THE ROLE OF ISABEAU OF BAVARIA IN THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE

A Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

One crucial transformation in medieval institutions was the growth of royal authority at the expense of independent feudal nobles. As the kingdom of France consolidated and royal authority was extended, political power became centered in the person of the king and his bureaucratic advisers. One consequence was the decline of once powerful members of the feudal aristocracy and the queen. In the time of the early Capetians, the queen had been a true partner in power with the king, traveling with him and sharing the same household. But by 1500, she was excluded from power and participation in government, and her intimacy with the king was undermined by the formation of a separate household. By the thirteenth century the governmental functions of the queen were ceremonial, decorative, or symbolic.

Thus it was only under extraordinary circumstances that a queen could gain independent political power, and such was the fate of Isabeau of Bavaria. When she married Charles VI, king of France, in 1385, he was under a regency controlled by four dukes, but in three years Charles asserted his sole authority by releasing them. Isabeau seemed headed for a typical reign until in 1392 Charles had the first
of many attacks of insanity which rendered him incapable of
governing. The first rivals for power were Philip the Bold,
duke of Burgundy and uncle of the king, and Louis, duke of
Orleans and the king's brother. As the rivalry became
intense, both dukes looked to Isabeau to mediate their con-
flicts. After Philip died, the rivalry continued with Isa-
beau forsaking neutrality to align herself with Louis
against John the Fearless, the new duke of Burgundy. This
rivalry culminated in the murder of Louis of Orleans by men
in the service of John. After the murder came a long series
of crises: the Armagnac-Burgundian civil war, the Cabochian
revolt, the reopening of the Hundred Years War with England,
the formation of two rival French governments, the murder of
John the Fearless, the English occupation of Paris, and
finally the setting up of an English king in preference to
the only living son of Charles VI. In all these crises
Isabeau played an important role.

Isabeau of Bavaria was at heart a German woman who
found herself queen of France at a time when the country
was plagued by feudal anarchy and foreign aggression. The
insanity of Charles forced upon her a political role which
brought unexpected power. This thesis explores how Isabeau
came to achieve this power and influence, how she eventually
used it, and what the consequences of it were.
CHAPTER I

THE WIFE OF A MAD KING

Isabeau of Bavaria was the only daughter born to Stephen III, duke of Bavaria, and Thadea Visconti of Milan. The Wittelsbach family of Bavaria was one of the most ancient ruling houses of Europe, while the Visconti of Milan had consolidated their power only in the mid-fourteenth century. The Wittelsbach however lacked the great wealth that the Visconti had at their disposal. Obviously the two families presented Isabeau with a varied background.

The first Wittelsbach duke of Bavaria, elected in 911, was Arnulf, a descendant of Louis the German, grandson of Charlemagne. No Christian ruling family in Europe could trace its line back further. The Wittelsbach Emperor Louis of Bavaria, 1314–1347, was able to make his house the most powerful in Germany by controlling Brandenburg, Hainault, Holland, Carinthia, the Palatinate of the Rhine, and other areas as well as his old lands of Bavaria. After Louis' death however these noncontiguous territories were divided among the Wittelsbach, and the empire itself passed under the control of the Luxemburg family. Even Bavaria itself was in danger of being permanently divided until, in 1363,
Stephen II, Louis' second son, succeeded in placing Upper and Lower Bavaria under his sole authority. Yet when Stephen II died in 1375, his three sons divided the old Bavarian lands among themselves.

Stephen III, the father of Isabeau of Bavaria, was the oldest of these three sons. He was a typical Wittelsbach in that he was a daring, affable knight, fond of fighting, tournaments, voyages, pomp, costumes, women, and dancing. Since Stephen shared the title of duke in Bavaria with his brothers Frederick and John, his resources were limited and his debts were heavy. His involvement with imperial, Italian, and papal politics also hurt him financially, as did the growing demands of the bourgeoisie for rights and privileges. In 1384, Regensburg and Munich were in revolt against the dukes whose military strength was not able to prevent a favorable settlement for the bourgeoisie. With their exploitative power weakened, the financial situation of the dukes was worse than ever. Stephen's financial problems led him to prefer money indemnities to territories and to accept bribes to betray his old allies.

On the other hand the Visconti family of Milan had the great wealth that was associated with the revival of trade and commerce in urban Italy. During the time of Stephen II Milan was ruled by the Visconti brothers Bernabo and Galeazzo. Bernabo was a quick-tempered, ambitious, and debauched knight.
who had at times declared himself pope, emperor, and king. He estimated that he had fathered at least thirty legitimate and illegitimate children, and he was successful in assuring good marriage contracts for many of them. His eldest daughter Virida married Albert of Hapsburg, duke of Austria; his son Marco married Elisabeth of Wittelsbach, Frederick's daughter; his daughter Thadea married Stephen III, and another daughter Madeleine married Frederick. Bernabo's brother Galeazzo was an early Renaissance man who had only one son, Giangaleazzo. Galeazzo was able to marry his son to Isabelle of Valois when her father King John of France needed money to pay his ransom to the English. After succeeding his father in 1378, Giangaleazzo had his uncle Bernabo taken prisoner and, after confiscating his property, probably had him murdered. Thus began a great feud carried on by the children of Bernabo against Giangaleazzo that extended to Bavaria via Thadea who taught her daughter Isabeau to hate Giangaleazzo. Later in France when Giangaleazzo's daughter Valentina became Isabeau's sister-in-law, the two women brought the feud to the court of France. In 1395 Giangaleazzo became the first duke of Milan by purchasing the title from the Emperor Wenceslas.

The marriage of Thadea Visconti and Stephen III, which was celebrated in 1367, produced only two children, Louis and Elisabeth, known as Isabeau. The exact date of Isa-
beau's birth is not known, but it was probably in the early months of 1371. She was born and raised in the one-hundred and fifteen year old chateau of Ludwigsburg in Munich, where she was surrounded by an atmosphere of pomp, pilgrimages, and military campaigns. Her education consisted of learning enough Latin to read the Saints' Lives and the epic poems and histories of the great deeds of her ancestors. Isabeau especially loved the animals, birds, and gardens of her Bavarian childhood, and later in France she kept a model farm to remind her of past happiness. Although her mother died when Isabeau was only ten, she still had the affection of her father and the companionship of her beloved only brother Louis. Isabeau's happy childhood in Bavaria was to come to a sudden end in 1385 when she was told to accompany her uncle Frederick on a pilgrimage to the distant country of France.

The marriage of Isabeau to Charles VI

The marriage of Isabeau of Bavaria took place against a complex background of French, German, Burgundian, English, and papal foreign policy. Before he died in 1380, Charles V had requested that his son marry a German princess because he wanted a German ally in the fight against the English, and he saw how Richard II of England had achieved a German alliance by marrying Anne of Bohemia.\(^6\) When Charles V died
his son the new king Charles VI was only eleven, and the
government was turned over to the young king's four uncles.
Louis, duke of Anjou, was regent, but he quickly left France
on a military expedition to secure the throne of Naples.
Another uncle John of Berry was given the administration of
the Languedoc and Guienne, and he spent his time there. The
guardianship of the young king was entrusted to two other
uncles: Louis, the duke of Bourbon and only maternal uncle,
was inactive and usually deferred to the other guardian
Philip, duke of Burgundy, who came to hold the power of the
king of France. Philip found living in Paris convenient
because it was equidistant between his holdings in the north­
east and Burgundy. His concern for his vast holdings was
also the reason why Philip was interested in a Wittelsbach
alliance.

Philip's reasons for wanting Charles VI to marry Isabeau
were complex. The Wittelsbach held Hainault, Holland, Zea­
land, and Frisia, while Philip was married to Margaret, the
heiress of Flanders, Brabant, and Limburg. It was therefore
in their interests to have friendly relations. Secondly
the problem of the Schism forced France to look for support
for the Avignon pope. The Roman pope Urban V was recognized
by all Germans, and especially by Wenceslas of Luxemburg,
the emperor, who was in alliance with England. Since the
Wittelsbach were bitter rivals of the Luxemburg, the French
hoped that the Wittelsbach might turn their allegiance to Avignon. In his quest for a Wittelsbach alliance Philip had already married two of his own children, Margaret and John, to William of Ostrevant and Margaret of Bavaria, the children of Albert of Wittelsbach, duke of Holland, Hainault, Zealand, and Frisia.

Philip learned of Isabeau's existence when her uncle Frederick came to France to help fight the English in 1384. Frederick was asked to return to Bavaria and obtain his brother Stephen III's consent to allow Isabeau to come to France. Isabeau would have to be examined nude by the ladies of the French court to determine if she could bear children, and Charles VI would not marry a woman he had never seen. Stephen III refused to allow Isabeau to go because he would not have her declared sterile, humiliated by Charles, or separated from him by such a great distance. While a few court advisers looked elsewhere, Philip employed Jeanne, duchess of Brabant, to find a solution. She was a childless widow who planned to leave Brabant to her niece, Margaret, the wife of Philip. Jeanne had arranged the two marriages of Philip's children to Wittelsbachs, and now she assured him that she could arrange the marriage of Isabeau to Charles. With Stephen still insisting on a guarantee, Jeanne suggested that a pilgrimage be used as a pretext for Isabeau to come to France. Stephen's need for money and his weariness of
the whole affair finally led him to allow Isabeau to depart with Frederick for France in the spring of 1385, but Stephen warned Frederick that they would be enemies if Isabeau were disgraced. 10

Isabeau knew only that she was on a pilgrimage to France that would also bring her to Brabant and then to Hainault where her Wittelsbach relative Albert reigned. Besides Frederick, she was accompanied by her dear friend Catherine of Fastavarin and a nurse. When they arrived at Brabant and Hainault, Isabeau was given expensive French dresses and jewels to wear, and the duchesses of Brabant, Burgundy, and Holland taught her how to behave in the way of the French court. Charles was to meet Isabeau at Amiens in the course of an expedition against the English. Isabeau was met at the gates of Amiens by Bureau de la Rivière and Guy de la Tremoille, two members of the king's council, on July 13, 1385. The next day she was led before Charles VI who decided he would marry her as quickly as possible in spite of the fact that she had not spoken one word to him since she knew no French. Philip of Burgundy triumphantly began to make preparations for a marriage at Arras, but Charles decided he wanted to marry Isabeau at Amiens. The marriage contract had no dowry from Isabeau because her beauty was said to be enough, and Charles would not even accept the money that Frederick had brought as a wedding gift. 11 The marriage,
held on Monday July 17, was made in such great haste that there were none of the public entertainments usually associated with royal marriages. The people, having had no participation in the ceremonies, were surprised to see an unknown German princess suddenly become queen of France. Isabeau also was surprised by her sudden, unexpected marriage. She was only fifteen, and although she was not really beautiful, she was youthful and charming. She had no political interests of her own, but she had been used by others to further their own interests. For the early years of her reign, she was content to remain passive.

The early reign of Isabeau 1385-1392

Isabeau was now to be initiated into the world of a medieval French queen. Only a few days after her marriage, Charles left to continue his military venture, the duchesses of Brabant, Hainault, and Burgundy returned to their castles, and Frederick returned to Bavaria. Only Isabeau's nurse and her friend Catherine of Fastavarin remained with her. Charles had designated Blanche, the duchess of Orleans and daughter of Charles IV, and John of Artois, the count of Eu, to accompany his wife to Creil where she would await his return. At Creil, Isabeau began to study the history of France and especially the French language in which she made slow progress probably because she always spoke German with
her confidant Catherine. At heart, Isabeau remained devoted to the fashions and religious superstitions of Bavaria. When Charles returned to Creil that autumn, he took Isabeau south with him and had her lodged at Vincennes while he entered Paris.

Isabeau set up her household at the splendid chateau of Vincennes. The household of a queen was much smaller than that of a king primarily because she had no troops and less official business. Her people and officers included a master of the household, master of the chambre aux deniers, a contrôleur of the expenses of the household, clerks of the offices of the household, house officers of the pantry, kitchen, stables, keys, and storage, clergymen, ladies of honor, secretaries, and servants. The master of the household, master of the chambre aux deniers, contrôleur, and clerks all made bi-annual accounts of the household receipts, which came from the treasury of the king, and the expenses. However the importance of the chambre aux deniers was limited because a large portion of household expenses, especially the purchases of clothing, tapestries, jewels, plate, and other equipment, escaped the chambre and were paid for by a special accounting officer called the argentier. The argentier controlled these purchases not only for Isabeau but also for the king, their children, Louis, the king's brother, and Louis' wife Valentina.
was to develop into an unwieldly institution over which Isabeau had little control.

Isabeau enjoyed a life of intense luxury and activity of an apolitical nature. Charles took her with him on his voyages with the frequent exceptions of military ventures and of times when she was in advanced stages of pregnancy. Even without Charles, she still did a great deal of traveling on her own as was the custom of medieval queens. This traveling was in a small zone restricted to the castles in the vicinity of Paris, and the purpose appeared to be merely to collect hospitality and not to meet the people as was the purpose of the king's voyages. Isabeau received mention in the chronicles only in connection with ceremonies and celebrations of a social or religious nature. In 1389, she attended three great fêtes. The first was in April at Saint Denis for the two sons of Louis of Anjou who were going on an expedition to conquer Sicily. Then in August she attended the marriage at Melun of Louis, then duke of Touraine, to Valentina Visconti, the only daughter of Gian Galeazzo and Isabelle of Valois. By far the greatest fête however was in honor of Isabeau herself. Although she had been queen for four years, Isabeau had not been officially received by Paris nor had she been crowned. Charles now planned a seven day display of wealth and pomp beginning with Isabeau's entry into Paris on August 22, 1389. The dukes and duchesses of
Touraine, Berry, Burgundy, and Bourbon as well as many foreign visitors and huge crowds watched the entry and saw her crowned the next day by the archbishop at Sainte-Chapelle. Isabeau however had difficulty attending all the events because she was seven months pregnant.

Certainly the most important duty of a queen was to produce an heir, and Isabeau, in spite of frequent pregnancies, had her difficulties. Her first child was a son named Charles who was born on September 25, 1386, and held the title of dauphin until he died three months later on December 28. The second child was a daughter called Jeanne who was born on June 14, 1388, and died in 1390. On November 9, 1389, a second daughter Isabelle was born. This daughter was married to King Richard II of England when she was only seven and returned to France a widow in 1401 without ever consummating the marriage. In 1406, Isabelle married Charles, son and heir of Louis of Orleans, and died in childbirth on September 13, 1409. The fourth child was a third daughter born January 24, 1391, and named Jeanne in memory of her dead sister. Jeanne married John of Montfort, son and heir of the duke of Brittany, in order to seal an alliance between Brittany and France, and she died in 1433. Isabeau's fifth child was the long-awaited second son and second dauphin who was born February 6, 1392, and also named Charles. The boy was promised to Margaret, daughter of John the Fearless.
the heir to Burgundy, but having always been sickly, this Charles died in 1401.

Charles VI, from his assumption of power to his insanity 1388-1392

At the time of his marriage, Charles VI was still under the control of his uncle Philip of Burgundy. Although he was the youngest uncle, Philip was acknowledged to be politically superior and his fief of Burgundy was one of the largest and richest in the realm. Philip used the regency primarily to extend his own influence in the Low Countries which of course was the basis for Isabeau's marriage. Isabeau remained affectionately grateful to Philip for arranging her marriage, but Charles resented him more and more. Charles had never been close to his uncle and spoke freely only with bureaucrats like Bureau de la Rivière, a friend and councillor of his father. Philip's fall began with his attempt to invade England and settle that conflict. Grand preparations for a fleet were made, but Philip's call was obeyed very slowly and with ill will by Berry and Charles, and the plans were ruined. The English, aroused by the attempt, bought the loyalty of the duke of Guelders who began hostilities against Jeanne of Brabant, Philip's ally. In 1388, Philip took Charles and a huge army against Guelders. The expedition was difficult because the natural route
through Brabant was not taken, and it was fruitless because Burgundy made peace without forcing Guelders to give up the English alliance. When Charles, then twenty years old, returned to Reims from the Guelders fiasco in November 1388, he was impatient and unhappy. With his brother Louis, then seventeen, and his councillors, Charles asked that the government be turned over to him and thanked his uncles for their services. Isabeau played no part, but she was no doubt happy to see her husband take the power into his own hands. Philip had no choice but to withdraw to Burgundy.

The men who aided Charles in this coup had all been important councillors under his father. These men came from the middle nobility or from the bourgeoisie and were called Marmousets by the great lords. Charles had a deep affection for the Marmousets, especially Olivier de Clisson, whom he made constable of France in 1380, Bureau de la Rivière and Jean le Mercier who now directed diplomatic and financial affairs, and Jean de Montagu, Charles' secretary who also assisted with the finances. These men supposedly governed in the best interests of the realm and not for personal gain as one accused a great noble like Philip. However although the Marmousets did make an effort to stop abuses in taxation and to try corrupt officials, they were corrupt themselves. In the era of the Marmousets, Charles was given a free hand to indulge in his love for pleasure and
luxury. The heavy costs of such fêtes as Saint Denis, Isabeau's entry into Paris, and frequent parties were not good for the people of France or for the king himself. In 1389, Charles and Louis left on a long voyage to see the southern provinces for the first time, to hear complaints against the duke of Berry's administration, and to visit the pope at Avignon. From Lyon, to Avignon, to Languedoc, Charles continued his unrestrained search for pleasure, and Isabeau, left pregnant and ignored at Vincennes, must have had doubts about the attitude of her husband. Certainly the Marmousets had become hated and feared not only by the king's uncles but also by the people as well.

The story of the fall of the Marmousets began with an attack on Olivier de Clisson by Pierre de Craon, an Angevin lord who had stolen treasures from the duke of Anjou while the latter was on his expedition to Naples. Since Clisson was an ally of the house of Anjou, Craon feared him and plotted with another enemy of Clisson, the duke of Burgundy. 21 Although the attack did not kill Clisson, Charles demanded revenge in spite of his uncles' attempts to discourage it. 22 The uncles knew that Charles was not well, that he had not fully recovered from a recent fever, that he was nervous, strange, and wild, and that he should abstain from activities and take care of himself. 23 Philip visited Isabeau frequently to convince her that France did not need a new war.
and that Charles was in no state to lead it, while la Rivière spoke against the duke. Isabeau apparently found Charles so intent on the expedition that she could not oppose it. It was in the course of this expedition on a hot August 5, 1392, in the deep forests of Le Mans that Charles VI had his first attack of insanity. As an immediate political effect, the uncles blamed the Marmousets for allowing the deterioration of the king's health and imprisoned several of them.24 Thus the uncles took all power back into their own hands.

Charles VI's first attack of insanity was the pivotal event of his reign, and his subsequent attacks and deterioration compounded the tragedy. During his first seizure he began to attack the men in his party and killed four of them. He recognized no one and did not speak. Charles always had brief intervals of lucidity however in which he regretted his insane actions, and in the beginning these intervals were always interpreted as signs that he had recovered. However the second attack in the summer of 1393 was more serious than the first. Charles lost all his awareness and did not know who he was. He said that he was not married and had no children and that his name was George. He would run along the corridors howling like a wolf, and when he saw lilies he would mock them or dance before them. Often he thought that he was made of glass and feared that he would fall. He was confused, incoherent, angry, and violent. Doctors
could do nothing for him, and since their cures verged on torture, the king dismissed them. One great problem was the superstition that Charles was under the spell of an enemy, and nearly everyone near him was at times falsely accused. As later attacks continued, Charles suffered great agony and stated that he would prefer death. He was incapable of taking care of himself. He would not change his clothes, and he was full of lice, vermin, and odor. Charles was to live with this tragic disease for thirty years, during which time he was helpless. In his periods of lucidity he would attempt to take an active political role, but he only added to the confusion. It became possible and necessary to build a base of power independent of the institution of the king.

**Isabeau and the insanity of Charles VI**

Isabeau was to suffer humiliation at the hands of her mad husband. When he returned to Paris after his first attack, he did not recognize Isabeau or their children, but he was not hostile to them. The doctors advised Isabeau and Louis to divert Charles' attention with the frivolous entertainments he had once enjoyed. In one of these diversions, the second marriage of Catherine of Fastavarin, Charles and six others dressed as savages in feathers and resin. When Louis accidently brought a torch too close, the savages caught fire and only Charles was saved. He seemed to be
recovering until he left Paris to negotiate with Richard II and had a second attack that lasted eight months. When he returned to Paris, Charles did not recognize Isabeau and was disturbed by her presence. In fact she was a horror to him, and he asked that she be removed from his sight. He did not recognize the Bavarian arms on tapestries, and he violently destroyed them. Isabeau was not allowed to spend time alone with him for fear that he would harm her. The one woman whom Charles did recognize and ask for was his sister-in-law Valentina Visconti who could calm and comfort him. Isabeau became a jealous outcast.

In his periods of lucidity however Charles regretted his conduct toward his wife and resumed his relationship with her. From 1393 to 1407, Isabeau gave birth to seven more children. Marie, the fourth daughter, was born in 1393 during her father's second seizure. When she was only four, she was presented to the convent of Poissy by her mother in order to obtain God's help in curing Charles, and she remained a nun until she died in 1438. The seventh child and fifth daughter was born in January 1395 and named Michelle. She married Philip the Good, son and heir of John the Fearless of Burgundy, and died in 1422. In 1397, Louis, the third son and future third dauphin was born. He married Margaret, the daughter of John the Fearless, and died in 1415. The ninth child was a son born in 1398 and also a future dauphin
named Jean. Jean married Jacqueline of Hainault, the daughter of William, duke of Holland, but like his three brothers died before he could be king. Isabeau's tenth child was a sixth daughter born October 27, 1401, and named Catherine. She was promised to the king of England Henry V in the treaty of Troyes and married him shortly afterwards. After he died she married a Welsh squire Owen Tudor and had two sons, one of whom was Edmund, the father of Henry Tudor.

Charles VII, the future fifth dauphin and king of France, was born on February 22, 1403. He consummated his marriage to Marie of Anjou, the daughter of Louis of Anjou, the king of Sicily, in 1422, the same year he became king. Isabeau's twelfth and last child was a son named Philip who was born on November 10, 1407, and died the same day. In spite of the frequent pregnancies Isabeau had little communication with the king, and she was subjected to cruelty and even beatings at his hands. Thus it is not difficult to understand that after twelve pregnancies and frequent abuse, Isabeau felt she had done enough to secure the Valois line.

Even before the birth of the last child, Isabeau had consented to a young female companion for the king named Odinette de Champdivers, the daughter of the master of the king's household. However France owed much to Isabeau's persistence in childbearing in spite of a mad husband and sickly children, and this was her most positive contribution.
Isabeau's primary activity after Charles went insane was the building of her personal fortune. The king's will of January 1393 and the king's council ordered that Isabeau be assigned a dower of twenty-five thousand livres tournois of rent annually. This was the sum given to the queens of Philip VI and Charles V. The Chamber of Accounts had to determine which places would annually furnish these rents if the king died. The difficult task took over a year and was complicated by the existence of the dower of Queen Blanche, widow of Philip VI. The long list finally included the châteaux in the Ile de France of Moret, Fontainebleau, Samois, Pont-sur-Yonne, Nemours, and the revenues of the bridge of Melun. In Champagne, the revenues of the cities and châteaux of Saint-Florentin, Pont and Nogent-sur-Seine, Meaux, etc., were included, as were areas of Rouen, Normandy, and the Dauphiné. Isabeau complained that these areas were too scattered and that Queen Blanche had the best dower. By the time Blanche died in 1398, Isabeau had been given the right to exchange several of her scattered areas in the Ile de France and Champagne for the fertile fields of Normandy that once belonged to Blanche. Isabeau was allowed to do this, but her sum could never go over twenty-five thousand livres tournois, and she could not have any of it until she was a widow.

Isabeau also found ways to profit from the king's mad-
ness. In 1393 she became master of her own expenditures and those of her children by receiving from Charles her own argenterie. She was also allowed the special privilege of receiving money from the Chamber of Accounts that she could use freely without revealing how she used it. At about the same time the royal council, then presided over by the duke of Berry, allowed her to regulate her debts without examination or control by royal officers. In 1396 she was given possession of the private domains of Montargis, Crécy-en-Brie, Courtenay, and Chantecoq, and in 1397 Charles gave her the beautiful residence of Saint Ouen near Paris. In 1398 she was given a farm near Saint Ouen and a residence in Paris itself, the hotel of Barbette, once owned by Jean de Montagu, the Marmouset who had survived the fall to become Isabeau’s friend and confidant. She also acquired Vaux-la-Reine, Saint Dizier, and Vignory, and in 1404, when the king gave his brother Louis Montargis, Courtenay, and Crécy-en-Brie, Isabeau was compensated with Melun and Moret and was allowed to continue receiving revenues from Crécy-en-Brie, a part of her dower. The costs of the new residences and the increasing number of royal children would have hurt her argenterie had she not been given more money from the Chamber of Accounts. Therefore Isabeau acquired receipts from the aides of Paris and some Normand cities and from the grainaries of Paris, Rouen, and Amiens.

22
Isabeau's apparent greed combined with her cooling relationship with her husband made her less popular with the people of France. Her German accent and habits made her forever foreign, and she made no attempts to meet or know the people.\(^\text{35}\) When Isabeau made her entry into Paris in 1389, the people of Paris condoned the waste, and the bourgeoisie gave her gifts, because they hoped she would use her influence to reduce the heavy burdens of taxation. However, Isabeau seemed to have the attitude that ceremonies in her honor and gifts were due her.\(^\text{36}\) The costs of Marmouset extravagance were not alleviated by their fall, because the insanity of the king brought his ambitious uncles and brother to power. With Charles insane, the uncles, Louis, and Isabeau all tried to acquire wealth to build power and security, and Isabeau's obvious moves in that direction made her vulnerable to attack. Her behavior toward Charles also made her vulnerable. After Charles nearly burned to death at her ball in 1392, the people of Paris were notably upset by their "foreign" queen.\(^\text{37}\) It was easy to accuse her of poisoning or bewitching the king, and it was true that she was forced to abandon him. Nevertheless, Isabeau's unpopularity with the people of France was only beginning, and it was to become a great problem.

Isabeau caused few problems in the early years of her reign because she did not seek power. In the governmental
adjustments made after Charles' insanity, Isabeau was to be accorded only a shadow of power if the king died and a regency were established, and while he lived, she had no power at all. Isabeau apparently submitted to the will of the king's uncles and brother, but in her struggle to achieve financial security, she acquired political experience. After 1392 she traveled much less and preferred to stay in Paris at the king's hôtel of Saint Paul until she had her own Paris residence of Barbette. She kept up a correspondence with Philip of Burgundy, Louis of Orleans, and John of Berry, and her new friend Jean de Montagu became the master of expenditures of the households of the king and queen. Meanwhile the rivalry of the dukes of Burgundy, Berry, and Orleans in both domestic and foreign affairs necessitated an arbitrator whom the dukes trusted as a friend. Isabeau stepped naturally into this role, and in ten years after Charles' first attack of insanity, the dukes agreed to approach the queen to mediate their differences.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I


3 Ibid., p. 27.

4 E. Collas, Valentine de Milan, duchess d'Orléans (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1911), p. 27. Collas points out that there is no proof that Bernabo was murdered.

5 Her given name was Elisabeth, and the medieval French form was Ysabel. Historians of later centuries translated her name to Isabeau, Isabelle, Isabel, or Isabella.


8 Thibault, p. 33.
9 Froissart, p. 94.


11 Thibault, p. 59.


13 Chavelot, p. 48.

14 Thibault, pp. 106-197.

15 For the offices and people of Isabeau's household in her early reign, see Thibault, pp. 109-117.

16 L. Douet-D'Arcq, *Comptes de l'hôtel des rois de France aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1865), pp. xxvii-xxviii for the list of a queen's expenditures; pp. xxxii-xxxiii for the sum of Isabeau's accounts 1398-1422 that exist; and pp. 128-172 for Isabeau's entire account for the first half of 1401.

17 Thibault, p. 254. Also, L. Douet-D'Arcq, *Nouveau recueil des comptes de l'argenterie des rois de France* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1874), pp. 113-319, for the argenterie of the king and his family and brother for the first half of 1387.

18 Thibault, pp. 118-119.


22. Ibid., pp. 19-20. The king's uncles did not like Clisson and might have been in the plot against him. They quickly had Craon pardoned.

23. Ibid., p. 20.

24. Ibid., p. 21. La Rivière and the other Marmousets spent a short time in prison. Clisson alone escaped. The king ordered them released later and had their property returned.


26. Ibid., p. 37.

27. Chavelot, p. 83.

28. Ibid., p. 82.

29. Vallet de Viriville, "Notes sur l'état civil des princes et princesses nés de Charles VI et d'Isabeau de Bavière," Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes, 1853, p. 481. All the dates of the births and deaths of the children are taken from this article by Vallet de Viriville, pp. 473-482.

31 Thibault, pp. 245-247.

32 Ibid., p. 257.

33 Ibid., p. 276.


35 Thibault, pp. 118-119.

36 Ibid., p. 166.

37 Ibid., p. 219.

38 Ibid., pp. 271-278.
CHAPTER II

ISABEAU AS DIPLOMAT AND ARBITRATOR

The insanity of Charles VI allowed Philip the Bold, the duke of Burgundy, to regain control of the French government. Philip's rival for power was the king's brother Louis, the duke of Orleans, who embarked on a career that eventually threatened Philip's authority in France. Although Louis was young, frivolous, and politically inferior to his uncle, he had the advantage of the affection of his brother, the king, which allowed him considerable influence when Charles was sane. Isabeau's position was complicated by the fact that her own interests led her into Louis' camp on domestic issues and into Philip's in foreign policy. Isabeau promoted Wittelsbach interests at the French court with cunning and consistency, and since Philip's foreign policy corresponded with Wittelsbach interests, Isabeau was Philip's useful and loyal ally. However she was not immune to the charms of her brother-in-law Louis, and she shared his desire to increase taxes and use huge sums of money for personal interests. From 1392 to 1404, the year of Philip's death, the diametrically opposed foreign policies of Isabeau and Philip on the one hand and Louis on the other were evident on such fronts as England,
Italy, the Empire, and the Schism. This chapter will discuss Isabeau's conduct and policy toward, firstly, the conflict over Italy, secondly, the two French foreign policies toward England, thirdly, the two policies concerning the German Empire, and finally the struggle between Philip and Louis for control of France itself.

Isabeau and Italian Politics 1389-1396

On September 17, 1389, Louis, the future duke of Orleans, married Valentina Visconti, the only daughter of Giangaleazzo Visconti, the future duke of Milan. Isabeau shared with her Wittelsbach family the bitter grievance against Giangaleazzo that he had illegally seized sole power in Milan in 1385 by deposing his co-ruler Bernabo Visconti, a man whose many contacts with the Wittelsbach included being the grandfather of Isabeau. Before Charles' insanity Isabeau and Valentina were both too preoccupied with maternity and their husbands to bother with old family hostilities. However Isabeau, her father Stephen, and brother Louis never renounced the Italian heritage, and as events developed in the wake of Charles' insanity, the entire Wittelsbach family together with their close ally Philip of Burgundy and the city of Florence were to form an anti-Milan faction. The pro-Milan faction was made up of Giangaleazzo and his son-in-law Louis of Orleans. Louis was an ambitious man who came to receive support and
guidance from Milan for such schemes as an Italian principality for himself, an attempt to end the Schism by placing the Avignon pope in sole power, and support for the princes of Anjou in Naples. Thus the lines were drawn for the conflict between the Orleans-Visconti and Burgundian-Wittelsbach factions that was to demonstrate for the first time the struggle for control of French policy that would ensue with the king insane.

At the end of 1392, Giangaleazzo Visconti sent his negotiator Niccolo Spinelli to Paris to form an alliance that would support Milan against the unfriendly states of Florence, Bologna, Padua, Mantua, and Ferrara. Spinelli, once the chancellor of Queen Jeanne of Naples and a supporter of the Angevin cause there, was given instructions to explain Milan's position. Giangaleazzo wished to remind France that he had not supported the anti-Avignon League of Bologna at Charles VI's request. As a result Milan was surrounded by hostile neighbors who were all supporters of Boniface IX, the Roman pope. Giangaleazzo felt he could support the Avignon pope Clement VII only if a French army guaranteed him protection from his neighbors. In return he would aid the French cause in Italy, even a French military expedition. Giangaleazzo also wanted Charles VI to grant him a title of a hereditary prince not simply because he was an elected official in Milan, but because this would mean the rejection of the
claims of Bernabo's children. Spinelli received support from Clement while at Paris, but the mission did not go well. Charles wanted Giangaleazzo to declare himself openly in support of the Avignon pope which would have been disasterous for Milan.

To save the negotiations, Spinelli revived an incredible plan of Clement's earlier years for the kingdom of Adria which would be the infeudation to a French prince of a portion of the Papal States. This kingdom of Adria would, on the one hand, provide Giangaleazzo with a friendly state in central Italy, and the obvious choice of Louis of Orleans, Giangaleazzo's son-in-law, might provide the support of a French army in Milan's interests. On the other hand the Adria scheme would end the Schism by means of an Orleanist advance on Rome from Adria and an Angevin advance from Naples which would depose the Roman pope and bring the Avignon pope Clement to Rome. Then when Clement became pope in Rome he would find the papacy finally free of the shameful and hateful burden of temporal politics that possession of the Papal States typified. However Clement did not want to give up the entire Papal States, and in August 1394 he scaled down the Adria scheme to include only the March of Ancona, Romagna, Perugia, Ferrara, and Ravenna. The final destruction of the impossible Adria scheme came about with a series of problems: Charles VI's insanity, Philip the Bold's intentions
to counteract Louis, Louis' decision to attack Genoa instead, and finally the death of Clement VII. In 1394 Louis was not able to get his Genoa expedition together in spite of the support of Giangaleazzo and finally was compelled to cede his claims to Genoa to Charles VI for 300,000 francs. Although the Adria and Genoa schemes had collapsed through their own inherent difficulties, Louis of Orleans had formed a steady alliance with his father-in-law that promised to produce more schemes for Orleanist-Milanese control of Italy.

Isabeau of Bavaria had definite interests in Italian politics which centered around Wittelsbach vengeance against Giangaleazzo. With the aid of her brother Louis of Bavaria and Philip the Bold of Burgundy she began in 1395 attempts to weaken Louis of Orleans in France and to encourage French alliances with Milan's enemies in Italy. She began this work by meeting in negotiations with Buonaccorso Pitti, the ambassador from Florence, the Italian enemy of Giangaleazzo. The result of these talks was a projected treaty against Giangaleazzo that Pitti would get approval for in Florence and then return with to Paris for ratification by the French king. While waiting, Isabeau was able to score her first political victory on a rather unpleasant basis. This was the forced exile in April 1396 of Valentina Visconti, wife of Louis of Orleans and daughter of Giangaleazzo, from the French court at Paris to Louis' country residence at
Asnieres-sur-Oise. Isabeau's dislike of her sister-in-law was not necessarily based on Wittelsbach revenge for Bernabo's deposition or even Wittelsbach desire to destroy the influence of Giangaleazzo and Louis of Orleans at the French court.

In fact the most obvious reason for Isabeau's desire to harm Valentina was the position of trust and influence that Valentina had achieved with Charles VI since his insanity. Charles consistently desired Valentina's company which had a soothing effect on him, while he was so deeply disturbed by Isabeau's presence that he asked that she be removed from his sight.

Isabeau might also have been jealous of Valentina's intellectual and cultural superiority and desirous of Valentina's handsome, ambitious, and unrestrained husband Louis of Orleans. It was therefore not so much politics as feminine jealousy that brought this humiliation to Milan and vengeance to Wittelsbach.

Valentina and Louis however were unpopular enough with the people of Paris to make Isabeau's role in Valentina's exile quite obscure. Actually, the charges against Valentina began to circulate widely in Paris taverns without the encouragement of Isabeau. It was rumored that Valentina was a sorceress who had bewitched the king and poisoned his children. These slanderous, malicious attacks were encouraged by Valentina's close relationship with the king since his insanity, by the total failure of medieval medicine...
to cure or even explain the king's illness, and by the reputation of Lombardy as a center of sorcery. The people of Paris also had no love for Louis of Orleans whose lifestyle involved lavish spending on pleasures that the people paid for with their taxes. Since there was no dauphin at the time, the people saw that the obviously ambitious Louis and Valentina would become king and queen if Charles died. There was certainly no proof of a plot against the king, but in these suspicious times there was no need for proof. The rumors that the people of Paris intended to march on Valentina's Paris residence and kill her increased to such a point that Louis feared for his wife and children. When Louis was accused of plotting with his wife it was decided in April 1396 that Valentina must leave Paris, and she would not return until after Louis' assassination in 1407. In spite of the role of the mob it was certainly probable that Isabeau was the perpetuator, if not the inspiration, of the attacks for the obvious reason that they furthered her ambitions in both France and Italy. Credit must also be given to Isabeau's ally the wife of Philip the Bold of Burgundy, Marguerite, who helped to make the unfortunate Valentina the first victim of the struggle between the houses of Burgundy and Orleans.

Isabeau's victory over Valentina was followed quickly by her total victory over Giangaleazzo's entire French policy.
In May 1396, Maso degli Albizzi, a party leader in Florence and arch enemy of Milan, went to Paris where he was joined in July by Florentine diplomat Buonacorso Pitti who had definite proposals for an alliance. The negotiations were handled largely by Pitti and Isabeau in secrecy in order to avoid opposition from Louis of Orleans. With the approval of Philip of Burgundy, Isabeau was able to keep Louis from the conferences, and after the Franco-Florentine alliance was drawn up, Isabeau quickly and secretly took it to King Charles for his signature in September 1396. Since Charles was in one of his periods of insanity, he had no idea that France and Florence had concluded a five year alliance, promising mutual military aid and arranging for a partition of Milan. Then in November 1396, France formally annexed Genoa, the city Giangaleazzo had wanted for Louis' empire, by a friendly agreement in which Louis was paid 300,000 francs for his claims. In December Pitti was authorized to recruit mercenary troops in France for the war against Milan. Isabeau's diplomatic victory however soon met with the reality of the French government's capability and intentions.

Giangaleazzo prepared to take the offensive against Florence and France, but luckily for him, the French could not honor their alliance. News arrived that the French crusading army had been totally wiped out by a Muslim force
at Nicopolis, plunging all France into mourning and causing France to ignore the Lombard expedition and to leave Florence alone with only uncertain Italian allies. The Mantuan War began with Milan's campaigns which proved inconclusive. In 1397 Florence tried again to bring France to her aid, but Louis of Orleans and Giangaleazzo managed to block the new threat. The Mantuan War remained an entirely Italian project in which neither Milan nor Florence and her allies lost or gained much of importance. The hopes of Isabeau for the destruction of Giangaleazzo in Milan were ruined, but she was by no means discouraged. It was clear that French troops would not be used to support either side in Italy, but Isabeau had certainly put an end to Louis of Orleans' ambitions for a Franco-Milanese alliance. Louis of Orleans now turned his attentions from the Italian principality to the possibility of a principality on France's northeastern border, and in the process he became involved in German, Burgundian, and French politics as well as the related problems of the Schism and Italy. Louis would again find himself countered by Queen Isabeau of Bavaria who would again show herself capable of furthering Wittelsbach interests.

Isabeau and the Lancastrian Revolution 1399

Before discussing the German question, brief mention should be made of the minor problem that developed for Isabeau.
beau when Henry of Lancaster had the king of England Richard II deposed and murdered in 1399. On March 12, 1396, the betrothal of Richard II to Isabeau's daughter, Isabelle of France, who was only seven years old, was celebrated at Sainte-Chapelle by procuration. Isabelle continued to live in her mother's house until November 1396 when her marriage was celebrated at Calais, and then she went to live in London. Isabeau endured a minor insult in 1399 when Richard ordered the dismissal of the French lords and ladies who had accompanied Isabelle to England, but news of a great crisis reached France that same year. It was reported that a court revolution in London had brought Henry IV to the throne and that Richard and Isabelle were prisoners. Isabelle appealed to her French relatives for help, but her father Charles was too ill, her uncles had more or less agreed to allow Henry's coup, and her mother Isabeau did not have the necessary influence to begin an expedition into England.17

After Richard was murdered, the demands for Isabelle's return increased in France, especially on Isabeau's part. She feared that her daughter would be forced to accept the hand of an English prince while Isabeau had new plans for Isabelle in Germany.18 Finally in August 1401, Isabelle was returned to France and the household of her mother, and since the German marriage did not materialize, Isabelle was given in 1406 to Charles, the son of Louis of Orleans. Mean-
while, Isabeau's hostility to the new English government quickly dissipated after the return of her daughter. As a good Wittelsbach and ally of Philip the Bold of Burgundy, Isabeau dreaded any discord between France and England primarily for economic reasons. In Wittelsbach Holland and Philip's Flanders the wool industry was of primary importance. The Low Countries and Flanders needed English wool for their textile industry, and their communes would revolt against the dukes if the trade and prosperity were jeopardized. Since Louis of Orleans did not share this interest it is not surprising that he did make a proposal to Isabeau to avenge Richard and Isabelle, but Louis was again frustrated by his uncle Philip.

**Isabeau and German Politics 1395-1404**

As early as 1395 the Wittelsbach families of Bavaria and the Palatinate were plotting to depose their enemy the Emperor Wenceslas of the Luxemburg family and to replace him with a Wittelsbach. The Wittelsbach Louis V had led the empire in its grander days, and now their candidate for emperor was the Count Palatinate Robert II of Wittelsbach, and his most active agents were Stephen III and Louis of Bavaria, Isabeau's father and brother. Wenceslas' personal behavior was deplorable because he was a drunkard, but his political behavior was far more offensive to the Wittelsbach. It was
Wenceslas who finally sanctioned Milan's departure from the empire by giving Giangaleazzo the hereditary title of duke of Milan in 1395. Wenceslas, in the tradition of the Luxembourg family, also had sympathies and friendships with the Valois family in France. The emperor's close relationship with Charles VI and his brother Louis created worry among the electors of the empire that Wenceslas would make agreements that would jeopardize the Roman pope in favor of Avignon.

When Wenceslas realized that a storm was rising against him in Germany, he naturally sought to renew personal ties with France even if he had to make major concessions. A conference between Charles and Wenceslas was therefore held at Reims in March 1398, primarily to discuss ways to end the Schism.

Reims brought into focus the problems that the two leaders faced, not the least of which were Charles' next attack of insanity and Wenceslas' drunken stupor.

At Reims, the Schism was of primary importance. All Europe was divided along political lines between the partisans of Rome and the partisans of Avignon with France and her allies supporting Avignon and England, the empire, and their allies supporting Rome. In 1390 France had hoped that the imperial princes would subtract obedience from the Roman pope Boniface IX, but the influence of the Wittelsbach princes remained fiercely faithful to Rome. When the Avignon pope Clement VII died in 1394, the French court offered to support
Boniface, but the cardinals of Avignon elected a new Avignon pope, the unpopular and obstinate Benedict XIII. It was then that the University of Paris took the lead by offering several solutions: first, the abdication of both popes in favor of a single candidate, second, arbitration between the two popes, or third, the convocation of a general council to settle it. At Reims Charles and Wenceslas agreed that obedience should be withdrawn from both popes. To show good faith, a council of the French clergy met in July 1398 and with the support of the French court voted to withdraw obedience from Benedict XIII. However the German princes of Wittelsbach were upset by Wenceslas' decision at Reims and refused to allow the empire to withdraw obedience from Boniface.

The revolutionary stance of the French council was undermined when the two French rivals Philip of Burgundy and Louis of Orleans began to disagree sharply on whether France was wise to have been alone in withdrawing obedience. Philip had fully embraced the thinking of the University of Paris and the subtraction of obedience from Benedict, and he logically hoped that the empire would do the same with Boniface. Louis of Orleans, on the other hand, although he realized that mutual abdication was the only way to achieve peace within the church, realized that the Wittelsbach princes would never force the resignation of the Roman Boniface. Louis
thus heightened his support of the Avignon pope to the extent that he insisted that Benedict's abdication be only of his own free will. Isabeau's attitude to the Schism is not known, but her attitudes were usually consistent with her Wittelsbach relatives, and surely she perceived her mission to be to serve the ambitions of the Wittelsbach.\textsuperscript{21} The major Wittelsbach ambition of regaining the imperial throne was the underlying concern at Reims.

The March 1398 Reims conference between Charles VI of France and the Emperor Wenceslas worried the Wittelsbach conspirators who feared that an alliance would be worked out to strengthen Wenceslas in his struggle against them.\textsuperscript{22} As it turned out, no agreements were made with Charles that would assist Wenceslas, but Louis of Orleans himself concluded a treaty with the emperor that furthered the old Luxemburg-Valois entente. Since Louis' plans for an Italian principality were a total failure, he now turned his attentions to the northeastern frontier of France bordering the empire. Wenceslas promised Louis assistance in case of need and agreed on a marriage between Louis' son Charles and Wenceslas' niece Elisabeth of Goerlitz who would bring a dowry of 100,000 francs. This agreement was followed by acts of homage being rendered to Louis of Orleans by the count of Cleves and the duke of Lorraine, both for a substantial pension.\textsuperscript{23} The worries of the Wittelsbach and Isabeau were needless however
because the alliance with Louis in no way impeded the movement to depose Wenceslas. The electors had been apprehensive about Wenceslas' trip to Reims, and the decision to subtract obedience from both popes was definitely made against their wishes. With each day they grew more determined to depose Wenceslas and make the Wittelsbach Robert of Bavaria emperor. In February and May 1400, the imperial diet at Frankfurt formulated accusations against Wenceslas which reproached him for the Reims conference and his concessions to Charles on the Schism. Louis of Orleans tried to save Wenceslas by convincing Charles to demand adjournment of the diet, but Charles chose the Wittelsbach conspirator Stephen III to request adjournment. When two French delegates who were partisans of Orleans tried to journey to the meeting of the diet, Philip of Burgundy retained one at Dijon, and Isabeau managed to retain the other at Paris. Finally on August 20, 1400, Wenceslas was deposed by the electors at Ober-Lahnstein, and on August 21 Robert II of Wittelsbach was elected emperor.

Immediately after the coup, the Wittelsbach took advantage of Isabeau's position in the French court to ease any anxieties the French might have had at Wenceslas' deposition. The new emperor Robert sent Stephen III, Isabeau's father, to Paris in September 1400 in order to gain an alliance with Charles and especially to prevent Louis of Orleans from
taking up Wenceslas' cause. 27 It was the first time Isabeau had seen her father since she left Bavaria fifteen years before. On the personal side, Isabeau made a great display of the luxury and wealth that surrounded her in Paris, and her father was so deeply impressed that on his return to Bavaria he attempted to imitate the French court and went into debt in the process. 28 Needless to say Isabeau spent huge sums to entertain her father splendidly and to honor him with expensive gifts which went back to Bavaria. 29 Politically Stephen asked the king and his nobles to accept the election of Robert, and he proposed an alliance between France and the empire that would be sealed by the marriage of Robert's oldest son to one of Charles' daughters. Stephen left France after a six weeks stay without an alliance, but he could tell Robert that the Wittelsbach could count on the support of the queen of France. They trusted her ability to influence the dukes of Burgundy and Berry to support the Wittelsbach cause, especially in regard to the new emperor's plan to attack Milan. Thus with the emergence of a Wittelsbach on the imperial throne, Isabeau became his agent at the French court.

Isabeau worked to counter the influence of Louis of Orleans who opposed the new Wittelsbach emperor in every way. Immediately after the deposition of Wenceslas, Orleans sent his troops into the empire, but when he found Wenceslas pas-
sive the campaign was suspended, and the troops returned to France. Orleans then tried to use diplomacy and his influence with his brother to oppose Robert and Isabeau. He had enough influence with the king's council to frustrate any marriage between Robert's son and a French princess, but Orleans' own attempts to arrange marriages for his children with the king's largely failed when Isabeau secured marriages for three of her children with the grandchildren of Philip of Burgundy. In 1401 when Robert sought to recover Milan for the empire, he depended exclusively on Isabeau to handle the diplomacy at Paris. In May 1401 she entertained the anti-Wittelsbach dukes of Guelders and Orleans sumptuously in her Parisian hotel in order to keep them off guard. She also handled the negotiations with the count of Savoy who controlled passage through the Alps. In September 1401 Robert descended into Italy, but he was turned back decisively by Giangaleazzo's mercenaries and was forced to retreat ingloriously to Heidelberg in May 1402. Robert had been beaten not only on the field but also by intrigues at the French court by Orleans and Giangaleazzo. These two allies instilled fears that Wenceslas would reemerge in another Wittelsbach-Luxemburg confrontation if Robert's Italian venture weakened him. This fear along with the fear that Louis of Orleans would increase his power in France made the risks too great for Isabeau to go too far in support of Robert in Italy.
On his return to Germany, Robert found it necessary to renew his good relationship with Isabeau and to assure her that his Italian venture was not the disaster that Orleans claimed it to be. To do this, Robert promised to send Louis of Bavaria, Isabeau's brother, to Paris to negotiate an alliance. On her own Isabeau hoped for a French alliance with the empire even if it were nothing more than an agreement on the Schism, but she also had grandiose plans. She hoped to work out plans with her brother to suggest that Charles propose a treaty with Giangaleazzo that would be acceptable to the empire. Since Giangaleazzo could be expected to refuse such a treaty, plans would then be made for a combined franco-imperial army to attack Milan, defeat Giangaleazzo, and then go to Rome to settle the Schism by forcing the resignation of Boniface.\textsuperscript{33} Isabeau hoped to influence Philip of Burgundy and the king's council to adopt her plans, but her letters to the emperor himself left him unresponsive. Robert was slow to seek confrontation with Giangaleazzo again, and he certainly would not break with Boniface.\textsuperscript{34} Nevertheless after some delay, Robert finally sent Louis of Bavaria to Paris in 1402.

Louis of Bavaria was a man of considerable importance in the life of his sister Isabeau. He first came to France in 1392 and from then until his death in 1417, he lived alternately in France and Bavaria. From 1402 to 1405, he was
grand master of Charles VI's household, and afterwards he was a member of the king's council. Louis was noted for scandalously misusing royal funds and for hoarding jewels and riches which were often gifts from Isabeau. He was hated by the people of France and Bavaria. Earlier in 1402 he had attacked the bourgeoisie of Munich and invaded the neighboring Bavarian territory of Pfaffenhof. After pillaging the archives, emptying the treasury, and drawing tributes, Louis left Bavaria for the splendor of Paris. Louis' mission was to negotiate a Wittelsbach-Valois marriage, an offensive and defensive alliance against mutual enemies with the exception of an English war (in which case the empire would remain neutral), the denial of the title of duke of Milan to Giangaleazzo, a joint French-imperial commission to rule Milan once Giangaleazzo was deposed, and finally an end to the Schism by council or voluntary abdication of both popes. Louis placed all hopes on his sister, but none of the plans ever materialized. On September 3, 1402, while Louis was in Paris, Giangaleazzo Visconti died of fever, and with him died Isabeau's passion for vengeance. There was less urgency for an alliance with the empire, and the primary result of Louis' presence was his own marriage to the rich widow Anne of Bourbon, countess of Montpensier, on October 2, 1402. In January 1403 Isabeau tried to secure her brother's appointment to the office of constable of France, but Louis of Orleans had another candidate installed.
Louis of Orleans made great strides in his quest for power not only at home but also abroad in the formation of a principality for himself on the northeastern border of France. He already received homage from the count of Cleves and duke of Lorraine in 1398 as a result of deals made at the Reims conference. Louis' next maneuver in this direction was especially painful to Isabeau. While her father was in Paris in 1400, she proposed that he marry Isabelle of Lorraine, the widow of the sire of the wealthy barony of Coucy. In order to keep the barony under French control, Louis of Orleans bought it quickly from the dead baron's eldest daughter for the huge sum of 400,000 livres. Louis followed this in April 1401 with an agreement in which the duke of Guelders, an old enemy of Philip the Bold, did homage to Louis for 30,000 gold crowns and accompanied him to Paris where Guelders swore allegiance to King Charles for 50,000 more crowns. In August 1402 Orleans bought the imperial district of Luxemburg from the margrave of Moravia for 500,000 livres and was authorized by the king to collect taxes to pay for it. Aside from his French possessions of Orléans, Valois, Beaumont, Dreux, Soissons, Angoulème, La Ferté-Milon, Ham, Coucy, Pierrefonds, Provins, Montargis, and Château-Thierry, Louis was building a principality stretching eastward from the confluence of the Oise and Aisne rivers to Lorraine's Meuse and Moselle rivers and Luxemburg. In the process he could cut communications
between the lands that Philip of Burgundy and the Wittelsbach possessed in the north -- Hainault, Brabant, and Flanders -- from France and Burgundy to the south. From 1400 to 1403 Louis received more homages from the count of Saarwerden, the seigneur of Boulay, the count of Zweibrucken, the count of Nassau-Saarbruecken, the marquisate of Pont-à-Mousson, the diocese of Toul, the count of Saint-Paul, and in 1403 the margrave of Baden which the emperor forced back into the empire quickly. This quest for a principality on the northeastern frontier made Orleans a major threat to Burgundy, but with Giangaleazzo dead and the emperor Robert of Wittelsbach secure, Isabeau became more and more a free agent promoting her personal family and financial interests in the midst of the great quarrel between Philip the Bold and Louis of Orleans.

Isabeau and the struggle for control of France 1400-1404

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the kings of France found that the destruction of feudalism meant the destruction of the sole military power of the state. Therefore when confronted with the war against England, Charles V reared an artificial feudal establishment by placing great fiefs in the hands of his relatives. This trend continued during the reign of the insane Charles VI to such a point that France seemed on the brink of disintegration. Philip
the Bold of Burgundy, Louis of Orleans, John of Berry and Poitou, and John of Montfort of Brittany all held parts of France as separate states virtually independent of royal control. These men dissipated the financial resources of France, arrogated the judicial rights of the crown, created sinecures for their own men in the royal administration, and used royal troops for their own aggrandizement. Burgundy and Orleans even followed deliberate policies to extend their own separate states not merely inside France but also outside her borders. Thus the rival houses of Burgundy and Orleans became the two major parties involved in the attempt to control the French government and to use its resources to enrich their own houses, a process that could only lead to the dismantling of the French state.

The original rivals in the quarrel between the Burgundians and Orleanists, Philip the Bold and Louis of Orleans, had obvious personal and political differences. Born in 1342, Philip was the elder man who had enjoyed the principal share of power during Charles's minority and early insanity. Philip controlled not only Burgundy but also wealthy Flanders, Artois, and other northern territories, causing him to desire peace for commercial reasons and making him wealthy enough to protest occasionally the high level of taxation that Frenchmen were subjected to. All these factors made Philip a popular man who inspired confidence. Louis of Orleans on
the other hand was a dashing young man whose tendencies to indulge in luxury, love affairs, and war made him unpopular. Unlike Philip, Louis was only beginning to set up a separate state, and therefore, since he could draw no revenues from outside the kingdom, he frequently asked for more taxes. There had been bad feelings between the two men from the time of Charles' first insanity. Philip considered his nephew politically inferior and had the attitude that Louis needed to be governed rather than to govern. Louis himself felt that his position as sole brother of the ill king rightfully dictated great political power, and he resented Philip's moves to frustrate him. Their initial discord stemmed primarily from diplomatic intrigues, the Italian problems, the Schism, the deposition of Wenceslas, the Lancastrian revolution, and the extension of their separate states. In 1398 the two men argued bitterly when they met in council, but Isabeau of Bavaria, the queen of France, entreated them to desist. For the next three years they observed the strictest courtesy toward each other, but in the first days of October 1401, their profound enmity and distrust gave way to a major confrontation.

The confrontation in the final months of 1401 was the result of the increasing influence of Louis of Orleans at the French court. Philip had left Paris in mid June 1401 to travel to his northern provinces and to prepare for the engage-
ment of his son Anthony. Orleans took advantage of this opportunity and the king's brief lucidity to move into the royal government. He installed his own men in key positions such as prévôt of Paris, grand master of the king's household, president of the general council of aides, and secretary to the king.\(^{44}\) Louis also had Charles renew his support of the Avignon pope and had himself named guardian of this pope.\(^{45}\) Another blow to Philip was the alliance of Louis and Charles with Burgundy's old enemy the duke of Guelders who normally pillaged Flanders.\(^{46}\) On October 7, 1401, Philip wrote a vehement letter from Senlis to Louis at Paris, but the dukes of Berry and Bourbon, both at Senlis, tried to defuse Philip's anger. Again on October 26 Philip wrote from Resson of the great pity and grief he felt for the state of things in France, referring to Louis' misuse of royal funds.\(^{47}\) When Philip finally returned to Paris after his long absence on December 7, 1401, he came at the head of a large army composed of his vassals from Liège, Hainault, Brabant, and Germany. Philip installed himself and his sons John and Anthony at the hotel of Artois, and his six-hundred armed men camped in neighboring streets. At the same time Orleans called his vassals including Guelders' men, Normans, Bretons, and Welsh mercenaries all of whom made an army numerically inferior to Philip's.\(^{48}\) Paris was in peril not simply for fear of a conflict but for fear of pillaging by the soldiers. With the
city divided into two armed camps, arbitration was necessary.

Queen Isabeau of Bavaria stepped into this situation in early December to attempt to reconcile the two dukes. Since Isabeau, the sick king, and the royal children were all staying in Paris at the hotel of Saint Paul, she had an immediate personal desire to end the perilous state. With assistance from the dukes of Berry and Bourbon she attempted to resume the type of negotiations begun by Berry and Bourbon at Sens. The role of an impartial mediator was quite new to Isabeau, but it did not conflict with her own interests. Philip the Bold's preeminence was always favorable to Wittelsbach interests, but on the other hand Louis was more receptive to Isabeau's desire for personal financial enrichment. Her affection for both men and her fear of a conflict resulted in Isabeau keeping an equal balance between the two rival dukes. Both Orleans and Burgundy believed themselves to be favored by Isabeau, and both trusted her with large governmental responsibilities. On December 7 Isabeau attempted to deflate the situation by sending instructions that the Parlement was not to spread rumors or to interfere in the quarrel. However whenever Philip and Louis met, they brought their troops and reacted so angrily toward each other that Isabeau found it necessary to remind them of their once close relationship.49

Nevertheless Isabeau had the advantage that neither
duke wanted to risk a direct battle, and both feared they might soon become prisoners of their own foreign armies. On January 6, 1402, the dukes agreed to serious negotiations. On January 14 at a council meeting in Paris called by Isabeau and attended by the dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Bourbon, four bishops, and some nobles, Isabeau proposed a settlement. Louis of Orleans and Philip of Burgundy would agree to be true and loyal friends and good subjects of the king, they would work to safeguard the peace, and they would submit to the arbitration of the queen and the dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Bourbon if the differences resurfaced. If ever hostilities were imminent, the two dukes would wait two months in order to give the arbitrators time to make a settlement, and if they ever came to fight it would not be in the cities or lands of the king. Since responsibility for a conflict was traditionally not placed on either high noble, blame was placed on irresponsible men in their company who had spread evil rumors. Anyone who spread future rumors would be punished, and if a duke heard them he would discuss it with the arbitrators. Both Louis of Orleans and Philip the Bold agreed to this, affirmed their agreement on January 15, 1402, in the presence of the queen, and dined together as the reconciliation, imprinted with the seal of the queen and the princes, was publicly announced.

In spite of the reconciliation, the enmity of Orleans
and Burgundy was not abated, and there was danger that the conflict would resume. In anticipation of this, Charles VI declared on March 16, 1402, that Isabeau would be granted full power, authority, and obedience due to the king if the conflict resumed when the king was ill. As Charles' attacks of insanity were becoming more frequent and devastating, Isabeau could soon find herself absolute mistress of the realm. She followed the declaration with another agreement among the dukes of Berry, Burgundy, and Orleans to keep the peace, and then she herself offered to go on a pilgrimage. However the divisive factors set to work again when Philip the Bold left Paris for Arras on April 1, 1402, and Louis was again able to take advantage of Philip's absence and the king's rare moment of sanity to move into the government. This time Orleans had the king and the council name him sovereign governor of aidses with rank above the councillors. Louis now had the authority to name financial administrators, to control accounts, and to handle the extraordinary finances. What really angered Philip however was that Louis had received his new post for the expressed purpose of beginning a defensive against the English in Guienne, and Louis immediately levied a taille to finance the war. At this point it was clear that Isabeau had been unable to keep a balance between the two rivals, and therefore Philip again felt threatened.

Philip's counterattack this time involved no army but
an attempt to mount public opinion against Orleans. In a letter to Parlement written at Clermont-en-Beauvaisis on May 18, 1402, Philip stated that Louis' allegation that Philip had approved the taille and would profit from it was a lie. In the same letter Philip further stated that he opposed the taille on the grounds of the "great mortality" of past battles with the English and the heavy tax burdens that the people were forced to endure, and he promised to support the withdrawal of the taille. Philip asked Parlement to publish his letter so that his true opinion would be known, and he expected that the people of France would readily concur with him. The president of Parlement, an Orleanist, did not wish to publish the letter for fear it would be a bad precedent, but Philip had the letter distributed anyway. Burgundy was able to pose convincingly as a champion of the people and to make Orleans appear irresponsible, but his protest did not prevent the imposition of the taille. Although the taille was almost immediately suspended in the name of Orleans and Isabeau with promises of no new taxes, Philip arrived in Paris at the end of June 1402, and another crisis had come to the city.

During the last days of June 1402, Isabeau, Berry, and Bourbon obtained fresh powers of mediation from the king. With the marriage of his son concluded, Philip came to Paris to equalize the power held by Orleans and himself. Isabeau
sympathized with Philip's opinion that France was already exhausted by taxes and war, and it was she who had convinced Louis to suspend the taille, but Philip wanted a permanent check on his rival. On June 24, 1402, political equilibrium was reestablished by the mediators when Philip the Bold was named to serve as sovereign governor of aides beside Louis of Orleans, thus dividing the control of finances. Orleans did not appear to adjust to this easily, and another conflict seemed imminent. In reaction to this, the king wrote on July 1 that the finances of his realm had to be properly administered in spite of his "absences", and he therefore reaffirmed Isabeau's powers of mediation at the same time that he also conferred on her the power to audit the government's finances. The king was depending on Isabeau more and more with the understanding that she would consult with Berry, Bourbon, and other nobles, and she was given the power to convokethem. As it turned out, Isabeau had no real trouble reestablishing the entente and obtaining Louis' acceptance of Philip beside him as governor of aides. Both dukes were more drawn by diplomatic affairs at this time, and as a result they wished to avoid a serious confrontation in internal affairs. On July 18, 1402, Louis of Orleans and Philip the Bold again dined together as a symbol of friendship, this time in the hotel of Orleans.

From 1402 to April 1403 there was a lull in the conflict
while Orleans and Burgundy attended to their separate states, and even when they challenged each other again there was no great hostility. On February 22, 1403, Louis and Philip amicably agreed to a compromise that gave John of Berry control of the finances with Louis and Philip as his assistants. In April 1403 however Philip took advantage of Louis' absence from Paris and the king's state of insanity to convince Isabeau that the peace would be assured only if he and Louis had equal powers. What Philip had in mind was the ordinance that named Orleans regent in case of the king's death. Therefore with the assistance of Berry, Philip and Isabeau had a new ordinance issued by the council in the name of the king on April 26, 1403, that annulled the ordinance naming Louis regent. The new ordinance stated that in the case of the king's death, the dauphin, regardless of age, would be crowned as quickly as possible with all the rights of a king and with no regent. The government would be run in the name of the new king equally by the queen, Berry, Burgundy, Orleans, and the king's council.

Philip's more important method of reducing Orleans' influence while Charles VI still lived involved the elevation of Queen Isabeau. Again on April 26, 1403, Burgundy and Berry had another ordinance issued stating that during the king's "absences", the government would be run by the queen who would become president of the king's council and would
rule with the assistance of the dukes, the constable, and the other councillors. Since Isabeau's only political passions were Wittelsbach interests and personal aggrandizement, Philip trusted that she would be impartial in most internal affairs and helpful to him in diplomacy. When Orleans finally returned to Paris on May 7, he planned to use his influence with his brother to annul the new ordinances and to plan the marriage of his daughter to the dauphin, and he was successful. However on May 11 Charles changed his mind and reestablished the full power of the queen in a statement that expressed his affection for her and his confidence in her.58

Isabeau used her position as president of the council primarily in support of the house of Burgundy until the death of Philip the Bold in April 1404. From April 1403 to April 1404 Isabeau concluded the arrangements for the marriages of her children with the family of Burgundy. The dauphin Louis of Guienne was promised to Philip's granddaughter Margaret, the eldest daughter of John the Fearless, and Isabeau's daughter Michelle was promised to Philip the Good, the son of John the Fearless. However in spite of the losses in finance, the regency, and marriages that Louis of Orleans had encountered in his struggle with Philip, he was not bitter, and he even maintained a fair relationship with Burgundy in 1404. Actually Louis had been doing quite well
in his major interest of the acquisition of foreign lands, and he had received compensation in the form of certain chateaux and lands and especially in the reinstitution of obedience to the Avignon pope that Burgundy and Berry were forced to accept. On April 27, 1404, the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold, died in an epidemic near Brussels. Louis of Orleans now found himself no longer the rival of an experienced, intelligent, and capable man, and therefore he was able to make significant progress in the government and especially in his relationship with the queen. As for Isabeau herself her love and loyalty for Philip the Bold did not extend to his son and successor John the Fearless, and she soon dropped her neutrality to align herself completely with Louis of Orleans.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II


2Chamberlin, p. 152.

3Bueno de Mesquita, p. 155.

4Ibid.

5Chamberlin, p. 154.

6Ibid., p. 155.

7Bueno de Mesquita, p. 158.

8Thibault, p. 340. There is a difference of opinion on how much Isabeau was responsible for the attacks on Valentina. Jarry in his book on Louis of Orleans states that it was a plot of Isabeau's. E. Jarry, La vie politique de Louis de France, duc d'Orléans 1372-1407 (Paris, 1889), p. 167.


10Chavelot, p. 89.

11Collas, p. 225.

12Ibid., p. 226.

14 Bueno de Mesquita, p. 204.

15 Chamberlin, p. 179.

16 Thibault, p. 343.


21 Thibault, p. 349.


26 Thibault, p. 351.


29. Chavelot, p. 94.


31. Ibid., p. 360.


33. Thibault, p. 365.

34. Ibid., p. 366.

35. Vallet de Viriville, "Isabeau de Bavière," 22.

36. Ibid., 21.

37. Ibid.

38. Thibault, pp. 367-368.


40. Michelet, p. 31.

41. Vaughan, Philip the Bold, p. 58.

42. Vallet de Viriville, "Isabeau de Bavière," 13.


This was exactly what had happened when Charles V died and left his young son Charles VI under the regency of Anjou. The dukes of Berry, Bourbon, and Burgundy crowned the king, ended the regency as such, and ran the government together.

Thibault, p. 382. Nordberg states that Charles was insane at the time and therefore could not have denied Louis...
knowingly. This would mean that Charles' statement of affection for Isabeau was not genuine which is likely. Nordberg, p. 71.

CHAPTER III

ISABEAU AND LOUIS OF ORLEANS

After the death of Philip the Bold in 1404, Isabeau of Bavaria needed a new patron to guide and protect her in the intense struggle for power that had developed with the king insane. Her antipathy for Philip's son John the Fearless, the new duke of Burgundy, eventually led her solidly into the camp of her brother-in-law and old rival, Louis of Orleans. In public opinion Louis and Isabeau became inseparable not only in politics but also in personal behavior. The pair were commonly accused of using royal funds for personal advancement, treason against the king, and unrestrained pleasure seeking. Their rivalry with John the Fearless for control of the French government was often intense, but Louis' experience and status as the king's brother allowed him to take complete control. Angry, threatened, and jealous, John the Fearless hired men to assassinate Louis of Orleans in November 1407. The assassination made John the most powerful and popular man in France, but Isabeau courageously continued to oppose him. In 1409 she finally was forced to submit to the power, violence, and political skill of John the Fearless when she formed an alliance with him that rendered the king,
the dauphin, and herself pawns in the hands of Burgundy. John was now the absolute master of the French government, but the dukes of Berry, Orleans, Brittany, and Bourbon formed a military alliance with the counts of Armagnac, Alencon, and Clermont to oppose him. This chapter discusses firstly, the conduct of Isabeau and Louis of Orleans, secondly, their political struggle with John the Fearless, thirdly, the assassination of Louis of Orleans, and fourthly, the assassination's aftermath that saw John the Fearless gain control of the French government, and France move toward civil war.

The conduct of Isabeau and Louis of Orleans

Within a month of Philip of Burgundy’s death in April 1404, Louis of Orleans achieved the dominant position in the French government. Louis had the support of John of Berry and other princes of the blood, the king's council, and his most important ally Isabeau of Bavaria. Until 1405 Isabeau and Louis had followed divergent diplomatic policies, and domestically Isabeau had made an effort at neutrality; therefore, their sudden and complete partnership provoked much speculation. From the death of Philip to the assassination of Louis in 1407, Isabeau worked so closely with her brother-in-law that it was widely suspected that the two were having an affair. There was no proof of such an affair, but the rumors had a seemingly accurate foundation. In 1404 Isabeau
was in her mid-thirties, and her many pregnancies had left her plump but no less active in the pursuit of pleasure. Isabeau also separated herself as much as possible from her husband, the king, who had become a pitiful figure. During his frequent attacks of insanity, King Charles was often slovenly, lice-ridden, and covered with sores, and his behavior toward Isabeau was such that she was never safe in his presence. Isabeau no longer lived at the king's residence in Paris, the hotel of Saint Paul, but instead she established her own hotel of Barbette in Paris. The people of France, however, still had affection for their king, who was rarely seen publicly, and they deeply resented not only Isabeau's desertion of the king but also her lack of regret or sympathy. Isabeau even happily consented to Charles' mistress, Odette de Champdivers, by whom he had two daughters. Although Isabeau would have one more child, it appeared that in the eyes of the queen the king no longer existed.¹

Isabeau's break with Charles was contrasted by her growing close relationship with Louis of Orleans. Orleans, who was also in his mid-thirties, had developed into an ambitious prince with political experience and ability, but he was still quite a hedonist. With his wife Valentina Visconti in exile, Louis supposedly lusted after almost every beautiful woman he saw and kept a private portrait gallery of all those whose favors he had enjoyed.² As for Isabeau, she was reputed
to be a promiscuous woman who took advantage of her husband's insanity to have affairs with her favorites, Orleans being only one. Several of her later children were rumored not to be the children of the king, and her grandson Louis XI once referred to her as "a great whore", but such accusations were difficult to prove. Thus it is conceivable that Isabeau and Louis heightened their all important political alliance with an affair that would have been considered incestuous. Arguments in favor of such an affair were Louis' seductive qualities, Isabeau's taste for pleasure, the end of her marital relations with the king, the debauched character of the entire court, and Isabeau's need for vengeance against Valentine Visconti. Another possibility was that Louis and Isabeau, mindful of their past political rivalry, tried to win each other over by seduction. In 1405 Isabeau broke a tradition faithfully observed by all queens of France when she fled Paris with Orleans and lived for two months under the same roof with him at Melun. The public and the poets talked openly of a scandal as did a few ladies in Isabeau's own entourage who soon found themselves dismissed or imprisoned by their queen. Whether there was an affair or not, it is certain that the two were political partners and confidants and that their relationship was a source of great and increasing unpopularity. Such a trend could only benefit the arch-enemy of Isabeau and Louis, John the Fearless of Burgundy.
The death of Philip the Bold of Burgundy drove the queen into the arms of Orleans primarily because she intensely disliked Philip's son and successor John the Fearless. John was an unattractive and coarse man, devoid of charm and slovenly in appearance, but brave, wily, and extremely ambitious. He hoped to control France in order to exploit her as his father had done, but the emergence of Orleans blocked this from the outset. John did not intervene in France immediately after his father's death, but on February 13, 1405, he concluded a treaty of friendship with Queen Isabeau. She promised to protect and defend John and to pursue his good and honor against all enemies with the exception of the king and his family. This alliance was a remnant of Isabeau's good relationship with Philip, but John frightened her, and she came to think of him as evil and unscrupulous. Thus Isabeau joined with Louis not so much for love or mutual interest as for fear of John the Fearless.

John the Fearless did not intervene in French governmental activities until the opportunity to pose as a leader of popular opposition against the Orleans government arose. In mid-February 1405 Louis proposed a new tax to begin a defensive against the English who were advancing in Guienne, Picardy, and Limousin. John not only protested the aide at a meeting of the king's council but also summoned his own private
assembly including two first presidents of the Paris Parlement, three masters of accounts, and leading merchants and repeated his protest. 8 John demanded accounts of how the last aides were used and declared that money in Louis' hands disappeared too quickly, did not serve the war effort, and instead served to pay Louis' debts. 9 John even declared that if the present revenues were deficient he would make up the deficit from his private purse so that the people would be spared. 10 John then refused to levy the tax in Burgundy and Flanders and left Paris for his own lands on February 16, 1405. Louis won the tax, but many taxpayers, convinced that John's sympathy and pity for them was genuine, came to regard Burgundy as a desirable alternative to the unpopular Orleans government. Since John could not compete with Orleans in the king's council or in the affections of the king and the princes of the blood, he appealed to the people by posing as a reformer who hoped to end the corrupt financial administration and the deplorable government of Orleans and Isabeau.

During the spring of 1405 serious charges of financial corruption and greed were made against Louis of Orleans and Isabeau. Many people in Paris met the tax levied in February 1405 by Louis and Isabeau with rebellion and went to jail rather than pay it. Those who did pay often had to sell their own possessions, but since the economy had prospered in the recent years of peace, the tax could have been paid if it
had been levied fairly. The people of Paris were indifferent to the English advancement on the frontiers, and they felt that Louis and the queen shared this indifference and levied the tax only to increase their own riches. Pamphlets accused the queen and her brother-in-law of entering into an incestuous relationship, of forgetting their royal duties, and of stealing royal funds. Rumors spread that Isabeau, wanting to impoverish France and enrich Germany, sent all the money that Louis did not claim to Germany. It was reported that six horses each loaded with gold were being sent by Isabeau to Bavaria when, luckily, they were stopped at Metz. The people were incorrect to believe that huge sums far exceeding what the kingdom needed were collected in previous taxes and that Louis and Isabeau had done away with them. However the queen and Orleans made the great mistake of saying nothing in their own defense.

The financial state of Isabeau of Bavaria had definitely improved steadily since the first days of her reign. The central theme of Isabeau's financial needs was not greed or indulgence but independence. She had learned early to depend on the king as little as possible, and as a result she came to establish an autonomous house which led its own life separate from the king. Using the resources of the state, Isabeau hired specialists to maintain her household, including her stables, argenterie, treasury, and chambre aux
deniers, and she put her own men in official posts to insure good revenues and expenditures. During the first eight years of her reign when Charles was sane, Isabeau did not bear heavily on the royal finances, but after the insanity, events forced her to carry a heavy responsibility for the perpetuation of the state. Since the queen was assigned the task of keeping and raising the dauphin, it was reasoned that on the event of the king's death, the takeover of the dauphin would be facilitated if the queen independently had all the facilities of the king. By 1404 Isabeau was a prosperous woman spending and receiving huge sums of money. A large part of this money was supposed to be used in the upbringing of her children, but Isabeau did not spend as much as was expected in this endeavor. She also received numerous gifts from the king, many of which found their way to Germany, and she herself was extremely generous with her ladies and her brother. Isabeau probably even broke a tradition among French queens by using the revenues of her dower which were customarily not used until the queen was a widow. Isabeau lived luxuriously as did most queens of France, but with the encouragement of John the Fearless, the people were in no mood to pay for it. They disliked the excesses of Orleans which were now associated with the queen, and they interpreted Isabeau's desire for independence as egotistical greed and malicious desertion of the sick king.
The popular sentiment against Isabeau and Orleans was expressed openly and dramatically on May 28, 1405, by an Augustinian friar named Jacques Legrand. Isabeau was actually present when the friar delivered his shocking attack on debauchery and abuse at the queen's court. Legrand told Isabeau that the goddess Venus alone ruled at her court, and then he attacked such fashions as dancing, fringes, men's large sleeves, and women's hairstyles. According to Legrand ladies at court had made certain knights effeminate by telling them to avoid wars in order not to disfigure their bodies. Then he suggested that Isabeau disguise herself and walk through Paris in order to hear the rumors spoken against her. The queen was so displeased by Legrand's performance that he was in some danger, especially since Isabeau's ladies vehemently denied the accusations. However King Charles, momentarily sane, protected Legrand and asked to hear personally the charges. On June 7, 1405, Legrand told the king and the princes of the blood that the taxes had gone to no good, that Orleans was accursed, and that the kingdom would pass to a stranger. The king promised to act against all the abuses, but he soon went mad again, and no action was taken. Defenders of Louis and Isabeau claimed that John the Fearless had planted false accusations in Paris taverns, but the rumors were believable enough for the people, and the scandal was enormous.
Knowledge that the king himself was upset by the conduct of Louis and Isabeau was almost all John the Fearless needed to make his move. The final straw was the accusation that the queen and Orleans were neglecting the royal children and the king. Isabeau had reportedly gone three or four months without seeing her children and had not attended to their education. Charges were also made by a nurse that the dauphin had insufficient food and clothing. When the king heard all this he was irritated enough to ask the dauphin how long it had been since the queen had caressed and kissed him, and the boy replied that it had been three months.

The king was concerned that one of the richest nations in the world lacked these basic necessities for its princes. Even Charles VI himself did not receive adequate care during his periods of insanity, and it was known that Isabeau refused to have intimate relations with him. In short Isabeau was now being accused with neglect of her most sacred duties, and the king, unhappy with the entire Orleans-Isabeau government, resolved to discuss these matters in a council of the princes of the blood including the dukes of Orleans, Berry, Bourbon, and Anjou. The king also requested the attendance in this council of the duke of Burgundy.

**The crisis of 1405 and its aftermath**

John the Fearless had his own grievances against the
government of Orleans prior to the convocation of the council in 1405. Louis of Orleans had convinced the king to grant him control of Normandy, but John encouraged the Normans to resist the takeover by their new governor. Louis intended to wage war against the English from Normandy, but he was not sympathetic to similar desires of the duke of Burgundy. On May 15, 1405, with his own Flemish interests in mind, John had asked the king and council for money and troops to besiege Calais, but Orleans refused saying that there was no money due to Burgundy's protest of the last aide. John decided that a show of force was necessary and used the convocation of the council and his need to do homage to the king for Flemish lands acquired at the recent death of his mother as a pretext to come to Paris. When Orleans heard that John was heading for Paris on August 15, 1405, at the head of a one-thousand man army, he sent out a call to his own vassals.

In a surprise move Orleans, either hoping to avoid a conflict in hostile Paris or fearing the size of John's army, left quickly with Isabeau for Melun, a part of the queen's private domain. At the same time Isabeau secretly ordered her brother Louis of Bavaria to bring the ten-year-old dauphin Louis of Guienne to Melun. When John heard this he hastened to Paris and, finding the boy had already left, rode as fast as possible in pursuit. John overtook the dauphin at Corbeil and had him sent back to Paris. John had won the first
round, but France appeared on the brink of civil war. With Isabeau, Louis, and their army at Melun and John and his army at Paris, a pamphlet war began. John drew up complaints against the material and moral neglect to which the king and dauphin had been subjected, the mismanagement of justice and finances under Orleans and the queen, and the heavy taxation that went not to the war but to the personal treasuries of Louis and Isabeau. John also took credit for rescuing the dauphin from the "abduction" planned by his mother. Louis countered that the queen had a right to send for the dauphin and that John had arrested the boy. 24 The duke of Burgundy had the complete support of the people and the university of Paris, but a stalemate developed when he realized that his popularity would not allow a military attack on Orleans and the queen.

The dukes of Berry, Bourbon, and Anjou and men from the university all went to Melun for John and tried in vain to coax Isabeau and Orleans back to Paris. 25 Finally on September 27, 1405, the queen and Louis left Melun for Vincennes for negotiations, but Isabeau herself stopped at Corbeil where she merely corresponded with the dukes of Berry, Bourbon, and Burgundy. On October 5, 1405, Isabeau received a letter from Christine de Pisan, the major literary figure associated with the courts of Charles V and Charles VI. Besides expressing popular concern, this "Epistre" warned
that the English would again invade France if civil strife continued and begged Isabeau to be the mediator of the quarrel between the rival dukes. Christine assumed that Isabeau's passiveness had prolonged the conflict and that the queen had the power and influence to bring peace. Isabeau went to Vincennes after she received Christine's letter, and although the queen herself made no initiatives toward peace, the final settlement, made by the princes of the blood, included major concessions to her. On October 12, the princes had a royal ordinance issued that conferred all authority on the queen to mediate between Orleans and Burgundy as in 1402. By virtue of this authority Isabeau forbade the dukes to go to war and ordered their armies disbanded. A few days later Orleans and Burgundy made peace in an agreement on some minor reforms and a plan for John to fight the English at Calais and for Louis to do the same in Guienne. On October 23, 1405, Isabeau and Orleans made a ceremonious state entry into Paris to mark the settlement.

The aftermath of the crisis of 1405 saw Isabeau's position in the realm and with Orleans strengthen. The queen personally experienced a rebirth of political power when the princes again found her indispensable to the maintenance of peace. She also made new advances in financial prosperity when the dukes appointed a man in her service receiver general to centralize all receipts and expenditures of the realm.
The crisis also convinced many of the princes of the blood that the methods of John the Fearless were dangerous, and many turned to the Orleanist camp. On December 1, 1405, the powerful duke of Berry concluded a secret alliance with Isabeau and Orleans in which the three promised to take no measures against each other and to protect each other against all except the king and his children. Isabeau's personal interests coincided more with Orleans when the interests of her Wittelsbach family now opposed the Burgundians. When Jeanne of Brabant died in December 1406, the Wittelsbach emperor Robert advanced claims to Brabant as did the Burgundians. To support their more established claims, the Burgundians declared for the deposed emperor Wenceslas who invested John's brother Anthony with Brabant in return for a later and insincere offer of military assistance. When John the Fearless, unlike his father, found expansion into the empire easier by using the deposed Wenceslas, he lost all links to friendship with Isabeau.

The extent of the failure of John's coup d'état was seen in his failure to achieve effective reform and the failure of the military expeditions. In November 1405 demands for reform were presented at the queen's court by Jean Gerson, head of the university of Paris, who spoke against tyranny and called for reform in the church and in morals, but nothing was done. When John's complaints threatened to start new
troubles in December, the king's council, under Isabeau's presidency since the king was ill, met to consider reform but also did nothing. In January 1406 John the Fearless joined Berry, Bourbon, Orleans, and Isabeau on the council of regency that ruled France in the king's "absences", but this regency worked with the king's council which was Orleansist. Membership in the king's council was restricted in July 1406 to princes of the blood, royal officials, and fifty others who could be bishops, lords, knights, lawyers, or university men in an attempt to exclude local officials and to maintain secrecy. Salaries of royal officials were reduced, and certain gifts were prohibited, but John's major grievances of misuse of public funds and greed were not dealt with. Isabeau and Louis dealt with such abuses only irregularly such as when the two were once caught in a thunderstorm and feared God's vengeance. In 1407 they ordered suspension of the right of prisage which allowed stewards in their service to take whatever they wanted from markets, but the pair had misused this right so much that the people were not appeased.30

In the fall of 1406, the projected campaigns of Burgundy at Calais and Orleans in Guienne began, and both ended in the winter in dismal failure. Neither duke received adequate funds because France did not have the resources to finance two major campaigns, especially when both dukes refused to
levy aides to finance the other's venture. Louis was in Guienne in November 1406 when John got orders from Paris calling off his Calais venture. As Louis' campaign slowly failed in Guienne, John incorrectly blamed Orleans for his own fiasco and returned to Paris to stir the people up until officials calmed him down.

The assassination of Louis of Orleans

The rivalry between Louis of Orleans and John the Fearless of Burgundy resulted in such a complete victory for Orleans that in 1407 the Burgundian decided to murder his rival. Orleans had scored a clear victory by his control of the king's council which at this time ruled the state. Among the fifty-one councillors in 1406 who were not princes of the blood or royal officials twenty-five were of the Orleanist party, twelve were Burgundian partisans, and the remaining were either neutral or unknowns. Despite Orleanist superiority among the princes, royal officials, and the majority of the other councillors, the Burgundian faction and nonpartisans could block Orleans. Louis remedied this in April 1407 when John was in Flanders. The council assembled and passed an ordinance that reduced the fifty-one figure to twenty-six. Five Orleanists left the council to fill royal positions, and all but two from the Burgundian faction were eliminated. The remaining twenty Orleanists,
two Burgundians, four nonpartisans, and the pro-Orleanist princes and officials took oaths before the king on April 28, 1407, and John, in Flanders, could do nothing. This mortal blow to Burgundy's political power in France was matched by his financial losses.

Under John's father Philip the Bold some 235,000 francs a year found their way from the French royal treasury to Burgundy, but after Philip's death in 1404 John received no pensions from the crown and practically no gifts. All John could hope to receive was compensation for expenses incurred in France or in behalf of the French government. In 1403 Philip had received 46% of his total revenues from the king, but in 1406 John received only 12% of his revenues from that source while Orleans in 1405 received 90% of his total revenues from his brother. Thus the funds that Philip had once diverted to Burgundy were now being diverted to Orleans whose annual income from the French crown exceeded 200,000 francs. In April 1407 royal letters were issued that acknowledged a 347,591 franc debt owed to John by the French government and provided for its payment in annual installments from the royal aides of Amiens, Beauvais, Chalons, and Troyes, but there is no sign that John received the money. John's failure to obtain French resources clearly threatened to undermine the Burgundian state.

Other reasons why John the Fearless decided to have his
rival murdered were papal, diplomatic, and personal. John and the university of Paris opposed the Avignon pope Benedict XIII who was a great friend of Louis of Orleans. In the Low Countries Louis allied himself with Burgundy's enemies, and when John's brother Anthony took over Brabant in 1406 Orleans announced that he would take over certain castles there on the grounds that they belonged to his own Luxemburg. The diplomatic activity of Orleans was in fact the only serious obstacle to the progress of the Burgundian dynasty in the Netherlands, northeast France, and the Rhine valley. In 1407 Louis was even involved in a campaign against Metz, a venture that so threatened Isabeau and the emperor Robert that they brought the rival parties to Paris to negotiate a partition of Metz. On the personal side, John heard false rumors that Orleans had pursued his wife Margaret of Bavaria into a corner of the royal palace, and after seduction had failed, tried to take her by force. John also reportedly entered Louis' portrait gallery, where paintings of all his feminine conquests hung, and found Margaret's portrait.

The murder of Louis of Orleans on November 23, 1407, was definitely premeditated and carefully planned by John the Fearless. As early as June 1407, inquiries were made in Paris to find a house that could be used as a base for the gang of assassins hired by John and led by Raoul d'Anquetonville, a Norman knight whom Isabeau once had convicted of swindling.
On the night of November 23, 1407, Orleans was dining with Isabeau at her hôtel of Barbette in Paris and trying to console her after her last child, a son Philippe, had died within hours of his birth. Since there was the usual speculation that the son was Louis', he had tried to attract little attention to his visit by bringing few attendants with him. When a man dressed as a valet of the king's entered and announced the king's desire to see his brother, Louis set out with only two squires, a page, and some footmen with torches. On the way he was attacked by eight or nine armed men who tore his head open and killed him and a German valet who had tried to protect his master. When Isabeau heard about this shortly afterwards, she feared for her own life and moved with the help of her brother to the king's hôtel of Saint Paul where she felt secure.

The very next day Louis' body was entombed in the church of the Celestins in the presence of such nobles as the dukes of Anjou, Berry, Bourbon, and even Burgundy who pretended to be in great mourning. Suspicion soon fell on men staying in John's hotel, but they could not be questioned without John's permission. When permission was sought on November 26, John confessed to the dukes of Anjou and Berry who were so shocked and confused that John was later able to flee Paris for Flanders without any resistance. The loss of Louis of Orleans left Isabeau alone in grief and fear. He had been
her guide and support and with his death she faced the great storm alone.\textsuperscript{42} Isabeau however knew that past crises had been settled only with her assistance and that her position as wife of the king and mother of the dauphin demanded respect.

The aftermath of the assassination of Louis of Orleans

Valentina Visconti, who had been in exile from Paris for eleven years, was sixty miles away at Chateau-Thierry when her husband was murdered. Orleans was in his grave before Valentina even knew he had dead.\textsuperscript{43} Although Louis had been spectacularly unfaithful to her, Valentina's grief was overwhelming, and the desire for vengeance consumed her. While Isabeau was still in a state of shock, Valentina arrived in Paris on December 10, 1407, with her son Charles and his wife Isabelle, who was Isabeau's daughter, another son, and her entourage of ladies, squires, and household members, all in very dramatic mourning. Valentina threw herself at the king's feet and begged him to do justice to the murderer of his beloved and faithful brother.\textsuperscript{45} Charles promised to do whatever his councillors advised, but when Valentina repeated her complaint before them, she had little success. The princes in fact preferred to negotiate with John and had already made plans to meet with him in January 1408 at Amiens. One concession was made to Valentina in the form of two royal
ordinances in December and January that excluded John from the French government. The dauphin Louis who was placed under Isabeau's protection would be crowned immediately on his father's death; and, if ever the king and queen were both incapacitated, the government would be turned over to him. However Valentina's hopes for John's punishment dimmed when Berry and Anjou left for Amiens, and in mid-January she heard that John planned to arrive in Paris soon as a hero. She left for Blois bitterly disappointed.

John the Fearless had left Paris not in fear or shame but only in hopes that the situation would calm down. Since he was now the most powerful and popular man in France, John intended to return to Paris and take full control of the French government. On January 19, 1408, John, his brothers, and an escort of 261 knights met at Amiens with the dukes of Berry and Anjou and Jean de Montagu, grand master of the king's household. John refused to ask for a pardon but instead began to justify the murder with the help of theologians, among them Jean Petit, a doctor of theology at the university of Paris. John's feeling that he should be commended for the murder left Anjou and Berry cold, and they left for Paris warning John not to visit the capital unless called for. John, who was too powerful to be intimidated by these dukes, made a triumphant return to Paris on February 28, 1408, escorted by some 400 armed men and welcomed with
joy and enthusiasm by the people. On March 8 John the Fearless had his formal justification presented in a four hour discourse by Jean Petit before an audience packed with his supporters.

Jean Petit's justification was a masterpiece of political chicanery, deceit, and lies of which the target was the dead man Louis of Orleans. The gargantuan dissertation contained numerous references to canon and civil law, the Bible, and almost every conceivable ill rumor ever spoken about Louis, Valentina, or Isabeau. According to Petit the murder was perpetrated for the safety of the king and his children and for the general good of the realm. The argument revolved around this ridiculous syllogism: the major, it is meritorious to kill a tyrant; the minor, Orleans was a tyrant; and the conclusion, the duke of Burgundy did good to kill him. The "evidence" against Orleans was mainly false accusations of attempts to secure the crown. Petit charged that Orleans had tried to kill the king by witchcraft and had used witchcraft to induce the king's fits of insanity. Orleans was also accused of conspiring with Giangaleazzo Visconti to kill the king, of sending the king a poison apple, and of trying to kill the dauphin. According to Petit, Louis had plotted to usurp the throne of France when Henry of Lancaster usurped the throne in England and had remained close to Henry. It was also charged that Louis' heavy taxes went not to wage war
against the English but to finance the attempts on the
throne.\textsuperscript{49} Therefore, concluded Petit, the king should be so
pleased with the murder as to give John love, honor, and
riches.

The charges against Isabeau involved only her dealings
with the "tyrant." Petit made no effort to associate the
queen with the misuse of royal funds which should have been
the best case against her or Orleans. Instead Petit charged
that Orleans had once tried to turn Isabeau against the king
by an attempt to convince her to take refuge with her children
in Luxemburg.\textsuperscript{50} Louis had acquired Luxemburg in 1402, and
according to Petit, he planned to hold the queen and her chil-
dren there at his disposal. Louis supposedly had asked the
queen to travel there on the pretext of a pilgrimage, but when
she sought the advice of the king, he convinced her to forget
the project. Since Isabeau did not deny the entire story,
there is presumably some truth to it.\textsuperscript{51} The incident, which
could have happened in 1405 after Philip the Bold's death
and John's ascension, might simply have been Louis' desire
to place the royal family under his protection when the king
was insane.\textsuperscript{52} On February 13, 1405, John had been prompted
to conclude a treaty with Isabeau in order to insure against
this. The intrigue was probably an honest political move
that John now interpreted in a sinister light. Another ref-
erence to Isabeau concerned the crisis of 1405 when Orleans
and the queen had fled to Melun and raised an army there to counter John's army in Paris. Petit now charged that their troops had ravaged the countryside doing great harm because Louis had authorized them to live off the land. In reality, guilt for such things was shared by Orleans in Melun and Burgundy in Paris.

In spite of the ugliness and falsehood of the justification, the next day John received a royal pardon signed by the king and witnessed by the helpless dukes of Berry, Brittany, and Anjou. The pardon recognized John's duty to protect the king and accepted as fact that Louis had tried repeatedly to kill Charles and to attain the crown for himself. The king then removed all displeasure he might have felt for Burgundy, repeated his trust in him, and forbade any moves against him. Although she was as weak and fearful as Berry or Anjou, Isabeau refused to condone the behavior of John the Fearless. On March 11, 1408, she made the only protest possible when she left Paris with the dauphin, her other children, her brother, and a small armed escort for Melun and prepared for a siege. Anjou, Berry, and Isabeau's new ally Brittany followed her to Melun and held a council meeting there, but Berry soon returned to Paris where John ruled supreme. With the realization that Burgundy could justify killing anyone, Isabeau spent some time at Melun making out a will in which she tried to establish perpetual foundations
out of the lands she had acquired. Meanwhile John took advantage of the dukes' helplessness and Isabeau's self-imposed exile to appoint his own men to high offices, to withdraw support from the Avignon pope, to extort large sums from the king, and to declare himself the only faithful servant of the king. Finally on July 5, John was called away to Flanders on urgent business, and the entire Orleanist group felt a great sense of relief and opportunity.

With John in Flanders, Isabeau returned to Paris on August 26, 1408, with the dauphin, Louis of Bavaria, Berry, Bourbon, Brittany, and a sizable army. The people of Paris reacted enthusiastically, if insincerely, to the return of their queen. Isabeau soon extended an invitation to her new ally Valentina Visconti to come to Paris to renew her demands for justice and to answer Jean Petit. Valentina arrived a few days later in another solemn march, and on September 5, she went before the queen and the dauphin in council. First, the king's lawyer Jean Juvénal announced that Isabeau and the dauphin would run the government during the king's illness, and then Valentina threw herself at the feet of the queen who heard the princes demand justice for the widow and a response to Petit. This response, which resembled Petit's in length and format, was given on September 11, 1408, by the abbot of Cerisy, Thomas du Bourg, at the Louvre in the presence of the queen, the dauphin, Valentina, Charles of
Orleans, Berry, Brittany, Bourbon, and others. The abbot had no trouble refuting the evil of Burgundy's deed and the slanderous lies of Petit, but the attempt to make Orleans an innocent martyr was not well received in Paris. John the Fearless was condemned for taking the law into his own hands, for declaring Orleans a tyrant, and for appointing himself judge, jury, and executioner without allowing the victim a chance to defend himself. The abbot also refuted false accusations that Orleans had attempted to kill the king and the dauphin, to withdraw Isabeau to Luxemburg, or to plot with Henry of Lancaster. Most importantly, the abbot claimed that John the Fearless had ordered the murder of Orleans not for any good as John claimed but for the desire to dominate, to have power and authority, and to gain possession of the king's treasures.

When the abbot had finished, Valentina's lawyer William Cousinot presented a list of punishments for the duke of Burgundy. John was to confess his guilt, ask pardon of Valentina and her children on his knees, and kiss the earth. All his lands would be confiscated and all his buildings in Paris destroyed. He would build a church at the site of the murder as well as in Rome and Jerusalem where a daily mass for the soul of Orleans would be said. John himself would be imprisoned until the demands were met, then he would be exiled for twenty years, and on his return he would not be
allowed within one hundred leagues of Isabeau or the sons of Orleans. A few days after the abbot's talk, King Charles annulled the pardon given to John and gave Valentina a document to prove it. The king also sent letters to Burgundy informing him that he planned to take proceedings against him with the support of the princes. Valentina then left Paris.

Isabeau remained at Paris, but no one there was strong enough to force the powerful duke of Burgundy to meet Valentina's demands. When the news arrived that John had completed his business in Flanders and planned to arrive in Paris with his army at the end of September, nearly everyone at court prepared to flee the capital. At the end of October the sick king was secretly escorted on order of Isabeau to Tours by Bourbon, Montagu, and a small army. With John marching toward Paris, Isabeau courageously appealed to the people for funds to defend the city and to oppose John with arms, but the people of Paris were overjoyed to learn that their hero was returning, and they refused to aid Isabeau in any way. After her pleas were ignored Isabeau quickly left Paris for Tours in early November as did Anjou, Berry, Brittany, and others. John the Fearless returned to Paris in triumph with an army of 700 men on November 28, 1408, but he could not control the government when the court was at Tours. John needed to bring the king, the queen, and the dauphin back
to Paris so he could control them, and negotiations began. These negotiations were tragically facilitated by the sudden death on December 4, 1408, of Valentina Visconti, the duchess of Orleans. In spite of her long exile from Paris and her husband's unfaithfulness, Valentina had been obsessed since the murder with despair and a need for vengeance. She faced great pressures to keep Louis' empire together, and knowing that her death left the task to a weak boy filled her with even more despair as she died. Valentina had broken under Burgundy's power and the hatred of the Paris mob, but Isabeau was in a position to be more flexible.

The negotiations between John the Fearless and the French court at Tours in the winter of 1408-1409 resulted in a victory for the Burgundian. John's negotiator at Tours was his brother-in-law William of Bavaria, the count of Hainault, who was also Isabeau's great uncle and a father-in-law of one of her sons. William met in council with Isabeau, the dauphin, and the princes and begged that the king be returned to Paris. Since Charles was only a pawn in the hands of whoever kept him, Isabeau refused until Burgundy made his peace with Charles of Orleans. After commuting back and forth from Tours to Paris, Louis of Bavaria and Jean de Montagu finally presented an agreement that John would accept after some revision. This agreement called for John to leave Paris for Chartres on February 1, 1409, with a small army while the sons of Orleans,
the king, queen, and princes of the blood would do about the
same. On March 9, 1409, an extremely dramatic and well staged
ceremony of reconciliation occurred at the cathedral in
Chartres. King Charles, Isabeau, the dauphin, the princes,
churchmen, and members of Parlement watched John kneel before
the king while his spokesman asked for forgiveness for the
murder committed for the good of the realm. The princes
and Isabeau seconded the request, and the king forgave John
and pardoned him for everything. In the second step, Louis
of Orleans's sons, Charles of Orleans, the new duke, and
Philip, the count of Vertus, were also asked to pardon John.
The boys were slow to answer and cried but did as they were
told. Both parties finished by promising to be friends and
not to harm one another again. On March 9 the duke of Bur-
gundy returned to Paris, on March 17 the king, Anjou, and Berry
returned, and on March 18 Isabeau and the dauphin made their
entry. All received very enthusiastic greetings from the
people of Paris, especially Isabeau who was even more splen-
didly received than at her first entry in 1389. Chartres
however was a great victory for Burgundy who had dictated the
ceremony and its consequences. He had brought King Charles,
Isabeau, and the court back to Paris under his control and
had increased his popular appeal by having secured the return
of the king and the restoration of peace.

In the aftermath of Chartres strong opposition to John
the Fearless emerged, but Isabeau was no longer able to join it. No one could ignore that the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon had not returned to Paris immediately after the reconciliation and that Berry, Jean de Montagu, and Isabeau still represented opposition to John. At first, Isabeau kept close to her old allies by leaving Paris in April 1409 for Melun where she entertained the duke and duchess of Orleans. John the Fearless however kept steady and irresistible pressure on the queen to come to terms with him. Long ago in 1403, Philip the Bold had arranged the marriages of the dauphin Louis to John's daughter Margaret and of Isabeau's daughter Michelle to John's son Philip. In June 1409 John had both these marriages consummated and thereby forced Isabeau closer to his camp. The crowning blow came however in October when John the Fearless had his long time enemy Jean de Montagu executed on the block. The victim, who was grand master of the king's household, had wielded great political and financial authority in the households of the king, the queen, and the duke of Berry, but it was his steady opposition to John and his role in John's supposed "humiliation" at Chartres that finally destroyed him. Isabeau lived in terror at Melun after Montagu's execution, and her desire to oppose Burgundy quickly dissipated.63

On November 11, 1409, Isabeau finally submitted to John when she signed an alliance at Melun with him, the king of
Navarre, William of Bavaria and Hainault, Louis of Bavaria, the bishop of Liège, and John's brother Anthony of Brabant. This Melun treaty of friendship and assistance entrusted Isabeau with the guardianship of the dauphin and entrusted the new allies with the protection of the queen. In December 1410 John himself took complete control of the dauphin however and had a royal ordinance give the dauphin, and thus himself, sole power during the king's "absences". Burgundy was thus in complete control of the French government, but a powerful new alliance had formed against him. In April 1410 the newly energetic dukes of Berry, Bourbon, Orleans, and Brittany allied themselves with Bernard VII, count of Armagnac, and the counts of Alençon and Clermont in the League of Gien which provided for a common army. On the one hand, Berry's allies were more French than John's from Hainault, Bavaria, Brabant, and Liège, but John had the royal family and the people of Paris. Thus the murder of Orleans, the takeover of John the Fearless, and the formation of an alliance against him drew France to the brink of a tragic civil war.
CHAPTER III

1Thibault, p. 400. This was especially true during his very frequent attacks of insanity. When he was sane, Isabeau would reestablish marital relations, but there was no rapport between them.

2Michelet, p. 30.

3Thibault, pp. 401-403.

4Ibid., p. 406. This was however a major political crisis in which John the Fearless occupied Paris with a large army, and Isabeau and Louis formed an army at Melun.

5Ibid., p. 412. Poems which might refer to the relationship between Orleans and Isabeau were Le Songe Veritable and Le Pastoralet, Thibault, p. 417-421.


7D'Avout, p. 75.


9Chavelot, p. 109.

10D'Avout, p. 77.

12Ibid., p. 233. This convoy was supposedly intercepted at Metz by the inhabitants of Metz who learned from the drivers that similar sums had been sent several times before. The surprise was great, said the Chronicler.

13Michelet, p. 36.

14Rey, p. 174.

15Ibid., pp. 177-178.

16Ibid., pp. 219, 223, 217. These pages contain tables of the queen's expenditures and receipts from 1398-1406.

17Ibid., p. 206.

18Michelet, p. 37.

19Religieux, v. III, p. 269. Also the following sentence.

20Michelet, p. 37.


22Thibault, p. 407. One wonders who told the boy to respond so exactly to the question.


24Nordberg, pp. 197-198.

25Darwin, p. 81. In fact Isabeau even refused to meet with some of these men. (The duke of Anjou was also the king of Sicily and is often referred to as "Sicily" instead of "Anjou").
26 Jarry, p. 330.

27 Nordberg, p. 203. The queen was only an instrument of the dukes' own will in this case.

28 Rey, p. 183.

29 Vaughan, John the Fearless, pp. 251-252.

30 Michelet, p. 41.

31 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 40, and Michelet, p. 39.

32 Nordberg, p. 215. "The council is everything. Everything comes from it, everything ends at it, and its powers are as extensive as the monarchy itself."

33 Ibid., p. 219. All figures given in this paragraph come from Nordberg, pp. 219, 221-223.

34 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 41. This interpretation of the causes of Louis' murder comes primarily from Vaughan.

35 Ibid., pp. 42-43. The 347,591 franc sum was comprised of 45,300 granted to John on his father's death, 25,000 for defense of Sluis castle, 15,000 for cost of a wedding in Campiegne, 72,625 for military expenses against the English, and 189,666 for debts owed to his father.

36 Ibid., p. 43.

37 Ibid., p. 44.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.
Michelet, p. 44. The idea as to why Orleans had few attendants is only speculation on Michelet's part, but it is possible. Orleans visited Isabeau's hotel of Barbette very often, and since she was very upset at the death of her last child, there was good reason for Orleans's guard to be down.

No mention is made anywhere of Isabeau's presence at the funeral which occurred only hours after the murder. Chances are that she was too upset and still weak after the birth of the child.

Vallet de Viriville, "Isabeau de Bavière", 18.


Collas, p. 371.

Monstrelet, v. I, pp. 241-324. Monstrelet was a Burgundian and thus copied the whole speech complete with all references. No other chronicler copied it all. Strangely, Petit did not attack genuine abuses of Orleans, perhaps because he had to make Orleans a criminal, not simply corrupt.

Ibid., p. 245.

Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 70, from Monstrelet.

Monstrelet, v. I, p. 298-324 for all the accusations mentioned in the paragraph.

Ibid., pp. 317-318.

52 Ibid., p. 354.


54 Religieux, v. IV, pp. 105-106.

55 Ibid., pp. 119-127.


57 Ibid., p. 441. And the next sentence, pp. 441-444.

58 McLeod, p. 49.

59 D'Avout, p. 109. It is important that John still insisted that the murder was for the good of the kingdom. John was not being humiliated in any way.

60 Philip, the count of Vertus, would marry one of John's daughters as part of the reconciliation.

61 J. Shirley, A Parisian Journal 1405-1449, trans. from the anonymous Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 50. Isabeau must have appreciated this reception, and perhaps it caused her to have doubts about opposing the popular duke of Burgundy.

62 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 78.

64 D'Avout, p. 121.
CHAPTER IV

ISABEAU, THE ARMAGNACS, AND THE BURGUNDIANS

With John the Fearless of Burgundy in control of the royal government in Paris and the formation of the Armagnac party to counter him, France was in 1410 on the brink of civil war. For Isabeau of Bavaria this Burgundian-Armagnac civil war was a family feud in which she had ties to both sides. She tried to work for a reconciliation, but her conduct appeared only indecisive and vacillating. As the war began, Isabeau was forced for her own security to turn to the Burgundians with whom she had earlier signed a treaty at Melun, but her sympathies may well have been on the other side. By 1412 John the Fearless still controlled the government and royal family in Paris where he attempted major governmental reforms. John's support of the Cabochian revolt became so unpopular that he was forced to flee Paris in 1413. Since Isabeau had been treated cruelly by the revolutionaries, she welcomed the Armagnacs' return to Paris and gave them her support. As the Armagnacs launched campaigns to destroy John, the English under Henry V invaded France, and the war became a hopeless triangle in which Armagnacs and Burgundians fought each other and the English. Meanwhile in Paris, Isabeau
found life under the Armagnacs difficult when she tried to maintain a correspondence with John the Fearless. On the pretext of scandalous behavior, the Armagnacs led by the dauphin Charles exiled the queen to Tours and placed her under guard in April 1417. John the Fearless however helped her escape in November 1417, and together they went to Troyes to set up a rival government. With Isabeau as his ally John retook Paris in 1418, but the dauphin Charles escaped to Bourges and set up a provisional government there. As Henry V moved closer to Paris, it was necessary for John the Fearless and the dauphin to negotiate, but when they met on September 10, 1419, the dauphin chose to murder his rival instead. Shocked by his act, Isabeau turned to John's son Philip the Good and Henry V. This chapter discusses firstly, the first phase of the civil war, secondly, the Cabochian revolt, thirdly, Henry V and the revival of the Hundred Years War, fourthly, the Armagnac government and Isabeau, and finally Isabeau's alliance with John the Fearless.

Isabeau and the civil war 1410-1412

In 1410 France was bracing herself for a civil war between the Armagnac and Burgundian parties. John the Fearless of Burgundy, who was in control of the French government including the king, queen, dauphin, and council, lived in Paris where his popularity was enormous. His substantial
military power was based on his own armies as well as those of his brothers and his allies from the Low Countries and Germany. To counter John, the dukes of Orleans and Berry and the counts of Clermont, Alençon, and Armagnac formed the League of Gien on April 15, 1410. The driving force of this league was Bernard VII of Armagnac whose daughter Bonne married Duke Charles of Orleans to seal their pact. The Armagnacs had no intention to forgive John the Fearless for the murder of Louis of Orleans and instead had the definite intention to attack the Burgundians at Paris, to "rescue" the king and dauphin, and to restore them to power.

As both sides braced for war, Isabeau of Bavaria was an uncertainty. On November 11, 1409, she had signed a pact at Melun with John the Fearless in which he promised her control of the dauphin, but the next year the duke had taken it for himself much to Isabeau's chagrin. Since she seemed indecisive, the queen received solicitations from both camps, but her strongest desire was for peace. In late September 1410 Isabeau and other envoys from the king and John traveled to Marcoussis in the company of Burgundy's troops to confer with the rival princes, but she could not work out a settlement. Burgundy had hoped to wrest Berry from the Armagnac league, but Isabeau only clashed with Berry who refused to renounce his intentions to lead troops to Paris. Isabeau left Marcoussis on September 23 for Paris, and both sides prepared
for war. Burgundy's power and control of the dauphin forced Isabeau to opt for his side, and in September she provided moral and monetary support to help John raise troops. In late autumn 1410 Armagnac and Burgundian troops assembled around Paris and were billeted about much to the dismay of the citizens, but there were no hostilities. On November 2, 1410, the dukes agreed to the peace of Bicêtre which was not a settlement but a truce to delay the war. This unrealistic peace called for nonpartisan councillors, Berry's right to share the guardianship of the dauphin with John, and a delay in any hostilities until Easter 1412. The dukes also agreed to retire with their troops to their own lands, and John the Fearless left Paris in November 1410 accordingly.

With John the Fearless in Flanders, Isabeau again displayed vacillating tacits in the interest of unrealistic peace keeping. For John who could not count on Isabeau's loyalty, she became a problem. His enormous popularity had been built on reform and the assassinations of such public enemies as Louis of Orleans and Jean de Montagu, and Isabeau of course was easily associated with his victims. Although she was now in her forties and so fat and gouty that it embarrassed her, Isabeau had not curtailed her luxurious, scandalous life. John became distrustful of the queen and her Bavarian brother and friends, and Isabeau feared that the continued chaos would only lead to her destruction. In mid-
July 1411 Charles VI himself announced that Isabeau had gone to Melun to confer privately with the dukes of Berry, Brittany, and others about the possibilities for a peaceful settlement. Isabeau clung desperately to hopes for peace, and like the king and dauphin, she counted on the aged Berry to arbitrate the differences that divided the princes. Berry received envoys from the Burgundian camp at Melun, but he was beginning to regret his past indecisiveness and intended to give full support to his godson Charles of Orleans. Thus the conferences at Melun were quickly becoming a total failure. By July 31 the best Isabeau could do was to attempt to prolong the truce brought about by the sham peaces of Chartres and Bicêtre. She wrote to the dukes of Burgundy and Orleans and begged them not to begin hostilities before the close of the conference at Melun since the honor of the arbitrators was at stake. Both parties however insisted that they had remained faithful to the treaties and the royal family and that the other side had not.

In late summer 1411 tensions mounted to the point that war was again inevitable, and again there was confusion about which side Isabeau was on. Even before Melun on July 14, 1411, the sons of Orleans had stated in the declaration of Jargeau that the murder of their father was not forgiven or avenged and also that John had broken the peace of Chartres when he had executed Montagu. On August 31, 1411, Burgundy replied
in the most belligerent tone possible, and on the same day he wrote to Isabeau that he remained loyal to her and asked her to keep his aid and confidence. When Isabeau who was at Melun with Berry did not respond to John's letter, there was speculation that she was now an Armagnac. The people of Paris felt that Isabeau had fled to Melun to place herself under Berry's protection and that the Armagnacs planned an attack on Paris from that town. In fact Isabeau had approached Berry in hopes that he would mediate the conflict. She may well have been an Armagnac sympathizer, but her loyalties were genuinely divided, and in any event her future behavior did not indicate partisanship.

In Paris, the king and dauphin left the hotel of Saint Paul on August 26, 1411, to live in the fortress of the Louvre as a security precaution from the imminent danger. Ambassadors were sent by the dauphin to ask the queen to return to Paris from Melun where she still resided with Berry and to insist that, if she refused, at least the children would be allowed to come to the fortress. Obviously the dauphin, king, and Burgundy's men in Paris did not know if Isabeau had turned into an Armagnac at Melun. Berry and Isabeau responded to the dauphin's request by coming together as far as Corbeil from which Berry asked if he could also enter Paris. The Burgundian Walderan of Luxemburg, count of Saint Paul, and the butchers and other craftsmen who held Paris for John feared that the
queen would entrust Berry with control of the government and therefore refused to allow his entry. 10 Thus the queen entered Paris without him on September 11, separating herself from the Armagnacs, while Berry went on to Montargis after deciding it was unwise to live near Paris.

The fighting, which began sporadically after the letters of defiance were sent in August 1411, was to last almost exactly a year. The Armagnacs disagreed among themselves whether to attack Paris or Flanders, and the Burgundians waited for Flemish and English reinforcements, but minor towns in Picardy and around Paris were surrendered and captured by both sides. John the Fearless returned to Paris on October 23, 1411, and took personal charge of the government after paying his respects to the royal family in the Louvre. The king, queen, and dauphin spent this phase of the war in that fortress as virtual prisoners of Burgundy and without freedom of action. 11 With the royal family under his control, John had the Armagnac princes declared outlaws and banished from the realm, called all royal vassals to his side, and generally claimed that he defended the king from Armagnac attack. John also claimed that Bernard of Armagnac wanted to crown Charles of Orleans king and that he was in alliance with England. Paris was so pro-Burgundian that Armagnac supporters could hardly live there, and when Berry and Orleans sent complaints to Isabeau she could do nothing. When the Armagnacs finally
decided to concentrate on encircling Paris, John, a military expert, led his forces out of Paris on November 9, 1411, attacked the Armagnacs, and thoroughly defeated them.

In 1412 John the Fearless was at the height of his power and accepted as regent by the royal family who resided with him at Paris. The Armagnacs still intended to oppose him however, and on May 18, 1412, they signed the treaty of Bourges with the English. This treaty which the Burgundians uncovered conceded that Guienne was rightfully English, provided for Berry to do homage to the English for Poitou, and proposed marriages. Although John had also tried to recruit the English with the use of the royal family, he showed the treaty to the king and dauphin who approved a campaign to lay siege to Bourges, Berry's capital. The king and dauphin accompanied Burgundy to besiege the city on June 11, but a stalemate developed. The dauphin Louis of Guienne, a rising force and a possible Armagnac like his mother, did not wish to destroy Bourges or to invite English involvement and therefore worked out a settlement with the help of the count of Savoy and the duke of Anjou. This settlement of Auxerre which was agreed to by both parties on September 7, 1412, ratified again the peace of Chartres, promised a marriage between the rival families, granted pardons to all but Orleans's actual murderers, and insisted that both parties renounce their treaties with the English.
A great show of reconciliation was then made. On the instigation of the dauphin, Jean de Montagu's head was removed from the gibbet after three years and reunited with its body. The king, dauphin, Burgundy, Berry, Bourbon, Orleans's brother Vertus, and Isabeau all made triumphant entries into Paris, but Orleans himself did not since Armagnac still had troops in the field. Burgundy, Orleans, Vertus, and Bourbon entered into a peace league, and the dauphin issued a decree prohibiting the use of the terms Burgundian and Armagnac. The peace of Auxerre however like Chartres and Bicêtre created only a lull that allowed both sides to regroup. John the Fearless remained in control of the government in Paris, but his fall soon came in an unexpected way.

The Cabochian Revolt

John the Fearless always posed as a fair taxer and reformer, and his popularity was enormous. When the Estates-General of Languedoc, composed almost entirely of Burgundian partisans, opened at the hotel of Saint Paul on January 30, 1413, it condemned dissension among the princes, faulty organization in the governmental bureaucracy, slowness of the council, corrupt tax officials, and mismanagement of public property. One example was the queen's household which had once cost 36,000 francs but now cost 154,000 and her personal treasurer Hamonet Raguier who had become so wealthy that he
spent 30,000 francs on his castle. In February demands were presented to have all financial officers suspended, and many including the queen's brother Louis of Bavaria briefly fled the city. The leaders of the reform movement were the rich, hereditary masters of the stalls in the butchery of Paris and their allies the medical doctors. The butchers, led by Simon Le Coutelier, known as Caboche, quickly tired of waiting for reforms and sensed a hostile attitude among the wealthy bourgeoisie, clerics, dauphin, and princes. The reformers grew more angry and belligerent, but John the Fearless continued to support them and even to encourage them to insurrection.

Two serious riots, one directed against the dauphin and the other against the queen, were led by the Cabochians. On April 28, 1413, Caboche led a mass demonstration before the Bastille and then into the dauphin's apartment at the hotel of Saint Paul. The sixteen year old boy was accused of scandalous behavior, and men in his service such as the duke of Bar and the chancellor Jean de Voilly were arrested for miseducating him. Then on May 22, 1413, the king, queen, dauphin, Berry, Burgundy, Bavaria, and others were listening to a long discourse by the Cabochians explaining the riots when the mob outside became rowdy. On this day they accused the "foreign" queen of scandalous behavior and demanded her banishment with her brother and other Germans in her household. The riot-
ers took hostages from the queen's entourage including Louis of Bavaria, Isabeau's confessor the archbishop of Bourges, several of her household officers, and fifteen of her ladies. Isabeau asked the dauphin for aid and then John the Fearless himself spoke to the mob in her behalf, but he was not completely in control. Jean de Troyes, the Cabochian making the arrest, refused all concessions even when Isabeau begged in tears for her brother. Louis of Bavaria was taken with the others to the Louvre on this day before his planned marriage to Catherine d'Alençon which was opposed by the Cabochians anyway. The queen was so frightened and angered by these arrests that she became extremely ill.

The Cabochian revolt was distinguished by John the Fearless's reform program presented on May 26 and 27, 1413, in the Cabochian Ordinance. John and his advisers drew up the document without help from Caboche and his men in an effort to put purpose into the revolt that was getting out of hand. The 258 clauses were not a revolutionary manifesto but a detailed program of administrative reforms designed to make the government more efficient and economical and less corrupt and abusive. According to John, the queen's household was a center of corruption, and major changes were proposed. In an attempt to restore the king's chambre des comptes as the center of all supervision, the queen's separate chambre would be abolished, and each year her finances would be rendered to
the king's chambre.23 Her receivers and treasurers would receive no pensions beyond their salary, and certain pensions already given would be revoked.24 An inventory would be made of all jewels, gold, money, and gifts in her household as well as the king's and dauphin's, and no new aides would be levied on merchants for the households of the royal family. The king would take back the lands given to Isabeau in her dower so that she could not use them until he was dead.25 This plan of John's in the Cabochian Ordinance to clean up the finances and bureaucracy was unfortunately never implemented.

The Cabochian affair amounted in the end to two serious riots, the murder of four suspected Armagnacs in April, six executions in June and July, and less than fifty persons thrown in jail.26 In spite of the violence, John the Fearless and the Cabochians stayed together, but they grew increasingly weaker. The dauphin, who was John's son-in-law, had been badly humiliated by the rioters, and during the summer of 1413 he wanted to escape from Paris and join the Armagnacs. Failing that, he stayed in Paris to play a major role in the opposition to the Cabochians. A moderate third party, formed by the rich bourgeoisie, university men, and all those wanting peace, was led by the former prevot Jean Juvénal des Ursins with the support of the court.27 To add to John's problems, the king maintained his sanity throughout the summer and worked for reconciliation through his son the dauphin.
Meanwhile the Armagnac princes mobilized their forces around Paris and kept contacts with anti-Burgundians inside.

On July 27, 1413, John was pressured by the king, dauphin, and Berry into signing the peace of Pontoise which was favorable to the Armagnacs. A general amnesty was granted to most Parisians, Burgundy's troops were to disband, and forts in his control would return to the king. 28 On July 31, 1413, Berry entered Paris with the peace settlement and found himself popular as a peace-maker while John, anxious that Pontoise not be accepted, was uncooperative. When the peace was accepted, Cabochian leaders fled Paris in fear of arrest. Seeing that he too must flee, John invited the king to go hawking with him at Vincennes on August 23, 1413, but Juvénal and his men stopped the kidnap plot, and John fled alone to Flanders. 29

The new Armagnac government under Duke John of Berry now took control of Paris with the help of Isabeau of Bavaria. On August 31, 1413, Orleans, his brothers, and Bourbon made a triumphant entry into Paris where they were met by Berry, the king, queen, and dauphin. In September all anti-Armagnac and pro-Cabochian edicts were annulled, the Cabochian ordinance was torn up, and Cabochians were disarmed, banished, or arrested. The Armagnacs placed their own partisans in governmental positions such as Louis of Bavaria's appointment to run the Bastille so that he could arrest his former jailers.
Isabeau also regained her prestige and retook an active role as president of the council now that the king was again insane. On January 29, 1414, she and the duke of Orleans signed a treaty of alliance, and with the king and dauphin she bound herself by oath not to treat with John the Fearless until his power was destroyed. John began his counterattack by forging letters in which the dauphin asked him to return to Paris and free the royal family, but actually the dauphin and Orleans got along very well. John arrived at Saint Denis in February 1414 with a large army, and the Armagnacs, meeting in council with Isabeau and the dauphin, called royal vassals. They decided however to refuse to fight or negotiate with John, and he was forced to withdraw.

On March 2, 1414, the queen and dauphin presided over a council that declared war on John the Fearless, and in April the insane king, dauphin, and Armagnacs set out for Arras to destroy the Burgundian. Compiègne, Soissons, and Bapaume were taken, and Arras was besieged in spite of an epidemic that caught the Armagnacs including Louis of Bavaria. John the Fearless felt threatened and sent the king and dauphin submissive words that the royal family, quite tired of war, warmly received in spite of Armagnac displeasure. Since John was unable to present himself before the king, queen or dauphin without their written consent, the negotiations were handled for him by the duke of Brabant, envoys from Flanders,
and especially the countess of Hainault, whose husband William of Bavaria was a favorite uncle of Isabeau's. The peace of Arras of September 4, 1414, was an ambitious proposal in which Burgundy and the Cabochians were granted full pardon for all wrongs. The dauphin wanted to keep these promises to John, but the Armagnac princes, Berry, Orleans, and Bourbon, had enough control over him to prevent it.

Armagnac refusal to come to terms with John the Fearless over the amnesty question swayed the peace-loving Isabeau and dauphin back to Burgundy's side. In November 1414 John used his daughter-in-law Michelle who was also Isabeau's daughter to write to the queen and obtain her support. John criticized Isabeau for allowing the dauphin to go to Bourges in October with Berry who only wanted to put obstacles in the way of peace. John suggested that Isabeau use her influence to return the dauphin to Paris and that her intervention could allow a more balanced government. When the boy returned in mid-December, the Armagnacs were busy condemning Jean Petit and holding ceremonies for Louis of Orleans. The dauphin allowed his break with them to open when he went to Melun with his sympathetic mother. From December 1414 to January 1415, Michelle, Burgundy, and Isabeau corresponded secretly, and their messengers traveled in great peril. In January 1415 the countess of Hainault came to Saint Denis to again discuss the amnesty settlement. John would not
accept the proposal in February for the banishment of 500 Cabochians, and in July the dauphin finally got him to swear to a figure of 200 on the condition that once he swore there would be amnesty for all. In August, John and all but 45 Cabochians were offered pardons, but John still pushed for total amnesty. The problem was impossible because the Armagnacs did not want to settle, and the dauphin was still too firmly under their control, but this internal quibbling was soon interrupted by a more serious threat.

**Henry V and the renewal of the Hundred Years War**

With the Burgundians and Armagnacs still on the brink of civil war, Henry V, king of England, invaded France for his own advancement. Henry's father had domestic worries and did not press his dubious claims to the French throne, but the son did so immediately after his ascension on March 20, 1413. In August 1414 Henry declared that he wanted large parts of France including Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Aquitaine and also the hand of Princess Catherine with a dowry of two million crowns. After the French refused, Henry landed in Normandy on August 14, 1415, with six thousand men-at-arms, twenty-four thousand archers, and war machines. Although both Armagnacs and Burgundians realized the danger of an English victory, the Armagnacs controlled the government and were therefore responsible for pursuing the war. John the
Fearless on the other hand did not wish to aid the Armagnacs or to see them successful, and thus he did not offer his own troops. On October 25, 1415, the disastrous battle of Agincourt ended in a total defeat for France and the Armagnac party. The duke of Alençon, the constable the lord of Albert, and John's brothers Anthony of Brabant and Philip of Nevers were all dead, and Charles of Orleans and the duke of Bourbon were prisoners. In this year of Agincourt, Isabeau unfortunately was prominent in her need for money. In April 1415 the dauphin in a moment of independence charged that nearly all his relatives had squandered public funds, and he ordered the seizure of the stockpiles that Isabeau was supposedly hoarding to send to Germany.\(^{35}\) In spite of this and Agincourt, Isabeau did not fear in 1415 to protest to the council that her annual 150,000 francs should be allotted.\(^{36}\)

**The Armagnac government and Isabeau**

Agincourt did not have as great an effect on French politics as the deaths in 1415 and 1417 of two consecutive dauphins. The dauphin Louis of Guîenne, to whom Christine de Pisan had dedicated her *Livre de la paix*, was a peace-loving moderate and mediator with close ties to both factions. While he was alive, Isabeau was able to move on both sides in spite of the Armagnacs solid control of Paris. She corresponded secretly with Burgundy, but she also received Bernard
of Armagnac when he returned to Paris in December 1415. She stayed close to her Burgundian relatives, but in the summer of 1415 her brother Louis of Bavaria and Jean Gerson led the Armagnacs to the council of Constance to condemn Jean Petit's justification. With Guienne's death on December 18, 1415, Isabeau slowly lost her bipartisanship. The new dauphin Jean of Touraine, Isabeau's fourth son, was married to Jacqueline of Bavaria and lived with his wife's parents, William of Bavaria, the count of Holland and Hainault, and Margaret, John the Fearless's sister. Isabeau's strong ties to these relatives drew her into John's plot to regain the government by using the new dauphin.37 When William brought the boy south in January 1417, Isabeau met them at Senlis to plan his establishment in Paris. The suspicious Armagnacs allowed the Bavarians only to pass through the capital, but William warned the council on March 31, 1417, that if the dauphin and John the Fearless were not established in Paris, he would take the boy back to Hainault. The Armagnacs were spared this problem however when on April 4, 1417, the dauphin of Touraine died, and the new one, Isabeau's last living son Charles of Ponthieu, succeeded him. Ever since 1413 when Charles was engaged to Marie of Anjou, he had been in the care of his future mother-in-law Yolande who now refused Isabeau's request for the boy's return.38 Thus the dauphin Charles was a total Armagnac with very weak ties to his mother.
In 1417 Isabeau of Bavaria and her entourage were charged with scandalous conduct.\textsuperscript{39} The Armagnacs, suspicious of Isabeau's Burgundian sympathies, probably encouraged these attacks to make the queen an embarrassment to their own government so they could get rid of her. In 1417 Isabeau was at least forty-six and so fat and gouty that she could not take exercise and often had to be carried in a chair. Her deteriorating health, for which she took gold and precious stones, even kept her from performing her duties as president of the council during the king's absences.\textsuperscript{40} Nevertheless Isabeau lost none of her taste for pleasure which supposedly got worse. In 1417 the queen's beloved brother Louis of Bavaria died, and his eventual replacement as master of the queen's household, Louis de Bosredon, obviously engendered more than fraternal love. Isabeau had met this new favorite in 1416 when the Armagnacs, fearful of a fake Burgundian plot to kill the royal family, assigned him as a guard to protect the queen and her ladies at Vincennes. Bosredon, a gentleman from Auvergne, had been a distinguished Armagnac military man since 1408 and had fought bravely at Agincourt. He shared his queen's taste for corruption and pleasure; she refused him nothing and reportedly slept with him among others.\textsuperscript{41} This scandalous conduct appeared to embarrass the government which had to bear John the Fearless's propaganda against luxury and corruption at court. Still the Armagnacs
must have welcomed Isabeau's disgrace for only they themselves could have been responsible for the statements from the momentarily sane King Charles and the dauphin that denounced the queen's turpitude.

Isabeau's correspondence with Burgundy and her scandalous behavior finally brought a complete break with the Armagnacs in April 1417. Hearing on April 15 that the count of Armagnac was bringing the king and an armed escort to join the dauphin and herself at Vincennes, Isabeau sent the boy, Bosredon, and an armed escort out to meet them. Before Bosredon could greet Charles VI properly, the Armagnac constable and prevot arrested him in the name of the king, and Bosredon's escort dispersed. After an unpleasant interview between Isabeau and her husband, the Armagnacs led the king and dauphin back to Paris. Meanwhile Bosredon was chained in the tower of Montlhery and then taken to Paris where he was judged not in a court of law but by the prévôt. Tortured and condemned to death, he was executed secretly at night in order to avoid public sympathy and thrown into the Seine in a leather sack which read, "Let the king's justice run its course." In grave danger, Isabeau hoped to retire to Melun with her court, but the Armagnacs had Bosredon's "confession" to prove the scandalous rumors and her unfitness to be the mad king's wife. Removed from the council and all authority, Isabeau was exiled by order of the king to Blois and then to
Tours where she was denied the company of her ladies and children. Even worse, Isabeau was held captive by three guards, William Thorel, Jean Petit, and Laurent Dupuis, who watched her so carefully that she could not even write a letter without their knowledge. Thorel, Isabeau's chancellor, and Picard, her first secretary, were once trusted servants who now betrayed their mistress, but Dupuis, the chief guardian, was distinguished only by his refusal to show her the respect normally given to any woman, much less a queen. Back in Paris, the Armagnacs found a new source of revenue in the queen's jewels and treasury, and her home at Melun was looted in the name of the king and constable. The charges of improper behavior and misuse of public funds were however only a pretext to remove Isabeau from the government. In the end, the exile and captivity turned her completely against the Armagnacs and her last son the dauphin Charles whom she held responsible.

**Isabeau turns to John the Fearless**

John the Fearless, the duke of Burgundy, began a new military campaign against the Armagnacs in July 1417. In October 1416 he had met at Calais with Henry V of England and the German emperor Sigismund. No treaty was made, but Henry and John knew they would indirectly help each other by fighting Armagnacs separately. Thus John's renewal of the
Burgundian-Armagnac civil war in late summer 1417 coincided with the beginning of Henry V's new invasion into Normandy. With the major exception of Bernard of Armagnac, the Armagnacs in Paris were weakened by the disappearance of most of their leadership since Orleans and Bourbon were in England and Berry, Anjou, and Alençon were all dead now. After Isabeau's exile however the Armagnacs were reinforced by their new royal figurehead the dauphin Charles who was named in June 1417 as president of the council during the king's absences. John the Fearless's offensive consisted of tightening a ring around Paris by taking its surrounding towns. Some French towns such as Reims, Troyes, Amiens, and Doullens opened their gates to the Burgundians while others such as Chartres and Corbeil resisted for a while. From July 1417 to January 1418, John also took Montdidier, Beauvais, Senlis, Vernon, Mantes, Poissy, Provins, Pontoise, Beaumont-sur-Oise, Montlhéry, and Rouen. Paris itself however and the Armagnac government held firm even in September and October when John marched his army around the city putting it in a virtual state of siege. John's efforts to take Paris therefore stymied, but in November 1417 he brought off a different sort of coup that strengthened his position in France immensely.

In November 1417 Isabeau of Bavaria longed for escape from her six months exile in Tours. Her liberty and luxurious life style could be regained however only if she could rees-
tablish her proper position and avenge herself. Isabeau finally got the better of her guardians and wrote to John the Fearless while he was resting at Etampes from his siege of Corbeil on October 26-28, 1417. When John received these overtures from the queen, he eagerly sent one of his secretaries Jean de Drosay to Tours to help plan the escape. As a guarantee of their pact, Isabeau gave Drosay a gold seal of her office that John the Fearless understood perfectly. After leaving Etampes with a large force on October 28, John arrived near Tours on the night of November 1 and dispatched two lieutenants and the army to rescue the queen. When she learned of Burgundy's presence, Isabeau asked to go outside the city to the abbey of Marmoutiers to attend mass. Isabeau's three guards balked, but when she insisted she was obeyed. While inside the church, the guards warned their queen that a company of Burgundians or English had arrived, but Isabeau of course showed no fear. The Burgundian Hector de Saveuse surrounded the abbey with sixty armed men and announced to the queen that Duke John would arrive soon. Isabeau ordered the arrest of her three guards and had the hated Dupuis thrown immediately into the Loire while Picard and Thorel were held for ransom. Two hours later John the Fearless appeared before Isabeau who declared her love and loyalty for this man who had proven that he still loved the king, the royal family, and the kingdom.
On November 2, 1417, Isabeau and John the Fearless entered Tours where they received a royal welcome, and the next day they left for Chartres which they reached on November 8. Isabeau and John spent fifteen days in Chartres laying the foundation for their own government to rival the Armagnacs in Paris. On November 11, Isabeau issued papers taking the government into her own hands on the basis of the duties given to her in 1403 as president of the council of regency and the king's council during the king's absences or the dauphin's minority. Isabeau referred to these duties as an irrevocable grant made to her by the king and his council, and she declared her intention to do anything to reestablish the king's power. She ignored the king's ordinance of November 6, 1417, that transferred these duties to the dauphin and another very recent ordinance of November 6, 1417, that confirmed the dauphin's position and annulled all ordinances conferring power on the queen. On November 13 Isabeau appealed to the people of France to accept her administration and the Burgundian party, and for support she abolished the gabelle. At the same time, she ordered the Burgundian councillor Philip de Morvilliers to set up a sovereign court of justice at Amiens to take the place of the Paris court in the areas of Amiens, Vermandois, Tournai, and Ponthieu. The queen even received a new seal with the arms of France and Bavaria to validate the acts of the new government. Chartres, however, was in a
strongly Armagnac area, and therefore Isabeau and John left for Troyes on December 23, 1417.

On January 1, 1418, Isabeau and John the Fearless arrived at Troyes to establish the queen's version of the royal government complete with council, chancellor, constable, and financial, judicial, and administrative bureaucracy. The new administration was staffed with Burgundian partisans, and the revenues of areas under their control were entrusted to Burgundians. On January 6 Isabeau authorized John the Fearless himself to take charge of the financial and administrative affairs, and on January 10, by virtue of her 1403 powers, she named him governor of the realm with the right to mint money, to make war or peace, and to serve as president of the Parlement. Nominally she gave John the same powers she herself enjoyed, but in reality she was only a figurehead. On January 30, 1418, the queen named commissioners for the three provinces which recognized the Troyes government, Languedoc, Guienne, and Auvergne, and tax reforms were instituted there. When the queen's delegates went in April to the Languedoc, which was normally Armagnac's fief, they received in Isabeau's and John's names homages from vassals who resisted only at their own peril. On February 16, 1418, the Burgundians annulled and abolished the Parlement of Paris, the chambre des comptes, and the jurisdiction of the prévôt of Paris and established similar institutions at Troyes.
By the spring of 1418, large parts of France including Languedoc, Guienne, Auvergne, and Burgundy recognized the new government of John and Isabeau.

While John the Fearless built a strong base for himself, the Armagnacs in Paris weakened considerably. Normandy was lost to Henry V by the end of spring 1418, and from July 1418 to January 1419 Rouen was under a dreadful English siege. Although John was also concerned about the English advance and sent troops to help Rouen, the Armagnacs were hurt much more by Henry's progress because they were responsible for the king's government in Paris. A greater problem for the Armagnacs however was the growing strength of Burgundian sentiment in Paris. As the constable Bernard of Armagnac's need to tax Paris grew, he became more unpopular, and the necessity of repression also grew. In order to fight the English, every three burgesses were obliged to furnish one man-at-arms, and each burgess had to lay in a certain quantity of corn and to buy all his salt at the public granaries at a high price. When the Burgundians issued edicts in the north and south forbidding the payment of taxes to the Armagnac government, so many towns gladly obeyed that Paris alone was left to supply most of the funds the Armagnacs needed. After the capital was drained, the troops deserted for lack of pay, and the Parisians themselves would never defend the Armagnac government. John the Fearless was still the man of the people,
and the Armagnacs always had to be repressive to prevent conspiracies in his behalf. They deprived the Parisians of arms and suppressed John's allies the butchers whose trade was declared no longer hereditary. Thus the Parisians came to look upon John and Isabeau as a desirable alternative to Armagnac rule.

When Burgundy tightened his ring around Paris again in 1418, the Armagnacs wanted to negotiate. On May 23, two cardinals from the new pope Martin V, who had effectively ended the Schism in 1417 at Constance, tried to make peace between the Armagnacs and Burgundians. The Armagnacs were in trouble and therefore sincere, but John and Isabeau, who were on the brink of taking Paris, were evasive and impossible. John and Isabeau demanded that all the queen's acts of the past six months remain in force, that offices in the government be filled with the advice of the queen and Burgundy, and that the queen and duke be given free access to the king. The Armagnacs could not agree to these proposals and insisted that all princes be advised on government officials, that Isabeau and Burgundy return castles they occupied, that all infringements on royal rights be abolished, and that all pacts made by John with England be annulled. Burgundy refused all this and insisted that he had made no pacts with England. John the Fearless was actually planning the seizure of Paris under cover of these negotiations and making the Armagnacs
look uncompromising as well.

On May 28, 1418, the Burgundians finally retook Paris. An iron maker's son stole keys and opened a gate to the Burgundians who entered with a small force which was soon joined by the Parisians. The Burgundians, who were led by the lord of Isle-Adam, Jean de Villiers, a new favorite of Isabeau's, were masters of Paris in a few hours.\textsuperscript{56} They went to the hotel of Saint Paul and presented themselves before the king who was now in such a deteriorated state of health that he remembered nothing and did not know the difference between Armagnac and Burgundian. A Burgundian Guy de Bar was named prevot and went immediately to where Bernard of Armagnac was hiding and arrested him. The fifteen year old dauphin Charles however and some Armagnac chiefs escaped to the Bastille. The dauphin gathered a small force at Charenton where he held council and decided to try to regain Paris since the Bastille was still being held for him. The counterattack on June 11, 1418, failed, and the dauphin retired to Melun and then to Bourges, but the citizens of Paris and the Burgundians decided to end any further Armagnac threat by massacring the arrested Armagnacs such as Bernard of Armagnac. On the night of June 12, 1418, a dreadful massacre broke out in which the mob killed great numbers of prisoners indiscriminately and anyone else in the city who could be accused of being an Armagnac.\textsuperscript{57}

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After the reign of terror had subsided, John the Fearless and Isabeau left Troyes on July 8 and entered Paris on July 14, 1418, in triumph with a sizable military force. John took control immediately and restored order by putting to death a few of the more ruthless massacrers. Even though Burgundy now controlled the capital, king, queen, and the entire administrative and financial organization of the crown, the dauphin Charles had appointed himself regent and had installed his own Parlement at Poitiers and chambre des comptes at Bourges by the end of 1418. His provisional government was supported by bands of strong knights and a large part of France's population in Anjou, Berry, Orléans, Blois, Poitou, Bourbon, and Auvergne. Even Paris was disgusted by the recent massacres, chaos, taxes, and John's failure to help the besieged city of Rouen. With these problems, John the Fearless tried unsuccessfully to come to an understanding with both the dauphin and Henry V. Although the dauphin had refused a summons sent by his mother and father, he tried in the summer of 1418 to deal with John. On September 16 a reconciliation treaty of Saint Maur-des-Fosses was signed by Isabeau and Burgundy, but the dauphin refused to sign since the treaty would have put him in John's hands. Then on May 30, 1419, King Henry met at Melun with Isabeau, her daughter Catherine, and Burgundy. During the month long negotiations, Henry demanded large parts of France such as
Normandy and Catherine's hand, but these demands were impossible.

In July and September 1419, John the Fearless engaged in a fateful series of personal conferences with the dauphin Charles. In May the forty-eight year old duke of Burgundy and the sixteen year old dauphin agreed to a three months truce, and on July 8 and 11 at Pouilly-le-Fort and July 13 at Corbeil, they met personally. In the treaty of Pouilly, they promised to govern France jointly and to attack the English, but the treaty was a dead letter since the dauphin refused to join his parents or to cooperate with John. 60 Henry V, disturbed to see his French rivals negotiating, responded by moving toward Paris, capturing Pontoise, and forcing John to move the king and Isabeau to Troyes. Breaking off his negotiations with the English, John hoped to talk again with the dauphin at Troyes, but the boy insisted on a meeting at friendly Montereau. This fateful meeting was held on the bridge of Montereau on September 10, 1419. On the enclosed bridge, Burgundy and Charles spoke about the king, the English, and their own behavior when the dauphin's man Tanneguy Duchatet reportedly reminded John the Fearless of the unavenged murder of Louis of Orleans, raised his battle-ax, and killed the duke. 61 All the Burgundians who had entered the enclosed bridge were taken prisoner, and John's body was placed with no formality in a pauper's shell at the church

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of Notre Dame de Montereau.

The murder of John the Fearless was another dramatic, severe blow to Isabeau of Bavaria. She was deeply shocked by the loss of this ally who had rescued her from captivity and reestablished her prestige. John had walked into a trap carefully laid by the Dauphinists and probably the dauphin Charles himself. Isabeau was thus convinced that her son was a false, hard, and dangerous boy, and her feelings were shared by many in northern France and Paris who turned against the dauphin and toward the Burgundians. After the murder of John the Fearless, Isabeau turned to his son Philip the Good, but together they could not avenge Burgundy or overthrow the dauphin without the help of Henry V of England.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV

1 Michelet, p. 56.


3 Ibid., p. 191.

4 Vaughan, John the Fearless, pp. 83-84.


6 Ibid., p. 231. The existence of Isabeau’s letter was revealed by the response of the duke of Burgundy to the queen.

7 Jean de Montagu had written the ceremony of Chartres in which John asked the king and Orleans to forgive him for the murder of Louis of Orleans. John was not humiliated, but he interpreted it that way. Some say the murder of Montagu was caused by Chartres and not by the corruption issue.

8 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 89, and d’Avout, p. 137.

9 D’Avout, p. 137.


11 Lehoux, v. III, p. 251. This was a statement of the duke of Berry who was certainly biased.

12 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 95. John added a few fake measures when he showed the treaty of Bourges to the king.
13Ibid., p. 97.


15Calmette, p. 102.

16Ibid., pp. 102-103.


18D'Avout, p. 185.

19Ibid.

20Shirley, Journal, pp. 70-71. "Their evil intention was to have the wedding some distance away and to take the king to it, so as to be masters of Paris....etc."


22Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 99.


24Ibid., pp. 50, 136.

25Ibid., p. 75.

26Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 100.

27Calmette, p. 107. This Juvenal was the Chronicler's father.
The peace of Pontoise itself provided that all the princes disarm and confer outside Paris with the king and dauphin. The conference brought the favorable settlement to the Armagnacs.

28Lehoux, v. III, pp. 315-316. Religieux, v. V, pp. 115-121. The peace of Pontoise itself provided that all the princes disarm and confer outside Paris with the king and dauphin. The conference brought the favorable settlement to the Armagnacs.


31Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 195. Most historians say these letters were genuine, but Vaughan is probably correct. The dauphin and Orleans were so close that they dressed alike. Calmette, p. 107, gives the view that the dauphin was tired of Orleans.

32Lehoux, v. III, p. 373. Michelle was married to John's eldest son the future Philip the Good who was then count of Charolais.

33D'Avout, p. 215.


35McLeod, p. 118.

36Rey, p. 175.

37Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 212.

Religieux, v. VI, pp. 71-75.


Religieux, v. VI, p. 71, Guizot, p. 401, and Chavelot, p. 127. The monk refers to him as Louis de Bourdon.

Vallet de Viriville, Charles VII, v. I, p. 38. Religieux, v. VI, p. 73. This story is usually told in a way very unfavorable to Bosredon. As the other story goes, Bosredon refused to greet the king properly or greeted him "cavalierly and hastily". This alternate story is given in Guizot, p. 401, and even Vallet de Viriville gives this story in "Isabeau de Bavière", p. 26, and the other in Charles VII.

Religieux, v. VI, p. 73, and Guizot, p. 401.

D'Avout, p. 255 gives this spelling of the names. Vallet de Viriville in "Isabeau de Bavière", p. 28 spells the names Picart, Toreau, and du Puy.

Religieux, v VI, pp. 73-74, and Vallet de Viriville, Charles VII, p. 42.

Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 217. From a map.

Monstrelet, v. IV, pp. 48-51 for the whole story that follows.

Ibid., p. 51.

50 D'Avout, p. 256.

51 Monstrelet, v. IV, pp. 56-57.


53 Michelet, p. 94.


55 Ibid., pp. 213-215.

56 Chavelot, pp. 135-136.

57 Michelet, pp. 96-97.

58 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 265.

59 Juvenal des Ursins, pp. 549-550. This gives a detailed account of the ceremony of the meeting between Henry and Isabeau.

60 Vaughan, John the Fearless, p. 273.

61 Guizot, p. 417, Monstrelet, v. IV, p. 183, and Juvenal des Ursins, p. 554. There are many different accounts of what actually happened on the bridge. Nearly everyone there had a different story. Vaughan in John the Fearless examines most of the stories, pp. 274-286.

62 Vaughan, John the Fearless, pp. 282-283. This was a highly disputed point. The dauphin and his supporters insisted it was a sudden scuffle during which John died inadvertently or in self defense, but Vaughan's argument to the contrary is convincing.
CHAPTER V

AN ENGLISH ALLY UNTIL DEATH

Isabeau of Bavaria and her allies were shocked and endangered enough by the murder of John the Fearless to attempt to negotiate with King Henry V of England. However when Isabeau felt that Henry’s demands were too high, she alone contacted his rival and her son, the dauphin Charles. These contacts had not advanced far before the English and Burgundians offered the queen a solution to her dire financial state, and she conceded to them. On May 21, 1420, Isabeau obtained the insane king’s signature on the hated treaty of Troyes that immediately turned the French government over to Henry V and disinherited her own son. Troyes effectively ended the political career of Isabeau who became a mere instrument of English control. After she became a widow in September 1422, Isabeau lived as a recluse at the hôtel of Saint Paul. In spite of English promises, her financial state never improved, and her ill health, loneliness, and unpopularity made the long years of widowhood a time of misery. While her son Charles VII slowly led France back from the tragedies of the past, Isabeau finally died a lonely and unhappy death on September 24, 1435. This chapter deals with firstly, the
treaty of Troyes, secondly, Isabeau's remaining years as
queen, and thirdly, her dowager years.

Isabeau and the treaty of Troyes

When Joan of Arc repeated in 1429 the prophecy that
"through a woman would France be desolated and through a
woman restored", there was no question that Isabeau of Bavaria
was the former woman.¹ Isabeau earned her distinction as one
of the worst queens of France as a result of her role in the
making of the treaty of Troyes less than a year after the
murder of John the Fearless. Troyes, sworn to on May 21,
1420, provided for the marriage of Henry V and Catherine of
France, recognized Henry as the heir to the French throne,
and, for the present, named him regent. Charges that Isabeau,
obessed with hatred for her only remaining son Charles,
willingly sold out to the English and declared the dauphin
illegitimate have, however, been challenged successfully.²
The options open to the queen were in fact extremely limited,
and her actions seemed to her the least evil of these options.

Tradition and public opinion demanded that the murder
of John the Fearless be avenged. Paris had been cooling
toward John after the massacres in 1418 and his failure to
defend Pontoise, but with his murder the city again showed
its Burgundian sympathies. The university, burgesses, and
Parlement rose in protest, and a funeral service at Notre
Dame was especially solemn. The Parisians invited other cities in the realm to join the Burgundians and were obeyed in the north. The task of avenging the death of John the Fearless however fell heaviest on his son Philip the Good who hoped to maintain his father's position in France by demanding an appointment as lieutenant general of the realm. Isabeau hoped to maintain her alliance with the Burgundians and thus wrote to Philip asking him to join her at Troyes where the king's and queen's government was situated. Philip however feared that he would fall under the queen's control and therefore refused to come. These three anti-Dauphinist parties, Paris, Philip, and Isabeau, all made the decision at approximately the same time to approach Henry V. Isabeau wrote to him on September 20, Paris sent negotiators on September 19, and in early October Philip also sent envoys.3

Henry V, who had been trying to conquer France since 1415, now saw that nearly everyone in the country except the discredited dauphin looked to him for deliverance from the poverty and weariness of war. His demands were thus extremely high and uncompromising. He insisted that the crown of France fall to him and his heirs on the death of Charles VI, that he govern the country himself for the present since Charles was ill, and also that he marry Catherine.4 The Parisians were willing to accept the double monarchy and the disinheriting of the dauphin whom they hated and urged Philip
the Good to do the same. Philip, however, hoped primarily to occupy his father's position in the realm and demanded the position of lieutenant general for himself. Henry V immediately refused these ambitions and forced the duke of Burgundy to debate seriously his options with his own advisers at Malines and Arras in October 1419. Philip saw that France could not hold out against the English and that the Parisians desired the alliance. His state of Burgundy would be in danger if he did not deal with Henry, and especially if the dauphin did. Philip also hoped for military support against the dauphin and preferred that Henry be king only, of course, after Charles VI's death. Thus the Burgundians finally decided to meet all of Henry V's demands on December 25, 1419, at Rouen.

When Isabeau of Bavaria heard the extent of Henry's demands, she regretted encouraging Philip to negotiate with the English and failing to control the young duke. Isabeau and John the Fearless had rejected lesser English demands in May 1419, and now she saw that Henry wished to destroy her Troyes government. Therefore, in spite of the Burgundian nature of the Troyes court, Isabeau independently established contact with the dauphin in the first half of December hoping to reunite France against the English threat. The dauphin was pleased to contact his mother again, but the correspondence was soon uncovered by the Burgundians who showed the
letters to the English. In January 1420 the English sent Louis de Robersart to Troyes to negotiate with Isabeau about promises of financial help from Henry V. The queen had earlier complied with a major reduction in her finances from 150,000 livres to 46,000 on account of the great wartime difficulties, but she complained to Philip that the money was not enough for her household. 7 The Burgundians promised her financial help but on the condition that she break with the dauphin and consent to the policies of Philip the Good. On January 17 Isabeau bowed to Robersart and the Burgundians when she agreed to use the king to condemn the acts of the dauphin and approve Philip the Good who finally decided at the end of January to come to Troyes. On February 18, a new treasurer was appointed for Isabeau's finances and 6000 livres were turned over to her. She was momentarily relieved of her distress, but Henry's vague promises to "revere and honor" the mother of his future wife needed to be cemented. 8 Thus in May 1420 her argentier was independently instituted again, and in June 1420, after the treaty of Troyes, Henry authorized a monthly sum of 2,000 francs for the queen of France.

Philip the Good arrived in Troyes on March 23, 1420, and the preliminaries of the treaty were worked out with representatives of Henry and Paris on April 9, 1420. On May 19 full powers were given to Philip and Isabeau in the name of
Charles VI to make the treaty, and on May 20 Henry V, the man who dictated its terms, also arrived at Troyes. The treaty of Troyes provided for the Lancaster dynasty to administer both France and England through separate national organizations for all time. Charles VI and Isabeau would retain their positions until the king's death, but the dauphin was completely disinherited. Henry, who became son and heir of Charles VI and regent on account of the king's insanity, agreed to reduce to obedience all parts of France still subject to the dauphin. The agreement would be sealed of course by the marriage of Henry to Princess Catherine. On May 21 the councils of Henry V, Charles VI, and Philip confirmed the treaty and added provisions to assure Catherine's support in widowhood and to allow each country to retain its own laws without being subjected to the other's. On June 2, 1420, Henry V was married to Catherine in the cathedral of Troyes with great solemnity.

Severe criticism has fallen on Isabeau for the treaty's phrase referring to the "so-called" dauphin which supposedly implied that he was a bastard. No contemporary 1420 source advanced this theory but only the theory that the dauphin was disinherited for his crime against John the Fearless. In fact the first allusions to the bastard theory came in 1449 in a tract written by the future pope Pius II that was used as English propaganda. The dauphin himself secretly had
doubts as early as 1429 since in that year Joan of Arc had assured him of his legitimacy. Given the king's insanity and Isabeau's moral nature, the dauphin's paternity was of course debatable, but it was only after the treaty of Troyes that the English used this to attack the dauphin. Isabeau would not have allowed her honor to be so disputed publicly as the English later did without concern.

To the deaths of Henry V and Charles VI

With Henry V in complete control of the royal government, Isabeau and Charles VI became his instruments. Henry did not allow long celebrations after his marriage, and instead on June 4, 1420, the English and Burgundian armies set out on campaigns for the reduction of the dauphinist fortresses. King Charles and the queens Isabeau and Catherine accompanied the army to Villeneuve-le-roi near the first target, Sens, which opened its gates to Henry on June 11 after a short siege. Leaving Charles and the two queens at Bray, Henry and Philip of Burgundy went on to besiege Montereau, part of which was taken by June 23 allowing Philip to recover his father's body, and on July 1 the castle at Montereau itself capitulated. When the siege of Melun began on July 13, the king and two queens were first deposited at Corbeil, but as the siege dragged on they were moved to the camp sight itself to make it easier for the garrison to surrender. The citizens
of Melun informed King Charles however that while they would render him obedience, they would never kneel before an English prince.\textsuperscript{11} This dauphinist stronghold, the one closest to Paris, held out for four months before finally capitulating from famine on November 17. On December 1 Henry made his state entry into Paris which he had had free access to since the treaty of Troyes anyway. As the people cheered enthusiastically, Henry rode at the head of the procession with King Charles on his right and Philip of Burgundy on his left until the end when Charles rode to the hôtel of Saint Paul and Henry to the Louvre.\textsuperscript{12} The next day the two queens Isabeau and Catherine entered Paris with similar ceremony and rejoicing.

The contrast between the English court of Henry and Catherine at the Louvre and Charles VI's and Isabeau's at the hôtel of Saint Paul was striking. The pomp, pageantry, and regal magnificence at the Louvre was indescribable. Henry acted as though he were really sovereign, removing and appointing officers, opening the Estates General, having the murderers of John the Fearless declared traitors, reestablishing the currency, imposing taxes, and receiving citizens. On the other hand Charles, the king of France, lived humbly, attended only by old servants and men of low estate. Great men and nobles who wanted position and wealth no longer went to the hôtel of Saint Paul but instead went to the Louvre.
Saint Paul itself was dilapidated, its rooms being empty of tapestries, chests, and precious objects which had all been sold, given away, or stolen. This poverty of the king and queen of France was the result of the miserable state in which all Frenchmen lived. The military campaigns had made it impossible for the peasants to farm or the merchants to trade regularly, and therefore they could not pay taxes to support their royalty. Isabeau herself was no longer able to maintain a separate residence in Paris and had to stay with the king at the hôtel of Saint Paul which she hardly ever left. She had, of course, prepared all along for such tragedies, but her dower was mostly in English-controlled Normandy, and her tax and loan agents could not wrest from the people what they did not have. Henry V had certainly made promises to Queen Isabeau, but he was slow to hold to them. The English king had granted his wife and mother-in-law the privilege of taking items from the merchants of Paris, but this only momentarily relieved the queen of France. A few days after Christmas in 1420, Henry and Catherine left for England where she would be crowned, and Isabeau was left more isolated and miserable than ever.

After his brother the duke of Clarence died fighting the dauphinists at Bauge, Henry V returned to France in June 1421 leaving Catherine pregnant in England. The dauphinists had had success while Henry was away, but on his return they gen-
erally retreated. On August 8 Henry retook the Picardy district of Dreux and later the districts of Perche and Beauce. In the first days of September 1421, Catherine returned to Paris and Vincennes to be with her parents, but Henry sent her back to have the baby in England. In December when he learned that she had given birth to a son, Henry presented the grandmother with the privilege of selecting gifts for herself again. In February 1422 he even flattered Isabeau by having her write a letter to request the inhabitants of Dijon to accept the treaty of Troyes when it came up for ratification there. After the fortress of Meaux fell to Henry on May 2, 1422, Catherine left her son at Windsor and returned to Vincennes where she was joined by her husband from Meaux and Isabeau and Charles from Paris.

On May 30, the court moved back to Paris where again Henry and his queen lived in splendor at the Louvre while Charles and his queen lived humbly at the hôtel of Saint Paul. Henry was so moved however by the miserable state of the king and queen of France that he promised to restore them to their proper rank, but Isabeau's poverty was assured when the king of England was unable to keep his promises. When Henry's health soon began to fail him, Isabeau, Charles, and Catherine accompanied him on June 11 to Senlis where he hoped to recover. After leaving Senlis to take Compiègne, Henry returned very ill. In spite of the severe pain of
dysentery he tried to set out again for the upper Loire fortress of Cosne but had to stop at Corbeil. He then tried to get to Paris but died on August 31, 1422, at Vincennes. Isabeau and Charles did not return from Senlis for the funeral services at Saint Denis.

A very sick King Charles returned from Senlis with Isabeau on September 18, 1422. Before his death Henry V had decided that the regent in France during his infant son's minority would be Philip the Good of Burgundy, but if the latter refused, Henry's brother the duke of Bedford would fill the position. Philip, who had just lost his wife, Isabeau's daughter Michelle, traveled to Paris and rendered honors to the king and queen of France, but he refused the regency and returned to Flanders. The regent Bedford owed Isabeau nothing and needed her for no other reason than to obtain Charles VI's signature on royal acts. This function was removed two months after Henry's death when on October 22, 1422, Charles VI died at the age of fifty-four. His body stayed at the hotel of Saint Paul until November 11 when Bedford finally returned to attend the funeral. All of Charles's royal relatives were absent from Saint Denis for "legitimate reasons", and Bedford, the only prince present, was joined by the dead king's chamberlain, chancellor, confessor, lesser household officials, and considerable adoring public. Although she was in Paris, Isabeau herself was
not present either at her husband's deathbed or funeral, probably for reasons of ill health.

The dowager queen

After the death of Charles VI the English, Burgundians, and northern Frenchmen proclaimed the infant Henry VI king of France and England, while Isabeau's disinheritied son declared himself King Charles VII in the south. The war continued. Isabeau, who was fifty-one when her husband died, had thirteen years left to live. Even in peaceful times, propriety regulated the life of a widow. Renouncing most activity, Isabeau lived the rest of her life as a recluse in the hôtel of Saint Paul never again leaving Paris. At least two events however were marked by the queen's presence. In October 1424 she attended a Parisian fête of special magnificence, as did the duke and duchess of Bedford and Philip the Good of Burgundy. On this occasion Philip made such obvious advances to the earl of Salisbury's wife that Salisbury vowed never to fight beside Philip again. Then on December 2, 1431, Isabeau's nine year old grandson Henry VI made his state entry into Paris. As he passed the hotel of Saint Paul, Isabeau watched from a window with her ladies and bowed to him with tears in her eyes. The procession stopped to allow the boy to enter the hôtel and quickly give his respects. On December 16, he was crowned king of France.
Isabeau's later life was marked by personal and financial misery. Lonely and isolated, only the lady of Bavaria, Catherine of Fastavarin, still befriended her. Of her twelve children, only four were still living. Marie lived in a convent, Catherine in London, Jeanne in Brittany, and Charles, disinherited with the help of his own mother, was lost to her forever. Adding to her miseries, Isabeau's health was ruined by obesity, gout, inactivity, and poverty. Life under the English was hard for most Parisians, even Isabeau, who was dependent on Bedford for money to keep up her meagre standard of living. Bedford appointed an official to oversee her finances, and on April 23, 1423, he gave her the wealth of Hemon Raguier, her own confidant, treasurer, and receiver general for many years, on the grounds that he was a rebel. In 1425 and 1427 Bedford confiscated the house and wealth of Isabeau's argentier Jean le Blanc. The old queen herself lived so poorly that she could barely provision herself and her people, but no one in Paris cared about her, because most believed that she was responsible for all the troubles.

During the last years of Isabeau's life, the success of Charles VII was significant. In 1429 Joan of Arc insisted that she had been miraculously sent to aid him and obtained a force to relieve the besieged city of Orleans. After doing so, Joan brought Charles VII to Reims and saw him crowned before she was captured near Compiègne by a Burgundian sol-
With renewed aggressiveness, Charles took Chartres, Logny, Corbeil, and disputed the English right to Harfleur. His diplomatic success was also remarkable. In August 1435 Bedford, Charles, and Philip met at Arras, where the English duke insisted that Henry VI be recognized as king of France and that Charles hold the lands in his possession as Henry's vassal. When Bedford left the conference on September 1, Philip, threatened by Charles's alliance with the emperor Sigismund, began serious negotiations with the French king that led to the treaty of Arras on September 20. Charles paid dearly for Burgundian neutrality in this treaty that would effectively destroy the treaty of Troyes. Philip the Good obtained the two counties of Macon and Auxerre that bordered his Burgundian lands and two other counties adjoining Flanders. While Charles lived, Philip would not do homage for his fiefs held of the French crown, and Charles would have to make amends for his part in John the Fearless's murder. When the duke John of Bedford died on September 14, Charles's triumph in France was assured. His troops entered Paris on April 16, 1436, and afterwards, one by one, the towns and castles held by the English surrendered to him. By the time the last battle for Bordeaux ended in 1453, all that was left of Henry VI's kingdom of France was the town of Calais and its environs.

On Saturday, September 24, 1435, four days after the
signing of the peace of Arras, Isabeau of Bavaria died at the hôtel of Saint Paul at the age of sixty-four. She had died miserably, shivering with cold, plagued by semiparalysis, dropsy, obesity, gout, poverty, loneliness, and the hatred of many Frenchmen. After being on display for three days, her body was taken at four in the afternoon on October 13 to Notre Dame for the funeral. Fourteen bellmen and a hundred torches accompanied Isabeau's body, but no women of rank except Catherine of Fastavariin and a few gentlewomen were present.²³ As the sixteen men in black carried the body upon their shoulders, vigils were said with less solemnity than customary for queens of France. The abbot of Sainte Gèneviève officiated at the funeral which was attended by all the processions of Paris. The next day after mass, her body was placed aboard a boat on the Seine and taken to Saint Denis for entombment. Fear that the dauphinists would rob the cortege made land travel around Paris too hazardous. While still at the congress of Arras, Philip the Good learned of Isabeau's death and carefully arranged services for her there. Burgundy, Bourbon, and the counts of Vendome and Etampes all dressed in black and went to mass in the abbey of Saint Vaast where forty poor men held torches, and many candles shone around the catafalque, a practice usually seen only at the funerals of abbots.²⁴
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER V


5 Bonenfant, p. 181.

6 Ibid., p. 100.

7 Ibid., pp. 23, 93.

8 Ibid., p. 131. Also page 132 for additional payments made to Isabeau by Henry.
9Ibid., pp. 133-135. Bonenfant proves this with the monk of Saint Denis, Monstrelet, and the Journal d'un bourgeois.

10Sackville-West, pp. 124-125 for an amusing attempt to determine whether Charles VI could have fathered the dauphin using the date of the boy's birth to figure the time of his conception and determining whether the king was sane at that time. The results are inconclusive.

11J. Davies, Henry V (London: Arthur Barker, Ltd., 1935), p. 256. The siege of Melun was one of the great military episodes in Henry's career.

12Kingsford, p. 320.

13Chavelot, p. 155.

14Vallet de Viriville, Charles VII, pp. 314-315. Philip was returning to Dijon after some time and insisted that the treaty of Troyes be adhered to but met with some resistance. Calmette, p. 135.

15Shirley, trans., Journal, p. 179. Isabeau and Charles arrived at Paris from Senlis on September 25, 1422.

16Juvenal des Ursins, p. 568. According to Juvenal, all Charles's relatives were "legitimately excused."

17Shirley, trans., Journal, p. 203. The behavior sounds drastic except that he added "as a widow ought to do."


19Ibid., p. 208.


22. In 1805 a dramatist named Pierre Caze came up with a theory in *The Death of Joan of Arc* or *The Maid of Orleans* that Isabeau and Louis of Orleans were the parents of Joan. According to this theory, Isabeau's last child, the soon dead son Philippe, was actually a healthy girl whom Louis and Isabeau sent out into the country to be raised. It is inconceivable that they could have gotten away with it or even that they would have wanted to if the child really were a healthy girl. The theory satisfied a need to make Joan of the noble class and to explain why Charles VII accepted her. For a discussion of this ridiculous idea, R. Pernoud, *Joan of Arc* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), pp. 24-26, and Guerin and White, pp. 258-267 for an attempt to prove the theory.

23. Shirley, trans., *Journal*, p. 298, and Monstrelet, v. VI, p. 228. Accounts of Isabeau's funeral vary as to how many people attended and how hostile the people were. Catherine of Fastavarin was probably the lady referred to as "the lady of Bavaria."

CONCLUSION

The death of Isabeau of Bavaria and the conclusion of the peace of Arras were happily seen as a new era for France. One of the last actors in the Hundred Years War and French civil wars had disappeared, and at the same time the first rays of peace materialized. Isabeau herself was said to have met the news of the peace of Arras with tears of joy. In France she had always been a foreigner who had never developed a sincere attachment to the people. Like many of her contemporaries Isabeau was a person of vice and weakness, but the series of uncertainties, conflicts, and disasters that plagued her life made her a tragic figure.

In spite of the happiness and quiet of her childhood, Isabeau could not have hoped for an uneventful adult life. As the only daughter of the Wittelsbach duke of Bavaria and Thadea Visconti, it was certain that a profitable, advantageous marriage would be found. She was only fourteen when her uncle took her on a "pilgrimage" to France where the young French king Charles VI would decide if he wanted her for his wife. His decision to marry Isabeau immediately certainly took her by surprise, and she experienced an abrupt change of status as the queen of a foreign land. Isolation, loneliness, homesickness, and unsuccessful preg-
nancies marred the early years of her reign, but only a tragedy of great magnitude finally shook the naivety of the young queen. On August 5, 1392, in the forests of Le Mans Charles VI suffered the first of many attacks of insanity that rendered him incapable of running the government for the greater part of his long reign. Isabeau was especially humiliated during her husband's attacks by his refusal to have anything to do with her. In time however the queen was able to use her status and her many children to build a financial base that left her independent.

With the king incapacitated, a struggle to control the French government developed between the king's uncle Philip the Bold of Burgundy and the king's brother Louis of Orleans. The older Philip took power immediately after Charles's insanity, but Louis challenged him primarily in foreign affairs. Orleans married Valentina Visconti, the daughter of Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan, and together the two men plotted to set up a principality for Orleans in Italy. Isabeau was especially concerned about the advance of Giangaleazzo who had been responsible for the deposition and death of her grandfather Bernabo Visconti, and she did all she could to check him. The queen was extremely successful in her opposition to Orleans in Italy and even in France itself where she helped to exile Valentina Visconti from Paris. Frustrated in his Italian policy, Orleans turned to
the German empire where he again ran into Isabeau and also Philip the Bold of Burgundy. Isabeau's Wittelsbach family and Burgundy helped to depose Orleans's ally the emperor Wenceslas and to install Robert of Wittelsbach as emperor. In spite of this success, Orleans made great strides in the formation of a state for himself on the northeastern border of France that threatened both Burgundy and the empire. When the struggle between Orleans and Burgundy finally came to Paris and the French government itself in 1401 and 1402, Isabeau was called upon to mediate the conflict. The rival dukes calmed down eventually, and the queen herself achieved the power that the dukes aspired to when she was named on April 26, 1403, the president of the king's council during the king's "absences."

After the death of Philip the Bold in 1404, Isabeau allied herself firmly with Louis of Orleans, and together they controlled the French government. Since her intimate relationship with Orleans was both political and personal, the public soon became disgusted with the scandal and with the financial excesses of the pair. The queen had turned to Orleans primarily because of her antipathy for Philip's successor in Burgundy John the Fearless who now hoped to profit from the public's reaction against Orleans and Isabeau. Burgundy's pose as a man of the people made him extremely popular in Paris, and in 1405 he brought troops to
the capital in order to overthrow Orleans. John's coup failed when Isabeau and Orleans fled to Melun to wait for John to negotiate. Since Orleans completely controlled the royal family, the king's council, the finances, and the foreign diplomacy of France, John eventually decided that his only alternative was murder. John the Fearless had Orleans assassinated on November 23, 1407, leaving Isabeau in a state of fear and helplessness. She tried to achieve justice for the victim, but John the Fearless, who was now the most powerful man in the realm, refused to admit that he had done wrong. By 1409 John firmly controlled the French government, and Isabeau was forced to sign an alliance with him at Melun.

Although the royal family and French government were controlled by John the Fearless, the count of Armagnac and duke of Orleans formed a military alliance to counter him. When the civil war broke out in 1410 Isabeau was caught in the middle. Her sympathies were still Orleanist, but John was the most powerful man in the realm, and she feared the consequences of opposing him. As a result, the queen tried to keep ties to both sides and to work for peace, but she gave the appearance of vacillating. By 1412, treaties which were really only truces left John in firm control of Paris, but his support of the Cabochian revolt there in 1413 ruined him. Since the revolt was riotous and uncontrollable,
reaction against John set in, and he was forced to flee while the Armagnacs took Paris. Isabeau had been humiliated by the rioters, and thus she welcomed the Armagnacs. However, when the Armagnacs insisted on destroying John and sending an army against him, John used all his diplomatic skills to win Isabeau to his side. When the Armagnacs became aware of Isabeau's secret correspondence with John, they accused her of scandalous behavior and exiled her to Tours in 1417. John rescued the queen and took her to Troyes where they set up a rival government. In 1418 John and Isabeau retook Paris, but the advance of the English under Henry V made the French civil war a nuisance. John tried to negotiate with the dauphin Charles, the successor to the Armagnac faction, but the dauphin chose to murder John the Fearless at Montereau on September 10, 1419.

After the murder of John the Fearless, Isabeau hoped to maintain her Troyes government, but the demands of Henry V made this impossible. When John's son Philip the Good and the citizens of Paris agreed to Henry's demands that the crown of France fall to the English king, Isabeau tried to negotiate with her son, the dauphin Charles. However Philip and Henry promised the queen financial support and dignity, and she decided not to resist them. In the treaty of Troyes on May 21, 1420, Isabeau helped to disinherit her son Charles and to assure English control of France. Henry soon occupied
Paris and subdued many dauphinist strongholds, but the English king died before he could honor his promises to support the queen of France. Only a few months after Henry's death, Charles VI died on October 22, 1422, and Isabeau was no longer queen. While the war between the English and Isabeau's son, the self-proclaimed King Charles VII, continued, the dowager queen herself lived as a recluse in English-occupied Paris. The remaining years of her life were marked by loneliness, poverty, isolation, and ill health, and to add to her misery, she was generally held responsible for the realm's troubles. Isabeau died on September 24, 1435, at the age of sixty-four at a time when her son was finally leading France out of the disasters of the reigns of Charles VI and Isabeau of Bavaria.

To argue that Isabeau, if she had been more intelligent and capable, could have prevented the great tragedies of Charles's reign is to misunderstand the times in which she lived. France was experiencing a political crisis in the Armagnac-Burgundian civil war and the Hundred Years War, a religious crisis in the Schism, an economic crisis in the costs of the wars, and a moral crisis in the pervasive hopelessness, disorder, and anarchy. Isabeau's role could not have been primary because she could not have controlled these forces. Queen Isabeau's time was characterized by uncertainty, confusion, and violence, and only another generation could recover and move on.
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