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## TRUE LIES: TRANSVESTISM AND IDOLATRY IN THE TRIAL OF JOAN OF ARC

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*The ecclesiastical case against Joan of Arc gradually narrowed to the central charge of idolatry. Joan was condemned for worshipping false gods, the saints of her visions, and for making herself into an idol of masculinity—a "false lie"—by wearing male attire.*

According to the scribe who annotated the final interrogation of Joan of Arc that occurred on May 28, 1431, what ultimately sent her to the stake as a relapsed heretic was her "fatal reply" that she had again heard her divine voices. Not only had St. Catherine and St. Margaret spoken to her, but, Joan reported, they declared that her earlier recantation was evil and treasonous, her accusers false. Joan's return to a belief in the validity of her voices was probably sufficient to convict her of the charges written on her cap when she was subsequently burned by the English on May 30: *Heretica, Relapsa, Apostata, Idolatra*.<sup>2</sup> Yet all of these characterizations—heresy, relapse, apostasy, and idolatry—applied equally well to Joan's other "fatal" action shortly before, or on, May 28: her resumption of male attire. On that Monday, the judges began by interrogating Joan's overt marks of relapse, her return to male dress, and only then moved on to ferret out what to them were the invisible, inaudible signs, the recurrence of her private voices. Joan's male attire and voices are inextricably linked in the transcript of her final condemnation; her transvestism serves to introduce and manifest her suspect revelations. As Beverly Boyd phrases it, "The issue was, of course, [Joan's] voices, ... but the emblem of her heresy was her wearing of men's clothing."<sup>3</sup>

Jeffrey Burton Russell observes that "most of the charges levelled against Joan were complete falsifications," for hers was at best a "lurid

political trial."<sup>4</sup> Régine Pernoud finds the original case a "issue of trickery and falsification," and she argues that Joan's so-called relapse was based on a forged document.<sup>5</sup> Johanne scholars largely agree with these characterizations of the accusations made against Joan. Indeed, Boyd comments, Joan's "trial [was] so unjust that the evidence eventually canonized the accused."<sup>6</sup> Trumped up as the accusations may be, I nevertheless wish to examine them carefully here. Although the charges themselves are lies—"mendacious propositions," Pernoud calls them<sup>7</sup>—I believe they can yield certain "truths" about sexuality, gender, and gender construction in the late Middle Ages. In particular, I shall analyze why Joan's cross dressing was coupled with her voices, that is, explore in what sense both were regarded as evidence of heresy, specifically idolatry.

Here, too, one might question the wisdom of taking the charges literally or precisely, for both heresy and idolatry were fluid concepts, often circular in definition, hence vulnerable to political manipulation. Late-medieval heresy, Russell remarks, was any belief the pope found heretical;<sup>8</sup> similarly, idolatry might be any form of devotion deemed improper, as Carlos M.N. Eire observes. "Idolatry," Eire continues, "is a fighting word": it "presupposes a definition of what is true and false in religion, for an idol cannot be universally recognized as such.... One man's devotion was another man's idolatry."<sup>9</sup> Idolatry was also an all-encompassing vice throughout the Middle Ages. Tertullian named it "the chief crime of mankind, the supreme guilt of the world, the entire case put before judgment," for every sin "is committed within idolatry."<sup>10</sup> Centuries later, Aquinas still viewed idolatry as "the cause, beginning and goal of every sin because there is no kind of wickedness which idolatry does not produce at some time...." Despite the elastic nature of medieval idolatry, I shall argue that there is a calculated and precise, albeit perverse, rationale that underlies Joan's condemnation, and my ultimate aim is to identify what cultural work the censure of her overt idolatry, transvestism, performed.

#### TEXT AS PRETEXT: FRAMING JOAN'S CASE

The denouement of Joan's judicial ordeal, her execution as a relapsed heretic, an idolater, was neither abrupt nor arbitrary; the final act was in the making for months as the trial passed through its various phases. During this period, from February to the end of May 1431,

Joan's transvestment was relentlessly scrutinized. Valerie R. Hotchkiss counts more than thirty appearances of the charge in the trial text's preliminary lists of accusations and admonishments.<sup>12</sup> At the retrial that began posthumously in 1455 and soon exonerated or "rehabilitated" Joan, her lay compatriots clearly perceived the centrality of her transvestment in her earlier condemnation first by ecclesiastical and then by university officials. One witness singled out Joan's transvestism as the exclusive cause of her execution: Pierre Cusquel, a mason of Rouen evidently employed at the castle where Joan was held prisoner, testified that "people said that the sole cause of her condemnation was that she had resumed male clothes...." Although not literally true, Cusquel's statement was not far off the mark, for as Joan's prosecutors honed and polished their case against her, they gradually narrowed it in effect to a single overarching charge of idolatry, articulated into two varieties or manifestations, one of which was Joan's resumption of male attire. The effort Joan's judges expended to frame the charge of idolatry gives it an import beyond mere political expediency or a convenient excuse to get rid of her.

The text of the proceedings against Joan is a complex and unwieldy document, albeit typical of trials before the Inquisition, yet it does reveal a pattern of selectivity that ends with an exclusive focus on idolatry.<sup>14</sup> First recorded in French during the trial of 1431, only a portion of this putatively verbatim transcript survives. The Latin translation of the full French minutes of the trial was not made until sometime after 1435, and into it were inserted letters and other ancillary material, including narrative accounts of the events that resulted in Joan's abandonment to the secular powers and subsequent execution. The accuracy of this later official text is as difficult to assess as is that of the fragmentary French one, but exactitude was not necessarily the main objective in compiling either document. Legitimizing, even rationalizing, Joan's death was surely on the minds of the editors of the post-1435 trial text. To this end, the Latin text searches for, and eventually finds, a dominant theme, a consistent set of accusations against Joan. Judicially (and charitably) speaking, the official text records the efforts of Joan's judges to cull out bogus charges against her; literarily speaking, it reveals the labors of its authors to construct a coherent and credible narrative of her crimes. Inexorably, the narrative edges Joan closer to the fire.<sup>15</sup>

The first stage of Joan's judicial ordeal, the initial interrogation or preparatory trial, lasted for over three months. During this phase, Joan was asked hundreds of questions, all potential accusations.<sup>16</sup> The queries ranged from the seemingly mundane—what was Joan doing yesterday morning when her voice came to her? did her king have a crown when at Reims?—to the profound—would Joan submit herself to the judgment of the Church Militant? From the myriad questions and answers of the preparatory trial, the authorities drew up a list of seventy charges, which were read aloud to Joan over the course of a week. The Latin text records both the accusations and Joan's responses to them.<sup>17</sup> Following this second interrogation, known as the ordinary trial, Joan's ecclesiastical judges digested the seventy accusations into twelve articles.<sup>18</sup> The digest not only streamlined the case against Joan, but focused it and began to develop the major themes that would eventually constrict into the central charge of idolatry. The digest also omitted Joan's responses, for at this point the proceedings clearly dropped whatever pretense of adjudication they had had and began to prove their case against her.

The twelve-article digest eliminated trivial and fanciful accusations of witchcraft and sorcery from the ordinary trial, such as Article VII, that Joan had carried a magical mandrake in her bosom for the purpose of gaining good fortune, and Article XX, that she had put a spell on her ring and standard to the same end. The digest also discarded charges that Joan was first a resident prostitute, then a camp-follower. Articles VIII, IX, and X of the earlier ordinary trial place Joan in a house of prostitution in Neufchâteau before she began having her visions, and Article XI specifies that she had intimate relations with Robert de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, to whom she boasted that she would bear three sons, one to become a pope, one an emperor, and one a king. Although Voltaire, most notably, would later exploit this image of Joan's carnality in his mock epic, *La Pucelle d'Orléans*,<sup>19</sup> the ecclesiastical authors of the digest in fact dismissed all suggestions of her sexual misconduct with men, for reasons I shall examine below. Instead, the Rouen judges shaped their case around Joan's saints and visions and her male attire; they also cited her leap from the tower of Beaurevoir castle (a supposed suicide attempt or proof of Joan's presumptuous belief that her saints would save her), her departure from her paternal home in Domrémy without parental consent, her dictation of letters signed "Jhesus

Maria," and, in the final article, her alleged refusal to submit to the Church Militant if its dictates conflicted with her sense of God's commands or with her revelations.

The bulk of the articles in the digest, I, II, III, IV, IX, X, and XI, focus on Joan's admission that the saints Gabriel, Michael, Catherine, and Margaret appeared to her, spoke to her, revealed a knowledge of the future and of secret things to her, and convinced the dauphin to allow her to lead his troops against the Burgundian-English alliance. The most damning of these charges concerns Joan's response to the "voices and spirits whom she calls St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret," for specification of her reaction to them opens the digest and recurs in the penultimate article. To these "spirits," the digest implies, Joan "made reverence" as if they were divinities:

St. Catherine and St. Margaret have appeared to the said woman who saw them in the flesh. And every day she sees them and hears their speech; and, when she embraces and kisses them, she touches them and feels them physically. She has seen, not only the heads of the said angels and the saints, but other parts of their bodies, whereof she has not chosen to speak.<sup>20</sup>

[Joan] has uncovered, knelt, and kissed the ground where they walked, and has consecrated her virginity to St. Catherine and to St. Margaret, when she embraced and saluted them. And she has touched them bodily and felt them.... (232–33; 1. 295)

Next in importance of the digest's charges is Joan's male attire, a subject also raised in Article I and then elaborated in two subsequent articles. Article I interconnects Joan's saints with her transvestism, claiming that Joan confessed that St. Catherine and St. Margaret instructed her, "in the name of God, to take and wear a man's clothes" (227; 1. 290) when she approached the dauphin, and that Joan stubbornly continues to obey their command even though doing so bars her from hearing Mass and receiving the sacrament of communion. Articles V and VII escalate the accusation in that they personalize it, placing the onus on Joan herself for deciding to wear men's clothes and for actually obtaining them. Eliminating the intermediary saints, Article V quores Joan as claiming that God directly commanded her to dress as a man, and VII asserts that a captain (Robert de Baudricourt) "lent this woman a man's clothes and a sword *at her own request*" (231, italics mine; 1. 293).

The digest *per se* refrains from analyzing Joan's trespasses. That task was reserved for the subsequent faculty body at the University of Paris that deliberated over the accusations the digest presented. But the joint opening opinion of the Rouen court, which had authored the digest, sets the stage for later developments: tentatively and briefly, it classifies one of Joan's sins as "idolatry, or at least misleading fiction" (236; *idolatrum aut, ad minus, conficcionem mendosam*, 1. 299), but says no more. The Rouen judges also subscribed individual opinions to the digest, and one of these clerics, Raoul Le Sauvage, elaborated upon the charge of idolatry:

In respect of Article XI, that she embraced and kissed bodily and with her senses St. Catherine and St. Margaret, I see in this nothing but imagination and fictitious lies [*fictum mendacium*], or the deception of demons: and if she had adored them, simply and unconditionally, she would not have rashly exposed herself to the charge of idolatry [*forte discrimini cuiusdam ydolatrie temerarie se submisit*]. (263; 1. 326)

For Le Sauvage, then, Joan's vulnerability to the charge of idolatry centers on her visions, specifically, her "fictitious lie" that her saints possessed a *material* existence to which she did reverence. When the Rouen judges later rephrased the charges of the digest and read them to Joan on May 2 for her response, they widened the scope of idolatry beyond her "fictitious lie" to the inherent danger of this sin in Joan's presumption to decide for herself whether or not her apparitions were true:

She said also that she had adored these novel things which appeared to her, although she had concerning them no sufficient proof for her to believe that they were good spirits; that she had not taken the counsel of priest or any other ecclesiastic on this point, but presumed too much upon herself, in a matter wherein the danger of idolatry [*periculum idolatrie*] is ever imminent. (275; 1. 341)

Joan's "case"—the rewritten twelve-article digest minus her responses of May 2—was next sent to the theological faculty of the University of Paris, which deliberated and rendered judgment upon it twice, rewording it several times in the process. If the Rouen judges stopped a hair short of declaring Joan an idolater, the Paris academics convicted her forthwith on the grounds of her apparitions, which they declared to be "false lies" (*ficta mendacia*, 1. 361). Regarding Article I, the nature of Joan's visions, on May 19 the Paris faculty

stated outright that Joan had concocted fictitious, pernicious, and seductive lies (*ficta mendacia, seductoria, et perniciosia*, 1. 361) and therefore was an idolater (*est ydolatra*, 1. 362). At the same time, the Paris faculty extended the concept of idolatry into Article V, which regards Joan's attire, a connection the Rouen judges had failed to make:

Regarding article the fifth, the said woman is blasphemous towards God, contemptuous of God in his sacraments, unmindful of divine and sacred law and the ecclesiastical sanctions, evil thinking and erring in the faith, foolishly boastful, and must be suspected of idolatry, and of the execration of herself and her garments; she has imitated the rites of the heathen [*et habenda et suspecta de ydolatria et execratione sui ac vestium suarum demonibus, ritum gentilium imitando*]. (290; 1.361)

Finally, the text of the trial had found its focus; both Joan's visions and attire evidenced her sin of idolatry, a sin grave enough to justify her excommunication as a heretic if she did not recant her errors. With what would soon become a fatal symmetry, Joan's visible idolatry, her attire, had been synchronized with her invisible idolatry, her visions.

On May 23, the Rouen court read aloud a memorandum of Joan's many "faults, crimes, and errors" to her, and she was allowed the opportunity to "correct and reform herself" (301; 1. 375) and to repudiate her mistaken beliefs, which the trial text records Joan did on May 24. In the document of her abjuration, transcribed first in French and signed in the accused's own hand, Joan confessed to idolatry in "adoring and calling up evil spirits" (313; *et ydolatrant per aouer mauvais esperis*, 1. 390) and to "breaking the divine law, Holy Scriptures, and the canon laws" in wearing immodest male attire "against the decency of nature" (313; 1. 389). (To give Joan's words the required gravity, the trial document immediately translates them into Latin, so that her confession is not merely doubled but, in effect, bilingual [1. 390-91].) On the afternoon of the same day, Joan also reformed her most visible erroneous action: she was given woman's dress (*vestes muliebres*, 1. 394), which she put on immediately after she took off her male costume. She also allowed her hair to be "shaved off and removed" (317; 1. 394) as a correction of her short (masculine) hairstyle. In sum, Joan renounced both her external and internal idolatry, as well as a raft of other crimes and trespasses, thus saving

her soul from perdition. Nevertheless, quite to her surprise, she was condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

The text of the proceedings does not end at this point, however. Indeed, the denouement it has been preparing for has yet to come. The penultimate act that the text anticipates throughout occurred when, of all the many sins Joan confessed and abjured, she relapsed into one alone: idolatry. On May 28, she was observed to have resumed male attire in her prison cell. Once again, in the "manner of the heathen," Joan had visibly performed her idolatry. As her inquisitors probed more deeply the extent of her relapse, they soon uncovered evidence of the invisible partner of Joan's idolatrous transvestism, her claim that the voices of St. Catherine and St. Margaret had spoken to her again, among other things telling her that she had made a mistake in recanting in order to save her life. Joan's voices also instructed her to resume male attire. Predictably enough, in the final "trial" for relapse conducted on May 29, only two interlocking pieces of evidence against Joan were presented:

... obeying the orders of the Church, Jeanne [had] put off male costume and wore woman's dress. But ... led on by the Devil she had once more before many witnesses declared that the voices and spirits which were wont to visit her had returned to her and told her many things; and Jeanne ... once more rejected woman's dress in favour of male costume. (321; 1. 402)

To a man, the Rouen judges found Joan's idolatry sufficient to convict her of a return to heresy. Their only point of disagreement was whether or not to recommend that the secular arm to which they would soon turn her over treat her with mercy. Such deliberation mattered not at all: immediately following the act of excommunication on May 30, Joan was released to the secular authorities and burned at the stake. In this near-final act of the drama that the trial document records, the reading of the sentence, all manner of epithets were hurled at her (330-31; 1. 414), although when she went to the stake Joan was given a cap to wear that bore but four epithets. Three of them described her status in relationship to the church—*heretica*, *relapsa*, and *apostata*. The fourth epithet singled out the crime that had pitted Joan in this fatal opposition to authority: *idolater*.

#### PASSING IN THE MONASTERY: HOLY TRANSVESTISM

The ponderous caution with which Joan's judicial opponents moved—in particular, their obvious effort to link her transvestment with her visions—is perhaps typical of Inquisition politics, yet it also suggests that the "case" against her was not an open-and-shut affair. Medieval attitudes to female transvestism reveal the stumbling block Joan's judges encountered: transvestism *per se* was regarded but not necessarily treated as transgressive. Indeed, despite the scriptural prohibition on wearing the apparel of the other sex (Deut. 22:5) and Paul's prohibition of women cutting their hair (1 Cor. 11:6), there were well-established exceptions to these biblical sanctions. To be sure, as Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough observe, one might search the church fathers in vain for overt and unconditional approbation of transvestism, and specific canons against it are easy to find.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, even when condemned, transvestism often excited no comment at all or only "passing attention" from the canonists.<sup>22</sup> And one version of transvestism appears to have been both admired and encouraged, albeit indirectly, in the legends of female saints who disguised themselves as men in order to live as monks. Essential to understanding both the medieval anxiety about transvestism that surfaced in Joan's trial and the specific way in which her judges labored to frame her case is first to analyze those instances in which transvestment did not evoke alarm and was evidently valorized, as is the case of the "holy transvestites" of hagiographical tradition.<sup>23</sup>

Although, as James Anson argues, the motif of the transvestite female saint may have had baptismal implications in its earliest uses—signifying and effecting the birth of a new physical as well as spiritual self in Christ—the lives of the later transvestite virgins "move in a world of pure erotic romance."<sup>24</sup> One such "romance," the life of St. Margaret, is recorded in Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Legenda aurea*. Fearing for her virginity on her wedding night, Margaret cut off her hair, donned male attire, stole away from her new husband, and went to a monastery, where she successfully passed herself off as Brother Pelagius. Pelagius led an exemplary life as a monk but was soon put to the test by the devil, who wished to "hinder her prosperous career and bring her into disrepute."<sup>25</sup> Believed to be male, and thus the only man in the convent, (s)he was blamed for the pregnancy of one of the nuns, the portress, and driven into exile in a mountain cave. Pelagius endured both the calumny and

the harsh living conditions of banishment silently. Only at the moment of death did (s)he reveal in a letter to the abbot her sexual identity—and her innocence.

For Anson, the inner logic and justification, of such erotic romances, in which the female monk is accused of seduction, turns on the concept of woman as ritual sacrifice. These narratives were written largely by (male) monks for (male) monks, and their apparent purpose is to discharge or exorcise the female sexuality so threatening in this masculine milieu. Typically, the disguised female monk becomes the victim of another woman's seduction and false accusation; predatory female sexuality is thus diverted from men and displaced onto ritual female victims, who neutralize its effects. The "holy transvestite" recuperates her own sex: "It is as if she undoes the guilt of her whole sex by becoming the victim of its designs against men," Anson argues.<sup>46</sup>

While Anson would explain the "valorization" of the female transvestite monk as a function of this figure's crucial role in creating yet containing the fantasy of monastic heterosexual desire, the Bulloughs and other scholars explain the positive cultural reaction to holy transvestment from a sociological rather than psychoanalytical perspective. Noting that women transvestites can be celebrated, even sanctified, in medieval culture, whereas male transvestites are never worthy of admiration, the Bulloughs credit such asymmetry to the enduring status differential between men and women in western culture: "female cross dressers have not only been tolerated but even encouraged, if only indirectly, through much of western history, since it was assumed they wanted to become more like men and, therefore, were striving to 'better' themselves."<sup>47</sup>

Yet another medieval rationale for condoning female transvestment resides within the narrative motif of the holy transvestite. Structurally, it comprises the first and second of the three sections that Anson finds in these legends: flight from the world, and disguise and seclusion.<sup>48</sup> The women who dress as men typically do so in order to retain and protect their virginity, even against their spouses, as in the example of Margaret/Pelagius, who flees from the world—her marital bed—on her wedding night. No less an authority than Thomas Aquinas was adduced to validate transvestment under such circumstances, for Aquinas had opined that although expressly forbidden in the law, wearing the clothes of the opposite sex may be

done "without sin in case of necessity [*ex necessitatis causa*], for instance, in order to hide from enemies, or because there are no other clothes, or for some such good reason."<sup>49</sup> As Hotchkiss notes, defenders of Joan of Arc's wearing of male attire seize upon Aquinas's endorsement of protective transvestment and specifically link both with the actions of the female monks.<sup>50</sup> For example, in exonerating Joan, the anonymous author of the *Sibylla Francica* (1429) quotes Aquinas's rationale of necessary disguise—*ex necessitatis causa*—and offers the example of St. Marina, whose father wishes to enter a monastery and can protect his daughter only by disguising her as male and taking her to the monastery with him (where, as Marinus, she is subsequently accused of seducing a young woman and ostracized for it).<sup>51</sup>

Both the psychoanalytical and sociological explications of why the Middle Ages sanctioned certain types of female transvestment make valid observations, yet each fails to articulate precisely enough the paradigm of transvestment it seeks to illuminate. Medieval transvestment was by no means a monolithic phenomenon, and the utilitarian justification advanced by Aquinas and others can help recapture some of its nuances.<sup>52</sup> Aquinas specifically validates transvestment as disguise, as a means of hiding oneself from enemies (*se occultandi ab hostibus*). In modern terms, what Aquinas refers to, then, is not merely *cross dressing*, partial or episodic transvestment in which the subject's biological sexual identity remains apparent or known, but *crossover*, or *passing*, the complete and continuous impersonation of the opposite sex, including whatever changes in hair style, clothing, voice, behavior, and attitude may have been necessary to achieve total masquerade in the Middle Ages.<sup>53</sup> The holy transvestites fall into this latter category, for they "pass" as men and monks until the moment of discovery, usually after their deaths. Their choice of profession as monks enables their crossover, for monastic attire conveniently masks women's distinctive anatomical features, and monastic cells afford a degree of physical privacy that delays discovery of their sexual identity until after death. And when Vern and Bonnie Bullough cite medieval acceptance of women transvestites who wish to "better" themselves by becoming male, they have in mind women, like the female saints, who pass, not women who cross-dress, who "wear the breeches" or as does Chaucer's Wife of Bath, put on the spurs, but otherwise remain recognizably

female. One common denominator among medieval female transvestites who were culturally sanctioned, then, is that they achieve complete disguise, total effacement of their female sex, and I am arguing here that medieval women who passed as men were the ones eligible for sanctification, the so-called "holy transvestites." Those who cross-dressed or retained some aspect of their female identity, however, were censured or even, as in the case of Joan of Arc, condemned to the fire.

#### "SAVE NATURE'S OWN DISTINCTIVE MARKS"

Because of the medieval distinction between cross dressing and passing, Joan's accusers were careful to specify and record the precise nature of her transvestment. Article XII of the preparatory trial, which tends not to draw conclusions about Joan's behavior, first offers a detailed description of the way in which she "put off and entirely abandoned woman's clothes":

... with her hair cropped short and round like a young fop's [*ad modum manganum*], she wore shirt, breeches, doublet, with hose joined together and fastened to the said doublet by 20 points, long leggings laced on the outside, a short mantle reaching to the knees, or thereabouts, a close-cut cap, tight-fitting boots and buskins, long spurs, sword, dagger, breastplate, lance and other arms in the style of a man-at-arms [*more hominum armorum*]. ... (152; 1. 205)

In addition to wearing male costume and bearing masculine "weapons of offense," which, Aquinas's exceptions notwithstanding, the Rouen judges stated was contrary to divine law and prohibited by ecclesiastical decree, the preparatory trial also accused Joan of wearing "rich and sumptuous habits," clothes of gold and fur (154; 1. 207).

When the judges prepared their digest, they narrowed the charge to wearing male attire, eliminating the accusations concerning Joan's arms and sumptuous attire. At the same time, however, the Rouen officials introduced a crucial detail that altogether ruled out the most likely medieval defense of Joan's transvestment: she wore man's clothes, cut her hair short, and retained "nothing about her to display and announce her sex, *save Nature's own distinctive marks*" (230, italics mine; *preter ea que natura eidem femine contulit ad feminei sexus discrecionem*, 1. 293). The Paris faculty took its cue from Rouen, for in its memorandum of Joan's crimes, it repeats the all-important exception: Joan had kept nothing about her to denote her sex "*save*

*what nature ha[d] given [her]"* (303, italics mine; *excepto eo quod tibi natura contulit*, 1. 377). That is, unlike the holy transvestites, who totally disguised their sex, Joan had not concealed her anatomy or other "marks" of her biological femininity. Intentionally or not, she had cross-dressed.

Fifteenth-century visual images of Joan depict her transvestment variously, yet they typically reveal her as a woman who wears men's clothing or armor. In the only extant pictorial representation of Joan made during her lifetime, a cartoon by the scribe Clement de Fauquembergue in the margin of a manuscript on the siege of Orleans, her left hand rests on the sword she wears, and her right hand holds a staff and pennon.<sup>34</sup> Otherwise, though, Joan is depicted as female: she has on a dress, which is cut to emphasize her full breasts, made even more obvious by her position in profile, and her long hair trails down over her shoulders. In the oldest extant miniature of Joan, from 1451, she holds a lance and shield and wears armed leggings and a breastplate. Yet here, too, Joan is shown in a skirt, her hair is long, and her body armor outlines a female anatomy.<sup>35</sup> A fifteenth-century bronze statuette of Joan on horseback encases her entirely in armor but clearly indicates the female structure of her waist and torso.<sup>36</sup>

In practical terms, Joan's cross dressing was strategically useful to her opponents, for it crippled the most obvious defense of her wearing male costume. Aquinas's vindication of transvestism as a means of hiding from enemies, or, as Raoul Le Sauvage phrased it, to "escape violence and keep [one's] virginity" (262; 1. 325-26), was predicated on total disguise, on passing, and no one in the trial ever suggested that Joan "passed" as a man. At least one legend to that effect exists, but it was not cited during the judicial proceedings.<sup>37</sup> And although her defenders, such as the anonymous author of the *Sibylla Francica*, argued that Joan wore men's clothes to escape harm, their rationale was undercut by the ecclesiastical pronouncement that women protected themselves by total, not partial, sex masquerade and the general perception that Joan had taken little if any care to disguise her biological identity. Rather than buttress Joan's case, the ecclesiastical justification *ex causa necessitatis* cut the ground out from under it.<sup>38</sup>

## TRUE AND FALSE LIES: IMAGE AND IDOL

The nature of Joan's transvestment, cross dressing, not only barred the traditional medieval defense of it but enabled her judges to make an eventually fatal association between her attire and her visions, classifying both as idolatry, hence heresy. The connection between cross dressing and idolatry was not invented by Joan's judges. Early in the Middle Ages, Tertullian's *De spectaculis* had linked the two,<sup>39</sup> and echoes of this coupling reverberated throughout the later medieval period, as in the anonymous fifteenth-century *Miroir aux dames*, which rewords the prohibition in Deuteronomy 22:5 to indict the female cross dresser of this religious sin:

It is forbidden in the Bible  
That a woman be so bold  
On pain of terrible torment,  
To commit the idolatry  
Of wearing on a single day of her life  
The dress that belongs to a man.<sup>40</sup>

Unlike such popular poems as the *Miroir*, however, Joan's judges were more careful and precise, albeit complex, in the nexus they created among Joan's cross dressing, her visions and voices, and idolatry.

The diction these authorities employ in the various condemnations of Joan's idolatry—such phrases as “lying fiction” (*confessionem mendosam*, 1. 299) and “false lie” (*factum mendacium*, 1. 326, 1. 361)—may strike modern ears as tautological and hyperbolic, yet it evidences a technical rather than merely popular conception of idolatry. To the layperson, idolatry consisted of the worship of false gods, or idols, but to the ecclesiast, idolatry carried with it profounder metaphysical implications as well. In his *Etymologiae*, Isidore of Seville derived the word “idol” from *dolus*, or fraud,<sup>41</sup> and the idol, typically a human statue, was not merely a false god, but a counterfeit or false representation of the true god, the Christian God. By implication, there had to be true or valid representations of God, and to distinguish the bogus from the legitimate another word was employed; the latter was called an “image.” Neither idol nor image was the thing itself, the *res* or signified, but a simulacrum or likeness of it. Both were fictions, then, or “lies,” but idols were “false” fictions, whereas images were “true” fictions. What determined the mendacity or veracity of the figuration was its effect on the perceiver. The true

fiction diverted attention from itself, from its own materiality, and pointed the viewer to its transcendental meaning; it directed the perceiver from an apprehension *corporellement* to one *spirituellement*. As Aquinas phrased it, the true lie caused the mind to move toward it in so far as it is the “image of something else.”<sup>42</sup> The true lie performed a disappearing act, so to speak:

The efficacy of images . . . resided in their ability to rouse the mind to spiritual intentions, and the sooner the accidents or externals of the representations were left behind the better, since “dallying in imagery conceals the poison of idolatry.” And this poison—the adoration of the man-made object, instead of what this stood for—was to be avoided at all costs.<sup>43</sup>

The false fiction, however, had no such outward or upward referentiality; the perceiver's apprehension of it became an end in itself. In early Christian eras, the cross was an image, a true fiction, for it referred the viewer to what it signified, Christ; it was a “true” lie in the sense that it sacrificed itself and became a means of pointing to a higher reality. The idol, on the other hand, was a “false” lie, for it demanded that the viewer pay it reverence by attending to its corporeality, its accidents and externals, rather than use it as a means, to transcend this materiality and gain access to a higher spiritual significance. The idol was regarded as using sensuous means—typically, the physical representation of corporeality in the three-dimensional statue—to seduce the perceiver.

The later Middle Ages experienced a blurring of the distinctions between idol and image;<sup>44</sup> in particular, “the image and the prototype often became indistinguishable” to the layperson.<sup>45</sup> Increasingly material, indeed three-dimensional, representations of saints and other religious figures appeared, which the church itself had begun to defend against iconoclastic heresies, such as Lollardy.<sup>46</sup> Yet the traditional discourse of idolatry persisted and was ready to hand when, for instance, Joan's judges at Rouen and the University of Paris deliberated her case. Their recurring queries about the actual nature of Joan's apparitions probed for idolatry: if Joan had experienced a corporeal, physical apprehension of her saints, she was suspect, for the “false lie,” the idol, seduced by such material, sensuous means.

With what at times seems prurient obsession, Joan was from the very first, in the preparatory trial, quizzed about how she physically

apprehended her saints. Was St. Michael naked? Did he have any hair? Did he have scales? How did she know whether her apparitions were male or female? What bodily parts of them did she see? Did she see anything of her saints other than their faces? What did their voices sound like? Did they speak in English? The trial transcript records that Joan often parried these inquisitions with witty counter-questions. Why should St. Michael be naked?, Joan retorted; did her judges think God lacked the wherewithal to clothe him? Why should St. Margaret speak English when she is not on the English side? Although George Bernard Shaw later celebrated these humorous remarks and made them the hallmark of his *Saint Joan*, Joan's answers in fact edged her closer to the fire, for they offered her enemies confirmation that her visions were "false gods," idols who had seduced her by corporeal means.

Proof positive of this seduction soon materialized, for Joan was shown to have misdirected her reverence to these idols. She had bowed to them, kissed the ground they walked upon, and embraced their feet. Once raised, these accusations plagued Joan until her death. As early as the second phase of the proceedings against her, the ordinary trial, Joan's physical apprehension of her visions (Article XLII) and her corporeal veneration of them—"embracing and kissing them ... and entering into familiarity with them" (Article XLIX)—had led her judges to the conclusion that such actions "seem to partake of idolatry" (191; *videtur ad ydolatriam pertinere*, 1. 249). And every subsequent part of the proceedings against Joan repeated the charge that her apparitions were "false lies" that had seduced her into idolatrous reverence of them.

Implicated in the charge of idolatry was not merely the idol itself but the idolizer as well, for the latter also participated in a kind of arrogant self-referentiality. Joan's judges argued more than once that she, too, had made herself into a false god by inviting the veneration of the people and that her idolatry was thus presumptuous and blasphemous.<sup>47</sup> In yet another fashion as well, the judges charged, Joan had made herself into an idol, for she had dressed as a man. Joan's transvestism was literally linked with idolatry in the sense that wearing the clothes of the opposite sex "imitated the rites of the heathen" (290; 1. 361), an argument that dated back to at least Tertullian. But Joan's cross dressing did more than mimic heathen customs; it transformed her into the "false lie" that constituted the

idol. By retaining visible aspects of her female anatomy, "what Nature had given her," Joan made herself into an idol of the male sex, a counterfeit or false representation of it. Had Joan "passed," in the mode of the holy transvestites, she would have correctly figured or imaged the male gender, presenting the "true lie" that diverted attention from itself and directed the viewer toward a higher reality, in this case, the traditionally superior male sex. But Joan's attire occasioned no such transcendental perception; her partial male attire did not mask but drew attention to her materiality, her female body, and thus "seduced" its viewers. Like the idolatrous heathens Tertullian so despised, Joan had made a spectacle of herself; the all too obvious "accidents" of her biological sexual identity diverted the attention of her viewers from what she might represent to her corporeal substance. Like the bodies of the saints she embraced, the cross-dressed Joan had turned her own body into an idol, a "false lie."

#### ROTTING AWAY IDLY IN BED

Idolatry was a much-castigated religious offense throughout the Middle Ages, especially in the earlier eras, for it embodied the power of nascent Christianity's rivals. In the later Middle Ages, however, Camille argues, the idol came to stand more widely for the Other—past and present, foreign and domestic—as western Europeans sought to define themselves; the discourse of idolatry provided a "propaganda of fear and prejudice" against the pagan, the Muslim, the Jew, and the homosexual.<sup>48</sup> As it applies to transvestism, this discourse also reveals deep-seated anxieties about western Europe's "oldest Other"—woman. In the alarm raised by cross dressing in Joan's trial, there is an implicit but powerful suspicion about the "false lie" of male attire clothing female anatomy. This disquieting concern is not that the "false lie" is in some way true but that it has the power to become so: the woman who openly wears man's clothes destabilizes *his* sexual identity, not her own, for her action effeminates him. Ultimately, the female cross dresser threatens to "adulterate" man, to mix in the (female) other and turn him into woman.<sup>49</sup>

Such dread about sex/gender instability surfaces in medieval narratives of transvestment both within and outside the hagiographical tradition. An example of the latter is Boccaccio's biography of the Assyrian queen Semiramis, in *De claris mulieribus* (ca. 1355–59).<sup>50</sup> Drawing on Justinus, Valerius Maximus, and other

classical authors, Boccaccio shapes his rendition of the life of Semiramis into a two-part fable of transvestism that contrasts passing and cross dressing and unmask the threat of the latter. To suggest Semiramis's notoriety, Boccaccio positions her life-story second in his work, immediately following Eve's. Yet Boccaccio begins his narrative with an altogether positive affirmation of one incident in Semiramis's life: her passing as her son in order to rule the realm when her husband, King Ninus, is slain in battle. The valiant King Ninus, Boccaccio explains, had subjugated all Asia, which he ruled by force. After his death, Semiramis was reluctant to entrust command of this great empire to so young a child as their son, also named Ninus, and therefore she conceived a "great stratagem" to deceive her late husband's army into believing that she was the heir to the throne, the boy Ninus.<sup>4</sup> Boccaccio emphasizes that Semiramis's "stratagem" is crossover, complete masquerade. She was "still quite young" (4) enough herself to pass as a boy, bore physical resemblance to her son, and went to extreme lengths to effect a total disguise:

Semiramis's face looked very much like her son's; both were beardless; her woman's voice sounded no different from her young son's; and she was just a trifle taller, if at all. Taking advantage of this resemblance, she always wore a turban and kept her arms and legs covered so that in future nothing might disclose her deceit. At that time it was not the custom of the Assyrians to dress in this guise. Lest the novelty of her garb shock her countrymen, Semiramis decreed that everyone should dress in this fashion. And so this woman, who had been Ninus' wife, masqueraded as a man and pretended to be her own son. (5)

For Semiramis's "marvelous subterfuge" of passing, Boccaccio has nothing but praise: "By pretending *very carefully* to be a man," Boccaccio observes, "she achieved many things which would have been great and noble even for the strongest of men" (5; italics mine). Eventually, however, Semiramis revealed her sexual identity, though she continued to rule the realm and to take up arms "with manly spirit" (5). As queen, Semiramis exerted her power successfully, subduing Ethiopia and India and rebuilding the city of Babylon. But in this second part of the narrative, Boccaccio's attitude to Semiramis begins to shift from celebration to censure, and the pivotal point occurs during a scene of vestment. One day while Queen Semiramis was having maids comb her hair "with feminine care

into braids" (6), news came that the city of Babylon had rebelled. Although her hair was only half-braided, Semiramis was so angered that she "immediately abandoned her womanly pursuits" (6), put on her armor, and rode out to subdue the revolt. A huge bronze statue of Semiramis—with her hair braided on one side, loose on the other—was erected to testify to her brave deed, yet for Boccaccio the statue becomes an emblem of Semiramis's evil, not her virtue, for he employs it to introduce a cautionary motif about female cross dressing and its effects on men. As a cross-dressed woman, a queen in arms, Semiramis commits a sin "more beastly than human" (6), Boccaccio confides to his audience in horror. She gives herself as a lover to her own son, Ninus. This act confounds Ninus's identity, an observation Boccaccio couples with an image, or idol, of female cross dressing, the queen in arms: "As if he had changed sex with his mother, Ninus rotted away idly in bed, while [Semiramis] sweated in arms against her enemies" (6). Although Semiramis's male attire correlates to her "manly" spirit, Ninus's gender identity, and possibly his sexual identity, is transformed from masculine to feminine, and this, Boccaccio implies, is the threat of female cross dressing: it effeminates men.<sup>5</sup> The woman who passes, however, as had Semiramis earlier, and the holy transvestites, poses no danger to men; if anything, the female passer enhances masculinity.

Like cross dressers, medieval women who experience a partial transsexualism also affect men's sexuality, or so the legends of the bearded female saints suggest. The most famous of these legendary women is Wilgefortis, also known as Uncumber. The daughter of a pagan father and Christian mother, Wilgefortis determined early to follow her mother's religion and to remain a virgin. When her father insisted upon her marriage to the King of Sicily, Wilgefortis prayed to Christ to rescue her. Her relief soon arrived in the form of the mustache and beard she grew. Wilgefortis's father demanded that she veil her hirsutism, but she let this cover slip in the presence of her husband-to-be. Her appearance had a chilling effect upon his ardor. Seeing Wilgefortis's beard and mustache, the king of Sicily gave up all interest in the marriage. Crucified by her father, Wilgefortis, alternatively named "Uncumber," became the patron saint of women who wanted to rid—disencumber—themselves of their husbands. Like the effect of the cross-dressed woman on such men as Ninus, the cross-sexed or hirsute woman also registers an

impact on male sexuality. Nominally celebrated as saints, the bearded women nevertheless suffer scorn and ostracism in their narratives, even if they find such disparagement preferable to marriage.

These fables and legends suggest that the medieval female transvestite who passed did not evoke the cultural anxiety that the cross dresser did. It may be, as Vern and Bonnie Bullough explain it, that the woman cross dresser "threatened the male establishment by taking too overtly masculine a role," whereas the female passer did not carry the matter so far, or as Horkkiss claims, that "a corollary exists between historicity, perceived or actual, and critical views of cross dressing. Transvestism can be sanctioned or even lauded, if the woman does not challenge male authority, or if she disguises herself only temporarily."<sup>33</sup> Yet I would argue that what threatened the patriarchal establishment about cross dressing was more complex than female usurpation of conventionally male power.<sup>34</sup> Boccaccio's narrative suggests that women cross dressers do not merely make themselves into men but make men into something else, that is, into something less—into women—men, the effeminated Ninuses who "rot away idly in bed" or the male suitors who lose interest in their brides. Women cause this change in men indirectly. Although they do not alter men themselves, the thing or *res*, women cross dressers affect the sign or image of maleness by their admixture of visible female elements, thereby debasing, or adulterating, and hence effeminating the masculine image. In an era that often saw little or no distinction between *res* and sign, however, tampering with the latter was tantamount to an assault on the former. Semiramis's partial disguise, then, is not so much dressing up, a woman arrogating male power, as dressing down, for her visible femininity degrades the male image, adulterates it, and the actual male in the narrative, Ninus, experiences a mimetic degradation into woman—man. In contrast, the woman who passes, who disguises the "accidents" of her gender, as did Semiramis early on in Boccaccio's narrative and the female monks, effaces her femininity and therefore does not corrupt the sign of maleness—or, more significantly, the *res*. In the first part of Boccaccio's legend of Semiramis, her crossover registers no impact on her son. Indeed, if Anson's interpretation is taken, male monks become even more "manly," or less "womanish," through the female passers who enable their heterosexual desires.

#### MAKING DESIRE IMPOSSIBLE

Late medieval patriarchal culture did not experience the degree of gender anxiety that Levine detects in its early-modern successor,<sup>35</sup> although its sensitivity to Joan's cross-dressing suggests that her transvestment involved something more threatening than simple female arrogation of male power or abrogation of scriptural command. The deeper nature of her affront is perhaps best illustrated in the posthumous retrial or rehabilitation proceedings of 1455. Ironically, to reverse Boyd's formulation of the matter, the evidence voiced in the retrial to exonerate Joan may well have served as the silent subtext that earlier convicted her, for her male colleagues-in-arms repeatedly testified to the fact that they never felt carnal desire for the cross-dressed Joan, even when they slept in the same room with her and saw her unclad body.

Jean de Metz, who stated that Joan slept beside him each night "without taking off her doublet and breeches," swore on oath that he "never had any desire or carnal feelings for her."<sup>36</sup> Jean II, duc d'Alençon, experienced the same phenomenon even though he caught a glimpse of Joan's breasts: "Sometimes, when we were in the field, I slept with Joan and the soldiers 'on the straw,' and sometimes I saw Joan get ready for the night, and sometimes I looked at her breasts, which were beautiful. Nevertheless I never had any carnal desire for her" (123–24). Joan's squire, Jean d'Aulon, had occasion to see even more of her body, yet neither he nor, he asserts, any other man physically desired her:

Although she was a young girl, beautiful and shapely, and when helping to arm her or otherwise I have often seen her breasts, and although sometimes when I was dressing her wounds I have seen her legs quite bare, and I have gone close to her many times—and I was strong, young, and vigorous in those days—never, despite any contact I had with the Maid, was my body moved to any carnal desire for her, nor were any of her soldiers or squires moved in this way, as I have heard them say and tell many times.... (134)

One of Charles's squires, Bertrand de Poulegny, also recalls his own virility in those days with Joan, "but all the same [he] had no desire or carnal urge to touch her as a woman" (79). Another royal squire, Gobert Thibault, testified that the soldiers in the field with Joan "believed that it was impossible to desire her." And if they were even "talking among themselves about the sins of the flesh," when

"they *saw* her and drew near to her, they could not speak like this any more. Suddenly, their sexual feelings were checked" (51-52; italics mine). The mere sight of Joan, the cross-dressed idol, the "false lie," nullified their desire. And Jean Dunois generalized the "impossible" effect Joan had upon male desire to include all women: "...when we were in [Joan's] company we had no wish or desire to approach or have intercourse with women" (111).

In such testimonies at the retrial, these witnesses inadvertently reveal the underlying threat that Joan's cross dressing posed to masculine authority, if not to ecclesiastical powers. Doubtless, Joan's male comrades meant to brighten her tarnished image as the "whore of the Armagnacs," to suggest her madonnalike purity. But such a defense was technically unnecessary, for Joan's judges had dropped their accusations about her sexual immorality and conceded her virginity. Tellingly, Joan's male defenders appear more concerned—at times, like Jean d'Aulon, puzzled and surprised—about their own (hetero)sexuality, or apparent lack of it, than about Joan's. What hovers just beneath the surface of their admiration for the cross-dressed Joan is the fear that the idol of masculinity she constitutes has rendered them effeminate, sexless, with respect both to her and to other women.

So powerful, albeit subtle, in the retrial, Joan's threat to masculinity lives on in representations of one central figure in her drama: the dauphin. Both early and postcanonization playwrights shape Charles into the effeminate foil of a masculinized Joan. In the chronicle histories that served as Shakespeare's source for *Henry VI*, Holinshed had noted that Joan "counterfeit[ed] manking" in her attire, and Shakespeare's dauphin registers the effects of her cross dressing. Charles's "womanly" nature initially takes the form of his servile devotion to Joan; in Act I, scene ii, after she defeats him in a mock sword fight, the dauphin fawns upon her as the "bright star of Venus" (l. 144). At the end of the play (Act V, scene iv), when Joan claims she is pregnant in a desperate attempt to avoid the fire and first names the dauphin as the father of her unborn child, the jest (and proof of Joan's mendacity) is that such an ineffectual fop as Charles could never achieve paternity. Shaw, who discusses Joan's "abnormal" manliness in the preface to his *Saint Joan* and outright labels her an "unwomanly wom[a]n," molds Charles into her mirror opposite, the "gentle little Dauphin" who does not want to be either a father or a son, especially a son of St. Louis (Scene II). And in the preface

to *The Lark*, Jean Anouilh admits to the knowledge that Joan was a "big, healthy girl" and goes on to create a dauphin who confesses to being frightened by virgins even though Charles knows his disclosure invites his wife to tell him one more time that he is "not virile enough."

To Joan, her cross dressing was, she insisted, "but a little thing, the least of all" (153; l. 206), yet to her opponents, and even to her defenders, it became all important. For some, it caused confusion concerning her sexual or gender identity; the judges at Rouen opined that "in all things [Joan] behaves more like a man than a woman" (158; *in omnibus virum magis se gerens quam mulierum*, l. 212). Others went farther and wondered whether she was human or monster: "What it was, God only knows," the anonymous author of the *Parisian Journal* exclaimed.<sup>17</sup> As I have argued here, however, the most disturbing question Joan's cross dressing posed to her cohorts and judges alike was not who she was, or what her gender was, but what gender itself was, specifically the male gender—what constituted it, what menaced it, what preserved it, and what relationship it bore to biological sex. To contemporary churchman and layperson alike, to both her nominal friends and her enemies, Joan was a "false lie," an idolater and an idol who threatened to come true, to adulterate masculinity itself. For that reason, if Englishmen had not burned Joan of Arc, Frenchmen probably would have. As Shaw observes in the preface to *Saint Joan*, when Joan was captured, her Armagnac military colleagues were close by and probably could have saved her. But these soldiers were as glad to be rid of her as were the churchmen, for what was "at stake" was not merely God, king, and nation but the traditional constituent of all three, manhood.

#### JOAN AND THE TAILOR: RE-HABILITATION

Joan's retrial and exoneration were prompted by political changes in France. Once Charles VII was on the throne, it was in his own best interests to clear the name of the woman who had put him there, especially since a new assault on his legitimacy, his actual paternity, was being raised by the English in the 1450s.<sup>18</sup> To reclaim Joan, to deny her visible sign of idolatry, she had to be literally re-dressed—re-habilitated—as a woman. While the retrial gave voice to the fears that had animated opposition to the cross-dressed Joan, it also laid the groundwork of vestimentary purification that culminated in her

canonization in 1920. Once Joan's clothes were burned in the fire, according to the testimony of the author of the *Parisian Journal*, the executioner exposed her body for all to see; then he stoked up the fire again and burned her "poor carcass" to ashes, which were scattered in the Seine.<sup>59</sup> Other legends had it, though, that Joan's body was irreducible in the fire, that her heart would not burn, and the inevitable rumors circulated that Joan had been sighted alive.<sup>60</sup> Purged of her former attire in the fire, this reborn naked Joan was available for reclothing, a process that began in the retrial records. Several male witnesses testified that the first time they saw Joan, she was wearing women's clothing, specifically, a red dress, of poor condition befitting her social status.<sup>61</sup> On their prompting or direct suggestion, they rationalized, Joan exchanged this garb for riding clothes to make her way to the dauphin. Mentioned almost incidentally, this travel wear is male costume of a colorless nature. Far more memorable, as well as prophetic, is the image of the peasant Joan in the red dress.

Joan also acquired a tailor in her re-habilitation. Jean Marcel stated that when the duchess of Bedford conducted an examination to determine whether Joan was a virgin, she ordered the tailor, Jeannotin Simon, to make a woman's tunic for Joan.<sup>62</sup> As Simon tried the garment on Joan, he was moved to "softly put his hand on her breast," an advance Joan repelled by slapping his face. Unlike Joan's cross dressing, which checked male desire for her, her female attire now encouraged such ardor, and this new image of Joan in woman's garb anticipates what would develop over the next several centuries. Joan's re-habilitation made her increasingly attractive to the men around her: poets, dramatists, and libertists lost little opportunity to cast her in amorous roles, with both male friends and enemies alike.<sup>63</sup> Civic officials thought she looked best in female peasant garb, as Chapu had sculpted Joan in 1872.<sup>64</sup> By the early twentieth century, Joan had been rescripted and recled to serve the interests of God, king, country, and, finally, masculinity—male heterosexual desire—herself. In this new garb, Joan was canonized in 1920. The "Most Blessed Father," Pope Benedict XV, declared her to be an "object of veneration, of imitation."<sup>65</sup> In the eyes of the church, Joan of Arc had become an image of holiness, a "true lie," forever.

## NOTES

1. Pierre Tisser and Yvonne Lanhers, eds., *Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1960–71), vol. 1, p. 397.
2. Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York, 1981), p. 117.
3. Beverly Boyd, "Wyclif: Joan of Arc, and Margery Kempe," *Mystics Quarterly* 12 (1986), 117.
4. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1972), p. 261. Russell notes that Joan's judges toyed with accusations of witchcraft but withdrew them altogether, as I explore below.
5. Régine Pernoud, *The Retrial of Joan of Arc: The Evidence at the Trial for Her Rehabilitation*, trans. J.M. Cohen (London, 1955), pp. 51–52.
6. Boyd, p. 116. Boyd sees Joan's trial as an extension of English concern over heresy, Lollardy, at home. In 1401, England enacted laws against heresy, including state execution by burning, and on February 23 the first such execution (of William Sawtre) took place. Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman* (Lewisston, 1986), p. 85, holds a similar view, noting that in 1428, the year Joan began her mission, "an apparent recurrence of Lollard belief in eastern England had led to the arrest of sixty suspects, three of whom were burned to death by the Bishop of Norwich, who later became an observer at Joan's trial. The remains of John Wyclif ... were dug up and burned [in 1428]." Both Boyd and Barstow further note the association between female mystics and heresy.
7. Pernoud, p. 47.
8. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1965), p. 5.
9. Carlos M.N. Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 5.
10. J.H. Waszink and J.C.M. Van Winden, eds. and trans., *Tertullianus, De idolatria: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 1987), vol. 1.1, p. 23.
11. *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae, 94, 4. trans. Blackfriars (New York, 1964), vol. 40, p. 35.
12. Valerie R. Hotchkiss *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Religion, Literature, and History* (New York, 1996), ch. 4 ("Transvestism on Trial: The Case of Jeanne d'Arc"). I am indebted to Hotchkiss's wide-ranging study, which the author generously shared with me early on in the preparation of this article.
13. Pernoud, p. 183.
14. Pierre Duparc, ed., *Procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1977–1988), vol. 5, pp. 118–19, instances numerous appearances of the accusation of idolatry in the proceedings and final condemnation, although he does not make a case for the eventual exclusive focus on this charge in the so-called trial for relapse.

15. Elsewhere in this volume, Steven Weiskopf argues that Joan gains control over the text by *becoming* the text, which she alone can interpret, whereas I read Joan as largely constructed by the trial text. In part, our different readings turn upon the question of whether medieval judicial transcripts, secular or ecclesiastical, constitute life-writing. Whose "voice(s)" do we hear in these documents?

16. Tisset, 1. 40–179.

17. Tisset, 1. 184–286.

18. Tisset, 1. 290–97. J. van Kan, "Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*: An Historical Point of View," in "*Saint Joan*," *Fifty Years After, 1923/24–1973/74*, ed. Stanley Weintraub (Baton Rouge, 1973), pp. 44–53, discusses the relationship between the initial seventy points of accusation and the subsequent twelve points.

19. See Ingvald Raknem, *Joan of Arc in History, Legend, and Literature* (Oslo, 1971), pp. 70–77.

20. W.P. Barrett, ed. and trans., *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc* (London, 1933), p. 227. The original Latin text occurs in Tisset, 1. 290. All subsequent quotations of Barrett's translation are indicated parenthetically by page number in my text, followed by the volume and page number of the original text in Tisset. I include the original text from Tisset parenthetically in cases where the actual wording is important to my argument.

21. Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia, 1993), p. 51. The Bulloughs cite the Council of Gangra (ca. 345), which condemns women who disguise themselves as monks. As I note below, this same activity was later valorized in a different medieval discourse, the saint's legend. The Theodosian Code (435) also prohibited female tonsure.

22. James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 213, 251.

23. Bullough and Bullough, p. 51, note exceptions to the cultural sanction of holy transvestism; for example, the Council of Gangra had condemned pious women who posed as male in order to join monasteries. Marie Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite: Myths and Rites of the Bisexual Figure in Classical Antiquity*, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (London, 1958), pp. 84–101, surveys medieval legends of female saints in masculine clothing. See also Rudolf M. Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Judy Marcure and Lotte Van de Pol (London, 1989), pp. 44–46; Vern L. Bullough, "Transvestism in the Middle Ages," *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (1974), 1381–94; and Horchkiss, ch. 2 ("Female Men of God").

24. James Anson, "The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif," *Viator* 5 (1974), 11. There is considerable controversy over the origin of the motif. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite*, pp. 84–102, finds in the motif evidence of female aspiration

to bisexuality, which amounts to the asexuality so prominent in early Christian asceticism. Earlier scholars saw in the motif a survival of the cult of the bisexual Aphrodite of Cyprus. My concern here is not to identify the source of holy transvestism but to understand its significance to the later Middle Ages.

25. *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (1941; rpt. New York, 1969), p. 613.

26. Anson, p. 19. Ultimately, however, Anson concludes, the legend of the transvested female monk enables rather than cancels monastic heterosexual desire, for it makes the woman disguised as man "appear guilty of the very temptation to which the monks are most subject."

27. Bullough and Bullough, *Cross Dressing*, p. 46.

28. Anson, p. 13.

29. *Summa theologiae*, 222ae. 169, 2, vol. 44, p. 239.

30. Horchkiss, ch. 4. Horchkiss surveys other medieval defenses of Joan's transvestism, including the "practical argument that male clothing is more appropriate for waging war."

31. Jules Quicherat, ed., *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite La Pucelle*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1841–49), 3: 440–41. As I argue below, however, Joan's judges took care to invalidate this defense.

32. Medieval transvestism, especially male transvestism, is an understudied phenomenon. New documents on the latter are coming to light, such as David Lorenzo Boyd and Ruth Mazo Karras, "The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1 (1995), 459–65. As the various medieval fables and legends of castration and eunuchry suggest, transsexualism also warrants investigation; see my discussion below.

33. From here on, I use the terms "transvestment" and "transvestism" generically to indicate any degree of disguising one's sexual identity and/or assuming the identity of the other sex, whereas "cross dressing" refers to partial masquerade and "passing" or "crossover" to complete, even if episodic, assumption of the appearance of the opposite sex. On the use of these terms, see Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York, 1992).

34. Pernoud, *Joan of Arc by Herself and Her Witnesses*, trans. Edward Hyams (New York, 1964) plate 4 (following p. 128). Also reproduced in Warner, plate 15 (following p. 228).

35. Pernoud, *Joan*, plate 3a.

36. Pernoud, *Joan*, plate 1. Sixteenth-century depictions of Joan increasingly feminize her costume, as does the 1581 painting commissioned by the aldermen of Orleans (plate 7), in which Joan wears a plumed hat and bodiced dress. The only vestige of male attire is the rather diminutive sword Joan displays. Pernoud remarks that the "Aldermen's Painting" influenced iconography for the next two centuries.

37. In his chronicle, Jean Germain, bishop of Nevers and Châlons, reported that Joan tried to "pass herself off as a man" in order to evade capture. See Charles Wayland Lightbody, *The Judgements of Joan: Joan of Arc, A Study in Cultural History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p. 83.

38. When Joan herself chose to defend her cross dressing, she sometimes implied it was intended to ward off sexual assault when, for instance, she was imprisoned by male guards. What she must have meant was that cross dressing in some way dissuaded her would-be ravishers from attacking her, frightening them off. She could not have believed that male attire literally thwarted sexual attack; at best, pants provide a short-lived obstacle to such violence. As I shall examine below, Joan's male friends remarked upon the antilibidinal effect her cross dressing had upon them. Ecclesiastical authorities, to be sure, did not sanction female cross dressing as a charm against male sexual aggression or attraction; to do so would perhaps empower women too much and countenance demony. Only the more passive and orthodox "passing" was culturally acceptable.

39. Tertullian condemns the stage because everything about it, including actors who "counterfeit" sex through transvestment, involves idolatry; see *De spectaculis* xxiii, trans. T. R. Glover, (New York, 1931), p. 287.

40. "*Le miroir aux dames*": *poème inédit du XVe siècle* (Neuchâtel, 1908), ll. 505-10; translation quoted from Warner, p. 148.

41. Cited by Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (1989; repr. Cambridge, 1992), p. 50. I am generally indebted to Camille's Chapter 5, "Idols in the Church," which traces the backgrounds of Christian attitudes to images and idols.

42. Camille, p. 207.

43. Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London, 1984), p. 139.

44. Camille, p. 207. As Camille remarks earlier (p. xxvii), "The Christian Church was never in doubt that idolatry should always be condemned; the perennial debate was how to define and separate 'correct' visual representations from incorrect idols and how to operate within that definition."

45. Eire, p. 5.

46. On the ecclesiastical defense of images in late-medieval England, see Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 143-54.

47. Of particular interest to the judges was whether Joan had "seen or had made any images or pictures of herself or in her likeness" (87: 1. 98). Although Joan denied both actions, she was later held responsible for misleading people and encouraging them to "set up her images on the altars of saints, wear medals of lead or other metal in her likeness, like those made for the anniversaries of saints canonized by the Church" (202: 1. 261).

48. Camille, p. xxix.

49. Adultery and idolatry were traditionally linked, for both were seen as producing false or counterfeit images. See Aston, *Iconoclasts*, pp. 466-79. In patriarchal thinking, men who wear women's clothing do not "adulterate" the female sex or threaten to turn women into men, for adultery (from *ad* + *alter*) implies the mixing in of an inferior or foreign element, the "other." On the increasing fear of effeminization during the Renaissance, see Laura Levine's provocative study, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge, 1994).

50. On Chaucer's use of this episode, see my "Worlds Apart: Orientalism, Antifeminism and Heresy in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1996), 59-96.

51. Guido A. Guarino, trans., "*Concerning Famous Women*" by Giovanni Boccaccio (New Brunswick, 1963), p. 4. Subsequent quotations of this translation are cited parenthetically by page number in my text.

52. Nancy F. Partner, "No Sex, No Gender," in *Studying Medieval Women: Sex, Gender, Feminism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993) pp. 117-42, distinguishes between biological sexual identity (male or female) and gender identity (living socially as man or woman) and raises interesting and important questions about the relationships between the two identities in the Middle Ages. Boccaccio seems to imply that Ninus trades both identities with his mother. (Partner also discusses the relationship between transsexualism and transvestism.)

53. Bullough and Bullough, p. 68; Horkkiss, ch. 8.

54. The predominating view of the nature of the transgression involved in female transvestism is that "it attacked men by aping their appearance in order to usurp their function" (Warner, *Joan*, p. 155); that is, women try to make themselves into men. At the same time, Warner notes, female transvestism also flattered men and affirmed their supremacy, for men "remain the touchstone and equality a process of imitation." Horkkiss, ch. 4, agrees that Joan's wearing of male attire reaffirmed the sexual hierarchy but argues that her "clear presentation of herself in female terms as a virgin and innocent vessel for a divine plan" created a "hero clearly defined by her female sex, yet unconfined by gender constructs for women." My point here is somewhat different, for I interpret female cross dressing in terms of its effect on male sexual and gender identity.

55. Levine concludes that the profoundest fear driving Renaissance antitheatricalism and antitransvestism is that "there is no real masculinity, no masculine self" or, worse yet, that "locked away within the man—tucked away somewhere inside his own body—is a woman herself" (*Men in Women's Clothing*, p. 23). See also Peter Stallybrass, "Transvestism and the 'Body Beneath': Speculating on the Boy Actor," in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (New York, 1992), p. 76; R. Valerie Lucas, "*Hic Mulier*: The Female Transvestite in Early Modern

England," *Renaissance and Reformation* 24 (1988), 68-69; and Jean E. Howard, "Cross Dressing, the Theater, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," in *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross Dressing*, ed. Lesley Ferris (New York, 1992), pp. 20-46.

56. Pernoud, *Retrial*, p. 75. Subsequent quotations of retrial testimony are from this translation and cited parenthetically by page number in my text.

57. Janet Shirley, ed., *A Parisian Journal, 1405-1449* (Oxford, 1968) p. 240.

58. Charles T. Wood, *Joan of Arc and Richard III: Sex, Saints, and Government in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1988), pp. 147-50, analyzes the rehabilitation trial in light of Charles's need to confirm the legitimacy of his birth. See also Wood's article in this volume.

59. Shirley, p. 264.

60. For instance, in the *Chroniques de la noble ville et cite de Metz* of 1445, printed in Quicherat, *Procès*, vol. 5.

61. Pernoud, *Retrial*, pp. 73, 76, 78.

62. Pernoud, *Retrial*, p. 177.

63. For instance, in his *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, Friedrich Schiller has Joan fall in love with an English officer, Lionel.

64. *Joan of Arc Loan Exhibition Catalogue* (New York: Joan of Arc Statue Committee, 1913), p. 41.

65. Text of the official pronouncement of canonization is reprinted in Wilfred T. Jewkes and Jerome B. Landfield, eds., *Joan of Arc: Fact, Legend, and Literature* (New York, 1964), p. 165. Elsewhere in this volume, H.A. Kelly describes the proceedings that led to the canonization.