

B 6723 no 2; witch 108, Jean Cachette de Flin

10 April 1603; informations préparatoires

(1) Jean Mengin, cousturier, 50

Reputation 3 years.

(2) Claudatte femme Symon Hanry, 50

Reputation 7 years. A month earlier an officer of the prévôt had been in village early one morning, and Jean had fled out of back of house. She found him sitting on a bench when she went to feed animals; he told her not to be afraid, and her husband later said he had been frightened he was about to be arrested. All this made her suspect that sicknesses of various animals might have been his doing. Also told how 3 weeks earlier his daughter Fleurance (13) had been crying in poise, saying father had told her he had been accused by her mother, and that grandmother said 'qu'elle portoit ja avec elle Jehenne sa soeur' - presumed this meant to the sabat.

(3) Jennon femme Claude Hersier, 44

Reputation 3 or 4 years.

(4) Catherine veuve Anthoine d'Allemangne, 40

Reputation 9 years.

(5) Anthoine Vannier, laboureur, 40

Reputation 4 or 5 years. More than 3 years earlier plough broke while he was at work, and he 'borrowed' one belonging to accused to finish morning - later realized he knew about this. 6 weeks later had grave illness, did not know what he was doing, and thought this had been doing of Cachette or his wife - they refused to visit him. Thought that accused stood by bed and spoke to him one night, after which 'une lazarde' entered his left side. Cured after taking soup made with bread, salt and yeast from his house.

(6) Dieudonné Demenge Alix, 40

Reputation 6 or 7 years. Some 4 years before had met him on road, when witness was carting 'graine de nalbel' to make oil, and Jean warned him that he would lose his horses if he overcharged them in that manner. One then fell strangely ill, as if bewitched, and died, while other was drowned in a ditch - believed he had been responsible. Had also lost another horse after Jean complained his servant had been putting it on his pasture.

(7) Anthoine Brocquelat, laboureur, 75

Reputation 1 or 2 years. 8 weeks before had a child aged 4 which sickened and died in 3 days; reckoned this was doing of accused, and even more of his daughter Jehenne. Had demanded that accused, who had been nominated to help

him with costs of some soldiers, should do so, but he had said he was too poor. Also suspected him of causing blindness of a fine horse from envy.

(8) Jean de Frambois, laboureur, 36

Reputation 7 or 8 years. 2 or 3 days before execution of his wife he and his daughter Jehenne had come asking for loan of some grain, which he refused. They were talking together as they left, and within 2 days a horse died - thought this had been their doing if they were witches.

(9) Jean Grand Jean, laboureur, 40

Reputation 10 years. Some 9 years earlier dispute over a horse which was straying followed by its becoming sick; told Jean he was a witch and was responsible, but was finally forced to sell it to his father for 7 francs.

(10) Claude Harman, 40

Reputation 5 or 6 years. Shortly before arrest of wife had remarked to witness that his horses must be good to have completed some ploughing so quickly - within a few days one of them died, and thought this had been his witchcraft because he was envious.

(11) Demenge Purel, 30

Reputation 3 or 4 years. Just over a year before had bought horse belonging to Jean's father, but would only pay 8 ecus instead of the 10 they asked; animal died within 2 or 3 weeks, and suspected their witchcraft.

(12) Jean Hanry le jeune, 46

Reputation 3 years.

(11 April 1603)

(13) George Mongeatte, 56

Reputation since execution of his wife.

(14) Jehenne veuve Jean Halbix, d'Azerailles, 45

Reputation 2 or 3 years. 5 weeks earlier her son Claudon, who had married niece of his late wife Mengette, had been to Flin to see him. Asked to be told which land had come to him from his aunt, so that he could sow it; Jean's daughter Jehenne complained about this, but father told him. As soon as he left house felt pain in a leg, and was forced to take to his bed, where he died after 2 weeks, claiming throughout illness that he suspected Jean and his daughter.

(15) Jean Gerardin, manouvrier, 40

Reputation 2 years.

(16) Claudon le Comte, 60

Reputation 3 or 4 years; wife was niece of witness. After her execution he had spoken to Jehenne in his garden, saying her mother had lied when she said she was not a witch, and that Jehenne veuve Jean Margueron had warned her of arrest 2 or 3 days in advance, when she should have fled. Warned her that it was being said her mother had accused her father and her, adding comment about grandmother having warned them to flee - she replied that father had not been one then, but only for last 3 years, at which he was so shocked that he did not speak to her again.

(17) Jean Belat, manouvrier, 40

Reputation 7 years. After execution of his wife witness had been to ask for payment of costs he had met during her trial as partie formelle; Jean said he could not pay because he was poor and had enough to do to feed himself and his children, but would give him 'ung grand pot de vin' one day. Seeing he would do nothing, witness called him witch several times, saying he ought to be burned. Had heard that one of his daughters had admitted in 'poislage Demenge Purel' hearing Jehenne ask her father if he would not heal Claudon Halbix, to which he replied that she had done this, not him, and that if she healed him he would beat her to death. Jean himself had admitted this to witness when he was among those taking him to prison.

(18) Nicolas Moictrier, 40

Reputation 2 or 3 years. Had heard him say that he would flee if he knew he was to be arrested, because he feared 'la justice' although he was a good man.

(19) Nicolas Mengeotte, 40

Reputation 8 or 9 years.

(20) Symon Hanry, 50

Reputation since execution of wife. Told of occasion 3 months earlier when his wife found Jean in stable; since then a cow had lost its milk and others been sick, so he thought that if he was a witch he might have left 'quelque chose prejudiciable a son bestail'.

(21) Dieudonnée veuve Jean Vannier, 30

Reputation 9 years. Had been envious of their horses; some 6 years earlier husband was giving them drink when Jean came for same purpose; water became red after his horses had drunk, and one of theirs began bleeding at mouth. Died within week, found to have ruptured artery, and believed this had been his witchcraft. Following year suspected him of causing sickness of another horse - was sent to pasture with child, who reported he had looked at it closely, and had later to be sold for the leather. Also believed he had killed her husband, because at time of trial of his wife they had said they could only depose against the pair of them. Had heard from Mariette fille Martin Eulriat that her grandfather, le maire Marchal, said Jean had told him 'qu'il n'y avoit que deux hommes a Flin qu'il hayroit bien qu'il y en avoit ja l'ung des passé'. During illness husband maintained that Jean had given

him sickness, and story went round that he was the one who was 'des passé'. Had become ill one evening after passing Jean on the bridge by the mill.

(22) Sabel femme Nicolas Hanry, 40

Reputation since execution of wife.

(23) Nicolas Martinbois, 70

Thought he had been witch more than 3 years; believed his own illness came from their household, but his wife had confessed nothing at her trial, and he did not know what to think.

(24) Jean de Glonville, 60

Reputation since execution of wife.

(25) Jean Marchal, laboureur, 50

Reputation since execution of wife.

(26) Demenge Didier Ydatte, 47

Reputation 3 years. Around that time had dispute over payment for a mass attached to some property he had bought from Jean, and after latter had been to his house a cow became strangely ill. Went to see him, telling him that if he did not cure his cow he would kill him. Jean said 'que quant on avoit des bestes malades qu'on disoit que ce faisoient Jenat et Jenaxe et que le plus souvent s'estoit faulte de les mal gouverner'. Added that they did not all die, and cow might well recover - next day it was better, and believed he had bewitched it, then cured it. Had also heard from Jean Symon that his wife, sister of accused, said he had only been a witch for 3 years.

(27) Jean Thieriat, laboureur, 40

12 years earlier had been ploughing in common with him, but decided he would do better on his own. Jean was angry when he heard this, said that a time would come when witness only had 3 horses like him, instead of 4. 2 weeks later lost a horse, apparently killed by wolf, and believed this had been someone from his household.

(28) Sabel fille feu Nicolas le Comte, 30

Reputation 3 or 4 years. Some 2 years earlier he had stored some hay under 'sollier' where she lived, and her father had used this to make bed - Jean was angry when not paid back, told him he would repent. Next day leg became swollen, and remained so until he died, while he believed Jean had given him this. Also said that previous day she had heard of remarks made by his daughter Fleurance in house of her uncle, maire Hanry Jenat, at Haudonviller; father and sister Jehenne had been blaming one another for illness of Claudon Halbix, and Jehenne had been to Azerailles to make him a soup.

(29) Claude femme Jean Symon, 37

Reputation 2 or 3 years; he was her 'frere paternel'. Had been angry 9 months earlier when father Gerardin Cachatte had been injured (not clear what was going on here). Had asked him about confrontation with his wife at Azerailles, and he said he had not been when summoned, but substitut had told him she accused him of having been witch for 3 years.

(30) Jehenne femme Nicolas Mengeotte, 36

Reputation 7 years. After row over damage done by Jean's pig Demenge Purel had taken it as pledge; within 5 or 6 weeks he, his wife, and one of their sons were dead, and there was general suspicion against him.

(21 April 1603)

(31) Jean Symon, 30

After execution of his wife his sister Claude, wife of witness, had told him it was being said he had been witch for 3 years, and he did not deny this, which made him suspicious, although he could not be sure.

(32) Jean Bocquel, 52

A year earlier had heard Claude Harmant suggest he was a witch, and had caused death of his horse. Also knew of flight to house of Symon Hanry, and had heard him say about accusation by wife that she was 'une meschant femme et qu'il ne vouloit despendre sa vie a Flin' - supposed he meant 'qu'il se sauveroit volontier du bruict qu'il a d'estre sorcier'.

(33) Demenge Granat, 40

About 3 years earlier they had both been going out to plough, and Jean had admired one of his horses; same evening it became ill, behaving so wildly no-one could approach it, and died in 36 hours. In view of reputation believed this had been his doing.

22 April 1603; interrogation

Said he was about 44, son of Gerardin Cachette of Flin. Denied he was a witch, but knew this was reason for arrest. Asked about witches, and how they killed people and animals, said he had heard from accounts of reading of trials of those executed that this was done with powder. Had also heard from those coming back from hearing such trials read out that they could heal with powder.

Asked why he had been to hear readings, said it was to see justice done; denied it had been 'pour apprendre meschanceté'. Admitted being in stable of Symon Hanry, also that during trial of mother-in-law he had been to ask Jean Marchal to warn him if he and his wife were accused, saying he had not been 'bien saige' to do this.

(24 April 1603) Said that Demenge Purel had lost horse through overwork. Asked about death of Claudon Halbix, said that his daughter Jehenne had been called on to visit him by Nicolas Marenviller of Azerailles and his wife, and had made him a

soup. On return said to him 'que s'il avoit donné le mal audit Claudon qu'il luy oste, repliquent ledit prevenu que s'avoit il faict ses fiebres quartenne, comment s'auroit il faict qu'il estoit au lict, et qu'a contraire le femme dudit Marenviller disoit qu'elle avoit soupcon que s'avoit elle faict veu qu'elle l'a heu mené a Azerailles pour le guarir.' Asked about injury to his father's leg, said he had not done it, since he had been ploughing at the time.

Agreed he had said he would not willingly pass his life at Flin, 'pour ce qu'il cognoissoit qu'on ne luy veoit guere volontier a raison du bruict qu'il a d'estre sorcier mais a grand tort.' Judges were about to leave, and warned him that he would be placed in hands of executioner for torture, so it would be better to tell the truth. 'respondant sur ce qu'il ne savoit ce qu'il debvoit faire, priant dieu luy donner la grace dire la verité plutost que d'estre desrompu et tourmenté, ce qu'estant ses enfans ny personne ne le vouldroient aider ny assister, tellement que ce seroit pitié de luy, et ne le vouldroit on veoire ny escouter, que partant il luy semble que pour la descharge de son ame il fera mieulx dire ce qu'il scayt et qu'il a faict.'

Said he had been seduced by Persin some three and a half years earlier, when he had stayed in fields at dusk bemoaning dishonour brought on him by his wife's reputation. Promised he would never want, gave him money (leaves) and powder (black/kill, white/languish, grey/cure). Tried powder out on one of his calves, which died. Had often been beaten because he refused to use it. Had been to sabat 3 times; again beaten because he would not go more often.

Judges now threatened him again with torture, saying he could not be telling whole truth; he begged them to have pity on him and his poor children who were so small. Now confessed that after quarrel over taxes with Jean Vannier 4 years earlier he had made him ill, then regretted this and cured him. Had also killed one of his horses, because his servant called his son 'fils de jenaxe'. Some 7 or 8 weeks before had asked Persin to kill Vannier because he feared he would be discovered, and because he was accusing him of making animals ill; his master promised he had done this, and that he would never escape.

Admitted to killing other horses, but not to harming animals of Symon Hanry. Also agreed that he had made Anthoine Vannier ill, for no reason, by placing black powder outside door - intended to kill him, but repented because wife was relative, and finally healed him. Asked if someone else passing over powder would have become ill, said no, it only operated on those for whom it was intended. Asked about 'lezarde', said 'que cela peult bien estre parce que ceste poudre noire est sy plaine de venin, qu'il en peult sortir des lazardes et aultres choses semblables, car le sorcier a ceste puissance qu'en donnant ceste poudre il ordonne ce qu'elle fera mais par sa foy ne scay sy en donnant ladicte poudre il ait consenté qu'il sorte des lazardes du corps dudit Anthoine.'

Also said he had killed a horse of Jean de Frambois, who refused to lend him grain when he was in great need. Denied giving illness to Claudon Halbix.

25 April 1603; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Now said he had been to sabat 4 or 5 times. Claimed that others there were unknown to him, all masked, 'parlans langaiges estranges et diverses que bonnement on ne l'entendoit'. Said that bread and meat for sabbat was brought by participants according to their means. Because he was poor and had many children he only took two chickens each year. Was not given much esteem, becaus he was poorly dressed in comparison to others. They all had to revere Persin; usual dancing, with music from 'bombardes puissantes'. On one occasion had helped to make hail.

Asked about accomplices, named Claudon Plaisance of Flin, but no others. Said that whatever people said at Flin, he was not responsible for all the deaths of people and animals which occurred; often pressed by his master to do more, and beaten for refusing. Had done very little since wife's execution for fear of discovery. After his death they would see whether such misfortunes ceased.

3 May 1603; Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire, since he has denied many plausible charges, including those of harming his relatives. Change de Nancy agrees.

5 May 1603; interrogation under torture

Threatened with torture and invited to make full confession to avoid this. Now said that he had gone to Azerailles on way back from market at Deneuvre to confirm ownership of land, but Claudon Halbix was not back; he was wet and hungry, and felt very angry. His master met him in stable on return, and urged him to permit him to kill him. Agreed, but tried to withdraw consent some days later, saying he was a very good cobbler - master insisted he had given him fatal illness and would not withdraw this.

Would not confess any more, so was racked. Now said he had been witch for 15 years. Had killed his father by throwing powder on cart where he was loading dung, so that he fell into road - did this because father had said he was angry with him, would not live with him any more, and was leaving his property to his sister Claude and her husband.

Killed child of Anthoine Brocquillat which was lazy and did nothing but bully his own children. Asked why he had not confessed everything before, said this was because he feared that having done such evil he would be burned alive, begging them not to put him to death so cruelly.

Said he had killed Demenge Purel 15 years before after dispute over pig, and his wife because she called his mother-in-law and wife witches. Also son for similar reason, all within short time. Had killed brother-in-law Didier Symonin because he did not want to plough with him any more. Threatened with more torture, added confessions to having killed 3 horses. Asked about powders, said he had thrown away remainder in fields - no-one would be able to find them, or make use of them if they did.

Asked about accomplices, repeated that Claudon Plaisance was a witch. Now added names of Claudette, femme du maire Demenge Marchal, the wife of Valtin Vannier of Mernaville [Marainviller or Merviller?], and Mayance veuve Bernard Grand Jean of Flin.

6 May 1603; Rémy asks that he be given hot irons, then burned alive. Change de Nancy approves.

7 May 1603; formal sentence from court at Azerailles.