

THE CASEBOOK OF TRIALS

Every prosecution this book describes, in order, with the court and — where Baring-Gould gives it — the sentence. Where he does not give one, this table says so rather than supplying it. Read the three French judgments of 1598 to 1603 together: the same Parlement of Paris reprieved Jacques Roulet and burned the tailor of Châlons in the same year, which is why the medicalisation of lycanthropy is a slower and messier story than the two famous reprieves suggest on their own.

When and where	The charge	What the court did
1440 · Nantes	Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France, charged with the murder of a large number of children at Machecoul and elsewhere over some eight years.	Tried before an ecclesiastical court under the Bishop of Nantes and a secular one under Pierre de l'Hôpital. Excommunication was pronounced; a detailed confession followed on 21 October after torture had been threatened. Hanged 26 October 1440. Chapters XI–XIII.
1521 · diocese of Besançon	Pierre Bourgot and Michel Verdung, accused of witchcraft and cannibalism.	Heard in December 1521 by the Inquisitor-General for the diocese, Boin by name. Both confessed. Chapter VI. Baring-Gould does not state the sentence.
1573 · Dole	Gilles Garnier, the hermit of Saint-Bonnot.	Confessed to killing and eating children in the form of a wolf. Burned at Dole, 1573. Chapter VI.
1598 · Franche-Comté	The Gandillon family — Pierre, Georges and Antoinette.	Prosecuted by Henri Boguet, who wrote the case up himself. All three hanged and burned. Chapter VI.
1598 · Angers, then Paris	Jacques Roulet, found near a mutilated body and confessing to lycanthropy.	Condemned to death at Angers. The Parlement of Paris set the sentence aside and committed him to the Saint-Germain-des-Prés asylum for two years. Chapter VI.
14 December 1598 · Paris	A tailor of Châlons, charged with decoying and killing children.	Sentenced to the flames by the same Parlement of Paris, in the same year as Roulet's reprieve. Baring-Gould reports that the record of the trial was ordered destroyed. Chapter VI — and the case that stops the two reprieves from being a pattern.
1603 · Bordeaux	Jean Grenier, a beggar boy of thirteen who told girls on the dunes that he was a wolf and had eaten children.	The Parlement held that lycanthropy existed only in the disorganised brain of the insane and was not a punishable crime — and sentenced him to perpetual imprisonment in a monastery at Bordeaux, escape to be punished with death. He died there at twenty. Pierre de Lancre visited him in 1610. Chapter VII.
1849 · Polomyja, Austrian Galicia	Swiatek, a beggar, found to have killed and eaten children.	Never tried: he killed himself in custody at Dabkow. Baring-Gould names no source. Chapter XIV.
1848–49 · Paris	The violation of graves in the city cemeteries.	A trap was laid and a sergeant of the army was caught and confessed. Sentenced by court-martial to a year's imprisonment, 10 July 1849. Chapter XV — and, as Baring-Gould says, an anomalous case: no wolf appears in it at all.

The two that are easy to miss. In 1598 the Parlement of Paris set aside the death sentence on Jacques Roulet and committed him to an asylum for two years. In 1603 the Parlement of Bordeaux held that lycanthropy

existed only in a disordered brain and was not a punishable crime — and sentenced Jean Grenier, a beggar boy of thirteen, to perpetual imprisonment in a monastery, escape to be punished with death. Both had made full confessions to being werewolves. Both courts treated the confession as evidence about the man rather than about the crime — three hundred years before anyone would call that an insanity defence.

From The Book of Were-Wolves by Sabine Baring-Gould, Valice Classics 15. Free at valicepress.com/companion-book-of-were-wolves