

“We declare you of right excommunicate and heretic, being stubborn and obstinate in your crimes, excesses and errors; and we pronounce it meet to abandon you to the secular justice as a limb of Satan, infected with the leprosy of heresy, cut off from the Church, in order to prevent the infection of the other members of Christ ...” last words addressed to Joan of Arc, Wednesday 30 May 1431

Joan of Arc is one of just two internationally recognised figures with memorials in Winchester Cathedral. My purpose in writing this piece is to tell her story, to correct the frequently held belief that she was tried and executed by the English and to show that Cardinal Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, was not present at her trial nor responsible for her interrogation, as depicted in the famous painting by Paul Delaroche (1824).

Primary sources include the *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275-1504* and an English translation of the transcript of Joan of Arc’s trial.

There are two things which really do need to be emphasised at the start. The first is that Joan of Arc’s rise and fall were meteoric. She first appears in the historic record in February 1429. Just two years later, by the end of May 1431, she was dead. But the mark she made in history was profound. Even in those two short years she was being written about right the way across Europe. The second is that we know so much about her. The most authoritative biography of recent years (Regine Pernoud, see Bibliography) maintains we know more about her than we know of any other medieval European figure. This is because she was the subject of three Inquisitions. First in the Spring of 1429 she was examined at great length by Doctors of Theology on behalf of the Dauphin, secondly there is the transcript of her trial two years later, and thirdly there are the transcripts of what are now known as her rehabilitation process and her nullification trial which took place between 1450 and 1456. The transcripts of the original trial and the rehabilitation process and nullification trial were translated into French and edited and published in their entirety in the mid 19th century by Jules Quicherat. These works have been republished several times since then with editorial comment and much of them translated into English.

Joan was born in 1412 in the village of Domremy in Lorraine. In 1420, when she was eight, the Treaty of Troyes was drawn up between Henry V of England, Charles VI of France and Philip Duke of Burgundy to the effect that Henry V or his heirs and successors (he had married Charles’s daughter Catherine) would be heir to the crown of France on the death of Charles VI. The Dauphin was excluded from the succession and declared a bastard. Within two years Henry V was dead, Charles VI was dead, and Henry VI a toddler. The two most powerful men in England were the Duke of Gloucester (brother of Henry V) designated as Protector in England to his nephew the king and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, great uncle to the king. The three most powerful men in France were the Duke of Bedford (eldest brother of Henry V), designated as Regent, the Duke of Burgundy and Henry Beaufort. Bedford married Burgundy’s sister in 1423 and, in 1430, Philip of Burgundy married Isabel of Portugal, a niece of Beaufort.

Joan arrived at the Court of the Dauphin in Chinon in early March 1429 claiming she could raise the siege of Orleans. Her “voices”, (the voices of St Margaret and St Catherine, and, occasionally, the arch-angels Michael and Gabriel) had commanded her to do this. First a group of theologians examined her for three weeks at Poitiers and, after a rigorous examination, came to the conclusion that “In her ... we find no evil but only good, humility, virginity, devotion, honesty and simplicity” then, convinced by her ardour (and other matters), the Dauphin provided her with a custom made suit of armour costing 100 livre tournois (her mother, later, was granted a pension of almost 6 livre tournois a year), and in May she raised the siege of Orleans in just a few days, sending the English packing. On the 18th June 1429 she defeated a large English army at Patay. Chroniclers, and one of the combatants, estimated English casualties between 2000 and 4000 men; the French lost a handful. Such was Joan’s confidence that, at this point, she dictated letters to many towns in France inviting the people to prepare to attend the coronation of the Dauphin which would shortly take place at Rheims, and on 17th July, in Rheims, formerly a Burgundian stronghold, she led the hitherto reluctant Dauphin to his coronation, anointed by the sacred holy oils kept in that cathedral. In less than 6 months she had fulfilled her promise to the Dauphin, now king Charles VII. Joan was only 17.

This really shook the English to the core and they brought forward the coronation of Henry VI by several years; he was crowned king of England at Westminster Abbey on 6th November 1429 aged only seven. Plans were also made for his coronation at Rheims.

But in France Joan was now side lined by the French king. He prevaricated, he entered into dealings with the Burgundians; a truce was declared in August and then the winter prevented further campaigning. Joan tried to regain Paris but received little support and in May 1430 on a sortie out of Compiègne, the city gates were closed behind her and the drawbridge raised, she was pulled from her horse and captured by an archer in the service of Lionel, the Bastard of Wandomme, a vassal of Jean of Luxembourg, count of Ligny. Lionel was paid by Luxembourg the curious sum of 277 livres tournois for Joan. Within three days a letter was issued by the Inquisitor of France at the University of Paris demanding she be handed over to the University to be tried for heresy. Meanwhile Joan was taken in stages to the castle of Beaufort meeting Isabelle of Portugal (the wife of Philip of Burgundy) and Joan of Bethune (Luxembourg's wife) along the way. Beaufort belonged to Philip of Burgundy but was the residence of Jean of Luxembourg's wealthy and elderly aunt. Joan later related, "The lady of Luxembourg asked my lord of Luxembourg that I not be delivered to the English." She was held in Beaufort castle for the next 4 months.

Pierre Cauchon, exiled bishop of Beauvais (it was in French hands), an ardent advocate of a dual monarchy (England & France under one king), ceaselessly campaigned for Joan to be handed over to the French Inquisition. What should Luxembourg do? The chivalric code demanded he hand her over to the French for a ransom. His aunt and wife wanted him to do the same; but his brother, Luis of Luxembourg was the Duke of Bedford's Chancellor in France. But Charles VII made no attempt to either rescue her or ransom her and the English eventually offered Luxembourg 10,000 livres, so, around the beginning of December she was handed over to the English. Cauchon had already written to Henry VI, demanding she be tried by the University of Paris.

Joan was brought by a long circuitous route (to avoid the French) to the castle of Bouvreuil, outside Rouen, arriving there on or about Christmas Eve, 1430. The castle was held by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. Here she was kept in a cell, with her legs in fetters at all times, and chained to a log at night. She had 5 English guards, 3 of whom stayed in her cell at night. The English soldiers, known to the French as "Godons" because they were always swearing "God damn!" were renowned for their brutality and foul language.

Her inquisition began on 9th January 1431. There were several irregularities.

Church law required that the trial take place in the diocese of the presiding judge but Cauchon was in exile from Beauvais. Special provisions had to be put in place for Cauchon to proceed as judge. In effect the archdiocese of Rouen ceded the court as territory of Beauvais. However, since the trial was in Rouen and this was a court of the Inquisition an Inquisition judge from Rouen had to be appointed. This was Jean Le Maître, a Dominican friar of Rouen and Vice-Inquisitor of France. But, for "the serenity of his conscience" he declared he would not participate in the trial, arguing he had no jurisdiction in the court because it was Beauvais territory! (Catch 22?) Because of this he only took up his post half way through the court proceedings after being leaned on heavily by the Grand inquisitor of France and by Pierre Cauchon. His objection may also have arisen from his belief that this was not a properly constituted Papal court but an ad hoc arrangement. His reluctance to attend was reflected in his eventual reward from the English, just 20 salut d'or (5 livre tournois), less than half the price of a horse.

A further irregularity was that the prisoner should have been held in an ecclesiastical prison and attended by female guards with a priest on hand. The story has arisen that the legal fiction of an ecclesiastical cell was created by making three clerics responsible for holding the three keys to Joan's cell. And that one of these keys was held by Cardinal Beaufort. This story shows how easily truth can be distorted. The story arises from the testimony of just one man, a priest named Lebouchier, who on being questioned about Joan's abjuration (see later), reported that he had heard that Pierre Cauchon, Jean D'Estivet, the chief prosecutor during the trial, and Cardinal Beaufort each had a key to Joan's cell at that time. (He admitted he had never been at the trial.) But he was talking about Joan's abjuration and that took place on 24th May 1431, seven weeks after the court proceedings had ended. However, this hearsay report is contradicted by several witnesses. Jean Beaupere, one of Cauchon's closest aides testified that he was sent by Cauchon to speak to Joan in her cell on 25th May, but he couldn't get in because he couldn't find the man who had the key and he was chased off by the English. Clearly, Cauchon didn't have a key on that day. Another witness, Martin Ladvenu, a Dominican friar and one of

the assessors who attended throughout the trial, later testified that only the English had access to her cell. This was corroborated by Nicolas Taquel, one of the notaries who recorded the trial proceedings. Beaufort, of course, was English but he could not have held a key until after the court proceedings were over. He had left Rouen in November 1430 and crossed over to England in late December. He didn't return to Rouen until mid-April or early May 1431. He attended the English parliament from January to March 1431 (see Appendix 1) so he could not have attended the trial.

Other irregularities were that she, a simple peasant girl, had no-one to speak on her behalf and that she should have been charged, at the very beginning, with specific charges. In fact her trial involved extensive and repeated interrogation (there were no witnesses) in which her interrogators hoped to catch her out and only at the end of the trial did they prepare a list of 70 charges (or Articles) each of which she had to answer.

As far as the English were concerned it was most important that she was found guilty of heresy. If she was shown to be a heretic and burned at the stake that would certainly put the fear of God into any opposition to English rule and the Dauphin's coronation would have been invalid. This was what they were after.

On the 9th January Joan's Inquisition began. During the next six weeks evidence was collected, depositions of witnesses obtained and Joan was interrogated. During this time Jean D'Estivet, the chief prosecutor or promoter, entered her cell, pretending to be another prisoner, in order to trick her into saying something that could be judged heretical. Spies were paid to listen to these conversations. At other times she was visited by Nicolas Loiseleur who played the part of a false confessor who tried to trick her into an heretical confession.

The public trial began in the Royal Chapel of the castle on 21st February. But Jean le Maitre, the second principal judge failed to attend. The next day he put in his first appearance having been summoned to attend! He refused to act as judge as previously explained but was persuaded to remain as an observer. He did not take up the role of judge until 13 March 1431.

The constitution of this court comprised the two judges, one chief prosecuting officer, Jean d'Estivet, one chief examiner, Jean de la Fontaine, and a group of men referred to collectively as either assessors or judges. Despite the fact that these assessors would all, eventually, stand in judgment of Joan, their number varied throughout the trial from about 30 to 50 but, the latter part of the trial was held in Joan's cell, when, necessarily, all but two or three assessors were excluded. A further group of persons at the University of Paris, collectively known as counsellors or consultants, would also have a role to play. The terms judges, assessors and consultants were frequently interchangeable. Historians have identified over 150 persons who appear to have fulfilled one or more of these roles. For each day of the trial the names of all persons present other than the court officials (principal judges, the prosecutors and the notaries) are meticulously recorded. Beaufort's name never appears in these listings. On her first day in court 42 assessors were present. Three notaries recorded the trial. Subsequent sessions of the trial were held in the salle d'honneur of the castle, or, later, privately, in her cell, as previously noted.

The interrogation, at the beginning, was led by Jean Beaupere (see above), not Jean de la Fontaine, the chief examiner, who only interrogated Joan at a much later date in her cell. However, for most of the trial the names of the interrogators are not given. This is because, as we learn much later, numerous persons questioned Joan throughout the trial: judges, examiners, prosecutors and assessors; often all at once. The court proceedings concerned themselves with a variety of issues including her "voices", the physical manifestations of her saints, her submission or otherwise to the Church Militant, her adoption of masculine clothes and issues of sorcery concerning childhood beliefs in her village. Her virginity (which had to be proved by physical examination) was a great protection, for it was a well known fact that the Devil could exert no power against a virgin. The trial was very long. (By comparison the trial of Anne Boleyn took one day.) The court proceedings lasted from 21 February until 28 March. What the court wanted was an admission of heresy. Heresy was very difficult to prove so the proceedings continued until there had been amassed a large amount of testimony that could be shown to contain sufficient contradictions that the judges would recognise that her claims were diabolically inspired. On the 27th and 28th March 70 Articles of Indictment were read out to her[1][1]. These were the

[1][1] According to the trial documents the period from 21 February until 26 March is referred to as the Preparatory Trial and the period from 27 March until 23 May is referred to as the Ordinary Trial, but the court proceedings ended on 28 March after Joan had answered the 70 Articles (with some clarification, in her cell, on 30 March). After this Joan was

Court's summary of its findings. She had to answer every Article. No wonder this took two days! A further day, 30 March, was set aside for her to provide clarification on a number of her answers. At this point Joan's trial was, in effect, over. Now these 70 Articles take up about 80 pages of the trial transcript, almost one quarter of the whole. These 70 Articles were therefore reduced to 12 Articles. These were not shown or read out to Joan. They were then presented to 31 assessors in Rouen and to the Rouen cathedral Chapter for their opinion. Judgment was going to be made, not on the Court hearings, but on a document drawn up by Pierre Cauchon and his immediate circle. The 12 Articles were then taken to Paris and presented to the assessors and consultants at the University for their opinion. The University was the supreme authority in France for theology and canon law.

On 18th April the court ordered Joan to recant and obey the church. On 2nd May she was subjected to a lengthy sermon by Jean de Chatillon, Archdeacon of Evreux (one of the assessors), and threatened with burning. On 8th May she was taken to the Grosse Tour of the castle and shown the torture chamber and the executioners; Cauchon wanted to use torture but was advised against it. On 13th May Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and owner of the castle, held a great banquet. After the feast Warwick invited his guests to observe the spectacle of Joan in her cell; amongst them were Jean of Luxembourg and his brother Luis (the Chancellor).

By 19th May the judges, assessors and consultants assembled in the Archbishop's palace in Rouen and their several opinions were all recorded, some 24 letters being presented to the assembly, including one prepared by the University of Paris. It was agreed that Joan was guilty of heresy (the verdict being based on the 12 Articles). At this meeting it was also agreed that Joan should be shown clemency if she admitted heresy and denied her "voices". Beaufort was not present.

On 23rd May Joan was brought before Pierre Cauchon and several other bishops to hear the verdict. It is clear from the trial transcript that considerable effort was made to encourage Joan to abjure (that is to renounce her heretical ways). Pierre Maurice, a canon of the cathedral used all his powers of oratory beseeching her to abjure. She replied, "If I ... saw the fire lit, and the bundles of sticks ready and the executioners ready to light the fire, and even if I were within the fire, I would nevertheless not say anything other. I would maintain unto death what I have said in this trial." At this point the trial documents declare that the trial proceedings have ended. The next day Pierre Cauchon granted the people of Rouen a grand spectacle. In the Saint- Ouen Abbey cemetery several platforms were set up; one for Joan, the others for the judges and assessors, including Cardinal Beaufort, Luis of Luxembourg, and William Alnwick, bishop of Norwich. Guillaume Erard preached a sermon and then addressed Joan, exhorting her to submit to the Holy Mother Church and pressing her to sign a document of abjuration. But she remained steadfast; she would not abjure. And so, the trial transcript records how the dread sentence of excommunication and death by burning was read out by Pierre Cauchon. Dramatically, the trial transcript[2][2] now relates that, at some point during this reading, she interrupted him, she declared she would abjure and threw herself upon the mercy of Mother Church. Then Jean Massieu (a priest and her faithful usher throughout all the Court proceedings) read out to her, line by line, a document of abjuration. This she repeated after him. And then, according to the trial transcript she signed a document of abjuration. Massieu later testified that this was trick. He testified that what he had read out was a document of six or seven lines dealing with renunciation of taking up arms and matters of that ilk. The Court document is 50 lines long filled with admissions of heresy, of dealings with the devil and so on. (Interestingly this is the only document in French. A Latin translation is attached.) Another witness stated that Henry VI's secretary, Laurence Calot, produced a small document from his sleeve on which she drew a circle. She was led away to her cell. There was uproar and confusion and nearly a riot; Cauchon and the assessors being abused by the English and stones were thrown. It is now widely (but not universally) believed that this was a trick. The whole idea was to get Joan to abjure and then recant her abjuration. This would convince all the judges of her evil and the need for her to be burned at the stake.

subject to no further examination, only to admonition, the threat of torture and the plea that she abjure. (To prove heresy they needed her to abjure.)

[2][2] Three notaries, Guillaume Manchon, Guillaume Colles (known as Boisguillaume) and Nicolas Taquel kept the minutes of the trial. They all testified that, despite pressure to do otherwise, they kept a faithful record of what was said. This is contradicted by some witnesses. These minutes were later converted into a Latin transcript, translated by Manchon and one Thomas de la Courcelle. The Latin transcript was signed off by Manchon and Boisguillaume as a true and faithful record. However, they did testify that the 12 Articles of indictment and the formal abjuration document were drawn up by others. Only three copies of the Latin transcript exist today. A fragment of the original minutes is also in existence.

This day, the 24th May 1431, the day of Joan's abjuration, is the only date between November 1430 and the day of Joan's execution at which the presence of Cardinal Beaufort is undisputed.

On 28th May Cauchon and several others visited her in her cell where she had resumed wearing male attire; she refused to deny her saints, and was deemed to have recanted her abjuration. There are contradictory stories as to why she wore male attire; the transcript records she had done so voluntarily; Massieu and others later testified that she had been forced to do so. Joan now claimed she had only abjured for fear of burning. Some judges wanted her abjuration to be read out to her again on the 29th but this was refused by Cauchon and, on 30th May 1431, having been granted the last Sacrament[3][3] and a last confession she was taken to the Old Market Place and in front of a great crowd and some 800 soldiers, she was burned at the stake. She was 19 years old.

The following December Henry VI was crowned king of France by Cardinal Beaufort in the cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris. He was not anointed by the holy oil, which was held at Rheims and controlled by the French. Four years later Philip of Burgundy made peace with Charles VII and from that time on the French were in the ascendancy against the English. By 1453 the English had been driven out of France with the exception of Calais.

In February 1449 Charles VII set in motion an inquiry into Joan's trial and execution. This inquiry determined that the trial had been arbitrary and political in nature. But, since she had been tried in a Church court, only a Church court could clear her name. In due course, in 1452, a Papal Legate came to Rouen and interrogated some of those involved. This investigation produced a "summarium" which was placed before various ecclesiastical tribunals for their opinion, then their advice was put before the Pope, and in 1455 he authorised a new trial. The trial examined well over 100 witnesses, it moved from Paris to Domremy (Joan's birthplace), to Orleans and finally Rouen, and on the 7th July 1456 her 1431 trial was declared null and void. Most of what we know of Joan's whole life is to be found in the transcripts of this nullification trial. It needs to be said that an enquiry commissioned by Charles VII and a trial sponsored by the Pope would be unlikely to find fault with the French Inquisition or the University of Paris. Many of the witnesses had attended the original trial as court officials or assessors, who had condemned Joan to death, so, unsurprisingly, the people who were blamed for the flagrant injustice were either dead, like Pierre Cauchon, or were in hock to the English. Assessors were not actually cross examined on why they had individually condemned Joan to death.

In 1869 the Bishop of Orleans instituted proceedings by which she would be eventually canonised in 1920, thus fulfilling Shakespeare's prophesy "we will set thy statue in some holy place and reverence thee as a blessed saint". Her oak and gesso statuette, carved by W.D. Gough (designed by Ninian Comper), was placed in the retro-choir in 1923 facing Beaufort's chantry chapel. The statuette may be considered "wrong" in one important respect, it shows her holding a raised sword. We know from the transcripts that she never wielded a sword but always carried aloft her personal banner in order that she should not kill anyone.

Appendix 1 Was Cardinal Beaufort complicit in the outcome of the trial?

Beaufort was present in England for the 1431 Parliament from January until the end of March (see *The Parliament Rolls and Radford*). This was a most important Parliament. The English were doing badly in their war against the French and substantial sums of money were being raised for this purpose and to support the Duke of Burgundy. Beaufort himself had provided a huge short term loan to the government and he wanted his money back. A payment of £2815 was authorised by Parliament on 16th March and he was paid on the same day. He returned to Rouen no earlier than mid-April. He was not present during the court proceedings. The trial transcript carefully records, on a day to day basis, who was in attendance in the court (or cell). There is only one single reference to Cardinal Beaufort in the whole of these proceedings. He puts in an appearance on 24th May 1431, some seven weeks after the end of the court proceedings, and just six days before her death. At the nullification trial a doctor testified that Beaufort and Warwick expressed great concern, when Joan was seriously ill on 18 April, that she might die before being sentenced to burn. However, the trial transcript shows Cauchon admonishing Joan in her cell on that day and refusing her the last Sacrament, with no mention of Beaufort. Wagstaff (see Bibliography) dismisses this reference, maintaining

[3][3] It has been argued that Joan would not have been granted the last Sacrament unless she had admitted heresy. Seven witnesses testified on 7th June 1431 that immediately prior to her execution she admitted that her "voices" were diabolical, hence the granting of the last Sacrament.

that Beaufort didn't return until 2 May. His known movements from April 1430 until May 1431 are listed below. Throughout this period the young Henry VI was living in the same castle. Did he attend any of the court hearings?

Did Beaufort influence the outcome of the trial? This seems unlikely. With Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, in control, and men like D'Estivet (the principal prosecutor), Loiseleur (assessor and false confessor) and Guillaume Erard (one of her several interrogators) conducting the proceedings there was no doubt about the outcome, even though the English lost patience at the length of the trial. One of the assessors, Isambart de la Pierre, testifying years later, said, "Some of those who took part in the trial ... were ... motivated by *partiality*, some ... by the *desire for vengeance*; and others ... by *greed for gain* ... others were moved by *fear* (my italics), like the Vice Inquisitor [Jean le Maitre] ... The whole thing was done on the initiative of the King of England, the Cardinal of Winchester, the Earl of Warwick and other Englishmen, who paid the expenses incurred in the trial ..." The Duke of Bedford especially could have invoked the chivalric code and ransomed her back to the French, and saved her. He chose not to.

Beaufort only "sat amongst the judges" once, at Joan's abjuration, not her trial. There is no record of him every interrogating Joan in her cell. He did not officiate in any way at her burning; only one witness puts him as being present on that occasion.

Cardinal Beaufort's movements and key dates in Joan's story

1430	23 April	Beaufort accompanies Henry VI across to Calais
	24 May	Joan captured by Lionel the Bastard of Wandomme
	17 July	Beaufort and Henry VI arrive in Rouen
	7 November	Beaufort leaves Rouen
	16 December	Beaufort arrives in Calais
	21 December	Beaufort crosses over to England
	24 December	Joan of Arc arrives in Rouen
1431	8 th January	Beaufort witnesses petition to English Parliament (Wagstaff)
	9 January	Inquisition of Joan of Arc begins (closed session)
	12 January - 20 March	Beaufort attends English Parliament
	21 February	Public session of trial begins
	16 March	English Parliament affirms (and pays) loan repayment to Beaufort
	28 March	Trial ends with reading of 70 articles of indictment (later reduced to 12 articles)
	12 April	Ship commissioned at Southampton to take Beaufort to France (Wagstaff)
	mid April	Beaufort returns to Rouen (note: Wagstaff claims 2 nd May)
	19 May	Verdict of Joan's guilt read out in Archbishop's Palace in Rouen (Beaufort absent)
	24 May	Joan's "abjuration" attended by Beaufort
	30 May	Joan burned at the stake (only one witness records Beaufort's presence)

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