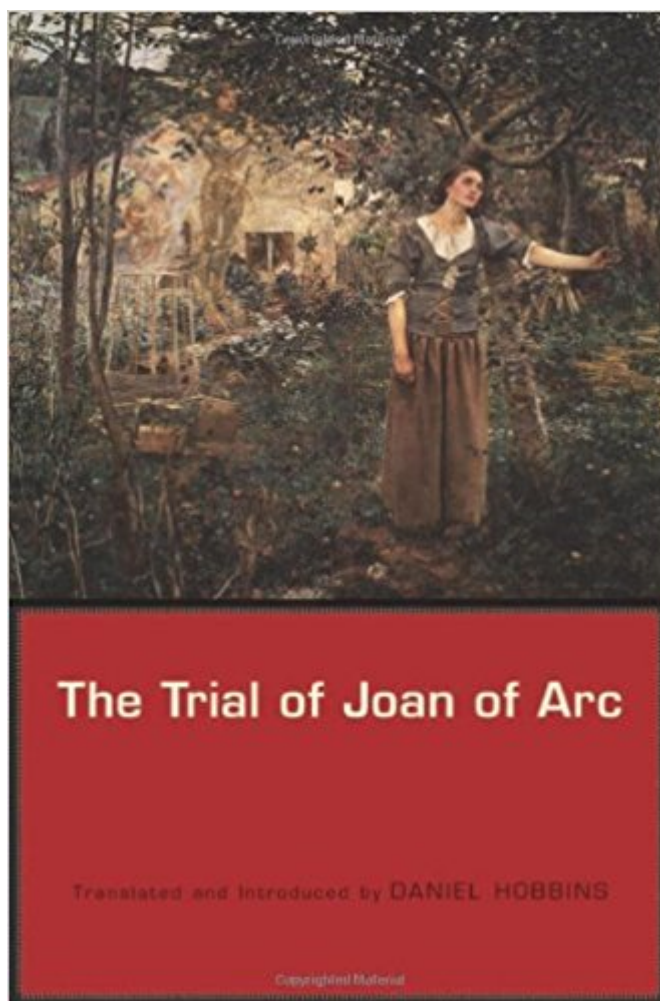


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The Trial Of Joan Of Arc



Synopsis

No account is more critical to our understanding of Joan of Arc than the contemporary record of her trial in 1431. Convened at Rouen and directed by bishop Pierre Cauchon, the trial culminated in Joan's public execution for heresy. The trial record, which sometimes preserves Joan's very words, unveils her life, character, visions, and motives in fascinating detail. Here is one of our richest sources for the life of a medieval woman. This new translation, the first in fifty years, is based on the full record of the trial proceedings in Latin. Recent scholarship dates this text to the year of the trial itself, thereby lending it a greater claim to authority than had traditionally been assumed.

Contemporary documents copied into the trial furnish a guide to political developments in Joan's career—from her capture to the attempts to control public opinion following her execution. Daniel Hobbins sets the trial in its legal and historical context. In exploring Joan's place in fifteenth-century society, he suggests that her claims to divine revelation conformed to a recognizable profile of holy women in her culture, yet Joan broke this mold by embracing a military lifestyle. By combining the roles of visionary and of military leader, Joan astonished contemporaries and still fascinates us today. Obscured by the passing of centuries and distorted by the lens of modern cinema, the story of the historical Joan of Arc comes vividly to life once again.

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Customer Reviews

The record of Joan of Arc's 1431 heresy trial is one of the most significant primary sources historians have for understanding this young woman's life and beliefs. Now Hobbins, who teaches history at the University of Texas, has produced what is sure to be the definitive edition of the trial

documents. Here we see Joan being questioned about her claim that she heard divine voices, and her choice to wear men's clothes. We also hear her firm insistence that all of her exploits were undertaken as acts of obedience to God's command. Especially valuable is Hobbins's 32-page introduction, which assesses the reliability of the text, explains medieval court procedure, and offers a description and evaluation of Joan herself. Hobbins sets Joan in the context of a centuries-long tradition of women mystics and saints who received special revelations. Joan participated in this tradition, but, in merging visionary mysticism with militarism, she was also unique. Useful appendices lay out the chronology of Joan's life and list the central characters in her trial. Sure to find wide use in classrooms, this text promises to transport any reader who wishes to go back in time with Joan of Arc. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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including the likes of Leonard Cohen, Hilaire Belloc and Mark Twain...Joan's replies, no matter how edited, have ensured her place in history not as a heretic burned at the stake as her inquisitors wanted, but as national hero, a saint, a fable, a myth--everything this trial tried to suppress. (Gerry Bellett Vancouver Sun 2006-02-25)[Hobbins'] careful translation, the first in 50 years, may well become the definitive edition. (Janice Farnham America 2006-05-08)Given Joan's celebrity, Daniel Hobbins's translation and commentary on the records (both in Latin and French) of her trial are welcome. His review of the transcripts and their subsequent interpretation by scholars over the last two centuries is a model of economy and clarity...In his historical commentary and excellent translation of the trial records, Hobbins does justice not only to both visionary and soldier, but also to the extraordinary peasant girl who amazed and troubled her contemporaries, and has continued to bedevil historians ever since. (Herbert Berg Journal of Church and State 2007-04-01)While no portraits of Joan of Arc survive from her lifetime, we are very fortunate to have access to the record of her trial in several languages, including this latest, first-rate edition in English. Daniel Hobbins...does an excellent job not only with his translation of the original texts themselves (in medieval French and Latin), but also with his introduction to the trial, Joan's life and the importance of the trial record as medieval literature...It is an engrossing read, regardless of one's academic background. (Patricia Grimshaw H-Net Online 2006-09-01)Daniel Hobbins's English translation of the three Latin and French legal records of proceedings against Joan of Arc contains both a readable translation and a valuable commentary on the trials' context and importance. The records correct many misconceptions about what actually happened during the trials...Those wishing to understand how fifteenth century politics, inquisitorial procedure and gender constraints condemned a nineteen year old girl for wearing male garb and acting as a soldier (among many other charges) would profit from reading Hobbins's translation. (Laurence W. Marvin Journal of Military History 2008-04-01)

These transcripts of the trial along with the author's commentary point out vividly the invidious trail of Joan of Arc. The English party both hated and feared her. They used the inquisition to condemn a political prisoner to death just to illegitimatze the King of France. Although Pierre Cauchon tried to disguise his animosity by presenting to the world a legally conducted trial, he violated every canon of a fair trial, and abused his office of Bishop. There is no credence in the author's supersition that the Bishop of Beauvais tried to save Joan from death by having her declared a repentive heritic thereby sentencing her to imprisonment. The evil bishop engineered her relapse for the sole purpose of putting her to death. Anyone interested in hearing Joan's own words and in reading a

prime source of history will find this book fascinating. It is not a book for those who like romantic history.

Critics of this book simply miss the point. This is the best, virtually the only, complete transcript of the trial at which Joan was questioned. It is beside the point that there was a retrial under friendly auspices later. The drama is in the first trial, and the arguments against the accuracy of the record have been wildly overstated. I do hope the translator will also do the second trial. It is less dramatic but a full portrait of Joan requires both.

If you have endnotes in an Ebook you HAVE to have the number on the page link to the endnote itself. It is infuriating that something so simple was overlooked. Why? I had to buy this book for class. Not my choice. But if I'm going to spend the money the least I expect is a decent Ebook.

Extremely well translated. Exactly what I was hoping for.

This is a wonderful translation of the trial documents well organized! It is extremely helpful to have the documents put in an order that is easy to read and understand.

I give the trial text of Daniel Hobbins 5 stars. I would give his introduction less than 1 star if I could. People with a more than a casual interest in Joan will certainly want this book, along with W. P.

Barrett's book, hands down, for reasons I will try to explain below. My review is only about the Introduction. Mr. Hobbins writes (Page 11): "After receiving their (the Poitiers examiners) cautious approval, he (the Dauphin) sent her (Joan) to Orleans, where she arrived on April 29; in a spectacular turn of events, the French broke the siege on May 8. More than anything else she accomplished, her supporters considered this victory the great sign of her authenticity. Notice how Mr. Hobbins leaves Joan out of the victory; he doesn't give her sole, exclusive, and extraordinary credit. He is the only one; even her enemies gave her credit, albeit as a 'limb of the fiend.' Mr. Hobbins writes (page 10) "Joan had been an international celebrity for almost 2 years by the time the trial began. Kim Kardashian is a

“celebrity; Joan was a heroine and a saviour to the French, a scourge to the English, a “celebrity” to neither. Mr. Hobbins writes (page 26): “The most famous Joan of Arc specialist of the twentieth century, Regina Pernoud

To Mr. Hobbins, Joan is a “celebrity” and Dame Pernoud is “famous.” When Paris Hilton is a celebrity and Ted Bundy is famous, these words cannot be considered complimentary or accurate. Mr. Hobbins reduces greatness to public notoriety. Perhaps he thinks no one can be great? Perhaps he thinks of Joan as acts as legendary, despite the vast treasure of contemporaneous documents? Mr. Hobbins suppresses one abuse of Pierre Cauchon on page 11. Mr. Hobbins writes:

“Pierre Cauchon, the bishop in whose Diocese Joan was taken, thus had jurisdiction over the trial. In fact, Cauchon had had to flee his Diocese BECAUSE of Joan’s victories; he wasn’t de facto bishop of anything. Cauchon was “granted” territory in Rouen in order to conduct his “beautiful trial,” one of the many irregularities that Mr. Hobbins ignores. Mr. Hobbins writes (page 12): From our perspective the ultimate dominance of the French king and nation might seem inevitable, merely a matter of time, and all the French who supported Burgundy might appear traitors to the fatherland. This is an illusion produced by hindsight. I suggest it is a REALITY produced by Joan of Arc; it is what she created, and what she lived and died for. Here might be Mr. Hobbins’ basic difference from anyone likely to want to read the trial text. Mr. Hobbins writes (page 12):

“Cauchon was a careerist, and in this respect neither more wicked nor more virtuous than other such men.” Mr. Hobbins must have a very low opinion of Church prelates, if he believes that. Is it normal to jail and threaten with death other clergy who aren’t anxious to murder innocent girls? Mr. Hobbins writes (Page 15): The outcome (of the Nullification trial) was inevitable. What does this mean? Mr. Hobbins should be more precise. Was the result of the Nullification Trial “inevitable” because of the outrageous defects of Joan’s Stalinist show-trial, or does Mr. Hobbins regard the Nullification trial as just another show-trial under a different despot? Mr. Hobbins also remarks that Joan’s family came away from the Nullification Trial “empty handed” (page 15). Joan was utterly vindicated and the Archbishop of Rheims declared the condemnation trial and sentence “to be contaminated with fraud, calumny, wickedness, contradictions, and manifest error of fact and law,

and together with the abjuration, the execution, and all their consequences to have been and to be null, without value or effect, and to be quashed. (Dame Pernoud, "The Retrial of Joan of Arc," Page 194). What does Mr. Hobbins think the family wanted? To be famous? To be celebrities? Mr. Hobbins writes (page 15): (After the Nullification Trial) there was no discussion whatsoever about making Joan into a saint that was the work of the twentieth Century. Dame Pernoud writes in "Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witness" page 272: "They (the French people since the fifteenth century) canonized Joan and made her their heroine, while Church and State were taking five hundred years to reach the same conclusion. On pages 25-27, Mr. Hobbins types nonsense about how Cauchon wanted to HELP Joan: "The only way for Joan to survive was through an abjuration of heresy" (Page 27) Did Cauchon help Joan by suppressing the testimony obtained in Domremy of her virtuous life? Did Cauchon help Joan by suppressing the results of her examination for signs of virginity? Did Cauchon help Joan by threatening with death and imprisonment those who tried to ACTUALLY help Joan? If Cauchon didn't want Joan to relapse, he would have consigned her to an ecclesiastical prison, guarded by women. The over-scrupulous trial record is evidence of Cauchon's awareness of guilt, not evidence of a clear conscience. Cauchon knew he would be criticized for his beautiful show-trial, and the trial record was concocted to withstand the inevitable scrutiny. This is why Cauchon included Joan's public appeal to the Pope; her appeal was PUBLIC, how could Cauchon not include it? The trial record is as self-serving as everything else Cauchon did. Mr. Hobbins writes (page 32): At this point in the trial (after Joan's adjuration) her decision was made and her judges really had no choice but to deliver her to the secular arm as a relapsed heretic. Even after her relapse, 39 out of 42 of those judges voted to preach to Joan, and read and explain the cedula to her, not burn her immediately, according to Dame Pernoud, "Joan of Arc, By Herself and Her Witnesses," Page 215. Mr. Hobbins is simply wrong. Anyway, Joan was never turned over to and sentenced by secular justice in Cauchon's haste to murder her. I don't see why Mr. Hobbins

included "commentary" like this. Bernard Shaw wrote much the same tripe in "St. Joan," but that was a play written for a general audience. This nonsense is gratuitously included in a book that only people familiar with Joan are going to want to read; precisely the audience that is equipped to reject Mr.

Hobbins' opinions, musings, speculation, and Cauchon apologetics; precisely the audience that regards Dame Pernoud not as "famous," but as a leader, pioneer, heroine, and scholarly Joan of Arc. This is off the subject, but I figure if anyone has read this far, maybe they can answer 5 questions and consider a couple of observations: One:

Cauchon cited Deuteronomy 22:5 in order to condemn Joan to death for wearing men's clothes. Cauchon didn't obey the Torah; he ate pork and shellfish and, being French, snails; he didn't observe the Sabbath. What gives? Two: Joan's banner featured Christ holding the earth.

Wasn't the earth supposed to be flat then? How could He hold it? Three: What were the signs of Joan's virginity? Surely, after riding thousands of miles on horseback, and charging France's enemies wielding a lance, her hymen was not intact. Four: The "Old" Calendar was in effect in France in 1429. Doesn't Orleans celebrate Joan's liberation of the city on the wrong date? Five: Joan is constantly talking to the English and they are talking back to her. I know that the aristocrats spoke French, but surely others, such as her low-life guards at Rouen and the soldiers shouting insults at her from their forts outside the walls of Orleans didn't. It's like a "Star Trek" episode where the aliens, whether they look like potted plants or lizards, all speak English. Could Joan speak English? Could the English, even the most plebeian, speak French? Why would her persecutors ask her if her voices spoke English unless she spoke English? They would not ask Joan if her voices spoke Pashto or Persian. Comment One: I don't think the people of Orleans get enough credit for their 600 year history of devotion to Joan - or their crucial role in the liberation of their city. The people of Orleans attacked the "back" of the Tourelles on their own initiative. The Orleanais also set fire to one of the city barges and drove it under the bridge that led to the drowning of Glasdale and many of his men. (Joan of Arc, A Military Leader, Kelly Devries, Page 89.) The enthusiasm and initiative of the people of Orleans - inspired by Joan, to be sure - was essential in the raising of the siege. Comment Two: I have a theory about Joan's laugh at her "adjuration." (See Dame Pernoud, By Herself and Her Witnesses, Page 209) Assume Joan was read the 8 line "credulity," which forbade her from bearing arms, wearing men's clothes, and cutting her hair. In signing, she would be "adjuring" only things she didn't care about (her hair), would need no longer (men's clothes if, as she understood, she would be sent to an Ecclesiastical prison), and

things she couldn't do anyway (bear arms). I suspect Joan laughed at the thought of all this effort, expense, and pressure to make her sign a meaningless document. Any thoughts?

The basis for questioning the accuracy of Joan of Arc's condemnation trial transcript has not been its date of creation, but the myriad ways in which the trial was rigged. Joan of Arc was a famous political prisoner. Her trial was funded by the government she had warred against and numerous court officials worked under compulsion, some even under death threats. Court clerks later testified under oath that portions of the official transcript were altered. This document did not stand the test of time. A quarter century later the verdict was overturned. While this remains an important historical source, it lacks the weight that court records normally carry. Serious scholars will prefer the Latin original. English translations are already available for free on the Internet. A new translation that makes suspect claims for the document's value is not what the English speaking public needs. I wish Professor Hobbins well and hope he follows up with a translation of Joan of Arc's retrial transcript. A complete and adequate version has never been readily available in English.

Although this book's marketing material states that it is designed to counter the Hollywood version, the book instead ironically tries to justify the standard Hollywood claim that Bishop Cauchon was a sincere fellow operating under lawful procedures - in contradiction to the many historians, as this book itself admits, who have soundly and consistently debunked that idea. This book does not present any credible evidence to back up its claims, selectively quoting (or misquoting) testimony at the appeal while ignoring both the majority of the witness testimony at the latter trial and glossing over or excusing the well-documented illegalities of the original trial. There have been many other books which give a more substantive and accurate accounting of the Condemnation trial, including previous translations such as those by Scott and Barrett.

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