
While lost early Christian texts are usually recovered from medieval libraries or archeological digs, Dieter Roth’s dissertation turned monograph reconstructs Marcion’s Gospel from 660 quotations scattered throughout anti-Marcionite literature. Modeling itself on Ulrich Schmid’s reconstruction of Marcion’s *Apostolos*, Roth’s work is a model of methodological rigor, only slightly diminished by an excess of caution. Roth presents comprehensive reference tables (chapter 3), full citations of all the relevant evidence (chapters 4–8), and a justification for his every textual decision, making his work an indispensable tool for any future study of Marcion’s Gospel.

Hardly the first to attempt such a reconstruction, Roth provides the first comprehensive history of relevant scholarship since Adolf von Harnack (chapter 2). Arguments from silence and appeals to Marcionite theology in evaluating variant readings are singled out for criticism throughout his survey. Furthermore, Roth draws attention to the failure of previous scholarship to interrogate the tendencies and general reliability of our witnesses to Marcion’s text. Given that virtually no new primary data has emerged since Harnack’s reconstruction, the correction of these three missteps, as well as the use of updated critical editions and an expanded apparatus for the text of Luke, constitute Roth’s own contribution to the field (78–82).

Among the witnesses to Marcion’s Gospel, Tertullian understandably receives the most extensive treatment (chapters 4–5). Building on the work of Schmid and his own previous studies, Roth argues for the general reliability of Tertullian’s testimony if one controls for a number of identifiable citation habits. In book four of *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian systematically worked through a Greek copy of Marcion’s Gospel without reference to the text of Luke (83–87). Tertullian’s testimony, however, is dubious where he attests variation
in conjunctions and word order, a substitution of the future tense for the present, or a harmonization towards Matthew (88–91).

Chapter 42 of Epiphanius’s *Panarion* represents the next largest repository for fragments of Marcion’s Gospel (chapter 6). Epiphanius twice gives excerpts from the same seventy-eight passages of Marcion’s Gospel, often in slightly different forms. Roth’s own analysis of the two lists supports the conclusion of Schmid against Zahn and Harnack that both are independent copies of an *Ur-Exzerptsammlung* and the often lengthier second catalog better preserves Marcion’s text (274–83). Roth sketches Epiphanius’s citation habits in more general terms than Tertullian’s. Epiphanius, although capable of precision where textual variation is relevant to his argument, is given to sloppiness, abridgement, and harmonization (283–5). As a result, Roth is skeptical of variant readings without independent corroboration, often attributing them to the hand of Epiphanius rather than Marcion.

The final significant witness to Marcion’s Gospel is the *Adamantius Dialogue* (chapter 7). Given the likelihood that the *Dialogue* is not directly consulting Marcion’s Gospel (351), the relative instability of its text (352–3), and the looseness of its citations (356–7), Roth ascribes little independent value to the *Dialogue’s* testimony. Readings attested only by the *Dialogue* cannot, in Roth’s schema, rise above the “possibility, or at most slight probability, of reflecting Marcion’s Gospel” (358).

The few remaining testimonies scattered throughout a wide range of Patristic sources are then treated collectively (chapter 8). These polemical fragments corroborate the three primary sources and, in a few cases, witness to otherwise unattested passages or phrases (e.g., 409). In these typically allusive references to Marcion’s Gospel, however, there is often irresolvable ambiguity between criticism of Marcionite exegesis and the text of the Gospel.

Finally, Roth presents a reconstructed Greek text of Marcion’s Gospel (chapter 9). To differentiate between degrees of relative certainty in his reconstruction, Roth employs a variety of font changes and bracketing (410–12). A chapter and section number alongside each Lukan verse helpfully indicates where in Roth’s monograph the reader can find a presentation and discussion of the evidence.

Although Roth makes a valuable distinction between “unattested passages” and “attested omissions,” his categorical rejection of “the argument from silence” is too simplistic. The absence of “evidence X” is, in fact, probative for “thesis Y” if one can show that the contrapositive is likely—if “not Y” then “X.” This is problematic in Roth’s analysis where he describes the omission of words or phrases in continuous citations as merely “unattested.”

For example, when Origen in two continuous citations of John 7:26 fails to attest ἀληθῶς (present in most Byzantine manuscripts) after ἐστιν, Ehrman, Fee,