



## Christine de Pizan (1364-c. 1430)

- Born in Venice
- Her father was the astrologer, alchemist, and physician to King Charles V
- Christine lived most of her life in France, mostly in Paris
- Married at 15, widowed at 25

How does the text undermine or critique the authority of men who write misogynistic texts?

What does Cupid imply is the goal of teaching boys grammar using stories that are critical of women? (40)

What argument does Cupid make about the relationship between men's tricks and women's perceived weakness? (42)

What's notable about Christine's advice to her son? Anything unexpected? Any bad advice?

What is feminism?

What are some of the debates or issues that divide feminists (according to Bennett)?

# Feminism and social class

Judith Bennett: “In fifteenth-century Europe, an elite woman like Christine de Pizan was able to increase the coin in her purse by employing women instead of men because, as one medieval handbook advised, ‘a woman will work for much less money than a man would take.’” (10)

# Political views and history writing

Judith Bennett: “This discomfort with feminism party springs from our profession’s discomfort with owning any political perspectives at all. Some historians aspire (naively, in my view) to reaching god’s-eye truths about the past, and some worry (unnecessarily, in my view) that politically inspired scholarship imposes a ‘pattern ready-made’ onto the past. History is not, of course, simply ‘the past,’ and historians are not, of course, unbiased reporters or god-like observers who simply reveal the past ‘as it really was.’ This ‘positivist’ aspiration has served more to disguise than to suppress the politics of historians. All recovery of the past entails interpretation, so that no matter how assiduously a historian might seek to let the past speak, he or she unavoidably speaks alongside the historical record.” (14)