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Could Christine de Pizan be the author of the « *Advis à Isabelle de Bavière* », BNF MS fr. 1223?*

In 1866 Vallet de Viriville published a document which, he announced, would come as a surprise to most readers and critics, given established assumptions concerning its addressee. The manuscript which he published under the title, *Advis à Isabelle de Bavière* begins in the following manner :

Très excellent et puissant princesse, et nostre très redoutée dame, mère de nostre souverain seigneur le roy, en laquelle il et nous tous ses subgiez avons esperance d'estre relevée la ruyne et desolacion du royaume (*Advis*, p. 133).¹

[Most excellent and powerful princess, and most revered lady, mother of our sovereign lord the king, in whom he and all of us his subjects have hope of relief from the ruin and desolation of the realm.]

It continues by outlining the actions that need to be taken by the un-named sovereign king in order to address the mistakes of the past and to govern well. Viriville argues that the powerful princess being addressed in this document is, as the title of the letter suggests, Isabeau de Bavière, and the sovereign king is her son Charles VII. A reference in the letter to « le roy d'Angleterre nagaires trespasé » (*Advis*, p.152) [the king of England recently deceased] dates it to not too long after 1422. However, the thought that is expressed in the introductory sentences of the letter of advice, which is that relief may come to the king and his realm through the agency of Isabeau, goes very much against all contemporary understanding of Isabeau's political role in the years between 1422, when her husband Charles VI died, and 1435 when she herself passed away. By all accounts, these were years during which Isabeau lived in poverty and isolation in Paris, then under the control of the English. Despite the surprising character of this letter of advice, it seems to have attracted very little attention since its publication in 1866, and except for some hypothesising by Viriville, the most basic questions as to its character and intent have not been conclusively answered. What does the document mean? When was it written, by whom, and for what purpose?

This intriguing letter deserves more scrutiny than it has so far attracted, and we will broach the last of these questions presently, but first it is necessary to describe the document itself in a little more detail. It is written on parchment, and

* I would like to thank Constant J. Mews for his generous advice, encouragement and enthusiasm in relation to all our collaborations. This paper contains many elements which are due to him and for which I am most grateful. I also owe thanks to Janice Pinder who is responsible for a good part of the translations from *Le Livre de Paix* used here, which are from our forthcoming English translation of this text.

¹ All citations from the *Advis* are taken from : M. Vallet de Viriville, « *Advis à Isabelle de Bavière* », *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 27^e année, sixième série, tome 2, 1866, p. 128-57. While the discussion of this manuscript is by Vallet de Viriville, the actual transcription was the work of M. Deprez. All English translations are the author's.

begins with a large decorated initial, ornamented in blue and gold. Subsequent paragraphs also begin with decorative initials, done in red and blue ink, in an alternating pattern of blue initial decorated in red, and red initial decorated with blue. On the flyleaf, the document is described both as «Articles pour le gouvernement du Royaume» [articles for governing the realm] and above this, «Traicté a madame la regente pour le gouvernement de la maison du Roy et du Royaulme de France» [treatise to my lady the regent for governing the household of the king and realm of France]. It is a carefully prepared manuscript, but not excessively sumptuous.

After the first sentence, expressing the hope that some help towards overcoming the desolation of the realm might eventuate, the letter goes on to suggest that the king and his subjects hope that he, the king, will begin to rule well and maintain the office of the king as is appropriate. It warns of the danger of the subversion of the realm if those in power do not mend their ways, and contains the following promise :

pour donner vraye cognoissance aus trois estaz d'icelui royaume de la bonne volenté, entendement et ymaginacion que le roy a, qui, de present, cognoist et aperçoit comment il a esté deceu ou temps passé, pour y remedier, et veult d'ores en avant vivre par bon conseil, ainsi que ont fait ses progeniteurs, roys de France, et mener sa juste guerre, que il a, de present, par bonne discrecion, selon le conseil d'iceulx troys estaz, en distribuant la finance des subgiez de son obedience par bonne et discrete maniere, et comme il appartient, en tel temps piteable et miserable, en quoy nous sommes, qui avons nous retourner à Dieu, plaindre noz pechiez, et autrement en plus grande charité amer et gouverner nostre peuple, comme Dieu le commande, est pure necessité, selon les saintes escriptures de prandre et tenir en gouvernement la forme et maniere qui s'ensuit. (*Advis*, p. 133-34)

[to give a true knowledge to the three estates of this realm of the good will, understanding and intentions the king has – knowing and perceiving now, that he was misled in the past – to remedy this, and wishing from this time forward to live by good counsel, as did his progenitors, kings of France, and conduct his just war, that he now has, with good judgement, following the counsel of these three estates, distributing the monies of those subjects in his obedience in a good and discreet manner. And it is required in these piteous and miserable times in which we find ourselves, that we turn towards God, repent our sins, and in other ways love and guide our people in great charity as God commands and of necessity following the holy Scriptures adopt and hold government in the form and manner that follows.]

Implicit in these first passages is the suggestion that a request is being made. Should Charles VII govern his realm as outlined in the document, Isabeau is asked to do her part in saving the realm from ruin and desolation. The reference, in this paragraph, to a king who acknowledges that he has been deceived in the past, makes it clear that a hypothesis concerning the addressee of this document developed by Yann Grandeau cannot be correct. Believing that Isabeau could not have been involved in any political intrigues during this period, Grandeau rejected Viriville's assumption that letter was intended for Charles VII and suggested that it might have

been written with Henry VI and his mother Catherine in mind². Since Henry was too young at the death of his father to have made past mistakes, we can reject this hypothesis. The body of the text proposes a number of principles for governing France in its straitened circumstances, but before discussing these we will turn to the question of the date of the document.

Vallet de Viriville, basing his guess on a reference to unpunished pillaging in the preamble of the document, proposes a fairly late date for its confection of 1433 (p. 129), a time during which the constable Arthur de Richmont wrested Charles VII from the control of La Trémouille. But there are two observations which militate against this dating. First, eleven years seems rather longer than would normally be understood to have elapsed since Henry's death, given the phrase «le roy d'Angleterre nagaires trespasé» (*Advis*, p. 152) [the king of England recently deceased] which is used later in the letter. Second, and more importantly, paragraph 25 (using Viriville's numbering) says: «que ung roy ne doit riens aliener de son demaine, et, s'il l'a fait, le doit revoquer, car c'est contre la profession qu'il doit faire à son sacre» (*Advis*, p. 141) [that a king may not alienate any of his domain, and if he has done so should revoke it, for it is against the vows that he must make at his coronation]. In the context, this implies that we can narrow the time of the document to before the coronation of 1429, for vows that must be made, not those that have been made, are spoken of. There is some reason to suspect, in fact, that the occasion of the fabrication of this letter of advice may be the first intervention of the duke of Richmont in Charles VII's affairs, a period during which Pierre Giac was arrested and executed. For during this period, following Arthur's earlier visit to Philip of Burgundy, and marriage to his sister Marguerite, numerous negotiations were undertaken by Amadeus VIII count of Savoy to bring about a rapprochement between Charles and Philip. Those of Charles' advisers who were associated with the bad advice that had led to the murder of John the Fearless on the bridge of Montereau were distanced from the court. Also, during this period Charles revoked a number of grants that he had made³. All this suggests that the document might well derive from the years 1423-28 and have been associated with an attempt to draw Isabeau away from the English, and to encourage her to revoke the Treaty of Troyes.

This redating makes possible a positive answer to the question raised in the title of the paper, possible at least in the sense of logically possible, for it is highly likely that Christine de Pizan died in 1430-31. If Viriville's guess were correct, the hypothesis proposed would have no plausibility, but the earlier date is compatible with the dates of Christine's life. Still, one might wonder whether there is really anything more than a logical possibility that Christine was the author of this letter of advice. In the remainder of the paper I offer three lines of reasoning to the conclusion that the letter was in all probability penned by Christine. First, we know that at other points in the troubled history of France between 1400 and 1429, Christine had cooperated with ambassadors, then negotiating with Isabeau and other

² Y. Grandeau, «Les Dernières années d'Isabeau de Bavière», *Cercle archéologique et historique de Valenciennes*, 9, 1976, p. 411-28 (p. 426, n. 39). My thanks to Rachel Gibbons for having alerted me to this rare comment on the *Advis*.

³ G. du Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII*, 5 vols, Paris, 1881-91, II, p. 315 & 351-99. Guillaume Gruel, *Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont connétable de France, duc de Bretagne (1393-1458)*, éd. Achille le Vasseur, Paris, 1890, p. 25-45.

members of the royal family, by composing letters which were intended to influence the political process.

Secondly, and most significantly, the content, imagery and style of the advice offered in this letter is very similar to that given by Christine in earlier works, and in particular, is similar to that found in her *Livre de Paix* of 1412-14, written for the sake of Isabeau's older son Louis of Guyenne.

Thirdly, the hand in which this letter is written is similar to that found in certain manuscripts which have been identified elsewhere as autograph manuscripts by Christine, and while it may not be possible to identify it as Christine's, the coincidence is suggestive. By themselves none of these observations would be persuasive. However, when we put all three together, the coincidence suggests that it is highly probable that the *Advis* was in fact written by Christine. Admittedly, not too much weight can be placed on the third piece of evidence. Identifying hands is a difficult and technical business, and there has been considerable controversy associated with the identification of Christine's hand. James Laidlaw in particular, has argued that in all probability Christine had her presentation manuscripts copied by professional scribes⁴. Nevertheless the similarity between style of this manuscript and that of others prepared for Christine is a co-incidence which adds some weight to the hypothesis. Given the contentiousness which surrounds this issue, however, the argument for suspecting Christine's authorship is ultimately most firmly grounded in the similarity of content between the *Advis* and other works by her.

Let us return, then, to the first set of reasons for suspecting Christine's involvement in the production of the *Advis*. Christine's role as a political propagandist for the cause of peace is well known. Her first direct intervention took place in 1405 when she wrote her *Epistre à la reine*. This was penned on the 5th October, at the request of an unidentified noble, possibly Louis of Bourbon, during a crisis which resulted from a botched attempt by Louis of Orléans and Isabeau to spirit Louis of Guyenne away from Paris⁵. Immediately after Christine's letter was

⁴ J. Laidlaw, « Christine de Pizan and the Manuscript Tradition », *Christine de Pizan : A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah McGrady, New York and London, 2003, p. 231-49 and James Laidlaw, « Christine's Lays – Does Practice Make Perfect? » *Contexts and Continuities. Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan (Glasgow 21-27 July 2000), published in honour of Liliane Dulac*, ed. Angus J. Kennedy, Rosalind Brown-Grant and Catherine Müller, Glasgow, 2002, p. 467-81. Gabriella Parussa has also raised doubts as to whether all the manuscripts in the X hand are by the same scribe : « Orthographes et autographes. Quelques considérations sur l'orthographe de Christine de Pizan », *Romania*, 117, 1999, 143-58 and Gabriella Parussa and Richard Trachsler, « Or sus, alons ou champ des escriptures. Encore sur l'orthographe de Christine de Pizan : l'intérêt des grands corpus », *Contexts and Continuities*, ed. Kennedy, Brown-Grant and Müller, p. 621-43. Ouy and Reno have responded to Laidlaw's critique in Gilbert Ouy and Christine M. Reno, « 'X + X' = 1. Response to James C. Laidlaw », *Contexts and Continuities*, ed. Kennedy, Brown-Grant and Müller, p. 723-30.

⁵ Louis of Bourbon suggests himself as the unidentified noble because he was the head of an embassy that left Paris just after Christine wrote her letter, and because he had earlier defended her in court, as is shown by her praise of him, suggesting that she would have been happy to lend her talents towards helping with the success of his embassy : Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, éd. Suzanne Solente, 2 vols, Paris, 1936-40 ; reprint, Geneva, 1975, I, 158.

written, Charles king of Navarre and Louis duke of Bourbon, who had been sent as ambassadors to negotiate with the queen, were successful in getting her to heed their prayers. On October 8th Isabeau moved to Vincennes and began serious peace negotiations. By the 17th of October, along with the duke of Berry, Isabeau was publicly thanked for having negotiated the reconciliation of the warring dukes⁶. Christine had begun her letter on that occasion, «Tres haulte, puissant et tres redoutée dame» [Most high, powerful and most revered lady] (*Epistre à la reine*, p. 254)⁷ a formulation echoed in the later letter of advice, «Très excellent et puissant princesse, et nostre très redoutée dame» [Most excellent and powerful princess, and our most revered lady] (*Advis*, p. 133) and while little can be made of such formulaic phrases, they are strikingly similar.

Five years later, on 23rd August 1410, also during a period of intense diplomatic negotiation, this time intended to solve the stand-off between the League of Gien and John of Burgundy, Christine completed her *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*⁸. While Christine represents herself in this letter as alone and tearful, there can be little doubt that its production was also associated with a contemporary series of negotiations which aimed to bring about the peace. An embassy made up of the aged bishop of Auxerre, Jacques de la Marche, and Christine's associates Guillaume de Tignonville and Gontier Col had been sent from Paris to negotiate with the duke and arrived at Poitiers on the 18th of August⁹. Not long after this Berry sent his own embassy to Paris. Christine's lament was penned at the height of this series of negotiations, and only a short time prior to the five days in September during which Isabeau negotiated with the League of Gien at Marcoussis, unsuccessfully attempting to defuse the political situation¹⁰.

Given these earlier interventions, Christine would have been a natural choice as the author of a new missive, intended to engage Isabeau in the process of settling the differences between Charles VII and Philip of Burgundy being undertaken by Amadeus VIII of Savoy in the period of 1424-28. Amadeus had earlier been instrumental in encouraging Louis of Guyenne to bring about the peace of Auxerre, which Christine had celebrated in the first part of her *Livre de Paix*. She was perhaps known to him, and certainly acquainted with some of the other political actors engaged in these negotiations. Louis of Vendôme, for instance, who had returned from English imprisonment in 1424, was present at Bourg-en-Bresse when the French negotiated their side of the proposed peace under the supervision of Amadeus. His sister Anne had been described by Christine as someone she loved,

⁶ L. Bellaguet, ed. *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, 6 vols, Paris, 1994, III. 345.

⁷ A. J. Kennedy, «Christine de Pizan's *Epistre à la reine* (1405)», *Revue des langues romaines*, 92, 1988, 253-264. Quotations from *L'Epistre à la reine* are taken from this edition. The translation is from: Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life with An Epistle to the Queen of France and Lament on the Evils of the Civil War*, ed. and trans. Josette Wiseman, London and New York, 1984, p. 70.

⁸ Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life*, p. 85-95.

⁹ Bellaguet, éd., *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, IV. 343. Christine de Pizan had exchanged letters over the *Romance of the Rose* with Gontier Col, and had offered a copy of these letters to Guillaume de Tignonville whose translation of the *Sayings of the Philosophers* she had quoted extensively in her *Epistre Othea*.

¹⁰ Bellaguet, éd., *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, IV. 361.

and his mother had also been praised in Christine's *Livre de la cité des dames*¹¹. Louis of Vedôme was undoubtedly one of Christine's acquaintances and he would have known that hers was a well established voice pleading for probity and reconciliation. We thus have a *prima facie* reason for suspecting her hand in the production of this later letter. The suspicion is greatly strengthened when we look more closely at the similarities between the sentiments expressed in it, and those found in earlier texts by Christine. In many cases the advice to Isabeau reads as a terse resumé of the principles of good princely government laid down by Christine in her earlier works.

After an introduction which will be discussed below, the *Advis à Isabelle de Bavière* turns to practical matters of finance. Having pointed out that in his straitened circumstances Charles cannot expect to govern in the manner of his ancestors the author says in paragraph 9 :

Item, que toutes les finances soient employées en l'estat et l'honneur du roy, et ou fait de la guerre, et que, sans faillir, les gaiges des officiers, tant de la guerre que de la justice, soient bien assignez et bien paieez, et que on cesse de faire dons de terres et de finances, sinon de finance où il sera necessaire, pour l'honneur du roy (Advis, p. 137).

[That all finances should be employed for the estate and honour of the king, or pursuit of war, and that without fail the wages of the officers whether of war or justice should be properly assigned and paid, and one should cease making gifts of land or money, except those gifts of money which are necessary for the honour of the king]

Christine in her *Livre de Paix* had made a good deal of the need to cease the practice of allowing people to purchase positions, and of making sure that money was well spent in legitimate ways. In particular, she had insisted, as does the author of this text, that the king's soldiers and officers be properly paid.

Et que sur le fait des finances soit bien pourveu qu'en bonnes mains en soient les receptes et distribucions par tel ordre que superfluité de choses non necessaires, ne grans dons excessis par prodigalité, ne les disperse et despende tellement que les loyaulx debtes et droituriers gaiges en soient reculees et empeschiees, et donner remede que fraudes n'y puissent estre faictes tant des receveurs comme des distributeurs et tous autres. Doit le prince vouloir et souverainement lui doit on conseiller, que pour le fait de ses guerres bien maintenir et que plus volentiers en

¹¹ « Autresi celle que tu aimes, Anne, fille jadis du conte de La Marche et seur de celui de present, qui est mariee au frere de la royne de France, Loys de Baviere, n'empire pas la compagnie de celles qui ont grace et sont dignes de louenge, car vers Dieu et vers le monde sont acceptees ses bonnes vertus. » [Similarly the woman whom you love, Anne, daughter of the late count of La Marche and sister of the present duke, married to Ludwig of Bavaria, brother of the Queen of France, does not discredit the company of women endowed with grace and praise, for her excellent virtues are well-known to God and the world.] Christine de Pizan, *La città delle dame*, trans. Patrizia Caraffi and ed. Earl Jeffrey Richards, Milan and Trent, 1997) II, 68, p. 42 ; *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards, London, 1983, II, 68, p. 214.

tel cas soit servis de privez et estranges, que ses gens d'armes soient tres bien paiez (Paix I.10, p. 76-77)¹².

[Also, so that finances may be well managed, let the receipt and distribution of funds be in good hands, so that they are not dispersed in acquiring superfluous quantities of unnecessary things, nor excessively lavish gift-giving, spending so much that payment of legal debts and just wages is thereby put off or prevented. This would also prevent fraudulent acts between both those who receive and those who distribute and others. The prince should wish and should be especially advised that to be able to carry on his wars well, and to be served more readily in such cases by his own and foreign troops, his soldiers should be very well paid.]

The need to pay troops properly had also been a theme of Christine's *Corps de Policie* and her *Fais d'armes et de chevalerie*¹³. She had returned to the subject later in *Le Livre de Paix*, in the third part, describing how well Charles V had managed his finances and paid his soldiers¹⁴. In the *Advis* the further requirement that captains be properly appointed is developed in paragraph 13 ; « on ne ordene aucun capitaine, s'il n'est homme bien choisi et esleu par grande election, homme d'onneur, amant Dieu et le bien du people » (*Advis*, p. 138) [one should not appoint any captain unless he is someone properly chosen and elected, a man of honour, loving God and the good of the people]. A similar requirement that officials be properly appointed is emphasised in *Le Livre de Paix* « c'est assavoir que les offices fussent donnez et distribuez non mie par telz simonies ou faveurs, mais par pure loyalle et vraie eleccion » (*Paix*, I. 13, p. 82) [Which is to say that offices ought to be given and distributed not through such simonies or favours but by pure, true and loyal election]¹⁵.

Urging financial restraint and a reduction in the numbers of people employed at court, the author suggests that it would be good were the king to organise his affairs in the manner of the king of Leon and Castile (*Advis*, p. 139). This was Juan II who reigned from 1406-1454. Since Christine's son, Jean de Castel, had been involved in an embassy to Castile in 1422, this comment, which implies some familiarity with the administration of the Castillian government, adds some further weight to the hypothesis that Christine was the author of the letter¹⁶. It could equally be taken to open up the possibility that Jean Castel himself was the author. Against

¹² Page numbers to Willard's edition, Christine de Pizan, *The « Livre de la Paix » of Christine de Pisan*, ed. Charity Cannon Willard, 'S-Gravenhage, 1958) are supplied. However the text differs from Willard's edition which has been corrected by Janice Pinder against Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (KBR) ms. 10366.

¹³ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre du corps de policie*, éd. Angus J. Kennedy, Paris, 1998, p. 14-15. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, trans. Sumner Willard, University Park, Penn., 1999, I, 14, p. 41 & III, 8, p. 153-5. Christine Moneera Leannac, « Christine antygrafe : Authorship and self in the prose works of Christine de Pizan with an edition of B.N. Ms. 603 *Le Livre des Fais d'Armes et de Chevalerie*. » PhD, Yale, 1988, vol. 2, p. 57 and 197-200.

¹⁴ Christine de Pizan, *The « Livre de la Paix » of Christine de Pisan*, III, 28, p. 158.

¹⁵ Christine had also outlined and endorsed the « election » or selection of knights on the basis of their virtue and expertise in Christine de Pizan, *Le Chemin de longue étude*, éd. Andrea Tarnowski, Paris, 2000, v. 4223-4356.

¹⁶ A. Thomas, « Jean Castel », *Romania*, 21, 1892, 271-4 (p. 274).

this, we will note below, that there are reasons to think that the *Advis* was written by someone whose access to Charles's attention was not guaranteed, and who was therefore unlikely to have been one of his secretaries.

Another opinion, particularly reminiscent of Christine, is found at paragraph 20, where the author warns of the dangers of a king going into battle. This item of advice is repeated in the 79th paragraph of the *Advis*, suggesting that it is something that the author took very seriously, as did Christine. Not only is this piece of advice characteristic of Christine's views, but the author uses the same examples of princes who had avoided going into battle as Christine had earlier used, saying :

Item, que le roy ne doit jamais aler en bataille, mais se doit tenir en ung bel lieu, bien acompaigné, car la prinse ou mort en bataille d'un roy de France est faire perdre ou mettre en merveilleuse desolacion le royaume, tesmoing la prinse du roy Jehan et la maniere de vivre du duc de Milan, qui est bonne et saige. (Advis, p. 140)
[The king should never go into battle but should establish himself well accompanied in a good position, for the capture or death in battle of a king of France can lose or put to terrible destruction the realm, as testified by the capture of king John, and the way of life of the duke of Milan, which is good and wise.]

In the sixth chapter of her *Fais d'armes et de chevalerie* Christine had argued at some length against the practice of a king leading his troops into battle, and at the end of the chapter she mentioned the duke of Milan who had conquered a good deal of Lombardy without ever going into battle¹⁷.

This unexpected transition from speaking of a French king to speaking of the duke of Milan, in relation to the subject of kings not going into battle, is a characteristic habit of Christine's. One finds it in *Le Chemin de longue étude*, where Wisdom begins to speak of the wise king Charles V and then moves on immediately to praise the first duke of Milan of whom it was said that he had conquered more by his wisdom than by battle¹⁸. In the *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, one has the same association; however the order is reversed. Christine speaks of the Viscontis and describes John Galeas as one who « mainte terre vainqui, par son grant sens plus que par armes » (*Mutacion de Fortune*, VII, LV, v. 23472-3)¹⁹ [who conquered many lands more through good sense than by force of arms]. She then moves on to French and English kings, and in particular Charles V, who chased his enemies from the realm « par son tres grant sens et prudence » (*Mutacion de Fortune*, VII, LVI, v. 23539) [with his very great good sense and prudence]²⁰. Much of the advice found elsewhere in this letter consists in homilies, which might well have been penned by another writer, but, barring the discovery of another contemporary who manifests the same cast of mind, this idiosyncrasy speaks strongly in favour of Christine as author.

¹⁷ Christine de Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, I, 6, p. 23. Leannac, « Christine antygrafe » vol 2, p. 35.

¹⁸ Christine de Pizan, *Le Chemin de longue étude*, v. 5001-5054.

¹⁹ Quotations from *La Mutacion de Fortune* are from : Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, éd. Suzanne Solente, 4 vols, Paris, 1959).

²⁰ See, Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de la mutacion*, vol. 4, p. 74 and 76. English translations are the author's.

The paragraph which contains these observations concerning the king's proper role in warfare is followed by advice concerning the organisation of his time and dress. Like Christine, the author of the *Advis* warns that ordinary people should dress according to their estate, while at paragraph 24 it is asserted that a king of France :

doit estre vestu continuellement en habit royal [...] et comment le saige roy Charles l'ayeul du roy qui est de present se vestoit, qui en portant l'habit tel que il vestoit monstroït vesture de roy tele que elle lui appartient. (*Advis*, p. 141)
[should always be dressed in royal dress [...] and in the same way as the wise king Charles the ancestor of the present king dressed, who in wearing the kind of clothes that he did, showed how to dress appropriately for a king.]

In *Le Livre de Paix*, basing her passages on her own descriptions of Charles V in *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roi Charles V*, Christine had praised the regularity and good order of this king's daily routine²¹. There she had also emphasised how well he had kept his royal estate. When he went in procession through the town he was clearly identifiable as the king. The people were able to recognise him for he was « hault montez, vestu en habit royal, car autre nul temps ne portoit – si te promet que bien sembloït estre prince » (*Paix*, I. 8, p. 72) [on a tall mount, dressed in royal robes, for he never wore anything else – and I promise you he appeared every inch a prince.] It is worth also noting in the paragraph from the *Advis* evidence of nostalgia for the past reign of Charles' ancestor Charles V, which is highly characteristic of Christine.

The paragraph describing Charles V's dress is one among a number of paragraphs annotated in the manuscript. On the right someone has drawn a double line, and a capital N. Two kinds of annotation are visible in the margins : some are pale, and may have been made with a very soft pencil. The note next to paragraph 24 is of this kind²². The others are in ink. It is not altogether clear whether these ink annotations were made by the scribe, or by some later reader, but since they do not enhance the manuscript they were probably added later. The ink annotations often coincide with the passages that are most reminiscent of views which were dear to Christine, perhaps suggesting that a past reader noticed the similarity between the views expressed here and those espoused by Christine.

Like Christine the author of the *Advis* emphasises the importance of education for the children of kings, saying that they should be taught many languages, including Latin²³. This had been a theme of chapters 3-5 of the first book of *Le Livre du corps de policie*. However, this passage also contains sentiments that might raise doubts as to Christine's authorship. The author says :

²¹ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, I, 15-18, vol.1, p. 39-51 and *The « Livre de la Paix » of Christine de Pisan*, I, 6-8, p. 67-72.

²² One sees marking of this kind at fol. 1r (double stroke twice), fol. 2v para 5 (single stroke), fol. 4v paras 15 (end) and 16 (beginning), fol. 5v para 20, fol. 6r para 24 (first N), fol. 8v, para 54, fol. 9r para 56 end (N), fol. 9v, para 62, fol. 10r para 66, fol. 12v, para 89 (Nota).

²³ Viriville, « Advis à Isabelle de Bavière », p. 144.

Item, un roy doit faire enseigner et endoctriner ses enfans et leur faire savoir plusieurs langages et mesmement latin pour voiaiger, et aus filles leur faire aprandre à ouvrer de soie et toutes choses appartenans à euvre de femmes, pour les occuper, en ostant oisiveté (Advis, p. 144).

[A king should have his children taught and educated and make them know many languages and even Latin for travelling, and should make his daughters learn to work silk and everything that pertains to women's work, to occupy them, thus avoiding laziness]

The ambiguity over whether the daughters are to be included among the children who should be taught Latin, and the conservative prescription that they should acquire feminine skills, may appear contrary to Christine's advocacy in favour of women. However, it has long been recognised that, despite her own education and success as an author, Christine did not expect women in general to abandon womanly pursuits²⁴. Indeed, she both abhorred idleness and emphasised the contribution that women make to the economy by spinning and weaving. In her *Livre de trois vertus* she singled out for praise the countess of Eu who gained more money by these means than from the revenue of her estates²⁵. So, despite first appearances, this passage, which assumes that women should busy themselves with womanly pursuits, does not rule out the possibility that Christine wrote the *Advis*.

Paragraph 62 concerns the need for the king to appreciate the importance of education. It says :

que un roy doit savoir qui sont les meilleurs clercs de son royaume, es universités et autrement, et les promouvoir, pour monstrier exemple aus autres de bien estudier, et les doit avancer, car un bien excellent clerc expert, au pois (poids) en poise mil autres ignorans (*Advis*, p. 145).

[that a king should know who are the best educated in his realm whether from the universities or otherwise, and promote them as an example to others to study well, and should advance them, for an excellent and expert clerk weighs more than a thousand ignoramus.]

The same sentiment concerning the weight of the value of wisdom is found in a more developed form in *Le Livre de Paix* :

Et ce tesmoigne Salemon ou il a dit : (fol 16r) « Mieulx vault sapiences que forces et l'omme prudent que le fort » car un seul bon conseiller puet valoir a tout un royaume, et ce ne fait mie un seul homme fort quelque force qu'il ait (*Paix*, I. 9, p. 74).

[And Solomon bears witness to this where he says : « wisdom is more valuable than strength and the prudent man than the strong » for a single good counsellor can bring benefit to the whole realm, and this a single strong man can never do]

²⁴ S. Groag Bell, « Christine de Pizan : Humanism and the Problem of a Studious Woman », *Hypatia*, 3, 1988, 173-84, p. 177 and 181.

²⁵ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des trois vertus*, éd. Charity Cannon Willard et Eric Hicks, Paris, 1989, II, 10, p. 156, Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, trans. Sarah Lawson, Harmondsworth, 1985, p. 133.

In *Le Livre de Paix*, Christine had also praised Charles V's learning, his respect for the university and love of books, calling him a « great clerk » by which she meant a well educated man :

il honnouroit de eulx tous les estas. C'est assavoir après les nobles, si que dit est devant, les clerks, si que bien le monstroient a l'université de Paris en leur gardant souverainement leurs privileges dont les franchises accroissoit de bien en mieulx, les tenoit en amour et paix, la congregacion d'iceulx avoit en grant reverence. Le recteur et les solennelz maistres veoit volentiers et tres benigneement oyait leurs propositions et de leurs consaulx usoit. Et pourquoy ne feist, car n'estoit il pas grant clerk lui meismes et droit philosophe et bon astrologien, et celle science moult amoit? (*Paix*, III. 18, p. 142)

[he honoured all their ranks, that is to say after the nobles, as has already been told, the learned, as he showed at the University of Paris where by preserving their privileges and always adding to their freedoms, he kept them in love and peace. He had great reverence for their congregation and was always glad to see the rector and the solemn masters, and most benevolently listened to their propositions and followed their counsels. And why would he not have done, for was he not a learned man himself, a real philosopher and a good astrologer, who loved learning greatly?]

The author of the *Advis* agrees that « un roy doit estre bon clerk, s'il veult bien gouverner » (*Advis*, p. 150) [a king must be well educated if he wishes to govern well]. This observation has been annotated with an N in ink in the margin. The comment occurs in the middle of a list of examples of wise kings who have been counselled by mature, educated men of probity : David had Sadoch, Alexander had Aristotle, Trajan was advised by Plutarch, who, it is claimed, wrote to Charlemagne – a mistake which will be discussed presently (*Advis*, p. 150). The list continues with mention of Nero who was advised by Seneca, who wrote a text referred to in the *Advis* as *Le Livre de clemence* to attempt to cure Nero of the cruelty to which he was inclined by nature. The *De Clementia* had been quoted by Christine at the beginning of the third book of *Le Livre de Paix*, in another passage to which we shall return. The list of kings and their advisors continues in paragraph 92 with the example of Charlemagne, who was advised by Alcuin.

All of this is reminiscent of the long passages concerning the need for mature counsellors in chapters VII-IX of the first Part of *Le Livre de Paix*. The author of the *Advis* emphasises the point with the saying « un roy non lectré est comme un asne coroné » (*Advis*, p. 150) [an illiterate king is like a crowned ass] claiming that it comes from the letter that Trajan sent to Charlemagne, as stated by *Policraticus*. This has been noted and highlighted with an arrow in the margin. Christine had used the same image, identifying an unlettered king with « un asne couronné », when she reported in her *Chemin de long estude* that a Roman king had once written to the king of France urging the necessity of education and had concluded his letter with the observation that a king without knowledge was of no more value to his realm than a crowned ass²⁶.

²⁶ « Puis conclut que roy non savant

The author of the *Advis* shows a rather insecure grasp of history, in claiming that this letter was sent by Trajan to Charlemagne, and it is only with some chagrin that I am led to attribute this gross blunder to Christine. Furthermore, it might well be argued that this is not a mistake that Christine would have made. She had elsewhere reported, for instance, that Charlemagne was a contemporary of John the Scot [Jean Scot Érigène] and she might well be assumed to have had a better grasp of chronology than is demonstrated by this comment²⁷. The issue raises disputed questions concerning the nature of Christine's sources. And in this case, a closer look at those sources does not rule out the possibility that Christine could have made this blunder.

In the *Chemin de long estude* when she used this metaphor, Christine spoke simply of a king of the Romans who wrote to a king of France. However, Evencio Beltran has identified Christine's intermediate source for the image of the crowned ass, which originally derives from the *Policraticus*, as the *Summa collationum sive collectionum* or *Communiloquium* of the English Franciscan John of Wales, and has suggested that her immediate source was Jacques Legrand's *Sophilogium*, written two years earlier than the *Chemin*. Like the author of the *Advis*, Jacques Legrand identifies the person who wrote to the French king as Trajan, and adds the detail, repeated in the *Advis* but not found in the *Communiloquium*, that this is reported in book 6 of the *Policraticus*. In fact, *Policraticus* is the source of the image, though it is found in Book IV chapter 6, not in Book VI²⁸. Legrand seems to have confused the letter from the King of the Romans referred to by John of Salisbury, with the more famous letter that Plutarch allegedly wrote for Trajan²⁹. So Christine, assuming that Beltran is correct concerning her source, might later, when writing from memory, have repeated Legrand's mistake and added the further false detail that Charlemagne was the French recipient of the letter.

Since Christine tells us at the beginning of her *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* that she had been confined to an abbey for eleven years we can assume that, were she the

Tout son fait n'estoit que droit vent,
Et qu'autant valoit ou regné

Comme fait un asne couronné. » This citation is from, Christine de Pizan, *Le Chemin de longue étude*, éd. Tarnowski, v. 5093-96.

²⁷ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, III, 13, vol. 2, p. 48.

²⁸ E. Beltran, «Christine de Pizan, Jacques Legrand, et le *Communiloquium* de Jean de Galles», *Romania*, 104, 1983, 208-28. *Unde et in litteris quas regem Romanorum ad Francorum regem transmisisse recolo, quibus hortabatur ut liberos suos liberalibus disciplinis institui procuraret, hoc inter cetera eleganter adiecit quia rex illiterates est quasi asinus coronatus*. [And thus, in a letter which I recall that the King of Romans sent to the king of Franks, who was exhorted to procure for his offspring instruction in the liberal disciplines, it was added elegantly to the rest that an illiterate king is like an ass who wears a crown.] Ioannis Saresberiensis, *Policraticus* I-IV, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, Turnhout, 1993, p. 251, *Policraticus*; *of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. Cary Nederman, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 44.

²⁹ One might surmise, since he had previously made half of the mistake, that Jacques Legrand could have been the author of this advice. He however died before Charles VI and so can be excluded as a possible author, E. Beltran, «Jacques Legrand O. E. S. A. Sa vie et son œuvre I», *Augustiniana*, 24, 1974, p. 132-160 (p. 158).

author of the *Advis*, she would, in all likelihood, not have had to hand all the resources on which she had been able to draw when in Paris, and this could well explain her blunder³⁰. This would also explain why the *Advis* differs from Christine's longer writings in that it does not contain many authorities, and is written without the copious quotations that are characteristic of many of her works. Yet the names that the author draws on are familiar from her work. *Policraticus* is cited (para 93) as the source of the observation that it was after they lost their love of science and knowledge that the Romans lost their empire³¹. In *Le Livre de Paix*, Christine had also asserted that while the Romans remained devotees of prudence and the acquisition of science their realm had no equal, but when pride and greed came to dominate, their rule collapsed, though she did not there cite *Policraticus*³². In paragraph 66 the author of the *Advis* encourages the king to read the chronicles of the kings of France, thus echoing Christine's praise of this practice³³. The examples chosen from the Bible are also similar to those selected by Christine. Mention is made of Belteshazzar, nephew of Nebuchadnezzar, who lost his realm because of bad counsel. The episodes from *Daniel* and the earlier *Book of Kings* which tell of the destruction of Babylon had been used by Christine in *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine* as an illustration of God's punishment of those people and kings who had fallen into vice³⁴. She had returned to these examples in *Le Livre de Paix*, telling the tale of Belteshazzar (which she spells Baltasar) in order to illustrate how God punishes pride, and reminding her readers of Nebuchadnezzar in the following chapter³⁵. Christine is very fond of this Biblical example, including the occurrences in *L'Advison* and *Le Livre de Paix*, references to Nebuchadnezzar are found, with the same spelling as that in the *Advis*, in twenty-eight places in her works³⁶.

There is also a marked similarity between the general ethical outlook of the *Advis* and that of Christine. Specifically, in the *Livre de Paix* Christine shows herself aware of the doctrine of the unity of the virtues, saying :

car tout ainsi comme une seule vertu ne se pourroit passer a par elle et que autre n'atraist, semblablement est des vices lesquelz en la maniere que les aneaux d'une chayenne s'entresuivent et tiennent est il d'iceulx. (*Paix*, I, 11, p. 78)
[that just as a single virtue cannot exist on its own without attracting the others, so, it is similar with vices, which like the links of a chain are intertwined and hold to each other.]

³⁰ Christine de Pizan, *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, ed. Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty, Oxford, 1977.

³¹ Beltran quotes the same thought from, Jacques Legrand, « Livre de bonnes meurs », in Jacques Legrand, *Archiloge Sophie, Livre de bonnes meurs*, éd. Evencio Beltran, Paris, 1986, p. 12.

³² Christine de Pizan, *The « Livre de la Paix » of Christine de Pisan*, I, 8, p. 72.

³³ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des trois vertus*, I, 12, p. 50, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, p. 61.

³⁴ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*, éd. Liliane Dulac et Christine Reno, Paris, 2001, I, 17, I. 24 and I. 26, p. 32, 42 and 45.

³⁵ Christine de Pizan, *The « Livre de la Paix » of Christine de Pisan*, III, 20-21, p. 146-7.

³⁶ See J. Laidlaw's wordlist at http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/french/christine/conc2_wordlist.htm [consulted March 2007].

And, while an appreciation of the unity of the virtues is hardly an uncommon trait in the late medieval period, the author of the *Advis* uses almost the same metaphor to express it in paragraph 74 :

Item, que un roy doit estre vertueux en toutes vertus, et ainsi doit estre nourri, et, s'il avoit aucune malvaise tache, la doit laisser, car, se la tache demouroit, toutes vertus le laisseroient, et sont les vertus de tele condicion que elles sont enchenées et liées ensemble, et qui ne les a toutes il n'en a aucune. (*Advis*, p. 147)

[Note, that a king should be virtuous with all virtues, and should be brought up thus, and if he has any fault, he should abandon it, for, if the fault remains all the virtues will leave him, for the virtues are such that they are chained and tied together and he who fails to have them all has none.]

A shared ethical outlook is also found when one compares paragraphs 97 and 98, which warn against the danger of judging when angry, and *Livre de Paix*, III, 36 which equally warns against speaking and acting in anger.

Two paragraphs stand out in the manuscript of the *Advis* because of the clear marginal markings in ink which are intended to draw attention to them. The first is paragraph 56 (fol. 9r) which insists that a king should visit his parliament at least twice a year and oversee his chamber of accounts regularly. While I have not identified any quite so explicit requirement that the king should visit his parliament in other works of Christine, this advice is very much in the spirit of the practical advice that she gives to baronesses in her *Livre des trois vertus* where she makes it clear that good management involves carefully overseeing the work of one's employees³⁷. The other clearly highlighted paragraph, number 87, does however go to the heart of an issue that was dear to Christine. It advises that :

Item, que, se un roy vouloit sagement vivre, il assembleroit cinq bons astronomiens, les mieulx renommés en experiance que on pourroit trouver, et feroit savoir le temps, mois, jour et l'eure de sa nativité, et leur bailleroit par escript en leur requerant que sur ce ilz feissent une figure, comme on a acoustumé, pour savoir les bonnes et malvaises inclinations à quoy par le jugement des estoiles il seroit enclin, et leur feroit jurer de lui en dire verité sans espargne, afin que il peust multiplier les bonnes condicions à quoy il seroit enclin (*Advis*, p. 149).

[Note that if a king wishes to live wisely he will bring together five good astronomers, the best recommended by experience that one can find, and make known to them the weather, month, day and hour of his birth and engage them in writing to derive from this a chart as one is accustomed to, to know the good and bad tendencies that he will be subject to according to the judgement of the stars, and will make them promise to tell him the truth of it without dissimulation, so that he can increase the good dispositions to which he would be inclined]

³⁷ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des trois vertus*, p. 149-57 ; *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, p. 128-33.

Viriville finds the faith in astrology that is expressed here strange, particularly in the light of the fact that earlier, at paragraph 32, the author had insisted that the king should put his hope in God and flee all sorceries and judgements such as ‘good hours’ and other superstitions counselled by astronomers³⁸. However, this apparently contradictory set of beliefs is perfectly in tune with Christine’s attitudes. She strongly defended the validity of the astronomical science practised by her father, who had once been Charles V’s physician and astronomer, while also admitting the possibility of astrological chicanery, and insisting on the greatest faith and hope in God³⁹.

I conclude this rather long catalogue of similarities between the *Advis* and works written by Christine with the observation that its overall aim exactly coincides with the overall aim of *Le Livre de Paix* which is to promote just, prudent government – where what is meant by prudent government is that wisely pursued for the common good – and to urge the distinction between virtuous, legitimate rule and mere tyranny. The author of the *Advis* puts the matter succinctly and without dissimulation :

se verité, doctrine et justice n'estoient en la volonté du roy, et, si ne les executoit réalment et de fait, il ne seroit mie dit roy mais seroit nommé tyran, et se dampneroit perpetuellement. (*Advis*, p. 135-6)

[if truth, doctrine and justice are not what the king desires and if he does not genuinely and in fact put them into practice he will not at all be called king but named a tyrant and will damn himself perpetually.]

Christine, in the passage from *Le Livre de Paix* discussed above, in which she advises against anger, says that this is the behaviour of tyrants, and in the third book she insists that the virtues of clemency, liberality and truthfulness are features which distinguish the true monarch from the tyrant. It is here that she quotes Seneca’s *Libro de Clemencia*, saying :

En continuant tousjours notre matierelle paix ainsi que devant, excellent et tres redoubté prince, en ceste iii^e partie en laquelle esperons traictier des manieres pertinans a prince de gouverner son peuple, parlerons a ce commencement de la vertu de clemence, qui est la v^e des vii vertus que devant ay dit qui t’appartiennent ; de la propriété de ceste dit Senecque cy dessus allegué que elle ne donne pas seulement honnesteté aux princes, mais aussi tres grant seureté, et que c’est le droit aournement des empereurs et certain salut. Et par le contraire est desplaisant la maudite puissance non durable des tirans. Or pues tu doncques veoir comment propice chose est a tout bon prince estre clement et humain. (*Paix*, III, 1, p. 115-16)

³⁸ Viriville suggests that the author would have been better to stick to the earlier point of view, « Advis à Isabelle de Bavière », p. 149-150, n. 4.

³⁹ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de l’advison Cristine*, p. 97-9 ; C. C. Willard, « Christine de Pizan : the Astrologer’s Daughter », in *Mélanges à la mémoire de Franco Simone. France et Italie dans la culture européenne*, Geneva, 1980, p. 95-111, p. 105 ; Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, 14-15 ; C. C. Willard ed., *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, New York, 1994, p. 114-15.

[Continuing still with our subject of peace in the same way as before, excellent and most revered prince, in this third part, in which we hope to treat the ways it is pertinent for a prince to govern his people, we will speak first of the virtue of clemency, which is the fifth of the seven virtues which I have said are proper to you ; the property of this virtue, says Seneca in the passage quoted above, is that it gives not only honesty to princes, but also very great security, and it is the fitting ornament and certain salvation of emperors. And in contrast the accursed power of tyrants, that does not endure, is displeasing. Now you can see therefore what a propitious thing it is for every good prince to be clement and humane.]

It would however be wrong to conclude this discussion without mentioning a feature of the *Advis*, which did not at first strike me as altogether typical of Christine, though it is certainly compatible with her learning. This is the image developed in the first major discursive paragraph after the introduction. Here the author introduces the thought that through the Trinity, which is a true simple essence and unity, a company of angels called a « gerarchie » was formed. This hierarchy is made up of three orders, the first consisting of seraphim, cherubim and thrones, the second order being composed of dominations, principalities and powers, the third of virtues, archangels and angels. These angels govern human affairs and the seraphim are understood to represent charity and love of God, the cherubim, abundant knowledge, and the thrones, the resting place of true judgment.

les seigneurs princes terriens en justice et en autre gouvernement se doivent gouverner au regard de leurs subgiez par seraphim, c'est assavoir, par vraye charité et dileccion que ilz doivent avoir à leurs subgiez, pour reverence de Dieu, qui leur a baillé le peuple en gouvernement, non mie comme bestes mues, mais comme leurs freres et pareulx à eulx, en forme et matiere, et comme seroient chanoines d'une eglise soubz un evesque. Et si se doivent gouverner lesdiz princes par cherubin, c'est assavoir, par plenitude de sciences [...] Et si doivent gouverner les hommes princes leurs subgiez par trones, c'est assavoir, par gens ayans paix et repos de bonne raison ou siege de leur entendement (*Advis*, p. 135).

[Princely lords on earth should govern their subjects by seraphim, which is to say through true charity and love which they should have for their subjects, out of reverence for God, who has consigned the government of the people to them, not like dumb beasts but as their brothers and equals, the same as them in form and matter, and as though they were canons of the church beneath a bishop. And the said princes should govern by cherubim, which is to say by means of abundant knowledge [...] And they should govern by thrones which is to say through people whose understanding is governed by the peace and repose of good reason]

Such an extended description of the angelic hierarchy is not to be found elsewhere in Christine's works, so far as I know, though she was undoubtedly aware of it, and she mentions the hierarchies of angel, archangels, cherubim, seraphim and thrones in *Le Livre de la prison de la vie humaine*⁴⁰. The description of this angelic hierarchy originates with the *Celestial Hierarchy* of Dionysius the Pseudo-

⁴⁰ Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life*, p. 54-5.

Areopagite, a book which Christine had mentioned, in her biography of Charles V, was translated from Greek into Latin by Jean Scot Érigène⁴¹. The immediate source of this passage could just as well have been *La Légende dorée* by Jacques de Voragine, which, in a similar fashion to the *Advis*, draws an analogy between the hierarchy of angels and human government⁴². However, some of the phrases used in the *Advis* are closer to Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale* II. 11-12, a French translation of which, by Jean de Vigny, the *Miroir Historial*, Christine had definitely used as a source⁴³. Here we come across a common situation, which makes the unique identification of medieval sources problematic, for a variety of compilations often reuse the same material. Indeed, the author of the *Advis* could well have derived this passage by combining and rephrasing both these originals.

The glorification of the Trinity that one finds in the passage on the hierarchy of angels has a more theological and spiritual resonance than much of Christine's earlier writing, and yet is entirely in accord with her world view. Early on in *Le Livre de Paix* she cries, « O trinité glorieuse, une seule deité inseparable que les angelz louent incessamment » (*Paix*, I. 1, p. 58) [O glorious trinity, one single indivisible God, whom the angels praise endlessly]. This passage also resonates with the concluding paragraphs of *L'Advision Cristine*⁴⁴. The message illustrated by means of this brief allegory is totally consonant with Christine's political orientation, according to which, the health of the body politic is ultimately dependent on the piety, knowledge and prudence of its head.

One last reason for doubting Christine's authorship needs to be addressed. This is the fact that the manuscript is anonymous, whereas Christine was characteristically meticulous in identifying herself as the author of her works. In this case, however, anonymity is not surprising. As Viriville observes, the political situation was such that a work encouraging Isabeau to support her son would have been perceived by the English as treason⁴⁵. Yet this observation only complicates the attribution to Christine. For, if one argues that, for fear of retribution, Christine would have avoided identifying herself as a supporter of Charles in the mid-1420s, why was she happy to brazenly put her name to *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, in 1429? Given the current state of knowledge, this question is impossible to answer satisfactorily. It is not impossible that Christine's circumstances had changed during

⁴¹ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, III, 13, vol. 2, p. 48.

⁴² Jacques de Voragine, *Le Légende dorée*, trans. Jean de Vignay, ed. Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, Paris, 1997, p. 923-25, Jacques de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, New York, 1969, p. 581.

⁴³ Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, <http://atilf.atilf.fr/bichard/Scripts/Artem2/resvdb.exe> [consulted October 2004]. The stories of Saints Catherine and Margaret in *The Book of the City of Ladies* are very similar to those found in Jacques Voragine's *Golden Legend*, but Maureen Curnow argues convincingly that her immediate source was in fact the *Miroir Historial*. The text of the *Miroir Historial* found in BNF MS fr. 312 is, Curnow claims, close to the source that Christine follows for her version of the stories of the saints: M. C. Curnow, « The *Livre de la cité des dames* of Christine de Pizan: A Critical Edition » (unpub. Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1975, p. 183-96).

⁴⁴ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de l'advision Cristine*, III, 26, p. 138-140.

⁴⁵ Viriville, « Advis à Isabelle de Bavière », p. 130.

this time, for, if as widely assumed, Christine wrote the *Ditié* while at Poissy, by putting her name to it, she must have risked significant retribution from the English and Burgundians, who were at this stage in control of the town. But this is mere speculation, and so, one must conclude that the lack of authorial self-identification partly counts against the attribution to Christine.

The letter of advice to Isabeau ends on an odd note, which indicates that it was written by a mediator who was neither very close to Isabeau, nor excessively close to Charles. We have seen that it initially addresses Isabeau, and that the first paragraph suggests that it is written by an adherent of the king, who is among those who desire her intervention for the sake of the relief of the kingdom. But the concluding sentence belies this impression. Following a last assertion that « un roy ne se doit mie laisser conseilher par varles et par gens de nulle prudence » (*Advis*, p. 153) [a king should never allow himself to be counselled by the vulgar or those of little prudence] the author seems to sigh and ends abruptly, « Et plaise au roy de lire ces petits articles et y prendre exemple, et son royaume en vaudra mieulx » (*Advis*, p. 153) [Should it please the king to read these little articles and take their advice his realm would be better for it]⁴⁶. Thus, although addressed to Isabeau in the first instance, the advice is as much written for Charles, laying out for him, if he is prepared to take heed, the principles he should adopt if he is to deserve that measure of relief from the destruction of the realm that Isabeau may be able to provide.

At the end of his edition of the *Advis* Vallet de Viriville adds some notes concerning two of Isabeau's advisors, Anselme Appart, her Franciscan confessor, and Jean Chuffart, Gerson's successor as chancellor of Notre-Dame, who was at the same time Isabeau's chancellor⁴⁷. These were named among Isabeau's executors, and accompanied her coffin when her body was transported by boat with a minimum of ceremony to St. Denis to be buried. Although Viriville expresses the thought that without proof one should not hypothesise, he allows himself the indulgence of speculating that it was these advisors, under the direction of Chuffart, who were responsible for the *Advis*. This piece of ungrounded speculation has since been repeated as fact in the *Dictionnaire de biographie française* under the entry for Chuffart⁴⁸. Why Isabeau's own advisors would write a letter of this kind is something that Viriville does not attempt to explain. Nor does he give us any substantial reason for thinking that either of these gentlemen had a hand in the production of the *Advis*. Presumably, in speculating thus, he was motivated by the thought that if Isabeau was completely isolated and politically irrelevant during this period, it can only have been her close advisors who confected this letter, though for reasons which are difficult to fathom. But we should, I think, take the letter at face value as showing that Isabeau was not completely out of the political picture, and that some elements in the French population still saw her as having a potential role to play. She continued to be visited by her noble relatives, when they passed through Paris, and by bourgeois women of the town⁴⁹. The very existence of the letter shows

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 154-57.

⁴⁸ J. Balateau, M. Barroux and M. Prévost, *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, 19 vols, Paris, 1933-2000, vol. 8, p. 1301.

⁴⁹ Grandeau, « Les Dernières années d'Isabeau de Bavière », p. 413.

that Isabeau was not completely out of the political picture. Which raises the question, who wrote it and why?

While the considerations that I have presented here cannot be taken to prove absolutely that Christine was the author of this last political missive to the queen, to whom she had written so often before, there are clearly far better grounds for accepting this hypothesis than there ever were for adopting the speculations offered by Viriville. It is true that much of the advice offered in the *Advis* was common currency for the time. But until it is demonstrated that some other author shared exactly the same idiosyncrasies and preoccupations as those common to Christine and our author, she should be recognized as the most probable suspect. If it is accepted, as I believe it should be, that Christine was the author of the *Advis*, we have a tantalizing piece of evidence, beyond the existence of the *Heures de Contemplation sur la passion de Nostre Seigneur*, that Christine did more than simply weep during the eleven years that separated her exile from Paris and her composition of the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*⁵⁰.

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⁵⁰ See L. Dulac, « Littérature et dévotion : à propos des *Heures de Contemplation sur la passion de Nostre Seigneur* de Christine de Pizan », in *Miscellanea Medievalia. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Ménard*, éd. J.-C. Faucon, A. Labbé et D. Quérueu, Paris, 1998, p. 475-85 for a discussion of this late work by Christine.