

B 8704 no 5; witch 244, Didier Grand Claudon, de Raon

Accused by Jennon Petit and Marie Ozelle, just convicted.

7 August 1609; informations preparatoires

(1) Catherine femme Claudon Thouvenin, 60

Reputation 8 years. 2 years before had quarrel with her son Claudon, after preventing latter taking sailing boat out of water; told him he would not be maitre valet for long. Same day fell strangely ill, and died in 3 weeks - he said he suspected accused had given him illness, and if he was witch as reputed she thought this too.

(2) Nicolas Salomon, boulengier, 50

Two and a half years earlier his late wife Jennon became strangely ill; died after 2 years blind and unable to walk. She suspected that Didier and Jennon Petit had caused this after quarrels they had together. Although Didier was his brother-in-law, they had often quarrelled, and if he was witch as long reputed thought he had caused him various misfortunes.

(3) Jean Canot, 70

10 years earlier had been selling accused some wood, and they had great disputes, during which he told witness he would repent. Since then he had been reduced to poverty, although he had property before, and had lost to the value of 100 golden ecus, despite working hard. Believed this had been his witchcraft; long reputation.

(4) Margueritte femme Chrestofle l'Huillier, 50

Reputation since mother was arrested as witch 15 or 16 years earlier; no personal suspicion.

(5) Pieron Hermemant

2 years earlier had been sleeping with accused in house of prévôt at Senones, and was frightened during night by something like whirlwind which battered door and windows; woke him up, but he said it was nothing, or perhaps some cats. In morning door was open, though he had closed this; had always suspected him since, and not liked to sleep with him when they took sailing boats there.

(6) Nicolas Liebault, 38

Told of incident 4 years earlier when they had both been among those who took boats to Metz. When witness, Jean Richard, and George de la Roche went to go to bed, accused was deeply asleep and could not be woken by all their efforts. As they went up stairs were struck by a whirlwind, as if 100 persons were passing; light went out, and la Roche received mysterious blow. Called hostess to their aid, who brought fresh light; Didier still pretending to be asleep on a chest. Next day la Roche could not eat as result of blow, told Didier it was his fault and he would be blamed if he died, so he should fetch him something good to eat - brought him bread and

wine. In view of reputation thought this had all been his witchcraft. Had been accused of being witch without taking action.

(7) Didier Dauphin de la Neuveville, 60

Had told him several times that he was reputed witch, and never dared to sleep with him when they were on boats together.

(8) Jennon veuve Claudon Tonnein, 28

Believed he had killed her late husband 2 years before; after quarrel threatened him that he would not always be maitre valet to Colas Salomon, and touched him on arm. Immediately became swollen and shiny as a mirror, and died in 3 weeks, maintaining to last that Didier was the cause.

(9) Colas Valentin, 35

Common repute, but no personal suspicion. 4 years before had been in house of Colas Salomon, whose wife was very ill; when he asked how she was, she said 'ha le mauvais frere', indicating that it was Didier, her own brother, who was cause.

(10) George Bertrand, 40

3 years before, when on river near Condé, accused called on him for help when boat got stuck, but he refused. Within the hour his own boat was stove in, and if he had not been rescued he might have drowned - in view of reputation suspected he might have caused this.

(11) Mongeon Jacat de la Neufville, 32

When sailing to Metz heard various other boatmen call him witch, but he did not seek reparation. General reputation.

(12) George la Roche de la Neufville, 40

Told same story as witness 6, adding that they were startled to find that he had moved from bed to chest, although still pretending to sleep. Had heard him called witch more than 100 times without seeking redress. Also said that 2 years before, going to Senones, he found him lying in middle of road enveloped in his cloak, with his face all bloody. Would never explain this, so he called him witch, saying his master had done it. Thought he was a witch or there had never been any in the world.

(13) Colas Blasas, 55

6 years earlier, at Pont-à-Mousson, heard the late Demenge Bontemps tell Didier, with whom he had been sleeping, that he or his master had tried to strangle him during the night. Did not seek redress for this or other accusations. Also thought that if he had been innocent he would not have absented himself.

(14) Margueritte femme Charles Commis, 48

Previous Easter had been to get fire from his garden, and he had great blaze going, in which there were large bones she thought were human. Since then had bad opinion of him, particularly in view of reputation, but no personal suspicion.

(15) Nicolas Parisat, marchal, 35

7 years before had been keeping guard over him when he was imprisoned on charge of witchcraft, and there was a sudden wind which blew out the candle. Then he got up and went to warm himself at the fire, saying he was strangely cold, although he had a good bed - thought he had been at sabbat. Long reputation, and some had accused him up to execution.

(16) Jehenne veuve Claude Brabant, 45

Reputation 10 years. Had several times heard late Jennon femme Colas Salomon, sister of accused, say during strange illness that she suspected him, with the midwife just executed, of causing her illness.

(17) Marie femme Thomas Jean Jacat, 36

Long reputation, accusations by condemned witches.

(11 August 1609)

(18) Colas Gerard, portier, 55

Reputation 7 years; accusations by witches.

(19) Dedie femme Colas Salomon, 22

Had always heard her stepdaughters say she had caused their mother's death.

(20) Jennon femme Colas Gerard, 50

Also told of accusations by Colas Salomon's first wife.

(21) Lucas Mongin, 48

Some 6 years earlier, after dispute over seating at church, he had quarrel with Didier's wife at the mill; his wife then suddenly died 2 weeks later, after being ill for only 3 or 4 days. Suspected him strongly, in view of reputation and accusations.

(22) Jean Grand Didier, 38

Some 7 years before had reproached him, saying he should not absent himself, but should stay and confront the women who accused him. Replied with 'plusieurs propos fort rude et picquant'. When in bed that night, felt heavy weight on him, then saw 5 persons around him, of whom he only recognized Didier, who was trying to strangle him. Commended himself to God, and lit a light, but as soon as he put this out surrounded him again, as they did for 3 or 4 days. Heard Didier say he was too firm in faith and they had no power over him - was troubled in his

mind for 15 days as result of fright. Was sure he was a witch, and would swear on his life that he had seen him as described. For last 6 months Didier had been frightened to meet him, since he had called him witch more than 100 times without any redress being sought.

(23) Nicolas Villemin, bouchier, 74

Reputation 17 years, and accusation by witches. When witness had taken back some property Didier had bought from his late sister, they quarrelled, and he threatened him, saying he would repent, and would see that he derived no profit from this. Since then had lost property to value of more than 1500 francs, and been reduced to poverty. This was surely his witchcraft - had accused him several times of being witch and causing his ruin, without any redress being sought.

(24) Margueritte femme Chrestofle Jean Pierre, 42

Some 8 years before he quarrelled with her at the mill, when she was in service with Sr Moiron; told her she would not always stay where she was, and would be glad to bring a small amount of grain to the mill. On way home she fell and broke her leg - was still suffering effects, and since he was accused had suspected that if he was witch he had been cause.

(25) Catherine femme Maurice Mongeon, 44

16 years earlier had rented house next to his, and within few days quarrel broke out at mill between herself and husband (who was then miller), and Didier, his wife and his mother. After this had various misfortunes; she had illness lasting 8 weeks, a child in the cradle had a broken leg, a daughter very ill for 3 weeks. Could not express misery to which they had been reduced, and she and husband had always blamed witchcraft by accused and his mother Barbeline, now in flight - long reputation of both.

(26) Gabriel Ozelle, 48

8 or 9 years before accused had been very angry with him, because he had contracted to cart beer to Ramberviller for Adam Rocq, in place of him. His son, with horse and cart, fell into river below la Neufville and would have drowned if not rescued; believed that if he was witch as long reputed he had caused this.

13 August 1609: orders given for his arrest, confrontation with Marie femme Gabriel Ozelle, and interrogation. His wife said he had been away on business for 8 days, and she did not know his whereabouts.

(? date) Change de Nancy orders arrest; if he cannot be found he should be banished.

18 August 1609; still not at home, wife served with notice of banishment. Process repeated on 22 and 29 August.

16 October 1609; additional depositions

(16 bis) Jehenne veuve Claude Brabant, 50

Added that she heard his sister blame him for fatal illness, and story about husband buying 2 pigs from him 10 years earlier, whose lard turned out to be rancid. Husband suspected him because he had called him witch a few days earlier; she also had suspicions, although not as stringly as husband.

(27) Jennon femme Nicolas Fournier, 34

At time of heavy snows 4 years earlier her late husband had sold him some wood, and she could not help saying she wished it was to burn him. Sent chambermaid to get money, but was refused it first time, and asked to come back later. When she brought it back witness was afraid to count it, fearing there might be some powder on it; finally took courage and did so, but immediately became very ill. Had great pains in side for 8 weeks, unable to walk, and believed he had caused this, in hatred over requests for payment, also because she and her husband had previously deposed against him. Husband had long dispute with him when they were confronted. Her suspicions were increased because she obtained bread, salt and ashes secretly from his house, and felt better as soon as she drank soup made with these.

(23 October 1609)

(28) Nicolas Barret, 32

Reputation 7 years. 3 years earlier had heard him quarrel with Claudon Tonnein at sawmill, telling him he would not stack planks much longer - became ill a week later and died.

15 - 16 October 1609; interrogation

Said he was about 40, baker and carter, native of Raon. Father Colas Grand Claudon had been draper; mother Barbeline had absented herself after justifying herself and being renvoyée on charge of witchcraft. Denied being witch.

Said Catherine Thouvenin might have accused him out of hatred, because he had caught her stealing his wheat at the mill. Denied claims about strange incidents in night, but said he had struck la Roche with his fist after latter pulled him off bed. As for incident when he had bloody head in road, he and la Roche had been drinking in house of prévôt at Senones, and la Roche struck him on the ear with a hatchet when they met on road.

Agreed that he had been accused as witch 7 years earlier by a woman who was executed, but had justified himself.

16 October 1609; confrontations

Said that Jennon veuve Claudon Thouvenin had stolen his wood at sawmill - she denied this. Repeated charge that first witness, Catherine Thouvenin, had stolen wheat - she denied this. In response to Nicolas Liebault, repeated that he had struck la Roche when latter dragged him out of bed, and said that he had fetched wine from courtesy, as member of company. Alleged that Jean Canot was a thief, and would have been whipped but for protection from his relative Brabant, also that he had made same allegations at previous trial, and he had justified himself. Said Pieron Hermemant had testified out of hatred because he would not stand caution

for him at Baccarat, and that they had never been at Senones together. Jehenne veuve Claude Brabant had testified out of hatred, and envy that he kept a tavern in his house.

23 October 1609; further confrontations

Claimed that George la Roche had thrown one of his valets in the water, and had deposed in hatred after a dispute over planks for prévôt at Senones.

30 October 1609; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire et extraordinaire

3 November 1609; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but started to confess when he was racked. 8 years earlier had been transporting sails, and had passed bois de Mondon when he heard there was something wrong (? meaning of text obscure here - was he going to be unable to sell them, or having trouble carting them?) and went back into woods sad and angry. Met Mre Navel, who offered to help him with his problems. Gave him a ducaton, which turned out to be wood, and two kinds of powder - black/kill, white/heal. Tried out black powder on one of his pigs, and later on one of his cows. Had killed Claudon Thouvenin by putting powder on ground where he would walk, and used similar technique (with red powder) to make wife of late George le Maire ill. Also confessed using powder against wife of innkeeper at Pont-à-Mousson (text damaged here). Killed daughter of maire Hursie of St Clement, because his wife 'luy comptoit par trop ses escots'.

Admitted making his sister, wife of Nicolas Salomon, ill as alleged, but claimed he was not cause of length of illness or her death. Has used mixture of powder given by master, and placed on ground, to cause broken leg of Margueritte Pierre. After quarrel with Maurice Mongeon at mill his master incited him to take vengeance, and consent to his breaking leg of child in cradle, which he did. After quarrel between his wife and wife of Lucas Guerard over seat in church used powder on ground to kill her.

Angry with Jean Grand Didier, who was always asking to drink in his house, conspired with master and accomplices (Alix veuve Demenge Marond and Margueritte femme Grand Didier) to get through window and attack him in bed, aiming to make him mad. Unable to achieve this, because they had no power over him - someone who used sign of cross liberally was protected, and for this reason had also been unable to make Jean Marande ill.

Asked about losses of Jean Canot, agreed that he had caused these with red powder given to him by his master. Asked about various nocturnal disturbances, said that at Senones his master had come to take him to sabbat, but had not gone for fear of discovery. It was his master who had struck la Roche at Metz (text damaged here). Denied he had been beaten by master when la Roche found him with bloody head, or that he had sunk boat of George Bertrand.

Asked about sabbat, said he had not been often, having made pact to give his master some milk in order to be exempt. First time was given grease to rub on hands, then carried on master's shoulders like the wind; returned in same way, and never went on foot. Conventional description of sabbat and hailmaking, to which he did not want to consent.

Had seen Alix veuve Demenge Marond, Margueritte femme Grand Didier, the wife of Demenge Potier, Sebille femme Didier Pescheur de la Neufville (presently convicted) - then page damaged, so further names missing. Many others

present, but were masked. Asked if they made 'quelque hommage ou adoration' before leaving, agreed that they kissed his thigh or his foot.

4 November 1609; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Asked again about accomplices, repeated accusations, but said he could not be sure about wife of Demenge Potier. Further names appear to have been those of 3 women recently executed, but he added that of daughter of Jean Tixerand, wife of Jean Colin.

12 November 1609; death sentence from Change de Nancy.

14 November 1609; sentence carried out.

Followed by documents in which widow and 2 children apply for goods - about to be confiscated - to be returned to them, after payment of costs of trial and other debts. Produced document showing that he had transferred all property to them in 1603, retaining only life interest for himself. As a result it looks as if their request was granted - had he taken this precaution after first trial? Stated to be 'marchand voilier'.