

= Joan of Arc =

Joan of Arc ( French : Jeanne d 'Arc , IPA : [ ʒan daʁk ] ; 6 January c . 1412 ? 30 May 1431 ) , nicknamed " The Maid of Orléans " ( French : La Pucelle d 'Orléans ) , is considered a heroine of France for her role during the Lancastrian phase of the Hundred Years ' War , and was canonized as a Roman Catholic saint . Joan of Arc was born to Jacques d 'Arc and Isabelle Romée , a peasant family , at Domrémy in north @-@ east France . Joan said she received visions of the Archangel Michael , Saint Margaret , and Saint Catherine of Alexandria instructing her to support Charles VII and recover France from English domination late in the Hundred Years ' War . The uncrowned King Charles VII sent Joan to the siege of Orléans as part of a relief mission . She gained prominence after the siege was lifted only nine days later . Several additional swift victories led to Charles VII 's coronation at Reims . This long @-@ awaited event boosted French morale and paved the way for the final French victory .

On 23 May 1430 , she was captured at Compiègne by the Burgundian faction , which was allied with the English . She was later handed over to the English and put on trial by the pro @-@ English Bishop of Beauvais Pierre Cauchon on a variety of charges . After Cauchon declared her guilty she was burned at the stake on 30 May 1431 , dying at about nineteen years of age .

In 1456 , an inquisitorial court authorized by Pope Callixtus III examined the trial , debunked the charges against her , pronounced her innocent , and declared her a martyr . In the 16th century she became a symbol of the Catholic League , and in 1803 she was declared a national symbol of France by the decision of Napoleon Bonaparte . She was beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1920 . Joan of Arc is one of the nine secondary patron saints of France , along with St. Denis , St. Martin of Tours , St. Louis , St. Michael , St. Rémi , St. Petronilla , St. Radegund and Ste . Thérèse of Lisieux .

Joan of Arc has remained a popular figure in literature , painting , sculpture , and other cultural works since the time of her death , and many famous writers , filmmakers and composers have created works about her . Cultural depictions of her have continued in films , theater , television , video games , music , and performances to this day .

= = Background = =

The Hundred Years ' War had begun in 1337 as an inheritance dispute over the French throne , interspersed with occasional periods of relative peace . Nearly all the fighting had taken place in France , and the English army 's use of chevauchée tactics ( destructive " scorched earth " raids ) had devastated the economy . The French population had not recovered to its size previous to the Black Death of the mid @-@ 14th century , and its merchants were isolated from foreign markets . Prior to the appearance of Joan of Arc , the English had nearly achieved their goal of a dual monarchy under English control and the French army had not achieved any major victories for a generation . In the words of DeVries , " The kingdom of France was not even a shadow of its thirteenth @-@ century prototype . "

The French king at the time of Joan 's birth , Charles VI , suffered from bouts of insanity and was often unable to rule . The king 's brother Louis , Duke of Orléans , and the king 's cousin John the Fearless , Duke of Burgundy , quarreled over the regency of France and the guardianship of the royal children . This dispute included accusations that Louis was having an extramarital affair with the queen , Isabeau of Bavaria , and allegations that John the Fearless kidnapped the royal children . The conflict climaxed with the assassination of the Duke of Orléans in 1407 on the orders of the Duke of Burgundy .

The young Charles of Orléans succeeded his father as duke and was placed in the custody of his father @-@ in @-@ law , the Count of Armagnac . Their faction became known as the " Armagnac " faction , and the opposing party led by the Duke of Burgundy was called the " Burgundian faction " . Henry V of England took advantage of these internal divisions when he invaded the kingdom in 1415 , winning a dramatic victory at Agincourt on 25 October and subsequently capturing many northern French towns . In 1418 Paris was taken by the Burgundians , who massacred the Count of

Armagnac and about 2 @, @ 500 of his followers . The future French king , Charles VII , assumed the title of Dauphin ? the heir to the throne ? at the age of fourteen , after all four of his older brothers had died in succession . His first significant official act was to conclude a peace treaty with the Duke of Burgundy in 1419 . This ended in disaster when Armagnac partisans assassinated John the Fearless during a meeting under Charles 's guarantee of protection . The new duke of Burgundy , Philip the Good , blamed Charles for the murder and entered into an alliance with the English . The allied forces conquered large sections of France .

In 1420 the queen of France , Isabeau of Bavaria , signed the Treaty of Troyes , which granted the succession of the French throne to Henry V and his heirs instead of her son Charles . This agreement revived suspicions that the Dauphin may have been the illegitimate product of Isabeau 's rumored affair with the late duke of Orléans rather than the son of King Charles VI . Henry V and Charles VI died within two months of each other in 1422 , leaving an infant , Henry VI of England , the nominal monarch of both kingdoms . Henry V 's brother , John of Lancaster , 1st Duke of Bedford , acted as regent .

By the time Joan of Arc began to influence events in 1429 , nearly all of northern France and some parts of the southwest were under Anglo @-@ Burgundian control . The English controlled Paris and Rouen while the Burgundian faction controlled Reims , which had served as the traditional coronation site for French kings since 816 . This was an important consideration since neither claimant to the throne of France had been officially crowned yet . In 1428 the English had begun the siege of Orléans , one of the few remaining cities still loyal to Charles VII and an important objective since it held a strategic position along the Loire River , which made it the last obstacle to an assault on the remainder of the French heartland . In the words of one modern historian , " On the fate of Orléans hung that of the entire kingdom . " No one was optimistic that the city could long withstand the siege .

= = Life = =

Joan was the daughter of Jacques d 'Arc and Isabelle Romée in Domrémy , a village which was then in the French part of the duchy of Bar . Joan 's parents owned about 50 acres ( 20 hectares ) of land and her father supplemented his farming work with a minor position as a village official , collecting taxes and heading the local watch . They lived in an isolated patch of eastern France that remained loyal to the French crown despite being surrounded by pro @-@ Burgundian lands . Several local raids occurred during her childhood and on one occasion her village was burned .

At her trial , Joan stated that she was about nineteen years old , which implies she thought she was born around 1412 . She later testified that she experienced her first vision in 1425 at the age of 13 , when she was in her " father 's garden " and saw visions of figures she identified as Saint Michael , Saint Catherine , and Saint Margaret , who told her to drive out the English and bring the Dauphin to Reims for his coronation . She said she cried when they left , as they were so beautiful .

At the age of sixteen , she asked a relative named Durand Lassois to take her to the nearby town of Vaucouleurs , where she petitioned the garrison commander , Robert de Baudricourt , for permission to visit the French Royal Court at Chinon . Baudricourt 's sarcastic response did not deter her . She returned the following January and gained support from two of Baudricourt 's soldiers : Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy . According to Jean de Metz , she told him that " I must be at the King 's side ... there will be no help ( for the kingdom ) if not from me . Although I would rather have remained spinning [ wool ] at my mother 's side ... yet must I go and must I do this thing , for my Lord wills that I do so . " Under the auspices of Metz and Poulengy , she was given a second meeting , where she made a prediction about a military reversal at the Battle of Rouvray near Orléans several days before messengers arrived to report it . Given the distance of the battle 's location , Baudricourt felt Joan could only have known about the French defeat by Divine revelation , and this convinced him to take her seriously .

= = = Rise = = =

Robert de Baudricourt granted Joan an escort to visit Chinon after news from Orleans confirmed her assertion of the defeat . She made the journey through hostile Burgundian territory disguised as a male soldier , a fact which would later lead to charges of " cross @-@ dressing " against her , although her escort viewed it as a normal precaution . Two of the members of her escort said they and the people of Vaucouleurs provided her with this clothing , and had suggested it to her .

After arriving at the Royal Court she impressed Charles VII during a private conference . During this time Charles ' mother @-@ in @-@ law Yolande of Aragon was planning to finance a relief expedition to Orléans . Joan asked for permission to travel with the army and wear protective armor , which was provided by the Royal government . She depended on donated items for her armor , horse , sword , banner , and other items utilized by her entourage . Historian Stephen W. Richey explains her attraction to the royal court by pointing out that they may have viewed her as the only source of hope for a regime that was near collapse :

After years of one humiliating defeat after another , both the military and civil leadership of France were demoralized and discredited . When the Dauphin Charles granted Joan 's urgent request to be equipped for war and placed at the head of his army , his decision must have been based in large part on the knowledge that every orthodox , every rational option had been tried and had failed . Only a regime in the final straits of desperation would pay any heed to an illiterate farm girl who claimed that the voice of God was instructing her to take charge of her country 's army and lead it to victory .

Upon her arrival , Joan effectively turned the longstanding Anglo @-@ French conflict into a religious war , a course of action that was not without risk . Charles ' advisers were worried that unless Joan 's orthodoxy could be established beyond doubt ? that she was not a heretic or a sorceress ? Charles ' enemies could easily make the allegation that his crown was a gift from the devil . To circumvent this possibility , the Dauphin ordered background inquiries and a theological examination at Poitiers to verify her morality . In April 1429 , the commission of inquiry " declared her to be of irreproachable life , a good Christian , possessed of the virtues of humility , honesty and simplicity . " The theologians at Poitiers did not render a decision on the issue of divine inspiration ; rather , they informed the Dauphin that there was a " favorable presumption " to be made on the divine nature of her mission . This was enough for Charles , but they also stated that he had an obligation to put Joan to the test . " To doubt or abandon her without suspicion of evil would be to repudiate the Holy Spirit and to become unworthy of God 's aid " , they declared . They recommended that her claims should be put to the test by seeing if she could lift the siege of Orléans as she had predicted .

She arrived at the besieged city of Orléans on 29 April 1429 . Jean d 'Orléans , the acting head of the ducal family of Orléans on behalf of his captive half @-@ brother , initially excluded her from war councils and failed to inform her when the army engaged the enemy . However , his decision to exclude her did not prevent her presence at most councils and battles .

The extent of her actual military participation and leadership is a subject of debate among historians . On the one hand , Joan stated that she carried her banner in battle and had never killed anyone , preferring her banner " forty times " better than a sword ; and the army was always directly commanded by a nobleman , such as the Duke of Alençon for example . On the other hand , many of these same noblemen stated that Joan had a profound effect on their decisions since they often accepted the advice she gave them , believing her advice was Divinely inspired . In either case , historians agree that the army enjoyed remarkable success during her brief time with it .

= = = Military campaigns = = =

The appearance of Joan of Arc at Orléans coincided with a sudden change in the pattern of the siege . During the five months before her arrival , the defenders had attempted only one offensive assault , which had ended in defeat . On 4 May , however , the Armagnacs attacked and captured the outlying fortress of Saint Loup ( bastille de Saint @-@ Loup ) , followed on 5 May by a march to a second fortress called Saint @-@ Jean @-@ le @-@ Blanc , which was found deserted . When English troops came out to oppose the advance , a rapid cavalry charge drove them back into their

fortresses , apparently without a fight . The Armagnacs then attacked and captured an English fortress built around a monastery called Les Augustins . That night , Armagnac troops maintained positions on the south bank of the river before attacking the main English stronghold , called " les Tourelles " , on the morning of 7 May . Contemporaries acknowledged Joan as the heroine of the engagement . She was wounded by an arrow between the neck and shoulder while holding her banner in the trench outside les Tourelles , but later returned to encourage a final assault that succeeded in taking the fortress . The English retreated from Orléans the next day , and the siege was over .

At Chinon and Poitiers , Joan had declared that she would provide a sign at Orléans . The lifting of the siege was interpreted by many people to be that sign , and it gained her the support of prominent clergy such as the Archbishop of Embrun and the theologian Jean Gerson , both of whom wrote supportive treatises immediately following this event .

The sudden victory at Orléans also led to many proposals for further offensive action . Joan persuaded Charles VII to allow her to accompany the army with Duke John II of Alençon , and she gained royal permission for her plan to recapture nearby bridges along the Loire as a prelude to an advance on Reims and the coronation of Charles VII . This was a bold proposal because Reims was roughly twice as far away as Paris and deep within enemy territory . The English expected an attempt to recapture Paris or an attack on Normandy .

The Duke of Alençon accepted Joan 's advice concerning strategy . Other commanders including Jean d 'Orléans had been impressed with her performance at Orléans and became her supporters . Alençon credited her with saving his life at Jargeau , where she warned him that a cannon on the walls was about to fire at him . During the same siege she withstood a blow from a stone that hit her helmet while she was near the base of the town 's wall . The army took Jargeau on 12 June , Meung @-@ sur @-@ Loire on 15 June , and Beaugency on 17 June .

The English army withdrew from the Loire Valley and headed north on 18 June , joining with an expected unit of reinforcements under the command of Sir John Fastolf . Joan urged the Armagnacs to pursue , and the two armies clashed southwest of the village of Patay . The battle at Patay might be compared to Agincourt in reverse . The French vanguard attacked a unit of English archers who had been placed to block the road . A rout ensued that decimated the main body of the English army and killed or captured most of its commanders . Fastolf escaped with a small band of soldiers and became the scapegoat for the humiliating English defeat . The French suffered minimal losses .

The French army left Gien on 29 June on the march toward Reims and accepted the conditional surrender of the Burgundian @-@ held city of Auxerre on 3 July . Other towns in the army 's path returned to French allegiance without resistance . Troyes , the site of the treaty that tried to disinherit Charles VII , was the only one to put up even brief opposition . The army was in short supply of food by the time it reached Troyes . But the army was in luck : a wandering friar named Brother Richard had been preaching about the end of the world at Troyes and convinced local residents to plant beans , a crop with an early harvest . The hungry army arrived as the beans ripened . Troyes capitulated after a bloodless four @-@ day siege .

Reims opened its gates to the army on 16 July 1429 . The coronation took place the following morning . Although Joan and the Duke of Alençon urged a prompt march on Paris , the royal court preferred to negotiate a truce with Duke Philip of Burgundy . The duke violated the purpose of the agreement by using it as a stalling tactic to reinforce the defense of Paris . The French army marched through towns near Paris during the interim and accepted several peaceful surrenders . The Duke of Bedford led an English force and confronted the French army in a standoff at the battle of Montépilloy on 15 August . The French assault at Paris ensued on 8 September . Despite a wound to the leg from a crossbow bolt , Joan remained in the inner trench of Paris until she was carried back to safety by one of the commanders . The following morning the army received a royal order to withdraw . Most historians blame French Grand Chamberlain Georges de la Trémoille for the political blunders that followed the coronation . In October , Joan was with the royal army when it took Saint @-@ Pierre @-@ le @-@ Moûtier , followed by an unsuccessful attempt to take La @-@ Charité @-@ sur @-@ Loire in November and December . On 29 December , Joan and her family were ennobled by Charles VII as a reward for her actions .

### == = Capture = = =

A truce with England during the following few months left Joan with little to do . On 23 March 1430 , she dictated a threatening letter to the Hussites , a dissident group which had broken with the Catholic Church on a number of doctrinal points and had defeated several previous crusades sent against them . Joan 's letter promises to " remove your madness and foul superstition , taking away either your heresy or your lives . "

The truce with England quickly came to an end . Joan traveled to Compiègne the following May to help defend the city against an English and Burgundian siege . On 23 May 1430 she was with a force that attempted to attack the Burgundian camp at Margny north of Compiègne , but was ambushed and captured . When the troops began to withdraw toward the nearby fortifications of Compiègne after the advance of an additional force of 6 @,@ 000 Burgundians , Joan stayed with the rear guard . Burgundian troops surrounded the rear guard , and she was pulled off her horse by an archer . She agreed to surrender to a pro @-@ Burgundian nobleman named Lionel of Wandomme , a member of Jean de Luxembourg 's unit .

Joan was imprisoned by the Burgundians at Beaurevoir Castle . She made several escape attempts , on one occasion jumping from her 70 @-@ foot ( 21 m ) tower , landing on the soft earth of a dry moat , after which she was moved to the Burgundian town of Arras . The English negotiated with their Burgundian allies to transfer her to their custody , with Bishop Pierre Cauchon of Beauvais , an English partisan , assuming a prominent role in these negotiations and her later trial . The final agreement called for the English to pay the sum of 10 @,@ 000 livres tournois to obtain her from Jean de Luxembourg , a member of the Council of Duke Philip of Burgundy .

The English moved Joan to the city of Rouen , which served as their main headquarters in France . Historian Pierre Champion notes that the Armagnacs attempted to rescue her several times by launching military campaigns toward Rouen while she was held there . One campaign occurred during the winter of 1430 ? 1431 , another in March 1431 , and one in late May shortly before her execution . These attempts were beaten back . Champion also quotes 15th @-@ century sources that say Charles VII threatened to " exact vengeance " upon Burgundian troops whom his forces had captured and upon " the English and women of England " in retaliation for their treatment of Joan .

### == = Trial = = =

The trial for heresy was politically motivated . The tribunal was composed entirely of pro @-@ English and Burgundian clerics , and overseen by English commanders including the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Warwick . Legal proceedings commenced on 9 January 1431 at Rouen , the seat of the English occupation government . The procedure was suspect on a number of points , which would later provoke criticism of the tribunal by the chief inquisitor who investigated the trial after the war .

Under ecclesiastical law , Bishop Cauchon lacked jurisdiction over the case . Cauchon owed his appointment to his partisan support of the English government , which financed the trial . The low standard of evidence used in the trial also violated inquisitorial rules . Clerical notary Nicolas Bailly , who was commissioned to collect testimony against Joan , could find no adverse evidence . Without such evidence the court lacked grounds to initiate a trial . Opening a trial anyway , the court also violated ecclesiastical law by denying Joan the right to a legal adviser . In addition , stacking the tribunal entirely with pro @-@ English clergy violated the medieval Church 's requirement that heresy trials be judged by an impartial or balanced group of clerics . Upon the opening of the first public examination , Joan complained that those present were all partisans against her and asked for " ecclesiastics of the French side " to be invited in order to provide balance . This request was denied .

The Vice @-@ Inquisitor of Northern France ( Jean Lemaitre ) objected to the trial at its outset , and several eyewitnesses later said he was forced to cooperate after the English threatened his life . Some of the other clergy at the trial were also threatened when they refused to cooperate , including

a Dominican friar named Isambart de la Pierre . These threats , and the domination of the trial by a secular government , were violations of the Church 's rules and undermined the right of the Church to conduct heresy trials without secular interference .

The trial record contains statements from Joan that the eyewitnesses later said astonished the court , since she was an illiterate peasant and yet was able to evade the theological pitfalls the tribunal had set up to entrap her . The transcript 's most famous exchange is an exercise in subtlety : " Asked if she knew she was in God 's grace , she answered , ' If I am not , may God put me there ; and if I am , may God so keep me . ' " The question is a scholarly trap . Church doctrine held that no one could be certain of being in God 's grace . If she had answered yes , then she would have been charged with heresy . If she had answered no , then she would have confessed her own guilt . The court notary Boisguillaume later testified that at the moment the court heard her reply , " Those who were interrogating her were stupefied . "

Several members of the tribunal later testified that important portions of the transcript were falsified by being altered in her disfavor . Under Inquisitorial guidelines , Joan should have been confined in an ecclesiastical prison under the supervision of female guards ( i.e. , nuns ) . Instead , the English kept her in a secular prison guarded by their own soldiers . Bishop Cauchon denied Joan 's appeals to the Council of Basel and the Pope , which should have stopped his proceeding .

The twelve articles of accusation which summarized the court 's findings contradicted the already doctored court record . The illiterate defendant signed an abjuration document that she did not understand under threat of immediate execution . The court substituted a different abjuration in the official record .

= = = Cross @-@ dressing charge = = =

Heresy was a capital crime only for a repeat offense , therefore a repeat offense of " cross @-@ dressing " was now arranged by the court , according to the eyewitnesses . Joan agreed to wear feminine clothing when she abjured , which created a problem . According to the later descriptions of some of the tribunal members , she had previously been wearing male ( i.e. military ) clothing in prison because it gave her the ability to fasten her hosen , boots and tunic together into one piece , which deterred rape by making it difficult to pull her hosen off . She was evidently afraid to give up this outfit even temporarily because it was likely to be confiscated by the judge and she would thereby be left without protection . A woman 's dress offered no such protection . A few days after her abjuration , when she was forced to wear a dress , she told a tribunal member that " a great English lord had entered her prison and tried to take her by force . " She resumed male attire either as a defense against molestation or , in the testimony of Jean Massieu , because her dress had been taken by the guards and she was left with nothing else to wear .

Her resumption of male military clothing was labeled a relapse into heresy for cross @-@ dressing , although this would later be disputed by the inquisitor who presided over the appeals court that examined the case after the war . Medieval Catholic doctrine held that cross @-@ dressing should be evaluated based on context , as stated in the Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas , which says that necessity would be a permissible reason for cross @-@ dressing . This would include the use of clothing as protection against rape if the clothing would offer protection . In terms of doctrine , she had been justified in disguising herself as a pageboy during her journey through enemy territory , and she was justified in wearing armor during battle and protective clothing in camp and then in prison . The Chronique de la Pucelle states that it deterred molestation while she was camped in the field . When her soldiers ' clothing wasn 't needed while on campaign , she was said to have gone back to wearing a dress . Clergy who later testified at the posthumous appellate trial affirmed that she continued to wear male clothing in prison to deter molestation and rape .

Joan referred the court to the Poitiers inquiry when questioned on the matter . The Poitiers record no longer survives , but circumstances indicate the Poitiers clerics had approved her practice . She also kept her hair cut short through her military campaigns and while in prison . Her supporters , such as the theologian Jean Gerson , defended her hairstyle for practical reasons , as did Inquisitor Brehal later during the appellate trial . Nonetheless , at the trial in 1431 she was condemned and

sentenced to die .

= = = Execution = = =

Eyewitnesses described the scene of the execution by burning on 30 May 1431 . Tied to a tall pillar at the Vieux @-@ Marché in Rouen , she asked two of the clergy , Fr Martin Ladvenu and Fr Isambart de la Pierre , to hold a crucifix before her . An English soldier also constructed a small cross that she put in the front of her dress . After she died , the English raked back the coals to expose her charred body so that no one could claim she had escaped alive . They then burned the body twice more , to reduce it to ashes and prevent any collection of relics , and cast her remains into the Seine River . The executioner , Geoffroy Thérage , later stated that he " greatly feared to be damned . "

= = Posthumous events = =

The Hundred Years ' War continued for twenty @-@ two years after her death . Charles VII succeeded in retaining legitimacy as the king of France in spite of a rival coronation held for Henry VI at Notre @-@ Dame cathedral in Paris on 16 December 1431 , the boy 's tenth birthday . Before England could rebuild its military leadership and force of longbowmen lost in 1429 , the country lost its alliance with Burgundy when the Treaty of Arras was signed in 1435 . The Duke of Bedford died the same year and Henry VI became the youngest king of England to rule without a regent . His weak leadership was probably the most important factor in ending the conflict . Kelly DeVries argues that Joan of Arc 's aggressive use of artillery and frontal assaults influenced French tactics for the rest of the war .

In 1452 , during the posthumous investigation into her execution , the Church declared that a religious play in her honor at Orléans would allow attendees to gain an indulgence ( remission of temporal punishment for sin ) by making a pilgrimage to the event .

= = = Retrial = = =

A posthumous retrial opened after the war ended . Pope Callixtus III authorized this proceeding , also known as the " nullification trial " , at the request of Inquisitor @-@ General Jean Bréhal and Joan 's mother Isabelle Romée . The purpose of the trial was to investigate whether the trial of condemnation and its verdict had been handled justly and according to canon law . Investigations started with an inquest by Guillaume Bouillé , a theologian and former rector of the University of Paris ( Sorbonne ) . Bréhal conducted an investigation in 1452 . A formal appeal followed in November 1455 . The appellate process involved clergy from throughout Europe and observed standard court procedure . A panel of theologians analyzed testimony from 115 witnesses . Bréhal drew up his final summary in June 1456 , which describes Joan as a martyr and implicated the late Pierre Cauchon with heresy for having convicted an innocent woman in pursuit of a secular vendetta . The technical reason for her execution had been a Biblical clothing law . The nullification trial reversed the conviction in part because the condemnation proceeding had failed to consider the doctrinal exceptions to that stricture . The appellate court declared her innocent on 7 July 1456 .

= = Canonization = =

Joan of Arc became a symbol of the Catholic League during the 16th century . When Félix Dupanloup was made bishop of Orléans in 1849 , he pronounced a fervid panegyric on Joan of Arc , which attracted attention in England as well as France , and he led the efforts which culminated in Joan of Arc 's beatification in 1909 . Pope Benedict XV canonized Joan on 16 May 1920 .

= = Legacy = =

Joan of Arc became a semi @-@ legendary figure for the four centuries after her death . The main sources of information about her were chronicles . Five original manuscripts of her condemnation trial surfaced in old archives during the 19th century . Soon , historians also located the complete records of her rehabilitation trial , which contained sworn testimony from 115 witnesses , and the original French notes for the Latin condemnation trial transcript . Various contemporary letters also emerged , three of which carry the signature Jehanne in the unsteady hand of a person learning to write . This unusual wealth of primary source material is one reason DeVries declares , " No person of the Middle Ages , male or female , has been the subject of more study . "

Joan of Arc came from an obscure village and rose to prominence when she was a teenager , and she did so as an uneducated peasant . The French and English kings had justified the ongoing war through competing interpretations of inheritance law , first concerning Edward III 's claim to the French throne and then Henry VI 's . The conflict had been a legalistic feud between two related royal families , but Joan transformed it along religious lines and gave meaning to appeals such as that of squire Jean de Metz when he asked , " Must the king be driven from the kingdom ; and are we to be English ? " In the words of Stephen Richey , " She turned what had been a dry dynastic squabble that left the common people unmoved except for their own suffering into a passionately popular war of national liberation . " Richey also expresses the breadth of her subsequent appeal :

The people who came after her in the five centuries since her death tried to make everything of her : demonic fanatic , spiritual mystic , naive and tragically ill @-@ used tool of the powerful , creator and icon of modern popular nationalism , adored heroine , saint . She insisted , even when threatened with torture and faced with death by fire , that she was guided by voices from God . Voices or no voices , her achievements leave anyone who knows her story shaking his head in amazed wonder .

From Christine de Pizan to the present , women have looked to Joan as a positive example of a brave and active woman . She operated within a religious tradition that believed an exceptional person from any level of society might receive a divine calling . Some of her most significant aid came from women . King Charles VII 's mother @-@ in @-@ law , Yolande of Aragon , confirmed Joan 's virginity and financed her departure to Orléans . Joan of Luxembourg , aunt to the count of Luxembourg who held custody of her after Compiègne , alleviated her conditions of captivity and may have delayed her sale to the English . Finally , Anne of Burgundy , the duchess of Bedford and wife to the regent of England , declared Joan a virgin during pretrial inquiries .

Three separate vessels of the French Navy have been named after her , including a helicopter carrier that was retired from active service on 7 June 2010 . At present , the French far @-@ right political party Front National holds rallies at her statues , reproduces her image in the party 's publications , and uses a tricolor flame partly symbolic of her martyrdom as its emblem . This party 's opponents sometimes satirize its appropriation of her image . The French civic holiday in her honour is the second Sunday of May .

During World War I , she was frequently used as an icon in musical works . Some notable songs include " Joan of Arc " , " Joan of Arc , They Are Calling You " , and " Joan of Arc 's Answer Song " .

= = Visions = =

Joan of Arc 's religious visions have remained an ongoing topic of interest . She identified Saint Margaret , Saint Catherine , and Saint Michael as the source of her revelations , although there is some ambiguity as to which of several identically named saints she intended .

Analysis of her visions is problematic since the main source of information on this topic is the condemnation trial transcript in which she defied customary courtroom procedure about a witness ' oath and specifically refused to answer every question about her visions . She complained that a standard witness oath would conflict with an oath she had previously sworn to maintain confidentiality about meetings with her king . It remains unknown to what extent the surviving record may represent the fabrications of corrupt court officials or her own possible fabrications to protect state secrets . Some historians sidestep speculation about the visions by asserting that her belief in her calling is more relevant than questions about the visions ' ultimate origin .



A number of more recent scholars attempted to explain her visions in psychiatric or neurological terms . Potential diagnoses have included epilepsy , migraine , tuberculosis , and schizophrenia . None of the putative diagnoses have gained consensus support , and many scholars have argued that she didn 't display any of the objective symptoms that can accompany the mental illnesses which have been suggested , such as schizophrenia . Dr. Philip Mackowiak dismissed the possibility of schizophrenia and several other disorders ( Temporal Lobe Epilepsy and ergot poisoning ) in a chapter on Joan of Arc in his book " Post @-@ Mortem " in 2007 .

Dr. John Hughes rejected the idea that Joan of Arc suffered from epilepsy in an article in the academic journal ' Epilepsy & Behavior ' .

Two experts who analysed the hypothesis of temporal lobe tuberculoma in the medical journal Neuropsychobiology expressed their misgivings about this claim in the following statement :

It is difficult to draw final conclusions , but it would seem unlikely that widespread tuberculosis , a serious disease , was present in this " patient " whose life @-@ style and activities would surely have been impossible had such a serious disease been present .

In response to another such theory alleging that her visions were caused by bovine tuberculosis as a result of drinking unpasteurized milk , historian Régine Pernoud wrote that if drinking unpasteurized milk could produce such potential benefits for the nation , then the French government should stop mandating the pasteurization of milk .

Joan of Arc gained favor in the court of King Charles VII , who accepted her as sane . He would have been familiar with the signs of madness because his own father , Charles VI , had suffered from it . Charles VI was popularly known as " Charles the Mad " , and much of France 's political and military decline during his reign could be attributed to the power vacuum that his episodes of insanity had produced . The previous king had believed he was made of glass , a delusion no courtier had mistaken for a religious awakening . Fears that King Charles VII would manifest the same insanity may have factored into the attempt to disinherit him at Troyes . This stigma was so persistent that contemporaries of the next generation would attribute to inherited madness the breakdown that England 's King Henry VI was to suffer in 1453 : Henry VI was nephew to Charles VII and grandson to Charles VI . The court of Charles VII was shrewd and skeptical on the subject of mental health . Upon Joan 's arrival at Chinon the royal counselor Jacques Gélou cautioned ,

One should not lightly alter any policy because of conversation with a girl , a peasant ... so susceptible to illusions ; one should not make oneself ridiculous in the sight of foreign nations .

She remained astute to the end of her life and the rehabilitation trial testimony frequently marvels at her astuteness :

Often they [ the judges ] turned from one question to another , changing about , but , notwithstanding this , she answered prudently , and evinced a wonderful memory .

Her subtle replies under interrogation even forced the court to stop holding public sessions .

Some psychiatrists have also urged that a distinction should be made between different types of experiences . Ralph Hoffman , professor of psychology at Yale University , argues that visionary and creative states , including " hearing voices " , are not necessarily signs of mental illness .

= = Alleged relics = =

In 1867 , a jar was found in a Paris pharmacy with the inscription " Remains found under the stake of Joan of Arc , virgin of Orleans . " They consisted of a charred human rib , carbonized wood , a piece of linen and a cat femur ? explained as the practice of throwing black cats onto the pyre of witches . They are now in the Museum of Art and History in Chinon . In 2006 , Philippe Charlier , a forensic scientist at Raymond Poincaré Hospital ( Garches ) was authorized to study the relics . Carbon @-@ 14 tests and various spectroscopic analyses were performed , and the results determined that the remains come from an Egyptian mummy from the sixth to the third century BC . The charred appearance was the result of the embalming substances , not from combustion . Large amounts of pine pollen were also found , consistent with the presence of resin used in mummification and some unburned linen was found and was determined to be similar to that used to wrap mummies . The noted perfumers Guerlain and Jean Patou said that they could smell vanilla in

the remains , also consistent with mummification . Apparently the mummy was part of the ingredients of medieval pharmacopoeia and it was relabeled in a time of French nationalism .

In March 2016 a ring believed to have been worn by Joan , which has passed through the hands of a cardinal , a king , an aristocrat and the daughter of a British physician , was sold at auction to the Puy du Fou , a historical theme park , for £ 300 @, @ 000 . There is no conclusive proof that she owned the ring , but its unusual design closely matches Joan 's own words about her ring at her trial .

= = Revisionist theories = =

The accuracy of the standard accounts of the life of Joan of Arc has been questioned by revisionist authors .