

Magic in Romance languages

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During the thirteenth century the Romance languages of Western Europe began to convey secular learned knowledge while expanding their audience to new social groups, such as the nobility or the bourgeoisie, after centuries of having been monopolised by Latin and by the clergy.¹ Magic was one of the specialised fields in which Romance texts were translated and produced earliest, as a result of rulers' and courtiers' ambition to dominate occult forces. However, although the origin of magical writings was at first related to those who held power, these writings later suffered persecution and censorship on the basis of religious orthodoxy, and this made it difficult for them to be preserved, especially in the Iberian Peninsula. This chapter will focus on astral magic, which includes ritual and image magic that observed astrological conditions, and which poses specific problems regarding its illegitimacy and circulation.

Castile: Learned Magic in the Vernacular for a Learned King

The process of vernacularization began in thirteenth-century Castile and spread from there to the rest of the Romance-speaking world. The necessary condition for Castile's precocity was the possibility of accessing the knowledge translated and produced by Islam, as a result of the Arabic manuscripts obtained in the territories taken from Muslims and of the Arabic speakers who remained there, mainly Jews; however the impulse came from King Alfonso X of Castile (1252-84), called the Learned precisely because of his ambitious intellectual programme. His aspiration to recover the sciences from Arabic sources for Latin Christendom, where they had deeply declined, is expressed in several prologues of the Alfonsine corpus. Different models of learned kingship, such as Solomonic or Platonic, have been proposed for Alfonso's decision to resort to intellectual activity in order to gain prestige and power for the monarchy, but it is difficult to deny the influence of the Islamic model of the sovereign. Indeed, as was the case with many Muslim monarchs, one of his main interests was the "science of the stars", which included astronomy, astrology and astral magic.

Although other European monarchies also patronised the science of the stars and promoted its vernacularisation, especially from the fourteenth century onwards, Alfonso's case is unusual not only because of its earliness or its use of direct sources in Arabic, but also because the Alfonsine corpus brings together a diversity of magical-astrological traditions, including ritual and image magic addressed to the spirits of the stars. In addition, throughout the thirteenth century the process of sifting out the texts translated from Arabic into Latin during the previous century, mostly in the Iberian Peninsula, took place in European universities, with the aim of

¹ On vernacularization see Claude Thomasset, "Les traités scientifiques", in Hans Robert Jauss *et al.* (eds.), *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988), VIII, 1, p. 306-9; William C. Crossgrove, "The Vernacularization of Science, Medicine, and Technology in Late Medieval Europe: Broadening Our Perspectives", *Early Science and Medicine*, 5 (2000): p. 47-63; Clara Floz, *El Traductor, la Iglesia y el rey: la traducción en España en los siglos XII y XIII* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2000); Lluís Cifuentes, *La ciència en català a l'Edat Mitjana i el Renaixement* (Barcelona – Palma: Universitat de Barcelona, 2006); idem, "La traducció i la redacció d'obres científiques i tècniques", in Àlex Broch (dir.), *Història de la literatura catalana* (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2014), II, p. 118-31.

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rejecting those not considered compatible with the Christian faith. Whereas natural magic and astrology that was not determinist were widely accepted, ritual and astral magic addressed to angels, demons and other spirits were generally rejected as illicit by intellectual elites and categorised as necromancy.² We should therefore ask ourselves whether Alfonso had any scruples when it came to admitting such practices.

Alfonso's position regarding the legitimacy of magic, sorcery and divination is expressed in his legal code, the *Siete Partidas* (1254-65): Law VII, 23, 1, distinguishes between divination performed by learned experts using astrological techniques and that conducted by sorcerers and diviners employing other techniques such as hydromancy, ornithomancy or chiromancy, with the latter divination being prohibited under penalty of banishment. The following two laws forbid necromancy on pain of death, defining it as "the art of enchanting evil spirits", as well as the use of images, philtres and any witchcraft intended to bring about or break up love. In contrast, magical operations carried out with good intentions, such as protection from demons, breaking curses and avoiding storms or pests, were worthy of reward.³

Nevertheless, Alfonsine compilations and translations include magical operations designed to do both good and evil. Specifically, both necromantic practices and experiments to bring about or break up love are found there. Hence, the basis for judging whether the magic is acceptable or not must be other than a strictly a moral one, with its learned transmission, guaranteed by the Arabic sources, being a more determining factor. Thus Castile, and particularly Alfonso's entourage, was yet to be reached by the condemnation of necromancy expressed by European intellectual elite. It was possible to produce texts with such contents because their production was patronised by the king independently from the Church.

If we compare the Alfonsine production in the sciences with the twelfth-century Toletan versions, certain fundamental differences may be detected, especially the breadth of subjects covered and the target language of the translations. Whereas Alfonso's scriptorium focused on the science of the stars, the translations of the previous century also covered other disciplines such as philosophy, natural philosophy, medicine, alchemy or mathematics – all the branches of knowledge of Arabic origin that interested European intellectuals, both those who chose and translated the works and those who made up their readership. By contrast, the intellectual activity of the thirteenth century was promoted and directed by the king, and this is why it was mainly related to the needs of the monarchy and the court, including the science of the stars, which could help the ruler to make decisions, as well as historiography, musical compositions, chess and other board games – some of them astrological.

The choice of language can be also related to the courtly character of Alfonsine production, as well as to its independence from the Church, although other factors were involved. In twelfth-century Toledo, translation into the vernacular was used merely as a bridge between Arabic and Latin: the text was rendered orally into Castilian by an Arabic speaker while at the same time a

² Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), p. 8-17, 151-75, 181-201; Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les "images astrologiques" au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance (XIIe-XVe siècle)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), p. 36-37; Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance: astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Sorbonne, 2006), p. 205-78; Sebastià Giralt, "Magia y ciencia en la Baja Edad Media: la construcción de los límites entre la magia natural y la nigromancia (c. 1230-c. 1310)", *Clío & Crimen* (2011), p. 15-72. On the evolution of the meaning of the word 'necromancy' see Sebastià Giralt, "Estudi introductori", in Arnau de Vilanova, *Epistola de reprobacione nigromantie fictionis, AVOMO*, VII.1 (Barcelona: Universitat, 2005), p. 59-66.

³ ALFONSO X, *Las siete partidas* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1807), III, p. 667-669.

clericus (Latin scholar) wrote out the text in Latin.⁴ The use of the vernacular was therefore instrumental and ephemeral, even though it may have been the first time the Castilian language was employed for an intellectual purpose. By contrast, in Alfonso's scriptorium Castilian was the final language. Alfonsine versions were also the product of teamwork: sometimes not only the presence of two translators – a Jew and a Christian – is attested but also of a corrector. There are signs of both technical and linguistic correction and successive later additions. The latter is the case of the *Lapidario*, a book on the natural magical properties imbued by the stars in stones. Texts were often not simply translated but often reworked with additions and omissions, as the *Picatrix* shows, and sometimes new treatises and compilations were created from Arabic sources.

A lengthy debate has existed among scholars as to why Alfonso promoted the writing or the translation of astronomical-astrological-magical works in Castilian rather than in Latin. This has often been attributed to the fact that such activity was carried out mainly by Jews, who did the bulk of the task because they knew Arabic and the science of the stars, but were not familiar with Latin.⁵ Moreover, very few of the Iberian Christian scholars of the Alfonsine scriptorium demonstrated sufficient proficiency in Latin to write such works in this language: uniquely, Álvaro de Oviedo is known to have translated Abenragel's *Liber Conplido* into Latin, but his version was replaced some years later by a new one by Egidio de' Tebaldi and Pietro da Reggio. When Alfonso resorted to his Italian chancellors, who were Ghibellines and whose Latin complied with European standards, to produce the Alfonsine Latin translations from the previous Castilian versions, this demonstrates his aim to project them into Western Europe while he was a pretender to the Holy Roman Empire (1257-75).

However, the use of Castilian as a learned language seems to be related also to the readership of the Alfonsine works. The main target audience was probably the court and the nobles of Castile rather than European scholars as in the twelfth century, and hence Castilian was the most suitable language for reaching such a public. This is also why the works written or translated in the royal scriptorium were copied in luxurious, beautifully illustrated codices. Different production periods for the science of the stars have been distinguished during Alfonso's time. In the 1250s particular works were translated from Arabic, such as *Picatrix*. Then after a decade focused on observations and treatises about astronomical instruments, from the mid 1270s a new encyclopaedic vision was added in the form of large compilations, including the *Libro de las formas* and *Astromagia*.

The *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* or *Picatrix*, probably composed in al-Andalus in the tenth century, is one of the greatest manuals of talismanic magic. It was translated from Arabic into Castilian probably by Yehuda ben Moshe by order of Alfonso between 1256 and 1257, and subsequently from Castilian into Latin.⁶ Only a few fragments of the Castilian version of the *Picatrix* are

⁴ David Romano, *La ciencia hispanojudía* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), p. 128–158; Julio Samsó, "Traducciones científicas árabo-romances en la península Ibérica", in Santiago Fortuño - Tomás Martínez (eds), *Actes del VII Congrès de l'Associació Hispànica de Literatura Medieval*, (Castelló: Universitat Jaume I, 1999), I, p. 199-231; Gerold Hilty, "El plurilingüismo en la corte de Alfonso X el Sabio", in M.^a Teresa Echenique – Juan Sánchez, *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Historia de la Lengua Española* (Madrid: Gredos, 2002), I, p. 207-20; Laura Fernández, *Arte y ciencia en el scriptorium de Alfonso X el Sabio* (Seville: Universidad, 2013).

⁵ Américo Castro, *España en su historia: cristianos, moros y judíos* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1983), p. 454-64, in addition to Samsó and Romano's publications cited above.

⁶ The *Picatrix* was edited by David Pingree: *Picatrix. The Latin version of the Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (London: Warburg Institute, 1986). On its Castilian fragments: David Pingree, "Between the Ghāyat and the

preserved in *Astromagia*. Picatrix (Picatriz in Castilian) is actually the author's name transmitted in the Latin (and Castilian) versions and, according to the Latin preface, the title given by the author. However, there is evidence in Romance texts that it was still known by its Arabic title – or approximate variants of this – until the fifteenth century, being indirectly cited in Enrique de Villena's *Tratado de aojamiento o fascinación* (c. 1422), under the title of *Gayad Alhaqim*,⁷ and directly by the Barberini codex (c. 1430) discussed below, under the names of *Art de yayet alphaqui* and *Alfaqui gaihet*. These are the first known references to the *Picatrix* before it became one of the cornerstones of the Renaissance occultist flourishing.

One of the longest compilations produced by the royal scriptorium was the *Libro de las formas y las imágenes* [*Book of forms and images*], but the sole surviving codex of this book (MS El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, h-I-16) only transmits the preface and the table of contents with a brief description of each part.⁸ It was an anthology composed between 1277 and 1279 in order to provide a comprehensive overview of astral images, using extracts taken from earlier Alfonsine treatises such as *Lapidario*, *Astromagia*, *Picatrix* and *Liber Razielis*, in addition to other texts that were prepared especially for this volume.

Another compilation of mainly astral magic, dated c. 1280 and entitled *Astromagia* by its editor, is also partially preserved in the MS Vatican, BAV, Reg. Lat. 1283a.⁹ Again, it was composed by joining different parts of works which had been previously translated in Alfonso's scriptorium, and adding new texts. Some of the sources are well-known – Albumasar, *Picatrix*, *Liber Razielis* – whereas others remain unidentified. Several extant fragments deal solely with purely astrological images but most of them include a number of operations addressed to angels or spirits.

Some of the texts transmitted in *Astromagia* have been identified as parts of the Castilian version of the *Liber Razielis*. This is one of the longest, most varied and most enigmatic medieval compilations on ritual and image magic, consisting of seven books, fully preserved only in its Latin version and accompanied by a series of short treatises with related contents.¹⁰ In the prologue to the Latin version of the *Liber Razielis*, Iohannes Clericus provides a semi-legendary account of how this corpus was formed: the work was initially a gift from the angel Raziel to Adam, and subsequently compiled by Solomon. He also explains that the whole compilation was collected and translated on the initiative of Alfonso, but he does not specify the source language. Iohannes declares that his own tasks have been to select and translate the annexed treatises from Latin to Castilian. If this is true, the Castilian version of these treatises

Picatrix. I: the Spanish Version", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), p. 27-56.

⁷ *Tratado de aojamiento*, ed. Anna M Gallina (Bari: Adriatica, 1978), p. 109.

⁸ Edited with the *Lapidario* in Alfonso X, *Lapidario and Libro de las formas & ymagenes*, ed. Roderic C. Diman and Lynn W. Winget (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1980), and in Alfonso X, *Lapidario, Libro de las formas y las imágenes que son en los cielos*, ed. Pedro Sánchez-Prieto (Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 2014). See Anthony J. Cárdenas, "Alfonso X's *Libro de las formas & de las ymagenes*: Facts and Probabilities", *Romance Quarterly*, 1986 (33), p. 269-74; Alejandro García Avilés, "Two Astromagical Manuscripts of Alfonso X", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 59 (1996), p. 14-23.

⁹ Edited in Alfonso X, *Astromagia*, ed. Alfonso D'Agostino (Naples: Liguori, 1992). See also Alejandro García Avilés, "Alfonso X y el *Liber Razielis*: imágenes de la magia astral judía en el *scriptorium* alfonsí", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 74 (1997), p. 21-40.

¹⁰ See García Avilés, "Alfonso X"; Boudet, *Entre science*, p. 195-8, Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der astrologischen Literatur der Juden* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), p. 257-94, and Damaris Gehr, "La fittizia associazione del *Liber Razielis* in sette libri ad Alfonso X il Saggio e una nuova determinazione delle fasi redazionali del trattato, della loro datazione e dell'identità dei compilatori coinvolti", *Viator*, 43 (2012), p. 181-210.

has been lost, as has almost all of the Castilian translation of the *Liber Razielis*. Above and beyond this legendary Solomonic origin, the compilation in fact brings together magical and astrological material from different origins: the largest number of works are Hermetic writings in their Latin versions, whereas the Hebrew tradition of the *Sefer Razi'el* paradoxically represents but a small part of the collection, even though it was responsible for giving it its name.

From its very prologue, the *Liber Razielis* and the treatises associated with it pose many specific problems as an Alfonsine product, and specifically regarding the role of the Castilian version in its transmission. The first question is who was Ioannes Clericus and what was his task? He was identified by D'Agostino with Juan d'Aspa, who had rendered two treatises into Castilian together with ben Moshe in 1259, although this identification is not demonstrated. Although his known translations are Arabic-Castilian, being probably in charge of improving the final Castilian text, his title of cleric makes proficiency in Latin likely. However, as seen above, when there is a double Alfonsine translation, the first version is always the Castilian one, with the Latin one coming afterwards; therefore, it is surprising that he says he has translated the treatises from Latin into Castilian, unless the Latin was not the original version. Indeed, although some scholars, such as Alfonso D'Agostino and Jean-Patrice Boudet, also consider Iohannes to be the translator of the *Liber Razielis* and while Damaris Gehr argues that Iohannes was in fact its real author, he actually only admits to having edited and translated the treatises appended to it, and in my opinion it would make no sense for him to have hidden in his prologue his main translation. Actually, we cannot know for certain what the original language of the *Liber Razielis* was and when it was compiled. Since Hebrew sources seem to be in a minority, it is unlikely that it is a translation from Hebrew as has sometimes been deduced from the mention of the Hebrew title in the prologue. Scholars also disagree on when it was compiled: Reimund Leicht thinks that it was prior to Alfonso's time, Alejandro García Avilés considers it an Alfonsine creation, and Gehr defends the hypothesis that it was composed in the late fourteenth century as a forgery, although there was an earlier two-part Latin version of the *Liber Razielis* used in *Astromagia*. In any case, we should consider that in Alfonsine works the titles given to the king are a useful indication when it comes to dating them. In the prologue to the *Liber Razielis* the series of titles used is identical to that of the *Libro conplido*, including that of King of Badajoz, which only appears in these two books. This fact may be interpreted as a hint that the Alfonsine attribution is a forgery (Gehr), or that the book was composed or translated earlier than the date proposed by D'Agostino (c. 1259), since the *Libro conplido* was translated in 1254.

At any rate, the editing and study of the *Liber Razielis* begun by Gehr will hopefully help to throw light upon its real origin, its sources and its relationship with Alfonso's corpus, which seems to be difficult to deny. In fact, she misses the overlap, discovered by García Avilés, between the second book of the *Liber Razielis* (*Liber Alarum*) and the eighth chapter of the *Libro de las formas* concerning the properties of 24 gems under the attribution of Razi'el.¹¹ Another extant book related to Alfonso whose contents coincide with the *Liber Alarum* is the *Livre des secrez de nature*, discussed below.

As with the *Picatrix*, there are a few clear witnesses to the medieval reception of the *Liber Razielis*. It was one of the main sources of the *Libre de puritats*, as we will see. In the *Tractado de la divinança* (1449-53), Lope de Barrientos attests to the wide circulation of the *Liber Razielis* in the Iberian Peninsula and critically describes the book, whose copy from Enrique de Villena's library he declares to have burned in 1434, following the orders of King Juan II, in

¹¹ Alfonso X, *Lapidario and Libro de las formas*, p. 151.

order to purge the library of magic books.¹²

French reception of some Alfonsine works

Both *Astromagia* and the *Libro de las formas* were passed to the library of Charles V of France, as a significant example of the transmission of magic from court to court, either in their original form or in translation. By 1373 the *Libro de las formas* had been rendered into French by Pierre Lesant by order of the Duke of Berry, as shown by King Charles's inventory, since many books belonging to the Duke were transferred to the royal library of the Louvre. The same inventory also seems to indicate the presence of a copy of *Astromagia* in Charles's library.¹³

In contrast to these two lost books, the *Livre des secrez de nature sur la vertu des oyseauls et des poissons, pierres et herbes et bestes le quel le noble roy Alfonse d'Espagne fit transporter de grec en latin*, attributed to Aaron – a biblical character sometimes related to stones –, is preserved in a fourteenth-century manuscript.¹⁴ It deals with the natural magical properties of animals, herbs and stones, including images engraved in these stones. Nevertheless, a direct Alfonsine origin, separated from the *Liber Razielis*, is doubtful since it does not correspond to any independent work in Alfonso's corpus. In addition, it is impossible to believe that the Castilian king ordered it to be translated from Greek, when this language was alien to Alfonso's milieu. Finally, the vicissitudes of the book reported in its explicit are suspiciously legendary.¹⁵

Magic in Catalan: an almost Vanished Corpus

In inquisitorial records there is evidence of the circulation of magic books in the Catalan linguistic domain, and witnesses of various and numerous vernacularised texts in Catalan on all branches of knowledge remain from the mid-thirteenth century. Therefore, the existence of a number of magic texts in this language seems probable. Unfortunately, there is apparently nothing extant. It has not been proven that the *Picatrix* is the basis for a Catalan version of *De duodecim imaginibus Hermetis*, a short writing on therapeutic astral images, contained in a manuscript from Andorra, together with other Catalan texts on medical astrology (1430-40).¹⁶ In fact the Latin version not only circulated as an interpolation in the *Picatrix* but also as an independent text. It was therefore most probably translated from an independent copy and not from the *Picatrix*.

An important indication of the existence of such a corpus is the set of magical books belonging to the mason Pere Marc, which were burned by the Inquisition in Barcelona in 1440, according to the inquisitorial records.¹⁷ There were books in Latin and in Romance languages, different

¹² Lope de Barrientos, *Tractado de la divinança*, ed. Paloma Cuenca (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1992), p. 197 and 200.

¹³ García Avilés, "Two Astromagical".

¹⁴ MS Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, manuscrits français, 2872, ff. 38r-57v. Edited in Louis Delatte, *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides* (Liège-Paris: Université de Liège, 1942), p. 291-352. See García Avilés, "Alfonso X".

¹⁵ "Yci fenist le livre des secrez de nature, le quel fit Aaron, et après vint a Kirem le roy de Perse, et après fu porté a Athenes et u sac de vie fu mis pour tresor, dont il vint a la notice du noble roy Alfons d'Espagne, le quel le fit translater de grec en latin et chier le tint et garda" (f. 57v).

¹⁶ MS Andorra, Arxiu Nacional, Arxiu de les Set Claus, 1, ff. 70r-2r. See Susanna Vela, *Tencar: una miscel·lània d'astrologia del s. XV a Andorra* (Andorra: Consell General, 1996), p. 105-216, 201-17, where the relationship with the *Picatrix* is defended. On the original Latin text, see Weill-Parot, *Les "images astrologiques"*, p. 477-96.

¹⁷ Josep Hernando, "Processos inquisitorials per crim d'heretgia i una apel·lació per maltractament i parcialitat per part de l'inquisidor (1440): documents dels protocols notarial", *Estudis Històrics i*

magical traditions and a variety of writings, namely treatises and *experimenta*, isolated or in collections. Marc's library included Catalan versions of an unknown *Key of Semiphoras* (*Clau del Semiforas*), the *Liber Semiphoras*, the *Key of Solomon* (*Clavicula de Salomó*), the *Liber orationum planetarum* (*Oracions dels set planetes*), the astrological *Liber similitudinum* (*Llibre de la semblança de tots els hòmens*) and other writings on medical magic, astral magic, the conjuring of spirits, images to find stolen objects and operations to seduce women. Other texts were in Latin and one in Castilian. Some scholars have assumed that there were also extracts from the *Liber Razielis*. In fact, only some "pieces of paper" with operations addressed to Raziél are recorded, one of them bearing Marc's name, but they do not necessarily come from the *Liber Razielis*.

Such a library, in addition to his reputation and some objects found in his house – circles, pieces of paper or parchment with characters, names and figures, pieces of glass, sulphur, wax, herbs, stones – suggests that Pere Marc had a deep dedication to magic. This is significant, since it demonstrates that in magic, as in other branches of knowledge, vernacularised texts also reached an audience other than the courtly one: practitioners, that is, secular magicians or necromancers, who had an irregular knowledge of Latin. However, any surviving texts used by magicians should be looked for in a closely related language: Occitan.

Occitan Texts by and for Magicians

In contrast to Catalan, some witnesses to what seems to have been a splendid Occitan magic tradition survive. Surprisingly, rather than translations, what remain are treatises and compilations on ritual and image magic directly written in Occitan. In fact, to date it is the only Romance language in which this phenomenon has been identified.

A miscellaneous codex copied in the early fifteenth century, in Provence (MS Paris, BNF lat. 7349), contains numerous occultist and divinatory texts both in Latin and Occitan. One of them is the *Liber experimentorum* (ff. 118v-5r), a booklet dealing mainly with planetary magic.¹⁸ Several allusions to the "masters of necromancy" – understood as both ritual and image magic – indicate that the target audience was magicians. Contrary to what the title suggests, it only gives general indications for experiments and does not describe any particular one in detail. In a fictional preface, Guillem de Perissa, who is probably the author of the work, presents himself as a simple translator from Latin into Occitan and attributes the original to Arnau de Vilanova, whom he claims to have served as a secretary. According to his account, after Arnau's death he took refuge in the court of the Countess Sibilia de Ventamilha, and at her request he translated the *Liber experimentorum* into Occitan so that she could read it and understand it. The core of the treatise is the indication of the days and hours that are astrologically suitable for various purposes, distributed according to the seven planets and concerning both everyday actions and actions related to different occult arts. In many cases these experiments are explicitly referred to as necromantic or are aimed at subduing the spirits. The last part is devoted to the preparation of materials and procedures for necromantic experiments. Although the dedication to Sibilia seems to be inauthentic, it might be a hint that was probably written in the fourteenth century

Documents dels Arxius de Protocols, 23 (2005), p. 75-139. Also analyzed in Cifuentes, *La ciència*, p. 224-7.

¹⁸ Edited and studied in Katy Bernard, *Compter, dire et figurer: édition et commentaire de textes divinatoires et magiques en occitan médiéval* (Bordeaux: Université Michel de Montaigne, 2007), I, p. 99-119; 645-59. See also Antoine Calvet, "Le *Liber experimentorum* attribué à Arnaud de Villeneuve", in Claire Kappler - Suzanne Thiolier-Méjean, *Alchimies (Occident-Orient)* (Paris: Association Kubaba - L'Harmattan, 2006), p. 127-36, and Sebastià Giralt, "*Liber experimentorum*, un llibre de màgia en occità falsament atribuït a Arnau de Vilanova", *Medioevo romanzo*, 41 (forthcoming).

in a courtly entourage, which also helps to explain the use of a Romance language. The attribution to Arnau de Vilanova, who died in 1311 and was in fact an opponent of necromancy, is due to his legend as a magician and the desire to release the work under a prestigious name.

A more outstanding testimony is the miscellaneous MS Vatican BAV, Barb. Lat. 3589, copied c. 1430. It contains many texts belonging to different traditions of magic, although the primary interest of the compiler, who should be identified with the copyist, proves to be ritual and image magic. The texts are incompletely or only partially copied, most of them in Occitan – with a strong Catalan influence – but some of them are in Latin. The use of both languages gives us the opportunity to examine the interaction of Romance languages with Latin.¹⁹

The most remarkable work is the anonymous *Libre de puritats* [*Book of secrets*], which occupies the first two thirds of the codex (ff. 3r-51v). It supposedly consisted of three sections. The first section, based above all on Book VI of the *Liber Razielis* and some of the treatises associated with it, teaches how to control angels, demons and other spirits by reciting the relevant psalms and performing rites, suffumigations and animal sacrifices in suitable astrological conditions in order to achieve the magician's aims. The second section, the only one copied by another hand, seeks to explain a treatise entitled *Art de caractas* [*Art of characters*], attributed to Theberiadi (Omar Tiberiades?) focused on characters, namely, combinations of stars that correspond to beings of the universe. The core of this part are ten tables giving the value of the characters and letters. Almost all these come from another treatise appended to the *Liber Razielis* (*Liber quorundam sapientum*) but here they are accompanied by explanations and examples of the rites associated with them. Finally, the third section, completely lost, aimed to explain the *Art de ymages* [*Art of images*] attributed to Hermes.

The third and final part of the codex (ff. 52r-79r) consists of a series of anonymous or apocryphal extracts, experiments and brief treatises in Latin and Occitan. They belong to several magical traditions, but a clear predominance of interest in astral images, especially planetary ones, and a noteworthy presence of the Hermetic corpus can be observed. The longest text in this part is the Occitan *Libre de ydeis* [*Book of images*], ff. 65r-77r), which is merely a poorly-assembled compilation of materials derived from a large number and a wide variety of texts, even though the majority apparently fall within the Hermetic tradition. However, it is only possible to have an approximate idea of the original collection because the compiler of the codex only copied a small part of it. A number of general rules are followed by repertoires of images and prayers: images of Saturn, images of the Moon, prayers to the seven planets and images of Venus.

Another untitled, brief and unfinished Occitan text aims to show where treasures can be found in Spain (f. 59r-v). The starting point is said to be the *Libre del rey Peyre de Aragon* [*Book of King Peter of Aragon*], translated by order of the monarch in order to show the location in the Iberian Peninsula of treasures enchanted by Saracens and Gentiles. This book may be related both to the legend of treasures hidden by Muslims in Valencia, attested by Francesc Eiximenis, and to the real activity of treasure hunting promoted by Pere the Ceremonious and other kings of Aragon²⁰.

Throughout the codex the compiler selects works and operations with the aim of completing his library, which, to judge by all the clues, specialized in ritual magic and astral, above all

¹⁹ See a complete description of this codex and a discussion of its composition and contents in Sebastià Giralt, "The manuscript of a medieval necromancer: magic in Occitan and Latin in ms. Vaticano, BAV, Barb. lat. 3589", *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, n. s., 9 (2014), p. 221-72.

²⁰ Sebastià Giralt, "Astrology in the Service of the Crown: Bartomeu de Tresbens, Physician and Astrologer to King Pere the Ceremonious of Aragon", *Journal of Medieval History* (forthcoming).

planetary, images: he copies the greater part of some works omitting operations that he already possesses or considers superfluous because he already has equivalent ones. In the case of other texts, he only transcribes those experiments that he needs. The number of titles that he copies or claims to possess is considerable. In some cases, he makes a written assessment of the experiments or the writings, usually comparing the text copied with others. In other marginal annotations he corrects the organization or relates certain passages with others. Therefore, the copy clearly reflects the compiler's own interests in a subject about which he has in-depth knowledge and we catch a glimpse of what undoubtedly is the library of a real magician, where the *Picatrix* and many other titles of magical literature are found.

Occitan is widely prevalent along the codex. Nevertheless, Latin emerges sometimes in the vernacular texts, which demonstrates that the sources were in Latin. In the first section of the *Libre de puritats*, Latin appears especially in the psalms employed in rituals, where only their first words are reproduced. In the second section the tables and their titles are generally in Latin, while the explanations are in Occitan. In the third part of the manuscript Latin and Occitan really alternate, which is understandable given the diversity of the collection copied. Usually both languages are kept separate from one work to the next, but there are some exceptions. Occasionally we find Latin in the *Libre de ydeis*: in a passage Occitan and Latin are mixed (f. 65r), and two other passages start in the vernacular and pass into Latin (f. 66v). Sometimes (e.g. f. 67v) Latin words or sentences emerge in the vernacular text, and are left untranslated. Furthermore, some prayers in Latin are included in the Occitan text or vice versa: a prayer to Saturn from the *Liber orationum planetarum* in Latin is inserted in another text in Occitan (f. 68v); but on another occasion the explanation and the ritual of the image are translated into Occitan, while the prayer is maintained in Latin. In another collection, titled *Experimenta Salomonis*, a prayer in Occitan to the Eastern Star (f. 53v) is placed among independent operations in Latin. However, in this case, the language switch is less surprising on account of the heterogeneity of this particular collection.

In the preceding examples the coexistence of both languages seems to be due to the source of the text or of the translation. But interestingly, Occitan and Latin also coexist in the compiler's notes on the manuscript, which give us some clues that allow us to sketch his profile and to understand the formation of the codex. First, both in the notes and in the process of copying the compiler demonstrates only elementary proficiency in Latin, as can be deduced from his frequent grammatical errors, inconsistent spelling and Romance interference. He also shows some knowledge of Hebrew when he rectifies the outline of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Such linguistic skills and especially the indications revealing the compiler's possession of an extensive magical library strongly suggest that he was a professional magician.

As to the origin of the codex, it is difficult to discern whether it originated in the Occitan or Catalan-speaking area. Logically, the language employed points to the first option. However, the Catalan imprint and the use of Iberian sources such as the *Libre del rey Peyre de Aragon*, the *Picatrix*, and the extended *Liber Razelis*, might indicate a relationship with the Iberian Peninsula or at least an origin between Occitan and Catalan areas, closely connected as they were in the Middle Ages by linguistic and cultural ties. Another indication to be considered is the use of the word *puritat*, from the Latin *puritas* 'purity', to refer to secret (magical) experiments, which seems to have a Castilian origin, because in this language *poridad* meant "secret" in medieval times, as employed in Alfonsine texts, perhaps because of Arabic influence, whereas it does not occur in Occitan or in Catalan.²¹

²¹ Cf. *Astromagia*, 142 and 228. The title of one of the Castilian versions of the *Secretum secretorum* was *Poridat de las poridades*. On the hypothesis of an Arabic influence, see Castro, *España*, 623-6, and Gilbert Fabre, "L'expression en *poridad*, modalité d'un 'arabe silencieux'", *Cahiers de linguistique et*

The Barberini codex gives us an insight into two different profiles of individuals dedicated to magic: the magician-author and the magician-compiler. We find the magician-author in the *Libre de puritats*, although unfortunately his name is missing, probably because of the hazards of manuscript transmission. Despite following his sources accurately, he speaks in the first person and demonstrates his ambition to create a digest of works with a planned structure. In comparison, the also anonymous *Libre de ydeis* fails to be a well-organized compilation. On the other hand, the formation of the codex has been done by an unnamed magician-compiler, who limits himself to collecting materials for his repertoire of resources. This second procedure evidences that magical knowledge is particularly prone to circulate fragmentarily.

A Courtier's Manual from Milan?

Another miscellaneous codex, copied in Milan in 1446 (MS Paris, BNF, ital. 1524), contains a number of writings on astrology and magic ritual organised and rendered from Latin into Tuscan by an anonymous translator who selected them from a set of manuscripts which he had at his disposal. The part entitled *Necromantia* occupies most of the manuscript (ff. 69r-235r) and, among other texts, includes many magical operations, mostly related to love and sex, in addition to the *Clavicula di Salomone* ["Key of Solomon"]²² (179r-235r). This is the earliest witness to this work, although it is partial because the translator based it on an incomplete copy. The translator's notes allow us to gain some understanding of his editorial work and the problems which he faced, such as the damaged or missing parts detected in the original manuscripts and the difficulties of interpretation posed by certain texts. At one point (f. 80v) he apologises for not being able to copy some passages from the original due to its poor condition and for not being able to complete the text because he has not found another copy to compare it to. He says that he only can try to correct what is wrong or supply what is missing as a grammarian but not as a necromancer. Therefore this codex, unlike the Barberini, is not the work of an expert and practitioner of magic but someone simply commissioned to translate the texts on account of his linguistic skills. This becomes more evident when the translator distances himself from necromancy and warns that the subject of the book, which he qualifies as vile or something even more abominable, is not believable for Christians, although it may have some effect in the eyes of people who believe in it or who are victims of false diabolical visions (ff. 69r and 73r). As in the Barberini codex, Christian psalms and prayers are left in Latin. A number of passages are crossed out, although it is not clear what criteria pursued in such censorship were. The contents and the beautiful workmanship of the book suggest that the recipient was a man of high rank interested in love affairs and social promotion, and who, according to Jean-Patrice Boudet, might have belonged to the court of the Visconti.

Circulation, Persecution and Survival of Romance Language Magic Books

Most of the magic texts studied here are translations from a learned language, namely Arabic or Latin. However, at least one, the *Liber experimentorum* was written directly in a Romance language, but presented as a translation, and the identity of its real author was hidden in favour of a prestigious name. Therefore, false translation and false authorship were occasionally used as a means of dignifying texts written in a language considered inferior, and about a subject

de civilisation hispaniques médiévales, 27 (2004), p. 159-70. See other possibilities in Pseudo-Aristotle, *Secreto de los secretos*, *Poridat de las poridades: versiones castellanas del Pseudo-Aristóteles Secretum secretorum*, ed. Hugo O. Bizzarri (Valencia, Universitat, 2010), p. 331.

²² I have consulted the manuscript through a microfilmed copy. See Boudet, *Entre science*, p. 366-8. Forthcoming edition: Florence Gal - Jean-Patrice Boudet - Laurence Moulinier-Brogi, *Vedrai mirabilia! Un libro di magia del Quattrocento* (Rome, Viella).

such as magic, which was often stigmatised. Nevertheless, later on, in the fifteenth century, a small number of works seem to have been circulating as original texts, such as the *Libre de puritats* and the *Libre de ydeis* transmitted in the Barberini codex.

Some Castilian versions served as a means of projecting these texts into Western Europe via Latin translation. Although it is not possible to affirm this in the specific field of magic given the few extant texts, in the vernacularisation process more generally Latin was often the vehicle between a Romance language and another. However, there are exceptions, such as the French translation of the *Libro de las formas e imágenes*, and indications of a possible circulation of Castilian texts in Catalan and Occitan-speaking areas: the use of words such as *puritats* or *calapech* (cf. Cast. *galápago* ‘tortoise’) and some references to the *Picatrix* in the Barberini codex, as well as the Castilian book burned with Marc’s library.

From the extant evidence analysed here, the origin of most magic texts in Romance languages seems to be the court, which used to consume such literature in luxurious codices, but later their circulation expanded into other social groups, especially practitioners of magic. Such dissemination led to poorer manuscripts and libraries containing mixed Latin and Romance texts. Therefore their users – such as Marc or the compiler of the Barberini codex – would have some proficiency in Latin, a fact which is not surprising in a domain in which this language was so overwhelmingly present.

Different reasons can be considered for the absolute predominance of Latin and the scarcity of texts written in all Romance languages in ritual and image magic, in comparison with other branches of knowledge. As Richard Kieckhefer has stressed, most of its practitioners were in fact clergymen, in the broad medieval sense of the term, and knew Latin.²³ Furthermore, the rituals of the Christian religion must have served as a linguistic model for these other kinds of rituals. However, recognising the prevalence of the clergy does not imply that magic did not expand its audience to lay people. The university and the court have been shown to be contexts into which it permeated. Since Latin was also the language of the university, magic’s expansion to the courtly milieu is doubtless the most important factor in explaining the use of the vernacular, as we have seen in most cases. Nevertheless, Marc’s case demonstrates that there were also common people involved.

Based on Marc’s case, Lluís Cifuentes attributes the paucity of magic books preserved in Castilian and Catalan to a more intense persecution by defenders of the Christian faith because of the danger posed by them being available for the unlearned, an argument which is supported by two early modern testimonies.²⁴ However, I suspect that there was no real difference between the persecution of occultist books written in Latin and Romance languages in the Iberian Peninsula. Marc’s books were all burned, without distinction of whether they were in the vernacular or not. In the fourteenth century, the inquisitor Nicolau Eimeric set many magic books on fire in Catalonia yet was apparently not concerned whether they were in Latin or the vernacular. Neither do we know from Barrientos if the copy of the *Liber Razielis* that he burned was in Castilian or Latin, although he complained that the circulation of this book was more abundant in the Iberian Peninsula than elsewhere. The inquisitorial indexes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries prohibited all books on occult arts, except those concerned with non-determinist astrology, without any consideration of their language. Certainly, a more intense persecution in both the late medieval and early modern Iberian Peninsula than in other European areas might explain why so little of the magic written in Castilian and Catalan remains, but also why Latin manuscripts of the great magic compendia produced in the Spanish Kingdoms, such

²³ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, 153-156.

²⁴ Cifuentes, *La ciència*, 223-7.

as the *Picatrix* and the *Liber Razielis*, are not preserved in Spain. Actually, the remaining codices of both Castilian and Latin magic of Iberian origin have been conserved in other countries. While none of the Alfonsine compilations on image and ritual magic have been preserved in their entirety in Castilian – two of them are conserved in Latin and two in Castilian are partially lost – only two of the 26 Alfonsine Castilian texts on astronomy and astrology have been disappeared and are only conserved in their Latin version. Nevertheless, although medieval manuscripts on natural astrology are preserved more frequently there is substantial evidence that they too were often censored in the early modern Spanish kingdoms, albeit not so systematically since it depended on the personal criteria of inquisitors. (Early modern printed works on astrology also suffered censorship but as they were printed outside the Spanish kingdoms they are better preserved). For example, a Castilian copy of Abenragel's *Libro Conplido* (MS Madrid, BNE, 3065) was mutilated by the inquisitorial expurgation, and two Latin copies of the same work were relegated to the restricted room of forbidden books in the monastery of El Escorial.²⁵ Such censorship can be regarded as one of the factors that caused a scarcity of astrological manuscripts in Spanish libraries.

Future Directions

Although surviving astral and ritual magic writings in Romance languages are scarce, it does not mean that new texts cannot be found in libraries and catalogues. For instance, Castilian fragments of the *Liber Razielis* have been recently discovered in a fifteenth-century codex (MS Frankfurt, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Lat. Oct. 231, ff. 96r–97v)²⁶ and they deserve to be edited and studied. Moreover, some other Italian texts have been preserved in several Florentine manuscripts. In addition to a treatise on rings transmitted by a fifteenth - and sixteenth- century codex,²⁷ Frank Klaassen's catalogue of medieval magical manuscripts includes two texts conserved in two fifteenth-century manuscripts and which have not been edited or studied: one is a manual with conjurations in the vernacular, sigils and a list of spirits; the other seems to be a collection of Solomonic images translated from Latin into Tuscan.²⁸ Another avenue of research worth exploring is to investigate archive documents such as inventories of properties or libraries, wills, and inquisitorial and judicial records, which may provide new data on the circulation and persecution of magic in Romance languages.

Many of the manuscripts or writings presented here require further research to a greater or lesser extent. One of the least studied and most promising is the Barberini codex, which deserves attention from philologists and historians of medieval magic, even though it does not provide us with an entire work but rather comprises incomplete texts or fragments. It allows us to see a magician at work and shows his access to contemporary magical literature both in Latin and in Romance languages. It gives us evidence of the circulation and use of outstanding magic books, and provides relevant testimony about them. Critical editions of at least some of these works should take this witness into consideration. A special regard should also be paid to its major work, the *Libre de puritats*, a work of very considerable length, which reflects an ability not

²⁵ Fernández, *Arte*, p. 124-9.

²⁶ José Rodríguez Guerrero, "Los manuscritos alquímicos de Juan de Selaya (fl.1450-1490): médico, astrónomo y profesor de lógica en Salamanca", *Azogue*, 9 (forthcoming).

²⁷ Edited in Stefano Rapisarda, "Il Trattato degli anelli attribuito a Pietro d'Abano: volgarizzamento italiano del ms. Palatino 1022 della Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze" in Jean-Patrice Boudet *et al.* (eds.), *Médecine, astrologie et magie entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance: autour de Pietro d'Abano* (Florence, SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013), p. 287-92

²⁸ MSS Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, Su38, ff. 35r-51r, and Plut. 89, Su36, ff. 213r-4v: Frank Klaassen, *Societas Magica catalogue of manuscripts and early printed books* < <http://homepage.usask.ca/~frk302/MSS> >, 2002 [consulted on 14/9/2015].

only to rework texts with a high degree of technicality but also to combine theory with practice. It can be considered the only ambitious work on ritual and image magic so far known to have been written directly in a Romance language. Without question, this outstanding treatise requires in-depth study and a critical edition. The *Libre de ydeis* and the other minor Occitan writings are also worth studying. Linguistic analysis on Catalan influence and Occitan dialectal bias can help to understand where, how and by whom the manuscript was composed. On the other hand, a great number of texts and sources have still not been identified in this codex, because they are incomplete or partial copies, and are not well-known to scholars or for other reasons. Nor have the sources of the *Liber experimentorum* (MS Paris, BNF lat. 7349) been analysed. The sources of Alfonsine magic compilations, despite the fact that their texts have thus far been well edited and studied, especially by philologists, also remain only partially disclosed. Hopefully, as magic works in Latin and Arabic are studied and edited, it will become easier to identify the sources of the Romance writings derived from them, but, considering the amount of magic literature that has been lost, many of them will probably remain unknown.