

Witch 277E, Jean Claude Mathieu 1

Witch 277E; B 8713 no 5, Jean Claude Mathieu, de la Bourgonce

10 July 1614; informations preparatoires

(1) Claudon Mathieu, 70

He had been accused more than 18 years earlier by some convicted at Etival; witness and Demenge Vaultrin had met him one day and warned him, adding that his father was already much suspected. No personal suspicion, but general reputation.

(2) Jean Choppat, 32

Previous year had asked him for payment for some carting, which he refused to make. Some time later a wolf attacked one of his cows, which became all swollen after being bitten so that it had to be killed. Suspected this was his doing - reputation and accusations.

(3) Colas Simon, 34

2 years earlier had been bringing back cartload of wood and passed over field belonging to accused; had accident in flat place and broke his leg. Believed this was his doing, in view of reputation and accusations. When he visited him during convalescence told him he might not have had the accident if he had taken the road instead of going over his field.

(4) Jean George, 60

No suspicion, despite reputation and accusations; father had been accused and imprisoned at Etival.

(5) Nicolas Doridant, 40

General reputation and accusations; had heard that his mother claimed that when he was small he was always going missing and failing to return to the house.

(6) Collatte femme Paulus Giliat, 50

4 years earlier her son Georgeon, aged 27, had done some work for him, but when he asked for payment all he got was threats, including wish 'que le diable le puisse emporter'. Then fell strangely ill and died in a week; a day or two before his death the accused came to house and offered to settle account, to which her son replied it was too late, and he went away without saying more. Was sure his witchcraft was cause of death, although he was brother-in-law; long reputation, like father.

(7) Colas Giliat, 36

Already suspected when father had been arrested 12 or 13 years earlier.

(8) Jean Dieudonné, 46

14 years earlier his first wife Claudatte told him how he and his father were asked by Richarde, mother-in-law of accused, where they were coming from - this was after a storm, and she said 'qu'ils venoient d'au diable'. Reputation 14 years, even before arrest of father.

(9) Mathiatte femme Henriat Mathieu, 90

No personal suspicion, but reputation and accusations.

(10) Paulus Giliat, 50

Same story as wife about death of son.

(11) Claudatte veuve Jean Thiriat, 56

No personal suspicion, but long reputation, like father.

(12) Honneste homme Mongeon Colas Grand Demenge, de Brehimont, 58

No personal suspicion, but reputation over 10 years. reputation, accusations, arrest of father.

(13) Mengeon Jacquat, 36

Had tried to live in peace with him, and had no personal suspicion. General reputation like father, accusations.

(21 July 1614)

(14) Epnatte veuve Claudon Xordey, de Pajaille, 30

2 years earlier her late husband had been hired to serve accused for 6 months, and drank on this, receiving the 'denier dieu'. Then decided he would not go, and when Jean came to ask him why said it was because of his reputation as a witch. Later fell strangely ill and died after 3 months, always saying he was bewitched. Suspected this was doing of accused.

(15) Jean Demenge Arnoult, du Mesnil, 50

Had visited Claudon Xordey during illness, and heard story from wife - he had left four small children destitute. Long reputation.

(16) Colatte fille Gregoire Grand Claude, de Hurbache, servante au maire de la Bourgonce, 24

4 years earlier had been in service of accused, and heard from his wife and other women of village that one evening something had entered his stable by the window. Catle took fright, so that most of them broke their tethers, and tongues were a foot out of their mouths, while whole house seemed to be on fire, as if there were candles alight everywhere. When wife wanted to go and see what was happening he prevented her. General reputation.

(17) Curien de Champs, du Vivier, 30

8 years earlier had been returning from woods with cart when he passed through la Bourgonce, and Jean Holbin invited him to join feast on morrow of wedding. Took a glass of wine saying he was thirsty, but accused told him it was not for him, and he should not drink it or he would repent. He replied it would do him no harm unless he had put some witchcraft in it, and drank it - promptly lost consciousness, and had to be taken home. Was ill for 2 weeks, but then saw accused passing on way to market at Raon, and threatened to kill him with a beam if he did not remove the witchcraft. He went off saying he was not a witch, but witness felt better, and was completely recovered next day. Sure this had been his doing - reputation and accusations.

(18) Jehennon fille Demenge Moulat, de St Remy, servante au precedent, 25

Had been in service of accused 5 years earlier; told of occasion when 2 animals cried out strangely in night, and mistress went to see what was happening, but could see nothing except that animals were all standing. Then 2 oxen died, and a child died in cot overnight, after which he went to see a devin - did not know where - to discover who had caused these losses. Came back with herbs which he cooked in a new earthenware pot and gave to his animals on 5 mornings. General reputation.

(19) Nicolas du Ban, doyen en la justice d'Etival, 40

6 weeks earlier had been sent to collect 'deniers de frottage des bois' from subjects of seigneurie. Jean said he had no money to pay, then refused to open door so that he could take any caution, as he was ordered to do, so he took a chain which was outside house. As he left a whirlwind got up behind him, throwing stones about, but he turned and said that some witch was following him, but he did not fear them. At this whirlwind ceased, and accused appeared, offering to pay what was due. Was sure he had tried to do him some harm by witchcraft - long reputation.

(20) Jacquot Claude Noel, de St Remy, 55

Had witnessed scene as above, and sudden disappearance of whirlwind when the doyen spoke. General reputation.

22 July 1614; interrogation and confrontations

Said he was laboureur, aged about 40, son of Mathieu Claude and his wife Jehennon. Agreed his father had been arrested as a witch, and that he himself had been accused by four people who had been executed - first time was 12 years earlier, since when he had reputation.

Denied all charges, and most circumstantial details. At first denied going to devin, then admitted he had been to one at Tanviller, who told him to cook some wine in a pot and give it to animals, after which they would not die.

No reproaches to any witnesses, but continued his denials.

22 July 1614; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire

24 July 1614; Change de Nancy approves

28 July 1614; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews and rack, but then given holy water to drink and subjected to tortillons, at which he started to confess. Had been seduced 12 years earlier when haymaking; he had 'quelque fascherie a la teste'; man in black appeared and promised him money. Money was leaves, powder black/kill animals, grey/kill persons, yellow/languish. Said (after prompting) that Persin had been in his body preventing him confessing until point where he was given tortillons.

Had tried out powder on a hen, a pig, and a calf belonging to himself. Then confessed series of maléfices, mostly as witnesses had deposed, with one or two additional acts against animals.

Said he had been to sabat 4 times a year; had given a hen in order not to go more often. Danced to violin, ate oysillons, made hail twice. Had seen Zabel femme Mongeon Jean Dieudonnée of la Bourgonce, already arrested, Henriot Mathieu of the same, who had stopped coming since he went blind some 4 years earlier, Jacquatte femme Anthoine Jean Marchal, tavernier à l'Hoste du Bois, and the mother-in-law of Gratian Doridant of la Vacherie, whose name he did not know. Also named 5 already executed.

Confirmed confessions later the same day.

29 July 1614; further repetition of confessions. Procureur asks for death sentence.

30 July 1614; Change de Nancy approves

12 August 1614; sentence carried out at St Dié