

## THE LORD’S PRAYER IN FINNISH BY GEORG BRUNO FROM 16TH CENTURY

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**Abstract:** This article briefly presents a new handwritten version of the Lord’s Prayer in Finnish that is currently stored in the National Library of Sweden. It is found in a manuscript attributed to Georg Bruno and dated to the late 16th century. Here we discuss its status and identify its sources. We also question some of the ideas of an earlier researcher of this manuscript.

**Keywords:** Lord’s Prayer, Finnish, manuscript, 16th century, Georg Bruno, Sebastian Münster

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### 1. Introduction

In 1955 the Latvian-born Swedish theologian Haralds Biezais<sup>1</sup> discovered a 16th century manuscript in the National Library of Sweden which contained a translation of the Lord’s Prayer into Latvian; the author of the manuscript seemed to be a certain Georg Bruno. Biezais published two studies on the Latvian Lord’s Prayer, one in Latvian (1955a) and another in German (1955b), and since then Georg Bruno has been recognized by scholars of Baltic literature as the author of one of the few 16th century manuscripts of the Latvian Lord’s Prayer. However, the fact that there are 19 other languages in the manuscript besides Latvian has gone unnoticed, most likely because Biezais did not publish the whole manuscript but only one page showing the Latvian Lord’s Prayer. Among these other Lord’s Prayers is the Finnish one

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1 Haralds Biezais (1909–1995) was a Latvian-born Lutheran pastor and theologian, who moved to Sweden after World War II and began working as a professor at Uppsala University in 1945.

which has so far been unknown to scholars. In this article, therefore, we will briefly present this prayer from philological point of view. We will start with a brief description of this manuscript, its place in the context of such publications in the 16th century, then present the facsimile, its transcription, and discuss the connection between this inscription and other known Finnish Lord's Prayers, concluding with a presentation of the identified source.

## 2. Description of the manuscript: its condition, author and date

The manuscript in question is currently stored in the National Library of Sweden (*Kungliga Biblioteket*, call number N 74).<sup>2</sup> It does not have the original binding. It also does not have a title page, but at the beginning of the text, before the first prayer, it says *Pater noſter: Varijs Linguis* 'Lord's Prayer: in various languages'. The manuscript consists of 22 pages and a cover (200 × 170 × 5 mm),<sup>3</sup> and it contains the Lord's Prayer in 20 different languages, Finnish being the 12th one. Each prayer is written on its own page and is clearly structured by breaking it down into prayer petitions and numbering them (see Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> The 20 prayers, like the collection itself, are titled in Latin, followed by the text of the prayer in the corresponding language. The prayer is given in the following languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Arabic, Armenian, Cuman, Turkish, (Church) Slavonic, Syriac, Latvian, Finnish, English, Danish, Swedish, French, Spanish, Italian, Czech, and Saami.<sup>5</sup>

The entries at the beginning show that the manuscript belonged to at least four people before it entered the National Library of Sweden.

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2 For a full description see Biezais 1955a, 1955b.

3 The cover is clearly later than the manuscript. It consists of two reused pages sewn together with one thread.

4 The Lord's Prayer usually includes an opening address and seven petitions. Later closing worship, the doxology, was added. Some of the prayers in the collection have a doxology, like the one in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Syriac, French, Italian, but not the Finnish one.

5 The language of the last prayer in the damaged and barely readable last page was identified by neither Biezais nor anyone else until in 2023 Ernesta Kazakėnaitė finally recognized it as Saami. Her identification has since been confirmed by the Uralicists Rogier Blokland and Jussi Ylikoski (p.c.). See also the forthcoming publication Kazakėnaitė & Blokland 2024.

The following names appear (in the order seen in the manuscript): 1) on the inside of the front cover, G. H. Mellin, with a note stating that the manuscript was given to the library by him on 18 November 1851; 2) in the middle of the first page, Reinhold Westerberg, who presented the manuscript to Karl Aug. Nicander in 1835; 3) on the top of the second page, Georg. f. Bruno.<sup>6</sup> The last-mentioned is assumed to be the author of the manuscript, while the others are obviously later owners. The main argument by Biezais (1955a: 281) for Bruno's authorship is the same writing style and ink color. In addition, the Latvian prayer which is the 11th in the collection is also signed as "GBruno", by the same hand.

The manuscript is not dated, except that on the second page a date, which has later been erased, can (almost) be seen; it seems to be 1650 (as Biezais also assumed), though it is barely legible.<sup>7</sup> However, it appears to be written in a different hand and ink than that of Bruno, who is considered to be the author, and it is therefore likely to have been added at a later date. Biezais (1955a: 282) dated the text to the late 16th century based on the paper. He argued that the watermark suggests that it was made in Bautzen (Germany) and produced between 1586 and 1596. Thus, if the analysis of the paper is correct, this text could not have been written before 1586. *De visu* examination of the manuscript has confirmed his hypothesis that the paper is indeed from Bautzen, although the latest watermark catalogues (see Piccard 1970: 324–327) do not allow us to be so confident about its date of production, but this is definitely the second half of the 16th century, and not earlier.

Another argument for this dating was the identification of "Georg. f. Bruno. || Banensis Pomēran[us]." to a known historical person active in Pomerania in the 16th century. Biezais (1955b: 48–49) therefore reads the record in Figure 1 as "Georg[ius]. f[ilius]. Bruno. Bar[n]



**Figure 1.** A record indicating the author.

6 For more information on these individuals, see Kazakėnaitė & Blokland 2024.

7 The only number that is definitely visible and beyond doubt is 5, all others are unclear.

ensis Pom[m]eran[us].” and thus linked this person to Georgius Bruno from Bernau, school rector in Anklam in Pomerania. Although Biezais’ description is very detailed and the dates coincide quite well, this is only one of the possible hypotheses. The problem is that the manuscript clearly shows the Latin (adjectival) name of the town “Banensis”, referring to Bahn (today’s Banie, Poland), rather than as “Bar[n]ensis” as suggested by Biezais.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the Latin form ‘of Bernau’ in the registers of 16th century university students is ‘Bernoviensis’, which is not the form suggested by Biezais (cf. Friedländer 1887, 1893.). The identification of Banensis as Bernau is further contradicted by the fact that Bernau was not in Pomerania unlike Bahn (cf. Bruzen de la Martinière 1744: 89, 740).<sup>9</sup> It must be admitted, therefore, that almost nothing is known about the author. There were a number of university registrations under the name ‘Georgius Bruno’ at the end of the 16th century, but none of them were further designated as ‘Banensis’, i.e. as coming from Bahn.

As we cannot prove the exact identity of the author, it is difficult to determine the location where the manuscript originated. However, Biezais (1955b: 50) may be right that it was written in the northern part of present-day Germany (or Poland) and that it ended up in Sweden perhaps during the Swedish Intervention in the Thirty Years’ War in 1630–1635, after which Western Pomerania belonged to the Swedish crown until 1815. This is further evidenced by the fact that only the German prayer was written with cursive handwriting in contrast to the block letters of all the other prayers, suggesting that the author was a native speaker of German. The Swedish prayer was later edited by a different hand; most likely in Sweden where the manuscript belonged to the private collections of the Rosenhane family (Forsslund 1819).

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8 Of course, it is possible that Bruno may have mistakenly recorded his origins, but this is unlikely. It should also be noted here that Biezais seems to have read ‘Barensis’, although the manuscript leaves no doubt that the correct reading is ‘Banensis’ (the ‘n’ is repeated in the same word and is identical to the first). He therefore suggests that the word omits the ‘n’, although we can see it is present in the word.

9 Another version must be mentioned, although it is obviously erroneous. In the series “Handlingar rörande Skandinaviens Historia” (Forsslund 1819: 17) one can find “Pater Noster variis lingvis; a Georg. S. Bruno Barthensis Pomerano. A:o. 1650.” However, there is no reason to believe that Bruno was from Barth because, as mentioned earlier, the record says *Banensis*, whereas *Barthensis* is just an interpretation, probably because Barth was a better-known Pomeranian city.

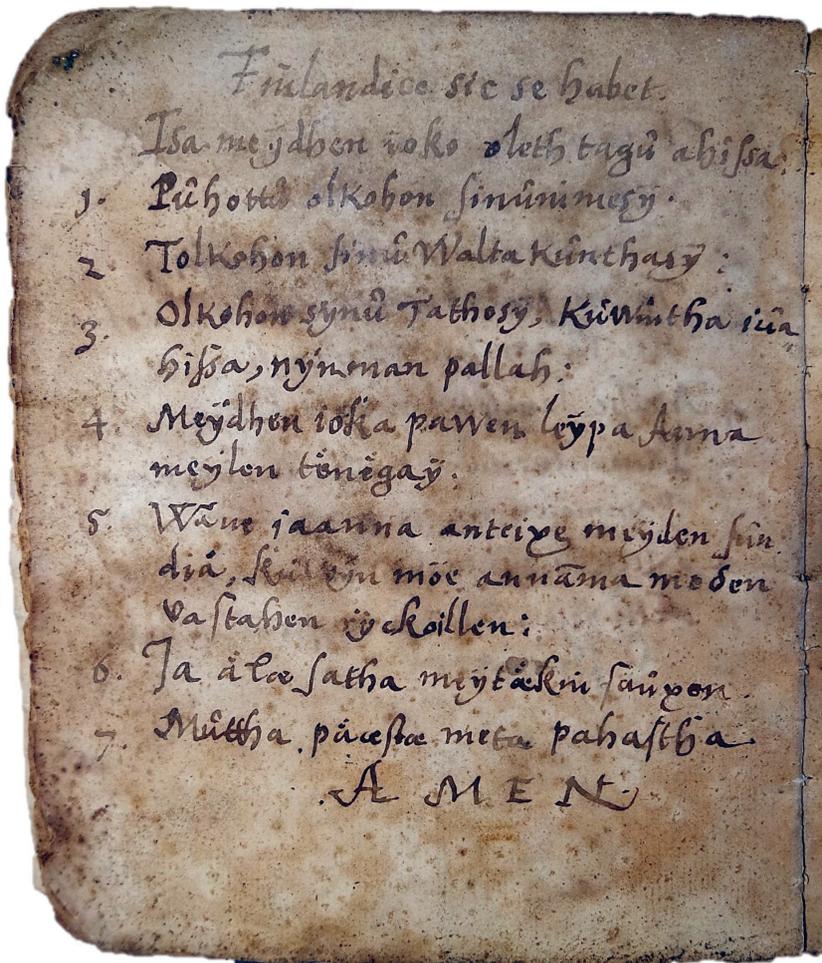
### 3. The Bruno Collection in the context of other publications of this type

Collections of the Lord's Prayers in various languages have a long tradition, starting in the 16th century. Early collections include *Mithridates* by Conrad Gessner (1555) and *Specimen* by Hieronymus Megiser (1593) or an even earlier publication, the comparison of the 14 prayers word for word in *De ratione communi omnium linguarum et litterarum commentarius* by Theodore Bibliander (1548). The idea of compiling such a collection is therefore not original. However, a comparison with other known printed collections from the same period has not revealed a specific source, which suggests that Bruno's collection is, at least for the time being, an original work.

It seems that this manuscript was well planned. As usual for such collections, it starts with Hebrew, Greek and Latin, moving on to other languages. Thus, it seems that this version was prepared as a clean manuscript, rather than being added to over and over again after receiving some additional prayer text. We cannot exclude the possibility that this manuscript is a copy of an earlier published one, but in fact this is not very likely, since a comparison with known printed collections of prayers, such as those of Gessner (1555), Megiser (1593) etc., reveals a number of differences. Instead, Bruno's manuscript seems to be compiled from other manuscripts rather than copied directly from a printed text. This is confirmed by copying errors pointing to a handwritten source rather than a printed one (cf. Draviņš 1965: 40 as well as our later discussion in this paper).

#### 4. The Lord's Prayer in Finnish and transcription

As mentioned before, the manuscript contains the Lord's Prayer in 20 different languages, Finnish being the 12th one:<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 2.** A facsimile of the Lord's Prayer in Finnish (National Library of Sweden; call number N 74). Original size of the page is 200 × 170 mm.

<sup>10</sup> We are grateful to the National Library of Sweden for digitizing and making the full manuscript available to the public: <https://manuscripta.se/ms/101704#>.

Transcription of the Lord's Prayer in Finnish by Bruno: original on the left and edited on the right (correcting obvious copying errors and incorrect word boundaries):

<i>Finlandice sic se habet.</i>	<i>Finlandice sic se habet.</i>
<i>Isa meÿdhen ioko oleth tagu ahifsa:</i>	<i>Isa meÿdhen ioko oleth tayuahifsa:</i>
1. <i>Puhottu olkohon finunimesÿ:</i>	<i>Puhottu olkohon finu nimesÿ:</i>
2. <i>Tolkohon finu Waltakunthasÿ:</i>	<i>Tolkohon finu Waltakunthasÿ:</i>
3. <i>Olkohon sÿnu Tathosÿ, Kuwintha iua=</i> <i>hifsa, nÿnman pallah:</i>	<i>Olkohon sÿnu Tathosÿ, Kuwin</i> <i>thaiuahifsa, nÿn manpallah:</i>
4. <i>Meÿdhen ioka pawen leÿpa Anna</i> <i>meÿlen tÿnÿgaÿ:</i>	<i>Meÿdhen iokapawen leÿpa Anna</i> <i>meÿlen tÿnÿpaÿwäne:</i>
5. <i>Wäne iaanna anteixe meÿden fun</i> <i>diä, kuwÿn möe annäma meden</i> <i>vastahen rÿckoillen:</i>	<i>ia anna anteixe meÿden fundiä,</i> <i>kuwÿn möe annäma meden</i> <i>vastahen rÿckoillen:</i>
6. <i>Ja älä fatha meÿtäkin fauxen.</i>	<i>Ja älä fatha meÿtä kiu fauxen.</i>
7. <i>Muttha päcÿstæ meta pahafitha.</i>	<i>Muttha päcÿstæ meta pahafitha.</i>
<i>AMEN.</i>	<i>AMEN.</i>

As can be seen in Figure 2, the text is quite clearly written, and only a few letters are difficult to read because they have been corrected during writing. However, the corrected form shows that Bruno's Finnish text is quite inaccurate, containing, most of all, incorrectly divided words and once even an incorrectly divided petition (cf. 4.–5.). The copying errors *g pro y* (*tayuahifsa*) and *g pro p* (*tÿnÿpaÿwäne*) strongly suggest that his source was indeed handwritten rather than printed.

## 5. The Lord's Prayer by Bruno in the context of other known versions

Literary Finnish began in one fell swoop. While the Medieval Finnish corpus had included only one 15th century text totaling a sentence and a half (Wulf 1982), the reformation period saw Mikael Agricola (ca. 1510–1557) within a decade between 1543 and 1552 publishing as many as nine Finnish-language books totaling about 2400 pages (Häkkinen 2016). The earliest survived Finnish manuscripts were

also written roughly at the same time. These works together included 13 Lord's Prayers in Finnish, all belonging to the same Lutheran tradition (Uusitalo 2015, 2016).

However, there was also a 14th Finnish Lord's Prayer which has been connected to a different Catholic tradition, namely the one published in the 1544 first edition of the famous cosmography by Sebastian Münster (1488–1552).<sup>11</sup> This book was immediately popular, being translated into several languages and reprinted more than 40 times until the last edition in 1628. Indeed, it was Münster's cosmography that, directly or through intermediaries, became the source for collections of prayers such as those by Megiser (1593), Duret (1613), Pistorius (1621), etc. Bruno's Finnish prayer, too, bears a closer resemblance to Münster's Finnish prayer than to any other attested Finnish prayer of the same period, as we can see below.

The Lord's Prayers in Finnish by Bruno (edited version) and Münster (1544: 520), as well as the modern form of the word and its English translation:<sup>12</sup>

	<i>father</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>which</i>	<i>art</i>	<i>in heavens</i>
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Isa	meÿdhen	ioko	oleth	tayuahifsa
<b>Münster</b>	Ifä	meidhen	ioko	oledh	taiuahiffa
<b>Modern</b>	Isä	meidän	joka	olet	taivaissa

	<i>hallowed</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>thy</i>	<i>name</i>
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Puhottu	olkohon	finu	nimesÿ
<b>Münster</b>	pühettä	olkohon	finun	nimefi
<b>Modern</b>	pyhitetty	olkoon	sinun	nimesi

	<i>come</i>	<i>thy</i>	<i>kingdom</i>
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Tolkohon	finu	Waltakunthasÿ
<b>Münster</b>	tulkohon	finun	waltakuntafi
<b>Modern</b>	tulkoon	sinun	valtakuntasi

11 Sebastian Münster born on 20 January 1488 in Ingelheim am Rhein, died on 26 May 1552 in Basel (see further Priesner 1997: 539; Wessel 2004: 21).

12 For more comparative texts, see Uusitalo 2015: 68ff. For English translation we used the traditional Ecumenical Version of the Lord's Prayer in English.

	<i>be</i>	<i>thy</i>	<i>will</i>		
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Olkohon	sýnu	Tathosý		
<b>Münster</b>	olkohon	fiun	tahtofi		
<b>Modern</b>	olkoon	sinun	tahtosi		
	<i>as</i>	<i>in heavens</i>	<i>like</i>	<i>on earth</i>	
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Kuwin	thaiuahifsa	nýn	manpallah	
<b>Münster</b>	kuwin	taiuahiffa	nyn	manpällä	
<b>Modern</b>	kuin	taivaissa	niin	maan päällä	
	<i>our</i>	<i>daily</i>	<i>bread</i>		
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Meýdhen	iokapawen	leýpa		
<b>Münster</b>	meidhen	iokapaiwen	leipä		
<b>Modern</b>	meidän	jokapäivänen	leipä		
	<i>give</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>today</i>		
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Anna	meýlen	tēnēpaýwāne		
<b>Münster</b>	anna	meilen	tānāpaiwāne		
<b>Modern</b>	anna	meille	tänä päivänä		
	<i>and</i>	<i>give</i>	<i>pardon</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>sins</i>
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	ia	anna	anteixe	meýden	fundiä
<b>Münster</b>	ia	anna	anteixe	meiden	fyndiä
<b>Modern</b>	ja	anna	anteeksi	meidän	syntejä
	<i>as</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>give</i>		
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	kuwýn	mōe	annaṃa		
<b>Münster</b>	kuwin	mōe	annamma		
<b>Modern</b>	kuin	me	annamme		
	<i>our</i>	<i>against</i>	<i>violators</i>		
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	meden	vaftahan	rýckoillen		
<b>Münster</b>	meden	vaftahan	rickoillen		
<b>Modern</b>	meidän	vastaan	rikkojille		

	<i>and</i>	<i>do not</i>	<i>lead</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>into temptation</i>
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Ja	älæ	fatha	meýtä	kiufauxen
<b>Münster</b>	ia	älä	fata	meitä	kiufauxen
<b>Modern</b>	ja	älä	saata	meitä	kiausukseen
	<i>but</i>	<i>release</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>from evil</i>	
<b>Bruno ed.</b>	Muttha	päæftæ	meta	pahaltha	
<b>Münster</b>	mutta	pääftä	meitä	pahafta	
<b>Modern</b>	mutta	päästä	meitä	pahasta	

In brief, Bruno’s and Münster’s Finnish Lord’s Prayers are syntactically and lexically identical. They also share the same dialectal archaisms, such as the allative ending *-llen* (modern *-lle*) and the 1st person plural ending *-mma* (modern *-mme*). There is only one striking difference: Bruno’s *finu/synu* corresponds to Münster’s *fiun* ‘thy’. At first glance one could compare them with Standard Finnish *sinun* and Southeast Finnish *siun*, respectively. However, since Bruno otherwise never omitted the genitive ending *-n* or any other word-final *-n*, it looks more likely that here we simply have a copying error, very common in manuscripts written by a person who does not know the language, where the /u/ and the /n/ are misidentified (viz. *finu/synu* pro *fiun/syun*). The idea that Münster’s prayer was of Southeast Finnish origin has already been well-established before (Kallio 2017).

However, there are numerous differences in writing. Although some of the differences might remind us of the characteristics of Finnish dialects, most of them can be attributed to Münster’s later editions swarming with printing errors.<sup>13</sup> Bruno’s unedited prayer is particularly close to Münster’s prayer published in his 1561 German edition (but not earlier or later ones).<sup>14</sup> The shared errors of those to publications include

13 The same was the case with the Latvian prayer published by Münster (Kazakénaitė 2020).

14 We can say this with confidence, because in the process of our research we have collected all the Finnish prayers in the Münster reprints, over 30 in total.

*Tolkohon pro tulkohon*<sup>15</sup> and *meta pro meitä*,<sup>16</sup> not to mention incorrectly divided words and even an incorrectly divided petition (cf. 4.–5.) where instead of *tēnēpäyväne* we find it separated into two different verses *tēnēgäy*: 5. *Wäne*. Although the previous Münster's 1558 edition already had many of the same errors, certain features point exactly to the 1561 edition: cf. *Tahtofi* (1558) and *Tathofi* (1561), *manpällä* (1558) and *man päällä* (1561).

***The Lord's Prayer by Bruno***

***The Lord's Prayer in the  
Cosmography of 1561***

<i>Isa meydhen ioko oleth tagu ahifsa:</i>	<i>Ifä meidhen ioko oledh taiu ahiffa/</i>
1. <i>Puhottu olkohon finunimesy:</i>	<i>pühettä olkohon fiun nimefi/</i>
2. <i>Tolkohon finu Waltakunthasy:</i>	<i>tolko hon fiun waltakütafi/</i>
3. <i>Olkohon syñu Tathosy, Kuwintha iua= hifsa, nynman pallah:</i>	<i>olkohon fiun tathofi kuwin taiuahiffa nyn man päällä/</i>
4. <i>Mejdhen ioka pawen leypa Anna meylen tēnēgäy:</i>	<i>meidhen iokapaiwen leipä anna meilen tänäpai/</i>
5. <i>Wäne iaanna anteixe mejden fun diä, kuwyn möe annāma meden vaftahen ryckoillen:</i>	<i>wäne/ ia anna anteixe meiden fündiä kuwin möe annāma/ meden vaftahan rickoillē</i>
6. <i>Ja älæ fatha meytäkin fauxen.</i>	<i>ia älä fata meitäkinfauxen/</i>
7. <i>Muttha päæftæ meta pahaftha.</i>	<i>mutta päästä meta pahaftha/</i>
<i>AMEN.</i>	<i>Amen.</i>

Münster's 1561 edition therefore looks like the source of Bruno's prayer, but it does not seem to have been taken over directly. There are minor, yet striking, orthographical differences:

- Münster's /ä/ is ⟨ä⟩ apart from the diphthong /äi/ that is ⟨ai⟩. Bruno's /ä/ is ⟨a⟩ in the first half of the prayer, but in the second half it can also be ⟨ä⟩, ⟨ë⟩, and ⟨æ⟩.

15 Münster's earliest German editions have *tulkohon*, *tolkohon* appearing in 1556 and later reprints. The Latin, French and Italian editions of the *Cosmography* have no such errors.

16 Münster's earliest German editions have *meitä* but since 1558 till 1592 we find *metä*. Word *meitä* appears again in 1598 and later editions. The Latin, French and Italian editions of the *Cosmography* have no such errors.

- Münster’s short /i/ is ⟨i⟩ (also in diphthongs), long /ii/ in turn ⟨y⟩. Bruno’s ⟨i⟩ and ⟨y⟩ vary freely.
- Münster’s /t/ is nearly always ⟨t⟩. Bruno’s /t/ can often also be ⟨th⟩.

The fact that there is a limited number of printable letters only partly explains Münster’s more phonemic orthography because even Agricola in his printed works was nowhere near the same strictness. In general, both Münster and Bruno largely followed German orthography, whereas Agricola’s orthography was much more Latin-like (cf. especially Münster’s and Bruno’s *kuwin* vs. Agricola’s *quin* ‘as’). Bruno’s orthographic peculiarities listed above could perhaps be attributed to Low German in which /i/ was frequently written with ⟨y̆⟩ and /t/ with ⟨th⟩ (Lasch 1914: 85, 162–163), although they were also common elsewhere. Anyway, Bruno’s German Lord’s Prayer was written in High German.

The Finnish prayer was not the only foreign-language prayer published by Münster, but there are no such direct links between his and Bruno’s prayers in other languages. This even goes for the Swedish prayer next to the Finnish one in the cosmography as well as the Latvian prayer earlier in the book. Although Bruno’s Latvian prayer similarly bears the closest resemblance to Münster’s Latvian prayer, it cannot have been copied directly from the cosmography, as there are added words that cannot be considered accidental (Biezais 1955b: 54; Draviņš 1955: 475). It can therefore be concluded that Bruno copied the Finnish prayer from a manuscript copied by someone else from Münster’s printed cosmography. This would explain certain orthographical peculiarities of the Finnish prayer.

## 6. Summary

It is probable that Georg Bruno was author of the manuscript and that he most likely compiled it in Pomerania on paper, made in Bautzen late 16th century. Analysis of the text and comparison with other known prayer inscriptions suggests that its Finnish Prayer does not appear to be directly linked to Finland or its clergy, but its source was Sebastian Münster’s German *Cosmographie*, published in 1561. It is important to stress that it was not a direct copy of this printed text, but rather a copy

of a manuscript copy. This conclusion also allows us to confirm that Bruno's manuscript was composed no earlier than the second half of the 16th century.

Bruno's publication of the Finnish prayer is therefore not an original, independent record of the prayer, which would give any new insight into the dialect characteristics of Finnish. Nevertheless, the source is of interest to scholars of Finnish literature because it shows that the Finnish Lord's Prayer was not only circulated in manuscripts in or near Finland.

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**Kokkuvõte. Ernesta Kazakénaitè, Petri Kallio: Georg Bruno soomekeelne meieisapalve 16. sajandist.** Aastal 1955 leidis Lätis sündinud Rootsi teoloog Haralds Biezais Rootsi Rahvusraamatukogu arhiivist 16. sajandi käsikirja, mis sisaldas ühe esimestest lätikeelsetest meieisapalvetest. Tõenäoliselt Georg Bruno poolt kirjutatud käsikirjas on veel 19 muukeelset meieisapalvet, mis on seni uurimata. Artikkel esitab filoloogilise ülevaate käsikirja soomekeelsest meieisapalvest, mis osutub koopiaks Sebastian Münsteri raamatu Cosmographie 1561. aasta trükist.

**Märksõnad:** Meie Isa Palve, soome keel, käsikiri, 16. sajand, Georg Bruno, Sebastian Münster