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## **Could Christine de Pizan be the author of the « Advis à Isabelle de Bavière »**

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### **Extrait de l'article**

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 redoubtée 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).

[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 unnamed 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 ?

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