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FAUST AND THE CLEMENTINE RECOGNITIONS

## FAUST AND THE CLEMENTINE RECOGNITIONS.

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It is with hesitation that any one at this day adds to the appalling mass of Faust literature, but two facts have led to the present paper: 1. The exhaustive work of Kiese wetter<sup>1</sup> on the historical and traditional Faust, just published, and the equally interesting and exhaustive work of Faligan,<sup>2</sup> published in 1888, practically ignore the most plausible hypothesis of the very origin of this story. 2. There are two or three matters of undoubted pertinency which have not hitherto been brought to bear on the subject. The discussion of these will at least bring together lines which have been followed out too independently, and, with the addition of one or two facts and observations, will furnish a positive historical hypothesis which may hope to prove the solution.

On the 20th of August, 1507, Trithemius, Abbot of Spanheim, wrote to his friend, Johann Wirdung of Hassfurt, Court astrologer to the Elector Palatine, in reply to a request for information concerning one Georgius Sabellicus, who styled himself chief of necromancers ("principem necromanticorum"), and from whom the latter was eagerly expecting

<sup>1</sup> KIESEWETTER, CARL. *Faust in der Geschichte und Tradition*. Leipzig, 1893. 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> FALIGAN, ERNEST. *Histoire de la légende de Faust*. Paris, 1888. 8vo.

Those who are curious to follow up the history of the Faust story will find here an exhaustive bibliographical list—the most comprehensive works being the collection of monographs in Scheible's Kloster, and the works of Ristelhuber, Faligan, and Kiese wetter.

a visit.<sup>1</sup> It appears from this letter that Trithemius had known of Sabellicus since May, 1505, and regarded him as a vagabond impostor, of execrable morals, who deserved the whipping-post. He gives details, founded "on most reliable authority," of the evil reputation which Sabellicus had acquired at Gelnhausen, at Würzburg, and at Kreuznach, and visits no little contempt and indignation on him for the title which he has framed for himself as suitably descriptive of his accomplishments. This title reads "Magister Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior, fons necromanticorum, astrologus, magus secundus, chiromanticus, agromanticus, in hydra arte secundus," and the "Faustus Junior," who appears here for the first time, is the historical starting-point of the familiar Faust story.

Passing by the document which relates to the presence of Faust at Heidelberg in 1509, the next document which is to the purpose of this paper is a letter of Mutianus Rufus, who, on the 7th of October, 1513, wrote to Urbanus that "eight days ago there came to Erfurt a Chiromant named Georgius Faustus, Helmitheus Hedebergensis," and speaks of him as a foolish impostor.<sup>2</sup>

From this point until 1587 allusions to Faustus, both by contemporaries and by those who knew him by reputation, are numerous. Among the former are Melanchthon, and perhaps Luther, Camerarius, Begardi, Gast, Gesner, and Wier. Among the latter are Bullinger and Lercheimer, with many others.

From all this testimony it appears that the historical Faust flourished from 1505 until about 1540, and was of great reputation, among learned and ignorant alike, as a reputed magician. After his death his reputation grew rather than diminished, and tales of other magicians gravitated to his name, until, in 1587, these tales were collected and, with various additions from sundry sources, published at Frankfort as *The History of Dr. John Faust*.

<sup>1</sup> For full text of this letter see documents at the end of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> For text see documents at end of paper.

If the reputation of the historical Faust was extraordinary, the popularity of this idealized Faust was almost unparalleled. In less than five years the book had spread all over Northern Europe. Not only were there numerous editions in the original High German, but translations had been made into Low German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, and English at least, some of these passing through several editions in this time. These were followed in the succeeding years by new editions, translations into other languages from French to Lithuanian, redactions innumerable, and transformations in subject matter and literary form. Among the common people it gained and held a remarkable popularity, through ballads and puppet plays in great variety, down to the present time, while as a theme for literature, music, and art it has been welcomed from its first appearance. Marlowe's *Faustus* appeared shortly after the first Faust book itself, and afterwards Lessing, Heine, and, above all, Goethe found in him a worthy theme, and have made the name of Faust familiar to all students of literature. The latest dramatic form of the story (the play of Mr. Wills) has, through the acting of Mr. Irving, brought up to the present day the tradition of the perennial popularity of Faust. And what is true of literature and the stage is true also of art and music. Among earlier artists, Rembrandt, Jost Amman, and Ary Scheffer found him a suitable theme, while in recent years this same theme has become wellnigh hackneyed. In music he has been handled by Lindpaintner, Radziwill, and Spohr, and, through Berlioz and Gounod, has become a familiar image to every lover of music the world over. There is not, in the history of modern comparative literature, a figure so well known as that of Faust.

But the Fausts of Gounod, Goethe, and Wills are not the same Faust, nor have they, though the lineal descendants of the historical Faust, much in common with him. Lamb's familiar question, "What has Margaret to do with Faust?" might be asked of other things. Even the compact in blood and Mephisto do not belong to Faust before the Volksbuch. The Faust of to-day is an evolution, and has in common

with the founder of the race nothing but a name and a certain uncanny reputation.

On this very account, however, the problem with which this paper has to do—the origin of the name—is the more interesting. The whole story is one to delight the student of comparative literature. Its remarkable extent and popularity give an uncommon interest to every problem of its history, but the fact that the single enduring characteristic of the famous story lies in the name itself gives a peculiar interest. Moreover, the problem touches the very historical beginning. The story is traced with clearness back to the date 1505 and the person Faust. There, just as the student thinks to touch the goal, it suddenly recedes in an aggravating “Junior.” Who is Faustus Senior? Without him the beautiful bit of critical literary history is a torso. He is the head of all.

It is not surprising that, in view of these facts, the attempts to solve the problem have been many (not to say desperate)—it is only surprising that there have not been more. One of these proposed solutions suggests that Faustus is his real family name, his father being thus Faustus Senior, while “Georgius Sabellicus” is only a *nom de guerre* taken on for his escapades, and borrowed from the Italian humanist, Marcus Antonius Sabellicus. This is both simple and ingenious, but will not stand. “Georgius Sabellicus” is the name given by Trithemius, and “Faustus Junior,” according to our only source, is a part of the title which he assumed as appropriate to himself. “Faustus Junior” undoubtedly points to some well-known earlier magician, whose name would stand as representing magic art. But who? A popular guess says Fust the printer, but this guess rests on the now exploded legend that Fust the printer was arrested for magic. With Fust’s magic vanishes his availability.

Some critics, with little ground and less acceptance, have proposed Faustus Socinus, and others have tried to make of the word only a descriptive term (*fausta*), meaning “lucky.” A slightly more plausible hypothesis, and one

which has been received with favor, is that of Schwetschke ("Deutsches Museum, Oct. 11, 1855"), who calls attention to the career of Publius Faustus Andrelinus, an Italian, afterwards professor at the University of Paris, and the correspondent of Erasmus. This is at best, however, only a plausibility, and the grounds on which it is based relate chiefly to the Faust of 1587.

Still another Faustus is the one proposed by Herman Grimm,<sup>1</sup> who argues that the source for the episode of the visit of the old man is found in the *Confessions* of Augustine, and that Faustus, Bishop of the Manichæans, is the original Faustus. The refusal to allow Faust to marry is put in conjunction with the Manichæan renunciation of marriage, and certain Manichæan suggestions of the eternity of matter are thought to confirm the theory. This, like the preceding and like various following theories, relates to the Faust of 1587 rather than to the historical Faust, and the fact that the author of the Volksbuch used the *Confessions* of Augustine does not prove that the historical Faust of 1505 did. In fact the author himself does not make this confusion, and his argument relates solely to the Faust book of 1587.

Seven or eight years ago the writer of this paper, out of a list of some fifty famous Fausts before Faust, formed half a dozen theories of the original Faust, partly as a *reductio ad absurdum* of all theories founded on mere plausibility, or on a few points of similarity only. Faustus the Manichæan was the basis of one of these, and on similar, though somewhat differing grounds to those of Grimm, whose essay had not then been seen. Another Faust was Faustus of Byzantium, whom Faligan has since declared to be beyond suspicion. But, in his *History of Armenia*, does he not write of one who flew like a flash without difficulty through the air, who raised the dead, and "did many other wonders greater than these"? Then there is Fausta the prophetess of Pliny, with Pliny's tales of magic arts, and Faustulus the shepherd who found Romulus, and who, with his daughter

<sup>1</sup> Fünfzehn Essays, v. 3.

*Helena*, only a century before had been introduced anew to the people in Plutarch's life of Romulus.

These do not by any means exhaust the list of plausibilities, but they show two things: 1. That any examination must distinguish clearly between the historic Faust and the Faust of 1587. 2. That some definite historical or documentary link must be provided in order to establish any hypothesis.

Turning to the documents again, we note that Sabellicus called himself not only "Faustus Junior," but also "Magus secundus." Magus has been regarded by many as meaning simply "magician," in spite of the pointlessness of the "secundus" in this event. Others have rightly referred the word to Simon Magus. Among these latter is Grimm, who associates the legend of Simon's attempted flight through the air in the presence of Nero and its unfortunate result, with the reputed similar performance of the historic Faust at Venice, but, as before said, Grimm connects "Faustus" with Faustus the Manichæan. He thus derives "Magus" from Simon Magus, assuming, however, that there was no relation between Faustus and Simon Magus in the mind of Faustus Junior. But the contrary view has also been held. According to Faligan, Knauth relates that Simon Magus was received at Rome by Tiberius Claudius, and that the Emperor's sons, Faustus and Faustinus, were his pupils in magic. Thus Faustus, son of Tiberius and disciple of Simon Magus, he claims as Faustus Senior. Just where this item of history is found Knauth does not tell, and Faligan does not know, but the latter hazards the safe opinion that Faustus Junior did not get his name from this source. The relation of names is, however, striking, and, "if true," as M. Faligan remarks, "these pupils of Simon Magus would have been worthy to serve as patrons to Faust." It is not true, but it is true that in literary history another Faustus was pupil of Simon, and it is probable that Faustus Junior drew his name from this mythical pupil of Simon, to wit, Faustus, son of Faustinianus, brother of Faustinus and of Clement of Rome, who relates their adventures and his in the book of *Recognitions*.

In the prolegomena to his edition of the Clementines, published in 1865, Lagarde alluded to the resemblance between the old Clement-Simon Magus story and the modern Faust story, in respect of Faust, Helen, Justus, the Homunculus, and the magic tricks. In a review of the book in the *Studien und Kritiken* (1867) Steitz took up and enlarged on the matter. Since Lagarde and Steitz, the solution has been noticed here and there with approval, as by Erich Schmidt in the *Goethe Jahrbuch* for 1882, by the Abbé Maistre in his *Life of St. Clement*, by H. Sutherland Edwards in the *Fortnightly Review*, and by various others. Dr. Schaff, in his Church history, has a note on the resemblances suggested by Lagarde and Steitz, and justly doubts "whether these resemblances are sufficient to establish a connection between the two otherwise widely divergent popular fictions." In fact, as has been remarked, mere general resemblances do not establish anything, and in this case the theory fails just where some of the others mentioned failed,—it proves too much. Helen, Justus, and the Homunculus belong to the Faust-book of 1587, and not to the Faustus of 1505-7. But omitting all these resemblances, the fact remains of a Faustus pupil of Simon Magus—an unquestionable literary-historical character, suitable as the senior to Faustus Junior.

And if mere suitability proves nothing where there is not at least historic probability, here it is different. Faligan says of Faustus of Byzantium and Knauth's Faust, that it is not probable they came under the view of Faustus Junior. The argument of Grimm for Faustus the Manichæan is founded on the probability that Augustine's *Confessions* would be familiar. If, in other words, to the extreme suitability of the Faustus of the *Recognitions* joined with Simon Magus as explanation of the Magus secundus be added a plausible probability that Faustus Junior was acquainted with the Clementine literature, it affords an historical probability amounting to proof that he derived his name from this source.

Here the argument of Steitz, though mistaken, has some-

thing to the point. According to him the various traditions and the name "flowed together" in the Faust legend. This view he grounds on the fact of the popularity of the *Recognitions* during the Middle Ages, a popularity which he infers from the large number of manuscripts mentioned by Lagarde. Now if the manuscripts mentioned by Lagarde, and which number fifteen, are a sufficient explanation of a widespread popular knowledge, then, *a fortiori*, the nearly hundred manuscripts known to the writer of this paper indicate such a degree of popularity that for it to be unknown to Georgius Sabellicus would be impossible.<sup>1</sup> Faustus Junior was a student. If a student of theology at Heidelberg, he would certainly have known the story, and at all events there would have been opportunities enough for any student, for South Germany, Switzerland, and Northern Italy with Eastern and Southern France were scattered thick with manuscripts. But more than that, just two years before the appearance of Faust, the first printed edition of the *Clementine Recognitions* was published.<sup>2</sup> And once again, and still more notable so far as the juxtaposition of Faustus and Simon is concerned, their story is found under the history of Clement in Voragine's "Golden Legend," the popularity of which was considered at length in a paper in the first volume of the Proceedings of this Society.<sup>3</sup> In brief, there are about three hundred manuscripts of this work in existence, and during the thirty years before the appearance of the historic Faust there were more than one hundred (one hundred and thirty) printed editions. It was the book of the common people, and its author quotes the *Recognitions* as his source. The story of Simon and Faustus was therefore freshly and prominently before both the learned world and the common people, and in speaking of himself as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. HARNACK. *Gesch. d. altchr. Litteratur*, i. (1893), 229-230.

<sup>2</sup> X. Februarii M.D. III is date of prefatory epistle. The *Paradysus Heraculidis*, included with the *Recognitions* is dated xxiii. Februarii of the same year, and the colophon of the *Recognitions* reads "Ex officina Bellovisiana. Finis: Impensis Joannis Parvi. . . . M.D. III. Idibus Iullis, iullio secundo."

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 235-248, especially p. 240, *note*.

“Faustus Junior” and “Magus secundus” Sabellicus was referring to characters perfectly well understood by the men of his day.

Returning again to the documents, we note that the boasts of Faustus are echoes of those of Simon. Faustus is “princeps necromanticorum,” and “fons necromanticorum”; Simon insists that he shall be regarded as chief of his company of magicians. Faustus is “agromanticus,” or, as some correct, “aëromanticus”; Simon can make trees to grow up, bear leaves, and produce fruit in a moment, or, if the correction is accepted of “aëromanticus,” then Simon can “fly through the air,” “fly from mountain to mountain supported by angel’s hands.” Faustus is “pyromanticus”; Simon can “walk in fire” and “ignis commistus unum corpus effectus sum,” and casting himself into the fire, is not burned. Again, Faust is necromancer and astrologer. In the *Recognitions* there is talk of necromancy, and much of astrology, the father of Faustus (or Faustus) being an astrologer. Finally, Faustus claimed to be able to do all the miracles of Christ whenever he wished, and “scire atque posse quiquid homines optaverint,” while Simon is adored as God, sets himself above Christ, professes to do his miracles, and says that “in brief, whatever I wish to do, I can do!”

Passing to the testimony of Mutianus, I venture an observation which may or may not bear on the subject. According to Mutianus Rufus, Faustus is called “Helmitheus Hedebergensis.” These words are, it is said, “unintelligible.” All sorts of efforts have been made to decipher them, the only tolerable hypothesis being that of two typographical errors for “Hemitheus Hedelbergensis” or “the demi-god of Heidelberg.” Now it may have no connection whatever with the matter, but it is curiously interesting that Helmitheus or Helmetheus occurs in some manuscripts and in the printed editions of the *Recognitions* as the name of a Greek god, the son of Pyrra and Prometheus, and, so far as appears, is not found elsewhere in all literature. It

Compare documents at end of paper.

is not wholly impossible that this student-magician, boasting so great familiarity with the Greek classics that he could reproduce from memory all of Plato and Aristotle, should have been struck by the name of this unique son of Prometheus, who had at the same time a good father for a magician, and a good alliterative name to be placed with Hedelbergensis. It is at least as likely as Hemitheus; for Faust was not at all likely to call himself a demi-god—he was above the Son of God and was not likely voluntarily to take second place to any god, whether heathen, Jewish, or Christian. The reason why Hemitheus is unique in the *Recognitions* is that he is a manuscript corruption for Hellen et Prometheus.<sup>1</sup>

But letting this pass for what it is, it appears from the preceding considerations that by himself Faustus, pupil of Simon Magus, is more probable than any other Faustus. It appears, in the second place, that the title "Magus secundus" identifies the Faust almost beyond a doubt, and compels the hypothesis that Faustus Junior must have known the Clementines in some form. When further it appears, from the vogue of the *Recognitions* and its derivatives in manuscripts, and the renewed attention which had just been drawn to it in print, that Faustus Junior must have been acquainted with it, this assurance is increased, and when to all this is added so considerable a body of resemblances in titles, assumptions, and circumstances, it becomes fairly certain that Faustus took his name and character from the *Recognitions*.<sup>2</sup>

With the relation of the Clementines to the Faust book of 1587 and later, this paper does not deal, except to note the

<sup>1</sup> This is altogether as pretty a piece of evolution through scribal errors as can well be imagined. The author originally declared that Pyrrha and Erymetheus were parents of Helen and Prometheus. This is gradually transformed until Pyrrha and Prometheus are parents of Helmitheus!

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that most of the facts cited apply equally well to the Homilies or the Epitomes, but, unless some definite link is established, the probability rests with the *Recognitions*. Whichever form it was, the ultimate source is the same, and is found in the story of Clement, which dates from the second century.

fact that it is a separate problem. That there is connection between the book of 1587 and some form of the Clementine story is probable. This is suggested as early as 1599 by Widman, in his edition of the Faust-book. He speaks, however, of the Clementine *Recognitions*, of which several additional editions had already been published. The fact, however, that the Helena of the other forms is Selena, and translated Luna in the *Recognitions*, requires some other source—undoubtedly the Epitome published in 1555—but with this we do not deal.

## DOCUMENTS.

*Testimony of Trithemius.*

(*Epp. fam. Hag.* 1536, repr. Kiesewetter, p. 4.)

Homō ille de quo mihi scripsisti Georgius Sabellicus, qui se principem necromanticorum ausus est nominare, gyrovagus, battologus, et circumcellis est, dignus qui verberibus castigetur, ne temere deinceps tam nefanda et ecclesiæ sanctæ contraria publice audeat profiteri. Quid enim sunt aliud tituli quos sibi assumit, nisi stultissimæ ac vesanæ mentis indicia, qui se fatuum, non philosophum ostendit? Sic enim titulum sibi convenientem formavit, Magister Georgius Sabellicus, Faustus junior, fons necromanticorum, astrologus, magus secundus, chiromanticus, agromanticus, pyromanticus, in hydra arte secundus. Vide stultam nominis temeritatem, quanta feratur insania, ut se fontem necromantiæ profiteri præsumat, qui vere omnium bonarum literarum ignarus fatuum se potius appellare debuisset quam Magistrum, sed me non latet ejus nequitia. Cum anno priore de Marchia Brandenburgensi redirem, hunc ipsum hominem apud Geilenhusen oppidum inveni; de quo mihi plura dicebantur in hospitio frivola, non sine magna ejus temeritate ab eo promissa. Qui mox, ut me adesse audivit, fugit de hospitio et a nullo poterat persauaderi, quod se meis præsentaret aspectibus. Titulum stulticiæ suæ qualem dedit ad te quem memoravimus, per quemdam civem ad me quoque destinavit. Referebant mihi quidam in oppido sacerdotes, quod in multorum presentia dixerit, tantam se omnis sapientiæ consecutum scienciam atque memoriam, ut, si volumina Platonis et Aristotelis omnia cum tota eorum philosophia in toto perſisset ab hominum memoria, ipse suo ingenio, velut Ezras alter Hebræus, restitueret universa cum præstantiore valeret elegantia. Postea me Neometi existente Herbipolim venit, eademque vanitate actus, in plurimorum fertur dixisse præsentia, quod Christi Salvatoris miracula non sint miranda, se quoque omnia facere posse, quæ Christus fecit, quoties et quandocunque velit. In ultima quoque hujus anni quadragesima venit stauronesum, et simili stulticiæ gloriosus de se pollicebatur ingentia, dicens se in alchimia omnium qui fuerint unquam esse perfectissimum, et scire atque posse quidquid homines optaverint. Vacabat interea munus docendi scholasticum in oppido memorato, ad quod

Francisci ab Sickingen Balivi principis tui, hominis mysticarum rerum percipidi, promotione fuit assumptus; qui mox nefandissimo formationis genere, cum pueris videlicet voluptari coepit, quo statim deducto in lucem fuga poenam declinavit paratam. Hæc sunt quæ mihi certissimo constant testimonio de nomine illo quem tanto venturum desyderio præstolaris. Cum venerit ad te, non philosophum, sed hominem fatuum et nimia temeritate agitatum.

*Testimony of Mutianus Rufus.*

(*Epp.* 1701, repr. Kiesewetter, p. 6.)

Venit octavo abhinc die quidam Chiromanticus Erphurdiam, nomine Georgius Faustus, Helmitheus Hedebergensis, merus ostentator et fatuus. Ejus et omnium divinaculorum vana est professio, et talis physiognomia levior typula. Rudes admirantur. In eum theologi insurgant. Non conficiant philosophum Capnionem. Ego audivi garrientem in hospitio. Non castigavi jactantiam. Quid aliena insaniam ad me?

*Extracts from the Clementine "Recognitions."*

2 : 7. Simon hic, patre Antonio matre Rachel natus est, gente samaræus ex vico Gethonum, arte magus, Græcis itamen litteris liberalibus apprime eruditus, gloriæ ac jactantiæ supra omne genus hominum cupidus, ita ut excelsam virtutem quæ supra creatorum Deum sit credi se velit, et Christum putari atque Stantem nominari. . . . .

2 : 9. . . . . tantum ut mihi, inquit, Simoni deferatis primatus, qui possum magica arte multa signa et prodigia ostendere . . . . . novas arbores subito oriri faciam . . . . . et repentina virgulta producarn, in ignem memetipsum injiciens non ardeam. Vultum meum commuto, ut non agnoscar, sed et duas facies habere me possum hominibus ostendere. Ovis aut capra efficiar, pueris parvis barbarn producarn, in ærem volando invehar, aurum plurimum ostendam, reges faciam eosque dejiciam. Adorabor ut Deus, publice divinis donabor honoribus, ita ut simulacrum mihi statuantes tanquam Deum colant et adorent. Et quid opus est multa dicere? quidquid voluero facere, potero.

3 : 47. Ego sum prima virtus, qui semper et sine initio sum. . . . . ego per ærem volavi, igni commistus unum corpus effectus sum, statuas moveri feci, animavi exanima, lapides panes feci, de monte in montem volavi, transmeavi manibus angelorum sustentatus ad terras descendi. Hæc non solum feci, sed et nunc facere possum, ut rebus ipsis probem omnibus quia ego sum filius Dei stans in æternum, et credentes mihi similes stare in perpetuum faciam.

*Faustinus Speaking for Himself and for Faustus.*

2 : 5. . . . . Niceta inquit . . . . . Super hæc autem omnia et Simon vehementissimus est orator . . . . . quod autem est omnibus gravius, et in arte magica valde exercitatus; . . . . . dum adjutores ejus et errorum socii fumuis.

7 : 31. Tum Petrus : Nolo turberis, mulier, constans esto ; isti sunt Faustinus et Faustus filii tui . . . . et quemadmodum alius ipsorum Niceta et alius Aquila dicatur ipsi tibi exponere poterunt. . . . .

7 : 33. Simoni autem cuidam mago qui nobiscum una educatus est, pro amicitiiis et puerili consuetudine adhæsimus ita ut pene ab eo decipi possemus. . . . . nos interim cum pene jam deciperemur a Simone quidam collega domini mei Petri, Zacchæus nomine, monuit ne falleremur a mago. . . . .

9 : 35. . . . . Gemini autem filii ejus sunt isti, Niceta et Aquila, quorum alius Faustinus vocabitur prius et alius Faustus. . . . .

9 : 36. Utque post hæc studiorum et consuetudinis causa Simoni adhæserint, atque ab eo, ubi magam et deceptorem viderunt, aversi accesserint ad Zacchæum. . . . .