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**An assembly of ladies: The fifteenth century pictorial tradition  
of Christine de Pizan's "La cité des dames" and "Le trésor de la  
cité des dames"**

Dufresne, Laura Jean, Ph.D.

University of Washington, 1989

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AN ASSEMBLY OF LADIES

The Fifteenth-Century Pictorial Tradition of

Christine de Pizan's

La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames

by

Laura Jean Dufresne

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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Approved by

Joanne Snow-Smith

(Chairperson of Supervisory Committee)

Program Authorized  
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Date

23 May 1989

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University of Washington

Abstract

AN ASSEMBLY OF LADIES:  
The Fifteenth Century Pictorial Tradition of  
Christine de Pizan's  
La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames"

by Laura Jean Dufresne

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee:

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Christine de Pizan was one of the first vernacular authors to supervise the copying and illustration of her books in the early fifteenth-century. Writing between 1390 and 1429, she produced a vast array of works in verse and prose for members of the French court. This study examines the relationship between text and image in two companion works Christine wrote in 1404-1405 devoted solely to the problems of women: La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames. The first work is a collection of lives of women who contributed to the development of civilization, the second work is both a mirror for the princess, and a behavioral handbook for women of all classes.

The focus of this investigation is the miniatures accompanying these texts produced in the fifteenth-century. Under Christine's direction, from 1404-1425, these manuscripts were richly illustrated with miniatures underscoring the action between Christine, as author-protagonist, and the allegorical and historical figures comprising her City. The second group of miniatures

produced between 1425-1465 in France and Flanders shifts the focus from the dramatic action of the women to their courtly loveliness. The third selection of manuscripts dates from the end of the century, and illustrates specific tales and scholarly discussion, returning the focus to Christine and the Virtues as models of creative and constructive action.

The continuing popularity of La cité and Le trésor among aristocratic women grants us the opportunity to compare changes in the iconography and style of the miniatures chosen by patron and artist to accompany Christine's visual and verbal message intended for "the world of women, present and future, where ever this book can reach or be seen."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Christine de Pizan, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, trans. by Sarah Lawson, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985) p. 180.

Doctoral Dissertation

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Date

*May 16 1989*

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## PREFACE

The works of Christine de Pizan provide a rare opportunity to examine the manuscripts of a writer who controlled the total appearance of her Late Medieval artistic product. Christine was one of the first vernacular authors who supervised the copying and illumination of her books in France in the early fifteenth-century. Writing between 1390 and 1429 she produced a vast array of works in verse and prose for members of the French court. This study examines the relationship between text and image in two companion books Christine wrote devoted solely to the problems of women; La cité des dames 1404-1405 and Le trésor de la cité des dames of Ladies 1405. The first work is a collection of lives of women who contributed to the development of civilization, the second work is a mirror for the princess, and a handbook for women of all classes instructing them on their duties and obligations as women.

The focus of this investigation is the illuminated copies of these two works produced in the fifteenth-century. Under Christine's direction, these manuscripts were richly illustrated with miniatures underscoring the dramatic action found at the beginning of each of the three parts of the text. The illuminations as well as the text draw from an abundant banquet of classical, religious and

draw from an abundant banquet of classical, religious and apocryphal sources. The first set of manuscripts to be examined are those created under Christine's direct supervision, according to her particular specifications, from the years 1405-1425. The second grouping encompasses copies of these works made by a variety of artists for patrons throughout France and Flanders in mid-century, from 1425 to 1465. The third selection of manuscripts date from the end of the century, and also includes an early printed edition with woodcut illustrations published in 1521.

Both La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames utilize the allegorical framework of the dream, mirrored in the accompanying miniatures. The continuing popularity of these books among aristocratic women grant us the opportunity to compare changes in iconography, style and relationship to the text in the miniatures as they occurred throughout the century. Christine choose her literary and visual prototypes with great care; in contrast qualities the miniatures by later artists display are not always in harmony with her original conception. Varying from bizarre to innovative, the later miniatures offer a host of curious variations and adaptations through details of dress, setting, attributes of the Virtues and even the very nature of the action the narrative describes. The text is sometimes ignored, resulting in decorative images of cloying artifice and grace, or it is meticulously

adhered to, invigorating each scene with the verisimilitude and power of Dutch genre painting. These variations provide a fascinating view of the changing tastes and desires of Christine's new readers over the course of the century. The continuing interest in illustrating her compelling visual and verbal message lives on, as Christine hoped, allowing her texts of encouragement and guidance to "...endure in many copies all over the world without falling into disuse, and many valiant ladies and women of authority will see and hear it now and in time to come."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>p. 180. All quotes from Christine de Pizan's Le trésor de la cité des dames in this study are taken from the first English translation of this text made by Sarah Lawson, entitled The Treasure of the City of Ladies, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

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## PART I

### CHAPTER ONE

#### THE LIFE AND WORK OF CHRISTINE DE PIZAN 1364-1430

The manuscripts produced by Christine de Pizan bequeath an unparalleled and powerful view of the world from one woman's perspective in the late middle ages. If our history is indeed as Beatrice Gottlieb has stated "the history of books"<sup>1</sup> then Christine's works hold a unique place in that history by virtue of their singularity. Christine de Pizan was one of the few writers of her time involved in every aspect of the transformation of her writings into deluxe illuminated manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> She supervised the copying and illuminating of her books, if she did not do the copying herself.<sup>3</sup> She produced deluxe editions of her work for the most illustrious patrons of her day, Jean Duke of Berry, Queen Isabelle of France, Louis of Orleans and Philip Duke of Burgundy, among others. Her patrons were attracted to works that "both delighted

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<sup>1</sup>B. Gottlieb, "The Problem of Feminism in the Fifteenth Century", Women of the Medieval World, (1985) p. 341.

<sup>2</sup>Her mentors Philippe de Mézieres and Honoré Bouvet may also have been so involved. See S. Hindman, Epistre Othea (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute, 1986) pp. 144-169. As a point of comparison, the miniatures accompanying Romand de la Rose, having received considerable attention, actually survive only in manuscripts copied centuries after the death of its authors Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung.

<sup>3</sup>See G. Ouy and C. Reno, "Identification des autographes de Christine de Pizan." Scriptorium 34 (1980) pp. 221-238, and M. Meiss French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries 2 vol. (London: 1974) p. 8.

the eye and stimulated the mind"<sup>4</sup> a sensibility Christine cultivated and shared. This study will focus on the miniatures accompanying two of Christine's writings, La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames. These companion texts are devoted to the problem of women's place in history, and the challenges of daily life respectively. They are illustrated by an artist of Christine's choosing, called La cité des dames Master by Millard Meiss<sup>5</sup> for this notable work. The early miniatures serve as models for later illustrations of the texts produced after Christine's death, and are imitated with varying degrees of faithfulness to the original, as discussed at length in the following chapters. My research examines 104 miniatures from 23 manuscripts from La cité and Le trésor created throughout the fifteenth-century. To understand the miniatures we must understand the texts they illustrate, as well as the author, and the tastes of her patrons and admirers during and after her lifetime. How closely do artists follow Christine's intent in both word and image? How is the author herself portrayed? As a widow, as she wished? Or as a nun, scholar, laborer, or fashionable young noblewoman? (fig. 1-1) How is dress used to convey

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<sup>4</sup>R. Wieck, Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life, (New York: 1988) p.27.

<sup>5</sup>Meiss, Limbourgs. p.12.

social position in these miniatures? Dress is a powerful indicator of status in any given period in human history - for example, medieval sumptuary laws relegated the wearing of certain ceremonial garments, fabrics and furs to members of the royal family alone. The fact that these laws were broken at every possible opportunity by the lesser aristocracy and the wealthy merchant class testifies to their power. The hierarchical medieval world view also extends its rules regarding dress to heavenly as well as allegorical figures. The aristocratic regalia of the celestial court often bears an astonishing resemblance to its earthly counterpart. Christine's opinions on the subject of dress are most strongly stated in Le trésor, and in the very way she allowed herself to be clothed and presented in the miniatures illustrating her early texts.

Christine de Pizan was born in Venice in 1364 and died at the Convent of Poissy in France around 1430. Her biography can be reconstructed on the basis of her works alone.<sup>6</sup> She has been heralded as the first feminist and

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<sup>6</sup>Christine's writings containing autobiographical information include: Livre du chemin de long estude 1402-1403, Livre de la mutacion de Fortune 1400-1405, and Avison-Christine 1405. Notable biographical treatments include C. Willard, Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works. (New York: 1984), S. Solente, "Christine de Pizan," Histoire littéraire de la France 40 (Paris: 1974) pp. 335-422., M.-J. Pinet. Christine de Pizan 1364-1430: etude biographique et littéraire, (Paris: 1927) rpt. 1974., E. McLeod, The Order of the Rose: The Life and Ideas of Christine de Pizan, (London: 1976).

the first professional woman writer of western Europe.<sup>7</sup> Her father, Tommaso de Pizzano, was born in Boulongne la Grasse<sup>8</sup>, earning a degree from the prestigious University of Bologna in 1342 where he remained as a lecturer in medicine and astrology until 1356.<sup>9</sup> Various civil disturbances led Tommaso, at the urging of his friend and father-in-law Tommaso de Modino, to leave Bologna for Venice where both were employed by the Venetian Republic as medical and astrological advisors.<sup>10</sup>

Christine's father was widely regarded in Europe as an astrologer, leading both Louis of Hungary and Charles V of France to invite him to their courts.<sup>11</sup> She was born

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<sup>7</sup>Gottlieb "Feminism" p. 346, D. Bornstein, The Lady in the Tower (Hamden, Conn.: 1983) p. 12, S. Bell, "Christine de Pizan (1364-1430): Humanism and the Problem of a Studious Woman" Feminist Studies III (1974) pp. 173-184.

<sup>8</sup>D. Borstein, Intro. Ideals for Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan (Detroit: 1981) p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>C. Willard, "Christine de Pizan: The Astrologers Daughter." In Mélanges a la mémoire de Franco Simone: France et Italie dans la culture européenne, (Geneva: 1980) p. 95. Although the family came from Bologna, previous generations lived in the hills southwest of the small country town of Pizzano, hence the family name "Pizzano", soon gallacized to Pisan, once Tommaso moved his family to France. This led many to mistakenly believe that Christine's family came from Pisa.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. pp. 95-96.

<sup>11</sup> D. Bornstein, Ideals, p. 1 . For more on the University of Bologna and its reputation see Willard, "Astrologer's Daughter" p. 96 and G. Sarton. Introduction to the History of Science (Baltimore: 1947) III, p. 1080.

shortly before her father accepted the position of court astrologer and physician at the humanist court of King Charles V, also known as "Charles the Wise". Christine and her mother joined him in Paris three years later in 1368. The family was situated in the Marais quarter, a dependency of the king's residence The Hotel Saint-Pol.<sup>12</sup> At some point in these early years Christine's two younger brothers Aghinolfo and Paolo were born. Christine's father was well liked in the king's entourage, and Christine would later profit from his close ties to the court.<sup>13</sup> She recounts being presented in the exotic clothes of her native Lombardy when just a child to King Charles V at the Louvre. She spent the rest of her life in France, an enthusiastic, if sometimes critical, patriot. "No nation of the world has such benign and humane princes as France. I say it without flattery because it is the truth."<sup>14</sup>

In spite of her mother's objections, Christine's father gave her a good education in Latin, philosophy and science far beyond what was considered appropriate for a

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<sup>12</sup>Hindman, Epistre, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> A. Gabriel, "The Educational Ideas of Christine de Pizan" J. of the History of Ideas XVI (1955) p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Christine, "The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life", trans. by J. Wisman in Christine de Pizan, (New York: 1984) pp. 2-69.

woman.<sup>15</sup> In 1379, at the age of fifteen, Christine married Etienne de Castel, a secretary in the service of Charles V. In 1380 the king gave Etienne and Christine a present of Tour Barbeau as a home, located on the Seine.<sup>16</sup> Although their marriage was arranged, it was a happy one, as Christine writes in *The Book of the Road of Long Study*: "Our love and our hearts were far more than that of brother and sister. We were joined in a unity of joy and pain."<sup>17</sup> Christine gave birth to three children, two sons and a daughter, between 1381 and 1385.<sup>18</sup> In 1380 Charles V died, and Christine's father lost his high position at court, for although he was retained, his salary was decreased. He fell ill and died sometime between 1384 and 1389, leaving

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<sup>15</sup>Gabriel "Educational Ideas", p. 4. The subject of the education of women is a common theme in Christine's work. In *La cité des dames* Rectitude tells Christine that "not all men (and especially the wisest) share the opinion that it is bad for women to be educated. But it is very true that many foolish men have claimed this because it displeased them that women knew more than they did. Your father, who was a great scientist and philosopher, did not believe that women were worth less by knowing science; rather, as you know, he took great pleasure from seeing your inclination to learning." All quotations of this text appearing in the present study are from Earl Jeffrey Richard's translation, entitled *The Book of the City of Ladies*, (New York: Persea Books, 1983) p. 154.

<sup>16</sup>Pinet, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup>Christine, *Le livre du chemin de long estude* (Berlin: 1881) 87-90.

<sup>18</sup>Christine, *Lavision-Christine* (Washington D.C.: 1932) p. 154.

behind little for his wife and children. In 1389 Christine's husband Etienne died of an epidemic while traveling with King Charles VI to Beauvais in the autumn of that year. "Now the door to our misfortunes was open, and I, being still quite young, entered in."<sup>19</sup> At the age of 25 Christine was a widow with three children, a mother and a niece to support. She was harassed by her husband's creditors, and was unable to collect what had been bequeathed to her children until 1411, after she had pleaded her case four times before the law courts. Creditors removed many of her belongings, she was forced to sell her father's property, and she fell ill.<sup>20</sup>

Gradually, she regained her health and courage. Christine describes this rejuvenation in an odd and startling manner. Fortune, she writes, changed her into a man in order to for her to assume the masculine responsibility of supporting a family, particularly through such intellectual pursuits as study and writing.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-158.

<sup>21</sup>Although this metamorphosis gave her a "strong and hardy spirit" and enabled her to stop weeping and get about the business of living, Christine emphasizes this change, though necessary, was not one of choice:

As you may have heard, now I am a man  
 And have been one for thirteen years  
 But it pleased me much more  
 To be a woman, as I was accustomed to  
 When I communicated with Hymen

Christine's two brothers returned to Italy, and she placed her son Jean Castel in the service of the Earl of Salisbury in England in 1397. Her daughter took vows as a nun at the Abbey of Poissy, outside Paris.<sup>22</sup> No information exists regarding the fate of her second son, so it is assumed that he died very young, no doubt compounding her sorrows during these dark years of struggle. Christine at long last began to apply herself to study, scholarship and writing. First, she worked as a scribe, copying the manuscripts of others with her own neat batard gothic script.<sup>23</sup> This gave her access to a multitude of scholarly and literary works. Christine tells us that she began to literally "consume" ancient histories of the Hebrews, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, French and Bretons, as well as science, poetry, and philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

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Livre de la mutacion de Fortune, pp. 21-22. For more on the topic of Christine's self-image, see D. Bornstein, "Self-Consciousness and Self Concepts in the Work of Christine de Pizan" in Ideals for Women, pp. 11-28.

<sup>22</sup>Christine, Lavision, pp. 165, 174. It was quite an honor for Christine's daughter to be admitted to such a prestigious place as the Convent at Poissy. A special authorization from the king was required for admission, as his daughter, Marie de France, and other noblewomen lived here. Christine writes a poem about a trip to Poissy made in aristocratic company, and she joins her daughter here in retirement for the last 18 years of her life. M. Roy, ed. Oeuvres poetiques de Christine de Pisan (Paris: 1891, rpt. New York: 1965) p. 312.

<sup>23</sup>Christine, La vision, pp. 164, 152.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

Christine's first writing efforts at the beginning of her career in the early 1390's were conventional love ballads and other lyrical forms, which met with surprising success in Parisian circles. She was soon a popular court poet and a professional woman of letters, writing partly from pleasure, partly from necessity. Her earliest poetic themes speak of the sorrow and misery of widowhood, but she alters this personal style with time to please her princely patrons. Christine expands to more conventional subjects, such as the pleasures and dangers of love, the joys of spring, and the caprices of fortune.<sup>25</sup> After a decade, she turns from romantic verse to long allegorical poetry, and finally to didactic works in prose. Christine wrote on so many diverse topics during the period of 1390-1429 she has even been called a "polyscribator."<sup>26</sup> A brief survey of her over forty works in poetry and prose below demonstrates the great range and versatility she attained both as a writer and a scholar. She took latin prose as her model for her biographies, autobiographies, appeals for peace, mirrors for the princess as well as the prince, military treatises and pleas for the recognition of women's

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<sup>25</sup>Gottlieb, p. 349.

<sup>26</sup>Richards, Intro. The Book of the City of Ladies, xxi.

contribution to culture.<sup>27</sup>

The unceasing support and favor Christine received from a wide assortment of patrons indicates she was taken seriously as a writer. Her books were in demand in courts throughout Europe, and Christine received offers to join both the court of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan, and King Henry IV of England. Christine is the first to acknowledge that a portion of her popularity was due to her novelty as a woman writer.<sup>28</sup>

A brief perusal of some of the major works of Christine de Pizan listed and discussed below reveals the breadth of knowledge and capabilities she brought as both an writer and scholar to her defense and instruction of women in the La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames.

#### POETIC WORKS

1. Cent ballads, virelays, rondeaux (One Hundred Ballads). 1390-1400. Short lyrical compositions on love

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<sup>27</sup>Christine preferred the complicated periodic syntax of latin prose as a model for her own writing in French. In her own time this was a hallmark of stylistic refinement, but makes her difficult for the modern French reader. For an analysis of Christine's scholarly language see Richards, xxii and L. Gay "On the Language of Christine de Pisan" Modern Philology 6 (1908) pp. 69-96.

<sup>28</sup>Christine, A vision-Christine, 164-166

and its loss are the themes of her early poems.<sup>29</sup>

2. L'Epistre au dieu d'Amours (Letter to the God of Love). 1399. Written in May, the ladies in this poem complain to Cupid about the negative depictions of women in the popular poetic works of Ovid moralisé and Jean de Meung, author of the final half of the Roman de la Rose, which was probably the most popular literary work of the Middle Ages. Christine's L'Epistre au dieu d'Amours, translated into English as early as 1403, is one of the earliest contributions to the most celebrated literary controversy of the Middle Ages, the "Quarrel of the Rose".<sup>30</sup> Many scholars believe Christine initiated this famous debate, for she even collected the letters exchanged during the "Quarrel" and had them bound.<sup>31</sup>

3. Le Debat de deux amans (The Debate of Two Lovers). c.1400. This work is dedicated to Louis of Orleans, a

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<sup>29</sup>Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pizan, ed. M. Roy (Paris: 1886-1891) 1.

<sup>30</sup>T. Hoccleve, The Letter of Cupid, in The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, (Oxford: 1897) pp. 217-232. This translation should be read with caution, as D. Bornstein advises in "Anti-Feminism in Thomas Hoccleve's Translation of Christine de Pizan's Epistre au dieu d'amours", English Language Notes XIX (1981) pp. 7-14.

<sup>31</sup>See C. Willard, "Christine de Pizan and the Order of the Rose" in Ideals for Women, pp. 51-65 and Bornstein Lady pp. 10-11. The letters can be found in M. Roy, II, pp. 1-27.

favorite patron of Christine. Two young men, one happy and one unhappy in love debate their views with Christine.<sup>32</sup>

4. Le Livre du dit de Poissy (The Book of Poem Poissy). 1400. An idyllic spring visit made by Christine and noble friends to the Convent of Poissy is described in this poem. Here her daughter and various aristocratic women of France lived quite comfortably, and Christine eventually retires to this Convent after 1418. The poem is dedicated to Jean de Werchin, the seneschal of Hainault.<sup>33</sup>

5. Le Livre des trois jugements (The Book of the Three Judgments). 1402. Also dedicated to the French knight Jean de Werchin, three varied love problems are submitted to the seneschal for his arbitration.<sup>34</sup>

6. Le dit de la rose (The Poem of the Rose). 1402. Describing an elaborate charade held on St. Valentine's Day in 1402, this becomes a tribute to the Burgundian Court of Love. The goddess "Loyaute" appears, sent by the God of Love to found the Order of the Rose, dedicated to reward those knights who defend the honor of women.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp.99-109.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., II, pp. 159-222.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 111-157.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. pp. 29-48. For an interesting discussion on this poem and its feminist implications, see Willard "Order of the Rose", in Ideals for Women.

7. Enseignemens and Proverbes moraux (Teachings and Moral Proverbs). c.1400. Written for Christine's son Jean de Castel these short essays aim to teach ethics to a young man. Moral Proverbs was very popular in England (where her son was living at the time it was written) and Anthony Wydeville, Earl of Rivers, translated the text into English in 1477, printed in 1478 by William Caxton.<sup>36</sup>

8. Le dit de la pastoure (Pastoral Poem). 1403. This courtly love poem describes the affection of an enamored shepherdess for a nobleman. The theme of the dangers of chivalry and its so-called "platonic" expression of love, treated pragmatically in Le trésor de la cité des dames, are detailed here in lyric, narrative form.<sup>37</sup>

9. Le Livre du chemin de long study. (The Road of Long Study). 1403-1403. Dedicated to King Charles VI and the princes of the fleur de lis, this long allegorical dream-poem transports Christine, led by the Cumaean sibyl, to a lofty, perfect world. Christine's familiarity and understanding of Dante's Divine Comedy, Boethius' The Consolation of Philosophy, John of Salisbury's Policraticus and John Mandeville's Travels is demonstrated in this

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid. pp. 223-294.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 223-294.

personal and revealing work.<sup>38</sup>

10. Le livre de la mutacion de fortune (The Book of the Changes of Fortune). 1400-1403. This poetic essay grapples with the theme of fate and universal history, and is considered to be the most important of Christine's poetic works. Here, as in so many of her writings, Christine plays the dual role of author and protagonist. Divided into seven parts each describing the caprices of Fortune in her own life and the lives of others in history, Christine discusses such diverse topics as the recent death of Henry II of England, the Great Schism of the Church, the battle of the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Italy, the Fall of Jerusalem, the Amazons, the History of Troy and more. Christine pays particular attention to the women involved in these historical events, and mentions many of her prestigious patrons including King Charles V, Dukes of Berry and Burgundy and Louis of Orleans.<sup>39</sup>

11. Le livre du duc des vrais amans (The Book of the Duke of True Lovers). 1403. A love affair between an anonymous duke and a married princess as told to Christine is described in this piece. The letter of advice and

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<sup>38</sup>Harley 4431, British Library, London, and P.B. Eargle "An Edition of Christine de Pisan's Livre du chemin de loc estude", Ph.D. DAI XXXIV (1973-74) 5167A.

<sup>39</sup>Paris, BN MSS. fr. 603 & 604, See modern edition by S. Solente, Livre de la mutacion de Fortune.

warning from the governess to her young mistress about this dangerous liaison appearing in this poem was deemed so important by Christine that she repeats it in Le trésor de la cité des dames.<sup>40</sup>

12. Religious Poems: L'oroyson Nostre Dame (Prayer to Our Lady) 1402-3<sup>41</sup>; Les quinze joyes Nostre Dame (The Five Joys of Our Lady) 1403-140<sup>42</sup>; Une Oroyson de Norstre Seigneur (A Prayer to Our Lord). 1403.<sup>43</sup>

13. Ditie de Jehanne d'Arc (Hymn to Joan of Arc). 1429. Christine's last written work is her poem to Joan of Arc, the only contemporary tribute to the French heroine and saint, and it is also the only document to her achievements outside of the trial records written during her life. The hymn was composed after Joan's victory at Orleans and the coronation of Charles VII. Christine wrote this piece after nearly eleven years in silence of retirement at the Convent of Poissy, and it repeats and exemplifies the major themes of Christine's literary career: the dignity of women, good government, and peace.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>A. Kemp-Welch, The Book of the Duke of True Lovers (London: 1908).

<sup>41</sup>J. For a fine English translation see Misrahi and Marks, L'Oroyson Nostre Dame (New York: 1953).

<sup>42</sup>Roy III, pp. 1-7.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-26.

<sup>44</sup>Berne, Municipal Library, MS 205.

## PROSE WORKS

1. Epistre Othea (Letter from Othea). 1400. This is probably Christine's most popular work, certainly the most richly illustrated, written in the form of a letter of advice to Hector of Troy. It survives in forty-eight extant manuscripts from the period, in addition to several English translations.<sup>45</sup> Consisting of both poetic and prose parts, it is extremely important for understanding the relationship between text and illumination in Christine's manuscript production. Dedicated to Louis of Orleans, Christine had sumptuous manuscripts, several with 101 miniatures, prepared and given to Jean of Berry, Philip the Bold and Queen Isabelle of France.

2. Le Livre des feats bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V (The Book of the Deeds and Good Customs of the Wise King Charles V). 1404. This biography (actually more of a panegyric) was commissioned by the King's brother, Philip the Bold. It is a unique, first-hand account taken from interviews of those who lived and worked under the king, including Christine's father and other court

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<sup>45</sup>Harley 4431, B.L., London. For the most recent and exhaustive study on this manuscript and its miniatures see Sandra Hindman's Epistre Othea.

officials and friends.<sup>46</sup>

3. Epistres sur le Roman de la Rose (Letters on the Debate of the Romance of the Rose). 1401-1403. Christine played a critical role in one of the first literary quarrels of its kind. The Roman de la Rose is a long allegorical poem recounting the seduction of a lady, represented by a rose, and guarded by Danger and Jealousy, personified by ugly old women. The first half of the poem was written by Guillaume de Lorris in 1230 to be finished fifty years later by Jean de Meung in 1280. Christine objected not only to the immorality of the piece, but to the misogynist views of women presented by Jean de Meung. Whether Christine initiated the "Quarrel" is uncertain, but her contribution to the exchange of letters makes her the first medieval woman to publicly champion her sex. Christine had powerful allies on her side of the debate; Jean Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris; Guillaume de Tignonville, the provost of Paris, and Marshal Jean le Mangre. The Defenders of the Rose were Jean Montreuil, provost of Lille; Gontier Gol, royal secretary and his brother Pierre Gol, canon of Paris.<sup>47</sup> Twenty

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<sup>46</sup>For a modern edition of this work see S. Solente, ed. Le Livre des fais et bonnes meures du sage roy Charles V par Christine de Pisan. 2 (Paris: 1936-1940).

<sup>47</sup>S. Lawson, Intro. The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 21.

treatises and letters were exchanged on this topic for three years, and Christine, its largest contributor, had the exchange of letters bound.<sup>48</sup>

4. La cité des dames (The City of Ladies). 1404.

This book is often considered to represent Christine's final statement on her position in the "Quarrel". A three part allegorical and didactic work, the text praises the virtues of women of the past and present, recounting their contribution to western culture. Taking the form of a dream-poem, three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, appear to Christine and help her build a utopia for women. Its content and structure is discussed at length in the following chapter.<sup>49</sup>

5. Le trésor de la cité des dames (The Treasure of the City of Ladies) also called Le Livre de trois vertus (The Book of the Three Virtues). 1404-1405. A continuation of La cité des dames, the three virtues return to Christine in this book, asking her to set up a college for women, presided over by Dame Virtue. Often called a courtesy book for women, this work can best be described as gritty,

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<sup>48</sup>Gottlieb, p. 343-347. For a full account of the debate see C. Ward. The Epistles on the Romance of the Rose and other documents in the Debate. (Chicago: 1911) and the most recent comprehensive study, E. Hicks Le D}bat sur le Romance de la Rose (Paris: 1977).

<sup>49</sup>The modern English edition of this work is that used in the present study, by Richards, The Book of the City of Ladies.

realistic survival manual for women. The lectures are full of delightful glimpses into the life and concerns of medieval women, told by Christine with frankness and humor. It is also a "Mirror for the Princess" delineating the education and obligations of the ideal female ruler. The significance of this work lies in its sheer comprehension and all-inclusiveness, addressing each class of woman from queen to peasant. Its three part structure and content are the subject of the second half of Chapter Two.<sup>50</sup>

6. Avision-Christine. (Christine's Vision). 1405. This is the most valuable source for biographical information of Christine's life. It is a complex dream-journey of Christine's where she meets and confides in a variety of allegorical personages such as Libera, Dame Opinion, Dame Philosophy and others.<sup>51</sup>

7. Epistre a la reine de France (Letter to the Queen of France). October 5, 1405. This letter directs the French Queen to solve the discord between the royal family in order to avoid impending civil war.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>The first english translation of this text is by Sarah Lawson, The Treasure of the City of Ladies.

<sup>51</sup>For a modern edition of this work see Sister Mary Louise Towner, ed. Lavision-Christine (1932; rpt. New York: 1969).

<sup>52</sup>For a reproduction of this letter see "An Epistle to the Queen of France" trans. Wisman, Christine de Pizan, pp. 76-83.

8. Le Livre de prudence a enseignemens de bien vivre  
(The Book of Prudence and Teachings for a Good Life).

1405-6. This work exists in two editions, dedicated to Louis of Orleans. It summarizes a conversation Christine had with Louis on the moral virtues of man and woman.<sup>53</sup>

9. Le Livre du corps de policie (The Book of the Body of Policy). 1406-1407. Written for the young dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, this Mirror for the Prince can be viewed as a companion piece to Le trésor de la cité des dames. Inspired by John of Salisbury's Polycraticus, it is divided into three parts, the first directed to the prince, the second to his knights and nobles, the third to the common people, duplicating the format Christine used earlier in Le trésor.<sup>54</sup>

10. Sept psaumes allegorisés (Seven Allegorical Psalms). 1409-10. Commissioned by Charles the Noble, King of Navarre, this lengthy prayer is based on the seven penitential psalms. It was also presented to Jean of Berry.<sup>55</sup>

11. Le Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie (The

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<sup>53</sup>London, BL Harley 4431.

<sup>54</sup>For a modern edition of this work see R.H. Lucas, ed. The Livre du corps se policie of Christine de Pisan:A Critical Edition. (Geneva: 1967).

<sup>55</sup>For more on this text see R.R. Rains, Les Sept Psaumes allegorisés of Christine de Pisan:A Critical Edition. (Washington D.C.: 1965).

Book of Feats of Arms and Chivalry). 1410. This treatise on the art of warfare is compiled extensively from Jean de Vignai's translation of Vegetius' De re militari.<sup>56</sup> In 1488 Antoine Vérard produced a printed version of this text, omitting Christine's name, presumably finding it difficult to believe a treatise on warfare could have been written by a woman.<sup>57</sup>

12. Lamentation sur les maux de la guerre civile (Lament on the Evils of Civil War). August 23, 1410. Written after the collapse of the peace of Chartres in 1409, this is a moving appeal to those in power describing the death and ruin resulting from civil war.<sup>58</sup>

13. Le Livre de la paix (The Book of Peace). 1412-13. Christine began writing this behavioral guidebook for the Dauphin one week after the signing of the peace of Auxerre. Renewed hostilities, however, delayed its completion. As with many of her other works, she presented it to Jean, Duke of Berry, as a New Year's gift in 1419. It relies heavily on her own Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V Charles V, Brunetto Latini's Livre du

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<sup>56</sup>Richards, xxvi.

<sup>57</sup>First translated and printed into English in 1489 by William Caxton in 1489.

<sup>58</sup>Wisman, Christine de Pizan, pp. 84-95

trésor among others.<sup>59</sup>

14. L'Epistre de la prison de vie humaine (Letter of the Prison of Human Life). 1416-18. A letter addressed to Marie of Berry to console her for the recent imprisonment and death of so many of her family as a result of the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.<sup>60</sup>

15. Heures de contemplacion sur la Passion de Nostre Seigneur (Hours in Contemplation of the Passion of Our Lord). c. 1420. A translation of the Passion from the latin, this is a short religious work consoling women stricken by the misfortunes of war. Christine wrote this from the Convent of Poissy during her retirement after the humiliating Treaty of Troyes in 1420 with England.<sup>61</sup>

The courage of Christine de Pizan to master topics as diverse as religion, warfare, courtly love, and the education of the princess demonstrates not only her medieval sense of breadth and all-inclusiveness, but the innovative daring so often associated with the thinkers of the Renaissance. Christine's greatest period of literary production occurs during the first two decades of the

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<sup>59</sup>For a modern addition of this work see Willard's The Livre de la paix of Christine de Pizan: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes. (The Hague: 1958).

<sup>60</sup>See Wisman, Christine de Pizan, pp. 3-69, for a modern english translation.

<sup>61</sup>Paris, BN, MS. Nouv. acq. fr. 10059, fols. 114-145.

fifteenth-century. The list of her prestigious patrons and the brief perusal of her writings furnishes the us with some sense of her immense contribution to the intellectual currents of the age. Christine was a highly respected and widely disseminated voice on the most important issues of her day, and she held the ear of the era's most principal players. Her writings display a dedication to the theme of peace, the good government of her adopted country, and her defense of women. Today it is her earnest effort to demonstrate that women possess natural affinities for all areas of culture, politics and science that elicits our admiration. As Diane Bornstein writes "In the works of Christine, we can see how an intelligent, educated woman responded to the feminine ideal of her time, mainly a creation of the male establishment."<sup>62</sup> Christine was the first woman to write on issues in the vernacular pertaining to women. She insisted that women have access to scholarly study in her educational plan for women of all classes in Le trésor de la cité des dames. These two factors alone make her revolutionary. "Her attitude was profoundly feminist" says Earl Jeffrey Richards, "in that it involved a complete dedication to the betterment of women's lives and to the alleviation of their suffering."<sup>63</sup> Feminism is

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<sup>62</sup>Bornstein, The Lady, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup>Richards, xxviii.

rarely far from her work and thought.

At the height of Christine's literary career France was plunged into a disastrous civil war. Her literary patrons were assassinated, killed, or imprisoned. Christine retired to the safety of the Convent at Poissy to join her daughter for the remainder of her days. She wrote a few short prayers, but for the most part from 1418 to 1429 her pen was silent. In 1429 she emerged from her retirement, enthused by the Maid from Orleans, Joan of Arc, writing Joan a hymn of praise, the very first to honor this contemporary warrior-saint:

O blessed be He  
That lent thee life! - how word my grateful prayer?  
No prayer of thine was spoken fruitlessly,  
O Maid of God, O Joan, O Virgin rare...  
Honor to womankind!  
It needs must be  
That God loves woman, since he fashioned thee.<sup>64</sup>

Although the exact date of Christine's death is unknown it is likely she died early in 1430, before Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431 by those men who interpreted such heroism as witchcraft. It is doubtful that Christine would have allowed her heroine's execution to go without remark.<sup>65</sup> Her last poem to Joan of Arc, as well as the writings of this study, La cité des dames and

<sup>64</sup>A. Kemp-Welch, trans. in Of Six Medieval Women (London: 1913) p. 146.

<sup>65</sup>Bornstein, "Self Consciousness," p. 25.

Le trésor de la cité des dames, exhibit Christine's desperate desire to spiritualize the distress and melancholy she believed to be the permanent temptations of the lonely woman, be she princess, amazon, field laborer or scholar.



1-2 Christine de Pizan, writing; Oeuvres, London, BL  
Harley 4431, f. 4, 1410-15, Epistre Master.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE MEANING OF THE TEXTS:

#### La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames

How did women think about themselves in the fifteenth-century? Christine de Pizan gives us one woman's view, colored by her honored position as a court poet, yet most importantly, Christine's is the first female voice to be heard on the topic, and La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames are her strongest statements on the contributions of women to the history of western civilization. Both books were written in quick succession between 1404 and 1405, intended to be viewed as "sister" or "companion" texts by Christine. The narrative action in Le trésor de la cité des dames begins where La cité des dames ends, with the exhausted narrator-protagonist Christine pleading to rest after her long literary labors "building" her City. The purpose of each book, as discussed in the following pages, is quite different. La cité is a universal history of women told by collecting the biographies of various women in history and grouping them together thematically rather than chronologically. Le trésor, however, is an educational and behavioral treatise for women consisting of a series of lectures and discussions held between Christine and her personal muses, the three virtues, for the edification of all females.

Structured in three parts, La cité des dames describes

a feminine utopia, ruled by the Virgin Mary and populated by virtuous women in history, both Christian and pagan. Christine discusses the merits and contributions of the female sex with three allegorical personages: Reason, Rectitude and Justice. The deeds of illustrious women through out history bringing honor to their sex are recounted; Ladies of military, political, intellectual and moral merit in Part One, pious, faithful, visionary and loving women in Part Two, and finally martyred and saintly Christian women in Part Three. La cité des dames survives in twenty-seven extant manuscripts, and one printed edition in English from the early sixteenth-century.<sup>1</sup>

Le trésor de la cité des dames belongs to a very different literary tradition, that of the behavioral guidebook, having a practical, serious, didactic purpose: to help women meet the challenges and temptations of their daily lives. It is one of the earliest examples of Renaissance literature having as its aim the formation of the perfect prince - or in this case, princess.<sup>2</sup> Also organized in three parts, Part One advises queens,

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<sup>1</sup>For a complete list of all the extant manuscripts of The City, with and without miniatures, see A. Kennedy, Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide (London: 1984), p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>C. Willard, "Christine de Pizan's "Livre des trois vertus: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?" in Ideals for Women (Detroit: 1981), p. 113.

princesses and noblewomen, Part Two addresses the roles and duties of the women of the court and the aristocracy in general, and Part Three speaks to working women; merchants, laborers and servants. Le trésor survives in twenty-one extant manuscripts, and three early printed editions, enjoying a far wider distribution across Europe than its sister text La cité des dames.<sup>3</sup>

#### La cité des dames

This work belongs to a specific literary genre, that of the universal history, in this case devoted to the deeds and contributions of women to history. Boccaccio wrote the first collection of women's biographies, between 1355 and 1359, including over 104 lives. He boasts of this novel accomplishment in the preface of De Claris Mulieribus:

"...I have been quite astonished that women have had so little attention from writers of this sort that they have gained no recognition in any work devoted especially to them, although it can clearly be seen in the more voluminous histories that women have acted with as much strength as valor. If men should be praised whenever they preform great deeds (with the strength which Nature has given them), how much more should women be extolled (almost all of whom are endowed with tenderness, frail bodies, and sluggish minds by nature), if they have acquired a manly spirit

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<sup>3</sup>Kennedy lists the extant manuscripts, p. 107.

and if with keen intelligence and remarkable fortitude they have dared undertake and have accomplished even the most difficult deeds?"<sup>4</sup>

La cité des dames is a refutation of Boccaccio's patronizing sentiment, for Christine uses his book only as a starting point for her own version of the history of women. Her text differs from Boccaccio's in a multitude of ways. Boccaccio limits his discussion almost exclusively to the deeds of pagan women, whereas Christine includes references to pagan, Christian, and historical figures up to and including those of her own day. Even the title of Christine's book is carefully chosen. La cité des dames makes obvious reference to St. Augustine's important work De Civitate Dei written in the fifth century. By juxtaposing these two cities Christine places her political vision into a Christian tradition of political philosophy. Yet Christine transforms the peaceful notion of civitas of Augustine into a more militant image of a fortress, designed to protect and ward off attackers. The purpose of La cité is described by Reason, the first virtue to speak, as one of defense:

"...so that from now on all valiant women may have a refuge and defense against the various assailants, those ladies who have been abandoned for so long, exposed like a field without a

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<sup>4</sup>All quotations from Giovanni Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus in the present study are from G. Guarino's English translation, entitled Concerning Famous Women, (New Brunswick: 1963), xxxvii.

surrounding hedge, without finding a champion to afford them adequate defense, notwithstanding those noble men who are required by order of law to protect them, who by negligence and apathy have allowed them to be mistreated ."<sup>5</sup>

Christine Reno argues convincingly that Christine de Pizan's creation of a fortified city alludes to the castle in found in the Roman de la Rose. Jean de Meung's castle is a fragile one, offering no resistance or protection for the "rose" or woman from the hero's "lover's staff" in this thinly veiled sexual allegory. Christine builds her city with high walls and battlements to protect, sustain and nurture the feminine from all such harmful sieges.<sup>6</sup>

Additional enlightenment on the meaning of the title of Livre de la cité des dames is found in the choice of the word dames rather than femme. The english translation is The Book of the City of Ladies, not The Book of The City of Women, proclaiming a kingdom honoring not solely women, but the very merits accompanying the feminine principle. Christine invests the term dames or ladies with "the nobility of the soul rather than the nobility of the blood", referring to those who have proven their worth through achievement. The path Christine offers urges women

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<sup>5</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 10. For more on the significance of the fortress see C. Reno "Virginity as an Ideal in Christine de Pizan's The City of Ladies" in Ideals for Women, pp. 69-90.

<sup>6</sup>Reno, p. 80.

to "find a place in La cité des dames by realizing their feminine potential".<sup>7</sup> Disturbed by the low opinion of women held by most of the authors of antiquity and her own day (from Ovid to Cecco d'Ascoli)<sup>8</sup> Christine makes a revolutionary suggestion:

They all concur in one conclusion: that the behavior of women is inclined to and full of every vice. Thinking deeply about these matters, I began to examine my character and conduct as a natural woman and, similarly, I considered other women whose company I frequently kept, princesses, great ladies, women of the middle and lower classes who had graciously told me of their most private and intimate thoughts, hoping that I could judge impartially and in good conscience whether the testimony of so many notable men could be true. To the best of my knowledge, no matter how long I confronted or dissected the problem, I could not see or realize how their claims could be true when compared to the natural behavior and character of women."<sup>9</sup>

La cité des dames becomes Christine's pivotal and moving response to her defense of women begun in 1398 with the "Quarrel of the Roman de la Rose". The biographies meticulously compiled and arranged by Christine into carefully selected thematic groupings in La cité are designed to act as proof of the virtue and honor due to women. Later, in Le trésor de la cité des dames Christine advises women on how to become useful and virtuous citizens

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<sup>7</sup>Richards, intro. The Book of the City of Ladies, xxx.

<sup>8</sup>Discussed in Chapters One, Two and Eight through Ten of Part One of The Book of the City of Ladies.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

worthy of citizenship in her "Kingdom of Femininity".

In La cité des dames Christine uses the standard literary convention of supporting her argument through the citation of examples and opinions from prestigious authorities of the past as a point of departure, or support, for an impending discussion. The use of this traditional and time-honored format allows Christine to fuel her purpose, raising the low opinion of women held by men and women alike her day, by bringing to life the deeds of virtuous and courageous women neglected or maligned by history.<sup>10</sup> Like many Italian humanists, Christine hoped to advance a cause dear to her heart by adducing ancient precedents.<sup>11</sup> The allegorical figures appearing to Christine in Part One are more secular and rational than those of other medieval French writers, suggesting the Olympian deities of the Renaissance.<sup>12</sup>

As previously mentioned, Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus is the only major literary work treating women's

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<sup>10</sup>M. Warner, Forew., The City of Ladies, XV.

<sup>11</sup>M. Meiss, French Painting at the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and Their Contemporaries, (New York: Braziller, 1974) p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>M. Laigle, Le Livre des trois vertus de Christine de Pisan et son milieu historique et littéraire (Paris: 1912), p. 8.

history written before La cité des dames.<sup>13</sup> This work was available to Christine in both Latin and French.<sup>14</sup> Nearly three-quarters of the biographies Christine uses are also found in Boccaccio, but she is intentionally un-faithful to her source. Christine quotes Boccaccio by name liberally throughout La cité, and peoples her utopia with many of the same classical heroines found in his work, now drawn in a more positive light. Both Christine and Boccaccio approach the same subject, the deeds of women in history, from widely different perspectives. Few scholars have discussed how profoundly Christine reworks Boccaccio. Susan Groag Bell writes "Boccaccio aimed to amuse, while Christine was entirely serious."<sup>15</sup> Christine excludes the lascivious material Boccaccio so delighted in, and seeks alternate source material to fully develop the lives of her heroines. Sometimes she contradicts Boccaccio based solely on her own opinion, as in the case of the ancient scholar Cornificia.<sup>16</sup> Most importantly, while Christine praises

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<sup>13</sup>Hesiod wrote a Catalogue of Women which does not survive, except through other literary references of the period.

<sup>14</sup>A. Jeanroy, "Boccace et Christine de Pisan, Le De claris mulieribus, principale source du Livre de la Cité des Dame," Romania 48 (1922) 92-105.

<sup>15</sup>"Christine de Pizan: Humanism and the Problems of a Studious Woman", Feminist Studies III (1976) p. 175.

<sup>16</sup>Christine, The City of Ladies, pp. 64-65, Boccaccio, p. 188.

women's intellectual pursuits in La cité des dames, she does not belittle "women's work" as does Boccaccio. Although she was anxious to persuade her readers, through historic examples, that women could be competent scientists, doctors, poets, scholars and rulers, she continuously praised women who contributed to the world in more traditionally feminine ways. The loving care of daughters for their parents, the invention of spinning, dying and weaving wool, or making silk, women's faithfulness in love and their many charitable acts are celebrated throughout her text.<sup>17</sup> Christine utilizes other sources when she finds Boccaccio's work inadequate or detrimental to her purpose. Her main source for the portrayal of the Amazons, for example, is Histoire ancienne, particularly the story of Sinope.<sup>18</sup> Christine, like Boccaccio, treats the stories of mythological figures as if they were once living individuals whose great feats

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<sup>17</sup>See Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, for an example of a loving daughter the tale of Drypetina is told on p. 113, and courageous Camilla on pp. 60-61; contributions in the invention of textile weaving are credited to Arachne p. 81 and Pamphile p. 83, examples of faithful women include Griselda p. 170, Dido p. 185 and Busa p. 210.

<sup>18</sup>Reno, "Virginité", p. 75. Christine had access to French translations of Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César through the library of the Duke of Berry, many copiously illustrated; Paris BN MS fr. 301 and London BL Royal MS 20 D I. For more on the versions of this text available to Christine see P. Meyer "Les Premières compilations françaises d'histoire ancienne," Romania 14 (1885) 36-81.

caused their deeds and associations to become God-like with time and the telling.<sup>19</sup>

Christine's departure from Boccaccio is evident in the structure of her history. She does not just list each story as he does, but integrates it into a series of dialogues with the Virtues, in which Christine herself takes part. This format allows Christine to raise questions which challenge traditional ideas about the power and worth of women through the citation of the biographies of various heroines, and to refute misconceptions about women held by ancient and prestigious authorities on the diverse subjects, including that of constancy in love, intellectual and inventive abilities, generosity, morality, the capability of governing and the motives underlying the act of rape. Christine includes herself as narrator and protagonist, constituting another radical departure from Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus, the source she is charged with having borrowed from too liberally.

#### PROLOGUE

The framework of Christine's dream vision begins with her emersion in dark revery caused by reading the Liber de in fortunis suis by Matheolus, an attack on the feminine

<sup>19</sup>This method of reasoning was first established by St. Augustine in his De Civitate Dei, a work both Boccaccio and Christine knew and praised. Augustine: 7.18.

sex written in the tenth century. Overwhelmed with melancholy, Christine writes:

Like a gushing fountain, a series of authorities, whom I recalled one after another, came to mind, along with their opinions on this topic. And I finally decided that God had formed a vile creature when He made woman, and I wondered how such a worthy artisan could have deigned to make such an abominable work which, from what they say, is the vessel as well as the refuge and abode of every evil and vice. And as I was thinking this, a great unhappiness and sadness welled up in my heart, for I detested myself and the entire feminine sex, as though we were monstrosities in nature.<sup>20</sup>

She writes in this passage of her denial of her own experience and perception, which contradicted the universal application of these faults in herself or most of the women she encountered. "I relied more on the judgment of others than on what I myself felt and knew." After much time in sad reflection she writes "in my folly I considered myself most unfortunate because God made me inhabit a female body in this world."<sup>21</sup> Christine's portrayal of herself as frail and insecure is certainly odd for a mature woman who had already attained quite a reputation as a writer, intellectual and a defender of women. Such an intentionally timid self portrait, writes Diane Bornstein, "would have amused Christine's audience" of sophisticated patrons fully aware of her capabilities.<sup>22</sup> Although

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<sup>20</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 4 & 5.

<sup>22</sup>Bornstein, The Lady, p. 88.

undoubtedly her moving description of her depression is drawn from her own feeling and experience, she utilizes it in this format as a fruitful dramatic device.

At this moment of despair, head bowed and eyes full of tears, three crowned ladies appear before her on a ray of light. They address Christine as "daughter" and reveal their purpose:

to bring you out of the ignorance which so blinds your own intellect that you shun what you know for a certainty and believe what you do not know or see or recognize except by virtue of many strange opinions.<sup>23</sup>

The self-confidence and knowledge Christine as the protagonist-narrator seems to lack are expressed instead through the vehicle of her three virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice.

Christine's three Virtues are quite different from the three theological virtues Faith, Hope and Charity, and have only an indirect relationship to the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance and Justice of Martin of Braga's De quatuor virtutibus, a text Christine knew well.<sup>24</sup> Each virtue holds an attribute: Reason the mirror, a vehicle of self-knowledge, Rectitude a ruler, and Justice a measuring vessel. Charity Cannon Willard

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<sup>23</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>Willard, "Ideal or Practical?", in Ideals for Women, p. 94.

believes the inspiration for Christine's "Reason" comes from Jean de Meung's Dame Reason in the Roman de la Rose. In the literary quarrel over this work between Christine and her opponents, the subject of Reason figured largely in a debate on the freedom of language and literature.<sup>25</sup> Christine's Justice hold the vessel, an attribute of the female, not the sword or scales tradition associated with this figure.<sup>26</sup> Rectitude is such a rare allegorical figure many thought she was Christine's own creation.<sup>27</sup> Rectitude holds a straight ruler, to separate right from wrong, a "rod of piece" supporting good, striking evil.<sup>28</sup>

Christine, together with the three virtues, builds a city, its foundation and walls comprised of "bricks", each representing the life of a meritorious woman, all held together and given form by the "mortar" of Christine's ink.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 93

<sup>26</sup>J. Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art (New York: rev. ed. 1979), p. 183.

<sup>27</sup>It makes a brief appearance in Philippe de Méziér's Songe du vieil pelerin, in a passage on the value of Astrology. See C.C. Willard, "The Astrologer's Daughter", p. 94; and Philippe de Mézières, Le Songe du vieil pelerin, (Cambridge: 1969).

<sup>28</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 13.

## PART ONE

Christine and Reason build the foundation of the City by first clearing away the useless rocks and stones littering the field, metaphors for the false beliefs about women held by many ancient and contemporaneous male writers; Cato, Ovid and Cecco d' Ascoli, as well as Mathéolus are singled out.<sup>29</sup> Once this debilitating debris is cleared away, the real labor begins. A new foundation is laid, and an outer fortification wall begins to rise, each brick of this section is composed of women who excelled in government, warfare, learning and the arts. In Chapters Eighteen through Twenty-six of Part One ladies of political and military merit are introduced. The story of Nicaula, Empress of Ethiopia is told, and Christine excitedly interjects a number of French heroines deserving of mention; Fredegund, an early Queen of France, Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis of France, Queen Jeanne, the widow of King Charles IV, and even the wives of her current patrons are included; the Duchess of Orleans, the Duchess of Anjou, the Countess La Marche, Lady and Countess of Vendome and Castres. At this point Reason speaks of many French women who have "governed themselves and their jurisdictions with fairness and justice."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 17 & 30.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. p. 35.

In her portrait of the early medieval French Queen Fredegund Christine feels free to modify history. Queen Fredegund plotted the assassination of many, including the wife of the King Chilperic in order that she might marry him herself. Christine includes no mention of such cruelty in her recitation of the tale, choosing to emphasize Fredegund's merits as a wise ruler and military strategist.<sup>31</sup> With Queen Blanche, on the contrary, Christine is free to relate her blemish-free history with no editing. Pious, moral, and powerful, Queen Blanche led an exemplary life, putting down rebellions peacefully and diplomatically to secure the throne for her son Louis, while he was imprisoned in the Holy Land.

For the tale of Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, Christine relies heavily on Boccaccio's account in De Claris Mulieribus.<sup>32</sup> This ancient queen led armies to establish an empire while her son was too young to rule. She dressed as a man, until one day, while her maids had only half finished braiding her long hair, news of a rebellion reached Semiramis. She vows the other half of her hair will not be braided until she has vanquished her enemies.

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<sup>31</sup>For more on Queen Fredegund's history see Francis & Joseph Gies, Women in the Middle Ages, (New York) p. 22. See London, BL Add. 20698 fol. 35v for Fredegund before her rebellious nobles.(fig. 6-33)

<sup>32</sup>Boccaccio, pp. 4-7; Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 38-40.

Boccaccio luxuriates upon the lustful nature of this Assyrian queen, describing in detail her "unnatural" desire for her own son. Christine handles the matter with her usual tact and delicacy as follows:

It is quite true that many people reproach her - and if she had lived under our law, rightfully so - because she took as a husband a son she had with Ninus her Lord.<sup>33</sup>

Christine dismisses the act as occurring during a time when individuals acted according to the laws of Nature, for there was no written law. Christine proclaims her certainty that if Semiramus had believed such an act was evil she never would have done it, being of such a noble and honorable nature.

Christine devotes the greater portion of Part One to the civilization of the Amazons and its warrior queens. Their ability to build and govern and protect themselves without masculine aid made their legend a natural model for her own allegorical utopia. She uses whatever version of the legend she has at hand that allows her to portray the acts and deeds of the Amazons in a positive light - be it Ovid, Boccaccio or Histoire ancienne - and even then, Christine embroiders without hesitation. Her description

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<sup>33</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 40. For more on the different treatment of the tale of Semiramis by Boccaccio and Christine see L. Dulac, "Un mythe didactique chez Christine de Pizan: Sémiramis ou la Veuve héroïque", Mélanges de Philologie Romane offerts à Charles Camproux I (Montpellier:1978), pp. 315-331.

of the first Amazon queens Marpasia and Lampheto is drawn heavily from Boccaccio. Christine ignores his bloodthirsty account of their rise to power through the murder of fathers, husbands, sons and brothers. Instead she claims these first queens realized the feminization of Amazon society by banishing all remaining males after a devastating battle with another nation, then learning to govern themselves.<sup>34</sup> In relating the stories of all nine amazon queens Christine is steadfast in emphasizing that their abilities as rulers and warriors stems in part from their chastity and virginity.<sup>35</sup> Virginity is valued by Christine not out of maidenly purity, but because it frees women from the dominion of men. Virginity is linked with strength, distinction and fame, and allows women to transcend their traditional obligations of caring for husband and child. As Diane Bornstein writes "For Christine, the main point is not whether a woman has kept her maidenhead, but whether she practices chastity."<sup>36</sup>

Her portrayal of Sinope is drawn from Histoire ancienne, although Christine highlights Sinope's virginity and military prowess through her choice of language. She

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<sup>34</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p 40. See also C. Reno, "Virginity", p. 72.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 69-90.

<sup>36</sup>Bornstein, The Lady, p. 28.

uses nearly identical phrases to describe the chaste lives of Sinope and the more famous Amazon queen, Penthesilea who "had such a great and lofty heart that not for a day did she deign to couple with a man, but remained a virgin her entire life".<sup>37</sup> Christine turns to Histoire ancienne for her recitation of Penthesilea's tale, finding Boccaccio's description of her admiration far too lustful for this mighty heroine. She describes Penthesilea's dedication to Hector of Troy as one of the honor of equals and fellow soldiers-at-arms. Penthesilea arrives at Troy too late to fight at Hector's side, but honors him with a speech extolling his chivalrous deeds, and avenges his death by striking down Pyrrhus, the son of his killer Achilles. Unfortunately, Pyrrhus rallies to later kill Penthesilea in battle, an occurrence which Christine allots meager space in her biography. Boccaccio's Penthesilea rides to Troy only out of a mad desire to bear Hector's child.<sup>38</sup> Christine includes other women warriors from ancient history who were not Amazons in her collection of biographies; the aforementioned Semiramis and Fredegund,

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<sup>37</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 48. Christine will often deviate from her own standard sources to enhance or invent vows of Chastity for Nicaula, Cassandra, Minerva, Camilla and other heroines. For images of the Amazons in Christine's manuscripts see figs. 6-4, 6-22, 6-36 to 6-39.

<sup>38</sup>Boccaccio, Concerning Famous Women, pp. 65-66.

adding Zenobia, Artemisia, Camilla, Berenice of Cappadocia and Cloelia, all taken primarily from Boccaccio. The case of Zenobia, Queen of the Palmyrenes is particularly interesting. She was courageous and strong, hunted wild game, fought lions, climbed mountains and refused to marry until forced to for political reasons.<sup>39</sup> Her husband was her match in all things, and she shared his hardships in warfare and politics. Zenobia was generous, prudent, and studied Latin and Greek, even writing the history of her realm. Diane Bornstein writes that in the figure of Zenobia "Christine thus portrays in a princess the Renaissance ideal of the perfect prince."<sup>40</sup> Like Zenobia, Camilla was skilled as a hunter and warrior, winning back her father's lost kingdom with her military and governing powers.

Ladies of learning and skill are also celebrated in this section including such examples as Sappho, poet and philosopher; Nicostrata, the inventor of the Latin alphabet and grammar; and Cornificia, a Roman girl who was sent to school with her brother and surpassed him in learning, becoming a great writer and scholar.<sup>41</sup> In relating the

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<sup>39</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 52-55. Christine claims Zenobia slept with her husband only to have children.

<sup>40</sup>Bornstein, The Lady, p. 91.

<sup>41</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, 62-83.

story of Cornificia Boccaccio suggests her poetic genius is derived in part from her Greek homeland, while Christine eliminates this factor entirely. Although sent to school with her brother as a joke "this little girl devoted herself to study and with such marvelous intelligence that she began to savor the sweet taste of knowledge acquired through study."<sup>42</sup> While Boccaccio claimed she was "equal in glory to her brother", Christine claims Cornificia "surpassed her brother" as a poet and scholar.<sup>43</sup> Boccaccio makes his frequent reference to Cornificia's abilities as an exception among her sex, references which Christine ignores. In this section of La cité des dames Christine makes clear the ability of women to learn, often declaring girls learn faster than boys. Time and again Christine deplores the waste of the female as a resource, preaching that the education of women would be of benefit to all society.

Christine's treatment of the notorious Medea is particularly novel and instructive. She portrays Medea as a learned woman of science, familiar with the power of herbs and spells, by which Jason was able to obtain the coveted golden fleece from her father.<sup>44</sup> She mentions in a

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid. p. 64.

<sup>43</sup>Boccaccio, Concerning Famous Women, p. 188., Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 64.

<sup>44</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 69, 190.

later section of La cité des dames that Medea "turned despondent" when Jason deserted her, but she makes no mention of her infanticide anywhere in the text.<sup>45</sup>

Christine is dedicated to portraying the positive side of Medea's character, as that of the wise woman, as she had done earlier in the Epistre Othea.<sup>46</sup> Christine praises Ceres for inventing cultivation and training oxen to follow the yoke; Isis, Queen of Egypt, for developing gardening and grafting; Minerva, the first to shear sheep, invent tools for spinning, initiator of the art of making olive oil as well as perfecting the technique of making armor from steel; Arachne's technique of dyeing wool and making tapestries and finally Pamphile who "with her speculative and imaginative mind" thought of utilizing the cocoons of silkworms to make a fine and splendid cloth.<sup>47</sup>

Christine extols the talents of two Greek painters, Thamaris and Irene, and that of the Roman painter Marcia, all stories culled from Boccaccio, which he obtained

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<sup>45</sup>Hall, p. 206. Ovid too hurries over Medea's murder of her two children when Jason takes a new, more prestigious bride.

<sup>46</sup>Hindman, Epistre Epistre, p. 97.

<sup>47</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, for Ceres see p. 75, fig. 6-47, for Isis, p. 76, fig. 6-48. Also note Christine says Isis is also known as Io, turned into a heifer by Jupiter; for Minerva see p. 73, fig. 6-49; Arachne, p. 81 fig. 6-50.

directly from the classical source of Pliny.<sup>48</sup> After discussing the talents of historical predecessors, Christine mentions a Anastasia, a modern-day woman artist working for her who is "learned and skilled in painting manuscript borders and miniature backgrounds that one cannot find an artisan in all the city of Paris - where the best in the world are found - who can surpass her..."<sup>49</sup> Much has been made of this reference and scholars have tried without success to unearth substantive facts about this illuminator. Christine praised this border painter in the same manner that she praises the self-portrait of the Roman artist Marcia, for their success and merit as artisans versed in realism. The major task of the artist according to Christine and the sensibilities of her day, was to imitate reality, in whatever form, making equal the painter of a figure or a forest, as long as it met the new standards of naturalism.<sup>50</sup>

Ladies of prudence are the topic under discussion in chapters Forty-three through Forty-eight, and though most of these stories are also found in Boccaccio, as usual,

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<sup>48</sup>Pliny, Natural History, tr. H. Rackham, Cambridge, Ma.:1952, 9:147. For Christine's version of these artists see The City of Ladies pp. 83-84.

<sup>49</sup>Christine, The Book City of Ladies, p. 85; also see D. Miner Anastaise and Her Sisters Women Artists of the Middle Ages, (Baltimore: The Walters Art Gallery, 1974).

<sup>50</sup>Hindman, Epistre, pp. 70-73.

Christine edits his accounts selectively. Prudence is the most important of all virtues to Christine, and in Le trésor de la cité des dames it is "Dame Prudence" who delivers the lectures at the college of women. Prudence is the honor of ancient wives of Rome, and Gaia Cirilla, as a queen who worked with her hands, and who was never idle. Dido is praised in three separate sections of La cité des dames; first, for building of Carthage, after escaping from her greedy brother and making off with his treasure. Christine discusses Dido again in Book II under the subject of women who were loyal in love until death. Dido, who gave her love and riches to Aeneas of Troy, threw herself onto a funeral pyre which she had lit after he broke his pledge of eternal love by leaving her secretly in the dark of night. Boccaccio writes an elaborate account of Dido falling on her sword on the funeral pyre rather than marry the king her people requested. Christine not only adapts Boccaccio's account, but divides the stories into sections to fit her thematic construct.<sup>51</sup> Dido's governing abilities are discussed in one section, and her loyalty in love in another. The stories are not as important to Christine as they are to Boccaccio, but rather the evidence

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<sup>51</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies. The discussion on women who persevere in love begins p. 90. Dido's tale can be found pp. 91-95, 186-189. For Boccaccio's account of Dido see XL, pp. 86-94.

they exhibit furthering Christine's purpose - the defense and the glory of women.

## PART TWO

Rectitude replaces Reason as the narrator in Part Two, and together she and Christine build the inner houses and palaces of the city based on their discussion of the women whose lives exemplify moral integrity. Rectitude helps Christine escort worthy and virtuous women to take up residence in the inner court of the city.<sup>52</sup> The discussions in this part of the text range from topics such as married life and its servitude, the general trustworthiness of women, to a general defense of women's ability to learn. Indeed, several manuscripts portray these interludes of discussion between Christine and the Virtues as often as the more narrative scenes. (figs. 5-8 to 5-9, 6-17 to 6-19, 6-29 to 6-32, & 6-63)

Ladies of vision and prophecy are the first women to be treated in Part Two. Christine uses three sources for her stories of the pagan sibyls; Boccaccio, Histoire ancienne, and Speculum historiale by Vincent de Beavais.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to Boccaccio, Christine includes biblical

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<sup>52</sup>A. Gabriel, "The Educational Ideas of Christine de Pizan" J. of the History of Ideas, XVI (1955) p. 15

<sup>53</sup>Richards, The Book of the City of Ladies, xxxix.

prophets Deborah, Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, and the Queen of Sheba in her compendium of great women of the world.<sup>54</sup>

Daughters who loved their parents are treated in Chapters Seven through Eleven. Christine asks Rectitude why men are so displeased when their wives give birth to daughters. Rectitude proclaims this attitude as utter foolishness for, among other things, "See how many sons you will find who gently and humbly care for their parents and mothers in their old age, as they are supposed to do?"<sup>55</sup> Historical examples of the exemplary behavior of famous daughters are then recounted; Drypetina, Hypsipyle, Claudine of Rome, and the famous Roman image of Caritas is told in Chapter Eleven with one significant alteration; Christine has changes the sex of the breast-fed parent from father to mother.

In the beginning of Chapter Twelve Rectitude announces that the houses and the wall of the city are finished, declaring "Now a new Kingdom of Femininity is begun, and it is far better than the earlier kingdom of the Amazons."<sup>56</sup> The City is ready to be populated by women of good character, and as Christine and Rectitude set out to look

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<sup>54</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 104.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

for these women, they discuss men's false complaints about marriage.

Rectitude begins by stating that wives endure more hardships in marriage than husbands, for beatings are considered normal, and the wife has no legal recourse against them, for her status is often little more than that of a slave. Rectitude cites examples of women who were devoted to their husbands, including Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, and Julia, wife of Pompee, and curiously enough she includes in this group Xanithippe, the wife of Socrates, usually exemplified as a shrew. This favorable portrait of Xanithippe certainly did not come from Boccaccio. It is quite possible that it is Christine's own unique and very human interpretation, for she praises Xanithippe for loving her husband even though he cared more for books than he did for his wife. Christine recalls Portia, wife of Brutus, to answer the accusation that women cannot keep secrets. For even though Portia tried to dissuade her husband from killing Julius Caesar, even wounding herself to keep him from leaving, she did not reveal his plan.<sup>57</sup>

Chapters Thirty through Thirty-five enumerate the good that has been brought into the world because of women. The first case is that of the pharaoh's daughter who rescued

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid. p.130, 134.

and cared for the infant Moses, followed by Judith who saved the Jews by slaying Holophernes, and finally Queen Esther who delivered her people from the evil influence of Haman upon the King. Rectitude's opinion on the tale of the Sabine women is notable, for the women are praised for restoring peace between their warring families and abductors. After being captured and raped by the ancestors of the Romans, for five long years their fathers and relatives waged war to obtain their release. In an effort to put a stop to the bloodshed, the women positioned themselves with their young children by the Roman fathers, between the armies demanding the end of all warfare. Christine's account of the bravery of the captured women highlights an aspect of this well-worn tale rarely acknowledged in literary and artistic references to this story.

Chapter Sixteen consists of strong arguments supporting the value of educating women. Once again Christine brings up this cherished topic, citing Hortensia of Rome, daughter of the orator Quintus Hortensius, and Novella of Bologna, who taught law in her father's place at the University, as exemplary learned women. Rectitude reminds Christine that her father "who was a great scientist and philosopher, did not believe that women were worthless by knowing science" and he took great pleasure in

his daughter's ability and eagerness to learn.<sup>58</sup>

The value of chastity and the horror of rape are among the topics discussed in Chapters Thirty-seven through Forty-five. Tales of Old Testament heroines Rebecca, Ruth, and Sarah are told first, then, after relating the story of Susanna and the elders, a startling and original discussion of rape ensues between Christine and Rectitude in Chapter Forty-four. Through the voice of her allegorical creation, Rectitude, Christine the author angrily expresses her views on this subject, denying first that women who are raped desire it for "Indeed rape is the greatest possible sorrow." Tales of those famous women of history who took their lives after or to avoid being raped are then recited to belie such a belief; Lucretia, Queen of the Galatians; Hyppo of Greece, the wives of the Sicambrians, and Virginia.<sup>59</sup>

Constancy in love is the theme covered in Chapters Forty-six through Sixty, and examples from both legend and literature are used to demonstrate that in spite of what many authors insist, women have on the whole proved to be more constant in love than men. Christine begins with the tale of Griselda, the long-suffering, patient and faithful wife from Boccaccio's Decameron. Ghismonda who kept her

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid. pp. 145-149, p.154.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 161-165.

lovers heart in a vase by her bed, and Lisabetta, who cherished a basil plant nurtured by her murdered fiancé's head buried within its soil are also borrowed from this source.<sup>60</sup> Further aspects of the legends of Medea and Dido are interspersed between these three, utilized as exemplars of women who were, above all, constant in love. For the stories of Thisbe and Hero Ovid's version is used.<sup>61</sup>

Women who are loved more for their virtue than their beauty are the topic of conversation between Rectitude and Christine in Chapter Sixty-four. Queen Blanche of France is brought forward again, for the poet Thibault, count of Champagne, fell in love with Blanche for her "great learning, prudence, virtue and goodness...even though she had already passed the flower of her youth." Thibault composed many poems, set to music, to this good Queen. Christine tells Rectitude that this has been true in her own experience, for "...many I know of virtuous and wise women who, from what they have confessed to me in lamenting their distress, have been propositioned more frequently after their peak of beauty than when they were in their greatest flower."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>For Griselda see the 2nd day, 9th tale; Ghismonda 4th day, 1st tale, Lisabetta 4th day 5th tale of Boccaccio, The Decameron.

<sup>61</sup>Richards, xxxix.

<sup>62</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Women, p. 208.

The generosity of women is the topic of instruction in the final two chapters of Book Two. Several of Christine's most prominent patrons are recommended for their virtues; Queen Isabelle of France, the Duchess of Berry, wife of Duke Jean; Valentina Visconti, wife of Louis, Duke of Orleans and others are cited for their good conduct, charity and devotion to God.

### PART THREE

In the third part of La cité des dames Justice directs Christine in the building of the high battlements and towers of the City to be inhabited by those distinguished married women, virgins, martyrs and saints who are delegated by Justice to defend the City. For the lives of the saints Christine relies on again on Speculum historiale as well as The Golden Legend.<sup>63</sup> As the construction of the City ascending from Book One through Book Three indicates, La cité des dames becomes a fortified hierarchical utopia, resembling a convent, defended by warrior women from history, populated by secular heroines, presided over by the Virgin Mary and her holy Christian companions. The

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<sup>63</sup>For a discussion of these sources see Reno, "Virginity" fn 4, p. 84 and M. Curnow, The 'Livre de la cité des dames' of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition Ph.D. DAI XXXVI (1975-76) 4536-37A, pp. 183-93.

Virgin Mary is crowned Queen of the City, and the lives of her most honored companions, Mary Magdalene and the learned Catherine of Alexandria are the first recounted in this final third of the text. The next section concentrates on virgin martyrs Agnes, Margaret and others. The virgin martyrs are not the only virgins celebrated in La cité des dames. Christine introduces this topic first with the Amazons, as the source of their strength and military success. Chapter Ten highlights Christine's own patron saint, who, like St. Barbara, was locked in a tower first for out of fear of the dangerous passion her beauty might spark in some unworthy suitor, second for her refusal to worship the false gods of her father. Horribly tortured, St. Christine still combats the judges who try to dissuade her from her beliefs with great intellectual skill. The judges become filled with desire for this beautiful young girl, and torture her all the more when she denies them her body. Finally, it is the women of the town who come to her rescue, objecting to this cruel treatment.<sup>64</sup> An entire chapter is devoted to those women who saw their children killed and martyred. This is unique in all such histories of the saints, before or since. Christine brings her experience as a wife and mother to her recounting of these tales, causing her to highlight and underline those

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<sup>64</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Women, p. 237.

qualities of strength and suffering long deserving special honor and merit. Next Christine tells of the adventures of women who dared to live and dress as men to worship their God, and to help various Apostles in Chapters Twelve through Eighteen.

When welcomed by Justice, Christine and the other inhabitants of the City, to be their Queen, the Virgin replies:

O Justice, greatly beloved by my Son, I will live and abide most happily among my sisters and friends, for Reason and Rectitude, and you, as well as Nature, urge me to do so. They serve, praise, and honor me unceasingly, for I am and will always be the head of the feminine sex. This very arrangement was present in the mind of God the Father from the start, revealed and ordained previously in the council of the Trinity.<sup>65</sup>

Beatrice Gottlieb cites this speech one of many examples of Christine's confidence and strength in her own convictions about the worth of women, finding her ideas comfortably housed in the tenets of her faith. She writes:

One of the things that made Christine so much a person of her time is the feeling she conveys of being on such good terms with God...She believed that the learned men who cited chapter and verse to defame women were simply wrong about God's intentions. They either misread God's works or they followed the opinions of evil men. When Christine defended women from misogynist attacks

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<sup>65</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Women, p. 218.

she usually went back to the same authorities used by the misogynists, and it was in Christian texts that she found her greatest consolation.<sup>66</sup>

Extending this inclusive attitude, Christine even harbors a liberal notion of virginity. Although it is the virgin martyrs such as Catherine, Margaret and Christine who occupy the highest mansions of Christine's allegorical fortress, married women and widows found throughout the tales in all three books of La cité des dames can become honorary virgins through the practice of chastity.<sup>67</sup> The non-virgins Anastasia, Theodora and Natalia all refuse to marry and undergo an assortment of tortures resulting in a martyrs crown.

There is an amused irony in Christine's triumphant displays of the ways in which God evidently approved of women, for the crowning argument is based on God's choice of Mary as his spouse, and therefore "not only should men refrain from reproaching women but should hold them in great reverence".<sup>68</sup> The quality of virginity is celebrated whether Christine is discussing saints or secular heroines. Through the practice of chastity Christine believed women

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<sup>66</sup> "The Problem of Feminism in the Fifteenth-Century", Women of the Medieval World, (1985) p. 55.

<sup>67</sup>For a lengthy discussion of this rather novel and all-inclusive notion of chastity and virginity held by Christine, see Reno, "Virginity", pp. 70-71.

<sup>68</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 218.

became stronger and more independent. It is enlightening that Christine, who found such great consolation in religious texts, should emphasize the worldly advantages of a chaste life - that is, a life of achievement and fame.

In the final chapter of La cité des dames Christine addresses the virtues and the new inhabitants of her City. She speaks to women be they married, virgin, widowed, worker, scholar, mother or queen, of their particular problems and woes, and in so doing encourages all "whether noble, bourgeois or lower class - be well informed in all things and defend your honor and chastity against your enemies." All women are commanded to take pride in their foremothers, whose deeds are recounted in this book, returning to take refuge in the City their deeds have built whenever the attacks upon their femininity become too hard to bear.

#### Le trésor de la cité des dames

In Le trésor de la cité des dames, written immediately after La cité des dames in 1405 Christine "after having made herself known as the champion of her sex, then desired to become its counselor".<sup>69</sup> This book vividly and

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<sup>69</sup>Richardson, Lulu McDowell, Forerunners of Feminism in French Literature of the Renaissance: From Christine de Pizan to Marie de Gournay (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1929) p. 30.

passionately describes the lives of every class of medieval woman. Originally titled Le livre de trois vertus it became known by the more poetic title of the "Le trésor de la cité des dames" by its followers in order to establish its association with its sister text, the "La cité des dames". The three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear in the prologue, dramatic transitional devices between the two texts that firmly establishes their relationship. In Le trésor it is "Dame Prudence" whose task it is to educate and prepare the future inhabitants of the City of Ladies with her lectures. Charity Cannon Willard writes "no such comprehensive description of women in these sections of society had been attempted previously".<sup>70</sup>

Like La cité des dames, Le trésor is also divided into three parts, but there all similarity ends. While La cité des dames defends and inspires through recitation of past glories, Le trésor deals with the stuff and grit of daily life. It makes use of the La cité's didactic framework, but it is not a universal history. Instead, it is a practical yet sympathetic description of the role and behavior considered suitable for women in Christine's time. Part One is devoted to the education, behavior, and

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<sup>70</sup>Willard, "A fifteenth-century View of Women's Role in Medieval Society: Christine de Pizan's Livre des Trois Vertus", in The Role of Women in the Middle Ages, p. 100.

responsibilities of Queens and princesses, Part Two addresses the duties, conduct and dangers particular to ladies of the court and the lesser nobility, while Part Three admonishes and encourages everyone else. The women whose needs are addressed in Part Three hardly reflect the real readership Christine had in mind, nor would they share her class perspective, yet it is a tribute to the author's sense of order, hierarchy and humanism that the effort was made to be all inclusive, to prepare every woman in the arts of good citizenship.

Le trésor de la cité des dames is dedicated to Margaret of Burgundy, eldest of the six daughters of John the Fearless, upon the occasion of her engagement to the Dauphin of France, Louis of Guyenne. Margaret left her home at the Burgundian court at the tender age of eight to be brought up in the disreputable Parisian household of the future king. Christine's book was meant to offer guidance not only to the young princess, but to those responsible for her upbringing. Yet Christine also sees fit to expand her discussion to include advice to members of the court, nuns, widow and chambermaids, probably because their problems were familiar to her and her own trials as a daughter, wife, sister, mother - and scholar. This personal view breathes life into every page as she chides those women who "jostle to get in front of one another at

church" or comforts women who are married to "husbands who behave very distantly toward their wives and give no signs of love".<sup>71</sup> Le trésor de la cité des dames is filled with startling and vivid pictures of the life lived by the medieval woman, complete with all its sorrows and joys.

Scholars have categorized Le trésor as everything from a courtesy book, a behavior manual, to a Mirror for the Princess. Susan Groag Bell believes Christine de Pizan is a feminine foreshadowing of Machiavelli "as she, too, analyzed the realities of life, not hesitating to write plainly about uncomfortable matters of conscience."<sup>72</sup> Le trésor is only a "Mirror" in part, for how does one explain the sections of the book involved with the less powerful? Christine will later write a Mirror for the Prince in 1412 called Le livre de la paix, intended to guide the education of the Dauphin. Like the earlier Le trésor, it too is divided into three parts and addressed to various levels of society. The uniqueness of Le trésor de la cité des dames, however, can be found in its defiance of traditional categorization. Christine certainly draws from a long line of courtesy books, written by men for their wives and

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<sup>71</sup>Christine de Pizan, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 136, 63.

<sup>72</sup>Bell, "Christine de Pizan", p. 179

daughters.<sup>73</sup> Yet she is the only known woman author of such a work on the instruction and guidance of women written before 1500. Others would follow, many inspired by women who had Le trésor de la cité des dames in their libraries.<sup>74</sup>

Throughout the three books comprising Le trésor Christine repeatedly displays her concern for the plight of widows, the importance of being efficient, productive, and honorable - at every level of the social order - and the dangers of courtly love, all combining to illustrate her understanding of the insecurity felt by women living in a society where they lack civil rights.<sup>75</sup> Christine's views on chivalry are particularly enlightening. She did accept the chivalric notion of the honor of a good reputation

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<sup>73</sup>Etienne de Fougères, Le Livre des manières 12th century; Saint Louis, Enseignements sa fille Isabell and Conseils de Saint Louis a une de ses; Robert de Blois, Chastoiement des dames and Durand de Champagne's Speculum dominarum from the 13th century; Francesco Barberino, Del Reggimento e costumi di donna, and The Good Wife Taught her Daughter (written by a man most scholars believe) from the 14th century. For an integrated discussion of these texts and others, see Bornstein The Lady in the Tower, and Distaves and Dames: Renaissance Treatises For and About Women (Delmar, New York: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1978).

<sup>74</sup>Anne of France wrote Enseignements a sa fille Suzanne de Bourbon when her daughter was fifteen, before her marriage to Charles de Bourbon in 1505. Anne uses Christine's Le trésor de la cité des dames as her source, for she was a great collector of Christine's writings.

<sup>75</sup>Willard, "A 15th-Century View", p. 101.

achieved at any cost, and she praised Boucicaut's Order Escu vert a la dame blanche<sup>76</sup> dedicated to the protection of women and widows. She was, however, thoroughly aware of the hypocrisy of the game of courtly love the code of chivalry encouraged.<sup>77</sup> The love it inspired of men for women was claimed to be platonic and honorable, yet Christine saw that instead it evolved into a dangerous game of seduction in the hands of untrustworthy court gallants. Le trésor de la cité des dames contains explicit and well-grounded advice to women as to how to handle such advances. Christine saw courtly love as a mixed blessing, a refreshing alternative to the misogynist literature of the past, but one offering more danger to women than any real power. The code allowed women more social freedom, acting

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<sup>76</sup>"Green shield with the white lady", an order founded by Boucicaut after he returned to Paris from adventures in the Middle East, well known by Christine for she praises it in one of her early ballads. C.C. Willard, Christine de Pizan, (New York: Persea, 1984) pp. 63-64.

<sup>77</sup>Aristocratic women did gain prestige from the game of courtly love, as it made the honoring of woman part of the chivalric code. Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen to Louis of France, then Henry II of England, and her daughter Marie of Champagne established courts of love in France and England where poems and songs were written exalting women and the civilizing virtues associated with femininity. By the late fourteenth century Christine de Pizan, among others, witnessed too many of the dangers of this "chivalric code" which "turned them (women) into objects of pleasure" writes D. Bornstein, for "The homage of the knight to his lady was only a word game." The Lady, pp. 41 & 44. See also J. Parry, The Arts of Courtly Love, (New York:1969) and A. Kelly Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings, (Cambridge, Ma. 1951).

as a safety valve in a society of frustrated bachelors and lonely women who were prisoners to political marriages. "The right to flirt" writes Diane Bornstein "is not a very significant freedom...In many cases the chivalric placement of a woman on a pedestal was a compensation for and a romanticization of their lack of power."<sup>78</sup>

Although Christine cautions women in the areas of courtly liaisons, she encourages women to learn and educate themselves in all ways "suited to their station". Hard work and preparedness are major themes in Le trésor's behavioral guide. According to Christine women are obliged to know and even share in their husband's business. Peace and diplomacy are major duties of womankind, especially for women in positions of power. The theme of woman as peacemaker runs strongly throughout Christine's writings. Prudence is the greatest virtue a woman can aspire to according to Christine, and indeed, in Le trésor de la cité des dames it is Dame Prudence who takes precedent over the three Virtues of Reason, Rectitude and Justice who lead the dialogues in La cité. Christine does espouse different learning for the sexes, however she advises practical instruction on the administration of lands and revenues for girls, as well as guidance on moral wisdom and virtue to prepare them to meet future temptations and difficulties.

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<sup>78</sup>Bornstein, The Lady, p. 45.

Christine never undermines the value of traditional "women's work", for to her it kept the fabric of society intact, deserving more honor and recognition. Accordingly, she can then recommend that girls study mathematics as well as embroidery. Christine disagrees with her own mother's ideas, however, that a purely domestic education is sufficient for women. Like Quintillion, Christine believes educated individuals should be able to express his or her ideas readily, and should never be limited in what they are allowed to learn. Christine quotes from the Stromata of Clement of Alexandria, stating that if a woman has the same aptitude as a man, she has the right to the same education.<sup>79</sup>

#### PROLOGUE

In the opening of Le trésor we find Christine exhausted from her labors building (or writing) La cité des dames. The three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice return to urge her on to the next task; to "capture" ladies with "traps, nets and snares" wherever they congregate to educate and prepare women to become worthy citizens of the Kingdom of Femininity. Christine is at last roused from

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<sup>79</sup>For a discussion of Christine's ideas on the education of women, see Gabriel "Education", and Bell "Christine de Pizan".

her rest, a scene painted by artists with action and drama, (figs. 4-14, 4-15, 5-10, 5-17 & 5-18) kneeling before the Virtues to receive the following command:

Take your pen and write. Blessed will they be who live in our city to swell the number of the citizens of virtue. May all the feminine college and their devout community be appraised of the sermons and lessons of wisdom.<sup>80</sup>

#### PART ONE

Beginning with an admonition, the three Virtues command "all princesses, empresses, queens, duchesses and high born ladies ruling over the Christian world " to value the virtues as the greatest treasure and to love and fear the Lord.<sup>81</sup> The second and third chapters discuss the temptations of a princess and how divine inspiration can help her steer clear of all threatening harm. These temptations begin with her with the first rays of dawn when the princess "wakes up in the morning, she sees herself lying luxuriously in her bed between soft sheets" with her ladies in waiting "seeing that she lacks for nothing."<sup>82</sup>

Christine begins with a discussion of religious duties, as did one of her predecessors, Durand de

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<sup>80</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p.32.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

Champagne, author of a mirror for the princess, the Speculum dominarum, written in 1305 for Jeanne of Navarre, first wife of King Philip the Fair of France.<sup>83</sup> As confessor to the Queen, Durand focuses on the spiritual life of the Queen, rather than her public and moral obligations. Christine too acknowledges the life of the perfect contemplative as one who is "so ecstatic that she does not seem to be herself " so at one is she with her creator, but Christine moves on quickly to offer the active life as "another way of serving God" to the less exalted woman living and working in the mundane world.<sup>84</sup>

After making a perfunctory, albeit sincere, bow to spiritual issues, Christine immediately shifts to a more practical discussion of daily life, stressing the active rather than the contemplative life for the princess. Christine's purpose is to school the princess in the ways of this life, through a rigorous program detailed in Chapter Eleven. Here Dame Prudence advises the princess on how she must fill each hour of the day. First, upon awakening, the princess must say her daily prayers, dress, and go to Mass if possible. If her husband is not at court, she must immediately see to her governing responsibilities. If he is at home, she may go to the

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<sup>83</sup>Bornstein, The Lady, pp. 79-82.

<sup>84</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 94.

chapel and distributes alms to the poor "from her own hand". At the governing council she will bear herself in a manner commanding respect. She will hear proposals, listening carefully to her counsellors with a critical ear, following the advice of those who speak wisely. It is the duty of the princess to try and be informed in advance of upcoming matters of importance which she must oversee. After the council she has her midday meal, while a learned person speaks "on some excellent moral subject" or tells stories of inspiring exemplary lives. The princess must learn to converse with the elderly in a serious manner, and the young in a merrier one. At this point she may rest, or take up some handwork with her ladies in her chamber until Vespers, when she will go to chapel. She may, if the weather is good, walk for her health until supper, and then see individuals with requests, say prayers and retire.<sup>85</sup>

The work ethic at all levels of society is a major theme throughout all three books of Le trésor. One can see that in this model day Christine offers to each young princess, there is little time to relax, let alone study anything other than religious texts or cases of arbitration. Christine admonishes all women holding high positions in society to oversee their estates well, and know and understand military tactics. This advise is not

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-61.

only wise, but reflects the actual responsibilities noblewomen faced in the Middle Ages. Bell states "Military exploits, civil strife and political maneuvering gravely affected the domestic economy and more women were entirely in charge of the household, defense and production in the absence of male relatives."<sup>86</sup>

In the following chapters Christine advises the queen on court politics and how to manage the atmosphere of intrigue which plagues court life. Chapters Seven through Eighteen tell of the seven principle teachings of Prudence for the princess, the first being to love and honor her husband "and live in peace with him". She offers serious practical advice on how to live with a difficult husband, and if this recommended course of action effects no change "she will take refuge in God."<sup>87</sup> Chapter Fourteen addresses the Queen on the raising of children, urging her to see that they learn their prayers, to read and to "be introduced to latin" and helped to "understand something of the sciences". Christine devotes three-quarters of the chapter to general educational principles for all children, one-quarter specifically devoted to the education of daughters.<sup>88</sup> Other humanist scholars, such as Leonardo

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<sup>86</sup>Bell, "Christine de Pizan", p. 181.

<sup>87</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, pp. 62-64.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

Bruni in De Studiis et Literis, suggest serious study only for a woman likely to take up the duties of a large aristocratic household. Christine expresses more ambivalence on the joys of the scholarly life in Le trésor when compared with the enthusiastic discussion it receives in the La cité des dames. The solitude of the scholar concerns her, and certainly she acknowledges depression and loneliness in her own life. In Le trésor Christine does not advocate that all women be rigorously educated for a scholar's life. Instead, she displays heartfelt concern for developing the underlying characteristics of Christian humanism, moral virtue and prudent action - qualities much needed to steer a woman through the dangers of court politics and scandal.<sup>89</sup>

The Queen is asked to find favor with the clergy, her counselors, and her common people, teaching the ladies of

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<sup>89</sup>Scholars have defined Christine's ideas on the education of women as everything from radical to surprisingly conventional. In fact, she is consistent in her ideas if they are taken in context. In La cité she heralds women scholars of the past; Cornificia, Proba, Sappho, Manto in Book One, Hortensia and Novella in Book Two, St. Catherine and St. Christine in Book Three. La cité was designed to inspire and encourage women with these shining exemplars, and suggest that in an ideal society, or utopia, women might be allowed to live up to their inherent potential. In Le trésor Christine grapples with the gritty reality of daily life, and feels compelled to write of the practical and dangerous pitfalls woman need to be prepared to face, therefore she advocates women be prepared to meet these challenges first. For a variety of discussions on this topic see Gabriel "Education", Willard, "Ideal or Practical" pp. 91-97, and Bell "Christine de Pizan" p. 178.

her court to be "models of all good things and all honor to other women."<sup>90</sup> Special chapters tell the wise woman how to exercise charity, and order her finances. Christine felt through her own personal experience the particularly harsh plight of the widow, left alone without protectors. She requires all women "to understand thoroughly the last will and testament of her husband" to avoid her own legal difficulties obtaining access to her husband's property. Christine advises young widows differently than she does the older widow, and cautions both to be moderate in their mourning so as not to "anger Our Lord by being grief stricken for too long a time."<sup>91</sup> As in all things Christine favors getting on with the business of living with expedience and competency.

Substantial chapters are devoted to the education of the young princess who is newly married, often a child-bride sent to her husband's court to become familiar with the customs of her new family. This was particularly appropriate in the case of the young princess for whom Le trésor was written, Margaret of Burgundy, brought to Paris at the age of eight as the Dauphin's bride. Christine's counsel in this chapter is to those responsible for their young charge, as special care must be given in choosing

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<sup>90</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 75.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

protectors and educators who are not only "prudent, good, virtuous and devout" but also able to please their young mistress with trinkets, games and stories, winning the child's love and trust. Christine shows rare insight into the feelings and needs of children for her time, directing the chaperon not to be solemn and too harshly disciplinary "lest the twig snap", a sensitivity lacking in educational tracts of the medieval period.<sup>92</sup>

The most amusing chapters of Part One counsel the newly married princess on how to handle the advances of men. The chaperon is cautioned to be nearby, observing the girl's reaction to the flattery and insincere attentions of courtiers elicited simply because of her high station. Sample speeches are offered to the young wife to use when she is approached, for she must "be very careful not to have a changed or fiery expression" when speaking to the young gallant, or he will know he has power over her.<sup>93</sup>

Christine inserts a model letter a guardian should write her young mistress if it is evident that she has been swayed by a man's advances. This letter, reproduced in full in Chapter Twenty-six, is one that appeared four years earlier in Christine's Le livre du duc des vrais amans.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-105.

Obviously she felt it must be of extreme importance to duplicate the epistle word for word.<sup>95</sup> Christine begins the chapter by having Prudence give advice to the chaperon who has been unable to dissuade her mistress from her dangerous and "foolish love affair". Prudence reminds the chaperon that she will be held responsible by the husband and the woman's family for these transgressions. She is advised to use skill in approaching the young woman, never speaking evil of her, or displaying bad temper or she may hear her mistress say to her ladies "The devil take the old bat! What a sourpuss! We are all stuck with her until she fries in hell!" Yet if all the chaperon's kind, well spoken warnings are to no avail, she must beg her mistresses forgiveness, and leave her service. Christine at this point explains that she is reproducing the letter she had Sybil de la Tour send to the Duchess in Le livre du duc de vrais amans as a sample for the chaperon to follow.<sup>96</sup> The

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<sup>95</sup>Recent events at court may have encouraged Christine to speak once again on the dangers of illicit love affairs, a subject she returns to throughout her writings. In 1405, the year Christine completed the La cité, and wrote and completed the Le trésor, Queen Isabelle and Louis, Duke of Orleans, both patrons of Christine, attempted to kidnap the Dauphin and spent nearly two months together at Meaux outside Paris.

<sup>96</sup>Sybil de la Tour is the antithesis not only of the ladies-in-waiting surrounding the current Queen Isabelle, whose actions she alludes to earlier in this chapter as having encouraged their mistresses dangerous liaison, but also of Jean de Meung's Duenna in the Romance of the Rose, who freely encouraged uninhibited behavior in the young.

chaperon states that she is writing to warn her mistress out of love, not condemnation, fearing "the decline of your good reputation" for a princess who is "raised high in honor" above others "ought to surpass all other ladies in good prudence, moral standards, conduct and manners" and be an example to all. Great ladies have "lost their honor and their lives" for merely being suspected of an affair. Christine believed all women must be on guard to defend their honor for the perils of courtly love affairs, so prevalent a part of aristocratic society, not only "grieve God" but if found out, "the woman is utterly disgraced." Christine was fully aware of the contradiction inherent in criticizing love in a society based on celebrating it. Yet the perils of such involvement were not just spiritual, but practical. Christine is not being prudish, but merely cognizant of the penalty extracted by society for women compromised by such love affairs. The discovery of a wife's adultery certainly led to punishments ranging from loss of freedom, to confinement in a convent, or even death. Christine saw the game of courtly love as particularly dangerous for women in a society where they have little legal power. Honor and a good reputation were not mere surface values, they were the only shield of

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Christine's model, Sybil, on the contrary, having observed the early symptoms of a love affair does everything within her power to stop it.

defense which a woman controlled herself.<sup>97</sup>

In Part One Christine portrays an ideal queen who realizes her role to the fullest extent in religious, social and practical realms. She is given direct, useful rules to follow on every aspect of her obligations, her training, and in her public manner or facade - honor and a good reputation, and creating an image of right-action and conduct that can only serve to inspire.<sup>98</sup>

## PART TWO

Reason, Rectitude and Justice address the lectures in this middle section to ladies, maidens, nuns and ordinary women living at castles, courts, manors, cities and towns. First the virtues claim that what they have stated previously to queens and princesses pertaining to the soul, manners and virtues "applies to all women, and each one may take from it whatever she feels she needs for the good and profit of her soul and her character."<sup>99</sup>

The second and third parts of this text add an

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<sup>97</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, pp. 89-105.

<sup>98</sup>This judgement of an individual by their conduct and exterior manner is part and parcel borrowed from classical descriptions and ideas of education, as in Quintillion's On Education and The Lives of the Twelve Caesars by Suetonius.

<sup>99</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 109.

astonishing ingredient to Le trésor de la cité des dames for women of the lower classes are addressed for the first time. Through this inclusion, however conventional be the terms in which Christine couches her advice, her doctrine is transformed into something courageous, novel and daring, as innovative as the writings of the Italian humanists of her day. Part One is a Mirror for the Princess, while the second and third parts of Le trésor encourage women to develop their potential within their station in life - providing each with path to citizenship in the "Feminine Kingdom".

Christine descends down the ladder of medieval social hierarchy from rank to rank with each succeeding chapter of Le trésor, from the lazy queen in Book One to the reformed prostitute at the end of Book Three. Here, in Part Two, she advises women of the court on four points: first, that they must love their mistress, and never encourage her to do anything "to the detriment of her soul, her honor, her good character." Second, they must "avoid too many friendships with men" to preserve their honor, for men will take their friendliness as a sign of encouragement for seduction. Christine writes that men jump to hasty conclusions when well received by a lady, and may invent lies and "make jokes behind the backs of the women, whatever polite manner they have adopted towards them to

their faces." The third and fourth points of advice encompass the avoidance of envy and slander, and love and support ladies of the should extend to one another in a sisterly fashion.<sup>100</sup>

Baronesses and women who live outside the court on manors and estates are instructed in chapters Nine and Ten.<sup>101</sup> Christine requires that they "must have the spirit of a man. This means that she ought not to be educated entirely indoors, nor only in the feminine virtues." The detailed picture drawn for us at this point is not at all theoretical, but mirrors the realities of fifteenth-century life outside the court. The lady must be wise and courageous and knowledgeable to run the estate during the frequent absences of her husband. She must be knowledgeable about the laws, rights of fiefs and so forth, supervise bailiffs with scrutiny, and make sure tenants are treated fairly. The lady must also know the art of warfare to be able to protect her land; "she ought to know how to use weapons...how to launch an attack or to defend against one". The lady must be familiar with the yearly income of the estates, and go over the accounts herself. She must know "which way is the best for the furrows to go according to the lay of the land" and encourages her workers rising

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-127.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., pp. 128-130.

early, dressing in her "houppelande and busies herself at the window so that she sees them go outside" thereby setting an example against laziness. Other responsibilities include watching over the animals, and least they be mishandled "she will go with one of her women to see how the sheep are being penned up". Cattle, oxen, horses, lambs must all be reared well and carefully overseen by the Lady of the manor in order to insure a handsome profit.

Christine lists all the tasks of the manor to be seen to in winter, when labor is cheap and the thrifty wife can have willow groves cut, livestock fed and wheat threshed. The lady should not be adverse to weeding the courtyard and working in the herb garden with her ladies "even getting covered in mud". Cloth, clothing and linens must be made by the ladies in their evening hours. Christine unfolds a very lively, industrious and ideal manor with her thorough and homely description for women with such obligations to follow.

Christine deplored extravagant and immodest dress, stating not only did it exemplify undue pride, but it led many a woman into foolish debt. She warns particularly against dressing above one's station in life; duchesses should not wear the gowns of queen, nor ordinary ladies that of countesses. Portraits of Christine found in those miniatures produced under her supervision show her wearing

the garments befitting an upper-class widow, in keeping with her own philosophy. (fig. 1-1) Christine's remarks also reveal the bias of an older woman against modern fashion, as she describes below:

(A Parisian tailor) He made a cotehardie for an ordinary lady who lives in the province of Gatinais. He had used five ells (according to the Paris measure) of wide Brussels cloth in making it. Three quarters of the train touched the ground, and the full sleeves reached to her feet, and God only knows how correspondingly large the head-dress is and how high the points are! It is actually and extremely ugly and unbecoming outfit...<sup>102</sup>

She complains the fashions, especially in France, change every year, and men and women get themselves into debt, as well as commit the sin of pride, to have the new article, just as "sheep follow each other". Additionally, Christine complains, this sin of pride extends from dress to public conduct and pride of station causing the disgraceful habit of "the jostling of women trying to get in front of each other in processions at weddings and other gatherings." These matters pertain to ladies in the country, and city, especially for ladies married to well-to-do merchants, eager to display their wealth by aping the dress of the aristocracy.<sup>103</sup>

In the final chapter in Part Two Christine speaks to

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., pp. 135-138.

ladies in religious orders, requiring that they try to live by the seven principle virtues of obedience, humility, sobriety, patience, sollicitude, chastity and concord.<sup>104</sup> Sins of nuns reflect on their institutions. Under the discussion of chastity Christine turns again to dress, stating that the wearing of worldly garments such as high headdresses and tight fitting clothing and jewelry by nuns is "odious and lewd". Concord and peace are the greatest obligation of all women in every station of life, and is particularly important for nuns who ought to live in "a union of peace."

### PART THREE

A unique contribution to the genre is made by Christine in these chapters where she speaks solely to middle and lower class women. Francesco Barberino wrote a text partially dedicated to all classes of women a century earlier, Del Reggimento e costumi di donna. He defined women, however, only in terms of their relationship to men; young girls, girls of marriageable age, women who have lost hope of marriage, wives and widows.<sup>105</sup> Such a focus on

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 138-141.

<sup>105</sup>F. Barberino, Del reggimento e costumi di donna, in Collezione di opere inedite o rare dei prima tre secoli della lingua, (Bologna: 1875) II, 118-201.

familial roles cut across class distinctions in Barberino's treatise. Christine does not ignore a woman's marital status or her class; in fact, this is specified to enable her to advise each situation as particularly as possible. She also devotes attention to the skills and education women need to acquire in order to perform their economic roles adequately. Christine gives much consideration to the feelings and needs of women in various situations, the widow, the lonely young princess-bride, the misguided lady, the over-worked chambermaid, the abused wife. Her advice is sympathetic, humane, yet first and foremost, practical.

Chapter One is directed toward women having some social standing, living in towns and cities, who are married to men in various administrative, civic, or courtly office - Christine's own social class. The three virtues begin, as before, by saying "we intend everything we have laid down for other ladies and young women concerning both virtues and the management of one's life to apply to every woman of whatever class she may be." Christine recommends in the case of marital distress that women always try to appease their husbands, for even men who "have been remarkably cruel to their wives" have experienced a pang of conscience on their death beds and left their entire fortune to their wives. A slender, but realistic economic encouragement. A day in the life of

the wise housewife is carefully detailed, from her early rising, Mass, spinning, finding good bargains for flax, keeping her linens clean and sweet smelling, to her generosity to the poor. The good wife keeps her children content and happy as well as clean and well fed, however rigid their routine. She will be neither sharp tongued nor foolish, and will cultivate the friendship of her neighbors and "will not refuse to lend little things." Through such images Christine manages to break down the barriers of centuries, as we visualize women borrowing honey or flour from one another across a cobblestone street.

The following chapter once again warns women from extreme extravagance in dress, but Christine's wording is far stronger in this later treatment of the subject.<sup>106</sup> Women who dress above their station, or dress indecently will risk attracting foolish men who "may think she is doing it in order to be desired and lusted after." Again Christine provides the reader with a sample speech to extract oneself from such a difficult misconception. Christine always takes great care in instructing women how to get out of dangerous situations with men without damaging the pride of the man, or inciting his anger. These recommendations sound stilted and archaic today, but

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<sup>106</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, pp. 149-153.

betray the authors full awareness of how women must behave in a society where they have only their good sense to protect them. Additionally, women are asked to avoid using sacred pilgrimages as an excuse to leave the home "play about or kick up her heels in some merry company." This, too, is not only un-pious, but dangerous, for it harms one's reputation, and for Christine this is every woman's greatest protective shield.

Women in business and trade are instructed in Chapter Three, and monied merchants are called to task for conspicuous display of goods. Christine describes a woman who held an indulgent "lying in" while waiting to give birth to her child. Rooms and beds hung with the richest tapestries, dressers "covered like an altar and laden with silver vessels", carpets worked with gold, fine linen, ornamented hangings, the expectant mother in a crimson silk gown studded with big pearl buttons, a display so costly and extravagant it was mentioned with disgust in the very chambers of the Queen as an example of excess beyond one's station. Christine remarks that the "rank of merchant is fine and honorable" so there is no need to ape the nobility. So much wealth, she advises, would be better spent in charitable donations.

Chapter Four is full of sincere and empathetic advice to the widow, both young and old, for as the author well

knew "this pitiful state usually involves much anguish and much troublesome business."<sup>107</sup> The rich widow will be subject to trickery, and the poor one will find pity from none. "Speak softly, but always protect your rights" states Christine in a phrase that sums up her entire philosophy. She suggests that lawsuits always be avoided for in so doing you must "put yourself at the mercy of others" who more often than not will cheat you. Most of Christine's comments in this chapter are based on her own hard, cold experience as a widow, having her goods repossessed, fighting for her husband's property after his death in the French courts. Christine learned from bitter experience, admitting she knew nothing of her husband's finances before he died, and had to learn to fend for herself at such a difficult time. She advises widows against remarriage for the most part, claiming at this point it is best to trust one's own experience and intelligence, and look after oneself.

Two chapters reveal the existence of a fifteenth-century generation gap between the young women and the old, and Christine writes of ways to ease these tensions for "We should like to make peace in this war of women of different ages".<sup>108</sup> Christine counsels older women to be sensible in

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., pp. 153-160.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., pp. 162-167.

dress and actions, and to correct the young carefully, without defaming them. Tolerance must be shown, and the old should never expect the young "to be wiser than you" writes Christine. She instructs the young women to honor and obey the old and to always be compassionate toward them "for there is no disease worse than old age."

The conduct of artisans is the subject of Chapter Eight. The women should not only see that their husbands and sons are well fed and start to work early but "the wife herself should be involved in the work to the extent that she knows all about it, so that she may know how to oversee his workers if her husband is absent." Christine takes the time to advise women on the importance of treating their husbands kindly so their men will not "join the foolish crowds of other young men in taverns" which are so accessible in Paris. Christine gives us an interesting view of married life with the following adage: "It is said that three things drive a man from his home: a quarrelsome wife, a smoking fireplace and a leaking roof." Women too are advised to not roam the streets with groups of friends, or indulge in needless pilgrimages. It is important to live frugally "so that at the end of the year they do not find themselves in debt."

Serving women and chambermaids are advised in the following chapters.<sup>109</sup> They are required to be honest in

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., pp. 167-171.

all their dealings with their mistress, and to protect her from dishonest tradesmen. Christine speaks with tremendous sympathy for the demanding and thankless life of a serving woman who rises before everyone, goes to bed after all are settled, scarcely having any time to eat, and often is prevented from going to Mass. She writes "if such a woman does not fast on all the days ordained by the church, God will excuse her."

Chapter Ten is entitled "Of the Instruction for Prostitutes" who are assured that God will forgive them all if they reform.<sup>110</sup> Christine explains that she feels no shame in including these women in her instruction for she is but following the charity recommended by Jesus toward those women who have erred in their ways. Christine gives strict and rigorous methods by which these women can reform. They must dress respectfully, avoid old associates and go to church often. New professions for her to pursue are cited: "laundry, spinning, or a nurse caring for the sick" for "if she has a strong and able body for doing evil and suffering many beatings and misfortunes, she could just as well use it for earning her living..." It is unlikely that prostitutes of this class would have had access to Christine's book, or the ability to read it at the time it was written, a fact of which Christine was well aware. No

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-174.

doubt she was trying to influence people's attitudes towards such women who desired to make a change. The woman educated in Christine's "College of Ladies" is asked to encourage and support reform among prostitutes, and perhaps, among their upper-class counterparts.

Country laborers and poor women are advised in the final chapters to be hard working and honest, and to pay their master with unmixed wheat and the best sheep, as required.<sup>111</sup> They must work hard, keep the peace with their neighbors, and never allow their children to steal grapes or break down hedges and other destructive acts. No need for her to warn against indulging in extravagant dress for "they are well protected against such excesses." The poor are offered sympathy and the hope for glory in Paradise. In Le trésor Christine encourages all classes of women to stand on their own two feet, to be knowledgeable about household finances, and to always trust their own good sense.

On the final page of Le trésor de la cité des dames Christine writes that she is exhausted but happy with her work, saying "that of the lectures of the virtues that "The more I look at them, the better they seem: very profitable for the good, the improvement of virtuous habits, and the increase of honor of ladies and the whole world of women,

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 174-180.

present and future, wherever this book can reach and be seen...It will endure in many copies all over the world without falling into disuse, and many valiant ladies and women of authority will see and hear it now and in time to come."<sup>112</sup>

The popularity of Christine's Le trésor de la cité des dames increased with the passage of time, as signaled by copies ranging from deluxe editions on vellum to printed copies on paper, many beautifully illustrated. The printed editions were often read by women wishing to improve their position in society, and it is this usage which caused Le trésor to be grouped by later scholars into in the category of courtesy literature. Christine understood the social order, and advised against trying to circumvent one's position in society by imitating the elaborate, sumptuous fashions of the aristocracy. She recommends industry to women of every social rank, urging them to achieve their full potential through every legitimate means. As Gottlieb believes, a feminist consciousness can be detected in Christine's writings:

"Here was a woman who, pained and outraged by reading and hearing that women were inferior and evil, refused to suffer in silence. She did not defend herself as an individual but made common cause with all women. She thought about women's lives and how they might be improved."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>113</sup>Gottlieb, p. 346.

In spite of her comments on spiritual matters it is the worldly, practical duties and dangers given the greatest attention and discussion in Le trésor. All classes of women are taught to be prudent, industrious, and knowledgeable in order to meet their obligations in life successfully. Above all women are instructed to keep the peace, whether it involves the disputation of husbands, harvesters or kings. Christine's description of life in fifteenth-century France vivifies "a great burst of social vitality rather than a world in decline."<sup>114</sup> Le trésor de la cité des dames is a precursor of Renaissance literature having as its aim the formation of the perfect prince (here the princess). Christine's manual also directs a significant amount of attention to the formation of the perfect citizen, educated at the Feminine College through the lectures of the Virtues and Dame Prudence to be a worthy resident of her metaphorical City of Ladies. The "Mirror of the Prince" was well represented in Renaissance Italy; and Christine's Le trésor precedes all but the earliest of these.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>C. Willard "The Manuscript Tradition of the Livre des Trois Vertus and Christine de Pizan's Audience" J. of the History of Ideas, 27 (1966) p. 442.

<sup>115</sup>See P. Kristeller, Renaissance Thought II,<sup>9</sup> (New York: 1965), pp. 49-50.

CHAPTER THREE:  
PATRONS, AUDIENCE AND THE MANUSCRIPTS

Christine de Pizan cultivated an impressive list of protectors, admirers and patrons throughout her literary career. She galvanized her energies, establishing a secure base of patronage among the associates of her father and her husband, the rich and highly placed, some of whom were women. She kept her patrons satisfied by producing works they found pleasing, luxurious and often flattering. Her reputation as a writer was excellent and she was admired in her own day as "a lady distinguished for her birth and character".<sup>1</sup> She dedicated copies of her work, often beautifully illuminated, to members of the royal family. Jean, Duke of Berry, collected nearly all of Christine's works in his distinguished library.<sup>2</sup> Philip the Bold and his son John the Fearless of Burgundy also commissioned several works from Christine.<sup>3</sup> Philip even honored

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<sup>1</sup>Christine, "Ditié de Jehanne d' Arc" ed. Kennedy and Varty, (Oxford: 1977), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Sarah Lawson, Intro. Christine de Pizan's The Treasure of the City of Ladies, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985) p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V written between January 30th and November 30th 1404, is a panegyric and moral portrait of the French King commissioned by his brothers. Le trésor de la cité des dames is dedicated to Margaret of Burgundy, daughter of John the Fearless, and may very well have been commissioned by his father, Philip the Bold. See E. Yenal, Christine de Pisan: A bibliography of Writings by Her and About Her, (London: Scarecrow Press, 1982) pp. 43-44, 46-47.

Christine's son Jean with a position in his court, after Jean's two years with the Earl of Salisbury in England came to an end. The reputation of Christine de Pizan spread beyond the confines of France, bringing her offers to join the courts of Henry IV of England and Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan. She refused both offers, remaining in her much-loved adopted country of France.

Christine spent her youth in the court of Charles the Wise, where her father was held in high esteem as court astrologer, physician and alchemist.<sup>4</sup> Charles was a great lover of books, commissioning many new works, as well as translations of the classical and Italian texts into French.<sup>5</sup> The illuminated manuscripts produced for Charles reveal the collaboration of theoreticians, scribes, and artists working under the direction of a small circle of the king's advisors.<sup>6</sup> These manuscripts were placed in the newly constructed library of the Louvre and formed the foundation for the library of his son, Charles VI. Christine was studying and preparing for her career as a writer during the early part of the reign of Charles VI

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<sup>4</sup>C. Willard "The Astrologer's Daughter," In Mélanges a la Mémoire de Franco Simone: France et Italie dans la culture européenne (Geneva: 1980)

<sup>5</sup>Hindman, Epistre Othea, pp. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup>L. Delisle, Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V 2 vol. Paris:1907 and La Librairie de Charles V Paris: 1968.

(1380-1422). Charles VI became the King at the age of 12, ruling under the regency of his uncles, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and Louis II, Duke of Bourbon. The ongoing rivalry between these two regents plagued Charles throughout his weak reign.<sup>7</sup> Early in the regency of the new king, Christine's father lost favor at court and the fortunes of the family rapidly declined. In 1392 Charles experienced the first of forty-two fits of insanity to attack him over the remainder of the next thirty years of his life. In addition, though the marriage of Charles VI to Isabelle of Bavaria in 1385 produced many children, most of whom died at birth. When the only son of Charles VI and Isabelle died, the Uncles of Charles VI, Jean of Berry and Philip of Burgundy, and the king's powerful brother Louis, Duke of Orleans began to take greater interest in government. This resulted in civil war and the resumption of the Hundred Years War as the English renewed their claims to the throne of France in 1399.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike his father, Charles VI was not an enthusiastic patron of manuscripts, and yet, the production of illuminated manuscripts flowered under his reign. The great patrons of the book during this period were his

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<sup>7</sup>R.C. Famiglietti, Royal Intrigue: Crisis at the Court of Charles VI (New York: AMS Press, 1986)

<sup>8</sup>Hindman, Epistre Othea, p. 8.

uncles, Jean of Berry and Philip the Bold of Burgundy, as well as his wife, Queen Isabelle, and his brother, Louis of Orleans. Christine's early poetic works thus reflect this broad based patronage not dependent on the king.<sup>9</sup> Many of her poetic works are dedicated to Louis of Orleans, Queen Isabelle, Philip the Bold, Charles d'Albret and Jean de Werchin, the Seneschal of Hainault.<sup>10</sup> In the early part of the fifteenth-century she began to write on the politics of France and the defense of women. She presented a copy of the correspondence on the Quarrel of the Roman de la Rose to Isabelle, and wrote a biography of Charles V commissioned by his brother Philip, the Duke of Burgundy.

Christine de Pizan was forty years old when she wrote La cité des dames. Twenty-seven French manuscripts of this work from the fifteenth-century survive in various libraries and collections throughout the Americas and Europe.<sup>11</sup> It was translated into Flemish in 1475 at the request of Jan de Baenst, a member of Philip the Good's entourage, but it was never printed. (figs. 6-21 to 6-61)<sup>12</sup> It was also translated into English by Brian Ansley, an

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<sup>9</sup>Yenal, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>11</sup>A. Kennedy, Christine de Pizan, (London: Grant and Cutler, 1984) pp. 93-94, and Bornstein, Distaff, xii.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

official at the court of King Henry VIII of England. This translation was later printed by Henry Pepwell in 1521. (figs. 6-62 to 6-63) Copies of La cité des dames are found in aristocratic libraries of the men and women of the royal house of France, as well as the houses of Berry, Burgundy, Orleans, Bourbon, Savoy. Additional copies have also been found in homes of the lesser nobility, merchant classes and some religious houses.<sup>13</sup> Unlike its companion text, Le trésor, dedicated to the young Margaret of Burgundy, La cité is not dedicated to any particular individual, but rather to all women, and is generally agreed to be a summation of Christine's position on the Quarrel over the Roman de la Rose, discussed in Chapter Two above. Its purpose is primarily to defend women through a creation of a universal history of the female sex, but it has as "its underlying and unstated poetical aim to refute any suspicion that Christine was either anti-humanist or anti-poetry."<sup>14</sup> Beautifully illustrated copies of La cité des dames were presented by Christine to Jean of Berry in 1405, and shortly after to John the Fearless. For such gifts she was generously rewarded. La cité des dames was also included in a deluxe Collected Works of Christine de

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<sup>13</sup>M. Cheney Curnow, "The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes, an English translation of Christine de Pisan's Le livre de la cité des dames", Les Bonnes Feuilles 3 (1976) 118.

<sup>14</sup>Richards, Intro. The Book of the City of Ladies, xliv.

Pizan, presented to Queen Isabelle between 1410-1415, London, BL Harley 4431. (figs. 4-10 to 4-13)<sup>15</sup>

In addition to dedicating a deluxe Collected Works to the Queen, Christine makes reference to her as well and other contemporary French noblewomen in the text of the La cité. At the end of Part Two, when Christine and Rectitude discuss who shall be invited to dwell in their new City, the first invitation is given to Isabelle "in whom there is not a trace of cruelty, extortion, or any other evil vice".<sup>16</sup> This comment on her character was written just before the summer of 1405, when the Queen's name was not yet linked in scandal with her husband's younger brother, Louis of Orleans. Later this same year her behavior did become a matter of public comment, to which Christine alludes in the Le trésor in her discussion of the lazy

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<sup>15</sup>London, BL Harley 4431 was composed from new and preexisting segments for this presentation volume given to Queen Isabelle. For a detailed discussion on the compilation of these two Collected Works, London, BL Harley 4431 and Paris, BN fr. 606 (BN fr. 606 does not include La cité des dames) see Hindman "The Composition of Christine de Pizan's Collected Works in the British Library: A Reassessment," The British Library Journal 19 (1983) pp. 99-107 and Epistre Othea p. 14-17; Mombello, La tradizione manoscritta dell' "Epistre Othéa" di Christine de Pizan: Prolegomeni all'edizione del testo, (Torino: Accademia delle Scienze, 1967) p. 203.

<sup>16</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 212.

queen as a model to be avoided by any young princess.<sup>17</sup>

After praising Isabelle in La cité, Rectitude and Christine salute other ladies of France by name, many of them patrons of Christine; the Duchess of Berry, the Duchess of Orleans - Valentina Visconti "who is strong and constant in heart", the Duchess of Burgundy and the Countess of Clermont, both daughters of Jean of Berry; the Duchesses of Holland and Countess of Hainault, both daughters of Philip of Burgundy; the Duchess of Bourbon, the Countess of Saint-Pol and Anne of La Marche.<sup>18</sup>

The uneasy political situation provided a special set of circumstances encouraging Christine to write a political sequel to La cité des dames. In August of 1404 Philip the Bold of Burgundy, actively pursuing an astute program of

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<sup>17</sup>In Part II of Le trésor, pp. 36-41, Christine includes a description of a lazy, selfish queen, which may be a revised portrait of Isabelle, in light of her recent irresponsible actions. Willard "Christine de Pizan's Livre des trois vertus: Feminine Ideal or Practical Advice?" in Ideals for Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan (Detroit, 1921) p. 100.

<sup>18</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 212-214. Marie of Berry, wife of John of Bourbon and Margaret, wife of John of Burgundy energetically managed their estates and established friendly relations between Bourbon and Burgundy while they were virtual "grass widows", their husbands either being held prisoner or waging war. The friendly relations established between these two women eventually lead to treaties between their countries, designed to avoid conflict and promote trade. See Vaughan, Valois Burgundy, London: Archon (1975) p. 62. Their actions demonstrate precisely those preached and promoted for all women in the Le trésor de la cité des dames.

politically advantageous marriages for his children and grandchildren, arranged for the marriage of his granddaughter Margaret to the French Dauphin, Louis of Guyenne. She was 8 years old at the time, and was expected to take up residence in the French court immediately, according to custom, to be trained for her future duties as Queen. It is to this little girl, destined to live in the licentious, unruly household of a mad king and his weak-willed wife, that Christine dedicated Le trésor de la cité des dames, originally titled Le livre des trois vertus. At the very time Christine was writing Le trésor, Queen Isabelle and Louis of Orleans removed the child-dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, and his young wife, Margaret of Burgundy, from the court of Paris in a fruitless attempt to usurp the power of Margaret's father, the new Duke of Burgundy, John the Fearless. Political crisis, a show of arms and later the assassination of Louis of Orleans was the ultimate result.<sup>19</sup> Christine's realistic portrayal of the dangers of court life and how a young princess should be educated and guided by wise and prudent chaperons takes on new meaning when viewed in their historical context. It is interesting to note that Christine's advice bore fruit in the virtuous Margaret of Burgundy, for her exemplary life

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<sup>19</sup>R. Vaughan, John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power, London: Archon (1966).

pays homage to Christine's counsel. Margaret was widowed in 1415, during a time of great political upheaval in Paris, and thus never became the Queen of France. In 1422 she married Arthur of Brittany, Count of Richmond, a prisoner since the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. Margaret had occasion to defend her home, the Chateau of Chinon, from her former brother-in-law, King Charles VII, while her husband was away from the estates. When times became safer she returned to Paris, where she died in 1442.<sup>20</sup>

The actual presentation copy prepared for Margaret of Burgundy of Le trésor has not yet been identified. The only extant copy of with miniatures prepared under Christine's supervision can be found in the Public Library in Boston, MS fr. Med. 101.(fig. 4-14) Le trésor was printed in 1497 by Antoine Vérard, in 1503 by Michel Le Nois and in 1536 by Jehan and Denis Janot. There is a Portuguese edition of this work, translated at the request of Isabelle of Portugal made between 1447-1455, printed in 1518 in Lisbon.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>For more on Margaret of Burgundy see B.A. Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, "Le Connétable de Richemont, seigneur bourguignon," Abbaies de Bourgogne VII (1935) pp. 309-336, VIII (1936) pp. 7-30.

<sup>21</sup>For a discussion of these extant manuscripts, translations and printed editions see Willard "Audience" p. 436 and "A Portuguese Translation of Christine de Pizan's Livre des Trois Vertus," PMLA 78 (December, 1978) p. 459-64; E. Yenal, Bibliography pp. 46-47.

The evidence of these surviving manuscripts and early printed editions indicates that Le trésor continued to be read well into the sixteenth-century, and its popularity increased with time. Additionally, many of the manuscripts have some connection with Margaret of Burgundy and her five sisters. The increasing popularity of Le trésor de la cité des dames throughout the century can be linked to the initial interest of one family of sisters all making powerful political marriages, thus disseminating the work to other areas of Europe. Two manuscripts of the Le trésor, Bodleian MS fr. 5 and London, BL MS. 31841 (fig. 5-17), found in English libraries vivify the attempt of English artists and scribes to copy a now lost version of this manuscript brought to England by Margaret's sister Anne when she married the Duke of Bedford in 1423.<sup>22</sup> The manuscript of Le trésor found at The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, has three miniatures of painted in the Flemish manner, produced by an workshop of Utrecht or Guelders. (figs. 5-13 to 5-16) The Duchess of Cleves at the time this manuscript was made was Mary of Burgundy, another of Margaret's sisters. Additionally the Duchess of Guelders was the

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<sup>22</sup>Bodleian Fr. MS. 5 is the work of an English scribe and border artist. Miniatures were planned, but never executed. See Willard "Audience", p. 438.

Frenchwoman Marie Harcourt, also married in 1405.<sup>23</sup> The abundance of copies of Le trésor from the later part of the fifteenth-century is due in part to the interest of literate members of the upper classes, to whom Part Three of the book is dedicated.

The general significance of women book owners and medieval marriage customs is an understudied area. Women were forced to move from their own lands as young girls, traveling with an entourage of guardians, becoming cultural ambassadors, disseminating literary, artistic and religious ideas through their dowry books, or books in the vernacular of their adopted lands used to teach the young child brides the language of their husbands. As Bell writes "By the end of the fourteenth century, women carried manuscripts of diverse languages and subject matter in their trousseaux".<sup>24</sup> This can be seen directly with two patrons of Christine, Jean, Duke of Berry and Louis of Orleans. The sister of Charles V and Jean, Isabelle of France, was married to Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan in order to raise ransom for her captive father. Isabelle took her French books to Milan in 1360. Later her daughter

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.. See Also E. Panofsky "Guelders and Holland: A Footnote on a Recent Acquisition of the National Museum of Stockholm," Konsthistorisk Tidskrift XXII (1953) 90ff.

<sup>24</sup>S.G. Bell "Medieval Woman Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture" Signs 7 (1982) pp. 763-764.

Valentina, returned to France to marry Louis of Orleans, bringing with her twelve books, most of Italian origin.<sup>25</sup>

The most magnificent extant manuscripts of Le trésor de la cité des dames are directly connected to the Burgundian court and the history of this volume is well known. Brussels BR 9551-2 was produced in Hainault and belonged at one time to the powerful Croy family <sup>26</sup>(figs. 5-10 to 5-12) Part of the Croy library came into the possession of Margaret of Austria, and after her to Marie of Hungary. Paris BN fr. 1177 belonged to Louis of Burges, and this as well as another copy of Le trésor de la cité des dames was in the possession of the Cleves family, brought by Mary, Duchess of Cleves, another of Margaret of Burgundy's numerous sisters. (figs. 6-10 to 6-12, & 6-67) Margaret's sister Anne became the Duchess of Bedford, possibly carrying a copy of Le trésor to England. Agnes, yet another sister, became the Duchess of Bourbon in 1425, explaining the presence of one of the two copies of Le

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<sup>25</sup>"Inventaire des Livres Apportés en France par Valentine de Milan et Compris dans sa Dot (1399)" in P. Champion La Librairie de Charles d'Orleans Paris: H. Champion (1910) lxix-lxx.

<sup>26</sup>The works of Christine de Pisan were well represented in the Burgundian Library. See Le librairie de Philippe le Bon, Exhibition Cat., Brussels: 1967, p. 150.

trésor de la cité des dames in the Bourbon library.<sup>27</sup> The other copy bears the signature of the daughter of Charles VI, Jeanne of France, who was also a Duchess of Bourbon. These two manuscripts provided direct inspiration for Les enseignements d'Anne de France a sa fille Suzanne de Bourbon, a book of advice, counsel and instruction written by Anne her daughter in 1505.<sup>28</sup>

Charity Canon Willard has convincingly established a link between the Portuguese translation of the Le trésor, the O Livre das Tres Vertudes (Madrid, BN MS 11515) and the Burgundian court. This translation was undertaken between the time of Queen Isabelle's marriage to King Alfonso of Portugal in 1447 and her death in 1455. This Isabelle was the much loved niece of Isabel of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy and one of the wives of Philip the Good.<sup>29</sup> The translation may have been made from a copy sent from

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<sup>27</sup>Agnes was a great collector of books in her own right, and eight of her volumes are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

<sup>28</sup>Anne owned three anthologies of the works of Christine de Pisan, one of her favorite authors, for five volumes of her books were bound in red velvet. See A.M. Chazaud Les Enseignements d'Anne de France a sa Fille Suzanne de Bourbon Moulins: Desrosiers (1878) pp. 255-256.

<sup>29</sup>For more information on this important link between the two courts see C. C. Willard "A Portuguese Translation" p. 459. Willard offers Philippa, youngest sister of the queen, as a possible translator of the Treasure. She resided at the Convent of Odivelas and was a well known author and translator. (Madrid BN MS 11,515).

Burgundy as a gift from Isabel of Portugal to her niece and namesake. Queen Isabel's concern for the welfare of her nieces and nephews was well known, as was as her family's taste for moralizing literature. The Portuguese translation was subsequently published at the request of Queen Leonor of Portugal in 1518.

Jeanne of France, daughter of Charles VII is among the prestigious owners of Le trésor de la cité des dames living at the end of the century (Paris, BN fr. 452). The first printed editions were dedicated to Anne of Brittany, Queen of France and wife of Louis XII and Francis I. Additionally a copy of Le trésor now in University and Public Library of Geneva, MS fr. 180, with eight miniatures, (figs. 6-13 to 6-20) also came from the library of a Breton nobleman Jean de Malestroit and his wife Hélène de Laval who owned a copy of Christine's Epistre Othea as well.<sup>30</sup>

La cité des dames was also printed, but only in English, by Pepwell in 1521. The Le trésor, as noted above, was printed in French three times by the middle of the sixteenth century, due to the early interest of the Queen, Anne of Brittany in the education of the women at her court.<sup>31</sup> Of Christine de Pizan's works only the

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<sup>30</sup>Paris, BN fr. 1187, see Willard "Audience" p. 349.

<sup>31</sup>For more on the English translation see Bornstein, Distaves and Dames: Renaissance Treatises For and About Women (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints,

Epistre Othea was printed more often. Earlier evidence of the popularity of Le trésor can be seen in the proliferation of paper manuscripts which preceded its first printing. Nine paper manuscripts from the second half of the fifteenth-century survive, indicating the esteem this work held for a new, educated and non-aristocratic reading public which would shortly become the mainstay of the printers trade.<sup>32</sup> It was only after the French translation of Baldassare Castiglione's Book of the Courtier in 1538, which introduced new tastes in social behavior, that the popularity of Le trésor began to wane. Christine's ideas must have seemed moralizing and old-fashioned, practical only when applied to the realities of Parisian court society of 1400, a century earlier. Revival of interest in the works of Christine de Pizan would occur from time to time over the succeeding centuries, first as a curiosity, then as a poet, and finally, in the twentieth century, as a writer who sought to encourage and instruct the women of her time through text and image in the manuscripts of La cité des dames and its Le trésor.

Miniaturists at this time, with rare exception, worked from written instructions of the writer, patron or theological advisor, or from other manuscript models.<sup>33</sup>

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1978) xi-xvi.

<sup>32</sup>C. Willard, "Audience" pp. 439-40.

<sup>33</sup>Hindman, Epistre Othea, p. 66.

All the copies of the La cité and Le trésor produced in the period between 1405-1430 have rubrics describing the opening of each chapter, and often the scene of the miniature. In general, the illuminators began to work on the manuscript only after it had passed through the hands of a bookseller or author to the scribe, who left spaces for the miniatures.<sup>34</sup> Christine's literary sources for La cité des dames, Ovid, Boccaccio, the Jacobus de Voragine's Golden Legend, Histoire ancienne were also often sumptuously illuminated and laden with beautiful miniatures, providing both literary and visual models for both the authoress and the artist. Christine and the artists who worked for her had access to the many illuminated copies of Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus, illustrating many of the same stories in Christine's text. These were never used as models for the miniatures of La cité des dames or Le trésor de la cité des dames, during her lifetime, for Christine preferred to emphasize the dramatic action in these two works, rather than their

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<sup>34</sup>R.G. Calkins, "Stages of Execution: Procedures of Illumination as Revealed in an Unfinished Book of Hours," Gesta 17 (1978) 61-70. See the discussion of the manuscript as book in S. Hindman and J. Farquhar, Pen to Press, (Univ. of Maryland, 1977) pp. 11-100, for an exhaustive account of the construction of such volumes with miniatures.

biographical or narrative content.<sup>35</sup> Later miniatures produced after Christine's death, such as London BL Add. 20698, in contrast, display a copious concern for illustrating every biographical tale. (figs. 6-21 to 6-61) The Italianate style of La cité des dames Master considered in Chapter Four where the miniatures of this Master are discussed, may have been inspired by frescos in the Collegiata of San Gimignano, for copies of compositions and scenes from this Italian fresco are used throughout a Bible produced by this workshop, Paris, BN fr. 9.<sup>36</sup>

Iconographically the three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, appearing in both the La cité and its sequel Le trésor are something of an amalgamation enlivened by original touches by the La cité des dames Master. Their origins are mysterious, and may have been inspired by a lost fresco, or book illuminations from Italy. Emile Male, seemingly unaware of these manuscripts of Christine de Pizan, states that the representation of the virtues with their attributes are rare in fourteenth and fifteenth-century French art, particularly before 1470, although they

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<sup>35</sup>These miniatures did provide models for Christine's Epistre Othea, and other earlier works. See Hindman, Epistre, pp. 194-203.

<sup>36</sup>Willard, "Ideal or Practical?", p. 94.

abound in Italy.<sup>37</sup> As Christine's work exemplifies, the ties between Italy and France at this time were many, varied, and strong, especially with regard to the importing of books from Italy among noted bibliophiles such as Jean, Duke of Berry and Charles V of France. Christine's three Virtues are very different from their theological counterpart, having a much stronger link to the more earth bound cardinal virtues. They appear before the writer emblazoned with light rousing Christine from her melancholy thoughts, as she writes "And as I lifted my head to see where the light was coming from, I saw three crowned ladies standing before me, and the splendor of their bright faces shone on me and throughout the room."<sup>38</sup> Christine was familiar with Martin of Braga's De quatuor virtutibus which Jean de Courtecuisse translated for Duke Jean of Berry in 1403.<sup>39</sup> This translation had already inspired an earlier work of Christine's entitled Le livre de prudence. Justice is the most recognizable of the trio, normally identified by a sword or scales which she carries. Christine's Justice holds a "vessel of fine gold" given to her by God "to measure out to each his rightful portion". Rectitude

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<sup>37</sup>E. Male L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen age en France; étude sur l'iconographie du moyen age et sur sources a' Inspiration, Paris: 1908, pp. 309-328.

<sup>38</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Willard, "Ideal or Practical", p. 94.

or Droiture, meaning Right-action, has the same attribute she held in Phillipe de Mezieres' Songe, the ruler, but she defines herself more particularly in the La cité as one who visits "the just and exhorts them to do what is right... This shining ruler which you see me carry in my right hand instead of a scepter is the straight ruler which separates right from wrong and shows the difference between good and evil...It is the rod of Peace."<sup>40</sup>

The inspiration for Reason may very well have been Christine's desire to attack Jean de Meung, for Dame Reason of the Roman de la Rose was the subject of much debate over the problem of freedom in literature in the correspondence of the "Quarrel". Reason in the La cité holds a "mirror of self-knowledge" surrounded by gems, to show "each man and woman his or her own special qualities and faults".<sup>41</sup> Reason is the first Virtue to speak to Christine in the La cité, and together they build the foundation of their utopia on the solid bricks provided by the lives of ancient heroines.

In the manuscripts produced in the early part of the century the Virtues are pictured as solidly as they were described by the author, sound, direct, active and strong. Their garments are quite fine, costly houppelandes or

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<sup>40</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 13-14.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

brightly colored cotehardies great ladies of this date wear at this time, although the Master of La cité des dames portrays Christine's Virtues in a far less elaborate manner.<sup>42</sup> They wear no jewelry or bells or bright gold bezants as was the custom save for their crowns, attributes belts, and in one case, a necklace (fig. 4-8) As each Virtue takes her turn as narrator-discussant at the beginning of each Part, she is shown in the accompanying miniature in robes royal, the ceremonial garments worn by the aristocracy on official occasions.

The duties of the three virtues are made quite clear: to prepare women for citizenship in the City of Ladies, through the inspiration of history now clearly viewed in Reason's mirror, and through hard-working lives as recounted in the lessons taught at the Feminine College. Christine's objectives are thus in harmony with those of the earliest Italian humanists, just beginning to write about the qualities which form the ideal citizen.<sup>43</sup>

The dissemination of La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames across Europe over the succeeding generations brought about a variety of changes in the style and iconography of the miniatures painted to accompany and elucidate the text, and in some cases the text itself was

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<sup>42</sup>B. Payne, History of Costume, (N.Y.: 1965) p. 235.

<sup>43</sup>Willard, "Ideal or Practical?" p. 95.

altered over the years.<sup>44</sup> The brides of Burgundy and Berry brought their books with them to their new homes in England, Portugal, the Netherlands and Austria, transmitting Christine's ideas over a wide geographical area. Copies would be made of these books often by workshops having no illustrated texts to follow. The most immediate changes one sees in the miniatures from various regional workshops is naturally in their style of execution and in the garments and headdress the ladies wear. The three Virtues in a copy of the Le trésor produced in Utrecht, The Hague KB MS 131 C 26, for example, though box-like in figure and out of scale with the architecture, nevertheless are softly modeled, and display the mannered poise and curving silhouette of the International Gothic style. (fig. 5-13 to 5-16) Interestingly, in the only two extant manuscripts of Le trésor de la cité des dames illustrated before 1430, Boston PL MS fr. Med. 101 and Paris, BN fr. 25294, the Virtues do not hold any attributes. (figs. 4-14 & 4-15) In The Hague's MS 131 C 26 copy of the Le trésor, they hold attributes, but not the ones assigned to them by Christine in their first appearance in the La cité. Instead of the mirror, the ruler and the vessel, the virtues now carry the scales, the sword and the rod.

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<sup>44</sup>The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26.

In general throughout the century the dress of all the figures becomes increasingly more ornate and richly ornamental. The crowns of the Virtues disappear, or perch atop a dizzying assortment of turbans, henins and caul. (fig. 6-2) Depending on the region of the workshop, the Virtues look as thin and brittle as insects in their tight fitting gowns and pinched waists and arms (figs. 5-7 to 5-9 and 6-22 to 6-26) as powerful and robust as country laborers (figs. 6-28 to 6-24), as ostentatious and jewel encrusted as icons (figs. 5-18 to 5-21), as ephemeral and lithe as angels (figs. 5-10 to 5-12) or as exotic and as eastern empresses (figs. 6-2 & 6-10).

This study investigates the miniatures of all of the manuscripts chronologically, comparing each miniature with its accompanying text, and all known visual and iconographic sources for the image. The manuscripts have been grouped together according to the dates of their production. Chapter Four discusses the seven manuscripts with miniatures created between 1405-1425. Chapter Five examines the eight manuscripts produced in the period from 1425-1465, and the final group of eight manuscripts, discussed in Chapter Six, were made from 1465 through the end of the century, including the woodcuts of the printed Pepwell codex of 1521. In each chapter La cité des dames will be treated first, followed by Le trésor de la cité des

dames.

Exploring the changes and alterations made to the miniatures during the course of the century yields an abundant harvest of information on the relationship of the text and the image in vernacular literature of the later middle ages in Northern Europe. The significance of these texts is due both to their dedication to and ownership by women, a factor playing a varying, yet unceasing contribution to the development of the miniatures. What images of womanhood are offered? Are they in harmony with Christine's original concept? Do the artists turn to other visual sources for illustration because of changing court tastes, or do they simply lack a model? Is integrity of word and image preserved? Many times the miniatures betray surprising ingenuity in their delightful provincial style. In a few cases artist and patron attempt an ambitious program of such meticulous fidelity to Christine's text which would have astonished not only the original patrons, but the author herself.

## PART II

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### La cité des dames (1405-1425)

Five manuscripts of La cité des dames painted during the earliest period of production, 1405-1425, survive. La cité des dames Master, under Christine's supervision, painted the first miniatures, which were then used as a model for other artists of this workshop assigned to illuminate the text.<sup>1</sup> Four of the codices were painted between 1405-10, the first two, presented in 1405 to the Duke of Burgundy, Brussels BR MS 9393, and the Duke of Berry, Paris BN MS fr. 607, by the Master of the workshop, now known as La cité des dames Master.<sup>2</sup> Soon thereafter two other copies of La cité were produced by the workshop, Paris BN MSS fr. 1178 and 1179.<sup>3</sup> A fifth copy, compiled and constructed between 1410-1415, was later included in the deluxe Oeuvres presented to Queen Isabelle of France.<sup>4</sup> The three scenes depicted in each manuscript discussed below are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>London, BL MS 31841 is erroneously listed as La cité des dames by the British Library, when its single miniature illustrates the opening scene from Le trésor de la cité des dames, and will be discussed in the second section.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of other extant manuscripts illuminated by City of Ladies Workshop see M. Meiss, French Painting at the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries, (New York: Braziller, 1974) 1, pp. 377-382.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>4</sup>Hindman, Epistre Othea, pp. 14-16.

1. The three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, appear to Christine at left, Reason and Christine lay the foundation for the City at right.
2. Rectitude welcomes Christine and heroic ladies to the City.
3. Justice and Christine welcome the Virgin and saints to the City.

These scenes are fully described in the first manuscript of this group discussed below, Brussels BR MS 9393, and as the miniatures of this early period are all so similar, only significant deviations from this model will be noted in the final four manuscripts of this section.

BRUSSELS BR, MS 9393  
La cité des dames, folios 3, 35v, 74v.  
 c. 1405  
 French, Paris  
La cité des dames Master

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This volume is separately bound, and was owned by John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, (d.1419) and is included in the inventory of his library when inherited by his son, Philip the Good, in 1420.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Recorded in Gaspar and Lyna, Principaux manuscrits, no. 172. (Meiss L 419) See also Georges Dogaer and Marguerite Debae La Librairie de Philippe le Bon: exposition organisée a l'occasion du 500 anniversaire de la mort du duc, Brussels:1967, pp.102-103.

## THE ARTIST

La cité des dames Master takes his name from his most well-known commission, his workshop's illustration of five manuscripts of Christine de Pisan's La cité des dames.<sup>6</sup> Christine demonstrates a "consistency of taste" according to Millard Meiss by engaging talented illuminators familiar with some aspects of Italian painting, La cité des dames Master, the Epistre Master, and the Egerton Master.<sup>7</sup> La cité des dames Master's style exemplifies the influence of Italian art in the monumentality of the well-proportioned figures, the use of green under-painting to achieve flesh tones and the clarity and order of the architectural environments.<sup>8</sup> Additionally the artist illustrates familiarity with the work of an earlier Parisian artist, the great illuminator Jacquemart de Hesdin. Bright, primary colors, active poses and delicate landscapes characterize the compositions of La cité des dames Master. The vivacity and curving elegance of the vigorous figures in these miniatures betrays some adherence to the tastes of the Courtly

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<sup>6</sup> London, BL Harley 4431; Paris, BN fr. 1178; BN fr. 1179; BN fr. 607; Brussels, BR fr. 9393.

<sup>7</sup> Millard Meiss is responsible for naming and identifying the City of Ladies Master and the Epistre Master. See his mention of this in his classic study The Limbourgs, cited above, pp. 12-15.

<sup>8</sup> M. Meiss, "The Exhibition of French Manuscripts of the XIII-XVI Centuries at the Bibliothèque Nationale", Art Bull. XXXVIII (1956) 193.

style developed in northern Europe at this time. The combination of these qualities not only made La cité des dames Master a favorite artist of Christine de Pizan, but of Jean of Berry as well.<sup>9</sup> Brussels BR MS 9393 is one of the first copies of this manuscript to include miniatures, presented by Christine to the Duke of Burgundy in 1405.

#### FRAME

The first half-page miniature on fol. 3 is framed on all four sides and between the two columns of text with a delicate gold rinceau border. This spray is composed of the traditional trifoliate ivy leaves of gold leaf found in French miniatures from 1380-1420. The vine scrolls, tendrils and sprays, accented dashes of black ink, sprout from the bars of blue and red framing the text on the left, right and bottom of the folio. Several blue, red and gold rosettes are found within the vine scroll. In the two smaller miniatures, fols. 35v and 74v, the gold sprays, tendrils and buds are placed to the left of the miniature, extending the full length of the column, and half its width on the top and bottom. The foliage emerges in the last two

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<sup>9</sup>For a list of manuscripts by the City of Ladies Master in Jean of Berry's library see M. Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry. The Late Fourteenth Century and the Patronage of the Duke. 2 vol. London: Phaidon, 1967, I, pp. 309-318. For a list of all extant manuscripts of the City of Ladies Master see pp. 356-357.

miniatures from gold poles which are themselves extensions of the foliate initial "A" painted in blue against an elaborate background.

#### THE MINIATURES

BRUSSELS, BR 9393; FOLIO 3 (fig.4-1)

This large, half-page miniature contains two scenes and is located at the top of the page above two columns of text. On the left side the action takes place in a simple architectural setting. The column attached to the far right of the room divides the two scenes into two parts. The room and the fortress wall sit on the same grassy plain. The cut-away building enclosing Christine and the three Virtues is shown from two sides. Christine is portrayed in a manner altering little in those portraits painted during her lifetime. She customarily wears a royal blue close-fitting cotehardie, here of an exceptionally daring cut<sup>10</sup>, with short, square-ended hanging sleeves. No doubt these garments reflects her own manner of dressing, since she approved their inclusion in all such portraits.

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<sup>10</sup>The cotehardie is a closely-fitting outer dress, made of one or two pieces, often having short sleeves to which false sleeves could be attached. At this time it was worn under more formal clothes, or alone, as a street dress. Due to its daring cut, older women such as Christine, would usually wear a piece of cloth covering the exposed chest. For a full description of all costume terms, see the glossary.

It certainly serves to make her instantly recognizable to the reader. Her headdress is equally unchanging in these early miniatures, and it represents a type favored by La cité des dames Master, seen repeatedly in many of productions of this workshop.<sup>11</sup> Christine's headdress is comprised of several fine white linen veils widely-stretched between two horns made of wire or some rigid form. She stands in front of a desk covered in a bright green cloth, holding three books, one closed on the lower shelf, one stacked on the top complete with clasp, and the third Christine holds open with her right hand. Leaning against a semi-circular chair Christine's pose creates a graceful, though contained, gothic silhouette. The bottom edge of her gown folds up to reveal a white fur lining. Christine's skin is pale, and her face is small and round.

On the opposite side of the table stand the three virtues. Reason's costume is hard to make out. She stands to the far left in a reddish gown with white accents, which may be the very robes royale she wears again in her second appearance with Christine at the right.<sup>12</sup> She is holding a

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<sup>11</sup>M. Scott, The History of Dress Series: Late Gothic Europe:1400-1500, (New Jersey: 1980) p. 90.

<sup>12</sup>Meiss remarks that this is the only time Reason is dressed in the same costume she wears at the right side of the miniature (Limbourgs p. 13) in any of the miniatures produced by this workshop. He describes her dress as red with a white bodice. In fact each Virtue wears cotehardie, surcoat and white plastron, or the robe royale in the

mirror. In the center stands Rectitude in a simple blue cotehardie with a large ruler in her right hand. Justice is closest to the front of the picture plane, wearing a scarlet houppelande with a high white collar, wide sleeves turned back to reveal fur lining and a black belt studded with gold. She holds a cylindrical vessel. All the virtues have the same small round face, and their blonde hair is coiled over their ears, forming two round buns at each side of their head.<sup>13</sup> Their hair is delicately highlighted, and they each wear a crown of gold leaf. Reason is the only one shown in profile, a convention maintained in all depictions of her in this scene by La cité des dames Master.

Occupying the right side of the miniature, encircled by a wall of pink masonry enlivened by turrets and crenelations, are Christine and Reason building their city of words. Christine, again in her blue cotehardie, holds her gown securely with her left hand, as she spreads the

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miniatures accompanying the Books containing their lectures. Robe royale is the name given those garments "frozen" from the early part of the fourteenth-century, now being reserved for ceremonial use by the royal family and the aristocracy throughout the fifteenth-century. See M. Scott, The Late Gothic Europe p. 150.

<sup>13</sup> This very popular hairstyle of 1380-1410 can be seen on many depictions of women from this period. The most well known example would be found in the Calendar pages of Trés riches heures de Jean duc de Berry c. 1416, particularly April, May and August.

mortar with her trowel with her right hand. Reason, still clothed in robes royale, a red cotehardie, gold hip-belt and a white fur plastron, lifts a brick to place on the "circuit and enclosure wall"<sup>14</sup> to protect the City they are building. Both scenes are placed against a heraldic diapered background of red, blue and gold squares decorated with small four-lobed rosettes.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 3

This miniature conveys the action described in the text simply and directly. Christine writes that when the virtues appeared she was "leaning on the pommel of my chair's armrest" but during their introductory speeches she tell us that "having stood up out of respect, I looked at them". The miniature telescopes the two moments, showing Christine both leaning against the round-backed chair and standing at the same time. Of the virtues Christine writes "I saw three crowned ladies standing before me" and later "the three ladies resembled each other so much that they

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<sup>14</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, II.1, p. 99. At the beginning of Book Two Rectitude commands Christine to "mix the mortar in your ink bottle so you can fortify the City with your tempered pen". The Virtue in this scene, although depicted without an attribute, has always been identified as Reason, helping Christine build the protecting wall. The miniature characteristically illustrates a great trough of mortar, representing the ink of the author's pen, and therefore as Christine's contribution to the City, her visual attribute in these opening miniatures.

could be told apart only with difficulty, except for the last one, for although she was of no less authority than the others, she had so fierce a visage..." The artist follows the description accurately, but distinguishes Justice only by her elaborate, high-collared gown, which does in fact accentuate her face.

Each virtue carries the attribute Christine describes in the text. Reason, the narrator of Part One, holds a mirror encircled by precious gems, acclaiming that "no one can look into this mirror...without achieving self-knowledge"<sup>15</sup> Rectitude, narrator of Part Three, says "This shining ruler which you see me carry in my right hand instead of a scepter is the straight ruler which separates right from wrong and shows the difference between good and evil...It is the rod of peace...which beats and strikes down evil."<sup>16</sup> Finally Justice, Christine's guide in Part Three, poses "holding this vessel of fine gold...made like a generous measure, God, My Father, gave me, and it serves to measure out to each his rightful portion. It carries the fleur-de-lis of the Trinity."<sup>17</sup> In this miniature however, the vessel which Justice holds does not display the fleur-de-lis, nor are the gems visible on Reason's

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid. pp. 8-9.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

mirror. The Master of La cité des dames always chooses to emphasize action over detail, describing the drama of the text with sparing simplicity, in sharp contrast to depictions of this same scene in late fifteenth-century miniatures discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

The scene to the right shows the activity of Part One, when Christine and Reason "go to the field of Letters. There the City of Ladies will be founded on a flat and fertile plain."<sup>18</sup> The right half of the miniature illustrates the lively task of Christine and Reason described in Part One of La cité, where the earthly and the divine combine forces and construct their fortified city of refuge. These chapters are narrated by Reason, so she is shown wearing the honorable robes royale. The miniaturist actively illustrates this scene, showing the two women building the protective walls of the fortress for the City.<sup>19</sup> The stones littering the lawn in this miniature can also be seen in Paris BN fr. 607 and London BL Harley 4431. (figs. 4-4 & 4-12) When Reason and Christine begin to construct the fortifications for the city Reason must first clear away "the dirty, and uneven stones" symbolizing various attacks and negative opinions men have written

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid,. p. 16.

<sup>19</sup>For a discussion of the implications of this allegorical fortress, see above Chapter Two "The Meaning of the Texts".

about women since the beginning of time, the very source of Christine's present melancholy.<sup>20</sup>

BRUSSELS, BR 9393; FOLIO 35v (fig.4-2)

This scene found above the right column of text illustrates Rectitude followed by a group of aristocratic into the unfinished city. Part Two honors the sibyls, prophets, Queens and heroines whose lives demonstrate some of the many honorable acts of love and selflessness performed by women throughout history. Before a city of grey and blue towers girded by a rose-colored fortifications (still under construction, for a laborer hoists a beam of timber by rope and pulley in the upper left corner of the miniature) stand five women, including Christine and Rectitude. The figures are large in scale in comparison to the architecture. Rectitude is crowned and now wears the robes royale Reason was seen wearing in the miniature depicting the opening action of Part One. (fig. 4-1) There is one minor change, for now the cotehardie is deep blue. Rectitude stands before her noble entourage indicating the city with a sweeping gesture of her left palm. She grasps the hand of a richly dressed woman in an apple-green cotehardie with long slit-sleeves over a red under-gown. This lady wears a black bouurrelet over her

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<sup>20</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 18.

blond hair. Behind her stands a woman in a white horned veil arrangement and a brown cotehardie. This trio is followed by a lady with a gold diadem and unbound blond hair, in a pink houppelande made with such an abundance of fabric it has been folded to form tucks and pleats along the bodice under her high belt. Last in this group is woman easily identified as Christine, dressed in her traditional white headdress and blue gown seen first in folio 3. The ladies stand on a grey cobble stone road moving through the arched entrance into the City. The background is a diapered blue, red and gold.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 35v

This miniature does not illustrate a dramatic scene described literally in the text. At the end of Part Two Christine welcomes "honored princesses of France and all lands, and all ladies and maidens, and, indeed, all women who have loved and do love and will love virtue and morality" to take residence in the lodgings just built for them in the City.<sup>21</sup> It is these ladies who are pictured in the miniature, now invited to reside and take refuge within the newly built residences.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

BRUSSELS, BR 9393; FOLIO 74v (fig.4-3)

This miniature is placed above the left column of text at the opening of Part Three. Crowded with figures divided into two clusters, the first group, led by Justice, spill out from the arched entrance to the city, no longer under construction, its gaily patterned roofs finally set in place. Justice, crowned and clothed in an ermine plastron, is in the act of kneeling to greet the holy women who approach the city gate. Behind Justice kneel all the women seen in the previous miniature of Part Two, one even throws up her hands up in a gesture of surprise or awe. To her right kneels Christine, and behind this front trio rises a profusion of twelve horned headdresses, bourelets, and various profiles.

The group of women entering the city on the cobblestone path all have halos, and carry attributes. Heading the holy conclave is the Virgin Mary in a blue mantle and gown, holding a book and a gold scepter. She is also crowned, and wears her hair long and unbound. The Virgin is followed by Mary Magdalene in a white veil wrapped tightly around her head, attached to a wimple covering her chin.<sup>22</sup> Her mantle is a rosy-orange worn over

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<sup>22</sup>The custom of covering the chin was prevalent in the fourteenth-century, and was associated with widows and members of religious orders. Later it became associated with the poor, elderly and unfashionable. See G. de Courtais, Women's Headdress, (London: Batsford Ltd., rev.

a plain brown gown. She holds an ointment jar. By her side stands St. Catherine of Alexandria, in a red cloak worn over a bright green gown, with a gold fillet atop her curly blonde hair. She holds a book and the palm of martyrdom. The story of the martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria is one of the first mentioned in the early chapters of Part Three. The other holy women are indicated by a grape-cluster of gold leaf haloes.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 74v

The opening action of Part Three is accurately described in this scene. Justice commands all the inhabitants of the City of Ladies to rejoice and welcome their Queen, the Virgin Mary<sup>23</sup>, and her noble company of saints. She asks that "princesses, ladies and all women come forward to receive her with the greatest honor and reverence"<sup>24</sup>. The lives of saints Mary Magdalene and Catherine of Alexandria are the first to be told in this final section, and they are easily identifiable by their

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ed. 1986) p. 24 & 25, fig. 31.

<sup>23</sup>Announcing the Virgin Mary as the Queen of La cit} des dames guaranteed the validity of this new universal history of women Christine was writing. In the later middle ages no higher authority could have been chosen by her to empower this culmination of the New Kingdom of Femininity with the proper authority.

<sup>24</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 217-218.

attributes of ointment jar and older woman's veil and wimple for the Magdalene, and martyrs palm and courtly attire for the learned Catherine.<sup>25</sup> The other saints are merely indicated by a grape-cluster of haloes behind these three.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: BRUSSELS BR 9393

The miniatures of Brussels, BR 9393 are finely and delicately painted. They reveal an ordered sense of space and a well-organized composition devoted to portraying the action described in the text with directness and clarity. Brightly colored, figure, architecture and object are delicately shaded with tiny parallel hair-like lines. The faces of the figures are expressive, as are their compact, well-proportioned and animated forms. A great deal of attention is given to costume, used not only to convey an aesthetic sense, but to indicate the status of the

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<sup>25</sup>Catherine of Alexandria is second only to Mary Magdalene in popularity, and the two are often represented in art, frequently together. Catherine's attributes are the wheel, sword, book or martyrs palm. Her inclusion in Christine's text is particularly appropriate as she was a patron of education and learning. The details of her torture on four wheels studded with iron spikes is a common one in painting, derived from The Golden Legend by Jacobus Voragine. The Magdalene's invariable attribute is the ointment jar. Legends abounded in France concerning her reputed pilgrimage to Provence, where her relics were "discovered" in the 13th century, adding momentum to the growth of her cult of followers. Here again, the source for the visual details of her life are also based on The Golden Legend.

individual portrayed. The sophistication of these miniatures down to the last detail make this manuscript a good candidate for the model created by the Master of La cité des dames, to be followed with very little variation by other artists of this workshop.

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PARIS BN FR 607

La cité des dames; folios 2, 31v, 67v.

c. 1405

French, Paris

La cité des dames Master

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This manuscript was presented to Jean, Duke of Berry in 1405, and bears his signature.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>M. Meiss, Limbourgs, p. 434, no. 31.

#### THE ARTIST

The early date and high quality of the miniatures found in this manuscript also make it a likely candidate for the original model painted by La cité des dames Master for other artists in his workshop to follow. It is the only one of the five versions produced by this workshop to replace the diapered background with an atmospheric dappled blue sky.

#### FRAME

A traditional French ivy vine scroll made of gold leaf fills the margins around the half page miniature and the space between the two columns of text on fol. 2. In the two smaller miniatures, fols. 31v and 67v, the gold tendrils sprout from the bars to the left of each miniature, extending along the full length of the column into the top and bottom margins. The bars are themselves extensions of the foliate initials "A"'s found beneath the miniatures and the rubrics.

#### THE MINIATURES

PARIS BN FR. 607; FOLIO 2 (fig.4-4)

This half-page miniature illustrates the narrative described in the opening pages of Part One of La cité des dames. The interior scene to the left is set in a pale grey room with a wood beamed ceiling, brown tiled floor,

single window and arched doorway. Inside, Christine leans against the same round back chair while holding a book open on the desk before her. The desk is now solid, with a door, and is covered in a burgundy cloth. A small red book and a large green bound manuscript are stacked on the right corner of the desk. Christine again wears her preferred blue cotehardie over a red sleeved gown. In addition to her usual white linen veils, the folds of a wimple are clearly visible across her neck and breast, modestly covering the shoulders and chest area normally exposed by the cotehardie. This widow's modesty contrasts sharply with the décolleté revealed in BR ms. 9393, fol 3 (fig.4-1). Also, in this portrait Christine's face is less expressive and her skin has taken on a grey tone not seen in the previous manuscript.

The three Virtues, complete with blonde coiled hair and gold-leaf crowns, face her on the opposite side of the desk. Reason with her mirror, in a gold cotehardie, stands to the left, Rectitude with her ruler, wearing a rich blue houppelande, in the center, and Justice, now visible in full-length, holds her gold vessel, and wears the surcoat, gown and plastron comprising the ceremonial robes royale.

The action described in Part One is illustrated in the right half of the miniature. Christine and Reason work together to build the protective wall of the city. Bricks,

a trough of mortar, and pieces of stone or masonry litter the grassy, flower bedecked field of their labor. Christine works eagerly, mindful of her gown. She also wears her wimple in this scene. Reason holds the next brick to be laid. She wears the same ceremonial robes Justice wears in the adjoining scene. The dappled, hazy sky, ranging from pale blue to lapis from the ground to the top of the miniature, is quite unique among this first group of miniatures. In the compositions of Paris, BN MS fr. 607 there is more emphasis on the figures and less on the setting than seen in Brussels, BR 9393, or a more emphasis on what is being done, rather than where the action is taking place.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 2

As in BR MS 9393, the miniature illustrates the activity related in Part One of the text with the directness and vigor customary of the Master of La cité des dames. The addition of a wimple to Christine's dress seems logical and appropriate, in accordance with her status as a widow.

#### PARIS, BN FR. 607; FOLIO 31v (fig.4-5)

This quarter-page miniature covers one column of text, and portrays the first group of honorable women invited to take residence in the city, described in Part Two.

Rectitude places her left hand against the arch of the city gate, and grasps the hand of an aristocratic woman in outfitted in a bourrelet and a cotehardie with long trailing slit-sleeves. Four other women follow, and one is actually cut off by the edge of the miniature at left, implying that the action of the scene extends beyond the frame of the miniature, adding to its sense of space. As before, a single workman can be seen completing the unfinished roofs. The figures dominate the delicate and brightly colored city which they are about to enter. The same cobblestone path is used discussed above in the contemporaneous Brussels BR 9393. The diapered background of the Brussels manuscript has again been abandoned in favor of the naturalistic blue sky seen in the opening miniature of fol. 2.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 31v

The welcoming of noble and worthy ladies to La cité des dames is the subject of this miniature. The action of this scene is implied throughout Part Two, and first mentioned in Part One when the Virtues divulge their plan to Christine, to have her write a history of the great deeds of womankind, and to build, with the "mortar" of her ink and the "bricks" of each woman's deeds a city "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."<sup>27</sup> The women being led into the city could be, therefore, a combination of historic figures and present and future women seeking refuge.

PARIS, BN FR 607; FOLIO 67v (fig.4-6)

This miniature is placed above the column of text opening Part Three. The women residing in the City of Ladies rush out of its arched city gate, to joyfully welcome and kneel before their Queen, the Virgin Mary, and her saintly entourage. They are led by Justice in her ceremonial robes, and Christine can be identified, again due to her standard dress, as the figure kneeling at the far right. The Virgin, Mary Magdalene and Catherine of Alexandria are depicted with customary attributes as seen above in Brussels BR 9393.(fig. 4-3) The figures are smaller in scale in relationship to the architectural setting than in all other depictions of this scene from the beginning of the fifteenth-century.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 67v

The opening of Part Three is the subject of this miniature. The roofs are finished, and it is time to house its highest towers with the Queen "with her noble company, so that she may rule and govern the City". Justice

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<sup>27</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 11.

requests that all women come forward to honor and greet her, which is exactly what is portrayed in this miniature.<sup>28</sup>

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PARIS BN FR 607

The miniatures of Paris BN fr. 607 display the use of many fine feather-light brush strokes in all three cases. The colors are pure and unclouded, yet are never applied in solid blocks of one hue, for close observation reveals the subtle modeling of forms with many small strokes. The ladies go about their tasks, dressed in the latest court fashion, as one might expect for any work presented to that great patron of the art of the book, Jean, Duke of Berry. Yet when these charming figures are compared with those created by their contemporaries, the Limbourgs, they suddenly take on a more solid and earthly appearance. (fig.4-16) While La cité des dames Master betrays an adherence to the mannered refinements of the International Gothic style, the forms, instead of being bodiless and ethereal, are robust, vivacious and not overly ornamented with richly patterned brocades, bezants, daggings and gold embroideries as is so common in miniatures of this period. Instead, the decorative pattern in Paris, BN MS fr. 607 is found on the bricks, background, tile, cobblestone, rather

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

than on the figures themselves. This manuscript illustrates, along with Brussels, BR 9393, why this anonymous artist was named after the work conveying such a distinctive, vigorous, monumental and yet courtly style to its fullest, La cité des dames.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: PARIS, BN FR. 607

Camille Gaspar and Frédéric Lyna, Les Principaux manuscrits a peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, 2 vol. (1937) rpt. 1984.

Millard Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries, New York: Braziller (1974) pp. 12-15, 290, 378 & 381.

L. Schaeffer, Die Illustrationen zu den Handschriften der Christine de Pisan, in Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft, 10, 1937, pl. 116, 118, 120.

PARIS, BN FR 1178  
La cité des dames folios 3, 64v & 135.  
 1405-1410  
 French, Paris  
La cité des dames Workshop

#### THE ARTIST

This manuscript was created by La cité des dames Workshop soon after the Master of the workshop completed BR MS 9393 and BN fr. 607, and its three miniatures resemble these earlier works both in composition and the moment of the text illustrated by the artist. These miniatures, and those of BN fr. 1179 and Harley 4431 discussed below, are products of La cité des dames Workshop, painted by artists

following the earlier established pattern designed by their master for Christine's texts.

#### FRAME

On folio 3 of Paris BN fr. 1178 the miniature and two columns of text are framed by a narrow ivy vine scroll of gold leaf. This marginal decoration is more symmetrical and less densely packed as others previously discussed from this time period. The margin decoration springs from a three gold and blue bars on the sides and bottom of the text, and from the modelled initial "S" found in the lower third of the right hand column. On the folio 64v the rinseau border is found in the left column, spilling over to cover one-half of the top and bottom margins over the left column of text. On folio 135 there is no border decoration, but the gold pole and ivy vine scroll sprays of gold leaf fill the space between the two columns of text. The foliage in the last two miniatures are themselves extensions of the foliate initial "A" found beneath the miniatures.

#### THE MINIATURES

PARIS, BN FR. 1178: FOLIO 3 (fig.4-7)

The figures in this manuscript are more elongated and mannered than all of the others produced by this workshop. This half-page miniature portrays the customary two scenes

within a single frame from Part One of the text. The interior to the left is encased in a grey-blue building with more architectural details than is usual along the top of the building. There is even some brownish weathering illustrated along the left wall. The window is large, square and divided into four parts. Inside, the ceiling is red, no door is shown on the right, although it may be implied behind the right column. The floor tile is bright green and black squares receding so rapidly that the floor seems to slant. The bright green cloth on Christine's desk has black embroidered stripes along the border, and the color scheme harmonizes with the tile pattern. Inside, a taller, more slender Christine leans against her same round-back chair. She wears her usual blue cotehardie over a pink gown and a white horned headdress. The three virtues, also slimmer and more postured, still carry their attributes and prerequisite blonde horns with gold crowns. Justice wears a dark burgundy gown with elaborate long white open sleeves, and has been given a necklace, both unique elements when compared to other examples of this miniature produced by La cité des dames Workshop.

The building of the wall of the city is located as usual on the right side of the miniature. Christine wears a fine transparent wimple in the construction scene which is not clearly visible in her costume at the left. She

holds the trowel and prepares the wall with mortar for Reason's next brick. Reason wears robes royale of red and white. Both figures are more graceful than customary, and play their parts as if they were involved in a dance rather than a building project. The City's fortification wall is delineated with care, and pink and white highlighting strokes of the brush are quite noticeable and brighten the entire scene. The background is a blue, gold, red and white checked pattern, augmented with gold lines and dots. There are no flowers on the grassy field, but the blades of grass, figure modeling and architectural details are indicated by many tiny, controlled and delicate lines.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 3

As in BR MS 9393 and BN fr. 607, the miniature illustrates the activity related in the Part One of the text with the same clarity and composition dictated in the first models for this scene by La cité des dames Master.

PARIS, BN FR. 1178; FOLIO 64v (fig.4-8)

This miniature is a full half-page, located above two columns of text, an unusually large size for the depiction of the opening of Part Two of La cité. Again, Rectitude leads a group of brightly clad worthies into the nearly completed city. Architecture is given pride of place in this miniature, and the City is nearly presented in its

entirety. In contrast, the figures of the ladies have been drastically reduced in relative scale to the architecture and are more centralized. Additionally, the figures and are placed further back in the picture plane, giving us a wider view of the scene than is customary, almost equalizing the attention on both figures and setting. This miniaturist tries to make the City itself the main subject, painted in a dazzling variety of jewel-like pinks, blues and soft greens, embellished with an array of three flags, highlighted in gold leaf, seen fluttering atop rooftops and finials. The roofs themselves are decorated with lively lozenge and chevron patterns. We still have the single laborer hoisting a beam up on a rope to finish the roofs in the upper left. The artist has eliminated the diaper pattern sky and replaced it with a modeled blue sky, as is found in depictions of this scene in both BN fr. 607 above and the later BL Harley 4431 below. Each tiny figure poses with easy grace in forming the much admired gothic S-curve of the fourteenth-century. Rectitude, in her ceremonial robes, leads her group toward the city gates, grasping the hand of an elegantly clad lady behind her. Rectitude's left hand is raised in a gesture of speech. Christine can be easily distinguished in this group of courtly figures by her plain blue and white costume. The artist has given particular attention to the hair of the women, accentuating

curls with quick, light brushstrokes giving the hair is visible a soft, fuzzy quality.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 64

The welcoming of noble and worthy ladies to the City is illustrated in this miniature. Rectitude narrates the second part of the text, whose task it is to dispel the notion that women are dishonorable in love. She relates the histories of women who not only have loved honorably, but those praised for their prudent and chaste and lives and faithfulness to their loved ones. The group she leads may be those very heroines, or those women who are asked to take refuge within the city walls. The fashionable dress of the women offers no clues for identification, as ancient figures are often clothed in contemporary garments in miniatures, painting and sculpture of the Late Medieval and Renaissance periods.<sup>29</sup>

PARIS, BN FR. 1178; FOLIO 135 (no figure)

This miniature is also given unusual half-page size, looming over two columns of text at the opening of Part

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<sup>29</sup>Historic figures of central importance were often dressed in contemporary fashions. Dress of the previous century sometimes became frozen as in the case of robe royale used for ceremonial purpose, or was used to indicate lower-class status. This is also demonstrated in the design of theatrical costume, as studied by S. Newton in Renaissance Theater Costume, (London: 1975).

Three. Justice, in a red and white surcoat leads the women out of the city to welcome their Queen, the Virgin Mary, and her company of female saints approaching the city gates. The ladies of the city kneel and gesture expressively as a group becoming a jumble of honored headdresses and bouurrelets and brightly colored gowns underneath the arched gateway of the city. It is difficult to identify Christine in this crowd. Behind the Virgin, with crown, scepter and book, stand six haloed figures. Unusually, the Holy women carry few attributes making them difficult to identify in the standard manner. The woman with the wimple and veil is no doubt Mary Magdalene, and her crowned companion in a green-lined blue mantle and rose gown must be St. Catherine of Alexandria, both mentioned in the first pages of the text as well as being painted in all other depictions Part One in manuscripts produced by this workshop.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 135

The opening of Part Three is illustrated in this miniature. The roofs are finished, and the rulers of the City, the Virgin Mary, and her holy court of women saints, are joyfully welcomed by its secular worthies. The scene shows the moment in the text when Justice requests that all women come forward to honor and greet their Queen.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 217.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PARIS, BN FR 1178

The figures of Paris BN fr. 1178 are smaller, more slender and mannered than any of those miniatures painted from 1405-1425 by La cité des dames Workshop. The miniatures, conversely, are larger than is customary for Parts Two and Three, for they have expanded in size to cover two full columns of text. The architecture is given prominence, and on the whole, vivid action is forsaken for gaiety and refinement. The colors used are meticulously paired with those hues offering a sharp, brilliant and fashionable contrast, serving to accent the curving lines of the women and their gowns. In addition, the figures are given a softer silhouette by the artist's blurred and fuzzy modeling. The artist demonstrates a kinship in style with miniatures illustrated by the Epistre Master, who worked on Christine de Pizan's most copiously illustrated text, Epistre Othea. (fig. 4-17)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: PARIS, BN FR 1178

Camille Gaspar and Frédéric Lyna, Les Principaux manuscrits a peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, 2 vol. (1937) rpt. 1984.

Millard Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries, New York: Braziller (1974) pp. 12-15, f. 41.

PARIS, BN FR 1179  
La cité des dames; folio 3  
1405-10  
French, Paris  
La cité des dames Workshop

#### THE ARTIST

This manuscript was created by La cité des dames Workshop within a few years of BR MS 9393 and BN fr. 607 discussed earlier, and its single miniature closely resembles the composition and figure style utilized consistently by other artists following the Master's lead in La cité des dames Workshop.

#### FRAME

The border of this manuscript differs significantly from all others produced by La cité des dames Workshop. Although the margin is filled with the customary gold ivy rinseau associated with French border decoration in Paris in the early fifteenth century, The text and miniature are banded by bars inhabited by single, rigidly symmetrical four-petalled rosettes alternating with paired buds or seed pods. Vines and tendrils sprout from the rosettes to join the outer ivy margin pattern. A modelled initial "S" opens the text.

## THE MINIATURE

PARIS, BN FR. 1179; FOLIO 3 (fig.4-9)

Paris, BN fr. 11779 has only one miniature to illustrate the text, the first half-page scene used in all the above cases to convey the action of the Part One. The painting is damaged and blurred, marring Reason's face as she builds the city wall in the right scene, and blurring the body of Justice in the left half of the miniature. The interior scene at the left, and the masonry to the right are moved extremely close to the picture plane, and little of the grassy field can be seen, except in the lower left corner, and within the confines of the City wall itself. The architecture is colored pale blue, and the wood beamed ceiling is unusually and beautifully decorated with gold fleur-de-lis. The floor tile is quite distinctive, patterned by a crisp black and white checkerboard pattern with rapid and awkwardly receding orthogonals extending to the base of the miniature, adding a tilted, but spacious, quality to the room. Christine, in traditional blue and white attire, leans against her chair holding an open book before her. The desk is solid and covered with a pink cloth and a closed brown book. Reason, Rectitude and Justice are in their usual left to right alignment, and carry the mirror, ruler and vessel as prescribed. The cylindrical vessel of Justice is much larger and bulkier

than customary, resembling a jar or even a woven basket. The figures are stockier and stiffer in execution than was seen in BN fr. 607 or 1178.

The activity of the right side of the miniature represents the standard building activity of Part One of the text. Christine holds her skirt out of harm's way with one hand, as she applies mortar to the fortification wall of the City she and Reason construct. The wall is a simple, smooth surface of masonry, showing none of the beginnings of towers and battlements seen in the other manuscripts. The interior of the fortification wall has an unusual grey color. Reason is clothed in the ceremonial robes of the narrator, although her surcoat is now more orange than red, and the white surcoat is worn over a brown cotehardie. A diaper pattern of blue and gold fills in the background.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 3

As in all the miniatures discussed thus far, Paris, BN fr. 1179 illustrates the opening action of Part One of La cité des dames. It does not differ significantly from the interpretation of the text discussed in all cases above.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: PARIS, BN FR. 1179

Camille Gaspar and F Lyna, Les Principaux manuscrits a peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, 2 vol. (1937) rpt. 1984.

Millard Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries, New York: Braziller (1974) pp. 12-15, 290, 290, 381. fig. 35.

L. Schaeffer, Die Illustrationen zu den Handschriften der Christine de Pisan, in Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft, 10, 1937, pl. 114, pp. 183-187.

LONDON, BL HARLEY 4431  
La cité des dames; folios 3 (frontispiece), 290, 323 & 361.  
 1410-15  
 French, Paris  
 La cité des dames

#### THE MANUSCRIPT

London, BL Harley 4431 contains the Oeuvres (Collected Works)<sup>31</sup> of Christine de Pizan, a deluxe manuscript of 398 folios bound in two volumes, presented to Isabelle of Bavaria, the Queen of France. It contains twenty-nine separate works of Christine de Pizan and constitutes the fullest version of her writings through 1410-15, the date of its completion. Part One consists of her poetic works, folios 1-177, followed by Part Two consisting of her prose works, folios 178-398. A codicological study of the manuscript reveals that it was reconstituted from independent manuscripts, perhaps at the expressed request of Queen Isabelle, to whom this deluxe manuscript was

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<sup>31</sup>The earliest Collected Works of Christine de Pizan is found in Paris, BN MS fr. 606, and does not contain La cité des dames.

dedicated.<sup>32</sup> Her portrait, along with that of Christine de Pizan and other ladies of the court is included in a half-page dedicatory miniature.(fig.4-10) There are 130 miniatures in BL Harley 4431. Each miniature occupies up to one-half of a single column in a two column text area, surrounded by a delicate ivy rinseau border painted by four different border masters. The majority of the miniatures were painted by the workshop of La cité des dames master, although some reveal a collaboration with the Bedford Trend Master.<sup>33</sup> This deluxe edition is especially important, for not only did Christine de Pizan supervise its total production, she also scripted most of the text, with the assistance of the two scribes who regularly worked on her manuscripts.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Hindman, Sandra. "The Composition of Christine de Pizan's Collected Works in the British Library: A Reassessment", British Library Journal. 9, 1983 pp. 93-112. Hindman believes that the Queen asked Christine to make a book which consisted of her complete works formed for the major part by those works already owned by the Queen, which had become favorites, augmented by new works by Christine which the Queen did not possess. For a detailed description of the meticulous cutting and pasting of these various manuscripts, see pp. 97-107.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>34</sup>Gilbert Ouy and Christine Reno have identified fifty-five manuscripts of Christine de Pizan as partial or complete autographs. see Ouy and Reno, "Identification des autographs de Christine de Pizan", Scriptorium XXXIV (1980) p. 227.

## OWNERS OF HARLEY 4431

1. Isabelle of Bavaria, Queen of France
2. Jacquetta of Luxembourg (second wife of John of Bedford)
3. eldest son of Jacquetta by her second husband Anthony Wydeville (translator Christine's Moral Proverbs into English)
4. Louis of Bourges
5. Henry Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle
6. The Harley Family

La cité des dames dated c. 1405, is only one of the 29 manuscripts comprising this Collected Works of Christine de Pizan compiled between 1410-1415. The text, found nearly at the end of Harley 4431, begins, accompanied by a miniature for Book One, on folio 290 through 374. It contains three miniatures illustrating the text:

1. fol. 290. The three virtues Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine at left, Reason and Christine lay the foundation for the City at right.
2. fol. 323. Rectitude welcomes Christine and heroic ladies to the City.
3. fol. 361. Justice and Christine welcome the Virgin and saints to the City.

The frontispiece to this manuscript, located on folio 3 of this immense work, is also discussed, as it portrays the patron and authoress.

## THE ARTIST

This manuscript was executed by the workshop of La cité des dames Master following earlier models. The frontispiece, however, was executed by the Master of La

cité des dames.

#### THE FRAME

The first half-page miniature on fol. 290 is bordered on the left side only with a delicate gold rinseau spray composed of the trifoliate leaves of gold leaf. These tendrils sprout from a pole to the left of this large miniature. In the two smaller miniatures, fols. 323 and 361 the gold sprays, tendrils and buds emerge from the top and bottom of the initials, in all three cases a blue letter on a gold-leaf field. Each miniature is framed by an inner border on all four sides of lapis blue and an outer border of gold leaf.

#### THE MINIATURES

LONDON, BL HARLEY 4431; FOLIO 3 (fig. 4-10)

The frontispiece for Harley 4431 gives us portraits of both patron and author in the opening miniature for this ambitious and deluxe manuscript. The detailed delineation of the room, its furnishings and inhabitants is so meticulously and richly done, most scholars believe this miniature was executed by La cité des dames Master alone.<sup>35</sup> The setting illustrates an informal presentation scene set within the confines of the Queen's bedroom at the Hotel de

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<sup>35</sup>Meiss, Limbourgs, p. 292.

Saint-Pol. It portrays the patron of this magnificent manuscript, Queen Isabelle of France, seated on a small bed at the left, in a red embroidered houppelande lined with ermine. Her headdress is an elaborate bourrelet made of flock and decorated with wild flowers.<sup>36</sup> She is surrounded by six ladies in waiting, who are individualized both in face and pose, this is a strikingly naturalistic approach. Christine de Pizan kneels in front of the Queen holding out the large, gilt-edged book before her. Christine is easily recognizable by her traditional modest blue cotehardie and white horned headdress. The room is curtained in tapestries decorated with fleurs-de-lis, gaily patterned rugs cover the floor, a large canopied bed occupies one quarter of the room, and two white dogs of different breeds complete the scene.<sup>37</sup> Although this miniature does not illustrate La cité des dames, it does provide the context for establishing the importance of the commission, its patron, and artist, La cité des dames Master.

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<sup>36</sup>Isabelle is credited with having introduced the millinery phenomenon of the bourrelet into France. See Blanche Payne History of Costume, (New York: 1965) p. 247.

<sup>37</sup>For a complete description and documentation of this miniature see S. Hindman, "The Iconography of Queen Isabeau de Bavière (1410-15): An Essay in Method," Gazette des Beaux Arts. ser 6, 102 (1983) 102-110.

LONDON, BL HARLEY 4431: FOLIO 290 (fig.4-11)

This half-page miniature portrays the two scenes described the first pages of Part One of La cité des dames in the manner first established in Brussels BR 9393 and Paris BN 607 described earlier. A single room, shown from two sides, colored in a light violet shaded with darker tones, encases Christine and the three Virtues. Christine, in her blue modest cotehardie, stands in front of a desk covered in a brown cloth holding four books. She leans against a semi-circular support which has become standard in the depiction of this scene by La cité des dames Workshop. Her left hip and belly project more dramatically than is characteristic in this scene. (compare with figs. 4-1, 4-5, & 4-8) Her headgear is unusual, for a round bourrelet is visible under her white linen veils.<sup>38</sup> On the opposite side of the table stand the three virtues. Reason appears to the far left, wearing a red houppelande with a high white collar holding a mirror, Rectitude in the center dressed in a green cotehardie holding her ruler, and finally, most prominently displayed as usual is Justice, at

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<sup>38</sup>This may be an example of pentimento. The bourrelet was painted first, replaced by a horned headdress. It is interesting to speculate that perhaps an artist of City of Ladies Workshop attempted to give Christine a more fashionable headpiece, only to be corrected later. Portraits of Christine executed under her supervision illustrate her without exception in a short, horned headdress with a white linen veil.

the far right. She is represented full-length in a violet cotehardie, holding a cylindrical vessel. All the Virtues have been given the standard identical faces, hairstyles and gold crowns.

Working in the right side of the miniature, encircled by a pale rose wall of masonry are the figures of Reason and Christine. Both are shown in the manner first found in BR 9393 as they construct the wall of the cité des dames. Both scenes are placed against a heraldic checkered background of red and blue squares forming diagonal bands of color across the background. Both architectural features sit on a grassy plain.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 290

This miniature conveys the action described in the text without variation from the model standardized in BR 9393 and others described above. The artist follows the description of the text accurately, but softens the features of Justice and awards her the prominent position on the right.

#### LONDON, BL HARLEY 4431: FOLIO 323 (fig.4-12)

This scene is found abover the left column of text, and illustrates Rectitude, followed by Christine and a group of aristocratic women being led into the City.

Before a background of violet, green, pink and grey towers and multi-patterned rooftops (still being constructed, as wooden beams and a solitary laborer can be seen in the upper left corner of the miniature) stand six women led by Rectitude. Rectitude is crowned and now wears the robes royale Reason wore in the right scene in folio 290. Her left hand is raised and open in a gesture of speaking, and she looks back to the ladies assembled behind her. A richly clad lady wearing an opulent fur-lined blue houppelande with a high white collar and high gold belt, has tucked her left hand into Rectitude's right. Christine, stands near the back of the group. The rest of the assembled ladies, arms modestly crossed in front of their slightly protruding abdomens (the desired posture for women of this period)<sup>39</sup> wear a bright array of cotehardies of violet, and bright greens and reds. The bourrelets and linen headdresses indicate upper class status of the women, with one exception. The fourth woman from the right, in the direct center of the group, wears the hood of a laboring woman,<sup>40</sup> illustrating Christine's inclusion of all

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<sup>39</sup>Scott. Late Gothic Europe, chap. 2 pp. 39-56.

<sup>40</sup>This hood was worn open or could be tied under the chin, and was accompanied by a long liripipe hanging down the back. These hoods were worn by the aristocracy in the early fourteenth-century, but sumptuary laws dictated that no women below a certain rank could wear a hood lined with miniver, a costly fur worn by the wealthy. Middle class women had begun to imitate the aristocracy with fur-lined

worthy women in the City. This point is powerfully evident visually in Le trésor de la cité des dames, two examples of which are discussed at the end of the present chapter. (figs. 4-14 & 4-15) The ladies stand on a grassy lawn studded with flowers in front of an arched entrance.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 323

This miniature illustrates those worthy women for whom the City was built, mentioned at the end of Part Two. They are now being invited to take refuge inside the city gates.

LONDON, BL HARLEY 4431: FOLIO 361 (fig.4-13)

This miniature is placed above the left column of text at the opening of Part Three. The figures and architecture are closer to the front of the picture plane than in the two previous miniatures. The pastel colored city still retains its patterned rooftop, and no laborer is seen. Partially kneeling inside the arch of the entrance is Justice, crowned and garbed in robes royale. She is in front of four other women, one of them Christine, and all

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hoods. By the fifteenth century these hoods were no longer in fashion, and their appearance indicates a lower class woman. G. de Courtais, Women's Headdress, cited above, pp. 24-25 and R. T. Wilcox, The Mode in Hats and Headdress, New York: Scribner's Sons (1945) p. 58. This hood is often worn by a shepherdess in The Annunciation to the Shepherds scene in a book of hours. See for example Pierpont Morgan Library M.6, f. 41.

make gestures of prayer and welcome. The group of women outside the city all have halos, and can be identified by their attributes. Again, the group is led by the Virgin Mary in a blue gown and mantle, holding a book and a gold scepter. She is also crowned, and wears her hair long and unbound. She is followed by Mary Magdalene holding an ointment jar, in a white coif and wimple covering her chin. A woman wearing a crown, and holding a book and the palm of martyrdom follows, representing Catherine of Alexandria, mentioned in the text. The other holy women hold no attributes to identify them.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 361

The action described in the opening pages of Part Three is accurately depicted. The individuals illustrated here are the same Holy women whose stories are recounted in the text.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: LONDON, BL HARLEY 4431

The miniatures of Harley 4431 have clear, readable compositions conveying both a sense of activity and space, populated with compact, active figures clothed in brightly colored costumes of the day. The faces of the women are expressive, as are their, well-proportioned and artful forms. A great deal of attention is given to costumes

which are used not only to convey an aesthetic sense, but also to indicate their high status, as allegorical figures.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: LONDON, HARLEY 4431

Sandra Hindman, "The Composition of Christine de Pizan's Collected Works in the British Library: A Reassessment," British Library Journal 9 (1983) pp. 93-122.

Millard Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries, New York: Braziller (1974) pp. 12-15.

Le trésor de la cité des dames (1405)

Written as a companion text to follow La cité des dames, Le trésor, completed in 1405, was originally entitled Le livre des trois vertus by Christine. It was dedicated to Margaret of Burgundy, the oldest daughter of the second Duke of Burgundy, John the Fearless, on the occasion of her marriage to the French Dauphin, Louis of Guyenne. This marriage was one of two uniting these royal families, for King Charles VI's daughter Michelle married the John of Burgundy's son, Philip the Good. All of these political marriages were arranged by the old duke, Philip the Bold. Christine had already received a noteworthy commission from Philip the Bold, to write the biography of his brother Charles V. He may have asked Christine to compose Le trésor for his granddaughter Margaret's benefit,

to prepare her for her future obligations as the Queen of France.<sup>41</sup>

There are two extant manuscripts surviving from this first period, Boston PL MS. f. med. 101, and Paris, BN fr. 25294. Each manuscript has only a single frontispiece, combining two scenes within a single miniature:

1. On the left, Christine being awakened by the three Virtues, on the right, a group of women attending a lecture.

Artists reproducing these scenes later in the century will break portray these activities in separate miniatures.

BOSTON, MS F. MED. 101  
Le trésor de la cité des dames; folio 3.  
 1405-10  
 French, Paris  
La cité des dames Workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This volume is separately bound. The earliest identifiable owner is Jean de Poitiers, Seigneur de Saint-Vallier (1499-1566), according to a note in 15th-century hand.<sup>42</sup> The next recorded owner is N. Yemeniz, who

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<sup>41</sup>The dauphin died before becoming King, therefore Margaret was never Queen of France.

<sup>42</sup>As the signature of Jean de Poitiers includes his title Saint-Vallier, which he did not receive until 1510, it is evident he is not the original owner. This manuscript could certainly have been among those inherited by his father, Aymar IV, in 1485 from his cousin, one of the Boucicauts, a family with which Christine de Pizan was well

purchased the volume at a sale in Paris in 1867. Erwin Rosenthal became the owner in 1919 having bought the volume from Leclere, a Parisian dealer. In 1943 the volume was purchased by the Public Library of Boston.<sup>43</sup>

#### THE ARTIST

This miniature was produced by La cité des dames Master or his workshop. The manuscript had originally been dated to the mid-fifteenth-century, until Millard Meiss identified it as belonging to the workshop of La cité des dames discussed in his six volume study of French painting.<sup>44</sup> La cité des dames Master takes his name from his most well-known commission, his workshop's illustration of five manuscripts of Christine de Pisan's La cité des dames, discussed above. There can be no doubt that this is the product of La cité des dames Workshop. First, the composition has been borrowed from the opening miniatures of La cité des dames; that of dividing the scene into two parts. The architectural interior on the left, and the subject of the first Part, the lectures, on the right.

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acquainted. This group of manuscripts inherited by Aimar IV included a Book of Hours painted by the artist known as the Boucicaut Master. See C. Willard "The Manuscript Tradition of the Livre des Trois Vertus and Christine de Pisan's Audience," J. of the History of Ideas 27 (1966) p.433.

<sup>43</sup>Di Ricci, p. 210.

<sup>44</sup>Meiss, Limbours, pp. 12-15.

Secondly, the same vigorous figures, sturdy, small and well-proportioned fill the scene. This time the action takes place on the left rather than the right. The dress is identical to that used in earlier depictions of its companion piece. Christine wears the same easily identifiable garb. Pale, delicately modeled skin and clear, bright colors are still utilized by this workshop.

#### FRAME

This half-page miniature is located above two columns of text on fol. 3. The miniature and text are framed on each side and at the bottom by pink and blue bars decorated with spiral meanders and chevrons. The margin is filled with a rich rinseau border of gold leaf. Ivy sprays emerge from the top and bottom of the bars. Slender acanthus leaves extends from the blue modelled initial "A" in the middle of the left column of text and connect with the bars. Ivy tendrils also decorate the bar dividing the two columns of text. This type of border is common to French manuscript painting at this time, and is found in the miniatures illustrating La cité des dames manuscripts analyzed above.

## THE MINIATURE

BOSTON, MS F. MED. 101; FOLIO 3 (fig.4-14)

The single miniature of the Boston PL manuscript is comprised of two scenes. At the left we see Christine reclining on a bed in a carefully articulated interior scene enclosed by pale green columns and a blue roof. White draperies patterned in grey lozenge shapes surround and cover the bed. The floor is green. The three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice stand at her bedside as one of them pulls Christine from her rest with a vigorous tug. The three Virtues hold no attributes. They are, however, dressed in variations of the fashionable houppelande and cotehardie, wear gold crowns and have the same blonde hair arrangement associated with La cité des dames Master. Christine wears her customary blue gown with square-edged sleeves. Her white horned headdress is of a type favored by La cité des dames Master, and is typical of headdresses worn in the first decade of the fifteenth-century.

On the right side of the miniatures we see another interior scene, not enclosed by any visible architectural setting. The background is a heraldic diaper checkerboard of blue, gold and orange. Ten women of different social rank are seated to the front and side of a crowned figure enthroned before a lectern with an open book. These ten ladies represent all the classes that the three Parts of Le

trésor de la cité des dames was designed to instruct. Four crowned queens or princesses sit on either side of the honored speaker. To the left and right, visible in profile, are two noble women, the one on the left in a bourrelet, the one to the far right in a white veiled headdress. Seated on a long brown bench, with their backs to us, are six ladies of varied social status. Three wear hoods with long liripipes, and quite simple gowns. The other two sport costly houppelandes. The lecturer, Dame Prudence, is clad in a fur-lined cloak and gown worn by the royalty during ceremonial functions, and gold rays radiate from her head and crown. She is seated in a rigid frontal position with her right hand partially raised.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 3

In the prologue of Part One of Le trésor de la cité des dames Christine writes that after finishing La cité des dames she "wanted only to rest and be idle for a while" being completely exhausted by the "continual exertion" of writing the book. But the three Virtues who goaded her into her first monumental effort have no intention of allowing her a holiday, returning immediately with the following reproach her for her idleness; "have you already put away the tool of your intelligence and consigned it to silence?...Now stand up and make your hand ready; get up

out of the ashes of indolence!"<sup>45</sup> The artist has chosen this very human moment to illustrate in the frontispiece. Christine has been awakened by one of the three Virtues who has given her left arm such a mighty tug she has pulled the authoress into a sitting position. This scene is a variation of a similar scene used in La cité des dames frontispiece. In both scenes where Christine meets the three Virtues she is lost in thought or resting.

The right of the miniature portrays the students of good citizenship, preparing themselves to be worthy of residence in the City of Ladies. All those who attend the lectures of "Dame Prudence" and the three virtues Reason, Rectitude and Justice given in Le trésor de la cité des dames are represented. This work is not a collection of women's biographies arranged by theme, as was La cité des dames. Rather, it is a collection of lectures directed at different classes of women. These various ladies discussed in the text, princesses, aristocrats, merchants, artisans and laborers can all be identified in the miniature by virtue of their dress. Those in gathered hoods with liripipes are from the lower class, the bourrelets and houppelande indicate wealth and aristocracy, due to the large amount of costly fabric required, and those women in crowns and ceremonial cloaks represent the nobility. These

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<sup>45</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 31.

three classes are directed each in turn in the three parts of Christine's text. The artist has duplicated the notion of one's proper place in the social hierarchy, adhered to by Christine, by placing royal ladies close to Dame Prudence and relegating the bourgeoisie to modest benches. Christine is given the following command by the three Virtues, who refuse to let the weary writer rest:

Take your pen and write. Blessed will they be who live in our city to swell the numbers of citizens of virtue. May all the feminine college and their devout community be appraised of the sermons and lessons of wisdom. First of all to the queens, princesses, and great ladies, and then on down the social scale we will chant our doctrine to other ladies and maidens and all classes of women, so the syllabus of our school may be valuable to all.<sup>46</sup>

However hieratic the placement of the figures in the miniature might be, all of these various classes of women are invited to inhabit the City of Ladies. The college lectures help to make them, one and all, citizens worthy of such an illustrious habitat.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: BOSTON, MS F. MED. 101

Millard Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and their Contemporaries, New York: Braziller (1974) p. 378.

Charity Cannon Willard, The Boston Public Library Quarterly II (1950) 291-305.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

PARIS, MS FR 25294  
Le trésor de la cité des dames; folio 6v  
 1412-25  
 French, Paris  
 Paper  
 After the manner of La cité des dames Workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

The 194 leaves of this volume are made of paper<sup>47</sup>, not the customary parchment usually found in manuscripts embellished with a miniature. The history of this manuscript is unknown. Its early date is based on the style of miniature, its decoration and script. It contains the dedication in rubrics to Margaret, the duchess of Burgundy and wife of Louis of Guyenne, the dauphin of France. What is remarkable is that this text is scripted on inexpensive paper rather than the customary vellum.<sup>48</sup>

#### THE ARTIST

This miniature was produced by an artist copying a miniature produced by the workshop of City of Ladies Master, such as Boston MS fr. Med 101 discussed immediately above. (fig. 4-14) The present artist has elongated the figures, altering the dress and crowding the composition in a manner which would never occur in the workshop of La cité

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<sup>47</sup>Suzanne Solente, Christine de Pisan extrait de L'Histoire Littéraire de la France XV (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1969) p. 52-54.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-54.

des dames Master. Additionally, the use of paper rather than parchment was not customary with the workshop of La cité des dames Master.

#### FRAME

This is a large full-page miniature framed only by a slim gold border. The text begins on the facing folio 7 with a large modelled capital "A". There is also a gold leaf border around the text.

#### THE MINIATURE

PARIS, BN MS FR. 25294; FOLIO 6v (fig.4-15)

The state of the miniature is not optimal as the paint on the faces of the figures has begun to flake. The composition seen earlier in the half-page format of Boston MS fr. med. 101 has been enlarged to fill an entire folio in Paris BN fr. 25294. The same two scenes are illustrated, however the scenes overlap and crowd one another in spite of the enlarged format. This is due to the fact that the artist has eliminated the architectural setting which normally surrounds the action of the Prologue. The green and yellow tiled floor and the bright gold and grey patterned background hinder the clarity of composition associated with City of Ladies Workshop.

Christine is shown being pulled to a seated position from her truncated bed by one of the three Virtues, now

positioned prominently in the front. The other two virtues stand behind the bed. As in Boston MS fr. Med. 101 the virtues are shown without their attributes. Christine's dress is unchanged, and the Virtues appear with the same blonde buns and gold crowns. This artist, however, has elaborated the dress of the three virtues far more than is found in the cité des dames Workshop. One virtue wears a cotehardie decorated with gold leaf, and her sleeves are of ermine. The most interesting alteration is seen in the Virtue now standing in front of Christine, determined to rouse Christine from her much-needed sleep. The Virtue wears a brilliant vermilion cotehardie which is so long it trails into the adjoining scene, as do her long ermine slit-sleeves.

On the right Prudence lectures to a group of 13 women. She is seated in the exact throne seen in the earlier miniature, but, again, her costume has been articulated with an abundance of detail. Her mantle is lined in ermine, and has been folded in such a way on her lap so as to display its rich and costly lining. Additionally, her gown is gold-leaf with a faint diaper pattern in red. Gold rays emanate from her crown. Her body is slightly turned, and she directs her gaze to the ladies at the right. There are only two crowned women in the group, and one has been displaced from the prominent placement of the princess next

to the speaker by a hooded figure in black, perhaps a nun. The ladies in their bourrelets and horned headdresses sit intermingled with women in their merchant-class hoods. There is a general feeling of animation, more profiles are shown, along with a variety of postures. An interesting costume feature is illustrated by a figure with her back to us, for she wears both a spotted bourrelet and an ermine lined hood with a liripipe, usually reserved for aristocratic women. The artist also shows particular care in delineating the various hair arrangements of the ladies of all classes.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 6v

The opening scene of the prologue and a general scene indicating the lectures given in all three parts of Le trésor de la cité des dames is illustrated in this large full-page miniature. At the left we see the action of the prologue depicted, as Christine is being forced to continue writing by one of the three Virtues who declares her work is not yet finished. The elaborate gown of the Virtue waking Christine conflicts with the very warning of the author herself, found in Part II, Chapter Eleven, where Christine deplores the latest fashion in dress, of gowns with sleeves and a train so long they trail on the ground, as "extremely ugly and unbecoming" as well extravagant and costly.<sup>49</sup> The very dress described so negatively by

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<sup>49</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 134.

Christine is worn by one of her cherished Virtues in this miniature!

The various classes of women instructed in Le trésor, from Lady to artisan, are seated snugly together on benches around Dame Prudence. In the earlier work the ladies are arranged much more hieratically, whereas in Paris RN 25294 they are intermingled, with the exception of the crowned women who are highly placed next to Dame Prudence. Even here, however, a woman with the hood of a nun, or possibly someone of lower status has been inserted. Christine was very class conscious, and although the spirit of her treatise illustrates compassion and sympathy for all, it is unlikely that she would have approved of such an informal seating arrangement.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PARIS BN FR 25294

The crowded composition, elaborate dress, and use of paper contrast significantly with all other manuscripts of La cité or Le trésor produced in the first quarter of the fifteenth-century. These various discrepancies in style and relationship to the text make it an unlikely work to have been produced under the authors direction, or by her favored workshop of La cité des dames Master. Yet, without a doubt, the artist has closely modelled his or her work after one such as Boston MS fr. med. 101, and dates from this early period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: PARIS, BN MS FR. 25294

Catalogue Général des Manuscrits Français: Anciens Petits Fond Français II Paris, Ernest Leroux (1902)

L. Schaeffer, Die Illustrationen zu den Handschriften der Christine de Pisan, in Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft, 10, 1937, pl. 167; p. 193.

Suzanne Solente "Christine de Pisan" L'histoire Littéraire de la France XL Paris: Imprimerie Nationale MCMLXIX pp. 52-54.

#### SUMMARY CHAPTER FOUR 1405-1425

The seven manuscripts discussed in this chapter can be confidently dated within the period of 1405-1425 based on both the history of each manuscript as well as its style. Brussels BR 9393, Paris BN MS fr. 607 and London BL Harley 4431 were owned by the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Berry and Queen Isabelle of France, and the neat batard script has been identified as autograph copies penned by Christine herself.<sup>50</sup> London, BL Harley 4431 was included in a deluxe Collected Works of Christine presented to the Queen between 1410-15. Brussels BR 9393 and Paris BN MS fr. 607 were models made by the Master of La cité des dames to be copied by other members of the workshop for the manuscripts with miniatures produced from 1405-10. Paris, BN MS fr. 25294 may not be a product of this workshop, but its composition reflects direct knowledge of an earlier model of La cité

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<sup>50</sup>Ouy and Reno "Identification" pp. 221-238; Meiss Limbourgs pp. 377-382; Hindman Epistre Othea xix, pp. 14-18, 98.

des dames Workshop. This miniature is the only one of the six I believe was not created under Christine's direction as discussed above.

The style of La cité des dames Workshop is easily identifiable, especially when compared to that of other workshop productions of the period. The sculpted weight of such robust figures as Christine and Reason constructing their city wall certainly has little in common with the boneless, fluid forms of the Limbourg brothers' mannered characters. (fig.4-16) Other workshops executing miniatures for Christine's voluminous literary works, such as the Epistre Othea<sup>51</sup>, though sharing the same preference for clear compositions and active figures as seen in the miniatures presently under discussion, are noted for their far more courtly style. In general, these miniatures are painted with a markedly light, feathery brushstroke, and the figures are distinguished by an attenuation of waist, neck, wrist and foot, in distinct contrast to the robust figures favored by La cité des dames (figs.4-17 & 6-73) The sources at work in the style of La cité des dames Master are Italian, either through direct knowledge of Italian art, or of French artists working in such a manner.

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<sup>51</sup>The style of the Epistre Master is identified and defined by Meiss in Limbourgs 377-382, and extensively examined by Hindman in her comprehensive study of this subject in Epistre Othea.

Christine, of course, played a definitive role in the emphasis of such qualities in the production of her manuscripts.

Christine discusses the work of Anastasia, as an example of a contemporary woman artist, a current compliment to such ancient historical prototypes as Thamaris, Marcia and Irene in La cité des dames. Anastasia painted manuscript borders and miniature backgrounds and was unsurpassed in Parisian workshops according to Christine, writing:

People cannot stop talking about her. And I know this from experience, for she has executed several things for me which stand out among the ornamental borders of the great masters.<sup>52</sup>

Scholars have been unable to determine which manuscripts of Christine's Anastasia may have worked on. The border designs of the manuscripts discussed in this study are certainly worthy of consideration, but there are few extensive landscape scenes, which are Anastasia's specialty according to Christine's descriptions of her abilities. Anastasia is mentioned in this section of La cité des dames due to Christine's unique thematic organization of her biographies. Unlike Boccaccio, Christine grouped her historic subjects by themes, always including modern prototypes of each virtue, occupation or accomplishment

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<sup>52</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies p. 85.

under discussion.<sup>53</sup>

There was an increasing interest in all things Italian in France in the latter part of the fourteenth-century. The connections between Paris and northern Italy were quite strong, and can be found in Christine's circle of courtly patrons, particularly through the wife of Louis of Orleans, Valentina Visconti, from Milan, and the book collecting habits of Jean, Duke of Berry. Christine herself was from northern Italy, and always expressed pride in her Italian birth, however loyal a patriot she was to her adopted country. Valentina Visconti brought many books with her upon the occasion of her marriage<sup>54</sup>, most of them Italian in origin. The courtly style in northern Italy combined fully modeled weighty figures painted with a finesse of elegant lines, adding grace and delicacy to the figures. The costume sketches of Giovanni dei Grassi, and Italian productions of the Taquinum Sanitatus display the manner in which Italian miniaturist managed to merge the action of

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<sup>53</sup>For more on Anastasia see P. De Winter, "Christine de Pizan, ses enlumineurs et ses rapports avec le milieu bourguignon," Actes du 104 Congrès national des Sociétés savantes (Paris, 1979) pp. 335-376, Martin, "Les Miniaturists français" (Paris, 1906), pp. 73-76 and D. Miner, Anastaise and Her Sisters: Women Artists of the Middle Ages, (Baltimore: The Walters Gallery, 1974).

<sup>54</sup>"Inventaire des Livres Apportés en France par Valentine de Milan et Compris dans sa Dot (1388)" in P. Champion La Librairie de Charles d'Orleans (Paris: 1910) pp. lxix-lxx.

the text peopled by sturdy figures with an elegant modulation of line belonging to a taste typically courtly. (figs. 4-18) Early renditions of Italian texts in France, namely Boccaccio's Decameron and De Claris Mulieribus display this same combination of robust figure with elegant line associated with the Italian style, even though these manuscripts were produced in Parisian workshops.<sup>55</sup> (fig. 4-19) La cité des dames Workshop, with the exception of Pairs, BN MS fr. 1178 with its attenuated forms and addition of the necklace and decorative white canon sleeves, and the cumbersome, crowded and objectionable fashionable dress of one of the Virtues in Paris BN MS fr. 25294, rarely added ornate embroideries, jewelry or even patterned textiles. The patterning is concentrated in the settings, rather than in the figures, allowing the clean lines of the forms to accentuate the action of the text.

At this point it may be useful to ask why the miniatures of these early texts of La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames do not illustrate the stories

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<sup>55</sup>Several beautifully illustrated copies of De Claris Mulieribus were made in Paris workshops; the earliest, BN MS fr. 12420 was given to Philip the Bold in 1403, BN MS fr. 598 was given to Jean, Duke of Berry in 1404. The Decameron was illustrated for the first time in Paris around 1400, see Boccaccio en France Catalogue, Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris: 1975) pp. 28-29, 53-58, and Meiss "The first fully illustrated Decameron" in "Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower" ed. Hibbard and Lewine (London: 1967) pp. 56-61.

of ancient heroines or the activities prescribed to women by Christine in Le trésor? There are several possible explanations for this. First, earlier works such as Livre du chemin de long estude and particularly Epistre d'Othea had been copiously illustrated, borrowing from popular miniatures of similar themes produced in recent copies of Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus, Ovid moralisé and Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César.<sup>56</sup> It is apparent that Christine wished to emphasize another aspect of the text, namely herself and her creative action and initiative. As discussed with each manuscript, a model satisfactory to the author was established early, and followed rigorously in this period. It is the opening action of each text which is pictured. Christine is roused from her melancholy by three divine Virtues, and given their command to write La cité des dames. The right half of the same miniature illustrates the allegorical activity of the first part of the manuscript, the building of the fortification wall by Christine and Reason. Parts Two and Three illustrate the women who inhabit the city, its honorable citizens, and then its ruling queen. Action and the sublime approval or inspiration of the text, and not the individual biographies of women are underscored by the miniatures. The opening miniature divides the activates of the Part One in a manner

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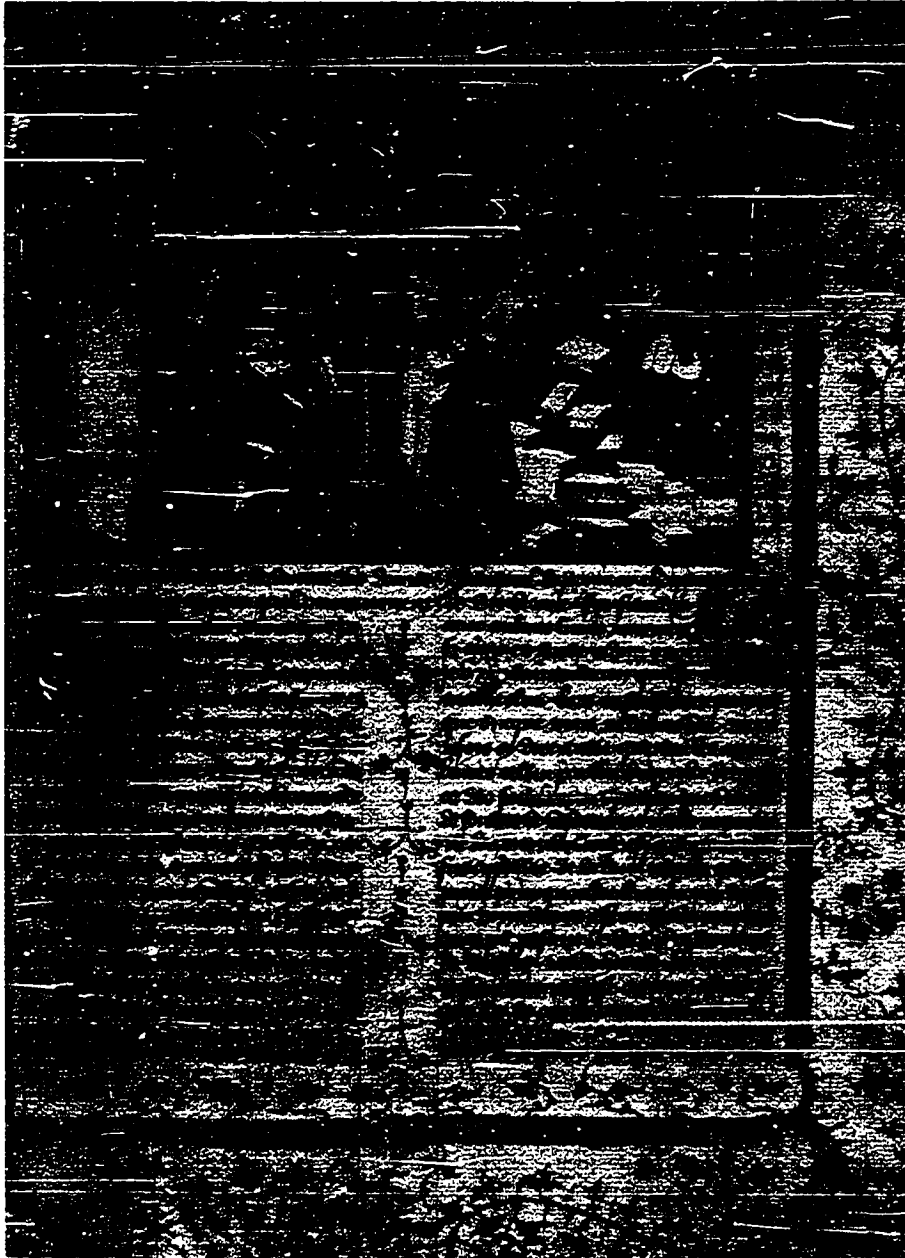
<sup>56</sup>Hindman, Epistre Othea pp. 189-193.

reflecting methods used in medieval theatre. The "set" resembles two mansions, or miniaturized architectural settings where the action takes place.<sup>57</sup> The use of such compositional devices by La cité des dames Master serves to emphasize the narrative action of Christine, the inspirational writing, the women for whom the book is dedicated, the entire action, or work that must accompany the production of a good life, as well as a useful text. Christine clearly wished to emphasize the divine inspiration or guidance of her work through by the virtues. The inclusion of the worthy inhabitants at the beginning of Part Two may simply be an acknowledgement of her audience, aristocratic woman of Paris who would have access to her text. The lives of women from the past are represented by the City itself, a physical representation of past

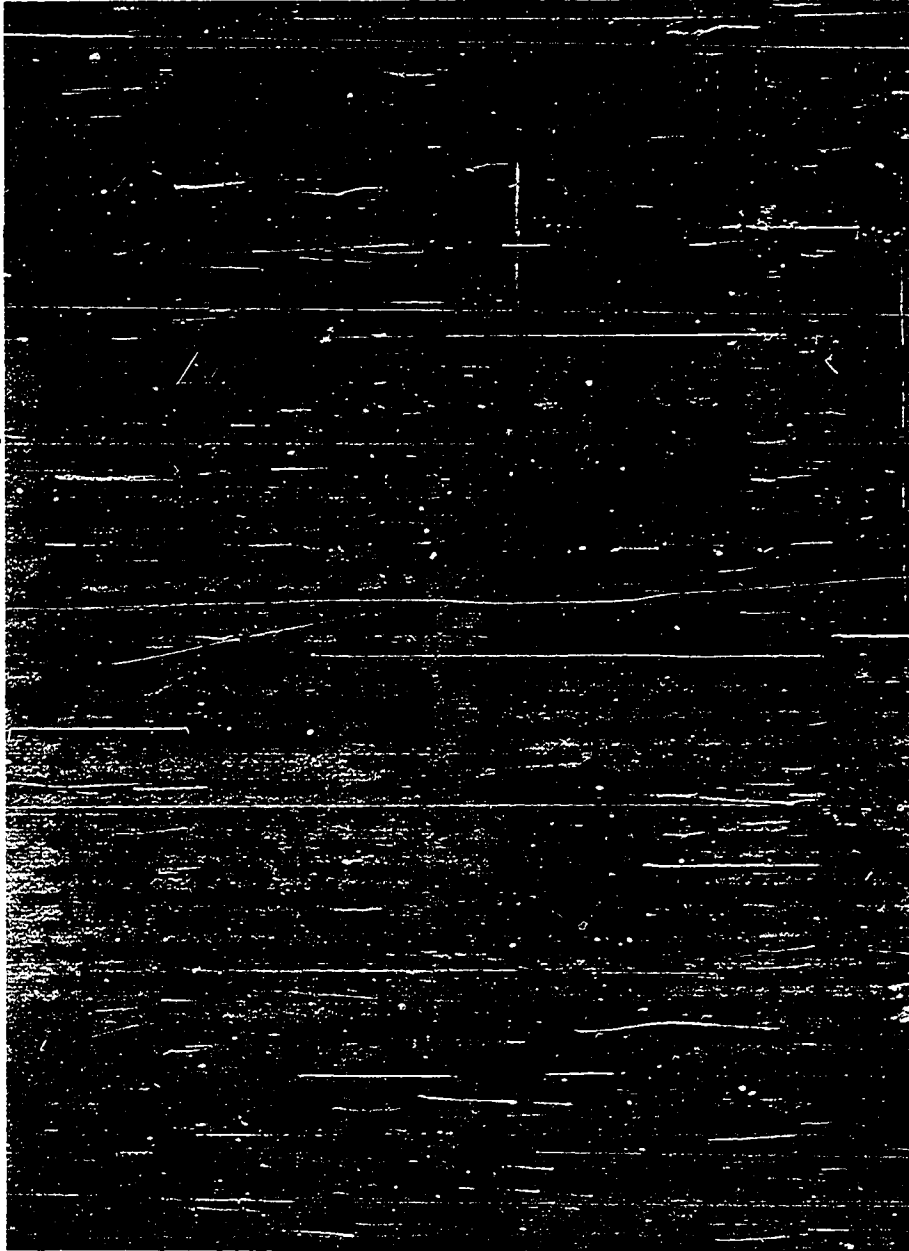
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<sup>57</sup>It was a theatrical convention to show interior scenes behind an arch, showing just the pattern of the tile floor, and some of the ceiling, and perhaps a curtained wall to set the parameters. This is certainly evident in all depictions of the action in both La cité and Le trésor. The use of the castle was a frequent setting for theatrical productions, not just for chivalric epics, but for the production of Morality Plays involving allegorical figures presented to the public in tableaux vivants. These morality plays included original plays inspired by classical mythology, often including historical figures, living personages, classical gods and allegorical figures such as the Virtues, Vices, etc. This also describes the cast of characters in Christine's La cité des dames. See G. Kernodle From Art to Theatre (London: 1944), pp. 26-27, 35-39; an T. Komisarjevsky The Costume of the Theatre (London: 1931) p. 66.

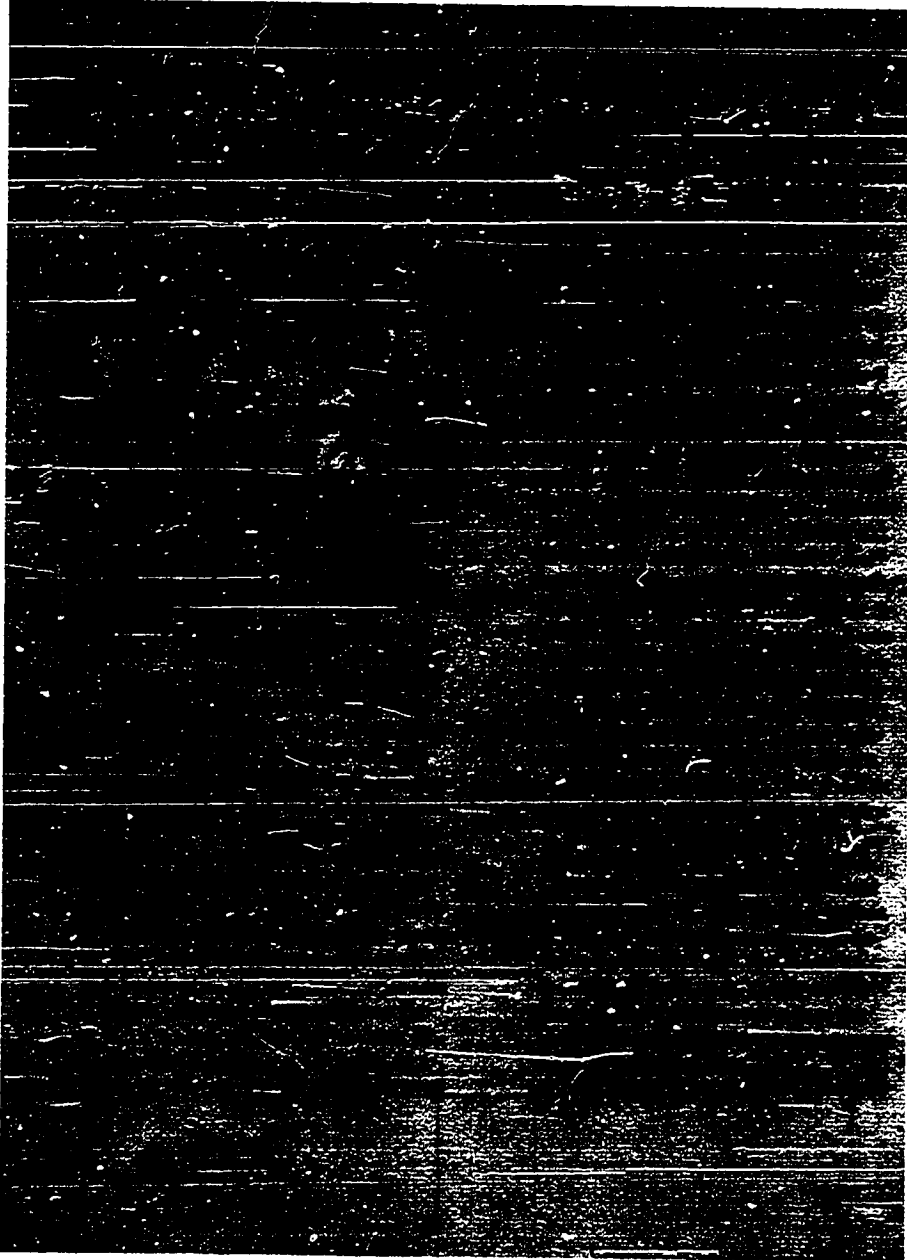
accomplishments, serving as a refuge for the woman of her day. In this sense there is a perfect harmony of text and image. The allegory of the City created with words is maintained in the accompanying miniatures, which do not detract from this visible symbol of the lives of the women told in the text.



4-1 Reason, Rectitude and Justice Appear to Christine;  
Reason helps Christine build the City; La cité des  
dames, Brussels, BR 9393, f. 3, 1405, La cité des  
dames Master.



4-2 Rectitude Welcomes Women to the City; La cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9393, f. 35v, 1405, La cité des dames Master.



4-3 Justice Welcomes Holy Women to the City; La cité des  
dames, Brussels, BR 9393, f. 74v, 1405, La cité des  
dames Master.

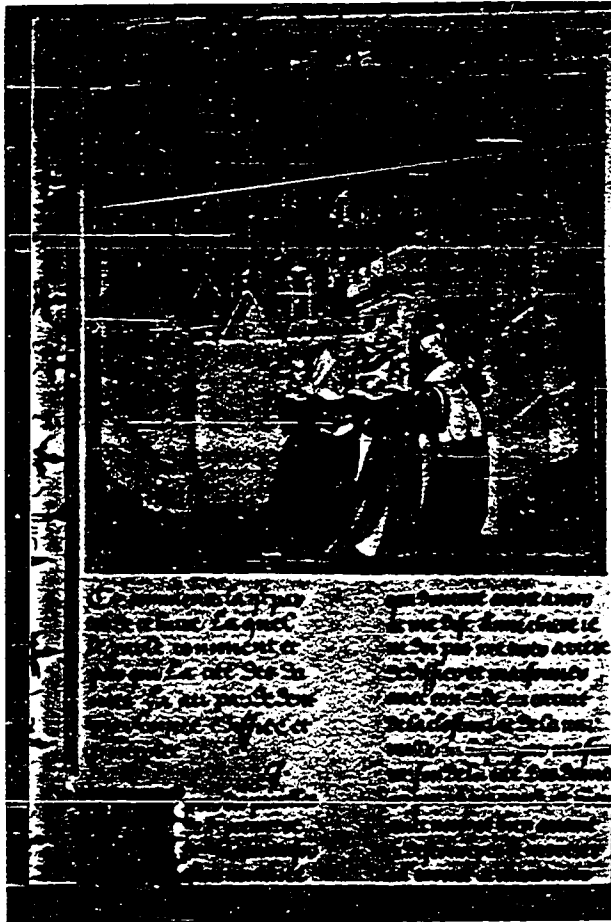


4-4 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine;  
Reason helps Christine build the City; La cité des  
dames, Paris, BN fr. 607, f. 2, 1405, La cité des  
dames Master





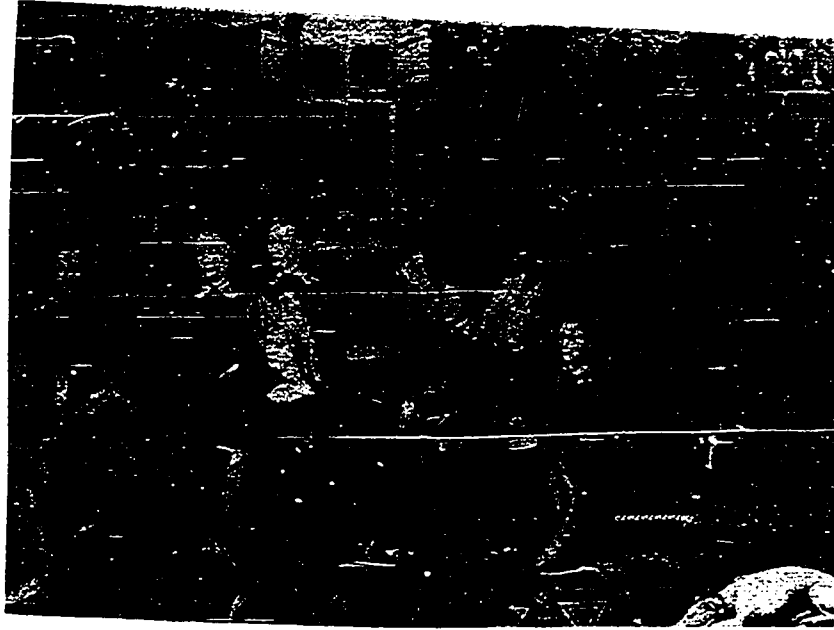
4-7 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine;  
Reason helps Christine build the City; La cité des  
dames, Paris, BN fr. 1178, f. 3, 1405-10, La cité des  
dames Workshop.



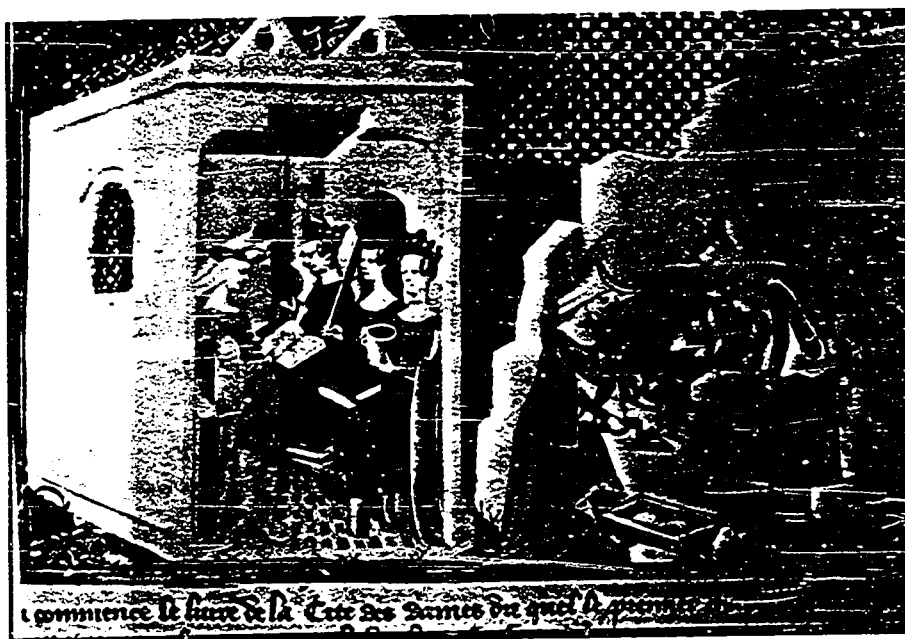
4-8 Rectitude Welcomes Women to the City; La cité des dames, Paris, BN fr. 1178, f. 64, 1405-10, La cité des dames Workshop.



- 4-9 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine;  
 Reason helps Christine build the City; Paris, *La cité  
 des dames*, Paris, BN fr. 1179, f. 3, 1405-10, *La cité  
 des dames* Workshop.



4-10 Christine de Pizan Presents Her Book to Queen Isabelle of France; Oeuvres, London, BL Harley 4431, f. 3, 1410-15, La cité des dames Master, and detail.



4-11 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine;  
Reason helps Christine build the City; La cité des  
dames, London, BL Harley 4431, f. 290, 1410-15, La  
cité des dames Master.



- 4-12 (left) Rectitude Welcomes Women to the City; La cité des dames, London, BL Harley 4431, f. 323, 1410-15, La cité des dames Master.
- 4-13 (right) Justice Welcomes Holy Women to the City; London, BL Harley 4431, f. 361.



4-14 The Three Virtues Return to Christine in a Vision; The College of Ladies; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Boston, PL MS fr. Med. 101, f. 3, 1405-10, La cité des dames Workshop.



4-15 The Three Virtues Return to Christine in a Vision; The College of Ladies; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Paris, BN fr. 25294, f. 6v, 1412-25, After the Manner of La cité des dames Workshop.



4-16 August; Très riches heures du Duc de Berry, Chantilly,  
Mus. Condé, f. 8v, c. 1416, The Limbourg brothers.



4-17 Latona and the Frogs; Epistre Othea, Christine de Pizan, Paris, BN fr. 606, f. 11v, c. 1404, Epistre Master.



4-18 (left) Costume Drawings; Bibliotheca Civica, 1390, Giovanni de Grassi.

4-19 (right) Thamaris Painting; Livres des cleres et nobles femmes, Giovanni Boccaccio, Paris, BN fr. 12420, f. 86, 1403, the Cleres Femmes Master.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY MINIATURES (1425-1465)

Eight codices with a total of twenty-one miniatures survive from the second period of deluxe manuscript production of Christine de Pizan's La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames.

#### La cité des dames

Of the five manuscripts to be studied in this section, only the first one, Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl. Cod. Gall. 8 (fig. 5-1) follows the standard format established by Christine and La cité des dames Master during the fertile decade of manuscript production explored in Chapter Four. The miniatures of the early period describe the opening action of each of the three parts of the codex in the following manner; the first miniature represents the two most active moments of Part One, when Christine meets the three Virtues, and builds the wall of the city with Reason; the second miniature illustrates Rectitude welcoming the noble women into the city; and the third miniature, at the beginning of Part Three, depicts Justice welcoming the Virgin Mary and her holy companions as rulers of the newly completed city. This clear and distinct organizational structure is transformed to one charming miniature of ladies in fancy dress, and their gentlewomen, spending an afternoon of amusement in a castle courtyard in

Chantilly, Mus. Condé Ms 856 (fig. 5-2). A later example from this second epoch of production of 1425 to 1465 expands the number of miniatures to four, including two illustrations of Christine and one of the Virtues engaged in an energetic discussion instead of the customary, and rather labor intensive, scene of building, or of ceremonial welcome associated with the final two books of La cité des dames.

MUNICH, BAYER. STAATSBIBL., COD. GALL. 8

La cité des dames; folios 4, 44v, 90v.

c. 1450

Flemish, perhaps Bruges

Unknown, in the manner of the Willem Vrelant Workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

The history of this manuscript is unknown, other than it once belonged to the collection of the Bibliotheca Regia Monacensis, for its stamp is found on folio 1, after the following inscription:

Lange Gabriel fut Enude de Dieu en Nazareth, Cité de galilée a une Vierge Espouse de Joseph, apellée Marie et s'approchunes d'elle, 1 luz dit. Je vous salie pleine de grace +.

#### THE ARTIST

Willem Vrelant was a Dutchman born in Utrecht, active from 1450-80 in Bruges. An enormous number of manuscripts have been ascribed to his workshop and followers. His

harshly modelled linear style delineates a manner favored in the Southern Netherlands since the 1440's.<sup>1</sup> Other characteristics of this school are a penchant for portraying action scenes in front of an open building or townscape, in uniform colors, with the roofs and walls often touched with gold. The figures in Cod. Gall. 8, however, lack the firmly modelled faces with staring eyes and thick lips associated with the Vrelant School.<sup>2</sup> The costumes of the ladies as well as the workmen invite close comparison with Brussels, BR MS 9243 folio 115, a manuscript associated with Vrelant's workshop. This folio illustrates the arrival of St. Waudru and her companions in Hibernia, found in Jacques de Guise's Chroniques de Hainaut, c. 1455.(fig. 5-22) The high horned headdress worn by Christine in all three miniatures of Cod. Gall 8, common among Flemish women in the 1450's<sup>3</sup>(fig. 5-23), can be found among the saint's animated fellow travelers crowded within the confines of the boat. An examination of both Brussels, BR MS 9243 and Munich Cod. Gall. 8 show strong affinities in style of dress, especially among the

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<sup>1</sup>L.M.J. Delaissé, Medieval Miniatures from the Department of Manuscripts: The Royal Library of Belgium, (New York), p. 172.

<sup>2</sup>G. Dogaer, Flemish Miniature Painting, (Amsterdam, 1987) p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>M. Scott, A Visual History of Costume, (London, 1986) pp. 85, 87, & 92.

varieties of headdress worn in this period, turbans, veils, heart-shaped bouurrelets, as well as the hood and short tunic of the workman. The style of Cod. Gall. 8, however, is much more softly modelled and less harshly linear than that of the Vrelant school.

#### FRAME

All three miniatures are a full half-page in size and are located above two columns of text. The marginal decoration is found to the left, right, and bottom of the text only. The top frame of the miniatures is bowed upward to form a sweeping arch.<sup>4</sup> The border is a combination of the French ivy rinceau with its three-lobed leaf and the more common Bruges border style of blue, gold and grey acanthus leaf, in Cod. Gall. 8 relegated to the four corners, as well as sprouting from the foliate initial. Red roses and seed pods, pink and white daisies, yellow lotus and blue five-pointed flowers are found at the bottom and one of the side margins in all three miniatures. Each illustration and the two columns of text are completely framed by a leaf molding of blue and pink or gold and blue

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<sup>4</sup>This arch-shaped miniature was also used by Vrelant in Ludwig IX 8, folio 137r, and was in common usage among other miniaturists in mid-century, seen in the works of the Master of the Gold Scrolls, The Master of the St. Bertin Altarpiece, Master of Margaret of York, among others. Dogaer, cp.7, figs. 54, 55, 57, 58, 7, 9, 23, 25, cp 9, cp 10.

on a gold-leaf ground. This "cable molding" is composed of two lines of different colors passing over and under one another repeatedly. The marginal decoration of folio 4 contains a peacock with gold plumage in the center of the right border. A white shield with its inscription has been painted over, and is located in the center of the bottom margin. A small brown rabbit inhabits the left border of folio 44.

#### THE MINIATURES

MUNICH, BAYER. STAATSBIBL. COD. GALL. 8; FOLIO 4

(fig. 5-1)

This half-page miniature contains two scenes, following the format established by the Master of La cité des dames earlier in the century. The two scenes are more closely allied than seen previously, uniting each scene within the framework of a single city, whose grey-blue architecture of towers, gold oriflamme and pennon flags and finials break the frame, soaring into the empty margin above. In a cut-away room directly over the left column of text sits Christine, at her desk, roused from her melancholy by the three Virtues. In spite of the tiny size of the room, crowded by four beautifully clothed figures, the artist managed to squeeze in an impressive number of details of furnishings and decoration to set the

scene. The floor is composed of green-checked tile, the walls are grey, a wooden door and a small round window occupy the right wall, and a round arched window with an iron grill is located on the back wall. The room has a wooden vaulted ceiling. Christine sits at her oak desk under a canopy of fine green brocade, lined and bordered in red. A bookshelf containing four books can be seen at the back.

Christine is dressed in the costume of a middle class Flemish woman<sup>5</sup>, with her white linen veil pinned and draped in such a way as to emphasize the high, rounded horns. This headdress differs significantly from those seen in miniatures by La cité des dames Workshop, in accordance with the new styles of the day. Her brilliant orange-red, high belted houppelande though extravagant in its cloth, does not fit neatly<sup>6</sup>, the sleeves bag and the bodice is loose, although it is trimmed both at the neck and cuffs and hem with white fur. A gold modesty pièce fills in the

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<sup>5</sup>Scott, Visual History, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup>A looser fit is also a sign of middle-class status. Aristocratic ladies at this time are beginning to wear their houppelandes in an altered style, requiring less fabric, but resulting in a far more daring, and often immodest, cut. This new robe is first found at the most luxurious courts of Europe, namely Burgundy and Paris. Looser robes will be worn by the lesser nobility, and princesses of distant, more conservative regions. In the present case, it does represent the kind of garment which would be worn by one of Burgundy's wealthy merchants, or the wife of a counsellor at court.

V-neck, as befitting a middle class widow. Her red robe has been highlighted with gold strokes along the folds. Christine holds a book open with her left hand on the desk stand, and places her right hand on a green book closed by a gold clasp on her lap. Gold leaf has been used to indicated the folios of these books.

The three Virtues crowd into the right side of the room, all extravagantly dressed, and sporting crowns atop a variety of exotic headdress. Reason, holding a mirror of gold, stands to the far left. She wears a white turban held in place by a blue and white chin-cloth and a voluminous blue houppelande topped by an unusual rounded neckline of gold.<sup>7</sup> Rectitude wears a beautiful red and gold brocade cotehardie with long narrow sleeves. She holds a large wooden ruler in her right hand, lifting her skirt not only to reveal an undergown of equally dazzling blue and gold brocade, but her black poulaines. Her white turban has no chin band, and exposes two coils of yellow

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<sup>7</sup>This rounded neckline is associated later in the fifteenth-century with the dress of German women, see M. Scott Late Gothic Europe, (London: Mills & Boon, 1980) p. 227. It can also be detected in some Burgundian paintings, most notably the "Hunting with Falcons at the Court of Philip the Good", a mid-fifteenth-century painting located at the museum of Versailles, see Boucher, 2000 Years of Fashion, (New York, 1967), p. 211. S.M. Newton believes it was not uncommon to combine costumes of different periods and locales in theatrical presentations of the fifteenth-century, especially in morality plays which included a variety of allegorical figures. Renaissance Theatre Costume (London, 1975) pp. 112-113, 42-43.

hair over each ear, no doubt enclosed by a mesh of gold. Justice is seen full length, holding her gold vessel with both hands. She wears no headdress other than the same gold crown of all three Virtues, exposing her bright blonde hair. The dark blue houppelande, drawn up by Justice to reveal its grey fur lining and the cloth-of-gold cote with a pomegranate motif, has carefully set folds above and below its high-waist red belt. The neckline is a narrow V, trimmed with fur, and the sleeves are loose, also trimmed in fur.<sup>8</sup>

The right side of the miniature breaks with the established visual convention of earlier manuscripts by showing Christine building the city with the aid of two workmen instead of Reason. It is also unusual in that, even though Christine is busy building a wall, the city in the background already seems amazingly complete, in contrast to La cité des dames Workshop, which showed only a small circuit wall at this early stage. In the foreground the artist has painted two small converging hills with groves of green trees in miniature, very much out of scale with the figures in the middle ground, in an amusing attempt to add some sense of depth to this crowded picture.

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<sup>8</sup>This style of robe is most often seen in Flemish painting as early as 1440, as seen in panel paintings of Rogier van der Weyden, St. Mary Magdalene reading, National Gallery, London.

Christine wears the same dress in both scenes, but she has double belted her robe for greater ease of movement, unfortunately exposing a rich under gown of gold and blue brocade to the danger of damage by the trough of mortar before her. A pick lies at her feet amidst scattered bricks, and she holds a trowel in her right hand and a brick in her left. A small workman in a short blue tunic and a round brimmed pink hat pulls on a rope connected to the scaffolding where a much larger man heaves a brick to finish a partial tower at the front and center of the city. This second workman wears a soft blue turban and chin strap and the sleeves of his pink tunic are rolled up, as are those of his white shirt.<sup>9</sup> Wooded hilltops can be seen behind the city, terminating at a high horizon of dappled blue, a technique utilized earlier in Paris, BN MS fr. 607 in 1405. (fig. 4-4)

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 4

The scene at the left of the miniature describes the action of Part One of La cité des dames, when the Virtues, beautifully arrayed in gold crowns carrying the attributes of the mirror, ruler and vessel, appear to Christine and command her to write the history of women's deeds,

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<sup>9</sup>M. Lister, Costumes of Everyday Life, (London, 1972, rpt. 1977), pp. 45-61.

accomplishments and good deeds. The miniature contradicts the text in the placement of Christine's room clearly within the confines of the allegorical city which has technically not yet been "built" at this moment in the narrative. The scene to the right normally illustrates Reason assisting with the building, as the opening rubrics of Chapter Four state:

Here the Lady Explains to Christine the City which she has been commissioned to build and how she was charged to help Christine build the wall and enclosure, and then gives her name.<sup>10</sup>

Such a statement also occurs at the beginning of chapters Five and Six, where Rectitude and Justice inform Christine that they will each assist her with the building of the city. In Chapter Four, however Reason reneges on her original offer quoted above, promising only to provide Christine with fresh waters and beautiful, strong stone materials. This explains some of the later illustrations of the building scene where Reason directs, and Christine does all the physical labor. (fig. 6-3 & 6-28) At this point in the text Rectitude offers her ruler of measurement needed to construct and lay out the buildings, houses, and circuit of the city walls, stating "I have come as your assistant, and this will be my duty." Finally, Justice adds in Chapter Six that her job is to perfect and complete

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<sup>10</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies p. 11.

the high roofs of the towers and mansions of the city.<sup>11</sup>

Another startling deviation from the visual models occurs in the addition of workmen to help Christine build the City. The cité des dames Workshop often included workmen in the second and third miniatures, but never in the first, as Munich Cod. Gall. 8 does in this scene. In so doing, the artist surrounds Christine with workmen from the mundane world of real building, in contrast with Christine's own mental labors of writing and transcribing, symbolized in the text, and miniatures, by the metaphor of her hard manual labor.

MUNICH, BAYER. STAATSBIBL. COD. GAL. 8; FOLIO 44v

(fig. 5-2)

Fifteen figures, eleven women and four men, populate this half-page miniature located at the beginning of Part Two of La cité des dames. The four workmen are busy within the grey-blue crenelated, flagged walls of the city, climbing ladders, lifting bricks, hammering as they busily construct the rooftops and towers of the City. The laborer at the far left hammers gold crockets along the roof-line of one building. The eleven women stand poised in front of the fortification wall, in frieze-like stances, save for those ladies crowded within the confines of the arched

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid. pp. 11-13.

entrance to the City at the left. Although five women stand within the archway, only the front two can be seen clearly. The one on the right wears ceremonial robes of the royalty, an ermine plastron over a green, ermine-lined surcoat embroidered with gold, covering a cloth-of-gold cotehardie. She is uncrowned, and wears her blond hair unbound. To her right is a woman in a turban wearing a blue houppelande. Christine kneels in front of the arch, a pick<sup>12</sup> and several bricks litter the green field around her, as she clasps the offered hand of a crowned woman presented to her by Rectitude, standing between them. The woman being presented holds a large green book, and is dressed in a blue mantle lined with gold, worn over a red gown. Rectitude is quickly identified by her costume and wooden ruler, just as she was seen in folio 4. An uncrowned woman with a voluminous white veil and wimple follows, her two hands clasped in prayer. Her ample pink cloak resembles those seen on classical statues, and is hatched with fine gold striations. A graceful figure clothed in the exact manner of Justice in the previous miniature follows, carrying a sword, which she leans upon as if it were a cane. She is also crowned. The final

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<sup>12</sup>This may well be included due to a reference in the text, when Reason commands Christine to bring the "pick of her understanding" out to the field of letters where they will soon begin building the City. Ibid., p. 16.

woman at the far right is absorbed in the large blue book she holds open before her. She has an ermine-lined pink mantlé, and her grey gown is shaded along its sharp folds with the most delicate gold lines. She wears a large veil and wimple. A small brown incline with a partially visible tree provides the only landscape detail in this picture. The speckled blue sky above the gilded towers, crockets and flags of the city, continue to break through the frame as in folio 4.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 44v

The artist has chosen to alter the visual model first established by City of Ladies Master by painting not only the royal ladies invited to take residence within the city at the end of Part Two, but the women whose lives are discussed in the text. The sibyls are the first women mentioned in Part Two of La cité des dames, all of whom Christine mentions by name. Two are given special attention by Christine, the Erythraean and the Cumaean Sibyls. The Erythraean Sibyl wrote twenty-seven poems foretelling of the Fall of Troy, Rome's greatness and demise, and the "profound mysteries of the Holy Spirit of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the Virgin."<sup>13</sup> The Cumaean Sibyl, called "Almathea" by Christine, was born in

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 101-102.

Italy, living to a great age after spurning the love of "Phoebus"<sup>14</sup> in favor of virginity and a life of learning and prophecy. She wrote nine books of revelation, offering them to King Tarquin of Rome.

After speaking of pagan women of wisdom, Christine turns to the lives of Old Testament women of prophecy, including Deborah and the Queen of Sheba, followed by the stories of other legendary and historic figures, such as the Trojan princess Cassandra, Queen Basine of France, and Empress Theodora of Byzantium, whom Christine calls "Antonia".

The woman in the wimple and mantle holding a book probably represents one of the Sibyls, either Erythae or Almathea, as they are both commonly represented with this attribute. The crowned woman presented to Christine could easily represent any of the royal women of prophecy, Cassandra, Sheba, Basine or Theodora. The woman wearing full, ruffled head-cloth and loose wimple, with hands raised in prayer may be Deborah, or perhaps Elizabeth or Anna also mentioned in the text. The most puzzling figure is that of the woman leaning on the sword. Since she is dressed in the sumptuous, royal costume worn by Justice in the previous miniature, we must conclude she does indeed represent the final of the three Virtues assisting

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<sup>14</sup>Apollo.

Christine, for the sword is the most common attribute associated with Justice, although it is not the golden vessel Christine chose to represent her powers.<sup>15</sup> The artist is following earlier visual models and the text selectively, emphasizing the women whose lives are told in Part Two as well as those virtuous enough to be invited to reside in La cité des dames. Consistency in the costume and attributes of the three Virtues varies in this manuscript, as we shall see in folio 90v of Cod. Gall. 8, where Justice assumes yet another costume feature, the robes royale. (fig. 5-3)

MUNICH, BAYER. STAATSBIBL. COD. GALL. 8; FOLIO 90v  
(fig. 5-3)

The final miniature of Cod. Gall. 8 is a full-half page, as are the first two, and the nearly completed bluish-grey architecture of the City is inhabited by sixteen figures, twelve women and four men. The men are the same four laborers seen in folio 44v above, three of whom work together to place a beam on the last unfinished roof, while the fourth, clad in a pink tunic, carries a

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<sup>15</sup>J. Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art, (New York, 1979), p. 183. The attribute of Justice, the gold measure, which she is seen holding in folio 4 of Cod. Gall. 8, is discussed in The Book of the City of Ladies p. 14.

heavy load of building supplies upon his back. The narrative action of the scene has switched to a second entrance, located now at the right of the miniature.

All the women crowded beneath the arched gateway have haloes of gold leaf. Christine and one of the Virtues, no doubt Justice, stand in front of the City wall, followed by a crowd of ladies in festive costume. The most prominent of the holy women in the group to the right is the Virgin Mary, who holds the Christ child in her arms. Christ is clothed in a rose gown, and his pose is animated, as he stretches both arms out in an eager gesture of welcome toward Christine and her companions. The Virgin is crowned, and wears a blue mantle embroidered in gold, over a rose under-gown. Behind her stands another crowned woman with blonde hair coiled into a bun over each ear, dressed in a red ermine-lined mantle, holding a book. Christine, located in the center, wears the same high horned headdress and orange-red houppelande she seen with comforting consistency throughout all three miniatures of Cod. Gall.

8.<sup>16</sup> Her face is slightly blurred by moisture.

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<sup>16</sup>The only variation can be seen when comparing the right half of folio 4, for while Christine is busily working she has tied up her houppelande in such a way as to reveal her beautiful under-gown of red and gold brocade. In folio 90v, the same heavy robe is pinned to her side by the gesture of her right arm, not only to create an elegant curving line of drapery, but to expose her under-gown, now a deep lapis blue.

Christine's left hand is open, palm out, in a gesture of speech, and her right hand is held by a crowned figure wearing the robes royale. Although this figure holds no attributes, it is Justice, the narrator of Part Three. In the early manuscripts of this scene produced by La cité des dames Workshop the narrator was always clothed in these ceremonial robes, and shown without her attribute. The ermine plastron of Justice is studded with gold bezants down the front. She poses artfully, swaying her entire body to the right with a twist of her waist and an out-flung hip, preparing Christine and her companions to meet their Queen, the Virgin Mary.

The group to the left of Christine present us with a myriad of headdresses, fabrics and gowns particular to women of various occupations and social status. The three women in the front, although two are dressed in houppelandes, wear the headgear common to middle class women. The one to the far left clothed in black mantle wears a white scarf and wimple, identifying her status as that of widow or nun. The black open hood with a long liripipe worn by the woman to her right has always been associated with artisans, merchants, and later in the century, country laborers.<sup>17</sup> She is led by a woman in the

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<sup>17</sup>See R.T.Wilcox, The Mode in Hats and Headdress, (New York, 1945), p. 58; G. de Courtais, Women's Headdress and Hairstyles (London, 1986) pp. 24-25; Lister pp. 46 & 52.

same high-horned headdress worn by Christine, a style preferred by middle-class Flemish women. (fig. 5-23) A magnificent heart-shaped headdress, of two-toned pale orange brocade, enjoyed a brief but enthusiastic popularity throughout northern Europe in the 1440's and 1450's, and graces the head of the lady in green standing in the background.<sup>18</sup> Another aristocratic lady, leaning valiantly under the weight of her high henin, hung with a long, transparent veil which has been carefully pinned and pleated, can be seen behind our authoress. (fig. 5-24)<sup>19</sup> She wears an equally admirable green patterned brocade houppelande. Once again, the landscape details are few, and all reduced and miniaturized, indicating several diminutive trees crowded together on a small earthen incline.

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<sup>18</sup>See de Courtais, p. 33; B. Payne, A History of Costume (New York, 1965) pp. 215, 243 & 248. Figure 260 on page 243 is of particular interest, as it is a portrait of Queen Isabelle of Portugal, wife of Philip the Good of Burgundy, who may have given a copy of Christine de Pizan's Le trésor de la cité des dames to her niece in Portugal, who in turn had it translated into Portuguese. For more on this see C. Willard, "A Portuguese Translation of Christine de Pizan's Livre des Trois Vertus," PMLA 78 (1963) pp. 459-64.

<sup>19</sup>Countess Joanna of Flanders and one of her companions wears a henin similar to the one this figure has on, which appears to be the heart-shaped or split-loaf headdress with its two points extremely close together, as was popular in 1450. Scott, Late Gothic, p. 156.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 90v

This miniature opens Part Three of La cité des dames, picturing the moment in the discourse when Justice announces to Christine that it is time to invite the Virgin Mary and her holy companions to lodge in "the palaces and tall mansions ready and furnished" of the City, as its ruler and governor. "Let princesses, ladies and all women now come forward to receive her with the greatest honor and reverence"<sup>20</sup> commands Justice, the very ceremony conveyed by the artist in this picture. It is an interesting variation upon the standard model offered by La cité des dames Master nearly fifty years before. In the miniatures illustrating this scene, usually the noblewomen received as worthy citizens of La cité des dames in Part Two crowd the city gates to greet their Queen. Cod. Gall. 8 reverses this composition. The noblewomen stand in front of the City walls, while the Virgin and her companions already stand firmly within the city, clearly settled, established and comfortable as its aristocratic residents and rulers. While this creative interpretation does not actually conflict with the text of La cité des dames, it is at odds with the original visual prototype.

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<sup>20</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 217.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: MUNICH, BAYER. STAATSBIBL. COD. GALL. 8

The three miniatures of Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl., Cod. Gall. 8 offer an interesting example of a faithfulness to the text superseding all visual models the artist appears to be familiar with, due to certain similarities of composition with that established by La cité des dames Master. Although adhering to the traditional mode of representing the action described in the opening of each three parts of La cité des dames, this manuscript differs from earlier models completely in style of execution, and with aspects of the text the artist chooses to emphasize.

The crowded, tumbling perspective of each miniature is confined by the sturdy, unaltering blue-grey of its crisply delineated city walls and architecture. Although the roofs are not gaily patterned as they were in those miniatures executed by the workshop of La cité des dames, they are generously endowed with gold-leaf crockets running along the apex of the roofs and towers. The addition of landscape details in the corners of several miniatures are completely out of scale with the frieze-like scenes portrayed behind it. Scale is not really an issue here, as the figures surely loom above the very buildings designed for their habitation, again, reflecting scene-setting devices currently in use in the production of plays of a moral and allegorical nature, many of which took place of

the streets of Bruges, the most likely center for this manuscript's production.<sup>21</sup>

The figures of all three miniatures in Cod, Gall. 8 are executed with a finely drawn line, modelled by subtle hatching on the face and the soft folds of the voluminous gowns. The women all share the same facial type, an oval face with a high, broad forehead, small chins, heavy lidded eyes and blonde hair, although the hair is rarely visible. The most active figures are the laborers, busy constructing the very city of refuge Christine's words tell us were built by the Virtues and the author. Christine is allowed to work in the right half of folio 4, and can be seen bending to apply mortar to the brick in hand. The ladies are shown in three-quarter poses, and the Virtues and other important individuals, the Sibyls and Holy women tend to be shown frontally. Although the figures are tall and substantial in form, they strike a multitude of self-conscious, attenuated poses, allowing their gowns and

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<sup>21</sup>An eye-witness account of Jehan de Hayin describes the nine tableaux presented to the new bride Margaret of York along the streets of Bruges, upon the occasion of her marriage to Charles the Bold in 1468. In addition to the seven biblical scenes, one was historical, showing a scene from the life of Alexander the Great, the other allegorical, a personification of Burgundy presented by a maid with the lion and leopard. Such extravagant feasts and plays were not at all uncommon in Burgundy. See Vaughan Valois Burgundy, (London, 1975), pp. 176-188; Huizinga The Waning of the Middle Ages (New York, 1954 rpt.), Chaps. VI, VII, XIX; Gascoigne, B. World Theatre (Boston, 1968) pp. 89-93.

mantles to spill and fall in numerous decorative curves, exposing rich fur lining or contrasting coloring of their fabric. This kind of attention causes the miniatures to resemble a festive, colorful court pageant. Much care has been given by the artist to costume details, for all articles of clothing are clearly delineated, painted in rich hues and augmented by refined ornamentation, especially evident in the use of gold leaf for the crowns. A great variety of fine textiles, brocades and damasks, are portrayed. The pomegranate motif is most common among the robes of the ladies, while the Virgin has been honored with a special fine gold embroidered star-burst pattern reserved only for her garments.

Although the paint has flaked away in a few places the miniatures of Cod. Gall. 8 are still quite exquisite. The richness of the marginal decoration and the fine script designate this manuscript as the product worthy of inclusion in the workshop the like of Willem Vrelant of Bruges.

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CHANTILLY, MUS. CONDE, MS 856 (662)

La cité des dames; folio 4.

1450-70

Northern France or Flanders

Unknown, in the manner of the Gillebert de Mets Workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

MS 856 contains two illustrated manuscripts within a single volume. The first text is an incomplete copy of La cité des dames, found on folios 4 through 30. It has one large, full page miniature on folio 4. The second text consists of a copy of Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus, occupying the major part of the volume, on folios 31 through 130, illustrated copiously with fifteen small miniatures depicting the lives of the women mentioned not only in Boccaccio's text, but in Christine's own. The miniatures of Boccaccio's text are painted in camaieu, monochrome, in a style quite different than the large, colorful single miniature opening La cité des dames. The two codices, sharing the same theme, were bound together at a later date in green moroccan leather, and bear the arms of Bourbon-Conde.

#### THE ARTIST

The textural evidence for localizing this manuscript

is ambiguous, however the border decoration of heavy, multicolored acanthus leaves is similar to those manuscripts executed by the Master of Guillebert de Mets, and his circle of followers. The vigorous line, strong modelling, draperies outlined in black and pallid tints found in the charming assembly of ladies in Chantilly, Mus. Condé MS 856 are also characteristic of this School. Working primarily in Lille and Tournai, Guillebert de Mets, named after the scribe for whom he worked on a manuscript in Paris<sup>22</sup>, was active circa 1410-45. The style established by this Master was widely influential, and can be found in the miniatures and border of the Morgan 293, created as far away as Besacon.<sup>23</sup> Finally, another important manuscript by the Master of Guillebert de Mets is a compilation containing, among other texts, one of Christine de Pizan's most popular writings, the Epistre Othea.<sup>24</sup>

#### FRAME

This full page illustration has a border on all four sides, broader at the bottom of the folio, filled with

<sup>22</sup>Bib. de l'Arsenal, MS. 5070.

<sup>23</sup>J. Plummer, The Last Flowering, (New York: 1982), no.17, pp. 12-13.

<sup>24</sup>Dogaer, Flemish Miniature Painting (Amsterdam, 1987) p. 33.

decorations in the new fashion of flowers including roses, columbines, cornflowers, strawberries, as well as clover. This bright fauna is superimposed upon decorative acanthus scrolls of blue and gold, appearing at intervals against a hairline growth of ink tendrils of black and gold. The most delightful inhabitants of the border are its rich array of birds in all manner of activity, single or in pairs, taunting snails, perched on vines, or in full flight as are two at the bottom of the page, their pale yellow wings stretched wide to form a pretty arc. No capital letter is found on this miniature page.

#### THE MINIATURE

CHANTILLY, MUS. CONDE MS. 856 (662); FOLIO 4 (fig. 5-4)

This single full-page miniature is the most curious and unique of all the extant illustrations for La cité des dames. Our point-of-view is bird's eye, as if we gaze at this odd city and courtyard from the clouds above, causing the entire composition to be askew. A small grassy courtyard becomes center stage, enclosed by a pale pearl-white crenelated wall with four towers. The City sports another extension outside the wall in the center of the background, with a roofed edifice between two towers with conical roofs of blue. Bushy green hedges line both sides of the wall extending from the lower right of the miniature

to the bottom center of the page. Groves of trees, grayish hills and a distant townscape occupy the high horizon. The text from the reverse of the page bleeds through the fine parchment. Sixteen ladies assemble in four distinct groups at various locales about the city, according to their rank. At the far right are grouped the waiting-women<sup>25</sup>, one clearly visible in the opening of the tower while her companions in service crowd behind her like toys jumbled together in an impossibly small box, barely visible. Her outer smock is sleeveless, a very pale pink, which she lifts in a strange, bold manner with both hands, revealing her light blue undergown. This is two piece garment was worn by working women in Flanders in the second quarter of the fifteenth-century, and is seen in many miniatures. (fig. 5-25) All the members of this group wear stiffened white turbans and fine, transparent wimples.

Two groups comprised of three women are placed at the top and bottom of the miniature. It is tempting to try and identify the trio at the top as the three Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice. First, they are placed at the highest position on the picture plane, at the one part of the City not part of the courtyard. Secondly, all three wear their hair in the long, unbound manner associated with

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<sup>25</sup>Lister, no. 55, p. 51.

maidens<sup>26</sup>, virgin saints, or allegorical figures. Finally, the figure to the far left wears a dull gold colored surcoat generously trimmed in ermine over a rose cotehardie - the robes royale. Her two companions have on damask houppelandes, and all three have turbans of blue, black and red embroidered with bright gold bezants. One holds a small gold object, impossible to identify, perhaps a purse, or even a vessel, the attribute of Justice.

Two of the three women grouped near the bottom of the miniature are placed with their backs to us, presenting a rare opportunity to study the construction of their garments from all sides. The lady to the far right wears a blue bouurrelet over a long, blonde blond braid, as was seen in Boston Public Library's miniature illustrating Le trésor de la cité des dames executed c. 1410.(fig. 4-14) She hoists her heavy, ermine edged hcuppelande from the back with the aid of her neighbor. The two women to the left wear gowns in light tones of blue and gold, their V-necks and hems banded with the rich brown fur of sable. All the women wear either a kerchief of linen beneath their robes around the neck, or an embroidered black, white, or red pièce to modify the low V-neck of their robes. A number of

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<sup>26</sup>In fact, the only others with long hair are the two girls wearing the under-cap of the larger headdress without the awkward and troublesome height and veils of their companions, considered a concession to their youth. Scott,, Late Gothic Europe, p. 175.

fine sheer wimples can be detected about the chins and throats of several women. They also have on tall henins with long fine veils cascading down nearly to the ground. All three have high, wide belts of red or black damask with elaborate gold metalwork.

The central group of nine women are of the highest social order, and they can be seen parading forth from the tower at the upper right, gesturing with affectation and animation as they settle upon the courtyard green to converse with one another. All wear houppelandes of pale yellow, blue or pink, trimmed in costly fur, usually ermine. All but two wear high cone-shaped henins with the extremely long veils increasingly popular in the years from 1440-1470. Two young girls have on more sensible flower-pot caps without veils, in bright red and gold. All wearing henins have plucked hairlines, and the loops of the black frontlets are visible on their foreheads for adjusting such monstrously cumbersome headdresses. The wide dark band at the base of the henins seen here is the kind favored by the Flemish.

Status in dress for women in this period is generally indicated by the costliness of the fabric and the generous quantities used; those with the deepest hems of ermine, longest veils and trains, however awkward, are the most admired. Veils, trains, fabric and fur were restricted to

the aristocracy by various sumptuary laws, often ineffective, from use by the wealthy middle classes.<sup>27</sup> The loose fitting bodices and wrinkled, unkempt sleeves on all the garments worn by this group indicates a date circa 1450. One seated lady has removed her belt for greater comfort, illustrating the wide cut of the robes at this period. The woman gliding in from the right to join this central group is a splendidly exaggerated example of the elongated, tilted posture required by the steeple headdress, long veil, voluminous furred robe and heavy train. All wear red or black poulaines, the pointed shoes variations of which continue to be popular with men and women since the middle of the 14th century. Aside from the waiting women in the upper right tower, the ladies meeting in the courtyard are all aristocratic, richly dressed, and seem intent upon amusing themselves with conversation and games. One of the seated ladies appears to be busy with some kind of needlework, as she is seen sewing on a rust

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<sup>27</sup>The main function of a long train was to proclaim one's elevated rank, for generally another individual must be employed in carrying it. Aliénor de Poitier writes of two meetings between the Duchess of Burgundy and Marie of Anjou, Queen of France, in 1445, and in 1456 as witnessed by her mother. On both occasions the Duchess took her train from the hands of the woman who carried it, and let it trail behind her, so as not to offend the higher ranking queen. A miniature by Jean de Tavernier of 1456 shows a devil sitting upon the long ermine train of a wealthy middle class woman who has committed the grave sin of aping her betters out of pride, Scott Late Gothic Europe, fig. 92, pp. 162

colored bourettelet in her lap. Their heads and bodies are in proportion, although the hands tend to be long and wide. The same facial type consisting of prominent eyes, small mouths and long noses is seen without variation on all sixteen ladies. There are curious strong modeling lines around the eyes, "comma" shaped, adding an aura of drama and liveliness all members of the party engaged in the festivities pictured in this delightful miniature.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; folio 4

The full-page miniature of Chantilly, Mus. Condé MS 856 does not illustrate any of the usual scenes associated with the text of La cité des dames to this date. The artist has not followed any of the standard visual models established early in the century. None of the figures, save perhaps the trio of ladies at the top of the miniature, possibly representing the three Virtues, can be associated by costume, placement or attribute with Christine, Reason, Rectitude or Justice, or the ancient Sibyls, heroines or the Virgin Mary and saints populating the text. Instead, the artist illustrates what is implied in the title, a city of very stylish aristocratic ladies. We have certainly seen in all manuscripts of this text examined thus far similar groups, usually arranged behind Christine at the beginning of Part Two, but never have they

been the sole subject of such a grand miniature. Assemblies of courtly ladies are given greater prominence in the companion text of La cité, in Le trésor de la cité des dames. (figs. 5-11, 5-19 & 5-20) It is important to note that this copy of La cité des dames is incomplete, and there may very well have been other miniatures illuminating the text. Perhaps even both texts were together in a single volume<sup>28</sup>, in which case the quaint depiction of a group of well-born, honorable women shown in harmonious communion with one another, lodged within the safety of their allegorical city of refuge is not at all in discord with the spirit of the text.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: CHANTILLY, MUS. CONDE; MS 856

The pallid, delicate hues of pink, gold and blue contrast sharply with the active poses and strong modelling of the faces found in this amusing depiction of sixteen ladies lounging in a castle courtyard. Stylistically, aside from the sculptural weight of the forms, it has nothing in common with any of the compositions created by La cité des dames Workshop for this text. Instead, as the style and costume details indicate, the work represents the tastes of Northern France and Burgundy at mid-century,

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<sup>28</sup>This is certainly not unheard of, for Brussels, BR 9235-7 contains both La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames, both illustrated by the same workshop.

especially in the abundance of fur trimmed, voluminous gowns of damask, and the wide dark trim of velvet at the base of the henins. The figures parade in a variety of poses, from a bold stance, to mannered gaits, to comfortable seated figures turning and gesturing quite naturally. Generally well-proportioned, and in scale with one another, if not the architecture, this miniature offers us an enchanting aristocratic genre scene of courtly ladies with their waiting-women enjoying an hour of leisure together.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: CHANTILLY, MUS. CONDE; MS 856

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PARIS, BIBL. ARS.; MS FR. 3182  
La cité des dames; fol. 2  
after 1450  
French or Flemish  
Unknown workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This manuscript has only one extant, although severely

damaged, miniature located at the beginning of Part One. Two other miniatures were removed between folio 40-41 and 84-85. The text is incomplete, and the entire volume has been defaced by scribbles and doodles very regularly through out the codex. The volume was once in the M. de Paulmy Library, and at one point during its long history, was owned by a young girl in the 18th century, as indicated by an inscription located at the bottom of folio 37:

Ce présentes livres appartient a Mathry [alias Mathurin] Ysambert, escollier, demeurant a Illiers. Fait le mardy...jour d'de la fevrier l'an mil six cent neuf.

#### THE ARTIST

Due to the damaged condition of the single remaining miniature of this volume, it is impossible to stylistically link this miniature with another workshop of the period.

#### THE FRAME

The half-page miniature has an arched shape frame at the top, and sits above a single, very wide column of text. A damaged initial "S" is located at the beginning of the text. The bottom margin and two side margins are filled with a foliate border of pseudo-acanthus leaf of blue and yellow, inhabited by red strawberries and blue cornflowers and gold tendrils.

## THE MINIATURE

PARIS, BIBL. ARS. 3182; FOLIO 2 (fig. 5-5)

An interior scene is presented in this half-page miniature. The hanging architectural elements in the top foreground, colored blue green and, bracing brown columns at each side of the miniature frame and divide the scene into three parts. There are seven round arched windows, the tile floor, where it remains in good condition, indicates the artist understood some of the basic principles of depicting space with the use of orthogonals.

There are four figures within the interior. Christine de Pizan is seated at her desk with leaning her head upon her hand at the far left. Little paint remains about her face and head, although it is possible to tell she wears a tall, pointed henin with a long veil. She has on a narrow-sleeved rose houppelande cuffed and collared in white. A green-bound book lies open in her lap. Her desk has a very high back and is covered by a beautiful brocade of blue and gold, now barely visible. Her desk is quite large, and continues nearly to the center of the room, and is covered with books.

The first Virtue, Reason, stands in a three-quarter pose in the center of the room, holding a mirror. She wears what appears to be a white veil, capped by a gold crown, and a pink mantle over a green gown. Rectitude,

holding her brown ruler, stands in a frontal pose behind Reason, with her head turned away from Christine. Rectitude is dressed in a dark green robe, and she wears her blond hair long under a pink turban. Justice follows at the far right, in a twisted, elegant pose, holding a gold orb in her right hand. She wears a pink houppelande belted in green under a green mantle. No hair is visible under her blue turban. Gold writing can be detected across the skirts of Reason and Rectitude, but it is indecipherable.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 2

The opening of Part One of La cité des dames, when Christine is roused from her pessimistic thoughts by the appearance of the three Virtues, is illustrated in this damaged miniature. This rendition is composed along similar lines to that established on the left side of the miniatures by the workshop of La cité des dames master, lacking an adjoining scene of Reason and Christine building the City walls. It is now more common to separate these two scenes in Flanders after mid-century. All of the Virtues are easily identifiable by the attributes described in the text.

#### STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PARIS, BIBL. ARS. MS fr. 3182

The elongated figures, tall henins and turbans,

convincing rendering of interior space, as well as the illustration of Christine's dream-vision without the usual accompanying scene of her building of the city wall, all point toward a mid-century or later date for this miniature. Due to the damaged condition it is difficult to discuss the painting style, other than to say the artful, frieze like poses of the Virtues, and their once dazzling archaic costume relates to miniatures of the same scene of the same or later date found in Northern France or Flanders.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: PARIS, BIBL. ARS. MS FR. 3182

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Suzanne Solente, "Christine de Pisan" L'Histoire Littéraire de la France Tome XL, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale MCMLXIX.

PARIS, BN MS FR. 609

La cité des dames; fols. 2v, 10, 59, 128v  
1460's

Northern France or Flanders

Unknown, in the manner of the Loyset Liédet Circle

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This manuscript is separately bound and contains three half-page and one quarter-page miniatures executed between 1460-70. There is no information with regard to past owners of the manuscripts. A note on the flyleaf indicates that the volume was rebound in 1873.

#### THE ARTIST

The style of the figures and treatment of the landscape details indicate this artist was under the influence of the school of Loyset Liédet. Liédet lived in Hesdin, where the Burgundian dukes maintained one of their residences, until sometime before 1469, when Liédet moved to Bruges, where he remained active until his death in 1478.<sup>29</sup> Although these miniatures lack the crowded scenes and multitude of detail characteristic of Liédet, the figures do exhibit his rather wooden, mannered and spindly forms and have a tendency to "sag a little at the knees" noted in the work of Liédet and his numerous imitators.

#### THE FRAME

The only border decoration to be found is a slender band filled with gold tendrils, a few green leaves and an occasional bright red strawberries, seed pod, rose, or blue columbine found to the left of all four miniatures, extending the full length of the page. A sparsity of decoration, limited to pictures enclosed by gold frames, is a characteristic of one phase of production of the School of Loyset Liédet, usually associated with Bruges. Under each miniature is a modelled blue initial against a gold leaf background.

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<sup>29</sup>Dogaer, p. 107.

## THE MINIATURES

PARIS, BN MS FR. 609; FOLIO 2v (fig. 5-6)

A carefully articulated interior scene, framed by two green columns with gilded capitals and grillwork, contains a single seated figure, Christine de Pizan, as the subject of this half-page miniature. The blue tiled floor recedes convincingly toward the back wall where, below a wall containing a roll of sizable arched windows covered by an iron grill, is located a wooden shelf containing three large manuscripts, richly bound with metal clasps. An engaged column with a springing fan vault and an arched doorway are visible in the far right corner of the room. Directly center-front, beneath a cloth-of-gold fringed canopy, sits the author of the text at her wooden desk and reading stand. Christine poses stiffly, gazing directly out toward the viewer. She has a book in her lap, and holds another in place on the shelf to her left. Christine wears a dark blue V-necked houppelande, fitting tightly in the bodice and the sleeves, which form a small bell shaped "cupped" cuff over each hand. Not a hair is visible underneath her black, high blunt-edged henin and sheer veil held aloft by two wires. Christine's gown, although not quite as tightly fit, is a slightly earlier version of one worn by Maria Hoose on the occasion of her wedding (fig. 5-26). In spite of the stiffness of pose and sharp folds of

her gown, and in Christine's strange, direct gaze, there is a delicacy of touch evident in the lines used to create the blue shadow on the floor to the right, in the indication of the grain of the wood, and through the addition of gold hatches to her rose undergown and folds of her veil.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 2v

Located at the very beginning of Part One, this miniature does not describe the action of this section, unless Christine is gazing out at the three Virtues unseen by us. More likely the artist has chosen to present us with a portrait of the author, especially as she is not shown reading or thinking, or involved in any part of the narrative of the text.

#### PARIS, BN MS FR. 609; FOLIO 10 (fig. 5-7)

This second miniature is the smallest of the four, as it only occupies one quarter of the page, and is located at the top of the right column of text. Four figures fill this picture set in an airy landscape with a rather high horizon. A grove of trees grace the slope behind the figures, and dark blue slashes indicate clouds in the sky above. Christine is the center figure, being led by the three Virtues surrounding her protectively. Christine's costume is the same, although it has changed from deep blue to rose.

At the left of the miniature stands the only Virtue with any attribute, a sword, perhaps meant to indicate the ruler of Rectitude, or more likely the most common attribute of Justice, an attribute not present in the text. She holds on tightly to Christine's right elbow. This figure wears an ermine plastron over a blue gown and violet surcoat speckled with gold dots. Her henin has a dark band at its base, a favorite among the Flemish. This was also seen in Chantilly, Mus. Condé MS 856 discussed above. (fig. 5-4) She also wears a white wimple to complete her robes royale. Behind Christine strides a second virtue, with no headdress, wearing blue robes. To the right of Christine is the final virtue, also exposing long blonde hair, who has linked her arm through Christine's and gazes at her in a friendly manner, as she points ahead with her left hand. This Virtue wears a grey houppelande with a wide burgundy belt. There is a general feeling of movement, action and purpose among these four ladies as they march stiffly through the landscape. Their eyes indicate quite specific glances, and their gowns are shaded by regular parallel lines or soft stippled highlights of gold.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 10

This miniature is found within the first pages of Part One of La cité des dames, and the text below the miniature

helps to specifically identify the scene of the picture:

Then Lady Reason responded and said "Get up, daughter! Without waiting any longer, let us go to the Field of Letters. There the City of Ladies will be founded on a flat and fertile plain, where all fruits and freshwater rivers are found and where the earth abounds in all good things. Take the pick of your understanding and dig and clear out a great ditch wherever you see the marks of my ruler...<sup>30</sup>

The artist is illustrating the action of Part One of La cité in a manner quite different from that established by La cité des dames Master. Instead of Reason and Christine building the City wall, we see Christine being escorted to the field where her labors will soon begin. None of the Virtues wear the crowns prescribed in the text, nor do they carry attributes, save the figure with the sword. This lady most likely represents Justice, holding not the golden vessel of measurement Christine awarded her, but the more common attribute associated with Justice in art and literature, the sword. The appearance of this same lady, complete with ceremonial robes and sword, at the beginning of Part Three of La cité, the section narrated by Justice, confirms the identification of this figure.

PARIS, BN MS FR. 609; FOLIO 59 (fig. 5-8)

This picture returns to the half page format, and illustrates an exterior scene. Christine and one of the

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<sup>30</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 16.

Virtues partake in vigorous discussion in a timbered valley between two hills. A city with a high wall, towers, spires and battlements is painted on a flat plain above the hills beneath a cloud streaked sky. Christine and the Virtue are shown in the act of conversing, a scene depicted with increasing frequency in many miniatures illustrating La cité des dames from the middle of the century. Christine leans with an arched back, bending under the weight of her henin as she holds her the skirt of her heavy pink houppelande with her left hand. The Virtue speaks, as indicated by her outstretched left palm, a form echoed by the jutting angle of her knee.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 59

No attributes are given to help us identify the figures in this scene. The text beneath the scene states that we have reached the beginning of Part Two of La cité des dames, when Rectitude takes over as narrator and discussant. Christine can be identified by her contemporary costume, which is the same in all four scenes, aside from a change of color in folio 2. The Virtue wears her hair unbound, a style commonly used for allegorical personages. The scene does truly convey the action of the text, that is, the conversation between Christine and each Virtue in turn.

PARIS, BN MS FR. 609; FOLIO 128v (fig. 5-9)

Again, two women stand in an outdoor setting in rapt conversation. The scene is slightly shifted, and they stand on a grey road, with hills and trees in the background. They are closer to the City than Rectitude and Christine were in folio 59. Christine still stands on the right, her left knee bent, and her arms outstretched before her. Justice, with her sword slung point heavenward over her shoulder, wears the same robes royale seen first in folio 10, points to Christine with her left hand. A pile of rocks occupies the lower left of the picture.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 125

This miniature illustrates the opening of the third and final book of La cité des dames. Traditionally, this scene shows the investiture of the Virgin Mary and her companions as rulers of the newly built City of Ladies. And yet, as mentioned in the discussion of folio 59 above, the text of the City does consist of a conversation between Christine and each Virtue on a series of thematically arranged topics designed to prove and exemplify through biographies of honorable women, the integrity and goodness inherent in the feminine sex. Artists at mid-century begin to show the two women talking with greater frequency, whether this evolved out of a

serious desire to reinterpret the text in an invigorating way, or because it was a simpler, more expedient manner of illustration, is difficult to say.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PARIS, BN 609

The four pictures illustrating Paris BN MS fr. 609 are executed with the hard, linear contours and bright color washes common among artists working under the influence of the school of Loyset Liédet in the 1460's. The crisp, paper-doll figures strike their self-conscious poses with stiffness and angularity that is not without its own vivacity and charm. The round faces of the women, of identical pallid tones, long noses, and small mouths still manage to indicate animation and energy through the direction of their gaze, and the clarity, or bluntness of their gestures. The artist has modelled both face, form and landscape with a series of quickly dashed slashes, enlivening what could otherwise be a very wooden interpretation of Christine's text.

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Le trésor de la cité des dames (1425-1465)

There are four surviving manuscripts with a total of twelve miniatures between them from mid-century illustrating Le trésor de la cité des dames. Two are quite early, Brussels, BR 9551-2 and The Hague KB MS 131 C 26 were both produced circa 1430, but their innovative compositions and regional styles indicate they are not the products of La cité des dames Workshop. A single picture, quite damaged, is all that graces a London copy of Le trésor, BL MS 31841. The elongation of the figures and the banner headdress worn by Christine propel this miniature forward to a date no earlier than 1440, in spite of the traditional interpretation of the scene found in this work. The last manuscript to be examined in this section is large as well as luxurious, the Yale University, Beinecke Library MS 427, with four miniatures. Executed in the soft, feathery painting style of the Master of the Amiens 200, an artist working in the manner of Simon Marmion, the miniatures for this work are quite distinct iconographically, and are dated to the 1460's.

BRUSSELS BR, 9551-2

Le trésor de la cité des dames; folios 2, 46, 66.

c. 1430

French or Flemish

Pre-Burgundian

Unknown Workshop, Follower of the Limbourg brothers

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This is a particularly luxurious rendition of Le trésor de la cité des dames not only due to the exquisite miniatures, but to the generous use of both gold leaf and silver throughout the folios containing miniatures. This volume contains two texts; Le trésor, with three miniatures, accompanied by Le Livre de Mélibée, by Renaut de Louens, illustrated by a single miniature. The two works may have been bound together at a later date, for, among other things, their miniatures are executed by different masters. The following inscription on folio 104v indicates that in the fifteenth-century this manuscript belonged to the library of the de Croy family:

C'est le livre des trois vertus a l'ensegnement  
des dames ou il y a iiii histoires, lequel est a  
Monseigneur Charles de Croy, comte de Chimay.  
[signed] Charles.

The de Croy family arms are also found within the border of folios 2, 46, and 66. It then became the property of Margaret of Austria, and after her, of Margaret of Hungary,

for her ex-libris is found on the first interior plate.<sup>31</sup> On folio 2 and 105v can be seen the red stamp of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

#### THE ARTIST

Delaissé describes the miniatures of BR 9551-2 as very peculiar, a good example of pre-burgundian painting before the grand style developed in Flanders under Philippe the Good at mid-century. According to Delaissé the artist is under the "tyrannical" influence of the traditional painting style of his contemporaries, yet manages to paint stunning landscapes and skies, in spite of the awkwardly handled brush evident in the figures.<sup>32</sup> It is the very visible and soft brushwork used on the figures, however, which gives these miniatures such distinction and charm. Paul Durrieu attributes this manuscript to the Workshop of Guillebert de Mets, once known as "The Master of the Silver Skies", due to sky made of silver scumble or underglaze still extant on folio 46.<sup>33</sup> However, the soft, feathery

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<sup>31</sup>M. Debae, La Librairie de Marguerite d'Autriche, exhibition catalogue Bibliothèque Royal Albert I, Bruxelles, 1987, xvii, & 56. Margaret of Austria acquired the de Croy library in 1511.

<sup>32</sup>L.M.J. Delaissé, Le Siècle d'or de la miniature Flamande, Bruxelles, 1959, pp. 35-36, no. 27.

<sup>33</sup>The silver was once used to depict the sky on folio 66, but a sixteenth-century artist painted the blue sky with clouds and birds in later. Gaspar & Lyna, Les

modeling of these wistful figures is markedly different than this school, having more in common with the elegant, tapering forms of the women produced by the Limbourg brothers a decade earlier.

#### FRAME

These three miniatures are all large, covering the top half of the folio, surmounting two columns of text. Beneath each picture are located initials of either red or blue, decorated with white stars and scrolls, upon a gold-leaf ground. The margins of each folio are filled by a single vine scrolls patterns, thickly foliated by three-lobed leaves of gold-leaf, and occasional strawberries and blue cornflowers. In the center of the bottom margin of folios 2, 46, and 66 are the silver shield devices of Charles de Croy. Tendrils of foliage decorate the space between the two columns of text.

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Principaux Manuscrits, p. 8. For more on this master see P. Durrieu's discussion in La Miniature Flamande au temps de la cour de bourgogne (1415-1530), Bruxelles, 1921, p. 15. Durrieu alters the name of workshop from "The Master of the Silver Skies" to the workshop of the Guillebert de Mets Master. The most recent reference on this workshop is found in Dogaer, pp.33-37. An early discussion of this master can be found in F. Winkler's Studien zur Geschichte der Niederlandischen Miniaturmalerei des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts, in Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhochsten Kaiserhaus, Band XXXIII, Heft 3, Vienne, 1915, pp. 306-324.

## THE MINIATURES

BRUSSELS BR 9551-2

Each miniature appears at the beginning of each of the three parts of Le trésor de la cité des dames and illustrates:

1. folio 2; two scenes: Christine de Pisan in her room with the three Virtues and the Three Virtues before the High Princesses.
2. folio 46: The three Virtues in a landscape setting addressing three noblewomen in an interior.
3. folio 66: The three Virtues address four middle-class women in a landscape setting.

BRUSSELS BR 9551-2; FOLIO 2 (fig. 5-10)

This miniature contains ten figures within two compartments. On the left, in an interior with a steeply rising perspective, sits Christine de Pisan, leaning her elbow upon a large bed, covered in a red velvet embroidered in gold. The room itself is contained within a thin, grey architectural framework set upon a grassy field. The walls of the room are covered by a green striped curtain, drawn at the left to reveal a bookshelf, supported by grey bricks, holding several volumes. The floor is tiled in a complex pattern of yellow, green and orange. Christine is not at her customary desk, or lying upon the bed, but sits on a folding or X-shaped wooden chair with interlacing straight slats, used commonly in the fifteenth-century

along the Mediterranean.<sup>34</sup> The three Virtues cluster anxiously at the foot of the bed. Christine wears a black houppelande, with loose straight sleeves, lined in grey fur, perhaps miniver, or squirrel, visible at both cuff and hem. Her robe is belted with a gold chain, and pleats are visible beneath the white collar. The details of her robe and pointed horned headdress indicate a date close to 1430.<sup>35</sup>

The three Virtues are slender and angelic, following no visual models previously seen for Christine's Virtues in either La cité or Le trésor. They are all identical, with long, curling blond hair and simple smocks in rose, yellow or blue, edged with gold embroidery. The use of this kind of garment is often found in depictions of the Virgin in fifteenth-century northern painting. The same garment, however, was worn by the Virtues and other allegorical figures in theatrical productions in Burgundy, the most famous being the well documented Feast of the Pheasant held in 1454.<sup>36</sup> Two of the three Virtues belt their garments with red and green sashes. The gowns of both the

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<sup>34</sup>S. Whiton, Interior Design and Decoration, (New York: Lippincott, 4th ed., 1974) pp. 95 & 97

<sup>35</sup>Scott, Late Gothic Europe, p. 111, figs. 48, & 49.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 151-154. The twelve Virtues wore satin gowns edged in white fur. On other occasions the Virtues wore smocks with long gold threads.

Virtues and Christine are full, long, and fall in rich, soft folds about their feet. The folds on the bed are also carefully indicated, especially where caused by the pressure of Christine's elbow.

The three Virtues appear again on the right side of the miniature, standing on a grassy meadow before three seated Queens. The background is comprised of a burgundy cloth-of-honor decorated by gold leaf acanthus scrolls. The three Queens are seated upon a large throne with a wooden canopy, upholstered in black damask. The Virtues wear the same pale gowns, and they either gesture to one another, or glance toward the Queens. The queens are all posed with their heads inclined to the right, as if listening in rapt attention. The central figure has her hands raised in exclamation. The Queens are dressed in a variety of ceremonial as well as contemporary garments. The lady at the left wears a large, blue unbelted gown with fur-lined slits. Her hair is blonde and coiled into two side horns, the style popular during the first quarter of the fifteenth-century. Her crown is made up of the fleur-de-lis motif. Her companion in the middle wears a much larger tiara, and her robe is painted entirely of gold leaf. The Queen on the right is dressed in contemporary garb, a black and gold belted burgundy robe with a wide cut neck, lined in miniver. Her bombast sleeves are luxurious

and rather old fashion for this date. Her blonde horns are surmounted by a multicolored bourrelet of blue, red and white.

Every head is tilted, every glance sympathetic. The faces of all the figures are round, painted in a grayish white, with heavy lidded eyes, small rounded chins and full, tiny mouths. The hands are quite small, but skillfully manage the heavy drapery, adding animation to each scene.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 2

The two scenes of folio 2 illustrate the action of the Prologue and the first group addressed in Part One of Le trésor de la cité des dames. In the only two illuminated copies of this text surviving from the first quarter of the fifteenth-century, Boston, PL MS f. Med 101 and Paris, BN MS fr. 25294, similar compositions are utilized. (figs. 4-15 & 4-15) The scene of the Prologue has remained the same, for all three show the weary Christine attempting to rest after having completed La cité des dames, only to be prevented from so doing by the new commands of the Virtues. At least in BR 9551-2 the Virtues look somewhat penitent about their new demands.

On the right side of the composition the artist of BR 9551-2 illustrates only the Queens, the very group

Christine addresses in the first series of lectures in Part One. The earlier miniatures, having only one miniature, indicate several classes of women attending the same lecture. With the addition of two more miniatures, the artist of BR 9551-2 is able to adhere even more rigorously to the structure of Le trésor, even if this seeming faithfulness mars the egalitarian undercurrent of the text.<sup>37</sup>

The opening paragraphs of Part One state that Reason, Rectitude and Justice beg these great ladies "not to be ashamed to humble yourselves to hear our lessons, for, according to God whosoever humbles himself will be raised up." The Virtues first speak of charitable love, and of the desire of humans for "gold and precious stones" when the "virtues are nobler" and "the food of our table".<sup>38</sup> In contrast to these words of restraint, this manuscript of Le trésor is particularly sumptuous, emblazoned with gold leaf as well as silver, evident in the materials used and the costumes depicted by the Queens.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 109, 145 & 180.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>39</sup>Almost without exception from now on in both La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames Christine will be clothed in the garments of the wealthy upper-middle class, or lower nobility, in spite of her many protests against such both verbally and visually in the texts produced under her tutelage from 1405-15.

BRUSSELS, BR 9551-2; FOLIO 46 (fig. 5-11)

This miniature opens part Two of Le trésor, and contains the silver scumble sky which caused several scholars to attribute this as the work of the School of Gillebert de Mets. Like folio 2, the composition is divided into two compartments by the pink architectural structure, or theatrical mansion, enclosing three ladies on the right side of the miniature. Standing together in the middle of a grassy plain are Reason, Rectitude and Justice, without attributes, as is standard for Le trésor. The trio strike animated and artful poses, hands raised, eyes raised, hems of pastel garments raised to display meandering gold-leaf hems to their best advantage. The field is indicated by sweeping brush-strokes delineating plants, bushes and the occasional white or blue flower. The silver sky is rosy at the horizon, and is strewn with soft clouds, enlivened by a flock of blackbirds.

Inside the bright pink room, underneath a wooden barrel vault, in front of two windows and an open door are three high-born ladies of great wealth and taste, indicated by their mannered poses and costly garments. The first woman moves her body to the right as if engaged in a solitary dance, creating a sweeping motion with the silhouette of her voluminous blue damask robes and wide bombard sleeves, folded back to display miniver lining.

Her red and gold bourrelet is becoming more heart-shaped, and has a long veil attached. She points to the woman in the center with her left hand. This woman stands quietly, head and eyes lowered, and the silver and pearl brocade of her gown and the white folds of her horned headdress make her appear almost columnar, deterred by the wistful bend of her head. The lady to the far right wears a crimson gown, fitted through the bodice and sleeves, to flare out, petal like, at the wrists and waist. Her headdress is also a bourrelet. She holds a small black dog with one hand, as she lifts the heavy train of her gown with the other. The floor of the room recedes rapidly in a cluttered, decorative fashion with its lozenge pattern of yellow and orange. Trees and clouds can be seen through the openings.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 46

This miniature opens the second part of Le trésor de la cité des dames, telling us:

...we will address our remarks in the second part of this volume to ladies and maidens and ordinary women, both those who dwell at the courts of princesses, having their position conferred upon them by their service, and those who live on their own lands in castles, manors, walled towns and fortified cities.<sup>40</sup>

In the first chapter Reason, Rectitude and Justice lecture on the duties and temptations of ladies who live at court.

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<sup>40</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 109.

These are the ladies pictured in the miniature, the exquisite, beautifully clad, provocatively elegant ladies of court.

BRUSSELS, BR 9551-2; FOLIO 66 (fig. 5-12)

Seven women cluster in two groupings within a far-reaching landscape. The green meadow has an amazing variety of foliage, fan shaped leaves, blue cornflowers, dandelions, several trees and rocky projections designating the foreground, the background consisting of hills squared by patches of planted fields before the grey towers of a city in the upper left. The trio of Virtues in their same pale hues and loose tunics crowd together at the left. The other four women are richly arrayed in houppelandes of black and blue, or wear gowns of bright red or green, covered by mantles and cloaks. Their headgear delineates their class as that of artisan or merchant. The first woman in black wears the same layers of crimped linen veils worn by women in the 1430's, as seen on Giovanna Arnofini in her wedding portrait by Van Eyck, and in the portrait of a woman believed to be Van Eyck's wife Margaret. (fig. 5-27)<sup>41</sup> This woman not only wears a veil

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<sup>41</sup>The headdress is not only a valuable dating tool, but is the best indicator of class distinction according to Margaret Scott. She states that apparently old fashioned gowns were often worn due to their association, in this case, with the dutch aristocracy, or various regional

similar to Giovanna Arnofini, she holds the voluminous material of her garment in front of her abdomen in the same, delicate, two fingered manner. The three women in the background form a separate knot, united by similar hoods in different colors. The simplicity of their hoods, worn over the peaks of hair coiled at the temples, covered by white veils, points to a wealthy merchant-class costume.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 6

This miniature accurately illustrates those women addressed in Part Three of Le trésor, as one of the Virtues states:

...we must now (as we have promised) speak to the women of rank in towns and cities, that is, to those married to clerks, counsellors of kings or princes, administrators of justice, or men in various offices. We shall also speak to those who are married to the citizens and merchants of cities and fine towns, who in some countries are called nobles when they are of ancient lineage. Following that, we will address all classes of women, so that all women may experience our instruction.<sup>42</sup>

This miniature pictures women of the first two categories, counsellors or merchants, but hardly represents the poor women, serving girls and farm laborers who are the subject

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preferences. Late Gothic Europe, pp. 125-6. The Arnofini Wedding by Van Eyck is dated 1433, and the portrait of Margaret Van Eyck is dated to 1439, the structure of these veils are analyzed by Scott on p. 122.

<sup>42</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 145.

of the final chapters of the text.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: BRUSSELS, BR 9551-2

In their commentary on the miniatures of BR 9551-2

Camille Gaspar and Grédéric Lyna write:

Les femmes représentées ici son du type de celles des Frères de Limbourg; elles sont minces, et ancées et gracieuses. Les visages sont ronds, aux joues charmes et aux yeax très grandes. Le caractère féminin est ci pousé a' l'excès. Le drapé est ample et assez élégant.

These svelt, graceful women all possess the refinement and delicacy admired in the works of the Limbourg brothers. However, the artist of this manuscript uses feathery, soft brushstrokes blurring their silhouettes, and models their poetic faces in a wistful, diminutive manner foreign to these great Flemish painters. No figure in this manuscript is frontally, or stiffly pose. All twist, turn, and lean in one direction or another, either to indicate sympathy, or attention to other figures in the scene. Although the artist devotes much care to the elaborate and incredibly specific dress of the figures, great skill is evident in the landscape as well. The overall atmosphere of these miniatures is delicate rather than fussy, and the exquisite draughtsmanship endows the ladies, and the Virtues in particular, with a quaint peculiarity which can not be linked to the workshop of Guillebert de Mets. The tapered figures with their curving outline and dance-like poses

suggests rather that the artist is a follower of the Limbourgs, carrying that courtly style into the next decade with a fluid, rather than flamboyant, charm.

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THE HAGUE, KB MS 131 C 26

Le trésor de la cité des dames; folios 1r, 1v, 22v & 32v.  
1425-50

Utrecht or Guelders

Unknown pre-Burgundian workshop

THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This volume contains 43 leaves and four miniatures.

The text of Le trésor is abbreviated<sup>43</sup>. Its owners are unknown, and a date of circa 1430 is written inside the front cover.

#### THE ARTIST

The catalogue lists KB MS 131 C 26 as a manuscript produced by a Parisian workshop,<sup>44</sup> while Delaissé, incorrectly referring to the text as Epistre Othea, describes the miniatures as problematic, suggesting a Northern French provenance, perhaps Hainault<sup>45</sup>. Charity Cannon Willard, in her study of the text, has found that not only is the text abbreviated, the language used varies significantly from both Parisian and Northern manuscripts. She convincingly argues that the miniatures for KB MS 131 C 26 are of Netherlandish origin, based on Panofsky's studies<sup>46</sup>, and states that Margaret of Burgundy, for whom Le trésor was dedicated, her sister Marie and another

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<sup>43</sup>Willard, "The Manuscript Tradition of the Livre des trois vertus and Christine de Pisan's Audience" in Journal of the History of Ideas, 27, 1966, p. 438; J.M.J. Guiffrey, Inventaires de Jean, Duc de Berry (Paris: 1894-96), I, no. 1181.

<sup>44</sup>The Dutch Royal Library Disc., KB (Koninklijke Bibliotheek), 1985, p. 13.

<sup>45</sup>Delaissé, p. 174, no. 238.

<sup>46</sup>E. Panofsky, "Guelders and Holland: A Footnote on a Recent Acquisition of the National Museum at Stockholm," Konsthistorisk Tidskrift, XXII (1953).

Frenchwoman, all having access to Le trésor, settled at Cleves, and Guelders.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE FRAME

The four miniatures of KB MS 131 C 26 are small quarter-page pictures found at various locations on a two-column folio. The margins of three sides of the page around the column with the miniature are filled with the sparse tendrils of a variant ivy rinceau pattern, augmented by pink, green, blue or gold pseudo acanthus leaves located at the corners of the column. Occasional red and white flowers can be seen, and a strawberry appears in the border of folio 32v. The border is painted in a broader manner than is customary, the leaves are rendered in gold patches, outlined with black ink to give them form. The margin decorations gives the appearance of having been executed with great haste.

#### THE MINIATURES

THE HAGUE, KB 131 C 26; FOLIO 1r (fig. 5-13)

The first miniature renders a curious aerial view of

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<sup>47</sup>Willard writes that as Marie of Burgundy, Margaret's sister, became the Duchess of Cleves, and Marie Harcourt, another French woman married c. 1405, became the Duchess of Guelders, "It is therefore not too difficult to understand how a copy of the text should have made its way into the hands of a Dutch artist." p. 438.

both city and landscape, with figures, buildings and the city-wall hopelessly out of scale with one another. The landscape is dotted with flowers, and the sky is atmospherically rendered with pale to medium blue brushstrokes. Three women, the three Virtues, stand within the circumference of a carefully rendered city wall, complete with towers, battlements, and a nesting white stork in the highest tower at the left. They are imprisoned beneath the arches of a large, dun-colored brick edifice, supported by five slender pink columns, and capped by a gabled orange roof with three fluttering gold flags.

Each of the three half-length figures stand beneath a separate arch, filling it completely with her squarish form. The Virtue to the far left wears a blue houppelande with a flat white collar open to form a v-neck. Her robe is belted in gold, and she wears a red mantle. Her hair could either be coiled about the crown of the head and covered by a crespine or caul<sup>48</sup>, or she may wear a yellow and red bouurrelet. The light, visible brush strokes seem to indicate hair. She holds gold scales in her hands, while glancing to her neighbor under the center arch. The middle Virtue is dressed in a pale pink, loose-sleeved robe of the

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<sup>48</sup>Known as reticulated headdresses in the fifteenth-century, these elaborately decorated nets were worn over women's hair in different arrangements from the 13th well in to the fifteenth-century. de Courtais, p. 18.

same style, and has on a gold turban with red ribbons and a large jewel at center front. She holds a large grey sword with a gold pommel, as she points to the last Virtue with her right hand. This Virtue wears a thin silver fillet over her long, flowing blonde hair. She is dressed in an apple-green gown with a white collar open at the neck. She holds a gold ruler.

The figures all have large heads, and tiny hands. In spite of their stocky appearance, their features are rendered with great animation and modeled delicately. Gold leaf is used on the attributes, it colors the scales, the pommel of the sword as well as the ruler.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 1r

The first miniature of KB MS 131 C 26 presents the Virtues housed within the protective walls of the City of Ladies. Christine de Pisan can not be identified convincingly through out any of the four miniatures of this manuscript. The customary of the Virtues command Christine to end her rest and begin work on Le trésor is not shown. The only Virtue holding the correct attribute assigned to her in the text is Rectitude, the narrator of the second part of the text. The sword and the scales are common symbols for Justice, but both appear held by different figures in this miniature. Christine's Reason, who is

assigned the mirror as her attribute in La cité des dames, may have been given the scales due to her association with Logic, one of the seven Liberal Arts, who "weighs the true and false" with her scales.<sup>49</sup> Reason's mirror, in addition to helping the viewer achieve self-knowledge, is supposed to help one see "the essences, qualities, proportions and measures of all things that are known, nor can anything be done well without it."<sup>50</sup> In the fifteenth-century, according to both Seznec and Tuve<sup>51</sup>, allegorical imagery borrowed from a great variety of sources including astrology, classical imagery, and especially, in Christine's case, from her own creative synthesis. The artist of KB MS 131 C 26 does not use the attributes for the Virtues described in La cité des dames, however, no attributes are mentioned in the text of Le trésor de la cité des dames. Christine viewed these works as companion pieces, but throughout the century they were not necessarily bound together, even in her own day. Therefore it is difficult to evaluate the artist's faithfulness to the text in this regard. The fact that the text itself is abbreviated further complicates the analysis. It is safe

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<sup>49</sup>Hall, p. 274.

<sup>50</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup>For more on this development see J. Seznec, Survival of the Pagan Gods, (New York: 1953, rpt 1972), and R. Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1966).

to say that the artist, while following no visual sources for the miniatures, does, as we shall see in the final two miniatures, link them thematically to the text.

THE HAGUE, KB MS 131 C 26; FOLIO 1v (fig. 5-14)

Reason, Rectitude and Justice are seen in the same costume, holding the same attributes discussed above, on the reverse of folio 1, at the beginning of Part One of Le trésor. They are now seen within the small confines of an interior, comprising the entire miniature. The room is built of pale grey brick, and has an arch-shaped door at either side, as well as a wooden barrel vaulted ceiling. The floor is red and white.

The three figures are now seen at full length, and they fill the room with their large size. Reason at the left raises her hand in speech, and the others gather their gowns up and turn toward her at elegant attention. Again, these robust little forms are not without their own brand of sturdy quaintness. Their poses echo the gothic S-curve so admired and cultivated for women in courtly circles.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 1v

Justice with the sword and Rectitude with her ruler give their full attention to the Virtue whom I have designated as Reason, standing at the far left. Reason is

the narrator of the first Part of Le trésor which begins on this very folio, and she raises her hand in a gesture of speech appropriately.

THE HAGUE, KB MS 131 C 26; FOLIO 22v (fig. 5-15)

Nine women crowd awkwardly into the same vaulted interior first viewed in folio 1v, the three Virtues and six seated ladies. Two pink columns and an arch now frame the scene. The three Virtues stand at the right, holding their attributes and gesturing and leaning in a graceful yet active manner. All the figures in the room are imbued with animation, energy and excitement. Rectitude, with her formidable ruler in one hand and shaking a pointed finger authoritatively with the other, addresses the ladies before her. Six ladies of different rank crowd cozily together on the floor. The queen is placed most prominently placed at the front, and she wears a full red robe, gold belt, gold collar hung with bells, and is crowned in gold, indicating her high status, in spite of her humble position on the ground. The belled collar is a kind of jeweled decoration more commonly seen in 1415, but is seen worn by Lysbeth van Duvenvoorde's wedding portrait, painted in 1430. (fig. 5-28)<sup>52</sup> Behind the Queen, sit three ladies in various reticulated headdresses and turbans, leaning forward, eyes

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<sup>52</sup>Scott, Late Gothic Europe, p. 112, f. 51.

raised, dressed in pink and green gowns and houppelandes. At the far right a woman of the lower classes, dressed entirely in a black cape, and unbuttoned hood hiding her face, sits cross-legged on the floor. The long liripipe hangs down her back. A woman dressed in blue sits at the back of the group near the door, wearing a similar hood, now colored bright red. In the shadow of the black doorway it is possible to make out a ghostly standing figure in grey and white.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 22v

This third of four miniatures is found above the following text "Après ce que nous avons ple ans formes princesses et haute dames..." This indicates the miniature illustrates the beginning of the second part of Le trésor, devoted to instructing ladies at court, and those living on manors and various estates. Rectitude narrates the lectures to the ladies in this part, and she does seem to be illustrated in the act of speaking, accompanied by Reason and Justice to the left. The mixing of the various classes together in a group, and the placing of the noblewomen upon the floor (or upon unseen stools or benches) is without precedent in visual sources illustrating this text up to this point, although it will be found in manuscripts created after mid-century. The

artist has chosen to illustrate all the women the text addresses, rather than just those in the second book, and the classroom seems quite lively indeed, not at all frozen into a hierarchical frieze of figures arranged according to rank.

THE HAGUE, KB MS 131 C 26; FOLIO 32v (fig. 5-16)

The final miniature illustrates the three Virtues standing before six seated women, including almost all the same figures seen in folio 22v. The framing columns are now pale green and the arch is pink, reversing the color scheme of the previous miniature. The three Virtues are still standing, but Rectitude now inclines her glance to Justice in the center, and presents the group to her with a gesture of her lowered right hand. Justice points downward, raises her sword and returns Rectitude's glance. The seated figures remain the same, with the following changes. The figure in blue, with the red hood now sits in the front, to the right of the princess. We can see her face more clearly, and she is wearing a white wimple. The lady at the back left of the group has more prominent horns on her headdress, and behind her is a new figure seen in profile wearing a bourrelet. The dark seated figure, as well as the shadowy figure in the door way have vanished.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 32v

Folio 32v of KB MS 131 C 26 is found above the beginning of the third and final book of Le trésor de la cité des dames, addressing wives of men holding office at court, merchants, and laborers in town and country. The artist has rendered the same variety of classes as seen in folio 22v, but has ironically eliminated one of the two women representing the women addressed in this section. The smiling figure with praying hands in the red hood is the only individual from the lower classes in the miniature.

## STYLISTIC SUMMARY: THE HAGUE, KB MS 131 C 26

The short, stocky, but delicately modeled figures can be related by both style and costume to the Netherlands about 1430. Each figure is shaded to achieve soft, downy, modelled skin tones, and the expression of the childlike faces are lively and varied, enhanced by the use of white in the eye to indicate direction of glances. The stocky figures appear malleable and coquettish in spite of their solid builds and small stature. Their hands are slender and used in the perfunctory fashion to focus the viewers attention upon the speaker. These characteristics are in keeping with other manuscripts of about the same period produced near Guelders and later Utrecht, as discussed by

Delaissé in his study of several Books of Hours produced circa 1430.<sup>53</sup>

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LONDON, BL MS 31841

Le trésor de la cité des dames; folio 2v.

1440-50

French or Flemish

Unknown workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This manuscript is incorrectly referred to as La cité

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<sup>53</sup>Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (MS 141, fig. 14), The Hague, (KB MS 74 G.34), Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (MS 185, fig. 15 & 16) and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library (MS 87, figs. 20-24) all share the liveliness, attitudes and gestures, contained within a small format found in KB MS 131 C 26. See Delaissé, A Century of Dutch Manuscript Illumination, Berkeley: 1968, pp. 20-23.

des dames in the British Library catalogue. It is an incomplete copy of Le trésor de la cité des dames and was bequeathed to the British library by William Burges, Esq., on June 25th, 1881. There are extensive notes and commentary written on folio 1 and folio 71 in English, perhaps by Burges. The writer of the commentary erroneously dates the manuscript to the time of Richard II of England (1377-1399)<sup>54</sup> which "stamps this copy with the appearance of priority of execution, and therefore, though mutilated gives it an increased value." This early dating is impossible of course, as both texts, La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames were composed in 1404-1405. Folio 71 gives an accurate assessment of the contents of the text and its condition, although it is here also incorrectly entitled La cité des dames:

This work entitled Le cité des dames is a treatise on the duties of women in every station of life from the Princess to the laborer's wife. It was composed by Christine de Pisan, and divided into three books, but what is here bound up consists only of fragments.

The analysis of the text and miniature on folio 1 and 71 has caused the British Library to give the manuscript an

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<sup>54</sup>The writer of the commentary bases such a dating on a comparison of the clothing worn in London, BL 31841 to an etching from a manuscript of the King of France, 7393 at Strawberry Hill, not from any manuscript illustrating a text by Christine de Pizan. The etching referred to was produced at the time of Edward IV (1461-1483). The writer of the flyleaf commentary mistakenly believes London BL MS 31841 to be of a much earlier date.

early date of 1409. A study of the dress and headgear worn by the Christine and the three Virtues indicates a dating no earlier than 1440.

#### THE FRAME

Folio 1 contains a large half page miniature set above two columns of text, which begins with a large foliate initial A of blue, set on a gold ground. The margins are decorated by gold ivy tendrils on all four sides. The ivy vine scroll, while containing the customary three-lobed leaf, also has flowers and balls of golds, and many curling tendrils. Naturalistic green sprays and blue flowers are also found within the marginal decoration.

#### THE MINIATURE

LONDON, BL MS 31841; FOLIO 2v (fig. 5-17)

The miniature is slightly damaged, and illustrates only an interior scene, framed by grey architecture and a low wall with a single opening. This rectangular architectural construct is quite singular, highlighted with diagonal brushstrokes of red, yellow and blue, and bears no relationship to any of the interior furnishings.<sup>55</sup> The

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<sup>55</sup>This may represent the horizontal framework which held the wall paneling in place, with molded edges in imitation of stone working techniques. See Whiton, Interior Design and Decoration, New York: 1957, rpt.1974, pp.72-73.

three Virtues stand behind Christine's bed, occupying the right half of the room. This interior scene is rich with domestic detail. The bed is dressed in white with a fringed canopy, decorated by a sparse dotted pattern of blue and pink. A series of interior arches divide the foreground from the back of the room. The colorful blue and gold painted ornamentation of the ceiling can be seen beneath the arches. A fireplace is located at the left, with a projecting hood built over it to direct the smoke out through a wall hole or chimney. The hood is ornamented with a coat of arms, as was customary in a great home. A hook and chain indicate the fireplace might also be used for cooking.<sup>56</sup> Beneath a rectangular window with open wooden shutters and iron grillwork sits a credence for the plate<sup>57</sup>. The credence was a cupboard on legs, customarily oak, and here it is covered by a linen cloth with blue embroidery cluttered with the silver serving dishes.

Christine lies upon the bed dressed in the blue cotehardie with square-slit sleeves and red undergown we have not seen since the early manuscripts produced by La cité des dames Workshop in the first decades of the

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid. pp. 71-72.

<sup>57</sup>The word plate originally meant silver, and bears no relationship to the shape of the object, but to its material.

century. The elongation of the form and the high folded peaks of her banner headdress are similar to that seen in a picture by the Master of Mansel painted after 1451.<sup>58</sup> (fig. 5-29) The three Virtues all wear crowns and can be identified by their attributes. All the Virtues have been marred by a brown discoloration across the chest. At the far left, in a fur-lined blue surcoat stands Justice holding an object which looks like her traditional vessel, but the paint has flaked away. The padded jewel-sewn horns of her heart-shaped bourrelet are still wide apart as they were worn in the 1440's. The lower portion of the headdress over the ears and temples is covered in mesh. Rectitude stands in the middle, but directs her attention to Justice with a turn of her body and inclination of both head and glance. All the virtues wear the same headdress discussed above. Rectitude can be identified by her thin brown ruler. She wears a red gown more tightly fitted through the bodice, but still loose and wrinkling in the sleeves, a silhouette common circa 1450. Reason stands at the far right, pulling Christine with her right hand and holding her mirror with her left. Reason's dress is some-

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<sup>58</sup>This miniature illustrates the marriage and coronation of Charles V and Jeanne de Bourbon, events occurring nearly a century earlier, in 1364. (fig. 5-29) These various costumes display the fascinating mixture of archaic dress, ceremonial robes royale as well as current (1450's) fashion and headgear used by artists when depicting historical events.

what out of date, resembling the gown worn by one of the Virtues in an earlier manuscript of Le trésor, BN MS fr. 25294 with its ermine sleeves trailing to the ground. (fig. 4-15)

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 2v

This miniature illustrates the action described in the Prologue of Le trésor de la cité des dames, when the three Virtues reappear to Christine demanding that she write a second book for women, this one full of lectures of instruction "to swell the number of citizens of virtue" for the City of Ladies.<sup>59</sup> It differs from earlier visual models created by La cité des dames Workshop in that it fails to illustrate the college of ladies for whom the lectures are intended. Even the manuscript from The Hague, KB 131 C 26, though illustrating the Prologue in a variant manner, with just the three Virtues and no image of Christine, pictures the women of various classes in succeeding miniatures. (fig. 5-15 & 5-16) Due to the fragmentary condition of the text, it is safe to assume other miniatures may have illustrated these scenes, but are now lost.

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<sup>59</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 32.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: LONDON, BL MS 31841

Although damaged, this miniature is finely executed, displaying a convincing interior space populated by beautifully costumed figures. The ladies are all slender, with soft oval faces and delicate, even features. The Virtues stand with their backs slightly bowed, creating a subtle curve of hip so admired in courtly art. The interest in the domestic detailing seems more Flemish than French, and is unprecedented to this date in all depictions of this scene. The compositional arrangement of the bed, Christine, and the three Virtues does indicate familiarity with earlier French visual models established by La cité des dames Workshop.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: LONDON, BL MS 31841

Catalogue of Manuscripts in the British Library

YALE UNIVERSITY, BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427  
Le trésor de la cité des dames; folios 1, 16, 49r & 72.  
 c. 1460  
 Northeastern France, Hesdin?  
 Master of Amiens 200

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This deluxe manuscript, with four fine large miniatures, surrounded by decorative borders, and bound in late 18th century red moroccan leather by Bozérian, was

unknown until its appearance at a sale in Paris in 1968.<sup>60</sup> Due to its overall luxury, and the fineness of its miniature decoration, the codex is possibly one presumed lost, once in the Bourbon Library and owned by Anne of France (1461-1522). An unidentified coat of arms, apparently overpainted, of a fifteenth-century owner appears on the initial "A" on folio 1r. A faded inscription can still be seen in the lower margin of folio 1r: "Je suis a Monsieur Louis...de Grant I", possibly from the 16th-17th century. The late 18th century binding displays the arms of the Parisian family Pajot d'Ons-en-Bay. Comte Pajot d'Ons-en-Bay inherited the library of the Duc de Montausier, governor of Louis XIV's son. It became part of the Rothschild collection, and was sold by the Rothschild family to H.P. Kraus in Paris June 24th, 1968.<sup>61</sup> It was a gift of Edwin J. Beinecke.

#### THE ARTIST

The high quality of the Yale manuscript has resulted in many diverse attributions made by well known scholars of manuscript illuminations before John Plummer's definitive

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<sup>60</sup>The Yale University Library Gazette, 52 (1978) no. 4, p. 244.

<sup>61</sup>Kraus, In Retrospect: A Catalogue of 100 Outstanding Manuscripts sold in the Last Four Decades by H.P. Kraus, New York: Kraus, 1978, p. 174, no. 67.

attribution to the Master of the Amiens 200. Georges Dogaer believes that the border decoration of Beinecke 427 exhibits similarities to the work of Jacquemart Pilavaine, active in Mons about 1450. The softly modelled figure types with their sweet faces, elegant costumes and frieze-like poses has led Anne van Buren to attribute the miniatures to the workshop of the Mansel Master. When close stylistic affinities were seen between the style of the miniatures with a fifteenth-century copy of a Valerius Maximus' "Faits et dits mémorables," (Berlin, Preuss. Staatsbibl., MS 94),<sup>62</sup> John Plummer established the authorship of the pictures with other works by the Master of the Amiens 200. The four miniatures of Le trésor de la cité des dames of the Beinecke Library are among the most refined and elegant created by this gifted artist and workshop. Although the composition is limited, due to the dictates of the text and past visual models, they are comparable to his other paintings in his Histoires romaines made for Philip the Good (Paris Bibl. de l'Arsenal ms. 5087-88) and the Berlin manuscript mentioned above. The Histoires romaines bears a colophon stating that the transcription of the text was finished in 1454 at Hesdin in the Pas-de-Calais. Loyset Liédet completed many of the miniatures for this same text, indicating the two artists

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<sup>62</sup>The Yale University Library Gazette, p. 244.

and their workshops were both working between 1454 and 1460 in Hesdin, located 35 miles north of Amiens. Based on the attributions listed below, it can be concluded that The Master of the Amiens 200 worked in Hesdin, Mons and Amiens. Delaissé has identified the following manuscripts to the Master of the Amiens 200 atelier: Girart de Roussillon written at Mons in 1448 (Vienna, O.N.B., Cod. 2549) and a Chroniques de Hainaut (Boulogne, Bibl. Mun. ms 149). John Plummer attributes the following works to the same master: Book of Hours at Amiens (Bibl. Mun., ms. 200) for which the Master is named, Book of Hours (Pierpont Morgan, M. 194) and a Speculum humanae salvationis (Kunstbibliothek Berlin, Lipp. Cd. 1).<sup>63</sup>

The style of the Master of the Amiens 200 reflects the influence of the great Simon Marmion, pervading his pictures with the same sense of delicacy and reality seen in the miniatures of Le trésor. They share an equally rich range of colors, from cerulean blue, to a burnished gold, to the subtle shadings of middle and light green, distinguishing the works of both masters. The miniatures also display the same variety of details of dress and interior space, including a love of elaborately patterned floors and furniture, also found in many fifteenth-century Flemish miniatures.

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<sup>63</sup>The Last Flowering pp. 14-15, numbers 19 & 20.

## THE FRAME

Beinecke Library Ms. 427 contains four half-page miniatures each located above one large column of text, with large four-line illuminated initials beginning each division of the book. The blue initial "A" on folio 1 is filled in with a shield of red and gold chevron designs. The border decoration fills the entire margin on the bottom and outer sections of each folio with a miniature, and slender gold ivy tendrils and ink sprays fill the inner margin and the area about the arch of the miniature's top frame. The sumptuous borders are filled with swirling pseudo-acanthus leaves of red, blue and green, augmented by flowers of red and blue flowers, set above ink sprays and gold ivy vines. Folio 1 has two butterflies of grey white and black, perched on a green frons, and red and black, displaying two wings fully. Folio 16 is inhabited by a yellow butterfly and bright green grasshopper in the bottom margin, and three exotic birds with green, grey or orange plumage sit upon a blue and gold finial. The borders of the third miniature, folio 49v, in addition to several moths, are inhabited by a long-necked, long-legged grey crane trying to stretch out its wings in the crowded left margin, while a duck with a red hood and green tail swims along the bottom of the page. The final miniature of Beinecke ms. 427, folio 72 adds a green frog to this

menagerie, an abundance of blue flowers and blue bells, a grey falcon and a blue and black bird seated on a sprig of iris.

The borders of the Beinecke MS 427 are uncommonly fine, rendered with a light, fresh brush stroke indicating with its fine detailing the very species of bird, insect and flower it represents. Georges Dogaer believes the marginal decorations are quite similar to the work of Jacquemart Pilavaine, for "As an illuminator he is notorious for his overloaded marginal decorations with multi-colored acanthus, golden leaves, flowers, strawberries and birds."<sup>64</sup>

#### THE MINIATURES

YALE UNIV., BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427

The scenes created to illustrate Le trésor by the Master of the Amiens 200 are an elaboration on earlier visual models, with several significant and noteworthy alterations. The four miniatures illustrate the four parts of the text as follows:

- fol. 1: Personifications of the three Virtues appear in a vision to Christine.
- fol. 16: Princesses seated in a semi-circle around Dame Prudence.

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<sup>64</sup>G. Dogaer Flemish Miniature, p. 61.

fol. 49v: Women of the Court and Nobility Seated at the Feet of the Enthroned Virtues.

fol. 72: Bourgeois and Common women Seated at the Feet of the Enthroned Virtues.

BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427; FOLIO 1 (fig. 5-18)

The three Virtues appear to the sleeping Christine in a beautifully articulated interior space. The artist has rendered the furniture, hangings and decorative details of this bedroom with meticulous care. At the far left of the room is a fireplace covered by a screen made of fine Italian brocade of red and gold, with the details of the pomegranate motif highlighted in metallic gold. Two clear glass vases occupy a small ledge on the mantle. The long pillow strewn wooden bench Christine rests upon is placed in front of the fireplace at an angle in harmony with the angle of the bed behind her. The bed is covered in blue velvet, and its hangings are drawn up and back to reveal another luxurious brocade of gold, red and black. Next to the bed is a window with the top shutters open allowing a view of the building's outer wall and a bit of the green landscape. The yellow and gold tile pattern of diamonds and squares has been carefully painted to convey depth.

Christine is shown asleep upon the blue pillows before the fire, her head upon her hand and turned away from the Virtues as they stand before her twisting and swaying with

the quiet elegance of late Gothic jamb statues. Christine is no longer modestly dress in a manner befitting a widow. Her gown is a modified houppelande tightly fitted through the bodice and sleeves, extremely low-cut, using less material than before, although the green velvet falls in crisp, angular folds about her knees and feet. Her neckline, cuffs and hem are lined in rich brown sable. A wide white damask belt binds her waist tightly. Christine wears a short flower-pot bonnet, its veil running straight up from eye level to two peaks on wires above the cap, similar to those worn by Isabella of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy, and her ladies in the Breviary of Philip the Good circa 1460 (fig. 5-30). The cap elongates Christine's forehead, and her face, finely painted, is softened by the transparent veil.

Christine and the three Virtues share the same delicate features on an oval face, with a large wide forehead, negligible chin, curving noses and full, small mouths. The three Virtues all have long, blonde hair with wispy, soft curls. Except for their headdress and attributes, the Virtues are all dressed in the same robes royale, consisting of an ermine-lined mantels attached to the gown by jeweled brooches, form revealing fur plastrons with jewel buttons worn over costly Italian cloth of gold brocades. Each Virtue leans in a different direction

creating a rhythm of repeating curves. Their narrow shoulders, serpentine stance, protruding bellies and mannered gestures are so arranged to delight the viewer. The first Virtue holds a large red book, and her gold crown is hung about her wrist instead of upon her head, where she wears a modest headcloth fastened by two corners at the back of the head. She reaches her hand out toward Christine. The middle Virtue sways in the other direction, her downcast eyes turned toward the viewer. Her right hands holds a sword, and her left is raised, palm outward. She wears one of the many variations of the turban-bourettelet, this one quite elaborate, with a gold band at its apex covered in jewels, nearly covering her coronet. The final Virtue wears a crown, and holds two attributes, the scales and the ruler.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 1

The miniature is located above the short text of the Prologue, and never has the narrative been illustrated so gently and quietly. Instead of Christine being physically jarred from her rest by the demanding tug of one of the Virtues, here we see her about to be given a gentle tap by Reason. The text of the Prologue never states that Christine was sleeping, simply resting after writing La cité des dames. The Master of the Amiens 200 has chosen to

adhere more closely to the pictorial tradition of the vacatio, where the protagonist of any vision is always shown asleep, than to the text of the Treasure itself. Additionally, Christine is not shown dressed as an upper middle class widow, but as an aristocrat gentlewoman. This is determined by the tightly fitted, rather immodest, fashionable cut of her gown.<sup>65</sup> Christine protests in the text of Le trésor against the dangers not only of immodest dress, but of dressing above one's station in life.<sup>66</sup> The artist has certainly not followed Christine's own desires, established in her writings and in earlier portraits, by showing her here as a young, nubile aristocrat, instead of the middle-aged widow she was.

The Virtues can be identified by their attributes, but they are not the symbols established in their first appearance in La cité des dames. It should be noted that the attributes of Christine's Virtues are never mentioned in Le trésor, but only in La cité. Reason, the first narrator, holds a book. The book is such a common attribute, it in itself is not a useful aid to

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<sup>65</sup>Around 1460 the most fashionable ladies of the Burgundian court wore revealing, tight-fitting gowns, whereas prosperous middle-class women had looser robes with baggy sleeves. Scott Visual, pp. 94-95, fig. 97.

<sup>66</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, pp. 130-133, 149-153.

identification. In secular art it was, however, commonly used to represent the Virtues in general, or, among the Liberal Arts, Rhetoric, Grammar or Philosophy.<sup>67</sup> Justice is in the center with her traditional sword, instead of the measuring vessel Christine wished. Her upraised palm indicates speech, and perhaps represents the coming lectures. Rectitude is curiously laden with the ruler assigned to her by Christine, as well as the scales. Rectitude was a rarely seen Virtue in allegorical literature, and Christine assigns to her among other duties "to give to each person what is his according to capacity, to say and uphold the truth", and the responsibility of measuring all things.<sup>68</sup>

BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427; FOLIO 16 (fig. 5-19)

Nine princesses are seated around the standing figure of Dame Prudence, a personification of the most valued virtue a woman could acquire through education and wise action, stressed throughout Le trésor. The royal ladies are distinguished only by their garments, for all display conformity to fifteenth-century standards of feminine beauty. The ladies sit upon two benches in a shallow space, brightened by a blue and crimson hangings. With

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<sup>67</sup>Hall, Dictionary, p.50.

<sup>68</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 12-13.

downcast eyes and hands locked inside the cuffs of their sleeves, they listen demurely to the lectures of Dame Prudence, standing in the center upon a green dragon or snake, the symbol of wisdom, and Prudence. Her unbelted, full cut cloth of gold, with sheer, full sleeves and jeweled turban is the common costume used to illustrate saints, Virtues and other individuals living in the far past.<sup>69</sup> Two younger women sit upon stools at the right. All wear the same variation of the houppelande worn by Christine de Pisan in folio 1, in a colorful assortment of gold brocades, and blue and crimson velvets. All manner of complex headdresses can be seen on the hairless heads of these mannered beauties, from reticulated headdresses shaped like turbans, to blunt henins, to their steeple-shaped derivatives of dizzying heights, with wire constructs and veils designating the butterfly or banner style worn in 1455-65.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 16

The high-born princesses in this miniature accurately depict, in a fresh and innovative manner, the ladies lectured to by the Virtues in Part One of Le trésor. To

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<sup>69</sup>Note the sibyl in the left panel of Rogier van der Weyden "Bladelin Triptych", 1450's. Such exotic variations on contemporary costume were often used to depict allegorical figures, and sibyls. See S.M. Newton Renaissance Theatre Costume, pp. 143, 160-162.

preserve the honor of her position the wise princess:

...will behave respectably and speak softly; her conduct will be kindly and her expression gentle and pleasant, greeting everyone with lowered eyes. She will greet people in words so humane and sweet that they may be agreeable both to God and the world.

This is certainly the attitude of the women illustrated in the miniature, with their quiet listening posture, bowed heads and lowered eyes.

Prudence has never been singled out before as the main lecturer in any other visual representation, and yet she is an important Virtue in the text. Our three familiar Virtues, Reason, Rectitude and Justice introduce her in Chapter Ten, saying "From now on we must speak of the lessons Worldly Prudence gives her (the princess)". Dame Prudence begs the princess above all to honor her reputation, to live morally, frugally, behave admirably, surround herself with wise individuals, and read instructive works. Chapters Ten through Seventeen describe the moral doctrine and seven principle teachings of Prudence for the princess: to honor one's husband, to gain the favor and respect of her husbands relatives, to watch over the welfare and upbringing of her children, to be discreet and circumspect to her enemies, to defend her people and win the respect of the counsellors, to keep the women of the court in order and finally to develop sound

financial practices.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, in Chapter Twenty-five, the instructions of Prudence are heard once again, spoken to the chaperon of a high-born young lady who wants to "plunge into a foolish love affair". A sample letter of warning first seen in the Livre du duc des vrais amans (1401) is reproduced in Chapter Twenty-six.<sup>71</sup> Prudence is a virtue watchful over the wise and careful life, and as Matthew admonished 10:16, "Be ye prudent as serpents." The symbol of the snake underlines this visually, having also been associated with the wisdom of Minerva, as well as Logic, makes it an admirable inclusion here.

BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427 FOLIO 49v (fig. 5-20)

In the third miniature, the three Virtues lecture to seven noblewomen of various ages seated upon the floor. The Virtues still hold their attributes, and wear the identical ceremonial costumes first seen in folio 1, as Justice and Rectitude stand while Reason, in the center, sits on a long bench situated before a blue and gold cloth of honor displaying the popular Italian pomegranate motif, edged in brilliant red. Warm oak paneling lines the grey wall, framed on both sides by wide windows, letting in streams of light.

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<sup>70</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, pp. 55-77.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid. pp. 95-105.

The seven women are divided into two groups of three and four located on either side of the miniature. At the left sit two women in the low-necked, tightly fitted gowns so popular in this decade. All of the ladies wear high henins, indicated their aristocratic status. The henins displayed are of the variety popular about 1460, covering all the hair, with a long strip of velvet, usually black, attached about the base of the headdress. The henins themselves are made of rich brocades, velvets or damask silk, and a stunning assortment of color and pattern is displayed in this miniature. None of the women wear the banner headdress with its mass of wires and veils seen in the previous miniature devoted to royal princesses. The final figure on the left is a young girl, seated in the front and seen in profile. She is smaller than the rest, and wears a truncated version of the henin, a less cumbersome type reserved for young girls, over long blond hair. The same variety and type of dress can be seen worn by the group of mature women on the right. Only three figures are seen in full, but a henin and shoulder are visible, indicating another figure at the back. These women seem to be older than the group on the left. The lady in the front at the right in a blue gown wears the white horned headdress composed of linen veils, a conservatism in dress not uncommon among the older women of

court. The rich display of costly textiles, fine furs and gold necklaces underlines the noble status of all the seated ladies.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 49v

The Master of the Amiens 200 illustrates the College of Ladies established by Christine and the three Virtues within the secure confines of the La cité des dames in this miniature. The Virtues lecturing from a raised platform, in front of a cloth of honor. The ladies are seated upon the floor, models of deportment and good conduct as they take their lessons in good citizenship. This miniature is located at the beginning of the Second Part of Le trésor de la cité des dames, dedicated to ladies and maidens of court, baronesses, ladies living on estates in the country, and women in religious orders. In Le trésor Reason, Rectitude and Justice, do not have a section of the book to narrate as they did in La cité des dames. Instead, they state their ideas and opinions as a group, making it impossible to distinguish them separately.

The Master of the Amiens 200 in this miniature and the one that follows, always shows Reason lecturing in the center, the only seated figure, with her hand raised in the gesture of speech. Reason and Rectitude frame her on either side, adding an elegant heraldic symmetry to the scene.

BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427; FOLIO 72 (fig. 5-21)

In the same classroom, later in the day perhaps, due to the increased light streaming in through the open shutter shining on the wooden seats at the left, assembles a new class of eight students, six women and two children. Reason is seated, but has now turned to the right, opened her book and raised her right hand. The Virtues appear in their same robes royale and hold the sword, book, scales and ruler as before.

The women on the floor before the Virtues wear a bright array of colors; reds, blues and spring greens belying one's first assumption that these must be nuns, due to their flat-topped headdress and veils. Variations of this headgear are common among women of the upper bourgeoisie, early versions of it can be seen as early as the 1430's, in the figure of the donor's wife in the outer panels of the Ghent Altarpiece by Jan Van Eyck. If these were nuns, they would certainly wear wimples. Their hoods are of the kind worn by wives of a clerks or counsellors attached to a great house.<sup>72</sup> A similar variety of headgear, ranging from nobility to lower-middle class, can be seen in miniature from La Somme des vices, dating to the same decade as Beinecke MS 427, and it also illustrates

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<sup>72</sup>H. Norris, Costume and Fashion 2, London: 1927, pp. 429-431.

sermons to a varied group (fig. 5-31). Several of the women wear the same kind of flat headdress over a white veil, hugging the head quite tightly.

Most of the women on folio 72 wear gowns and robes of a looser fit, or with outmoded sleeves, such as the woman with the high horned headdress at the left, all indications that the figures are from the wealthy middle class. The simple, round necked blue gown worn without a belt by the woman on the far right is a kind often worn by young girls of the upper classes.

The inclusion of the two children and a dog constitute the most delightful and enlivening addition to the class. A very smartly dressed young girl with long blond hair and a small black cap plays with a white dog on her lap. Her green gown and wide pink belt is a simplified edition of the clothing worn by the woman behind her. The toddler with the curling blonde hair and blue robe is captivated by the antics of the dog, rather than the lecture, as one would expect of any young child.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The toddler is most likely a girl, considering the theme of the text, although young children were similarly dressed until the age of six, when their clothing became practically miniature versions, without uncomfortable freaks of fashion, of their elders. See D. Hartley, Medieval Costume and Life, (London: 1931) p. 117.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 72

The lectures of the third part of Le trésor de la cité des dames address the bourgeoisie and common women pictured in this final miniature of Beinecke MS 427. The premise of Chapter Three is carefully adhered to by the Master of the Amiens 200:

The third point that we want to tell you about - you towns-dwellers and women of rank in fine towns - concerning your garments and clothing, is that you must not be extravagant, either in the cost or in the fashions....This is what makes the pomp and luxurious clothing multiply and increase every day, because each person is trying to outdo the other - by which many people are ruined in France and elsewhere.

Christine's arguments against extravagance in dress are as much base on debt and financial concerns as on sins of pride and vanity, or dressing above one's station. At a time when fine Italian textiles cost as much as a jeweled necklace, her warnings are quite practical. The women in this miniature are well, though conservatively, dressed in a manner in accordance with Christine's advice. None of the fine brocades of the previous miniatures are seen in folio 72, nor is ermine or sable, the furs reserved by sumptuary laws to the nobility. Only the tight-fitting dress of the young girl with the dog, and the woman behind her, perhaps her mother, betray the latest fashion. None of the working class laborers and serving women Christine specifically includes in the final section of Le trésor,

are included in the group.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: BEINECKE LIBRARY, MS 427

The four miniatures of Le trésor de la cité des dames executed by the Master of the Amiens 200 are a marvel of delicate workmanship. Each picture is exceedingly naturalistic in its depiction of interior space, architectural details and domestic furnishings. An unforced draughtsmanship and a palette of rich, varied colors distinguish these miniatures, and the events of the text are represented with all the self-conscious stylization of a tableaux vivant with its prescribed beautifully costumed participants. The faces conform to the canon of beauty of the day, and yet they are excellently modeled in rosy flesh tones, with demure, downcast eyes, adding to the overall serenity of each miniature. The most active scene is the illustration to the Prologue, when the Virtues appear to rouse the resting authoress from her inactivity. This characteristically is a scene of great action, with Christine being pulled from her bed by a demanding Virtue (figs. 4-14, 4-15, 5-17), and yet the present artist renders the scene with a soft brush, frozen poses and golden aura of a medieval dream-poem. All of the four miniatures share this ceremonial, visionary atmosphere, lacking the sharp edged frontality common to an

icon, opting instead to elicit serenity through gloriously garbed figures of supple grace, refined in every gesture, however artfully posed. The same can be said for the deportment of the students, be they princess or bourgeoisie, for all pay homage to the text of Christine in their avid desire to become good citizens through schooling at the college of ladies. The only exceptions to this can be found in the playful white dog and the fascinated toddler on folio 72, who disregard the solemnity of the lectures in the hopes of the amusements promised in a future recess.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: BEINECKE LIBRARY MS 427

H.P. Kraus, In Retrospect: A Catalogue of 100 Outstanding Manuscripts Sold in the Last Four Decades by H.P. Kraus, New York: Kraus, 1978, no. 67, pp. 174-175.

John Plummer, The Last Flowering: French Painting in Manuscripts 1420-1530. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982, no. 20, pp. 14-15.

The Secular Spirit: Catalogue Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1975, p. 161.

The Yale University Library Gazette, 52 (April, 1978) no. 68, pp. 243-245.

SUMMARY CHAPTER FIVE: 1425-1465

The eight manuscripts of La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames produced during the middle of the fifteenth century break from the visual models first

established by Christine de Pisan and La cité des dames Master in several ways. Although in most cases it appears that the artist has some familiarity with the favored format established by Christine and her artists, this proves no deterrent to creative variations in composition, style and interpretation of the texts. Various factors, not the least of which being creativity of the artists and the endless desire to meet the capricious tastes of their new patrons, bring about invigorating, often misguided, but continuously fascinating changes in the depiction of the captivating cast of characters populating these Christine's La cité and Le trésor. Additionally, particularly in the cases of Chantilly, Mus. Condé MS 856 and The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, regional styles imbue the figures and the scenes with a refreshing provincial flavor. (figs. 5-4 & 5-13 to 5-16)

The most obvious differences occurs within the composition of the opening miniature of La cité des dames. Characteristically, two scenes are kaleidoscoped within a single frame; that is Christine de Pisan is shown startled by the arrival of the three Virtues, and in the connecting scene she is actively engaged in the construction of this City aided by Reason. This format is enlarged in Munich Cod. Gall 8 to include more active workmen, and a completely inactive Reason, complicated by an all

encompassing, and all too complete architectural setting advancing before the action described in La cité. (fig. 5-1) In Paris, BN MS fr. 609 and 3182, and Chantilly Mus. Condé MS 856 there are no miniatures illustrating Christine's visionary meeting with the Virtues, and the cooperative construction scene is eliminated totally. (5-6, 5-7, 5-5 & 5-4) Yet all these manuscripts are endowed with quite spirited and energetic interpretations of the text, revealing the heart of Christine's theme in a new and lively manner. The characters turn, pose, gesture and parade in a manners quite foreign to the clear, uncluttered style of the Master of La cité des dames.

In Le trésor de la cité des dames the original, rather cramped composition is expanded and amplified in these mid-century miniatures to suit the courtly tastes of the new book owners. Brussels, BR 9551-2 and Beinecke MS 427 revel in a calligraphy of line, refinement of proportion, elaboration of dress, ornamentation of headdress, fabric, furniture, skies and foliage, betraying a dizzying preoccupation with pattern to dazzle any prospective aristocratic reader. (figs. 5-10 & 5-19)

In both La cité and Le trésor the most noteworthy changes in these new miniatures occur as a direct result of the increasing popularity of the texts themselves. Carried about the continent by sisters, wives, daughters, and

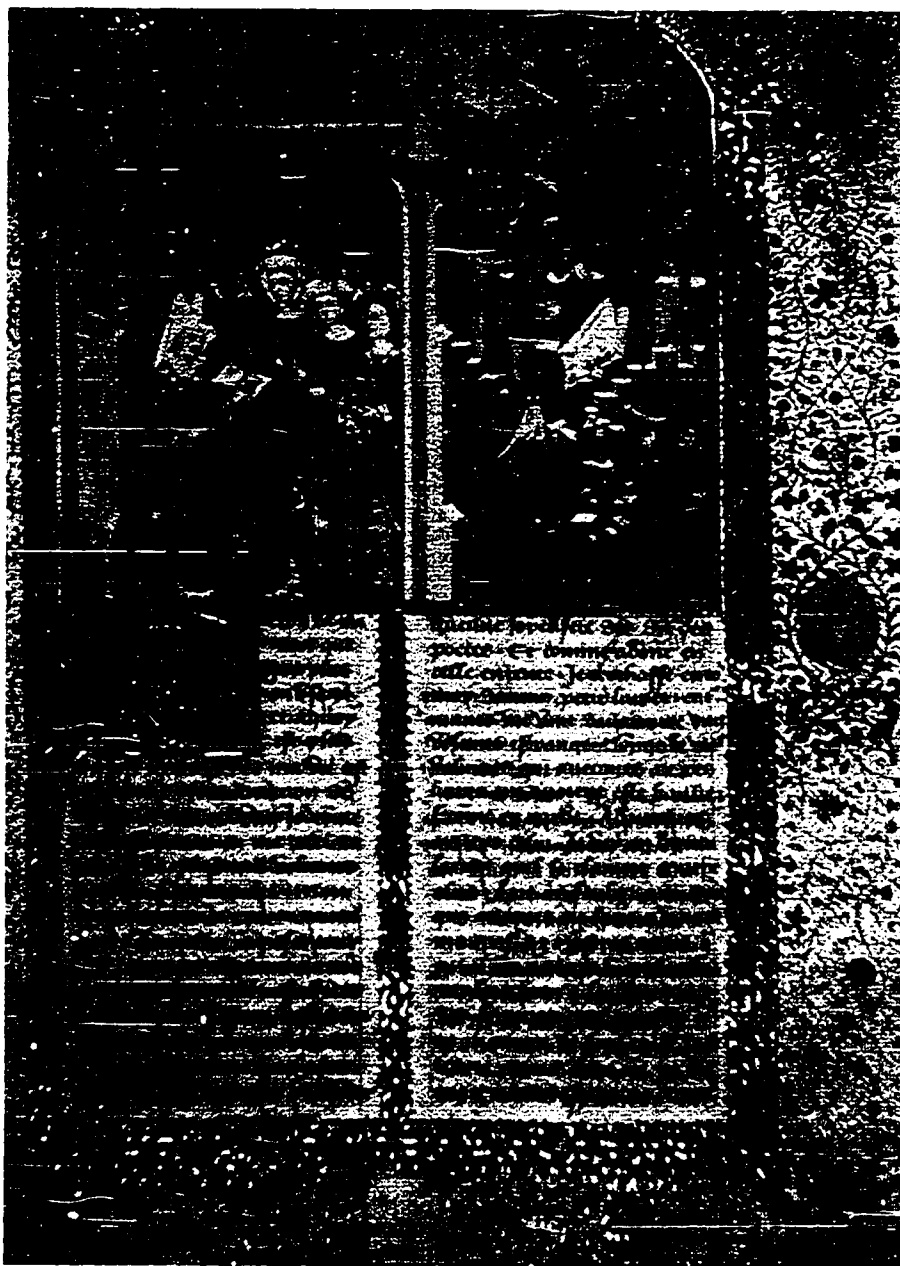
nieces the manuscripts are copied, translated and illuminated by regional artists working in all manner of styles, evident in the great variety of possibilities explored in the eight manuscripts studied in this Chapter. In Addition, special attention must be given to the changing portraits of Christine herself. Insisting upon common-sense modesty and even humility in dress in her writings, Christine's new readers and admirers in the decades after her death elevate their favored authoress to a higher status by clothing her in the garments reserved for women in the class above her current station as respected court writer. With the exception of Munich, cod. Gall. 8, where Christine, though finely dressed, can still be safely identified as middle class by her garments, all other images of her from this period alter her appearance significantly, through elaborate headdresses, costly furs, forbidden fabrics, and immodest gowns. By so doing they propel her status ever higher, elevating her visually into such refined and rarified circles they contradict some of her in Le trésor de la cité des dames:

In this connection, let us suppose, for example, that a woman is of excellent character and without any bad deed or thought in her head: but no one will believe it, for she is seen wearing clothing above her station. Many bad judgement will be made against her, however good she may really be. It therefore behooves any woman who

wants to preserve her good reputation to be modest and conservative in her clothing. Her garments should not be too tight nor the neckline too low, nor should she take up other unchaste fashions, nor newfangled things, especially indecent ones.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 150.



5-1 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine;  
 Reason helps Christine build the City; La cité des  
dames, Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl. Cod. Gall. 8, f. 4,  
 c. 1450.



par les paroles  
 de la premiere  
 Dame q' nomee  
 fu l'uson se trou-  
 ves mor la se-  
 conde. Laie de  
 nom Douce. et ainsi me fist  
 une chere. Je ne me der rai  
 de vous avoier ne estre orfance  
 de l'uson. Mais mesme auant  
 ton aide ou cooier de la closture  
 et de la minulle la bastie par  
 ma sœur l'uson. De la cite de c.  
 Dames. si vien les outub. et  
 s'ay auant. si de l'uson le mes-  
 mes de son sœur. et machone  
 for a la chaire de sa plume  
 C'est a dire de quel te l'uson  
 et en par de haut par l'uson  
 D'une auant edifie les hautes.

palais. honore et nobles ma-  
 fions des excellent Dames de  
 grande gloire. Fenomme q'  
 en ceste cite seont hebergees  
 et demourent a perpetuite  
 et a tousiours. Adonc  
 Je v'explique. Etant la parole  
 de la Dame heimeuse. De  
 en ceste maniere. E' de l'uson  
 Dame. D'ez mor et toute pte  
 o: commande. car non de  
 est de obier. et celle me fist  
 ainsi. Etant de l'uson. les hie  
 p'ence plus que nulles. pe-  
 cieusos et Relusans que le  
 tas escarier. Etant de l'uson  
 pour aloier en et machone  
 Ap' Je l'uson este orfance.  
 t'and' que l'uson. l'uson  
 for l'uson. Et le arde.

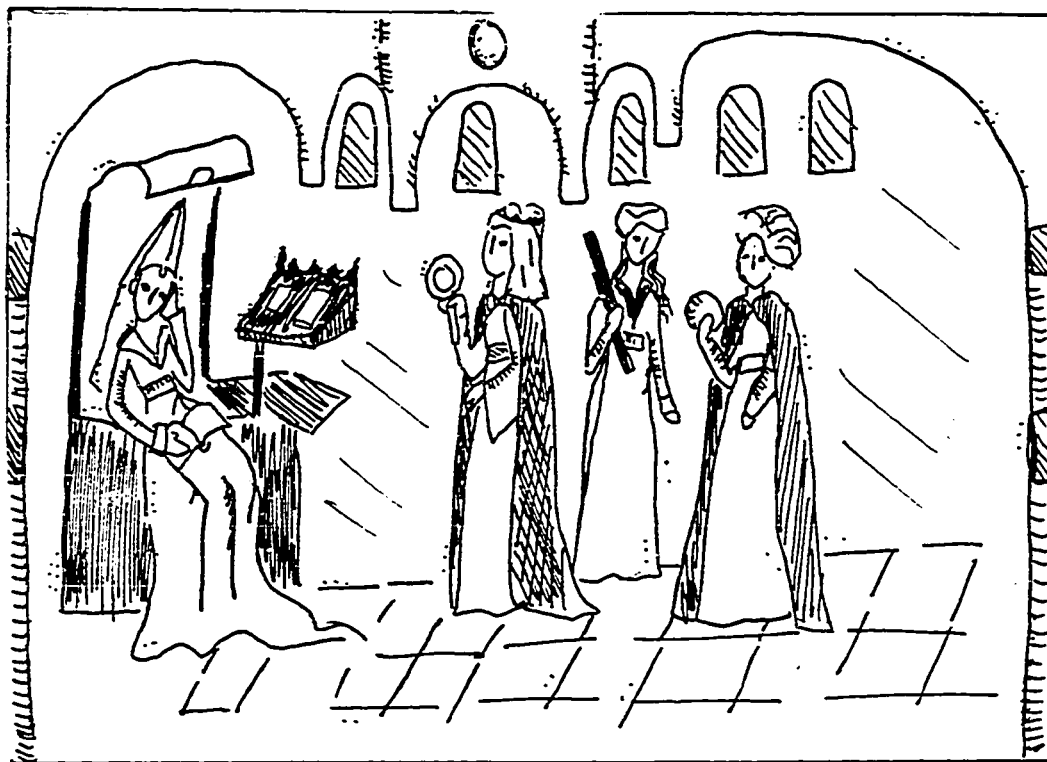
5-2 Rectitude Welcomes Women to the City; La cité des dames, Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl. Cod. Gall. 8, f. 44v, c. 1450.



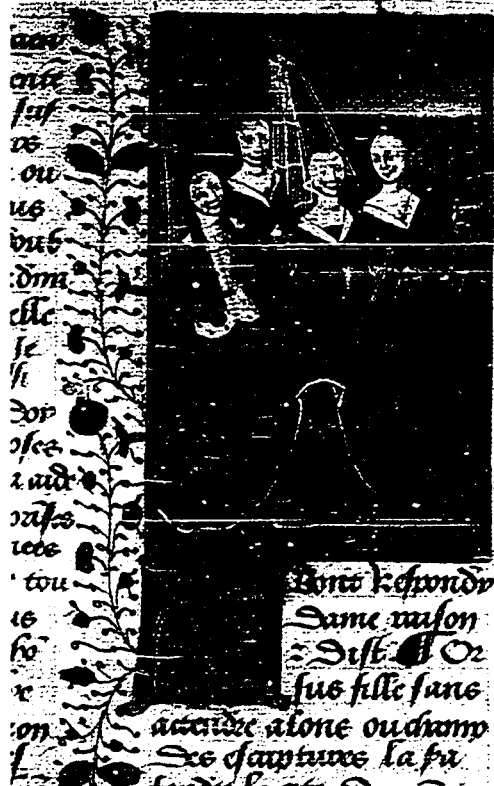
5-3 Justice Welcomes Holy Women to the City; La cité des dames, Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl. Cod. Gall. 8, f. 90v, c. 1450.



5-4 Women in a Castle Courtyard; La cité des dames,  
Chantilly, Mus. Condé MS 856, f. 4, c. 1450.



5-5 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine; La cité des dames, Paris, Bib. Ars. 3182, f. 2, c. 1450.



5-6 (top) Christine de Pizan; La cité des dames, Paris, BN MS fr. 609, f. 2v, c. 1460.

5-7 (bottom) Reason, Rectitude and Justice Lead Christine to the "Field of Letters;" Paris, BN MS fr. 609, f. 10.



**A**vec les  
 paroles  
 de la pie  
 matre du  
 me qui  
 au son es  
 tve nommee se tua vers  
 moi la secunde qui d'occe  
 tur avou nom z amfi  
 me dit. **A** mie chere te  
 ne me dors pas avec autre  
 re de esdiffice : mais donne  
 auage ton aide . ou auant

de la doucture z de la  
 muuulle ia basle par  
 ma s'ur au son de la at  
 des dames . **O** pie iee  
 fostis : vien auques  
 moi : vien auant fr  
 destormes le mortier .  
 ou coruer : ma come  
 forte a la tarmz de ra  
 plume . car asses d'  
 quor te l'auray : en  
 pou deat par l'atue  
 duune avous esdiffic

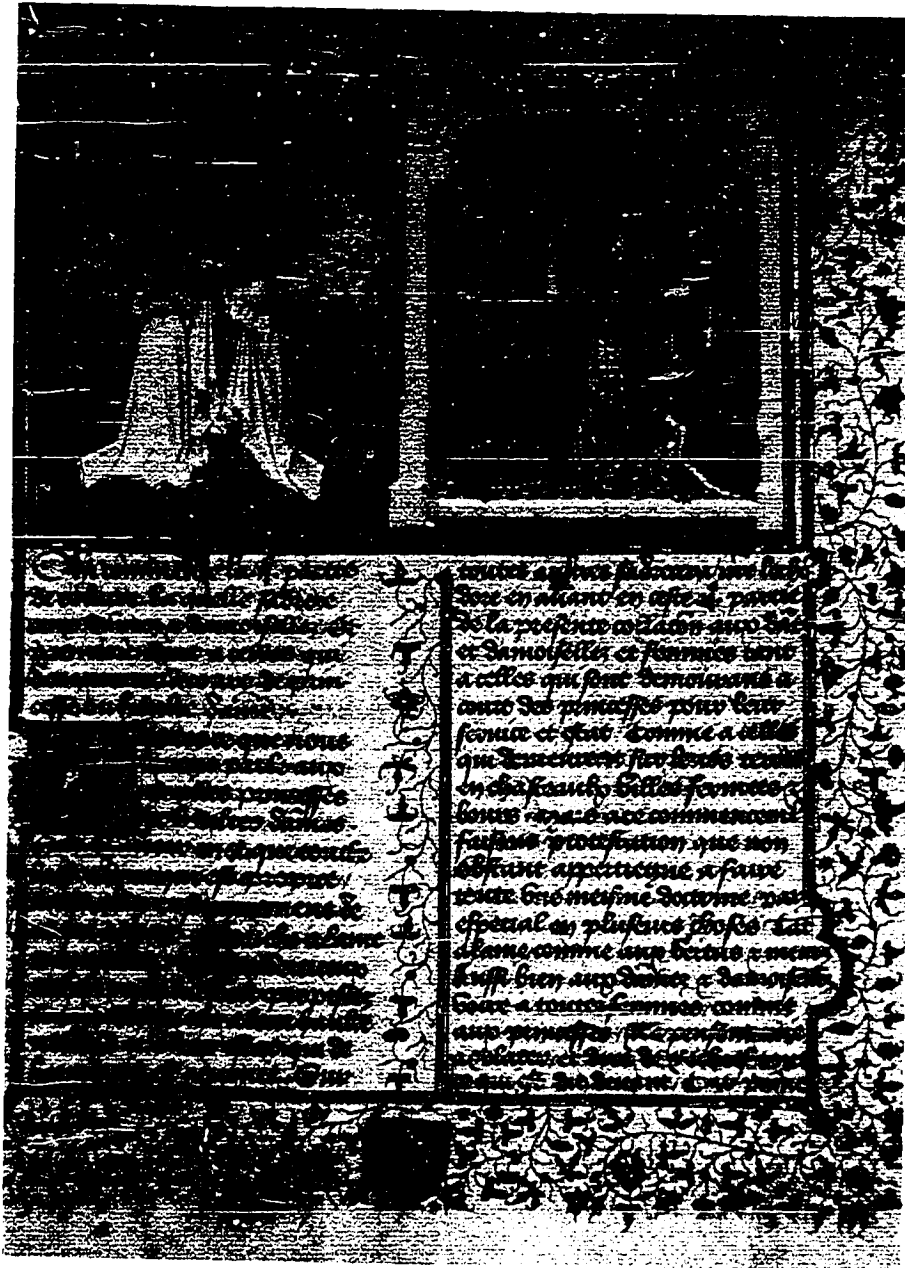
**A**nt se tua des  
 moi duine ut  
 fice a sa haut  
 re miamz : dit ainsi .  
**O** pie adroit soit h' me  
 semble q' selon rapossubite  
 alate de mee saur si q' tu  
 las sca metre en euvre fin  
 z tel as ouur ou l'apozome  
 de la ace des dames z desce  
 mais est temps q' ie m'uar  
 mette du surplus si q' ie te

ponne c'est assour dr  
 amama : legier la rone  
 exfessentz biencauz este  
 donnee : seigneur par elle  
 : habitee de guino mulatu  
 de de noblee duice de sa cou  
 z de sa mefaine car la dor  
 le palas : les haute manff  
 one prestee z parces : toure  
 les fuez comuete de fleur  
 pour decaouz elle : sa trefsi  
 noze : excellente vous : as  
 semblee **O** diuina de

5-8 (left) Christine Conversing with Rectitude; La cité des dames, Paris, BN MS fr. 609, f. 59, c. 1460

5-9 (right) Christine Conversing with Justice; Paris, BN MS fr. 609, f. 128v.





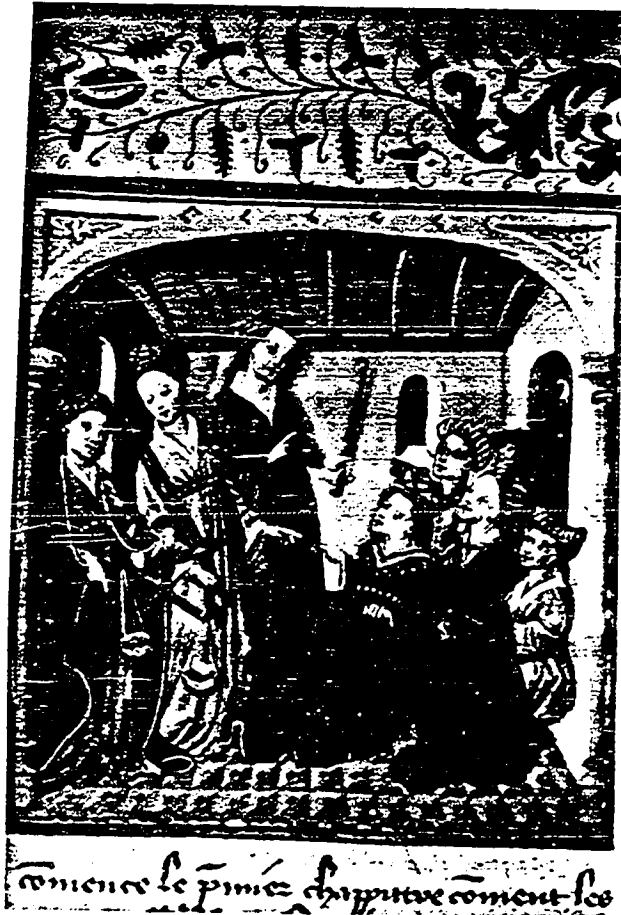
5-11 The College of Ladies, Lecturing Women of the Court and Nobility; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9551-2, f. 46, 1420-30.





5-13 (top) The Three Virtues in the City; Le trésor de la cité des dames, The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, f. 1r, c. 1430.

5-14 (bottom) The Three Virtues with Attributes; The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, f. 1v.



5-15 The College of Ladies, Lecturing Queens, Court Ladies and Common Women; Le trésor de la cité des dames, The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, f. 22v, c. 1430.



5-16 The College of Ladies, Lecturing Queens, Court Ladies and Common Women; Le trésor de la cité des dames, The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, f. 32v, c. 1430.



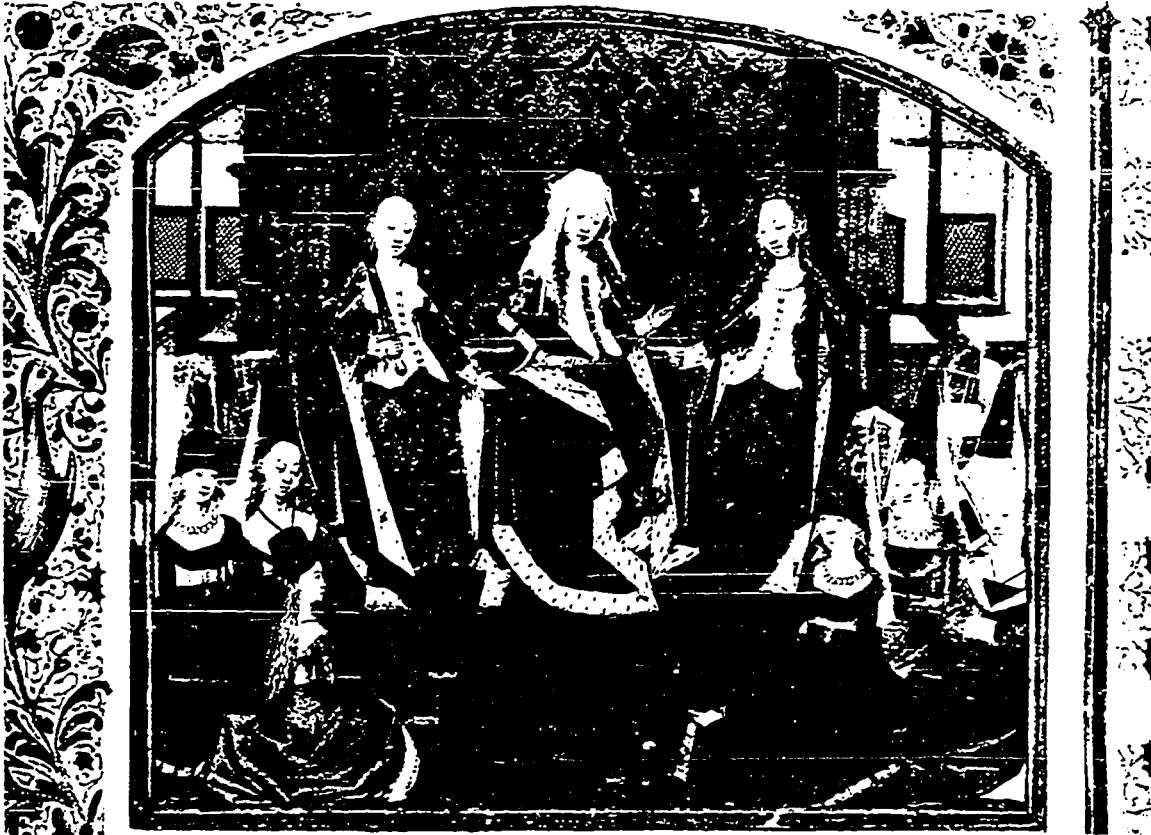
5-17 The Three Virtues Return to Christine in a Vision; Le trésor de la cité des dames, London BL 31841, f. 2v, 1440.



5-18 The Three Virtues Return to Christine in a Vision; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Yale Univ., Beinecke, MS 427, f. 1, c. 1460.



5-19 The College of Ladies, Dame Prudence Lectures Queens and Princesses, Le trésor de la cité des dames, Yale Univ., Beinecke, MS 427, f. 16, c. 1460.



5-20 The College of Ladies, Lecturing Women of the Court and Nobility; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Yale Univ., Beinecke, MS 427, f. 49v, c. 1460.



5-21 The College of Ladies, Lecturing Bourgeois and Common Women; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Yale Univ., Beinecke, MS 427, f. 72, c. 1460.



5-22 St. Waudru Arriving in Hibernia; Jacques de Guise,  
*Chroniques de Hainaut*, Brussels, BR 9243, f. 115,  
c. 1455, Workshop of William Vrelant.



5-23 Middle-Class Woman; Anon. Flemish draughtsman,  
Silverpoint Drawing, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen,  
Rotterdam.



5-24 Countess Joanna of Flanders and Count Thomas; The Privileges of Ghent and Flanders, Vienna, ONB, Cod. 2583, f. 13, after 1453, Anon. illuminator.



5-25 The continence of Charles d'Anjou; Boccaccio,  
Decameron, X, 6, Paris, Bib. Ars., MS 5070, f. 365,  
Flemish, 1430-1450.



5-26 Maria Hoose Wedding Portrait, Aged 17; detail, oil on panel, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Bruges Master 1473.



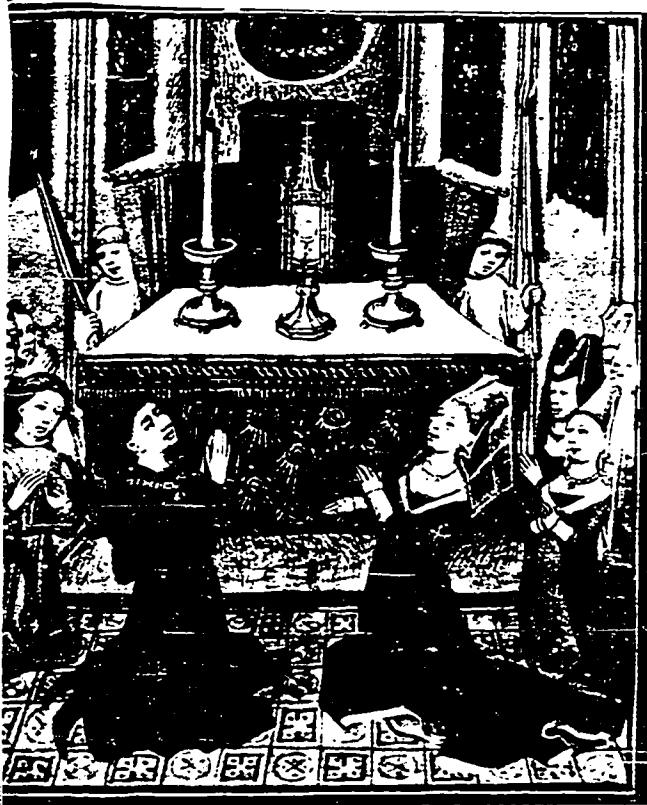
5-27 The Marriage of Giovanna Cenami and Giovanni Arnofini;  
Jan Van Eyck, oil on panel, London, National Gallery,  
1434.



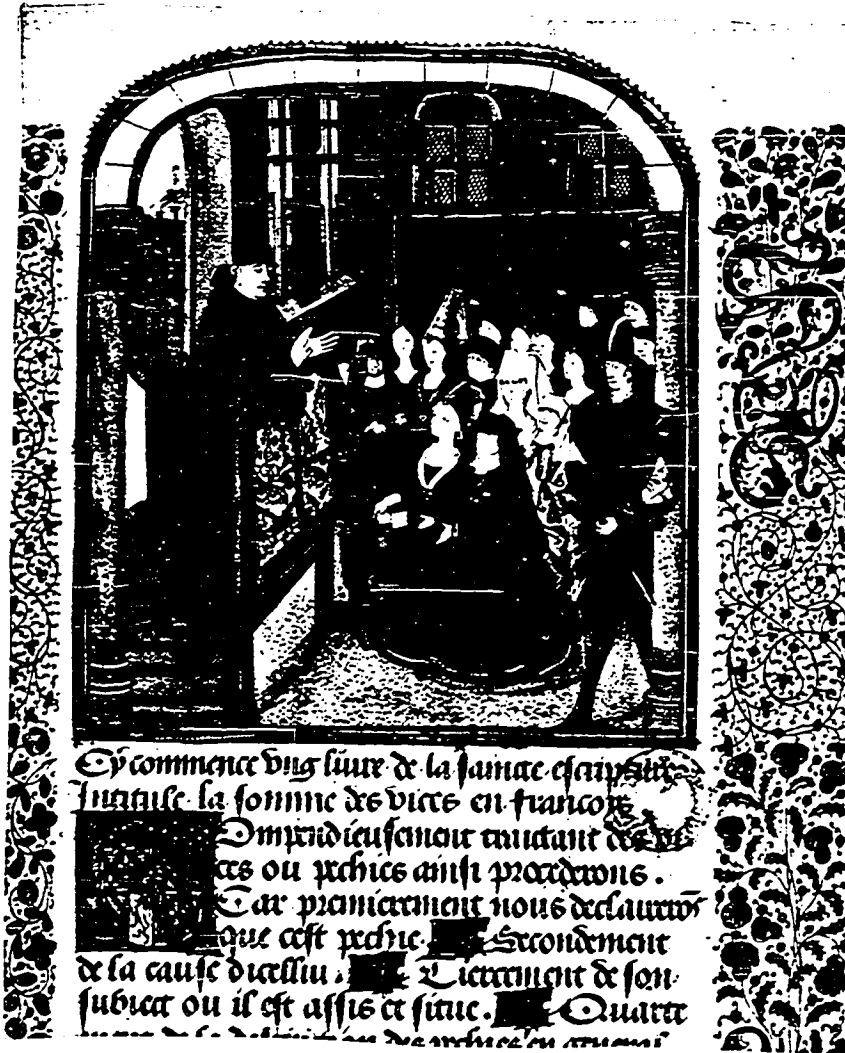
5-28 The Betrothal Portrait of Lysbeth van Duvendoerde;  
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 1430.



5-29 The Marriage and Coronation of Jean de Bourbon and Charles V of France in 1364; and the Birth of the Dauphin; Le fleur des histoires, Brussels, BR 9232, f. 423 (detail), painted after 1453, The Mansel Master.



5-30 Isabella of Portugal, and Philip the Good, Duke and  
Duchess of Burgundy, at prayer with their courtiers;  
Breviary of Philip the Good, Brussels, BR 9026, f.  
258, c. 1460.



5-31 The Faithful Listening to a Friar; La somme des vices,  
 Brussels, BR 9307, f. 1, c. 1460, Workshop of Loyset

## CHAPTER SIX

### LATER MINIATURES (1465-1521)

There are six surviving manuscripts with sixty-six pictures illustrating the text from the final period of production examined in this study, 1465-1521. Brussels BR 9235-7 and BL Add. 20698 are of particular interest due to their unique qualities distinguishing them from all other codices analyzed thus far. Brussels BR 9235-7 is one of the few manuscripts to contain both companion texts of Livre de la cité des dames and Trésor de la cité des dames within a single volume, here beautifully illuminated and accompanied by nine miniatures produced by the school of Jacquemart Pilavaine. (figs. 6-1 to 6-6 & 6-64 to 6-66) London, BL Add. 20698 is the most ambitious of all the illustrated manuscripts of La Cité, with a program of illustration attempting to provide a miniature for nearly every chapter of the text - there are spaces for one hundred and thirty miniatures, forty of which were begun, although only 25 can be considered completely finished. (figs. 6-21 to 6-61)

#### Livre de la cité des dames

All six of the manuscripts from this period illustrate La Cité, although two texts, Brussels BR 9235-7 and Paris BN fr. 1177 also contain the texts and illustrations for La

Trésor as well. These manuscripts will be discussed in both sections of this chapter.

Livre de la cité des dames

Brussels, BR 9235-7

9 miniatures: La Cité fols. 3, 5, 10v, 24v, 52, 112.  
La Trésor fols. 136, 180, 136

c. 1460-70

Flemish

School of Jacquemart Pilavaine (?)

THE MANUSCRIPT

This magnificent Flemish manuscript is not only embellished by nine miniatures accompanying both of Christine's texts, but also includes Renaut de Lonens Le Livre de Mellibé et dame Prudence at the end of the volume. As one might expect, the list of owners is distinguished. The margins are decorated with the coat of arms, the devise "muy seul", and emblem (a little bell) of the original owner, Walburge de Meurs, wife of Philippe le Croy, Lord of Chimay.<sup>1</sup> It bears the signature of Louise de Albert, sister of the king of Navarre and a princess of Chimay, one of the earliest known women bibliophiles.<sup>2</sup> It then became the part of the library of Charles le Croy, to be

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<sup>1</sup>G. Dogaer, Flemish Miniature Painting, (Amsterdam: B. M. Israel, 1987) p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>C. Willard, Christine de Pizan, Her Life and Works, (New York, 1984), p. 213; G. Doutrepont, La Littérature Française la Cour de Bourgogne, p. 39.

inherited by another noteworthy woman book-owner, Marguerite of Austria, in 1511.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE ARTIST

Georges Dogaer attributes the miniatures in this manuscript to the School of Jacquemart Pilavaine, active in Mons from 1450-80. Delaissé agrees with this attribution, particularly with regard to the script, for Pilavaine's hand is quite distinctive. However, Delaissé notes that the style of the miniatures and border decoration is far above Pilavaine's usual somewhat unrefined style, and in fact these exquisite miniatures suggest either a stylistic evolvment on the part of the workshop, indicating a later rather than an early date, or are they are work of another atelier.<sup>4</sup> Pilavaine executed manuscripts for Philip the Good of Burgundy, but his major source of commissions came from Philippe de Croy, patron of Brussels, BR 9235-7.

#### FRAME

Each arch-shaped half-page miniature sits above two

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<sup>3</sup> A noted bibliophile, 193 volumes have been retrieved from the 390 texts comprising her library upon her death. Probably the most well-known manuscript in her impressive collection is Trés riches Heures du Jean duc de Berry. See M. Debae, La Librairie de Marguerite d'Autriche, exhib. catalog. (Bruxelles: 1987) xvii.

<sup>4</sup>L.M.J. Delaissé, Le Siècle d'or de la miniature Flamande, (Bruxelles, 1959) p. 59.

short columns of text and is surrounded on three sides by marginal decoration teeming with all forms of flora, fauna, coats of arms and animals. Blue and gold acanthus scrolls emerge from the corners of the page or from poles of gold leaf. The standard gold ivy scroll combined with a variety of green leaves forms the field of habitation for strawberries, pinks, cornflowers, daisies and roses, all kinds of birds, an ape, a monkey, a leopard, a lion, a peacock, a griffin, tiny bells and numerous shield devices of the Croy family. The brushwork is rich, but controlled, full of lively detail, and many of the animals sport humorous, quizzical expressions.

BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7; FOLIO 3 (fig. 6-1)

The first miniature is an author portrait of Christine de Pizan seated in the direct center of the page on a large wooden chair, with a book stand, and while the chair has no canopy, it is backed in blue velvet and set in front of a cloth-of-honor patterned with gold falcons on a red field. Christine has taken an awkward serpentine pose with her knees under her voluminous rose gown pointing left, with her torso twisted right in order to page through a large green book. She wears a plain white kerchief and a wimple. Her simple, full, unbelted gown is highlighted by delicate gold hatching lines, and is edged by a gold embroidered

band. Christine's costume is that of a widow or a nun, with the voluminous gown, loose sleeves, mantle, and veil.<sup>5</sup>

The vaulted room is painted with an all embracing perspective. The vaults are blue, and decorated with gold stars and ribs. The entablature above the framing columns contains a carving of an older man painted in grisaille holding a staff, with a bag at his waist. Symmetrically arranged windows loaded with decorative tracery inhabit the upper portion of the grey stone walls of this interior. The entire room is crowded with books. The door of a large bookshelf on the wall at the left opens to reveal two crowded bookshelves. The bench below holds one plump pillow and a crimson bound manuscript. Three books litter Christine's desk. At the right, a small volume is found on the lower shelf of a beautifully carved credenza, covered with linen and topped by two large silver vessels. The floor is covered with black, yellow and grey tile in a checkered pattern.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 3

As we saw earlier in Paris BN 609, (fig. 5-6) this artist too has chosen to illustrate the first few lines of

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<sup>5</sup>See H. Norris' discussion of Margaret of Anjou's costume and hood from an illumination of 1475, "The Roll of Our Fraternity of Our Lady", in Costume and Fashion: Senlac to Bosworth, v. 2 (London: J.M. Dent, 1927) p. 418-19, figs. 574 & 575.

the text of Livre de la cité des dames:

One day, as I was sitting alone in my study surrounded by books on all kinds of subjects, devoting myself to literary studies, my usual habit, my mind dwelt at length on the weighty opinions of various authors whom I had studied for a long time.<sup>6</sup>

BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7; FOLIO 5 (fig. 6-2)

The second miniature of the text illustrates the scene customarily shown first, the arrival of the three Virtues. Christine, in her nun-like widow's garb, sits in a high backed chair placed at an angle at the left side of the room. She rests her head in her hand, with her eyes half-opened, rendered inactive and lethargic by her melancholy. The artist has managed to make her look quite depressed, through the arrangement of her body, her open eyes, and her tilted head. The three Virtues have arrived, and move toward Christine who is as yet unaware of their presence. The Virtues wear identical ermine-lined mantles of rose or green, hemmed with wide bejeweled bands of gold and a stunning variety of precious gems. The mantles are attached to their square-necked unbelted gowns by brooches, and sheer kerchiefs cover their necks and shoulders. All have gold necklaces, and wear crowns perched precariously around their henins. Rectitude, lacking an attribute,

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<sup>6</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 3.

leads the group, and moves toward Christine with her right hand outstretched. Reason stands in the center, displaying a large gold mirror prominently, ringed with gems. Justice holds a large gold jug covered in pearls. The garments of the Virtues are shaded with fine gold hatching, and they all strike graceful poses, handling their rich, heavy mantles with the required ease.<sup>7</sup>

This grey walled interior has a wooden vaulted ceiling, and depicting decorative stonework in grisaille above the scene. A knight with a sword is shown ready for action in the upper left, and a knight with a shield sits facing him in the upper right. Like the women below them, the grisaille images, though substantial in form, cavort with all the pomp and ceremony one expects from courtly art of this period. The back wall contains a high shelf with six books stacked in a disorderly fashion, and a large page of text, framed and hung on the wall. A bench on the right side of the room is covered with a crimson cloth and bright red and blue embroidered pillows. The floor tile is patterned in various hues of green.

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<sup>7</sup>The clothing worn by the Virtues throughout this manuscript are also commonly seen on female saints in large panel paintings of the last half of the fifteenth century, perhaps best exemplified in the figures of Saints Margaret and Mary on the right wing of The Portinari Altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes of 1475.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 5

This miniature accurately depicts the action found at the beginning of Part One of the text. The Virtues are not shown arriving on the prescribed ray of light, but they carry their attributes (except Rectitude), and Reason's mirror is the first to be covered with jewels as described by Christine, "My mirror has such great dignity that not without reason is it surrounded by precious gems."<sup>8</sup> The artist has cleverly provided royal robes of authority and power for the Virtues, and yet includes many fashionable details, such as the variety of veiled henins, the cupped cuffs of the sleeves, gold-work necklaces, fine fabrics and poulaines to satisfy the aristocratic reader of fashion.

## BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7; FOLIO 10v (fig. 6-3)

The third miniature of this manuscripts pictures in exquisite and meticulous detail the marking, measuring and digging of the fortification wall for the City, set within a beautifully articulated landscape setting. In the foreground Christine and Reason actively mark, measure and dig ditches. Christine leans forward onto her shovel at the left, guided by Reason, holding the measuring length. Pegs and rope criss-cross a middleground full of open

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<sup>8</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 9.

trenches. Not a brick or a stone is in sight. In the background, a fully constructed city looms atop a cliff overlooking a bay. Swans, orderly rows of trees, canals, tiny boats, and a bluish distant shore take us back into a far-reaching vista with a shimmering pale horizon. The right side of the miniature shows Rectitude and Justice crossing a bridge, approaching the laborers in the foreground, ready to begin their discussion. A delicate, slender tree in the middleground divides the composition in half.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 10v

This is the most imaginative and accurate of all the construction scenes of Livre de la cité des dames, exhibiting the Flemish concern for care and detail in rendering a beautiful, believable scene which is also true to the text. The ropes and pegs of building are described in Chapter Eight of Part One of the text as follows:

She (Reason) went ahead, and I followed behind, and after we had arrived at this field I began to excavate and dig, following her marks with the pick of cross examination.<sup>9</sup>

"The pick of cross examination" alludes to the entire allegorical structure of the City, each deed of a virtuous woman in history comprising a brick of the city. These

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

deeds are related to Christine through discussion with the three Virtues, and it is Christine's pen and ink binding together the entire fabrication.

BRUSSELS, BR 91235-7; FOLIO 24v (fig. 6-4)

This miniature illustrates the battling Amazon warrior-maidens, Menalippe and Hippolyta, and their encounter with the two greatest Greek Heroes, Hercules and Theseus. The composition takes the form of a continuous narrative, using landscape and the device of the road to lead us to all three parts of the story.

In the foreground the two knights mounted on white steeds at the left are being unseated by the lances held by the two Amazons charging from the right. Hercules and Theseus are illustrated wearing the armor reserved for knights "tilting" at a joust illustrated throughout illuminated manuscripts of the fifteenth-century.<sup>10</sup> The Amazons are identifiable by the sheer skirts worn over their armor, the gold plumes and devices on their helmets, their blond hair, and the rose tunics worn over their armor. The white path curves back, and to the right of a rocky projection the unseated gallants battle on foot. To the left we see the blond heads of Menalippe and Hippolyta

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<sup>10</sup>See "Knights Tilting", BM Roy. MS. 14.E.IV., fifteenth-century in D. Hartley, Medieval Costume and Life, (London, 1931), p. 1.

having lost their helmets, riding between Hercules and Theseus, captured, heading toward a large boat waiting at port. The entire story is conveyed with clarity as well as finesse, and once again, the landscape is rendered lovingly, more than a mere backdrop, but an integral part of the artists interpretation of this exciting tale.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 24v

Christine devotes a large portion of Part One of Livre de la cité des dames to describing the civilization of the Amazons and its warrior queens. Brussels, BR 9235-7 is the first surviving manuscript to attempt to illustrate any of the many biographies forming the bulk of Christine's text. This miniature faithfully pictures the victory of two Amazon maidens, Menalippe and Hippolyta, against the greatest warriors of Greece, Hercules and Theseus, described in Chapter Eighteen of Part One. Hercules and Theseus attack one of the port cities of Amazonia by night. While Queen Orithyia prepared to her armies to defend the country, her "two valiant maidens of supreme strength and valor" armed themselves with lances and elephant hide and road off to do battle.

It was clear how angered they were, for regardless of the great strength, boldness, and courage of these men, so forcefully did these maidens attack them that each maiden struck down her knight, horse and all, in one heap...What an honor these maidens must have enjoyed for they

had unhorsed the two most valiant knights in the world!<sup>11</sup>

The miniature illustrates the attack and unhorsing in the foreground, and the battle on foot in the middleground. Eventually the Greeks do capture the two Amazons, and the Queen achieves their ransom and peace with the Greeks. Christine emphasizes the entire episode as a victory, and writes that Hercules and Theseus were "greatly honored by this capture", adding that Theseus and Hippolyta were married with great ceremony once peace was achievement between the Greeks and the Amazons.<sup>12</sup> The artists rendition of this episode displays great sympathy with Christine's theme, to bring honor to women, for not only is the event accurately illustrated in accordance with the text, but the scene of the capture has been relegated to a small space in the background, easily escaping the viewers notice.

BRUSSELS, BR 9325-7; FOLIO 52 (fig. 6-5)

The fifth miniature of this manuscript is located at the beginning of Part Two of Livre de la cité des dames. Standing in the center, Christine, in her blue gown and white kerchief and wimple, leans to the left, glancing at

<sup>11</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

the three Virtues behind her. She is holding a trowel in her right hand and grasps her shovel, with its pointed edge wedged in stone, with her left hand. A stack of grey bricks lie behind two trees to Christine's right. The three Virtues, striking various animated poses and gestures, approach Christine from the left. Rectitude, unidentified by attribute, walks toward Christine with her ermine cuffed sleeve stretched out before her in a gesture of speech. Reason and Justice, still wearing their distinguishing square edged henins lean toward one another and look toward Christine. The middleground is filled by the rambling wall of the City of Ladies, and its blue conical roofs call to mind the chateaus of France and Burgundy. Once again, the artist gives us a masterful yet charming seascape, showing the effects of light on rippling water, and creating the hazy atmospheric perspective of distance where the speckled sky meets the winding roads and hilltops of the distant shore.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 52

The miniature is situated above the text opening Part Two of La Cité, beginning with the following:

After the remarks of the first lady, who was called Reason, the second lady, who was called Rectitude, drew toward me and spoke, "Dear Friend, with your help, I will not hesitate to continue building along the circuit and enclosure

wall built by my sister Reason for the City of Ladies.<sup>13</sup>

The artist, as in Munich Cod. Gall. 8 (fig. 5-1), illustrates an amazingly complete city, even though we are only one-third of the way through the text. Rectitude is shown advancing toward Christine, who is armed with her tools metaphorically representing pen and ink, as the dialogues continue.

BRUSSELS, BR 9325-7; FOLIO 112 (fig. 6-6)

The final miniature illustrating Livre de la cité des dames contains sixteen figures, and is executed in a hasty manner, lacking the gold highlighting and intricate detail of the previous five miniatures. Even the border lacks animals and birds within its ivy vine-scroll foliage. The women are shorter and more awkwardly posed, indicating the presence of another hand from the workshop as the artist.

Opening Part Three of the text, the ladies line up in the foreground along two portions of a forked path. Leading the group at the right is the kneeling Christine, followed by five large headed, slope-necked Flemish noblewomen in blunt henins and tightly fitted robes of a variety of colors. The woman in the center, dressed in a white gown fitted with old-fashioned slit sleeves, holding a palm and wearing a crown is Saint Catherine. Her body is

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

curved back to form an awkward rendition of the Gothic S-curve, accentuated by her jutting hip and abrupt curve of her raised skirt. To the right, in a blue mantle, holding a palm and carrying a tower, is Saint Barbara. Justice follows the two saints, recognizable only by her jug, which has lost its jewels, as has her gown. She is in a loose mauve robe hemmed and edged in sable, but she lacks the richly ornamented mantle seen in all previous miniatures. She is also the only woman on the left side of the miniature wearing a fashionable, contemporary headdress, the henin. Behind Justice stands the Virgin Mary, holding a very active infant Christ-Child. Mary is slightly larger than the other women, and wears a crown over her unbound brown hair. Clustering behind the Virgin are other female saints wearing the tunics and mantles reserved for saints in art and theatre of this period. A martyr's palm and the pincers are among the attributes held by individual members of this assembly of saints.

Stunted groups of trees separate the ladies from the moat surrounding most of the grey-walled city behind them. Boats abound on the water, and as usual a far-reaching vista is indicated in the background. The sky is of particular interest, populated as it is by wispy, curling clouds placed at regular intervals beneath the arched top border of the miniature.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 112

This picture illustrates the traditional opening scene for Part Three of the text, the welcoming of the Virgin Mary and her holy companions as rulers of La cité des dames. The aristocratic women behind Christine are those worthy of refuge in the city, having entered its sanctuary officially in Part Two of the text. Justice narrates this portion of La Cité, and she is the only one of the three Virtues identifiable in the scene.

## STYLISTIC SUMMARY BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7

The first five of the six miniatures illustrating Livre de la cité des dames are of exceptional quality and workmanship. The interior spaces are rendered with a believable sense of space, and present a wealth of domestic details in the form of furniture, fabric, vessels, upholstery and tile work, having since become the hallmark of the Flemish and Netherlandish style in the fifteenth-century. The figures in the first five miniatures are solid, robust, with large, oval faces, full lips, round eyes and rosy cheeks. They fill their space convincingly, and yet still manage to convey a keen sensitivity to the richness and elegance required of the inhabitance of such a sumptuous manuscript with their curving poses and masterful handling of drapery. The artist highlights the forms with

fine hatching lines of gold, and in the single narrative-action scene of battling Amazons, displays the ability to tell a complex legendary battle with clarity and inventiveness. Georges Dogaer describes the miniatures produced by Jacquemart Pilavaine as showing "little technical skill or stylistic refinement."<sup>14</sup> This statement does not apply any of the miniatures illustrating this or its accompanying text, Trésor de la cité des dames, to be discussed in the last section of this study, save for folio 112. The artist of Brussels, BR 9235-7 reveals a kinship in style to the Coetivy Master not only in the rich interplay between figures and settings, altered and integrated in a variety of compositional patterns, but also in the strong-jawed faces and expressive figures striking a variety of individual poses within a beautifully articulated setting. (fig. 6-68)

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<sup>14</sup>Dogaer, p. 61.

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VIENNA, ONB, COD. 2605

Livre de la cité des dames; fols. 3, 67 & 145.

C. 1470

Normandy

In the Manner of the "Teneyken" Workshop

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

Vienna, ONB Cod. 2605 contains three miniatures within a single volume, rebound in Moroccan leather in 1700. This text was once part of the Bibliothèque Sainte Genevieve in Paris, as indicated by that library's partially erased stamp on folio 1r. The owners of this text include Prince Eugene Von Savoyen, and King Charles VI after whose death the volume became part of the Prince's collection.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE FRAME

Each of the three half-page miniatures are located above one column of text and a large modelled initial on a gold ground. Each miniature is arched at the top, and the margins are divided into little compartments of gold-leaf and paint, containing a variety of decorative foliage. The

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<sup>15</sup>Otto Pacht & Dagmar Thoss, Französische Schule I, (Wien, 1974) pp. 52-53.

marginal decoration of folio 3 contains acanthus leaf, strawberries and gold sprays. A diagonal gold band and a gold square are found to the left and right of the miniature, and beneath the miniature a large bar runs under the text, connecting four triangular motifs, all filled with either gold acanthus against a gold field, or acanthus painted in grisaille. Folios 67 and 145 follow a similar pattern, including a single roundel, or enlarging the triangle for decorative variation. The borders show a considerable amount of variety and imagination, and other artists about France begin to experiment with similar marginal filler devices.<sup>16</sup>

VIENNA, ONB COD. 2605; FOLIO 3 (fig. 6-7)

Within a crowded and narrow interior space, Christine sits gloomily as the three Virtues march into her study. Christine, a delightfully mannered figure with a slender, bulbous head, tiny facial features and a wasp-waist tightly constricted by her broad, grey belt, has been transformed into an aristocratic lady by the artist of this miniature. She has on a tall steeple henin and the tightly-fitted gown so fashionable in the 1470's, designed to inflict the

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<sup>16</sup>See fig. 88, The Master of the Geneva Latini, Rouen, ca. 1470; figs. 105a,b & c of The Master of the Reneé II, Lorraine, ca. 1490 in J. Plummer's The Last Flowering, (New York, 1982).

maximum discomfort on the wearer, with its demand for a tiny, circular waist, and impossibly thin arms, also visible in the wedding portrait of Maria Hoose of 1473 (fig. 5-26). Christine has an open book upon her knees, but sits dejected, head in hand, upon a large, awkwardly tilted desk with crowded bookstand, brocade backing and red and green canopy. The three Virtues march stiffly in through the door at the right like participants in a parade, adding a solemn, ceremonial aura to the scene. The Virtues all hold attributes and wear no crowns. Reason is first, presenting her mirror as a kind of sacred relic, touching it only through a white cloth draped between her two hands. Her garments are an interesting combination of contemporary and archaic costume details indicating her other-worldly status: the voluminous, old-fashioned slit-sleeves, full, unbelted gown, and the loose fit of her sleeves. She wears a large, pale turban and a wimple. Rectitude follows, in the grey mantle, blue gown and white kerchief and wimple reserved for widows and nuns. She carries a ruler. Justice is double-armed with attributes, as she holds both a gold bowl and a sword. Her impossibly tight, yet is augmented by unfashionable tippets at the elbows, a style of the previous century. Although the women are tall, slender, angular and stiffly posed, great care has been given to their softly modeled facial

features, and the sharp folds of their dresses are highlighted by hair-like strokes of gold.

The narrow interior is littered with books, and reveals surprising details upon closer examination. A door on the back wall opens into a bedroom to show a bed covered in a blue and gold textile and a red canopy. Through the door at the right we are given a tidy landscape of hills, fields and trees. The architectural framework encasing the miniature contains two robed statues of gold on either side of a arch above the center of the miniature. The roundels accompanying each figure display a dragon and an eagle.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 3

Vienna, ONB Cod. 2605 correctly interprets the text of the first few chapters of Livre de la cité des dames, although it does not include images of building, as we found in some of the earlier mid-century miniatures illustrating this scene. (figs. 5-4 to 5-7) All of the virtues hold their correct symbols as assigned by Christine, yet the artist has felt the need to provide Justice with an additional, less obscure attribute, the sword, perhaps to make her more recognizable to the viewer. It is worth noting that Christine's clothing is highly fashionable, and portrays the middle-aged author-widow as an attractive young gentlewoman. This is a portrayal which

Christine would have found most objectionable, based on the portraits she approved, as well as her comments on the dangers of dressing above one's station in Trésor de la cité des dames.<sup>17</sup> (figs. 1-1, 4-1, 4-4)

VIENNA, ONB COD. 2605, FOLIO 67 (fig. 6-8)

This animated miniature is populated by twenty figures busily building the City of Ladies. Although sharing stylistic features and the same pale color tonalities as folio 3, this miniature was executed in a hurried manner, for it is less detailed and has lost some of the fine, soft modeling qualities enriching the first painting. Christine and the three Virtues occupy the foreground, standing before the rose walls of city under construction. Christine's form is insect-like, with her awkward pose, jutting neck, thin arms, bowed knees and impossibly draped blue mantle. She holds a trough of mortar in her hands, and several bricks litter the field. The three Virtues occupy the right portion of the foreground, standing in the same configuration, with a few subtle variations in posture, holding the same attributes and wearing the same dresses observed in folio 3. All the workmen wear long-sleeved tunics of knee-length, slit up the center from hem to hip level, or, for more strenuous work, wear only the

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<sup>17</sup>Part II, chapter eleven.

pourpoint laced up the center, over their leggings. Several wear black hats with rolling brims common to nearly all workmen.<sup>18</sup> One laborer shares the foreground with Christine and the Virtues, as he busily pounds a peg into a stone bench with his hammer. The middle and background are fully occupied by fifteen laboring men who scamper about the towers and blue tile roofs of the pink city hauling timber, stone and brick.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 67

This miniature is located at the beginning of Part Two of Livre de la cité des dames, when virtuous women are invited to take refuge in the city. Although the earliest miniatures executed by the Cité des dames Workshop would often include male workmen, this city is overrun with them, and neither Christine or Reason take part in the construction, ignoring explicit references in the text. Instead, Christine mistakenly offers a trough of mortar to Reason in this miniature, instead of Rectitude, narrator of Part Two, who says to Christine:

Now take your tools and come with me, mix the mortar in your ink bottle so that you can fortify the City with your tempered pen, for I will supply you with plenty of mortar, and, thanks to divine virtue, we will soon finish building the lofty royal palaces and noble mansions for the

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<sup>18</sup>B. Payne, History of Costume, (New York, 1965) p. 233.

excellent ladies of great glory and fame who will be lodged in this City, and who will remain here perpetually, forever more.<sup>19</sup>

VIENNA, ONB, COD. 2605; FOLIO 145 (fig. 6-9)

Twenty-seven figures assemble outside the walls and under the central arch of the City of Ladies in this miniature opening the final part of the text. The three Virtues can still be identified amidst the crowd of holy women outside the city by their gowns and attributes depicted with consistency in the first two miniatures. Justice stands in the center in a swaying pose, with both bowl and sword. Christine holds a prominent position at the left, and her lean, angular form is made top-heavy by her tall, conical henin. Rectitude and Reason, with mirror and ruler, stand behind Christine. Two haloed women complete the group to the left. The remaining holy women stand in their colorful mantles and full cut-tunics holding pinchers, the vera icon, and staffs.

Within the city, upon its highest tower, under a green canopy, are grouped eleven women, most with golden haloes, led by a small blue-winged angel in white. The Virgin Mary holding the Christ-child stands in the center, accompanied by St. Catherine of Alexandria with a palm, and Mary Magdalene with her ointment jar, among others.

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<sup>19</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 99.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 145

This miniature cleverly orchestrates the investiture of the Virgin Mary as Queen of the City of Ladies in the upper-most regions of the newly completed towers, as described in Part Three. The saints mentioned first in the text, Catherine and Mary Magdalene, are placed beside the Virgin, while those whose stories appear later in the chapter are located on the lower level. Veronica, holding the cloth bearing the face of Christ upon it is included within this group, although she is not mentioned at all in Part Three of Livre de la cité des dames.

## STYLISTIC SUMMARY: VIENNA, ONB COD. 2605

The delicate coloring and shading of these miniatures soften the sharp angles, harsh outlines and bony forms imprisoned by their gowns and robes which populate this drama. The rigid, elongated and inflexible figures in this manuscript have caused Otto Pacht to attribute its peculiarities as part of the style of the provincial "Teneyken" workshop in Normandy.<sup>20</sup> Yet their awkward forms do recall the wooden ladies found in Paris, BN MS fr. 609 of only a decade earlier. (figs. 5-6 to 5-9) The ladies of the Vienna manuscripts are taller, less animated, and expressive, but far more detail-laden and refined than

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<sup>20</sup>Pacht and Thoss, p. 53.

those of BN MS fr. 609. The tilted, tumbling perspective and crowded scenes, full of domestic or architectural minutia, shows some knowledge of the text and previous visual models, and yet it still offers those additions not found in the text, favored from the mid-century on, such as giving Justice a sword and making the author an aristocrat, augmented here by the inclusion of Veronica among the holy ladies, not mentioned in the text at all.

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PARIS, BN MS fr. 1177  
Livre de la cité des dames; folios 3v, 45, 95v.  
Trésor de la cité des dames folio 114.  
 1470-80  
 Flemish?

Unknown Workshop, in the Manner of the Master of Margaret of York.

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

The full history of this manuscript is unknown. Once part of the library of Louis of Bruges, it was copied and illustrated for him in his native city, as were many of the

texts in his collection.<sup>21</sup> At one time it was part of the library of Louis XII, as is indicated by shelf marks for the collection at Blois.<sup>22</sup> Like Brussels BR 9235-7 discussed earlier, this volume contains both sister texts, Livre de la cité des dames and Trésor de la cité des dames. Three of its four miniatures illustrate the first text, while the final miniature depicts the dedication of Le trésor to Margaret of Burgundy. The manuscript has been dated to the last quarter of the century based on dress, headgear, and the similarity in style to several workshops active in France and Flanders at this time, namely, The Master of Margaret of York, the Coetivy Master and the slightly earlier Master of Girart de Roussillion. The figures in this manuscript are small and attractive with sweet, pretty faces neatly drawn. The folds of their gowns have a certain stiffness, dictated by the tastes of the day.

#### THE FRAME

The first of the four miniatures illustrating this codex, folio 3v, is a large half-page miniature, located

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<sup>21</sup>J. Van Praet, Recherches sur Louis de Bruges, Seigneur de la Gruthuyse, (Paris, 1831).

<sup>22</sup>C. Willard, "The Manuscript Tradition of the Livre de Trois Vertus and Christine de Pizan's Audience", Journal of the History of Ideas 27 (1966) p. 439.

above two columns of text. The marginal decoration consists of bands of foliage on three sides of the picture filled with yellow and gold acanthus leaves, naturalistic green leaves resembling laburnum, clusters of fruit and grapes, as well as pinks, against a filler of gold sprays and tendrils extending into the arched area above the miniature. A blue shield with three gold fleur-de-lis is found at the bottom of the folio. The last three miniatures are all quite small, submerged within one of the two columns of text, above a modelled initial, from which gold tendrils and flourishes emerge.

PARIS, BN MS fr. 1177; FOLIO 3v (fig. 6-10)

The large opening miniature of this manuscript gives us a rich, dream-like interpretation of Christine's meeting with the three Virtues within a beautifully rendered interior flooded with both natural and mystical light. Christine is finely dressed, not as a court poet, but as a noblewoman in her tightly fitted, fur-lined blue gown and her square Flemish henin, an ensemble which would not have met with her approval. She is seated at an oak desk with a slanted top, high back with red brocade canopy and attached bookshelf. This is a novel, lightened version of the heavy, cumbersome desk she is usually seated upon. Her head rests lightly upon her hand, and her eyes are closed.

The three Virtues appear in costumes as exotic as Eastern Queens with their conglomeration of contemporary dress and theatrical attire. They posture and pose for our viewing pleasure like models on a fashion show run-way. Each virtue seems self absorbed, paying little attention to Christine, or one another.<sup>23</sup> Reason stands closest to Christine, gazing into her mirror. Her headdress is an amazing amalgamation of a turban and henin, gold crown and veil. The rounded necks of their gowns, and wide necklaces are developments occurring from 1470-90.<sup>24</sup> The addition of bright, full sleeves of gold for Reason, and the attached over-long train deftly managed by Justice, are all trappings used by artists to indicate saints or allegorical personages.<sup>25</sup> Rectitude, in the center, is the only one wearing strictly contemporary dress, although her train is unusually long. All four ladies in this miniature have tiny egg-shaped, nearly hairless heads, with delicately rendered features.

The interior is open, light and airy. Warm, pearly tones color the stone walls, bathed in light from the open

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<sup>23</sup>Compare their costume and attitude with the Coetivy Master's rendition of the Seven Liberal Arts (fig. 6-68), ca. 1465, and a small gilt Dutch statue of the Virgin from 1480 (fig. 6-71).

<sup>24</sup>M. Scott, Late Gothic Europe (London: Mills & Boon, 1980) p. 171 & 190.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 190-191.

arch at the right of the room, through which can be seen a lush green landscape. The room has two windows, and a blue and gold brocade wall covering. Rays of gold light stream from the window above the desk to fall upon Christine's head.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 3v

Paris BN MS fr. 1177 illustrates the opening action of Book One of Livre de la cité des dames. Like Vienna ONB Cod. 2605 and Paris BN MS fr. 609, the building scene found in all the earliest depictions of this scene has been eliminated. Instead, the artist illustrates other details found in Chapter Two:

So occupied with these painful thoughts, my head bowed in shame, my eyes filled with tears, leaning on the pommel of my chair's armrest, I suddenly saw a ray of light fall on my lap, as though it were the sun. I shuddered then, as if wakened from sleep, for I was sitting in a shadow where the sun could not have shown at that hour. And as I lifted my head to see where this light was coming from, I saw three crowned ladies standing before me, and the splendor of their bright faces shone on me and throughout the entire room. Now no one would ask whether I was surprised, for my doors were shut and still they entered.<sup>26</sup>

The artist paints the rays of mystical light entering from a high window, and although the Virtues have crowns and their correct attributes, the room is bathed in a lovely,

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<sup>26</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 6.

tangible, natural light, streaming in through doors and windows which Christine describes as shut.

PARIS BN MS FR. 1177; FOLIO 45 (fig. 6-11)

This small miniature is located in the upper portion of the right hand column, and contains ten ladies standing before the towers and fortification wall of the City. One of the Virtues, with her back to us, wearing a large bourrelet resembling a turban, gestures toward the entryway to her right. The other nine ladies are all quite fashionably dressed in the tightly fitted v-necked bodices and sleeves of the new round gown worn from 1460-80.<sup>27</sup> Their open bodices are filled with a black embroidered pièce, or with folds of white gauze. A variety of henins are worn, although two ladies as well as Reason and Justice, have on bourrelets. Some of the women, all small, with the high-plucked forehead of the day, appear demure, heads jutting forward, while others are animated, gesturing and looking at one another in anticipation of entering the City,

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<sup>27</sup>The first occurrence of a dress without a train in the latter part of the fifteenth century was made in the diary of Viscomtesse de Furness in 1457; "For this day Madame the Duchess (of Burgundy, Isabelle of Portugal) had put on a quite round dress for at that time she did not wear the silken train (que de drap de soye) nor do I remember whether anyone wore a train." Norris, p. 397, see also M. Lister, Costumes of Everyday Life, (London, 1972) p. 59.

The City wall and towers are rendered with much detail, and are scaled to harmonize with the figures. A large tree and several houses are also visible within the walls. The ladies stand outside, on a tiled path of blue, red and beige design. Our point of view is level with that of the figures, therefore the wall looms high above, and no sky can be seen.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 45

This miniature illustrates the virtuous noblewomen invited to take up residence in the City in Part Two of Livre de la cité des dames. It closely resembles the earliest renditions of this scene by the Cité des dames Master, with the ladies clustered outside the entryway, being directed by Rectitude. The gesturing lady does not wear the henin Rectitude wore in Folio 3v, although her dress is similar. The other two women in turbans may also be the Virtues, again due to the similarity in dress.

#### PARIS, BN MS fr. 1177; FOLIO 95v (fig. 6-12)

In another small miniature occupying the upper portion of the right column, in the same exterior setting described in folio 45, stand Justice and the Virgin Mary. The two ladies are small and doll-like, and glance at one another with affection. Justice, whose name is written in gold

across the skirt of her rose gown, holds a blue and gold orb, and leads the Virgin into the City by pulling on her mantle in an unusually familiar manner. Justice's gauze silk and black pièce barely cover her breast in this low-cut gown.<sup>28</sup> The Virgin in her traditional blue gown and mantle edged and decorated in gold, stands with eyes downcast in the admired curving pose so often given to her during the Gothic period. She holds the tiny Christ-Child with two hands, and the delicate gold-rays of his halo decorate her bodice. She has long, unbound brown hair, a crown and a halo.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 145

This miniature opens Part Three of the text, and portrays the arrival of the Virgin to the City in a very intimate, informal manner. Usually this scene is shown with troops of Holy Women and ladies hierarchically arranged, often kneeling, welcoming their queen, as in Vienna, ONB Cod. 2605, or Brussels, BR 9235-7, or even BR 9393.(figs. 6-9, 6-6 & 4-3) The text states:

Let princesses, ladies and all women now come forward to receive her with the greatest honor

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<sup>28</sup>The wide neckline with minimal trimming and the inconsequential pièce became so indecent that often it was discouraged by law; in 1480 girls in Nuremberg were ordered to wear necklines no lower than two finger-breadths under the points of their collarbones. M. Scott, A Visual History of Costume, (London, 1986) p. 108.

and reverence...And it is right that the assembly of all women beg this most lofty and excellent sovereign princess to reside here below in her humility with them in their City and congregation without disdain or spite because of their insignificance compared with her highness.<sup>29</sup>

Instead of the pomp and ceremony of the investiture of the Virgin as Queen of the City, the artist of Paris, BN MS fr. 1177 has chosen to ignore the text, and illustrate the scene in the quiet and sweetly restrained manner characteristic of the tone of all four miniatures in this volume.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PARIS, BN MS fr. 1177

The artist of this exquisite manuscript creates delicate, diminutive ladies of fashion and refinement, yet all are fully modeled and substantial enough to cast shadows. Little can be seen of the artist's landscape style, but the architectural elements reveal complex towers and roofs. In all the outdoor scenes the figures are rendered in scale with the architecture, and our view of the buildings is from the vantage point of a participant in the assembly. The first miniature displays a splendid understanding of light in an interior, bathing the women in a golden light creating an atmosphere conducive to the dream-poem Christine is embarking upon. The quiet,

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<sup>29</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 217.

reflective mood is aided by the effects of light, the downward glances and closed eyes of the ladies, disturbed only by the few animated gestures of the gentlewomen illustrated in folio 45. This artist displays great affinity with the Master of Mary of Burgundy, one of the most innovative painters of the last quarter of the century, active in the region surrounding Ghent. The stylized poses are courtly, yet realistic, and the small figures fill their spaces with life and animation. The Master of Mary of Burgundy was widely imitated, and it is difficult to distinguish his work from that of his followers.<sup>30</sup> The painter of Paris, BN MS fr. 1177 shares his good draughtsmanship, excellent storytelling abilities, and elegant sense of color.

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Suzanne Solente, "Christine de Pisan" extrait L'histoire Littéraire de la France Tome XL, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale MCMLXIX, pp. 49-50.

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<sup>30</sup>Dogaer, p. 145.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180  
Livre de la cité des dames  
 folios 3v, 5v, 11, 22v, 34v, 53, 62, & 110v.  
 c. 1475  
 French  
 Unknown Workshop, Western France

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This deluxe manuscript contains eight miniatures illustrating the text, combined in a single volume, rebound in fawn-colored calfskin in the 17th century with the arms and devices of Alexander Petau. The earliest owner was Guilette de Derval, wife of Jean de Malestroit, for their combined coat of arms of ten orbs of gold facing two red bands on a field of flecked silver is found on folio 1v.<sup>31</sup> The shield is surrounded by a garland of flowers similar to those located in the border of the manuscript. The volume became part of the Collection Petau 48. Legs Ami Lullin, 1756.<sup>32</sup>

#### THE FRAME

All of the miniatures of this text are located in the top half of one of the two columns of text, except for folio 110v, which is a large miniature occupying half the

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<sup>31</sup>H. Aubert, Notices sur les manuscrits Petau, (Paris, 1911) pp. 151-152.

<sup>32</sup>L'enluminure de Charlemagne a Francois 1st, (Genève: Musée Rath, 1976).

folio. Folios 3v, 5v, and 110v are surrounded on all four sides by a colorful decoration of gold sprays and scrolls combined with acanthus leaves and other foliage. The remaining miniatures have small bands of the same decoration above and to the side of the miniature, as well as at the bottom of the column where the picture is located.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180; FOLIO 3v (fig. 6-13)

In this opening scene, Christine is gazing up, ignoring the open book before her, as she sits at her large circular desk covered with colorful manuscripts. Christine is garbed in the imprisoning costume of a lady of wealth and fashion. Her small oval head appears to be hairless, in accordance with the tastes of the third quarter of the century, and she leans back awkwardly due to the immense height of her pointed henin and the length and weight of the long veil trailing from its tip. The arms of her rose-colored gown seem unbearably tight. The collar and deep hem of her gown are made of white fur, and long black poulaines emerge from her skirt, making her quite a long, angular, but none-the-less engaging figure. Tiny lines of gold shade the sharp folds of her gown.

A cloth of blue and gold brocade covers the wall behind her beneath the five rectangular windows. The floor

is tiled in shades of green, and the wooden beams of the vaulted ceiling above are painted red and gold. Grisaille columns and an arch dictate the shape of this tiny illustration.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 3v

This picture portrays the action described in the second sentence of Livre de la cité des dames, as Christine, contemplating the great authors of antiquity, describes "I looked up from my book, having decided to leave such subtle questions in peace and to relax by reading some light poetry."<sup>33</sup> She has not yet picked up the text of Mathéolus, which soon causes her to fall into a state of depression.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180; FOLIO 5v (fig. 6-14)

Christine, now seated in a round back chair, leans with her head in her hand, looking quite dejected, as three gold rays descend onto her lap. She is dressed as before, only her gown is now grey. To the right stand the three Virtues, all crowned, but without any attributes to identify them. They are all dressed in the same style of dress worn by Christine, differentiated only by their color; blue, rose or green. They all have wide gold belts

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<sup>33</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 3.

tightly bound below the bust, and luxurious ermine hems and collars. The women are all slender and pale, with long, thin arms and egg-shaped, hairless heads. The Virtues all wear gold crowns, but the first has a rather antiquated hairstyle of round blonde buns over each ear, perhaps encased in a caul, a style more commonly found at the end of the fourteenth-century. The Virtues gesture to one another in an animated fashion, and handle the heavy folds of their garments with courtly grace.

The action is located in a different room, with a grey tiled floor and different desk, although the ceiling is the same. Five columns line the upper part of the room to the left of a closed door located above a cloth of gold brocade displaying a rather large Italian pomegranate motif.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 5v

As the action and the text below the picture indicate, the scene illustrates the beginning of Chapter Two of the first part of La Cité, when Christine's melancholy is broken by the arrival of the three crowned Virtues on rays of mystical light. Although the Virtues do not carry their attributes as Christine proscribes in the text, the room has no windows, and the door is shut, as Christine describes when discussing her amazement at the miraculous arrival of the Virtues into her secured room.<sup>34</sup> This was

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

not the case in a similar scene found in the first folio of Paris, BN MS fr. 1177, also including the rays of light, but in a room with wide open windows and a large arched door. This artist of Geneva, BP & U MS fr. 180, however, has chosen to adhere to the dictates of the text, by depicting the scene in the darkened, shut room of Christine's study, devoid of natural light.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180; FOLIO 11 (fig. 6-15)

This miniature illustrates Christine, under the direction of Reason, digging the foundations for the City. Reason stands to the left, lifting her gown and smiling, as Christine strikes an awkward pose, with one foot on the shovel, and another hand outstretched as if to balance her action. Both ladies are dressed as in the previous miniatures, with more visible décolleté revealed in this scene.

The action takes place in the foreground of a green field, crossed by a blue river. A golden city composed of five towers fills the background, with a strange, ghostly cloud-like city visible between the two towers at the right. This small miniature is both active and humorous, as we see such reed-thin, expressive, smiling ladies set about construction in their costly, constrictive garments.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 11

As the text and the action of the scene indicate, this miniature correctly displays Chapter Eight of La Cité, when Christine and Reason go out to the "Field of Letters" to dig the foundation of the city after first clearing away the stones of misogynist beliefs purported by ancient authorities.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the earlier models first established by the Master of La cité des dames, but in accord with the artists of mid-century, Reason directs Christine, instead of actively helping her with this metaphorical labor, in contrast with the text.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR 180; FOLIO 22v (fig. 6-16)

In the same landscape setting, with a blue stream, in a grassy field before a golden city with many spiraling towers, walks a single armored woman, one of the nine Amazon queens. The tall Amazon is encased in gold-brown armor, holding her rose colored shield in her left hand, bracing her long lancet, with its swirling rose standard, against her chest with her right arm. Only one small square of her face shows from the heavy helmet, and she glances to the right of the miniature.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 22v

This miniature is located at the beginning of Chapter Sixteen, the first of a long section of Part One of La cité des dames devoted to the history of Amazonia and the deeds of its nine queens and heroines. This chapter describes the origins of this precursor of Christine's feminine utopia, located in a country called Scythia.<sup>36</sup> Marpasia, Lampheto and Synoppe are mentioned in this chapter, and the armored lady could represent any of them, for there is no symbol or action illustrated specifying the Amazon's identity.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180; FOLIO 34v (fig. 6-17)

Christine and Reason stand before a beautiful red and gold brocade cloth-of-honor in animated discussion. Christine now wears a blue gown of the same daring cut and style seen in the previous miniature, and she places both hands palms outstretched, as she makes further inquiries of Reason. The Virtue responds with glances and gestures, wearing the same gown and crown as before. The interior has a blue ceiling decorated with gold stars, one window, and an arched doorway at the right.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid. pp. 41-42.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 34v

This miniature illustrates Chapter Twenty-Seven of Part One of La cité des dames, as indicated by the text beneath the picture, as well as the rubrics to the left of the column in which the miniature appears, which translates as follows:

Christine asks Reason Whether God has Ever Wished to Ennoble the Mind of Woman with the Loftiness of the Sciences; and Reason's Answer<sup>37</sup>

At this point the two discuss numerous women of antiquity noted for their great learning and powers of invention, such as Cornificia, Proba, Sappho, Manto, Medea, Circe, Nicostrata, Minerva, Ceres, Isis, Arachne, Pamphile, Thamaris, Marcia, Anastasia, and Sempronia.<sup>38</sup>

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR 180; FOLIO 53 (fig. 6-18)

In this miniature we have returned to Christine's study, now only four windows are visible, with a door to the right, and the brocade on the wall has a pattern of fleur-de-lis and starbursts. Christine is seated, in her henin and low-cut blue gown with and black pièce, with an open book before her, as she glances up to her right. There stands Rectitude, in a green dress with a wide, round ermine collar. The figures are still thin and tall, with their egg-shaped, hairless heads, but have been

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid. pp. 62-86.

rendered in a quicker, sketchier manner than the previous five miniatures. There is less attention to detail, and although the gold shading is still evident, it is less finely done.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 53

As indicated by the red rubrics beneath the miniature, this scene illustrates the opening of Part Two of La cité. Rectitude is the narrator of this part of the text, and she and Christine are to build the inner walls of the city and invite worthy women to inhabit them.<sup>39</sup> The artist has chosen to illustrate the discussions, which are the very substance of the text, rather than the metaphorical city which these tales construct.

#### GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180; FOLIO 62 (fig. 6-19)

This charming scene is the most unique of the miniatures illustrated in this text. Christine and two of the Virtue amble through a lovely landscape setting of trees, a stream and a grassy meadow, with a golden city in the background upon a hill, silhouetted against a sky of sapphire blue. These provocatively elegant ladies move through the foreground, with their gowns of blue and rose, trimmed in fur, with inclining heads, fluttering hand

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

motions and cascading gowns in animated and genteel conversation. The only similar scene we have discussed thus far is the second miniature of Paris, BN MS fr. 609, showing Christine being escorted to the "Field of Letters" where the City of Ladies is to be built by three small, waif-like stiff figures, marching confidently through the field, while those in the present manuscript prefer to glide. (fig. 5-7) In spite of the similarity of their compositions, these two miniatures render completely different chapters of La cité. Paris, BN MS fr. 609 illustrates an early portion of Part One, whereas the present miniature is located in Part Two of the manuscript.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 62

This miniature illustrates Chapter Thirteen of Part Two of La Cité, as indicated by the rubrics to the left, the text below, and the scene above. In this section the great love and noble conduct of married women is related, to combat the belief men have "that married life is so hard to endure because of women and the wrong they cause."<sup>40</sup> The unusual depiction of Rectitude, the narrator of present section of the manuscript, and Reason, narrator of Part One, together is explained in the opening sentence of the chapter:

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid. p. 117.

Then, as we were searching for these women by order of Lady Rectitude, I spoke these words as we went along, "My lady, truly you and Reason have solved and settled all the problems and questions which I could not answer, and I consider myself very well informed about what I asked."<sup>41</sup>

The artist has paid unusually close attention to this portion of the text by illustrating both Virtues, Rectitude and Reason, as Christine begins to probe them about the conduct of women in marriage.

GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180; FOLIO 110v (fig. 6-20)

Strangely enough, the largest of the eight miniatures decorating this volume is the last, occupying half the folio, located above the two columns of text opening Part Three. Two figures, Christine and Justice, are located inside the interior of an awkwardly rendered cut-away view, showing a blue dome above from the exterior, and a blue sky to the right, while below inside are several windows of varying sizes, a door at the far right, two columns in grisaille and the barrel vaulted interior of red and blue seen in earlier miniatures. Christine sits at her desk with an open book, listening to the figure of Justice, standing at the right. Justice holds a sword, the first Virtue in this text to be portrayed with an attribute, however incorrect. Her name is also inscribed in gold

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

behind her. Justice, wearing a blue gown exactly like Christine save for a luxurious ermine collar, leans back, throwing her abdomen and hip forward to create the much admired Gothic sway. The two ladies are set against a magnificent cloth-of-honor brocade.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 110v

This large miniature is located at the beginning of Part Three of Livre de la cité des dames, narrated by Justice. Instead of depicting the Virgin Mary and Holy women as was customary in the early tradition of this text's illustration, the artist has again chosen to show the conversation between Christine and Justice, in this part consisting of the lives of various saints and martyrs told in the following pages. Justice is given a sword, conflicting explicitly with Christine's attribution to her of a less militaristic golden vessel.<sup>42</sup>

STYLISTIC COMMENTARY: GENEVA, BP & U, MS FR. 180

The awkward, tumbling perspective and slender, lanky figures populating the eight miniatures of this manuscript are not without charm, humor and a certain grace. Many of the scenes are portrayed with a great deal of vigor for such reed-thin ladies, particularly folio 11, illustrating

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid. pp. 13-14.

the rather immodestly garbed Christine plunging her shovel into the earth with one hand, or folio 62, when Christine and two of the Virtues stroll across the foreground of the miniature with lively gestures, and decorous inclining heads indicating fascinating discourse. The concentration on discussion in many of the miniatures displays an understanding on the part of the illuminator of the structure of La cité des dames, which for all of its allegorical implications, consists at its core of a series of conversations held between Christine de Pizan and three rather fantastic semi-divine creatures about very real, slanderous beliefs commonly held about women in late medieval European society. Aubert relates the style and format of this manuscript with that of Paris, BN MS fr. 609, for it also illustrates skinny, hairless, fashionable ladies in the same style of gowns, engaged in stimulating conversation.<sup>43</sup> (figs. 5-6 to 5-9) Geneva, BP & U MS fr. 180, however, has double the miniatures, and although the miniatures may have been executed within ten to twenty years of one another, their stylistic qualities are quite dissimilar. The figures in the Paris manuscript are shorter, and much more wooden in their movements and gestures, although both share a sense of vigor and animation.

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<sup>43</sup>Aubert, pp. 151-152.

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J. Senebier, Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits. Genève: 1779, pp. 436-438.

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LONDON, BL ADD. 20698

De Lof der Vrowen (La cité des dames)

130 miniatures planned, 41 attempted, 24 completed

1475

Flemish

Bruges

## THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

This is the most ambitious and amazing of all the manuscripts ever illuminated for Christine de Pizan's La cité des dames. It was translated into Flemish at the command of Jan de Baenst, an official in the government of Bruges under Philip the Good.<sup>44</sup> There are three hundred and thirty folios in this huge volume, including spaces for 130 miniatures, one for nearly all of the 136 chapters contained in the three Parts of the text. In fact, the

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<sup>44</sup>Maureen Cheney Curnow, The Livre de la cité des dames' of Christine de Pisan: a critical edition, Ph. D., Vanderbilt Univ., 2 Vols., 1975. DAI, XXXVI (1975-76), 4536-37A, pp. 300-45.

chapter numbers are all carefully penned in, eliminating all hesitation between the text and the event portrayed. Only forty-one of these miniatures were ever painted, and of these only twenty-four can be considered as fully complete. Notes on the folios provide some information on former owners; folio 1 indicates the volume was purchased from Mep. Boone on February 1, 1885, and the following notes and signatures are found on folio 1v: "J.S. Huyde woper, J. Hoos ne Amfrel and J. R. Crommler, 779."

#### THE ARTISTS

The hands of at least three different artist and workshops can be detected in this work. The most frequently represented artist, having illustrated sixteen of the finished miniatures, paints small, spindly, animated figures encased in tight, stiff garments. The second artist, painter of nine miniatures, creates robust, solid figures, foreshadowing the Dutch genre painting of the following century. There are fifteen unfinished works, which may be by either of the artists previously mentioned. Five miniatures are lively, handily drawn sketches by our third artist, and only the ruling marks clearly visible in each categorize them as unfinished.<sup>45</sup> Ten of the fifteen

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<sup>45</sup>In style they resemble a sketch drawn by Jean Miélot himself as he is shown offering his text, Briève compilation des histoires de toute la Bible of Philip the

unfinished works are mere washes, partially drawn or painted figures often conveying enough detail to establish adequate correspondence with the text. The styles of all the miniatures in this volume well represent the diverse artists and workshops patronized by Philip the Good, his officers, and those of his son, Charles the Bold.

#### THE FRAME

The border decoration for the miniatures in this text is minimal. Where it exists it consists of small patches or squares of hastily brushed vine scrolls, flowers, some acanthus leaf locate in the upper left area above the miniature, sometimes around the initial, or often simply below the column of text containing the miniature. The miniatures are always located either above or below one wide column of text and, with the exception of folio 2, are rectangular in shape.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 2 (fig. 6-21)

The opening miniature gives us an author portrait of Christine, lost in her "painful" thoughts, leaning on a closed book on the bookstand before her, holding a flower in her lap. The miniature is colorful, but was painted in

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Good. P. Durrieu, La Miniature Flamande, Bruxelles: 1921, XVIII, p. 47.

a quick manner, giving little attention to fine detailing, with the exception of the tiny gold hatch marks shading Christine's fashionable fur trimmed blue gown. Once again, Christine is aristocratically dressed, although placed within the airy environment of a cluttered, but well lit scholars study. Books are piled on shelves along the back wall, above a blue and gold textile. A credenza and silver dishes are placed in front of the shelves, and Christine's desk is decorated with a salmon colored canopy bordered in apple green, lining the back of the chair and the floor before Christine, leading to the arched opening at right opening on to a view of the inside of a city.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 2

This miniature illustrates the first several pages of La cité des dames, where Christine describes the reading causing her present, lethargic state pictured here. As we saw before in Paris, BN MS fr. 1177, the miniature conflicts with Christine's description of her room, which she describes as dark, with all the doors and windows closed.<sup>46</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 5 (fig. 6-22)

The three Virtues appear before Christine in this

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<sup>46</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 6.

marred and flaking miniature. Christine sits at the left in a large wooden desk with a red and gold brocade canopy. The interior is different from folio 2, although the dishes and bookstand with books still clutter the room. The women are all posed demurely, the Virtues have tiny, seemingly hairless heads, each wearing a different crown, for only the center Virtue has any sort of detectable headgear, in this case a scarf, although the others may have worn henins, having now flaked off. They hold no attributes, but are dressed in a varied assortment of laced or rounded bodices currently fashionable.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 5

This is the first of three miniatures in succession dealing with the appearance of the Virtues before Christine. This miniature is not in good condition, but it does illustrate the darkened room described by Christine in Chapter Two. The miniature itself appears at the bottom of the column at the end of Chapter One.

#### LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 7v (fig. 6-23)

The scenario described in folio 5 is now reversed compositionally, and relocated to an airy, sunny room with an arcade occupying the wall behind the Virtues, revealing a landscape scene. The dresses worn by all four women vary

little except for their color from miniature to miniature, and they still retain the same oval faces, shaved foreheads, stocky bodies with matchstick thin arms and expressive faces seen in all the miniatures produced by this workshop for London ADD. 20698. In fact, the first four scenes, folio 2, 5, 7v and 11 are all the products of this workshop, though executed with varying degrees of refinement.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 7

This miniature is located above Chapter Three of the text, where Christine describes the beauty, attire and countenance of the three Virtues, one of whom begins to explain their purpose in coming to her. The miniature does not show the author standing "out of respect" as she describes doing upon first seeing these heavenly figures.<sup>47</sup>

#### LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 11 (fig. 6-24)

In another interior setting, Christine sits, at her beautifully canopied wooden chair with separate bookstand, facing the arched opening and landscape, in vigorous conversation with one of the Virtues. Their costumes have changed in detail and color, as have the particulars of the room. The thin figure of the Virtue wears a particularly

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

Flemish style henin with the broad black cloth folded across the forehead and hanging down to her shoulders. A blue textile with gold stars hangs beneath two windows at the far end of the room.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEXT; FOLIO 11

As indicated above the upper right portion of the miniature, this scene illustrates the discussion between Christine and one of the Virtues who identifies herself at the very end of the chapter as Reason. She explains how they will build the wall and enclosure of the City comprised of the ancient heroines of antiquity, such as Minerva, and the Amazons.<sup>48</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 12v (fig. 6-25)

Christine and another Virtue are shown in conversation in this charming drawing. The setting is sparse, indicated by simple rounded forms for a door to the left, a canopied chair for Christine, shaded by areas of blue, or short, wide hatching marks. The women are taller, and more ample, and there is a subtle softening in the rendering of the garments. Christine sits with her hands folded in her lap, wearing a narrow sleeved dress with cupped cuffs, a round neckline and a tall henin augmented by a scarf. The

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid. p. 12.

Virtue stands, uncrowned, with a short, blunt cap covered by a veil, and her arms outstretched toward Christine. The exquisite draftsmanship of this undersketch relates in style, costume, and quality of execution to folios 17, 22, 26v, 32v and 34v, all which show two women having a discussion.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 12v

Rectitude introduces herself to Christine in this miniature, as told in Chapter Five of Part One of the text, and describes that together they will "build fair and sturdy mansions" to house the inhabitants of the City of Ladies.<sup>49</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 14 (fig. 6-26)

Two ladies occupy this lush interior setting "revealed" to us in the manner of a vision indicated by the red curtains parting at each side of the miniature. One woman sits in a chair set against a blue and gold "cloth of honor". She wears a grey gown with a the very fashionable low scooped velvet collar popular in the 1470's. Her henin is quite tall, and is covered with a transparent veil. Before her, with her back toward us, stands Christine, now given the modest short cap and round gown in keeping with

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid. p. 12-13.

her less exalted status in comparison with the Virtue.<sup>50</sup> This habit of seating the Virtue while Christine stands will not be adhered to with any consistency in this volume. The quiet power of this miniature, and others by this artist and workshop, conveys the soft, rounded naturalism of late fifteenth-century northern art, without sacrificing the courtly atmosphere of lovely well-dressed ladies communing with one another with dignity and grace.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 14

Justice and Christine are depicted in this miniature, as described in Chapter Six as Justice reveals to Christine that together they will build the high roofs, towers and palaces of the City, to accommodate its Queen, the Virgin Mary. Once again, no attributes or crowns are seen.<sup>51</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 15v (fig. 6-27)

This miniature is unfinished, as it contains only four heads and busts blocked in against a grey and blue wash hinting at a landscape setting.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 15v

The activity of the seventh chapter would have been

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<sup>50</sup>Scott, A Visual History of Costume, p. 100.

<sup>51</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 13-14.

portrayed here, when Christine replies to the speeches of the three Virtues with a prayer of thanks, declaring "Behold your handmaiden ready to serve. Command and I will obey, and may it be unto me according to your words."<sup>52</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 17 (fig. 6-28)

Christine forcefully plunges her shovel into the earth under the direction of Reason's pointing finger in this beautifully painted picture. The two women are placed within a well defined exterior setting, to the left is the golden wall of the city, augmented by Lombard band, grey buttresses and a tower. A intricate fence of interwoven branches separates the foreground from the bright green rolling hills, full of round trees and a feathery sapphire blue sky. Christine and Reason are dressed in a surprisingly similar manner, in their grey gowns with wide velvet collars set with a gold chain, yet their are several important differences in dress defining their status. First, Christine has wrapped the ends of her veil up over her cap, as would a laboring woman. Secondly, she does not lift her outer garment to reveal a costly undergown, as does Reason, her shoes are round, as is the cut of her

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid. p. 15-16.

dress, allowing her to work with greater ease.<sup>53</sup> Most importantly, however, Christine is the one doing all the work, a sure indicator of status. Again, in the earliest renditions of this scene, Reason helped with the laying of the brick and carrying of materials, as indicated by the text. (figs. 4-1 & 4-4) The women are given soft, rosy complexions, and they are sensitively modeled in light and dark with quivering, visible brushstrokes. The luminous colors, careful composition and lovely brushwork make this one of the finest, liveliest miniatures in BL ADD. 20698.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 17

Chapter Eight describes the excavation of the earth and laying of the foundation of the City by Christine and Reason as follows: "She went ahead, and I followed behind, and after we had arrived at this field I began to excavate and dig, following her marks with the pick of cross-examination."<sup>54</sup> Although the artist has faithfully rendered this particular portion of the chapter, I might add that few miniatures from this later period illustrate the portions of this chapter and others describing how Reason

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<sup>53</sup>Christine herself often manages to strike the same graceful pose, in spite of her strenuous digging, as can be seen in several of the early miniatures by the Cité des Dames Master, (fig. 4-1,4-5, 4-8) or even in Later works such as Munich Cod. Gall. 8 (fig. 5-1) of Geneva, BP & U MS 180 (fig. 6-15).

<sup>54</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 16.

carried earth on her shoulders, or transported boulders, to aid in building the City. It seems to have been difficult for artists to portray such lofty creatures as the Virtues engaged in such un-aristocratic activities.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIOS 22, 26v, 32v & 34v  
(figs. 6-29 to 6-32)

Folios 22 through 34v all portray Christine and one of the Virtues conversing in a variety of delightful landscape and garden settings. The miniatures are from the same workshop as that of folio 17 above, and are of the same bright color and fine quality, although some have been slightly damaged by flaking or dampness. In each, the two women stand close together and position their hands, bodies and facial expressions in such a way as to convincingly indicate individuals engaged in meaningful dialogue. Generally in both the women are beautifully dressed, and the viewer can easily identify Christine by her short cap, or, as seen in folio 22, a linen kerchief.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIOS 22, 26v, 32v & 34v.

The four miniatures discussed above illustrate the dialogues of Christine and Reason in Chapters Nine through Twelve. On these pages the misogynist beliefs found in the writings of Ovid, Cecco d' Ascoli, Cicero, and Cato are

refuted. The natural abilities of women to govern and be involved in politics is discussed, and in Chapter Twelve, Reason begins to embellish her philosophical statements with various examples from the lives of women in history embodying these standards of excellence.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 35v (fig. 6-33)

An early medieval French Queen, Fredegund, holding her infant son Clotair, stands facing a group of armored soldiers in this drawing. The ruled lines indicate this is probably an underdrawing meant to be painted later. Nonetheless, it is quite a forceful, detailed narrative of exceptional quality, by the same workshop executing folio 12v discussed earlier. Fredegund is shown standing with column-like resolve on a raised platform to the left, with a bench or bed with pillows behind her. She is wearing a sideless gown over a cotehardie, the ceremonial garments of the royalty, here used also to indicate an event of the past. Her headdress is a "frozen" form of the horned and netted headdress, now reserved for ceremonial wear.<sup>55</sup> The right half of the miniature is filled with knights and barons armed with spears, shields and lances, listening to the Queen.

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<sup>55</sup>A similar costume is worn by Margaret of Denmark, Queen of James III of Scotland, as painted by Hugo Van Der Goes in 1473-8 in Scott, A Visual History of Costume, p. 107.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 35v

Queen Fredegund is praised in Chapter Thirteen for assembling the warring barons before her, demanding that they cease their attacks and accept her son as their king. After citing the bravery of Fredegund as a woman of great skill, capable of governing until her son attained his maturity, Reason mentions Queen Blanche, mother of St. Louis, and several contemporary women noted for their wisdom and skill.<sup>56</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that Christine feels free to modify history, never mentioning that Fredegund was also known for her cruelty, plotting assassinations to improve her own position.

## LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 38v (fig. 6-34)

This unfinished drawing with a bluish wash illustrates two women in tall henins walking hand-in-hand through an interior overpowered by the wildly receding lozenge-patterned tile.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 38v

This miniature accompanies the text of Chapter Fourteen describing more exchanges between Christine and Reason, this time on the topic of the limitations of women's bodies, if any, due to their smaller size. First

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<sup>56</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 33-34.

Reason states the advantages of this arrangement as follows:

But as for boldness and physical strength, God and Nature have done a great deal for women by giving them such weakness, because, at least, thanks to this agreeable defect, they are excused from horrible cruelties, the murders, and the terrible serious crimes which have been perpetuated through force and still continuously take place in the world...it would be better, or would have been better, for the souls of several of the strongest men, if they had spent their pilgrimage in this world in weak feminine bodies.<sup>57</sup>

After extolling the virtues of frailty, however, the discussion turns to numerous women noted for their courage, strength, boldness and valor.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 41 (fig. 6-35)

The tale of Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, is related in this vigorous sketch. The queen stands in the center, having turned to greet a messenger in the act of kneeling. She has been interrupted in her toilet, for her long, thin hair hangs only partially braided down her back, and her servant has moved discreetly to the background at the right, arms crossed, and eyes lowered, waiting for her mistress. The interior is rendered convincingly, a wash shades the floor, and defines the surrounding arch to the right and top of the frame. Portions of the building and a

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid. p. 37-38.

few trees have been drawn to indicate the setting outside the palace.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 41

The life of this ancient queen is described in Chapter Fifteen La cité des dames. Widow of King Ninus, builder of Nineveh, she led armies to establish an empire for her son, who was too young to rule. The miniature portrays the following moment in the life of Semiramis:

Once, when Semiramis was in her chamber surrounded by her maidens who were braiding her hair, news came that one of her kingdoms had revolted against her. She stood up immediately and swore by her power that the other lock of her hair which remained to be braided would not be braided until she had avenged this injustice and brought this land back under her dominion.

Reason reports that a bronze statue depicting this exact moment, with half of her hair unbraided, was erected in Babylon to commemorate her victories. As with the case of Fredegund, Christine does not require that her heroines have an unsullied background in order to be included in the City. Semiramis, legend has it, "took as a husband a son she had with Ninus her Lord", which is permissible to the liberal Christine as it occurred before the time of written law.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid. pp. 39-40.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 43v (fig. 6-36)

A beautifully symmetrical sketch, in the style seen in folios 12v, and 35v discussed earlier, illustrates the crowning of an Amazon queen. Two gentlemen in plumed caps and long gowns simultaneously place the crown upon the long, unbound hair, indicating maidenhood, of the woman before them seated on a monastery chair made of interlacing wooden slats. A cloth canopy has been sketched in. Two gentlewomen in tall henins, Flemish veils and scoop-necked gowns stand at either side, pinning the voluminous folds of their outer gowns deftly to their sides with clamp-like elbows. Upon careful examination, it becomes apparent that the woman being crowned has no left breast.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 43v

Chapter Sixteen is entitled "Concerning the Amazons" and relates the founding of Amazonia, and tells first of the lives of its earliest queens Lampheto, Marpasia and Synoppe. Either of these three women could be the queen illustrated in the miniature. Christine explains that the Amazons were known as "the breastless ones", for the royal Amazons, when they were girls, burned off their left breast to enable them to hold a shield, while commoners did the same to their right, to hold a bow. While the artist has taken great care to follow the text by indicating this

queen has no left breast, the inclusion of the two men is a fabrication of the artist or patron and directly contradicts Christine's writings on this feminine empire.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 45v (fig. 6-37)

Two figures are confined within the walls of a castle garden in this partially painted, damaged miniature. A woman in a tall henin moves to greet an approaching messenger, who has removed his hat and while placing a note in her hand. The messenger is male, wearing a short jerkin with slashed sleeves, hose and a codpiece, cloak, and the shoulder length hair popular after 1460.<sup>59</sup> Columns, arched windows and broad-round leafed foliage set the scene.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 45v

This picture is located at the beginning of Chapter Seventeen of Part One of the text, and concerns the life of Thamiris, Queen of Amazon during the attack of Cyrus, King of Persia. The chapter gives two clues as to the possible inclusion of a male within the stronghold of Amazonia. First, Thamiris learns of the impending attack of Cyrus through "spies", this is most likely the action described by the action pictured here, the delivery of a message from Persia. Secondly, Christine has already told that Amazon's

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<sup>59</sup>Lister, Costumes of Everyday Life, p. 46.

"coupled" only for necessary procreation, but when they gave birth to boys they sent them outside Amazonia to be raised. In this chapter Christine writes of the grief expressed by Thamaris when she learned "of the death of one of her beloved sons whom she had sent to Cyrus", providing another possible explanation for the presence of a male, perhaps another of her exiled sons.<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note, however, as will become more apparent in succeeding miniatures, the artists prefer to portray the scenes detailing male involvement in all of the tales told in La cité des dames, but most particularly in those concerning the Amazons.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 47v (fig. 6-38)

A wooden pea-pod shaped boat, crowded with armored figures, fills the picture. A boarding plank reaches toward the shore, and two knights in silver armor, one with a lance over his shoulder, march up to board the ship. The figures, boat and shimmering watery bay and bright blue sky are carefully shaded with feather-like brushstrokes.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 47v

Chapter Eighteen is devoted to the great victories and valiant actions of the two most famous Amazon warriors,

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<sup>60</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 41-43.

Menalippe and Hippolyta, who served the Queen Orithyia. This picture, however, portrays Hercules and Theseus and their armed fleet of Greek warriors sailing to test their skills against those of the Amazons.<sup>61</sup> Brussels, BR 9235-7 illustrates the same events with a continuous narrative chronicling how these brave women rushed to ambush the famed heroes Hercules and Theseus, unhorse them, battle valiantly to eventually be captured, a humiliating event that artist tactfully relegates to the background. (fig. 6-4) The artist of the present manuscript ignores such possibilities, instead choosing to focus on the embarkation of the two Greek heroes by boat to fight the famed Amazons, an artistic decision totally out of harmony with the theme of Christine's text. Naturally, in keeping with the practice of the day, the ancient heroes are shown wearing contemporary fifteenth-century armor.<sup>62</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 51 (fig. 6-39)

Queen Penthesilea is illustrated marching with her

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid. pp. 44-47.

<sup>62</sup>There are limitless instances in fifteenth-century miniatures of jousting scenes, or romanticized historical or biblical battles, as in "The Battle between Caesar and the Belgae" in Brussels BR 9242, fol. 203r, fig. 30, and "Joshua crossing the River Jordan" in Brussels BR 9231, folio. 33v, fig. 18 reproduced in Dogaer, Flemish Miniature Painting.

troops of armed Amazons to aid Hector of Troy in his battle against the Greeks in this nearly finished miniature. The style of the figures is stockier, less finely modeled, with the use of more visible, but less delicate hatching lines to model the figures. Penthesilea rides side-saddle in her queenly garb, tall henin and wimple, holding a sword as she leads a large group of armored women toward the hills and groves at the left of the miniature. Unfortunately, the artist never painted her face, for the miniature is not damaged, and shows no signs of flaking.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 51

Queen Penthesilea's march to Troy, illustrated in folio 51 is told in Chapter Nineteen of Part One of La cité des dames. Christine uses nearly identical phrases to describe the chaste lives of Synoppe and her more famous descendant, Penthesilea, saying they remained virgins throughout their lives. Christine's point of view, that Penthesilea wished to aid Hector out of the platonic admiration of equals, conflicts directly with Boccaccio's interpretation of the legend, which states Penthesilea rushed to Troy not out of a desire to aid a honorable soldier in battle, but rather because she had a mad desire to bear Hectors child.<sup>63</sup> She reaches Troy too late to help

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<sup>63</sup>Boccaccio, De Claris Mulieribus, pp. 65-66.

Hector, but they aid Troy until their leader, Penthesilea was killed by Pyrrhus.<sup>64</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 63 (fig. 6-40)

Set within a beautifully rendered landscape with crystalline colors, complete with a multi-towered city, rolling hills, groves of trees and rocky outcroppings, we return once again to a portrayal of Queen Fredegund of France. She is mounted side-saddle on a horse at the left of the picture, again holding her son Clotair, making another speech to her barons. Fredegund is appears demure, but fully composed, and wears the reticulated heart-shaped headdress most often used at this period for ceremonial purpose, or to indicate antiquity or celestial status. Her barons stand before her in grey armor lit with silver, as she prepares to lead them into battle.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 63

This miniature illustrates Chapter Twenty-three of the text. The three miniatures portraying the activities of Chapters Twenty through Twenty-two have spaces on folio 55v, 58v and 61v which were never sketched or painted. Folio 63 displays yet another instance of Fredegund's bravery. When her kingdom was at war she rallied support

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<sup>64</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 47-51.

from her troops by proclaiming:

I will abandon all feminine fear and arm my heart with a man's boldness in order to increase your courage and that of the soldiers in the army, out of pity for your young prince. I will walk ahead of everyone, holding him in my arms, and you will follow me.<sup>65</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 64v (fig. 6-41)

With this charming miniature we return to the workshop first noted in folios 2 through 11 working on BL Add. 20698. Other women warriors from ancient history are discussed by Christine and Reason, and here we are given the fanciful tale of Camilla and her father's escape from their enemies. The miniature shows the king, clad only in his crown, steering his young daughter Camilla to safety in a boat roughly hew from tree bark. The placid Camilla sits demurely enough in the imprisoning tightness of her grey velvet gown with its artfully arranged folds, and her tall black henin strewn with gold stars. The artist does not hint at her future abilities as a brave warrior in this rendition of her sitting useless in her gentile, restrictive finery, as her poor father gallantly paddles them to safety. The setting is equally inviting, and the calm, winding stream, peaceful rows of silvery round trees and soft, luminous mountain range in the background betray no sense of danger narrowly diverted.

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid. p. 59.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 64v

Camilla's father was devoted to her, and their escape from a rebellion is told in Chapter Twenty-four of La cité des dames. She was raised in the woods, clothed in skins, and taught to hunt and bear arms by her father during their exile in the wilderness. Once she learned of the wrongs done to her father, she managed to raise an army and reconquer her father's kingdom.<sup>66</sup> Again, none of this future bravery is expressed in this miniature, which, though delightful, seems to undermine the text with its helpless, frail and even decorative portrayal of the young Camilla.

## LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 68v (fig. 6-42)

Variations on the theme of Christine and Reason deep in conversation prove to be a theme worth ceaseless repeating by all three workshops executing miniatures for BL ADD. 20698. Once again, the two protagonists of Book One of La cité des dames sit in a multi-patterned interior setting, with raised arms and animated expressions indicating their delight in such discourse. Both women are dressed in tall henins, with side veils and trailing silks, and similar garments constricting their bodies to such a

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid. pp. 60-61.

degree that they begin to resemble insects with their large, rounded heads and headdresses bowed forward with heaviness. It is impossible to distinguish Christine from Reason in this miniature.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 64v

This miniature initiates a new theme of discussion and pictorial undertaking in Part One of the text, that of women who excelled in science, languages, philosophy, poetry and powers of invention.<sup>67</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 70 (fig. 6-43)

A melancholy scholar is depicted in this brilliantly colored miniature, in a room rendered in accurate, though rapidly receding, linear perspective. Within a narrow grey brick cell-like room sits Cornificia, a Roman scholar of antiquity. The workshop providing the sturdy, robust images of Christine digging and Reason working or discussing in folios 14, and 17 through 34 is responsible for the execution of this powerful, monumental depiction of the labors of the human mind. Cornificia is located in the center of the miniature, seated at a dark, heavy wooden desk, with a large open manuscript before her. Instead of reading, she leans her head upon her hand, and her half-

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid. pp. 62-64.

lowered eyes and serious expression indicate she is involved in deep, perhaps painful thought, calling to mind the standard rendering of Christine in the first folios of nearly every copy of the La cité des dames examined in the present study. Cornificia wears the somber grey attire of a fifteenth century nun, undecorated save for the nervous white highlighting of the garment, and the center crease of her kerchief.<sup>68</sup> Behind and above her stretches the warm orange of her brocade canopy, and brightly colored books are stacked in the bookshelf to her right, and behind her. Even the tile is a bright yellow, and a road wanders invitingly in the green landscape outside the open door, all unnoticed by our heavy featured, sad heroine.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 70

Cornificia was educated with her brother in Roman times, but soon surpassed him in learning to become a scholar and poet of great renown, according to Christine's account in Chapter Twenty-eight. Her poems are praised as late as the time of St. Gregory, who mentions them in his letters. Christine quotes Boccaccio in this chapter, saying they both agree it is a crime for women "to despise

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<sup>68</sup>This type of veil with a stiff center front fold was popular from 1480 through 1510. When worn low over the forehead as it is here, it usually indicates the wearer is older, widowed, or perhaps a nun. Scott, Late Gothic Europe, p. 193-194.

themselves and their own minds...for God has given them such beautiful minds to apply themselves, if they want to, in any of the fields where glorious and excellent men are active..."<sup>69</sup> Cornificia, however, in this miniature, does not look particularly content. Although extolling the virtues of education in the La cité des dames, Christine later writes in the Le trésor de la cité des dames that the life of the scholar is one of solitude and melancholy, and not suited to all, be they male or female.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 72 (fig. 5-44)

This unfinished miniature illustrates a woman reading in an interior setting enlivened only by a circular patterned canopy behind and above her. Although unfinished, the style indicates an affinity with the workshop producing the small, skinny figures seen, for example, in folios 2 through 11, executed with varying degrees of care. The text indicates the figure is Proba, another Roman scholar who was also a Christian.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FOLIO 72

This partially painted miniature does illustrate the figure of a woman with an open book before her, the standard manner of depicting a scholar throughout medieval

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<sup>69</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Women, pp. 64-65.

literature. Proba was noted for her understanding of both classical and biblical texts.<sup>70</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD 20698; FOLIO 75 (fig. 6-45)

This unfinished miniature shows the blocked in form of a woman reading, at the same stage of development seen in the depiction of Proba in folio 72, discussed above. This miniature illustrates yet another famous female of antiquity, the maiden Manto, whose specialty was "divination by fire".

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 75

Manto's story is told in Chapter Thirty-one of Part One of La cité des dames, and although the miniature has only been finished as far as the underpainting, there is no indication that the picture illustrates fire, the manner through which Manto achieved fame and fortune with her predictions of the future.<sup>71</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 78 (fig. 6-46)

This delightful miniature depicting Sappho and her ladies enjoying an idyllic stroll along the river is one of the better products of the workshop producing most of the

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid. pp. 65-67.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid. pp. 68-69.

miniatures in Add. 20698, similar to Camilla being carried across the river in folio 64v. It shares the same soft, golden treatment of the hills and greenish blue execution of water seen in the earlier miniature. The women too are dressed in a similar fashion, with grey and blue scoop-necked dresses fitted so as to heighten accent their spindly forms. The variety of exotic henins and turbans made of all manner of sumptuous fabrics are the kind favored for the portrayal of historic or mythical personages, as seen in the figures of Helen of Troy and her ladies in another manuscript produced in Bruges, c. 1470 (fig. 6-69)<sup>72</sup> Sappho stands apart from her conversing company, to strum a tune on her harp as she gazes into the depths of the stream.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 78

This miniature illustrates one section of Chapter Thirty, where Reason, in accord with Boccaccio's account of this great poetess and musician, states:

Sappho, possessed of sharp wit and burning desire for constant study in the midst of bestial and ignorant men, frequented the heights of Mount Parnassus, that is, of perfect study...She went on her way until she came to the deep grotto of Apollo, God of learning, and found the brook and conduit of the fountain of Castalia and took up

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<sup>72</sup>See fig. 6-99, "Helen of Troy", From The Universal Chronicle of Jehan de Courcy (M. 214, f. 84), Bruges, c. 1470, The Pierpont Morgan Library.

the plectrum and quill of the harp and played sweet melodies, with the nymphs all the while leading the dance, that is, following the rules of harmony and musical accord.<sup>73</sup>

Sappho's companions in this miniature are more interested in chatting than moving about in some sort of celestial dance of harmony, but all-in-all it is a charmingly faithful interpretation of the text.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 84 (fig. 6-47)

Ceres, in full courtly regalia, guides two oxen across an unplowed field in this delightful miniature illustrating the noble accomplishments of this ancient Goddess. The oxen have been damaged by moisture, but aside from that this miniature is in pristine condition, sharing the soft, glowing colors discussed in other examples from this artist, folios 64v and 78, among others. Ceres raises a whip with one brittle arm to urge her powerful team as they pull the plough, an invention attributed to Ceres by Christine as well as antiquity. Her bulbous gold turban, embellished with decorative blue balls, constrictive gown and insect-like form seem to be no hindrance to Ceres, as she energetically marches forward, proving the worth of her contribution to history, the gift of agriculture.

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<sup>73</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 67, also for the original source of the Boccaccio quote, which Christine repeats quite faithfully, see De Claris Mulieribus, p. 99.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 84

Ceres is discussed as an ancient queen of Sicily in Chapter Thirty-five, and not as a Goddess, as Christine writes:

Poets dreamed up the fable that Cere's daughter was carried off by Pluto, the god of Hell. And because of the authority of her knowledge and the great good she brought about for the world, the people of that time worshipped her and called her the goddess of grain.<sup>74</sup>

Ceres, we are told in this passage, tamed oxen, invented the plough, and taught her people the art of cultivation in all its complexity, as well as organizing them into communities to build towns and cities. In short, she was responsible for the invention of civilization.<sup>75</sup> The artist depicts her power, invention, creativity and lofty status faithfully in this picture through her vigorous action and demonstration of her skills, and her ability to act at all, none-the-less plow, while wearing such restrictive, albeit aristocratic finery!

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>75</sup>For more on the importance of Ceres and Isis to Christine see S. Hindman, Epistre Othéa, pp. 91. I have included an earlier miniature by the Epistre Master of Ceres and Isis (fig. 6-73), sharing the same folio in Christine's L' Epistre Othéa, not only as goddesses of the land, but due in part to allegorical associations these figures had, particularly Isis, whose grafting becomes a simile for Christ's conception. See W. Wells, "A simile in Christine de Pisan for Christ's Conception" J. of the Warburg and Coutauld Institutes 2 (1938-1939) pp. 68-69.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 85 (fig. 6-48)

In this miniature Isis is shown instructing the Egyptians, looking remarkably like Flemish laborers, in the art of gardening and grafting. The face of one of the workmen is blurred, but the rest of the picture is unmarred. Unlike Ceres pictured in folio 84, Isis prefers to let others work, for here she stands directing rather than illustrating by example. The garden is shown in late winter, walled, marked off in squares, with leafless trees ready for planting and grafting. Isis is clothed in the too-tight and too-long fashions of the day, while the laborers, with their loose hose, worn jerkins and close-fitting hats worn by the working classes.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 85

Chapter Thirty-six of Part One of La cité des dames tells of the great contribution of Isis, and we are told she "for some reason (this lady) went from Greece to Egypt"<sup>76</sup> where she taught the Egyptians so many useful things, such as an abridged script and grafting, that they began to worship her after her death as a Goddess, a practice taken up later by many Romans. The second contribution of Isis is honored in this picture, the gift of domestic cultivation.

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<sup>76</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 76-77

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 87v (fig. 6-49)

In an interior setting Minerva directs a blacksmith in the art of making armor, which she improved upon and strengthened through her powers of invention. Minerva, standing closest to the workman, is accompanied by an equally short, brittle companion, whose large head is also encumbered by a large, bulbous headdress.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 87v

This miniature accompanies Chapter Thirty-eight of the text, summarizing the accomplishments of Minerva, Ceres and Isis. The chapter devoted to Minerva, describing her numerous contributions to technology such as the making of woolen cloth, extracting oil from olives, improving metallurgy, inventing flutes and other wind instruments, is found earlier in Chapter Thirty-four, having a space for a miniature which was never even attempted.<sup>77</sup> Reason describes again the ignorance leading the people to call Minerva a Goddess, and goes on to enumerate her symbols in art, according to accounts of a statue erected to her by the ancient Greeks, showing Minerva clothed in shining bronze armor holding a long lance, and a wide, strong shield emblazoned with the head of a Gorgon as well as an owl. This miniature illustrates Minerva as a Master

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid. pp. 73-75.

craftsperson, supervising the activities of her shop rather than laboring in it herself.

LONDON, BL ADD 20698; FOLIO 90 (fig. 6-50)

Arachne sits in a small grey room before an enormous loom weaving a floral tapestry in this miniature, which is situated beneath one wide column of text. The picture is by the same artist producing the past six miniatures, and this illustration harmonizes with the others with its tiny figure, clothed in contemporary silvery grey damask gown and blunt henin. Arachne has two large baskets of colored yarn next to her as she works. Her face has been marred by dampness, causing the colors to blur.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 90

Arachne's accomplishments are chronicled in Reason's lecture to Christine in Chapter Thirty-nine.<sup>78</sup> The miniature accurately illustrates the first of her accomplishments honored by history, that of inventing the art of dying wools into a variety of brilliant colors, shown by the baskets of thread in the miniature, and most notably, by weaving these colorful threads together "like a painter" in her invention of weaving, textiles and, as seen in this picture, the art of tapestry.

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid. pp. 81-82.

LONDON, BL ADD 20698; FOLIOS 96, 99v, 101 and 109  
(figs. 6-51 to 6-54)

Several miniatures are left blank in this section, and then there are four partially finished pictures, interspersed between several blank spaces, followed by no illustrations whatsoever until folio 222. Folio 96 displays a several musical instrument surrounding a standing woman in a henin against a bluish wash. Folio 99v depicts three women in an interior decorated with a patterned textile. These women all kneel upon the floor and are surrounded by large bundles. Folio 101 shows several women seated before a large loom. Finally, folio 102 gives some scanty delineation of two individuals in a landscape.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIOS 96, 99v, 101 & 109

Folio 96 opens Chapter Forty-two of Part One of the La cité des dames, describing the life of the beautiful Roman woman Sempronia, who "sang so melodiously and played all stringed instruments so well that she won every contest,"<sup>79</sup> accounting for the lute and harp in the miniature. Folio 99v is connected with Chapter Forty-four, which begins by quoting Proverbs on the qualities of a virtuous woman. This miniature of the kneeling women busy at work with

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid. p. 86.

large bundles near them may have been intended to illustrate women sewing "fabrics and fine linens" and making clothes as praised and described in the text.<sup>80</sup> It is interesting to note that in this last section of Part One Christine praises the activities of the good wife, and refuses to ignore the contributions of women in day to day living in her tribute to womankind. Folio 101 continues this theme, for it accompanies Chapter Forty-five, honoring the Queen Gaia Cirilla, a virtuous and industrious housewife, shown here weaving with her companions, whom the Romans worshipped as a Goddess.<sup>81</sup> Folio 109 follows two blank spaces for miniatures, and is located beneath the text for Chapter Forty-seven, telling the tale of Opis, Queen of Crete, followed in Chapter Forty-eight with the story of Lavinia. Due to the minimal content of this miniature, it is impossible to determine which of these chapters the miniature was meant to represent.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 222 (fig. 6-55)

Two small, angular women in fitted grey gowns, one in a gold turban, the other in a henin with a black front scarf flecked with gold, stand and converse outside a city wall. Behind them wanders a path leading through a

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid. pp. 89-90.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid. p. 90.

landscape of low, dun-colored hills, sparsely populated with trees, ending at the purplish mountain range in the distance.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 222

This is the first miniature found in the text for over 100 folios, and it illustrates Chapter Fifty-four of the second part of the La cité des dames, in which Christine and Rectitude, the narrator of this section of the text, discuss the erroneous belief some hold that women are less faithful in love than men. The next few miniatures to be discussed deal with noteworthy, if often somewhat ghoulish, examples of women's superior abilities in the ability to love forever, however foolishly.<sup>82</sup>

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIOS 224 & 230 (figs. 6-56 & 6-57)

The next two miniatures are unfinished, and there are several blank spaces for additional illustrations interspersed between these two. The first, folio 224 shows a hillside with the busts of two figures blocked in. To the right of the hill a ship in full sail moves out of the harbor. Folio 230 gives us plentiful details within the parameters of this unfinished miniature. A hastily sketched man stands in a small boat at the left of the miniature. The right side of the miniatures is covered

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid. pp. 186-87.

with paint blocking out the form of a tower above the sea. A woman's head and shoulders have been indicated by flesh-colored paint leaning from a window in the tower.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; folios 224 & 230

Folio 224 portrays the constancy of Dido, as told in Chapter Fifty-five of Part Two of the text. Aeneas deserted Dido in the dead of night, "secretly and treacherously" after pledging his eternal love to her when she "restored and enriched him with property and ease, his ships refreshed, repaired, and placed in order, filled with treasure and wealth".<sup>83</sup> The treachery of Aeneas is the subject of this miniature: his ship is in full sail, speedily leaving the harbor, as two figures, one undoubtedly Dido, watch its departure from a large cliff.

Several chapters are unembellished with illustration before we reach the story of Hero and Leander, told in Chapter Fifty-eight. The miniature pictures the clandestine meeting of these two lovers, for Leander would cross the waters separating their homes secretly to the castle on the shore where the maiden Hero lived. The only discrepancy between the illustration and the text is that Leander swam nude across the water, and the miniature shows him fully clothed, standing in a boat.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid. p. 189.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid. pp. 192-193.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 231v (fig. 6-58)

Four figures crowd into the narrow confines of a small bedroom, nearly filled by a huge bed upon which our heroine, Ghismonda, lays dying. She leans upon one elbow, dressed, in a large grey turban, propped up against a pillow of blue as she clasps a gold reliquary against her breast. A maid in a red henin leans stiffly forward to assist her. Ghismonda's father, Tancredi, wearing a robe of grey damask<sup>85</sup> and a round crowned hat with a rolling brim, clasps his hands together and mournfully looks toward a woman in a gold turban entering the room from the right. The only pattern to be found in this miniature is in the tile on the floor.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 231v

The story of Ghismonda is retold from Boccaccio's Decameron at length in Chapter Fifty-nine. The miniature illustrates the tragic outcome of the lengths to which Ghismonda took her fidelity in love. A widow, she returned

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<sup>85</sup>The preponderance of grey in the color of clothing for males and females throughout the miniatures of London, BL Add. 20698 represents the new associations darker colors acquired at mid-century with the nobility and their "aristocratic" finesse. A growing taste for blacks, greys, and browns can be found in every kind of garment worn in Flemish courts and cities during the 1460's and 1470's. The favorite color for dressing and official portraits of the fashionable Philip the Good of Burgundy was black. See Scott, A Visual History of Costume, p. 106.

to live happily in her father's house, promising to keep him company and never remarry. Instead, she took a lover, and was discovered by her father, who had him killed, and sent his daughter her lover's heart encased "in a gold goblet". Ghismonda pours poison into the goblet over her lover's heart, and drinks from it. The miniature illustrates her final moments, when she calls her father to her bedside that he may watch her die, the result of his jealous handiwork.<sup>86</sup> The mournful suicide is shown with great drama and emotion by these stiff, expressive figures, who gesture, roll their eyes and clasp their hands with great melodramatic vigor.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20698; FOLIO 240 (fig. 6-59)

The corner of a crenelated castle wall and a small green patch of landscape fill this miniature. A woman, Lisabetta, wearing a bulky black henin flecked with gold, with a broad white veil leans from a high window ministering to a large pot holding a green basil plant sitting on the ledge. She has the same over-slender arms and grey gown favored by the artist painting folios 7, 64v, 90 and many others in this manuscript.

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<sup>86</sup>Christine, The Book of the City of Ladies, pp. 193-199.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 240

Christine again acknowledges Boccaccio by including the tale of Lisabetta in Chapter Sixty of Part Two of La cité des dames dealing with the theme of women's constancy in love. Lisabetta was in love with her childhood sweetheart whom her brothers murdered secretly, hoping for a more profitably alliance in marriage for their sister. Lisabetta mysteriously found his body in the garden, dug it up and removed the head, burying it secretly in a pot of earth in which she planted a sprig of basil, which naturally flourished in such fertile soil. She cherished this plant to the end of her life, to the puzzlement of her brothers, and foiled their plans by refusing to marry any suggested suitors.<sup>87</sup>

## LONDON, BL 20698; FOLIO 247 (fig. 6-60)

A tiny, round-shouldered, thin-armed woman encumbered by a monstrously large turban made of gold and silver cloth, leans forward to pull a large ship to shore aided only by a damask belt studded with metalwork. Her maidenly companions nearby do not seem to be particularly amazed by this feat, and stand amidst the softly colored landscape lost in thought, heads inclining under the weight of their henins.

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., pp. 200-202.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 247

Chapter Sixty-three concerns the beautiful Claudia Quinta, a Roman woman so fond of pretty clothes and flirtation that her very virtue became suspect. This story is told after Christine and Rectitude discuss the erroneous belief men hold that women dress prettily only to attract men. In Claudia's case, a ship bearing a stature of Magna Mater, the mother of the Gods, was being shipped to Rome, but no one could bring the boat to shore. Claudia prayed to the Goddess, and with her aid, demonstrated her chastity with the action illustrated in the miniature, by drawing the boat to shore single-handily with only the aid of her belt.<sup>88</sup> The miniature conveys the action in a straightforward, pleasing manner but neglects to display the image of the Goddess on the boat as the text describes, nor has Claudia used her own belt, but rather seems to have borrowed one that of her companion in the turban, who stands with her back to us in an unbelted gown, while Claudia's belt remains securely and painfully in place.

LONDON, BL ADD. 20693; FOLIO 248v (fig. 6-61)

The forty-first and final miniature illustrating this Flemish translation of Christine de Pizan's La cité des dames illustrates Christine and Rectitude, one seated in a

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid. pp. 205-206.

Renaissance backless chair, within a small room enlivened by little save two shelves of books. The workshop producing this miniature is the one most commonly seen throughout this text, responsible for sixteen of the twenty-five completed miniatures, noted for the brittle, stiff, yet animated quality of his miniatures.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; folio 248v

A discussion on how women are loved more for their virtue than their prettiness is illustrated in this miniature, which is set within the text of Chapter Sixty-four of Part Two of the text.<sup>89</sup>

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: LONDON, BL ADD. 20698

The twenty-five completed miniatures for this most ambitious rendering of Christine's La cité des dames reveals three distinct workshop styles, organized by the gatherings of the manuscript.<sup>90</sup> The workshop represented by the largest number of miniatures, sixteen of the finished twenty-five, utilizes a nervous, sharp brush to

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid. pp. 206-207.

<sup>90</sup>For more on the construction of medieval manuscripts, and the many possible ways of folding, cutting and "gathering" the folios, to quite frequently be sent out to various workshops for illumination, see J. D. Farquhar's excellent review of this process in S. Hindman and J.D. Farquhar's Pen to Press, Univ. of Maryland & Johns Hopkins Univ., 1977.

render rather emaciated, short figures with reed thin-arms, wasp-waists and bulbous heads, whose size is heightened by large headdresses in the form of luxuriously ornate turbans, bouurrelets or henins. The women wear gowns of shimmering grey, tightly binding in the arms, forming cups over the wrists, and falling as simple, round skirts, or awkward trains, then clumped into folds and clamped against their side by a thin elbow. These distinctive figures are nonetheless quite expressive in both gesture, animation and action, and tell the tale in their accompanying chapters with an awkward gusto and childish charm. When most successful, as in the story of Camilla and her naked father swimming to freedom in folio 64v, or Ceres blithely plowing in her finest grey damask gown in folio 84, they are set in a kind of impressionistic landscape of subdued golds and clear blues, always light and airy in tone.

The workshop producing the brilliantly colored and sensitively shaded series of images of Christine in discussion with Reason, folio 14, and 17 through 34v sacrifices the dramatic action of the former artist in favor of substantial, robust yet monumentally elegant figures of women fully composed, gesturing with grace and restraint in a variety of courtly poses. The sincere, human flavor of this workshop's illuminations seems

characteristically Dutch, replacing the sharp linearism of the first artist with innumerable tiny brushstrokes of white, highlighting flesh tones, damask gowns, the texture of masonry, the sharp glint of a metal shovel, and distant hills with a sense of brilliant light and atmosphere.

Several of the unfinished sketches, although hastily done, convey the action of the narrative with a tense and lively line. The figures are softly drawn, and doll-like, generally of equal size and well proportioned. Rounded features, thin hair, heavy lidded eyes, as seen in the tale of Semiramis in folio 41 characterize this artist, who brings each story to life with an anecdotal sense of narrative. Eleven of the miniatures are merely blocked in by washes of grey or blue, although they often give enough detail to identify their relationship to the accompanying text, as in the tale of Hero and Leander seen on folio 230.

Although exhibiting the work of several workshops, the miniatures illuminating this deluxe volume of Christine's most ambitious illustrated defense and honoring of women offers important clues as to the changing tastes of patronage in the later part of the century. The copiously illustrated section on the Amazons does not underline their skill at arms described in the text, instead it focuses on the male heroes, such as Hercules, in folio 47v, instead of on the brave Amazon warriors Christine's prose praises.

This was not the case in Brussels Br 9235-7. (fig. 6-4)  
 Although all of the manuscripts examined in this study are  
 luxurious works for aristocratic patrons, this work seems  
 to be particularly concerned with portraying the heroines  
 in a mannered, courtly fashion, even at the cost of  
 undercutting Christine's strongest examples of the  
 capabilities of her sex.

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PEPWELL

The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes

2 woodcuts

1521

English, London

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

Brian Ansley, in the service of Henry VIII of England,  
 made the first English translation of Christine's La cité  
 des dames, and soon thereafter it was printed by Henry  
 Pepwell in 1521. Pepwell received advice and encouragement  
 from the Earl of Kent, Richard Grey, and dedicated the

first edition to him in appreciation.<sup>91</sup> Richard Grey supported Pepwell's venture because his uncle, Anthony Woodenville, was an important literary patron, and translator of several of Christine de Pizan's works into English; Morale Proverbs, published by William Caxton in 1478, and possibly The Book of the Body of Policy.<sup>92</sup> Woodenville owned London, BL Harley 4431 containing an illustrated copy of La cité des dames illustrated by Cité des dames Master (figs. 4-11 to 4-13).<sup>93</sup>

#### THE FRAME

The large woodcut representing Christine and the three virtues has no border decoration. The second print, illustrating Christine and one of the Virtues, possibly

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<sup>91</sup>For more information on this early translation, see M.C. Curnow, "The Boke of the Cyte of Laōyes, an English Translation of Christine de Pisan's Le Livre de la cité des dames," Le Bonnes Feuilles, 3 (1974), 118, or her critical edition of this text in French, which also discusses the Flemish and English Translation in DAI, XXXVI (1975-1976), 4536-37A, pp. 300-345.

<sup>92</sup>Bornstein, Diane, ed., The Middle English Translation of Christine de Pizan's 'Livre du corps de policie' (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1977) pp. 31-36.

<sup>93</sup>Anthony Woodenville gave London, BL Harley 4431 to Louis of Bruges as a present in the late fifteenth-century. Ansley's translation was probably made from British Library, Royal Ms. 19 A XIX, which bears the symbols of Richard, Duke of York, or possibly Edward IV, who owned two copies of Christine's Epistre Othéa. See D. Bornstein, Distaves and Dames: Renaissance Treatises For and About Women, (New York, 1978) xii-xiv.

Justice, is a smaller print located above one short column of text bordered on two sides by a candelabra configuration consisting of urns and foliage arabesques. The bottom margin consists of a twisted cable motif terminating in rosettes, with a triple crossed sword bearing the initial "W" at the top. There are many noteworthy printed initials throughout this edition, decorated with the heads of jesters, acanthus leaf and other flora.

PEPWELL 1521; FIRST PRINT (fig. 6-62)

The pages of this early printed edition are not numbered, but the first of the two prints in this text is repeated four times. First, it accompanies the Table of Contents for the Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes, and its second, third and fourth appearances are found at the beginning page of each of the three parts of the text. The four prints are exactly the same. The print, although depicting one interior, is divided symmetrically. Christine's desk, with its slanting and tilted sides, following no perspective scheme, fills the room. Books are stacked behind her and to her side. Christine holds one text open before her, and turns to look over her shoulder at the three Virtues approaching from the left. Christine wears a veil and a widow's barbe, a pleated wimple, the accepted form of headgear for widows and women in

religious orders in the fifteenth century, particularly popular in England.<sup>94</sup> The three Virtues stand in a row at the left on a lozenge patterned floor beneath two windows. They wear gowns with wide sleeves and long trains, draped over their arms, or held up in the customary fashion. The most distinctive feature is the new English hooded head-dress worn by all three Virtues. It consists of a semi-circular draped form attached to a caul worn on the crown of the head. A separate front band replaces the turned back fold, and this band, as seen in this print, is decorated with embroidery, jewelry, or even fur. Interestingly enough, it was a style associated with the wealthy merchant class, not restricted to the aristocracy.<sup>95</sup> The Virtues carry the attributes of the mirror, ruler, and vessel, here a rustic elongated wooden urn.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: FIRST PRINT

As this print is found in four separate locations, it cannot have been designed with one specific portion of the text in mind. The subject chosen for representation is the one most often seen in all illustrations of the text of the La cité des dames, the moment when the Virtues appear to

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<sup>94</sup>G. de Courtais, Women's Headdress and Hairstyles, (London: Batsford, 1986) rev. ed., pp. 36-37.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

Christine. They carry their proper attributes, but the composition mirrors the customary arrangement, placing Christine on the right instead of the left. This is a commonplace occurrence when copying from a painting onto the woodblock, which then reverses the composition during the printing. The Virtues do not wear crowns as directed, and their status is certainly not elevated by their unaristocratic headdress. The print is found at the beginning of all three parts of the text, and it accompanies a table listing all the subjects covered in the book as well.

PEPWELL 1521; SECOND PRINT (fig. 6-63)

This print is found only once in this book, at the very end of the third part. Two women, with empty cartouches above their heads, face one another and raise a hand in a speaking gesture, while holding up the folds of their gown with the other. Their gowns are typically Tudor, with a close-fitting bodice with a square neck, above which appears the top of the kirtle, or undergown, or the folds of a kerchief. Their long sleeves are folded back to form a loose cuff, their skirts are long and full, and the loose ends of their belts dangle from their waist. They wear an earlier form of the hood than seen in the first print, appearing more like a truncated henin. The

straight edge of the semicircular fabric is placed across the forehead and folded back to show the lining, while the remainder of the material is slit, hanging on either side of the face. Here the cap has been decorated with netting or embroidery. Some foliage can be seen at the feet of Christine and the Virtue.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT: SECOND PRINT

The inspirational tales discussed in La cité are related through a series of discussions between Christine and each of the Virtues in turn. The formulaic device of illustrating Christine conversing with one of the Virtues, in this case Justice, due to the print's location at the end of Part Three, is found in texts illustrating Livre de la cité des dames as early as 1460 in Paris, BN fr. 609 (figs. 5-8 & 5-9).

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: PEPWELL 1521

As these are the very first known printed images of the text, their style and manner of execution is unique. Following the standard dictates of a rapidly made woodcut, the lines are unvarying and strong, and the shading is indicated with bold, short hatching marks of even length distributed in a regularized fashion along the edges of every object be it gown, face, edge of desk and so forth.

The print illustrating the meeting of Christine with the Virtues is more carefully rendered, with its small figures arranged within a patterned interior like so many additional pieces of furniture. The mirror composition of that usually found in renditions of this scene has caused some to propose that the designer saw the miniatures of Harley 4431, in the possession of the Woodenvilles until the late fifteenth-century. Some knowledge of the traditional composition is evident, but beyond this, the details of the costume when coupled with the handling of the interior owe their style to the new medium, and English tastes.

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Le trésor de la cité des dames (1465-1521)

The two manuscripts containing miniatures illustrating Le Trésor, Brussels BR 9235-7 and Paris BN MS fr. 1177, are found in volumes containing its sister text, La cité, and were discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Le

trésor de la cité des dames was printed in French three times in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: first by Antonius Vérard, in 1497, second by Michel Le Noir in 1503 and finally by D. Janot in 1536, all Paris publications, and all testaments to the continuing popularity of this text. Although sometimes printed on vellum and decorated with woodcut illustrations painted to resemble miniatures, none of these volumes attempt to illustrate the Christine's text.<sup>96</sup> Vérard's printed edition was dedicated to the Queen, Anne of Brittany, noted for her education of young women.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, nine paper manuscripts give evidence of its popularity among the rising middle class, who used the text as a true manual on courteous behavior for daughters and wives of the aspiring merchants.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Vérard's edition was decorated with an image of John the Evangelist, and a palace, as noted in M.L.C. Pellechet's Catalogue général des incunables des bibliothèques publiques de France, Paris: Picard, 1905, 3564. Vérard was particularly noted for making his editions of French texts resemble the deluxe illuminated texts, see C. E. Pickford "Fiction and the Reading Public in the Fifteenth Century," Bull. of the John Rylands Library, XLV (1963) pp. 432-433.

<sup>97</sup>Willard, "Audience", pp. 435-436.

<sup>98</sup>C. Willard, "Audience", pp. 439-440.

BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7  
 9 miniatures: La Cité fols. 3, 5, 10v, 24v, 52 & 112  
La Trésor fols. 136, 180 & 136  
 c. 1460-70  
 Flemish  
 School of Jacquemart Pilavaine (?)

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

The owners, border decoration and stylistic attribution of this deluxe manuscript is reviewed above in the introduction to the miniatures illustrating the first text of this volume, La cité des dames.

BRUSSELS 9235-7; FOLIO 136 (fig. 6-64)

This is the most unusual and uncharacteristic representation of the Prologue of Le trésor de la cité des dames seen in any of the manuscripts examined to date. Instead of Christine trying to rest, and being urged or awakened by the three Virtues to begin the new text, this artist shows Christine, clothed in the same "nunish" widow's costume, standing in the center of a grey walled green, in animated dialogue with the Virtues. One Virtue steps forward, right palm outstretched, the other deftly managing the heavy rose bejeweled mantle, to explain the new assignment for their willing writer. The other two Virtues look on, in pleasant anticipation of Christine's willingness to write a manual guiding the conduct of women of all classes, now that their city of refuge has been

built. Their softly modeled, full lipped faces are enlivened by agreeable expressions. Outside the crenelated wall lie several rocky outcroppings, a bridge, a river leading past a lovely multi-towered city, distant towns and islands. As seen in the first five miniatures of BR 9235-7, the colors are gem-like and pure, the figures of the ladies are tall, substantial, yet elegantly posed, and the detail of clothing, blades of grass, and atmospheric sky are rendered with sharp, visible brushstrokes.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 136

This miniature does not illustrate the event described in the opening paragraph of the Prologue of Le Trésor de la cité des dames. Christine tells us she was so tired upon completion of La Cité that she wanted "only to rest and be idle for a while". Instead, the Virtues accuse her of sloth, and command her to begin the next text on the education and obligations of women in every phase of society. The quiet harmony evident between the figures represented in the miniature does embody a spirit of camaraderie described at the end of the Prologue, where Christine writes:

Then I, Christine, hearing the soft voices of my very reverend mentors, filled with joy and trembling, immediately roused myself and knelt

before them and offered myself in obedience to their noble wishes.<sup>99</sup>

Although she is not kneeling, she does stand before them smiling and attentive within the fresh, new walls of the City of Ladies. None of the Virtues are shown with their crowns or attributes, however these descriptions are found in La cité des dames, and not in Le Trésor.

BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7; FOLIO 180 (fig. 6-65)

Nine ladies stand on a road before a small grove of trees and a meandering path leading to a moat surrounding the grey stone, blue roofed City of Ladies. The nine figures are divided into three groups. At the far left stand the three Virtues. They are not distinguished by crowns or attributes, but their full, square necked unbelted gowns, and long jewel trimmed mantles are similar to the ceremonial costume worn by the Virtues in the seven previous miniatures produced by this workshop for BR 9235-7. There are some inexplicable variations from the scheme, for the figure on the left is dressed in white, and wears no mantle, which is without precedent, and the figure on the far right of the trio has a bold patterned brocade not seen before on any of the Virtues in this manuscript.

The second group is made up of five aristocratic

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<sup>99</sup>Christine, Le Trésor de la cité des dames, pp. 31-32.

ladies all similarly dressed in v-necked gowns of blue, black or crimson, trimmed in various furs, with long fur cuffs extending over the wrists and pièces and neckerchiefs filling in their décolleté. All wear the high henins covered with sheer veils extending to their foreheads, and wide damask belts. They appear to have just arrived, for several hold their skirts in a manner indicating movement.

The last figure of the group follows at a discreet distance, her kerchiefed head lowered, and although dressed in a similar fashion to the ladies preceding her, her cuffs, belt and hem of her gown are decorated by contrasting colors rather than costly fur.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 180

This miniature adjoins the beginning of Part Two of Le trésor de la cité des dames, devoted to the education of the ladies of the court, ladies in waiting, baronesses, and high born women living on manors. The group of six women in the center of the picture well represent the women attending the next set of lectures, apparently being held out in the open air, in the manner of Socrates. This configuration is unlike all others examined for this text. From the earliest period of miniature production for Le trésor the lectures given to the ladies have been held inside, with all sitting on various benches or on the

floor in sometimes in order of rank, as in Boston PL MS FR Med. 101 (fig. 4-14), or later in Beinecke MS 427 (fig. 5-19 to 5-21). The only manuscript showing a group of women being instructed outside is Brussels BR 9551-2, when illustrating the final group of middle class women addressed in Part Three, all standing in an open field. (fig. 5-12) The last woman seen to the far right is middle class, or a servant to the other ladies, as indicated by her garments.

BRUSSELS BR 9235-7; FOLIO 201 (fig. 6-66)

This lovely scene is one of the most imaginative and complex interpretations of the last chapter of Christine's Le trésor. The miniature is dominated by the City itself sprawling across the middleground of the picture, providing the architectural framework for the figures. A bridge crosses the moat, populated by several boats, one piloted by a man in bright red hose, accompanied by a graceful white swan, whose reflection shimmers on the rippling motion of the water. The figures are out of scale with the architecture, but due to their grouping, their animation, and their sumptuous costumes and courtly poses, one hardly notices this elegant awkwardness. The eighteen figures are divided into four groups located in the city tower of brick, on the bridge, on the high bank, and on the low bank.

The four figures in the high brick tower in the City of Ladies are the three Virtues and Christine, easily identified by their distinctive costumes worn consistently throughout the previous eight miniatures. The three Virtues crowd together in a little group, but Christine leans forward eagerly and waves to the departing women. The final three groups of women are arranged according to their class. The group on the high bank are ladies of royal blood. Not only are they shown larger, and higher than the others, but each of their gowns is brightly patterned by embroidery or brocade, as are their henins, and their collars, cuffs and hems are made of ermine or miniver, the wearing of which was often restricted to the aristocracy by sumptuary laws. The ladies below are also aristocratic, but their smaller size and plainer gowns indicate the lesser aristocracy, ladies of court, and so forth. Member of both these groups lean, posture and glance at one another and back at the city in a lively manner not at all formal, hieratic or stiff. The four women on the bridge are women of the merchant classes, certainly colorfully dressed in the latest cut gowns, but their white stiff veils, folded and pinned to fall low over the forehead and create a dip at the crown, are an indication of middle class status.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Scott, A Visual History, p. 85.(fig. 5-23).

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 201

This elegant and animated interpretation of the text, although located at the beginning of Part Three of Le trésor de la cité des dames, illustrates not just the middle class women addressed in this final section, but those spoken to in the all of the earlier chapters as well. In fact, it looks as if the "College of Ladies" has just been dismissed and everyone is taking their newfound wisdom out into the world again. As the author states in the beginning of Part Three:

As we have already mentioned several times before, we intend everything that we have laid down for other ladies and young women concerning both virtues and the management of one's life to apply to every woman of whatever class she may be. It is said as much for one woman as for another, so each one take whatever part she sees pertains to her.<sup>101</sup>

In spite of this imaginative interpretation illustrating a scene never described, but certainly implied throughout the text of Le trésor, the artist does not illustrate the poor women, servants and laborers Christine devotes special attention in the final portion of her writing. Instead, the artist represents easily identifiable groups distinguished by costume going no lower down the social ladder than wives of merchants and artisans, many of whom would be soon great readers of this text in its printed

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<sup>101</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 145.

editions in the early-sixteenth century.<sup>102</sup>

STYLISTIC SUMMARY: BRUSSELS, BR 9235-7

These three miniatures were produced by the School of Jacquemart Pilavaine, and are executed in the same style as the first six of the nine miniatures of this text containing both La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames discussed in the first section of this chapter. The ladies presented are painted elegantly, yet in a solid manner, softly modeled with round eyes, full lips and lively expressions. Many of the compositions, particularly the final one, folio 201, betray both imagination and inventiveness, as well as an understanding of the premise of the text itself, the worth of women in history, and the value of education in assisting them with the rigors, temptations and obligations of their daily lives.

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<sup>102</sup>Willard, "Audience", pp. 439-440.

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PARIS, BN MS 1177

Livre de la cité des dames; folios 3v, 45, 95v.

Trésor de la cité des dames; folio 114.

1470-80

Flemish (?)

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS OWNERS

The history of this manuscript and its ownership by Louis of Bruges is discussed in the previous section of this chapter with regard to La cité des dames, located first within the same volume, illustrated by the same hand.

PARIS, BN MS FR. 1177; FOLIO 114 (fig. 6-67)

This small miniature is located in the middle of the left column of the folio 114, encompassing the final portion of La cité des dames as well as the beginning of the text of Le trésor de la cité des dames. The rubrics beneath the miniature declare that here the text is presented to the Duchess of Guyenne, also known as Margaret of Burgundy. Christine kneels before Margaret in a room with five arched windows set above a bright blue brocade patterned in gold with variations on the ever popular

Italian pomegranate motif.<sup>103</sup> The cream colored floor is covered with light designs in blue and red. The figures of the two women are small, yielding and doll-like in their pose and configuration. Christine, elegantly attired in a tightly fitted pale blue gown, and gold henin presents a large black volume decorated with gold clasps to Margaret of Burgundy. Margaret is dressed in a similar gown, of rose, with a brilliant green undergown, and green damask belt. Her black embroidered pièce barely covers her breasts, as the wide, sloping neckline rests precariously on her rounded shoulders. Margaret's henin has no frontlet, but instead is trimmed by a wide band of black velvet, decorated with a gold pin, in a similar fashion to one of her descendants, Mary of Burgundy (fig. 6-70).

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEXT; FOLIO 114

This miniature does not illustrate any of the activities of groups of women discussed in Le trésor specifically, but instead pictures the young girl to whom the first copies of the text were dedicated, Margaret of Burgundy, daughter of John the Fearless of Burgundy, and wife of Louis of Guyenne, the dauphin of France. The entire

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<sup>103</sup>The splendid patterned brocades seen in many Netherlandish, Flemish and French paintings were all imported from Italy before 1498, A. Geijer, A History of Textile Art, London: 1979, pp. 61, & 148-151.

first section of the text instructs the princess and queen on her education, duties and responsibilities, making this the first mirror for the princess written by a woman. Many later copies of this work include Christine's original dedication, perhaps due to the fact that Margaret and her five sisters, through their various impressive marriage alliances made by their grandfather Philip the Bold, carried this text to a vast number of European courts, now part and parcel of the Burgundian aristocratic feminine heritage.

#### SUMMARY CHAPTER SIX: 1465-1521

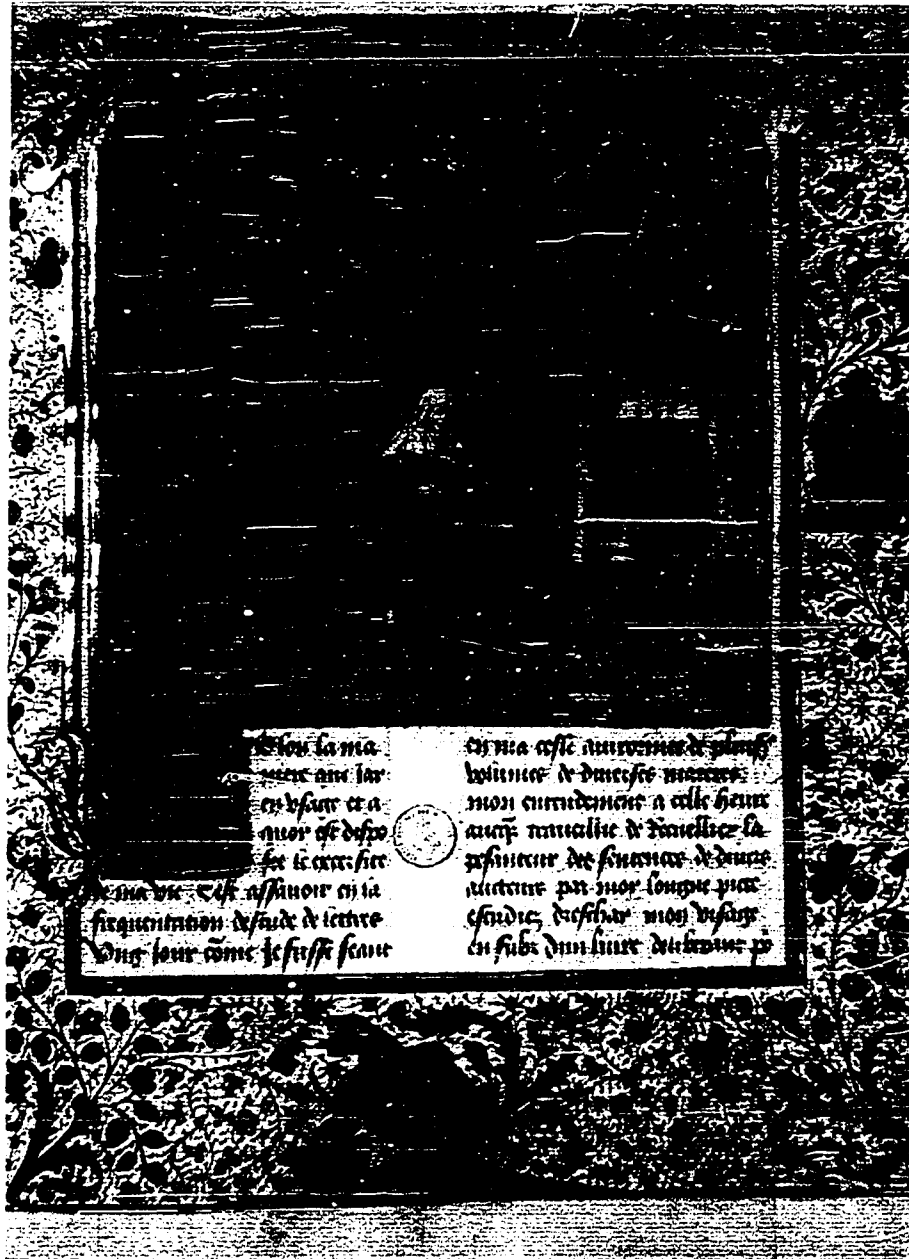
The stylistic variety in the last phase of deluxe manuscript production of Christine de Pizan's La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames is quite astonishing, reflecting the wide audience these texts acquired as the century progressed, witnessed both by their translation into English, Portuguese and Flemish, and in the continuing desire of new patrons in obtaining deluxe editions of the texts, complete with illuminations, and miniatures. The style of the pictures varies from stiff English woodcuts, populated by straight-laced Virtues, or robust Flemish workers, elongated ladies with bulbous heads, tiny, boneless figures in daring clothing, fighting Amazons in full armor, small, angular women gesturing

wildly, all shaded by hatching lines, naturalistic modeling, or costly gold-leaf, giving some indication of the multitude of factors controlling the appearance of the artistic product at this time. As one might expect, there is no single accepted aesthetic utilized by the many workshops illustrating these two texts. Often the visual models established by Christine's artists are followed by virtue of their directness and familiarity, but these models are not adhered to with any regularity. Many of the programs of illustration found in this final period do evidence an understanding or affinity for the spirit of Christine's text, beyond what can be observed in the middle of the fifteenth-century. For example, London, BL Add. 20698 attempts to portray the conversations comprising the text, as well as the tales Christine and the Virtues discuss which illustrate the various capabilities and merits displayed by women throughout history and in the present. Christine and one or two Virtues are found in various settings, castle courtyards, small rooms, vast landscapes, gesturing, or demurely listening. This kind of scene, while offering a field for the artist to display genteel ladies and their lovely attire, more importantly portrays intelligent females engaged in intellectual activity; the analysis of history and civilization. This was first seen in a late manuscript from the middle period

of production, in Paris, BN MS fr. 609.(figs. 5-8 & 5-9)  
 Discussions form the very meat and bones of every chapter  
 of La cité, and they are illustrated in Geneva BP & U MS  
 fr. 180, Brussels BR 9235-7, and Pepwell as well.(figs. 6-  
 17 through 6-20, 6-5, 6-6 and 6-63)

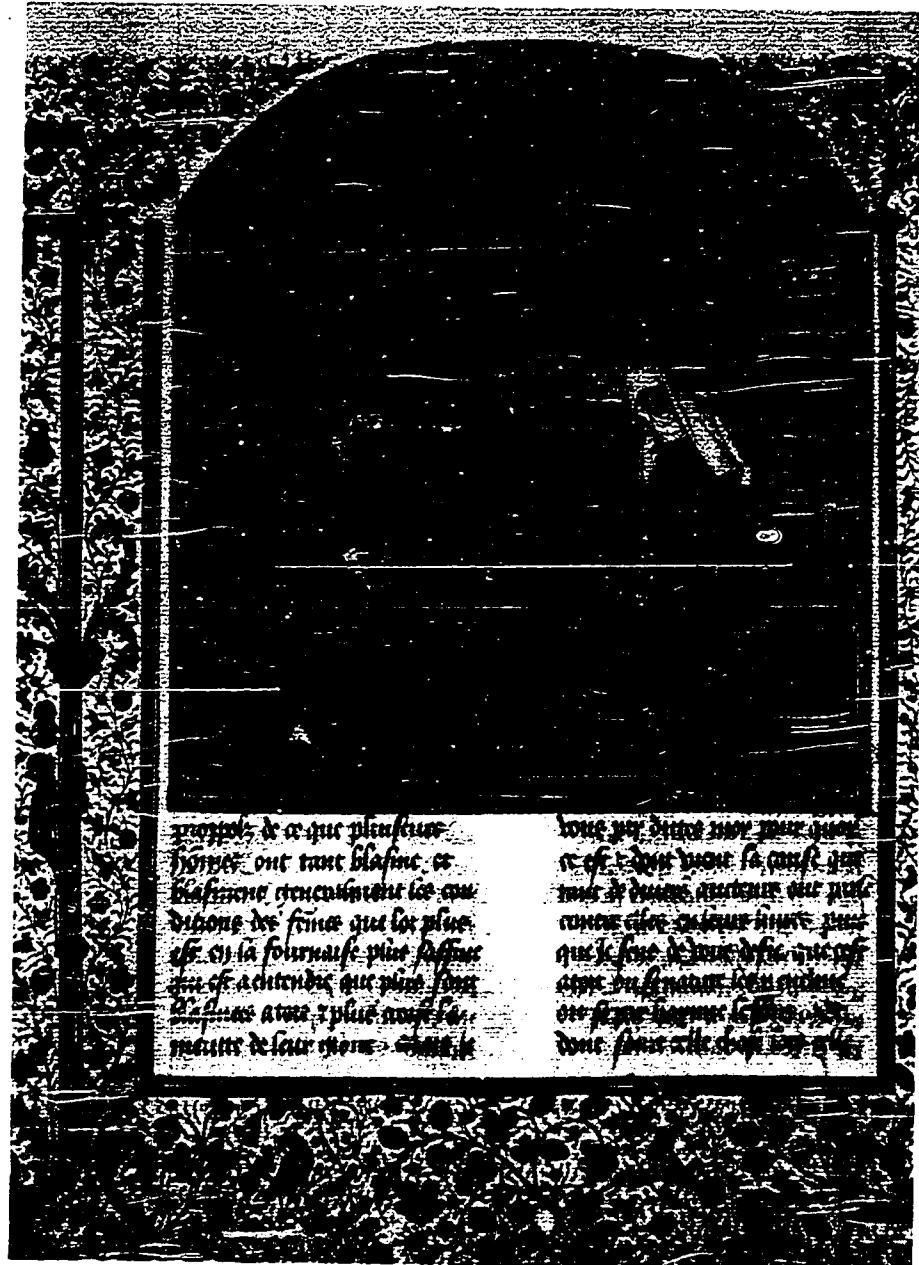
The multitude of artists working on the copiously  
 illustrated London BL Add. 20698 often prefer to emphasize  
 the beauty and charm of the speakers, and the main players  
 in the dramas they relate, rather than the moral merit or  
 astounding fortitude which won their inclusion in such a  
 history of honored women. The miniatures illustrating La  
cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames in  
 Brussels, BR 9235-7 however, reverberate with the harmony,  
 action, pride and cooperative spirit one finds within the  
 Christine's very words. The ladies, though still charming  
 in their presentation, are portrayed as strong, active,  
 content, cooperative and as busy and dedicated to the task  
 at hand as any proper Flemish woman keeping shop, house or  
 castle. They are never so burdened with elegant and  
 fashionable frivolities of dress that they are prevented  
 from executing their famous deeds with flair and vigor.  
 Christine's garments once again take on a sensible flavor,  
 her wimple, kerchief and plain gown appear nun-like, not  
 aristocratic. Even the rough, direct woodcuts illustrating  
 the English translation of Christine's text's in the

Pepwell printed edition of 1521 acquire the sturdiness of the Flemish model, and the clarity of the original compositional format established by La cité des dames Master. The print maker gives the Virtues, and the author herself, an air of modernity through dress and straightforward actions and stances, uncluttered by the usual curving gothic poses, which would stylistically combat their majestic linear presentation. In summary, each manuscript created during this final period of production, is bright and individual, and attests to the great freedom achieved by the artists who interpret a book with whatever degree of faithfulness achieves their ends; that is to create a pleasing, beautiful and courtly image for aristocratic patrons with a taste for the jewel-like charm of the illuminated manuscript.

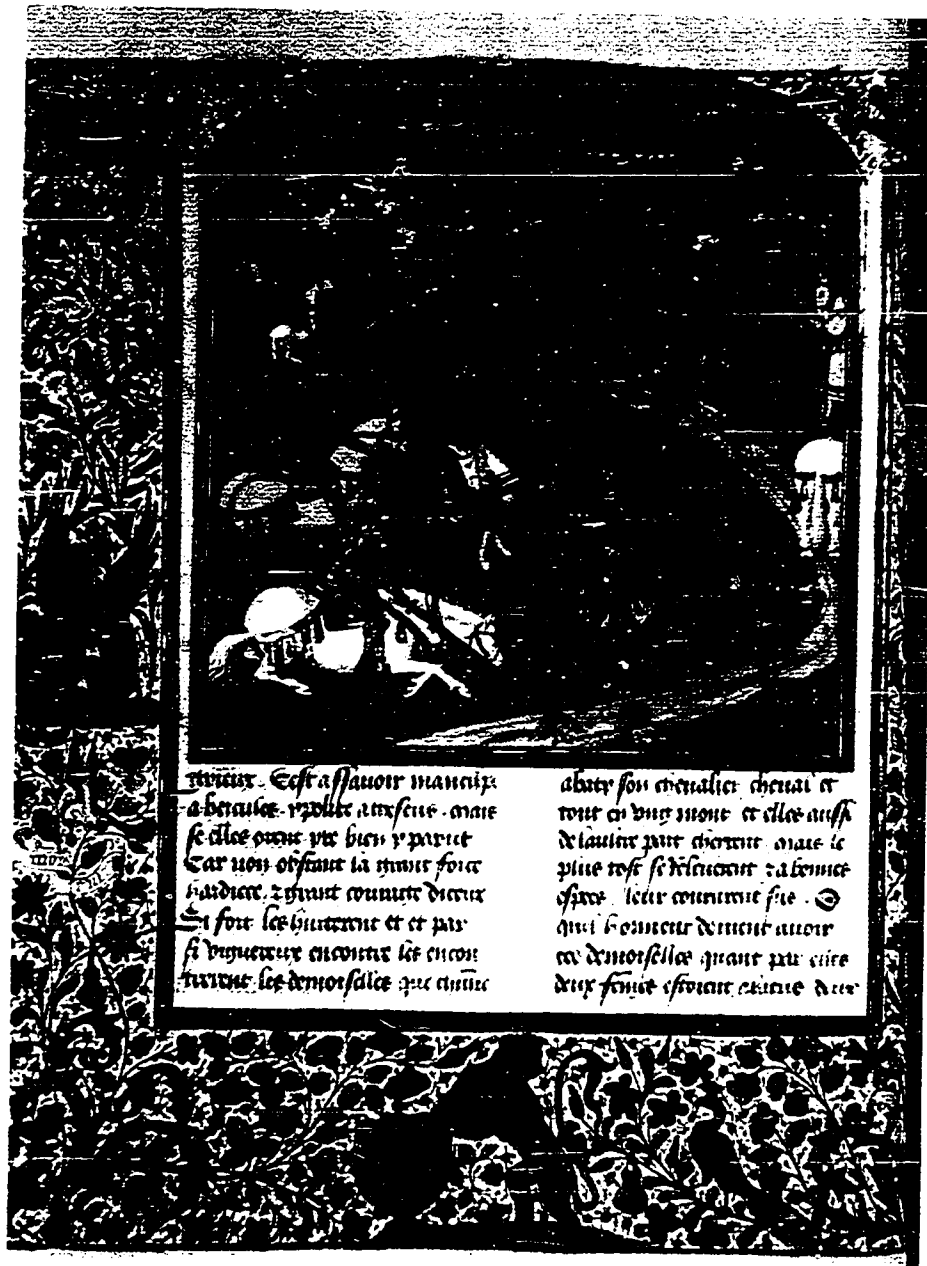


6-1 Christine de Pizan; La cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 3, c. 1465, School of Jacquemart Pilavaine(?).






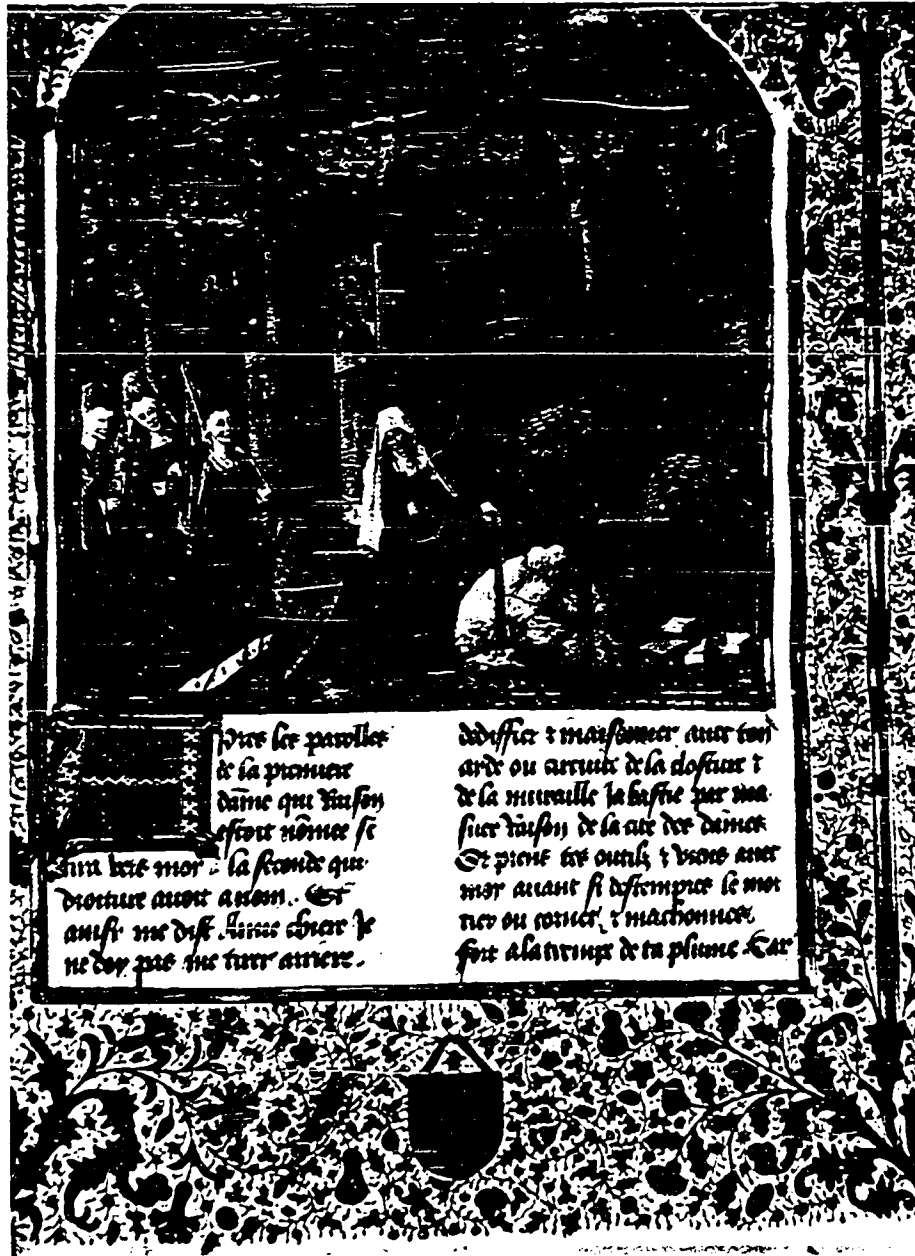
6-3 Reason helps Christine build the City; La cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 10v, c. 1465, School of Jacquemart Pilavaine(?).



muer. Cest assavoir mancipz  
 a hercules. ydolte amfens. mais  
 se alce ovent yre bien y pariet  
 Car non obstant la nuit forte  
 hardiee. y hant conuist d'iceux  
 Si forte les huerent et et par  
 si viguerent enuoyent les encon  
 tuerent les demoiselles que auoir

abate son chevalier chenal et  
 tout ce vng moue et elles auiff  
 de l'aine par chertout. mais le  
 plus tost se huerent. La benice  
 s'ice. leur conuist fue.   
 qui l'onneur de ment auoir  
 ce demoiselles quant par cite  
 dux foute s'foiant exente d'ice

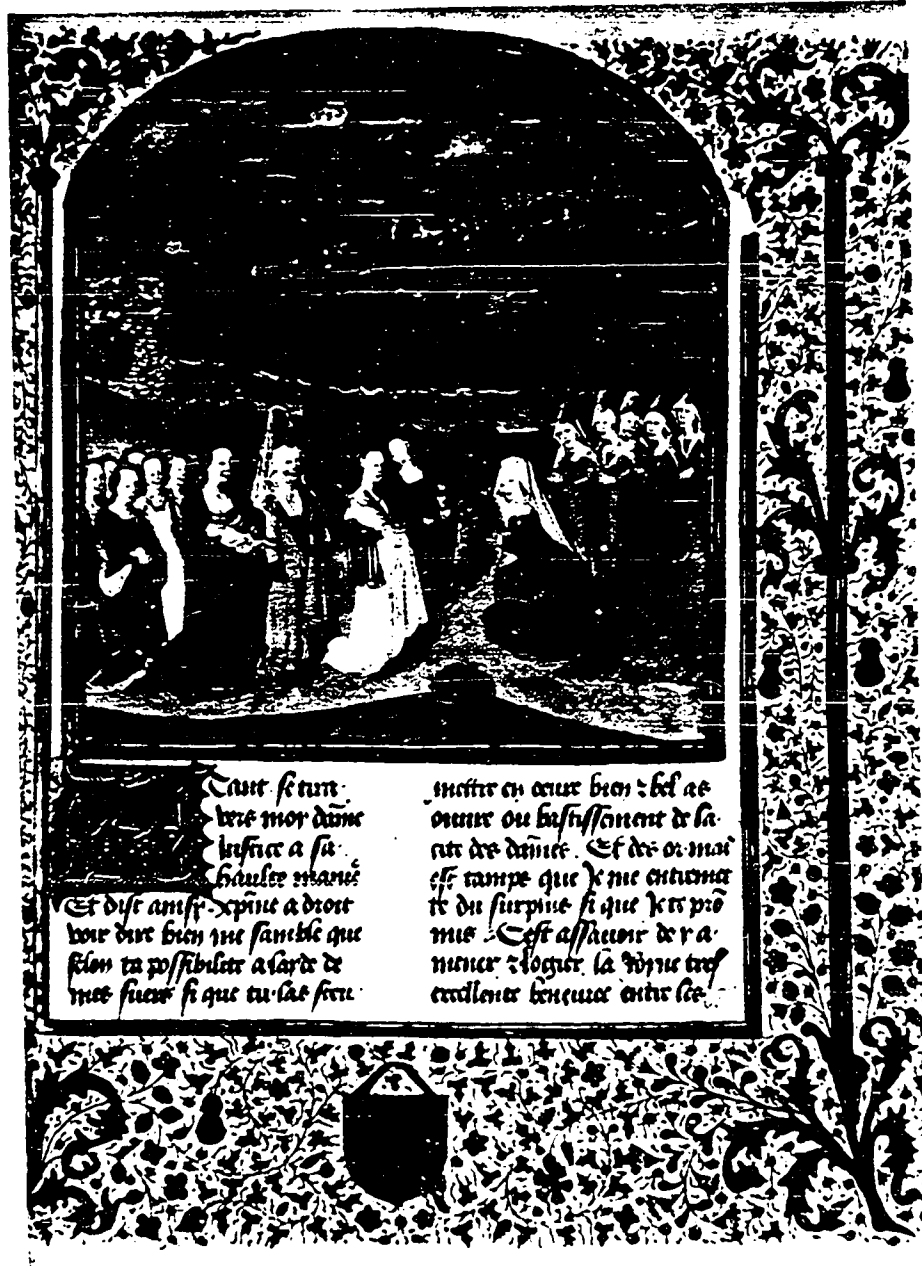
6-4 Amazons Menalippe and Hippolyta Battling Hercules and  
 Theseus; La cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f.  
 24v, c. 1465, School of Jacquemart Pilavaine(?).



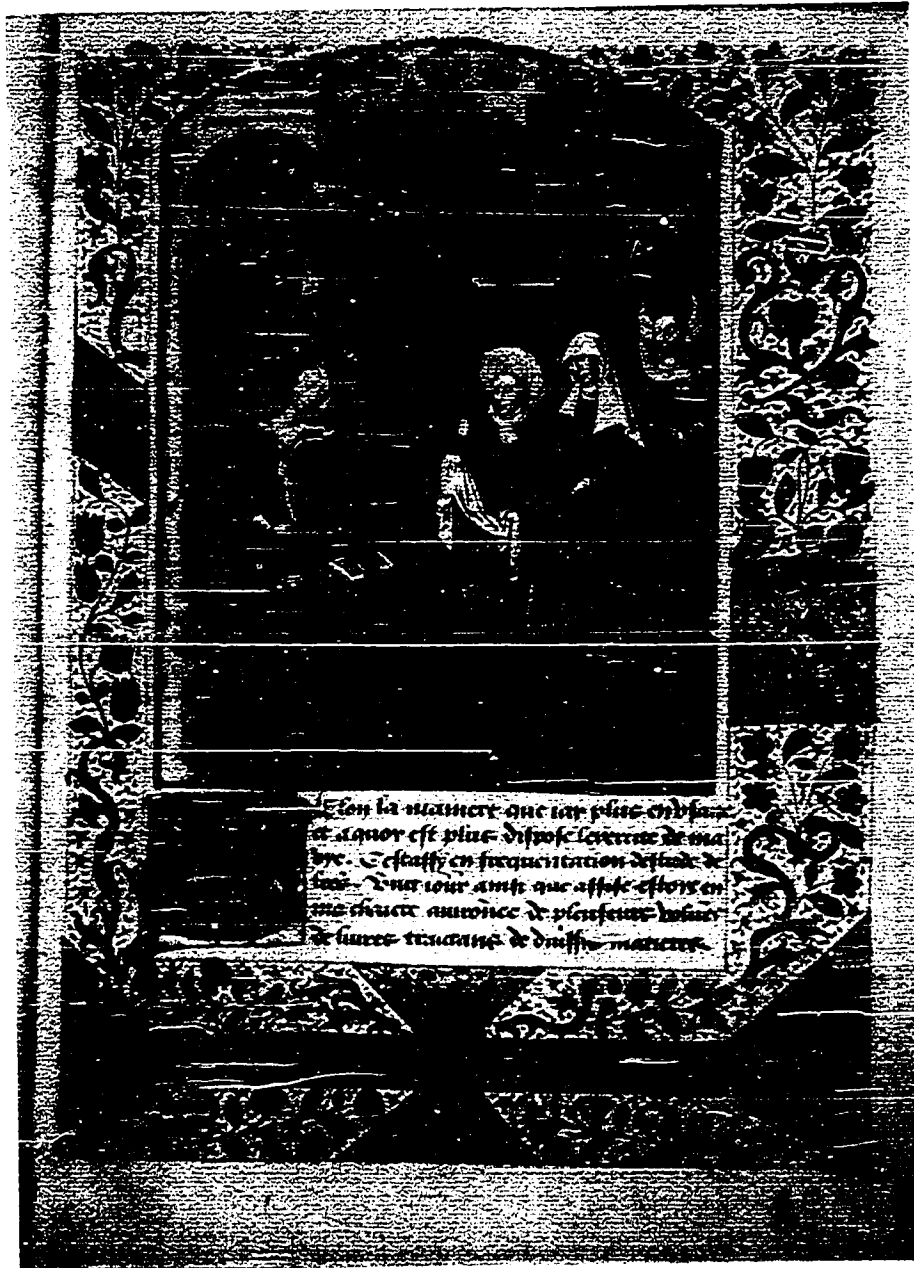
Priez les parolles  
 de la premiere  
 dame qui fu son  
 effort nommer se  
 sera brie mor. la seconde qui  
 docture avoit a son. Et  
 ainsi me dist. L'ame chier je  
 ne doy pas me tenir ariere.

de diffier i manfomer avec ton  
 arde ou arriere de la docture i  
 de la muraille la haste per ma  
 sice ruse de la cite des dames  
 Et priez les outils i vros avec  
 mor avant si desempier le mor  
 nez ou coner i machonner  
 fore ala trimp de ta plume. Car

6-5 Christine and the Three Virtues Standing Before the  
 City; *La cité des dames*, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 52,  
 c. 1465, School of Jacquemart Pilavaine(?).



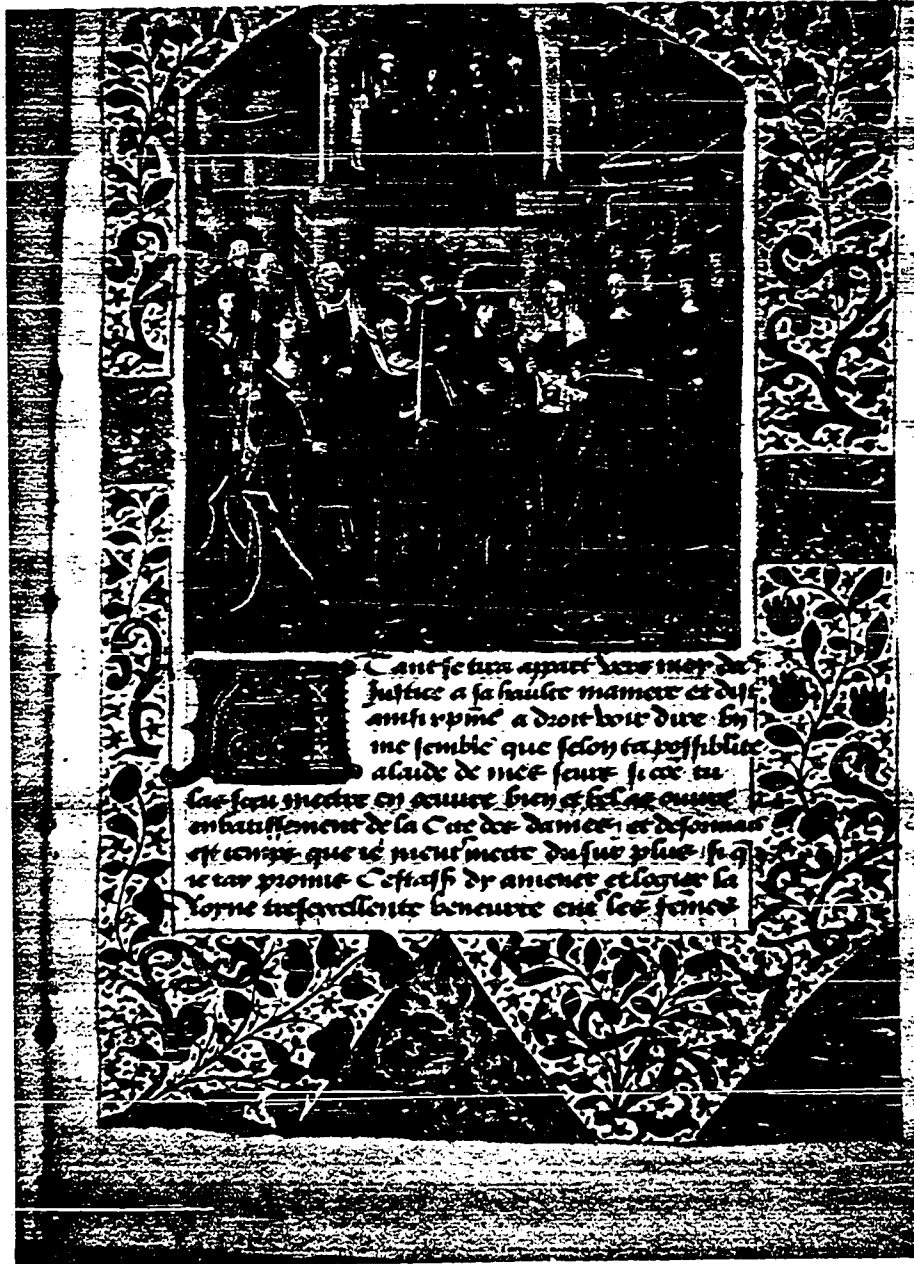
6-6 Women are Welcomed to the City; La cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 112, c. 1465, School of Jacquemart Pilavaine(?).



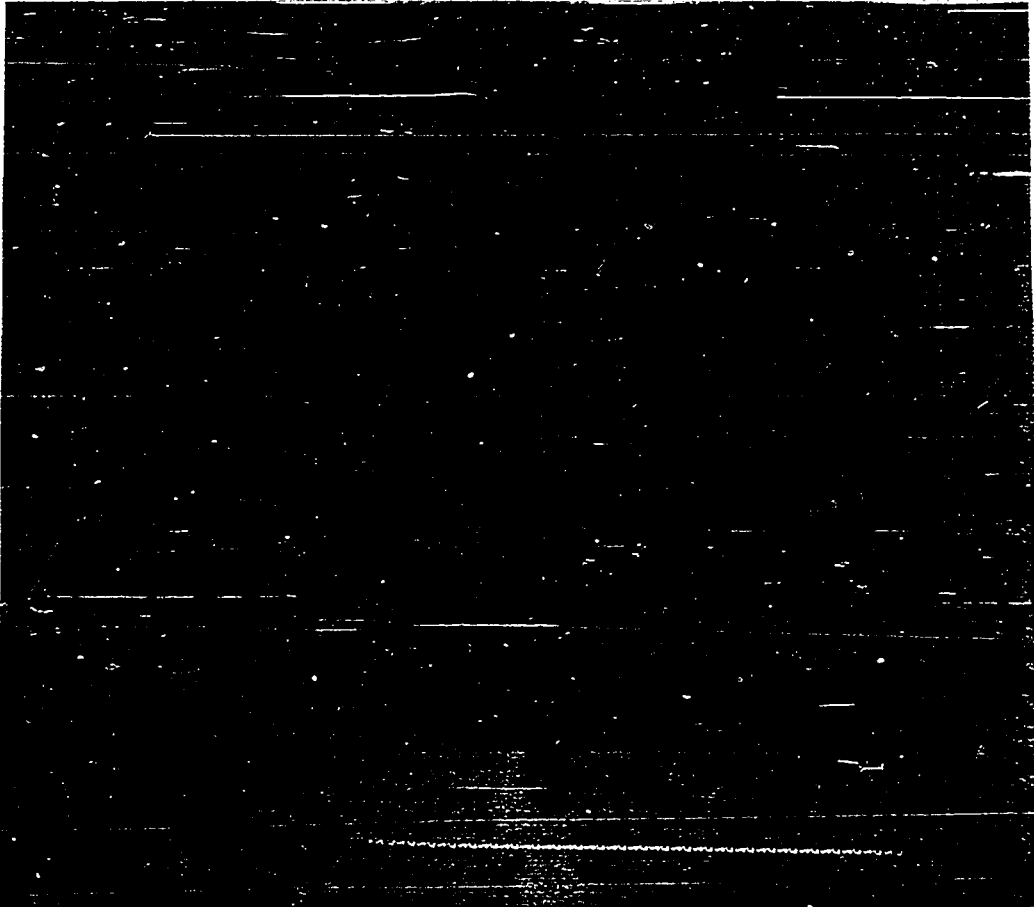
6-7 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine; La cité des dames, Vienna, ONB Cod. 2605, f. 3, c. 1470, After the "Teneyken" Workshop.



6-8 The Three Virtues Supervise the Building of the City;  
La cité des dames, Vienna, ONB Cod. 2605, f. 67, c.  
 1470, After the "Teneyken" Workshop.



6-9 The Three Virtues Welcome the Holy Women to the City;  
 La cité des dames, Vienna, ONB Cod. 2605, f. 145, c.  
 1470, After the "Teneyken" Workshop.

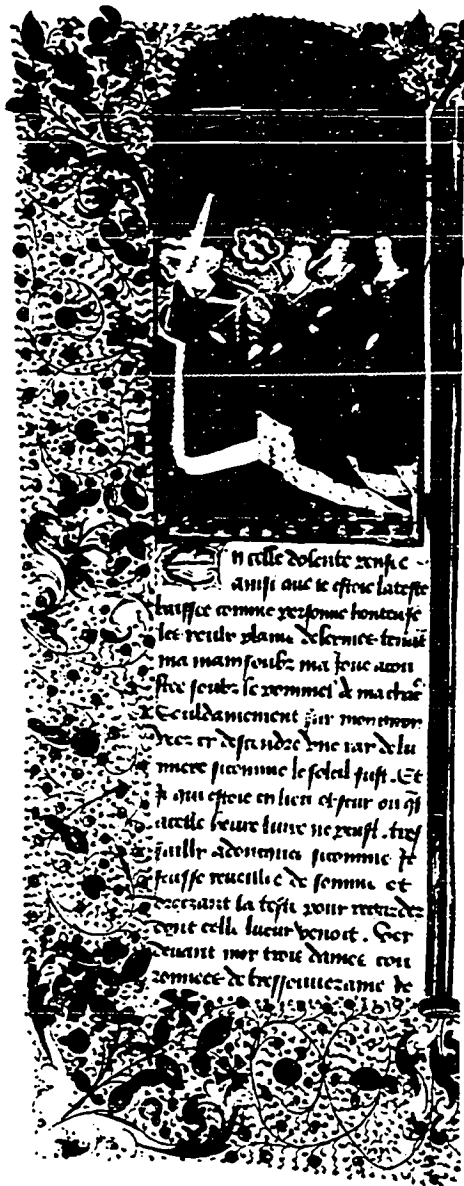
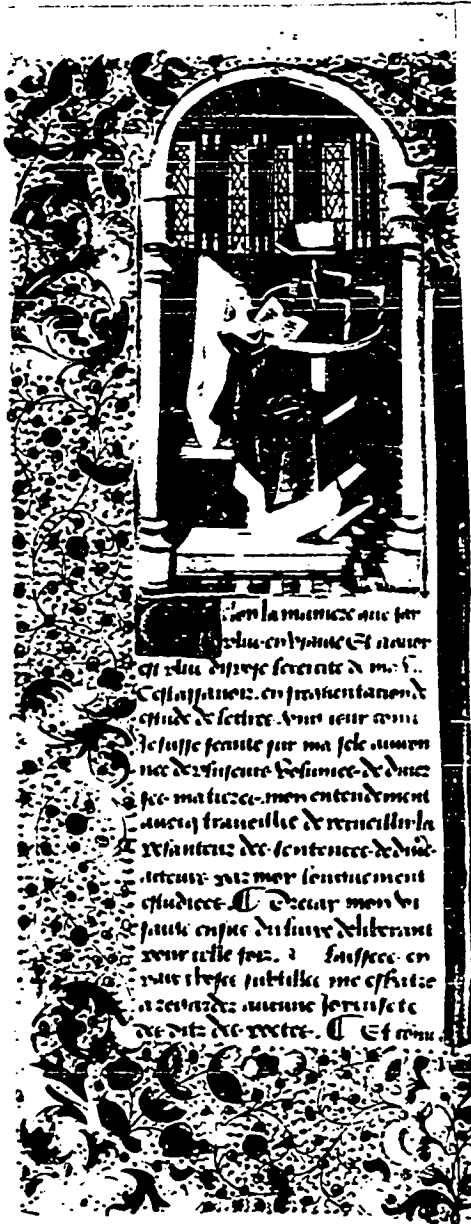


6-10 Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine; La cité des dames, Paris, BN MS fr. 1177, f. 3v, 1470-1480.



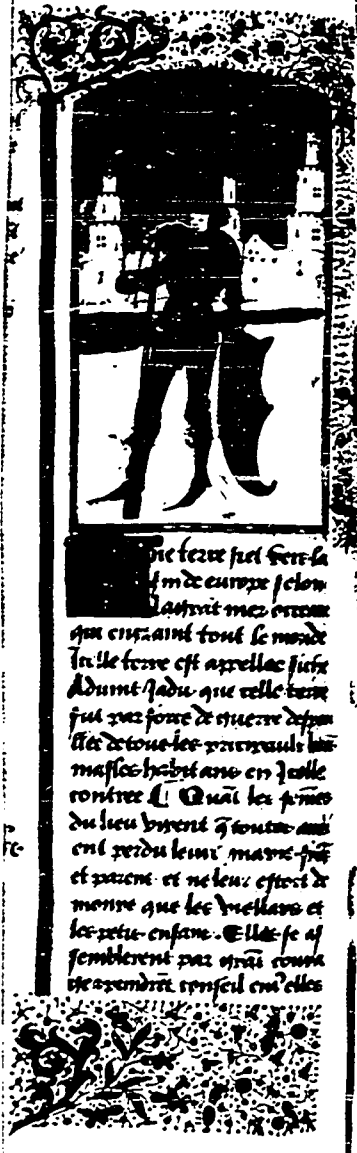
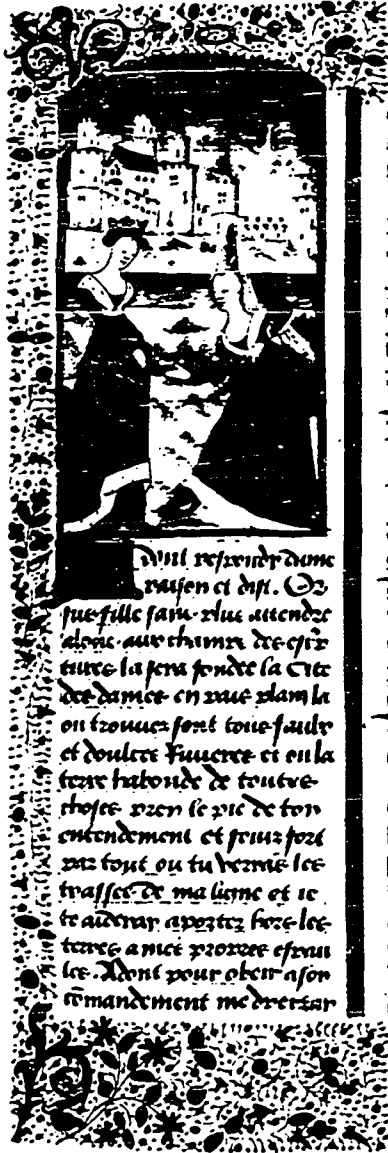
6-11 (left) The Virtues Welcome Women to the City; La cité des dames, Paris, BN MS fr. 1177, f. 45, 1470-1480.

6-12 (right) Justice Greets the Virgin and Christ Child to the City; Paris, BN MS fr. 1177, f. 95.



6-13 (left) Christine de Pizan; *La cité des dames*, Geneva, BP & U, MS fr. 180, f. 3v, c. 1475.

6-14 (right) Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine; Geneva, BP & U, MS fr. 180, f. 5v.



6-15 (left) Reason directs Christine as she digs the foundation for the City; La cité des dames, Geneva, BP & U, MS fr. 180, f. 11, c. 1475.

6-16 (right) Amazon Warrior; Geneva, BP & U, MS fr. 180, f. 22v.





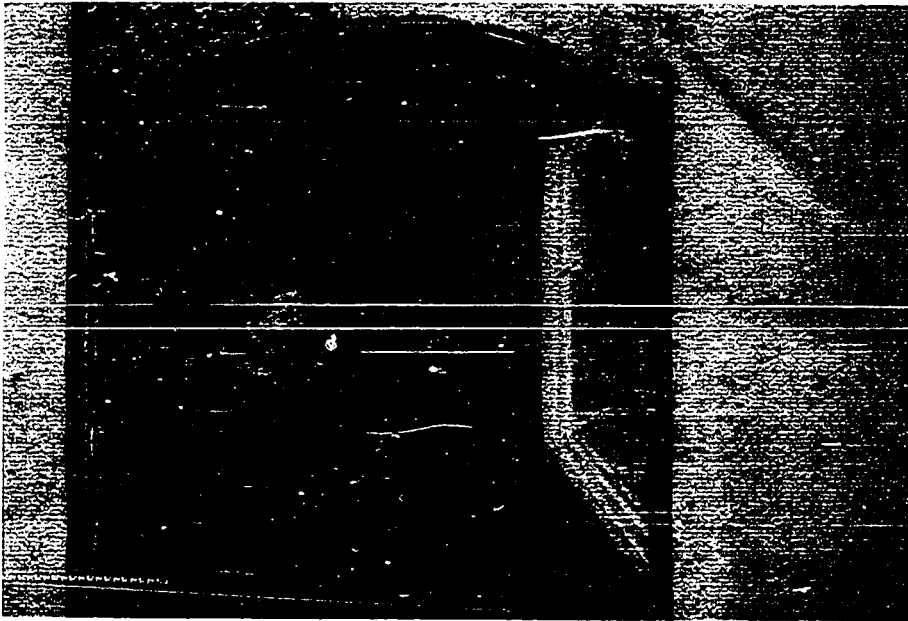
**T**ant je t'admire  
 tant d'ouïr parler  
 de sa haulte ma-  
 mere et dit ainsi. vaine a  
 droit vous dire bien me semble  
 que selon la possibilité alade  
 de mes sens si que tu las puz  
 mettre en œuvre bien et bel  
 œuvre ou huytisme  
 de la ceste des dames : de form  
 est femme que se mentremet  
 du surplus si que se tar  
 ronne. C'est assavoir  
 amenez et loiez la forme  
 tuelle et lante bienueure estre

Donnee et seigneurie par  
 elle et habitude de esprit nul  
 titude de noble dame de sa  
 cour et de sa mesme Cai  
 se dor les haults palais et  
 haultes mansions prestee  
 et puree et toutes les hies  
 rouvertes de fleur pour n  
 avoir elle et sa tres honneur  
 et exalte toute et assem-  
 ble. Or diegnent donnee  
 de mesmes dames et toutes  
 femmes au d'uant de cour  
 auant honneur et Reueren-  
 ce celle qui est normale seule

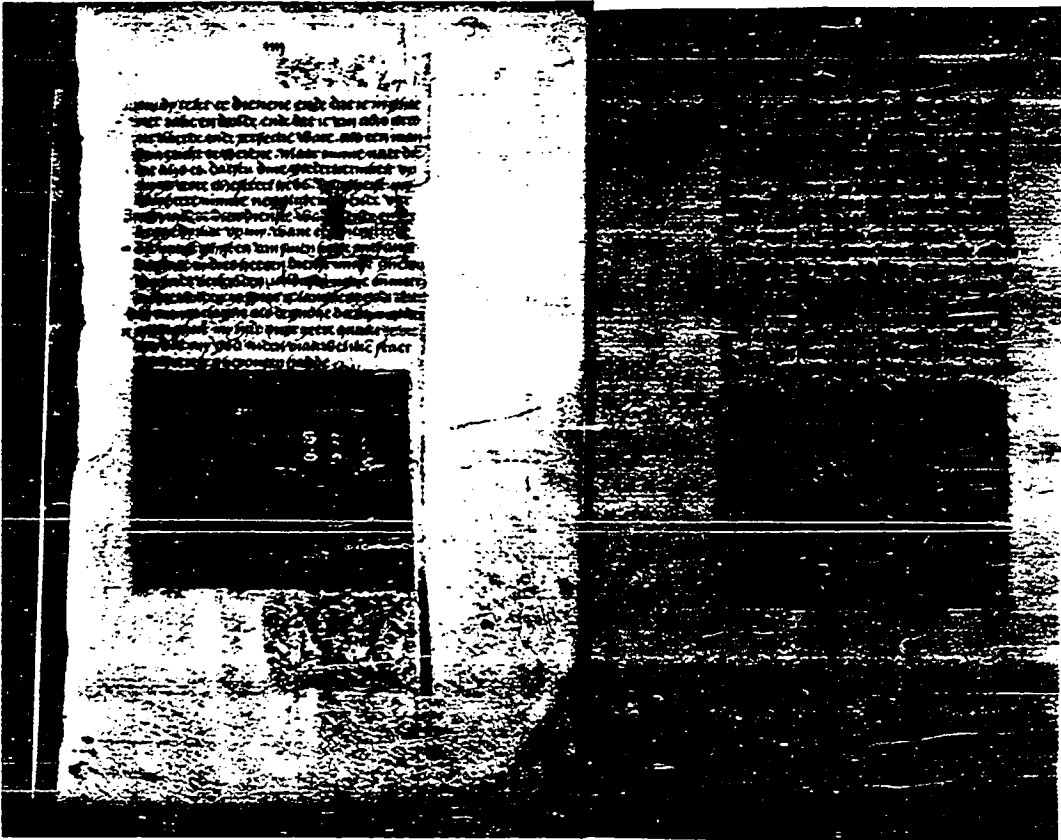


dont en alant querre  
 les dites dames par  
 la dominance de dame  
 dont une disoient en alant  
 ceste parolle. Il Dame  
 sans faille vous et ses for-  
 mans solue et conclues  
 et bel et si bien toutes mes  
 questions et demandes que  
 se pliquer plus ny sauoye  
 et me fien pour ce bien  
 informet de ce que que cor-  
 et affe par vous de ay a  
 come comme toutes choses  
 susables et sciables tant en  
 force de corps comme en sa-  
 pence d'entendement et de tou-  
 tes vertus sont possibles et

- 6-19 (left) Christine, Rectitude and Reason Discuss Women's Faithfulness in Love; La cité des dames, Geneva, BP & U, MS fr. 180, f. 62, c. 1475.  
 6-20 (right) Christine and Justice Discuss Women Saints and Martyrs; Geneva, BP & U, MS fr. 180, f. 110v.

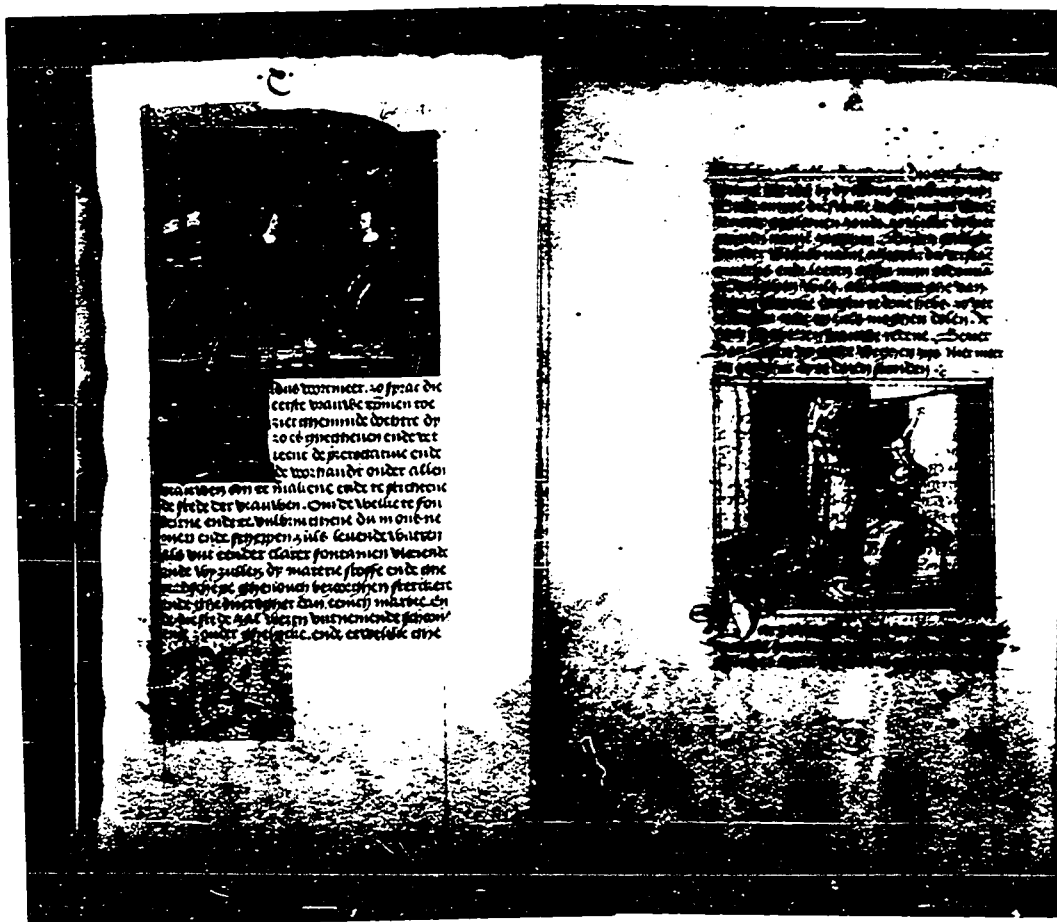


6-21 Christine de Pizan; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add.  
20698, f. 2, c. 1475.



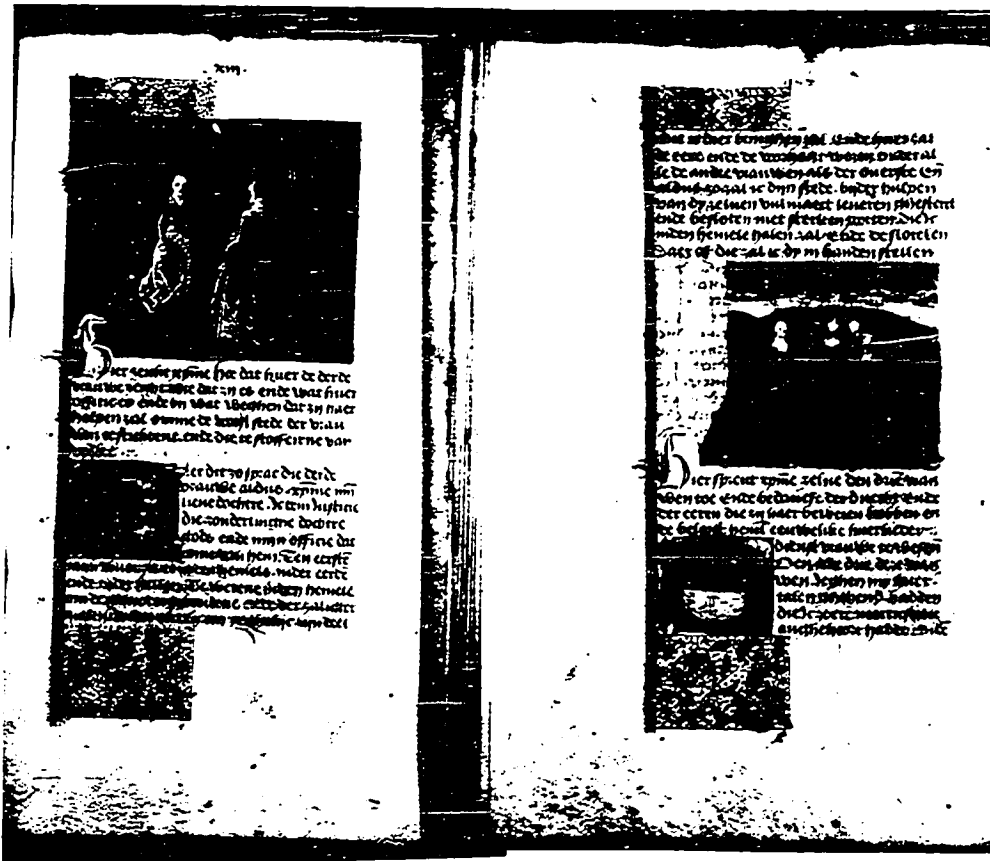
6-22 (left) Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to  
Christine; De Lof Der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698,  
f. 5, c. 1475.

6-23 (right) Christine and the Three Virtues; London, BL  
Add. 20698, f. 7v.



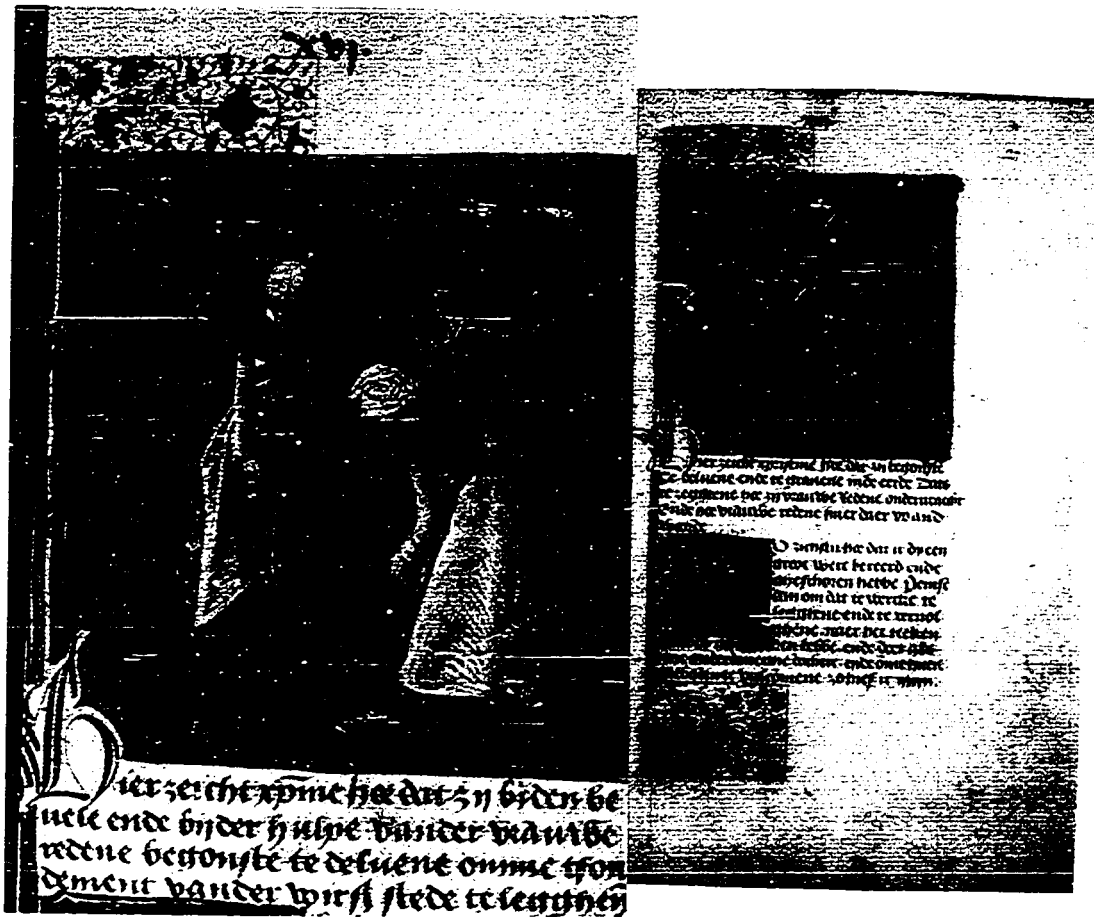
6-24 (left) Christine and Reason; De Lof der Vrowen,  
London, BL Add. 20698, f. 11, c. 1475.

6-25 (right) Christine and Rectitude; London, BL Add.  
20698, f. 12v.



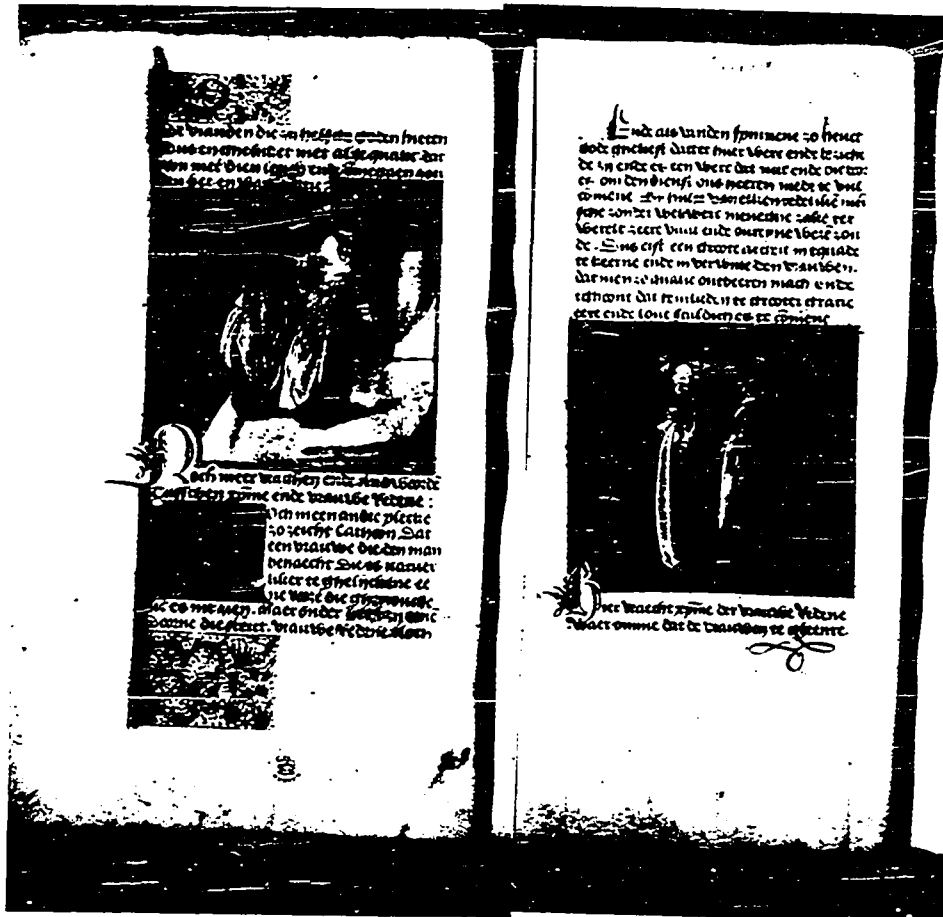
6-26 (left) Christine and Justice; De Lof der Vrouwen,  
London, BL Add. 20698, f. 14, c. 1475.

6-27 (right) Unfinished; Christine and the Three Virtues;  
London, BL Add. 20698, f. 15v.



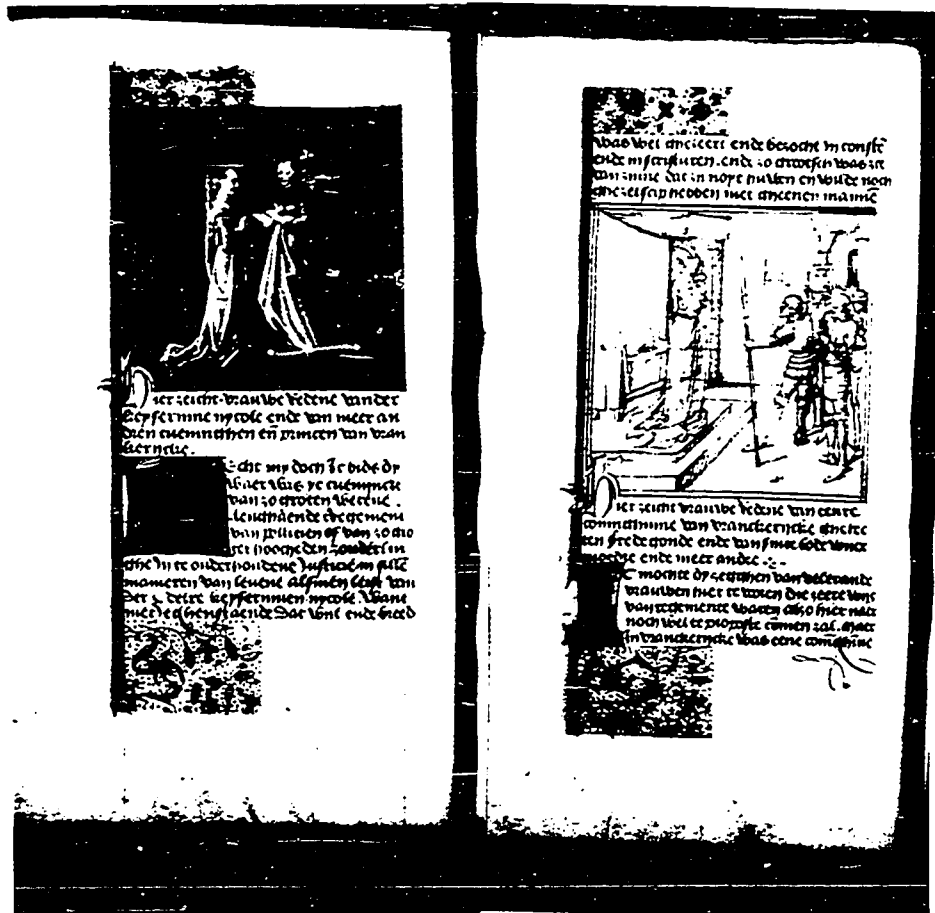
6-28 (left) Reason directs Christine as she Digs the Foundation for the City; *De Lof der Vrowen*, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 17, c. 1475.

6-29 (right) Christine and Reason Conversing; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 22.



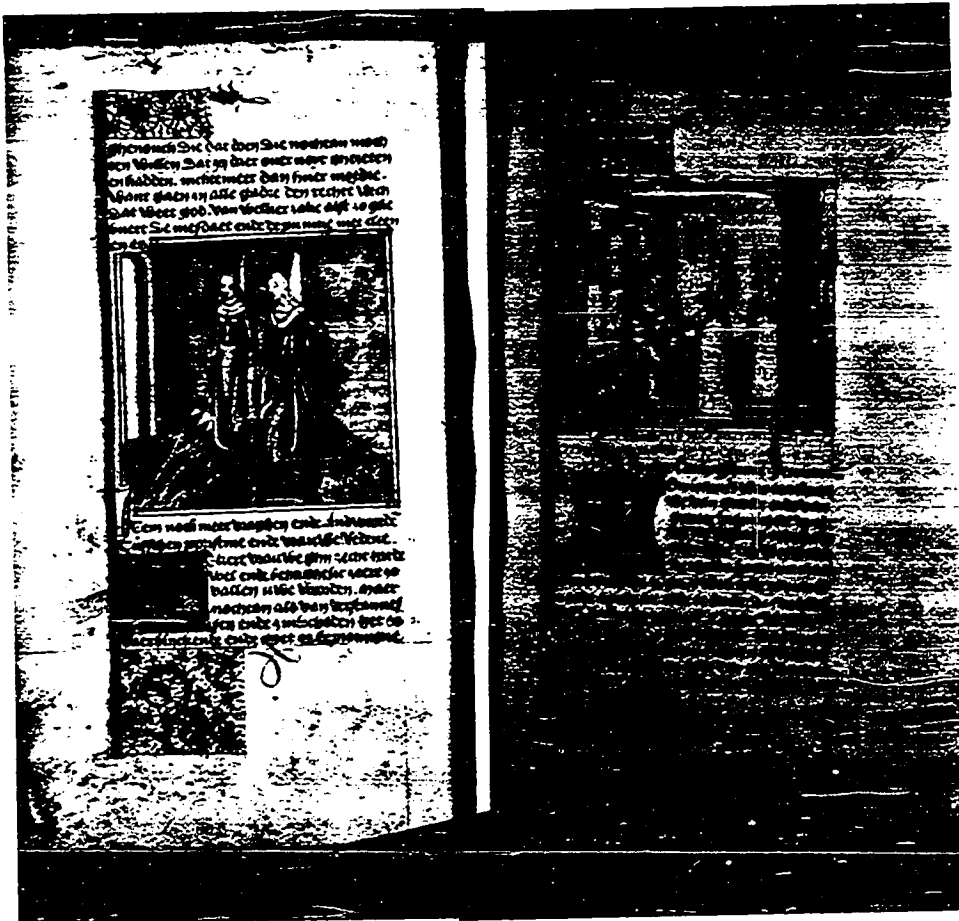
6-30 (left) Christine and Reason Conversing; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 26v, c. 1475.

6-31 (right) Christine and Reason Conversing; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 32v.

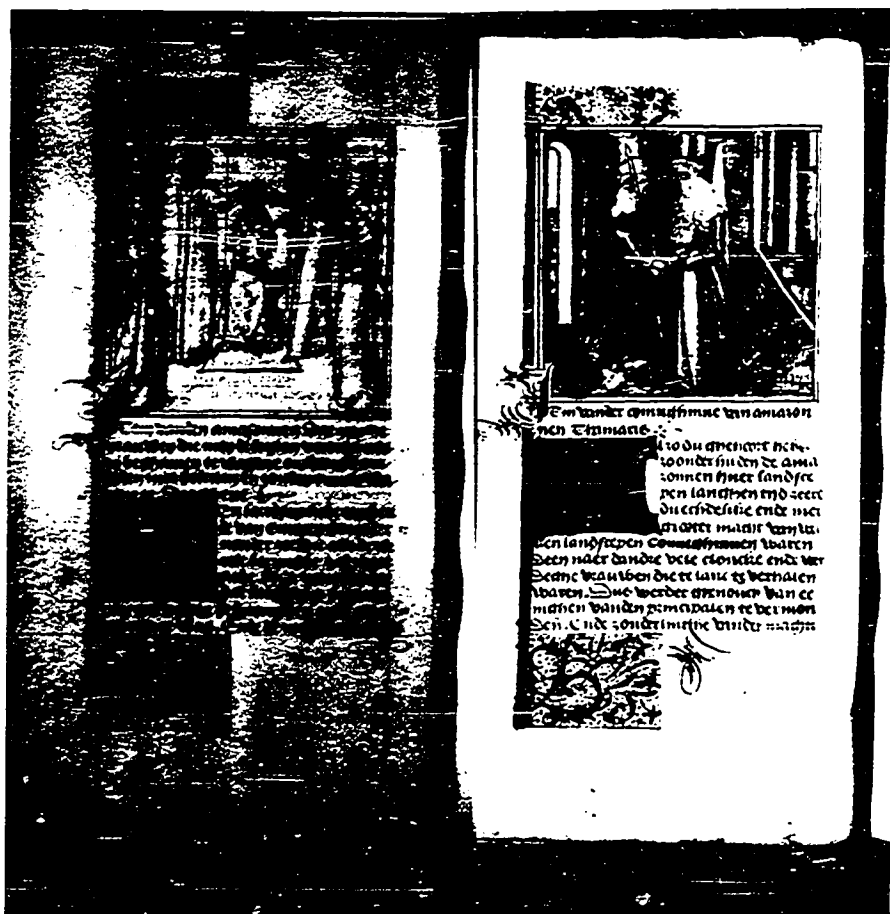


6-32 (left) Christine and Reason Conversing; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 34v, c. 1475.

6-33 (right) Fredegund with son Clotaire Face Rebellious Barons; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 35v.

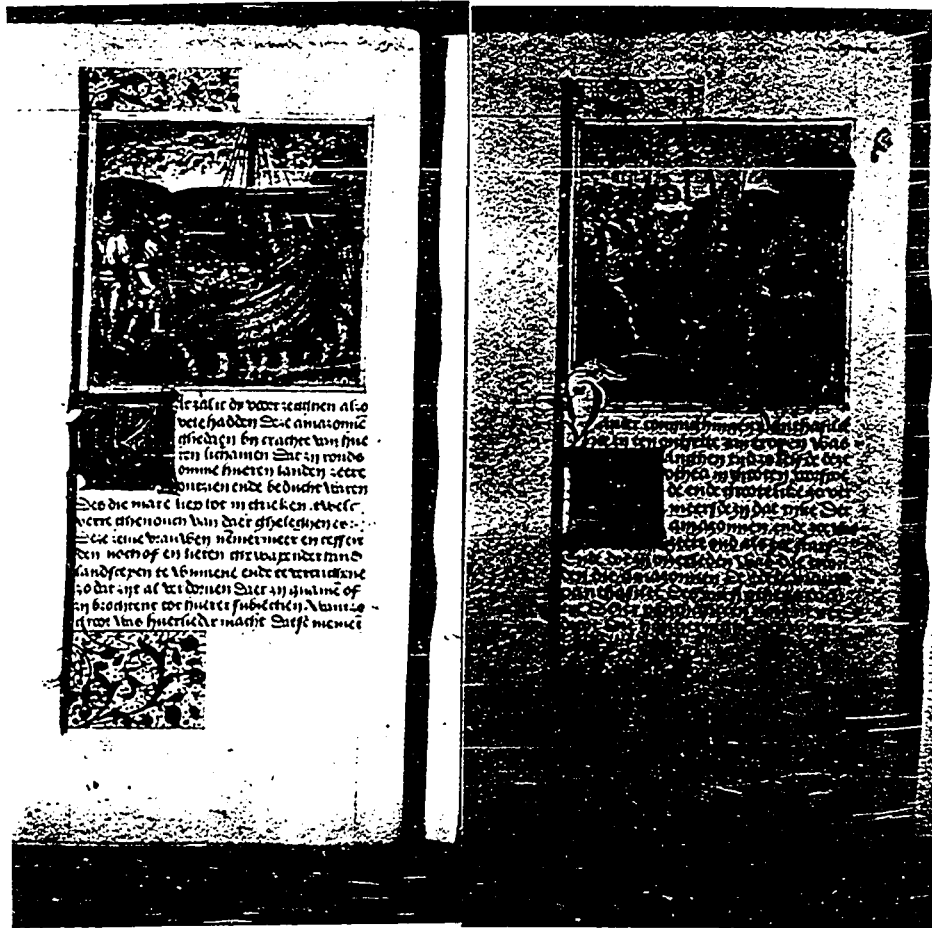


- 6-34 (left) Christine and Reason Conversing; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 38v, c. 1475.
- 6-35 (right) Assyrian Queen Semiramis Hears of Rebellion While Dressing Her Hair; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 41.



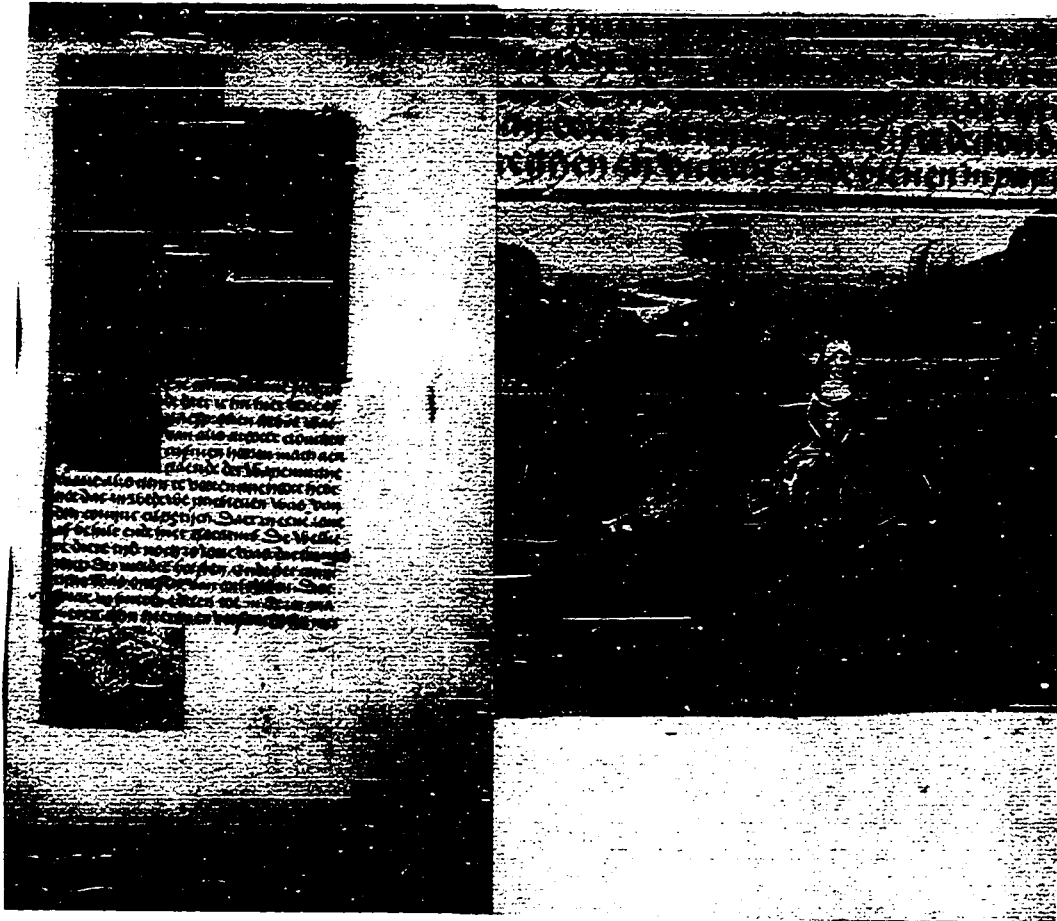
6-36 (left) The Crowning of an Amazon Queen; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 43v, c. 1475.

6-37 (right) Queen Thamiris of Amazonia Hears of Persian Attack; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 45v.



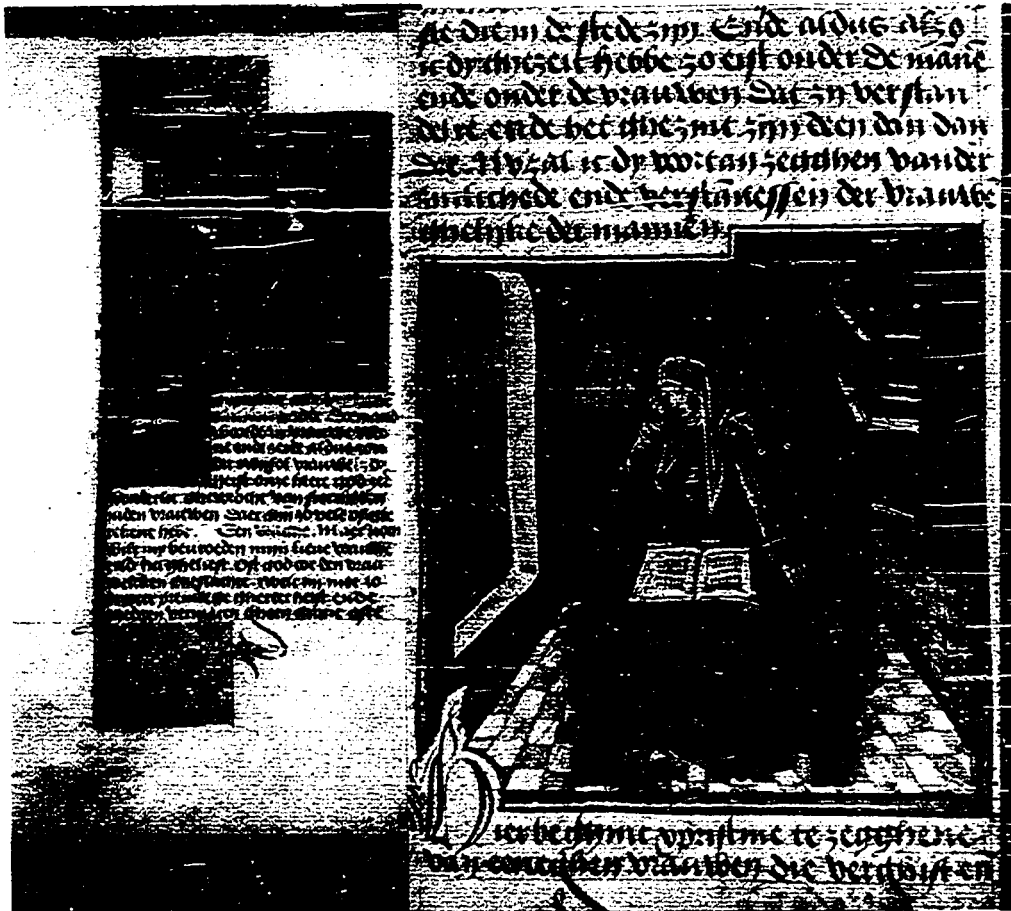
6-38 (left) Hercules and Theseus Board Ship; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 47v, c. 1475.

6-39 (right) Queen Penthesilea of Amazonia Rides to Troy; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 51v.



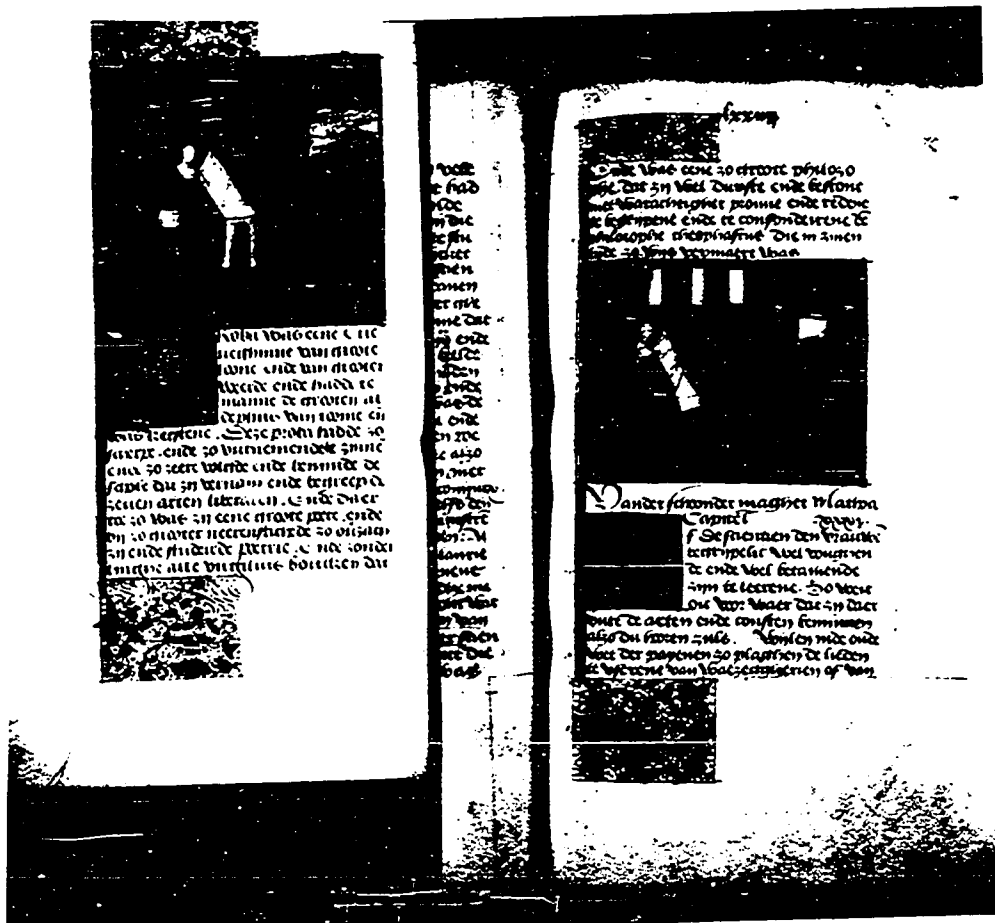
6-40 (left) Queen Fredegund Leading Troops; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 63, c. 1475.

6-41 (right) The Escape of Camilla and Her Father; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 64v.



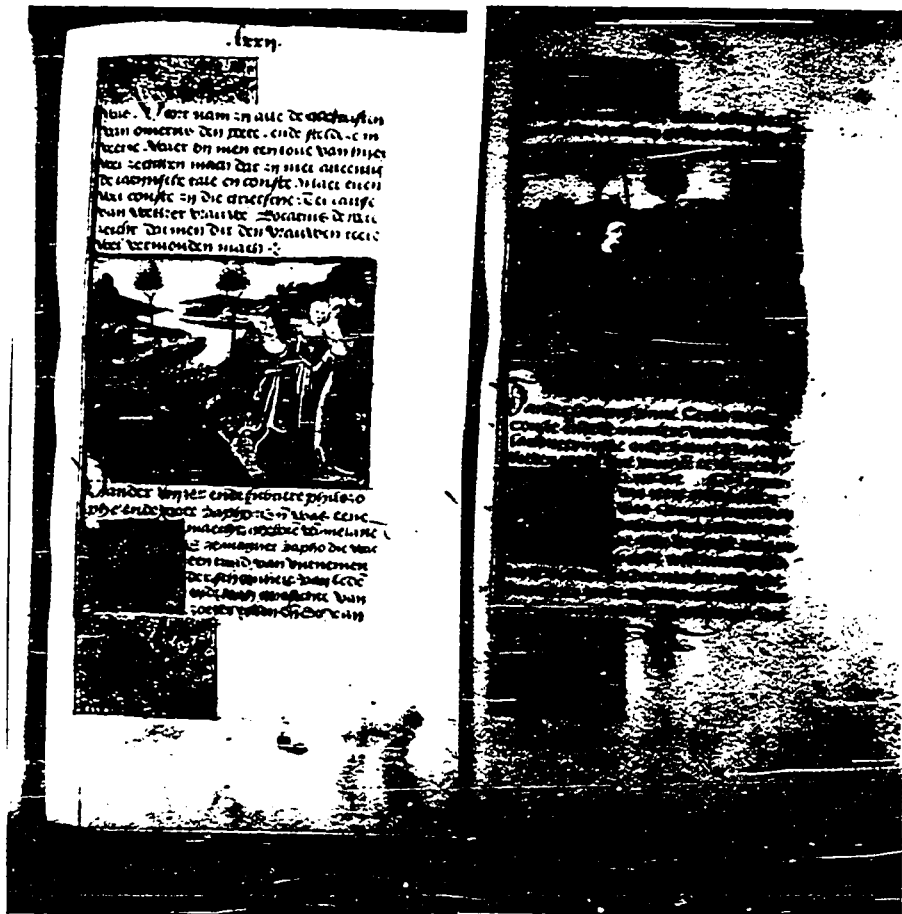
6-42 (left) Christine and Reason Conversing; *De Lof der Vrouwen*, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 68v, c. 1475.

6-43 (right) Cornificia in Her Study; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 70.



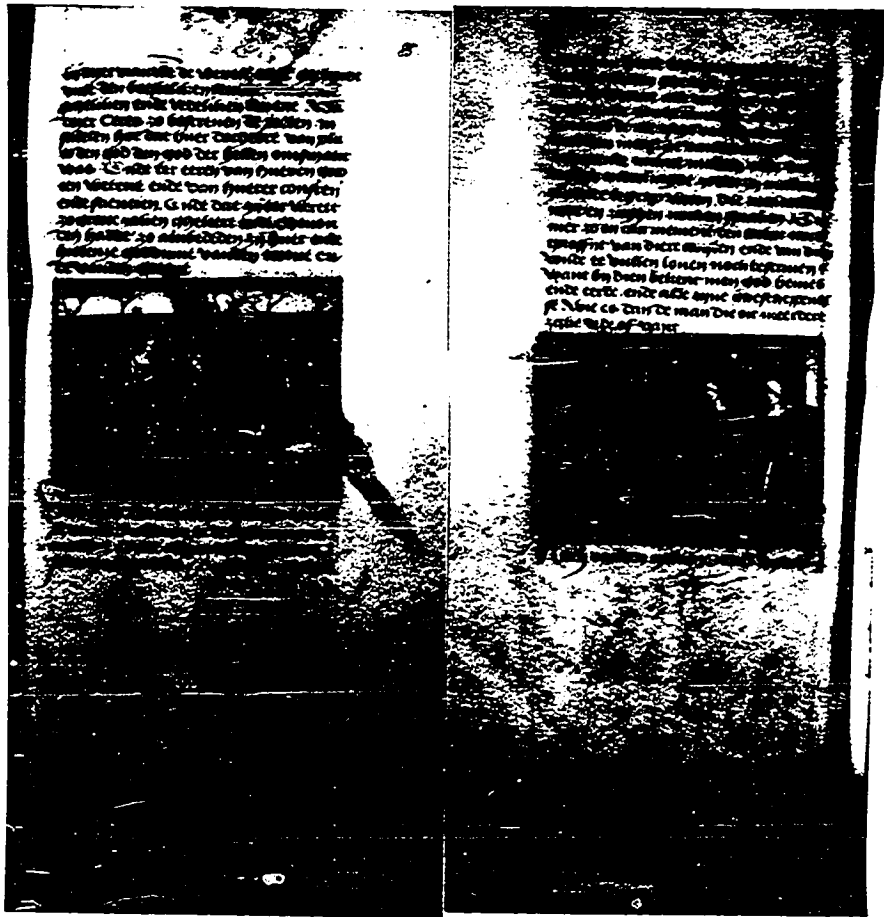
6-44 (left) Unfinished; Proba; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 72, c. 1475.

6-45 (right) Unfinished; Manto; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 75.



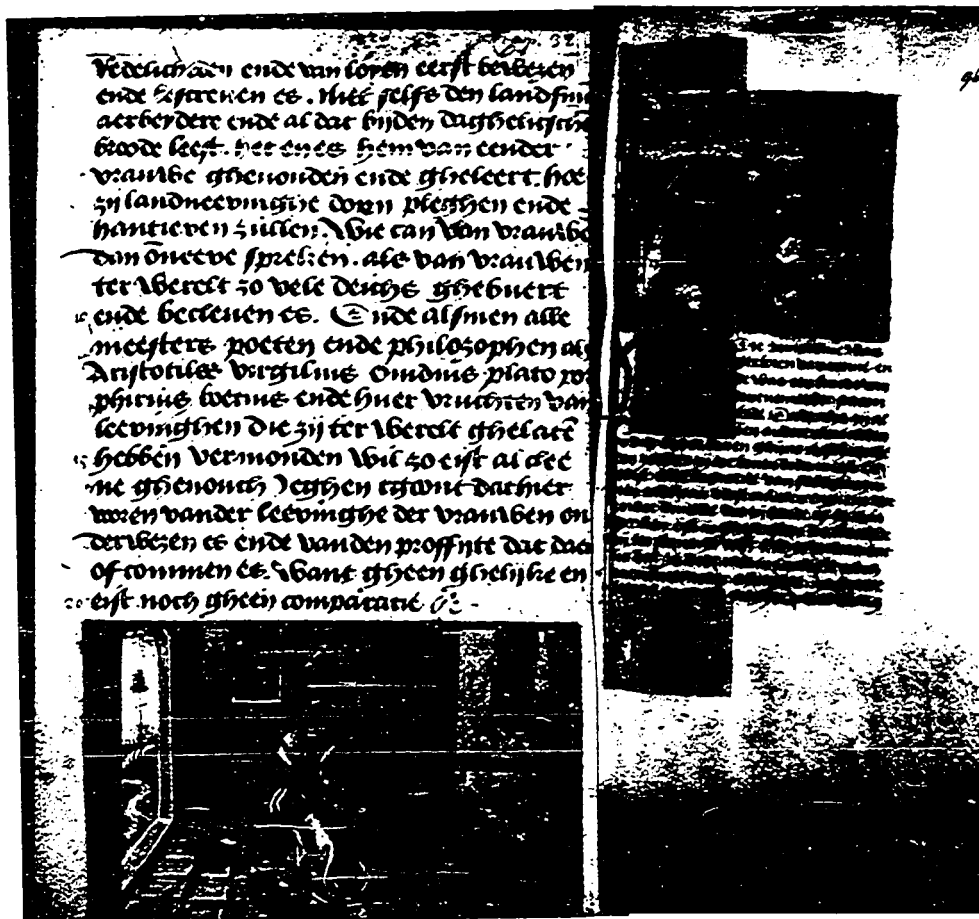
6-46 (left) Sappho and Her Companions; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 78, c. 1475.

6-47 (right) Ceres Plowing; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 84.



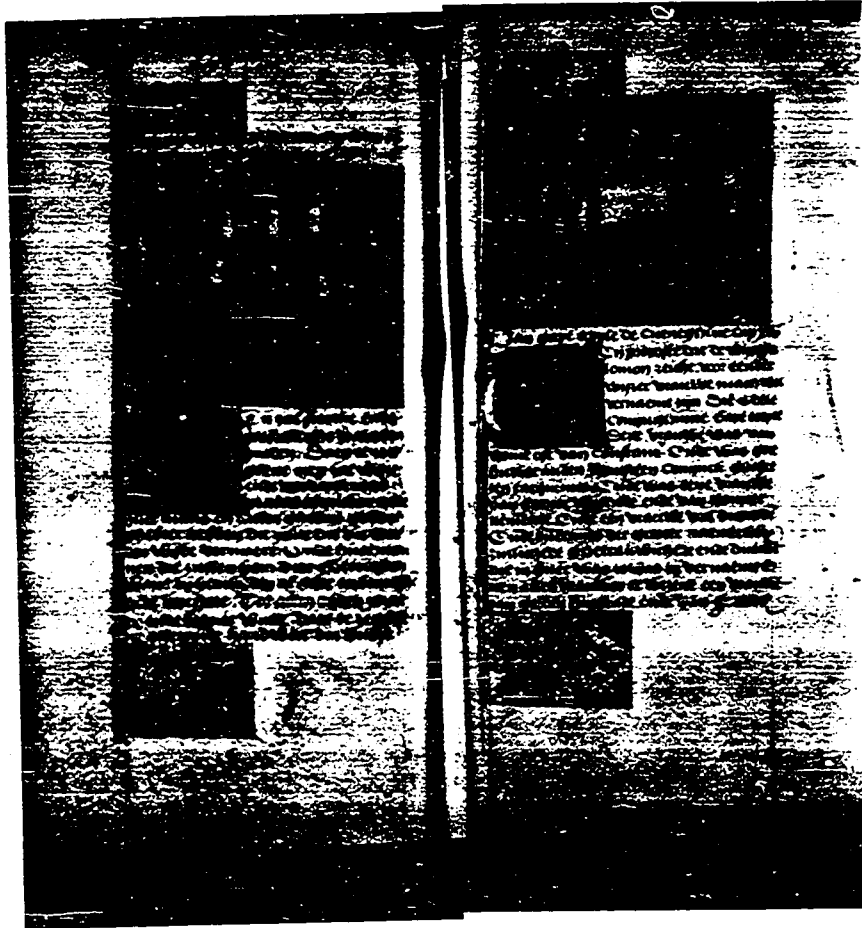
6-48 (left) Isis Grafting; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 85, c. 1475.

6-49 (right) Minerva Directing a Blacksmith; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 87v.



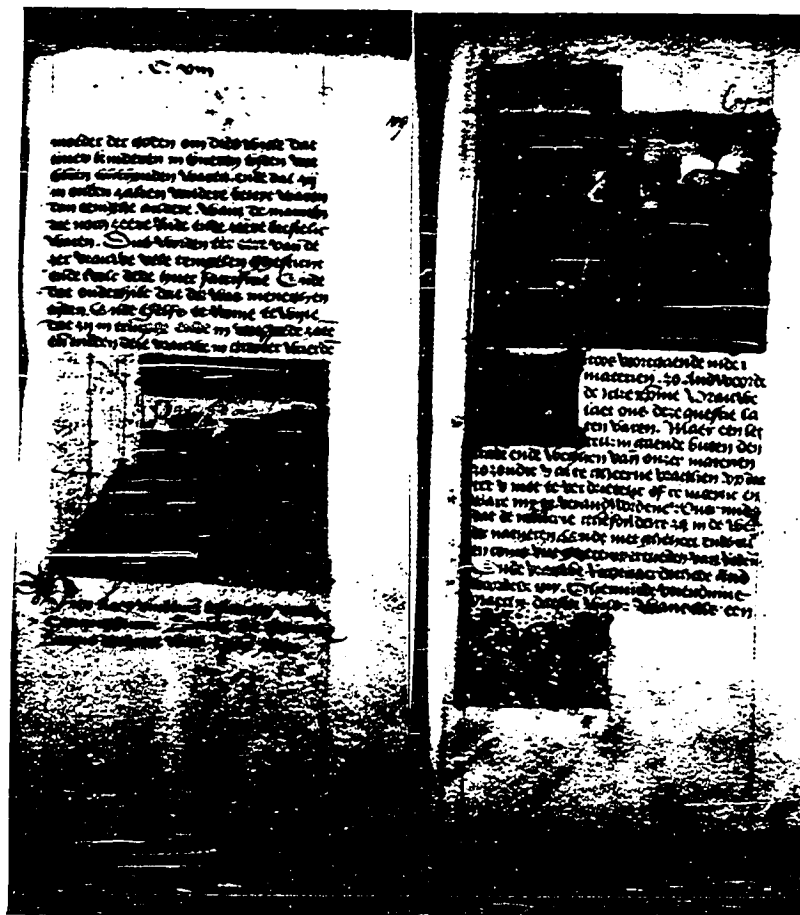
6-50 (left) Arachne Weaving a Tapestry; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 90, c. 1475.

6-51 (right) Unfinished; The Musician Sempronia; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 96.



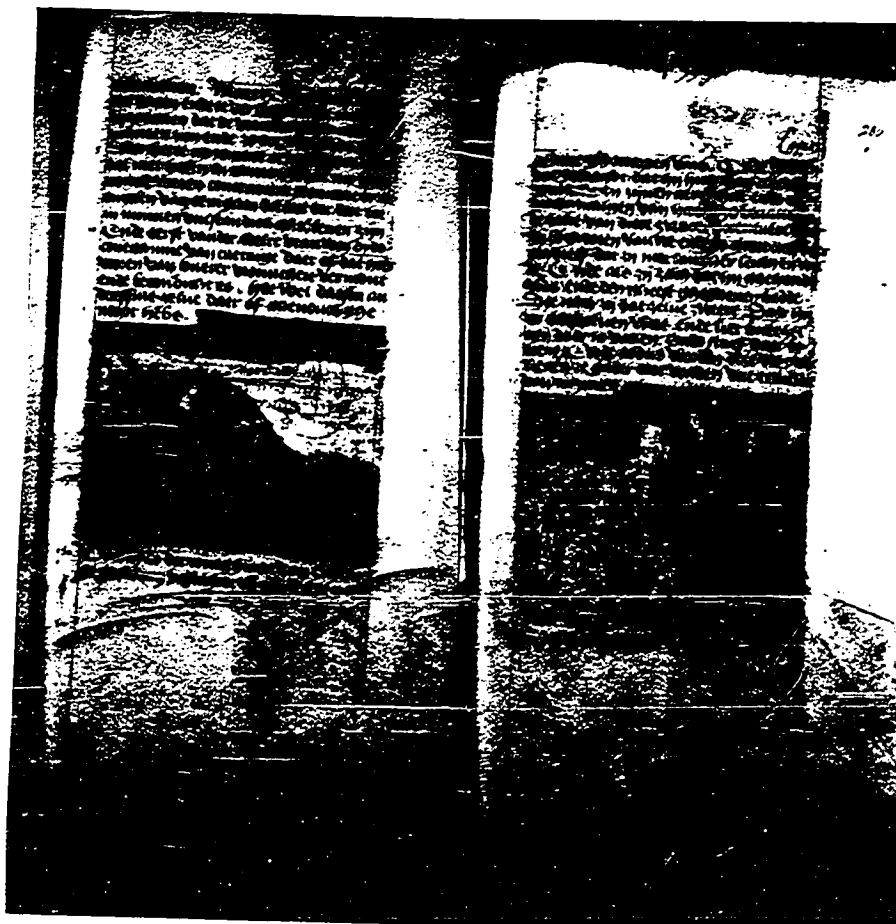
6-52 (left) Unfinished; Virtuous Women Discussed in Proverbs; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 99v, c. 1475.

6-53 (right) Unfinished; Queen Gaia Cirilla; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 101.



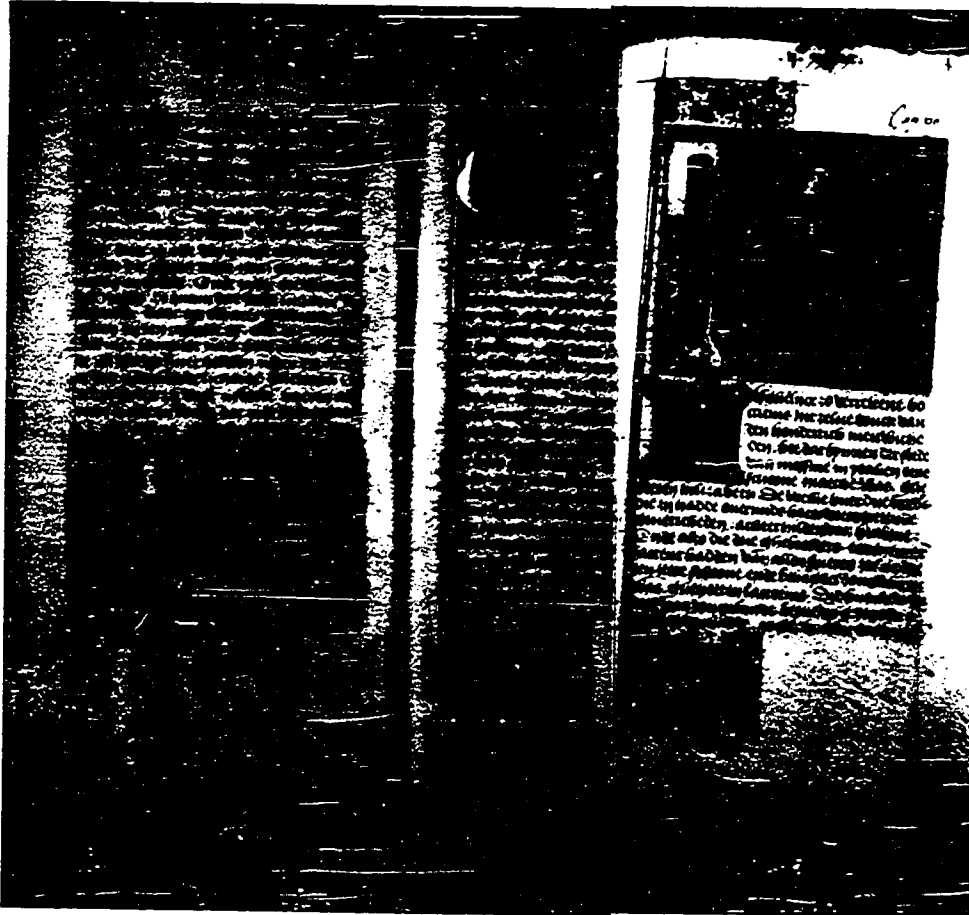
6-54 Unfinished; Queen Opis of Crete or Lavinia; Der Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 109, c. 1475.

6-55 Christine and Rectitude Discuss Women's Faithfulness in Love; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 222.



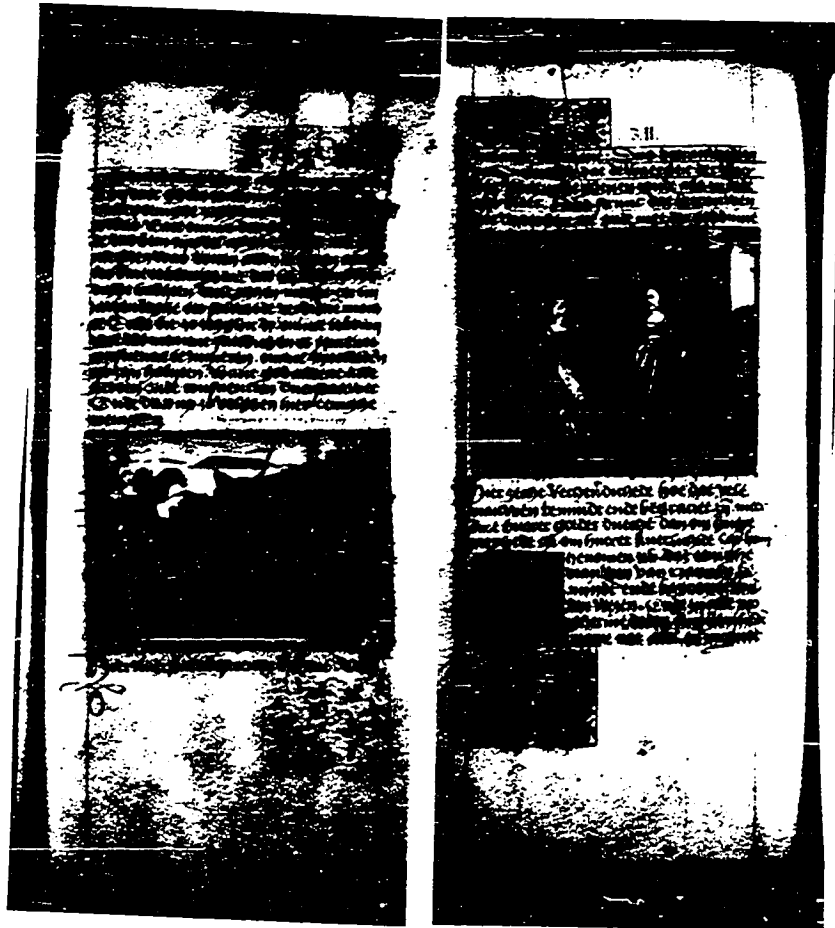
6-56 (left) Unfinished; Dido Deserted by Aeneas; De Lof der Vrouwen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 224, c. 1475.

6-57 (right) Unfinished; Hero and Leander; London, BL Add. 20698, f. 230.



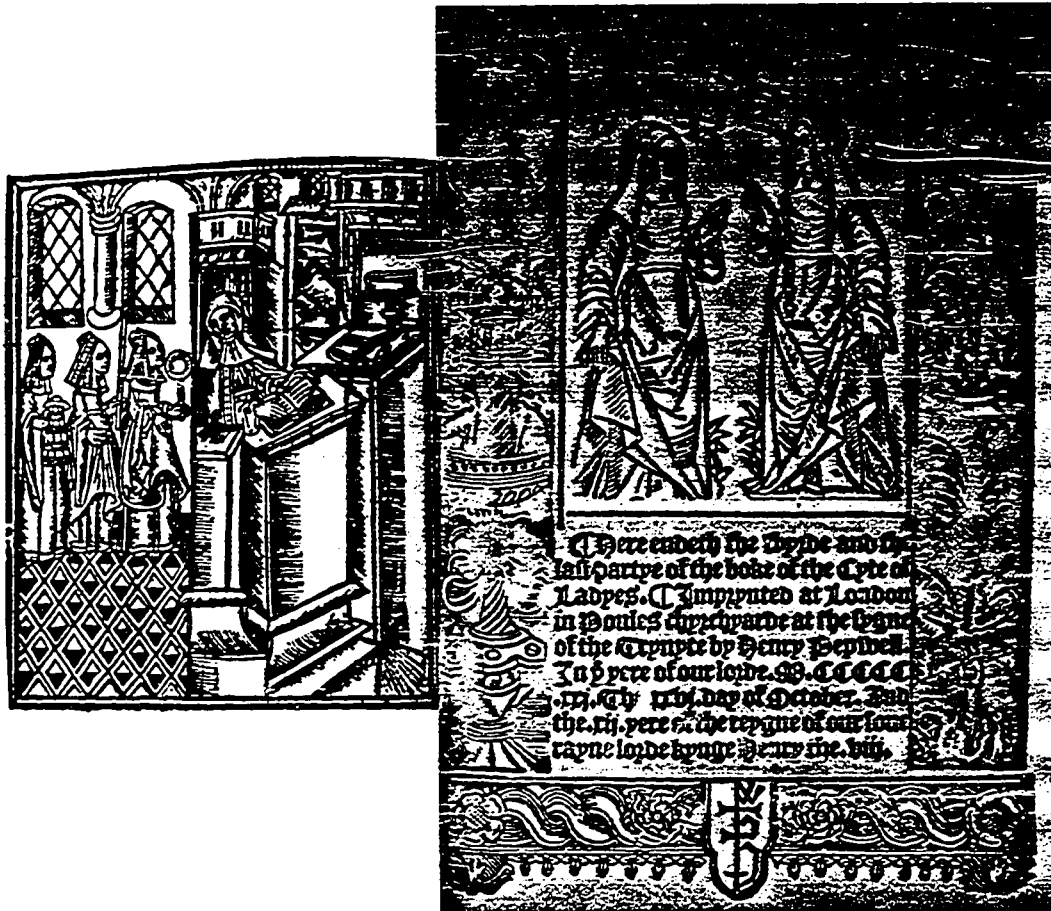
6-58 Ghismonda' Suicide; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL  
Add. 20698, f. 231v, c. 1475.

6-59 Lisabetta and the Basil Plant; London, BL Add. 20698,  
f. 240.



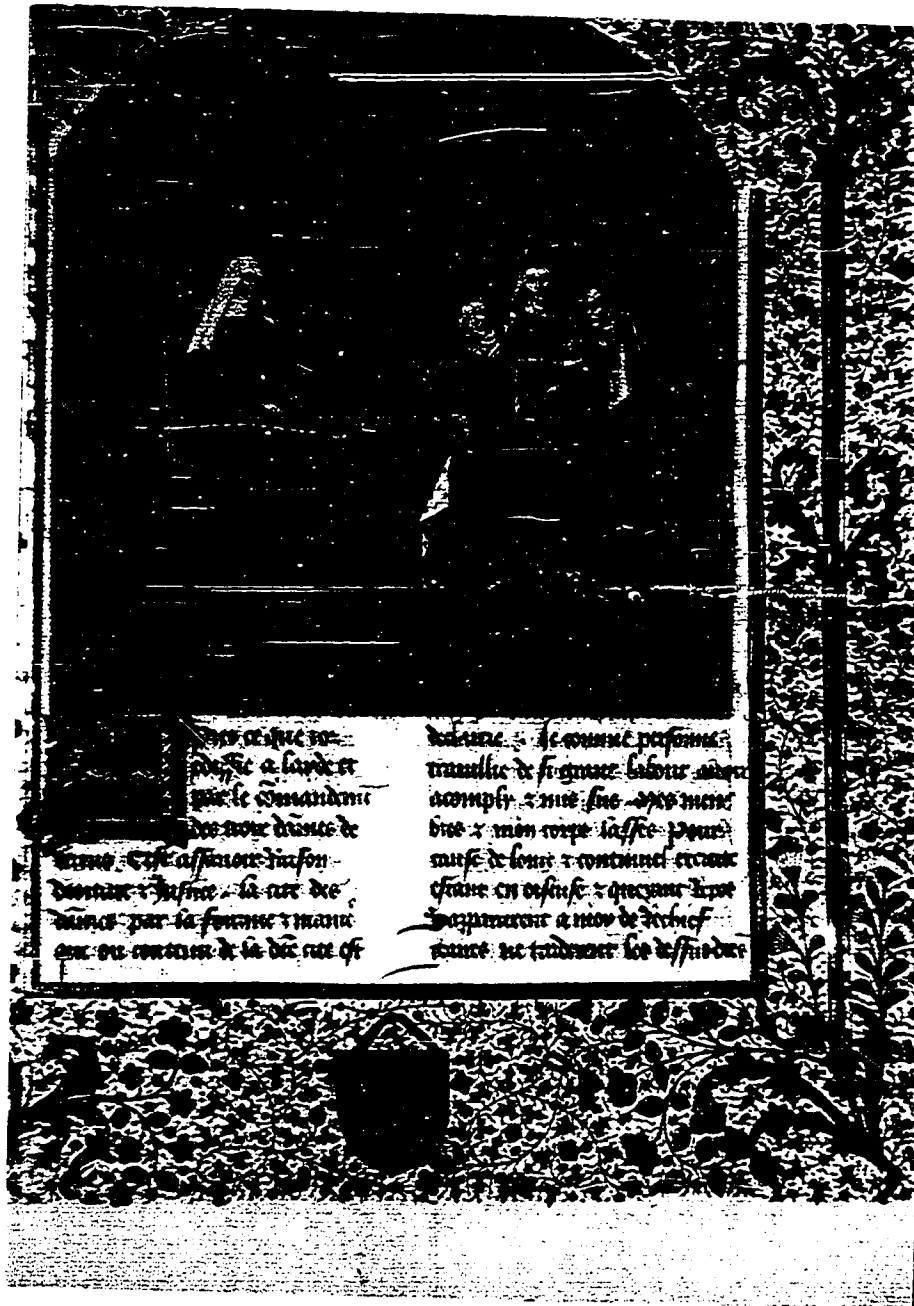
6-60 (left) Claudia Quinta Proves Her Virtue By Pulling Boat to Shore With A Belt; De Lof der Vrowen, London, BL Add. 20698, f. 247, c. 1475.

6-61 (right) Christine and Rectitude Discuss Women Who are Loved for Their Virtue; London, BL Add. 20698, f.248v.



6-62 (left) Reason, Rectitude and Justice appear to Christine; The Boke of the Cytte of Ladyes, 1st woodcut, repeated three times, Pepwell Printed Edition, 1521.

6-63 (right) Christine and Justice Conversing; 2nd woodcut, Pepwell Printed Edition.



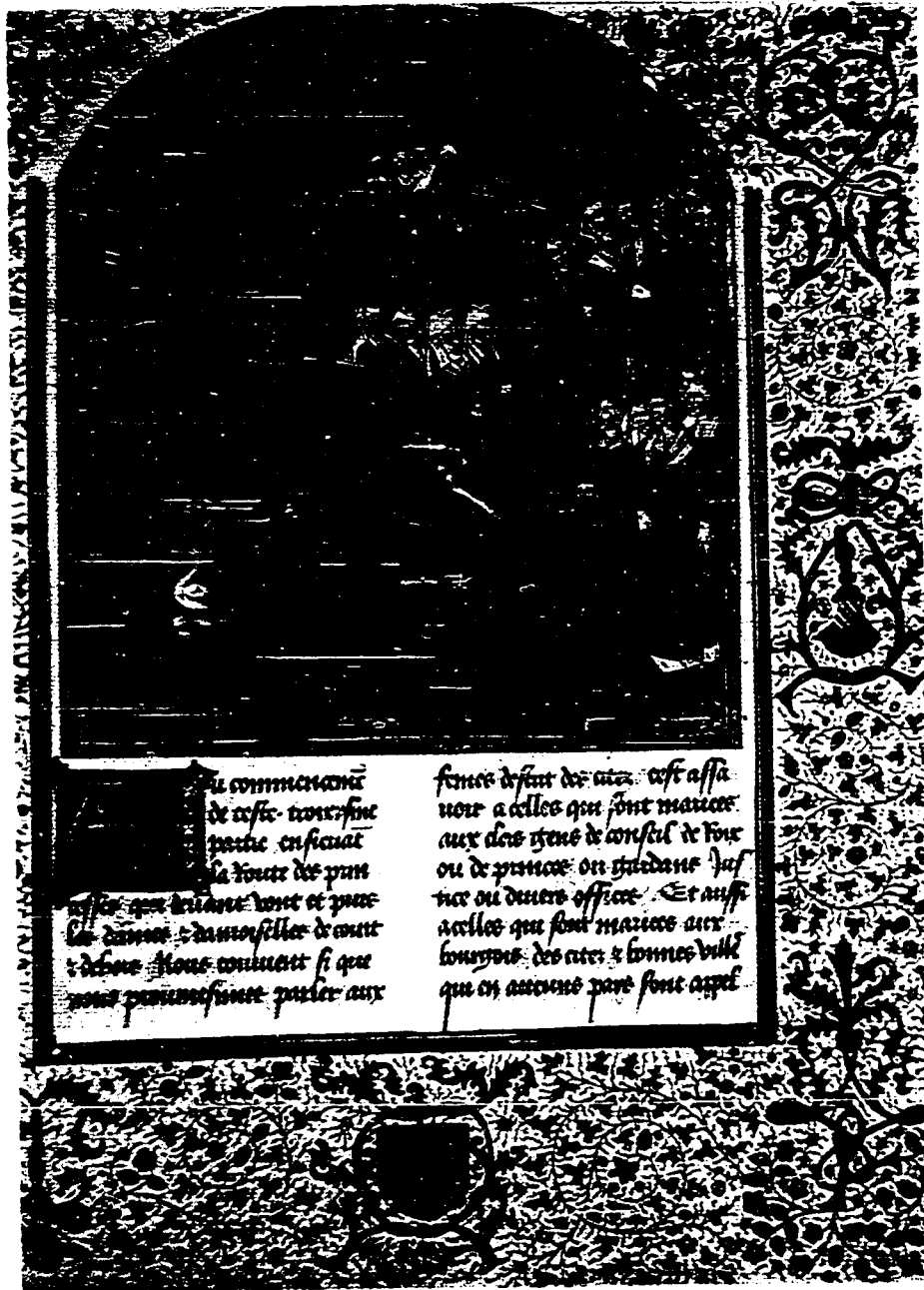
6-64 Christine and the Three Virtues Converse in a Courtyard; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 136, c. 1465.



**E**st ce que nous  
 auons parlé aux  
 doctes pmaesses  
 hautes dames  
 Est assavoir en ce qui touche  
 la doctrine qui est propre tant  
 aux enseignemens de ce q'assiet  
 : tout a la me ce aux meures :

vertueux & bons qui lui sont pro  
 pres & appartient a leur hautes  
 noblesse & leur estat qui de ho  
 neur est couru. Sur toutes  
 autres s'adviser nre leçon  
 doit en avant en cest y partie  
 de la pntz collation aux dames  
 et damoiselles & femmes tant a

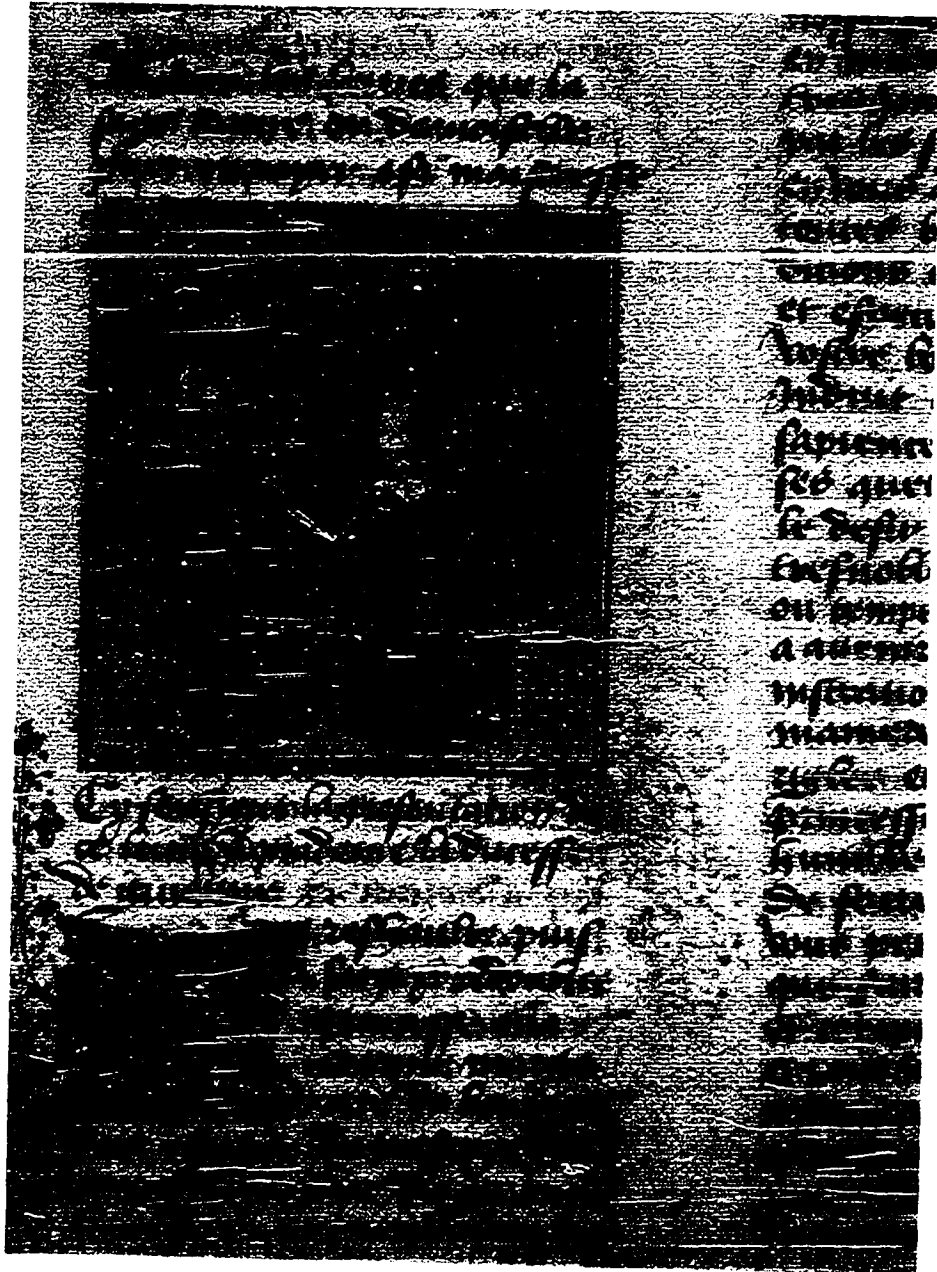
6-65 The Three Virtues and Students outside the City; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 180, c. 1465.



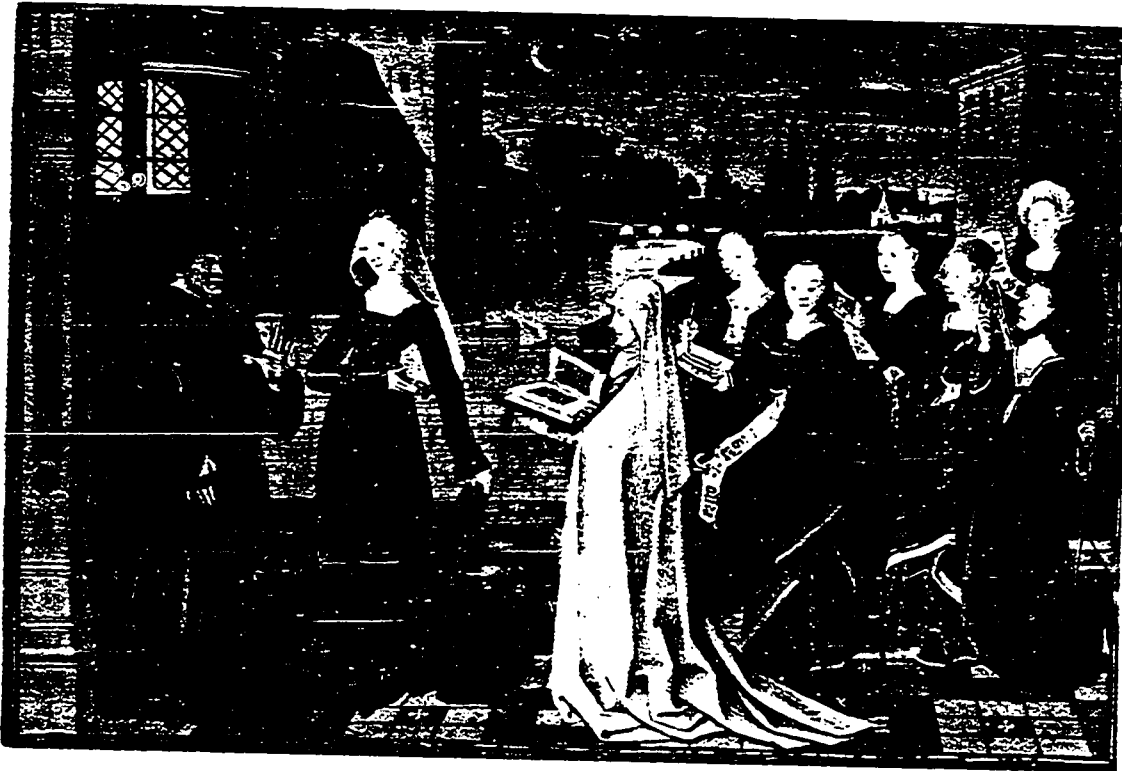
**U** commencement  
 de ceste œuvre fine  
 partie en plusieurs  
 la route des prin  
 cipales que devant vont et par  
 les dames & damoiselles de court  
 & dehors. Nous comment si que  
 nous pourrions parler aux

femmes de fait de vie. cest assa  
 uoir a celles qui sont mariees  
 aux gens de conseil de force  
 ou de prudence ou gardans jus  
 tice ou autres offices. Et aussi  
 a celles qui sont mariees aux  
 bourgeois des cités & bonnes villes  
 qui en aucuns pays sont appel

6-66 Christine and the Three Virtues Dismiss the Classes of the College of Ladies; Le trésor de la cité des dames, Brussels, BR 9235-7, f. 201, c. 1465.



6-67 Christine Presents Her Book to Margaret of Burgundy;  
Le trésor de la cité des dames, Paris, BN MS fr. 1177,  
 f. 114, 1470-1480.



6-68 Philosophy Presenting the Seven Liberal Arts to Boethius; De Consolatione philosophiae, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 222, f. 39, c. 1465, The Coetivy Master.



6-69 Helen of Troy Meets King Priam; The Universal Chronicle of Jehan de Courcy, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 214, f. 84, c. 1470.



6-70 Mary of Burgundy: 1458-1482; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



6-71 The Virgin; Anon., Antwerp School, gilded wood, Mauritshuis, The Hague, c. 1480.

L'epistre

Et pour uenir a l'ordonne les articles  
 de la foy auec prapre sens le quel ne  
 pouuoit profice: bon esprit prendrons  
 pour: Dieu de Dieu de par Dieu le quel est  
 sans tache au me ameur de toute nature  
 et qui chose possible de pechie ne pouuoit  
 estre agreable creator du ciel et de la terre  
 la quelle chose est necessaire a l'esperance  
 et a la foy. Et come dit le premier au  
 de la foy que d'ist monstrent sans  
 pierre. Et ad idem d'um patrum empitote  
 creatorum celi et terre.



Et come dit le premier au  
 de la foy que d'ist monstrent sans  
 pierre. Et ad idem d'um patrum empitote  
 creatorum celi et terre.

Et come dit le premier au  
 de la foy que d'ist monstrent sans  
 pierre. Et ad idem d'um patrum empitote  
 creatorum celi et terre.



6-72 Ceres Planting Seeds, Isis Grafting Trees; L'Epistre Othea, Paris, BN MS fr. 606, f. 13v, c. 1406.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

How are the activities of scholarly, historical, saintly, legendary, allegorical and every-day women visualized in the fifteenth-century? A perusal of the 104 miniatures in the twenty-three illustrated manuscripts of Christine de Pizan's La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames offers an answer: in every conceivable manner. The rigid control Christine exerted in the illustration of these texts as discussed in Chapter Four results in clear, crisp, sturdy well-dressed figures acting out the dramatic action of the dream-poem held in front of an allegorical City as convincingly rendered as any abbreviated theatrical stage-set. In spite of the wealth of fascinating tales to illustrate in these texts, and the interest at this time in illustrating Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus<sup>1</sup>, a source for many of the lives of women reinterpreted in Christine's own La cité, the miniatures produced from 1405-1425 do not explore this exciting possibility. This is not due to any lack of

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<sup>1</sup>This text was translated into French as early as 1401 by Laurent de Premierfait, and an illustrated copy was given to Philip the Bold in 1403 and John, Duke of Berry in 1404. There was no Italian precedent for the production of this text accompanied by miniatures, and by 1415 the Decameron too was fully illustrated in France. See M. Meiss, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and Their Contemporaries, (New York: Braziller, 1974) pp. 283-292 and Boccace en France: De l'humanisme a l'érotisme, (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1975) pp. 53-58.

foresight on the part of Christine, for she had many of her narrative and allegorical tales copiously illustrated in her many other literary works, the most stunning example being Epistre Othéa. Christine had other goals for La cité and Le trésor, namely creative, moral action and divine approval. Visionary meetings, calls to labor, welcoming, lecturing, learning and ceremonial aspects of the text are underscored by the visual images Christine commissioned from La cité des dames Master. The City metaphorically represents, through its brick and stone, the lives of all manner of heroines, scholars and morally commendable women, bound together by the very ink and action of Christine's writings. In these miniatures the focus is always on the author-protagonist, Christine, who becomes a model exemplar, building and greeting secular and saintly worthies to her city of refuge. The decorative elements of the composition are found in the patterned background or tile, and the major figures, Christine and the Virtues, are rarely cluttered with such fashionable frivolities.<sup>2</sup> La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames were not meant to be entertaining literary diversions, or mere exercises in classical and intellectual aptitude, their

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<sup>2</sup>The exceptions to this are found in the miniatures produced by members of La Cité des dames Workshop (figs. 4-8, 4-9, 4-11 to 4-13) or those copying visual models established by this Workshop (fig. 4-15).

purpose is instead quite serious and deeply meaningful to Christine: to instill in womankind a sense of dignity and worth through their history, and once accomplished, to educate women to live up to their newfound past through responsible and virtuous behavior in the present. Another kind of illustrative cycle would undermine this goal, trivializing her purpose to that of mere entertainment on a level with Boccaccio's delightful, though notorious, De Claris Mulieribus.

Miniatures illustrating La cité and Le trésor at mid-century tentatively explore new possibilities in the narrative action between Christine, the three Virtues, and the inhabitants of the City, but never in the exciting adventurous lives of that City's famed inhabitants. Instead we see a growing interest in the courtly life implied by the interaction of Christine herself and such magnificent allegorical creatures. Garments become more costly and ornate; desks become impossible shifting planes of oak with numerous maniacal projections of wood, velvet and gold, top-heavy with colorfully bound manuscripts; rooms are festooned with architectural decorations, starred vaults, enormous credenzas, silver dishes and linens, brightly patterned tiles and windows and doors of every shape and size. The compositional focus of the illustrative cycle moves from the central four characters to all matter of

pattern and color in architecture, jewelry, elaborate headgear, textiles, tiles and dress, losing the clarity established by La cité des dames Master.

Our author, by virtue of her great accomplishments, and the honor bestowed upon her by such celestial creations, takes on the demeanor and costume of a high-born lady, and begins to strike more refined poses as a result. Christine was not immune to the importance of dress in establishing hierarchical levels within the pictures illustrating her texts, for her artists do clothe the Virtues in robes royale, although they are greatly simplified and restrained in their execution. One need only examine the choking collars, rich brocades hung with gold bells and bezants, multi-colored, enormous chaperons and extravagant costumes worn by the elongated, mannered figures painted by the Limbourg brothers, contemporaries of La cité des dames Master, to realize how plain and cursory are the costume's of Christine's Virtues. (fig. 4-16)

Other workshops were available to Christine for the illumination of her La cité and Le trésor, and yet she chose an artist who would give her sturdy, vivacious yet sensibly dressed figures whose social status is easily determined through clearly delineated items of dress. This restraint is swept away immediately once Christine is no longer alive to supervise and dictate the composition and

content of her miniatures. The emphasis on the beautifully dressed figure not only enhances but more often than not overwhelms the picture, evidenced by the growing crowds of aristocratic ladies posed artfully within or in front of the City walls at the beginning of Chapter Two in La cité, or within the lecture halls of Le trésor. In Mus. Condé, Chantilly MS 856, Christine and the Virtues are glaringly omitted, eliminated in order to allow the artist to portray a plethora of pastel ladies cavorting happily in a castle courtyard. (fig. 5-4) In Munich, Cod. Gall. 8 and The Hague, KB MS 131 C 26, the dramatic action, though still adhered to, is overwhelmed by miniatures crowded with animated, bustling, well dressed women, eager to join the illustrious ranks of those women of history celebrated in the pages of La cité, if not through the long course of instruction offered at the college of ladies in Le trésor, at least by dressing the part. (figs. 5-3, 5-15 & 5-16) Finally, in Beinecke MS 427, it is the beautiful ladies, though dutifully listening to the lectures of Dame Prudence and the Virtues, who are really the sole subject of the miniatures. (figs. 5-19 to 5-21) Expanding the space allotted to this scene by the cité des dames master from one-half of the miniature (fig. 4-14) to three, the exquisite study of fashionable refinement and dress evidenced on these pages speaks of yet another aspect of

Christine's educational and behavioral treatise now being praised in courtly and wealthy merchant-class circles; as a manual defining courteous behavior. All of these visual possibilities, hinted at in The Hague KB 131 C 26, and elucidated provocatively in Brussels BR 9551-2, bloom magnificently in the Beinecke miniatures painted by the talented Master of the Amiens 200, working under the soft and splendid spell of Simon Marmion. In the wooden figures of Paris BN MS fr. 609 there is a heartening innovation in the final two miniatures; these scenes show Christine conversing with one of the Virtues. This modest development has rich implications, for it underscores the scholarly pursuits of study, discussion and analysis, so advocated in La cité, and at long last illustrated. (figs. 5-8 & 5-9)

Ironically, it is in the last period of production at the end of the century, at a great distance in time and geography from Christine and her original conception, that we find programs of illustration for La cité and Le trésor uprooting fresh and invigorating possibilities of illustration from her texts, beyond her original intent perhaps, but in harmony with her spirited theme of honoring women from all times and places for their abilities and achievements. The discussion scenes first evidenced in Paris BN MS fr. 609 are included in the majority of

manuscripts illustrating La cité des dames from this period. (figs. 6-5, 6-6, 6-17 to 6-20, 6-29 to 6-32, 6-63) The expanded miniature cycles found in Brussels BR 9235-7, Geneva BP & U, MS fr. 180 and most exhaustively in London BL Add. 20698, aptly convey the excitement of new and fresh possibilities discovered by succeeding generations of artists and patrons in Christine's words, enabling them to breath vigor and freshness into an over-stylized and exhausted visual tradition. The focus of the composition turns to the women in the text, or to Christine herself, who in Brussels BR 9235-7 is even garbed sensibly and soberly once again. (fig. 6-1) The tales of Amazon history are painted, the brave deeds of ancient queens, the activities of poets, scholars and scientists are sketched and drawn; agricultural, technological and domestic inventiveness is applauded in a variety of lively scenes; faithful lovers and strong mothers are pictured in miniatures of alluring charm and skill. And yet, although such ambitious cycles, especially in the case of London BL Add. 20698, are creative and admirable, often anecdotal and narrative scenes are favored over ennobling ones. Why does the artist choose to paint the embarkation of Hercules and Theseus to Amazonia on folio 47v instead of the valiant battles of Menalippe and Hippolyta? (fig. 6-38) Why not show Camilla leading her troops to victory rather than

portraying her prettily passive as she is carried to safety by her naked father in a little bark boat? (fig. 6-41) Why does the great scholar Cornificia look so unhappy? (fig. 6-43) Why is the Amazon queen crowned by two men? (fig. 6-36) Although the many artists and workshops painting the miniatures of London BL Add. 20698 successfully, stylishly and inventively portray the tales of women described within La cité, their objective is to describe the fascinating action of these attractive ladies, not necessarily to glorify and honor them. Christine's overall objective often disappears in this dazzling display, and falls closer to Boccaccio's aim of entertainment than Christine's aim to encourage and ennoble through example.

Of all the manuscripts illustrating Christine's La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames, the nine miniatures of Brussels, BR.9235-7 honor the spirit of her purpose and prose better than all others. (fig. 6-1 to 6-6, and 6-64 to 6-66) First of all it combines the companion texts of enlightenment and instruction within a single volume, illustrated by a single workshop. Although far more detailed than the miniatures of La cité des dames Master, in accordance with the Flemish meticulous interest in construction techniques, architectural detailing and domestic furnishings, these elements not only are not at all intrusive, but most importantly they do not become the

actual subject of the pictures. The artist's convincing perspectival compositions make rational and orderly each scene, so that the main action is given visual prominence, and once observed, then the eye can wander about enjoying beautiful brocade patterns, lovely swans, rippling water and the atmospheric sky. Christine is dressed simply, and the magnificent costumes of the Virtues are only ceremonial and are adhered to with some consistency throughout the nine miniatures. Dress is still used as a means of establishing social rank, again in accordance with Christine's views, and the final folio portrays this beautifully, with all the various classes of ladies embarking for home in their clearly delineated groups once the lectures of the "Feminine College" have been dismissed. (fig. 6-66) The victory of the two Amazon warriors is emphasized and elaborated on folio 24v, and their capture relegated to the background, in exact accordance with the space Christine gives the various aspects of the tale with her words. The exquisite, inventive and well-painted miniatures of Brussels BR 9235-7 are suffused with the same spirit of joy, harmony, pride and cooperation found throughout the pages of La cité des dames and Le trésor de la cité des dames, and I will venture that Christine would be quite pleased with the result.

And now I join wholeheartedly with Reason, Rectitude and Justice in their final comments to the author by saying:

We recommend you to God, Christine, dear friend.  
And so we leave our work.

The end and conclusion of this book.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 180.

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## APPENDIX ONE

### GLOSSARY

**BAGPIPE SLEEVES:** Long, large puffed sleeves gathered at the wrist.

**BEZANTS:** Wafer-thin ornaments made of silver and gold sewn onto houppelandes and cotehardies.

**BOMBARD SLEEVES:** Also called cannon sleeves, referring to the trumpet shape sleeve with the wide, hanging opening at the wrist popular in the late gothic period.

**BOURRELET:** Padded rolls used to make women's headdresses in France, also called an escoffion, taking a wide variety of shapes and forms. Primarily it a stuffed circular roll worn on the crown of the head, with or without a cap.

**BANNER OR BUTTERFLY HEADDRESS:** A variation of the henin worn in Northern France, Burgundy and the Low Countries first appearing in the 1450's, and worn well into the sixteenth-century in some regions. It consisted of a cap like an inverted flower pot made of costly fabric often richly embroidered, set at an angle on the head. The arrangement of the transparent veil gives the headdress its name. The veils were sometimes folded and pinned in the center, or more commonly draped over two to three fine wires radiating from the center front of the cap. Although first appearing in the 1450's, the elaborate versions of this headdress are seen most often in the 1470's and 1480's. A black band of material is often added as in the original henin, worn without the wires and veils.

**CAUL:** Women's jewelled net head-coverings worn in the fourteenth and fifteenth-centuries, usually cylindrical in shape in the fourteenth-century, becoming squarish or box shaped with time.

**CHEMISE:** A camica in Italian, or gown, made of silk, linen or cotton worn primarily as an undergarment, visible at the neck, wrists and through slashes of the outer-garment. The cut of the garment varies from men's to women's garments.

**CLOAK:** Cloaks or mantles were worn as protective covering by men and women, and were often attached to hood. They are also called mantles. The fur lining of a cloak as a custom reserved for the nobility, regulated by sumptuary laws which forbade women of the middle classes to imitate the nobility in spite of their wealth.

**COTEHARDIE:** A tightly fitted garment made of one or two pieces, worn under a more formal outer garment such as a houppelande or a surcoat, or it may be worn alone. It was worn of varying length for men, often scandalously short, but it was always long when worn by women, but often scandalously low-cut. In fact, it is characterized by a low scoop neck and a tight fitted bodice. It is called a kirtle in England, and a gamurra or camora in Italy.

**DAMASK:** A form of satin weave using free-floating threads, alternating the floating threads along the length of the textile and across its width. The different ways in which the light travels along the floating thread creates the impression of a fabric made from two tones of the one color, when in fact it is normally made from threads of one tone and color.

**DAGGING:** A series of slashes on the edge of a garment, or a piece of slashed cloth applied to a garment.

**DRESS:** The total arrangement of all outwardly detectible modifications of the body, and all material objects added to it.

**ELL:** A measurement of length approximately equal to a yard, but varying in length from country to country.

**ERMINE:** The winter coat of a member of the weasel family, completely white in the winter except for the black tip of the tail. In theory its use was limited to the royalty, but members of the aristocracy also wore it, or imitations, which could be obtained by using scraps of black lambskin to mimic the black ermine tail.

**ESCHARNES:** Gold dagged streamers hung over houppelandes and cotehardies.

**FASHION:** Both a form and product of human behavior widely accepted for a limited time, replaceable by another fashion that is an acceptable substitute for it. In dress the changes in fashion begin to accelerate in the fourteenth-century, inciting comment by theologians and secular writers, including Christine de Pizan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Christine, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, pp. 130-135, 145-149.

**FILLET:** Stiffened band of linen or silk or metal varying from one inch to four inches worn around the head. It was worn by young girls over a short veil and flowing or braided hair.

**GORGET:** A silk or linen veil covering neck, and often the chin, which is often pleated.

**HANGING SLEEVES:** Sleeves of an over-gown left hanging or put on over other sleeves.

**HEART-SHAPED OR SPLIT-LOAF HEADDRESS:** A combination of the horned headdress and the turban. With time the horned formation became less wide and the side pieces, called templars, moved from a horizontal to vertical position, thus becoming heart shaped in the 1440's. As a rule they were formed of rich fabrics and jewels, encased in lightweight gold mesh, decorated with needlework and jewels. Sometimes they became encased in heavy goldsmith's works set with precious stones worn for ceremonial occasions. They were regarded as heirlooms by women of the period, who often mentioned them in their wills.<sup>2</sup>

**HENIN:** A cone or steeple shaped headdress made of rich fabric stiffened with wire or padding, placed on the head at an angle of about 40 degrees. It was covered by veils and was popular in France and Flanders making its first appearing in the 1430's, continuing to be worn throughout the fifteenth-century. It was usually cone shaped in France, and rose to great heights, blunt or squared at the end in Flanders. The hair was rarely visible when it was worn, but often a dark loop called a "frontlet" to ease adjustment of the larger varieties can be detected on the wearers forehead. The extremely long veils are seen after 1460. About 1470 a broad band of black material was attached to the base of the henin across the front from side to side of the head, with the ends hanging down to shoulder level.

**HOODS:** Usually confined to members of the middle and lower classes, worn by the nobility only while traveling to protect the head. Hoods could be worn open, or tied or buttoned at the chin. They often ended in a tubular point called a liripipe, sometimes several feet in length.

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<sup>2</sup>de Courtais, Women's Headdress and Hairstyles London: 1973) p. 32.

**HORNED HEADDRESS:** An arrangement of veils over a wire frameworks of padded caul, one on each side of the head, reaching extremely large proportions in the fifteenth-century causing them to resemble horns.

**HOUPELANDE:** A voluminous over-gown of varying length for men, always long for women, requiring the use of a large quantity of fabric. It was fashionable in every part of Europe from 1380-1420. It was often heavily embroidered, and worn with a wide variety of collars and sleeves depending on the date. The wearing of the houppelande always indicates wealth, if not status.

**LIRIPIPE:** A long tail ending from a hood worn in the fourteenth to fifteenth-centuries, usually by the lower classes in the fifteenth-century.

**MINIVER:** Fur of the grey squirrel, arranged in rows with the white of the belly forming a "shield". This fur was also reserved for the nobility for it took so many to line a mantle. In 1406 Princess Philippa had a gown made from two cloths of gold, lined with 1300 miniver skins.

**PIECE:** French term for the small piece of cloth worn across the chest for warmth or modesty, especially after 1450 when the robes of both sexes were worn low and open at the front. Also called a tassel.

**PLASTRON:** A central front panel of a woman's sideless gown, or cyclas, which can be made of fur, and is often decorated with a vertical row of buttons. It is part of the ceremonial robes royal.

**POINTS:** Ties or lacings used to connect or close sleeves, bodices and stockings to other garments.

**POULAINES:** French term for pointed shoes worn from the mid- fourteenth-century, forbidden at the Synod of Angers in 1365, and by King Charles V in 1366, for they made it difficult to kneel during mass. Their derivatives were worn throughout the fifteenth-century in northern Europe.

**ROBE:** Can refer to a suit of clothes for men or women, but after 1430 generally refers to a sleeved outer gown.

**RETICULATED HEADDRESS:** From the latin, reticulum, for net. A headdress, like a caul, formed of gold wire, and later metal work frames covered with jewels taking a variety of shapes, horned or turban like, through-out the fifteenth-century.

**ROBES ROYALE:** The name given to a set of garments worn by the royal family and the aristocracy on formal occasions, It incorporates many elements of dress "frozen" from the fourteenth-century. The female robes royal generally consists of a cloak, an open or sideless gown with plastron, worn over a cotehardie.

**SLASHES:** Cuts in garments showing undergarments, fifteenth to the seventeenth-centuries.

**SURCOAT:** An over-gown resembling a jumper with large armholes, worn over a cotehardie, and often decorated with a plastron. Also called a cyclas.

**TURBANS:** A headdress of Turkish inspiration made of padded rolls of silk or velvet decorated with pearls and jewels, often with a veil draped over the top, swathed round the chin. Although it makes an appearance in the early fifteenth-century, it did not become popular until the middle of the century, reaching its peak of fashion after the capture of Constantinople in 1453.

**WIMPLE:** A fabric covering the neck and chin worn by married women, widows, and later nuns. It is worn in conjunction with a veil or kerchief over the head.

APPENDIX TWO

ABBREVIATIONS OF THE NAMES OF LIBRARIES

Beinecke Library: New Haven, Yale Univ., The Beinecke Library

Boston, PL: Boston, Public Library

Brussels, BR: Brussels, Bibliothèque royale Albert 1er

Chantilly, Mus. Condé: Chantilly, Musée Condé

Geneva, BP & U: Geneva, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire

The Hague, KB: The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek

London. BL: London, British Library

Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl.: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Paris, Bibl. Ars.: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal

Paris, BN: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

Vienna, ONB: Vienna, Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek

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| President of the Art History Graduate Students       | 1984      |
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- "The Très Riches Heures: the Book of Hours in the Fifteenth Century" Guest Lecture, Professor Moore, Western Washington State University, Bellingham, August 3, 1988
- "Quattrocento Painting: Masaccio, Masolino, Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, Uccello, Veneziano & Castagno," Guest Lecturer, Renaissance Art, Professor Morrogh, University of Washington, April 13, 14 & 15 1988
- "Duccio and the Art of Sienna in the Fourteenth Century" Guest Lecturer, Early Renaissance Art, Professor Snow-Smith, University of Washington, October 11, 1986
- "Sleeper, Dreamer, Visionary: The Vacatio in Medieval Art" Art History Colloquium. University of Washington, May 10, 1986

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- "From Utopia to Reality: An Examination of two Fifteenth Century Manuscript Illuminations of Christine de Pizan's The Treasure of the City of Ladies," Art History Colloquium, University of Washington, February 21, 1986
- "The International Gothic Style: The Secularization of Religious Art," Guest Lecturer, Renaissance Art Course, Professor Snow-Smith, University of Washington, November 6, 1985
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Graduate Internship, Henry Art Gallery 1983-1985  
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 Research, photograph, document and catalog  
 historic textile and costume collection.  
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Library Assistant, Art Library 1984  
 University of Washington, Seattle Washington  
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 collections in Europe and the United States.

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 Senior Norwalk Action Program. City of Norwalk,  
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Implemented social service programs for older persons with regard to mental and physical well-being and financial security. Advocate for older persons in matters of social security, state aid and consumer issues. Coordinated with other agencies to provide home delivered meals, housing and health services for the home bound. Developed and implemented health clinics at the senior center. Responsible for grant proposals, design and layout of brochures and newsletters for the center. Wrote press releases, coordinated outreach programs and spoke to community organizations, colleges and universities with regard to the field of gerontology. Supervised staff/volunteers.

Docent, La Habra Children's Museum 1978-1981  
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Designed and implemented art workshops for children. Lead tours through facilities. Assisted with exhibit installation.

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