

B 8548; witch 138, Jacquot Colin des Petites Rosieres

Arrested on denunciation by noble Richard Chamenol, whose fish-pond he had been caught robbing, in company of Cezare Bellery.

22 February 1611; informations preparatoires

(1) Pierre d'Aspremont portier de la porte St Nicolas, 32

Some 9 or 10 months earlier had broken up a shed in garden of Pierre Ganthier and stolen wood; had also stolen a table and three stools from another garden shed belonging to son-in-law of Joseph Courbellon.

(2) Claude Lermite des Petites Rosieres, 30

Previous summer he and others were returning from Rosieres with accused, who told them he was a lost man, and talked about meeting a black man when he was taking a stake from the vines; Jacquot started to move away from them, and one of them went after him to make sure he did not get lost. Then made remark about black man telling him it was the sergeant and that he should pretend to be dead.

(3) Nicole femme du precedent, 50

Previous summer Jacquot had told her that he, the black man, and 'le mandigat' intended to kill her husband with a pistol; walked around house several times swearing and blaspheming. Asked him why he wanted to kill husband, he said it was the other two who wanted him killed; had lit pistol but not actually fired it.

(4) Francois Riesselin des Petites Rosieres, 26

Also told of return from Rosieres; Jacquot had gone off wringing hands and saying 'Seul je n'iray pas, je n'iray pas'. When they came before a cross knelt down and begged mercy from God, saying he had committed an unpardonable crime. When he got home wanted to go to river, but seeing he was not in his right mind they prevented him. Next morning said that two hares had been directing him, and that one of them had turned into a black man who said one of his great enemies was coming, he should let himself be beaten, and the black man would cost him his goods and make him despair.

(5) Demenge Ban de St Nicolas, 32

Told of theft of table and three stools from his garden at Rosieres; believed this had been done by Jacquot and one Guinat, because latter had admitted taking goods as he passed them out of garden.

(6) Pierre Claude tisserand de St Nicolas, 32

Believed that accused had stolen the wood from his shed.

(7) Jeanne veuve Claudon Bessy des Petites Rosieres, 50

He had seemed out of his mind previous summer; when made to say Benedicite said his arms were as heavy as sacks of corn.

(8) Margueritte veuve Jean Husson des Petites Rosieres, 60

Also told of episode previous summer when he said he wanted to drown himself and had to be prevented by neighbours, who tried to sprinkle him with holy water and make him say Benedicite. Often went out at night, she did not know why.

(9) Jeanne femme Francois Tiesselin des Petites Rosieres, 40

Same testimony as previous witness.

(10) Jean Gantier des Petites Rosieres, 40

About a year before Jacquot had wanted to kill Jean Magnien with a pistol; did not know what would have happened if his wife and sister had not prevented him.

22 February 1611; interrogation

Said he was Jacquot Colin, son of late Nicolas Colin and his wife Ysabel; mother still living at Affrocourt. Had married there 10 years earlier, come to live at Petites Rosieres a year later. Would not have left if he had enough property to stay.

Admitted stealing 9 carp from fishpond on two previous visits and selling them; had been caught on third occasion. Had paid Cezar Meillery to accompany him. Also admitted thefts from gardens; said that porter of St Nicolas gate knew about these, had had wood from first theft, and gave him wine to ensure silence about the other.

Asked about the black man, said he had thought it was a neighbour called Florentin, and he had an implement on his shoulder; disappeared when he prayed before cross. Had heard a voice saying he would be happy if he went to the spring, but saw no-one. Said he had been 'en grande fascherie' about his debts, and black man had promised him money to pay them if he would serve him, but did not agree to this. Asked about hares, said he had felt there were dogs about his legs but he could not see them. Said that as he was near warren thought someone said to him 'Voicy ung de tes compagnons que tu pense estre ung de tes amis et c'est ung de tes grand ennemis laisse toi choir s'il te veulx battre, faict de mor et je luy couteray tout son bien'.

Next day confirmed confessions, adding that without him Cezar would not have been to steal fish, and he had shown him the way.

26 February 1611; C.M. Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire on witchcraft charge. Change de Nancy agrees.

28 February 1611; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, now admitted he had been seduced by Persin, who gave him money which turned out to be oak leaves, after promising that he would be a better master to him than God. Had several times appeared to him at river telling him that he would be happy if he drowned himself. Asked why he had tried to persuade him of this, said it was because he had ordered him to kill his wife with yellow powder. Had killed 6 horses belonging to Ladventure, moictrier a la vacherie de St Nicolas, who had not paid him properly for a purchase; paid in grain of less quantity and lower quality than promised.

Had been to sabbat twice, where there were more than 100 persons, had recognised one called Florentin, his wife, and Lespine, all of Petites Rosieres. Later added name of Claudin Meuchal, previously porter at 'porte du hault de Tiebly' at St Nicolas; others all masked. Judges asked if he had recognised Jean Landre, previously of Petites Rosieres, now living at Vitrimont, and he agreed that he had seen him twice as drummer, with Persin playing fife. Danced and feasted in usual style; had once been obliged to do Persin homage by kissing backside. Also admitted meeting under bridge to make mist when vines were in flower, but were not enough of them to do much damage.

Asked about attempt to kill 'le Mandigat' with pistol, said he had twice intended to do this; he hated him, and would have done it if he had found him.

Then racked, asked about other crimes. Said he had killed two people, named Le Ver and Libaire; judges pointed out that first had died 4 years before, and he moved back date of his seduction, saying his master had prevented him confessing this.

Said that he had persuaded Cezar to go with him and steal fish by assuring him that he knew the servants, and even if they saw them they would do nothing. Then confronted with him; Cezar claimed he had merely agreed to help him without knowing exactly what they were to do.

Added name of la Maresse Picquart, previously of St Nicolas, to those of his accomplices.

Confirmed all confessions the next day.

11 March 1611; procureur general asks for execution; Change de Nancy agrees.

14 March 1611; formal sentence by court at Rosieres