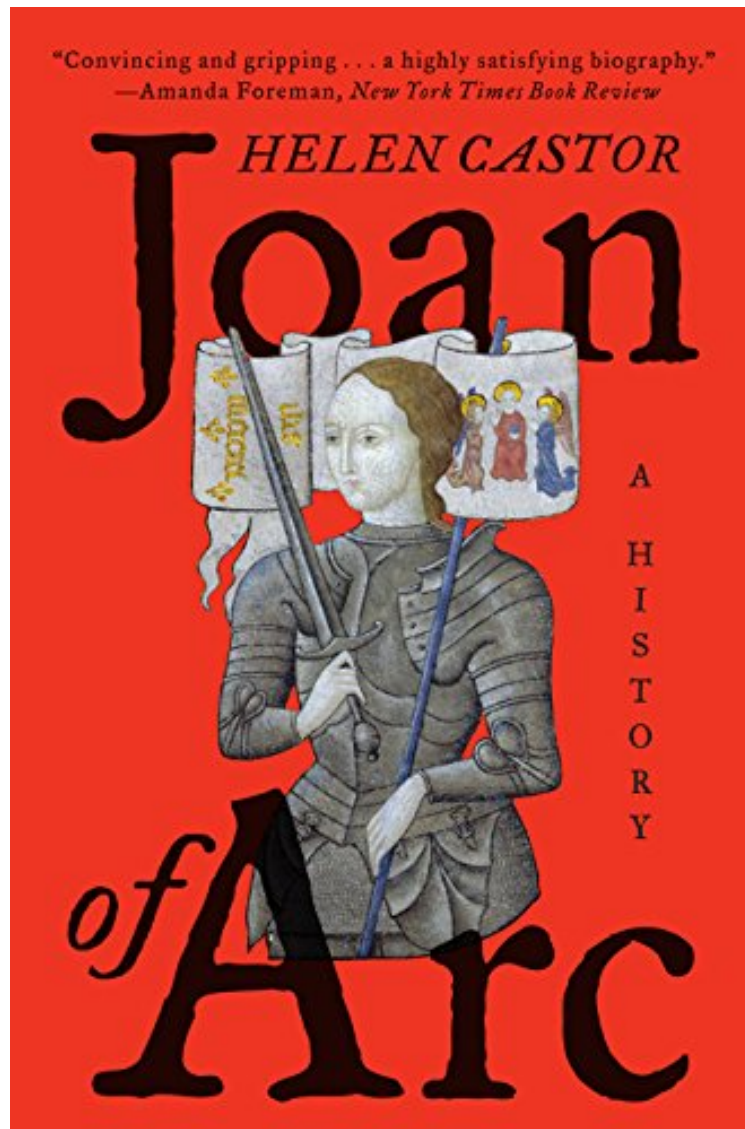


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## Joan of Arc: A History

Helen Castor

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#132082 in Books Helen Castor 2016-05-17 2016-05-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .84 x 5.311, .0 #File Name: 0062384406368 pagesJoan of Arc A History | File size: 67.Mb

**Helen Castor : Joan of Arc: A History** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Joan of Arc: A History:

55 of 55 people found the following review helpful. Joan bio number 878+, and countingBy spinozaI place the countless biographies of Joan of Arc--a veritable literary industry--into two categories: those written by authors that seem to be clueless there are already countless biographies of Joan of Arc, and those written by authors aware of the flood of Joan biographies, but who justify their writing yet another biography because all the others seem to have been

lacking in some way or another. In all of these cases, the same material is covered, over and over and over again: the Joan biographical sources, after all, are well known, well defined and well organized. What seems to be common with all of these biographies is a strong psychological need on the part of the author to personally relive Joan's life through writing about her. Even if the author has at least done his or her research and is aware of the hundreds of biographies already written, they still feel compelled to write yet another biography. And since she's a rockstar in the pantheon of historical figures, publishers are more than willing to ride the wave of her popularity with yet another book about her. Only a handful of the Joan biographies stand out as having actually contributed new insights and scholarship, an example being Marina Warner's classic study, as well of course the work of Rgine Pernoud, the greatest Joan of Arc scholar. I'm giving Castor's work five stars not because it breaks any new ground, but rather because she recasts Joan's life firmly within the backdrop of her historical milieu, indeed much of the book is historical background that is directly related to better understanding Joan's significance. What comes of this is that we learn that Joan, as being a female warrior, is not a coincidence, but rather can be understood in the context of the particular historical moment that engendered her (pun intended). Castor clearly has invested a good deal of effort into writing this book, but it is curious as being yet another example of satisfying this insatiable need of reliving Joan's life through literary writing. 46 of 47 people found the following review helpful. An enlightening narrative not just about Wars and Saints. By Elspeth G. Perkin This was my first, but certainly not my last non-fiction title by Ms. Castor. After reading Joan of Arc: A History I have moved She-Wolves: The Women Who Ruled England Before Elizabeth (a title I have been interested in but until now has sat on the lower levels of reading priority) to my list of books to purchase in the near future. If this author can make the complicated machinations and events of the Hundred Years' War and the brief final years of Joan the Maid's life so easy to follow, a joy to read and yet present such a sensitive portrait of legendary figures - I can't wait to see how she presents the sometimes controversial She-Wolves and epic power struggles of English History. Joan of Arc: A History may surprise some readers who expect to read solely about Joan of Arc (or Joan the Maid and later Saint Joan of Arc), her story is a minor section that makes up the wider world that Ms. Castor paints with articulate and confident strokes of chapters that aim to first educate but also directly accompany the reader through the complex events that played out in England and France during the 14th-15th centuries. The pace of this book is swift and the reader may feel a little intimidated with the huge lists of names and titles and how quickly the many battles, skirmishes, underhanded murders and devastating wars play out on and off the blood soaked fields. It's okay to be confused at this point, but keep with this narrative and trust Ms. Castor as she first explains the basic facts of bad blood shared between kingdoms and moves onto the desperate moments that cry out for a miracle for France and then a familiar young girl who claimed heavenly guidance appears in the pages. Some may expect that Joan's appearance come earlier but the author explains in the front of the narrative why she chose to present this timeline. The rest of this title moves to: detailed descriptions of the battles that Joan the Maid led her fellow french soldiers into, her capture, imprisonment, her trial and death. This narrative could stop there, but continues after the ashes of her memory are scattered and goes on to show the impact that Joan the Maid or "The Maid of Orlans (then later known as Joan of Arc) made in history and shares the words of those who knew and battled beside not just the Maid but the young girl from Domrmy who believed in something. Joan of Arc: A History handles certain subjects of injustice, complex topics and controversial questions delicately while at the same time allowing the reader to make their own judgments and conclusions. Those portions I really appreciated and I didn't feel at any time I was being forced into any biased moment by the author. The only negatives I had with this book were, I wished more time was spent on certain details and not on others. I also wanted to know more about Joan's personality traits and a little more about her early history before she arrived at the Armagnac Court and perhaps something about her training to be a soldier (how she trained- that must be recorded somewhere). Still this was an enlightening read that I would recommend to others who have been looking for a widely ranged narrative that can take on: Wars, Battles, Fractured Kingdoms, Court and Religious Conflicts and Saints to create another kind of look at legendary figures that is a joy to read.

\* I would like to thank Harper and Edelweiss for the opportunity to read and enjoy Joan of Arc: A History 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Nice little history By Carl E. Johnson Jr. Back in high school in the 1950s our senior English class read G.B. Shaw's play "Saint Joan" and two other books (names now forgotten) focusing on the trial and the religious/theological issues, as I remember the books today. This is not that sort of book. The title, "Joan of Arc: A History," is somewhat misleading. It is actually not a history of Joan per se, but rather of her time, the political (power) struggles of the day, and her place and role therein. The time is pre-nationstate, and if you're not familiar with details of the warring royal families and factions, it's a little easy to get lost from time to time, as I did. The book could have benefited from multiple really good maps. However, putting that aside, for those who are interested in the historical Joan, such as we can know about her, I recommend this book. It's well written and a "relatively" easy read.

From the author of the acclaimed She-Wolves, the complex, surprising, and engaging story of one of the most remarkable women of the medieval world as never told before. Helen Castor tells afresh the gripping story of the

peasant girl from Domremy who hears voices from God, leads the French army to victory, is burned at the stake for heresy, and eventually becomes a saint. But unlike the traditional narrative, a story already shaped by the knowledge of what Joan would become and told in hindsight, Castors *Joan of Arc: A History* takes us back to fifteenth century France and tells the story forwards. Instead of an icon, she gives us a living, breathing woman confronting the challenges of faith and doubt, a roaring girl who, in fighting the English, was also taking sides in a bloody civil war. We meet this extraordinary girl amid the tumultuous events of her extraordinary world where no one not Joan herself, nor the people around her princes, bishops, soldiers, or peasants knew what would happen next. Adding complexity, depth, and fresh insight into Joans life, and placing her actions in the context of the larger political and religious conflicts of fifteenth century France, *Joan of Arc: A History* is history at its finest and a surprising new portrait of this remarkable woman. *Joan of Arc: A History* features an 8-page color insert.

A book that shows vividly what Joan meant to those in her own time, politically and militarily fascinating (The New Yorker) A triumph - brings the real Joan and her time to dramatic, moving and brilliant life. (Dan Jones, author of *The Plantagenets*, New York Times bestseller) In Castors hands [Joans] voice comes across in a truly vibrant way that illuminates her personality as few others have managed eye-opening, engaging, and overall, excellent non-fiction Castors outstanding ability to convey the important events and people that made up the political landscape make this one a winner. (BookBrowse) Castor creates a strong introduction to the courageous girl who swore she heard saints voices, but also to the nation-rending struggle for power so fiercely waged that only that singular, obsessive teenager could finally save France Recreates the heady atmosphere of the period. (Publishers Weekly) Convincing and gripping a highly satisfying biography Castors great coup is in framing this biography within another context...it puts the women back into the story Castors book is an important way of returning Joans star to the realm where it belongs, the human one. (Amanda Foreman, New York Times Book ) Castor brings keenly observed historical details to the grandeur and drama of the political and religious turmoil of medieval Europe and an extraordinary young woman. (Booklist) Castors research is thorough and her account always fascinating. Readers interested in history, rather than folklore, will find this detailed framing of Joans story very rewarding. (Library Journal) Castors account is filled with gruesome murders, even more gruesome accidents, and layers of intrigue that make *Game of Thrones* look like childs play enjoyable never dull, thanks to Castors knack for weaving in salacious bits, usually involving a particularly unfortunate death. (Daily Beast) *JOAN OF ARC: A HISTORY* is popular history at its best: pacy, clear and undergirded with a formidable array of scholarly footnotes. Helen Castor shows how well it can be done. ( Daily Telegraph) An amazing read This is a true story from the histories and journals of the times that reads like fiction one of the best histories I have encountered. (Blogcritics (Leslie Wright)) An unorthodox yet erudite and elegant biography of this massive star. (Kirkus s) There have been many lives of Joan, and books about her times, some of them excellent. But none is quite like Castors ... [her] book is a historians achievement. (The Guardian) [A] vivid and intelligent biography ... hugely impressive. ( Sunday Business Post) Clear and elegant ... an engaging piece of popular scholarship that does not diminish Joans star, but instead uses its light to illuminate a remarkable age. (Times Higher Education) Compelling ... [Castor] succeeds triumphantly in rescuing [Joan] from the various straitjackets in which she has been confined ... a fascinating and privileged insight. (Sunday Times (London)) quite intriguing. This book is a great historical read. (Manhattan Book ) An elegant, subtle biography of great historical integrity and sensitive understanding. Castor lets the humanity of Joans story shine through. (Kate Mosse, Evening Standard (London)) A fascinating biography ... truly thrilling. (Daily Mail (London), Book of the Week) Excellent ... perhaps Castors greatest achievement is to remind us of just how extraordinary Joan was. (Literary ) Enlightening ... [an] elegant and vivid account. (The Times (London)) With the meticulous scholarship that she revealed in *SHE-WOLVES*, and in the same captivating manner, Helen Castor presents us with a very compelling analysis. (Trevor James, Historical Association / The Historian) [An] excellent retelling of the strange tale of the Maid from Domrmy... *JOAN OF ARC: A HISTORY* is popular history at its best (Daily Telegraph (London)) Gripping Written to the impeccable standards of her award-winning bestseller, *SHE-WOLVES*, Castors meticulous untangling of six centuries worth of incredibly complex and contradictory detail into elegant prose is a thing of wonder Castor doesnt make history fun or cool in *JOAN OF ARC*. She makes it shockingly, poignantly, irresistibly real. (BookReporter) [An] illuminating new biography... a clear and elegant account . (Times Higher Education, Book of the Week) From the Back Cover Helen Castor brings us afresh a riveting life of Joan of Arc. Instead of the icon, she gives us a living, breathing young woman, a roaring girl fighting the English and taking sides in a bloody civil war that was tearing apart fifteenth-century France. Here is a portrait of a nineteen-year-old peasant who hears voices from God; a teenager transformed into a warrior, leading an army to victory in an age that believed women should not fight. And it is also the story behind the myth we all know, a myth that began to take hold at her trial: that of the Maid of Orleans, the savior of France, a young woman burned at the stake as a heretic, a woman who, five hundred years later, would be declared a saint. Adding complexity, depth, and fresh insight into Joans life, showing her confronting the challenges of faith and doubt in a superstitious age, Castors *Joan of Arc* is a rich history and biography that allows us to better understand this remarkable woman and her world. About the Author Helen Castor is a historian of medieval England and a Bye-Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. Her first book,

Blood and Roses, was long-listed for the Samuel Johnson Prize and won the English Associations Beatrice White Prize. Her second book, She-Wolves, was selected as one of the books of the year by The Guardian, The Sunday Times, The Independent, Financial Times, and BBC History Magazine. She lives in London.