

Craig Taylor, ed. and trans.  
*Joan of Arc, La Pucelle.*  
Manchester University  
Press/Palgrave, 2006.  
pp. xxii + 370.

Interest in Joan of Arc continues unabated in many media and fora. The presence once again of the ultra-right-wing Jean-Marie Le Penn on the 2007 slate of candidates for president of the French Republic inevitably sullies Joan's name because Le Penn and company continue to embrace her as their patron saint. Like Joan, they too wish to drive all foreigners from French soil. More benignly and appropriately, both Washington, DC's Corcoran Gallery of Art and New Haven's Knights of Columbus Museum have recently mounted shows highlighting differing aspects of the life and legend of the Maid of Orléans—the Corcoran show being complemented by film programs at the National Museum of Women in the Arts and at the National Gallery. In 2005, Harvard University Press made available in English a masterful translation by Daniel Hobbins of the contemporary record of Joan's 1431 trial for heresy.

Craig Taylor's *Joan of Arc, La Pucelle* supplements Hobbins' book by presenting in readable, well-annotated translations 105 documents related to Joan. Taylor's volume is a gold mine of information for devotees to Joan of all stripes, and it is especially useful as a textbook

for both undergraduate and graduate courses in a variety of disciplines.

The first set of documents covers a period from 1420 (The Treaty of Troyes) to 1432 (a letter from the English King Henry VI to the Burgundian Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who presided at Joan's trial). Cauchon made no secret of his desire to be appointed Archbishop of Rouen and sought to curry favor with the English in order to advance his ecclesiastical career by delivering Joan to them. Other documents include letters to and from Joan, contemporary reports on her activities, and the first literary celebrations of her life, including Christine de Pizan's famous *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* composed on 31 July 1429.

The second set of documents offers highlights from Joan's trial and condemnation. Taylor provides transcripts of both public and private examinations—remarkably, the unschooled Joan manages throughout to frustrate some of the finest minds of her day. On Palm Sunday 1431, Joan's message to her judges asking permission to hear Mass on Palm Sunday 1431 is appropriately followed in Taylor's volume by the record of her interrogation in prison on Holy Saturday that year. Similarly, the presentation of The Twelve Articles of Accusation is complemented by the opinions the learned faculty of the University of Paris subsequently offered on those articles and on Joan's whole trial. Inevitably, section two of Taylor's volume ends with documents recording the abjuration and sentence,

the opening of the trial for relapse, and the final condemnation.

Taylor then takes up the debate about Joan that started even before the flames in Rouen died down by presenting a variety of documents in which any number of royal and ecclesiastical figures attempted to “hedge their bets.” Such hedging along with the persistence of Joan’s family and friends finally led to the process to nullify the original trial and condemnation. In part four of this collection, Taylor presents the testimony of key figures present at this second trial, many of whom had also witnessed the original trial a quarter of a century earlier. The section concludes with the sentence of nullification, originally written in Latin prose, which left no doubt about how history had already come to view the travesty of justice perpetuated at Rouen under Cauchon’s direction:

We say and pronounce that we judge that this [original] trial record and sentences that contain deceit, slander, contradiction and manifest error of law and of fact, as well as the aforesaid adjuration, the execution and all that then ensued, were and are null, invalid, without effect or value. And nevertheless, as is necessary and required by reason, we quash, suppress and annul them, removing all of their strength. We declare that this Joan and the plaintiffs, her relatives, have not suffered or incurred any mark or stain

of infamy because of what has been said, and that she is innocent and that she was justified in all of this. And, insofar as it is necessary, we justify her in this completely. (349)

Taylor concludes his volume with four texts: a 1459 (?) commentary by Pope Pius II on Joan’s life and career, a passage about Joan from the late fifteenth-century English *Brut* chronicle, and two remembrances of Joan’s role in lifting the siege of Orléans, one by a veteran of and another by the son of a veteran of the 1428-1429 siege.

By way of supplement to the texts that he translates and edits, Taylor also provides a brief preface, maps of France and Orléans in Joan’s time, a genealogical table for the house of Valois, a chronological table of important events related to Joan’s life, a helpful general introduction to the texts that follow, a select bibliography, and a meticulously accurate index. Anyone interested in Joan of Arc is clearly in Professor Taylor’s debt for editing this invaluable volume.

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