

B 8678 no 3; witch 170, Demenge Milan, de Remomeix

1 August 1596; confronted with Laurence femme Colas Viney, who claimed to have seen him at sabat 15 years earlier, and again some 6 or 7 years before.

9 August 1596; informations préparatoires

(1) Claudon Demenge Jean Perry, 45

Said he had first suspected him of witchcraft some 16 years earlier. Had been dispute over wall between their neighbouring houses, and he met him by stones at le Faing, when Demenge was returning homewards and witness was going to St Dié. Quarrelled again, then he saw him well off on the road - only to meet him at St Dié, so he told him the devil must have brought him there so quickly. Was so startled he became ill. Soon after won lawsuit, and had to constrain him to pay - was told he would repent, and calf died same evening. Various other disputes had followed; every time was told he would repent, then lost animal of one kind or another. Total value over 50 écus, and suspected he was cause. Long reputation.

(2) Valentin Thiehay, 60

10 years earlier deposed against Demenge in lawsuit, and same day lost a fine cow, as did late Colas Vincent who had also deposed. They suspected him; long reputation, and mother already thought to be witch and called such. If he was a witch, thought he had caused losses to value of over 1,000 francs.

(3) Pierre Grosmaire, 50

A year earlier Demenge had asked witness and his wife to attend betrothal ceremony of one of his daughters; he had excused himself because he had to go to St Marie, but said his wife would go. In fact she did not, and when Demenge came to invite them to the marriage proper he said to wife 'qu'elle l'avoit bien tost eu payé de la peine qu'il avoit prin a la marier et que ilz seroient bien tost a recommencer'. Same day, when she had been happily working and singing, as servants and neighbours could testify, was suddenly taken ill, throwing herself across tables and benches, saying she had something in her body. Died 9 weeks later, having always suspected him of being cause, as did witness; long reputation, mother suspected.

(4) Jacquey Mandray, 50

Previous year various inhabitants of Remomeix were ordered by chapter to 'vuider le bled du molin' on their fields, and was dispute between him and accused over who was responsible for one field. Sonrier decided against Demenge, who was furious, telling witness 'qu'il luy feroit bien de l'autre mesnage' - he took witnesses of this threat. Immediately lost a bullock, then he, his son-in-law, and all children became ill, remaining so for more than 6 months. Illness was unknown, and they were hardly visited by anyone else; cost then at least 50 écus. As he recovered said in public that he thought Demenge had been cause; latter then came with officer to ask if he would make reparation, and if he had seen him 'en genoxerie et au sabat'. Replied that he had not, but that he would stand by his accusation, at which Demenge took no further action.

10 years earlier was taking cartload of grain to town, when outside Demenge's house a mare would go no further; finally had to put her behind cart and make other horses pull her past. Became ill on return home, died a week later. Had heard late Colas Vincent accuse Demenge in public of making an ox lame after he had been seen near it, also claiming that a fine cow died as if rabid after he had deposed on behalf of Claudon Demenge Jean Perry against him. Long reputation, mother also suspected.

(5) Jean Fleurat, 50

2 years before, on return from market at St Dié, Demenge had given his wife 5 pears; immediately became very ill, as if rabid, and had to have her tied down. Said constantly that Demenge had given her the sickness with the pears and 2 eggs he had sent her; Demenge came with doyen to complain and ask for reparation. Witness said that if he were as big as the belltower he would still not make reparation, and wife called him witch, accusing him of making her ill. He replied 'qu'il n'y avoit point de raison a elle', and took no further action. She was still ill, and believed he was cause. Long reputation.

(6) Jacques des Cluses, 50

Had heard rumours for several years that he was feared, but had seen no harm in him.

(10 August 1596)

(7) Colas Perry, 45

Had quarrel with Demenge 3 or 4 years earlier; had not noticed if he made any threats, but immediately lost a fine horse. Suspected this had been his witchcraft; long reputation, mother already thought to be witch.

(8) Claudatte fille feu Jean Demenge Perry, 22

Had been present when threats were made to wife of Pierre Grosmaire, who died 3 or 4 weeks later.

(9) Jean Simon de la Vauvrelle, maire de St Marguerite, 37

6 years earlier his late father Jean Simon (also maire) sold at auction the goods of Demenge's father, on orders of Chapter, to whom they fell by mortmain. His mother threatened him, saying he would repent, and immediately after he fell ill. Died 10 weeks later, during which time Demenge was often in his room for no good reason, until told by mother of witness to keep away. His mother, on the other hand, was sent for to see if she could bring some remedy. Until death father maintained he had been bewitched because of the auction.

(10) Colas Grosmaire, 30

Had given evidence for Claudon Demenge Jean Perry against accused 6 years earlier, then lost cow, bullock, and other animals. Suspected he had caused this, and

losses incurred by several other witnesses - long reputation. Had heard Pierre Grosmaire's wife complain during fatal illness that Demenge had bewitched her.

(11) Colas Thiehay, 36

2 years earlier had dispute over newly built house, which he had bought from Claudon Demenge Jean Perry; Demenge wanted it himself, because it lay between 2 houses he owned. Soon after was in house with family when cock crowed in night, and they heard a noise above; moved to side of the barn, inspired by grace of God, then part of main wall fell down, with huge stones falling where they had been. Neighbours claimed to have heard a noise as if a flock of sheep was on roof. 2 days later a whirlwind tore off most of roof, yet did not damage a single slate on Demenge's adjoining house. Believed this had been his doing; long reputation.

(12) Jennon veuve Colas Thiery, de Vanifosse, 50

Had strongly suspected his mother, but no suspicion against him.

(13) Jean Mourel, de Vanifosse, 25

Around previous Christmas had agreed to buy some grain from him, and expected to pay for drinks afterwards, but while he was briefly out of the room Demenge paid his own bill and left. On way home he was suddenly taken ill with stomach pains, as if he had been punched in stomach, and remained ill for 6 weeks, unable to use limbs. At end of this time Demenge came to see him, saying that he was not a witch and he did him great wrong if he suspected him. Witness replied that he did not know if he was a witch, but if he had made him ill he had done him wrong, since he had no cause. Started to recover from that moment, and was completely better within week. Had always suspected him of causing illness; long reputation.

(14) Jean Parmentier de Neufviller, jeune fils, 30

Had left Demenge's service 18 months earlier, after 2 years. Told of occasion when a horse was lost, and at midnight Demenge suddenly told them where to find it - was there, although they had searched place several times earlier.

(15) Jean Girard Ancel, 40

3 years before Demenge found his cow doing damage, and told him off severely; soon after the cow died, and he had always suspected him. Long reputation.

14 August 1596; statement from Demenge Ferry, porte enseigne, that at execution of Laurence femme Colas Viney, carried out precious day, she had discharged those she accused except for mairesse Masson and Demenge.

14 August 1596; interrogation

Said he was laboureur, native of Remomeix, aged about 50. Layte father and mother had been Demenge and Barbeline. First marriage, 28 years earlier, had been

to Laurence fille Demenge Jean Ferry of Remomeix, and had lasted 19 years. Second wife was Marguritte from St Jean d'Ormont, to whom he had been married for 9 years.

Agreed that his mother had been suspected as a witch, and said that about a year before her death he had spoken to her about this. Suggested that if she was she should tell him, and he would try to take her far away; she assured him she was a good woman.

Asked about quarrels, said only one he had was with his brother-in-law Claudon Demenge Jean Ferry, with whom he had been continually at law for past 10 years. Claimed that Pierre Grosmaire had made reparation for accusations by wife, which he had only heard about after her death. Said that Jean Fleurat's wife had already been ill for a year before he was accused of harming her. Denied all other charges.

17 August 1596; confrontations

Agreed making remarks to wife of Pierre Grosmaire, but denied being cause of her death. No reproaches to witnesses. After confrontations said 'qu'il est homme de bien et supplie pour l'honneur de dieu que l'on ayt pitié de luy, de sa femme et enfans, et qu'on le mecte hors de prison. Que pour l'egard de ce peu de bien qu'il a, il n'est pas sy ingrat qu'il n'en veuille recognoistre ses seigneurs pourveu qu'on luy saulve son honneur, de sa femme et de sesdits enfans, et que pour l'egard du faict de genoxerie il en est aussy net, que l'enfant qu'est venu au monde du jourdhuy.'

19 August 1596; procureur asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

21 August 1596; Change de Nancy recommends that she should be shown instruments and threatened with their use if he does not confess.

26 August 1596; interrogation under torture

Threatened with torture, would not confess, 'obstant qu'il apprehende merveilleusement les rigueurs de la question et que sans iceulx il n'y avoit moyen d'en tirer aultrement la verité'. Was then racked, and said master was called Navel. Would say no more, but begged not to be tortured any more, and given until next morning to consider.

27 August 1596; interrogation

Had been seduced 8 or 9 years earlier, when angry because someone had stolen wood he had already cut. Black man appeared and promised to tell him who had done this, adding that they did him much harm. Resisted this time, but a few days later yielded against 'grandes promesses'. Given black powder, which he tried out on a sow. Later killed cow of Colas Grosmaire; wanted to harm him personally, but he was doyen and he had no power over him. Had made Jacquey Mandray and his family ill with powder he threw over them as they sat outside house on a Sunday. Also confessed to other maléfices of which he was accused - cow of Claudon Demenge Jean Perry, horse of Colas Perry, wife of Pierre Grosmaire.

Had been to sabat 12 times. Saw Colatte femme Noel de Grand Ruix, a woman of Ayemont, and Valentin Thiehay of Remomeix. Gathered round fire, ate roast meat and oysillons, then master distributed powder. On other occasions made hail by using brooms in spring. On two occasions had to file before master Navel

and do hommage by kissing his knee; once with 12 present, other time 18. Sometimes went by themselves, others carried in air by their master. Said that since his temptation he had tried a hundred times to escape from power of his master, but could not do so.

Asked if he had not wanted to cause Noel Cayer and the maire Hougney harm when he had a lawsuit with them, 'dict que non et qu'il se plaindoit une fois audit mre Navel du tort qu'ilz luy faisoient demandant s'il le sçauroit ayder, a quoy il respondit que non et qu'il ne se mesloit de la Justice et que les sorciers n'ont poinct de puissance sur les officiers ny sur tous ceulx qui ont bonne fiance en Dieu.'

Confirmed confessions that afternoon. Said that he now remembered the woman of Ayemont had previously been married to George du Paire; now remarried to someone whose name he did not know. Thought he had also seen wife of Guillaume Bouchier and wife of Holbin le Jalley, but could not affirm this definitely. Could not identify others because they wore masks.

28 August 1596; interrogation

Confirmed previous confessions.

28 August 1596; procureur asks for death sentence

29 August 1596; Change de Nancy approves, subject to reiteration of confessions without any threat of torture.

30 August 1596; interrogation

Confirmed his previous confessions.

9 September 1596; yet another confirmation.

10 September 1596; execution takes place