

Witch 271; B 8708 no 10, Jean Gerardin Haxo de la Fosse

2 November 1611; confronted with Marguittre femme Girardin Haxo, who maintained her accusation. He said he wished two angels would appear to declare what a worthy man he was; added 'que s'il fust esté sorcier il n'eust tant prins de peine a travailler comme il a faict.'

3 November 1611; informations préparatoires

(1) Claudon Hermemant alias Massenel, Musnier au Vivier, 30

Some 5 or 6 years rumour had gone around that Jean had taken his mother to the sabbat on a white horse. Did not suspect him of causing him any harm.

(2) Jean Grandmont du Mesnil, 34

No personal suspicion of harm. Reputation since witness had come to village on marriage; late mother also suspected, and had cherished him above all her other children.

(3) Mengeon Girard de la Fosse, 60

When one named Cathelon de la Xalbee had been executed as a witch more than 20 years earlier she had claimed that he took his mother to sabbat on a white horse, and story had been in circulation ever since.

(4) Jean Mengin de la Fosse, 55

More than 18 years before Jean had told him of being attacked in bed by a great black cat which tried to strangle him; was all scratched around face, and witness believed that it had been some evil spirit. Had temporarily lost use of an eye. Reputed witch ever since story about white horse proceeding from Cathelon some 20 years back.

(5) Nicolas Dentandt , 50

Some 10 years earlier, as official for Monsieur d'Etival, was called on to act when sow belonging to Jean did damage in his own brother's garden. On way to market at Raon next Saturday in company with Jean, told him he had to pay 5 gros for droit de seigneur, at which he was angry and 'jura par le sang de notre Seigneur avant qu'il fut deux jours il le rattraperoit d'une autre sorte'. Same day a foal belonging to brother was found dead behind his house, and witness was convinced this was his revenge by witchcraft. Brother had also told him that Jean Aulbry of le Vivier, later executed as a witch, had told him that Jean was one too; witness had heard Aulbry call him witch and son of witches.

About 15 years earlier had dispute because witness did not send someone to look after herd of pigs when it was his turn; he pointed out to Jean that he had failed to inform him as he should have done. Two days later a pig fell ill, and was as if rabid, refusing to eat; after 10 days had to kill and bury it. Believed this too had been his witchcraft; long reputation, and his mother had been accused several times.

(6) Jean Thieriot de la Fosse, 32

Said that 15 years before he had been in service of accused, and several times heard his father and mother 'qui s'appelloient sorcieres et s'estoient veuz au sabbat'; had no suspicion against Jean, but he had long reputation.

(7) Nicolas Aulbry de la Fosse, 25

Some two years before heard him quarrelling with Marguitte femme Girardin Haxo, and they were calling one another witch. Also told of occasion 4 years earlier when sow belonging to Jehenne Michiel, now of Donipaire, did damage in his garden and he chased it out with angry threats; died 2 or 3 days later, and he and Jehenne quarrelled - she said he had killed it. Long reputation.

(8) Aulbry Colas Aulbry de la Fosse, 30

Had several times heard him tell story of black cat; had also heard about white horse, and long reputation.

(9) Jean Francois de la Fosse, 30

Long reputation.

(10) Jennon femme Estienne Carriot du Vivier, 50

Some two and a half years earlier had been his neighbour at la Fosse, and heard him quarrelling with his wife; she called him witch, adding 'qu'elle debvoit bien maudire les buissons qu'estoient allentour de leur logis, et la maison et tout'. No personal suspicion.

(11) Mengeotte femme Jean Thieriot de la Fosse, 42

Told of episode involving land they held from Monsieur d'Etival, which included a meadow at a point where the river ran strongly. This was so damaged by water that Jean tried to lay claim to it as land recovered from the river, saying that he would build a dam to protect it. Her husband and other neighbours protested that it was their property, offering to do the work themselves, which was agreed. After they had made an adequate dam Jean passed and said it would not last long; soon it broke, and she suspected he had caused this. Also told of quarrel with his sister-in-law around previous St Remy, when she had called him witch and dared him to seek reparation. In view of her own subsequent execution she should have known, and had indeed maintained he was such in confrontation.

(12) Jehennon veuve Claudon Hamo de la Fosse, 36

2 years ago last St Remy Jean's wife Marion had been at veillée in their house, and said that 'elle debvoit bien maudire les buissons qu'estoient a lentour de leur logis', when telling of quarrel with husband. No personal suspicion, but long reputation

(13) Jennon femme Toussaint Nicolas Nicolle de Denipaire, 46

Told story of pig which damaged his garden, and same evening became ill as if rabid. Suspected him, so went round next day to tell him he should cure it or she would complain to the maire. Nevertheless it died within 3 days, and she had it cut up by the knacker of the ban d'Etival 'pour recognoistre tant mieulx sy c'estoit sortileiges, le chair fut trouvée aussy noire comme charbon'. Believed he had bewitched it; long reputation, story of white horse.

(14) Nicolas du Ban du Vivier, 40

Some 18 days earlier had been guarding Marguitte Haxo, who had been very insistent that Jean was a witch, and had particularly said that previous witness should be called.

(10 November 1611)

(15) ? fille Mengeon Girard de la Fosse, 18

Previous year had quarrel when she was leading animals of her master Claudon Colas Colin Dentandt, and took them through meadow belonging to accused. He complained that she was allowing them to eat as they went, to which she replied that he did the same in one of their meadows. She called him witch, but he never sought reparation.

(16) Claudon Colas Colin Dentandt de Vivier, 40

Told how 15 or 16 years before Cathelon de la Xalbee had told him Jean was a witch, and that he took his mother to sabbat on a white horse. Did not believe that he had done him any harm, although they had sometimes quarrelled, and he had even called both Jean and his mother witch, without reparation being sought.

(17) Girardin Haxo de ?, 50

Told story of damage done by pig some 10 years before, action against his brother, and subsequent death of a young mare, which he had always blamed on his witchcraft. Colas Aulbry of la Fosse had told him that previous year, when companies of soldiers were returning from Juliers, his father the maire had several billeted on him, causing him great expense. Since the accused had none, he called on him for help, but he was angry. Shortly afterwards father died, and he suspected that Jean had bewitched him. General reputation.

(18) Nicolas Berquey paistre du Vivier, 40

Long reputation; mother also suspected, story of white horse.

9 November 1611; interrogation

Said he was Jean Curien Haxo, laboureur of la Fosse, aged about 45; native of village, parents were Curien Haxo and his wife Jehennon, both dead for several years. Knew he had been accused by his sister-in-law, asking that she 'ne puisse jamais avoir repos' until she told the truth, that he was innocent. Agreed that his mother had been reputed a witch, and was accused twice to his knowledge. Said that story of cat was true; had occurred on night of a Good Friday, and cat had

already been in the house while they were at church that morning. Denied that it had been his master, when judges suggested that no cat had power to pull someone out of his bed as he said it had done. No other admissions.

10 November 1611; confrontations

When asked about taking mother to sabbat of a white horse, said this was 'ung pesant article contre luy', asking who had claimed this was true. Told it was Cathelon de la Chanee, said 'qu'il n'est pas estonné si le monde va a reculon, veu qu'on le charge de telle chose et que ladite Cathelon ne puisse jamais aller en Paradis jusques a ce qu'elle se presentera par devant nous et dire la verite de ce qui en est'. Denying again, said he 'desire bien de mourir, reconnoissant qu'il n'est plus de gens de bien au monde'.

Only reproach he made was to Jehennon Hamo, saying she had stolen some money from him when she was a girl some 24 years earlier - which she denied. Otherwise simply denied all charges, and most circumstantial detail.

10 November 1611; procureur asks for question ordinaire

12 November 1611; Change de Nancy agrees

16 November 1611; interrogation under torture

Had been confronted that morning with Laurence femme Vincent Bandesapt, who maintained that he was a witch. Was given thumbscrews, and promptly said he wished to confess. Some 15 or 16 years earlier he had been angry with his wife and had beaten her; still in a temper, went out to cut wood in 'Grimabois de Hurbache' for the governor of Rosieres. Big man in black appeared, and said to him 'qu'il estoit bien fasché contre sa femme, et prenoit beaucoup de peine a faire du bois de cordes, que s'il se voulloit addonner et croire a luy, il feroit en sorte qu'il n'auroit plus de dispute avec sa femme, et luy donneroit beaucoup d'argent pour l'ayder en sorte qu'il n'auroit plus besoing prendre tant de peine a coupper du bois'. Agreed and renounced God, received powder of 3 kinds, black/kill, yellow/make ill, white/cure. Money turned out to be tree leaves.

Tried powder out on a sheep, which died, then used it to kill one of his foals, which had done damage in his barn and angered him. Had killed sow of Jennon Nicolle because it did damage in his garden. Had also killed young mare belonging to his brother, after incitations from his mater Persin which he resisted at first. Had made pig belonging to Jean de la Fosse ill some 5 years ago, because it damaged his oats, then healed it.

Denied causing death of Nicolas Dentandt's pig, and of the late maire Aulbry, saying he had never killed anyone. Judges objected that this was implausible, but he said that he had made a pact to give Persin a black hen before Lent each year to be spared from committing maléfices.

Had been to sabbat many times. Had seen Laurence Bandesapt and Marguittie Haxo, recently executed, and Jennon femme Claudon Girard of St Remy, also executed, Marguittie femme Jean Colas Arnoulx of Deyfosse, and many others who were masked. Short conventional description of sabbat. Master had promised to protect him against torture, but had realised he had been deceived as soon as thumbscrews were applied. Said (in reply to question) that Persin had taken form of cat in order to punish him for refusal to perform acts of witchcraft.

17 November 1611; interrogation

Repeated earlier confessions, on two occasions, recommending his poor wife and children to Monsieur d'Etival and all the bourgeois of the seigneurie.

18 November 1611; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

21 November 1611; Change de Nancy agrees

29 November 1611; sentence carried out