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Platonic Ideas in Courtly Ideals

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Abstract: The article states the hypothesis of a possible (indirect) ancient platonic love ideal influence on the formation of courtly relations in the Middle Ages. Considering the impossibility of its direct influence, an attempt to find significant common elements has been made. Such elements could be easily evinced through comparing the texts of Plato (The Symposium and The Phaedrus) and a number of medieval sources. The similarity (possible identity) of some of the key characteristics of platonic love and courtly love has been educed (which were least affected by The Roman de la Rose). The corresponding works of such experts as V.F. Shishmarev, Johan Huizinga, Jacques Le Goff, Georges Duby and others are also revised.

Keywords: courtesy, courtly love, platonic love, antiquity, the Middle Ages, chivalry

Problem statement. The current article is mostly devoted to an attempt to discover the origins (or at least analogies) of the medieval courtly love in Greek antiquity. Here we refer, of course, to Plato's writings, his therein classic dialogues *The Symposium* and *The Phaedrus*. The possibility of such a relation has been mainly (rather reasonably) doubted on the grounds that Plato`s texts had been translated into Latin and become known to the West-European educated public in the second half of the XV century through the efforts of Marsilio Ficino. Because of that, the Provencal troubadours have not been familiar with Plato's views. One can reply that the impact could be indirect in this case, not through literature, but implicit, through the practices of everyday interactions, as a result of the gradual dissemination of a certain ideology and its related cultural practices. There is a strong possibility that certain regularly practiced in everyday life beliefs have spread far beyond those limits of space and time, where they had been formed, but through that exact daily routine. This statement may remain a hypothesis since the current research has not been aimed to prove the genetic relation, but to show the common elements of the concept of love in the Plato`s and courtesy apologists` theories. Such a resemblance would not be surprising because the medieval Europe is still a cultural heiress of antiquity.

Another possible objection to such a relation lies in the courtly love characteristic to be exclusively concerned with the relationships between opposite sexes. Plato`s version (in mentioned dialogues) describes, on the whole, the reversed situation, where, according to him, the “real” love exists only between men. However, this should not by considered as a Greek antiquity common rule: generally, ancient Greek myths and tragedies contain descriptions of love relationships between just only men and women. Aphrodite and Adonis, Selene and Endymion, Artemis and Hippolytus, Medea and Jason, Orpheus and Eurydice, Zeus, Niobe and Io, and so on - the whole list is huge. Interestingly enough, however, that women are not mere mortals in all these examples (except Niobe and Medea, but it is also subject to reservations). It is significant that when ancient sources mention love between men and women, these women mostly are not quite ordinary mortal women, but the ones with a special status. Thus, the ordinary woman inferiority to man has been emphasized (they has been considered unequal in the spiritual sense). Concerning goddesses, as noted by Nicole

Loraux [Loraux, 2005: 46], generally they can be hardly considered as women – they are not humans and not persons. In the tragedy of Euripides Medea complains of sexual discrimination [Euripides, 1993: 371], describing the low status of women in society. Here the conclusion of Plato`s women disregard on the grounds of his current time traditional views on women spiritual (intellectual) inferiority (not because of sexual reasons) can be drawn. In any case, Plato`s gender emphasis can be ignored, because the foundation of both platonic and courtly love lays more in ideas sphere than in physical one.

Some commentary on courtly love. It should be borne in mind that starting in the XII century and ending in the late Middle Ages the notion of courtly love (amour courtois) and its implementations have varied a lot through their development. Arabic poetry [Naiman, 1979: 6], works of Provencal troubadours, of French trouveres and German minnesingers, Christian Church, clergy and frivolous-scientific treatises, like *The Roman de la Rose* are likely to have produced an impact on the development of courtly love at different times, as well as the changes of socioeconomic conditions, the transformation of the court everyday life and the bourgeoisie growing importance. Therefore, the courtly love is hard to be exactly defined as this and that, which is on the contrary way easier according to the platonic love. Nevertheless, of course, there are some common inherent characteristics of this period courtesy. Courtesy is, first of all, a specific court phenomenon, which distinguishes the noble from the ignoble, which requires sophistication, which can be gained only through proper parenting and education.

Not coincidentally, the *fine amour* – the subtle love – is another name of the courtly love. And also most of the troubadours, the singers of the great love, are knights (who, in general, originate from lowest unsecured nobility class layers). Some noblemen have also belonged to troubadours, for example, William IX, Duke of Aquitaine (fr. Guillaume de Poitiers), is considered (but questionable) to be the first troubadour (Jaufre Rudel and Bertran de Born are good examples as well). On the other hand, the representatives of lowborn classes have very often become the troubadours. Moreover, in some cases, the noble class has adopted the romantic ideal, developed by people, who are inferior to them on the social ladder and who do not basically meet the requirements of this ideal. Bernart de Ventadorn, Arnaut de Mareuil, Giraut de Bornelh, Salh d'Escola, Gaucelm Faidit and many others are the examples of the troubadours and jugglers of lowborn classes. It is significant that life stories (and razo) of a simple origin troubadours are often written in quite an ironic manner, for example: "Gaucelm Faidit was originally from a town called Uzerche of Limousin Diocese and was born in the family of one of the locals. He was the worst singer in the world but did well at the words and tunes versifying. He began juggling after he had diced away all his fortune. He was the man of great generosity and eager to eat and drink, why became utterly fat," etc. [Meilakh, Rukova, 1993: 100].

We should also keep in mind that the ideal of courtly love admits its existence even where the gender aristocracy is not very significant too. Vladimir Shishmarev [Shishmarev, 1965: 219, 246] has shown this ideal popularity in urban (not necessarily aristocratic) environment in medieval Italy. With its specific nature, of course - in the late Middle Ages «virtúoso» has become the main concept for the high Italian culture. It includes the same as the late medieval courtesy but pertains to the broader social urban groups. In this regard, Huizinga has noted that comparing the Italian *virtúoso* with the French chivalry ideal (the basis of courtesy) "a difference lies only in the degree of erudition and in the sense of taste" [Huizinga, 2011: 122].

Plato on love. Let us recall some important Plato`s points on love issue for clarity. In the context of *The Symposium* and *The Phaedrus,* the classic dialogues substance of different views of different people exposition should not confuse our research – we will avoid the controversial points.

In *The Symposium* Plato states through Phaedrus the following:

- nothing can teach one merit better than love [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 178c];
- the best state or army would consist of lovers and their beloved [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 178e];
- "Only the loving ones are ready to die for one another, both men and also women" [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 179a] – the moment, illustrated by Alcestis love example, which has shown that in the ancient Greek world women are capable of true love too;
- there is a clear separation between the lovers and their beloved – they are unequal because of the inferiority of the second ones to the first, thus the first serve the second;
- loved is inferior to loving because loving is inspired by God [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 180b], so being in love is a spiritual obsession, that exalts the lover above mere mortals and gives him special privileges;
- "people are miserable ... first of all, they love women no less than boys; secondly, they love their beloved more for the sake of their bodies than souls...." [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 181b] We have to understand that here, as it might seem, not the homosexual pattern prevails, but the typical for that time sexism, which claims that inherently, the woman is spiritually inferior to men and as soon as true love is highly spiritual, therefore it is a male domain only;
- it is a poor person who loves the body more than the soul because his love is flighty, as the body withers [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 183e];
- custom requires the lover to aspire the beloved object for a long time, with the evasions from the latter [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 184a];
- it is a shame to oblige somebody for the sake of money, power, and other material benefits [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 184a];
- love is the desire for eternal possession of the benefits, for perfection [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 206a];
- love is the desire for immortality [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 207a];
- love is a mean of spiritual perfection [Plato. The Symposium, 1993: 210b].

And further, in *The Phaedrus*:

- beauty contemplation (enamourment) inspires and exalts the soul [Plato. The Phaedrus, 1993: 249e];
- the ultimate love is in the spiritual union of lovers and abstinence from carnal pleasures - this love leads them "to become elated and light after death, having a great victory in one of three truly Olympic competitions, which is the greatest benefit neither human common sense nor divine fury can beat for a person" [Plato. The Phaedrus, 1993: 256b];
- if the lovers have yet indulged in carnal passions, they are wingless after death, but still assigned to a bright life and a chance to get wings as a reward for their allegiance and great love [Plato. The Phaedrus, 1993: 256d];
- if intimacy is not accompanied by love, then "the soul will senselessly putter in the upper and lower worlds for nine thousand years" after the body`s death.

Such a brief summary of the main characteristics of the platonic love ideal is enough for the research purposes (the list is certainly incomplete, but sufficient in this context).

Characteristics of amour courtois in its development. In order to describe the phenomenon of courtly love, it is in many ways reasonable to be guided by the fundamental paper *On the History of Love Theories in the Romanesque Middle Ages* by Vladimir Shishmarev. His study presents a thorough analysis of the problem through the extensive material of troubadours and trouveres biographies and writings, as well as other sources. Shishmarev believes that courtly love and the establishment of its forms originate from the conditions of feudal marriage [Shishmarev, 1965: 191], which, in its essence, was a transaction in the medieval society, which did not allow marriage to be a union of hearts. Thus, love has somehow had to find its expression, even being naturally crossed out of the marital relationships. The love for *domina*, a married lady with a higher social status, has turned out to be such an expression, which, in fact, reproduces the relations between a vassal and a lord. However, Oleg Voskoboynikov claims that it would be wrong to think that marriage in the Middle Ages had nothing to do with love; *fine amour* could come from a spouse in relation to his wife [Voskoboynikov, 2014: 278]. However, Jacques Le Goff (apparently referring to Andreas Capellanus) considers, that courtly love might arise and develop only outside marriage bonds [Le Goff, 2007: 94], meaning that the act of marriage and marital relations extinguish the love. Georges Duby points out slightly different grounds for courtly love origins, besides describing the relevant conditions of medieval marriage as a trade deal too. According to him [Duby, 2009: 255-256], the inability to have marital relations for most of the nobles (younger children with no inheritance, poor knights) has determined their choice of the court mistress (their lord's wife) as a love object. At the same time, this has contributed to the regulation of sexual relations: the libido of young nobles has found some culturally acceptable direction. Thus, a married woman, a lord's wife, has become the main love object (an ideal), and an unmarried young knight - the subject. In a certain respect, the lady appears to him as a mother [Duby, 2009: 258] and, therefore, her role is largely educational. Naturally, in most cases, the physical implementation of such aspirations has been out of question and love has presupposed a constant distance. However, one should not assume that a young knight has not dreamt of physical possessiveness and that a lady has not wished to oblige him - in this regard, Johan Huizinga provides some illustrative examples of the contrary [Huizinga, 2011: 139].

At the end of the XII century, Andreas Capellanus has made a key influence on the development of courtly love by his major work *De Amore* (as reported by Mikhail Gasparov, half a century later a similar effect has been produced in Italy by *Rota Veneris* by Boncompagno of Bologna [Gasparov, 1993: 572-573]). There is an interesting interpretation of this treatise by Duby: according to the "three orders model" [Duby, 2000], he tries to interpret the paper in accordance with the era (though, in a different work Duby claims that "medieval texts contain particularly complex symbolism, the key to which we have no more" [Duby, 2009: 253]).

In Capellanus's work, it is clearly indicated that not everyone is capable of great love: for example, the common people, those who are engaged in physical labor (because they are rude, uneducated, and have no proper manners). Prostitutes can not be involved in great love either because they have turned love into work.

According to Capellanus, society members are categorized into commoners, nobles, higher nobles and supreme nobles. Only the last three classes may qualify for courtly love. The two middle ones are courtiers (presumably, including knights, although, the term "knight" appears neither in the treatise, nor in *The Roman de la Rose*). The supreme nobles are the clergymen [Capellanus, 1993: 387], which means that a cleric is not forbidden to love a lady. Among the commoners Capellanus distinguishes those who are involved in trade, not manual labor. They have a higher status and are likely to have the right for great love; but

nevertheless, due to their hard work and no noble birth they have to choose an object of love within their own social circle. Hence, they have no option of loving a noble lady. All are limited by their social classes. Even the clergy, "as the clergy by their long living of idleness and food abundance are more than others naturally inclinable to bodily temptations, if a cleric desires to undergo a test of love, let him correspond in speeches with the class and the estate, which he belongs by his blood to" [Capellanus, 1993: 388]. That is the pre-order: no matter how worthy you are as a plebeian, your dignity is nothing compared with the dignity of a baron. Capellanus, however, mentions the possibility of love between different classes, but only in the case of their contiguity, for example, between an ordinary noblewoman and a commoner (but not vice versa: between a nobleman and a commoner woman – in this case, love is out of the question) [Capellanus, 1993: 387]. It is significant that a nobleman has the right to take a commoner woman by force. In the case of a misalliance, when a poor nobleman settles his dowerless daughter to marry a wealthy commoner, the status of the latter has remained unchanged. However, there is someone who can change this order and ennoble a commoner, writes Capellanus, and this person is the sovereign. Upon this Duby makes a slightly unexpected conclusion that, in fact, *De Amore* glorifies the power of the monarch [Duby, 2000: 306].

Capellanus distinguishes the clergy as the highest class both in society and love affairs. In connection to this, the example of Pierre Abelard seems interesting. It should be mentioned that Pierre Abelard has lived earlier than the times when courtly love relations have finally been established. However, the turn of the XI and XII centuries has already been the time when such love relations have been actually practiced. The assertion of Le Goff that the love of Abelard and Heloise has been a prototype of courtly love may seem odd [Le Goff, 2007: 95]. This opinion is hardly agreeable, because it contradicts the basic principles of courtly love, which will be described below. If you consider the famous Abelard's autobiography (the part where it comes to the affair with Heloise) not from the traditional sexist angle, it is possible to find that Abelard tells quite a vulgar story far from any kind of courtesy. Moreover, due to her social status Heloise could not claim to be a *domina*. Yet, the story is presented as a story of great love. However, Abelard directly writes, that "But by entrusting me the girl with a request not only to teach, but even severely punish her, he gave me the opportunity to fulfill my desires and he gave me a chance (even though we both did not mean it initially) to seduce Heloise with caress or to force her [to love] by threats and beatings" [Abelard, 1992: 267]. Then he immediately gets what he wanted, and they make love instead of having lessons, and he beats her to cover the secret. After getting pregnant, she eventually takes the veil, unwilling to bother a learned person with marriage (in respect to this Abelard provides many justifications – a good example of gender-based way of thinking). Apparently, the story of Abelard is quite a contrast to the cleric's love ideal, which has been glorified half a century later by Andreas Capellanus, and hardly has any relation to courtesy. In the story of Abelard and Heloise there was no pre-suffering, no courtship, no struggle for reward (on the contrary, their love story begins with this reward), no longing in anticipation of the fair lady's favor. Obstacles for the lovers have arisen only when Abelard has been castrated.

It is not easy to point out any other legendary stories that may serve as examples of courtly love. The story of Tristan and Iseult, repeatedly mentioned by Le Goff (for some reason, the well-known interpretation of the legend by Thomas Malory [Malory, 1991] has not been taken into consideration), contains a dramatic love story, which has flared up accidentally and passionately, without the key courtesy preludes there again. This legend has much more likely influenced the idea of love as the highest spiritual value, which has later inflown the courtly love concept. Probably, the story of Lancelot and Guinevere, the wife of

his lord King Arthur, is a closest one to the ideal of courtly love (as presented by Chrétien de Troyes [Troyes, De, 1997]).

Thus, courtly love is the love of the nobles (including nobles in spirit, with a proviso that, in fact, it is intended only for the upper classes). In reality, of course, common forms of courtly love could address not only the lord's wife, which becomes quite clear from the troubadours` songs. The wife of the lord is an ideal.

Despite the fact that historically a married lady has been the object of courtly love focus, the pattern of erotic gratification has still been of utmost importance (particularly, in the beginning). Indeed, these relations have been a kind of vassal relations: the man in love is sort of a vassal, the lady is sort of a lord, and the vassal has the right to claim a reward. "If a lady makes her friend beg for too long, he has the right to leave her" [Shishmarev, 1965: 194]. Duby even points out that the term "love" meant nothing but lust in the medieval language, and that "courtly love was not platonic in its aspirations" [Duby, 2009: 249-250]. Generally, it is true, but it is still worth to trace the historical development of courtly love, in order to perceive its platonic elements. It is strange that Duby is so definite about it: we find some compelling examples where sexual gratification can hardly be present (in fact, the lover does not even think of it). Types of rewards, which is possible for a lady to grant her admirer with, as a rule, include: a smile, a meaningful glance, a ring, gloves, lace, a kiss, and, finally, the frequently mentioned permission to lie down with the lady. All these are signs of a bond, a union [Shishmarev, 1965: 196-197]. Regarding the last one it should be noted that a strictly restrained behavior of the lover is considered here: he may lie next to the lady, who might be naked, but he cannot touch her and must be in full control of himself (that is, at least, how Duby sees the matter). Shishmarev is inclined to admit that this strange decumbency is a "symbolic act reflecting an ancient mundane relationship" or simply a rhetorical wording.

However, soon enough the idea of love as a pure, selfless service to the lady has begun to prevail in the troubadours` songs (such sentiments have become typical for the turn of XII-XIII centuries). Henceforth, a lover must be satisfied with the entire fact of his love, without hoping for a reward, and be grateful in his suffering over the inevitable separation from the beloved lady. The vassal is happy that the lady allows him to think of her, to serve her, and the highest award is just a favorable glance - the sign of her permission for him to serve her. An Italian, Sordello da Goito, who in fact has become a troubadour of Provence, has claimed that any other, more tangible, signs of appreciation would upset him, and God forbid the offer to lie down next to the lady, "because such an invitation would only make him feel ashamed" [Shishmarev, 1965: 198-199].

Let us specify some features of courtly love in their development:

- Following the rules of courtly love, a lover should worship the lady, be faithful and loyal to her, know courtship and suppress his pride [Shishmarev, 1965: 195-196];
- Love also bears educational functions: it improves, exalts, makes more honorable, brave and generous. Love makes people act right following their heart. Love turns a coward into a brave and helps in battle [Shishmarev, 1965: 200-201];
- Love affects the way a person looks: a lover has to have a proper dress and equipment, to take care of his haircut, to make beautiful speeches, etc.;
- N`At de Mons provides a colorful image of a man in love, which has later been adopted by many theorists of love, including such an influential troubadour as monk Matfre Ermengau, who wrote, "Let the true lovers know that driven by love an arrogant man becomes humble, a vulgar becomes courageous, a lazy turns energetic, a foolish turns wise, a barbarian becomes well-mannered, a desperate man finds control of his feelings, a sad becomes cheerful and joyful, a boaster speaks truth... not-courtly

becomes courtly... a pitiful becomes dignified... a common becomes outstanding" [Shishmarev, 1965: 203];

- Troubadour Guiraut Riquier (the XIII century) has developed another pattern, which becomes an essential element of courtly love. This motive is suffering. A lover has to suffer; the desirable should not come free or easy to him. However, a reward that can relieve the suffering does not strengthen love, "it can strengthen the enjoyment of love" [Shishmarev, 1965: 207-208];
- Raimon de Cornet, another significant poet of Provence (first half of the XIV century), offers to make a distinction between *aman*, a lover, and *amayre*, a loving. The first prevails over the second, because he fully gives himself to the love, he sees love eminently as an immaculate feeling, close to the mystical ecstasy of divine experience. In this regard, Raimon writes very interesting things: that true love (*aman*) is so glorious that he does not even know the way to talk about it. And further, in a denying manner, which resembles the technique of apophatic theology (ref. Pierre Hadot *Negative Theology* [Ado, 2005]), he tries to describe the level of its sublimity. "Neither knowledge, nor wealth, nor daughter, nor son, nor wife, nor good armor or anything else, only love is a paradise full of joy" [Shishmarev, 1965: 212]. Here it is. Notable that one's own wife can not be the object of courtly love. Again, this is probably due to the fact that marriage is primarily thought as of a bargain. But there is a more subtle nuance: marital relationship does not involve suffering, longing and self-development on the abstinence basis, because it's already a sexually fulfilled relationship. *Aman*, according to Raimon, is guided by a force that causes two people to strive for moral perfection, which an ordinary *amayre* lacks. The moral perfection represents a long list of virtues, the most important of which are repeated by almost all of the poets, knights and clerics, the apologists of courtly love;
- According to Raimon, there's a place in heaven for true lovers [Shishmarev, 1965: 226];
- "The effect of love is that a true lover is not a subject to stinginess, that even a rude and ignorant man shines with beauty because of love, even a commoner acquires nobility of character because of love, an arrogant is granted humbleness, and every service is performed by the lover with great propriety. Oh, what a wonder is love... that teaches everyone to abound with good manners! Moreover, something else about love is worthy of considerable praise: love decorates a man with virtuous sobriety..." [Capellanus, 1993: 386];
- Matfre Ermengau has mentioned abstinence from sensual pleasures and added generosity, cheerfulness, courage, valor, good looks and even fresh breath. Regarding the love for a wife, Matfre tells that it is meant for procreation. However, the real "loyal" lover "can loyally fall in love with ladies and just women, without falling into a sin" [Shishmarev, 1965: 216-221].

The development of the ideas about the perfect, immaculate, supersensual love for the lady leads to the fact that the lady loses the features of a real person and turns into an ethereal creature [Shishmarev, 1965: 219, 225]. Obviously, there is a religious influence here: it is the church that dictates permitted subjects (in Toulouse, 1323, *the Consistori del Gay Saber* has been established, which in fact has regulated the poetry of troubadours by scholastic norms) and therefore poets have had to look perforce for acceptable forms. In this sense, the placement of *domina* at transcendental heights, turning her into the Virgin Mary, which means breaking up with all earthly things, seems logically justifiable. May such an idealized "lady" be considered as a human being? It might be more appropriate to speak about the eidos of the "lady" here, the idea of her in the platonic sense, which has attracted the desires of a

lover's soul. In the medieval Christian world, of course, *amour courtois* could not be addressed to some abstract idea, which is why the image of the lady has begun to come closer to the image of the Virgin Mary. However, prerequisites for this have appeared earlier: as noticed by Mikhail Gasparov [Gasparov, 1993: 572], even at the end of the XIII century there have been attempts to infuse the religious meaning into the Capellaus's treatise – with the theme of love for the Virgin Mary. Guilhem de Montanhagol, a troubadour of the XIII century, literally describes the lady as an ethereal creature, who has descended to earth from heaven. In Italy, the development of this pattern can be found in Dante's absolute idealization of Beatrice. Thus, courtly love has fully moved from the bodily sphere to the realm of spirit.

The influence of *The Roman de la Rose.* However, it is only the one side of love consideration, which is compiling an image of courtesy. The other side is determined by a quite distant from a traditionally religious content, presented in *The Roman de la Rose* (the XIII century).

The two authors have created *The Roman de la Rose*: Guillaume de Lorris has completed his part in between of 1225 and 1240; Jean de Meung has finished the continuation of the novel in between of 1268 and 1285. Here is a very brief content of the first part. Guillaume de Lorris himself is the main character. At first, he tells he is going to reveal his dream he saw quite a long time ago, but only now he is ready for its interpretation and projection. In his dream, he goes for a walk and turns up in a wonderful garden mostly inhabited by allegorical characters (Fair-Welcome, Fear, Evil-Tongue, Reason, Sweet-Looks, etc.[1] [Lorris, Clopinel (Ellis), 1900]). While walking around the garden, the poet notices the beautiful Rose, and the Cupid strikes him with multiple arrows, each filled with some ingredients of courtly love. The lover wants to pick the Rose (with a support of the Fair-Welcome), but then guardians of the Rose arrive and mess everything up. Finally, the poet has managed to kiss the Rose, but the main antagonist, villain Danger, finds out about that and exiles the poet, depriving him of an opportunity to come closer to the Rose.

On one side, the first part of the novel follows traditions of high courtesy. After having shot his arrows into the poet, the Cupid starts counseling him on love affairs (a direct influence of Andreas Capellanus here):

> "Fore all beware of Villainy,"
> Quoth Love, "and utterly deny
> All knowledge of her, under pain
> That all thy vows I count but vain.
> Those who love Villainy I hate,
> And count them excommunicate.
> `Tis Villainy doth villains breed,
> I have her hath love or pity won," etc.
> [Lorris, Clopinel (Ellis), 1900: Vol. 1, ll.2160-2167]

On the other side, the text of the novel abounds with highly sexual symbols. These are an image of the Rose, a key that Cupid uses to lock up the heart of the lover, striking his heart arrows, the tower where Fair-Welcome is imprisoned, the stick of the villain Danger, which he uses to threaten the main character, the burning candle that Venus hands into the poet`s hands.

[1] The characters names and quotes are given according to the English translation of Frederick Startridge Ellis.

Moreover, such positive characters as Shame, Reason and Chastity become obstacles on the way to love. The poet exclaims out:

> Cease then, I pray, you do but lose
> Your time, and fair French words misuse,
> Thus sermoning me, who, for my part,
> Would sooner die than deem my heart
> Despised of Love for falsity.
> I little reck although I be
> Or praised or blamed, but while I live,
> To Love my heart will wholly give:
> Forego your counseling I pray.
> [Lorris, Clopinel (Ellis), 1900: Vol. 1, ll.3220-3228]

In fact, the pattern of physical love satisfaction as an important and meaningful idea can already be traced in the text of Guillaume de Lorris, though a total change of values has taken place. The character wants to slip off the flower and kiss it, but Chastity stays on the way:

> And she hath given most strict
> Anв sure commandement, none should touch
> Or kiss the Rose.
> [Lorris, Clopinel (Ellis), 1900: Vol. 1, ll.3550-3552]

The co-author, Jean de Meung, in his continuance has developed this theme in a more dramatic and courageous way by stating the idea of Chastity and Shame bad origins. Even more, those two are considered to be a violation of Nature. Cupid, Nature, and Venus publicly appeal for free sex. The main character ends up winning all enemies with strong support, slipping off the Rose, while considering Reason and Jealousy as the main obstacles to love.

Consequently, the novel undermines the ideal of courtesy love. It does not destroy it but modifies it. It denies the classical female virtues: shame, honor, and chastity as the obstacles. These new contents reveal a sharp contrast with Christian values, which cannot help leading to a confrontation between the novel followers and opponents, which has grown worse with the popularity of the novel. Christine de Pizan (the turn of the XIV and XV centuries) appears as an aggressive opponent of the novel. She has clearly understood the novel as the exclusively men`s point of view, which shortly comes down to statement that a woman has to oblige herself easily to a man without any resistance. In *The Book of the City of Ladies* Christine has used the same allegorical characters that we have already seen in *The Roman de la Rose* – lady Reason, lady Justice (it is crucial for these to be ladies). Christine is appealing through lady Justice: “Oh Lord, how much severe beating without any reason or cause, how many insults, threats, how much humiliation and brutality many women have endured, and after all neither of them has cried out for help! Moreover, please also recall those women who barely die from hunger and suffer staying at home with lots of children, when their husbands jollify at revels and city taverns and when those lads do come home, their wives get beating for dinner” [Pizan, De, 1991:252]. Christine has stated that women are not inferior to men, they are not some disposable possessions and have the same rights (for instance, the woman is allowed to study science, and this is a real claim for mental equality).

The Roman de la Rose have had even more serious opponents, for example, Christine`s contemporary, the Paris University Counselor Jean Charlier de Gerson. He has concluded the main idea of the novel as follows: “all maidens should sell their bodies as

quickly and expensively as possible, shamelessly and fearlessly, without hesitating to lie or break an oath with it" [Huizinga, 2011: 200]. Despite the strong influence of Gerson, the popularity and influence of the novel have remained – there have been far more followers of it, including powerful clergymen (such as Jean de Montreuil, the abbot of the cathedral in Lille).

Johan Huizinga in *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* has thoroughly analyzed the novel in the context of courtesy relationships. He states that as no other the novel has influenced an everyday life of medieval France and Burgundy: its allegorical characters have come into general language, merged into routine. And even more important is that "*The Roman de la Rose* has added a new meaning to the forms of courtesy love" [Huizinga, 2011: 184]. Quite in Freud style, Huizinga considers the knight`s ideal as a replacement of unsatisfied desire [Huizinga, 2011: 131]. Of course, it means a sexual desire. Unrealized sexual desire is replaced by several life practices, thus forming a courtesy mentality of a knight. Huizinga mentions that tales of chivalry, such as primarily writings of Chrétien de Troyes, have significantly influenced on courtesy relationships. In the XV century champs of battles with unusual names (such as "The Spring of Tears" or "The Dragon`s Manacles") have been created in order to embody romantic novel characters into reality. Here knights have an opportunity to fight for ladies. Famous for his adherence to courtesy, a well-known fighter Boucicaut Master even has established the Order of the White Lady on the Green Field in pursuit of allegiance to women. In 1401 the Court of Love (Cour d`amours) has been also significantly established during the plague epidemic. Controversial love problems and relationships of lovers have been discussed there in real earnest. The Court has included both followers and opponents of *The Roman de la Rose*. But all these more likely show us that by the XV century courtesy love has mostly lost its connection with reality and has become some kind of a game, nostalgia, has elaborated pretentious literature features. In mid-XV-century, poetry has distanced far from courtesy ideal. For instance, in his famous *Le Testament* François Villon is very ironic about love [Villon, 1999: 48] (also he is equally far off joys of love described in pastoral poems – refer to his *Les Contredictz de Franc-Gontier*). By the XVI century, Lodovico Ariosto has already made courtesy relationships a definite attribute of the legendary chivalry past. At the beginning of Song Twenty-Six of *Orlando Furioso* he states:

> In former ages courteous ladies were,
> Who worshipt virtue, and not worldly gear.
> Women in this degenerate age are rare,
> To whom aught else but sordid gain is dear;
> But they who real goodness make their care. [2]
> [Ariosto, 1823-31: Vol. 5, Canto XXVI, I]

Furthermore, he carries an ideal of the lady of foretime to an absurdity – beautiful female characters Marphisa and Bradamante are so strong and aggressive that they are even able to knock almost any knight out of the saddle. Bradamante has fought head-to-head with her beloved – a great knight Ruggiero.

It is significant that ironic and sarcastic attitude to courtesy love can still be traced in the XIV century: after visiting the Provence, Francesco da Barberino has created a sarcastic tractate *Tractatus amoris*. There he has turned all courtesy values upside down, pretending to praise them and speak "through the love." In particular, he tells such a morality tale (retold by

[2] The characters names and quotes are given according to the English translation of William Stewart Rose.

Mikhail Meilakh) "about a mentally deficient man, a member of the some countess equipage (!), passing through Burgundy, where that fellow has attempted to rape a village girl, for which villagers have killed all the countess escort and in return have nearly raped the countess herself. Da Barberino has added here that "the villagers have not even been punished because of a significant number of them guilty of the crime, which is extremely outrageous!" [Meilakh, 1993: 581]

Conclusions. The courtly love, however, stays at literature focus theme up to the late Middle Ages. Despite the influence of *The Roman de la Rose*, the basic idea of the exalted attitude to the lady, the subtle and noble allegiance has still been preserved. Huizinga has one of the latest historical examples of this – the love of Guillaume de Machaut and Marianne [Huizinga, 2011: 309].

Generally, the two separate phenomena contain the traces of platonic relationships: the love to a lady as generous allegiance, which ennobles the lover and exalts him above mere mortals; and the noble male friendship. Probably, such a phenomenon of the Middle Ages, as the minions – a close male friend of the preceding man – preserves some platonic imprint in it. Huizinga calls it a sentimental friendship and notes that it is often put in parallel with courtly love as its certain form, embodied in the relationships between men. It is easy here to step up to the Plato`s version of love, but Huizinga asseverates that "However, any hint of some whatsoever resemblance to the friendship in the Greek spirit is absolutely inappropriate here," [Huizinga, 2011: 97] despite the fact that "These are often the two friends of the same age, but different positions, which are dressed the same way and sleep in the same room or even in the same bed" [Huizinga, 2011: 98]. In the XVI century Michel de Montaigne argues about friendship and gives the example of his relations with Etienne de La Boétie, actually describing it in platonic terms: "Reduced to bodily possession and, therefore, subject to satiety, the pleasure kills it... and since the pleasure is spiritual, the addicted soul exalts" [Montaigne, De, 2007]. Moreover, then he states them to be basically the united one, "dissolved" in each other.

Around the same time, but in another part of Europe, as well the heiress of courtly love, Benvenuto Cellini tells of his love for Angelica [Cellini, 1987: 145]. In this love there is no trace of courtesy, it is nothing more than a stubborn desire to possess the object of his passion completely. All ends when after the achievement of desirable, he instantly loses interest to her. Some time later, he claims to step back on enamored with him Pantasilea for his friend Bachiacca without any hesitation for the simple reason that he liked her too. Only Cellini`s male friends, such as Michelangelo and Ascanio, are honored with his truly warm feelings (apparently, without any homosexual hints – anyway, Cellini denies such suspicions). It is more like the "platonic friendship."

These and other examples show us that the ideal of courtly love dies at the turn of the Renaissance, at least in such a form which it has appeared and lasted through the poetry of the troubadours. However, as noted by Duby: "Even today, despite the shift in the relationships between the sexes, the inherited from the rituals of courtly love characteristics exert on them, which most notably distinguishes our civilization from the rest" [Duby, 2009: 264]. Disagreeing with him is hard. Indeed, the "lady-vassal" dichotomy holds a firm place in the perception of both sexes, as a particular sample. However, a wife of the lord, a noblewoman before – now the lady`s mask suits every woman. Moreover, the generated by the creation of Jean de Meun antagonism remains the same: if women want to be "ladies", men want to tear the roses quickly.

To summarize, the significant common elements of platonic and courtly love should be indicated once more. In fact, lover of the Middle Ages (by the way, the courtly literature is mostly focused on him, not on the object of his love) is also inspired by God – same with a

lover in Plato`s version. Here is the same with Plato`s pattern of improvement, sophistication, inspiration. Thanks to love, overcoming the carnal desires (and when the Virgin Mary becomes the object of love, it is even out of the question), the lover exalts from the mundane to the celestial, improving and acquiring his moral values. If according to Plato, true lovers come to overworld after the death, the courtesy lovers, according to Raimon de Cornet, are also destined to live in paradise. Thus, the most important common characteristics are the designation of special enamored status, the pattern of selfless allegiance to the beloved object and improvement through love, which is possible to achieve through abandoning of physical satisfaction. Love is a recipe, which gives admission to the higher meaning through the abandonment of selfishness and spiritual self-development. At the same time, the features, added by *The Roman de la Rose* to courtesy relationships, considerably separate them from the platonic ideal.

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