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Louis XI and the Principle of the Common Good

In commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the birth of King Louis XI of France (1423-1483), founder of the first sovereign nation-state.

by Pierre Beaudry , 6/9/23

“Give the world on which you act the direction of the Good, and the natural rhythm of time will bring about its development.” (Friedrich Schiller, *Letters*).

Introduction

American citizens and citizens of the world owe an enormous debt to France's King Louis XI, who reigned from 1461 to 1483. Louis XI created the first modern nation-state committed to educating its population and raising the living standards of the approximately 95 percent of the population, which, up to Louis's time, lived a life not much better than the animals they tended. Approximately three hundred years later, the American Republic was established based on representative self-government.

The concept of a government, in Abraham Lincoln's words, “of, by, and for the people,” was presented as a working document by the great scientist, historian, and

Christian humanist, Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-1464) to the Catholic Church's Council of Basel in 1434, in a book-length treatise titled *The Catholic Concordance*.

Cusa argued that Christians must give up their illusions about the glory of the Roman Empire. That empire's rejection that man is created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) aiding God in His creation through his faculty of creativity, and that the emotion of agapē (charitable love) was a moral abomination, sowed the seeds of its own destruction. In *The Catholic Concordance*, Cusa presented original research that he had done to prove that the so-called Donation of Constantine (the ninth-century assertion that the Roman Emperor Constantine had ceded the temporal power of the empire to the papacy) was a total fraud. Cusa's argument exposed the tainting of the Church with its bogus cession to Roman imperial power, and demonstrated that the only basis for the emergence of the sovereign nation-state resides in the elective principle of the King based on the enrichment of the nation as a whole with the consent of the people.

On this basis, Cusa establishes that the Roman Catholic Church does not depend on the Pope, but rather derives its authority from God by means of the consent of the governed; and so it is for the elections of Kings. Cusa summarizes his political principle as follows:

“All legislation is based on natural law and any law which contradicts it cannot be valid, see D. 9 [after c. 11] *Cum ergo* and [D. 10 c.4] *Constitutiones*. Hence, since natural law is naturally based on reason, all law is rooted by nature in the reason of man. The wiser and more outstanding men are chosen as rulers by the others to draw up just laws by the clear reason, wisdom, and prudence given them by nature and to rule the others by these laws and to decide controversies for the maintenance of peace, as is contained in D. 2 [c.5] *Responsa Prudentum*. From this we conclude that those better endowed with reason are the natural lords and masters of others but not by any coercive law or judgment imposed on someone against his will. For since all are by nature free, every governance whether it consists in a written law or is living law in the person of a prince – by which subjects

are compelled to abstain from evil deeds and their freedom directed towards



the good through fear of punishment can only come from the agreement and consent of the subjects. For by nature men are equal in power [*potentes*] and equally free, the true properly ordered authority of one common ruler who is their equal in power cannot be naturally established except by the election and consent of the others and law is also established by consent.” (Nicholas of Cusa, *The Catholic Concordance*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 98.)

Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464)

Coming Out of the Dark Age

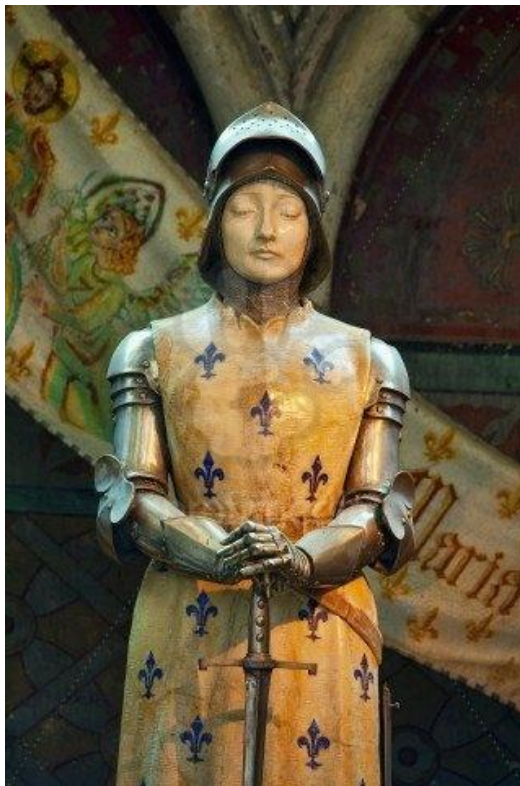


Louis XI (1423-1483)

By the first half of the fifteenth century, the Hundred Years' War with England had ravaged France to the point of barbarism. Especially savage was the destruction of the French countryside by English troops, following on the heels of the dark ages which had destroyed most of Europe.

France was only a small portion of the continent which had suffered the Black Death of 1348, during which half of Europe's population had been killed by the bubonic plague. The 1343 collapse of the Venetian-controlled banking houses of Bardi and Peruzzi, on top of a physical breakdown of the productive economy which was already underway, weakened the population and subjected it to the spread of disease. The bubonic plague, carried by rats in the urban areas, quickly became pneumonic plague which easily spread from human to human.

Marauding bands of armed men, known as "scorchers", or strippers, representing various militias of French warlords, laid waste to the land and looted and killed those who had been fortunate enough not to have been killed by the plague. Entire regions, towns, and villages were pillaged, and were ultimately destroyed.



In 1429, Joan of Arc took charge of a broken down French army--demoralized from decades of fighting England--and led it to a stunning first victory at the battle of Orléans; however, nearly 95 percent of the population were suffering in utter poverty. In spite of all of this, by the middle of the fifteenth century, France had produced a leader, King Louis XI, who in the course of his reign (1461-1483), transformed this depopulated scorched earth into the most productive nation-state in the world, a model for nation-building efforts of Spain, England, and eventually America.

Jeanne d'Arc (1412-1431) Rheims Cathedral

The Principle of the Common Good

Louis's development of France was based on the idea of the general welfare, a government on behalf of the physical and cultural enrichment of the people and the nation-state through the common good as opposed to the territorial looting of the Roman Empire.

Such a national general welfare policy orientation could only be achieved by means of improving the productive powers of labor of that population. Such a nation-state must be ruled in a dirigistic fashion from a centralized government which commits itself to fostering man's ability to reflect this general purpose through breakthroughs in art and science. In turn, the project of elevating individual souls had the power of ennobling the nation-state as the population contributed to its advancement and progress.

From this sentiment of uplifting the individual, the nation-state promotes and defends the fundamental right of every human being to develop his power of reason as created in the image of God, and to perfect himself in order to get closer to the principle of divine reason, the underlying principle of the Good which generates the changing relationships of all things in harmony with natural law.

In specific, this means that the ruler of the nation-state commits himself to fostering man's access to scientific knowledge, i.e., the discovery of the higher principles underlying the physical processes of nature, and the mastery of how such principles can be applied to machine-tool principles and machines more generally. Such a nation-state cannot exist without the explicit objective of establishing what the seventeenth-century universal genius, Gottfried Leibniz, was to call “academies”, or “societies.” Leibniz wrote in his 1671 essay “Society and Economy”:

“With the help of these academies (or societies) which are institutions of research and development, with their own manufactures and commercial houses directly attached to them, the monopolies will be eliminated, because the academies will always guarantee a just and low price for goods, and very

often such goods would become even cheaper because new manufactures will be built where none exist at that time." (*Society and Economy*, Fidelio Volume 1, Number 3, Fall 1992.)

Louis XI of France was the product of such an outlook, and he understood the necessity to perpetuate it. This is clearly shown in his magnificent book, *Le Rosier des Guerres* (The Rosebush of Warfare), written for his son, who later became Charles VIII. The book is a treatise on the necessity of defending the common good and is a precursor to Jean Bodin's *Les Six Livres de la République*. In beautiful Rabelaisian French, Louis wrote:

“Considering that the characteristic of Kings and Princes and their Knights, is that their estate and vocation is to defend the common good, both ecclesiastic and secular, and to uphold justice and peace among their subjects, and to do good, they will have good in this world and in the other and out of doing evil, there will only come grief; and one must count one day on leaving this world to go and give an account of one's undertakings and receive one's reward. And to expose their lives for others, of which among all other estates of the world is most to be praised and honored. And because the common good which concerns many, which is the public matter of the Realm is more praiseworthy than the particular, by which the common good is often frustrated; we have gladly put in writing the deeds of princes and of their knights and all the good tenets that served their cause....

“I have seen nothing which has more destroyed and annihilated the power of the Romans than the fact that they listened more to their individual interest than to the common good....

Justice

“When Justice reigns in a Kingdom, the common good is well guarded, and so is the particular: Because Justice is such a virtue that maintains human company and common life, providing that everyone makes a wise use of common things as common; and of particular things as particular.

"He who attends to justice must love and fear God, so that he be loved by Him: but one cannot better love than by giving to each his good and evil to none, then people shall call him just, follow him, and shall love him with reverence." [[Louis XI—The Rosebush of War \(schillerinstitute.org\)](http://www.schillerinstitute.org/Louis_XI_The_Rosebush_of_War).]

Academies based on these principles began to flourish in France under the leadership of Louis XI, and thereafter, which included the Vosges Gymnasium (1505) founded by Jean Pélerin Viator, secretary of Louis XI, a school of the Brotherhood of the Common Life which had its own printing and distribution house. In the seventeenth century, these schools were followed by the school of the Oratorians (1600), the Royal Academy of Sciences (1666), the École Polytechnique (The Polytechnic Institute), and the École des Arts et Métiers (School of Arts and Crafts) (1794). This outlook was exported to Germany, where Göttingen University was established, and into the United States, where the military academy at West Point was founded in 1816.

The key to teaching the scientific method in each and every one of these new institutions was modeled on Nicolaus of Cusa's method, reflected in a rigorous approach to resolving paradoxes, especially the paradox of the One and the Many, by means of the coincidence of the opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*).

But, the idea of a nation-state as a necessity for the survival of civilization was already clear well before Louis XI actualized it through his reforms and innovations of government.

The Brotherhood of the Common Life

Joan of Arc, for example, was a project of the same circles which later launched Louis XI on his revolutionary course. These circles included the teaching order of the Brotherhood of the Common Life, the Augustinian Order of Hermits, and the faction of the Church around Nicolaus of Cusa. These were the circles in the Church which saw to it that both Joan and the Brotherhood of the Common Life were protected, to accomplish the necessary work of giving birth to the nation.

In 1429, Joan of Arc stepped forward to organize a military offensive to expel the English from France and defeat the Burgundian allies of England, who controlled the northern half of France from the Rhine to the Lower Loire Valley, and the entire southwestern region around Bordeaux. Convincing a cowardly Charles VII to be crowned King of France, Joan then proceeded to unify the nation around the monarch. [\[fn1\]](#) Even though Joan was betrayed by Charles, who allowed her to be burned at the stake in 1431, the idea of creating a new French nation endured.

At the Council of Florence in 1439, the organizing within the Church by the great Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-1464) succeeded in unifying the eastern and western churches around the fundamental idea that all men are created in the image of God, laying the basis thereby for the great project of Louis XI for the new political and economic unity of France. [\[fn2\]](#)

These ideas had been handed down by Saint Augustine, Dante Alighieri, and the teaching order established in 1380 known as the Brotherhood of the Common Life. Its founder, Gerhard Groote, set up numerous schools across Germany, Switzerland, Burgundy, Flanders, the Netherlands and parts of France which took in poor boys to teach a method of learning that went back to the Greek Renaissance. This method, known as the *Devotio Moderna*, taught that every man is made in the image of God and is perfectible by virtue of his creative capabilities which must be developed and educated.

Between 1374-1417 thousands of boys were educated by the Brotherhood of the Common Life in Cologne, Trier, Louvain, Utrecht, Brabant, Flanders, Westphalia, Holland, Saxony, Cleves, Gelderland and Frisia. Tremendous opposition erupted against the Brotherhood's method, and the Church, led by Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa's circles who had fought to heal the Great Schism, rose to the defense of this humanist organization. [\[fn3\]](#)



Boundary limits of France (red) after Louis XI's victory of 1477.

The fight to weaken and destroy the nation-state of France has been relentless ever since that period. What was it that Louis XI accomplished that the feudal oligarchy hated so much? During his 22-year reign, Louis's most significant strategic and political accomplishment was to bankrupt the feudal landed aristocracy. He created

a new governing principle for society and for the economy with the establishment and defense of industries throughout the cities of France, and with the opening of reciprocal trade with England, and treaty agreements with Genoa, Florence, Naples, Sicily, and Calabria.

But the crucial change was the creation of new humanist schools and universities under the King's authority. Louis XI presided over the establishment of the first Renaissance humanist studies by creating two new universities, one in Valence and the other in his home town of Bourges, in 1464. By 1471, he opened the printing house of the Sorbonne in Paris, which began the dissemination of Plato, Sallust, Virgil and Juvenal, and Xenophon, commissioned by the King himself.

Louis brought from Germany Martin Krantz, Ulrich Gering, and Michel Friburger to set up the Sorbonne printing house with state subsidies. Very quickly, France had major printing houses in 37 cities. In 1514, the Sorbonne press printed the first complete Latin edition of Cusa's work in Europe, under the *Parasina* editions of the humanist, Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, which was “historically” received throughout all of Europe during all these centuries.

Louis and his successors used the Sorbonne press as a strategic weapon as well as an educational one. In 1477, the King commissioned the first book in French, *La Chronique* by Saint Denis which recounted the building of the French nation from the Roman times to the death of his father, Charles VII. Thus, the first French language book is the history of how France became a nation.

Louis XI's National Banking Policy

Louis's relationship with the city of Florence was a crucial element in his design for the creation of a unified France: to do so, it was necessary to have a single currency and a unified investment plan which prioritized the physical economy, a dirigistic program which included a tax-incentive program for investment in manufacture and infrastructure. There was only one banking house in the world at that time that was also oriented toward that kind of economic development, the Medici bank.

In 1462, Louis XI released an ordinance establishing a national bank with branches in Paris, Lyons, and Montpellier, which would use, with the agreement of the Church, 900,000 écus a year of lendable money as state credit for infrastructure and agriculture. The Medici bank agreed to secure and guarantee depositors the way Louis intended and took charge of his national bank program.

Louis wrote thousands of laws, which were read aloud in the public squares across France, to both inform the population of new regulations and to invite them to participate in the newly created economic activities.

For example, Louis issued a law calling for all fallow land to be cultivated. A census shows that all unclaimed land was devoted to agricultural production and if there was not enough manpower, Louis appealed to Germans, Italians, and others to come and occupy the land, leasing it for 10 to 20 years.

The general view of the Medici bank and of Louis was that banks were at the service of the nation and not the nation at the service of the banks. Louis had the personal guarantee that all the loans from the Medici bank would be interest-free. It was against the law of the land and against Christianity to incur interests on loans, as usury was prohibited in France. Bankers who were oriented toward fat profits had to resort to other means to get it, such as bills of exchange, or currency exchange, and the like.

According to accounts of the time ^[fn5], Louis won a major trade war in favor of the city of Lyon, the second-largest city in France, against Genoa, which was then controlled by the Venetian oligarchy. In order to lure international merchants to Lyon, Louis organized major international fairs in Lyon and systematic operations against Genoa. To convince foreign merchants that their operations would be safer in France than Genoa, Louis renounced his privilege of assuming control of the possessions of any foreigner who died on French territory. In his ordinance of March 8, 1463, he established the most sweeping measures to favor merchants who would “prefer” trading with the French city. No restrictions whatsoever would be placed on all merchant transactions at the Lyon fair, and exchangers would be allowed to trade with up to 15 percent interest. The central figure behind Louis

XI's export market capabilities was Jacques Coeur. In her unpublished report on Jacques Coeur, Katherine Notley wrote:

“The recent researches into the oligarchy of Venice and Genoa have thrown a new light on the 15th-Century industrialization of France and its rise to become the most powerful European nation by the turn of the 16th century. [...]

“There are two outstanding facets of Jacques Coeur's project: 1) Within a short, 20 year span, Coeur industrialized France through a massive project that entailed the creation of a relatively high-technology export market of finished goods making France the leading exporter of finished goods throughout the Mediterranean world. 2) His project of creating this export market within the Mediterranean sphere directly challenged Venice in particular, but also Genoa. By combining these two export economic projects, Coeur wielded sufficient political power to back up the humanist papacy's attempts to halt the Ottoman operations against Byzantium and the Arab-controlled Eastern Mediterranean. [...]

“Trade with the Arabs was critical for three reasons: 1) the Arabs had been ravaged by Tamerlane and were now severely threatened in the Middle-East and North-Africa by the Ottomans, a threat exacerbated by the Balkan defeats of the Christians; corollary to this was a state of continual warfare between the Sultan of Egypt and the Knights of St. John and Jerusalem, then largely confined in Rhodes. 2) The necessity of an ecumenical front against the Turks was recognized by the leading popes and their backers such as Coeur. And finally, 3) the Levantine trade continued to provide new technologies to Europe, especially in the sector of agriculture. Through Egypt came rice, sugar-cane, apricots, asparagus, beans, hemp, and the mulberry tree which is the host of the silk-worms. In addition, the Egyptian science of irrigation was imported to Europe as well as the Greek science of medicine, one of whose primary schools was the College of Medicine located at Montpellier.” [Katherine Notley, *Jacques Cœur: The Political Economy of 15th Century France*, March 23, 1980.]



In October of 1462, Genoa made the foolish mistake of supporting a revolt against Louis XI's father-in-law, the Duke of Savoy. In retaliation, the King decreed that any Frenchman attending Genoese fairs would be penalized, and any foreigner crossing the territory of France to go to Genoa would have his wares highly taxed. This was no idle threat, but a regulation strictly enforced by thousands of guards at strategic locations on the route to Genoa. As a result of this protectionist measure, by 1464, Genoa suffered a major decline on international markets.

Jacques Cœur (c. 1395-1456, engraved by Mignaret after drawing by Dupre).

Population Growth Policy

As a general policy, Louis protected and capitalized on the initiatives of entrepreneurs and inventors in agriculture, industry, and commerce. He adopted protectionist and anti-dumping measures to protect grain growers, linen producers, and other agricultural enterprises, and exempted traders from provincial tariffs while imposing tariffs on foreign merchandise. He encouraged skilled laborers from other countries to settle in Dauphiné with their families, guaranteeing them tax exemptions which were proportional to their productivity.

Louis's main concern was to develop tens of thousands of jobs in infrastructure and industry. He centralized the development of waterways in order to facilitate transportation of goods and military equipment throughout the nation. One of his projects made the Garonne River fully navigable and toll free so that “wool, oil and

other goods from Languedoc would flow down to Bordeaux and then to England and to Flanders, which had never previously been done." For similar purposes, he expanded the ports of Rouen, Marseilles, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux.

Louis created extensive textile plants throughout the country, such as a Lyon firm which employed up to 10,000 workers in its silk factory. He wrote a public letter stating that textile manufacturing is a most honorable trade which could employ "church people, nobility, nuns, and others who are now unemployed and would have an honest and profitable occupation." Such programs were so successful that, in the case of the city of Tours, the burghers who financed it, benefitted from a flourishing industry for two centuries.

Louis created a national postal service. Horsemen were posted every few kilometers offering a service as efficient as it is today. A letter could travel 400 kilometers within 24 hours.

The mining industry was also a major project of Louis XI. Throughout France, he ordered large-scale mining of gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, iron, and coal, and did not hesitate to confiscate the land of any feudal lord who refused to exploit the natural resources under his responsibility. For this purpose, France needed foreign labor, notably, German and Italian engineers and miners, who were considered the most developed and skilled miners and metallurgists in the world. He brought them in to train the local population in the various productive skills of their trades: Engineers, printers, miners, farmers, armor manufacturers, designers, artillery specialists, iron workers, copper workers, caldron makers, glass makers, weavers, etc. All specialized workers of Europe were invited to come and live in France.

One particular law on the creation of industries shows clearly that Louis's conception of the creation of technology was based on a policy of economic growth for the benefit of the general welfare of all of the people. Louis wrote in this ordinance:

"Whereas among all those things necessary for the good maintaining and usefulness of the republic, one of the most important would be the act of trading by means of which the fertility and abundance of the fertile regions

aids and provides for the necessities of others, and provides the regions and people living therein with several things which otherwise, frequently, they should suffer the lack of: and [this] is clearly seen by manifest and known experience that all the Kingdoms, countries, and regions where the act of trading is not common and frequent, are not the richest and most abundant. Therefore, by the means of negotiation and by carrying, as much by sea as by land with big and powerful merchants, a great number of people, who otherwise would be idle, have honest and profitable occupations and by the industry of the mechanical arts which they exercise under the aforesaid big merchants, entertain themselves and earn their living and that of their household. Since the countries and regions where the continuations of said trading are common and frequent, are the ones who are most wealthy in all things, similarly, the increasing of their population becomes one of the greatest glories and felicities which a Prince can have and which he must desire to have under him....

“Let it be known that we, desiring with all our heart to ... practice all the means which can be turned to the profit and utility of our subjects and give them industry where they might profit, and enrich themselves and better live under our law. We want to declare and order, by this ordinance and its perpetual constitution, that all lords, churchmen, nobles, officers ... and generally anyone irrespective of state, condition, or origin be able to freely engage in trade overseas, land, rivers, without infringement on their noble rights, offices, dignities, and prerogatives, nor that anything might be imputed against them on account of it." [[*ORDONNANCES DES ROIS DE FRANCE DE LA TROISIEME RACE*](#), Volume 18, Imprimerie Royale, Paris, 1828. Translated and adapted by P. B.]

This is a true application of the principle of Genesis 1|28, “be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth...”; the unique principle of the nobility of labor, demonstrating that the general welfare of the people comes from the improvement of the mechanical arts, and the rise in labor power. Never before Louis XI did any leader of a nation have such an explicit policy of growth and profit, including the clear

conception that human labor can produce more, through advanced technology and the discovery of new principles, than what is necessary for its own subsistence.

These measures were so crucial that during Louis's 22-year reign, salaries doubled, and the income tax paid to the crown increased from 1,200,000 in 1462 to 3,900,000 pounds in 1482. Add to this the "aides" and the "gabelle" taxes, which reached a total of 655,000 pounds of income a year for the crown. Through the judicious use of taxes, both by levying and exempting as the need arose, Louis was able to direct economic growth and development throughout the Kingdom. The irony is that the majority of the people in the cities never complained; the historical records, however, are filled with complaints from the aristocracy which had been frustrated in its privileges.

Conclusion

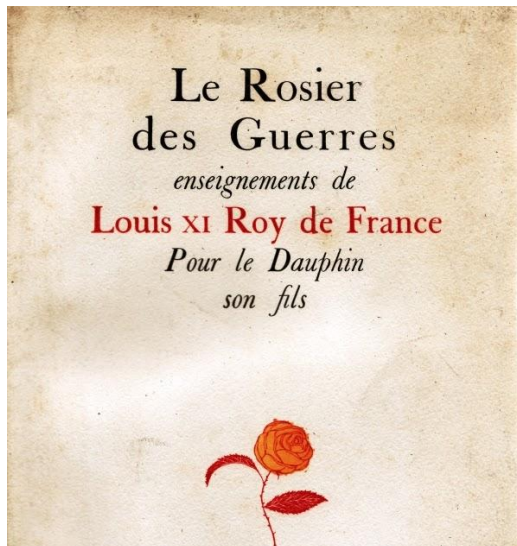
The reign of France's King Louis XI was the first time in history when a policy of demographic growth was consciously and deliberately implemented for the benefit of mankind. These economic reforms, including universal coinage, administrative functions, and judicial reorganization were unheard of before the reign of Louis XI. This is why all of these innovations made Louis XI the most hated enemy of the feudal lords, who could no longer wage their private wars and exercise their privileges of potentates. But for the ordinary man, Louis XI was a good King, a King who served the common good of the people and gave them back the dignity that the feudal oligarchy had taken from them.

Today, we are once again confronted with a similar Dark Age. It is imperative that we once again internalize the great potentiality of mankind as it was once successfully accomplished by Louis XI, and recreate with renewed passion the same principles of development for the continents of Africa, Asia, and Ibero-America.

We must again reestablish the nobility of labor, whereby every human being can develop the maximum of his creative capabilities in the image of God. This means that universal love of mankind, *agapè*, must once again become the basis for the moral courage of leaders where the commitment for the General Welfare of all

peoples makes Kings and ordinary citizens equals. Finally, let this recommendation given by King Louis XI to his son the Dauphin, resound like an echo of hope across the continents:

“We read of King Alexander who, when his father, King Phillip, was near death, had him crowned and made him King of his Realm and made him sit on the Royal throne and the princes and the lords were content. Nevertheless, after the death of his father, to draw to himself the hearts of his men and subjects, he said among other beautiful words: ‘Dear lords, I wish to have no sovereignty over you but to be as one of you, and that it pleases you to accept me: I would love what you love and hate what you hate: I do not wish in any manner to be in opposition to you or to your



actions. But I, who hate frauds and malice and have always loved you when my father was alive, and still do and will always do, I counsel and pray you that you fear God and obey Him as Sovereign Lord, and he who you are electing as King, whom you see the most obedient to God, who will best think of the good state of the people, and who will be most kindly and merciful to the poor, who will protect justice and right for the weak as for the strong, who

most will expose his own being in public matters, who for no delectations nor delights will be lazy to protect and defend you, who most boldly places himself in danger of death to destroy your enemies, and who by means of his good works will protect you from evil: For such a man must be elected King and none other.’

“And after his men had heard his reasons and recognized his great prudence and subtle understanding, they were all extremely marveled and replied to him: ‘We have listened to your reasons and we have accepted and shall follow your council, yes we beg of you to reign and have power over us for always, and we do not consider that anyone else has better deserved to be our King.’” [[Louis XI—The Rosebush of War \(schillerinstitute.org\)](#)]

Louis XI Rosier des Guerres, [Miscellanées](#), un blogue bibliographico-littéraire

Notes

1.[\[return](#) _____ [to](#) _____ [text\]](#)
Gabriel Hanotaux, *Jeanne d'Arc*, Editions Hachette, Paris, 1911.

Gabriel Hanotaux, the French foreign minister at the end of the nineteenth century, wrote in his biography of Joan of Arc that her intervention into the Hundred Years' War was decisive for the fate of civilization. The crucial battle of Orléans turned the tide and gained the victory for France even though at the expense of Joan of Arc herself. From 1425 to 1428, the invading English conquered every town from Maine to Anjou, were able to reduce Picardy and Champagne, beat back two offensives in Normandy and Brittany, and were on the point of taking strategic Orléans which would have enabled the English to rejoin their northern states with those of the south, ending thereby the French nation as such.

2.[\[return](#) _____ [to](#) _____ [text\]](#)
Pope Eugene VI, who convened the Council of Florence in 1439, organized the Treaty of Arras in 1435 which ended the French-Burgundian hostilities and paved the way for ending the English occupation of France.

The papal delegation to Arras was led by the great humanist Nicolo Albergati (1375-1443), assisted by both his secretaries, Tommaso Parentucelli, the future Pope Nicolaus V, and Aeneas Sylvanus Piccolomini, Pope Pius II. These were clearly the networks who saw in France and in her young prince Louis the potential

for the kind of nation state outlined by Nicolaus of Cusa in his *The Catholic Concordance*.

3.[\[return](#) [to](#) [text\]](#)

In 1429, just before his death and upon the request of Charles VII, Jean Gerson (1363-1429) theologian and chancellor of the University of Paris, wrote a defense of Joan of Arc establishing the validity her mission. At the Council of Constance in 1417, Gerson rose to the public defense of the Brotherhood of the Common Life, which was being charged with heresy for preaching the perfectibility of ordinary people. Gerson also denounced the Burgundian-authored assassination of the Duke of Orléans and thus was forced to go into exile. Nicolaus of Cusa came to Gerson's posthumous defense, when Gerson came under attack by critics from the University of Paris.

4.[\[return](#) [to](#) [text\]](#)

Lyliane Brion-Guerry, *Jean Pélerin Viator*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1962.

5.[\[return](#) [to](#) [text\]](#)

Raymond de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici bank*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1966.

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