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THE RHETORIC OF SEDUCTION IN THE TREATISE *DE AMORE*

Lenka Svobodová

Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* (written in 12th century) is generally considered a cornerstone of literature about the cultural phenomenon called 'courtly love'. The first part of the treatise praises love as the source of all worldly good, whereas the second part rejects it as the cause of all suffering. This paper engages in the rhetoric of seduction which the male speakers use in eight dialogues in the first part of the treatise. Although the aim of their flowery speech – namely, to gain the favour of their female addressees – is clear, they never succeed. This article will show the literary figures (exempla, allegories, and metaphors) which the male speakers employ to substantiate the requests that they make of their lady loves. Attention will also be paid to the *visio* in the fifth dialogue, which employs the topos of the *exercitus mortuorum* (army of the dead) in a highly original way.

Im 12. Jahrhundert war Andreas Capellanus Autor der lateinischen Abhandlung *De amore*, die als einer der Grundtexte für das Kulturphänomen der „höfischen Liebe“ gilt. Der erste Teil des Buchs preist die Liebe als Quelle alles Guten in der Welt, während sie der zweite Teil als Ursache jedes Leidens zurückweist. Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der Rhetorik der Verführung, deren sich die männlichen Gestalten in acht Dialogen im ersten Teil der Abhandlung bedienen. Das Ziel ihrer blumigen Reden ist eindeutig – die Gunst ihrer weiblichen Ansprechpartnerinnen zu gewinnen, was ihnen allerdings nie gelingt. Der Aufsatz weist auf einzelne literarische Tropoi (Beispiele, Allegorien, Metaphern) hin, die die männlichen Redner verwenden, um ihr Verlangen zu begründen. Aufmerksamkeit wird auch der *visio* im fünften Dialog geschenkt, welche das alte Thema des *Exercitus mortuorum* (der Totenarmee) auf eine originäre Art wieder aufnimmt.

Ve 12. století sepsal Andreas Capellanus latinský traktát *De amore*, který je považován za jeden z pilířů kulturního fenoménu zvaného „dvorská láska“. První část knihy oslavuje lásku jakožto zdroj veškerého pozemského dobra, zatímco její druhá část lásku zcela odmítá a považuje ji za počátek veškerého zla. Studie se věnuje rétorice svádění, již používají mužští mluvčí osmi dialogů, které tvoří jádro traktátu. Účel jejich květnatých promluv je jasný, snaží se získat přízeň oslovených žen, nicméně ani v jednom případě neuspějí. Text také představí některé literární figury (příklady, alegorie, metafory), které v dialogích slouží jako nástroje nátlaku na sváděné ženy. Pozornost je věnována *visio* v pátém dialogu, ve kterém je velice originálním způsobem rozvíjeno téma zástupu mrtvých (*exercitus mortuorum*).

In Socrates' famous speech in Plato's *Symposium*, the seer Diotima explains that love is the desire to possess the good and she shows the steps of love which lead to the essence of Beauty. The beautiful person inspires the mind and the soul and directs one's attention to spiritual things. We have therefore first to discover the beauty of the beloved body and then move on to the beauty of all bodies. The next step leads to the revelation of the beauty of the soul, which is more valuable than physical beauty. This is followed by the beauty of institutions and laws, above which stands the beauty of science, of understanding. Ultimately we perceive the nature of wondrous beauty, which is everlasting, neither growing nor decaying, neither waxing nor waning (Plato 2005, 52–58).

Fifteen centuries later, in the South of France, a new cultural phenomenon emerged, which, as in Plato, operated with physical and spiritual beauty as the source of the Good. By the late eighteenth century, the phenomenon came to be called 'courtly love'.

This term was first employed by Gaston Paris, in an 1883 article about Chrétien de Troyes's romance, *Lancelot, le Chevalier de la Charrette*. Paris introduced four attributes characterizing courtly love:

1. It is secret and illicit (it cannot exist between wife and husband); often the beloved is married, her lover is not.
2. The lover is subordinated to the beloved; she is of a higher social status; the lover is of an inferior status and feels insecure; the beloved is elevated, haughty.
3. The lover must earn the lady's affection by undergoing many tests of prowess, valour, and devotion (Paris 1883).

Love is an art and a science, subject to many rules and regulations, like courtesy in general.¹

One hundred and twenty years after Paris, scholars are no longer so sure what exactly courtly love is. We know that the whole phenomenon emerged along the south of what is today France, in about 1100, when William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, wrote the first known troubadour poems. It is important to emphasize that the main features of courtly love are abstracted away from poems (we know of hundreds of poems written by dozens of poets), courtly romances (which are primarily connected with the name of Chrétien de Troyes) and from *De amore*, which, though the focus of this article, is a highly problematic example (as we shall see).

The basis of courtly love is the cult of the beloved and the ennobling quality of her lover's love. His noble deeds are the way to win her favour. She plays the role of the suzerain and sets many tasks for her lover, by which he becomes morally improved. Another central attribute of courtly love is also the transformation of desire into moral action. But this is an ideal and, as the literary works demonstrate, there

1 For further discussion, see Moore (1979, 622).

are many exceptions, because courtly love is not a compact philosophical system but a code of behaviour.

Among the other often-quoted themes are love as a sickness, entailing symptoms such as insomnia, pallor, and melancholy, Cupid, the god of love, standing at the head of the army of lovers, the perpetual fear of losing the beloved, the beauty of the beloved (often fair-haired, blue-eyed, and of snow-white skin), the themes of nature in springtime, an emphasis on the need for secrecy – the woman is not called by her real name and there is often a character who acts as a go-between, who mediates communication between the lovers, and also a dreaded gossip who threatens to expose the clandestine relationship. All these themes have parallels in the literature of classical antiquity (for example, the works of Ovid), medieval Latin works such as the collection of verse *Carmina Burana*, and also in Hispano-Arabic culture.

One of the most problematic aspects of this phenomenon is the question of the adulterous nature of courtly love, which is mentioned by Gaston Paris. C. S. Lewis, in his famous *Allegory of Love* (1936), asserts: 'The revolutionary effects of courtly love were such that the Renaissance was, by comparison, a mere ripple on the surface of literature [...] it transformed European ethics, aesthetics and social customs, erecting impassable barriers between us and the classical past or the Oriental present' (Lewis 1958, 4). According to him, the four chief features of courtly love are humility, courtesy, the religion of love, and adultery. Lewis argues that this last feature is the result of the historical context. In a society where marriages were arranged by the parents of the bride and bridegroom, in accordance with political and financial interests, it was inevitable that love and marriage should have been considered mutually exclusive. That means that courtly love was consequently an extramarital affair. Adulterous love is, he says, also a response to Christianity, which does not consider desire an ennobling emotion (Lewis 1958, 1–43).

We know, however, a number of troubadour poems full of adultery and we know Chrétien's *Lancelot* about the adulterous love of Guinevere and Lancelot. And we also know Chrétien's other courtly romance, *Érec et Énide*, where the husband and wife experience various chivalric adventures together. And Andreas Capellanus seems to be quite inconsistent in this question but he never rejects marriage or the possibility of affection between husband and wife.

Moreover, courtly poetry developed from the very outset in two directions. The first direction was, as we have seen, courtly-idealistic. The other was realistic, full of sexual innuendo, vulgarity, and irony. For example, in the poem '*Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh*', William of Aquitaine explicitly describes his encounter with two sisters:

*Tant las fotei com auziretz:
Cen e quatre vint et ueit vetz,
Q'a pauc no-i rompei mos corretz
E mos arnes;
E no-us pues dir los malaveg tan gran m'en pres* (Chambers 1985, 32).

(You shall hear how much I fucked them: / A hundred and eighty-eight times, / So much that they almost broke my equipment and my tool; / And I can't describe the aching, so much I was taken.)

Some of these poems, in the spirit of medieval misogyny, attack women for of their alleged lechery, greed, and alcoholism. Some attack men for their alleged lechery or impotence, poor writing style, and so forth. But, as Bakhtin says, parody and other forms of humour serve to underscore the seriousness of particular phenomena (Bakhtin 1984). Ernst Robert Curtius remarks:

The testimony already discussed permits the assumption that the mixture of jest and earnest was among the stylistic norms which were known and practiced by the medieval poet, even if he perhaps nowhere found them expressly formulated. We may, then, view the phenomenon as a fresh substantiation of the view that the Middle Ages loved all kinds of crossing and mixtures of stylistic genres. And in fact we find in the Middle Ages ludicra within domains and genres which, to our modern taste, schooled by classical aesthetics, absolutely exclude any mixture (Curtius 1953, 424).

The concept of courtly love also belongs to the most problematic areas of medieval culture. That is why some scholars in the 1950s denied its existence as a specifically medieval system. D. W. Robertson, for example, has argued that courtly love was a somewhat tendentious modern invention and an 'impediment to the understanding of medieval books' (Robertson 1968, 17). According to Robertson, every medieval literary work that dealt with any kind of love other than *caritas* was meant ironically.

In the 1960s Freudians also joined the discussion, describing courtly love as an exemplary form of sublimation, and stressing that the poetic celebration of the lady as the object of desire is founded on the interdict that has made her unattainable, for example, her being married to the king (O'Donoghue 2006, 12). Other scholars saw a connection between courtly love and, for example, the cult of the goddess Cybele (also called the Great Mother), matriarchal society, the cult of the Virgin Mary, the Albigensian heresy, and the phenomenon of play (Boase 1977). In the 1970s feminist interpretations appeared.² Today, we tend to be more cautious than before, and understand courtly love as an open system of themes and ideas, of which we emphasize the ennobling power of the originally physical, sensual desire that leads to the moral perfection of man.

I shall now focus on the most problematic work of literature connected with courtly love, *De amore (On Love)*. We know little about the author, except his name, which appears in Book I of the treatise:

Nam ea caecus continetur et amens, quos ab amoris curia penitus esse remotos amatoris Andreae aulae regiae capellani evidentiter nobis doctrina demonstrat (Capellanus 1982, 153).

(The teaching of Andreas, chaplain to the royal court, shows us beyond a doubt that the blind and mad are utterly debarred from the court of Love.)

We thus know his name from a self-reference. In the previous part of the book, the author argues that the mad and the blind should be excluded from the Court of Love (Capellanus 1982, 40). The reference to the chaplain to the royal court could be a clue. Possibly this Andreas was the chaplain to King Philip II Augustus (Karnein 1985, 27–35), but, as we know, the courtly lovers venerated another king – Amor, the king of love. Andreas could thus call himself chaplain to the court of Amor. Ultimately it is not important who Andreas really was. What is important is that the treatise is full of courtly ideas while also being laden with obscurity, innuendo, inconsistency, and contradiction. Scholars should be wary of seeing the treatise as a comprehensive treatment of courtly love.

The treatise comprises three books. Book I begins with a short preface with a dedication – Andreas speaks to his dear friend Gualterus (Walter) and promises to instruct him in the matter of love. Then comes a short *accessus* (introduction) leading to the treatise proper. This is followed by a definition of love (*Quid sit amor*):

Amor est passio quaedam innata procedens ex visione et immoderata cogitatione formae alterius sexus, ob quam aliquis super omnia cupit alterius potiri amplexibus et omnia de utriusque voluntate in ipsius amplexu amoris praecepta compleri (Capellanus 1982, 32).

(Love is an inborn suffering proceeding from the sight of the beauty of the other sex and immoderate thought upon it, for which cause above all other things one wishes to embrace the other and, by common assent, in this embrace to fulfil the commandments of love.)

This definition is formulated in a psychological vein. The notion of love as suffering, a commonplace in scholastic philosophy, is fundamentally classical, going back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Such suffering through the eyes is a commonplace in the genre of erotic elegy and the same notion appears in twelfth-century troubadour lyric and in vernacular romance. The love being described in this definition is not *amor curialis* (courtly love); this will follow in subsequent chapters. Rather it is *amor concupiscentiae* (carnal love). *Amor curialis* appears in Chapter 2 together with warnings against the dangers of poverty and avarice and also in Chapter 4 where *amor curialis* endows the suitor with nobility, humility, generosity, and chastity. Lastly, in Chapter 6, Andreas reaches a position opposed to his view in the first section: 'I believe that in choosing a woman, honesty of character is to be sought more than

² See Bowden 1979 and Andersen-Wyman 2007.

beauty [...]’ (Capellanus 1982, 45). In other words, one must choose one’s partners with one’s reason and judgement, not with one’s eyes.

This is followed by a series of eight dialogues in each of which one man and one woman discuss matters of love. The speakers are determined by their social status alone. There is a common woman, a lady, and a lady of higher noble rank and a commoner, a nobleman and a man of higher noble rank. This section should therefore contain nine dialogues, but one is missing.

After these dialogues, Capellanus returns for the remainder of Book I to a scholastic analysis and he provides a survey of the love appropriate to special groups. He discusses the love of clerics and nuns (which is forbidden to both), the love of women who give their favour too willingly (which he condemns). In the following chapter, on the love of rustics, the author’s dismissive tone is reminiscent of the attitudes of the gallant in the poetic form known as *pastourelle*. Of rustics, Andreas comments: ‘They are impelled to acts of love in the natural way like a horse or a mule [...] if the love of peasant woman chances to entice you, you should not delay in taking what you seek, gaining it by rough embraces’ (Capellanus 1982, 223). This passage is often quoted in feminist works. Lastly, there is a chapter condemning any association with harlots.

In the spirit of Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*, Book II proceeds from ‘how to win her’ to ‘how to keep her’. The decrease and end of love are further discussed; the emphasis is on religious impiety as a cause of such a decline of affection. Capellanus says: ‘In particular, love acknowledges its end if one partner [...] is found guilty of error in the Catholic faith’ (Capellanus 1982, 233). *Amor Christianus* is therefore also present in the treatise.

Book III presents one of the greatest problems of the treatise because it is an enumeration of arguments against the secular love that was previously proposed. Such love is (as Book II says) opposed to God’s will and incurs eternal punishment. It opposes the commandment to love one’s neighbour as oneself. It is harmful to friendship. Secular love pollutes not only the soul, but also the body. It brings poverty and suffering. It is the cause of serious transgressions like murder, lying, incest, and idolatry. It brings no good to man. (In Book I, by contrast, love is called the source of all good.) It breaks up Christian marriages and so forth (Capellanus 1982, 287–305).

The final argument against love takes the form of an attack on women and their vices, including avarice, envy, slander, greed, gluttony, disobedience, pride, lying, vainglory, drunkenness, lechery, and superstition (Capellanus 1982, 305–21). All of this echoes Paul’s warnings in the Bible, but also Juvenal’s celebrated attack on women in Satire 6 and the misogyny of St Jerome.

The cardinal question is how can one explain this rupture between the first and the second part of the treatise? Some scholars emphasize that the *accessus*, the introduction of Book I, precedes solely the content of Books I and II. It seems that the author intended to write only these two parts. Why did he add the last part? Books I and II refer to courtly love, to *amor curialis*. If Andreas Capellanus was a real chaplain, his book surely provoked the indignation of his superiors and he had to write

the last part to negate his previous statements. This is a plausible explanation but it underestimates the intelligence of Andreas’s audience and superiors. Books I and II are an enthusiastic celebration of secular love, a source of all good, and the eight dialogues primarily reveal to us the author’s zest for life. By contrast, Book III is only a routine list of reasons why this love should be condemned.

The scholars Robertson and Karnein each argues, on the other hand, that only Book III reveals Andreas’s real opinions and that the first part of the treatise may reasonably be considered ironic (Robertson 1953, 145–53; Karnein 1985). They consider the whole work to be an anti-courtly tract. But if the first two books are meant to be ironic, why should we take the third seriously?

Another possible explanation is in the medieval way of explication. Many medieval scholars employed *pro et contra*, providing antithetical arguments. I suggest another alternative. The core of the treatise is formed by the eight dialogues of Book I. It was said that the interlocutors are defined only by their gender and social status. We have already seen the first inconsistency of Book I – namely, there are three men and three women, so the reader expects nine dialogues, but the conversation between a nobleman and a woman of higher noble status is lacking. Furthermore, the whole treatise is dedicated to one Gualterus, a member of a certain social status. So why did Capellanus need more than three dialogues? All these characters are fictional and, with one exception, the setting of the dialogue is unspecified. The aim of every conversation is the same: to win the love or the favour of a lady.

Each dialogue begins with the author’s briefly advising the man how to begin the conversation. This advice is somewhat banal and suggests that the task is not supposed to be difficult. For instance, Andreas Capellanus advises the suitor first to greet the lady in his usual fashion. He must not, however, then immediately begin with words of love, for that is the approach to be used when addressing a harlot. ‘First make some casual observation with an amusing point, or praise her native region or her family or her person. Women, especially commoners and country women, almost all delight in the praise of their persons, and believe in all circumstances whatever they construe as praise of themselves’ (Capellanus 1982, 47).

Everything seems to be easy. Earlier, in Chapter 5, Capellanus enumerates the three ways in which love is won:

1. *Venustas formae* (handsome appearance), which is sufficient for simple lovers because they think there is nothing worth seeking in a lover except grace of figure and features and elegance of appearance.
2. *Probitas morum* (honesty of character), which Andreas puts in first place. It enriches a man with nobility and makes him shine with beauty.
3. *Copiosa sermonis facundia* (eloquence), which makes a good impression of the speaker’s moral worth (Capellanus 1982, 41–45).

We should therefore expect that the men in the dialogues will prove their moral character. But the initially relaxed, informal conversations change into bitter strug-

gles and the ladies are forced to use all their eloquence (as recommended in Chapter 5) to withstand the men's sorties.

Let us look at Dialogue 4, in which the nobleman and the common woman converse (Capellanus 1982, 87–97). The nobleman introduces himself as a messenger from the court of love, and asks the woman to tell him which is more praiseworthy, the honest character of a woman of noble blood, or that of woman known to be without noble lineage. We, the readers, know how the social roles were assigned from the beginning, and can thus guess which answer is expected. The woman is reluctant to reply, and argues that it seems unsuitable to solve such a controversy since the present matter relates to herself. But she then offers her opinion:

At first sight, nobility seems more praiseworthy, for qualities which emerge consistent with a person's nature seem more worth seeking than those which are foreign and come to him, so to say, from without. So, in the case of women themselves, a colour of complexion that is natural is judged more worthy of honour than that which is applied; and again, words uttered by a man are preferred to those of a talking magpie [...] In the same way, the worth of character is more in keeping with people of noble blood than with people sprung from plebeian stock (Capellanus 1982, 89).

The man disagrees. Her examples contain praise of human skills, things learned, but, as he argues, natural qualities are preferred to those that are acquired. In a common woman, worth of character springs from the inherent excellence of her inner self alone, and so it is regarded as natural. Good character is therefore more praiseworthy in a commoner than in a noblewoman. The reader must wonder! Is this nobleman so simple that he has not understood her examples of praiseworthy natural qualities (a woman's complexion, the words uttered by a man)? Or is he merely a clumsy manipulator who interprets her examples as human skills, something unnatural, learned? The man does not develop a Platonic dialogue; his goal is not to discover the truth; it is to win the woman.

Now the speaker presents three images:

1. A pheasant captured by a sparrowhawk is thought more worth having than one caught by a large hawk (the allegory seems clear: the pheasant stands for moral character, the sparrowhawk a common woman, the large hawk a noblewoman).
2. The man who pays back more than he owes deserves a greater reward than the man who has paid back what he has promised to pay.
3. The instruction of a master shipbuilder who can fashion a suitable vessel out of poor wood should win more praise than the shipbuilder who constructs one of the best wood.

The woman agrees, because any good thing that is rare is especially precious, but she is also surprised that the nobleman is attempting to demean the nature of nobility. The man perceives her consent as an impulse to courtship. He calls her his lady; she

is the one in whose name he has decided to perform every good deed. If she accepts his services, he will attain the rewards for which he longs. This is a fine example of the link between *amor curialis* (courtly love) and a kind of compulsion. At this point the reader would expect the woman's approval, yet she opposes the man again: 'He who is found to soldier with less success in his own rank is not considered able to perform his service properly in any other. So you must seek out a love within your own class' (Capellanus 1982, 91).

This statement angers the suitor. He says that love takes account of neither blood nor beauty, and that it 'makes a low-born, ugly woman appear noble and beautiful to her lover and causes her to be considered noble and supremely beautiful beyond all others' (Capellanus 1982, 91). This is an impolite hint by the man, suggesting that the woman is not particularly pretty. But she uses a new argument and employs his words against him: 'Why, then, should I not choose as a lover a commoner of impeccable character rather than a man endowed with high nobility?' (Capellanus 1982, 93). At this moment the nobleman loses! He searches for another argument but fails again. She accuses him of being like a crab, walking backwards in this discourse: 'It seems hardly appropriate for a man of sense so shamelessly to contradict his own views in response to the words of a woman, however wise she may be, and to deny now what he had just previously admitted' (Capellanus 1982, 95). As we see, the suitor from Dialogue 4 has been hoisted by his own petard! The woman has used one of the ways to win love (eloquence of speech) to fend off his attacks.

In Dialogue 5, between a nobleman and a noblewoman, the gentleman uses a smarter, more elaborate example to win the favour of the lady. At first, she refuses the whole idea of love and so the suitor describes Love's palace and recounts an anecdote of the fate that awaits her if she fails to submit to Amor:

The story goes – and it is true – that at the centre of the world is set a palace with four highly ornate sides, in each of which is a most beautiful entrance. In the palace itself only Love and companies of ladies have the right to dwell. The eastern entrance has been reserved for use by the god of love alone, whereas the other three are specified for particular classes of ladies. The ladies of the south entrance always linger at the open doors and are for ever to be found on the threshold. Likewise the ladies of the western entrance, only they are always to be found wandering outside the threshold of the door. But the ones who have the privilege of guarding the north entrance always remain behind closed doors, and observe nothing outside the boundaries of the palace (Capellanus 1982, 103).

The ladies of the south gate carefully enquire into the moral probity of the men who seek to enter the open gate. When the women are confident of the men's merits, they admit them with every honour. The ladies at the west gate are the promiscuous women who refuse no one, yet they love no one and are found unworthy of any decent man's love. The women guarding the north gate open it to no one and they refuse to love, though are themselves loved by many. The nobleman from Dialogue 5 then asks the lady to choose one of the entrances. She picks the north gate. This

was not the right answer and he therefore tells another story to show her the fate of ladies who refuse love (Capellanus 1982, 103–19).

This story originates in the chronicle *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis, written between 1114 and 1141. The originally exemplary narrative urging one to lead a well-ordered life was transformed by Andreas Capellanus into an apocalyptic vision of the condemnation of women who refused love.³

The suitor from the Dialogue 5 tells that as a young boy in the service of a nobleman he got lost one day while riding through a royal forest of France with his master and many other knights. He eventually saw in the distance a large group of riders and women. In front of the crowd there was a knight with a golden crown, who was sitting on a splendid horse and was being followed by women divided into three groups.

The ladies in the first group were sitting on handsome horses and clad in fine colourful robes. Each was accompanied by three knights. Next came a large group of women accompanied by footmen and knights. 'But so loud was the din of those offering their service, and so large the oppressive crowd, that the women could not accept their courtesies and the man could not easily be at hand to offer them' (Capellanus 1982, 107). The women from the last group were of outstanding beauty, but clothed in wolf skins, sitting on wretched heavy-footed horses, unaccompanied.

As the narrator later learns from a woman in the crowd, the knight with the golden crown was the god of love, Amor, and the crowd was an army of dead women; the ladies in the first group were the women from the south gate who, while alive, had loved the honest knights of Amor, and now obtained their full reward. The second crowd included the promiscuous women dwelling at the west gate, who had, while alive, accepted all men indiscriminately, and were therefore now unpleasantly surrounded by countless men. The women in the last group had, while alive, closed the palace of Love to all who wished to enter. The narrator's lady companion belonged to this third group. She revealed to him their sad fate and makes an appeal to all women still alive:

Besides this punishment we have been sentenced to many other kinds of torments which none could know unless schooled by experience. It would be impossible for me to tell them, and quite hard for you to hear them. So women still living in the world should beware not to become our partners in these punishments, for after death no repentance will avail them (Capellanus 1982, 111).

The whole crowd, including the narrator, arrives at a place with trees, flowers, and fruit, and a sweet fragrance. The place is fashioned circularly, divided into three areas or rings. The first area is at the centre, around a high tree bearing all kinds of fruit, surrounded by a spring with the purest water, which tastes like nectar. Next to the spring sits the queen of love on a throne, wearing a crown and fine robes.

³ See Schmitt 2004, 98–100. For further discussion of this story, see also Dinzelbacher 2004, 68.

This ring is called Amoenitas (Pleasantness), and is reserved for the ladies of the first group. The second ring is called Humiditas (Moisture) and is reserved for the promiscuous women of the second group. Though it has grass and water, the water (from the spring in Amoenitas) has become so cold that no one can bear to touch it and the region has no trees to provide shade from the heat of the oppressive sun. Consequently the women here feel coolness and heat at the same time. As the suitor says: 'It would be quite arduous to recount all the gnashing and wailing heard there' (Capellanus 1982, 115). The outermost region is Siccitas (Aridness). A place of torture, it is reserved for the last group of women:

For each of the women was prepared there a seat on a bundle of thorns, which was always being rotated by the men whom I mentioned as assigned to this task, so that the women were more painfully scratched by the points of the thorns, and their bare soles touched the red-hot earth. Such was the pain and suffering there that I can hardly believe it equalled amongst the very demons of Hell (Capellanus 1982, 115).

The narrator has witnessed it all and in the end has been given a list of the twelve main precepts of love. The form of love which these precepts create may usefully be imagined as *amor Christianus* transposed into a secular ideal (whose rules prescribe, for example, generosity, chastity, fidelity, and modesty):

1. Avoid miserliness as a harmful disease, and embrace its opposite.
2. You must maintain chastity for your lover.
3. When a woman is appropriately joined to another in love, do not knowingly try to seduce her.
4. Be sure not to choose the love of a woman if natural modesty forbids you to join marriage with her.
5. Remember to avoid lying completely.
6. Do not have too many privy to your love.
7. Be obedient to mistresses' commands in all things, and always be eager to join the service of Love.
8. In the granting and receiving of love's consolations there should be the utmost modesty and decent restraint.
9. You must not be foul-tongued.
10. You must not expose lovers.
11. Show yourself civilized and chivalrous in all things.
12. When practicing the consolations of love do not go beyond the wish of your lover.

(Capellanus 1982, 117).

The narrator's companion has released him from this underworld, saying: 'Friend, go your way with God's grace, because you can see no more of the business of this

court. The glory of the other women, and the punishment exacted from us, are more than twice as great as what you see, but such things are granted to no living man to behold' (Capellanus 1982, 119).

The story ends and the noblewoman from Dialogue 8 is terrified by this narrative of dreadful punishment. She changes her mind and chooses the south gate, but makes no promise to her noble suitor: 'I shall therefore take pains to discover the man who is found worthy to enter.' (Capellanus 1982, 119). This long story, resembling medieval Christian *visiones*, should function as an *exemplum*, a narrative showing the consequences of bad behaviour. But, as we see, the nobleman was not completely successful – the woman changed her mind but did not choose him as the object of her favour. The suitor, like the nobleman of the previous dialogue, has failed.

The same situation occurs in every dialogue. All eight battles unexpectedly end with the victory of the women. This, I feel, is unexpected, because the author, Andreas Capellanus, and the recipient of the work, Gualterus, are men. Moreover, the treatise should give advice on how to win a woman, not how to fail.

As Gaston Paris noted, one of the four attributes of courtly love is that the lover must earn the lady's affection by undergoing many tests of prowess, valour, and devotion. In the vernacular courtly lyric the protagonist depicts his inner feelings – love, grief, and fears. He admires the beloved woman and is willing and able to sacrifice everything to win her favour. In the courtly romances the knights have to prove their character by their exploits; for instance, Cligès in one of Chrétien's romances must become one of King Arthur's knights and consequently prove his moral qualities before he can win the heart of Fenice.

Andreas Capellanus begins his treatise with a definition of courtly love. He starts from a sensuous impulse (love comes through the eyes) but he later explains that love founded merely on beauty is suitable strictly for simple lovers. Proper love is based on honesty of character.

The suitors in the dialogues are endowed with eloquence, which is the third way to win love. But, as Capellanus demonstrates, this is insufficient. The women of the dialogues are not distant ladies somewhere in a castle. They are interlocutors equal to the men and, as I hope to have demonstrated, their ability to rebut their suitors is great. The men in the dialogues only speak. They never mention whether they have done any good deeds and their courtly manners veil the pressure they put on their female partners in the dialogues.

Capellanus has brought to the stage vigorous women defined by readiness, education, and ability to argue. The common woman of Dialogue 4 leads the talk in a Socratic way. The male speakers demonstrate their courtliness, eloquence of speech, and ability to manipulate their partners but they do not prove their real honesty of character. This is the reason why they fail.

And now imagine a rejected suitor. Does he acknowledge defeat or does he write a tearful but misogynous tirade against women such as we have seen in Book III of the treatise? My proposed interpretation of the discrepancy between the first and the second part of the treatise is but one of many. Courtly love is an aesthetic phenomenon because it concerns moral and physical beauty, courtliness, and its rules,

the transformation of desire into the moral ennobling of character. In his treatise Capellanus considers all the chief marks of courtly love (such as secrecy, courtliness, adultery, and good deeds) but he also brings to the table female voices that are able to discuss all these topics at the highest level.

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