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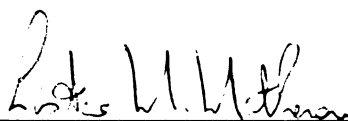
INTERROGATING BOUNDARIES:
CHRISTINE DE PIZAN AND HER INFLUENCE
IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

presented by

DOMINIQUE TIEMAN HOCHÉ

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

PH.D. degree in English



Major professor

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INTERROGATING BOUNDARIES:
CHRISTINE DE PIZAN AND HER INFLUENCE
IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

By

Dominique Tieman Hoche

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Department of English

2003

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ABSTRACT

INTERROGATING BOUNDARIES: CHRISTINE DE PIZAN AND HER INFLUENCE IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

By

Dominique Tieman Hoche

The politics of book ownership and the politics of book readership are not that fundamentally different: they share an interest in the provocative relationship between writer and reader. Christine de Pizan enjoyed a vibrant readership in late medieval France, and her influence spread to England, but little has been known about the details of her influence. This study asks who were these English readers, what works did they own and read, and why did they enjoy reading Christine de Pizan? Establishing the characteristics and range of Christine's original readership (the Yorkist, Lancastrian, and ultimately Tudor court) allows us to begin understanding the ways in which England responded to an author as celebrated and as unusual as Christine. Her popularity in England began with the readers associated with Anthony Woodville (Earl Rivers), and her influence spread through the interaction of this circle to the larger literary culture of the time, and then further, beyond the scope of her own popularity. Her

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writings became a part of both broad cultural texts and cultural mores. *Feats of Arms*, the touchstone of this study because it was favored by the Woodville circle, not only contributed to the rise of military professionalism in the 16th century and modern humanitarian law, but provided readers a new way to approach chivalry and masculinity. Christine's readers were exposed to early modern ideas that question the theories and politics of identity and responded to her provocative new challenges to the conventions of gender, which in turn contributed to her influence on late medieval society.

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To DMT, for encouraging me to begin this long journey

To JLS, for helping me reach the finish

To my father, for inspiration

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Introduction

Christine de Pizan fascinates me: the risks she took as a woman writer; her commitment to women's well-being, respect, and treatment; her love of education and teaching; her thoughtful and innovative approach to politics, chivalry, history, biography, and philosophy; but I am also equally entertained by her wit, and find ideas and expressions of thought in her writing that provoke me to challenge not only the accepted academic views of medieval chivalry, masculinity, and identity, but also gender.

Christine's readers have all shared in her sense of learning and discovery, her joy in gaining knowledge, and her deliberately intimate relationship with her literary audience. My goal in this study is to explore a reader's response to Christine's works, focusing on her immediate legacy in fifteenth and sixteenth-century England. Christine de Pizan (1364-1430) enjoyed a vibrant readership in late medieval France, and her influence spread to England, but little has been known about the details of her influence. This study asks who were these English readers, what works did they own and read, and why did they enjoy reading Christine de Pizan?

While there is quite a range of writings by Christine,

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my focus is on the works that appealed to what is called the Woodville literary group, and specifically *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie* (translated as *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and Chyvalrye* by William Caxton in 1489, and most often called *Deeds of Arms*). I choose *Deeds of Arms* for several reasons: first of all, it is the least studied of Christine's significant works, and this gives me a great opportunity to offer original research. Second, next to *Epistle of Othea*, *Deeds of Arms* is one of the favorite works of the Woodville circle, and the examination of the historical and literary circumstances behind the translation and dissemination of the work reveals the influence and appeal of Christine's writings on the Woodville circle and the interaction of the group with the larger literary culture of the time. Third, *Deeds of Arms* is a text that looks deceptively simple, and yet is surprisingly complicated: it is a mix of Christine's interpretations of prior military manuals and her own research, and as a result is a combination of what one might call military tactical 'chestnuts' and Christine's own idiosyncratic approach to power, authority, class, and gender. While the military information would most likely be the reason a fifteenth-century reader picked up the work to read, it is certainly Christine's own personality and

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her approach to masculine identity made the work appealing and ultimately worth including among the first printed books. In that she was a woman writing about masculine identity, her popularity suggests a public awareness of Christine's deliberately protean and provocative gender identity as a writer.

I have divided the dissertation into six chapters, each of which builds on the previous in order to move from concrete facts to speculative theory. Each of the chapters is a whole within itself but they are not independent of each other. Chapter Four was written first because the central material focus of this dissertation is *Deeds of Arms*. Chapter One was next, which positioned both Christine and *Deeds of Arms* within the historical context. Chapter Three allowed me to present *Deeds of Arms* within a textual perspective, and Chapter Two gave me the background for a prosopographical perspective. The fifth chapter allowed me to bring together the three final material elements of historical influence, political inheritance, and cultural reflection. Once these studies were finished, only then did I feel comfortable in presenting the more ephemeral literary theory in the sixth chapter. In all, the parts are interrelated and dependent upon each other to

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provide the integrity of a new interpretation of Christine's value and influence.

I began with the provenance of Christine's works, determining which manuscripts were used by Christine's readers, translators, and printers in England. I discuss provenance as it applied to Christine's works, and then as a master example I follow the provenance of London BL MS. Harley 4431. I identify, for each of the works used in England, the applicable French manuscripts and their provenance, and the English manuscripts and incunabula and their provenance. And finally I suggest the nature of why these particular texts were chosen for dissemination.

The second chapter examines the small literary group in England that encouraged and translated many of Christine's works, introducing them to the court of Edward IV and Richard III. I began with an overview of the Woodville literary circle, then describe and discuss the persons and personalities of the group. The preferences of the Woodville circle led to the introduction and dissemination of Christine de Pizan's *L'Épître d'Othéa*, *Proverbes Morales*, *Le Livre du Cité des Dames*, *Le Livre du Corps de Policie*, and *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie*. Through a comparison of their libraries I was

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able to reach a general picture of the circulation and knowledge of Christine's works among the Woodville circle.

The third chapter offers the reader an overview of chivalric texts that were available to the Woodville circle, with the intention of placing Christine's works and appeal within a larger social/literary context. Framed between an analysis of Sir John Pastons' reading interests, including his own work, the *Grete Book*, the primary focus of this chapter is a discussion of the scope of chivalric texts available in fifteenth-century England. Based on this discussion of chivalric texts, I begin to speculate on the psychological appeal of *Deeds of Arms* for the Woodville circle.

The fourth chapter focuses on *Deeds of Arms*: I begin with the origins of the text, looking at John the Fearless's request for Christine to write the work, then I discuss her own background in regards to *Mirror for Princes* texts, the construction of the text, and Christine's portrait of the ideal knight and her understanding of the aristocratic mystique and its connection with early modern individualist thought.

Chapter Five extends this inquiry into the influences of *Deeds of Arms*. Christine's direct popularity fell in England by 1545, and so this chapter looks at the rise of

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Christine's indirect influences on Renaissance views of chivalry. I have divided this chapter into three parts: the first part considers the arguments for and against her position in the early modern canon; the second part builds on this to discuss Christine and *Deeds of Arms's* affiliation with and influence on medieval political thought; the third part pursues the influence of *Deeds of Arms* on Elizabethan popular culture, namely Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which shows some identifiable parallels in thought and political philosophy with *Deeds of Arms*.

The sixth chapter draws together the speculations and theoretical musings I have offered since the third chapter: what were the implications of someone like Sir John Paston reading Christine de Pizan? What was the appeal? Drawing on the contemporary gender and queer theory of Judith Butler and Jonathan Dollimore, I explore Christine's ludic play on identity and her 'performance' as a gender dysphoric writer.

It is highly likely that Sir John was able to peel back the layers of queerness in Christine's presentation of (1) a woman writing, (2) a book on chivalry, (3) using a manly female persona, (4) which tells men how to perform in court and battle, (5) while speaking to the men with a personal tone that is outside of cultural norms, (6) and

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The aim of this dissertation is to explore boundaries: to find the scope of the Woodville literary circle, to define and undefined chivalric texts, to discover how Christine defined masculinity and through her explorations, discover how Christine defined the boundaries of herself. To interrogate a boundary is to test its edges -- to see how far it can be pushed out, and how far it can be stretched or crushed into itself before it loses its form or essence. I question the dividing lines between medieval and modern, the limits and inclusions of reader-identity, and the nature of the "queer" in medieval literature.

In my pursuit of these boundaries I rely on the invaluable criticism of historian Lee Patterson, who has provided Medievalists with an astonishingly fertile ground of inquiry by renovating Medieval Studies. In this dissertation I rise to Patterson's charge that "what needs to be challenged is the crude binarism that locates modernity ("us") on one side and premodernity ("them") on the other, thus condemning the Middle Ages to the role of all-purpose alternative" ("Margin" 93), and part of my particular challenge is to the idea that the generation of modern identity did not begin with the Renaissance, but

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existed in the Medieval mind as well. Patterson insists upon "the connection between writing and the making of history," leading to "knowing that the understanding of the past determines the shape of the future" ("Margin" 107). It is upon this understanding of the Medieval and Early Modern that I am able to build my argument in my final chapter on the queerness of Christine. Interrogating boundaries brings us back to the issue of Christine's influence, the provocative nature of her writings, and the fact that her imagination captured her contemporary readers as much as in the present it captures us.

I would like to thank Dr. Evelyn Gajowski for her suggestion of the title "Interrogating Boundaries." Her eternal enthusiasm for Shakespeare and her faith in me and professional guidance will always be a source of inspiration. My deepest thanks to Dr. Lister Matheson for his patience, perpetual good humor and encouragement despite the fact that we live in interesting times.

Chapter One

The Provenance of the Works of Christine de Pizan in Fifteenth-Century England

In order to begin a study of the influences and reception of Christine de Pizan in fifteenth-century England, it is necessary to determine which manuscripts were used by her readers, translators, and printers in England. While others have preceded me in this task, they have concerned themselves with the provenance and reception of individual texts, instead of looking at the larger picture.¹ My aim in this chapter is to gather together the provenances of Christine's works that were translated into Middle English in order to determine the scope of the general circulation and knowledge of her works in late medieval England.

The texts that were translated into Middle English are: *L'Épître au Dieu d'Amours* or *The Letter of Cupid* (1399); *L'Épître d'Othéa* or *The Letter of Othea* (1400); *Proverbes Moraulx* or *Morale Proverbes* (1400-1401); *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* or *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405); *Le Livre du Corps de Policie* or *The Book of the Body of Policy* (1406); and *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de*

¹ See Bühler, Byles, Campbell, Curnow, Fenster and Erler, Hindman, and Willard.

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Chevalerie or *The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry* (1410). Beginning with discussing provenance as it applies to Christine's works, we will then as a master example follow the determination of the alleged provenance of BL MS. Harley 4431, then identify for each above work the applicable French manuscripts and their provenance, and the English manuscripts and incunabula and their provenance. Finally, I will suggest the nature of why these particular texts were chosen for dissemination, in order to explore the characteristics and range of Christine's original readership and the implications for our understanding of the audience for her prose works in late medieval and early modern England.

I. Provenance of Christine's Works

The problem of identifying Christine's manuscripts in fifteenth-century England has been somewhat eased by the work of bibliographers Kennedy and Yenai, but the question of provenance is still uncertain for many works.

Provenance is "the pedigree of a book's previous ownership" according to John Carter (166), and the evidence of provenance is used to determine information about the owners of a book. This information can be determined from

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armorial bearings stamped in gold on bindings, stamped names, initials or mottoes, and notes of ownership in manuscripts. A binding style or decoration may identify the traditional style of a previous owner, but "the fact that a particular volume has stamped on its covers the arms of an historical figure does not necessarily mean that the book ever belonged to or was in the library of such a person" (Nikirk 20). Louis XV, for example, regularly gave copies of books as gifts each year that bore his arms on their bindings. Christine herself made many presentation copies in hopes of royal patronage, and ostensibly these copies were bound in a way that would be favorable to her desired patron.² In determining ownership one must always follow what Paul Needham designates the (Neil R.) 'Ker' law of provenance: *Identification of ownerships should be based on definable and classifiable evidence* (541).

The evidence that most readily contributes towards identifying provenance can also be determined from the

² According to Willard, "These manuscripts, written on vellum and handsomely illustrated, were prepared for the royal bibliophiles of the French court. Among these is the Harley 4431...a presentation copy for the Queen of France. Others are the Duc de Berry's *Cite des Dames* (BN Fonds. Fr. 607), his *Épître d'Othéa* (BN Fonds. Fr. 606), and the Duc de Burgundy's *Mutacion de Fortune* (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 9508)" ("Trois Vertus" 435). J. C. Laidlaw points out: "Miniatures painted at the beginning of extant copies of the *Debat des deux amans*, the *Livre des Trois jugemens*, and the *Épître d'Othéa* show Christine presenting her work to her patron. Thus the dedication of a work to a patron can be taken to imply the preparation of a presentation copy" ("Publisher" 41).

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interior of a book: from "book plates displaying arms or names or both; a name or a motto written on a fly-leaf or on the title page; perhaps a shelf mark or auction lot number; or a clipping from an old catalogue" (Nikirk 21). From this, one might think it would be easy to determine the provenance of a magnificent manuscript like the 'Queen's Text' Harley 4431, where Christine herself is depicted in an illumination presenting the manuscript to Isabeau of Bavaria. Christine controlled the copying and illustrations of her works, and her portrait is found in all of her presentation copies and in many of her works copied after her lifetime, making her an easily recognized character (Dufresne 106).³ But the BL Harleian manuscript catalogue as late as 1808 noted that

...this book, which seems originally to have been written for some exalted personage, has a mark in it which shows that it was once also in the collection of the Duke of Newcastle.... To whom it had belonged in France does not appear. (144)

Was the exact provenance unclear in 1808 because of lack of evidence? ⁴ This is unlikely, as historian Sir Frederic

³ Some good examples are in the BL Harley 4431, Boston Public Library Fr. Med 101, Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9551-2, Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9235-7, Yale Beinecke 427, and Paris BN f. fr. 1177.

⁴The flyleaf may be seen reproduced by F. Madden in his "Narratives of the Arrival of Louis of Bruges, seigneur de la Gruythuyse, in England, and of his creation as Earl of Winchester in 1472."

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Madden in 1836 was able to establish a clear-cut provenance for Harley 4431. Was it because of a lack of necessity for elaborate cataloguing? Most likely, as Nikirk points out:

Since booksellers' catalogues reflect the collecting tastes and standards of their time, until comparatively recently catalogues listed only author, title, place of printing, date, and size. For up until at least the early nineteenth century, few collectors bought books from the viewpoint of provenance. (27-28)

The Harleian catalogue of 1808, then, would appear to be exceedingly informational by these terms. Indeed, Nikirk notes:

...until the pressure of scarcity occurred in post-war times, not even a Gutenberg Bible up for sale in the old London auction houses would move the cataloguers to paroxysms of description. (37)

Thus researchers of provenance in that light, it seems, ought to be grateful for the Harley cataloger's verbosity.

Provenance researchers must often rely on the descriptions in catalogues. Unfortunately, sometimes a description in a catalogue is all we have left of a manuscript or incunabulum, as is the case of what appears to be an early printed edition of the *Letter of Cupid*.⁵

⁵ Known as "Le Contre roman de la Rose nommé le Gratia Dei," this incunabulum is "the only known copy of [the] early printed edition of the *Épître au Dieu d'Amours*" (Kennedy 78), once held by the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville, a library formed by Fernand Colomb between 1510 and 1539. Curator H. Harisse noted in the Colombine's 1887 catalogue that "Ce livre, dérobé à la Colombine, a été vendu à Paris en 1884 pour 60 frs" (80), and Maurice Roy substantiates the theft, stating that the manuscript was "acquis en 1884 par M. Le baron Pichon" (II, ix). All we know of the incunabulum is that "Il consiste en une plaquette in-12 de quelques feuilles, sans date ni nom d'imprimeur," and Roy speculates

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Determining the provenance of a manuscript or incunabulum can be difficult and frustrating, but it can also provide an insight into collecting motives, and for the purpose of this chapter, provide an understanding of the original readership and its implications in a specific time period.

My identification of the manuscripts suspected to be used by Christine's readers, translators, and printers was approached in the following manner: using Kennedy and Yenai's bibliographies, I made a list of Christine's works that had been printed in English between 1489 and 1721. From this list of six works I compiled a list of extant manuscripts that might have been accessible to French and English readers. From this list I determined a list of libraries that held the manuscripts in, and extracted all available catalogue descriptions of the manuscripts. Some manuscript catalogues, especially those of the 1868 Bibliothèque Impériale catalogue part of the Bibliothèque Nationale, which has a majority of Christine's manu-

that "*Cette édition, fautive comme toutes celles de son époque, paraît cependant avoir été établie sur un bon texte, c'est-à-dire d'après un ms. de la famille A*" of which he means a family of texts close to A¹ (BN f. fr. 835, 606,836, and 605) and A² (BL Harley 4431) (II, ix). Neither Roy nor Kennedy's research states why a book stolen from the Colombine prior to 1884 would be listed in the 1887 catalogue, nor how the curator knew of its 'fenced' price, nor how Maurice Roy came to know of the owner of the 'hot' incunabulum, nor how Baron Pichon managed to keep the work once it was discovered that it was stolen, nor what happened to the work after Baron Pichon bought it. Unless auction records of the Pichon estate are brought to light, the intriguing trail of this incunabulum is lost. Thus we see the advantages and disadvantages of relying on catalogues, as the descriptions can become detective mysteries in themselves.

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scripts), gave only title, author, and a quote from the first and last sentences of the work. This was not surprising, based on Nikirk's observations on the nature of catalogue descriptions. The result was a list of 96 extant manuscripts that were possible sources for readers, manuscript translations and early printed editions in Middle English. During my research, I also discovered mistaken numbering (Bodley 824 for 821), mistaken work title identification (Paris BN f. fr. 812), and a manuscript that had been completely missed by a major Christine scholar (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Add. 48). Such is the nature of provenance research.

II. BL Harley MS 4431 or 'Queen's Text'

Before describing the provenances of the individual manuscripts, it is important to briefly discuss the provenance of British Library Harley MS 4431, the 'Queen's Text.' This manuscript, dating from 1415, is considered the 'signature' manuscript for many of Christine's works, as it is a compilation by Christine herself of 29 separate works, marking the "culmination of Christine's literary

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career" (Hindman 93).⁶ It is important to discuss first not only because it contains manuscript versions of four of the six texts that were translated into Middle English, but also because it has a clear provenance from which one can model other provenance descriptions.

Cyril Ernest Wright, the Deputy Keeper of the Department of Manuscripts of the Harley Collection, accepted (in 1972) for the 'Queen's Text' the ownership of Isabeau of Bavaria (1371-1435), wife of Charles VI, and Henry Cavendish, the second Duke of Newcastle (1630-1691), and yet there are many more signatures on the frontispiece (folio C₁) of Harley 4431 than just Cavendish's.⁷

⁶ The "Queen's Text" or "Queen's Manuscript" (1415) contains the following works: *Dedication to the Queen, Cent Balades, Autres Ballades, Plusieurs Autres Ballades, Virelais, Rondeaux, Balades D'Estrange Façon, Lais, Jeux a Vendre, L'Épître Au Dieu d'Amours, Le Debat De Deux Amans, Le Livre Des Trois Jugemens, L'Épître d'Othéa, Les Enseignements Moraux, Les Proverbes Moraux, Les Épîtres Sur Le Roman De La Rose, L'Oroyson Nostre Seigneur, L'Oroyson Nostre Dame, Les Quinze Joyes Nostre Dame, Le Livre Du Chemin De Long Estude, Le Dit De La Pastoure, L'Épître A Eustache Morel, Le Livre Du Duc Des Vrais Amans, Le Livre des Trois Vertues, Le Livre Da La Cité Des Dames, Le Livre De Prudence, Complaintes Amoureuses, Encore Autres Ballades, Cent Ballades D'Amant Et De Dame.*

⁷The construction of Harley 4431 has been under debate. Laidlaw suggests that the "Queen's Text" was the result of a single effort ("Publisher" 66); Hindman suggests that it was the result of a compilation of previously written works. She argues that, "In her dedications, Christine usually described the circumstances underlying the composition and presentation of her work, and she did so with a historical exactitude that was perhaps unusual for writers of her time. These few hints from the author, coupled with the more telling physical evidence, appear to sustain the hypothesis that the Queen had asked Christine to make a book that consisted of her complete works and which was formed by joining those books already owned by the Queen with others, newly written, that the Queen did not yet possess" (112). This is a very persuasive argument, as it would not have been the first time

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Uncovering these two previous owners was not difficult: the text is shown being presented to Isabeau in an illustration on the frontispiece, and the illustration itself cleverly contains Charles VI's insignia. The signature of Cavendish must also have been easily identified, as the Cavendish-Holles Library was removed from Welbeck and sent whole to the Harley estate following the death of Edward Harley's mother-in-law, the Duchess of Newcastle, in 1716. Wright justifies his decision by explaining that:

Formal *ex libris* inscriptions in manuscripts offer as a matter of principle no difficulty...Where a name is written with obvious care, or one might say calligraphically, in a manuscript in a conspicuous place such as the first page of the text or prominently and neatly on a flyleaf or even a paste-down, I have assumed it to be that of the owner. (45)

This explanation is in accord with Nikirk, Carter, and Needham's suggestions, and even follows the 'Ker' law of provenance. It is also (at least) an expansion from the 1808 notation where the cataloguers acknowledge only the Duke of Newcastle and have no idea to whom it belonged originally in France. What about the other signatures? Wright does not acknowledge them, following his principle that, "Names scribbled in a manuscript whether on flyleaves or in the margins present more difficulty, but they may be important in supplying a pointer to a possible source or

that Christine responded to a book request; for example, her biography of *Charles V* and *Deeds of Arms* were requested works.

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provenance or locality of circulation, more particularly so if they occur in groups; they are therefore recorded" (45, *italics his*). Therefore, according to Wright, the 'scribbled' names present on fol. C₁ were not important enough to be recorded.

Hindman disagrees with this decision, and protests the strictness of Wright's determination of provenance (despite the 'Ker' law), saying that:

Although such caution is commendable, it seems to be too conservative when such close ties can be shown to exist between successive owners and when it seems to have been unusual to sign a book except as an indication of ownership. ("Reassessment" 120)

Hindman's protestation is supported by the conclusions of Madden and Roy regarding the signatures on one of the flyleaves (fol. C₁), where several bibliophiles or owners have signed their names. The earliest signature on the flyleaf is of Jacquetta of Luxembourg, whom John of Bedford (d. 1435) married in 1432 as a second wife, and she also wrote her motto, *Sur tous autres*, under her name. Hindman surmises that, "If Jacquetta owned the book, as it seems likely, she might have acquired it from her husband, the Duke of Bedford, who was regent of France following the death of Charles VI in 1422 and who in this capacity appropriated many royal belongings" (96). Roy suggests that the actual date was 1425 for the 'appropriation' of the

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text from Royal Library (III, xxi). Two years after the Duke of Bedford died, Jacquetta was remarried to Sir Richard Woodville, who became Earl Rivers in 1466. Beside her signature is that of her son Anthony Woodville (d. 1483), the eldest son by her second husband, accompanied by his motto *Nulle la vault*. Beneath Woodville's is the signature of Louis of Bruges (d. 1492) who beneath it wrote *Plus est en vous, Gruthuse*, although Hindman points out that Harley 4431 appears in none of his inventories. Finally, Henry Cavendish signed the work, adding *His boke*, 1676 [sic], and it was through his heirs that the book came into the Harley family library in 1716, and later into the possession of the British Library in 1753.

Despite 'Ker's law' and Wright's choice of non-inclusion, when three scholars agree on approving the provenance of a work based on historical and paleographical evidence, one should take such designations of provenance seriously. Indeed, the links between Woodville and William Caxton, the printer, are strengthened because of the alleged provenance of Harley 4431. Unfortunately, determining the reading practices of the Duke of Bedford is not clarified by this designation; while it is possible he appropriated the Queen's Text because he was interested in its contents, its author, or its reflection of the

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Burgundian court, it is also equally possible that he took the manuscript because of the value of its rich illuminations. One cannot imagine that much discrimination was made between literature and 'eye-candy' in the 1425 pillage of the French Royal Library.

III. *The Letter of Cupid*

The provenance of the *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* (1399) is difficult to determine, and indeed for the purposes of this chapter, not entirely necessary, as Hoccleve's translation/ adaptation was available for English readers in 1402.⁸ Christine's French work survives in eight French manuscripts: Chantilly, Musée Condé 492; London, BL Harley 4431; London, Westminster Abbey Library 21; Paris, Arsenal 3295; Paris BN f. fr. 604; Paris BN f. fr. 835; Paris BN f. fr. 12779; and Paris, BN Moreau 1686. From these we can eliminate BL Harley 4431 as it has been discussed above. Three of the manuscripts can be grouped together, as they

⁸ Fenster and Erler point out, "Hoccleve's principal debt, of course, is to Christine's poem, though as numerous readers have noticed, his version might more accurately be called an adaptation rather than a translation. Christine's order is considerably rearranged as lines or sections of her poem are juxtaposed in new combinations to create an English poem slightly more than half the French one's length. Hoccleve's frequent practice is to translate a sentence of Christine's as the first two or three lines of a stanza, then to fill the rest of the stanza with his reflections on her sentiments, or his expansion of them"(160).

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are considered to be copies of a lost original, prepared close to 1399. The first of these is the Chantilly, Musée Condé 492, which was listed by Roy as having been sold in 1882 by the Count of Toustain to the booksellers Morgand and Fatout; it was acquired by the Library at Chantilly in 1888 (I, xix). The second is Paris BN f. fr. 12779, which, according to Fenster and Erler "was owned in the eighteenth century by Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye, who had two copies made of it, presently codified as B.N. Moreau 1686 and Arsenal 3295" (24). And the third is Paris BN f. fr. 604, an incomplete manuscript, of which *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* is the thirteenth part of a collection of Christine's works on vellum (beginning on fol. 51), and whose provenance is unknown. London, Westminster Abbey Library 21, is a manuscript that follows an exemplar not unlike Harley 4431. Christine scholars consider it to be a defective manuscript, as it is a miscellaneous collection of works from the 1430-40s that happens to include three of Christine's writings (Fenster and Erler, 24). Its provenance is unknown.

Paris BN f. fr. 835 is actually a section of a larger collection called the 'Duke's Manuscript,' known to have been originally prepared for the Duke of Orleans, but after his murder in 1407 the new recipient of the work was the

Duke of Berry, who paid a high price for the manuscript and added it to his library in 1408-09 (Laidlaw "Publisher" 58). Somehow, the 'Duke's Manuscript' was taken apart and rebound sometime between 1409 and 1523 when Pierre Antoine, a commissioner for Francois I^{er}, inventoried the library of the Duke (Roy I, xi). The manuscripts are now (in order) BN F. Fr. 835, 606, 836, 605, and 607. *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* is in the ninth part of the collection in F. Fr. 835 (beginning on fol. 45) on vellum. That the manuscript was once a single volume is confirmed by the signature of the Duke at the end of folio 607, "*Ce livre est au duc de Berry. Jehan.*" In 1523, Francois I^{er} confiscated the Bourbon properties in Moulin and brought the library to Paris to the Château de Fontainbleau for the King's pleasure and to help begin the Bibliothèque du Roi of Charles IX.

As the triplet copy-texts and the 'Duke's Manuscripts' allegedly never left France, it is unlikely they were available to readers in England. The Westminster manuscript is a good candidate (since it is in England), but since its provenance is unknown, the determination is incomplete. Thus for the purposes of exploring Christine's readership in England, Hoccleve's 1402 translation/adaptation attracts the most attention. In late 1399 Christine

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sent her thirteen-year-old son Jean de Castel to England to provide companionship for the two sons of the Earl of Salisbury. With her son and Salisbury went copies of her works, a collection of poetry that included *Épître au Dieu d'Amours*. This set was not bound into one book (as Christine did not make her first book until 1402) but was a group of separate presentation-quality manuscripts (Laidlaw "Salisbury" 135). It was a copy made from this group of manuscripts that Thomas Hoccleve used to write his *Letter of Cupid* in 1402. J.C. Laidlaw suggests that "the manuscript of *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* on which Hoccleve relied for his *Letter of Cupid* was probably a presentation copy. It may have been sent to Salisbury and then have passed into the king's hands. Alternatively, it may have been presented directly to the king" ("Salisbury" 136). Unfortunately, "it seems unlikely that the manuscript survives from which Hoccleve made his translation" (Fenster and Erler 171), as "very few of these early, separate copies of Christine's works survive today, and none that can be linked with Salisbury or Henry IV" (Laidlaw "Salisbury" 136). From the point of view of determining provenance or readership of any French manuscript of the *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* read in England, the trail ends.

Yet the Hoccleve translation/ adaptation of the work

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had a healthy dissemination of its own, surviving in eleven English manuscripts and several sixteenth-century editions.⁹ The readers of Hoccleve's translation/adaptation did not realize they were reading either Christine or Hoccleve's poem because the work was attributed to Chaucer in all editions until 1532 (Fenster and Erler 172). It wasn't until 1598 that Thomas Speght's edition correctly named Hoccleve as author, but even as late as 1718 the poet George Sewell argued that the poem was nevertheless Chaucer's work. B. Lintot finally printed the poem with a proper assignment in 1721. Indeed, it is possible that the work was not available to the public in French, literate or general, until Roy published Christine's collection in 1885. The audience for Christine's work would have to be determined through the popularity of Hoccleve's poem, but that is a poor way of determining readership. Therefore, the provenance of *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* does not assist us in broadening our understanding.¹⁰

⁹ *Letter of Cupid* survives in Bodleian MSS 1782, 2078, 3354, 3896, 10173; Cambridge University MS Ff. 1.6; the Trinity College Cambridge 600; the Advocates 1.1.6; Durham University Cosin V.ii.13; Huntington Library MS HM 744; and extracts in BL Additional 17492.

¹⁰ There is a suggestion of a connection between Scrope's *Letter of Othea* and Hoccleve's *Letter of Cupid* in that Sir John Astley read them both. Scrope dedicated (c. 1460) what is now Pierpont Morgan Library manuscript M775 to Sir John Astley, and the Astley family armorial bearings are found on Oxford Bodley 638, a manuscript dating from 1450-1475 that contains works by Lydgate, Chaucer, and the *Letter*

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IV. The Letter of Othea

The provenances of Christine's manuscripts of *L'Épître d'Othéa la déesse, que Elle Envoya à Hector de Troye Quant Il Estoit en l'Age de Quinze Ans*¹¹ (1400) lead us almost immediately to the Woodville literary circle, as the work was brought to England and translated early in the fifteenth century. *L'Épître d'Othéa* is found in 47 manuscripts of which 6 have clear provenances that indicate they were available to English readers. Like *Épître au Dieu d'Amours*, the *Épître d'Othéa* was translated into English, and while it was not done during Christine's lifetime, the translation took place not long after her death.¹² For the purposes of this chapter, I shall focus on the manuscripts that either have a clear provenance, or provide a clue to the connection with readers in England.

of Cupid by Hoccleve on fol. 38v. Astley appears to be at least peripherally included in the Woodville literary circle.

¹¹ Translated as *The Letter of the Goddess Othea, which she sent to Hector of Troy when He Was Fifteen Years Old*.

¹² Some manuscripts of *L'Épître d'Othéa* were copied in the 15th century, but are in books that contain other works. Paris, BN f. fr. 1185 and 1644 manuscripts only contain *L'Épître d'Othéa*, but Paris, BN f. fr. 1186 contains *L'Épître d'Othéa* as well as a *La Dance aux Aveugles* by Guillaume Machault and an anonymous *La Danse Macabre*. It is a paper manuscript with colored images, and the Catalogue of the Bibliothèque Imperiale lists it as dated in 1482. The Paris, BN f. fr. 1187, 2141 and 5026 and the Oxford, Bodley, 421 also contain *L'Épître d'Othéa* in addition to other works.

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The provenances of the French manuscripts of *L'Épître d'Othéa* can be divided in four different areas, as the manuscripts were dedicated to four different patrons: the Duke of Orleans (18 MSS), Berry (2 MSS), and Burgundy (3 MSS), and to Henry IV of England (2 MSS). Laidlaw points out that "in the extant copies the dedication found most frequently is that to the Duke of Orleans" ('Publisher' 41). *L'Épître d'Othéa* in Paris BN f. fr. 606 is a part of the aforementioned 'Duke's manuscript,' and Paris BN f. fr. 848 is the earliest copy of *L'Épître d'Othéa* that was dedicated to the Duke of Orleans. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Add. 49, CFM 22 contains a dedication to the Duke of Orleans, and the Fitzwilliam catalogue notes that it was once in the hands of a French convent, although the ownership note is "obliterated." C. Fairfax Murray (who also owned a copy of *Fais d'Armes*) gave it to the Fitzwilliam in 1905. The Duchess of Orleans also appears to have been a patron who enjoyed *L'Épître d'Othéa*, as she had a copy prepared for her, now Paris BN f. fr. 604. It was copied from Chantilly, Musée Condé 492-93, a sister-text to Paris BN f. fr. 12779, which were both collections of the works Christine first had copied and illustrated under the author's own supervision (Laidlaw "Author" 533). Paris BN f. fr. 604 was prepared for Valentina, Duchess of

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Orleans who, according to the inventory of her possessions drawn up after her death in 1408, owned two other manuscripts of Christine's works. Her ownership, indicated in the 1417 catalogue of the library at Blois made for the records of Charles of Orleans, reads "*Le livre de Christine fait pour feue madame d'Orleans, couvert de rouge marqueté*" (Delisle 106). While there is no way to tell whether the book was prepared as a present or as a commission, the royal patronage of the House of Orleans is indubitable.

A work as popular as *L'Épître d'Othéa* (judging from the number of surviving manuscripts and extant early printed editions) was no doubt brought to and copied in England early in the fifteenth century, probably not too long after it arrived in 1425, as article #17 in the 'Queen's Manuscript,' Harley 4431 (Roy III, xxi).¹³ Three manuscripts show evidence of having been copied by English scribes: Oxford Bodleian Laud 570 was copied in England between 1425-1440 (Bühler "Fastolf" 128). London, BL Harley 219 contains *Épître d'Othéa* as a fifth text, and the Harley cataloger notes that the manuscript was "*Mis en vers François, et dédié a Charles V. Roy de France, par Christine fille de Thomas de Pizan de Buloin le Graffe, et Conseiller du mesme Roys avec Commentaires amples la*

¹³ For 1425 date, see Roy; for 1415 date, see Bühler.

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dessus." P.G.C. Campbell proposed that the manuscript was the work of a fifteenth-century English scribe, "*qui connaît mal les sons du français et altère souvent les mots: on trouve, par exemple, greek pour grec, uncore, taunt (tant), countre (contrée), lesson (leçon), Joeudy (jeudi) etc*" (664). This suggests that the manuscript was copied in England, and that it was the faulty scribe (and not the cataloger) who misascertained that the work was dedicated to Charles V (as he had died in 1385) instead of Charles VI. And finally, London, BL Royal 14.E.II was made at the request of Edward IV between 1473 and 1483, and was copied by an English scribe from a French original currently in Brussels (Campbell 665).¹⁴

Like *Épître au Dieu d'Amours*, *Épître d'Othéa* was translated into English, but its significance differs as a result of the work's popularity. Bühler points out that, "Not many French contributions of so early a date aroused sufficient interest to call forth three separate English translations within the space of a hundred years, so that on this basis, too, *Othéa* must be regarded as a work of considerable literary significance" ("*Othea*" xiii).

Debating the importance of *Othéa* is not the focus of this

¹¹ Also in the Brussels Bibliothèque Royale is Jean Miélot's Burgundian revision of *L'Épître d'Othéa* (Bibliothèque Royale 9392), completed around 1455, an indicator of "a new wave of interest in Christine's writings at [the Burgundian] court" (Willard "Paix" 91).



chapter, but Bühler's point regarding the number of translations and printings certainly has merit. The French work was first printed in Paris in 1499 by Philippe Pigouchet, then by an unknown printer in Lyon in 1519, then by Philippe Le Noir in Paris in 1522, and three more editions by later printers followed; thus the French *editio princeps* went through six editions in twenty-five years. Stephen Scrope's English translation of *Épître d'Othéa* as *The Epistle of Othea to Hector, or, the Boke of Knyghthode* (c. 1454) survives in six manuscripts (Bühler "Fastolf" 128). It was translated by Anthony Babyngton in 1537 (found solely in BL Harley 838), and translated and printed in 1540 by Robert Wyer.

It is the Scrope translation, however, that appears to have had the widest audience. It was mentioned in the Paston Letters in 1468 (Davis "Modern" 168n.2), and according to Bühler, "other manuscripts of Scrope's translation must have once existed" ("Othea" xvii). The missing manuscripts begin with Scrope's working copy, the actual presentation copy to Fastolf, the one to Buckingham, the one to a "High Princess," and the two owned by Sir John Paston ("Othea" xvii).¹⁵ This indicates that a larger group

¹⁵ In determining which manuscript Stephen Scrope used for his translation, Bühler came to the conclusion that three manuscripts were candidates: Paris, BN Fonds. Fr. 12438, Paris, BN nouv. acq. Fr. 6458,

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of readers had access to Scrope's *Letter of Othea*, possibly as many as had access to the literary circle connecting Scrope, Worcester, Fastolf, Woodville, and Caxton. Stephen Scrope was the stepson, ward, and secretary of Sir John Fastolf, and William Worcester was a secretary to Fastolf as well. Earl Rivers (born Anthony Woodville) and Sir John Fastolf were connected through service in the wars in France, and Woodville, the brother-in-law to Edward IV, was also a good friend and patron of William Caxton. The Woodville literary circle thus provides a greater picture of the circulation and knowledge of Christine's works in England, and merits further consideration.

and Oxford Bodleian, Laud 570 are all dedicated to Jean de Berry. Scrope says in his introduction that Christine compiled the work for the Duke, and so it was necessary to find a manuscript that contained that dedication. Bühler then eliminated the Paris manuscripts as unaccessible, and that left Laud 570, a decision supported by six corresponding "misreadings" in both the Scrope and Laud texts that are found in no other texts. Since Laud 570 also contains the motto of Sir John Fastolf, *Me fault faire*, on folios 23 and 93, Bühler asks, "What could be more natural than to suppose that Laud 570 was the very manuscript which Scrope held in his hand while making his translation of Christine's work?" ("Fastolf" 126). But this is not to be, as Bühler finds three errors in the Laud manuscript that do not appear in the Scrope translation ("Fastolf" 127). Harley 4431, which Bühler uses as the authoritative text, likewise avoids these errors. In this light, Bühler comes to the conclusion that not only was Laud 570 written in England, but, "If one assumes that a French original was in the possession of Fastolf about 1440, that Scrope made his translation from this particular manuscript (apparently no longer extant), and that in the year 1450 (or 1454) a copy of this French manuscript was made for Fastolf, all the textual problems are resolved. It seems reasonable to infer, therefore, that Laud 570 is a "sister-text" to Scrope's English version and that both these texts derive from a common ancestor" ("Fastolf" 128).

V. *Morale Proverbes*

The path to the English audience of Christine's *Proverbes Moraulx* (1400) is short, and leads almost immediately to Caxton's press. *Proverbes Moraulx* is available in four manuscripts: London BL Harley 4431, Paris BN F. fr. 605, Paris BN f. fr. 812, and Paris BN f. fr. 1990. The first one, the 'Queen's Manuscript,' contains *Proverbes Moraulx* on fols. 261v-263a, and the second one is part IV of the 'Duke's Manuscript'. The other two contain *Proverbes Moraulx* as part of a collection of Christine's works, each collection being of different works plus the proverbs. However, there may be more manuscripts yet unknown in collections, as Kennedy points out "It is likely that a number of manuscripts of this text have not yet come to light, since the text is sometimes classified anonymously in catalogues *Sub. Proverbes*" (116).

The *Morale Proverbes* of Christyne was first printed by Caxton in 1478 at the command of "my special lorde Therle Ryueris;" three incunabula exist of this printing, but the manuscript of the English translation is unknown (Blades II, 47). Woodville inherited the 'Queen's Manuscript' from his mother Jacquetta of Luxembourg, and this is a likely source of Woodville's translation. But if this is so, then

why did he not translate other equally didactic works in the manuscript? It is possible that Woodville never looked at his mother's manuscript for translation purposes at all, but instead used the copy received from his meeting with Louis de Bretaylles, a Gascon Knight, with whom he sailed in 1473 on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella. During the voyage, Bretaylles gave him his copy of *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which Woodville translated and Caxton then printed in 1477 (Blades II, 39). It is interesting to note that Paris, BN f. fr. 812 has both a French version of Christine's *Proverbes Moraulx* and a French translation of *Les Dis Moraulx des Philosophie* in it, and the presence of the two works of similar didactic tone together suggests that it was not uncommon for them to be associated in one manuscript. Unfortunately, Christine's readership of *Morale Proverbes* cannot be certain from such a small number of manuscripts and incunabula, but, like *Letter of Othea*, an examination of the Woodville literary circle will shed new light on addressing the scope of her general circulation.

VI. The City of Ladies

Like Woodville's translation of *Morale Proverbes*, Christine's *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* (1405) had a limited circulation in English, but it had a large circulation in French and Flemish. Maureen Curnow states, "copies of *Cité des Dames* were to be found in the royal library, as well as in the libraries of the noblemen and noblewomen of the houses of Berry, Burgundy, Orleans, Bourbon, and Savoy; other copies were owned by members of the lesser nobility, by members of the bourgeois class, and by religious order houses" (118). Nineteen manuscripts were possibly accessible to English readers: like *Moraulx Proverbes*, the *Cité des Dames* is in both the 'Queen's Manuscript,' Harley 4431, on fols. 292a-375b and the 'Duke's Manuscript,' BN f. fr. 607, in part V. Several texts exist in single manuscripts: Paris, BN f. fr. 609, 1178, 1179 are separate manuscripts, illustrated and with ornate capitals, containing no other texts but *Cité*; Paris, BN f. fr. 608 is likewise a separate manuscript, but unlike the others it is unillustrated.

Several manuscripts place *Cité des Dames* as well as *Livre des Trois Vertus* together as sister-works. One of these is Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9235-9237, a copy

made around 1450-1475 for the Croy family that was later the property of Marguerite d'Autriche (Willard "Trois Vertus" 439). Another is Paris, BN f. fr. 1177, a copy made around 1460 for Louis of Bruges, and it has "traces of its passage through Louis XII's collection...evident in the shelfmarks for the library at Blois" (Willard "Trois Vertus" 439). And Paris, BN f. fr. 1182 contains *Cité des Dames* in an unusual combination with *Le Livre de Paix*, as well as two other minor texts.

The above manuscript provenances do not suggest a close relation to English readers, and so we must turn to BL Harley 4431 and London BL Royal 19.A.XIX, as it appears that both were in England in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The latter manuscript, according to Curnow, was copied in France, but the British Library catalogue suggests that the white rose of York and the fetterlock (without a falcon) on the lower part of the first decorative border may show ownership by Richard, Third Duke of York (1411-1460). His daughter Margaret was married to the Duke of Burgundy (who himself owned three manuscripts of *Cité des Dames*), and his son Edward IV owned two copies of *L'Épître d'Othéa*. Curnow states that it was BL Royal 19.A.XIX (or a close relation) that Bryan Anslay used for his translation into English (123).

Henry Pepwell's printing of Brian Ansley's translation as *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes* (1521) was done at the request of Richard Grey, Earl of Kent. No manuscript of the translation has survived, but the printed text is extant in two copies and one fragment (Bornstein "Distaves" xiii). There is a question about the woodcuts that illustrate the printed work, as they are remarkably similar to those in the 'Queen's Manuscript,' but Curnow suggests that either Pepwell (a member of the court of Henry VIII) or Ansley (a yeoman of the wine cellar of Henry VIII) were both in the position to be able to consult the 'Queen's Manuscript' for the design of the woodcuts because of their connection with the court. As Richard Grey was the nephew of Anthony Woodville, one of Christine's works again owes its reproduction to the Woodville literary circle.

VII. *The Body of Policy*

The English readers of *The Body of Policy* also owe their reading pleasure to the Woodville literary group, although through a different chain of provenance than seen previously. Nine French manuscripts of Christine's *Le Livre du Corps de Policie* (1406) survive, but only one has a clear provenance: Paris, BN f. fr. 12439 is Philip le

Bon's copy of *Corps de Policie* (Willard "Trois Vertus" 435n). Its sister-texts are Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 10440 and London BL Harley 4410, the latter of which is unfortunately not described with the same attention to detail as many of the other works in the Harley Library. The cataloguer gives the first rubric, and notes that, "On a blank leaf prefixed is an account of the author & her various works, written in the 17th Century, and founded on the Authority of Labbe, Naudæus, &c." But no other relevant provenances are noted.

A second group of sister-texts are Paris BN f. fr. 1197, Paris BN f. fr. 1198-9, Chantilly Musée Condé 294, Paris Arsenal 2681, and New York Public Library, Spencer Collection 17. The provenances of these manuscripts are unknown. Paris, BN f. fr. 1197 and 1199 are illustrated manuscripts, containing no other texts but *Corps de Policie*, and Paris, BN f. fr. 1198 and 1199 is a two-volume version of the text, also illustrated and with ornate capitals.

The only text that has been determined to have a link with England is Chantilly, Musée Condé 294. While the provenance of this text is unknown, it appears to be the text closest to the edition printed by John Skot on the 17th of May, 1521. As Diane Bornstein has pointed out, it was

uncertain for many years as to whether Cambridge, University Library MS. Kk.1.5. (a manuscript dated from around 1470) was the basis for Skot's printing. After studying the textual relationships, Bornstein comes to the conclusion that:

Skot's text appears to be printed from a later copy since the orthography, vocabulary, and some of the grammatical structures in his version are more modern. If this were not the case, he must have modernized the spelling and usage before printing the work...In almost every case, phrases that appear only in the English manuscript or only in Skot occur in the French. The phrasing of the two versions is usually identical. Therefore, it is evident that they derive from the same translation. ("Policie" 26)

This conclusion would be a minor point, except for the fact that the 1470 translation is attributed to Anthony Woodville. Cambridge, University Library MS. Kk.1.5 contains as its frontispiece the coat of arms of the Kentish family of Haute, and William Haute married Joan Woodville, Richard Woodville's sister, in 1429. The Haute-Woodville branch of the family was the most likely owners of *Corps de Policie*, and the work was probably the possession of Richard Haute, the second son (Bornstein "Policie" 18). Richard Haute served in the court of Edward IV, and was a close friend of his cousin Anthony Woodville, who made Haute the overseer of his will (Bornstein "Policie" 19). The manuscript made its way to the library

of Richard Holdsworth, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, between 1590 and 1649, and was acquired by the University after his death.

This literary group therefore encompasses Scrope's translation of *The Letter of Othea*, Woodville's translation of *Morale Proverbes*, Henry Pepwell's printing of Brian Anslay's translation of *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, and Woodville's translation of *The Book of the Body of Policy*. The choice of these texts in the Woodville circle shows a similar interest in what was popular in the courtly Burgundian-influenced circles of Edward IV: "The genres favored are mythological histories, encyclopedic works, chronicles, theological treatises, works on scriptural history, chivalric manuals, and romances" (Bornstein "Burgundian" 3). Through the work of Caxton, those who were interested in the reading matter favored in the Burgundian court could now read the printer's translation of Christine's *Deeds of Armes*.

VII. *Deeds of Armes*

The provenance of *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie* (1410) follows one of the most interesting trails of Christine's works. At the request of John the

Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, and inspired by Petrarch's letters, Christine wrote a manual which combines a lesson on princely education and politics, a treatise on practical strategy and martial law, and a study of the philosophy that emphasizes Roman virtues. The French texts survive in seventeen manuscripts, and are divided into two types: the first acknowledges Christine as author (9 copies), and the second is anonymous (6 copies). The former are, in order of quality determined by Byles: London BL Royal 15.E.VI; London BL Royal 19.B.XVIII; London BL Harley 4605; Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9009-9011; Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 10476; Paris BN f. fr. 603; Paris BN f. fr. 1183; Paris BN f. fr. 1241; Paris BN Duchesne 65. The latter are, in order of quality: Oxford Bodley 821; Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 10205; Paris BN f. fr. 585; Paris BN f. fr. 1242; Paris BN f. fr. 1243; Paris BN f. fr. 23997.

In order to examine the provenance of these works, I will go from the least known to the most known determinations. Paris BN f. fr. 603, Paris BN f. fr. 1183, Paris BN f. fr. 23997 and Paris BN f. fr. 1242 all bear the red stamp of the Royal Library with the double monogram of Louis XV (1710-1774), and one may surmise that the texts were rebound and added to the library during that time. According to Byles, Paris, BN Duchesne 65 consists of

extracts of literary and historical works (including *Fais d'Armes*) written in the hand of the historian André Duchesne (1584-1640) (xxiii). Paris BN f. fr. 1243 and Paris BN f. fr. 1241 both have on their bindings the arms of Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-83), the chief finance minister to Louis XIV of France. And Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Add. 48, CFM 21 is, according to the Fitzwilliam catalogue, a French manuscript from the second half of the 15th century. It is described as "*Ashburnham Barrois 378, Lot 115, Sotheby's, 10 June 1901. Given by C. Fairfax Murray in 1904.*" Only the Fitzwilliam manuscript was readily available to English readers; the others are eliminated from this study.

The better known provenances include those of Oxford Bodley 821, Paris, BN f. fr. 585, and Harvard, Houghton Lib. 168. Bodley, 821 is of English origin, judging from the binding of stamped, white parchment on boards, suggested by Byles to be typical of English work in the late sixteenth century. The Bodleian catalogue agrees, and adds that "A rather later English note on the arms of maister Movun (Mohun) is on fol. 140" and that it was bought by John Starkey in the sixteenth century, and a later hand wrote "*bowght [sic] at 2-hand of Mr. [Denis] Edwards 17 May 1615 for 3s*" (506). Paris BN f. fr. 585 was

made in Bruges for Louis of Bruges, Seigneur de la Gruthuse, and while the nineteenth century calf binding says "Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie par Christine de Pizan" there is no mention of Christine in the manuscript itself. And Harvard, Houghton Lib. 168 is listed in the 1962 Harvard College Library catalogue as having been owned by "Comte Pierre Louis Roederer; Baron Gaspard Gourgaud (1838); book-label of Adriana R. Salem. Deposited in 1955 by Mr. and Mrs. Ward M. Canaday" (Willard "Pilfering" 32). According to Willard, the name of the first owner was Guillaume de Nast, and Baron Gourgaud (the son-in-law of Comte Roederer) was Napoleon's aide-de-camp, General Gourgaud (32). Of these three, Paris BN f. fr. 585 is a very promising link, as Louis of Bruges is connected with William Caxton's early publishing ventures (Willard "Paix" 91). The best known provenances are for London, BL Royal 15.E.VI, London, BL Royal 19.B.XVIII, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 9009-9011, and London, BL Harley 4605. London, BL Harley 4605 is a sister-text to Paris, BN f. fr. 7087 and Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 10476, as the illuminations are almost identical (Byles xix). According to the 1808 Harley catalogue,¹⁶ manuscript 4605 dates to 1434, and the cataloger supplies the entire colophon:

¹⁶ As of 2003, there is no updated version of the 1808 catalogue, although the catalogue itself is becoming available on-line.

"*Explicit. Digatz* [at this point the cataloguer notes that the inscriber probably meant *Deo gratias*]. *Un pater noster et un Ave Maria per mossen Pey* [the cataloguer adds or *Rey*] *de la sita, qui a escrivt a quest livre en l'an de n[ot]re seng[io]r mil ccccxxxiiij°*. *Et fut fait alondres, a xv de May*" (178). The catalogue also notes that an inscription on the first leaf shows that this manuscript once belonged to a Burgundian monastery "*Monasterii Sanct^o Crucis Burdigal, congregat. Sancti Mauri, Catalogo inscriptus an. 1718*" (178).¹⁷

Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9009-9011 used to belong to the library of the family of de Croy, which was begun under Jean de Croy, first Comte de Chimay, who was the literary adviser to Philip le Bon. The manuscripts of the de Croy library are marked with the de Croy arms and the device "*Moy seu.l*" Jean's son Philip continued the library, and, in turn, Philip's son Charles, who died in 1527. Byles notes that on fol. 236 verso is written the inscription, "*C'est de livre de l'arbre des batailles et d'aucuns fais d'armes, et se y a quatre (sic) histoires, le quel est a monseigneur Charles de Croy, comte de Chimay. Charles*" in the Count's own hand. Byles also observes that

¹⁷ The male sign of [^o] is the original abbreviation mark in the manuscript.

the inside cover of the manuscript bears the arms of Marie of Hungary, and this is sensible, as "many of the de Croy manuscripts subsequently passed into the library of Margaret of Austria, later inherited by her niece Mary of Hungary and were eventually deposited in the Royal Library of Belgium" (Willard "Paix" 91). This manuscript does not appear to have left Belgium or to have been available to the average English bibliophile.

The most interesting provenance of French origin is London BL Royal 15.E.VI, a marriage gift to Margaret of Anjou, queen to Henry VI, from John Talbot, the first Earl of Shrewsbury, who escorted her to England for her marriage in 1445. A miniature on fol. 2 depicts Talbot in the act of presenting the book. Byles suggests that Caxton could have possibly had access to this French manuscript, but because of omissions of political nature in Part I of Chapter 5, which Caxton translated in full in his edition, the printer could not have used this text exclusively. The alternate text is London BL Royal 19.B.XVIII, an English copy of the manuscript. This manuscript, according to Byles, "corresponds most closely with Caxton, and has been used as the basis for collation in [this] edition" (Byles

xviii).¹⁸ Nevertheless, Willard suggests that it was the presence of BL Royal 15. E.vi in the Royal Library that "suggested to Henry VII the idea of having William Caxton translate and print the text" ("Pilfering" 31). According to Caxton's epilogue, Henry VII sent a manuscript via the Earl of Oxford so that the proper social classes would be able to read, in translation, about proper and chivalric battlefield behavior.

Indeed, Christine's *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie* is best known through William Caxton's Middle English version as *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, translated and printed in 1490. The Caxton exists in twenty copies, and according to Byles's accounting, only three Caxtons are extant in a larger number of copies than *Faytes of Armes* (20): they are *Tulle of Olde Age* (26), *Golden Legend*, 1st edition (33), and the *Polychronicon* (40) (xxxi). The English readers of this incunabulum included Samuel Pepys, the Earl of Arundel, Sir John Lumley, Thomas Payne, Thomas Lovelace, John Warren, and other bibliophiles.

Those readers interested in Christine's work in England could have had access to the Fitzwilliam manuscript, but probably not to Louis de Bruges's Paris BN

¹⁸ Byles chose BL I.B.55131 "Lumley" as the Caxton from which he made his edition (xxxii).

f. fr. 585. The Bruges manuscript, however, since it was anonymous, could be a part of the provenance trail for the French printings of the anonymous *Fais d'Armes* by Verard in 1488 and Le Noir in 1527. In determining the readers of *Fais d'Armes*, the Caxton edition (due to the popularity of the text in English) appears to be the most fruitful path to follow in looking for Christine's readership.

IX. Preliminary Identification of Christine's Readership

Who read Christine de Pizan? Did class or country divide her readership? The answer to these questions cannot be one simple response, as Christine wrote many different kinds of works, each having a different appeal. Like any professional writer, she was constantly aware of her audience and her patronage. For example, *Épître au Dieu d'Amours* and *Épître d'Othéa* were written under the patronage of the Duke of Orleans, who preferred poetry and romance. When Orleans lost favor, Christine began to write for the Duke of Burgundy, who preferred didactic and historical works and had a taste for early humanistic writings. This is the reason behind Christine's shift from poetry to prose and explains her moving in less than six months from *Le Dit de La Pastoure*, an allegorical poem

written in May of 1403, to *Le Livre des fais et Bonnes Meurs du sage Roy Charles V*, the official biography of Charles V written in January of 1404. Christine herself thus wrote for a courtly audience, indeed, the highest levels of the court, including the Queen and the Dauphin as well as the Dukes of Burgundy, Orleans, and Berry. Christine's writings themselves did not stay within those lofty circles, but radiated out as the years progressed into the bourgeois and merchant classes.

One might think that the English copying of her French manuscripts would be an indication of her popularity in England: BL Harley 219 and BL Royal 19. B.xviii were both copied in England, and BL Royal 15 E.vi was presumably copied for English readers at court. And we know for certain that BL Harley 4605 was copied specifically in London, finished on the 15th of May in 1434 - only three or four years after Christine's death. But, as P.G.C. Campbell points out, in the fifteenth century the French language was losing its hold in England, even at the Royal court. She concludes that, "Donc, pour le grand public, même pour la plupart des courtisans, les oeuvres de Christine devenaient livres clos, ou du moins peu intelligibles et, dans la suite, nous voyons paraître toute une suite de traductions" (665). Thus to determine the

distribution of her works, one must look at the scope and provenance of the translations.

To this end, Campbell adds a final observation, "Il est à remarquer que ces manuscrits exécuté en Angleterre et ces traductions en anglais ne témoignent pas seulement de la popularité des oeuvres de Christine, mais indiquent en même temps que c'est surtout parmi les grands seigneurs qu'elle jouissait d'un renom particulier" (669). The works of Christine, then, were not only popular but also read by the bluest of bloods in England in the fifteenth century. Therefore, Caxton's printing of *Morale Proverbes* and *Deeds of Arms* only spread her popularity to the middle-class English public, instead of introducing her to England. The evidence of *Fais d'Armes* alone would support this evidence, but Frances Teague notes the irony of *Fais d'Armes*, "Written to advise a French prince on war with the English, the work proved more popular in English than in French" (32). Cynthia Brown suggests that while "Caxton played a critical role in introducing to the middle-class English public the works of Christine de Pizan; she already had a readership among the nobles since her own association with the English court earlier in the century" (218), and the connections between Christine's writings and the Woodville literary circle appear to support this idea.

Her popularity in England suggests a cycle that rose in 1400, crested in 1478, and fell in 1536-45 (Brown 215). While the first-generation of printers in France chose to misrepresent Christine's identity and show a lack of interest in her writing, English printers took full advantage of her popularity. Not until 1536 did French printers restore Christine's popularity in her homeland, beginning with Jean André's printing of *Trésor de la Cité des Dames*, which finally presented the biographical and authoritative information that had been removed by previous printers. Despite Christine's increasing popularity in France in the middle of the 1500's, her writings apparently disappeared as a voice in both England and France in the late 1500's, perhaps due to the waning interest in medieval authors, or perhaps due the difficulty of reading Christine's medieval French. Therefore we may now conclude that the audience for Christine's prose works in England began with the aristocratic and moved to the middle-class: the popularity of her manuscripts in the royal court and the number of incunabula that still exist today provides this evidence.¹⁹

¹⁹ Willard sums this point up, "The evidence show that Christine's book was indeed widely read. In addition to two French imprints and the Caxton translation and imprint, a number of manuscripts still exist, including some rather handsome early ones and some later paper copies that give evidence of hard use" ("Art" 14).

Chapter Two

"Here is a coysy werd": The Woodville Literary Circle

The reading group which was fascinated with reading and translating Christine de Pizan's works consisted of Anthony Woodville (brother to Elizabeth Woodville who was the wife of Edward IV), William Caxton, Stephen Scrope, Sir John Fastolf, William Worcester, Richard Grey (the nephew of Anthony Woodville), John de Vere, the thirteenth Earl of Oxford, and Sir John Paston II. Stephen Scrope was the stepson, ward, and secretary of Sir John Fastolf, and William Worcester was also a secretary to Fastolf. Earl Rivers (born Anthony Woodville) and Sir John Fastolf were connected through service in the wars in France, and Woodville was also an acquaintance and patron of William Caxton (as was John de Vere). This chapter will examine the small literary circle in England that encouraged and translated many of Christine's works, introducing them to the courts of Edward IV and Richard III. Beginning with an examination of the political and historical contexts, I will look at the biographies of the members, seeking clues to their literary preferences. I intend to reach a general picture of the circulation and knowledge of Christine's

works among the group in particular so that I may build upon these conclusions in Chapter Three.¹

I. A Lancastrian or a Yorkist Literary Circle?

The translation of *The Letter of Othea* suggests a good origin point of the group's interaction in terms of interest in Christine de Pizan. The French manuscript arrived in England in 1425 as a part of the 'Queen's Manuscript,' BL Harley 4431, and was copied in England by English scribes between 1425-1440 (Bühler "Fastolf" 128); a second *Épître d'Othéa* was copied by an English scribe from a French original at the request of Edward IV between 1473 and 1483 (Campbell 665). The Scrope translation undertaken between 1440 and 1459 suggests an origin date for the group

¹ Samuel Moore's article "Patrons of Letters in Norfolk and Suffolk, c. 1450" presents a strong argument that several additional members of the gentry in East Anglia participated in the literary circle of the area, but as of this time it is evident that they were not connected with the dissemination of Christine's works in particular. These members were: Sir Miles Stapleton (d. 1466), Sir John Fastolf's cousin; John Metham, author of pseudo-scientific treatises; William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk (1396-1446), author and patron; Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV; Henry Bouchier, Earl of Essex; John Lydgate, author and poet; Abbot William Curteis, Lydgate's superior from 1429-1446; Osbern Bokenham, author and poet, Thomas Burgh, patron of Bokenham. These members were either acquaintances or patrons of Lydgate, Bokenham or Metham.

In addition, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447) had connections with the literary circle around Fastolf and Woodville because of his patronage of Lydgate and Oxford University, but according to Susanne Saygin, the Duke's focus was on providing the University with books that focused on the Italian models of education. There is no evidence yet available, however, that Gloucester was connected to the dissemination of Christine's works, and therefore he is not included in this study.

"in the earliest years of the first decade" or 1440-1445 (Bühler "Epistle" xxi).

The translation of *The Body of Policy* is attributed to Anthony Woodville circa 1470. Bornstein provides suggestions for external and internal evidence supporting the claim that Woodville translated the text, and "taken all together, this evidence provides a good case for Woodville as the translator of *Corps de Policie*" (Bornstein "Policie" 36). *The Morale Proverbes of Christyne* as a work is confirmed to have been translated by Woodville, and was printed by William Caxton in 1478. Likewise, the translation of *Fais d'Armes* in 1490 is documented by Caxton's printing of the work. The patron of the printing of *Fayttes of Armes* was John de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, at the bequest of Henry VI.

The last work by Christine connected with the Woodville group is *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladies*, translated by Brian Anslay between 1509 and 1521, and printed by Henry Pepwell in 1521. The printing of the work was encouraged by Richard Grey, the third Earl of Kent. I am hesitant in including this text as a translation in the Woodville circle for two reasons: first, because Woodville was executed in 1483, and some time prior to his death he gave his copy of BL Harley 4481 to Louis of Bruges, who

died in 1492,² and second, because of the puzzle of the political allegiances of the members of the group.³

Bornstein makes a persuasive argument for the Anslays' connection to the Woodvilles:

Pepwell states that he consulted the Earl of Kent about the advisability of printing the translation and published it with his encouragement. Therefore, he dedicated the work to this nobleman. In 1521, the Earl of Kent was Richard Grey, third Earl of Kent. He was the son of Anne Woodville and George Grey and a nephew of Anthony Woodville. Anthony Woodville had owned a manor at Lee, which passed to his brother Richard, who died in 1492. Therefore, the Woodvilles and the Anslays probably knew each other. This is significant because Anthony Woodville was an important literary patron as well a translator of the works of Christine de Pizan...He owned a manuscript that contained a copy of the *Cité des Dames* (BL Harley 4431). Although this was not the manuscript used by Anslay in doing his translation, it may have been consulted by Anslay or by Pepwell in designing the woodcuts for the printed edition since they closely resemble some of the illustrations in the manuscript. (Distaves xii)

The resemblance between the woodcuts and the illustrations suggests that the illustrations could have been consulted in order to make woodcuts, especially if Pepwell had in mind the printing of the work. Bornstein continues:

Various details suggest a connection between Anslay's translation and the literary activities of Anthony

² If Richard Grey, the third Earl of Kent followed his Yorkist family allegiances still in 1521 when the Yorkists had lost power to the Tudors, this would strengthen the hypothesis that the *City of Ladies'* translation and printing may be attributed to a group with Yorkist leanings.

³ McFarlane thoroughly describes the treacherous twists of the Lancaster-York allegiances, "To speak of a Yorkist or a Lancastrian family, apart from the royal houses themselves, is almost impossible when successive generations changed sides with so much freedom"(247).

Woodville. The publication of the *Cyte of Ladyes* may provide evidence for the continuation of a literary circle of the late fifteenth century that had been centered around Anthony Woodville. (xii)

Bornstein's focus is on the *City of Ladies* in her research, and does not take into account the other works of Christine which were available to the group, but she does make a valuable connection between Ansley's translation and a Yorkist literary circle:

Ansley's translation is very close to BL Royal Ms. 19 Axix; it is likely to have been done from this manuscript or from one very closely related to it....The [BL Royal 19 Axix] bears two symbols of the house of York in the lower part of its first decorated border." (xiv)

She refers to the BL cataloguer George F. Warner's suggestion that the symbols indicated possession by either Richard, Duke of York, and/or his son Edward IV, who owned two copies of Christine's *Epistle of Othea*, and concludes that "...we have evidence for the continuation of a Yorkist literary circle that was interested in the work of Christine de Pizan" (xiv).

The idea of a Yorkist literary group appears to be a sufficient reason for including *The Book of the City of Ladies* and a tempting explanation for the interest in Christine's work; however, the idea is not completely compelling because the group was not grounded in solely Yorkist alliances. The idea of a group of like-minded

friends is much more reasonable in that many of the participants in the group managed to skirt the Lancaster-York political battles precisely because they were not politically connected to either Anthony Woodville or the rest of the Yorkist party. Frances and Joseph Gies argue on behalf of the Pastons that:

[Their] position in the Wars mirrors that of much of their class. They were neither Lancastrian nor Yorkist by tradition or conviction but were drawn into one camp or the other by the combination of their own private interests and the posture of whatever great noble -- duke of Norfolk, earl of Oxford, Lord Scales, Lord Hastings -- they depended on at the moment for patronage. In the course of the Wars, the Pastons received summonses from both sides to serve; they evidently declined to heed those from Lancastrian Henry VI in 1459 and Yorkist Richard III in 1485, while acceding to those from the Lancastrian earl of Oxford in 1471 and Yorkist Edward IV in 1475. John Paston III was wounded by a Yorkist arrow at the battle of Barnet in 1471 and lived to be knighted on the battlefield of Stoke in 1487 by Tudor-Lancastrian Henry VII. In part, the Paston men survived the Wars because they were gentry rather than nobility; while their social betters were commonly hunted down and beheaded after losing a battle, Sir John Paston and John Paston III successfully sued for pardon after fighting on the losing side at Barnet. (17)

Despite the Gies argument of non-partisanship on the part of the Pastons, the historical evidence suggests a more complex set of reasons behind the Yorkist favorings. Indeed the Pastons appear to be not so much favored as forced. John Paston did not fight on the Lancastrian side at the "rout of Ludlow" (12 October 1459) under Henry VI (even

though at the time he was "held favorable" by the Lancastrian Duke of Suffolk)⁴ probably because there was no actual battle to be found: Richard, Duke of York, Edward, Earl of March, Richard, Earl of Warwick, and Richard, Earl of Salisbury fled when their reinforcements failed to arrive and when Andrew Trollope (the Master Porter of Calais, one of the most skilled soldiers of the time) refused to fight against the King and withdrew the Calais garrison (Lander 95).

London itself was divided: the people of London supported the Duke of York, but the royal garrison was commanded by the Lancastrian Lord Scales, Richard Woodville. Twelve years later, the Pastons were called again into service, and they chose the Lancastrian side under the earl of Oxford. The decision does not appear to be a matter of politics, but of a personal connection to the earl of Oxford and the earl of Warwick. After Sir John and his brother's capture at the Battle of Barnet, the

⁴ A letter from Friar John Brackley, written after October 12, 1459 discusses the commissions to arrest the supporters of the Earl of March after the defeat of the Yorkist at Ludford Bridge:

The Chauncelere is not good to these lordys, &c., for he feryth the Erle of Marche wyl cleyme be inheritauns the erldam of Ha(...), &c, of which mater I herd gret speche in Somercedde schyre, &c. Wyndham, Heydon, Todynham, Blake, W. Chambirleyn, Wentworth, had late commyssyonys to take for tretowrys and send to the next gayl alle personys, fawtourys, and weel(wyll)erys to the seyd lordys &c. Mayster Radclyff and 3e haf none of commyssyonys directid to 3ow, &c. for 3e bene holdyn fauowrabil &c. Wyndham and Heydon bene namyd here cavserys of these commyssyonys, &c." (Davis II, 1971, pp. 184-5)

Pastons immediately turned to their Yorkist friend Anthony Woodville, a decision which suggests that the natural political inclinations of the Pastons were Lancastrian.⁵

The Pastons did accept the call of the Yorkist Edward IV in 1475, but this war was against foreign enemies, England allying with Duke Charles the Rash of Burgundy against France. Edmund Paston, now 24 years of age, was engaged to serve under the duke of Gloucester (future Richard III) for one year, giving the family Yorkist sympathies. But the Yorkist sympathies did not last long. They returned to their Lancastrian allegiance with the earl of Oxford between 1476 and 1485; sometime prior to 1479, Walter Paston, the second youngest son, made friends with Lionel Woodville, the queen's younger brother, and they hoped to graduate from Oxford University together in that year (Davis II, 1971, pp. 365-6). By 1483, however, the Woodvilles had lost power with the rise of the Yorkist King Richard III, and Anthony Woodville himself had been executed without trial on 25 June 1483 along with Lord Richard Grey (Elizabeth Woodville's son from her first

⁵ The Gies contradict themselves: they suggest that "John Paston III was wounded by a Yorkist arrow at the Battle of Barnet in 1471" (17), and then suggest that "John III was painfully wounded with an arrow in the forearm, perhaps received in the friendly fire mishap [on the Lancastrian side at the Battle of Barnet]" (248). I speculate that John III's antipartisan attitude might have stemmed from this wound; an attitude colored by perhaps his realizing the petty uselessness and aristocratic irresponsibility of the Lancastrian-York conflict.

marriage to Sir John Grey of Groby),⁶ and Sir Thomas Vaughan (Edward IV's chamberlain and a Woodville ally) (Kendall 252).

Richard III again called the Pastons into service in 1485, but John III managed to keep a low profile and decline the Yorkist call from the duke of Norfolk. In a suggestively anti-partisan move, he also declined his old patron the earl of Oxford who was supporting Henry Tudor. John's anti-partisan choice was rewarded by the earl of Oxford, an action reflected in the joining of the York and Lancaster sides into one when Henry VII married Elizabeth of York in 1486. John Paston III's knighting on the battlefield of Stoke in 1487 was the result of John's fighting on the side of Oxford.

Outside of the Pastons' immediate family, the Lancastrian connection extends to Stephen Scrope. Sir John II and John III Paston fought under the Lancastrian Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, during the Battle of Barnet. Stephen Scrope sold Neville the wardship of his six-year-

⁶ The Woodville circle had two men named Richard Grey connected to it, although historians do not always make a careful distinction between them. The first is Lord Richard Grey, born in 1456, the son of Elizabeth Woodville and her first husband Sir John Grey of Groby. He and his brother Thomas Grey, the Marquess of Dorset and Montagu, figure predominantly in the Lancaster-York battles for power. The second is Richard Grey, third Earl of Kent, born c. 1481, son of Anne Woodville and her second husband George Grey, the second Earl of Kent. Both Richard Greys were nephews of Anthony Woodville, and this point is the origin of the historical confusion.

old son and heir in 1466, which indicated that "Scrope had more than a passing acquaintance with Warwick" (Bühler "Epistle" xx). And John de Vere, the earl of Oxford, married Margaret Neville (daughter of the earl of Warwick) and later married Elizabeth Scrope, widow of Lancastrian Lord Beaumont.

Based on the above labyrinth of allegiances, the idea of a solely "Yorkist literary circle" becomes unconvincing. Bornstein's idea that Anthony Woodville was the center of the group also lacks strength because of the influence of Scrope prior to Woodville's involvement, and Ansley's translation after Woodville's death.⁷ The connection to the Woodville family is strong, but the suggestion of a group of like-minded readers is still more persuasive. If they were more strongly connected by similar tastes in literature than they were pulled apart by politics, then it is very possible that it is necessary to use the printing of *The Book of the City of Ladies* as a reference for the group's ending. A solution to this puzzle of whether the circle was partisan or not, and whether to include *The Book of the City of Ladies*, is to look at the biographies of the

⁷ Woodville lends his name to the circle only because he was the highest ranking member; Jonathan Hughes would no doubt prefer the group to be called the "Fastolf Literary Circle"; Samuel Moore might suggest the circle be named after the Duke of Suffolk.

group, examine their links and participation in the group, and look at their literary preferences.

II. Anthony Woodville (Lord Scales, later Earl Rivers)

Based on the series of translation dates: 1440-1470-1478-1490-(1509-1521), the action and influence of the Woodville literary circle lasted for nearly three-quarters of a century.⁸ Woodville himself was not so lucky. He was born in 1442, and was brother to Elizabeth Woodville (wife of Edward IV). He was made Lord Scales by Edward IV in 1461 and became Earl Rivers in 1469. He was executed without a formal trial by command of Richard III in 1483. "Pilgrim and knight, worldling and ascetic, Anthony Woodville was moved by the vision of both the Grail and the Good Life," states Kendall, noting that Woodville was also considered the "most famous jouster of the age" (204). These quasi-contradictions are apparent in Woodville's approach to literature as well.⁹

⁸ The dates 1509-1521 were arrived at by the following calculations: the end date of 1521 was obvious because that was the date that Henry Pepwell printed the translation. The beginning date is a educated guess because the translator Brian Anslay was "a yeoman of the wine cellar to Henry VIII" and Henry VIII reigned from 1509-1547 (DNB II, 503.)

⁹ See Kendall, Davis, McFarlane, Painter, and Crotch for biographical information on Woodville.

"His greatest distinction," notes Davis, "was his interest in literature, especially of an edifying kind" (59). Woodville's version of *The Dictes or Sayengs of the Philosophres* (1477) was the first book printed in England by William Caxton. In 1478 Caxton printed Woodville's verse rendering of Christine's *Moral Proverbs*, and in 1479 he printed Woodville's *Cordyal*, a translation of the French work on the *Four Last Things*. Caxton describes Woodville in the epilogue to Woodville's translation of *Cordyale*:

And not withstonding the greet labours & charges þ^t he hath had in the seruice of the kyng & of my said lord prince as wel in wales as in Englonde, which hath be to him no litle thought & besines bothe in spirite and in body as the fruit therof experimently she weth. Yet ouer that tenriche his vertuous disposicion he hath put him in deuoyr at all tymes whene he might haue a leyser. Which was but startemele to translate diuerse bookes out of frensh into english... Furthermore it semeth that he conceiueth wel the mutabilite and the vnstablenes of this present lyf and that he desireth with a greet zeles and spirituall loue our goostly helpe and perpetuel saluacion... Wherefore he took vpon hym the translating of this present werke named CORDYALE trusting that bothe the reders and the herers therof sholde knowe them self hereafter the better and amende thair lyuyng or they departe and lose this tyme of grace to the recouere of their saluacion. Whiche Translating in my Iugement is a noble & a meritorious dede. (Crotch 38-9)

Caxton appears to have been impressed by Woodville's preference for literary activities over leisure. Or is it possible that Caxton wanted to encourage Woodville's literary leanings? After all, for a printer such as

Caxton, more translations meant more business. Caxton also praises Woodville's interest in the salvation of those who would read his work, but the most interesting phrase is the idea that Woodville wrote his translations, "trusting that bothe the reders and the herers therof sholde knowe them self hereafter the better." Woodville himself gives a good autobiographical description of his motivations for translating his works, and this in turn reveals the man behind the translations -- but not by much, for he was a man of many contradictions. He says in his prologue to *Dictes*:

Where it is so that every humayn Creature by the suffraunce of our lord god is boren & ordeigned to be subgette and thral vnto the stormes of fortune. And so in diuerse & many sondry wyses man is perplexid with worldly aduersitees of the which I, Antoine Wydeuille, Erle Ryuyeres lord Scales &c. haue largely & in many different maners haue had my parte. And of hem releued by thynfynyte grace & goodnes of our said lord thurgh the meane of the Mediatrice of Mercy which grace euidently to me knowen & understonde hath compelled me to sette a parte all in gratitude. And droof me by reson & conscience as far as my wrecchednes wold suffyse to gyue therfore synguler louynges & thankes. And exported me to dispose my recouerd lyf to his seruyce in folowing his lawes and commandements. And in satisfaction & recompense of myne Inyquytees & fawtes before done to seke & execute y^e werkes that might be most acceptable to hym. And as fer as myn fraylnes wold suffre me I rested in that wyll & purpose. (Crotch 111-12)

Woodville suggests that he was caught by his conscience to give thanks for the blessings in his life, an attempt (most

likely) to ward off the downward turning of Fortune's Wheel. The Woodville family's notorious rise to power and fame is legendary, but Anthony was in many ways the black sheep of the family in that he was not caught up in their lust for power. While his father and brother were executed in 1469 as traitors to Henry VI, he managed to escape the Duke of Clarence and Warwick's trap and avoid sharing captivity with Edward. He traveled to Portugal in 1471, and returned to more intrigue and warfare. Woodville gives the reason for his traveling to Spain in 1473 as being "to gyue therfore synguler louynges & thankes" but a wise man would also scheme to keep himself out of the way of the Lancaster-York battles.¹⁰ He continues:

Duryng that season I vnderstode the Jubylee & pardonne to be at the holy Appostle Seynt James in Spayne whiche was the yere of grace a thousand CCCClxxiii. Thenne I determynd me to take that voyage & shipped from Southampton in the moneth of Iuyll the said yere. And so sayled from thens til I come into the Spaynyssh see there lackyng syght of all londes the wynde being good and the weder fayr. Thenne for a recreacion & a passyng of tyme I had delyte & axed to rede somme good historye. And among other ther was that season in my companye a worshipful gentylman called Iowys de Bretaylles, whiche gretly delited hym in all vertuouse

¹⁰ McFarlane notes that between 1460 and 1470, "Victories and disasters succeeded one another so rapidly that it was impossible to foresee what would be the outcome. Nevertheless it was difficult for any members of the class, however constitutionally wary, to hold aloof. Their position involved them. To opt out meant the sacrifice of their expression of their lordly status. Even so a surprising number preferred to lie low. Their absenteeism was as marked on the battle-fields as it was in parliament" (244-45). Woodville enjoyed his lordly status, but not so much that he involved himself in his sister's machinations.

& honest thynges. That said to me he hath there a book
that he trusted I shuld lyke it right wele and brought
it to me whyche book I had neuer seen before and is
called the saynges or dictis of the Philosophers.
(Crotch 112)

I divided his prologue into these two blocks of narrative
because there appears to be a change in style between the
prayerful reasons behind the trip, and the narrative of the
trip itself -- a good example of Woodville's complicated
personality. His language changes from flowery courtly
praise to specific action-oriented travel description. He
is a knight upon a quest, and yet during his quest he can't
resist wanting to read "somme good historye," probably a
chronicle featuring exciting tales of knightly action. He
does admit he is bored, since the ship was "lackyng syght
of all londes." He strikes up a friendship with Louis of
Bretaylles, who gives him his copy of the *Dictes*, much to
Woodville's pleasure. And so we see a man who loves
adventure, travel, excitement and has a keen sense of
spirituality and a love of the quiet contemplative life.

What did Anthony Woodville enjoy reading? We may
assume that he enjoyed reading the works that he
translated, and since they were literature that dealt with
moral improvement, the works suggest an interest in self-
fashioning. The *Dictionary of National Biography* describes
Woodville as having a "zeal for morality" (XXI 884), and

while Caxton describes Woodville as having a "vertuous disposicion," it does not necessarily follow that translating pithy sayings is equal to having a zeal for morality. Woodville did have a natural daughter named Margaret and his will is marked by guilt over unjust property transactions, suggesting that he was neither a faithful man nor one able to avoid the seven deadly sins.

As far as evidence for the actual works Woodville may have read, one may begin the list with the three texts he translated for Caxton. Caxton also mentions that Woodville wrote "diuerse balades ayenst the seuen dedely synnes" (Crotch 39) which have not survived to the present day. I might add to that list the mention of the "good historye" he was reading on the voyage to Spain, and his signature is on the 'Queen's Manuscript,' BL Harley 4431, which strongly suggests that he read this manuscript of Christine's works.

I speculate that Woodville may have read prior to his death in 1483 most everything coming out of Caxton's press, since he was one of Caxton's patrons. Indulgences and advertisements aside, Woodville would have had a broad range of works to choose from since Caxton began printing in England in 1477 with Woodville's own translation of the *Dictes*, and he lived long enough to see his translation be printed in a second edition in 1479 (but not the third

edition in 1489). Woodville would have had access to the first edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, the *Chronicles of England*, *Godfrey of Boloyne*, and the *Polycronicon*, among other works. Woodville's personality was complicated and this suggests his reading interests may have followed his varied social interests; therefore I cannot eliminate any of Caxton's books as 'uninteresting' to Woodville.¹¹

Oddly enough, the only work connected to the group that Woodville had not read was Scrope's 1450 translation of *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, made for Sir John Fastolf. According to G. D. Painter, "Blades and others are mistaken in thinking [Caxton and Woodville] plagiarized Scrope's version and pretended they had never heard of it. Comparison shows that apparent resemblances are coincidental, being due to the prevalent habit of taking over any difficult French words into English, and

¹¹ Woodville was executed with no trial and only a minimal amount of warning, but he was permitted to write his last will during the two months (between April 29 and June 23, 1483) he was imprisoned in the castle of Sheriff-Hoton in Yorkshire (*Historica Excerpta* 244). While imprisoned he wrote a ballad, and had the opportunity to appoint executors, and amend his will. His will is very detailed, listing items as valuable as land holdings and cups of gold down to basic personal items such as "myn aray for my body and my horse harnes" (247). However, he does not mention his book collection, which had to have been large and quite valuable on a personal and financial level. He mentions a general "all other stuffe of howsehold in the Mote and at my place in the Vyntree" but nothing specifically having to do with a library or even a single favored book. He is very concerned in his will with paying off his debts, and he does owe money to "divers creditours" (including Tybold his barber). His memory is very precise in his listing of his possessions and accounts, but I find it out of character for a bibliophile such as he to sell his precious books to pay his bills.

that Scrope's many errors are not repeated by Rivers" (87). Nevertheless, the coincidence is thought-provoking.

III. William Caxton, translator and printer

From Woodville, we move to William Caxton, as the printer was of necessity influenced by the interests and literary tastes of the court.¹² Caxton was born in Kent in 1422 (Crotch xxviii), and spent most of his life in business on the continent. He entered the service of the Duchess of Burgundy in 1469 as the result of her interest in his translation of the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*, and the popularity of his translation spurred him to looking into the new art of printing. At Bruges in 1475 he printed his translation of the *Recuyell*, the first book printed in the English language. A shrewd businessman, he realized the opportunity within the business of printing, and began a second career by returning to England in 1476 and setting up a printing press at Westminster. His courtly connections paid off, and in 1477 he printed Woodville's translation of *The Dictes or Sayengs of the Philosophres*; from that date to 1491 he printed at least

¹² See Crotch, Bühler, Bornstein, and most important, William Blades for an authoritative biography on Caxton.

ninety-six separate books, the most famous being Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1478), *The Golden Legend* (1483), and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485).

Caxton's connection to Woodville has been discussed above, but he also had a connection with John de Vere, the thirteenth Earl of Oxford and Sir John Fastolf. Oxford had been a patron of Caxton from the beginning of his printing career, but he stepped in as a primary patron after the death of Woodville in 1483. Oxford encouraged Henry VII to become a patron of Caxton as well, and the King did so, beginning in January of 1489. Caxton tells how he gained the patronage of Oxford in the prologue to *The Four Sonnes of Aymon* (1489) a work he translated at Oxford's request.¹³ However, this was not the first time Caxton had printed a work for Oxford; evidently Caxton printed the *Life of Robert Earl of Oxford* some time prior to *Aymon*, but we have no record of either the print or the manuscript.

Caxton also explains in his prologue to Cicero's *De senectute*, or *Tullius of Old Age* how he was asked by Sir John Fastolf to print the English translation in 1481: "Whiche book was transltd and thystoryes openly declared by the ordenaunce & desyre of the noble Auncyent knyght Syr

¹³ Painter notes that Caxton called Oxford "my singular and especial lord," a title he had used previously only with Woodville and Arundel (165).

Johan Fastolf of the countee of Norfolk banerette" (Crotch 41). The book was translated from Laurent de Premierfait's French version by Scrope, although it is possible that Caxton received William Worcester's revision (Bühler "Dicts" xliii). Woodville's name is in the circle, but it appears to be Caxton's connections, no doubt coming from his ability to charm the aristocracy, that provide the outlet for the group's literary interests.

Diane Bornstein suggests that his choice of reading material came from the influence of the literary tastes of the Court of Burgundy, not that of the English court: "Burgundian fashions had a stronger effect on Caxton and on the English aristocracy than has been generally acknowledged. They influenced the specific works Caxton printed as well as the rhetorical formulas and ideas that appear in his Prologues and Epilogues" (Bornstein "Burgundian" 1). She argues that the Burgundian influence is the reason why Caxton printed so many chivalric works, the result of "a brief chivalric renaissance" (1) during the reign of Edward IV. Bornstein points out that the chivalric manuals Caxton chose to print were popular reading at the court of Burgundy, and most of the individual works printed by Caxton were in the libraries of Philip the Good and Louis of Bruges (5).

What did William Caxton enjoy reading? It would not be objective to assume that he enjoyed reading everything he printed and translated, but Caxton does carefully explain in the prologue to *The Four Sonnes of Aymon* his rationale:

As the Philosopher in the fyrst booke of hys metha-fysyque sayth y^t euery man naturally desireth to know and to con newe thynges: And therfore haue the Clerkes & people of gret vnderstandynge desyred and coueite to lerned sciences and to know vertues of thynges. Some by Phylosophy, other by Poetrye, and other by Historyes and cronyckes of thynges passed. And vpon these three they haue greatly laboured in such y^t thanked be God, by theyr good dylygence and laboures: they haue had greate knowledge by innumerable volumes of bookes, whiche haue be made and compyled by great studye & payne vnto thys day. (Crotch 106)

If Caxton's literary tastes did not lean towards the work he was translating, he at least "desyred and coueite" the knowledge he was transmitting to fifteenth-century England. Indeed, he printed "Encyclopedias, education, true Classics (though few), morality and religion, allegory, chivalry, Romance, history and the Poets" (Crotch cxxv) and he would have included travel in his lists had he been able to print *Mandeville's Travels* before he died in 1491.¹⁴

The variety of works coming from Caxton's press should not be mistaken for heterogeneity of opinion. For example,

¹⁴ Painter suggests that "Perhaps Caxton was prevented from printing *Mandeville* by his death in 1491; but probably the plan was made inopportune by serious trouble between St. Albans and the Crown soon after he received the manuscript" (179).

devotional texts were extremely popular in the late middle ages, and yet Caxton chose not to publish them until the end of his career. Since devotional texts were read primarily by women, and Caxton was sensitive to literary trends and markets, it is possible he decided to avoid devotional texts because his patrons were male, and he chose to appeal specifically to masculine interests. However, he did understand the interests of his female readers, and cleverly managed to print works that would appeal to both genders. Caxton translated and printed *Blanchardyn and Eglantine* (1489) by the request of Margaret of York, and in his prologue he does a very careful balancing act between the reading interests of his male and female patrons, saying that while the work "specyfyeth of the noble actes and fayttes of warre achyeued by a noble and victorious prynce named Blanchardin...for the loue of a noble pryncesse," it is good reading for both young men and women:

...for under correction in my Jugement / it is as requesyte other whyle to rede in Auncyent hystories of noble fayttes & valiaunt actes of armes & warre which haue ben achyeued in old tyme of many noble prynces lordes & knyghtes / as wel for to see & knowe their walyauntnes for to stande in the specyal grace & loue of their ladyes. And in lykewyse for gentyl yonge ladyes & damoyseyllys for to lerne to be stedfaste & constaunt in their parte to theym that they ones haue promysed and agreed to suche as haue putte their lyues

ofte in Ieopardye for to playse theym to stande in
grace. (Crotch 105)

Caxton thus straddles the psychological relations of patronage between genders and the capitalist relations between the printer (producer) and his reader (consumer). He manages three wins at once: to produce a work that will please his female patron and appeal to female interests; to print a work that will sell on the market to men and women; and to please himself by printing a work that appeals to his own masculine interests.¹⁵

IV. Stephen Scrope, the stepson, ward, and secretary of Sir John Fastolf

Stephen Scrope may appear on the surface of an investigation into the circumstances of the Woodville literary circle to be a minor participant, but his translations, friendships, and acquaintances, like tree roots, keep touching and connecting the individual members of the group.¹⁶

¹⁵ On the connection between the printer and his product, see Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*; Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*; and *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475* Ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall.

¹⁶ For an excellent biography and character analysis of Scrope, Worcester and Sir John Fastolf, see Jonathan Hughes "Stephen Scrope and the Circle of Sir John Fastolf: Moral and Intellectual Outlooks."

Scrope was born in 1396 to Millicent Tiptoft and Sir Stephen Scrope. When Sir Stephen died, Millicent married Sir John Fastolf and since young Scrope was only 13, and heir to his father's large property, Fastolf took him as his ward. Fastolf sold the wardship to Chief-Justice Gascoigne for 500 marks; after three years, and after Scrope caught an unknown sickness, Fastolf bought the wardship back again for 500 marks. When he came of age, he served Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester and Sir John Fastolf in France, but did not profit from the service. He married disadvantageously, and had a daughter, and was forced to sell her wardship to a knight in the same manner which he himself was bought and sold, and he was very regretful of his necessity. Many years later Scrope became involved in the lives of the Pastons because he made an offer to marry 20-year old Elizabeth Paston, but the match was not agreed upon. Scrope finally married Joan, the daughter of Richard Bingham, judge of the King's Bench, in 1459 (Gairdner clxxvii).

Scrope was intimately connected with Sir John Fastolf through family, social, and military ties, and to William

Hughes takes liberties in his analysis of the contributions of Scrope and Worcester to English literary culture, but his social projections based on their psychology appear to be sound, despite the slim material evidence. See Gairdner, Bühler, G.D. Painter, Crotch and McFarlane for additional biographical evidence.

Worcester through serving in the same household. But Scrope held a stronger connection to Worcester because they had similar literary tastes and ambitions. Bühler suggests that Worcester was Scrope's literary executor and it is evident that Worcester revised all of Scrope's work after his death in 1472 ("Dicts" xli).

A good example of Scrope's connections comes from Caxton's printing of Cicero's *Of Friendship*. In his prologue, Caxton praises John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, a very unpopular man known as the "Butcher of England" for his judicial killings under Edward IV. Tiptoft was also a man of pilgrimage, learning, and morality, and was considered to have been very charming, and he was murdered because he defended the Woodvilles against Warwick. According to Painter, "Caxton's praise of Tiptoft was undercover propaganda for the dissatisfied Rivers, who doubtless rewarded him" (114) and suggests that "Caxton's readers would understand the hidden message, that a living man shared the martyred Butcher's virtues and deserved his advancement" (113). Caxton attributes the translation of *Of Friendship* to Tiptoft: "Here foloweth the said Tullius de Amicicia translated in to our maternall Englissh tongue by the noble famous Erle / The Erl of wurchestre sone & heyer to the lord typtoft" (Crotch 44). However, Sir John

Pastons' book list includes a "*Tully de Amicitia* left with William Worcester" and this doubling of the name Worcester makes it difficult to discern whether Caxton confused the scribe with the Earl as translators. Caxton appears certain that Tiptoft translated the work, but the doubt remains because of the connection between Scrope, Tiptoft, Worcester, and Caxton, not to mention the Earl of Oxford:

Tiptoft was Constable of England from February 1462, when he beheaded Oxford's father, to August 1467, when he was sent to Ireland at the Queen's wish to liquidate her enemy Desmond, and handed over his post as Constable to Rivers the father, evidently as part of the deal. Father Rivers held it till beheaded by Warwick in 1469, and Anthony was supposed to have inherited it in theory until Tiptoft regained it in March 1470. To make matters more complicated, Scrope the translator of *Old Age* was a cousin of Tiptoft the translator of *Friendship*; Scrope's mother Millicent, who married Sir John Fastolf in 1409, was the widow of Sir Stephen Scrope and a daughter of Robert, third Lord Tiptoft, the elder brother of Tiptoft's father. (Painter 114)

Bühler suggests *Of Friendship* was translated by Scrope and revised by William Worcester, and that Caxton unwittingly confused the reviser of the manuscript with the famous Earl ("Dicts" xlvi).¹⁷ G. D. Painter disagrees, insisting that

¹⁷Both G. D. Painter and Bühler make valid points in this argument regarding the possible translation of *de Amicitia*, and both agree in three areas: that the Earl of Worcester was an excellent Latinist and could easily have done the translation; that William Worcester was a poor Latinist and is the least possible candidate for translator; and that it is suspicious that Stephen Scrope would have translated one sister-text and not the other. McFarlane, however, argues in Worcester's favor:

But whether it was [Worcester's] version that Caxton printed in 1481 as from the pen of John Tiptoft, Earl of

Caxton was too well connected with the aristocracy not to be correctly informed, and stresses that while the Earl was an excellent Latinist, Worcester was a notoriously poor one, and that the original translation had to be done by the Earl because "both pieces in English are so close to the Latin originals that they can only have been translated directly from the Latin" (113). While G. D. Painter disagrees with Bühler's theory about Scrope and *de Amicitia*, the discussion illustrates that Scrope's literary abilities and social connections placed him in an unusual position: he was not well-born enough to be able to gain financial advantages from his contacts, but he was able to make the most of his position and education to gain literary privileges. He did marry twice (evidently succeeding in the marriage market at some level) and managed to translate four of the most popular works of his time.

Worcester (1427-70), is not so clear, though there are several circumstances that make it probable. It was, Caxton tells us, composed at Fastolf's 'ordinance', and even if it did not strike the printer as odd that a knight could command the services of an earl it must strike us. The terms in which the proem speaks of Fastolf are similar to those used elsewhere by his secretary and would come better from him than from Tiptoft; and there are in places obvious parallels between the wording of the translation and that of Worcester's known works. *Tullius of Old Age* seems to be his rather than the earl's; and that may be true of its companion *Tullius of Friendship* also. ("Worcester" 218-219)

While it is not necessary to ascertain the translator of *de Amicitia* for the purposes of this inquiry, I would in the future like to make a linguistic examination of Scrope's skill with Latin and compare his skill with Worcester's "peculiar Latin" ("Worcester" 210), as it may give an answer as to who the translator might have been.

It is possible, however, that his translations were what made the works popular, and not the other way around. He did have an understanding of what reading material would be interesting to those affiliated with the English court, and had the linguistic skills to advance that understanding. What did Stephen Scrope enjoy reading? We know his translations include *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1450), *Boke of Noblesse* (prior to 1459), *Tully of Old Age* (prior to 1459), and *Epistle of Othea* (after 1440).¹⁸ If we categorize these works, we have a treatise on morality, a chivalric manual, a philosophical treatise influenced by

¹⁸ There is an argument as to whether Scrope or Worcester wrote the *Boke of Noblesse*. When J. Gough Nichols edited the book for the Roxburgh Club in 1860, he said he did not know the author of the text. He suggested it was either William Worcester or Peter Basset because they had both been connected with Sir John Fastolf, but he had no "presumptive proof that either of them wrote *Boke of Noblesse*" (Nichols liv). Sir George Warner argued in 1904 that Worcester was responsible only for the additions written in the margin of the manuscript, but that the translation was most likely done by Stephen Scrope (xlv). Bühler furthered the investigation in 1940 by comparing the Emmanuel College manuscript of the *Dicts* in conjunction with the Bodleian manuscript and the University Library, Cambridge manuscript of the *Boke*, and argued that "from MSS. B and H we know that Stephen Scrope was the original translator, and from the colophon in U we learn that Worcester was the revisor" ("Dicts" xl n.1). Bühler concluded, "On the basis of analogy, it seems safe to assume that the *Boke of Noblesse* suffered the same fate as the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, that is, that the work was originally translated by Stephen Scrope and subsequently 'corrected' by William Worcester" ("Dicts" xl n.1). McFarlane disagreed, and believed that Worcester was the author of the *Boke of Noblesse* despite the similarities between the manuscripts and Worcester's interlinear comments in both manuscripts (Emmanuel College manuscript of the *Dicts* and Royal manuscript of the *Boke*). He argued in 1981 that "To make him the reviser and then 'on the basis of analogy' to give Scrope a hand, if not the chief part, in the composition of the *Boke of Noblesse* is justified by neither evidence nor logic. If Worcester revised one of Scrope's books it does not follow that all books he revised, still less all the books he claims to have written, must really have been by Scrope" ("Worcester" 218).

the classics, and a 'Mirror For Princes' allegorical/chivalric lesson. These follow what was popular for the literary tastes of the court of Burgundy; Scrope even chose two works connected to Christine de Pizan. *Epistle of Othea*, of course, is a direct connection through Scrope's translation of a manuscript of the text owned by Sir John Fastolf. *Boke of Noblesse* is also a translation of a French manuscript owned by Fastolf, but the text itself is a compilation borrowed from French works, primarily from *Fais d'Armes*.

Epistle of Othea was a popular text, judging from the number of French manuscripts which survive today (over 43) and by the number of translations into English in less than a hundred years (three), and its printing in 1540 suggests that *Othea* was still well-read into the sixteenth century. Scrope chose a text that was an example of "that large and influential tradition of moral, didactic, and encyclopedic works...which are now almost totally ignored, but which clearly enjoyed a large readership in the Middle Ages" (Gray 238). Scrope was aware that the work would enjoy a wide appeal, and in his preface in the Longleat manuscript states: "And all-so ye schal fynde here in this seyde Boke Off Cheuallry how and in whatte maner ye, and all othir off whatte astate, condicion or degre he be off, may welle be

called a knyght that ouercomyth and congveryth his gostly ennemyes by the safegard repugnand defence off hys sovle" (Bühler "Epistle" 122). Scrope knew the question of "how to be a good knight" would have relevance to all "astate, condicion or degre"; while his immediate audience was Sir John Fastolf himself, his vision included a broader English audience, including gentry like John Paston II (who owned a copy) and antiquarians like William Worcester.

V. William Worcester, secretary to Fastolf

William Worcester, being born on the "fringes of the gentry" (McFarlane "Worcester" 201), is farther out from the periphery of the group, but his connection to the group is a valued one. If indeed he did translate *De Amicitia* and compile the *Boke of Noblesse*, then his connection to the group is closer, but his value to the focus of this investigation does not increase except to provide a name for whichever man chose to translate and compile excerpts from Christine's *Fais d'Armes* before Caxton acquired her work.

Worcester was born in 1415 in Bristol and died in 1482. Like Scrope, he was descended from a wealthy family and he often made sure his fellows understood his origins,

calling himself William Botoner after his mother's maiden name. He entered Oxford in 1432 and became Fastolf's secretary in 1436, where he managed Fastolf's legal business, wrote his letters, and was trusted by Sir John (although not well paid). He had a full professional life with Sir John for twenty-one years, including marrying the niece of Thomas Howe, Fastolf's chaplain. He is discussed in the Paston Letters, beginning in 1456, because of the lawsuit between Worcester and the Pastons resulting from Worcester's attempt to claim what was due him when Fastolf died in 1459. Worcester contested the estate going to Paston, saying that Fastolf had made him a grant of land for the support of his family, but his suit was settled and he was awarded property in Norwich and Southwark in addition to his own house in Bristol. In his later years he worked for Sir John Paston II and his brother.

Worcester had much less free time than Scrope, and it wasn't until 1478 that he was able to pursue his interest in antiquities and scholarship. He revised Scrope's translation of *Dits Moraulx* in 1472, translated *De Senectute* in 1473, and wrote his *Itinerarium* based on field-work done from 1477-80 (McFarlane "Worcester" 220).

What did Worcester enjoy reading? We can answer this question if we assume for the sake of argument that he

translated and compiled the *Boke of Noblesse* over a twenty-two-year period, beginning in 1453 and finishing in around 1475. McFarlane's argument does have merit in that Worcester had interests peculiar to himself which show up in the work. However, this does not prove that Scrope did not write the book, but only that Worcester definitely influenced or corrected the final version, which can be seen from his interlinear comments. Therefore, the following analysis could apply to either Scrope or Worcester since they had equal literary advantages within the Woodville group (although not social advantages). Regardless of who translated and compiled the *Boke of Noblesse*, we are able to learn a great amount about Worcester's literary interests and education.¹⁹

¹⁹ One might wonder how Worcester or Scrope managed to get his hands on a copy of *Fais d'Armes* prior to Caxton. Of course there may have been other copies of the work in England in 1453, but BL Harley 4605 (in French) dates from 1434 and was most likely in a Burgundian monastery until 1718, not arriving in England until 1808. BL Royal 15.E.VI (in French) was a marriage gift in 1445 from John Talbot the first Earl of Shrewsbury to Margaret of Anjou, queen to Henry VI, but was still in the royal library as of 1490, as it is the most likely manuscript given by Henry VII to Caxton for translation and printing (although the sumptuous illustrated vellum original probably did not leave the court library, but a copy was made at the King's request), and the Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Add.48, CFM 21 was copied in French after 1450. While Stephen Scrope had better connections with the court, there is little potential for a secretary such as Worcester to get a copy of a manuscript that had not yet trickled down to the gentry, unless Fastolf's trust of Worcester allowed him to have access to books that otherwise would be out of his reach. On the other hand, the connection may come from Anthony Woodville, who took a part in the arguments over Fastolf's will, especially over the ownership of Caister castle. The Duke of Bedford's purchase of the library of Charles VI allowed books to make their way into the hands of his wife Jacquetta of Luxembourg, and then into the hands of her son Woodville, and one of

Living with Fastolf did provide Worcester with access to books, and his notebooks attest to his interests.²⁰ They include extracts from a French compendium of the histories of Orosius, Lucan, and Suetonius and from the *Quadrilogus* of Alain Chartier.²¹ McFarlane points out that since Worcester was taking extracts from a French work, this eliminates Warner and Bühler's objection that Worcester did not know French ("Worcester" 215 n.102); Worcester's notes also contain many of the authorities cited in the *Boke of Noblesse: Civitas Dei*, the *Communiloquium* of John of Wales, Cicero, Ovid, Boethius, and by 1459 he could have drawn on the books in Fastolf's library, including 'Basset's Chronicle', a Livy and a Vegetius ("Worcester" 215 n.103-4). If, indeed, Worcester used his notes to write the *Boke of Noblesse*, then we have evidence of the writer's journey between 1453 and 1475. The problem with this conclusion is a matter of the dates, because many of the arguments apply to the problems that the English faced between 1449 and 1451; Charles VII of France, for example, is spoken of as "yours grete adversarie". Scrope was actively writing his

these books may have been *Fais d'Armes*. If so, then would Woodville have allowed a secretary like Worcester to handle the valuable manuscript? Or would Scrope, being Fastolf's nephew, have had a better chance at getting his hands on the work? It seems to me that Scrope's connections would win out.

²⁰BL MSS. Cotton Julius F.vii, Royal 13.C.i, & Sloane 4.

²¹BL MS. Royal 13. C. i, fol. 135-46.

works between 1450 and 1459, and much of what was written in the *Boke of Noblesse* applies to the court of Henry VI during 1459; however, the description of the work in the preface (as we have it today) does not fit the material inside the book. In addition, the writer of the *Boke of Noblesse* used many classical sources, and McFarlane admits that Worcester was not a humanist in any form:

... he read the classics as he studied modern authors, to use what they taught him. He was less interested in their manner than in their content. The ancients possessed knowledge he was anxious to learn; it never occurred to him to alter his Latin prose in imitation of theirs. This is what lovers of humanism find it impossible to forgive in him. He came into contact with the greatest stylists of old Rome, he made pages of extracts from Ovid, Cicero, and Seneca -- and wrote nothing to show that he was touched by their beauties. He left it to others to ape these models; he stuck to the argument. His attitude was so obstinately 'medieval' that he went to the classics only for wisdom. ("Worcester" 217)

Worcester's poor Latin and his lack of humanist interest in his writing seems to be the trait of a man who was a career secretary and antiquary, and suggests that a compilation like the *Boke of Noblesse* -- if we see it as only a compilation of war-history -- would have been the product of a man who was less of a artist with words and more of a sensible businessman. Nevertheless, the *Boke* is more than just a military treatise, and does contain ideas which were atypical for the 'medieval' mind (although these ideas may

simply be the reflection of Christine de Pizan's thought as transmitted through her translator). This lack of confirmation of Worcester's authorship adds to the doubt behind the question of authorship of *Tullius of Old Age*. Scholars do not doubt Worcester's authorship of his two antiquarian works: the *Antiquitates Anglie* in three books and the *De Agri Norfolcensis familiis antiquis*, but any claims to his authorship of more literary works remains questionable.

VI. Sir John Fastolf

Sir John Fastolf, in his retirement, encouraged the translation of many of Christine's works, and followed the precedent set by John, Duke of Bedford, in his love of books. The collecting of books was both fashionable, following the lead of Henry VI and others of the court, and of personal interest to Sir John, since his collection reflects his personal interests as well as works of religious and didactic nature.

Fastolf was born in 1380 and was descended from wealthy merchants and ship-owners. Through his mother's marriage it was able for him to be educated in the household of the Duke of Norfolk's grandmother, and in 1398

he served as a page to the Duke of Norfolk. At twenty-one he began to serve Thomas of Lancaster, one of Henry IV's sons, and was still a squire in 1415 when Henry V invaded France. Fastolf distinguished himself at the siege of Harfleur and the battle of Agincourt, was knighted at the age of 37, and was appointed governor of the Bastille in Paris. Two years later, Henry V's death made the Duke of Bedford regent, and Fastolf was rewarded by being appointed the grand master of the regent's household. Fastolf continued campaigning and began amassing a fortune, and when he finally retired in 1439 he owned almost a hundred manors, several ships, and estates in France, enjoying thousands of pounds in revenue. He died on 5 November, 1459.

What did Fastolf enjoy reading? The Fastolf Papers, a catalogue of Fastolf's possessions drawn up by Worcester to be given to the executors of Fastolf's estate, lists the books held at Fastolf's primary residence, Caister Castle, as of 1450:²²

French works:

Astronomie

A Book of Julius Caesar

The Bible

Bible cum historia scolastica

Brute in ryme

Liber de Sentence Joseph

Liber Etiques

Liber Geomancie cum iiiij
aliis

Meditacions Saint Bernard

Petrus de Crescentiis

²² Fastolf Paper 43 and 70.

Cronicles d'Angleterre
The Cronycles of France
The Cronicles of Titus Livius
Instituts of Justien Emperor
Josephus
Liber de Cronykles de Grant
Bretayne in ryme
Liber de Roy Artour

Problemate Aristotelis
Lez Propretez dez Choses by
Barthe Glanville
Romaunce la Rose
Veges de l'arte Chevalerie
Vice and Vertues
English works:
In chapel: 2 antiphoners, 1
Legend of Holy Service, 2
Missals, 1 Psalter

The problem of 'a book owned is not a book read' is a little easier to answer when one considers how much of a miser Sir John Fastolf was. It is not likely that such a personality would buy a book that he was not prepared to either read or enjoy. While it is true that book-buying and collecting was fashionable, Fastolf supported at least six authors, and his involvement in literary patronage indicates that he did read his own books.²³ His dealings with the military, financial investments, legal situations, and years spent in France suggest an ability to read and write fluently in both French and English. H.S. Bennett notes that, "What happened to most of these books when Sir John died is unknown, for there is no evidence that any of them went to the Pastons," and he cites the 1479 inventory of Sir John II's books (111). However, twenty years passed

²³ Stephen Scrope, Peter Bassett, Christopher Hanson, Luke Nantron, John Bussard, and William Worcester. Scrope dedicated one of the manuscripts of his translation of *Letter of Othea* to Fastolf, as seen in Longleat MS. 253 (Bühler "Epistle" xvii).

between Fastolf's and Sir John's death, and the disappearance of the books is a mystery.

VII. John de Vere, the Earl of Oxford

John de Vere, the thirteenth Earl of Oxford, was a patron of both the Pastons and William Caxton, and is known as "a hero, a fine soldier with a shrewd grasp of strategy and tactics" (Seward 14). While his patronage of the Pastons does not necessarily qualify him as an addition to the Woodville circle, the assistance given to William Caxton does ensure that he must be added to the center of literary acquaintances and friends.²⁴ McFarlane points out, "Though wealth and inherited position could do much, successful patronage was an art to the mastery of which the lord had to bring a number of obvious but by no means universal qualities: a cool judgment, some insight into other men's springs of action, some firmness of purpose, an affability however rough and a reputation for success" (253). Oxford does exactly that: even though Caxton's previous patron had been Anthony Woodville, a Yorkist, Oxford was wise enough to see the opportunity and

²⁴ See Seward, McFarlane, G. D. Painter, and Hope's edition of Oxford's will.

advantages of the new printing press, and took Caxton into his service.

John de Vere was born in 1443 into a strong Lancastrian family. His father was executed by Yorkists in 1462; young Oxford was granted his family's lands and title by Edward IV. He was still viewed as a Lancastrian and fell under suspicion, but was reprieved by the restoration of Henry VI in 1470. He fought at the battle of Barnet and was on the losing side, fleeing to France; there he practiced piracy against the Yorkists. He avoided the reign of Richard III by supporting the Lancastrian position in France, and returned with Henry VII to fight the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. He was very well rewarded for his loyalty and his lands were returned along with a series of lucrative offices. Oxford served Henry VII as high steward until the king died in 1509, and he acted as a commissioner for Henry VIII.

Sometime prior to 1488, Oxford asked Caxton to translate and print a *Life of Robert Earl of Oxford* from the French (both Seward and G. D. Painter suggest it was probably the Robert de Vere who witnessed Magna Carta).

Caxton writes in the prologue to *The Four Sonnes of Aymon*,

Therefore late at y^e request and commaundement of the
ryght noble and vertus Erle John Erle of Oxeforde my
good synguler and especial lorde I reduced &

translated out of Frenche into our maternall and Englyshe tongue the lyfe of one of his predecessoures named Robert Erle of Oxeforde tofore sayd in diuerse & many great myracles whiche God shewed for him as wel in his lyfe as after his death, as it is shewed all alonge in hys sayde booke. (Crotch 106)

This was most likely the beginning of Oxford's patronage of Caxton; like Woodville, Oxford asked Caxton to translate a book that was dear to his own interests, not thinking of the larger impact of having such a text in print. But it didn't take long -- Oxford soon became intensely interested in the press, and Caxton notes that, "my sayd Lorde desyreth to haue other Hystories of olde tyme passed of vertues chyualry reduced in lykewyse into our Englishe tongue" (Crotch 106). Oxford asked Caxton to translate and print *The Four Sonnes of Aymon* in the latter half of 1489, "a booke in Frenche conteynyng thactes and faytes of warre doone and made agaynst y^e great Emperour and King of Fraunce Charlemayne by y^e iiii sonnes of Aymon" (Crotch 106). The love of printing may have worked to overcome partisanship because Henry VII became Caxton's patron by January 1489 (no doubt through the assistance and recommendation of Oxford), asking Caxton to translate and print the English version of Christine de Pizan's *Fais d'Armes*.

What did Oxford enjoy reading? Oxford's will does not name books in detail, but several books are listed. He

made a bequest for a Cowcher and a mass-book to be given out of his private chapel to the priory of Colne. To Lady Oxford, he gave "his second antiphoner." The inventory of his estate lists a "Matteyns Boke w^t a clapse of silver wich my lorde was wont to use hymself" among a box of plate from Colne (298). Sir William St. John Hope, who analyzed Oxford's last testament and inventory, notes "The list does not seem to have been made in any definite order, and in four or five cases only are the ornaments that formed a suit or set grouped together. There is also an absence of details" (299). However, one lot does list diverse books:

ij Portuous an older and a newer, an olde masse boke written, and a masse boke in prynte; ij Psalter bokes on Reed and the lesser blake lymnid; a nother psalter coverid w^t blake and silver clapsys; also a litle masse boke; a Chest full of frenshe and englisshe bokes; a masse boke w^t clapsys of silver; iiij masse bokes written in velom; a greate Antiphoner, a legend complete; ij grayles, iij processionales; vij antiphoners; vj grales and xx processionales; ij half Legendes; ij printid masse bokis; vij Pricke song bokis bounde in leder; and xij Prick song bokis; a Gospell boke w^t thone syde covered w^t silver and a picktur of o^r Lorde in it trussid in a cofer w^t in the college of Sudbury. (300)

As typical of the early 1500's, the Earl of Oxford owned books both "written" and in print, and for all the supposed 'absence of details,' the scribe who made the inventory list distinguished between manuscripts on vellum and incunabula. For our purposes, it would be very valuable to

have an inventory of the "Chest full of frenshe and englisshe bokes." That the chest was separate from the rest of the religious texts suggests that they were secular in content, but beyond that it would be impossible to speculate on the contents, as Oxford was wealthy enough to purchase any books he wanted.

IX. Sir John Paston II

Sir John Paston II is known as "the most enthusiastic bibliophile" of the Pastons (Bennett 112), a family that scholars consider to have had "more than the ordinary degree of education for their times" (Thompson 409). All the male family members could read and write, and knew Latin and French. The patriarch Justice William Paston was an educated man, made a judge in 1429; his son John Paston I was educated at Trinity Hall at Cambridge, and the Paston letters suggest that John II was educated in the same way; the youngest of John Paston I's sons, Walter Paston, went to Oxford in 1473. The women of the family were probably not book-educated, but did have enough education to deal with the running of the family estate, probably more -- in 1434 we know that Agnes Paston had a copy of the *Stimulus Conscientiae* lent to her, and in later years Anne Paston

owned a copy of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*. Sir John Paston II was a product of this bookish family, and it is not surprising that he followed the vogue from the court of Henry VI and Edward IV of reading for entertainment.²⁵

John II was born in 1442 and at age 19 joined Edward's IV's court. He was knighted in 1463, with his father paying for the dignity that John I himself had cautiously rejected. He preferred a life at court to life under his father's command in Norfolk, and easily slipped into the courtier's role, serving in Princess Margaret's train for her marriage in Bruges in 1468. He took the Lancastrian side in 1470 and fought in the battle of Barnet under Warwick in April 1471; as was common for the gentry, he was pardoned for being on the losing side. He was engaged in 1468 to Anne Haute, first cousin to the queen, Elizabeth Woodville, but the marriage was amiably called off in 1472. John II died suddenly in 1479 of the plague, and the Paston estate went to his brother John III.

Sir John was "a free spender, a collector of books, a devotee of knightly pleasures (including the pursuit of women) and a sometimes indifferent guardian of his estates" (Gies 187). He was not of the same temperament as his father who was forceful and aggressive when it came to

²⁵ See Bennett, Thompson, Gies, Lester, Davis and Gairdner.

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defending the Paston property; John II preferred to use compromise and diplomacy instead of confrontation and litigation to defend the family estate. Sir John was a courtier, a lover of jousting, and was very interested in buying, collecting, and when he could, claiming without purchasing (i.e. stealing) his favorite books. The story in the Paston Letters of his efforts to obtain the books of the family chaplain Sir John Gloys is well known -- Sir John was more than happy to ask his mother to pack up the books without paying Gloys' estate for them.

What did Sir John enjoy reading? Of all the members of the Woodville circle, we know the most about Sir John's individual tastes because an inventory of his personal books has survived. The inventory has been dated between 1475 (the publication date of Caxton's first edition of *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*) and no later than 1479, since Sir John died on 15 November of that year.²⁶

The Inventory off Englysshe bokis off Joh[n Paston knyght] made þe v daye off Novembre A^o r.r. E. iiij²⁷

²⁶ Norman Davis confirms that the hand in which the inventory was written was Sir John's ("Paston" 516). The paper was damaged along the right side so that some of the text was lost, but Davis and Gairdner made educated guesses as to the proper titles. Arabic numerals precede the first eleven entries; after that they are in a simple list. I have taken the liberty of combining both scholars' judgment as to the missing titles.

²⁷ Gairdner expands as, "anno regni Regis E. iiij" (#869, 300) for the 4th year of the reign of Edward III because the year has been lost at the edge.

1. A boke had off myn ostesse at þe George...
off þe *Dethe off Arthur begynnyng at Cassab[elaun, Guy, Earl of]Warwyk, Kyng Richard Cure delyon, a cronicle...*
To Edwarde þe iij, pric...
2. Item, a boke off *Troylus* whyche William Bra...
hathe hadde neer x yer and lent it to Da[me]
Wyngfelde, et ibi ego vidi; valet M...
3. Item, a blak boke wyth *The Legende off Lad[ies, La Belle Dame]saunce Mercye, þe Parlement off Byr[des, the Temple of]Glasse, Palatyse and Scitacus, The Med[itations of]..*
[Sir Gawain and] *the Greene Knyght; valet --*
4. Item, a boke in preente off þe *Pleye of þe [Chess]...*
5. Item, a boke lent Modelton, and therin is *Bele Da[me sans]Mercy, þe Parlement off Byrdys, Balade...*
off Guy and Colbronde, Off the Goos, þe ...
þe Dysputison bytwyen Hope and Dyspeyre...
Marchauntys, þe Lyffe off Seint Cry[stofer]...
6. A reede boke þat Percyvall Robsart gaff m[e]...
off the *Medis off þe Masse, þe Lamentacion...*
off Chylde Ypotis, A Preyer to þe Vernycle, [a book]callyd The Abbeye off þe Holy Gooste...
7. Item, in quayerys *Tully de Senectute* in d...
wheroff ther is no more cleere wretyn...
8. Item, in quayerys *Tully or Cypio de Ami[citia]*
leffte wyth William Worcester, valet --²⁸
9. Item, in quayerys a boke off þe *Polecye off In..*
10. Item, in qwayerys a boke de *Sapiencia...*

²⁸ Gairdner remarks: "It is a curious circumstance that this book should be here mentioned as left with William Worcester, who... translated it" (301 n.2). Seeing *de Amicitia* next to *de Senectute* side by side in Sir John's catalogue strongly suggests that the two works of Cicero were a joint endeavor, and since we do know Scrope translated *de Senectute*, it does look odd that Sir John would leave a book with the man who supposedly translated it in the first place. One would suspect that the translator would presumably have his own original copy.

wherin be ii parson is liknyd to Sapi[ence]...

11. Item, a boke de Othea, text and glose, valet...
in quayerys --

Memorandum, myn olde boke off blasonyngs off a[rms].

Item, the nywe boke portrayed and blasonyd...

Item, a copy off blasonyngys off armys and t...
names to be fownde by letter--

Item, a boke wyth armys portrayed in paper...

Memorandum, my boke off knyghthod and ther in m[aner]
off makyng off knyghtys, off justys, off torn[eauments
off]fyghtyng in lysts, paces holden by sou[ldiers (?)
/ eraignes(?)] and chalengys, statutys off weer and de
Regimi[ne Principum]...valet--²⁹

Item, a boke off nyw statutys from Edward...
the iiij --

In addition to this inventory, the contents of Sir
John's "Grete Boke" are extremely valuable in determining
what he liked to read. The "grete boke" survives as British
Library MS. Lansdowne 285, and was copied by William
Ebesham in 1468 from the manuscript known today as Pierpont
Morgan Library MS. 775, which was owned by Sir John
Astley.³⁰ While Ebesham billed Sir John for copying 'Othea

²⁹ Lester notes, "From the correspondence of this to L [Lansdowne 285] and to the Grete Boke of Ebesham's letter and bill, there can be no doubt that it is the Grete Boke (i.e. L) which is being referred to" (41).

³⁰ Lester notes that "Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales, features prominently in the [Grete Boke] and his relationship with the Pastons is therefore of some significance. When he first became involved in their affairs it was as an enemy, one who in 1466 had designs not only on the late Sir John Fastolf's fine castle at Caister but also on the Paston manor of Cotton. His attention seems, however, to have been diverted by the acquisition of the lordship of the Isle of Wight, and thereafter he became a special champion of the Paston family interests,

Pistill' along with the other quires that were included in Lansdowne 285, Christine's work was never bound in with the manuscript, but was kept separate (Lester 39). The "grete boke" was developed by accretion: the deeds of arms were acquired from Woodville's household; the ordinances of war and the summons for the surrender of Le Mans were acquired from Fastolf; the description of the jousts held by Richard Beauchamp were most likely acquired from Richard Neville's household (Lester 45-6). "The sequence of events was perhaps this," speculates Lester:

A miscellaneous collection of texts mainly to do with knighthood had grown up around certain longer works -- Vegetius, *The Book of Governance*, *Othea* -- in the 1450's. The fairly random order was retained when a professional fair copy was made in [Sir John Astley's manuscript] before 1461. Sir John Paston caused William Ebesham to copy from [Astley's manuscript] the texts most relevant to chivalry, and to place the shorter items in a more logical order near the beginning of the new transcription. Having decided to develop the volume into a great manual of knightly practice -- a grand design, judging from the title 'Grete Boke' -- he decided to exclude *Othea*, which was not practical enough for what he had in mind. (47)

Judging from Sir John II's love of the court and tournaments and the Burgundian influence on his reading habits, it is not surprising that the 'Grete Boke' reflects his aspirations as both a courtier and a knight. The 'Grete Boke' contains the majority of what the late fifteenth-

tourneying alongside Sir John in 1467" (44). This is another good example of McFarlane's description of the aristocracy being able to "change sides with so much freedom" (247).

century court was interested in reading: it was a practical treatise on chivalric combat, as well as containing "heraldic ceremonial record, the military manual, the collection of statutes and ordinances for war, and the mirror for princes" (Lester 48). The romances and chronicles of the time may have provided the emotional and historical examples, but for a knight to get practical information regarding the chivalric life, he needed to turn to military manuals and other works.

X. Richard Grey, nephew of Anthony Woodville

Although his influence and presence in the Woodville circle is small, Richard Grey must be briefly mentioned in that he encouraged the printing of the *Boke of the City of Ladies* in 1521. Brian Anslay, a yeoman of the wine cellar to Henry VIII translated Christine's book, and "in a preliminary copy of verses the printer, Henry Pepwell, states that the translation was published at the instance of the Earl of Kent" (DNB II, 503). In 1521, the Earl of Kent was Richard Grey, third Earl of Kent, born c. 1481. He was the son of Anne Woodville (Anthony Woodville's sister) and George Grey, second Earl of Kent, who died in 1503.

To include *The Book of the City of Ladies* in the Woodville group makes sense if we consider the printing of the work to follow the same impulse that Sir John Paston had when he included the various Mirror for Princes texts in his *Grete Boke*, for Christine's work is, in its least definition, a mirror for princesses. It was not a chivalric manual, but it functioned for women in the same way that a chivalric manual functioned for men. Therefore, we may use Christine's *City of Ladies* to mark the circle's ending, but the work asks us to broaden the definition of how the fifteenth-century reader saw chivalric texts.

The next chapter follows this line of thought, giving the reader an overview of these chivalric manuals available to the Woodville circle, with the intention of placing Christine's works and appeal within a larger social and literary context. Now that we have an idea of who was in the Woodville literary circle and what was available for the group to read, I intend to reveal the patterns behind the texts' physical quantity and literary appeal, and in turn formulate a theory as to the circle's ideological or psychological approach to reading chivalric texts.

Chapter Three

'Prouffitable vertues': Chivalric Texts in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century England

In 1925, Virginia Woolf tried to imagine what might have gone through Sir John Paston II's mind as he collected his library:

The money that might have bought [John Pastons' tombstone], or more land, and more goblets and more tapestry, was spent by Sir John on clocks and trinkets, and upon paying a clerk to copy out treatises upon knighthood and other such stuff. There they stood at Paston -- eleven volumes, with the poems of Lydgate and Chaucer among them, diffusing a strange air into the gaunt, comfortless house, inviting men to indolence and vanity, distracting their thoughts from business, and leading them not only to neglect their own profit but to think lightly of the secured dues of the dead. (224)

Woolf was an advocate of reading for pleasure, but believed that "we have of course to control ourselves...we must not squander our powers, helplessly and ignorantly, squirting half the house in order to water a single rose-bush" (1). Sir John's choosing books over respecting the dead struck her as being undisciplined and disrespectful, and she sees Chaucer and Lydgate as being the only authors worth mentioning, putting "treatises upon knighthood" on equal terms with "other such stuff." Woolf was most likely familiar with Chaucer and Lydgate but the other contents of

Sir John's *Grete Boke* (c. 1468) were largely unknown to her; if she had known of the actual contents of the *Grete Boke* she would not have dismissed so lightly the "treatises upon knighthood" as extraneous interests for Sir John.

Woolf continues her imagining:

For sometimes, instead of riding off on his horse to inspect his crops or bargain with his tenants, Sir John would sit, in broad daylight, reading. There, on the hard chair in the comfortless room with the wind lifting the carpet and the smoke stinging his eyes, he would sit reading Chaucer, wasting his time, dreaming -- or what strange intoxication was it that he drew from books? ...Lydgate's poems, or Chaucer's, like a mirror in which figures move brightly, silently, and compactly, showed him the very skies, fields, and people whom he knew, but rounded and complete. (224-25)

Sir John was undisciplined and disrespectful, but Woolf does not blame him for being a dreamer, for she believes she understands him. She applauds Chaucer for being a powerful storyteller, and uses Sir John as an example of how Chaucer's stories enthralled his audience, both then as they do now. She is correct in her observations about Chaucer, but misses the point in her observations about Sir John: the man was no doubt an admirer of Chaucer, but the reasons Sir John neglected his father's grave in favor of books and courtly life were not a symptom of irresponsibility or an untamed love of books, but the sign of a man who understood the fact that the predictable pastoral ways of his father and mother were no longer functioning in Sir

John's unpredictable urban world. Sir John may have been neglecting his responsibility to make a financial profit, but he was certainly not neglecting the art of 'reading profitably,' that is, the idea of reading for only moral or intellectual value. Woolf is correct in surmising that Sir John was looking for entertainment, but a deeper analysis shows he was also looking for facts and clues to the puzzling and changing nature of chivalry.

Chivalry has eluded definition as its meanings shade according to context, yet scholars have tried to codify the term by attempting to set down the basic principles according to their time and era. The *Grete Boke* is an example of Sir John's try at defining chivalry, and another is the *Black Book* (c. 1470) of Edward IV. The latter work was written out of necessity when the King was twenty-eight and a rising number of men were joining the court:

[and] as the number... increased, so did the obligation to provide proper occupation and instruction for them all - the king's own children, the 'henchmen' (the six or seven young companions of honor who walked or rode beside the king in processions etc.), the various squires and pages of the household, and all the other youthful gentlemen who gave service. (Lester 55)

This obligation required clarifications of the requirements of service, and the *Black Book* was the result. The book commands the Master of Henchmen (who was employed along

with the Master of Grammar and the Master of Song) to educate the young men in 'lettere' (basic literacy and scholarly study) and 'nouriture' (the art of polite behavior) (Lester 55). Specifically, the Master of Henchmen was responsible for educating his charges in:

...the schoolez of vrbanitie and nourture of Inghland, to lern them to ride clenly and surely, to drawe them also to justes, to lerne hem were theyre harneys; to haue all curtesy in wordez, dedes, and degrees, dilygently to kepe them in rules of goynges and sittinges, after they be of honour. Moreouer, to teche them sondry langages and othyr lernynges vertuous, to herping, to pype, sing, daunce, and with other honest and temperate behauing and pacience; and to kepe dayly and wykeley with thees children dew conuenitz, with correcions in theyre chambres according to suche gentylmen; and eche of them to be vsed to that thinges of vertue that he shalbe most apt to lerne, with remembraunce dayly of Goddes seruyce accustomed. This maistyr sittith in the hall next vnto benethe theez henxmen, at the same bourde, to haue his respectes vnto theyre demenynges, how mannerly they ete and drinke, and to theyre comunicacion and other fourmez curiall, after the booke of vrbanitie. (Myers 126-7)

Thus, the Master was not only responsible for the physical welfare of his charges (teaching them how to ride, joust, and wear armor) but also for their mental welfare (teaching them courtesy, respect, languages, and giving them a religious education). Of course, not all young men of noble descent were able to be educated at court, but they knew that they would not be excused on account of their ignorance of courtly and chivalric customs and laws. The

only way for a young knight to make up for this disability was to purchase - or have a collection made for him (as Sir John did) - a 'booke of vrbانيتie' or chivalric manual in which he could learn those customs vital to his advancement and survival at court. G.A. Lester points out:

...the value of the *Grete Boke* to Sir John is fairly clear. Containing, as it does, a wealth of practical information about jousts and other 'actez marciabiez', the correct wearing of harness, observing due decorum in 'goynges and sittinges', exemplifying polite speech and 'othyr lernynges vertuuous', and even recording (for good measure) a couple of short passages from 'cronycles of kinges', it is obviously -- in part at least -- a book of 'noriture'. As such, it has a place alongside the well-known courtesy books and presumably alongside the 'booke of vrbانيتie' mentioned... The *Grete Boke* is, in a sense, Sir John's own, personal 'booke of vrbانيتie'. (57)

Sir John's interest in reading becomes more apparent when one realizes that it is a form of his learning physical, social, and political survival skills during the York-Lancaster civil wars.

Virginia Woolf's interest is in Sir John's fantasy life, a life utilized to praise Chaucer's talent; Lester's interest is in Sir John's practical education, a facet utilized to raise the academic value of the *Grete Boke* to the level of the *Black Book*. However, Sir John's fascination with Chaucer and "treatises upon knighthood" followed a path neither completely fantastic nor academic. The chivalric manuals available to the Woodville literary

circle appealed to a reader's need for fantasy and his need for education -- and were written specifically to exert that charm.

This chapter will first attempt to define chivalry as it is manifested in romances, historical writings, and manuals of chivalry, and then I will narrow to review the chivalric manuals available to the Woodville circle. From these facts, I will suggest a definition of "chivalry" as Sir John Paston may have understood the term, and use this definition to place Christine's works within the available material and historical context in order to suggest the nature of her appeal to the fifteenth-century reader.

I. Knights in Shining Armor, etc.

Chivalry means different things to different audiences, but there remains a constant in that a sense of idealism recurs. Sometimes the idealism appears as personal identification, and in other hands it becomes public ideology, but the end result returns to the same mix of applying the facts and fantasies of chivalry to everyday life.

Maurice Keen admitted at the end of his magisterial work *Chivalry* (1984) that he had "fallen...in love with his

subject" (253). In a work aiming (and succeeding) in finding a definition of chivalry there is a certain 'queerness' to that confession. The act of definition, especially defining something that is considered an important part of masculine identity, gives us access to the nature of the voice we bring to the dialogue between the historical text and our own personal discourse. Keen reveals the investment he has made in his construction of masculine chivalric identity, and opens himself up to the consequences of his confession. His identification with chivalry suggests that the modern masculine subject still requires deliberate construction based in relationship to an Other, but the Object/Other does not necessarily have to be female, or alien, strange, or hostile.¹ Keen does identify with chivalry and the "otherness" of knighthood, not in terms of class identity, but with the image of a man of honor, personal integrity, and a sense of duty to defend the weak and oppressed, a man who is invulnerable and invincible in his armor, dedicated to a higher calling, and is ultimately 'bigger than life.'

¹ Greenblatt suggests that "Self-fashioning is achieved in relations to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other -- heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist -- must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed" (10). While his views are no longer considered by New Historicists as irrefutable, they remain the lingua franca of the discourse.

For the purposes of this chapter, I am going to use as the touchstone Keen's definition of chivalry, but I must insert Lee Patterson's caveat that:

Whether we rely upon previous texts [in interpreting a text], social and political formations, or a period consciousness, we are turning not to "extrinsic data," in the sense of something instantly apprehensible and self-evidently meaningful, but rather to a mass of material, almost all of it textual, that requires interpretation before it can enter into the process of historical understanding. Indeed, however much as we may be committed to the idea of original meaning, we must finally acknowledge that, in every way that counts, "original meaning" is indistinguishable from "meaning to us." (44)

Thus in attempting to define such an elusive and derivative term as chivalry, we must consider our discourse as part of a process, a reconstruction of the past through our own lenses, and not a distinctive or determining answer.

Therefore, in order to answer the question I must reveal part of my own identity in relation to the text -- that my identification with the social mystique of chivalry has permanently biased my approach towards any definition. Sir John's quest for information and definition regarding chivalry follows this same path - his identification with chivalric norms may have been a more explicit part of his culture, and the modern scholar's identification may be more implicit, but it is nevertheless the same journey towards finding meaning.

Keen sees the term chivalry as an "evocative word, conjuring up images in the mind, it is also, for that very reason, a word elusive of definition." The noun *chevalier* is definable in its closest French meaning of 'knight,' but Keen reveals that chivalry "is a word that was used in the middle ages with different meanings and shades of meaning by different writers and in different contexts...but it remains a word elusive of definition, tonal rather than precise in its implications" (1-2). Nevertheless, he does try to come to a working definition, stating that:

...chivalry may be described as an ethos in which martial, aristocratic, and Christian elements were fused together. In a given context, one facet may be to the fore, but it remains hard to exclude overtones from elsewhere. The military aspect of chivalry is associated with skill in horsemanship specifically, a costly expertise which could be hard to acquire for one not born to a good heritage. The aristocratic aspect is not just a matter of birth; it is connected with ideas of the function of knighthood and with a scale of virtues which implies that aristocracy is a matter of worth as much as it is of lineage. The Christian aspect is presented surprisingly free of the imprint of ecclesiastical prejudice and priorities. (Keen 16-17)

This definition has more of a psychological approach, which is not surprising since Keen admits he feels a sense of personal identification with the subject. He describes chivalry as an "ethos," which implies that he sees the military, aristocratic, and Christian aspects to be part of

a belief system, and a virtuous one at that. Keen concludes that:

Chivalry essentially was the secular code of honor of a martially oriented aristocracy. ...It flourished, in the period between the mid-twelfth and the sixteenth century, as the ethos of the dominant secular estate of Christian Europe, and its characteristic trappings were fashioned by the social, political, and cultural conditions of those times. ...The rise of the secular courts, as centers of culture and as a natural meeting ground of clergy with nobility, provided the context for it to grow up from a warrior's code into a sophisticated secular ethic, with its own mythology, its own erudition, and its own rituals which gave tangible expression to its ideology of honor. (252-3)

As a "secular ethic" chivalry provides a code of honor that is understandable for a male identity that may not otherwise find an affinity with the warrior ideal. Keen's point of view sees chivalry as an ethic with which one may form an emotional alliance -- or not -- as one chooses. For Keen, chivalry may be defined as less of a type of ideology, and more of a selective lifestyle chosen to promote personal honor and glory.

Law historian Theodor Meron, on the other hand, provides a definition of chivalry which is based on his analysis of chivalry as an ideology that promoted personal accountability instead of honor and glory. In *Bloody Constraint* (1998), Meron sees chivalry as, "...the principal normative system providing a code of behavior for knights, nobility and the entire warring class in the

endemic wars in which they were involved" (4-5). Seeing chivalry as a "normative system" as opposed to a "secular ethic" suggests a vision of chivalry through the lenses of a Hegelian dynamic in which there is a power struggle between those promoting the system and those who have to live under the constraints of that system of rule.² Meron continues his definition by elaborating on that system:

As a code for the upper classes, chivalry also radiated values for other members of society. The humane and noble ideals of chivalry included justice and loyalty, courage and honor and mercy, the obligations not to kill or otherwise take advantage of the vanquished enemy, and to keep one's word -- sanctity of the chivalric oath was particularly important -- and the duties to protect the weak, women, widows and orphans, to help people in distress, to be gentle, to act nobly and generously, to redress wrongs, to avenge injustice and to renounce the pursuit of material gain (but not the spoils of war and ransom). (5)

This system of values is focused on the rewards of externally virtuous action and conforming to a code of behavior that is not always in the knight's self-interest. Indeed, in order to be dubbed a knight, a squire must reflect "merit, courage and service to the community, in accordance with these principles" (5). Since these

² A solid literature on medieval masculinity and codes of behavior is emerging: three major semiotic works are the 1990 anthropological study by D.D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*, the 1994 historicist study of medieval cultures collected by Claire A. Lees: *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, and the 2000 gender study edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*.

principles are socially motivated, the chance a knight will engage in recreant behavior increases in proportion to his difficulty in living in such a normative system.

Keen and Meron's definitions of chivalry come to the same conclusions about the romantic aspects of chivalry, even though Keen approaches it by seeing chivalry as a 'larger than life' social mystique, and Meron sees chivalry's romantic aspects arising from overcoming unrealistic expectations for men living in an environment based and surrounded by endemic warring. One must admit that these definitions are much more attractive than Jeremy Adams' essentializing chivalry into A, B, and C:

When educated speakers of current English mention "chivalry" in a discussion of the European Middle Ages, it is safe to assume that they are referring to one or more of three connected phenomena: (A) the expert horsemanship of the military landed aristocracy and, by extension, its mode of making war; (B) the class which developed and was at least partly defined by that expertise and its consequences, cultural as well as political and economic; or (C) the codes of behavior developed by that class as self-definition, especially from the twelfth century onward. For convenience, let us call the military Chivalry A, the social class Chivalry B, and the code -- or codes -- Chivalry C. (43)

Adams' definition in his article "Modern Views of Medieval Chivalry" (1988) removes all of the splendor, mystique, and ideological ambiguity that are necessary for a full appreciation of chivalry. Such an anatomized chivalry does

not contain the spirit of those who lived it its height, nor does it reflect any sense of the inspiration chivalry gave to those in the fifteenth century or during the Victorian revival or even in chivalry's manifestation today. By seeing chivalry as a "phenomenon," Adams denies the chivalric value system still prevalent in our own western culture (especially in the military, sports, business, and Hollywood films), as well as the fact that his definition is only one interpretation, part of a "process of historical understanding."

II. Knights and Other Romantic Aliens

The definitions of chivalry in the romances are intertwined with the genre's treatment of women, but as the genre engages with femininity it paradoxically focuses attention on masculinity. The earliest surviving romances date from around 1150, and the genre is associated with the appearance (originally in Occitania) of a type of poetry that incorporated *fin'amour*, renamed *amour courtois* or 'courtly love' by Gaston Paris in 1883. The definitions of chivalry in romance can be seen as being developed primarily through the comparison between the knightly subject and the Other, and secondarily through negotiation

with another knightly figure in an exchange of a woman. The knight in this second area may himself be read as an Other, and this adds to the construction of his knightly identity in his separation from courtly society.³

Simon Gaunt suggests that "The masculine individual in romance is necessarily alienated. The feminine is the agent of his self-discovery, but also potentially the cause of his alienation" (109). This point is very well seen in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*: we can barely tell the two knights apart until they start fighting over the woman, and even then their bare distinguishing characteristics only slowly arrive in relation to their feelings toward the woman and towards each other. Locked in prison, with no hope of the usual chivalric ransom, they are alienated from their own court, and alienated from the court of Theseus. The moment they set eyes on Emily, they become alienated from each other. The negotiations of knightly identity begin at this point, as Arcite shows his tricky character in subterfuge after he is let out from prison, and Palamon shows his slippery character by escaping prison to be near Emily.

³ In addition to Gaunt, see Jean-Charles Huchet, *Le Roman Medieval*, a re-evaluation that argues that romance articulates a new and more complex model of male subjectivity via love and women; Roberta Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance*, argues that romances both endorse the sex/gender system they mediate and appears to deconstruct it by showing the transparency of the model.

The set-up of their final battle is a wonderful template for chivalric tournaments, and the anachronism of placing Greek characters in a fourteenth-century joust is politely ignored by Chaucer. But it is the character of each knight's chivalric identity that takes up more storytelling than the actual battle, as the descriptions of the knight's prayers to Venus and Mars are very telling of the two sides to chivalry: the pursuit of war, and the pursuit of love, and finding the right lady to love you so that you will do well in battle, and to do well in battle so that the right lady will love you. Theseus remarks on the irony of the chivalric ideal here, in that Emily knows nothing about their battles: "But this is yet the beste game of alle,/ That she for whom they han this jolitee/ Kan hem therfore as muche thank as me./ She woot namoore of al this hoote fare,/ By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!" (1806-10). Emily, of course, has little or no say in the matter, and her knowledge of the situation is irrelevant, since she is only intended to be a metaphor men may use to construct their own subjectivity. She is the Other, but the real impulse for the construction of knightly identity among Arcite and Palamon occurs between the two men, and between the knights and the larger marriage-promoting society embodied by Theseus. In the end, of course, to the

victor goes the spoils, but with Chaucer's usual sense of irony one cannot help but wonder if Emily hasn't won the second best husband, as Arcite knows that "trouthe, honour, knyghthede,/Wysdom humblesse, estaat, and heigh kynrede,/Freedom, and al that longeth to that art"(2789-91) are the values of good chivalry, and dying in battle is a sure chivalric guarantee of a direct ascent to heaven.

Gaunt sees this dilemma as the divide in chivalry between the self and society, echoing Keen's definition of chivalry in personal, psychological terms, but also tempering it along Meron's more societal, ideological interests. Gaunt suggests:

The hero of romance is a divided self, split between an impulse towards social integration and a counter-impulse towards socially alienating, but privately fulfilling desires. The concomitant ambivalence surrounding the male individual's construction of his identity is frequently reflected in equivocal public perception of his worth... A countercontext is suggested in which the structure of the romance is the reverse of that suggested superficially by the narrative; the hero loses more than he gains in his successful quest for identity; he starts off worthy, but nameless; he ends up slightly ridiculous and alienated. (109)

This dilemma is seen in several texts: Chrétien de Troyes *Erec et Enide*, the anonymous *Guy of Warwick*, *Sir Orpheo*, and Stephen Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure*.

The *Pastime of Pleasure* (c. 1500) is an allegorical romance, once highly esteemed (like Lydgate's poetry) but

one that fell into disuse as the interest in romance waned. The hero, dubiously called Graunde Amoure, undergoes scholastic and chivalric training in order to win La Bell Pucell, is knighted, does great fayttes of arms, kills a horrible dragon, marries the fair lady, grows old, and dies. It does not contain a plot of great consequence. The story does, however, have some interesting preliminary suggestions of chivalric self-fashioning, notably:

For knyghthode is not in the feates of warre
As for to fyt in quarell ryght or wronge
But in a cause whiche trouthe can not defarre
He ought hymselfe for to make sure and stronge
Iustyce to kepe myxte with mercy amonge
And no quarell a knyght ought to take
But for a trouthe or for the comyns sake. (3368-74)

A knight should fight in a 'cause' condoned by society, but he also has a responsibility to his own image and desires, as Hawes suggests that the knight must decide the surety and value of his potential battles for himself.

The hero of *Sir Orpheo* (c. 1325) also undergoes a fight between his own self-interest and the greater good of his kingdom, as he struggles to win over the Other, first in the faerie kingdom, and then by assuring the loyalty of the steward of his own kingdom. Orpheo must negotiate the return of his wife Heurodis (and his honor) from the Faerie King, and as such he must fight using his wits, not unlike the occasional turn of events in *Guy of Warwick*, who must

now and then outsmart an enemy he cannot physically kill. Orpheo wins his battle, but the result is his separation from his courtly society, and he, like Odysseus, must test his court before he allows himself and his kingly identity to be reintegrated into the court.

That a knight must be intelligent, learned, and have some 'street smarts' as well as excellent battle skills is very well set forth in *Guy of Warwick* (c. 1330). The hero begins as a steward's son who loves Felice, the daughter of an earl, and he goes on adventures in order to gain honor and glory enough to be worthy to marry the earl's daughter. As is typical of romance, she is the reason for his adventures of self-discovery, but she is also the reason for his greatest heartbreak. Guy and Felice finally marry, but less than fifteen days later Guy determines he must do penance for his bloodshedding life prior to his marriage, and decides to go on pilgrimage. He tells her "Sithe that y first loued the/ In grete sorowe y haue bee:/ Than y haue for the doo/ Wrought moche sorowe and woo" (7415-18). Guy is caught between the impulse for stability and family life as opposed to fulfilling his desire for honor and glory and saving his soul. In his chivalric quest he has finally become a king, but Gaunt's idea of a 'countertext' is

supported in that the end result of Guy's spiritual quest is his losing his wife, child, best friend, and country.

Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide* (c. 1172) underscores Gaunt's point about the feminine as the agent of chivalric self-discovery, as well as the reason for a knight's alienation. The world of the tale is a constant battleground for testing, and Erec's identity is not allowed to rest when he is married. Nancy Bradley-Cromey suggests that, "Although Chrétien's romances may not explicitly delineate codes of conduct proper to knighthood, each offers, through the conflicts which the knight confronts, a prescriptive enactment of what he should do and where his priorities lie" (451). The definitions of chivalry are both explicit and implicit in this tale, as we see Erec fight honorably in tournaments and battles, and we see him struggle with the loss of his chivalric virtues and prowess. His loss occurs immediately after his marriage:

But Erec was so in love with her that he cared no more for arms, nor did he go to tournaments. He no longer cared for tourneying; he wanted to enjoy his wife's company, and he made her his lady and his mistress...His companions were grieved by this and often lamented among themselves, saying that he loved her far too much. (67)

Enide appears to be a three-dimensional character in that she reacts to the slanders and grumbling by the knights in a very realistic way:

...Enide heard them say among themselves that her lord was becoming recreant with respect to arms and knighthood, because he had profoundly changed his way of life. This weighed upon her, but she dared not show it, for her husband might have taken it ill had she mentioned it. (67)

That she is a woman whom we hear of after the negotiations and transfer of the wedding exchange is surprising; that Chrétien allows the Other to speak and tells us her intimate thoughts is even more amazing. Woman is most often seen in romance as a force that destroys social cohesion, but here Enide is fighting to keep that cohesion in the face of a husband who is not suppressing his antisocial desires. As the public perception of his worth drops, Erec must recover it by denying the woman whom he sees as the cause for his alienation. Gaunt's suggestion of the countertext applies strongly in this tale: as the reader follows the psychological trials of Enide and the physical trials of Erec, he cannot help wondering if Erec is worth Enide's worry and Griselda-like patience, since Erec is behaving foolishly. Erec's behavior might be seen as alienating not only his wife but also the audience of the tale, as Chrétien's gift to the audience of Enide's thoughts makes Erec's scolding into a testing of the audience's patience as well.

Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre du Duc des Vrais Amants* (1405) offers a problematic definition of chivalry. The Duke is in love with a young woman named Sebille, and like Erec, he avoids going to war, preferring to participate in local tournaments in order to remain near her. The gossip grows too great, and her honor becomes damaged by the talk, forcing the Duke to go off to Spain. The love affair slowly ends with suspicion and jealousy on both sides, with the Lady being advised to end the affair. Unlike the typical romance, it does not end happily; the knightly figure is alienated and never recovers; the Duke does not care about his own reputation as a knight; and ultimately both parties lose more than they gained in the relationship, as no marriage is ever possible. With hindsight, it is possible to see Christine's deep distaste for the genre's traditionally male perspective, and her lack of respect for the self-absorbed Duke echoes her negative comments regarding such figures in *L'Epître au Dieu d'Amours* and Ballades XLIV and LVII. The tale's emphasis is not on male chivalrous deeds and honor but on honor for women, and as such participates in Gaunt's suggestion of the "divided self." Even though Sebille manages to suppress her private desires and avoid the complete destruction of her honor, she is alienated from

her society because the public perception of her worth has been questioned.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (c. 1375-1400) and Malory's *Morte Darthur* (c. 1469) are what most people consider when speaking of English chivalry, and rightly so. Composed within a hundred years of each other, their blend of realism and didacticism on one hand, and fantasy and romance on the other, made them often valued less as fiction and more as a 'mirror of reality' even for their fifteenth-century audiences. Though they were written late in the romance genre, they were a strong force in transmitting the idea of chivalrous adventure and ideals, because their situations were familiar and the motivations of the characters were known to their contemporary audiences. Howell Chickering suggests that:

...we may reasonably infer that contemporary audiences tended to see images of themselves in the epic and the romance...[because] in the later medieval period the relationships between historical and literary evidence are much more copious and specific. When...we encounter Froissart [and] Malory...we see a much closer and clearer connection between literature and historical reality. Some knights even modeled their public personalities and activities directly upon earlier chivalric literature. (9-10)

As such, these late romances did not add any new definition to the idea of chivalry, but instead supported the psychology (or ideology) and mythology of the Arthurian

court. *Sir Gawain and the Morte Darthur* added a richness and depth to the ideal of chivalry, supporting the system's rituals and ceremonies, and reflecting the complexity and sophistication of previous manifestations of the romance.

III. Knightly fact and fiction / fact in fiction

That *Sir Gawain and the Morte Darthur* were seen as 'mirrors of reality' is largely due to the historical writing about Arthur in the Middle Ages. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (c. 1136) originated and encouraged the view of the basic historical veracity of Arthur, and medieval historians used histories such as his in addition to the romances to "establish what they thought to have been the rules of the tournament in the days of King Uther Pendragon, and the terms of the oaths which newly made knights of the Round Table had been obliged to swear on admission to the society" (Keen 113). Geoffrey's view of practical chivalry is unclear at best -- his knights do not behave or use the same cultural practices as Malory's knights. For example, Geoffrey's use of *milites* does not mean the same thing as 'knight,' but closer to footsoldier, and implied not a rank but a battle position, with little chivalric meaning. The *miles* is the

closest to the later meaning of 'knight,' seen as "a warrior of superior kind, with a horse, and riding to battle...but for that he dismounts" (Tatlock 331).

However, when it comes to Arthur and his creation of Merlin, Geoffrey defines the ultimate warrior as one who balanced secular glory and military success. We do not get glimpses of his relationships with women, or a discussion of his private or interior life. Arthur is a soldier, and as Christopher Dean suggests:

Geoffrey thus bequeathed to posterity the figure of Arthur as warrior-king and conqueror abroad. Writers of romances later transformed his character into one more to their own taste, adding the softer qualities of chivalry to the king and the court around him. But there is almost nothing of this nature in Geoffrey. ...[His] conception of Arthur caught the imagination ... and most historians preserved that conception for generations after its author was dead (5).

Not all of the tales in Geoffrey's history were accepted, and yet he was not often accused of making up his material (at least until Higden in 1327 and William Caxton in 1485). Today we view Geoffrey's conception of Arthur as fiction, but we must remember that to interpret a text we cannot turn to 'real' or 'objective' history in order to give us the materials to "enter into the process of historical understanding." Just as our history gives meaning to our art, our art gives meaning to our history, or, in the words of Patterson, "Art, and culture in general, are not merely

super-structural consequences of the material processes by which man makes his world; on the contrary, they are themselves a form of praxis, a working upon the world in order to transform it" (53). One may want to see the incongruities of Geoffrey's text as wrongly interpreted, or "false" history, but one should try rather to see the text as a maker of social or ideological reality, especially for his contemporary audience. The literary text is a cultural practice that helps constitute our reality, as social reality is in effect constituted by cultural practice.⁴

Sir John Mandeville's examples of chivalry in his Travels (1356) are more implicit than Geoffrey's, but his version of reality is not any less constituted. His description of Prester John's kingdom is very Arthurian, with knights following special orders not unlike the Round Table, and with symbolic items such as crosses of gold and wood to indicate the societal status of Prester's John's court (gold for war, wood for peace). Prester John's naming reflects the "rash promise" origin of many chivalric adventures, combined with the description of the knight

⁴ See Pierre Bourdieu's essay "Reading, Readers, the Literate, Literature" in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. He suggests, "Culture and language change because they survive in a changing world: the meaning of a line of verse, of a maxim or an entire work changes by virtue of the sole fact that the universe of maxims, lines of verse or works simultaneously proposed to those who apprehend them changes: this universe can be called the space of 'co-possibles'" (104).

ceremony seen in the *Ordene de Chevalerie* (c. 1220) or Charny's *Book of Chivalry* (c. 1350). It is ironic that the kingdom of Prester John is seen as an ideal Christian state, not unlike Arthur's Camelot. Mandeville's critical view of chivalry follows his views regarding moral and clerical reform, in that he uses the person of the Sultan to warn Christian knights: "We know too by our prophecies that the Christians shall recover this land again in the time to come, when you serve your God well and devoutly. But as long as you live as you do in wickedness and sin, we have no fear of you; for your God will not help you" (108). Unless they reform their ways, Christian knights will not be able to regain the Holy Land from the Saracens -- a warning not unlike the one given to Lancelot in his search for the Holy Grail.

With Froissart's *Chronicles* (c. 1369-1400), the definition and description of chivalry appears in many ways to be a return to Geoffrey's love of war and pageantry.⁵ Froissart's narrative combines authentic personal accounts, trustworthy official records, and legendary fictitious exploits, all of which are conflicting in their approach to

⁵ See the introduction to Geoffrey Brereton's edition of Froissart's *Chronicles*; Howell Chickering's short analysis of Froissart as historian (compared to Huizinga's approach to history) in *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*; and J.J. N. Palmer's collection *Froissart: Historian*.

history. The narrator has no problem putting himself into "the process of historical understanding" and thus becomes a character in his own chronicle. The value in Froissart's definition of chivalry comes from exactly that advantage -- there is no attempt to find interpretive correctness in his view of historical reality, because he sees that it is impossible for one man to make a socially absolute text. His textual discontinuities are not treated as errors, but as "the best he could do" under the constraints of an individual eyewitness of history. Unlike Sir John Mandeville, Froissart was an admirer of chivalry, and sometimes his approaches to great knights suggest an identification similar to Keen's. He was not, however, an idealist when he came to describing the knightly order, but more of an admirer of the knightly ideal combined with an understanding of human nature. His narration of the conversation with Bascot de Mauléon is a good example of his understanding of chivalry: Bascot narrates his life in battle, and interspersed in his tale is his accounting of how much money he has made from ransoms:

I know of very few, except myself, who were not killed somewhere in battle. But I have always held the frontier and fought for the King of England, for my family estate lies in the Bordeaux district. Sometimes I have been so thoroughly down that I hadn't even a horse to ride, and at other times fairly rich, as luck came and went. (288)

Bascot appears to be a reasonable man, a professional soldier, and one who has a nascent sense of nationalism. He is also a man who is experiencing the change in chivalry from the early medieval individualized approach to warfare (where the noble is offset by his expenses and pains through ransoming knights of equal or greater nobility), to the late medieval mass campaigning brought about by large-scale warfare (where the noble is but a small part of a greater company of soldiers, many of whom are mercenaries paid by taxation and plunder).

Christine de Pizan, in *Le Livre des Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy Charles V* (1404), also includes herself as a character in her own narration. To support her history, she does try to suggest a level of interpretive correctness in her narration, but she also relies on chronicles for her dates and names of those in the court whom she did not meet. Like Froissart, she is an admirer of chivalric qualities, but Christine is less accepting of the foibles of human nature, and supports knights only when they display their chivalric trappings with compassion and nobility. Charles V was an extraordinary ruler (especially when compared to the mad and unfocused Charles VI), and her description of the king is a celebration of his superior

qualities. Christine's bias for her constructed vision of the perfect knight does show through when she rationalizes how Charles V "could be said to be a true knight":

Now it is time to return to the main purpose of our material, so that by holding to our promise the truth will be made clear in the royal portrait -- how our wise King Charles, notwithstanding that his person appeared most of the time to be in repose within his rich palaces, was in fact chivalrous in the manner that appertains to a true prince, and that the four aforementioned graces suitable to produce true chivalry were all found within him (238).

The four graces were his protection of rights, justice and equality in his realm, his support of the church, his support of his physical health, and his interest in increasing his knowledge by supporting teachers, scientists, and scholars. One cannot help but notice that Christine does not say Charles V "is" a true knight -- she lets the definition of knighthood and chivalry remain implicit in her description so that the disparity does not become obvious.

William Caxton, while not himself a historian *per se*, does like to give the history of his translations, and included in his epilogues to his chivalric publications are important views about his definition of chivalry and knighthood. Like Christine, he expected the king and knights to be models of behavior, and to live up to the chivalric code. Caxton's epilogue to *Ordre of Chiyvalry*

(c. 1484) expresses his regret that knights do not live up to the code. The code that Caxton is thinking of, however, is not so much that in the work he has just translated, but that of the:

...noble kyng of Brytayne kyng Arthur with all the noble knyghtes of the round table / whos noble actes & noble chyualry of his knyghtes / occupye so many large volumes/...rede the noble volumes of saynt graal of lancelot/ of galaad / of Trystram / of perse forest / of percyual / of gawayn / & many mo" (122)

He also exhorts his audience to "rede Froissart" (123), reflecting a sense of historical self-consciousness. We know that Caxton is defining chivalry through the romances he has read (and translated) as well as through the history of England in texts such as the *Polychronicon*. By advocating the reading of exemplary historical texts, Caxton was transmitting what he considered to be the defining code of chivalry -- an action that suggests support for the theory that the literary text is a cultural practice that helps constitute our social reality.⁶

⁶ The key word in this sentence is "helps" because if a reader's inner self does not agree with the outer self, which the conduct literature is endorsing, there will be no correspondence, no matter the weight of the authority advocating the text. The gap between discourse and practice is always there, and Sir John Pastons' seeing the need to compile his *Grete Book* suggests that he understood this distinction.

IV. Textbook Knighthood

Keen begins his search for a definition of chivalry by listing and analyzing the available materials -- the romances, the histories, and the chivalric texts. He eliminates the romances because they are too elastic: he cannot create a solid definition based on what he terms "essentially literature of escape" (3). The treatises of churchmen in the Middle Ages are, on the other hand, too solid, as they used the conception of a ideal tripartite society to "portray chivalry in terms of priestly priorities which most knights either did not fully understand or felt justified in ignoring" (5). Chivalric manuals, then, appear to very suitable as they "do make an attempt to treat chivalry as a way of life in its own right, and to offer instruction to that end" (6).

Despite this satisfactory conclusion, one must question the value of chivalric manuals as didactic literature. There is no doubt that military treatises were read -- the libraries of the Duke of Burgundy and Henry VI, as well as Sir John Fastolf and the personal collections of the Paston family can attest to that. But the practicalities and surprises of fighting war negates following any sort of textbook model in guiding and surviving the course

of battle. Therefore, chivalric manuals must have been read less as "how to fight war" and more as "how to act/look/sound/behave like a knight." This is not an easy conclusion to come to, as while early chivalric manuals focus on virtuous personal attitudes and behavior, later manuals appear to be more practically oriented, focusing on the organization and techniques of war.

One possible reason for this change in emphasis is the change in the ideology behind the knightly role. Patterson suggests that:

Ideology is not merely a delusive structure of thought that serves to mystify the true nature of social being either in order to gain economic advantage or to provide a merely symbolic resolution of real contradictions; rather, it is the means by and through which man gives meaning to his social world and thereby makes it available to his practical activity. As an agent of praxis, the symbolic actions of ideology in effect constitute culture. (54)

Knighthood began as a practical form of defense of one's territory, and over that practicality evolved a symbolism resulting from the praxis of knightly culture. As the forms and means of defense changed, so did the praxis. The symbolism, which began as a rite of age ceremony, evolved into deeper and deeper meanings as it integrated the experiences and rationalizations of the knightly culture. In the late Middle Ages, jousting and armor faded as the new techniques of war made horsemanship less relevant,

chivalrous histories faded as they lost their touch with contemporary culture, and as the interest in the classics increased it was difficult to maintain audiences' interest in the bravery (and reality) of Arthur. One response to this evolution was to write manuals which appealed to these new armchair knights, stressing the practicality of the information within, but couching the information in such terms as would reflect the psychological identity and social contour of the reader's mind.⁷

Despite these reservations, chivalric manuals do appear to reflect the arc of the definitions of chivalry to a much greater degree than the romances or histories. The scope of this section will focus on manuals that are good examples of early, middle, and late definitions of chivalry, and will include mentions of like manuals within each area. One must always begin with Vegetius' *Epitome of Military Science* (c. AD 383-450) the quintessentially pilfered Roman military manual. Publius Flavius Vegetius

⁷ Teresa of Avila, in her spiritual autobiography *The Interior Castle*, admits that as a young woman she loved books of chivalry, as did her mother, but from her adult perspective that love of chivalry encouraged vanity. Jennifer Goodman suggests that, "[Teresa's] reading in 'books of chivalry' might also have fostered her powerful sense of worldly honour, which she describes as a roadblock to her spiritual development" ("Wordly" 29). Teresa saw the influence of the chivalric texts as being negative, but that is the view of a person who has chosen a spiritual life. If chivalric texts could deeply influence a young woman (who would never have a chance to support the discourse of the chivalric ideal with the practice of the ideal), one can only imagine the powerful effect they had on a young man who could apply what he had read to his everyday life.

Renatus was "in the Middle Ages one of the most popular Latin technical works from Antiquity, rivaling the elder Pliny's *Natural History* in the number of surviving copies dating from before AD 1300" (Milner xiii); as a result it provided much of the primary text material for the idea of the connection between the Roman *miles* and the medieval knight. One did not write on warfare without a reference to Vegetius, since the whole concept of chivalry was thought to have originated in Rome.⁸

Many early military manuals saw the knight as a representative of Christ, but not all of them. *Godfrey of Boloyne* (c. 1183) by William, the Archbishop of Tyre, depicts the knight as a Christian hero, and Godfrey's reputation as one of the nine worthies was perpetuated by Caxton, who, in his translation, names Godfrey "the most worthy of Christen men" (3). However, in the poem *Roman des Eles* (c. 1210) the definition of a knight is that of a social creature, and the poem "concentrates on telling knights how to behave rather than elaborating on the symbolic significance of knighthood. It is a treatise on cortoisie...[with an] extended passage on love" (Busby 18). The *Roman des Eles* by Raoul de Houdenc is not an essentially religious poem, focusing instead on the social

⁸ See Milner's select bibliography; a full bibliography on the vast commentary on Vegetius was published by R. Sablayrolles in 1984.

virtues of love and the pleasures of women as opposed to the trials of the battlefield. The anonymous *Ordene de Chevalerie* (c. 1220) is quite a different treatise, describing the dubbing ceremony of the model knight. The ritual is a very Christian one, but the tone is entirely secular, with overtones of the chivalrous ideals of the romances. It was an extremely popular poem, suggesting that its secular ideals and symbolism initiated and supported the meaning of chivalry in the social arena. The *Book of the Ordre of Chyvalry* (c. 1276) by Ramon Lull, was the most successful of all the early military manuals. It raised knighthood to the level of a secular form of priesthood; the knight was viewed as a nobly born warrior responsible for maintaining law and justice. Since Lull himself was a knight-turned-priest, the basis of his defining the knightly identity as priestly/secular is fairly overt, but he tempers his religious zeal with knowledge of the practical tribulations of the warrior. The manual's success may be explained partially because it did promote the romance idea of the knight as a representative of Christ, and partially because it was perfectly in tune with the ideological presuppositions of French and Castilian knights.

Manuals written during the Hundred Years War (generally considered to be between 1337 and 1453) presume that not only is the knight responsible for keeping the laws and maintaining a level of justice in his lands, but that he is also involved in the long-term hostilities between England and France. Thus, in 1350, Geoffroi de Charny's *Book of Chivalry* defines the knight as not quite a career warrior, but by 1410, in Christine de Pizan's view there is no doubt of his profession; while Lull's treatise was the most popular, Charny's was considered the most practical, as "from this book we can gain a fair idea of what a knight has absorbed out of the vigorous medieval world of ideas all around him, what he has rejected or ignored, what he has added from the yet more vigorous world of his own experience in camp, court, and campaign" (Kaeuper 20). That is not to say that the work of Charny was the most original, but it has a refreshing way of presenting lay, non-symbolic, pragmatic advice for the young knight, and while never expecting the impossible of them, holds them to a high level of responsibility, especially in his (discreet!) relationships with ladies.

Honoré de Bouvet's *The Tree of Battles* (c. 1387), while not quite falling under the definition of a chivalric manual, does deal with the workings of knighthood, but

focuses on the legal codes and practices of the soldierly custom called the 'laws of war' or the 'law of arms.' The manual is about the 'just war' and was immediately considered popular in face of the questions arising from the constant warfare between England and France. Bouvet did not accept the definitions of chivalry from the likes of Lull and Charny: he found heroism to be too closely connected with vainglory, and disliked its effect on the discipline of what was beginning to be the soldier-knight. As such, his popularity was mostly with civil authorities rather than the professional knight. Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie* (c. 1410), follows in this vein (and was often mistaken for Bouvet's treatise by later translators). Christine follows Vegetius in the first part of her manual and Bouvet in the last part, but intersperses her own interviews and information to update her sources. She also maintains a decidedly humanist account of knighthood, seeing it with much of the same eyes as Castiglione did a hundred years later. The knight needs to be able to fight on a practical basis, but she knew her aristocratic audience would not be on the same level as Lull and Charny -- hers were princes who needed a broader scope of the laws and ideologies of warfare along with a basic knowledge of the messy details. She knew that

with proper social manipulation, employment of military professionals, and a bit of what would be called later *sprezzatura*, the prince-general would guide the battle and not actually participate in it. Christine's work reflects the changing ideological presuppositions of chivalry and implicitly acknowledges that the prince can be the purveyor of ideological meaning as well as a participant in its praxis.

Late medieval views reflect a change in the idea of chivalry as an aristocratic mystique. The knight was beginning to experience a reduction in his sense of value in war as armies began to depend on yeoman archers, and campaigns with siege operations became routine. The rules of knighthood depended on the honor of the one-on-one encounter, and wars fought by large armies using artillery were not supportive of taking and ransoming aristocratic prisoners. The religious wars leading up to and following the Protestant Reformation also pitted aristocrat against aristocrat, but in a Christian versus Infidel atmosphere and the definitions of chivalry strongly precluded giving quarter to religious adversaries. The result was twofold: first, a wholesale appeal for a reformation of chivalric values, and second, the promotion of social chivalry devoid

of its military focus, as the knight became the Elizabethan courtier.

Nicholas Upton, a cleric and heraldic authority, notices the beginning of this change in knightly personnel in *De Studio Militari* (c. 1446):

In these days we see how openly how many poor men through their service in the French wars have become noble, some by through prudence, some by their energy, some by their valor, and some by other virtues which, as I have said, ennoble men. (48)

The aristocracy is no longer able to hold onto the monopoly of knightly arms, nor do they want to in the face of the dangerous and mechanically-inclined late medieval wars. But the basis of chivalric ideology and psychology still held an attraction for the aristocracy, which is why the 1458 translation into English verse of Vegetius (titled *Knyghthode and Bataile*) was widely read, why Caxton was asked to translate and print Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie* in 1489, and why the translation was (to use an anachronistic term) a best-seller in England. If Christine's subject matter held its attraction eighty-odd years after it was written, there must have been some merit to her ideological presuppositions about the changing nature of chivalry.

Caxton translated and printed Lull's *Book of the Ordre of Chyualry* in 1484, adding to it some notes and his epilogue. Along with Caxton's advice to read chivalric histories, he makes a distinction as to who needs to read the *Ordre of Chyualry*:

whiche book is not requysyte to euery comyn man to haue / but to noble gentylmen that by their vertu entende to come & entre in to the noble ordre of chyualry / the whiche in these late dayes hath ben used accordyng to this booke here to for wretton but forgeten. (121)

Like Upton, Caxton is seeing men like John Paston joining the ranks of the nobility within two generations, not so much due to their prowess in arms, as to their prowess in government administration and law, whose backgrounds were professional and mercantile. To aspire to nobility and to join courtly society meant to take up the chivalric mentality -- which can be seen as an incongruous twist, as one might say that chivalry was originated in order to get nobles to behave themselves among the common folk.

Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (c. 1527) is a lesson in chivalric practicality -- not for war on the battlefield but for war in the courtyard. The definition of chivalry in the work has not changed in terms of concept: nobility is still a powerful force in the social world, and the basic ideas of loyalty, honor, generosity,

courage were not altered. The understanding that force of might must be balanced by depth of education and knowledge still remained. Keen argues that "chivalry did not fade or decline with the coming of the Renaissance. It might parade in a new dress, Castiglione's courtier might be expected to know more about the classics and less about such romantic rituals as the swearing of oaths upon a peacock...but what this denoted was a change of the chivalric courtier's wardrobe rather than a change of heart" (249). The social mystique remained, but the blades of combat changed from good steel to 'good breeding.'

V. "...my boke off knyghthod": Sir John's Collection

A wide range of definitions of chivalry were thus available to Sir John, ranging from romances to historical writings to manuals. All of these were available to the Woodville circle - "available" meaning that the texts were physically present somewhere in England - but of course that does not mean the members were able to access the texts in order to personally read them.⁹ Woodville himself

⁹ More analysis could be made if we knew the contents of Henry VI's library. We know that he was a benefactor of Eton and King's colleges, Cambridge, but as Thompson points out, "nothing is known of his library except that in 1426 an *Egesippus* and a *Liber de observantia papae* were borrowed from the royal library in the treasury by Cardinal

may have had access to everything Caxton printed, including the first edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, the *Chronicles of England*, *Godfrey of Boloyne*, and the *Polycronicon*.

Caxton most likely had access to an even larger range of works, and as a businessman, he chose to print only those which would sell the best, based on the literary trends of the market. This market, following the literary tastes of the court of Burgundy, is reflected in Stephen Scrope's choice of texts to translate: *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* and *Tully of Old Age* are treatises on morality and philosophy; *The Letter of Othea* is a 'Mirror For Princes' allegorical/ chivalric lesson.¹⁰

The contents of *The Boke of Noblesse* shows that the chivalric works in Sir John Fastolf's library were more extensive than it appears in his final will. The library

Beaufort, and there are subsequent notices of the return and reissue of the same books to the same borrower" (406). On the other hand, the contents of the library of Edward IV are well known, and his tastes were towards books that led to "entertainment and edification rather than serious study" (Thompson 407). Edward, being Caxton's patron, no doubt had access to everything Caxton printed.

¹⁰ The tastes of the court of Burgundy were reflected in the tastes of the English court, and with the ascension of Henry IV, this taste was reflected back towards the French with an English flavor. Henry IV was a well-read king who commissioned both Gower and Chaucer in their old age, and appointed a pension to Hoccleve. The friendship between Chaucer and Deschamps is well documented, and in turn Christine de Pizan held the attention of English literary society when Henry IV invited her to court; although she declined the favor, the offer increased her prestige in French literary society (see Willard "Works"). It is possible that the young Henry met Christine (who was only two years his elder) when he was exiled by Richard II in 1398 and then lived in the Hotel Clisson in Paris.

may have contained a French compendium of the histories of Orosius, Lucan, and Suetonius, the stories of Cicero and Ovid, and 'Basset's Chronicle' (McFarlane 215 n103-4). His final will lists in French the *Cronicles d'Angleterre* and *The Cronycles of France*, *A Book of Julius_Caesar*, the *Romaunce la Rose*, and *Veges de l'arte_Chevalerie*, plus a *Liber de Roy Artour*.

The Earl of Oxford certainly had a collection of chivalric works beyond *The Four Sonnes of Aymon*, a chivalric treatise which he asked Caxton to translate and print, and it was most likely Oxford's recommendation that connected Caxton with Henry VII, and led to the translation and printing of Christine's *Fais d'Armes*.

This leaves us with Sir John Pastons' collection of chivalric works. He most likely had access to his sister Anne's copy of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* and it would be difficult to eliminate any of the books seen in his inventory of 1475-79 as not having a connection with the means and ideals of chivalry. He owned a copy of the chivalric favorite *Guy of Warwick*, a version of the *Death of Arthur*, a book of *Troilus*, two books in which Chaucer's writings were compiled, a copy of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and Christine's *Boke de Othea* [sic], which he notes in his listings as including both the text and the gloss.

He had several books of blazonings and arms, and his Grete Boke topped off the collection.

Sir John has been called a "bibliophile," and yet that name only applies because we have the evidence from the Paston Letters and his own inventory that indicates he felt a deep love of books. However, we do not have any evidence that his reading habits were out of the ordinary - he was a courtier who followed the trends of the Burgundian court, and as such he followed in the steps of his social superiors. His collection does not indicate that he was following any innovative process: he was trying to entertain and educate himself, as was most, if not all, of the English court, following the idea of 'profitable reading.'¹¹

Judging from the book collections of his peers in the Woodville circle, his actions were perfectly normal in his collecting of heraldic records, military manuals, collections of statutes and ordinances for war, and 'Mirror for Princes' works. And yet the very act of collecting this

¹¹ Jennifer Summit elaborates on the idea of 'profitable reading': "Caxton offer[ed] *Caton* to readers 'that they maye thereby prouffyte and be the better,' and the *Mirror of the World* as an example of 'men somtyme travailyng in prouffyttable virtues.' That such a model of virtue comprises both moral and commercial 'profit' finds particularly graphic support in Caxton's *Dialogues in French and English*, for example, which promises 'grete prouffyt' to readers should they 'lerne this book diligently', and thereby learn French in order to master the art of international trade" (159).

information reflects a desire to contain and create a correspondence between Sir John's personal experiences and the experiences of those men and women he had read about in his books, which in turn suggests that Sir John did not find his reading material to be 'profitable' - or at least not profitable enough for Sir John to be satisfied by simply making a financial outlay for a particular book. He had to create his own book in order to feel that sense of 'profitable reading.'

I must return to Lee Patterson's caveat regarding interpreting texts to explain this curiosity: when Sir John collected his books, he was looking for information which would allow him to interpret the social and political formations around him. Chivalry, even to Sir John, who lived in a time when jousts could be attended, was not something "instantly apprehensible and self-evidently meaningful" as Patterson describes "extrinsic data," but something that required interpretation, that is, something within which Sir John had to find his own meaning. We cannot know if his definition was closer to Keen's personal identification or Meron's view of it as a form of social ideology, but these are admittedly two extreme views. Judging from Sir John's relaxed approach to his familial duties, one might come to the conclusion that his politics

were just as relaxed and moderate, and perhaps his views of chivalry followed the same middle path.

Sir John's attempt to define chivalry suggests that he, too, was aware of the fact that this definition was not final, but a part of a process, a reconstruction based on his own personal lenses. The other chivalric manuals and conduct literature may have aimed at making a solid correspondence between discourse and practice, but Sir John may have found that they did not appeal to his needs and individuality and so compiled his own "booke of vrbانيتie" which allowed him to speak as a subject in his own right.

Neither Sir John, nor Christine de Pizan, nor anyone participating in finding meaning within one's culture can avoid the expression of their own personal interpretation of that "extrinsic data." But the works of Christine de Pizan within this context create an unusual situation because while she did appeal to the fifteenth-century reader, Christine's view was not that of an ordinary man -- or woman -- and thus her interpretation of her environmental data would of necessity be innovative. On the most basic level, she was a woman writing about chivalry, and this in itself defied the norms of her culture. What is even more unusual is that her interpretation of the extrinsic data around the mystique and facts of chivalry

was publicly accepted by both the French and English court -- even though the definition of chivalry was seen through the personal interpretation of a woman -- allowing a woman to redefine a vital part of the masculine identity of the fifteenth century. Not only was Christine's view accepted, but it was promoted by more than one king.

The Woodville circle's reading of Christine's interpretation would have to be aware of the original and innovative nature of her writing and her approach to chivalry. Religion was narrowly defined by the Church, but chivalry was not so narrowly defined, and was open not only to public reinterpretation, but also private dialogue, it appears.¹² The Woodville circle's delight in books reflects minds that delight in education and information and temperaments that do not seek "official" answers. This is a thirst for personal improvement, a reflection of the thoughts beginning to flourish as the ideas of the Italian Renaissance make their way north. Christine's appeal in England reflects this thirst, a desire not marred by

¹² Rondeau, following Foucault and deCerteau, links "the historical creation of the closed discourse of history - and of hegemonic 'discourse' generally - to the claims to institutional power of the clergy. Clerics' claims to speak officially, in the name of religion - itself a historically defined category - both refer to and foreclose the possibility of examining transparently the "practice, hence...reality" of past cultures. Clerical claims to authority rest upon specific modes of linguistic control, framed in terms of the authority of the written word and Word - "discourse" in a word" (18). The texts chosen and embraced by the Woodville circle reflect a private discourse outside of the Church's control.

discrimination against her sex that was seen in her French publishers and copiers.

Sir John knew that he was reading the writings of a woman, and there is no evidence that he cared about her gender. That he was reaching for a definition of his own masculine identity through the medium of a woman writer may have not been an issue for him - on the other hand, a woman's interpretation of chivalry may have been the very factor that made her appealing. As we will see in later chapters, Christine's voice may be read on different levels of text and subtext, and part of her popularity may truly rest on the cleverness and insightfulness of those who could decode and profit from those multiple levels, knowing that their historical, psychological, and ideological lenses matched hers, or at least were fascinated by her thought.

The next chapter will discuss the interaction between Christine's "conduct literature" writings, focusing on her "bestseller" *Deeds of Arms*, and the appeal of her innovative approach to chivalry. A certain amount of voyeurism exists in the study of something as touchy and intimate as honor and courage, no matter the century. Chivalry is an ideal, but it is also the lifestyle of living, breathing human beings, making decisions to solve

everyday problems based on a code that does not reflect a high amount of self-preservation. To be chivalrous means to be constantly thinking about causes and effects, to be one step ahead of one's enemy, and to enjoy the rush of adrenaline should combat begin. Chivalry is a good code (or ideology) for social cohesion because one constantly must look after one's fellow human being -- it is not, however, a good code for personal survival or profit.

Chapter Four

Deeds of Arms: Origins, Construction, and the Aristocratic Mystique

Christine de Pizan's *The Letter of Othea*, and *The Book of the Body Politic* were owned by members of the Woodville circle, and *Deeds of Arms* was present in the group in the form of *The Boke of Noblesse*. However, *Deeds of Arms* had a second life when it was deemed significant enough by Henry VII for him to request its translation and printing into English, and thus it had an influence beyond Christine's other works. This chapter reveals the history behind *Deeds of Arms*, and suggests why this particular text was chosen by a duke and two kings to be a standard for chivalric behavior in their time.

I. A New Manual for War

In 1410, John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, commissioned Christine to write a new manual on warfare for the Dauphin of France, Louis of Guyenne.¹ The Duke's

¹ By December 28, 1409, the Duke had triumphed over his political rivals, the Armagnacs, and on that date had been named official governor of the Dauphin, making him the ruler of Paris in all but name. The history behind these events and their connection to Christine may

interest in the Dauphin's education prompted him to provide the prince with tutelage, and in 1410 the prince was thirteen years old, the year considered proper for a future knight to begin military training.² A number of factors may have played a role in the decision to commission a new manual for war. The Duke could have just given the Dauphin a copy of Honoré Bouvet's 1387 military manual, *The Tree of Battles* (a copy of which had been owned by Philip the Bold, the Duke's father).³ However, warfare had been changing rapidly under the influence of artillery use in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Between 1377 and 1424 the use of cannon overtook older ballistic weapons of siege warfare such as the trebuchet and the mangonel. In 1377, at the siege of Ardres, only one cannon was used to fire 200-lb. balls; in 1415 Henry V used three cannons during the siege of Harfleur, taking nearly a month to collapse the walls of the gate-defense (Keegan 80). But by 1424 "English artillery battered down the walls of Le Mans within a few days, and during the great campaign of

be found in Willard ("Treatise" and "Works"), Teague, and Vaughn ("Fearless").

² The starting age for training is suggested by Willard to be thirteen ("Treatise" 184), and by Delbrück to be from twelve to fourteen (228).

³ For an analysis of the libraries of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless, see Vaughn ("Bold" 194-95 and "Fearless" 234).

reconquest in 1449 the French took sixty fortresses with the aid of cannon, many surrendering as soon as they saw the big guns in position" (Wise 167). Bouvet's manual dealt with legal and theoretical arguments relating to warfare but, as it did not discuss the day-to-day details, it did not include any reactions or stratagems regarding the new technology.⁴ Clearly a manual of warfare was needed that bridged the connection between the old laws and ethics of warfare and the new technical practicalities and, at the very least, detailed new strategies and customs for knights to navigate and survive these advances.⁵

John the Fearless chose Christine as the author because he knew what he would get (or at least thought he knew what he would get) when he asked her to write such a work. As the first professional woman writer in Europe, Christine had demonstrated repeatedly her ability and

⁴ Wright suggests *The Tree of Battles* presents a picture of the ideal soldier's role in society: "a picture which must have appeared a long way from reality in fourteenth-century France...[It was] only a theoretical treatise whose fine rules and generous exemptions were rarely observed" (29-30).

⁵ Vale points out with a sense of irony, "Had it not been for the French siege-guns, the outcome of the Norman and Gascon campaigns which effectively ended the Hundred Years War might arguably have been very different. The challenge they offered to traditional methods of siegecraft and fortification led to the creation of new techniques of both attack and defense. In the realm of ideas, the gun was accepted without serious reservations, just as former innovations had been accepted. The existing gulf between chivalrous idealism and the reality of war was merely widened as a result of its appearance. The gun posed no threat to a society in which 'chivalrous' behavior in warfare was, perhaps, the exception rather than the rule" (72).

confidence to write on a wide variety of topics while using a number of methods.⁶ John was also well known for patronizing those writers who gave him Burgundian propaganda or "enthusiasm" (Vaughn, "Fearless" 235), and he ran a fully fledged propaganda campaign from 1404-1413 in order to give him the support and deference he needed to keep control of Paris. In this propaganda campaign, Christine had presented *Le Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune* to the John the Fearless on the first of January, 1404, and had been commissioned by Philip the Bold, the previous Duke of Burgundy, to write *Le Livre des Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy Charles V*, which she finished on November 30, 1404. These two works were very generous in their praise of all French princes, and demonstrated her sympathy with the court of Burgundy's reputation.

Evidence for John's regard for Christine has been found in an item recorded in the Burgundian accounts and dated May 13, 1411, regarding the financial compensation for *Deeds of Arms*:⁷

⁶ For Christine as "the first professional woman writer" see Bornstein "Policie," Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Cerquiglini, Quilligan, Richards "Ladies," Willard "Works." This idea was championed by the *grande dame* of Christine criticism, Charity Cannon Willard, and it is now considered by scholars to be a fact that Christine was the first woman to write on commission.

⁷ Willard suggests this item is for Christine's payment for the *Letter on the Evils of Civil War and Feats of Arms* ("Treatise" 186), received on May 13, 1411.

To Demoiselle Christine de Pizan, widow of the late Master Estienne du Castel, a gift of 100 crowns, made to her by my lord the duke, for and in acknowledgment of two works which she has presented to my lord the Duke, one of which was commissioned from her by the late Duke of Burgundy, father of the present Duke...shortly before he died. Since then she has finished this book and my lord the Duke has it instead. The other book my lord the Duke wanted to have himself and...he takes much pleasure in these two books and in others of her epistles and writings. Let these books be entered in the inventory and kept for my lord the Duke.⁸

The account suggests John chose Christine because he liked what and how she wrote. John inherited his father's collection of books: Philip the Bold's taste was for devotional and religious literature, but there were more than a few romances, histories, and didactic works in the library (Vaughn, "Bold" 194). The evidence suggests that John was aware of Christine's familiarity with humanist works, and we have evidence he himself was partial to humanistic thought through the forty selections he had commissioned for his library,⁹ including a copy of the history of the discovery of the Canary Isles in 1402-4 titled *Le Canarien*, and manuscripts of Laurent de Premierfait's French translations of Boccaccio's *Decameron*

⁸ Translated by Vaughn with ellipses, ("Fearless" 235). Quoted in Vaughn from the *Archives départementales de la Côte-d'Or, Dijon*, MS. B1543, fol. 107, found in De Laborde's *Ducs de Bourgogne*, i.16, no.63.

⁹ The manuscripts are, respectively, BL Egerton MS. 2719, BV MS. Pal 1989, and BA MS. 3193.

and *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum Illustrium* (Vaughn, "Fearless" 234).

The Duke's acknowledgment that Christine had served him well with her Burgundian "enthusiasm" suggests that she was attuned to the needs of the Duke, and thus understood the necessity for influencing and educating the Dauphin in Burgundian ways, guiding the young prince away from the influence of the rival court of Orléans. Under these circumstances Christine was asked to write a treatise on warfare, and she explains in her preface to *Deeds of Arms* that:

I have not been inspired by arrogance or foolish presumption, but rather by true affection and a genuine desire for the welfare of noble men engaging in the profession of arms. I am encouraged, in the light of my other writings, to undertake to speak in this book of the most honorable office of arms and chivalry...as set forth in divers laws and by several authors, just as the builder who has already put up several strongholds is bold enough to construct a castle or fortress when he feels he has the materials to accomplish the work. So to this end I have gathered together facts and subject matter from various books to produce this present volume.¹⁰

¹⁰ Translated by Sumner Willard as *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, ed. Charity Cannon Willard (12). All further translations of *Deeds of Arms* are from this edition. The French original is thus: "Moy, nonne mene par arrogance en folle presumpcion, mais admonestee de vraye affection et bon desir des nobles hommes en loffice dez armes, suis enortee apres mes autres escriptures passees, sy comme cellui qui a ja abastu plusieurs fors edifices est plus hardy de soy chargier dedifier ung chastel our forteresce quant garny se sent de conuenables estoffes en ce neccessaires...ainsy qua propos Iay assemble les matieres et cuilles en plusiers liures pour produire en mon intencion ou present volume." From Christine's prologue to *Fais d'Armes*, reprinted in Byles 5-6.

This statement has led scholars to believe Christine felt she was in a "peculiar" (Teague 27) or "awkward" position (Willard, "Treatise" 182), using the wording of the standard apology in her preface to the work to support the idea that Christine was out of her league. But the above quote and the historical evidence promotes the opposite conclusions: John had great confidence in Christine's ability to write a book of war because of her previous works on chivalry.

John the Fearless appears to have received more than he expected from Christine. While she did fulfill the basics of the commission she was given, the tone of *Deeds of Arms*, when compared with other military manuals of the time, suggests she also interpreted the command to her own taste, rising above the level of political propaganda. She knew the Dauphin needed a practical education, but Christine's description of the man she considered to be the wisest man in France, Charles V, suggests that the future ruler of France would also need to be educated in the classics of philosophy and science coming to the French court for the first time from Italy:

Even though he understood Latin well and there was no need of translating for him, he was so provident that because of the great love he had for those who would follow him in times to come, he wanted to provide them

with teachings and knowledge leading to all sorts of virtue, and for this reason he had all the most important books translated from Latin into French by solemn masters highly competent in the sciences and arts... [including] the Bible, ...Saint Augustine,... Aristotle, ...Vegetius, ...*The Properties of Things*, ...Valerius Maximus, ...*The Policraticus*, Titus Livius...and a great many others.¹¹

Christine drew attention to Charles V's love of science and philosophy so that readers would see the benefits of a humanist education. If the Dauphin could follow the same path as his grandfather, he would theoretically overcome his enemies and not repeat the social, economic, and military mistakes of his father, Charles VI.

The result of her creative decision is twofold: on the first level *Deeds of Arms* is a plain-speaking manual for early modern warfare, made of an evenly distributed synthesis of ancient and medieval sources and Christine's own annotations, research, and opinions. The work argues that war is lawful for a just cause, either self-defense, defense against tyranny, or preserving freedom of a country; Christine also discusses weaponry, military strategy, and rules of engagement. On the second level, *Deeds of Arms* articulates in full what Christine considered

¹¹ See Book III.xii of *The Book of the Deeds and Good Character of King Charles V the Wise* in Willard ("Writings" 240-241). Willard points out in a note that "Charles V's library was...supervised until 1411 by Giles Malet, an especially trusted member of the royal household and a friend of Christine's husband's family, [and] this collection of manuscripts had no equal in Europe except for the Visconti Library in Pavia" (247).

to be proper and improper knightly behavior, constructing a more classically-based pragmatic soldier in opposition to the older norms of the chivalric knight. This dual purpose is no doubt one of the reasons why the book was chosen by Henry VII to be printed (and thus perhaps becoming required reading for his court): it appealed to both his softer courtly tastes and his tougher military requirements, and provided an excellent balance between the two.

II. The Construction of *Deeds of Arms*

The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry (1410),¹² is representative of the medieval military text as a genre in that it draws together three of the most influential military treatises available in Christine's time: a military history, a military strategy manual, and a courtier's manual or "Mirror for the Prince."¹³ Christine's choice to include personal interviews with contemporary

¹² Sumner Willard's 1999 translation of *Deeds of Arms* was based on Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS. 10476, as it "dates from the lifetime of Christine de Pizan" (2).

¹³ It could have been placed in her times in the same categories as the *De Regimine Principum* by Ptolemy of Lucca, written around 1250 and translated into French for Charles V in the 1360's; *De Bello* written by the Italian legist John of Legnano around 1365; and *A Toute la Chevalerie* by Jean de Montreuil in 1408. It would not have surprised a reader of *Deeds of Arms* to see Christine using *De Re Militari*, as it was the most translated of all military treatises in her time, nor to see her using *L'Arbre des Batailles*, as its main source was *De Bello*.

military men reflects her understanding of the anxieties of her audience regarding new techniques and tactics of warfare. While sometimes accused today of offering an "idealistic" description,¹⁴ Christine says that she sought to write a plain-speaking manual for warfare, because

...military and lay experts in the aforesaid art of chivalry are not usually clerks or writers who are expert in language, I intend to treat the matter in the plainest possible language so that, with God's help, I may make clear and comprehensible to all readers the doctrine set forth by the several authors whose works I have consulted.¹⁵

While she has been instructed in rhetoric and Latin, she acknowledges that her audience is not, and thus writes for those men who were already practicing in the arts of war and were used to plain language. As Latinity was a mark of elite masculinity, Christine's emphasis on plain language and her writing in the vernacular indicates a non-clerical

¹⁴ Bornstein states that in *Deeds of Arms*, "The portrait of the knight as a soldier appears in its most idealistic form" ("Mirrors" 39). Willard disputes this idea saying, "If the ideal upheld by both Christine and Bouvet has been criticized as far removed from the harsh reality of the day, it does provide evidence of a desire to reform chivalric conventions that were not longer useful to society. Both books were immediately popular, an indication that their ideas found favor with many knights, and it was in fact during the course of the fifteenth century that national armies evolved out of the various orders of knighthood. These books are less an indication of the decline of chivalry than of its potential for adapting itself to changing circumstances" ("Works" 186).

¹⁵ (12) In French, her focus on clarity is even more pronounced: "...les exerceans et expers en l'art de Chevalerie ne sont communement clerckz ne instruis en science de langage. Je nentens a traittier ne mais au plus plain et entendible langage que je pourray, a celle fin que la doctrine donnee par plusieurs acteurs...propose en ce present liure declairer, puist estre a tous cler et entendible" (Byles 5-6).

audience -- or a Dauphin who has not yet learned his Latin well.¹⁶ In this aspect the manual is a work of popularization, a "Reader's Digest" as it were, of the Roman classics pertaining to the basics for being a good warrior and the practical skills of rough warfare. As such, it is an intellectually opposite work to her earlier chivalric poem, *The Letter of Cupid* (1399), which endorsed the cultivation of the courtly ideals of chivalry.

The text of the *Deeds of Arms* is divided into four books and includes a personal prologue from Christine. The text is a compilation of several authors and Christine's own annotations, research, and opinions, but the distribution between compilation and her comments and research is fairly even. Her first seven chapters are considered "original" in that they are not paraphrased from or connected to outside works. Vegetius's *Epitome Rei Militaris* is used by Christine as the source of nineteen chapters in Book I, and eleven chapters in Book II. Frontinus's *Strategemata* (supplemented by Valerius Maximus's *Facta Dictaque Memorabilia*) are the sources of chapters 1-12 in Book II. The second book is also supplemented in sixteen chapters by the work of military

¹⁶ See Ruth Mazo Karras for a discussion on literacy and its connection to the formation of elite masculine identity in medieval universities.

advisors "wise knights, experts in these military techniques" (117) who assisted Christine but have asked not to be named in her work. The source of her last two books is Honoré Bouvet's *Tree of Battles*, but Christine is indebted only to Bouvet's fourth part, as she uses it to examine Bouvet's views on *droit de guerre*, so that this part of her work may be regarded as a commentary on the earlier treatise. Thus out of sixty-seven chapters, Christine is responsible for twenty-seven chapters and a prologue, as well as for the translation and editorial decisions involved in the general compilation of the work.

In her seven "original" chapters, Christine builds her argument by discussing under what situations a king may wage war, the five causes of war, and the steps that must be taken before declaring war. In Chapter 6 she outlines the care that must be taken to avoid the king's physical presence being harmed at a battle:

It is not, however, to be considered lightly if a king or sovereign prince should go [into battle] in person. It is better to avoid battle than to be present...For if Fortune should go against the prince who was there in person, and if he were thereby killed, taken prisoner, or should flee, this would be a loss of dishonor not merely to his person, but to those of his blood and, in general, to all his subjects, and loss and disruption to his land and country. (22)

"Loss and disruption" is a rather understated way to reflect on the difficult practicalities of maintaining the

king's body and social position. Christine also points out in this chapter that many kings, Charles V included, fought wars from their thrones, and that it is often best to do so to avoid social tensions, as "good sense and diligence are more useful in warfare than the presence of the prince" (23). Christine's sense of humor shines through in this quip, and she truly understands the anxieties and intimidations experienced by those rough warriors in the presence of majesty.

In Chapter 7 this practicality comes to the front in her long and detailed portrait of the ideal constable or commander. In the selection of a constable he must, of course, be a person "who is outstanding in all things that the bearing of arms requires, which is to say that through long experience they should be so accustomed to the conduct of warfare that it should seem like a natural calling" (23-4). She advises not to discriminate based on age,¹⁷ but on skill, and that experience is more essential than lineage:

...in this selection greater attention should be given to perfection of skill in arms, along with the virtues and the character and good bearing that should accompany this, than to exalted lineage or noble blood. (24)

¹⁷ An underlying theme in Christine's works (especially seen in her pro-feminist prose) is a commentary on the classes, following the classical idea that virtue is not solely inherent to nobility. It is strongest in her works where she uses the philosophies of Boethius to make her point.

After discussing philosophically the constable's abstract qualities, including his need for wisdom and courage, she lists the most important psychological *moeurs*:

Thus the qualities and conditions that should be found in a good constable are these: he should not be stubborn, short-tempered, cruel, or malevolent, but rather moderate and temperate, firm in justice, kindly in conversation, of upright bearing and few words, with a composed face, not given to light talk, truthful in word and promise, brave, sure of himself, diligent and not covetous. (25)

Christine lays out her standards of manners from the beginning of her description; her adjectives are based on detailing the psychological self-control of the ideal male character.¹⁸ The description of his internal qualities as

¹⁸ Christine follows the Aristotelian notion of *hexis*, in Latin *habitus*, often translated as "habit" or "manners." Aristotle defines it as "A state of character arising from the repetition of similar activities. Hence we must display the right activities, since differences in these imply corresponding differences in the states" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1103b25). Forhan points out that Christine calls this concept *moeurs* which she understood as

... habit, morals, manners, and even custom, depending on context. For Christine, this concept has important theoretical implications because it combines public and private behavior, the world of morality with the world of law. If the correct habits of virtue are inculcated early, they will be reflected in the individual person's morals as well as his or her manners. (xxii)

If a man is able to justify and accept the differences between public and private behavior, then his character does not suffer stress, but this is difficult, as there are conflicts between the desires of corporal knightly existence and the demands of projecting an ideal knightly image. According to N.A.R. Wright, there was a difference between the *droit de guerre* and the *droit d'armes*. The former was applied to the code of laws (such as in the *Tree of Battles*) that would allow the creation of "disciplined national chivalries in a world where chivalry had traditionally accepted neither discipline nor nationalism as virtues" (19). The latter applied to the relationships between knights "in which one party was temporarily at a disadvantage with regard to another" and their interests in authority were based on personal advantage or survival as opposed to "public duty" or "common good" (19). In *The Book of the Body of Policy* (1406), Christine

temperate will also, hopefully, be the description of how the knight will behave in a crisis situation. However, the *droit d'armes* gives a knight the opportunity to project these traits artificially in order to win a battle. I see Christine as giving her ideal knight these temperate traits as inherent to his character, but the traits he cannot artificially project are those of the warrior, and thus Christine continues with standards of physical action in dealing with external forces:

[He should be] proud before his enemies, magnanimous to the vanquished and to his inferiors, not easily angered or given to impulsive acts, not readily impressed by appearances or by words that do not seem truthful. (25)

Christine's constable fights to the proscribed limits, and no more, and never fights due to anger or insults. Part of having the correct *moeurs* is being aware of the emotional

acknowledged this difference (which in itself is a conflict between the survival of the body and the survival of the state) and she pulls the two military interests together in her discussion of boldness and honor in battle. She quotes Scipio as saying "no one ought to fight his enemies, that is, attack them, without just cause. But if the cause is just, they ought not to wait until they are attacked, for in a just cause, right gives greater boldness" (II.9). She is not advocating individual heroism that will senselessly cause death in battle, but is following Bouvet's guide in advocating that a knight should understand the reason and justice behind the battle, and not go to war for glory, hatred, or fear of dishonor. Spontaneity in war will only cause harm to the knight and to the plan of battle. True boldness comes from courage despite the odds, she argues, "And in such a case a man ought to fight securely, but not unless he is forced to fight. But in the case where he is attacked, if he does not defend himself, it is shameful because it would be cowardice and show little confidence in good fortune, which would be bad" (II.9). Honor invites boldness, and boldness invites a warrior to use trickery when it is merited, and Christine argues for the virtue of the action, "for whatever he does, if he finds any good and just deception, I believe that it is well and wisely done" (II.9).

deception of others, and being able to interpret illusive from significant discourse. Deception crumbles under hard evidence, and manipulating material evidence -- from swords to entire lands -- is the realm of the warrior. The presentation of his personal materiality must also be temperate, as he must avoid appearing either fashionable or physically fragile:

[He is] not tempted to vanity, ornaments, or jewels. He should be well provided with equipment and saddle, and should present himself proudly. He should not be lazy, slow, or sleepy, too easily tempted by food and drink or a dissipated life. (25)

That he should "present himself proudly" suggests the psychological self-control inherent in proper *moeurs*. The "equipment and saddle" most likely also refers to knightly armor, and reinforces the categorization which "locates that sexual difference for men, in particular, in distinctive dress and clothing" (Burns 118).¹⁹ A man may have a male identity out of armor, but in armor his

¹⁹ See Burns, Kuchta, Schultz regarding the link between clothing and gender. Burns argues that "Civilian dress for aristocratic men... was in fact...a unisex garment that could have been worn by either man or woman. The identity of the kneeling knight remains uncontested by...historians, who seem to presume that as long as a courtly figure is dressed in armor, whether in a visual image or in a literary text, one can readily recognize and identify him as a proper knight. But as soon as this male figure is "disarmed" (*desarme*, in Old French) and divested of that key marker of masculinity, his gender comes into question: he looks in fact more like an aristocratic woman" (112). Schultz disagrees, arguing that "vestimentary masculinity is defined not by armor itself but by the ability to move freely between armor, courtly dress, and exposed skin" (108). Christine, however, is concerned with putting knights in armor, and so her argument is prescriptive of the distinctiveness of gender (and social class).

identity is that of a knight, and as such, the wearing of armor becomes a symbol of his identity as well as a means for protection. Granted, in 1410 armor was still useful for physical protection, but the battles at Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and Agincourt (1415) "had shown that the feudal horse and its tactics were no match for the English longbowmen," not to mention artillery,

...although the cavalry could and usually did stay out of the range of these cumbersome early guns, the artillery deprived the heavy horseman of his chief tactical advantage -- his comparative immunity from wounds. Defensive positions supplied with artillery were safe from his charges. Thus the fifteenth century saw the noble cavalry forced to share its place in the army with mercenary infantry and trains of artillery. (Painter 23-24)

Christine's having to point out the obvious -- that knights should "dress richly in harnesses" -- comes from the changes in military technology which were rendering armor obsolete except in its ceremonial function. The disparaging comment about "the delicate life" echoes Christine's complaint in *Letter of Cupid* that instead of exercising military prowess, the bad courtier leads a life of leisure.²⁰ Christine continues in describing the Constable's

²⁰ In *Letter of Cupid*, the God of Love orders men to behave themselves, the irony of which suggests a parody of the chivalric ideal. Christine makes a mocking portrait of those knights who imitate the ideal in the extreme, or imitate the wrong elements of the ideal. She shows, for example, that men who physically pose as characters out of Arthurian romances appear quite ridiculous:

They spur their horses up and down the streets
Jaunty and handsome, jingling as they go.

public manners:

He should rather inform himself everyday regarding his adversaries state of readiness, be subtle, farseeing, and cautious in defending himself against them, assailing them wisely, and remaing well-informed of their traps. He should know how to govern his own people, keeping them in order and commanding due respect, carrying out the right, disdaining games, honoring those who merit it and keeping them near him, rewarding those who are deserving, and showing generosity where the situation requires it. (25-26)

This section emphasizes the labor necessary to be considered a productive knight, and his service on the battlefield had to be a balance between exceptional prowess and remarkable tactical planning. But knowing how to defend oneself from enemies and govern one's people is knowledge earned through experience, and cannot be learned from books. It can only be the result of long-living and the ability to adapt to circumstances. This part of her description echoes Christine's often-seen argument that

They make a show of great activity,
And spare no horse or mule. Then ever so
Attentively they tender their requests,
Inquiring for the weddings and the feasts
At which those polished, ardent, gallant swains,
Display how much they feel our arrow's cut,
So much that they can barely stand the pain! (51-59)

These men are imitating the theatrical elements of the characters that one might read about in Chrétien de Troyes's romances, but they are twisting the intent of the tales. In displaying themselves "a-jingle" they are advertising for the on-the-spot jousting associated with knight-errantry, and in asking at weddings about ladies they are imitating the necessary inquiries a young knight must make in order to find and succor damsels in distress. They are physically playing at being a knight, a reflection of their vanity, and instead of internalizing the chivalric virtues from the tales of valor, bravery, and honor into their lives, they are imitating only the superficial elements of adventure.

experience is more valuable than lineage, as "age of itself does not give any guarantee of skill and manner of combat, but rather experience" (24). Written when Christine was forty-six years old, this work certainly advocates wisdom over youthful prowess.

Finally, Christine describes proper action in the larger worldly sphere, and includes again a description of the proper "ordinary talk" or expression for an ideal knight. Speech and action are restricted to that which presents his knighthood in the best light:

His ordinary talk should be of arms and deeds of chivalry, and of the valiant accomplishments of good men. He should avoid boastfulness, be reasonable, love his prince and be true to him, be helpful to widows, orphans, and the poor, refrain from exaggerating small slights to his person or minor disagreements, but readily pardon those who repent. Above all, he should love God and the Church and uphold what is right. All these conditions are suitable to a good constable, and likewise to marshals and all thos who hold similar offices. (26)

Her ending is decorous, with the proper references to God, and the Church. The warning about "boastfulness" reflects her development from the poetic description in *Letter of Cupid*: "They spur their horses up and down the streets / Jaunty and handsome, jingling as they go. / They make a show of great activity, / And spare no horse or mule" (49-54), to one more concise, as befitting plain language.

Her advice to not count the "personal trespass" suggests a reference to dueling. In Book IV of *Deeds of Arms*, Christine details the rules of dueling from the *Tree of Battles*, and includes her own authority in the matter, asking "if such a battle is just and permitted by right" and defining the duel:

In my time I have seen it in France, and even before my time it was used in deeds of arms. This is a contest carried out between only two contenders, or sometimes several over a single quarrel, in restricted fields, a conflict that is called single or judicial combat, which one gentleman undertakes against another to prove with the strength of his body some hidden and concealed crime. (197)

Her reply is that the duel is not permitted because it was fighting for the sake of determining justice, an act of presumption against God's will or vengeance, and a temptation of God. But the decline in the judicial duel paralleled the rise of the duel of honor (Bryson xxiii).²¹ Honor, as Christine suggests in the first part of *The Book of the Body Politic*, is won less by the sword than by the possession of virtue. Thus honor must be acquired through the practice of grace and not merely the practice of arms, because "it is true, as it has often been seen, that the

²¹ According to Frederick Bryson, the official "judicial duel in France ended with the combat between Jean Legris and Jacques Carronge in the presence of Charles VI in 1385. But it seems that the judicial duel in France did not become extinct until toward the end of the fifteenth century" (xvii). He further explains that "many duels contained features of more than the three main types [state, judicial, honor]. Thus the state duel resembled the judicial duel and the early duel of honor when it was regarded the judgment of God" (xx).

one who was right has lost" (198). Christine is suggesting that dueling, like warfare, is no longer a measure of manhood for a warrior but an action or 'performance' that must only be done with just cause. This lack of promotion parallels the shift in the historical signification of the meaning of the duel, making it less of a judicial act and more of a staged performance of stereotypical masculine honor.

There are certain points left out of her description. There is not a warning against drunkenness, nor against women of ill repute, nor is there the suggestion that a normal man does not really enjoy life without women, similar to the argument in *Letter of Cupid* that "reasonable men / should value women, love and cherish them.../ For woman rightly is that single soul / Whom man loves deeply through the natural law" (718-724). Even so, the chapter identifies particular physical and social behavioral patterns, and promotes bonding with other men who share those same patterns.

Christine's identification of specific knightly norms must have held a fascination because of their reinforcement of social behavior that was daily being broken by the nobility and the gentry in their violent personal conflicts. As an agent of social stabilization, *Deeds of*

Arms held a powerful argument because of the combination of Christine's use of respected classical sources and her own modern additions. But Christine provided an additional twist to her treatise: while she identified proper knightly behavior, she also was writing for the Dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, who would have the power to uphold the standards while changing or even breaking those standards for his personal use and identity. When it came to Henry VII's turn to read *Deeds of Arms*, he could not have missed the promotion of individuality and an awareness of the difficulties in maintaining an absolute masculine identity.

III. Christine's Understanding of the Aristocratic Mystique

Christine's exploration of masculinity in *Deeds of Arms* was an extremely convincing model for those men who needed advice in learning how to be the best in all things military. It was persuasive because the work focuses on the basics: manipulating military techniques, laws and strategies, manipulating men solely and in huge battalions, and manipulating one's corporal, material body and one's abstract, representative body. The material and abstract realities of Christine's ideal knight were fully integrated in this work, as her use of *moeurs* had become an inherent

part of her construction of interior and exterior behavior. Christine's use of ancient and medieval sources in *Deeds of Arms* provides the source of power for the dynamic, but the arrangement of the information in connection with her own authority suggests that her construction of the knight is connected to the construction of her personal identity. While *Deeds of Arms* integrates the two levels of reality inherent in the knightly body, Christine's work shows an awareness that the physical male body and its abstract representation could be separated and reconnected, and this suggests that she was also aware that the physical and abstract representations of the gender of the knight could also be shuffled -- and possibly replaced with another gender.

The implications of Christine's decision to accept the commission to write *Deeds of Arms* were far-reaching: not only was it received with "much pleasure" by John the Fearless, but posthumously her treatise was translated and printed by Caxton in 1490, supposedly by order of Henry VII of England. It was also capable of attracting the interest of military men four centuries later, evidenced by Harvard MS. 168 being signed by General Gourjourn, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, and his father-in-law, Comte Pierre-Louis Roederer (1754-1835). While interest in Christine's other works

faded, *Deeds of Arms* held its place in the eyes of those who were searching for information on chivalry and warfare. The interest may have resulted from Christine's contribution to the genre of the military treatise, or the work's skillful reincorporating of classical values into contemporary life, or the acknowledgment of the individuality of the author. But all of these would have faded in value by the 1700s. What was left, then, was the appeal of Christine's understanding of the aristocratic mystique, especially the mystique of the chivalrous knight.

Christine did not begin her writing career with the masculine subject in mind; in her *Ballades* the feminine subject and its fight for respect and speech in the courtly arena was her closest interest.²² *Letter of Cupid* too, was a response to social manners that denigrated women, and suggested a deep-seated conviction in her beliefs in how the world *should be*. (This is perhaps why Christine became so involved with didactic writing that she was able to make a career out of it.) Her *Letter of Othea* responded to the need for an educational text for a young man, and whether it is seen as a political, allegorical, mythographical, or plainly didactic text (or all of these together), it

²² See E. J. Richards, *Christine de Pizan and the Medieval French Lyric*, and Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defense of Women: Reading Beyond Gender*.

constructs a masculine subject. The knight is still a courtly and chivalric ideal, but he has touches of morality which enter into the text, possibly as a result of Christine's concerns for her young reader's practical education in the *trivium*. The didacticism inherent in *Letter of Othea* and Christine's later texts uncovers a deeper level to Christine's construction of masculinity, that of the conflict between being an autonomous subject and being subjected to outside forces.²³ As Christine constructs or "fashions" the consciousness of her readers, she too is being constructed: her focus becomes more socially constituted, the possibilities narrow, and her avenue of interest leads her to explore the making of her own and others' material and projected identities. As will be seen in the next chapter, her exploration of personal identity was the mark of early humanist thought in France, and through the Woodville circle, in England.

The identity of the prince is the highest social level that one can aim at constructing. Ideally, in a stable and coherent world, the prince would not need to be fashioned, as it would be from him that all fashioning examples would be made. *The Book of the Body of Policy* was her response

²³ She explored her own identity in the *Book of the Mutacion of Fortune* (1400), *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), *Treasure of the City of Ladies* (1406), and *Christine's Vision* (1406).

to the fact that Christine's age was not stable but fractured. The head of state in France faced the political problems of ducal rivalry and English invasion, the economic problems of financial exploitation of the French crown by Orléans and Burgundy (Vaughn "Fearless" 41), and the social problems of Italian-influenced, rapidly changing intellectual ideals and the first steps of civic humanism (Ferguson 42). The opportunity to construct the prince's political identity allowed Christine to become an active agent in the construction of her society and political sphere. She became a producer of ideology in addition to being a participant in it, and her fascination with *moeurs* encouraged her to fashion the prince's manners according to the system of values and beliefs that she thought the most correct. In addition to constructing masculinity, a whole new realm of social action opened to her, one in which her ability to participate and perform was at least intellectually equal to that of a man.

In the *Book of the Body of Policy* Christine writes "Oh, what a noble, honorable, and profitable thing it is in the kingdom, empire, or country to have brave knights, that is, good soldiers!" (I.29) In this work, a noble is a soldier. But in *Deeds of Arms* the perfect knight is a rougher, more battle-oriented man. In the *Letter of Cupid*,

the knight only serves Venus; in *Deeds of Arms*, the knight only serves Mars. The lack of precise definition occurs because Christine's portrait of the ideal knight is a construction grounded in her own identity, and she makes no attempt to solve the puzzle of this paradox, but instead plays upon the irony of the situation.

Christine's identification with the warrior figure comes to its fullest development in her final poem, *The Poem of Joan of Arc* (1429). The development of her ideal knight ends up, ironically, as the description of a young maid. Christine praises her as the ultimate French hero in Part XXVI:²⁴

But as for us, we've never heard
About a marvel quite so great,
For all the heroes who have lived
In history can't measure up
In bravery against the Maid,
Who strives to rout our enemies.
Its God who does that, who's guiding her
Whose courage passes that of men.

In this poem Christine expresses her concern for the guidance of France as well as her interest in creating a pro-feminist stance. The Maid, guided by God, becomes the

²⁴ I am using Thelma Fenster's 1994 translation of *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*.

greatest hero because she is the bravest and most valiant knight. But is God on Joan's side because she is the perfect knight, or because she is a woman and needs divine aid? Christine answers that it is because she is both, in Part XXXIV:

What honor for the female sex!
God's love for it appears quite clear,
Because the kingdom laid to waste
By all those wretched people now
Stands safe, a woman rescued it
(A hundred thousand men could not
Do that) and killed the hostile foe!
A thing beyond belief before!"

Christine is rejoicing that Charles VII is finally king of France, yet her joy is greater that the crowning was made possible by a young woman. Joan of Arc validated Christine's convictions that women are capable of knighthood.

Her vindication suggests Christine's understanding of the aristocratic mystique behind the 'perfect knight.' The knight is not a masculine being at all, but the warrior's gender follows instead the figure of Minerva. Willard suggests that Christine did not consider *Deeds of Arms* as adding to her literary credit, since her reputation was as

a courtly poet, and she "therefore decided to take refuge behind the figure of Minerva who, according to mythology, had invented the art of forging metal armor, likewise a rather unladylike pursuit" ("Treatise" 182). I see the reverse: that this "refuge" behind Minerva is not at all a refuge but a form of identification. Minerva is not Christine's shield, held outside her body, but masculine armor, worn on her female body. Christine's use of the figure of Minerva not only feminizes valor and wisdom, military strategy and cunning, but also reflects her own subjectivity, subordinating the traditionally masculine heroic to a dominant feminine icon.

This identification becomes apparent further into the prologue of *Deeds of Arms* after she acknowledges her womanhood and admits:

As this is unusual for women...so let it not be held against me if I, as a woman, take it upon myself to treat of military matters. Rather, follow the teaching of Seneca, who said, "As long as the words are good, it does not matter who speaks them." (11-12)²⁵

She warns her readers not to be caught up in the novelty of her gender writing in this genre, as her sex is not as important as her words. She then "prays" to Minerva,

²⁵ "...et pource que c'est chose non accoustumee et hors vsage a femme...se moy femme me suis chargee de traittier de si faitte matiere, ains vueillent ensuire l'enseignement de senecque qui dit, Ne te chault qui die mais que les parolles soyent bonnes" (Byles 5-6).

praising her for her skills and genius ("desleue
entendement") in military matters:

Lady and high goddess, may it not displease you that
I, a simple little woman, should undertake at the
present time to speak of such an elevated office as
that of arms. (13)²⁶

No male skills are present here: it is Minerva who has
invented the forging of iron and steel, armor and harnesses
to cover the body of man, weapons for battle, helmets,
shields, and battle tactics. And it is not because
Christine is a woman that she asks for Minerva's help; it
is because she does not have Minerva's knowledge. It is
more of a matter of needing knowledge, than feeling
inadequate as result of her gender, which spurs the
request. The final identification sign comes from
Christine's closing nudge: "like you I am an Italian woman"
"*et je suis comme toy femme ytalienne*".²⁷ She reminds
Minerva that they are kin, both from the Greco-Italian
area, and not of France. The identification is complete
and justified: Minerva, a literary figure, becomes a
personified historical fact, and by birth, gender, and by

²⁶ "*Dame et haulte deesse, ne te desplaise ce que moy, simple
femmelette, sy comme neant enuers la grandeur de ton renomme scauoir,
ose presentement entreprendre a parler de sy magnifique office comme est
celuy des armes*" (Byles 5-6).

²⁷ This isn't the first time our attention has been called to
Christine's decidedly unfeminine identifications: her mentor Deschamps
even noticed it, saying in a letter on February 10, 1404, "*Car je te
voy, comme Boece a Pavie / Seule en tes faiz ou rayaume de France.*"

psychological inclination Christine sees herself as having the right, privilege, and power to write about knighthood, chivalry, and war.

Christine de Pizan, in *Deeds of Arms*, connects multiple layers of interest, history, social, and political beliefs. She participates with confidence in an area of intellectual achievement not open to women, and her previous writings put her in a position where she could receive compensation for her performance. She constructs an agent in her ideal constable who is able to connect to her male readers and listeners through his corporeality, his focus on the practicalities of labor and protection, and his goal of exceeding in a military career. She also constructs an agent who is the representative of an ideal, a projection of what a knight should be, and how he would ideally fit into the larger chivalric-based social sphere. And finally, she places herself in a position of authority which allows her to become one with her idol, the wise warrior queen Minerva. For Christine, the reality of Joan of Arc must have overwhelmed her greatest dreams: the image of a wise, honorable, and chivalrous knight connected to the body of a virtuous young woman, and this creation is using her gendered authority to return France to glory. It was as if the goddess Minerva had come to life.

The text of *Deeds of Arms* was cherished by both the English and the French court for its value as a practical military treatise,²⁸ and an important addition to any reader's classical education, but the subtext had to have been the primary reason why the work was read. In both the French and the English courts the works of Vegetius were openly available, and other works on chivalry and war existed in equal measure. But *Deeds of Arms* enjoyed an elevated readership that went beyond the ordinary - it spoke to the knightly mind and attitude, in a way that other chivalric manuals did not, by bridging the practical needs of the military man and the new forms of thought regarding the philosophy of war. In 1970, the modern military historians R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy praised Christine's contribution to the art of war: "One example of the appearance of professionalism was the resumption of theoretical studies of warfare, almost

²⁸ Willard suggests that the "continued popularity of the text was [due to] the reform of the French army under Charles VII around 1445. The group of later manuscripts, notably the paper ones, appears to date from this period of reform. One of the king's principal advisors during this period was Arthur de Richmont, an important leader in the campaign that finally expelled the English from France. Richmont would surely have been acquainted with Christine's book, for he was one of Louis de Guyenne's companions at the French court at the time the *Fais d'armes* was presented to him. Furthermore, he later married the dauphin's widow, Marguerite de Guyenne, the princess to whom Christine had dedicated the *Livre des Trois Vertus*. Richmont made an important contribution to the reorganization of the French army by bringing into hand the undisciplined freebooters and by insisting on adequate leadership, discipline, and regular pay, all qualities insisted upon by both Vegetius and Christine" ("Deeds of Arms" 8).

unknown since the time of Vegetius. Representative of this new intellectual approach to military affairs was the treatises of war and on chivalry by Christine de Pizan" (400). Christine's ability to lead in this "new intellectual approach" comes from her exposure to Petrarch and other early humanists, and we will explore her connections to humanist thought in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Christine de Pizan, Early Modern Thought, and Renaissance Views on War

By 1545, general interest in Christine's writings was diminishing in England: the date of decline comes from Robert Wyer's 1545 printing of his translation of *L'Épître d'Othéa* as the *C Hystoryes of Troy*. According to Cynthia J. Brown, "[Wyer's] edition is the only known evidence of a French-English print connection in the publication of Christine's works during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (229). In comparison to Christine's other works, *Deeds of Arms* managed to enjoy a longer life span, aided by Caxton's 1490 translation and printing of the work into English, but by the 1600s the immediate appeal of *Deeds of Arms* had greatly faded.

In France, her readership was still active, as seen in Jean André's printing in 1536 of the *Trésor de la Cité des Dames*. After 1545 a limited, smaller group of readers remained in France, usually made up of scholars who could read medieval French. Earl Jeffrey Richards points out:

Christine is never mentioned in a vacuum. Her name usually crops up during discussions of royal historiography, of female erudition, of the "new" literary history undertaken at the beginning of the eighteenth century or of fanciful, romanticizing

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author biographies. Despite these unfavorable premises, though, Christine's memory did not fade: quite the contrary is the case. There are more than fifty references to Christine between 1545 and 1795. ("femme auteur" 103)

Richards organized these references into four groups of readers:

(I) French national historians who record Christine as a source for the reign of Charles V; (II) pro-feminine writers who explicitly situate Christine within a tradition of *femmes auteurs*; (III) literary historians who try to situate Christine within a newly conceived scheme of literary history; and (IV) romanticizing writers who concentrate their attention on an invented love affair between Christine and the Earl of Salisbury. ("femme auteur" 103-4)¹

Richard's discussion of the literary historians is brief, sketching out the major developments in France and bowing to the analysis by historian Franco Simone. One might argue that the readership in England, based on our earlier discussion of the Woodville circle, follows along similar lines: the person who translated and paraphrased Christine's *Fais d'Armes* into *Boke of Noblesse* had a different view and historical interest than Caxton, who translated Christine's work with its anti-English references intact, as well as making sure that Christine's name and gender was praised and not erased.

¹ Horace Walpole (1717-1797) was taken with the idea of Christine's romantic liaison with the Earl of Salisbury, and published a version of it in 1786, but it was based on his imaginative response to the French scholar's speculations, and not on any books or manuscripts he had read on his own.

Unfortunately, outside the more general references in France and the evidence from provenance studies in England for Christine's works, there is no evidence of direct citation except for *Fais d'Armes*. Kate Langdon Forhan sums up the situation:

There is no evidence to date that any later political thinker quoted directly from her works, explicitly refuted them, or named them in any way in the construction or elaboration of political views. In terms of some great chain of being of political ideas, or some orderly evolutionary flow, Christine de Pizan, cannot, with that one exception [*Fais d'Armes*], be shown to have had any direct role in the development of Western political thought. (160)

Forhan, of course, writes of this disappointment because of her wish to connect Christine with other early modern political thinkers such as Machiavelli, but that is not possible. Forhan overcomes this setback by turning away from the 'great chain of political ideas' and focusing more realistically on Christine's influence in France:

That said, however, she does have indirect significance in the evolution of European political ideas. It must be recognized that Christine's contribution to political thought in fifteenth-century France is collective as well as individual. She was one of a great wave of intellectuals who, confronted with national tragedy and incompetent rule, were concerned with the fate of France and shared observations, criticisms and ideas. (160)

Forhan concludes by describing Christine as "a renaissance woman in every sense" (167), and it is this understanding of Christine as a "renaissance woman" that will be

discussed in this chapter. What are the requirements for a "medieval" versus an "early modern" or "renaissance" label? Should scholars identify a paradoxical writer and personality like Christine de Pizan as 'early modern' instead of 'medieval'? Drawing a conclusion from those answers, I discuss the influences, direct and indirect, of *Deeds of Arms* on medieval and early modern political thought. Finally, I explore the effect of this influence on the ideas of 'just war' theory within Elizabethan popular culture, namely theatre, exposing an indirect parallel between the ideas about war within Christine's *Deeds of Arms* and Shakespeare's "Henriad."

I. Christine as a medieval or early modern writer

Many scholars have tried to place Christine de Pizan in the "early modern" category instead of the "medieval" because of the problematic nature of her place within the intellectual movements of her time. Part of this effort comes from a clearer understanding of Christine's thought resulting from a greater variety of her writings becoming more accessible in both original form and in translation; part of this effort comes from efforts of scholars, both of literature and history, to "demodernize the Middle Ages."

Medieval Studies in the twentieth century began with the idea that the Middle Ages were the origins of modern authority and liberty (Freedman and Spiegel 679). John Matthews Manly remarked in *Speculum* in 1930 that

...the Middle Ages must not be neglected. It lies close to us. In it arose many of our most important institutions. Our social life, our customs - our ideals, or superstitions and fears and hopes - came to us directly from this period; and no present-day analysis can give a complete account of our civilization unless it is supplemented by a profound study of the forces and forms of life, good and evil, which we have inherited from it. (250)

The medieval was obscure and strange, on one hand, and on the other its alterity offered a sense of sympathetic kinship to the developing literature and philosophies of western academic culture. In the 1960s, the collapse of governmental prestige and the waning of the Cold War, however, encouraged scholars to begin to see the medieval in more realistic light, as the pressure to see literature and history in terms of individuality, pluralism, and human autonomy gave way to an appreciation of medieval "otherness" and of the "grotesque" which had fascinated nineteenth century medievalists. This opened the door for an exploration of the sense of marginality where three developments became apparent, according to historians Paul Freedman and Gabrielle Spiegel in their article, "Medievalisms Old and New": the effort to uncover women's

history and the historical production of gender; the rejection of the universalizing, foundation-oriented approaches to history in favor of a "new historicism" that focused on a cultural approach to history based on looking at transformations instead of foundations; and a focus on linguistics, the idea of understanding documents as texts rather than sources, seeing history no longer as a cohesive narrative but as representations of individuals (696-7).

It is because of these developments that Christine de Pizan's placement in the philosophical canon has become uncertain. A modernist approach to Christine's writings would follow the division of medieval and Renaissance thought, and place anyone writing in England prior to the Tudors (Henry VII's ascension in 1485 to be the earliest date) within the 'medieval' category, an assertion that is simple, unifying, and certain. A postmodern approach suggests that we abandon any hopes of reaching a continuous and progressive view of history and accept a fractured and estranged sense of the past, and the result would be to call a writer "early modern" or "medieval" based on an individual scholar's view of history. The aim of scholarship should be, of course, the pursuit of comprehension, which should aim to synthesize the two modes of thought (which scholars appear to be overdeveloping into

aporia). The next stage of scholasticism appears to be looking beyond the either/or, inclusion/exclusion dichotomy of modernism versus postmodernism. The next, as yet unnamed, stage sees the ideas of both hegemony and arbitrariness as being totalizing, and embraces the mediating "And": the idea that cultures, ideas, and writers may operate smoothly on two or more highly contrasting concepts at once without finding those concepts to be contradicting.² Instead of putting a writer into a "movement" or "margin," an action which achieves modern cohesiveness and unity but destroys postmodern individuality and marginality, it allows speakers to speak for themselves, embracing hybrid, bisexual, biracial, and diverse stances, and asks us to accept an author's own self-definition even though we may see it as conflicting, and may not comprehend his or her interior distinctions.

² Kiernan Ryan calls this the "holy grail of hermeneutics": "New Historicism and Cultural Materialism in particular have striven to do justice both to the strangeness and remoteness of the texts they address and to their own entrenchment in the late-twentieth-century assumptions that govern their aims and methods. But the readings produced by these approaches turn out time and time again to be intractably retrospective or stubbornly narcissistic nonetheless. What is clearly needed is a criticism that can develop a genuine dialogue between past and present; a criticism that can place the text in history and trace history itself in the letter of the text; a criticism that can reconcile aesthetic analysis and theoretical critique, which refuses to sacrifice the poetry to the politics of the work. But, although the holy grail of hermeneutics is not hard to imagine, it remains elusive as ever" (236). Like the search for a unified field theory in physics, it is simple to conceive but maddeningly difficult to define.

Christine de Pizan is a key candidate for this next stage. Charity Cannon Willard sees her as "One of the writers who marked the transition in France between the so-called late Middle Ages and the Renaissance" ("Franco-Italian" 333). Willard's argument to place Christine within the early modern begins with Christine's well-known debate over the intrinsic worth of Jean de Meung's part of the *Roman de la Rose*. In 1401, Jean de Montreuil, the provost of Lille, began the argument by writing a commentary which praised de Meung's addition and upheld the poet's misogynistic ideals. He sent a copy of what he had written to Christine, and she rebutted his argument with eloquence and wit, earning the support of Jean Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris. The intellectuals within the Parisian court were sent copies of the debate letters, and soon many others were involved in the discussion. Willard summarizes:

The whole discussion, in spite of the heat it apparently generated, is best understood as a sort of intellectual exercise inspired by debates among Italian humanists. Its greatest importance for Christine was that it gave her considerable publicity as a defender of her sex and encouraged her to undertake even more ambitious objectives. (337)

Willard lessens the importance of the discussion itself, yet maintains the importance of Christine's center position within the group of Parisian humanists. Christine's

writings flourished, as did her career as a professional writer, and in 1405 she wrote her autobiography, *L'Avison-Christine*, a work that also addresses the political problems of the time. Willard again promotes Christine as "humanistic," describing the work:

In spite of being a medieval dream-vision in form, the work is basically humanistic in concept - it not only provides a spiritual autobiography of the sort that Petrarch had rendered popular, but its advice to the French rulers follows the tradition already made popular by Italian humanists, who saw their role as advisers to monarchs as one of their main functions in life. (338)³

To this list of Christine's qualities, Willard adds,

Another essentially humanistic trait is Christine's interest in the education of the young, which can already be noted in two works written early in her career for her son, Jean de Castel - the *Enseignemens Moraulx* and the *Proverbes Moraulx*, both of which enjoyed considerable popularity, the latter being printed in an English translation by William Caxton in 1477. (338)

In addition, for the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, Christine painted a portrait of the perfect Renaissance prince in her work *Le Livre du Corps de Policie*.

Maureen Quilligan's view, however, of Christine's "modernity" is much less enthusiastic than Willard's.

Quilligan entered into Christine scholarship with the

³Maureen Quilligan corrects Willard's view of Christine as having dream-visions, "Unlike Dante (or Chaucer, or the narrator of the Rose), Christine takes time out to eat and does not have a "dream" - such as most allegorical dream-visions insist. Rather, she has a waking vision, much like Dante's" (230).

insistence on the medieval nature of Christine's writing, and struggled against the prevailing views of the scholarship of the 1980's that called Christine a "feminist"; instead, Quilligan stalwartly promoted Christine as a pro-woman writer, an anti-misogynist, asserting that to call Christine a "feminist" would be anachronistic. Quilligan's view of Christine was equally grounded on the necessity for firm definitions of terms when it comes to calling Christine a humanist:

[Christine's] seeming modernity, predicated...on the most "medieval" practice of authorial citation and revision, and her explicit and inexplicit scrutiny of a misogyny driven by what can be termed various oedipal anxieties, as well as her focus on the problematic relations between oral and written traditions of authority in the representation of the female body, would seem to place her at the center of a number of late twentieth century critical concerns and therefore in a position somewhat anachronistic to her late medieval movement. (242)

Quilligan acknowledged that Christine wrote "with a sense of the political instrumentality of literature that we are only now beginning to appreciate" (242), but would not label Christine as a humanist, insisting that if we find anachronism in the middle ages, we would do better to redefine the idea of the medieval rather than force the medieval to mirror our political practices.

A few years later, Quilligan made a large concession towards Christine's modernity, and suggested that her

insistence on self-naming, using 'Je, Christine'

...indicate(s) a practice that we ordinarily associate with the self-naming Renaissance. Michelangelo's famous carving of the inscription 'Michelangelo hoc fecit' across the Pietà may stand witness to the later age's resolute refusal of anonymity. While the appearance of the formula, 'Je, Christine' is not entirely anomalous in medieval literary practice, its repetition throughout Christine's oeuvre - especially in the *Livre de la cite des dames* - makes its distinctively idiosyncratic frequency a signal mark of Christine's authority. ("Name" 202)

Quilligan argued that Christine's practice of naming follows a trend in the medieval genre of chronicle-writing; Froissart and others established their authority by including their names in the prologues to their chronicles, and the act in turn reveals the author as an unique person located in a specific historical or social arena.

Christine's use of self-naming reveals:

...[a] new possibility for authorial self representation. Her rather unusual use of the chronicler's self-naming inaugurates not only her strange "modernity" as an author, it also marks her practice as essentially gendered, specifically when she redeploys the chronicler's signature to make her own femaleness a social category supporting her authority. (204)

Quilligan thus admitted a "strange modernity" in Christine's writing, but tempered her concession by suggesting that this modernity was based upon the influence of the writings of Dante, and "an attempt to capitalize on the powerful appeal currently felt in France for the

beginnings of Italian humanism" (215).

Beatrice Gottlieb, too, is concerned with using the term 'humanist' (as well as 'feminist') in connection with Christine's modes of thought. Gottlieb, a historian, is very careful to separate the values we place on words in a present-day context from those used in a fifteenth-century context, and believes that "utterances of the past should never be taken at face value, because 'face value' more often than not means current value, the value derived from a twentieth-century context" (340). She defines the modes of thought in the fifteenth century as:

A tendency to think in hierarchical terms, to see both the physical world and society as naturally existing in layers arranged in something like a pyramid, a tendency to explain things by what we call supernatural causes (whether emanations or sympathies or miracles), and a tendency to think allegorically and use symbols not as arbitrary literary devices but as expressions of a real correspondence between different spheres of being. (340)

Thus the question a historian must ask is not "is Christine a humanist" but "did Christine think of herself as a humanist?" According to Gottlieb, we cannot say that the above modes of thought are necessarily medieval, because these modes are a 'tendency' and Christine in her own time was an exception to the accustomed order. Likewise, if we follow this line of logic, we cannot define Christine as a humanist, but must follow the definitions Christine made

for herself.

Christine was not fond of following standardization or allowing herself to be confined by definition. She may have thought in hierarchical terms, but she did not respect hierarchy for its own sake, instead following the person and not the leader. From the beginning of her career, with the "*Débat du Roman de la Rose*" she resisted having her identity defined as an inferior subject and women as "other." In her works from *Charles V* to *Jeanne d'Arc*, she searched for historical reasons behind events, looking for human power and choices in politics instead of identifying surprising or unexplained events as "miracles." Christine was able to write allegorically (such as in the *Épître d'Othéa*), but the allegory was placed on an equal standing with a didactic gloss, which forces the reader or hearer to acknowledge that the allegory is a literary device to aid memorization and understanding.

Kevin Brownlee follows this delicate path towards exploring Christine's approach to early modern thought. Christine was "the first French literary figure who explicitly incorporated her identity as a woman into her identity as an author," and to do that she had to "radically modify...the two principal vernacular literary discourses of the late fourteenth century" (199), the

"courtly" and the "clerkly" traditions. These two traditions, argues Brownlee, excluded the possibility for a woman writer, either poet or clerk, to have an identity, and thus Christine had to "create a new kind of discourse of the self...On the one hand, Christine utilizes courtly diction to critique and to expand the courtly system. On the other hand, she uses the learned discourse of 'clergie' to critique and expand the clerkly system" (200). In doing this, Brownlee concludes, Christine exhibited a "coherent discursive ego" and redefined the "causal relationship between writer and text" by modifying the two traditions for her own purposes and voice. In sum, Brownlee suggests,

Christine's overall critical strategy thus involves a systematic insistence on authorial responsibility and reader response, both in a moral context. Christine's notion of the moral dimension of literary discourse is part of her own self-definition as a writer, for this is how she conceives of her own literary vocation, her new kind of female authorial identity. (216)

In insisting on authorial responsibility and reader response, it appears that Christine is challenging hierarchical behavior by presenting herself as a model to be imitated, and a female model at that. She appears to be aware of the consequences of challenging tradition, and that a successful challenge will create mimesis. Therefore, by choosing to participate in the "Débat," a very public and aggressive verbal exchange, Christine

established her own credentials as an author, and also established a new kind of public self. Here we have Christine's definition of self, and that self appears to be early modern, in that it is based on her ability to establish her own voice, her own authority, her own individuality against others, as well as understanding that the individual is a microcosm of the state.

Earl Jeffrey Richards has made one of the most consistent arguments for Christine having a humanist orientation. He qualifies his definition of her humanism by calling Christine's writings "essentially humanist with a courtly veneer" but separates Christine from the medieval by insisting that

Christine's mastery of these courtly forms and categories - both social and literary - is essential to her own implicit ideological program and should not be construed as Christine's automatic or obligatory identification with them. ("Humanism" 263)

Richards sees a clear "courtly/humanist opposition" in her writings, suggesting that:

On ideological grounds, there seem to be curious parallels between Christine's critique of courtly conventions and later Renaissance humanist criticisms of medieval courtly romance, so much so that Christine's attitude toward courtly literature, far from being indicative of her opposition to humanism, as Coville long ago argued, can be directly tied to her humanist orientation and to her assimilation of Italian humanist thought. (257)

Richards supports the idea that we must follow the

definitions Christine made for herself by arguing that the presence of Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Boethius in her writings connects her to humanism.

In her political persuasion, Christine was a monarchist, but Richards argues that "her conception of the role of the monarchy within the French nation was itself innovative within the context of her time" (267). He cites the work of Franz Walter Müller, a Marxist historian, who analyzed *Autres Ballades* #49 (considered an important ballade within Christine's work because of its historical and political significance for the history of France) and determined it was critical because "it views the French nation as one body of subjects under the king rather than an entity divided along estate lines, and because it invoked a new ideal of humanity that anticipated later developments in humanist political thought" (267).

Guillaume de Machaut, in comparison, reinforced the view of the feudal estate and class separatism. For Christine, France is first among nations not because of its Christianity, but because of its humanity, and that shift indicates a transition from medieval thought to a renaissance ideal. Richards concludes by suggesting that "a fuller understanding of the poeto-logical values that stand behind her works and that led to a penetrating

transformation of courtly conventions [would lead to] an appreciation of the consistently provocative, innovative, and, within the context of her time, revolutionary nature of her writings" (268).⁴

Forhan also agrees with Richards, seeing Richard's qualifier of Christine being "innovative within the context of her own time" as the key component. For Forhan,

Christine's vulnerability in life explains her conventional acceptance of social hierarchy, of monarchy, and of 'knowing her place'. . . The world was a given, and yet she had the perception to see that it might be constructed differently, including a functional view of society, a reduced political role for the clergy, and clear standards on the concepts of justice and just war. (163)

Forhan's views follow the clear-sighted approaches Quilligan and Gottlieb have towards steering away from anachronism in constructing labels. It is a measured response, one that is careful not to carelessly throw a woman who clearly lived in a medieval environment into the Renaissance cauldron. It is also a necessary response, because Christine does not suffer labels easily. Forhan bridges the two worlds:

In a sense, she was utterly conventional yet she was astoundingly insightful and optimistic within those limits. She had a clear normative vision and was able

⁴ Richards continued his challenge in 1998 with "Christine de Pizan and the Medieval French Lyric" which asks "whether there is a correlation between Christine's formal freedom as a lyric poet and the way in which she addressed the questions of authority, experience, and women's place in "the field of Letters" (2).

with great clarity to convey the enormous gap between what is and what ought to be. (163)

Christine's ability to discern what ought to be the practical response to a political or social situation caused her to place prudence as being the highest virtue in many of her works, the *Épistre d'Othéa* being the most visible: "*Othéa, deesse de prudence, qui adrece les bons cuers en vaillance, a toy Hector, noble prince puissant... salutation*" (Parussa 197). Forhan explains

Prudence is not wisdom in some abstract and theoretical sense nor is it merely discretion. Rather, prudence is foresight, expertise, shrewdness and can even include deceit. [Christine's] rich understanding of prudence looks to the modern reader very much like self-interest; to the political theorist, it resembles Machiavelli's *virtù*. Virtue and the appearance of virtue are important; the former for salvation, the latter for political survival. (164)

In this light, Forhan not only sees Christine as an early modern thinker, but places her on the same level as Machiavelli. For many scholars, Machiavelli is seen as an innovator, representing a shift in political thinking, but Forhan presents a view that views Machiavelli from a more thematic approach which emphasizes a centered place in the development of Renaissance thought, not at the lead.

Forhan suggests that there are:

...striking similarities between the lives and ideas of Niccolò Machiavelli and Christine de Pizan... There are significant differences between the two writers of

course, not least being gender, era, and nationality, but also very real divergences in temperament and perspective as well. But despite these differences, they were both consumed by the themes of fortune, power and political survival. The combination of intelligence, craft, foresight and skill that Christine calls prudence is analogous to Machiavelli's *virtù*, and plays the same pivotal role in the defeat of Fortune. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the two concepts prudence and *virtù* are essentially identical. (165)

One may recall that Quilligan described Christine's writings as having a "strange modernity," but when Forhan compares Christine to Machiavelli by showing the similarities between their foundational ideas, Christine's writings do not seem so out of place after all. Like Machiavelli, Christine is the voice of the upper middle class. Machiavelli, because of his social position and gender, is able to be openly subversive - Christine, for the same reasons, must be more tempered, yet they both advocate prudence and pragmatism in their advice to rulers. Machiavelli suggests that he is original; Christine denies the responsibility of originality. Yet, as Gottlieb suggests, on that subject we must pay close attention to the context and definition of the idea of 'originality' as seen in fifteenth and sixteenth-century thought.⁵ With the

⁵ The contradiction between Machiavelli's concept of 'innovation' and the twenty-first century idea of 'innovation' is a good example of the need for context. J.G.A. Pocock follows a Janus-like approach to the concept, suggesting that "Machiavelli's development of the theme of innovation has caused him, first, to employ the concept of *virtù* in its

context of their time, it appears that both Machiavelli and Christine were developing old concepts and ideas into new approaches. Perhaps 'development' may be the key word in deciding whether an author is medieval or early modern: instead of asking whether they themselves were original or individualistic, we might ask whether the author participated in the development of original or individualistic thought. One might suggest that, within the context of the age, a person whose writings represent a stage in the development of a mode of thought can be just as brilliant and original as a person who we believe to be distinctive and ahead of their time.

Paul Oskar Kristeller, the preeminent scholar of Renaissance philosophy, was clear in his view that scholars should not fall into a narrow defining process when trying to identify humanists. His own analysis of Petrarch

purely formal sense of that by which order is imposed upon *fortuna*, and, second, to do so in a way that separates it from the Christian and Aristotelian, moral and political contexts in which it ordinarily functioned" (169). Brayton Polka questions Pocock's statement, pointing out that "it was in fact quite impossible for Machiavelli to have a coherent theory of innovation... Working within what Mr. Pocock himself calls a medieval, that is simultaneously Christian and Aristotelian, framework, Machiavelli is unable to conceive of real temporal change, for *virtù*, on the one hand, presupposed innovation, in that the innovator imposes form on fortune, and yet, on the other hand, *virtù* is the source of innovation, for the new prince acts boldly, through his virtue, and thus finds himself exposed to fortune" (180). Pocock appears to be aware of the Janus-styled thinking of Machiavelli's time, while Polka does not, instead choosing to see the disparity between twentieth and fifteenth-century thought as contradictory by forcing his definition of innovation to be constrained by twentieth-century ideas of temporality.

reflects the idea of allowing medieval or early modern writers to define themselves:

Petrarch, the great poet, writer, and scholar, is clearly an ambiguous and transitional figure when judged by his role in the history of philosophical thought... His classical culture, his Christian faith, and his attack against scholasticism are all of a personal, and in a way modern, quality. At the same time, everything he says is pervaded by his classical sources, and often by residual traces of medieval thought. The old and the new are inextricably intertwined, and we should avoid stressing only the one or the other side, as has often been done. If we want to do him justice, and to understand his peculiar frame of mind, we must accept the old and the new as equally essential components of his thought and outlook. (17-18)

It is a temptation to read Kristeller's comments as reflective of the search to go beyond the modernist and postmodernist dichotomy into the mediating "And" that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter.⁶ To do so would be to favor, in literary analysis, the mirror over the lamp. E.J. Richards, however, argues that Christine herself favored Petrarch over all other humanists because of his inspirational rhetoric and philosophy and when

⁶ Kristeller uses the term "Historical pluralism": "The only way to understand the Renaissance is a direct and, possibly, an objective study of the original sources. We have no real justification to take sides in the controversies of the Renaissance, and to play up humanism against scholasticism, or scholasticism against humanism, or modern science against both of them. Instead of trying to reduce everything to one or two issues, which is the privilege and curse of political controversy, we should try to develop a kind of *historical pluralism*... Complete objectivity may be impossible to achieve, but it should remain the permanent aim and standard of the historian as well as of the philosopher and scientist" (*Renaissance Thought* 105). (italics mine)

reading Kristeller's definition, it is hard not to bring to mind the parallels between Christine's and Petrarch's thought. Christine, like Petrarch, appears to be ambiguous - that is, she reflects the mediating "And" - because of the liberty she found within Petrarch's aspirations as a humanist. Her writings were a part of the development of humanism within France and England, and as such she was a transitional figure like Petrarch. Being transitional, one might say that we cannot place her wholly either in the 'medieval' or 'early modern' periods, but that would say that Christine was neither lamp nor mirror, and that does not do her justice. If it is necessary to place Christine on one side or another, perhaps it is better to follow Kristeller's suggestion that we look at aspects more concrete than philosophy. Kristeller offered:

...I do not think that it is possible to define Renaissance humanism by a set of philosophical ideas shared by all humanists, or to regard humanism exclusively as a philosophical movement, let alone as the sum total of Renaissance philosophy as some scholars have recently tended to do... If we compare the work of different humanists, we are led to the conclusion that they held a great variety of opinions and ideas, and that their common denominator is to be found in an educational, scholarly, and stylistic ideal, and in the range of their problems and interests, rather than in their allegiance to any given set of philosophical or theological views. (4)

A common ideal within education and scholasticism, a view of common problems and interests brings us back to

Willard's emphasis on Christine's focus on the education of the young, her tireless pursuit of knowledge and history, and her interest in the themes of fortune, power, and political thought. Christine lived in a medieval world, but her interests were in the development of the 'early modern', and it is in the 'early modern' world that Christine made her contribution.

Christine de Pizan, then, may be categorized as 'early modern' but cannot technically be categorized as a humanist.⁷ We must acknowledge her medieval background, but her education, her position as a respected rhetorician and poet among her peers, her individualism, her love of historical and classical learning, her ability to criticize

⁷ One of the major aspects of Christine's work that excludes her from being a humanist is that she writes in vernacular French instead of Latin (see Kristian Jensen "The Humanist reform of Latin and Latin teaching"). Writing in and reviving classical Latin is a necessary part of the humanist concern, as Susanne Saygin defines:

Renaissance humanism has been understood and defined by historians as a broad concern with the study and imitation of classical antiquity which was focused on the *studia humanitatis* (grammar, rhetoric, poetics, history and moral philosophy), and found its expression in scholarship and education and in many other areas, including the arts and sciences. Renaissance humanists recovered, emended, and edited classical texts; they undertook translations from Greek into Latin and from Latin into the vernacular. They promoted the revival of classical Latin and, arguing that the pursuit of eloquence (*eloquentia*) was inseparable from wisdom (*sapientia*), they applied their rhetorical abilities to the composition of orations, public and private letters, historical studies, treatises on moral philosophy and poetical works based on antique models. The works of the humanists were characterized throughout by a desire to imitate ancient authors and to emulate them in the elegance of their style, vocabulary and literary composition. To this the humanists added a new dimension that was not typical of ancient literature and that marked a sharp difference from the literature of the Middle Ages: the tendency to take seriously their own personal feelings and experiences, opinions and preferences. (1)

and manipulate tradition, her perception of herself and her nation as individual subjects and not grouped as part of estates, her defense of her sex, her valuing prudence over virtue -- all lead to the conclusion that Christine's allegiance was to the secular over the spiritual, to the authority of human experience over religious dogma. Her intellectual connection to Dante and Petrarch serves as the cornerstone for identifying her as a early modern, and her use of the notion of 'self as performance' gives us a solid view of a charismatic and brave personality.

II. *Deeds of Arms* and medieval political thought

It would be a delight to be able to connect Christine directly with a known sixteenth century scholar, writer, or poet, but even with the surprisingly intimate connection between Christine and Machiavelli's secular philosophies, no connection has yet been established.⁸ The idea of Christine's indirect influence, however, opens a new area, and *Deeds of Arms* is an especially fertile area of study.

⁸ Forhan laments "No scholar has yet presented any evidence that Machiavelli knew or read Christine's works, at least to this writer's knowledge, although it is not impossible that he encountered them, given her Italian connections and the peripatetic circumstances of her books... The evidence of any lineal connection between these two political writers is purely circumstantial." (166)

In order to pick out the trail of indirect influence, however, we must compile the elements which make up the trail. We know the direct path in England between Christine's writing of *Deeds of Arms* in 1410 and its translation into English in 1489-90. In France, the text continued to be popular, as Willard suggests, not only due to Charles VII's reform of the French army around 1445, but also because Arthur de Richmont, an important military leader at the time, aided in the reorganization of the army by following what appears to be Christine's rules in regards to leadership, payment, and military discipline. Willard implies that Richmont must have owned a copy of *Fais d'armes* and followed Christine's advice ("Deeds of Arms" 8). The trail grows colder, though, after 1545. In 1729 the work was cited in Chacón's *Bibliotheca*, which refers to Christine as a writer (albeit male) on military subjects, "Christinus de Pisis, Italus natione, inter alia composuit de re militari lib. 1." (Richards 'femme auteur' 103). Thus, Christine's work, originally cherished by both the French and the English as a highly valuable and practical military treatise, appears to slide into a single mention in an encyclopedia. This appearance, however, is an illusion; while the evidence of linear connection fell, the lateral and indirect influence began to rise.

"One example of the appearance of professionalism was the resumption of theoretical studies of warfare, almost unknown since the time of Vegetius," says the modern military historians R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy in 1970, "Representative of this new intellectual approach to military affairs was the treatises of war and on chivalry by Christine de Pizan" (400). The reference is oddly placed - the paragraph containing the information is sandwiched between one on the rise of gunpowder, the "reappearance of military professionalism in Western Warfare" (400) and in the next, the fall of Constantinople. The mention of Christine is linked to the section on the "Triumph of Professionalism" and their analysis of the rise of the new French army between 1445 and 1500. Are they suggesting that *Fais d'armes* was the actual template for what the Dupuys describe as the "first appearance of what was essentially a modern-type professional army" (425)? When Charity Cannon Willard points out that "the group of later manuscripts, notably the paper ones, appears to date from this period of reform" (8)⁹, Christine's influence seems to be apparent: we have the multiple manuscripts today; we have the connection between Louis de Guyenne (to

⁹ Of the seventeen manuscripts known today, one is of parchment, eight are of vellum and eight are of paper; the paper manuscripts uniformly originate after 1455 (Byles xvi-xxvi).

whom *Fais d'armes* was presented) and his best friend Arthur de Richmont, who advised the king in creating a professional army for France; and we have the connection between Christine's ideas on military professionalism and the application of those ideas on the French army between 1444 and 1500. And yet, it is all appearance, and the influence can only be proven as "indirect."

Nevertheless, Forhan insists, "...of all Christine's political works, *Fais d'armes* is undoubtedly the most directly and obviously influential in the development of international law and in just war theory" (157).¹⁰ Indeed, Christine's definition of just war is what has distinguished her among military experts today.¹¹ Christine begins the work by discussing the problem of *auctoritas* or the authority to fight a war; since war leads to destruction and death, can there ever be a just war? The answer is that "wars and battles waged for a just cause are but the

¹⁰ Forhan adds, "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that for many of its early readers, as their opinion of its value and originality increased, the possibility that it could have been written by a woman decreased, in a kind of reflexive gender bias" (157), echoing Richards's sentiment that "This astonishing case shows only too directly how readers' expectations drastically misrepresented a work" ('femme auteur' 103).

¹¹ The historians Dupuy and Dupuy feature her as a representative in their introduction to the rise of military professionalism; Maurice Keen, also a historian, uses *Feats of Arms* in his many discussions of defense, infantry, the changes in the concepts of chivalry, and places Christine's works at the cusp of the change between medieval and modern warfare.

proper execution of justice, to bestow right where it belongs. Divine law grants this as do laws drawn up by people to repress the arrogant and evildoers" (Willard "Deeds" 14). Therefore, it is only lawful for "sovereign princes, which is to say, emperors, kings, dukes, and other landed lords who are duly and rightfully heads of temporal jurisdictions" (15). Christine restricts *auctoritas* very little, since dukes and other lords usually have a superior, a point that suggests her favoring the Duke of Burgundy by including him since he was the patron of her work. On the other hand, it does point to the realities of the day, as privilege gave nobility the right to engage in violence to protect their honor. Richard Kaeuper points out:

...a combative sense of autonomy is encountered time and again in all the evidence relating to chivalry; the sense of honor it conveys was secured with edged weapons and bloodshed. In the provincial leagues that formed in 1314, French lords demanded that the Capetian crown recognize their right of private war; a generation earlier they had pointedly reminded clerics that the French kingdom itself had been founded 'by the sweat of war'. (8)

There is no reason to restrict *auctoritas* when it is pointless. The only solution is to focus on 'just cause.'

Christine lists the prime causes of war and analyzes them according to 'just cause':

...five grounds are commonly held to be the basis of

wars, three of which rest on law and the remaining two on will. The first lawful ground on which wars may be undertaken or pursued is to maintain law and justice; the second is to counteract evildoers who befoul, injure, and oppress the land and the people; and the third is to recover lands, lordships, and other things stolen or usurped for an unjust cause by other who are under the jurisdiction of the prince, the country, or its subjects. As for the two of will, one is to avenge any loss or damage incurred, the other to conquer and take over foreign lands or lordships. (Willard "Deeds" 14)

Christine was, of course, following the discussion of just war that began at least in the time of St. Augustine. The first three grounds are based on the prince acting on behalf of the church, the people, or the country, and this is acceptable because it is his duty to defend those under or above him. The latter two grounds are unacceptable because they are a matter of the prince's will or desire, and are not supported by either secular or divine law. Where Christine departs from tradition is her statement regarding applying the due process of the legal court to the process of going to war.

Christine removes the decision-making from the Prince's hand and puts it in the hands of arbitration and neutral decision-makers. Christine specifies:

In order that a price may go about this matter justly, he will follow this course: he will gather together a great council of wise men in his parliament, or in that of his sovereign if he is a subject, and not only will he assemble those of his own realm, but in order that there will be no suspicion of favor, he will also

call upon some from foreign countries that are known not to take sides, elder statesmen as well as legal advisors and others. (17)

The prince must reveal the entire matter of the conflict to this council and he must be honest, so that he can be sure he is taking the right action. If it appears his cause is just, then he must "summon his adversary to demand of him restitution and amends for his injuries and the wrong done him" (18). The adversary must be allowed to speak without either favor or spite. Christine concludes, "If these things are duly carried out, as the law requires, then the just prince may surely undertake war, which on no account should be called vengeance, but rather the complete carrying out of due justice" (18). The departure Christine makes is in her insistence on due process, and not on ancient customs or religious fervor. In summoning the outside viewpoint from foreign lands and in adding legal advisors, she creates a professional jury, presenting the new idea that the law applies to everyone - combatants and antagonists alike. This point returns us to Christine's views on the monarchy, where she held innovative ideas about seeing France as a united body of subjects instead of divided along estate lines. The subjective and personal identity of the individual is enhanced, while the identity of the nation is taken out of the hands of the prince and

placed in the hands of the objective legal system. The aristocracy no longer have their right to wage a private war for their amusement, because the effects of war (effects which have been of larger magnitude because of the development of artillery) now affect a larger international population.

Christine's ideas of due process, on seeing the rules of war as being international, on the steps required to satisfy the requirements for a war fought under just cause, all contributed to the reason her work was so widely read, and gives us a reason why Henry VII "desired & wyllled" Caxton to print the work in 1489. If we add this already solid offering of new ideas to the attraction of the work being written in French as opposed to Latin, and therefore easily understandable to the common listener and reader, we can see the reason it had an impact on the development of the rise of international law.

Our pursuit of influence becomes intriguing when faced with the popularity of *Deeds of Arms*. If the work was so popular, then why is it not mentioned in legal treatises or political documents? Here we run into the mirror/lamp problem - perhaps Christine's humanist ideas were so ready to be accepted that they flowed into popular thought without hesitation. On the other hand, many times serious

ideas are not taken up by the established academic or political order for the very reason that they are 'new'; it often takes the lauding of an idea in popular culture before it is considered in higher levels of thought. Thus, the gap of mention between 1545 and 1729 becomes less difficult to understand if we look at the reflection of the common man's understanding of these new ideas regarding due process within popular culture.

III. "Literature in the Wars": *Deeds of Arms* and *Henry V*

Gower: Captain Fluellen!

Fluellen: So! In the name of Jesu Christ, speak fewer. It is the greatest admiration in the universal world, when the true and aunchient prerogatives and laws of the wars is not kept. If you would take the pains but to examine the wars of Pompey the Great, you shall find, I warrant you, that there is no tittle taddle nor pibble babble in Pompey's camp. I warrant you, you shall find the ceremonies of wars, and the cares of it, and the forms of it, and the sobriety of it, and the modesty of it, to be otherwise. (Hen V.IV.i.64-74)

The thematic source of *Henry V* was *The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth*, a play registered for printing in 1594 and published in 1598. Scholars suspect Shakespeare had seen *The Famous Victories* on stage as

well.¹² Shakespeare's main historical sources were the biography of Henry V by Tito Livio and the chronicles of Holinshed, who followed those of Hall, but Holinshed compressed his narrative while adding information taken from additional sources (Bullough 351). L.B. Campbell points out, "there is much in the play that is not in the chronicles, but... the general picture remains true to the pattern set by Tito Livio and continued in all the English chronicles" (259). The elements which are not in the chronicles come forward from the comic interludes of *Henry IV*, a continuation of the battle between the practicalities and actualities of war - a battle of the books, a dispute between the ancient and the moderns in the school of war.

Fluellen's concern with the "true and aunchient prerogatives" reflects conflicting thinking about war in Elizabethan England. Campbell lists four works which would have been influential to those who espoused military theory over experience: the translation of Frontinus' *Strategems, Sleytes, and Policies of War*, dedicated to Henry VIII in 1539; the translation of Onosander's *Of the General Captain, and of His Office*, dedicated to the Duke of Norfolk in 1563; Vegetius's *Foure Bookes of Martiall Policye*, translated by John Sadler and published in 1572;

¹² See Smidt 124, Bullough 348.

and Caxton's translation of *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, published in 1489.¹³ All of the military treatises of Shakespeare's time were based on the wars on the continent and any English military works by necessity reflected foreign experiences and requirements.

Fluellen's debate with Gower reveals this struggle: while Gower's is based on experience, Fluellen's knowledge is based on classical military theory, reflecting battle tactics that used the long bow and an idealized vision of Roman discipline. This vision was effective, but it needed to be updated in the light of the current use of weaponry such as gunpowder and cannons and the disordered warfare seen in Spanish and French military practices, and that is why Henry notes of Fluellen, "Though it appear a little out of fashion, there is much care and valor in this Welshman" (IV.i.83-4). Gower's knowledge is more practical albeit less honorable and ethical: he does not react to the French slaughter of the boys in the luggage, even though Fluellen points out "'Tis expressly against the law of arms" (IV.vii.1-2). He is focused on the loss of valuables in the King's tent and the loss of ransoms after the slitting

¹³ Neither Campbell, nor her source H. B. Lathrop, was aware that Christine was a woman. Campbell carefully footnotes that "Lathrop lists *him* as Christine de Pisan" (297), but corrects Lathrop by identifying the author of Caxton's translation as "Christine du Castel." (*italics mine*)

of the French prisoner's throats. He appears to be callous; nevertheless, Fluellen describes Gower to Henry as "a good captain, and is good knowledge and literated in the wars" (IV.vi.149-50). How is it possible for Gower to be so callous and still be considered a good captain? The answer is because Gower is a slice of Henry. Fluellen's praise of Gower, his captain, reflects well on himself since Henry likes Gower. Also, standing in front of the King is not generally a good time to debate military theory, as Fluellen says wisely, "There is occasions and causes why and wherefore in all things" (V.i.3-4). This is the heart of Fluellen's argument: he admits "I speak but in the figures and comparisons of it" when discussing the similarities between Alexander the Great and Henry V, but his disapproval of Henry's lack of military knowledge and discipline is clear. Fluellen concludes, "I'll tell you there is good men porn at Monmouth" (IV.vii.52-3) but judging from Henry's treatment of Falstaff, those good men do not include Henry. The joking wager with the soldier reinforces the appearance of Henry's flaws, especially since it occurs before the most horrific of scenes: the reckoning of the numbers of the dead on both sides. Experience is a fine teacher, but Henry's conduct regarding the prisoners does not follow the laws of war, no matter

the practicalities or excuses, and Fluellen judges him to be a flawed King.¹⁴

All of the 'just war' topics touched on in *Henry V* are found in Christine's *Deeds of Arms*: the procedures for declaring and making war, the king's (or his representative's) responsibility to his subjects and soldiers, the discussion of the philosophy of war and the laws of arms, the discipline of the troops. The play opens with Henry's decision to make war on France and the Archbishop justifies his decision on high moral and legal grounds. Henry wants to make sure he can go to war with the knowledge that justice is on his side, and that he has a worthy cause. Shakespeare followed Holinshed's record of Henry's deathbed

¹⁴ Fluellen professes to be proud to be Henry's countryman, "I need not to be ashamed of your Majesty, praised be to God, so long as your Majesty is an honest man!" (4.vii.113-15), but one may take his exclamation in two ways: the first as an honest identification with a fellow Welshman, brought out by the excitement of finding out the battle is won, and having the King support the comradeship; the second may be read as a warning, reminding the King that both a fellow countryman and a subject of England is trusting him with his life and honor. Barbara Hodgdon points out that not too long after Fluellen tests Henry's honor, Henry in turn tests Fluellen's honor in the glove trick (191). Harold Bloom concurs, suggesting that the entire play is "essentially ironic"; for Bloom, "Shakespeare slyly employs the Welsh captain to give us a properly ironic analogue for the rejection of Falstaff in the Alexander the Great monologue" (322). Bloom suggests, "One great conqueror or "pig" is much like another, as Fluellen argues," (323) a point that supports my conjecture that Fluellen's "honest man" exclamation is a warning. Yet Bloom echoes Fluellen's ambivalence, in that, "A king is necessarily something of a counterfeit, and Henry is a great king... no one could fall in love with Henry V, but no one altogether could resist him either" (323-4).

protestation to create the theme of the first act,¹⁵ and one cannot help but recollect Christine's discussion of just war and the series of legal steps that must take place before war may be declared. Henry "gather(s) together a great council of wise men in his parliament" and "assemble(s) those of his own realm" as Christine suggests, including "elder statesmen as well as legal advisors and others." True to form, Shakespeare introduces the nobility before he allows the clergy into the scene. Next, Christine advocates that "he will propose or have proposed the whole matter in full without holding anything back, for God cannot be deceived." Henry echoes this by asking the Archbishop of Canterbury, "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" and the Archbishop responds, "The sin upon my head, dread sovereign!" (I.iii. 96-97). Once this point is reached, Christine presents the next step, "if through such a process it appears that his cause is just, he will summon his adversary to demand of him restitution

¹⁵ "...neither the ambitious desire to inlarge his dominions, either to purchase vaine renouwe and wordlie fame, no anie other consideration had mooved him to take the warres in hand; but onlie that in prosecuting his just title, he might in the end atteine to a perfect peace, and come to enjoie those peeces of his inheritance, which to him of right belonged: and that before the beginning of the same warres, he was fullie persuaded by men both wise and of great holinesses of life, that upon such intent he might and ought both begin the same warres, and follow them, till he had brought them to an end justlie and rightlie, and that without all danger of God's displeasure or perill of soule." (Holinshed, III, 583.)

and amends for his injuries and wrongs done him" and the adversary must be allowed to defend himself "without special favor, but also without willfulness or spite" (18). Indeed, the Ambassador restates Henry's claim regarding the dukedoms before rejecting the claim, a point that makes the legal balance clear: Henry has followed the rules of due process by advising the King of France of his perceived injuries and wrongs. The tun of tennis balls, which are sent by the Dauphin as a reflection of his "willfulness and spite" are received without violence, although the slow, simmering anger of "We are glad the Dolphin is so pleasant with us,/ His present and your pains we thank you for" rises to ice-cold threats: "And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his/ Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones, and his soul / Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance / That shall fly with them" (I.ii 281-85). There is neither willfulness nor spite in this passage, at least from Henry's point of view; his question regarding rectifying the wrongs done to his estate has been supported by a jury of his peers and council, and his maturity as a King has been scorned, giving him license to begin the war. If due process is carried out, then, as Christine defines

it, the resulting war may not be called vengeance, but "rather the complete carrying out of due justice" (18).¹⁶

More thematic parallels exist between *Henry V* and *Deeds of Arms*: Christine gives practical advice on war and money in her original chapters.¹⁷ In I.21, she takes Vegetius's advice regarding addressing troops before a battle, and creates her own battle speech "template," which has many similarities to the "St. Crispin's Day" speech Henry gives in IV.iii., especially in the "band of brothers" imagery and the sentiment that the men will be remembered and honored for their victory, and in turn will be proud to boast of their bravery. Fluellen's knowledge of

¹⁶ Shakespeare understood due process, and set it out clearly in the play. Henry follows the letter of the law, but his appreciation of the spirit of the law is lacking, as Robert Ornstein points out, "Whatever else has grown stolid in [Henry], his moral casuistry is as ingenious as ever. In his world-view the problem of ethical choice exists for others, not for him, because his responses are automatic and automatically justified. He begs other men to be merciful, but sees the prosecution of his "just" cause as his only obligation. He never ponders whether his ancient claim to the French throne or the Dauphin's insult really merits the annihilation of cities and peoples" (182).

¹⁷ Christine's advice in her fifth chapter concerns the practicalities of finances and manpower: no prince may make war without sufficient men and sufficient money. Henry is more than aware of this requirement, for after he is satisfied that he has the moral and legal grounds to go to war, Henry accepts Canterbury's encouragement to go to war along with (almost in the same breath) the offer of "a mighty sum" of money from the church. The King questions the need to defend against the Scots, but agrees to take only a quarter of his forces into France to defend his claim, since his cause is just and therefore approved by God. The first act ends with the command, "Therefore let our proportions for these wars be soon collected," and therefore Henry will have his men and money to go to war. Granted, the subtext of the scene is the fight between church and state, but the end result is the same, as each gets what they desire.

military names and events is mirrored in *Deeds of Arms* II.1-13 where Christine translates and comments on the *Strategemata* of Frontinus. Henry's musings on his responsibility to his subjects and their duty to him has parallels in Christine's reworking of the *Tree of Battles* in her third section, and the issue of troop discipline is discussed in Christine's first section.

From the point of view of indirect influence, it appears that Shakespeare was following the accepted formula for due process and common military knowledge; however, can we account for the precision with which Christine's teaching is followed in the first act of *Henry V*? Christine's thoughts on the matter of 'just war' were hers alone: she did not begin to quote and rework her sources until the seventh chapter of *Deeds of Arms*. W.H. Schofield argues that the best source for Shakespeare's "spirit of chivalry" is Honoré Bouvet's *Tree of Battles*, citing resemblances in *I Henry IV* and *The Merchant of Venice*. G.W. Coopland, an authority on the *Tree*, argues otherwise. Coopland admits that there are resemblances between *I Henry IV* and the *Tree*, but the "other examples really belong to common form in these matters in the middle ages" (23 n43). Bouvet's work was a successful treatise for military ideas and customs, but the thoughts and approaches towards the

philosophy of the laws of war are firmly medieval; as Coopland admits, "from the standpoint of the medievalist, the *Tree* marks not the rudimentary beginnings of International Law, but a phase near to the declared and accepted end of an older system" (68); the intrinsic difference being in Bouvet's understanding of the distinction between sovereignty and nationality. While it is true that the *Tree* was printed in French several times after 1477, and that there were manuscript copies in Anglo-Scots (from Gilbert of the Haye's translation in 1456), the lack of an English edition and printing (except inside the *Deeds of Arms*) suggests that Bouvet's work was not as readily accessible as Schofield would like.¹⁸

Based on this fact, it is doubtful that Shakespeare used the *Tree* as his sourcebook for the medieval nature of war in the *Henriad* because everyone in *Henry V* behaves as an Elizabethan soldier, not a medieval one. Their actions follow the plot of Holinshed's history but their worries and reactions to the laws of war and their musings about a man's responsibility to his sovereign and to his soul reflect a humanist manner of thought: the men share a similar approach to prudence and self-interest but have only a passing respect for the standards of chivalry.

¹⁸ See N.A.R. Wright.

Moreover, they have less sense of feudal loyalty to their knightly overlord, King Henry and more allegiance to the state, England. This focus on political thought and national unity within a secular and individualist attitude was not usual among medieval soldiers, as seen in Charny and Lull's works on chivalry. Because of this, we have to return to the appeal of *Deeds of Arms*: due to Christine's presentation of the procedure and process of the deliberation to wage war and the arbitration to make peace, *Deeds of Arms* was prized for its humanist influence on the construction of international laws of war. Robert Ornstein asks:

Shall our guide to *Henry V* be medieval and Renaissance treatises on the proprieties of war? Or shall we see war feelingly through Shakespeare's eyes and recognize that, despite the appeals in *Henry V* to God and Christ, despite the references to justice and mercy and the talk of ancient disciplines and rules, war is an assault on the foundations of civilization. (191)

Deeds of Arms also holds the same skepticism and comprehension that war is a terrible crime against humanity. Wars touch "the lives, the blood, and the honor and the fortunes of an infinite number of people," Christine admonishes in her original sections. "There is absolutely nothing that so needs to be conducted with good judgment as war and battle... No mistake made in any other circumstances is less possible to repair than one committed

by force of arms and by a battle badly conducted" (18-19). Christine's disapproval of the imprudence of war comes from her understanding that while there are laws of war, Abelard's laws of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, there is no power strong enough to execute those laws with complete justice.

IV. "Coup' la gorge!"

An article in the 17 June 1996 New Yorker, "Take No Prisoners: How would Henry V have fared at the war-crimes tribunal in The Hague?" by Lawrence Weschler examines the stage portrayal of the killing of the prisoners and the death of the boys in the baggage -- and why these two scenes have been glossed over in most recent productions, including the Olivier and Branagh films -- focusing on the 1996 staging of *Henry V* by Douglas Hughes that reintroduced Pistol's cry "Coup' la gorge!" before the prisoners are slain. Woven into his analysis of that production is a secondary interview with Theodor Meron, a leading scholar of international humanitarian law (he advised the chief prosecutor at the Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal in 1995), who is the author of two acclaimed works on the evolution and application of the laws of war. Meron is also a highly

regarded Shakespearian scholar, which is why he was called upon to advise Hughes's production.

Weschler had no idea that there were any laws of war in the Middle Ages, a notion that Meron was quick to correct: "Actually, during the Middle Ages there was an extremely right normative system of military law, enforced across boundaries and often honored far more than anything we have today" (55). The code, as we have seen, was customary and for the most part unwritten, but as the system broke down and the rules were beginning to be ignored, that is when (Meron argues) there began to be an upswing in the amount of chivalric literature, "almost as if in desperation." Meron puts Shakespeare's *Henry V* at the top of the list of chivalric literature, because "from the point of view of a historian of international law, [Shakespeare] can provide a quite unparalleled optic ... a vast panorama of attitudes towards chivalric norms among the various characters, but especially within the character of the King himself" (55). For example, Henry's rationale for Bardolph's death is a precursor of the humanitarian norms of today, and Henry's threats read like the war crimes that Meron dealt with at the Yugoslavian tribunal. Meron makes the point that there was one threat that Henry did follow through - the killing of the prisoners.

The authoritative 1623 First Folio, containing close to 3000 lines for *Henry V*, dropped out Pistol's "Coup' la gorge!" and the scene ends with the King's order "Give the word through." But the first "bad" Quarto, printed in 1600 and based on actor's notes and recollections, included Pistol's line. The Riverside edition offers Pistol's shout as a part of the textual notes, and the New Cambridge edition dismisses Pistol's exclamation in a footnote as a 'comic catchphrase.' The Oxford edition, however, offers Pistol's exclamation in optional brackets, and that edition was the basis for Hughes's production. Pistol's exclamation is very powerful when it is heard across the stage, especially since earlier he threatened the French prisoner with the same phrase in a comic situation which individualized both the knight and the boy. When Henry, against all chivalric norms, orders his men to kill the prisoners, his order would have been met with shock, and having Pistol reiterate his catchphrase before murdering his own prisoner would bring the horror to a crisis.

The validity of Henry's order has been often debated -- some arguing that it must be excused because of the raid on the King's camp and the murder of the baggage-boys -- others refuting that argument by saying that killing unarmed prisoners who were not involved with those French

knights who committed the raid was simply vengeance and not justice. Others argue that it was a necessity because of the reorganization and approach of French troops -- the reply to that argument reminds us that the knights were on the ground, in the mud, in seventy pounds of heavy armor, and weaponless according to Holinshed's chronicle. "It was like killing turtles," Meron argues, and therein is his point: Shakespeare does not relieve Henry of his guilt and responsibility for killing the prisoners. He does not write Henry as avoiding any blame for his actions during Agincourt, and Meron argues that Shakespeare's "implied criticism of Henry's behavior can be read as a sort of rear-guard defense of the kinds of chivalric norms that were already fast receding" (58). Meron suggests that Shakespeare recognized the need for a sober reintroduction of an internationally recognized law of war, one that took into account the inclusion of technology within the parameters of chivalric rules, and one that acknowledged that there is a notion of 'crimes against humanity.'¹⁹

¹⁹In 1996, Hughes's production of *Henry V* was played against the larger political backdrop of the Yugoslav Tribunal and focused on the horrors of war. Recent productions have had to be sensitive about patriotism and war since the tragedy on September 11, 2001. The unfortunately timed September 2001 production of *Henry V* at the University of Puget Sound chose to be "about the people and not about the war" and the September 2002 production at the Jean Cocteau Repertory carefully mixes the pro-war and anti-war messages of the play, making a mixture that critics call "profoundly subversive." The staging, however, is set during the Vietnam war, a point that would

Today, we have a complicated system of humanitarian laws that are guided and maintained by experts and the normative system that Christine and Shakespeare lived by has long faded. Many scholars such as Meron, however, question what we have lost: the natural rise of law in a society on the basis of experience; the flexibility of custom over law; the values of honor, chivalry and mercy. Having solid rules and laws undermines the individual responsibility of honor, and thus undermine the sense of shame and guilt. In gaining the disciplined soldier of Gower, we have lost the educated and honorable warrior of Fluellen.

The New Yorker article led me to Meron's first book on Shakespeare, *Henry's Wars and Shakespeare's Laws* (1993), which led me back to *Deeds of Arms* because of the discussion of the laws of war arising from the historical Henry V's French campaigns. Meron's 1998 work, *Bloody Constraint: War and Chivalry in Shakespeare* again reconnected Christine and Shakespeare. Meron, while not overtly suggesting that there was an influence of Christine on Shakespeare's conception of just war, uses *Deeds of Arms* as a constant illustration of what Shakespeare had to know

undermine the shocking nature of Henry's acts to the medieval mind, losing the horror within the numbing atrocities seen during Vietnam.

in order to include correctly this vital issue in his plays.

It is not certain which contemporary treatises Shakespeare used, but these treatises were based on older ones, which were based on yet older ones, and so on.²⁰ The issues contained in *Deeds of Arms* were vital to the time, and it is reasonable to conclude that the popularity and authority of Christine's work would have made it an appealing source of information in the 1590s. It is also reasonable to suggest that Christine's humanism made her works more palatable to the Renaissance mind.

Deeds of Arms' place on the list of 'probable' or 'indirect' influences on Shakespeare is secure. However, the close parallels between Christine's original chapters and the first act of *Henry V* does ask us to consider that Shakespeare's connection with Christine may be more direct

²⁰ Campbell, in her chapter on *Henry V*, points out a dozen or so of the treatises of war, ranging in origin from 1549 to 1599, but they all made (to one degree or another) similar statements that Christine's *Deeds of Arms* made for English readers in 1490. Ornstein, too, connects Shakespeare's formulation of his ideas with the playwright's fascination with the literature of the historical past: "If Shakespeare's interest in history had been shallow and opportunistic, if he had turned to the Chronicles merely to find plot materials and had been willing to accept without question the judgments of his sources, he would have found all he needed to write his History Plays in a single Chronicle as comprehensive as Holinshed's. Yet he used Hall as his primary source for the first tetralogy and, in addition to Holinshed, read Stowe, Foxe, the *Mirror for Magistrates*, a host of lesser Chronicles and historical accounts, plays and poems. One could reasonably conclude that a man who consulted so many source materials and who wrote nine or ten plays about English history and three about Roman history had a very deep and serious interest in the past" (22).

than we might otherwise suppose. To support this consideration, we must acknowledge that there was a starting point for these treatises of war and that humanist popularity, approval of the crown, and early printing and translation of *Deeds of Arms* makes it a prime candidate for the status of 'direct influence.'

Chapter Six

Reading Christine de Pizan: What was the attraction?

Ideology, Poetics, or just plain Queerness?

...Christine's works have historically been highly unsettling to many readers. It was too easy for Lanson to dismiss her as a blue-stocking, just as it was too easy for Coupé and Walpole to romanticize her. Rather than dismissing these reactions as eccentric, it is more informative to see them as indicative of the fundamentally provocative nature of Christine's works themselves. Future research on Christine, I would suggest, should not ignore the conventional features of her work, which are undoubtedly present and important in showing Christine's close ties to the vernacular literary culture of her day, but it might begin to redirect inquiry into Christine's profound and subtle provocations to the reader. - E.J. Richards ¹

What are Christine's "profound and subtle provocations to the reader"? Christine does provoke her readers into responses which are very difficult to catalogue because her text and subtext do not always coordinate with each other. She wrote for a courtly reader, and yet she also wrote for herself, weaving her own biography, questions and agendas into the texts, provoking her readers to ask questions of their own.

Most good books, however, ask the reader to involve themselves. What did Christine do that was different? Why

¹ This was Richard's conclusion to his essay, "The Medieval 'femme auteur' as a Provocation to Literary History: Eighteenth-Century Readers of Christine de Pizan."

read the writings of Christine de Pizan? Why bother? This question has hopefully been answered by the previous chapters: she was read because she was favored by the aristocracy, and the aristocracy read her because she wrote according to their needs, desires, and visions. She was read because she offered a vast amount of knowledge on history, politics, culture, philosophy, and military information. She was read because she presented this knowledge in an accessible and appealing manner, often with interesting and educational illustrations, and her language was plain and simple for her time. She was read because the bourgeoisie wanted to emulate the aristocracy, and to do so they needed to know what the aristocracy knew. Like many popular authors, she was read for no other reason than fortune favored her: she wrote the right book at the right time with the right information, attitude, or philosophical angle, and this combination appealed to her readers.

Christine was favored by fortune, and yet there is more to this answer because we are still reading her today and we still find that she speaks to us. Her knowledge base is outdated and the true contextual basis of her Middle French is inaccessible (for the most part). Yet her "profound and subtle provocations" still prompt us to question, translate, and enjoy her writing. Richards

presses scholars to ask just what these "profound and subtle provocations" might be - to ask what makes Christine's complexity unsettling to her readers - and this question can only be answered by a reader who is willing to admit that he or she has been provoked, challenged, exploited, subverted, threatened, cajoled, disrupted, or whose desires have been tangled by reading Christine.

I. Reading in Broad Daylight

The politics of book ownership and the politics of book readership are not that fundamentally different. I began this inquiry by examining the evidence of provenance to determine where Christine's books had sprung from and where they have ended up. Then, I took that information and determined who within the fifteenth century we could prove had read Christine in England, and then placed Christine's writings within the larger availability of chivalric literature. After examining the chivalric treatise *Deeds of Arms* as an individual work, I placed the work within a larger arena, examining the influences of the work on the culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This has been a complicated path and one that has been focused on the available materialist and historical evidence regarding

Christine's influence. The reason why Christine is provocative, however, is connected with the theories and politics of identity, a point that can be illustrated by two images: the first, one reader's description of another reader, the quasi-imaginary image of Sir John Paston reading alone. The second is of Christine's creation: it is her persona, in bed, speaking to Honoré Bouvet in the introduction to the third chapter of *Deeds of Arms*. The image of Sir John I will discuss below, and the latter image created by Christine herself I will discuss later in this chapter.

Virginia Woolf's vision is of Sir John Paston reading in broad daylight, his responsibilities supposedly forgotten, caught up in the reveries of Chaucer, wasting his time. This study has shown that Sir John was not at all wasting his time, but 'reading profitably,' and yet this image is a useful one because it functions as a metaphor for the reading interests and activities of the entire Woodville group and beyond. Reading in public is educational and entertaining, and was quite common for a culture that for the most part read out loud. Reading alone, however, suggests introspection. When one reads in public, one is caught by the timely flow of the material, and it is not expected that the reader should stop and make

comments. Reading alone, however, one may stop and comment, muse, re-read, comment, and re-read again to one's own satisfaction. Reading alone makes memorization easier. Reading alone allows the reader to muse over a particular turn of phrase, or turn back to an earlier passage, skip passages or chapters entirely, or jump to the end of the tale. The introspection afforded by reading alone may lead to many situations of personal development ranging from simple daydreaming to complex "self-fashioning:"² the act

²In using the term "self-fashioning," I am consciously aware of using it within the bounds of two criteria: the first is the pronouncement by historian K.B. McFarlane, "The truth is that the conception of the Renaissance as a dividing line between medieval and modern is an unscientific anachronism and should be discarded forthwith" (287-88). Modernity and premodernity are not binary states, and while I must agree with most scholars and historians that that there was a major change in Europe between 1300 and 1600, I cannot ascribe to the idea of a different sense (usually described as "a lack") of historicity existing prior to the Renaissance. This leads to the second, a rebuttal of Greenblatt's idea, "that there is in the early modern period a change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities"(1). When I use "self-fashioning," I see it as a term that applies to both scholastic and humanist thought, especially in terms of courtly and chivalric literature and 'mirror for princes' texts. In other words, the court and its environs functioned as a mirror, enforcing self-consciousness, display, performance, and a dialogue between the inner and outer voice. This view, which extends the maxim "that we are actors as well as acted upon" to the Middle Ages, follows Louis Montrose's definition of "subject," written (he confessed) to be intentionally and purposefully ambiguous: "a process of *subjectification* that, on the one hand, shapes individuals as a loci of consciousness and initiators of action, endows them with subjectivity; and that, on the other hand, positions, motivates, and constrains them within -- subjects them to -- social networks and cultural codes that exceed their comprehension or control" (9). Contra Greenblatt, the writings of Christine de Pizan and Geoffrey Chaucer are examples of advanced and introspective subjectivity and self-fashioning, as we see them use their personae to manipulate their audience into thought and action, revealing a full and complex inner self. (The ambiguity of Montrose's definition lends itself very easily to the critical

of reading (whether the book read offers a list of facts or is a window into another's mind) creates an opportunity for identification because it allows the mind to connect ideas and facts in ways that are not always socially prescribed. A reader may read and memorize, or he may read and interpret, but either way he is taking the information into himself, and such growth leads to the development of desire. Whether the desire is to avoid the experience or repeat the experience of the text, idea, or memory, it still impacts on the reader's identity.

Christine begins the *Book of the City of Ladies* by describing herself in her study, reading alone, reacting with sadness to what she is reading, and then dreaming of a solution. Virginia Woolf, known well for advocating the necessity of "a room of one's own" for writing and reading, follows this image when she projects her fantasy of John Paston "in broad daylight, reading, and seeing him as a dreamer. Christine reads, dreams, and builds, Woolf does the same in her own books, and envisions John Paston doing the same reading, dreaming, and building."³ Both Christine

indeterminability of queer studies, whether that was his intention or not.)

³ Joel Blanchard advocates the connection between reading, compilation, and building, because the act of reading leads to the flow of mental correspondences. He states, "compilation in Christine is a matter of temperament and a game of the imagination. This vocation is

and Woolf build alternate realities for themselves, and from their dreams they refashion themselves in other images. Their actions and responses to their desires brought about by reading are not unusual.⁴

Earlier in this study, I examined Sir John's library and reading patterns. His habits were, for lack of another word, 'ordinary,' in that they followed the trends of the Burgundian court and his social superiors. On the other hand, that Sir John made his own book suggests that he had an exceptional and creative mind, one that enjoyed education and 'profitable reading.' Following Richard's question, I must ask what might John Paston have imagined when he read the 'mirror for princes' literature written by Christine de Pizan? What "profound and subtle provocations" might have caught Sir John's attention? Did he perceive anything unusual about what he read in Christine's *Deeds of*

abundantly clear in the illustrations found in Christine's manuscripts: the image of a school girl, *une fille d'escole*, sitting in her *recet*, surrounded by books. This representation itself of the privileged female reader has contributed to establishing its permanence in her work. The act of reading for her is a veritable labor of humanist investment, an illumination of the universe, a manner of refining both her research and her mind (*s'asoutiler*)" (229). This 'humanist investment' suggests 'self-fashioning' from Christine's mind, outward to her *recet*, and the universe beyond.

⁴ Examples of people being influenced by books are too many to list here, as they range from the simplest impulse for change such as Augustine's "tolle lege, tolle lege" to the complex reorganization of personality and identity, even language and dress seen in the fictional/ metaphorical crowd of roaming book-savers and memorizers in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*.

Arms?⁵ It was a book of chivalry, written in plain language, by a woman - and the book was not considered odd but cherished and celebrated by the Burgundian and English courts. Christine's innovative approach to chivalry, knighthood, and masculinity, too, was accepted and appreciated. But why read *Deeds of Arms* when there were other treatises on chivalry available, indeed, when the very military works that Christine used as her sources were available? The answer is that besides the military and chivalric information Christine offered something different, something more than just a new and appealing approach to waging a just war. It was a combination of the above factors, plus Christine's individuality that made her appealing: a combination of ideology, poetics, and for lack of a better word - "queerness" - that made her provocatively desirable to a reader's identity.

⁵ The assumption that a manuscript of *Le Livre de Fais D'Armes et de Chevalerie* circulated in the Woodville circle comes from fact that either Scrope or Worcester managed to get a hold of a copy in order to write the *Boke of Noblesse*. This suggests that a manuscript must have been passed around the Fastolf/Paston family and the Woodville circle, and it stands to reason that if a clerk like Worcester or an ill-favored nephew like Scrope had access to the manuscript, then a knight like Paston would have had equal or greater access. (See Ch. 2, n.15)

II. Identifying the Queer in Queer

Christine's political and social ideology and poetics have been well discussed, although I believe there is room for more clarification. But her "queerness" has been examined by only a few scholars, a point that is surprising since queer studies and Christine de Pizan studies have been flourishing in parallel since the late 1980s.⁶ The lack of examination may be due to the challenge of terminology: one scholar's "queer" is not necessarily another scholar's "queer." Or, as Jonathan Dollimore wryly

⁶ One study, "Queering Ovidian Myth: Bestiality and Desire in Christine de Pizan's *Épître d'Othéa*" by Marilyn Desmond and Pamela Sheingorn, was placed as the first chapter in *Queering the Middle Ages*. The essay follows the idea of "outlaw theory," a term invented by Sally O'Driscoll, which "follows the original impetus of queer theory - a liberating deconstruction of sexual ideology and categories - without the problematic terminology confusion that negates the insistence on the material reality of specific sexual practices and their consequences." The essay argues that "Christine queers the Ovidian obsession with metamorphosis and explores trans-species sexuality as a way of revising received notions of female sexuality and envisioning female desire" (3). The authors suggest that Christine's approach towards female sexuality and desire does not reflect mainstream attitudes towards women, and they argue that Christine uses the imagery of beast myths to reveal cultural ideas about female desire and agency "outside the hetero-normative paradigm" (21). I must point out, however, that Christine herself admitted that her views were "unpopular" and outside the mainstream, a fact which made them more provocative (in the *Querelle de la Rose* she reminds Gontier Col that the tiny point of a knife can pierce the largest and mightiest sack, indicating that she herself is the little knife) and cannot be considered as a revelation by today's scholarship. Beast myths, too, have been used as metaphors for much longer than Christine wrote, and these myths are not exclusive to western culture, nor limited to just female sexuality. Granted, the images in *Epître d'Othéa* offer many opportunities for new insights, but this reading lends itself more to feminist "reformist" theory than to queer theory, although perhaps this was the authors' intent in order to avoid the challenging "terminology" which marks many queer theory discourses.

comments:

Although queer theory has been very influential in academic and metropolitan circles in the last few years, it's difficult to define exactly. After heroically struggling through the language of the major queer texts, the most famous of which, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, [Richard Goldstein, a writer for the *Village Voice*] finds 'as dense as a black hole,' the only radical agenda he can derive from them is that - wait for it - nothing is really fixed and we are or should be free to be and do what we want. And Goldstein is a sympathetic commentator. (7)

Dollimore's search for definition is humorous but nonetheless an excellent indicator of the chaotic state of queer theory. Indeed, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick remarks, "what seems least settled is any predetermined idea about what makes the queerness of a queer reading" (2). The Middle Ages are especially problematic for queer theory, as Karma Lochrie explains:

Refracted through the Middle Ages...the question as to what constitutes heterosexual sex could never have puzzled medieval theologians, much less laypeople, for the simple fact that the category as a norm did not exist in the same way that it currently does... because all sex was included under the Deadly Sin of Lechery in the first place. The Middle Ages had a much more broad, diverse, and pluralized notion of sexual activity than we do, and...the binary opposition that governs contemporary identity cultures does not seem to have governed medieval sexual acts. (92)

Celibacy and virginity are the only two clearly defined sexual identities that appear to have the same meaning in the modern sense, perhaps because these two are absolute.

While the binary oppositions in the Middle Ages appear to not have existed, twenty-first century scholars' ability to interpret the notion of sexual activity and identity has settled into an oppositional stance between history and literature. The November, 1998, Queer Middle Ages conference, for example, announced in the call for papers that it was dedicated to "the pursuit of methodologies of interpretation and documentation of the same-sex choices of woman and men who resisted hetero-normativity in their sexual and affective bonds during the period we have come to call the Middle Ages." ⁷ The conference was a success, but the participants in the conference itself voiced a general problem with the issue of academic approach. Paul Halsall noted:

Repeatedly participants commented on the contrast between the approach of literature scholars, on one hand, and historians on the other. It would be crude, but not entirely inaccurate, to say that the historians found the fact that you could "read" a medieval text in a "queer" way uninteresting, whereas, as far as I could make out, this was indeed the major approach of literature scholars.⁸

The suspicion behind the historian's reproach comes from the need for historical scholarship to be supported by

⁷ (<http://www.english.upenn.edu/CFP/archive/1997-11/0044.html>) Accessed 12.29.2002. Unfortunately, there has not been a QMA Conference since this date.

⁸ (<http://omega.cohums.ohio-state.edu:8080/hyper-lists/lt-antiq/98-12-01/0011.html>) Accessed 12.29.2002.

concrete evidence in the investigation, while literature can ride on hermeneutic practices, as long as they are defensible. Halsall notes the same problem with "queer" that was faced by Dollimore and Sedgwick:

Although the conference adopted the name "queer," this word rapidly seemed to collapse. On the one hand many paper-givers took a positivistic approach to the word: "queer" was taken as a synonym for "homosexuality," or for "homosexuality and other non-normative sexual practices"; on the other hand, with those who adopted a "queer studies" approach to texts, it was often hard to distinguish between "queering" and "deconstruction" -- or rather "queering" a text seemed often to involve deconstructing it with a sexual edge.⁹

Deconstruction (à la Derrida) involves a focus on philosophical statements, or theoretical concerns, and queer theory comes out of the opposite spectrum of feminism and gender theory's labors, but one could ask, based on the Derridean challenge to the concept of "correct interpretation" and suspicion regarding hermeneutics, if deconstruction (when applied) might work in reverse: Does deconstructing a text queer it? Does queering a text deconstruct it? I would have to say that queer theory owes more to Bakhtin's dialogism, where the multiple contextual layers of meaning within the individual voice is fundamental for all interpretation, and therefore a wittier question might be: Does queering a text reveal the

⁹ Ibid.

heteroglossia in it? When we "out" the heteroglossia from monologic texts, do we queer it? Polyphony or 'double-voicing,' too, can be usurped by queer theory because it reflects the multiple verbal positioning of queer street language, a vocabulary which is only now beginning to emerge in academic language. Or perhaps, because there is no codified definition of queer theory, this is all a matter of semantics; instead, I offer a series of suggestions which make the study of sexuality in the Middle Ages more accessible, especially in the study of Christine de Pizan.

First, we cannot assume that there is a trans-historical queer identity, in that we cannot "out" authors, and we must use tact and caution when facing human sexuality. Even the most autobiographical sexual revelations (such as Christine's *L'Avison* and *Mutacion de Fortune*) must be treated with circumspection. Second, we cannot fall into the guilty anachronism of calling an author a lesbian or homosexual, since the terms did not exist in the Middle Ages. If the term must be used, it is better to put it into quotes so that readers are aware of the historic differences. Third, sexuality in the Middle Ages cannot be taken as a mark of identity, the core of a person's self, nor can the involvement in heterosexual

activity prove that the identity of the author (or the authorial persona, or a character) is heterosexual.

Dollimore suggests,

...we all aspire to a sexual identity of some kind. But it is wrong to suggest that we do this as a relatively straightforward expression of our orientation or desires. Identity (as single orientation) can be as much a defense against, as an expression of, desire. (24)

Christine's claim of celibacy within widowhood, therefore, cannot be taken as an indication of her identity as a sexually inactive heterosexual. A mark of queer theory is that "acts" do not indicate "identity": no longer does gay or lesbian scholarship aim at identifying gay individuals or identities, because scholars have found that desire is much more complicated than the sexual act, as it shifts along with culture, history, politics, ideology, and homoerotic availability. Because of the shifting nature of desire, queer theory does not equate identification and desire any more than feminist theory equates gender and sexuality.¹⁰

¹⁰ See Butler, Hunt, Holsinger, Dollimore, and Lochrie. Butler argues, "In psychoanalytic terms, the relations between gender and sexuality is in part negotiated through the question of the relationship between identification and desire. And here it becomes clear why refusing to draw lines of causal implication between these two domains is as important as keeping open an investigation of their complex interimplication. For, if to identify as a woman is not necessarily to desire a man, and if to desire a woman does not necessarily signal the constituting presence of a masculine identification, whatever that is, then the heterosexual matrix proves to be an imaginary logic that insistently issues forth its own unmanage-

This leads to the fourth point, the commitment of queer theory to historicity - the position of a text or author within (or on the margin) of historical narrative. Fradenberg and Freccero state that queer theory is "devoted to dismantling the universals, essences and natures that have for centuries been used to define and persecute 'others,' including those others understood by dominant ideologies to be excessively fond of the pleasures of sameness" (xvii). The argument of historicity is that we cannot deny the connection between pleasure, desire, and their role in the production of historical discourse. The "territorial identifications" of both the authors in the Middle Ages and scholars in the contemporary academy affect the writing of history, politics, and the articulations of sexual practices. Christine began her career by being asked to write the biography of Charles V, and in her history she is not ashamed to reveal that she identifies with the king's humanism and education, a point that she emphasizes in her narrative, which in turn colors the reader's identification with Charles V, the subject of the biography.

ability...The vocabulary for describing the difficult play, crossing, and destabilization of masculine and feminine identifications within homosexuality has only begun to emerge within theoretical language: the non-academic language historically embedded in gay communities is here much more instructive" ("Bodies" 239-40).

The fifth point rounds out this list. Queer theory has had a rich controversy regarding the dangers and pleasures of identification: how heterosexuality can be "performed" by gay and lesbian-identified subjects, making gender into a role or an "image." Dollimore proposes, "we need a double distinction here: between identity and identification, and between desire and identification. Do we ever simply desire the person we love, or is our desire not also partly an *identification with* him or her? Simply put, the 'I want you' of desire is complicated by the 'I want to be you' of identification" (27). Christine's rehabilitation of Semiramis, Dido, and Medea in the *City of Ladies* reveals Christine's identification with these strong women in that she sees them as wronged by misogynistic speech, as Christine herself was in the *Querelle de la Rose*, and she seeks to rewrite their false biographies, emphasizing their courage, wisdom, and authority. In *Deeds of Arms* she calls upon Minerva, the goddess of arms and chivalry, saying at the end of her first chapter "like you I am an Italian woman" (13). Dollimore insists that desire is complicated, a point well taken, but fortunately, Christine is very open and free with her identifications and desires, which facilitates discussing her work using the ideas of queer theory.

III. Queering Christine

From the very beginning of her writing career, Christine was open about her identification with the opposite sex. Her first biography within the *Mutacion de Fortune*, written c. 1400, describes how Fortune turned her into a man in order to help her face the problems of her life. It is written as an allegory, and many scholars accept it as a metaphor for her change into an independent, public person.¹¹ A scholar who looks at the *Mutacion* through the eyes of queer theory, however, sees an entirely different tale because Christine is open with her cross-gender identification: it is not required for a reader to decode or deconstruct the text, as the moment of queer recognition is exposed for anyone to see. That the moment is so exposed suggests that it marks a moment for Christine's queer self-recognition - a point of mental awakening - where, to use an analogy, the author realizes that he or she is no longer walking with the crowd, but

¹¹ Claire Nouvet, for example, argues that Christine's "sexual metamorphosis involves above all a mutation of her voice into a masculine voice. The change of voice confirms that which we could already suspect; that Christine's sexual metamorphosis is not to be understood as a literal but a metaphorical metamorphosis. Christine does not become a man; she becomes like a man... in order to find a narrative voice" (302).

instead is crossing the street.

Christine tells her history, "How I, a woman, became a man / By the flick of Fortune's hand / How she changed my body's form / To the perfect masculine norm" (142-5). The tone is light but sincere. She describes her father, whose wealth was in his knowledge, and her mother, who is Nature.¹² Her father wanted a son who could inherit his wealth (wisdom) but Nature gave him a girl, "For instead of male, the other / Sex was I born, though otherwise / I had my father's looks: his eyes, / His hair, his build" (395-8). Christine grew up, and was married to a "perfect young man" who cherished her, but during the allegorical voyage of their marriage he is swept overboard during a storm, leaving her alone. She cries out to Fortune piteously, and one afternoon just before dinner Fortune changes Christine into a man. She experiences a literally queer awakening, "I felt all strange: / My body undergoing change / All over I felt transmuted: / No longer weak and subjugated" (1334-7). Christine begins to touch her new body, "All over I felt myself afresh, / As I touched muscle - a man's flesh! / And my voice took on assurance / As my body gained

¹² Christine does not mention her natural mother very often in her writings, admitting in her biographies that her mother did not support Christine's literary interests and aptitude.

endurance" (1347-50).¹³ Full of muscle, she repairs the ship, learns to sail and command a crew.¹⁴

Christine ends Part I with regret: "Now see, / Like a real man; I have to be. / Fortune kindly taught me the way / To do manly deeds, to this day. / As you can tell, men are my peers / As they have been for thirteen years. / Though 'twould please me more than a third, / To return as woman and be heard" (1390-7). A feminist reading would interpret Christine's words as a desire to return to womanhood (Ferrante 207), but to a womanhood that is respected and whose voice is listened to.¹⁵ A queer reading is more pragmatic and committed to historicity: Christine knows that women will not be listened to, unless they do something to attract attention. She is on the forefront,

¹³ What "muscle" is Christine touching? What would be the primary body part a human would touch to determine the sex of the body? Male sexuality is constructed on the phallus, and in a culture where men and women both wore unisex garments (Burns, 112), determining the sex of the body would be difficult without actually examining the body part in question.

¹⁴ Christine's wedding ring also falls off: "But there from my once fragile hand / From my finger, my own wedding band / Had fallen" (1351-53) presumably because of her new strength, but also because as a man, she cannot be married to a man.

¹⁵ Susan Schibanoff resists the idea that Christine became a man in order to write, arguing that in *City of Ladies*, Christine survives reading the misogyny of Matheolus's text by resisting the convention that all readers must read "as a man," and instead supports her right to read "as a woman," thus "emasculat[ing] herself as a reader" (225). This term is in reference to Judith Fetterly's discussion of literary stereotypes, "though one of the most persistent of literary stereotypes is the castrating bitch, the cultural reality is not the emasculation of men by women but the immasculation of women by men" (xx).

if not the first, of professional women writers, and her chances of being listened to "as woman" are slim. She may be able to convince her readers that women are equal to men in morality and intelligence, but they are not the social or political equals of men.¹⁶ Therefore, despite her regrets, she enjoys being a man and does such a good job at it (supporting the idea of gender being a performance) that men have been her peers for thirteen years.¹⁷

In later works, Christine does drop the female-to-male metamorphosis imagery on an allegorical level, but retains

¹⁶ Rosalind Brown-Grant's central argument: "Whether writing didactic manuals for knights and princes or offering pragmatic advice to ladies and princesses, Christine was unwavering in her desire to convince her readers of the equality of the two sexes in moral, if not social, terms" (6) falls apart under the scrutiny of queer theory. The very idea of the 'equality of the sexes' is absurd because of queer theory's recognition of the social, cultural, and psychological plurality of gender identification. If any equality does exist, it can only flourish as a part of the equal subversion of the status quo, in the hope that "the binary opposition which maintains the status quo [of binary sexuality] will become so overloaded with cultural diversity that it will short-circuit and eventually self-destruct" (Dollimore 30).

¹⁷ Claire Nouvet's feminist reading goes out of its way in order to avoid "queering" Christine: "The masculine voice with which Christine speaks is the product of this *translatio* of fear into speech. What is here called "masculine" is not opposed to feminine: the "masculinity" of her newly gained voice simply signals the process of *translatio* that the feminine fear must undergo in order to find a voice...The apparent change of gender does not represent a renunciation of one's gender but instead the very condition for a gendered speech. Speaking like a man, Christine does not speak as a man. On the contrary, she must speak like a man in order to speak as a woman" (303). Nouvet's extended qualifying to re-gender Christine as feminine suggests a deliberate anti-reading of Christine's biographical metaphor. A metaphor is supposed to reveal to the reader a meaning that is closer to the truth, and not the opposite of the truth. Without the anti-reading, the feminist scholar would have to read Christine's metaphor as "gender betrayal", a heinous crime in feminist studies.

it on a metaphorical level. Her grief in *City of Ladies* comes from being torn between being male in spirit and female in body. In *L'Avison Christine* she again expresses her gender dysphoria: she sees in a dream vision the figures of male Chaos and female Nature, where Nature takes matter from Chaos, mixes it into humans, puts the mixture into little molds, and cooks it in Chaos's mouth. When the figures are baked enough, Nature decants the bodies, and Chaos eats them in order to raise and educate them. Christine's spirit is put into a little mold and she is baked until she has a body; however, the result is not what she expected: "But according to the wishes of her who had made the mixture I received the female sex - because of her and not because of the mold" (*Mais comme le voulsist ainsi celle qui la destrempe avoit faitte a la quel cause ce tient et non au moulle iaportay sexe femenin.*)¹⁸ In a reversal of the sex roles, Nature makes the child out of Chaos, who incubates it. "For Christine, Nature implies, it is as natural to write books as to have babies" suggests Ferrante, following feminist theory (208). Queer theory looks instead at the violation of Christine's wishes: the implication that her spirit is male, and therefore her body

¹⁸ (http://erc.lib.umn.edu/dynaweb/french/pizalavi/@Generic_BookView) Accessed 12.30.2002.

should have been male also, except for Nature's perverse wish. Christine's specification "not because of the mold" (*et non au moule*) gives another layer to the perversity of Nature's overruling - the queer reader could get the bizarre image that the mold which Christine received was indeed male, but her womanhood has been clumsily grafted on like gumdrops adhered with frosting to the chest of a gingerbread man.

Many scholars see Christine's change of gender as a point of regret, but the *Mutacion* and *L'Avision* are very clear that the loss of her husband, while grievously painful, gave her an opportunity for growth that few other women of her time were offered. Christine did not have to portray herself as a person who experienced this change of gender, or offer her readers her view of her "queer self-recognition," but she realized that this self-recognition permitted her to frustrate the limitations the French society usually imposed on women. In *Mutacion*, she uses the myth of Tiresias, the man who spent seven years as a woman, to illustrate that Christine has seen both sides of gender. By correlation, Christine has the power to give advice to royal figures since she has seen both sides of political and social arguments, making her 'mirror for princes' texts all the more valuable to her contemporary

readers. Christine had to become a man in order to write, and she was happy to stay that way.¹⁹

Christine was able to claim a new self-identity and self-confidence by learning how to read authoritatively, that is, trusting her own personal experiences to interpret what she was reading. This skill, Schibanoff suggests, comes from Christine being the only female participant in the *Querelle de la Rose*, as Christine "learned from the debate the art of deconstructing a text, of recognizing and examining the means by which readers construct the variable meanings of a text. It appears she never convinced her opponents that readers inevitably recreate the texts they read in their own images, even though she herself was charged with reading in precisely that way" (235).

Schibanoff suggests that Christine herself, however, learned well the lesson regarding the discrepancy between text and reader. Texts were not "fixed": she knew that her readers would identify with the subjects they read, that no reader would ever come to the same conclusion as another, that it was useless to argue with a reader who saw a work differently, and that one's gender affected one's

¹⁹ Thelma Fenster believes that Christine's decision to "go male" is indeed a self-conscious action. "Much more than a mere trope, this claim reflected a social and cognitive reality. Thus the learned Italian women trained in Latin by students of famous humanist teachers like Guarino of Verona were advised to become men if they wished to write" (101-2).

interpretation.

In Christine's works that deal with women's issues, especially her works prior to her biography of *Charles V* in 1404, her confidence as a writer was not at its greatest. The years 1404-5 were pivotal for Christine, as her belief in her writing doubled along with her transition into the status of a professional writer. *L'Avison Christine* (1405) is a good example of Christine reflecting on her transition, and after that date her trope of "reading as a man" decreased as she was able to make her voice heard on multiple subjects. By the time *Deeds of Arms* was written in 1410, Christine had moved into political science, reflecting her self-assurance as a writer. In the introduction to *Deeds of Arms*, Christine apologizes in a typical humility trope, saying that her knowledge is not equal to the subject matter - but she does not apologize for being a woman writer - in fact, she celebrates it by likening herself to Minerva, and says that it is "both appropriate and poetic" (12) that she is writing a book on chivalry for men.

IV. Queer bedfellows: Christine and Bouvet

Christine saw the advantage in the reader's natural reclaiming of a text, and used the changeable nature of experience and knowledge to play with the reader's perception and construction of gender. "Play" is also provocation because it asks for a response, especially when aimed at the reader, asking them to speculate and respond, and form an exchange as they reclaim a text. *Deeds of Arms* offers many opportunities for the reader to respond, in that Christine is very aware of the language level of her audience and she uses wit, humor, and often sarcasm to get her point across. The third book is a good example of this: the chapter discusses the "droit d'armes" according to written law using the fourth book of the *L'Arbre des Batailles* by Honoré Bouvet, written c. 1390 and dedicated to Charles VI.²⁰ Christine has an introductory section which is entirely original, and she never identifies Bouvet by name while engaging in a playful Socratic dialogue with the "Master."

²⁰ This section discusses the precepts of the rights of arms and how they connect to a king's vassals; the rights the king may demand of his vassals, and the rights the vassals may demand from the king. The section has many strong echoes of Act IV of *Henry V* regarding good and evil causes, "Every subject's duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own" (IV.i.176-77).

Christine begins the chapter by placing herself in bed, drowsy with the burden of her work, resting in order to gather strength for her next chapters. While she is in bed, she is visited by a creature appearing to be "a solemn man in clerical garb," who says:

Dear friend Christine...I have come here to lend a hand in the composition of this present book of knighthood... therefore, in conformity of your great desire to give material to all knights...it is good for you to gather from the *Tree of Battles* in my garden some fruit that will be of use to you... In order to build an edifice that reflects the writings of Vegetius and of other authors who have been helpful to you, you must cut some branches of this tree, taking only the best, and with this timber you shall set up the foundation of this edifice. (144)

Christine thanks him, but she never specifies that his presence is part of the dream-vision topos that she frequently used. Christine often portrayed herself as receiving information from an Annunciation, but the sudden arrival of Bouvet is a twist on the Annunciation iconography: instead of the somber archangel Gabriel, she is visited by a cheerful old man. In *City of Ladies*, Christine admits that she may have been asleep and is frightened that the three crowned ladies in her room may be phantoms come to tempt her. In *Deeds of Arms*, however, Christine does not react with any sort of fear but is instead very happy to see him appear in her private, inner

space. Indeed, Christine is far more frightened by finding three shining women in her study than by finding a musty old man in her bedroom.

With Bouvet, she never separates the dream vision from reality but instead insists on the authenticity of the odd situation, as if she were recollecting an actual conversation, noting dispassionately "it seemed to me I said to him" (*me sembloit adonc que ainsi lui disoye*)²¹ as she begins her next speech. She tells him she has admired him for a long time, but asks a question: "I pray you tell me if my work can be reproached for your counseling me to make use of the aforesaid fruit"(144). He replies "the more a work is seen and approved by people, the more authentic it becomes" (*de tant est une oeuvre tesmoingnee par plus de gent, tant plus est autentique*) (144). Her Master continues by promoting the advantages and social benefits of compilation, for it protects the compiler by showing "the indication of having seen and read many books" (144). She ends with him praising her work for being good, and promising her, "I assure you that it shall be commended and praised by many a wise man" (144).

The city-building imagery parallels Christine's

²¹ Translation is from the unpublished edition of B.N. MS. f. fr. 603 in the 1988 dissertation of Christine M. Laennec.

endeavors in *City of Ladies*, and emphasizes the aforesaid connection between reading, compilation, and building. That the man appears in clerical garb (*homme d'abit*) would appear to emphasize the solemnity and formality of Christine's quest, and the tree and fruit metaphors for gathering knowledge are traditional. That Christine (supposedly) remains within the dream in order to question and find support for her questions finds its roots in Petrarch and Dante, as does the approval of her act of compilation and the commendation of her "Master." This section, read outside of queer theory, seems commonplace.

To the queer eye, however, there are many elements that provoke and tease the reader: Christine in bed is following dream-vision behavior, but the fact that her persona is female puts a twist on it that is queer - she is in bed, so to speak, with Bouvet, but she is not engaging in sexual acts, but instead is engaging in a meeting of minds. The tease comes from the fact that she did not have to place him in her bedroom but could have placed him in her study as she did with her three female visitors in *City of Ladies*. Why have the women appear in her study, and the man appear in her bedroom? That is very suggestive. If this is a form of sexual play, it is unprocreative in its lack of physicality.

On the other hand, it plays into a very procreative arena because this meeting of like *minds* is giving birth to a new book. The dialogue between a Master and his student would not be remarkable, but to have that dialogue exchange exist between a male Master and his female student reminds us of the passionate exchange between Abelard and Héloïse - with its disastrous conclusion. The chances here for Christine's virtue to be compromised are great. Christine, however, keeps the distance between herself and her Master by depicting him as a old man in clerical habit, but that does not negate the queerness of the situation, because clerics, while desexualized, were also the site of gender equality, as nuns were considered "manly" because "in the monastic order, they performed many of the same tasks as men, sometimes in the same physical environment...shar[ing] the educational opportunities available to monks," (McNamara 6) and producing women of impresssive learning such as Hildegard of Bingen. Christine encourages the development of a reader connecting these provocative ideas by creating an Annunciatory situation and then subverting it with elements of her own desire and identity.

Bouvet has penetrated Christine's bedroom, and she welcomes his presence and advice as she asks him questions about chivalry. Could it be said that he is teaching

Christine "new tricks"? Or, to use street language, is Christine "turning a trick"? At the end of her preface, she writes him as commending her good work with praise, a form of payment for her efforts. Like many who visit prostitutes, her visitor has not given his name, nor does she ask it. By not naming him, even though everyone reading the text knew who he was, she creates the subtext of the illicit affair. Is Christine's persona engaging in literary sodomy, that is, her persona and Bouvet are engaging in non-procreative mingling for pleasure?²² Or is this the lust of adultery which will bring forth the birth of a new child-book, a bastard from an inappropriate mother who should never have written on chivalry at all, and who had to consort illicitly with men in order to get the information for the book? Perhaps we could argue that since she sees him as her "Master" there is a marriage of minds, and that would make this child-book legitimate. Still, Bouvet is not in bed with Christine and semantically speaking their collaboration is that of non-procreation but of lust for knowledge.

²² Following the studies of Gregory Bredbeck, Bruce Smith, Bruce Holsinger, and Steven F. Kruger, I am using the term "sodomy" not only to mean perverse sexuality, particularly homosexual activity, but also heterosexual sodomy (which does not lead to children), adultery (the children of which are probable but not lawful) and even into metaphor: the pursuit of knowledge which is sinful, illegal, barbaric, or unfruitful.

Christine has the Bouvet character speak a maxim: "the more a work is seen and approved by people, the more authentic it becomes." On one level, it appears commonplace but it has additional subtexts: in Christine's mind, literary reality is formed by a flexible joint consensus and not by any concrete outside laws. The more times people read a book, the more they consider it to be a manifestation of the truth. By extension, the more a writer's thoughts are embraced by his or her readers as the truth, then the more acceptable the thoughts become. Who makes literary reality then? The write, or the reader? In exposing these subtexts to her readers, Christine may have wanted them to reinforce the authenticity of her desires and identity; a work that is, "*tesmoingnee par plus de gent*" will allow her to scatter the seeds of her unique rhetoric and viewpoint.

The ludic nature of Christine's situation in particular offers many transgressive and provocative opportunities for examining medieval gender roles. Butler suggests:

Gender is neither a purely psychic truth, conceived as "internal" and "hidden," nor is it reducible to a surface appearance; on the contrary, its undecidability is to be traced as the play between psyche and appearance (where the latter domain includes what appears in words). Further, this will be a "play" regulated by heterosexist constraints

through not, for that reason, fully reducible to them.
(234)

Christine's "play" with Bouvet condenses the slippage between the internal gendering of the author and her exterior. If Christine sees herself as gendered "masculine" in her interior, then the bed-trick could either fall flat, as her persona becomes a male student seeking advice from his wise master, or it could expand into a homosocial and homoerotic realm, making a boy and his master bedmates of an intimate nature. As Butler suggests, the ambivalency of the situation relies heavily on the words used to create (and interpret) the effect. A heterosexist response would reveal its weaknesses by insisting on reinforcing/rebuilding the entire situation into "just a dream." Such balking and swerving comes from the heterosexist ability to recoup any socially disrupted norm in order to reestablish hegemony, but it is a constant battle because the queerness of "play" provokes new challenges to established thought. Karma Lochrie suggests that the entire grid of "heteronormativity" needs to be questioned by queer medievalists because of the way it "balks and swerves" when it tries to delineate the queer:

The current absurdity of heterosexuality calls attention to its recent "invention," and should force us to reconsider whether it is historically accurate

or even wise to assume a heteronormative grid for the Middle Ages against which we define the queer. (95)

Christine offers those "profound and subtle provocations" in places where a reader would not expect a challenge to conceptions of reality. She is aware of her ability to challenge conventions within society at large and within her reader's mind - asking them to reevaluate as inventions what they consider to be privileged facts. Her readers come to appreciate that, for Christine, truth has an "inside" and an "outside," as the psychic and the body often do not "match" as heteronormality would have them. Christine challenges those conventions -- and her readers -- by violating the illusion of heteronormativity and queering the core of medieval gender.

V. Queering the Question of Influence

Gender, as Judith Butler has theorized, is not a "performance" but a "performativity," that is, it only exists in the continuous series of acts, and the circulation of those acts in order to reproduce the gender, and it conceals any effort to prove that it is a repetition ("Bodies" 12). Therefore, gender only exists as an expression or result of the performativity, a "doing," and

not as an identity or a "being." Christine's queer play in the third chapter of *Deeds of Arms*, as well as her construction of the perfect knight in the first chapter, constitutes her way of "doing masculinity". Her "doing" assumes that men and boys in the fifteenth century were willing to demonstrate to others that they were "manly" by drawing on masculine resources available from within the context of their culture. These practices, such as bullying, fighting, engaging in sexuality, and acting like a gentleman, allow them to reinforce the circulation of gender currently accepted within the culture. This reinforcement, or performativity, is also re-evaluated in individual performances, or acts, which vary according to the resources available which may function as proof. Masculinity, then, only exists in a culture's ability to contrast it with femininity, and because its existence is only linked to its opposite and not to any tangible part of the culture itself, it must be reinforced, proven, and scripted.

Sir John, reading *Épître d'Othéa, Proverbes Moraulx*, or more likely *Fais d'Armes*, would identify with Christine's performance - that is, her books exist unto themselves as a single demonstration of "doing masculinity." How did he react to this performance? Would

he have absorbed Christine's performance into his own gender performativity? We cannot be sure as to Sir John's gender identity: the information we have in the Paston Letters suggests that he participated in opposite-sex liaisons in that he was content to be engaged to be married and was known to have fathered a child. But as mentioned above, sexual activity in the Middle Ages is not an indicator of sexual identity. Sir John's desires, in as far as we can extricate them from the textual limitations of the Paston letters, were not his father's desires for wealth and battle: he preferred the social life of the court and the pleasures of pageantry, the imaginative stories in his collection of romance books, and the chivalric ideas of his military and heraldic treatises.

Christine's *Deeds of Arms*, in that it combined all of these pleasures together, may have been Sir John's inspiration to compile his "Grete Boke." Today, we have a fascination with conduct literature because it reveals to us the relationships of power and culture in the Middle Ages, but conduct literature would have been no less fascinating to Sir John, because he, as a courtier by inclination, would have understood the complex social dance of the court. The delicate threading of subjectivity and agency would have been apparent to him, as it has always

been necessary for a successful courtier to weave the path between the court, himself, and his monarch. It is fairly certain that Sir John was successful in his endeavors, since he was able to get himself betrothed to the first cousin of the queen, Anne Haute, and he was able to do this despite the fact that he had constant financial troubles. His family responsibilities called him home often, but whenever he could, he would escape to the court (Gies 155). In this, we may assume that Sir John felt more comfortable within the social structures of courtly conduct and was at ease in the performativity of his social self. Sir John enjoyed the imagination within his books, and the performances of the court, making him a man who understood that there was no concrete correspondence between a man's inner and outer selves or lives, and that as a courtier he was no less masculine than a rougher, iron-clad, and battle-hardened knight such as Sir John Falstaff.

Deeds of Arms, in its avocation of the construction of masculinity and "doing masculinity," as we have shown, potentially would have reflected what Sir John would have understood as the difference between courtly discourse and actual military practice. *Deeds of Arms* draws together the pomp of chivalry and the mud of actual battle, along with a subjective view of the individual self. Christine writes

with readers in mind who will not appreciate theory -- she knows that they want facts, and now. In this she speaks for her readers, voicing their questions for them, and not treating them as objects to be preached at but as subjects who are respected for their interior desires and questions.

Just as Sir John "did masculinity" at court, Christine "did masculinity" in *Deeds of Arms*. Christine could not control how her readers interpreted the text and subtext of her writings, nor could she predict how the text would influence others, or how her readers would influence other readers. When Christine finished writing *Deeds of Arms*, she ended that particular performance, but the performativity of the text continued on. It gathered meaning despite Christine's intentions, and yet it was her intention to be appropriated, discussed, borrowed, and challenged -- again, she is deliberately provocative, showing men like Sir John new ways to "do masculinity," with the intention that her voice, ideas, and vision would be appropriated by her readers. The Woodville circle, in turn, did fulfill her intentions by appropriating her, giving her as a writer the rare chance to be seen as an invaluable tool for readers to explore their own needs and wishes.

Christine manages to excuse herself in her introduction to *Deeds of Arms*, creating a space for her performance that crosses the norms of gender as well as chivalry. I am constantly surprised and appreciative that she was able to cross these norms, because, as Barbara Ehrenreich points out:

War is, in fact, one of the most rigidly "gendered" activities known to humankind... many other roles and occupations -- that of religious leader, healer, farmer, fisher, pottery maker -- have been shared at times or fought over by men and women. In the case of war, history offers no such alternations between the sexes... women who have wanted to become warriors have had to first become "men." Thus war-making is not simply another occupation that men have monopolized. It is an activity that has often served to define manhood itself. (125-27)

That Christine could cross this line at all seems to be highly under-appreciated by scholars. Not only does Christine provide the beginning of modern humanitarian law in *Deeds of Arms*, but she also gives her readers the sense of the potential for de-gendering war. Two hints suggest this de-gendering: the first, in her discussion of the perils of cannon fire versus knights, and the second in her discussion of the dangers and proper use of archers. *Deeds of Arms* was the first chivalric treatise to discuss the military tactics needed to use cannons in warfare, and her information was based on her personal interviews of men who knew the guns. Christine, who testified in *Deeds of Arms*

that she had witnessed the testing of the great cannons Garite, Rose, Seneca, Maye, Montfort, and Artique, knew of the use of the cannon during sieges (118). It is highly probable that the development of the cannon and the use of the longbow during the One Hundred Years War could have suggested to Christine this "de-gendering" of war in the same way the longbow "de-stationed" war. The longbow, first appearing South Wales in the twelfth century, was used by English peasants to great success, for example at Agincourt in 1415, but it was still considered a "servile weapon" earning knightly disdain (Barber 196). One does not have to be noble born to use a longbow, and thus an archer becomes equally dangerous as a knight, proven by Henry V's devastating use of yeomen (who were not bound by the chivalric code) to kill the prisoners at the battle of Agincourt. To see such carnage wrought by weapons which needed little-to-no male muscle and certainly not used by knights bound by the chivalric code may have suggested to Christine that such weapons had the potential to de-gender war. Ehrenreich reasons: "the de-gendering of war does not mean that 'masculinity' will cease to be a desirable attribute; only that it will be an attribute that women as well as men can possess" (230). Christine's inclusion of female warriors in *City of Ladies*, her prayer to the

warrior goddess Minerva in *Deeds of Arms*, and her adoration of Jeanne d'Arc, certainly supports the argument that Christine's presentation of "doing masculinity" was not to be restricted to the realm of men.

Christine was influential because, on one hand, she was aware of her position as a performer within her writing and, on the other hand, she was aware that her writers were also spectators, watchers at a court of performers, aware of their own performativity. Rachel Adams defines spectatorship as being "always queer, because the viewer inevitably crosses genders as he or she identifies with multiple characters and scenarios during the course of any given...narrative" (474). Christine, as she violated the "fourth wall" in speaking to her reader (as opposed to speaking at her reader), created theatricality in her writing. Therefore, if we expose the layers of (1) a woman writing, (2) a book on chivalry, (3) using a manly female persona, (4) which tells men how to perform in court and battle, (5) while speaking to the men with a personal tone that is outside of cultural norms, (6) and stating that she was just as qualified to know this information as men were, we can see the root of her provocation and influence. Christine asked her readers to cross norms that they would not normally cross, and she persuaded them to do so for

their own benefit. Christine's readers, as spectators of her queer layering of woman/man/knight, were exposed to her ideas about the flexibility of gender, identity, and desire.

VI. Provocative Christine

Christine's queerness, that is, her ability to acknowledge the binary masculine-feminine dynamic and yet cross and confuse that social organization of desire, is a celebration of difference. In many ways, however, it is also an experiment, a test of society, and that experiment, I believe, is the root of her "profound and subtle provocations." Christine is looking for something that does not exist in her time, and therefore she is a visionary. Yet she is also looking for something that she thought existed in the past, and that existed in her memories, and therefore she is a sentimentalist. Scholars who attempt to find unity within Christine's writings will always fail because she is too complex and indeterminate. As a writer, she did evolve, but that does not mean that there is unity in her evolution. Because Christine was constantly searching herself and her culture for knowledge -- a better word would be "truth" or "authenticity" -- she was unfixed,

a person who encouraged and supported her culture and who was supported and profited in turn, and a person who spent her life surviving her culture despite its attempt to wreck her grasp of authenticity.

Christine was provocative because she was imaginative. She was comfortable making her desires known from the very start of her career, and she resisted essentialization whether as a woman or as a writer. When she saw an opportunity to subvert courtly poetry, she took it, and the success of her experiment opened the doors to greater accomplishments. She was able to identify with other successful writers, seeing them as peers and, being a woman, she could not avoid seeing the social margin, the wall of inclusion and exclusion. The only way around that wall was to remake herself and again she was successful. The result was a complex identity reflecting masculine and feminine desires. It is said that our fantasy lives rarely live up to our political ideals: Christine, however, proves the exception to that rule.

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