

Cambry G. Pardee, *Scribal Harmonization in the Synoptic Gospels*. NTTSD 60. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019. Pp. XIV+494. Hardback ISBN: 978-90-04-39180-2, E-book ISBN: 978-90-04-39181-9. €160.-.

- [1] Cambry G. Pardee assembles a very interesting work that seeks to understand better the role of harmonization in manuscripts of the Synoptic Gospels up to the fourth century. The work is assembled logically and is easy to follow. Seven chapters contain the contents of Pardee's argument. After the main contents of the book, Pardee puts together a strong bibliography and indices of subjects, modern authors, manuscripts, and biblical citations. Of the seven chapters, five chapters contain the core of Pardee's data and argument. Chapters 1 and 7 introduce the idea of harmonization; and in the conclusion, the author gives a summary and final thoughts on harmonization. Chapters 2 through 6 contain the data Pardee used in the research phase of the study. Pardee focuses on the extensive papyri material and two complete texts of the Synoptic Gospels as found in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Pardee is exclusively focused on the biblical material from the second to the fourth century due to the idea that, citing Bart D. Ehrman and David C. Parker, "the second to fourth century was the period of greatest change in the text" (39). Overall, Pardee seeks to focus on harmonization in the Synoptics, and finds that "deliberate assimilation does not occur more often than accidental assimilation, and in fact occurs quite sparingly" (11).
- [2] Chapter 1 introduces the material and frames the direction of the work. Pardee begins on page one, "No ancient manuscript is an exact copy of the exemplar from which it was transcribed" (1). Following Ehrman and Wayne C. Kannaday's previous studies, Pardee sets the parameters around harmonization, as a scribal habit, in the Synoptic Gospels. Pardee breaks, however, with Ehrman and Kannaday by focusing on researching variants for more than their functional use. The author uses the chapter to set the parameters of harmonization. One comment shows that "deliberate harmonization did occur, but was by no means more prevalent than accidental, unconscious, or what is called here "reflexive" harmonization" (16). Moreover, the author found that "reflexive harmonization, caused by the scribe's horizon of expectation, is the most common cause of assimilation" (17). Pardee continues with a very helpful state of research, working through views on harmonization by Origen, Jerome, Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, Ernest C. Colwell and James R. Royse, Kurt Aland and Kyoung Shik Min, and J. Keith Elliott and Gordon D. Fee. Pardee ends the chapter by giving the exact method of the study. This work focuses on the scribal harmonization in the Greek manuscripts of the Synoptic Gospels from the second to fourth centuries. In his research, Pardee analyzed singular readings, comparative readings, and accepted/secondary readings. The "base text" for the collations on the manuscripts was a collection of critical editions: "eighth edition of Tischendorf, editions of Merk, Legg, Souter, Nestle-Aland 27-28, UBS 4, Aland's *Synopsis*, the IGNTP, and Swanson's horizontal parallels" (40). Pardee examined three manuscripts (P<sup>25</sup>, 0160, and 0188) in person with the rest of the manuscripts studied digitally, or by facsimiles. Then, Pardee assembled the readings into entries for easily showing the type of change. Each resulting entry (found in chapters 2 – 6) contains a reference, accepted reading, variant reading, parallel, harmonization, and what type of reading occurs in the manuscript. Finally, Pardee cleverly states the book's purpose again: "It is commonly accepted that harmonizations played a major role in the

transmission of the text of the Synoptic Gospels. This book clarifies what that role has been” (43).

- [3] Pardee begins chapter 2 with a minor introduction to fragmentary manuscripts from the second and third centuries. In this chapter introduction, the author discusses a few viewpoints of the fluidity of the early text. Moreover, Pardee suggests “the codex [could have signaled] scriptural status” (47). The work continues with a discussion of the manuscripts in its specific focus. “Only four manuscripts [P<sup>104</sup>, P<sup>103</sup>, P<sup>77</sup>, P<sup>64/67</sup>] of any of the Synoptic Gospels are extant from before the third century” (47). Moreover, the four copies are all from the Gospel of Matthew. Pardee then goes through each manuscript and lists harmonizing variants found. Then, Pardee offers a comment on the variant. After listing specific variants and manuscripts within the exact purview, Pardee offers brief conclusions before moving to the next section or chapter. For the second century fragments discussed, Pardee states, “Evidence for harmonization in second-century manuscripts of the Synoptics is scarce” (70). The third century contains the following manuscripts for this study: six manuscripts of Matthew, four of Luke, and fragments of a manuscript with both Matthew and Luke in 0171. In the second and third century, however, “the majority of harmonizing variants are substitutions (at 56.3 percent)” (109). The material surveyed in this chapter also shows that variants occurred more frequently with the words of Jesus (62.5 percent) than of the words of the evangelists (18.8 percent). Although, Pardee admits that the evidence from this chapter is too scant to draw firm conclusions for a general trend; yet, many of the same patterns found in this chapter are found throughout other manuscripts studied (109).
- [4] The author continues with “Extensive Manuscripts of the Third Century” in chapter 3. More precisely, Pardee focuses on P<sup>75</sup> and P<sup>45</sup> in this chapter. Pardee finds in P<sup>75</sup> fifty-one variant readings. Of the variant readings, seventeen “likely or very likely arose under the influence of parallel passages” (142). Also, twenty-six “may have arisen by harmonization and eight were shown not to have involved harmonization” (142). Furthermore, Matthew, rather convincingly, is the “horizon of expectation” for the scribe of P<sup>75</sup>. Most harmonizing variants are substitutions (64.7 percent) and the words of Jesus are altered more frequently (88.2 percent). In P<sup>45</sup>, forty-six of the ninety-four variants found “can confidently be ascribed to harmonization” (189). Matthew, once again, “had the strongest influence on the text of [this manuscript]” (189). Substitution was the most common harmonization at 58.7 percent, and Jesus’s words were altered the most at 60.9 percent. Pardee comments, “Apparently scribes more often memorized or focused on Jesus’s teaching than the framework within which Jesus’s words were contextualized” (191).
- [5] Chapter 4 deals with fragments from manuscripts in the Fourth Century. For this study, Pardee used eleven fragments of Matthew, four of Mark, and two of Luke. The available evidence begins to increase substantially moving forward in time. Again, Pardee finds that “Matthew remained the primary source of harmonizing variants” (214). Addition became the primary type of harmonization in the fourth century manuscripts at 40 percent. Moreover, harmonizing variants usually affected only one (46.7 percent) or two (33.3 percent) words (215). Jesus’s words were harmonized more frequently (53.3).
- [6] Codex Vaticanus becomes the topic of study in chapter 5. Pardee gives a brief introduction to the history of Vaticanus discussing various opinions on provenance, dating, and production of the manuscript. The similarities of Vaticanus and P<sup>75</sup> are

discussed as a “sibling relationship” between the two manuscripts. From Pardee’s research, Codex Vaticanus is found to be a manuscript that has very few harmonizing readings. “The scribe has been careful not to permit external influences to infiltrate his text, but several assimilating readings have arisen nonetheless” (218). Pardee found ninety variants including parallel material. Matthew, again, appears as the expectation for harmonizing sources. Substitution was the most common type of harmonizing variant (279). In Vaticanus, harmonizing tended to involve only one word at a time (74.4 percent). The words of Jesus were altered more frequently (53.3 percent) than other portions of the text in the Synoptic Gospels. Pardee concludes this chapter noting the care and exactness of the scribe of Vaticanus, which agrees with the assumption that the text was becoming or had become more stable by the time Vaticanus was produced.

[7] The final content chapter in Pardee’s work turns the focus upon Codex Sinaiticus. Following the same format of other chapters, a few brief introductory remarks occur at the beginning of the chapter. A brief discussion, also, of previous research on Sinaiticus is given. While Vaticanus falls in line with the assumption about the stability of the text in the fourth century, Sinaiticus does not. Two hundred and fifty-five variants were likely or very likely to have risen from parallel passages of the five hundred and thirty-five variants found within Pardee’s purview in Sinaiticus. Pardee discusses specific trends separated by scribes and correctors of the codex. Scribe A altered the text of Matthew the least. Substitutions occur the most as harmonizing variants (50.5 percent). Jesus’s words also contain the most alterations at 59.5 percent. Scribe D harmonized the text less than Scribe A. Substitution occurs the most within harmonizing variants for Scribe A (43.8 percent). However, the narrative was altered the most at 68.8 percent, instead of variants within Jesus’s words. Pardee comments, however, this statistic may be skewed due to the lack of substantial data for Scribe D, since this scribe appeared to be a better scribe. The Initial Corrector created several, distinct variants in the Synoptics. Additions are most common for this corrector (75 percent). Jesus’s words were altered the most (56.3 percent). Corrector CA follows the trends found in other manuscripts studied in this work, with the exception of adding more variants (48.3 percent) rather than subtracting material. Corrector CB<sup>2</sup> was a very careful corrector only introducing four harmonizing variants. Pardee concluded the chapter with a brief word on the role of the correctors in introducing many of the distinct variants found in Sinaiticus.

[8] In the final chapter of the work, Pardee restates all of the major conclusions and provides brief commentary on harmonizations. “Harmonization is a result, not an intent. The evidence collected in this study shows that in the second to fourth centuries there was no general editorial agenda among scribes to harmonize one Gospel to another” (429). Furthermore, of the manuscripts studied “the harmonizing variants...are in most cases not the product of scribal intent” (429). Pardee paints a rather convincing picture from the data of the oral tradition being so prevalent in the minds of the scribes that unintentional harmonizing occurred in the manuscripts studied. Pardee states, “scribes were *influenced* by external material to greater or lesser degrees and sometimes allowed parallel material to affect their copy of a Gospel” (431). Pardee suggests a change in the way text critics speak about “harmonizing variants.” “In most cases, harmonizing variants are not intended to reduce discrepancies between the Gospels, even if they do so incidentally; they exist because of the differences between the Gospels and reflect the influence of parallel material” (430). What Pardee suggests, rather convincingly, is that the scribes of

these manuscripts studied were not deliberately changing the text due to some theological slant or conspiratorial agenda. Instead, based on the strong oral tradition, undoubtedly known by the scribes, and based on the “horizon of expectation,” harmonizations were the unintended results. Regarding the data Pardee researched, of the 7,405 verses of the 37 manuscripts analyzed, only 439 variants in 377 verses were “likely or very likely attributable to harmonizations” (432). This number comes to 5.1 percent. Pardee states, “it is more accurate to say that harmonization occurs in less than 5.1 percent of the text of the Gospels available to us. Harmonization was an infrequent occurrence” (432). The bulk of the chapter reiterates the author’s finding as discussed in chapters 2–6 . One of the more interesting discoveries in Pardee’s research came in the type of material harmonized. 57.9 percent of harmonizing was found at Jesus’s words, while gospel narratives (29.6 percent) and other dialogue (12.5 percent) occurred less frequently. Also, the Gospel of Matthew was found to have been harmonized the least with Mark having been altered the most. Furthermore, Matthew was found to have been the source of at least “41 percent of the harmonizing variants and could be the source of up to 62 percent” (433). Further minor conclusions were included in this chapter by Pardee. The author does well in summarizing and offering explanations as to understanding better the results of the study.

[9] Pardee does well in achieving the stated goal of the work and following the guidelines set. Two minor thoughts are necessary before a final conclusion. First, Pardee states on page 9 that the study follows Ehrman and Kannaday’s method in understanding the function of variants within the Synoptics. The train of thought from Ehrman and Kannaday is followed through much of the first chapter before the state of research, as found in the footnotes. Pardee does well in stating various critiques to Ehrman and Kannaday’s methods, especially critiques from Peter Head and Ulrich Schmid. It is curious as to why their model, as a source for Pardee’s current work, is used, especially when Pardee finds harmonization not to be a deliberate action from agenda-driven scribes, such as actions proposed in *Orthodox Corruption*. A second minor critique questions the lack of engagement with Gerd Mink, the Coherence Based Genealogical Method (CBGM), or proponents of this method. Pardee states in the opening pages of the work, “No ancient manuscript is an exact copy of the exemplar from which it was transcribed” (1). Contamination of various textual sources into “harmonizing variants” is very much in line with the purpose of the CBGM. Pardee fails to interact with Mink or other advocates of the CBGM within the discussion of variants throughout the work. Whether or not one agrees with all the work of the newer method, interaction between Pardee’s work and CBGM findings would have improved the book. A comparison of the major harmonizing variants viewing how the manuscripts relate through the CBGM would also have strengthened the work.

[10] The two minor critiques aside, Pardee has produced a strong work challenging previous thought on the role of harmonization within the Synoptic Gospels. An interesting next step for the field is to view these conclusions within other material in the New Testament. Do Acts, Catholic Epistles, Pauline Epistles, and Revelation find the same conclusions about harmonization? Furthermore, do later codices yield similar results? Are the same conclusions found in other New Testament material of the manuscripts studied as they were found in the Synoptic Gospels? It is curious as to why Codex Bezae was not included in this study due to its assumption as a manuscript with many peculiar features.

Why exactly did Pardee draw parameters around the fourth century for finding the data? Pardee's conclusion about harmonizations will and should be tested throughout various New Testament literature. Pardee has produced a work that sheds light on the type of scribe that was copying the Synoptic Gospels of the New Testament from the second to fourth centuries. This potential scribe knew the Gospel of Matthew, of the Synoptic Gospels, the best, which influenced potential harmonizing variants towards Matthew's Gospel. The scribe also subtracted more text than was added, all while usually changing features within a single word. The text of Jesus's words, which the potential scribe knew the best, was altered the most in order to "correct" the text. This general snapshot is further understood when revisiting the percent of harmonization within Pardee's study: 5.1 percent. Harmonizing variants, with all their tendencies and trends, did not occur to 94.9 percent of the text in the Synoptic Gospels in the manuscripts studied, according to Pardee's work. This statistic alone should cause others in the field of textual criticism to further assess their assumptions on the role of harmonization in the early centuries of extant manuscripts. This book does indeed clarify the role of harmonizations in the transmission of the Synoptic Gospels. I highly recommend this work to text critics.

*Matthew Burks*  
*New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary*

© Copyright *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism*, 2019