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In recent years, the Abbey of St Gall in Switzerland has led the way in making high-resolution colour images of its manuscripts freely available on the internet for the benefit of scholarly research and public interest. Nevertheless, this splendid facsimile volume goes significantly beyond the excellent resources currently at www.e-codices.unifr.ch: nineteen groups of fragments from four different libraries, including images not published online and newly-discovered pages, are brought together in their original sequence to reconstruct a fifth-century Latin gospel book; a transcription of the text is provided; the Old High German drypoint glosses, all but invisible on conventional and digital images, are photographed and fully discussed; the introductory material includes an overview of the Old Latin tradition and a thorough description of the manuscript’s palaeography, codicology and history.

Although there are several manuscripts in St Gall listed in the _Vetus Latina_ register, including a fragment of John (VL 20, or _p_), this book is devoted to VL 16, the remains of a gospel book copied in Italy in the fifth century and now divided between several shelfmarks and holding institutions. The standard edition previously was that of Wordsworth, Sanday and White (1886), using the traditional sigla: _n_ for the portions of Matthew and Mark bound as part of St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 1394 and fragments of John 19 in the St Gallen Kantonsbibliothek (Vadianische Sammlung), _o_ for a seventh-century replacement page at the end of Mark and _a_² for two leaves of Luke at the Bischofliches Archiv in Chur. All of these are re-edited in the present volume, along with the _editio princeps_ of additional fragments found in the St Gall Stiftsarchiv in 1999 containing text from John 14–18, and the reverse of a strip of text with Mark 15 from Stiftsbibliothek 172 which was restored in 2008.

A full account is given of the history of the manuscript. It was probably copied in Rome, and an inscription on the reverse of the supplementary page of Mark shows that it was certainly there in the seventh century. It later made its way north, perhaps through Bobbio, to the Bodensee area: the Old High German glosses in the dialect of the Alemannic kingdom are datable to the late eighth century. Scholars have long identified this codex as one of the _euangeliorum volumina… tria uetera_ listed in the mid ninth-century St Gall library catalogue. A major reorganisation of the monastery library in 1461 appears to
have prompted the dismembering of the manuscript for re-use in bindings, along with several other contemporary codices including the St Gall Vergil and the earliest surviving manuscript of Jerome’s Vulgate Gospels (Stiftsbibliothek 1395). The fragments began to be rediscovered in the late eighteenth century, the majority being bound into collective volumes by Ildefons von Arx in 1822.

The manuscript is a significant witness for the European Old Latin tradition. In the Synoptic Gospels it has a similar text to VL 3 (Codex Vercellensis), including the long addition at the end of Matthew 20:28 based on Luke 14:8–10, while in John it resembles the Old Latin form in VL 8 (Codex Corbeiensis) including the reading perticae rather than hysopo in John 19:29. In addition to the order Matthew–John–Luke–Mark, there are a number of pre-Vulgate codicological features not mentioned by the editors, such as the absence of prefaces and Eusebian apparatus, the nomen sacrum DMS rather than DNS and, probably, the form lucan(um) in the running titles of Luke. The shape of each page is relatively square, another indication of antiquity: the wide margins surviving in Matthew (e.g. pages 57–8, 61–2, 69–70 of codex 1394, some too large to fit on a single page of the facsimile) suggest that the proportions of the reconstructed opening on page 30 are not broad enough. Although a number of mistakes in White’s edition are corrected, among them the nationality and date of the glossator, there is no engagement with his argument that the Chur fragments derive from a different manuscript. This is based primarily on proportion and letter-spacing: the full-size images in the present volume confirm that the columns in Luke are only 205 mm tall rather than 215–220 mm as in the other gospels. There is no obvious difference between the hands, however, and the format is practically identical: the red Greek numerals for chapters probably added later in Matthew and John are absent from Mark too. While the two extant quire numbers in Luke and Mark fit well into the reconstruction of a single codex (page 29), the inconsistency remains puzzling.

The facsimile is well laid out, with recto and verso preserved and the transcription opposite. The confused pagination of codex 1394 and the absence of numeration for the other pages means, however, that the only consistent means of navigation is by biblical verse. One helpful feature is the provision of two images for the new fragments, one alongside the transcription and another opposite a horizontally-inverted image of the binding from which they were taken: in several cases, the offset ink enables the retrieval of letters not visible on the fragments themselves. The placement of some images across the gutter mimics the fold in the bifolium, although it would be helpful to have a note on page 126 that the letters on the left of the image are actually part of the fragment of John 15:4–8 transcribed on page 111: the explanation is to be found in