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BLUMENFELD-KOSINSKI (Renate), « Two Travelers: Didactic Trajectories in two late medieval Dream Visions. Philippe de Mézières' *Songe du viel pelerin* and Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre du chemin de lonc estude* »

RÉSUMÉ – Cette analyse porte sur le rapport entre le déplacement géographique et les leçons morales et politiques qu'on peut tirer des voyages allégoriques dans *Le Songe du viel pelerin* (1386-1389) de Philippe de Mézières et *Le Livre du chemin de lonc estude* de Christine de Pizan (1402). Tandis que Christine traverse le monde en touriste et ne nous donne des leçons politiques qu'au moment où elle et son guide arrivent aux cieux, le pèlerin dans le *Songe* nous offre des leçons à chaque arrêt sur terre.

ABSTRACT – The relationship between geographical displacement and the dispensing of politico-moral lessons is at the center of this analysis Philippe de Mézières' *Songe du viel pelerin* (1386-1389) and Christine de Pizan's *Livre du chemin de lonc estude* (1402). While Christine in the *Chemin* travels through the world as a tourist and postpones her political didacticism until she and her guide reach the heavens, the pilgrim in the *Songe* uses each geographical location for explicit political discussions.

TWO TRAVELERS:
DIDACTIC TRAJECTORIES
IN TWO LATE MEDIEVAL DREAM VISIONS

Philippe de Mézières' *Songe du viel pelerin*
and Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre du chemin de lonc estude*

MEDIEVAL TRAVEL, ALLEGORY, AND DIDACTISISM

Travel educates, it widens our horizons, makes us meet other cultures and their customs, and allows us to bring home important lessons that we can apply at home. Medieval authors often combined the idea of travel with that of allegory by having their characters travel through allegorical landscapes and meet allegorical personages. Most of these kinds of journeys occurred in dream visions that allowed for almost limitless thematic expansion. By the late fourteenth century allegorical dream visions had become commonplace – certainly after Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (ca. 1270) this genre had been opened up to just about every imaginable topic and it had begun to intersect with another important genre: the mirror of princes. The mirror is not really a fixed genre or, as Frédérique Lachaud and Lydwine Scordia state in the introduction to the excellent volume *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, “ses bornes sont difficilement à fixer, car les miroirs sont souvent apparentés à certains couplages...”¹. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, as Gisela Naegle points out, Claude de Seyssel in his *La monarchie de France* lists his many predecessors who wrote mirrors for princes and specifies that some, such as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas or Gilles de Rome, wrote actual

1 *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, ed. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia, Mont-Saint-Aignan, Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2007, “Introduction”, p. 13.

“traités”, while others, for example Cicero, wrote orations or panegyrics². Indeed, a mirror for princes can be “hidden” in many different types of texts, as the essays in that volume show: romances, hagiography, even music. It can also be part of a biography or an epic account of a crusade, as Daisy Delogu has demonstrated in *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*³. The affinity I would like to explore in this article is that between the mirror for princes – or more generally the didactic political treatise – and travel or displacement: space and motion from place to place. “Place”, according to Sarah Kay in *The Place of Thought* is a “prop of didacticism”. By placing “thought within a recognizable location”, Kay argues, authors hoped to build consensus regarding their didactic goals⁴. Authors can employ different kinds of places in their didactic enterprises: real or imagined landscapes like gardens or mountainous regions, or fantastic constructions and mythological *loci* that would bring with them a whole host of traditional meanings.

Another important element in this type of didacticism is the journey or voyage from place to place. Among countless examples the most important and influential is probably Dante’s *Divine Comedy* that features Dante the pilgrim traveling through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Guided by Virgil and Beatrice, the pilgrim traverses a historical and moral universe of the utmost complexity. Geography, mythology, and the imaginary intermingle in these kinds of texts in order to create profound lessons in the realms of morality, theology, or political philosophy. The two works at the center of this brief study, Philippe de Mézières’s *Songe du viel pelerin* (1386-1389) and Christine de Pizan’s *Livre du chemin de lonc estude* (1402-1403)⁵, both feature extensive travel (by

2 G. Naegle, “À la recherche d’une parenté difficile: miroirs des princes et écrits de réforme (France médiévale et Empire)”, *Le Prince au miroir*, p. 259-276, at p. 269.

3 See for example D. Fiala, “Le prince au miroir des musiques politiques des XIV^e et XV^e siècles”, *Le Prince au miroir*, p. 319-350; D. Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign: The Rise of the French Vernacular Royal Biography*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2008.

4 S. Kay, *The Place of Thought: The Complexity of One in Late Medieval French Didactic Poetry*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, p. 3.

5 Philippe de Mézières, *Songe du vieux pèlerin*, trans. J. Blanchard, Paris, Pocket, 2008 and *Songe du viel pelerin*, ed. J. Blanchard, 2 vols., Geneva, Droz, 2015 (quotes come from the 2015 edition); Christine de Pizan, *Le Chemin de longue étude*, ed. and trans. A. Tarnowski, Paris, LGF, 2000. By referring to the text as *Lonc estude* in all three essays of this dossier, we follow the usage observed by Christine de Pizan in every presentation copy of this text that she produced in her own scriptorium: see G. Ouy, C. Reno, I. Villela-Petit, *Album Christine de Pizan*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2012, p. 379-412.

air and by foot), and both the *Songe* and the *Chemin* exploit that travel for their didactic purposes. Both texts use their protagonists' trips as a kind of prelude to what follows: explicit political lessons, presented at different types of "courts", that are meant to solve the world's and specifically France's problems. But they do so in quite different ways: while Philippe's alter ego and his cortege engage the local population and its rulers in political discussions in the many places they visit on earth, Christine's traveler persona remains a wide-eyed tourist during her earthly travels; she engages with her world's political situation only after she and her guide, the Cumean Sibyl, reach the heavens and witness a lengthy and ideologically charged political debate.

PHILIPPE DE MÉZIÈRES' TRAVELS
IN THE *SONGE DU VIEL PELERIN*

Philippe de Mézières was, until he settled in Paris in the 1370s, an indefatigable traveler. From the Holy Land to Cyprus (where he was chancellor in the 1360s), from Venice and Avignon to Prussia he criss-crossed Europe many times before settling in Paris and finally, after the death of king Charles V, whom he had served as counselor, retiring to the convent of the Celestins, though never becoming a religious⁶. But nothing in Philippe's real life can equal the almost obsessive traveling that goes on in the first part of his vast didactic work, *Le Songe du viel pelerin*. In this allegorical dream vision Philippe portrays himself as an old pilgrim, living with the Celestins in Paris. One morning after matins he finds himself in their chapel and falls into a half-waking, half-sleeping state during which a splendid spiritual lady, accompanied by two other ladies, miraculously enters the chapel. She is Divine Providence who rebaptizes the pilgrim as Ardent Desir and orders him: "lieve toy de la poudre de penitence et de la fosse de desesperacion⁷." He should depart, together with his sister Bonne Esperance to find Reine Verite so that

6 For his biography see N. Jorga, *Philippe de Mézières, 1327-1405, et la croisade au XIV^e siècle*, Paris, Bouillon, 1896.

7 *Songe*, vol. 1, p. 18.

they can go on a journey together; its goal is to find a country that is worthy of receiving the forge of the “bons besants”, the good coins that denote a country that is morally and spiritually pure⁸. This trip around the world thus begins in the chapel of the Celestins, an enclosed space that can be opened up through the dream: Philippe, while remaining the dreaming subject in the chapel, can at the same time, through the device of the allegorical dream vision, enter the vast expanse of the “real world.” As Philippe Maupeu has shown in his comprehensive study *Pèlerins de Vie Humaine*, Philippe de Mézières “opère une projection de l’espace eschatologique sur le plan terrestre.” The chapel provides “le lieu d’intersection des deux espaces⁹.”

Philippe’s alter ego, the Old Pilgrim, is represented collectively by the characters Ardent Desir and his sister Bonne Esperance, both of them equipped with wings that designate their status as divinely ordained messengers and that will also allow them the air travel necessary for the accomplishment of the world journey that awaits them. They first seek out a hermit in the Egyptian desert who directs them to a place located a 30-day journey to the East. Sometimes walking, sometimes flying, they arrive at this mountainous place and find it surrounded by a frightening stream so wide and wild that they cannot cross it and finally decide to fly over it. Could this be the terrestrial paradise¹⁰? The surrounding stream, the virtuous nature of the inhabitants, as well as the presence of numerous allegorical ladies representing the virtues suggest that it could in fact be the terrestrial paradise, as described for example by Pierre d’Ailly in his *Imago mundi*¹¹. Medieval maps, oriented with the East on top, often showed Eden as a mountainous region at the top spot, with the four rivers of Paradise extending downward¹². The fact that

8 On the “bons besants” see A. Tarnowski, “The Consolations of Writing Allegory: Philippe de Mézières’ *Le songe du viel pelerin*”, *The Age of Philippe de Mézières: Piety and Politics in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski and K. Petkov, Leiden, Brill, 2012, p. 237-254.

9 P. Maupeu, *Pèlerins de Vie Humaine. Autobiographie et allégorie narrative, de Guillaume de Deguileville à Octovien de Saint-Gelais*, Paris, Champion, 2009, p. 357 and 361.

10 On the ambiguous nature of this place see Maupeu, *Pèlerins*, p. 362-364.

11 See D.M. Bell, *Étude sur le Songe du Vieil Pelerin de Philippe de Mézières (1327-1405). D’après le manuscrit français 22542. Document historique et moral du règne de Charles VI*, Geneva, Droz, 1955, p. 24.

12 See chap. 2 (The Shape of the World) in S. Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2009. Figure 6 shows a

the place our travelers reach by air is located on a mountain in the East thus makes us think of the terrestrial paradise, even though the number of streams is three instead of four. However, in medieval culture this Eden was a forbidden place, inaccessible for humans. Jean Mandeville in the famous fourteenth-century account of his (imaginary) travels, for example, makes it clear that no mortal man can ever set foot in this terrestrial paradise¹³. Thus Philippe, while keeping the exact nature of this place ambiguous, seems to imply that our travelers' allegorical nature exempts them from the interdiction against entering the earthly paradise, while at the same time suggesting that their mission carries a special divinely ordained authority that is linked to their privileged entry into this originary space.

Setting out in the company of the Riche Precieuse, that is, Reine Verite, and a cortege of allegorical ladies representing a whole host of virtues, our travelers begin to walk down the mountain. The initial section of the trip thus involves a descent (though not into Hell, as in Dante's *Divine Comedy*): the frontispiece of book 1 in manuscript Bibliothèque nationale de France fr. 22542 (fol. 31^r) shows a winding path on which Ardent Desir, Bonne Esperance, and the queen accompanied by her cortege proceed downhill¹⁴. The experiences to be gathered on their journey are thus represented as being of this earth, within the realm of the worldly. But this descent then becomes the starting point for an aerial trip (again reminiscent of Dante, specifically *Paradiso* 27) over and around what was known of the world in the late fourteenth century. This trip even outdoes Marco Polo's real or Mandeville's imagined travels but it does not end in the heavens, as does Christine de Pizan's *Chemin de lonc estude*. Ardent Desir and his cortege gather their evidence in this world, a wide world that comprises a plethora of possible stops: over one hundred eighty countries, regions, and cities are

representative map taken from a Psalter manuscript (after 1262), London, British Library Additional 28681, fol. 9.

13 See Akbari, *Idols*, p. 60.

14 See fig. 2 in P. Contamine, "Un préambule explicatif inédit dans un manuscrit (milieu xv^e s.) du *Songe du vieil pèlerin* (1389) de Philippe de Mézières: Le texte et l'image", *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus*, novembre-décembre 2007, p. 1901-1923 and fig. 4.3 in K. Bourassa, "Reconfiguring Queen Truth in Paris, BnF, Ms. fr. 22542 (*Songe du vieil pèlerin*)", *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval France, Manuscripts and Early Printed Books*, ed. R. Brown-Grant, A. D. Hedeman, and B. Ribémont, Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2015, p. 89-108.

on the itinerary of our traveling party, a group that for the most part remains resolutely allegorical. Thus, to quote Maupeu once more “la réalité du monde n’est jamais oubliée dans le *Songe* mais subordonnée à l’univers des personnifications.”¹⁵ In a brilliant interplay of the real and the imagined, Philippe creates a vast hybrid world that presents real geographical regions that are peopled with both real historical personages and allegorical personifications; all of them are placed into the context of real historical events and political crises that they are obliged to address and that allow them to draw political and moral lessons to be applied later, after their return to Paris¹⁶.

The purpose of this multi-country expedition, as mentioned earlier, is to determine whether any place is worthy of receiving Reine Verite’s forge in which she and her company will forge “bons besants”. This good money or good deeds, evoking the New Testament parable on the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 and Luke 19:12-27, can only be forged in a kingdom that is religiously and morally pure, a kingdom in which dwells the sign of Tau, that is, the Cross. The forge, reminiscent of Nature’s forge in Alain de Lille’s twelfth-century *De planctu Naturae* as well as in Jean de Meun’s late thirteenth-century *Roman de la Rose*, suggests that Philippe and his companions are seeking a place worthy of creation, an originary place that would parallel their initial stop, a terrestrial Eden, where no sin exists and where the virtues were effortlessly forging the beautiful coins our travelers so desperately seek to produce¹⁷.

The travelers go by air and thus see the world from above: it looks flat, like the *imago mundi*, known from images and texts like those of Pierre d’Ailly¹⁸. Philippe and his companions fly above the real world

15 Maupeu, *Pèlerins*, p. 362. Mary Campbell dismisses the *Songe* in her otherwise excellent book on medieval travel literature by stating “its fictionality is too blatant and its structure too anti-mimetic to provide a really new experience for the imaginations of its first readers.” See M. B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1988, p. 132. But we do not actually know the reactions of Philippe’s first readers.

16 Blanchard points out that part of the journey reproduces the itinerary of Pierre de Lusignan in 1364 when he sought support for the crusade in Prague, Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, and Carinthia before returning to Venice (*Songe*, vol. 1, p. LXII).

17 *Songe*, vol. 1, p. 149.

18 On Pierre d’Ailly see J. B. Williamson, “Le *Songe du Vieil Pelerin*: Philippe de Mézières’ Grand Discovery of the World”, *Das grosse Abenteuer der Entdeckung der Welt im Mittelalter*, Greifswald, Reineke, 1995, p. 159-166, at p. 159 and Bell, *Étude*, p. 24. See also Maupeu, *Pèlerins*, p. 364-371.

whose borders had “steadily [moved] East for some time¹⁹.” It was precisely in the period when Philippe wrote his *Songe* that maps started to be oriented toward the North; instead of putting Jerusalem on top of maps mapmakers now indicated the North on top, thus shifting the meaning of maps from a symbolical to a real level. The compass that came into use at that time – and that Philippe mentions in the *Songe* – was the great motivator for this important change²⁰. Thus the travelers fly over a map-like world in a counter-clockwise motion from Egypt via Nubia to India and China, then westwards again to Syria, back to Egypt and North Africa. After a stop in Granada they are off to Asia Minor, the Balkans, Russia and other Northern and Scandinavian countries; then on to central and Southern Europe (with long stops in Avignon and Rome as seats of the rival popes of the Great Schism). Sometimes they move by ship, as for example when they go from La Rochelle to Bretagne and then to England, Ireland, and Scotland. Finally from Flanders they return to France. Frequent touchdowns and stops provide depth; each time they land or linger at a place they are immersed in the historical reality of each country’s past and present, marked mostly by discord, cruelty, and tyranny.

The intersection of the allegorical journey with the historical and political reality of each country produces the didactic meaning that lies at the heart of the *Songe*. It is worth remembering here an important point Mary Campbell makes in her seminal book on medieval and early modern travel writing. Speaking of Mandeville, she observes that Mandeville had used his geography “symbolically, as did the makers of the *mapppae mundi* [...]. But his method is an inversion of theirs: they imagined geography expressive of preordained ideas. He shaped ideas out of the geography of the real²¹.” I would argue that in the *Songe* Philippe can be seen walking (or rather flying) in Mandeville’s footsteps in more ways than one. The “geography of the real” in fact

19 Campbell, *The Witness*, p. 158.

20 See S. Akbari, “From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation”, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. J. J. Cohen, New York, Palgrave, 2000, p. 19-34. For echoes of medieval map-making in the *Songe* see Bell, *Étude*, p. 161. Philippe explains the usefulness of the compass for seafaring people (*Songe*, vol. 1, p. 633) and then goes on to interpret the compass allegorically as signifying the Virgin Mary, often referred to as *Stella maris* (*Songe*, vol. 1, p. 664).

21 Campbell, *The Witness*, p. 161. My emphasis.

allows Philippe to construct his vast storehouse of philosophical and practical ideas put at the disposal of his patron, Charles VI. Philippe's conception and valuation of the known world, the immense space from Egypt to Iceland and from Spain to China, are thus determined by the extent to which the different countries exemplify the ideal of a Christian state, and this ideal in turn is represented by the virtuous allegorical cortege, led by Reine Verite, which accompanies Philippe in his quest. The discourse in this part of the *Songe* is dominated by a theological and ecclesiastical vocabulary linked to universal reform, in contrast to the other two parts where a secular and judicial register is prevalent. Gisela Naegle, who elaborated this contrast in her study of debates on the notion of the common good in fifteenth-century political treatises, succinctly equates "*Weltreise*" and "*Weltreformation*" in the *Songe*²².

Which countries can pass muster for our travelers? They find much virtue in India, for example, including the utopian society of the Bragamains (who recall the Brahmins of the *Roman d'Alexandre*), where the inhabitants' innocence and goodness make laws superfluous²³. The Bragamains live by precepts that could come straight from the New Testament but, alas, they are not Christians. Other countries, such as China, Syria, Egypt, and Ethiopia, are rejected as homes for the forge for the same reason. In Constantinople they finally find a sign of Tau – but it is a fake. Philippe's hatred of Greek Orthodox Christians is well known. They are the "rotten apples", worse than the Muslims in Philippe's view, as Kiril Petkov has shown in a penetrating article²⁴. In Scandinavia the sign of Tau can be found here and there, but it is not "de bon aloi". In Prussia there is still too much idolatry (though the Teutonic Order is singled out for praise as a military-religious quasi-monastic entity dear to Philippe's heart). In Eastern Europe the Turkish threat has diminished the Christian faith; in Germany and Holland everyone is too busy to pay much attention to the visitors; in Spain there is too

22 G. Naegle, "Französische Gemeinwohldebatten im 15. Jahrhundert", *Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn. Historische Semantiken politischer Begriffe*, ed. H. Münkler and H. Bluhm, 4 vols., Berlin, Akademieverlag, 2001, vol. 1, p. 110-111.

23 See M. Demaules, "L'utopie rêvée: l'exemple du *Songe du Vieil Pelerin* de Philippe de Mézières", *En quête d'Utopies*, ed. C. Thomasset and D. James-Raoul, Paris, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005, p. 73-91, at p. 76-77.

24 K. Petkov, "The Rotten Apple and the Good Apples: Orthodox, Catholics, and Turks in Philippe de Mézières's Crusading Propagand", *Journal of Medieval History*, 23/2, 1997, p. 255-270.

much cruelty, and in Northern France and England the crisis of the Hundred Years War prevents the establishment of the forge.

The travelers do not spend the same amount of time in each country. Where the problems are the most severe in Philippe's estimation they linger for much longer. Each location associated with the Great Schism, is of special importance²⁵. In Avignon at the papal court of Clement VII, for example, the travelers linger for a full 33 folios! Thus if we were to redraw the map of the known world for the *Songe* based on the length of time of each stay the proportions would shift and the map would look out of shape, shaped by the importance Philippe gives to each political problem.

Obviously I cannot analyze the travelers' opinions of the more than 180 localities in this brief study. Let us just state that not one of them is worthy of the "bons besants". While Philippe does divide the known world into those countries that are governed by the genuine "sign of Tau" and those that are not, he does not endorse any of the Christian countries as the seat of the forge. The entire vast journey thus dramatizes a lack – that is its true purpose, I believe. The world is full of countries but not full of religious and political virtue. Philippe's mission is therefore to turn his own country, France, into a place worthy of receiving the forge. The spatial or geographical expanse of book 1 now contracts in a concentric movement and we find ourselves in Paris at the royal court. From an international perspective we now move to a national one. This in fact, seems to me one of the major functions of the *Songe's* spatial arrangement: to dramatize the importance of an international perspective on French problems. For the rest of the immense *Songe* we stay more or less put – on earth, in France – as far as geography is concerned. The hundreds of chapters of books 2 and 3 provide more complicated allegories, like that of the Nef (ship) or the chessboard, but do not take flight again. The concern of these parts of the *Songe* is political and ecclesiastical reform. In the latter domain putting an end to the Great Schism was the foremost task; in the former, Philippe envisaged both a return to a stable social order but also innovations, such as the increased importance of assemblies or "public consistories", of the kind convoked by the Reine Verite in the *Songe*. With these ideas Philippe is "en phase avec l'évolution politique de son temps", as

25 See R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378-1417*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, chap. 4.

Philippe Contamine has shown²⁶. Philippe-Ardent Desir's body now stays put in Paris while his intellect takes flight and brings forth one of the most elaborate mirrors of princes of his era.

CHRISTINE DE PIZAN'S TRAVELS
IN *LE CHEMIN DE LONC ESTUDE*

Christine de Pizan, though she came as an immigrant from Italy to France at an early age, never again traveled widely in real life. While Philippe drew at least in part on some real experiences, Christine's travels are purely allegorical, though informed by medieval travelers' accounts. As in the *Songe*, several spaces intersect in the *Chemin de lonc estude*. Bernard Ribémont's brilliant analysis of the *Chemin's* complex spatiality shows that there are "deux espaces", both of them undergirded by science: a geographic one, inspired by mappemondes, universal histories, mythology, and the Bible. This first "espace" has realistic traits such as descriptions of cities and of trajectories around the Mediterranean; the second "espace" is that of the cosmos and the spheres, an "espace imaginé", but nonetheless informed by contemporary science, especially Aristotelian and Ptolemean cosmology and astronomy²⁷.

Let us explore just a few movements of our travelers in the *Chemin*. As we just saw, Philippe's *Songe* begins with a downward movement toward earth and then alternates between the upward sweep of an aerial journey and the downward one of the touchdown. The pilgrim's extensive trip is motivated by the despair he feels at the countless crises troubling

26 It is impossible here to summarize Philippe's many ideas for reforming the kingdom that ranged from changes in the system of taxation to streamlining royal officers and staff to reorganizing the legal profession. For details see P. Contamine, "La crise de la royauté française au XIV^e siècle: réformation et innovation dans le *Songe du Vieil Pelerin* (1389) de Philippe de Mézières", *Tradition, Innovation, Invention. Fortschrittsverweigerung und Fortschrittsbewusstsein im Mittelalter*, ed. H.-J. Schmidt, Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2005, p. 361-379. See also J. Blanchard, "Discours de la réformation et utopie à la fin du Moyen Âge: le *Songe du Vieil Pelerin* de Philippe de Mézières (1389)", *Studi francesi*, 32, 1988, p. 397-403.

27 "Christine de Pizan: Entre espace scientifique et espace imaginé (*Le Livre du Chemin de longue étude*)", *Une femme de Lettres au Moyen Âge*, ed. L. Dulac and B. Ribémont, Orleans, Paradigme, 1995, p. 245-261, esp. p. 250-253.

the world. In the same Boethian vein, Christine's despair at the dire situation of a world riven by wars and discord brings forth the figure of the Sibyl who appears suddenly in her bedroom, touching her bed. She is an older woman who reminds Christine of the goddess of wisdom Pallas Athena; she is simply clad, without a crown²⁸. The contrasts with Philippe's recruitment of his traveling party are glaring: Christine does not actively seek out her guide as do Ardent Desir and his sister in the *Songe*; the Sibyl hails from pagan antiquity and not from the realm of the Christian virtues as do Reine Verite and her ladies. These differences in inspiration set the two works apart, yet each has an element of travel through the real world that precedes the didactic set pieces. What is the function of geographical displacement – travel – in the parts of the *Chemin* that precede the ascent to the heavens?

Most important seems to me to be the initial motivation for the trip Christine takes with the Sibyl. Christine recalls the trip the Sibyl took Aeneas on: namely "enfer le douloureux" (v. 683), a miserable place that Christine has no desire to visit²⁹. No – she is happy to hear her travel agent suggest other destinations: "Quant ainsi vous me voulez duire/En contree moins rioteuse/Que n'est ceste, et plus deliteuse" (v. 686-688). "Alez devant! G'iray derriere" (v. 698), Christine exclaims, echoing of Virgil's exhortation in *Inferno* 4, 15 ("io sarò primo, e tu sarai secondo"). Thus, rather than seeking out conflicts and pondering solutions to them, as the traveling party did in Philippe's *Songe*, Christine in this first part of the *Chemin* wants to play tourist and get away from the troubles that brought her sleepless nights: what she seeks at this moment is delight. And indeed, the travelers' first stop is a *locus amoenus* that seems to be the "Terrestre Paradis" (v. 792), a brilliant piece of mythological *bricolage*³⁰. Not saturated with the Christian elements that characterized the *Songe's* paradise-like mountain landscape, it is a place of secular

28 I will not go into the Dantean echoes here which have been studied in detail by K. Brownlee, "Literary Genealogy and the Problem of the Father: Christine de Pizan and Dante", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 21, 1993, p. 365-387 and A. Slerca, "Le Livre du chemin de long estude (1402-1403): Christine au pays des merveilles", *Sur le chemin de longue étude*, ed. B. Ribémont, Paris, Champion, 1998, p. 135-147.

29 Virgil was led by the Cumaean Sibyl while Christine's travel companion is the Sibyl Almathea.

30 See R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Reading Myth: Classical Mythology and its Interpretations in Medieval French Literature*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 193-201 and Kay, *Place of Thought*, p. 158-169. By using the words "que ce semble estre Terrestre Paradis"

wisdom and poetic delight, as the lovely bath of the Muses indicates. Here Christine and the Sibyl embark on the path of long study, one of the two paths available in this enchanted space. But this path does not lead directly to the heavens. Rather Christine suddenly finds herself “oultre mer” (v. 1180).

Now a period of intense and quick travel follows, though on foot not by air. Christine has a strong desire to visit places and monuments. She is a passionate tourist (and I do not use this term in a disparaging way), and her guide instructs her in all sorts of things, regarding plants as well as inanimate objects (v. 1505). While this display of encyclopedic knowledge builds Christine’s authority as learned author, we do not enter into the historical background or the politics of any given place except in Constantinople, where Christine bemoans the ravages the Saracens have inflicted on the city. (Though there is no explicit mention of the destruction at the hands of Christians during the Fourth Crusade in 1204³¹.) Christine uses a vocabulary that could come straight from a tourist guidebook: preceded by the verb “vi” (I saw) the repeated uses of terms like “merveille, grant, bel noble” or “puissant” paint the breathtaking splendor of the city³². It is not until later, in the middle of this description, that Christine changes gears and now deplores the ruins she sees in this largely depopulated city that suffers from the proximity of the Saracens and their incursions³³. But Christine’s observations remain extremely general here: no overt political crises or problems surface. This truly remarkable fact creates a strong contrast with Philippe’s *Songe* that had used world travel as an indispensable tool for the acquisition of knowledge that would then serve the moral and political didactic purpose.

After Constantinople, our travelers reach the Holy Land where the stops at Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Golgotha retrace the life of Christ. They then move on to locales around the Mediterranean; they see the

(it seems to me to be the Terrestrial Paradise, v. 761-762; my emphasis) Christine echoes the ambiguity concerning the exact nature of this place that we found in Philippe’s *Songe*.

31 For the significance of this omission see L. J. Walters, “Sailing to Byzantium: Christine de Pizan’s Vision of Constantinople in the *Chemin de lonc estude*”, in this dossier.

32 I cannot agree with Fabienne Pomel here who claims that the verb “voir” means “lire” in this context and that Christine’s trip is “un programme de lecture.” See F. Pomel, “S’écrire en lectrice: les métamorphoses de Christine de Pizan dans *Le Livre du Chemin de longue étude*”, *Lectrices d’Ancien Régime*, ed. I. Brouard-Arends, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003, p. 215-230, at p. 218.

33 Ribémont, “Christine de Pizan”, p. 252.

ruins of Troy and visit Rhodes, Cairo, and Babylon on the Nile. Here we find a rare allusion to contemporary political events, namely the conflicts between Sultan Bayazid and the Turkic-Mongol leader Tamerlan (also known as Timur) whose invasion of Anatolia in 1402 culminated in the battle of Ankara that destroyed the sultan's forces. But despite the momentous nature of these very recent events, the narrator does not elaborate on the issues raised by the Mongol victory, a victory that could have had serious repercussions for Europe. Then, clearly inspired by Mandeville, the travelers move on to Mount Sinai, Syria, and to Arabia, India (where monsters and pygmies abound), Ethiopia, Egypt, Armenia, Persia, Macedonia, and again Ethiopia and Armenia where Gog and Magog are imprisoned until the coming of the Antichrist³⁴. In India Christine marvels at the tomb of Prester John whose realm features the wealth and luxuries of the stereotypical medieval Orient³⁵. In a trajectory reminiscent of the *Roman d'Alexandre* and medieval travel accounts like Mandeville's they pass the Orient, approach the limits of the known world or the "bornes d'Hercule" (v. 1534) and the terrestrial paradise.

It is when they approach the terrestrial paradise – the place that was Philippe de Mézières' starting point – that the Sibyl warns Christine that they will not be allowed to go any further. Still, our travelers will be allowed to ascend to the starry heaven where eventually they will witness the intense debate by the different forces of medieval society (in the guise of the four allegorical ladies Chevalerie, Noblesse, Sagesse, and Richesse) on who is to blame for the many troubles in France, a debate faithfully transcribed by Christine who functions here as an observer but not as debater. Finally, Christine is charged to descend the ladder back into France, to take along her transcript of the heavenly debate and to reveal to the French king and his dukes that they need to choose a perfect ruler to solve all earthly problems³⁶. The transcript is of course the

34 See R. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1981.

35 See M. Uebel, *Ecstatic Transformation: On the Uses of Alterity in the Middle Ages*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. Christine does not problematize any of the issues raised by the "alterity" of the marvelous realm presided over by the mythical Prester John.

36 Was Christine thinking of Louis d'Orléans, Charles VI's younger brother, one of the princes who harbored imperial ambitions? See G. Ouy and C.M. Reno, "Où mène le *Chemin de long estude*?" Christine de Pizan, Ambrogio Migli, et les ambitions impériales de

Livre du chemin de lonc estude that she offers to the king and the powerful French princes in the prologue (v. 1-60), where she evokes the very task she was charged with at the end of her visionary pilgrimage: to solicit from them “la sentence d’un grant debat³⁷.” Thus the text’s end rejoins the beginning, and in a skillful double ending, the narrator’s mother wakes her up and scolds her as a lay-about in bed: within the diegesis of the visionary journey, her mission thus remains unfulfilled, but it is accomplished extra-diegetically through the existence and offering of her book³⁸. This work, like Philippe’s *Songe*, raises many important issues on the proper relations between the different parts of French society that would assure a smooth functioning of the state³⁹. Philippe also wakes up at the end of his lengthy *Songe* – in a depressed state in the chapel of the Celestins’ infirmary. But in an additional vision he is consoled by Divine Providence; the text thus ends on an optimistic note, although the travels are recalled as very painful and burdensome.

CONCLUSION

We have arrived at the end of this quick trip through entire allegorical universes. What is the function of travel, then, in the *Songe* and the *Chemin*? For Philippe, I believe, the long journey by air is a necessary prelude to the more theoretical mirror of princes sections of the *Songe*. The consistories

Louis d’Orléans (à propos du ms. BnF fr. 1643)”, *Christine 2000, Studies Offered to Angus Kennedy*, ed. N. Margolis and J. Campbell, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2000, p. 177-195.

37 *Chemin*, v. 44-45.

38 The ending of being woken up by her mother is not present in all manuscripts, however. Notably, it is missing from Paris, MS BnF fr. 1188, a copy of which may have been the basis for the Jean Chaperon’s 1549 prose translation. In that translation Christine recounts how she and the Sibyl returned to earth and handed over their message to King Charles VI. See J. Chaperon, *Le Chemin de long estude de Dame Cristine de Pise (1549)*, ed. C. Le Brun-Gouanvic, Paris, Champion, 2008, p. 55.

39 The fact that the *Chemin* occupies the crucial central position in the Queen’s manuscript (1414; British Library, Harley 4431) reinforces its didactic function for subsequent years. Lori J. Walters argues that this manuscript’s arrangement of texts “maps out an intellectual journey or mental pilgrimage for the Queen” (personal communication). See also L. J. Walters, “The Book as Gift of Wisdom: *Le Chemin de long estude* in the Queen’s Manuscript”, forthcoming in *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures*, 5, 2016.

assembled in every major place they visit present a vast panorama of very specific political and spiritual crises. When the pilgrim finally arrives at the French court he has a whole education in international affairs behind him. Christine's *Chemin* also takes us to a court – a heavenly one – but stops short of actually arriving at the French court within the diegesis. Unlike her later more polemical texts that address particularly pressing political problems like the French civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs⁴⁰, the *Chemin* takes a moral-philosophical approach to internal crises. Although one can make arguments for Christine's universalism in many contexts, it seems clear to me that the extensive international travel Christine undertakes in the *Chemin* yields very little in terms of political consciousness and political lessons; these lessons are taught in the heavens by allegorical figures, not during a trip on earth. In the first part of the *Chemin* Christine remains a tourist, albeit a very intelligent and curious one. It is in the later parts that the narrator becomes a witness and scribe at the debate at the Celestial Court where, interestingly, the political problems that are discussed have no overt relationship to the preceding travels. Philippe, while also putting his vast teachings into the mouths of multiple allegorical figures, draws on what he has learned outside of France in order to bring both stability and reform to his country. Christine will eventually abandon allegory in her overtly political texts. Her first explicit mirror for princes, the *Livre du corps de policie* of 1407, requires no geographical displacement and no allegorical personifications, nor does the later *Livre de paix* (1412-1413). Christine can remain in her study and no longer needs to don her protective headscarf or hitch up her skirt in order to find wisdom, for she can now find it in her beloved books; and although the Sibyl figure remains important for Christine throughout her career, in those texts it is the ancient authors who guide her and whose wisdom she distills for a new and troubled age.

Renate BLUMENFELD-KOSINSKI
University of Pittsburgh

⁴⁰ See T. Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014.