

Witch 172, Demenge Martin 1

B 8680 no 2; witch 172, Demenge Martin, du Paire

Accused by Jehenne femme Demenge le Maire, of la Chapelle. Confronted with her on 5 December 1596, when she maintained accusation.

9 December 1596; informations préparatoires

(1) Gerard Bertrand, de Moyenmoutier, 40

Reputation only.

(2) Marguittre femme du précédent, 40

6 years earlier had heard from some in val de Senones that they had found some people dancing as if at sabat, and he was among them.

(3) Marguittre femme Claudon le Musnier, de Moyenmoutier, 30

Had heard story that he had been courting girl at Vieux Moulin, and when he was refused stepped on her foot when dancing, after which she died.

(4) Jehan Pieron, du Paire, 30

Reputation since execution of his mother.

(5) Nicolas Jean Martin, 60

5 years before had heard him quarrelling with his brother over inheritance, and latter said to him 'ne dire mot tu es sur le rouge papier'.

(6) Jean le Maire, 42

In May that year was discussing crops with accused on way back from Moyenmoutier, and he said that the fogs they had been having for 2 weeks had caused the loss of the flowers of both grain and trees. Seemed as if he knew something about it - long reputation.

(7) Demenge Malfort, 40

Thought that if he was witch as reputed he might have caused death of small child in cradle 18 months earlier; had been angry because witness sold field he wanted to buy without telling him.

(8) Babon femme Idoult le Chouxe, 30

8 years earlier had told her 'qu'il scavoit des tours que les autres ne scavoient pas'; reputed witch since that time.

(9) Jennon femme Claudon Jacquel, 28

First husband Colas Endreu had died 5 years earlier, and suspected that if he was witch he had caused this. Day before illness she had heard him say 'qu'il le tenoit à sa manche d'un costé, et de l'autre le prevot de St Dié', then husband died in a week. Reputation 6 years.

(10) Epuron Jany, 40

Same story as in previous deposition about remarks and death of Colas Endreu. Reputation 5 years.

(11) Jennon femme Guerard Thomas, de St Prayel, 30

18 months earlier husband had great quarrel with accused outside mill at Moyenmoutier, and some time later her baby, aged 5 weeks, was found dead in cradle for no apparent reason. Suspected if he was witch as reputed for 8 years he might have caused this, in view of threats he had made.

(12) Guerard Thomas de St Prayel, 40

Same story; Demenge had said 'qu'il luy feroit menger des larmes de ses yeulx'; reputation 7 or 8 years.

(13) Marguitte femme Mongeon Charpentier, 28

Father had died 6 years earlier, and suspected accused was cause of his death, after quarrels over debt of a teston and threats. Long reputation.

(14) Jean Jacquat de Monsey, 50

8 years earlier accused had been in his service, and he told him off for driving ox too hard when ploughing; another of his oxen died within an hour, over which he suspected him.

10 December 1596; interrogation

Said that he was about 30, son of late Idoult Demenge Martin of le Paire and his wife Dedie, executed as a witch 7 or 8 years earlier. Had been married about 5 years. Denied that he was a witch.

(11 December 1596) Under further questioning, continued to deny all charges. Did agree he had quarrelled with Guerard Thomas, but denied threatening him.

11 December 1596; confrontations

No reproaches, but no admissions either.

13 December 1596; procureur asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

14 December 1596; Change de Nancy approves presentation to the torture only, with threats it may be used.

31 December 1596; additional witnesses

(15) Michiel Blaise de la Fontenelle, 30

7 years earlier his cousin George jeune fils died, a week after threats at village feast, and drinking glass of wine accused gave him. In view of reputation (9 years) and threats, suspected him.

(16) Nicolas Mourice de la Fontenelle, 28

Briefer version of same story; victim was his brother.

(17) Jean de la Houtte de Laistre, 35

Same story again.

(18) Estienne Benay du Vieux Moulin, 50

Wife had died 7 years earlier, suspecting that if he was witch as reputed he was cause; he had previously wanted to marry her, and stepped on her foot, after which big toe became all swollen and she died in a week.

(19) Demenge Parmentier du Vieux Moulin, 50

Same story; said that she had maintained to death that Demenge was cause.

Confronted with new witnesses same day, made no objections, but continued to deny.

31 December 1596; in view of new evidence, procureur repeats request for torture

4 January 1597; Change de Nancy approves

8 January 1597; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but started to confess when racked. Seduced 10 years earlier, when still living at home; cursed God while guarding animals, which gave him a lot of trouble. Next day man in black approached him, promising that if he would serve him he would not have such trouble, but he refused. Appeared again next day, suggesting that they might go to the war together, and he said he would think about it overnight. Following day came with arquebus and sword, offering him 50 francs if he would serve him, and he finally agreed. Then made him

renounce God, and gave him leather purse, saying his name was Persin; money proved to be horse dung.

A week later gave him yellow powder. Did not use this until 2 years later, when Martin Jean Apuril owed his father some money, and he was having difficulty collecting it. Persin appeared and suggested he use the power to kill him; he objected that he did not know how, to which Persin replied that he need only give his consent and he would act for him. Transformed himself into a fly and jumped on table to put powder in soup, after which Martin sickened and died in a week.

5 years before had quarrel with Colas Jean Endreu over repayment of money he had advanced to buy some grain; at Persin's suggestion he put some powder in his soup, and he died in 6 days.

2 years before was on way to betrothal of brother Idoult when Demenge Malfort made offensive remarks about marrying a rich bride. Persin wanted him to kill Demenge, but he refused, finally giving consent to his killing child, which he did by overturning cradle so that it suffocated.

18 months earlier Guerard Thomas called him son of a witch; Persin again suggested he kill him or his child, and he agreed to latter. Persin then stifled child in cot, and told him they had not made sign of cross when putting it to sleep. Asked about power of sign of cross, said it made people secure against devil and witches if they used it night and morning.

Also admitted killing Claudatte femme Estienne Benay, because she had refused to marry him - stood on toe while dancing. Had agreed that Persin should kill his brother Idoult, so that he did not have to pay him his share of inheritance - had died in a week as if rabid.

Killed George Mourize of la Fontenelle with powder in glass of wine after quarrel.

Had been to sabat 9 times. On first occasion were about 30 people there, dancing and feasting, with 3 musicians - very like a wedding, but no salt, tablecloths, or napkins. Only person he recognized was Jehenne femme Demenge le Maire. On another occasion more than 50 present, and saw Mathieu Claude of la Bourgonce; made hail and destroyed more than half the grain in ban d'Etival, as well as around le Mesnil in val de Senones (this was 6 years earlier). After beating water to make cloud, were all carried up in the air to direct it. Said that ringing of bells only gave protection when it was begun before they had decided which areas to damage.

Others he had seen were his brother Claudel, already executed, Jean le Maire and Nicolas Jean Martin of le Paire, and 3 others already executed - Catherine Willaume, Blason Charpentier, Mongeatte veuve Jacquel de St Blaise. On another occasion saw Marion femme Demenge Jean Nicolle of Moyenmoutier. Saw most of those he had named at sabat around harvest in 1595, when they began planning to destroy all crops left in fields and the trees, but were foiled by ringing of bells at Senones.

(9 January 1597) Confirmed previous confessions. Said that his master had been in his throat, and prevented him feeling any pain until he was given holy water to drink. At this point he left room like smoke through broken window (which he pointed out).

Said that at time of last harvest Persin had suggested he should kill his own wife, and he refused saying he would kill himself. Went out with knife intending to do this, but Persin prevented him, then neighbours came up

Gave further confirmation of confessions later that day.

10 January 1597; procureur asks for death sentence

11 January 1597; Change de Nancy approves, subject to final reiteration of confessions

18 January 1597; repeated admissions

20 January 1597; trial read to bourgeois of ban

4 February 1597; execution carried out