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Lucio Anneo  
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## **Edita:**

Instituto de Estudios Clásicos "Lucio Anneo Séneca"

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Edificio 17 "Ortega y Gasset"

C/ Madrid, 133 - 28903 - Getafe (Madrid) - España

Teléfono: (+34) 91 624 58 68 / 91 624 85 59

Fax: (+34) 91 624 92 12

Correo-e: [seneca@hum.uc3m.es](mailto:seneca@hum.uc3m.es)

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Autor: Instituto Lucio Anneo Séneca

Editor: Francisco Lisi Bereterbide

**ACADEMIA ROMANA AS A SOURCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PASSIONATE PILGRIM.  
A COMPARATIVE READING OF TWO MANUSCRIPTS: MS. FR. 1259 AND MS.  
OTTOBONIANO LAT. 2860"**

Sandra Ducic-Collette  
(Durham University, UK)

**I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: *BALLET COMIQUE, MEASURE, HONOUR AND HARMONY***

It is significant that it is behind the mask of an allegory that the most obvious and certain example of political influence in the Renaissance is to be found. The *Guise* element is very prominent amongst the ones associated with the *Ballet comique* during the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth century. This kind of performance actually appears to have been used in order to mitigate, so to say, religious rancour by the *doux et gracieux* means of humanistic paganism. It takes place in a chain of events often interrupted by disastrous wars, massacres and trials. More precisely, it belongs to the period when Henry III, king of Navarre, appears to turn towards politics, under cover of his Counter Reformation and of his restoration of the medieval *hospitales domus* Order. But it is in regard to Shakespeare's *Love's Labour Lost* that the series of French Court festivals and their relations to the French and Italian Academies might be the most illuminating. Shakespeare is obviously pleased with the idea of a hierarchically ordered social system, provided it functions harmoniously. In his play, he has the same esteem for kings as for the Academicians of his Palace, and shares their wish to see the young

Prince eventually playing the role of a philosopher-king. He is particularly careful to state that the kings of France are not tyrants:

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,  
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs  
And then grace us in the disgrace of death (...)

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 1.1.1-3)

“Trial in 1468”. The activity of Roman Academic groupings, heralding the period named Renaissance, ended in a famous trial in 1468, under Paul II. The date of 1464 marks the end of the period which we call the Church of the Lights, in which two Popes played an important part by enticing to the Vatican Court some of the best intellectuals of the time. They were Pope Nicolas V (Tommaso Parentucelli), who officiated between 1447 and 1455, founded the Vatican Library and organized the Como's and Medici's Libraries in Florence, and Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), who officiated between 1458 and 1464.

The first Academia (known as Academia Vitruviana) held its meetings in the Cardinal Colonna's home and continued its activities till the death of the last of the Italian Humanists, Pomponio Leto, in 1463. According to Mancini's *Vita di L.B. Alberti*, besides the fundamental conflict shooting up around the legitimacy of the temporal power, another conflict involved factions of the Curia<sup>1</sup>.

This second conflict involved proponents of a stiff control on the research of Humanist intellectuals and artists. We are told that Paul II dismissed the abbreviators in order to save their salaries, but it is likely that he had another motive, which would better explain his decision. This motive, probably, was that Pius II had removed the responsibility for the abbreviator's school from the Prefects and left it to the care of Cardinal Rodrigo Lenzol Borgia; this enabled Paul II to chase away the abbreviators, and with them, L.B. Alberti and the other humanists at that time.

After the death in 1462 of Humanist Pope Pius II, considered as the spiritual heir of Nicholas V, Cardinal Bessarion carefully decided to go away from Curia. His colleagues Prospero Colonna and Nicholas of Cues had already passed away at that time. Within only six or seven years, the Humanist Movement appears to have suffered a large number of deaths, many of them quite suspicious. I am not going here to enlist all of them, but at least some of the major ones so that one can realise how tragic became the situation of the Italian Humanists at that moment. The list opens with Clarice Orsini

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<sup>1</sup> G. Mancini, *Vita di L.B. Alberti*, Florence, Sansoni, 1882, p. 449.

(1453-1488), wife of Lorenzo de' Medici: as a daughter of Jacopo Orsini, she represented for the Medici an important support in Rome. Her death was followed by that of her daughter Luisa (eight years old). The tragic enumeration continues with the death of Berotoldo di Giovanni, in 1491, sculptor and caretaker of the antique collection of the Medici's Garden. His death was followed a year later by that of Lorenzo de' Medici himself (at an age not older than forty-four). Then came Cristoforo Landino's turn, commentator of Dante and reporter of the Camaldoli's Congress held in 1468. Then the Venetian patrician Ermolao Barbaro, who died in Rome because of a "bad fever" as it is reported (he was no older than thirty nine years old). Then Poet Angelo Poliziano died also because of a "bad fever", in September 1491. After him, the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, 1494, passed away Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (not older than thirty one years old). This makes a rather long list of deaths of individuals of which most were young, in only very few years: six, to be precise (1488-1494)!

Commenting on those tragic deaths, Leonard Olschki wrote rightly that *die Geschichte der Terrorisierung der Forscher und Denker Italiens muss erst geschrieben werden*<sup>2</sup>. However, if we take into account the work of Shakespeare and the allegorical interpretation we find in it, we can see that at least a small but essential part of this tragically ended story has been preserved and, thanks to him, gained immortal glory. Indeed *Love's Labour's Lost* (but also *Troilus and Cresida* and *Romeo and Julia*) can be seen as a *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* and tacit answer to the trial which took place against the Humanist thinkers<sup>3</sup> in Italy (one century before and can be seen as a *Ex labore deo naturae sacrificia Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* ed. 1546, p. 11v.):

Ex labore deo naturae sacrificia liberaliter, paulatim  
Reduces animum deo subiectum, firmam custodiam  
Vitae tua misericorditer gubernando, tenebit inco-  
Lumemque servabit.  
(HP ed. 1546, p. 11)

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<sup>2</sup> Reported by F. Heer, *Sieben Kapitel aus die Geschichte des Schreckens*, Zurich, Max Niehans Verlag, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> The best known work of Huguenot political theory (i.e. politic Huguenot) is the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1579), which has been attributed to Philippe du Plessis-Mornay (although the attribution is not certain). Mornay was a French nobleman, who was for many years a close adviser of Henry of Navarre (future Henry IV). This famous book deals with the question of the right of subjects to resist a ruler who attempts to violate the law of God or to oppress the church or the state. On that, cf. B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 227.

The prominent idea of Measure that we find in *Love's Labour's Lost*, clearly relates to the notions of academic *Harmony* and *Honour* can be interpreted as a means to put an end to civil wars and religious *hubris* (immoderation) which took place in Europe in the Sixteenth century, so as to reunite Humanists, Huguenots and Catholics. The measured speech or famous *degree* in Shakespeare's plays is grounded in musical analogies between the harmony of the physical world and the harmony of a hierarchically ordered society:

Take but *degree* away, untune that string,  
And hark, what discord follows!  
(*Troilus and Cresida*, 1.3.1.9-10)

*Honour* is another image of which Shakespeare makes use, referring to Muses as knowing who actually honours them on earth by pursuing liberal arts. In the following passage, he connects '*everything polished in the arts and sciences*' with the pursuit of Honour, and this quest for Honour is at the same time recognized as the cause of '*fine monuments and sepulchres engraved with inscriptions in prose and verse*' recalling for eternity the memory of those who have honourably served the state. So when the French king, in the opening of *Love's Labour's Lost*, sets up an Academy in his Kingdom of Navarre (which is the same as of Marguerite, the protector of French poets), he inaugurates it with a speech on Honour full of images as follows:

When, spite of *cormorant devouring Time*,  
The endeavor of this present breath may buy  
That *honour* which shall bate his scythe's keen edge  
And make us heirs of all eternity.  
(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 1.1.4-7)

The underlying denunciation is here of the *intellectual jealousy* of the less endowed (*minus habentes*) to the initiated. Similarly, in the preliminary pages to *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (hereafter: *HP*), the poet Andrea Marone (ca. 1499) makes explicit that the identity of Poliphilo will not be revealed so that "the divine things wont be devoured by jealousy"<sup>4</sup>. The link between honour and immortal fame due to literary labours - such as those of a learned (*initiated*) academy - and honours paid to great men engraved in ancient monuments is clearly a Renaissance theme.

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<sup>4</sup> Epigram of Andrea Marone: *an divinam etiam livor edat radibus* (in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili ubi humana omnia nisi somnium esse docet* Venice: Aldus 1499).

## **II. MEDIEVAL CHIVALRY: *PASSIONATE PILGRIM*, *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST* AND *LE CHEVALIER ERRANT DE LA MANTA*.**

The influence of Giordano Bruno has often been suspected in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Passionate Pilgrim*, the dates of which are uncertain, maybe the early 1590s<sup>5</sup>. But I think if there had ever been an influence from him, it was rather in the sense that Shakespeare was against Bruno's polemical teaching. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the King and his courtier swear to live 'in philosophy', by chastity, fast and study, and to be driven by those 'divine entrenchments' into a knowledge which is deemed 'a godlike recompense'.

Shakespeare's work discloses traces of medieval chivalry, aims at their restoration, and then makes cutting remarks about the philosophy in vogue in his time, namely "The School of Night", influenced by Bruno's lectures (given during his stay in England, between 1583-85). In *Love's Labour's Lost* he alludes to it, saying (4.3.251-2): 'Black is the badge of hell,/The hue of dungeons and the suit of night'. This school was a secret atheistic, philosophical and scientific academy, chief source of English Copernicanism and precursor of Bacon's scientific investigations. It was run by Sir Walter Raleigh, under the patronage of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and his friend Ferdinand Stanley, Lord Strange, fifth earl of Derby. Others suspected to be involved in it were writers like Christopher Marlow, George Chapman, as well as the mathematician and astronomer Thomas Harriot, translator of Giordano Bruno. Shakespeare, it is thought<sup>6</sup>, belonged to an opposing group allied to the Earls of Essex and Southampton, including writers John Eliot and Thomas Nashe. This is why *Love's Labors Lost* became eventually *a defence of aristocratic women* ('But love, first learned in lady's eyes', 4.3.301), especially the Earl of Essex's sisters, Penelope Devereux, (Sidney's *Stella*) and Dorothy Devreux, the Countess of North Humberland.

We find obvious parallels of the Shakespearian idea of woman as the source for true knowledge in the manuscript of *Le Chevalier Errant de la Manta* (Ms fr 12559), authored by Thomas III of Saluzzo. There, we are told from the very first act of the "beaulté trop plus qu'humaine" of the "Dames et seigneurs du temps jadis". As to Shakespeare, he intends to maintain beauty of women against the apparently 'advanced'

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<sup>5</sup> H. Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama in Knowledge : Giordano Bruno in England*, London and New York, Routledge, 1989, pp. 424 ss.

<sup>6</sup> H.R. Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

views of philosophers *whose mind were allegedly set of higher things*: ‘Fie, painted rhetoric!’ (*Love’s Labour’s Lost* 4.3.235). Where personal allegory or satire was sought, it was found: the character of Moth refers to Nashe and Holofernes, his antagonist, Gabriel Harvey, or as Warburton had suggested already in 1747, John Florio, in which case Harvey was Don Adrian de Armado, who has also been identified by M. Hume, with the Spanish exile and correspondent of Earl of Essex, Antonio Perez (ca. 1540-1611)<sup>7</sup>.

The leading male characters bear names taken from the French civil wars: Navarre, Dumain, Longavill, Berowne. It is noteworthy that the opposite pairs are represented in these names; in addition to “Navarre”, we have “Dumain”, that is, Mayenne, member of the Guise family who eventually became head of the Catholic League. Shakespeare clearly knew the long tradition of ‘conciliatory French fêtes’, in which both “Navarin” and Guisin” took part. They all belong to an *Academy at Court of Navarre* where questions of honour and virtue were often discussed:

Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;  
Our court shall be a little Academe,  
Still and contemplative in living art .  
(*Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 1.1.10-13)

The King (in fact, Henry III of Navarre, future King of France under the name of Henri IV) and his fellows fall in love with a French queen and her ladies to whom they write sonnets and stage a ‘masked’ and a measured dance. That it is a “measured dance” is suggested by the very repetition of the word “measure” in acts IV and V of the *Love’s Labour’s Lost*:

(...)And, when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods  
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.  
(*Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 4.3.318-319)

FERDINAND: Say to her, we have measured many miles  
To tread a measure with her on this grass.  
BOYET : They say, that they have measured many a mile  
To tread a measure with you on this grass.

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<sup>7</sup> M. Hume, « Some Spanish Influences on English Literature », in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom*, 2nd Series, vol. XXIX, 1909 [Especially chap. IX, « The Spanish Theatre and the English Dramatists »]; see also, G. Ungerer, « A Spaniard in Elizabethan England : The Correspondance of Antonio Pérez’s exile », 2 vols 2, 377-98, London, 1976. Ungerer points to Perez’s *unbearable vanity, his boundless self glorification, his self centered cosmic view, his excess of megalomania...*



ROSALINE : It is not so. Ask them how many inches  
Is in one mile: if they have *measured* many,  
The *measure* then of one is easily told.

BOYET : If to come hither you have *measured* miles,  
And many miles, the princess bids you tell  
How many inches doth fill up one mile.

BIRON : Tell her, we *measure* them by weary steps.

BOYET : She hears herself.

ROSALINE : How many weary steps,  
Of many weary miles you have o'ergone,  
Are number'd in the travel of one mile?

BIRON : We number nothing that we spend for you:  
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,  
That we may do it still without accompt.  
Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,  
That we, like savages, may worship it.

ROSALINE : My face is but a moon, and clouded too.

FERDINAND : Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do!  
Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars, to shine,  
Those clouds removed, upon our watery eyne.

ROSALINE : O vain petitioner! beg a greater matter;  
Thou now request'st but moonshine in the water.

FERDINAND : Then, in our *measure* do but vouchsafe one change.  
Thou bid'st me beg: this begging is not strange.

ROSALINE : Play, music, then! Nay, you must do it soon.  
*Music plays*: Not yet! no dance! Thus change I like the moon.

FERDINAND : Will you not dance? How come you thus estranged?

ROSALINE : You took the moon at full, but now she's changed.

FERDINAND : Yet still she is the moon, and I the man.  
The music plays; vouchsafe some motion to it.

ROSALINE : Our ears vouchsafe it.

FERDINAND : But your legs should do it.

ROSALINE : Since you are strangers and come here by chance,  
We'll not be nice: take hands. We will not dance.

FERDINAND : Why take we hands, then?

ROSALINE : Only to part friends:  
Curtsy, sweet hearts; and so the *measure* ends.

FERDINAND : More *measure* of this *measure*; be not nice.  
(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.2.184-222)

Contrary to the legend which has made so much play with the *escadron volante*<sup>8</sup> of *galand ladies* there is a good reason to think that in these lines we hear of the interest taken in the Academies by Catherine de Medici<sup>9</sup>, and her insistence on high moral tone. And we learned also that the labours on measured poetry and music in the Academy are combined with labours on “measured dancing” and on dramatic composition.

Love’s Labour’s Lost plot, actually the planned wedding of King of Navarre, refers obviously to a series of European events of both artistic and religious importance. First, it is worth recalling here that the *Paradis d’Amour* and the *Ballet comique*, two ancestors of the French opera, are associated with the marriage of a Protestant King, Henry of Navarre, with the Catholic Marguerite de Valois. Second, it is significant that the Italian opera made a distinctive appearance on the occasion of Henry’s second wedding with Maria de Medici. Actually, such artistic innovations came to France thanks to Maria de Medici’s intervention<sup>10</sup>. Both queens worked for the restoration of classical knowledge as well as of medieval religious order like “hospitals domus” which became the Order of of the Holy Spirit under the reign of Henry III. (for which a major testimony is provided by *Le Chevalier Errant de la Manta* through the direct influence of Carlo Borromeo upon a French Kings<sup>11</sup>). They thought the Catholic Church as well as the Academies could improve their views on Humanity: seen by Shakespeare as a “seal of Love”. In that sense, *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (along with most of Shakespeare’s plays) should be primarily linked to a European and even universal setting, and not only to a local one as some commentators thought it was.

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<sup>8</sup> Catherine de Medici's court ladies were known as the 'escadron volant'.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. P. Champion, *Ronsard et son temps*, Paris, 1925, pp. 285-6, 290 ss and H. Prunière, *Le Ballet de Cour en France*, Paris, 1914, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> *Maria de' Medici, Una principessa fiorentina sul trono di Francia*, a cura di Caterina Caneva e Francesco Solinas, Sillabe, Florence, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> By P. de Nolhac and A. Solerti, *Il viaggio in Italia di Enrico III, re di Francia, e le feste a Venezia, Ferrara Mantua e Torino*, Turin, 1890, we had been told about king’s meeting with Carlo Borromeo. At Monza, he heard Mass said by future saint, with whom he had several conversation and who gave him at parting a golden crucifix containing wood from the cross. In view of the undoubted influence of Borromeo upon Henri, it is interesting to note the parallel development of the French academies in his reign. A very similar wave of religious *furor* transformed the humanist debates of the Palace Academy into devout humanist sermons which were delivered to Henri and his Penitents at Vincennes which the scheme of the oratory was based on a reliquary containing a fragment of the true cross inserted in a cross of gold. “Perhaps it was the reliquary which St. Charles Borromeo had given to Henri and which would be, to him, symbolic of his whole great effort of Counter Reformation penitence. It was flanked by silver satyrs”. In such a scheme there would be references to pagan sacrifices, suggested by satire, used as prefigurations of the central mystery of the Eucharist” (F. A Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, London, 1947 p. 172). It shows how it passed from a humanist and dramatic phase to an intensely religious phase, following the conversion of Borromeo to his life work to Counter Reform, Joseph Antonius Saxius, *Notti Vaticane seu sermones habiti in Academia a s. Carlo Borromeo Romae in Palatio Vaticano instituita*, Milan, 1748 p. 332-3 & Codex Ottoboniano, 2418, par. II, c. 633.

### III. THE METAPHYSICAL BACKGROUND: SHAKESPEARE AND THE PYTHAGOREAN THREAD

*Love's Labour's Lost* shows that Shakespeare knew how an Academy can go from an oratorical to a poetic, and, finally, intensely religious stage. The universality of his genius, his obsession for the concept of "universal harmony"<sup>12</sup>, may suggest influences from a very remote source of thought, namely Pythagorean philosophy, through medieval chivalry which spiritual testimony we can say is somehow *Chevalier Errant de la Manta* and its successor, the *Academia Romana* (XIVth c.) whose spiritual testimony is *HPI*. It shows the spirit of continuity of one main underground stream as already have been said, Pythagorean philosophy.

Let's first start with a brief presentation of *Le Chevalier Errant de La Manta*. It is in 1395 that Thomas III, Marquis of Saluzzo, came to Paris to make a copy of his manuscript *Le Chevalier Errant de La Manta*. The main passages of his poem are painted as frescos on the walls of Castle of Manta, near Saluzzo, in Piedmont. The spirit of chivalry is manifest in this poem: the quest of the *Chevalier Errant* – this forerunner of Don Quichote – is actually a search for divinity first set out under the aegis of *Dame Fortune*, and second of *Dame Coignoissance*. Its final aim is the recollection of the "Fons vitae" or "Fontaine dont notre Seigneur parole en l'Évangile", recalling a famous passage from St. John's Gospel (Jn IV, 14) : "... une fontaine qui le fera saillir en la vie perdurable". The Marquis of Saluzzo was a troubadour looking for a "Gay-Savoir".

We find a similar structure in the text of Ms fr 12559, which actually served as a model for the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, masterpiece of Cardinal Prospero Colonna and Leon Battista Alberti. In the *Chevalier Errant de la Manta*, the knight is led by *Lady Fortune* (ms. F 12559) through Antiquity, and then by *Lady Coignoissance* (ms ott. lat 2860) to the "Fountain of Life" in "the Garden of the Elected" (« *le Jardin des Élus* » ms fr 12559; ms ott 2860), where the Flower of immortality blooms in the sea, from which appears Aphrodite when Life enters in the time (cf. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night Dream*). However, whereas Thomas III de Saluzzo wanted to show the link between Antiquity and Christianity, the fact that Poliphilo stops in the physical universe (creation of physical life, the resurrection of nature in spring) and in Antiquity (where worship to the creative God was held) is obviously meant for emphasizing the divine

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, 4.3.34-12: "And, when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods. Make heaven drowsy with the harmony".

origin of the physical life in the visible world. As to Shakespeare, by linking the Academy with the Christian model, he appears to be willing to restore the notion of humility (*humilitas christiana*) in the face of Mystery:

As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair:

And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods  
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.  
Never durst poet touch a pen to write  
Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs;  
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears  
And plant in tyrants *mild humility*.  
(*Love's Labour Lost*, 4.317-323)

I humblie craue and sue for your fauourable graces (...) »? (...) Hovv your Honor vvill accept hereof, I make no doubt, because that curtesie attendeth vpon true nobilitie; but my *humble request* is, that your *Honor* may not thinke of me as if I vvere *amorous*, and did speake according to my ovvne passions, for I beeing restrained of my *liberty*, and helde in the graue *obliuion*, where I still as yet remaine, oppressed with *Melancholie*, and wearied with *deeper studies* (...) *I shall thinke my selfe most happy*.

(*The Strife of Loue in a Dreame*, translated by R. Dallington, London, A. Jeffes, J. Charlewood, and Eliot's Court Press, 1592, pp. 8, 61)

[Ad questa petitione havendo la voce alquanto reassumpta, da quegli illici et nympei aspecti excitata, et dal dolce parlare rivocata, respondendo li dissi. Dive Nympe. Io sum el più disgratiato et infoelice amante che trovare al mundo unque se potesse. Amo, et quella che tanto ardente amo et cordialmente appetisco, io ignoro dove ella et me si sia. Et per il maiore et mortale periculo che mai sapesse exprimere, quivi conducto et pervenuto sum. Et già a gli ochii provocate le *pietose lachrime*, et in terra curvato et ad li virginali pedi provolutome, pietate per il summo Idio supplico suspirante io vociferai. De subito nel suo *molliculo core da miseritudine et da pietosa dolceza tute exagitate*, et quasi il simigliante a lachrymule commote, et per gli brachii da terra officiose et certante trahendome, me sublevorono, et cum dolcissimo et blandiculo eloquio lepidule mi disseron].

(Ms Ottoboniano lat. 2860, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 77e iii)

Allegorical dreams in an architectural setting had a strong hold on the imagination during the Renaissance, as it is shown by *HP*, to which the work *Le Chevalier Errant de la Manta*, though of a different temper, has a close relationship<sup>13</sup>: the "Fountain of Life" is reachable only to the pilgrim looking for a wisdom of Love and driven by the eyes of his beloved Lady:

Full many gloriuous morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with haevenly alchemy.  
(...)It is the East, and Juliette is the Sun !  
(*Passionate Pilgrim, Sonnet XXXIII 1-5 ; Romeo and Juliette, 2.2-3*)

C'est la *claire lumière* qui nous ravie doulcment a  
sa contemplation, pour enluminer nos ténèbres :  
car aucun ne démeure aveugle les yeulx ouverts,  
sinon ceulx qui la fuyent et refusent (... )  
(Ms fr 12559)

J'ay conquis por ma force les illes d'outremer ;  
d'Orient jusques en Occident fuge ja sie appelé ;  
j'ay tué roi Daire, « li Persian », Porus, « li Endian » Nicole l'armiré.  
Ka grand Babilonia fige vers moy encliner  
Et fus sire du monde ; puis suis enerbés ;  
Ce fut III. C ans devant que Dieu fut né.  
(Ms fr 12559, *Le Chevalier Errant de La Manta*)

To see great Hercules whipping a gig,  
And profound Solomon to tune a jig,  
And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,  
And critic Timon laugh at idle toys!  
Where lies thy grief, O, tell me, good Dumain?  
And gentle Longaville, where lies thy pain?  
And where my liege's? all about the breast:  
A caudle, ho!  
(*Love's Labour's Lost, 4.3.162-170*)

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<sup>13</sup> In his *Civitas veri sive morum Batholomei Delbene Patricii Florentini Ad Christianissimum Henricum III Francorum et Polonie Regem Aristotelis de Moribus doctrinam, carmine et picturis complexa, et illustrata* (Commentariis Theodori Marcilii, Professoris Eloquentiae Reagii, Paris, 1609), Theodore Marcilii points out St. Augustine's *City of God* as a source for *Le Chevalier Errant*, and indeed the plan of the 'city of Truth' we find in the later recalls illustrations from medieval manuscripts of the former.

[Questo è quello chiaro lume che dolcemente ne invita alla sua contemplatione per illuminare gli nostri obscurati ochii].

(Ms Ottoboniano lat. 2860, 57d)<sup>14</sup>

Pilgrim's ideal of eternal love arises from a conception of Eros understood as a creative energy: any interruption of the stream established by him entails a cosmic disaster. The remembrance of such a break causes a sudden *high temperature which turns in frenzy*, and it is this frenzy which tormented Poliphilo during the night of agony preceding his dream. At the time of sinking into sleep, his spirit woke up in a different dimension: a vision showed him what will be the way for finding his beloved. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (cf. *Leucothoea and Clytie*, IV, 190-270), Clytie, nymph abandoned by Apollo, dies from thirst. Indeed, it is the lack of light which makes her die from thirst, *mutataque servat amorem*. The secret meaning of this, such as it emerged from Shakespeare's plays and poems, as already shown in the preliminary verses to Love's Labour's Lost (1.1.4-7) according to these of Poliphilo (the "divine things" which the question was about; it is the passage towards the mystic hierogamy in illumination, and seems to be a search for the light beyond the death (or the exit towards the full light of the day, *Ut aspexi lumen*). The key of that search is in an Orphic model we find already in Ovid, in particular in the courtship of Hero and Leander (*meus ignis in illo est: Illa meum, litora lumen habent*)<sup>15</sup>: Leander dies when the torch lit by Hero, his secret wife, goes out. But dying with him, Hero "carries himself away somewhere else", with Leander, beyond death:

Acadette che non cusì praesto le expectate et appetibile aque claustrale, nella caveata mano ad la bucca aperta era per approximarle, che in quello instante audivi uno *Dorio cantare, che non mi suado*, che Thamiras Thratio el trovasse, per le mie caverniculate orecchie penetrante, et ad lo inquieto core tanto suave dolce et concino traiectato. *Cum voce non terrestre, cum tanta armonia*, cum tanta incredibile sonoritate cum tanta *insueta proportione*. Umè quanto mai si potrebbe immaginare. Perché sencia dubio questa cosa excede ultra la potentia di narratione. La dolcicia della quale et delectatione, *molto più de oblectamento che la potiuncula offerentise mi se praestava*. Intanto che l'aqua hausta intra la clausura dell'intervalli degli denti, insenso quasi et già

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<sup>14</sup> The fountain recalls the « Fons Amoris » of the Troubadour's tradition.

<sup>15</sup> « Ut procul aspexi lumen, 'meus ignis in illo est: Illa meum,' dixi, 'litora lumen habent! » [I raise myself high upon the surface of the waves; and discerning at some distance a light, "My flame (cried I) is there; these shores point out the darling light." ] Ovidius Naso, *Epistulae* (vel *Heroides*), *Leander Heroni*, poem XVIII, 18 ; pp. 51-52.

"Dunquealhora (i.e. *Aurora*) la dolente Hero Ms *Ottoboniano lat. 2860; Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, pp. 11-12.

obstupefacto lo intellecto, et sopito l'appetito, niuna virtute contradicendo reserati gli nodi se sparse ad humida terra. (*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Ms Ottobobinano lat. 2860, 17 a iiiii)

[Euen then also it fell so out, that I had no sooner taken *water* into the palme of my hand, offering the same to my open mouth, ready to receiue it: I heard a *doricall songe*, wherewith I was as greatly delighted, as if I had heard the Thracian Thamiras, which thorough my eares presented it selfe to my vnquiet heart, with *so sweete and delectable* a deliuerie, with *a voyce not terrestriall*, with *so great a harmonie* and incredible a fayning shrilnesse, and *vnusuall proportion*, as is possible to bee imagined by no tounge sufficiently to be commended. The sweetnes whereof so greatly delighted me, as thereby *I was rauished of my remembrance*, and my vnderstanding so taken from me, as I let fall my desired water thorough the loosned ioyns of my feeble hands].

(*The Strife of Loue in a Dreame*, London, S. Paules Church), Printed for Simon Waterson, 1592, p.12)

Shakespeare's sonnets *Fair Youth* and *Dark Lady* refers to real and liked beings. The poet's suffering changes them, "by divine alchemy", into a symbol stemming from darkness of the essential night. According to the orphic tradition, the first miracle is the creation of light in the invisible universe: *chàsma d'up'èérion kai nènémós erragè aithèr Ornuménoio Phanètos*<sup>16</sup>; or, according to St. John's gospel: *ex tenebris lux*.

At dawn, only the song of the nightingale will spare Poliphilo of oblivion, *on pain of losing her tongue* (*Love's Labour's Lost* 1.1.122.), and will remind him the knowledge of the mysteries seen in his dream.

Than for that angel knowledge you can say,

Yet confident I'll keep what I have sworn.

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 1.1.113-114)

Did stumble with haste in his *eyesight* to be.

All senses to that sense did make their repair (...)

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 2.1.238-239)

Poliphilo's quest and the search of the *Passionate Pilgrim* in *Love's Labour's Lost* share a common framework with the *Chevalier Errant de la Manta*. Both can be considered as representing the spiritual wills of both Academies: the *Acchademia Fiorentina* (extinguished with the disappearance of Lorenzo Magnifico and his like, Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Angelo Poliziano) and the

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<sup>16</sup>*Orph. Fr.* K72; 86.

*Acchademia Romana* (of Bartolomeo Platina, Lorenzo Valla, Giorgio Pomponio Laeto and Leon Battista Alberti), persecuted and dissolved after the famous trial of 1464-1468. Only the *Lady's eyes*, mirror of the heavenly light, will bear the seal locked of the Academies legacy:

In leaden contemplation have found out  
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes  
Of *beauty's tutors* have enrich'd you with?  
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain;  
And therefore, finding barren practisers,  
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil:  
*But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,*  
Lives not alone immured in the brain;  
But, with the motion of all elements,  
Courses as swift as thought in every power,  
And gives to every power a double power,  
Above their functions and their offices (...)  
(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 4.3.295-306)

*From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:*  
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;  
They are the books, the arts, *the academes*,  
That show, contain and nourish all the world:  
Else none at all in ought proves excellent.  
(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 323- 328)

#### IV. EPILOG

The plot of the *Love Labour's Lost* is doubtless related with the marriage of the Protestant Henry of Navarre and the Catholic Marguerite de Valois and relates it to a sequence of very great politico-religious and artistic importance; as the *Passionate Pilgrim* is in some way *in memoriam* to the corner stone or remembrance on tragic disappearance of *Academia Romana* and his brotherhood that promised to live *in philosophy*. On the universal scale it is in the same time a wish to celebrate the transposition of religious conflicts into one *new* one, modelled on medieval chivalry which in its highest glory fused into the order of the *Hospitale domus*. Thus the Lady's Love and the « music of the ancient » was applied to the solution:

While Philomela sits and sings  
(*Passionate Pilgrim*, XIV, 5)



This may be the hope, mingled with tragedy, as the Orpheus regard to Eurydice, or Poliphile this brother of *Passionate Pilgrim* (*Chevalier Errant*) in his wandering since he was exiled form Eden :

Wander,' a word for shadows like myself,  
As take the pain, but cannot pluck the pelf.  
(*Passionate Pilgrim*, XIV, 10-12)

Should it be only the fallen dream, or this dream still stronger than reality. All the same, the vivified memory on its happening brought by the Poet happens to be as a nightingale sung with task to save humanity from the everlasting obllivion or *plogeon au fleuve d'oubly* :

Every thing did banish moan,  
Save the nightingale alone:  
(*Passionate Pilgrim*, XXI, 7-8)