



Marin Report

⚠ AI translation ⚠

Note: This document, written at the Château de Besques by Maître Marin, royal notary, on June 20, 1767, the day after the death of the beast killed by Jean Chastel at the Sognes d'Auvers, was only found by Mrs. Elise Seguin in 1958 at the National Archives (file F 10-476, agriculture collection, destruction of harmful animals).

"Today, the twentieth day of June, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven, we, Roch Etienne Marin, royal notary, Bailiff of the Royal Abbey of Chazes, Saint Arcons, of the Barony of Orades, Besques de Charraix, appointed to the subdelegation of Langeac, for the pleasure of Monseigneur de Ballainvilliers, Intendant of this province of Auvergne, in the absence of the Subdelegate, having learned that the Marquis d'Apchier, greatly concerned by the terrible ravages wrought for several years by a ferocious beast on the borders of this province of Auvergne and that of Gévaudan, for the destruction of which he had undertaken countless hunts, but without success, and that finally this beast having appeared again in the parish of Nozeyrolles and the parish of Desges on the eighteenth of this month and devoured a child that same day, Mr. the Marquis d'Apchier was informed and left that same day, the eighteenth of the present month, at eleven o'clock in the evening, with some hunters from his house and some others from his lands whom he hastily assembled, in all twelve in number.

Having moved into his forest on the Margeride mountain, positioned his men, and hunted that forest and then that of the Marquis de Pons, this ferocious animal appeared at around 10:15 a.m. yesterday, the 19th of this day, to one of his hunters named Jean Chastel, from the hamlet and parish of La Besseyre. The hunter fired a shot at the animal, at which point it fell dead at the edge of the forest called La Tenazaire, in the parish of Nozeyrolles.

The Marquis d'Apchier having had the animal transported to his château of Besques, in the parish of Charraix, we deemed it appropriate to go there to verify its appearance. And while at the château of Besques, the Marquis d'Apchier showed us this animal, which appeared to us to be a wolf, but an extraordinary one, quite different in its appearance and proportions from the wolves seen in this region.

This is what more than three hundred people from all around who came to see it confirmed to us. Several hunters and many knowledgeable people indeed pointed out to us that this animal only resembles a wolf in its tail and hindquarters. Its head, as will be seen from the following proportions, is monstrous; its eyes have a peculiar membrane that starts at the lower part of the socket, covering the eyeball at will.

Its neck is covered with very thick, reddish-grey fur, crossed by a few black bands; it has a large white heart-shaped mark on its chest. Its paws have four toes armed with large claws that extend much further than those of ordinary wolves; they, as well as its very thick legs, especially the front ones, are the colour of a roe deer's.

This struck us as a remarkable observation because, in the opinion of these same hunters (word crossed out in the text), knowledgeable individuals, and indeed of all hunters, wolves had never been seen with such colors. It also seemed pertinent to note that its ribs did not resemble those of a wolf, which allowed this animal the freedom to turn around easily, whereas the ribs of wolves, being obliquely positioned, do not permit this ease.

The proportions we have given this animal are:

- *Length from the base of the tail to the top of the head: three feet (99 cm),*
- *From the top of the head to the point between the two outer corners of the eyes: six inches (16.2 cm),*
- *From the outer corners of the eyes to the tip of the nose: five inches (13.5 cm)*
- *Width from ear to ear: seven inches (18.9 cm),*
- *Mouth opening: seven inches (18.9 cm),*
- *Horizontal width of neck: eight inches six lines (23 cm),*
- *Shoulder width: eleven inches (29.7 cm),*
- *Width at tail base: eight inches six lines (23 cm),*
- *Tail length: eight inches (21.6 cm),*
- *Tail diameter: three inches six lines (9.5 cm),*
- *Ear length: four inches six lines (12.2 cm),*
- *Width of forehead below ears: six inches (16.2 cm),*
- *Distance between the two outer corners of the eyes: two inches six lines (6.7 cm),*
- *Length of humerus: eight inches four lines (22.5 cm),*
- *Forearm length: eight inches (21.6 cm),*
- *Length from last joint to nails: seven inches six lines (20.3 cm),*
- *Jaw length: six inches (16.2 cm),*
- *Nose width: one inch six lines (4 cm),*
- *Lower jaw width: one inch three lines (3.4 cm),*
- *Incisor length: one inch three lines (3.4 cm),*
- *Lower jaw length: six lines (1.3 cm),*
- *Upper jaw length: one inch one line (2.9 cm),*
- *Tongue length: fourteen inches from its root (37.9 cm),*
- *Eye width: one inch three lines (3.4 cm),*

- *Head thickness: seven inches (18.9 cm),*
- *Hind legs from the first to the second joint: seven inches two lines (19.4 cm),*
- *From the second to the third joint to the nails: ten inches (27 cm),*
- *Pain width: four inches six lines (12.2 cm),*
- *From chestnut to tip Leg length: six inches (16.2 cm),*
- *Penis length: seven inches (18.9 cm),*

The upper jaw is furnished with six incisor teeth, the sixth being longer than the others, two large straps or hooks away from the incisors and one inch high, four lines (3.6 cm), with a diameter of six lines (1.3 cm), three molar teeth, one quite small and two large, a fourth molar larger than the others and to which is almost joined the fifth and penultimate which is divided into two parts, one extending perpendicularly and the other extending horizontally into the interior of the palate, and finally a sixth molar.

The lower jaw is furnished with twenty-two teeth: namely six incisors and on each side a strip similar to the upper ones, seven molars: the first very small and far from the strip, the next three are larger and similar to the second and third upper molar, the fifth, the largest and longest, is divided into three parts, the anterior one being shorter, the sixth, quite large, has two anterior and lateral eminences, the seventh is very small and almost equal.

We observed a wound three lines (0.7 cm) below the joint of the right thigh, both internally and externally, and found three lead pellets in the hock. We were assured that this wound must have been the one inflicted by Monsieur de Lavedrine, Esquire, with a gunshot two years ago or thereabouts, plus another old wound on the left thigh near the joint, plus an old wound above the eyelid of the left eye which appears to have been made by a sharp instrument. Finally, this animal received the fatal blow from a gunshot which pierced its neck, severed its trachea, and broke its left shoulder.

*O*f the many rural inhabitants gathered here, the following individuals recognized this animal and asserted that it was the same one that had caused so much havoc:

- ❖ *Pierre Aret of Servillanges, parish of Venteuges, stated that he shot it in the left leg in the spring of 1766 with the aforementioned rifle.*
- ❖ *Jean Pierre Loudes of La Veyseyre, parish of Saugues, aged 22, stated that he freed this beast, which was holding a girl from the village of Sauzet, in the spring of 1766, and then struck it with his bayonet.*
- ❖ *Joseph Regourd, Jean-Jacques Laurent, and Baptiste Lonjon of Servillanges stated that they had made the beast abandon Guillaume Barthelemy, whom it had surprised while herding cattle.*
- ❖ *François Laurent, from La Vacheresse, in the parish of Venteuges, aged 32, said he had been attacked by this beast for about three weeks.*
- ❖ *Joseph Chassefeyre, from Le Fraisse, in the parish of Chanaleilles in Gévaudan, said he had been attacked by this beast a year ago. It stopped his oxen, which were harnessed to a cart, and he had great difficulty defending himself despite being armed with a sword.*
- ❖ *Antoine Plantin, from Servières, parish of Saugues, aged 40, said that it was the same animal that snatched his daughter on March 2nd, that after chasing her for about five hundred paces, he lost sight of her in a wood, and that his daughter was devoured.*
- ❖ *Barthélémy Simon, from Servières, parish of Saugues, aged 22, said he was the same animal that attacked him in a pasture last September and at which he fired a shotgun. Laurent Vidal de Servieres, âgé de 17 ans a dit que ce même animal l'avait attaqué en deux différents jours au mois de mai dernier, qu'heureusement il était armé d'une baïonnette, sans quoi il aurait péri. Il a ajouté avoir vu cette même bête dans un pâtural depuis entour quinze jours qui mangeait un enfant de Jacques Meyronneinc .*
- ❖ *Antoine Laurent, from Servieres, aged 12, said he was attacked by this beast a month ago and that without the help of a man he would have perished.*

- ❖ *Jean Bergougnoux, from the farmhouse of Montchauvet, parish of Saugues, aged 48, told us that this beast is the same one that devoured a nine-year-old boy from him in March 1766, that he had chased it for a long time at the time, but in vain. He added that this beast attacked him last March, and that he would have been devoured had he not been armed with an iron-tipped shovel.*
- ❖ *Anne Chabanel from Viallevieille, parish of Saugues, aged 17, said that this same beast attacked her in August 1766 and that it struck her several times with its bayonet, but in vain. Marguerite Dentil, of Viallevieille, aged 32, said that this beast attacked her last Lent and that, had she not been armed with an axe, she would have perished.*
- ❖ *Marie Reboul of Veysseyre, aged 19, said that it was the same beast that attacked her last Lent, and showed us three wounds it inflicted above the muscle of her right arm and another six inches (16.2 cm) long, from the top of her parietal bone to the back of her cheek, which tore off her ear. The wounds have not yet been reattached.*
- ❖ *Jean Chassefeyre of Veysseyre, parish of Saugues, aged 44, said that this beast is the same one that devoured the aforementioned Marie Reboul and that it was he who freed it.*
- ❖ *Elisabeth Molherat de la Veysseyre, aged 28, stated that it was the same beast that devoured Marie Reboul, to whose aid she rushed with Jean Chassefeyre.*
- ❖ *Antoine Dentil de la Veysseyre, aged 14, stated that he was attacked by this same beast in a wood on the sixth of this month and that he inflicted several bayonet wounds upon it.*
- ❖ *Catherine Freycenet de la Veysseyre, aged 42, stated that she was attacked by this beast in July 1766.*
- ❖ *Pierre Combeuil de la Veysseyre, aged approximately 22, stated that he saw this beast two years ago holding an eight-year-old child, whom it had overpowered and would have devoured had it not been for the intervention of the child's father. Jean Teysseudre, from Meyronne, in the parish of Venteuges, aged 29, reported being attacked twice by the same animal in the last eighteen months.*

- ❖ *Jean-Pierre Guilhe, from Rouve, in the parish of Venteuges, aged 40, stated that he was bitten on the left hip by the same animal two years ago.*
- ❖ *Barthélémy Moussier, from Mourennes, in the parish of Venteuges, aged 15, reported being chased by the same animal on the fifth of this month.*
- ❖ *Jean-Baptiste Bergougnoux, from Vachellerie, in the parish of Paulhac-en-Gévaudan, reported being attacked twice by the same animal during May.*
- ❖ *Antoine Veyrier, from Pompeyreinc, in the parish of La Besseyre-en-Gévaudan, reported being attacked by the same animal on the fifth of this month. Jean Bourrier, from Pompeyreinc, aged 12, said that while he was in a tree, this same beast came and snatched another child of his age from the foot of the tree. He and a man who happened to be nearby ran to help, and the beast, seeing itself pursued, released its prey.*
- ❖ *Barthélémy Dentil, from Septsols, in the parish of La Besseyre, aged 50, said that this same beast attacked him in a wood three times in the same day last April and made every effort to snatch a small child who was beside him.*
- ❖ *Jacques Pignol, from Pontajou, in the parish of Venteuges, aged 57, said that this same beast appeared to him in a meadow last May and tried to snatch one of his children who was in his arms.*

All these large numbers of inhabitants assured us that the devastation caused by this animal was so terrible that since the last Easter holidays, it had devoured at least twenty-five people in different places on the borders of Gévaudan and Auvergne.

All the above demonstrations having been performed and cited, and proportions drawn by Master Antoine Boulangier and Court-Damien Boulangier, Masters of Surgery residing in the town of Saugues, in the presence of Mr. Jean-Baptiste Aiguillon de Lamothe, Doctor of Medicine residing in the town of Saugues, during the dissection of this animal, they showed us that the head, leaving a gap at its sides, perfectly imitates the prow of a ship, and they extracted from the stomach a bone which they said was the head of the femur of a medieval child.

They also pointed out to us that this animal, from the front leg to the spine, is two feet four inches (76.8 cm) tall and that its eyes are cinnabar red.

And we, having requested Monsieur le Marquis d'Apchier and Monsieur le Comte d'Apchier his father, if they wanted this animal in the hands and under the charge of sieur Desgrignard brigadier of the constabulary at Langeac present here, on our requisition with two riders of his brigade, to be sent to Monseigneur de Ballainvilliers, intendant of this province, Messieurs le Comte and Marquis d'Apchier replied to us that Monseigneur de Ballainvilliers was not currently in Clermont and that they judged it appropriate to keep this animal to dispose of it themselves in the most suitable manner.

From all of this, we have drawn up the present report in four copies which we have signed with the said Sieurs de Lamothe, Boulangier and the said Sieur Desgrignard and have left two to Monsieur le Marquis d'Apchier who requested them and a third to be sent to Monseigneur de Ballainvilliers intendant.

Done on the aforementioned day and year, Marin, clerk at the subdelegation of Langeac, Agulhon de Lamothe, Doctor Boulangier, C.D.; Boulangier, master surgeon, Desgrignard, brigadier.

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