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The folk and oral roots of the Portuguese «Livro de São Cipriano»

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The Portuguese «Livro de São Cipriano», while fitting into the European grimoire tradition, seems to have only come into its current form in the late 19th century. Still, careful analysis reveals that large sections of this book have their origin in pre-existing Iberian folk magic practices, a conclusion which may be arrived at by the occurrence of the same recipes and sorceries in the records of such scholars as J. Leite de Vasconcelos and Teófilo Braga. This observation makes this book a window into elusive aspects of culture and traditional belief and practice, adding up to a grimoire quite distinguishable from most others, but whose content does challenge these in terms of ancestry. In this paper a basic outline of the «Livro» is presented, highlighting those sections that find their root in oral traditions and also the mechanisms allowing for the dissemination of its various versions in Brazil.

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Introduction – Approaching the «Livro» as a cultural object

As a book inserted in the European grimoire tradition, the current form of the Portuguese «Livro de São Cipriano» is actually little more than one hundred years old. While it is a clear and more than tangible physical object, today on sale in most bookstores, it is a highly complex symbol whose full significance may completely elude an outsider to its cultural environment.

Being a grimoire, the foremost grimoire of Portugal, one must always remember that these are objects that extend well beyond themselves. The cultural significance of a traditional magic book is never restricted to the printed sheets of paper that make up its physical form. The «Livro» in this sense is an almighty ghost, a haunting shadow in the traditional Portuguese mind, a kind of black box concept where all magic, diabolism and mystery may fit and may spring from.

Given this fact, the most disparate attributes are found associated with this book: that reading it causes insanity, or may even summon the Devil; that a house where one resides will not fare well in any regard or that owning or even touching one a sin. A series of magical properties that can be summed up in the Portuguese saying: "To touch this book is a sin, but who reads it will rise to the clouds without wings".

These, it should be noted, are not just beliefs to be found in old ethnographic records, but rather, they are very much alive still today. This makes this book an invaluable window into the intangible Portuguese mental substrate from which all culture arises, both by its written and unwritten content and which has been unexplainably left unstudied and unattended by the academic community at large.

Variations and editions – The Iberian duality

Before dwelling into this one single book, it should be understood that it actually inserts itself in a long and rich tradition of Iberian magical literature. Typically, the custom in both Portugal and Spain has been to call any and all magical books a Book of St Cyprian (Davies, 2010), and as such many books have carried such a title throughout history, some of them original Iberian creations and other mere translations of other well reputed European specimens, such as the «Le Grand Grimoire» (Barreiro, 2010), a book which today bares many touching points with the Iberian Cyprian books, particularly the Spanish ones. Besides this, and making the full chronology of Cyprian books in Iberia a challenge to grasp, clear evidence of old

and all but lost books can actually be found in particular ethnographic records from the late 19th and early 20th century, such as the following fragmented excerpt collected by Coelho (1889a) and entitled "Cyprianus Magjje septe horar Magicae":

Ne Opuz hoc contrafial & falso meo NOMine currant Hoc Sabs eripsi & Rubricavi Mea propria Littera
Cyprianus Magnus primus

Cyprianus gratia [Belse]buth Locifuge Resoce et ejusdem omnium potestatum Universi
Magust primust, eni tantunmodo cognossere Magiae arcana principalia, et tolere de sina
Terae nuiea et generali methodo Thesaura omnia invenire.....

concessum fuit; nunc pro viribus meis atenuatis Magicandi.... et parvulos inopiam suam
perdere voleus: anrient [arg]entumom ne et aurum, sient alia pretioza in terra jandudum
Magiae virtute detenta: has septem horas Magiae didico sequentibus notiz. primo: De
antiquis solum. ADAMI. MAEGI, quae vera est [faina] De paradiso omni Boni ac Mali Cientia
expulsis est. Secundo: Nemo Thezaura haurire deziderans v... fican (?) quaerat..... Mulieres,
illae raro pacto suficiens debent: Querit egenun (?) vel CLoRICIV, qui pro interin Locifuge
Thezaurorum custode pactum faciat, et fide legat vel a sacerdote audiens pronuncied omnia
infra scripta:

Magiae artes abjudicate manu; quis in illis aliquod deficiet, et tantum mea propria manu
subscripta, et Typis edita valent, ed solum in ipsis data; potente pactum Verum facienti.

The analysis of this "Latin" text, even if particularly challenging, may provide precious clues and indications on the cultural and historical fitting of such books. The particular reference to «Locifuge Resoce», a probable corruption due to an oral transmission of the name «Lucifuge Rofocale», a demon of particular relevance in the French «Le Grand Grimoire» (Anon, 2011), indicates a connection to other wider European ceremonial magic procedures, and this demon's role in the «Le Grand Grimoire» as a keeper of buried magical treasure should not be taken as a coincidence.



Figure 1. Illustration of «Lucifuge Rofocale» from the «Le Grand Grimoire».

As for the titular St Cyprian, the repented black magician turned saint, his figure as Iberian magical hero cements itself in his "orthodox" tale as reported by the «Flos Sanctorum», also known as the «Legenda aurea», «Legenda sanctorum» or Golden Legend, a 13th century collections of hagiographies reproduced in most Cyprian books, particularly the Portuguese ones (Anon, 2001). Besides this, one can find numerous folk legends that transport Cyprian from his distant Antioch (modern day Turkey), directly into the Iberian world (Coelho, 1889a). The underlying reason behind the preeminence of this saint as the local magical hero however may be difficult to understand, but evidence of his magical predilection among the Iberian magic practitioners can be found at least as early as the 16th century (Frisvold, 2013), as also attested by the play «Exortação da Guerra» by Gil Vicente (Ferreira, 1992), where his name features in an evocation of two demons (Zebon and Danor) by a necromancer-priest.

Approaching the modern times, we find that the many current (but not all) versions of St Cyprian books can mostly be grouped into two main branches, which can currently be divided by the linguistic and national borders of Portugal and Spain.

The most prolific Spanish version, both in terms of recent editions and variations, is most commonly called «El Libro de San Cipriano – Tesoro del Hechicero» (Vicente, 2007). Between the Portuguese and the Spanish versions, this is the one that falls more in line with the typical European grimoire tradition. Although it does also possess sections consisting of several magical secrets and folk remedies taken from oral and traditional sources (some of which are common with the Portuguese version) it also displays other more ritual inclined sections, such as instructions on the production of several magical tools (on certain occasions similar to those presented in the grimoire «The Key of Solomon the King» (Mathers, 2006)) and instructions for the summoning of both Celestial and Infernal spirits, for example (according to Vicente (2007), these sections somewhat follow the grimoire «Arbatel of Magic» and the «Pseudo-Monarchia Daemonum»).

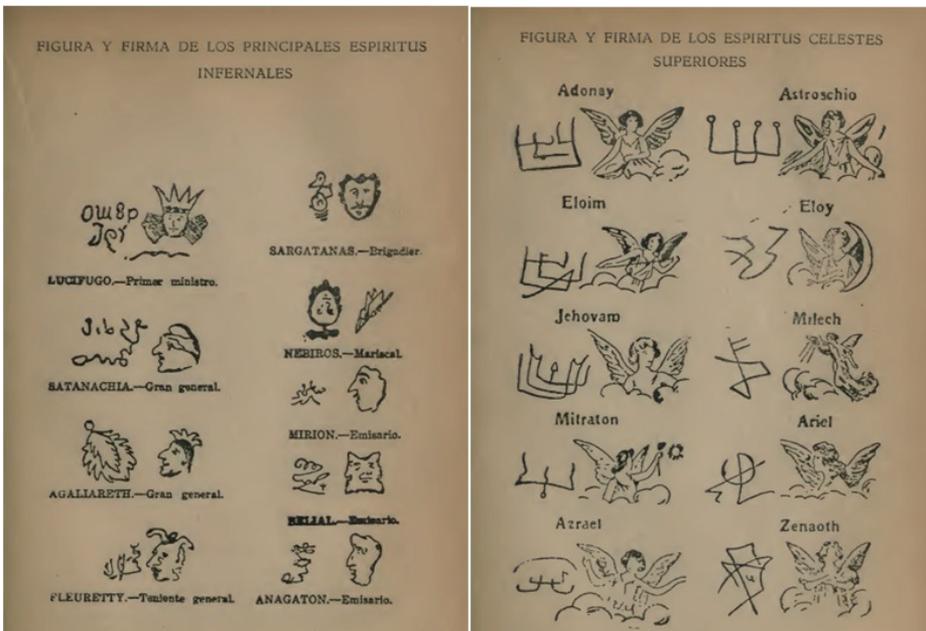


Figure 2. Sigils and identification of the various Infernal (left) and Celestial (right) spirits listed in the Spanish «Libro»; some of the sigils presented for the celestial spirits are rough reproductions of those presented in the grimoire «Arbatel of Magic» as belonging to the seven «Olympick» spirits Aratron, Bethor, Phaleg, Och, Hagith, Ophiel and Phul, rulers of the seven planetary spheres.

Also significant in these same evocation instructions, is the description of the same magical circle of protection as given in the «Le Grand Grimoire», once again underlying the connection between these two books.

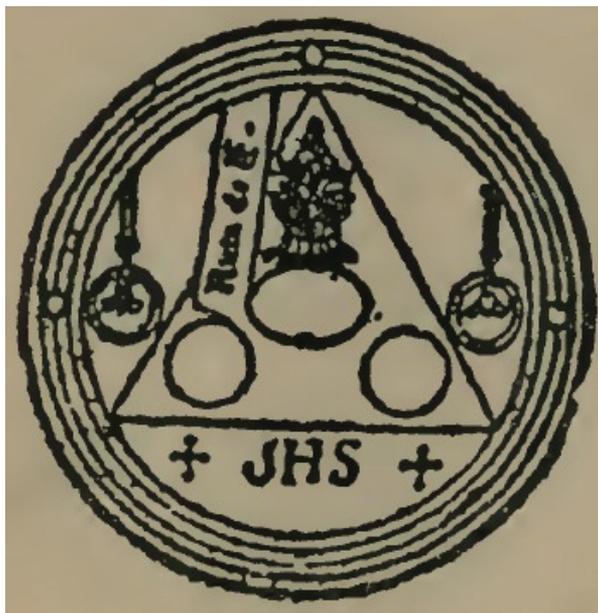


Figure 3. Circle of protection from the «Le Grand Grimoire», also presented in the Spanish «Libro» for the practice of spirit evocation.

This version presents a considerable plasticity as, besides these examples, among its various editions several sections from various other grimoires, such as the «Grand et Petit Albert», may be found, amounting to a considerable number of possible content which finds its most impressive expression in the large tome entitled «El Libro Infernal – Tratado Completo de las Ciencias Ocultas».

The Portuguese «Livro», commonly called «O Livro de São Cipriano – O Tesouro do Feiticeiro», removes itself quite substantially from this line of grimoires, as this Portuguese «Livro» seems to rather be a large collection of folk traditions, orisons, remedies and sorceries, fitting itself into the vast intangible complex that Espirito Santo (1990) called the Portuguese Popular Religion (this, it should be noted, is merely valid for the currently available version, as records of a long out of print edition named «O Verdadeiro Livro de S. Cypriano», printed in Porto, do exist (Vasconcelos, 1996; Vicente, 2007)).

As such, this book somehow presents itself at the crossroads between the oral and the written word, as oral knowledge congealed in book form. This particularity seems to generate an “open” book, with a beginning but no concrete end (Ferreira, 1992), as it does not present a set of ideas contained within themselves. This aspect of it, when we expand our analysis beyond Portugal (where this book’s content has been roughly the same for well over one hundred years), gives rise to a different kind of plasticity, when compared with the Spanish «Libro», as it is still used as a deposit of practical oral material by its users, with new editions coming to light on a regular bases containing new original sections clearly relating to such living cults as Umbanda and Quimbanda. This process has, remarkably, managed to preserve the «Livro» as flexible and living as the oral traditional frame it originally sprang from, making up a literary and magical continuum ranging from Iberia to South-America.

Beyond de Ibero-American scope, one should also note the existence of books associated with St Cyprian both in Italy and Scandinavia (other punctual examples may be found all through Europe (Skinner & Rankine, 2009)). Of these two, the Italian branch is the least remarkable, as these books present themselves as merely Italian translations of the Spanish «Libro», more precisely of the «El Libro Infernal – Tratado Completo de las Ciencias Ocultas» (translated into Italian as «Il Libro Infernale – Tesouro delle Scienze Occulte»). Even though northern Italy is home to several traditional practices related to St Cyprian, such as orisons, remedies and sorceries, the occurrence of this version of the book in this area seems to have been a purely commercial move by publishers in order to capitalize on pre-existing native folk practices, and as such these do not represent an original product of the local culture.

The Scandinavian case on the other hand is a completely different and legitimate branch of the grimoire tradition. Commonly called the «Cyprianus» or the «Svarte Boken», Black Books, these once again present themselves as repositories of traditional and oral knowledge, with literally hundreds of variations. The explanation of this phenomenon is due to the traditional practice consisting that every new copy of a Black Book should be made by hand copying a previous version, adding whatever new secrets

the new owner wished to include (Stokker, 2007; Rustad, 2010). Such a circumstance meant that these never came to crystallize into a standard version by action of the printing press.

In this case, it is quite certain that the name «Cyprianus», both as the title of these books and the name of their author, is a reverence to the same Sorcerer Saint of Antioch, supposed author of the Iberian books, but this connection in Scandinavia present itself more diffuse and confusing.

As far as Denmark goes, there appear to be two distinct reports of who Cyprian was. One says that he was an exceedingly evil Dane who was banished from Hell by the Devil himself (Davies, 2010). Upset by this event, he dedicated himself to writing nine books on black magic, whose content is the base for the Scandinavian Black Books. The other account, also present in Norway (Stokker, 2007), describes him as a gentle and orderly person, who, while passing by the Black School of Norway, made a pact with the Devil and become a Sorcerer. His book is said to have been written during his later years as he repented such evil actions, having the purpose to show how evil is performed so as one may counteract it. This legend goes on to say that this book is in fact divided into three parts, the Cyprianus, Dr. Faustus and Jacob Ramel.

Going south towards Germany, we once again encounter similar traditions to the ones presented in Denmark, the following account is given by Thorpe (1851):

In ancient times there lived in one of the Danish isles a man named Cyprianus, who was worse than the Devil; consequently, after he was dead and gone to hell, he was again cast forth by the Devil and replaced on his isle. There he wrote nine books, in the old Danish tongue, on Witchcraft and magical spells. Whosoever has read all these nine books through becomes the property of the Devil. From the original work three (or nine) copies are said to have been made by a monk, and mutilated copies of these have been dispersed all over the world. A count, who resided in the castle of Ploen, is said to have possessed a perfect copy, which he caused to be fastened with chains and buried under the castle; because in reading through eight books he was so troubled and terrified that he resolved on concealing it from the sight of the world. One of these books still exists in Flensburg. Some spells from the nine books are still known among aged people. Whoever wishes to be initiated therein must first renounce his Christianity.

One other remarkably different Scandinavian account describes Cyprianus as a beautiful Mexican nun from 1351. Her story states that after refusing the advances of a depraved clergy member she was locked in a dungeon where she wrote her book of magic with shreds from her clothing and her own blood (Stokker, 2007).

The Portuguese «Livro»

Focusing on the Portuguese «Livro», the oldest example of what has become its current standard version can today be found in the Portuguese National Library, originally printed in Lisbon by Livraria Economica in an uncertain date but most likely in the late 1800s.

The structure of this book, although having suffered very minor alteration regarding the numeration of its various sections throughout the years, is in its essence the same as the most modern (Portuguese) editions. Its structure goes as follows:

The book opens with the «Vida de S. Cypriano – Extraída do Flos Sanctorum ou a Vida de Todos os Santos», which consists of the “orthodox” account of St Cyprian’s life as the terrible dark sorcerer who repents his actions and joins the Christian faith. This section, although present in every book, seems to place itself outside of its standard three parts.

The first part is divided into two sections: the first of these, entitled, «Livro de S. Cypriano» is in the entire book what most resembles a classical grimoire. This is itself divided into nine chapters, being that the first seven present in fact a quite well structured system of healing, banishing and exorcism through prayers and orisons, having many interesting nuances and variations depending on the nature of the evil being treated, be it a devilish sorcery, an evil spirit or a good spirit. This part in particular relates quite strongly to the Northern Portuguese concept and preoccupation of the «Almas Penadas» and the dead in Purgatory (Parafita, 2000, 2006), offering methods of identifying these spirits and aiding them in achieving Heaven.

One other remarkable particularity about this section is an extremely lengthy and elaborate banishment for the disenchantment of one hundred and forty eight buried treasures, as this is a book that has always been intrinsically linked with magical treasure hunting. This section bares strong and complex folkloric connections, which are fully exposed below. Finally, chapters VIII and IX of this section present a system of cartomancy and an interpretation of the Zodiac.

The second section of the first part is entitled «Poderes Ocultos – Cartomancia, Orações e Esconjuros» and is largely a list of sixteen sorceries and magical procedures, be them for divination, manipulation or protection.

This first part is finalized with an orison named the «Oração do Justo Juiz» and yet another system of cartomancy, both standing on their own and not as a part of any subsection.

The second part is divided into five sections: the «Verdadeiro Tesouro da Magia Preta e Branca ou Segredos da Feitiçaria» consisting of a list of twelve sorceries\magical secrets and an unnumbered description of a talisman referred to as the «A cruz de S. Bartholomeu e de S. Cyrano». Directly following is the «Mysterios da Feitiçaria Extraídos d'um Livro de Magia Que se Julga do Tempo dos Mouros» yet another list of thirty eight sorceries\magical secrets, amounting both these parts to fifty procedures. In more recent edition (Anon, 2001) this list has been divided further into more than thirty eight entries, as its numeration is on occasions illogical, with a few distinct entries listed under the same number.

The third section, «Arte de Adivinhar as Paixões e Tendencias das Pessoas pelo Craneo e a Pysionomia», consists of several methods of determining the character of any person by their physical attributes, from the use of phrenology to the shape of their various features.

The forth section is once again a cartomancy system, the «Cartomancia Cruzada», and finally this part closes with a dictionary-like list of elements for the interpretation of dreams.

The third part is divided into seven sections, and it is usually subtitled «Tesouros da Galiza», which should be a direct reference to its first part, a lengthy narrative entitled «Inguerimanços de S. Cypriano ou os Prodigios do Diabo – Historia Verdadeira Acontecida no Reino da Galiza». This narrative describes the tale of the Frenchman Victor Siderol, as he finds a copy of the Grimoire (Inguerimanço) of St Cyprian and is lead to Galicia by the Devil in search of buried treasure and an easy life. The second section of this part is then directly related to this narrative, as it lists one hundred and seventy four buried treasures, some of which feature in the narrative presented in the first section.

Following this is an extremely erudite text regarding ghostly apparitions entitled «Espiritos Diabolicos que infestam as casas com estrondos e remedios para os evitar», which on some points does seem to contradict the banishment and spiritual succor instructions given in the first part of the «Livro». Such a text stands out in the book as it is clearly not from a folk or traditional source, quoting authors such as Johannes Hymonides, Antonio Possevino, Gerolamo Cardano or Alessandro Alessandri.

The forth section is another list of thirty sorceries\magical secrets, entitled «Poderes Ocultos do Odio e do Amor Descobertos pelo Magico Jannes e praticados por S. Cypriano». This is followed by a short chiromancy section, which on some more recent editions has been included in the previous list of sorceries\magical secrets.

The sixth section is another remarkable, yet short, text on alchemy which is indicated as having been extracted from the book

«Crimini falsi» by a certain Cecilio Rodigenio. And the book is finally closed by the text «A Feiticeira de Évora ou Historia da Sempre Noiva – Tirada de um Manuscrito de Amador Patricio datado de Salvaterra aos 23 de Abril de 1614», which, as indicated, consists of two different excerpts from the book «Historia das Antiguidades de Évora» by Amador Patricio.

Folk and oral roots

The greatest evidence of the traditional and folk roots of the «Livro» can most easily be found in the various lists of sorceries\magical secrets spread out through the book. This may be solidly arrived at by the analysis of the works of J. Leite de Vasconcelos and Teófilo Braga (among others), as these same eminent scholars seem to have collected many of the exact same recipes and folk magic procedures as presented in the «Livro» by their own methods. Other punctual cases are also detectable in its other sections, such as the use of a particular sigil of protection in the two sections referring to the disenchantment of buried treasures, identified by Vasconcelos (1996) as a traditional «sino-saimão dubrado», a doubled sign\sigil of Solomon.

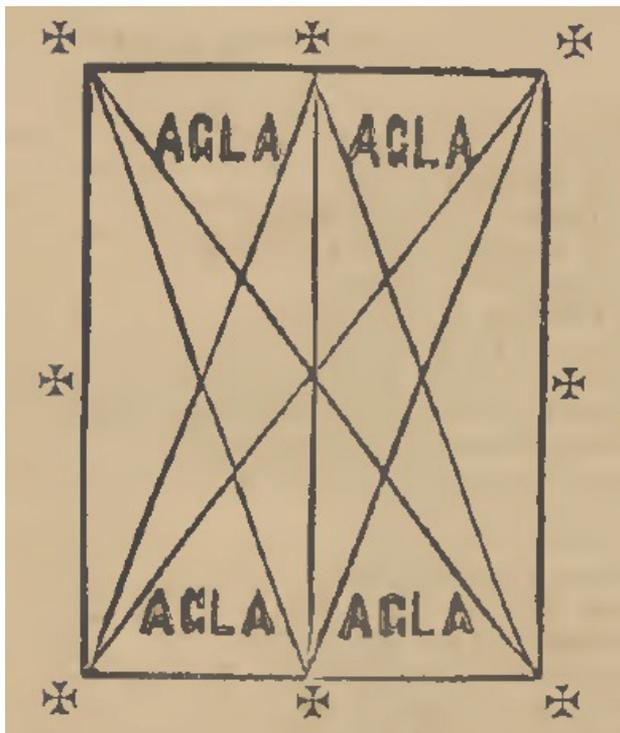


Figure 4. Sigil of protection ascribed in the Portuguese «Livro» for the disenchantment of treasures, an elaboration on a traditional Portuguese «sino-saimão dobrado».

Surprising however is the fact that the relation between these folk practices and the «Livro» has never before been made, neither by these researchers, as Coelho (1889a), and even Vasconcelos himself, had some knowledge of its content (Vasconcelos, 1996), nor by others since. Among the many listed sorceries and magical secrets presented in the «Livro», the following can be presented as examples: in the «Poderes Ocultos» section, we can cite Points X, XI and XII, which, among two interesting narratives of the life of St Gregory and St Cyprian, one can identify the popular «Oração do Anjo Custodio», the Orison of the Custodian Angel, also popularly known as the Twelve Words Said and Returned or as the Orison of St Cyprian. This, in its oral and folk root, is an extremely wide spread and flexible orison, with examples literally from all around the world (Coelho, 1889b) and it is based on the numerical enumerations of religious concepts and objects, such as the two tables of Moses, the three persons of the Trinity, the four evangelists and so on (Vasconcelos, 1882). In Portugal in particular, references to this orison can be found at least as far as the 16th century, when it was outlawed and consequently starts to feature in Inquisition processes (Braga, 1994).

In the «Verdadeiro Tesouro da Magia Preta e Branca» section, point VIII, one finds the «Encantos e magica da semente do feto e suas propriedades», enchantment and magic of the fern seeds and its properties, which describes the process of collecting fern seeds on St John's Eve and their magical properties (in the current case it is mostly related to love and the banishment of evil spirits, but such a practice actually occurs throughout Europe for various other purposes (Frazer, 1993)). A similar procedure is mentioned by Braga (1994), which is referred in traditional sources as the seed of the «feito» or «feitelha». Vasconcelos (1882) also describes this same tradition, adding many details quite similar to the ones presented in the «Livro», quoting the following folk song from the Douro which refers directly to it:

Meu amor não vás a Avintes,
Nem p'ra lá tomes o jeito;
Olha que as moças de lá
Trazem a semente do feito.

In the «Mysterios da Feitiçaria» section, points XXXVI and XLVI one can find instructions for the creation of two magical needles, both meant for romantic incantation of an individual. These two points, while sharing most of their attributes and general instructions, differ in the aspect that one is prepared by passing a needle through the skin of a dead man (point XXXVI) while the other through the eyes of a bat (point XLVI). Although remaining silent about the process by which one may activate the magical power of such needles, Braga (1994) refers quite directly to the practice of the dead man needle, while Vasconcelos (1882) mentions a similar tradition which consists on passing a needle through the eyes of a snake, indicating that these are most likely to be flexible and wide spread customs.

Also interesting in this section is point XXXVII, the instructions on how to acquire a miraculous herb that is said to restore life to the dead. This particular herb is introduced in the «Livro» in a narrative featuring Cyprian and the mountain shepherd Barnabé, who describes how one may obtain the herb.

This process consists in finding a swallows' nest, removing the eggs from it and boiling them, returning them to the nest before the swallows notice they are gone. Upon realizing that their eggs are dead the swallows are said to go fetch an herb which restores their life, being that one merely needs to take this herb in order to operate similar miracles.

These same instructions can also be found in the book «Fysiognomia, e Varios Segredos da Natureza» by Cortés (1699), an author whose influence on Iberian and South-American folk practices cannot be underestimated (Almeida, 2012), and who is actually directly cited in the «Livro» in point XII of the «Poderes Ocultos do Ódio e do Amor». Besides this, Braga (1994) also mentions similar instructions, hailing from Spain, for the acquisition of a stone used for the curing of every affliction of the eyes. The instructions are in all similar to the ones in the «Livro», but one should locate a swallows' nest and blind the already born hatchlings, which will entice the swallows to fetch this miraculous stone.

Finally, in this section it should also be mentioned a particular procedure for the dispelling of the evil influence casted by a hunchback, point L. Vasconcelos (1996) mentions this as a general superstition, brought into being by the 17th century physician Fonseca Henriques, which determined this particular physical deficiency, together with limping, blindness, possessing a cross-eye or only one hand, to be one that is able to cast fascinations and bad luck on all those who see them. Vasconcelos further mentions magical gestures (mainly the fig sign) and several incantations in order to counter act this evil influence, of which the one mentioned in the «Livro» is but one.

In the «Poderes Ocultos do Ódio e do Amor», point XXVI presents the instructions on the construction of a viper head talisman, an object which is mentioned on several other sources as an extremely powerful and effective magical tool (Pires, 1895; Ribeiro, 1917), being occasionally part of complex composite talismans in the form a bags or consecrated pouches containing several magical items (Aragão, 1994), a form of syncretic Afro-European folk magic popularized in the 18th century as the «bolsas de mandinga» (Calainho, 2008).

Taking the above examples into consideration, the particular characteristics of these various lists of secrets and sorceries make them, in the whole of the «Livro», particularly soft spots for the integration and alteration of content. Their organization and overall logic is challenging, with even the occurrence of repeated sorceries or various recipes for exactly the same purpose. This transmits the same clear notion of fluidity and plasticity as these various procedures also possess in their original folk roots, and which are merely collected and congealed here under the name of the Sorcerer Saint Hero of Iberia.

To the attentive reader this opens this grimoire into a whole underlying world of traditional practices, and the very chaotic and apparent random organization of these lists then seems to suggest an "open" book, a mere circumstantial reflection of a particular aspect of traditional lore. Yet, this situation is further complicated by the existence of a mythical corpus around the «Livro» itself as a magically charged cultural object. Its own mythical status has given it an "imaginary" ancientness, also reinforced by its connections to the old Iberian practice of magical treasure hunting (Missler, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c), placing the «Livro» in a complex crossroad of remoteness and proximity.

Imaginary roots

Not explicit in its text is the strong connection of the «Livro» with other mythical and folkloric aspects of traditional Iberian culture. These may reveal to be completely invisible and unperceivable to the outside observer, but they greatly enhance its magical glamour and add layers of interpretation to its text. Particular among these is the connection of the «Livro» with the mythical corpus of the «Mouras Encantadas», the Enchanted Moors.

The two lists of treasures presented in part one and three of the «Livro» are a direct descendent of the once popular «roteiros de tesouros», small booklets or pamphlets describing the locations of old Moorish buried treasures (Sarmiento, 1888; Missler, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). Analyzing these two lists, besides the several direct references to «Mouros» acting as treasure keepers, the most obvious connection can be picked out from the introduction to the second list of treasures: «Todos os thesouros e encantamentos do antigo reino da Galliza acham se depositados pelos mouros e romanos em esconderijos subterraneos», all treasures and enchantments of the ancient kingdom of Galicia were deposited by the Moors and the Romans in underground hiding places.

Besides these, one should also note the occurrence of the word «haver», a belonging, as part of the description of several of these treasures. This word, or its variation «aver», is reported by Braga (1994) as being the specific designation of a buried treasure guarded by a «Mouro», and it occurs thirty-six times in the list of treasures presented in part one and thirty-two in the one presented in part three.

The presence of these lists in the «Livro» transports it further away from the usual grimoire or folk magic realms and instead weaves it into the vast complex of mythical and legendary narratives surrounding the «Mouros Encantados». A complete explanation of the concept of the «Mouro Encantado» may be difficult to achieve, as these represent a multileveled folkloric figure, echoing the collective memory of the «Reconquista», ancient pagan cults or general folk fairy lore (Parafita, 2006). Although certain classification models for a structured study of «Mouras» and «Mouros» have been proposed by Vasconcelos, Consiglieri Pedroso and Francisco Manuel Alves, all these seem to be lacking, being that Pedroso himself admitted the frailty of his (Parafita, 2006). This seems to be due to the vastness that the concept of the «Moura» has taken in Portuguese folklore, where it seems to almost fully occupy the folkloric “niche” of any and all remote notions of nymphs, gods or fey folk.

As a whole, the «Mouro» mythical corpus, independently of the identity or characteristics of this figure, always present it as the “Other”. The «Mouro» is all which is strange, remote and ancient, but mainly, all which is not Christian (Parafita, 2006). In this sense, all strange and unnatural phenomenon is traditionally attributed to the «Mouros» as a whole, meaning that all pre-Christian structures such as «castros» (Iberian pre-Roman hill forts), standing stones or dolmens (places frequently referred to as having stashes of «Mouro» treasure buried underneath them, both in the «Livro» and in oral sources) are frequented attributed to «Mouro» construction, a term which is used to designate all inhabitants of Iberia before the Christian «Reconquista» (Parafita, 2006). This places the «Mouro» as a being of a different order, inhabitant of a murky and diffuse notion of an ancient pre-Christian age, the current Cosmic order.

As such, the inclusion of these two lists of buried «Mouro» treasures and all they imply, as well as the significant presence of the «Livro» itself in several «Moura» legends (Parafita, 2006), claims for it an “imaginary” glamour of absolute ancientness, as its magic reaches all the way back to the pre-Christian age of Iberia and its remote Moorish rulers. Moreover, the «Livro», by assuming its power over these treasures and their guardians, takes up in the religious duality arising from the narratives of the «Reconquista» the position of the always victorious Christian.

In all of this one may contemplate the vast nexus of culture and folklore which makes up the «Livro» as a concept, both by its direct significance (the objective and purpose of its various magical proceedings) as well as by its indirect implications and ramifications.

Crossing the Atlantic

Further adding to this argument is the interesting evolution the «Livro» and its content has suffered in Brazil. Its aspect as an “open” book, together with the fact that the «Livro» on various occasions present itself as a reduced and adulterated version of a supposedly mythical “true” book of Saint Cyprian, assuming itself as an “unfinished” book, seems to set the field for the free and open possibility for constant additions and alterations to its content and organization. This seems to have been the attitude assumed by several Brazilian authors who have taken up the challenge of constantly reinventing, reorganizing and updating the «Livro» in order to fit it to new social, economical and religious backgrounds (Ferreira, 1992; Molina, 1993). As an offshoot of folk magic it has become truly a book of the people (Ferreira, 1992) and although its readers and environment changes, its function remains the same: a repository and collection of magical secrets under the great and dark cloak of St Cyprian, the supreme master of all magic.

Coming into the cult of Quimbanda, and its legions of spirits referred to as Exu and Pomba Gira, for example, both St Cyprian and his book have taken up a relevant and prestigious role in this genuinely Brazilian system (Frisvold, 2012). This can both be observed by the presence of many «despachos» or «trabalhos» echoing those presented in the «Livro», or the presence of the figure of the Saint himself as one of the many spirits worked in this cult (Frisvold, 2012, 2013).

Even though the presence of similar proceedings in this cult as those presented in the «Livro» are, logically, not to be taken as a surprise, these take on much more intense and novel connections when they are seen attributed to particular other spirits in the cult. According to its own narrative, it is said that it was from the spirit Exu Meia-Noite that St Cyprian acquired his occult knowledge (Alva, n.d.; Frisvold, 2012), which was later crystallized into the «Livro». As such, in this context, the «Livro»’s procedures may be separated from the figure of the mythical Sorcerer Saint and attributed to Exu Meia-Noite, gaining in this way a new and much more solid grounding in the core of this relatively new cult.

One other remarkable aspect which seems to have taken a life of its own is the narrative of the «Feiteira» or «Bruxa» of Evora. As stated above, this is the last section of the «Livro» in its basic Portuguese version, and it is itself taken from a previous book by Amador Patricio (a pen name of Francisco José Freire, a quite relevant neo-classical Oratorian Friar from the 18th century, one of the inspirers of the movement of the Arcádia Lusitana). As such, associated with the figure of this «Bruxa» one may today find grimoires attributed to her in the Brazilian market (Santander, n.d.). Further elaborating on this figure, new narratives seem to have emerged in which the «Bruxa» is counted as one

of Cyprian's masters (similarly to Exu Meia-Noite) and that the «Livro» came to be due to the scrolls he inherited from her (Ferreira, 1992; Frisvold, 2013). Furthermore, the figure of the «Bruxa» has come to occupy a relevant role in Afro-Brazilian cults, much like the Saint, either under her own name and attributes or as the Pomba Gira Bruxa de Évora (Farelli, 2006; Frisvold, 2011) worked in Quimbanda, being occasionally counted as having also been the master of Maria Padilha, a known historical figure that today occupies an extremely relevant role in the legion of the Pomba Giras of Quimbanda (Frisvold, 2013).

We can also travel forward and find the figure of Athanásio, a character from the original «Flos Sanctorum» tale who is described as one of Cyprian's students, but that now appears as an author of his own grimoire in Brazil, which shares large portions of its content with the original «Livro» (Athanásio. n.d.; Frisvold, 2013).

The figure of the Saint himself may also be brought into examination, as besides the character presented in the original «Flos Sanctorum» and general catholic narratives, various other variations and nuances of this figure may be observed in the workings of this cult. Of absolute importance at this point is the understanding of the common confusion between St Cyprian of Antioch and St Cyprian of Carthage, occasionally referred to as the Pope of Africa. This, over time, has then led to the association of St Cyprian with the African line of Umbanda and the spirits known as Pretos Velhos, later turned into the line of the Souls, the specific spiritual line worked in Quimbanda. From these we can then gather the examples of the Pretos Velhos Pai Cipriano (Frisvold, 2013) and Cipriano Quimbandeiro (Anon, n.d.), also, São Cipriano das Almas (Carqueja, n.d.) and São Cipriano Quimbandeiro (Frisvold, 2012), as the specific Quimbanda manifestation of the Saint. This then adds further articulation to the variability of "Cyprianic" material which may find itself associated with the «Livro».

Given its "unfinished" nature, these instances are perfect examples on how the «Livro» may find new content, as now, within the mechanics of these cults, it can be deconstructed and rearranged in a constant stream of new canonical information (according to these cults), producing theoretically infinite variations of the «Livro» depending on the influence of particular spirits cultivated by a potential new author.

Nonetheless, such instances further cement what was referred to previously as "imaginary" roots of the «Livro», this time in Brazil. By the addition of such characters to the overall narrative of the «Livro» a new authority and glamour of power and ancientness can be attributed to it in a new land where it previously had no roots, establishing itself once again as a repository or reflection of folk magic. Once again, this places the «Livro» in a most privileged position for the observation of such cults and the narratives they establish of themselves.

Conclusions

Multiple evidences that the current Portuguese version of the «Livro de São Cipriano» is akin to a collection of magical secrets and beliefs of an oral and folk nature has been presented. Such an instance, coupled with the «Livro»'s own acceptance of its incomplete nature, as well as its attribution to the folk magical hero of Iberia, places it in a complex position that allows for the constant addition and alteration of this book's content.

Still, a clear glamour of authenticity and ancientness seem to be claimed by the «Livro» as it has become intertwined with the rich and vast mythical corpus of the «Mouras Encantadas», representations and expressions of ancientness and otherness in the Northern Portuguese rural imaginary, claiming in this way what may be referred to as "imaginary" roots.

When traversing to Brazil and into its particular magical and religious environment, the «Livro» takes on a particularly relevant aspect, as through the mechanics of cults such as Quimbanda its content may be deconstructed and attributed to both novel and pre-existing characters of its own narrative. This allows for the generation of new "imaginary" roots for this grimoire, which then permit for the continuing evolution of its content in a new social, economical and religious environment.

All these aspects of the «Livro» make up a unique cultural phenomenon, both in Portugal and in Brazil, where it may be regarded as a rare window into several aspects of the intangible culture of the environments where it may be found, both due its written content as well as the reactions it triggers in its surroundings.

With all this, the «Livro» proves to be an invaluable tool and object of interest that has been largely disregarded by most researchers and which beckons a more attentive and multidisciplinary study.

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