

B 8684 no 11; witch 198, Jean Thierion le vieux de Brehimont

Charged by Jean fils Demenge Arnoulx.

21 October 1600; informations préparatoires

(1) Jean Girard, 36

Reputation 10-12 years. Some 7 years before Jean had enclosed some common land, but witness went to Mr d'Etival and arranged to rent it. When maire Demengeon Jean Girard went to mark it out accused was there with an axe and displayed his hatred of witness. After this he lost whole series of animals, which he imputed to his witchcraft - died as if rabid or strangely. 2 horses, several sheep, a cow and an ox. Also blamed him for loss of a sow. 2 years before thought he had broken into house of Jean Thierion le jeune, who was away.

(2) Jean Laurent, 50

Commonly reputed witch and thief. Previous Easter had fenced in garden, taking some land belonging to witness; since he did nothing despite several remonstrances, had his son take down fence. Said nothing when they passed one another, but later a cow died after crying strangely. Said to household that he was sure Jean had done this. Also believed he had killed a fine bull within last month, because witness was one of these called in to judge damage his animals had done in field of Mengeon Colas Girard (he had refused to go and agree this himself), and he was very angry with them.

(3) Demengeon Claude Girard, laboureur

Reputation several years as witch, but no suspicion. For theft said that 20 years before he had been caught stealing bread at St Dié; witness reproached him, pointing out that he was not in need, and he tried to blame his brother-in-law for abusing and distracting him so that he forgot to pay. Had also heard report of his stealing 2 empty sacks at St Dié.

(4) Marguitte femme Jean Laurent

Repeated husband's story about fence and loss of cow.

(5) Halbix femme Demenge Colas Girard, 50

Told of incident when her first husband prevented him crossing land with cart of dung, taking head of horses and oxen and turning them round. She begged husband not to beat him, which he promised not to do, but Jean was angry at having to go another way. Within few days husband fell ill, and died in 5 days. Although accused was nearest neighbour, did not visit him when asked, and did not even come to help lay out body. Also reported defiant reply last winter when husband accused him of stealing fence posts that he had taken them, and would take more.

(6) Jean Thierion le jeune, 36

6 or 7 years earlier, when he had taken his horse to graze in a road where accused had right to grazing, he told him off and threatened him. A week later the horse died and he suspected this was his witchcraft.

(7) Demenge Colas Girard

Previous year Thierion had closed off an ancient passage, so that people had to pass on land of witness. He went to remove posts, and as he bent over felt pain in back as if he had been stung - had to go home supported on stick, and in pain unable to work for next week. Thought this had been his witchcraft. Also told of defiant remark about fence.

(8) Michiel Girard, laboureur, 75

Reputation more than 7 years; had no suspicion against him, but did suspect his wife.

(9) Jean Grand Didier, 40

Had not heard talk of him as witch until he was accused by two or three convicted witches at Etival. Had seen him stealing some fencing, but had not dared say anything because he had no witnesses.

(10) Jean Grand Michiel, 30

Reputation 12 years. No personal suspicion, but had seen him stealing some fencing from Mengeon Claude Perrin 3 or 4 years before.

(11) Claudon Jean Perrin, laboureur, 45

Reputation several years, but no personal suspicion. Had taken him to law about theft of fencing 4 or 5 years before.

(12) Colas Ferry, laboureur, 36

Some 9 months before, when he had been imprisoned overnight at Etival, witness and Jean Girard had been appointed to watch his house. When he returned was angry, saying they had eaten his property, but he would thank them. A few days later his cow died in strange fashion, and believed this had been his witchcraft - reputation several years.

(13) Didier Thiebault de la Vacherie, 40

Reputation as witch several years, no personal suspicion. Had heard from late father-in-law Claudon Jean Girard that he did much harm to fences at Brehimont, going out in the evening to steal posts.

(14) Mengeotte femme Jean Girard, 33

Repeated husband's testimony about field and losses, also alleged loss of sow after husband had guarded his house during imprisonment, and he had threatened he would repent.

(15) Catherine femme Jean Thierion le jeune, 27

Repeated husband's story about death of horse.

23 October 1600; interrogation

Said he was laboureur aged 60, native of Brehimont, where he had lived constantly since marriage 30 years before. Asked about alleged malefices, said he wished 'que tous les sorciers et sorcieres fussent bruslez et mis en cendres, et luy le beau premier s'il est tel, affin que l'on en oye plus de nouvelles'. Said that when he tried to take cart over field of late Demenge Grand Didier they had great quarrel, and Demenge would have hit him with a post if wife had not prevented him. Denied virtually all other quarrels, and any witchcraft; did finally admit some minor thefts.

24 October 1600; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses; admitted one or two more thefts. Said at one point that if he was released he would start spying on his neighbours. Otherwise denied all witchcraft charges.

30 October 1600; Change de Nancy approves torture

interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews and racked; asked to be set down, promising to confess, but then denied he was a witch, asking to be allowed to make an accord with Mr d'Etival and return home. Racked again, seemed to be trying to suffocate himself, and was taken down. Said if he had known they would torture him he would have killed himself in prison. Executioner reported that he had not eaten for 4 days; asked about this, said he had wanted to kill himself. Told this would have been to damn himself, said 'ce luy estoit tout ung', but still refused to confess to witchcraft on grounds that this would mean eternal damnation, while asking to be put to death rather than tortured. Added that his children would be able to make accord with seigneur if he died under torture, and would not be shamed before the world on his account.

interrogation

Next morning his guards reported that Jean Doridant, servant of miller at Etival, had come to see him in prison and maintained that he had seen him change himself into shape of a wolf 'et luy bailler le cours' because he had pastured animals in his meadow - accused had reportedly agreed this was case. Doridant then summoned, and testified that this had been 5 years earlier, when he was 15 and guarding animals which often escaped into his meadow. He threatened to make him repent - then episode with wolf (damage here) which seems to have chased him in order to drive him away from the animals. Went to prison previous evening, spoke to guards, extracted admission from him. Guards also summoned, and agreed that accused had finally admitted he had turned himself into wolf on one occasion.

This was all in presence of Thierion, but he denied being witch or making the admission - finally sent back to prison.

Case ends here, with illegible damaged recommendation from Change de Nancy, seemingly for further torture