

B 3347 no 1; witch 048, Claude Henri, d'Autrepierre

9 September 1614; informations préparatoires

(1) Jean Prevost, mulnier de Blamont, 45

Reputation 8 or 9 years. Told of occasion 2 years earlier when he had been angry with servant of Remy Allix because he would not wait for him when they were drinking from a spring, then flour he was carrying fell off his horse twice. Claude said it would not fall again, and this proved correct.

(2) Adloff Bolle, de Richécourt, 30

Reputation 6 years. 2 years ago had been on journey to fetch wine from Allemagne when accused touched his horse in stable, saying he always had fine ones; next day it was lame and he had to return home. Suspected he had caused this, in view of reputation and particular envy he bore witness.

(3) Jean Thouvenin, de Bardenal, 40

Reputation 6 years. Another story about carting wine and horse being drowned - point not very clear, but next year witness called him witch and ordered him away from his horses. Had also heard him called witch by Jean de Nomeny when he wanted to drink from his barrel of wine; took no action although there were witnesses.

(4) Jean de Nomeny, de Blamont, 50

Reputation since drowning of horse, as above. Also told story of calling him witch; no reaction, but later he took one of his shoes as if in joke, and witness finally struck him with a stick. No reaction, but one of his horses then went wild, which he suspected had been his doing.

(5) Barbelline femme Foiriet Bertrichamps, d'Autrepierre

Reputation 7 years. Around that time saw him strike his black horse more than 20 times with a stick, saying it was 'le plus gros diable d'enfer'. Also suspicions about causing a horse to fall several times when fetching wine.

(6) Demenge Pierson, 42

Reputation 7 years. Story that he had been called witch by late Henry Tabourin without seeking reparation. Long story about how he thought he had been responsible for death of a young horse, having made remark that he would not exchange it for his own.

(7) Demenge de Nohegny,

Reputation 7 years. Suspected him over death of a fine goat 3 years earlier, after remark he made.

(8) Jean Andreu, 60

Reputation 12 years. Previous summer witness and Didier Aubertin had bought a horse and leased it to accused, but on condition that they could take it back if they were called on to pay debts. He was indignant about this, and started to take them to court, but finally desisted. Later said he heard he was to be made prisoner, and wished he were so already.

(9) Didier de Neufville

Reputation 6 years. Had often been called witch in public without seeking reparation. Suspected him of making his cow ill, with swollen neck; had eventually suggested way of healing it with a knife.

(10) Nicolas Thoussaint (blind), 36

Reputation 12 years. Brother of accused had injured one of his eyes, and been forced by law to pay compensation. Was then recovering when Claude came to his house and asked to buy some peas; he refused, and then other eye went blind, so thought he was responsible.

(11) Demenge Collin, 27

Reputation 12 years, called witch without seeking reparation.

(10 September 1614)

(12) Chrestienne femme Claude Bastien, 30

Reputation 7 years; had served in their house in his youth, but had seen no harm in him.

(13) Claudatte veuve Jean Mathieu, 50

Reputation 5 or 6 years. Occasion 2 years earlier when her daughter Jennon was guarding village cattle, and Claude came up, remarking how some of them were eating. Same day a fine cow belonging to Dieudegnon Masson died suddenly, and suspected this might have been his doing.

(14) Demenge du Banc, 36

Reputation 6 years. 5 years earlier he was trying to beat the wife of Henry Tabourin, and when witness objected became angry. Said his mother was 'bien heureuse', referring to fact that she had been executed as witch after confessing her crime, but he did not know if mother of witness was. She had been killed by fall from cart when on way to Blamont to live with married daughter. At this he called him son of a witch, and that autumn lost a heifer, which he suspected might have been his doing.

(15) Nicolas Zabey, 50

Reputation 12 years. Had various quarrels, called him witch and son of a witch, saying his mother had been burned; also lost various animals, but did not blame him for this.

(16) Demenge Vincent, 30

Reputation 7 years. Called witch without seeking reparation.

(17) Remy Alix, 40

Reputation 12 years. Had quarrelled with him at times, and warned him about execution of mother, but had no suspicions despite losses of animals.

(18) Bernard Faltin, de Blamont, 36

Reputation 4 years. Previous year he had some piglets, and Claude wanted one, but finally brothers of witness took them all. Later Claude passed him with his horses, and asked if ther was anything wrong with one of them; he said there was not, but it then sickened and died in 3 weeks. Suspected he had been cause of this.

(10 September 1614; substitut for procureur fiscal asks that he be arrested; note that this was done same day.)

(12 September 1614)

(19) Jeanne femme Gerardin Marchal, 26

Reputed a witch 'tant par les Grands que par les petitz' at Autrepierre. 8 years ago, a year after their arrival, he invited her and her husband one Sunday to eat cherries in his garden outside village, but she did not eat many, partly because of fear, also because she had to go and open house door at midday for animals returning to village. Husband then went to play cards at house of late Grand Henry, and became ill; went home, but when she was trying to get him to lie down he wandered off and was found by neighbour in confused state. Sent offering to Beau Bernard, after which her husband vomited up the cherries and a lot of blood; was troubled in his mind, but after a few days gradually recovered. Suspected this was his doing, particularly since she had heard he had not been pleased by their arrival, since he had planned to marry one of his sisters to a blacksmith, who would have occupied place they now had. Also told of occasion 3 years earlier when her son aged 2 fell over in church during mass, and Claude rushed to pick him up, then wiped him down. Became all yellow, and died a month later. Showed child to Mademoiselle des Noyers, who knew many remedies, but she did not know any cure and said he was bewitched. Suspected this had been his doing, although they had never quarrelled.

(20) Nicolas Bouvard, maire pour le comte de Linange, d'Avricourt, 50

Reputation 7 years. Previous year had bought 4 fine foals at fair of St Avol, and Claude was one of those who wanted to buy one. Looked in its mouth, but when it was returned to stable it did not want to eat. Sold it to Dieudegnon Masson, but he brought it back. It then seemed likely to die, but neighbours suggested that they suspend it in the air with ropes. Meanwhile he sent his son to Autrepierre to

see if Claude would come to see it and suggest a remedy. Met Jean André, and asked on what pretext he could speak to accused; he said he should buy some wine in tavern he was then keeping, which would be occasion for mentioning foal without offending him. Found ways of obtaining bread, salt and ashes from his house, to treat foal if he would not come, but in fact he agreed to look at it, saying that he would do anything he could for it. Witness deliberately kept away so as not to see what he did, but he said it would recover slowly, and this happened, so that he sold it in the end. Believed he had been cause of illness.

(21) le maire Nicolas Adam de Vardenal, 45

Claude had served him some 17 years earlier, and he had never seen any harm in him. Mengin Masson of Vardenal had called him witch during quarrel that year, and they were still at law about this.

(22) Nicolas Hanns alias Febuay, 36

Witness was native of Autrepierre, but now wandering beggar, unmarried. Reputation more than 14 years. Told of quarrel 2 years earlier when he was buying wine, and he called Claude witch without any redress being sought. Also told of a dispute between Claude and his cousin Didier Aulbry 18 years earlier, when they were both guarding animals, and called one another son of a witch - mothers were sisters, and both executed. Didier told Claude 'qu'il estoit le cuyseur sur la coste de Repy, qu'il tournoit les Rotz, et chinquoit a boire, et servoit a table ceulx qui y estoient, et ledit Claude Henry luy repartit la dessus qu'il menoit le hautboy aussy gros qu'un chassy de char'.

(13 September 1614)

(23) Catherine femme Didier André, de Domjevin, 26

Witness was native of Autrepierre. Said Claude was reputed witch even before his marriage. Had been at poisle with him, sharing a light, when a spark from this went into her left eye, so that she lost her sight on that side - believed this had been his doing, and all the others present thought so too.

(19 September 1614)

(24) Adam Bardenat, de Blamont, 30

Reputation 3 months. Had accepted a horse from him in payment of a debt; had no suspicion of him, but did not know reason for its death.

(24 September 1614)

(25) le maire Dieudegnon Masson, 55

Daughter of Claudatte veuve Jean Mathis had told of his visiting stable and asking whose a fine cow was; she replied that it belonged to witness, and it died same day. Nevertheless did not suspect him over this. Did know that Demenge Pierson suspected him over death of foal, and Claude himself had said that Demenge was angry with him. When Jeanne femme Demenge Mercier was under

arrest she told him 50 times that Claude had been willing to give 10 francs to have her burned, but it would only need an écu for him to be burned. On night when she threw herself from top to bottom of her prison they were milling grain together, and news came that prévôt was looking for someone from Autrepierre, at which Claude went off leaving his uncle Remy Masson to complete the milling for him. On return said he knew who were accused, 'et que la plus grasse et plus riche l'estoit et la vouloit nommer, toutesfois il ne le fit ad cause qu'il luy fit remontré qu'il falloit parler de chose certaine, et non a la vollée.'

19 September 1614; interrogation

Said he was native of Autrepierre, aged about 36, son of late Henri Masson and his wife Allison. Father had died natural death, but mother was executed as witch some 22 years earlier. Had been married some 12 years, to Zabey from Beaumesnil; was laboureur, and also trafficked in wine from Allemaigne. Knew he was accused of witchcraft, but they did him great wrong. Said the maire Daniel Chaillot of Badonviller had warned him of his arrest at Saturday market in Blamont, 'mais comme il se sentoit homme de bien il ne fit beaucoup d'estat de tel advertisement'.

Denied various details about incidents when trading wine. Had helped to drag Jean Thouvenin's horse out of the water when it drowned, but Thouvenin told him how he had seen it fall and feared it had broken its neck. Revealed that he himself had been unable to go to fetch wine at one point because all his horses had been taken by his creditors.

Said that Nicolas Thoussaint already had very poor sight before marriage, and it had declined further. As for Gerardin Marchal, said he had indeed become deranged, telling of occasion when he had rushed out of village; accused and Demenge Pierson caught him and brought him back, while he said he saw 3 men in black with many riksdallers - took him an hour to recover his senses.

Agreed that he had visited sick horse of maire Bouxard at Avricourt, but had been taken there under false pretences, after he was told that there might be a suitable horse for him to buy - had rejected others as too dear.

In general was able to discuss most alleged incidents and show that they could be seen very differently. Denied various claims, including those of being called witch.

25 September 1614; confrontations

Demenge de Nohegny added to deposition story that 4 years before he had been taking some oats to Badonviller for curé; Claude asked if money was to be for him, saying the curé owed him over 30 francs, and when told he knew nothing about this wished he might have the oats 'dans le ventre' and break his neck before returning. Cart overturned on way, and curé (who was riding on it) broke thigh, so that he was still very lame.

Claimed that Bernard Faltin had been caught by foresters stealing firewood - he denied this. Said he had heard that Nicolas Bouxard's foal had already fallen in a ditch before he saw it, and that he had difficulty getting it home. Otherwise no reproaches, and firm denials of all charges.

29 September 1614; procureur fiscal asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire, noting that he is a strong man and relatively young.

1 October 1614; Change de Nancy approves

4 October 1614; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews and rack - latter for about an hour - but would confess nothing.

5 October 1614; interrogation under torture

Given further spell on rack - about a quarter of an hour - then tortillons. Surgeon then asked to inspect marks on head, which accused said might have been result of blows from stones and sticks when he was a child guarding animals. Continued to deny everything, and was finally sent back to prison.

7 October 1614; procureur fiscal asks that he be held in prison while further witnesses are sought. Also asks for report from surgeon on his condition at end of torture.

10 October 1614; further depositions

(26) Aulbry Didier Zabillon, 53

Reputation 7 years. At that time asked him for some grain in payment for guarding animals; he was angry and said he had none. Same day witness found his horse dead in the fields, and suspected this was Claude's doing. Also suspected him of making horse ill with swollen neck after dispute over tenure of some fields, but this time it recovered.

(27) Pierson André, de Domjevin, 34

Long reputation. Previous year had agreed to sell him a horse on credit, which he took, but then heard he was to be arrested as a witch, so he went and took it back from fields. A week later took it to fair at Marsal to sell it, but it went lame on way and had to be sold in that state. Had not suspected Claude over this.

(28) Jennon femme Demenge de Vardenay, de Repas, 30

Reputation 6 years. Had been in his service 5 years before, and told of finding great black dog by house which frightened her. Others said it had been his master, and when she had quarrel with his wife she told her that her husband was reputed a witch. Mistress beat her, but Claude spoke to her in friendly fashion when he heard, warning her not to talk in that way. She then asked to be released from service, and only had 2 francs for 9 months' service.

(29) Nicolas Ory, de Reillon, 36

Reputation 2 years. Occasion previous year when they were carting wine, and although Claude had been in front he came up for behind them and frightened their horses, which caused witness to call him 'petit sorcier'.

(30) Nicolas Loratte, 60

Had only been at Autrepierre 6 months, and within fortnight of arrival heard of reputation. Was warned against Claude, although he seemed a good man from his speech and manner. Then lost a heifer; originally had no suspicion, but then heard that Claude had wanted lease of moictresse witness held, and had spoken ill of him. Later was asked to lend him a horse to cart some wood, which he refused; horse then developed enormous swelling on neck, which was now nearly cured after use of various remedies. Suspected he might have caused this.

(31) Vaultrin Jean Mariatte, de la Chazelle, 40

Reputation 2 years.

(32) Margueritte femme Demenge Petit Jean, d'Amenoncourt, 25

Reputation less than a year. Previous summer had offered to fetch wine for them from Allemaigne, but husband said he had already commissioned another. Husband went on trip himself, and was surprised by an 'air' so that he fell under cart. Was not hurt, but on way home became troubled in his mind. On return made three 'neufiennes' at Vergaville, and another at St Ydoulx, and finally recovered. On way to St Ydoulx they passed Claude cutting wood, and husband told her he feared him; did not know if he had been cause, but did not suspect him herself. Had been told he had made threatening remarks before husband went to fetch wine.

(33) Demenge Petit Jean, d'Amenoncourt, 33

Reputation 5 years. Told of his accident as reported by wife, but said that although several had tried to persuade him that Claude was the cause, he did not suspect him.

(34) Claude Jean Clerc, 33

Reputation 7 years, but no personal suspicion. When he was under arrest heard him say that he could have avoided this if he had given 2 or 3 écus, but he wanted to show truth about himself.

(35) Demenge Bageat, 33

Reputation 11 years, and similar remarks made when under arrest.

(36) Gerardin Marchal, 33

Reputation 7 years. Same story as wife had told about illness after eating cherries.

(14 October 1614)

(37) Demenge de Nomeny, de Blamont, 40

Reputation 7 years.

(38) Jehenne femme Jean de Bourdeney le viel, de Blamont, 57

Earlier that year had overheard remark he made 'que sy l'on en prenoit qu'on ouyroit ou verrooit on merveille'. Had told Demenge Petit Jean's wife about this when she heard of husband's illness.

13 October 1614; substitut for procureur fiscal asks for interrogation and confrontations on new evidence.

15 October 1614; the surgeon René le Cerf made brief report on state of accused after torture, suggesting that he could stand and had suffered no serious injury.

15 October 1614; interrogation and confrontations

Said he knew Aulbry Didier Zabillon had lost a horse, but it was blind, and fell into a deep pit. On Jennon femme Demenge de Vardenay, said she had been dismissed because she beat his wife and another servant; she had 'une des plus mauvaise teste qu'on scauroit estimer'. As for death of heifer of Nicolas Loratte, this happened soon after arrival, and thought he had brought illness with him, since nearly all animals at Frémonville had died, as was generally known. Otherwise denied all charges or gave reasonable explanations.

At confrontations made no reproaches, but continued to deny.

16 October 1614; procureur fiscal suggests that original torture was not severe enough to count as extraordinaire, and asks for it to be repeated.

24 October 1614; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire

29 October 1614; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews and rack for another hour; would still confess nothing.

31 October 1614; procureur fiscal recommends that he be renvoyé

3 November 1614; formal sentence that he be renvoyé from Blamont court

Documents in B 3358 (no 3) show that he was tried again in 1621; no records of depositions or interrogations present. On 11 July the procureur fiscal stated that he had been tortured, but had continued to deny; wanted either renewed torture or banishment. On 16 July Change de Nancy asked for 2 surgeon to inspect the 3 scars on his head to see if they were diabolical marks; this was done same day, but they said the marks did not appear diabolical, since they were sensitive to the touch. The procureur fiscal repeated request for banishment, but on 21 July 1621 the court at Blamont ordered that he be renvoyé.