

witch 173, Jean Martin 1

B 8680 no 3; witch 173, Jean fils Demenge Claude Martin, de Mandray

10 December 1596; procureur for chapter of St Dié has been informed that the accused, as a young boy guarding animals, had told other children about seeing a large black man who gave him money, and an animal like a black goat, but which had yellow feet like those of a goose. Has asked for information to be taken from other children.

(1) Henry fils Henry, de Mandray, 12

Said he would tell no lies, which priest had always forbidden him to do. 3 years earlier had joined others in field, and asked how much they would give him if he could make a spring come in their presence; cut end of stick and thrust it into ground, then when he withdrew it water followed. Later told them about seeing the black goat with yellow feet.

(2) Jehenne fille Colin Lienard, 17

Similar account.

(3) Jennon fille feu Jean Jennat, 15

Had told story about goat with yellow feet previous summer; they said he must be a witch, but he only laughed.

(4) Claude fils feu Andreu Jaulnat, 15

Story about goat from previous summer. 3 weeks earlier, when his mother was being taken to St Dié, had said 'que le Capitaine n'avoit plus a tarder de chercher des autres gens parce que son camp se defaisoit bien fort, et que sy sa mere estoit bruslée les seigneurs en auroient bien cent escus'.

(5) Colas fils feu Mengin Menginot, 11

Story about goat from previous summer; witness had said it must have been a devil, and he must be a witch to have seen such things, because the rest of them were out in same place at all hours, and had never seen anything like it.

11 December 1596; interrogation

Said he was 16 or 17. After denying for long time, finally admitted telling story about goat, but in fact it had been a man in black who promised to make him rich if he renounced God - he refused to do so. Had not seen him again.

Admitted remark about captain and camp; had meant that if his mother was burned devil would have lost a servant. Asked if he knew she was a witch, said he did not.

Was then sent back to prison, to await questioning of mother, since there were great presumptions she had taken him to sabat.

18 December 1596; interrogation and confrontation

First was questioned on basis of claims made by his mother, which he continued to deny, saying she had lied.

He was then confronted with his mother Jehenne, who maintained her claims to have taken him to sabat and used him as agent to carry out maléfices (see her trial in B 8677 no 10).

He persisted in his denials, and she finally said she was his natural mother, and would be 'bien malheureuse et de meschante nature' if she charged him with untruths. He lowered his eyes but continued to deny.

Interrogated again later, he now confessed he had been to the sabat with his mother, starting 18 months earlier. Had taken part in fasting and dancing, and saw Jacques Gabourel, but would not renounce God when Persin asked him to do so. Went another 4 times, but still refused to renounce God. Insisted he had never committed any maléfices, although judges warned him his trial would be sent to Change de Nancy, which would certainly recommend torture.

23 December 1596; Change de Nancy recommends that he be given thumbscrews only, and with moderation.

3 January 1597; interrogation under torture

Now said he had never been to sabat, with his mother or otherwise. His previous confession was false, 'et voudroit qu'il luy ait cousté deux vers de son sang que nous scachions sa pensée'.

Was finally given thumbscrews, and threatened with further torture. Now asked to be released, promising to tell the truth. Had been to sabat with mother, and after twice refusing to renounce God, the third time her pressure and that of Persin made him agree. Had seen Jacques Gabourel and Barbeline femme Mengeon Jean, both of Mandray.

Used powder to commit long series of maléfices. Killed goat of Cathelon Colin, with whose son he had quarrelled, then bull of Jacques Henry Finance, who had insulted his father. Killed calf of Claude Menginot for same reason, and another of Vincent Jean Laisne after fighting with his son. Quarrelled with Claude fils Jacques Henry; first killed a calf, then used powder to kill Claude himself.

Also killed Demenge Jacquemin, doyen at Mandray, who wanted to levy tax on his father, and who had threatened to beat him. Killed Mengey fils Mongeon Jean after a quarrel, and Claude fils feu Claude Gabourel, who called him 'fils de sorciere ey fils de ribaulde'. Another victim was Jehenne femme George Jean Jeannatte, who had threatened to beat him after he struck one of her goats and made it limp. Killed Mengeatte fille Demenge Claude Menginot, who called him 'fils de ribaulde'.

Asked why he did not die like those on whom he threw powder, since he touched it himself, replied 'que ladicte pouldre ne peult point faire de mal aux sorcieres qui la manient et que quand ils ont jecté de ladite pouldre sur quelque personne ou bestial, c'est le diable leur maitre par apres qui les fait mourir apres

qu'ilz ont donné leurs consentement.' Asked if he had not been afraid he would be arrested like other witches, said he had, but Persin had constantly ordered him to do more. Did not forbid him to go to church, but was not to pray to God.

Asked if he had power to use powder against anyone he wished, replied 'que luy ny toutes aultres sorcieres, n'ont poinct de puissance sur aulcune personne que le diable ne les en advertisse premierement, leur commandans de ce faire apres neangtmoings qu'ilz ont eu l'envie et intention de mal faire a aulcune personne, et que toutes les personnes et bestial qu'il a faict mourir, le diable son maitre Persin, l'avoit tousjours poussé et incité de ce faire'.

4 January 1597; interrogation

Confirmed previous confessions.

7 January 1597; further confirmation

8 January 1597; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

10 January 1597; Change de Nancy approves, subject to final reiteration of confessions

13 January 1597; confirmed confessions, adding that he had seen his 'soeur germaine' Jennon at sabat, where he thought his mother had taken her.

4 February 1597; sentence carried out