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**Priests, books and the devil. Practices of Exorcism in Early Modern Catalonia. (The case of father Pere Amich)<sup>1</sup>**

In the spring of 1637, a 30-year-old Catalan priest, Pere Amich, stood before the inquisitor at the Holy Tribunal in Barcelona.<sup>2</sup> He was living in the municipality of Tàrraga, part of the diocese of Solsona, where he was serving as a Mercedarian friar in the convent of *Mercè*. Four women and three men testified against him: he was accused of publicly curing illnesses acquired through sorcery and bewitchment.

He was approached by parents and adults hoping for a cure who attributed their children's or their own illness to malicious sorcery (in the summary of the lawsuit: *hechizo*), or witchcraft. Witnesses consistently told how patients had to appear nine consecutive days before the friar at the temple, who received them in a chapel. He was wearing a stole and, with a book in his hand, he said prayers for their recovery by candlelight. With his thumb he would occasionally draw a cross on their forehead, in the palm of their hand and on their chest, sometimes around their stomach. He would unbutton their clothes to gain access to the aching part of their body, then he would draw a cross three times on the problem area and ask them if they felt pain when he touched them, saying, "*Deus, Abraham. Deus Jacob. Deus Israel*". He then began to pray while he applied oil three times to the treated area. He also gave the patients some of the holy oil for later use. Following this, some of the patients even fainted. He also gave various handwritten "papers" to the "enchanted" (*hechizados*). One was to be hung on the door of the room where the patient slept and the other on the window of the same room. On the amulet for the door were the words "*Jesús + Nazarenus + Rex Judeorum*" with a cross between them. On the inscription on the window, he copied an excerpt from a hymn: "*Procul recedant somnia, hostemq[ue] nostrum comprime, ne pulluantur corpora.*"

In the official case report (*relación de causas*) to the Supreme and General Inquisition Council (*Consejo de la Suprema y General Inquisición*, or *La Suprema*), it is stated that the priest had various manuscript notebooks ("*quadernillos*") with prayers and recipes. These were confiscated by the Holy Tribunal and on 23 April 1637 the Inquisition qualifiers decided that these documents should be confiscated. At the same time, they called on the Holy Tribunal to institute proceedings against their

1 This study was supported by a Bolyai János Research Fellowship. (A longer version is available in Hungarian.)

2 AHN, Inq. Lib. 734, 131v-132v. (case nr. 22)

user and owner for proving that the friar was a sorcerer who had made an implicit or explicit pact with the devil. On these charges, the inquisition proceedings were instituted against Pere Amich, and his own convent was designated as his prison.

Under the inquisitorial procedure, the accused was only ever made aware of the charges at an advanced stage of the trial. After imprisonment, the usual three preliminary hearings and a warning (*amonestación*) followed in the case proceedings. The first one took place the day after Pere Amich's imprisonment, on May 27, as all three had to be held within ten days of his arrest. The interrogations usually began with the inquisitor seating the prisoner at his table and asking him, without any prior information, whether he knew or suspected why he was before the Holy Tribunal. The friar was not taken aback. As was the usual formula, he was told during the interrogation that he could expect a lighter sentence if he pleaded guilty at an early stage of the trial. He must have thought it better to actually confront the matter, because when questioned he replied straight away that he believed he had been brought before the Inquisition because he had cured patients by means of exorcisms. He also stated in the confession that he did this in the prescribed and authorized manner. He explained how these healing sessions went: after going into the chapel with the patient, he first made the sign of the cross and then recited the four Gospels: first, 1. *In principio erat verbum*, then 2. *Missus est*, then 3. *Cum natus esset Jesus*, and then 4. *Recumbentibus*. Finally, he read the prayer of St. Cyprian from a manuscript book. This was confiscated from him by the Inquisition Commissioner of Tàrrega. He confessed that the whole booklet was in his handwriting and that he had copied the texts word for word from a printed publication. When reading the title of the book cited as the source, you can almost see the scribe's pen twitching as he hastily writes a summary of the case. He hesitates on hearing the title, and jots down the first word he could understand: *Complementum*, then the second: *Martini*, and finally the third: *exorcista*. It is possible that the scribe who copied the case report had already copied the wrong title, since that is not the title of the book. In the testimony, Friar Pere Amich referred to the manual *Complementum artis exorcisticae* by the Milanese exorcist Zacaria Visconti. He also revealed that he had borrowed this manual from a fellow order member, Friar Gabriel Segarra.

The exorcism oil was said to have been consecrated with the help of the famous Franciscan exorcist Girolamo Menghi's manual *Flagellum Daemonum*, and at other times, as he himself said, he followed the *Rituale Romanum*. He also blessed the patients' homes with consecrated incense, following one of the 'benedictions' of the *Flagellum Daemonum*. He then also gave the patients a demon-exorcising card, which he had written and which read "*Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judeorum*". The note was made with the intention of placing it in the door or window of the patient's room so that no malevolent spirit could enter the house. For the head end he usually made another manuscript slip with the above mentioned "*Procul recedant somnia...*". For some patients, he would consecrate a rue (It. *ruta*

*graveolens*) based on the ‘benediction’ of the *Flagellum daemonum*, blessing the bread, wine and water for them to eat and drink, thus helping their recovery. He performed exorcisms in Tàrrega and neighboring Verdú. In his testimony he mentioned another priest and one of his patients, a woman, Lluisa Plana. According to him, he cured children and adults who were victims of bewitchment (*maleficium*), as he could establish from the *Flagellum and the Malleus maleficarum*. He was guided by charity for the poor in his healing of women, men and children. On June 2, the third hearing took place, and on June 10, the verdict was delivered. He was severely reprimanded and ordered not to heal in this way again, and the nearest Inquisition commissioner was ordered to take to the tribunal the book from which he had copied the exorcist texts he used, especially the prayer of St. Cyprian. After reviewing the case, the reader may ask why Pere Amich’s exorcisms were considered to be superstitious acts by the Inquisition, if he once used the popular and established exorcist books of the time? Why were these confiscated from him?

The surviving sources on his exorcisms are, by their very nature, concise and schematic. It summarizes the accused’s activities in barely three folios. It is part of a document, the case reports (*relaciones de causas*)<sup>3</sup> sent annually by the inquisitors of the local, district courts to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition to inform the central body of the trials that had just taken place, summarizing concisely the content of the case, the testimonies and the interrogations of the accused, with a summary of the sentence. There is no longer any documentation of this incident, only this vague, distant “shadow drawing”. Can we get a sense of the real-life practice behind the shadow model? Can we see glimpses of some of its features? Or is it just the projection of a defensive palm held in front of a face? Can we understand the events in the blind spot of the source through data obtained from elsewhere? This study attempts to do just that. My aim is to carry out a horizontal analysis of a Catalan Inquisition trial that took place in 1637, using other sources from the period, writings documenting ecclesiastical-power ambitions, and similar cases of exorcism.<sup>4</sup>

### **Exorcism as an ‘everyday’ healing act**

Pere Amich did not hold the kind of spectacular, theatrical, dramatized, notorious exorcisms that the Thomist humanist Pedro Ciruelo had so sharply attacked in his demonological handbook *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías...* (*Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft*), published 100 years earlier. The case of Friar Pere was neither sensational nor unique in the second

3 One of the first scientific accounts of this source type is Henningsen 1977.

4 I always indicate the geographical and historical validity of my findings. The parallels I cite as examples, which are geographically more distant, are presented not for formal features but for functional similarities.

third of the seventeenth century in the Principality of Catalonia. A friar who read books similar to those of his fellow monks, copied the same texts as they did, encountered situations similar to theirs when he performed exorcisms among the faithful.

If we look at the statistics obtained from Jaime Contreras and Gustav Henningsen's database<sup>5</sup> of 44,000 cases, we find that between 1615 and 1700 there was a significant increase in the number of trials for *superstitious practices* not only in Catalonia but in the whole Spanish Monarchy, in other words in all the district courts, except for the Tribunal of Logroño, where the great Zugarramurd witch trials had taken place a few years before. The Barcelona Tribunal had a high rate of superstition trials throughout the monarchy.<sup>6</sup> What could be the reason for this increase in numbers? Could it be due to a sudden change in mentality, or is it more due to the newness of case management? According to Gunnar Knutsen, it is possible that the trivial cases of faith that the Holy Tribunal used to resolve during inquisitorial visitations were subjected to more scrutiny from the early seventeenth century onwards, and that this may have been partly responsible for the significant increase in the number of superstition trials.

In the statistics of the *superstitio* trials of the early modern Sacred Tribunal of Barcelona, it is also striking that in this period the rate of repression against men was higher than in other Spanish tribunals. According to Juan Blázquez Miguel's figures, which also cover the early modern period, the percentage was 76.5% (4161 trials between 1487 and 1820). Of these, the number of ecclesiastics, including the proportion of the secular lower clergy, is outstanding.<sup>7</sup> Among them, in addition to cases of solicitation, exorcism without permission was common, and priests were typically tried for superstitious practices and covenanting with the devil. They were mediators between two cultural strata: they were familiar with the world and needs of peasants and craftsmen, the local religious milieu, and represented the Church as such,<sup>8</sup> and were also mediators of ecclesiastical medicine.

One of the main pillars of their relationship with the lower classes was healing. In order to imagine the role of exorcism in everyday healing, it is worth going into the healing practices of the priests and the church as they are known from the period. First of all, it is worth reviewing what, apart from exorcism, was included in the permissible healing practices of priests and monks for which we have early modern data. The simple recitation of benedictions, prayers for the healing of the sick and the use of 'orthodox' short texts, handwritten amulets, for the sick, without details that could be interpreted as heresy, were common practice. Another important issue for the Church was the extent to which they could regulate the secondary use of sacramentals in the home. For health keeping

5 Contreras, Jaime – Henningsen, Gustav 1986: 100-129.

6 Blázquez Miguel, Juan 1990: 279.

7 Blázquez Miguel, Juan 1990: 274.

8 On the role of the lower clergy and the exorcist trials of the sixteenth century in Modena, Bologna and Venice, see O'Neill, Mary L. 1984: 56.

purposes, the use of the washing water of the chalice and other relics was allowed, either for human consumption or for the “blessing” of livestock.<sup>9</sup> From a sixteenth-century treatise of the Spanish Franciscan Martín de Castañega, we know that it was customary to ask for the oil of the church lamp, which was burnt in front of an icon or the tabernacle, or the washing water of the wound of Saint Francis, for the healing of both humans and livestock.<sup>10</sup> Testimonies from the early modern Inquisition trials in Venice, Modena and Bologna clearly show that it was a routine practice, approved by the Church, for mothers to take their children from time to time to the priests to bless them with the sign of the cross or to say prayers for them, as a preventive measure and for spiritual affirmation.<sup>11</sup> The use of foldable, rolled-up amulets (*breves, nóminas, cédulas*)<sup>12</sup>, which could bear names and texts, prayers, to ward off illness and disease and to convey blessings, was also widely known to protect the health of the individual and his/her environment.<sup>13</sup> They were used for a variety of purposes, to avoid crisis situations, to facilitate liminal conditions (childbirth), to cure illnesses (fevers, diseases of the mouth, physical pains, hemorrhoids or tertian and quartan fevers, for example), to ensure the health of livestock, plants (trees, vines). Their use was regulated from the sixteenth century onwards, sometimes more strictly, sometimes more permissively, by demonological works in Spanish and in Latin. In these treatises we also find information that the wearing of an amulet with a sacred evangelical text is permitted for devotional purposes, on which no image may be depicted except the sign of the cross.<sup>14</sup> In the confessional guide of Martín de Azpilcueta y Jaureguizar (Doctor Navarrus)<sup>15</sup>, a long-lived monk of the canonical order of St. Augustine, the same statement is made, with the addition that *nóminas* promising protection against war wounds, plague or sudden death by drowning or fire create a false illusion in their users, because they cannot have such an effect either naturally or by divine decree, and consequently, they should be discontinued. Whoever wears such amulets commits a mortal sin. The *nóminas* may be worn if they contain familiar, commonly understood names, such as names known from the Gospel, scripture or the names of saints. They may not contain any other drawing or demonic invocation other than the sign of the cross. According to Azpilcueta’s **confessions**, it is also not permitted for the wearer of the amulets (*nóminas*) to have false expectations of the quality of the material (usually virgin parchment, according to the specifications),

9 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: 132.

10 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: 132.

11 O’Neil, Mary R, 1984: 60.

<sup>12</sup> Hereinafter I will use the original Spanish term *nómina*.

13 Later *amulets*, known also from the German-speaking world (*Brevertl*), also included images of saints and herbs. In a sixteenth-century treatise by Pedro Ciruelo, he refers to the wrapping of herbs and other small objects in Spanish territory, with attention to their shape and number, but this is a false illusion and forbidden by the Church. Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 123.

14 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007. The Franciscan author points out that no *nómina* should be worn that has not been authorized by a prelate or magistrate (*gobernador de la iglesia*). Castañega, Martín de 2007: 132.

15 The long-lived monk (1492-1586), theologian, philosopher, economist, had a great influence on the canon law and ethics of his time; his book was published eighty-one times in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

the nature of the writing or the way it was made, the circumstances in which the text was recorded (for example, written in the light of the rising sun or while reading the Gospel) or the person who made it (a virgin maiden); just as the color, quality and material of the canvases covering the text (linen or silk wrapped *nóminas*), the method of its making (sewing), the number of knots and the way they are tied, cannot be expected to produce a ‘miraculous’ effect.<sup>16</sup> Pedro Ciruelo has called for even stricter regulation of *nóminas*. The relevant section of his treatise on superstition is an indignant outcry against the popular forms of verbal magic of the time. He states that, as in the case of the verbal charms (*ensalmos*), words cannot have a natural effect in curing disease, since the cure would then be outside the body, which cannot be conceived of otherwise than by diabolical or divine assistance.<sup>17</sup> He set out ten rigid rules on *nóminas*, explaining in detail when their use is a sin or a superstitious act, what beliefs, texts, words, attitudes he finds objectionable about them, and suggesting other procedures instead of the condemned practices. It also speaks out against the use of closed text amulets. His detailed examples give us an idea of how the faithful in the early modern Spanish monarchy used *nóminas*.<sup>18</sup> Ciruelo tries to shift the belief in the magical power of the object, the general magical use of the texts for various purposes, and the desire for healing towards another form of individual devotion, the practice of prayer, either read aloud or spoken aloud.<sup>19</sup> In his lengthy reasoning, he is indulgent with only one text, “*Iesus Christus Maria virgo mater Dei. Kyrie eleyson. Pater noster. Ave Maria. Credo in Deum*”. He also calls for the practice of prayer by the doctor and family members involved in the healing process.<sup>20</sup> In his reforms, Ciruelo applies, in the words of Alejandro Campagne, “a pedagogy of fear”, with the prospect of divine punishment for the use of forbidden *nómina*, which, even if it cures the patient of his or her ills, will later lead to serious illness.<sup>21</sup>

As we have seen from the Inquisition trial of Pere Amich, the priest, as a complementary gesture to healing bewitchment, could also prepare a *nómina* for the patient, which he ordered to be placed at the patient’s bedside. This was also not an exceptional practice in the Principality of Catalonia in the early modern period. The practice of having the priest bless the medicine prescribed by the doctor or, for example, the clyster, was also well known.

16 Azpilcueta, Martín de 1545: 53.

17 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 124.

18 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 125-126.

19 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 133. Encouraging prayer was also the most obvious protection against unorthodox practices in Gentilcore’s investigations in southern Italy. Gentilcore, David 1992: 96. Ciruelo is only one example among many regarding the text of the officially accepted *nóminas*, who has received more attention in this study because he was reissued a few years before the examined Inquisition trial, with the recommendation of the Bishop of Solsona. Later demonological works, however, also accept other texts as admissible, such as Benito Remingio Noyens’ *Práctica de Exorcismos y Ministros de la Iglesia*, published in 1688, in his manual *Práctica de Exorcismos y Ministros de la Iglesia*, which contains the seven last words of Christ on the cross. (Noydens, Benito Remigio 1688: 27.)

20 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 134.

21 Cf. Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2002: 415.

All of these less formal measures could be used to alleviate a wide range of ailments, including those of natural origin. By contrast, the clerical remedies of *coniuratio* and exorcism were reserved for the treatment of conditions of supernatural origin caused by harmful magic (*maleficium*) or demonic possession (*possessio*), through the intervention of an authorized specialist.<sup>22</sup>

Indulging local needs, there were some priests, whether clerics or self-employed exorcists, who crossed the already fluid boundaries of permissible ecclesiastical medicine and performed other magical procedures for the faithful, in addition to healing: They undertook the task of searching for buried treasure or finding a thief through invocations, magical texts,<sup>23</sup> and thus became sought after and respected by their clientele. Moreover, the access of the clergy to liturgical resources such as holy oil, holy water, incense, as well as their linguistic, literary and ceremonial knowledge, their connections, and the fact that they had easy access to liturgical or even magical books and manuscripts, made their cooperation with the faithful crucial in various individualized, bottom-up magical procedures. In the same diocese where Pere Amich was active, in the town of Solsona, similar magical needs were being served by a Castilian hermit, Jacinto García, who was prosecuted by the Inquisition in 1641 not only for unauthorized exorcisms, but also for treasure hunting, the use of illegal (magic) books and texts, demon conjuration and divination, *quiromancia* (palmistry), in other words, for several forms of magic.<sup>24</sup> His example proves that certain accusations against exorcists can bear a striking resemblance to accusations against lay healers, arising from their ambivalent character, and could drift overnight into the realm of harmful magic. The name *bruixot* (male witch) appeared in the testimonies against the hermit Jacinto García. Among other local conflicts, this label may have been due to the opinion of another health ‘entrepreneur’ (*herbolari*) in the town, who was consulted by a town resident when a treasure hunt led by the hermit failed. As one witness testimony reveals, the *herbolari* looked at the handwritten treasure hunt text used as a script and told the man who sought his advice that the hermit was performing a forbidden procedure, namely demon conjuration.<sup>25</sup>

The case of Pere Puig, a priest (*presbítero*) serving in the municipality of La Garriga in the Principality of Catalonia, against whom a woman and four men testified before the Holy Tribunal in 1637, seems less egregious based on the surviving sources. The priest healed the faithful with oil. He treated the sick in their homes, performing exorcisms on them. He anointed their faces, foreheads, ears, feet,

22 O’Neil, Mary R, 1984: 60.

23 In Catalan territory, in the sixteenth century, tales of buried treasure were particularly favored by the flourishing of banditry.

24 I have published several studies on the case of the hermit in recent years, and I am still pursuing my research with a monographic ambition. See for instance: Smid, Bernadett 2019.

25 We know from French case studies that exorcism was also used by priests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to establish hierarchies among themselves, and in France it became a means of accusing other priests of witchcraft. With such accusations, priests were responding to the French Catholic reform after Trent, giving form to its principles. On several occasions in the seventeenth century, exorcists asked the possessed to publicly recount the seductions and betrayals of alleged witch-priests. The examples seem to suggest that exorcism became an allegory for the new reformist clergy and spawned a new class of purified Catholic priests. Ferber, Sarah 2004: 64-66.

hands, breasts, hearts and stomachs with holy oil, while crossing himself. He consecrated bread, wine, chicken, raisins, almonds, and stated that the existing illness was a result of witchcraft and bewitchment. As proof of this, he asked patients to bring him any objects of bewitchment (such as bundles of feathers) they found in their homes. Indeed, these objects were found in the households, and he burned them in his own home in front of several people. According to witnesses, the priest was inspired by the *Malleus Maleficarum*, which he used to perform divination to find out who caused the illness caused by bewitchment, who the witch was. Puig was eventually made to answer for his actions before the Holy Tribunal. On July 17, 1637, he handed over to the Inquisition his manuscript book of exorcisms, which unfortunately has not survived among the sources. He was severely reprimanded and cautioned by the Holy Tribunal.<sup>26</sup>

Another case came before the Holy Tribunal in 1674. This was when testimony was given against Father Josep Faura (*presbítero*), a priest of Santa María del Mar in Barcelona. He would invite all the ‘*endemoniados*’ (demon-possessed) in the area to his own house, where he would sit them around a table late at night holding a candle. They all stared at the light of the candle lit in the middle of the table. On the table were three more books and some stoles, which he laid in turn on the shoulders of those present, and then on his head and shoulders, while he said the prayers and performed the exorcism prescribed by the *Rituale Romanum*, at least according to the testimony of the witnesses. During the ritual, the possessed people made more and more noise, making a series of obscene gestures, wailing, cursing, and communal fits of hysteria, which increasingly disturbed the priest’s neighbors until the incident was reported to the Inquisition. The trial was swift, and Faura was banned from performing exorcisms.<sup>27</sup>

The Inquisition punished the clergy’s transgressions deemed as superstition depending on the severity of the cases. Minor “ignorance” was punished with a reprimand, but documented demon conjuration could result in exile, and in the event of a relapse, even galley slavery. The punishment for the domestic, secondary use of sacramentals is also evidenced in the Inquisition trials. In any case, the Holy Tribunal functioned as a school of Catholic reform in the Early Modern period, where one of the primary aims was the religious education of the lower clergy and the lower classes.<sup>28</sup>

There are many sources to prove that the first demonological works and superstitious treatises published in the early modern Spanish empire did not produce any breakthrough results in 100 years, neither among the illiterate population, nor among the lower classes. In the early modern healing practice, ‘unorthodox’ elements, texts forbidden by the Church or condemned to expurgation (correction), kept resurfacing. However, control was not an easy task in an empire of this size, which integrated a considerable part of the New World. The reform of exorcism can be imagined as a long cultural process that took place simultaneously at local levels. In the words of Mose Sluhovskiy, “until

26 For the case report on him, see AHN Inq. Lib. 734. No. 9. 79v–80.

27 AHN Inq. Lib. 735. fol. 302v–303.

28 The *abjuracio* documents of the Inquisition show what practices were considered as heresy. The statistical analysis of the types of punishment in the context of exorcisms is not addressed in this study.



the first systematic attempt to define and restrict exorcismal practices – an attempt that had started in the second half of the sixteenth century but did not achieve much success until the nineteenth century – exorcism was a routine and nondramatic occurrence that was practiced by many thousands of individuals, some of them ecclesiastics, but the large majority members of the laity.”<sup>29</sup> We rarely see an exact scenario of how the exorcism of a lay specialist, or the exorcism of a diagnosed supernatural illness, took place, and how it compared to the ceremonies performed by a licensed exorcist (yet shaped by the specialist within a certain framework).<sup>30</sup> We can infer a multiplicity of coexisting practices drawing on different manuals, and clerical acts of healing bewitchment fell within the scope of exorcisms in the early modern Principality of Catalonia. As a parallel, it is worth mentioning Jonathan Seitz, who examines Venetian exorcisms in a broad sense, as healing practices, which was how Venetians in witchcraft trials saw them.<sup>31</sup>

In the light of all this, the question arises: why is it that in the Early Modern period, some regions would be characterized by a series of spectacular, theatrical exorcisms, while in others, exorcisms were performed on a monthly basis as part of ecclesiastical medicine, behind closed doors, without major scandals? Seitz explained the difference between the two scenarios in the context of Venice. In contrast to the situation in northern Europe, by the end of the sixteenth century the threat of Protestant expansion in Venice had subsided, so the theatrical exorcisms were no longer needed to strengthen Catholicism.<sup>32</sup> By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, public exorcisms were therefore no longer the norm in this region.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, most of the healing acts performed by clerics took place in private ‘behind closed doors’, at the request of the patient or the patient’s family or friends, the primary aim being to identify illnesses believed to be supernatural in origin, based on various identifiable symptoms, to make a diagnosis, or to accept and cure the diagnosis pronounced by the community.<sup>34</sup> Patients testifying in Inquisition trials saw the exorcist as a cleric who could heal illnesses that physicians could not cure. At a time when the witch trials in Western Europe were on the wane, Venetians, like the Catalans, continued to practice magical divination, to look for signs of bewitchment and supernaturally acquired illness in their sick children, and to seek the services of

29 Sluhovsky, Mose 2007: 33-34.

30 A mixture of ritual elements, gestures and texts could form the practice of a lay specialist. The cases of the Barcelona tribunal show that in the Early Modern period, the practice of curing *maleficium* cases with special prayers was common among lay healing specialists in the Principality of Catalonia. If the cure was unsuccessful, they were often the ones to be charged with *maleficium* (for instance, Madalena Ferrera, a 47-year-old woman healer, in 1621. Cf. Knutsen, Gunnar 2009: 62.)

31 Seitz, Jonathan 2011: 99. Seitz doubts that exorcisms presented as theatrical spectacles were really the norm in France, England or elsewhere. Judging from the Venetian Inquisition files, clerical healing was commonplace in Venice, as it presumably was elsewhere. But it is precisely these private, ordinary cures that historians find difficult to access, rather than those ‘staged’ in front of large crowds according to a carefully planned scenario. Seitz points out that the main function of exorcisms is not to be found in their spectacle.

32 In his book on the exorcist of Zombor, Dániel Bárh deals in detail with the issue of publicity, including the cases of other European exorcists (e.g. Gassner). In the case of Friar Rókus, who was active in Zombor, he notes that the exorcist spectacle was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it was a glorious missionary activity, in that it led to conversions, but it could also be a source of dismay, since there were occasional reports of the degradation of Catholic ritual as a result of exorcisms. Bárh Dániel 2016: 253.

33 There is also an important difference in the nature of the disease. The Italian Inquisition trials presented by Seitz do not testify to the theatrical exorcisms mentioned in the exorcist manuals, like those in France, where the possessed person is cured by the exorcist in a lengthy ritual, but to the remedy of *maleficium* cases. O’Neil, Mary R. 1984: 60. For details of the French cases, see Walker, D. P. 1981, and Ferber, Sarah 2004.

34 Cf. Seitz, Jonathan 2011: 99.

priestly and non-priestly healers to restore them to health. And specialists in ecclesiastical and lay medicine were seen as a supernatural resource to rely on in the everyday fight against witchcraft.<sup>35</sup> The witch trials carried out by the Inquisition in the Catalan territory had subsided by the second third of the seventeenth century, which does not mean that local communities no longer believed in the harm done by witches. All that had changed was that the social control of the church and the repression exercised by the Inquisition had shifted to other group(s). Pere Amich, as a local healer, was also not brought before the Holy Tribunal for curing demonic possession, but for diagnosing and treating cases of *maleficium* caused by witches among his followers. The possible sequence of events will be discussed later.

### **The pluralist medical market**

In order to get a rough idea of exorcism and the perception of health and disease in early modern Catalonia, we need to think in terms of the coexistence of systems of medicine, the so-called medical pluralism. We do not yet know what percentage of the healing specialists in the Principality of Catalonia in the Early Modern period were priests or monks, either in rural or urban areas. Without a precise database, it would be pointless to make estimates. A more interesting question than the determination of proportions, however, seems to be the mapping of the ‘cooperation’, competition or coexistence of the various healers, their relationship with each other, in the light of the available sources, and bearing in mind that the demonological works of the period can only provide an incomplete ‘map’ of this relationship in terms of the balance of power as imagined by the Church. It is from this perspective that the **medical pluralism** will be discussed below.

In addition to the priestly task of spiritual guidance, the focus on curing illnesses placed exorcists in the circle of healers; they were an alternative to medical advice or local healers for their patients. Based on sources from the Kingdom of Aragon, neighboring the Principality of Catalonia, María Tausiet concluded that for many Aragonese in the sixteenth century, ecclesiastical medicine mediated by priests was practically equivalent and interchangeable with the healing options offered by various popular healers (*ensalmadores, santiguadores, desaojadores, saludadores, etc.*).<sup>36</sup> For illnesses believed to be of supernatural origin, patients came to them with similar expectations, with no dividing line between scientific, religious, magical or superstitious cures.<sup>37</sup> Italian examples also show that if the knowledge of one specialist did not work and the patient did not improve, in order to

35 Seitz, Jonathan 2011: 95.

36 Tausiet, María 2000: 345.

37 Tausiet, María 2000: 344.

achieve the goal, i.e. a cure, it was necessary to consult another specialist. This does not mean, of course, that the different specialists were completely interchangeable. The perception of the disease, the pathology, could be a key factor in the decision to consult a particular specialist, the need to discover the cause of the disease, or the person who caused it, could in itself determine which healer was consulted. But for many options, there are no empirical data on the ways of interpreting symptoms locally, on the cognitive processes behind the choice of specialists, on the patterns that determine the decision mechanism, and we can only rely on indirect sources and on cases with similar outcomes under similar circumstances and conditions. But often the only way to find out is through the written, critical and snarling opinions of the Church. Viewed from above, there was rarely reciprocity between lay and ecclesiastical medicine, but rather competition. Still, if there was a reputable and charismatic healer in a given settlement, it was rare, but it could happen that the priest, having defined his own limits of competence, would not take on the more serious cases, but would send the patient to the local healer.<sup>38</sup>

Competing specialists (at least healers with a well-defined method known in the wider field, perhaps specializing in a certain type of disease) were included in the early modern Spanish demonological treatises and confessional mirrors. Different authors gave them different emphasis, and in the light of the ecclesiastical works in question, we can also see significant differences in the way in which each group was treated. Martín de Azpilcueta in his confessional mirror, for example, is permissive towards healers who are neither trained physicians nor priests, as long as they do not practice magic (*hechicería*) or enchantment (*encantamiento*). In his view, the activity of *ensalmadores* and *santiguadores*, who heal with prayers and verbal charms, did not disturb the Church as long as they used authorized prayers in the healing process and the healer himself was a righteous man..<sup>39</sup> Pedro Ciruelo, on the other hand, was less tolerant of several groups of specialists, taking the view that any practice is superstition if it seeks healing outside natural remedies, prayer or the passion of the saints, and notoriously stressed that the penalties against such healers should be toughened as soon as possible. With a group of *ensalmadores*<sup>40</sup>, who promise to heal ulcers and other sores and abscesses through the power of words and other means (natural medicine or other means such as amulets). After naming them, Ciruelo immediately refers to the problems they treat as medical problems, noting that they deal with diseases that fall within the domain of surgeons. Typically, when discussing the various healers, the theologian first urges that diseases of natural origin be treated by a physician.<sup>41</sup> Behind his seemingly modern ideas, however, it is worth looking at the distribution of physicians in some areas of the Spanish monarchy. Nevertheless, even though the physician appears first in rank in his

38 Examples of this kind in Italy are reported by: O'Neil Mary R. 1984: 68-69.

39 Azpilcueta, Martín de 1554 (1568): fol. 47.

40 For more details, see Smid Bernadett 2019b: 226.

41 Cf. Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2002: 353.

treatise, he had to act within the ethical framework of religion, as in most treatises, and in the practice of medicine he was advised to pray and to have his remedies blessed by a priest.

Among the specialists, who at one time received some formal training, was the *herbolari*, an “ointment man” familiar with medicinal herbs, who could also learn from medical books. Confidence in his work was helped by the fact that he promoted empirical knowledge. The particular healing style of each specialist meant that he could add other elements to his procedures based on his knowledge of herbs, such as the preparation of *nóminas*.<sup>42</sup>

With the development of formal medicine, the figure of the physician became increasingly important in early modern Spanish demonological treatises and other theological works. A few years before the trial of Pere Amich at the Inquisition, in 1631, Gaspar Navarro published *El Tribunal de Superstición Ladina*, in which he paid particular attention to the relationship between doctor and priest. This issue had already been addressed in earlier Spanish-language treatises on demonology, such as those by Pedro Ciruelo and Franciscan Martín de Castañega, but the publication of this work and its novel approach indicate that it was important for the Church, in a pluralistic system of healing and health-seeking practices, to clarify the responsibilities of the healer and to share the hegemony. Navarro, who served as a village priest for eighteen years, urges that patients suffering from physical pain be examined by a physician, but points out that in the case of supernatural illnesses, the doctor is powerless, natural remedies are ineffective and only exorcism can help.<sup>43</sup> The devil is described as “the most expert physician”, with an excellent knowledge of herbs and animals. Navarro also wanted to ensure the presence of the Church in medicine by having natural medicines blessed by a priest and mixed with holy water by physicians to make the treatment more effective. He notes that even when a doctor is not available, it is still possible to heal the body, with God’s help.<sup>44</sup> And if Navarro has diminished the role of the physician in healing, he has also absolved him of responsibility in the event of the patient’s death.<sup>45</sup>

They did not specialize in curing *maleficium* cases, but among the healers, it is worth mentioning the specialists known as *saludador*, who mainly cured rabies and hydrophobia, and around whom

42 These healers could also have been tried by the Inquisition for superstition and witchcraft in the Early Modern period. A not-too-distant case of a *herbolari* in Valencia in 1668 is reported in detail in: Schmitz, Carolin - López Terrada, Marialuz 2015.

43 Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2002: 363-364.

44 Navarro, Gaspar 1631: fol. 80v. We know from the testimonies of Inquisition trials that the faithful did indeed bring medicines and clysters to the priest for blessing.

45 Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2002: 365. “Do not attribute the healing of illness to doctors or medicines, but to God, because it is he who is able to heal illnesses. And if the cure is not miraculous, do not complain of bad doctors, for the cure is not accomplished by the will of God, who gives the sickness for the benefit and use of the soul. If the doctor is mistaken, or because he does not know the disease and therefore prescribes the wrong remedy, this error is accomplished by the will of God.”

theological controversy arose in the early modern Spanish monarchy.<sup>46</sup> By the beginning of the seventeenth century, their functions had become clearly identifiable. These specialists healed with saliva, were born under special circumstances, on Christmas Eve or Good Friday, usually as the seventh son in the family. They wore the wheel of St. Catherine or St. Quiteria on their palates as a stigma and were considered to be related to them. Spanish *saludadores* had divination abilities, claimed to be able to tame fire (they held red-hot iron in their hands, walked on glowing embers, could put out the wildest fires with seven blows, etc.), and were also endowed with thaumaturgical powers. Pedro Ciruelo also strongly attacked them in his demonological work. Unlike his contemporaries, such as Castañega, he demonized them, and the theologians could not reach an agreement during the long-running dispute over the *saludadores* (c. 1530-1740). One of the dubious activities of these special healers, in the Church's view, was to pass on bread moistened with their saliva to their patients as a healing relic. They were sought-after, charismatic healers. The following example illustrates a possible contemporary strategy for resolving the conflict between the local religion(s) and the Church: if demonizing healers branded as superstitious or instilling fear in the faithful who visited them did not succeed, the supernatural could be clericalized.<sup>47</sup> In this particular case, the supernatural healing functions of the *saludador* were used by a priest to establish and fulfil his personal charisma. In his work *Patrocino de ángeles y combate de demonios*, published in 1652, Fray Francisco de Blasco Lanuza mentions a priest who was serving in the parish of La Nuza in Aragón (Bishopric of Jaca) and began to spread the word that he had acquired supernatural powers to cure rabies through the intercession of St. Quiteria.<sup>48</sup> He cured sick animals and people by means of devotions, and his successes led him to be visited from ever more distant lands.

### **Maleficium and ecclesiastical medicine**

One of the key questions in ecclesiastical medicine was whether a particular illness was of natural or supernatural origin. If the physician's treatment did not help, the suspicion arose that the illness was of supernatural origin, and the patient was then the focus of interest of several specialists. The procedure involved not only treating the disease, but also finding the cause of the disease. Interpreting the disease in this cause-and-effect relationship also involved mapping community relations and

46 Fabián Alejandro Campagne has summarized the theological arguments and counter-arguments about the *saludador's* activity, based on the work of seventeen contemporary authors. For details see. Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2002: 247-267.

47 Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2007: 329.

48 Cited by Campagne, Fabián Alejandro 2007: 330.

conflicts. The clerical service of exorcism against *maleficium* shows that the church mediated in the troubles of the local community not only through confession and sermons, but also through exorcism. To understand the perception of illness and trouble, let us start from the types of illnesses, life situations and crises that were attributed to evil in the early modern Spanish monarchy. Marital and sexual disorders were also associated with *maleficium*. Already in the *Malleus Maleficarum* it was suggested that limitation and restraint of male sexual potency, impotence, discomfort caused by nocturnal pressing beings, excessive sex life could also be a consequence of bewitchment, as could obsessive or excessive love-seeking behavior. It was thus used to explain all forms of deviation from the norm, positive or negative.

Since an exorcist was contracted to treat supernatural ailments, the first thing he had to do was to identify *maleficium* or *possessio*. This task was complicated by the fact that the same disease could have its origin in natural or demonic causes, and that the diabolical presence could be a feature of several diseases. For instance, Girolamo Menghi, with his exorcist manuals, tried to introduce some clarity into this seemingly complex process by formulating specific criteria to distinguish between the sources of the same symptoms. In practice, however, exorcists were less likely to adhere strictly to these and similar guidelines and could be helped in their diagnosis by the divinatory tradition and consensus of the local community. In some cases, as we can see from several testimonies in Italy, patients may have come to the priest as a healer after the divination had already taken place, and the diagnosis of *maleficium* was made by themselves, the family or the community, in most cases naming the person who had done the harm. However, the identity of the person who caused the bewitchment was not necessarily part of the diagnosis, and even less of the testimonies.<sup>49</sup>

The ritual of exorcism in the case of ills caused by bewitchment could also include natural remedies: physical treatment and purging of the body. This is supported by several types of sources. Exorcist manuals popular in the Early Modern period, such as Zaccaria Visconti's *Complementum*, include recipes containing a mixture of various herbs. In addition to benedictions, ointments, baths made from recipes, fumigations, various aromas or purgative remedies guaranteeing rapid bodily purification for patients with symptoms of vomiting<sup>50</sup> may also have been an additional element of exorcisms or *coniuratio*s to treat diseases caused by *maleficium*. The practical use of the relevant recommendations of the manuals is also supported by the testimonies of early modern Inquisition trial.<sup>51</sup> The possibility of natural remedies for supernatural illnesses is also mentioned in demonological works, albeit rarely. In his treatise published in 1618, Torreblanca Villalpando also discusses how to indirectly expel the devil from the body. The author describes how, by inducing vomiting, one can successfully change

49 O'Neil, Mary R. 1984: 61.

50 Visconti, Zaccaria 1638: fol. 44-45.

51 Visconti also gives a prescription for the treatment of impotence caused by *maleficium*.

the proportion of the patient's bodily fluids, especially the black bile, and consequently improve the condition of the patient.<sup>52</sup>

Returning to the ecclesiastical point of view, the Franciscan Castañega devoted a whole chapter of his treatise to discussing the *coniuratio*s allowed in cases of bewitchment (*maleficium*) or **enchantment** (*hechizo*),<sup>53</sup> while in another chapter he spoke out against local specialists who could remove the bewitchment.<sup>54</sup> The Franciscan theologian Alfonso de Castro also refers to this when he writes in his treatise, that it is not necessary to resort to a devil's covenant to cure bewitchment. He advises praying holy prayers to ward off the spell. This advice raises new problems of interpretation, since the dichotomy of the concept of prayer (good and bad prayer) recurs in early modern Spanish demonological works. The Franciscan also recommends the destruction of the instruments used for the bewitchment, which will immediately remove the effect of it.<sup>55</sup> But let us return to the advice of the other Franciscan, Castañega. According to the authorized ecclesiastical method, it is first necessary to establish whether the *maleficium* is of a notorious nature and evident, or whether it is a figment of the imagination, as in the case of feigned possession.<sup>56</sup> If it is really a case of *maleficium* or a **sorcery**, then only God should be approached. They should trust in their wise confessor, examine their consciences carefully, and come to the sacrament with purity and reverence at the Mass dedicated to the chains of St. Peter, at the end of the Mass the Gospel of St. John (*In principio erat verbum*) should be read to them, and at the end of the part of "Word became flesh" they should fall down with great reverence and kiss the ground in memory of the Son of God who has delivered mankind from evil. Pray the Creed often, with great reverence, and read the *Quicumque vult* to them.<sup>57</sup> According to Castañega's treatise, they may wear real "relics" around their necks, with an inscription from the Gospel passage *In principio...*, with no other image except the sign of the cross. They should take some of the holy water every Sunday and sprinkle it around the house and room and sprinkle it on the bed. They should eat consecrated bread every Sunday on an empty stomach, and always carry a cross of some kind with which to make the sign of the cross and often mention the name of Jesus. They may drink water used to cleanse the chalice and other relics, just as the water used to wash the wounds of St. Francis has healing powers. After these are performed, those suffering

52 Torreblanca Villalpando, Francisco 1618: fol. 162r-164r.

53 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: 180-181. Chapter XXI. Campagne points out that a similar procedure is seen in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, where the authors also list the remedies accepted and prescribed by the Church for *maleficium* and **enchantment**.

54 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: chapter XVII.

55 Lásd Campagne, Fabián de 2002: 416.

56 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: 179.

57 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: 179. One of the most fundamental Catholic prayers of the period was the *Quicumque vult*, a creed attributed to St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, on the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation.

from illnesses due to bewitchment or **charms** should trust in God and their requests will be heard, if not, then it is God's will.<sup>58</sup>

The cure for illnesses caused by harmful supernatural forces, according to the guidance of Girolamo Menghi, a Franciscan exorcist popular in Spain and Catalonia, could take various forms of ecclesiastical medicine, such as confession, pilgrimage or, in justified cases, exorcism, based on the *Compendio* manual. Pedro Ciruelo suggested that, in order to cure illnesses due to *maleficium* and their physical symptoms, one should first try natural remedies and various forms of devotion, such as prayers, mass, almsgiving, and then, if these failed, seek the help of an exorcist as a special procedure. If none of these remedies are effective, they should trust in God's will and accept death. Involving the exorcist in this case is not only an attempt to resolve the conflictual relationships in the community, family or marriage, but also a need to assert ecclesiastical control.

We have seen that children were taken to exorcisms by their parents as a preventive measure and also for existing illnesses attributed to bewitchment. The question arises, to what extent did the ritual for children differ from that for adults? At this stage of the research, only a few data have been found on this. Zaccaria Visconti suggests that children who are "not yet of intellect" should be anointed with oil and bathed by exorcists, with particular care for the limbs.<sup>59</sup>

In Pere Amich's Inquisition trial, we saw that the exorcist also sought to purge the whole house when dealing with cases of possession. Pedro Ciruelo also gave the ideal scenario of this procedure in his demonological manual. He advised that when the devil was possessing the residents of a house, after an examination of conscience and confession, they should remove from the house anything that might offend God and pray. As long as the 'siege' of the house lasts, a priest should enter the dwelling every day and at the beginning of the evening, wearing a surplice and a stole, and enter each room, reciting the psalm *Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi*, followed by the Gospel of St. John (*In principio erat verbum*), accompanied by other sacred texts. As well as the exorcism of the consecration of water on Sundays, and place in each room a cross made of consecrated **twigs** and a candle, and always have holy water in each room.<sup>60</sup> They should have a mass said and ask God and the saints to deliver the place from his wrath and send his guardian angel to cast out the devil, to whom they should answer nothing, whatever he asks. On no account should 'sorcerers' be called who want to cast out the devil with *coniuratio*s and ceremonies, for this will highly offend God.<sup>61</sup> It is clear from this detail that one

58 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 2007: 179.

59 Visonti, Zaccaria 1638: fol. 50.

60 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 47-49. The use of holy water and the cross in every room is also recommended by Gaspar Navarro. The healing power of holy water and its effectiveness against demonic possession are also highlighted in his work published in 1631. Navarro, Gaspar 1631: fol. 112v, 114r.

61 Noydens' exorcist's manual, published in the last third of the seventeenth century, also refers to the rites to be performed in the dwelling. See Noydens, Benito Remigio 1688: 265. In the case of bewitched animals, the manual also recommends avoiding the folk specialists, they should bless the straw and hay of the animals and pray while feeding them. In addition, the priest should check for the presence of an object of bewitchment under the threshold



of Ciruelo's ambitions was to replace the various functions of local, popular specialists entirely with ecclesiastical rites.

This brings us to another important issue, the discussion of personal charisma, both in the case of popular specialists and the official exorcists empowered by the Church itself. In addition to the exorcist being expected to be of perfect personal moral chastity, the ritual had to be preceded by a preparation phase. A series of successful exorcisms could mean that a particular priest became more respected and sought after than his peers. Girolamo Menghi explained at length in his manual that in his experience exorcists lacked the knowledge necessary to practice the art of exorcism and cited negative examples from his own experience. In a town in Lombardy, he saw with his own eyes how an exorcist, who had never produced any books on the art of exorcism, proclaimed himself able to detect and cure any case of *maleficium* he came across. Patients flocked to him, and his reputation spread so widely that patients came to him from all parts of Italy in the hope of a cure. He even went so far as to diagnose never-before-seen patients from a distance, often including the symptoms. Since exorcisms could not be performed in the absence of the patient, Menghi warned that the proclamation of such powers implied fraud or divination.

The church in the early modern period expected the clergy to discern where the line was drawn between what they considered superstitious acts and religiously acceptable techniques, but our sources seem to indicate a wide variety of exorcism and demonology manuals, the plethora of devotional popular publications, the competition and the insistent demands of the faithful could have 'confused' even the most pedantic exorcist, even if in fact he knew the limits of the help that could be offered within the official framework.

### **The embodiment of the 'other': the illicit exorcist**

We know that no exclusive official exorcism rite existed in the Roman Catholic liturgy until the 1614 publication of the *Rituale Romanum* by Pope Paul V. At that time, the new ritual had not yet become binding, but rather served as a model for the whole Church. In what follows, it is worth briefly discussing what we know about the exorcisms of the period before the introduction of the *Rituale Romanum* in the Early Modern period, and what exorcist practices can be inferred from the exorcist manuals and demonological works popular in the Spanish territory in the 1630s and 1640s, immediately a few decades after the publication of the *Rituale Romanum*. Even if there was no forced and rapid change, the *Rituale Romanum* was published to curb the excesses of exorcists, and priests

and, if found, burn it. Some people have dug up entire barns and successfully destroyed the bewitchment. Noydens, Benito Remigio 1688: 314.

were strictly forbidden to gather in crowds during the exorcism ritual.<sup>62</sup> What was the reason for this restriction and how successful was it?

After the Council of Trent, a long and slow process of ecclesiastical reform began, one of the aims of which was to purge the priestly role in moral and intellectual terms and to distance it from the lay people. What do we know about this slow process? In addition to the Inquisition trials, early modern treatises on demonology published in the Spanish monarchy are a good source for examining the critical discourse of exorcism. We must bear in mind, however, that each author had a different attitude and temperament towards certain elements of local religion, lay specialists, and texts used for exorcism. Thus, individual works on demonology cover a wide spectrum of views, from almost uncritical popularization of exorcism to angry skepticism.<sup>63</sup> While some authors were more permissive, others called for immediate drastic change and dwelled on the insidious conspiracies of demons and exorcists to deceive people about exorcism. Reading the treatises also reveals the dynamics of thinking about evil, as the theological reasoning about exorcism is also a reflection on the devil as the agent of undesirable actions. The critique of exorcism from the perspective of the Church is at once a critique of the lower clergy, their lack of knowledge from the perspective of theologians, the charismatic ‘outburst’ of some priests, and the popular and diverse exorcism practices of lay folk specialists, and the intertwining of all these.

However, we must also remember that not all treatises have become equally relevant. The number of republications of demonological works and the place of publication can tell us about the success, reception and reference value of each work at the time. It is clear that Pedro Ciruelo’s treatise on demonology are of particular importance for the study of early modern Catalan ecclesiastical aspirations.<sup>64</sup>

The embodiment of the other, the ‘illicit exorcist’, the need to marginalize him, and at the same time the behavioral paradigm expected of exorcists, is also evident in this demonological treatise. In what follows, I will review the relevant comments, with a view to making sense of the diversity of exorcist practices in the early modern Spanish monarchy and, where local sources allow, in the Principality of Catalonia.<sup>65</sup>

What kind of ‘flawed’ practices can be found in this work? And who performed such rites according to the author? In his treatise, Pedro Ciruelo condemns, first and foremost, the ignorant priests who,

62 Cf. Ferber, Sarah 2003: 59. Ferber gives a detailed account of the use of exorcism in the French religious wars of 1562-1629, one of the aims of which was to recatholize the Huguenots. The theatrical, sensational public exorcisms were associated with cases of *possessio* rather than *maleficium*.

63 Cf. Ferber, Sarah 2004: 39.

64 In 1628, it was republished with a foreword and an encouraging recommendation from the Bishop of Solsona, the Viceroy and Captain General of the Principality of Catalonia, Don Miguel Santos de San Pedro, the head of the geographical and cultural area under study. Its local use and folkloric value have been reported in a previous study. Smid Bernadett 2019: 215-241.

65 Specific local examples are always indicated in the text.

after the first tonsure, perform public exorcisms, even though they are not even members of minor orders.<sup>66</sup> The spectacular exorcisms carried out in public were more related to cases of *possessio* than to *maleficium* and sorcery. The theatrical, dramatic and loud exorcisms were also an opportunity to create the appearance of individual priestly charisma, ‘chosenness’, miracle or ‘sanctity’, and thus to create a competitive situation among priests.

Ciruelo condemns those exorcists (in his words “*sacadores de los espíritus*”) who pretend to expel the devil from people possessed by spirits (*esperitados*) or demons (*endemoniados*), who have long conversations with the devil in public, because they want to gain an advantage over other priests. This practice could be specific to public, theatrical exorcisms. He calls them necromancers (*nigrománticos*), sorcerers (*hechiceros*) and claims that they are the worst of all *coniurators*. Ciruelo could not yet have referred to Menghi’s exorcist manuals, given that they were published after Ciruelo’s death, but it did not take long for the various practices to spread in writing. A cleric must have been on his feet in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, able to navigate the cavalcade of conflicting demonological treatises and fresh exorcist manuals. Indeed, the technique of prolonged interrogation is explicitly recommended as a rite in European exorcist manuals, such as Zacaria Visconti’s *Complementum Artis Exorcistae*. Visconti even explained the various types of languages which could be used in exorcism. Girolamo Menghi also suggested discussion when describing some of the exorcist rites of *Flagellum*. In the *Compendio* he recommends exorcists to be particularly careful when questioning demons. They should not question out of curiosity, but exclusively to take control of the fight against evil. They may ask whether God’s creation was possessed by one or more demons and why they chose him/her. They can also ask the name of the demon and when and how, and which saint they can call upon to end the torment of the possessed.<sup>67</sup> In this regard, Martín de Azpilcueta, author of the “*Manual de confesores y penitents*”, a confessional mirror published in Zaragoza in 1555, argued that in cases of demonic possession, it was permissible to ask the demon questions for the benefit of others, but forbidden to solicit or conspire with them.<sup>68</sup> We can see how contradictory the positions of the various authors were on this issue as well.

As the great European exorcist manuals were being republished, it was appropriate that Pere Antoni Jofreu, in his 1628 edition of Ciruelo’s work, published with the need for reform, should mention some of them in his additional notes on exorcism. He recommends Girolamo Menghi’s manuals *Flagellum daemonum* and *Fustis daemonum*, as well as the *Malleus Maleficarum*, as reading for priests, alongside the works of Martín de Río, Francisco Torreblanca Villalpando and Emanuel do Valle de Moura, in order to avoid superstitious misconduct.<sup>69</sup> Despite all this, Ciruelo’s strict

66 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 174.

67 Menghi, Girolamo 1580: 49-53.

68 Azpilcueta, Martín de 1554: 51. (27. par)

69 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 192.

prohibitions and the contradictions of the more permissive Italian manuals are not resolved in the new edition.

What other flawed elements are mentioned in Ciruelo's treatise? In distinguishing between the holy/good and the bad exorcist, Ciruelo refers not only to the theological ignorance of the exorcist, to the nature of the performance, but also to the nature of the texts he uses.

And the devil, to deceive them more, has taught him certain spells, almost similar to those used in the Holy Church against the Demons to compel them to come out, even if they do not want to, from the bodies of men. In these diabolical incantations, with some holy and good words, are mixed some bad words and also some vain superstitions.<sup>70</sup>

Since these *coniuratio*s are not suitable to cast out the devil, such exorcists secretly make an agreement with the devil in advance and have a long discussion with him. During this time, the devil may set those present against the faith and arouse sinful thoughts in them, inciting others to carnal love or other sins. These exorcisms can last for days, and by the time the exorcist has finally cast out the devil, the believers' souls are already full of flaws, and such exorcists are often said to have made an agreement with the devil to make some kind of noise when he leaves the body<sup>71</sup>. In his treatise, he explains that the evil, superstitious exorcist performs feigned *coniuratio*s after making a secret alliance or agreement with the devil.<sup>72</sup> In addition, bad exorcists also use secret *coniuratio*s known to few, whispering them in the patient's ear while applying herbs and stinking incense (*sahumerios*). All this to create an audience for themselves and the devil. Wherever such exorcists are active, there are more and more cases of possession.<sup>73</sup>

The basis for the reference to the 'other', the bad exorcist, is a parable in Ciruelo's treatise. This text is the Gospel of the Third Sunday of Lent, "*Erat Iesus demonium eiciens...*" (Luke 11:14-26), the accusation of Beelzebul, the exorcism of the prince of the devils.

Let us not forget that behind the cultural-historical motif of the devil's covenant, the early modern exorcism also brings to the fore the action against charismatic personal power. We see this not only in the case of Ciruelo, but also, for example, in the case of the Jesuit Martín del Río, who wrote his famous six-volume treatise, *Disquisitiones Magicae, or Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex*, in Latin<sup>74</sup>. He also pointed out that some exorcists who perform "specific formulas and ceremonies" to treat possession are likely to have "made a deal with the demons" to make them appear to flee when

70 "Y el diablo, para engañarlos más, le ha enseñado ciertos conjuros, casi parecidos a los que se usan en la Santa Iglesia contra los Demonios para compelerlos a que salgan, aunque no quieran, de los cuerpos de los hombres. En estos conjuros diabólicos con algunas palabras santas y buenas, están mezcladas otras malas y también algunas vanas supersticiones." Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 175.

71 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 178.

72 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 176.

73 For more details see. Smid Bernadett 2019: 232.

74 First published in Leuven in 1599-1600, Hugh Trevor Roper referred to it as the new Catholic *Malleus*.

they are exorcized.<sup>75</sup> Just like Ciruelo and Castañega, Del Río's demonology warns of the danger of the devil's presence in exorcism, which he likens to witchcraft. Martín Del Río also denounces the exorcisms of lay people and unauthorized exorcists, because the devil profits from them when they perform their ceremonies in front of large crowds. He warns against the priests making fun of the devil, because they can be the ones to lose out. To illustrate this, he gives several anecdotes taken from Johannes Nider's *Formicarius*. In one of these stories, the devil took revenge on him in the lavatory, just as the priest was about to relieve himself and nearly bit the dust.<sup>76</sup>

Although Ciruelo's demonological work was mainly concerned with the bad practices of the lower clergy, his contemporary, the Franciscan Martín de Castañega's treatise on demonology also condemns the specialist activities of the popular exorcist. These *coniurators*, as the author writes, draw circles on the ground and make the possessed (*endemoniado*) kneel there, then begin to speak, whereupon the possessed person loses consciousness and begins to scream wildly, sometimes insulting those present, accompanied by terrifying gestures. Castañega himself has seen a rite where the possessed had to tell who possessed him, what demon was ruling him as prince and captain. Occasionally, a certain number of deceased souls would be drawn there, of whom the possessed would tell who they were and speak on their behalf. If they died on the field or in battle, they asked to drink because they were thirsty; if they died by drowning in the sea, they pretended to spit water from their mouths; if they died of sickness, it appeared as if the possessed were sick too. The Franciscan alluded to the fact that one could encounter a multitude of similar pretenses. Such specialists usually make strong incense, put a handful of rue to the nose of the possessed, slap them and use other corporal punishment on them.<sup>77</sup> The Franciscan author listed the mistakes made by such local specialists. First of all, he warns that in exorcisms it is forbidden to identify the spirits (*ánimas*) who dwell in the body. Secondly, he labels as demon conjuration the drawing of a circle accompanied by diagrams and letters. Thirdly, the torture of the body is not felt by the devil even in cases of possession, he comes to torture the body, so whoever does this cooperates with the devil and is therefore considered a servant (*ministro*) of the devil. Fourthly, to ask a soul whether it is in hell or purgatory and whether it can help people is also superstitious and diabolical, deceiving. Fifthly, Castañega also objects to the practice of telling the demon and those who are with it when to leave the body, and at the appointed time they make a show, summon them and they leave the body one by one. But they are given permission by the *coniurator* to return to the body later, who claims that he is only doing this to make

75 Del Río, Martín DM lib 6, Anacephaleosis. Fol. 334.

76 These stories were published in Spanish by Antoni Pere Jofreu in 1628, in an updated edition of Ciruelo's treatise. Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 189-190.

77 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 1997: 173.

it easier for the patient to heal. The demons eventually leave the body through the mouth. All this is a devil's covenant, and the *coniurator* is the devil's servant and henchman (*familiar*).<sup>78</sup>

Above, we have reviewed the mistakes made by the 'illicit exorcist'. Let's now turn to what Ciruelo considers a good exorcist! A good exorcist, in his interpretation, has three main characteristics. Firstly, he uses simple exorcisms "without ceremony", in accordance with the order of the Church, just like the evangelical priests of Christ, which are found in the manuals for clergy and rectors of parishes, and which all good priests know.<sup>79</sup> But we have to stop here for a moment. To which book was Ciruelo referring when he mentioned the right *coniuratio*? After all, even in the Middle Ages there was not just one manual and ritual, but several in parallel, just as there were at the time of the publication of the treatise. Since Ciruelo refers to the correct source as the only existing book, we can think of the *Sacerdotale* or *Liber sacerdotalis*, published and widely used at the time, whose author was the Venetian Dominican friar Alberto Castello. The first edition of this manual was published in 1523<sup>80</sup>. The exorcism section of this more than 700-page manual was the basis for the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614. In Castello's work, exorcisms against both *maleficium* and *possessio* were still used, something we no longer see in the standardized rite. In a separate section, Castello deals with the symptoms of *maleficium* (*De signis quibus cognoscitur quis esse malefiliatus*) and the signs that the exorcist may encounter during the *coniuratio* of *maleficium* (*De signis quae apparent quando sacerdos coniurat malefiliatum*). In addition, Ciruelo may refer to a much earlier, fairly widespread and well-known manual, the *Libellus Officialis* or *Manuale o Liber manualis* (eleventh-twelfth century).<sup>81</sup> The second mark of a good exorcist is that he casts out the devil in the name of God, and does not speak to him, does not ask him anything he would expect him to answer, but says only the words Jesus used for exorcism: "*Obmutesce immunde spiritus, et exi ab homine.*" (Mark 1:25)<sup>82</sup> The third characteristic of a good exorcist is that, after he orders the devil to leave the body, he also expects him not to come back. If he does return, he will use the same concise language as the first time.<sup>83</sup>

What solutions did Ciruelo see to the problem outlined? He thought that prelates, ecclesiastical and secular judges alike, should punish these deceivers much more severely. Every diocese should take this problem into account. As well as Martín del Río, he also drew attention to the responsibility of confessors in relation to exorcism. Confession became increasingly widespread during the period.

78 Castañega, Martín de (1529) 1997: 174. Campagne also cites some scandalous stories of possession in his notes to the treatise, including one of the Jesuit priest Fernando de Algaba at a Mass in 1646, when a possessed woman entered into dialogue with the priest, started crowing and other unexpected things during the Mass.

79 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 177.

80 A comparative study of the editions published between 1523 and 1603 was carried out by Davide Righi. Righi, Davide 2006.

81 It was given to priests when they were assigned to parishes and to friars after ordination.

82 Literal translation: "Be silent, unclean spirit, and get out of the person."

83 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 178.

Ciruelo also consistently stresses that there is no difference, no superiority in effectiveness between licensed exorcists. No one can have natural power over the devil; only supernatural, God-given powers can exorcise him. They cannot claim that some have greater supernatural power than others, for that can only be for holy men, of whom there are few. Ciruelo was of the opinion that it should not even be allowed to have a separate exorcist, but that exorcism should be the duty of every priest or rector serving in a parish, in the same way baptism is.<sup>84</sup> If anyone encounters a bad *coniurator* by the fault of church leaders, they should leave their circle as soon as possible, otherwise they are committing a mortal sin.<sup>85</sup> Since the devil often pretends to be the soul of a deceased person during exorcisms, and often asks something of those present, which may at first seem like a pious request (such as attending mass), no one should obey him, because the devil will strike later. Ciruelo points out that the souls of the dead do not return to a living body but take on an ethereal form similar to that of angels.<sup>86</sup> In his summary, he also points out that it is forbidden to use exorcism for divination purposes, and that it is a mortal sin to ask the possessed anything. The first thing to do is to make sure that in the case of illness, it is indeed a case of demonic possession. In order to decide this, priests should be called, because sometimes the illness can be of natural origin. However, if the patient speaks in a language that he or she did not before or claims to be the spirit of a dead man or woman, then it is very likely a case of possession.

Ciruelo also describes the official exorcism process, which is worth reviewing. The priest is to dress in a surplice and stole, take the cross and holy water in his hands, call the patient to the church or other respectful place. He sends everyone away from there, for no one can hear the devil's voice before he is successfully cast out of the body. The exorcist says the exorcisms according to the priestly manual, which is customary at the Sunday water consecration, sprinkling holy water as he goes. Then puts the end of the stole on the person and reads the exorcisms that are customary at baptism at the church gate over those who come to be baptized and repeat this three times. Then he reads the familiar Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, with special attention to the words that are effective against the devil. Because in the Gospel of St. Mark, which is usually sung on the Feast of the Ascension, Christ says: "*In nomine meo daemonia eijcient*", and then he reads Luke's Gospel (Luke 4) "*Descendit Iesus in Capharnaum*", where we learn what Jesus said to a man possessed: "*Obmutesce immunde spiritus, et exi ab eo.*" After that, he should read a few psalms, such as Psalm 34 ("*Judica Domine nocentes me*"), Psalm 58 ("*Eripe me de inimicis meis Deus meus*") and Psalm 90 ("*Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi*"). Finally, he can recite a few prayers from the missal. But he should not heal with the charmed prayers that some have ordered for their own convenience. He

84 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 180.

85 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 181.

86 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 182.

should not perform any other ceremonies except devotional prayers, and he should use the cross, which is the most terrifying to the devil, and holy water. It is good if, before the *coniuratio*s, the priest confesses or is atoned in a suitable place, and, with devout prayers, dedicates his service to God, asking him not to look upon his sins, and to assist by his mercy this struggle which he has undertaken against the devil, and then arms himself with the cross and says the Creed. If possible, he should say Mass after the *coniuratio*s are finished.<sup>87</sup> He should do this to the possessed person once a day, or several times, if necessary, until he succeeds in driving out the evil spirit. And send the person to the church several times and say exorcisms and prayers over him or her. Other believers should also pray for the possessed. Let the exorcism continue until the man is delivered by the grace of God. Because eventually, by the grace of God, the person will be healed. In the meantime, let the pious believers say mass for the person, give donations and fast. And when the possessed is healed, let the person give thanks to God and to the holy Church with a few masses and devotional prayers. According to Ciruelo, this is the true doctrine in the case of exorcism, and those who do not follow it are committing a sin. And not only the bad *coniurator*, but anyone who invites and agrees to perform *coniuratio*s in their house.<sup>88</sup>

In light of all this, the clergy must have had a difficult time, often not knowing with absolute certainty where the line between orthodox, legal and illegal practices lay in the promising field of supply and demand. Exorcism books in Italy included the rite of exorcising the demons that haunted the house, with the priest performing his rites in the house of the patient(s). It is noticeable that Ciruelo makes no mention of these, nor does he specifically detail the *maleficium* cases when discussing exorcism. If we were to concentrate only on the republished treatise on demonology, we might think that exorcism in this period was confined exclusively to cases of possession. However, the surviving Inquisition trials clearly show that priests were brought before the Holy Tribunal for exorcisms for the cure of *maleficium* in the Principality of Catalonia. Even if the demonological work was originally written in Aragon, neighbouring Catalonia, it is less likely that he was unaware of *maleficium* cases and their ecclesiastical medicine, since Gaspar Navarro, in his treatise published in Huesca in 1632, dedicates an entire chapter to *maleficium* and the ecclesiastical medicine of the various types of bewitchment.<sup>89</sup> So the question is: what is the reason for this dichotomy? It is possible that Ciruelo saw the greatest danger to the faithful in public cases of possession culminating in spectacular exorcisms, and he sought to discourage these, along with the other popular practices in the treatise, through the confessors and ecclesiastical tribunals, rather than the ecclesiastical cure of bewitchment.

87 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: fol. 185-186.

88 Ciruelo, Pedro 1628: 187-188.

89 For a detailed discussion of the issue, set in a local historical context, see Tausiet, María 2000: 322. For example, to solve the problem of milk theft, Gaspar Navarro suggested the Mass of St. Agueda, rather than going to the local specialist.



So what was the problem with curing *maleficium*? In the context of the Inquisition trial of Pere Amich, we will try to answer this question, mainly by a thorough review of the friar's readings.

### **The Exorcist's Library. The exorcist texts of Pere Amich**

The case of Pere Amich happened 100 years after the first publication of Ciruelo's treatise. As we have seen above, this work did not become irrelevant in the diocese, because the Bishop of Solsona himself urged its updated republication in 1628. The eradication of superstitious practices, their replacement by ecclesiastical services and the reform of the clergy were thus still seen as timely, and this on the basis of the text of an earlier treatise, which had been published in a neighboring region. Let us not forget that the Inquisition lawsuit dates back to the time when the *Rituale Romanum* already existed as the recommended liturgical book for the Roman liturgy. If, before that, almost every diocese had its own rite, from then on, the Church sought to ensure that it did not contradict the Roman liturgy. Other European examples also make it clear that even after the *Rituale Romanum* was published, with the intention of unifying Catholic practice, local practices remained anchored in older traditions and did not necessarily conform to this ideal.<sup>90</sup> This suggests that the Inquisition and the church reform efforts were not very effective. In addition, the new liturgy also shows an ambivalent attitude towards exorcism: the real aim was to regulate and standardize exorcisms, but it also gave the priest the opportunity to ask during the exorcism why the demons had possessed the body of a particular person.<sup>91</sup> And as the era progressed, more and more (then) authorized exorcist manuals circulated in Europe, and in parallel with them, a multitude of unauthorized rites could be performed.<sup>92</sup>

The cases of the Barcelona tribunal also illustrate the ambition of the reformist clergy of the Inquisition: the repression and education of the lower clergy and the practice of the healers, who were poorly educated and lived with the people, serving their needs, was one of the important aims of this period. The Church's reform would have been unthinkable without the practical education of the lower clergy in local inquisitorial tribunals. Implicit in this effort is the realization that the attempts of the Council of Trent to reform popular culture can only succeed if they take into account the misguided practice and the education of the lower clergy, who sometimes act as accomplices in the 'superstitious acts', and if they mentally distance themselves as far as possible from the simple believers and their transcendent ideas, about which the authors of the treatises were not shy to write. By entrusting the lower clergy with sacramental and educational duties, correcting their errors seemed

90 Seitz, Jonathan 100.

91 Ferber, Sarah 2004: 39.

92 Gentilcore, David 2002: 7, 13, 105, 107, 110.

even more necessary to the Catalan Inquisition in the 1630s than settling lower neighborhood feuds channeled into magical accusations. On the other hand, their ritual practices including magical elements were much more dangerous to the ‘orthodoxy’ of the religion than similar practices of the lay people.

The superstition trials at the Barcelona tribunals of the period ended in mild sentences for the lower clergy, despite accusations of conspiracy with the devil and even stronger charges (formal heresy). In this sense, the tribunals also became a forum for the education of priests. It is an unfortunate fact that some trials have survived only in the form of case reports, and in such cases the researcher cannot ponder over lengthy testimonies but has to settle for a more succinct source. In such cases, additional sources and other trials on similar grounds are of great service and help to open up the field of interpretation.

The report of the Inquisition trial of Brother Pere reveals that in the late 1630s, the friar was mainly sought out in Tárrega for healing bewitchment (*maleficium*). In the next section, we move one step closer to his world and explore the books he used. Based on a concise description of his testimony, we will take a look at what texts Brother Pere might have used and what kind of local exorcism practices he might have carried out in a village in the Principality of Catalonia in the 1630s.

## **1. The amulets (*nóminas*)**

### **1. a. The Holy Title (INRI)**

In connection with the ecclesiastical regulation of the *nóminas*, we have previously cited some proposals for solutions from the period and have seen that there was no consensus among demonologists as to the content of the texts. Several Inquisition trials in the Principality of Catalonia show that priests provided their congregation with anti-bewitchment amulets in case of illness, and that the content of these amulets varied according to the personal decision of the cleric. We know of two *nóminas* by Pere Amich from the scarce sources, one a Latin phrase, “*Jesus Nazareus Rex Judaeorum*”, the inscription on the cross of Jesus. The inscription was intended to ward off demons by evoking Jesus and the cross. Since the succinctly worded judgment in the case transcript does not include the Inquisition’s position on the *nóminas* used by the friar, we may suspect, based on the demonological literature, that Brother Pere did not commit a major error with the INRI text itself.

### **1. b. A hymn fragment used as a text amulet**

The other inscription, made by the friar and given to his patients served to protect the house from intruding demons. The Latin lines he copied are taken from an old Latin hymn, which is also included in the Roman Breviary as an evening prayer (lat. *completorium*).<sup>93</sup>

*“Te lucis ante terminum,/ Rerum Creator poscimus,/ Ut pro tua clementia/ Sis præsul et custodia./ Procul recedant somnia,/ Et noctium phantasmata;/ Hostemque nostrum comprime,/ Ne polluantur corpora./ Præsta, Pater piissime,/ Patrique compar Unice,/ Cum Spiritu Paraclito/ Regnans per omne sæculum. Amen.”*

The full English translation reads:

Before the ending of the day,/ Creator of the world, we pray/ That with thy wonted favor thou/ Wouldst be our guard and keeper now./ From all ill dreams defend our eyes,/ From nightly fears and fantasies;/ Tread under foot our ghostly foe,/ That no pollution we may know./ O Father, that we ask be done,/ Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;/ Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,/ Doth live and reign eternally./ Amen.<sup>94</sup>

93 The text is also included in the Roman Breviary as an evening prayer (lat. *completorium*). It was also included in the liturgical hymns of the Benedictine order, from the early 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries, but its form and stanzas suggest an earlier origin. See Blume, Klemens 1908. The different versions of the *Divinum Officium* have been compared by László Kiss, whose work is available on the Internet at [divinumofficium.com](http://divinumofficium.com). The version of the text published in this study follows the version of 1570 published on the website.

94 The translation is from [www.divinumofficium.com](http://www.divinumofficium.com).

The hymn beginning *Te lucis ante terminum...* was part of the *Divinum Officium*, or “divine duty”, the hymnal, the liturgical book of daily prayers, which for at least 1500 years contained the official and communal prayers of the Roman Catholic Church. Its performance was one of the most important duties of the clergy.<sup>95</sup> In the *Divinum Officium*, the prayer that ended the day was the *completorium*. The full text of the hymn may have been known in church circles at the time of Pere Amich’s Inquisition trial. It is curious, however, that in the text of the *nómina* he used, after the first clause, there is a missing phrase before the *hostemque*: “*et noctium phantasmata*”, or, according to the English version, “From nightly fears and phantasies.”<sup>96</sup>

The translation of the text, with the omission of the missing part, is as follows: “From all ill dreams defend our eyes,/ Tread under foot our ghostly foe,/ That no pollution we may know.”

We do not know whether the scribe omitted this in his hasty summary, or whether it was omitted during the testimony as a result of the defendant’s deliberate intention, or whether it was not included in the manuscripts seized by the Inquisition. Similarly, as in the case of the previous *nómina*, if only these texts had testified to Pere Amich’s exorcisms, the qualifiers would probably not have proposed confiscating the source text.

## **2. The exorcist manual of Zaccaria Visconti**

The exorcist manual of Zaccaria Visconti may have been more puzzling for the judges of the Holy Tribunal, mainly because of a specific prayer.

Little is known about the life of Zaccaria Visconti. Born around 1530 in Milan, he was a Barnabite monk<sup>97</sup>, and a renowned exorcist. His manual *Complementum artis exorcisticae* was first published in 1589 and has been published at least seven times as an independent volume, while his work was also included in the *Thesaurus exorcismorum*, a collected volume of exorcist texts by other authors. There are no other records of his works related to exorcism.

95 From the eleventh century onwards, it was also called a breviary (“abridgement”), because only the initial word was printed from the repeated passages.

96 For the English translation, see also: Harper, John (ed.) 2013.

97 The Barnabites, also known as the Paulists, the Sons of St. Paul, are a monastic order founded in 1530 by St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria (Antonio Maria Zaccaria), a canonized Italian priest.

Since the relationship between bewitchment and exorcism and the everyday ecclesiastical medicine is less discussed in the literature, I will present the relevant chapter of Visconti's manual. The *Complementum* also contains a list of criteria for the symptoms of possession (*possessio*) and *maleficium*.<sup>98</sup> The author urges caution in the diagnosis because, as he writes, natural and supernatural diseases can have the same physical symptoms. At the same time, Visconti clearly distinguishes and lists the possible physical consequences of the bewitchment.<sup>99</sup> These are: aversion to normal food, vomiting, stomach pains, in today's terms typical symptoms of "heartburn", indigestion, regular fainting, headache, sharp pain in the heart, sudden onset of pain, weight loss, pain in the extremities, visceral, shooting pain in the abdomen, bloating, melancholy. Medication typically does not relieve the patient's symptoms. You will see that the list starts with a description of the internal, physical symptoms. It is also clear that the symptoms listed are mostly physical symptoms reminiscent of digestive upset or food poisoning, with the addition of a feeling of melancholy.<sup>100</sup> Given the set of symptoms presented, it is understandable that the purgative remedies mentioned earlier could have been recommended to complement the exorcism.

Visconti's manual then goes on to describe two accounts from his own experience, followed by an appraisal of the objects and signs that allude to the bewitchment.<sup>101</sup> Visconti draws the exorcists' attention to the fact that in the case of children who do not yet speak, it is not easy to recognize the fact of the bewitchment (*infirmitas maleficialis*) in case of illness, since they cannot tell what hurts them. So the exorcist has to be on the lookout and check their bed for evidence of bewitchment. The ritual protection of the bed and the sleeping area with textual amulets may have been a common element of Pere Amich's exorcist practice, as we have seen above. This practice was also advocated in the exorcist manual of Benito Remigio Noydens, published in the early modern Catalonia.<sup>102</sup>

98 Since the Inquisition trial presented as a starting point for this study relates to cases of *maleficium*, I will not discuss the parts of Visconti's manual regarding *possessio*.

99 Visconti, Zaccaria 1600: fol. 33-34.

100 Linked to this list is the connection between bewitchment and "feeding" (poisoning), which is evident in the records of early modern Catalan witch trials. The Catalan word *enmetzinar*, meaning to poison, also has the connotation of a bewitchment. The Inquisition trial of the hermit Jacinto García from the 1640s documents this semantic link. The origin of the illness of a Catalan patient was explained by the consumption of a pot of rice by the locals in testimonies. The food had come from outside the household and, according to the testimonies, had been given to the eventual patient with the intention of bewitchment, the motive being envy.

101 Visconti, Zaccaria 1600: fol. 34-35.

102 Relatively later than Pere Amich's trial, an exorcism manual was published in Barcelona, which also recommends that the priest should search the patient's bed in case of *maleficium* to find the object of bewitchment. "He should tell them to change the bedsheets completely, the straw bags (X) and pillows to be taken apart, the wool to be cleaned, and because by the devil's wiles the objects of bewitchment and of enchantment are usually hidden in them: needles, fruit, waxworks, lead." He then suggests purification rites using previously consecrated elements:

Zacaria Visconti's manual refers here to objects of bewitchment having probative value. This subject is not included in the list of bewitchment diagnoses in the manual, but clear instructions on how to destroy them during healing are given in the volume, similar to other European manuals such as Maximilien von Eynatten's manual from the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>103</sup> According to Visconti, they should be hit hard before they are burned.

Visconti warns the readers that the wise exorcist should always first ascertain whether the illness is of diabolical origin or not, because in the case of melancholia and female uterine diseases it is rather difficult to decide due to the presence of multiple signs and symptoms.<sup>104</sup>

The case of Pere Amich is a surviving example of the clerical diagnosis of *maleficium* in an era when the practice is beginning to disappear from the catalogue of recommended practices. The *Rituale Romanum* no longer contains a description of the diagnosis of *maleficium*.<sup>105</sup> There is no indication as to whether the accused used this manual explicitly and exclusively to diagnose a supernatural illness, or whether he relied on a previous family and community diagnosis, but he mentions Visconti's manual in his testimony, so it is likely that this book may have been in the convent, even though I have not been able to find a copy in the diocesan archives, despite my best efforts.

It appears that Pere Amich may have performed the benediction in the second part of Visconti's manual, the purpose of which was to cast out the evil spirits of the house (*Benedictio domus á spiritibus vexatae*). This contains the exact excerpts from the Gospels of John, Matthew, Luke and Mark quoted above from the case report.<sup>106</sup> There is also a coherence in the content of the *nóminas*, placed at the boundary of the house and the outside world, providing protection against intruding demons, reinforced by a written version of an evening prayer.

Another important discovery I made is related to Zaccaria Visconti's manual. The fact that Pere Amich copied the prayer of St. Cyprian from this exorcism manual is an extremely important addition to the history of Catalan healing exorcisms, because it reveals a new, thus far unknown source and

powdered gold, incense, myrrh, salt, olive oil, holy wax and rue. These mixtures should be placed in each corner of the clean bed, blessed three times with the sign of the cross. Noydens, Remigio Benito 1688: 91-93.

103 According to Gaspar Navarro's 1631 treatise on demonology, it is a permissible practice to force the bewitcher to reveal where he or she has hidden the object of bewitchment. Navarro, Gaspar 1631: fol. 69v.

104 In his treatise on exorcism, Pedro Ciruelo did not mention the *maleficium* cases. However, several exorcist manuals discuss the subject at length. Alberto Castello's *Sacerdotale* of 1523 has already been mentioned, and also the fact that he devoted several chapters to the symptoms of bewitchment. The similarities in content suggest that Visconti was an important source for Castello's manual on *maleficium*. Cf. Seitz, Jonathan 2011: 138.

105 Seitz, Jonathan 2011: 140.

106 The following folios contain the excerpts to which Pere Amich refers in his testimony: Visconti, Zaccaria 1600: 248. *Cum ergo natus esset Jesus*; 249. *Missus est Angelus Gabriel á Deo in ciuitatem Galilea*; 253. *Recumbentibus*.

proven path of dissemination of this text, which was so popular in the Iberian Peninsula and in the New World for centuries.<sup>107</sup> In the manual, in the title of the prayer, it says that it is an extended version, expurgated of several errors. This is not a coincidence, since it was already listed in several *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*<sup>108</sup> in the sixteenth century as a text with errors that needed correction. The prayer version of Visconti's volume is different from the printed versions that have been discovered so far in that it is not amulet-like, it does not contain the clause that it protects against bewitchment and binding and many other crisis situations, if one carries it. Visconti's version of St. Cyprian's prayer was used for ritual purposes, recited by exorcist priests to cure patients who had fallen ill due to *maleficium*. The normative part before the main text records the circumstances in which the prayer was recited and contains an element of content that is consistent with the testimonies of early modern Catalan Inquisition witnesses, who say that it was used in the context of a particular kind of exorcism, in the form of a novena.<sup>109</sup> Visconti's manual instructs the priest to recite the prayer daily, kneeling before the altar with a lit candle in his hand.<sup>110</sup> It can be confirmed that in 1557, before the publication of Visconti's *Complementum*, the prayer of Saint Cyprian was already published in the vernacular (Catalan) language on a small sheet print format, which could be carried by illiterate peasants as an amulet, not only to ward off or remedy bewitchment, but also to ward off all visible and invisible enemies, against drought, *maleficium*, binding, or to facilitate childbirth or for the health of the newborn.<sup>111</sup> Its small size also predestined it to be carried by people not just as a text, but as an object of protection.<sup>112</sup>

In Pere Amich's testimony, we read that he read St. Cyprian's prayer from a manuscript book. To what extent was this version a slavish copy of the *Complementum* prayer, with which the friar was familiar? Was the text in Latin or perhaps in the vernacular? Could the friar have seen several versions of it, not just the one in the manual? In the absence of surviving evidence, it is impossible to answer

107 See the edition of 1600: *Oratio attributa a Sancto Cypriano, per Autorem á diuersis erroribus expurgata & augmentada* (fol. 647-661.)

108 The Index was a list of books and printed publications which the Roman Catholic Church did not give permission to read and possess, or even expressly forbade. It also included works for which corrections were recommended.

109 An example of this is the Inquisition trial of the hermit Jacinto García, the publication of which I am currently working on.

110 Visconti, Zaccaria 1600: 647.

111 For more details see. Smid Bernadett 2019. The popular use of the text, which can be traced back to the seventeenth century, is supported by the Catalan, Spanish and Italian versions of the text discovered in recent years. I have recently published an independent study on late medieval Venetian liturgical use. Smid Bernadett 2022.

112 For more details on the source see Smid Bernadett 2018: 309-315., and 2019.

these questions. Yet it is not unreasonable to speculate on the possibility that the manuscript version may have differed somewhat from the text in the manual, since the qualifiers reprimanded Friar Pere during the trial specifically for this prayer, even though Visconti explicitly made an effort to expurgate and correct the objectionable parts of the text in the version he published. There is a good chance, therefore, that Amich knew some of the variants known on the Iberian Peninsula and included their contents in his manuscript notebook. However, St. Cyprian's prayer was used not only by exorcists but also by lay local healing specialists to cure bewitchment, and because of its amulet nature it could also have been owned by illiterate people for apotropaic purposes. Friar Pere may have used the *maleficium*-related passages of the books he read to compose a powerful exorcist ritual against bewitchment, of which the prayer of St. Cyprian may have been an important component,<sup>113</sup> and the use of which, despite its status as a text to be expurgated, may have been common in exorcism rites in early modern Catalonia.

What is the evidence for this? A few years before the case of Pere Amich, in an Inquisition trial between 1641 and 1644, I came across a Catalan version of the prayer, published in 1557, which was also used for exorcism by a hermit, a contemporary of Pere Amich, in the same diocese.<sup>114</sup> It was also published in the 1630s in a book of thunderstorm-exorcisms in Navarre, then in Latin, but a Spanish translation of this version was probably made around 1634..<sup>115</sup>

The prayer text type itself begins with the contrastive conversion story of Saint Cyprian of Antioch, and is a first-person narrative of an exorcism, an exorcism and bewitchment-expelling text, from the mouth of the saint. It was included in the Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1590 as a text to be expurgated, a year after the first edition of Visconti's manual. Visconti's version of the text does not include the usual conversion part (common in earlier and later versions), but the author publishes it as a corrected text, in which Cyprian appears at the beginning of the text as an exorcist authorized by the Church.<sup>116</sup> In the prayer of Saint Cyprian first appears as a text that needs to be expurgated and

113 This functionality is not far from the function documented from the late Middle Ages, as the text is also found in Latin in a Venetian book of exorcisms. Smid Bernadett 2022.

114 Smid Bernadett 2019.

115 Itúrbide Díaz, Javier 2010: 333-346. On Iberian cult forms, see also Smid Bernadett 2019.

116 The known variants of the prayer text show structural and functional similarities with a text type of exorcism known from the benediction liturgies. The main difference is that, in the relevant part of the ordos, it is the priest who speaks in the first person singular to the demons, to their helpers or the natural phenomena, while in the prayer, Saint Cyprian is the speaker. In terms of similarities, it is striking that both types of text list in detail the possible places of the bewitchment, that the actions of Christ or other biblical figures are mentioned in sequence, and that the bewitchment is sent to a barren place, out of reach of civilization. For details, with textual citations, see Bárh Dániel 2010: 97-98. Although the historical study of textual relationships is a task for the future, the



corrected in the Spanish *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1559, then in 1583, and later in the seventeenth century in 1632 and 1640.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, it can be said that it was at the time of Pere Amich's Inquisition trial that it was reintroduced into the collection of texts to be corrected. And even though the Inquisition confiscated the prayers of Saint Cyprian and their manuscript copies, they could not prevent their dissemination and use.<sup>118</sup> In this period, the manuals of Visconti and Girolamo Menghi were not yet banned, but the prolonged ritual reform efforts later caught up with these works as well.

### **3. Girolamo Menghi: *Flagellum daemonum* – an exorcist's manual**

Girolamo Menghi, an Italian Observant Franciscan friar and the best-known exorcist in early modern Europe, was born in Viadana (Mantua) in 1529 and died in his hometown in 1609. During his long life, he witnessed the religious and political transformation of the Apennine Peninsula. The years of war ended in 1559, when the city-states of Italy came under the direct or indirect domination of the Spanish-Habsburg Monarchy for the next hundred years. This change may have accelerated the exchange of cultural goods, both in terms of manuscripts and printed books. This may partly explain the popularity of Italian exorcism books in the northern parts of the Iberian Peninsula.

We know most about Menghi's life from his own books and his work as the most famous exorcist of the Italian Renaissance, so the surviving data about him are mostly autobiographical fragments. At the age of twenty, he joined the Franciscan Order in Bologna, where he studied theology. He lived in the convent of Santa Maria Annunziata until at least 1556, and most probably for the rest of his life.<sup>119</sup> He became a renowned orator, a practicing exorcist from 1558, and in 1598 he was appointed superior of a Franciscan province. In the last year of the Renaissance wars, he performed an exorcism in public, which was a new form of exorcism in Bologna at the time, as well as in other parts of Italy.<sup>120</sup>

possible paths of textual movement are already clearly visible in the early modern Cyprian prayer texts discovered in recent years. And the recent discovery of medieval Saint Cyprian textual variants also confirms the established place of the independent prayer text in the ritual order. Cf. Smid Bernadett 2022.

117 On forbidden prayers, including the prayer of Saint Cyprian, see Lodoño, Marcela 2019.

118 For more on censorship and local control of the distribution of books in early modern Catalonia, see Kamen, Henry 1993: 221-231., and Peña, Manuel 2015 and Moreno, Doris 2019: 253-254.

119 Dall'Olio, Guido 2020: 224.

120 Dall'Olio, Guido 2020: 226.

He wrote several exorcist manuals in Latin and Italian<sup>121</sup>, in which he explained in detail the exorcist's task, the characteristics and orders of demons, and the nature of demonic pacts. His works were an immediate success, most notably the *Compendio* and the *Flagellum*. The first treatise he published included several excerpts from the *Malleus Maleficarum*. In the 1570s he held more and more exorcisms. His growing success is also reflected in the fact that Menghi wrote a foreword for a reprint of Silvestro Mazzolini's earlier book on exorcisms<sup>122</sup>, first published in 1502. He then wrote two of his own highly successful works, *Compendio* and *Flagellum*, which went through several editions. In 1587 and 1589, he was appointed advisor (*definitore*) to the provincial friar in the Order of Bologna, and in 1598 he himself became a general provincial superior.<sup>123</sup> Menghi started publishing exorcist manuals in the 1570s at a time when Johann Wier, Pomponazzi and even Erasmus were questioning the existence of witches. The abundant Italian literature addressed to exorcists (which formed a sub-genre of European demonological literature and had a great impact even beyond the Alps) flourished at the very moment of the crisis of the Aristotelian-Galenic paradigm, and was driven by the desire to destroy the authority of the 'evil' philosophers.<sup>124</sup>

Since Pere Amich admits in his testimony to having used the *Flagellum daemonum*, it is worth briefly discussing this short treatise. The reason for the publication of this work (first in 1577) was, by the author's own admission, that few exorcism books were available in print and that they were out of date.<sup>125</sup> The work was a success even after its first edition. Between 1577 and 1727, 47 editions were published in Italy, Germany and France, although some included the later *Fustis*

121 Menghi's works on exorcism include: *Flagellum daemonum*, 1567 (The Devil's Scourge); *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 1576 (Compendium of the Art of Exorcism); *Remedia probatissima iin lamingos spiritus expellendos*, 1579; *Fustis daemonum* (Club against demons), 1584, *Eversio daemonum* (The Overthrow of Demons) 1588; *Fuga daemonum* (The Flight of Demons), 1596, a *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* part II, 1601. His lesser-known works on exorcism follow the structural principle of *Flagellum daemonum*, the first part being theoretical, followed by exorcism rites for various purposes. This solution, the theoretical and practical approach to exorcism, can be seen as an innovation by Menghi compared to the earlier exorcist manuals. From the publication of the *Fustis daemonum* onwards, the exorcism texts contained fewer ambivalent *coniuratio*s that could be considered magical. Dall'Olio, Guido 2020: 232.

122 The title of the work is *Aureus tractatus exorcismique pulcherrimi et efficaces in malignos spiritus effugandos de obsessis corporibus* (Golden Treatise and Most Beautiful and Effective Exorcisms to Expel Evil Spirits from the Bodies of the Possessed). Although Mazzolini was a renowned Dominican theologian, this treatise has not become well known.

123 Dall'Olio, Guido 2020: 228.

124 Pastore, Stefania 2010: 550.

125 Menghi, Girolamo 1567.

*daemonum*.<sup>126</sup> He also recommended the use of various concoctions to the exorcists in cases of *maleficium* and diabolical possession, which could also cause discord between the physicians and the practitioners of priestly medicine.

The widespread use of the manual is confirmed by the testimonies of the Inquisition trials. Almost always, when an exorcist in Italy was accused of some kind of abuse or suspected of heresy, he would claim in his defense that he had acted on the basis of Menghi's *Flagellum*, coming to the tribunal with the manual under his arm. The accused were hoping that Menghi's fame and reputation would help clear their case.<sup>127</sup> The same can be said in the case of Pere Amich. The Inquisition's lawsuits against exorcists prove that Menghi's manual did indeed reach the 'marginally trained' exorcists for whom the manual was originally intended by the author.<sup>128</sup> And, of course, also those who just wanted to become exorcists and were looking for guidance in performing their rite.

According to Menghi, exorcists had to work with physicians in caring for patients in a way that credibly identified the presence of the devil behind the physical symptoms. For example, the devils could hide behind the very common biliary diseases to deceive patients, physicians and exorcists alike. What else could explain the high rate of treatment failures? The devil knew very well how to alter the balance of bodily fluids, causing biliary diseases. Menghi therefore envisioned the ideal exorcist as a universal healer, able to heal through benedictions. In his stories, the physicians are uncertain about the origins of disease, but the exorcists, by finding the objects of bewitchment, overcome this skepticism and heal using herbs and incense in their rituals.<sup>129</sup>

According to Pere Amich's testimony, the *Flagellum* and the *Malleus Maleficarum* helped him to diagnose and cure *maleficium*. Although it is not mentioned in the testimony that Visconti's book contains a 25-item list of the signs of possession, Amich's testimony also suggests that the determination of whether the patient was a victim of *maleficium* or *possessio* may have been a preparatory step in the ritual of healing. In the exorcisms of Girolamo Menghi, there is a clear distinction between exorcisms for curing demonic possession and exorcisms for curing illness

126 The theoretical part of the manual cannot, however, be considered too original. Several chapters have been taken from Mazzolini's *Aureus tractatus*, Alberto Castello's *Liber sacerdotalis* and the *Malleus Maleficarum*. In a few pages written by Menghi, we read the author's veiled criticism of the exorcist, who, according to the latest guidelines, had to perform exorcisms behind closed church doors. Dall'Olio, Guido 2020: 231.

127 Dall'Olio, Guido 2020: 231.

128 According to the Italian trials examined by O'Neil, many of the accused came with the *Flagellum* in hand to prove that they had acted correctly and according to the rules in their exorcisms. O'Neil, Mary R. 1984: 74.

129 Pastore, Stefania 2010: 550. For more on Menghi's influence and work, see Malena, Adelisa 2010: 1022-1024.

caused by harmful magic, as we have seen with Visconti. Menghi also gives a detailed list of the objects or ‘makings’ causing the bewitchment.<sup>130</sup>

Pere Amich testified that he blessed incense with the help of Menghi’s manual. The text on the use of consecrated incense is found in the fourth exorcism,<sup>131</sup> which aims to cast out demons that occupy the human body. It is quite possible that Pere Amich performed the benediction itself according to a local ritual book. However, the contents of his testimony together suggest that he used a *Flagellum* edition that was published together with the *Fustis*. We can deduce this from the fact that the Gospel passages he mentions appear in just such an edition, for example the 1587 edition, which also contains a benediction to the unclean spirits that settled on the house, which Menghi adapted from an old exorcism (*Benedictio domus á spiritibus immundis molestata, ex antiquis exorcismis excerpta*).<sup>132</sup> All of the gospel excerpts mentioned in the testimony of Pere Amich are included in this edition: from the Gospel of Mark, “*In illo tempore, Recumbentibus undecim Discipulis...*”<sup>133</sup>; from the Gospel of St. John, “*In principio erat verbum...*”<sup>134</sup>, which has been a common element of exorcist practices since at least the eleventh century<sup>135</sup>; from the Gospel of St. Matthew, “*Cum natus esset...*”<sup>136</sup>; from the Gospel of St. Luke, “*In illo tempore missus est Angelus Gabirel...*”<sup>137</sup> All of the gospel excerpts mentioned in the testimony of Pere Amich are included in this edition, from the Gospel of Mark, “*In illo tempore, Recumbentibus undecim Discipulis...*” , from the Gospel of St. John, “*In principio erat verbum...*” , which has been a common element of exorcist practices since at least the eleventh century , from the Gospel of St. Matthew, “*Cum natus esset...*” , from the Gospel of St. Luke, “*In illo tempore missus est Angelus Gabirel...*” After these passages comes the blessing of the incense. The long section with benedictions and exorcisms is a collection of remedies (*remedia*) against evil spirits and bewitchments.<sup>138</sup>

130 *Flagellum* 51. folio in the 1584 edition.

131 See Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol.162. “*Deinde benedic incensum hoc modo, & post benedictionem pone ipsum super ignem.*”

132 Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol. 154.

133 Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol. 132.

134 “*Initium Sancti Euangeli Secundum Ioannem: In principio...*” Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol. 160.

135 Ferber, Sarah 2004: 21. The evocation and the reading of the Gospel of the Incarnation is also suggested by Castañega, for example. The Gospel of St. John was also used by lay healers in the early modern period, both in the Spanish monarchy and in Italy, as evidenced by testimonies from the Inquisition trials. Cf. O’Neil, Mary: 93.

136 Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol. 161.

137 Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol. 161.

138 “*Remedia efficacissima in malignos spiritus expellendos. Facturas, & maleficia effuganda de obsessis corporibus cum suis benedictionibus.*” Menghi, Girolamo 1587: fol. 126-

Menghi's manual also served as a guideline for Pere Amich in the healing of *maleficium* cases.

#### 4. The *Malleus Maleficarum*

In the case of Pere Amich, we see that, in addition to exorcist manuals and liturgical books, priests confronting possession and bewitchment could have read manuals on witchcraft, such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* by the two Dominican inquisitors Heinrich Kramer (*Institutoris*) and Jakob Sprenger.<sup>139</sup> The manual was first printed in 1486 and has gone through many editions since. Even in the early modern period, it was the best-known demonological work.<sup>140</sup>

What exactly was Pere Amich using the *Malleus* for? The first two parts of this three-part work focus on enlightening the clergy about the nature of witchcraft according to biblical and canon law practice, and on the religious remedies to be used against the witches' evil deeds.

The second part of the *Malleus* deals with practical problems related to the crimes of witches. The Alsatian monk draws on his first-hand experience as an inquisitor interrogating accused witches, although he also refers to witch trials in the late fifteenth century in which he was not personally involved.<sup>141</sup>

This treatise also explores the various types of supernatural illnesses and damage caused by bewitchment, from devastating hailstorms to livestock damage, and from adult illnesses, especially those of infants, to death. Kramer explains that witches seek mainly to block sexual relations between spouses and to prevent the conception and birth of legitimate babies. They achieve their goals by causing impotence and virtual castration in men and miscarriages in women. When a couple has a healthy baby, the witches try to prevent it from being baptized and offer it to the devil. However, the Evil also teaches the witches the art of healing so that they can profit financially from curing the diseases they cause. Kramer warns his readers not to ask sorcerers to help them remove evil spells. Instead, it lists various ways of protecting against the bewitchment, as well as cures accepted by the Church.<sup>142</sup> Kramer and Sprenger were unique among the theorists of witchcraft in the fifteenth century in that they also gave credit to popular procedures against

139 Jonathan Seitz adds medical texts to the list. In the absence of any other data, the case of Pere Amich, in which a healing friar refers to the *Malleus Maleficarum* in his Inquisition trial, is a curiosity. Cf. Seitz, Jonathan 2011: 135.

140 Herzig, Tamar 2020: 53.

141 Herzig, Tamar 2020: 56.

142 Herzig, Tamar 2020: 57.

*maleficium*, while most of their colleagues advocated the preventive use of sacramentals in the period, while cautioning against the use of magical procedures against witchcraft.<sup>143</sup>

In the trial of Pere Amich, the *Malleus maleficarum* is used in connection with the identification of the witch, as a sign and proof of the mediation of supernatural power, so we can assume that this work may have inspired the Catalan friar when identifying the bewitchment object. There were different views among the contemporaries of the two inquisitors as to whether the sign of witchcraft (*signum*), the object of the bewitchment, should be destroyed. Jean Gerson held a negative stance, while others accepted the procedure.<sup>144</sup> According to this view, the destruction of the object of bewitchment serves to break the devil's activity, since once the devil has made a covenant with the victim, he is able to harm him through the object of bewitchment.<sup>145</sup> Clearly, it is the latter view that explains the role of local clergy in the above-mentioned early modern Catalan *maleficium* cases.

## Summary

From the Inquisition trials of Pere Amich and other clerics, we can see precisely which theological treatises and manuals helped to support popular ideas, and which of the pluralistic ecclesial discourse may have guided the operation of a local healing practice, especially in terms of diseases and dysfunctions caused by *maleficum*. In addition to the liturgical book containing local ceremonies, practical exorcist manuals and theoretical treatises on demonology were also available in the convent of Tàrrega in the first half of the seventeenth century. Exorcists, either clerics or laymen, diagnosed illnesses of supernatural origin, the fact of the bewitchment, with the help of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuals. The manuals were both a theoretical and practical guide for the exorcist, several of them containing experiences from the author's personal practice. In the healing process, priests combined several texts and ritual elements, treating the manuals and their instructions as open texts. Inquisition sources also show that in their manuscript books they created

143 Broedel, Hans 2003: 156. Petrus Mamoris, in his *Flagellum maleficorum*, considers priestly mediation to be the most effective antidote to *maleficium*, as well as conventional practices such as almsgiving, prayer, confession and Holy Communion.

144 Broedel, Hans 2003: 136.

145 Broedel, Hans 2003: 137.

a specific functional compilation of texts, combining structural elements to perform their exorcisms adapted to local needs. In such proceedings, we can also see how certain ways of using a text can deprive or truncate a given work of its ‘real’ significance. Although some of the ritual elements appearing in the Inquisition trials were taken from manuals still authorized at the time, the way they were used, the thought patterns behind the compilation, which sometimes leaned more towards magic than religion, and the integration of the clerical medicine of *maleficium* into popular practice were increasingly considered incorrect practice by the Holy Tribunal. Through their exorcism, both for curing *possessio* and even more so for curing *maleficium*, the priests were in direct contact with the rural and urban population, with the common people. The clerical ritual practice that could be discerned from the sources could be integrated into the realm of popular diagnosis and perception of illness, local religious practices and the concept of witchcraft, thereby addressing both a popular demand and the priestly function in the era of Catholic reform. We have seen that the *Rituale Romanum* no longer included a diagnosis and cure for *maleficium*. This may partly explain why exorcists turned to earlier exorcist manuals, even after the advent of the Roman rite, staying in close contact with their faithful, providing adequate answers when curing cases of bewitchment.

Zaccaria Visconti’s *Complementum* and Girolamo Menghi’s two aforementioned exorcist manuals were indexed by the Roman Inquisition also in 1709. Even at this time, Menghi’s lesser-known or lesser-used works were not officially banned, and escaped sanction despite the fact that the *Fustis* contained similar texts to the exorcisms of the two indexed manuals. Finally, an examination of several seventeenth-century Catalan Inquisition trials reveals that St. Cyprian’s prayer in clerical use was also a prominent text in the exorcism of the *maleficium*, despite being listed as a text to be corrected in the indexes as early as the sixteenth century. In this paper I have attempted to show, on the basis of as wide a range of sources as possible, the tendencies of the post-*Rituale Romanum* years towards the lower clergy through exorcism, modelled on the Holy Tribunal of Barcelona. I have also tried to show the imperative of the gradual distancing of priestly medicine from the lower classes and the still unceasing demand for clerical remedies of bewitchment.

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## Databases available on the Internet

*The Divinum Officium Project* [divinumofficium.com](http://divinumofficium.com)

### Abstract

During the religious renewal and Catholic Reform, Catholic authorities paid greater attention to separating the spheres of illicit folk magic, illicit and licit church-magical practices. They tried to eradicate or reform the criticized practices. These renewal efforts can also be traced in the Spanish demonological treatises from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

The reform-minded Pedro Ciruelo, great defender of catholic orthodoxy and the Franciscan friar, Martín de Castañega, both formulated the objectionable elements they found in contemporary exorcist practices. Of the two treatises, Ciruelo's work gained greater popularity. Even a hundred and ten years after its first appearance in 1530, it served as a guideline among clergy to decide where the line was between permitted and prohibited religious practices. Ciruelo's treatise also reveals that in addition to the digressions of the priests authorized to exorcise, the practices of lay exorcists (and the so called „spirit extractors”) were also a matter of concern for the Church.

Looking at the statistics on superstition trials of the Inquisition of the Court of Barcelona, it is striking that in early modern times repression was more prevalent against man than in other Spanish courts. The proportion of ecclesiastical persons, especially the secular clergy is outstanding among them.

In connection with my previous inquisition researches, in this paper I would like to present a trial that took place in 1637. This source documents the exorcist practice of the Catalan Father Pere Amich in Tàrraga. The aim of my paper is to present an ordinary exorcism against *maleficium*, the unorthodox readings and manuscript texts the Father's ritual consisted of in practice. This paper also explain the ritual elements, objects and system of gestures having been used in his healing acts in order to shed more light on the early modern practice of using different manuals and effective texts for exorcism in accordance with the local needs.

This case study helps to understand the stratification and diversity of the texts, the importance of exorcism as ordinary healing act against a disease believed to be of harmful magical origin, their magical elements in the early modern Catalonia, their connections with the Italian exorcismal literature, and last but not least, the possible role of Saint Cyprian's prayer in the exorcism ritual in the north-eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula in the early modern period.