

Witch 067, Demenge Demongeot 1

B 3804 no 2; Witch 067, Demenge Demongeot, of Dompierre

6 November 1619; denunciations at execution by Bastienne veuve Jean Brihey d'Aydoille.

After 'variations et parolles hors de propos a son accoustumé', made series of accusations. Mongeon le musnier, Thomasse femme Jean Poirot (already imprisoned before), Nicolas Adam, a woman of Rompchamps, bailliage d'Espinal, who was called le Poil, and whose father had already been executed at Epinal. Also claimed that daughter and daughter-in-law, Georgatte and Marie, were witches.

Statement that when Mengeon was told to be present at execution, he absented himself.

10 February 1620; order by substitut of procureur general des Vosges that in view of common fame of Demenge Demengeot, and accusations by Bastienne and Colas Adam, he should be confronted with latter, while witnesses are sought. If Adam maintains charge, the accused should be kept under guard.

11 February; confrontation takes place, and Adam maintains charges, despite firm denial by Demengeon.

19 February; Adam repeats accusations against Demengeon and Thomasse at stake.

11 February; information par George Milot, Prévôt de Bruyères

(1) Demenge Jacot Cole de Dompierre, 60

2 years before last September, Demenge had been to see him when he was threshing in barn; asked 'quel mesnage faisoit Claudon Haiatte son gendre et deffunte Nicole sa fille. Auquel il fit response que tout leur succederoit bien s'ils avoient quelque chose a mesnager, mais qu'ils estoient pauvres, et que de ce subject il feroit bien de les aider et leur fournir le mariage qu'il leur avoit promis. Chose qui le mit en haut colere, et en jurant, tempestant, et touchant de ses mains l'une contre l'autre, protesta a plusieurs fois qu'il auroit sadite fille en main, ou passeroit par ses mains, Allegant qu'elle avoit bien eu sondit mariage, pour ce que depuis la mort de sa premiere femme sa mere, elle et une sienne soeur avoient vuide ses coffres, et pris tout plain de vaisselle et autre chose.' Shortly afterwards she fell ill with a languishing malady, which lasted until next Whitsun. During veilles her father insisted on her sitting next to him at 2 or 3 meals, and she then recovered. But at following harvest he was furious about theft of some sheaves of corn, and someone told him his son-in-law had stolen them. Daughter's sickness recommenced, and she died 10 months later. Witness believed him responsible, on account of longstanding reputation, accusations by others, and threats he had heard.

(2) Claudate femme de Claudon Chabay de Dompierre, c. 30

Two years earlier at time of harvesting oats, Demenge had asked her about his daughter, wife of her cousin Claudon Haiatte. She said that she didn't know, because she didn't speak to her often, 'y adioustant neantmoins qu'elle pouvoit estre mal contente de ce qu'il ne lui avoit pas donné son mariage et qu'il s'estoit marié a une autre femme, Ce qui le mit en colere et fit jurer la mort, la teste Nre Seigneur qu'elle s'en repentiroit, l'auroit, et passeroit par ses mains.' Illness followed, until Whitsun, when she seemed cured, and 'publioit qu'elle avoit laissé le mal chez sondit pere au molin, ou elle avoit fait bonne chere et beaucoup beu'. Then loss of corn, and he repeated threats before witness, calling daughter 'putain'. Refused to visit her during illness, although son-in-law asked him twice to do so. In view of 'tant de menaces et animosité', and long reputation, believed him to be cause of her death; on previous day Claudon Haiatte had confessed to having similar suspicions.

(3) Jean la Gaulde de Dompierre, 33

Some 8 or 9 months before Demenge had quarrelled with his son-in-law Nicolas Petit Homme 'en l'appellant larron et meschant homme, disant aussy qu'il luy deroboit tout, et pour revenche l'autre luy dist qu'il estoit un sorcier, qu'il avoit ja fait mourir ses trois autres filles, qu'il face encore mourir la derniere sa femme, et puis qu'il n'en auroit plus du tout.'

(4) Nicolas Pirot dudit lieu, c. 36

Repeated story of quarrel as in (3). Also claimed that when he was 12 had affliction in legs, which forced him to use crutches; father told him to go to the mill often, and after Demenge told him he would be cured he recovered. Believed this had been result of quarrel between Demenge and his father.

(5) Bastien Hanna de Dompierre, c. 26

Some days before Demenge had come and asked him and father why they were seeking to have him arrested; replied that this was untrue, and that he himself was cause of rumours, having absented himself for a night. He replied that it was his children's fault, and that his daughter had told him the sergent was coming to arrest him.

(6) Jean fils Jean Mougin de Girecourt, servant Didier Barton laboureur de Dompierre, c. 18

2 years before, Demenge had quarrelled with Nicolas Petit Homme, his son-in-law, and his daughter Jennon. This led him 'de leur dire (en haulte colere qu'il estoit) que quand il voudroit il les feroit tous mourir.'

(7) Nicolas fils Antoine Ferry de Dompierre, 20

Similar deposition to (6).

(8) Jean Lallemand de Dompierre, c. 30

About three years before his wife had given birth to a son; took some wheat to mill and asked Demenge to 'tendre le Burte' to make white flour for baby. Demenge 'repartit en le rebrouant pour le diable'; shortly afterwards baby sickened and died, and he suspected Demenge. Some 3 weeks earlier he had come to their house and reproached wife with putting about story that 100 sheaves were missing from her 'teisse de ble'; she denied saying anything about it, but at same hour one of his mares became ill and had to be destroyed.

(9) Bernard la Gaulde le jeune, c. 28

Told how he had to take Magdelaine wife of Jeandat tabellion of Sercoeur back on a cart from veilles of Fontenay on St. Laurent's Day, because she had dislocated her ankle. Later heard via mother-in-law that she suspected Demenge of causing this, since he had threatened her over alleged theft of his dog. At time of execution of Bastienne d'Aidoile, the miller's wife Claudate told him that Demenge was 'espouvanté' by the accusation against him, and had spent a night away from mill. Had also had wheat and other property removed by son-in-law and son, and since St. Martin had sold several pieces of land.

(10) Nicolas Jean Blot de Dompierre, c. 30

Some 12 years before his niece had been in service with Demenge; had subsequently sickened and died, and told witness that Demenge had given her illness because he was angry when she demanded some cloth still due to her for her service. Demenge living with son-in-law Nicolas Petit Homme at that time. Witness also said that Demenge had recently been selling land, pretending this was to pay debts to merchants.

(11) Jean Clerc de Padoux, c. 32

Told how six years before he had served Demenge at mill of Sercoeur. Latter had complained to Nicolas Chante that he was making no profit; when Chante said that there was no dearth, he offered to make the lease over to him at cost price, and this was agreed. Later wanted to back out, but was unwilling to pay compensation demanded, so surrender went through. Later he passed the mill, and next load of corn would not mill properly - made noise like 50 drums, so that horse which had brought it broke away and fled to village. Believed that Demenge might have caused this by witchcraft, of which he was already suspected by some. Since accusations against him by Bastienne he had several times lodged at Padoux, and was so frightened of arrest that he had 'tenu et fréquenté craintivement les bois'.

(12) Jacote femme de Claudon du Pore de Girecourt, c. 50

Some 10 or 12 years before her daughter had been in service with Demenge; left with an illness from which she died two years later, but didn't know cause of this misfortune.

(13) Claudon du Pore, c. 50

Told of daughter's illness. Demenge had owed her a 'couvrechef', which he had only given after father threatened to take him to court. Both witness and daughter believed him to have given her illness, in view of his bad reputation.

(14) Mongeon Antoine Toussainct de Dompierre, c. 50

Told how 6 years earlier, in house of Dominicq Nicolas tabellion, he had been pressed to sell horse to Nicolas Claude, courretier a Padoux, for 18 ecus. When he refused to do so, Demenge told him that by 'la mort de nre Seigneur', because he didn't want to sell at that price, within 6 weeks horse would not be worth 4 ecus. Duly became sick and had to be killed 'comme enragé'; believed Demenge to be cause, in view of bad reputation.

(15) Claudon Fraiart de Girecourt, c. 54

Some 5 years earlier Claudate Durant, widow of Francois Brausson, had told him that Demenge was seeking her in marriage, and asked him, as native of same village (Damay-devant-Dompierre), to tell her what he knew of Demenge and what was reputation of his 'parenté'. Told her that his uncle and two of his cousins had been hanged at Fontenoy after being arrested by officers of M. d'Haure, seigneur of Damay, and that he had left village and never returned on rumour that they had accused him of complicity. Had left one of witness's cousins claiming to be pregnant by him. Claudate said 'que s'il avoit esté d'or elle ne l'epouseroit pas et qu'il vaudroit bien mieux qu'elle s'allit noier' - but shortly afterwards she did marry him, and told him what witness had said. When he met Demenge three months later a quarrel ensued (he was returning from taking horses to drink, Demenge coming from market at Bruyeres); Demenge refused to accept plea that he had been under obligation to tell truth. Subsequently one of his horses became sick and died within a couple of days. Believed Demenge responsible - reputation 20 years before.

(16) Nicolas Rouvier de Dezviller, 50

13 or 14 years ago at next Whitsun his father had died of a strange illness, which sometimes made him 'hors de soy'. Had previously secured lease of mills at Sercoeur and Dompierre previously held by Demenge, and latter had struck him on shoulder pretending to wish him good health. When witness had later encountered Demenge, he tried to hit him with handle of a hoe, after calling him witch, but he was restrained by onlookers while Demenge fled.

(17) Toussaint Mathieu de Fontenay, c. 40.

Had heard his late father say that 25 years earlier, when levying tithe for curé of Dompierre, he had a dispute with Demenge and called him a witch, without any action being taken against him.

(18) Nicolas Bonne Aveine musnier au molin de Sainte Heleine, c. 50

Some 9 or 10 weeks earlier Demenge had come to his mill at sundown, and asked to be put up for night; he had agreed, but couldn't provide him with a bed, as only two were occupied by himself and wife, and by daughter. Demenge sat by fire and put head in hands, saying that a wicked woman had accused him of witchcraft, because he had asked her to pay money for some wheat he had sold her. Witness's wife told him he should not flee; he stayed the night, then went off to meet some of his servants.

(19) Catherine veuve de Nicolas Rouvier de Dezviller, c. 80.

Repeated story in (16), placing it 24 years earlier. Said that Demenge had wanted husband to sublet him mill of Dompierre, and had asked him to meet him again at veilles of Dompierre. In meantime he became ill, and died 2 days after Whitsun (date of veilles). Both she and her husband believed Demenge had given him his illness.

(20) Nicolas Jean Ferry de Dompierre, c. 50

Had several quarrels with Demenge; latter had been to see him after execution of Bastienne to ask if she had accused him. Witness said that she had 'Surquoy il repartit que s'il advenoit qu'aprehendé pour cas de sortilege, et luy qui parle estoit adjourné pour déposer contre luy, scavoit ce qu'il diroit, et que sa replique fust que s'il eut esté sorcier et eu pouvoir sur luy il ne seroit aujordhuy vivant, veu l'Inimitié qu'ils se sont entreportés.'

18 February 1620

(21) Magdelaine femme a George Jeandat tabellion a Sercoeur, c. 36

Told how 9 or 10 months earlier a little dog belonging to Demenge had been in their house, and they had been unable to chase it away. Speaking of witness he said 'Elle l'entretient, la carogne'. Then told of how she sprained her ankle on return with husband from Veilles of Fontenoy. After accusation by Bastienne had thought that Demenge was responsible. In response to question, said that she had not seen Demenge at Fontenoy or on road.

(22) Dieudonné femme de Demenge Drouin musnier de Serceour, c. 50

Her husband had obtained lease of mill at Sercoeur, previously held by Demenge, some 7 years earlier. Knew he had been angry, although he had covered it up. Subsequently both their 13-year-old son and their son-in-law had died suddenly, although they had no specific reason to suspect Demenge.

(23) Nicolas le Conte de Laxoncourt, 55

6 years before had leased mill of Dompierre, and Demenge had been angry, 'alleguant qu'il se fust bien passé d'ainsy courir sur son marché, qu'il n'en feroit

guerres de profit et ne demeureroit longtemps audit molin, obstant aussy qu'il l'avoit tenu quarante cinq ans continuelz.' During next 3 years he and his son had so many difficulties with mill breaking down that they eventually found it necessary to abandon it and cede lease to Demenge. Believed misfortunes to come from him, given his long reputation as a witch.

24 February 1620: interrogation

Said he was at least 80, native of Damay-devant-Dompierre. Had been married three times in all, had 5 children by 2 previous wives, of whom two were still alive. Agreed that he had heard that he had been accused by Bastienne. Claimed that Nicolas Adam had a grudge against him because he had a lawsuit with Adam's brother, and had not loaned Adam some wheat.

Asked why he had absented himself from Bastienne's execution, claimed he had not been specifically summoned, only called on to follow the 'enseigne'.

Denied killing his daughter Nicole, and claimed he had visited her at least 7 times during sickness.

Denied version of conversation in Bastien Hanna's house given by latter - had been to ask about claim that he had seen a hare, and Hanna explained that this was Nicolas Adam.

Admitted that he had absented himself for a night and a half from his mill in fear 'des rigueurs de justice et de la prison'.

Agreed that he had been selling some land, but this was simply to pay his debts, notably those to prévôt of Epinal.

Denied hearing of remarks made about him by Claudon Froiart, and said that only one of his relatives to be executed had been a cousin - didn't know why.

In connexion with death of Rouvier, said he had always heard 'qu'il s'estoit crevé beuvant en compagnie'.

Over leases of mills, claimed he had not wanted to renew that of Sercoeur anyway. As for that of Dompierre, he had warned Le Comte that he would make a loss because he was paying too much, and this had proved true.

28 February 1620; confrontations

Accused 6th witness, Jean fils Jean Mongin, of being thief and son of murderer. On testimony of Nicolas fils d'Antoine Perry, claimed he had said that they desired his death, and perhaps theirs would arrive first.

Refuting allegations of Jean Clerc, claimed that he had caused breakage himself; was angry at being sacked, and had thrown 'un paulx' into machinery.

Generally denied all other allegations, although agreed to Nicolas Bonne Aveine's account of his visit to his mill.

Sergent produced to testify that he had been properly summoned to execution of Bastienne; could only resort to saying that he had not heard properly.

4 March 1620; confrontations completed (2 witnesses only)

18 March 1620; PG des Vosges asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire, but with moderation appropriate to great age of accused.

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20 March 1620; Change de Nancy approves.

26 March 1620; interrogation under torture

Subjected to full battery of torutures; thumbscrews on hands and feet, rack, 'bastonceaux', and strappado. Apparently not given very long on each. Stubbornly denied guilt throughout.

29 March; PG des Vosges orders that he be renvoyé, subject to payment of costs.

1 April 1620; Change de Nancy approves, but orders that he should not be liable for costs.

4 April 1620; note that prisoner has been released without payment of costs.