

30 July 1592; informations préparatoires contre Mengette, femme de Colas Jean Gerard Estienne du Paire d'Avould 'tenue et reputée pour sorcière'.

(1) Colas Didier Noel du Paire d'Avould, c. 60

More than 20 years before 'luy qui dépose assistant Colin Collenel premier marit à ladite Mengette à luy aller faire l'amour et venus qu'ils furent vers le pont de Cendroville ils oyrent dire que c'estoit une sorcière. Et par ce furent d'avis de retourner Toutesfois ils parrirent oultre. Et avoit sa mere fort le bruict et reputation d'estre ja une sorcière Mais dit n'avoir veu mal d'elle.'

Wife was now seriously ill, and bedridden for 15 weeks. Believed this was Mengette's doing, and arose from disputes over children by first marriage, for which he was 'maimbour'; long reputation as witch.

(2) Didier Claude, ?, c. 40

Until last St. George had been neighbour for two years; had lost animals (calf and pig). A few days before death of latter, had dispute over a 'voye d'eau' which she or her husband were damaging. No more trouble after he had moved away. His father had believed her cause of loss of some of his animals 'mort estrangement'; long reputation.

(3) Jean Claude Jehanel du Paire, c. 40

Long reputation, even before she was married and came to Avould. Some 9 or 10 years before had a dispute with her, and called her 'genoixe' in presence of several others. She never sought reparation, and 'sy elle l'eust faict il avoit bonne envie de s'en deffendre'. Soon afterwards lost animals to a total value of 240 francs, including ox worth 50 francs, cow 40, 'torel' 20 etc. 'Pour lesquelles (pertes) il fut en hazard de deffaire son mesnage et absenter la place' - believed this to have been Mengette's doing.

(4) Parisot Bertremin du Paire, c. 56

Long reputation. Young people who guarded animals said that they (animals) went willingly into her house, but didn't know what they meant.

(5) Colas Claude Demenge Genay, c. 36

Long reputation. Towards last Chandeleur his sister-in-law Catherine, daughter of Colas Pierel, during a quarrel, called Mengette 'sorcière' - no reparation sought. Some people tried to keep animals from passing before her house; he himself had a cow which insisted on going past, whatever efforts were made to take it another way.

(6) Honn homme Colin Jean Clement du Paire, c. 40

Some two months before Mengette's husband, as moictrier of Valentin Petit Didier, had encroached on one of his fields. Took him to justice, but he asked him to forbear and he would ask his master to compensate him. Did so; shortly afterwards a pig became strangely ill, refusing all food, and he believed this was her doing. Long reputation; was afraid of her. Also reported that his late wife had quarrelled with Mengette two years before, during reaping; Mengette had been put out over an incident when food was taken out to the women, and later made disobliging remark to his wife which made her afraid. Admitted that he didn't know whether Mengette was cause of wife's subsequent death, since she died in childbed.

(7) Marguitte femme à Parisot Bertremin du Paire, c. 50

Reputation since she had come to village. Unless animals were driven rapidly past her house, they stopped in front of it, and were liable to lose their milk.

(8) Colas Colin Demenge Ganay, du Paire, c. 40

Always reputed 'sorciere et mauvaise femme'. Long before Catherine, widow of Jean Claudel, during a quarrel over sharing out fruit, had called her 'genoxe', accusing her of causing her cow to lose milk - no reparation sought.

(9) Mathiotte de La Meix, ?, c. 40

Reputation as long as could remember. Had heard Poline, wife of Colas Claude Demenge Ganay, tell previous year that cows lost milk if they passed before her house. Had seen no ill in her for himself.

(10) Honn homme Nicolas Petit Didier du Paire, c. 43

Always reputed a witch. 10-12 weeks before he had been told by 'vachiere' that Mengette had passed among his herd in a meadow at Les Gouttes, remarking what fine beasts they were. Shortly afterwards a fine young cow died, and he went to see her, asking why she had been in his meadow when she had no business there; she claimed she had been looking at some of their wheat. Believed she had killed cow because she was angry with him for pressing her husband to pay debts owed to witness. Also said 'qu'apres qu'il eust chosé [disputed] avec ladite Mengette, elle disoit par la ville, que luy qui depose l'avoit bien menassé de la faire prendre Mais qu'elle veoit bien qu'il ne luy feroit rien.' Soon afterwards lost a fine mare for which he wouldn't have taken 120 francs. 3 weeks before Mengette had passed before his house leading a little dog; his own dogs rushed out and bit it, and she cursed them - soon afterwards one of them died. Believed her responsible, granted evil reputation 'et la hayne qu'elle luy portoit'.

(11) Marguitte femme à Claude Jehandel du Paire, c. 25

Always reputed a witch. Her grandfather Claude Demenge Genay had always told her to drive animals rapidly past her house without stopping. During previous Lent Mengette's husband owed money to witness's husband, and they had 27 sheaves of wheat as a pledge. Their pigs escaped at this time and did some damage, about which Mengette 'maulgrooit fort' [complained strongly]. Day after taking wheat a fine pig died suddenly during the night, and she strongly suspected Mengette.

(12) Catherine femme de Blaison Grand Colas de Clemecey, c. 34

During time of first marriage to Jean Claudel of Le Paire, the 'chambrière' who was guarding their herd was called off by Colas Colin Demenge Genay to help him with his ploughing; animals strayed and damaged crops belonging to Menette. Next day the best milker, which normally gave a full pail of milk, would give none, and continued in this state for 2 or 3 days. Witness then went to see Menette, and reproached her with being cause of this 'et qu'elle avisast d'y remedier ou aultrement qu elle s'en plaindroit et feroit visiter de la justice sadite vache, et qu'elle la feroit prendre l'appellant genoxe et sorciere . .' Despite strong denials, same evening cow protested noisily and gave milk as before; never sought reparation.

During widowhood her children, who were at St. Dié, wanted some pears. Sent servant Claude, son of Claude Brisard, to take some from a tree in which Menette claimed a share. Menette's husband came upon him and took his hat as 'gaige'; when he went to reclaim it she 'le chose bien rudement'. He became ill immediately afterwards, and although he continued to work for about 10 weeks was eventually forced to leave her service without completing his year. Died after languishing for 2 years, and had blamed Menette for his sickness.

(13) Claude Bertremin Jacquemin de la Harde d'Anould, c. 42

Menette's first husband had been his half-brother, and when their mother was a widow for second time she gave her small amount of property to him and his other full brother, preventing it being inherited by half-brother. Menette was angry, and let it be known around the town that they had done ill, and would repent. Mother and two sons were living together; soon had two cows dead, and lost other valuable beasts. 'Et y eust ung homme qu'on estimoit s'y fort bien cognoistre allentour qui leur fut visiter, qui leur declaira qu'elles estoient ensorcelées et que savoit faict une qui estoit de leur parenté lequel leur avoit enseigné de faire une recette et que la faisans la sorciere qui leur avoit donne le mal viendroit en leur logis et ne leur vouloit declarer qui c'estoit.' Didn't in fact use recette, but always believed it was Menette's witchcraft which had killed animals.

(14) Marguittte femme à Claude le Parmentier du Paire, c. 30

When she had a piglet to feed, she borrowed a 'bachot' from Michel Rabenel's wife for it to feed from. Subsequently lent it to Menette on condition that she would give it back to real owner if she wanted it. She herself then had another piglet to feed, and went and took it back, although Menette wasn't at home. Piglet died two or three days later, and her mother suggested that she should not have taken back the bachot, and told her that Menette had been to house saying she could just as well have fed piglet from a plate. Reported rumour about cows losing milk, and claimed that one of hers sometimes gave none after passing Menette's house.

(15) Claude Jehandel du Paire, c. 30

Long reputation. Explained how around previous Chandeleur he had stood guarantor for Manette's husband over purchase of resal of wheat for about 9 francs from a merchant of Saint Dié. As surety they deposited some sheaves of wheat with

him; it was these which his pigs damaged, and he believed that in anger at this Mengette had killed the best pig overnight.

(16) Claude Parmentier du Paire, c. 30

Long reputation. Story about cows, and specifically one of his own, losing milk.

(17) Mengel Claude Demenge Genay du Paire, c. 40

On occasion when his animals and those of Mengette's husband bumped into one another at fountain, Mengitte had threatened his wife that she would repent. Subsequently lost a new-born calf, which failed to stand up. Since he moved away from being her nearest neighbour 7 or 8 years before, had no similar trouble.

(18) Catherine femme à Mengel . . Genay, c. 32

After her marriage festivities her husband had become ill, as if he were going out of his mind. Consulted his parents, and they threatened Mengette that if she were the cause of his sickness she should heal him, or they would have her taken. When witness was going to collect straw for bed, as she had been advised to do, Mengette asked if she could accompany her and see the bed; after this the sickness disappeared. Also told how Mengette had borrowed 'une maix a faire pain'; her mother-in-law had sent her to recover it one Christmas Eve, and she had been threatened by both accused and her husband (Collonel) that she would repent - had serious illness afterwards. Finally story of cow losing milk after passing Mengette's house.

(19) Valentin Connis du Paire, c. 34

Mother told him how she advised Colin Collenel against marriage with Mengette, since she was reputed a witch.

(20) Collette femme à Jean Connis du Paire, c. 50

Her late brother-in-law had told her that Mangette was a witch (she had no previous suspicion of this), and that when guarding animals with her in Ban de Fraisse during youth he had seen her beat water of fountain with a white twig to make rain. Also told about occasion when they were reaping for Colin Jean Clement, and Mengette had been very angry because his wife took the food back to town before her children had arrived. Shortly afterwards the wife became sick and died.

(21) Magdalaine femme de Demenge le Fevre du Paire, c. 43

Some 8 or 9 years before her husband had a dispute with Mengette, for reason she couldn't remember. 2 or 3 days later they lost a cow, which they 'tenoient de maitre' from Colas le Maire of Saint Dié; blamed Mengette, who as long as she could remember had been reputed a witch.

(22) Jean Connis du Paire, c. 40.

Told of mother's attempt to prevent Colin Collenel marrying Menette. Later heard Menette say 'que puis que sadite mere avoit usé de tels propos elle l'en hayroit toute sa vie, et toute sa race.' Had numerous sicknesses while he was her neighbour, and was eventually forced to move house. Soon afterwards a fine sow which he had left on lease to other inhabitant of house died 'comme enragee'. Told same story as wife about brother-in-law's memories of youth; on a hot day Menette had boasted she could make rain, and had peeled a twig before beating water in fountain - hailstorm resulted.

With signatures of officials a note that 'le lieutenant de prevost n'at signé pour ne scavoir escrire'.

3 September 1592; Nicolas Remy as Procureur General de Lorraine orders interrogation and confrontation with witnesses

15 September 1592; interrogation

Said she was about 50, daughter of Richard Didier Jean Michiel of Mazeville in Ban de Fraisse, currently married to Colas Jean Gerard of Le Paire. Before marriage had lived with father, guarding animals and keeping house. First marriage had been some 20 years before, and had 3 children by first husband, 2 still alive. First marriage lasted 8 years, and she remarried a year later. Another 3 children by second husband.

Described quarrel with Catherine wife of Mengel Claude Demenge Genay previous winter after animals clashed; angry when called 'genoxe', called Catherine 'genoxe' in reply. Said of Catherine 'qu'elle luy a tousjours porté hayne, pour ce qu'elle ne disoit vray. Mais pour cela ne luy a faict aulcung deplaisir, ny àà tous aultres.'

Admitted to several disputes with wife of Colas Didier Noel, who told her she was not treating children by first marriage well - they had complained to her.

Agreed that she had disputes with Didier Claude when they were neighbours, but when asked about deaths of his animals replied 'que non, et qu'elle mesme en a bien perdu, qu'il conviendroit bien mal que tous les inconvenients qui venoient fussent par des sorciers et sorcieres.'

Explained fact that animals stopped outside house, or passed close by; was near road, and this was of stone. She often put out fresh straw in front of house, which animals preferred to walk on. Sometimes came through house towards garden at rear. Her husband was accustomed to piss against the doorpost, which the animals came to lick.

Denied incident when she supposedly complained that Colin Jean Clement's wife took 'marende' away before children could eat it - said her children were 'en ville' and had enough bread there. Asked if she had pinched the wife saying 'le grais bacon cy', said she didn't remember, but might have done.

Agreed that she had been angry with Colas Petit Didier, because he was not willing to show any patience in claiming money they owed him, but denied causing him any harm. Had not made any remark about his threat to have her taken for a witch.

Said she knew nothing about Mengel Claude Demenge Genay's domestic troubles after his marriage, but 'qu'il n'est encor guiere sage presentement'.

Agreed that she had kept animals with the late Claude Cuguin of Gerhandel some 30 years earlier, 'mesme luy at heu bailé plusieurs fois des danses, et l'eust bien voulu avoir pour sa femme'. Story about making hail was complete lie.

Denied causing harm to Connis family, although agreeing that the mother 'l'eust ainsy desbruité à tort'.

16 September 1592; confrontations

Objected immediately that (in case of first witness) rumours he reported were nothing but 'ung ouy dire, et que les ouy dire vont par ville'. In reply to Didier Claude Demenge Ganay, denied harming animals; knew he had lost a 'veillon', but this 'mourut en pauvreté parce que les poulx le mangeoient'.

Said of Jean Claude Jehandel that he beat his mother and his wife, and that latter had once told her that he had tried to strangle her; he was 'ung faussaire'.

In reply to Colas Claude Demenge Ganay, said he had made reparation for calling her a witch; if he had not, her husband would have taken him before 'l'officier'.

Eventually admitted that wife of Mengel Claude Demenge Genay had called her witch, but he agreed that they had made reparation 'amyablement'.

Agreed that she had retained hatred against the Connis, but denied story about rainmaking vigorously - pointed out that Claude Cuguin would not have wanted to have her for his 'baiselle' if he had thought her a witch.

In respect of death of Colin Jean Clement's wife, she said 'que luy mesme est bien joyeux pour vivre avec autres gens, que quant à sa femme c'estoit bien de ses amyes laquelle elle crioit lors qu'elle mourut.'

Asked about origins of her reputation, replied 'que le bruict leur fut donne mal à propos En ce qu'ung jour sa mere allant querir du feu chez ung de leur voisin, la ou il y avoit ung nommé (blank) qui estoit dans ung bain ayans mal en ung jambe, et ne pouvant estre gueri il feit aller au devin lequel devin dict Que ce pourroit avoir faict quelcune de ses voisines, sur ce ladite bruict fut donné à sadite mere parce qu'elle avoit esté querir du feu Encore qu'elle n'en eust jamais esté suspicionnée.'

(17 September) Continued denials, although admitting quarrels etc. Agreed that she had been angry with mother of Claude Bertremin Jacquemin over settlement of property, but had done her no harm. As for loss of animals, she herself had lost two one winter, and 'dieu permet bien telle fortune'.

20 September 1592; Nicolas Remy asks for torture

26 September 1592; Change de Nancy approves

9 October 1592; interrogation under torture

Brought for torture, by 'vil personne' of St. Dié (Colas Chertemps) and Mre Jean, executioner of duchy. Before torture, exhorted 'de nous dire et declairer verité, autrement que luy ferions sentir la rigueur de justice affin de l'y induyre Et que cela luy pourroit causer une perclusion de membre pour estre miserable toute sa vie Oultre que surcellans la verité elle seroit damnée avec les malheureux'.

Continued to deny, and was then racked. Torture stopped to give her a drink, and she begged to be released; when racked more strongly started to cry out 'alarme, alarme, alarme, bon prince de Lorraine, je meurs, mon dieu mon Createur pitié misericorde'. Released then racked afresh, less strongly, said 'Vray Jhesus on luy faisoit grand tort Criants alarme alarme y at il plus de pitié au monde et qui nourriroit ses enfans'.

When nothing resulted from racking, apart from agreement to pinching episode, was eventually given 'corderelz', but "a faict de la morte" and would say nothing. Finally sent back to prisons until 3 p.m.

Shorter session of torture on resumption produced no more results - sounds as if she either fainted or was semi-conscious, although judges recorded it as if it were deliberate, and showed she didn't feel torture as she should.

(10 October 1592) Brought up at 7 a.m., and again racked without result. The judges suggested that the devil was protecting her, and that she wasn't feeling torture; she would only say that she was a good Christian, and had harmed no-one.

12 October 1592; Nicolas Remy orders that she should be interrogated again under threat of torture, since experience shows that witches often denied under torture, only to confess subsequently. If she remained unwilling to confess, and no new indices appeared, she should be renvoyée, with stern warnings to give no further cause for scandal or suspicion.

13 October 1592; Change de Nancy approves

23 October 1592; judges questioned her again, even having local executioner pretend to prepare her for more torture, but in vain, and she was released.