

B 8721 no 8; Witch 300, Nicolas Claudon de Chastay (Ban-de-Sapt)

26 October 1618; procureur asks for informations, and for arrest in case of sufficient indices.

27 October 1618; informations preparatoires

(1) Jean Apvril, 40

Reputation some 10 years. About 7 years earlier, when several witches had been executed at Denipaire, Colas asked him if there had been any talk about him, saying he would trust him to tell him. Made him form suspicions in his own mind.

(2) Colas du Rux, 26

Reputation more than a year; heard him called witch by Demenge Noel and Humbert Parisat, without taking any action.

(3) Nicolas Vuillaumé, 60

Reputation 7 years.

(4) Zabel femme Claude Prevost, 40

Had heard rumour that he had been accused by witches at Denipaire 7 years earlier.

(5) Mongeatte femme Nicolas Vuillaumé, 65

Story about 20 years earlier when he was guarding animals - document damaged here.

(6) Claudon Chrestien, 32

Reputation more than 7 years; hearsay was that he had said 'que l'argent du diable estoit bon pour achepter des preys'.

(7) Jean de Rux, 60

Knew him well, and had seen no harm in him, but reputed witch for 12 years - said to play 'bombarde' at sabbat. 3 or 4 years earlier his daughter Icquelon had been in service in his house, and had to come home for 3 weeks ill, with body all swollen, before returning to work. If he were witch as reputed believed he had caused this.

(8) Humbert Dedion, 50

About 4 years before had refused to sell him a horse, and at next harvest passed him with cart. When he got home the horse fell down, to die next day as if rabid. In view of long reputation blamed him, and after he made suspicions known Colas came to reproach him. 20 years before he had heard him talking about witches at mill, saying that when they confessed they always said money had been

leaves or dung, but perhaps it was good money, and if they did not say otherwise everyone would want to be a witch. His mother Marion had been widely reputed a witch around the village.

(9) Jean Chaudron, 36

3 years ago had been occasions when 4 calves being guarded by his children had done damage in his field, and he had threatened them. One of calves fell suddenly ill, jumping about, and died within an hour - suspected his witchcraft. Suspicions of mother also.

(10) Colas Jacquat, 45

Reputation over 20 years (mother also). 12 years before wanted to sell fine young horse at St Dié, and left early in morning because he was afraid of some 'mauvais rencontre, ou envie'. Met accused, apparently going same way, who asked him what price he wanted for horse. Wouldn't say, but Colas advised him to have it shod in order to sell it better - had this done on forefeet only. Apparently fine on arrival, but after selling it purchaser found it was lame, so deal was broken, had to take it home, and eventually sold it cheaply. If he was witch suspected him of causing this.

(11) Icquelon femme Jean Thoussainct, 24

4 years earlier had left his service after 4 years; he was annoyed at the end when she wanted to leave. A week before Christmas, just before end of her term, had strange illness (as described by father); all swollen and lost use of her limbs, before gradual recovery. Believed he might have given her this - long reputation.

(12) Demenge Vuillaumé, 60

Reputation 7 years. Previous year he had spoken to witness asking if he could marry his daughter Barbe, now he was widower, but he had refused because of his reputation.

(13) Dedion Henry, 46

Some years before had been at mill with accused and others, 'advient qu'on commença a parler de la devineresse du village de Bouray qui avoit esté executée pour le crime de sortilège, qu'un jour elle avoit receu de l'argent du diable, et que venant en son logis avoit trouvé que c'estoit des feuilles, ou fiente de chevaux (soub corection) dequoy ledit prevenu respondit que c'estoit aussy bon argent de mise que de l'autre et que les officiers n'avoient garde de le dire en proces qu'il fust bon, par ce qu'un chacun le voudroit estre.' In view of long reputation this made him very suspicious.

(14) Claudon Valtin moictrier de Neufmaison, 40

Some 26 years earlier he had been courting his sister Babelon, and when in father's house said 'qu'il avoit tousjours deux heures bonnes a la journée, pour mener et conduire son bestial aux champs pour faire dommage a aultruy, sans estre trouvé'.

Sister was 'tellement degoustée' that she refused him; always reputed a witch since then.

(15) Demenge Chaudron, 40

More than 20 years earlier, when he and accused were guarding animals, had made similar remark to that reported by previous witness. Had poor opinion of him since - always reputed a witch.

(16) Colas Vernier, 66

Reputation 15 years.

(17) Colas Chaudron, 36

Some 2 years earlier he had said 'pense tu que l'argent du diable ne soit aussi bon que l'autre' during conversation with witness. Reputation 15 years. Previous day had come to see him, knowing he was to testify against him, and said 'qu'il craindroit bien qu'on luy feroit beaucoup de mal, et luy deposant respondi qu'il avoit usé de propos ilicites et malsonnantz et qu'il s'en eut bien garée, et il repliqua qu'il n'en avoit point usé qu'il en puisse estre reprins'.

(18) Jean Noel, 40

When guarding animals with him as a boy he had put them in field of another, telling witness that there was 'quelque heure assurée a la journée' and that no-one would come - as they did not. Formed bad opinion of him - reputation since he was a boy.

(19) Cathelon femme Humbert Dedion, 36

Some years before husband refused to sell him a foal, and within a few days it fell sick and died after he passed close by it. Suspected him of being cause - long reputation. Also suspected him over death of an ox some 11 years earlier, after they would not agree to exchange it for another.

(20) Jean Belosse, 30

4 years earlier found that accused had taken some of his hay where fields joined, and after threatening to take him to court agreed to arbitration. Two days later found a horse dead in the morning, previously quite fit. In view of general reputation suspected him of causing this.

(21) Demenge Colas Noel, 30

Talking of witchcraft with accused, witness had asked if it was possible that the Devil's money was as good as any other, to which he replied that it was. 3 years before, at wedding feast of Colas Noel, heard him say that if he remarried he would never have any children.

(22) Marguitta veuve Humbert Dedion, 36

Told story of herding animals, and how he claimed to be able to put them in fields for 2 hours without being discovered. Also said 'que s'il avoit une riche femme espousée qu'il auroit beaucoup d'enfant, et sy elle estoit pauvre qu'elle en auroit bien peu.' Long reputation.

(23) Marion femme Demenge Noel, 48

Reputation 20 years; mother also reputed a witch.

(24) Jennon femme Demenge Colas Noel, 47

20 years earlier was unmarried and living in father's house at Grand Rux, when accused was courting her; speaking of witches of Blandeca, said they should be left alone, and it would be a shame to burn them. Had not had good opinion of him since; long reputation.

(25) Marguitta femme Colas Martin de Frappelle, 36

18 years earlier accused had been seeking her hand in marriage, when she lived with father at Germainfaing. 'et comme il la demandoit incessamment, cela fust remis a elle pour scavoir sa volonté, A quoy elle luy feist response qu'elle estoit trop jeune, et qu'elle ne se vouloit marier d'ung an, Au bout duquel terme, il se representa pour scavoir sa volonté, et elle n'estant encor son intention de se marier, Iceluy luy dict sy elle doubtoit qu'elle fust trop jeune pour avoir des enfants qu'il la garderoit bien qu'elle n'en auroit que deux, et sy c'estoit une autre qu'elle qu'il n'ayme pas qu'il n'en auroit qu'un, et en scavoit les remedes, ce qu'entendu par elle deposante et que telz propos estoient illicites d'user a ung homme de bien, elle dict absolument a ses gens (ores qu'ilz en fussent assé consentants) qu'elle ne le vouloit'. Later heard of reputation as witch.

(26) Collate veuve Anthoine Andreu, 55

Some 11 years earlier accused had been forester for a particular wood, but was deprived of post for not performing duties properly, and replaced by her husband. 6 weeks later suddenly became ill, and died within a week, saying 'la mal envie, s'il failloit qu'il meure pour cela'. Later heard that Colas had said he had wanted to be forester, but would not be it for long; in conjunction with reputation this made her believe he might have caused the illness.

(27) Nicolas Jacquat de Neumont, 33

Told same story as above; he had complained that he was not responsible for the damage to woods which caused him to lose his post. Also told of how they had been drinking in company 4 years earlier, and talking of some witches arrested at Taintrux, when Colas spoke of how the devil's money was good, and would buy good meadows. Long reputation.

(28) Claudon Jean le petit Nicolas de Neumont, 32

Reported conversation some 3 or 4 years earlier, when they had been on way home after drinking in Nicolas Lallemand's house. Talked about taking tree trunks out without anyone knowing, and of being able to stamp his foot and disappear -

then realized he had said more than he should, and asked them to say nothing about it. Had also boasted about grand marriage feast he would make for his daughter. Long reputation.

(29) Nicolas Vuillaum  de Laistre, 30

6 years earlier had been with accused to sell some oats, and on way back suggested to witness that he should marry his sister Claudatte, saying she would come with 50 ecus. He would not promise, saying his father was still his master, but accused said if he promised he would make sure he got his way. Witness was frightened and made sign of cross, because of his reputation.

10 November 1618; Change de Nancy approves imprisonment and trial.

14 November 1618; interrogation

Said he was about 40, laboureur, native of Chastay and had always lived there. Would not give reason for arrest at first, but when asked about reputation as witch hesitated, then said he had first heard of it some 10 years before.

Admitted conversation with Jean Apvril about witches of Denipaire. Denied speaking of money of devil, 'bien a il ouy dire que le Diable gardoit ung gros tresor'. Asked how he knew this, said it was just by hearsay.. Agreed that he had reproached Humbert Dedion with thinking he had killed his horse, getting reply 'qu'il ne s'en soucioit, bien que savoit fait des genox'. Also agreed to conversation with Demenge Chaudron about prospect of arrest.

Said that if he had spoken about not having children had been without ill intent. Judges pounced on this, asking how he knew about it and what means he used; could only know it 'par quelques voyes diabolicques, que cela ne se peut faire par telles gens de son sex que luy'. Said that this alone was enough to justify putting him to the torture. He replied that he was 'bien esbahy d'ou proviennent tant de propos, et qu'il n'eut jamais pens  d'estre ainsy charg  comme il est'.

Admitted that he might have spoken to Marguitte Martin about children in manner alleged, 'mais que c'estoit en riant, et non en malice'. Otherwise denied charges, while admitting some circumstantial details.

15 November 1618; Confrontations

Claimed of Humbert Dedion that he had sworn he would never marry his daughter in village of la Fosse, yet had done so. Had heard that his father had called out that he wanted to kill him, but only knew this by hearsay. Said of Humbert's wife Cathelon that she had a child dead, said in village that she 'en avoit mal us ' and that her husband had wanted to drown her. Said that Marguitte widow of Humbert Dedion was suspected of witchcraft. Collatte veuve Anthoine Andreu sometimes lived in their village, sometimes elsewhere; was rumour that she had debauched her husband to get him to marry her. Otherwise no worthwhile results from confrontations.

27 November 1618; procureur asks for question ordinaire

28 November; Change de Nancy agrees

1 December 1618; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews on hands and feet, but started to confess when racked. 4 years earlier, when angry with his animals, approached by man in black named Nidicriti, but he disappeared when he thought of God. Came again offering to make him rich, but he refused. Another day came for third time, offering riches, and he agreed 'legerement'; made him renounce God, pinched forehead, and filled hands with money which later disappeared. On later occasion gave him powder - black to kill, white to heal. Tried it on pig which died, then threw it away. Master asked his consent to kill Demenge Noel, beat him when he would not agree, as he did on other occasions. Also refused when master offered to give him means to avenge himself on any who displeased him. Said he had done no-one any harm. Had been to sabbat a year after seduction, and saw a dozen persons dancing, but having anticipated 'la pauvreté que c'estoit' would not stay. Gave master a hen every year to be exempt from attendance.

3 December 1618; interrogation

Now said he was willing to die, but had never been a witch, and had only confessed to escape torture.

5 December 1618; procureur asks for question ordinaire again, with death sentence if he renews confessions.

7 December 1618; Change de Nancy agrees

10 December 1618; interrogation under torture

As soon as he was given thumbscrews he renewed earlier confessions, still refusing to confess any other maléfices. Said he had revoked them in hope of avoiding death and loss of goods, hoping to be banished, since he was a man who could always earn his living.

Later made free confession, and repeated it next day.

11 December 1618; procureur asks for death sentence

13 December 1618; Change de Nancy agrees