

B 2148; witch 001; Jean Bulme et Didiere sa femme, de Mazerulles

22 May 1591; informations preparatoires

(1) Nicolas Parmentier, 26

Long reputation, called witches without seeking redress, and when Jacquette Charpentier was arrested on similar charge she told witness he would never be able to keep hens so long as they were his neighbours. Claim that he had been shown to be thief when 'warcolles' and harness were found in his house.

(2) Odille femme Claudin Thieriat, 45

General reputation and accusations, including one by Anthoine Rougier for which Jean said he would seek redress, but failed to do so. Story of theft. Had heard from Barbellon femme Didier Charpentier that her son Urban had called her witch.

(3) Catherine veuve Mongenot Gerard, 50

Reputation 22 years (residence). Suspected Jean particularly, whom she suspected of having killed her husband. Had lost cow, and husband called him witch, blaming him for not doing his duty, then fell ill a month later and died in 5 days.

(4) Barbellon femme Nicolas Mulnier, 40

Reputation 15 years. Suspected Jean because after her husband took over from him as herdsman they lost one of their cattle. Suspected Didiere because witness had once agreed to make her a shirt, and she was impatient when this was delayed - a calf died.

(5) Catherine femme Didier Moictrier, 40

Suggested that after quarrel between her husband and Didiere her child had gone lame, and was so still.

(6) Claude Guerard, jeune fils, 23

After quarrel with his late father over herd Jean said to him 'qu'il estoit tousjours contre luy, et qu'il s'en donneroit de garde', shortly after which he died.

(7) Laurent Doullat, 50

Said that some time before Jean had given up keeping of 'bestes blanches' to him in hope of taking over cattle, but was angry with several people when this failed. Soon after wife said to him 'qu'il pouvoit bien avoir des bons chiens et qu'elle luy envoieroit des grimonds'. Around this time one of their pigs went back to village early, without his knowledge, and ate some cheeses; she told him 'qu'ilz payeroient lesdits fromages en des lieux qu'ilz scauroient bien'. Next day 6 pigs escaped into woods, and 3 of them died. Following day animals were attacked by a wolf, although this did no damage, and Jean appeared soon after, making equivocal remark. On another occasion said that inhabitants would not dare take herd away

from him because they feared him too much. General reputation; another remark by Jean about losses of horses by Jean Hangney, saying he had not lost cows like others.

(8) Jean Hangney, laboureur, 36

Long reputation. Had quarrel as result of accusations against Jean made by Vincent Epron, which had resulted in accord made by a relative; Jean was very angry about remarks made by witness, and within a week he had 4 horses dead suddenly. Jean de Moullin had told him that Didiere had caused death of one of his children. Story about theft.

(9) Dyon femme Jean Vosgien, d'Aboncourt, 39

Long reputation. Had several quarrels with Didiere about scarf she claimed to have lost behind house of witness, during which she threatened her; subsequently lost 14 horses, with other animals. Her son had accused Jean of killing a sheep, after which he had trouble with leg for a long time. Had kept herd of Mazerulles for long time because inhabitants were frightened of his evil reputation. Story of theft.

(10) Jean Vosgien, d'Aboncourt, 60

Long reputation He had lost many animals after refusing to cart wood for Jean, and accused him over death of a horse, before witnesses, without his taking any action. Previous year deterred inhabitants of Mazerulles from giving Jean charge of herd, after which had a cow dead. Also story of son's bad leg.

(11) Anthoine Rougier, laboureur, 26

Long reputation, and had called them witches during recent quarrel which came to blows, without reparation being sought. Thought he had killed a horse and made another sick soon after. Also story af quarrel with late Mongenot Gerard, when they fought with clubs and sticks, and Gerard called him witch, while he said 'tu verras la meschancete de moy'. Gerard died some 6 weeks later, and he thought this was his witchcraft.

(12) Claudin Thienat alias Mallenoy, laboureur, 50

General reputation only.

(13) Mengin Cuysenier, 36

General reputation. Lost a horse after dispute over quality of grain given in payment for keeping herd, and a cow after refusing to give Didiere some milk.

(14) Didier Moictrier, 40

They owed him money, and he had difficulty getting repayment - still not complete. On one occasion Jean told him he would repent when he pressed for payment, after which son became ill and impotent, as he still was. Had accused him of being witch and cause of this, and he replied by saying it was not true, but he would discover one day who had done it. Had called her witch several times and beaten her without any complaint being lodged. Story of theft.

(15) Nicolas Musnier, 60

2 years before he had replaced Jean as herdsman, although latter bid lowest price, because many in village wanted to replace him. Threatened him and his wife, and later beat his wife, who was still ill; believed this was result of their witchcraft. General reputation, story of theft.

(24 May 1591)

(16) Demange Rougier, laboureur, 70

Long reputation. Previous winter, when time came to appoint herdsman, Jean wanted to have one of the herds, but inhabitants were unwilling, and frightened to tell him. Witness took lead and told him they all feared him and did not want him as herdsman; 5 weeks later a fine mare died. After Jean's arrest Symonin Mulnier had said to Didiere that they should eat his cows because he was a witch, then he fell ill suddenly and died (a week earlier). Also story of quarrel between his son Anthoine Rougier and Jean, with subsequent loss of animals. Believed all this had been witchcraft by one or both.

(17) Magdellaine femme Warin Cherrier, de Bioncourt, 25

Some 2 years before their son had been seeking her in marriage, but she had discouraged him because of their reputation. Soon afterwards her brother died, after Jean had passed by him; had heard that they believed brother had advised her against marriage, so suspected it might have been witchcraft.

(18) Le maire Nicolas Aubert, 63

When he was herdsman a cow belonging to witness was lost, and he would not go and look for it as was his duty. Found to have been strangled by wolf, and he accused Jean of having done this himself, and of strangling those he wished, without his seeking any redress. Had also accused him (rightly) of stealing sheep from Moncel without any action following. Long reputation.

(19) Barbon femme Demenge Rougier, 55

Reputation over 10 years (Jean) and 2 (Didiere). On Sunday a week before had argument with Didiere over providing food for some soldiers lodged in house of witness; called her 'meschante sorciere' several times, and only reaction was to tell her to be on her guard. Same day her son Demenge, aged 15, was looking after horses, and saw Jean approaching. Tried to keep them away from him, in fear he might be seeking revenge, but could not prevent him going up to 3 of them, of which one died the next day, while another became very ill. Suspected they had caused this. Demenge Herdier of Brin, who had now fled because he too was suspected, had told her that they were witches, who were doing them much harm.

(20) Damien Boulengier, 27

Some 12 years earlier had wanted return of some animals Jean held on lease from him; refused this although term was up, demanding that he give him a pot of

butter and a scarf. He objected, saying he was under no obligation to do this, and Jean replied 'qu'il s'en donneroit de garde, et qu'il n'en feroit gueres de profficts'. Soon afterwards lost 5 cattle, 5 pigs, and 17 or 18 sheep, worth 300 francs, and did not think he had ever made profit on animals while Jean was herdsman. Occasion when cow was drowned in field where there was no more than 6 inches of water, and he failed to do anything; reckoned he was a witch, and had several time accused him of killing his animals without any action following.

(21) Demange Rougier, jeune fils, 15

Told of how he saw Jean and his son walking back from mill, and tried to keep horses away from him, in view of quarrels, including one that day between his mother and Didiere. Was also worried because his small nephew, son of brother Anthoine, was there, and frightened they might cause him harm, so at one point left horses to get him out of their way. Jean went within 4 feet of 2 or 3 horses; death of one and illness of another next day, over which he suspected him.

(22) Catherine femme Colin Douche, 35

Long reputation. Previous year were many insects on trees, and husband cleaned theirs. Jean then blamed him for death of a piglet, saying it had been in their garden, and they were both afflicted with bad legs; she was still unable to make her living. Had heard Jean say that husband had killed pig, but this had given him a bad leg.

(23) Jean Symonin, 42

Long reputation. 6 or 7 years earlier had quarrel over child who had not served as agreed, after which one of his children died. Went and accused them of being witches and causing death, without any redress being sought.

25 May 1591; PG (Maimbourg) asks for interrogations and confrontations. Also reprimands prévôt of Amance, after report he had received from clerc juré, because the prisoners are being allowed to communicate freely with one another, with only one sergeant to guard them. This is contrary to all judicial formality, and they must be imprisoned securely so that they cannot communicate.

28 May 1591; interrogation (Jean)

Said he was about 50, native of Mazerulles; late parents were Jean Bulme and his wife Sibille, with whom he lived until he was 18. Had then been in service for 2 years at Mulcey, followed by other single years of service at Mazerulles, Bettencourt, Bezanges (2), Hoeville (1 or 2). There he married his present wife some 32 years earlier. Returned immediately to Mazerulles to live on his land; had kept the herd for many years, and gone out to do day labour.

Said he thought he had been arrested on suspicion of witchcraft, following quarrel with Jean Hangney and Anthoine Rougier. They had called him witch, and he intended to take legal action. Had not heard anyone else call him such, and thought reputation only dated from accusation by Jeanette Bagarde and la belle Claude, executed at Brin, who had discharged him on point of execution. Denied that Nicolas Parmentier had called him witch; as for theft of 'warcolles', his wife had

found these abandoned by their dungheap, and he had not been fined after returning them to maire.

Denied several other charges; did admit a quarrel with late le Couzat, who had always been hostile to herdsmen. Also said that his son had not served Jean Symonin according to his contract, but denied doing him any harm. Generally defended himself sensibly, giving natural explanations of various incidents.

29 May 1591; confrontations

Nicolas Parmentier insisted he had called him witch, when their wives were fighting in the street. In response to Catherine veuve Mongenot Gerard, agreed that latter had called him 'meschant homme' during quarrel, but denied he had ever said he was a witch; if he had been well advised would have sought reparation.

Claimed that Barbellon femme Micolas Mulnier had 'couru les pays'; she said she had been away for 6 weeks with first husband, who was driven by poverty to join garrison at Dieuze, but died there. Claimed that Laurent Doullat was a thief, having stolen a load of logs, but he denied this - said Jean was aware that he had discovered his crimes, and wanted to prevent him testifying.

Objected that Jean Vosgien had stolen some wood, and not been accepted when he went to testify before bailli at Nancy; Vosgien said someone else had been fined over theft, and that he had given evidence - both could be checked from records. Then admitted he had heard of accusation by Vosgien's child over death of sheep (had previously denied this), but said he had not harmed him. Had thought of taking action against him, but had been dissuaded by late Claudin Barbier.

Agreed that Demenge Rougier le viel had told him that inhabitants did not want him to keep herd, but denied rest of his deposition.

Damien Boulengier added that when Jean was taken to Amance as prisoner on first occasion, he was guarding his wife in the house, and she told him Jean had said 'comme il y avoit ung homme deceuz par l'esprit malingt: icelluy homme estant ainsy desvoyé, fut remis en son bon propos et quicta des mauvaises oppinions par ung passant qu'il trouva: et lhors que ledict esprit malingt ne trouva cestuy homme ainsy qu'il esperoit: il dict a ses petitz complices sathanas: allez par tout desrompez et prenez tout ce que trouverez.' Had said this when they were talking about woods which had been damaged by lightning and winds at Amance in 1590. Jean agreed that he had said this, but it was only by hearsay - thought he had heard it from an unknown shepherd between Mazerulles and Champenoux.

29 May 1591; interrogation (Didiere)

Said she was about 60, native of Hoeville, daughter of Didier Thierion and his wife Barbelline. Father died when she was 8, after which she went into service at Drouville (6 months), Hoeville (5 years), then other places she did not remember, until marriage some 30 years earlier.

Knew she had been arrested as witch; 'le cousson dudit Mazerulles luy dict que s'il avoit encor des bestes mortes qu'il la feroit prendre au corps.' Admitted she had been called witch, but said they had obtained redress, except in case of Anthoine Rougier, because they had been arrested within a day or two. He had beaten her severely on this occasion. Admitted that Didier Moitrier had told her he suspected her over child's illness, but he did her wrong.

Had fought with wife of Nicolas Musnier, who accused her of calling her 'ribaulde' in the village. Admitted she had quarrelled with Barbon femme Demenge

Rougier over providing for soldiers, and that Barbon called her daughter 'fille de sorciere', but only witness was a soldier. Otherwise denied charges firmly.

29 May 1591; confrontations (Didiere)

Agreed that Nicolas Parmentier had called husband and her 'larron et sorciers', but had been no witnesses. Also that she had killed one of his hens which was damaging her garden, but had done him no other harm.

Catherine femme Collin Douche added to testimony that one day she passed Didiere who complained angrily that she had not given her 'bonjour', and touched her on shoulder; immediately her breast became painful, and she had been unable to find a cure. Also claimed that last summer she had seen her carrying bundle of hay, when there had not been time for her to get to field and back since she had seen her in village. Didiere denied these charges, saying that she had gone to fields on a cart.

No reproaches to any witnesses, but maintained denials.

15 June 1591; PG de Lorraine asks that they be tortured, after Didiere has been questioned further. Apparently another woman, la Maslinade, was also accused, and witnesses against her claimed that Didiere had said they did her and her husband wrong to accuse them over deaths of animals, when la Maslinade was responsible. She is to be asked how she knew this.

20 June 1591; Change de Nancy approves, with condition that Didiere should only be tortured moderately.

26 June 1591; interrogation under torture (Didiere)

Asked about claims she had allegedly made against Didiere la Masseninalde of Mazerulles. She denied having said this, asserting that she had never seen her do anything dishonest. They had lost a cow, but she had no idea that la Masseninalde had thrown powder on it after a quarrel, as the judges suggested. Asked about occasion at Vic when Damien Boulengier had refused to take them home in his cart, and her companion allegedly said he would not keep his horse beyond Christmas. Agreed incident had occurred, but Masseninalde had not taken it badly, merely saying 'de par dieu, laisse le aller'.

Continued to deny she was a witch; noted that replies were 'impertinentes ains furieuses, avec jurementz, qu'amyables'. Was then racked; said she was dying, they should put her down and she would tell all, but could not when in such pain. Was released, but would confess nothing, so racked again - shut her mouth and would say nothing for a time, pretending to be dead.

Asked about 'grimons', said this was name used in village for good dogs. Said, with great cries and oaths, that they did her great wrong 'et qu'elle estoit maintenant sauvée en paradis, par le marthié qu'elle enduroit: et que c'estoit folie' - begged not to be tortured any more, because she could not speak.

When finally released told 'qu'elle advise de penser a sa conscience aultrement l'on n'aura plus de pitié d'elle'. She said 'que l'on ne luy scauroit faire davantaige de mal qu'elle a endurée, et qu'elle avoit dict tout ce qu'elle scait, disant voyla ung terrible lieu que je deviens je ne suis esbahie sy on faict confesser des choses a des personnes qu'ilz n'ontz jamais faict.'

26 June 1591; interrogation under torture (Jean)

Was racked for a long time without making any confession, but when executioner did it harder he finally asked to be released, saying he would tell the truth. Then continued denials, so was racked harder; finally said he could bear no more and would tell the truth, claiming all his limbs were out of their place. Said he was a witch, and his master was Persy. Taken down, and given time to 'reprendre son esprit, afiin qu'il n'offence sa conscience'.

Had been seduced some 10 years before, when he was having trouble controlling herd - afraid that they would do damage, and that young animals might escape into woods. Persy appeared, dressed in black on black horse, and promised him that in future herd would obey him. Agreed to serve him, and Persy touched him on forehead - was like bee-sting, not very painful. Looked like fine young man, but feet were like those of cattle. Gave him golden piece, which he put in his purse, but could not find again. Asked him if he had a wife, then asked him to bring her so that he could take her into service as well, promising to do them much good. Gave him yellow powder, saying that he should throw it on clothes of anyone he hated and see what happened. As soon as he disappeared the herd assembled itself again without any prompting. When he got home told his wife all that had happened, and she said she would join him as proposed.

Used powder against one named Nicolas Bazin, who had taken herdsman's job away from him; he died soon after. Later given other kinds - black and yellow/kill, grey/languish, white/heal. Took wife to meet him 3 weeks later as agreed, and he took her off, so did not know what happened. Gave her large silver coin; he told her to keep it, for fear he might lose it as he had his own. Later took it to St Nicolas to buy shoes, but was told it was false, and was threatened with prison; looked at it again on bridge, saw it had gone yellow, and threw it into the water in anger. Saw he had been deceived, 'mais il ne se peult jamais deffaire dudit Persy, et falloit qu'il l'obeist tousjours quand il le retrouvoit.'

Confessed series of crimes as alleged by witnesses. Had killed horses of Jean Hangney, then killed Mengenot Gerard by sprinkling powder on his clothes as they cut wood together (both after quarrels). Had also killed Jean Margo, because he prevented marriage of his son with sister Magdellaine. Wife was party to all this, and was 'plus maulvaise que luy'. Master had forced him to kill small daughter of Jean Symonin; could not remember any other offences.

Asked about sabat, said master had told him and wife to go to etang at Brin, where they would find others. Were 2 women there, one of whom was Jehenne femme Gros Joullain of Brin, but was so dark he could not recognize the other; then Persy arrived, carrying la Masseninalde on shoulders as butchers carried calves. Asked how he knew her if it was so dark, said he knew her voice, and spoke to her by name. Then beat the water to make hail.

On another occasion he and wife went to woods of Liocourt, and joined group who were dancing to sound of drum and unknown songs which all the others were singing - all were masked, danced holding hands behind their backs. Finally dispersed when master told them they had danced long enough; as they approached Mazerulles la Masseninalde asked him if he had been in woods of Liocourt, so he knew she had been there too, although he had not recognized her.

27 June 1591; interrogation (Jean)

Confirmed previous confessions, saying he had not slept that night, and had been thinking if he had committed any other crimes. Said he had killed maire Demenge Parmentier, because he had taken caution from him over the 'warcolles'. Asked about accusation by the witches from Brin, denied that he had been at sabbat

where they claimed to have seen him. Said he had never used grey powder; had tried to heal Mongenot Gerard with the white, but he had died very quickly none the less.

Confronted with his wife, maintained accusations; she said he was 'yvre et tout esperdu'.

28 June 1591; interrogation (Didiere)

Said she would tell everything if she was not tortured again, but said she was not a witch. Was promised that she would not be tortured, then confronted again with Jean. He seems to have given fairly full summary of his confessions, after which she admitted she could no longer conceal that she was a witch, while saying that Jean was the first cause of this. She had taken Persy for master, and had intercourse with him. Had been to sabbat in same way and same places as husband. Sound of drum had been made by man hitting oak tree with long stick.

Had used powder to make wife of Collin Douche ill, after quarrel. Admitted participating in various maléfices of husband. Had killed cow of Hanry Thomassin, who did not want to pay for guard of animals, and 2 cows of Damien Boulengier, with whom she had several quarrels and who beat her.

6 July 1591; PG asks for death sentence, after confrontations with la Masseninade.

11 July 1591; Change de Nancy approves

15 July 1591; interrogation

Jean confirmed earlier confessions and accusations. Didiere now said hers had been false, extracted by force and fear of further torture. Was confronted with Jean, who insisted she was a witch as he was; she persisted in denials.

Under further questioning she renewed her confessions. Denied participating in some of Jean's maléfices, and was urged to tell the truth, so that she would be out of prison in 2 or 3 days. Responded to this by asking to be banished from duchy, saying that since she was to be banished she freely confessed she had shared in all his wrongdoing.

16 July 1591; formal death sentences from court at Amance