

B 8707 no 2; witch 254, Bastien Stablo de la Bolle

25 November 1610; procureur for canons has been informed that Stablo has been charged with stealing bread from baker's stall previous Sunday, and of committing same offence previously, although he was reputed to be 'assez aisé'. Asks for information to be taken, and accused interrogated if facts are correct.

27 November 1610; informations préparatoires

(1) Honn Homme Jean Didier, boulengier à St Dié, 50

On Sunday previous week had attended low Mass, so that wife and servant could go to parish Mass, and they attended shop in turn. On way home saw accused, then heard someone come in; ran after him and found him with loaf, which he admitted he had taken, but said he intended to pay for. Tried to pay, but witness refused, saying that since they had not been able to burn him they would have to hang him. Was commonly reputed a witch, and had been tried but not convicted; also said to be well off, and to have wheat in his loft. Nicolas Charier and his wife said he had already stolen 2 loaves.

(2) Dieudonnée femme Mathieu Clement, bourgeois de St Dié, 40

Had witnessed scene described by previous witness; Stablo had been 'tout honteux', but said nothing to excuse himself. Demenge Gerard, hostellain of Vieu Marché, said he had just paid him 20 francs, and was astonished by theft. Reputed to have grain in his loft.

(3) Françoise veuve Jean Frampart de St Dié, 60

Had also witnessed scene; Didier had wanted to open his coat to show he had the bread, but he had resisted this and gone back to house with him. Reputed to have property worth more than 700 francs, also suspected of witchcraft and previously arrested.

(4) Nicolas Charrey, boulengier et bourgeois de St Dié, 42

Told of previous occasion when wife informed him that Stablo had stolen loaf worth 3 sols; she could have run after him and caught him, but did not dare for fear of a scandal. Lost a loaf on another occasion, and two girls said they had seen Stablo outside house putting something in his pack. Theft could not be from necessity, since he was reputed to have property worth 2000 francs; suspected as a witch.

(5) Barbeline femme du precedent, 30 or more

Told story of theft; he had bought some loaves and asked her to put them on account, since he did not have money with him, then took advantage of her going to do this to take another. Followed him and saw him put it in his pack, but did not dare challenge him because there was a large assembly of men around. Husband later advised her to forget it, for fear that if he was witch as reputed they might suffer some misfortune. Also story of second theft, as told by husband.

- (6) Margueritte fille Nicolas Charrey, 22

Story of second theft.

- (7) Demenge Foelice, de la Bolle, 30

Had heard rumours about thefts, but knew no more.

- (8) Jean Diez Jeandel le jeune, de la Bolle, 32

Story of how previous summer he had been accused of stealing a sack at the mill.

- (9) Jehennon veuve Anthoine Alixey, de la Bolle, 60

Had heard of thefts by hearsay, and previous summer caught him putting horses in her field of oats; would not offer reparation, and as poor widow had not been able to pursue the matter. Later some rye she had sown was spoiled by hail, and if he was witch as reputed thought he might have done this.

- (10) Didier Toussainct de Fraice, demeurant à la Bolle, 27

3 months earlier heard the miller's son Claudin accuse him of stealing some bread, adding that he was a man of means and had no need to do this. Claimed miller had given him the bread, but when son said he would ask him would not allow this, tacitly admitting guilt. Some 10 years earlier heard him claim he would never harm neighbour - then saw him stealing wood.

- (11) Claude fils Jacquot Hocqueley, de la Bolle, 22

General reputation as thief and witch.

(18 December 1610)

- (12) Jacquot Hocqueley, de la Bolle, 50

25 years earlier had seen him steal a loaf from a baker's cart in market at St Dié, and talked of this; came to ears of his mother (later executed as witch) but no reparation sought. Lost a cow, and deposed against her at trial; she confessed to causing its death, and his wife's illness. Bastien suspected as mother had been.

- (13) Pierron Anthoine Jean Jacquemin, de la Bolle, 50

Previous year had cut quantity of firewood, and Bastien agreed to cart it to St Dié in loads of 100. Discovered that he was keeping some for himself, cheating those who bought it, so ceased using him in future.

- (14) Agathe femme du precedent, 50

Had heard that he had been selling loads of firewood for 13 or 14 gros, and although supposed to pay half to her husband only paying him 6 gros they had

originally expected - thought this amounted to theft. Was man of means who had no need to do this.

(15) Jehennon femme Demenge Phelice, de la Bolle, 30

Hearsay only about thefts. Since last arrest had quarrel with him about pig which damaged her garden; he was taxed at 4 gros, but she returned this in fear of his reputation. Had several times called him witch in public without reparation being sought, since when she had lost various animals; could not say with certainty that he had been cause, but if he was witch suspected him.

(16) Urbain Colas Sagaire de la Bolle, 26

Had not deposed against him on either of two previous occasions he had been arrested. 7 years earlier had been taking bark off logs at sawmill of chapter, and when they were eating accused gave him some dried pears. Became ill that evening, and remained so for a week or two, when Stablo heard of illness and gave him some more dried pears. After eating these he recovered; did not know he had been cause, since there had been no quarrel or threats, but if he was witch he might have caused illness.

(17) Jean Anthoine, de la Bolle, 50

Had deposed against him at last arrest 2 years earlier, and after he was renvoyé saw that he bore him ill will. Some time later two of his daughters had been to play with children of accused in his house, as neighbours did, then developed trouble with legs. This lasted for about a year, but after he made his suspicions public they recovered. Believed that one day when he left his cart to look for something which had fallen from wheel Stablo had stolen loaf he had with him. Previous year had moved a hedge, and witness had taken no action because he was frightened of him.

(18) Vincent Jeandel, de la Bolle, 40

After last trial, when he had been witness, heard he was very angry with those who had taken part, and so told him that if he had done him wrong by deposing he begged his pardon. Had not seemed to bear him any grudge since, but he had lost a fine cow, and retained some suspicion that if he was witch as reputed he might have taken revenge in this way.

(19) Jean Colin le vieu, de la Bolle, 74

Some years before accused had borrowed a new sack from maireesse Jean de Guerre, then changed the label to an old sack of his own - but she spotted this, and he was forced to return the new sack. Also thought to have stolen a sack from the mill.

(20) Nicolas du Bois, de la Bolle, 40

During last imprisonment Stablo's wife had told him that she often watched to see if he went out at night, and that if she was called to testify would have to say

that he sometimes seemed to fall back into bed with a bump, although she did not know if he was returning or not.

(21) Mengeon Demenge de Montaigne, de la Bolle, 60

Some 7 years before had been dispute after he and his wife found accused taking unripe cherries from communal tree to feed pigs; since then their own cherry tree had been barren. Wife became ill same evening, throwing herself about, and remained in fit for some 14 hours with teeth clenched - had finally to be prised apart. Thought this might all have been his witchcraft; had not deposed against him before.

(22) Jehennon femme du precedent, 60

Brief confirmation of husband's deposition.

1 March 1611; procureur notes that although called to be confronted with Claudette femme George Mengin he had absented himself. Asks for further depositions, and arrest and interrogation if appropriate.

(23) Chrestofle Grandmont, de la Chapelle d'Urtimont, 35

Previous year had been at assembly in Vieu Marché where they were speaking of dearth and high prices; accused said that within a year the 'escuille' would sell for as much as the half bichot did currently. Others were shocked and cursed him, since half bichot was already at 15 or 16 gros, which was a high price for the poor. Had heard some time ago of reputation, and of quarrel with Jean Jacot of Saulceray, who had then lost animals.

(24) Bastienne Claudon Vaulthier, de St Dié, 55

4 years previously on first of May the accused, as forester, had come to see M du Hault, canon of St Dié, who had charge of woods of la Magdelaine, and tell him about some fines. Canon had a headache, and was busy making up accounts, so did not have time to see him. She had orders to give him a drink, but prevent him seeing the canon, 'pour l'honneur qu'il avoit de luy' on account of reputation as a witch. Despite her efforts he forced his way in to see canon, and when he did so was told to come back next Tuesday, to which he replied 's'il parleroit le jeudy'. Next day canon started to stammer, and had to come back from Matins; lost his voice for several days, since when he had always had difficulty speaking, and often been ill, receiving last rites twice. Had always believed that if he was a witch he was cause of this.

(25) Athanaise, jeune fille niece du Sr du Hault, 19

Told how uncle had fallen ill, and next Sunday Stablo came to house asking her and her sister Chrestienne how he was, to which they said still very ill, but rather better. He said he would recover his voice and appetite, and gave them some nuts he suggested would help, but her uncle refused to eat these, saying they might cause his death. Since then her uncle had always been suffering from kind of catarrh, and suspected that if he was witch as reputed this might have been his doing.

(26) Claudon Gros George, de Taintrux, 47

3 or 4 weeks earlier had met accused as he was returning from woods - Stablo was floating planks on river at Rougiville. Sat down and talked, and Stablo told him he had heard from a woman at la Bolle that grain would be very expensive in another year (same comparison as given by witness 23), Did not know why he said this, nor how he knew it.

(27) Chrestienne Henry, niece à M du Hault, 20

Story of nuts and uncle's refusal to eat them; uncle had always suspected he was cause of his illness, because he refused to speak to him on previous occasion.

(15 March 1611)

(28) Mengin fils George Mengin, de la Bolle, 18

Shortly before arrest of his mother Claudette Stablo had come to see her, and witness realized he was going to give her advice as he had done on previous occasions. Concealed himself and heard him say that when confronted with witnesses she must say they were not 'gens de bien', otherwise their depositions would be believed. Had quarrel when they were both floating planks on river, and called him witch, but only response was to say he should blow his own nose, which was as dirty as his. Could only assume that he was tacitly reproaching him with crime of his mother, who later accused him.

(16 March 1611)

(29) Pierre Anthoine, de la Bolle, 50

Some years before wife of accused told him that he had said he would not be able to withstand torture if subjected to it again, but would have to confess what he had long concealed.

(30) Jean Thierion, de la Bolle, 35

Previous year had wanted to fine him for damage done by animals, but he said 'qu'il aye patience s'il vouloit, et que ce n'estoit pas grande chose, ou bien qu'il enragea'. Soon afterwards lost 3 horse to value of 50 écus, which he thought was his doing if he was witch as reputed.

(17 March 1611)

(31) Claude Bras de Fer, de Scarupt, 36

For last 3 years had floated planks together on river, but then had quarrel so that they no longer spoke; after this was lifting sluice when stone fell on his leg and nearly broke it. Had called him son of witch and witch at least 30 times without his taking any action. On another occasion when he was annoyed because he went first with planks had accident which forced him to be off work for 3 weeks.

(32) Mengeatte veuve David Demenge Collatte, de la Bolle, 28

Previous harvest her late husband had been tithe collector, and charged Stablo with evasion, which led to quarrel during which he called him witch. Had many misfortunes after this, and notably death of husband before end of harvest, which she blamed on him if he was a witch; ill for 5 weeks, but continued working until 3 days before death.

(33) Jean Jacot de Saulceray, 36

2 years before previous winter had been on way to woods when his cart damaged nets set for snipe. Saw accused, but he said nothing to him; later lost all 3 oxen which had been attached to his cart, and suspected that if he was witch as reputed he had caused this.

(34) Lucas Saffroy, de St Dié, 35

3 years earlier canons had forbidden accused to cart any more dead wood from bois de la Magdelaine, yet he had tried to claim payment for remaining loads from witness, who refused. Replied 'bien, bien, je feray pour mes peines', and he lost a horse worth 35 écus, which died as if rabid - suspected that if he was witch as reputed this had been his doing.

16 March 1611; interrogation

Said he was about 50, laboureur of la Bolle. Denied he was a witch, and said he had been away when called for confrontation. Agreed he had taken loaf, but insisted that he intended to pay for it; denied other thefts. Constant denials of all charges. Claimed he had not spoken about prospects of dearth, but did say that his daughter Beniste, who had been in service at Ste Marie, had heard this from some witches who were burned there.

After initial denial, admitted remark about blowing nose, saying that Claudette had already been executed.

Copies of these proceedings and remainder of trial are in Vosges G 709, from which rest comes.

17 March 1611; confrontations

Said that Jehennon veuve Antoine Abzey was a thief, as was Didier Toussaint. Claimed that Jacquot Hougney had taken his purse, with an écu in it. Reproached some other witnesses with minor thefts, but could not produce any witnesses. Said Claude Bras de Fer was a blasphemer. Denied all the charges.

19 March 1611; procureur d'office (Clement) asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

22 March 1611; Change de Nancy approves torture (? ordinaire only).

24 March 1611; interrogation under torture

As soon as he was questioned he started to confess. 18 years earlier had set nets for woodcock, and was angry when Jean Jacat broke these as he passed with his

cart. Big man in black appeared, and promised he would give him so much money that he never needed to catch woodcock again. Name was Percin, money was leaves, and also gave him powder - black/kill, grey/languish, yellow/cure.

Tried powder on cat, which died. Then killed Jean George of Haillieulle with powder in soup, because he had told him off for taking fish from his water. Killed le vieux Anthoine of Haillieulle in similar fashion because he had cost his father a fine of 30 gros after finding accused taking an apple.

6 or 7 years earlier had killed Thiriot Gomel of Haillieulle, who had taken a field of common land from him. 10 years earlier killed Claude des Battes of la Bolle, who had called him witch. Killed Claude Colatte of la Bolle, who would not work for him, and Jean Cachat of Haillieulle, who had kept a pot as caution, and caused him to be fined for fishing.

12 years earlier had killed small child of Nicolas le Gendre of Haillieulle after a quarrel. Had caused illness of Mr du Hault 3 years earlier, angered by dealings over woods, then tried to heal him with yellow powder, but he would not eat the nuts he sent.

Admitted further series of maléfices - dead animals and illnesses - for similar fairly minor motives.

Asked why he had not confessed 3 years earlier, said he had been 'fort robuste' at the time, and could easily bear the torture; if he had still been as strong would not have confessed so quickly this time.

Had been to sabat at la goutte mourel, but not often because he gave his master a chicken every year. Were about 4 dozen present, more women than men. Usual feasting, dancing, hailmaking. Had seen Claudatte femme George Mengin, already executed, and Clement Cheneviere alias de Lairain of la Bolle (now in prison).

Confirmed his confessions that afternoon.

26 March 1611; interrogation

Added names of wife of Claudon le Clerc of Rougiviller and Mengeon Schenault, already executed at Taintrux, to accomplices.

26 March 1611; procureur asks for death sentence

28 March 1611; Change de Nancy approves

29 March 1611; execution takes place

Vosges G709 also contains record of interrogation under torture in November 1592, which is badly damaged; this was year when his mother was executed as a witch.

He claimed to have seen an angel several times; judges told him his mother had said the same, but finally confessed it was an evil spirit. Was asked if he was cause of death of Jean Georgeon Jeandel, and cat of Holbin le Jallay. Had been accused by Claudatte Michiel of la Haulte Rue Withstood torture, and order for release given on 4 December 1592