

B 8708 no 2; witch 263, Clement Cheneviere de la Bolle

February 1611; Clement is confronted with Claudatte femme George Mengin of la Bolle, already convicted, who claimed she had seen him at sabbat. He said she had lied 'comme une genaxe et une treuye'.

1 March 1611; procureur d'office asks for investigation, to be followed by imprisonment if necessary.

11 March 1611; informations preparatoires

(1) Nicolle femme Claudon Michiel de la Rochatte, 48

8 years before had trouble with his horses straying on their land and causing damage. Took two of them to barn, but accused came and removed them. This led to fight between him and her husband; heard him crying that he was being killed, but when she rushed to spot her husband was underneath him on ground. Same evening he and his wife came to demand reparation, which was refused; next day an ox sickened, dying about a month later. Believed this was his doing, if he were witch as reputed - father already executed. Then told story of his young cousin, who had hired himself to her husband in order to learn to plough in fashion of Lorraine; Clement insisted he should return to Allemaigne, but he refused. Then he asked him for payment of 30 gros he owed him to buy 'clouyns'; Clement told him he should keep the money until he was ill. Shortly afterwards became ill while working in fields, starting with leg, so that he could hardly walk and had to be brought back on a cart. Illness spread so that he was covered with spots as if he had smallpox, and he said 'Ha le mal bien, ils l'auront assez, il me cottera la vie. et je ne vous servira gueres'. Went to house of his tuteur, the late Jean Moictrier, and soon died - she suspected Clement of being cause.

(2) Jehennon femme Demenge de Mortaigne de la Bolle, 60

Told of occasion when she and her husband, on way to collect wood, saw Clement ploughing, and a wolf following him only a stone's throw away. Called out to warn him, at which he threw a stone or piece of earth at it, but it did not flee, merely stopped. From woods could still see plough, but did not know what became of wolf.

(3) Jehennon fille Demenge de Mortaigne, 20

When in service of accused more than a year earlier, his sister had been on trial in ban d'Etival. Heard him say he feared she would accuse him, and he and his brother Bernard went in that direction one Sunday morning - returned crying after hearing that she had named them. He and his wife always went to work together by day, and sometimes by night, saying they were going to keep boars off crops. An animal trader she did not know had found his cattle all scratched after they had escaped into Clement's field, and said this was witchcraft, adding that he had seen a wolf on the roof of the house, at which her master had been very angry.

(4) Demenge de Mortaigne de la Bolle, ?60

Told of fatal illness of Jean de la Moictresse, cousin of accused, about 9 or 10 years earlier; had met him limping to tutor's house dragging his belongings. Before death said constantly 'le mal argent que Clement m'a donné'. 2 years ago next autumn went to ask about prior arrangement to cart some manure; became ill for 6 weeks after eating two pears given him by accused. Went to mass on Sunday morning with aid of stick, and while in church Clement placed himself close (as he had tried to do previously). Felt him rub his leg and thigh with end of his coat, then after returning home started to feel better, able to eat heartily again. Suspected he had given him illness then taken it off, after they quarrelled about carting. 3 or 4 days before his arrest told witness 'qu'il ne doubtoit personne que luy' over cousin's death.

(5) Henry Bergier le Jeune du Vieulx Marché, 28

Told of quarrel about 6 months earlier after he sold Clement a mare for 12 ecus and 2 francs to drink, about which he made difficulties; ended in court because accused called him a cheat. Later a mare worth 100 francs fell ill, and blacksmiths were unable to save it; suspected that if he were witch as he was reputed, he had been responsible.

(6) Claudon Michiel de la Rochatte, 50

Repeated story as told by wife of quarrel over horses which strayed. Accused had said to him 'que c'estoit une chere gaigere et qu'il s'en repentiroit'; ox had been worth 50 ecus, died after 3 weeks as if rabid. Also had a bull sick for a year, had to sell it for 9 francs when he had bought it for 18. Believed he had caused these losses if he were witch as reputed. Agreed with wife's deposition about death of Clement's cousin when this was read to him.

(15 March 1611)

(7) Mengeatte femme Urbain Sagaire de Rougiville, 30

3 years earlier next harvest she and her husband were cutting corn for accused, who said 'que sy les années continuoyent leurs sterilité en bled, encor deux a trois ans, il ne faudroit que luy pour chasser hors tout le reste des habitans de la Bolle, tant estoient ils pauvres et luy riche'. Demenge de Mortaigne replied that if this happened they would say he was a witch, to which he responded 'que peult estre seroient ils sy bon que de le dire, et ainsy demeura le reste du jour sans mot dire, semblant bien vouloir avoir rachepté de qu'il avoit dit'. His wife reproached Demenge bitterly for his remarks.

(8) Mengin fils George Mengin de la Bolle, 18

When his mother was imprisoned Clement had said to him that they ought to have let her go after she was accused at Taintrux, and she could have returned to house secretly at night.

(9) Jean Thoussainct de la Bolle, ?

Some years before his cow lost its milk after escaping into field owned by accused, at which he was angry; had recovered after pilgrimage was made to cross of Perrychamp. Had also heard Burgundian complain about witchcraft when cattle were scratched.

(16 March 1611)

(10) Jean Guenaye de Rougville, 34

Because of his suspicions, and fact that he was son of a witch, had called him witch several times, threatening to have him burned; he had responded by saying he would seek reparation, but had never done so. Since then he had lost animals, 'laquelle il ne peult assurement declairer deriver des venefices dudit prevenu, que sy toutesfois il se treuve tel, et il aye heu puissance sur sesdits bestiaux, il en auroit peu causer la perte de quelqu'un d'iceulx'.

(11) Mengeatte fille de feu Jean Gerard Noel du Paire de Taintrux, 28

Some 4 years before had been in his service, and was helping him to plough when a wolf approached and frightened animals. She only had 'verge' in hand, and tried to 'flatter' the wolf, but Clement reproached her. However he did not throw anything that she saw, nor send her to fetch axe from edge of field, merely making as if to run at wolf, then saying they should let it go. Had later wondered if he had taken form of wolf, but finally decided not, since he had been with her.

(12) Colas Demenge Colas Noel de Xainfain, 27

Previous winter, threshing in house of accused on a rainy day, latter said to him that they were not clouds, but 'des fumées qui se levoient sur la mer, plaines d'eaue, qui venoient tomber par terre' - did not dare ask how he knew this.

(13) George Demenge Colas de Xainfain, 25

The evening after the execution of Clement's sister from ban d'Etival witness was threshing in house of accused, who went to talk to his brother Bernard, who lived nearby. Returned after witness had gone to sleep, but he woke and overheard conversation between him and his wife. She was worried that he wanted to buy a field, saying that he might be arrested any day; he told her to be quiet, saying he would pay his debts by selling some animals, 'qu'il ne pensoit qu'il fut sorcier, et que s'il l'estoit il luy diroit, adjoustant estre impossible qu'un homme soit sorcier s'il ne le scait, ou au contraire que s'il l'estoit, il donneroit ses bien a ses enfans, et ne seroit jamais brulé a Saint Diez, d'aautant qu'il se retireroit en une chambre au Paire de

Taintrux, ne tenant que deux vaches et un cheval.' Next morning wife asked witness if he had heard conversation, and when he said he had replied 'qu'elle mesme n'en scavoit que dire'.

17 March 1611; interrogation

Said he was Clement Cheneviere alias de Lairain, laboureur, aged about 40; born in ban de Taintrux, resident at les Moictresses de la Bolle for some 12 years. Father, who had been from le Paire de Taintrux, had been executed as a witch; mother was still living there. Knew he was accused of witchcraft after charge by Claudatte femme George Mengin, but said he was a good Christian.

Agreed to quarrel and fight with Claudon Michiel; latter had struck him, drawing blood, and rather than strike him with axe he had thrown him to ground. Had called out because Michiel had him by the neck, and he was frightened he might be strangled.

Agreed that his cousin Jean de la Moictresse had asked for loan of 30 gros, as advance on rent of a field; he had said to him that he should keep them to go to Plombieres, because he had a swollen hand from injury received in Allemaigne. Said he had been ill more than a week before he died, not one or two days as alleged; he himself had helped to lay him out. Claimed that Jean had asked Jean Moictrier's wife not to put him (the accused) out of the house, because of their relationship.

Agreed to seeing wolf when he was ploughing; had been ready to throw some pieces of iron at it, and it had made off.

Admitted returning home in tears after learning of sister's fate, but this was because she had been convicted, not because she had accused him and his brother. Wife had accompanied him to fields because she 'le voit sy volontier, que le plus souvent elle ne peult demeurer au logis quand il n'y est pas.' They had only been out at night once, to guard some oats; asked if they had been to sabbat. said 'qu'il n'y fut sa vie, et ne scait ce que c'est'.

Said he could not remember giving any pears to Mortagne de la Bolle which might have made him ill, to which judges replied it was impossible he could not remember, since Mortagne 'devulgoit par tout le soupcon qu'il en avoit'.

Agreed to dispute with Henry Bergier over purchase of mare. Said that when he spoke to George Mengin's son Mengin about his mother he had not said they should have let her go, but that she had accused him wrongly. Jean Guenaye had called him witch and threatened to have him burned, but he had obtained reparation. Asked about loss of his animals, said he had never known that he had any.

Agreed to Mengeatte Gerard's story about wolf which frightened plough team, and to conversation between them on the subject. Also agreed to statement about clouds; had learned this from Grand Colas de la Bource when in his service. Made rather uncertain replies when asked about conversation with wife overheard by George Demenge Noel.

18 March 1611; confrontations

Said Nicolle femme Claudon Michiel was 'une ribaude', and of Demenge and Jehennon Mortaigne that they had eaten meat in Lent. Henry Bergier had taken some of his property. Claudon Michiel had two bastard children - he admitted this, but said 'que pour cela il n'est mechant'. Said Mengeatte femme Urbain Sagaire was reputed a 'ribaude'.

Jean Guenaye said he had heard from Nicolas Bagaire's widow Anne that during his fatal illness the accused and his brother visited him, at which he said 'qu'au lieu de lui amener deux anges, on luy amenoit deux diables, et ausquels il n'avoit gueres de fiance, et qu'on les mit hors'. Clement denied this, and said of witness 'qu'il est homme qui injurie fort souvent les personnes et coustumier de faire reparation, non croyable et recepvable a serment'.

19 March 1611; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire

21 March 1611; Change de Nancy approves

22 March 1611; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews, then racked. When on rack refused to renounce devil, on grounds that he had never been in his service; judges noted that he did not seem to feel pain of torture, and concluded that devil was helping him. Was released, then racked harder, with no results, although at end they thought he might be on point of confessing. Was finally threatened with more torture next day, and shown the 'tortillons'.

24 March 1611; interrogation

Was delay of one day because judges were otherwise occupied. The brought in Bastien Stablo, who confirmed his own confessions, in which Clement was particularly identified as an accomplice. Begged him to end resistance and return to God, reminding him of places where they had attended sabbat, their feasts and respective positions. Said Clement had travelled there on a black ox, and accused him of giving him a bad leg because he had not paid for some animals. Clement was 'tout esbranlé, et a demy vaincu', but still denied. Judges then exhorted him to gain paradise like Stablo, who had confessed without being tortured or even shaved in preparation; also threatened him with further torture.

Now started to confess, saying he had not done so previously in fear of losing his property. Had been seduced after father's execution, when he had left le Paire de Taintrux for present abode, and was cutting wood. Man in black promised that if he would believe in him 'il n'auroit plus affaire de rien'; he agreed and was pinched on forehead and between shoulders. Percin gave him 'money' which was dead leaves and cowdung, and black and grey powder, to kill and either to make languish or cure. First used powder on a pig and a cat of his own.

Confessed to series of maléfices; had killed wife of late Jean Jeandel by putting powder in soup, because she called him witch. Used same method to kill his cousin in order to obtain his property. Made ox of Claudon Michiel languish after latter had him fined when horses strayed. The wolf which came when he was ploughing was his master, bringing him more powder - since it could not be put into

his hand, left it in field for him to collect. Also agreed to making Meneon Demenge de Mortaigne ill with pears, and curing him by touching him in church. Had put powder in stream which Henry Bergier crossed, and mare which drank water died; this was because of quarrel over purchase of another mare. His master had drowned one 'des enfans Xalaide' at his request, because father, who was vagabond, had angered him by several thefts of pears. Finally agreed to giving Stablo bad leg as he described.

Had been to sabbat at Chaulmont, where he had helped to make hail and fog; they beat water with sticks, and master boiled pot on fire after adding powder. Three years earlier had caused hail which did much damage around St Dié. Had danced to sound of 'guigues et violles', and feasted on unsalted meat and 'oysilons' for dessert. Was seated close to his master 'qui luy faisoit entendre que c'estoit pour luy faire plus grand honneur que les autres'.

Asked about accomplices, named wife of Colas le Clerc of Rougiville, Margo de Richarville, Jean Mathiatte and Meneon Schenault, all previously executed at Taintrux, and Bastien Stablo. Said he had been on black ox, but this was his master who transformed himself, making him believe 'que c'estoit pour luy faire aultant d'honneur et de respect'.

26 March 1611; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions (twice during day).

26 March 1611; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

27 March 1611; Change de Nancy approves

29 March 1611; sentence carried out