

Vosges G 707 no 1; Witch 336, Jean Lallemand de St Lyenard

9 February 1590; informations preparatoires

Taken at request of Mengeon Demenge Valentin of Contramolin.

(1) Claudel le Maire de St Lyenard, 55

Had called him witch several times, and heard others do so, without reparation being sought. Asked if he suspected him over losses of animals following threats, said he and his people had several times suspected him of poisoning animals. Were such close neighbours there was only a wall between them. 2 years ago his oxen had become lame one after another, and blamed him for this and loss of a cow. Even his brothers-in-law called him witch. Asked if Lallemand had begged him to say nothing against him, said he had not.

(2) Voiriat Jean Voiriat, 30

Had called him witch several times, and had once been taken to justice, which ended with an accord by which he paid the costs, but accused paid him 18 écus (for a debt over tithes). Had heard him called witch by his father-in-law Claudel le Maire and others. In reply to question about threats, said that during various lawsuits he had threatened to make him 'bien petit compagnon', but since he did not keep animals had lost none. Had once told him how before dawn one day was near Contramolin when a big black man passed on one side and 2 white angels on the other; did not harm him, but his companions 'barilleurs' found him at Davelline and they went on to Ste Marie. Servant of accused had complained to his wife that bed was full of bugs which prevented her sleeping, and she went to sleep in kitchen, where she thought she saw him come in, take a broom, and fly out of chimney.

9 years earlier, when accused and his wife were 'en divorce', heard her say that when she was riding back from Clemecey a man in black had offered to restore peace between them if she would sleep with him; she rode off but was very frightened. On another occasion accused had come in as he was heating oven to bake bread, and put his coat down. When witness sat next to it he noticed there were some bones in it, sewn to inside; when he saw these Lallemand suggested they were 'du mal que l'on avoit donné pour mettre divorce entre luy et sa femme, et qu'il les monteroit au maire de Moncel comme justice'. Asked if he had asked him to say nothing, said he had, pointing out that they had made reparation to one another. Had also said that although his opponent Demenge de Moncel 'soit riche et puissant Sy estoit il aussy bien pour luy faire ung plaisir', to which witness replied that he would say what he knew and no more.

(3) Jean Michiel Jeannel, 60

Generally known as witch, and called such without seeking reparation. Asked if as one who was often in house he had seen anything to justify this, said he had not, 'et qu'il faisoit ses choses secrettement'. Had heard him talk of encounter

with man in black on way to Ste Marie, who did not disappear although he made sign of cross.

(4) Mongeatte femme Voiriat Jean Voiriat, 23

Called witch, and story about servant. In her version the girl said she had seen him take something from under a stone, then he seemed to disappear. Also story from his wife about how man in black approached her; on return to house accused said to her 'Truye, ribaulde, reviens tu je pensois que le diable t'eut emporté'.

(5) Mongeatte femme Lyenard Demenge Gerard, 30

Called witch, and brief version of story about wife and man in black.

(6) Claudatte femme Demenge Trechey, 50

General reputation.

(10 February 1590)

(7) Martin Fleurant, 45

Closest neighbour, often called witch (by witness on occasion) without seeking reparation. 12 years before witness had engaged a meadow to him, then withdrawn it when offered more money by another. Lallemand told him he would repent and would be poorer as a result, and within a week his cows started to make loud noises, one of them worth 28 francs finally died, which in view of threats he suspected was his doing. After this lost animals worth 200 francs in 2 years, so that he became poor; he told accused that if he did not stop causing these losses he would have him burned, calling him witch. Animals then stopped dying, so he reckoned he had been cause of losses.

(8) Colas François de Sarux, 34

General reputation, called witch.

(9) Girard Demenge Girard, 30

Knew nothing.

(10) Colas le Marchal, 30

Knew nothing.

(11) Georgeatte femme Jean Michiel Jeannel, 34

Called witch; knew nothing else.

(12) Mengeatte femme Martin Fleurant, 30

Had been trying to raise young animals to recover meadow which was in hands of accused for several years as 'gaigeure', and often quarrelled; lost many animals and could make no profit. After they recovered the meadow had several more losses, and in view of reputation suspected this was his witchcraft.

(13) Jean Demenge Trechey, 26

General reputation.

(14) Jean Grand Didier, 32

General reputation.

(14 February 1590)

(15) Margueritte femme Francois Thiriat, de Sarux, 50

Had delivered several children in his house (she was midwife), but knew no harm of him other than that he was sometimes called witch.

(16) Marie femme Jean Grand Didier, 25

Had seen no harm in him, although he was nearest neighbour.

(17) Jehennon femme Jacques Hugo Vincent, 40

Did not suspect him of being witch despite being called such; husband had made him reparation after calling him witch.

(18) Hantz Wacquer, musnier, 28

Knew nothing against him. Asked if he had heard something from servant, said that when he asked the servant why he was leaving his service so soon he replied that he had heard of an animal in his master's room. Witness asked him what it was, and he replied 'que c'estoient voites vestes'.

(19) Jean Pierat de Moncel, 37

Had reputation as witch, and was called such, but had no personal suspicion that he was truly witch or had caused him harm. Had arbitrated in case between accused and Jacques Hugo Vincent, which had been over insults and tithes; Vincent had to pay 5 écus rather than 23 for hay and oats he had from accused.

(20) Mengeatte fille Robert le Vert, de la Ruelle de Saulcy, 21

She was servant who was supposed to have seen him leave suddenly. Denied having spoken of this to anyone, or seen any harm in him, and said it was an imposture placed on her.

(21) Jean le Maire, de Girompaire, 50

Was reputed witch, but when witness called him this he was forced to make reparation; did not think he had caused him any harm.

(22) Jean Voignier, de Ste Marguerite, 40

In 1575, when Ste Marie was burned, he was servant to Claudel le Maire at St Lyenard. They had suspected him over death of a cow after a quarrel, and had called him witch several times. Asked if he had seen him with a number of toads in a room, which he fed and whistled to, denied this. Asked if he had tried to persuade him not to depose, agreed he had promised to buy him drinks if he would be on his side, but insisted he had told the whole truth.

(21 February 1590)

(23) Ambroise Pierat, 60

Had heard him called witch, 'mais de gens de petite etoffe'. Asked if he had heard that he had given false oath against Demenge Vallentin of Moncel, said he had not. Asked about bones Lallemand had shown him, said that when there was much talk of discord between him and his wife he showed witness what looked like pieces of 'sucre candy' found in his jacket, saying he thought this might be 'mal donné' - had shown this to many. Asked if he knew that a witch called Françoette executed at Taintrux had named him as an accomplice, saying he was masked, denied knowing this. Had been some questions over tithe, but did not know truth about these.

(24) Barbelline femme Colin Pierry, soeur non germaine du prevenu, 27

Had heard nothing from him or his wife to indicate they were witches. Asked if she had spoken to her brother-in-law Didier des Gouttes about an ointment accused had shown her, saying he should be burned, she said that when angry she had told Didier that Jean had more property than her, and that 'il ne falloit pas sesbahyr sy les autres gens disoient qu'il le failloit brusler', while she disavowed him as her brother. When she recovered her temper, however, she repented of what she had said, and would have wished to take words back, since she had never seen any harm in him in her life. Asked if she knew of his beating his wife to make her become accomplice, said she did not. Had heard that he was called witch by Voiriat, but thought he had secured reparation. Asked if on rumour he was to be arrested he had transferred some of his property elsewhere, said she knew nothing of this. His wife had never complained to her.

(25) Honneste homme Mengin Vallentin, de Moncel, father of 'partye poursuivant', 66

When he was maire in Ban de Meurthe Jean had been doyen for a time, and had various pieces of property in house belonging to people who were slow to pay taxes; he had ordered him to return them to those who had paid. Asked about bones, said he had offered to show them to him, but he told him 'qu'il s'en aille avec sa sorcerye'. Long reputation, and mother already suspected. Had heard complaints from Jacques Hugo Vincent, Claudel le Maire, and his son Mengeon that they had lost animals after quarrels. Claimed that he had testified against witness under oath and been found to have lied. Asked about tithes, told long story about how he had passed on tithes at St Lienard to Jacques Hugo Vincent, and case had followed in which he accused Jean of taking a sheaf, but was himself charged with calling him witch. This was reason for the settlement previously recorded, and witness wanted to take action, but case petered out. Had heard him called witch by those already named, as well as by Jacques Vallentin Finance of Mandray.

(26) Didier Remy Henry, 60

Had been called witch by several without seeking reparation. Mengeon du Moncel had accused him over death of a horse, but had not heard of other similar charges. Had heard him called 'faux dismeur', but did not know what had happened. In reply to various questions answered in the negative.

(27) Colas Demenge Bresson, du Viller, jeune fils demeurant à Sarux, 20

Had been on point of entering his service previous Christmas, but left after 3 days because others told him he had never kept a servant for the whole year. Denied he had seen anything suspicious in his house, and knew nothing else.

(28) Didier des Gouttes, beau frere du prevenu, 40

Explained that he and Jean Pierat of Moncel had been mediators in dispute with Jacques Hugo Vincent. Asked if he had been to offer Dieudonné Jean Dieudonné of le Souche money to depose for Jean in a case over tithes, said this was an imposture. Asked about reputation as witch, said 'que de sa part il ne l'at en tel estime le commun peult estimer ce qu'il luy plaist.' Negative responses to various other questions.

(29) Demenge Marchal, de Contramoulin, 42

Said that when he was officer Voiriat had called him to settle dispute with Jean, who had beaten him and called him thief, but instead of agreeing they started to insult one another again, and Voiriat called him witch - believed they had gone to court, but did not know outcome. General reputation, also had to satisfy Voiriat over tithes.

(30) Colas François de Sarux (already heard)

Returned to add that his mother had been ill in bed 7 or 8 weeks earlier, and told him she had been to mill, which belonged to Jean, but he had let another go first. She stayed the night there and became very cold, she thought this was cause of illness.

(23 February 1590)

(31) Colin Cayé, de Vannemont, 40

Had been present when Jacques Hugo Vincent said he was a witch and should have been burned long before. Knew they had made an accord.

(32) Claude Ambroise, 30

Had heard him called witch by Mengeon Vallentin. Knew of various other episodes on which he was questioned, but had nothing significant to say.

(33) Jean Babel, de Sarux, 35

Had heard him called witch by Voyrier, but had not heard anyone complain that he had threatened them, or that he was reputed witch. One day in woods he told witness he had some good timber he did not want to cut; asked why, he replied 'qu'il estoit desormais vieux et ne vivoit plus guieres'. This made witness think of accusation he had heard, and wonder if he was afraid.

(34) Polline veuve Jean le Maire, 40

Her late husband had quarrelled with him, but they had not suspected him of causing any misfortunes, although they had an ox sick. Was not generally reckoned a witch, although she had heard him called such.

(35) Barbelline femme Blaise Lombrat, 40

Had done day labour for him, and when they asked for payment he struck her husband on the arm with a flail; had to be treated for injuries, and an accord was made, although she knew nothing of details. Asked whether she had not heard from his son that he told him not to cross himself in bad weather, denied this. Asked whether she had been threatened by Lallemand or others if she should depose against him, said that she had. His brother-in-law Jacques Houllon, who was mason, had been building a wall and accused came to see it, at which point it fell down, and Houllon said 'au diable fut ce meschant homme qu'il ne leur avoit point apporté de chance'. 2 weeks earlier had threatened her with reparation if she spoke about this.

(36) Mre Jean Ruyr, cleric du chapitre de St Dié, 30

Asked whether accused had sought reparation before court, said he had taken Voyriat Jean Voyriat there when he called him witch, and was another case over tithes, but they were settled by a private accord. Knew that Mongeon Vallentin suspected him over death of a horse. Had heard stories about false witness (in case between brothers Jean and Claudel le Maire) and being found 'faux dismeur'.

(6 March 1590)

(37) Diez Demenge Aubert, de la Warde de Saulcy, 40

Said that Mongeon Vallentin had bought from Dieudonné Marchand his share in some sheep he leased from the accused. Jean was then unable to get his share from Mongeon, and the threatened 'qu'il luy cousteroit bien vingt cinq fois autant plus tost se mettroit il en guise de chat Ce que par luy deposant entendu il luy dit, qu'il Vallentin estoit puissant assez pour le bien tenir et que s'il n'estoit genaux il ne luy scauroit rien faire, A quoy il luy repliqua qu'il ne plaise a dieu qu'il soit tel.' No harm had come to Vallentin after this.

Marked tendency for court to lead witnesses by asking them questions, which becomes stronger as case goes on - some questions related to evidence given by witnesses. Others, e.g. about toads, must have resulted from information supplied by his adversary.

2 May 1590; interrogation under torture

Said that objects in coat had not been bones, but what was called 'fouchere'; did not know who had put them there. Denied seeing black man by night, although there had been an occasion when his horse was scared by something he could not see. He had to put down its load, and as he was still young could not lift it again, so returned to father's house without it. Had seen no evil spirit 'et que ce que les tesmongs en ont deposé estre par envye, et hayne qu'ilz ont contre luy a la sollicitation de sa partye adverse'.

Asked about allegations of flying up chimney, said these were false, and 'qu'il n'estimoit que ladite servante en eut recognu aulcune chose par sa deposition'. Asked about final deposition concerning threats to Vallentin, denied making these and said 'que ce sont choses controuvez par tesmoings acheptéz'.

Most of this took place while he was being racked, but he would confess nothing, and was finally sent back to prison.

13 May 1590; Change de Nancy recommends that he be renvoyé.