A Unified Gospel in Persian

An old variant of the Gospels along with exegetical comments

Written by:
Yahyā Ibn Ayvaz-e Tabrīzī-ye Armanī

Critical edition, introduction and annotation:
Mahmoud Hassanabadi, Roubik Jahani and Carina Jahani

English preface:
Robert Crellin

List of Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

> I Familyname, A., Familyname, B. (2008) Paper main title. Paper subtitle. *Name of journal in italics*, 1(2):3–4

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Contents

Abbreviations

A-D	Arabic Diatessaron
P-H	Persian Harmony

Introduction to the Persian Harmony of the Gospels

Introduction: The Gospels as *Diatessaron*[1]

Today we are accustomed to thinking of the Bible as a single entity, i.e. as 'the Bible', a well-defined corpus containing a set number of books. In late antiquity and in the middle ages, however, the situation was much more fluid. This fluidity showed itself not only in the fact that parts of the Bible would often circulate independently, but also in that Bible texts were often known in vernacular languages both in direct translations, but also in interlinear glosses and poetic paraphrases (Liere 2014: 190). It is in this context that the phenomenon of the *Diatessaron*, that is, the gospel harmony, is to be seen.

The first known attempt at harmonising the gospel accounts and providing a single narrative of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth was that of Tatian, known as the 'Diatessaron', compiled c. 150-60 CE (Livingstone 2013 *ad loc.*). Tatian was a Syrian who while in Rome converted to Christianity and became a disciple of Justin Martyr (McCarthy 1993: 3). Remembered in the West more for his encratite, and thus heretical, beliefs, he was nonetheless responsible for the τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων εὐαγγέλιον (*tò dià tessárōn euangélion*, lit. 'the gospel through four'), the *Diatessaron* (Crawford 2013: 363). This version of the gospels was to become hugely influential in the eastern church, being the subject of commentaries from both Aphrahat and Ephrem.[2] However, already in late antiquity the tide turned against its use, and consequently many copies were destroyed. The result is that to our knowledge no copies of Tatian's harmony have survived, and much about it remains unknown, including even the language in which it was originally written (McCarthy 1993: 4). There are, however, numerous extant gospel harmonies from late antiquity and the middle ages, most of which are held to bear some relationship to Tatian's work.

The only direct witness is a fragment in Greek from Dura (Kraeling 1935). Otherwise two groups may be identified: Eastern and Western

(Metzger 1950: 261). Two of the most important witnesses in the Eastern group may be said to be Ephraem's commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron (C4[th]), and an Arabic Diatessaron (henceforth A-D). Of Ephraem's commentary we have the greater part of the Syriac text, as well as two MSS of an Armenian translation. The Arabic Diatessaron was translated from Syriac and has been preserved in seven MSS dating from C13[th] to C19[th] (Joosse 1999: 80-86). Its language has been influenced by the Syriac of the Vorlage, as well as the Middle Arabic dialect of the composer(s) (*ibid.* pp. 99-101, 106). It was probably translated by Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib (*ibid.* pp. 116-17), and the text of the underlying Vorlage had likely been revised according to the Peshitta (*ibid.* p. 127). The most important witness in the Western group may be said to be Codex Fuldensis, written between 541 and 546 CE (*ibid.* p. 73).[3]

The Persian Harmony (henceforth P-H) is regarded as an Eastern witness (Metzger (1950: 268). However, unlike many of its peers, both western and eastern, this harmony is strikingly different in the arrangement of its pericopes. Its correct placing in the Diatessaric tradition is concomitantly more idiosyncratic (*ibid.* pp. 267-8). Before discussing this directly, I will first give an overview of the P-H itself.

The Persian Harmony

The P-H comes down to us attested in three manuscripts. One of these, known as Laurentian manuscript XVII (Metzger 1950: 266), and labelled ف ۱ (*f 1*) in the apparatus of the present edition, is held in the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana in Florence, was copied in 1547 CE by a certain Ibrahim ben Shamās who was a Jacobite priest (Higgins 1984: 195, Metzger 1950: 266). This manuscript was published by Messina along with a fulsome introduction and Italian translation (Messina 1951). Another manuscript, also held in the same library in Florence, and known by its catalogue number 399, here denoted ف ۲ (*f 2*), is a copy of the Laurentian MS, and therefore of little value for the textual criticism of the P-H (Messina 1951: lxxxv).

It has until now been generally believed that the Laurentian MS was the only witness to the text of the Persian Diatessaron (Thomas 2015: 74, Joosse 2002: 13). However, there in fact exists another witness, brought to light in the present edition, in the form of a manuscript belonging to the National Library of Iran (کتابخانه‌ی ملی ایران, *ketābxāneye melliye Irān*) catalogue number 816789, copied by a certain Khusraw Valad Bahrām (خسرو ولد بهرام), and finalized on 9 Rajab 1111 A.H. (= 31 Dec.

1699). Since this MS forms the basis of the present edition, it is known here as نسخهی اصل (*nosxeye asl*), 'Base manuscript'.

Also of relevance to the text of the Persian Diatessaron is the translation of the four separate gospels held in the Bodleian library in Oxford, Pococke 241. This is the translation printed in Walton's London Polyglot (Walton 1657; see Thomas 2015: 90-94). It has many readings similar to those found in P-H (see Persian introduction, p. 12), as well as having a copy of the same introduction as is found in *nosxeye asl* and *f 1* (see Persian introduction; Messina 1951: lxxxvi). This MS is referred to in the present edition as ب (*b*).

Messina attributes translation of an original Syriac harmony to C13[th] CE (Higgins 1984: 196; Messina 1951: xx-xxi) and gives his name Ivànnìs Izz al-Din, 'John, glory of the religion'. This was a common name at the time, rendering the task of identifying exactly who he may have been rather difficult (Thomas 2015: 79-80). We will return to the question of the identity of the original compiler-translator once we have discussed the nature of the work.

The place of the Persian Diatessaron in relation to the rest of the Diatessaron tradition

The question of how and where to place the P-H within the Diatessaric tradition comes down to two main issues, namely the sequence of the pericopes and the text (cf. McFall 1994: 88). These will be taken and addressed in turn.

Ordering of the pericopes

The P-H uses a different ordering of the pericopes from Tatian (Higgins 1952: 83; Metzger 1950: 280; Joosse 2002: 14-15). Notably different is the fact that the P-H starts with Mark 1:1, whereas on the basis of the testimony of Dionysius bar Ṣalībī (Joosse 2002: 14), Tatian starts with John 1:1. Not only this, but the ordering of the P-H is very different from that seen in the A-D and Codex Fuldensis, which are generally taken to be close to Tatian's arrangement, although for the most part using a different text (see below).

Underlying text

The text of both the A-D and Codex Fuldensis are 'vulgarized' (Schmid 2003: 178), that is to say that while the arrangement of the pericopes kept close to that of Tatian, the text had been edited to conform to the Syriac Peshitta and Latin Vulgate respectively. There is evidence that the P-H is also based on a vulgarized Syriac text (Higgins 1952: 85). Of course, this does not mean that the P-H and A-D do not for this reason preserve Tatianic readings, since the Peshitta seems in some cases to preserve older Tatianic readings (Higgins 1952: 85; 1984: 195), even against the Old Syriac (Joosse 1999: 121). In addition, both the P-H and the A-D may preserve older Tatianic readings against Peshitta (Higgins 1984: 195).

As an example of possible Tatianic readings preserved in the P-H as against the Peshitta, we can consider the rendering of John 15:1 (Joosse 2002: 18). Here it is possible to detect possible Encratite leanings, as might be expected of Tatian, given that the Encratites were not in favour of the drinking of wine:[4]

1. John 15:1, P-H 4:31
   a) (Persian)
      mnm drxt myvhy rʾsty منم درخت میوهی راستی
      'I am the tree of the fruit of truth'
   b) (Syriac, Peshitta)
      ʾnʾ ʾnʾ gptʾ dšrrʾ ܐܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܓܦܬܐ܄ ܕܫܪܪܐ
      'I am the true vine'
   c) (Greek)
      egṓ eimi hē ámpelos hē alēthinḕ Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινὴ
      'I am the true vine'

Here the P-H does not render 'true vine' directly, but gives rather 'tree of the fruit of truth.'[5]

In short, it may be said that the principle value of the P-H for Diatessaric research is in the Tatianic readings that it may preserve, rather than in the ordering of its pericopes.[6]

The Language of the Persian Diatessaron

Differences between the MSS

As previously mentioned, the two Florentine MSS, *f 1* and *f 2*, are very similar to one another, the latter being a copy of the former. The same may not be said of the MS taken as the basis of the present edition, *nosxeye asl*. Between *f 1* and *f 2*, on the one hand, and *nosxeye asl* on the other, there are some consistent differences of spelling and phrasing, a fact which suggests that in the case of at least one set of MSS an editing process has taken place. A full list of the most frequent differences is given in the Persian introduction to this edition. We focus here on some of those which are most immediately striking.

In terms of spelling *f 1* and *f 2* demonstrate a difference of treatment of voiced stops with respect to the modern language, while *nosxeye asl* tends to fall more in line with modern spelling. Thus for the word for 'sinners' the former have کنهکاران (*knhkʾrʾn*) while the latter has گناه کاران (*gnʾh kʾrʾn*). By contrast, there is, in the case of at least some words, a tendency to avoid plene spellings in *nosxeye asl*, vis-à-vis *f 1* and *f 2*, e.g. سیم (*sym*) for سیوم (*sywm*) and دگر (*dgr*) for دیکر (*dykr*).

In terms of morphosyntax, an interesting case is that of prepositions governing personal pronouns. These tend in *f 1* and *f 2* to be univerbated and joined to the pronoun by means of د(*d*), as in بدیشان (*bdyšʾn*, 'to them'). By contrast, *nosxeye asl* has به ایشان (*bh ʾyšʾn*). A similarly notable difference is the use of the adpositions را (*rʾ*) and به (*bh*) / بر (*br*): postposed را (*rʾ*) is preferred in *f 1* and *f 2*, while *nosxeye asl* prefers preposed به (*bh*) / بر (*br*).

Finally, several words and phrases are substituted one for another between the two sets of MSS. A selection of these are given in the table below. It is noteworthy that at least one of these involves the substitution of an Arabic word for a Persian one, namely جمع شدن / کردن (*jmʿ šdn / krdn*) for گرد شدن / کردن (*grd šdn / krdn*).

Examples of substitutions of words and phrases between MSS

نسخه اصل *nosxeye asl*	ف ٢, ف ١ *f 1, f 2*	Gloss	Example
از بهر or از جهت *ʾz bhr* or *ʾz jht*	از برای or برای *br ʾy* or *ʾz br ʾy*	'on account of' διὰ+ACC (*dià*), ܡܛܠ (*mṭl*)	John 1:29 P-H 1:18
در تعجب ماندن *dr t ʿjb m ʾndn*	در عجب ماندن *dr ʿjb m ʾndn*	'be in wonder' θαυμάζω (*ethaúmazon*), ܬܡܝܗ (*tmyh*)	Luke 1:21 P-H 1:2
جمع شدن or کردن *jm ʿ šdn or krdn*	گرد شدن or کردن *grd šdn or krdn*	'gather' συνάγω συνέδριον (*sunágō sunédrion*), √ܟܢܫ (√*knš*)	John 11:47 P-H 3:35

Word order

The P-H is notable for its departure from standard Persian SOV word order. The following is a case in point from John 1:7:[7]

2. John 1:7, P-H 1:1
   a) آمد از برای گواهی تا <u>گواهی بدهد</u> بهر نور که بر دست او همه خلق <u>ایمان بیاورند</u>.
   ʾmd ʾz br ʾy gw ʾhy t ʾ <u>gw ʾhy bdhd</u> bhr nwr kh br dst ʾw hmh xlq <u>ʾym ʾn by ʾwrnd</u>.
   'He came for testimony <u>to give testimony</u> concerning the light, so that through him all creation <u>would be-lieve</u>.'

   b) ܗܢܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܣܗܕܘܬܐ. ܕܢܫܗܕ ܥܠ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܟܠܢܫ ܢܗܝܡܢ ܒܐܝܕܗ.
   hn ʾ ʾt ʾ lshdwt ʾ. dnshd ʿl nwhr ʾ dklnš <u>nhymn</u> b ʾydh.
   'This man came for testimony, to <u>bear witness</u> concerning the light, so that all men <u>might believe</u> through him.'

   c) οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα <u>μαρτυρήσῃ</u> περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες <u>πιστεύσωσιν</u> δι' αὐτοῦ.
   hoûtos êlthen eis marturían hina <u>marturḗsēi</u> perì toû phōtós, hina pántes <u>pisteúsōsin</u> di' autoû.
   'This man came for testimony, in order to <u>bear witness</u> concerning the light, so that all <u>might believe</u> through him.'

In the three clauses of this verse we see that in the first two, the Persian text places the verbs آمد (*ʾmd*) and گواهی بدهد (*gwʾhy bdhd*) first in their clauses, and in this the Persian follows the Peshitta and the Greek. It does seem, therefore, that the Persian text is dependent upon its Vorlage for word order in many cases. However, the final verb in this verse, ایمان بیاورند (*ʾymʾn byʾwrnd*), is in final position in the Persian text, while in both the Syriac and the Greek it is the penultimate constituent. Such a distribution shows that, insofar as the translator-compiler may be said to have been translating a text which followed the Peshitta at this point, he felt able to deviate from its syntax where it suited him.

The close relationship of the syntax of the P-H and its Syriac Vorlage is often viewed in negative terms, as Thomas (2015: 81):[8]

The rendering in the Persian harmony is a literal translation from Syriac. It follows the word order of the Syriac sentences, resulting in a wooden, unnatural Persian style […] The result is that the translation is subservient to the Syriac with a consequent loss of Persian style and syntax.

It is certainly true that the word order is in many places unnatural in Persian terms. Two points should, however, be noted. First that in the third of the clauses quoted from John 1:7, the Persian places the verb last, unlike either the Peshitta or the Greek text. It therefore seems that the translator felt able to vary word order if he needed to. Secondly, it is often too quickly assumed that following the word order of the Vorlage should without question be regarded as a negative quality. However, this is not the only way to view the situation. As Joosse (1999: 101) has noted in connection with the A-D:

When a translation slavishly follows the original text, the 'Vorlage', this is not necessarily due to the author's ignorance, but it may well point to an honourable principle of translation.

Given the high esteem in which the translator clearly held the Syriac language, the expertise in Persian which he demonstrates in the introduction, as well as the likely fact that the community for whom he was writing had at least a historic association, if not deep familiarity, with Syriac, it seems likely that his close following of the word order of the Syriac text he was likely translating was a deliberate move. Furthermore, it seems likely that this move was taken to keep the Syriac flavour of the original in the translation.

Errors in translation

Despite the translator's obvious esteem for the Syriac language, it has been noted (Messina (1943: 48-52)) that there are several apparent errors

of translation. These have in turn been taken to indicate that the translator was not a native speaker of Syriac (*ibid.* p. 50, Thomas 2015: 81). Consider the following example from John 1:14:

3. John 1:14, P-H 1:1

    a) و عظمت او را دیدیم مانند عظمت یگانه که از خدا باشد تا <u>به کمال</u> <u>برساند</u> خیرات [و] راستی را.

    w ʿzmt ʾw rʾ dydym mʾnnd ʿzmt ygʾnh kh ʾz xdʾ bʾšd tʾ <u>bh</u> <u>kmʾl brsʾnd</u> xyrʾt [w] rʾsty rʾ.

    'And we saw his glory as the glory of the one and only that is from God, so that <u>he would bring to completion</u> grace and truth.'

    b) ܘܚܙܝܢ ܫܘܒܚܗ. ܫܘܒܚܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܐ: ܕܡܠܐ ܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܘܩܘܫܬܐ.

    wḥzyn šwbḥh. šwbḥʾ ʾyk dyḥydyʾ dmn ʾbʾ: <u>dmlʾ</u> ṭybwtʾ wqwštʾ.

    'And we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only who is from the Father, who <u>is full</u> of grace and truth.'

    c) καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, <u>πλήρης</u> χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

    kaì etheasámetha tēn dóxan autoû, dóxan hōs monogenoûs parà patrós, <u>plḗrēs</u> kháritos kaì alētheías.

    'And we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father, <u>full</u> of grace and truth.' (trans. LEB)

From this we see that the Persian translator has taken the Syriac ܡܠܐ (*mlʾ*) not as a G passive participle ܡܠܐ (*mleʾ*) introduced by ܕ (*d*), 'full', but as an active form. Messina takes this active form to be the D imperfect, ܢܡܠܐ (*nmalleʾ*). There is, however, another possibility, that the translator takes ܡܠܐ (*mlʾ*) as the active participle ܡܠܐ (*māleʾ*). Interestingly, he translates another active participle at John 1:9 also with a Persian subjunctive:

4. John 1:9, P-H 1:1

    a) نور حق آمد [تا] <u>روشنایی بیفروزد</u> بر هر کسی که در عالم بیاید.

    nwr hq ʾmd [tʾ] <u>rwšnʾyy byfrwzd</u> br hr ksy kh dr ʿʾlm byʾyd.

    'The true light came in order to <u>bring light</u> for everyone who comes into the world.'

b) ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ ܓܝܪ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ܆ ܕܡܢܗܪ ܠܟܠܢܫ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ.
ʾytwhy hwʾ gyr nwhrʾ dšrrʾ <u>dmnhr</u> lklnš dʾtʾ lʿlmʾ.
'For he was the true light that <u>brings light</u> for everyone who is coming into the world.'

c) Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ <u>φωτίζει</u> πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.
ên tò phôs tò alēthinón, hò <u>phōtízei</u> pánta ánthrōpon, erkhómenon eis tòn kósmon.
'He was the true light, which <u>lightens</u> every person coming into the world.'

This suggests, perhaps, that the translator believes that the participle in Syriac can have a conjunctive function.[9] This is of course not surprising, since such a conjunctive function is clearly attested for the participle (Nöldeke 1904: 213-14).

There are, however, translations that certainly look odd. A case in point comes at Luke 2:7 (Messina 1943: 50-51, Thomas 2015: 81), where the translator-compiler has taken Syriac ܕܘܟܬܐ (*dwktʾ*) as 'cradle' rather than 'place', its usual sense:

5. Luke 2:7, P-H 1:5

a) انداختش در معلف آخُر زیرا <u>گهواره</u> نداشتند جایی که فرود آمده بودند.
ʾndʾxtš dr mʿlf ʾxur zyrʾ <u>ghwʾrh</u> ndʾštnd jʾyy kh frwd ʾmdh bwdnd.
'She put him in a stable manger, because they did not have <u>a cradle</u> in the place to which they had come.'

b) ܘܐܪܡܝܬ ܒܐܘܪܝܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ <u>ܕܘܟܬܐ</u> ܐܝܟ ܕܫܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ܀
wʾrmyth bʾwryʾ. mṭl dlyt hwʾ lhwn <u>dwktʾ</u> ʾykʾ dšryn hww.
'And she laid him in a manger, because they did not have <u>space</u> for them where they were staying.'

c) καὶ ἀνέκλινεν αὐτὸν ἐν φάτνῃ, διότι οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς <u>τόπος</u> ἐν τῷ καταλύματι.
kaì anéklinen autòn en phátnēi, dióti ouk ên autoîs <u>tópos</u> en tôi katalúmati.
'And she laid him in a manger, because there was not <u>space</u> for them in the living quarters.'

Purpose and intended audience

As the translator-compiler himself explains in chapter 10 of his intro-
duction, the P-H was originally composed for a group of Christians
whose ancestors most probably had been Syriac-speaking, but who
were now more familiar with Persian than any dialect of Aramaic
(به زبان پارسی خبیرتر اند از زبان خود, *bh zbʾn pʾrsy xbyrtr ʾnd ʾz zbʾn xwd*,
'They are better at Persian than their own language'). Out of concern
for their spiritual welfare, he therefore composed the P-H.
The community for whom the P-H was originally composed were likely
either Jacobite or members of the Assyrian Church of the East (Thomas
2015: 76-77). In this connection the translator-compiler mentions the
deportation of Nestorians and Armenians from Tabriz to Eastern areas
including Khorasan, Mazandaran, and Herat (*ibid.* p. 76). As such they
would have been Syriac (or at least Aramaic) speaking and used to us-
ing Syriac in their liturgy and reading of Scripture, but were now sur-
rounded by Persian speakers (*ibid.* pp. 76-7).
The decision to provide a harmony for them, rather than separate gos-
pels, was taken deliberately, in order to facilitate understanding of the
chronology of the events in the life of Jesus, as well as to locate partic-
ular elements of content.

<div align="center">

از اوّل تا آخر علی التوالی به نسق آوردم بی تکریر

ʾz awwal tʾ ʾxr ʿly ʾltwʾly bh nsq ʾwrdm by tkryr

'I laid out [the life of Jesus] from beginning to the end in order with-
out repetition'

</div>

The translator-compiler's assertion that he had arranged the material
himself is supported by the fact that, as noted above, the order of the
pericopes is substantially different from that seen in the A-D, generally
taken to be closely based on Tatian's arrangement.

The translator

Now that we have surveyed the nature of the P-H and its MSS, we are in
a position to evaluate the question of the translator's identity. Messina
held that the translator was not a native speaker of Syriac, on the grounds
of the errors made (Messina 1943: 50). He was, however, of the view that
he was a native speaker of Persian. Against this Thomas (2015: 83) holds
that, owing to the unnatural Persian style of the translation, he was likely
not a native speaker of Persian. Instead he espouses Gulbenkian's sug-
gestion (Gulbenkian 1981: 58) that the translator was an Armenian from

Tabriz, a certain Ohvanes. However, we have seen that the apparently unnatural Persian style need not imply a lack of skill in Persian, but may instead simply indicate a high estimation of the text in its Syriac form. Accordingly, it seems unnecessary to conclude, on this basis at least, that the translator was not a native speaker of Persian.

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Notes

as Johan Lundberg, Thomas Jügel, Philippa Steele, Ida Glaser and Martin Whittingham. Any errors remain, of course, my own responsibility.

2. For Tatian's possible purpose in bringing together the four gospels into a single narrative, and for the disadvantages to using the terms 'Diatessaron' and 'harmony' in reference to the work, see Crawford (2013).

3. For an overview of the witnesses to the Diatessaron tradition, especially in the West, see Schmid (2013).

4. The Greek text used is Nestle-Aland (2012) (= NA28). The Peshitta text is the same as that provided by the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon (CAL) (http://cal.huc.edu/), accessed between October 2017 and February 2018. CAL gives the text of the British Foreign Bible Society edition. The Persian text is that of the present edition.

5. It is interesting to note that *f 1* and *f 2*, on the strength of Messina's text, do not include the copula, while *nosxeye asl* does.

6. Thus Higgins (1984: 195) states, 'Next to Ephraem's Commentary these two harmonies are the most important and extensive Eastern witnesses to the Diatessaron, and of all the harmonies the most valuable for the task of recovering its text, the Persian being at many points superior to the Arabic.' Similarly Metzger (1950: 280) comments, 'Its [i.e. he P-H's] value for the textual criticism of the Gospels lies in the presence of many undoubted Tatianic readings which are embedded within its text. These Tatianisms show a remarkable affinity to similar readings preserved in other Eastern and Western witnesses of the Diatessaron. As soon, therefore, as the text of the entire Persian Harmony has been made available, its evidence ought to be included in any reasonably complete critical apparatus of the Gospels.' Finally Joosse (2002: 15) states, 'Metzger is of course right in his judgment of the Persian Harmony. It has in fact little to do with the Diatessaron tradition, but it is a veritable *Fundgrube* for Tatianic materials.'

7. *f 1* / *f 2* includes این (*ʔyn*) before آمد (*ʔmd*).

8. Thomas cites Messina (1943: 54) with similar sentiments.

9. There is, of course, the alternative possibility to consider, that the translator was translating a different Syriac text.