In a recent article, U. Bianchi has once again sought to determine the roots of Marcion's thought: biblical theologian or gnostic teacher? Such has been the focus of Marcion studies since the appearance of Harnack's monograph in 1921. Harnack argues forcefully, one might even say desperately, that Marcion's thought can only be understood as a radical attempt by this second century figure to recover and reclaim the purity of the Christian gospel as revealed by Jesus and proclaimed by Paul but perverted by nearly everyone else in the early church. Against the views of Bousset who saw Marcion's dualism as heavily influenced by a gnosticism of Persian origin, Harnack contends that his point of departure was the Pauline disjunction between law and gospel. And it was this disjunction that ultimately led him to his theory of a higher, alien deity utterly removed from the just and inconstant creator god of the Jews.

For all of his influence on subsequent scholarship, however, Harnack failed to achieve consensus on his major goal of removing Marcion from the sphere of gnostic influence. With but few exceptions, recent studies have described him as in some sense a gnostic thinker, while at the same time affirming the significant influence of Paul. On one point only,
and that a seemingly trivial one, is there anything like a *consensus doctorum*. Whatever the roots of Marcion's thought - neurosis, Cerdo, a reaction to Jewish elements in his native Pontus, or a radical interpretation of Pauline ideas - philosophy was not among them. Harnack emphasizes the point repeatedly: “von hellenischem Geiste spurt man schlechterdings nichts in ihm” (22); “grundsätzlicher Biblizist und Gegner aller Philosophie” (160); “philosophische Studien treten nirgends hervor...” (*18, n. 1). In turn, the same point is made by E. C. Blackman and E. U. Schüle.

Now of course this view of Harnack and others is taken in direct and conscious opposition to the witness of Marcion's “orthodox” opponents. Clement of Alexandria (Strom. 3,3,21) regards him as a confused Platonist, while Hippolytus would have him dependent on Empedocles (Haer. 7,29–31) and the Cynics (ibid. 10,18). Tertullian refers to Marcion's higher god as a *deus philosophorum* (Adv. Marc.2,27,6) and says sarcastically that his *deus melior de tranquillitate* stems from the Stoics (Praescr.7,3). More interesting, however, because less expected and seemingly less likely, are accusations that he was influenced by Epicurus. The chief witness is Tertullian (Adv. Marc. 5,19,7) who declares: “Let Marcion admit that the main tenet of his faith stems from the school of Epicurus, introducing a sluggish and indifferent god.” Jerome compares Marcion with Epicurus in somewhat different fashion (*Comm. in

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6 See the interesting, if not altogether compelling view of H. J. Schoeps, *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit* (1950), that Marcion was “ein schwerer Sexualneurotiker und Verdrängertyp” with a pronounced fear of insects (p. 257, n. 2).

6 On the question of Cerdo's influence on Marcion, a point emphasized by Irenaeus (1,25,1; 3,4,3), Tertullian (Adv. Marc. 1,2,3) and Hippolytus (Haer. 7,37; 10,19) but scarcely credited by modern critics, Harnack's view is that little is known of Cerdo's thought and that what is known (e.g., a good god opposed to an evil god) has nothing in common with Marcion (a just god opposed to a good god).

7 Harnack, *Marcion* 21f., notes that Jews were numerous in Pontus and even suggests that Marcion or his family might have been Jewish in origin.

8 *Marcion and his Influence* 71: “His dualism was not offered as a new theory of the universe nor as a contribution to the philosophy of religion.”

9 Der Ursprung des Bösen 30: “Aus dem uns überliefernten Quellenmaterial ... geht nun allerdings klar hervor, dass Marcion kein philosophisches System übernommen hat.” He further notes that Tertullian “bringt ihn mit der stoischen Philosophie und sogar mit Epikur (!) in Verbindung.” Cf. also the comment of Tollinton, Marcion's Dualism 265, that “there is nothing to shew that Marcion had ever received any training in the schools of philosophy.”

10 For Tertullian I have used the Turnholt edition, *Tertulliani Opera* I (CC 1, 1954).

11 *Sed Marcion principalem suae fidel terminum de Epicuri schola agnoscat, deum inferens hebetem etc.*