

B 7314 no 2; witch 113, Margueritte veuve Barthelemin Liegey d'Ambacourt

10 July 1624; PG des Vosges has received advice that Margueritte, vulgarly called la Geline, was much feared as witch by those in villages around, where she had been begging for 20 years or more. Asks prévôt at Mirecourt to take depositions.

11 July 1624; informations preparatoires

(1) Didier Drouat, 31

2 years earlier he had trouble with leg, which became shorter than the other; general rumour that accused had caused this, but he sought help from apothecaries and surgeons. Found no cure, then she asked to come to his poisle, saying she would do no harm; Claudon Mathieu, who was present, said to her 'Sorciere que luy voudrois tu faire il en a assez du sien'. She seemed astonished and did not reply, but 3 days later found her sitting by a hedge, and she said 'pauvre homme vous avez bien de mal, dieu ne vous veult il pas faire aller droict', repeating this several times. Within 3 days was completely cured. 12 days earlier her son-in-law Pierot Cuginin owed him some money, and had to resort to force to obtain payment, and his wife came to house 3 times to give cautions. Came home from fields to find wife in bed, with first one limb than another affected - 'et ne peult croire aultrement qu'elle ne soit ensorcellée' by Margueritte or her daughter Lucye. Pierot had told them several times of reputation, and also told witness he wished him no ill, asking him not to blame him for sickness of wife; claimed he had told wife and mother-in-law to harm no-one in their house, but had not been able to be master. Also said his wife would soon be better, as she was to a degree when he returned to see her. Margueritte always reputed a witch. (Competent signature)

(2) Anne Marchal, veuve Mre Jean Chasquin, femme Jean Merlin, 45

2 years earlier first husband (surgeon) obliged her son-in-law Pierot Cuinin to give caution for his debts; she told him he would repent, and he took witnesses of this. Immediately he returned home whole body became swollen, and he was ill for 9 months until death. Believed that she had given this to him, and said so frequently. Doctors and apothecaries could not even identify disease; she had tried to get accused to come and remove spell, but nothing would induce her to visit him. Always reputed a witch. 12 years earlier her sister refused to give her 'ung bat de chausse', promptly fell ill and died, saying to the end she had given her the illness.

(3) Colin Grandidier, 40

Long reputation, repated claims by Jean Chasquin that she had bewitched him, and by Jean George of Bujieux that she had killed his wife. Generally feared in villages, and he himself had ordered that she should be kept away from his house.

(4) Demenge Cuinin le Bourdier et cordonnier, 33

General reputation.

12 July 1624; PG des Vosges gives order for arrest.

12 July 1624; further depositions

(5) Didon fille Jean Saulnier, 20

18 months before had asked father to sell her some wood, but he said he had none to sell. Went into stable, and 3 hours later a cow died - believed this had been her witchcraft, in view of general reputation for causing harm to everyone. Also believed she had caused illness of Claudon femme Didier Drouot.

(6) Le maire Philippe du Hault, 70

In view of reputation had forbidden her to visit his house - she had said he had no reason to fear her, and she would do him no harm.

(7) Claudon femme Didier Drouot, 32

7 or 8 years earlier had come into house, and child became ill, dying 4 years later - in view of general reputation and fear of her believed she had been responsible. Also her own present illness - same story as husband, said she had thought she would die, but after being helped by curé of Vomécourt had recovered.

(8) Jean Grandidier, charpentier, 45

General reputation. Had heard from Grand Humbert of Hergugney a story about how she had given illness to a woman at Bralleville who had refused to take another into her house (incomprehensible account of how Humbert had apparently beaten woman who died). Jean George of Puzieux had told him she had killed his wife, who had refused her alms, and Jean Friant le viel said she had tried to drown him in the woods.

(9) Jean Vuillemin, dit Saulnier, 70

Same story as daughter about death of cow, and charges by Jean Chasquin.

(13 July 1624)

(10) Claude du Hault, 32

Long reputation; had sometimes forbidden her his house, and she said she would do him no harm. Had once given him 5 apples (of type called Paradis) which were marked and full of holes - suspected some evil, and threw them away. (Signed)

(11) Jean Petit Jean, 40

General reputation; his cousin Marie, femme Didier Mengenot of Bralleville, had several times told him that she had given her illness from which she had been suffering for last year, after she had not wanted husband to lodge her in their house - seems to be same incident described by witness (8).

(12) Joseph serviteur a Philippe du Hault, 22

2 years before had been guarding pigs when she came towards him, told him she would do him no harm, and said she was on her way to steal wood from the

priest while he was in church. Later became ill, and 'ne scauroit assés souhaiter la mort de Margueritte Poirson'.

(14 July 1624)

(13) Jehenne femme Jean Grandidier, 40

9 or 10 years earlier son of Phillebert Renault had lost use of both legs, and father asked witness to get Margueritte to come and visit him. She refused because husband forbade her to act, and finally the father risked asking her to come, offering her some milk for sick member of her family. Went into kitchen with it, pot in hand and broom under arm; put broom down, then took it away with her again, after which child recovered. Also told of suspicions of Marie femme Didier Mengenot and Jean Chasquin. General reputation.

(14) Demenge Saulnier, 50

More than 2 years earlier had come to house asking wife to sell her wood, and after several refusals went to door of stable, turned round, and came back. Repeated this 3 times, then asked to buy milk, which was also refused, at which she said she would repent. After this only cow sickened, and after 3 days was advised to threaten her; he did so, saying he would beat her. She replied 'Ma foy Demenge je n'y veulx aller', and within hours cow recovered - believed she had caused illness, in view of reputation.

(15) Pieron Petit Jean, 60

Had several times heard from niece Manne that Margueritte had caused illness by witchcraft; general reputation.

(15 July 1624)

(16) Jean George, laboureur de Puysieux, 60

2 years earlier she had been seeking alms in village, and was refused by his wife Claude, who shortly afterwards fell ill, with mouth twisted. When she returned later wife told her she had been very ill since refusal, to which she replied 'qu'elle vouloit doncques dire qu'elle luy avoit donné le mal'. Died 3 months later, suspecting that she had bewitched her.

(16 July 1624)

(17) Mainne femme Didier Mongenot, de Bralleville, 40

18 months before she had come to door begging to be let in, because son of Grand Humbert of Hergugney was coming after her to beat her. Refused because she suspected she was a witch, and closed door, making children get back in case she did them any harm. Husband then told her to let her in, so she did so, and left her by fire with some milk and dried pears while she went to 'escraigne'. Children later told her she had taken some more dried pears from cupboard; on return witness ate some of these, and shortly afterwards developed swelling, which was still causing her great pain. Was afflicted 'des bestes jusques a cinq ou six y en ayant

d'icelles de la grosseur d'un rat, qui paroissent a toute heure, tantost elles montent jusques au sommet de la teste tantost aux bras et mains et autres membres, et quand elle veult manger ou boire les bestes montent jusques a la gorge pour prendre les viandes, lesdites bestes se changeantes en plusieurs formes d'animaux, comme de corbeaux, de petits pourceaux et aultrement'. Had not been able to find any release from spell, which she believed Margueritte had given her - long reputation.

(18) Humbert Journal le jeune, de Hergugney, 23

18 months before his wife had died after 6 day illness, during which she threw herself about so they could hardly hold her. Kept saying that Margueritte had given it to her, and these were last words. Had previously come asking for wife, then had her take splinter from foot. (Good signature)

(19) Claudon femme Gerard Tisselot, de Hergugney, 22

3 years before had been washing at spring when Margueritte approached, saying she had not eaten and was very thirsty. Witness was afraid of her, went off to hang washing on hedge, then went home. Then became very ill for 2 months, and visited priest at Charmes, who told her 'que pour vray elle estoit ensorcelée et qu'en signe de ce qu'on regarde deans les lits la ou ladite deposante couchoit et l'on y trouveroit merveilles'. Did so, found hare's feet, pieces of sheet, and other things; believed accused had given her illness, general reputation.

16 July 1624; PG des Vosges asks for arrest and interrogation.

17 July 1624; interrogation

Said she was widow (from last marriage) of Bartremin Liegey, marguillier of Ambacourt, aged about 60. Knew she had been arrested as witch, denied she was such, admitted she had been accustomed to beg around villages.

Said son of Grand Humbert had chased her to beat her because he believed she had made his wife ill. Otherwise denied all accusations, although she admitted she had sometimes stolen some wood.

(18 July 1624) Admitted some occasions when she had been accused of causing deaths or illnesses; agreed that wife of Demenge George of Puzieux had refused her alms several times, as many others had done. Noted that she showed no emotion, merely replied promptly to questions.

19 July 1624; confrontations

Agreed that Humbert Journal had struck her and pursued her to Bralleville, and to story about splinter.

Claudon femme Didier Drouot claimed she had walked from Ambacourt without feeling any effects of bewitchment, but had started to suffer in arm and throat as she approached place where she was. Similar claim by Joseph, servant of Philippe du Hault, that he had only started to feel spell since he passed Poussay, and had really made him ill while he was waiting for confrontation in church of Cordeliers.

She agreed that Claude du Hault had forbidden her his house, and that she had given him apples when he was a young man - but this had been with no ill intent.

Jean Vuillemin dit Saulnier said that after death of cow 'on luy conseilla de faire cuire et bouillir le coeur d'icelle et que si elle estoit morte de venefice que celuy ou celle qui l'avoit donné y yroit le premier en son losgis ce que fut fait, et en effect ladite prevenue se trouva la toute premiere en sondit losgis sitost que ledit coeur commença a cuire et demanda la fraissure de ladite vache'. She agreed she had been given this, but denied doing any harm.

Said she had met Jean Friant in woods and said it looked as if there would be a storm and they would get very wet, but had not caused this - he had beaten her some days later over this.

23 July 1624; PG des Vosges asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

26 July 1624; Change de Nancy approves

29 July 1624; interrogation under torture

Began to waver before torture, but only confessed when thumbscrews were applied to hands and feet. Said she had been seduced by Persy some 6 years earlier, but would not give more details (it sounds as if she was confused and in pain). Then said she had only said what she had to be released, and would not confess when racked. Given tortillons, and asked about insensible mark found on her head by executioner that morning, said it came from a blow given her by children guarding animals at Fresnel. Now said she had been to sabbat more than 7 times, and that she was a witch, but would say no more, asking that they put her to death.

30 July 1624; interrogation

Asked how long she had been a witch, said she could not remember precisely, but it had been before death of husband 14 years earlier, 'lors qu'ilz heurent un enfant noyé qui causa son desespoir, il y peut avoir quelques 18 a 20 ans qu'elle est telle.' Persy had approached her asking reason for her sadness, and she told him about drowning; offered her a purse if she would serve him, but he and the purse disappeared after he had touched her forehead on her acceptance. Had been to assemblies every fortnight, but did nothing there. At first meeting given powder - black/kill, yellow/heal.

Confessed making Joseph ill because she was afraid he would tell about theft, and Didier Drouot's wife because of demand for money. Had killed wife of Humbert Journal, but would give no reason for this. Also wife of Jean George, who had refused her alms. Said these were all her maléfices.

Asked about accomplices, claimed she had always been to sabbat on her own. Asked if it had therefore been to prostitute herself to her master, denied this.

That afternoon renewed confessions, but would add nothing.

31 July 1624; interrogation

Confirmed she was witch; now said there had been 7 or 8 people at sabbat, but they did nothing and she did not know them.

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2 August 1624; PG des Vosges asks for death sentence, but that she be tortured again first to ask her about accomplices

5 August 1624; Change de Nancy asks that before deciding on further action she be asked whether she actually renounced God, and how.

7 August 1624; interrogation under torture

Said others at sabbat were men, and that they were dressed normally - then immediately said they were in white cloth. They and Persy danced, she only watched. Admitted she had renounced God at first meeting - had been crying as she went towards St Nicolas because of drowning of child.

Asked about other at sabbat, claimed that they had been veiled, although she was not. Asked if she had power to take off illnesses she had given, said she had not.

Finally given thumbscrews, and asked again about accomplices, persisted that she knew none.

7 August 1624; PG reiterates request of 2 August.