Approaches to Teaching the Works of Christine de Pizan

Edited by
Andrea Tarnowski

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Editions and Translations

Christine de Pizan was a prolific author who lived in the early 1400s and thus composed in Middle French, a language closer to modern French than, say, the English of Chaucer is to modern English but abounding in difficulties nevertheless. The volume of her production, the labor necessary to transcribe her manuscripts, and the desire to make her work accessible to a broad audience—scholars, students, and lay readers—have meant that publishing Christine has unfolded in stages, over several dozen years, a process that has not yet reached an end.

The comprehensive list of Christine’s texts, given in table form below, is divided into categories for easy consultation: those works that exist in Middle French editions, those that have been translated into modern French, and those that are available in modern English. There is of course overlap among these; some of Christine’s texts exist in all three forms. A fourth category, late medieval and early Tudor English versions of her work, can be profitably exploited in the classroom, and thus these editions are listed briefly before the comprehensive list.

Middle French Editions

Though Christine de Pizan wrote more than forty works, and though thirty years ago few existed in readily accessible modern editions, the great rise in her popularity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has meant a steady increase in the availability of her writing, to the point where only one or two texts remain unavailable in manuscript or online transcription.¹ Scholars, for their own research or for exploration with graduate students, now have easy access to the original Middle French texts of Le livre de l’advision Cristine, Le livre du chemin de lonc estude, Le débat sur Le roman de la rose (also edited as Le livre des epistres du débat sus Le rommnant de la rose), Le livre de paix, Le livre du corps de policie, Le livre du duc des vrais amans, and L’epistre Othea, all of which have been published since the late 1990s; an edition of Les sept psaumes allegorisés is forthcoming. A Middle French edition of Le livre des trois vertus, also known as Le trésor de la cité des dames, dates to 1989.

Trois vertus / Trésor is a kind of sequel to Christine’s most famous and popular work, Le livre de la cité des dames. For the first two decades of heightened modern interest in Christine de Pizan, the only available edition of La cité des dames was found in a 1975 PhD dissertation by Maureen Curnow, still useful today for its notes. But in 1997, a modern Italian translation of the book published as an affordable paperback included a facing-page edition of the Middle French text by Earl Jeffrey Richards. Because the book is listed in catalogs simply by its modern Italian title, La città delle dame, it is difficult to locate this indispensable Middle French edition unless one knows in advance what to look
for. It should be noted that a new edition of Le livre de la cité des dames (accompanied by a new translation into modern French) is in the works: Anne Paupert, in collaboration with Claire LeNinan, serves as both its editor and translator.

Other works by Christine in mid-twentieth-century editions are readily available in libraries, including Suzanne Solente’s two-volume Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V (1936–40) and her four-volume Livre de la mutacion de Fortune (1959–66).

Christine’s lyric poetry, the initial source of her fame, was collected along with other pieces in three volumes in the late nineteenth century by Maurice Roy. Roy’s work is still the reference point for her shortest verse compositions; the three volumes of his edition can be read online at www.gutenberg.org. While extracts and groupings of poems were published late in the twentieth century—Jacqueline Cerquiglini’s Cent ballades d’amant et de dame (1982), now out of print, and Kenneth Varty’s Christine de Pisan’s Ballades, Rondeaux, and Virelais (1965)—there is no complete recent edition of Christine’s poetry. However, some of her longer poems originally published in Roy have been brought out in modern editions: L’epistre au dieu d’amours and Le dit de la rose, edited by Thelma Fenster and Mary Erler, appeared in 1990, and both texts can also be found in Christine McWebb’s Debating the Roman de la Rose: A Critical Anthology (2007). Three debate poems by Christine were also collected in an edition by Barbara K. Altmann in 1998: The Love Debate Poems of Christine de Pizan: Le livre du debat de deux amans, Le livre des trois jugemens, Le livre du dit de Poissy.

Christine’s final text, Le ditié de Jehanne d’Arc, written in 1429 as Joan of Arc rode to liberate the French from their English occupiers, was edited in 1977 by Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty. This brief work is out of print but available in libraries or online at www.maidofheaven.com/joanofarc_song_pisan_contents.asp.

Modern French Translations

The foundation for classroom-friendly modern French versions of Christine’s writings was laid in 1986 with Eric Hicks and Thérèse Moreau’s La cité des dames, still widely used today. A new modern French translation of the text (along with a new edition) by Anne Paupert is forthcoming. Hicks and Moreau also produced Le livre des faits et bonnes meurs du roi Charles V le Sage in 1997; in 2013, Joël Blanchard and Michel Quereuil returned to this text to provide readers with a new translation entitled Livre des faits et bonnes moeurs du sage roi Charles V.

In the last decade, a cluster of translations has enriched the Christine corpus in modern French. Danielle Régnier-Bohler’s 2006 volume of writings by medieval French women, Voix de femmes au Moyen Âge: Savoir, mystique, poésie, amour, sorcellerie, XIIe–XVe siècle, contains three key works by Christine: Le
livre des trois vertus (translated by Liliane Dulac), La vision de Christine (Anne Paupert), and Le ditié de Jehanne d’Arc (Margaret Switten). The year 2006 also saw the publication of Virginie Greene’s modern French translation of Le débat sur Le roman de la rose. In 2008, Hélène Basso brought out L’épître d’Othéa, part of a two-volume set that also includes a facsimile of a fifteenth-century illustrated Othea manuscript; this book would not be assigned for individual purchase by students but would work well as an aid for instructors who wish to present seminars with a physical example of the relation between text and image in medieval manuscripts.

At the other end of the spectrum in format and price are Dominique Demartini and Didier Lechat’s Le livre du duc des vrais amants, and Andrea Tarnowski’s Le chemin de longue étude; they are currently the only easily accessible texts by Christine that present both Middle French editions and modern French translations in facing-page layout. They are thus particularly appropriate for students and other readers of modern French who are curious to learn and explore Christine’s original language.

Modern English Translations

Two anthologies constitute the reference bedrock for Christine in English. The Writings of Christine de Pizan, edited by Charity Cannon Willard, published in 1984, contains extracts of all major and many minor texts. In 1997, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee brought out an edition entitled Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan. The Willard volume and the Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Brownlee volume both contain selections from a broad range of Christine’s work; and while each volume offers translations of about a tenth of the cycle of One Hundred Ballads, there is no overlap in the choice of poems. Excerpts vary greatly in length between the two volumes: Willard offers five pages from The Book of the Long Road of Learning, whereas the Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Brownlee text presents twenty-nine pages from the same work, there given the title The Path of Long Study. The Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Brownlee volume also includes a nearly full translation of Christine’s final poem, The Tale of Joan of Arc, along with seven critical essays on the writer. Willard’s selections are grouped thematically (e.g., “The Courtly Poet,” “The Defense of Women,” “The Fate of France”), while Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Brownlee’s lineup is chronological.

Whereas the selections in these two anthologies range across Christine’s oeuvre, other anthologies focus on a particular genre. Barbara Altmann and R. Barton Palmer’s An Anthology of Medieval Love Debate Poetry contains one text by Christine, The Debate of Two Lovers, in addition to two judgment poems by Machaut (King of Bohemia, King of Navarre), Chaucer’s The Legend of Good Women, and Alain Chartier’s The Book of the Four Ladies. Fenster and Erler offer Middle French and English texts of two of Christine’s works in a volume
entitled *Poems of Cupid, God of Love: Christine de Pizan's Epistre au dieu d'amours* and *Dit de la rose*, Thomas Hoccleve's *The Letter of Cupid*, with George Sewell's *The Proclamation of Cupid*. Josette A. Wisman brought out a volume featuring three of Christine's texts, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life* with *An Epistle to the Queen of France* and *Lament on the Evils of the Civil War*, which contains both Middle French editions and English translations.

Two works in English present the multiple texts by Christine and a circle of clerics (Jean de Montreuil, Pierre d'Ailly, Pierre Col and Gontier Col, Jean Gerson) concerning *The Romance of the Rose*. McWebb's *Debating the Roman de la Rose: A Critical Anthology* provides chapters of contextualization (“Italian Humanism and French Clericalism in the Fourteenth Century,” “The Defense of Courtly Discourse and Morals”) before presenting the letters of the debate in both Middle French editions and English translations. David F. Hult's *Christine de Pizan: Debate of the Romance of the Rose*, published in 2010, is an all-English volume and thus has many more pages to devote to the primary texts; it also includes a rich introduction. Both McWebb and Hult provide copious notes and include sections on the works in which Christine spoke of *The Romance of the Rose* in the years following the debate.


Finally, the two books Christine wrote specifically to defend women and define their roles in society both have two modern English translations. *The Book of the City of Ladies* was first translated into English by Earl Jeffrey Richards in 1982 and revised and reissued in 1998. In 1999, Rosalind Brown-Grant offered a new English translation. Richards produced an English text closer to the Middle French original, whereas Brown-Grant interpreted Christine's writing using a more liquid, modern idiom. The sequel to *The City of Ladies*, composed by Christine as *Le livre des .III. vertus a l'enseignement des dames* and later issued in print as *Le trésor de la cité des dames*, has two titles in English: Sarah Lawson's *The Treasure of the City of Ladies; or, The Book of the Three Virtues*
was first published in 1985 and then revised in 2003; A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies, by Charity Cannon Williard and Madeleine Pelner Cosman, appeared in 1989.

As is evident from both this overview and the comprehensive list of Christine's texts, scholar-teachers have poured great energy in recent decades into making Christine's work available for use in the classroom at a variety of levels and in numerous disciplines. The effort continues: at this writing, English translations of The Long Road of Learning (Andrea Tarnowski) and of the Book of the Deeds and Good Practices of the Wise King Charles V (Nadia Margolis) are near completion.

**Early English Editions and Translations**

In 1402, Thomas Hoccleve translated Christine's Epistre au dieu d'amours into English as The Letter of Cupid. Stephen Scrope translated L'epistre Othea as The Epistle of Othea in the mid-fifteenth century, and the same French work was published in English as The C. Hystoryes of Troye before 1549. Christine's Proverbes moraux were translated by Anthony Woodville as Morale Prouerbes in 1478; in 1489, in The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye was translated by William Caxton. There was an anonymous translation in 1521 of Le livre du corps de policie as The Booke [of] the Body of Polyece, and Bryan Anslay's 1521 rendering of Le livre de la cité des dames bears the title The Boke of the Cyte of Ladies; an edition of Anslay was published by Hope Johnston in 2014.
## Comprehensive List of Christine de Pizan’s Works

See the works-cited list for full bibliographical details of works listed below.

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<th>MIDDLE FR. EDS.</th>
<th>MODERN FR. TRANS.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advision. Le livre de l’advision Cristine. 1405.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Amant et dame. Cent balades d’amant et de dame. 1407–10.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Autres balades. Autres balades. 1402–07.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Balades d’estrange façon. Les balades d’estrange façon. 1399–1402.</strong></td>
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**Chemin de lonc estude. Le livre du chemin de lonc estude. 1402–03.**

- *Le livre du chemin de long estude.* Edited by Robert Püschel, 1887.

**Cité des dames. Le livre de la cité des dames. 1404–05.**


**Complainte amoureuse I. Une complainte amoureuse. 1407–10.**


**Complainte amoureuse II. Une autre complainte amoureuse. 1399–1402.**


**Corps de policie. Le livre du corps de policie. 1406–07.**


**Débat sur Le roman de la rose. Le livre des epistres du débat sus le Rommant de la rose. 1401–04.**

- *Le débat sur le Roman de la rose.* Translated by Virginia Greene, 2006.
- *Le débat sur Le roman de la rose (excerpt).* Translated by Thérèse Moreau and Eric Hicks, *Patrimoine littéraire européen,* vol. 6, pp. 138–39.
### Comprehensive List of Works

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<td><strong>Deux amans.</strong> Le livre du debat de deux amans. C. 1400.</td>
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<td>Le livre du debat de deux amans. Altmann, Love</td>
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<td>Debate Poems, pp. 81–152.</td>
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<td><strong>Dieu d'amours.</strong> L'épistre au dieu d'amours. 1399.</td>
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<td><strong>Dit de Poissy.</strong> Le livre du dit de Poissy. 1400.</td>
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<td>Debate Poems, pp. 139–222.</td>
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<td><strong>Dit de la rose.</strong> Le dit de la rose. 1402.</td>
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<td><strong>Ditié.</strong> Le ditié de Jehanne d'Arc. 1429.</td>
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<td><strong>Duc des vrais amans.</strong> Le livre du duc des vrais amans. 1404–05.</td>
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Les enseignemens moraux.


Epistre à la reine. *Épistre à la reine*. 1405.

“Christine de Pizan’s *Épistre à la reine* (1405).”


“Lepistre à la reine de Christine de Pizan (1405).”


Epistre Othea. *L’epistre que Othea la deesse envoya a Hector de Troye quant il estoit en l’age de .XV. ans*. 1400–01.

*Épître d’Othéa* (manuscript facsimile). Translated by Hélène Basso, 2008.


### Comprehensive List of Works

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Andrea Tarnowski
### COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF WORKS

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<td><strong>Prison de vie humaine.</strong> <em>Lépistre de la prison de vie humaine.</em> 1414–18.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prudence</strong> (see also Prod’omnie, another version of the same work). <em>Le livre de Prudence a l’enseignement de bien vivre.</em> 1407–08.</td>
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The Instructor’s Library

Basics

For instructors, four titles suggest themselves as places to begin reading or to extend existing knowledge about Christine and her work. The first is The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan, edited by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and translated by Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee. Apart from offering substantial excerpts in English of nearly all Christine’s works, the volume contains a valuable introduction and a series of key critical essays by well-known scholars. It gathers multiple means with which to understand Christine’s literary production.

The second work recommended is Christine de Pizan: A Casebook, edited by Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady. Its fifteen essays cover the genres Christine explored, her political self-positioning and defense of women, and her manuscripts and their reception.

The third work, An Introduction to Christine de Pizan, by Nadia Margolis, provides chapters on the politico-historical situation in France during Christine’s lifetime, the sources exploited in her work, and the literary and philosophical stakes of the works themselves. This book could engage undergraduates as well as their instructors.

Instructors who read French and wish to know more about medieval manuscript production and the artistic, political, and economic factors that influenced it will want to consult the fourth work, Album Christine de Pizan, by Gilbert Ouy, Christine Reno, and Inès Villela-Petit. This work explores how and by whom Christine’s works were transcribed, what ink and parchment were used, who decorated their borders, what painters illuminated them, and which collectors acquired them.

Reference

Angus J. Kennedy marshals annotated bibliography pertaining to the full spectrum of Christine’s production in his Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide and its two supplements, and Liliane Dulac provides a meticulous bibliographical essay in Trente ans de recherches en langues et littératures médiévales. Tracy Adams follows in Dulac’s footsteps with her own bibliographical overview in French Studies (“Christine de Pizan”). Dictionnaire des lettres françaises, in its revised edition by Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink, is an invaluable source of articles and bibliography on individual authors, documents, and literary forms; Sylvie Lefèvre composed the dictionary’s excellent entry on Christine de Pizan.
Among more narrative general works, Zink’s *Introduction à la littérature du Moyen Âge*, also available in English translation, serves as an overview for anyone wanting to refresh or contextualize knowledge of the period. Denis Hollier’s *A New History of French Literature*, while spanning a broad chronology from literature’s beginnings through the twentieth century, is notable for a score of fine essays concerning the Middle Ages; see especially the article by the distinguished *pizaniste* Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet pegged to the year 1401, when Christine’s literary career was gathering momentum. In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, edited by Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, an essay by Marilynn Desmond is devoted specifically to Christine de Pizan, though other chapters of this volume, such as Jane H. M. Taylor’s on the lyric poetry of the late Middle Ages, are also germane to students of Christine’s work. The anthology of medieval texts *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, by Alcuin Blamires (with Karen Pratt and C. W. Marx), has multiple connections to Christine’s work but is particularly useful for a passage from Jehan Le Fèvre’s *Lamentations of Matheolus*, the text that the Christine figure reads dispiritedly at the beginning of *The City of Ladies* and that catalyzes her fight against misogyny.

**Biography and History**

Charity Cannon Willard’s *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works* has long been the principal book-length biography in English. More recent biographies are Simone Roux’s *Christine de Pizan: Femme de tête, dame de cœur* and Françoise Autrand’s *Christine de Pizan: Une femme en politique*.

Familiarity with the history of late-fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century France, and particularly with life in Parisian court and humanist circles, will help illuminate the context in which Christine wrote, explain the choice of some of her themes, and define the figures who were her patrons and audience. Among broad-based histories, Johan Huizinga’s century-old *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* sheds light on the world-in-decline motif in Christine’s work. Charles F. Briggs’s *The Body Broken: Medieval Europe, 1300–1520* offers a panoramic examination of the unity and fragmentation of a Christian ideal in the late Middle Ages—an ideal that permeates Christine’s writing. Claude Gauvard’s *Le Moyen Âge* and *La France au Moyen Âge du Vᵉ au XVᵉ siècle* both reward consultation; in the latter, chapters 13 and 14, “La dynastie des Valois s’impose (1364–1392)” and “France du roi, France des princes (1392–1440),” are most relevant. On the subject of dangerous princely rivalries at the start of the fifteenth century, see Bernard Guenée’s *Un meurtre, une société: L’assassinat du duc d’Orléans, 23 novembre 1407*. Françoise Autrand’s *Charles V le Sage* and *Charles VI: La folie du roi* examines the French kings whose reigns imprinted themselves on Christine’s work, and Autrand’s *Jean de Berry* tells the story of France’s best-known patron-prince.
The literary scholar Tracy Adams has published two books that reexamine Christine's historical context: in *The Life and Afterlife of Isabeau of Bavaria*, Adams retools the negative reputation of the queen of France, the dedicatee of the most lavish copy of Christine's collected works; in *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, she makes the argument that Christine was a loyal Orléanist-Armagnac throughout her career. Blumenfeld-Kosinski’s “Enemies Within / Enemies Without: Threats to the Body Politic in Christine de Pizan” is a convincing account of Christine’s position in the face of civil strife and the English threat to France. On the subject of the English menace and France’s response, the historical and biographical guide offered by Deborah A. Fraioli in *Joan of Arc and the Hundred Years War* can help both instructors and students gain a sense of Joan’s importance; Christine took Joan’s triumph in battle against the English as the subject of her final composition, *The Tale of Joan of Arc*.

Also useful is volume 2 of *Histoire de la vie privée: De l’Europe féodale à la Renaissance*, translated into English as *A History of Private Life: Revelations of the Medieval World* (Ariès and Duby); the chapters by Danielle Régnier-Bohler, “Imagining the Self,” and by Georges Duby and Philippe Braunstein, “The Emergence of the Individual,” are particularly relevant.

To parse the papal schism that anguished Christine and her contemporaries, readers can refer to Walter Ullmann’s *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*; to understand the writing produced in the context of the split in the Church, they can consult Blumenfeld-Kosinski’s *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378–1417*. Information on the significance of material culture in the religious thought and practice of this period can be found in Caroline Walker Bynum’s *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*.

On the particular form of history that is myth, and on Christine’s use of the legends of antiquity in her work, see Blumenfeld-Kosinski’s *Reading Myth: Classical Mythology and Its Interpretations in Medieval French Literature*, and volume 3 of Jane Chance’s *Medieval Mythography*, which contains two chapters dedicated to Christine. Lori Walters writes on both memory and projected history in the form of future authorial renown in her essay “Constructing Reputations: *Fama* and Memory in Christine de Pizan’s *Charles V* and *Ladvision Cristine*.”

**Women, Widows, Mothers**

Numerous resources can be used to understand the strong thematization in Christine’s work of a woman’s place and women’s roles and her status as France’s first professional woman writer. *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Katharina M. Wilson and Nadia Margolis, is a solid reference tool. Volume 2 of *Histoire des femmes en Occident* or, in English, *A History of Women in the West* (edited by Christiane Klapisch Zuber) is the sweeping, broad-brush
counterpart to an encyclopedia’s fine-stroke entries; the introductory essay to this volume, entitled “Including Women,” begins with and focuses on Christine. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women’s Writing* contains Jennifer Summit’s essay “Women and Authorship” and Barbara Hanawalt’s “Widows”; other essay categories (virginities, marriage), as well as a piece by David F. Hult on *The Romance of the Rose* and the *querelle des femmes*, highlight Christian themes. Angela Jane Weisl considers women on either side of marriage in “The Widow as Virgin: Desexualized Narrative in Christine de Pizan’s *Livre de la cité des dames*,” in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity*, edited by Cindy L. Carson and Weisl.

For a better understanding of the metaphor of motherhood that Christine often uses, see *Medieval Mothering*, whose essays span texts and practices from across Europe, and which has a useful introductory essay by its editors, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler. Clarissa W. Atkinson’s *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* includes discussion of gender roles and the historical development of the maternal.

Caroline Walker Bynum’s *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* remains a touchstone for conceiving of the medieval female body. Roberta Gilchrist’s “Medieval Bodies in the Material World: Gender Stigma and the Body,” in Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin’s *Framing Medieval Bodies*, likewise centers on the notion of corporeality. Also germane to this theme is Jane Tibbetts Schulenberg’s “Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation,” in Mary Beth Rose’s *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*.

**Feminism and Christine**

Some critics have based their interpretations of Christine’s work on claims and counter-claims concerning her feminism or protofeminism. Joan Kelly’s classic essay “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” is found in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, edited by Renate Bridenthal, Susan Stuart, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks. Sheila Delany penned a provocative article entitled “Mothers to Think Back Through: Who Are They? The Ambiguous Example of Christine de Pizan” (*Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, edited by Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman). Christine Reno responded to Delany in “Christine de Pizan: At Best a Contradictory Figure?” (in Margaret Brabant’s *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*). Maureen Quilligan addresses early feminism in her influential work *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan’s Cité des dames*; other excellent resources are Helen Solterer’s *The Master and Minerva: Disputing Women in French Medieval Culture*, Rosalind Brown-Grant’s *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women*, and Alcuin Blamires’s *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*. Finally, Margaret W. Ferguson devotes a chapter entitled “An
Empire of Her Own” to Christine’s *Book of the City of Ladies* in *Dido’s Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France*.

**Responses to Christine: Collective Works**

While Christine’s oeuvre attracts scholars from many disciplines, most are specialists in literature, whether they teach courses on lyric poetry or on the “mirror of princes” tradition. Since the early 1990s, a series of international colloquia associated with the Christine de Pizan Society has produced collections of essays; these include Margarete Zimmermann and Dina De Rentiis’s *The City of Scholars: New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*, Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont’s *Une femme de lettres au Moyen Âge: Études autour de Christine de Pizan*, Eric Hicks’s *Au champ des escriptures: 3e colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, Angus J. Kennedy’s *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, Liliane Dulac et al.’s “Desireuse de plus avant enquerre . . .”: *Actes du VIe colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, Patrizia Caraffi’s *Christine de Pizan: La scrittrice e la citttà; Anna Loba’s* *Ton nom sera reluissant apres toy par longue memoire*; and Olivier Delsaux and Tania van Hemlyck’s collection of essays across two issues of the journal *Le moyen français* (vol. 75 [2014]; vols. 78–79 [2016]). Each publication contains contributions in English and French.

In addition to this succession of works, other symposia and collaborative projects focused on Christine and her work have been published: Margaret Brabant’s *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, Marilynn Desmond’s *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*, Earl Jeffrey Richards’s *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan* and *Christine de Pizan and Medieval French Lyric*, and Juliette Dor and Marie-Élisabeth Henneau’s *Christine de Pizan: Une femme de science, une femme de lettres*.

Finally, a host of edited volumes that do not take Christine as their principal object nevertheless contribute to the critical context; these include Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot’s *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*; Chance’s *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages*; Rebecca Dixon and Finn Sinclair’s *Poetry, Knowledge and Community in Late Medieval France*; Thelma S. Fenster and Claire A. Lees’s *Gender and Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*; Henrik Syse and Gregory M. Reichberg’s *Ethics, Nationalism, and Just War: Medieval and Contemporary Perspectives*; and Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood’s *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*.

**Poetry, Art, Politics, Theory**

Daniel Poirion’s *Le poète et le prince: L’évolution du lyrisme courtois*, published in 1965, was a catalyst for sparking interest in Christine as a poet and
Andrea Tarnowski

has achieved the status of a landmark study. Another important examination of poetry and poetics is Jane Taylor’s *The Making of Poetry: Late-Medieval French Poetic Anthologies*. Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet addresses the central role of books in the late medieval imagination, with Christine’s work as a prime example, in her evocative *La couleur de la mélancolie: La fréquentation des livres au XIVe siècle, 1300–1415*, also available in English translation. Sandra Hindman’s *Christine de Pizan’s Epistre Othéa: Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* examines the messages of Christine’s manuscripts. Joël Blanchard and Jean-Claude Mühlethaler explore the political power of the pen in *Écriture et pouvoir à l’aube des temps modernes*. Jacques Krynen treats writing for the benefit of those who reign in *Idéal du prince et pouvoir royal en France à la fin du Moyen Âge, 1380–1440: Étude de la littérature politique du temps*, and Daisy Delogu continues in this vein in *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign: The Rise of the French Vernacular Royal Biography*, which contains a chapter on Christine’s portrait of, and paean to, King Charles V. In *Allegorical Bodies: Power and Gender in Late Medieval France*, Delogu highlights the fact that while France prohibited women from accession to the throne, its discourse of state depended on the elaboration of female allegories. Sarah Kay focuses on place images as markers of posited truth and consensus in *The Place of Thought: The Complexity of One in Late Medieval French Didactic Poetry*, which includes a chapter entitled “Melancholia, Allegory, and the Metaphysical Fountain in Christine de Pizan’s *Le livre du chemin de long estude*.” Douglas Kelly likewise makes the status of truth and subjectivity his topic in *Christine de Pizan’s Changing Opinion: A Quest for Certainty in the Midst of Chaos*.

**A Contemporary of Note: Jean Gerson**

Gerson scholarship has greatly increased since the turn of the century and merits note for the depth it adds to our picture of the political and religious controversies of France in the reign of Charles VI. See especially Brian Patrick McGuire’s *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* and Daniel Hobbins’s *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning*. McGuire’s *A Companion to Jean Gerson* contains an essay by Blumenfeld-Kosinski on Gerson’s role in France’s first great literary quarrel, “Jean Gerson and the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*.” Two essays in Dixon and Sinclair’s *Poetry, Knowledge and Community in Late Medieval France* engage with Gerson: Lori J. Walters’s “Gerson and Christine, Poets” and Mishtooni Bose’s “Jean Gerson, Poet.” Another essay by Walters homes in on Gerson’s connection to what is no doubt Christine’s most famous self-description: “The Figure of the Seulette in the Works of Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson.” Nathalie Nabert examines Gerson and Christine as moral reformers in “Christine de Pizan, Jean Gerson et le gouvernement des âmes,” in *Au champ des ecritures*, edited by Hicks. Finally, Earl Jeffrey Richards
defines the connection between Christine and the University of Paris cleric in “Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson: An Intellectual Friendship,” in Christine de Pizan, edited by John Campbell and Nadia Margolis.

NOTE

¹These are *Le livre de prudence* and *Le livre de la prod’homme*, two versions of the same work. An edition of *Le livre de prudence* is in preparation by Barbara Falleiros.
Aids to Teaching
Christine de Pizan Online
Mark Aussems

For études christiniennes, the study of the life and works of Christine de Pizan, the Internet contains a profusion of information. It is reassuring to see that Christine, on her “long road of learning,” has firm footing on the Web and that the information available is diverse and ever-expanding.¹ This essay provides an overview of some of the most interesting and inspiring Web sites dedicated to Christine de Pizan and her oeuvre, as well as to fifteenth-century Paris and its literary circles. The goal here is not to list academic research tools but rather to provide instructors with a set of reliable Web resources that they can use to enrich their classes and lectures. These resources are divided into three categories: digital innovations concerning the manuscripts of Christine’s works, Web resources pertaining to Christine’s life in fifteenth-century Paris, and tools for studying the medieval French language in which Christine wrote.

Manuscripts and Illuminations

Christine de Pizan’s works were published in manuscript form, copied by scribes and embellished by skilled illuminators. Of the many manuscripts of Christine’s texts that have survived, no fewer than fifty were produced under Christine’s own supervision. Besides being invaluable testaments to fifteenth-century bookmaking, these original manuscripts provide the largest corpus of supervised manuscripts of any medieval French author. As these manuscripts paint a unique picture of a medieval author’s involvement in their production process, the study of Christine’s original manuscripts plays an important role in études christiniennes.

In recent years, new developments in data analysis and digitization processes have brought about major innovations in this field. The Christine de Pizan Research Project at the University of Edinburgh carried out pioneering research into the manuscript called London, British Library, Harley 4431 (or MS Harley 4431). Known as the Queen’s Manuscript, this is often described as the most important collection of Christine’s works. The project Web site contains digital editions of all the texts in this manuscript, as well as a detailed codicological description. It also offers high-resolution images of the manuscript (www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/gallery).

The Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) has made available 109 manuscript documents concerning Christine de Pizan (among them the fabulous codices f.fr. 603, 605, 607, and 12779) through their image repository Gallica (gallica.bnf.fr).² Taken together, these London and Paris manuscripts provide a fascinating look into the principles behind the production of manuscripts and
the extent to which these principles gradually change from the early days of Christine’s career (MS 12779, produced around 1399–1405) to the production of MS Harley 4431 in 1412–1413, which represents the apogee of her fame.

As for the production of medieval manuscripts in general, the Getty Museum’s Web site features a section entitled “The Making of a Medieval Book,” where short videos explain the different stages in the laborious process of producing a manuscript from parchment to binding (www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/making). The Web site of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, has a section “Making Art: Medieval Manuscripts” that illustrates similar processes (www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/sections/making_art/index_manuscript.html).

**Christine and Fifteenth-Century Paris**

Among notable biographical descriptions available online are Brian Pavlac’s Women’s History Resource Site (departments.kings.edu/womens_history) and Doré Ripley’s detailed online essay “Christine de Pizan: An Illuminated Voice” (www.ripleyonline.com/Under%20Discussion/Christine/Christine.htm). As for Christine’s works, there is no better online bibliography than the section devoted to her on the Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge (ARLIMA; www.arlima.net/ad/christine_de_pizan.html). For each of Christine’s works, ARLIMA offers basic information, such as the date of composition, the dedicatee, and the incipit and explicit, followed by an overview of surviving manuscripts, existing editions and translations, and studies of the text in question. Another noteworthy repository is Robert Peckham’s Web site Textual Sources of Christine de Pizan (www.utm.edu/staff/bobp/vlibrary/christine.shtml).

Less widely used in the classroom, but certainly worth knowing, are digital versions of older editions of Christine’s works. The Internet Archive contains, among others, Maurice Roy’s 1886–96 edition of Christine’s Œuvres poétiques, as well as Mathilde Laigle’s 1912 edition of Le livre des trois vertus. The Internet Archive also houses several other notoriously difficult-to-find essays and studies of aspects of Christine’s life and works; most prominent among them is Raymond Thomassy’s Essai sur les écrits politiques de Christine de Pisan, dating from 1838 (www.archive.org/details/texts; search for “Pizan” as well as “Pisan”).

Christine de Pizan lived through a turbulent period in the history of France. The untimely death of King Charles V in 1380 shook the French nation to the core, and the attacks of madness that plagued his son and successor, King Charles VI, caused despair and anxiety in the government. Good background information about the reign of Charles V is available in the “Classes” section of the BNF Web site. Similarly interesting is the BNF’s digital exhibition featuring the famous fifteenth-century painter and illuminator Jean Fouquet (classes.bnf.fr/dossitsm/b-charlv.htm; expositions.bnf.fr/fouquet). In addition, an online
article “Assassinat dans la rue Vieille de Temple” describes how the assassination of Charles VI’s brother, Louis, duke of Orléans, by his cousin, Jean, duke of Burgundy, in November 1407 sparked a twenty-eight-year civil war between the two most important houses of France (www.herokuapp.net/23_novembre_1407 -evenement-14071123.php).

The spirit of Christine’s fifteenth-century Paris is slightly more difficult to evoke on the Web. Despite the large number of search results for queries such as “medieval Paris” or “Paris médiéval,” few Web sites offer reliable, compelling information about the French capital in the Middle Ages. The online Musée nationale du Moyen Âge—in particular its section “Le Moyen Âge au quotidien”—is probably the most useful resource on this subject (www.musee -moyenage.fr; under the Collection tab, see “Parcours Découverte”). Also noteworthy is the online guide to a medieval Paris walking tour; among its many fortes is its ability to connect the medieval past of Parisian locations to other historical and modern events that took place at the same sites (dimeliandco.net/ paris-medieval) and its large collection of images.

A different approach to recreating medieval Paris has been taken by McMaster University of Hamilton, Ontario; their Medieval Women Web site includes a 3-D virtual tour of (a remodeled) Paris. The end result successfully calls up the atmosphere of a medieval city (mw.mcmaster.ca/home.html).

**Language Tools**

With the advent of programming and languages such as XML, Javascript, and PHP, the Internet has become not just a database of images and texts but also a place where these can be analyzed and interpreted. The Dictionnaire du moyen français, for instance, is available online in an updated version (www.atilf.fr/ dmf). This site includes as a separate section the Lexique de Christine de Pizan, the most important resource for understanding Christine’s language, choice of words, grammar, and spelling (www.atilf.fr/dmf/Pizan [Pizan is case-sensitive]).

A Web site of similar importance is James Laidlaw’s Christine de Pizan Database; of the forty-plus works in Christine’s oeuvre, an impressive thirty-three are included in this database, which consists of lists of words and rhyme words (both lists also in reverse form) and proper names, as well as a full A-to-Z concordance of every word encountered in these texts (www.ed.ac .uk/literatures-languages-cultures/de/ac/french/research-projects/christine -de-pizan-database).

Loci, a tool developed by Charles Mansfield for the aforementioned Christine de Pizan Research Project in Edinburgh, provides insight into the frequency and distribution of words in Christine’s Harley 4431 manuscript. Loci can search up to three different words at a time in the manuscript and displays them in different colors; as such, it is ideal for showing the fluid nature of the French language in the early fifteenth century (eserve.org.uk/loceme/loci.htm).³
AIDS TO TEACHING ONLINE

No selection of Web sites can do justice to the diversity and variety of online resources connected to Christine de Pizan and her era. While a great many of the almost 350,000 Google hits are superfluous, many other Web sites could have made it onto these pages in addition to the ones mentioned. A desideratum, therefore, is a complete, up-to-date, and digital overview of Web resources on Christine.

NOTES

1 While a Google search for “Christine de Pizan” yielded about 120,000 results in April 2011, it had close to 350,000 results in November 2017.
2 In the dropdown menu next to the search bar, click on the collection “Manuscrits” and search for “Pisan.”
3 As an example, try searching for doulz, doulx, and the modern equivalent douce; or try ailes, aillleurs, and ailleurs.
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