

B 8721 no 1. Witch 293, Dieudonnée femme Toussaint Jalley de Mazelay, 20 March - 2 May 1618.

20 March 1618; procureur for canons of St Dié asks for taking of evidence against Dieudonnée, following accusation by Jehennon veuve Thomas Diez Thomas (already executed) and declaration by Chrétien Jeandel of Mazelay. To be arrested if there is sufficient evidence.

27 March 1618; informations préparatoires

(1) Collatte veuve Adam Bessat, 44

7 years before her late husband had rented a cherry tree from the late Gros Didier, and found servant of accused taking branches from it; Didier subsequently obtained satisfaction, with payment of 1 franc. Dieudonnée was angry, and threatened 'qu'elle ravroit bien tost ledit Bessat'. Soon after had strange illness for 3 weeks, unable to walk without sticks. Suspected Dieudonnée, so sent small daughter Collatte to ask for plate of 'napueaux'; found these so good he said he could have eaten six times as much, and made complete recovery. Believed she had given and cured illness; husband had called her witch several times in presence of her husband without reparation being sought. Common repute.

(2) Marie femme Remy Val de Liepvre, 36

2 years earlier accused had wanted her and her husband to go and harvest for her; they had refused because they were already committed elsewhere. She said 'que tous les diables soient dedans les ouvriers et ouvrières dudit Mazelay', and immediately witness became strangely ill, losing use of limbs. Bedridden for full year, and still not fully recovered, so that she suspected she would have illness for life; suspected Dieudonnée, in view of general repute and accusations by convicted witches. Also told of occasion a year before illness when she was returning home in evening (but still light) after working for accused, and a great wolf appeared in middle of village, running to prevent her reaching house. No-one could discover where it had come from, and believed it had been accused in transformed state.

(3) Helleny femme de Damien le Menestrel, 32

Had no personal accusation to make, despite general repute. but last 'dimanche gras' had heard her say that if she were arrested 'elle diroit son fait, sans se faire destirer de question, adjoustant qu'elle estoit femme de bien, et que sa tante Jehennon du Mesnil ban d'Estival avoit confessé son cas amyablement et sans entrer en prison, et qu'elle en feroit le mesme . . .'

(4) Jehennon femme Jean Didier Vagnier, 47

18 months before her small daughter Marguitte had worked in house of accused for 5 days, then at night became terrified, calling out 'Mere, mere, venez moy secourir, ma tante Dieudonnée est allentour de mon lict qui me veult faire mourir'. Became 'toute frenetique et hors d'esprit', and next day insisted she wanted to go and see 'tante Dieudonnée'; had to be helped along, and found her crushing some apples. Offered one to girl, who did not want to take it, but a poor woman who was passing told her to do so. Took a bite, and accused told her to take one

home if she wanted. After eating this she began to recover, and was cured in a week. Did not know cause, but daughter had always claimed since to have seen her when illness began.

(28 March 1618)

(5) Claudel Aubert, 43

Some 5 years earlier had lost a cow, and suspected Dieudonnée with Jehennon wife of Thomas Didier Thomas; his late wife called them both witches without any reparation being sought. The another cow fell ill, and he told his wife to ask Dieudonnée to look at it; she did so and after she had handled it the cow recovered. Could not say if she had made it ill, 'mais il luy soupconne ladite guerison'. Reported accusation by Jehennon, who had maintained it firmly when attached to stake.

(6) Claudon Gerard Jalley, 45

Last New Year her daughter had come to his house asking for some milk for following Sunday, when she was to give dinner to village midwife on rising from childbed. He refused, saying he had no cows in milk, and on the Sunday at the very hour for which she had requested milk a cow miscarried, so that both she and calf had to be killed. Suspected her of being cause; general reputation and accusations.

(7) Mathis Jeandel, 40

Told how some 2 years before he had gone to drive off a wolf which was attacking small son of accused not far from her house. Child was carried home, and when witness told her he was astonished the wolf had attacked him rather than the animals which were near she said it was a witch, not a wolf. He advised her to take child to St Humbert for fear the wolf might have been rabid. 3 months later a cow belonging to her husband, on way back from fields, cut open stomach of one of his horses with its horn, so that the animal died; believed she had caused this because of what he had said to her. General reputation and accusations.

(8) Margueritte femme Diez Thomas, 40

Some years earlier had found herself by chance with a group of women at Mazelay, where accused and Jehennon were already present. Dieudonnée told story 'qu'elle avoit des gens en chex eulx qui mettoyent de l'argent dans une escuelle couverte d'ung tranchoir, et que vers la minuit elles le portoient hors de leur losgis, et qu'alors il y avoit quelque chose qui venoit prendre ledit argent, sans nommer l'espece, ny qui le venoit prendre, ce qui des lors fit doubter a ladite deposante que cela estoit quelque sort, et que des gens de bien n'usoient de telle façon de faire'.

(9) Claudatte femme Claudel Aubert, 28

A year earlier one of sons of accused, Colas, came to borrow 'ung vand', and sat by fire telling about a wolf which had been near their house howling, and how his father had tried to chase it; animal sometimes put foot under door of house. Had heard her talking about wolf which had attacked her daughter, saying that she would no longer dare to send her out, and husband telling her it had been a witch,

not a wolf. Suspected her over loss of a cow, after husband had refused to sell them one on credit, and of a bull, which she had taken to pasture for them.

(29 March 1618)

(10) Remy Valdeliepvre, 50

Repeated wife's story of how they had not gone to harvest; explained that he had promised to do so, but then made excuses for being unable to work on specific day. Followed by curse as reported by wife, to which he replied by telling her to do him no harm, and that she was commonly reputed a witch. Also believed he had lost several animals, including a goat previous Sunday, which she had taken in form of a wolf, because whenever he met her he threatened to have her burned if she caused him harm.

(11) Jehennon fille Jean Vagnier, 15

Repeated story about illness of her sister.

(12) Marguitte fille Jean Vagnier, 14

Told about how she had gone to help husband of accused with ploughing some 2 years earlier, and been fed in their house, but was frightened of her because of reputation, and would not eat any soup - several times asked her why. Thought there was something like a cat in her room when illness began, then seemed to see accused before her, sometimes running after her. Story of apples and recovery. Also told how Nicolle, daughter of accused, had told her 'qu'elle avoit veu la noire beste en leur noire chambre, et qu'il y en avoit des grosses et des petites, des laides et des belles, et que les plus belles faisoient la cuisine, et estoient tousjours devant'.

(13) Gerard Jalley, 46

Some 6 or 7 years earlier had warned her not to allow animals to stray in his field or he would have her fined; muttered something he could not hear, and same evening found a heifer which had died suddenly in the field. Believed that if she was a witch as reputed she had caused this.

(30 March 1618)

(14) Nicolas fils Thomas Jean Thomas de la Voevre, 15

Some 2 years earlier, guarding animals with Colas Toussaint l'Allemand, son of accused, latter told of being attacked by a strange black ox and thrown into field. Also told how after supper one Sunday a 'menestrier' came to house, danced with his mother, and then they vanished he knew not where. Believed this had been some evil spirit, in view of her reputation.

(15) Catherine fille feu Michiel Petit Michiel, 12

A year before, when they were both guarding animals, had heard her son Nicolas who said 'voicy a l'entour de moy des rouges qui me pensent tuer, je crois que le diable est icy qui me les jecte avec ses cornes, pour tascher de m'offenser'.

(16) Estiennette fille Jean Holbin de la Pescherie, 12

Told of how her son Nicolas, guarding animals, had named devil repeatedly, and been asked by Demenge Holbin if he was his master, to which he replied that he was.

(17) Demenge fils Jean Colas Holbin de la Pescherie, 16

Told same story - was about a year earlier.

(31 March 1618)

(18) Mengeon fils Dieudonné Jean Demenge de la Pescherie, 12

Told of how Nicolas had talked about being attacked by devil in form of a black ox.

(19) Jehennon femme Didier de Bedecourt, 40

Previous winter had been to spin in Dieudonnée's house in evenings, and her daughter Nicolle had come in saying 'mere nonpar qu'il y a des bestes par icy', to which she replied crossly 'tay toy, tu es une tralleure'. Believed she was a witch.

(20) Marion femme Claudon Jalley, 40

Repeated husband's story of refusal to promise milk, and subsequent loss of cow and calf.

(21) Zabel fille Jean Didier Martin, 20

Some 3 years earlier had been in service in house of accused, when on a fine Sunday in mid-summer her mistress was ill in bed. Sent her out to check that horses had not strayed, and while she was out it became overcast and misty with thunder. As she returned found her mistress sitting under a tree, and when she asked what she was doing she said she had been afraid witness would go to her father's house, so had come to check horses herself. Thought she might have been coming from sabat, if she was a witch as reputed. Claimed that Nicolas, son of accused, had told her that a great black man came to house in the evening; could only be seen by himself, sister Nicolle, and his mother, not by his father, little sister, or the witness. Was particularly attentive to his mother, whom he kissed and caressed, and took off to dance in the woods.

(22) Colatte femme Colas Holbin Valdeliepvre, 35

At harvest nearly two years before she and her husband had been among those who contracted to work for husband of accused, then went to work for another at La Pescherie. Had been told that accused was very angry, and wished of witness 'que jamais bled ne puisse elle couper davantage'. Next night fell ill, and was in bed for 9 weeks; when accused visited her she asked whether she had been told of what she had said. Witness replied that she had, and that if she knew she had caused the illness 'qu'elle en tireroit la raison, luy deust il couster son bien'.

Dieudonnée replied 'qu'il falloit laisser parler les meschants gens, ou les laisser pour le diable'. Had various pilgrimages made, and recovered in time, but suspected she had given illness.

(23) Colatte veuve Holbin Valdeliepvre, 56

Mother of previous witness, confirmed her story. Added that during illness she had met Dieudonnée by the watercourse, she asked her how her daughter was; told her she was very ill, and suspected her because of words reported to her. Said she should visit her, which she did, to be accused directly, to which she made reply reported above, and left suddenly. Had never sought any reparation, and she believed that if she was a witch she had caused the illness.

(2 April 1618)

(24) Colatte femme Mathis Jeandel, 36

Told story of how husband's horse had been killed by ox belonging to accused, and blamed this on her witchcraft, in view of general reputation and accusations.

(25) Damien le Menestrel, 30

Said that daughter Nicolle had told him that one Saturday morning, when her father wanted to go to Raon, there was a black creature in their room.

(26) Nicolas Robinet bourgeois de St Dié, 47

Said that when he had accompanied the late prévôt Lamance at execution of Jehennon, she had discharged Catherine femme Claudon Holbin, and some others, but maintained charge against accused.

(27) Nicolas Jalley de St Dié, 40

At harvest 2 years earlier had been to help his 'frere germain', husband of accused, but had to leave before task was completed. As he left his brother gave him some 'napueaux' to make soup, which he did some days later. Promptly fell ill, and did not recover until fortnight before Christmas; thought that if she was witch as she was reputed she might have made him ill. Also told of how he had gone as requested by his brother to harvest nuts they shared; accused was under trees with animals, and said husband was busy elsewhere. When witness said that he would just harvest his own she was angry and went off muttering between her teeth. Subsequently lost a fine pig, and believed she was responsible, particularly since she had asked his sister-in-law if he had a pig.

4 April 1618; interrogation

Said she was native of La Bourgonce in seigneurie of Etival, aged 33; husband was laboureur. Father was Curien Juliat (had no memory of him), mother Jehennon, who came from Saulceray, also dead for a long time. Believed she had

been arrested because of accusation by Jehennon. Denied she was a witch or had been to sabbat, saying 'qu'elle n'a esté par ces chemins là'.

Asked about cherries and Adam Bessat, agreed she had said 'qu'elle ravroit bien tost ledit Bessat', but had been referring to catching him taking their cherries. Agreed she had sent him a plate of turnips, but denied any harm; had not given him sickness, so could not remove it.

In relation to occasion when harvesters did not work, said they had claimed the grain was too difficult to cut, and they were not being paid enough.

Agreed that Margueritte had come to house and had an apple, but said she had not made her ill, nor cured her.

Said that late wife of Claudel Aubert had said 'qu'il y avoit bien des sorcieres par la allentour, et qu'elle en feroit brusler, mais ne nomma personne.' Agreed she had touched his sick cow with her hand, but had meant no ill. Denied that she and husband had ever sought to buy a cow from him.

Said her son had been bitten by a wolf, which left 7 holes in his thigh; she and her husband had suspected this was a witch. Denied rest of story about wolf attacked by her husband, and remarks about black beast attributed to her daughter.

Her son Colas was then produced, and told story of how black man had come to house and carried him and his mother off; he was on horns and she was on his back. Went to place called la Goutte Chenal, where there were others; ate unseasoned beef, danced to sound of a 'bombarde', and made hail. Added that he had been to sabbat six times, that Percin had pinched him on forehead and given him silver coin which turned out to be a stone, then 3 kinds of powder to kill people and animals. Mother had told him to do what her master commanded. Dieudonnée simply said she had never taught him such things.

6 April 1618; confrontations

Claimed that her husband had found Claudon Gerard Jalley taking 'une bolle' in one of his fields - he denied this. No other reproaches, and just simple denials of main charges.

7 April 1618; procureur asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

20 April 1618; Change de Nancy agrees

23 April 1618; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but started to confess when racked. Had been seduced by Mre Navel 3 years earlier, when she had lost a sheep; husband was angry and called her 'ribaude'. Man in black appeared to her as she was feeding sheep in barn, promised to give her money so that husband would no longer be angry with her. Money turned out to be paper, and knew she had been deceived when his semen was cold, so that she felt great regret at her temptation. Gave her different powders; black to kill, red to make ill, white to cure, and grey to kill or cure at her will. Tried them out on her own animals - a bull, two foals, and a hen. When her daughter Jehennon was ill with smallpox she was fed up with nursing her, and used red powder in effort to kill her; girl lost use of arms, but then she was sorry and cured her with white powder. Had made Marie Valdelievre ill with powder in piece of bread she gave her son when he came seeking alms, then cured her with powder in two dried pears she sent in same way.

Denied having been wolf which attacked son; husband had suspected Claudatte femme Demenge le Maire, currently in prison on suspicion of witchcraft. Wolf which had been around house, however, was her master come to induce her to do ill. Angry with Girard Jalley because he had enclosed a meadow to prevent their animals getting in, killed a bull with powder. When found out late in thunderstorm by servant Zabel had been with master, who wanted her to win over Zabel and take her to sabbat; she refused on grounds that Zabel had done her no harm. Black animal in house one Saturday had been master, who tried to persuade her to let him overturn husband's cart and kill one of his horses; hit her when she refused. Angry with her brother-in-law Nicolas Jalley when he wanted to stop cutting corn for them, made him ill then cured him.

Had been to sabbat twice a year only, in return for payment of black hen on St John's day every third year. Conventional description; said that 'bombarde' was played by one named Damien living at Mazelay. Had made rain and hail, and twice been carried up with master to direct the clouds. Had seen Jehennon wife of Didier Bergier of le Viller, Colatte veuve Remy Valdelievre, of Mazelay, Claudel Aulbert alias l'Allemant of Mazelay, and Jehennon veuve Claudon Pieron of Robache, all alive, and Catherine Claudon Huerin of Mazelay, now dead. Could not recognize others because they wore masks. Under pressure from her master, had finally given him her son Nicolas as his servant some 18 months before; begged chapter to have pity on him and treat him well, since it had been her doing.

Master had promised to protect her during torture, and had been in her stomach, but she had spat him out by the mouth after drinking holy water.

24 April 1618; interrogation

Confirmed previous confessions, and declared willingness to die. Judges said they would not enquire about other maléfices she might have committed and failed to confess, provided she made full avowal to her confessor. Repeated accusations, except that against Claudel Aulbert; when judges asked why she had accused him before, said it was not in hatred or for vengeance, but because her son had told her he had seen him.

27 April 1618; interrogation

Again confirmed confessions, but now discharged Damien of Mazelay and Colatte veuve Remy Valdelievre, again claiming that she had not seen them, and had been going on hearsay from her son.

28 April 1618; procureur asks for death sentence.

30 April 1618; Change de Nancy agrees.

2 May 1618; execution carried out.