanted to kill him - she refused. A few days later, when husband had driven her out of house, approached her again. She still did not want to kill him, but was given powder she used to make him lame. Judges pointed out that he had been lame for at least 10 years, and she had been talking about a year earlier - she agreed that temptation had been at least 9 years ago.

Confessed to normal seduction, by Persin, who gave her black powder to kill, white to cure (no mention of money). Confessed to several maléfices against animals, and to making her friend Penthecoste ill, then curing her. Had been to sabbat twice, and made hail - carried in the air by her master. Saw Nicolle Grillat, femme Colas Lolbiat, and Jehennon Colin, femme Jean Pairson (who had fled). Blamed latter for death of cow of Nicolas Alexis, after he had refused to lend her grain, and for several of the other losses imputed to her - said they told one another what they had done. Denied seeing her husband at sabbat.

Repeated confessions later, saying that husband treated her badly, had sold her property, and everyone was sorry for her. Denied having killed any Christians. Said that Colas Lolbiat's wife had given him beginning of illness which caused limp, and she herself had completed it; also thought she had given him another illness which lasted 6 weeks, for which she treated him, always saying she knew who had given it to him.

Now said she had been to sabbat 4 times in all. Had helped to damage crops, and Persin 'vouloit tousjours faire que l'on eut vendu le bled a l'escuelle'. Village fields would not have been damaged on St John's Eve that year if the marlier had continued to ring the bells - when they stopped Persin brought the cloud back.

9 October 1594; repeated confessions and accusations

24 October 1594; Change de Nancy approves death sentence, after she had been interrogated again under threat of torture.

7 November 1594; interrogation

Insisted that all she had said was true, but added nothing else.

19 November 1594; note that she has been executed.