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The Book of Peace

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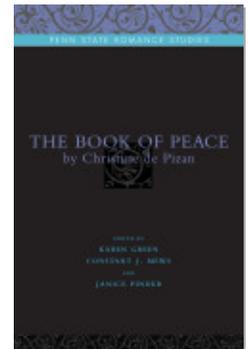
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INTRODUCTION

Karen Green

Christine de Pizan (1364–1430) stands out in the history of women’s ideas as a rare example of a late medieval woman—one who mastered the literary and scholarly conventions of her time in order to produce highly valued texts that demonstrate her command of contemporary Latin and vernacular wisdom. Born in Venice, she spent all but her very first years in Paris, where her father was employed as an astrologer and physician by the king, Charles V. After his death in 1380, Christine and her family suffered the impoverishment and death of her father, followed by the death of her husband, Etienne du Castel. Against the background of these misfortunes she took up the challenge of providing for herself and her family by producing works in poetry and prose that she presented to a variety of royal patrons, and for which she was more or less generously rewarded.¹ Best remembered for her works defending women, Christine was also a moralist and political thinker whose works of advice to princesses, princes, and knights were printed in France and England well into the sixteenth century.²

During the past twenty years, modern English translations of most of Christine’s major works have appeared, making her thought at last accessible to a wider audience. The earliest of these translations were of those works most relevant to male–female relations and those that most clearly showed Christine writing from a woman’s perspective. These included *Le*

1. For Christine’s biography, see Marie-Josèphe Pinet, *Christine de Pisan* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1974), and Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pisan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea, 1984). For her development as an author and “publisher” of her own works, see James Laidlaw, “Christine de Pizan: An Author’s Progress,” *Modern Language Review* 78 (1983): 532–50, and “Christine de Pizan: A Publisher’s Progress,” *Modern Language Review* 82 (1987): 35–75.

2. Cynthia Brown, “The Reconstruction of an Author in Print,” in *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*, ed. Marilyn Desmond (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 215–35, and P. G. C. Campbell, “Christine de Pisan en Angleterre,” *Revue de littérature comparée* 5 (1925): 659–70.

Livre de la cité des dames (*The Book of the City of Ladies*), *Le Livre des trois vertus* (*The Book of Three Virtues*), *Le Livre du duc des vrais amans* (*The Duke of True Lovers*), *Le Livre de l'Advision Cristine* (*Christine's Vision*), *L'Epistre au dieu d'amours* (*Letter to the God of Love*), and *L'Epistre Othea* (*The Letter of Othea to Hector*).³ Two recent selections from Christine's works have also recently appeared, as well as a series of important new editions, and this will surely result in much broader appreciation of Christine's writing within the academy.⁴ If Descartes with his "I think, therefore I am" deserves to be recognized as the father of modern philosophy, then Christine, with her "I think, therefore I am the spiritual equal of a man," deserves to be recognized as the mother of humanist feminism. Her beautifully argued rebuttal of the Aristotelian charge that women are monsters in nature, her poetic evocation of the trials and dangers of courtly love, and her history of women's achievements provided an unsurpassed model of the defense of women for two hundred years.

Of Christine's works that are relevant to women's status, at least two, *L'Epistre Othea* and *Le Livre de l'Advision Cristine*, are also important as commentaries on the political situation in France and they encapsulate versions of her program of advice to the French princes. In general, however, the overtly political treatises produced by Christine between 1406 and 1414 have been slower to make their way into English, perhaps being seen as less marketable.

The appearance in 1994 and 1999, respectively, of translations of *Le Livre du corps de policie* (*The Book of the Body Politic*) and *Le Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* (*The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*)⁵ is evidence of a welcome broadening of interest in Christine's political thought. In these texts she directed her attention toward principles of good government and the defense of the realm, thus engaging with medieval political theory as traditionally defined. The first is an example of the genre of the "mirror of princes," emphasizing the qualities necessary for princely rule. The second is a practical manual that not only emphasizes the personal virtues required by generals and knights, but also describes effective military organization and devotes considerable space to the practical organization of armies and warfare.⁶

3. See the list of abbreviations for reference details.

4. *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*, trans. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997); Charity Cannon Willard, ed., *The Writings of Christine de Pizan* (New York: Persea, 1994).

5. See the list of abbreviations for reference details.

6. See Barry Collet, "The Three Mirrors of Christine de Pizan," in *Healing the Body Politic: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 1–18.

Our translation of *Le Livre de paix*—which, unlike the preceding works of Christine, has never previously been available in translation—means that of Christine’s prose political writings only her *Livre de prudence* and *Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* remain to be translated into English.⁷

While it is anachronistic to reproduce, when dealing with Christine, the modern division between what is public, political, and characteristically associated with the masculine, and what is personal, poetic, and imagined as feminine, it is apparent that this division has structured the reception of her writing.⁸ Her work has attracted the attention of literary theorists, mythographers, and those interested in the representation of women but has received less attention from philosophers and political theorists.⁹ Nevertheless, during the last two decades, a number of important additions have been made to the once slender scholarship on Christine as a political theorist.

In first decades of the nineteenth century, Raimond Thomassy provided an overview of the content of Christine’s political writings and lamented the lack of modern editions of her political works and her unwarranted descent into obscurity.¹⁰ It was not until a century later, with the appearance of pioneering editions by Suzanne Solente, that Christine began to attract the critical attention she deserved. Despite Thomassy’s early enthusiasm and his insistence on Christine’s political importance, some early discussions were rather dismissive, suggesting that her works had little political significance.¹¹ Others stressed her significance as an early nationalist and humanist, and they located her work in a tradition of politically engaged poets associated with

7. Both *Le Livre du corps de police* and *Le Livre des faits d’armes et de chevalerie* were translated into English in the sixteenth century. We should note that we agree with Tania Van Hemelryck that *Le Livre de paix* is the correct title for Christine’s work, not *Le Livre de la paix*, adopted by Willard from the flyleaf of the Brussels manuscript: Tania Van Hemelryck, “Christine de Pizan et la paix,” in *Au champ descriptures: IIIe Colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. Eric Hicks with the collaboration of Diego Gonzalez and Philippe Simon (Paris: Champion, 2000), 664n5.

8. For a seminal discussion of the way in which this dichotomy has structured modern political thought, see Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

9. See Liliane Dulac, “État present des travaux consacrés à Christine de Pizan,” *Perspectives médiévales*, numéro jubilaire (2005): 167–90, for an overview of the work on Christine during the last thirty years.

10. Raimond Thomassy, *Essai sur les écrits politiques de Christine de Pisan, suivi d’une notice littéraire et de pièces inédites* (Paris: Debécourt, 1838).

11. Claude Gauvard, in “Christine de Pisan a-t-elle eu une pensée politique?” *Revue historique* 250 (1973): 417–29, broached the question of Christine’s engagement in the political turmoil of her times and concluded that she supported no political faction (429); Gianni Mombello, “Quelques aspects de la pensée politique de Christine de Pisan d’après ses œuvres publiées,” in *Culture et politique en France à l’époque de l’Humanisme et de la Renaissance* (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, 1971), 43–153, concluded his rich study of Christine’s works with the judgment that she could not be considered a political writer (153).

the royal court.¹² During the 1980s, appreciation of Christine's engagement with contemporary political events was enhanced by Sandra Hindman's study of the political references in the illuminations of her manuscripts.¹³ Soon after this, discussions of Christine as a political thinker began to proliferate as a result of the translation into English of her more feminist works, and a polemic developed over her status as a feminist thinker and her attitudes concerning the common people.¹⁴ More recently the study of Christine as a political thinker has broadened and deepened. Work has progressed on filling in the context of her political interventions and on her sources, and a clearer picture is emerging of her distinctive contribution to medieval political thought.¹⁵

12. Joël Blanchard, "'Vox poetica, vox politica,'" in *Études littéraires sur le xve siècle* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1986), 39–51 (translated as "'Vox poetica, vox politica': The Poet's Entry into the Political Arena in the Fifteenth Century," in Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*, 362–71); Diane Bornstein, "Humanism in Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre du corps de policie*," *Les Bonnes Feuilles* 3 (1975): 100–115; Diane Bornstein, "Political Fact and Political Theory in Fifteenth Century Mirrors for the Prince," in *Medieval Studies in Honor of Lillian H. Homstein*, ed. Robert Raymo and J. B. Bessinger (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 77–85; Josette Wisman, "L'Éveil du sentiment national au Moyen Âge: La pensée politique de Christine de Pizan," *Revue historique* 522 (1977): 289–97.

13. Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pizan's "Épître Othea": Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

14. Sheila Delany, "'Mothers to Think Back Through': Who Are They? The Ambiguous Example of Christine de Pizan," in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Schichtman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 177–97. Christine M. Reno's response to Delany, "Christine de Pizan: At Best a Contradictory Figure?" appeared in Margaret Brabant, ed., *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 171–91, which also included papers by Eric Hicks, "The Political Significance of Christine de Pizan," and Kate Forhan, "Polycracy, Obligation, and Revolt: The Body Politic in John of Salisbury and Christine de Pizan," 7–15, 33–52. The debate has continued in Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Christine et les pauvres," in *The City of Scholars: New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*, ed. Margarete Zimmermann and Dina De Rentis (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 214–15, and in Susan Dudash, "Christine de Pizan's Views of the Third Estate," and Pierre André Sigal, "Christine de Pizan et le peuple," in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the 17th International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, ed. Angus J. Kennedy et al. (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), 315–30, 811–28.

15. See, for instance, Angus Kennedy's edition of the *Livre du corps de policie*, and Berenice Carroll, "Christine de Pizan and the Origins of Peace Theory," in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. Hilda Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 22–39; Berenice Carroll, "On the Causes of War and the Quest for Peace: Christine de Pizan and Early Peace Theory," in Hicks, *Au champ des escriptures*, 337–58; Kate Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Kate Forhan, "Reading Backward: Aristotelianism in the Political Thought of Christine de Pizan," in Hicks, *Au champ des escriptures*, 359–81; Kate Forhan, "Reflecting Heroes: Christine de Pizan and the Mirror Tradition," in Zimmermann and De Rentis, *City of Scholars*, 189–205; Claude Gauvard, "Christine de Pizan et ses contemporaines: L'engagement politique des écrivains dans le royaume de France aux xive et xve siècles," in *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge: Études autour de Christine de Pizan*, ed. Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995), 105–28; Lori Walters, "Christine de Pizan, Primat, and the 'noble nation française,'" *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* 9 (2002): 237–46, and the essays in Green and Mews, eds., *Healing the Body Politic*.

We continue this trend with this translation of Christine's last major work, *Le Livre de paix* (*The Book of Peace*).¹⁶ This text contains a mature formulation of her thoughts on good government; Gabriel Naudé hoped to edit it in the seventeenth century; and it was highly praised by Thomassy. Arguably, it is "one of the most important of her prose works."¹⁷ It revisits many ideas she had articulated earlier in *Le Livre du chemin de long estude*, *Le Livre de prudence*, *Le Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, and *Le Livre du corps de policie*, expressing them with renewed urgency considering the unstable contemporary political situation.¹⁸ Although the second and third parts of *The Book of Peace* show some evidence of having been written in haste, the first part, in particular, develops at length Christine's thoughts on the nature of prudence and its relationship to the other virtues necessary to the development of princely rule. It is thus a crucial text for understanding the content and development of her political ideas.

Context and Purpose of *Le Livre de Paix*

Christine's political philosophy developed during a period of intense civil disturbance and many of her works are prompted by particular crises. In 1392 the young Charles VI experienced the first of a series of mental breakdowns that rendered him often incapable of governing. In 1402 his wife, Isabeau of Bavaria, was given the authority to govern during his "absences," but her power was soon limited by the need to gain approval from the royal council, which included Charles's brother, Louis of Orléans, and his uncles, the dukes of Burgundy and Berry.¹⁹ Conflicts over royal policy that had simmered between Louis of Orléans and Philip of Burgundy erupted after

16. We know only three texts written by Christine later than the *Livre de paix*: *L'Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* was presented to Mary of Berry at the beginning of 1417. BNF n.a.f. 10059 contains "Les Livres de la contemplation sur la passion de Christine," thought to have been composed between 1418 and 1429. See Willard, *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, 46–47, 322, and Liliane Dulac, "Littérature et dévotion: À propos des *Heures de Contemplation sur la passion de Notre Seigneur de Christine de Pizan*," in *Miscellanea Medievalia: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Ménard*, ed. J.-C. Faucon, A. Labbé, and D. Quérueil (Paris: Champion, 1998), 475–85, for a discussion of this late work. Christine's last work was *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, completed in July 1429.

17. As asserted by George Warner in Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of Othea to Hector or the Book of Knyghthode*, trans. Stephen Scrope, ed. George Warner (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1904), xvii. For Naudé's intentions, see Thomassy, *Essai*, II–III, and for Thomassy's praise, LXVI.

18. See the list of abbreviations for reference details.

19. R. C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue: Crisis at the Court of Charles VI* (New York: AMS Press, 1986), 28–29.

Philip's death in 1404, when John the Fearless succeeded his father as duke of Burgundy. Christine's works during this period often argued for the virtues and capacities of women, thus suggesting that she advocated a greater exercise of power on behalf of Isabeau, who, as regent, might have controlled the conflict between the nobles, as, at an earlier period, Blanche of Castille had done.²⁰ Christine also attempted to intervene directly in political events by writing works intended to promote wise and effective government. The intended recipient of at least two of these works, the *Livre du corps du policie* and *Livre de paix*, was the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, Isabeau's oldest surviving son, who, as he grew older, was increasingly in a position to step into the chaos and fill the gap created by his father's incompetence. A third work that Christine addressed to him, to which she refers in *Paix* 2.14 and 3.24 as the *Coq* or *L'Advision du Coq*, has been lost.²¹

The earliest of Christine's three books of advice to Louis, the *Livre du corps de policie*, was written only shortly prior to the assassination of Louis of Orléans as he left Isabeau's residence near the Porte Barbette on November 27, 1407.²² This crime, which John the Fearless confessed to having organized, plunged the country into a series of crises, standoffs, slaughters, and broken peace accords which did not finally come to an end until the Peace of Arras signed in 1435 between Charles VII, Isabeau's only surviving son, and John the Fearless's successor as duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good.

The composition of *The Book of Peace*, completed seven years after Louis of Orléans's assassination, spanned two interludes in the subsequent series of civil disturbances, which were punctuated by various thwarted attempts to bring John the Fearless to justice for the murder of his cousin. In the month before Christine sat down to write the first part of her treatise, the dauphin had distinguished himself by helping to negotiate what turned out to be merely a temporary truce between his cousins, John the Fearless and Charles of Orléans. For a time it seemed that Louis might take over the government on behalf of his incompetent father. Christine begins her exhortation to the dauphin with two chapters praising this "miraculous" intervention on behalf of peace and then turns to encouraging him to continue the peace, using as

20. See Karen Green, "Isabeau de Bavière and the Political Philosophy of Christine de Pizan," *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* 32 (2006): 247–72.

21. K. Sneyders de Vogel, "Une œuvre inconnue de Christine de Pisan," in *Mélanges de philologie romane et de littérature médiévale offerts à Ernest Hoepffner par ses élèves et ses amis* (Paris: Société d'Éditions Les Belles Lettres, 1949).

22. Michel Pintoin, *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, trans. and ed. M. L. Bellaguet (Paris: Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994), 3.733–41.

her text “Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit” (Every kingdom divided in itself will be made desolate, and every city and house divided against itself will not stand).²³ Her use of this text serves to indicate her ties to contemporary public figures involved in the ongoing negotiations to establish peace, negotiations that had been a feature of French life for some years, for this biblical text had become something of a staple for Christine and her contemporaries. She had previously quoted it in French in 1405.²⁴ Some years later, the official royal chronicler, the monk of Saint-Denis, Michel Pintoin, reporting the activities of the Orléanist League of Gien (which had begun to raise troops to oppose the power of John the Fearless in the spring of 1410), lamented that he thought often at this time of the words of the Evangelist: “omne regnum in se ipso divisum desolabitur.”²⁵

In August of that year an embassy was sent to the duke of Berry, as leader of the league, the ambassadors of which included Christine’s acquaintances Gontier Col and William of Tignonville. Tignonville, called to speak on behalf of this embassy, also turned to this text for the theme of his oration.²⁶ Christine’s use of it so prominently in *The Book of Peace* suggests a continued interaction with Tignonville, whose message she echoes, and it indicates that in all probability her political alignment was similar to his. He was someone who was acceptable to both sides of the dispute between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, and he was sent on this embassy because he was counted among those whom it was understood “were dear to” the duke of Berry.²⁷

Christine’s earlier interactions with the members of this embassy are well attested and show her positioning herself as a female “clerk” with authority to speak as an equal on moral and political matters. In the first years of the century, she had exchanged letters with Gontier Col over the morality expressed in *The Romance of the Rose*.²⁸ A copy of these letters, which defended the virtue and authority of women, was presented to Tignonville, whose recent translation of *The Sayings of the Philosophers* had been quoted

23. Constant Mews has pointed out that Christine fuses two different passages from Evangelists: Matthew 12:25, “Jesus autem sciens cogitationes eorum dixit eis *omne et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit*,” and Luke 11:17, “ipse autem ut vidit cogitationes eorum dixit eis *omne regnum in se ipsum divisum desolatur et domus supra domum cadet*.” See Constant J. Mews, “Latin Learning in Christine de Pizan’s *Livre de Paix*,” in Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic*, 61–80.

24. See *Prison/Epistre* 72.

25. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.326–27.

26. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.346–47.

27. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.343.

28. See *Débat* in the list of abbreviations for reference details.

extensively by Christine in her *Epistre Othea*.²⁹ Other recipients of these letters were Isabeau and Louis of Orléans's wife, Valentina Visconti. In 1412, when she gave the text that Tignonville had used in his diplomatic speech a prominent place in her own treatise on peace, Christine very likely hoped to remind her reader of that earlier embassy. By associating her work with that diplomatic intervention, she may also have intended to highlight the role that she too had played in past negotiations designed to bring about the peace.

Christine is quite deliberate in dating her *Livre de paix*, as she had been in dating two earlier political epistles that she had written with the intention of influencing the course of political events and could justly claim to have had some beneficial effect. The first of these, her *Epistre à la reine*, had been written on October 5, 1405, addressing Isabeau at the behest of some unnamed noble involved in last-ditch negotiations to resolve the crisis then dividing the realm and threatening civil war. This crisis had been caused by an attempt, made by the queen and Louis of Orléans, to "kidnap" the young Louis of Guyenne in order to prevent him from being dominated by his father-in-law, John the Fearless. This attempt had gone awry when John turned back the young prince, thus countermanding the queen's order and insulting her dignity.³⁰

In 1405, immediately after Christine's letter was written, the king of Navarre and duke of Bourbon, who had been sent as ambassadors to the queen, were finally successful in getting Isabeau to heed their prayers. On October 8, only three days after the date of Christine's letter, the queen moved to Vincennes and began serious peace negotiations. By October 17 Isabeau and the duke of Berry were publicly thanked for having negotiated the reconciliation of the warring dukes.³¹ These dates strongly suggest that the letter Christine wrote to the queen was presented to her by a member of the embassy and that, indeed, this letter effectively achieved its diplomatic ends.

The second direct political intervention was Christine's *Lamentacion sur les maux de guerre civile*, completed on August 23, 1410, just five days after Tignonville's embassy to the League of Gien.³² The production of both of these political pleas coincided with moments in the ongoing conflict at which

29. *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, trans. Stephen Scrope, William Worcester, and Anon., ed. Curt F. Bühler (1941; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

30. See *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 3.291–96.

31. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 3.345.

32. See *Prison/Epistre*. The ambassadors arrived in Poitiers on August 18: see *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.342–43.

a resolution appeared to have been brokered, only to collapse again soon afterward. In both cases Isabeau of Bavaria was urged by Christine to use her mediating influence to quell the civil disturbances, and in both cases Isabeau was actively pursuing the mediating role that Christine had urged on her.³³

In her *Lamentacion*, we see Christine again writing a plea for peace during a period of intense political negotiation. Gontier Col and William of Tignonville had been part of the embassy, which also included Jacques de la Marche, the grand-prior of Rhodes, and the aging bishop of Auxerre, and which was closely followed by a counter embassy to Paris and the king, led by the duke of Berry's chancellor, the bishop of Bourges.³⁴ This was succeeded by yet another delegation from the king to the duke of Berry, who was now at Étampes; this time the ambassadors included the count of St. Paul, Pierre de Navarre, and the archbishop of Reims, Simon Cramaut. Now the queen herself became involved in the negotiations and spent five days attempting to wrest concessions from the duke of Berry.³⁵ These negotiations were not immediately successful, but they show the queen endeavoring to act in accordance with the prescriptions that Christine had urged in her public plea. At this stage the duke of Berry remained intransigent, and the king prepared to wage war on the Orléanists; he was only prevented from doing so by a clever intervention by members of the University of Paris. It was not until November 2 that the Peace of Bicêtre, which required all of the dukes to return to their own duchies, was agreed on.³⁶

The political turmoil that necessitated these repeated diplomatic interventions had arisen largely from Charles VI's inability to impose justice. John of Burgundy, having confessed his involvement in the murder of Louis of Orléans to his uncle, the duke of Berry, and to his cousin, Louis, king of Sicily, was allowed to escape. Early in the following year, Charles VI accepted

33. For discussions of Christine's representation of the mediating role of the queen, see Tracy Adams, "*Moyennerresse de traité de paix*: Christine de Pizan's Mediators," and Louise d'Arcens, "*Petit estat vesval*: Christine de Pizan's Grieving Body Politic," in Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic*, 177–200, 201–26.

34. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 3.357.

35. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.361; Enguerrand Monstrelet, *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries*, trans. Thomas Johnes (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), 1:164–65. According to Monstrelet's account, there were two embassies by the queen to the Orléanists during this period.

36. See *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.379–85. R. C. Famiglietti also gives an account in "The French Monarchy in Crisis, 1392–1415, and the Political Role of the Dauphin, Louis of France, Duke of Guyenne" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1982), 213, 217.

a dubious justification of this act, prepared by Jean Petit, and pardoned John. Years later, and not long after Christine's *Livre de paix* was completed, this pardon was withdrawn, and the justification of Jean Petit publicly burned.³⁷ Indeed, the king's pronouncements on the issue of Burgundy's guilt were erratic. Even when not suffering from one of his "absences," he seems to have been highly suggestible and to have vacillated on the issue of John's culpability according to who had his ear. A few months after the presentation of Petit's justification, a moving speech demanding that it be condemned, delivered on behalf of Valentina Visconti, Louis of Orléans's widow, wrested promises from the king that John would suffer a humiliating public exculpation.³⁸ The young dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, was present on this occasion. Significantly, in the introductory prayer that Christine addresses to him in the *Livre de paix*, she chooses to evoke many of the images and texts that had been used in this earlier defense of Louis of Orléans.

Beginning her prayer with the text (Ps. 8:2) that it is from the mouths of babes and sucklings that God is praised, Christine refers to Susanna, unjustly accused of immorality and vindicated by the words of the young David. According to Michel Pintoin, this was one of the texts cited in the address defending the duke of Orléans, presented on behalf of Valentina, which argued for the necessity of justice.³⁹ The debate over the nature of tyranny, and what is required for justice, which had been stirred up by John's assassination of Louis, thus forms the background against which Christine's book needs to be read. Christine's text suggests, however, that it is John the Fearless, rather than Louis, whom she takes to be a tyrant, and who should fear the just punishment that tyrants deserve.⁴⁰

Triangulating on the individuals involved in Christine's previous political interventions, it is possible to get a clearer picture of the milieu in which Christine moved and her intentions in writing the *Livre de paix*. The late Charity Cannon Willard, who prepared the original edition and pioneered Christine studies in the Anglophone world, tended to represent Christine's career as beginning with an allegiance to the court

37. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.249–79.

38. The abbot of St. Fiacre gave this address on September 11, 1408: see *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.93. Soon after this, on December 4, 1408, Valentina Visconti died.

39. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.95. Monstrelet provides a fuller version of the address than does Michel Pintoin, and there is no explicit mention of Susanna in his version. Because Pintoin's account is far closer to being contemporary than Monstrelet's, however, I believe that we can take his summary as evidence that the version reproduced by Monstrelet (*Chronicles*, 1:89–111) is abridged.

40. *Paix* 3.1–5, 3.19.

of Orléans, which was transferred to the Burgundian cause after 1403, when Philip of Burgundy invited her to write the *Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*.⁴¹

There are, however, reasons to doubt a clear and simple transfer of allegiance by Christine. One is that she continued to cultivate many patrons throughout her career. Very prominent among these was the duke of Berry, who, while he was at different times associated with both of the warring factions, was closer to the Orléanists than to the Burgundians. A second is that the accounts of John the Fearless show that Christine had difficulty obtaining payment for the works she had presented to him.⁴² Another has to do with the iconography of the lavish collected works, now British Library Harley 4431, which Christine offered to Isabeau of Bavaria in 1414, at about the same time that she completed the *Livre de paix* for Louis of Guyenne.⁴³ This collection includes a dedication miniature representing Louis of Orléans, wearing the symbols of his Order of the Porcupine and receiving the *Epistre Othea* from Christine. It also displays prominently a golden shield associated with Louis of Bourbon's chivalric order of this name and so indicates support for the Bourbon and Orléanist families who had united together with the duke of Berry in the League of Gien.⁴⁴ The last and most important set of reasons for thinking that Christine was not a supporter of John the Fearless have to do with the timing of the *Livre de paix*, as well as the timing of her earlier interventions, and the people those interventions can be seen to support.

41. Willard, *Christine de Pisan*, 155–56, 203. This account of Christine's allegiance has been repeated, for instance, by Glenda McLeod in her introduction to *Christine's Vision*, where she follows Willard in surmising that this text was presented to John of Burgundy (see *Advision* xviii). Her claim that none of the manuscripts of this work was owned by John the Fearless's enemies is belied by the fact that BNF fr. 1176 belonged to the duke of Berry and came into the possession of Charles of Orléans, and that Charles d'Albret also owned a copy (*Advision* xlv, xlix).

42. Pierre Cockshaw, "Mentions d'auteurs, de copistes, d'enlumineurs et de libraires dans les comptes généraux de l'état Bourguignon (1384–1419)," *Scriptorium* 23 (1969): 122–44.

43. James Laidlaw has discussed this manuscript in detail in "Christine de Pizan: A Publisher's Progress," 35–75. For his revised dating of the queen's manuscript, see "Christine de Pizan, le duc de Bourbon et le manuscrit de la reine (Londres, British Library, Harley ms 4431)," in *La Chevalerie du Moyen Âge à nos jours: Mélanges offerts à Michel Stanesco*, ed. Mihaela Voicu and Victor-Dinu Vladulescu (Bucharest: Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti, 2003), 332–44, and "The Date of the Queen's ms (London, British Library, Harley ms 4431)," Salzbug, <http://www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/harley4431date.pdf> (2005).

44. Hindman, *Christine de Pizan's "Épistre Othea,"* 47–51. Louis of Bourbon was one of the harshest critics of the actions of John the Fearless, both his assassination of Louis of Orléans and his involvement in the execution of Jean de Montaigu; see *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.191 and Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:148.

In order to understand Christine's political position we need to recognize that, like many others, she was caught between the two sides of this conflict and attempted to steer a reconciliatory middle course. One of the nobles similarly committed to reconciliation, and who was involved in both of the diplomatic interventions that drew from Christine epistles promoting the quest for peace, was Charles "the Good," king of Navarre. With Louis of Bourbon, he was one of the leaders of the 1405 embassy to Isabeau. He did not himself negotiate with the duke of Berry in 1410, but his son-in-law, Jacques de la Marche, was part of the first embassy in August 1410, while his brother Pierre, count of Mortain, took part in the second embassy. Charles of Navarre had earlier been instrumental in establishing the Peace of Chartres agreed to on March 9, 1409.⁴⁵ Following the arbitrary arrest and execution of Jean de Montaigu, the grand master of the king's household, in October 1409, this peace failed. The king of Navarre once again played an important role when he proposed the terms that were accepted at the Peace of Bicêtre in November 1410. This resulted in both the Orléanists and the Burgundians leaving Paris for their own estates.⁴⁶ Christine named him in her *Sept psaumes allegorisés*, which date from the latter half of 1409, as the person who commanded her to write them.⁴⁷ At this stage he was officially the ally of John of Burgundy, but faced with Montaigu's execution, he is said to have been disturbed by John's brutality. The *Sept psaumes* are thought to have been ordered partly by way of penance, and in translating them Christine powerfully evoked her desire for the French crown to return to its tradition of Christian kingship, epitomized in Charles's ancestor Louis IX, and revived by Charles V.⁴⁸

45. Famiglietti, "The French Monarchy in Crisis, 1392–1415"; Willard, *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, 319.

46. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.371–85.

47. Willard, *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, 333.

48. When, in 1408, William Coussinot had presented a proposal as to what would be just punishment of the duke of Burgundy for the murder of Louis of Orléans, it included the requirement that John should remain on his knees on a scaffold at the place of his crime while a priest recited the seven penitential psalms and said the litany and a burial service for the deceased Orléans (Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:113). This fact strengthens the thought that although Christine prays for God to be kind and favorable to John of Burgundy and his children, the psalms constitute an implicit criticism of his acts. The *Inventaire de la "Librairie" de Philippe le Bon (1420)*, ed. Georges Doutrepoint (Brussels: Kiessling, 1906), no. 8, shows that a copy of the *Sept psaumes* was given to John the Fearless before his death. Given her difficulties in receiving payment from Jean, one might wonder whether he really appreciated this particular gift: Cockshaw, "Mentions d'auteurs, de copistes." See also Lori Walters, "The Royal Vernacular: Poet and Patron in Christine de Pizan's *Charles V* and the *Sept Psaulmes Allégorisés*," in *The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval Religious Literature*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 145–82.

Soon after the production of the allegorized psalms, the power of the Burgundian faction in Paris was curtailed. The outcome of the Peace of Bicêtre was to remove all rival dukes from Paris, with the exception of Pierre, count of Mortain. The Burgundian provost of Paris, Pierre des Essarts, who had been directly responsible for the arrest and execution of Montaigu, was immediately replaced by Bruneau de Saint-Clair, in the first act of the new ministers put in charge of the government as a result of the count of Mortain's initiatives.⁴⁹

It was during this period, in 1410, that Christine wrote *Le Livre des fais d'armes et chevalerie*. It would add immeasurably to our understanding of her political position if we were able to identify the knights whom she acknowledges as having helped her by supplying her with the military information she used in this work and who encouraged her to write it. Willard suggests that "the Duke of Burgundy would surely have been the person most likely to commission such a text" and supposes that he was responsible for Christine receiving two hundred livres from the royal treasury on May 11, 1411.⁵⁰ This last seems unlikely, however, for both Burgundy and Berry had been required to leave Paris in November 1410, by the articles of the Peace of Bicêtre, and Burgundy was not invited to return until September 1411.⁵¹ Moreover, he did not have a copy of this work in his library at his death, and while there is a payment to Christine recorded in his accounts for October 1412, this is for various books that she had given him some time earlier, for which she had not been remunerated.⁵² The tenor of the *Livre des fais d'armes et chevalerie* is implicitly critical of both the dukes of Burgundy and Orléans, because it limits the right to wage war to sovereign princes.⁵³ This echoes edicts published early in 1411 by those then in power in Paris prohibiting any noble from raising an army without the express authorization of the royal council.⁵⁴ So Christine's book was unlikely to have been paid for at the behest of the distant duke of Burgundy and more likely to have been commissioned by one of the people then controlling Charles VI's court.⁵⁵

49. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.385.

50. *Chevalerie* 5.

51. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.461.

52. Cockshaw, "Mentions d'auteurs," no. 81.

53. *Chevalerie* 1.3 15.

54. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.387–89. Christine does concede that a duke may be a sovereign prince, so her criticism is somewhat veiled (see *Chevalerie* 15n6). I do not think that this detracts from the fact that, in accordance with the doctrine she lays down, the duke of Burgundy would not have the right to raise troops within the lands that he held from the king of France.

55. Michel Pinto names some of these: see *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.385.

Thus it appears probable that Christine's position was royalist and associated with a middle group acceptable to both sides of the conflict, though also in danger from both.⁵⁶ One way of understanding her position is to see her as often adopting the role of a spokesperson for Isabeau of Bavaria, who was nominally in charge during the king's "absences," but who had been ineffectual in extinguishing the quarrel between the princes of the blood. This means that Christine was an outright supporter of neither the Orléanists nor the Burgundians; she should be seen instead as primarily an advocate for the authority of Isabeau and her oldest son, Louis of Guyenne.⁵⁷ The clear intention of the *Livre de paix* is to bolster Louis's authority. Its dating and content also show Christine to be sympathetic to the Orléanist perspective, as does—it has been argued above—the illumination of the queen's manuscript, which she presented to Isabeau de Bavaria on the first day of 1414.

Christine tells us that she began her *Livre de paix* on September 1, 1412, after the signing of the Peace of Auxerre. This peace brought to an end the siege of the duke of Berry's town of Bourges and resulted in the restoration of the goods of the executed Jean de Montaigu's brothers, Gerard, the bishop of Paris, and Jean, archbishop of Sens. At Louis of Guyenne's order, Montaigu's body was now taken down from the gibbet, his head retrieved from the pike at Les Halles where it had been displayed, and he was given a Christian burial. His son was also invited back from exile to join Louis's court.⁵⁸ This peace was therefore something of a victory for the Orléanists, and the prayers of thanks and relief that introduce the first part of the *Livre de paix* celebrate their return to Paris, but the peace was soon to collapse once more.

It is, indeed, most unlikely that Christine could have been a supporter of John the Fearless after the execution of Jean de Montaigu, given the views that she had earlier expressed in relation to the latter. In her biography of Charles V she had praised him warmly and called him her friend.⁵⁹ According to Christine he was an excellent administrator, a friend to the poor, wise,

56. For instance, when Jean de Montaigu was arrested in 1409, Tignonville was also made a prisoner for a time but then released on bail: see Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:148–49.

57. See Adams, "*Moyennerresse de traité de paix*," and Green, "Isabeau de Bavière and the Political Philosophy of Christine de Pizan," for recent discussions of Christine's attitude to and relationship with Isabeau de Bavière.

58. *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.723–27.

59. "On y trouve encore des hommes de bien, excellents administrateurs, conseillers loyaux de la chose publique comme pour les affaires privées du roi; je citerai parmi eux le seigneur Jean de Montagu, vidame de Laonnais et grand-maître de France, homme sage, loyal, intègre et probe: j'ai en effet des raisons personnelles de l'honorer ici, car c'est le père des pauvres et le secours des malheureux, un homme prudent et discret, généreux en actes et en paroles, plein de bienfaisance. J'ai trouvé en lui, ainsi que beaucoup d'autres, un véritable ami. Puisse Jésus-Christ, le Fils bien-aimé de Dieu, le maintenir dans la félicité!" *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.17 (Solente, 1:149).

loyal, and honest. Indeed, the thumbnail sketch she had given in that work represented him as having all the qualities appropriate to the good counselor and administrator as she later described them in chapters 9 and 10 of the first book of the *Livre de paix*. Unless he had significantly changed for the worse, she must have been among those who saw his arrest and hurried execution in 1409 as evidence of John the Fearless's tyrannical exercise of arbitrary power. Indeed it is almost impossible not to read Christine's description of the damage done by a hypothetical bad lord as, among other things, a commentary on the treatment of Montaigu. What, she says, will the bad lord do in order to finance his wars, given the dangers of burdensome taxation? "In God's name, find out where the rich are, especially what can be got from them; it will be put about that some of them are traitors, others have been party to some bad contracts, still others have deserved death, and there are enough prepared to testify to it. And thus in diverse ways, by representing cruelty, pillage and tyranny under the color of justice, money will be found, no matter who is disinherited or ruined in the process."⁶⁰

Some mystery nevertheless surrounds the date that Christine gives for the time when she broke off writing her book, as she tells us, because of the failure of the peace. She represents herself as doing this on the last day of November 1412. It is not clear what took place at this time to convince her that peace had already failed. Orators speaking in January of the next year, who are quoted by Michel Pintoin, seem still to believe that the peace was holding.⁶¹ But Christine's pessimism may have hinged on the fact that although Montaigu's brothers' lands had been restored, a decision was made around this time to uphold the generality of confiscations of property that had been imposed while the duke of Burgundy was in control. Monstrelet suggests that this caused "much silent bitterness and discontent."⁶² Christine explains in the second chapter of the second part of the *Livre de paix* that she left off writing her book after having come to the end of the first part and explains her failure to complete it thus: "that subject of peace eluded me on account of badly advised people and that rabble and base people by whose conjurations and conspiracies the good of peace has since been disturbed."⁶³ At the end of autumn in 1412 it was decided to call an assembly, which would include the bourgeoisie of Paris, the university, and deputies from the provinces, to discuss the matter of raising money to combat the English, who

60. *Paix* 3.5.

61. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.741.

62. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.741; Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:229.

63. *Paix* 2.2.

had landed in Guyenne, and it may be that Christine foresaw that this would also lead to trouble. It was not until the spring of 1413, however, that Paris was rocked by a wave of civil disturbances, which culminated in the imprisonment of many nobles, including some of Isabeau's ladies in waiting.⁶⁴

Whatever caused her premonition of these events, Christine tells us that she put down her pen on the last day of November 1412 and did not take it up again until September 3, 1413, after the final ratification of a new peace treaty, which had been agreed on at Pontoise some months earlier.⁶⁵ She had turned in the intervening months to writing a now-lost letter that she refers to twice in the third part of the *Livre de paix*. In this *Advison du Coq*, which she had presented to Louis during Lent in 1413, she had warned of the ensuing troubles and pleaded with the dukes to show clemency and avoid greed and the civil war consequent on it.⁶⁶

At the beginning of March 1413, while the assembly that had been called the previous autumn was in session, the duke of Guyenne was clearly attempting to assert himself, and for a short time he seemed to be escaping the influence of his father-in-law, the duke of Burgundy. Louis dismissed the chancellor of Guyenne, Jean de Nielle, who had been recommended for the position by John of Burgundy. Jean de Nielle was thought to have insulted the aged chancellor of France, Arnaud de Corbie, in front of the royal assembly, and Louis is said to have risen from his seat and thrown him out of the council chamber.⁶⁷ Monstrelet says that Louis "now took the whole government into his hands and insisted that everything should be done according to his pleasure."⁶⁸ He names those who were encouraging Louis in this enterprise as Edward, duke of Bar, Louis of Bavaria (the queen's brother), and the count of Vertus (Charles of Orléans's brother). He also observes that John of Burgundy was not happy about these developments, which he saw as attempting to exclude him from the administration, but he did not immediately show his displeasure. A reaction was not long in coming.

During February of the same year, the university had taken the opportunity afforded by the general council to complain that there would be no need of further taxation if those responsible for receiving and distributing the king's dues had not enriched themselves at the king's expense. Raymond Raguier,

64. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.17–47.

65. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.115–23.

66. *Paix* 3.15, 24.

67. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.769; Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:238–39.

68. Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:239.

Charlot Poupart, Guillaume Budé, André Giffart, Bureau de Dammartin, Regnier de Boullingny, and the aged chancellor of France, Arnaud de Corbie, were named and blamed for the deplorable state of the king's finances.⁶⁹ It was soon after this that matters began to turn very nasty. The duke of Guyenne's advisers attempted to exonerate this group of the king's retainers and encouraged him to call back Pierre des Essarts, who they claimed had proof that the duke of Burgundy had been in receipt of a large quantity of gold that was unaccounted for.⁷⁰ Pierre des Essarts in fact agreed to show Louis the receipts for this money, thereby making himself "the mortal enemy" of the duke of Burgundy. He returned to Paris and took refuge, with a group of soldiers he had brought with him, in the Bastille of Saint-Antoine, the Bastille that had become famous by the time of the French Revolution. No sooner had he done so than an armed crowd was stirred up by Denys Chaumont, Simon Caboche, and an old surgeon by the name of Jean de Troyes. The agitators claimed that an attempt was being made to take over Paris. The crowd surrounded the Bastille and did not allow Pierre des Essarts to leave until he was effectively arrested by the duke of Burgundy and taken to prison. Now it was his turn to be accused of corruption and of having used the king's treasure to enrich himself. He was tried and ultimately executed on July 1, 1413. His head was placed on a pike and his body left to hang from the gibbet, just as he had caused Jean de Montaigu's to be, less than four years previously.⁷¹

Following their blockade of the Bastille, the crowd, using as their excuse the dissolute life of the young duke of Guyenne, overran his palace and arrested Edward of Bar, Pierre de Nesson, and a number of the duke's other counselors. Included among them were Jacques de la Rivière and Jean du Mesnil, who were subsequently killed in prison. Philip of Orléans, the count of Vertus, seeing that he was likely to be the next to be arrested, fled Paris in secret.⁷² On May 12, 1413, the duke and queen were again accosted by an armed crowd in their palace of St. Paul. This time the queen's brother, Louis of Bavaria, and a number of her ladies were also arrested and thrown into prison. Christine expresses her horror at these upheavals and uprisings in the second and third parts of the *Livre de paix*, speaking of "the mad government of the low-born and bestial people" and "the diabolical low-born people" who

69. See *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 4.744–69; Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:230–36.

70. Michel Pintoïn says "deux millions d'or;" but it is not clear what this amounts to: *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.7.

71. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.77.

72. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.21, 33, 55–59.

massacre ladies, maids, and children without thinking of the consequences.⁷³ The body politic rent by civil war is monstrous, like a mad person, flaying its own limbs and eating its own members.

Christine has been severely criticized for showing no sympathy for the instigators of these uprisings and reacting with horror to this assault on France's nobility and to any attempt by ordinary working people to take power.⁷⁴ For those who see the fifteenth-century mobs as a foretaste of the French Revolution, and evidence of the first stirring of a popular democratic consciousness, Christine appears to be depressingly on the wrong side, heavily wedded to a conception of nobility by birth. For, despite her repetition and approval of Seneca's claim, that the nobility that arises from the active pursuit of the virtue of prudence is more to be praised than that which comes from inheritance, she represents the common people as bereft of prudence and as having no legitimate claim to a part in government.

Whether this shows that Christine was "a conservative even for her own time" depends partly on how one interprets the popular uprisings of 1413. There is much to suggest that these uprisings were not in fact ideologically driven, but that the duke of Burgundy was using a handful of agents provocateurs to stir up the crowd against the Orléanist faction, which had, as Monstrelet says, gained the ear of the duke of Guyenne, much to John the Fearless's displeasure. Among the crowd who attacked the Bastille of Saint-Antoine, where Pierre des Essarts was trapped, were a number of nobles who belonged to the duke of Burgundy's household and had served him well in his wars.⁷⁵ Moreover, there is nothing in the speeches that have come down to us from these agitators to suggest that their aspirations were democratic. Their accusations pointed to members of a particular group of nobles who were claimed to be intent on capturing the king or attacking the Parisians. The crowd was not against nobility in general but opposed to certain members of the nobility who were accused of attempting to overstep their authority.

It needs also to be recognized that Christine shows some sympathy for the common people, and that she sees their well-being as included in the common good that it is the prince's office to maintain. She makes it clear

73. "Le fol gouvernement de menu et bestial peuple" and "le diabolique menu gent," *Paix* 2.1, 3.13.

74. Sheila Delany, "Mothers to Think Back Through: Who Are They?" and "History, Politics, and Christine Studies: A Polemical Reply," in Brabant, *Politics, Gender and Genre*, 193–206. For critiques of her interpretation of Christine, see Oexle, "Christine et les pauvres"; Reno, "Christine de Pizan: At Best a Contradictory Figure?"; Dudash, "Christine de Pizan's Views of the Third Estate"; and Sigal, "Christine de Pizan et le peuple."

75. Michel Pintoin identifies these as the lord of Helly, Léon of Jacquville, and Robert of Mailly; see *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.13.

that a tyrannical prince deserves the punishment that will be the result of his brutality. Nevertheless, it would be a distortion to see anything very radical in Christine's prescriptions for good government. She advocates considered, just, and clement rule in accordance with established customs, and she understands the legitimacy of the French crown as deriving from its historically established position. Like Burke, many years later, she understands law as partly gaining its legitimacy from established custom, and she expects a ruler to govern not merely by abstract principles but in accordance with the established customs of the regions within his or her jurisdiction. Thus, any attempt to overthrow a well-established authority is automatically seditious, and all one can expect from the destruction of the native nobility is that a new and foreign power will take advantage of the vacuum and impose its own form of order, to the rebels' ultimate detriment.

Christine's clear rejection of popular government and of any direct role for low-born people in the administration of public affairs can be taken as further evidence that she was in no way aligned to the court of Burgundy during this period. For it is generally conceded that the leaders of the popular uprisings of 1413 were acting in Burgundy's interests and were more or less under his control. On August 23, only days before September 3, 1413, when Christine returned to singing the praises of peace, John of Burgundy had precipitously left Paris, without taking leave of the Parisians, or waiting to greet his returning cousins. He was not there to see them process through the streets escorted by a cavalcade of knights and squires, led by the chancellor of France at the head of the royal council, and dressed in the violet coats and red and black parti-colored hats that had been sent to them for the occasion by the duke of Guyenne.⁷⁶

Christine's return to celebrating the peace in September 1413 is a renewal of her earlier celebration of the achievements of Louis who, in the preceding two months, had acted decisively to help prevent Denys Chaumont, Simon Caboche, and Henri de Troyes, the son of Jean, from derailing the events leading toward peace that had been initiated in mid-July by the king of Sicily (Louis of Anjou), Charles of Orléans, John of Bourbon, and the counts of Alençon and Eu at Pontoise. Articles of peace having been agreed on between the ambassadors of this group and the dukes of Berry and Burgundy by the end of July, these terms were sent to Paris to be ratified by the university and parliament. At this juncture the whole process was nearly scuttled when Chaumont, Caboche, and Troyes occupied the town hall,

76. *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 5.149–51.

while the rich bourgeoisie, encouraging Louis of Guyenne to put himself at their head, armed themselves in order to impose peace. The threat of bloodshed was avoided partly by the actions of John the Fearless, who had enough leverage with the occupiers of the town hall to convince their leaders to disperse quietly, and partly through a show of strength on the part of Louis of Guyenne. Placing himself fully armed at the head of the bourgeoisie, Louis ordered Berry and Burgundy to accompany him and marched through the city to the Louvre and then to the Palais, from whence he freed Louis of Bavaria, Edward of Bar, and many others who had been imprisoned during the spring. No sooner freed, these two were given control of the castle of the Louvre and the Saint-Antoine gates, respectively, thus benefiting from the dismissal of Henri and Jean de Troyes a few days earlier.⁷⁷

That Christine saw these events as cause for celebration gives one final reason for thinking that her sympathies did not lie with the Burgundians. We should not, however, see her as an unqualified supporter of either Louis of Guyenne or of the Orléanists. Her lost *Advison du Coq* had been written at a point in time when Louis came under the influence of a group of relatively young Orléanists. From what she says about it, we can deduce that it expressed warnings about the direction in which he was being led. Implicit in the *Livre de paix* are a number of criticisms of Louis's youthful self-indulgence, which indicate that, despite the high hopes that she had had for him in 1412, Christine was less sure by 1413 that he would follow in his grandfather Charles V's footsteps and learn to rule himself so as to be able to rule others. She inserts into the discussion of magnanimity, in her second book, a warning against spending too much time in solitude and cautions against all kinds of frivolous behavior, which might lead to his subjects despising him. The nocturnal orgies, debauchery, and other scandalous activities the young duke pursued, despite his mother's prayers and good advice, had provided the pretext for the crowd, which had overrun his palace in May and had arrested Edward of Bar and his other young companions.⁷⁸ Despite Christine's endorsement of his mother's point of view, the dauphin appears not to have mended his ways, and ten months later, during January, when the Orléanists were in control of Paris, the young duke's dissolute lifestyle was being blamed on Moy, Montauban, and Croy, companions who were represented as Burgundians. The chancellor of France complained during secret deliberations held in the Louvre on

77. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.121–31.

78. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.17–21.

January 9 that the queen and various princes saw well that the duke of Guyenne often refused to attend the Royal Council and that he was surrounded by flatterers who encouraged him in libertinage, laziness, and frivolous pleasures such as staying up late and listening to music.⁷⁹ At this juncture the queen attempted to assert her own authority and her right to govern as regent, using Robert le Maçon as her spokesperson.⁸⁰

Christine's Political Ideas

Central to Christine's understanding of the art of government is that it should be directed toward the common good and be guided by wisdom and the virtue she calls "prudence," the word used by French medieval authors to translate Aristotle's *phronesis*.⁸¹ In the French translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, commissioned by Charles V as part of a program of translations that Christine praised, one reads "Et la vertu de prudence seule est propre au prince" (The virtue of prudence only is proper to the prince).⁸² While the exact interpretation of this phrase is contestable, it expresses two ideas: prudence by itself entails all the virtues, and it is the possession of prudence that is definitive of the good prince. Elsewhere Aristotle says more clearly that "if a man have the one moral virtue of prudence he will also have all the moral virtues together with it."⁸³ This Aristotelian framework permeates Christine's political writing, although she fundamentally disagrees with Aristotle over women's capacity for prudence, using against him his own claim that

79. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.233–35.

80. *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.237.

81. Cicero had used the Latin "prudencia" to translate "phronesis." For a more detailed discussion of Christine's understanding of the virtue of prudence, see Karen Green, "On Translating Christine de Pizan as a Philosopher," in Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic*, 117–37.

82. Nicole Oresme, "Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote; Published from the Text of the Avranches Manuscript 223," with a critical introduction by Albert Douglas Menut, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., 60, no. 6 (1970): 123. Christine praises Charles V's commitment to vernacular translations of authoritative texts in *Paix* 3.18 and in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.12 (Solente, 2:42–45). For the importance of this program of translation to the development of French royal ideology, see Walters, "Christine de Pizan, Primat, and the 'noble nation française,'" "The Royal Vernacular," and "Christine de Pizan, l'idéologie royale et la traduction," in *D'une écriture à l'autre: Les femmes et la traduction sous l'Ancien Régime*, ed. Jean-Philippe Beaulieu (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 31–52.

83. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.13 1145a1–2, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 373; Nicole Oresme, *Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le Livre de éthiques d'Aristote; Published from the Text of MS 2902, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, ed. Albert Douglas Menut (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1940), 360.

prudence is exercised in household management.⁸⁴ Christine introduces the *Livre de paix* with the following explanation of her intentions in writing it: “The first part exhorts my lord of Guyenne to the preservation of peace, and speaks of the virtue of prudence and of what it requires of princely government.”⁸⁵ The book is thus structured as an account of the nature of political prudence.

It is in the fifth chapter of the first book that Christine elaborates on what she intends by prudence: “This Prudence serves our spiritual welfare just as much as our corporeal for by her man desires to know God, to love and fear him, and to know the things which lead to salvation and to live by them. For without this knowledge all other prudence is nothing but folly.”⁸⁶ In his *Ethics* Aristotle had explained that *phronesis* is a virtue rather than an art and had characterized it as “a truth-attaining rational quality concerned with action in relation to things that are good and bad for human beings.”⁸⁷ Christine’s direct knowledge of Aristotle’s *Ethics*, whether in Latin, or in the French translation prepared by Nicole Oresme for Charles V, has been a matter of some obscurity.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, elements of her representation of prudence in the first part of her book suggest that she modeled it on Aristotle’s discussion of prudence in the sixth book of the *Ethics*. She moves, for instance, as does Aristotle, from discussing the political virtue of prudence to discussing good counselors. At the same time it has to be acknowledged that much of Christine’s material comes from later reformulations of Aristotelian themes. For instance, in the *Livre de paix* she draws a great deal of material from Brunetto Latini’s *Livre du Trésor*, which contains a long paraphrase of the *Ethics*, so her restatement of Aristotle could be largely derived from this source.

In her *Livre de prudence* of 1406 (a version of which is called *Le Livre de la prod’homme de l’homme*), Christine drew on a set of definitions of the

84. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.8 1141b32–33 (Rackham, 349); Oresme *Éthiques* (Menut, 344). See Karen Green, “*Phronesis* Feminized: Prudence from Christine de Pizan to Elizabeth I,” in *Virtue, Liberty, and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women, 1400–1800*, ed. Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green (Amsterdam: Springer, 2007), 23–38, for a longer discussion of Christine’s subversion of Aristotle’s views concerning the prudence of women.

85. *Paix* 1.0.

86. *Paix* 1.5.

87. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.5 1140b4–5 (Rackham, 337–39). Oresme’s translation is “prudence est un habit vray factif avecques raison vers les choses qui sont bonnes ou males a l’homme” (*Éthiques* [Menut, 338]).

88. Two recent papers argue that Christine was influenced by Oresme’s text, which she mentions in her *Fais et bonnes meurs*: Sylvie Lefèvre, “Christine de Pizan et l’Aristote Oresmien,” and Forhan, “Reading Backward,” in Hicks, *Au champ des écritures*, 231–50, 359–81.

virtues translated from Alan of Lille's treatise *De Virtutibus et de vitiis et de donis Spiritus Sancti*.⁸⁹ Reformulating Aristotle's definition, Alan defines prudence as "discepcion de bonnes et mauvaises choses en la fuyte du mal et l'election du bien" (discernment of good and evil things in the flight from evil and pursuit of good).⁹⁰ In the *Livre de paix* this definition is repeated by Christine but applied to discretion: "Discretion . . . is a virtue by which we can distinguish good and evil, and choose the good because it is valuable and spurn the bad because it is harmful."⁹¹ Prudence, or discretion, which derives from reason, is here represented by Christine as the first of the four cardinal virtues and as the mother and guide of all the virtues.

Christine was also influenced by Aquinas's discussion of prudence in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, from which she translated passages inserted into *L'Advison Cristine*, written in late 1405.⁹² Aquinas's fusion of Christianity and Aristotle, which takes over much from the earlier fusion of Platonism and Christianity found in Boethius and Augustine, forms the background to what one might call Christine's political epistemology, her treatment of political wisdom as a branch of theology. For we should take quite seriously her assertion, quoted above, that prudence serves to determine man's spiritual as well as corporeal welfare. For Christine, political theory is a branch of theology, the study of the highest being, which is God. Thus knowledge of how to govern well is inseparable from an understanding of God's nature.⁹³ Her outlook is also very much that of her Italian precursor and model, Dante, who derives from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* the proposition that "since knowledge is the highest perfection of our soul, in which our

89. Rosemund Tuve, "Notes on the Virtues and Vices," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26 (1963): 296. It is an open question whether this is Christine's own translation. For a discussion of the two versions of the *Livre de prudence*, see Jean-Louis Picherit, "Le Livre de la prod'homme de l'homme et Le Livre de prudence de Christine de Pizan: Chronologie, structure et composition," *Le Moyen Âge* 40 (1985): 380–413, and Christine M. Reno, "Le Livre de prudence/Livre de la prod'homme de l'homme: Nouvelles perspectives," in Dulac and Ribémont, *Une femme de lettres*, 25–38.

90. *Prudence* 268r.

91. *Paix* 1.5. In the *Livre de paix* Christine introduces this passage with the phrase "Dist l'Ecclesiaste," but this does not refer as one might initially think to Ecclesiastes but rather to her earlier citation of Alanus, which she introduces thus: "cy s'ensuivent les diffinitiones des quatres vertues cardinales et de leurs parties selon l'opinion des hommes ecclesiastiques" (*Prudence* 259v).

92. Liliane Dulac and Christine M. Reno, "L'humanisme vers 1400, essai d'exploration à partir d'un cas marginal: Christine de Pizan traductrice de Thomas d'Aquin," in *Pratiques de la culture écrite en France au XVe siècle: Actes du colloque international du CNRS, Paris, 16–18 mai 1992, organisé en l'honneur de Gilbert Ouy par l'unité de recherche "Culture écrite du Moyen Âge tardif,"* ed. Monique Ornato and Nicole Pons (Louvain-la-Neuve: FIDEM, 1995), 161–78.

93. See Glynis M. Cropp, "Philosophy, the Liberal Arts, and Theology in *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* and *Le Livre de L'advison Cristine*," in Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic*, 129–54.

supreme happiness is found, we are all driven by our very nature by the desire to attain this.”⁹⁴ So practical knowledge of how to bring about the good contributes to spiritual perfection. The Bible as the word of God is therefore read by Christine as a repository of political wisdom in which it is demonstrated how immorality leads to the destruction of kingdoms.⁹⁵ Christine’s method in the *Livre de paix*, which is to expand on and gloss Latin passages that she has gleaned from the Bible and from ancient authors, can thus be seen as both synthesizing classical and Christian wisdom and continuing Charles V’s program of vernacular translation.

In the *Livre de paix* Christine offers a utopian vision of an intelligent, just ruler, able to take the advice of those who are older and wiser, hard working, peace loving, clement, and at the same time firm in dispensing justice. Despite the lamentable political situation of her time, she never gives up her optimism that peace and justice are possible on earth as well as in heaven. Here one can detect the influence of Dante on her political thought. Christine’s debt to Dante is clearest in her poem *Le Chemin de long estude* from 1402–3. In this dream allegory she is guided on her adventure, as was Vergil in the *Aeneid*, by the Cumaean sibyl. But she is not led through the underworld, as Vergil had been, but into the realm of the celestial spheres that Dante had described in both the *Paradiso* and *Convivio*. Passing by the long path of learning, she is taken into the celestial firmament, where she witnesses a debate between Wealth, Nobility, Chivalry, and Wisdom over the qualities required in the monarch who, as ruler of a single Christian empire, would bring peace to earth. We can deduce from this, given that Vergil took the place of the Cumaean sibyl in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, that Christine

94. Dante, *The Banquet*, trans. Christopher Ryan (Saratoga, Calif.: Anma Libri, 1989), 13. For the influence of Dante on Christine, see Arturo Farinelli, *Dante e la Francia dall’età media al secolo di Voltaire*, 2 vols. (Milan: Hoepli, 1908), where he mentions the passage from the *Convivio* (at 1:154), and also Arturo Farinelli, “Dante nell’opere di Christine de Pisan,” in *Aus romanischen Sprachen und Literaturen: Festschrift Heinrich Morf* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1905). The influence has also been discussed by Kevin Brownlee, “Literary Genealogy and the Problem of the Father: Christine and Dante,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993): 365–88; M. Merkle, “Le chemin de longue estude: Primo tentativo di imitazione dantesca in Francia,” *Rassegna Nazionale*, April 1, 16, 1921; Earl Jeffrey Richards, “Christine de Pizan and Dante: A Reexamination,” *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 222 (1985): 100–111; Anna Slerca, “Le Livre du chemin de long estude (1402–1403): Christine au pays des merveilles,” in *Sur le chemin de longue étude: Actes du colloque d’Orléans, juillet 1995*, ed. Bernard Ribémont (Paris: Champion, 1998), 179–90; and Maud Temple, “Paraphrasing in the *Livre de la paix* of Christine de Pisan of the *Paradiso* iii–v,” *PMLA* 37 (1922): 182–86.

95. In this she was typical of her age. The monk of Saint-Denis, Michel Pintoin, structures much of his chronicle of Charles VI around the motif of history as the development of God’s retribution for sin.

intends to suggest that the Cumaean sibyl stands in place of Dante, who is Christine's inspiration. Passing by the fountain of the muses, as she is guided by the sibyl, she evokes Dante:⁹⁶

Mais le nom du plaisant pourpris
 Oncque mais ne me fu appris,
 Fors en tant que bien me recorde
 Que Dant de Flourence recorde
 En son livre qu'il composa
 Ou il moult beau stile posa,
 Quant en la sive fu entrez
 Ou tout de paour ert outrez,
 Lors que Virgile s'aparu
 A lui dont il fu secouru,
 Adont lui dist par grand estude
 Ce mot: "Vaille moy lonc estude
 Qui m'a fait cercher tes volumes
 Par qui ensemble accointance eumes."

[The name of that pleasant grove
 Was no sooner learnt by me
 Than straight away I remembered
 That Dante of Florence recorded
 In his book which he composed
 Where a beautiful style he showed
 That when he entered the wood
 And was overcome with dread
 Vergil appeared to him, then
 Offering help to him, when
 He said to him by great study
 "Blessed be my long study
 Which made me seek out your books
 And brought us into acquaintance".]

Her knowledge of this author's works is manifest throughout the poem, particularly in verses 3040–66 where she paraphrases Dante's argument that

96. *Long estude* 1125–38.

in order to put an end to the greed that causes war and dissension, the world needs a single universal monarch who will reign in justice.

In *Monarchia*, arguing that the best possible world order is one in which justice is strongest, Dante quotes a famous line from Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*: "Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns."⁹⁷ He tells us that the virgin is also called "justice" or "Astrea" and reads these lines as stating that with the coming of justice there will be a new golden age, repeating the supposed era in which Christ was born and Augustus ruled, and showing in his optimism the influence of the prophetic view of history developed by Joachim of Fiore.⁹⁸ In the *Livre du chemin de long estude* Christine also alludes to prophecies of the coming of the Antichrist and the predictions of Merlin and the sibyls, which had become associated with the Joachimist corpus.⁹⁹ She shows her familiarity with this prophetic tradition in *L'Advision* as well, where she mentions Joachim and attempts to read Biblical history as providing the pattern of historical events.¹⁰⁰

In the *Livre du chemin de long estude*, Christine assumes the possibility of justice being brought to earth by a single monarch and stages a debate as to the qualities that would be necessary in such a universal ruler. In the *Livre de paix* her aim is more limited and realistic. It is simply to urge the young Louis to take on the character of the just ruler and to maintain peace in France. Yet even here, the optimistic outlook found in Dante can be detected. Christine inscribes at the head of her chapter in praise of Louis: "Fiat pax in virtute tua" (Let there be peace in your strength)—a line from the Psalms that encapsulates the hope that temporal power can be both governed by and impose peace.¹⁰¹ Later in her work, and echoing Dante, she quotes a version of lines from Boethius that had been used by Dante to show that, because the sphere of heaven is guided by a single source of motion,

97. Dante, *Monarchia*, trans. Prue Shaw, Cambridge Medieval Classics 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), I.11 (22–23).

98. See Frances Yates, *Astraea* (London: Routledge, 1975), 29–38, for a discussion of the sources of this image, a more general discussion of Dante and his optimistic political views, and for the origins of this worldview in Joachim. See also Marjorie Reeves, "Dante and the Prophetic View of History;" and "The Third Age: Dante's Debt to Gioacchino da Fiore," in Reeves, *The Prophetic Sense of History in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

99. *Long estude* 1467–76, 2197–202. See Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Late Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), for a detailed discussion of the tradition alluded to by Christine and its association with the prophecies of Merlin and the sibyls.

100. *Advision* 10, I.23, 41 (McLeod, 34).

101. Maud Temple finds echoes of Dante's *Paradiso* 3.85, "Et la sua voluntate è nostra pace," in Christine's use of this phrase. Maud Temple, "Paraphrasing in the *Livre de la paix*," 184.

God—monarchy, or undivided rule, which he calls empire—is needed for the well-being of the world.¹⁰² In Christine’s hands Boethius’s claim, that men would be happy, if only the love by which the heavens is ruled were to rule their minds, is applied to Frenchmen: “oh, you men of France, you will be so blessed if you desire it: that is, if you are governed by the love that holds up the heavens and without which nothing is stable.”¹⁰³

By 1417, when Christine sent her *Prison de la vie humaine* to Mary of Berry, she had apparently given up her optimism that peace could be found on earth. There she developed the theme that the soul is trapped in the body and imprisoned below, only to be released into happiness at death. But she returned to her optimistic and prophetic voice in *Le Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*, her last known work, completed a few days after the coronation of Charles VII in 1429. In this poem she represents Joan as the fulfillment of the prophecies of Merlin, the sibyls, and Bede, and as having been sent to earth to help Charles VII fulfill the predictions of the Charlemagne prophecy. This prophecy was also part of the pseudo-Joachimist corpus and proposed that a son of Charles would conquer Rome and rule as a new Augustus.¹⁰⁴ Of course, Christine’s optimism was, once again, unjustified, but Joan at least provided striking proof of Christine’s belief that women had a part to play in history and could demonstrate all the capacities and excellences available to humanity.

Christine’s prescription for stable government is a well-educated and prudent prince who listens carefully to older and wiser counsel and acts only after the best advice has been taken. Because her political works are responses to specific events and have a primarily didactic purpose, Christine does not explicitly engage in argument in order to justify monarchy, and she skirts around the issue of the monarch’s duty to accept advice. One does not find in her writings a clear statement either of absolutism or of the existence of “bridles” on the king’s power, as we see one hundred years later in Claude de Seyssel’s *The Monarchy of France*.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, although she insists on the importance of taking advice, she is also very aware of the danger of corrupt or incompetent counselors. These must be avoided. Christine advises that the king will need the counsel provided by experienced individuals from all estates who are experts in their fields and have shown themselves to be

102. Dante *Monarchia* 1.9 (20–21).

103. *Paix* 3.6.

104. *Ditié* 1.9, 1.16.

105. Claude de Seyssel, *The Monarchy of France*, trans. J. H. Hexter, ed. Donald R. Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 49–57.

honest and intelligent.¹⁰⁶ He has a moral obligation to heed such counselors, but she never invokes the right of parliament or even the Royal Council to impose its advice on the king.

Christine is very aware of the importance of the appearance of majesty and the dangers of defamatory loose talk that undermines royal authority. In her earlier portrait of Charles V, she had excused herself for having only praised the virtues of this king and his relations, without mentioning their vices, suggesting that it was dangerous to publicly undermine rulers' authority and that they should be criticized only in private.¹⁰⁷ In the *Livre de paix* also, she works to encourage respect for the monarchy and encourages the dauphin to deserve that respect. He should administer justice promptly and with firmness, make himself a worthy example of the dignity of his office, avoid anger and cruelty, be liberal, clement, and truthful. He should make himself available to his subjects and always dress in a manner appropriate to his station.

From a modern point of view this image appears as something of a cliché. If monarchies could only guarantee themselves such monarchs, they might well offer good government, but monarchs are human, and humans, placed in a position of excessive power, are rarely capable of living up to any such ideal. Soon Christine's insistence that a king should heed good counsel will develop into the demand that the monarch's power be constrained by counsel. But Christine never discusses such formal constraints on the power of the monarch. Nevertheless, we should not judge Christine's originality by what came after but in relation to the images and texts available to her, and in this work one can see her stamping her own quite original mark on the tradition of the virtuous Christian prince. Often this emerges as much in the imagery that she uses as in the content of her advice.

At the time Christine was writing, the observation that discretion, or alternatively prudence, was the mother of the virtues was already a well-worn phrase, found, in the first version, in St. Benedict's rule and, in the second, in Abelard, as well as in Cicero and many others.¹⁰⁸ Yet Christine manages to make the idea graphic and takes almost literally the feminine character of the virtue of prudence. In her *Epistre Othea*, she had made Othea the "goddess of prudence" who offered the young Hector

106. *Paix* 1.10.

107. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.18 (Solente, 1:182–83).

108. *The Rule of Benedict: A Guide to Christian Living*, trans. the monks of Glenstal Abbey (Blackrock: Four Courts Press, 1994), chap. 64; *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, ed. and trans. D. E. Luscombe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 129: "Prudentia, id est boni malique discretio, mater est virtutum potius quam virtus."

advice on how to attain chivalric virtue.¹⁰⁹ In *Livre de paix* prudence is called “an excellent daughter of discretion” capable of organizing everything well, and once again, Christine’s language underscores the feminine character of the virtue. Though she does not point out here that prudence pertains to household management as well as to the running of kingdoms—she had done so elsewhere—Christine’s language conveys an image of the prince as a careful and circumspect manager who differs from the good housekeeper only in the size and importance of the domain for which he must care.¹¹⁰

She is particularly aware of the importance of what we would now call “good governance” for the economic prosperity of the realm. Magistrates must not be corrupt, they should be elected to their offices by merit, and the practice of allowing positions to be bought should cease. The consequence will be increased economic activity and the encouragement of trade by foreign merchants, who will know that their commercial activities and property rights are secure.

The definition of justice as giving each person what is due to them is also well-known, being at least as old as Plato’s *Republic*. Christine feminizes the trope and justice becomes “a faithful housekeeper who distributes and shares out for each person that part and portion which is due for their acts, whether they be good or bad.”¹¹¹ Evoking language appropriate to the relationship between husband and wife, Christine asserts that the king who loves justice will be protected and shielded from misfortune and will grow in prosperity. Thus, in her hands, the feminine gender of the abstract nouns develops into a full-blown feminization of the political virtues, which gives her writing a flavor quite different from other medieval and early modern political writers. One sees this same tendency in other works by Christine. In the opening passages of her *Livre du corps de policie*, she had introduced an image of human happiness as a queen seated on a throne served by the virtues.¹¹² It is not until one looks at the original source of the passage from Augustine’s *City of God*, which Christine has adapted to extract this image, that one recognizes that she has transformed a well-known misogynist trope that derives from Cicero, and which assumes the arbitrariness of female rule, into an allegorical evocation of the nobility and benefits of a feminine ruler.¹¹³

109. *Othea* 199 (Chance, 35).

110. *Cité des dames* 1.43; Green, “Phronesis Feminized.”

111. *Paix* 2.5.

112. *Corps de policie* 2–3 (Forhan, 4–5).

113. For a more detailed discussion of this passage, see Karen Green, “Philosophy and Metaphor: The Significance of Christine’s ‘Blunders,’” *Parergon* 22 (2005): 119–36.

The feminine personification of the virtues in Christine's political thought complements her explicit arguments to the effect that women are capable of exercising all the virtues and hence of attaining the highest levels of human excellence. Her extended argument in the *Livre de la cité des dames*, illustrated by ancient, early Christian, and contemporary examples, that women are not defective men but capable of all the same kinds of excellence thus builds on a general conception of human nature, which is motivated by a desire for knowledge of the good. In the *Livre des trois vertus*, Christine represents herself as a bird catcher attempting to populate her city of ladies with virtuous women, and she offers her teaching to women under the guise of the teachings of prudence.¹¹⁴ Reading her teachings through the modern connotations of this word, one is inclined to hear Christine's injunctions as small-minded, self-interested, and cautious. While there is an element of intelligent caution, however, and even craftiness, in the advice that she offers to princesses, it is important to realize that the prudence she is advocating for women is the same Aristotelian *phronesis* that forms the basis of a prince's practical activity.

When one takes into account the totality of Christine's oeuvre, one sees that she has painted a portrait of an ideal Christian monarch who is a wise and prudent ruler, and she has outlined a role that could be filled by a woman as well as by a man. It was, indeed, perhaps filled as well by Elizabeth I of England as by any other monarch of the early modern period. Moreover, the imagery of Elizabeth's rule drew on the same sources that we have seen Christine deriving from Dante. Elizabethan eulogists returned to the image of Astrea, the virgin justice, to depict Elizabeth's rule, reworking the feminine personification of the virtues to women's benefit, as Christine had done.¹¹⁵ The extent of Christine's influence on this iconography is a subject that has not been fully investigated.¹¹⁶ Certainly, English translations of the *Livre de la cité des dames* and the *Livre du corps de policie* had been printed in London in 1521, without their author being acknowledged, and there is some evidence that the *Livre du chemin de long estude* was also available.¹¹⁷ Elizabeth also had in her possession a set of tapestries depicting scenes inspired by Christine's

114. *Trois vertus* 8–9 (Lawson, 31–32).

115. Yates, *Astraea*, 29–87.

116. See, however, Green, "Phronesis Feminized."

117. Campbell, "Christine de Pisan en Angleterre," 659–70; Glenda K. McLeod, ed., *The Reception of Christine de Pizan from the Fifteenth Through the Nineteenth Centuries: Visitors to the City* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1991). A prose version by Jan Chaperon of Christine's poem *Le chemin de longue étude* was printed in Paris in 1549.

Livre de la cité des dames, and among the volumes in the royal library there were copies of this work as well as the *Epistre Othea* and the *Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie*. Elizabeth is unlikely to have known Christine's *Livre de paix*, which did not have a wide circulation, and of which only three manuscripts have survived. Yet her actions and the imagery that she used to represent herself have much in common with that developed by Christine. By emphasizing the foundation of good government in prudence, and by demonstrating women's exercise of prudence in many spheres of life, Christine developed what might be called an image of an androgynous ideal of monarchy capable of being exemplified as much by a woman as by a man. Her hopes for Louis of Guyenne were not realized; he died soon after the battle of Agincourt, without ever having justified the aspirations that Christine had held for him. But Christine has left us in her *Livre de paix* a passionate and timely call for the adherence to the princely virtues that are necessary for peace.

