

Notes on the So-Called Persian Diatessaron and its Author and Commentator

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In 1951, Giuseppe Messina, the Italian Jesuit and scholar of Iranian studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, offered an *editio princeps* of what he called the ‘Persian Diatessaron’ with a translation into Italian and an extensive introduction. In the following decades, this Persian harmony of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John was predominantly studied by biblical scholars interested only in the textual criticism of the Gospels and possible ‘Tatianic readings’ referring to Tatian’s original Diatessaron (which is no longer extant).

The present paper investigates the Persian interlinear commentary (*tafsīr*) on the Gospel verses that had not been included in Messina’s edition. Based on new manuscript evidence, it presents information about the identity of the author/harmonist and commentator that has so far escaped scholarly attention. The paper also aims to contribute to our understanding of the broader historical and cultural context of translating, interpreting and transmitting the biblical text in ‘Standard (New) Persian’.