

## Trajectories on Violence, Slavery and Misogyny in the Bible

### Appendix: Evidence 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 is an interpolation.

1 Corinthians 14:33b-26 reads: (As in all the churches of the saints, <sup>34</sup> women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?)

Notice that in the NRSV this section is in parenthesis which indicates textual concerns. It is there because the placement of this section is slightly different in some manuscripts. In a footnote Gordon Fee says, "Most MSS (including P 4 6 A B K Ψ 0243 33 81 1739 Maj) include these verses here; they are found after v. 40 in D F G 88\* a b d f g Ambrosiaster Sedulius-Scotus, thus the entire Western tradition."<sup>1</sup> I do not believe it was part of the original text.

Crossan writes, "First, the entire section is found at different locations among the earliest extant manuscripts of the letter. Some have it here, and others have it after 14:40—that is, at the end of the chapter. The best explanation for this discrepancy is that it was not originally part of the letter; that a copyist wrote it in the margin as his own version of 1 Timothy 14:33b-36, and later copyists inserted it from the margin into the text at two different places."

Raymond Collins doesn't agree, "There are, indeed, various reasons to consider vv. 33b-36 as a later interpolation into Paul's text. The arguments are, however, not weighty. The manuscripts where the passage wanders to the end of ch. 14 are few in number and closely related. They belong almost entirely to the Western type of text. The oldest manuscripts (P<sup>46</sup>, N, A, B) along with \*Ψ and the Byzantine tradition read the letter with the problematic verses in their canonical location."<sup>2</sup>

But Gordon Fee (ibid) writes, "Although the majority of interpreters assume that option 1 is original, they generally do so without asking the historical question as to how then the Western text came into existence. The solution that is sometimes offered, that someone in the early second century "edited" the text in this fashion "to find a more appropriate location," seems to be unhistorical—on two grounds: (a) displacements of this kind do not occur elsewhere in the NT; and (b) no *adequate* reason can be found for such a displacement were these words originally in the text after v. 33. It is simply a

<sup>1</sup>Gordon Fee, *New International Commentary, 1 Corinthians* p. 699,

<sup>2</sup>Raymond Collins *Sacra Pagina, Commentary, 1 Corinthians*

modern invention that someone in the early church would have been troubled by the *placement* of these words in the text, since all who comment on it find the arrangement very logical. It is therefore most highly improbable that with this text before him it would ever have occurred to a copyist to take such an unprecedented step as to rearrange Paul's argument—especially so since in this case one can scarcely demonstrate that the "displacement" makes better sense! The Western text may not be shunted aside. All the surviving evidence indicates that this was the only way 1 Corinthians appeared in the Latin church for at least three hundred years. Those who wish to maintain the authenticity of these verses must at least offer an *adequate* answer as to how this arrangement came into existence if Paul wrote them originally as our vv. 34-35."

Fee (*ibid*) also wrote: "Although these two verses are found in all known manuscripts, either here or at the end of the chapter, the two text-critical criteria of transcriptional and intrinsic probability combine to cast considerable doubt on their authenticity.

First, on the matter of transcriptional probability, Bengel's first principle must rule: That form of the text is more likely the original which best explains the emergence of all the others. In this case there are three options: Either (1) Paul wrote these words at this place and they were deliberately transposed to a position after v. 40; or (2) the reverse of this, they were written originally after v. 40 and someone moved them forward to a position after v. 33; or (3) they were not part of the original text, but were a very early marginal gloss that was subsequently placed in the text at two different places. Of these options, the third is easily the one that best fits Bengel's first principle. One can give good historical reasons both for the gloss itself and for its dual position in the text; but one is especially hard pressed to account for either options 1 or 2 had the other been original."

William O Walker Jr. wrote, "Robert Hull, Jr, however, argues that Fee has misappropriated Bengel's first principle, which applies only to 'attested textual variation, not conjectural emendation'. My own view is that, while Bengel's principle as stated applies only to 'attested textual variation', it may well be appropriate to expand it in such a manner as also to include 'conjectural emendation' if there are sound arguments for the proposed emendation. Surely, Fee's third scenario— the original absence of 1 Cor. 14.34-35—is one possible explanation for the varied location of the passage in the surviving manuscripts, and as such it should be given serious consideration."<sup>3</sup>

Collins (*Sacra Pagina*) thinks the internal evidence favors Pauline composition: "There are, moreover, substantial internal arguments that confirm the Pauline character of the text. These bear principally upon its vocabulary and syntax. The disputed passage's references to speaking, being silent, being subject, and the assembly link these verses to what Paul has said in the immediately preceding paragraph. It may be argued that Paul's vocabulary is somewhat

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<sup>3</sup> William Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*

unusual, but six key expressions occur in 1 Corinthians in an immediately adjacent or similar context: "to be silent" (*sigad*) in 14:28, 30; "to be subject" (*hypotasso*) in 14:32 (cf. 15:27-28 [6x]; 16:16); "the law says" (*ho nomos legei*) in 9:8; "to learn" (*manthand*) in 14:31 (cf. 4:6); "their own husbands" (*idiot andres*) in 7:2 (in the singular); "shameful" (*aischros*) in 11:6. Verses 33b-36 are, moreover, structured in a way that is similar to Paul's exhortations to prophets and those speaking in tongues. In each instance the instruction is followed by a conditional clause and with regard to women and to prophets there is a final motivation (vv. 34b; 35b). "He doesn't think the verses are Paul's thoughts, however, and suggests "Verses 33b-36 represent a conservative argument that Paul rebuts by means of the double rhetorical question in v. 36. 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."

Fee disagrees: "One can make much better sense of the structure of Paul's argument without these intruding sentences. As noted above,<sup>13</sup> the balanced guidelines for tongues with interpretation and prophecy with discernment are fittingly brought to a conclusion on the twin notes of vv. 32 - 33, that the "spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" and that orderly worship fits the character of God, being what is found (or laid down)<sup>14</sup> in "all the churches of the saints." Then, in typical fashion, the mention of "all the churches" sends Paul off on an *ad hominem* argument against those in the community who in the name of being *pneumatikos* ("spiritual") are leading this church in another direction. Thus, in light of the "other churches," he asks rhetorically, "Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?" This rhetorical aside (vv. 36 - 38), which at the same time is a direct confrontation between him and them over the crucial matters that divide them, is then followed (vv. 39-40) by a concluding wrap-up of the whole matter of chaps. 12 - 14. This reading of the text 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.

Furthermore, very little in the two verses fits into the present argument, which to this point has only to do with manifestations of the Spirit in the community. Any mention of people as such (e.g., "the one speaking in tongues") is quite subordinate to the larger concern of intelligibility and edification in the community through prophecy and related gifts, which by the same token disallows uninterpreted tongues. These verses, on the other hand, have to do with people only—women in this case, with no corresponding word to men as in 7:1-35 and 11:4-15. Moreover, there is not a single internal hint that they deal with gifts or manifestations of the Spirit in any way. The linguistic ties that do exist ("speaking, silence, submission") are used in such completely different ways as to make them suspect in any case. For example, there is not a single absolute use of the verb "to speak" in its other 21 occurrences in this chapter, yet it is twice so used here; and the enjoined "silence" in vv. 28 and 30 is of an otherwise legitimate activity that in some circumstances is being curtailed, whereas here the injunction to silence is absolute. Thus, these two verses simply lack any genuine correspondence with either the overall argument of chaps. 12-14 or the immediate argument of vv. 26-40."

In addition, what we find here contradicts what Paul wrote in 11:2-16 where women can pray and prophecy in the church. Fee writes, "Of even greater difficulty is the fact that these verses stand in obvious contradiction to 11:2-16, where it is assumed without reproof that women pray and prophecy in the assembly, not to mention that such is also assumed in the repeated "all" of vv. 23-24 and 31 and the "each one" of v. 26.1 5 This problem is so manifest that most interpretations that consider these words authentic engage much of their energy in "getting around" their plain meaning so as to allow the two passages to exist side by side in the same letter. "

Collin's view that Paul was responding to this mistaken view and correcting it does also resolve some of these issues. It is also fully consistent with the trajectory outlined above but it does not address the different placement of the verses in the Western tradition. William Walker concludes, after a measured discussion of the issue, "As regards 1 Cor. 14.34-35, the following can be said: the text- critical evidence suggests that it may represent a secondary addition to the text of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The linguistic and ideational evidence suggest non-Pauline authorship of the passage, and indeed the latter suggests that it was someone other than Paul who inserted the verses in the Pauline letter. The situational and comparative evidence suggest composition of the passage after the time of Paul and both non- Pauline authorship and non-Pauline insertion. The motivational and locational evidence provide plausible reasons why someone other than Paul might both have composed the passage and inserted it at precisely its present location in Paul's Corinthian letter. Thus, the cumulative weight of the evidence appears to support the view that 1 Cor. 14.34-35 is a non-Pauline interpolation."