

B 8260; witch 126, Hillevix, femme Cuguin Magister, de Vilcey-sur-Trey

Had been arrested and taken to Preny on charge of witchcraft.

11 May 1584; informations preparatoires

(1) Didier Mairase, 45

Told of illness of le Grand Martin Jacques 16 or 17 years earlier; he suspected her, and sent for her to heal him. She agreed to make a soup, but he could not eat it, and it dribbled out of his mouth. He and his wife then died and were buried together. After Easter in current year his own wife was very ill, and again suspected her, so sent for her to make a soup. When accused leaned over bed to ask how she was she threw this in her face, saying 'sorciere jenosse ne me veulx tu point reguerir fault il par ton gré je m'en aille mourrir', to which Hellevix replied 'maulvaise garce tu as mal faict'. Witness then showed her 2 children who were also ill, and she told him they would do well if he gave them food, but their mother was in danger 'de rachepter les enffantz'.

(2) Gigons Jacques, 50

Had been resident for 30 years, and never seen harm in her - but also never heard good. Had demanded repayment of debt of 7 gros he owed her when they all had to pay taille, which she complained was too high; he feared her, so borrowed money elsewhere to pay debt. Story of death of his brother Martin Jacques, as above.

(3) Didier Michiel, charpentier, 40

Had been drinking in her husband's house a month earlier when she told of visit to Alizon femme Didier Maurize, and attack in which latter had called her witch and pulled out some of her hair. Some years earlier had heard from Jean Grassoie that her daughter-in-law Babon claimed to have found her beating water; when he remonstrated with her that she should not say this she claimed Hillevix was a witch and she would have her burned.

(4) Colas Bourlier, 20

Told of illness of his father 18 months earlier. Had been haymaking, and stopped to take wine and 'quichette' at her house, after which he was ill and in bed for several days. Witness asked Hellevix to visit him, which she did, telling him he would soon be well. Next morning she and her daughter came to make his bed, after which he slept for a while, then declared himself cured and went out to work. During illness had told witness and Colas Collin he suspected her, although they both suggested he should not think this.

(5) Jean Grassoie, 40

20 years earlier her brother Jean Cuguin had leased some sheep to Pierron Marchal, although she wanted them, and she told Pierron he would make no profit. The sheep died soon after; Pierron asked her to look at them but she refused, after which he several times called her witch. Later when a witch was executed at Preny

Cuguin Magister saw some soldiers coming from Viller, whom he thought were from the prévôté coming to arrest them, and said to wife of witness 'nous sommes perdus'. Long reputation.

(6) Jacquemin Tout Bon, 37

2 or 3 years earlier she had come to his house asking to buy eggs, but could not agree price and told his wife she would repent. Soon after they lost a cow, a goat, and other animals, and a child fell ill; suspected this was her doing.

(7) Didier Jacques, Mre echevin en la justice de Vilcey, 50

Story of illness of Colas le Bourlier, and his belief that she was responsible, after which the witness, le maire Grassye, and Colas Colin advised his wife to call Hellevix to visit him and make him a soup. Had seen her go to house, but did not know what she did. On another occasion had argument with her over quality of money she gave him for wine, after which he lost a foal. 'D'aultre mal n'a point veu en elle synon peu de bien.' Asked about illness of his brother Martin, described how she made him soup but he could not take it, and how he and his wife died and were buried in 'une fosse', but made no charge against her.

(8) Colas Collin, 50

Some 2 years previously had been in dispute with her brother Jean Cuguin over tilerly they leased jointly, and brought this to an end. Over following year he lost 3 cows and 2 horses, while his wife was ill; when he consulted friends they advised him to take Cuguin back into partnership, which he did, since when he had no more losses. Story of Colas Bourlier's illness, during which he swore she had bewitched him. General reputation.

(12 May 1584)

(9) Yzabel veuve Colas le Bourlier, 45

Told how 2 years earlier late husband had bad leg, and often had to go with stick. After working for Capitaine of Preny he took 4 testons to Hillevix, since he owed her 16 francs and had given her 4 journals of wheat as surety. Asked her for some wine and 'quichette', but when he came home had great illness in stomach and whole body. In bed for 3 days in great distress; when she called in their neighbour the maire husband said Hellevix had bewitched him. The maire and Colas Collin advised her to call the accused in and discuss the deal made with her; she did this and it was agreed that husband should cut the wheat. Later she returned and suggested it would be a good idea to remake his bed; when witness said she could not so it alone she offered to help, and walked him about room, holding him under arms, while she made bed. He then slept for an hour and woke declaring himself better, in presence of maire and curé who had come to visit him. She had to persuade him not to go to work that day, pointing out that he had made confession earlier, but he did go next day. Had no trouble with leg or anything else, and lived 2 more years in good health. Reputation 17 years (residence).

(10) Laurent Pacquin, 30

When his mother-in-law was ill she and her sister went to see la Queprotte at La Va Nalbe, ban de Chenimont, 'qui avoit coustume de deviner de maladie', and advised about pilgrimages and other cures. She said it was 'mal donné, et que c'estoit esté une femme que luy avoit donné ce loppin qu'elle avoit au dessus du coeur et s'il eust esté au desoubz elle n'eust pas vescu xxiiii heures, leur ordonnant une neufiesme au nom de Dieu St Bernard St Cusmine (?) et St Damien et sy elle devoit reguerir ou mourir ce seroit dedans ladite neufiesme'. She died on sixth day, which made them suspect Hellevix. Asked to say more about reasons for suspecting her, said they had owed her husband money, and she had sworn they owed 7 francs more than was the case. After threats from her had lost various animals, notably pigs which they had refused to sell her. General reputation, and had several times called her witch in public without reparation being sought.

(11) Pierrot le Mareschal, 60

When they lived next to her some 27 or 28 years earlier his daughter Cathin (now married at Thiaucourt) was so ill that his wife told Hellevix she was dying; Hellevix visited her, and she recovered in half an hour, after which they suspected her so much that they moved house. Later leased sheep from her brother Jean, but she was angry and said neither he nor they would make profit. One then died, and he was carrying skin back to village when he met her and said 'Jenosse sorciere regarde voila de ton ouvrage', at which she went off 'houchant la teste'. Within the year all the other 5 or 6 died. Asked if when they were neighbours there were threats followed by illnesses, said they had a sick child and consulted a woman at Corny who said they had evil neighbours; immediately they returned a cow died. General reputation.

(12) Thiery fils Claudin Thiery, de Viéville, 30

Genera reputation only.

(13) Thiebault Robert, 40

Only resident a short time, but had heard she was reputed a witch, and several said 'que ayantz des enffans malade ou bestialz mort qu'il seroit bon parler a ladite Hillevix'.

(14) Marguitte Mengeot, 20

Hillevix had attended birth of first child, which died 2 weeks later, but did not suspect her over this. In youth had heard from father and father-in-law that they suspected her over death of a child; general reputation.

(15) Bastienne Tanchot, 45

Had seen no harm in her, but had seen some call her witch.

(16) Colin Fillette dit Rengier, de Neufmoulin proche Vilcey, 60

Had heard Mengeot Grassoie claim she had caused death of his wife's first child. General reputation.

(17) Mariotte Collin, femme Colas Collin, 50

Hillevix had borrowed a sack from her for grain, and when she went to fetch it 2 weeks later gave her some 'joutte' with a piece of meat. As soon as she ate this she was cured of illness she had suffered from for previous 6 months. General reputation.

(14 May 1584)

(18) Bastien Grassoys, de Rembacourt, 56

Some 16 to 18 years earlier had dispute with her over payment of remainder of sums due for house he had sold her, and took her to court. During case he told her he would rather lose his best horse than renounce what was due to him, and she said he might well lose two. In next few months 4 horses died, to value of 58 golden écus, and marchal could do nothing for them; also lost 7 pigs and 14 sheep. Was an occasion during night when they found their 6-month-old child out of its cot and by the door. After so many misfortunes he tried to kill her with a sword, calling her witch, but was prevented by others who were present. Had not sought redress for occasions when he called her witch.

(19) Pierresson Destain, mercier de Vendieres, 50

Told of occasion 4 years earlier when he had been by fire in her house with her husband one cold day, and they heard a noise. Husband called out threateningly to her and got up, at which witness followed, afraid he was going to beat her. Saw her lying under chimney in kitchen, and seemed to say 'quac, quac, quac'. When she came to herself was white and frightened. On other occasions he had asked husband why they took no action when she was called witch, and he only said this was false.

24 May 1584; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses, and agreed she had sometimes been called witch, but otherwise denied charges. Agreed that wife of Didier Maurise had attacked her, but she was in such a state that she did not know what she was doing.

28 May 1584; interrogation

Had apparently been interrogated already on 24 May - unless this was merely a reference to confrontations. Agreed that she was reputed a witch, that she had visited the sick, made them soups, and given them food and drink - but all she had done 'n'a pas esté par mauvaise intention ains par devotion et charité.'

1 June 1584; Change de Nancy asks for further interrogations and confrontations; if she continues to deny may be given question extraordinaire.

5 June 1584; interrogation under torture

Appears to have been confronted with witnesses first. Then interrogated while being threatened with torture. Said she was about 60, native of La Voenville in prévôté de la Chaulse et terre de Gorze. Lived there for 4 years after marriage,

then moved to Vilcey, where they worked land in association with husband's brother-in-law Mengeot Grassoie. Had quarrel, because when people came more often to their house than to that of Grassoie to buy wine the latter's wife dissuaded them, saying they would be given 'boucots' to eat which would make them ill. Over 7 or 8 years was dissatisfied because husband would not take her part, and then a man in black approached her in garden, saying that if she would do as he wished he would give her vengeance against her enemies. When she agreed he touched her forehead and left, saying he was Mre Martin.

Returned 2 weeks later and gave her 7 or 8 horns of powder in different colours, and 'herbes broiées'. Had used these to make Colas Bourlier ill, but then cured him by touching him. Had killed horses of Bastien Grassoie by putting powder in stream where they drank, but had not made his other animals ill. Admitted making Mariotte Collin ill, and killing sheep of Pierrot Mareschal, who had called her witch.

Claimed she had not seen her master for about a year, since God had released her from his 'mauvais volonté et entreprinse'. No clear indication whether she was being tortured at any stage of this confession.

11 June 1584; interrogation under torture

Started by revoking previous confession, saying it had been made in fear of torture. Was then tortured - no details of how - and renewed confessions.

Asked whether her master had intercourse with her, said he had done so twice. Also said he had beaten her for refusing to obey him. On way back to prison said that a year earlier her master had taken her to a stream, where she beat the water with a stick to make hail and snow, but all her efforts were in vain. Had wanted to make it fall on fields of some of those who spoke ill of her.

14 June 1584; PG de Lorraine (Maimbourg) asks for her to be interrogated further on details of crime, then put to death.

15 June 1584; Change de Nancy approves in general, but says final sentence must await results of interrogation.

16 June 1584; interrogation

Renewed earlier confession; said seduction had been around time Spaniards came, perhaps a year after taking of St Dizier. Asked if her master was like other men when he had intercourse with her, said she was not sure, since he had beaten her and made her unable to cry out. Had finally confessed everything to curé of Vilcey, a monk of St Marie (subsequently curé at Ley), since when he had not appeared to her. Asked how in that case she had performed the acts she had confessed, said she had kept some of the powder. Sometimes used yellow powder to cure, at other times it was sufficient to touch people.

18 June 1584; Change de Nancy approves death sentence

21 June 1584; formal death sentence