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Of Queens, Incubi, and Whispers from  
Hell: Joan of Arc and the Battle Between  
Orthopraxy and Theoretical Doctrine in  
Fifteenth Century France

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**Of Queens, Incubi, and Whispers from Hell: Joan of Arc and the Battle Between Orthodoxy and Theoretical Doctrine in Fifteenth Century France**

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**Honors Thesis**

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## Introduction and Theory

Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431, after having recanted her confession of heresy made during an extensive captivity and inquisition at the hands of the Burgundians and the Catholic Church during the Hundred Years War. Joan of Arc lived through the Hundred Years War, a time of periodic warfare between the English and French crowns, lasting a hundred and sixteen years (from 1337-1453). Joan of Arc ran away from her home, after hearing voices she attributed to St. Michael urging her to join in the conflict, liberate Paris from the English, and see Charles VII crowned at Reims. The future Charles VII, upon receiving Joan inspected her, questioning her voices, and ordering a medical examination to prove her virginity. Joan was subsequently given command over an army, and during her tenure as a military leader she lifted the siege of Orléans, and participated in the Charles VII's coronation at Reims (the traditional coronation place for French kings since Charlemagne, with whom Charles VII shared a name), and was captured by the Burgundians (allies of the English) and then sold to the English as a prisoner, who turned her over to the Church to stand trial for heresy.<sup>1</sup> Centuries of studies, advertisements, political speeches, and religious testimonials have understood Joan as the unfortunate victim of a society which couldn't allow a woman to assert power and undermine the structures of patriarchal authority. This project follows in the recent tradition of theological analysis in exploring gender in the medieval period, building upon the founding works of Alcuin Blamires, Fiona Griffiths, Shawn M. Cranmer, as well as my own research in exploring the so-termed anti-feminist theological literature of the medieval period in order to understand where, if at all, women did have codified places of authority and agency within the religious establishment of the twelfth century. Gender analysis on the middle ages was born largely in the 1970s, but largely ignored

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Hobbins, "Introduction" in *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 1-4.

religion until the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> As gender history has grown as an academic field, most analyses published on the period (focused mostly on women) have either explored the lack of agency given to women during the period, or focused on the “heroines” of medieval history, those “anomalous” women who appeared to live outside the prescribed gender norms of the period (primarily influenced and enforced by the Church). These analyses reinforce the assumption that the Middle Ages represented a period of unified, dichotomous understanding of gender and nonconformity, in which men and women occupied wholly distinct spheres, and were believed to have innate behavioral and physiological differences. Unfortunately, these analyses actually deny their female subjects’ personhood in finding that the social reactions for their lives (either positive or negative) reflect the power of the patriarchy or the special circumstances afforded to certain individuals on the strength of family connection or wealth alone (as has been done with the memory of Joan of Arc).<sup>3</sup> This project seeks to further understand the boundaries and means of female agency in public during the medieval period, and provide a concept of medieval gender theory which brings a nuanced update to the scholarship which has persisted in understanding medieval women who performed cross-gendered lifestyles as wholly subversive, and “special” when they managed to avoid persecution.

Joan of Arc differed from many other medieval women, who were celebrated and even canonized for their leadership positions within the Church (termed “brides of Christ). The “Bride

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<sup>2</sup> Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, Women, Gender, and Church History *Church History* 73 (2002): 600-620, accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4146422>, 604.

<sup>3</sup> Alcuin Blamires, “Introduction” in *Woman Defamed, Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed., Alcuin Blamires, Karen Pratt, and C.W. Marx (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), vii. Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Mysticism and Asceticism of Medieval Women,” *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 2012), EBOOK, 57. Caroline Bynum, a contemporary prominent medievalist, also laments the lack of scholarship on the power and influence of women within the context of monasticism in the medieval period and the lazy (and yet ubiquitous) argument that women, oppressed, had little impact on the construction of the medieval Church (and therefore society).

of Christ” theology created a means of living outside the prescribed gender roles of medieval society (i.e. living in the masculine public sphere). This theology enabled women to subvert gender roles without separating its subject from her sex (as the “bride of Christ” was understood within a marital context—exercising the duties of a wife and duly eroticized as the conjugal companion of God). My own previous research, as well as that of Fiona Griffiths, Alcuin Blamires, Dylan Elliott, and Johanna Chamberlyne have analyzed the pockets of agency women were able to cultivate within the religious sphere of medieval society, becoming prominent members of canon and doctrinal debate (like Herrad of Hohenburg), saints, and powerful abbesses (essentially running a political, spiritual, and judicial mini-polity, like Heloise).<sup>4</sup> Since St. Augustine, Christian theologians posited the importance of “spiritual virginity,” which at various times in medieval history eclipsed physical virginity in importance. Both men and women who eschewed marriage or sexual activity were esteemed for their close personal connection to God, but those who had been married, or who (this mostly applies to men) had engaged in sexual activity but renounced their past actions and joined the Church, could be spiritually virginal, by keeping their minds guarded against sin and exemplifying great virtues (intellectual, ascetic clerical duties).<sup>5</sup> Women born to great estate and who married a ruler (duke, King) were also understood as a “Bride of

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<sup>4</sup> Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Twelfth Century Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November, 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/). Herrad and Hohenburg and Heloise were two twelfth century female religious. Herrad’s book, *Hortus Deliciarum* offered theological exegesis and her perspective on the proper maintenance of religious communities, participating the contemporary theological renaissance known as the Gregorian Reforms. Heloise is perhaps one of the most famous abbesses in history; she was an extremely well-read, intelligent woman who ran her religious community assiduously (although she is perhaps most well known for her relationship and debating skill with her one-time husband Peter Abelard, who was a major figure in the theological discourse of the twelfth century and who created an entire dialectical re-work on the nature of sin in order to ameliorate his fears over the immortal souls of both himself and Heloise).

<sup>5</sup> Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Twelfth Century Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November, 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/).

Christ,” as a great ruler was chosen and anointed through divine intervention. These women were painted as Madonnas (loose hair, white clothes). In essence, these women were celebrated as a Mary figure through whose children (and own works during a potential regency) the political realm would be saved from dissension, war, weak leadership, etc, and whose quasi divine marriage afforded them holy status.<sup>6</sup> Female virgins (physically) were also considered the “brides of Christ,” a holy estate which afforded women a special proximity to God, and therefore ability to intercede on behalf of the souls of fellow mortals.<sup>7</sup> They were also considered the mistress and embodiment of the Church itself (also referred to as the “bride of Christ”). It is important to note that the “bride of Christ,” is eroticized in theological discourse--the “bride” is regarded as having reached the conjugal state with God.<sup>8</sup> Based on my previous research, and on the work of Dylan

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<sup>6</sup> Joanna L. Chamberlyne, “Crowns and Virgins: Queenmaking During the Wars of the Roses,” *Young Medieval Women*, ed. Katherine J. Lewis, Noel James Mengue, and Kim M. Phillips (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 62.

<sup>7</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Mysticism and Asceticism of Medieval Women,” *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 2012), EBOOK, 71. Bynum writes, examining female participation in medieval Catholicism through a Weberian analysis, that “being a vessel, to a medieval person, meant being active and serving in a way Weber’s understanding of mysticism seems almost to preclude.” While sociologists like Weber have concluded that female activity within the medieval religious tradition was largely manifested in “mysticism,” Bynum argues that this view is anachronistic and ignores the specifically gendered conception of “active” and “passive” participation. Being a vessel through which another’s soul could find salvation (as in the Bride of Christ construction) was necessarily *active*, as an embodiment of Jesus’s sacrifice and mission. *Being* a reputed “Bride of Christ,” was an active position, and therefore a public position; women who acted within this model were participating within the medieval public sphere.

<sup>8</sup> Gilbert of Hoyland, *The Works of Gilbert of Hoyland: Sermons on the Song of Songs*, trans., Lawrence C. Braceland (Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1978), 44 in Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Twelfth Century Latin catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas Summer Research 2017*: 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/), 20. The eroticization of the soul’s relationship to God is perhaps best understood through Gilbert of Hoyland’s passage on the soul’s ascendancy to God as a marriage in his commentary on St. Augustine’s *Sermon on the Song of Songs*: “What better place than one’s little bed, what time more fitting than by night, for the exercise of love...In Genesis, as soon as our first parents opened their eyes to this daylight, they blushed in confusion. How much happier were they previously when they kept their eyes closed, and when under cover of a better night, they knew not sin’s concupiscence!” The bride, marrying God, sits on a bed at night, the setting of matrimonial (and all canonical licit sexual activity) consummation; however, her activities, though connected to “love,” are intellectual (meditative), and Gilbert takes special care to enunciate the differences by declaring that she is “not wanton,” “nor does she dally on a bed of concupiscence.” Her ascetic intellectual pursuit (for she has eschewed the comforts of lay society) bring her into a conubial embrace with God, an embrace born out of chastity, but which is nevertheless described in terms of the passions of a wedding night, and which symbolizes the reversal of the fall of man, born out of sexual sin (as confirmed by Gilbert’s reference to Genesis).” Additionally, though Gilbert is writing to a male audience about the nature of

Elliott, these women, deemed “brides of Christ,” were afforded social prestige, intellectual agency, and respect of male peers to engage in public discourse and debate.<sup>9</sup> Individuals understood under this theory were afforded position and celebration because their actions were understood as manifestations of quasi-uxorial duty, obedience, and fortitude.

### **Thesis and Historiography**

Joan of Arc’s own statements about herself in the *Trial of Condemnation*, contemporary positive literature on Joan of Arc, the Inquisitorial response and analysis to Joan of Arc’s presentation in the *Trial of Condemnation*, as well as the major fifteenth century theological debates, reveals the ubiquity of the “Bride of Christ” theology in fifteenth century society (lay and ecclesiastical) as a means of female empowerment outside of traditional gender roles, as well as the limitations of this theory in practice. These three perspectives respectively utilize this theological model with respect to Joan of Arc’s military adventures in the service of the Dauphin. Joan of Arc herself evaluates her performance as a woman participating in warfare within the model of the “Bride of Christ,” as the holy vessel through which God would bring lost souls into his dominion through the waging of holy war against the English. As she is represented in the trial transcript, she understands her identity as the wife of God, the sexually pure tool of intercession, curating her Lord’s domain on his behalf (the ideal example of *feminine* sex role in medieval society). Her supporters (exemplified by Jean Gerson, Jacques Gelu, and Christine de Pizan) likewise identify her behavior with the “bride of Christ” concept and indeed suggest her performance within a masculine field (warfare) represented her value in performing her *wifely* duties as the

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*their* souls, the metaphor Gilbert draws on is applied to women as well, through Abelard’s analysis, and in the works of later theologians.

<sup>9</sup> Dylan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Twelfth Century Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November, 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/).

“celestial bride,” going so far as to paint Joan with an *Queen’s* coronet. Both Joan (in the trial) and her popular supporters understood Joan’s masculine performance as an acceptable incarnation of her feminized role as a wife (associated with the medieval concept of feminine sexed body). However, Joan’s Inquisitors find her relationship to God problematic, and therefore cannot understand her masculine performance in war as an acceptable commission of duty by a celestial Lord and Husband. They interpret her interest in status and material possession as evidence of adultery and treason against God, and a violation of her position as a female sexed body against natural law. Joan of Arc’s case demonstrates the ubiquitous acceptance of a theological concept in allowing women to cross gender roles within the public sphere. Examining Joan’s presence through the “Bride of Christ” theology further highlights complexities in medieval gender theory; the ability to acceptably preform cross-gendered lifestyles in medieval society was contingent upon said performance’s relationship to societal expectations for that gender.

Joan of Arc has been a subject of historical analyses for centuries, and as one of the most well-documented individuals of the Middle Ages, historians have had much material to work with. Much of the historical work on Joan of Arc however, has focused on either vilifying the English (to the detriment of actual analysis on Joan herself), or on sanctifying Joan as a martyr for a multitude of causes including female participation in the military, French nationalism, the power structure of feudal France, religious freedom, and Catholic supremacy. Many of these causes are contradictory, and reflect individual historians’ personal biases. These rehabilitative

analyses all have, at their core, a refutation of the trial against her as a mere puppet show orchestrated by the English to rid themselves of a burdensome political enemy.<sup>10</sup> It represents the unchallenged or critiqued demonstration at the Musée de Jeanne D’Arc in Rouen, Normandy (the city where Joan of Arc was tried and burned at the stake in 1431).<sup>11</sup> The museum operates as an interactive experience wherein visitors are taken in small groups through the reconstructed tower Joan of Arc was imprisoned in, and participate in selected media reconstructions of the trial of Joan of Arc, along with historians’ remarks. These media selections and historian remarks functioned to tell the story of an extraordinary woman who was killed because of her immense power against the English, and that the trial was certainly a tool of the English Crown, who ultimately was able to unite France against the English.<sup>12</sup>

These analyses of Joan of Arc ignore her gender and gender performance as a secondary issue to her political status as an enemy of the French Crown. However, this project endeavors to demonstrate that her gender and gender performance was actually the key issue at stake during her trial, drawing on the unique (for the field) works of Susan Crane and Lilas G. Edwards, who analyzed Joan of Arc’s gender performance and its importance in understanding her as an actual historical figure and restoring her autonomy. Additionally, my work draws on that of Deborah A. Fraioli, who, though she does not focus on the gendered aspect of analysis on Joan of Arc, has focused in *Joan of Arc: The Early Debate* in understanding the various contemporary viewpoints on Joan of Arc and what the motivations may have been behind these positions.<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Cornford’s “Christine de Pizan’s *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of

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<sup>10</sup> Kelly DeVries, *Joan of Arc, A Military Leader* (Stroud: The History Press, 2011). DeVrie’s work is representative of the popular take on Joan of Arc.

<sup>11</sup> Musée de Jehanne D’Arc, Rouen France, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Deborah A. Fraioli, *Joan of Arc: The Early Debate* (Suffolk: The Bodyell Press, 2011).

Charles VII,” like Fraioli’s work, focuses on the contemporary source material on Joan of Arc. Cornford’s analysis though begins to stray into gender analysis, unlike Fraioli’s, and offers a unique perspective on the thoughts of others on Joan of Arc’s actions, identity, and gender performance.<sup>14</sup> Both these authors analyze contemporary literature and theology focused on Joan. Analysis on these texts is a relatively new attempt in the historiography of Joan of Arc; for centuries after the Trial of Rehabilitation, historians and popular enthusiasts have dismissed the actual theological and propaganda pieces in favor of Joan, just as they ignored the *Trial of Condemnation* text. These scholars assumed these texts all shared common roots in political factionalism, and in any case, dismissed the realities of the theological debate on Joan by arguing that “superstitions” ruled the fifteenth century, and such “irrational” systems of thought can not be analyzed with equal respect. These inaccurate line of thought, along with assumptions on the rigidity of medieval gender have largely strangled interesting attempts at analysis using Joan of Arc to understand the greater complexities of medieval society. This project draws on the tradition Cornford and Fraioli exemplify; analyzing the contemporary debate on Joan of Arc from the perspective of pushing back against the way she has been appropriated for political “causes” since her death. Examining Joan of Arc through the lens of the “Bride of Christ” theology provides a means of understanding how Joan’s gender and sexuality performance is presented in the trial transcript, how her proponents, and how her opponents understood this performance, as well as the larger complexities of gendered and sexed agency in the mid-fifteenth century.

**A Reconstruction of Joan’s Identity in Three Parts: By her own Admission Represented in the *Trial*, in the Words of her Followers, and by her Inquisitors’s Condemnations**

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<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Cornford, “Christine de Pizan’s *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII,” *Parergon* 2 (January 2000): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>.

### **Pt. 1: By her own Admission in the *Trial***

The *Trial of Condemnation*, the trial transcript of the legal proceedings and interrogation of Joan of Arc in 1431, is the only surviving documentation in which Joan herself is recorded; her answers to the Inquisition's questions reveal her own understanding of her sexual identity as a “bride of Christ,” the same sexual identity with which powerful women of the Middle Ages had identified and been identified with by the male institutions of power for centuries.<sup>15</sup> Not only does this revelation imply the widespread diffusion of this metaphor in lay life (albeit devoid of its finer theological points), it also allows for the reconstruction of Joan’s personal gender identity, on her own terms (a gift of agency she has been denied for centuries). Pierre Cauchon, the head of the Inquisition against Joan of Arc, began his proceedings with an interrogation (before charges had been formally brought down); her answers to these questions, provide glimpses of

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<sup>15</sup> Daniel Hobbins, “Introduction” in *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 4-22. This text has been historically maligned and subsequently ignored in many analyses of Joan of Arc’s life. Since its publication in 1431, the trial transcript has been met with skepticism over its validity as a record of the proceedings against Joan of Arc. As many historians and contemporaries of Joan viewed the trial against her as mere political theatre, orchestrated by the English to rid themselves of a tiresome enemy (one who had galvanized the previously lethargic French armies and lost them the control of Orléans and created an alternative king), they did not believe the transcript represented the truth of what had proceeded against Joan, nor did they believe it mattered if it did. Daniel Hobbins, a prolific scholar on the Hundred Years War, and translator of the most recent version of the trial transcript argues that the text should be taken at face value, as important to understanding the Church's real case against her. His argument rests on examinations into the lives of the Inquisitors, pre and post trial. The trial was lead by Pierre Cauchon, and administered by a hundred at thirty one ecclesiastical men (Hobbins emphasizes that only eight of this number were not French). Under the orders of Cauchon, Thomas de Courcelles and Guillaume Manchon (members of the Inquisition) collected all the documentation of the trial, including the original French minutes, and translated and edited the mass into a unified, Latin, text of the proceedings. This document was carefully constructed, overseen, and thoughtfully distributed for public consumption. The care with which Cauchon distributed a finalized project gives insight into his motivations; this document was a record for posterity and Cauchon distributed it as a means of justifying the trial, the sentence, and the authority of the canon proceedings which had condemned Joan to death. Guillaume Manchon (the notary) testified in 1450 (nearly twenty years after Joan’s execution, and after the political tides had shifted to favor the French) that he “was sometimes pressed by the Bishop of Beauvais and the judges to write according to their understanding, contrary to Joan’s meaning. But in everything [written] [he] followed only his own understanding and conscience.” Some have argued that the bound translation Manchon compiled represents a complete re-write of the trial, a version Cauchon believed would give credence to the validity of the trial, but there is almost no evidence of this (and if it were true, the record would still be extremely useful, as it represents what the Church believed was a justifiable presentation of heresy and thus still provides insight into the the constraints of the spiritual identity in medieval society).

the way Joan saw herself.<sup>16</sup> Of course, analyzing this text in order to understand Joan's true feelings is somewhat complicated by the circumstances under which her voice was recorded (in prison, under duress). However, Joan's responses show her disinterest in answering questions in order to secure favor with her jailers, and it should be noted that Joan was decently treated as a prisoner--she was not put to torture, and she was allowed an advocate of sorts. Her recorded voice is the only insight into Joan's real identity, not the extorted, faded copy which has been pasted onto every cause and political movement (liberal or conservative) which invokes her name and memory.

Her voice, preserved within the trial transcript, shows her understanding of her own identity as existing within the theological, theoretical framework of the "bride of Christ," giving her license to behave outside of traditionally gendered ways.<sup>17</sup> The trial transcript reads:

Joan spoke first concerning the article on the certainty of her salvation, on which she was questioned this morning: that she meant by this, provided she keeps the oath and promise she made to God to keep her virginity in both body and soul. Asked whether she need confess, since she had a revelation from her voices that she will be saved, she says she does not know that she has sinned mortally, but if she is in mortal sin, she thinks that Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret would abandon her at once.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3. Cauchon's career began at the University of Paris in canon law, and became Bishop of Beauvais (a position which afforded him spiritual and secular dominion over his subjects), and one of the most powerful men in Paris after Henry V was ceded the territory in 1420. He was firmly interested in the interests of the Burgundians (allies of the English against the French), but Hobbins writes, was mostly concerned for his career, not ideology. There is also evidence that Cauchon believed the best chance for Joan of Arc to receive a fair trial (and to survive) lay with an ecclesiastical court. The English had intended to try her themselves in civil proceedings, but Cauchon interceded. While Cauchon's name has been tarnished for centuries after his death, there is evidence to suggest that he acted in self-interest, not interest to the English.

<sup>17</sup> In the case of the *Trial of Condemnation* being a re-writing of the trial in order to justify the sentence passed off against Joan of Arc, her answers which reveal a belief in adhering to this theological tradition strengthen the position that this trial represents a fight between belief/theory and practice. If Cauchon re-wrote the trial transcript, the places where Joan demonstrates her adherence to the "Bride of Christ" principles serve as a foil to the orthodoxy he and his fellow intellectuals and jurists persist in pushing on Joan (or their construction of her).

<sup>18</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 102.

Joan says here that she believes she occupies a unique closeness to God, by virtue of her virginity. She talks of her virginity in “body and soul,” meaning that her notion of her virginity is not a physical or experiential marker of her sexual history; instead she has constructed a spiritual and psychological idea of her *self* as a function of her abstinence from marriage and sexual activity. This relationship between her *self* and God forged by her virginity is the essence of who she believes herself to be. Some can and have made the argument that Joan’s identity verges on transsexual, based on her preference for men’s clothing (and indeed her willingness to die rather than be forced into a dress--some have also implied her dress reveals nothing more than the political expediency of hiding her female biology); however this preference for men’s clothing should be viewed as an appendage of her identity as a *virgin*, and within that context as being a specifically female-sexed *wife* to God, despite her masculine gendered performance in attire and warfare.<sup>19</sup>

The issue of Joan’s masculine clothing is a key focus of the trial, and has been a key focus of historians and popular historical enthusiasts for centuries.<sup>20</sup> The precedent for powerful religious women to identify with masculine qualities is abundant; many theologians starting with St. Augustine have posited that virginity associated with the soul gives women a level of masculine superiority in intellectual pursuits (in reaching God through exegesis and moral dialectics), and metaphorical strength (in fighting the devil-which in theological tracts and clerical memoirs is described as a literal battle or fight).<sup>21</sup> Joan was not an educated woman, and therefore would

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<sup>19</sup> Meaning as an individual with a personally close relationship to God as a function of her virginity.

<sup>20</sup> Medieval understandings of sexuality do not consider identity in the same way modern society does. There was no conception of “gay,” “straight,” or “transsexual.” Individuals may have been inclined sexually, towards heterosexual or homosexual activity, but such preferences were not understood as an aspect of identity.

<sup>21</sup> Alcuin Blamires, “Caput a Femina, membra a viris: Gender Polemic In Abelard’s Letter ‘On the Authority and Dignity of the Nun’s Profession’ in *The Tongue of the Fathers: Gender and Ideology in the Twelfth-Century Latin*, ed. David Townsend and Andrew Taylor (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 63.

have been unaware of the metaphors at play in the Latin intellectual tradition on gender and virginity, but the language of battle and warfare is ubiquitous in the medieval oral preaching she would have grown up with. Upon being asked “whether she had been commanded to wear men’s clothing, she said clothing is a small matter, one of the least. She put on men’s clothing not by council of a man of this world; she had not taken anything, nor has she done anything else, but by command of God and the angels.”<sup>22</sup> For Joan, attiring herself in men’s clothing, acquiring a horse, armour, a sword, and cutting her hair were the natural outgrowths of her fulfilling her role *as a virgin*. She claims that God had commanded (through his messengers St. Margaret, St. Michael, and St. Catherine) her to wear men’s clothing, and that she never took any action since her oath to God to remain a virgin, if it was not commanded by the voices she heard (or she would know herself to be in sin and would change her behavior).<sup>23</sup> She sees herself as becoming a masculine figure insofar as she follows in the tradition of female saints depicted with masculine language (in reference to a metaphorical battle for their virtue with the devil), who acquire these skills as a result of their special relationship to God as a virgin. She was not becoming a man, but rather expressing her position as a “bride of Christ,” in the manner she believed she was called to do.

Joan’s understanding of herself as a “bride of Christ,” grows out of her personal identity as a virgin. The term “bride of Christ,” most usually refers to the souls of men who had, through

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<sup>22</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 66. Joan repeatedly testifies to this effect throughout the trial, and after receiving a guilty verdict and offered leniency by giving up men’s clothing (as well as a theological lecture on the sinfulness of these clothes), she refuses to give up the clothing because she says her soul would exist in mortal peril.

<sup>23</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 107-108. At one point, she discusses a time where she acted against the commands of the voices; she had attempted to escape from her prison by the Burgundians, and as punishment for disobeying God, she was severely injured and ill for a while afterwards. She admits that her actions were in sin, and that since that point she refuses to disobey the voices.

ascetic intellectual activity and ability to pass the truth they had gained from this activity onto another, atoned for his original sin and reached God.<sup>24</sup> However, this term also applies to spiritually virginal women (who are oftentimes also bodily virgins as well). Joan's answers during her inquisition demonstrate her belief that she occupied this role as an intercessor on behalf of the souls of others (given to her especially as his consort and as the mistress and embodiment of the Church and its mission to fight for the salvation of humanity's souls through Jesus's preaching), even if she was unaware of the theological complexities of the position. Cauchon questions Joan about a letter she wrote to King Henry VI of England (and France) and his uncle Duke of Bedford, the Regent of France. The Inquisitors are particularly interested in this letter because Joan refers to herself as a "war captain," and because she makes threats against the bodies of royalty, however, her letter highlights more than just Joan's tenacity and apparent bloodlust. In this letter, Joan writes, "Do justice to the King of Heaven; surrender to The Maid."<sup>25</sup> She refers to herself as "The Maid," a reference to her virginity, while proclaiming that two personages of immense secular power surrender to her, as a representative of God on earth, God being the "King of Heaven." Next to "King of Heaven," the capitalized title "The Maid," and the responsibility she takes on in saying she will receive humbly offered peace from the English king and lead him to God, she evokes the power of a queen (and implicitly, the theological position of the "Bride of Christ," whose job it was to lead men to God through her intercession with her celestial husband). Joan reveals that she perceived her role as a "war captain," as a position she took up in or-

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<sup>24</sup> Helen Tschurr, "An Examination of Twelfth Century Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity," *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/).

<sup>25</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 74.

der to fulfill her soul's salvation (she states multiple times on the record that all she asked in return for donning men's clothing and heading to battle was salvation),<sup>26</sup> or to join in the metaphorical conjugal state with God.<sup>27</sup>

Joan's discussion of her relationship to the voices she claims to have heard match the metaphorically erotic relationships between God and the "brides of Christ," in Catholic discourse, further highlighting her understanding of her gender and sexual identity within this theological tradition. In the course of the next few questions after Joan's discussion on her letter to the King of England, Cauchon asks her to elaborate on her relationship with the voices from which she claimed to receive visits. The record states that Joan, when "asked what shape Saint Michael took when he appeared to her, she said that she did not see his crown and knew nothing of his garments. Asked whether he was naked, she answered: "do you think God can't find him clothes?" The record shows Joan continued, saying "that she feels great joy when she sees him; and it seems to her that she is not in mortal sin when she sees him."<sup>28</sup> Cauchon's question reveals his interest in understanding the erotic connotations of Joan's relationship with her voices (which her earlier responses hint at, in connecting herself to the voices and their master in such marital terms). Joan's answer demonstrates her intention in displaying a belief in her relationship with

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>27</sup> Helen Tschurr, "Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity," *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/). The theology on this phenomenon is well defined. Theologians and female religious have analyzed the soul's ascension to heaven as a sexual encounter, the consummation of a marriage. Hagiographies (narratives of a woman's life written to exact sainthood from the papacy on her behalf) of female saints often include overtly sexualized scenes between the woman and a representative of God. These stories are ones Joan would have grown up hearing, in oral religious tradition, even if she wasn't educated enough to understand the finer theological points on how this tradition had evolved, or how theologians had, in narrative, painted the requirements for such an experience.

<sup>28</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 77-78.

God and his messengers in terms of the metaphorical ecstasy which characterizes the relationships female saints or proclaimed “brides of Christ” before her enjoyed with God. Christina of Markyate, in her hagiography, goes out into the woods, seeking respite from her desire for an unnamed cleric with whom she lives, experiences Jesus, and as the author relates, “the maiden...pressed him to her bosom. And with immeasurable delight she held him at one moment to her virginal breast, at another she felt his presence within her...From that moment on the fire of lust was... extinguished.”<sup>29</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, a famous religious woman who was celebrated for her mystical visions and prophecies, writes on her own experience that God said to her, “You are nonetheless touched by My light, which kindles in you an inner fire like a burning sun...So do not be timid, but say these things you understand in the Spirit as I speak them through you...Therefore, O diffident mind, who are taught inwardly by mystical inspiration”<sup>30</sup> These women were celebrated for their contributions to twelfth century religious life and ecclesiastical reform; their experiences so recorded from a tradition in which female saints or important religious women experience this quasi sexual relationship with God, giving them the strength to conquer their trials (for Christina this means her unchaste feelings for her mentor, and for Hildegard, her female gender and lack of formal education). Joan’s statement to Cauchon references this tradition, as she relays her experience of ecstasy with St. Michael, an ecstasy which is felt in her knowledge of her soul’s salvation and knowledge of the purpose she must serve in order to

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<sup>29</sup> Anonymous, *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, in Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Holy Woman, ed., Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser 53-78 (Routledge: Oxford, 2005), 107 in Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/), 34. Christina of Markyate was a famous female recluse and religious figure in twelfth century England.

<sup>30</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, in Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Twelfth Century Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, 39.

ascend to heaven. She recalls these visions happen nearly every day, where she is told to answer “boldly,” in interrogation, or before her capture to venture “boldly” into war.<sup>31</sup> Her actions, as she portrays them, then, are a product of God’s “mystical inspiration,” like Hildegard’s. Joan’s testimony taps into the tradition of the “bride of Christ,” and she paints herself as a divinely inspired woman, who in fulfilling her celestial husband’s wishes (and in increasing the glory of their dominion, the Church) leads humanity towards God (and the warfare, men’s clothing, and ecstatic relationship with the divine voices are all products of her special relationship to God, borne of her spiritual virginity). Despite the fact that the Inquisitors’ condemn Joan for heresy, they are clearly convinced that Joan does see herself this way (even if they do not agree that this is her role); in Cauchon’s final plea to Joan to abjure her sins and spare herself a fiery death, he says, “stop saying these things [that she will not submit to the Church’s authority], I beg you, if you love God, your creator, your beloved spouse.”<sup>32</sup> Joan’s belief in her position as a *bride*, or idyllically feminine (in that she was chosen by God for his own wife) position is apparent in the testimony presented in the trial, that her *accusers* understand her self-constructed identity is as a *woman* participating in the masculine world on behalf of her “beloved spouse,” in a show of dedication and conjugal duty (ideal feminine traits).

### **Pt. II- In the Words of her Followers: A Crown for Jehanne d’Arc**

Joan’s proponents follow suit in justifying Joan’s behavior in terms of her virginity and spiritual position as a “bride of Christ,” signifying both the power, singularity, and diffusion of the concept and its role in creating a space for female agency in the public sphere (one which is not simply “anomalous”). The *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc* of Christine de Pizan, Jean Gerson’s *de*

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<sup>31</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 80.

<sup>32</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 189.

*quadam puella*, and Jacques Gelu's *Dissertatio*, political tracts written in support of Joan of Arc and Charles VII reveal the power of Joan's public identity, as well as the way medieval society allowed women to break certain gender norms. Gerson writes, "It is in harmony with the Holy Scriptures that God made use of the weak sex and the age of innocence to offer peoples and kingdoms the happiness of salvation...God chose what was weak in the world to confound that which was strong."<sup>33</sup> Christine de Pizan cites the same examples which Gelu does (Esther, Judith, and Deborah--from the Bible), to which Benjamin Cornford, a historian at Cambridge, attributes to collusion between the two authors and collusion in creating tracts which would provide sound rhetoric on behalf of the Armagnac cause.<sup>34</sup> The examples are fascinating for two reasons; one, because the evidence of collusion provides further insight into the power of rhetorical and religious context both authors place Joan in, and because the argument that God "made use

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<sup>33</sup> Jean Gerson, *de quadam puella*, in Benjamin Cornford, "Christine de Pizan's *Ditie de Jehanne d'Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII," *Parergon* 2 (January 2000): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>, 81.

Helen Tschurr, "Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity," *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/), 26. This quote also alludes to the works of St. Augustine and Peter Abelard, who both championed similar perspectives on God's prophetic grace on womankind for "last to become first," because of their inherent weakness.

Gerson, Jean "*De elucidatione scholastica mysticae theologiae*," and "*Poenitemini: Contre La Luxure*," in Dylan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200-500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 248-249. Gerson was an intellectual at the University of Paris working on the issue of demonic corporeality and generation (he believed in it), and an avid fan of Bernard of Clairvaux and his his *Sermon on the Song of Songs*). Gerson was fearful of the terminology of "bride of christ," Dylan Elliott argues, because he saw women as prone to demonic captivation if they envisioned their relationship with God too carnally, writing, "It behooves us...that no one be made to doubt the chastity of the inner senses, which the smoke of the carnal or literal meaning obstructs. Nor should anyone incur the scandal of disgraceful carnality." However, he doesn't remove himself entirely from the metaphor writing in *Spiritual Poverty*, he writes, "the most high and perfect and worthy affection...one is kissed on the feet or the hands, but, according to the declaration of St. Bernard, for this affection one is kissed on the mouth; and this affection makes the soul, who has the ability, near and familiar with God as husband and wife." Thus Gerson's perspective on the the greatness of Joan of Arc is particularly interesting.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Cornford, "Christine de Pizan's *Ditie de Jehanne d'Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII," *Parergon* 2 (January 2000): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>, 81. It's also important to note that Gerson was at the time, confessor to Charles VII.

of the weak sex and age of innocence to offer peoples and kingdoms the happiness of salvation,” offers a succinct definition of the “bride of Christ” metaphor, setting up both de Pizan and Gerson’s arguments as ones which firmly place Joan within this theological tradition.<sup>35</sup> Cornford further argues that the similarities do not stop there, but are so abundant between the works of de Pizan, Gelu, and Gerson that collaboration between all three of the authors is a reasonable assumption. The collaboration between these three authors is especially important in understanding how Joan’s gender identity played into her ability to gain authority in fifteenth century France. Cornford argues there is reasonable evidence suggesting that while these works are certainly pro-Joan propaganda, they might also represent a real theological inquiry, at least on the part of Jacques Gelu (Archbishop of Embrun, and Gerson).<sup>36</sup> Gerson speaks of Joan at remove, always grounding his praise in conditionals, and making clear his information is sometimes based on hearsay. Doing so grants him the freedom to praise Joan and also distance himself from her if and when new information came which discredited the validity of her mission to see Charles VII crowned (with whom his loyalty lay). The fact that Gerson was endorsing Joan, though, even at this remove is significant. As a theologian, he was particularly interested in demonology, and wrote on his fears that the idea of the “bride of Christ,” was imbued with so much carnality that it would lead young women into sin with incubi.<sup>37</sup> Knowing Gerson’s position, his endorsement

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<sup>35</sup> Helen Tschurr, “Ladder to Heaven: An Evaluation of Twelfth Century Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017): 1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/), 20. The concept of that which is weak (woman) becoming the vehicle for salvation dates to Augustine. This metaphor was interpreted also by Peter Abelard, and within the language of female saints throughout the medieval period. Women who eschewed marriage and sex in order to serve God and bring humanity within the Church’s authority, essentially atoned for the “fall of man” through their actions, as their sexuality was converted to religious ecstasy (as seen in the examples of sexual imagery in female religious lives).

<sup>36</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 89.

<sup>37</sup> Gerson Jean. “*Tractus de oculo*,” in Dylan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200-500*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 252-255. In

of Joan is an endorsement of her position as a correct “bride of Christ,” is telling: from a specific political position Joan does display the proper doctrinal elements of this female theological space. They together demonstrate a deliberate interest in arguing for the greatness in Joan’s military campaign, and in excusing her for the use of male clothing. These works were all published before Joan’s trial, meaning the fact that they chose a theological argument is significant; the use of a theological argument implies that these three spectacularly educated people decided the best overall argument on Joan’s and the Armagnac cause was rooted in religion (meaning female agency outside the lay gender roles largely relied on religious doctrine).

These works betray their authors’ position in praising Joan through the “bride of Christ” theology throughout the texts. Gelu’s *Dissertatio* addresses Charles VII directly, warning that if the king “does not obey the Maid, the King...must fear...to be abandoned by the Lord, to be denied what he wishes and to see his desired frustrated...it is advisable that every day the king accomplish something particularly agreeable to God; that he confer about it to the Maid.”<sup>38</sup> This direction to Charles is repeated in the *Ditie*, where Christine de Pizan gives Joan the power of “authorization on Charles,”<sup>39</sup> writing, “for it was believed quite impossible that you should ever recover your country...all this has been brought about by the intelligence of the Maid...she will destroy the Saracens by conquering the Holy Land ...has she not lead the King with her own

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his *Tract of the Eye* Gerson writes, “there are two eyes of the bride and groom in the Canticles, namely of cognition and of love,” meaning the intellectual process of ascension to Heaven (discourse on doctrine and expressing that to others that they might ascend also, and “love for God,” but which he avows has no erotic connotations--a departure from his earlier peers. He writes that the perversion of this holy union (the “bride of christ” metaphor) is the evil queen, obsessed with the “worldly love that alienates us from God is likened to a series of metaphors: a snare, a chain, some mortar, a performing animal held by a leash, a captive bird, the ‘evil queen who founds the city of confusion for our enemy from hell in the human creature,” and “In short, the adultery of a queen is both more portentous and more despicable than a parallel transgression by a normal matron.”

<sup>38</sup> Gelu, Jacques. *Dissertatio*, in Benjamin Cornford, “Christine de Pizan’s *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII,” *Parergon* 2 (January 2000): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>, 91.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

hand to his coronation?”<sup>40</sup> de Pizan’s message here references the book of Revelations, and eschatological prophecy; she alludes to the medieval narrative that Charlemagne had restored the power of Rome, thus staving off the apocalypse, but that the end days were marching closer each day, and that the last king would be reminiscent then of Charlemagne and reclaim Jerusalem before Judgement Day.<sup>41</sup> de Pizan writes that Joan will reunite the Church (during the period known as the schism, where there existed three popes), and bring about the salvation of Christendom, which Gerson references as well. Gerson writes, “For there will be a King of France called Charles, son of Charles...and in the end he will be emperor.”<sup>42</sup> de Pizan writes, “It is there [Jerusalem] that she is to end her days and that both of them are to win glory...therefore in preference to all the brave men of times past, this woman must wear the crown.”<sup>43</sup> Gerson argues that Charles VII will be the last emperor, leading Christendom to heaven, and references his connection to the great Charlemagne, in referencing Charles as “son of Charles,” which could mean both Charles VII’s father Charles VI, as well as Charles the Great. Gerson and de Pizan reference Joan’s ability to provide for Charles correct political maneuvering; essentially she is a relic through which God’s message is relayed for the salvation of Charles and by extension Christendom (if Charles can heal the Church and lead his people through the Holy Land to Judgment Day).<sup>44</sup> This method of understanding Joan as a vessel for intercession due to her extraordinary

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<sup>40</sup> de Pizan, Christine. *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*, in Benjamin Cornford, “Christine de Pizan’s *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII,” *Parergon 2* (January 2000:): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>, 102.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>42</sup> Gerson, Jean. *de quadam puella*, in Benjamin Cornford, “Christine de Pizan’s *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII,” *Parergon 2* (January 2000:): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>, 102.

<sup>43</sup> Pizan, Christine, de Pizan. *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*, in Benjamin Cornford, “Christine de Pizan’s *Ditie de Jehanne d’Arc*: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII,” *Parergon 2* (January 2000:): 75-106, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2000.0039>, 103.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. The “Second Charlemagne,” prophecy has its roots in the fourteenth century; the constant recurrence of plague, crop failure, Hundred-Years war and related death, starvation, and destruction facilitated the fear of the imminence of the apocalypse.

relationship to God as a virgin is the essential root of Peter Abelard's *cura monialium* and the doctrinal positions Herrad of Hohenbourg and Hildegard of Bingen pursue through their literary works (that is, the theology behind the conception of the "bride of Christ). de Pizan's reference to a "crown," is important as well; in conjunction with the earlier claims she makes, this crown appears to represent a queen's coronet, one which does not compete with Charles VII's as the last emperor, but which references her relationship with God instead (a higher crown than Charles VII).<sup>45</sup> Cornford closes his article by writing that these three authors conspired to alter Joan's identity and mission in order to suit their own political needs; however, while de Pizan, Gelu, and Gerson may have expanded Joan's vision of her mission from God, based on her own testimony, it appears as though these authors, while they did appropriate Joan for a goal which Joan herself exemplified, they applied theological logic to the gender identity of spiritual virginity to which Joan subscribed. In doing so, these authors preserve for posterity the place of womanhood and femininity in the public sphere; Joan is idyllically *female* to these authors (whatever the armor, clothes, and haircut say to the contrary regarding her *gender* performance), and her power resides in her power *as a virginal woman*, but only insofar as she is described as conforming to the delineations of the "bride of Christ," fighting (in this case physically, although it is usually metaphorical) for the salvation of mankind.

### **Pt. III- The Inquisitors: Joan, the Evil Queen**

The similarities between the way Joan understood her own gender identity, and the way her gender identity was interpreted by her adherents and champions as a *virgin*, and more specifically the theological construct of the virginal "Bride of Christ," highlights the difference in the ways the inquisition saw Joan's sexual and gender identity: as the embodiment of what Gerson

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 105.

terms “the evil queen.” This difference serves to demonstrate the disconnect between the “bride of Christ” theory employed by Joan (loosely) and her political followers and the legal examination of Joan’s practice of such a position. Gerson defines the “evil queen” as the individual who, for “worldly love,” commits “adultery” against God with the devil, and is detailed in Gerson’s contemporary Johannes Nider’s summary of demonology from his publication *The Anthill*:

The word of God, Christ, is spouse and husband of the clean soul. I marry you all to one man, Christ, as a chaste virgin, says Paul. When the soul, therefore adheres to the spouse and is embraced, she hears his word and is accept the semeen of his word, and conceives and produces children: chastity, justice, patience, and all the virtues. If however the soul prostitutes itself to the devils and demons, she brings forth sons of adultery--namely every sin.<sup>46</sup>

While Cauchon and his canons understand the context in which Joan attempts to place her identity, their lines of questioning and articles of condemnation reveal that they do not see Joan as a “bride of Christ,” because they view her “mission” as one inherently undergone for material, not spiritual, gain. In examining Cauchon’s questioning and articles of judgement, his understanding of Joan was as this “evil queen,” the adulterous wife of God, perverting her status as a recognized virgin through her relationship to incubi in order to gain worldly power, wealth, and deceive good Christians and lead them into the the shadow of the devil, demonstrating that Joan’s gender performance was the central issue of her trial and the theological importance in law of *orthopraxy* (conventional practice of female religious authority) versus adherence to theological doctrine (the bride of Christ).

Cauchon’s questions and articles reveal his concern with Joan’s affinity for materiality as a recognized virgin, and the theological problems with her behavior as a soldier-courtier, as relates to her gender identity. Cauchon asked Joan, before she was captured and had attempted to

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<sup>46</sup> Nider, *The Antihill*, in Dylan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200-500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 252-255.

take Paris from the English, “whether she had said... ‘Surrender this town to Jesus!’ She said no, she had said: ‘Surrender it to the king of France.’”<sup>47</sup> In a similar vein, Cauchon then asks Joan, “what promise and help she expected to receive from the Lord for wearing men’s clothes,” to which she responded, saying, “that for her clothing and other deeds, she expected nothing but the salvation of her soul.”<sup>48</sup> Cauchon attempts to draw out Joan’s motivations for her behavior. From the questions he asks, it’s clear that he expects or is inclined to believe that Joan’s behavior was selfishly motivated, and that she attempted to better her position in society in becoming a courtier knight and seizing territory for a secular king who might reward her for her actions (and did) with land, prestige, and gifts for her family. Cauchon connects his assumption of Joan’s selfish, worldly motivation to the voices she claims to hear, asking whether these voices promised her any of the worldly advantages she gained during her tenure in masculine clothing. Cauchon continually points to Joan’s rich clothing and armor (she relates that she was previously dressed in velvet), and her pattern of declaring surrender to herself or the king, not to God.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, in the articles read against Joan after the deliberations of the judges, determined that on the commands of the voices she heard, “she often wore extravagant and magnificent clothing made from precious fabrics and cloth of gold, with fur lining...And her crimes were notorious, for she was captured wearing a cape of gold cloth,” and perverted “not only women’s decency but even the conduct of virtuous men,” with “the ornamentation and attire of the most dissipated men...To attrib-

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<sup>47</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 99.

<sup>48</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 99.

<sup>49</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 111.

ute this to the command of God, holy angels, and even holy virgins, is to blaspheme....[and] offend the female sex and its honor.”<sup>50</sup> Of interest in Cauchon’s pronouncement is his judgment that Joan, through her perceived ostentation in dress (gold cloth and fur being extremely valuable, and generally found adorning nobility), and position as soldier-courtier perverted not only the “honor” of the female sex, God, and “holy virgins,” but “virtuous men.” In Cauchon’s understanding, Joan used her position as a virgin in order to exploit society for material gain, and dressing as a man was a part of her upward mobility. In this scenario her voices were either complicit or manipulative in bringing Joan into deceiving society as to her virtue, and in doing so shamed the tradition of female virginal piety; she committed intellectual (spiritual) adultery against God (her supposed and proclaimed husband) by treating her elevated position as a means of flouting his revealed proscriptions on the sinfulness of coveting, and bloodlust (against other Christian soldiers). The medieval theological discussion of warfare goes back centuries. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Church attempted to regulate warfare, as the constant warfare between Christian lords was deemed sinful (Truce of God), and Bernard of Clairvaux, in this treatise on the Second Crusade, likened soldiers of secular warfare to overly sumptuous (and thus sinful) *women*.<sup>51</sup> The implied comparison to Joan, dressed as a man in a man’s position, to a sinful and frivolous woman is not lost nor insignificant. Cauchon’s message here is that Joan, spiritually, is no different than the man who has so sinned in his actions that he emasculated himself and fell in the face of God to the position of a woman; in the same way, Joan fell from her coveted position as a holy virgin, as a Bride of Christ, to an extraordinary sinner.

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<sup>50</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 130.

<sup>51</sup> Helen Tschurr, “An Analysis of Twelfth Century Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017):1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/), 15-16.

Cauchon perceived Joan as literally and metaphorically (as discussed above) re-enacting the Fall of man through sexual perversion and temptation from the devil, rather than understanding in her virginity the reversal of the Fall and salvation of humanity through divine intercession, as Joan and her followers did. Perhaps most telling regarding Cauchon's suspicions regarding Joan comes through in his statement on the testimony of Robert de Baudricourt:

Joan, Robert's intimate friend, boasted to him that once she had arranged and accomplished all she had been commanded by God through revelation, she would have three sons: the first would be pope, the second, emperor, and the third king...she answered: 'No, no, gentle Robert, there's no time, the Holy Ghost will work it out.'

These things Robert affirmed, stated, and made public in various places, before prelates, great lords, and notable persons.<sup>52</sup>

Cauchon's presentation of such a statement offers additional insight into the way he understood Joan, and the importance of his understanding of her gender identity on the outcome and process of the trial. Here, Cauchon presents what he believes to be solid, incontrovertible evidence that Joan saw herself in the future controlling the access and diffusion of power in Christendom, and that she believed the "Holy Ghost," that is, the power of her voices, to impregnate her. This is perhaps no different than what Christine de Pizan, Gerson, or Gelu envisioned in their eschatological predictions for Joan's eventual role; however, the key difference is Cauchon has revealed he does not believe Joan is acting as a true "bride of Christ," because her motivations are selfish, and she is metaphorically committing adultery. In that case, the children begot by what Joan calls the Holy Spirit could not be the true children of God, but rather the children of sin (as Nider writes). Cauchon carries this idea further, implying that Joan's adultery may not be entirely metaphorical or spiritual, but physical and carnal. Cauchon asks Joan, "how, if the devil took the

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<sup>52</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 128.

shape or appearance of a good angel, she would know it was a good angel or an evil angel,”<sup>53</sup> “what shape Saint Michael took when he appeared to her, she said that she did not see his crown and knew nothing of his garments,” and “whether he was naked.”<sup>54</sup> These are seemingly odd questions. However, in light of Cauchon’s revelations regarding his perception of Joan as the adulterous, evil queen of Heaven, these questions make sense: he is attempting to understand the exact nature of Joan’s relationship to voices which must have some connection to the devil. These questions reveal Cauchon’s concerns that Joan might literally have been sleeping with incubi; he asks whether her voices appeared to her naked and how she interacts with the voices.<sup>55</sup> He also reveals his interest in whether Joan was aware or not about the depth of her theological mistakes, whether she was intentionally flirting with eschatological disaster. In the end, he concludes that Joan was a “seductress of princes and peoples; permitting and allowing herself to be worshipped and adored in injury to God:”<sup>56</sup> a very close definition to Nider’s evil queen. Cauchon accuses Joan of buying her usurpation of her husband with her sexuality, selling her virginity to demons (metaphorically or literally) in exchange for power influence, and money (clear perversions of female sexed expectations of duty on behalf of one husband and chastity).<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusions

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<sup>53</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 108.

<sup>54</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 77.

<sup>55</sup> St. Michael’s association with soldiers and warfare colors Cauchon’s interpretation of Joan’s relationship with the voices she claims to hear. Cauchon focuses on her relationship with St. Michael (out of the three saints she claims to interact with). If Cauchon understood Joan’s motivations in warfare as corrupted, then her relationship with St. St. Michael would be equally corrupted. Joan’s physical or metaphorical sexual relationship with “St. Michael” the disguised demon encapsulates the perversion of using St. Michael to justify illicit warfare and deceive thousands of Christians (leading them into the Devil) in doing so.

<sup>56</sup> *Process de condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*. Edited and Translated by Daniel Hobbins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 124.

<sup>57</sup> Helen Tschurr, “An Analysis of Twelfth Century Latin Catholic Non-Dichotomous Spiritual Gender Identity,” *Sound Ideas* (Summer Research 2017):1-45, accessed November 22, 2017, [https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer\\_research/302/](https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/302/), 17.

The Joan portrayed in the *Trial of Condemnation* understood herself as the wife of God, and perceived her sexed identity as a spiritual virgin, while her political supporters duly utilized the theoretical theology of the “Bride of Christ,” in portraying her as an extraordinary woman, who through her purity waged masculine warfare against death and led humanity to salvation. Analysis on the interpretations of her political supporters reveals the diffusion of the “Bride of Christ” theology in bolstering and justifying female agency (cross-gendered) within the public sphere, as well as the power of such theological gender theory (these arguments did convince King Charles VII to give a peasant woman an entire army). As much as the case against and for Joan of Arc demonstrates the diffusion of the “Bride of Christ” theology in offering a space for female empowerment, *The Trial of Condemnation* also highlights the legal reality of this theology as a codified “safe space.” This space, under legal protection within the Church requires more, in the mid-fifteenth century, than a personal mandate from God, and presentation as a virginal (spiritual and/or bodily) vessel through which humanity might find salvation to God by virtue of her connubial relationship to the divine. The Inquisitors viewed Joan’s female sexed identity as a corrupted Bride of Christ, and concluded that she had committed adultery against her divine bride-groom by succumbing to the adultery of the material gain of a successful knight. Through killing (an act clerics should never undertake), Joan had drowned her holy marriage in blood, a sort of backwards baptism born out of her metaphorical or carnal relationship to incubi (the tempters who had led her into sin), and in doing so perverted the idea of idyllic femininity (as a sexual identity) so important in the “Bride of Christ” concept. As the theological debate coalesced around the topic of the Bride of Christ in the mid-fifteenth century, Joan of Arc may represent the line inherent in the medieval concept of the “Bride of Christ:” the contingency of cross-gendered lifestyle acceptance on correct sexed expectations.

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