

The Echo of the Apocrypha on  
Simon Magus in *Georgii Monachi Chronicon* and  
*Pověsti Vremennykh Lět*

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines the reminiscences of the 1<sup>st</sup> century legend on Simon Magus in *Georgii monachi Chronicon* and *Pověsti vremennykh lět*. The origin of this tale is in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter and Simon* and in the ancient philosophical roman, known under the title of “Pseudo-Clementines”.

**KEYWORDS:** *Chronicle of George Amartol* — Apocrypha — *Acts of Peter and Simon* — Simon Magus — Pseudo-Clementines

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The canonical Acts of the Apostles reports of Simon the Magus that at the time when the apostles Philip, Peter and John were preaching in Samaria, he “was a magician and amazed the people of Samaria, posing as someone great. He was listened by everybody from the young to the oldest, saying, ‘This is the great power of God (οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη μεγάλη)’” (Acts 8, 9-10) (NT, 1994: 342), but, having later listened to the Apostle, all people believed in Jesus Christ (Acts 8, 11). According to the canonical version, “Simon himself also believed and, being baptized, did not depart from Philip; and seeing the great powers and signs taking place, he was amazed”(Acts 8, 13). It is further reported that Simon brought money to Peter and John and said: “Give me this power too, so that the one on whom I lay hands receives the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8, 18–19).

In the *Tales of Bygone Years* (*Pověsti vremennykh lět*),<sup>1</sup> the canonical version of the story of the Samaritan magician was not reflected, although acquaintance with it of the compiler and editor of the Tales at the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th centuries can not be doubted, since the translation of the Apostle dating back to the times of Cyril and Methodius (Voskresensky, 1879; Phlorja, 1981; Tachiaos, 2005) is evidenced for the 11th century by the ancient Bulgarian translation of the Enin Apostle (Kodov, 1965, 1983 [with the description of the phototypical edition in 5 languages]; Christova-Shemova, 2004) and for the 12th century by the Old Rus' manuscript of the Christinopolitan Apostle (Kažužniacki, 1896; Novak, 2014).<sup>2</sup> Besides that, in the list of 1143, compiled on Athos during the transfer of the Xylurgic monastery to the Serbian monks among the Βιβλία ρούσ(ικα) of forty-nine manuscripts, five Apostles are already mentioned (Porfiriev, 1877: 77; Lemerle et alii, 1982: n. 7; Pavlikianov, 2011: 169; Tachiaos, 2015; Syrtsova, 2015: 6–7).<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the place and time of the translation of the *Chronicle of George Amartol* (*Georgii Monachi Chronicon*) (De Boor, 1904) into the Slavic language (Istrin, 1920),<sup>4</sup> which continues to be under discussion (Obolenskij, 1847; Sreznevskij, 1867; Sobolevskij, 1897; Istrin, 1920; Lavrov, 1925; Dostál, 1963; Speranskij, 1914; Weingart, 1922-1923; Tvorogov, 1975; Meshcherskij, 1978; Vodolazkin, 1992, 1993; Stankov, 1994, 2012; Pitchkhadze, 2002),<sup>5</sup> the conclusion made in due time by Simon Franklin

<sup>1</sup> Created in Kiev at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this historical compilation of the old tales about the first three centuries of Rus' of Kiev, including the apocryphal visit of the Dnieper hills by the apostle Andrew (Chichurov, 1990; Syrtsova, 2016), the baptism of Rus' preceded by the Prophecy of Philosopher with a number of apocryphal elements (Franklin, 2002), the visit of Princess Olga to Constantinople (Florja 2018) and the description of the other significant events of the old days, is conserved in many manuscripts, the oldest of which is Lavrentijevskaya Letopys' of 14<sup>th</sup> century. As in this manuscript, the important fragment connected with Simon the Magus is lost, therefore, we used for the further quotations the better-conserved text of the Radzivilovskaya Letopys' of the same redaction [PSRL. T. 38]. In spite of the tradition going back to A. Shachmatov to speak about One Tale, we prefer to name this compilation in the plural and to understand it as a chronical union of the old particular tales. The manuscripts admit both interpretations. Cf.: *The Pověst vremennykh lět; An interlinear Collation and Paradosis*. Ed. by Donald Ostrovski et al. (2003).

<sup>2</sup> Lviv Historical Museum. Department of mss. № 37; V. Vernadsky Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Department of mss. VIII.3.

<sup>3</sup> As concerned this list conserved in the archive of Greek manuscripts of the St. Panteleimon monastery on Athos, it should be noted that the list mistakenly repeated by Yavor Miltenov (2013: 137) and Anatoly Turilov (2012) of fifty-two manuscripts is wrong and evidently was taken not from the Greek manuscript, but from the misreadings of the other authors who have interpreted the objects of the sacred cult of Theotokos as the manuscripts of the sacred books.

<sup>4</sup> *Georgii Monachi Chronicon* was translated from Greek into Slavic in the second part of the 10<sup>th</sup> c. The Bulgarian translation in the redaction made in Rus' (Sobolevskij, 1897; Meshcherskij, 1960) was probably used by the compiler of the *Chronograph po velikomu izlozeniju* in the middle of 11<sup>th</sup> c. (Tvorogov, 1975: 46-73). The oldest mss are from the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is also a Serbian translation of the Greek text edited according to one of the three known manuscripts (GIM Sinod. sobr. 148 of 1386 year). Lk.: Georgij inok (1878-1880). Late Ukrainian redactions of the translations of the fragments of the *Chronicle in Komarnjansky Prolog* and *Przemyslsky Prolog* demonstrate the traces of the acquaintance of their redactors not only with Greek and Old Slavic text of *Georgii Monachi Chronicon* but also with such Greek and Latin sources of Amartolos as apocryphal Acts of Peter (Franko, 2006: 12-25). For the understanding of the history of Slavonic translations, a certain interest could represent the studies of the Georgian translation of the *Chronicon* dated by XI c. Lk.: Kauchčišvili (1920, 1925).

<sup>5</sup> The new textological perspectives of the research were opened by the special studies of the manuscripts by Anisimova (2002, 2009) and Afinogenov (1999, 2004).

remains relevant and meaningful: “If, with all the efforts of so many scholars, we still cannot reliably attribute the translation of the Chronicle of Amartol to X or XI century, Bulgaria or Kievan Rus, we thereby prove not only the limitations of modern scholarship but also the single supranational nature of the ancient Slavonic book culture” (Franklin, 1988: 330).

Simon Magus is mentioned in “Tales” in connection with the death of Prince Oleg predicted by the magi under 6420 (912) in an article borrowed from the *Chronicle of George Amartol*, which is introduced into the annalistic story with the words: «Се же не дивно, яко от волхования собывается чародѣством; якож(е) бѣ и ц(а)рство Доментианово нѣкии волхвъ именем Аполонитяник» («It’s not marvelous, because magic happens with sorcery; for under the empire of Domentian there was a certain magician Apollonius Tyanus») (PSRL 38: 23). In the same list, as those whose witchcraft and sorcery have come true, besides the Greek philosopher of the Pythagorean school Apollonius Tyan, the Biblical king Saul, the high priest Caiaphas, the sons of the high priest Skeva, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and Menander, the disciple of Simon himself, the Gnostic philosopher of the 1st century are named to confirm the main idea of the article, «яко мнози, прекостни имуще умъ, пред образомъ Х(ри)с(то)вымъ знаменають иною кознью на прелестъ ч(е)л(овѣ)комъ неразумевающихъ добраго, якоже быс(тъ) Симонъ волхвъ и Мендръ ни таковых рад(и), поистѣнѣ реч(е): не чудеса прелщати» (“like many, having distorted mind, made the signs before the image of Christ to charm a man who doesn’t understand the good, likewise was Simon the sorcerer, and Menander, and others of such kind, it was truly said about them: one must not temptate by the miracles”) (PSRL, 38:23; Istrin, 1920: 305–306, fol. 186a). Once again, Simon the sorcerer is mentioned under the year 6579 (1071) after the story of how did a sorcerer come to Kiev («прииде волховъ, прелщень бѣсом», “came a sorcerer, seduced by the diable”) and the “sorcery” on Beloozero, however, this time it is not placed in the context of explaining why did the predictions of the blessed sorcerers come true, but is given for an explanation of how did they “seduce men”: «Но и мужы прелщены бывають от бесовъ невѣрнии, яко се и в первыя роды, при ап(о)с(то)лѣхъ, быс(тъ) Симонъ волхвъ, иже творяше волшествомъ псомъ гл(а)гола(т)и ч(е)л(овѣ)ч(е)ски, и самъ пременяшетъ(я), ово старъ, ово млад, ово ли иного пременяше въ иного образъ въ мечтании.» (“The men are also being seduced by the diables, as in the first times of the apostles there was Simon the sorcerer, as well as creating dogs to speak humanly, and to pretend himself to be transformed or very old, or very young, or to present himself in a dream as some other”) (PSRL, 38: 75). This brief mention and comparison also goes back to the *Chronicle of George Amartol*, where it is narrated in chapter 6 of book 9 that «Симонъ волхвъ въ Римъ пришеде и многа знаменья волшбеньствъ и призракы нѣкоторыми творя и себе Бога нарицаша» (“Simon Magus came to Rome and, while creating many signs of magic and some ghosts, nominated himself as god”) (Istrin, 1920: 252, fol. 152a).

When comparing the fragments of the *Chronicle of George Amartol* about Simon the Magus reflected in the *Tales of the Bygone Years* with the text of the canonical *Acts of the Apostles*, we can see that the stories about the famous magician, primarily represented by the Greek chronicler, were both lexically, phraseologically, and in fact taken from apocryphal sources associated not with the apostle Philip, but with the apostle Peter, who arrived in Samaria later and then convicted Simon in Rome.

In the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostle Peter*, which appeared, according to R. A. Lipsius, in the first third of the third century (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: IX-XIII; Poupon, 1997: 1043), judging by their repercussions in the *Didascalia of the Apostles* (VI. 7–9) and in the third volume of *Commentary on the Book of Genesis* by Origen (according to Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* III 1) (2008: 95), there was no discussion of the baptism of Simon Magus by the apostle Philip, and Eusebius of Caesarea also clarifies that Simon Magus only “pretended to be so believing that he wants to be baptized” (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* II, 11. 11) (2008: 55). In the Latin translation of *Acts of Peter* (the Greek original of which is preserved only in the final part, which reports on the Martyrdom of Peter) (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 78-103), found in a single manuscript of the 6th – 7th centuries (*Actus Vercellenses*) and published in 1891 by R. A. Lipsius under the title *Actus Petri cum Simone* (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 45-103)<sup>6</sup>, it is said, on the contrary, that during the debate with the Apostle Peter, arranged at the Roman Forum, where, before the arrival of the Apostle of Christ, Simon Magus had been really taken for the Power of God (*Virtus Dei*), the magician not only did not recognize Christ as Lord and living God, but also reproached Peter that he allowed himself to “talk about Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a craftsman whose family is in Judea as a living God”. Upon that, while addressing the crowd of the Romans and their common sense, he rhetorically asked: “can God be born? can he be crucified?” (*Actus Petri cum Simone* 23; Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 71) and, according to another late-antique work on the spiritual contest of Peter and Simon, “Recognitiones”, the latter claimed that the apostle exalts “a magician who could not even save himself from agony on the cross. “From this it is clear that this Gnostic could not “appropriate the name of Christ”, as can be read in the *Chronicle of George Amartol* and contemporary stories based on it (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 71), because he did not honor the Lord Christ, presenting himself instead as “Strength Of God” (ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ) and calling himself Ἐστῶς (“One that stands steadfast”) (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 82-84).

When comparing the sufficiently lengthy in its narrative and theologically profound Latin text with those short paraphrases, fragments and compilations from the original story that survived in the late Slavic manuscripts (Santos Otero, 1978: 52–59; Thomson, 1980: 256–268; Matvejenko, 2000; Anisimova, 2002; Shchegoleva, 2003), and, in particular, in the Ukrainian manuscripts published by I. Franko: «ГЛОВО прѣвнїа Петрова изъ Гумономъ влзхвомъ» from *Komarnyansky Prologue* and *Przemyslsky Prologue* of the year 1632; «Петръ же много проповѣдавъ слово Хѣо, потомъ пришовъ до Римѣ»

<sup>6</sup> ms. Bibliothecae capitularis Vercellensis CLVIII, f. 327r. – 372r ; ms. Vatoped., f. 174r – 176v.

(Ungvarsky manuscript of the XVIII century); «Мѣѡ того кѣѡ еѣго апѡла Петра ѡ Пабла» (Manuscript of Father Theodore from Dubovets); «Мѣѡ їѡнїѡ кѣѡ днѡ. Жытїѣ еѣыхъ вѣрховныхъ апѡлз Петра ѡ Пабла, поѣтрадавѣшнхъ в Рїмѣ вѣ время Нерона царѡ вѣ лѣтѡ [о] ѣѡѡ.» (Manuscript from the village Litmanovi B) (Franko, 2006: 12-25), it attracts particular attention that, along with the most striking in the Acts of the Apostle Peter and Simon (*Actus Petri apostoli et Simonis*) description of the miraculous flight of Simon over Rome with its fall through the prayer of Peter (chap. 32), these very abbreviated and selective apocryphal paraphrases use another, also described in chapter 9 of this work, rather exotic miracle with “making the dog to speak humanly” (PSRL 38: 75).

We read the following about this miracle in the above-mentioned chapter of the *Chronicle of George Amartol*:

«и великомѡ апѡлз Петрѡ вѣ Римѣ пришедезшю и кѣ волхвѡвѡ пришедезшю ѡбѣрѣте пѡ пребелѣѡ привѣзана ѡужн желѣзными ѡѡ братѣѡ, ѣгоже Симонѡ привѣзала вѣзѣранѡющѡ вѣѣмѡ нѣже не хотѣашѣ к немѡ да вѣхѡдѡтъ, и се бѣѡ первоѣ чюдѡ хотѣашемѡ кѣ Симонѡ вниѣти. Петрѡ же вѣдѣвѣ пѡ толь велика и свѣрѣпа и ѡвѣндѣѡ яко многѡѡ погѣбн хотѣшнмѡ вниѣти преже повелѣнѣѡ Симонѡ приѣтѡплѡ разрѣша и глаѡ: «вниди кѣ Симонѡ и рѣчи ѣмѡ члѣвѣскимѡ глѡмѡ: «Петрѡ, рабѡ Хѣвѡ вниѣти к тобѣѡ хоѣетѡ» и пѡлѡ лѣѣѣ ѡкорѡ вѣшедезшю и тако вѣзглавѣшю днѣншѡѡ ѡѡци и Симонѡм глаѡще: «кто ѣѣтъ Петрѡ и которѡѡ ѡѡла ѣго» и ѡтѣѡшѡ к нмѡ Симонѡ: «се вѡмѡ да не днѣѡ ѡѡдѣтъ еже и азѡ ѡтѣѡрю и призѣвѡвѡ грѣѡ, тако же повелѣѡ ѣмѡ рѣци члѣвѣскимѡ глѡмѡ Петровѡ да внидеѣтъ и се ѡтѣѡри пакѡѡ грѣѡ и вѣннѣѡ Петрѡ к Симонѡ» (Istrin, 1920: 252–253, л. 152; De Boor, 1904: 364)

“And as the great apostle Peter came in Roma and came to the magician he met the dog tied to the gates who must be kept away from entrance. And when Peter saw this great and ferocious dog, he understood that everybody who tried to enter without the permission of Simon must be killed, and he said: “Go to Simon and say in a human voice: ‘Peter, the slave of Christ want to entry to you’”, and the dog went and said these words to Simon in a human voice. And those who were with Simon began to ask: “Who is Peter and what is his force”; and Simon answered them: “Behold it is not marvelous, and I can do it and he called for the dog, and also commanded him to go and to say to Peter in a human voice to enter and the dog made it and Peter entered to Simon”.

The certain interest is provided by the presence in the one and the same fragment of two different Slavic nominations of the dog. The apostle Peter have seen «пѡла» and gave

the order «пѣ», when Simon Magus «прѣзѣвъ грѣча, тако же повелѣ ѣмѣ рѣци члвчьскнмъ глѣмъ Петровѣ да внидетъ н се створи пакы грѣчѣ».<sup>7</sup>

The same miracle, similar to the Latin version, is retold in the *Ungvar manuscript* as follows:

«А коли свѣтъ апѣлз Петръ там прѣшѣвъ ѣднѣго днѣ до Симона волѣва, а било прѣ него дворѣ побно стѣжи, побачнѣши стѣрожаѣ стѣго Петра, нѣж нѣдет до нѣх пана Симона, почали мнѣлнѣти недѣбре ѡ стѣомѣ Петрѣ. Петръ прѣшѣвши прѣд воротѣа того дворѣа н рече нмѣ: «мнѣлз вѣша недѣбраѣ ѡ мнѣ мѣждѣ божѣим, мѣ за тогѣ мѣлз, цѣо мнѣлнѣте – ѡказѣвъ на ѣа чѣрнѣго, которѣи то лѣжѣвъ прѣд воротѣа – бѣдѣтъ нѣстн тѣло вѣше н дѣшѣ ѡтакѣѣ ѣн чѣрнѣѣ». Тѣта стѣрожа не хотѣла пѣстнѣти стѣго Петрѣа до Симона волѣва. Свѣтъ Петръ рече ко томѣ ѣѣ, которѣи лѣжѣвъ там чѣрнѣи: «нѣн повѣѣжз пнѣ своѣмѣ, нѣж Петръ нѣде до тѣбе». Петръ свѣтъ рѣказѣвши ѣѣ, прѣз пошѣлъ до полѣты н чѣргнѣвъ пѣа своѣго рече: «пошѣвъ мѣ Петръ до тѣбе, лѣнѣз бѣмѣз гѣтовѣи ѣверѣти во дом своѣ ѣго, во то стѣрожа не пѣклетѣ ѣго до тѣбе». Симонѣ заднѣвола ѣа нѣж прѣз прѣговѣрѣлъ мѣвоѣу лѣдѣкоѣу, н зѣмѣѣѣа вѣлѣнн н казѣвъ вѣнѣти стѣомѣ Петровѣа до ѣебѣ» (Franko, 2006: 18)

«When the saint apostle Peter came to Simon the Magus, there were many guards at his court who, having seen Peter going to Simon, began to think a bad thought concerning him. Peter came to the gate of that court and said: “Your thought about me, a man of God, is bad, but for that thought such black dogs—he pointed to the right one, who was lying in front of the gate—will eat your soul and your flesh”. Those guards did not want to let Peter to Simon. The saint Peter speaks to the black dog who was lying there: “Go and say to your master that Peter comes to him.” As Peter spoke, the dog went to his master and said: “Peter sent me to you, for you were ready to let him enter the house, because the guards don’t let him go to you.” Simon was astonished that dog spoke to him in a human voice, and thought deeply and said to let Peter to come to him».

According to ch. 12 of the Latin “Acts of Peter and Simon,” Simon ordered the unusual messenger to tell Peter that he was not at home. Then the dog called Simon a charlatan who tempted many, promised him curses and eternal flame, then returned to the apostle, predicted to him that he would turn many tempted by Simon to God, and having said this, fell at the feet of Peter and “gave his soul” (*deposuit spiritum*) (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 60, f. 344v). G. Poupon, working on the preparation of *Actus Petri apostoli et Simonis* for publication in the *Corpus christianorum. Series apocryphorum* (Brepols

<sup>7</sup> This particular russism (Грѣчѣ in the sense dog κύων) definitely demonstrates the participation of Rusich in the translation or the redaction of the translation of the fragment about Simon Magus in Georgii Monachi Chronicon. Lk: Pitchkhadze (2001: 240).

Publishers), noted that, apparently believing the dog, according to the apostle's word, to have become a rational being, the author of the apocrypha used the same expression to indicate his death, which he himself used to refer to Peter's death in that part of the apocryphal, which is also preserved in Greek (Ch. 40) (Poupon, 1997:1076, 1113), while the evangelist John used to signify the death of Christ himself: παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (John 19, 30) (NT, 1994: 313). However, the Greek expression in the gospel corresponds to the Latin *tradidit spiritum*, which can be read in the canonical translation, whereas the phrase *deposuit spiritum* used in the apocrypha just indicates the author's attitude to the talking animal as an unreasonable being, incomparable at the time of death neither with a person, nor, by that sickness, with the apostle or Christ. Indeed, the spirit, as it was invested in a non-human, non-divine way, was given as an artificially invested thing.

Thus, as for the miracle referred to in the *Tales of Bygone Years* as “making a dog speaking human voice”, according to the original apocrypha about the deeds and confrontations of the apostle Simon Peter and Simon Magus (both in the oldest version and in the later Slavic retellings) (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1891: 56-60; Istrin, 1920: 252), it was not Simon Magus who first demonstrated it in Rome, but the apostle Peter, and with a possible (in one of the plot options) fatal result for a poor creature after performing an apostolic mission. Simon Magus only showed that he could also convey his answer through a talking animal. Why, then, was the compulsion of “the dog to say humanly” ultimately paradoxically attributed to Simon Magus, whether by the chronicler or the Slavic tradition on which he relied? It can be assumed that the Kiev chronicler proceeded from the fact that such miracles could not belong to those the apostle could have performed to demonstrate the power of Christ's faith (“Don't seduce by the miracles...”). But since this exotic plot with animals coded for speaking was well remembered and distributed in retellings and written interpretations, there is nobody besides Simon defeated by the saint to whom the miracle should be attributed.

As for the other assertion, in *The Tales of Bygone Years* under the year 6579 (1071), that Simon Magus was allegedly “different in a different way in a dream”, it finds some correspondence in a late-antique philosophical novel about intellectually theological discussions between the apostle Peter and Simon Magus written in Greek and famous (according to the manuscripts Cod. Parisinus gr. 930, 10th c.; Cod. Vat. Ottobonianus gr. 443, 16<sup>th</sup> c.) under the name *Clementine homilies* or *Pseudo-Clementine* (Rehm, 1992; Le Boulluec et alii, 2005: 1195–1621) and a close and largely identical Latin translation of this novel under the title *Recognitiones* by Rufin. At the end of both versions we find (*Hom. XX 19–23; Rec. X 52–65*) (Rehm 1992, 1994), in particular, a story about how the elderly and sick Faust, who was turned by Simon into his likeness, since he himself was already wanted by order of Caesar, accusing him of magic, was instructed by apostle Peter to go to Antioch and, posing himself as a resemblance of Simon, proclaim repentance on his behalf in order to prepare in such a way the population of the city for the arrival of Peter. At the same time, the pragmatism of the apostle in using modified “in a different way” Faust apparently does not reject such methods for conversion to the Christian faith, which should indicate that the main difference between the apostolic miracles and the

miracles that Simon demonstrated is not in the methods themselves, but in that apostolic miracles are, as a rule, useful, that is, perfect for the purpose of healing, saving people, while Simon's miracles, like his flight over the forum, should only demonstrate his superhuman magical power.

On this difference of healing miracles inspired by faith in the Living God, which the apostle Peter performed before the Roman crowd, from the magical actions of Simon the Magus, which the apostle relentlessly exposed, the following is set forth in chap. 31 of *Latin Acts of the Apostle Peter and Simon*:

«And there were many who were healed of the paralyzed and those who suffered from three-day and four-day fevers; by faith in the name of Jesus Christ, they were healed of any bodily disease, and by the grace of the Lord daily there were many who joined the faithful. A few days later Simon the magician promised to prove to the crowd that Peter did not believe in the true God, but was mistaken. However, despite the fact that he showed many miracles, his former disciples, who had already been strengthened in the faith, only laughed at him. Indeed, he could demonstrate the appearance of spirits, but these were only visions devoid of real being. As a result, he cited numerous evidence of his ability to magic, could make cripples appear healthy, but only for a short time, and do the same even with the blind, he seemed to revive and make several dead people move at the same time, as in the case with Nicostratus. But in all this, Peter, who followed him, denounced him in front of the audience. Having thus lost his “face” in front of the Roman crowd and suffering from her ridicule, Simon saw that they did not believe him, because he had not done what he had promised. Under such circumstances, he ended up declaring: “Romans, you now believe that Peter has an advantage over me, that he is the strongest, and your vigor is on his side. You are mistaken. Therefore, tomorrow I will leave you as completely godless and ungodly, and I will fly so that I can cling to God, whose I am Power, which has weakened. And if you fall into disbelief, then I am the One who stands steadfastly. And I will rise to the Father and tell him: “Here I am, the One who stands steadfast, your son, they wanted to force me to give in, but, not giving in to them, I stood my ground». (Lipsius – Bonnet, 1981: 81-82)

It is noteworthy that the author of the ancient apocrypha acknowledges significant magical abilities for Simon, and describes the flight over Rome as quite plausible, but does not evaluate these abilities as a manifestation of the Power of God to a greater extent than any other abilities of a gifted person. Unlike the later Slavic ones, he is not inclined to demonize them, explaining with the help of “diabolical servants”, etc., but, on the contrary, he prefers to join the Roman crowd in ridiculing the “human, too human” desire due to God's gift of extraordinary abilities to equate himself with God.

A similar more philosophical approach seems to be accepted also by the compiler of the *Tales of Bygone Years*, who tried to explain why the Divine Grace represents itself also through the magus. A certain philosophical understanding of the difference between the Christianity and Gnostic idea of Simon Magus could be readable as well in the record under the year 6420 (912) where it is said that the miracles of those who seduce the men not understanding the Good and having not comprehended that the world was created by



the Good God are illusory. In favor of such meaning of the words about the temptation of the man who do not understand the Good, the main idea of this article could testify, which is to explain how does the universal Divine Grace act in such a way through the ungraceful as for the deprived of Christian dignity.

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