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BRINGING ORDER TO 1 CORINTHIANS 14:34-35

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Religion Division

Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Philip J. Abbott

May 2015

This thesis, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2015

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Bringing Order to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

by

Philip J. Abbott

May 2015

Dr. Kindalee De Long, Chairperson

ABSTRACT

Contrary to the arguments of many, when read in context, 1 Cor 14:34-35 is not a command for church-wide female silence. The passage is actually an appeal for the Corinthians to maintain an ordered worship, and fits within Paul's overall section (ch. 11-14) regarding orderliness in the *ekklesia*. By contrast, however, the displacement of the passage in some manuscripts brings the passage out of context and makes it seem to be a direct command to church-wide feminine silence.

The Apostolic Fathers and early Greek Church Fathers did not understand the passage to mean universal female silence in the church. It was not until the late second century that Western Church Fathers began referencing the passage to silence women and combat the heretical Montanist sect which was known for its prominent women prophets. The citations of 1 Cor 14:34-35 in the late second century coincide with the emergence of the Western text-type which relocates 1 Cor 14:34-35 several verses later to follow 14:40. This work argues that Western Church Fathers repositioned the passage in the late second century to combat Montanism and to align Christianity with Roman social standards.

INTRODUCTION

Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians contains what some consider one of the most misogynistic passages in all of scripture (1 Cor 14:34-35): "women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church" (Αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν, οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν· ἀλλὰ ὑποτασθήσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει. εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν, αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἔστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ).¹

Ironically, these verses are found in the same epistle that contains Paul's responses to the conflicts among Corinthian believers that had been reported to

1. Throughout this work, all English biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

him by “Chloe’s people” (1:11- “τῶν Χλόης”).² The term “Chloe’s people” refers to “members of Chloe’s household,” and likely indicates that Christian meetings were held at the house of a woman named Chloe.³ In light of this, it seems quite improbable that Paul would mandate silence for Chloe in her own home. In addition, Paul’s discourse on proper dress for women who prophecy in 1 Cor 11 makes the supposed Pauline command in 1 Cor 14:34-35 for women to be completely silent in the *ekklesia* all the more problematic.

Due to the seeming contradiction between 1 Cor 14:34-35 and these other aspects of the letter, many have concluded that the passage is a non-Pauline interpolation. They point to the divergent placement of the passage in many ancient manuscripts as evidence that it was a late non-Pauline addition to the Pauline letter. Additionally, these interpolation proponents claim that vv. 34-35 contain rhetoric and language foreign to Paul and do not match his otherwise

2. Ross S. Kraemer, “Chloe,” in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (ed., Carol L. Meyers et al.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 62-63.

3. *Ibid.*

permissive attitude toward women's participation in worship as manifested in his other works.⁴

Although many scholars uphold this theory, the present work will demonstrate that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is neither misogynistic nor a post-Pauline interpolation. Instead, 1 Cor 14:34-35 represents a call for orderly worship in its traditional location, but Church Fathers from the Latin West displaced the passage in the second century in order to highlight its seemingly misogynistic tone.⁵ The displacement had as its objective to undermine the heretical Montanist movement which featured prominent female prophets, and to bring the early Christian church's leadership and social structure more in line with acceptable Roman norms.⁶

4. See, for example, Romans 16:3, 7; Galatians 3:28.

5. A clarification must be made here—the passage does not necessarily need to be displaced in order to be understood misogynistically; however, the displacement brings the text out of the context of orderly worship and further underscores its ostensible anti-feminine message. Once displaced, the passage becomes an unmistakable mandate for universal feminine silence in Christian churches.

6. The present author recognizes that the words “orthodox” and “heretical” are arbitrary and anachronistic terms. In this work however, “orthodox” will be used to refer to those whose views were largely consistent with what would later become deemed orthodoxy, and “heretical” will be used to designate those whose views fall outside of orthodoxy.

To make this case, chapter one of this study surveys the various theories about 1 Cor 14:34-35, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each. Yet despite the variety of interpretations, when read in context 1 Cor 14:34-35 is not a command for church-wide female silence, as argued in chapter two. Rather, the passage fits within Paul's section (ch. 11-14) regarding overall orderliness in worship. By relocating the passage out of this context, the displacement of the text in some manuscripts makes it seem to be a direct command for church-wide feminine silence.

Chapter three exhibits that, unlike the Latin Church Fathers of the second-century western church, the Apostolic Fathers and early Greek Church Fathers did not interpret the passage to mean universal female silence in the church. In fact, some understood the Pauline-Corinthian correspondence as evidence that Paul was libertine in his views about feminine speech in church. Irenaeus, for example, who was born in Smyrna, states, "For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, [Paul] speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognizes men and women prophesying in the Church."⁷ In the Latin West, however, the passage was understood differently. The first extant appeal to 1 Cor 14:34-35 in order to

7. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.11.9 (ANF 1:429).

silence women comes from the Latin Church Father Tertullian: “For how credible would it seem, that he who has not permitted a woman even to learn with over boldness, should give a female the power of teaching and of baptizing! ‘Let them be silent,’ he says, ‘and at home consult their own husbands.’”⁸ This third chapter demonstrates that 1 Cor 14:34-35 was used in the second-century western church to combat the heretical Montanist movement and to align the church with Roman social standards. Prior to the late second-century, there is no evidence that the passage was cited to silence female Christians.

The final chapter of this work discusses the rampant textual manipulation taking place in second-century Rome, particularly the Western textual family (which contains the displaced passage) that emerged there. It demonstrates that the manuscripts which contain the passage in the dislocated position are very unreliable texts that display extensive redaction. Furthermore, this chapter exhibits the “anti-feminist bias” of the Western text, a bias which coincides with the fact that the displacement of 1 Cor 14:34-35 is found only in these texts.⁹

8. Tertullian, *Baptism* 15.17 (ANF 3:677).

9. Ben Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 183.

These textual factors constitute strong evidence that the displacement is the product of patriarchal Western text transcribers of the second century.

CHAPTER 1

The State of the Question

The controversial passage about female silence in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 has generated a multitude of theories concerning its origins. The contextual and textual issues regarding the passage have led some to conclude that 14:34-35 is: (1) a non-Pauline insertion into the text, (2) a Pauline insertion into the text, (3) a misogynistic Corinthian slogan or (4) part of the original text of 1 Corinthians. This chapter will survey and examine these various theories. The purpose of this examination is to present the state of scholarly research concerning 1 Cor 14:34-35 and to highlight the likelihood that the verses were originally part of Paul's letter to Corinth.

Non-Pauline Interpolation

Because of the divergent location of the passage in Western manuscripts and its alleged non-Pauline message, many scholars have argued that 1 Cor

14:34-35 is a non-Pauline interpolation.¹ For example, one scholar asserts that this directive about women's silence "cannot come from the pen of Paul."² The most compelling evidence to support this position is the fact that vv. 34-35 are situated after verse 40 in several manuscripts in the Western tradition.³ Because of this textual displacement, many scholars believe vv. 34-35 were originally a gloss written in the margin of 1 Corinthians by a non-Pauline hand but eventually inserted into the text of later manuscripts in different places (after v. 33 in some and after v. 40 in others).

Most who uphold a non-Pauline interpolation for 1 Cor 14:34-35 believe the textual insertion occurred very early. Some argue that the interpolation could have taken place with the creation of the Pauline corpus: "interpolations and redactional activity are highly likely to have occurred as the Pauline corpus was assembled, and... since our earliest texts come from the early third or late second

1. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 330-33. For major arguments of this position see Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1999), 515.

2. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 290.

3. By contrast, Conzelmann argues that the Western readings are themselves "no argument for the assumption of an interpolation;" he is convinced of the interpolation based on internal grounds. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: a Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 246 n. 16.

century, such redaction may be entirely invisible within our textual variants.”⁴

However, Antoinette Wire observes a problem with the view that the interpolation stems from the formation of the Pauline corpus: “1 Corinthians is in circulation across the Mediterranean before Paul’s letters are collected, as 1 *Clement*, Ignatius, and probably the *Didache* already show, and no copy survives without this passage in some location.”⁵ This fact presses the date of any supposed interpolation to the first or early second century at the latest.

Most scholars who believe that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is a non-Pauline gloss surmise the interpolation was inserted into the text by Christians a generation or two after Paul.⁶ The similarities between the Corinthian verses in question and 1 Tim 2:11-15 lead many to conclude that these verses come from either the same

4. David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 186. See also J. C. O’Neill, *The Recovery of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (London: SPCK., 1972), 1-12; Winsome Munro, “Interpolation in the Epistles: Weighing Probability,” *NTS* 36.3 (1990): 431-43; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians” in Oxford Scholarship Online, 2009.

5. Antoinette C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 230.

6. Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 86-89.

hand or community that composed the pastoral epistles.⁷ As Richard Hays explains, “All things considered, this passage is best explained as a gloss introduced into the text by the second- or third-generation Pauline interpreters who compiled the pastoral epistles.”⁸

Perhaps the most adamant proponent of the non-Pauline interpolation theory is Winsome Munro. In her 1983 book, *Authority in Paul and Peter*, Munro argues that both 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36 are post-Pauline ‘pastoral’ insertions.⁹ In later articles, Munro expands the interpolation hypothesis in 1 Cor 14 to include vv. 32-38.¹⁰ In each work, she seeks to demonstrate the misogynistic character of the pastoral epistles and the anti-feminine redactions their creators made in the undisputed Pauline letters, particularly 1 Corinthians.¹¹

7. Garry W. Trompf, "On Attitudes Toward Women In Paul And Paulinist Literature : 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 And Its Context," *CBQ* 42.2 (1980): 196-215.

8. Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 246-47. Assuming that when he refers to “generation” Hays means roughly 25 years, his argument is in line with Wire’s observation in the preceding paragraph.

9. Winsome Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 67-82.

10. Winsome Munro, "Women, Text and the Canon: the Strange Case of 1 Corinthians 14:33-35," *BTB* 18.1 (1988): 26-31; Winsome Munro, "Interpolation in the Epistles," 431-43.

11. Winsome Munro, "Patriarchy and Charismatic Community in ‘Paul,’” in *Women and Religion: Papers of the Working Group on Women and Religion, 1972-73* (ed., Judith Plaskow and Joan A. Romero; Chambersburg, Pa.: American Academy of Religion; distributed by Scholar's Press,

Besides Munro, most scholars who defend the non-Pauline interpolation theory argue for a smaller interpolation and assert that vv. 34-35 do not fit with the preceding verse. This argument is almost forced upon them, however, since the displaced passage in various manuscripts consists of only vv. 34-35; if v. 33b indeed goes with vv. 34-35 then interpolation supporters have no manuscript support for their position.¹² As a result, proponents of the non-Pauline interpolation theory maintain that vv. 34-35 upset the flow of the passage and are inconsistent with Paul's usual syntactical constructions;¹³ as David Horrell explains, "The sentence as construed by joining v. 33b to v. 34 is unusually

Missoula, Mont, 1974), 152-53. Munro argues that the misogynistic literature in the period of the pastoral letters was due to the activity of Christian women: "The teachings of the pastorals and related material is polemical and prescriptive rather than entirely descriptive.... [such material] bears witness to a different state of affairs with which it is at odds, and which it seeks to combat. Clearly there would have been no need to insist that women keep silent in Christian assemblies unless they were making themselves heard to a significant degree.... the fact that the subordination of women receives particular emphasis in this material suggests the presence of an opposite tendency in the early Christian movement." Bernadette Brooten, "Early Christian Women and Their Cultural Context," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (BSNA 10; ed., Adela Y. Collins; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 82, makes a similar point.

12. Antoinette Wire observes that "if the interpolation is longer than the two verses found differently located in the manuscripts (14:34-35), it cannot be explained as a marginal gloss variously inserted into the text" (*Corinthian Women Prophets*, 230). The number of verses included in several interpolation theories "has gradually expanded through the twentieth century (vv. 34-35, 33b-35, 33b-36, or 33-38)."¹² However, none of these theories that include verses other than 34-35 have textual support.

13. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246. See also William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 311.

clumsy owing to the repetition of ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. This should at least make us suspicious of the link. Moreover, in other places in 1 Corinthians where Paul refers to general church practice, the phrase *concludes* the related comment rather than introducing it."¹⁴

In agreement with Horrell, Gordon Fee asserts that the concluding clause of v. 33 makes best sense when read with the preceding clause (33a) and not with the next two verses (vv. 34-35).¹⁵ In fact, he argues that the "idea that v. 33b goes with v. 34 seems to be a modern phenomenon altogether."¹⁶ He maintains that the reading of v. 33b with the preceding section "makes so much sense of all the data that even if one were to conclude that vv. 34-35 are authentic, they would appear to be best understood as something of an afterthought to the present argument."¹⁷

14. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 186-187. Orr and Walthur (*I Corinthians*, 311) assert that between vv. 33-34 there is "awkwardness in the repetition of ekklesia."

15. J.M. Bassler, "1 Corinthians," in *Women's Bible Commentary* (ed., Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 327-28. Bassler asserts, "something is seriously amiss here" with this passage; it is a marginal gloss incorporated into the words of the text of Paul's letter by a copyist.

16. Fee, *First Epistle*, 697 n. 49.

17. *Ibid.*, 701.

Horrell points to early textual evidence to validate the claim that v. 33b should be read with 33a: “In many ancient manuscripts, vv. 34f appear as a distinct paragraph. John Chrysostom (*Homily 36.7*) clearly connects v. 33b with 33a.... Presumably the scribes who wrote the Western texts found that the link between v. 33 and v. 36 made reasonable sense. Indeed, v. 36 makes perfectly good sense as Paul’s immediately succeeding comment after v. 33.”¹⁸

In addition to the clumsy syntax of the passage, scholars who argue for non-Pauline interpolation claim that the verses contain rhetoric and language that are foreign to Paul.¹⁹ Firstly, the undisputed letters of Paul exhibit a very liberal approach to women’s roles in the Christian community;²⁰ even earlier in 1 Cor (chapter 11) Paul gives instruction for women who prophesy.²¹ This clearly demonstrates that a mandate for female silence in 1 Cor 14:34-35 would

18. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 186-187. See also Fee, *First Epistle*, 698. Philip Barton Payne makes a similar point in *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids.: Zondervan, 2009), 250-53.

19. Fee, *First Epistle*, 707.

20. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 81.

21. Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles; A Disquisition Upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 17.

contradict both Paul's liberal attitude towards women and his earlier instructions.²²

Secondly, the decree of silence in "all the churches of the Saints" with an appeal to the Law are likewise non-Pauline in character; the expression "the churches of the saints" [ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων] is not found in any other Pauline letters²³ and a reference to the vague "Law" seems contrary to Paul's attitude toward the Mosaic code. Regarding the appeal to the Law, Fee explains:

Real problems for Pauline authorship lie with the phrase 'even as the Law says.' First, when Paul elsewhere appeals to 'the Law,' he always cites the text (e.g., 9:8; 14:21), usually to support a point he himself is making. Nowhere else does he appeal to the Law in this absolute way as binding on Christian behavior. More difficult yet is the fact that the Law does *not* say any such thing. Gen. 3:16 is often appealed to, but that text does not say what is here argued.²⁴

For Fee, the appeal to the Law is particularly challenging because it is neither like Paul to make such an appeal, nor does the reference to the Law echo an actual statement from the Pentateuch. Fee sees this as proof that the passage is non-Pauline.

22. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246.

23. Christophe Senft, *La Première Epître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Genève: Labor et fides, 1990): 182-83. See also Hays, *First Corinthians*, 246-47.

24. Fee, *First Epistle*, 707.

In summary, the main arguments for non-Pauline interpolation are:

1. Displacement of vv. 34-35 in a number of manuscripts points to a marginal gloss.
2. Vv. 34-35 interrupt the flow of the passage.
3. Misogynistic rhetoric similar to that of the pastoral epistles suggests a gloss from that period.
4. The verses contradict Paul's liberal attitude towards women and his earlier instruction about female prophets (ch. 11).
5. An appeal to "the Law" and the expression "the churches of the saints" are foreign to Paul.

Pauline Interpolation

Another interpolation theory is that the passage is a textual insertion but also genuinely Pauline; vv. 34-35 represent an addendum placed in the margin of the text by Paul after he composed his epistle. In this and the previously mentioned interpolation theory, the displacement of vv. 34-35 in various texts of 1 Corinthians is because the verses were a marginal gloss not originally in the body of the text.

The main proponent of this theory is E. Ellis,²⁵ who argues that rather than being a post-Pauline insertion, the passage is non-Pauline paraenesis taken up by Paul.²⁶ He asserts that the words of the passage, although not originally Paul's, were adopted by him due to their applicable nature.²⁷ In Ellis's view, Paul added the marginal note at 14:33a because of its appropriateness to express his concern with the regulation of verbal noise in church and with the role of wives.

Ellis's argument has been accepted and developed by Stephen Barton. Barton asserts that Paul modified the traditional saying to conform to his rhetoric; the text is "a source for Paul's attitude toward wives speaking in

25. E. Earle Ellis, "The Silenced Wives of Corinth (I Cor. 14:34-5)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis* (ed., E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981): 213-220.

26. Sigountos and Shank build on Ellis's initial study. They claim: "1 Corinthians 14 clearly appeals to a common, ecumenical tradition, and 1 Timothy 2 probably does as well. This fact has also been overlooked by others invoking hermeneutical solutions. Although they find many possible historical reasons for the commands, none can be generalized to explain the existence of a common tradition. When a text appeals to 'common tradition' any hermeneutical explanation must be based not on local problems but on something common to 'all the churches,' such as something in Greco-Roman culture. Only such a broad basis could account for a tradition shared by 'all the churches.'" James G. Sigountos and Myron Shank, "Public Roles For Women In The Pauline Church : A Reappraisal Of The Evidence," in *JETS* 26.3 (1983): 287.

27. Ellis ("Silenced Wives," 213-220) argues that the language is consistent in these verses with the preceding section.

church."²⁸ Paul used the saying to promulgate his sense of place: church is inherently different than home.²⁹

Corinthian Slogan

A less popular theory regarding the controversial passage of 1 Cor 14:34-35 is that the verses are actually a Pauline quotation of a misogynistic Corinthian slogan.³⁰ Paul's response to the Corinthians' chauvinism is found in 14:36—
 "What?³¹ Was it from you that the word of God went forth? or did it come unto you alone?"³²

According to this argument, the Corinthians had adopted a position (as put forth in vv. 34-35) derived from general cultural values of the Greco-Roman era, a position which runs counter to the explicit teaching of Paul elsewhere (e.g.,

28. Stephen C. Barton, "Paul's Sense of Place: an Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth" *NTS* 32.2 (1986): 229-30.

29. See also Anders Eriksson, "'Women Tongue Speakers, Be Silent': a Reconstruction Through Paul's Rhetoric 1," *Biblical Interpretation* 6.1 (1998): 80-104.

30. Neal M. Flanagan, "Did Paul Put Down Women in 1 Cor 14:34-36?" *BTB* 11.1 (1981): 10-12.

31. Bilezikian translates the word ἦ as "bunk!" Gilbert G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide For The Study Of Female Roles In The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Bk House, 1985), 144-153.

32. Author's translation.

Gal. 3:27-28; 1 Cor 11:5, 12).³³ Paul rebuts the Corinthians “by means of the double rhetorical question in v. 36.”³⁴ He clarifies that “to demand the silence of women in the Christian assembly is to claim for oneself a monopoly on the word of God. Such a monopoly no one can claim.”³⁵

Perhaps the most influential work claiming that vv. 34-35 constitute a Corinthian slogan is D.W. Odell-Scott’s article “Editorial Dilemma: The Interpolation of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 in the Western Manuscripts of D, G and 88” (2000). Odell-Scott argues that v. 36 could not directly follow v. 33 (i.e., vv. 34-35 have to fit between vv. 33 and 36) since “the particle [ἦ] which introduces the interrogative sentence of 14:36 indicates that the rhetorical questions to follow will serve to refute the sentences which preceded it.”³⁶ In other words, the

33. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 91-95.

34. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 517.

35. Ibid.

36. D.W. Odell-Scott, "Editorial Dilemma: The Interpolation of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 in the Western Manuscripts of D, G and 88," in *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 30 (2000): 69. Although Odell-Scott’s argument at first appears convincing, he seems to ignore the other possible usages of ἦ as found in Herbert Weir Smyth and Gordon M. Messing, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2856-63.

particle ἥ must be refuting the contents of vv. 34-35 since there is nothing in v. 33 to refute.

Others have also contributed to the argument that vv. 34-35 represent a Corinthian slogan. Neal Flanagan observes that the word “ones” (μόνους) in the phrase, “are you the only ones it has reached” in v. 36 is masculine. He takes this to mean that Paul is talking only to the men who are prohibiting female speech.³⁷ Taking a different approach, R.W. Allison argues that vv. 33b-36 come from an earlier letter from Paul to Corinth. In that previous epistle, Paul quoted the hierarchical view of a conservative group at Corinth; this quotation is now found in 1 Cor 14:34-35.³⁸ Accordingly, v. 33b is an editorial link, and v. 36 introduces Paul’s incensed rhetorical questions which are a “sarcastic rebuttal of his opponents’ position.”³⁹

Those who remain unconvinced that 14:34-35 is a Corinthian slogan point to the fact that the passage differs from other slogans (e.g. 6:12; 7:1) in several respects. Firstly, it is much lengthier than the other Corinthian slogans, which are

37. Flanagan, “Did Paul Put Down Women,” 10.

38. R W. Allison, “Let Women Be Silent in the Churches (1 Cor. 14.33b-36): What Did Paul Really Say, and What Did It Mean?,” *JSTN* 10.32 (1988): 27-60.

39. *Ibid.*, 47.

usually just a short phrase. Secondly, the passage is unlike other slogans because the Corinthian expressions typically “represent not ‘rebuttals’ but circumstantial qualifications—they raise more questions than they answer.”⁴⁰ Instead of a slogan and a Pauline correction, then, most view vv. 34-35 as a Pauline statement and v. 36 as Paul’s anticipation of “the response he expected to get when the Corinthians read his argument (vv. 34-35).”⁴¹

Pauline Original

Although many scholars accept the non-Pauline interpolation theory, several endorse the Pauline interpolation model and a small minority maintain the slogan argument, most contend that 1 Cor 14:34-35 was originally in Paul’s letter to Corinth. Nonetheless, because of the difficulties of the passage, all who argue this position must provide sufficient internal and external evidence for their reasoning. David Horrell explains,

Significant problems regarding the authenticity of 14:34f arise both from the textual dislocation of these verses, and from the apparent tension with 11.2-16 (esp. v. 5), where it is assumed that women are free to pray and prophesy. Every interpreter who accepts 14.34f as authentic must explain its content in such a way as to harmonize it with 11.2-16, and this leads to

40. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 99.

41. *Ibid.*

the qualification of 14.34f in ways which are not necessarily demanded by the text itself.⁴²

Like Horrell, other non-Pauline interpolation theorists declare that those who accept the passage as Pauline denature the text in their exegesis.⁴³ They claim that any interpretation that does not recognize the anti-feminine rhetoric of 1 Cor 14:34-35 is misguided. In support of this, they point to similar misogynistic words from noted chauvinistic writers to claim that the passage is unquestionably sexist. The following citation of Josephus is a favorite: “The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive.”⁴⁴

Those who defend the Pauline nature of the passage argue that “most, if not all, of these arguments (e.g., especially the relation to 11:5) become clarified in the light of patient exegesis.”⁴⁵ They claim that both the internal and external evidence points to the passage as being genuinely Pauline, and most assert he is not being sexist.

42. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 186.

43. See Fee, *First Epistle*, 706.

44. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.200-201 (Thackeray, LCL).

45. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1150.

Textual Issues

Many of the interpolation arguments are addressed by J.M. Ross, who categorizes different types of displaced or “floating” texts within the NT.⁴⁶ He argues that if the verses were indeed an interpolation, this would had to have taken place “very early, almost before any copies had been made, certainly before the writing of 1 Tim 2:11-13. . . . [therefore] we are bound to accept the unanimous testimony of the manuscripts.”⁴⁷ Regarding Ellis’s theory of Pauline interpolation he states, “A better guess is that an early copyist omitted 14.34-5 because it seemed inconsistent with the apparent permission for women to speak at 11.5, but the omission was preserved (perhaps in the margin) and a later copyist restored them to the text, but in the wrong place.”⁴⁸

Most scholars who uphold Pauline authorship, however, dismiss arguments about the dislocation of the passage in various texts as being the

46. J M. Ross, "Floating Words: Their Significance For Textual Criticism," *NTS* 38.1 (1992): 155-156.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

result of a textual insertion: “Displacement is no argument for interpolation.”⁴⁹

Instead, they argue that the “scribal alterations represent attempts to find a more appropriate location in the context for Paul’s directive concerning women.”⁵⁰ In other words, vv. 34-35 were probably “displaced by scribes who assumed that they were about household order, not order in worship, scribes working at a time when there were church buildings separate from private homes.”⁵¹

Those who argue that the dislocated verses were re-arranged rather than interpolated disagree with the claim by interpolation theorists that vv. 34-35 disrupt the flow of the passage. Instead, they maintain that the verses actually fit quite well within the framework of the larger section.⁵² As Margaret Mitchell explains, “I regard the passage as probably authentic because it fits well the argument for concord throughout 1 Corinthians. It also contains the very same

49. Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 288.

50. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 499.

51. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 288. Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982), makes a similar argument.

52. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 230. Ross (“Floating Words,” 155) asserts that the passage reads too roughly without vv. 34-35.

advice for order and peace in the assembly as is found in its context: silence (14:28, 30, 34), and it assumes the same purpose for this worship assembly, learning (14:31, 35)."⁵³ In addition to its thematic consistency with the overall passage, some argue that the language in vv. 34-35 is consistent with that used by Paul in his section about worship. Witherington points out that the four key terms in 1 Cor 14 are all found in vv. 34-35: λαλέω (14:14-32),⁵⁴ σιγάω (14:28, 30, 34), ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (14:28, 34, 35), and ὑποτάσσω (14:32, 34).⁵⁵

Relation with 1 Cor 11

Even if strong evidence supports the place of vv. 34-35 in the overall section of worship in 1 Cor 14, one must still grapple with the seeming contradiction between the message of the passage and Paul's instruction on

53. Margaret Mary Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 282-83, n. 536. See also C. D. Osburn, "The Interpretation of 1 Cor. 14:34-35," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity 1* (ed. C. D. Osburn, Joplin: College, 1993): 219-42. In this work, Osburn demonstrates the continuities between verses, the immediate context, and the larger discourse (12:1-14:40). Also, Meeks (*First Urban Christians*, 220) states, "verse 36 would not follow smoothly on vs. 33."

54. Allen Hunt observes that λαλεῖν, throughout 1 Corinthians is used for "inspired, Christian, intra-community speech" in distinction from non-inspired, more general speech. Of Paul's 52 uses of the verb, 24 are in 1 Cor 14 alone. Allen R. Hunt, *The Inspired Body: Paul, the Corinthians, and Divine Inspiration* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 122.

55. Ben Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 91.

female prophecy in 1 Cor 11. Does Paul advocate women speaking in church or not?

One theory that seeks to harmonize 1 Cor 11 and 14 is that the former chapter is referring to women prophesying whereas the latter is trying to maintain order and forbidding “chatter” and “frenzied shouting.”⁵⁶ This argument upholds that in ch. 14, rather than prohibiting women from prophetic speech, Paul “is forbidding them to indulge in feminine chatter which was becoming a considerable nuisance.”⁵⁷ However, as Barrett points out, λαλεῖν does not refer to “chatter” in Paul’s writings or elsewhere in the New Testament: “in the NT and in Paul the verb normally does not have this meaning, and it is used throughout chapter xiv (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 39) in the sense of inspired speech.”⁵⁸

56. Catherine Clark Kroeger and Richard Clark Kroeger. “Strange Tongues Or Plain Talk?,” *Daughters Of Sarah* 12.4 (1986): 10-13.

57. Gaston Deluz, *A Companion to I Corinthians* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1963), 215. Similarly, Moffat claims that Paul’s mandate to “keep quiet means even more than a prohibition of chattering. Worship is not to be turned into discussion groups...” James Moffat, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 233. See also Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 80-88.

58. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 332.

Another explanation for the apparent inconsistency between chapters 11 and 14 is that Paul prefers women to be silent except in special cases. Vander Stichele argues that rather than understanding the speech of women in church referred to in ch. 11 as the norm and the silence of women in ch. 14 as the exception, the silence should be understood as the norm and the speech, under the power of the Spirit, as the exception.⁵⁹ In agreement is Godet who combines ch. 11 and 14 to create the following hypothetical Pauline attitude: "As to women, if, under the influence of a sudden inspiration or revelation, they wish to take the word in the assembly to give utterance to a prayer or prophecy, I do not object; only let them not do so without having the face veiled. But in general, let women keep silence. For it is improper on their part to speak in church."⁶⁰

Others believe Paul is referring to different types of women in chapters 11 and 14 respectively. Schüssler Fiorenza contends that 11:2-16 discusses the decorum of unmarried women whereas 14:34-35 refers to married and non-

59. C. Vander Stichele, "Is Silence Golden? Paul and Women's Speech in Corinth," *LS 20* (1995): 241-53.

60. Frédéric Louis Godet, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 314.

Christian women.⁶¹ Similarly, Lone Fatum postulates that 14:34-35 treats the special issue of married women's participation in the official duty of testing the spirits (1 Cor. 12:10). Since Fatum believes that this activity involves charismatic authority as well as the right to question and criticize, she understands 1 Cor 14:34-35 to imply that Paul supports one set of rules for married women, and another set for unmarried women (1 Cor 11).⁶²

Others hypothesize that Paul has in mind not the women's identity but a specific type of speech. For example, Anthony Thiselton states that "the speaking in question denotes the activity of sifting or weighing the words of prophets, especially by asking probing questions about the prophet's theology or even the prophet's lifestyle in public."⁶³ This became especially sensitive and problematic when "wives were cross-examining their husbands about the speech and

61. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 230-33.

62. Fatum, Lone. "Image Of God And Glory Of Man : Women In The Pauline Congregations," in *Image of God and Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1991), 56-127.

63. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1158. Jervis also claims that interpolation theories are unconvincing. The real sense of Paul's letter is to ensure the peaceful practice of prophecy, not to limit the speech of women, but that the type of speech in which the women were engaging was counterproductive. L.A. Jervis, "1 Corinthians 14.34-35: A Reconsideration of Paul's Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women," *JSNT* 58 (1995): 51-74.

conduct which supported or undermined the authenticity of a claim to utter a prophetic message..."⁶⁴ In support of his position, Thiselton points to the Greek word ἐπερωτάω (to inquire) which is used in v. 35—"Let [the women] ask their husbands at home" (ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν). He points out that the verb has the distinctive interrogative meaning, suggesting that the women's behavior was disruptive.⁶⁵

Like Thiselton, Witherington argues that inappropriate questions posed by married women likely sparked the Pauline command in vv. 34-35. During the time of weighing prophecies, "women, perhaps married women, were asking questions, perhaps inappropriate questions, and the worship service was being disrupted. Paul urges in vv. 34f. that Christian worship not be turned into a question-and-answer session."⁶⁶ Witherington contends that like their pagan neighbors, Christian women thought of prophets in a similar vein to the Delphic Oracle which prophesied in response to particular questions about the personal

64. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1158.

65. This word will be investigated in more detail in ch. 2.

66. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 287. Likewise, Wayne Grudem (*The Gift of Prophecy*, 249-255) argues that Paul is telling women to be silent "during the evaluation of prophecies."

life of the seeker.⁶⁷ This misunderstanding by Christian women called for Paul to turn “from a more general exhortation to orderly procedure in regard to weighing prophecy (vv. 32-33) to the more specific case of women weighing or questioning prophecy.”⁶⁸

Other scholars understand the passage not to be a response against inappropriate questions but a Pauline clarification that women should never ask questions about prophecy. James Sigountos and Myron Shank explain that *λαλεῖν* “refers to asking questions in public—quite possibly a reference to the examination of the prophets in v. 29. If a woman spoke in this manner she violated the principle of submission (v 34).”⁶⁹ Sigountos’ and Shank’s understanding of the passage is unique, however, since they argue that “women were permitted to pray or prophesy but not to ask questions.”⁷⁰ They reconcile 1 Cor 11 and 14 by pointing out that Pauline Christianity was like Greco-Roman religion in that women could function as priests, just not as teachers.⁷¹

67. Ibid., 247.

68. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 102.

69. Sigountos and Shank, “Public Roles for Women,” 284.

70. Ibid., 285.

71. Ibid., 288-289.

Payne and Niccum

So far the major positions regarding 1 Cor 14:34-35 have been surveyed; however, two of the most influential and meticulous studies of the passage have not yet been discussed. The first of these is Philip Payne's 1995 article entitled "Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus, and I Cor. 14.34-5." Payne "identifies two previously unnoticed items of textual evidence that support the view that 1 Cor 14.34-5 ('Let women keep silence in the churches ...') was an interpolation."⁷² The first bit of evidence is a marginal gloss in the Latin manuscript Fuldensis. Payne claims that in the sixth century, Bishop Victor, a noted scholar with "acute text-critical perception"⁷³ who oversaw the production of Codex Fuldensis, ordered the rewriting of 1 Cor 14.34-40 in the margin of Fuldensis with vv. 34-35 omitted. This, according to Payne, is evidence that Victor was aware of at least one text with the passage omitted.

Payne's second argument is in regards to the 'bar-umlaut' which is "a text-critical siglum that indicates the scribe's awareness of a textual variant" in

72. Philip B. Payne, "Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus, and I Cor. 14.34-5," *NTS* 41.2 (1995): 240.

73. *Ibid.*, 241.

Codex Vaticanus.⁷⁴ According to Payne, of the 27 previously overlooked bar-umlaut marks in Vaticanus, 23 designate passages that contain a textual variant in Nestle-Aland 26.⁷⁵ Included in the list of 27 is a mark at the beginning of 1 Cor 14:34 which Payne takes to mean that the scribe of Codex Vaticanus knew of a text in which the passage was non-existent.⁷⁶ Payne therefore concludes that this, as well as the marginal gloss in Codex Fuldensis, are two ancient witnesses which attest a variant reading in which 1 Cor 14:34-35 is omitted.⁷⁷

The second work that necessitates discussion is one which makes claims opposite to Payne's and is largely devoted to undermining Payne's conclusions: Curt Niccum's 1997 article "The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Cor. 14.34-5." Niccum argues that the

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 251-253.

76. Ibid., 240.

77. Jorunn Økland makes the following observation regarding Payne's arguments: "Even if arguments similar to Payne's were right, his arguments do not concern what seems to be the most widespread interpolation theory, which considers 33b-36 an interpolation, and which uses as one of the main arguments that the ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἀγίων of 33b is post-Pauline terminology. 33b is considered Pauline even by Payne. He argues the case of 34-35. In other words, Payne's outer and the traditional inner criteria are fighting different cases." Jorunn Økland, *Women in Their Place Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 150.

displacement of 1 Cor 14:34-35 occurred at least a century and a half after 1 Corinthians was composed.

Niccum begins his article by undercutting Payne's argument regarding the bar-umlauts. He states that Payne confused two separate markings: the 'bar' and the 'umlaut.' "The 'bar' which extends from the text into the left margin" and divides the text into sense units dates from the fourth century but has "no value for determining readings of other MSS."⁷⁸ The 'umlaut,' although it does signify textual variation, was likely introduced into the text in the sixteenth century by Sepulveda.⁷⁹ Therefore, Niccum concludes that Payne's theory about the bar-umlauts being fourth-century markers of textual variants is quite unlikely.

Concerning Payne's argument about Fuldensis, Niccum asserts that Victor did not have a text missing vv. 34-35. Rather, after completing Fuldensis, Victor reviewed the text comparing his translation with another manuscript, and notated differing readings between the two in Fuldensis' margin. The text Victor used to compare his translation had vv. 34-35 after v. 40: "Victor, comparing both

78. Curt Niccum, "The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Cor. 14.34-5," *NTS* 43.2 (1997): 244-245.

79. *Ibid.*, 245.

MSS, began to write the comparison reading at the point he realized the two texts differed, i.e. immediately following v. 33. He copied cc. 36-40 in the margin. When he then reached v. 34 in the comparison text, he stopped since it was already present in Fuldensis."⁸⁰

Following his response to Payne, Niccum gives a lengthy and thorough study of the Latin and Western texts. He concludes that rather than being an interpolation or very early transposition, 1 Cor 14:34-35 was likely a displacement that took place in a northern Italian text in the third or fourth centuries.⁸¹ He postulates, "considering the increasing power of women and the rise of female monastic communities in the western churches during the third and fourth centuries, some may have perceived the collocation of women's silence with 'as in all the churches' unfortunate."⁸²

Feminist or Chauvinist?

1 Cor 14:34-35 has sparked intense interest because it is an important source for determining Paul's view towards women. Was the apostle a feminist,

80. Ibid., 246.

81. Ibid., 255.

82. Ibid.

a chauvinist or something in between? Those who argue for a non-Pauline interpolation as well as those who believe the passage is a Corinthian slogan usually seek to present Paul as a gender egalitarian. So much is this the case that Carroll Osburn has accused Gordon Fee's exegesis of the passage as looking "suspiciously like attempts to liberate Paul in terms of modern agendas."⁸³

However, some scholars who maintain that the passage is genuinely Pauline also argue that Paul is quite liberal in his views towards women. They claim that in vv. 34-35, Paul is referring to a specific circumstance in Corinth and that he does not intend for his words to be read as a mandate for universal feminine silence. Instead, Paul is simply trying to maintain order in Corinthian worship with these verses.

On the opposite end of the spectrum are those who use the passage to demonstrate Paul's doctrine of male headship or his misogyny. Walter Maier, for example, maintains that this passage confirms Paul's support for the Law which teaches that men are superordinate over women.⁸⁴ Similarly, Jorunn Økland asserts that Paul is addressing the issue of "sacred space" in these verses, a

83. C. D. Osburn, "The Interpretation of 1 Cor. 14:34-35," 223.

84. Walter A. Maier, "An Exegetical Study Of 1 Corinthians 14:33B-38," *CTQ* 55.2-3 (1991): 81-95.

sacred space which must maintain the order of male headship as taught in the Law.⁸⁵ Perhaps the most extreme position is that taken by Antoinette Wire who considers 14:34-35 the climax of Paul's argument in chapters 12-14. She states, "Paul's forcing a spiritual vote of confidence at exactly this point shows that the women's silencing is not a parenthetical matter but the turning point in his argument concerning the spiritual. Once he has called for their silence he has done all he needs to do."⁸⁶

A position between Paul's feminism and misogyny is maintained by many who believe it is unlikely the apostle held to either extreme. They assert that attempts to read Paul as "either a feminist who violates cultural norms of the Greco-Roman world or a traditionalist who cannot get beyond his own cultural patriarchy usually arise from an ill-informed picture of Greco-Roman antiquity."⁸⁷ Many who adhere to this position believe Paul had different sets of rules for different types of women, (usually married and unmarried). These divergent regulations are evident in the different messages of 1 Cor 11 and 14.

85. Økland, *Women in Their Place Paul*.

86. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 155.

87. Richard Oster, *1 Corinthians* (Joplin: College Press Pub. Co, 1995), 343.

Conclusion

No argument about 1 Cor 14:34-35 is without its difficulties. The contextual and textual issues regarding the passage are complex and often perplexing. This has led many to conclude that the problem of 1 Cor 14:34-35 is insoluble: "One finally cannot decide from the evidence available which of the several suggestions for interpretation is absolutely correct."⁸⁸

Nonetheless, despite the many challenges posed by the passage, the present author sides with Anthony Thiselton who maintains that the passage can be "clarified in the light of patient exegesis."⁸⁹ Careful textual and contextual analysis will shed light on the meaning of this passage and its function in early Christianity. Indeed, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, patient exegesis will bring order and understanding to these difficult verses.

88. Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians* (NIBC 7; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 307.

89. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1150.

CHAPTER 2

1 Cor 14:34-35 in its Orderly Context

In recent New Testament scholarship, 1 Cor 14:34-35 has not been neglected. Whereas Christians in centuries past largely understood the passage to be support for male-dominated worship services, biblical scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first century have re-examined the passage thoroughly in order to reconcile it with seemingly gender egalitarian passages in Paul's letters. However, as has been demonstrated in chapter one, no consensus regarding the passage has been reached.

This chapter will shed light on the condition of Corinthian women in the first century Roman Empire and Paul's attitude towards them as demonstrated in his epistles. Furthermore, this chapter will examine the language of 1 Cor 14:34-35 and its place in the context of the Corinthian correspondence. It will demonstrate that rather than a command for feminine silence, 1 Cor 14:34-35 is actually a call for orderly worship in the *ekklesia*.

Women at Corinth

Although they had a limited public role,¹ Roman women were by no means insignificant. Evidence suggests that they held a variety of occupations and responsibilities:

Graffiti from Pompeii, tomb carvings from Ostia, and occasional references in the literature show us women at work as weavers, dressmakers, copyists, midwives, physicians, grocers, innkeepers, barmaids, entertainers and barbers. Such women would have been free of some constraints of traditional rectitude: their economic contribution to the family was too important, and their background, whether in the slums or the dormitories of a house where they had been slaves, would not have socialized them to the niceties of aristocratic femininity.²

Because they lived in a city largely made up of freed slaves with relatively few aristocrats,³ women at Corinth were particularly disinclined to passivity. Some of

1. Women could not vote, hold public office, or serve in the Roman military. Also, “unlike other ancient Mediterranean peoples such as the Carthaginians and Egyptians of North Africa, the Romans were never ruled—even in their mythic traditions—by a queen.” Judith P. Hallett, “Women’s Lives in the Ancient Mediterranean,” in *Women & Christian Origins* (ed., Ross Shephard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo; New York: Oxford, 1999), 18.

2. John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 99. See also Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 225-256. Cohick (*Women in the World*, 240) also states, “Women did almost every type of work that was done by men, with a few important exceptions: men did not work as midwives or wet nurses (or nurses, for that matter), and women were not soldiers or politicians.”

3. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 27, 49, 64, 112.

them even participated as “quasi-professional” athletes at the famed Isthmian games, and their “abilities guaranteed their families a very good living.”⁴ Others like the honored Junia Theodora exerted great influence as affluent benefactors.⁵ Particularly noteworthy is what Plutarch observes, that the women at Corinth were known for their fierce attitudes and desire for battle: “The Corinthian women were the only women in Greece who offered that splendid inspired prayer that the goddess should fire their husbands with a passionate love for battle with the barbarian.”⁶

Although many women worked outside the home and participated in athletic and religious endeavors, gender equality was by no means a reality; life for women at Corinth was harsh. The primary role of a Roman woman was that

4. *Ibid.*, 14.

5. The female Corinthian benefactor Junia Theodora was probably a contemporary with Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2). Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Wilmington, Del: Michael Glazier, 2002), 82-84. Murphy-O'Connor (*St. Paul's Corinth*, 80) also clarifies that women could be *archsynagogoi*: “The common assumption that an *archsynagogos* was responsible for the public worship of the congregation and/or the senior magistrate of the community is no longer tenable. All that can be said, in the light of Jewish inscriptional evidence, is that it was an honorific title awarded by a community in gratitude for a donation to their place of prayer.... Since superfluous wealth was the only qualification for becoming a patron, the title could be given to a man or a woman.”

6. Plutarch, *De Herodoti Malignitate* 39.871a-c (Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth* 110-11). Although Plutarch is remarking on Grecian Corinth, it is likely that the legends of brave Corinthian women inspired the later female Corinthians of the Roman Empire.

of a wife and mother, and she was under the control of the *pater familias*.⁷

Antoinette Wire explains the difficulties that confronted Roman women:

Literary sources show that girls married at twelve to fourteen, men not before twenty. Burials suggest the life expectancy of females was roughly seven years shorter than of males, probably due to widespread death in childbirth. The exposure of infants by the father's decision, the primary method of birth control, fell largely upon girl babies because of the dowry system and the economic advantage of sons. Some of the girls were found and raised as slaves. Many others died, and that is one factor in the severe depopulation problem in Greece during this period (NT period). The low proportion of women in the population increased pressures on them to marry early and, if widowed, to remarry quickly. It can be assumed that virtually all adult women who were to become prophets in the Corinthian church were married when entering the community, bearing children regularly, and keeping the hearth either for their husbands' or their masters' households.⁸

What added to the difficulty of women's lives was the double standard of morality for husbands and wives. Women were expected to embrace complete fidelity in marriage whereas men were allowed to engage in extra-marital sexual affairs. About a century before Paul, however, women reacted against the inconsistent standard of chastity. At the time of Cicero and Caesar emerged the "new wife" or "new woman" in Rome—"a woman in high position, who nevertheless claims for herself the indulgence in sexuality of a woman of

7. See Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 35-48.

8. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 64.

pleasure.”⁹ This new woman “eschewed traditional morality as encapsulated in motherhood and wifely modesty in favor of riotous living, not unlike wealthy men’s partying and cavorting.”¹⁰

Paul and Women

Paul sought to bring the liberated Corinthian women back to more conservative mores. Bruce Winter argues that 1 Cor 11 is Pauline instruction for married women to stop acting like the “new” wives of Rome and to wear veils in public like married women should.¹¹ Although Winter’s theory is debatable, Paul’s disapproval of Corinthian women’s behavior is not.¹² Whether they had been inspired by the “new wives” or some other liberating movement, female

9. Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 123.

10. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 72.

11. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 128; see also 121-41. April DeConick makes a similar point in her work *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender Conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 62. She states that the removal of veils by Corinthian women “is an astonishing action for them to have undertaken, since it would have marked them to other Jews and Romans as licentious women, even adulteresses, a point which Paul takes great strides to press home.”

12. For an argument contrary to Winter’s, see Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 230-33.

Corinthian comportment was inappropriate in Paul's view, and he advocated more conservative dress for women in worship in 1 Cor 11.¹³

The liberal attitude of these women toward traditional dress could have been influenced by their active roles in society and participation in the Isthmian games. Ben Witherington explains, "Women participated in the games, and it is possible that some of Paul's difficulties with women in Corinth were in part due to female Greek or Roman Christians used to a greater scope of activity in society than the apostle would allow in the Christian community."¹⁴

On the other hand, Paul's letters show some evidence of liberal thinking. For example, few Romans "could have conceived of arguing that the husband's body *belonged* to the wife" as Paul explains in 1 Cor 11.¹⁵ He also recognizes the authority of female Christians like Priscilla, a fellow tentmaker. When Paul mentions Priscilla and her husband Aquila, Priscilla is usually listed first,

13. Murphy-O'Connor (*St. Paul's Corinth*, 91-92) explains Paul's logic: "If a woman is prepared to be unfeminine by ignoring the conventions of female hair dressing, she should go the whole way and appear mannish. Very short hair was the sign of the lesbian, as two texts from Lucian show."

14. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 12.

15. *Ibid.*, 175.

suggesting to some scholars that she was the head of the family unit.¹⁶

Furthermore, Paul likewise recognizes the authority of Junia as an apostle

(ἀπόστολος) and Phoebe as a “sister” (ἀδελφή), “deacon” (διάκονος), and

“benefactor” (προστάτις).¹⁷ Perhaps his best known reference to gender equality

is found in Gal 3:28: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or

free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

These examples demonstrate that unlike most men within the Roman Empire in

which he lived, Paul gave voice to women and recognized their authority in

leadership roles in the Christian *ekklesia*. J. Murphy-O’Connor explains,

Paul took it entirely for granted that women were ministers of the church in precisely the same sense as men. He recognized their gifts as fruits of the Spirit, which he had neither the desire nor the authority to oppose. Given the androcentric world in which he lived, however, it would be

16. Paul J., Achtemeier and Roger S. Boraas, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1996), 882. Lynn Cohick (*Women in the World*, 130) observes, “Because the culture was highly stratified, the order in which someone was named in a group could have status implications. Some scholars suggest that Prisca had a higher social status than her husband. ... Others suggest that Prisca had more wealth and so was treated with proper honor in noting her name before her husband’s.” Another view is that Priscilla was a “major player” in the Jesus movement, perhaps more so than her husband Aquila; see Ross S. Kraemer, “Jewish Women and Women’s Judaism(s) at the Beginning of Christianity,” in *Women & Christian Origins* (ed., Ross Shephard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo; New York: Oxford, 1999), 73.

17. See Margaret Y. MacDonald, “Reading Real Women in the Undisputed Letters of Paul,” in *Women & Christian Origins* (ed., Ross Shephard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo; New York: Oxford, 1999), 207-211.

surprising if there were not stirrings of opposition among those who failed to appreciate just how radical the gospel was.¹⁸

A Call for Order

Many non-Pauline interpolation proponents contend that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is inconsistent with Paul's liberal outlook on women's role in the *ekklesia* as well as his attitude towards the Law. For example, Paul was aware that Gen 2:21-22 was "used in Jewish circles to demonstrate the inferiority and subordination of women."¹⁹ In 1 Cor 11:11-12, however, Paul works to overturn "the traditional argument from the chronological priority of the male in the creation narrative by pointing out that the chronological priority of woman in the birth of a male is just as much part of God's plan for the order of his creation."²⁰ Paul undercuts the argument for male priority with an appeal to mutual dependence on male and female. As a result, those who argue that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is genuinely Pauline must explain how Paul, who apparently rejects male supremacy and recognizes

18. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 289.

19. *Ibid.*, 290.

20. *Ibid.*

gender interdependence, could appeal to the Law to silence women. This section will demonstrate that Paul's reference to the Law is a plea for Corinthian order, not gender subordination.

As noted above, interpolation theorists view 1 Cor 14:34-35 as non-Pauline because of the way the passage references the Law. As Gordon Fee claims:

Real problems for Pauline authorship lie with the phrase 'even as the Law says.' First, when Paul elsewhere appeals to 'the Law,' he always cites the text (e.g., 9:8; 14:21), usually to support a point he himself is making. Nowhere else does he appeal to the Law in this absolute way as binding on Christian behavior. More difficult yet is the fact that the Law does *not* say any such thing. Gen. 3:16 is often appealed to, but that text does not say what is here argued.²¹

However, Fee and other interpolation theorists seem to misunderstand Paul's argument and reference. The fact that the Law "does not say any such thing" indicates that Paul is not referring to a specific scripture like Gen 3:16.²² Richard Oster explains that both in chapters 11 and 14 of 1 Cor, Paul cites the Torah but does not refer to a particular passage: "It should be obvious that Genesis 1-3 does not any more explicitly mention liturgical head coverings than it says that

21. Fee, *First Epistle*, 707.

22. S. Aalen gives a convincing argument against those that claim οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται is not Pauline. He asserts that Paul draws here from a rabbinic formula used to reference biblical texts. The formula often begins with ὁ νόμος λέγει. S. Aalen, "A Rabbinic Formula in 1 Cor 14:34," in *Studia Evangelica II* (Berlin: Berlin Academy, 1964), 513-25.

women cannot speak in the assembly of believers! Moreover, Paul does not even imply or say that the text of Genesis says either of these."²³

Therefore, rather than a mandate citing Gen 3:16 for female silence, the Pauline petition to the Law stands as an appeal to the order of creation described in the Pentateuch. Thiselton observes, "It is extremely important to distinguish this (*ὑποτάσσω*) from submission based on Gen. 3:16, since this then confuses the Christian believer's role within the *created order* with a role still unresolved within *fallen* creation, which then appears to conflict with Gal. 3:28."²⁴ Paul's goal is to maintain Pentateuchal order, not to place women under men's authority; in other words, "women are not being commanded to submit to their husbands but to the principle of order."²⁵

23. Oster, *1 Corinthians*, 341. F.F. Bruce agrees with Oster. Regarding the Law, Bruce states that a specific reference to the fall narrative "is unlikely since in MT and LXX Gen 3:16 speaks of woman's instinctive inclination... (Heb. נָקָה; Greek ἀποστροφή) towards her husband, of which he takes advantage so as to dominate her. The reference is more probably to the creation narratives." F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, (London: Oliphants, 1971), 136.

24. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1155.

25. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 102-103. Thiselton observes that *ὑποτασσέσθωσαν* should be "keep their ordered place" instead of "be subordinated" since "the Pentateuch declares the *ordered character of creation and human life* and the regulative character (especially Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Numbers) of *boundaries or differentiations*....The patterns of order demonstrated in divine actions of creation through differentiation and order in the Levitical and Deuteronomical codes are integral to the Pentateuch. The prior state of 'the earth' was 'without form and void.' God then 'divides' or 'separates' light from darkness and heaven from earth to give each 'form'" (Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1153-54).

The usage of the verb *ὑποτάσσω* in v. 34 is vital in understanding Paul's appeal to order. Two verses earlier (14:32), Paul states an important rule for worship using the same word: *πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται* ("the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets"). When Paul instructs women to be "in submission" (*ὑποτασσεσθωσαν*) in v. 34, he is referring back to this rule of orderly worship, not to male headship. The principle behind the Pauline command is that "God is a God not of disorder but of peace" (14:33- οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ εἰρήνης).

Paul's call for submission and order did not appeal to many charismatic Corinthian Christians, however.²⁶ In the eyes of many at Corinth such orderliness did not apply to them because of the freedom of the new covenant; in Paul's view however, such a claim "undermines the very unity of God by making the god of the Spirit of the new age contradict the God who revealed his ordered ways through scripture."²⁷ Paul's issue with the Corinthians was not "speech"

26. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 13-38.

27. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1154.

but their “abuse of speech.”²⁸ Rather than prohibiting prophetic or feminine speaking, he is forbidding interruption and chaos.²⁹

There is more at play here, though; the Corinthians were not merely speaking out of turn but were doing so without *agape*. In 1 Cor 13:5, Paul states that *agape* does not behave unseemly, seek its own things, provoke or calculate evil (οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν). It seems, however, that the Corinthians, particularly the women, could have been guilty of all of these things. In v. 35, Paul’s employment of the verb ἐπερωτάω (which can mean “to inquire” but can also mean to “interrogate”) instead of “the simple verb ἐρωτάω” (“to ask”) indicates this: “Let [the women] ask their husbands at home” (ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν).³⁰ Besides his quotations of LXX, this is the only occurrence of ἐπερωτάω in Paul’s letters; every other time he means “to ask” he uses the verb ἐρωτάω.³¹ Therefore, it seems that Paul is referring to a special type of accusation or interrogation by

28. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*.

29. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 135.

30. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1159. For examples of ἐπερωτάω used in the interrogative sense, see Acts 5:27; 23:34.

31. Paul does use ἐπερωτάω once while quoting Isaiah (Rom 10:20) but nowhere else. On the contrary, Paul employs ἐρωτάω in Phil 4:3, 1 Thess 4:1, 1 Thess 5:12, 2 Thess 2:1.

these women rather than mere questioning. This is especially likely in light of the fact that in Mark 14:60-61, for example, ἐπερωτάω means “to interrogate” in a judicial investigation and is used to explain the high priest’s interrogation of Jesus.³²

Many Corinthian women were probably disrupting worship with inappropriate interrogations and accusations. 1 Cor 14:29b speaks of the responsibility of all to “weigh or investigate” (διακρινέτωσαν) prophecies and it seems that certain women had taken this duty too far. These Christian women were raising accusations, particularly against their husbands, “under the guise of sifting what has been said.”³³ They were disrupting the honest examination of prophecy and possibly questioning the moral character of the one prophesying. As a result, the objective for all to learn and receive encouragement was frustrated (14:31- ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται).

In addition to the accusatory tone of the Corinthian women, much of the problem at Corinth was that wives were making accusations against their

32. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1159. Thiselton also observes that the noun form of the word (ἐπερώτημα) “oscillates between *inquiry* and *demand*, with overtones of earnest intensity. By contrast, without the directive compound, the *simple* verb ἐρωτάω means more generally to *ask*, in an ‘open’ sense” (*First Epistle*, 1160).

33. *Ibid.*, 1152-53.

husbands *before the ekklesia*; they were raising private affairs in front of the congregation. The line between home and assembly was one which Paul addressed earlier in 1 Cor (e.g. 11:22; 11:34)³⁴: "At several points Paul proposed that the Corinthians do at home activities that he considered disrupting or difficult when they gather."³⁵ The instruction in vv. 34-35 is much like the other instances in Paul's letters where he tries to separate the *ekklesia* from the home; home is the place to satisfy hunger, thirst and family disputes, not church.

1 Cor 14:34-35 in the Literary Context

Paul draws the line between public and private space largely to restore order in the *ekklesia* and to be consistent with the "missionary vision" of the church.³⁶ A part of this missionary vision was to generate a better atmosphere for potential converts by curbing unnecessary interruptions. To achieve this, Paul gives the following list in 1 Cor. 14:26-35 of those who are to keep order in the church:

34. Stephen C. Barton, "Paul's Sense of Place: an Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth," *NTS* 32.2 (1986): 225. 14:23 supports Barton's claims and makes it clear that Paul's emphasis in ch. 14 is on missionary and edification purposes. This stands against Jorunn Økland's (*Women in their Place*) argument that Paul in ch. 14 was seeking to designate a hierarchical sacred space that had little to do with missionary efforts.

35. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 16.

36. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1158.

1. The (male and female) *speakers in tongues* are told (vv. 27-28):
 - If there is no interpreter
 - *Be silent* in church
2. The (male and female) *prophets* are told (vv. 29-30):
 - Don't all talk at once
 - *Be silent* in church
3. *Women* with husbands are told (vv. 34-35):
 - Don't accuse your husbands and quarrel in public
 - Resolve your differences with your husbands at home and *be silent* in church³⁷

An appeal to silence is no outlier in chapter 14. The silence command in vv. 34-35 parallels the other directives to reticence for prophets and speakers in tongues in the preceding verses. It seems that all of these silent mandates are the result of a situational disturbance, not a universal theologically-backed mandate.³⁸

37. Kenneth Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (New York: SPCK, 2012), 415. The outline above was adapted from a similar one by Bailey.

38. An objection could be made that the parallel mentioned above is not exact. The first two cases include a subjunctive introduction to the silence commands (if there is no interpreter; if a revelation is made), but the third command, to women, has no subjunctive preface. However, the lack of a hypothetical introduction to the third command is likely due to the mutual knowledge Paul and the Corinthians had of a specific interruptive situation taking place in the Corinthian *ekklesia*. The third directive differs from the previous two in that it does not address kinds of disorder that have occurred at times in the past and could theoretically be issues in the future. Rather, in the third command, Paul refers to a definitive situation about which both he and the Corinthians are familiar.

Vv. 34-35 suit not only the immediate context of 14:26-35 but also the overall structure of chapters 11-14. Kenneth Bailey argues that chapters 11-14 constitute a chiasm.³⁹

WORSHIP: Men and Women in the Church (11:2-14:40)

4.1 Men and Women Leading in Worship: Prophets and How they Dress (11:2-16)

4.2 Order in Worship: *Sacrament*—The Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)

4.3 Gifts and the Nature of the Body (12:1-30)

4.4 The Hymn of Love (12:31-14:1)

4.5 Spiritual Gifts and the Upbuilding of the Body (14:1-25)

4.6 Order in Worship: *Word*—Prophets and Speakers in Tongues (14:26-33a)

4.7 Women and Men Worshiping: No Chatting in Church (14:33b-36)

(Concluding Summary and Personal Appeal [14:37-40])

If Bailey’s outline and chiasm are correct, vv. 34-35 certainly belong in their traditional location. The verses fit well in Paul’s call to order in church.

What adds validity to Bailey’s proposal is the culminating statement in 14:40 that concludes the overall section devoted to order: “all things should be done decently and in order” (πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω). Paul organized 1 Corinthians so that the verses prior to this pronouncement in

39. Ibid., 409.

14:40 are included in the section intended to maintain proper decorum in the *ekklesia*.⁴⁰

If vv. 34-35 are placed after this injunction, however, they are no longer included in the section devoted to order. Instead, they become an independent declaration placed between the Pauline call to orderly worship (11:2-14:40) and his teaching about the resurrection (15:1-58). This rearrangement would give heightened importance to the gender dimension by taking the words out of their immediate context which calls for silence and order from multiple parties. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, such a textual arrangement is more in line with the agenda of second- and third-century western Christians than that of Paul. Paul's goal was to establish order, not to silence women.⁴¹ If he had wanted to ensure feminine reticence he would not have given women permission to speak with their heads covered at the beginning of his section on orderly worship (11:2-16).

40. Margaret Mitchell explains, the "section 11:2-14:40 concludes with Paul's overall advice: orderly and concordant behavior is to be sought in worship, where at present instead, shockingly, the Corinthian factions manifest themselves when 'coming together.'" Margaret Mary Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 283.

41. See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 258-283.

Immediate Context

Vv. 34-35 also fit in the immediate context before v. 36.⁴² Paul follows up his direction in 14:34-35 with the words, “Did the word of God come from you, or are you the only ones it has reached?” (ἢ ἀφ’ ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξηλθεν, ἢ εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους κατήντησεν;).⁴³ In this verse, Paul is addressing the women who were monopolizing the word of God. These women were acting as

42. Vv. 34-35 likely belong with the preceding v. 33b as seen in Nestle-Aland 28. Nonetheless, because v. 33b is not included in the textual displacement, interpolation theorists are forced to argue that vv. 34-35 form an independent unit; they contend that the verses stand alone and do not follow v. 33b. David Horrell (*Social Ethos*, 186-187) argues this position. He asserts that it is non-Pauline to take v. 33b (ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἀγίων) with v. 34. Horrell states that in “other places in 1 Corinthians where Paul refers to general church practice, the phrase *concludes* the related comment rather than introducing it.” The problem with Horrell’s argument is that he fails to cite any particular examples. Without them, his assertion is inconsequential.

43. Author’s translation. The displacer of the passage could have seen v. 36 as a problematic response to vv. 34-35 which would have motivated him to displace the verses. It is clear from the Western version of Romans 6:15-16 (which add an ἢ in v. 16 to clarify Paul’s rejection of the question posed in v. 15) that the Western text transcribers understood ἢ as a particle that “often introduces an argument *ex contrario*” (Smyth and Messing, *Greek Grammar*, 2861).

Whether or not the Western scribe displaced the passage in order to remove it from v. 36, Paul probably did not mean v. 36 to be a contrary argument to vv. 34-35. In 1 Corinthians, Paul does use ἢ to introduce an argument *ex contrario* without the words οὐκ οἶδατε after it: ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε. This occurs in 1 Cor 6:2; 6:9; 6:16; 6:19.

Paul is more likely using ἢ in a different manner here. Smyth and Messing (*Greek Grammar*, 2860) explain, “ἢ often does not introduce an alternative to a previous question, but substitutes instead another question which is more specific and intended to anticipate the answer to the first.” In this way, Paul rephrases opposing rhetoric into an absurd question in numerous locations: Rom 2:4; 3:29; 6:3; 9:21; 11:2; 14:10; 1 Cor 9:6; 9:7; 9:8; **10:22**; 11:22; 12:21; 2 Cor 1:17; 3:1; 6:15; 11:7; 13:5; Gal 1:10.

if they were proprietors of prophecy; they were behaving as if the word of God originated with them or they were the *only* ones it had reached.⁴⁴ As mentioned above, it is likely that they took the practice of weighing (διακρίνω-14:29) prophecies too far and neglected the important goal for “all to prophesy” (14:31). Their comportment was shameful in Paul’s eyes.

Contextual Change and Conclusion

As we have seen, 1 Cor 14:34-35 belongs in its traditional location. Its language and style are consistent with the preceding verses (14:26-33), and the instruction in the following verse (14:36) is an appropriate anticipation of the Corinthian response to vv. 34-35. When situated in the traditional location, the passage is included in the chiastic structure of the overall section (11:2-14:40) dedicated to preserving order in the *ekklesia*.

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, early Eastern Christians understood Paul’s command to silence in vv. 34-35 as being for the whole church (not just women) to worship in an orderly manner. However, shifting vv. 34-35 to follow v. 40 took those verses out of the context of maintaining reverence

44. Paul’s usage of the word “only” or “alone” (μόνους) is significant in this verse. If Paul were contending for exclusion of female speech in the assembly he would be arguing that the Word of God *only* comes to men, thus contradicting his rhetoric. Because Paul censures the women for monopolizing the word, he must mean that men must not monopolize it either.

during prophecy and transformed them into a universal mandate to women's ecclesiastical silence.⁴⁵ This mandate became very convenient for Western Church Fathers who were seeking to align the church with Roman norms.

45. James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women: A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36" in *WTJ* 35 (December 1, 1973): 215.

CHAPTER 3

1 Cor 14:34-35 and the Church Fathers

Ben Witherington has made the astute observation, “It should be recognized that what an individual says to correct an error cannot be taken as a full or definitive statement of his views on a particular subject.”¹ First and early second-century Christians did not take Paul’s statement to the Corinthians as indicative of a church-wide mandate, and those who later championed female silence were not restoring the church to its early order. Rather, these later female-silencers were attempting to impose a Roman structure on the Christian church.

This chapter will argue that 1 Cor 14:34-35 was first used to subordinate women by late-second century Western Christians who were attempting to bring the church from private to public space.² Aggravated by the second-century heresy, Montanism, the Western Fathers turned to 1 Cor 14:34-35 to silence the

1. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 25.

2. The designation “Western Fathers” denotes those from the Western Roman Empire who wrote primarily in Latin. The term “Eastern Fathers” refers to those from the Eastern Roman Empire who wrote mainly in Greek or Syriac.

prevalent Montanist prophetesses. Prior to the Montanist movement, 1 Cor 14:34-35 was not cited to keep women in submission. Furthermore, besides Origen, Eastern Church Fathers did not cite the text to silence women until the fourth century. Consequently, interpreting 1 Cor 14:34-35 as a Pauline directive for female silence in church is inconsistent with the earliest Christian readings of the text.

The Divergent Christian and Roman Social Structures

As demonstrated in chapter two, Paul gave women a voice and a leading role in the early Christian church. However, female leadership in the church not only lessened Christianity's credibility; it also posed a threat to the social order of the Roman world. The second-century Christian critic Celsus accused Christianity of being a religion of women and slaves,³ an accusation that served as both an insult and a warning about its threat to society. As one author explains, "In discussing conversion to foreign cults, the [ancient] male writers draw on stock assumptions about females, including their inherent gullibility and promiscuity. Moreover, Roman male writers were highly suspicious of and

3. Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.44 (ANF 4.481-482).

deeply opposed to the mixing of social classes, especially wealthy free women mingling with lower classes.”⁴

Despite these social stigmas,⁵ women held leadership positions in early Christianity from at least the time of Paul’s earliest epistles,⁶ and females were mentioned as church leaders through the second and third centuries by Clement⁷ and Origen.⁸ Evidence seems to show that by the third century,⁹ however, Christianity’s leadership shifted when it began to attract “members of the municipal ruling elites, who were trained for public life and experienced in

4. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 184.

5. Margaret Y. MacDonald, “Reading Real Women Through the Undisputed Letters of Paul” in *Women & Christian Origins* (ed. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 217, explains, “When early Christian groups penetrated the cities of the Roman empire, they no doubt encountered various preconceptions as to what their women had to offer.”

6. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 173, gives evidence of women involved in evangelizing, catechizing and baptizing.

7. Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 3.6.53.3-4) speaks of “feminis diaconis” (ANF 2.390-391).

8. Origen (*Commentary on Romans* 16.1,2) refers to “feminas in ministeris Ecclesiae constitu.”

9. See Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 3. The title *diakionos* for women continues through the sixth century but the female title deaconess began replacing the title of female deacon by the late third century. The term deaconess usually designated a female monastic superior by in the fifth to sixth century.

politics. Many Christian communities welcomed these aristocratic members, and they moved quickly into leadership positions.”¹⁰ Ben Witherington explains, “Unfortunately, after the NT period, with the effective loss of an eschatological focus on the imminent return of Christ and in the heat of the struggle with various heresies, the reforming process was abandoned or exchanged for a conforming schema.”¹¹ With the merging of differing Christian and Roman leadership norms,¹² Christian women were forced to submit to Roman standards.¹³

Prior to this social tension regarding the role of women in the late-second-century church, there is no record of any appeal to 1 Cor. 14:34-35 in order to silence women.¹⁴ As one scholar noted, “Even though 1 Corinthians was the most

10. Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women’s Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper SanFrancisco, 1993), 155.

11. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 35.

12. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 302. She suggests that “the episcopal hierarchy ... replaced early Christian prophecy.”

13. Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 6: “By the early third century, it is fairly clear that ordained or clergy women ordinarily did not perform the same role as their male counterparts.”

14. Peter Dunn, *The influence of 1 Corinthians on the Acts of Paul* in *Society of Biblical Literature 1996 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996): 452, argues that the author of *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* “could not have had 1 Cor. 14:34-35 in his copy, for he depicts a woman

quoted epistle by Christian writers in the second century, none of the Apostolic Fathers cite 1 Cor. 14:34-35."¹⁵ Nevertheless, the passage became a silencer for women as the Roman and Christian worlds began to combine.

Church Worship and Practice

Before we explore the roles of women in the early Church and the impact of 1 Cor 14:34-35 on them, a review of early Christian worship is in order.

In 1 Cor 14:26-33, Paul explains the type of worship that he desires the Corinthians to attain:

²⁶ What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. ³² And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, ³³ for God is a God not of disorder but of peace.

prophesying in the assembly, when otherwise he seems quite determined to show that the practice of the Corinthians follows Paul's teachings to the letter." However, the author of *Acts of Paul* might have had the passage in his copy, he or she just did not interpret the passage to be a universal mandate for female silence.

15. Philip Barton Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 251.

Paul's vision for worship is for each member to participate and contribute, but in an orderly manner and in turn.¹⁶

The charismatic and participatory devotion found in the earliest Christian assemblies waned in the latter decades of the first century; scripture took the place of prophecy as Christian worship increasingly focused on the book. Harry Gamble explains,

With the abandonment of Christianity's original eschatological orientation, there arose an awareness of this past as absolute and closed, an awareness that found its expression in the formation of the New Testament canon and enabled, indeed required, Christianity to undertake its history in the world and become a literary movement for the first time.... Thus Christianity became a literary movement only when, and only because it became a historical movement.¹⁷

Sources from the early second century indicate the changed focus in worship: from charismatic participation to the public reading of scripture and preaching by the bishop.¹⁸ As the author of 1 Timothy explains, "Until I arrive, give

16. Speaking of this passage, Valeriy Alikin observes, "This suggests that Christians conformed to the tradition held by non-Christian contemporaries of enlivening their symposia with talks, exposes, instruction and other oral contributions." Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 183-84.

17. Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 13.

18. This is not to say that the earliest Christians did not read scripture in worship. Early scriptural reading in worship is attested in Acts 15:31; Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; Rev 1:3; Rev 22:18.

attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching” (4:13). This more didactic type of worship is also evident in Justin Martyr’s description of early second-century Christian meetings:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen...¹⁹

The reading of scripture in worship seems to be even more important in the late second- and early third-century church. Tertullian explains: “We meet to read the books of God—if anything in the nature of the times bids us look to the future or open our eyes to the facts. In any case, with those holy words we feed our faith, we lift up our hope, we confirm our confidence; and no less we reinforce our teaching by inculcation of God’s precepts.”²⁰ For these Christians, “the very thrones of the apostles [were] still pre-eminent in their places,” because

19. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 1.67 (ANF 1.185-86).

20. Tertullian, *Apol.* 39.3. English translation from Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 156.

in worship “their own authentic writings [were] read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally.”²¹

As reading became increasingly important in worship, illiterate Christians, particularly women, were unable to contribute. For the Romans, literacy separated the elite: “Reading of literary prose, often difficult and inaccessible to the less educated, is part of that which fence[d] off the elite group from the rest of society.”²² In order to maintain the exclusivity of literacy, the elite Romans deliberately made reading more difficult by removing punctuation and reading aids that had existed prior to their time.²³ Due to the exclusive nature of reading, it is estimated that literacy rates in the Roman Empire were very low, particularly for women. William Harris posits that among Greco-Roman urban

21. Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 36: “Come now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally” (ANF 3.260-261).

22. William A. Johnson, “Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *AJP* 121 (2000): 623.

23. Ibid. Harry Gamble (*Books and Readers*, 48) also adds, “Punctuation marks, accents, and other lectional aids, when they did occur, are normally found only in texts used by scholars and students.”

dwellers, the literacy rate among males was 20-30% while among females it was 10-15%.²⁴

Worship based on reading changed the culture of the late first-century church and likely set the stage for limited roles for women. As elite, literate members of society began to dominate worship services, women, who were mostly illiterate, faded into the background. As a result, the new church leadership was not only upper class, but also mostly male. By the end of the second century, with women mostly in the background, appeals to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in order to completely silence females did not seem unreasonable to some Christians.

The Reader in His Place

With the stress on reading in worship, the “reader” of the texts became increasingly important. Due to the lack of reading aids in Roman texts, a great responsibility fell on the reader to bring literary works to life.²⁵ William Johnson

24. William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1989), 266-67. Harris postulates, “Overall in the empire, the “level of literacy is likely to have been below 15%.”

25. By “Roman texts,” Johnson means the “reading of Greek literary prose texts by the educated elite during the early empire (first and second centuries A.D).” In his study, Johnson considers “evidence as diverse as bookrolls from Greco-Roman Egypt and cultural behavior in Rome.” Johnson, “Toward a Sociology,” 606.

explains, “It was the *reader’s job* to bring the text alive, to insert the prosodic features and illocutionary force lacking in the writing system.”²⁶ The “reader played the role of performer, in effect, and the sort of direction for pause and tone given by the author’s para-linguistic markup in our texts (commas, quotes, italics, indentation, etc.) was left to the reader’s interpretation of the lines.”²⁷ In short, “a surprising amount of the burden to interpret the text was shifted from author to reader.”²⁸

By the end of the second century there had arisen within the church a specific office of “reader.”²⁹ In earliest Christianity, such an office was not official as attested by Rev 1:3, which “pronounces a blessing upon ‘the one who reads’

26. Ibid., 620. The italics are Johnson’s.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 218. The office is first attested by Tertullian for North Africa at the end of the second century (*Praescr.* 41), and Hippolytus verifies it for Rome only a little later (*Apost. Trad.* 1.12). This office is the oldest of the so-called “minor orders” of the clergy. Gamble (*Books and Readers*, 221) explains, “In not having hands laid upon him the reader is differentiated (along with widows, virgins, subdeacons, and healers) from the clergy proper (bishops, presbyters, and deacons).” The affairs differed in the western and eastern churches, however (Gamble, 222): “In the western church the reader was understood as a functionary responsible for a particular action in the liturgy. As such, he receives no special spiritual endowment but is merely given the object of his duty, the book. The eastern ritual conveys a higher estimate of the reader: a spiritual endowment is invoked by prayer and bestowed through the laying on of hands, just as for the other orders.”

and upon 'those who hear.' This reader had no official capacity, for the participle *anaginoskon*, 'the one who reads,' rather than the noun *anagnostes*, 'the reader,' is used."³⁰ Even after the "reader" became an official position, however, its prominence was short lived. By the fourth century, the reader's most prestigious duty had been usurped by the deacons and presbyters: the *Canons of Basil* (97) counsel that "only a deacon or presbyter should read the gospel in the catholic church; no one should overstep his rank."³¹ The "reader" was reduced to reading the less sacred texts of the Old Testament while higher clergy took over the reading of the more sacred New Testament: "Let the reader ... read the books of Moses [and the rest of the OT is listed here]... and afterwards let a deacon or a presbyter read the gospels [and the rest of the NT is listed]..."³²

In addition to defining *who* could read in the Christian assembly, *where* the lector read was also of importance. In the third century, Cyprian alludes to the reader standing on a "pulpit (*pulpitum*), that is upon the tribunal of the church"

30. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 219: "The other is found in 1 Tim. 4:13, which admonishes Timothy to attend 'to the (public) reading, to preaching and to teaching' (*te anagnosei, te parakleseis, te didaskalia*). Here the responsibility for reading, preaching, and teaching all accrue to the community leader, or bishop, represented by 'Timothy.'"

31. *Canons of Basil* 97. English translation from Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 222-223.

32. *The Constitutions of the Apostles* 2.57 (ANF 7.421-22). Jerome, Epistle 147.6 (NPNF 6.292): "you used to be for ever reading Christ's gospel as if you were a deacon."

which is “propped up in the place of the highest elevation and conspicuous to the entire congregation.”³³ *The Constitutions of the Apostles* advise the reader to “stand upon some high place... in the middle.”³⁴ As Harry Gamble explains,

It must be supposed that the place where Christians met (housechurch or domus ecclesiae) was furnished with ...a platform (bema or ambo). Indeed, one can be seen in the early third-century housechurch at Dura Europus: at the eastern end of the room that served as the assembly hall there was a small raised platform that must have been the place from which reading and preaching were done.³⁵

With this raised platform for reading, it seems that Christians were replicating Roman bureaucratic practices. J. Murphy-O'Connor explains that a raised platform was the center of Roman political life: “The bema (Acts 18:12), or speaker’s platform, stood in the center of the agora.... From here public proclamations were read. Here the magistrates sat. Those who appeared before them stood on the square stone platform near the altar.”³⁶

The adoption of the bema by Christians affected the role of women in the church. Some Christians, like the late fourth-century Church Father John

33. Cyprian, *Ep.* 39.4.1 (L. Michael White, “Architecture: the first five centuries,” in *The Early Christian World 2* (ed., Philip Francis Esler; London: Routledge, 2000), 718).

34. *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.57 (ANF 7.421-22)

35. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 224-25.

36. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 28.

Chrysostom, upheld that women could speak in the church building but just not at the bema.³⁷ Chrysostom's statement will be discussed in more detail below.

A Roman Church

The Christian adoption of the Roman bema is indicative of a shift in early Christian worship. The Pauline gift-based worship that took place in housechurches was being replaced by a public worship in a space that reflected Roman customs. As Christian worship shifted from communal meal in private space to open assembly in public space, public roles were assumed by Christians in worship, and space was defined and designated. In short, the Christian *ekklesia* was beginning to mirror the Roman *ekklesia*.

A result of the conforming social schema of the church was that Roman social boundaries penetrated the Christian *ekklesia*, ostensibly subordinating Christian women. Roman women were "debarred from public life;" they could not vote, hold public office, or serve in the Roman military.³⁸ Although some women wielded power financially or otherwise, the general public role of Roman

37. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 31 (NPNF1 11.553-559).

38. Ronald Syme, *Sallust*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

women was that of submission.³⁹ Therefore, the increasingly public nature of the Christian *ekklesia* was oppressive to women who wished to participate in worship. The fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* demonstrates this: “And let the women sit by themselves, they also keeping silence.... Let the women approach with their heads covered, as is becoming the order of women.”⁴⁰ In short, for the Romanized church, the social equality of Pauline Christianity (Gal 3:27-28) was no longer a reality.

This social conformation of Christianity was not embraced uniformly throughout Christendom, however. The practice of silencing Christian women and their exclusion from church offices seem to have been initially applied much more in the Latin West than in the Greek East. Archaeological evidence demonstrates this claim with a large disparity between the two regions in the number of women deacons: “The overwhelming preponderance of evidence for female deacons comes from the Greek East—sixty-one Eastern and four Western inscriptions of known women deacons, along with forty Eastern and two

39. See “Women at Corinth” above.

40. *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.57 (ANF 7.421-22). Although this work comes from fourth-century Syria, it represents the attitudes that western Christians pushed on the eastern church in the third and fourth centuries. As will be demonstrated below, the misogynistic agenda of some Western Fathers eventually penetrated into the eastern churches as well.

Western literary references to real women who held the office.”⁴¹ From this data one can see a clear difference in female’s roles between the East and West.

In addition to the archaeological evidence for different functions of women in the West and East, Western and Eastern Church Fathers of the second and third centuries also express diverging attitudes toward women’s church roles. The writings of the Western Church Fathers exhibit an agenda to silence women and conform Christianity to Roman social standards. By contrast, early eastern Christian writings demonstrate a Christian tradition in which women were not aggressively subordinated but seen as fellow participants in Christ.

Western Fathers

Clement of Rome

Irenaeus mentioned both the fact that Clement was the third Bishop of Rome, and that “the church in Rome sent a most powerful letter to the Corinthians urging them to peace and renewing their faith and the tradition which they had recently received from the apostles.”⁴² This epistle, probably

41. Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 203.

42. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.3.3 (ANF 1.416). Clement of Alexandria also knows of Clement of Rome, author of the Epistle to the Corinthians (*Strom.* 1.7; 6.8). He refers to him once as ‘the Apostle Clement’, attributing the letter to the Corinthians to him (*Strom* 4.17).

written around 95-96 CE,⁴³ includes likely the first recorded reference to 1 Corinthians.⁴⁴

Clement did not share Paul's vision of a Christianity that disregards social roles. Instead, in possible sympathy with the writer(s) of the pastoral letters, Clement saw "the *paterfamilias* as ultimately responsible for the spiritual welfare of his entire household."⁴⁵ The ideology in Clement's writings "legitimizes and affirms the dominant social order, rooting the established social domestic and ecclesiastical hierarchy in the ordering purposes of God the creator. It reinforces the position of the socially dominant within the Christian community, urging all to remain in their place."⁴⁶ In short, for Clement, "the subordination of women is assumed and presented as ideal."⁴⁷

43. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 239.

44. Margaret Mitchell (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 17) postulates that "probably the first recorded reference to 1 Cor. is 1 Clement 47.1-3." The Bishop Dionysius of Corinth, sometime around 170 CE, informed the church at Rome that the epistle "sent to Corinth 'through Clement' was read out regularly for the instruction of the Corinthian church." Letter of Dionysius to Soter, Bishop of Rome, cited by Eusebius, *Church History* 4.23.11 (NPNF21.201). Eusebius says the letter was "publicly read in the common assembly both in the days of old and in our time." *Church History* 3.16 (NPNF2 1.147).

45. James S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome Social Order and Hierarchy in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 123.

46. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 279.

47. Ibid.

Clement revealed this chauvinism in his epistle to the Corinthians. He began the letter with a “reminiscence” of the glorious past when the Corinthians used to have peace and prosperity:

For you used to act impartially in all that you did, and you walked according to the ordinances of God, submitting yourselves to your leaders and rendering all due honor to those who were older (presbyters) among you. You instructed your young people to think moderate and respectful thoughts. You directed women to accomplish all things with a blameless, respectful, and pure conscience, dutifully loving their husbands. And you taught them to love their households respectfully, living under the rule of submission, practicing discretion in every way (ἐν τε τῷ κανόνι τῆς ὑποταγῆς τὰ κατὰ τὸν οἶκον σεμνῶς οἰκουρῶσαι ἐδιδάσκετε, πάνυ σωφρονοῦσας).⁴⁸

Clement’s description of the past is probably not accurate and merely serves his rhetoric. Throughout his epistle, Clement sought to subordinate women and establish patriarchal order along normal Roman social lines. His “reminiscence” probably fit in this overall scheme and was likely a way to promote and aggrandize traditional patriarchy, not a truthful description of the past. David Horrell explains:

It must be questioned whether Clement’s picture of the Corinthian community in this regard has much basis in fact.... Clement is not aware of earlier times of division in the Corinthian community (see Clem 47) and it is possible that 1.3 refers to a time of ‘deep peace’ after Paul’s final

48. 1 Clement 1.3 (Ehrman, LCL).

departure, when the hierarchy and subordination associated with traditional social roles had become the norm at Corinth, though it seems much more likely that Clement's presentation of the past merely represents his own view of what is desirable in the present.⁴⁹

Clement's chauvinism was displayed throughout his letter. In 6:3, he asserted that envy estranges "wives from their husbands" and nullified "what was spoken by our father Adam, 'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh'": marital strife was due to the rebellion of the wife.⁵⁰ Similarly, in 11:1 he contrasted the good example of Lot (11:1) and the bad example of his wife (11:2). The message was clear in these verses—women who do not obey their husbands will meet the same fate as Lot's wife. Clement did give hope for female Corinthians, however; he demonstrated through scripture that when subordinate, women had been capable of performing many "manly" acts (πολλὰ ἀνδρεῖα): "Many women were empowered by the gracious gift of God to perform numerous 'manly' deeds" (55:3).

Clement's misogyny was in full display in 21:6-7:

We should set our wives along the straight path (διορθώσωμεθα) that leads to the good. 7. Let them display a character of purity, worthy of love; let them exhibit the innocent will of their meekness; let them manifest the

49. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 265-66.

50. All translations of 1 Clement come from Ehrman, LCL.

gentleness of their tongues through how they speak; let them show their love not with partiality, but equally to all those who stand in reverential awe of God in a holy way.

Clement's message was clear: men should lead their subordinate wives in quiet lives of submission.

What is most surprising about Clement's misogynistic letter, however, is that he nowhere cited 1 Cor 14:34-35. Despite pushing a patriarchal hierarchy where women were submissive, Clement did not refer to the passage for support. Clement's reference to and description of 1 Corinthians in 1 Clement 47 is evidence that he was very familiar with the Pauline letter. Nonetheless, he did not cite it to support his rhetoric.⁵¹ Instead, as will be demonstrated below, the chauvinistic rendering of the passage first took place in the late-second or early-third century.

51. The lack of reference to 1 Cor 14:34-35 by *1 Clement* could potentially be used to support the non-Pauline interpolation theory; a case could be made that Clement does not cite 1 Cor 14:34-35 to support his chauvinistic rhetoric because the passage is not present in his text. Philip Barton Payne makes a similar claim in his book *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 251. Payne argues that because none of the Apostolic Fathers cite 1 Cor 14:34-35 to silence women, the passage must have been an interpolation: "Even though 1 Corinthians was the most quoted epistle by Christian writers in the second century, none of the Apostolic Fathers cite 1 Cor. 14:34-35." Although Payne is correct in his assertion that none of the Apostolic Fathers appeal to 1 Cor 14:34-35, an interpolation after Clement's time is impossible. Since the displaced passage is in every extant manuscript, an interpolation is only plausible if it occurred before 1 Cor was disseminated. See "Non-Pauline Interpolation Theory" above for more.

Tertullian

The first known writer to reference 1 Cor 14:34-35 to silence women was the Western Church Father Tertullian (160-220 CE). Born in Carthage, Tertullian was the first great western Christian writer and has been designated as “the father of Western Christianity.”⁵² Tertullian was a prolific author who wrote extensively against heresy and whose “inclination was mostly towards legal themes.”⁵³

Tertullian was among those Western Church Fathers who pushed for a “recasting of Latin Christianity.” His agenda was to bring the Christian church out of private space and into the public sphere.⁵⁴ This schema called for a major shift in women’s roles.⁵⁵ Tertullian stated in a treatise, “Young women, you wear

52. Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590-752* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 22.

53. Justo L. González, *Church History: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 30.

54. Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests*, 160.

55. Unlike other regions, the widows of Tertullian’s Carthage were not ordained (Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 5).

your veils out on the streets, so you should wear them in the church.”⁵⁶

Tertullian’s mantra seems to have been that in order for the church to be more socially acceptable, Christian women needed to act less “at home.”

Unlike some other Christians, Tertullian taught that *all* Christian women should be categorized together in the same inferior classification. He believed that from the time Eve partook of the fruit in the Garden of Eden, Eve and the rest of womankind had become the “door of the devil.”⁵⁷ As a result, Tertullian taught, “Women should all dress the same and act the same. There should be no distinction between virgin and married woman in dress and behavior.”⁵⁸

Concerning the priority⁵⁹ some Christians were giving virgins, Tertullian

56. Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, 13 (ANF 4.35). Tertullian argues that veiling of Christian virgins has apostolic authority (*De Virginibus Velandis* 2 (ANF 4.28)): “Throughout Greece, and certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of Churches keep their virgins covered. There are places, too, beneath this (African) sky, where this practice obtains; lest any ascribe the custom to Greek or barbarian Gentilehood. But I have proposed (as models) those Churches which were founded by apostles or apostolic men; and antecedently, I think, to certain (founders, who shall be nameless). Those Churches therefore, as well (as others), have the self-same authority of custom (to appeal to); in opposing phalanx they range times and teachers, more than these later (Churches do).”

57. Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*. 1.2 (ANF 4.14-15).

58. Tertullian, *On Prayer* 20-22 (ANF 3.687-89). See also *On the Veiling of Virgins* 4-5 (ANF 4.28-29).

59. From Tertullian’s comments it appears that some Christians viewed virgin women with more esteem than non-virgins. However, Tertullian advocated the view of female homogenization. In accordance with his writings cited above, Tertullian attempted to transform

asserted, "It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say [in any] sacerdotal office. Let us inquire whether any of these be lawful to a virgin.... So true is it, that, on the ground of her position, nothing in the way of public honour is permitted to a virgin."⁶⁰

In carrying out his agenda of a new church order, Tertullian, reacting to women who were teaching and debating, twice quoted 1 Cor. 14:34-35 to ban their voices in the church.⁶¹ In his work *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, he explained, "[Paul] enjoins upon women silence in the church, that they are not to speak, at all even with the idea of learning."⁶² In another work, *On Baptism*, Tertullian combined 1 Cor 14 misogynistically with 1 Tim 2: "For how credible would it seem, that he who has not permitted a woman even to learn with over

all lay Christian females into the most pious of Roman women; "the standards he set for women's use of makeup were observed only by vestal virgins in Rome in his day," Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests*, 167.

60. Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins* 9 (ANF 4.33).

61. Tertullian, *Prescription* 41.5 (ANF 3.263). It seems that women did not give up their speaking rights in church without a fuss. In Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women II.4* (ANF 4:14), Tertullian put these words in a woman's mouth: "To me it is not necessary to be approved by men; for I do not require the testimony of men; God is the inspector of the heart."

62. Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5,8,11; trans Tertullian and Ernest Evans, *Adversus Marcionem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Tertullian does relent that Paul teaches that women can prophesy "with a veil."

boldness, should give a female the power of teaching and of baptizing! 'Let them be silent,' he says, 'and at home consult their own husbands.'"⁶³ For Tertullian, 1 Corinthians mandated that women were to hold no authority in the church.⁶⁴

Cyprian

Like Tertullian before him, Cyprian, the third-century (c. 200-258) bishop of Carthage, appealed to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 to keep women subordinate in church. Cyprian avoided speculative theology and wrote exclusively about pastoral concerns.⁶⁵ Cyprian's pastoral emphasis is manifest in his twelfth treatise in which he offered an abbreviated list of church practices:

63. Tertullian, *On Baptism* 17 (ANF 3:677). This quotation seems to combine 1 Cor 14 (consult husbands at home) and 1 Tim 2 (learn without excessive boldness).

64. Tertullian (*A Treatise on the Soul* 9.27 (ANF 3.188-189)) gives an example of a woman who was having visions during worship. However, only after the worship service was over was she able to tell about her experiences: "We have now among us a sister whose lot it has been to be favoured with sundry gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision amidst the sacred rites of the Lord's day in the church: she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; some men's hearts she understands, and to them who are in need she distributes remedies. Whether it be in the reading of Scriptures, or in the chanting of psalms, or in the preaching of sermons, or in the offering up of prayers, in all these religious services matter and opportunity are afforded to her of seeing visions. It may possibly have happened to us, while this sister of ours was rapt in the Spirit, that we had discoursed in some ineffable way about the soul. *After the people are dismissed at the conclusion of the sacred services, she is in the regular habit of reporting to us whatever things she may have seen in vision.*"

65. Benedict, *The Fathers* (Huntington, Ind: Our Sunday Visitor, 2008), 58.

Cyprian to his son Quirinus, greeting.... [Y]ou asked me to gather out for your instruction from the Holy Scriptures some heads bearing upon the religious teaching of our school; seeking for a succinct course of sacred reading, so that your mind, surrendered to God, might not be wearied with long or numerous volumes of books, but, instructed with a summary of heavenly precepts, might have a wholesome and large compendium for nourishing its memory.... I have collected certain precepts of the Lord, and divine teachings, which may be easy and useful to the readers, in that a few things digested into a short space are both quickly read through, and are frequently repeated.⁶⁶

Towards the end of Cyprian's "summary of heavenly precepts" that was intended to be "frequently repeated," he paired 1 Cor 14:34-35 with 1 Tim 2:

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: *'Let women be silent in the church. But if any wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home.'* Also to Timothy: *'Let a woman learn with silence, in all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to be set over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not seduced, but the woman was seduced.'*⁶⁷

Cyprian believed that female silence in church was important enough to include in his abbreviated list of church practice. For Cyprian and his tradition in the West, female silence in church had become an important tenet of the faith.

66. Cyprian, *Treatises of Cyprian*, 12.3 (ANF 5.543).

67. *Ibid.*, 12.3.46 (ANF 5.546). Cyprian used the Old Latin "Western-type" texts. Curt Niccum, "The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Cor. 14.34-5," *NTS* 43.2 (1997): 247. For more on the Old Latin translation and Western text see chapter 4.

Eastern Fathers

The attitude toward women was much different in eastern Christianity. Unlike the Western Fathers, the Eastern church leaders whose writings have survived did not seek to silence women with an appeal to 1 Cor 14:34-35 until the fourth century, with the exception of Origen.

Tatian

Instead of seeking to reconcile Christianity with societal norms of female subjugation, the second-century Syrian Church Father Tatian (c. 120-c. 180) defended the prominence of women in the Church. In *The Address of Tatian to the Greeks*, he attacked those who accused Christians of “talk[ing] nonsense among women and boys, among maidens and old women.”⁶⁸ He explained that such accusations are hypocritical since among the Greeks, behavior abounds that was “unbecoming... in what relates to woman.”⁶⁹ To validate his point, Tatian gave 14 named examples of Greek statues and poems dedicated to women. He then explained: “My object in referring to these women is, that you may not regard as something strange what you find among us, and that, comparing the statues

68. Tatian, *Address of Tatian to the Greeks* 33 (ANF 2.78-79).

69. *Ibid.*

which are before your eyes, you may not treat the women with scorn who among us pursue philosophy.”⁷⁰ Unwilling to conform to standards of female subjugation, Tatian called on Greek examples to justify the unconventional actions of Christian women.

Irenaeus

Tatian’s contemporary, the second-century bishop of Lugdunum, Irenaeus (c. 130-202), believed Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians demonstrated no difference between men and women with regard to speaking in church.⁷¹ In his work *Adversus Haereses*, Irenaeus drew upon 1 Cor 11 to affirm women’s participation: “For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, [Paul] speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognizes men and women prophesying in the Church.”⁷² For Irenaeus, 1 Corinthians meant equality, not disparity.⁷³

70. Ibid.

71. Even though Irenaeus was a bishop in Gaul, he is considered an Eastern Church Father because he was from Asia Minor.

72. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 3.11.9 (ANF 1:429).

73. Ibid., 3.3.4 (ANF 1:416). Irenaeus says that in his “youth” he saw Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna who was martyred in 156 AD. This has led to the belief that Irenaeus was born in Smyrna during the 130s–140s.

Clement of Alexandria

Like Tatian and Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 CE) also maintained equality of the sexes. His perspective of egalitarianism was rooted in his theology: he believed that Christ was neither male nor female, and that God the Father had both male and female qualities. Writing about the instruction on 1 Peter 2:2, that Christians, like infants, ought to “long for the pure, spiritual milk,” Clement even suggested that “Christ is the maternal breast of the Father, nursing the believers with his shed blood, turned into breast milk.”⁷⁴

Although not often recognized for it, Clement of Alexandria was an accomplished textual critic. He was engaged heavily in discovering the authenticity of various Homeric works and other Greek writings. His extensive research and notes on these subjects are extant in *Stromata* 1.25.1; 5.49.3-4; 6.5.3-8; 6.25.2; 1.91. This level of detailed scholarship is important to consider as we survey his treatment of 1 Cor 14:34-35.

Clement of Alexandria interpreted 1 Corinthians as a plea for both men and women to be reverent in church: “Woman and man are to go to church

74. Teresa Berger, *Gender Differences and the Making of Liturgical History Lifting a Veil on Liturgy's Past* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub, 2011), 75. See also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos*, 1.43.2-4.

decently attired, with natural step, *embracing silence*. . . Let the woman observe this, further. Let her be entirely covered, unless she happen to be at home. . . For this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled.”⁷⁵ The term “pray veiled” is a clear allusion to women’s dress code in 1 Cor. 11, but Clement saw no difference between the sexes when he cited 1 Cor. 14:34-35 that “woman and man” should be “embracing silence.”

In *Stromata*, Clement displayed an absence of gender bias by arguing that men and women were equals with the same nature:

As far as respects human nature, the woman does not possess one nature, and the man exhibit another, but the same: so also with virtue. If, consequently, a self-restraint and righteousness, and whatever qualities are regarded as following them, is the virtue of the male, it belongs to the male alone to be virtuous, and to the woman to be licentious and unjust. But it is offensive even to say this. Accordingly woman is to practice self-restraint and righteousness, and every other virtue, as well as man, both bond and free; since it is a fit consequence that the same nature possesses one and the same virtue. ... Women are therefore to philosophize equally with men...⁷⁶

75. Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 3 (ANF 2:290). Clement, here, like some of the Western Fathers mentioned above, makes a distinction between public and private space with regard to dress.

76. Clement, *Stromata*, 4.8 (ANF 2.419-421).

In a later passage in *Stromata*, Clement shows an even stronger feminist tendency. In 4.19 when speaking about the ability of men and women to suppress sexual desires, Clement proclaimed: "In ... perfection it is possible for man and woman equally to share. It is not only Moses, then, that heard from God. . . but Judith too, who became perfect among women, in the siege of the city."⁷⁷ Clement then went on to give a female hall of faith similar to Hebrews 11 but consisting of all female characters, from both scripture and the history of Greece and Rome.⁷⁸ It seems apparent that Clement did not see women as lesser than men and even praised them throughout his works; he was clearly not an advocate for women's silence.

In *Stromata*, 4.20, which directly follows the female hall of faith discussed above, Clement used scripture to show that women ought to be "help" to their husbands in the sense that they give correction instead of receiving it: "woman is given by God as 'an help' to man. It is evident, then, in my opinion that she will

77. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 4.19 (ANF 2:431).

78. In his female "hall of faith," Clement praises Judith, Esther, Susanna, the sister of Moses, a certain woman Lysidica, Lesena of Attica, the Argolic women, Telesilla the poetess, daughters of Danaus, Atalanta, Anticlea, Alcestis, Maksria, Themisto, Myia, Kronus, Menexene, Argia, Theognis, Artemesia, Pantaclea, Hipparchia, Arete of Cyrene, Lastheneia of Arcis, Axiothea of Phlius, Aspasia of Miletus, the poetesses Corinna, Telesilla, Myia, Sappho, Irene the daughter of Cratinus, Anaxandra the daughter of Nealces, the daughter of Cleobulus, and the wife of Abraham ("the blessed Sarah").

charge herself with remedying, by good sense and persuasion, each of the annoyances that originate with her husband in domestic economy."⁷⁹

Interestingly, Clement described the perfect wife as one who corrects her husband and is far from silent, but rather voices her requests and opinions.⁸⁰

Origen

Clement's egalitarian view of male and female Christians was later qualified by his pupil Origen.⁸¹ Origen was a prolific thinker who was very interested in comparing sacred texts.⁸² In his travel to Rome in 211-212 AD, he likely obtained an anti-feminine Western version of the New Testament and was

79. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 4.20 (ANF 2:432).

80. Clement quoted 1 Cor. 12 in the beginning of *Stromata* 4:19, which suggests he was using 1 Corinthians (or at least had access to it) in shaping these *Stromata*. However, instead of citing 1 Cor. 14:34-35 to condone the silence of women, Clement advocates their ability to voice their opinions.

81. Joseph Wilson Trigg and Origen, *Origen* (London: Routledge, 1998), 15-35. Darrell Hannah explains, "There is some debate over whether or not Origen studied under Clement, as Eusebius claims. Whatever their relationship, Origen, at the age of eighteen, assumed charge of the catechetical school, after Clement left Alexandria." Darrell D. Hannah, *The Text of I Corinthians in the Writings of Origen* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 3.

82. Origen is often considered the greatest text critic of the early church and is known for his massive *Hexapla*, which contained parallel versions of the Old Testament. See Trigg and Origen, *Origen*, 16.

influenced by the rhetoric of female subjugation in western Christianity.⁸³

Because of this, Origen felt it necessary to qualify Clement's female hall of faith, as well as passages of vocal women in the scriptures, by stating that these women never spoke in the assemblies. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Origen explained, "If the daughters of Philip prophesied, at least they did not speak in the assemblies; for we do not find this fact in evidence in the Acts of the Apostles. Much less in the Old Testament. It is said that Deborah was a prophetess [However] there is no ... evidence that Deborah delivered speeches to the people, as did Jeremiah and Isaiah ... For [as Paul declares] 'I do not permit a woman to teach,' and even less 'to tell a man what to do.'"⁸⁴ Origen was the first known Greek Father to teach that 1 Cor. 14:34-35 mandated silence from women in all churches at all times, and it seems that his western influence might have been the reason for this interpretation.

83. This is a distinct argument by the present author. However, for more on Origen's travels, see Trigg and Origen, *Origen*, 15. For more about the influence of the Western text on Origen, see the later section entitled "A Scriptural Rebuttal Against Montanism."

84. Origen, *Fragmenta ex commentariis in epistulam i ad Corinthios (in catenis)*, Greek texts published in Claude Jenkins, "Documents: Origen on I Corinthians. IV," in *JTS* 10 (1909), 41. English translation from Roger Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1976), 28. Origen elsewhere says, "'It is shameful for a woman to speak in church'" (1 Cor 14:35), whatever she says, even if she says something excellent or holy, because it comes from the mouth of a woman." Origen, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, fragment 74. English translation from Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 29.

Later Eastern Fathers: Victorinus of Pettau and Theodoret

Even though Origen condemned female speaking in the assembly, other Eastern Greek Fathers continued to give women a voice in church. Saint Victorinus of Pettau (died c. 303-304), like Irenaeus, was an Eastern Church Father who worked in the West.⁸⁵ Victorinus believed Paul meant for women and men to prophesy:

For the apostles, by powers, by signs, by portents, and by mighty works, have overcome unbelief. After them there is now given to the same completed Churches the comfort of having the prophetic Scriptures subsequently interpreted, for I said that after the apostles there would be interpreting prophets. For the apostle says: *And he placed in the Church indeed, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers, and the rest.* And in another place he says: *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge.* And he says: *Every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, dishonours her head.* And when he says, *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge,* he is not speaking in respect of the Catholic prophecy of things unheard and unknown, but of things both announced and known. But let them judge whether or not the interpretation is consistent with the testimonies of the prophetic utterance.”⁸⁶

In the quotation above, Victorinus cited 1 Corinthians three times: (1) 1 Cor 12:28: “And he placed in the Church indeed, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers,” (2) 1 Cor 14:29: “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others

85. Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers; The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* 1 (Washington: Review and Herald, 1946), 337.

86. Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 10.3 (ANF 7.353).

judge” and (3) 1 Cor 11:5: “Every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, dishonours her head.” It is enlightening that even though Victorinus cited 1 Cor 14:29 to set forth the structure of the church and the role of prophecy in it, he did not appeal to 14:34-35 (which are found just a few verses after 14:29) to enjoin female silence and their subsequent inability to prophesy. Instead, Victorinus quoted 1 Cor 11:5 to ensure that women were veiled while prophesying. Victorinus was more than likely familiar with 1 Cor 14:34-35 but did not interpret it as a prohibition on women prophecy in church. In Victorinus’ tradition, it appears that women were vocal participants in worship, but only if they followed the rules of dress outlined in 1 Cor 11.

The early fifth century bishop, Theodoret (393-457 CE) of Cyrrhus, Syria, taught a similar doctrine in his *Commentary*: “Not only men but also women enjoyed the spiritual gift, as God announced beforehand through the prophet Joel: *I will pour my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy* (2:28). Thus Paul had to give rules about them as well.”⁸⁷ Theodoret upheld that Paul gave rules to women about prophecy but did not attempt to silence them.

87. Theodoret, *Commentary*, (PG 82:345-48).

Rather, Theodoret believed the prophecy by Joel indicated an inclusive prophetic atmosphere with women observing the guidelines Paul set forth in 1 Cor 11.

Subsequent Confusion

The meshing of western and eastern traditions and ideas created a very uncertain stance on the role of women in the church in the third and fourth centuries. The late fourth-century Greek Church Father John Chrysostom showed symptoms of the confusion.

Although Chrysostom's reading of the creation narratives led him to believe men are entitled to rule over women, Chrysostom did not interpret those texts as forbidding "women to counsel men or men to accept that counsel as a general rule."⁸⁸ In a homily on 1 Cor 7:16, he even stated that women were the greatest teachers: "for no one can be as strong of a teacher as a woman" (οὐδεὶς γὰρ οὕτω διδάσκαλος ἰσχυροῦσαι δυνήσεται ὡς γυνή).⁸⁹

Nonetheless, Chrysostom's instruction about women speaking in the *ekklesia* was contradictory. In his homily on Romans, Chrysostom stated that

88. Valerie A. Karras, "Male Domination Of Woman In The Writings Of Saint John Chrysostom" *GOTR* 36.2 (1991): 137.

89. Author's translation. Greek text from Chrysostom, *On 1 Corinthians*, Hom. 19.4 (PG 61.155).

women *could* teach in the *ekklesia* but they just should not sit at the bema (referencing only 1 Tim. 2 to make this point, not 1 Cor. 14:34-35).⁹⁰ However, in his homily on 1 Corinthians, Chrysostom contradicted his statement in the Romans homily by asserting that women should be silent in church at all times.⁹¹ Moreover, in Homily IX, he combined both the 1 Tim. and 1 Cor. passages when he stated, “from such teaching keep silence.”⁹² Perhaps like many other Christians, Chrysostom was confused about the role and position of women in early Christianity. The western view of women’s roles and their use of 1 Cor.

90. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 31 (NPNF1 11.553-559). This homily was written in 391 ACE.

91. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians* 37 (NPNF1 12.222-224). This homily was written between 381-398 ACE (NPNF 12.iv).

92. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Timothy* 9 (NPNF1 13.435). This homily was written between 381-404 ACE ((NPNF 13.401). Chrysostom gives similar instruction in *Discourse 4 on Genesis 1*: “Listen to how Paul speaks of this subjection, so that you may again be instructed on the agreement of the Old and the New Testaments. Paul says, ‘Let the woman learn in silence, in all subjection’ (1 Tim 2:11). Do you see how he, too, submits the woman to the man? Hold on, and you will hear the reason. Why does Paul say, ‘in all subjection’? He asserts, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach a man’ (1 Tim 2:12). Why not? Because she taught Adam once and for all, and taught him badly. ‘Nor should she have authority over the man’ (1 Tim 2:12). What in the world is he getting at? She exerted her authority once and exerted it badly. And she should be ‘in silence.’ Tell the reason for this as well. Paul says, ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and sinned’ (1 Tim 2:14). Therefore let her descend from the professor’s chair! Those who know not how to teach, they destroy both themselves and those who learn from them. This is the very thing that occurred through the woman’s agency. So here it is evident that she is subjected to the man and that the subjection is because of sin. I want you to heed that verse, ‘Your inclination shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you’” (English translation from Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 30).

14:34-35 seems to have spread throughout Christianity and challenged the eastern view of more equal roles between genders.

The influence of western patriarchy appeared in the late fourth-century work *The Apostolic Constitutions*, a collection of eight treatises likely composed between 375 and 380 CE in Syria.⁹³ The unknown author of these treatises sought to eliminate women from teaching in the church: “We do not permit our women to teach in the Church.... [F]or our Master and Lord, Jesus Himself, when He sent us the twelve to make disciples of the people and of the nations, did nowhere send out women to preach, although He did not want such.”⁹⁴ The *Apostolic Constitutions* also sought to end women’s baptizing:

Now, as to women’s baptizing, we let you know that there is no small peril to those that undertake it. Therefore we do not advise you to it; for it is dangerous, or rather wicked and impious. ...But if in the foregoing constitutions we have not permitted them to teach, how will anyone allow them, contrary to nature, to perform the office of a priest? For this is one of the ignorant practices of the Gentile atheism, to ordain women priests to the female deities, not one of the constitutions of Christ.⁹⁵

93. Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 85-87.

94. *Apostolic Constitutions*, 3.6 (ANF 7.427-28).

95. *Ibid.*, 3.9 (ANF 7.429).

A similar practice is ordered in the *Council of Laodicea* (360 CE): "[T]he so-called 'presbyteresses' or 'presidentesses' are not to be ordained in the Church"⁹⁶

Despite these efforts to silence women in late antiquity, the knowledge of prior practice could not be extinguished. Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 CE), commenting on 1 Cor 11:3 taught, "*Not only men but also women prophesied*. At that time, the baptized received spiritual gifts in a more obvious way, and various forms of prophecy were prominent, according to the needs of the church. In particular, prophets exposed the false pretenses of those who entered the church in order to test it (1 Cor 14:24-25)."⁹⁷ Likewise, John Chrysostom recognized the high status of some women in scripture. In his homily on Romans, he made the following comment about Junia: "Oh! How great is the devotion (φιλοσοφία) of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle! But even here he does not stop, but adds another encomium besides, and says, 'Who were also in Christ before me.'"⁹⁸ Chrysostom indicated that the

96. *Council of Laodicea*, Canon 11 (NPNF2 14.130-31).

97. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary*. English translation from Judith L. Kovacs, *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 179.

98. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 31 (NPNF 11.554-555).

unworthiness of the women of his day was the reason for the change in their status:

For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. And in the apostle's time also both men and women were together.... Heard ye not, that the men and women were gathered together in the upper room, and that congregation was worthy of the heavens? Hear, for instance, the seller of purple saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come in, and abide with me.' Hear the women, who went about with the apostles, having taken unto themselves manly courage, Priscilla, Persis, and the rest; from whom our present women are ... far removed.⁹⁹

Chrysostom believed that women had lost their prominence in the church because they no longer displayed "manly courage."

The Montanist Controversy

The rise of Christian sects and heresies added to the misogyny in ancient Christianity. Among these sects was Montanism, a Christian heretical movement that began in Phrygia sometime in the second century¹⁰⁰ (probably around 165)¹⁰¹

99. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 73 (NPNF 10.443). This homily was written between 386-388ACE.

100. Stephen Mitchell, "An Epigraphic Probe into the Origins of Montanism," in *Roman Phrygia Culture and Society* (ed., Peter Thonemann; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 170-171.

101. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Viking, 2010), 138.

and “protested against the growing formalism in the Church.”¹⁰² Montanism, also known as “The New Prophecy,” troubled orthodox Christian leaders for a number of reasons, not least of which “was that women were allowed leadership roles.”¹⁰³

According to Eusebius, Montanism was started by a “recent convert” named Montanus who had an “unquenchable desire for leadership.”¹⁰⁴ Joining Montanus in his new sect were the “prophetesses” Maximilla and Priscilla.¹⁰⁵ The Montanists believed the parousia was nearing. According to Epiphanius, Maximilla proclaimed, “After me there will be no more prophets, but the completion.”¹⁰⁶ Similarly, another Montanist prophetess, Quintilla, is reported to

102. James T. Shotwell and Louise Ropes Loomis, *The See of Peter* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 77.

103. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 196-97.

104. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.16.7 (NPNF2 1.231)

105. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.14 (NPNF2 1.229): “The enemy of God’s Church, who is emphatically a hater of good and a lover of evil, and leaves untried no manner of craft against men, was again active in causing strange heresies to spring up against the Church. For some persons, like venomous reptiles, crawled over Asia and Phrygia, boasting that Montanus was the Paraclete, and that the women that followed him, Priscilla and Maximilla, were prophetesses of Montanus.”

106. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 48.2.4. English translation from Philip R. Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: selected passages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 170.

have had a dream at Pepouza of Christ dressed in women's clothing, announcing that it was here that the New Jerusalem would be manifested: "In the form of a woman dressed in shining armour Christ came toward me and put wisdom in me and revealed to me that this place is holy and that here Jerusalem will come down from heaven."¹⁰⁷ Montanists believed they were the chosen ones to whom Jesus had revealed the place of the New Jerusalem as recorded in the Apocalypse of St. John.

Montanists were elitist Christians who were empowered by their revelations. Stephen Mitchell explains:

In Phrygia... we should see Montanos, Priscilla and Maximilla as extraordinary and uncompromising individuals, driven by the sense that they were the best and truest Christians, the only believers prepared to accept the message of the Book of Revelation at face value. Their credibility was reinforced by the prophetic powers which they claimed. They came into direct conflict with the majority of Christians in their own communities, who flourished precisely by avoiding extremism and confrontation.¹⁰⁸

Montanists' arrogance and dogmas of separation estranged them from other Christians in second-century Phrygia.

107. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 49.1.2-3. English translation from Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 252.

108. Mitchell, "An Epigraphic Probe into the Origins of Montanism," 195-96.

The prominence of women in Montanism was not the original reason the movement was rejected. In fact, archaeological evidence suggests that a woman priest was actually one of the earliest opponents of Montanism.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the Bishop of Rome, Eleutherus (bishop c. 174-189 CE), an eastern Christian born in Nicopolis, Greece, originally did not oppose the sect.¹¹⁰ Like some fellow eastern Christians, Eleutherus could have had a fairly egalitarian view towards women speaking and holding office in church and was not bothered that prophetesses were prominent in the Montanist movement.

However, it was the Montanists' claim to authority that eventually led to their condemnation. Eusebius tells of Proclus, a Montanist, who argues for the apostolic origins and authority of Montanism. Proclus' claim to authority derives from the Montanists' veneration of the apostolic tomb of John as well as the tombs of Philip and his four daughters.¹¹¹ The Montanists' assertion of authority was vehemently opposed by some traditionalist Christians. Tertullian describes

109. Ibid., 196: "We should thus conclude that bishops Artemidoros and Diogas, the woman priest Ammion, and other prominent Christians of the inscriptions of Temenouthyrai between c. AD 180 and 215 were not Montanists, but precisely their opponents."

110. Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 1 (ANF 3.597-598).

111. Eusebius, *Church History* 3.31.4; 2.25.6-7; 3.28.1-2; 6.20.3.

how a conservative Christian named Praxeas came to Rome and convinced Bishop Eleutherus, who originally “acknowledged the prophetic gifts” of Montanism, to oppose the sect because of their heretical claim to authority:

For after the Bishop of Rome [Eleutherus] had acknowledged the prophetic gifts of Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla, and, in consequence of the acknowledgment, had bestowed his peace on the churches of Asia and Phrygia, *he [Praxeas], by importunately urging false accusations against the prophets themselves and their churches, and insisting on the authority of the bishop's predecessors in the see,* compelled him [Eleutherus] to recall the pacific letter which he had issued, as well as to desist from his purpose of acknowledging the *said* gifts¹¹² (emphasis mine).

By appealing to “the authority of the bishop’s predecessors in the see,” Praxeas was able to convince Eleutherus to revoke his approval of the Montanist movement. The claim to exclusive apostolic heritage by Montanism led to its condemnation.

In addition to their controversial claim to authority, Tertullian explains¹¹³ that “false accusations against the prophets themselves and their churches” (*falsa de ipsis prophetis et ecclesiis eorum adseverando*) recalled Eleutherus’ approval

112. Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 1 (ANF 3.597-598).

113. By this time, Tertullian had joined the Montanist movement, so his description of affairs is biased. He claims that the accusations were “false” and says that by fighting against the New Prophecy, Praxeas himself was the heretic, not the Montanists: “By this Praxeas did a twofold service for the devil at Rome: he drove away prophecy, and he brought in heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and he crucified the Father” -Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 1 (ANF 3.597-598).

of the sect. Some of these “false accusations” were claims of importune behavior and teachings. Tertullian explicates, “It is on this account that the New Prophecies are rejected: not that Montanus and Priscilla and Maximilla preach another God, nor that they disjoin Jesus Christ (from God), nor that they overturn any particular rule of faith or hope, but that they plainly teach more frequent fasting than marrying.”¹¹⁴ It seems that Christians were upset that the prophetesses had left their husbands and embraced asceticism in the new sect. As Eusebius explains, “We show that these first prophetesses themselves, as soon as they were filled with the Spirit, abandoned their husbands. How falsely therefore they speak who call Prisca a virgin.”¹¹⁵

Montanism was also problematic because it caused strife in Christianity which was struggling against external forces; it was weakening an already fragile Christian body.¹¹⁶ In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius writes about Christians in Gaul who sent epistles to Eleutherus urging him to oppose Montanism and establish peace in the church:

114. Tertullian, *On Fasting* 1 (ANF 4.102).

115. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.18.3 (NPNF2 1.235).

116. See Eusebius, *Church History* 5.16.4 (NPNF2 1.233).

The followers of Montanus, Alcibiades and Theodotus in Phrygia were now first giving wide circulation to their assumption in regard to prophecy—for the many other miracles that, through the gift of God, were still wrought in the different churches caused their prophesying to be readily credited by many—and as dissension arose concerning them, the brethren in Gaul set forth their own prudent and most orthodox judgment in the matter, and published also several epistles from the witnesses that had been put to death among them. These they sent, while they were still in prison, to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, and also to Eleutherus, who was then bishop of Rome, negotiating for the peace of the churches.¹¹⁷

In both this account by Eusebius and the previously quoted passage by Tertullian about Praxeas, Eleutherus was being pressured to oppose Montanism by Christians who laid “particular stress upon the necessity of loyalty in every respect to the Roman tradition and the danger of countenancing strange inspirations.”¹¹⁸

117. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.3.4 (NPNF2 1. 219).

118. Shotwell and Loomis, *See of Peter*, 256. Christine Trevett observes that many Christians feared that Montanism would bring added persecution from the Romans: “To them, probably, as to the pagan populace, we may surmise, the New Prophecy would have seemed troublesome not least because, with its noisy, crowd-attracting phenomena, its rigorism and unpragmatic approach to persecution, it was not capable of a low profile,” Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 43. Similarly, Marta Sordi makes the argument that Montanism roused persecution of all Christians through public fears concerning state security: “The Roman government had begun to regard the Christian communities as politically suspect, and the reason for this was the spread of Montanism, with its rigidly intransigent attitude to the state, its identification with the anti-Roman spirit of the Jewish revolts, its openly provocative behavior, its charismatic and prophetic claims and its thirst for martyrdom,” Marta Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 72.

A Scriptural Rebuttal Against Montanism

It was under these circumstances that some passages of scripture, particularly 1 Cor 14:34-35, were emphasized to counter Montanism. Tertullian's *On Baptism*¹¹⁹ is the first known reference to 1 Cor 14:34-35 to appeal to female silence, and it was written during the height of the Montanist movement. Similarly, the work of Ambrosiaster—the oldest Latin commentary¹²⁰ on the Pauline epistles which is dated from the late fourth century¹²¹ but contains the “Western” Old Latin text type¹²² (developed in the late second century)—is “extremely harsh toward women.”¹²³ The Western Ambrosiaster commentary on 1 Tim. 3:11 uses Paul's command for women's silence in 1 Cor. 14:34-35 to claim that the Montanists err in ordaining women deacons.¹²⁴

119. Tertullian, *On Baptism* 17 (ANF 3.677): “For how credible would it seem, that he who has not permitted a woman even to learn with over boldness, should give a female the power of teaching and of baptizing! ‘Let them be silent,’ he says, ‘and at home consult their own husbands.’”

120. The unknown author of this work is referred to as Ambrosiaster.

121. Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 16.

122. Niccum, “The Voice of the Manuscripts,” 247.

123. Gryson, *The Ministry of Women*, 92.

124. Ambrosiaster, *Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas*, CSEL 81 (1969):267-68.

Perhaps the best example of the influence of and reaction against Montanism is found in the works of Origen. As discussed above, Origen was an Eastern Church Father who clarified the female “hall of faith” of his predecessor Clement of Alexandria; according to Origen, women never spoke in the assembly. Origen traveled to Rome in 211-12 AD, a few decades after Eleutherus revoked his approval of Montanism. It is likely that during his visit, Origen was influenced by anti-Montanist arguments; his understanding of women’s place in Christianity was altered. The following passage of Origen’s *Homilies* indicates the effect the Montanism controversy had on Origen’s views of female Christians:¹²⁵

125. It is unlikely that Origen believed that the displaced position of 1 Cor 14:34-35 in Western manuscripts was original. Instead, he was probably influenced by Western misogynistic rhetoric. According to Bruce Metzger (*Historical and Literary Studies; Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 91-100), Origen had Western texts in his possession and makes references to them. However, “The Western influence on Origen’s text seems small indeed.... Origen’s relationship with the Western group seems negligible at best” (Hannah, *The Text of I Corinthians in the Writings of Origen*, 272). Due to this minor influence of the Western type on Origen’s text, it is likely that Origen’s chauvinism was influenced by Western misogynistic rhetoric rather than Western texts while in Rome.

Western church writings were likely collected by Origen. This is evident in the texts available at the Caesarean library which “had its beginnings in the early third century,” the nucleus of which “appears to have been the personal library of the Christian scholar Origen, who spent the second half of his career in Caesarea” (Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 155). Gamble explains that “Naturally the works of eastern Christian writers predominated in the Caesarean library, but some works of western provenance – by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Cyprian – had also been gathered” (Gamble, 157).

The work of the Caesarean library was not limited to collecting, arranging, and maintaining a large body of Christian literature, however. “Like other major libraries, the Caesarean library engaged in the critical task of collating and revising texts, especially scriptural texts. Some manuscripts available today attest by colophons their descent from manuscripts of

Realizing that all were speaking and had permission to speak if a revelation came to them (1 Cor 14:30), Paul says, The women should keep silence in the churches. *Now the disciples of the women, who had become pupils of Priscilla and Maximilla, not of Christ the bridegroom (see Eph 5:31-32), did not heed this commandment.... [E]ven if we should concede, on the basis of a prophetic sign, that a woman is a prophetess, still she is not permitted to speak in church.... For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church, whatever she might say, even if she should speak marvelous and holy words (emphasis mine).*¹²⁶

Origen displays western patriarchal influences in his understanding of scripture, and it was the Montanist controversy that sparked him to appeal to 1 Cor 14:34-35 (as well as 1 Tim 2) to silence women.

the library at Caesarea—manuscripts that had been corrected by Pamphilus and Eusebius themselves.... Such colophons indicate that the Caesarean library was well stocked with biblical manuscripts, that from the beginning it sponsored a tradition of careful textual scholarship, and that it was highly respected as a repository of reliable texts” (Gamble, 158).

It is clear from Origen’s later travels that his works were influenced by divergent texts located in the places he visited. Darrell Hannah (*The Text of I Corinthians in the Writings of Origen*, 6) explains the change in Origen’s writings when he relocated to Caesarea from Alexandria: “Both Alexandria and Caesarea are thought to have been the centers where different text-types of the Gospels developed. From Eusebius (EH VI.24) we learn, with few exceptions, which of Origen’s works were written in Alexandria and which in Caesarea. Thus, a study of Origen’s Gospel citations and allusions may shed light on the text of the Gospels in two different locations in the third century. Indeed, there is good evidence that Origen’s text of Matthew and Mark changed dramatically after his relocation in Caesarea.”

126. Origen, *Homilies*, in *JTS* 10 (1909): 41-42. English translation from Judith L. Kovacs, *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 239-40.

A Subsequent Misogyny

Unlike the second-century rivals of Montanism who opposed the sect for its elitist dogmas and heretical claims to authority, Christians from the third century onward understood Montanism as the heresy that gave inappropriate responsibilities to women. A short description of the movement by the fourth-century Church Father Epiphanius illustrates this point: "They have women bishops, presbyters, and the rest; they say that none of this makes any difference because 'In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female' (Gal 3:28)."¹²⁷ Likewise, Augustine (354-430) states that the Montanists are heretics "who give women predominance so that these, too, can be honored with the priesthood among them. They say, namely, that Christ revealed himself . . . to Quintilla and Priscilla in the form of a woman."¹²⁸

The orthodox bout with the Montanist movement cemented the misogynistic dogmas of the western church and likely eventually led to the

¹²⁷ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 49.5. English translation from Patricia Cox Miller, *Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 40.

¹²⁸ Augustine, *Heresies* 1:17.

suppression of women in the eastern church as well.¹²⁹ Women became second-class citizens in large segments of Christendom due to the reaction against Montanism; the orthodox appeal to scripture to mandate feminine silence and submission eventually led to widespread female subjugation. Women's primary role came to be that of ensuring the modesty of other women and assisting the

129. Another heretical movement that could have flamed the misogynistic fire against Montanism was started by a former Marcionite named Apelles. "Apelles was a prominent heretic at Rome in the later second century, famous for his syllogistic attacks on the early chapters of the book of Genesis as well as for the revelations of his female companion 'Beloved'" (Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 76). Tertullian describes the activities of Apelles in *Prescription of Heretics* 30.6: "If we must likewise touch the descent of Apelles, he is far from being one of the old school, like his instructor and moulder, Marcion; he rather forsook the continence of Marcion, by resorting to the company of a woman, and withdrew to Alexandria, out of sight of his most abstemious master. Returning therefrom, after some years, unimproved, except that he was no longer a Marcionite, he clave to another woman, the maiden Philumene (whom we have already mentioned), who herself afterwards became an enormous prostitute. Having been imposed on by her vigorous spirit, he committed to writing *the revelations* which he had learned of her. Persons are still living who remember them—their own actual disciples and successors—who cannot therefore deny the lateness of their date. But, in fact, by their own works they are convicted, even as the Lord said."

Augustine, (*Heresies* 24) also gives a description of Apelles and his prophetess: "He [Apelles] moreover used to say that a certain girl named Philumēnē was divinely inspired to predict future events. He used to refer to her his dreams, and the perturbations of his mind, and to forewarn himself secretly by her divinations or presages." [Here some words appear to be missing.] "The same phantom, he said, showed itself to the same Philumēnē in the form of a boy. This seeming boy sometimes declared himself to be Christ, sometimes Paul. By questioning this phantom she used to supply the answers which she pronounced to her hearers. He added that she was accustomed to perform some wonders, of which the following was the chief: she used to make a large loaf enter a glass vase with a very small mouth, and to take it out uninjured with the tips of her fingers; and was content with that food alone, as if it had been given her from above." English translation from G. R. S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten. Some Short Sketches Among the Gnostics, Mainly of the First Two Centuries. A Contribution to the Study of Christian Origins Based on the Most Recently Recovered Materials* (London: Theosophical Pub. Society, 1900), 251-52.

clergy in “women affairs.” The fourth-century Eastern bishop Epiphanius of Cyprus describes this limited role for women:

There is an order of deaconess in the church. But this is not allowed for the practice of priesthood or any liturgical function, but for the sake of female modesty, at either the time of baptism or of the examination of some condition or trouble, and when a woman’s body may be bared, so that she will be seen not by the male priests but by the assisting female who is appointed by the priest for the occasion, to take care of the woman who is in need of it when her body is uncovered. For the ordinance of discipline and good order in the church has been protected with understanding and care, in proportion to our rule. For the same reason the word of God does not allow a woman ‘to speak’ (1 Cor 14:34-35) in church either, or ‘bear rule over a man’ (1 Tim 2:12). And there is a great deal that can be said about this.¹³⁰

130. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.3.6. English translation from Miller, *Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts*, 68. Epiphanius (*Panarion*, 78:13-79.3) also taught: "Certain women there in Arabia [the Collyridians] ... In an unlawful and blasphemous ceremony ... ordain women, through whom they offer up the sacrifice in the name of Mary. This means that the entire proceeding is godless and sacrilegious, a perversion of the message of the Holy Spirit; in fact, the whole thing is diabolical and a teaching of the impure spirit....

"It is true that in the Church there is an order of deaconesses, but not for being a priestess, nor for any kind of work of administration, but for the sake of the dignity of the female sex, either at the time of baptism or of examining the sick or suffering, so that the naked body of a female may not be seen by men administering sacred rites, but by the deaconess....

"From this bishop [James the Just] and the just-named apostles, the succession of bishops and presbyters [priests] in the house of God have been established. Never was a woman called to these. . . . According to the evidence of Scripture, there were, to be sure, the four daughters of the evangelist Philip, who engaged in prophecy, but they were not priestesses....

"If women were to be charged by God with entering the priesthood or with assuming ecclesiastical office, then in the New Covenant it would have devolved upon no one more than Mary to fulfill a priestly function. She was invested with so great an honor as to be allowed to provide a dwelling in her womb for the heavenly God and King of all things, the Son of God. . . . But he did not find this [the conferring of priesthood on her] good." English translation from Philip Amidon, *The Panarion of Saint Epiphanius*, 350-353.

Conclusion

Because its teachings and practices were in discord with the contemporary Roman social norms and structures, Christianity struggled to find its place in the Roman world. The divergent models of church and state forced Christians either to adopt a socially acceptable form of Christianity or to embrace an incongruous one.¹³¹ Most western Christians conformed to Roman standards, which included the subjugation of women. By contrast, literary sources suggest that the eastern church largely upheld the egalitarian ideals of Paul and nascent Christianity during the course of the first two centuries of the Common Era.

The second-century heretical movement, Montanism, was a catalyst for change throughout Christianity. The Montanist movement, which was initially approved by the eastern Christian Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome, drew harsh criticism from western Christians who were seeking to align Christianity with Roman norms. The patriarchal western Christians eventually won over Eleutherus and succeeded in condemning Montanism. More significant,

131. Christians at this time also could have been trying to distance Christianity from Judaism, which may have had the practice of recognizing women presbyters, a custom which the Montanists adopted. See William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 68-69. See also Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).

however, was the reaction to the Montanist controversy. Women were left without a voice due to the collision between orthodoxy and Montanism; their roles were severely curtailed as silent and subservient.

In addition to the change in women's roles, scripture was altered to support western Christians' patriarchy, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Eastern Christians like Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria understood 1 Corinthians to be an appeal to orderly worship by both sexes; they believed Paul taught equality, not subservience.¹³² However, in order to condemn Montanism, some western Christians removed 1 Cor 14:34-35 from its original context, placing it outside the section designating order in the church. By placing the passage after v. 40, they sought to make it a clear call for women to be silent in the churches.

CHAPTER 4

A Displaced Passage

As discussed in chapter 3, Christianity gradually became a religion of the book in the latter half of the first and beginning of the second centuries, so that reading began to take the place of prophecy in worship. The concentration on literature in the early church made Christians especially reliant on early Christian writings for doctrine.¹

First Corinthians was particularly important and widely used by early Christians to establish church dogma and practice. As Payne points out, “1 Corinthians was the most quoted epistle by Christian writers in the second century.”² Walter Bauer explains that the popularity of 1 Corinthians in the early church was due to the fact that it addressed factionalism and was useful in

1. See Eusebius, *Church History* 7.24.8 (NPNF2 1.309). Also, the Apostolic Father Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35-c. 107 CE) recounts an exchange with some Christian opponents: “For I have heard some saying, ‘If I do not find it in the archives I do not believe it in the gospel’” (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 8.2 (ANF 1.84)). By “archives” Ignatius is likely referring to Christian congregational libraries (Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 111).

2. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, 251.

combating later Christian heresies: “And from that time on (the time when 1 Clement was written), the purpose of 1 Corinthians was firmly established in the church: ‘First of all to the Corinthians, censuring the heresies of schism.’”³

Because Christians appealed to Apostolic texts for doctrine (and notably 1 Corinthians for our discussion), many sought to manipulate these manuscripts in order to influence the beliefs and practices of the church. This early textual redaction led to a plethora of variants in Christian manuscripts. As Nils Dahl explains, “The extreme complexity of New Testament textual history is due to the activity of editors and correctors, much more than to the errors or whims of scribes.”⁴

An Atmosphere of Textual Change

Textual manipulation did not start with Christianity. Greeks and Romans had dealt with altered manuscripts for centuries before Christianity, and Greco-Roman textual criticism was not taken lightly:

3. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Tran. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 220. Bauer cites *The Muratori Canon*, 42-43.

4. Nils Alstrup Dahl, “0230 (=PSI 1306) and the fourth-century Greek-Latin edition of the letters of Paul,” in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* (ed., Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 84.

Literary criticism could be serious business. The words ‘genuine’ and ‘spurious’ refer to legitimate sons and bastards in *Iliad* 11.102-104, where a bastard drives the chariot for his ‘glorious’ partner. The invidious distinction was carried over into literary criticism, where it was needed when deletion and forgery were rampant. The Stoic Athenodorus, in charge of the library at Pergamum, was said to have deleted unsuitable passages from the works of Zeno, the founder of his sect, though they were replaced after he was caught. As later Stoics grew closer to conservative Roman politicians, the rationalist ethics of early treatises, often entitled *Republic*, became embarrassing. A Stoic teacher ascribed to Epicurus the letters ‘commonly attributed’ to the Stoic Chrysippus, but when a Stoic forged fifty scandalous letters in Epicurus’s name, an Epicurean philosopher killed him.⁵

Falsified and manipulated texts were also a problem for early Christians. In one of his earliest epistles, Paul warns the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:2 NRSV) “not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, *as though from us*” (ὡς δι’ ἡμῶν, italics mine). Similarly, the epilogue of the Apocalypse of John includes a warning to those who were inclined to alter manuscripts:

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book (Rev 22:18-19).

5. Robert M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1993), 15.

The unorthodox were not the only ones who made changes to scripture, however. According to Eusebius, the Apostolic Father Papias stated that the Gospel of Mark was written “accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ.”⁶ Matthew then wrote his Gospel drawing on Mark and “the first Epistle of John” but apparently in a more proper order,⁷ essentially changing the text.

The existence of multiple Gospels and textual variants bothered the second-century heretic Marcion (c. 85-c. 160). He asserted that the original Gospel as taught by Jesus had been corrupted, and only his restored versions of Luke and the Pauline epistles were unadulterated scripture. These claims of restoration by Marcion, though undoubtedly false, shed light on the early Christian atmosphere: “Marcion’s insistence that both *Gospel* and *Apostle* had been interpolated suggests that he knew current theories about interpolated religious documents, as well as the editorial procedures of the great Hellenistic

6. Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.15 (NPNF2 1.172-173).

7. Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.16 (NPNF2 1.173).

textual critics.”⁸ In other words, Marcion likely could not derive the idea of restoring original texts unless he was aware of major textual corruption of it.

While Marcion believed he was restoring the Gospel as taught by Jesus and his “true” apostle Paul, the Elchasaites, a heretical Jewish-Christian group, rejected Paul entirely and altered other scriptures to be in-line with the Old Testament. Origen explains that the group “deletes items from every scripture and, while using texts from the whole Old Testament and the gospels, absolutely rejects the apostle [Paul].”⁹

By Origen’s time (c. 184-c. 254 CE), there was a myriad of textual variants. Origen, in his *Commentary on Matthew* states, “The differences among the manuscripts have become great, either through the negligence of some copyist or through the perverse audacity of others; they either neglect to check over what they have transcribed, or, in the process of checking, they make additions or deletions as they please.”¹⁰ These numerous variants altered the way Origen

8. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 34.

9. Eusebius, *Church History* 6.38 (NPNF2 1.280). Eusebius quotes Origen here.

10. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* XV, 14. English translation taken from Bruce M. Metzger, *Historical and Literary Studies; Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 88.

approached and commented on Biblical texts. As Metzger explains, “In addition to the usual mode of citation of texts for comment or example, Origen occasionally makes reference to variant readings in New Testament manuscripts current in his day.”¹¹

Pastoral Sabotage

In addition to altering scripture and earlier writings, many were sabotaging contemporary Christian pastoral and instructional manuscripts. According to Eusebius, the second-century bishop of Corinth, Dionysius, wrote: “As the brethren desired me to write epistles, I wrote. And these epistles the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, cutting out some things and adding others. For them a woe is reserved. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if some have attempted to adulterate the Lord's writings also, since they have formed designs even against writings which are of less account.”¹²

Similarly, Tertullian alleges that a former “brother” turned on him and published a corrupted copy of his work, *Adversus Marcionem*. Initially, Tertullian had composed a work which he describes as “too hurriedly composed.” Later, he

11. Metzger, *Historical and Literary Studies*, 90.

12. Eusebius, *Church History* 4.23.12 (NPNF2 1.201-202).

produced a version of the work that was more careful and extensive but was corrupted prior to dissemination by the aforementioned former “brother.” To rectify the situation, Tertullian subsequently published a third “official” version of the work with corrections and clarifications. In the prologue of the official version, he explains,

Whatever in times past we have wrought in opposition to Marcion, is from the present moment no longer to be accounted of. It is a new work which we are undertaking in lieu of the old one. My original tract, as too hurriedly composed, I had subsequently superseded by a fuller treatise. This latter I lost, before it was completely published, by the fraud of a person who was then a brother, but became afterwards an apostate. He, as it happened, had transcribed a portion of it, full of mistakes, and then published it. The necessity thus arose for an amended work.¹³

Due to the rampancy of such textual manipulations and mistakes, Irenaeus issued the following warning to potential redactors of his work *On the Ogdoad*: “I adjure you who may copy this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his glorious advent when he comes to judge the living and the dead, to compare what you shall write, and correct it carefully by this manuscript, and also to write this adjuration, and place it in the copy.”¹⁴

13. Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 1.1-2 (ANF 3.271).

14. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.20.1-2 (Lake, LCL).

Roman Adoptionists

A center for textual corruptions was Rome; “Literary heresies tended to flourish in the intellectual environment of Rome.”¹⁵ One of the literary heresies present in Rome in the second century was Adoptionism. According to Hippolytus, the heretical Adoptionist Theodotus taught that Jesus was an ordinary mortal until God “adopted” him at his baptism:

Jesus was a (mere) man, born of a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, and that after he had lived promiscuously with all men, and had become pre-eminently religious, he subsequently at his baptism in Jordan received Christ, who came from above and descended (upon him) in form of a dove. And this was the reason, (according to Theodotus,) why (miraculous) powers did not operate within him prior to the manifestation in him of that Spirit which descended, (and) which proclaims him to be the Christ. But (among the followers of Theodotus) some are disposed (to think) that never was this man made God, (even) at the descent of the Spirit; whereas others (maintain that he was made God) after the resurrection from the dead.¹⁶

Adoptionists were heavily influenced by the prominent Greek philosopher Galen, who was active in Rome in the late second century. Galen was a prolific author and a pioneer in his critical approach to studying the medical treatises of

15. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 7. Grant also clarifies that “[h]eresy and biblical criticism were associated before orthodoxy joined hands with criticism too.”

16. Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies* 7.23 (ANF 5.15).

Hippocrates.¹⁷ He composed a large collection of commentaries on works attributed to Hippocrates and also sought to determine the authenticity of the attributed works. Galen's logical approach to texts led him to attack followers of Moses and Jesus for relying on "undemonstrated laws."¹⁸

Galen's critical examination of texts inspired Adoptionists to study Christian documents in a similar manner. As one author explains, "the adoptionists wanted to sort out texts, and like moneychangers, discover the genuine ancient ones. They rejected the analogical exegesis commonly used by Christians in favor of logical methods for explaining scriptures."¹⁹ Eusebius gives a description of the Adoptionist approach to scripture in a citation that is sometimes attributed to Hippolytus:²⁰

They do not endeavor to learn what the Divine Scriptures declare, but strive laboriously after any form of syllogism which may be devised to sustain their impiety. And if any one brings before them a passage of Divine Scripture, they see whether a conjunctive or disjunctive form of syllogism can be made from it. And as being of the earth and speaking of the earth, and as ignorant of him who comes from above, they forsake the

17. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 59-67.

18. Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 11-14.

19. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 68-69.

20. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 122.

holy writings of God to devote themselves to geometry. Euclid is laboriously measured by some of them; and Aristotle and Theophrastus are admired; and Galen, perhaps, by some is even worshipped.²¹

The scathing description of the Adoptionists goes on to say that the heretical group not only perverts sacred texts by interpretation but also physically alters manuscripts:²²

Therefore they have laid their hands boldly upon the Divine Scriptures, alleging that they have corrected them. That I am not speaking falsely of them in this matter, whoever wishes may learn. For if any one will collect their respective copies, and compare them one with another, he will find that they differ greatly. Those of Asclepiades, for example, do not agree with those of Theodotus. And many of these can be obtained, because their disciples have assiduously written the corrections, as they call them, that is the corruptions, of each of them. Again, those of Hermophilus do not agree with these, and those of Apollonides are not consistent with themselves. For you can compare those prepared by them at an earlier date with those which they corrupted later, and you will find them widely different.²³

21. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.28.13-14 (Lake, LCL).

22. Orthodox Christians were also involved in correcting heretical ideas and writings. According to a letter quoted by Eusebius, (Eusebius, E.H. 7.24.1-4 (Lake, LCL) a second-century bishop in Egypt named Nepos was reproved by Dionysius of Alexandria. Nepos was a Jewish Christian who taught that scriptures should be understood in a more Jewish manner. Dionysius instructs Christians to correct Nepos's teachings and writings.

23. Eusebius, *Church History* 5.28.15-17 (Lake, LCL).

Western Textual Displacement

In this second-century atmosphere of widespread textual manipulation, the Western textual family emerged. According to Zuntz, the “Western text in the proper sense of the word is represented by three witnesses, namely (1) the Greek archetype of the manuscripts D F G (Bilinguals); (2) Tertullian; and (3) the archetype of d and the non-Vulgate quotations in Latin Fathers.”²⁴ Witnesses two and three would be classified as “Old Latin” texts. These translated Old Latin texts “were being produced by the last two or three decades of the second century.”²⁵

Like other second-century Christians, the producers of the Western text manipulated their manuscripts to influence church practice. Their “growing dislike for women assuming prominent roles in the Church” spilled over into

24. Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles; A Disquisition Upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 85: “The Vulgate is a Western witness, belonging to (3), where it agrees with those mentioned.”

25. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 131. Augustine notes about these Old Latin translations: “in the early days of the faith everyone who obtained a Greek manuscript [of scripture] and imagined that he had some ability in both languages, however slight, undertook to make a translation [into Latin]” (*De Doctrina Christ.* 2.16). English translation taken from Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 131.

their New Testament texts.²⁶ This is evident in the “anti-feminist bias of various readings in the so-called Western Texts of Acts,” for example.²⁷

Unfortunately, however, many ignore the misogynistic textual prejudice in Western witnesses and fail to recognize that only the Western texts contain the dislocated passage about women’s silence in 1 Corinthians.²⁸ Many proponents of the interpolation theory appeal to the simple existence of the dislocation of 1 Cor 14:34-35 in several manuscripts as evidence for an early interpolation.²⁹ Nonetheless, the origin and reliability of the texts containing the displacement need to be examined before one can argue that an interpolation took place.

Arnold Monera created the following outline of manuscripts where vv. 34-35 are placed after 14:40. Monera’s list demonstrates that the interpolation is extant almost exclusively in Western texts:

26. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 183.

27. Ibid. See also Ben Witherington, “The Anti-Feminist Tendencies of the “Western” Text in Acts,” *JBL* 103.1 (1984): 82-84.

28. Wire (*Corinthian Women Prophets*, 284, n. 18) correctly observes that no Old Latin type reads the text in the normal position. Wire (285, n. 19) also states, “Although the Vulgate puts 14:34-35 back into its numerical order, at least one Vulgate manuscript, Codex Vaticanus Reginensis lat. 9, retains the Old Latin sequence. But this cannot be taken as an independent attestation of late placement of these verses since even our earliest Vulgate in the Pelagian commentaries already shows signs of conservative reversion to the Old Latin.”

29. Matthew R. Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 198.

- a. The three bilingual Western manuscripts
 - Codex **D 06** (Claromontanus; 6th c.)
 - Codex **F 010** (Augiensis; 9th c.)
 - Codex **G 012** (Boernerianus; 9th c.)
- b. The first hand of Codex **88** (12th c.; a “Western” cursive)
- c. Two other Old Latin MSS.
 - **Sangermanensis** (e/76; 9th c.)
 - **Armachanus** (ar/61; 9th c. [Because this manuscript also omits vv. 36-39, its text reads vv. 33, 40, 34-35, in this order.]])
- d. Two Latin Fathers:
 - Ambrosiaster (4th c.)
 - Sedulius-Scotus (9th c.)³⁰

All the texts are Western³¹ except the twelfth century Greek ms 88, which the Alands classify as having little significance for determining the original text.³² Its 1 Cor. 14:34-35 dislocation is probably just a “rebound” of the Western text.³³ The three bilingual codices contain both Greek and Latin versions of the New Testament. These Latin texts are independent³⁴ of the Greek in that they are not

30. Arnold T. Monera, "1 CORINTHIANS 14:34-35 A Continuing Conundrum for Textual Critics" in *Hapág: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Theological Research* 2 (2009): 9.

31. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 85.

32. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 127-129, 105-6.

33. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 151.

34. Although independent, the texts show extensive influence on one another. On the Latin side, “A genuine (independent) Old Latin text has been adopted as the basis, but altered throughout into verbal conformity with the Greek text by the side of which it was intended to

translations of their neighboring Greek witness but stem from an earlier Old Latin translation.³⁵ These bilinguals (F and G) are so similar that they are considered to have originated from the same source.³⁶ In speaking of the source of F/G and codex D, Wire states, “[They both] agree together against the Alexandrian text type in so many ways that the theory of a single common archetype of these two Greek texts—called Z—is well established.”³⁷

Parker created the following diagram to illustrate the relationship between bilinguals D 06,³⁸ F 010, and G 012.³⁹

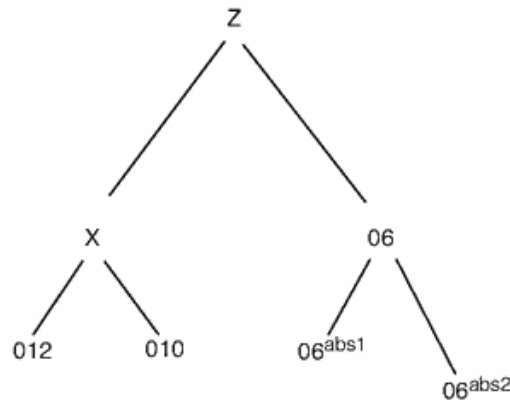
stand.” B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek; Introduction and Appendix 2* (London, 1896), 82.

35. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 319. D.C. Parker explains that the oldest of the three bilinguals is Codex Claromontanus (D 06) which was copied in the fifth century. The other two bilinguals are Codices Augiensis (F 010) and Sangermanensis (G 012) which were both “produced by Latin scribes who had some difficulty with copying a Greek text” D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 260.

36. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 150.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Concerning D 06, Dahl observes, “there are two streams of textual transmission which both go back to the same source. The chief representative of the first line is Codex Claromontanus (D) ... This manuscript was written in southern Italy, in the fifth, rather than the sixth, century. The manuscript was worked over by several correctors, none of whom were later than the sixth century. The main correctors were more interested in the Greek than in the Latin text. Their general tendency was to eliminate singular readings and thus to normalize the text(s) according to current standards.” Nils Dahl, “0230 (=PSI 1306) and the fourth-century Greek-Latin edition of the letters of Paul,” 81.



Manuscript Z⁴⁰ is the proposed archetype bilingual of the tradition, while X is a lost liaison between Z and F 010 / G 012. Manuscript D 06 appears to be a direct descendent of Z. (Texts 06^{abs1} and 06^{abs2}, copies of D 06, are irrelevant in our discussion.) According to Fee, the archetype Z of this tradition could represent the early third century text known to Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome.⁴¹

The derivation of the Western bilinguals from a common source is an important factor in determining their importance as witnesses. Instead of being

39. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 260.

40. Speaking of the parent of D, E, F, G called Z, Dahl explains, "The editor made use of an already existing Latin version which he adapted to the Greek text in order to make sense lines of the two columns correspond exactly to each other. For the Greek column, he used a manuscript with a text of a type that in the fourth century was already obsolete in most parts of Christendom. It was similar to but not identical with the Greek text from which the Latin translation had originally been made." Dahl, "0230 (=PSI 1306) and the fourth-century Greek-Latin edition of the letters of Paul," 83.

41. Gordon Fee, "The Majority Text and the Original Text of the New Testament" in *The Bible Translator*, 31 (1980): 113–14.

three independent witnesses that contain the displacement, the Greek texts are offspring of one textual source.

A Singular Tradition

In addition to the bilinguals, most scholars agree that all the texts of the Western type (Greek and Latin) depend “upon one particular Greek original.”⁴² As one scholar notes, “The dominant hypothesis remains that of a distinctive Western Greek text giving rise to both the various Old Latin text types in the second and third centuries and to the Greek text behind the bilinguals (DFG).”⁴³ This single Greek source for the Western tradition is “traceable to the second century.”⁴⁴

Niccum demonstrates that this singular source text containing the displacement of 1 Cor 14:34-35 can be geographically located. In a very extensive study, he notes that all texts with the dislocation originated in northern Italy: “the transposition is the product of a local text.”⁴⁵ Hardly coincidentally, the date

42. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 86.

43. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 150.

44. Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 187.

45. Curt Niccum, “The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women,” 251-52.

and location of the displacement of 1 Cor 14:34-35 by Western transcribers coincide with both the Montanist controversy and the “largely corrupt basis” of textual transmission in second-century Rome.⁴⁶

An Altered Text

The Western text is known for its “paraphrastic” textual qualities.⁴⁷ In Western witnesses, “words and even clauses are changed, omitted, and inserted with surprising freedom, wherever it seemed that the meaning could be brought out with greater force and definiteness.”⁴⁸ The Western text of 1 Corinthians is no exception. Zuntz gives the following list of differing word order in 1 Corinthians between Western and older Eastern witnesses:⁴⁹

- 4:14 ταῦτα γράφω D F G latt; 489: γράφω ταῦτα P⁴⁶ cet.
- 5:1 ... ἔχειν τινα D F G latt: γυναικὰ τινα... P⁴⁶ cet.
- 6:1 πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον προᾶγμα ἔχων D F G Cyr Aug Ambr Ambst Pel Cass; 547 1926 Thdrt (simil 1827 Chrys Theophyl): προᾶγμα ἔχων πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον P⁴⁶ cet.

46. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 267.

47. Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 64. The Alands estimate that about 200 A.D. is when the western church switched to Latin and needed textual translations from Greek (Aland/Aland, 68).

48. B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 550.

49. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 160-161. See also pp. 165-168 for glosses in the Western text.

- 6:15 μέλη πόρνης D F G latt; 383 1108 1611: πόρνης μέλη P⁴⁶ cet.
- 7:12 ἐγὼ λέγω Wω: λέγω ἐγὼ P⁴⁶ 'Alex.'
- 7:18 ἐκλήθη τις D* F G: τις ἐκλήθη P⁴⁶ cet.
- 7:18b τις κέκληται (ἐκλήθη ω) D* F G vulg; P¹⁵ ω Joh-Dam: κέκληταί τις P⁴⁶ 'Alex.'
- 7:24 ἕκαστος ἀδελφοί... D F G Ambst: ...ἐκλήθη ἀδελφοί P⁴⁶ P¹⁵ al pler.
- 9:1 ἀπόστολος... ἐλεύθερος D F G vulg^{mss} Pel Ambst; ω: ἐλεύθερος... ἀπόστολος P⁴⁶ 'Alex.'
- 10:31 ποιεῖτε τι D F G m (non d f Pel): τι ποιεῖτε P⁴⁶ cet.
- 13:11 τὰ τοῦ νηπίου κατήρηκα D F G Tert Ambst Pel; 823 999 1108 1611 Basil Eriph: κατήρηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου P⁴⁶ cet.
- 14:35 ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ λαλεῖν D F G Tert Ambst Sedul Pel: λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ P⁴⁶ cet.
- 14:36 κατήνησεν μόνους F G: μόνους κατήνησεν P⁴⁶ cet.
- 15:38 αὐτῷ δίδωσιν D F G latt pler; ω: δίδωσιν αὐτῷ P⁴⁶ 'Alex.'

Zuntz's list shows a very clear lack of commitment from the Western text to adhere to the original Pauline wording.⁵⁰

In addition to the doctrinally insignificant word order variants, the Western hand edited 1 Corinthians near the dislocated passage. Wire gives the following examples of such changes made for ideological reasons:⁵¹

- 14:32—Changes "spirits" to "spirit" (D F G a b d f g vg+ Ambst)

50. In these word order discrepancies in 1 Corinthians, Nestle-Aland 28 agrees with the Eastern word orders against the Western text in every circumstance.

51. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 152. Wire also mentions that the Western text in 14:37 drops "command(s)" so that what Paul says is "of the Lord" but not "the command(s) of the Lord" (D* F G b d f g Ambst). The elimination of "commands" is likely an attempt to smooth over the somewhat awkward Pauline wording.

- 15:2—“If you hold on” becomes “you ought to hold on” (D F G a b d g Ambst)
- 15:5—Changes “twelve” to “eleven” (15:5 D F G a b d f g vg+ Ambst)

The change from “spirits” (πνεύματα) to “spirit” (πνεῦμα) in 14:32 is likely due to the “theological uneasiness with multiple spirits.”⁵² Furthermore, the alteration in 15:2 changes Paul’s conditional “if” to the admonishing “you ought to.” The third change, found in 15:5, is a “pedantic correction” clarifying that Jesus’ appearance was to the eleven apostles after the death of Judas.⁵³

Other Western Displacements

The Western text shows not only a willingness to alter the text but also a disposition to rearrange it. As one author explains, the “Western text [is] a textual tradition with a record for textual dislocations.”⁵⁴ This fact stands in opposition to the erroneous claim by interpolation adherents that displacements like 14:34-35 “do not occur elsewhere in the NT.”⁵⁵ In fact, however, such textual transpositions are manifest in the Western texts, the very manuscripts that

52. Ibid.

53. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 500.

54. Larry W. Hurtado, “The Doxology at the End of Romans” in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis* (ed. E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981): 195.

55. Fee, *First Epistle*, 700.

displace 1 Cor 14:34-35. An example of this is in Romans 16:20, where Paul appears to give a benediction to the letter before adding a postscript. In order to correct Paul's writing style, however, "western witnesses (D F G d f g Sedulius Scotus) transfer the benediction to follow ver. 23, thus preventing the greetings of vv. 21-23 from having the appearance of being an afterthought."⁵⁶

Western texts contain other textual displacements as well. In Rom 16:16, for example, the Western witnesses (DFG ar m; Pel) remove the saying ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("all the churches of Christ greet you") and place it in verse 21 so it is grouped with other greetings. In another instance, Western witnesses (DFG ar) remove the first line of Rom 16:5 (καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν) and replace it two verses prior (into Rom 16:3).

| Traditional Reading | Western Reading |
|--|---|
| <p>3 Ἀσπάσασθε Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 4 οἵτινες ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς μου τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον ὑπέθηκαν, οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἔθνῶν,</p> | <p>3 Ἀσπάσασθε Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν, 4 οἵτινες ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς μου τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον ὑπέθηκαν, οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἔθνῶν,</p> |

56. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 476.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>5καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν. ἀσπάσασθε Ἐπαίνετον τὸν ἀγαπητὸν μου, ὅς ἐστιν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς Χριστόν</p> | <p>5. ἀσπάσασθε Ἐπαίνετον τὸν ἀγαπητὸν μου, ὅς ἐστιν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς Χριστόν</p> |
|---|---|

This displacement in Western manuscripts changes the meaning and flow of the passage. Instead of praising Prisca and Aquila for risking “their necks for Paul” (v. 4), the Western witnesses have Paul praising the church at Prisca and Aquila’s house for risking their necks. It is possible that this was an anti-feminine alteration to take credit away from Prisca.

In summary, if the Western text rearranged Paul’s outline in Romans, a similar move could have been made in 1 Corinthians 14 in order to mandate universal silence of women.

Anti-Female Corrections

In addition to their readiness to rearrange Paul’s epistles, the Western text’s producers display an eagerness to eliminate female characters from the text by transforming them into men. In Colossians 4:15, the original text probably reads, “Greet the brothers in Laodicea and Nympha and the church in her

house”⁵⁷ (Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν). The Western text (D F G) changes the accent on “Nympha” (Νύμφαν to Νυμφᾶν) and alters “her house” to “his house” (οἶκον αὐτῆς to οἶκον αὐτοῦ) in order to transform Nympha into a male. It is clear that the Western text editor was attempting to represent early Christianity as having female-free leadership.

A similar redaction was made by Western witnesses (DFG, it, vg^{mss}, Ambrosiaster) in Rom 16:7.

| Traditional Reading | Western Reading |
|---|--|
| <p>Ἐσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.</p> | <p>Ἐσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις τοῖς πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.</p> |

The replacement of **οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ** with the Western **τοῖς πρὸ ἐμοῦ** changes the status of Andronica and Junia. In the traditional reading, the two are “prominent” (ἐπίσημοι) among the apostles and were Christians before Paul, in

57. Author’s translation. While some manuscripts replace αὐτῆς with αὐτῶν, this was likely a later redaction that sought to include “ἀδελφοὺς in the reference.” Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 560.

the Western reading however, they are merely prominent among the apostles who were Christian before Paul.

A Contextual Re-Adjustment

While it seems likely that the Western text producers moved 1 Cor 14:34-35 after 14:40 in order to place the passage outside the Pauline call for orderly worship as discussed in ch. 2, the redactors could have also been motivated to rearrange the passage in order to separate it from 14:36. Vv. 34-35 are too lengthy to be an assertion by the Corinthians. Nonetheless, the Western displacer(s) of the passage could have seen v. 36 as a problematic response to vv. 34-35. This is plausible in light of the Western version of Romans 6:15-16 which adds an ἦ in v. 16 to clarify Paul's rejection of the question posed in v. 15. Apparently the transcribers of the Western text understood ἦ as a particle that "often introduces an argument *ex contrario*."⁵⁸

Conclusion

The texts which contain the dislocation of 1 Cor 14:34-35 come from a time and a place where textual manipulation was rampant. The second century CE was a

58. Herbert Weir Smyth and Gordon M. Messing, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2861.

period of heresies in western Christianity, when many sought to conform sacred texts to their ideologies. Particularly noteworthy for our purposes are the anti-feminine redactions in Western texts.

Those who claim that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is an interpolation largely overlook the fact that the dislocation occurs only in unreliable Western manuscripts which stem from the second century CE. The interpolation is the product of a textual family that is noted for its lack of adherence to the original text and its preponderance of textual manipulations.

The textual manipulation of the Western texts undermines the claim by interpolation adherents that displacements like 14:34-35 do not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. In fact, such textual transpositions arise in the very manuscripts that displace 14:34-35. The Western texts demonstrate that their transcribers were willing to re-arrange the Pauline wording in order to promote their anti-feminine ideology.

CONCLUSION

Although many argue 1 Cor 14:34-35 is a non-Pauline interpolation into the text of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, this theory is unlikely; the verses do not demonstrate non-Pauline chauvinistic attitudes as some scholars assert. Instead, in these verses, Paul calls for women at Corinth to submit to the principle of order that underlies the Torah. Supporting this argument is Paul's instruction that women should not accuse (ἐπερωτάω) their husbands in front of the *ekklesia*; such behavior undermines the orderly atmosphere that ought to prevail in worship.

The passage has been misunderstood for centuries, however, because it assumes knowledge of the specific situation Paul was addressing. Paul was not giving instructions about worldwide, timeless church practice in these verses; instead, he was seeking to quell a specific issue that was disturbing the orderly worship of a small group of Christians at Corinth. It is unfortunate, however, that many do not understand what Ben Witherington has observed: "what an

individual says to correct an error cannot be taken as a full or definitive statement of his views on a particular subject.”¹

Despite what some view as clear misogyny in these verses, it is significant that the Apostolic Fathers (even chauvinists like Clement of Rome) did not cite the passage to silence women (or even cite it at all). This fact has led some to mistakenly conclude that the passage was a later textual insertion; they argue that the lack of references to the verses by early Christians is evidence that the verses were interpolated. However, Clement of Alexandria was aware of the passage and understood it as instruction regarding order in worship for both genders. The Apostolic Fathers likely thought along similar lines. Furthermore, it is extremely improbable that an interpolation made in the text after the era of the Apostolic Fathers would appear in every extant manuscript of 1 Corinthians.

The first known appeal to 14:34-35 to silence women in church is made by the Latin Church Father Tertullian (160-220 CE). Significantly, he and subsequent Western Church Fathers who cite the passage to silence women use the Western text-type which has the passage displaced. This is hardly a coincidence.

1. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 25.

The displacement of the passage probably took place in the second century when manuscripts were rampantly manipulated and the church was seeking to define itself in the Roman world. Western Christians were seeking to align the Christian *ekklesia* with the Greco-Roman *ekklesia*; they wanted the church to replicate the state in its practices and sociality. Furthermore, Christians were influenced by the critical approach to texts by Roman philosophers like Galen. This led many to interpret and alter texts to support their ecclesiastical agendas; they sought to change writings to align with their ideas rather than conforming themselves to the teachings of the texts.

The displacement of 1 Cor 14:34-35 likely took place in the latter half of the second century CE as western Christians sought to convince the bishop Eleutherus of Rome (who was an eastern Christian) to condemn Montanism. Initially, Eleutherus condoned the Montanist movement and issued an epistle with his blessing regarding the sect. Due to the Montanists' unorthodox claims to authority and improper behavior, however, the bishop was eventually convinced by western Christians to rescind his blessing and condemn the sect. It is probable that amidst this controversy regarding the Montanist movement, transcribers of the Western text sought apostolic support to condemn the practice of inspired

female speech, which would be damning to Montanism due to the prominence of their women prophets. In order to carry out their agenda, the Western transcribers likely shifted 1 Cor 14:34-35 several verses later in the text to remove the passage from the context of orderly worship. This subtle transposition of verses made it more likely for readers to understand the passage as a universal decree for women to be silent in the church.

A clarification must be made here: it is not as if the passage needs to be displaced in order to be understood misogynistically. However, the misplacement brings the text out of the context of orderly worship and highlights the seemingly misogynistic tone of the passage. The potential anti-feminine message of the displaced passage could serve western Christians fighting Montanism.

The Montanist controversy and the “largely corrupt basis”² of textual transmission in second-century Rome provide the backdrop for the Western text. This very fluid text type is known for its paraphrasing, numerous deviations from original readings and its textual re-arrangement. Particularly noteworthy in the Western text are the anti-feminine changes which demonstrate a clear

2. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 267.

misogynistic agenda. It is evident that the producers of the Western text were eager to manipulate the New Testament in order to further their chauvinistic vision of the church. Unfortunately, they largely succeeded, even among those like Origen who rejected many of their readings but were persuaded by their misogynistic rhetoric.

In conclusion, the Montanist controversy and the development of the Western text with its anti-female readings both occurred in the second century; these simultaneous factors must have influenced one another. It seems most likely that the misogynistic readings of the Western texts were a reaction against a movement (Montanism) which threatened western Christians' ideology. To defend their position, these western Christians found it very beneficial, especially in light of the dissenting claims to authority by Montanists, to ensure that the authoritative apostolic texts supported their philosophies. Unfortunately, both the innocent Pauline appeal to order in 1 Cor 14:34-35 and Christian women became prey to their redactive ploys; once the passage was displaced, it became a hindrance and a silencer for Christian women and their spiritual gifts.

An Attempt at Order

An astounding amount of literature has been written about 1 Cor 14:34-35. Especially since the passage deals with gender issues, many have a vested interest in the message and textual situation surrounding it. The question of women's role in modern Christianity is at stake for many who seek to make sense of the potentially misogynistic character of the injunction in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians.

Despite the amount and variety of literature dedicated to 1 Cor 14:34-35, the lack of attention paid to the manuscripts containing the displacement is surprising. Rarely do interpreters investigate the nature or origin of the texts in which 1 Cor 14:34-35 is dislocated. Instead, many simply mention that the passage is displaced in some manuscripts and claim that 14:34-35 is likely an interpolation.

The title of this thesis is "Bringing Order to 1 Cor 14:34-35." Its aim has been to bring to light the social environments that led to the writing of 1 Cor 14:34-35, its literary context, its transposition in the Western texts, and its subsequent usage as a silencer for women. The current disorderly state of

scholarship regarding 1 Cor 14:34-35 is in large part due to the neglect of these factors.

While the present study has sought to uncover the message and history of 1 Cor 14:34-35, it has also unearthed some new issues and questions which could lead to new lines of investigation. Firstly, in addition to silencing women, what other church practices have been influenced by manipulated texts? The dislocation of 1 Cor 14:34-35 is certainly not the only redaction employed to validate a certain church praxis. Therefore, while textual criticism is typically utilized to elucidate the original texts of the New Testament, what can it illumine about the social agendas that have formed modern Christianity? Secondly, this study adds to the already popular movement of seeking to discover the silenced voices of women in ancient Christianity. Who were these early believers and what did they have to say? Thirdly, this study should inspire the reader to examine his or her own hermeneutical practices. In what ways do we, like the Western Fathers combating Montanism, denature scriptures? While physical manipulation of sacred text is unlikely in our modern world, almost every Christian is guilty to some degree of taking scripture out of context and utilizing it to legitimize his or her personal agenda. Ultimately, as readers of the New

Testament, we must evaluate our own interpretations by removing the blinders of personal agenda and letting scripture speak for itself.

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