

B 8717 no 5; witch 288, Demenge Mathis, of Entre-deux-Eaux

18 June 1616; procureur d'office for Canons of St Dié asks local court for investigation of 'sinistres deportemens' of Demenge Mathis, 'prevenu de sortilege et larrecins avec aultres malversations de fort long temps.'

21 June 1616; depositions

(1) Demenge le Rouyer of Entre-deux-Eaux, 60

Good many years before Demenge had accused him of going over boundary between their fields; taken to court and Demenge 'ruzé' forced him to pay 10 francs for wine, although in his opinion he had done nothing. Also threatened him 'qu'il le feroit suer', and shortly afterwards developed trouble with his feet, one or the other becoming infected and swollen, with discharges, making him cry out with pain. Illness returned annually for 6 weeks or so around harvest time, for about 10 years, but now cured. Suspected accused, because of threats, long reputation, and accusations against him by condemned witches.

(2) Claudatte, femme du precedent, 45

Repeated husband's story. Reputation 20+ years, since her residence.

(3) Vincent Laurent of Entre-deux-Eaux, 60

Reputation several years, accusations. On one occasion had told witness and his wife that he was going to flee, since he believed that he was going to be arrested, 'et qu'il craignoit les rigueurs de la question.' Had sold a pair of oxen to have money for the purpose, but they dissuaded him, arguing that to flee would be to condemn himself. Had heard son-in-law of accused, Demenge Collenat, threaten to have him tried.

(4) Marguitte femme du precedent, 50

Similar deposition to that of husband; according to her it was Demenge's late wife who had asked them to intervene and prevent flight. She too said she had heard son-in-law call him witch, 'et luy feroit bailler les estrivieres'.

(5) Didier Simon de Mandray, 45

Had shared farm of great and lesser tithes with Demenge; had seen him take extra sheaf from Jean Grand Didier of Saulcy, but witness had told Jean to keep another one back. Was also episode when Dieudonné Grand Didier accused Demenge of placing a sheaf in his field to claim that he had cheated on tithe - as principal farmer witness took Dieudonné to court, only for Demenge's evidence to be rejected so that witness had to pay costs. 'a adjousté qu'il a trouvé ledit prevenu fort rigoureux, et de mauvaise conscience, envers ceulx a qui il a heu affaire, et disoit au deposant qu'il failloit porter une de leurs gerbes de disme, entre les gerbes des

champs des particuliers, pour les surprendre d'avoir mal dismé, encor qu'il n'en soit rien.'

(6) Nicolas le Rouyer d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 60

Some years before Demenge had killed two of his geese which strayed into his field, and hid them so that they could not be found. Quarrel followed, and within 2 days a bull belonging to witness sickened, dying in 36 hours. Attributed this to witchcraft by Demenge, who had been accused by Jean Blaise Laynel.

(7) Mengeatte femme Vincent Jeandel, d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 52

8 years earlier she had kept the sheep of Entre-deux-Eaux, which her children looked after. One evening Demenge had taken one belonging to Claude Henry, and he and his sons asked her to take flock to the fields herself the next day to check on this. Did so, but Demenge was 'sy caultte et ruzé' that he didn't send sheep back - it was heard 'baaler et crier' at his house. Dispute followed, with Henry calling him 'larron'; did not know if any reparation was made.

(8) Claude Jean Dieudonné Laurent d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 30

3 years before was rearing some fine pigs, which sometimes strayed into field of accused near their house; he warned witness to stop them, after which biggest died. Some days later again warned his wife, saying that if it happened again 'il les feroit aller tout bellement'; soon after a second became ill, and he had it killed. Suspected Demenge; long reputation.

(9) Colin Colas Henry d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 40

Returning one day from selling barley at market of Kayserperg in Allemaigne, in company of Demenge, latter picked up a sack on road. Later Jean Demenge Bonabel asked if he had found it, which he denied, although witness knew this was false.

(10) Nicolas Claude Henry d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 34

When his late father was a widower, his chambrieres were more careless than they should have been about animals. Neither their sheep nor those of Demenge were marked - then told story of how sheep and its lamb had been stolen, his father had dispute with accused and finally recovered them. Reputation as witch.

(11) Claude Colas le Rouyer d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 35

15 or 16 years earlier had bought some land from brother-in-law of accused, Dieudonné Demenge Collenat, about which he was angry and made a veiled threat. Immediately after a fine ox feel sick, and he had it killed 'et craignant de courir plus grande fortune, alla trouver le tabellion, et fit casser la notte de son acquest.'

Around last Martinmas, when corn was already sprouting, some of his animals got into a field and were eating it. Saw accused among them, although it was too far off to tell exactly what he did, then finest animal fell down, while others ran off. Caught up with accused near Fauchifol, told him he had heard he was a witch, but had seen what he was doing. Found that animal had got up again, but later his finest ox became sick, and again he had it killed for fear it would die. Believed this to be witchcraft; general reputation.

(22 June 1616)

(12) Jean Colin Dieudonné d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 60

About a month before he had heard Dieudonné Demenge Collenat quarelling with Demenge, calling him witch and saying that he had been accused as such. Invited him to take those present as witnesses, 'adjoustant que ledit prevenu se devoit bien faire purger de ladite accusation, que suivant les menasses qu'il luy avoit donné il luy avoit mescheu et avoit tant perdu de bestes qu'il en estoit tout espauvry, et enquis s'il l'en chargeoit ledit Dieudonné luy respondit qu'il entendoit bien ce qu'il disoit, et qu'il luy en demanda reparation.'

Told how when they had both been collecting tithes in village Demenge had wanted to put an extra sheaf in stack of Jean Blaise Laynel, so that there would be 11 and he would be found to be cheating. Witness objected 'qu'il ne vouloit vivre de pain semblable, sur ce repartit ledit prevenu, que sy luy deposant vouloit craindre le malgré de ses voisins il ne seroit jamais riche.' Had heard Dieudonné Grand Didier call Demenge 'larron et meschant homme' after he tried the same trick on him, saying that 'c'estoit luy faire perdre sa bonne reputation'; went to law, where accused lost and had to pay costs.

(13) Demenge Gerard d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 35

Some 7 years earlier, returning at twilight from fair at St. Die, saw Demenge attack Jean l'Hoste of Benifosse; had large stone in his hand, pulled victim's hat down over his face, then started to beat him. When he called out for help Demenge ran off, stopping to throw one last stone at him. Witness himself 's'en alla a grande haste de paoeure qu'on ne le print pour tesmoings de tel meschant act.' Long reputation as witch.

(14) Jean Gregoire d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 31

Long reputation, accusations. When he was keeping household with his brothers, had sought reparation from Demenge's son (now dead) after he trespassed on their land with cart; started to go to law, but Demenge finally settled out of court. Some years later, when living apart, lost a fine ox, which became emaciated despite eating normally; if accused were a witch, believed he might have caused this in revenge for previous episode. He and others had noticed that when priest raised the host at Mass the accused did not look at him like other parishioners, but looked at the ground; this increased suspicion 'qu'il adhere plustost au diable qu'a dieu'.

(15) Hidoult Gregoire d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 36

Reported same episode as his brother, and loss of ox.

(16) Thoussaincte veuve Demenge Collenot d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 50

Rather confused story of accident some 12 years earlier when she had hired accused to plough for her. Had nearly been run over when she fell, and her daughter had suggested that in view of his reputation he might have been responsible - she had called on 'le glorieux saint Nicolas'.

(17) Jean du Treux d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 36

Some 3 years earlier quarrel about trespassing on adjoining fields when ploughing - claimed they both did this - followed by ox going lame for 3 weeks before it recovered, which he attributed to accused - long reputation as witch. Previous year had put up hedge around another field to prevent similar behaviour (there was an area in between to turn in when ploughing); Demenge promptly reclaimed a loan of 6 gros by sending official to collect it. 10 weeks later his young wife died after giving birth 'ne scait au reste pour l'assuré sy ca esté ledit prevenu, mais il en a quelque oppinion mauvaise, a cause qu'il avoit fermé son champ.' Added that cat had been doing damage in his house, and he tied its feet together, intending to kill it, but was prevented by his mother. Cat scratched his knee although he had it wrapped in cloth; ever since he had trouble with the knee at the same season. Neighbours told him it was Demenge's cat, and he thought it might have been him in the form of a cat.

(18) Dieudonne Demenge Collenat d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 60

Told of tithe dispute 11 or 12 years earlier, when he had been farmer of great tithes; had told Demenge to cut his whole field at once, according to custom. Demenge was angry, and told him 'qu'il se teust, et qu'il l'auroit en ung autre lieu qu'il ne se donneroit de garde'. Very soon after he lost various beasts to value of 100 ecus, and after reproaching Demenge that this had followed his threats he himself was ill for 21 weeks. In view of reputation and unpurged accusations against him, he suspected he had caused these misfortunes.

(19) Le maire Mengel Houssemand de Mandray, 41

Previous Ascension Day had heard Henry Finance le jeune of Mandray call Demenge 'genax' at St. Dié, before numerous witnesses. As maire knew that he had made no complaint, but had 'honteusement supporté l'injure'. Also previous public accusation by Jean Claude Cugin of Mandray which had gone unanswered.

(20) Didier Henry de Fouchifol, 40

11 or 12 years before had bought a fine mare at auction at La Croix aux Misnes, and refused to sell her to Demenge at same price. A year later he asked

again, received same response, and a few days later mare went blind. A year later died quite suddenly. Also reported attempt by Demenge to cheat Colas Noel of le Chanoy by trick of putting extra sheaf in field, when he and witness were collectors - witness had refused.

(21) Marion femme Jean du Treux, d'Entre-deux-Eaux, 25

Previous autumn had been on way to see animals which her grandmother was guarding, when she met Demenge, who falsely told her that they were outside their land; he insisted despite grandmother's denials, telling witness 'qu'il leur gardoit un bon plaisir'. Had since had three cattle dead, and two more sick, including a fine cow given by her late father on her marriage. Believed accused had caused all this, and had told him 'que s'il arrivoit jamais que l'on l'apprehende, elle se resouviendroit bien du plaisir qu'il disoit luy garder'.

(22) Henry Finance le jeune de Mandray, 60

Long reputation, and had called him witch without any reaction.

(23) Mengeon Demenge du Treux de Fouchifol, 60

Shortly after Catherine femme Mengeon Dion of Fouchifol had been executed as a witch, he had heard her children say that Demenge had been at sabbat, where they had been present. Long reputation.

(24) Jean Bertremin grand homme de Fouchifol, 40

Same story as previous witness, names children as Catherine and Mengeon Dion.

(25) Didier Anthoine de Fouchifol, 60

Some years before Demenge had told him that his wife was a witch; at that time she had not been suspected, although later she was executed. She had several times told him to keep Demenge away from their house, since he was 'un meschant homme.' Also occasion when he had been accused of theft, and had not dared appear to clear himself; had stripped his house of goods in fear he would be arrested.

23 June 1616; interrogation

Said he was about 50, native of Coniche, living as laboureur at Entre-deux-Eaux; had also lived at Fouchifol. Had been confronted with Marguitta femme Chrestien Colas Thierry, presently convicted, who had claimed he was present at sabbat. Admitted quarrel with Demenge le Rouyer; had gone to arbitration, and he had to pay for wine to settle it.

Was suggested that he damned himself by denying he was a witch, in view of time when he wanted to flee, and was only dissuaded by neighbours who said 'qu'il se mectroit la corde au col'; he denied this. Admitted that Dieudonné Grand Didier had been cleared of charge over tithe, and that Didier Simon had to pay costs. Admitted restoring sheep and lamb to Claude Henry, although denied most of detailed charge on this count. Agreed that Dieudonné Demenge Collenat had called him witch in public, but claimed that later he had not wished to maintain the accusation.

Admitted striking Jean l'Hoste with his fist, but claimed that was all. Denied hearing some accusations of witchcraft, but claimed he had received reparation from Jean Claude Cugin.

25 June 1616; confrontations

Said of Demenge le Rouyer that he was 'un rayeur de bornes', but only witness he would have cited was Didier Grand Colin, who had died 6 weeks earlier. Reacted to wife's deposition by saying she had lied like a witch. Said of Claude Colas le Rouyer that his father had often called him a witch. Jean Colin Dieudonné was 'un mechant homme', who had stolen tithe grain when he was collector. Said of Marion femme Jean du Treux that she had stolen his apples. She agreed that when pregnant she had a great desire for a red apple from a tree overhanging the road, not knowing to whom it belonged. She took a hatful, but the accused then appeared and took her coiffe as gage; accord made by maire for one franc over such a small thing.

25 June 1616; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

27 June 1616; change de Nancy agrees

30 June 1616; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, confessed when racked. Seduced some 12 years ago that spring, when in a meadow around nightfall, by a tall man in black, Persin. Promised to make him rich, gave him two kinds of powder, black to kill and grey to make ill. Persin turned himself into succubus, but did not have same 'contentement' as with his wife, because genitals were cold as ice.

Confessed series of maléfices. Had killed bull of Colas le Rouyer, because latter had falsely accused him of killing his geese. Had been beaten by his master for not obeying orders not to take holy water and bread at church, and not bringing him host as he was told to do. Agreed he had turned himself into cat to attack Jean du Treux.

Had been to sabbat 3 or 4 times a year. Often made hail, but someone always dropped an earthenware pot to frustrate this; he had done so once, and been beaten by Persin as a result. Made annual offering of a hen so that he did not have to attend sabbat as often as others. Had seen Jean Girard of Entre-deux-Eaux (the cook), Jehennon femme Jean Dieudonne Laurent, Magdelaine femme Dieudonné Demenge Colnat, Colas Demenge le Rouyer and his son Claude, all of Entre-deux-Eaux; Jehennon femme Claude Mengin of Fouchifol, Nicolas Laurent de

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Contramolin, and Babelon femme du maire Estienne Jean Demenge Simon de Coniche.

Interrogated again later same day, confirmed earlier confessions. Added names to accomplices; Claudatte Begoley, femme Demenge le Rouyer of Entre-deux-Eaux, and Marguitte femme Chrestien Colas Thiery, who had accused him. Said his master had been present in his throat and had prevented him confessing earlier; he had managed to spit out a first mouthful of holy water. Asked to have people to be with him in prison so that Persin could not come and punish him.

1 July 1616; interrogation

Confirmed confessions. Added another accomplice; Jehennon femme Jean Colin Dieudonné, sage femme of Entre-deux-Eaux. Said that there had been as many as 50 witches at sabbat, but were masked. Ended 'prian au surplus au bon dieu de vouloir avoir pitié de son ame, et luy faire la grace de gaigner son saint paradis.'

2 July 1616; procureur asks for death sentence

4 July 1616; Change de Nancy approves

5 July 1616; sentence carried out