

3000 MILES TO ROUEN: JOAN OF ARC ON HORSEBACK

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I. Introduction

The equestrian image of Joan of Arc (1412-31 CE) has predominated in history, live performances, film, and art, especially through a notable series of bronze statues across the globe. A gilded bronze statue of Joan on horseback, based on an original design by Emmanuel Frémiet, can be found at prominent sites in numerous cities, from Paris to Melbourne and Philadelphia (Fig. 1). Other bronze equestrian statues of Joan are on display throughout France, Belgium, Germany, the US, and Canada. This equestrian tradition is not overblown, and, if we are to consider Joan as a soldier, then we will also remember that she spent much of her time on horseback. In less than two years, between her seventeenth and nineteenth birthdays, Joan learned to ride while campaigning on the road. From Vaucouleurs, in February 1429, to her arrival in Rouen, in December 1430, it is estimated Joan traversed over 3,000 miles on horseback.¹ Her riding experience was more than simply using a horse

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¹ Régine Pernoud made this estimate based on an attempt to chronicle Joan of Arc's itinerary, relying on documentary evidence and filling in the gaps with educated guesswork. Régine Pernoud and Marie-Véronique Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, trans. Jeremy duQuesnay Adams (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 25, 265-274. The attempts to chronicle part or all of Joan of Arc's itinerary are legion, as attested to in the 125 sources listed in Nadia Margolis, "Regional Interest – Itinerary (Including Prisons),"

for transport. While on horseback, and in full armour, she carried a banner, jousted, forded rivers, charged into battle, retreated, was wounded, and was captured. There are contemporary descriptions of her calming horses, mounting, dismounting, turning around, curvetting, speeding up, and slowing down on battlefields, among excited crowds, at night, and incognito. Even her detractors attested to her skill with horses and the assessors at her condemnation trial included horseback riding in the list of articles brought against her.

A survey of the contemporary evidence and commentary reveals that a teenage woman on horseback, however uncommon a sight, was often overshadowed by Joan's claims of divine revelation, her military campaigns, use of gunpowder artillery, and cross-dressing. However, after her execution, promoters and detractors alike had no issue with depicting her on horseback and even marvelling at Joan's effective equestrian skills.



Fig. 1. *Jeanne d'Arc*, by Emmanuel Frémiet, Philadelphia (Erected in 1890, gilded in 1950). Photograph taken by author on 25 September 2019.

in *Joan of Arc in History, Literature, and Film* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 194-214. The most recent, convincing attempt is found in Olivier Bouzy, "Essai d'itinéraire de Jeanne d'Arc," in *Jeanne d'Arc: Histoire et dictionnaire*, eds. Philippe Contamine, Olivier Bouzy, and Xavier Hélary (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2012), 9-20.

It is understandable how her skill as an equestrian could become lost among the many feats of Joan of Arc. In 1428, during what we now call the Hundred Years War, Joan arrived on the scene in the frontier of Lorraine, France, and the Holy Roman Empire, claiming to hear instructions from divine voices that she must lead the armies of Charles VII, in order to expel the English from France, and see him crowned at Rheims. After convincing a local captain of her mission, she trekked through enemy territory to meet with and promote her vocation not only to the king, but also to theologians who examined and questioned her for eleven days. After her arrival at the besieged Orléans, the defending French celebrated their biggest successes and eventual victory against the English, who had sustained the siege for more than seven months (12 October 1428-8 May 1429). The king's army then captured more English-controlled cities along the Loire River before marching to Rheims, bringing more cities over to the king's side, often without firing a shot. At Rheims, Charles was coronated (17 July). The success of the campaigning stalled outside the gates of Paris, where Joan was wounded (8 September). She then spent the rest of her military career fighting mercenaries and Burgundians until she was captured trying to lift the siege of Compiègne (23 May 1430). Joan spent more than a year in captivity, the final four months of which were spent in the most-documented inquisition trial of the Middle Ages, resulting in her condemnation as a relapsed heretic and her execution on 30 May 1431.² Twenty-five years later, a second trial was hosted in France, featuring eyewitness testimony from those who encountered Joan, resulting in a nullification of the inquisition trial's verdict (1456).³

Joan was celebrated in France for centuries, especially in Orléans, but it was not until the nineteenth-century, when researchers published chronicles, letters, and transcripts of the inquisition trial and the nullification proceedings, thus making accessible the details that have brought Joan her worldwide fame today, that the rest of the world

² For details on the overwhelming surviving documentation of the trial, see Daniel Hobbins, *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 7-13.

³ There are numerous histories of Joan of Arc, and some recent ones include Helen Castor, *Joan of Arc: A History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015); Larissa Juliet Taylor, *The Virgin Warrior: The Life and Death of Joan of Arc* (New Haven: Yale University, 2009). See also Scott Manning, *Joan of Arc: A Reference Guide to Her Life and Works* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, forthcoming 2023).

realised the scope of her undertaking.⁴ After a process spanning nearly half a century since her beatification (1874), she was canonised as a saint by the Catholic Church in 1920.⁵ In the past century, she has been the subject of numerous books, comics, and films.⁶

In this chapter, I will examine the historical record and contemporary commentary relating to Joan and horses, demonstrating that, although she purportedly started with no experience, she learned on the job, with missteps along the way. By the end, horses had become an integral part of her life. Inspired by the historical accounts, this equestrian image has been perpetuated through art, statues, live performances, and film for the ensuing six centuries, ensuring it will live on with the memory of Joan.

II. Contemporary Evidence of Joan of Arc on Horseback

In fifteenth-century France, cavalry was expensive not only because of the possession and upkeep of horses, but also the expense involved in gaining expertise and investing in armour. Training typically began at puberty and was relegated to the wealthy class.⁷ Although Joan of Arc's family was by no means poor, they did not possess the wealth or status of the families that produced knights and squires. Still, that Joan rode on horseback is without question. The evidence survives in the transcripts of her condemnation trial, chronicles, and eyewitness accounts. In some instances, the corroborating evidence is overwhelming. Joan had likely seen and gained some knowledge of horses from a young age. Her father, Jacques d'Arc, owned a farm, but it is unknown if horses were among his stock. Plowing could be accomplished with horses, but also with oxen.⁸

⁴ The bulk of the work in Jules Quicherat, ed. *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite la Pucelle*, 5 vols. (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1841-1849). For more on this process, see Jacques Darras, "A Myth on Trial," in *Joan of Arc, A Saint for All Reasons: Studies in Myth and Politics*, ed. Dominique Goy-Blanquet (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), 105-122; Ellen Ecker Dolgin, "Divine Threads: The Canonization Era in Context," in *Modernizing Joan of Arc: Conceptions, Costumes, and Canonization* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2008), 43-70.

⁵ For more on the process, see Dolgin, "Divine Threads," 43-70.

⁶ See Margolis, *Joan of Arc in History, Literature, and Film*. A recent survey of Joan of Arc in popular culture available in John Flower, *Joan of Arc: Icon of Modern Culture* (Hastings: Helm Information, 2008).

⁷ Kelly DeVries and Robert Douglas Smith, *Medieval Military Technology*, 2nd ed. (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 104.

⁸ Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélarly, *Jeanne d'Arc*, 623.

Although there is a 1498 etching depicting Joan spinning thread next to her father plowing with horses, historians have dismissed it as insufficient proof that they employed horses.⁹

Regardless, the possible use of horses for plowing does not mean Joan learned to ride them.¹⁰ As Marina Warner concludes, “a horse seemed indispensable to Joan for the art of war, but quite beyond her reach.”¹¹ At her condemnation trial, Joan claimed that before she left her family in Domremy for Vaucouleurs, likely May 1428, she “knew nothing of riding.”¹² If that is true, she arrived at the city to ask Captain Robert de Baudricourt to send her to meet the king with no knowledge of horseback riding. Joan’s attempts to convince Baudricourt were met with antagonism, and he sent her away twice.¹³ It was not until January 1429 that Baudricourt at least agreed to send Joan to meet Duke Charles II of Lorraine, likely in Toul, roughly 12 miles away. Yet, even given this distance, we still do not know whether she journeyed on horseback or on foot.¹⁴ It is only after this meeting with Charles II that we have the first account of Joan and horses, as one eyewitness claims the duke gave her a black horse.¹⁵ Riding back to Vaucouleurs, Joan was at last able to convince Baudricourt to send her to meet the king in Chinon, a journey of over 270 miles.¹⁶ From this point, the evidence for Joan on horseback becomes overwhelming, as no fewer than four people recounted how the

⁹ Reproduction of etching available in Monsignor Le Nordez, *Jeanne d’Arc racontée par l’image: d’après les sculpteurs les graveurs et les peintres* (Paris: Imprimerie Générale Lahure, 1898), 20; One such dismissal available in Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyary, *Jeanne d’Arc*, 623.

¹⁰ Although some historians accept this as a possibility: “She probably was accustomed to riding a horse on her father’s farm.” John Aberth, *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 264.

¹¹ Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 146.

¹² Testimony recorded on 22 February 1431 in Hobbins, *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, 54.

¹³ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 89.

¹⁴ Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyary, *Jeanne d’Arc*, 623.

¹⁵ Statement made by Jean Morel on 28 January 1456. Morel was a farmer who knew Joan of Arc and her family, and he was the first witness to provide testimony in Lorraine during the nullification proceedings. Original Latin available in Pierre Duparc, ed. *Procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc*, vol. 1 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977), 255.

¹⁶ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 90.

people of the town supplied her with a horse, which was paid for by Baudricourt.¹⁷

On the 11-day journey to Chinon, traversing hostile territory, as well as crossing rivers, Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy were among those escorting Joan of Arc, and both later testified about their experiences. Since the roads were controlled by Burgundians, Joan's party travelled at night.¹⁸ Historians today believe this journey involved an intense learning on the job for Joan, during which experienced equestrians such as Metz and Poulengy likely coached her.¹⁹ They were certainly qualified to train her, as they were squires, which at this period in France were knights in all but name.²⁰ However, they shared nothing about such training in their accounts, likely because they were more enamoured with Joan's divine revelations and confidence. Poulengy was especially impressed that Joan "always told us to have no fear" even as they only travelled at night to avoid the English and Burgundians and experienced several near misses.²¹ With such alarms, we can envision the group dismounting and lying low to avoid patrols, as well as riding silently to avoid detection. Although there is no record, Joan must have learned to lead her horse on foot and possibly even to coax it into lying down to avoid detection.

Upon arriving at Chinon, Joan met with the king and convinced him to hear her out, after which he decided to send her to be examined by theologians in Poitiers, a 40-mile journey.²² On 7 March 1429, before the

¹⁷ Statements made on 30 January and 6 February 1456 by Jean de Metz, Durand Luxart, Catherine Le Royer, and Bertrand de Poulengy, who were all present at Vaucouleurs when Joan left for Chinon. Metz, Le Royer, and Poulengy all remember it as the people giving Joan the horse, but Laxart, Joan's uncle, added the detail that Baudricourt reimbursed them. Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 290, 296, 298, 306.

¹⁸ Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 290, 306.

¹⁹ Contamine, Bouzy, and Héлары, *Jeanne d'Arc*, 623-624. Taylor places some of this learning while Joan was in Toul and Vaucouleurs, but believes it obviously continued over the next several months. Taylor, *The Virgin Warrior*, 49.

²⁰ Although the prevalent medievalism depiction of squires is that of a young assistant to a knight, the role had evolved to mean nobles who had all the gear and training to be a knight, but forwent the ceremony and title, often indefinitely, typically for financial reasons. Metz and Poulengy were about 30 and 37 years old, respectively. For more on the status of squires in fifteenth-century France, see D'Arcy Jonathan Darce Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325-1520* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 10-11.

²¹ Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 306-307.

²² Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 94.

king sent her along, the Duke of Alençon recalled seeing Joan in the field, riding with a lance in a jousting charge. He was impressed and “gave Joan a horse.”²³ This demonstrates that, if Joan did not know anything of riding prior to January 1429, by March she was already attempting to joust and leaving an impression on those who saw her efforts. In addition, she now had experience with at least three different horses given to her by Charles II, Baudricourt, and now Alençon. Joan’s demonstration to Alençon also reveals someone determined to practice, which very likely continued even during her 11-day examination at Poitiers.²⁴

The theologians at Poitiers informed the king that they found her to be a “good Christian” and “considering the urgent necessity and the danger in which the town of Orléans stood, that the King could turn to Joan and send her to Orléans.”²⁵ The king outfitted her with plate armour customised for her frame, after which she would have spent time learning to manage the weight of the armour not only on foot, but also on horseback.²⁶ In April, he sent her to the active siege with supplies and reinforcements.²⁷

The journey from Chinon to Tours to Blois, and, finally, to Orléans, was roughly 100 miles to the northeast and, again, via horse.²⁸ There, much of Joan’s exploits on horseback come not only from eyewitness

²³ “...dedit eidem Johanne unum equum.” Statement made by Alençon on 3 May 1456. Alençon and Joan worked closely together in several of her campaigns, and he still held a very favorable opinion of her during the nullification proceedings. Louis de Coutes, who served as Joan’s page from April to September 1429, also confirmed that Alençon gave Joan a horse in a statement on 3 April 1456 (“dux Alenconii dedit eidem Johanne unum equum”). Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 381, 362.

²⁴ Kelly DeVries makes a similar point in that “whatever spare time she had between her numerous examinations and ecclesiastical devotions, she spent on the practice of military arts.” Kelly DeVries, *Joan of Arc: A Military Leader* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 56.

²⁵ Although the record of the Poitiers examination (March 1429) has not survived, Seguin de Seguin, who was present and held a favourable opinion of Joan, provided these details on 14 May 1456. Original Latin available in Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 469. English translation from Craig Taylor, trans. and ed., *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 338.

²⁶ DeVries, *Joan of Arc: A Military Leader*, 50. Castor envisions her effort to learn to distribute the weight properly on horseback in Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 100.

²⁷ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 101-102.

²⁸ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 100, 102.

testimony, but also from chronicles such as the *Journal du siège d'Orléans*.²⁹ The *Journal* tells us that the inhabitants in the city, who had heard of the coming of Joan, crowded to meet her and even touch her horse when she entered the besieged city, on 29 April. In the excitement, Joan's standard, being carried behind her, was set alight by an overeager spectator carrying a torch. The *Journal* describes how she "struck spurs," turned her horse, and moved toward the scene as one who was "experienced in war."³⁰ To perform such a manoeuvre in a crowd without hurting anyone demonstrates the skill of Joan's horseback riding, her ability even being recognised by the author of the *Journal*. This level of skill is all the more noteworthy considering that Joan had never benefited from the training available to young nobles from puberty onwards. Today, it is not hard to envision her skill as comparable to that of mounted police officers involved in crowd control outside stadiums before and after major sporting events.³¹

By the time Joan arrived at Orléans, the English had captured and refortified the Tourelles, a stone fortification on the south side of the Loire River connecting with a partially demolished bridge to the city. In addition, the English had built multiple boulevards, fortifications made of wood meant to house troops and artillery, and withstand bombardments.³² These boulevards were numerous, but did not effectively surround or cut off the city, leaving gaps in the north and northeast fortifications of the city.³³ In addition, the English had little

²⁹ Commissioned by the city in 1467, this Middle French chronicle relied on an anonymous daily journal from 1428-29, augmented by the nullification proceedings in 1450-56. The journal provides an almost daily account of events of the war between September 1428 and September 1429. Deborah Fraioli, "Journal du siège d'Orléans," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, eds. Graeme Dunphy, et. al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2:949-50.

³⁰ Paul Charpentier and Charles Cuissard, eds., *Journal du siège d'Orléans, 1428–29, augmenté de plusieurs documents, notamment les comptes de ville*. Orléans: Cuissard (Orléans: H. Herluison, 1896), 76-78.

³¹ New York City boasts one of the largest mounted units in the United States with a training program consisting of six hours a day across five to six months. Lauren Cook, "NYPD Mounted Unit: Meet the horses that patrol NYC's streets," *AM New York Metro*, September 16, 2016, <https://www.amny.com/news/nypd-mounted-unit-meet-the-horses-that-patrol-nyc-s-streets-1.12327370/> (accessed August 24, 2020).

³² See J. E. Kaufman and H. W. Kaufmann, *Castle to Fortress: Medieval to Post-Modern Fortifications in the Lands of the Former Roman Empire* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2019), 98, 102-103, 231; DeVries Smith, *Medieval Military Technology*, 276.

³³ For a recent description of the English fortifications, see DeVries, *Joan of Arc*, 61-62.

cavalry, having deemed to conduct the siege predominately on foot save for what was necessary for their siege train. Boulevards were also insufficient for housing horses.³⁴ The demolished suburbs around the city had created a protective barrier that allowed French cavalry to ride relatively unmolested.³⁵ Thus, Joan was free to ride around.³⁶

On 4 May, more French reinforcements arrived at Orléans, and the efforts to relieve the siege began in earnest. Again, Joan's use of horses is prominent in reports of the day. When Joan received word that the Bastard of Orléans was arriving from Blois, with more troops and supplies, she and others mounted and rode out to meet them. Jean d'Aulon testified how Joan and others guarded their flank as they entered the city, ensuring they were unmolested before following them back into Orléans.³⁷ Later that day, the French targeted the Saint-Loup boulevard to the east, capturing and burning it after three hours of fighting.³⁸ Both Jean d'Aulon and Louis de Coutes testified how the attack initially began without Joan's knowledge. When she became aware, Joan commandeered a horse from a passing page, fetched her standard, and raced toward the fighting.³⁹ For Joan, seemingly any available horse would suffice in the heat of battle, another testament to her innate skill, not just with horses, with which she was experienced, but with unfamiliar horses as well.

The next day, the French determined to target the Saint Jean le Blanc boulevard to the southeast, across the Loire River. Jean d'Aulon tells us that Joan and others crossed the Loire River with their horses on boats, after which they remounted and charged at English who had left the Augustins boulevard to attack, but the English ultimately retreated back to safety.⁴⁰ After this, the French found the le Blanc boulevard empty and occupied it.⁴¹

³⁴ Michael John Harbinson, "Horses and Horsemen in Fifteenth-Century Siege Warfare, with Particular Reference to the Later Hundred Years War," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 18 (2020): 219.

³⁵ Harbinson, "Horses and Horsemen," 221.

³⁶ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 107.

³⁷ Statement made by Jean d'Aulon on 28 May 1456. His is the only testimony recorded in French in the record of the nullification proceedings. Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 478.

³⁸ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 107.

³⁹ Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 479, 363-64.

⁴⁰ Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 480.

⁴¹ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 108.

On 6 May, the *Chronique de la Pucelle*⁴² tells us that, at the end of day, Joan dismounted and injured her foot on a caltrop.⁴³ A caltrop is an ancient, defensive weapon that featured spikes (typically four) in a star shape, bent in a such a way that, when thrown, it would always land with one spike pointed directly up. They varied in size and sometimes featured a weighted ball in the center. Vegetius, the most prevalent military treatise in Medieval Europe, tells us the Romans successfully used them against chariots.⁴⁴ In medieval warfare, caltrops were used in battles, sieges, outside camps, and on roads, aimed at hindering cavalry.⁴⁵ They were common during the time of Joan of Arc and could be used to extremely destructive effect against mounted troops.⁴⁶ The *Journal du siège d'Orléans* tells us that the women of the city planted caltrops outside the walls in 1428.⁴⁷ Joan's injury must have been minor, as the *Pucelle* is the only surviving source that mentions it, but still Joan retired for the day, due to the injury and fatigue.⁴⁸ For all her quick-learning and experience, Joan was still learning, and her comrades in arms surely comforted and warned her to look more carefully before dismounting.

On 7 May, the final day of the siege, Joan permanently secured her place in history. After a day-long effort to capture the Tourelles, Joan was wounded by an arrow to the breast or shoulder, and the Bastard of Orléans was prepared to withdraw for the day. However, Joan convinced him to continue pushing on, and then, "mounting her horse, she

⁴² Written sometime after 1467, this anonymous Middle French chronicle was a compilation from other chronicles and testimony given during Joan of Arc's nullification proceedings, in the 1450s. Deborah Fraioli, "Chronique de la Pucelle," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, 1:401-402. Although not considered a reliable source today, it was "once regarded as the earliest and best" of the chronicles on Joan and thus influential in the transmission of her story. Charles Wayland Lightbody, *The Judgements of Joan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 46-47.

⁴³ Auguste Vallet de Viriville, ed., *Chronique de la Pucelle* (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1859), 291.

⁴⁴ N. P. Milner, trans., *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 112.

⁴⁵ For more on caltrops, see Christopher Corèdon and Ann Williams, *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms & Phrases* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 56; Christopher Gravett, *Medieval Siege Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey, 1990), 57.

⁴⁶ For example, in a 1406 inventory of John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy, he had 20,000 caltrops in his arsenal. Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power*, new ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), 39.

⁴⁷ *Journal du siège d'Orléans*, 7.

⁴⁸ *Chronique de la Pucelle*; 291; Quicherat, *Procès*, 5:226.

withdrew to a vineyard not far away from the troops and remained in prayer in that vineyard for about seven or eight minutes.⁴⁹ After praying for eight minutes, she returned to the ditch outside the walls and the French troops rallied to capture the boulevard.⁵⁰ Joan was obviously in pain, but still managed to mount, ride, and dismount to gain her composure before remounting and returning to the siege. From here, Joan rallied the troops on foot to capture the Tourelles. The next day, the English abandoned the rest of the boulevards, lifting the siege of Orléans.⁵¹

In just over a week, Joan's exploits on horseback included marching and manoeuvring in an excited crowd, riding out to protect the flank of troops, using multiple horses, including one she commandeered, crossing a river with her horse by boat, receiving a wound during a dismount, and, finally, riding while wounded from an arrow. Yet, Joan's understanding of horses did not stop there. A letter dated 8 June 1429, from the town of Selles, a month after the lifting of the siege, records how two noble brothers were amazed when Joan encountered "a great black charger" that "would not allow her to mount." She instructed that the horse be led to a cross in front of a church and "there she mounted without him moving, as if he had been tied."⁵² As Karen Campbell concludes about Alexander the Great in a similar story, this "displays superb horsemanship and the ability to observe/read the horse and his fears."⁵³ While the evocation of the cross plays into the divine nature associated with Joan at the time, moving the horse to a church was more likely an example of her understanding that the horse needed a change of environment, perhaps calmer and less crowded. This was clearly not her first such experience in calming an excited horse.

⁴⁹ Statement made on 22 February 1456 by then Count Dunois, previously known as the Bastard of Orléans. Original Latin in Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 320. English translation from Taylor, *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle*, 281.

⁵⁰ Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 320.

⁵¹ Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 320-21.

⁵² Letter from Guy and André Laval in Taylor, *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle*, 92-93. A similar story is recorded sixty years later from an eyewitness in Poitiers, who claimed he knew the exact stone Joan used to mount a black charger. Statement recorded by Jean Bouchet in Quicherat, *Procès*, 4:537.

⁵³ Campbell, Karen, "Reading Horses and Writing Chivalry," in *The Horse in Premodern European Culture*, eds. Anastasija Ropa and Timothy Dawson (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 117.

After Orléans, the English still occupied cities along the Loire River and, in what has been dubbed the Loire Campaign, Joan and the king's army captured Jargeau, Meung, and Beaugency along the river, in June 1429. The climax of the campaign occurred when Joan pressed the commanders of the army to confront the English army on 18 June. Jean de Wavrin,⁵⁴ a Burgundian source and an eyewitness to the battle, tells us it was a stray horse of the English that alerted the French to their location and set in motion the charge of the French cavalry, catching the English unprepared outside Patay.⁵⁵ There, the French were able to take the English by surprise before they could fortify their position or receive reinforcements. The result was a major victory for the French and the capture of English leaders including John Talbot, Thomas Scales, and Thomas Rempston.⁵⁶ Joan's involvement in the charge is unclear in the contemporary sources, but historians theorise this was possibly because she was among the main force of the French that participated in the battle after it had become a rout.⁵⁷

After Patay, the king's army marched 100 miles to Rheims, receiving the surrender of dozens of cities, including Auxerre, Tournai, and Troyes.⁵⁸ Although the newly crowned Charles VII and the Burgundians agreed to short truces while they negotiated a permanent treaty that never came into effect, Charles eventually gave in to Joan's insistence that they attack Paris. It was during this time that Joan received a letter from Jean IV, count of Armagnac, inquiring about her opinion on the true pope. Joan's dictated response on 22 August 1429, which has survived, at first dismisses the question, because she was "too occupied with war."⁵⁹ However, she offered to provide a firm answer after she was in Paris.

⁵⁴ Jean de Wavrin (c. 1400-c. 1475) was a bibliophile in the Burgundian court, who produced a lengthy six-volume work on England in French. For the period of the Hundred Years War, he relied heavily on Froissart, Monstrelet, and others. Klaus Oschema, "Jean de Wavrin," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2:913.

⁵⁵ John de Waurin, *Chronicles and Ancient Histories of Great Britain, Now Called England*, trans., Edward L. C. P. Hardy (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1891), 3:185-187.

⁵⁶ See Joan of Arc's letter to the inhabitants of Tournai (25 June 1429) celebrating the success and capture of the English leaders in Taylor, *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle*, 93-94.

⁵⁷ DeVries, *Joan of Arc*, 120-21.

⁵⁸ Distance in Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 120. Kelly DeVries has pieced together thirty-two individual cities that surrendered during the march to Rheims from various chronicles. DeVries, *Joan of Arc*, 114, 116, 122-23, 126-27, 132-33, 136, 138-39.

⁵⁹ Letter available in Taylor, *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle*, 122-23.

The assessors at Joan's trial later read and questioned her about the letter. She claimed that the letter did not include all she had stated and that she hastily gave her answer just before mounting her horse.⁶⁰ Perhaps this is what she meant by being "too occupied with war." Are we to conclude that Joan's skill with a horse still required her concentration and she could not effectively dictate a letter? Or was the scribe too rushed or lazy to include her full response?

After capturing Saint-Denis and moving to the gates of Paris, a day-long siege resulted in a defeat of the royal army, on 8 September 1429. During the assault, Joan suffered an arrow to the leg. Here, Perceval de Cagny,⁶¹ an eyewitness in the royal army, described how Joan was forced from the siege by her comrades and then mounted on a horse to retreat.⁶² Joan's wound was severe, and she did not fully recover until October.⁶³ That she was able to ride a horse with this wound again testifies to her endurance on horseback.

After Paris, Joan's campaigns receive much less attention from chroniclers and eyewitnesses, but she was with a smaller army that successfully captured Saint-Pierre-le-Mouëtier, on 4 November 1429, before spending six weeks besieging and failing to capture La Charité, abandoning the siege on 25 December. The winter season put a damper on Joan's campaigning, and, by March, she is recorded as eager to get back out onto the field of battle.⁶⁴ At the battle of Lagny, on 29 March 1430, Joan and some 400 French troops defeated 300 Burgundians from Paris. Monstrelet⁶⁵ tells us how the Burgundians dismounted and

⁶⁰ Testimony recorded on 1 March 1431 in Hobbins, *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, 41.

⁶¹ A servant of the Duke of Alençon, and thus writing favorably toward Joan of Arc, Perceval de Cagny produced a chronicle in Middle French, with intimate details of Joan's military career. Deborah Fraioli, "Perceval de Cagny," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2:1199.

⁶² H. Moranvillé, ed., *Chroniques de Perceval de Cagny* (Paris: Librairie Renquard, 1902), 167-68.

⁶³ DeVries, *Joan of Arc*, 157.

⁶⁴ DeVries, *Joan of Arc*, 159. Also see Joan of Arc's letters dated 16 March 1430 and 28 March 1430, in Taylor, *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle*, 131-32, 132-33.

⁶⁵ Enguerrand de Monstrelet (c. 1390-1453) aimed to continue the chronicle of the war in the vein of Froissart. Writing from a Burgundian perspective, he is often biased against the French. However, his details regarding the period of Joan of Arc are invaluable for details and the general sentiment of the Burgundians toward Charles VII and Joan. Hanno Wijsman, "Enguerrand de Monstrelet," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1:578.

inflicted “great mischief against the enemy’s cavalry,” but were ultimately defeated “and the better part of them put to the sword.”⁶⁶ The brief account indicates that the French remained on horseback for several charges. Joan’s last wilful act on horseback occurred during her capture outside Compiègne, where she was riding out to relieve the city besieged by Burgundians. On 23 May 1430, chroniclers describe how Joan was surrounded and dragged from her horse.⁶⁷

Spending the rest of her life in captivity, Joan of Arc was transported through several cities, most likely on horseback, or at least drawn in a cart by horses until she arrived at Rouen, on 26 December 1430.⁶⁸ After an inquisition that lasted through to 24 May 1431, Joan was eventually handed over to the secular authorities on 30 May, after the ecclesiastical court determined that she was a relapsed heretic. Joan’s last day alive saw her drawn in a cart to the marketplace in Rouen where she was executed by burning at a stake.⁶⁹

During her inquisition, we learn more details, although unspecific, about the types of horses Joan employed. In testimony recorded on 10 March 1431, Joan tells us she had “five chargers out of her king’s treasury not counting the hacks, which numbered more than seven.”⁷⁰ As for which horse Joan was riding at Compiègne, Joan said she was upon a demi-charger, or “*ung demi coursier*” in French.⁷¹ Still, Joan’s ensemble of horses matches with what historians have observed with medieval cavalry, as “each knight had a string of horses to support his charger.”⁷² This would have included men to attend the horses.⁷³ The horses, team of men, and maintenance would have been expensive and, thus, typically relegated to the wealthy class.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Thomas Jones, trans., *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet* (London: William Smith, 1845), 1:571.

⁶⁷ Perceval de Cagny, 175-76; Monstrelet, 1:572; Warvin, 3:218.

⁶⁸ Philippe Contamine theorizes that at least part of this journey was on horseback, as opposed to by a cart drawn by horses. Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar, *Jeanne d’Arc*, 624.

⁶⁹ Castor, *Joan of Arc*, 194.

⁷⁰ Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 88.

⁷¹ Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 88.

⁷² Matthew Bennett, “The Medieval Warhorse Reconsidered,” in *Medieval Knighthood V: Papers from the Sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994*, eds. Stephen Church and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 31.

⁷³ Bennett, “Medieval Warhorse,” 32.

⁷⁴ DeVries and Smith, *Medieval Military Technology*, 105.

It is unclear if the king maintained this financial support throughout a year of campaigning, especially after Paris, and Joan's stable certainly ebbed and flowed. One undated incident came up in her trial regarding a horse taken from a bishop. Her assessors accused her of stealing it, but she insisted she never requested it. She sent it back and believed the bishop was paid, but she could not confirm if this happened. In Joan's defence, she said that she sent the horse back upon learning that the bishop was upset, but also because "the horse was useless to her for riding."⁷⁵ Regardless, Joan told her assessors that her brothers kept her remaining horses.⁷⁶

The assessors at Joan's condemnation trial had her examined physically, possibly in January 1431.⁷⁷ Determining that she was still a virgin, they also found that her buttocks were injured due to riding, most likely exhibiting what modern equestrian athletes refer to as saddlesores.⁷⁸ Riding injuries are common even among experienced riders and a regular issue nowadays is "spinal disorders caused by the shifting pressures and rhythms of riding."⁷⁹ We can only imagine what riding did to Joan's spine after more than 3,000 miles in the saddle.

Although the assessors questioned her on riding and her horses, they focused more on her male clothing and her claims of hearing divine voices and encountering saints. Still, among the 70 articles initially presented against her, the eighth article claims "she learned to ride and gained knowledge of arms."⁸⁰ Joan did not refute the accusation.⁸¹

Even if Joan's assessors did not focus so much on horseback riding, there is still more contemporary commentary. Monstrelet, a detractor, recognised Joan "had shown much courage in riding horses to water, and in other feats unusual for young girls to do."⁸² Jean de Wavrin, another chronicler, echoed a similar sentiment.⁸³ Pope Pius II, writing 30 years

⁷⁵ Testimony recorded on 14 March 1431 in Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 103.

⁷⁶ Testimony recorded on 27 February 1431 in Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 68.

⁷⁷ Marie-Véronique Clin, "Joan of Arc and Her Doctors," in *Fresh Verdicts of Joan of Arc*, eds. Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 300.

⁷⁸ Statement made by Jean Monnet, an assessor at Joan's trial, on 3 April 1456. Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 360.

⁷⁹ Campbell, "Reading Horses," 109.

⁸⁰ Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 127.

⁸¹ Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 127.

⁸² Monstrelet, 551.

⁸³ Wavrin, 3:165.

after Joan's execution, described her as one "who had learned to bear arms and delighted in military exercises," and, after mounting "the most spirited steed" in "her gleaming armour" made him "lead, run, and curvet."⁸⁴ At this sight, all the nobles "took up arms and eagerly followed."⁸⁵ Similarly, one eyewitness attested to seeing Joan "ride a horse, carrying a spear as well as any soldier, which surprised them."⁸⁶

III. Depictions of Joan of Arc on Horseback

Turning from documented history and contemporary commentary of Joan of Arc, some of the earliest surviving images of Joan depict her on horseback. Colourful miniatures in a copy of *Les Vigiles de Charles VII* from 1484-85 depict a mounted Joan wielding a sword and chasing sex workers out of the camp, and again during her capture at Compiègne (Fig. 2).⁸⁷ An engraving in the *La mer des histoires* from 1491 shows Joan riding with a sword in hand in front of an army (Fig. 3).⁸⁸ Finally, another colourful miniature in *Les vies des femmes Célèbres* from 1504 depicts Joan riding in golden armour, carrying her banner astride a white horse.⁸⁹ The plethora of depictions of Joan of Arc can be overwhelming, and it is difficult to quantify the number of equestrian images of her in circulation at the height of her fame. However, if we sample the 300-plus images in the picturesque *Jeanne d'Arc, racontée par l'image, d'après les sculpteurs, les graveurs, et les peintres* (1898), featuring depictions from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, there are at least 266 depicting Joan in many media, including etchings, engravings, drawings, miniatures, paintings, statues,

⁸⁴ Writing while in France, in July-October 1461, Pius II was surely influenced by the plethora of material from the nullification proceedings from the previous decade. Florence A. Gragg, trans., *Secret Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini Pius II* (London: The Folio Society, 1988), 196, 200.

⁸⁵ Gragg, *Secret Memoirs*, 196.

⁸⁶ "...quia equitabat cum equo, portando lanceam sicut melior armatus fecisset; et de hoc mirabantur armati." Statement made on 30 April 1456 by Marguerite de La Touroulde, who spent time with Joan during her recuperation from her wounding at Paris (8 September 1429). Original Latin in Duparc, *Procès en nullité*, 378.

⁸⁷ Jean Bourdichon, *Martial d'Auvergne, Les Vigiles de Charles VII*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 5054, f. 60v, 70r, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105380390/f132.item> (accessed 2 September 2020).

⁸⁸ *La mer des histoires*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-G-219, 384, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k111058f/f384.item> (accessed 2 September 2020).

⁸⁹ *Les Vies des femmes Célèbres*, Musée Dobrée, ms. 17, 76v.

reliefs, medallions, and stained-glass windows dating back to the fifteenth century. Of these, 54 depict Joan on horseback or preparing to mount a horse.⁹⁰ Although this is merely a sampling of artistic depictions, and by no means complete, we can still state that one in five of the selected images of Joan is equestrian in nature. The selected images in this collection aimed at showing how artists depicted Joan at all stages of her life and, if we remove the images of her in early childhood, on trial, or being executed, the percentage increases.

The tradition of raising life size equestrian statues of Joan of Arc, the same ones which are now so visible throughout France, Belgium, Germany, Australia, the United States, and Canada, began in the nineteenth century.⁹¹ One of the earliest surviving such works was by Denis Foyatier, erected in Orléans in 1855.⁹² Joan sits astride her horse wielding a sword, which is pointing down. Arguably, the most famous and influential depiction of the equestrian Joan of Arc is by Emmanuel Frémiet. Commissioned by the government and erected in 1874 in Paris shortly after the Franco-Prussian War (1870), the sculptor made hundreds of small reproductions. A modified version was erected in Philadelphia in 1890 (Fig. 1), which subsequently became the model for the replacement in Paris and other versions in Portland, New Orleans, Melbourne, and a further five cities in France.⁹³ Most of these are now gilded, and the original statue initiated commissions of images of Joan of Arc by departments throughout France.⁹⁴ Although Frémiet's image of Joan remains apolitical in the US, the statue in Paris has served as the backdrop for annual marches and demonstrations by the Front National

⁹⁰ Nordez, *Jeanne d'Arc*, inside plate, i, iii, 20, 41, 65, 75, 77, 81, 87, 93, plate between 152-53, 153, 156, 157, 160-61, 168, plate between 168-69, 180, 185, 188, 190, 194, 200-201, 204, 209, 212, 218, 225, 229, 245, 249, 255, 257, 259, 269, 274-75, 218, 285-86, 289, 293, 299, 305, plate between 308-309, 315, 374, 375.

⁹¹ Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar, *Jeanne d'Arc*, 626.

⁹² Michel Winock, "Joan of Arc," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, vol. 3, ed. Pierre Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), 441.

⁹³ For a history of Frémiet's original works, see Ted Gott, "An Iron Maiden for Melbourne – the History and Context of Emmanuel Frémiet's 1906 Cast of *Jeanne d'Arc*," *La Trobe Journal* 81 (2008): 53-68. An inventory of Frémiet's original Joan of Arc statues and those based on his design, see Kees van Tilburg, *Equestrian Statues*, <https://equestrianstatue.org/> (accessed 4 September 2020).

⁹⁴ Winock, "Joan of Arc," 442, 448.

party and other far right groups, appropriating Joan of Arc in their xenophobic crusade against immigrants since 1984.⁹⁵



Fig. 2. Joan of Arc's capture at Compiègne. Miniature from *Les Vigiles de Charles VII*, BnF, fr. 5054, f. 60v. Public domain.



Fig. 3. Joan of Arc on horseback. Engraving from *La mer des histoires*, BnF, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-G-219, 384. Public Domain.

⁹⁵ For the evolution of Joan of Arc as a symbol for the far right in France, see Nadia Margolis, "The 'Joan Phenomenon' and the French Right," in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, eds. Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 265-87.

In the United States, after a six-year campaign by the Joan of Arc Statue Committee, sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington was the artist for a work in New York City. Dedicated in 1915, the equestrian statue still overlooks the Hudson River. Over the next eighteen years, statues based on Huntington's model were also erected in San Francisco, Gloucester, Massachusetts; Quebec City, Canada; and Blois, France. In preparation for the original monument's dedication, an inventory determined there were fourteen known equestrian statues of Joan of Arc.⁹⁶ Today, there are more than three dozen.⁹⁷

Static art also influenced live performances, and it was an equestrian portrait that purportedly inspired Friedrich Schiller to produce his *Die Jungfrau von Orléans* (1801), an epic on Joan of Arc that led to countless reproductions and imitations well into the twentieth century in Europe and North America.⁹⁸ One such performance at Harvard University, in 1909, boasted more than 1,300 participants, many on horses.⁹⁹ An advertisement for the play features Joan of Arc astride a horse, with banner in hand.¹⁰⁰ Numerous other live productions featuring Joan also promoted her equestrian image. For example, Ringling Bros. produced a 45-minute spectacle that preceded each of their performances across 300-plus cities in the United States and Canada during their 1912 and 1913 seasons. Throughout the performance, Joan is depicted on horseback along with others in the march to Rheims. Promotional material in the form of posters, couriers, librettos, and newspapers reinforced this image. In each city targeted by their promotional campaign, Ringling Bros. hosted a parade day featuring costumed actors, exotic animals, bandwagons, a band, and a mounted Joan of Arc.¹⁰¹ Ringling Bros. were by no means the first to incorporate Joan into their parades and a poster from Forepaugh & Sells Brothers Circus in 1902

⁹⁶ Inventory available in George Frederick, *The Dedication of the Statue of Joan of Arc in the City of New York on 6th of December 1915* (New York: American Scenic & Historic Preservation Society, 1916), 51-52.

⁹⁷ There are 35 listed in Tilburg, *Equestrian Statues*, but this list is not complete, missing some statues in Belgium and Germany.

⁹⁸ The portrait is believed to be lost. Warner, *Joan of Arc*, 225-26, 313n16.

⁹⁹ "Joan of Arc' in the Stadium at Harvard," *The Theatre: Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Dramatic and Musical Art* 10, 102 (August 1909), 38-39.

¹⁰⁰ "Maude Adams in Schiller's 'Joan of Arc,' *The Theatre: Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Dramatic and Musical Art* 10, no. 101 (July 1909), 10.

¹⁰¹ See Scott Manning, "Fit for Print, Not for Spectacle: Ringling Bros. and the Careful Exploitation of Joan of Arc," *Studies in Medievalism* 30 (2021): 229-252.

depicts a mounted Joan of Arc with banner leading a procession of knights, as well as soldiers from an assortment of eras and regions.¹⁰² Even today, a restored France-themed bandwagon featuring two painted equestrian Joan of Arcs – one marching and one charging – has appeared in many of the yearly circus parades in Milwaukee, WI since 1965 (Fig. 4).¹⁰³



Fig. 4. “France” Tableau No. 80 bandwagon on display in Circus World, Baraboo, Wisconsin. Photograph taken 30 August 2018 by author.

For nearly 600 years, Orléans has boasted an annual celebration of the relief of the siege by Joan of Arc, with only a brief interruption during the French Revolution.¹⁰⁴ Joan astride a horse is often depicted in parades. In New Orleans, home of the youngest Joan of Arc equestrian

¹⁰² A 2-sheet (76.3x193.7 cm) lithograph print available at the Cincinnati Art Museum. Strobridge Lithograph Company, “Forepaugh & Sells Brothers Enormous Shows United: The Leading Sections of Our New and Magnificent Military and Spectacular Free Street Parade,” Cincinnati Art Museum, (1902), 1965.1145.

¹⁰³ Originally built in 1918, the “France” Tableau No. 80 bandwagon has seen numerous owners and restorations. It first received its Joan of Arc images in 1937, for the Cole Bros. Circus, replacing paintings of the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe. It was restored again in 1996, based on photographs from 1937. See Fred Dahlinger, Jr., “Artifact of the Early Motorized Circus: Cole Bros. France Tableau,” *Bandwagon* 40, no. 5 (September-October 1996): 4-10.

¹⁰⁴ Blaetz, *Visions of the Maid*, 196.

statue based on Emmanuel Frémiet's original, annual celebrations have amalgamated on January 6, Joan's traditional birthday. Since 2008, Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc has organised a day-long celebration featuring demonstrations, reenactments, and a parade, complete with Joan on horseback.¹⁰⁵ Beyond the traditional parades and celebrations, Joan became an icon of the women's suffrage movement in the early twentieth century. In demonstrations, the figure of Joan of Arc on horseback led marches in England, which in turn led to similar usage of Joan in marches in the United States in the second decade of the twentieth century. Photographs and supporting programs for events often featured Joan on a white horse.¹⁰⁶

Joan of Arc's equestrian image was not limited to live productions, parades, and demonstrations, as filmmakers continued to depict her riding horses almost without exception.¹⁰⁷ If a film features Joan traveling or in battle, as most do, she is on horseback. The earliest surviving film, Georges Méliès's *Jeanne d'Arc* (1900), depicts Joan carrying her banner astride a horse, as she marches into Orléans amid a cheering crowd.¹⁰⁸ After seeing Geraldine Farrar ride throughout Cecil B. DeMille's *Joan the Woman* (1916), a *New York Evening Journal* reviewer proclaimed that "she can ride a horse like a veteran."¹⁰⁹ In the film, Farrar charges into battle ahead of cavalry, before dismounting and directing the artillery in tow.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ For more on the New Orleans parade including its founding, logistics, and first-hand accounts from 2012 through 2015, see Tara Beth Smithson, "The Mnemonic Maid: Joan of Arc in Public Memory" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2016).

¹⁰⁶ See images in Laura Coyle, "A Universal Patriot: Joan of Arc in America during the Gilded Age and the Great War," in *Joan of Arc: Her Image in France and America*, eds. Nora M. Heimann and Laura Coyle (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2006), 65-68.

¹⁰⁷ For a recent survey on the cinematic Joan of Arc, see Kevin J. Harty, "The Lady Is for Burning: The Cinematic Joan of Arc and Her Screen Avatars," in *Medieval Women on Film: Essays on Gender, Cinema, and History*, ed. Kevin J. Harty (Jefferson: McFarland, 2020), 182-198.

¹⁰⁸ *Jeanne d'Arc*, directed by Georges Méliès (France, 1900). There is an 1897 version that was expanded in 1900. See Kevin J. Harty, *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian Films about Medieval Europe* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1999), 139-40.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Robin Blaetz, *Visions of the Maid: Joan of Arc in American Film and Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2001), 55.

¹¹⁰ *Joan the Woman*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille (Paramount, 1916). For an analysis on how Ringling Bros. influenced depictions of Joan of Arc on horseback in the film, see Scott Manning, "Joan of Arc's Gunpowder Artillery: in Cecil B. DeMille's *Joan the Woman* (1916)," *Film & History* 52, no. 1 (2022): 25-29.

One of the most publicised cinematic casting efforts came for Marco de Gastayne's *La Merveilleuse vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928). Although the filmmakers sought a medium build brunette with French heritage and horse riding skills, they got none of that in the form of Simone Genevois in the titular role.¹¹¹ She later reflected, "I did not have a sturdy peasant build, nor dark hair – I was as blonde as a wheatfield – nor did I know how to ride a horse."¹¹² Genevois, however, learned to ride alongside the four regiments of the French army on loan to the director, resulting in charges and a siege that one historian described as "the most effective reenactment of the events" at Orléans.¹¹³ The equestrian Joan is featured in other big budget epics including Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc* (1948), starring Ingrid Bergman, and Luc Besson's *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc* (1999), starring Milla Jovovich.¹¹⁴ Joan also rides into battle in Jacques Rivette's nearly-six-hour-long *Jeanne la pucelle* (1994) and Bruno Dumont's recent musical *Jeanne* (2019).¹¹⁵

The criticism from Joan of Arc's assessors at her condemnation trial focused on what they saw as her desire to make war. Ignoring treaties, spurning calls for truces, encouraging sieges and assaults, as well as learning to make war and ride horses, all fit into their narrative that Joan sought to continue the war in France as opposed to accepting the English claims to the French throne. Still, she was lauded with praise by her comrades-in-arms and contemporaries for her martial abilities including horseback riding.

Her equestrian image was not diminished during the lengthy beatification and canonisation processes (1874-1920). Among the statements made by devil's advocates against canonisation, was their admission that her horseback riding made her candidature stronger. However, they also argued that the many gifts, including horses, freely

¹¹¹ Blaetz, *Visions of the Maid*, 156.

¹¹² Kevin Brownlow, "Obituary: Simone Genevois," Independent, December 22, 1995, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-simone-genevois-1526934.html> (accessed 6 September 2020).

¹¹³ John Aberth, "Film," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Technology*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2:49.

¹¹⁴ *Joan of Arc*, directed by Victor Fleming (RKO, 1948); *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*, directed by Luc Besson (Gaumont, 1999).

¹¹⁵ *Jeanne la pucelle*, directed by Jacques Rivette (Pierre Grise Productions, 1994); *Jeanne*, directed by Bruno Dumont (3B Productions, 2019).

accepted by her did “not constitute heroic or even ordinary virtue.”¹¹⁶ Thus, where Joan’s assessors at her condemnation trial criticized her for learning to ride horses at all, in 1892, she was criticized for enjoying such lavish gifts given to her by the king and nobles. None of this weakened the power of her equestrian image, which was reinforced by the canonisation bull issued from Pope Benedict XV in 1920, which describes her acquiring and riding horses.¹¹⁷

This six-century tradition of the equestrian image of Joan of Arc was established as a result of her intensive two years of riding horses and campaigning on horseback. In this brief time, Joan learned to respect their power. During her condemnation trial, the assessors continually asked in different ways if she understood what her voices had commanded of her, especially regarding her mission. After reiterating the same answer each time, the scribes of the trial added, “She says further that she would rather be torn asunder by horses than have come to France without God’s permission.”¹¹⁸ This was a melodramatic statement made by someone who had not only learned to read horses, but had witnessed and experienced their power as transport and in battle. Yet, even this statement underplays the potency of the horse. Joan had ridden more than 3,000 miles to her final destination in Rouen, but she continued to ride over the next 600 years in histories, commentaries, art, live performances, and film. Even being ultimately torn from her horse at Compiègne could not diminish this image. Today, she still rides in bronze throughout cities across three continents, and any future depictions of Joan of Arc will continue to represent this teenager as a mounted saint on horseback.

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¹¹⁶ Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Joan of Arc’s Last Trial: The Attack of the Devil’s Advocates,” in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, eds. Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 209.

¹¹⁷ Pope Benedict XV, *Divina Disponente*, 16 May 1920, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/la/bulls/documents/hf_ben-xv_bulls_19200516_divina-disponente.html (accessed 2 September 2020).

¹¹⁸ Testimony recorded 27 February 1431 in Hobbins, *Trial of Joan of Arc*, 66.

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on Horseback
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Miriam A. Bibby

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