

Clément Marot. *Recueil inédit: Offert au connétable de Montmorency en mars 1538 (manuscrit de Chantilly)*.

Textes Littéraires Français 604. Ed. François Rigolot. Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 2010. 353 pp. index. append. illus. bibl. \$95. ISBN: 978-2-600-01407-6.

In March 1538, the French poet Clément Marot (ca. 1496–1544) offered a manuscript containing 140 of his poems to Anne de Montmorency, a lifelong friend of King Francis, and since February 1538 “Constable of France,” thus second-in-command only to the king. With the presentation of this immaculate manuscript, Marot probably tried to obtain Montmorency’s favor, and at the same time to clear his name of the persistent association with Lutheran heresy (as all

independent thinking about the Church was conveniently labeled in those days). This double intention can be inferred from the presentation itself and from the contents of the manuscript. It is not a complete collection of Marot's poetic output during his exile from France (as suggested in the title of the manuscript), but it offers a clever selection and arrangement of poems from that period. Marot deliberately suppressed poems full of evangelical overtones (e.g., the famous Epistle to the King "Du temps de son exil à Ferrare") and an Epistle to two unknown sisters (generally but incorrectly referred to as "A deux soeurs savoisiennes"). This exclusion is not at all surprising: Marot never published these poems (we know of them only because they are present in covert editions and manuscripts) and the Constable of France was known for his religious intransigence. The real surprise of the Chantilly Manuscript is the presence of some poems, known only from this manuscript, and an expurgated version of an "Epistle to Renée of Ferrara" sent from Venice in 1536. In the original version of this Epistle (known from several manuscripts and first published by Guiffrey in the nineteenth century) Marot strongly criticizes the Roman Catholic Church; he even compares the pope with the Antichrist. Marot did not suppress this extremely risky poem. Instead, he shortened it by twenty lines, so cunningly rearranging the remainder (106 lines) that he transforms the poem from an attack on the perversion of the Church into a general *boutade* against the Epicurean lifestyle of the Venetians.

These elements and the fact that this manuscript was written under Marot's direct surveillance, and thus organized and edited according to his wishes, make the Chantilly Manuscript an important resource for Marot researchers, ever since it was discovered by Gustave Macon in the library of Chantilly in 1898. It was never published in its entirety. Researchers had to do with imperfect and partial publications, and the footnotes and annotations in the critical editions of Marot's *Oeuvres* by C. A. Mayer, Gerard Defaux, and François Rigolot, respectively.

For this reason, the separate critical edition of the manuscript prepared by Rigolot is more than welcome. Alongside a photographic facsimile of the entire manuscript Rigolot offers a transcription of all poems with succinct footnotes, including the necessary references to other known versions. In between, one finds a short introduction dealing with the origin of the manuscript, the relation between Marot and Montmorency, and the organization of the poems in seven sections (a deliberate and clever *dispositio* to prepare the reader to interpret everything *in bonam partem*). Here the editor also evokes and critically assesses the topics referred to above.

In a number of annexes the reader finds alternative versions of some poems (e.g., the unexpurgated version of the "Epistle to Renée from Venice"), known responses to some Epigrams, and the Latin text of the Epigrams of Martial that Marot paraphrased in the last section of the manuscript. A table of *incipits* guarantees the accessibility of this edition, which now offers the precious Chantilly Manuscript to every interested scholar.

DICK WURSTEN
Antwerp