

1412-1431 JOAN OF ARC

Joan of Arc, or Joan the Maid, was a peasant girl, virgin-warrior, healer, devotee of the black virgin, martyr, saint, visionary, and unprecedented military leader. No male or female, before or since Joan of Arc has exhibited such profound military skills at such a young age of sixteen and from such a humble background (JOA: 40). She was born in the village of Domremy in Lorraine, France, on January 6th, in 1412 CE. Domremy was an area known for seasonal rituals and observations. In *God of the Witches*, Margaret A. Murray refers to Lorraine as an area that “still kept many of its more primitive ways” (TGOW: 177). These included the custom of taking the mother’s last name, rather than the father’s. Also the name Joan, Joana or Jeanne were frequently given to women in the Cathar rituals. In addition to the name Joan, she is also known as *Jeanne la Pucelle*, witch of France, “The wicche of Fraunce that was called the Pushell” (TGOW: 182). *La Pucelle* (or maiden) was also the name of a priestess in the fairy or old pagan religion.

Anne Llewellyn Barstow adds to the discussion on Joan of Arc by suggesting that she was an unrivaled mystic and oracle. Barstow notes that prior to Joan’s visions, Illiteracy, poverty, class, and gender disadvantaged her. With the onset of the visions at the age of thirteen (JDA: xi), she received her first message and military mandate. She went on to become France’s chief hero, military leader, states person, oracular prophet and noted miracle worker. The voices of her visionary experiences were said to have been motivated by the ringing of church bells or when the light was exceptionally bright. During these experiences, Joan’s voices instructed her to liberate France from the English. Barstow speaks of these experiences as “mysticism of action” in which Joan’s visions took her into the “the central places of masculine power, where she performed as an active mystic, serving as both catalyst and instigator in the political life of her era” (JOA: 29). It should also be noted that although Joan was wounded, she was always miraculously healed (JDA: 14, 32, 236, 262, 278, and 288-97.)

Joan believed she had two heavenly commands, “to raise the siege of Orleans, [and] the other to conduct the King to Rheims for his coronation and anointing” (JDA: 291). She also envisioned and initiated France’s great national independence (JDA: xvii). She changed her peasant dress for male military attire and assumed leadership of an armed French feudal group of waifs and ner’er-do-wells. But of this group, Lord Melville’s is quoted as staying that, “the worst men make the best soldiers” (JDA: xiii). Orleans was considered the key location of the military struggle between the English and the French. In following her charge and visions, Joan entered Orleans on April 28, 1429 with her French army and within a week the English decamped and fled. In addition to Orleans, her 1429 victories in France also included Patay, Troyes, Compiègne, the “triumphal march of Rheims” and French King Charles VII was consecrated in the old Cathedral (JDA: xiv). She also increased her army tenfold and transformed them into a mighty force that served her as loyal and dedicated volunteers.

Following this victory, the English captured her in Compiegne on May 23, 1430. She was subsequently tried, found guilty, excommunicated, and condemned to burn at the stake as a member of a Dianic cult, witch and heretic. (TGOW: 177.) Alan MacFarlane reminds us that females that were outspoken, independent, strong leaders and/or cross dressers were often accused of witchcraft and that “witchcraft was treated as a branch of heresy” against the church (WTS: 14). (JOA: 41, n. 22.) Joan’s trial took place in Rouen Castle, the seat of the English Duke of Bedford, officiated by the Archbishop of Rheims. Joan of Arc was 22. During an ecclesiastical court trial, she was also accused of conversations and dealings with the fairies, which was not uncommon in Lorraine, France. She refused to deny the accusations.

In addition to the above, the following speaks to issues around Joan’s clothing while in prison. While chained to a bed, her sentry included five male guards during the day and three during the night (JOA: 42). In T. Douglas Murray’s book, *Jeanne D’Arc*, taken from the Latin text of the trial, he says that although Joan agreed to wear female clothes in prison, she was subsequently assaulted (JDA: 136). For protective purposes, she returned to wearing her male military clothes. (For additional information see, R`egine Pernoud, *The Retrial of Joan of Arc*. (JOA: 42.)) Following what had become unbearable violations, Joan is quoted as saying that she would rather die, “than endure any longer the suffering of a prison” (JDA: 138). This prison suffering and violations are corroborated and documented by Manchon and De Courcelles (JDA: 136). Also in the court records of the Rehabilitation Enquiry, Jeane de Metz and de Poulengey suggested that she resume wearing male attire (JDA: 136). When reappearing in the court in this clothing, the presiding bishop declared her a hopeless heretic and condemned her to death. As a result of her relapse of wearing male clothing, she was branded as an incorrigible heretic of diabolical obstinacy and rendered “damnable by perjury of the Holy name of God and blasphemy of His ineffable Majesty” (JDA: 143). Gender-blurring and cross dressing for females, delineated witchcraft and was therefore considered unforgivable by the court and the presiding bishop. (JOA: 41. FTEM: 1-32.) As a result of the decree, Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431 CE.

In 1455, Pope Calixtus annulled the condemnation of Joan and declared the trial unjust. There is no evidence of any compensation to her family. In 1920, she was canonized as a saint with the blessings of Pope Benedict XV. Between 1581-1591 CE, nine hundred witches are said to have been burned in Lorraine. (WAN: 15.) (CBV: 138; WAN: 15; TGOW: 176-197; BGTF: 146-149; SSOL: 36; JOA: 29-42; BOST: 80-85; JDA: i-xxiv, 14, 32, 236, 262, 278, 288-97, 291; FTEM: 1-32; RJA.)

For further information on authors that speak to cross dressing, see: “The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif,” by John Anson (FTEM: 1-32); “Joan of Arc and Female Mysticism,” by Anne Llewellyn Barstow (JOA: 29-42); *Jeanne D’Arc: Maid of Orleans Deliverer of France*, edited by T. Douglas Murray (JDA: 134-146); and “In Search of Byzantine Women: Three

Avenues of Approach” by Herrin, Judith (SBW: 167-189).

For additional information see entries: 1163, Pope Alexander III; and 1209, CE Pope Innocent. For additional Inquisition information see BCE entry: 814, Carthage. Also see CE Inquisition entries: 300, Catholic Church, Concubines and Witchcraft; 354-430, Saint Augustine; 1022, Catholic Inquisition; 1095, Pope Urban II Initiates the Crusades; 1163, Pope Alexander III; 13 Century, Catholic Inquisition; 1209, Pope Innocent and the Albigensian Crusade; 1252, Inquisition and Papal Bull of Pope Innocent IV; 1440, Gutenberg Press; 1468, Crimen Exceptum; 1484, Catholic Inquisition and Gender Cleansing; 1487-1489, Catholic Inquisition and Midwives; 1523, Como, Italy, and Witch Burning; 1600, Catholic Inquisition; 1684, Catholic Inquisition in England; 1692, Catholic Inquisition and USA; 1775, Inquisition Concluded in Germany; 19th Century, Femininity, Dependency, and Pathology, and 19th Century, Spanish Inquisition.

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