

Royal Financial Records Concerning Payments for Twenty-Seven Contingents in the Portion of Joan of Arc's Army Which Arrived At Orléans on 4 May 1429

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Royal Financial Records Concerning Payments for Twenty-Seven Contingents in the Portion of Joan of Arc's Army Which Arrived At Orléans on 4 May 1429

Abstract: *The article contains an annotated translation of an entry in the Royal financial registers concerning payments totaling 5,711 livres-Tournois given out to contingents in the portion of Joan of Arc's army which had returned to Blois after 29 April 1429, and subsequently "escorted, during the second march, the provisions and other necessary items to the town of Orléans", arriving on 4 May 1429. The translation is accompanied by clarifying notes and commentary.*

Contributors: *Robert Wirth (editor), Virginia Frohlick (peer-review), Margaret Walsh (authorial contribution), Allen Williamson (authorial contribution and translation)*

Introduction and Context

Among the numerous entries in the Royal financial registers documenting payments given out to the commanders who served during Joan of Arc's campaigns, the excerpt translated below concerns the contingents which were part of the "second march" from Blois to Orléans.

The detour made by this portion of the army had been necessitated by a lack of available boats to transport the entire body of troops across the Loire when Joan of Arc arrived near Orléans, on the south bank of the river, on 29 April 1429. While she herself and a small number of soldiers were brought into the city that evening, most of her troops had to return to Blois in order to cross the bridge there before proceeding onward to Orléans by land. The Count of Dunois, commander at Orléans, said that Joan had been reluctant to separate herself from these troops, since reform efforts during her presence had succeeded in rendering them "well-confessed, penitent, and of goodwill", a state of affairs which might suffer erosion in her absence; but she finally consented to the plan. After some further difficulties and disagreements among the leadership at Blois, these remaining soldiers proceeded along the north side of the river, arriving at Orléans on May 4th.

It should be noted that only those contingents paid by the Royal government during this particular assessment are included, and only the number of actual combatants are listed for each contingent. Such units also typically contained a large group of 'civilians'. Noblemen often brought along a considerable retinue which could include personal chefs and varied other personages. "Mercenaries" (who might be one-time craftsmen or other such persons looking for a better life) sometimes brought their families along, the wife and children helping out with the camp chores. People were needed to tend to wagons and horses; merchants might follow such units in order to capitalize on the ready market provided by an army on the march, and prostitutes did the same. The latter group, however, encountered a hostile environment in Joan of Arc's army whenever she was personally present. Accounts from eyewitnesses such as Duke Jean II d'Alençon, Pierre Millet and Louis de Coutes, as well as chroniclers such as Jean Chartier, state that she tried to drive away both prostitutes and the soldiers' mistresses, reportedly striking some of them with the flat of her sword blade on one or more occasions.

Nothing akin to a national military or system of recruitment existed. Individual units in the French Royal army were

contracted separately, and each served under an agreement negotiated to the commander's specifications. Commanders were generally noblemen. Units led by a commoner were sometimes reviled as "headless contingents", reflecting the common view that aristocrats were the natural leaders in society. Against the backdrop of such thinking, France's acceptance of the Maid may appear to be all the more astonishing; but people of all classes came to accept her claim of divine inspiration, a factor which outweighed Joan's status as a commoner and a girl.

Joan of Arc's impact on this system is often misunderstood. Despite the popular image of Joan leading a peasant army, the core of her armies were in fact composed of the usual group of aristocrats, mercenaries, municipal levies, and other typical elements which made up the central core of any army during this period. The 15th century sources indicate that she attracted a larger number of soldiers, not a substantially different type of soldier. Likewise, these sources indicate that the motivating factor was religious in nature rather than anything analogous to a spirit of national patriotism - a concept which was still in its infancy, and of little effect at this time when the French were divided into hostile "Armagnac" and "Burgundian" factions. It was the Armagnac faction and the Valois dynasty which benefited from Joan of Arc's presence.

The significant number of Scottish commanders in the following entry is a good illustration of the degree to which Charles VII relied on noblemen from that kingdom, long allied with the French monarchy due to a common history of disputes with the English. In other portions of these campaigns, troops from Spain, Italy, and various other regions throughout Europe served in Joan of Arc's armies, a situation which had likewise been a common element in French Royal forces throughout the Hundred Years War.

The Text

A translation of the entry follows below, in the left-hand column. Side-notes in the right-hand column are referenced via superscript numbers in the text.

"To the commanders named hereafter, the sum of 5,711 livres-Tournois, which, by order of the King our lord, had been paid out to them by the aforesaid Treasurer in the months of April and May 1429, to compensate them and their men for the substantial expenses which they had incurred while in the company of many other commanders, leaders of men-at-arms and projectile-troops^[1] who had escorted, during the second march, the provisions and other necessary items to the town of Orléans, for its resupply and fortification, to resist the efforts of the English, longstanding enemies and adversaries of the aforesaid lord [the King], who have maintained a siege around the aforesaid town for an extended period of time.

To wit:

To the Sheriff of Angus,^[2] from the land of Scotland, for the payment of 60 men-at-arms^[3] and 300 archers from the aforesaid land, 1,370 livres-Tournois.

To my lord of Sainte-Sévère [i.e., Jean de la Brosse],^[4] Maréchal of France,^[5] for his wages and payment of his men, the sum of 780

- Note:** The term "projectile-troops" (as opposed to "archers") is being used here as a translation of the terms "gens de traict" and "hommes de traict", which could be utilized during the 15th century for soldiers armed with any species of long-range weaponry, not just bowmen. Garrison records demonstrate this quite clearly by sometimes including soldiers armed with gunpowder weapons within groups labeled "gens de traict".
- Note:** The 'Vicomte' (Sheriff, in this case) of Angus, Sir Patrick Ogilvy of Auchterhouse. This Scot served both at Orléans and in the subsequent Loire Valley Campaign and Rheims Campaign.
- Note:** The term "men-at-arms" ("gens d'armes" or "hommes d'armes") referred to soldiers, usually noblemen, equipped with plate armor and a lance or other hand weapons.
- Note:** Lord of Sainte-Sévère and Boussac. The citizens of Orléans were said to have loved this nobleman for his loyal service to them during the siege.

livres-Tournois.

To my lord Florent d'Illiers, knight, for the payment of 80 men-at-arms, 1 projectile-soldier and 100 foot soldiers, 620 livres-Tournois.

To Etienne de Vignolles, called 'La Hire',^[6] for the payment of 80 men-at-arms and 60 projectile-troops, 701 livres-Tournois.

To the Bâtart^[7] de La Marche, for the payment of 30 men-at-arms, 30 projectile-troops and 80 foot soldiers, 340 livres-Tournois.

To Bernard de Bourgogne, squire, for the payment of his men, 30 livres-Tournois.

To Alain Serly, squire, for the payment for himself and his men, 120 livres-Tournois.

To Michael Norwill, squire of the land of Scotland, for the payment of 20 men-at-arms and 25 projectile-troops, 130 livres-Tournois.

To Master John Chrichton, governor of Châtillon, for the payment of 8 men-at-arms and 16 archers from the aforesaid land of Scotland, 90 livres-Tournois.

To Galobre de Ponsac, squire, for the payment for himself and his men, 180 livres-Tournois.

To Gonsalle Darie, for the payment for himself and his men, 45 livres-Tournois.

To Jean Pot, for the payment of the troops of my lord of Lignièrès,^[8] 12 livres-Tournois.

To Pierre Riffart and Jean de Seignac, for the payment for themselves and their men, 82 livres-Tournois.

To Charlot de la Pierre, for the payment of 19 men-at-arms and 10 projectile-troops, 96 livres-Tournois.

To my lord Jean, lord of Bueil,^[9] knight, for the payment of 30 men-at-arms and 40 projectile-troops, 200 livres-Tournois.

To my lord Pierre d'Amboise,^[10] lord of Chaumont, knight, for the payment for himself and his men, 60 livres-Tournois.

To Guyot du Pleceis, for the payment of 6 archers, 12 livres-Tournois.

5. **Note:** A "Maréchal" was one of several commanders theoretically ranking right below the Connétable (chief Royal commander). At this time in April-May 1429 there were three Maréchaux: Sainte-Sévère, La Fayette, and Rochefort. Rais would later become a fourth.

6. **Note:** The term "la hire" in medieval French meant "ire" or "anger". He was known by this nickname for being unable to maintain the sang-froid expected of an aristocrat. The English sometimes called him "Gracious Ire of God".

7. **Note:** The term "Bâtart" in this case was a 'title' given to the illegitimate sons of noblemen; the synonymous term "Bourg" was also used. The reason for such 'titles' was simply that nobles were expected to take responsibility for their out-of-wedlock children, who were routinely raised as part of the family and sometimes given lands and positions. Needless to say, there isn't a good English equivalent for the term "Bâtart" when used in this sense: translating it as its direct cognate inevitably produces a word which gives people a negative impression.

It should be noted that among the commanders in Joan of Arc's army, the most famous person to bear this title was Jean, Bâtart d'Orléans (son of Duke Louis of Orléans and his mistress, Mariette d'Enghien), later known as the Count of Dunois. Joan of Arc followed everyone else's example in calling him 'Bâtart', not as an obscene slur but merely as a neutral title.

8. **Note:** This refers to Jean V, Baron of Lignièrès, who held the title of 'Grand Queux' of France (officer in charge of the Royal chefs). He served in Joan of Arc's army at Orléans and the subsequent Loire Valley Campaign.

9. **Note:** Jean de Bueil, Count of Sancerre, was a longterm military man and son of the Agincourt casualty Jean IV de Bueil. He would later write the book "Le Jouvencel" in 1466, a story about a soldier which loosely parallels his own wartime experiences. A portion of the book deals with the siege of Orléans. Bueil's real-life service earned him many positions from the Royal government and the label "Scourge of the English".

10. **Note:** Pierre d'Amboise was Lord of Chaumont-sur-Loire, Les Bordes, Meillant, Bussy, and Sagonne; son of the Agincourt casualty Hugues III d'Amboise.

To Jean Maillet, for the payment of 20 comrades, 26 livres-Tournois.

To Pierre, Bâtart de La Chasteigneraye, for the payment for himself and his men, 30 livres-Tournois.

To my lord Antoine, lord of Prie, knight, for the payment of 10 men-at-arms and 20 projectile-troops, 80 livres-Tournois.

To Jean Girard, squire, for the payment for himself and his men, 30 livres-Tournois.

To Jean du Tessier, squire, for the payment for himself and his men, 20 livres-Tournois.

To Monsignor Nicholas de Giresmes, Commander of the Cross,^[11] knight, and Roberton des Croix, squire, for the payment of 12 men-at-arms, 12 projectile-troops and 40 foot soldiers, 152 livres-Tournois.

To Louis, Bâtart de Harcourt, squire, for the payment for himself and his men, 140 livres-Tournois.

To my lord Louis de Tremagon, knight, for the payment for himself and his men, 30 livres-Tournois.

To my lord of Torcy and Antoine de Flandre for the payment of their men, 20 livres-Tournois.

To my lord Raoul, Lord of Gaucourt,^[12] knight, for the payment of himself and his men, 300 livres-Tournois.

To Jean Hubert, for seven bundles of arrows which he had purchased to give to some archers from the land of Scotland, who had used up their arrows against the English, 15 livres-Tournois.

As appears by letters-patent from the King our aforesaid lord, given at Chinon on the 10th day of the aforesaid month of May in the above-mentioned year of 1429. For this, by virtue of the above-cited letters and receipts given here, the aforementioned sum of 5,711 livres-Tournois."

11. **Note:** Friar Nicholas de Giresmes was a member of the Order of Rhodes, perhaps better known as the "Knights of Saint John", one of the Church's orders of military clergy. At Orléans, his moment in the sun came when he led an assault against the north side of Les Tourelles on May 7th, a feat which involved the unenviable task of crossing a wooden walkway which had been hastily erected across a broken section of Orléans' bridge. He would later become a Grand Prior of his order.

12. **Note:** Lord Raoul de Gaucourt had been appointed Bailiff of Orléans in 1428 and was one of the more experienced commanders there. Knighted in 1396 for service at Nicopolis during a disastrous crusade against the Ottoman Empire, he subsequently served against the English at Harfleur when Henry V invaded in 1415. Captured during that engagement, he spent six years as a prisoner-of-war.

Source:

Translated from:

Compte de M^e Hémon Raguiet. In *Journal du siège d'Orléans, 1428-1429 : augmenté de plusieurs documents notamment des comptes de ville, 1429-1431*. Paul Charpentier and Charles Cuissard, eds. (Orléans: H. Herluison, 1896). [PDF version from La Bibliothèque Nationale de France, code number N102284]. pp. 195 - 198.

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