

A SIXTH-CENTURY FRAGMENT OF ST MARK.

IN the British Museum there is a MS bound in curious wooden boards containing the *Notae Tironianae* (so called from Tiro, the freedman of Cicero), a collection of shorthand symbols. At the end of this MS, which belongs to the tenth century, are two leaves from two ancient Latin MSS, fols. 117 and 118. The MS was purchased by the Museum on July 13, 1907, from O. Turville Petre, Esq., of Bosworth Hall, Leicester, and is now numbered *Addit. MSS 37518*.

The MS has the name 'I. Fortescue de Salden' written in a sixteenth-century hand on its first leaf. This is probably the Sir John Fortescue of Salden, Buckinghamshire, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who died in 1609. The MS descended from the Fortescue family to the Turviles of Bosworth Hall, into whose possession it came at the beginning of last century, and whose book-plate of arms it bears. Bound up in the curious binding of the MS by some careful hand of the sixteenth century were two precious and highly interesting leaves containing Latin writing of great antiquity. The first of these leaves contains, in a bold uncial hand of the seventh century, eight short prayers, seven of which are found in the Gelasian Sacramentary. The second leaf contains on one side the fragment of St Mark which we now publish. On its other side there are two ecclesiastical lections—St John xiv 7-14 followed by St Luke xxiv 49-53—written without separation as though the two formed one continuous narrative. These lections cover twenty-two lines, and are in a hand that belongs to the eighth century or early ninth. Their text is practically Vulgate; but xiv 7 > *utique et patrem meum*; xiv 12 *propter opera ipsi credite* [*ipsi* seems unique]; and xxiv 52 *reversi* with *a c d e r* against *regressi* of *b ff vg*. To the copyist of these lections we owe the preservation of the last leaf of an ancient exemplar of St Mark which he rescued in order to use its blank side.

The uncials are bold and large—fully twice as large as those in *ff*, but less round, and more approximating in shape to the later (as I believe) uncial formation found in *k*. The boldness and excellence of the letters betoken a scribe who was a master in the art of calligraphy.

The writing is older than that of any other Latin Biblical text that the British Museum contains, and may be assigned without hesitation to the first half of the sixth century. The punctuation is only by a small central point as in *b* and *ff*. The capitals are very little larger than the other letters. The scribe has a curious habit of occasionally writing *t* so that it is half as high again as the other letters. Twice (once in verse 15 and once in verse 19) he writes this *t* in ligature with the base of the letter *e* to form *et*.

Two correctors have revised the work of the first hand. The first corrector uses the same dark ink with yellow infusion as the copyist, and always writes in the same gracefully shaped bold uncials, even when employing lettering which may be called diminutive. There is nothing in ink or lettering to differentiate him with certainty from the original workman. The second corrector used darker ink, and belongs to the late seventh century. He writes *assumptus* in full above *adsumptus* in verse 19; and his lettering exhibits a later stage—approximating to *q*—of uncial writing.

Our fragment has two readings of great interest and importance. (1) At the beginning of verse 15 instead of *Et dixit eis* we read *Et dixit dñs ihs discipulis suis*. This new reading, if known to Tatian, would support his identification of St Matt. xxviii 16–20 with St Mark xvi 15–20; for it indicates that the incidents of verses 14 and 15 relate not to the same occasion, but to two different occasions. The recently discovered Freer Gospels have, in fact, a long interpolation between verses 14 and 15, and part of this interpolation was known to Jerome.

(2) In verse 17 we read *Signa autem eos qui uelut apostoli crediderint haec sequentur*. It is true that the words *uelut apostoli* are above the line; but they were inserted either by the first hand or by a corrector who used the same ink-pot. Signs are promised according to this text only to those who have faith as the apostles had.

No other readings are of equal note with these two. The spellings *creiderit*, *baptizatus*, and *quit* are all ancient; *biberent* for *biberint* should also be noted; whilst *condempnabitur* and *egros* are deteriorated spellings frequent in Irish and Spanish MSS of the seventh and eighth centuries. Finally, *sermone* is found in our MS and only elsewhere in G J Z of the Vulgate. The Gospel of St Mark has no *Amen* appended by the first hand, nor any subscription; but at the bottom of the text in the middle (not in the right-hand corner as in *ff*) the first hand has written Q xii. This indicates that our leaf was once the ninety-sixth in an uncial Evangelium, written probably in the Vulgate sequence, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—certainly St Mark was second. Our MS, in order that the text of St Matthew and St Mark should fill 96 leaves, must have contained more than 18 lines on each page (according to my calculation 20); but if, as is highly probable, the text was preceded by the prefatory matter and Capitula found in the Irish MSS D and Q, then 22 lines on each page would be demanded by the space.

Our leaf, of which the vellum is stouter and thicker than that of *ff* and more like some pages of *h*, would seem to have lain long with its text side on an earthen floor, as fine particles of sand still adhere to it. The ink has suffered much deterioration in consequence, and in spots has become extremely faint. Moreover the lection-writer, who saved

our leaf from destruction, clipped it not only on both sides, but also at the top (where I believe either two or four lines are now missing) and at the bottom, in order to reduce its size to his requirements. Letters thus clipped away at the sides have been restored in brackets.

The fragment both in spelling and calligraphy recalls the work of the early Irish scribes. It is certainly a Vulgate text, but a Vulgate text of the earliest known type. We know from an inscription they bear that the *Notae Tironianae* were in Belgium in the twelfth century; but this tells us nothing, as it was probably not until the sixteenth century that they received the valuable appendix of our fragment together with another ancient Latin leaf.

St Mark xvi 15-20]

credider]unt. ¹⁵ Et dixit dñs ihs discipu
li]s suis. euntes in uniuersū mun
d]um praedicate euangeliū om[n]i
cr]eaturae. ¹⁶ qui cretiderit et bab
ti]zatus fuerit sauus erit qui uer[
no]n crediderit condempnabitur.
¹⁷ Sig]na autē eos qui ^{uelut apostoli} crediderint haec
se]quentur in nomine meo daemonia
ei]ciant linguis loquentur nouis
¹⁸ se]rperentes tollent et si mortiferū
qu]it biberent non eos nocebit su
pe]r egros manus inponent et bene
ha]bebunt. ¹⁹ Et dñs quidē ihs post quā
lo]cutus est eis adsumptus est in cael[ū
et s]edit a dextris dī. ²⁰ illi autē profecti
prae]dicauerunt ubique dño coope
ran]te et sermone confirmante sequē
ti]bus signis.

Q xii

¹⁶ crediderit *m*²
m^{*} vel *m*^{dior}

baptizatus *m*²
¹⁸ quid *m*^{*} vel *m*^{dior}

saluus *m*^{*} vel *m*^{dior}
¹⁹ assumptus *m*²

¹⁷ uelut apostoli
²⁰ + amen *m*²

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