

JOAN OF ARC IS A NATIONAL HEROINE OF FRANCE

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Annotation: The article analyzes the life and historical activity of Joan of Arc, the national heroine of the French people who lived in the first half of the 15th century. The paper examines the events of her struggle for the liberation of the French nation from foreign invaders, her influence on the course of the war, as well as her trial and death. The article reveals Joan of Arc's place in European history and her significance as a symbol of female courage.

Keywords: Joan of Arc, Henry VI, Charles VI, Isabella of Rome, Saint Catherine, Saint Margaret, Gascony, Edward III, Metz, Siege of Orléans, Pucelle, Patay, Grusine, Jean de Luxembourg, Ammo, Martyr, Bordicure, Ruy, Village of Saint-Denis, La Pierre Cauchon, Jean D'Estive, Armagnac

Annotasiya: Ushbu maqolada XV asrda Fransiyada yashagan "fransuz xalqining" milliy qahramoni Janna d'Arkning hayoti va tarixiy faoliyati tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada Yuz yillik yillik urush davrining siyosiy holati, uning ozodlik uchun kurashi, diniy e'tiqodi, xalq oldidagi qahramonliklari, ilohiy vahiyalar ta'sirida olib borilgan kurashlari, xalq ruhiyatiga ko'rsatgan tasiri, shuningdek, uning sud jarayonlari o'limi ilmiy manbalar asosida ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqola matnida Janna d'Arkning Yevropa tarixidagi o'rni va ayollar jasorati timsoli sifatidagi ahamiyati ochib berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Janna d'ark, Genrix IV, Karl VI, Jak d'Ark, Izabella Romae, Avliyo Ketrin, Muqaddas Margaret, Gascogne, Edward III, Azenkur jangida, Chinon shahri, Bodrikur, Ruray-Sent-Denis qishlog'I, "La Pucelle", Pancrazio Giustinia, Jan de Lyuksemburg, Pierre Cauchon, Jan D'Estivet, Armagnac.

Аннотация: В статье анализируется жизнь и историческая деятельность Жанны д'Арк, национальной героини французского народа, жившей во Франции в XV веке. В статье рассматриваются политический обстановка Столетней войны, её борьба за свободу, религиозные убеждения, героизм перед народом, её борьба под влиянием божественных откровений, её влияние на психику народа, а также её судебный процесс и её смерть научных источниках. В статье раскрывается место Жанны д'Арк в европейской истории и её значение как символа женского мужества.

Ключевые слова: Жанна д'Арк, Генрих VI, Карл VI, Изабелла Ромэ, Святая Екатерина, Святая Маргарита, Гасконь, Эдуард III, Мец, Осада Орлеана, Пусель, Патая, Грусин, Жан де Люксембург, Аммо, Мученица, Бордикур, Рюй, деревня Сен-Дени, Ла Пьер Кошон, Жан Д'Эстив, Аманьяк.

Introduction

In European history, the fifteenth century occupies a special place due to its complex political processes, sharp conflicts between states, and the protracted Hundred Years' War. During this turbulent period, the Kingdom of France found itself on the brink of fragmentation, grappling with internal divisions and the pressure of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance. In a context marked by political disunity, weakened centralized power, the advance of English forces, and growing despair among the populace, the emergence of the Joan of Arc phenomenon profoundly influenced not only the course of the war, but also the spiritual revival of the French people. Despite being the daughter of a simple peasant, Joan altered the direction of numerous military operations and, through her religious inspiration, determination, and devotion to her homeland, quickly became a national heroine embodying national identity and spiritual unity. Her role in breaking the Siege of Orléans, assisting Charles VII in being lawfully crowned in Reims, and raising the morale of French troops transformed her into one of the most remarkable historical figures of medieval Europe.

Joan of Arc's life, character, and historical mission stood at the intersection of medieval religious beliefs, the social status of women, political ideology, and the formation of national consciousness. However, her successes were perceived as a threat by the Burgundians and the English, and in 1431 she was condemned by an ecclesiastical court on charges of "witchcraft" and "heresy," and subsequently executed. The 1431 trial, the content of the accusations, and the later proceedings—particularly the rehabilitation trial of 1456, held twenty-five years later—form the basis for ongoing historical debates surrounding her persona, as that later court officially recognized Joan's innocence. The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that the figure of Joan of Arc stands at the crossroads of many areas, including medieval church-state relations, the social position of women, the development of national consciousness, and political ideology. Written sources about her—trial records, contemporary chronicles, letters, and later historical-literary interpretations—serve as a rich scholarly foundation. Even today, the Joan of Arc phenomenon continues to be extensively studied by historians, theologians, sociologists, and cultural scholars. The main purpose of this research is to analyze Joan of Arc's historical activity, her religious and political views, as well as her role in the military-political processes of medieval France on the basis of available sources. The study also examines trial documents, chronicles, modern historical research, and the reinterpretation of the Joan of Arc figure from the Middle Ages to the contemporary era, allowing for a multilayered and comprehensive exploration of the topic. Scholarly investigations about her rely primarily on three major types of sources: chronicles left by contemporaries, official records of the trial proceedings, and historical-literary interpretations from later centuries. These sources make it possible to study Joan of Arc not only as a military leader, but also to explore her religious beliefs, spiritual world, and political motivations. Therefore, the figure of Joan of Arc remains a distinctive historical, religious, social, and cultural phenomenon that has preserved its significance in European history to this day.

Research and Findings

The XV th century in Europe was a period of various social, political, and religious conflicts. During this era, France was a centralized state. Surrounded by numerous feudal disputes, public unrest, and foreign invasions, France also entered into a series of conflicts with England. This period of tensions became known in history as the Hundred Years' War. France suffered severe defeats in this war. The general instability led to an agricultural crisis; population decline and rising taxes intensified dissatisfaction with royal policies. Disorder in religious life caused the

decline of the Church's authority. Among the people, the belief in some miraculous salvation grew stronger. In such circumstances, the name of Joan of Arc emerged among the people as a symbol of deliverance. Joan of Arc was born on 6 January 1412 in the village of Domrémy, located in the northeastern part of France, then partly under English control. The region lay partly within Champagne and partly in the dependent territory of Barrois. Joan's father, Jacques d'Arc, and her mother, Isabelle Romée, were honest, hardworking, and devout people. Their extended family consisted of well-off peasants and craftsmen, and Joan's uncle was a priest. Like most peasants and many people at that time, Joan was illiterate, as girls had very limited access to education. Nevertheless, she grew up in a deeply religious environment. Although she could neither read nor write, she learned Bible stories from her mother and local clergy, and she was familiar with various beautiful legends filled with miracles. Joan was raised in the spirit of the Catholic faith. Her mother Isabelle taught her daily prayer, fasting, and participation in church rituals. Joan's family owned around fifty hectares of land, of which twelve to thirty hectares were arable land or meadows, and four hectares were forest. They had a house and some furniture. Although their income was modest, they could still host and accommodate travelers passing through their area. Despite their humble social standing, the family lived a life closely intertwined with Christian faith and the Church. In medieval France, the Church stood at the center of community life; religious rituals, churches, and celebrations formed the spiritual foundation of society. Growing up in this atmosphere, Joan was raised in the spirit of piety and purity. She was known as a polite, gentle-natured, kind, obedient, and modest girl, yet also determined and strong-willed. Sources on her childhood emphasize the religious education she received from her mother. She was taught to memorize Holy Scriptures, attend services regularly, and help the poor, which later shaped her patriotic devotion. From adolescence, she began to experience visions, hear voices, and converse with angels. The instability, war, and devastation in the kingdom caused her deep suffering. According to Joan, she began receiving revelations in about 1424, at the age of twelve. She described them as spoken messages as well as visible and tangible figures of saints and angels. She identified these visions as Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Margaret of Antioch, the Archangel Michael, occasional appearances of Gabriel, and at times large groups of angels. Of these figures, only the Archangel Michael was directly connected to military matters. The Hundred Years' War, which lasted from 1337 to 1453, began as a result of England and France disputing the French crown and England's desire to control territories within France. The main cause of the conflict was England's King Edward III claiming the French throne and attempting to retain control of Gasconne, an English fief within the French kingdom. In the first phase of the conflict (1337–1360), France suffered heavy losses, while during the second phase (1369–1396) it partially recovered. However, England's King Henry V achieved a decisive victory at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, after which France was divided into two rival factions: the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. The Burgundian faction supported Henry V's son, Henry VI. According to the Treaty of Troyes of 1420, Henry VI was recognized as the future king of France. France remained politically fragmented. King Charles VII had not yet been officially crowned, and much of the country was under English control. National morale had deteriorated, and despair had spread widely. It was in this moment of crisis that Joan of Arc appeared. At Chinon, on the Vienne River, she made her third attempt to reach Charles under an armed escort. Robert de Baudricourt eventually granted permission. One report states that Joan convinced him by accurately predicting the Armagnac defeat near Rouvray-Saint-Denis close to Orléans on 12 February 1429. After this prediction proved true, Baudricourt organized an armed escort to take her through enemy territory to Chinon. For safety—from possible identification or assault—she

wore men's clothing, which allowed her to tie long boots and trousers to her tunic for extra protection. Witnesses stated that she wore this outfit constantly for modesty and security. She called herself La Pucelle ("The Maid"), explaining that she had vowed to remain a virgin until God willed otherwise. After an eleven-day journey, Joan reached Chinon on about 4 March and was granted an audience with Charles two days later. Witnesses recalled her approaching him with humility, saying: "Most noble Dauphin, I am sent by God to help you." Reports also indicate that she reminded him of a personal prayer he had made on 1 November, which persuaded him to take her seriously. Charles ordered a theological investigation to confirm her orthodoxy, and she was sent to Poitiers, where theologians questioned her for three weeks before giving their approval. A Venetian observer, Pancrazio Giustiniani, wrote that her confidence in answering the learned theologians earned her the reputation of "another Saint Catherine come to earth." In May 1430, Joan turned her attention to Compiègne and attempted to free it from Burgundian siege. During a night attack, she crossed the bridge and went straight into the heart of enemy positions. However, another group of Burgundian and English soldiers cut her off from the city, and the gates closed behind her. Surrounded, she was captured. Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, rejoiced, claiming that her capture exposed the "foolish trust" people had placed in her. Joan tried to escape several times but failed. Technically, under the laws of war, she belonged to John of Luxembourg, whose soldiers had captured her. She was taken to a castle twenty miles away while decisions regarding her fate were considered. Soon after, theologians from the University of Paris and the church's vicar-general requested that she be handed over for trial on charges of heresy. Geneva, however, did not respond. John of Luxembourg hoped to secure a large ransom. Eventually he received payment: on behalf of King Henry VI, the royal council purchased Joan in November. She was transferred to Rouen, the capital of English Normandy. On 3 January 1431, young King Henry (more precisely, his advisors) issued an order for Joan to be tried by the Bishop of Beauvais on charges of various religious crimes. Despite being held in a royal fortress, she was placed under the authority of church officials. Among the charges were wearing men's clothing, violating biblical commandments, falsely claiming divine mission, and inciting bloodshed. The trial was held in Rouen, one of the last strongholds of English power in France. Joan had already spent eight months in prison before questioning began in February 1431. Numerous violations of canon law occurred: she was chained, guarded by male soldiers, and denied access to church prison. She had no legal defender. When Pierre Cauchon offered her a counselor from those present, she refused, noting that they were all allied with the English. Her refusal suited Cauchon, who was determined to convict her regardless.

Conclusion:

Joan of Arc stands out on the stage of history for her exceptional bravery, unwavering determination, and profound religious conviction. Her actions played a decisive role not only in the political and historical developments of fifteenth-century France, but also in demonstrating the value, potential, and strength of women within society. Joan broke through the limitations imposed on women of her era and became a vivid symbol of patriotism and spiritual resilience. Her steadfastness on the battlefield, the firmness of her decisions, and her contribution to national unity through her support of the king clearly show her sincere devotion to the fate of her homeland. Her religious faith served as the guiding principle behind all her decisions. Joan regarded her mission as a divine command, and this belief endowed her with extraordinary courage. It was precisely this harmony—spiritual strength, loyalty to her people, and faith in justice—that immortalized her as a historical figure. Today, Joan of Arc is not only a symbol

significant to French history, but also to the cultural heritage of all humankind. She is remembered as an emblem representing the active role of women in society, the ideals of national liberation, and the importance of faith in human life. Her legacy continues to inspire modern generations toward the values of courage, conscience, determination, and devotion to one's homeland. The historical significance of Joan of Arc can be evaluated from several perspectives. First of all, she emerged in an era when opportunities for women in medieval Europe were severely limited, yet through her dedication, resolve, and bravery she rose to an unparalleled position not only in the military sphere but also in social life. Joan's activity demonstrated in practice that a woman could also play an influential role in political and military affairs. Through her strong faith, integrity, and valor, she challenged the deeply rooted perceptions of male dominance within society. Secondly, Joan's patriotic struggle served as a powerful impetus for the unification of the French people. Her appearance on the historical stage brought spiritual strength, moral uplift, and renewed hope to French society. Major political achievements—such as the lifting of the Siege of Orléans and the coronation of Charles VII—were directly connected to Joan's efforts, illustrating the profound nature of her national liberation ideals. Her patriotism shows that the efforts of a single individual can change the destiny of an entire nation. Thirdly, Joan's religious conviction was the central foundation of all her actions. She believed her mission to be divinely ordained and supported every step she took with faith. It was this spiritual strength that enabled her to overcome fear, resist obstacles, and remain loyal to her purpose. The harmony of faith and courage was one of the key factors that transformed Joan into a historical symbol. Her execution further sanctified her image and contributed to the creation of a vast spiritual legacy surrounding her personality.

Today, Joan of Arc is revered throughout the world as a symbol of women's rights, equality, national pride, religious freedom, and personal determination. She exemplifies the idea that a person—regardless of origin, gender, or age—can reach remarkable heights through purpose and conviction. Joan's legacy continues to call modern generations toward the universal values of courage, patriotism, responsibility, faith, and humanity, leaving an indelible mark on historical memory.

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