

B 8712 no 5; witch 276, Dieudonné Jean Thierion, of Brehimont

Accused by Claudon Jean Perrin of Brehimont, executed 18 May 1611; copy of relevant confession at start of procedure.

26 June 1614; informations préparatoires

(1) Claudon Demenge Grand Didier de Brehimont, 30

Some 7 years before were neighbours, and disputing about right to some water behind houses; within a week of quarrel a fine pig died. Shortly afterwards had arranged for children of accused to guard his cows, and he said to wife of witness 'qu'ils ne luy payoient la garde de leur veaux, mais qu'ils la payeroient en un autre endroit qu'ils ne s'en donneroient de garde'; threat was followed by death of a fine cow within a week. After another dispute some 2 years before had become so seriously ill that he was expected to die; had been told that during this the accused visited him and placed his hand in the bed. Believed he had caused illness and taken it away.

(2) Alizon femme du précédent, 30

Told of dispute and threat over keeping cows. After death of cow husband had said in public 'qu'ayant heu querelle et dispute contre quelque sorcier, il leur avoit faict mourir leurs bestiaux'. Later heard from Claudatte, mother-in-law of accused, that she had warned him of their suspicions; he had said that surely 'quelque sorciere' had caused deaths. Then told of visit during illness and recovery; during previous serious illness of her husband had brought him 'un morceau de pain bis', urging that she should make sure he ate it, and he recovered. Long reputation, and accusation by Claudon Jean Perrin.

(3) Marguitte femme Colas Andreu de Brehimont, 40

Reputation several years, accusation. Two years before her husband had bought a horse, and accused said several times that he had one too, which would last longer. One day came into house by back door, which he had never done before, and passed horse in stable, saying 'qu'il mengeoit bien ce vieux diable de cheval' - next night the horse died. Had been present at visit to sickbed when he put hand under bed. Had seen him in act of stealing some logs 3 years before. Previous Lent had two children ill; Dieudonne visited them and said 'que le plus jeune et dernier devenu malade, racheteroit le plus grand, et mourroit.' A week later the younger child (4) died. After returning from burial he came to house uninvited, saying 'qu'il n'y venoit pour y faire du mal'; this was followed by strange illness she had for 5 weeks, during which he visited her and told her several times she would not die. Suspected him of all this.

(4) Jennon femme Gerardin Haxo de la Fosse, 40

Two years before had been living with her brother-in-law Colas Andreu, and confirmed wife's testimony about horse. During illness of Claudon Demenge Grand Didier she had gone to fetch priest; then accused asked her if he had been, and she said that he had not, to hear what he would say. He then visited sick man, and sitting by head of bed said 'qu'il preigne courage et que bien tost il guerrioit'. Also told of seeing him stealing logs.

(5) Jean Borcquaux de Brehimont, paistre des bestes a cornes, 35

Long reputation; father executed as witch some 12 years earlier. Had heard his mother-in-law Claudatte say that if he was a witch he had killed cow of Claudon Demenge Grand Didier; also said that if he were arrested and she was called to testify she would say enough 'pour le faire descombrer'. 3 years before the late Rozemand du Renty, in the service of Colas Ferry, told witness how he was singing on way to cart wood, and said 'dieu garde' as he passed accused, who replied 'qu'il estoit bien joyeulx, ne scavoit s'il estoit desjuné, mais il ne seroit tousjours sy joyeux'; within the hour had his leg broken in a strange accident. Had heard late wife of accused, Claudatte, tell him he was a witch like his father.

(6) Mengeatte femme Estienne Jean Perrin de Brehimont, 30

A year ago previous winter her husband had fetched a load of wood for accused; thought he might have felt it was not big enough, and had a horse dead subsequently, although could not positively say he was responsible.

(7) Marguitte femme Symon Jacquot de Brehimont, 30

Nothing to depose about witchcraft; had once heard from his late wife that he had taken some goods from church in val de Saint Dié, for which he had been 'bien escoutengé'.

(8) Claudatte femme Mengeon Voiriat de Brehimont, 36

Last Good Friday Dieudonné's daughter had come asking to buy a cheese, and she had told her she had none to sell. Cow with calf then lost milk for 15 days before recovering it slowly; believed he might have caused this. Common repute.

(9) Claudatte femme Claudon Fallayeux de Brehimont, 36

Some 4 years before he had proposed to share animals with her husband for ploughing, but latter had preferred arrangement with Jean Gerard, and Dieudonné was angry. Shortly afterwards made unexplained visit to their house, put hand on back of a calf which was in the kitchen, and said it was 'bien beaux'. Calf died soon afterwards, and in view of common repute believed him to blame. Around same time dispute over water behind houses, following which child became ill and languished for a year. Talking with Jehennon Grand Didier in front of his house, said that sickness might have been caused by a witch, to which he said it might well be so. Made her more suspicious, so she obtained bread and salt from his house by

means of his mother-in-law, which she gave child in a soup, and he quickly recovered.

(10) Mengeatte femme Jean Gerard de Brehimont, 50

Had heard Rozemand du Renty claim that accused had caused his broken leg, and wife of Colas Claude Gerard say he had killed a horse. Long reputation, father's execution.

(11) Halby femme Demenge Colas Gerard de Brehimont, 60

Told of illness of her son Claudon Demenge Grand Didier; had been weeping in front of house when accused told her he was visiting him, and with God's grace he would recover.

(12) Dedille femme Colas Claude Gerard de Brehimont, 50

Quarrels some 2 years earlier about one of their horses which had repeatedly damaged his field of oats; he said that if it went to eat there so often, 'il mangeroit un bot'. Horse trespassed again, died in 4 days. While it was sick, accused passed her house and said 'qu'il faisoit bien chaux, elle respondit que ce n'estoit cela, mais qu'il failloit parler de son cheval qu'un sorcier avoit ensorcelé, et qu'au diable soit celuy qui scavoit faict', to which he said nothing. Was sure he had bewitched it; long reputation, accusations by others executed.

(13) Curien Colas Ferry de Brehimont, 28

Previous winter had refused to sell him a pig, after which he had been angry, and within a week the pig died; believed this was his witchcraft - long reputation.

(14) Colas Jean Andreu de Brehimont, 40

Some 2 years before accused had asked him to take his horse with those of witness to cart some wood - had refused on grounds that horse was too lazy to work with his. Was angry and said 'qu'il s'en aille doncque que dieu luy soit en aide, et se donne bien de garde qu'il ne soit blessé'. Was astonished, and so frightened of accused that he nearly put his horses back in stable; on way back horse fell on good piece of road, and died three days later. Then told of incident with two sick children, and remark that the one who had fallen ill last would die.

(15) Jean Simon de Brehimont, 50

Some 5 weeks before, having recovered from long illness, went out to look at grain in fields with accused. Witness remarked 'qu'il ne failloit estre sy avaricieux aux biens du monde, et que sur la fin il ne leur failloit sinon sept pied de terre a chacun'. Reply was 'que cela estoit vray, mais que peult estre n'en avoient ils point de nécessité', which astonished witness who could not understand meaning.

(16) Colas Claude Gerard de Brehimont, 70

Some three years ago had refused to sell him a horse, after which he had complained about damage done by animals of witness; a horse died 3 or 4 days later, which he believed to be his witchcraft, in view of reputation.

(17) Estienne Jean Perrin de Brehimont, 40

Last Martinmas accused had wanted him to deliver load of wood he had promised, after buying some 'heritages de menantie' from him; did not want to do so until purchase had been approved by Mr d'Etival, but finally agreed. Few days after lost a mare, which he blamed on his witchcraft, in view of reputation. Had heard Colas Andreu call him witch without any reparation being sought.

(18) Demenge Claude Gerard de Brehimont, 72

Some 3 months after execution of his father, accused was invited by witness to thresh in his barn. Had told him story about knockings on door in night, seeking advice from M. d'Etival, then opening door to find it was his dead father.

(19) Laurent Jean Laurent de Brehimont, 30

No suspicion over witchcraft, but had stolen some of his logs, which he had been obliged to restore.

(20) Claudon Fallayeux de Brehimont, 30

Repeated wife's deposition about loss of horse and illness of child.

(21) Didier Sagaire le Jeune de Brehimont, 30

Had heard him called witch in public without seeking reparation.

(22) Claudatte veuve Mengeon des Sottieres de Sachemont, 70

Mother-in-law of accused, had told him about suspicions of Claudon Demenge Grand Didier, and he replied that 'une sorciere' had caused death of cow. Had heard him 'maulx dire les pere et mere qui l'avoient mis au monde, ad cause qu'il avoit tant de maulx de vivre'.

26 June 1614; interrogation

Said he was laboureur aged about 30; father had been Jean Thirion, did not know name of mother who had died when he was small. Father executed as witch at Saint Dié some 10 years earlier. Would not renounce devil, claiming that he had never had anything to do with him.

Had lived at Clemency, where he had married his first wife Claudatte, for a year 14 years before, since then always at Brehimont. 6 weeks after return he told

his father he was reputed a witch, and he turned him out of his house, after which he had always found it difficult to make a living.

Denied accusations with a variety of colourful expressions, such as 'qu'il a aultant de souvenance avoir usé desdites menasses, comme il a souvenance d'avoir un cousteau fisché dans son ventre'. Agreed to hearing remark made by wife of Colas Claude Gerard, 'mais d'autant qu'elle ne disoit absolument que luy prevenu ayt ensorcelé ledit cheval, il ne luy fit aucun response'.

Told of appearance of his father after his execution; was in garden around twilight, and told him he was in pain because he had moved a fence between his garden and that of Jean Claudon Thirion to get possession of a pear-tree. Asked him to replace it so that 'il luy feroit son lict en paradis', then disappeared. Agreed that he had spoken ill of his father 'parce qu'il luy estoit trop rude'.

28 June 1614; confrontations

No results of any consequence; made no reproaches against witnesses.

27 June 1614; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

30 June 1614; Change de Nancy agrees

2 July 1614; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, rack, and tortillons, but would not confess. Only admission was stealing some wood to give children some warmth.

3 July 1614; voluntary confession

Judges were called to prison on news that he wanted to confess. Explained that his master Napnel had previously been in his throat preventing him doing so, but that he had finally decided to save his soul. After father's death his land had been forfeit to M. d'Etival, but with accustomed generosity he had been allowed to take them back on payment of an entry fine. Was having difficulty paying this when Napnel appeared to him and seduced him, giving him purse of money which turned out to be oak leaves. Had started by using powder on some of his own animals which had caused him problems.

4 July 1614; continuation

Confessions had been broken off because it was late; confirmed what he had said previous day. Added series of maléfices, then stated that he was not responsible for the others charged against him. Had been to sabbat, but less often than others in return for annual gift of hen. Were more than 100 present, mostly masked. Danced back to back to sound of drums, violins and flutes.

Had recognized Marguittre femme Simon Jacot de Brehimont (daughter of Claudon Jean Perrin), Jean Mathieu de La Bourgonce, Jacotte femme Anthoine Jean Marchal hostelain a l'hoste du bois, Mengeon fils feu Jean Laurent de Brehimont,

living at Herbaville (mother already executed), Meline belle-mere Gratian Doridant de La Vacherie.

Said 'que c'est une grande pitié de veoir tant de pauvre gens ainsy abusé du diable. Adjoustant que ausdits sabatz les riches sont tousjours les plus prisés et assis au hault bout, proche des maitres, et les pauvres n'ont que le reste des riches, et n'y sont beaucoup prisée.'

Confirmed confessions later same day.

4 July 1614; procureur asks for death sentence.

5 July 1614; Change de Nancy agrees.

8 July 1614; sentence carried out.