

Helwi Blom

Legendary Love. The Wide Appeal of *Pierre de Provence et la belle Maguelonne* in Early Modern Europe

With Floris and Blancheflour, Pierre and Maguelonne belong to the love couples from medieval literature whose stories have resonated with audiences from different social, cultural, geographical, and temporal backgrounds. The oldest known version of the story is a French *roman* in prose that probably dates back to the 1430s. By 1500, it had already been printed multiple times in France, and it quickly found translators in several European vernaculars. In many linguistic regions, the story was destined to a long life in the form of so-called chapbooks and literary adaptations such as plays and penny prints.

This chapter aims to study how *Pierre et Maguelonne* travelled across boundaries and how the story evolved over time. The first part consists of an analytic overview of the spread of the narrative across Europe from its first appearance until 1800. Although this overview, which complements and corrects existing surveys and studies,¹ focuses on the printed tradition, the manuscript tradition that existed alongside it will also be considered.² The second part will zoom in on developments in the production of reprints and new editions in different linguistic regions during the early modern period. What are the similarities and the differences in the contents, the material features, and the reception of chapbook editions of *Pierre et Maguelonne* in different areas? It will be argued that, while the reprints increasingly took the characteristics of a production at the lowest possible cost, they also reveal the preoccupation of early modern publishers of this type of books with updating the presentation of the medieval love story about Pierre de Provence and the beautiful Maguelonne.³

1 Notably Babbi (2003) and Roudaut (2009).

2 The discussion concentrates on editions of the medieval narrative and leaves aside dramatic adaptations as well as eighteenth-century literary reworkings.

3 The editions discussed in this chapter are referenced in my *Bibliography of early modern editions of “Pierre de Provence et la belle Maguelonne”* (BPM) at <https://uu.academia.edu/HelwiBlom>, which serves as an appendix to this chapter. All items have a unique identifier composed of one or more letters and a number. See also Tab. 2 at the end of this chapter.

Note: A special thank you to Marie-Dominique Leclerc, Vicent Pastor i Briones, and Christine Putzo for their contributions to my research on *Pierre et Maguelonne*.

1 A Multifaceted Medieval Text and its Early Dissemination in Manuscript Form

The French *Pierre et Maguelonne* as we know it is thought to have been composed – or at least put in writing – around 1430–1440 by an anonymous author, who might have had links to the court of René of Anjou, Count of Provence (1434–1480) and King of Naples (1435–1442), or to the entourage of his contemporary Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1396–1467).⁴ The plot can be summarized as follows: eager to discover the world, to prove himself as a knight and to set eyes on the much praised beautiful Maguelonne, Pierre goes to the court of Naples, where he participates incognito in a tournament. Maguelonne is as impressed by him as he is by her, and thanks to the complicity of Maguelonne’s nurse, Pierre and Maguelonne can soon declare their love to each other. For some reason, they decide one day to leave Naples in secret. During a rest break on their journey, Pierre admires the breast of his sleeping beloved when, suddenly, a bird snatches from her neck a sachet containing the three golden rings that he had given her. Pierre pursues the bird and by a cruel twist of fate, the boat he uses to retrieve the sachet drifts off to open sea, where he is picked up by pirates. Thus separated, Pierre and Maguelonne go through many tribulations. Maguelonne ends up in Provence, where she founds a hospital and a chapel consecrated to Saint Peter in a coastal village called Port Sarrasin. After having been held at the court of the Sultan of Alexandria, Pierre embarks on a ship bound for Provence, but during a supply stop he falls asleep on a desert island and the ship leaves without its passenger. Pierre is saved by fishermen who bring him to the hospital in Port Sarrasin. There he is finally reunited with Maguelonne and his parents. The couple marries and lives happily and saintly ever after.

The storyline is based on a combination of elements that can be found in several other medieval European narratives, most notably the motive of a predator bird causing a temporary separation of young lovers, which probably finds its ultimate source in the *One Thousand and One Nights* tale of Kamar al-Zaman (Bolte 1894, XII–XVII; Babbi 2003, IX–X; Roudaut 2009, 8–11). Especially in its original form, *Pierre et Maguelonne* is a generically hybrid story, which can be placed in the realm of a variety of text types, such as chivalric romance, the idyllic or moral tale, the *roman d’aventures* (“adventure novel”), the founding legend and hagiography (Pastor [i] Briones 2018, 65–130; Burrichter 2013, 359–372). This rich

⁴ On the estimated date, the context of composition as well as the – baseless – attributions to specific authors, see Pastor [i] Briones (2018, 49–63).

interpretational potential has been deployed in various ways during the story's journey through time and space.

Six manuscripts containing the medieval French *Pierre et Maguelonne* have come down to us. They all date from the fifteenth century and are usually divided into two groups: one consisting of four manuscripts offering the oldest known version of the story (ca. 1430–1440), the so-called *rédaction* B (manuscripts A, P1, P2, and P3), and another composed of two manuscripts with a prologue dated 1453 and an interlinear translation in Latin, which present a later and abridged version: *rédaction* C (manuscript C, and Jena, THULB, El. f. 98). These last two were probably copied by German scribes. None of the manuscripts are illustrated, but one of the copies of the second group has cut-outs for illustrations, which have not been realized.⁵

The two manuscripts of *rédaction* C, which presumably originated around 1480–1500 in the Electorate of Saxony where they served as a support for aristocrats learning French (Backes 2004, 44–46, and Putzo 2018–2019), are the earliest representatives of a series of geographical, linguistic, and transmedial migrations that characterize the early modern history of the text. It is likely that these *rédaction* C manuscripts were based on contemporary printed editions imported from France.⁶

When and where exactly the first translation into another European vernacular was made is impossible to say. If we are to rely on the extant manuscript tradition, the Byzantine prose romance⁷ of *Imberios and Margarona*, dating back to ca. 1490 at the earliest, could be qualified as the oldest known adaptation. This anonymous rendering in Greek prose differs significantly from the French version; the young couple is for instance already married when they run off and Maguelonne contacts Pierre's parents about her plans to build a church and a hospital. After reuniting, the couple marries again. Scholars nonetheless agree that its author probably drew on a French – manuscript or printed – original, which he reworked, using elements and conventions from local literary culture

5 Babbi (2003, XVII–XXVII) describes the five manuscripts known to her in detail. A description of the manuscript in Jena, with the cut-outs for illustrations, can be found on ARLIMA. Since it presents a version of the French text plus interlinear Latin translation that does not depend on the other *rédaction* C manuscript, Putzo (2018–2019, 234) argues that it should be considered as an autonomous *rédaction* J.

6 The former collection of the Bibliotheca Electoralis (Jena, THULB) holds a *Sammelband* with a copy of an edition of *Pierre et Maguelonne* published in Lyon in 1489 (shelfmark 4 Art.lib.XII,1), but this copy, which belonged in 1496 to Wolff Haller, son-in-law of the German publisher Anton Koberger, was probably not the model for the manuscript conserved in Jena. The text of the manuscript is closer to the 1490 Lyon edition ascribed to Jean de La Fontaine (ISTC ip00645450).

7 On this genre, see Goldwyn and Nilsson (2018).

(Jeffreys and Jeffreys 1971; Yiavis 2006a; Lassithiotakis 2012; Yiavis 2016; Luzi 2018). The context of the creation of the two separate German manuscript translations that appeared in the first quarter of the sixteenth century is somewhat better known, and its study throws an interesting light on the cultural background and the networks of the actors involved in the transmission process. The single extant copy of the oldest – anonymous – Bavarian German translation dates from around 1510–1518. The translator possibly used a Lyon edition from the end of the fifteenth century as a template. The most striking aspect of this manuscript is the fact that it is illustrated with 24 pen drawings, which are ascribed to the German painter Albrecht Altdorfer from Regensburg. It is tempting to link the genesis of this illustrated manuscript to the international publishing house of the Koberger family from Nuremberg and to consider it as a copy destined to serve as the basis for a printed book, but the quality of both the text and the illustrations seem to contradict this hypothesis (Domanski 2020).⁸

The second German translation brings us back to the Electorate of Saxony: in 1527 Veit Warbeck, who had been a secretary to Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony (1463–1525), as well as to some of his successors, used the Coburg manuscript with the French-Latin *Pierre et Maguelonne* (manuscript C, *rédaction* C) as an exemplar for a German translation. In the past, it has been suggested this was a wedding present for John Frederick I (1503–1554), son of the then Elector John the Steadfast (1468–1532), and Sibylle of Cleves (1512–1554), but it seems more likely that the work was ordered expressly by either John Frederick or his cousin Francis of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1508–1549), who lived at the time at the Elector's court. Both men took a keen interest in tournament fights but would not have been fluent enough in French to read the chivalric romances that could be found in the Bibliotheca Electoralis, such as *Pierre et Maguelonne*, in their original language (Putzo 2018–2019, 236–244). Warbeck followed the French text very closely, but as an adherent of Luther who lived in an environment that could be qualified as the epicentre of the Reformation, he tempered its Catholic flavour by omitting all references to Marian devotion or the veneration of saints, and by translating the word “catholique” as “christlich” (Bolte 1894, XVI–XLIX; Buschinger 2010, 82–87). Thus, the etiological aspect of the story as a founding legend for the town of Maguelone and its Cathédrale Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul loses much of its importance in this German translation.

There are also fragments of a manuscript with an English adaptation from around 1500 that bears no direct resemblance to any of the contemporary manuscript or printed versions of *Pierre et Maguelonne* (Zettersten 1965).

⁸ On Koberger and Haller, see also Brandis (1917).

2 Lyon as a Production and Distribution Hub

The intertwining of manuscript and print that characterized the first decades of the reception of the narrative did not disappear when the printing press gained ground in Europe. Yet the new medium quickly became essential to its transmission and longevity.

It has long been assumed that the Coburg manuscript was the earliest representative of *rédaction* C as well as the source of all French editions, except for the *princeps*, which was thought to be based on *rédaction* B.⁹ Although several researchers admitted that 1453 was more likely to be the year *rédaction* C was composed than the creation date of the manuscript itself, the status of the Coburg manuscript as a source for the printed tradition has only recently been seriously challenged. As indicated above, it is now assumed to be posterior to the first printed editions. If we combine this finding with the fact that the French edition that is considered to be the *princeps* ([Lyon: Guillaume Le Roy for Barthélemy Buyer?, ca. 1475], ISTC ip00645130) also contains the 1453 prologue, our perspective on *rédactions* B and C drastically changes. In the new constellation, the printed edition from ca. 1475 is the oldest known representative of a version that has at least one of the characteristics of a *rédaction* C for which no prior manuscript is known and the relationship of which with *rédaction* B has to be re-examined. Was there a now lost manuscript or edition that introduced the 1453 prologue and/or contained other features that distinguish *rédaction* B from the printed tradition? Was the prologue invented by the first printer, and should we consider the *princeps* as an intermediary version between *rédaction* B and a *rédaction* C that was, in fact, a particular stage in the long line of adjustments made by the first Lyon printers?¹⁰ These questions call for a reassessment of the fifteenth-century manuscript and printed copies that have come down to us, an endeavour that I cannot undertake here, but that I will give a push by examining the *editio princeps* and its relation to the manuscripts of *rédaction* B as well as the re-edition from 1483.

The contents of the four *rédaction* B manuscripts present only minor variants, but there are some interesting differences with regard to chapter titles: manuscripts P1 (ca. 1451–1468) and P3 (ca. 1474–1500) are almost identical, P2 (ca. 1459?) has clearly different headings, and manuscript A (1471) does not have any.¹¹ Interestingly

9 See ARLIMA; Babbi (2003), who dates the Coburg manuscript to 1453, according to the date in the prologue; Mounier (2012), who observes however that the *editio princeps* seems to follow *rédaction* C; Roques, cited by Roudaut (2009, 26), and Roudaut (2009, 256).

10 On this question, see Putzo (2018–2019).

11 Cf. footnote 5. In P2 (ca. 1459) the beginning is missing, so we cannot be sure that it did not have the prologue.

enough, the chapter division and the 27 chapter titles in the oldest known edition diverge more or less from those in P1 (42 chapters) and P3 (44 chapters), while being close to the 33 section divisions – indicated by red initials which are often preceded by a coloured spiralling line – and their opening lines in manuscript A. For example, in this edition, the title of chapter 25 paraphrases the first sentence of the chapter, which echoes the opening sentence of the corresponding section in manuscript A: “Comment Maguelonne ne pouvoit dormir de toute la nuit pour la grande joye que son cueur ...” (“How Maguelonne could not sleep at night because of the great joy that her heart ...”), whereas P1 and P3 as well as P2 announce the contents of chapter in other terms: “Comment Maguelonne s’en va vers le conte et la contesse et leur assigne jour a venir veoir leur filz Pierre” (“How Maguelonne goes to the Count and the Countess and sets a date for them to come and see their son Pierre”). Similarly, the title of chapter 23 does not align with the P1 and P3 version: “Comment le noble Pierre se reveille de la ou il estoit endormy” (“How the noble Pierre wakes up from where he was asleep”) but focuses instead on the opening sentence of the section that follows, describing Pierre asleep on the island: “Comment Pierre demoura endormy en l’isle” (“How Pierre remained asleep on the island”).¹²

Even though manuscript A lacks chapter titles and its chapter division does not entirely match the *editio princeps*, it seems that, from all extant French manuscripts that could predate the publication of the first printed edition, this is the one that comes closest to it. It is, of course, possible that the first publisher added the chapter titles himself, together with the prologue. At this stage, I cannot explain the curious error in the title of his chapter 17 (both in the text and the table, see Fig. 1): “Comment Maguelonne dormoit ou giron Pierre ou bois où ilz se estoient retraitz et comment il prenoyt playsir à regarder la plaisant beaulté de Maguelonne” (“How Maguelonne slept on Pierre’s lap in the wood they had retreated to and how he took pleasure in looking at Maguelonne’s pleasing beauty”), which summarises the contents of the previous chapter in similar but less explicit terms than the title of chapter 16: “Comment Maguelonne se dormoit ou giron de son doulx amy Pierre et comment il prenoit plaisir à la regarder et baisier et à la fin eut grand douleur” (“How Maguelonne slept on her sweet friend Pierre’s lap and how he took pleasure in looking at her and kissing her and how, in the end, he felt great sorrow”). Did the editor make a mistake in copying or adapting these chapter titles – which do not appear in any of the *réduction* B manuscripts – from an unknown source (or two), or is this editing accident the result of his doubts on using “baisier” in the title of chapter 16, which contains the most daring passage of the book? The word “baisier”

¹² This is also the case in chapters 5 and 7. The *princeps*’ chapter titles are cited here from the table in Roudaut (2009), but his chapter numbering is different since it includes the prologue.

occurs in the chapter as we find it in the *réduction* B manuscripts, but not in the text of the *princeps* itself. Was it deliberately omitted, and was the title adapted accordingly? But if so, why did the editor keep the passage about the breast-touching then?

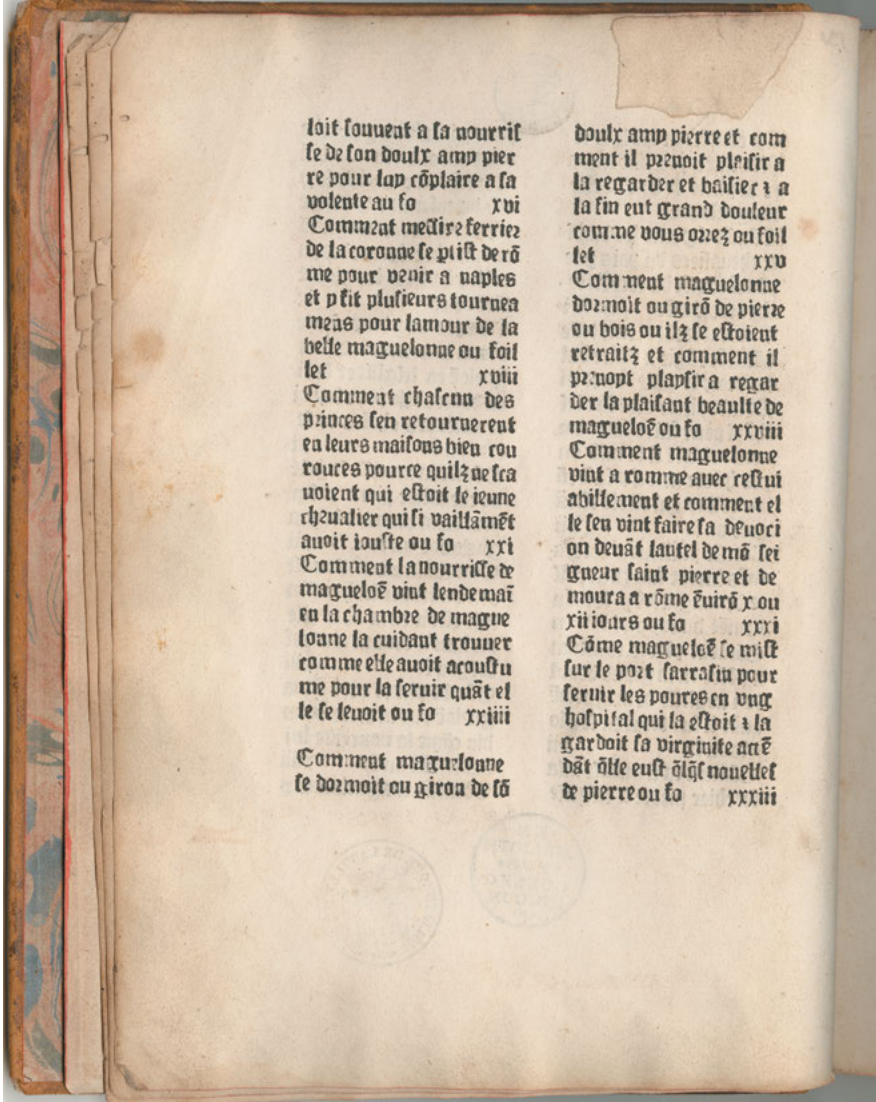


Fig. 1: Table of contents in the oldest known edition of *Pierre et Maguelonne*. [Lyon: Guillaume Le Roy for Barthélemy Buyer?, ca. 1475], π1v (Lyon, BM, Rés. Inc. 183). Photo Vincent Lefebvre. By courtesy of Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon.

Manuscript A is also temporally and geographically close to the first printed edition: the colophon, signed by Jean de Monnoy from Valence, is dated 1471 and the manuscript belonged to Jean de Varennes, member of a noble family from the Lyon region.¹³ The *editio princeps* itself is not dated or signed, but it must have seen the light around 1475–1477 in the workshop of Guillaume Le Roy, Lyon’s *prototypographus*, who was called to the city by Barthélemy Buyer, an enterprising merchant who around 1473 installed a printing press in his house. His edition of *Pierre et Maguelonne*, which was possibly one of the first medieval chivalric romances to appear in print,¹⁴ might have been published at the instigation of Buyer himself, as was perhaps the second edition (Lyon: Martin Huss, ca. 1480, ISTC ip00645150).¹⁵ Buyer was an accomplished businessman with many international relations and warehouses in Avignon, Toulouse, and Paris (Parquez 2002; Fau et al. 2003). When he died in 1483, Lyon had already become a flourishing printing centre oriented towards the production of books in the vernacular aimed at a wide audience: religious and devotional works, history, romances, and medicine (Coq 1989, 207–214). It was probably this focus on specific genres in the vernacular that prompted Lyon publishers to embellish their impressions with woodcut illustrations as early as 1478. To this end they often borrowed, bought, or copied woodblocks used by printers in the German language areas (Labarre 1989, 248–250; Zeldenrust 2016), but the series of 22 woodcuts used in the first illustrated edition of *Pierre et Maguelonne*, issued by Guillaume Le Roy around 1483 (ISTC ip00645200), was especially created for this narrative.¹⁶ This new edition differs considerably from the one Le Roy printed before: not only did he leave out the table of contents, the chapter division and some of the chapter titles were also modified in a way that suggests that the editor used a second or different model for his re-edition. He added for example five chapter titles, which also exist in manuscripts P1 and P3. While P3, which is much closer to P1 than to the printed version, could be posterior to this edition, P1 definitely predates it. The editor – the printer-publisher himself? – however also

13 On the Varennes family, see Claude Le Laboureur, *Les Mazures de l'abbaye royale de l'Isle-Barbe lez Lyon ...* Vol. II. Paris: Jean Couterot, 1681, 618–633. The provenance note seems contemporaneous.

14 By “medieval chivalric romance” I mean a tale in prose or verse first composed in the Middle Ages and recounting the exploits, marvellous adventures, and love stories of knights and their beautiful ladies (cf. Vielliard 2007; Blom 2012).

15 The only extant copy of this edition has no table of contents, but it contains the same repetition in the titles of chapters 16 and 17 as the first edition. Yet the wording is not entirely identical, the most striking difference being the absence of the word “baisier”.

16 There are 27 images in total, because some of the woodblocks were used more than once. Judging by their state, the blocks had been used before, probably in a now lost edition of our narrative.

removed two chapter titles, which brings the total chapter number from 27 to 30. In addition, the *princeps'* mistake with the title of the chapter discussing Pierre admiring the beauty of his beloved was duly corrected: title 1 (speaking of kissing) was replaced with the less explicit title 2, which was placed above the chapter it belonged to. The chapter thus left without title received a befitting one: “Comment maguelonne dormit sur le manteau de pierre son loyal ami dedans le bois & comment quant elle se resveilla se trouva seule” (“How Maguelonne slept in the wood on the coat belonging to Pierre, her loyal friend, & how, when she woke up, she found herself all alone”). Finally, the layout of the text was also changed from double columns to long lines, a format that would become dominant in the sixteenth-century Lyon editions.

For about fifteen years Lyon was the sole production and distribution centre for the *Pierre et Maguelonne* narrative, and, as we have already seen with the example of the manuscripts in Saxony copied from French editions, the eight editions that came off the printing presses during that period quickly found their way to readers in other cities, inside and outside France. To all appearances, it was again through a Lyon edition that *Pierre et Maguelonne* was made available in Castilian. It has been regularly suggested that the *historia de la linda magalona [...] y del [...] cavallero Pierres de provença* that was published in 1519 by Jacobo Cromberger in Seville (IB 16697)¹⁷ followed the Guillaume Le Roy edition from ca. 1485 (ISTC ip00645250), because they would both have a “preamble” absent from other French manuscript and printed sources (Vargas Diaz-Toledo 2013; García Collado 1994, 179–197). However, this is not the case. Not only was the preamble in question – the 1453 prologue – included in two manuscripts (*rédaction* C) and in almost every French edition published before 1519, it also is conspicuously missing from the 1519 Castilian translation as well as from subsequent editions published in the Castilian language. One could conjecture that the first publishers on the Iberian Peninsula simply preferred to skip an opening passage that was of little interest to their readers, but there is a more plausible explanation: Cromberger used a contemporary French quarto edition printed in the workshop of Pierre Mareschal and Barnabé Chaussard, closely resembling the undated one [ca. 1504?] digitized in Gallica (BnF, RES-Y2-707, ISTC ip00645550). Except for a later reprint now attributed to Jacques Moderne, this is the only early French edition without the 1453 prologue that I know of.¹⁸ Another interesting feature is

17 The Burgos edition from the same year, mentioned in several bibliographies, is a ghost. An inventory from 1508 already mentioned “un libro de empremta de la istoria del fixo del conde Proença” (“a printed book about the son of the Count of Provence”) (Aranda García 2021c, 300), but it is unclear if it was indeed an edition in an Iberian vernacular.

18 I have however not been able to consult BPM, F9 and F11–13.

that, contrary to the 1485 edition (and the rest of the folio editions printed in Lyon), it mentions that Pierre kisses Maguelonne while she is sleeping, an important aspect that is also present in the Castilian translation.¹⁹ The chapter division is not identical: the edition attributed to Mareschal and Chaussard has two unique additional chapter titles (made up to match its illustrations?) and the 1519 edition by Cromberger has a heading that is absent from the French edition. Yet the fact that the title woodcut of a later Spanish edition (Toledo: s.n., 1526, IB 16699) reproduces the image depicted on Mareschal and Chaussard's edition (see Figs. 2a and 2b) seems to offer further proof of the circulation of an edition similar to theirs in Castile at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Crombergers themselves, however, did not copy a French woodcut for their title page illustration – the only picture in the book –, but used a block from their stock representing an enthroned queen surrounded by courtiers. It emphasized their choice to put Magalona first in the title, while Pierre was the one named first in the contemporary editions from Lyon. Did the Spanish translator or publisher reverse the order because he was aiming at a female audience and/or wanted to frame the story as a book about strong women, such as the popular *Historia de la linda Melosina*?²⁰ Whatever the reason, the choice has proven decisive, since all the Castilian editions that followed presented the story as *La historia de la linda Magalona*, at least until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Around the same time, the narrative was also translated in Dutch by or on behalf of Willem Vorsterman, one of the leading publishers in the international printing centre of Antwerp, who brought out an edition dated to ca. 1517 (BPM, Du1). The translation follows the text of the French original, but less closely than the Castilian version: it sometimes paraphrases or abbreviates, while elaborating and adding in other instances. The most important change is the insertion of 28 ballades expressing the sentiments of the protagonists (Vinck 1976–1977; Finet-van der Schaaf 2001). This sort of addition, which not only considerably amplifies the text but also adds a lyrical and dramatic aspect to it, was a common phenomenon in contemporaneous editions of Dutch prose romances, but our narrative undoubtedly stands out in this respect (Debaene 1977, 347–351).

As for the model used by the Dutch translator, it has been hypothesized that he either used a manuscript of *rédaction* B in combination with a printed edition similar to Guillaume Le Roy's (ca. 1485), or had at his disposal an unknown printed ver-

¹⁹ The “baisier”, however, is not mentioned in the chapter title. This aspect is also present in the quarto editions by Jean Du Pré and Jean de La Fontaine, but not in Pierre Bouttellier's (BPM, F6–8).

²⁰ The first edition of the Castilian *Melosina* was printed in 1489. See the chapter on *Melusine* in this volume.



Figs. 2a and 2b: Title pages of a French and a Castilian edition of *Pierre et Maguelonne* displaying an almost identical woodcut. On the left: [Lyon: Pierre Mareschal and Barnabé Chaussard, ca. 1504], a1r (Paris, BnF, RES-Y2-707); on the right: Toledo: [Miguel de Eguía], 1526, a1r (Paris, BnF, RES-Y2-819). By courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

sion with the characteristics that separate the Dutch edition from the known French versions, notably the absence – again! – of the 1453 prologue (Vinck 1976–1977, 26; Finet-van der Schaaf 2001, 876). At this stage, we cannot resolve the question, but there are two elements that seem to support the hypothesis of a printed source: contrary to the *rédaction* B manuscripts, the Dutch translation does not mention that Pierre kisses his sleeping fiancée, and in the 1516 Rouen edition (with prologue), the chapter describing Pierre’s awakening on the island is as distinctively short as in Vorsterman’s edition. Like his counterpart in Castile, the Dutch printer refrained from ordering illustrations designed specifically for *Pierre et Maguelonne* but delved into his own stock of woodblocks. He probably also borrowed a few from his colleagues (Vinck 1976–1977, 13–18).

3 Georg Spalatin and the Spread of *Pierre et Maguelonne* in Northern and Central Europe

After this first phase of dissemination in manuscript and print in and from France, with Lyon as an important vector, the second phase starts with the publication of Warbeck’s translation by his friend Georg Burckhardt, better known as Spalatin, in 1535. In the dedicatory letter to Elisabeth von Einsiedel, wife to Saxon nobleman Heinrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel (1497–1557),²¹ that served as a preface, Spalatin stated that the reason for publishing Warbeck’s translation was that he was repeatedly urged to do so. He accepted because he thought it could serve as an exemplum for readers and as an inspiration for authors to write books for a female audience, which would be better off reading and hearing a respectable story than spending their leisure hours “with idle talk and mischief making” (*Die Schön Magelona ... Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1535, π2v*).²² While this edition of *Pierre et Maguelonne* might seem like a rather disparate publication in Spalatin’s *oeuvre*, certain elements in the letter indicate that the subject was in fact closely connected with a hot topic in the humanist and Lutheran circles Spalatin was active in: matrimonial law and the status of secret engagements in a society where the Catholic *ius canonicus* was no longer normative (Putzo 2020). By presenting Maguelonne’s running off with Pierre – “in Gottes unnd irer eltern ungehorsam wider das vierdte gepott Gottes” (“disobeying God, her parents and the Fourth Commandment of our Lord”) – and the sufferings that followed as a negative ex-

21 On the Einsiedel family, see Putzo (2020).

22 The English translation of the quotes comes from McDonald (1994).

emplum for young women and a warning for parents “ein fleysigs aug unnd achtung auff die kinder / beuor auff die töchtern haben” (“to cast a diligent eye on their children, especially their daughters”) (*Die Schön Magelona* ... 1535, π2v), Spalatin framed the story as a moral tale destined for women. He changed the title of Warbeck’s translation accordingly from *Ein sehr lüstige histori vom dem Ritter mit den silbern schlüsseln, und der schonen Magelonna* (“A very pleasant history of the Knight with the silver keys, and the fair Magelonna”) to *Die Schön Magelona. Ein fast lüstige [...] histori vonn der schönen Magelona [...] und einem Ritter genannt Peter* ... (“Fair Magelona. A very pleasant [...] history of the fair Magelona and a Knight called Peter”). He left the text itself almost untouched, except for one small but important detail: in the published version Pierre no longer touches Maguelonne’s breasts but only looks at them.

Spalatin entrusted the text to his regular publisher, Heinrich Steiner, one of the major printers in Augsburg, who in 1535 produced a quarto edition illustrated with 24 woodcuts in different styles (VD16 H 3867).²³ Like Vorsterman, Steiner did not use custom-made woodblocks, but made a judicious selection among the ones he had recently used for other titles, such as *Fortunatus* (1530) and *Celestina* (1534) (Müller 1990 [J.D.], 1227; Schmidt 1996, 194). *Die Schön Magelona* was an instant success: there were at least five reprints within ten years. When Steiner died in 1548, Hermann Gülfferich in Frankfurt am Main quickly filled the gap in the production of popular narratives by almost monopolizing the publication of this type of texts. *Die Schön Magelona* was the first fictional narrative he printed; between 1548 and 1553 he published no less than four editions, which he partly illustrated with Steiner’s woodblocks (Rautenberg 2015). His stepson Weigand Han, who took over in 1554, produced another two editions, followed by two brought out by his heirs. In the Han workshop, the format was reduced to in-octavo, which meant that the woodblocks had to be replaced with smaller specimens. The text itself also underwent some changes in that the number of chapters went from 31 to 42; especially the chapters recounting the mutual recognition and reunion were divided into smaller segments (Schmidt 1996, 196).

During these years when Frankfurt am Main with its important fairs occupied not only a crucial position as a production centre of early modern narratives in German, but also as a distribution centre for the national and international book trade, the German *Magelona* spread further in central and northern Europe. This “Protestant” edition with a foreword focused on morality and female reader-

²³ There are several repetitions of the same woodcut. On Augsburg as a printing centre, see Künnast (2011).

ship became indeed the prism through which translators into Czech, Polish, Danish, and Low German read and adapted it.

Little is known about the contents of the original Czech translation, of which no copy has survived. The document that reveals its existence was drawn up in 1567 by Vilém Prusinovský, Bishop of Olomouc, and lists the books Friedrich Milichthaler from Olomouc was authorized to print and sell.²⁴ Milichthaler was the stepson of Jan Günther, a printer-bookseller who trained in Nuremberg but moved to Olomouc, where he developed a flourishing business, among other things by ordering translations of German books destined for a broad audience (Nádvorníková 2004). Günther died in 1567, so the Czech *Magelone* edition from 1565 mentioned in the bishop's list (BPM, Cz1) was probably published by him.

In approximately the same period, an anonymous author translated the German *Magelona* into Polish. As in the case for the Czech translation, its existence is only known through a reference in a contemporaneous booklist; the post-mortem inventory of the Kraków bookseller Maciej Przywilcki (d. 1587) lists four copies of an octavo edition of the *Historyja o Magielonie* (Kiliańczyk-Zięba 2013). Judging by the title in the oldest preserved copy containing the beginning of the text (Kraków: s.n., 1677, BPM, Pol4), the Polish translator, who referred to neither Warbeck nor Spalatin, turned the narrative into an exemplum for both women and men:

Historyja o Magielonie krolewnie Neapolitanskiey. Vmysłu wspániąłością, Vrody pięknością, Náiásnieyszą Godnością, wszelakich cnot y przymiotow zgromádeniem, v całego świata wslawioney. Ktora będąc prawdziwym szczęścia y Nieszczęścia igrzyskiem: stała się przykładna káždemu w Nieszczęściu mężney stałości; w Szczęściu, bacznego pomiarkowania; w Dostátku, szczodroblivości; w niedostatku, cierpliwego znoszenia Mistrzynie: aby tak cokolwiek na kogo przypadnie, nic nowego bydź rozumiał, ani się nagłych lub niespodziewanych strachał przypadkow; lecz z innych doświádczenia miarę biorąc, przestrzeżony, cudzym karał się nieszczęściem. Dla zachęcenia ciekawego Czytelniká / z poprawą sensu słowy poleownieyszymi teraz świeżo wydana.²⁵

²⁴ On this list, see Lechner (1896).

²⁵ “The History of Magielona, princess of Naples. Famous all over the World for her Magnanimity, her beautiful Appearance, her Great Dignity, an accumulation of all virtues and qualities. Being subjected to the vicissitudes of luck and Misfortune, she proved herself in every Misfortune to be an example of human constancy: a Mistress [=Master] showing careful consideration in times of Happiness; generosity in times of Affluence, and patient endurance in times of want. So that whatever happens to anyone, he experiences nothing new, nor should he be afraid of sudden or unexpected events, but he should learn from the experiences of others and be cautious. To attract the curious Reader, with a correction of sense in polished words, now newly published.” Transliteration and translation Krystyna Wierzbicka-Trwoga. On the Polish translation, see Wierzbicka-Trwoga (2020).

This idea of withstanding with constancy the vicissitudes of Fortune is developed in the prologue to “the Reader”, which thus brushes off the specific lesson and intended readership in the German version.

In 1583 Lorentz Benedicht, the first royal printer in Denmark, who might have come originally from the German language area, published a Danish translation of the German *Magelona*.²⁶ Unlike his predecessors in Kraków and Olomouc, the Danish translator fully acknowledged the author of his source: “Beautiful Magelona. A very pleasant story about the beautiful Magelona [...] and about a knight named Peder [...]. Translated from French into German by M. Vitus Varbeck. And now recently translated into Danish, very pleasant to read”.²⁷ The Danish translation not only closely followed the German text – as represented in the editions posterior to 1548 (Westermann 1932, 295) – but Benedicht also patterned his foreword on Spalatin’s; it contains similar critical remarks on Catholicism, the same framing of the story as a negative exemplum and a warning to young women and their parents, and, last but not least, Benedicht also dedicated his edition to a noble lady: Kirstine Lykke, wife to “rigskansler” (chancellor of the Danish Kingdom) Eiler Grubbe (DFB 7, XXI). Ruth Westermann notes that the earliest Danish editions have significantly more chapters (43) than the 1549 German edition (32). Since this was also the case in the Low German edition of 1601 (39 chapters), which in some other instances also seemed closer to the Danish translation than the High German, she saw this as an element in support of her hypothesis that the translator must have worked with two different models: a High German and a Low German one (Westermann 1932, 305; Noll-Wiemann 1975). Apart from the fact that no Low German edition is known to have existed before 1601, the argument fails to consider the German editions that appeared between 1549 and 1583: the editions published by Weigand Han (Frankfurt am Main: 1556 and 1558, BPM, Ge12–13) already have 42 chapters, 43 if one includes the preface. This change was introduced when the format was reduced from quarto to octavo. While it does not allow for explaining all the divergences and similarities observed by Westermann between the Danish translation and the High and Low German editions, these findings show once more how important it is to study the entire printed tradition – or what is left of it – before drawing conclusions.

It follows from this that Westermann’s observations on the Low German translation, which were repeated by Brüggemann and Brunken (1987), must also

²⁶ BPM, Da1. This now lost edition and its preface are known through a seventeenth-century manuscript which contains a transcription of another lost edition in Danish, dated to 1610 (BPM, Da2) and based on the 1583 edition (DFB 7, 235–238). On Benedicht, see https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/Lorentz_Benedicht.

²⁷ Translation Anna Katharina Richter, based on BPM, Da2.

be corrected: the presumed publisher, Hermann Möller, did not use the 1549 quarto edition as his exemplar but a later edition in octavo format. Some of the adaptations Westermann presented as typical for the Low German version were already present in Han's editions. The chapter titles and divisions as well as the disappearance of Warbeck's and Spalatin's names from the title page seem, however, to be Möller's doing.

It was again a German edition that served as a model for the Hungarian translation, signed by Vencel Tesseni and published in 1676 by Samuel Brewer in Levoča (Lőcse) (BPM, Hu1). In the preface, the translator paraphrases Spalatin's "Sendbrief"; instead of dedicating the translation to a noble woman, he starts his work by addressing "renden valo olvasoknak" ("regular readers") and "Fő Bötsületes és Tiszteletes Urak, s mind közönséges renden való férfiak és asszonyok" ("Most Honourable and Venerable Gentlemen, and all men and women of common rank") (A2). Like his predecessor, however, he presents the book as an exemplum for women of all ages and reiterates his warning that parents should keep an eye on their daughters. He even copies the remarks about the remaining traces of Catholicism. This would no doubt have suited the publisher, who might have been the commissioner of the translation. Like many of his fellow citizens, Samuel Brewer was a Lutheran. His family was originally from Wittenberg, and he studied there himself (Pavercsik 1979). Could he have picked up a German edition on his travels and brought it with him as one of those "szép [...] Historiákat Német nyelvből" ("beautiful [...] Histories in German") worthwhile to be rendered into Hungarian mentioned in the preface (A2)?

The last early modern translation deriving directly from the German version is the Yiddish rendering that appeared in Fürth, near Nuremberg, the city where the production of affordable editions of fictional narratives in the vernacular was concentrated at the time in the hands of the Endter family; at least five editions of the German *Magelona* were produced there during the seventeenth century. The Yiddish version, *Ayn sheyn lid fun ayn riter oiz proventzien land ...* ("A beautiful song about a knight from Provence"), was an adaptation in rhymed verse by an unknown poet (Oehme 2015).²⁸ It closely followed its German model, but its title redirected the focus from Maguelonne (Magelene) to Pierre, who was renamed Zigmund, thus destroying the links between the male protagonist and Saint Peter, and diminishing the hagiographical and legendary components of the story with it. The adaptor went indeed to lengths to dechristianize the narrative by deleting or neutralizing references to churches, biblical passages, and Christian devotional practices. He also successfully smoothed out some of the inconsis-

28 BPM, Y1. Transliterated title.

tencies in the original story, while placing significant stress on monetary values and parental love (Paucker 1959).

Some of the above-mentioned translations from German served in turn as intermediaries for adaptations in other languages. The Polish translation, for example, was used as a basis for Ukrainian and Russian versions. The Ukrainian version is more like an excerpt that has been preserved in a manuscript anthology, compiled in 1660 by the priest Hryhoriy Sharhorodskyi (Czepelyk 2017). The oldest known Russian translation dates from the same period (1662). While the story was not printed in Russian before the mid-eighteenth century, its prompt and lasting popularity is attested by the large amount of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century manuscript copies of the *Povest' o Petre zlatykh ključej* (“History of Peter with the golden keys”) that have come down to us.²⁹ Those with a title almost all place Pierre at the centre of the story, reframing it as that of a noble warrior. In the seventeenth century these manuscripts circulated mainly among the aristocracy, and they were read by old and young alike. In the middle of the eighteenth century, a further abridged version appeared in print. This version will be discussed below.

In the seventeenth century our story also reached Iceland, presumably through the Danish translation (Seelow 1989). At least five manuscripts containing a translation in prose, generally referred to with the title *Lykla-Péturs saga ok Magelónu fögru* (“The saga of Peter with the Keys and the beautiful Magelona”), have been preserved as well as manuscript copies of an adaptation in verse made by the poet Hallgrímur Pétursson (Seelow 1989; McDonald Werronen 2020).

4 The Southern *Pierre et Maguelonne*

In the meantime, the ‘original’ French version continued to flourish in France and surrounding regions, especially the Mediterranean, where the story partly takes place. While the production of sixteenth-century French editions of fictional narratives was generally concentrated in the main publishing centres (Paris, Lyon, and Rouen), printers in Avignon and Montpellier also brought out editions of this particular narrative.

Around 1550 the prose adaptation in Greek was reworked into a rhymed version (Yiavis 2006a and 2006b), which was printed at least five times in sixteenth-century Venice (BPM, Gr1–5), the sole printing centre for books intended for the

²⁹ It was the Polish translator who turned the silver keys into golden ones. On the four redactions in Russian and their dissemination, see Kuz'mina (1964).

Greek-speaking world. These editions were part of a series of chapbooks in modern Greek aimed at a broad audience. The first one was published in 1543 by Damiano di Santa Maria and illustrated with five woodcuts which were originally designed for a modern edition of the *Iliad* (Layton 1994, 199, and 230). One of the later reprints was used for an abbreviated translation in Romanian, made around 1780 (Dimia and Dimia 2016, 251–255).

If we are to believe the information on the title page of the oldest extant copy of a Catalan edition, published in 1650 by Sebastián de Cormellas in Barcelona (IB 58827), its translator, the otherwise unknown Honorát Comalàda, had a Castilian exemplar. The 1650 octavo edition was probably a reprint of a quarto edition the same publisher produced in 1616, which is considered to be the oldest Catalan translation, although there might have existed a now lost earlier version (Pastor [i] Briones 2018).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the French *Pierre et Maguelonne* once more generated editions and translations outside France, such as the French edition published in 1733 by a “J. Conrad Bincheldre” in Zurich, a person that I have not been able to identify (BPM, F57). In any case, he must have used a Lyon edition, since the subtitle of this edition mentions the couple’s “promesse” (“promise”), “honnêtes Amours & Mariage” (“honest Love and Marriage”), which was typical of editions from this city. There are also two manuscript versions in Romansh, both dating from the first half of the eighteenth century; one is thought to be derived from a German source and the other from the French, but neither has been thoroughly researched.³⁰ On the other side of the Alps, Gerardo Giuliano (*fl.* 1726–1765) in Turin launched a translation in Italian, *Istoria memorabile [...] Del valoroso Pietro di Provenza e della bella Maghelona ...* (“Memorable history of the brave Peter of Provence and the beautiful Maghelona”). This first edition in Italian, based on a French edition and illustrated with small woodcuts, was reprinted twice in Turin during the eighteenth century (BPM, It1–3).

Thanks to the workshop of the Álvares family, who came originally from Castile (Torres 2014), a Castilian edition of *Magalona* was published in Lisbon as early as 1625 (IB 58813), but readers in Portugal had to wait another century before they could buy a Portuguese translation, the first known edition dating from 1733.³¹ This *Historia verdadeira da princeza Magalona* (“The true history of princess Magalona”) is sometimes ascribed to Jerônimo Moreira de Carvalho, a military physician who translated the Castilian *Historia del emperador Carlo Magno y*

³⁰ For these versions, see Decurtins (1881, 480–497); Bolte (1894, LX); and Decurtins (1905, VI and 14–24).

³¹ See BPM, Por1, and Severino (2005, 40). The 1637 edition mentioned by Babbi (2003) and Roudaut (2009), is a bibliographical ghost. This is possibly also the case for the 1725 edition.

de los doce pares de Francia (“History of emperor Charlemagne and the twelve peers of France”) into Portuguese, but except for the fact that the Portuguese *Magalona* was indeed based on a Castilian original (Cao Míguez 2016, 429–431), this is only conjecture.

With the Portuguese translation, we end our overview of the spread of our story through early modern Europe. During the period we are interested in, European editions also reached other continents, but none of the editions of *Pierre et Maguelonne* published outside Europe seem to be from before 1800.

5 Differing Developments

When we bring our data together in a chronologically ordered table (see below, Tab. 1),³² it becomes clear that while the number of editions increased over time, keeping up with the spread of the printing press and the growing number of places where our story was published, the location of these centres underwent important changes over the course of the centuries. These changes testify among other things to the dynamics of the reception in specific languages and regions. It has already been mentioned that for some reason, and unlike other popular narratives from the Continent, Pierre and Maguelonne’s love story was never picked up by publishers in the British Isles. And while Polish and Czech adaptations flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the 1676 edition of the Hungarian translation is the only known occurrence of the story in this language before 1800. This could have been due to factors as diverse as the quality of the text, its material embodiment, the taste, finances and/or language and reading skills of the public, and the impact of the political and religious context. The late arrival of Italian editions, which were restricted to a region with close ties to France, is perhaps easier to explain because the Italians had *La storia di Ottinello e Giulia*, a poem in *ottava rima* inspired by a similar set of motifs as *Pierre et Maguelonne*, which was printed several times between the 1490s and 1800 (D’Ancona 1867; Passano 1868, 71–74).

The Dutch translation was among the earliest adaptations in other languages, but it did not have as much success as some of the other translations. In 1587 the Antwerp bookseller Jan [I] van Waesberghe published a new Dutch translation, without refrains, which he combined with the French text on which it was based in an edition destined for language education (BPM, FDu1). This intended use,

³² Table based on the BPM; this includes lost editions for which there is enough reliable evidence that they existed at some point.

which reminds us of the educational use of French *Pierre et Maguelonne* at the Electoral Court of Saxony, and the particular typography designed for it – Dutch in the easy-to-read *civilité* letter and French in roman type – brought the story into the realm of schoolbooks. Although there must have been a market for this type of bilingual editions, especially in a multilingual city as Antwerp, it can also have had a restrictive effect on the wider circulation of the story. Dutch-speaking readers who were not interested in learning French might have refrained from spending money on a book consisting for fifty percent of pages they did not need. The framing of our narrative as a schoolbook might even have contributed to its disappearance; in 1618 the Antwerp Catholic clerical authorities issued a list of books that were banned from schools. It probably comes as no surprise that *Pierre et Maguelonne* figures among the condemned “historien oft boecken tracterende amoreusheydt ende dierghelycke dinghen daer de jonckheyt meer pleech door vererghert te worden dan yet goedts wt te leeren” (Poffé 1895, 59).³³ In the following years, some of the titles on the blacklist were expurgated and accepted, but a file compiled in 1621 by the bishop of Antwerp classified our story along books which could not be used in schools before they had been corrected and approved in accordance with the bishop’s ordinance (Dela Montagne 1907, 7). The critical summaries made by the censors give us a good idea of the issues they identified. For *Pierre et Maguelonne* they noted the following: “Deux personnes se rendent très-souvent à l’église pour leurs amours; la jeune fille dort sur le sein de Pierre; celui-ci la regarde avec curiosité et après l’avoir bien vue il la méprise” (Ruelens 1872, 67).³⁴ The mistakes in this summary strongly suggest that the censors only perused the books they had to examine. While there is no evidence of the existence of expurgated editions with an approbation, *Peeter van Provincien* (5 sheets in-4, priced “2 stuyvers”) is cited on a price list of common schoolbooks issued in 1642 by the Antwerp City Council (Dela Montagne 1907, 10), which means that there might have been editions that my bibliography does not account for.

As we have seen, in some regions, our narrative circulated mainly or exclusively in manuscript form. The fact that the only Russian editions on my list date from the middle of the eighteenth century thus tells us more about the cultural history of the region than about the popularity of the medieval couple. Until 1700 the majority of the texts printed in Russia were religious works and when this started to change, the literary works and popular stories disseminated by the

33 “[H]istories or books containing love-stories and similar contents which usually harm youthful readers rather than edify them”. Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

34 “Two persons very often go to church for the sake of their love; the young lady sleeps on Pierre’s chest; he looks at her with curiosity and despises her when he has studied her well”.

press took a form that was unique for Europe at the time: instead of mobile characters, printers used xylography to produce illustrated *lubki* with a limited number of pages. The illustrations often also circulated separately as prints. The eight-page of *Pierre et Maguelonne*, which went through several editions (see for an example Fig. 3), contains a condensed – but complete – version of the *Povest' o blagorodnom knjaze Petre zlatych ključach i o blagorodnoj korolevne Magilene* (“The Tale of the noble prince Petr of the Golden Keys and the noble princess Magilena”, Duchartre 1961; Kuz'mina 1964; Sytova 1984; Chuchvaha 2019).

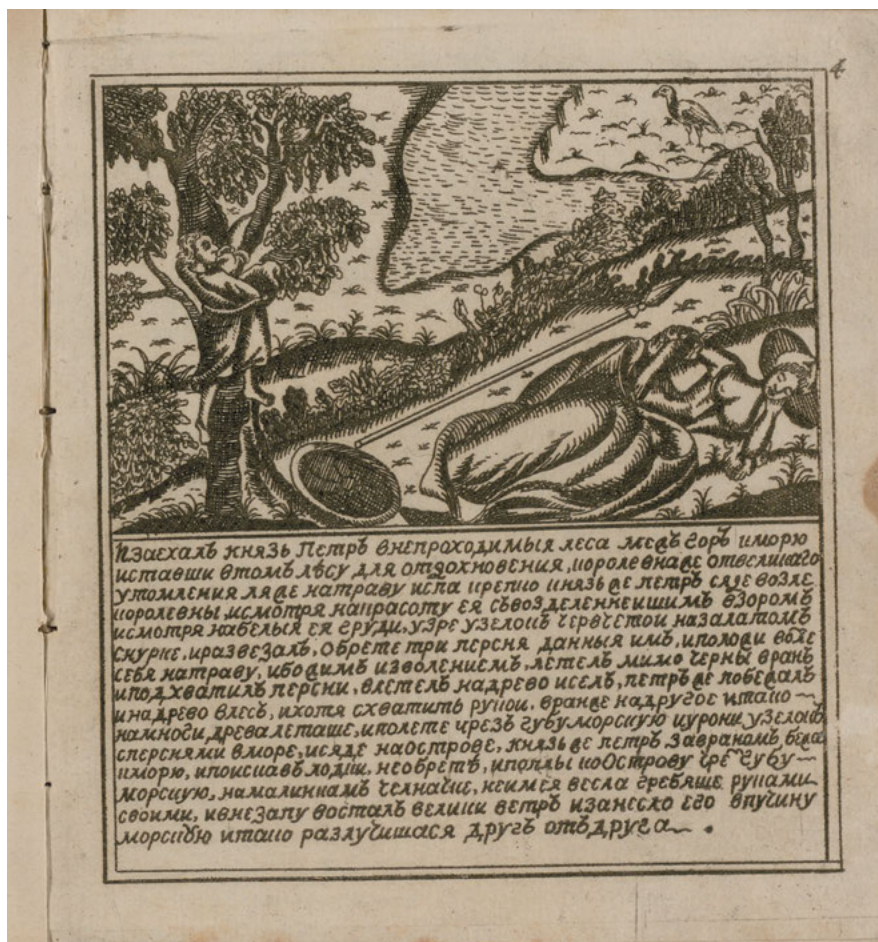


Fig. 3: Pierre pursues the bird while Maguelonne is sleeping. Illustration in *Povest' o blagorodnom knjaze Petre zlatych ključach i o blagorodnoj korolevne Magilene*. S.l.: s.n., [ca. 1780], π4r (Göttingen, SUB, 8 FAB X, 6725 (3) RARA). By courtesy of Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen.

Tab. 1: Printed editions of *Pierre et Maguelonne* until 1800 per period and per language.

	1451–1500	1501–1600	1601–1700	1701–1800	
French	10 Lyon 8 Paris 2	22 Paris 10 Avignon 1 Montpellier 1 Rouen 3 Antwerp 1 Lyon 6	15 Rouen 5 Troyes 3 Troyes/Paris 3 Brussels 1 Lyon 3	28 Lyon 3 Limoges 1 Zurich 1 Caen 1 Rouen 7 Troyes 13 Tarascon 1 Toulouse 1	75
Castilian		7 Toledo 1 Seville 3 Burgos 3	9 Zaragoza 1 Madrid 2 Baeza 1 Seville 1 Cuenca 1 Lisbon 3	10 Évora 1 Madrid 1 s.l. 1 Barcelona 1 Valladolid 2 Salamanca 1 Valencia 2 Murcia 1	26
Dutch		2 Antwerp 2	1 Utrecht 1		3
French and Dutch		2 Antwerp	1 Rotterdam		3
Greek		5 Venice	6 Venice	4 Venice	15
High German		17 Augsburg 7 Leipzig 1 Frankfurt am Main 9	7 Nuremberg 5 s.l. 2	12 Cologne 1 s.l. 8 Nuremberg 3	36
Czech		1 Olomouc?	3 Olomouc 1 Prague 1 s.l. 1	14 Olomouc 3 Kutná Hora 1 Prague 2 Skalica 1 Hradec Králové 1 Jindřichův Hradec 2 s.l. 4	18
Polish		1 s.l. 1	4 Kraków 1 s.l. 3	9 Kraków 4 s.l. 3 Supraśl 2	14
Danish		1 Copenhagen	4 Copenhagen 3 Helsingør 1	11 Copenhagen 7 s.l. 4	16
Low German			2 Hamburg 2		2
Catalan			6 Barcelona 6	5 Girona 3 Olot 2	11

Tab. 1 (continued)

	1451–1500	1501–1600	1601–1700	1701–1800	
Hungarian			1 Levoča 1		1
Yiddish			1 Fürth 1	4 Fürth 1 Prague 1 Offenbach 1 Amsterdam 1	5
Portuguese				9 Lisbon 8 Porto 1	9
Italian				3 Turin 2 Turin/Vercelli 1	3
Russian				2 s.l. 2	2
	10	58	60	111	239

6 Common Features in Editions from Different Language Areas (1600–1800)

Despite the differences in genesis, presentation, and destiny of the editions of the *Pierre et Maguelonne* narrative produced in early modern Europe, in terms of content the various printed traditions were generally relatively stable and remarkably close to the French *Pierre et Maguelonne*, except perhaps for the Greek version. This stability, or conservatism, is also visible in the fact that, aside from some minor spelling adaptations, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century titles and prologues were maintained as they were for a long time. This idea of *Pierre et Maguelonne* as a type of publication unaffected by time is reinforced by the absence of publication dates from many cheap editions that appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and by the appearance of the indication “printed in this year” in some of the German editions (e.g. VD18 90748336; Künast 2010).

Even when, over the course of time, censorship tightened its grip on schoolbooks and affordable editions for the masses, especially – but not exclusively – in Catholic environments, it seems that the story underwent little change. As a matter of fact, censors from different eras and regions were unanimous in their criticism. Just like his seventeenth-century predecessor from Antwerp, the Castilian censor who exam-

ined the narrative in the 1750s noted that the piece was likely to “corromper las buenas costumbres” (“corrupt good manners”). He also loathed the mixing of religion with a love story: “El fondo de esta historia es el robo de una mujer llamada Magalona, por el caballero Pierres; tiene varios coloquios con Dios muy tiernos, pero esto mismo me parece mal porque es una cosa abominable el valerse de los medios más sagrados de la religión para componer una novela impura”.³⁵ At that time, the chapter where Pierre admires Maguelonne’s beauty had already been purified: in the Castilian edition from 1676 (IB 109588), for example, Pierres no longer kisses Magalona nor does he touch her breasts. In 1709 “La Belle Maguelone” was listed among the books for which Rouen booksellers could only receive an approbation if they were thoroughly revised.³⁶ A comparison of the approved edition published in 1714 by Anne Havard, the widow of Jacques Oudot (BPM, F50), with previous editions from this workshop reveals that the latter edition conformed to criteria set by the Antwerp censor almost a century earlier: Pierre and the nanny no longer meet in church and the passage detailing how Pierre touches his beloved’s breasts has disappeared. He now contemplates her “merveilleuse beauté” (“marvellous beauty”) (p. 30), a change that partly undermines the logic of the events that follow and the moral of the story with it. By comparison, the unaltered “Protestant” version disseminated by the eighteenth-century German editions was much more explicit.

These three cases also show that the question of censorship was closely connected with the expansion of the book market and the growing number of social groups capable to buy and read relatively cheap print. For publishers this was a potential goldmine; for ecclesiastic and secular authorities concerned about morals and political stability, a phenomenon they sought to control. However, the use of reinforcement and expansion of preventive censorship as an instrument encountered fierce opposition from publishers who saw their profits evaporate when they were obliged to apply for a permission for each book they produced, however old and/or small. Hence the petitions for exemptions and grouped permissions or, if this failed, the stoic continuation of what was considered a type of publication consecrated by tradition. A telling example of such a bulk application for – in this case – a privilege for low-cost productions is the one submitted in 1721 by the Copenhagen printer Joachim Wielandt; it listed no fewer than 97 titles, including “Magdelone eller Peder af Provence”. Wielandt argued that these “små historier” (“small histories”) would provide him with an income that could help

35 “The background of this story is the theft of a woman called Magalona, by the knight Pierre; it contains several very tender conversations with God, but this in itself seems wrong to me, because it is an abominable thing to use the most sacred means of religion to compose an impure novel”. In 1766 the Council of Castile prohibited *Magalona*, but with little effect (López 1993, 362).

36 See the transcription of the list in Hélot (1928, s.p.).

him finance the production of more important books. In 1727 he was granted a twenty-year privilege for *Pierre et Maguelonne*, *Griseldis*, *Melusine*, *Apollonius*, *Historia septem sapientum Romae*, *Fortunatus*, *Reynaert*, and 23 other chapbooks in Danish (Werlauff 1858, 145–146; Horstbøll 2012, 12–14).³⁷ This means that at least some of the unsigned eighteenth-century Copenhagen editions of *Magelona* were probably issued by Wielandt and his widow.

Although it was only after 1800 that the publishing tradition of our narrative underwent substantial modifications, it must be noted that editions were updated from time to time, especially during the eighteenth century. Not only did censorship leave a few traces, publishers also voluntarily introduced changes. The most striking example might well be the choice of the “veuve Garnier” (Marie-Louise Barry, widow of Étienne Garnier), one of the main publishers of the *Bibliothèque bleue*, to replace the medieval version of the story with a sentimental reworking by the Count de Tressan (Leclerc 2019). In the 1770s and 1780s Tressan had adapted several “vieux romans” (“old romances”) to the taste of the literary elites, who also read Rousseau and Voltaire.³⁸ The widow apparently thought that this modern and more prestigious version was also suited for the large and diverse audience of the “blue books”, and given the fact that her example was followed by her successors as well as by competing publishing companies in Rouen (Leclerc 2019), she did not misjudge the situation. This type of renewal however seems to have been unusual; while the audience of the cheap editions of long-selling narratives was certainly not restricted to the lower strata of society, the modern reworkings of centuries-old narratives like *Pierre et Maguelonne* that appeared in the eighteenth century circulated mainly in relatively expensive publications destined for the socially and culturally privileged. Nonetheless, one can find a similar sentimental reworking of the plot in popular Czech editions from around 1800 (Kotšmířová 2021, 51–53).

The adjustments made by European publishers of “popular” print to the content of the story seem to have been principally aimed at creating a lighter and shorter text and reducing the bibliographical format. This process was motivated not so much by considerations of ‘readability’ of the text for a public with limited cultural competences – although the multiplication of the number of chapters in some traditions might indicate that publishers tried to adapt to new audiences –, as by the wish to produce at the lowest possible cost to keep prices low and profits

³⁷ For a French example, see Hélot (1928, lxij).

³⁸ His adaptations were published in the *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* (1775–1789) and the *Corps d'extraits de romans de chevalerie*, first published in 1782.

high. In an era where paper constituted a third to half of the production costs,³⁹ the number of sheets per copy was indeed crucial for the selling price and thus for the range of buyers one could attract. Even though some of these strategies are at least as old as the printing press itself, they gained in importance when the market expanded and diversified. The most incisive operations on *Pierre et Maguelonne* seem indeed to date from the period after 1680. For example, in 1700 the Rouen publisher Jean-Baptiste Besongne simply cut out four chapters in the middle of the text, without even bothering to create some sort of transition. This allowed him to print the story on three sheets, while his predecessors and his competitor Jacques Oudot from Troyes needed four sheets (Blom 2012, 132, 404, and 406), which was already significantly less than the six to eight sheets that had gone into the French editions from the incunabula period. When we compare the development of the formats and the number of pages of editions printed in different European centres, we can indeed observe a significant decrease in the amount of paper used for their production. Catalan editions went from 56–64 pages in quarto format in the seventeenth century to 94 pages in octavo format in the eighteenth century. The Danish editions were octavos from the start, but those preserved from the eighteenth century have at least fourteen fewer pages than the extant ones from the seventeenth century.⁴⁰

The disappearance of Spalatin's preface from the eighteenth-century German editions mentioned above might thus have had a more prosaic reason than the consideration that no one knew who he was any more. Preoccupation with production costs and wholesale and/or retail prices probably also contributed to the fact that, in the eighteenth century, German and Castilian editions of *Pierre et Maguelonne* started to mention the number of gatherings on the title pages, a practice that certainly was not new, because Parisian and Rouen printers from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did the same.⁴¹ It is also interesting to see how publishers avoided wasting leftover space by filling it with advertisements⁴² or little stories with a moral message.⁴³

The wish to produce at a low cost also led publishers to set the text in smaller type and to economize on the quality of the paper, and the type and the number

39 See on this question the contributions in Bellingradt and Reynolds (2021).

40 Cf. BPM, Cat2, 5, 6, 8–11; Da4–5, 11–12, 14. See also Horstbøll (2012).

41 Title pages of eighteenth-century German editions mention eleven, ten, nine, or seven gatherings, the edition issued by Christian Everaerts at the turn of the century six (BPM, Ge27–29, 33, 35). The Castilian editions by Alonso del Riego announce six gatherings (BPM, Cas19–20). For sixteenth-century France, see BPM, F26–27.

42 See, for example, the edition by Francisco Borges de Sousa (Lisbon: 1789, BPM, Por7).

43 See, for example, VD18 10850678, and VD18 90823451.

of illustrations. We have already seen that even in the case of first translations, publishers often refrained from ordering custom-made woodcuts. It seems that the first Lyon editions were the only ones assorted with a set of cuts illustrating the highlights of the story. Later French editions either displayed a mix of generic woodcuts or they were not illustrated at all, except for, occasionally, a woodcut on the title page. It seems that, towards the end of the eighteenth century, only the German editions and the French editions published in Troyes still had some illustrations, as did the rare editions of the recent Italian translation and the new Russian *lubok*. It must however be noted that right from their first appearance, iconography had been almost absent from *Pierre et Maguelonne* editions in Castilian, Polish, Czech, Danish, and Portuguese.

The relative stability that seems to characterize the textual tradition of *Pierre et Maguelonne* is also present in the material presentation of the story. The layout of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reprints often reproduced the features of the earliest editions. For example, in the German language area and in the Low Countries, the Gothic typeface was preserved for a relatively long time (sometimes well into the eighteenth century), as were the two-colour title page, the quarto format, and the text divided in two columns. The same woodblocks were used repeatedly for the illustration of the narrative. When they finally were so worn that they could not be used any more, they were often replaced with copies carrying the same, sometimes centuries-old, illustration. Some of the title page illustrations thus became iconic for our story, but in many cases they also appeared in other popular print genres.⁴⁴ Yet modernization was not totally absent in this field either. During the eighteenth century the appearance of the protagonists was updated to more recent fashion styles (e.g. BPM, Ge25 and Ge33). Another remarkable development is the fact that in the early eighteenth century, publishers in Rouen, who might have been inspired by a recent Portuguese edition, broke with a long tradition by replacing the title page illustration representing a couple with a woodcut representing only a woman (BPM, F53, and F62).

7 Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I would like to highlight some key elements that emerge from this overview of the spread of *Pierre et Maguelonne* and its publishing history in early modern Europe. Firstly, it needs to be emphasized that this was a dynamic and non-progressive process, moving back and forth between manuscript and print,

⁴⁴ See, for example, Ulla Lorenzo (2022).

old and new versions, different languages – which sometimes coexisted in the same region –, as well as different kinds of audiences. Within the printed tradition, we can distinguish two major strands: a French, Catholic, tradition, which formed the basis for the editions of translations that appeared in the Iberian Peninsula (Castilian, Catalan, Portuguese), the Low Countries (Dutch and French), the German language area (German), Piedmont (Italian), and the Old Swiss Confederacy (French), and a German, Protestant, tradition, which formed the starting point for editions in Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Danish, Yiddish, and Russian that mostly appeared in central, northern and eastern European regions. The dissemination history confirms the important role of booksellers and printer-publishers as cultural agents in the early modern period; no doubt it was for a large part through their initiative that *Pierre et Maguelonne* was translated, published, and further adapted in different language areas. Except for the German, Hungarian, and Catalan printed versions, the names of the translators even remain unknown.

A second dichotomy in the publishing history of our narrative is between titles putting Maguelonne first and titles opening with the name of Pierre. This distinction only partly overlaps with the two major strands in the dissemination of the story. It can in fact be traced back to the fifteenth-century Lyon editions, some of which indicate the title as *La belle Maguelonne* on the title page while keeping “Histoire du vaillant chevalier Pierre de Provence et de la Belle Maguelonne” in the incipit and/or colophon. Yet, until 1700 at least, all French editions with an illustrated title page depict both heroes, and from 1516 onwards, the French editions were consistent in naming Pierre first in the title. One could hypothesize that those placing Maguelonne at the centre advertise the story as the – morally exemplary – account of a woman’s tribulations, while those focusing on both heroes would rather present it as a chivalric romance or a love story. Although these different aspects were, in fact, often combined in the subtitles of editions belonging to either of these strands, there are clearly differences in the presentation of the narrative that deserve further examination, preferably in combination with data on readers and their perceptions.

While it might have survived in oral traditions, the founding legend of the Cathédrale Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul in Maguelone (near Montpellier) that was predominantly present in the 1453 preface seems to have quickly lost its appeal in the printed tradition, from which it disappeared altogether in the course of the sixteenth century. From then on, only the last sentence highlighted the hagiographic dimension of the story.

Despite differences in terms of form, content, layout, popularity, and the impact of censorship, the editions of the story from different linguistic regions and their publication history are often strikingly similar. As far as the basic form of the story is concerned, the distinction prose/verse apparently did not play an es-

sential role; some translators maintained the prose, others opted for a poetic form that did not affect the narrative character of the text, and still others chose for a mixture. In some traditions, prose and verse versions followed each other or coexisted. From the sixteenth century onwards, almost all these editions became progressively part of a market of affordable works for a wide audience, which, in the course of time, became increasingly dominated by a few specialized publishers. Notwithstanding a few notable exceptions, relatively little is known about these publishers, their practices and networks, partly because researchers tend to ignore the later editions as being simple reprints. There is probably a world to be won with archival and bibliographical research as well as comparative, detailed studies of individual editions. Such additional data are needed to determine the extent to which fictional narratives that sold well for a long time, like *Pierre et Maguelonne*, can actually be regarded as a part of a transnational, European phenomenon. Given the universal human themes that underpin the plot as well as the mix of adventures that structure it, it is understandable that this French story about the vicissitudes of two young lovers had a resonance that transcended the boundaries of place, language, and time. However, the research discussed in this chapter – as well as the rest of the volume – clearly suggests that the transnational dimension of the story was not limited to the content; with regard to the materiality of the editions and the developments over time regarding both these printings and the strategies of the publishers involved, we noted striking similarities between practices, catalogues, and publications in different regions in early modern Europe. In this sense, the key to understanding the success of *Pierre et Maguelonne* lies as much in the characteristics of the individual literary work as in the initiatives and creativity of printers and publishers with a fine nose for the market and a keen eye on the competition.

Tab. 2: Earliest extant editions of *Pierre et Maguelonne* in European vernaculars.

Language	Title resp. colophon	Title / colophon (English translation)	Place, printer- publisher and year	Reference
French	Colophon: “le livre et l’histoire de pierre filz du conte de prove(n)ce et de la belle maguelonne fille du roy de naples”	“the book and history of pierre son of the count of provence and of the fair maguelonne daughter of the king of naples”	[Lyon: Guillaume Le Roy for Barthélemy Buyer?, ca. 1475]	ISTC ip00645130

Tab. 2 (continued)

Language	Title resp. colophon	Title / colophon (English translation)	Place, printer- publisher and year	Reference
Dutch	<i>Die Historie van Peeter van Prove(n)cen Ende die schoone Maghelone van Napels</i>	The History of Peeter van Provecen [Provence] and the fair Maghelone van Napels	Antwerpen: Willem Vorsterman, [ca. 1517]	München, UB, Cim 81
Castilian	<i>La historia de la linda magalona fija del rey de napoles. y del muy esforçado cauallero Pierres de proue(n)ça: fijo del conde de proue(n)ça: y de las fortunas y trabajos que passaron</i>	The history of the fair magalona, daughter of the king of naples, and of the very brave knight Pierres de provença [Provence]: son of the count of provença: and of the fortunes and hardships they went through	Sevilla: Jacobo Cromberger, 1519	IB 16697
High German	<i>Die Schön Magelona. Ein fast lustige un(d) kurtzweylige Histori, vonn der schönen Magelona, eins Königs tochter von Neaples, un(d) einem Ritter, genan(n)t Peter mit den silberin schlüsseln, eins Graffen son ausz Provincia, durch Magister Veiten Warbeck, ausz Frantzösischer sprach in die Teütsche(n) verdolmetscht, mit eynem Sendbriefff Georgij Spalatini.</i>	Fair Magelona. A very pleasant and entertaining History, about the fair Magelona, a King's daughter from Naples, and a Knight called Peter with the silver keys, a Count's son from Provincia [Provence], translated from the French language into German by Magister Veiten Warbeck, with a Dispatch letter from Georgius Spalatinus	Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1535	VD16 H 3867
Greek	<i>Ἐξήγησις του θαυμαστου Ἡηπεριου</i>	History of the admirable Imberios	Venezia: Christophoro di Zanetti, 1553	Wien, ÖNB, *38.L.147

Tab. 2 (continued)

Language	Title resp. colophon	Title / colophon (English translation)	Place, printer- publisher and year	Reference
Low German	<i>Eine seer korttwylige Historia, van der schönen Magelona, eines Königes dochter van Neaples, unde einem Ridder, genömet Peter mit den sülveren Schlötelen, eines Graven Söhn uth Provintz. Erstlick uth der frantzösischen in de hochdüdesche, nu överst in de Sassische Sprake övergesettet</i>	A very entertaining History, about the fair Magelona, a King's daughter from Naples, and a Knight called Peter with the silver Keys, a Count's son from Provintz [Provence]. First translated from the french language into high german, and now transposed into the Saxon Language	Hamburg: [Hermann Möller], 1601	VD17 7:667487X
Catalan	<i>Aci Comensa La Historia Del Noble, Y esforçat Caualler Pierres de Prouença, fill del Comte de Prouença. Y de la gentil Magalona, filla del Rey de Napolis; y de les fortunes y treballs que passaren en la sua molt enamorada vida. Traduyda de llengua Castellana, en nostra llengua Catalana, per lo discret y honrat Honorat Comalada</i>	Here Begins The History Of The Noble, And Valiant Knight Pierres de Provença, son of the Count of Provença [Provence], And of the gentle Magalona, daughter of the King of Naples; and of the fortunes and tribulations that happened in his life full of love. Translated from the Spanish language, into our Catalan language, by the discreet and honorable Honorat Comalada	Barcelona: Sebastián de Cormellas, 1650	IB 58827

Tab. 2 (continued)

Language	Title resp. colophon	Title / colophon (English translation)	Place, printer- publisher and year	Reference
Hungarian	<i>Kedves es nyajas História, Szép Magelonarol, Neapolis Királynak leányáról, és edgy Peter nevű Vitézről az ezüstös kútsokkal, ki edgy Provinciabeli Gróf fia volt. Francziai nyelvből Nemet nyelvre meg-fordittatott Spalatini György küldött levelével edgyütt M. Warbeck Vitus által. Mostan penig Németből Magyarrá fordította Tesseni Wenczel, az Magyar Olvasók kedvéjért</i>	A sweet and tender History about the Fair Magelona, the daughter of the King of Neapolis, and about a Knight named Peter with the silver keys, who was the son of the Count of Provincia [Provence]. Translated from French into German by M. Vitus Warbeck with the letter sent by György Spalatini. It has now been translated from German into Hungarian by Wenczel Tesseni, for the benefit of Hungarian Readers	Levoča: Samuel Brewer, 1676	RMK I, 1202
Polish	<i>Historya o Magielonie krolewnie Neapolitanskiej ...</i> ⁴⁵	The History of Magielona, princess of Naples ...	Kraków: s.n., 1677	Kharkiv, Central Scientific Library of Kharkiv National University, 196692

⁴⁵ For the complete transcription, see section 3 in this chapter.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Language	Title resp. colophon	Title / colophon (English translation)	Place, printer- publisher and year	Reference
Danish	<i>En meget Kortvillig Historiae om den skjønne Magelona, en Konges Daater aff Neaples. Oc En Ridder som bleff kaldet Peder med Sølf-Nøglen, en Grevis Søn udaff Provincia. Aff det Franzoske Sprock først paa Tydsken udsoet oc nu nyligen fordansket</i>	A very Entertaining History of the fair Magelona, a King's Daughter from Naples. And A knight who was called Peder with the Silver Keys, a Count's son from Provincia [Provence]. From the French first translated into German and now recently translated into Danish	København: s.n., 1690	København, KB, N 1850 8°
Yiddish	<i>Ayn sheyn lid fun ayn riter oiz proventzien land ...</i> ⁴⁶	A beautiful song about a knight from proventzien [Provence] ...	Fürth: Josef Schnei'or, [5]458 [1698]	Trier, UB, 24=XH/nc38784
Portuguese	<i>Historia Verdadeira Da Princeza Magalona Filha delRey de Napoles, E Do Nobre, E Valeroso Cavalheiro Pierres, Pedro De Provença, E dos muitos trabalhos, e adversidades, que passáraõ, sendo sempre constantes na Fé, e virtude, e como depois reinarãõ. e acabaraõ a sua vida virtuosamente no serviço de Deos</i>	The True History of Princess Magalona Daughter of the King of Naples, And of the Noble, and Valiant Knight Pierres, Pedro De Provença [Provence]. And of the many difficulties, adversities, that they went through, being always constant in Faith, and virtue, and how they reigned and ended their lives virtuously in the service of God	Lisboa: Manoel Fernandes da Costa, 1737	Lisboa, BNP, RES. 974/14 P

⁴⁶ Transliterated title.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Language	Title resp. colophon	Title / colophon (English translation)	Place, printer- publisher and year	Reference
Czech	<i>Welmi vtěšená a kratochwilná Hystorye O Krásné Panně Mageloně dceři Krále z Neapolis. A O gednom Rytjři Gménem Petrowi znamenitého hraběte z Prowincy Synu. Kterážto Hystorye prwe z Francauské Ržeči w Německau a nynj zase w nowě z Némecké w Českau s Pilnosti přeložena gest</i> ⁴⁷	A highly amusing and entertaining History About the Beautiful Maiden Magelona, daughter of the King of Naples. And About a Knight Named Petr, son of an illustrious Count of Prowince [Provence]. Which History has been translated first from French into German and now, with Diligence, anew from German into Czech	Olomouc: František Antonín Hirnle, 1741	KPS K17693
Italian	<i>Istoria Memorabile ... per ogni ... Nobile Cavaliere. Del ... Pietro Di Provenza E Della Bella Maghelona ...</i>	A Memorable ... History about a ... Noble Knight. Of ... Pietro Di Provenza [Provence] And The Beautiful Maghelona ...	Torino: Gerardo Giuliano, [ca. 1726–1765]	Ithaca, Carl A. Kroch Library, PQ1501.P53 I8 1600 tiny
Russian	<i>Povest' o blagorodnom knjaze Petre zlatych ključach i o blagorodnoj korolevne Magilene</i> ⁴⁸	The Tale of the noble prince Petr of the Golden Keys and the noble princess Magilena	S.l. [Moscow]: s.n., s.a. [ca. 1781]	Göttingen, SUB, 8 FAB X, 6725 (3) RARA

⁴⁷ I did not count the seventeenth-century extant editions of the broadside ballad version, entitled *Pjseň Vtěšená a kratochwilná o krásné Mageloně a Petrowi z Prowincy kterak gsau se náramně spolu zamilowali potom gak se s njmi dalo* (“A Pleasant and entertaining Song about the beautiful Magelona and Petr from Prowince [Provence] who fell in love with each other and what happened to them”; KPS K09899–K09901).

⁴⁸ Transliterated title.