

B 8979 no 5; witch 328, Jehanne Villaume, veuve Pierre Louvet, drappier de St Nicolas

Denounced by Ydatte Marchal, femme Humbert Vaulthier

10 October 1609; informations preparatoires

(1) Jehanne Pierat, femme Claudin Biquel, marchand, 34

Said that 3 or 4 years earlier her daughter aged 5 had been taken ill in the church; told witness that Jehanne had pulled her by clothes and made her fall, while telling her off. Became as if paralysed and very hot, looking as if she had been burned from waist down; surgeon could do nothing, so she enquired about Jehanne's reputation. When she heard she was suspected of witchcraft, obtained bread and salt from her house through a neighbour. Child ate this, instantly fell asleep for an hour, and was much better when she woke - skin fell off affected part. Suspected her, for reason given before, and because she had several times put her out of her seat in church. (Competent signature)

(2) Phelippe Passaige, gardeur, 45

Had lived in same house 6 years earlier, when his daughter aged 18 months became ill, with legs twisted and useless. Had not suspected her until asked to get bread and salt by previous witness, when he heard of cure of her child. General reputation. (Marked)

(3) Elizabeth femme Mengin Barillat, huillier, 46

4 years earlier one of her sons was quarrelling with son of previous witness in presence of accused, who took him by arm and said 'tu auras ton peut diable'. Witness later told her off, saying she was not wise to use such words; 3 months later boy fell ill, with arm all swollen. Surgeon had been unable to cure him; as soon as one place was better, hole appeared elsewhere, and still not properly recovered. Suspected her because of what she said, touching, and general reputation.

(4) Jacquatte veuve Vaultrin Contal, cordonnier, 47

Some 10 years earlier she had been envious over charity given to witness by wife of late Nicolas Drouard, fearing she would be less generous than previously to her. Went to her and said charity was needless, since husband of witness could make his living; witness went and told her she was angry with her, to which she replied that she knew this already - yet she had only spoken to her husband about it. A week later her daughter aged 2 became ill, emaciated although she ate all the time, and with neck twisted. Having some suspicion against her, persuaded her to visit the child. She came, saying she was angry to be suspected, and was not what they thought. Witness said she had not said this, but she could see state of child, and Jehanne asked if they had made pilgrimage, adding that these were useless if made by mother and father. Witness then asked her to do what was necessary, and she made neuvaine in church with candles, then later gave child an apple and some bread. After this she quickly recovered, having been ill 9 months - suspected she had been cause, for reasons above and common repute.

(5) Barbe femme Isaac Farré, cordonnier, 30

4 years earlier, at request of Phelippe Passage, had obtained bread and salt from her house for child of Claudin Biquel. Heard from midwife that she was angry when she found out; child became black and twisted a week after birth, and died 3 weeks later - suspected her in view of the above and common repute.

(6) Anne femme Claudin Mulnier, recouvreur, 45

Long reputation, and sometimes feared her.

(15 October 1609)

(7) Claudon veuve Aubertin Laurent, cordonnier, 54

Told how 4 years earlier she had spoken to witness about Barbe femme Isaac Ferré, talking about childbirth, then saying that she had done her great harm and spoken against her. Talked of bread and salt, and said she wished her bad health. General reputation, and several people murmured against her.

(8) Barbe Chocquart, femme Nicolas Rennial, marchand, 40

When accused had been neighbour she had often been in her house and that of her mother. During this time had various afflictions, notably in childbirth, but did not suspect her; only since arrest had she thought that of she was witch she might have caused such infirmities. (Competent signature)

(9) Anthoinette Marchal, femme François Racquenel, boulangier, 34

She had been in habit of going to cemetery at Varangeville to sprinkle holy water on graves of her dead children, and sometimes gave alms to accused. Year after Grand Jubilé Jehanne met her and said she did not go there so often, and thought less of dead children now she had another child alive. Next day child, aged 10 months, fell ill, and she immediately suspected her; called her to see it, and she made a neuvaine, but child died day after she finished this. Suspected her because of common repute, and because she had discontinued usual alms.

16 October 1609; PG (C.M. Rémy) asks for interrogation and confrontations

19 October 1609; Change de Nancy approves

23 October 1609; interrogation

Said she was about 60, native of St Nicolas. First husband had been Epron Guerin dit Pettiat, second Pierre Louvet, drappier, both of St Nicolas. On arrest maire had told her she had been accused as witch by Jacqueline Manouvrier.

Knew that Claudin Biquel's wife had obtained bread and salt; had confronted her and told her she did her great wrong to suspect her. Asked her 'sy elle estimoit qu'elle fut meschante', to which she replied 'qu'elle n'en sçavoit rien', and that if she had suspected her over child's illness she would have called her to give healing. Agreed that she usually sat in her seat, or next to it, in church, and might have pushed child to make more room, but had done no harm.

Asked about illness of child of Phelippe Passaige, said child had returned ill from the wetnurse, and she was not cause. Agreed she had made neuvaine for sick child of Anthoinette Marchal, but was not cause of death. Otherwise denied all charges, insisting she was innocent.

24 October 1609; confrontations

Said in reply to Jehanne femme Claudin Biquel that even if she had had bread and sal from her house, she did not know this was cause of cure. As for Jacquatte veuve Vaultrin Contal, she was 'ribaude, lairosse et attrairesse'; had stolen wine from cellar of late Nicolas Drouard and incited his maid to do likewise. Jacquatte admitted having affair with young man who promised marriage, and said she had stolen wine on suggestion of chambermaid; had confessed to Drouard, who forgave her. Otherwise no reproaches to witnesses. Admitted saying to Claudon veuve Aubertin Laurent that she wished 'mal santé' to Barbe Ferré, but this was because she had accused her of being witch, and she wished her no harm otherwise.

27 October 1609; substitut asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

31 October 1609; Change de Nancy approves

2 November 1609; interrogation under torture

Agreed she had often separated sons of Phelippe Passaige and Mengin Barillat, but had not made remarks attributed to her, adding 'que ceulx a qui elle a faict autrefois du bien, luy rendent le mal'.

After lengthy questioning, was given thumbscrews and questions were repeated; called out 'Jesus Maria' many times, but would confess nothing. Then racked, with two turns eventually applied (each section apparently for 7-8 minutes). At this point remarked that she had gone very red in the face, and could not safely be stretched further. Kept saying that against the damnation of her soul she was innocent. Finally given tortillons; asked them to have mercy on a poor widow, but would not confess.

14 November 1609; substitut suggests that she be renvoyée

16 November 1609; Change de Nancy concurs

19 November 1609; formal order for release from court at St Nicolas