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The Book of Peace

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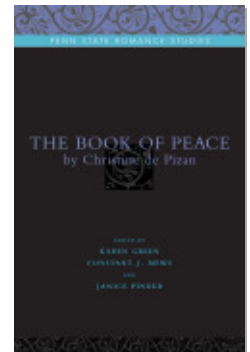
Published by Penn State University Press

Green, Karen & Mews, J. & Pinder, Janice & de Pizan, Christine.

The Book of Peace: By Christine de Pizan.

University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008.

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PART I



Here begins the table of contents of the *Book of Peace*, which is dedicated to the noble and excellent prince the Duke of Guyenne, eldest son of the King of France. Begun on the first day of September, after peace was sworn between our lords of France at the city of Auxerre, in the year 1412.¹

This book is divided into three parts. The first exhorts my lord of Guyenne to preserve the peace, and speaks of the virtue of prudence and its application in princely government. This first part was finished on the last day of November, but the remainder of the book was put aside because of the failure of the peace.

The second part of the work was taken up again on the third day of September, after the restoration of peace in the town of Pontoise, and after our lords of France had come together in great joy and peace in Paris, in the year 1413.² The second part speaks once again of the benefits of peace, to urge the said lord of Guyenne to maintain love among the princes and the knights, by appeal to three virtues: justice, magnanimity or greatness of heart, and fortitude. Examples are given from his forebear, King Charles V.

The third part speaks of governing the people and the polity well,³ by appeal to three other virtues: clemency, liberality, and truth.

1. August 22, 1412. For a description of the ceremony and the clauses of the agreement, see Michel Pintoin, *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, trans. and ed. M. L. Bellaguet, 6 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994), 4.709–19.

2. July 28, 1413. The articles agreed to are published in *Religieux de Saint-Denys* 5.115–23.

3. Christine's phrase "la chose publique" is clearly a French translation of the Latin *res publica*. Rather than translating this as "republic," we have chosen the more neutral "polity" because "republic" has acquired too many democratic overtones. It is nevertheless significant that, by using this term, Christine demonstrates her recognition of a public political realm.

The chapters of the first part:

1. The first praises God, giving thanks for the present peace.
2. Praise and blessing to my lord of Guyenne, because it is through his efforts that this peace came about.
3. Addresses my lord of Guyenne, urging the preservation of the peace.
4. Exhorts my lord to virtue.
5. Takes up the subject of prudence, and where it comes from.
6. Proof that there is no one to whom diverse knowledge is more advantageous than a prince, and some examples concerning King Charles, fifth of that name.
7. How a prince should let himself be guided by the wise, with examples concerning the said king.
8. More concerning the said king.
9. That a prince should act in accordance with counsel; and which counselors are suitable and which are not.
10. Concerning good counselors: how many should be in the prince's circle, and of what qualities.
11. Concerning bad counselors, and the evil that can result from them.
12. Again concerning bad counselors.
13. Concerning bad officials and the means by which they obtain office.
14. Concerning what court officials and servants should be like.
15. Again concerning good servants.

Here begins the *Book of Peace*, which is addressed to a most noble and excellent prince, my lord the Duke of Guyenne, eldest son of the king, begun on the first day of September, after peace was sworn between our lords of France, in the year 1412.

1

The first chapter praises God for the present peace

From the mouths of children and babes,
you have made praise. [David, Psalm]⁴

Our Lord God, almighty heavenly King who overcomes and takes away, when you wish to, the suffering of the world, indeed you are pleased

4. *P* adds "David in Psalmo" (Ps. 8:2); the phrase "que en la bouche des enfans et des alaitans Dieux a parfaite sa loenge" is also quoted in *Corps de policie* 1.3.

to receive perfect praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. This has been seen many times, as when you opened the lips of the young Daniel, to relieve the chaste and falsely accused Susanna from sentence of death, when he said: “I am clear from the blood of this woman,” etc.,⁵ for which you were blessed by every nation. O glorious trinity, one single indivisible God, whom the angels praise endlessly: he is indeed foolish that has no faith in you. Did we not also see your power when Azarias and his two companions were consigned to a blazing furnace by the king of Babylon, but suffered no ill? They praised you in song: “Blessed is Our Lord!”⁶ Similarly, O Lord God, it pleased you to be blessed from the mouths of children when you entered Jerusalem with great solemnity, and they cried aloud: “Savior! Son of David! Blessed be you, who come in the name of Our Lord.”⁷ And, sweet God full of goodness and infinite mercy, although much more could be told about the many times you revealed your divine grace and boundless virtues through innocent children in the past, we must now offer our *present* gratitude, and praise you with all our hearts. Once more you have chosen to comfort us, and by your mercy to come to our aid in our great affliction. You sent a single child, inspired in word and deed with your Holy Spirit, to minister to us on your behalf, and to bind the mortal wound of bitter hatred—to staunch the fearsome, unremitting bloodshed from which your catholic kingdom of France was dying. For this bounty, most sweet Jesus Christ who with the Holy Spirit sits at the right hand of God the Father in his glory, we praise you, we bless you, we glorify you. We give thanks for this great blessing,⁸ to you who are our true God, our sole creator, our good shepherd, most righteous judge, our wise master, our very powerful helper, our beneficent physician, our brilliant light, and our life. Consent, King of Glory, to hear our honest prayers. On account of our duke Louis’s work we French should “sing unto the Lord a new song, for he has worked wonders!”⁹ Bestow on him, if it please you, the accomplishment of grace, good counsel in conduct, wisdom in government, and enduring glory. Amen.

5. Dan. 13:46: “mundus ego sum a sanguine huius.”

6. Dan. 3:52–90.

7. Matt. 21:9.

8. Ordo missae (Gloria in excelsis Deo . . .): “Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tua.”

9. Ps. 97:1.

Praise and blessing to my lord of Guyenne, to whose mediation and efforts this peace is due

Let there be peace in your strength.

Psalm of David.¹⁰

Glory, honor, and reverence be laid dutifully before you, most excellent and redoubtable Prince Louis, eldest son of the King, in line to the crown by the grace of God, Duke of Guyenne and Dauphin of Viennois. Most high and noble prince, let not your magnificence disdain the writings of your humble servant, moved as she is by a sincere desire for your well-being. Rather, let the liberal clemency of your noble heart consent to receive them. And by leave of your gentle humility, do not take it amiss if I address you plainly and in the singular. For you, already versed and instructed in letters, are surely aware that according to the canons of rhetoric this is the most apt style of writing, even to emperors and kings.¹¹ Most excellent lord, the great joy brimming in my heart on account of the new peace, granted through you by divine providence, impels me now to write in admiration of you. For not only I, a simple and untutored woman writing in a humble rustic way, but also many high-minded and learned intellects—wise orators steeped in rhetoric, law, and argument—celebrate you in verse and prose, so that you will always live in memory. For are you not the one who, at the age of only fifteen, by the grace of God and in spite of the infernal arch-enemy of peace who strives ingeniously to frustrate it, has constantly and tenaciously made peace—between those of your own blood whose relentless war was destroying the realm? How unlike a light unstable youth! More like a grown man, most wise and weighty in your deeds. And you are the one who united them in peace, harmonized and appeased them, bound them in new love with loyal and worthy alliances—yes, even those who had been divided by a terrible hatred, spewing fire and sparks far and wide. You have assembled them, to swear fidelity together in your exalted presence. O, child born in a propitious hour! May you be forever blessed in heaven and on earth, for skillfully achieving so great a work, which everyone thought

10. Ps. 121:7. This phrase has been linked by Maud Temple to the line from Dante's *Paradiso* 3.85, "Et la sua voluntate è nostra pace." Maud Temple, "Paraphrasing in the *Livre de la paix* of Christine de Pisan of the *Paradiso* III–IV," *PMLA* 37 (1922): 184.

11. Here Christine excuses herself for using "tu" rather than the more formal "vous." See J. D. Burnley, "Christine de Pisan and the So-Called *Style Clergial*," *Modern Language Review* 81 (1986): 1–6, for a discussion of Christine's use of this form.

impossible! The initiative, of course, came not from you, but from one without whose protection watching over the city is in vain. On the eve of Saint John the Baptist in this year 1412, as I have been reliably informed, you, on hearing in the mass the passage of the gospel that says of Saint John “and many will rejoice at his birth,”¹² turned with joyful countenance, as if suddenly inspired, and said to your confessor: “O, please God that on this glorious day we might be able to bring together in peace and joy those two Johns who are enemies!”¹³ That is to say, John, Duke of Berry and John, Duke of Burgundy. “But,” you said, “so that henceforth a firm agreement might be negotiated, mediated, and sealed between them with God’s help, it is fitting that a fine solemn mass be said tomorrow in the chapel of Saint John near here, to which they both have great devotion.” O noble prince, the advent of this peace has been a miracle—considering the many impediments and squabbles. You were with the King your father, in the midst of a great army marshaled before Bourges (where peace was only mentioned in order to deride it!) when the idea came to you; and since then you have argued tirelessly for peace, against all resistance. Though all things come from God, praise is nonetheless due to you, since he has made you worthy of receiving such a great boon from him, for which let us be forever thankful. And so you, a vassal of God—are you not by his leave the restorer and the comforter of all France? You have turned war into peace, grief into joy, death into life, hatred into love, bloodshed into healing, dearth into abundance, and every evil into good. O, glorious things are spoken of you!¹⁴ Now and evermore you should be named *Louis the God-given*, provided that you continue virtuously. For these present bounties may you be blessed with a godly nature, and with all the things in heaven and earth which God has endowed with goodness—you who give us cause to sing loudly: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.”¹⁵

12. Luke 1:14.

13. See *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.693 for an account by Michel Pintoin, the author of the *Chronique*, of Louis’s intervention on behalf of peace. He, like Christine, attributes Louis’s intercession to divine inspiration. William Tignonville was one of the people deputized to work out the clauses of this peace, and it therefore seems highly likely that he was one of the “people worthy of belief” who relayed to Christine the story of Louis’s prayer to his confessor, here repeated. Louis’s confessor at this time was Jacques Gelu.

14. In quoting this line from the Psalms, Christine evokes St. Augustine’s important influence on French political thinking of the period. See Lori Walters, “Christine de Pizan, Primat, and the ‘noble nation françoise,’” *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* 9 (2002): 237–46, and “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.

15. Luke 2:14.

To my lord of Guyenne, urging the preservation of the peace

Every kingdom divided in itself will be made desolate, and every city and house divided against itself will not stand. In the Gospel.¹⁶

Every kingdom divided in itself will be destroyed, and every city or house divided against its own good cannot endure. To this Holy Scripture is witness, supported by several examples that could be given, such as Troy, Rome, and others that I leave out for brevity, which were once so powerful that the whole world in concert could do them no harm—but they were undone by discord.¹⁷ Once again we can glorify, revered prince, this work of yours, this worthy peace. Seeing that it is inevitable that every kingdom perishes in which there is dissension, certainly the converse is true: by peace and love it is preserved and sustained. Therefore you, wise and well counseled as you are, could find no better medicine nor more sovereign remedy to keep this noble kingdom—your inheritance—from ruin than by installing peace in it. Thus you will have saved what is yours, and with it gained much in heaven and on earth: as Scripture tells us, peacemakers are blessed and holy, for they shall be called the sons of God.¹⁸ And to show that you will benefit on earth, Scripture says also that the glory of the governor, which is to say of the lord, is greatly increased when the subjects are not stirred up by war. Therefore, since joy and tranquility are found where there is no such preoccupation, goods will flow to you in abundance. As the psalmist says, completing the verse attached to the beginning of the previous chapter: “and abundance of

16. Matt. 12:25 and Luke 11:17. Matt. 12:25: “*Jesus autem sciens cogitationes eorum dixit eis omne regnum divisum contra se desolatur et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit*”; Luke 11:17: “*ipse autem ut vidit cogitationes eorum dixit eis omne regnum in se ipsum divisum desolatur et domus supra domum cadet*.” These two texts are fused by Christine. “*Omne regnum in se ipso divisum desolabitur*” was also used by Michel Pintoin to sum up the contemporary situation in France, while Christine’s friend Guillaume de Tignonville used similar phrasing in a harangue he delivered during an embassy to the royal princes in 1410; *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.347. The French version of this text had also been used by Christine in her “Letter to the Queen”: see *Prison/Epistre* 72.

17. Christine’s *Othea* had used stories from the history of Troy to illustrate the virtues to be attained and vices to be avoided by a young knight. The political relevance of this work is discussed in Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pizan’s “Épître Othea”: Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

18. Matt. 5:9.

all things shall be in your towers,”¹⁹ which is to say, in that which you shall possess. But David says: “Seek and pursue peace,”²⁰ and certainly you have done this well, for you have sought it so well that you have found it. Indeed, it is incumbent on you to pursue it; to persevere forever according to the maxim of Scripture: “Great praise for that prince who can manage peace so well that it works to the advantage of everyone; nor is it injurious to any, but cherished by all.”²¹ And you must work with tremendous prudence in this way in the future: that is to say, you should wisely manage and maintain all things required for peace, which together with good counsel banish all obstacles. That way no accidental setback can upset the peace. For as a philosopher says: “It is not so great an accomplishment to acquire the thing desired as to look after it well.”²² Fire, once established in a town and grown into a great conflagration, is difficult to extinguish completely: some small flame might linger for a few days, then flare again and bring destruction.²³ Similarly with spitefulness and ill will, which are difficult to abate or placate readily by force of arms: their suppression, as with putting out fire, requires that the water of gentleness and goodwill be poured over them. It must arise in you yourself, as from a veritable fountain of clemency, good cheer, and geniality. All this, in order that you may always be for them a means of following peaceful ways—not just for a month or two, but forever—by such gentleness that you entice and soften their hearts. So let the sting of past rancor, as much for the love of you and your gentleness as for their own good, be altogether smoothed away and turned into love, benevolence, and unity. And so, noble prince, do not doubt that God, by whose aid—praise be to him!—you have achieved the most arduous part, will help you to accomplish what remains by following these and such other good ways as one must, so that henceforth you may live with glory in the love of your people and for their good.

4

Exhorting my lord to virtue

Only virtue is in its own power; all
reasons for living well are to be placed

19. Adapted from Ps. 121:7.

20. Ps. 33:15.

21. Cf. Cassiodorus *Variae* 1.23, ed. A. J. Fridh, CCSL 96 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973), 31: “Ad laudem regnantis trahit si ab omnibus pax ametur.” Quoted in Thomas of Ireland, *Manipulus florum*, “Pax.”

22. Unidentified.

23. For a previous use by Christine of “mieux vaut prevenir le feu que l'estaindre quant il est pris,” see *Trois vertus* 1.13.

in virtue. For fortune cannot much get in the way of one who has placed himself more strongly in virtue than in chance. Tully, in the second book of Rhetoric which is called the *Ars Nova*.²⁴

As all things here below be fallible, virtue alone, says Tully, has dominion over itself, which means that it has endurance; and because of this one's reasons for living well should be founded in virtue. For surely Fortune will not set herself against anyone holding fast to virtue, rather than to the benefits of Fortune and sheer luck. Although it is clear to me most noble and venerable prince (may God by his grace ever cause your fair youth to flourish), that you have always been from first childhood to the present day, admonished and guided in the way of good conduct and praiseworthy virtues by wise nobles (honest men in your circle, whom your noble nature inclines you to retain), nevertheless I, as your own creature, absorbed as I am in laborious and lonely study, have gathered fine and tender flowers from the fields of literature to make a wreath to grace your youthful brow—in order that the joy that you gave us may endure till we see you in full kingly raiment. That will be the adornment most proper and becoming for your highness!²⁵ These flowers issue from shoots, among other noble plants, from the seven principal roots of virtue, of which the first, being the one from which all the others sprout, is called *prudence*. The other six are called *justice*, *magnanimity* or greatness of heart, *fortitude*, *clemency*, *liberality*, and *truth*. And so that you who await the crown of royalty may desire first of all to possess this coronet—a circlet which in its entirety is known as *virtue*, encompassing the said flowers set well in order—I shall say a few more fine words in commendation of it.

24. Culled from ps.-Cicero *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.17.24, 4.19.27, ed. F. Marx (Leipzig: Teubner, 1964), 132, 135: “omnes bene uiuendi rationes in uirtute sunt conlocandae, propterea quod sola uirtus in sua potestate est, omnia praeterea subiecta sunt sub fortunae dominationem . . . In sententia hoc pacto: ei non multum potest obesse fortuna, qui sibi firmitus in uirtute, quam in casu praesidium conlocauit.” Translated by Harry Caplan (29) as “All the rules for noble living should be based on virtue, because virtue alone is within her own control, whereas all else is subject to the sway of fortune.”

25. Cf. Jerome *Epistulae* 130.9, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 56/1 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1910–18), 188. This metaphor may have been suggested to Christine by the expanded French translation of an Italian text, *Li Fiori de virtù*, called in French *Le Chapelet des vertus*. Curt F. Bühler, “The *Fleurs de toutes vertus* and Christine de Pisan’s *L’Épître d’Othéa*,” *PMLA* 62 (1947): 32–44, and by the same author, “The *Fleurs de toutes vertus*,” *PMLA* 64 (1949): 600–601. This may have been the source of passages in Christine’s *Othea* and *Prudence*, although this has been questioned by Parussa (*Othea*, 53).

Tully says: “Nothing is more pleasing or more apt to be loved than virtue”;²⁶ and Seneca in his epistle to Lucilius: “Virtue alone gives lasting joy.”²⁷ And Aristotle proves the truth that in virtue there is every joy: since glory and unmixed delight could not inhere in anything evanescent or mutable (that is, changeable from one thing into another, such as ordinary delights that decay into sadness), there can be no true felicity (that is, true joy) except in things possessed of such a high degree of goodness and stability that they cannot be corrupted or unsettled by any manner of disturbance.²⁸ And what thing is situated at such a high level? In God’s name, only virtue! Nothing else whatsoever. O noble prince, if only you were to know the good comprised therein, certainly you would desire no other treasure so much as virtue, for it alone can make you great, powerful, rich, renowned, feared, and loved. And do you know what it is, this virtue? Briefly, it is what inclines us to avoid all ugly or reprehensible qualities, to delight in doing and speaking well, and to love and accept good counsel. But Seneca says that he is not virtuous who only seems to be so; it is rather he who performs the works of virtue.²⁹ Indeed, if your actions spring from virtue, you need fear no harm; and consequently you will lack no happiness, as Macrobius points out.³⁰ This is borne out by Saint Luke: “Go surely, so long as the virtues are your guide, for no other wall stands so firm against ill fortune.”³¹ And to this point Tully says: “The wise are girt by a bulwark of virtue which protects them.”³² You might imagine that to follow this direction amounts to giving up all joy and cheerfulness—things youth can hardly do without, of course.

26. Cicero *Laelius de amicitia* 28, ed. K. Simbeck (Leipzig: Teubner, 1938), 57: “nihil est enim virtute amabilius.”

27. Seneca *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* 27.3, ed. O. Hense (Leipzig: Teubner, 1938), 90.

28. Aristotle *Ethica* 1.9–10.1099b4–10, trans. Roberti Grossetesti, ed. R. A. Gauthier, AL 26.1.2 (Brussels: Desclée de Brouwer, 1973), 82. Christine has, however, placed a very Stoic reading on Aristotle’s doctrine, which is that happiness consists in rational activity in accordance with virtue.

29. Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Trésor de Brunetto Latini* 2.52.7, ed. Francis J. Carmody (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948), quoting Seneca *Epistulae morales* 9.30 (Hense, 26).

30. Latini *Trésor* 2.52.10, quoting Macrobius *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis* 1.8.2, ed. J. Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1990), 37: “solae faciunt virtutes beatum, nulla que alia quisquam via hoc nomen adipiscitur.”

31. Latini *Trésor* 2.52.11, who also combines Luke 24:49 (“et ego mitto promissum Patris mei in vos vos autem sedete in civitate quoadusque induamini virtutem ex alto”) and Seneca *Epistulae morales* 74.19 (Hense, 266).

32. Latini *Trésor* 2.52.11, perhaps quoting Cicero *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 4.14, ed. T. Schiche (Leipzig: Teubner, 1915), 136: “Vos autem, Cato, quia virtus, ut omnes fatemur, altissimum locum in homine et maxime excellentem tenet, et quod eos, qui sapientes sunt, absolutos et perfectos putamus, aciem animorum nostrorum virtutis splendore praestringitis.”

But I answer you like this: Tully says that of all the joys and worldly pleasures none can match that which issues from virtue, for it is like a fountain that can never dry up.³³ Saint Bernard confirms this, saying that to be saved and to do good one need not put aside all delight and pleasure.³⁴ And so, most worthy lord, I tell you again that from childhood and early youth it is necessary that you behave and conform yourself in everything to virtue; for Solomon says that the man grown old or hardened in vice has very great difficulty in returning to virtue.³⁵ To conclude: as Tully says, if you delight in owning the best and finest things, as it is proper that you should, then choose above all as your sovereign good, the best and most beautiful life.³⁶

5

Of prudence and where it comes from

No good thing is without reason.
Virtue is nothing other than right
reason. All virtues are reasons. Reason
follows nature. What is reason other
than the imitation of nature? Seneca.³⁷

No good thing, says Seneca, is without reason. So in line with the quotation above, virtue, which is the highest good, is nothing other than reason itself. And since reason, as he says, follows nature, it follows that all our undertakings should be founded, undertaken, and begun in reason. From this Reason, who is God's daughter, follows Prudence. O Prudence, noble virtue! There is no wealth or genuine nobility except what comes from you. It is as Seneca affirms, in praise of you: "If long-established wealth in families makes men

33. Cicero *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.25.72, ed. M. Pohlenz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1918), 437: "quodsi gaudere talibus bonis animi, id est virtutibus beatum est omnes que sapientes is gaudiis perfruuntur, omnis eos beatos esse confiteri necesse est."

34. Perhaps from Latini *Trésor* 2.52.9; cf. Bernard, *Sermones in quadragesima* 5.6, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–80), 4:375: "Divina enim est, et non carnalis delectatio; et cum in his delectamur, plane delectamur in Domino."

35. Perhaps from Latini *Trésor* 2.54.3, quoting Prov. 5:22.

36. Latini *Trésor* 2.53; cf. Cicero *De oratore* 1.212, ed. K. Kumaniecki (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905), 82.

37. Combined from: Seneca *Epistulae morales* 66.39: "Si ratio divina est, nullum autem bonum sine ratione est, bonum omne divinum est"; 66.32: "Virtus non aliud quam recta ratio <est>. Omnes virtutes rationes sunt"; 66.39: "Et ut quod volo exprimam breviter, materia boni aliquando contra naturam est, bonum numquam, quoniam bonum sine ratione nullum est, sequitur autem ratio naturam. Quid est ergo ratio? Nature imitatio."

noble, certainly greater is the nobility of those who have taken it from the treasuries of prudence.”³⁸ The better to explain what prudence is and where it comes from, let it be known that its beginning is with the understanding—a power and activity of the soul, as Saint Augustine observes, given by God individually to some men more than to others. The role of this understanding is to imagine everything seen and unseen; according to the capacity of this imagination to investigate well, knowledge is engendered. This knowledge brings a closer understanding of practical things; that is to say, of things one wants to achieve, and understanding of how to achieve them. From this knowledge comes Discretion, who is called mother and guide of all the virtues, and also first among them.³⁹ Of this discretion and what it might be for, the Ecclesiast says that it 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.⁴⁰ And the reason she is called the mother of all virtues is that if ever the virtues were not led by her, they would then not be virtues but vices. So he who scatters the virtue of wisdom among swine will have folly in return, rather than wisdom. Similarly with temperance: if a man striving for temperance and restraint wanted it so much that he allowed his father to be humiliated in front of him, without taking revenge or some such thing, though it was within his power to do so, such “temperance” would be folly. Again, if someone wanted so much to be brave that he held back

38. Not Seneca, but Cassiodorus *Variae* 8.19 (CCSL 96:324–25): “Nam si inueteratae et per genus ductae diuitiae nobiles faciunt multo magis praestantior est, cuius origo thesauri prudentiae locuples inuenitur.” Christine expounds at length on the theme that true nobility derives from virtue in *Long estude* 4101–222.

39. The image of prudence/discretion as the mother and guide of the virtues is a staple of Christine’s thought. In the version that makes prudence the mother of the virtues she quotes it in *Othea* (Parussa, 201–2) where its source may be the *Chapelet des vertus*. The phrase also occurs in various forms in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.22 (Solente, 1:59; Hicks and Moreau, 78), *Prudence* 238r, *Trois vertus* 1.6 (Willard and Hicks, 25; Lawson, 45), and *Prison/Épistre* 35. In the earlier works it is prudence that is deemed mother of the virtues, in *Paix* and *Trois vertus* it is discretion, and in *Prison/Épistre* Christine speaks of “discretion, which some call prudence,” 35.

40. Quoting Alan of Lille, *De virtutibus et de vitiis et de donis Spiritus Sanctus*, quoted by her previously in *Prudence* 268r. On this earlier occasion Christine had introduced the passage thus: “Cy s’ensuivent les diffinitions des quatre vertus cardinales et de leurs parties selon le opinion des homes ecclesiastiques.” Alan’s definition of prudence was translated by Christine as “discepcion de bonnes et mauvaises choses en la fuyte du mal et l’election du bien” (discernment of good and evil things in their flight from evil and pursuit of good); Rosemund Tuve, “Notes on the Virtues and Vices,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26 (1963): 296. Alan’s treatise was edited by Odon Lottin in vol. 6 of *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1960), 27–92. Christine’s misrepresentation of her source may be due to carelessness, working from memory, or possibly because “un homme ecclesiaste” carried too little weight so she deliberately encouraged her readers to think that this came from Ecclesiastes. See also Latini *Trésor* 2.57.2.

from complaining about some pain that he felt, and thus went without a remedy, this courage would be nothing. Or if cruelty or vengeance were exercised under the cover of justice; or if prodigality, which taxes some to give excess to others, were cloaked as largesse; or if stupidity and cowardice were disguised as clemency and benevolence—these things and others like them would not be virtues but vices, because of the absence of discretion, which serves to determine the right measure in which they are used: neither too little nor too much.⁴¹ So from Discretion comes Reason, who is called God’s daughter; this is because the role of Reason is to distribute all things equally; she wishes that the good be rewarded and the bad punished, and that all the works she accomplishes be in good order. To this end she has brought forth an excellent daughter, particularly adept at keeping everything well organized, namely Prudence. This Prudence serves as much our spiritual as our physical welfare, for through her, man desires to know God and learn the things that lead to salvation and to put them into effect, to love and to fear him. Without this knowledge of God all other prudence is mere folly, and only this good and that which depends on it is called wisdom, which is the principle of all knowledge as the Psalmist says.⁴² In this way the virtues are born and derived one from another; and each one fits well with all of the others. It would be appropriate to treat this very fine subject at greater length, and more subtly by way of Aristotle’s proofs, which my poor understanding can hardly represent or describe; but to keep to the theme of this work we shall pass over it for the time being.⁴³ We should understand that for practical affairs in the physical realm we need Prudence. And another virtue arises from her and operates through her: Circumspection. This virtue is necessary before any kind of work is undertaken by man—especially great matters and weighty deeds. The circumspect man gives mature consideration to the reasons and causes motivating him toward certain undertakings, and when he has thought them over scrupulously, if he finds that his motives are good and just, he is happy to act on them. Nevertheless, it is not enough to

41. Christine repeats a version of this explanation of why discretion or prudence is called the mother and guide of the virtues at *Prison/Epistre* 35.

42. Marginal note: “Res principium sapientiae timor domini” (Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom): Ps. 110:10; cf. Prov. 9:10: “principium sapientiae timor domini et scientia sanctorum prudentia.”

43. That prudence implies all the virtues is asserted by Aristotle: “if a man have the one moral virtue of prudence he will also have all the moral virtues together with it.” Aristotle *Ethica* 6.10.1144b32 (AL 26.3:492); 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.

have a good reason for doing something; rather one must see how it might be accomplished, before deciding on it. For this, four things are relevant: first, what power one has to achieve it; second, what manner of help, and of what quality, one will be able to get for it; third, what objections, resistances, and impediments might exist to raise doubts concerning it; and fourth, what might be the final outcome. And then three further points are pertinent: the first is to weigh up what has happened in similar cases in the past; the second concerns how to make provision for the future; and the third, how we might make good use of present circumstances.⁴⁴

6

Proof that there is no one to whom diverse knowledge is more advantageous than a prince, and some examples concerning King Charles the Fifth

It does not suit anyone to know either better than or more than the prince, whose teaching can be of benefit to all his subjects. Vegetius, *On Military Affairs*, in the first chapter.⁴⁵

Regarding what has been said in the previous chapter, most noble prince, there is a good reason in the authority cited above for taking so long over the description of prudence, for without doubt there is no man for whom it is more appropriate to know many things—and to know best—than

44. This threefold division of prudence derives from ps.-Seneca [Martin of Braga] *Formula vitae honestae* 2, in Martin of Braga, *Opera omnia*, ed. Claude W. Barlow (New Haven: Yale University Press for the American Academy in Rome, 1950), 240: “Si prudens es, animus tuus tribus temporibus dispensetur: praesentia ordina, futura praevide, praeterita recordare.” It occurs in the *Miroir des dames* by Durand de Champagne (Corpus Christi College ms 324, fols. 103v–104r), with more specific reference to its sources in Cicero and Seneca: “Et a prudence iii parties selon ce que dit Tules. C’est assavoir: intelligence, memoire et pourveance. Intelligence et entendement regarde les choses presentes, memoire les choses passees, et pourveance les choses a venir. Donc dit Seneque, se tu veuz vivre selonc prudence tu dois ta vie et ton gouvernement selonc iii temps bien dispenser: les choses presentes dois ordonner, lez a avenir pourveoir, et les passees remember.” The reference to Cicero is unidentified. A similar passage occurs in *Prudence* 250r, in the passage inspired by Martin of Braga.

45. Vegetius *Epitoma rei militaris* 1. Prol., ed. A. Önnersfors (Leipzig: Teubner, 1995), 6. Perhaps quoted from 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, and in Durand de Champagne *Miroir des dames* fol. 1v.

a prince. His prudence and the good order of his life can benefit all his subjects, as much by good example as by their being well governed. This virtue of prudence is needed and through it you may act with circumspection—in everything the first care of the wise in any undertaking, as we have seen. Then your authority will shine forth not only because of your great dignity, now and in times to come, but even more for your virtues and wisdom. One could think of many examples of valiant ancients—such as the noble Julius Caesar, Pompey, Scipio, and other nobles—who first strove to be knowledgeable and wise in planning the great enterprises which they later accomplished, better governed by knowledge than by force of arms. But it will suffice to give you the example of your good grandfather, the very wise King Charles, the fifth of that name. May God by his grace let you resemble him, and you will not lack anything that befits a perfect and wise prince. O, who was more prudent than he, or more cultivated and in all good things more perfect? For, by God's grace, even in the flower of youth, realizing with his great prudence that it is noble and necessary for a prince, no matter how young, to have a mature heart and to understand what should be pursued and what abandoned, he gave up all youthful habits, and behaved in every way as wisdom teaches.⁴⁶ And having made this decision, he dismissed any who might tempt him away from his good intentions, and tried to attract wise, cultivated people of integrity. Far and wide he sent out inquiries for such people, and retained them in all manner of offices, honoring and rewarding them.⁴⁷ In order to be well instructed in everything affecting his spiritual well-being (which is the most important), he sought out among solemn theologians of integrity one very wise master called master Jean de la Chaleur,⁴⁸ and others from whom he often, on certain days and at certain hours, wished to hear lessons of wisdom. Through their teaching he prepared himself to serve God, and to fear and love Him before all else; and he pursued this goal for the rest of his life, through acts of charity to the poor, the endowment of churches, prayer, and other devotions. The evidence can still be seen in many places.

And similarly, in order to govern well the implementation of policy in his realm he sought the counsel of learned jurists so that everything should be

46. Cf. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.8 (Solente, 1:21–22); *Corps de policie* 1.6 (Kennedy, 8).

47. Cf. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.14 (Solente, 1:38).

48. Jean de la Chaleur is mentioned in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.42 (Solente, 2:115), where he is described presenting a discourse in the presence of the Emperor Charles IV on the occasion of his visit to Paris. He was chancellor of the University of Paris from October 2, 1370. See Oresme *Éthiques* (Menut, 5).

done by their advice in accordance with law.⁴⁹ It followed that as long as he reigned, in accord with well-regulated royal order, he kept his realm in great magnificence and ever-increasing happiness. He secured this by maintaining perfect justice—by keeping his knights well ordered and busy with their training and other duties, by respecting the clergy’s privileges and rights, by keeping the bourgeois loyal and the merchants (whether foreigners or locals) well regulated, and by keeping peace among the people, not involving them in anything except their labors and trades (as good policy required), nor permitting them any extortion on anyone.

And similarly, so that the realm was well defended and could expand while it was in his hands, he drew into his service the flower of chivalry, from every place where good men could be recommended to him. The best of these he made captains, with all due honors and provisions, as many can still testify.⁵⁰ As a result of his efforts, noble sir, the benefit remains with you; and to his credit and great renown it will remain with the crown, if God pleases.

7

That a prince should let himself be guided by the wise, with examples concerning the said king

A multitude of wise people is health for the whole world and a wise king is a foundation for the people. In chapter 6, the book of Wisdom.⁵¹

In the authority cited above, Solomon means that if the wise are many, all the lands and countries of the world can be preserved. So that none may be misled in hearing this, to be wise is not necessarily to have acquired great learning; although that is very fitting, and those in whom prudence and circumspection are combined with such learning surpass all others in

49. We have translated Christine’s term “clercs legistes” as “learned jurists,” following Earl Jeffrey Richards’s discussion of her knowledge of the legal tradition. See “Christine de Pizan and Medieval Jurisprudence,” in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the 17th International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, ed. Angus Kennedy and others (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), 747–66, and “Bartolo da Sassaferrato as a Possible Source for Christine de Pizan’s *Livre de paix*,” in *Healing the Body Politic: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 75–90.

50. Cf. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.14 (Solente, 1:38). The previous examples of Charles V’s prudent government summarize the longer treatment in 1.14–19 of this work.

51. Ws. 6:26.

wisdom. Nevertheless one sometimes sees very great scholars who, as the shrewd saying has it, are not the wisest. They are not the most prudent in acts of government and policy, nor even in words, no matter how much learning they demonstrate. And while it is true that they know how to argue logically, according to bookish learning, many of them find it difficult to act practically, and in worldly things they are not very able. So let us say that the wise are those who know how to *act* wisely and well, and not those who only have knowledge. And while Aristotle says he is not truly wise who does not know everything, nevertheless those who only know by means of books should be called *erudite*, but not wise.⁵² And therefore among the wise may be counted even lay people who have good understanding, and who know how to manage things prudently: such as wise knights and others who have undertaken many deeds and seen many things come to pass, either in arms or in the politics of the country. From cautious reflection on these things they can see the proper remedies to problems that may arise.

But to return to the first matter: our authority goes on to say that wisdom so enhances a king that he becomes a firm support for all of his subjects. And since, most revered prince, the wisdom of a wise king can only be manifest in good action, and giving examples usually makes a greater impression than giving reasons, I can find no better way to show you how to govern with the necessary prudence than to tell you again about your grandfather. Moreover, since you are directly and closely descended in blood, it must please you to hear of him and his noble feats, and to follow his example. In another work devoted to his deeds I have spoken more fully about him; nevertheless it is useful in this present volume, written in your name, to return to him, so let me not be reproached or taken to be repetitive. O sweet God! Most noble lord, contemplate for a moment, if you will, what a marvelous difference is to be seen between the royal estate then and now. O, what great order in all things—what majesty, what sense, what leadership, what a figure of a prince, what fluency, what eloquence! And what a most revered and respected person he was to see, who at every hour was

52. This appears to sum up Aristotle *Ethics* 6.5:8.1140a–1141b, where Aristotle claims that prudence is not just knowledge of how to act in restricted cases. It is translated as “celui est simplement et du tout prudent qui scet bien conceiller universelment de tout quanque appartient a bien vivre” in Oresme *Éthiques* (Menut, 337). The discussion continues: “Et pour ce dit l’en que Anaxagoras et Tales et telz philosophes furent sages et que il ne furent pas prudent; car l’en voit que il estoient ignorans des choses e eulz utiles et profitables” (343). Christine’s move from a discussion of prudence to a discussion of good and bad counselors also follows Aristotle, since straight after this observation he says: “prudence est vers les choses desquelles l’en seult conseilier” (343).

busy with some good work: whether attending to the good of the public realm, which was closer to his heart than anything else, or to affairs of the church, or to helping foreigners, or to making war, or some other appropriate occupation. Consider his diligence in getting up early in the morning to hear mass, to say his daily office right through and serve God well, then going early to the council. I can assure you: order was kept so well that no member of council would have failed to be there at the right time; nor were there superfluous people, nor anyone unworthy through lack of sense to be at a king's council.⁵³ And whoever spoke best, or made some worthy proposal, did not do so in vain, for he was one who knew well how to listen: to understand and take note. Then the prince sat down at a dinner made ready in good time, after which right up until supper there was space for everyone who had a need to approach him, and he listened to them all most kindly. Similarly, after the siesta, which was never long, and even as he walked up and down taking the air in his well-maintained gardens at Saint-Paul, he expedited anything that needed doing. But do you think that this went on for a tedious long time, as it does nowadays? It wearied him very much to have to spend lengthy periods on anything whatsoever; and furthermore he would not have been able to deal with his many responsibilities if he could not get things done quickly. So he let nothing drag on and he deferred nothing that he could complete straightaway. What a sight it was to see him surrounded by his noble brothers—and other barons, whether or not of his blood—or his valiant knights whom he kept occupied in his wars, or various foreigners who came to visit. How beautifully he was able to receive them all: to speak to them, to put them at their ease and make them welcome! In good order and with dignity, yet with humility also, so that many esteemed him and all felt content. And at his various public ceremonies and feasts, what rich decoration, what sideboards, what rich plate! How well his rooms were hung with tapestries, and how generously people were served! This never happens nowadays. See, noble prince: what wisdom truly is, and what an impression it makes on people!

This king was kind above all the princes of the world, and with joyful demeanor among all people, so that he never spoke or acted harshly against anyone. But still his prudent manner and beautiful eloquence caused him to be regarded with such great respect that no one, no matter how grand, dared cross him in anything—not even his brothers, by whom he was served at great feasts in the presence of eminent foreign lords.

53. The order of the king's day is also described in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.16 (Solente, 1:42–48).

More concerning the said king

And the one who sees bears testimony,
and his testimony is true, and he knows,
because he speaks the truth so that you
may believe. John.⁵⁴

You, Louis, grandson of that King Charles whom I praise with ample justification, might simply listen to the many illustrious knights and others of your household as witnesses to my telling the truth in this matter, if you had any doubts.⁵⁵ But in future times this book will, if it please God, be disseminated and read in many places, since books are as it were *perpetual* in the world, in virtue of the many copies which are commonly made. To those who will succeed you, and to others who hear this, I offer the words cited above, which in relation to my subject mean “the one who saw these things bears witness to them, and this testimony is true, so you who hear should believe it.” Have no doubt: for many, myself included, saw this with their own eyes. O, how well ordered it was when he rode through the town or went abroad! There was no need for any in the crowd to ask: “Which is the King? Which is the King? They are all mixed together!” For truly the good order that was maintained there made it plain to see.⁵⁶ Knights and squires at the front, as is the custom—and God knows how elegantly dressed and mounted they were! No matter what anyone says, have no doubt: as one who maintained a majestic estate—above all other kings, these many years—he would never have suffered his people to be less than richly turned out, and he gave them all that was necessary. There were among his people a number of

54. John 19:35.

55. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 189) suggests that these friends were identified by Suzanne Solente in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1:lxiii–lxxx, but few of the people mentioned there were still alive in 1412. An exception is Jean de Châteumorand, whose chivalry Christine had praised in her *Long estude* 4516–66. Christine may have also had in mind Charles d’Albret and Jean de Meingre (Boucicault), members of the Order of the White Lady on a Green Shield whom she had praised in her poems and who were old enough to have experienced the reign of Charles V in their youth. See *Cœuvres poétiques* 1:208–12, 220–21. Charles d’Albret and his brother Louis were mentioned by Christine in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.7 (Solente, 1:125). Charles, who was made constable of France in 1402, was one of Christine’s patrons and was the recipient of a copy of her poem *Le Debat de deux amans* as well as other poems in his praise. See *Cœuvres poétiques* 1:25–26, 31–32. He also owned a copy of *Advision*. See Henri Stein, “La bibliothèque du connétable d’Albret à Sully-sur-Loire (1409),” *Le Bibliographe moderne* 6 (1902): 91–93.

56. The splendor of Charles’s processions is also described in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.18 (Solente, 1: 49–51).

men-at-arms and crossbowmen, always in front of him, who were kept on wages of twenty francs a month (which I mention because some suggest that he did not pay as much as one does today); and the knights got thirty. The barons went before him, as close as possible with the standard in front of them, and his brothers, if any were there, or others of his blood went behind. But on either side no one came nearer than six feet except the sergeants at arms, who walked all around him. There he was on a tall mount, dressed in royal robes, for he never wore anything else—and I promise you he looked every inch a prince. And then his caparisoned war-horses, with rich saddles, the most beautiful that you could see, came after in great number. So he went, greeting the people who flocked toward him on all sides, as the good people of France are accustomed to do. And when there was a great crowd in a big square, as a sign of love and kindness the King would raise his hat as he received their salute. Thus this lord kept order in all things. O! how well he regulated the affairs of the queen his wife, who was always accompanied by a good number of ladies and maids of honor, and many of her blood.⁵⁷ Certainly her condition was well maintained; and so were his children well cared for, for whom he wished discipline and education.⁵⁸ But their good father left them too early, which was not just a loss for them and the realm, but in general for the whole world. As you have heard, the prudence of this king was demonstrated as much in the act of governing his estate and person as in all other general affairs, as will be shown below.

9

That a prince should act in accordance with counsel; and which counselors are suitable and which are not

Where there are many things, do them
all with foresight. Solomon, Proverbs.⁵⁹

As demonstrated in what has already been said, prince of noble ancestry, and as the authority above says in Latin, he who has many things to do should act on counsel. You have many things to do, so clearly *you* have need of counsel, in order to act with prudence—as you must, if you are to act well. To make this even more appealing to you, the *Book of Proverbs* says, concerning

57. Jeanne de Bourbon (1338–78) married Charles V in 1350. See *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.20 (Solente, 1:76–77) for a description of Jeanne’s piety.

58. The education of these children is discussed in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.21 (Solente, 1:77–78).

59. *P* adds “Salomon in Proverbiis.” Perhaps a remembered quotation of Prov. 13:10: “qui autem agunt cuncta consilio reguntur sapientia.”

prudence and counsel: “If wisdom has entered into your heart, counsel will guard you and prudence preserve you.”⁶⁰ And elsewhere says Solomon: “Act on counsel and you will not regret it.” You should understand, in this, that while counsel in *general* is good, not *all* advice is good.⁶¹ Therefore it is well to give some advice as to who should be chosen as counselors and what they should be like, even though we have already touched on this through the example of King Charles the Fifth. To continue on this topic, Aristotle in his book of the *Politics* said that young men are not called on to advise princes.⁶² Their understanding cannot yet be perfect, because their youth has given them too little space to learn, or to see through wide experience how to recognize the good from the bad. On top of this, their nature runs hot: angry and headstrong, quickly stirred for little reason, quickly deciding without consideration, undertaking at will, without circumspection and without regard to reason. Brief of counsel, full of bloody threats, of fickle opinion, quickly moved to battle and all sorts of sudden actions and ill-considered behavior—all of this condemns their counsel, for through them and their advice many ills have often come about.⁶³ This is borne out in many histories and even in the Bible, which speaks of Rehoboam who lost his realm through believing such counselors.⁶⁴ But call the old and wise to counsel, says the philosopher mentioned, for, as the old, that is to say the wise, have had a long time to learn through study as well as experience, they are the ones who should be believed. For, he says, they do not decide doubtful things lightly, but often anticipate the worst outcomes, for they have seen in their life things turn out thus many times, and they are not moved to believe anything on slight evidence but only if they have proven its

60. Cf. Prov. 2:10–11: “si intraverit sapientia cor tuum et scientia animae tuae placuerit consilium custodiet te prudentia servabit te” (If wisdom shall enter into your heart, and knowledge please your soul: counsel shall keep you, prudence shall preserve you). This is one of Christine’s favorite passages: it occurs in Latin in *Othea* (Parussa, 202) and also in the version “Se sapience est entrée en ton courage, conseil te gardera et prudence te conservera” in *Prudence* 236r.

61. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 3.87.2, paraphrasing Prov. 13:16.

62. Cf. Aristotle *Politica* 1.12.1259b, trans. Guilelmi de Moerbeke (AL 29.1:21), ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1872).

63. Possibly inspired by Aristotle *Ethica* 6.10. Oresme’s translation: “Mais il ne sont pas joenes faiz prudens. Et la cause est car prudence est de chose singuliers, lesquelles sont cognueies par experience. Et celui qui est joene n’est pas encore expert, pour ce que la multitude du temps fait experience” (Menut, 347). The reflections on the hot nature of the young, however, appear to be Christine’s additions.

64. Latini *Trésor* 2.54.2, quoting 3 Kings (= 1 Kings) 14:21–31. Rehoboam is mentioned in a number of Christine’s works: for instance, *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.7 (Solente, 1:19). This example is there used by her to establish the importance of providing a proper education in prudent statecraft for the children of kings. She returns to the example of Rehoboam later in *Paix* (see 3.8).

truth—for often, as Seneca says, truth wears the face of falsehood and falsehood that of truth.⁶⁵ The wise remember that they have been often deceived, so they do not give credence readily; nor do they offer great hope on little foundation and for little reason, for they have often seen that through the turns of fortune things come out unexpectedly. This is why they do not offer hasty advice generated on the run, and warn of the perils of rashly undertaking anything important without good advice and mature consideration, by raising many doubts. And the advice of such wise old men—or even of young men endowed with good habits and weighty good sense, as some are by the grace of God—is very praiseworthy, and they should be held in great respect no matter what their estate. For, as Tully says in his *Book of Old Age*, while the old are not so strong in body as the young, nevertheless they have greater discernment and virtue in counsel, which is of more benefit to the polity—and more praiseworthy, since the virtue of understanding is nobler and more profitable than strength of body.⁶⁶ Solomon bears witness to this where he says: “wisdom is worth more than strength, and the prudent man more than the strong.”⁶⁷ For a single good counselor can be of value to the whole realm, unlike a single strong man, no matter how great his strength should be. Because of which, as I have said elsewhere, certainly the loyal, wise, and good counselor can never be rewarded enough, for infinite is the good that can be achieved by him—so long as he is believed. It is written that Scipio Nasica, a very wise and good counselor, did as much good

65. Approximation of Seneca *Epistulae morales* 102.13 (Hense, 489): “Illi placet verum, veritatis una vis, una facies est: apud hos falsa sunt, quibus adsentiuntur” (To him, a true thing is pleasing, one force, one face of truth; to them, those things which they follow are falsehoods). Cf. *Corps de policie* 1.20: “Dit Aristotle des meurs des vieux et des anciens ou livre de *Rethorique* que ilz ne croient mie de legier pour ce qu’il ont esté en leur vie plusieurs fois fraudé.” Angus Kennedy finds the whole of the discussion of the character of old age in *Corps de policie* in the glossed French translation of Valerius Maximus’s *Facta et dicta* produced by Nicolas de Gonesse and Simon de Hesdin in circa 1400, which Christine quoted extensively, as she herself acknowledges. He identifies the passage as coming from fols. 335b–336b of the manuscript BNF f. fr. 282, which once belonged to the duke of Berry.

66. Cf. Cicero *De senectute* 26, ed. K. Simbeck (Leipzig: Teubner, 1917), 13: “ut enim adolescentibus bona indole praeditis sapientes senes delectantur levior que fit senectus eorum qui a iuventute coluntur et diliguntur, sic adolescentes senum praeceptis gaudent quibus ad virtutum studia ducuntur; nec minus intellego me vobis quam mihi vos esse iucundos.” Once again the original is in the Gonesse and Hesdin passages referred to in the previous footnote.

67. Eccles. 9:16: “et dicabam ego meliorem esse sapientiam fortitudine quomodo ergo sapientia pauperis contempta est et verba eius non sunt audita” (and I said that wisdom is better than strength, yet the poor man’s wisdom is despised and his words are not heeded).

through his counsel concerning the government of the Roman republic as all those other Scipios of his lineage who were so valiant in arms.⁶⁸ The writer of this observes that he had not earned less reward or praise in his civil garb than had the others with all their harnesses and apparel of war.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, although we have praised as counselors wise old men, this does not mean that all the old have sense, or are worthy to have their counsel heeded: for there are some who are quite stupid and mad, and have no virtue or any other value. There is nothing more despicable than a dissolute old age, stupid and lacking virtue. But loyal, prudent, good men, of virtuous conscience, must be listened to. Aristotle says there are two styles of old age: one is that which follows from a well-ordered and temperate youth, and it is this that Tully praises in his *Book of Old Age*. The other is the old age that follows after a youth which is dissolute and frivolous, and this he says is full of misery and open to contempt. Therefore let the man who desires to be virtuous not wait for old age to become so, for the pot always retains the smell that it acquired when new.⁷⁰

10

Concerning good counselors, and how many and which estates should be in the prince's circle

He who corrects a man shall subsequently find favor with him more than he who deceives through smoothness of the tongue. Proverbs, chapter 29.⁷¹

Says Solomon in his proverbs: “He who corrects a man will receive more favor and thanks afterwards than he who deceives him with flattering words.” According to the previous chapter, the old and wise should be called to the

68. *Corps de policie* 1.19 (Kennedy, 34); according to Kennedy, from BNF f. fr. 282, fols. 222d–223a.

69. Valerius Maximus *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 5.3.1, ed. I. Briscoe (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998), 321: “Quis ignorat tantum laudis Scipionem Nasicam toga quantum armis utrumque Africanum meruisse, qui pestifera Ti. Gracchi manu faucibus oppressam rem publicam strangulari passus non est?” Scipio Nasicus is described in this way in the *Corps de policie* (Kennedy, 33–34; n67 above).

70. Cicero *De senectute* 29 (Simbeck, 15): “libidinosa enim et intemperans adulescentia effetum corpus tradit senectuti.” Latini *Trésor* 2.74.9 credits Tully with “the pot always retains the smell that it acquired when new.” The attribution to Tully of two kinds of old age, however, also occurs in *Corps de policie* 1.20 (see n68 above).

71. Prov. 28:23.

councils of princes; so now we should see what good will come of their advice if they are believed. Well, in the name of God, *all* good comes of it—not merely in a single thing but in everything, both with regard to the prince himself for whom counselors are appointed, and generally for all the country. This is because, being wise, these counselors will fall short in neither loyalty nor probity, otherwise their wisdom would be nothing. For as Solomon says, wisdom, prudence, or counsel is nothing if God does not come first.⁷² So they will first induce the prince to be good toward God and to keep his commandments, and in no way counsel him to do otherwise. Similarly, as truly loyal men and not false flatterers, they will reproach and censure him out of loyalty if they see him do or say anything dishonest, against conscience or honor, or not becoming for a prince—with humbly and gently phrased admonishment, if there is need. If he is willing to believe them, he may be a very good and virtuous prince, well ordered in life and morals, for there is none so hard that regular good teaching does no good.

Similarly, since governing an empire, realm, or country includes in its scope diverse and difficult things, it is appropriate that the counselors of the prince should come from various estates, not all from the same. Let them have just one thing in common: probity and good conscience, since any who lack these should not be called on (as was said in relation to King Charles), nor any not known to lead a good life and to be expert in the areas in which they claim to be masters. So in particular there should always be available counselors of four kinds of estate.⁷³ That is to say, two kinds of nobles: first, elite knights or squires, well proved in the use of arms, who have spent all their time working with them, to the extent that they know all or most of what it takes to be a leader of others, with the appropriate duties and responsibilities. These will be suitable to advise on matters of war. For the philosopher says that each who is expert in his art should be believed and oversee the execution of his plans, once the prince has approved them. Secondly, wise older knights or other nobles with natural good sense, who have learned from all that they have witnessed, and are able to comprehend differing conditions of time and of person. They are mature and settled, given to wise words and worthy deeds, of good life and well-ordered estate. It is these who properly reside close to the said prince and counsel him concerning the management of everything pertaining to his royal estate,

72. Prov. 21:30.

73. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 191) points to the similarity between this passage and the *Corps de policie* 1.23 (Kennedy, 400). Kennedy (154) identifies this as coming from Valerius Maximus and from that source identifies the Cicero referred to as *Tusc. disp.* 1.2.4.

and these who are appropriate to be made grand master of the household, chamberlains, and other such offices. To tell the truth, the presence of such nobles is a fine and honorable ornament at the court when foreigners of whatever sort are received, and for the governance of the state generally. The other estates comprise clergy and lay people: jurists and other wise men, whether prelates or not, to whom the laws have taught the right way to govern the polity and community of all kinds of people. They can advise on the administration of justice, and caution the prince to see that the offices of justice, as well as others, are put into good hands, and that those employed are recognized as competent, of good life, and loyal and virtuous—so as to avoid making wolves shepherds, or thieves masters.⁷⁴ And so that finances may be well managed, let the receipt and distribution of funds be in good hands, rather than dissipated in needless purchases or excessively lavish gift-giving—spending so much that payment of legal debts and just wages is held back. This would also prevent fraudulent acts among receivers, disbursers, and all others. Let the prince be advised that to carry on his wars well, and to be served more readily by his own and foreign troops, the soldiers must be very well paid. This would also give them less excuse for oppressing the country and troubling the laborers: no appeal to any right would prevent their being punished, if after being justly paid they took anything.⁷⁵ So will his valiant gentlemen counsel the prince, and it is those of this legal estate who are appropriate to be made chancellor, provosts and bailiffs of large jurisdictions, masters of requests, and other such offices.

The lay members of council—from the fourth estate—should be worthy gentlemen of good condition and good life, bourgeois or others, wise and prudent, who have had dealings with people of various estates and offices, both financial and concerned with the writing of royal or legal documents and letters, and therefore versed in finance and accounts, and such matters. These will counsel the prince on the just and advantageous ways to manage his finances and draw profit from them, and on how to avoid being defrauded of his revenues. They will advise him well; but if they are men of conscience, they will carefully avoid laying before him any means of drawing money by extortion or other unjust means, for they would carry the blame.

74. The “loups pastoures” is perhaps an echo of Dante (*Paradiso* 9.130–32), although the image seems rather common and Farinelli identifies it in Jean Meschinot and later in Martin le Franc: Arturo Farinelli, *Dante nell'opere di Christine de Pisan* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1905), 1:167n33.

75. Christine underlines the importance of paying the troops in order to avoid pillage in *Corps de policie* 1.9 (Kennedy, 14–15). Kennedy refers to Jean Gerson, *Vivat Rex*, in *L'Œuvre française: Sermons et discours*, vol. 7 of *Œuvres complètes*, ed. P. Glorieux (Paris and Tournai: Desclée, 1968), 1170. The theme also occurs in *Chevalrie* 1.14 (Willard and Willard, 41).

Such are the people it is proper to appoint to offices of finance and accounts. Through the counsel of all of the above together—and others of his subjects along with them, such as lawyers, magistrates, bourgeois from his good towns, merchants, and others he might call on as cases may require—the prince can be well counseled, and dispose all his affairs as well as possible.

11

Concerning bad counselors, and the evil that can result from them

The man who speaks to his friend with smooth and false words spreads a net for his feet. Proverbs, chapter 29.⁷⁶

A man, says Solomon in his proverbs, who with sweet feigned words flatters and blandishes his friend—or one whose friend he pretends to be—does the equivalent of spreading nets and snares at his feet to trap him. Following on what we have said concerning wise, loyal, and appropriate counselors, they cannot be rewarded enough nor praised too much, for by their wise and just counsel the whole country can be guaranteed protection. It is a pity all are not like that. We will explain how it is that some are perverted and turn from being good, which is a very great mischief when it happens: it is through greed, which is the root of all evil and all vices.⁷⁷ It is because of this miserable greed—and in order to draw from their lords offices, benefices, emoluments, and profits—that not all counselors strive to know what will profit the soul and body, the glory and honor of the prince, though they were appointed for that task: to encourage him, and give good counsel. For the bad, on the other hand, it is sufficient merely to advise how money might be extracted and brought in, whether by just means twisted to the most sinful tyranny and cruelty, to the detriment of the people, or some other way. So long as it can be dressed up as having some just cause, that is enough. In this work they apply their understanding subtly, pondering at such length that there is no ingenious ploy they will not recommend. They attain a great and devious cunning, which makes them so adept at stratagems that they are very expert at advising on ways and means. But I doubt that their private intentions are

76. Prov. 29:5.

77. 1 Tim. 6:10. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 192) points out that this was the text of Jean Petit's sermon in defense of John of Burgundy's killing of Louis of Orléans. It appears in fact to have been a platitude that was taken up by both sides, and it figures prominently in the speech defending Louis of Orléans read before the king on September 11, 1408, at the behest of Valentina Visconti. See *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.105.

aimed at the prince's own profit. Rather, these intentions spring from the prodigious greed that burns within them, because they know well how to comport themselves to get their cut, and yet leave people with the impression that they have served well and that they are good and wise counselors, worthy of every reward. The worst is that, just as a single virtue cannot exist on its own without attracting the others, so it is with vices, which like the links of a chain are intertwined and hold to each other. Therefore the bad counselor who is full of greed will not do without blandishment and flattery. Using these vices he will hide his acts from any who do not see clearly, for to achieve his end he will employ all manner of flattery in his intrigues. To do this the more effectively he will consider his master's disposition and inclinations, and so seek to trap him. Trying more for his master's favor than to counsel him for the benefit and honor of his soul and body, he will make sure, whether in open council or elsewhere in public or private, to offer only opinions that he believes will please, even if he speaks against his conscience, forbearing to give some other counsel that he knows would be better and more truthful. On the contrary, since there is nobody who is without some vice, if he perceives in his lord some blemish in which that lord takes great delight—like voluptuousness, levity, or frivolity—he will never reprimand him, but will speak words of encouragement to gratify him even more. If the lord is young and carefree, he will not speak for his improvement, but of idle, foolish things. Similarly for his other vices, even cruelty, tyranny, pillage, or other malefactions—he will support him in them all. So it does not matter to him what path his lord takes, as long as he can keep him on a leash in order to govern him completely, or at least for the greater part. And he will behave the same toward anyone he thinks he might need, to effect his evil deeds. So will the foolish prince be deceived, without being on guard against one he wrongly takes to be a friend. He is no friend, but rather one who prefers the feathers to the flesh, and to whom it does not matter what evil is done, nor what its consequences are, so long as he attains whatever unconscionable desire his wickedness prompts him to. It is to this that the above authority in Latin relates.

12

Again concerning bad counselors

With the multiplication of the impious, crimes will multiply, but the just will see their destruction. Proverbs, chapter 29.⁷⁸

78. Prov. 29:16.

With regard to the subject of the preceding chapter and this that follows, Solomon speaks extremely well in the Latin given above, for there is no doubt that when there are many troublemakers and traitors all evils will be multiplied; and experience teaches us that this is true. So we take up once again the subject of false ministers and disloyal counselors, of whom there are many surrounding any great lord or powerful man. There is no greater peril in the world; indeed, when they sense that he is disposed to put faith in their false advice, there is no horror they will not put into his head. O! if they sense that he is lecherous, nothing is required but to work to satisfy him by diligently seeking and finding girls and married women of all estates to serve him, deceiving them with many tricks, trying to outdo each other, and the one who knows best how to use them is the best servant. God knows what deceptions are contrived on these occasions! Or if their lord is covetous, the pillage, extortion, and unfair levies they advise as ways of extracting money are similarly without bounds. If he is cruel and pitiless, alas! The evils that ensue are hardly thinkable. For then nothing will prevent their persuading him that to be a true lord he must persecute all sorts of people—have heads cut off, some people put to death, others imprisoned or exiled. He must avenge every displeasure, so that he is held in fear, and spare nobody so that none will dare stand up to him. They claim that it is justice well executed, to make sure that many die because they have said things about him, or are so much as suspected of not being his friends or supporters, or in agreement with him. It is not right for him to put up with anything; rather he should in all cases take revenge, as lord and master. And thus “a household is conducted according to its lord”;⁷⁹ by these means the evil counselors become the favorites of the evil lord. And thereby, because of the authority that they are seen to have when such things happen, the simple and peaceful folk fear them so much that they do not care what they have to pay or do to ransom themselves from these evil men, as long as they can live in peace, free of cruelty. For their part, they are well aware of this, and like nothing better than to fleece them to the full if they sense that they are at all rich, whether by threats or otherwise. So they keep them in subjugation and fear with their words full of menace and exaggeration claiming that they have pissed against the sun⁸⁰ and that they will show them how. Furthermore, if those poor

79. Proverb, repeated in 2.18, “Si que dit le proverbe commun que selon le seigneur est la maisniée duite.”

80. According to Emile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–61), this means “offended someone in a high position.”

guiltless innocents want to bring them around with their goods, God knows how hard a bargain these traitors drive, saying that they well deserved to be punished and if it had not been for them their life would have been forfeit. But if it happens that someone attracts their hatred, whether recently or a long time ago, and these wicked people see an opportunity to be avenged—O, what cruelty is then committed! I believe that there is no torment sufficient to punish the acts that such a man is subjected to. So discord and dissension are sown by these people, both in private and in the public realm; and this they glory in, for it is out of such trouble that they take their prey, and just as it is said that the death of the sheep is the life of the wolf, so these could not profit from such things if sedition were to cease.⁸¹ If I were to go on forever speaking of the evil which follows from bad counselors and seditious people—such as the ruin of soul, body, honor, and all the good of the said lord, and the destruction of peace, and the rebellion of his subjects—I would not have related one thousandth of it. The fortune of these wicked people may appear durable for a time, while God permits it as a scourge for the sins of His creatures. But such violence cannot last for long, and God will not allow it to go on forever. As the words at the end of the authority in Latin say above, the just will see the ruin of these people. That is, while for a time they may rule, one will see them in the end destroyed and brought down by divine justice, to the joy of the common good. This is shown in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Phaeton, through presumption and overconfidence, sought to meddle in driving the chariot of the sun; because of which foolhardiness the earth and its vegetation were all ruined, for he did not know how to keep to the right path and everything was burnt before him. But the god Jupiter, hearing the cries of the creatures harmed by him, in the end struck down with thunderbolts this madman who had intervened through arrogance in the affairs of others, which were none of his business.⁸²

81. This whole passage reads as though it is intended as a commentary on the events that followed the peace of Chartres, which resulted in Jean de Montaigu being executed because of his past friendship with Louis of Orléans. Christine may well have been upset by this, as she had praised Montaigu for his generosity toward her in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.17 (Solente, 1:179). During this period, many others feared for their lives, including William Tignonville, who for a while was afraid to return to Paris and whose property was confiscated. See Enguerrand Monstrelet, *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries*, trans. Thomas Johnes (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), 1:148–49. The accusation that Louis of Guyenne was surrounded by false counselors during this period was also made by Monstrelet. He was clearly criticizing a group of young Orléanists who had the ear of the prince; it is unclear whether Christine would have endorsed his criticisms. Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, 1:239.

82. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2:1–326, ed. W. S. Anderson (Leipzig: Teubner, 1981), 27–36.

Concerning bad officials and the means by which they attain office

They are wicked who are as well placed
as if they had the deeds of the just.
Ecclesiasticus, chapter 8.⁸³

Among the other great evils that can come from such greedy and unscrupulous counselors as described above, there is one in particular that affects the prince, as well as certain others. This is that they can promote people to offices—whether of justice or finance, or many other positions and ministries—who are neither good, nor men of probity, nor even competent to do what the office requires. Or they put these people in posts around the prince and in his service, so that if any bad report concerning them should come up, these people can snuff it out—or prevent it from coming forward at all. They even place such people in financial offices, so that they will work for them in return for a share. Indeed, there are many who have contrived to pay out large sums of money, either their own or someone else’s, giving it liberally to whoever procured such a post for them—those who gave a good report of them and their lives to their lord, testifying to their goodness about which they know nothing, so that rightly or wrongly, they are installed there. There is no doubt that just as it is greed that has bought them such a position, from this motive also they will work in the exercise of these offices, both to recover what it has cost them, and to enrich themselves or rise immediately to great standing by setting up a grand household. So they must now determine how money, gifts, and emoluments can be raked in, whether from the prince or elsewhere. Ah! God knows how because of this great robberies, extortions, and pillage are committed by these people, without any regard to conscience—nor any care that in the end they will have to account to God for their faults. This they disregard. I speak of the evil ones; the good I except. *Ecclesiastes* speaks of the iniquitous and their deeds in the passage set out above, which says that there are some pitiless and wicked people so entrenched in their evil, and so good at covering and whitewashing it, that they seem to do nothing unjust; and this is a great peril, when under such cover they find the means to execute huge frauds. In such appointments there are many perils, and much evil follows in many places and countries

83. Not Ecclesiasticus but Eccles. 8:14.

when they are made for the benefit of the persons appointed and not for the offices, because the office is sought first and competence afterwards (which is opposite to the way it should be). For this reason the Romans considered that for offices to contribute to the general public good it was better to fill them well than to provide for private interests; and therefore they did not distribute offices as favors or gifts, or at the request of people, but gave them to the most worthy and wise. Against those who say that honors change behavior, they never gave anyone office until good sense had already shown itself. Even offices of arms were given to the wisest and best-trained.⁸⁴ It was not enough for them that a man be merely handy with arms, if he did not wield them intelligently—for they thought that good sense was more profitable than force, even in deeds of knighthood.⁸⁵ And if anyone had undertaken any enterprise foolishly, without regard to the law of arms and of reason, even if good came of it for the captain, it was never attributed to the prowess of the one who did it, but to good luck. Conversely, if something went badly even though it was undertaken sensibly and with good reason, they blamed fortune and not him who had undertaken it. Thus good sense was valued above all other things. It pleases God, as I have said elsewhere, that in such cases order be maintained in all things, after the manner of those consummate statesmen, the Romans.⁸⁶ Offices ought to be granted not through such simonies or favors but by pure, true, and loyal election by well-informed men of probity on the basis of good inquiries, to whoever is of most worth and merit. And let each station be filled according to what is needful—such as in knighthood, as we have seen, choosing the most expert and wise in matters of arms, with the qualities demanded of captains of whatever degree according to their capacity. Similarly in matters of justice: appoint those learned in justice, law, and the customs of the country. And likewise with other offices: only those who are capable and good should be put in them. Above all, in order to avoid the harm that we saw can come from greed, none, whatever his knowledge, should be chosen unless

84. Here, and elsewhere in this text, Christine uses forms of “exciter” where one would expect forms of “exerciter.”

85. A.-J.-V. Le Roux de Lincy, *Le Livre des proverbes français*, 2nd ed. (Paris: A. Delahaye, 1859), 2:83; J. Ulrich, “Die altfranzösische Sprichwörterammlung *Proverbes ruraux et vulgaires*,” *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 24 (1902): 1–35, no. 244.

86. *Corps de policie* 1.12 and 2.14–17 discuss the necessity that knights love honor, and 2.15, in particular, illustrates the Romans’ love of honor over money. The virtues of the Roman knights are also a theme of Wisdom’s speech on chivalry in *Long estude* 4223–500. Also throughout her *Fais d’armes et chevalrie*, Christine extols the Romans, their love of honor, methods of training young men, and valor in war.

it is known by men of probity—from reliable, honorable sources, untainted by envy or the desire to do harm—that his life is good and that he is a person of good conscience and praiseworthy conduct. This was how the said King Charles did things. He even refused his brother the Duke of Anjou an office in Languedoc for one of his servants—because he was informed that this man was a player of dice. He gave it instead to a man of simple estate who he was informed was good and wise.⁸⁷ Through consistent use of this procedure, all offices will be filled advantageously, because when they see that none are received in them except those who are worthy and good, those desiring to achieve such honor would take pains to be capable and worthy of attaining it.

14

Concerning who should be court officials and servants

Who wishes to love life and see out his days in prosperity should restrain his tongue from evil, and his lips should not speak deceit. Let him refrain from evil and do good; let him search out peace and follow it. Epistle of Peter.⁸⁸

Because the class of officers, which we spoke of in the previous chapter, can include officials of seigneurial courts and their servants, among others, it seems good to us in this chapter to speak of certain things that encourage the *good* officers in particular (though they are relevant to all), and not just dwell on the bad. Where virtues and good deeds are lauded as worthy to be upheld and followed, vices and bad deeds are seen as unworthy, and to be shunned. Saint Peter teaches this in his Epistle, as is expressed in Latin at the beginning of this chapter: “The man who wants to follow a good rule in life to the betterment of his days should watch that his tongue does not speak evil, and that no false or treacherous words issue from his lips. Set aside evil and do good; desire peace and follow it.” These teachings of Saint Peter quoted above serve to introduce five principal attributes that the good officer of the court should have, whether he be of great or humble estate. These are love, loyalty, good speech, diligence, and good nature. First, he must have love for his master, which encompasses the soul at least as much as the body—otherwise

87. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.19 (Solente, 2:58–60).

88. 1 Pet. 3:10–11.

it would not be love. The effect of this love should show itself in everything that touches the good of the said lord—in body, soul, honor, renown, and profit. He should pursue all these—guarding, advancing, and maintaining them with all his power in the carrying out of his duties. Above all, he should shield his lord with his body in all just and reasonable cases where there is need. It is true, as everyone knows, that true love demands all this; so the love must not be feigned, nor the service aimed at currying favor with the lord, in the hope of some reward. Service done only for such reasons is not done for the love that one has for the person, but for his goods. However, it is with this kind of love that powerful men are often loved; and they deceive themselves greatly, as Tully says, when they believe in times of prosperity that they are loved by those who lead them on with false blandishments, while everything appears different if ever fortune turns from sweet to bitter. As soon as power is lost so too are such friends.⁸⁹ However, since it is no part of the true servant to love with such a love, we turn to the second attribute appropriate to him, which we said was loyalty. This loyalty will command him that whatever happens, even if it means death, he will not say or do, nor suffer anything within his power to be done, against the honor of his lord. It commands that he serve his lord well and loyally—whether in prosperity or in bad fortune, poverty or riches, or in whatever situation he is in; and that he will do his duty as long as he is with him, even more in adversity than in prosperity. These are the things that loyalty requires of the good servant. It will rule out for him the false disloyal contracts, robberies, and diverse hidden or manifest frauds that many officers engage in—embezzling without conscience, claiming that it doesn't matter if they spend or pilfer, because though these are their lord's goods, he is very rich. They deceive themselves, for without fail they will be damned, and will render account to God. And worse, there are some who under cover of office extort from and rob many poor people, such as their lord's own collectors. Such men are neither good nor loyal, and should not be tolerated when they are found out.

15

Again concerning good servants

The tongue kills more than the sword.
Solomon, Proverbs.⁹⁰

89. Cicero *De amicitia* 61 (Simbeck, 69).

90. Not Proverbs, but perhaps false recall of Ps. 56:5, “et lingua eorum gladius acutus,” or Eccles. 28:22, “multi ceciderunt in ore gladii sed non sic quasi qui interierunt per linguam suam.”

As Solomon says above, many people are killed by the blade of the tongue. This authority concerns servants who in fact betray their lords in many ways, in the guise of good service, by diverse flatteries. They themselves are the means of their destruction—of their goods or of their honor or, as has sometimes happened, even of their person. O God! What a horrible crime here! Is there sufficient punishment in the world for such disloyalty? Certainly I think not; and of such people, I have no doubt that, supposing that through some favor they are tolerated in this world, in the other they will be put in the profoundest hell—or a deeper place such as Vergil describes for the case of false Judas. For there is no worse fault than to betray one's master.⁹¹ But when Dame Greed burns strong in the heart of the bad, all of this is brought by her.

With regard to the next good attribute that the officer of the court should have, we have said it is an honest tongue. This gift should be manifest in three ways. One, always to speak good, true, loyal words to his master and encourage him toward the good, within the officer's power and with what it falls to him to speak about. Two, to keep his lips sealed about his lord's private business, whatever it may be, and neither from threat of death nor with the prospect of gaining the whole world to reveal it. And three, to make no bad reports: whether in blaming someone else wrongly through envy; through some particular hatred in order to disgrace him or to have his property or his office; for some other unjust cause; or through flattery and false blandishments to extract goods from him by evil means. Ah! One can hardly say enough about this honest tongue, as much with regard to what it should say as to that about which it should remain silent. And if it dares not, at least let it be silent and not speak the opposite—nor speak against conscience through flattery in order to please the master, if the speaker does not want to displease God. But since in the entourage of lords there are generally few like this, Seneca's point in the *De Beneficiis* is sound: that there is nothing in the world great lords have a greater lack of than someone to tell them the truth—for flattery, with which they are generally served, would scarcely allow the truth to be told them.⁹² The *Policraticus* says that the flatterer is the enemy of all virtue and that he blinds the one who believes

91. Allusion to Dante *Inferno* 34.

92. Cf. Seneca *De beneficiis* 3.15.3, ed. E. Hosijs (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914), 61; *Corps de policie* 1.10 (Kennedy, 16), according to Kennedy (150), cited from Hesdin and Gonesse 2c.

him as much as if he had driven a nail into his eye.⁹³ Truth should be told to the lord by his good servant: that is to say, truth told wisely in circumstances of loyalty, for the good and honor of that lord, both in soul and in body. Flattery should never be heard—those flattering reports given to the lord to please him, wrongfully encouraging him in the direction in which he seems to be inclined, as was already said above in a chapter on bad counselors. Nor blandishments directed at making him laugh, making him speak words of mockery or detraction about others at their dinners or during their entertainments, nor urging him to incite them to sins of the flesh or other vices.⁹⁴ The lips should be sealed against such things, as the authority quoted above suggests. The fourth attribute appropriate to the servant who seeks to live well is diligence in serving his master: to be ready at any hour, awake and prompt. Such diligence comprises also obedience in any just and reasonable matter. Everyone should understand that it is no small thing to place oneself in service. For, while the tie of marriage is a sacrament of the Holy Church which permits a man to leave his father and mother to join his partner, nevertheless, when the two partners are with their mutual agreement placed in unrelated households, they will be required during their service to leave one another, and while preserving their marriage vows, at the same time, to pledge their loyalty to this service. By just such obedience and diligence is the good servant or officer known, for in this there is a double profit: as much to his master by the servant's bringing him whatever benefit, honor, and pleasure he can through serving in his office, as to himself in deserving good wages and rewards for his excellent service. O, what a great asset is the good loyal servant! Certainly it is impossible to reward him too much, where there is no flattery or adulation. Let us consider what genuine flattery amounts to, lest anyone believe that it is diligently to obey and carefully serve, to be awake and ready to serve and do and say his master's or mistress's pleasure in anything worthy and without sin, to keep one's peace without murmur and without disobeying or failing to do anything that is appropriate. Is that flattery? No, indeed! Rather it is the province of a good loyal honest follower or serving woman so to behave. Genuine flattery is when the servant, in order to please his lord, gives him evil advice on matters of sin—whether to do with finance or with women, or cruelty or whatever

93. John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 3.4, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, CCCM 118 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), 179: "Adulator enim omnis uirtutis inimicus est." Also quoted in *Corps de policie* 1.10 (Kennedy, 16; 190 above).

94. Cf. *Prudence* 243v.

it might be—and pursues the act, seeks it out, and makes use of it against his lord's good honor and conscience, in order to win his thanks and bring benefits to his own fortune and condition. So I say that such a follower is neither good nor loyal, for he leads his master to fall into hell—and himself with him as well.

Similarly, the fifth attribute of the good servant is to be good-natured, so that he seeks peace and keeps it. O! what a good attribute in any officer of the court or servant, whoever it may be! For by him much good may be done. He may appease his lord if he sees that he is ill-disposed toward someone for some reason, and through gentle words, if it is something of which it is fitting for him to speak, change his mind when his lord wants to punish someone who is wrongly accused through envy, as often happens at court. The nature of such a man is always to use good words, and to make peace between the riotous and the troublemakers to the extent of his power: not to blame anyone, but to excuse people willingly, and to have pity on the downtrodden. When he wants to say something, he makes sure in advance that he says nothing that might turn out to displease someone or bring blame, or which might call forth some rancorous response. He is friend to everyone—to God first of all, who loves peacemakers most—of sweet cheer and benign carriage, happily greeting and honoring people, gracious in deed and word. Such a man is naturally loved by nearly everyone. But the opposite—the riotous, quarrelsome, and discordant man—can disrupt not only the court of a prince, but a whole county or city by disseminating evil words and spreading dissension among the closest friends. His riots can bring about assemblies of the people so that a whole town can be moved to do unimaginable evil, and such a man is more to be shunned and driven away than the serpent. So ends this first part.