

B 8281 no 2; witch 132, Margueritte veuve Claudin Hierosme, de Vilcey-sur-Trey

10 September 1597; the accused presented herself before the maire of Vilcey, Zacary Ragot le vieux, accompanied by her daughter Marie and her son-in-law Collas Hierosme. Said she knew he suspected her over 2 horses which had died in last few days; he replied that he did, and wanted to have her arrested, even if it cost him 100 écus. She replied 'j'aime beaucoup mieux m'en aller, car il me cousteroit, et a vous, que sy j'estois prize je n'auroy poinct de droict'. He then went to tell Nicollas le Procureur, mre echevin, and she followed to say 'Messieurs puis que je voy qu'il y a partie des bourgeois d'icy qui ont soupson sur moy, et qu'ilz ne me voyent volontiers, j'aime mieux m'en aller, et m'absenter d'icy que d'y estre a regret, et contre leur volonté, et que de me laisser tormenter (car celluy qui est pris n'a pas bon droict). Je quicte (dict elle) des maintenant à la bourgeoisie, aux droictz du village, et a tout, demandant avoit une certification. Luy fut respondue que sy elle en voulloit avoir une, ceroit selon son fame, et que ses faictz estoient cause de son mal, ce qu'entendu par elle, dict; J'aime donc mieux n'en poinct avoir.'

When she saw maire leave for Pont-à-Mousson on private affairs half an hour later, may have thought he was going to start action against her. Then made donation of all her property to her son-in-law, on condition that he would assist her to best of his ability. After this she left, and had not been seen since.

22 November 1599; informations preparatoires

(1) Zacharye Ragot, jadis maire, 30

Some 3 years earlier had 2 horses which died within a week. Margueritte, known as la Charbonniere, made them a drink, but this did no good. In view of reputation suspected her; she had several times asked him as maire to support her from the tailles as a poor widow, but he had taken no notice.

(2) Didier Maurice, laboureur, 60

4 years earlier his son Jean was very ill, and Margueritte told witness he must get him to eat something. She sent his maid to get milk from her cow, and the sick man took this after she boiled it, then went to sleep and suddenly recovered. She had also cured a sick ox, giving in drinks and pushing food down its throat with her hand. Told him that without her it would have died. Did not want to charge her except by conjecture, in view of reputation.

(3) Laurent Pasquin, 40

Said that about 4 years earlier he had taken one or two birds from nets set by her husband. Soon after had bad chest and could hardly breathe; finally she visited him and felt his chest, putting a finger where pain was, after which he recovered. A year later had a bad arm for long time, and consulted her. She handled it, then told him to rub it with milk from a black cow; did this and was cured.

(4) Laurent Collon, 40

About 4 years earlier she had picked up his year-old child when it fell, after which it had a twisted neck, from which it was still suffering. Had difficulty breathing, and something like frogs in stomach.

(5) Cathin femme Robinet Ganard, 30

3 years before had chased Margueritte's goat out of her garden with a stick; she said she had beaten it, and should look out for her own. Soon after her own goat died. 5 years earlier her sister Jennon had died, and when she spoke to Margueritte later she said this would not have happened if they had sent for her.

(6) Blaisotte veuve Pierron Gaignon, 60

6 years earlier her daughter Barbe, wife of Pierron Fillotte of Remenonville, was staying with her. Margueritte brought her some fish, but when she took first mouthful it was bitter, and she felt something prick her knee. Next night whole body became swollen, and various women came to see her. Margueritte made them all leave, then rubbed body with warm linen, saying that otherwise she would have died. Swelling went to her leg, where there were two openings, and she treated these with powder and grease. She went home with husband, but Margueritte later said she should return so that she could cure her completely. Further treatment with powder and grease was not successful, and after 8 or 9 days there was a quarrel; Barbe said after this she was sure Margueritte had given her the illness. Also told of warning that no-one else must let powder or grease get on them.

(7) Pierron Fillotte de Remenonville, 30

Said that when his wife was in hands of surgeon, Mre Guillaume, Margueritte said she would have healed her just as well as any doctor, by use of herbs. After he gave up on case she took over, using a lot of grease and powder, but this did no good and she finally died. Warning about not touching as above.

(8) Cointine femme Gerard Rouyer, de Neufmoulin, 60

Same story about illness of Barbe, who was daughter-in-law. Claimed that Margueritte had said 'je voullois luy faire avaller le mal, qu'il sortist par dessoubz les ongles des pieds je n'en peux jouyr, il fault que cela se perce en la jambe'. After this the two holes appeared, and she said they must not be stopped or she would die; did in fact die suspecting illness was her doing.

(9) Pasquin Vyon, manouvrier, 30

4 years earlier his wife had invited her to treat sick child; she rubbed it with grease many times, but did no good. In the end he called her witch and drove her out of house, but she made no complaint.

(10) Martin Jeaugente, maire de Vilcey, 40

Told of occasion 3 years before when he went to her house around 7 in morning with intention of buying some manure. Saw her in her chemise performing strange ceremonies around a candle, so he was frightened and left. She came after him to ask if he was frightened, saying she had been performing a neuvaine for a sick person she had in the house. Soon after he had a horse ill, which died despite drinks she gave it, but could only charge her by conjecture.

(11) Claudin Humbert, manouvrier, 40

Told of occasion at dawn 3 years ago when he had seen her leave house wrapped in a sheet, carrying a candle, and go to graveyard, after which she made a turn round the church before returning home. Had heard of Barbe's suspicions over her illness.

13 December 1599; substitut for PG orders that she be summoned to answer charges, and if she cannot be found should be banished and her goods seized.

Series of formal statements about attempts to find her follows, leading to formal sentence by Change de Nancy (18 March) and court at Preny (2 May 1600).