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### Delvallée, Ellen. Poétiques de la filiation. Clément Marot et ses maîtres : Jean Marot, Jean Lemaire et Guillaume Cretin

Robert J. Hudson

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**Delvallée, Ellen.**

***Poétiques de la filiation. Clément Marot et ses maîtres : Jean Marot, Jean Lemaire et Guillaume Cretin.***

Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 622. Geneva: Droz, 2021. Pp. 976. ISBN 978-2-600-06263-3 (paperback) CHF 82.

Described by the author as “ni reproduction à l’identique, ni révolution radicale” (13), the model of poetic influence in the verse of Clément Marot (1496–1544) posited by Ellen Delvallée in this volume is filial in nature. A product of nourishment, training, and imitation, received firsthand from benevolent masters before ultimately giving way to a developing individual, natural voice, Delvallée’s familial concept is more genealogical in approach, insisting on virtual human kinship rather than contemporary *translatio studii* metaphors of grafting foreign sapling branches to a native trunk or of carefully replicating the bee ensconced in the amber of antiquity from the famous Martial epigram. Eschewing such figurative flora and fauna allegories, Delvallée’s wholly original study is likewise devoid of the theories of Freudian anxiety or building on the shoulders of distant giants, which loomed large in recent decades. Indeed, her *Poétiques de la filiation* insists on proximity, mentoring, nurturing, and refinement in the creation of the Marotic aesthetic that has so frequently been characterized as a clean break from a recalcitrant medieval past and/or announcing a modern trajectory for the future without a clear justification of such.

Early into the work, Delvallée recognizes the significant scope of the study she was undertaking. With a nod to several articles and book chapters from the past fifty years that speak to individual poems or appeal to focused examples of influence (23–24), Delvallée proposes a far more exhaustive examination of the complete poetic corpuses of Clément Marot and his chief “maîtres”: father Jean Marot, Jean Lemaire de Belges, and Guillaume Cretin. In the end, examining circumstantial verse from each poet beneath the lens of rhetoric, she was able to convincingly make her case for proximal *imitatio* over a substantial 898 pages of analysis.

Indeed, the three sections into which Delvallée divides her book, each composed of several chapters and totaling roughly 250 pages, could well stand individually as a book of its own. The first of these, treating funerary lamentations (*la déploration funèbre*) was well-chosen by Delvallée in that death was a constant in the Renaissance and one of the chief functions of a courtly poet,

which all four poets she treats were, would be to write circumstantial verse to commemorate and pay homage to the life of one mourned by the king. From a rhetorical cataloguing of the forms taken by this type of poetic exercise and a historical overview of how it had been practised in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Delvallée embarks on a sustained analysis of Lemaire's treatment of death across his verse, with particular attention given to his most influential works, *Le Temple d'Honneur et de Vertus* and the *Épîtres de l'Amant vert*. From Lemaire, she proceeds to examine poetic eulogies penned by Cretin, before turning in the subsequent chapter to the chief figure of the book, Clément Marot himself, and demonstrating how his early attempts to compose *complaintes*, *rondeaux*, and so on, in his *Adolescence clémentine* would enable him to develop his own personal, evangelically tinged poetics of consolation. One final chapter closes out this initial section, examining the poetic epitaph, as composed by Lemaire and Marot, both father and son, and building to what she would call the "quintessence" of the Marotic death lament: an ironic lightness and joy, unsurprising coming from a poet whose Pauline official motto, derived from a canonical funerary poem studied here by Delvallée, was "La Mort n'y Mord" (Death Has no Bite/Sting).

Moving to the second section, the reader is delighted to discover that Delvallée's approach to the three types of circumstantial verse she treats is neither formulaic nor systematic. Rather than announce the thematic and then embark on a study of each poet in what one might call a dissertation format, her chapters remain cohesive and organic, and they dialogue well one with the next. Despite the impressive length of the volume, this carefully crafted organization makes the book flow remarkably well and maintain a unified coherency throughout. For instance, from the initial section treating lamentations, Delvallée examines poetic historiography and the courtly task of chronicling the reign of the sovereign employer; this time, however, she begins with Clément Marot and traces the development looking backwards from the model of her chief figure. Following an overview of the French practice of poetically recording a king's travels, deeds and exploits, she analyzes the efforts of a young Marot to fulfill his duty in an early journey to Hainaut and how his approach is informed by the practices of Jean Marot, who had famously accompanied the Valois monarch Louis XII to Genoa and Venice. Over the three chapters that constitute this central section, through close rhetorical analysis, Delvallée

traces the evolution of the role of royal historian/propagandist from poetic father(s) to son.

Delvallée's final section sees her enter an important ongoing conversation within Marot Studies, that of the poet constructing and marketing his poetic "career" at the dawn of moveable type. With excellent volumes over the past two decades by Florian Preisig, Guillaume Berthon, and Scott Francis treating this question in varied ways, Delvallée holds firmly to her volume's thesis as she examines several of the rhetorical strategies of self-fashioning derived from Marot *père*, Cretin, and Lemaire. In so doing, she convincingly indicates instances in which Marot is aware of his debt to his three closest poetic masters. While this final section perhaps engages most directly contemporary questions, the first two sections appear to invite scholars to newly reconsider consolatory verse and early Renaissance poetic historiography. Whatever draws them to this work, the breadth and quality of analysis have established this volume as indispensable and required reading for anyone working to understand Marot's aesthetics. Throughout, Delvallée's overarching point is crystal clear: We cannot merely put our faith in the biases of literary history (the Pléiade, Boileau, Sainte-Beuve, Weber), nor can we accept Marot's own editorial career (Villon, Petrarch, the *Roman de la Rose*) as sufficient to establish his poetic paternity; no, there is no acceptable substitute for the hard work of rigorous, thorough rhetorical analysis.

ROBERT J. HUDSON

Brigham Young University

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