Robert F. Shedinger, *Tatian and the Jewish Scriptures: A Textual and Philological Analysis of the Old Testament Citations in Tatian's Diatessaron*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 591 (Subsidia 109) (Lovanii: Peeters, 2001). ISBN: 90-429-1042-9. Price: € 70.00.

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Because of its antiquity (it was composed about 172 C.E.), Tatian's gospel harmony, the Diatessaron, has been the subject of intensive study since the Enlightenment. However, since we possess no direct descendents of the autograph Diatessaron, scholarship has been forced to attempt to reconstruct its text from the occasional conjunction of a miscellany of secondary and tertiary sources commonly called "witnesses" to the text of the Diatessaron. These are usually divided into Eastern and Western witnesses. Among the Eastern witnesses are: a commentary Ephrem Syrus composed on the Diatessaron; the gospel quotations in various early Eastern Fathers and works (such as Aphrahat, or the *Liber Graduum*); the Syriac versions of the NT (the Vetus Syra [Syr^{s} and Syr^{c}], the Peshitta [Syr^{p}], and the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary [Syr^{pal} (sometimes referenced in older works as Syr^{j})]); an Arabic Harmony, translated from a Syriac *Vorlage* about 1025 CE; and a Persian Harmony, apparently translated from a Syriac predecessor no later than the thirteenth century (the sequence of harmonization in this Persian Harmony shows that it is a new creation; nevertheless, because its variant readings sometimes agree with Diatessaronic readings, there appears to be some indirect link with the Diatessaron). The Western witnesses include: several Latin harmonies, the oldest of which is Codex Fuldensis (sixth cent.); a bilingual MS in Old High German and Latin, Codex Sangallensis (ninth cent.); a group of Middle Dutch Harmonies (thirteenth cent. and later); a few Middle High German Harmonies (which derive from the Middle Dutch); and two families of Early Italian Harmonies (one in the Tuscan and one in the Venetian dialects).

Although the Diatessaron has usually been associated with New Testament studies, it has long been realized that it is also of potential relevance to studies of the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament [OT])—for the gospels contain a considerable

number of quotations from the OT. Furthermore, since a strong case can be made that the Diatessaron was the first gospel text in Syriac, the form of the OT citations in the Diatessaron—if they could be reconstructed with any degree of reliability—may be of value for investigating the history of the OT in Syriac.

Using these well-known observations as his point of departure, the author of this monograph, Robert Shedinger, endeavors to demonstrate three things. First, he seeks to show that the Syriac gospel tradition, especially as manifest in its (putative) oldest form—namely, Tatian's Diatessaron—contains "readings that are earlier than, and probably more original than, what can be recovered from the Greek text tradition alone" (p. 2). Second, acknowledging that there are divergences between the text of the Diatessaron and the "canonical Greek Gospels," Shedinger's study "will demonstrate that many of these divergences are not the result of Tatian's editorial work, but that Tatian generally took over the Old Testament citations in the form he found them in his sources" (p. 2). Third, Shedinger will attempt to demonstrate that the OT citations in the Diatessaron have not been influenced by the text of the Peshitta OT (pp. 8–11; the reverse has been argued by Prof. Jan Joosten, of Strasbourg ["The Old Testament Quotations in the Old Syriac and the Peshitta Gospels: A Contribution to the Study of the Diatessaron," *Textus* 15 (1990), 55–76]; your reviewer endorses neither position).

This is a very tall order. Anyone familiar with such research will immediately recognize that the waters are not only murky, but filled with hidden cross-currents: the differing readings among the gospels themselves, the differing readings of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, the "interference" of the other versions of the Old Testament (Qumran, the "Old Greek," Aquila, etc.), the vagaries of translation, grammar and syntax across at least three languages (Hebrew, Greek, Syriac), the same vagaries across the multiple languages of the Diatessaronic witnesses themselves, and the versional history and development not just of the Peshitta OT but also the Syriac NT—to name only the most obvious. By its very nature, this is an extremely complex, ambitious undertaking. To be ambitious in one's dissertation (the volume under review is a dissertation submitted at Temple University [Philadelphia, USA] in 2001), is not, *per se*, a bad thing. But it requires competent guidance from a *Doktorvater* (or *-mutter*), a committee familiar with the field, and proficiency on the part of the dissertationist: a command of the requisite literature, a feel for the nuances of this many-faceted problem,

sensitivity to philological possibilities, and well developed logical and self-critical skills. This volume falls short on all these measures.

The doctoral committee contained no experts on Biblical textual criticism, the Syriac Bible, or the Diatessaron. Whether the committee considered itself competent where it was not, or whether the committee was convinced that the student knew more than they did, is unknown. In either case, however, the committee has acted irresponsibly. The author, however, cannot be absolved, for even without competent guidance he should have recognized the illogical arguments, inconsistent standards, philological errors, and methodological blunders that mar this book. He has not. The result is a study that does not achieve its stated purposes.

Let us begin by examining one of the book's stated goals: to show that "many of [the] divergences [between the OT citations in the Greek gospels and the OT citations in the Diatessaron] are not the result of Tatian's editorial work," but come from "an older form of the [OT] citation[s]...one that is closer to the original text of the gospels" (p. 2). To see how Shedinger would prove this claim, let us examine his analysis of Matt 4:16, which is his second reading. (Shedinger's evidence consists of 69 unnumbered readings; for ease of reference, your reviewer has numbered them seriatim.)

Shedinger claims he has reconstructed the Diatessaron's text of Matt 4:16, and concludes that the Diatessaron omitted the word "land" (or "region": "those who sat in [*a land* of] the shadow of death..."). According to Shedinger, "The omission of any reference to 'region' or 'land' in a host of Diatessaronic witnesses is due simply to the fact that the original text of Matthew lacked this reference" (p. 45). In this manner, Shedinger uses this reading to support his claim that such deviations spring not from Tatian's pen, but reflect "an older form of the [OT] citation[s]," one that is, in this case (according to Shedinger), identical with "the original text of Matthew."

There are two claims here: first, that the Diatessaron omitted the word "land," and, second, that this variant is "the original text of Matthew," and is not due to Tatian tampering with the text. In support of these two claims, Shedinger observes that the same omission is found in Clement of Alexandria (c. 200), Augustine (c. 400), and the Ethiopic version. The evidence of Clement is dubious, however: Shedinger acknowledges that Clement only "seems to allude to" this version of the text; one is, therefore, ultimately unsure of Clement's reading. From the omission in these two or three early references, Shedinger concludes that the omission was known in the early church. Upon that we can all agree. But ob-

serve: other than Shedinger's reconstructed reading of the Diatessaron (to which we will turn in a moment), the oldest evidence for the omission is Clement (c. 200)—and Clement's evidence is weak, since it is an allusion, not a quotation. Simple logic tells one that to go back from Augustine to an allusion in Clement, and from Clement's allusion to a (dubious) reconstruction of the Diatessaron's text, and then from this reconstruction of the Diatessaron to the "original text of Matthew," is a very tortured path. Shedinger has not navigated it successfully. The problems are numerous, grave, and obvious. Let us begin by looking at the reading itself, and then consider whether it is "the original text of Matthew."

The first observation that strikes one is that the reading is an omission. Textual critics know that omissions are, *a priori*, very weak evidence, for an omission is, strictly speaking, the *lack* of evidence. Because one can never be certain what *caused* an omission (in one case, an exemplar may have had a lacuna; in another case, a scribe may have made an error of the ear or eye; in another language, the idiom or alliteration may have been awkward, so a superfluous word was dropped; etc.), they are unreliable as indicators of textual filiation: one can never be sure the omission was caused by textual dependence, and not some other, completely unrelated phenomenon. An interpolation, by contrast, requires a specific act of *intention* (an omission does not), and the conscious selection of the *identical* word to add from the thousands of possible words (an omission does not); interpolations are, therefore, excellent markers of textual filiation; generally speaking (and certainly in the readings in this book), omissions are not.

Second, Shedinger himself describes Matt 4:16 as a "composite" citation: according to him, it is a conflation of Is. 9:1 with Ps. 107 [LXX: 106]:10 (see pp. 41–45). One of these (Ps. 107:10) omits the word "land," while the other (Is. 9:1) includes it. Because of the "dual" parentage of this citation, one might expect that, from the outset, scribes would have been fiddling with it, sometimes moving it closer to Isaiah, sometimes towards the Psalms, and sometimes towards a new (and, presumably, to the scribe), more agreeable conflation. (Such scribal "cross-referencing" of OT source[s] against their NT quotation—and subsequent "improvement"—is a well known and well-documented phenomenon.) Indeed, Shedinger himself notes that scribes have been playing with this very passage *in the Diatessaronic witnesses*, for he writes: "If we look back to the text of the Persian Harmony, we find that it has collapsed the two halves of this poetic parallelism from Isaiah into a single statement... The Palestinian Syriac Lec-

tionary, at least in its extant form, preserves both halves of the parallelism... In fact, later Greek scribes probably did not recognize the conflation; they only recognized that Matthew's text differed from Isaiah and needed to be 'corrected'" (pp. 44–45). Given all of this—where the genesis of the passage lies in a conflation, and where scribes have been almost continually adapting the citation—how, then, can one determine the Diatessaron's reading with any degree of accuracy and reliability? The answer, of course, is that one cannot. In a situation such as this, the only responsible action is to suspend judgment: we simply do not know—and have no means of determining—what the Diatessaron read.

A third problem with this reading is the method by which Shedinger has determined that the omission of "land" is Diatessaronic. Shedinger has adopted (see p. 34) three "criteria" published by your reviewer for determining the likelihood that a variant is (or is not) Diatessaronic. The second of these three criteria—which Shedinger quotes—is: "[to be Diatessaronic, the] reading should *not* be found in any non-Diatessaronic texts, from which the Diatessaronic witnesses [with the variant] might have acquired it" (p. 34). The reason for having such a criterion is rather obvious. If a variant reading occurs in Diatessaronic witnesses *and also* in other texts or fathers that are *unrelated* to the Diatessaron, then we are faced with an insoluble conundrum: the reading *may* be Diatessaronic, but it is also possible that our Diatessaronic witnesses have been "contaminated," and acquired the variant *not* from the Diatessaron, but from one of the non-Diatessaronic texts with the same variant. In such a circumstance, we will never be able to determine whether the reading came from the Diatessaron, or from some other source; therefore, the reading must be rejected.

Although Shedinger says he is following this criterion, he clearly violates it in this reading: the very presence of the reading in Clement [?], Augustine and the Ethiopic mean that the reading must be discarded.

So much for Shedinger's claim that the reading is Diatessaronic; now let us turn to his claim that this omission represents "the original text of Matthew." Although the assertion is certainly attention-getting, it is quite preposterous. There are so many problems with this claim that one hardly knows where to start. To begin with, as shown above, we cannot be sure what the Diatessaron read here—and the Diatessaron (c. 172 C.E.) would be the oldest evidence for this omission. By default, then, the oldest evidence for the reading becomes Clement (c. 200). But recall that Clement's

reading is not a quotation, but an allusion. Therefore, our oldest unambiguous evidence for the omission is Augustine (c. 400).

Shedinger's claim that the omission was known in the early church is granted: on that we can all agree. He apparently feels that the presence of this omission in Clement [?], Augustine, and the Ethiopic increases the probability that this is "the original text of Matthew"; it is his sole evidence. But is it possible that the first text to omit "land" may be Augustine? The answer must be "yes." Even if one were to grant—solely for argument's sake—that Clement and the Diatessaron omitted "land," is it possible that the Diatessaron was the first text to omit "land"? The answer must be "yes." Shedinger has not produced a shred of evidence to demonstrate that this was "the original text of Matthew," and not a redactional change made by Tatian, or, alternatively, a variant that arose in the third, fourth or even fifth century. There is no evidence to support Shedinger's claim, other than his assertion.

At another level, this reading exemplifies the sort of stumbling logic that bedevils this book. In this particular case, Shedinger is advancing as "true" two mutually-exclusive arguments. The first argument is this: The omission of "land" is the "original text of Matthew" because the omission was widespread in early Christianity—it crops up in the Diatessaron, Clement [?], Augustine, and the Ethiopic. The presence of this omission in texts unrelated to the Diatessaron leaves only one possible source from which all of them might have obtained this omission: "the original text of Matthew." The second argument is this: The omission of "land" is Diatessaronic because it is found only in Diatessaronic texts, or texts related to the Diatessaron (recall that the criterion adopted by Shedinger requires presence of the variant *only* in Diatessaronic witnesses; the variant cannot be present in non-Diatessaronic witnesses, from which our Diatessaronic witnesses might have been contaminated with the variant). Faced with these two arguments, one can only ask: Which is it? For if the non-Diatessaronic witnesses are *not* related to the Diatessaron, then, indeed, they are independent witnesses to the variant in the early church—*but in that case, the variant cannot be claimed as "Diatessaronic,"* for all of the witnesses with the reading may have obtained it from (to pick one name from thin air) Augustine. On the other hand, if the non-Diatessaronic witnesses *are* related to the Diatessaron, then, indeed, one can claim the variant as "Diatessaronic," for there would be no non-Diatessaronic sources to contaminate our witnesses—*but in that case, there is no evidence that the variant was widespread in the early church:* the variant

might well have originated with Tatian in his Diatessaron; there is nothing to suggest it goes back to "the original text of Matthew."

The remainder of this book is more of the same. Error simply compounds upon error. It is tempting to leave it at that, but a reader of this review deserves a sampling of the mistakes which lead to such a negative appraisal. Examining some of the remaining 68 readings will expose the methods, logic, philology, and evidence used, and show why these are all so unacceptable.

In chapter 5, Shedinger presents 21 readings—about one-third of his total of 69 readings. All 21 must be dismissed on logical grounds. The reason is as follows. As is well known, scribes have always been "moving" texts in the direction of the "standard" text of their time and place. Over time, the same has occurred with the Diatessaronic witnesses: deviating readings have been eliminated, and replaced with the "standard" reading of a particular time and place. This phenomenon is known as "Vulgatization," and can be shown to have occurred again and again in Diatessaronic witnesses. Shedinger is familiar with Vulgatization, and even discusses it (p. 26). Because of Vulgatization, it follows logically that one can only determine Diatessaronic readings at points where the Diatessaron's text *deviates* from the "standard" text (usually the researcher's collation base). In cases where the readings in Diatessaronic witnesses *agree* with the standard text, one can never be sure whether the agreement is because of Vulgatization, or because the Diatessaron itself gave the "standard" reading. This problem—which is strictly logical in character—has been well known to Diatessaronic researchers since the time of Johann Christian Zahn, in 1814, and has guided methods since: "Large portions of the Diatessaron's original text agree verbatim with the text now found in the principal gospel manuscripts. Because of this, the text of the Diatessaron can be recovered with certainty *only* when it *deviates* from the vast majority of gospel manuscripts."

Despite the rather obvious logic of this reasoning, and despite the fact that Shedinger himself subscribes to this logic and method in chapters three and four (where all of the readings he presents are *deviations* from the standard text), all of the readings in chapter five are places where the Diatessaron's text—according to Shedinger—was *identical* with the standard gospel text. Did no one involved in the writing, approval, or publication of this book recognize that two entirely different, mutually-exclusive methodologies were being employed, side-by-side?

The remaining 48 readings in chapters three and four are felled by one or (usually) more problems. We will limit ourselves to discussing only three.

The first is the matter of "trivial" readings. By "trivial" we mean readings which turn on the tense or voice of a verb changing, a conjunction appearing (or disappearing), pronouns materializing (or vanishing), or words with overlapping semantic ranges replacing each other (door/gate; wilderness/desert; hastened/ran; etc.). One frequently stumbles across readings such as these in Diatessaronic studies. Are they significant? The answer is "no." Over the last century scholars have tested such readings to see what value they have as evidence for the text of the second-century Diatessaron. The unanimous conclusion is that they are almost always useless, and should almost always be ignored (the qualifications are too complex to lay out in this review, and are, in any event, irrelevant to Shedinger's readings).

When one reflects on the wide variety of languages in which Diatessaronic witnesses appear (Syriac to Early Italian, Persian to Middle High German, Arabic to Latin, Pahlavi to Middle English, etc.) and the vast chronological span over which these witnesses were translated and copied (the earliest would appear to date from the first half of the fourth century [probably Aphrahat or, conceivably, some of the Syriac apocrypha]; the latest would be 1547 C.E. [the date our lone exemplar of the Persian Harmony was copied]), the reasons are self-evident. Idioms change from place to place and time to time. The grammatical norms and constraints of Syriac are different from Old High German—and both of them are different from the grammatical norms and constraints of Latin and Persian. Even within a single language, vocabulary and grammar change over time (Shakespeare's English is not ours); it even varies within the same language, at the same time, but in different places (or classes): in certain English-speaking circles today, "He is taller than *I*" is considered correct usage ("than" is construed as a conjunction, and one mentally completes the unspoken comparison "...taller than I [am tall]"), while in other circles "He is taller than *me*" is considered correct ("than" is construed as a preposition, requiring the objective case, "me").

All of this is obvious, and is well known in Diatessaronic studies. Agnes Smith Lewis pointed it out to H. J. Vogels in 1913, noting especially the tendency of Syriac to add pleonastic pronouns and conjunctions, the former due in part to suffix pronouns and the latter due in part to the Semitic aversion to subordinate clauses. The point has been repeated many times since: "I find many of the

individual cases produced by the experts too niggling and unimpressive" (so the distinguished Orientalist Fr. Robert Murray, *HeyJ* 14 [1973], p. 312); "some of the coincidences in small similarities between [Diatessaronic] witnesses may have originated accidentally or from independent exegetical modifications" (so Bruce Metzger, *JThS* n.s. 27 [1976], p. 481). Nevertheless, some 22 of Shedinger's readings are textual trivia. For example, he detects a "Diatessaronic" reading in the change of verb voice in readings 21 and 35 (where an active voice in the Greek becomes passive in some Diatessaronic witnesses) and in reading 12 (passive voice becomes active). More "Diatessaronic" readings are found in the change in some witnesses from "*their* heart" (so the Greek) to "*its* heart" (reading 32, Matt 15:8); the interpolation of "and" in reading 28 (Matt 4:7 parr.), where (according to Shedinger) the Diatessaron inserted "and" into the phrase "the Lord [+ *and*] your God." In reading 15 (Matt 4:6) the matter turns on whether "foot" is in the objective case (so Matthew) or the nominative case (so some Diatessaronic witnesses); shades of "He is taller than I/me" in today's vernacular! Reading 18 (Matt 15:4, par.) finds the canonical "or" turning into a "Diatessaronic" "and"—this despite the fact that the OT lemma (Ex. 21:17) in Hebrew has "and," while the LXX reads "or," with the gospels; that means that if only two scribes independently checked the NT citation against the Hebrew, and corrected it to the Hebrew, then we would have a "Diatessaronic" reading here—without, of course, any contact with the Diatessaron! All of these readings are precisely the sort of textual trivia warned against in the literature for nearly a century. They must be rejected.

Turning to another problem, five of Shedinger's readings are omissions. As we saw above (in reading 2, the omission of "land"), omissions are very weak as evidence, and are highly unreliable in Diatessaronic studies as genetic markers. As with "trivial" readings, so too the problems with omissions are well-documented in the literature—not just of Diatessaronic studies, but also of textual criticism. But once again, Shedinger shows no awareness of this.

The third and final problem we will address is the defective philological and lexical work, which eliminates about ten of Shedinger's readings. If there is any place in Diatessaronic studies where scrupulous honesty and care are required, it is here. The reason is that Diatessaronic research is a two-act play involving lexical agreements and disagreements. The first act of the play consists of noting textual *disjunctions*: one searches for readings where the Diatessaronic witnesses differ from the standard gospel text. Here are

some of the differences Shedinger finds; they eventually result in "Diatessaronic" readings: reading 1, "ruler" (= Matt 2:6b) and "king" (= Diatessaron); reading 10, "adultery" (= Matt 19:18, par.) and "fornication"/"impure" (= Diat.); 25, "robbers" (= Matt 21:13, parr.) and "thieves" (= Diat.). It is to be granted that in English these words are different, but it is also evident that their semantic ranges are very, very close. Shedinger is making very fine, very precise distinctions here; he is distinguishing very rigorously even between synonyms ("thieves" and "robbers," for example). Therefore, at the very outset, one must question whether such rigid distinctions can be made. Most lexicographers would say "no," because what one is probably registering is simply different translations of the same word: the German "Fleisch" can be translated into English as either "meat" or "flesh," and both translations are correct.

But there is also a second act in the play of Diatessaronic studies: after identifying the points of variance from the standard text, one then looks to see if there are *conjunctions* among the Diatessaronic witnesses—if *multiple* Diatessaronic witnesses contain the *identical* variant. This *multiple testimony* is necessary to prevent a unique reading in a single witness being called "Diatessaronic." Finally, to insure against the influence of "local texts" (which might have influenced multiple Diatessaronic witnesses in a particular geographic region—say, in Syria/Syriac, or in Italy/Latin), support for the proposed Diatessaronic reading should be found in *both* the Eastern *and* the Western witnesses.

Given the rigor Shedinger employed to distinguish between the text of the gospels and the Diatessaronic witnesses (recall, for example, that he distinguished "robbers" from "thieves"), one would expect him to be equally rigorous when searching for agreements among Diatessaronic witnesses. That is not, however, what we find. In reading 10 (Matt 19:18, parr.), where the Greek reads "adultery," Shedinger finds an ambiguous word in the Arabic Harmony (which he says can mean either "adultery" or "fornication"); in the West, he finds "fornication" in some Vetus Latina manuscripts, and "impure" in two related Middle Dutch Harmonies. Shedinger construes "impure" and "fornication" as the same variant. Something other than "adultery" ("fornication"? "impure"? one is never informed precisely what) is the Diatessaronic reading. But any observant reader will ask: If our author distinguishes between "king" and "ruler," between "thieves" and "robbers," then must he not also distinguish between "fornication" and "impure," and regard *them* as *two* distinct variants? This question does not

seem to have occurred to anyone connected with this book. Furthermore, since the reading of the Arabic Harmony is ambiguous, and *may* be the standard Greek reading, how can Shedinger claim it as Eastern support for whatever "Diatessaronic" reading he proposes? The answer, of course, is that he cannot.

This same insensitivity to lexical differences is displayed again and again, and the result is always the same: a "Diatessaronic" reading. For example, in reading 13 (Matt 27:9–10) one Diatessaronic witness reads "I was valued," and two (related) witnesses read "I was bought"; despite their differences ("bought" is not "valued"; one can "value" something without "buying" it), Shedinger pronounces a conjunction of witnesses here, and, of course, a "Diatessaronic" reading is the result. Or consider reading 8 (Matt 13:35 [the Greek reads "I will utter"]), where Shedinger says that "I will bring to light" and "I will reveal" and "I will make clear" all represent a single "Diatessaronic" variant.

What is going on here? It is really quite simple: Shedinger is using two different sets of standards when making lexical comparisons. When he wants to find differences, his standards are rigorous ("thieves" are not "robbers"; a "king" is not a "ruler"). But when he wants to find agreements, his standards are so loose that they defy the lexica ("bought" is the same as "valued"; "impure" is the same as "fornication"). This is not only unacceptable lexicography, it is also methodologically dishonest: *one* set of standards should be used.

The lexical problems do not end there, however; "Diatessaronic" readings are sometimes manufactured out of elementary lexical blunders. Here are two examples. In reading 23 (Matt 4:6, par. Luke 4:11) Shedinger claims that the reading of the Diatessaron was "arms" against what he considers the standard Greek reading "hands." The problem is that the text of Matthew (and Luke) reads, "...On their *ceirwn* they will bear you up..." This is a quotation of Ps. 91:12, where the LXX also reads *ceirwn*. Shedinger concludes that "arms" is the Diatessaronic reading because the Syriac word *dr'*—which J. Payne Smith defines as "arm" (*A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* [the "little Payne Smith"; Oxford 1903], p. 98)—is found in some Diatessaronic witnesses (in Matthew in Syr^{s,c} and in Luke in Syr^{p}; "arms" is also read in the Arabic and Persian Harmonies). Against this, other Diatessaronic witnesses in Syriac (Syr^{s} in Luke and Syr^{p} in Matthew) read *yd* ("*hand,...forepaw*; *the axle* of a wheel [*N.B.*!]; *the arm* of a seat or throne [*N.B.*!]; *a handle* [*N.B.*!]..." [Payne Smith, p. 186; the italics are hers]). In support of his conclusion that "arm[s]"—*dr'*—is the reading of the Diatessaron, Shedinger

writes that "it is not easy to reconcile [the Syriac] *drʿ* [*sic*] as a translation of either [the Hebrew] *kap* or [the Greek] *ceiroV* [*sic*]" (p. 96).

This statement is simply not true of the Greek *ceir*—and remember that Tatian was working from the Greek gospels. Reference to any Greek lexicon will show that *ceir* is polysemous, and can mean *either* "hand" *or* "arm" (see, *e.g.*, Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT* [third revised edition; Chicago 2000], p. 1082; cf. Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [ninth edition; Oxford 1940 (1977)], pp. 1983–1984: "the hand...[the] hand and arm...the arms").

The two readings we find in our Syriac sources are completely explicable as two different—but correct—translations of the "standard" Greek reading, *ceir*. Some Syriac sources, correctly, translated it as "hand" (*yd*) some of the time, and some, correctly, translated it as "arm" (*drʿ*) some of the time. This ambivalence is apparent if one arranges the datum in a table.

	Matt 4:6	Luke 4:11
Syr^{s}	*drʿ*	*yd*
Syr^{c}	*drʿ*	*[deest]*
Syr^{p}	*yd*	*drʿ*

Also note that the Syriac word *yd* itself may well have had, in colloquial usage, the same dual meaning of the Greek *ceir*; one can see vestiges of it in Payne Smith's definition ("hand," but also "axle, arm of a seat, a handle"); one might presume this to be especially so in any Christian community where the sister language Hebrew was known, for the Hebrew cognate and homophone *yad* is also polysemous (see Koehler-Baumgartner-Stamm-Richardson, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [1995], Vol. 2, p. 386: "forearm, hand"). Note further that, in the LXX, *ceir* is regularly used to translate *both* the Hebrew *yad and* the Hebrew *kap* ([the word found in Ps. 91:12] "hollow of the hand, the whole hand").

Shedinger's claim that "it is not easy to reconcile [the Syriac] *drʿ* [*sic*] as a translation of ... [the Greek] *ceiroV* [*sic*]" can only mean that he has incorrectly assumed that the Greek *ceir* can only mean "hand," when, in fact, it can also mean "arm"—the purported "Diatessaronic" reading here. That the Syriac *drʿ* is a perfectly acceptable translation of *ceir* is evident not only from the table above, but also by its use at Mark 10:16 in the Peshitta to translate *ceir*.

A second example of a false "Diatessaronic" reading generated by the same lexical insensitivity to polysemous words occurs in reading 9 (Mark 10:19), where the standard Greek is: "do not *de-*

fraud (Greek: *aposterhshV*)." Shedinger finds "do not *oppress*" in three Eastern Diatessaronic witnesses; for his Western evidence he adduces three Vetus Latina MSS (*a c k*) which read "[do] not *deny* (Latin: *abnegabis* [*abnegaveris* in *k*])." Although he should have abandoned the reading at this point—for "oppress" is not the same as "deny"—Shedinger forges ahead, and pronounces a "Diatessaronic" reading.

The problem is that, just like *ceir* in the previous example, *aposterew* is polysemous. Reference to a Greek lexicon will show that although the *first* meaning of *aposterew* is "defraud," its *second* meaning is "refuse" or "deny"; it is, for example, also used in I Cor. 7:5, which is commonly translated as "do not *deny* (*aposterew*) your wives." It is true that the majority of Vetus Latina MSS (and the Vulgate) read *fraudem feceris* (so MSS *aur b d ff² l q*; MS *f* reads *fraudem facies*), rendering the *first* meaning of *aposterew* ("defraud"). But *abnegabis* is an equally good—and, in some respects, better—translation of the Greek, rendering the *second* meaning of *aposterew*, "refuse, deny." We say "better" because, from a strictly linguistic standpoint, *abnegabis* is (1) a *single* Latin word translating a *single* Greek word (such things were important to the ancients), and (2) the *ab-* prefix of *abnegabis* displays parallel compositional morphology with the *apo-* prefix of *aposterew*. (As an aside, your reviewer would note that it is interesting—and perhaps significant—that our two oldest Vetus Latina MSS [*a k*] read *abnegabis*, while the more recent ones—and the Vulgate—read *fraudem fecit*. This suggests *abnegabis* is the older translation.)

Shedinger's claim, then, that the Latin reading *abnegabis*—the sole Western support for his proposed "Diatessaronic" reading—represents something other than the standard Greek of Mark, is simply false. For evidence of a "Diatessaronic" reading, then, one is left with "oppress," a reading that is found only in three late Diatessaronic witnesses (the Peshitta, and the Arabic and Persian Harmonies), all from the East, and all derived from a Syriac *Vorlage*. The evidence suggests, then, that this reading is most likely a relatively late variant, part of a "local text" that circulated only in the East.

These sorts of errors—in a book whose subtitle announces a "Philological Analysis"—are beyond comprehension. Did no one on the doctoral committee know that *ceir* can mean both "hand" and "arm"? Did it occur to no reader at CSCO that if "robbers" were being distinguished from "thieves," then one also ought to distinguish—if for nothing else than consistency's sake—between "valued" and "bought"?

The book has other flaws, as well. The command of current literature is defective. Although this book was published in 2001, Migne is used for Justin Martyr's text, not the critical editions of Goodspeed (1914) or Marcovich (1997); Sievers' sometimes-defective second edition (1892) of Codex Sangallensis is used rather than Masser's excellent new edition (1994). Although Shedinger relies very heavily on your reviewer's handbook *Tatian's Diatessaron* (1994), he displays no awareness of a substantial chapter titled "Using the Diatessaron" (pp. 357–425). This chapter begins with a list of potential "Problems" awaiting the novice researcher. The first "problem" listed is "Arguing from omissions" (pp. 359–360); the second is "Arguing from trivial readings" (360–361); the fifth is "Arguing from what may be 'local texts'" (364); the seventh is "Arguing from grammatical, syntactic, or orthographic trivia" (365–367); the eighth is "Arguing from a dubious translation" (367–368). Of course one does not have to read this chapter to gain these insights; anyone reading the literature listed in Shedinger's bibliography would have come to the same realizations, although it would have taken longer and required that one laboriously order the material one's self.

A prerequisite for reliable and proper use of a Diatessaronic witness is a thorough understanding of its transmission-history. Although Shedinger used Giuseppe Messina's edition of the Persian Harmony, he apparently failed to notice Messina's analysis of the text, for in the "Introduction" to his edition Messina addresses the subject of Shedinger's book: the OT quotations in the (Persian) Diatessaron (pp. lxviii-lxxvi). Messina (* 1893–† 1951) was the world's expert on this text. In the process of preparing his edition, Messina concluded that the Persian translator, as he translated from Syriac into Persian in the thirteenth century, frequently "improved" the OT quotations by referencing the *Targumim* and/or the Hebrew Bible in a Semitic language. Messina's textual examples (two of which parallel pericopes examined by Shedinger) are unambiguous and definitive. Therefore, Shedinger cannot use the Persian Harmony as he does, for Messina demonstrated half a century ago that its OT citations have frequently been revised to agree with texts much later than the Diatessaron. Even if these eight pages in Italian escaped our author's notice, it is odd that he also missed an English *précis* of them in a book he frequently cites.

In the end, one wonders how much of the bibliography was actually consulted, for Shedinger's bibliography gives the following entry: "Plooij, Daniel, *Traces of Syriac Origin of the Old-Latin Diatessaron*. Amsterdam: n.p., 1927." Anyone attempting to locate this

book from Shedinger's reference will come up empty-handed. That is because it is an article: "Traces of Syriac Origin of the Old-Latin Diatessaron," in *Mededeelingen der koninklijke akademie van wetenschappen, Afdeeling letterkunde*, deel 63, serie A, no. 4 (1927), pp. 101–126. Whether he actually consulted the article or not (a glance at the title page—which bears the pagination "101"—reveals instantly that the work is an article, not a book), the full, correct reference was (once again) available to Shedinger in the bibliography of a monograph he frequently cites.

One could go on. Everyone has lapses of judgment; everyone makes mistakes—even Homer nodded. But that is not the issue. Here the errors are so frequent and so fundamental that this volume can contribute nothing to scholarship. What it says that is true has already been said elsewhere, with greater clarity and perspective. What it says that is new is almost always wrong, plagued—as we have shown above—with philological, logical, and methodological errors, and a gross insensitivity to things historical (both within the discipline, as well as the transmission-history of texts). Reading this book fills one with dismay and despair. It is shocking that a work which does not rise to the level of a master's thesis should be approved as a doctoral dissertation; how it found its way into print is unfathomable. One shudders to think of the damage it will do when, in the future, it is cited by the ignorant and the unsuspecting as "demonstrating" what it has not.

It is not easy to produce such a technical book without any flaws. I mention only those which affect Syriac words. P. 38, 2nd line of the Syriac quotation: read *tšbhwn*; p. 44, paenult. and ult. lin.: read *trtyhyn*; p. 45, lines 11–12, inverse the two part of the Syriac phrase; p. 67, n. 40, "from us" is never *man* but *menan*; p. 96, n. 121: read *npq* (twice); p. 118, n. 189, 1st line: transliterate *ab*; p. 161, line 14: read *wnšbhwn*; p. 177, ult. lin. (and 74, *ad* logion 18, 3): "he will know" is reconstructed in two different fashions, *myd'* and *nehwā ida'* (which has to be changed into *nehwe yāda'*); p. 180, middle (and 144, n. 266, *ad* logion 100, 4): *d̰amm(i)* would be a very awkward—if not impossible—*Vorlage* for Coptic *ptn pôei*, instead of *ddīl(i)*. As for Coptic, p. 55: the basic form of the Coptic negator is *ⁿn* (and *ⁿm*, the assimilation of it before a labial); p. 152, n. 296: read *arkhei*; p. 182–183: *peje* signals direct discourse in the past, and not in the present (cf. B. Layton's *Coptic Grammar*, § 380), therefore: "Jesus said", and not "says".