

B 8682 no 2; witch 180, Marie Alexey femme Jean Chastellain, de Colroy

Preliminary statement (damaged) suggests that a ducal order had to be used to secure her release from château de Lusse, where she was being held by officials of Sieur de Barbay, and take her to St Dié for trial. This was on 15 April 1598, and on 16th she was questioned. Had evidently made a confession some 2 weeks earlier, but now said this had been obtained by torture, and denied everything.

18 April 1598; informations préparatoires

(1) Colin le Maire, de Colroy, 50

Could say nothing against her.

(2) Nicolas Stegel, de Colroy, 60

3 years earlier had quarrelled with her husband at Ogneviller, where they were at salines [salt workings], and 2 weeks later a horse worth 32 écus died after being ill overnight. Was not sure that she was cause, but if she was witch as reputed thought she might have caused this.

(3) Colin le Bourguignon, 35

8 years before had chased his sow out of her field, throwing a hatchet at it; he objected that she might have injured the animal, and in following quarrel called her witch (she was near neighbour). 3 weeks later passed in front of his house, and he immediately became ill, remaining so for 10 months, unable to work or get any rest, with no appetite. Wife's friends advised her that if he had quarrelled with Marie he should get bread, salt, and ashes, with 3 kinds of greens, from her house. Obtained this by a neighbour, then made soup, which made him throw up a lot of vile matter, and he was cured in 2 or 3 days; believed she had caused illness, in view of quarrel and strange form of healing. Same year during illness went out to look at fields and called her witch when he met her; she said she would seek reparation if she had a witness, but did nothing although Vincent le Crouvesier was in his field and could hear them. General reputation, even before she came to village.

(4) Blaise Jean Colas Demenge Olry, 30

General reputation only.

(5) Didielle femme Demenge Colinel, 50

Had come to Colroy from Wisembach about 14 years earlier, on marriage to Jean Chastellain, and was brought by late Demenge Mandray of Wisembach. As he arrived in village said 'que s'il n'y avoit point de sorciere ilz y en amenoient une', to which she and others remarked that they had enough already. Had been called witch without seeking reparation.

(6) Georgeatte femme Michiel Humbert, 26

3 years earlier had been in childbed, and Marie sent her daughter with pot of milk - very surprised because she had never done this before. Did not want to drink

it herself, and told husband she would not, but he might; started to do so, then thought better of it. Mixed it with water and gave it to goat which died next day, so thought there had been something in it. Only reason she could think of was that she had been too busy to help in her garden when asked. A year later was working in her house, and her daughter was playing with children of accused. 2 or 3 days later child had bad foot, which seemed to be afflicted with 'mal St Antoine', and Marie advised her to offer some candles; when this did no good neighbours advised her to make soup with 3 kinds of greens from her garden, and child recovered. Later Marie came and told her she had taken the greens, and 'qu'elle garde bien un morceau de pain, qu'elle le garde' - seems as if child had relapse, was treated again in same way, and gradually recovered (damage here).

(7) Jennon femme Demenge Gros Demenge, 30

Reputed witch since she came to village, and all soldiers lodged with her said she was such. 5 or 6 years earlier had called her witch several times, because husband of witness was frequenting her house, and when she tried to dissuade him he threatened to beat her, then did so. After this Marie came to her house asking where husband was, to which she replied by asking 's'il n'estoit pas au diable avec elle', took a branch from fire, and ran at her calling her 'faulce sorciere', saying she had been beaten on her account, and that she should leave the house. Said as she left 'qu'il luy viendroit des gros esclans, entendante des grosses affaires'. 3 or 4 weeks later passed by several times as she was washing in river, and when she went to fields later suddenly fell ill, with eyes starting from head, while she lost use of limbs. Ill for 15 weeks; advised to obtain 3 kinds of greens, which helped a little, but only finally cured by soup made with bread, salt, and ashes, after eating which made quick recovery. Believed she had been cause of this.

(8) Jennon femme Colin le Bourguignon, 60

Repeated essential of husband's deposition.

(9) Barbon femme Hanns le Musnier (no age legible)

General reputation. 3 years earlier gave customary banquet after having baby, but did not invite Marie; soon saw that baby was in pitiful state, and remained so for 12 weeks, despite pilgrimages she made. Finally advised to obtain bread, salt, and ashes from her house, and mixed these with baby's food, after which he quickly recovered. Could not be sure if this caused recovery, but if she was a witch thought she had caused illness.

(10) Catherine femme Vincent Crolbecier, 23

Not resident long; general reputation. 4 years before had found her stealing beans in her garden, and told her she was surprised to find a woman such as her doing this. She replied that it was a small thing; when witness arrived back home she told servants of quarrel, saying she feared some misfortune might result. Next day she had miscarriage, which she could not be sure had been her doing, but she had 'fantaisie' it was.

(11) Demenge Claude Jean le Maire, 40

Long reputation, and had called her witch several times himself without reparation being sought. At marriage feast the people from Wisembach, after having a lot to drink, said that if there were no witches at Colroy there was one now.

(12) Demenge Colas Humbert, 40

Long reputation only.

(13) Valentine femme Demenge de la Rolbe, 40

Long reputation. 6 years earlier had hired husband of witness to cut all her hay, but was angry when rain came. 2 weeks later he fell ill, and remained so for a month, until on hearing how others had been cured she took 3 kinds of greens from Marie's garden, and after eating these he recovered within another 2 weeks. Was not sure whether this had been cause of cure, or whether she had given illness. Around last St Jean had refused to sell her a goat - seems to have fallen ill and recovered after eating something from her garden, but damage here.

(14) Claude Menguiot, 30

General reputation only.

(15) Jean Claude Olry, 30

General reputation only.

(16) Chretienne femme Claudon des Eaues

General reputation. She had lost animals, and did not know if she was cause, but suspected her on account of evil repute.

(17) Demenge Ranguiel, 40

Reputation only.

(18) Thoussaince femme Demenge Claude Jean le Maire, 40

General reputation. Previous year had come to house complaining that one of her children had killed one of her hens, and called her children 'fils de genoxe'. Witness offered to pay for hen, but said children might well call one another such things, and she would act if she heard them doing it. Marie was not content with this, and said 'qu'elle en auroit bien sa raison, et luy en conviendroit bien'. Next day a fine bullock fell ill, and died next morning.

(19) Humbert Michiel, 40

Long reputation. Same story as wife, that they refused to go and work for her 2 years or more earlier, because they were too busy. Then sent round milk, which wife would not drink, then he thought better of it just as he was about to drink it. Death of goat day after drinking milk with water; not sure if she was cause, but suspected it.

(21 April 1598)

(20) Demenge Gros Demenge, 32

General reputation; one of soldiers lodged with her had called her witch, saying he had become ill after she gave him soup. Some 4 years earlier lost a calf, and a few days later the skin, feet, and head alone were found in a meadow behind their house. A week later a foal died after hole appeared in stomach, with intestines coming out. Could not understand how these misfortunes happened, but wife suggested they might be the doing of some witch. Went to visit woman living at Tantviller, only telling her he had lost animals, but she told him how many and of what kind. When he asked her who was responsible she would not answer at first, saying 'que cela luy estoit deffendu par son seigneur, d'aultant qu'elle l'avoit heu dit a d'aulcunes qui luy en avoient faict resproche, et que cela avoit causé de la querelle.' After he had assured her he would say nothing told him it was the woman whose meadow had been damaged by his horse; he then remembered that horse had strayed in Marie's meadow, making her angry, although she did no more than tell his wife. Therefore thought she had caused his losses.

(21) Claudon des Eaues, 50

Some 6 years earlier had gone to share out some fruits with her husband, and she tried to make division, at which he told her to leave it to those who had known how to proceed before she was at Colroy - also pushed her. She was angry and said 'qu'il verroit comme il luy en prendroit'. 2 weeks later lost 3 of his 4 fine cows, and thought she might have been cause.

? 1598; interrogation

Said she was Marie Alexy, daughter of late Alexy le Marchal of Wisembach and his wife Marguitte. Aged about 40, had lived at Colroy since marriage to Jean Chastellain 14 or 15 years earlier. 5 children by him, all living, including one born when she was imprisoned at Lusse; he also had child by previous marriage.

Had been arrested on eve of St Martin by servant of M de Barbay, aided by Hantzo Gaillard and Lienard Michiel. Taken to Lusse, where 'contrerolleur de St Dié' was present. Asked if she was pregnant, said she had conceived 2 or 3 months earlier. Was kept under arrest; spent 3 weeks in a tower, but became ill and was not sent back there.

Asked about reputation, said that this had begun with the late Demenge Mandray, who had drunk heavily at wedding feast, then allowed his sister, who was riding behind him on horse, to fall in the water. Said angrily 'que les sorcieres de Colroy avoient causé ceste cheutte, de telz propos les assistans ou parties d'iceux entendirent qu'il disoit que la deposante estoit sorciere, et que s'il n'en y avoit a Colroy ils en y avoient amené une, Ainsy entendans parler d'elle, desla en avant on a tousjours murmuré contre elle quant quelque fortune est arrivée a aucuns particuliers dudit Colroy, combien que c'est a grand tort que l'on luy impute telle chose, declarant comme l'année derniere on parloit de faire prendre des sorcieres audit village, elle ne desirant aultre chose, n'ayant que deux vaches a elle, dit qu'elle en donneroit une pour subvenir aux frais et dit telz propos ung jour a Benette femme a Colin le Maire depuis executée a Taintrux pour cas de sortilege, que sy elle fut esté telle qu'on la soubçonne elle n'eust sy librement offert telles choses et n'eut désiré telle prinse, comme elle faisoit, de peur d'estre descouverte.'

Asked if she had been accused by Beneitte, said that she heard she was. Asked Claudon Betej, maire for M de Chasteaubrehain, who said she had not been named, and not much notice was being taken of what Beneitte said. Dissatisfied with this response, went to Taintrux on day of execution, and presented herself before her after Marion femme Demenge Husson and Jennon femme Colin Gros Demenge, both of Colroy. Was priest present to confess her, and after Beneitte said she was witch like her wanted to justify herself, but he told her to go back home, which she did.

Asked about disputes, said she had quarrelled with Colin le Bourguignon (damage here, something about damage done with cart), with Jennon femme Demenge Gros Demenge, whom she had called witch, then made reparation to, and with Thoussaince femme Grand Demenge, whose children had killed 2 of her hens, and were always calling hers sons of a witch. Also quarrel with Claude des Eaues, who refused to give her pears in settlement of debt; had deposed against her at Lusse over loss of 3 cows.

Asked if she or husband had not quarrelled with Nicolas Slegel dit le Kieffre, and whether she had not caused him to lose horses, said they had never quarrelled with him or wished him ill. Carters had to expect to lose horses, and her husband had lost them to value of 1000 francs. Asked about illness of Colin le Bourguignon, said she had never heard that he called her witch, added another quarrel over sow which did damage. Had not made him ill, and had heard from his wife that he had sought healing from gypsies, and given them some property. Then realized they were cheating him, and took property back, calling them thieves; they said they would give him back the illness they had cured. Asked if she knew how he had been cured, said she had heard that he had obtained something from a garden, but this was only a rumour.

Asked about Georgette femme Michiel Humbert, said she had sent her some milk when she was in childbed, knowing her to be in need. Story that it was given to goat which died was untrue, because her husband had said in presence of Colas le Broleux that they had eaten a soup made with the milk, and given rest to a goat which did not die.

Asked about illness of child of Hanns le Musnier and his wife Barbon, said she had not quarrelled with them, and knew they had had pilgrimage made. When Hanns was guarding her at Lusse he told her illness had been fault of his wife, who was 'plus curieuse de travailler de l'esquille que de son enfant, ne luy donnoit a tetter, joinct que quant elle fut mariée se n'estoit qu'ung enfant.'

In case of Catherine femme Vincent Crouvecier, midwife had told her miscarriage occurred because she was young and had not called her in time. Knew that Demenge de la Rolbe and his wife blamed her for his illness, and called wife to tell her they did wrong to accuse her, but she denied that they had done so.

Asked whether there were any special herbs in her garden, in view of cures reported, said there were only the normal greens and herbs there.

Admitted she had confessed to being a witch at Lusse, but this had been 'par rudesse, n'ayant fait le mal qu'elle a dit, mauldissant l'heure qu'elle at esté née, disant qu'elle a dit des bourdes sur elle, que les tesmoings deposans contre elle se veulent dampner, que ce ne sont gens qui vaille, y en aians qui sont estez au divin comme Gros Demenge et aultres.'

Added that she had confessed because Demenge Ranguinel, who was guarding her at Lusse after first torture, said she would do better to lie and say she was a witch than to endure further torment which was being prepared for her. He said hangman had told him he would burn her feet to make her confess, and was preparing 'broches de fer' for her.

24 April 1598; confrontations

Had heard Gros Demenge say that Didielle femme Demenge Colinel had stolen some salt and he wanted to kill her. Nicolas Stengel had been before court at Raon, and had stolen a field from the Ranguinel children. Georgette femme Michiel Humbert had stolen some onions. Barbon femme Hanns le Musnier was reputed to be 'une ribaulde'. Had found Thoussaince femme Demenge Claude Jean le Maire stealing fruit. Claudon des Eaues had accused her of death of cows which were already dead before the quarrel to which he referred.

(25 April 1598) Said Demenge Gros Demenge had stolen a sack of oats; the wolf had eaten his foal, and he had previously suspected someone else over this.

29 April 1598; Rémy asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

30 April 1598; Change de Nancy approves

2 May 1598; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, she cried out so loudly that she could not be interrogated. Then racked, was silent for a time, then begged to be released - only to continue denials. Racked again, she started to confess. Seduced by Persin 12 years earlier, on way to Wisembach, at wood of la Gotte Mourel (this is 2 km due north of Wisembach); offered her money, which she accepted because they were heavily in debt. Money turned out to be 'de la merde', although she did not know of what sort; powder was black/languish, grey/kill.

Tried powder out on a pig which died. Taken to sabbat on master's neck some weeks later, at place of temptation, where they danced and feasted. Saw Marion femme Demenge Husson and Jennon femme Colin de la Gotte, both of Colroy, but others present were masked.

Then said she was cold, and was left for an hour to warm herself by fire. Began confessions with repetition of what she had said before, adding that she had been on way to try and collect some debts at Wisembach, and that on first occasion when Persin wanted to take her to sabat she refused. He beat her so badly that she was in bed for a month, and next time threatened to kill her unless she went. All helped cook meat in earthenware pots, then ate what they fancied, after which they danced and sang, with youngest being the merriest, notably two women she had already named. Had also seen Delatte femme Pierron Gaillat of Colroy. Refused to make hail when told to do so, and was given great blow by unseen person. Then they returned together, Jennon having a candle she had taken with her.

On another occasion saw Didielle femme Demenge Colinel; this time she deliberately spilt pot of something they were going to use to make hail and spoil fruit - had small children and feared they would go hungry. Had 'ung merveilleux regret' that she had allowed herself to be abused, and when she heard a trial read out at Liepvre heard that accused had carried 'pain bénit' with her, and had only killed her own goat. Therefore did the same herself, and still had some in her corset; Persin did not come too close, and told her off roundly.

Had put powder in milk she sent to Georgette femme Michiel Humbert, because she refused to help her. Had killed one of the cows of Claudon des Eaues, but not the others, although she had confessed to this at Lusse. Also killed animals of Demenge Gros Demenge, and made Colin le Bourguignon ill because he was always damaging her property and insulting her. Had also made Jennon femme

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Demenge Gros Demenge ill, because she was always insulting her and 'luy faisoit fort la guerre', threatening to have her burned.

Told she must have committed more maléfices over so many years, insisted she would damn herself if she confessed things she had not done.

4 May 1598; Rémy asks for death sentence by burning. Change de Nancy approves, but to be strangled after feeling fire.

6 May 1598; free confirmation of previous confessions