

# Christine de Pizan's Lady Reason and the Book in Beinecke MS 427

***Christine McWebb***

Johan Huizinga describes the waning Middle Ages as an epoch saturated with symbols and images.<sup>1</sup> The numerous cathedrals and monuments from this period confirm the point, with their multitude of allegorical scenes depicted in murals and on pillars inside and out. The same can be said of those illuminated manuscripts so lavishly and carefully done that they transmit the message of the text on a pictorial level. During the Middle Ages, the image seemed to occupy a central role with regard to the perception of a given manuscript. In fact, the prestige of a manuscript was often tied to the quality and quantity of the illuminations and miniatures it contained, pointing to the wealth of the patron who commissioned it. The value and the popularity of a specific work can thus be judged, to a certain extent at least, by the number and the quality of its miniatures. A case in point, for instance, is the second manuscript "edition" of Christine de Pizan's collected works dating, as has been proven, from between 1410 and 1415, British Library, MS Harley 4431, prepared for Isabeau de Bavière, one of Christine's patrons.<sup>2</sup> This manuscript is today one of the British Library's treasures, with twenty-nine individual works in prose and poetry, as well as one hundred and thirty miniatures of sumptuous quality.

At the time of the creation of Harley 4431, Christine, who had begun her literary career at the end of the fourteenth century, already enjoyed considerable popularity, of which the lavish iconography of this manuscript is but one proof.<sup>3</sup> We can safely say that she was at the time of this manuscript's production accepted at the court as a serious writer by the dukes who supported her and commissioned her work, including Louis d'Orléans, Jean sans Peur, and the dukes of Berry and of Burgundy. Christine largely supervised the production and illumination of her own

works, and it was thanks to her growing reputation that she was able to hire two and then later three of the most renowned illuminators in France. Sandra Hindman has shown that this signals the importance which Christine attached to the compilation and production of her texts:

When Christine's clients admired her writings, they admired them as manuscripts produced by her or under her supervision, a factor that probably added to the novelty of Christine as a woman writer. The language used in inventories of collections and records of payment indicates that her technical role in the composition of her writings was recognised along with her intellectual role (Hindman 13).

I shall here discuss one case, a rather fascinating one, concerning the manuscript production of another one of Christine de Pizan's texts, the *Livre des trois vertus* (henceforth *Trois vertus*). Christine herself tells us that she composed this text in 1405 right after her well-known *Livre de la cité des dames* (henceforth *Cité des dames*):

Après ce que j'oz ediffiée a l'ayde et par le commandement des troys Dames de Vertus...*La Cité des Dames*...s'apparurent a moy de rechief, gaires ne tarderent, les susdictes troys glorieuses, en disant...“Comment, fille d'estude, as tu ja remis et fichié en mue l'outil de ton entendement?...Prens ta plume et escrips” (*Trois vertus* 7-9).

[After I built the *City of Ladies* with the aid and instruction of the three lady Virtues...suddenly the three radiant creatures appeared to me once more, saying: “Studious daughter! Have you spurned and silenced the instrument of your intellect?...Take up your pen and write” (*A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor* 69-70)].<sup>4</sup>

At first glance, the *Trois vertus* seems to be a conduct manual for women divided into the conventional three parts addressing first and foremost women of the nobility, secondly the wives of merchants and artisans living in the cities, and thirdly female peasants, prostitutes, and so forth. We know of about twenty extant manuscripts of this work, nine of which contain miniatures. The manuscript on which I shall focus is Yale University, Beinecke MS 427.

The history of this manuscript is rather easy to trace: it was probably written in Amiens around 1460, some fifty years after the text's composition. According to the

coat of arms in the manuscript, it belonged to the Crèvecoeur family. In the eighteenth century it changed hands and was acquired by Comte Pajot d'Ons-en-Bray. Then, Baron Edmond of Rothschild bought it at the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth century. The Rothschild family in turn sold it in 1968 to a gentleman named Kraus who presented it to Edwin J. Beinecke. The illuminator of the manuscript was the so-called master of Amiens 200, one of the most well-known artisans of the profession, known especially for his illumination of a breviary and a copy of the Valerius Maximus.

Beinicke 427 was used as one of the four control manuscripts for the critical edition of the *Trois vertus* prepared by Eric Hicks and Charity Cannon Willard in 1977 and, on a textual level at least, it can therefore be considered as one of the manuscripts of this work most faithful to Christine's scriptorium. This is undoubtedly the case when it comes to the written text. However, the four miniatures, half a page each in size and decorated in quite vibrant and extravagant colours, suggest a different interpretation. The theme of the miniatures, which is repeated in a number of copies of both the *Trois vertus* and the *Cité des dames*,<sup>5</sup> is the apparition before Christine, author-narrator, of the three allegorical divinities, Lady Reason, Lady Righteousness and Lady Justice, divinities who, in the *Trois vertus*, are later joined by Lady Prudence. The three figures attempt to convince Christine to start writing down what God commands her to write, which will be dictated to her by the allegorical divinities themselves. In conformity with artistic convention of the time, the allegories are depicted as queens holding, instead of a sceptre, the symbol referring to their allegorical function: Lady Righteousness holds a ruler which she uses to *depart le droit du tort et demonstre la differance d'entre bien et mal* (*Cité* 643) "separate right from wrong and show the difference between good and evil" (*City* 13).<sup>6</sup> Lady Justice carries a scale in her right hand, although she is sometimes shown holding a golden cup or a vessel, as for example in certain manuscripts of the *Cité des dames*.<sup>7</sup> The symbolism behind these objects is to *mesurer a un chascun sa livree de tel mesure comme il doit avoir* (*Cité* 636) "measure out to each his rightful portion" (*City* 14) as she herself tells us, imitating in a way the symbolic function of the ruler held by Lady Righteousness. The third figure, Lady Reason, holds a privileged position in Christine's texts: it is Reason who frees the author-narrator from her cataleptic state in the opening scene of the *Cité des dames* and it is to her that Christine already turns for guidance in her *Chemin de long estude* composed in 1403.

In the manuscript tradition of the *Cité des dames* and in the other illuminated manuscripts of the *Trois vertus*, Lady Reason holds in her right hand a mirror, an

object replete with spiritual symbolism in the Middle Ages, but which, on a philosophical level, is the tool for seeing ourselves reflected in our souls, and thereby attempting to improve ourselves. Lady Reason explains to Christine:

Et pour ce que je sers de demonstrier clerement et faire veoir en conscience et de fait a un chacun et chacune ses propres taches et deffaulx, me vois tu tenir en lieu de cepstre cestuy resplandissant mireuoir que je porte en ma main destre. Si saiches de vray qu'il n'est quelconques personne qui s'i mire, quel que la criature soit, qui clerement ne se congnoisse. O! tant est de grant dignité mon mirouoir, sans cause n'est il avironné de riches pierres precieuses, si que tu le vois, car par luy les essances, calités, proporcions et mesures de toutes choses sont congneues, ne sans luy riens ne puet estre bien fait (*Cité* 627-28).

[Since I serve to demonstrate clearly and to show both in thought and deed to each man and woman his or her own special qualities and faults, you see me holding this shiny mirror which I carry in my right hand in place of a sceptre. I would thus have you know truly that no one can look into this mirror, no matter what kind of creature, without achieving clear self-knowledge. My mirror has such great dignity that not without reason is it surrounded by rich and precious gems, so that you see, thanks to this mirror, the essences, qualities, proportions, and measures of all things are known, nor can anything be done well without it (*City* 9)].

In this manuscript, however, and only in this one, the mirror has been replaced by a book which is sometimes open, sometimes closed. The substitution of the mirror, with which Lady Reason is depicted in most of the initial manuscripts of the *Cité des dames*, with a book could serve as a metaphor for the book-*speculum* alluding to the didactic function of the text. As Eric Hicks has speculated, “[t]hat a book should replace a mirror is surely an interesting occurrence, perhaps alluding to the *speculum* construct, for the work is...a *mirror* for women.”<sup>8</sup> However, the mirror is the symbol which, especially at the time of Christine de Pizan, was largely exploited in the designations of didactic conduct manuals, and it could have reflected the same connotation as did the book. There are of course numerous mirrors for princes, princesses, ladies and even virgins which are generally referred to as “book-*speculi*.”<sup>9</sup> Since this manuscript is not an autograph,<sup>10</sup> one can only speculate on the copyist’s or the scribe’s motivations for ordering the illuminator to paint Lady Reason with a book and not a mirror.<sup>11</sup>

Let us suppose then that the copyist or the scribe in charge of the manuscript's production knew Christine's works. She probably died around 1430, about thirty years prior to the making of this manuscript. This is, in fact, quite likely, since her work was at that time and throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries very popular, as witnessed by the extant evidence of the increasing number of copies of her texts produced at that time. It is only after that period that her literary renown dwindled.<sup>12</sup> However, from an art historian's point of view the iconographical individuality of these miniatures, by comparison with earlier manuscripts of the *Cité des dames*, is clear, including variations in colour as well as the different symbols carried by Lady Justice and Lady Reason.

The activities of reading and writing were Christine's dominant preoccupations in a number of her texts, such as in the opening scene of the *Cité des dames*, in which she describes herself as sitting alone in her study engaged in the reading of literary texts. Her own role as a female writer at a time when such an activity was scarcely accessible to women might have been the reason for the frequent figural representations of the author/narrator in the process of reading or writing.<sup>13</sup> For example, in the *Cité des dames* we often find these descriptions in the incipit of her prose works, a frequency which cleverly underscores the importance of these activities and functions as a sort of *mise en abyme* of the composition of the text in question. We must remember that it is, in fact, the three allegorical goddesses who first encourage Christine to compose the *Cité des dames*:

[n]ous trois dames que tu vois cy, meues par pitié, te sommes venues adn-  
 oncier un certain ediffice fait en maniere de la closture d'une cité fort  
 maçonnee et bien edifficee, qui a toy a ffaire est predestinee et establie par  
 nostre aide et conseil, en laquelle n'abitera fors toutes dames de renommee  
 et femmes dignes de loz: car a celles ou vertu ne sera trouuee, les murs de  
 nostre cité seront forclos (*Cité* 630).

[We three ladies whom you see here, moved by pity, have come to you to  
 announce a particular edifice built like a city wall, strongly constructed and  
 well founded, which has been predestined and established by our aid and  
 counsel for you to build, where no one will reside except all ladies of fame  
 and women worthy of praise, for the walls of the city will be closed to those  
 women who lack virtue (*City* 10-11)].

Secondly then, her sleep is interrupted by the three divinities, so that she may continue her diptych with the *Trois vertus*: *Or sus! sus! Baïlle ça ta main! Drece toy! Plus ne soies accropie en la pouldriere de recreandise. Entens noz sermons et tu feras bonne oeuvre (Trois vertus 8)*, “Now up, up! Lend a hand! Get ready! Stop crouching on this dust heap of fatigue! Obey our words, and your work will prosper” (*Mirror* 69).

No allegory, I suggest, other than Lady Reason seems better suited to underline the importance of the written word in Christine de Pizan's texts in general, but first and foremost in what I am calling her diptych, the *Cité des dames* and the *Trois vertus*. After all, it is she, the faculty of human reason, who is the founder of language, the “founder of mythical language” as David Hult has put it.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, this noble allegory had to endure criticism and defamation in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*, written in the second half of the thirteenth century, in which Reason is the Lover's first interlocutor in his quest for a suitable amatory doctrine.<sup>15</sup> Her rational advice against the traps and dangers of love is not very well received, however, and Lady Reason finds herself rejected by her pupil and later insulted by the powerful God of Love. The latter revises the book's title and calls out:

[q]ue tretuit cil qui ont a vivre  
 devoient apeler ce livre  
 le *Miroër aus Amoreus*,  
 tant i verront de bien por eu,  
 mes que Reson n'i sait creüe,  
 la chetive, la recreüe (II:10618-24).

[...that all those who have yet to live ought to call this book the *Mirror for Lovers*. They will see so much good in it for themselves, providing that Reason shall not be believed, the poor wretch.]<sup>16</sup>

This kind of defamation as well as the obscene language used by Reason in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*<sup>17</sup> triggered the famous epistolary debate (three years prior to the composition of Christine's diptych) between herself and her adversaries, mainly Jean de Montreuil and the brothers Pierre and Gontier Col.<sup>18</sup> In her epistle to the Provost of Lille, Christine complains:

Mais en accordant a l'oppinion a laquelle contrediséz, sans faille, a mon avis, trop traicte deshonestment en aucunes pars—et mesmement ou personnage que il claime Raison, laquelle nomme les secréz membres plainement par nom (*Débat* 13).

[But I agree with the opinion (which you clearly oppose, it seems to me) that he speaks too dishonourably in some parts of the *Roman de la rose*, even when he speaks through the character he calls Reason, who names the secret members plainly by name (*La querelle de la rose* 48)].<sup>19</sup>

It is well known that Christine subscribed to a more Christian moral code, and she repeatedly objected to Reason's overt references to the male genitalia using the kind of language which should have no place in the mouth of such a courteous lady. In the *Roman de la rose*, Reason's famous repeated enunciation of the word "cullions" and her refusal to repent turn her persona into the antithesis of Christine's conception of a virtuous allegory. In Reason's reply to Lover's accusation of having spoken such shocking words, she refers to the origin of language with God in Paradise; it can therefore contain nothing shameful. Christine, in her response to Jean de Montreuil's treatise, argues otherwise, although admitting that *crea Dieu toutes choses pures et necte* (*Débat* 13) "God created all things pure and clean" (*Querelle* 48). She refers effectively to the virtue of shame, which forbids the use of such carnal language. In Christine's eyes, the corruption of this noble allegory is the more reprehensible because of her symbolic origin.

Moreover, in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*, Lady Reason ironically is a poor rhetorician, for she fails to convince the protagonist, Lover, of her amatory doctrine as she tries unsuccessfully to make him abjure the oath he has pledged to the corrupt God of Love and his barons. Lover's impatient dismissal of Lady Reason as a potential teacher in the art of love destroys any honourable status Reason might have held in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*, an act which—for Christine—requires a remedy:

Mes je vos ai bien dit sovent  
 que je ne veill ailleurs penser  
 qu'a la rose ou sunt mi penser;  
 et quant ailleurs penser me fetes  
 par voz paroles ci retretes,  
 que je sui ja touz las d'oïr,  
 ja m'en verrez de ci foïr,  
 se ne vos en taisiez a tant,  
 puis que mes queurs ailleurs s'atant (I:7190-98).

[But I have told you many times that I do not want to think about anything but the rose which is where my thoughts are right now. And if you want to convince me with your words, which I am already very tired of hearing, to

take my thoughts elsewhere, I will flee from here, if you do not be silent at once, since my heart is attached elsewhere.]

Although Lady Reason already appears in Christine's *Chemin de long estude*, it is probable, according to Charity Cannon Willard, that for her diptych the author turned to the *Roman de la rose* for a model of this allegory: "There is no avoiding the probability that the inspiration, if not the model, for Dame Reason came from Jean de Meun" (93). Consequently then, as Willard notes,<sup>20</sup> the positive value of Reason, who together with the other allegorical divinities holds no lesser role than that of narrator in Christine's diptych, must be restored. The unsatisfactory outcome of the debate requires redress, in order to attach more credibility to the author's own writing.<sup>21</sup> Already in her epistle to Jean de Montreuil, Christine proclaims:

Et encore ne me puis taire de ce, dont trop suis mal content: que l'office de Raison, laquelle il mesmes dit fille de Dieu, doye mectre avant telle parole et par maniere de proverbe comme je ay notee en ycellui chapitre, la ou elle dit a l'Amant que "en la guerre amoureuse...vault mieulx decevoir que deceuz estre" (*Débat* 14).

[Further, I cannot be silent about a subject that so displeases me: that the function of Reason, whom he even calls the daughter of God, should be to propound such a dictum as the one I found in the chapter where Reason says to the Lover, "In the amorous war...it is better to deceive than to be deceived" (*Querelle* 49)].

She goes on to criticise the author of the *Roman*, arguing that in his text, Reason in proposing such cunning behaviour contradicts the doctrine of God, her father.

In her *Cité des dames*, Christine reinstates the true allegorical value of Lady Reason, for she is responsible for the construction of the foundation walls of the city of ladies, of which each stone represents the narration of a legend about female heroism. These tales concern female warriors in particular, but also include stories about erudite women, and those who invented a particular science or art. Further, the revalorisation of this allegory continues through the use of eloquent language in the sequel to the *Cité des dames*, in which her "reasoned" message offers virtuous advice to women for any situation in which they might find themselves.

The depiction of Lady Reason in Beinecke 427 attests to the fundamental importance of language in Christine de Pizan's philosophy. The book replacing the



mirror suggests that Reason is a mediator between the book composed by the author and the physical product itself. This book of wisdom, of sapience, here symbolises the fictive city, the fortress made of words, particularly the written word which protects Christine's "treasure"—given that the *Trois vertus* is sometimes called *Le trésor de la cité des dames*.<sup>22</sup> The Field of Letters, the *champ des escriptures* (Cité 639), in which Lady Reason guides Christine at the beginning of the *Cité des dames*, is echoed by the book in Reason's hand in Beinecke 427.

Lady Reason's habitual mirror allowing us to see our soul in order to improve ourselves would have distracted the reader from her true allegorical force as the founder of language, more precisely, of an eloquent and sophisticated language which reflects her divine birth. This kind of language is the focus of both the *Cité des dames* and, even more so, its sequel the *Trois vertus*. If anything, the *Trois vertus* is even more concerned with originary language, in that the author provides her female readers with dignity-inspiring models of discourse.<sup>23</sup> With a book in her hand, Reason chases away the bad memories of her role in the *Roman de la rose*.

The importance of this miniature in the manuscript corpus of Christine's works is not to be neglected, particularly when we take into account the common medieval perception of art as an illusion of divine truth. For the first time in art history, the artist compares to the poet in the sense that both have the capacity to represent truth, which is in the medieval context invariably a truth about religious spiritualism. Paintings ought to be viewed as divinely-inspired works. Christine herself expresses her opinion on this topic and attests to these developments. In her *Livre du corps de policie*, a conventional text of the "mirror for princes" genre, she praises at length the admirable talent of artisans including especially the illuminators and miniaturists. She repeats this high praise in the *Cité des dames*, in which she insists on learning about women who excel in intellectual or artistic knowledge. Quite fittingly, it is Lady Reason who responds to Christine's inquiry, citing various examples of legendary women artisans and artists—among whom are several female illuminators, painters, and miniaturists such as the Greek women Thamaris and Irene, and Marcia the Roman. The description of their extraordinary talent reminds Christine of Anastasia, an outstanding painter of manuscript borders and miniature backgrounds, hired repeatedly by Christine herself.<sup>24</sup>

If the copyist of Beinecke 427 was indeed familiar with Christine's works, the decision to replace the mirror with a book reflects a sensitivity to her writing. Whatever might be the case, through the iconography and allegorical anthropomorphism

the copyist pays heed to and brings forth the essence of Christine's message about the power of the written word. Furthermore, and what is more important, replacing the mirror with a book underscores the essence of Lady Reason's role in Christine's diptych, in particular when we read it not as an isolated text, but as integral to her activities as writer and polemicist during the debate about the *Roman de la rose*. In her last-known contribution to the debate, the letter to Pierre Col dated 2 October 1402, Christine expresses her intention of distancing herself from this stagnant exchange of insults, complaints, and stale arguments:

Et quant a moy, plus n'en pense faire escripture, qui que m'en escripse, car je n'ay pas empris toute Sainne a boire: ce que j'ay escript est escript. Non mie tairé pour doubte de mesprandre quant a oppinion, combien que faulte d'engin et de savoir me tolt biau stille, mais mieulx me plaist exerciter en autre matiere mieulx a ma plaisance (*Débat* 149-50).

[For my part, I do not intend to write any more about the matter, whoever may write to me, for I have not undertaken to drink the entire Seine. What I have written is written. I do not, I hasten to add, keep quiet for fear of sending forth mistaken opinions, although my lack of ingenuity and knowledge deprive me of an elegant style. I prefer to devote myself to another subject more to my taste (*Querelle* 144)].

This subject is, of course, far from closed in her mind.

In the *Cité des dames*, Christine twice reminds us of her discontent with Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*. In Book I, Lady Reason, in her introductory speech to Christine, urges her to interpret the numerous misogynist messages contained in the works of the auctores, such as Jean de Meun's criticism of marriage, according to the grammatical figure of *antiphrasis*, which takes them to mean the exact opposite of what they say. She adds in passing that the only reason why his work continues to attract so much attention and praise is the reputation of its author: *plus grant foy est adjousteé pour cause de l'auctorité de l'auteur* (*Cité* 624) "where greater credibility is averred because of the authority of its author" (*City* 7).<sup>25</sup> On an intertextual level, the depiction of Reason holding a book marks Christine's continued criticism of her opponent's work not only in the *Cité des dames*, but also in her mirror for women.

**University of Alberta**

## Notes

1 See *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), especially chapter 15.

2 A more detailed description of this manuscript is Sandra L. Hindman's extensive iconographical study, *Christine de Pizan's Epistre Othéa: Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986), p. 16. The date of the manuscript is determined in P. Meyer, *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan* ed. Maurice Roy, 3 vols (Paris: Firmin Didot et Cie., 1886-96), 1:278 and confirmed by Lucie Schaefer, "Die Illustrationen zu den Handschriften der Christine de Pizan" *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 10 (1973): 119-208, 162-3.

3 For more extensive biographical information on Christine de Pizan, see Charity Cannon Willard's *Christine de Pizan. Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea Books, 1984).

4 Christine de Pizan, *Le livre des trois vertus* ed. Charity Cannon Willard and Eric Hicks (Paris: Champion, 1989). The translation is *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies* ed. Charity Cannon Willard (New York: Persea Books, 1989), henceforth *Mirror*.

5 Christine de Pizan, *The livre de la cité des dames. A Critical Edition* ed. Eric Hicks (Geneva: Slatkine, 1996). See also Christine de Pizan, *The livre de la cité des dames. A Critical Edition* ed. Maureen Cheney Curnow (Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1975), vol. 2.

6 *The Book of the City of Ladies* trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea Books, 1982), henceforth *City*.

7 See for example Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fr. 1777, f. 3v, as well as Christine's collected works prepared for Isabeau de Bavière in British Library, MS Harley 4331, f. 290.

8 See Eric Hicks, "Le livre des trois vertus of Christine de Pizan: Beinecke MS 427," in *Contexts: Style and Value in Medieval Art and Literature* eds Daniel Poirion and Nancy F. Regalado (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991), pp. 51-71, p. 69.

9 For examples of such designations in the titles of didactic works from the European Middle Ages, see Herbert Grabes' *Speculum, Mirror und Looking-Glass*.

*Kontinuität und Originalität der Spiegelmetapher in den Buchtiteln des Mittelalters und der englischen Literatur des 13. bis 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1973).

10 Concerning the manuscript tradition of the *Trois vertus*, Charity Cannon Willard concludes that none of the existing manuscripts of this work is an autograph. To date, only one manuscript has been dated to the time of composition of the text, Boston Public Library, MS 1528; see her "The Manuscript Tradition of the *Livre des trois vertus* and Christine de Pizan's Audience" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27 (1966): 433-44, pp. 436-7.

11 Sandra Hindman demonstrates that the illuminator decided on the position and the theme of the miniature only in exceptional cases, since, as she points out, "by the time he actually began work on a book he had to put his pictures in preexisting blank spaces that already had descriptive rubrics above or below them" (64). For a more detailed explanation of the procedure of manuscript production, see Hindman, *Christine de Pizan*, pp. 64-8.

12 For considerations of Christine de Pizan's progress as a writer and a publisher and with the historical reception of her works see: James Laidlaw, "Christine de Pizan: An Author's Progress," *Modern Language Review* 78 (1983): 532-50; James Laidlaw, "Christine de Pizan: A Publisher's Progress," *Modern Language Review* 82 (1987): 35-75, and Glenda McLeod, *The Reception of Christine de Pizan from the Fifteenth through the Nineteenth Centuries. Visitors to the City* (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1991).

13 Examples of these representations can be found in Harley 4431, f. 290; Christine appears in her study with an open book in front of her on which her index finger rests. Next to her are two closed books on a pulpit and one below. This scene again describes the moment of apparition of the three Virtues. In the fifteenth-century Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 609, f. 2v, Christine can be seen facing front and holding an open book in her right raised hand, a closed one in her left hand, which rests on her lap. In another fifteenth-century manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 1177, f. 3v shows the apparition scene with Christine behind a pulpit reading and surrounded by books.

14 See David Hult, "Language and Dismemberment: Abelard, Origen, and the *Romance of the Rose*" in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception* eds Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 101-130, p. 118.

15 The standard edition is Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la rose* 3 vols, ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: Champion, 1965). See also the exhaustive discussion of Lady Reason's role in the *Roman de la rose* by John V. Fleming, *Reason and the Lover* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1984).

16 All translations of passages from the *Roman de la rose* are my own.

17 *Joutice, qui jadis regnot, / au tens que Saturnus regne ot, / cui Jupiter coupa les coilles, / ses filz, con se fussent andoilles* (*Le roman de la rose* I:5505-08) "by his son Jupiter treating them as if they were sausages," and further *car volentiers, non pas enviz, / mist Dex en coillons e en viz / force de generacion*" (*Le roman de la rose* I:6935-37) "Since out of his own will and not reluctantly, God put the power of generation into testicles and penis."

18 For a detailed chronology of the events surrounding the debate about the *Roman de la rose*, see Eric Hick's edition of the epistles assembled by Christine (LII-LIV in *Le débat sur le roman de la rose* [Geneva: Slatkine, 1996]), as well as his article in collaboration with Ezio Ornato, "Jean de Montreuil et le débat sur le *Roman de la rose*" *Romania* 98 (1977): 34-64, 186-219.

19 *La querelle de la rose: Letters and Documents* eds Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies, 1978).

20 Similarly, see her comment elsewhere in the same article: "Christine was trying to provide Reason with an image different from Jean de Meun's" (93). The article is Charity Cannon Willard, "Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?" *Ideals for Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan* ed. Diane Bornstein (Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1981), pp. 91-116.

21 According to the documents assembled in the *Débat*, Christine never replied to Pierre Col's letter, which is the last in the chronology of the quarrel apart from Jean Gerson's sermons at the church of St Jean-en-Grève in December of 1402. Only a fragment of Pierre Col's letter has survived which cannot be dated, but it must have been written after 30 October 1402, which was the day Pierre Col received Christine's last letter.

22 Charity Cannon Willard took up this alternate title in her English translation of this work, *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor—The Treasury of the City of Ladies*.

23 Compare Liliane Dulac, "The Representations and Functions of Feminine Speech in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*" in *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan* ed. Earl Jeffrey Richards (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 13-22, p. 13.

24 For the narration of these exempla, see *Cité*, I, ch. 41.

25 In II, ch. 25, Lady Righteousness criticises Jean de Meun for teaching men not to reveal any secrets to their wives because of their alleged tendency to gossip (*Cité* 843).