

B 8724 no 1; witch 301, Humbert Marchal de Coincourt

10 March 1619; informations preparatoires

(1) Didier Marchal, 29

General reputation. Around last St Remy had been drinking in his house with Mengin Bernard, who quarrelled with accused, and Humbert said 'mal sage, tu t'en repentira'. 2 or 3 months later Bernard lost a pig which had been near house of accused, and at his forge next day there was talk about this. He said 'que l'on dirait bientost que s'estoit luy qui l'avoit faict mourir, et qu'il scavoit bien qu'on luy soubsonnoit, neanmoins que l'accident avoit arriv  pour avoir est  margoll  d'autre porcq qu'il avoit rencontre'. When witness confirmed that he was suspected, asked him to speak to Bernard and tell him this was false. About a week later was drinking there again, and told him he drank like a witch - replied that he was 'mal sage' to come to house with others and call him this. Had also heard 2 years earlier that Colas Dufour suspected him over sickness of horse after quarrel; threatened him, and it then recovered. Had also heard it said to him in his house that if he did not get himself burned he would die as a 'pauvre meschant homme' - no reaction to this, or on other occasions when he was called witch. Witness asked him about tolerance, and he replied he could not seek redress because of the accusation made against him by Jean Vosgien of Parroie, already executed. Witness and neighbours had been on point of accusing him, and spoke to tabellion about sending request to chapter; he heard of this, and begged them to desist, which they had done.

(2) Mengin Bernard, 34

Told of quarrel when they were drinking, during which he called Humbert witch. Went to house again a few days later, and he said to him 'tu m'a appel  sorcier, tu n'est pas sage, tu t'en repentira, et t'en donnera de garde'. 2 days later lost a cow which died within day, and at same time a pig - in view of reputation suspected he had caused losses, Called witch by several without seeking redress.

(3) Claude Cugnin, 44

Some 3 years before had gone to arbitration in dispute with his brother, and they had eaten and drunk at his house on appointed day. As they dispersed he was last to leave, and Humbert tried to make him pay for them all, which he refused to do. Went off to get his horses, and then got off one he was riding as he approached a ditch, thinking of his reputation as a witch and fearing some accident - then the horse broke its leg. Suspected him over this; at time of accusation by Jean Vosgien had absented himself.

(11 March 1619)

(4) Jean Nicolas Niclas le jeune, schoolmaster, 28

Long reputation. Previous year lost two oxen, and suspected him, because witness owed him money, and he seemed afraid to ask for payment - thought he might have caused misfortune 'pour se paier et descharger son courage'. Often went to house and had disputes for no reason. (Signed)

(5) Zabelat femme Jean Anthoine, 60

Angry because her husband was always drinking in his house, had been there and thrown a plate at him, which missed and broke some panes in window. Heard later that he said she would pay more dearly than at the market, and his wife tried to take her scarf as payment - she said she would pay costs in normal way. 6 weeks later lost a horse with a malady unknown to blacksmiths and experts, also a cow; suspected him in view of reputation, and their quarrels over the 'desbauche et mauvaise mesnage' of her husband in his cabaret.

(6) Demenge Barbellin, 70

Had been échevin at time of trial of Jean Vosgien, and heard him maintain accusation. Also told of occasion shortly afterwards when there was storm, with some hail, and he saw accused coming from hillside where cloud had formed - suspected he came from making hail at sabbat.

(7) Mathieu Marchal, 60

General reputation, failure to respond to being called witch.

(8) Nicolas Anthoine, 54

General reputation and accusations. Previous year had horse ill, and as nearest neighbour he looked at it; said it would recover, and it did. No suspicion, except that some said he had healed the horse.

(9) Jean Laurent le jeune, 31

Not near neighbour, so no personal suspicion. Had heard Mengeon Bernard and others complain of his witchcraft, and threaten to have him tried. Told of incident when he had lied and sworn by the devil, then seemed to repent when reproached by others present. In view of reputation this gave witness poor idea of him. Had heard from Claude fille Nicolas Gardey of Parroie, who had been in service of Nicolas Hachon sergent at Parroie 3 years earlier, at time of trial of Jean Vosgien and Didier Mobbille, both executed. Vosgien accused both Humbert and Mobbille, and latter fled, to be hidden for 5 or 6 weeks by former. Humbert asked him not to accuse him if he were taken and he confessed, promising to feed his children and help him as much as he could. During detention of Mobbille her master sent her several times to Humbert's house, and he gave her ecus to prevent accusation; Mobbille named all those accused by Jean except Humbert.

(10) Laurent Gespar, 40

General reputation and accusations.

(11) Jean Tessainct, 36

Had been appointed as one of those who guarded house during his absence after accusation; his wife was thinking of going to join him, but they dissuaded her. Then Humbert himself appeared 'tout esperdu', telling him that if he was arrested he would confess everything, since he could not withstand the torture. Recently his son

told him that accused had called him 'fils de pouxellon' - went and called him witch, telling him that if he suffered any misfortune he would have him arrested.

(12) Jean Reguard, 40

General reputation.

(13) Claudon Reguard, 70

General reputation and accusations.

(14) Claude fille Colas Gardey de Parroie, 14

Some two and a half years earlier, when Didier Mobillé was under arrest, Humbert had come to see the sergent Colas Hachon, and had long talk to him. Then she was sent back with him to fetch an axe he was said to have been sharpening - surprised because she knew they did not have one. On arrival he took keys from wife, opened a chest, and gave her two pieces of silver to value of a riksdaler each for her master. Said axe was not ready, so was sure this was just a pretext, and that money was to ensure that Mobillé did not charge him. Master was also talking often to Mobillé's wife at this time.

(15) Nicolas Fleuron, 40

Accusation by Jean Vosgin.

(16) Jean Colas Niclas, mulnier, 50

In year he was accused by Vosgin witness had dispute with him over a tax charge, wanting him to count day's labour against it. Told wife about this, and she told him he should not quarrel with him, and he would cause them some misfortune. 2 days later a cow became swollen and died in 4 days. In view of reputation believed he had caused this.

(17) Mengeatte femme Mengin Reguard, 30

Her husband had called him witch, and later heard he had made threats against them. Lost a pig and a cow suddenly, and suspected him in view of reputation and threats.

(18) Catherine femme Didier Marchal, 45

Bore ill will to her husband, but still let him go to drink in house. Had quarrel with his wife, over quality of wine, then 2 months later a calf died. After this he came up to husband and clapped him on shoulder, saying 'Ha Didier doresnavant tu sera mon bon amy je t'ayme maintenant'.

(19) Didier Claudon, 36

General reputation; had lost various animals, but was not sure of cause. Knew him as 'homme legere de foid, et sans aucune stabilité' - thought he had

perjured himself speaking of him. Had heard him ask whether if he were a witch the priest and others would go and eat in his house.

(12 March 1619)

(20) Dieudonné Didier Mulnier, de Parroie, 55

Told how he had asked him to intercede with Colas Hachon to persuade him to get Jean Vosgin (whom he was looking after) to retract his accusation, promising to pay him well. He had asked Vosgien whether he had not accused him out of hatred, but he insisted it was true. Had also heard him say he would not be able to endure torture, but would say he was a witch.

(21) Demenge Dedier de La Neufville aux Bois, 24

About a year earlier had been drinking at Coincourt and called him witch in presence of several people, without any action being taken.

(22) Nicolas Hachon sergent à Parroie, 55

Agreed that he had approached him over accusation by Jean Vosgien, claiming that there had been quarrel between them. He had spoken to him, but he insisted that Humbert was a witch.

12 March 1619; procureur d'office asks for arrest and interrogation

13 March 1619; interrogation

Said he was 55 to 60, native of Coincourt, son of Claudon Marsal and his wife Jeannon. Had been to learn trade at Blamont and Ogeviller before returning to village. Knew he had been reputed witch for 3 years since accusation by Vosgin. Agreed that he had offered Hachon money to get himself discharged. Said that Mengin Bernard had drunk too much one day, and he refused to give him more, at which he called him witch - told him he was foolish and would be sorry the next day.

Claimed he had endured being called witch for fear of costs. When he had been away it was to consult a relative. Admitted that he had thought of going to St Jacques with his wife. Said he had spent more than 500, perhaps a thousand francs, over the accusation and fines levied on him by the chevaucheurs of the salines. Admitted that he had said he was afraid he could not resist the torture. Otherwise denied all charges.

13 March 1619; confrontations

No reproaches. Catherine femme Didier Marchal added that she had heard his second wife Jehenne (now dead) call him old witch while running away as he tried to beat her. Otherwise nothing of consequence.

16 March 1619; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

18 March 1619; Change de Nancy agrees

22 March 1619; voluntary confession

Had been confronted with Jeannon femme Massel du Four, who had made voluntary confession previous day, and accused him of having been at sabbat. Instead of protesting merely asked her if she was sure, then said he wanted to confess.

Seduced by Persin more than 5 years earlier. Had been in trouble with salines at Einville for having unauthorized salt in houses, and was in despair because of great expenses he was incurring, and feeling that he would lose his case. Promised to help him and provide what he needed. Money was leaves, but later gave him yellow powder to revenge himself on his enemies; could throw it in them or in their path while saying curses.

Killed animals belonging to Jean Petit Jean (the schoolmaster) because instead of paying debts he beat him when he asked for the money. Also a few other deaths of animals.

Had been to sabbat, where he saw Jean Vosgin. Suggested that he had been very unwilling participant, and that master had beaten him. Denied some other maléfices, saying again that master had beaten him for being unwilling to commit them.

Asked whether he had not regretted his apostasy, 'et comment il feust sy legere de consentir a une simple seduction, veu qu'il a quelque connoissance de lettre, et que souvent il frequente les gens d'eglise et les recoit en sa maison' - also if he had made any confession or been given a penitence. Said that he was 'homme colere et remuant, mais de peu de durée', and it was when angry that he had been seduced. Had not confessed to priest, merely saying that he had a regret he could say nothing about.

Said that his third wife was suspect and false to him; Persin had given him powder with which to make her ill for 6 years. Gave her this in soup, and for last two years she had been on crutches.

Placed on rack fully clothed, and given a third of a turn only. Said his accomplices were Nicolas Tasprine, Melline Hannix, Parrein femme Grand Niclaus, and late Jean Vosgin.

22 March 1619; repeated confessions, said he thought he had seen those he had named, but could not maintain accusations for fear that the devil had deceived him.

22 March 1619; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

23 March 1619; Change de Nancy agrees