

Classic Poetry Series

Clement Marot
- poems -

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Clement Marot(1494-1544)

Clément Marot (23 November 1496 – 12 September 1544) was a French poet of the Renaissance period.

Marot was born at Cahors, the capital of the province of Quercy, some time during the winter of 1496-1497. His father, Jean Marot (c. 1463-1523), whose more correct name appears to have been des Mares, Marais or Marets, was a Norman from the Caen region and was also a poet. Jean held the post of *escripvain* (a cross between poet laureate and historiographer) to Anne of Brittany, Queen of France. Clément was the child of his second wife. The boy was "brought into France" — it is his own expression, and is not unnoteworthy as showing the strict sense in which that term was still used at the beginning of the 16th century — in 1506. He appears to have been educated at the University of Paris, and to have then begun studying law. Jean Marot instructed his son in the fashionable forms of verse-making, which called for some formal training.

It was the time of the *rhétoriciens*, poets who combined stilted language with a fondness for the allegorical manner of the 15th century and the most complicated and artificial forms of the ballade and the rondeau. Clément began as a "rhétoricien," though he later helped overthrow this style. He wrote panegyrics to Guillaume Cretin and translated Virgil's first eclogue in 1512. He soon gave up the study of law and became page to Nicolas de Neuville, seigneur de Villeroy, which led to his introduction into court life. The house of Valois, which would hold the throne of France for the greater part of a century, was devoted to literature.

As early as 1514, before the accession of King Francis I, Clément presented to him his Judgment of Minos, and shortly afterward he was either styled or styled himself *facteur* (poet) *de la reine* to Queen Claude. In 1519 he was attached to the suite of Marguerite d'Alençon, the king's sister, (later to become Marguerite de Navarre), a great patron of the arts. He was also a great favourite of Francis himself, attended the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, and duly celebrated it in verse. In the next year he was at the camp in Flanders, and wrote of the horrors of war.

Marot, like most of Marguerite's literary court, was attracted by her grace, her kindness, and her intellectual accomplishments, but there is no grounds for thinking that they had a romantic relationship. During this time his poetic style began to change, becoming much less artificial. Some of his poems praise a lady named "Diane", whom some have identified with Diane de Poitiers, but there is

little support for this theory, because 16th-century poets always referred to real women under pseudonyms.

In 1524, Marot accompanied King Francis on his disastrous Italian campaign. The king was taken prisoner at the Battle of Pavia, but there are no grounds for supposing that Marot was wounded or shared the king's fate, and he was back in Paris again by the beginning of 1525. However, Marguerite for intellectual reasons, and her brother for political, had until then favoured the double movement of "Aufklärung", partly humanist, partly reforming, which distinguished the beginning of the century. Formidable opposition to both forms of innovation now began to appear, and Marot, never particularly prudent, was arrested on a charge of heresy and lodged in the Grand Châtelet in February 1526. This was only a foretaste of his coming trouble, and a friendly prelate, acting for Marguerite, arranged his release before Easter. The imprisonment caused him to write a vigorous poem entitled Enfer (hell), later imitated by his friend Etienne Dolet. His father died about this time, and Marot seems to have been appointed in Jean's place as valet de chambre to the king. He was certainly a member of the royal household in 1528 with a stipend of 250 livres. In 1530, probably, he married. The following year he was once again in trouble, this time for attempting to rescue a prisoner, and was again released, this time after Marot wrote the king one of his most famous poems, appealing for his release.

In 1532 he published (it had perhaps appeared three years earlier), under the title of *Adolescence Clémentine*, the first printed collection of his works, which was very popular and was frequently reprinted with additions. Unfortunately, the poet's enemies ensured that Marot was implicated in the 1534 Affair of the Placards, and this time he fled. He passed through Nérac, the court of Navarre, and made his way to Renée, duchess of Ferrara, a supporter of the Protestant Reformation in France--as steadfast as her sister-in-law Marguerite, and even more efficacious, because her dominions were outside France. At Ferrara his work there included the celebrated *Blasons* (a descriptive poem, improved upon medieval models), which set all the verse-writers of France imitating them. The blason was defined by Thomas Sibilet as a perpetual praise or continuous vituperation of its subject. The blasons of Marot's followers were printed in 1543 with the title of *Blasons anatomiques du corps féminin*.

Duchess Renée was not able to persuade her husband, Ercole d'Este, to share her views, and Marot had to leave Ferrara. He went to Venice, but before very long Pope Paul III remonstrated with Francis I on the severity with which the Protestants were treated, and they were allowed to return to Paris on condition of recanting their errors. Marot returned with the rest, and abjured his heresy at Lyon. In 1539 Francis gave him a house and grounds in the suburbs.

It was at this time that his famous and influential translations of the Psalms appeared. Each courtier identified his or her favorite psalms, and the poems were sung in the court and in the city. It is said, probably with exaggeration, that these translations did more than anything else to advance the cause of the Protestant Reformation in France. Marot's translations of the Psalms continued to be sung for centuries by Protestant congregations.

At the same time Marot engaged in a literary quarrel with a lesser poet named Sagon, who represented the reactionary Sorbonne. Half the verse-writers of France aligned themselves as Marotiques or Sagontiques, and a great deal of versified abuse was exchanged. Victory, as far as wit was concerned, remained with Marot, but his biographers suggest that a certain amount of ill-will was created against him by the squabble, and that, as in Dolet's case, his subsequent misfortunes were partly the result of his own rashness.

He edited the works of his fellow poet François Villon.

The publication of the Psalms gave the Sorbonne the opportunity to condemn Marot. In 1543 it was evident that he could not rely on the protection of Francis. Marot accordingly fled to Geneva; but the stars were now decidedly against him. He had, like most of his friends, been at least as much of a freethinker as a Protestant, and this was fatal to his reputation in the austere city of Calvin. He again had to flee, and made his way into Piedmont, and he died at Turin in the autumn of 1544.

A Etienne Du Temple

Clement Marot

A Madame De Ferrare

Clement Marot

A Monsieur De Pothon

Clement Marot

A Son Ami Lion

Clement Marot

A Un Créancier

Clement Marot

A Un Poète Français

Clement Marot

A Un Poète Ignorant

Clement Marot

A Une Damoyse Malade

Clement Marot

A Une Médisante

Clement Marot

Adieu Aux Dames De La Cour

Clement Marot

Amour Et Mort M'Ont Fait Outrage

Clement Marot

Au Roi De Navarre

Clement Marot

Au Seigneur Theocrenus, Lisant À Ses Disciples

Clement Marot

Aux Damoselles Paresseuses D'Écrire À Leurs Amis

Clement Marot

Ballade De Frère Lubin

Clement Marot

Ballade De S'Amie Bien Belle

Clement Marot

Celle Qui M'A Tant Pourmené

Clement Marot

Chant De Mai Et De Vertu

Clement Marot

De Celui De Qui L'Amie A Fait Nouvel Ami

Clement Marot

De Celui De Qui L'Amie A Fait Nouvel Ami

Clement Marot

De Celui Qui Entra De Nuit Chez S'Amie

Clement Marot

De Celui Qui Incite Une Jeune Dame À Faire Ami

Clement Marot

De Celui Qui Ne Pense Qu'En S'Amie

Clement Marot

De Celui Qui Nouvellement A Reçu Lettres De S'Amie

Clement Marot

De Celui, Qui Est Demeuré, Et S'Amie S'En Est Allée

Clement Marot

De La Jeune Dame Qui A Vieil Mari

Clement Marot

De La Mort De Monsieur De Chissay

Clement Marot

De La Rose

Clement Marot

De L'Abbé Et De Son Valet

Clement Marot

De L'Absent De S'Amie

Clement Marot

De L'Amant Dououreux

Clement Marot

De L'Amant Marri Contre Sa Dame

Clement Marot

De L'Amour Du Siècle Antique

Clement Marot

De L'Amoureux Ardant

Clement Marot

De Sa Grande Amie

Clement Marot

De Soi-Même

Clement Marot

Des Trois Couleurs, Gris, Tanné Et Noir

Clement Marot

Dieu Gard Ma Maîtresse Et Régente

Clement Marot

D'Où Vient Cela, Belle, Je Vous Supplie

Clement Marot

Du Content En Amours

Clement Marot

Du Disciple Soutenant Son Maître Contre Les Détracteurs

Clement Marot

Du Mal Content D'Amour

Clement Marot

Du Partement D'Anne

Clement Marot

D'Un Soi Défiant De Sa Dame

Clement Marot

Épigramme Qu'Il Perdit Contre Hélène De Tournon

Clement Marot

Épitaphe De Jehan Serre, Excellent Joueur De Farces

Clement Marot

J'Ai Contenté

Clement Marot

J'Ai Grand Désir

Clement Marot

J'Attends Secours De Ma Seule Pensée

Clement Marot

Je Ne Fais Rien Que Requérir

Clement Marot

Je Suis Aimé De La Plus Belle

Clement Marot

Jouissance Vous Donnerai

Clement Marot

Languir Me Fais Sans T'Avoir Offensée

Clement Marot

Ma Dame Ne M'A Pas Vendu

Clement Marot

Plaisir N'Ai Plus, Mais Vis En Déconfort

Clement Marot

Pour Le May Planté Par Les Imprimeurs De Lyon

Clement Marot

Quand J'Ai Pensé En Vous, Ma Bien-Aimée

Clement Marot

Qui Veut Avoir Liesse

Clement Marot

Réplique À La Reine De Navarre

Clement Marot

Secourez-Moi, Ma Dame Par Amours

Clement Marot

Si De Nouveau J'Ai Nouvelles Couleurs

Clement Marot

Sonnet De La Différence Du Roy Et De L'Empereur

Clement Marot

Tant Que Vivrai En Âge Florissant

Clement Marot

To Diane De Poitiers

Farewell! since vain is all my care,
Far, in some desert rude,
I'll hide my weakness, my despair:
And, 'midst my solitude,
I'll pray, that, should another move thee,
He may as fondly, truly love thee.

Adieu, bright eyes, that were my heaven!
Adieu, soft cheek, where summer blooms!
Adieu, fair form, earth's pattern given,
Which Love inhabits and illumines!
Your rays have fallen but coldly on me:
One far less fond, perchance, had won ye!

Clement Marot