

Thanks to the Society's travel bursary, I was able to visit manuscript libraries in Austria, France, and Switzerland, as part of my doctoral research on mirrors for princes dedicated to Charles VI of France (r. 1380-1422). I have now consulted the manuscripts of three of these texts: Robert Gervais' *Speculum morale regium* (1385), Philippe de Mézières' *Songe du vieil pelerin* (1389), and both versions of Pierre Salmon's *Dialogues* (1409 and 1413-15). These mirrors for princes are important examples of political communication during a reign marked by the mental illness of the king, internal power struggles, civil war, the Hundred Years War, and the ongoing papal schism. As attempts to enter the political conversation at the French court through literary means, these texts suggested solutions to these problems, recommending for example the reorganization of the French taxation system in order to strengthen the king's position. This project focuses on two questions: first, what was the intended function of the content of these works? Second, what were the intended and actual audiences for their surviving manuscripts?

This research trip was invaluable for addressing the second of these questions, particularly in the case of the *Songe du vieil pelerin*, which survives in eight manuscripts. Only one of these dates to within its author's lifetime. The rest were all produced in the fifteenth century, during the reigns of three subsequent kings (Charles VII, Louis XI, and Charles VIII). The ownership of these fifteenth-century manuscripts demonstrates that the *Songe du vieil pelerin* was particularly popular among the courtiers of these later kings. Of the eight manuscripts, seven are illustrated and no two share an illustration program. By consulting the manuscripts in person, I was able to use their illustration programs to draw some conclusions about the reasons these later audiences were interested in the *Songe*, and how it could be adapted to suit new contexts.

The earliest surviving copy, for example, clearly demonstrates its original context. The manuscript, which has autograph corrections, features imagery associated specifically with Charles VI—such as a crowned, winged stag—and shows the king in conversation with the book's author. This manuscript reflects the text's primary intended purpose as a method of communication between Philippe de Mézières and Charles VI of France. By way of comparison, a manuscript produced during the reign of Charles VII targets a completely new audience. This is accomplished through two features: the manuscript's illustration program, and a four-folio preface explaining to the manuscript's readers how to interpret each of its fourteen miniatures. The preface is unique to this manuscript and forms a part of its regular, 8-folio gathering structure. It thus appears to have been part of the manuscript's original composition, a determination I would have been unable to make had I not been able to consult the manuscript in person.

The preface and the miniatures of the manuscript alter elements of the text that were originally targeted to Charles VI and make them more applicable to a later, wider audience. For example, the *Songe du vieil pelerin* employs a chessboard metaphor as an organizational tool for its instructions to Charles VI. Through the use of its miniatures and its preface, this later manuscript changes the meaning of the chessboard so that it instead represents the teachings of the Church for all Christian people. This interpretation of the *Songe du vieil pelerin* could only be accessed by studying this manuscript in its material context, and is important for our understanding of the contemporary function of this text.

This research trip also enabled me to make connections between several manuscripts. Three out of eight copies of the *Songe du vieil pelerin* contain a biographical passage about its author. Since I consulted these manuscripts in person, I was able to determine that in two of these cases the passage was likely part of the original structure of the manuscript. In the

third, the biography was copied onto a separate sheet of paper at a later date and inserted into the manuscript. This determination will be important for conclusions on the production of these copies of the *Songe* and their geographical proximity to each other.

Over the course of this trip, I was able to consult a total of twelve manuscripts representing three important mirrors for princes dedicated to Charles VI of France. This work, which could not have been accomplished through a study of manuscript reproductions alone, will form a crucial part of my doctoral research on the contemporary function of these political and didactic texts.