

B 4094 no 2 Witch 074, La Grande Lucye

13 March 1608; PG des Vosges orders prévôt of Charmes to investigate reputation of La Grande Lucye, denounced by la Rondelatte at her execution on March 11.

28 March 1608; informations preparatoires

(1) Claude Borrellier de Charmes, 40

Long reputation. Some 4 years ago he had sold his half of a house they shared with her in faubourg; this was his wife's property, and Lucye as her 'soeur germaine' was prospective heir. Had heard from Marie, wife of Cuguin Flaux, that Lucie had demonstrated her discontent at poisle of Nicolas Claudiat, saying that her sister had agreed to the sale 'mais que des deniers en provenans elle ne s'en serviroit en bonne santé'. Soon after his wife (Francoise) became ill with strange sickness, all bent so that she could not walk, and he had to carry her like a child. Several people thought that Lucie had given her sickness, but when he asked her his wife said she did not believe this. He had therefore not believed it either, until last summer when Lucie had sent an apple for her to eat; she had found it good, but soon after started to get worse, and died a week later. He now thought she had bewitched his wife.

(2) Margueritte Harmant femme de Nicolas Gegoult marchal de Charmes, c. 35

Some 6 years before Lucie had undertaken to sell 3 linceux de courtine for witness, but prospective buyer had withdrawn, and finally she had sold them herself, so that Lucie did not get commission. Soon after her son Nicolas, aged 10, fell violently ill. During sickness Lucie came to house asking that her husband should sharpen her hatchet, but when she didn't return for it witness regretted not having spoken to her about child's illness. He died around midnight same day, after she had heard something drop from his bed - could not discover what when she lit a light. Soon after Lucie came to see her, saying she was not responsible for his death, and asking what the lodgers were saying about her. Witness suspected her so strongly that for eight days she had kept watch for her, intending to strike her with a hammer.

(3) Marie femme de Cuguin Flaux de Charmes, c. 78.

Believed that Lucie had caused illness of her son Jean Flaux, aged 22, some 6 years earlier when he had been learning trade of weaver with Claude Borrellier. Since then he had suffered bouts of insanity lasting up to 3 days; had begun after he had argument with her. Also testified to remarks about Borrellier's wife after sale of share in house. General reputation.

(4) Barbon fille de Jean Michiel marchal à Charmes, c. 20

General repute, and told of taking apple to Francoise Borrellier for her.

(5) Didier Bartremin Jeune, fils de Claude Bartremin marchal de Charmes, c. 19

Some 6 years before he and the two sons of Jean de Socourt (now absent from Charmes) had been cutting wood when they saw two animals fighting; took hatchets and went to see what they were. Thought they might have been foxes or hares, but

they suddenly disappeared; then Lucie came out of wood at place they had entered, 'toute dechevelée'; they hastily made up their bundles and left, without speaking to her, since what they saw had made them believe common notion that she was a witch.

(6) Agnez fille de feu Jean de Vaubexey alias Thierry de Charmes, c. 44

Some 5 years earlier she had taken a young girl from Bralleville called Libaire, who had fallen ill in service of the sieur de But, tabellion, into her house; right arm and thigh were full of 'cloux'. Told her she suspected Lucie of causing this, because she had refused her some shoes when in service of Gille Choisy, tailor. Within two hours of arrival in her house Lucie appeared with two pears for her; she ate these after they had been cooked, but they did not help her (although witness had regarded it as an excellent sign that Lucie should bring them) - instead she became worse and soon died. On this basis, and in line with Libaire's own suspicions, witness thought that Lucie was a witch and had killed her 'et ne se peult contenir d'en ouvrir et declairer quelque parolle.' Lucie was informed of this, and subsequently said to her 'tu as raporté que j'estois cause de la mort de Libaire, et que je luy avois porté des poires, Je t'assure que tu t'en repentiras, tu ne mouras jamais d'autres mains que des miennes.' When she met her usually gave her various 'maledictions', and around last St. Jean for 3 weeks there was a daily 'tintamarre' in her room, with small stones falling on her, although she was not hurt. On advice of various visitors she made her 'paques' and trouble ceased.

(7) Nicolas Claudert de Charmes, c. 46

General reputation. When a woman of Charmes had committed suicide some 10 or 12 years earlier, Lucie had said the Devil was a tempter, and had told of an occasion some years before when she had woken in fields to find man dressed in black trying to make her believe in him, but she had sent him packing. Also believed she had killed his horses after quarrels; he and his wife had left house they shared with her because they wanted peace from her endless arguing.

(8) Mengeotte femme de Guillaume Redoubte de Charmes, c. 30

Some 4 years earlier Lucie had looked in her baby's cot and said it was a fine child; it became ill two days later and died next day. Did not suspect her at time, but now she had heard of her reputation and imprisonment thought she could have caused death, even though she had never quarrelled with her.

(9) Mongeon femme de Demenge de But tabellion de Charmes, c. 40

Told story of Libaire's illness, emphasising how firmly she believed herself to have been bewitched by Lucie. Also said that her husband had several times rebuked her, saying 'que c'estoit honte à elle de demander l'aulmosne, attendu qu'elle avoit quelque commodité et deux belles grandes filles qui pouvoient bien l'entretenir sans ainsy mendier'. After this her son Nicolas, aged about six, had fallen ill with an unknown illness and died 'pitoiablement'. Witness suspected Lucie of causing this; also general repute and fear.

(10) Nicolas Gegoult marchal de Charmes, c. 32

Confirmed wife's story about death of his son Nicolas, for which he firmly believed her to have been responsible. At burial Lucie had said to him; 'Nicolas je suis femme de bien je vous prie de n'avoir aucun soubcon sur moy encor que j'ay plusieurs fois niché votre enfant'; since he was 'triste' he made no reply. Had however intended to drown or kill her after hearing that she had beaten son before his death.

(11) Cuguin Flaux de Charmes, c. 78

Said he had called her witch without any reaction, and also told of hearing her threaten others during quarrels. Blamed her for son's illness, and said she bore him a grudge 'a raison d'une chanson que luy avec d'autres avoient chanté d'elle de ses filles et de quelques Religieux de Belchamps ou elles alloient souvent et de faict le fait un jour battre audit Belchamps par un Religieux.'

(12) Idatte femme de Claude Barbonnaire harquebusier à Charmes, c. 40

5 or 6 years before, as neighbour of Lucie, had been frightened to refuse her anything. Had fallen ill, and suspecting her to be cause, had asked her for remedy. She gave her a 'verge' to keep by her, but she felt worse, and on asking further advice was told to have pilgrimage made, and to ask Cuguin Flaux what he had done for his son. Her own husband and son made pilgrimage with her to Rebrimont (?) after which she was cured.

(13) Honnorable Gille Joseph archer de la garde de S.A. demt. à Charmes, c. 47

Told of occasion two years earlier when he had seen her near the étang, then looking back seen that she was staring at him. Dropped on to his knee and let go of arquebus, as if something was making him do this. Called her a witch and said he would have her burned, a threat he had repeated later. Also told of a mysterious large cat in his house, which he had been unable to catch; there was no opening it could have entered by. Finally said he suspected Lucie of causing recent death of his son, and that he knew she bore him hatred and envy. (Signed)

(14) Anne femme de Nicolas Meschy tanneur à Charmes, c. 48

General reputation. Bore witness to illness of Libaire and to stones which had fallen on Agnez.

(15) Chesnon veuve de feu Linard Martin de Charmes, c. 72

Told of numerous quarrels which she and her daughters Catherine and Libaire had had with Lucie when she was their neighbour; over last 5 or 6 years had suffered many afflictions and accidents which they believed to have proceeded from the 'oeuvres meschantes' of Lucie. A year before 'ladite Catherine retournant de la confession sans avoir demande pardon à ladite Lucie, elle fut sy osée de dire que l'accident que luy arriva le jour de pasques pendant la grande messe ne luy fut venu sy elle luy eust demandé pardon, ayant tumbé en pasmoisin tellement qu'il sembloit qu'elle deust mourir.' Her other daughter Libaire had vomited up a creature a foot long which had made a terrible smell when thrown on fire. They had also suffered from a 'tintamarre' above their roof. Further gave account of talk after suicide 12

years earlier, when Lucie had described being approached by figure like devil, and told of an occasion when she had seen her rolling on the ground in her garden, crying and groaning. She and her daughters had been talking of Lucie after she had been accused, then discharged, by Jean de Socourt; one said she wished she were a hundred feet underground, as otherwise she would do them harm, and other replied that the earth itself would be 'gastée'. At this point heard three bangs on door, but there was no-one there.

(16) Bastienne veuve Demenge Ferry de Charmes, c. 50

Told of episodes with Libaire and Agnez. 12 years before she and husband had been neighbours of Lucye, and there had been a dispute over picking peas in garden with one of her daughters. Lucie had threatened her several times, saying 'je t'auray'; soon her husband fell ill and died with sickness similar to that of Libaire, and in view of quarrel and her reputation witness had believed her responsible.

(17) Libaire fille de feu Linard Martin de Charmes, c. 25

Told how she had been very ill when she vomited out strange creature, and didn't remember it very well; had taken drink prescribed by curé of Gripport beforehand. Generally concurred with mother's testimony, and added that Lucie had been angry because she had not brought bread from Mirecourt or 'connieres' from Nancy when asked to do so.

Depositions followed by note from Prévôt saying that he has consulted previous trials of la Mallebarbe, la Triffatte, la Romaine, and Jean de Socourt. Only last-named had accused Lucie, and he had withdrawn this later. Only one to maintain accusation had been la Rondelatte.

5 April 1608; PG des Vosges orders interrogation

10-11 April 1608; interrogation

Note that she had been imprisoned after accusation by la Rondelatte a month earlier.

Said she was Lucie, widow of Guyot Bozieres of Charmes, aged about 70. Husband had been a miller, whom she had married at Leneuveville; had then taken mills at Ville-sur-Madon, Gerbecourt, and Cantenois. Husband had died at last-named, having been bewitched by Claudon Blanpoil of Vaudeville. Of seven children, two daughters survived, Marie (c.36) and Catherine (22). Had been widow for 20 years.

Asked how she knew of bewitchment, and if Blanpoil had been executed, 'Respondu que non, mais que chacun l'avoit en estime de sorcier, et qu'environ sept ou huit mois avant son décès ledit Blanpoil qui avoit esté appelé sorcier par un sien frere, invita son dit marit à boire, tellement que retournant d'avec luy, dit qu'il l'avoit fait boire en son verre et qu'il se trouvoit fort mal, sy bien qu'à l'instant il se trouva malade et mourut ayant mis hors de son corps plusieurs bestes et autres vilenies qu'il luy a tousjours fait juger qu'iceluy Blanpoil estoit sorcier, et qu'il a fait mourir son dit marit sans toutefois qu'il ait eu querelle avec luy qu'elle sache.'

Said that during widowhood she had retired to Charmes, where she had done day labour, spinning, and relied on alms when necessary. Claimed she was reputed a good woman, and that the Sr. Maillard of Cantenois had certified her so to the 'gens de Justice' of Charmes when she came to take up residence.

Told the contrary was true, and that she was reputed a witch, she finally conceded (while seeming to cry without tears) 'qu'aucuns en ont murmuré mais qu'elle ne les a ouy'.

Denied long string of questions. Did agree that Gille Joseph had called her witch on one occasion only. Also agreed that she had reproached Catherine Martin with not seeking her pardon, but said that she had fainted because she was subject to 'mal St. George'.

Under further reproaches, suddenly fell on knees and said she wanted to confess the truth. Some 27 years before, when they had been at Ville-sur-Madon, her husband had come home drunk as she was preparing to bake bread; tried to attack her and beat her, but she fled out into a garden. When there she suddenly thought that he might throw baby into heated oven, and while in terror the enemy appeared to her in form of Mre. Romary and seduced her.

Had been numerous times to sabbat, where she had sometimes been beaten for refusing to do her master's will. Sometimes merely dreamed she was there, other times was actually present. Had only recognised Jean de Socourt, la Rondelatte, and a tisserande of Chamagne whose name she did not know, but who had been in prison for a long time. Confessed to killing a few animals on her master's orders, using powder he gave her, but denied any other malefices.

12 April 1608; interrogation

Told that she had surely committed other malefices she had not yet confessed, and that she could only secure her soul by telling everything, she added new details. When at Ville-sur-Madon another horse had been attacking theirs, so she put powder in field - but this killed both horses. Had killed two women in same place, one who had stolen 'du filet et de la chanvre', the other who had refused to pay for some wheat. Had also killed her cousin Francoise Philipe of Charmes some 4 years earlier after she had reproached her for begging when her two daughters could have provided for her. Had also killed Jean Mallebarbe, who had broken a 'hape' he was supposed to be mending for her.

Reinterrogated later same day, admitted to killing three other persons. A girl of Ville-sur-Madon who had snatched coiffe from head of one of her daughters, a 3-year-old girl at Gerbecourt, whose mother had beaten one of her daughters who died soon afterwards, and Claudatte Flamant of Charmes, with whom she had quarrelled over share of payment for day labour.

13 April 1608; interrogation

Said she had also killed Catherine wife of the late Claudon Jean of Charmes, who had asked her to kill or strangle her, because she had let her child be burned, and

feared her husband's rage. This had been some 17 years before; as with all other cases, had used powder to kill her. Had also killed a woman of Gerbecourt, who took water too often from their fountain.

14 April 1608; PG des Vosges asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

17 April 1608; Change de Nancy approves death sentence on basis of existing evidence; she should only be shown instruments of torture while being questioned particularly on original allegations made by witnesses.

21 April 1608; interrogation under torture

Said she had nothing else to confess and did not fear torture; prévôt evidently chose to follow advice of procureur general and to disregard that of Nancy court, and had her racked. This was unproductive, since she still persisted that she had confessed everything, although begging not to be racked harder lest this cause her to tell lies. Said she had done no harm over last five years or so, because people had been so charitable to her in Charmes that she had never wished to offend them; specific accusations made against her were false. Also withdrew accusation against tisserande from Chamagne.

May have been easier to disregard advice of Nancy court because approval already given for death sentence meant that documents didn't go back there.

21 April 1608; PG approves death sentence

22 April; execution carried out.