

Witch 294, Jean Perrin 1

B 8721 no 2. Witch 294; Jean Perrin de Giriviller

6 April 1618; informations preparatoires

Had been accused by Mongeon Andreu marechal of Giriviller.

(1) Fleurant Houat, 31

Reputation 10 years (residence). Previous year had pressed witness to an exchange of horses, from which he had finally withdrawn on payment of a franc, but horse then became ill as if rabid, and had to be killed. Believed this had been his doing.

(2) Francoise femme du precedent, 30

Repeated husband's story.

(3) Jacques Louiot, ?

Reputation 7 or 8 years. Previous year his son Demenge had promised to sell Jean some hay, but feared he would not be paid, so gave it to witness (his father) instead. Jean had been angry, and about a week later one of his pigs sickened and died - believed this was his doing.

(4) Jean Grand Jean, cleric juré à Mouriviller, 40

Some 3 years before had been on way to St Dié on business, and spoke to Jean, who told him that Sr Milian was angry with him, and asked him to discover what they were saying of him there. On return told him that Sr Milian intended to have him arrested as a witch, and that he was supposed to have caused death of another man at Giriviller. He replied that he was not a witch, and asked 'est ce point George Micquel qu'on dit que j'ay faict mourir, l'on dira que c'est pour ce qu'il disoit qu'il battoit mieulx que moy'. Then said he ought to sell his property and leave, but would be very sorry to leave his wife. Witness told him it was Micquel he was accused of killing, but that he should not leave, since if he was a worthy man he would then always be thought a witch. (Signed)

(5) Claudon Simonin, ?

Reputation more than 7 years. Around a year before, witness, Jean Clement, and the accused had contracted to thresh grain belonging to late maire Nicolas Grilat. Accused wanted to have equal share of payment although he had not done as much work as others, and was angry when they refused. Subsequently lost a fine cow which died suddenly, and suspected him.

(6) Nicolle femme du precedent, 40

Long reputation only.

(7) Ysabel femme au maire Demenge Grand Prey

Knew nothing against him, and had seen no harm in him.

(8) Demenge Grand Prey maire, 46

Reputation 6 years. Previous year had intended to terminate agreement under which they ploughed and sowed together, but one of his horses went lame immediately, and recovered when he invited Jean to resume sowing as before. Believed he had made it ill, then cured it.

(9) Nicolas Grand Prey fils du precedent, 15

Told same story as father; latter had put off renewing deal, and horse was lame for 6 weeks. When he finally made fresh agreement Jean said to witness 'Si demain ce cheval estoit guary, nous ferions une bonne journée'; next day horse was fine, so he thought he had caused illness and recovery.

(10) Jean Demenge Gerard, 28

Reputation as long as he could remember; had never wanted to live near him.

(11) Dieudonné Demenge Gerard, 36

Reputation more than 6 years. 2 years before had quarrelled when Jean threatened he would beat Silvestre, valet of witness, who had struck his son; witness said that if he merited punishment it was for him as his master to administer it. Jean shut up, but was obviously angry; soon after one of his oxen died suddenly from unknown sickness while grazing, and believed this was his doing.

(12) Heillenix jeune fille de feu Demenge Jean Colas, 17

Some 6 years before her late father called him a witch; although he took witnesses, next day came to house and said he would not pursue matter.

(13) Estienne Quenouel, 34

Reputation 10 years. About 5 years before late maire Grillat bought a lot of grain from comte de Tornielle, and Jean said to witness as they were working together that a woman had said that after this purchase it was certain that the vines would be frosted that year - as indeed they were. Believed prediction had been his own, since he refused to name woman.

(14) Annon femme au maire Pieresson Michelet, 50

Long reputation. Previous harvest time Jean's small son had accused her daughter of stealing from their fields, and girl had struck him. Later she herself encountered him, and demanded whether he or his wife were responsible for this story, so they had a sharp dispute. A fortnight later lost a fine horse which died suddenly, then their best cow, and believed this had been his witchcraft.

(15) Barbon femme Claudin Vernier, 50

Long reputation. Various losses of animals, but did not know whom to suspect. Jean's wife had quarrelled with brother of witness, and said that he was

related to someone executed as a witch, and he replied 'qu'elle se taise, et qu'il y en avoit ung aupres d'elle, qui n'en estoit guiere assure'. Jean heard these words, but did not react.

(16) Claude Rayebois jeune fils, 18

Around Christmas just over a year before, returning from Ramberviller with cart of his master (Demenge Grillat), was in company with cart of accused, and night fell long before they reached village. Both he and the woman thought they saw a strange light around Jean's horse and cart, then it suddenly vanished.

(17) Nicolas Vernier, 33

Told same story as Barbon Vernier, but with fuller report of statement he had made - 'Chrestienne, taise tu, il y en a ung aupres de toy, qui n'en est guiere assure, que si on prenoit informations contre luy, il s'en iroit apres les autres, que depuis peu ont esté executez pour mesme crime'.

(18) Didier Jean Thierry, 50

Said Jean's father had been tried as witch but had resisted torture. Claimed that when in father's service Jean had damaged his vines, and that 3 years earlier he had seen him steal two sheaves of oats left for tithe.

(19) Margueritte femme du precedent, 40

Repeated most of husband's evidence. Reputation 2 or 3 years.

(20) Jennon veuve George Micquel de Romont, 30

Some 5 years ago last Christmas her late husband and accused had been threshing for Demenge Grand Prey, and husband told Jean he had been asked to thresh for maire Demenge Parmentier of Mazieres. Jean seemed envious, and asked if he was sure he was able to go to do as he had promised. Same night he became suddenly ill, and told her 'Jennon, je suis fort malade, je suis ensorcelé, sa fait Jean Perin', adding that Perin was envious because he had much more work than him. Had felt ill since drinking with him same evening. Died in 5 days, maintaining charge to the last.

(7 April 1618)

(21) Pieron de la Voivre, 28

Reputation 2 years. Previous year had refused to sell him 2 piglets, and soon his sow died of an unknown illness, which he attributed to his witchcraft.

(22) Le maire Anthoine Hamo, 57

Long reputation. Previous year had accompanied the sieur Chaulson, procureur d'office at Gerbeviller, to feast at Romont, and latter told him that some of those executed for witchcraft at Gerbeviller at that time had named Jean as an accomplice.

(23) Didier Quenouel de Rozellieures

Reputation around 3 years. Had been present when Jean Grand Jean had told accused that he was supposed to have been accused by 'les Martenottes', executed at Mouriviller; he replied that if there was something against him it was not witchcraft. Since then word had been going round that he was a witch, and when witness met him previous November he asked him if he remembered previous conversation, and whether he was not 'ung peu genat'. Took no notice, although there were several people present, but within the hour his horses took fright and bolted, and when cart turned over he was so badly hurt he had to be carried away - believed this was his witchcraft.

7 April 1618; procureur asks for arrest

12 April 1618; interrogation

Said he was laboureur aged about 40, son of Jean Perin of Giriviller. Judges suggested that he had been disposing of some goods, and had absented himself, in fear of being arrested, but he denied this. Admitted that he had been suspected of witchcraft for past year. Said that after his mother's death his father remarried, and that his second wife Jennon was executed as a witch; father was renvoyé, and had died about 8 years earlier. Thought this was probably cause of his reputation.

Asked about Fleurant Houat's horse, denied causing it any harm, and claimed that Houat was 'l'un de ses plus grand haineux', although he did not know why. Agreed to quarrel with Dieudonné Demenge Gerard over servant who had beaten his son. Said that Demenge Jean Colas had called him witch, but they had been reconciled by procureur d'office, with Demenge paying two thirds of costs. Ggeneral denials of all serious allegations, and virtually all disputes.

13 April 1618; report that he had broken down a wall and tried to escape, but been recaptured by his guards. He said that the wall was only made of earth, and he had been able to break it with his hands. Had fled in fear of torture, and because so many had deposed against him. Asked whether on previous Saturday he had not said at Lunéville that he was prepared to die if he could strike two blows first, against Mongeon Andreu and maire Gerardin. Admitted that he had said this, but only in reference to Andreu.

12 - 13 April 1618; confrontations

Said that Jennon veuve George Micqual was a thief, and had stolen linen and grain from Mre Grand Prey - only knew this by hearsay. Alleged against Fleurant Houat 'qu'il est son accusateur et instigateur en la presente procedure, et qui luy mesme a poulcé Mongeon Andreu plaignant de poursuivre, luy disant qu'il ne perde courage.' Similar claim against Claudon Simonin, whom he claimed had given Andreu money to pursue case.

Said Annon femme Pieresson Michelet had several times stolen flax from him, about 7 years earlier, and that she had had sexual relations with several people. Alleged Pierron la Voivre had stolen a purse 5 years earlier. Claimed that he and late Demenge Jean Colas had been reconciled by Sr Milian, Sr Tichay tabellion, and Jacquot le maire de Gerbeviller.

Claimed that Nicolas Grand Prey often grazed his horses in other people's meadows; Nicolas admitted that like many others he sometimes did this, taking risk of being fined. Said that Didier Quenouel had been imprisoned at Baron; latter agreed, but said he had been released as innocent. Said that Barbon Vernier's brother had been executed as a witch.

Separate investigation of claims against witnesses then took place. Demenge Grand Prey said that Jennon Micquel had committed no thefts in his service, or elsewhere that he knew. The same did not agree that he had told Jean about Fleurant Houat's involvement against him - it was Jean who had told him. Accused claimed that he knew of loan of money by Claudin Simonin because Demenge Louiot had told his wife about it. Otherwise largely a matter of hearsay.

18 April 1618; procureur (Milian) asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire, pointing out that he had been unable to justify his reproaches against witnesses satisfactorily, and drawing attention to attempt to escape from prison, and earlier absence.

20 April 1618; Change de Nancy approves

26 April 1618; interrogation under threat of torture

Judges obviously sensed his hesitation, and while he was being shaved by executioner stopped process to question him again. Then started to confess. Some 4 years earlier, at season when communal woods were cut, returned home for dinner to be criticized by his wife for not having worked hard enough - this was common, as she was 'rioteuse', and had beaten Jean, his son by his first marriage, so that he had sent him away from home. Went out again later, and met man dressed in black, with long black hair and beard; this was Parsin, who said that he should serve him and then he would no longer have to fear his wife. Replied 'comment il vouloit servir un homme qu'il ne pouvoit servir sadite femme, disant Jesus Maria que veux je faire'. Persuaded to take Parsin for master, pinched behind shoulder and on forehead, given money which turned out to be moss, and powder - black to heal, grey to kill or make languish at will.

Had used powder on one of his own pigs to try it out, but denied most other accusations. Said that on way to St Dié Claudon Simonnin had apologised for accusing him over death of cow, saying he now suspected another. Did admit causing hail in collaboration with maire Grillot (already executed) 3 years earlier, but had been unwillingly, and had said 'que ce seroit pitié des pauvres gens'. Agreed that he had killed cow of Annon Michelet, but not her horse. Also admitted killing George Micquel, and sow of Pierron de la Voivre.

When judges said he must have done more, claimed that to free himself from master had worn some blessed bread and palms around neck for 18 months; master had only returned when he lost them in bed, beating him and taking him to sabbat. Had only been to sabbat 3 times, because he carried blessed bread to protect himself - master threatened to beat him for this. Standard account of sabbat, where they danced to sound of flute; had objected to making hail because he had small children who would suffer. Had recognized Bertremin of Giriviller, already executed, but 7 or 8 others were masked.

Interrogated again later, declared himself ready to die and asked pardon for his crimes. Judges said that in view of his confession and his wish to save his soul they were content with what he had said, and that he should report anything else he

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remembered to his confessor. Finally said he remembered seeing Demenge Grillot twice at sabbat, and that Grillot had once asked him why he no longer went.

Repeated confessions next day.

28 April 1618; procureur for canons asks for death sentence

30 April 1618; Change de Nancy agrees

2 May 1618; execution carried out