

B 8691 no 16; witch 227, Catherine veuve Jean Demenge, d'Anozel

10 June 1603; witnesses heard 'contre une femme mendiane et vagabonde nommée Catherine veuve de feu Jean Demenge d'Anozel ou ilz souloient resider icelle soubconnée et accusée pour sorciere et de ceste occasion expulsée et chassée de ce lieu ou elle mendioit sont quelques deux ans si que si estant retrouvée il auroit requis prisne de corps contre elle partant detenue en prisons criminelles de ce lieu (St Dié).

(1) Chrsitophe de Forges, tabellion et procureur, 33

Some 5 years before, in August or September, had been sitting outside house after dinner on Sunday evening when they saw some beggar-women approaching, Catherine among them. He told wife not to give to her, since she had been begging at house recently, and took child indoors himself before she arrived. When she asked if there was any soup, his wife rudely replied that there was not, and she should go away. Soon afterwards her face began to hurt, as if she had toothache, and that evening a large cat appered in house and proved difficult to chase away. Doctors and surgeons could do nothing to ease wife's pain; he reckoned it was witchcraft, and thought of the refusal of alms and her reputation, so told his wife to seek her out and see if she could help. She suggested that she should go to bed and make herself sweat, but this did no good. Witness became more angry, and one day called Catherine into the house, took a stick, and telling her she was a witch he threatened to beat her and have her burned. She told him not to do so, saying his wife would recover. After this she did improve, but still not wholly cured, so when he saw Catherine passing he looked out of 'guichet' and threatened her again with stick. After this his wife recovered, although she still felt pain when weather changed.

(2) Valentin Claudon Holbin, de Mazelay, 46

Had heard Adam Bessat and his wife talk of Catherine as a witch; his late wife had also suggested that if she was one she had caused loss of many of their animals.

(3) Didier Voignier dit Gros Didier, de Mazelay, 60

His late wife had told him that when she had been outside the church begging with the other poor Catherine had struck her on the shoulder; this hurt her, then back became painful, and she said that if Catherine was witch as reputed she was responsible - died of her illness.

(4) Adam Bessat, de Mazelay, 33

A year before the son of the accused, in whose house she often lived, owed him money; had to take caution to make him pay, at which he was angry and told witness he would repent. Then lost a fine calf, over which he suspected her. She had earlier reproached his wife because her mother had disputed with her without

good reason, and after this she looked threatening whenever he met her, so in view of his doubts he told his children to keep out of her way. One day, however, they left house just after she passed, and she went out of her way to go near them; son aged 6 became ill 2 or 3 days later 'frenetic et comme hors de son esprit et entendement'. Ill from St Remy to Chandeleur, then died just after accused had returned from begging. If she was witch as accused believed she had been cause.

(5) Collatte, femme du precedent, 26

Repeated husband's story; added that her mother had often kept company with accused.

(6) Holbin Colas Holbin, de Mazelay, 40

4 years earlier had quarrelled with son of accused, then when she came to house refused her alms, saying 'que son fils avoit bon moyen de la nourrir'. She was angry, and as far as he knew never came again; afterwards lost cow and calf, which he suspected might have been her doing if she was witch as reputed.

(7) Remy Valdeliepvre, 35

5 years earlier his uncle's daughter aged 20 refused her a plate of millet when she came begging; was told she would repent, and 2 weeks later her limbs became weak. Languished for 3 years, then became very swollen 2 weeks before death - always said that Catherine had bewitched her.

(8) Jennon femme Chrestien Claude Michel, de Mazelay, 40

General reputation; had lost many animals but did not know cause.

(9) Marguitte femme Anthoine Colas Colin, de Mazelay, 60

Nothing to depose against her, although she had lived with her son, where she often came to stay.

(10) Mathieu fils Chrestien Claudon Michel, de Mazelay, 20

Had heard of accusations by 3 or 4 convicted witches, and had always feared her.

(11 June 1603)

(11) Anne femme honn homme Pierson Ferry, tabellion et controlleur à St Dié

Said that 3 or 4 years earlier she had seen accused in church at St Dié, 'ayant en main une fusée de fillet qu'elle portoit a contremont avec deux oeuf' - said when she asked 'qu'elle la vouloit offrir a Sainct Maur a intention d'ung enfant malade'. Some time later asked for alms at door of witness 'et d'autant qu'elle conclut

mauvaise opinion d'elle depuis qu'elle luy eust veue faire la superstition cy dessus, elle luy refusa l'aumosne et luy dit qu'elle la craindoit plus qu'elle ne l'aimait et qu'elle s'en aille.' Some time later one of their sons, placed 'en pension' with schoolmaster at St Dié, developed abscesses on left side, two of which had to be lanced on orders of the doctor, the Sr Fournier, producing enormous quantities of stinking matter. This didn't cure him; the infection continued for 2 years so that he was virtually deformed and they twice consulted other persons who were unable to help, so they suspected it was witchcraft. This suspicion was increased when they heard from Christophe des Forges that he had believed she had caused his wife's illness, then cured her in a day. When she met Catherine in the church she gave her alms and asked her to come and see their child. She touched him, and repeated this several times while performing 'quarantaine' on his behalf; said 'que c'estoit un gros mal que dieu le benie'. Had already employed two others to make quarantaines without effect, but now a scab formed over the place, and child finally recovered. While she was touching him asked 's'il luy en scauroit bon grez de sa guerison et s'il prioit dieu pour elle'. Son of accused had made pilgrimage to St Curien in addition. Suspected she had given the illness and then cured it.

(12) Marguite femme Christophe de Forges, 29

Repeated husband's deposition; told how neighbours had advised her to give promises and presents to Catherine to encourage her to cure her, to which she replied 'avec parolles de mescontentement qu'elle ne se mesloit de mediciner les personnes'. Told her to go to bed and sweat, then to go on pilgrimage to St Lienard. She was too unwell to do latter; then husband had chased Catherine out of house threatening to beat her, after which she started to recover.

(13) Mengeon Tohey, de St Dié, 65

Some 2 years earlier, as Maitre des Pauvres, was charged with expelling her from St Dié because she was reputed a witch.

(27 June 1603)

(14) Holbin Valdeliepvre, de Mazelay, 70

Had known accused for more than 20 years; her sister had married his brother. She and her sister had kept company with 2 other women who were much suspected; one was executed as a witch, the other died in prison.

After this the papers of the case against Jennon veuve N le Regnard of Robache (executed 5 July 1602) were consulted. Among those she accused was 'une nommée Mengeotte errante et vacabonde'; the maire claimed that Jennon had got name wrong, and that this accusation was reason why Catherine had been expelled from St Dié.

26 June 1603; interrogation

Thought she was about 50, but was not sure; widow of Jean Demenge of Anozel, to whom she had been married about 25 years, and who had died 7 years earlier. She and husband had been beggars for last 16 years. Native of le Chenal de Saulcy, like her father; mother was from Anould; had lived with husband at Anozel until they left to beg their living.

Claimed she had been expelled from St Dié because she was neither native nor inhabitant. Said she had not been accused of being a witch, except by a woman convicted at la Rochatte; had wanted to be confronted with her, but was not allowed this when chased out. Admitted being called to house of Christophe des Forges to see sick wife, and being accused and chased by him, but not to giving advice. Agreed to having taken eggs into church as described; said it was on behalf of the child of her son living at la Vouivre 'auquel le fondement sortoit'. Judges said 'qu'il ne convenoit pour tel mal recourir aux saintz', to which she replied 'qu'elle n'y pensoit aucun mal et ne se souvient qu'elle eust des oeufs'.

Agreed to general outline of sickness of controlleur's child, and to having touched him and undertaken 'quarantaine', as well as arranging pilgrimage by son. Controlleur's wife had asked her to do this on basis that it needed 3 'quarantaines', and only 2 had been made so far, offering to pay her well. If he had been cured it was by the grace of God, not hers. Denied that she had touched the child with both hands when he was naked, although agreed to touching him in more normal fashion.

27 June 1603; confrontations

No significant additions - insisted that all she had done for controlleur's child was what his wife had asked. No reproaches to witnesses.

2 July 1603; Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire. Change de Nancy approves, with moderation suitable to her age.

31 July 1603; interrogation under torture

Resisted thumbscrews and 3 sessions on rack, said to have lasted a good hour. When on rack said that they were going to kill her, and as a good Christian she wanted to receive confession and communion. Maintained denials throughout, including in second interrogation after dinner.

5 August 1603; substitut for PG asks that she be renvoyée. Change de Nancy concurs.

7 August 1603; released from prison