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From East to West: The Greek Prayer of Cyprian and its Translation into European Vernaculars

Daniel Vaucher
University of Freiburg (CH)
daniel.vaucher@unifr.ch

The Prayer of Cyprian is an exorcistic and apotropaic prayer that gained popularity in Western Europe, particularly on the Iberian Peninsula and in South America. Since the fifteenth century, it has been transmitted in numerous versions and languages. Notably, the prayer came under the scrutiny of the Inquisition due to its alleged attribution to Saint Cyprian of Antioch and the inclusion of superstitious elements. As a result, it was listed in the Index of Prohibited Books. Until now, the origins of this *apotropaion* have remained unexplored. This article is the first to illuminate the clear connections between the vernacular recensions and the Greek manuscripts. An examination of the manuscripts, along with their copyists and owners, further reveals that the prayer travelled from East to West during the Renaissance, was translated into Latin, and subsequently rendered into vernacular languages.

Keywords: devotional prayer, exorcism, magic, inquisition, translations

Introduction

Cyprian of Antioch, an alleged magician, bishop, and martyr who supposedly lived in the third and fourth centuries, is a notorious figure and still epitomizes the wise magician in the occult scene today. Over the centuries, numerous spells and prayers have been attributed to this enigmatic figure. This trend began in ancient times in the Greek language but reached its peak in Western and Northern Europe from the sixteenth century onwards in the various vernacular languages. This article focuses on the so-called prayer of Cyprian, originally an apotropaic prayer of protection attributed to the Antiochian saint, which included various adjurations and invocations and thus ended up on the Index of Prohibited Books.

The Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, and Latin versions have received some attention in recent years. It is thanks to Itúrbide Díaz, Vicente, Londõno, and Smid that the prayer has become known in the various vernacular languages. However, apart from a brief note by Vicente (an observation that he did not follow up), none of the scholars mentioned recognized identical prayers in

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Late Byzantine Greek. This article aims to close this gap and demonstrate the undeniable connection between the Greek, Latin, and Western European prayers.

The paper contends that the Latin and vernacular versions originate in Greek models. Even if it remains impossible to trace precisely the development of these anonymous prayers, a look at the manuscripts will highlight possible paths and actors in this process. The various versions of the prayer of Cyprian offer a good example of the complex literary and material contexts of translation processes in Byzantine times and the Renaissance period.[1]

In the first step, the characteristics of these prayers are briefly described. In a second step, the manuscripts of the Greek prayer of Cyprian will be analyzed. Even if these sources offer only individual insights, the sum of the individual manuscripts provides a picture of a transfer from the Greek-speaking East to the Latin-speaking West. The vernacular adaptations in the West will be presented in a third step. Fourthly, the close relationship between the Greek and Western European prayers will be clearly illustrated by comparing a short passage. Fifthly, we will offer a few examples which clearly reveal that the prayer of Cyprian became one of the obsessions of the Inquisition throughout Europe.

Cyprian of Antioch and Characteristics of the Prayer of Cyprian

According to legend, Cyprian of Antioch was a famous magician who, even with his various arts and the help of the devil himself, was unable to win the love of the Christian virgin Justina.[2] Recognizing his powerlessness, he finally converted to Christianity and burned his magical books and idols. He then went through the clerical offices, became a bishop, and, finally, according to legend, died a martyr's death, together with Justina.[3] Although Cyprian renounced

1 The origins of the Greek prayer can no longer be precisely determined today. The legend of Cyprian of Antioch began to spread in the Eastern Roman Empire in the fifth century. Long exorcisms and prayers for healing similar to the prayer of Cyprian can be found in Byzantine euchologies, the oldest evidence of which is Ms Barberini gr. 336 from the eighth century, but it was not until the first half of the second millennium that collections of exorcisms appeared in the Greek-speaking world. The development of such collections in the Latin West has been studied by Chauve-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, 313–34. The Greek tradition predates the Latin development by several centuries, see Strittmatter, "Ein griechisches Exorzismusbüchlein" and Jacob, "Un exorcisme inédit" for two earlier examples.

2 On the legend, martyrdom, and the spread of the cult, see Krestan and Hermann, "Cyprianus II," and Vaucher "Orationes Sancti Cypriani," 25–30.

3 The legend of Cyprian and Justina was mainly recorded in three source writings in Greek: the *conversio*, a novelistic account in which Cyprian converts to Christianity after his failed attempt to win Justina; the so-called *poenitentia* or *confessio*, an account in which Cyprian confesses in the first-person singular all his

magic with his conversion, he remained a ruler over the demons through his art of healing and exorcisms. The so-called *conversio* reports that "grace was his company against the demons, and he cured all suffering."[4] This understanding of Cyprian as an exorcist was reflected in pseudo-Cyprian literature. The prayer of Cyprian is intended to protect not only the person reciting it but also the bearer or even all the inhabitants of the house in which it is recited from misfortune, illness, and demons. This list already makes it clear that the prayer of Cyprian is "universalistic." Unlike short protective formulas against specific illnesses or ailments, the prayer of Cyprian is so broadly based that it promises to work against all conceivable forms of evil.

To achieve the protective and healing effect, the reciter uses various rhetorical strategies.[5] The long litanies and invocations of patron saints, martyrs, and church fathers are striking. God's assistance is brought about by enumerating his previous acts of salvation and redemption to make him more disposed to help in the present case as well. Thus, the prayer of Cyprian is ultimately a sequence of long lists and catalogs. What is most remarkable, however, is the conversion story at the beginning of the prayer (see below). This *historiola* is a clear reference to Cyprian's vita and therefore links the universalist exorcism with the legend. The mention of a "mythical situation" and its resolution should paradigmatically help the current prayer or spell. By personifying himself in the first-person singular with the figure of the mighty Cyprian, the speaker lends additional impact to his spell.[6]

Concerning the various contexts in which and purposes for which the manuscripts were used, we can only speculate. The manuscript tradition suggests that some manuscripts were effectively written for use, i.e. for recitation in the case of an exorcism (see below). Some other assumptions can be made. In Byzantine

infamous deeds as a magician and idolater and hopes for forgiveness from the Church; and the *martyrium*, the account of the martyrdom of Cyprian and Justina. It is generally assumed that these three texts were written in Greek in the fourth and fifth centuries, see the new edition with introduction and commentary in Bailey, "Acts of Saint Cyprian." Most later revisions are dependent on these three writings: the *metaphrasis* of the Byzantine empress Eudocia (ed. Bevegni, *Eudocia*) or the Latin *Legenda aurea* of Jacob de Voragine (Graesse, *Legenda aurea*, 632–36) are famous examples.

4 "Χάρις δὲ αὐτῷ ἐπηκολούθησε κατὰ δαιμόνων, καὶ πᾶν πάθος ἰᾶτο," Bailey, "Acts of Saint Cyprian," 136–37.

5 More detailed on the rhetorical means in the prayer of Cyprian as well as in related Greek prayers in Vaucher, "The Rhetoric of Healing."

6 On the use of *historiolae* in magic, see Frankfurter, "Narrating Power" and "Spell and Speech Act" with more literature. On the personification and role-plays in magic, see Chiarini, "Εγώ εἰμι Ἑρμῆς," and Vaucher, "The Performance of Healing."

thought, the origin of illnesses was to be sought either in the magical actions of hostile persons (the idea of the evil eye is omnipresent in the prayer of Cyprian) or in the work of demons. Priests and other charismatic personalities could have said such prayers over the sick, in combination with consecrated water, the sign of the cross, and readings from Holy Scriptures. It is important to bear in mind that both the Byzantine and Western churches were always critical of this type of protective prayer and attempted to construct a canonized counterpart to the "private" exorcisms in the officially sanctioned liturgy. The prayer of Cyprian operates in a border area between magic and liturgy.[7]

Worn on the skin (folded or rolled around the neck), such a prayer can promise an apotropaic effect. For example, an Arabic version of the prayer of Cyprian was most likely worn as a talisman.[8] This corresponds with the self-designation of the prayer as *phylakterion*.[9] Moreover, the protection promised in the prayer extends even beyond the bearer. The text vows to protect the entire house and all its inhabitants. In this respect, it is also conceivable that a scroll or a small codex was kept in the house and honored accordingly.

Given the universalistic conception of the prayer, it might seem misleading to speak of an exorcism. The distinction is indeed difficult: the text can serve as a phylactery as well as an exorcism to be recited and performed. Furthermore, the boundaries are blurred when, on the one hand, God is implored for help and, on the other, the demons are addressed and invoked in direct speech.[10]

Greek Manuscripts

Theodor Schermann, the first editor of the Greek prayer of Cyprian, divided the few manuscripts known to him into two groups: an Antiochian group and a southern Italian group. However, the designation Antiochian is misleading, since it is based on the erroneous assumption that Cyprian of Antioch was the actual author of the prayer and that the two manuscripts of this group (**V1** and **B1**, see below) retained the original liturgical wording. However, his critical

7 Chauve-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, 329. On the difficult demarcation of magic, ritual, and liturgy, see Sanzo, *Ritual Boundaries,* and Vaucher, "Gebet, Exorzismus und Magie."

8 Pap. Heidelberg PSR no. 820, Bilabel and Grohmann, "Studien zu Kyprian dem Magier."

9 The best discussion of Christian phylacteries is still de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian.*

10 A clear definition and demarcation have not yet been established. It should be noted that Christian exorcisms are closely related to baptism and the confession of sins, but also to the healing of illnesses. Prayers for healing, such as those found in the Greek Euchologies, are therefore also related to the prayer of Cyprian.

apparatus and the more recent edition by Bilabel/Grohmann (based on Ms **A1**) show that there are significant textual differences between the manuscripts. It is therefore almost impossible to reconstruct an original Greek text. In the case of this type of literature, abridgements, additions, and new passages of text are to be expected.

Several additional manuscripts have come to light since Schermann and Bilabel published their texts. According to the database "Pinakes," the Greek prayer currently has been identified in ten manuscripts.[11]

A1: Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Cod. Ambros. A 056 sup.; written 1542, ff. 208r–221v.

A2: Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Cod. Ambros. B 033 sup., fifteenth century., ff. 5r–16r.

B1: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Cod. Bodl. Barroc. 008, sixteenth century, ff. 155r–164r.

B2: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Cod. Bodl. Barroc. 221, fifteenth century, ff. 136r–138v.

M: Palermo, Biblioteca centrale della Regione siciliana "Alberto Bombace", Cod. Panorm. III B 25; fifteenth century, ff. 41v–64r.

O: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Ott. gr. 290; sixteenth century, ff. 32v–49r.

P: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cod. gr. 426; written 1488, ff. 146r–156v.

V1: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vatic. gr. 0695, fifteenth century, ff. 262v–264v.

V2: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. gr. 1538; fifteenth-sixteenth centuries, ff. 94v-98v & 116r–142r.

V3: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. gr. 1571; fourteenth-sixteenth centuries, ff. 52v–64r.

None of the manuscripts is older than the fifteenth century. However, the translations into Arabic and Ethiopian, the manuscripts of which date back to the fourteenth century, indicate that a Greek original can be assumed to have existed before that. Of the manuscripts mentioned, **A1, A2, B2, M, P,** and **V1** are composite manuscripts of mixed content. **B1, O, V2,** and **V3** are collections of prayers and exorcisms that correspond to the emerging "rituel d'exorcisme" in

11 https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/oeuvre/15062/, last accessed February 20, 2025.

the West (from around the fifteenth century).[12] While the former group includes manuscripts that were produced probably with a scholarly interest (the aim was to preserve and pass on the text), the latter group had a practical function. They are mostly small-format manuals that were created for use, for example, for recitation during an exorcism.[13] With this assumption in mind, I will concentrate on the second group, but without completely ignoring the other manuscripts.

Manuscript **O** from the sixteenth century is a thin booklet of 79 folios. It contains the martyrdom of Marina of Antioch in Pisidia, followed by a series of exorcisms and prayers of protection common in the Byzantine region.[14] Between the martyrdom of Marina and the prayer of Cyprian on ff. 31v and 32r there are two color illustrations, one of the martyrdom of Marina, the other showing a bearded Cyprian with a long robe and halo, holding a red book in his left hand pressed to his chest. A similar miniature of Cyprian can also be found in Cod. **P**, f. 146v, only here the saint has both hands outstretched towards the edge of the page, as if offering help. On f. 49v, as the signature of Cyprian's prayer, the copyist presents himself as Ἰωάννης from Patras.[15]

According to the catalog, **V3** is packed with leaves of various origins. Batiffol called the codex "un ramas de feuillets mss. du XV^{e} siècle de style levantin."[16] However, one block can be identified among the various handwritings (ff. 40r–65v) that contains prayers for protection and exorcisms. This begins with a prayer by Basil for the sick, which is known from Byzantine euchologies, followed by an exorcism also attributed to Basil. It is followed by prayers and exorcisms by Saint John Chrysostom and finally the prayer of Cyprian. One scribe is probably responsible for this thematic block. The origin of this block

12 Chauve-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, 313–34.

13 See Barberiato, "Magical literature," 164 for other reasons of small-sized books, including, for instance, lower production costs and the simple fact that smaller books could be more easily and more rapidly hidden.

14 Feron and Battaglini, *Codices manuscripti*, 157: There is a prayer for the sick attributed to Saint John Chrysostom, one attributed to Saint Gregory, a phylactery in the name of Saint Sisinnius and Sinidor, and another prayer by Saint John Chrysostom.

15 Gamillscheg, *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten* (= RGK) III 339. According to this, an invocation contains the name of Cyprian of Calamizzi, a Calabrian healer and saint, see Mercati, "Un santo della Calabria." Healing prayers were also attributed to him in other manuscripts, such as the *oratio in infirmos* printed in Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina,* 323 from Cod. Vindob. philosoph. 178, f. 31; the same prayer is found in Vat. gr. 1538 (**V2**) and Marc. gr. App. II.163 (Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete*, 20). In **V1** the same prayer is attributed to Saint Chrysostom.

16 Giannelli, *Codices Vaticani Graeci*, 167–71. Batiffol, "La Vaticane depuis Paul III," 186, see also Mercati, *Per la storia dei manoscritti greci*, 96.

is, as already mentioned, clearly Byzantine. The owner of the codex, Francesco Accida, was originally of Cypriot origin.[17] As "Protonotario e protopapa cattolico di Messina," he donated several manuscripts (mostly of oriental or southern Italian origin) to Pope Gregory XIII in 1583 and some to Pope Sixtus V in 1585, which thus became part of the Biblioteca Vaticana.

V2 is another small-format ritual book from the fifteenth century. It constitutes an impressive collection of magical-exorcistic texts from front to back on 287 folios to which some Latin tables were later added on ff. 1r–6r.[18] The codex shows a Calabrian dialect in the headings and marginal notes, for example, when the prayer of Cyprian is said to work "per ligati di qualisiuoglia mali" (f. 117r). Interestingly, the scribe has even copied the Cyprian prayer twice here, namely in two different recensions. The texts collected in it are once again the Byzantine exorcisms mentioned above. The names of the prayers are given by Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostom, Tryphon, Solomon, Gregory, and others. The martyrdom of Marina is also included, as in Ms **O**.[19] On ff. 217r–229r there is also a prayer for the sick, attributed to Cyprian of Calamizzi, which allows us to assume the origin of the codex in southern Italy.[20] The former owner, Cardinal Felice Centino (1562–1641), Bishop of Mileto in Calabria from 1611 to 1613, was also at home in this region. He brought the book to Rome and offered it to the Vatican library.[21]

Manuscript **B1** from Oxford is just 15 cm in size.[22] The small codex from the sixteenth century was obviously written for use. It contains mainly prayers, hymns, and exorcisms in neat script and with some decorations. We know the scholar Andreas Donos from Rhetymno in Crete (then under Venetian rule) as the copyist. His pupil was the humanist Francesco Barozzi (1537–1604), also of Cretan origin.[23] Barozzi was active as a mathematician, philologist, and astronomer, and he showed an interest in prophecy as well. He published

17 Batiffol, "La Vaticane depuis Paul III," 184.

18 Giannelli, *Codices Vaticani Graeci*, 100–9, see also Almazov, "Chin nad besnovatym," 4–6.

19 Marina's description of her life as a demon vanquisher fits into the corpus of exorcisms, see Drewer, "Margaret of Antioch." We may wonder whether, in the course of a long exorcism, the Vita was also read aloud over the person fallen ill.

20 See above, no. 15.

21 Batiffol, "La Vaticane depuis Paul III," 190, no. 3, quotes f.1r: *Librum hunc è Mileto Romam translatum à fratre Felice Centino Ord: Minor(um) t(i)t(uli) sancti Laurentij in Pane et Perna Cardinali de Asculo nuncupato Ep(iscop) o Maceratensi Bibliothecae Vaticanae dono ipse dedit.*

22 Coxe, *Bodleian Library,* 13–15.

23 Boncompagni, "Intorno alla vita," 795–848; I was not able to consult Rose, *A Venetian Patron.*

the *Pronostico universale di tutto il mondo*, a collection of prophecies taken from Nostradamus and other authors, and a bilingual edition of the *Oracula Leonis*, a prophetic text of Byzantine origin.[24] Perhaps this interest in occult literature brought him into contact with the Inquisition, which kept a close eye on him and sentenced him in 1587 (see below).

Manuscript **B2** also comes from the same Barozzi collection.[25] Irmgard Hutter has traced the history of the codex: Soon after 1381, the manuscript belonged to Markos, the abbot of the Kosmidion monastery in Constantinople, who added scholia and other marginalia to it. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it belonged to Johannes Ratis, and in the second half of the sixteenth century, to Francesco Barozzi or his nephew Jacopo Barozzi on Crete. Together with their collection (and with **B1**), it was purchased by William Herbert in 1629 and donated to the Bodleian Library.[26] This codex also contains the prayer of Cyprian, but here it appears to have been added by another hand at the end of the codex.

The other composite manuscripts found in Western European libraries (and thus not specifically dedicated to exorcisms) fit the pattern outlined so far. Manuscript **P**, for example, from 1488 and written by a priest named Chorikarios, was purchased in Venice in 1538–1539 by a certain Jérôme Fondule for the French king and brought to Paris.[27] Manuscript **M** from the fifteenth century can be traced to Sicily. It originally belonged to the Abbey of Saint Martino delle Scale.[28]

To summarize, the division of the Greek manuscripts into an Antiochian and a Southern Italian group needs to be revised on the basis of a precise textual analysis of the newly identified manuscripts. More importantly, the number of manuscripts of the late Byzantine and post-Byzantine period offer other insights. The manuscripts, their copyists, and their owners provide information about the spread of the prayer of Cyprian at the end of the Middle Ages. Greece

24 De Maria, "Francesco Barozzi," 219–29. A wonderful splendor edition can be consulted on https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14624194, last accessed February 19, 2025. Incidentally, the *Oracula* are also included in manuscript **V1** together with the prayer of Cyprian, see Devreesse, *Codices Vaticani*, 169–72. This manuscript is notable for its drawings of wondrous animals within the *Physiologus* and also for its Greek-Latin bilingualism.

25 Coxe, *Bodleian Library*, 387–89, where the prayer is attributed to Cyprian of Carthage.

26 Hutter, *Corpus der Byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*, no. 146.

27 Gamillscheg and Harlfinger, *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten* (RGK IIa), no. 527. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire*, vol. I, 46.

28 Martini, *Catalogo di manoscritti greci*, vol. 1, 82–83.

and Constantinople, as well as Crete and Cyprus, were named as stations of transmission. This would suggest the prayer originally came from the Greek-speaking East.[29] The Venetian Empire and its scholars, such as Francesco Barozzi, were prominent in ensuring the transfer of occult knowledge from East to West.[30] During the flourishing Renaissance in Italy, coveted manuscripts were brought to Rome, Paris, and Oxford. The Italian south, with Calabria and Sicily, should also be mentioned. Here, we find an exciting mixture of Greek and southern Italian dialects (e.g. manuscript **V2**).[31] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a transfer of Byzantine exorcisms and prayers to Western Europe took place. We now turn to this transfer.

Vernacular Adaptions

We are probably still a long way from being able to survey all the translation strands of Byzantine exorcism literature. Mention has already been made of the translations of the prayer of Cyprian into Arabic and Ethiopian in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[32] There are references to translations into Syriac and Armenian, but text editions are not yet available.[33] A Slavonic recension was published by Almazov.[34] The transfer of the prayer of Cyprian into the vernaculars in Western Europe has been better researched. In several publications, Vicente has demonstrated its great popularity in the recent past, both in Spain and Portugal, but also in South America.[35]

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29 Davies, *Grimoires*, 28; Rigo, "Hermetic books."

30 Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, 112–64; Barberiato, "Magical literature," 161.

31 Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, 13–15 calls Calabria a "leading outpost of Byzantine influence in the West." On Sicilian and south Italian spells, see Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete,* and Schneegans, "Sizilianische Gebete."

32 Basset, *Les apocryphes éthiopiens*; Grohmann, "Studien zu den Cyprianusgebeten," Bilabel and Grohmann "Studien zu Kyprian dem Magier." An Arabic prayer from Lebanon (undated) can also be found in Tallqvist, *Zwei christlich-arabische Gebete*.

33 Strelcyn, *Prières magiques*, L–LII; Macler, "Formules magiques," esp. 28 on the manuscripts, to which should be added Sachau, *Handschriften-Verzeichnisse*, 589–90. On the Armenian texts s. Wingate, "The scroll of Cyprian."

34 Almazov, "Vracheval'nye molitvy," 131–45 from Bibl. Sofia Cod. 869, ff. 187v–194v.

35 Vicente, "El libro de San Cipriano," and Vicente, "O Máxico San Cipriano." A French version inserted in the village parish registers of Bosdarros in Southwestern France in 1790 has been reproduced by Desplat, *Sorcières et Diables,* 64. On the classification and circulation of related *orationes*, such as that of Saint Marta, see Fantini, "circolazione clandestine," 62–63.

Here, we are more interested in the older Western European versions. These are:

a: Paris, Bibliothèque St-Geneviève (BSG) 1352, fifteenth century, ff. 1–26v.

This book of exorcisms contains Latin prayers attributed to Cyprian, Ambrose, and the Veronese bishop Zenon. Other pieces have been added in the Venetian dialect, such as a pharmaceutical recipe "a far butar fora le fature e altre cose" on f. 63v. Also of a later date is the drawing on f. 36v of a bishop performing an exorcism, probably Saint Ambrose.[36] The book opens with a series of psalms, followed by the prayer of Cyprian in Latin. The localization of the manuscript to fifteenth-sixteenth century Venice fits seamlessly into the abovementioned distribution of Greek testimonies. BSG 1352 is, to my knowledge, the only extant Latin example of the prayer of Cyprian to date.[37]

b: Christophorus Lasterra, *Liber exorcismorum adversus tempestates et daemones*…, Pamplona 1631 (printed book), ff. 68v–72v.

The prayer of Cyprian begins on f. 68v, which the author claims to have translated from Latin into Spanish, even though most of the pieces in this book were kept in Latin. The bilingualism of this small-format book merits mention. The author evidently considered a "modern" Spanish version to be closer to his audience and therefore presumably of broader appeal than his Latin original. While a Latin version was aimed almost exclusively at clerics in the seventeenth century, a Spanish translation had a completely different target audience.[38]

c: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Oración devotíssima de san Cipriano, traducida de latín en castellano*, seventeenth century, 3ff., in-folio, Signatura RES FOL-OA-198 (BIS, 25).[39]

This small leaf from the Paris National Library is closely related to **b**. It contains the same text as Lasterra's 1631 version but is undated.

d: Sevilla, Biblioteca de la Institución colombina: *La Oratione de santo Cipriano volgare*, Signatura 14-01-10 (21)

This Italian manuscript was acquired in Rome in October 1512 and has been part of the collection of Hernando Colón (Ferdinand Columbus), son of

36 Chauve-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, 330 s.

37 Not to be confused with the prayer of Cyprian are the Latin *orationes Cypriani*, which are sometimes attributed in the literature to the Antiochian saint, but which have been handed down in the corpus of writings of the Carthaginian bishop of the same name and have nothing to do with the prayer of Cyprian discussed here. See Vaucher, "Orationes Sancti Cypriani."

38 Smid, "Catalan Saint Cyprian Prayer," 289.

39 https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k851256q/f1.item.r=oracion%20devotissima%20de%20san%20cipriano

the famous navigator Cristobal Colón, ever since. Hernando Colón acquired books of all kinds throughout Europe and compiled one of the largest modern libraries in Seville.[40] The ten-page text has a woodcut on the front showing Cyprian driving out demons in an episcopal hat and robe and holding a staff in his hand.

e: Barcelona, Biblioteca de Cataluña, MS. 580. *Oració de Sant Cebrià contra els embruixos, Miscellània de textos en llatí i en català*, ff. 155v–158r.

This manuscript from Barcelona, dated to the first half of the fifteenth century, is even older. I am not able to judge to what extent this text is related to our prayer of Cyprian.[41]

f: Barcelona City Archive, AHCB 16/1C. XVIII-9

Smid made known another Catalan version from 1557.[42] She found this small "chap book," which was barely larger than the palm of one's hand, in the inquisition materials of the Barcelona City Archives. Smid showed how a hermit and healer named Jacintho García came into contact with the Inquisition in Solsona (Catalonia) in 1641. García had carried out exorcisms in his town without the permission of the church and had probably also made use of the Catalan booklet with the prayer of Cyprian (see below).

The list of these six witnesses is not intended to be exhaustive.[43] But the few examples already show how the prayer of Cyprian first spread in Latin in Italy, France, and the Iberian Peninsula since the fifteenth century and was then translated into the respective vernacular languages.

The Relationship between the Vernacular Texts and the Greek Prayer

Until now, these vernacular versions have never been associated with the Greek prayer. However, their origin is undoubtedly to be found in the Byzantine East. All traces of the legend lead to the fourth and fifth centuries in the Roman east.

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40 Sherman, "Hernando Colón."

41 It is listed in the Forbidden Prayers Digital Library, https://forpral.uab.cat/prayer/oracion-de-san-cipriano/ with reference to the catalog entry https://explora.bnc.cat/discovery/fulldisplay?context=L&vid=34CSUC_BC:VU1&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&tab=Everything&docid=alma991002898469706717.

42 Smid, "Catalan Saint Cyprian Prayer."

43 Fantini, "catalogo bibliographico," 613 provides evidence of several mentions of the prayer of Cyprian in trial records from the Archivio del Sant'Uffizio in Modena from the years 1571-1608. The inquisitors were instructed to register the existence and titles of the forbidden texts before handing them over to be burned, see Fantini, "catalogo bibliographico," 599–600 and Fantini, "Censura romana, 240–41.

Although the prayer of Cyprian is only loosely connected to the legend of the Antiochian bishop through the excerpt presented below, here too, the content and style point to Byzantine demonology and liturgy.[44]

The only connection to the legend of Cyprian is found in the first part of the prayer, when the speaker refers to his past in the first-person singular and mentions his spells before his conversion to Christianity. I reproduce this passage in several variants in Table 1 to demonstrate the clear connections among the versions.

The structure of this passage is identical in all the recensions. God is invoked with the reference that he knows the evil deeds of his servant Cyprian, with whom the person praying personifies himself. Cyprian cast these binding spells when he did not yet know the name of God, i.e. when he was still a pagan. Cyprian used his magic (or the demons he conjured) to bind the clouds so that it would no longer rain, the trees so they would no longer bear fruit, the animals so that they would no longer give birth, the women so that they would no longer conceive. The Greek version is the most detailed, with references to the vines, gardens, birds, and fish. Here we can already see a shortening in the Spanish and Catalan translations, which still retain the structure but abridge the train of thought.[45]

The legend of Cyprian tells of the magician's conversion when he realizes his powerlessness in the face of the Christian faith. The paragraph in the prayer following the passage exposed in Table 1 alludes to this. Now that Cyprian knows the name of this powerful god, he asks him to free the bound forces of nature and the people and to protect them from demonic influences. The elements to be liberated are listed again in Table 2, even if in a slightly different order.

44 The prayer of Cyprian has not yet been studied in this respect, but there are numerous obvious parallels to the exorcisms of the Byzantine Euchologies; see Vaucher, "The Rhetoric of Healing" with further literature.

45 However, Vicente, "O Máxico San Cipriano" (without page numbering) also knows longer versions of more recent date, which correspond more closely to the Greek original, e.g. *Verdadera Oración de los Gloriosos Mártires San Cipriano y Santa Justina, acompañada de la SS. Cruz de Caravvaca. REus, imp. y Librería de Juan Grau*. Barcelona, nineteenth century (pp. 10 ss. in the PDF): "Yo no sabía tu santo nombre y terrible, altísimo Dios, más ahora se que tú eres, Dios mío, Dios fuerte, Dios grande, Dios omnipotente, + que habitas en gran luz y eres loable en los siglos de los siglos. En otro tiempo no conocía yo vuestra bondad ni vuestro poder, y Vos veíais los maleficios que yo esclavo del demonio hacia mezclándome con su potestad. Ataba las nubes y no llovía sobre la haz de la tierra, y la yerba de la tierra se secaba y los árboles no daban sus frutos; y me paseaba por medio de los ganados extraviándolos y haciendo que se perdieran. Con mi gran astucia y malicia ligaba las aves del cielo y los peces del mar, y los peces no surcaban las olas del mar, y las aves no volaban por los aires; del mismo modo ligaba las mujeres embarazadas y no podían parir…"

Table 1

Greek edition based on 3 manuscripts (Schermann 1903, 311–313)[46]	**a: Paris, BSG 1352**[47]	**c: Paris, BNF RES FOL-OA-198 (BIS, 25)**[48]	**f: Barcelona City Archive, AHCB 16/1C. XVIII-9** – text by Smid 2019
Κύριε ὁ θεός, ὁ δυνατός (...) Σὺ γὰρ γινώσκεις τὰ κρύφια τοῦ δούλου σου N.N.[49] Οὐκ ἔγνων σε τὸ πρότερον τὸν μαντοδύναμον θεόν, ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐκράτουν τὰ νέφη τοῦ μὴ βρέχειν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ δένδρα τῆς γῆς Ἔδενα τοῦ μὴ ποιεῖν καρπόν, τὰ ποίμνια τῶν προβάτων Ἔδενα καὶ τὰς ἐγγυώσας τοῦ μὴ γεννᾶν καὶ τὰς ἑτέρας γυναῖκας τοῦ μὴ συλλαβεῖν ἐν γαστρί. Εἰς δὲ φραγμοὺς ἀμπελῶνος ἔβλεπον καὶ ἐποίουν τὰ κλήματα τοῦ μὴ ἀνθῆσαι, καὶ τὰ λάχανα τοῦ κήπου τοῦ μὴ ἐκφυεῖν, καὶ πᾶν ὄρνεον, χερσαῖον καὶ θαλάσσιον, ἐκώλλυον πετᾶσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἰχθύας τῆς θαλάσσης ἐγγύτευον καὶ οὐκ ἐσαλεύοντο. Πάσας τε καὶ μαγίας εἰργασάμην, καὶ πάντα τὰ πονηρὰ πνεύματα ἐδούλευον· ταῦτα πάντα ἐπετέλουν διὰ τὰς πολλάς μου ἁμαρτίας·	Vidisti, Domine, malitiam meam servi tui et iniquitates in quibus mersus sum sub potestate diaboli: et nesciebam nomen sanctum tuum. Unde ego Ciprianus in illo tempore ligabam nubes et non pluebant supra fatiem terrae: et terra non dabat fructum suum. Ligabam arbores et non fructificabant. Etiam pergebam per greges ovium et statim desortabantur. Et mulieres pregnantes ligabam et non poterant parere. Ligabam pisces maris et non pambulabant semitas maris pre multitudine malitie mee et malorum meorum. Hec omnia fatiebam.	Nos Cipriano, siervo de Dios nuestro señor, proveído en el mi entendimiento al muy grande y alto Dios rogase diciendo: tú eres Dios fuerte y poderoso, que moras en la grande cumbre, y eres santo y alabado en el tiempo antiguo. Viste la malicia de tu siervo Cipriano, y las sus maldades, por las cuales fue metido so el poder del diablo, y no conocía el tu nombre, y ligaba las nubes que no lloviesen sobre la haz de la tierra, y la tierra no saba fruto; ligaba los peces del mar, que no anduviesen por las carreras de las aguas, por la muy grande malicia de mis maldades, y las mujeres que estaban preñadas no podían parir.	Io Cebria seruent de nostre senyor Iesuchrist posi lo meu seny e la mia memoria al alt e sobira e loable Deu omnipotent veent la mia maliciae los mals arts los quals lo de primer fehia enuia sobre mi la potestat del diable, empero ab lo seu nom me defensaua' e per lo meu gran peccat no plouia, ni la terra no donaua son fruy['t'] e les dones prenyades se affollauen, e los peixos coses de nadar y axi totes les coses de la mia malicia eren ligades

46 Bilabel and Grohmann, "Studien zu Kyprian dem Magier," 236 ss. offers a text based on manuscript **A1** that differs in many respects. For the sake of clarity, I will not reproduce it here. The motifs of the "bindings" before the conversion are at least the same, though the text has been inflated even more by insertions.

47 I provide a transcription (with some assumptions) based on photographs of the manuscript. A Hungarian translation by György Bednárik can be found in Smid 2022.

48 https://forpral.uab.cat/prayer/oracion-de-san-cipriano/. Last accessed February 19, 2025. The text in Lasterra, Liber exorcismorum is closely related, with some linguistic differences but identical formulations and structure.

49 The Greek manuscripts are all issued to a specific name, see Schermann's apparatus.

Table 2

Greek edition based on 3 manuscripts	**a: Paris, BSG 1352**	**c: Paris, BNF RES FOL-OA-198 (BIS, 25)**	**f: Barcelona City Archive, AHCB 16/1C. XVIII-9**
Προσπίπτω δὲ γοῦν τῇ σῇ ὀρθοτομώτητι καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ σου ὀνόματι καὶ ἱκετεύω καὶ παρακαλῶ, ἵνα πᾶς τόπος ἢ οἶκος ἢ ἄνθρωπος ἢ ἔχων μαγίαν ἀνθρώπων ἢ δαίμονος, ὅταν ἐπαναγνωσθῇ ἡ προσευχή μου αὕτη ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ἢ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα λυθῇ ἀπὸ πάσης μαγίας καὶ φθόνου καὶ ἔριδος καὶ ὀφθαλμοῦ κακοῦ, μάλιστα ἀπὸ τὸν δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ NN. (…) νὰ φεύγουν οἱ δαίμονες καὶ δραπετεύσονται οἱ κακοί, τὰ νέφη δὲ πέμψουσι βροχὴν καὶ τὰ δένδρα φέρουσι καρπὸν καὶ αἱ κοιλίαι γεννῶσι καὶ αἱ μητέρες συλλήψονται, καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀπὸ παντὸς δεσμοῦ λυθήσονται ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος...	Nunc autem domine deus meus Iesu Christe, cognovi nomen sanctum tuum et dilexi illud. (…) Etiam rogo te domine deus meus ut disvinpas (disvincas?) vincula nubium et absolvas ea et descendat pluvia supra fatiem terre: et terra det fructum suum. Et arbores dent fructus suos eorum et pariant mulieres filios suos immaculatos et sugant filii lac matrum suarum: et pisces maris dissolvantur: et animaliaque moventur in aquis: et omnia flumina et volatilia celi: et fontes et omnia que in eis sunt: et omnia vincula dissolvantur ab eis per nomen sanctum tuum et fugiant ab eis omne malum et omne periculum et spiritus invidi non permaneant apud ea nec apud homines portantes hoc scriptum. Amen.	Todas estas cosas hacía yo en el nombre del diablo y ahora, Dios y mi señor Jesucristo, conozco el tu sacratísimo nombre y ámolo, (…) y caiga la lluvia sobre la tierra, y la tierra dé su fruto y los árboles, y las mujeres paran sus hijos sin ninguna lesión, y mamen la leche de los pechos de sus madres, y desátense a su tiempo los peces del mar, y todas las animalias que andan sobre la tierra. Desátense todas las nubes del cielo y todas las otras cosas, y todos los hombres, y todas las mujeres a quienes fueren hechos los hechizos de día y de noche, todos sean desatados por el tu santo nombre. Huya todo enemigo de aquel, o de aquella que sobre sí trajere esta oración, o le fuere leída tres veces.	e per·so ara Deu meu prech te molt per la tua sancta dilectio que rompes los nuus e tos los ligaments y enuia pluía sobre la terra, e tots los arbres donen lur fruit e los peixos de la mar sien desligats, e totes les coses que son en ella e nengun mal esperit e[n] ells no puga aturar, ni en aquells ho en aquelles que aquest scrita portaran ho legiran, ho legir faran sien desliurats de tot mal, profiten lurs persones e los lurs pensaments e los lurs fets i ferms en tot be, e tu senyor los vulles desliurar del poder del diable, e dels seus aguayts, e asso per lo teu sant nom…

Again, the close relationship among the four versions are clear, but so are the deviations and abbreviations that one would expect in translations (especially translations of popular literature).[50] These sources offer examples of renderings in various target languages of an original text that has not been translated with strict adherence to syntax and narrow focus on the inclusion of every noun, adjective, or phrase, but the structure and the train of thought have nonetheless been retained. The Latin version (**a**) from Venice (now Paris) corresponds impressively with the Greek version, not only here but also in the rest of the prayer.

50 See Vicente, "El libro de San Cipriano," 18.

The Prayer as One of the Obsessions of the Inquisition

I have mentioned in passing the critical interest taken in the prayer by leaders of the Inquisition. It may come as a surprise that a Christian prayer dedicated to protection from illness and demons attracted so much attention from the defenders of the faith. But already in late antiquity, the church fathers preached against the use of amulets and the church councils attempted with their legislation to prevent all kinds of ritual practices in the field of magic. In this respect, not much had changed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many scholars of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance showed a keen interest in magic, which led to the publication of numerous grimoires and exorcism books.[51] Also, prayers, exorcisms, and magic were converging, resulting in a reciprocal influence.[52] As Barberiato has observed, it was often the same individuals who practiced incantations for evil purposes and exorcisms for healing purposes.[53] Moreover, the printing of books made it increasingly difficult for the church to control the proliferation of this occult literature.[54] The translation of exorcisms previously intended for clerics into the vernaculars further popularized prayers and exorcisms, giving "religious freelancers" an instrument of power.[55] One aim of the Inquisition was therefore to keep a tight rein on the laity who had entered into competition with the clergy and to preserve the Church monopoly on the realm of the sacramental.[56]

This can be seen in the trial in Solsona, Catalonia. Bernadette Smid's archival work has brought to light the court proceedings against the hermit and healer Jacintho García, who allegedly healed the village population with prayers, holy water, candles, and incense in the first half of the seventeenth century. Together with the court documents, Smid also found the textual witness **f** (see above) from the year 1557. García had therefore used it for his healings, which is also reflected in the testimonies according to which the healer considered the illnesses the result of *maleficium* (the prayer of Cyprian being directed against this). Although there were many doctors and hospitals in Solsona, the hermit was apparently very popular: "Jacintho García acted as an intermediary, a specialist

51 Davies, *Grimoires*, 44–138. See Kieckhefer, *Forbidden rites* with further literature.

52 Chauve-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, 329.

53 Barberiato, "Magical literature," 159–60.

54 Smid, "Catalan Saint Cyprian Prayer," 280; Caravale, "Orazione," 1141.

55 Davies, *Grimoires*, 57–67.

56 Martin, *Witchcraft,* 247; Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer,* 81–82; Lavenia, "Tenere i malefici."

coming from outside the local society."[57] But this was also his undoing, as he lacked the Church's permission to carry out exorcisms.[58] Furthermore, the use of superstitious prayers and sacred objects reserved for the Church aroused the suspicion of the Inquisition. It is not known how the trial against García ended.

The action against illicit exorcists coincides with the action taken by the Inquisition against private, devotional prayers, especially those involving specific rituals, objects, or practices mentioned in the *rubrics*.[59] These *rubrics*, placed at the beginning or the end of the prayers, attributed to the the devotional a merely mechanical and material value, promising effect simply through mechanical compliance with instructions.[60] Some devotional prayers were perceived to have superstitious elements or to be associated with magical practices that the Church deemed heretical or dangerous. Thus, a prayer named *confessione di Santa Maria Maddalena* from the late sixteenth century says, "Whoever recites, or gets others to recite, this confession / for thirty days, for himself or for his family, / will receive contrition for every sin, / Mary Magdalene will be his defender."[61]

Such a promise of protection, together with the indication of exact times and repetitions of prayer, can also be found in the prayer of Cyprian. For example, the *Oración devotíssima de san Cipriano* (**c**) has a similar rubric before the actual prayer: "This is the most holy prayer of the glorious Saint Cyprian, which was made and ordained to deliver people from evil deeds and spells, and evil eyes, and evil tongues, and for any bindings and enchantments, that all may be unbound and loosed, and for the woman in childbirth and for pestilence and foul air. This prayer is to be read three times on three Sundays, each Sunday once."[62] Here,

57 Smid, "Catalan Saint Cyprian Prayer," 303.

58 See the note in witness **a** (BSG 1352), according to which Joachim Gillet, librarian of the abbey, received the book on June 29, 1711: "Mr l'abbé Hoüel, que je n'avois pas l'honneur de connoître, me donna ce livre dans la crainte qu'etant tresdangereux, il ne tombat en mains de personnes qui en abusassent." https://calames.abes.fr/pub/bsg.aspx#details?id=BSGB10178. The catalog entry also states: "Le catalogue de vente de la bibliothèque de cet abbé en 1735 y atteste la présence de nombreux mss touchant à l'alchimie," and the collection has a "goût orientalisant," see http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/cataloguevente/notice141.php

59 Such devotional prayers were addressed to saints asking for help or salvation, for example to Helena, Marta, Magdalena etc., see Caravale, "Orazione," 1141.

60 Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer,* 192.

61 "Chi dirà, o farà dir questa confessione / trenta giorni per sé o per sua brigata, / d'ogni peccato haverà contrition, / la Maddalena sarà soa advocata…"; cited in Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer,* 193. Compare the rubric of the prayer of Cyprian in Modena anno 1600: "Questa devota oration de san Ciprian' è bona contra maligni spiriti, fatture, incanti; chi la dirà o la farà dir tre volte…" (Fantini, "catalogo bibliographico," 613).

62 "Esta es la muy santa oración del glorioso san Cipriano, la cual fue hecha y ordenada para librar las personas de malos hechos y hechizos, y ojos malos, y malas lenguas, y para cualesquiera (sic) ligamientos

the boundaries between magic, exorcism, and devotional literature risk being blurred. The Inquisition's primary goal was to maintain religious orthodoxy, and anything that appeared to deviate from approved Christian doctrine or seemed to involve attempts to manipulate spiritual forces was subject to scrutiny and condemnation.

But even priests such as Cristóbal Lasterra from Navarro (**b**) attracted the attention of the Iberian Inquisition. Lasterra was himself a commissioner of the Holy Office and thus was entrusted with inquisitorial proceedings against dubious magical literature. In 1624, he became parish priest in San Adrián, where he remained until his death in 1638.[63] His office in the Inquisition undoubtedly made him sensitive to this kind of literature, and so it remains a mystery why he himself translated and published such exorcisms together with the prayer of Cyprian in his *Liber exorcismorum adversus tempestates et daemones*… in 1631. Three years later, his book became the focus of the Inquisition.[64]

The Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition had shown an interest in this type of popular piety, the popular prayers, and the books of Hours as early as the sixteenth century.[65] The first Portuguese index of forbidden books had appeared in 1551. The index issued in Spain in 1559 had already included the prayer of Cyprian, as had the Portuguese index in 1561, and finally the Roman index in 1590.[66] In his investigation of the trial against Lasterra in 1634, Itúrbide Díaz emphasized why the Inquisition declared war on this type of prayer: Five Jesuits examined the text and, in a report dated December 22, 1634. They unanimously determined that the prayer was unworthy ("indigna") and could not be attributed to Saint Cyprian under any circumstances, as it contained an anachronistic reference to the Moors, who had not existed during Cyprian's lifetime. They pointed out that the requirement to say the prayer on three consecutive Sundays and the invocation of Saint Cyprian had a superstitious smell ("huele

y encantamientos, para que todos sean desatados y desligados, y para la mujer que está de parto y para la pestilencia y aire corrupto. La cual oración ha de ser leída tres veces en tres domingos, cada domingo una vez." (https://forpral.uab.cat/prayer/oracion-de-san-cipriano/

63 Itúrbide Díaz, "Piedad popular," 338–39.

64 Ibid., 343–44; Smid, "Catalan Saint Cyprian Prayer," 289.

65 Londõno, "Oración supersticiosa."

66 Ibid., 685; Fantini, "Censura romana," 232. Martínez de Bujanda, *Index*, 516 lists several versions of Catalan and Italian *Oracion de sant Cyprian, por si pequeña* as well as *Oratione de Santo Cipriano Volgare* that circulated in the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries. See Vicente, "El libro de San Cipriano," 15–25. On the development of the index, see Frajese, *Nascita*.

conocidamente a superstición").[67] Thus, the text was considered historically inaccurate and mistakenly (or deliberately falsely) attributed to Cyprian. And presumably most importantly from the perspective of the Inquisition leaders, it contained references to superstitious practices regarding prayer times and ritual repetition. There is no information in the Inquisition file about the decision that was finally made, but Itúrbide Díaz suspects that the print was probably confiscated.[68]

Forbidden books also brought the Cretan scholar Francesco Barozzi (the owner of the Greek manuscripts **B1** and **B2**, see above) into the clutches of the Venetian Inquisition.[69] A verdict from October 16, 1587 describes the accusations and, after initial resistance, the confessions of Barozzi. He was accused of having adhered to "the vane and pestiferous doctrine" and having taught it to his own son and his disciple.[70] When his study was examined, the Inquisitors found two boxes of forbidden books and books of Hours.[71] Finally, Barozzi confessed to have collected Greek and Latin magical books and to have experimented even in conjuring demons.[72] The other charges and confessions are related to magical and divinatory rituals. Although the prayer of Cyprian is not mentioned anywhere in the entire *sentenza*, we can draw a link to the banned books. Furthermore, Barozzi was also accused of having abused sacramental items like consecrated water and oil.[73] We have already seen the example of Jacintho García, who had used or abused ecclesiastically consecrated objects in his healing rituals, even though our text of the prayer of Cyprian does not

67 Itúrbide Díaz, "Piedad popular," 343. On the superstitious in these prayers, see Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer,* 191–96.

68 Itúrbide Díaz, "Piedad popular," 344.

69 On the Venetian Inquisition, see Martin, *Witchcraft;* Barberiato, "Magical literature," and Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*. On the Italian Inquisition see also Lavenia, "Tenere i malefici" and idem, "Possessione."

70 Boncompagni, *Sentenza*, c. 36v: "attendeui à queste vane et pestifere dottrine, ma anco ne faceui il Maestro alleuando et nutrendo li proprij figliuoli et genero et anco il suo unico discepolo…"

71 Boncompagni, *Sentenza*, c. 36v: "libri prohibiti et con parole all'hora, et doppo non conuenienti à Gentilhuomo cristiano"; see Rigo, "Hermetic books," 79. On the books of Hours, see Londõno, "Oración supersticiosa."

72 Boncompagni, *Sentenza*, c. 37r: "hauendo fatto diligente raccolta de libri stampati et manuscritti in Greco et Latino che trattauano de Varij sortilegij Negromantia et Arte Magica essercitandoti in quella facesti diuersi esperimenti scongiurationi de spiriti…"; see Martin, *Witchcraft,* 157.

73 Boncompagni, *Sentenza,* c. 40r: "in diuersi esperimenti hauer abusato cose sacramentali come Aqua benedetta, Candelle benedette, stola et Camiso da sacerdote, hauuto consecrato oglio s.to benedetto et consacrati lochi et fatto Altari, genuflesso hai inuocato et riuerito con turificationi et finalmente adorati li spiriti maligni…"

prescribe the use of *materia magica*. Barozzi was ultimately sentenced to a fine of 100 ducats and imprisonment for an indefinite period.[74]

In sum, the Inquisition fought against the use of certain devotional prayers primarily because they were seen as potential vehicles for superstition, magic, and heterodox beliefs that could threaten Church authority or lead people away from the true faith. Together with the steps taken to prevent the free circulation of prayers and exorcisms, the Catholic Church also worked on standardizing its own rituals during the period of the Counterreformation, ultimately resulting in the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614, which standardized the practice of exorcism.[75]

However, the vernacular prayer of Cyprian belonged to a new era. Exorcism had emerged from the domain of the (Greek or Latin-speaking) cleric and had become accessible to everyone, just as Lasterra's translation of the Latin prayer of Cyprian into Spanish had helped popularize a text banned by the Inquisition.[76] In the same period, the famous drama by the Spanish poet Pedro Calderón de la Barca (*El Mágico Prodigioso*, 1637) shows how popular the legend of Cyprian had become on the Iberian Peninsula. And finally, the numerous vernacular versions from Spain, Portugal, and France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries demonstrate that the Inquisition had only a temporary success.

Conclusions

The prayer of Cyprian in the European vernacular languages has received increased attention in recent decades. These versions originate from a Greek version presented above. It is probably impossible to reconstruct the original text today from the fifteenth-sixteenth century manuscripts. As the translations of the text of the prayer into other languages clearly show, the prayers were part of a living literature that was updated with every copy and every new translation. A comparison of the texts, however, reveals the close connections among the Greek, Latin, and Iberian versions.

The origins of the Greek prayer can no longer be precisely determined today.[77] The legend of Cyprian of Antioch began to spread in the Eastern Roman Empire in the fifth century. Long exorcisms and prayers for healing similar to the

74 On Barozzi, see Boncompagni, "Intorno alla vita," and Rose, *A Venetian Patron*.

75 Roy, "The Development of the Roman Ritual," 20 s. The literature on the history of exorcism is vast, see Young, *History of Exorcism*; Fontelle, *L'exorcisme,* or Scala, *Exorzismus* with further literature.

76 Smid, "Catalan Saint Cyprian Prayer," 290.

77 See Vaucher, "Orationes Sancti Cypriani."

prayer of Cyprian can be found in Byzantine euchologies, the oldest evidence of which is the magnificent Barberini gr. 336 from the eighth century,[78] but it was not until the beginning of the second millennium that collections of exorcisms appeared in the Greek-speaking world, similar to developments a few centuries later in the Latin West.[79]

Humanism and the Renaissance brought the Greek prayer of Cyprian to the European West. The path that I have traced above, based on the descriptions of the manuscripts, leads from East to West, via southern Italy and Sicily, and via Venice, which at the time had extended its sphere of influence far into the Greek world, including Crete and Cyprus, and which had close contacts to Constantinople. The prayers thus offer a magnificent example of the long-term historical and literary processes of translations from the Greek East via Latin into the Western vernaculars.

In the sixteenth century, a new era began, with the translation of the already Latinized prayer into the vernacular languages. With the change in language, the prayers also underwent a popularization. They became an instrument for healers and exorcists outside the Church and thus also entered into competition with the sanctioned rites of the Church. Here, from the middle of the sixteenth century, devotional prayers as well as exorcisms were closely observed by the Church. Hence, the prayer of Cyprian was also found in the Inquisition trials.

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78 Parenti / Velkouska, *L'Eucologio Barberini* offers a full edition of the Euchologion and also the best overview of other Euchologies. On euchologies and methodology, see Rapp, "Byzantine Prayer Books," and Rapp, "Byzantinische Gebetbücher." Primary collections are Goar, *Euchologion*, and Dmitrievskii, Εὐχολόγια.

79 See Strittmatter, "Ein griechisches Exorzismusbüchlein" and Jacob, "Un exorcisme inédit." Other collections are of a later date, e.g. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, 323–45; Almazov, "Vracheval'nye molitvy [Prayers for healing]," 367–514; Almazov, "Chin nad besnovatym" [Ritual for an Obsessed], 1–96; Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete*; Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensia*; Delatte, *Un office byzantin d'exorcisme*; Micaleff, *Exorcistic Prayers*. On the Latin exorcism books of the Middle Ages, see Chauve-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, 313–34.

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