

# Recommended Reading for SHWEP Storytime: Reading the *Kyranides*

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10th June 2026

## 1 Selected Publication-History of the *Kyranides* (roughly-chronological)

Our Greek MSS all date from very late (the earliest being fourteenth-century); they are discussed at Kaimakis 1976, 5–13, cited below.

A translation or translations was/were made into Arabic at some point in the ninth century. See the conspectus of Manfred Ullmann. Die arabischen Fragmente der Bücher II bis IV der Kyraniden. In Yury Arzhanov, editor, *Studies Dedicated to Rüdiger Arnzen on His Sixtieth Birthday*, number 10 in *Studia Græco-Arabica*, pages 49–57. Pacini Editore, Pisa, 2020.

A Latin translation was made in 1169 at the orders of Manuel Komnenos. This pre-dates all of our Greek MSS, so is actually very important for rectifying the mess that is the Greek. A modern printed edition was published by the great Delatte: Armand Delatte. *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides*. Number 93 in *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège*. E. Droz, Liège/Paris, 1942.

There is a 1685 English translation from the Latin by an anonymous author and from an anonymous publisher (this full-spectrum anonymity is what you sometimes need when publishing works explicitly about ‘Magick’ in the seventeenth century), entitled *The Magick of Kirani, King of Persia, and of Harpocraton; Containing the Magical and Medicinal Vertues of Stones, Herbs, Fishes, Beasts and Birds, etc.* You can read it in digitised form [here](#).

Charles-Émile Ruelle. Les Cyranides. In F. de Mély, editor, *Les lapidaires de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*. Ernest Leroux, Paris, 1898-1899 [first critical edition of the Greek; messy in that he didn't have access to all the MSS, and so it's actually a bunch of partial editions

scattered across two volumes].

Dimitris Kamakis, editor. *Die Kyraniden*. Number 76 in Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie. Anton Hain, Meisenheim, 1976 [The essential study-tool currently: a critical edition of the Greek based on the surviving MSS, minus the Latin translation. An on-line, unattributed version of Kaimakis' Greek text, minus the apparatus and with dodgy diacritics, can be found [here](#)].

Maryse Waegeman. *Amulet and Alphabet: Magical Amulets in the First Book of Cyranides*. J. C. Gieben, Amsterdam, 1987 [Useful republication of Kaimakis' Greek text for Book 1 with accompanying English translation (but we wish she had done all the books, and also not skipped the intro and the weird extra bits!). Remains to my knowledge the only *in extenso* English rendering of any large part of the *Kyranides* from the Greek].

**Hot off the presses!** Richard Greenfield of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and Alexander Alexakis of the University of Ioannina are working on a new critical edition with English translation. Entitled *The Kyranides: A Handbook of Traditional Medicine from Byzantium*, it should be out with Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library in 2028.

## 2 The Acrostic Poems

R. Ganszyniec. Studien zu den Kyraniden IV. Die Hymnen der Kyraniden. *ByzNeubJbb*, 2:445–52, 1921 [first noticed the poems, but not their acrostic first lines].

R. Führer. Noch ein Akrostichon in den Kyraniden. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 58:270, 1985 [adds one that slipped through West's (see below) net].

David Jordan. Notes on Verses in "Cyranides," Book I. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 154:117–24, 2005.

Martin L. West. Magnus and Marcellinus: Unnoticed Acrostics in the Cyranides. *Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 32:480–81, 1982 [put the acrostics on the map as acrostics].