

B 8693 no 4; witch 233, Claude Colin Michiel dit Bejolley, de Wisembach

Had been denounced by Catherine femme Colas Jean Diez Martin of Lesseux, already executed.

12 August 1604; informations preparatoires

(1) Anthoine Diez du Prey, 50

Previous year had heard his brother Toussaint Colin Michiel complain by his forge that he had suffered losses, and blamed his brother.

(2) Didier Alexy, 34

Nothing apart from reputation since accusation.

(3) Colin Chanal, 30

Accusation a year earlier.

(4) Jean Houberlan, 22

Accused had sometimes worked for his father as day labourer - no harm caused. Accusation a year earlier.

(5) Marguitte veuve Colas Demenge Thomas, 50

Had no suspicion he had caused her any harm, despite accusation previous year. Added 'qu'il luy a rendu beaucoup de service a la guerison de plusieurs bestail qu'elle a heu malade, ausquelz le prevenu a heu donne beaucoup de remede'.

(6) Demenge Chatel, 30

Had been near neighbour for 7 years, and had seen nothing but good in him. Only suspected since accusation previous year.

(7) Jean Thomas, 21

Had heard him suspected for several years, notably since recent accusation, but as near neighbour had seen no harm in him.

(8) Claudon Diez Martin, 60

Reputation 10 years, notably since accusation, but had seen no harm in him.

(9) Demenge Thomas, 31

Neighbour for 2 years, had seen no harm in him; had been suspect for a while, especially since accusation.

(10) Mengeon Napuel, 50

Had heard children of his brother Toussaint say he was a witch; reputation 7 years.

(11) Demenge Jean Thomas dit Beulay, 34

Neighbour for 2 years; previous year had met him returning from Lusse, complaining that he had gone to confront his accuser, but had not been allowed to speak to her. Said he was 'merveilleusement faulché', and his countenance and tears confirmed this - witness had never seen any harm in him.

(12) Colas Saixatte, 30

Some 8 years earlier he had been called in to visit a sick cow; said it would die, and predicted form illness would take. Cow and its calf did die as he had said, but did not believe he was cause, since he had no dispute with him. Wife had quarrelled with him long before, but no harm had resulted. Reputation 10 years.

(13) Andreu Gaixatte, 50

Had been reputed witch before accusation, but witness had never quarrelled with him, and he had healed several of his animals.

(14) Jean Bertremin, 50

Reputation 4 years.

(15) Mengin Colin Michiel dit Bejalley, brother of accused, 45

After accusation previous year, and rumour which followed, had several times said to brother 's'il estoit tel qu'il convenoit prendre la mort de gré', but he always replied that he was a good man and they need not fear. Closely questioned, witness would say nothing more.

(16) Jean de la Forge, 40

Reputation since accusation.

(17) Catherine veuve Claude Jaiquemin, 40

Accusation only.

(18) Jean Remy, 30

Ditto.

(19) Didier Colin Michiel, alias Bejalley, brother of accused, 48

Had seen no harm in him; accusation previous year.

(20) Nicolas Marchand, 40

Reputation 8 years. Around that time, as near neighbours, his wife asked to buy 3 piglets from witness, who refused. After this they became very thin; 2 died, third had to be sold, and he thought that if he was a witch he might have been cause.

(21) Catherine femme Zacharie Colin, 34

In the past he had cured many of their animals on different occasions, but since accusation previous year her husband had forbidden her to call him in, saying that perhaps he made them ill in order to be paid for healing them.

(22) Mengin Toussain alias Tixerand, 50

Reputation 3 or 4 years. Some 3 years before had fallen out of a cherry tree and hurt himself, and accused was one of those who came to help him. Said he had just been asleep, but witness was sure he had seen him with other men nearby before accident, and this made him suspect he might have been cause. Asked if they had any disputes, witness said they had not; he had been to see him several times afterwards, and even lent him some money, but of he was witch as reputed he still suspected him.

(23) Agathe femme Nicolas Marchand, 34

Same story about piglets as told by husband.

(24) Jennon femme Colas Saixatte, 23

Story of sick cow whose death he predicted, as told by husband - said she did not suspect him of being cause.

(14 August 1604)

(25) Claudatte femme Hannezo Alexy, 69

Reputation since accusation.

(26) Jean Bertrand, 27

Reputation several years. 2 years earlier had a bull sick, which he expected to die; called in accused, who gave it some hay saying 'mange, mange de par le diable, ho il mangera'. Came back 2 days later, and found it was still not eating, at which he said 'qu'il mangeroit si le diable le debvoit emporter'; after this visit it did begin to recover, and was still alive. Had no suspicion against him.

Was one of those who went to arrest him, and he said 'Ha je vois bien qu'il me fault mourir pour mes biens faits pour ce que je n'ay pas voulu desrober a l'esglise'. When wife visited him told her 'belle fille je vois bien que pour mes bien faits il me fault mourir, fait du mieulx que tu poulras, advise de donner a mes freres chacun un de nos enffans s'ilz les veulent prendre mais si tu les pouvois nourrir ce seroit encore mieulx.' Asked about meaning of theft, said Claude told him that Catherine femme Nicolas Napuel, who had accused him, had wanted to hide some property from her children after husband's death, and asked him to put it in chests he had in the church. He refused, and it was in revenge for this that she had accused him and given him reputation as a witch.

(27) Francois Cabuche, marchal, 60

Previous autumn a woman from St Marie asked him to find someone who would lease a fine cow from her, and he approached Claude, thinking he would be glad to have it, but he said he had no need. Wife of witness then leased it, and around Chandeleur Claude visited it in the stable (against his will) and wanted to lease it himself, paying them for feeding it earlier. They refused, and 2 weeks later after birth of calf the cow sickened, becoming so weak on its legs it had to be lifted to suckle calf. Called him in to inspect it, and he said cow would live, but would limp - both cow and calf did well, but former remained lame. On same visit he felt belly of a goat which was pregnant, and made no reply when asked what he was doing; after giving birth it lost its milk and kid died, so he suspected that if he was witch he had made both cow and goat ill in revenge for refusal to transfer lease of former.

Previous year Claude and others had been at his forge, and he said 'qu'on luy pensoit faire du desplaisir, mais que s'il failloit parler il parleroit, et diroit bien (sans nommer personne) qu'on l'avoit esté prier et soliciter d'aller tendre nuictamment sur le hault chemin.'

(28) Claudatte femme Demenge Jean Thomas, 30

Accusation only.

(29) Mengeatte femme Colas Jean le Maire, de Norbepaire, 35

10 years earlier her husband bought a cow from him, which he later asked several times to buy back, but they refused. Became ill, and after several requests he visited it. Told them its neck was twisted, and they should bring it to him secretly and he would see if he could cure it. When she said she was praying to God that it might recover, he said this was no good because it was the work of the devil. Cow later died, and she suspected that this was his doing if he was a witch as reputed; neighbours told her that after refusal he said they would not keep the cow as long as he would have done. Previous Christmas a cow lost its milk, and suspected him over this, because his wife often asked her for milk, which she sometimes gave her, sometimes not.

(30) Jennon femme Colin de Norbepaire, 33

Referring to same affair of cow bought from him, said he was angry because he claimed a teston he was given in payment was not good. Heard remarks about not keeping it as long as he would have done.

(31) Claude Benay, 70

Reputation only.

(32) Jennon femme Jean Bertrand, 27

4 years earlier called him to see a sick foal, and he said 'le diable l'avoit emporté', giving no hope of cure - it died soon after. Later came to visit sick bull, and said 'Ho hi de par le diable il mangera', and animal recovered.

(33) Claudel Petit Jean, 30

Reputation several years. Previous year heard him quarrelling with brother Toussain, who said to him 'Tais toy ne me menasse point donne toy de garde que je ne te fasse mettre ou tu debvrois estre'. Soon after heard that Toussain had lost a calf, and was told by him he suspected his brother had taken form of a wolf and bitten it.

(34) Colas Jean le Maire, de Norbepaire, 45

Same story as wife about purchase of cow (for 26 francs); claimed he had said they would not keep it a year when they refused to sell it back. Suspected he had caused death if he was witch as reputed. (At confrontations was said to be brother-in-law)

(35) Jean Colin Michiel Bejolley, brother of accused, 60

Said his brother had gone to Lusse to try and speak to his accuser, but had been prevented by force. Would have said anything he knew against him, even though he was his brother.

(36) Toussaint Colin Michiel, brother of accused, 55

Previous spring had asked Claude for some money he owed him, to which he said that 'il le ravroit bien et ne courroit guiere fort'. Next day a fine bullock was attacked by a wolf, and so badly mauled that it died in 2 days. Boys guarding animals said that they did not see where the wolf came from, but dogs would not bark or run after it - then it vanished suddenly as they moved towards it. Had heard that Catherine had accused him of taking form of a wolf, so suspected that if he was a witch he had caused this loss in disguise of a wolf. Had long held doubts about him; he had often kept company with the late Jennon femme Didier Saixatte, who had several times been accused of witchcraft, so thought she might have caused him to become such.

(37) Mengeatte femme Jean Colin Michiel, 55

More than 12 years earlier Didion Colin Michiel, brother of accused, had bought a cow which was with others belonging to their father. Claude found Didion's wife giving hay to her cow and not to the others; was angry, saying that within 2 weeks it would not be eating any more. 10 days later it sickened and died, which gave her grounds to suspect him.

(38) Catherine femme Toussain Colin Michiel, 40

Repeated husband's story; according to her it was Claude who asked for repayment of debt, to which husband replied that he also owed him money, and they would have to reckon up, after which he went off grumbling. Added that they had bought another animal to replace lost one, but it sickened and died, over which they also suspected him.

(39) Jennon femme Francois Cabuche, 33

Repeated husband's story.

(40) Jean Gros Didier, 76

Reputation 4 years. Previous year had met him carrying his arquebus; told witness he was leaving to live at Bon Homme, because of accusation against him. Complained that he had not been allowed to speak to his accuser. Witness finally persuaded him to return, saying that if he was a good man they would do him no wrong - he said he was only doing this for the sake of his wife and little children.

(41) Jean Diez Gaixatte, lieutenant du doyen, 50

18 months before as echevin had told accused, who was herdsman, that there were complaints he took the animals out too late. Soon after he came to tell him he resigned his charge, and witness could take the animals out if he liked - replied that he had spoken for others, not for himself alone. A few days later one of his pigs went lame, and he told the accused, who said there were many others like it - then it recovered. Did not know if he had been cause of this or not.

(42) Colas Mandray, 36

Had lost many animals, but did not suspect accused because he had not quarrelled with him.

(43) Mathieu Henry, hostellain, 34

Reputation 12 years. Some 2 and a half years earlier had a horse which was blind in one eye, and around one in the morning heard a noise in the stable. Sent servant girl to investigate; she was frightened by something like a black shadow, and called on another girl to help her. Took candle into stable, and thought they saw the thing vanish through the window; then heard accused banging on window, telling them horse was strangling itself and they should open the door to him. He then cut the bridle, but horse died 2 days later. Was not sure whether he had been cause or not, since he had seemed very upset about the death.

20 August 1604; interrogation

Said he was 34, native of Wisembach; father was Colin Michiel and mother Barbelline, both dead some years. He made 'traineur de bois' for 'rouliers' to come down from mountain, and worked as day laboureur. His wife was Marguitte, and they had 4 small children.

Asked how he had learned to cure animals, said his mother had taught him; used a form of prayer, which he repeated. This was only for cattle, not other animals. Went as follows:

Il est ainsi vray que dieu est, pain n'a fain, feu n'a froid, l'eau n'a pas soif, les voyes sont cheres, cheval sans bride, calievre sans poil, calomb sans fiel, ainsy sois guarie rougeatte, de toute langiere et de tous maulx qui sont, au nom de dieu, et du pere, et du filz et du saint esprit, amen Jesus.

Said this 5 times, with 5 paternosters and 5 ave marias, while holding animal by right ear with his left hand.

Denied various specific charges, such as remarks about devil when healing animals. Said that he had visited cow of Francois Cabuche, and found it had damaged its leg on the wall - used grease Cabuche gave him to treat it.

Said quarrel with brother Toussain had been because he owned horses, and did not want to lend them to brother to fetch some coal (? charcoal) from Lubine. As for fall from tree by Mengeon le Tixerand, he had been asleep in house on a bench, and was wakened by the noise. Cow of Colas Jean le Maire had its neck broken by others in the herd, and he said nothing about the devil.

Asked about his attempt to leave, insisted this was because the women of the village had angered him by complaints about keeping of animals, not on account of accusation of witchcraft.

Occasion when he cut bridle of Mathieu Henry's horse had been towards dawn, and he was returning from his brother's forge. Saw light in stable, and thought there might be a fire - then looked in window to see the girls, and went to their help when they opened the door. Admitted he had said that he would give 10 ecus to know who was envious of the horse, but did not have any specific suspicions.

Repeated claim that Catherine, who accused him, had borne him hatred since he refused to help her hide goods from children.

23 August 1604; confrontations

Said that he knew cow of Colas Saixatte would die, because they had given it so much vinegar and 'verjus' to drink. Otherwise simply denied charges, but did not reproach witnesses.

After confrontations spoke about occasion when he had tried to speak to Catherine at execution, but had been hustled away by officers before she could reply to him. Claimed that when confessions were being read she had been asked if she had accused anyone falsely, and she replied 'ouy une fois ou deux'. As for brothers, had been lawsuit after father's death over piece of land left to Claude in return for some services, which brothers lost, but ever since they had disdained him.

29 August 1604; Rémy asks for torture.

30 August 1604; Change de Nancy agrees.

22 September 1604; interrogation under torture

Started to confess as soon as he was given thumbscrews. Said he had been seduced by Persin when out in the mountain, but started to hesitate, and was then placed on rack. Said it had been 3 years earlier, but would add no more until he was actually racked. Gave him money which was dung, and black powder. Tried this on a hen which died, then on bullock belonging to his brother Toussain - it was his master who attacked this as a wolf. Had also killed cow belonging to his brother Didion in house of his father. Said these were all the harm he had done, but when racked harshly again came out with further admissions.

Claimed he had only been to sabat once, a year after temptation. Went on foot, did not recognize most of those there, but thought two masked women had been Laurence, widow of Colas Mandray of Wisembach and Beniste femme Pieron de Norbepaire. Had made hail, but it turned to rain and did no harm.

On being racked again, finally said temptation had been 12 years before, but had committed no more maléfices. Had been to sabat 4 or 5 times, but added no more names of accomplices.

Repeated confession after lunch on same day.

30 September 1604; Rémy asks for death sentence, provided he repeats confessions freely once more and Change de Nancy approves.

2 October 1604; interrogation

Now withdrew accusations against the two women, saying he could not be sure he had seen them. Otherwise confirmed his previous confessions. Begged for pity for his poor wife and children, asking that his brothers be persuaded to take them into their houses.