

Witch 178, Colas François 1

B 8680 no 8; witch 178, Colas François de Sarupt

Denounced by Didier Pierrat de Saulcy (witch 177)

12 September 1597; informations preparatoires

(1) Barbelline veuve Jean le maire de Girompaire, 60

Long reputation. 6 years earlier had told off her daughter Colatte, who was guarding animals, saying that within 3 days she would not return to that place. Next day her feet seemed to be burning, and she cried continually; did not find healing for 3 years, and witness had always suspected this was his witchcraft.

(2) Colatte fille Jean le maire, de Girompaire, 24

Same story; had lost most of toes, and remained 'pauvre impotent' even after pain had ceased.

(3) Georgeatte femme Jean Colatte, 50

2 years before husband quarrelled with Colas over common land, and an ox fell ill, with great swelling on neck. Died after a year, and had always suspected this was his witchcraft.

(4) Mengeon Lienard, 30

3 weeks earlier Colas had pushed mare of witness as she was returning to village with other animals, after which the mare sickened. 3 or 4 days later went outside his house with others and said (without addressing him directly) that the person who had pushed his mare should put her right, otherwise he would bring her to him. Next day mare began to recover, and he suspected witchcraft by Colas.

(5) Jacquot Jean, maire de Girompaire, 32

Another version of story of his sister (witness 2).

(6) Lienard Adam, 25

Around previous St Jean Colas had approached one of his horse; did not know if he touched it, but it was frightened, and same evening sickened, to die next day as if rabid. Did not know if he was cause, but had long reputation as witch.

(7) Georgeon Demenge Babel, 50

Long reputation, but had not quarrelled with him.

(8) Jacquotte femme Mengeon Martin, 40

Long reputation.

(9) Claude maire Aulbry, 30

4 or 5 years earlier had heard him threaten Mengeatte la veuve 'que s'il la pouvoit avoir il l'auroit', to which she responded that she would know he was responsible if anything happened to her or her animals. Within a few days she had a mare which became ill and useless - did not know if this had been his doing. Long reputation.

(10-13) missing - not photographed. (10) Mengeatte veuve Lienard Demenge Lienard, (11) Jean Colatte, (13) Jean Colas Lienard

(14) George Aulbry, de Girompaire, 60

Some 3 years he had been very angry with his servant who was pasturing beasts on common land; next day he lost a cow worth more than 10 ecus, which he suspected had been his witchcraft. Long reputation.

(15) Jacques Hugo, de St Lienard, 50

Long reputation.

20 September 1597; interrogation

Said he was laboureur aged about 50, son of François Thieriat of Sarupt. Had lived there since marriage some 18 years earlier. Had some quarrels with neighbours, but too trivial to be worth speaking of. Knew he had been accused by Didier de la Ruelle, because story had gone round about 3 weeks earlier, but he did him wrong. Also admitted that he had long been suspected a witch, but this was false.

Asked if he had not said to Colatte that hell fire would burn her feet, denied this (not in record of depositions). Expressed pity for her, and said that if he wished a wolf might eat an animal, then this happened, 'il conviendriot bien mal que ceux qui usent de telz propos soient tous sorciers'.

Denied all other charges strongly. Said Adam Jean Lienard had lied like a witch, and was reputed such.

Said he was not cause of loss of eye by daughter of Mengeatte la veuve. Also denied causing losses to Jean Colas Lienard; did not remember threatening him after fight.

24 September 1597; confrontations

Claimed that Georgeatte femme Jean Colatte had stolen an axe from him; she denied this. Said that Jean Colatte was reputed to have stolen a pair of shoes, and George Claudey some wheat he had found on the road, which they similarly denied. No other reproaches, continued to deny charges. Colatte now did say he had made remark about hell fire burning her feet.

28 September 1597; procureur for chapter asks for torture

3 October 1597; Change de Nancy approves

16 October 1597; interrogation under torture

Was given rack, but would confess nothing. Made difficulties about renouncing devil, in usual fashion, and would only do so in conditional form.

17 October 1597; interrogation

Threatened with further torture, he now offered to confess. Seduced by Mre Navel 9 years earlier, when out ploughing and angry about loss of a horse; he promised to make him rich. Gave him money which proved to be horse-dung, and grey powder to kill men and beasts.

Admitted series of maléfices against animals after minor quarrels. As for Colatte's feet, he had told her off for damaging his wheat, and she wished him to the devil. Navel then appeared and incited him to harm her; he did not want to use powder, but Navel said that if he cursed her he would do the rest. He had then uttered wish about feet burning, and results followed.

Described usual feasting and dancing at sabat; only musicians were 2 or 3 little devils who made noises with their mouths. Saw Didier Pierrat and wife of Mengeon Renardin of Contramolin, but could not recognize others because they were masked. On another occasion saw wife of Lienard Laurence of Contramolin. Had then made pact to give his master 2 hens each year to be excused attendance at sabat, and not to be forced to perform maléfices.

Confessed some more maléfices against animals, then added further names to accomplices. Widow of Jean le maire of Girompaire and her son Lienard, wife of Jean Cosson of Contramolin, Dieudonné Jean Dieudonné of le Souche d'Anould, 2 sons of le Gros Didier of Voinchieres, Adam Jean Lienard and Jean Colas Lienard of Sarupt.

Interrogated again later same day, confirmed his earlier confessions. Also repeated names of those he had accused as accomplices, but withdrew charge against Jean Colas Lienard, saying he had made it out of hatred for various wrongs he had done him.

Asked about what Navel did at sabat, said he was sometimes mounted on a black horse, sometimes on an animal like a black dog, which he made jump and gambol, behaving like a drunken man. Assembled them around him to tell them 'comme il faisoit beaucoup plus beau, en son enfer, qu'en paradis, et qu'ils seroient bien heureux d'estre audit enfer avec luy'. Told them not to make sign of cross, nor use holy water, 'avec beaucoup d'autres propos, tousjours pour tascher de les abuser davantage'. While he was speaking they took their hats off and made reverence to him. Had seen him beat several who disobeyed, but had not been beaten himself.

18 October 1597; interrogation

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Renewed earlier confessions. Now withdrew many accusations, saying he had made them in hatred. Only ones he maintained were against Didier Pierrat, the wife of Mengeon Renardin, the two sons of le Gros Didier, and Dieudonné Jean Dieudonné.

19 October 1597; death sentence from Change de Nancy

21 October 1597; confirmed earlier confessions, but now said only person he could identify definitely as an accomplice was Didier Pierrat, recently executed. Sentence then carried out.