PREFACE

This book emerged from conversations that took place with my colleagues at York regarding a document-based course ('Special Subject') in late medieval French history. My original intention was to develop a course that would examine either Valois royal ideology or French chivalry, my major research interests. But I had always enjoyed teaching Joan of Arc and realised how exciting it would be to enable students to explore a subject that touched upon all of the major themes of medieval history, from politics and warfare to religion, social history and gender. There would certainly be no shortage of sources, given that Joan of Arc is one of the best-documented figures of the middle ages. Such a course would explore the usual range of legal and administrative records of the period, together with Valois, Burgundian and English chronicles and writings which provide insight into both her life and contemporary reactions to her. The centrepiece would be the extraordinary testimony that she gave during the trial which condemned her to death at Rouen in 1431 and the statements provided two decades later by her friends and acquaintances during the Nullification trial that overturned the original verdict against her.

The problem was that this rich tapestry of primary sources remains largely inaccessible to modern audiences. Few of the texts had been translated properly into English and therefore my only choice was to do the work myself. Aided by a generous allocation of research leave from my department, extended by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Board, I set to the task. I quickly realised that the relevant sources are scattered across countless printed editions published in Europe and North America. The easy option would have been to rely upon the remarkable five-volume collection prepared by Jules Quicherat in the middle of the nineteenth century, but this is far from complete and has been overtaken by better editions, not least the new trial records prepared for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Pierre Tisset and Pierre Duparc.¹ I therefore identified the best editions for all of the sources, in the process recovering a number of documents that have fallen out of usage during the twentieth century and adding a few additional sources to the corpus. With the assistance of the Inter-Library Loan staff at my own university, together with trips to libraries in Paris, London, Oxford and Leeds, I slowly located a vast quantity of material, enough for four volumes the size of this book. Inevitably, therefore, I have had to omit material that merited a place in this book if there had been sufficient space.

1 P. Tisset and Y. Lanhers (eds), *Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, 3 vols, Paris, 1960-71, and P. Duparc (ed.), *Procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, 5 vols, Paris 1977-89.

Around one hundred and sixty witness statements were presented before the Nullification trial, but much of this material is repetitive and so I have made severe cuts, not least the testimony in 1450 and 1452. I have also left out the Seventy Articles, the first set of charges presented against Joan during the Rouen trial. This is an extremely valuable source, demonstrating the full range of attacks mounted upon Joan before the charges were whittled down to the final Twelve Articles. Experts will no doubt identify other sources that should have merited attention.

In preparing this book, I have discovered that there is room for far more research on Joan of Arc than I had ever expected, given the veritable mountain of books and articles published over the last two or three centuries. Exciting new scholarship has opened up important ways of interpreting the social and religious aspects of her life, but this has raced ahead of our knowledge and understanding of the primary texts themselves. Fundamental questions remain unanswered about many of the documents used to study Joan. On the one hand, the critical approaches employed with regard to the original trial records have not been applied to the wider corpus of documents, too often regarded as unproblematic and 'truthful' sources. More importantly, serious investigation of the Valois and Burgundian chronicles seems to have stopped generations ago and, as a result, we do not know the precise relationship between the accounts of the Pucelle presented in a variety of well-known and frequently cited texts. I intend to tackle these difficult problems in the future, abandoning the traditional, biographical approach to the story of Joan and instead exploring the ways in which her story was constructed and disseminated in different categories of sources. I take great pleasure in the thought that such a book would follow in the path set out by Charles Wayland Lightbody, a fellow graduate of Worcester College, Oxford, and the patron of a fund that supported me as a student.

I have chosen to present the documents in a chronological fashion rather than to organise them thematically. It is essential that the reader recognise the importance of the date at which a source was written in order to evaluate it properly. The most obvious example of this must be the eyewitness statements presented at the Nullification trial, remembering events that had taken place a quarter of a century earlier, no doubt influenced by the rumours and myths that were already building around Joan. In some cases, of course, it is extremely difficult to be certain about dating of a particular document and I have therefore had to impose my own judgement, though I have also identified other secondary sources that present contrary opinions.

I have generally kept the French spelling of names and titles except in cases such as Joan of Arc where there is a commonly accepted Anglicisation. Unlike most British or North American scholars, I have chosen to retain the French title for Joan of Arc, 'La Pucelle', rather than to translate this into the commonly used 'Maid' or 'Maiden'. My intention is to encourage modern readers to engage with the full range of meanings implicit in the term 'Pucelle' which was central to Joan's gender and status in contemporary

society.² Some readers may also be confused about the fact that I refer to the son of King Charles VI as King Charles VII rather than the dauphin Charles. The title of dauphin was accorded to the heir apparent to the French throne from 1349 and was abandoned at the moment of accession to the throne, which took place at the death of the previous king and not at the royal coronation. Thus Charles VII was only dauphin from the death of his elder brother John on 5 April 1417 until the death of his father on 21 October 1422, even if Joan continued to use the title until his coronation on 17 July 1429, as witnesses at the Nullification trial later suggested [80–82].³

Finally it has become common in many modern books to render the testimony of both Joan of Arc and the witnesses at the Nullification trial (and indeed inquisitorial trials in general) in as vivid a manner as possible, particularly by use of the first person and the present tense. This is a particularly dangerous approach because it is liable to lull the reader into forgetting the exact nature of these records, that are not verbatim transcripts of the words of witnesses but rather carefully constructed and reshaped interpretations of what was said.⁴ I have therefore chosen to follow the original records as closely as possible, continuing to use the third person, and to present the statements in the past tenses, though I have had to iron out some inconsistencies in order to avoid confusion.

A number of individuals have provided invaluable advice and assistance throughout the preparation of this book. Christopher Allmand and Alan Lupack helped me to obtain copies of key books. Sarah Rees Jones and Natasha Glaisyer provided useful sounding boards when making difficult decisions about the organization and presentation of this book. Peter Ainsworth and Shelagh Sneddon provided assistance with particular translations. Angus Kennedy and Kenneth Varty kindly agreed to allow me to reproduce their translation of the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*. Jeremy Goldberg, Katherine Lewis, Alastair Minnis and Cordelia Beattie gave me important advice and served as sounding-boards on the subject of gender. My undergraduate students on two Special Subject courses have provided a wonderful think-tank in which to test out ideas (not to mention a willing team of proofreaders!), as have audiences at a number of conferences and seminars. Malcolm Vale, Kathleen Daly, Gail Orgelfinger, Bonnie Wheeler and the members of the International Joan of Arc Society have all encouraged me in this endeavour and I hope that this book will be of use to them when teaching their own courses.

² See pages 46 to 48 below.

³ This is not to deny, of course, that the coronation was a fundamentally important public ritual and a key element in the royal mythology, serving as a visible demonstration of God's support and approval for the new ruler: R. A. Jackson, *Vive le roi! A history of the French coronation from Charles V to Charles X*, Chapel Hill, 1984.

⁴ See pages 60 to 67 below.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my editor, Rosemary Horrox, who gave me detailed advice on my original proposal and has read the typescript on two separate occasions. Her comments and advice have improved this book and one can only wish that Thomas de Courcelles and Guillaume Manchon had had such assistance when preparing the record of Joan's trial at Rouen.

Finally my colleague and fiancée, Gabriella Corona, has not only spent many, many hours patiently talking over a host of questions throughout this project but also provided me with tremendous assistance in translating Latin and Italian documents.

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