

ARISTION, THE AUTHOR OF THE LAST
TWELVE VERSES OF MARK.

THE object of the following note is to adduce and estimate the value of some new evidence with regard to the authorship of the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel. The question of their authenticity has been constantly under discussion, and perhaps no one so well sums up the evidence for and against them as the late Dean Burgon in his monograph on the subject (Oxford, James Parker, 1871), to which monograph I am much indebted.

The evidence with regard to these twelve verses is this. In the 4th century codices B and Aleph these verses are omitted; and Eusebius states that in a vast number of copies the verses were in his day absent, and that the Gospel ended with the words *ἐφοβούντο γάρ*. Victor of Antioch,¹ writing a century later, A.D. 400-450, declares that they were missing in some copies, though not in the accurate copies, nor yet in the ancient Palestinian copy. He believed them to be genuine. Later Greek MSS., among which the three great uncials A, C and D are, however, almost contemporary with B and Aleph, include the twelve verses, often adding a scholion to the effect that they are genuine. One uncial, however, L, of the eighth century, prefaces the verses in question with the following note: *εστην δε και ταυτα φερομενα μετα το εφοβουντο (sic) γαρ*.

The majority of ancient versions add these verses, though the old Armenian copies of Mark, with one exception, which I shall soon dwell upon, omit them. The evidence of the

¹ Westcott and Hort, however, estimate Victor's evidence for the twelve verses less highly than Dean Burgon.

Fathers in favour, if not of the authenticity, at least of the antiquity of these twelve verses is very strong. Irenæus certainly quoted v. 19. Papias¹ doubtfully alludes to v. 18. Justin Martyr² probably alludes (*Apol.*, I. c. 45) to several of them.

In the third century, according to Dean Burgon, Hippolytus (A.D. 190–227) cites vv. 17, 18. The *Acta Pilati*, which Tischendorf assigns to the third century, contains vv. 15–18 (Tischendorf, *Evang. Apocr.*, 1853, pp. 243 and 351). Burgon sums up the Patristic evidence thus:—That three Fathers of the 2nd century, four of the third, six of the fourth, and four of the fifth, cite one or more of these last twelve verses.

The late Dean Burgon was convinced, on a review of the above evidence, that these twelve verses really belong to Mark's Gospel, and are from the hand of that evangelist. Tischendorf, however, and many other modern editors reject them, and Westcott and Hort decide against them on several grounds, and in particular because the style in which they are written does not agree with the style of the rest of the Gospel. All critics, however, admit the antiquity of these verses, whether they be Mark's or no.

Now if these verses be not Mark's, whose are they? In the Patriarchal library of Ećmiadzin, at the foot of Mount Ararat, I recently collated, in November, 1891, an Armenian codex of the Gospels, which seems to furnish an answer to this question. It is an uncial codex written in the year 986. Externally it is remarkable as having for its covers two

¹ Burgon, p. 23, writes: "It is impossible to resist the inference that Papias refers to Mark xvi. 18, when he records a marvellous tradition concerning Justus, surnamed Barsabas, 'how that after drinking noxious poison through the Lord's grace he experienced no evil consequence.' He does not even give the words of the evangelist. It is even surprising how completely he passes them by; and yet the allusion to the place just cited (*i.e.* Mark xvi. 18) is manifest." See Euseb., *H. E.* iii. 39, and my remarks below.

² For his evidence, see an article by the Rev. C. Taylor, in *THE EXPOSITOR* of July, 1893.

ivory plaques beautifully carved in relief by some Ravennese artist of the 5th or early 6th century. Within it also are bound up several Syriac paintings of N.T. subjects, which cannot be later than the beginning of the sixth century. The covers as well as the paintings are reproduced by photolithography by Strzygowski in his valuable monograph on this codex (Vienna, at the Press of the Mechitarists, 1892). Besides collating this codex throughout, the writer of this article photographed on the spot some of its pages.

Now in this codex the Gospel of Mark is copied out as far as ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ. Then a space of two lines is left, after which, in the same uncial hand, only in red, is written "Ariston Eritzou," which means "Of the Presbyter Ariston." This title occupies one whole line (the book is written in double columns) and then follow the last twelve verses still in the same hand. They begin near the bottom of the second column of a verse, and are continued on the recto of the next folio.

Now here the name Ariston is probably no other than the Greek name Aristion, badly spelt—as was natural—by a 10th century Armenian scribe. In the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.*, made from the Syriac c. 400 A.D. the name Aristion is transliterated in the same way. In the same version of Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.*, the name of Ariston of Pella, it is true, is transliterated in the same way; and Prof. Sanday has suggested to me that he might conceivably have written the twelve verses. Ariston of Pella was a Jewish Christian, and wrote about A.D. 140-150. Against this view, which Prof. Sanday does not prefer to my own, I would urge:—

1. That the date 140-150 is too late. An addition made at that time would hardly have appeared so uniformly in all the Greek MSS. as do these twelve verses.

2. So far as we know anything about Ariston's writings they were not at all similar to these twelve verses.

This Aristion, the presbyter, may have been either

1. The copyist himself, or
2. Some Armenian, who, finding this supplement in a Greek or Syriac copy of the Gospels, translated it into his own language, or
3. The person who composed these twelve verses.

(1) He was certainly not the copyist, for the latter gives his name at the beginning and end of the codex: "To the lord Stephen belongs this Gospel. I, Johannes, wrote it. Remember me."

(2) He could hardly have been the translator of these verses, for Ariston, or Aristion, is no Armenian name, and it is not usual in the Armenian version of the Bible for the translator of any portion of it to mention himself, and if he were to, it would be at the end of the piece translated, and not prefacing it. Neither would he use the genitive. The name Aristion never occurs in Armenian history; nor in Christian literature does it anywhere occur except in Eusebius, *H. E.*, bk. 3.

(3) This is the supposition we must accept. For this alone explains (a) the genitive case "*of the presbyter*" or *πρεσβυτέρου*, to which the word "eritzou" answers; (β) the dignity accorded to the words "Ariston Eritzou," which are in minioned uncials, as are the titles "of Matthew," "of Mark," "of Luke," "of John," in this evangeliar at the heads of their respective Gospels.

We must then infer that the Armenian translator of these twelve verses had a Greek or Syriac MS. which prefaced them with the words *Ἀριστίωνος πρεσβυτέρου*. A question remains: When were the twelve verses translated? They are absent in most uncial Arm. MSS. of the 10th and 11th centuries. In style they cohere fairly well with the rest of the Armenian Gospels which go back to c. 400. Still, a translator of a later age, who was versed in the Armenian Bible, may have translated them in archaic style. It is related by

a late Greek Father that the Armenians at first had the twelve verses in their version, but afterwards excised them. This would explain their occurrence in many later MSS., translated as they are translated in the Eémiadzin Codex. Perhaps the Armenian copyists left them out because they were prefaced by this very heading.

Who then was the Presbyter Aristion to whom in this codex these twelve verses are attributed, and who must in the scribe's mind have been a writer of almost the same importance as Mark himself, to judge from the prominence given to his name, and the red uncials in which it is written? To my friend, Mr. T. A. Archer, I owe the suggestion that this Aristion is no other than the one mentioned in Eusebius' History, bk. 3, ch. 39, where we have preserved to us the following excerpt from Papias:—

“I will not hesitate either to set out together in my interpretations all the things which I well learned and well recollected from the elders, firmly maintaining and defending their veracity. For I did not, like the run of people, take pleasure in those who have a very great deal to say, but in those who teach the truth; nor yet in those men who recollect alien¹ commandments, but in those men who recollect the commandments given by the Lord in the faith and flowing from the truth itself. And if anywhere one came who had followed and accompanied the elders, I ascertained the discourses of the elders: what Andrew said, or what Peter, or what Philip, or what Thomas, or James, or what John, or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples; and what Aristion and the presbyter (or ‘elder’) John,² the disciples of the Lord. For I did not

¹ ἀλλοτριὰς ἐντολάς is supported here by the old Armenian version. Rufinus seems to have read ἀνθρωπίνας.

² Rufinus translates: “Aristion and the presbyter John and the other disciples” “quæve Aristion vel Johannes Presbyter ceterique discipuli,” so omitting τοῦ κυρίου. The Armenian omits οἱ τοῦ κυρίου μαθηταί. Thus both the ancient versions hesitate to make Aristion and the presbyter John actual disciples of the Lord.

suppose that things learned out of the books aided me so much as things learned from the living and remaining voice."

Again, p. 136. 30 Eusebius says: ¹"And the Papias whom we just now mentioned, avows that he received the statements of the apostles from those who had been their immediate followers, but says that he himself had listened direct to Aristion and the presbyter John. At any rate, he often mentions them by name, when he gives in his own compositions their traditions." Eusebius then enumerates some of the traditions received and written down by Papias, one of which is the story of Justus called Barsabas, "how he drank off a deadly drug and yet suffered no ill effects because of the grace of the Lord." In a 12th century Bodleian Codex of Rufinus' Latin version of the *Ecclesiastical History* this story is mentioned in the margin against the name of Aristion (in p. 136. 31), from which we may suppose that the scholiast of Rufinus regarded the story as in a peculiar manner due to or suggested by Aristion. Lower down (137. 26), Eusebius, after mentioning Irenæus as one of the Church fathers who had imbibed wrong Chiliastic doctrines from Papias, makes a final allusion to Aristion, thus: "And he (Papias) in his own writing hands down also other narratives (*διηγήσεις*) of the Lord's words by Aristion, the aforementioned, as well as traditions (*παραδόσεις*) of the Presbyter John."

What do we gather from the above concerning Aristion? The net results may be summed up thus:—

1. Aristion was a *μαθητής του κυρίου*, a disciple of the Lord. But note that the Latin and Armenian versions

¹ Rufinus turns thus: Hic ipse de quo sermo est Papias apostolorum se uerba ab his qui secuti eos fuerant, Aristione uidelicet et Iohanne presbytero asserit suscepisse, unde et frequenter in commentariis suis a Iohanne et Aristione traditum sibi de singulis quibusque commemorat. The old Armenian version gives the same sense, but is more literal. Both versions therefore lay stress on the fact that Aristion and John the presbyter were *παρηκολουθηκότες τοῖς ἀποστόλοις*. The Greek text is not really adverse to this sense; for δὲ after *Ἀριστίωνος* need not bear an adversative sense.

(both made about A.D. 400, and the Armenian from a still older Syriac version) seem to have omitted *τοῦ κυρίου*.

2. Aristion was a *γνώριμος* or pupil, and a *παρηκολουθηκώς* or personal companion of the holy apostles.

3. Aristion either wrote or delivered orally *διηγήσεις τῶν τοῦ κυρίου λόγων*, narratives of the words of the Lord.

4. Papias wrote these narratives down in his *λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις*, often mentioning by name Aristion as the source of his information.

Lastly, is it conceivable that the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel should be, if not from the pen, at least from the lips of this Aristion? This question is best answered in the words in which Westcott and Hort sum up their judgment with regard to the twelve verses. They consider that these verses constitute an interpolation "inserted at a period when forms of the oral gospel were still current." And in their appendix on select readings (p. 51) they write:—

"There is no difficulty in supposing (1) that the true intended continuation of *vv.* 1-8 either was very early lost by the detachment of a leaf or was never written down; and (2) that a scribe or editor, unwilling to change the words of the text before him or to add words of his own, was willing to furnish the gospel with what seemed a worthy conclusion, by incorporating with it unchanged a narrative of Christ's appearances after the Resurrection which he found in some secondary record then surviving from a preceding generation."

"The opening words of *v.* 9 *Ἀναστὰς δὲ πρῶτ'*, without *ὁ Ἰησους* or any other name, imply a previous context, and mark *vv.* 9-20 as only the conclusion of a longer record; but to what length the record extended, it is idle to speculate. On the other hand, it is shown by its language and structure to be complete in itself, beginning with the resurrection and ending with the ascension. It thus

constitutes a condensed fifth narrative of the forty days. Its authorship and its precise date must remain unknown; it is, however, apparently older than the time when the canonical gospels were generally received; for though it has points of contact with them all, it contains no attempt to harmonize their various representations of the course of events. It manifestly cannot claim any apostolic authority; but it is doubtless founded on some tradition of the apostolic age."

The hypothesis that Aristion, the master of Papias, was the author or source of these verses would exactly fit in with the above surmises. The only objection is that Papias seems in a marked manner not to recognise Aristion as a presbyter, while he does recognise John as such. In this connection it is remarkable that the Armenian version of Eusebius renders the words of Papias (*Eccl. Hist.*, p. 136, l. 12) ἄ τε Ἀριστιῶν καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης as if they stood ἄ τε Ἀριστιῶν καὶ Ἰωάννης πρεσβύτεροι. However, stress must not be laid on this point, for (i.) we have to deal here with a version only, and (ii.) in the subsequent passages p. 136, l. 31, and p. 137, 29, the Armenian reproduces Eusebius' phrase "Aristion and the Presbyter John." On the other hand this objection to our proposed identification of the "Aristion Presbyter," to whom the Armenian Codex ascribes these verses, with Papias' teacher is not a strong objection. He may very well have been a presbyter at some time or other. Nor is it clear what force we should attribute to the title *πρεσβύτερος* which Papias gives to John. Does it mean the presbyter in the official sense, or merely the "Elder" John, in contradistinction with the Apostle John. The true force of Papias' words is probably not so much to withhold from Aristion a title which he is very likely to have had, as to mark off the Presbyter John from the Apostle of that name. A few lines before Papias has by implication called Aristion a presbyter, if not in the

ecclesiastical sense, at any rate as one of an older and more authoritative generation.

Assuming then that these verses were the work of the Aristion who was the master of Papias, how shall we account for their being added to Mark's Gospel? We may suppose, either (*a*) that Papias in his *ἐξηγήσεις* had one or more sections headed *Ἀριστιῶνος*, that one of these sections consisted of or included these twelve verses, and that some one, perhaps Papias himself, selected them to complete the—we know not how or why mutilated—Gospel; or (*β*) that Papias was not the intermediary at all, but that they were taken direct out of an independent narrative written by Aristion. Eusebius contrasts the *διηγήσεις* of Aristion with the *παράδοσεις* of the Presbyter John. May we not hence infer that Aristion himself *wrote a narrative* of the works and words of Jesus? If so, a part of his longer narrative may have been chosen as the end of Mark by some editor or scribe who felt the abruptness of the ending *ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ*. The words of Luke (ch. i., *vv.* 1-3) almost constrain us to give such an interpretation to the *διηγήσεις* of Aristion; they run thus: *Ἐπειδὴ περ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, καθὼς παρέδωσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου.* Here *διήγησιν* means a written narrative.

Either supposition accords well with the fact that Irenæus is the only 2nd-century Father who quite certainly recognises this ending of Mark's Gospel. For we know that Irenæus was in a special way related to Papias. If it was in Papias' circle and neighbourhood that the Gospel received this addition, then Irenæus is of all the Fathers the one in whose possession we should expect to find a copy of Mark with this ending. It may be further remarked that if Aristion was a disciple of the Lord or even a fellow and companion of the apostles, he was probably an inhabitant

of Palestine, and this agrees well with the patristic statement already noticed, that the ancient Palestinian copy of Mark included these twelve verses.

But there is another point of contact between Papias and Aristion on the one hand and these twelve verses on the other. Papias, according to Eusebius, related in his *ἐξηγήσεις* the story of Justus Barsabas drinking poison and being saved by the grace of the Lord. Dean Burgon saw in this a proof positive that Papias had in his hands a copy of Mark which ended with these twelve verses. Eusebius does not affirm that Papias derived this story either from Aristion or from John the presbyter; but, as I have already noticed, in a 12th century Bodleian codex of Rufinus a marginal scholion seems to refer the story in some way to Aristion. It is unlikely that Aristion himself in his *διηγήσεις* told the story in illustration of verse 18, of which he was the author, and that Papias only copied it from him. But the scholiast of Rufinus may have known that these twelve verses were Aristion's, and on that account have connected with Aristion's name a story so aptly illustrative of one of the verses in question.

The occurrence of *vv.* 15-18 in the *Acta Pilati* may be accounted for by supposing either (i.) that the writer of those *Acta* had in his hands Mark's Gospel with these twelve verses added; or (ii.) that he had the very *διηγήσεις* of Aristion; or (iii.) that he had Papias' *ἐξηγήσεις*, in which were embodied these *διηγήσεις*. And of these alternatives (ii.) and (iii.) must not be dismissed off hand, though I have not now space in which to consider them.

There remains the question: Whence did the Armenian scribe Johannes, who wrote the Ećmiadzin Evangeliiar A.D. 986, get these twelve verses, which so far as I know are not to be found added in any other Armenian codex prior to A.D. 1100? It is probable that they are translated from an early Syriac codex for these reasons:—

1. We know that the scribe John probably had such an early Syriac codex, because bound into the Ećmiadzin Evangeliiar at beginning and end are a number of Syriac illuminations at least as old as the beginning of the 6th century. One of these illuminations the scribe Johannes has rudely copied in his text, leaving space for his copy of it in his writing. (On the other hand these illuminations may equally well have belonged to the "true and accurate" Armenian exemplar from which, according to his own statement, he copied his codex. Strzygowski points out in his monograph that up to the 10th century the Armenians regularly sent to Edessa or to Greece for illuminations with which to embellish their books. That "true and accurate" exemplar may have and probably did include these twelve verses, title and all, and must have been a 5th or 6th century exemplar.)

2. The spelling Aristōn for Aristion is that which we also have in the Armenian version of Eusebius' History, a version made from Syriac. In translating from a Greek text an Armenian would not have neglected the iota before the omega; nor would he have transliterated omega by a short *ō*, but either by *ow* or *au*, according to the fixed and recognised custom of Armenian translators. It is singular that the name Ariston, though put first, is yet not put in the genitive. For it is clearly in apposition to eritzou = *πρεσβυτέρου*.

3. In *v.* 10 and *v.* 17 the singular of the relative pronoun is used with a plural verb. This is a Syriacism, but as it often occurs in Armenian versions made from Greek, little stress must be laid on it. More important is a harsh use of the relative pronoun in *v.* 14, which may perhaps betoken a Syriac original, though as not knowing Syriac I can pronounce no judgment on this point.

There is thus good reason to believe that these twelve verses were translated from a Syriac original as old as A.D.

500. It is to be hoped that the same ascription of them to Aristion the Elder will be some day noticed in a Syriac codex. If not taken from a Syriac original, they were copied from an older Armenian codex, probably as old as the 5th century.

Comparing the Armenian text of these twelve verses with Westcott and Hort's text, the following variants are to be noticed :—

v. 9. *πρῶτον* is omitted before *Μαρία*; *τῆ* is omitted before *Μαγδαληνῆ*. So D.—*ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια* is rendered as if the Greek were *τὸ ζ' δαιμόνιον*. Perhaps the original reading was *τὸ ἕβδομον δαιμόνιον*; for confusion of cardinal and ordinal numbers in Greek MSS. is constant. The *seventh* devil was the devil of sexual irregularity, as we know from the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs. Cp. Test. Reuben, cap. β'. *Ἐπτὰ πνεύματα ἐδόθη κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀπὸ τοῦ Βελίαρ καὶ αὐτὰ εἰσι κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἔργων τοῦ νεωτερισμοῦ . . . ἕβδομον πνεῦμα σπορὰς καὶ συνουσίας, μεθ' ἧς συνεισέρχεται διὰ τῆς φιληδονίας ἡ ἁμαρτία.* 'Seven spirits were given against man by Beliar, and they are chiefs of the works of insolence and wrong. . . . The seventh spirit is of reproduction and of chambering, together with which enters sin, because of the love of pleasure.'

v. 10. After *ἐκείνη* add *δὲ* or read *κἀκείνη*.

v. 11. For *κἀκείνοι* read *ἐκείνοι*; for *ἐθεάθη ὑπ' αὐτῆς* ? read *ἐφανερώθη*, or *ἐφάνη αὐτῇ*.

v. 12. Omit *δὲ* after *μετὰ*; omit *περιπατοῦσιν*; before *ἄγρον*, add *τὸν*.

v. 13. For *κἀκείνοι* read *ἐκείνοι*.

v. 14. After *ὑστερον* omit *δὲ*, then omit *αὐτοῖς* before *τοῖς ἑνδεκα* (so L. and versions); omit *καὶ* before *ὠνειδίσειν*; *ὅτι*—*ἐπίστευσαν*, the Arm. = *quia qui apparuit iis resurrectus ex mortuis non crediderunt*.

v. 17. Omit *δὲ* after *σημεῖα*; for *γλώσσαις* read *γλώσσας*.

Tischendorf here wrongly ascribes the addition *καιναῖς* to the Armenian.

v. 18. For *καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν* read *ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῶν*.

v. 19. Omit *οὖν*.

v. 20. *πανταχοῦ* is rendered "in tota terra."

In the above variants there is nothing very noticeable. Perhaps the transitions in the narrative are even more abrupt than they are in the Greek text. The Paris uncial Greek codex L, as has been already noticed, adds these twelve verses, after an interval, in the same way as does the Ećmiadzin Evangeliar. It may be asked, Why, if the title of the Presbyter Aristion is added in this MS. and in the Syriac, from which presumably it was translated, do we not find the same title in a MS. like the Paris L? If a mere surmise may be allowed on such a point, I would suggest the following explanation. The Church at an early period decided that there were four, and only four, canonical evangelists. Irenæus went so far as to deny *a priori* that there could be more, on the ground that there are only four winds. Now to have retained in the Gospels an addition avowedly made by Aristion would have been tantamount to setting up a fifth evangelist. Here then we have a motive which would explain the action of the N.T. scribes, who *either* omitted the verses altogether, leaving or not leaving a blank space in their books, or added them, but at the same time took care to suppress the name of Aristion. Probably the scribe of Codex B (who also wrote the corresponding part of Aleph) had before him in the codex he was copying the twelve verses with the very heading *Ἀριστιῶνος πρεσβυτέρου*. He was too conscientious to suppress the title and add them as if they were St. Mark's, and at the same time he did not like to include in his codex of the N.T. an uncanonical addition. He solved the difficulty by leaving a column blank for the reception, should he ever find it, of the true

Marcian conclusion of the Gospel. It deserves to be remarked that Armenian MSS., when they do make the addition, write "Here ends Mark's Gospel," after the words which correspond to *ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ*, and then after a pause continue with verses 9-20.

Thus the net result of our new evidence, if our interpretation of it be correct, is to gain for these twelve verses, if not the credit of being St. Mark's, at any rate the credit of having as their author one who, according to Papias, was a *μαθητῆς τοῦ κυρίου*. Incidentally, also, our discovery of the heading "of Aristion elder," is a remarkable confirmation of Eusebius' chapter upon Papias, and of the citations from Papias which it contains. Such a confirmation would incline one to trust the account given by Papias of the way in which the four Gospels were composed.

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WAS THERE A GOLDEN CALF AT DAN?

A NOTE ON 1 KINGS XII. 29, 30, AND OTHER PASSAGES.

THE question asked at the head of this note will, to many readers, sound quite absurd. They will say, "Of course there was 'a calf' at Dan, and another at Bethel, as is stated in 1 Kings xii. 29, although there is some obvious obscurity or corruption in verse 30." Besides, that there were two calves—one at Dan and one at Bethel, has been a received tradition for at least 2,500 years; to doubt it shows the utmost temerity.

Certainly the statement has been made from early days without dispute down to the time of the latest Rabbis; and that might be considered sufficient proof. But against this argument must be set the fact that the Book of Kings was not written earlier than B.C. 542, and that Samaria fell B.C.