

Christine de Pizan: Publishing, Politics, and Reception in Premodern Europe

A Conference to commemorate the acquisition of the manuscript of Christine de Pizan's *Book of Peace* by the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library of the University of Toronto held at the Jackman Humanities Building and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Many thanks to our sponsors including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Connections Grant Program, the Jackman Humanities Institute of the University of Toronto, the Centre for the Study of France and the Francophone World of the Munk Centre, the Department of French, the Department of Comparative Literature, the Centre for Medieval Studies, the Department of Political Science, The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library of the University of Toronto Libraries, the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies and the Department of English.

Day #1: Wednesday, August 21, 2024

9:00-9:30 a.m.: Registration and coffee/tea and pastries. Jackson Humanities Building, Room 100 (1st floor conference room), 170 St. George Street.

You can access a campus map and indication of the location of the Jackman Humanities Building here: <https://map.utoronto.ca/?id=1809#!ct/45469?m/494560?s/Jackma?sbc/> . The room for our conference proceedings is Room 100 located on the ground floor of the building.

9:30-9:45 a.m.: Welcome and Keynote Moderator Rebecca Kingston, Professor, Undergraduate Director and Associate Chair, Political Science Department, University of Toronto.

9:45-11:00: Keynote Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ

Tenir son peuple en paix: Rethinking Sovereignty and the Nation with Christine de Pizan's Livre de Paix

Akbari will consider Christine's political philosophy, focusing on how she presents sovereignty, authority, the body politic, and the nation. She will discuss these concepts not only within their historical context but with reference to our own time, especially considering the contrast between -- and the relationship of -- conceptions of peace that emerge from European and Indigenous North American political frameworks.

11:00-11:15 a.m.: Coffee/Tea Break

11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.: Session #1: Readings of Christine

Moderator: Renée R. Trilling, Angus Cameron Professor of Old English, University of Toronto.

Inès Villela-Petit, Independent Curator, Paris, President, French Antiquarian Society.

Christine de Pizan and the first readers of her manuscripts

Villela-Petit will examine the reception of the works of Christine de Pizan within her own circle of sociability and to see how and why the configuration of the court of France at the beginning of the fifteenth century was particularly favourable to her. Written to order or on her own initiative, the manuscripts addressed to the lords and ladies of her time seek to share her views, to influence the course of events, to rally readers to her cause, whether it be the party of peace, the eminent role of the queen or the cause of women. The layout, the illumination, and the ceremonial that surrounds the delivery of the book highlight the authority of Christine de Pizan as an adviser, philosopher and scholar, but also her moral stature and her perfect manners as a court lady. With these editorial strategies she formed a network of friendly and political relationships, of which the focus will be on her male audience.

Vanina Kopp, a PIMS Postdoctoral Fellow in 2013-2014, currently holds a fellowship at the Kolleg für Mittelalter und Neuzeit, an Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Trier.

Relight my fire: Christine de Pizan, literary orders and social disorder

Kopp suggests that Christine's debating activity emerged from the ongoing courtly as well as urban practices of conversational as well as debating games of her time. She enquires into the history and social practices of institutionalized moments of play and how ludic exchanges helped sublimate political tensions by providing a ludic and "civilizing" structure for society. She shows that Christine de Pizan's achievement was to relight and foster literary orders at the French court to serve as political instruments as well as social cures for the human body and the body politic.

12:15-1:30 p.m. Lunch (and walk to the Fisher)

Please note:

****CONSTRUCTION NOTICE**

The St George entrance to the Fisher Library is closed due to construction:

- Please follow the signage outside of the building to enter the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library via Harbord Street. Alternatively, you can enter the Fisher Library through the Robarts Library/Accessible entrance, situated at 130 St. George Street at street level
- Enter Robarts Library from the street-level St. George Street entrance and scan your TCard at the screening checkpoint (U of T students, staff and faculty), or inform staff that you are attending an event at the Fisher Library.
- Keep right, and continue straight past the Information Commons computers and then take the escalators or elevators to get to the 2nd floor.
- From the elevators: exit the elevator, go through the gates and turn left towards the other set of gates. Once through the second set of gates, turn right and proceed towards the Fisher Library. To the right of the steps, there is a ramp.
- From the escalators: proceed through the gates, turn right, and proceed towards the Fisher Library. To the right of the steps, there is a ramp.

1:30-2:30 p.m.: Session #2: The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library Manuscript of Christine's *Livre de Paix*

Moderator: David Fernandez, Head, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Timothy Perry, Medieval Manuscript and Early Book Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

Video presentation of Fisher MSS 05041, the recently acquired manuscript of Christine's *Livre de Paix*. This work offers Christine's advice for curing the political ills and civil conflict evident in France during her time. Christine originally composed this peace treatise in 1412-1413 for Louis de Guyenne (1397-1415), the heir apparent.

Tania Van Hemelryck, Professor Extraordinaire, Univ. of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

The Manuscript Tradition of Christine de Pizan's *Book of Peace* (*Livre de Paix*)

Video presentation (in French)-Van Hemelryck considers the place of the recently acquired copy of the *Book of Peace* (Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library MSS 05041) in the manuscript tradition of Christine's text. Her presentation will address two questions brought up by her new edition: (1) Does the frontispiece miniature represent the Duke of Guyenne? (2) How is "burgundization" at work in the three copies of this political text inspired by historical events?

2:30-3:30 p.m. [Fisher] Viewing of the manuscript and related materials; coffee not available at the Fisher but can be found nearby.

3:30-4:30 p.m.: Session #2 Christine in Burgundy [Fisher]

Moderator: Kelsey Gordon, Ph.D. candidate, Political Science Department, Univ. of Toronto

Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, Head Researcher, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK/IRPA, Brussels).

Christine and the Burgundians

Based on a review of archival documents and extant manuscripts (some fifty identified to date), this paper re-examines the relationship between Christine de Pizan, the Dukes of Burgundy, and their entourage. It explores the reception of Christine's works at the Burgundian court from Philip the Bold to Philip the Good, highlighting the role of librarian Guillebert de Mets in disseminating her writings, and the limited spread of her texts in the Southern Netherlands. It also examines the Middle Dutch translation of the *Cité des dames* for Jan III De Baenst and Jean Miélot's reworking of the *Epistre d'Othéa* for Philip the Good, reassessing the validity of the concept of "burgundization" in light of Christine's writings.

Helen Swift, Professor of Medieval French Literature and Tutorial Fellow, St Hilda's College, Oxford University.

De clergie tresor: Learning as Labour for Peace in Christine de Pizan and Martin Le Franc

Le Franc's *Champion des dames* chooses to praise Christine when arguing for the role of the writer as a political actor and for the authority of learning. Swift uncovers how French-born Le Franc's own political position and the material production of his *Champion* intersect fascinatingly with the content and context of the Fisher *Livre de Paix* in a mutually illuminating relationship. Le Franc's project closely resembles Christine's in aim and method, offering exhortation and challenge to a specifically targeted prince, teaching good government through moral virtue, labouring for peace by privileging learning, sound counsel, and truth. He dedicated the pro-French, pro-conciliarist, pro-Joan of Arc *Champion* to Philip the Good; amongst its surviving illustrated manuscripts, several found Burgundian patronage, and Jean V de Créquy is credited as sponsor of Le Franc's work at that court. Swift argues that the political philosophy of Christine should, far from being seen as a special case, be viewed properly in dialogue with other fifteenth-century actors navigating delicate didactic paths.

5:30-6:30 p.m.: Reception at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 59 Queen's Park Crescent East

Day #2 Thursday, August 22, 2024

9:00-10:00 a.m.- Coffee/Tea in Room 100 of the Jackman Humanities Building, 100 St. George Street.

10:00-11:30 a.m. Session #3: The Devotional Christine

Moderator: Ann M. Hutchison, Academic Dean Emerita, PIMS

Dorothea Kullmann, Associate Professor, Department of French & Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

Between Devotion, Moral Teaching, and Poetry: Christine de Pizan's Lyrical Prayers

The great *recueils* of Christine de Pizan's works include three lyrical pieces which closely resemble the vernacular prayers often found in Books of Hours, those books for lay devotion that were produced in great numbers around the same time: the *Oroyson Nostre Dame*, the *Quinze Joies de la Vierge rimées* and the *Oroyson Nostre Seigneur*. However, Christine's prayers not only imitate and re-combine typical motifs of prayers to the Virgin and the Lord found in devotional collections, they also show peculiarities which reveal slightly different, more dogmatic, aims. In a similar way, Christine takes inspiration from the decoration, presentation and grouping of such prayers in Books of Hours, but combines the devotional tradition with other, more literary ones. Kullmann's presentation will most likely concentrate on the two Marian texts.

Maureen Boulton, Professor Emerita, Univ. of Notre Dame, Associate Fellow, PIMS, University of Toronto.

Hours & Hours: The Canonical Hours in Christine de Pizan's *Contemplacion de la Passion* and Pierre de Nesson's *Vigilles des Morts*

Christine de Pizan's penultimate work, the *Heures de contemplacion de la Passion*, is one of only two not copied by her own workshop. Writing c. 1420, Christine organized her meditations according to the canonical hours, which was a rather common arrangement. Much rarer was her decision to cast her text in the form of the Office. In this paper, Boulton proposes to examine the

structuring role of the canonical hours in Christine's *Heures* and Pierre de Nesson's *Vigilles des morts*, which is also copied into The Hague, Koninklijke Bibl., MS 73. J 55, one of only two extant manuscripts of Christine's *Heures*, the other being the Parisian BnF, NAF 10059.

Alison More, Comper Professor in Medieval Studies, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.

Spiritual Influences: Ste Elizabeth of Hungary and Christine de Pizan

Sermons and hagiographic texts from throughout Europe related the tale of the saintly laywoman Elisabeth of Thuringia. As a laywoman and a model of holiness, Elisabeth is a fitting representation of quasi-religious life: that is, a spiritual life lived by laypeople outside the traditional institutional structures of the Church, but with elements that are compatible with traditional religious life. This same non-traditional and quasi-religious expression of holiness is found throughout Christine de Pizan's writings. While she acknowledges the traditional superiority of the contemplative life, she subtly but clearly outlines the virtues of the active life, praising Elisabeth explicitly in her *Trois vertus (Three Virtues 1.7)* This paper explores non-traditional and active devotion in Christine's writings with particular emphasis on saintly models and their implications.

11:30- 1:30 Lunch break

1:30-2:30 p.m. Session #4: Christine de Pizan as Political Philosopher

Moderator: **Lori J. Walters**, Visiting Scholar, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

Rebecca Kingston, Professor, Political Science Department, University of Toronto.

Political Fragility and Peace in Christine de Pizan and Michel de Montaigne

This paper offers a comparison of Christine and Montaigne on the theme of peace. Both wrote in times of difficult civil strife, but they offered somewhat different visions of peace and of how to achieve it. Christine addresses the dauphin and seeks to guide him in matters of communication and emotional regulation to achieve a community of close friendship. Montaigne advocates for appreciation of difference within civil society to promote a broader ethos of humaneness rather than close civic friendship. This juxtaposition raises questions of the relative responsibility of leaders vs the general public in achieving peace and of what a state of peace requires. I also suggest that it sheds light on a challenge of contemporary liberal democracy. Specifically, the need and skills for accommodation and negotiation that difference requires in a liberal framework may not always be met by an appeal to the people as dictated by democratic principles. It is in this regard, toward somewhat different ends, that the advice offered by Christine concerning the rhetoric and communication skills of a political leader and the work of emotional redirection become especially important.

Kelsey Gordon, Ph.D. candidate, Political Science Department, University of Toronto

Putting Love at the Centre: The Political Philosophy of Christine de Pizan

Christine de Pizan ends *The Book of the City of Ladies* by imploring married ladies to continue to submit to their husbands, regardless of their tyranny, arguing that "it is not always in a person's

interest to be free” (Pt. III Ch. 19, 219). Gordon argues that, far from these final remarks undermining Christine’s intention to create a liberating work for the benefit of women, this constraining obligation reflects Christine’s theory of love as a tripart division between the natural, the political, and the spiritual. In putting love at the centre, we see Christine reimagining a just world while attempting to remain rooted within the sociopolitical structures of Chivalry and Christianity, while simultaneously seeking to go beyond their present divisions and limitations by appealing to love between women and men. But what we see through Christine is an unjust world that makes realization of all three forms of love at the same time impossible, which results in women’s extraordinary grief and suffering because of absence of love in one of these forms.

2:30-3:00 p.m. Coffee break

3:00-4:00 p.m. Session #5: Christine and Italy,

Moderator, **Elisa Brilli**, Director, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

Mary Anne Case, Arnold I. Shure Professor of Law, the University of Chicago Law School.

Showing that “femme est a l'omme pareille”: Novella, daughter of Giovanni d’Andrea, in the *Livre de Leesce* and the *City of Ladies*.

Case's paper will consider the innovativeness of this claim (“femme est a l'omme pareille”- woman is equal to man) made by Novella in the *Livre de Leesce*, the translator’s introduction to Matheolus' misogynistic *Lamentacions* that Christine refutes in the *City of Ladies*; the possible roots of this claim in the canon law of marriage taught by Novella's father; and its legacy in the work of Christine. She will argue that, although claims of the superiority of women to men had been a feature of the tradition of declamation and paradox before the fourteenth century in response to much more frequent invocations of male superiority, the claim that the sexes were "pareille" (in the sense of both equal and similar) was much rarer, even in the later literature in the *querelle des femmes* tradition. Indeed, the *Livre de Leesce*'s mention of Novella's public lecture may be the earliest reference to a detailed argument in favor of the equality of the sexes, rather than simply in praise or defense of women.

Mihoko Suzuki, Professor Emerita, University of Miami, Florida.

Christine & Machiavelli [video presentation]

Although scholars have noted affinities between the political writings of Christine de Pizan and Machiavelli, they have stopped short of suggesting that Machiavelli knew Christine's work or was influenced by it. Suzuki suggests that based on textual evidence, Machiavelli closely engaged with Christine as he developed his political thought, and that his diplomatic missions to France---he wrote *The Prince* shortly after returning from the last of these missions---provided access to her publications. Acknowledging Christine de Pizan as an important predecessor not only challenges the *idée reçue* of Machiavelli as a completely original political thinker, but also the prevailing reluctance to ascribe to women writers an influence on canonical male writers.

Dinner for conference participants at Terroni. Details to follow.

Day #3, Friday, August 23, 2024

9:30-10:30 a.m. Coffee/Tea in Room 100 of the Jackman Humanities Building.

10:30a.m.-11:30a.m. Session #6: Christine's English Legacy.

Moderator, Sebastian Sobiecki, Professor, Later Medieval English Literature and Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto.

Misty Schieberle, Professor, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS

Christine de Pizan's *Epistre d'Othea* and English Audiences

Schieberle's paper evaluates the reception of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre d'Othea* to assert its central -- yet typically unacknowledged -- position in English literary culture. The paper has two parts: 1) it offers new evidence of the *Othea's* substantial influence on the major English poets Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate in the first half of the fifteenth century. 2) It reassesses the differing approaches to translation, production, and Christine's authorship illustrated by Stephen Scrope (c. 1440), by the anonymous translator of the *Little Bible of Knighthood* (c. 1450), and by printer Robert Wyer (c. 1550), who is rarely treated alongside his predecessors. The evidence from these independent compositions and translations emphasizes the lasting importance of Christine's notions of politics, authorship, and authority for English writers and readers.

Lori J. Walters, Harry F. Williams Professor of French Emerita, Florida State University and Visiting Scholar, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto,

The Reception of Christine's Queen's Manuscript (BL Harley 4431) in England.

Walters' paper focuses on how Christine's masterpiece (London, BL, Harley 4431) was received in England after it was purchased c. 1425 by the English regent in Paris, the duke of Bedford. She considers: 1) the marks of ownership and readership left on Harley's folios by Bedford's wife, Jacqueline de Luxembourg, and by Jacqueline's son by a second marriage, Anthony Woodville, the second Lord Rivers, who translated Christine's *Proverbes moraulx* from Harley; 2) why the translation's printer, the publisher William Caxton, accorded Christine consummate praise, calling her the "the mirror and mistresse of Intelligence." My study concludes that Jacqueline's reading of the agency that Christine had encoded in Harley had an indelible influence on English national history and gives the lie to assertions that Christine had no agency.

11:30-12:00 p.m.- Informal wrap-up discussion

12:00-1:00 p.m.- Lunch