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Love's Labour's Lost and Much Ado About Nothing: An Early Diptych?

Sophie Chiari

- 1 *Love's Labour's Won* is something of a mystery in the Shakespearean canon. It is not the only one, though, since the lost play *Cardenio*, by Shakespeare and Fletcher, is also problematic. Yet, we do know that "*Cardenno*" was played at court in 1612-1613 and that it was duly registered for publication by Humphrey Moseley at the Stationers' Hall in September 1653, whereas the information related to the performance of *Love's Labour's Won* is entirely missing.
- 2 Part of the difficulty with *Love's Labour's Won* is that the play, if it was ever performed, was never registered. Its title is obviously that of an early comedy which "must have either been missed when Heminge and Condell compiled the Folio (after all like *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, while *Timon of Athens* was only squeezed in as a filler when copyright problems almost excluded *Troilus and Cressida*), or [...] must have got into the volume under a different name."¹ Two solutions can thus be offered: either the text of the play, like many others at the time, was entirely lost, or it was performed and then published under a different name. The logic underpinning the current scholarship on *Love's Labour's Lost/Won* is not entirely satisfactory for treasure seekers as the general response has been to subsume the unknown title under the identity of a familiar play rather than celebrate the possibility of a new Shakespeare play.
- 3 What could this "familiar" play be? Many different suggestions have been made by editors and critics as speculations started early. In a letter dated February 28 1767, which he sent to a Cambridge scholar named Richard Farmer, Bishop Percy said that he had identified *Love's Labour's Won* as *All's Well that Ends Well*. Impressed by Bishop Percy's "discovery," Farmer included the suggestion in his *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* (1767), unlikely though it may have been.² All the same, he was followed in this by Edmund Malone who, after dating *All's Well* to 1598 on stylistic grounds, also identified that comedy with *Love's Labour's Won*.³
- 4 This hypothesis has been discarded because, on the basis of topical allusions and intertextual echoes, it is now suggested that *All's Well* was not completed before

1603-1604. And according to the latest Oxford edition of the *Complete Works*, the only comedy thought to have been written by 1598, but not listed by Meres, is *The Taming of the Shrew*, probably one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies.⁴ Identifying *The Shrew* as *Love's Labour's Won* might be justified by Gremio's claim that taming Katherine would be like rolling all of Hercules' labours into one ("Yea, leave that labour to great Hercules, / And let it be more than Alcides' twelve", 1.2.255-256),⁵ but then, it would follow that *Love's Labour's Lost*, probably composed after *The Shrew*, should be considered as a prequel of sorts. Even though this hypothesis is not totally implausible, one should keep in mind that, whereas "historical" prequels generally make sense because they satisfy the audience's need to know more about their origins, comedic ones are always commercially risky undertakings for the simple reason that what matters most in a comedy does not lie in its premises, but in the virtuoso way the plot unravels at the end.

- 5 That is the reason why I would like to discuss an alternative theory, as to me *The Shrew* appears as a less likely candidate than *Much Ado About Nothing*. A.E. Brae and Frederic Gard Fleay were probably the first important critics to designate *Much Ado* as their favourite choice,⁶ and, in doing so, they had to solve several challenging issues. Indeed, for all their similarities, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado* remain very different plays. The first is set in Navarre, the second in Messina, and while love is thwarted in the first play, it triumphs in the latter. Because these differences contribute to underline the complementarity of the two comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost*, that early play neatly structured by its four matching pairs and full of dense, sometimes acrobatic verbal wit, has recently been coupled with *Much Ado* in the RSC's repertoire.
- 6 In this double bill, the former is presented as a kind of prologue to the latter, boldly subtitled *Love's Labour's Won*. Why should a comedy first conceived as an autonomous piece need a sequel, one might ask? A possible answer is that *Love's Labour's Lost* does not meet all the criteria of the comic genre. It deprives us of the expected happy ending and closes on the dark note of the death of the King of France. The sad news brought by Marcadé in the last act casts a shadow on the many exchanges of wit that have been going on before. The comedy's symmetrical structure is therefore blown apart by the sudden appearance and unpredictability of death, disease, and loss. Present-day audiences may feel hard done by, which makes the idea of a sequel called *Love's Labour's Won* both fairly logical and rather intriguing in itself. But this poses the question of whether Shakespeare was such a marketing expert as to reel in audiences with a teasing suggestion of the next instalment in which the lovers would be reunited at the end. Rather than provide definitive answers, this paper will revisit the recent scholarship on what is now often referred to as Shakespeare's "lost play," trying to elucidate the question of whether Shakespeare, as a skilled young playwright, did intend to write a diptych. Was *Love's Labour's Won* meant as a sequel and, if so, what concrete elements may confirm this and make it a fact?

1. Bridging the gap

- 7 In the early 1590s, a budding English playwright presented new works on the early modern stage, and while some of them may be regarded as new generic experimentations, they also belonged to the well-known traditions of revenge tragedy, Plautine comedy, and *Commedia dell'arte*, to quote but a few. The newly created plays and the old pieces taken as models were implicitly linked to one another as part and parcel of

literary continuation. The mid-1590s were a period of intense creativity for the young, but experienced William Shakespeare. Around 1595, his company performed *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and this dramatic ebullience "was perhaps the result of Shakespeare's busy writing activity during the plague time."⁷ A few years later, probably during the same decade, *Much Ado* was produced on the London stage.

- 8 As a matter of fact, both *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado* were published during the author's lifetime. While the presence of Shakespeare's name on the title-page of *Love's Labour's Lost* has been noted by all commentators, the title-page of the *Much Ado* quarto also proves particularly interesting:

Much adoe about / Nothing / As it hath been sundrie times publickly / acted by the right honourable, the Lord / Chantberline his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. / London, Printed by V.S. for Andrew Wise, and / William Aspley. 1600.⁸

While *Love's Labour's Lost* was the first play printed under the playwright's own name, it is actually thanks to the quarto edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* that Shakespeare's name appeared for the first time in the Stationers' Register.⁹ We do not know how long before August 1600 Shakespeare wrote his play, but the title-page tells us that the comedy had already been "sundrie times" acted. This does not come as a surprise: unless plays were really popular, no stationer would immediately publish them, especially as getting hold of a manuscript was rarely an easy task for them.

- 9 Curiously, there is no record of the intended publication of *Love's Labour's Lost* in the Stationers' Register, but the quarto specifies that the play was published in 1598 by Cuthbert Burbie, maybe under a revised form. The title page of the 1598 quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* indeed claims that this is a "newly corrected and augmented version" of the play. Burbie (who also published the "good" quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1599) may therefore have replaced a rather poor, or "bad" (and now missing), quarto by a better one.¹⁰

- 10 According to Andrew Gurr and Richard Dutton, the manuscripts of *Love's Labour's Lost*, along with *1Henry IV* and *Richard III*, may have been released by Shakespeare's company in 1597-1598 "only because they faced a financial crisis when unable to use either the Burbage's new Blackfriars venue or the Theatre."¹¹ Like Lukas Erne however, one may question this argument.¹² Theatrical apparel representing the most precious goods of Elizabethan theatrical companies, selling costumes would certainly have secured much more money than merchandising manuscripts.

- 11 Be that as it may, both plays were performed before the turn of the century, and both appeared in print with Shakespeare's name on the title-page. Apart from their linguistic exuberance, they also share a number of common themes. While the playwright explores the various meanings of "honour" in history plays like *1Henry IV*, he takes up the same concept in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado About Nothing* and he simultaneously emphasizes its more positive aspects, derived from Aristotle,¹³ as well as some of its pernicious effects. If a ridiculous sense of honour guides the men's behaviour in *Love's Labour's Lost*, a firmer sense of honour and reputation underpins the action of the French Princess and her ladies-in-waiting. In Sicily, on the other hand, female honour is aligned with chastity, while male honour is associated with courtly etiquette. The theme of war is another connection worth noting between the two plays. While the French wars provide *Love's Labour's Lost* with a disquieting background, a war has just come to an end at the beginning of *Much Ado*.¹⁴ This is the reason why the cross-cast productions of the RSC are

both set before and after the First World War in an English country house closely modelled by Simon Higlett on Charlecote Park. However, in both cases, the war is metaphorically replaced by the battle of the sexes which Shakespeare uses to describe the anxieties of a strongly patriarchal society. Lionizing lovers rather than soldiers, the two plays are also characterized by the presence of shallow young aristocrats and witty ladies who refuse to be subordinate to men. This interest in female agency is counterbalanced by lighter moments, as the two plays rely as much on farcical humour (thanks to Costard's and Dogberry's malapropisms) as on refined (albeit aborted) masks and spectacles to seduce both popular and learned audiences. This list would be incomplete without the mention of two remarkably similar couples: the young Rosaline and Berowne, on the one hand, and the more mature Beatrice and Benedick, on the other. These voluble characters spar and bicker even as they fall in love. In Christopher Luscombe's production, Edward Bennett and Michelle Terry take on both pairings while it must be pointed out that the overall cross-casting is far from being literal or systematic. As a result, Beatrice and Benedick seem to evolve much more in a Shakespeare spin-off than in a sequel of sorts, and audiences are generally happy when, at the end of Luscombe's version of *Much Ado* staged as *Love's Labour's Won*, they at last get to lock lips. As Russel Jackson wonders,

Who knows what Shakespeare intended? All the comedies have overlapping but different ideas about people being separated and coming together. [But] the central pairs [in these plays] are the kind of people who are too smart for anybody else – and almost too smart for each other. I would say these are Shakespeare's two screwball comedies.¹⁵

- 12 On a less visible level, the two comedies are full of legal terms, which suggests that they may have targeted the same demanding audience, namely that of the Inns of Court. Given that the Inns students enjoyed linguistic games and complex literary devices, Shakespeare may have felt the need to parody Lyly's euphuistic style in the two comedies. But there is more to it. *Love's Labour's Lost* explicitly deals with the sort of bawdy issues that were dealt with in ecclesiastical courts, always much concerned with fornication and the procreation of bastards. It also clearly pictures the coterie world of the inns, reproduces its revels and its topography, and problematizes the traditional question of male bonding versus marriage. As to its possible companion piece, it is partly based on the problem of slander and it offers a dramatic version of the type of case often brought before the common law courts. Hero's predicament, in the play, is particularly gloomy if one thinks that female pre-marital unchastity had only been considered as a "punishable offence" since the 1550s.¹⁶ As Daniel Kornstein notes, "[p]erhaps the dramatist overheard some lawyers at the Inns of Court chattering about an important new case", or perhaps the inspiration for *Much Ado About Nothing* "came from a real life slander case" like the 1593 case of Davies versus Gardiner, in which "a woman engaged to be married" turned out to be "falsely accused of having an illegitimate child" and "los[t] her marriage as a result."¹⁷ So, the two comedies seem to have had a strong legal appeal even though they addressed different forms of jurisdiction.

2. Renaming the play

- 13 In spite of these similarities, the bittersweet *Love's Labour's Lost* and the exhilarating *Much Ado about Nothing* remain poles apart. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, there are no marriages at the end—at least not until a year of mourning has passed, according to what the Princess

decrees. A resigned Berowne is more or less forced to acknowledge that "Our wooing doth not end like an old play; Jack hath not Jill" (5.2.339-340). In *Much Ado*, not only does Jack have Jill, but he also marries her.

- 14 Precisely because of these discrepancies, Greg Doran, the current artistic director of the RSC, feels that the two plays belong together. In the 2014-2015 season brochure, he writes: "So strong is my sense, that I am sticking my neck out to say that we have come to the conclusion that *Much Ado About Nothing* may have also been known during Shakespeare's lifetime as 'Love's Labour's Won.'"¹⁸ For a man of the theatre, what essentially matters is that the production concept works on stage, and in this case, it does, not least because the same visual environment helps unify the two plays. But for scholars willing to support this hypothesis, what are the clues available?
- 15 In 1598, Francis Meres, a cleric and schoolmaster, published his lengthy *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury. Being the second part of Wit's Commonwealth*. This 666-page book was entered on the Stationers' Register on 7 September 1598, and a now famous passage from the chapter entitled "A comparative discourse of our English poets, with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian poets" gives us useful indications regarding the dates of composition and the popularity of some of Shakespeare's plays:

As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage. For comedy, witness his Gentlemen of Verona, his Errors, his Love's Labour's Lost, his Love's Labour's Won, his Midsummer Night's Dream, and his Merchant of Venice; for tragedy, his Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King John, Titus Andronicus and his Romeo and Juliet.¹⁹
- 16 A significant number of plays by Shakespeare had been published before 1598.²⁰ *Much Ado*, which is not even mentioned, was only printed in 1600, i.e. two years after the publication of this list. Yet, there is evidence that it was performed before 1600, not just because the title-page of the quarto version tells us so, but also because this quarto quotes a player who no longer was with the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1600. The name of Will Kemp is included as a prefix for some of Dogberry's speeches, and Kemp is known to have left the company in the course of the year 1599 in order to embark on a career of solo clowning. Consequently, *Much Ado About Nothing* could well have been in the repertoire of the summer of 1598 and, as these facts taken together suggest, it was probably renamed.²¹
- 17 The use of alternative titles or subtitles for plays was indeed an established practice at the time.²² For instance, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (c. 1585), a "most deadly but lively playe"²³ now lost and attributed to Richard Tarlton, was probably divided into two different parts and renamed *Five Plays in One* and *Three Plays in One*.²⁴ Those plays were in the repertoire of the Queen's Men in the mid-1580s. One could also cite the case of "Longshanks" (listed as such by Henslowe on August 29, 1595, and mistakenly referred to as "ne", i.e. "new"), which probably referred to Peele's mutilated *Edward I* published in 1593,²⁵ or that of "Muly Mollocco", which has been identified with George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* (c. 1588). Similar examples are numerous and they testify to the instability of early modern titles. While plays were often renamed after their leading roles, theatre managers often tended to simplify titles for the sake of efficacy, and companies sometimes suggested alternative titles to give old plays a new look. As to the spectators themselves, they often felt the need to re-appropriate the plays which they had seen by giving them new names.

3. The Sense of Sequels

- 18 If *Much Ado* was indeed renamed *Love's Labour's Won*, was it because audiences were bored with the initial title? The answer is almost certainly no. Granted, the published quarto was not a best-seller,²⁶ but its title-page specified that *Much Ado* had been acted several times. If the spectators had been unhappy with it, the play would simply have disappeared from the stage. Moreover, we know that it was still performed at Court in 1613, since the first documentary evidence actually dates back to the month of May of that same year.²⁷ Did this happen because the spectators saw it as a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost*? After all, building on the success of Marlowe's two-part *Tamburlaine* (1590),²⁸ Shakespeare was past master in the art of writing historical sequels. This, of course, does not imply that the plays of the tetralogies were then performed as a sequence. This actually never happened in Shakespeare's lifetime, which is also the reason why the numerous inconsistencies between the individual plays probably mattered less than today.
- 19 In the 1623 Folio, the plays were posthumously gathered as "Histories" and aptly re-entitled *The Life and Death of Richard the Second*, *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth*, *The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*, *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*, *The First Part of King Henry the Sixth*, *The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth*, *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth* and *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*. All the same, this impeccable sequence is too good to be true. Originally, parts were not systematically indicated: a play simply called *The History of Henrie the Fourth* was entered into the Stationers' Register on 25 February 1598, and it was appropriately followed by a piece which was clearly conceived as a sequel this time, namely *The Second Parte of the History of Kinge Henry the iiiith*, entered on 23 August 1600. Written earlier, the second tetralogy is characterized by more confused denominations. As *1Henry VI* was not published until 1623, we cannot expatiate on its original title, but it was simply referred to as *Harey Vj* by Philip Henslowe²⁹ who often failed to identify the first parts of sequels.³⁰ *2Henry VI* appeared in a 1594 quarto under the title of *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*. This seems to indicate that *1Henry VI* was actually a prequel written after the *Contention* (in which case Henslowe would not have failed to identify *1Henry VI* as part one of a sequence, but would have thought it rather useless to number it as such). Finally, what is now known as *3Henry VI* was then published as *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York, and the Death of Good King Henrie the Sixt*. So the neatly ordered vision of history generated by the two tetralogies was only achieved in retrospect, just like a teleological approach of Shakespeare's history plays can only work with the benefit of hindsight. Yet, internal evidence testifies to the fact that, for Elizabethan audiences, they functioned "as a kind of serial"³¹: in other words, the reception shaped the production, and playwrights had to be versatile enough to adjust their creations to the audiences' fantasies.
- 20 Whether it be chance or coincidence, one does find the word "sequel" in one of Shakespeare's historical plays, *Henry V*,³² where the word comes to signify a "sequence" or an "order of succession; [...], a series" (*OED*, †5.). The playwright could, after all, write comic sequels on demand, and tradition has it that Elizabeth asked the playwright that Falstaff be "resuscitated, excerpted, and in love."³³ Whatever the truth of the matter may be, Shakespeare did decide to resuscitate Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, first published in 1602. This exemplifies the playwright's ingenuity in that he was able to

invent a new type of sequel which definitely breaks all illusion of reality and, more importantly, of generic unity.

- 21 Incidentally, the word “sequel” properly understood as an “ensuing narrative” (OED, 7³⁴) also appears in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where it takes on a derogatory meaning. In act 2 of the comedy, a mocking Silvia interrupts Valentine who has just told her that, even though he found it difficult to write her letter to a “secret, nameless friend of [hers]”, yet he would write “a thousand times as much” (2.1.107-108). When she tells him that she has already “guess[ed] the sequel” (109), she suggests that she understands the nature of his enterprise: this was a labour of love on the part of Valentine. On a more general plane, what Silvia says here can be taken as a subliminal criticism of the new literary craze for commercial sequels that flourished in 16th-century Europe. According to William Hinrichs, these were characterised by three basic structures. The first kind of sequel “precedes the lived time of the originating text’s imaginative world”: in morphological terms, we would call this a prefix.³⁵ The second form of sequel, or infix, “expands it from within by extending an episode or adding details to it.”³⁶ The last major structure, or “suffix”, that could then be found, was the most common one because it consisted in “add[ing] on at the chronological end.”³⁷ Each of these forms shatters the original ending of a text by establishing a new conclusion. In other words, it contributes to the general instability and indeterminacy of early modern texts and it ultimately “undermine[s] any notion of definitive closure or definitive origin.”³⁸
- 22 In order to undermine “any notion of definitive closure”, a sequel has to be associated with a play whose denouement, evoking the next adventures which the spectators might expect, cannot be reduced to a “textual threshold into a strategic promotional space.”³⁹ The end of the first piece must also be perfectly conclusive. This means, in turn, that, according to the codes of the time, a play like *Love's Labour's Lost* would have been a poor prequel. Indeed, far from alluding to thrilling adventures to come, Shakespeare's comedy of youth offers the gloomy vision of Berowne visiting “the speechless sick” (5.2.837) in an “hospital” (5.2.857)—a situation totally unsuited for the stage—and of ladies cloistered in “a mourning house” (5.2.800)—hardly an exciting perspective for early modern theatre-goers. On top of that, it posits its generic indeterminacy right from the beginning: Ferdinand's lines (1.1.1-7) are comparable to an epitaph and work as a kind of proleptic warning for careful spectators. The play, moreover, emphasizes and relentlessly comments upon its own absence of closure: why then attach to it a companion piece whose function would be minimal, since it would not be able to undo an already aborted ending?
- 23 What I want to argue here is that if the idea of considering the open-endedness of the comedy as a call for writing a sequel makes sense in the 21st century, it certainly did not in the 16th century. Inconclusive denouements signalled instead a carefully planned non-ending and, as far as I know, nobody ever thought that *Measure for Measure* (c. 1604), with its intriguing denouement leaving us in the dark as to Isabella's answer to the Duke's marriage proposal, needed a sequel providing definitive answers. Tensions also exist in *All's Well That Ends Well* (c. 1604-1605) where young Helen, infatuated with the disdainful and puffed-up Bertram, eventually gets what she wants. Yet, this pair of lovers seems so utterly mismatched that Shakespeare actually ruins all hopes of long-term happiness in this marriage. And if the play has already been regarded as a likely candidate for *Love's Labour's Won*, it has never been seen as the first part of a dramatic diptych on the

simplistic grounds that, in spite of its drive toward marriage, it leaves us with a rather unsatisfactory ending.⁴⁰

- 24 In the world of early modern drama, a dramatic continuation was either planned well ahead of time (and, in this case, it was announced and publicized in the first piece), or it was spontaneously written to fit the demands of an excited audience. More often than not, first pieces were originally written as autonomous texts. When they were successful, their authors thought of writing further developments. So, if second parts are explicitly labelled as sequels, first parts are generally devoid of any indication emphasizing seriality.
- 25 Shakespeare experienced both situations, because contrary to the 18th century which saw literary continuations as low-status writings, the 16th century did not regard sequels as a particularly “trite and easy path” to reader/spectator pleasure.⁴¹ The playwright thus wrote both carefully planned sequels and obviously improvised ones. As we know, the character of Falstaff was immensely popular on the page (*1Henry IV* was reprinted seven times before 1623 and it quickly became Shakespeare’s most popular play in print) and on stage: his appearance in *1Henry IV* clearly created a demand for *2Henry IV*.⁴² Having ended *2Henry IV*, the playwright still had a type of continuation in mind, since the play’s epilogue announces that “if you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it” (24-27)—a sentence possibly uttered by the very actor playing Falstaff. Yet, Falstaff never truly reappears in *Henry V*, where he is an absent presence since we simply hear of his offstage death from Mistress Quickly’s account. It is impossible to know why the playwright changed his mind so suddenly, but it may simply have been because Will Kemp, who probably played the role of Falstaff in the historical sequence, had then left the company.
- 26 In *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, on the other hand, there is no hint whatsoever that Ferdinand will live on and reappear in another play. In Shakespeare’s half-serial, half-discontinuous vision of history, a character like Margaret, whose foreignness is already emphasized in *1Henry VI*, is sufficiently atypical to be singled out and to make her appearance in several plays. But no character can be excerpted from *Love’s Labour’s Lost* simply because he or she only exists in and for tit-for-tat games of language: deprive Berowne of his dark Rosaline and he becomes a fairly insignificant, melancholy young man like dozens of other melancholy lords. Couples might be extracted more easily, and that is one of the arguments of those who regard Beatrice and Benedick as *alter egos* of Berowne and Rosaline; but while Berowne rhymes with great ease in the first play, he becomes strangely incapable of doing so as Benedict in the second. More generally, Shakespeare demonstrates a remarkable devotion to verse in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (65% of which is written in verse)⁴³ whereas, on the contrary, nearly 70 % of *Much Ado*’s lines are written in prose.⁴⁴
- 27 So, if it was indeed *Much Ado* which was renamed *Love’s Labour’s Won* by Meres, it was not because it was a sequel. As a man of letters, Meres is likely to have given *Much Ado* a new title to forcefully suggest its connections with an earlier play. In other words, he saw *Much Ado* as a kind of echo or response to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, and to him, the comedy became a pleasant and witty variation on the theme of unrequited love. Seduced by the cleverness of his own symmetrical finding, he coined the new title of “Love’s Labours Won”, which, in turn, was adopted by some of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, were it only because it could be easily remembered.

4. The Reappearance of *Love's Labour's Won*

- 28 That some scholars adopted the title in the days of Shakespeare is indeed a matter of certainty. They probably approved of the opinions of a man whose credentials were reassuring. A graduate of Pembroke college, Meres was “incorporated MA at Oxford” in 1593 and he became “‘Maister of Arts in both Universities’, as he called himself on the title-pages of several of his books.”⁴⁵ Subsequently, he was a schoolmaster in Wing, Rutland, which apparently gave him some free time to write.
- 29 Not only was he learned but he also seemed both renowned and reliable. In his *Caroli Fitzgeofridi affaniae* (1601), the poet and Church of England clergyman Charles Fitzgeffry called Meres (who, it must be said, had previously complimented him) a “Theolog. et Poetam”, and he devoted an epigram to his skills.⁴⁶ Years later, the chronicler Edmund Howes still quoted him in an approximate chronological list of “Our modern and present excellent poets, which worthily flourish in their owne works”, which was included in the 1615 continuation of John Stow’s *Annales*.⁴⁷ It is worth noting, too, that Meres published other serious works before and after *Palladis Tamia*,⁴⁸ and that he was eventually “ordained deacon at Colchester, Essex, on 29 September 1599, and made a priest the following day.”⁴⁹
- 30 Why, then, would a writer (and translator) of good repute have forged a new title for an existing play, we may ask at this point? Most critics think that no motive, at least no clear or obvious one, can be invoked here. Yet, we have seen that an intelligent writer such as Meres may have been keen to show his intellectual dexterity by creating what he thought were more appropriate titles to the plays he had read, seen or heard of. As a matter of fact, Meres’s records are not totally flawless. In a tongue-in-cheek remark, Samuel Schoenbaum observes that he “offers homage to 125 English writers, painters, and musicians” and that “the inclusiveness of the listings does not inspire confidence in Meres’s powers of critical discrimination.”⁵⁰ What is more, D.C. Allen argues that Meres may have imitated the *Officina*, a 1520 work by Joannes Ravisius Textor and a best-seller which had been re-edited no less than seven times by 1595. So it would seem that, far from issuing personal judgements, Meres was content to plagiarize his source and replace Latin names with English ones.⁵¹
- 31 Despite *Palladis Tamia*’s high level of deceptiveness, scholars have often taken its contents at face value and, as a consequence, have been in quest for a companion play to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. In 1953, a sensational discovery came to the rescue. Solomon Pottesman, a London bookseller, undid the waste paper used as the binding to a 1637 volume and he found two leaves that were a list of books sold by an Exeter stationer in August 1603.⁵² The inventory lists, among others, the following titles:

marchant of vennis
taming of a shrew
knack to know a knave
knack to know an honest man
loves labor lost
loves labor won

If the bookseller mentions *Love’s Labour’s Won*, it is almost certainly because it had previously been printed (which does not imply that it was named as such), and that one copy, at least, was available for sale in August 1603. Two other observations can be made: first, “*taming of a shrew*” being mentioned in the list, this Shakespearean comedy may

then be definitely eliminated as a candidate for *Love's Labour's Won*; second, *Love's Labour's Won* is coupled with *Love's Labour's Lost*, exactly as in Meres's list.

- 32 According to William C. Carroll, there is a suspicion "that Meres invented the title for purposes of symmetry, since the two paired 'knack' plays certainly exist,"⁵³ an hypothesis which is certainly less glamorous than the one emphasizing the existence of a totally original, yet lost work. However, for all its unglamorous undertones, it takes into account the well-documented Elizabethan passion for order and symmetry not just in drama but, on a broader level, in politics, religion, gardening and so on. In other words, Shakespeare's contemporaries resorted to symmetry in order to stratify, classify and rationalize a deeply volatile world that may have seemed threatening to them. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the dedication of *Palladis Tamia*⁵⁴ in which the author affirms that "all the source of wit [...] may flowe within three channels, and be contrived into three heads; into a sentence, a *similitude*, & an Example" (my emphasis). A "similitude," to Meres's eyes, certainly implied an exacerbated sense of symmetry.⁵⁵ Besides, the writer must have particularly appreciated serials, to the point of seeing sequels almost everywhere. The full title of his book, which includes the subtitle *Wits treasury being the second part of Wits common wealth*, suggests indeed that he himself was anxious to define his own work as the companion piece of an already existing volume. This is confirmed by the dedication in which Meres reaffirms that this own literary enterprise should be seen as a sequel to Nicholas Ling's *Politeuphuia, Wits Commonwealth* (1597), a book which was reprinted several times.⁵⁶ Thomas Heywood testifies to its popularity since he eulogizes Ling's (rather than Meres's) scholarship in *An Apology for Actors* (1612).⁵⁷ Indeed, as Heywood tries to compare English writers with "the Greeke, French, Italian, & Latine Poets", he observes that "it was [his] chance to happen on the like learnedly done by an approved good scholler, in a booke called *Wits-Comon-wealth*, to which treatise [he] wholly referre[s] [his reader]".⁵⁸ The fact that Heywood quotes Ling, and not Meres, as a reference, may have sounded quite offensive to Meres, who was still alive and who could bitterly remember that he had previously praised (or overpraised) Heywood's poetic talent in his *Palladis Tamia*.⁵⁹
- 33 My argument, therefore, is that Meres and the bookseller whose inventory was found in the mid-20th century followed a logic which is highly representative of *their* time when they wrote their respective lists: verisimilitude, symmetry and beauty then seemed much more important than the new mantras of so-called objectivity and reliability. This contention is all the more plausible as one notices that the titles, in the bookseller's list, do not always faithfully reproduce the titles of the printed plays. For example, *Edward IV*, published in 1599 as *The First and Second Parts of King Edward the Fourth*, is referred to as "Jane Shore".⁶⁰ Shakespeare himself had written plays with fluctuating titles, to say the least. Not only did he pun on his own titles (one may think of *As You Like It*, a virtually nameless play), but he also resorted to alternative titles as in *Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*. The case of *Henry VIII* is just another example of renaming. According to a letter dated 2 July 1613 and written by the scholar-diplomat Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Edmund Bacon,
- [t]he King's players had a new play, called All is True, representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry 8, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the state [...].⁶¹
- 34 But while "All is true" was referred to as such in many other writings of the period, the play appeared as *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth* in the 1623 Folio.

This means that Heminge and Condell, having decided to call all the history plays after the name of a king, simply changed its title. The Folio was indeed an expensive enterprise and represented an important economic risk. Emphasizing chronological sequences and providing fair and square titles was a deliberate means to diminish this by appealing to a learned (and wealthy) readership, eager to discover the smooth underlying logic of heretofore fragmented dramatic works.

- 35 Each medium could thus appropriate a play and rename it according to its own interests and priorities. As a result, dramatic pieces could then be known under different titles—official ones and more popular ones. It follows that *Much Ado*, probably produced on stage before *Palladis Tamia* was entered on 7 September 1598, remains a likely candidate for Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Won* since it fulfils all the required conditions.

Conclusion

- 36 For lack of a definite conclusion here, it is certainly noteworthy that Shakespeare, as a young playwright, used to throw a backward glance at earlier pieces when he wrote new plays, this without necessarily intending to write a sequel to one of them. In *As You Like It* for instance, he relies on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, which both have a character named Rosaline, in order to create another variant of his female heroine (interestingly, Rosalind in *As You Like It* is sometimes spelled "Rosaline" in the Folio).⁶² Likewise, in *Hamlet*, the playwright disseminates a number of significant references to *Julius Caesar*,⁶³ and there are myriad examples like this. So, if the playwright, guided by the reaction of an enthusiastic audience, wrote sequels and prequels at the time when he was writing histories, he more often tended to revisit earlier plays when he dabbled in the comic genre. Yet, the word "sequel" has almost systematically been used to describe *Love's Labour's Won*, and in his DNB entry for Shakespeare, Peter Holland mentions *Love's Labour's Won* as "lost sequel".⁶⁴ Similarly, in his 2008 biography of Shakespeare, Jonathan Bate in turn confidently states that *Love's Labour's Lost* "was such a success, or such a pleasure to write, that [Shakespeare] wrote a sequel (alas, lost) called *Love's Labour's Won*."⁶⁵ This, of course, remains pure literary speculation or reconstruction.
- 37 Regarding somewhat arbitrarily *Love's Labour's Won* as a sequel necessarily disqualifies *Much Ado* as a comedy with a different background, different characters, and a different structure. But why should we consider *Love's Labour's Won* as a sequel when we know that actual sequels were rare, and that, in the list uncovered in 1953, one immediately notices the presence of *A Knack to Know a Knave* and *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*, two plays merely linked by their matching titles?⁶⁶ Set in England, the 1592 anonymous, anti-Puritan play called *A Knack to Know a Knave* is modelled on medieval moralities and exposes corruption through a character named Old Honesty. Lord Strange's Men performed it several times in June 1593 and in December-January 1593-1594. By contrast, the 1594 play *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* is set in contemporary Venice. It has a romantic plot with characters called Charity and Penitent Experience. However, its author sought to capitalize on the success of *A Knack to Know a Knave* and indeed, the play seems to have been quite popular in the 1590s, since Philip Henslowe notes that twenty-one performances took place at the Rose between 22 October 1594 and 3 November 1596.⁶⁷ So the title-trick apparently worked.

- 38 Surely, such an observation should be seen as a warning against defining *Love's Labour's Won* as a dramatic continuation of *Love's Labour's Lost*. Matching titles do not boil down to matching plays in early modern England. In fact, just as 16th-century texts generally "escape the criteria of veracity",⁶⁸ their titles, too, escape the criteria of transparency that we are now accustomed to praise.
- 39 Cleverly, by avoiding an exactly parallel cross-casting, Christopher Luscombe allows the two plays to stand alone as single pieces, even though they are staged together for obvious commercial reasons. My personal feeling is that he is right in doing so.⁶⁹ Shakespeare might have done exactly the same thing, as the two comedies were obviously performed as autonomous pieces. For example, the 1604/1605 Revels Accounts give precise indications on court performances of plays by "Shaxberd" in December 1604. That year, during the Christmas season, the new court of King James was given the opportunity to see fresh plays such as *Othello*, but also to rediscover some of Shakespeare's earlier works, including *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry V*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*.⁷⁰ The court, however, was not given the opportunity to catch up on *Love's Labour's Won*/*Much Ado About Nothing*.

NOTES

1. Michael Dobson, "Lost and Won" in the RSC Brochure, *Much Ado About Nothing or Love's Labour's Won*, William Shakespeare, September 2014 to March 2015. One could add that *Cardenio*, too, was absent from the First Folio, maybe because John Fletcher, "who was still alive in 1623", regarded neither *Cardenio* nor *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as "a finished product." See William Shakespeare, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Lois Potter, Walton-on-Thames, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, The Arden Shakespeare, Third Edition, 1997, p. 13.
2. William Shakespeare, *All's Well that Ends Well*, ed. Susan Snyder, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 21.
3. Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, New Edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 117.
4. If one agrees with the idea that *A Shrew* (1594) was a memorial reconstruction of *The Shrew*, then *The Shrew* was performed before 1594.
5. On this, see Lois Potter, *The Life of William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, p. 146. Unless otherwise stated, all references to Shakespeare's plays are to Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, eds. John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells, Oxford, Oxford University Press (1986), 2005 (2nd edition).
6. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (eds.), *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 4.
7. Peter Holland, "Shakespeare, William (1564-1616)" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004. Website: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25200> (Date accessed: 6 March 2015).
8. V.S. stands here for Valentine Simmes.
9. Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 87.

10. E.A.J. Honigmann, *John Weever: A Biography of a Literary Associated of Shakespeare and Jonson, Together with a Photographic Facsimile of Weaver's Epigrammes (1599)*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1987, p. 26. See also H.R. Woudhuysen, "The Foundations of Shakespeare's Text" in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 125, 2003 Lectures, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 73 (p. 69-100).
11. Richard Dutton, "The Birth of the Author" in *Elizabethan Theater: Essays in Honor of S. Schoenbaum*, eds R.B. Parker and S.P. Zitner, Newark, University of Delaware Press, London, Associated University Presses, 1996, p. 80 (71-92).
12. Lukas Erne, "Shakespeare and the Publication of His Plays," *Shakespeare Quarterly* Vol. 53, No. 1, Spring, 2002, 1-20, p. 5.
13. See Norman Council, *When Honour's at the Stake: Ideas of Honour in Shakespeare's Plays*, New York, Barnes & Noble, 1973. The concept of honour seen as "a certain testimony of virtue shining of itself, given of some man by the judgment of good men" is given pride of place in Robert Ashley's manuscript treatise *Of Honour* (1596), p. 34.
14. See William Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*, 1.1.29-30: "BEATRICE. I pray you, is Signor Montanto returned from the wars, or no?"
15. Holly Williams, "Whatever happened to the 'lost' work 'Love's Labour's Won'? The Royal Shakespeare Company might have the answer", *The Independent*, Sunday 12 October 2014. Website: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/whatever-happened-to-lost-work-loves-labours-won-with-their-new-pairing-of-plays-the-royal-shakespeare-company-might-have-the-answer-9787888.html> (Date accessed: 3 May 2015).
16. R.H. Helmholz, *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 110. Theoretically, sexual relationships before marriage were seen as a "spiritual offence throughout the Middle Ages." By contrast, in 1600, a woman found guilty of pre-marital sex was "required to do public penance in [her] parish church" (p. 111).
17. Daniel Kornstein, *Kill All the Lawyers?: Shakespeare's Legal Appeal*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 169.
18. Doran's statement can also be accessed online. See "The Shakespeare Blog": <http://theshakespeareblog.com/2014/02/loves-labours-won/> (Date accessed: 3 May 2015).
19. Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury*, London, Imprinted by Cuthbert Burbie, 1598, fol. 281.
20. In 1593 and 1594, Shakespeare published his narrative poems. His first printed play was *Titus Andronicus* (1594). It was followed by *2Henry VI* (1594), *3Henry VI* (1595), *Richard III* (1597), *Richard II* (1597), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1597). In 1598, *1Henry IV* and *Love's Labour's Lost* were published.
21. Richard Desper, "Much Ado About Oxford – part 2," *Soul of the Age*, vol. 9, ed. Paul Hemenway Altrocchi, Bloomington, IN, Universe, 2014, p. 301.
22. Andrew Gurr, "What is Lost of Shakespearean Plays, Besides a Few Titles" in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds David McInnis, Matthew Steggle, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
23. Gabriel Harvey, *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, London, Imprinted by John Wolfe, 1592, p. 29.
24. This hypothesis, however, has been contested, not least because "it depends on arithmetic that does not add up". See Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 93.
25. In the same diary, *The Devil and His Dame* actually referred to *Grim the Collier of Croyden*.
26. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, op. cit., p. 102.
27. Accounts register dated 20 May 1613 refer to payments made to John Heminge by James I's Treasurer of the Chamber. Fourteen plays, including *Much Ado*, were performed at the Court during the previous weeks. Heminge received forty pounds in all for this.
28. *Tamburlaine* was something of an exception because its two parts were printed together, whereas paired plays were generally printed separately. However, in performance, *Tamburlaine*

followed the fragmentary logic of its time. Emma Smith observes that Henslowe's diary shows "numerous entries, separated by days or weeks, for each part of *Tamburlaine* [...]." This means that explicitly paired plays "were also seen as autonomous and self-standing." See Emma Smith, "Shakespeare Serialized: An Age of Kings" in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, ed. Robert Shaughnessy, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 146 (p. 134-149).

29. R.A. Foakes (ed.), *Henslowe's Diary*, Second Edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 18.

30. Gary Taylor, "Shakespeare and Others: The Authorship of *Henry the Sixth, Part One*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama* 7, 1995, 145-205, p. 152.

31. Richard Knowles, "The First Tetralogy in Performance" in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003, p. 267 (263-86).

32. Instance quoted by the OED. See *Henry V*, 5.2.327-329: "The King hath granted every article: / His daughter first, and so in sequel all, / According to their firm proposèd natures."

33. Claire McEachern, "*Henry V* and the Paradox of the Body Politic" in *Materialist Shakespeare: A History*, ed. Ivo Kamps, New York, Verso, 1995, p. 314 (292-320). The tradition according to which Shakespeare wrote the *Merry Wives* to please the Queen dates back to Nicholas Rowe (William Shakespeare, *Works*, 1709, ed. N. Rowe, 1.viii-ix). For Peter Holland, if that is "unlikely to be true, it is far more probable that the play was performed for the celebrations in May 1597 linked to the installation into the Order of the Garter of Sir George Carey, now Lord Hunsdon, the son of the founder of the Chamberlain's Men and himself now in the same office after Cobham's death." See Holland, *art. cit.*

34. See "sequel", OED 7: "The ensuing narrative, discourse, etc.; the following or remaining part of a narrative, etc.; that which follows as a continuation; esp. a literary work that, although complete in itself, forms a continuation of a preceding one."

35. William H. Hinrichs, *The Invention of the Sequel. Expanding Prose Fiction in Early Modern Spain*, Woodbridge, Tamesis, 2011, Preface, ix.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

39. Virginia Krause, "Toward a Poetics of Adventure: *Amadis de Gaule*" in *Chance, Literature, and Culture in Early Modern France*, eds John D. Lyons and Kathleen Wine, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009, p. 76 (65-80).

40. On "Shakespeare's unwillingness or inability to imagine a married couple in a relationship of sustained intimacy" in his comedies, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World. How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2004, p. 136-137 (136).

41. Natasha Simonova, *Early Modern Authorship and Prose Continuation: Adaptation and Ownership from Sidney to Richardson*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 193.

42. Leonard Digges's commendatory contribution to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems testifies to this enduring popularity. Digges indeed mentions full playhouses in connection with Falstaff's presence on stage. See Stephen Longstaffe, *1Henry IV, A Critical Guide*, London, Continuum International Publishing Group, Bloomsbury, 2011, p. 12.

43. William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, eds Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, Basingstoke, Macmillan, The RSC Shakespeare, 2008, p. 18.

44. William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. Claire McEachern, London, Thomson Learning, 2006, The Arden Shakespeare, p. 63.

45. David Kathman, "Meres, Francis (1565/1566-1647)" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004. Website: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18581> (Date accessed: 26 February 2015).

46. Charles Fitz-Geffry, *Caroli Fitzgeofridi affaniae: sive epigrammatum libri tres ejusdem cenotaphia*, Oxford, Imprinted by Joseph Barnes, 1601, STC (2nd ed.) 10934, p. 62 ("Ad Franciscum Meresium").
47. John Stow, *The annales, or a generall chronicle of England, begun first by maister Iohn Stow, and after him continued and augmented with matters forreyne, and domestique, auncient and moderne, vnto the ende of this present yeere 1614. by Edmond Howes, gentleman*, London, Imprinted by Thomas Adams, 1615, STC (2nd ed.) 23338. See Kathman, "Meres, Francis", *op. cit.*
48. Before *Palladis Tamia*, he wrote *Gods Arithmeticke* (1597). Immediately after, he translated a work from Luis de Granada and entitled his translation *Granados Spirituall and Heavenlie Exercises* (1598).
49. Kathman, *art. cit.*
50. Schoenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
51. Don Cameron Allen, *Francis Meres's Treatise 'Of Poetrie'*, Urbana, IL., The University of Illinois, 1933, p. 31-50.
52. T.W. Baldwin examined the manuscript and found out that it had been the property of Christopher Hunt, who had just finished his apprenticeship to London and had moved to Exeter. See T.W. Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Love's Labor's Won*, Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois University Press, 1957. The inventory can be seen on the following website: http://lostplays.org/images/e/e4/LLW_full.jpg (Date accessed: 30 April 2015).
53. William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. William C. Carroll, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 40. Similarly, according to Harold James Oliver, Meres was probably "listing [the plays] that he could neatly pair, and balance against Plautus and Seneca [...]." See, William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Harold James Oliver, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 33.
54. Thomas Eliot of the Middle Temple was the dedicatee of Meres's *Palladis Tamia*.
55. Kathman, *art. cit.*
56. However, and somewhat significantly, "the compilers of the later *England's Helicon* (1600) apparently did not consider Meres's book an official part of the series. In addition to the dedication, Meres wrote a Latin address to the reader in which he apologizes for the book's limitations and blames the publisher Cuthbert Burby's stinginess with paper. This address was torn out of most copies of the first edition, no doubt by Burby, but one full copy survives." See Kathman, *art. cit.*
57. Sophie Chiari, "Thomas Heywood's Allusion to *Wits Commonwealth*", *Notes and Queries*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 593-594.
58. Thomas Heywood, *An apology for actors Containing three briefe treatises. 1 Their antiquity. 2 Their ancient dignity. 3 The true vse of their quality*, London, Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1612, STC (2nd edition) 13309, E3r-v.
59. Meres, *op. cit.*, 283-283v: "[...] the best [Poets] for Comedy amongst us bee, Edward Earle of Oxforde, Doctor Gager of Oxforde, Maister Rowley once a rare Scholler of learned Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, Maister Edwardes one of her Majesties Chappell, eloquent and wittie John Lilly, Lodge, Gascoyne, Greene, Shakespeare, Thomas Nash, Thomas Heywood, Anthony Mundaye our best plotter, Chapman, Porter, Wilson, Hathway, and Henry Chettle" (my emphasis).
60. Erne, "Shakespeare and the Publication of His Plays," *art. cit.*, p. 9. Erne notes, incidentally, that Edward IV is also "referred to as 'Jane Shore' in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607)."
61. William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII: or All is True*, ed. Jay L. Halio, Oxford, Oxford University Press, The Oxford Shakespeare, 1999.

62. James Shapiro, 1599. *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, London, Faber and Faber, 2005, p. 240.
 63. See Lisa Hopkins, *The Cultural Uses of the Caesars on the English Renaissance Stage*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008, chapter 2, p. 35-54.
 64. Holland, *art. cit.*
 65. Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age. The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare*, London, Penguin Books, 2009, p. 194. The book was first published by Viking in 2008.
 66. Dobson, "Lost and Won", *art. cit.*
 67. Tom Rutter, "Merchants of Venice in *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*" in *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, Volume 19, ed. S.P. Cerasano, Cranbury, NJ, Associated University Presses, 2010, p. 194 (194-209).
 68. Roger Chartier, *The Author's Hand and the Printer's Mind*, Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, Cambridge, Polity, 2014, p. 66.
 69. "I have encouraged [the actors] to think of them as separate. It's for the audience to enjoy the arc, more than the actors" (quoted in Holly Williams, *art. cit.*).
 70. Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare. Scenes from his Life*, London, Thomson Learning, The Arden Shakespeare, 2011, p. 170.
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ABSTRACTS

In his *Palladis Tamia* published in 1598, Francis Meres gave a list of popular plays, already a fairly long one, written by a young playwright aged 34, William Shakespeare. In Meres's inventory, an intriguing, unknown play called *Love's Labour's Won* is paired with *Love's Labour's Lost*, a mention which has so far remained a complete mystery. This paper aims at reconsidering the hypothesis according to which *Much Ado About Nothing* might be the comedy designated under the title of *Love's Labour's Won* and at examining the two-part work then formed by these two pieces which, in many respects, seem to match perfectly. Can *Much Ado About Nothing* be seriously regarded as a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost*, and, if so, what about the notion of dramatic seriality in Shakespeare's time? In other words, what may have been the playwright's intentions in writing a comic rather than a historical sequel or sequence?

Dans son *Palladis Tamia* publié en 1598, Francis Meres dressait la liste déjà longue des pièces à succès écrites par un dramaturge tout juste âgé de 34 ans, William Shakespeare. À *Peines d'amour perdues* répondait *Peines d'amour récompensées*, pièce fantôme dont le mystère reste aujourd'hui entier. Cet article entend tout d'abord réexaminer l'hypothèse selon laquelle *Beaucoup de bruit pour rien* pourrait être la comédie désignée sous le titre de *Peines d'amour récompensées* et étudier l'ensemble que constituent ces deux pièces mises bout à bout et qui, en effet, semblent par bien des aspects s'emboîter parfaitement l'une dans l'autre. Mais est-il sérieusement possible de voir dans *Beaucoup de bruit pour rien* la suite de *Peines d'amour perdues* ? Peut-on parler de sérialité sans tomber dans l'anachronisme ? Et si tel est le cas, que Shakespeare pouvait-il bien entendre par « suite » en écrivant ce qui serait une suite ou une séquence de type non plus historique mais comique ?

INDEX

Mots-clés: changement de titre, continuation littéraire, Meres Francis, Peines d'amour récompensées, pièce perdue, sérialité, suite, symétrie

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