

Evidence Paul did not write 1 Corinthians 14:34–35

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In a Greek public meeting (ἐκκλησία) the normal convention was that women were to be silent. Aristotle *Pol.* 1260.a.31 quotes Sophocles *Soph. Ajax* 293 ‘Silence (σιγή) adorns a woman.’

Chrysostom writes that Paul ‘sews up their mouths’. *Hom. in ep. ad. 1 Cor.* 37.1

Origen, although aware that Paul approved women prophesying, concludes, ‘even if she speaks marvelous and holy things, it is shameful for a woman to speak in church’ *JTS* 10 (1909) 40 line 37

Most interpretations that limit the prohibited speech permit speech that verse 35 prohibits.

Evidence that the silencing of women in vv. 34–35 is not a view Paul rejects in vv. 36–38:

It lacks all 3 characteristic traits shared by all nine of Paul’s widely-acknowledged quotations in 1 Corinthians: a short slogan, ‘but’, and Paul’s specific objection to the slogan.

Unless 14:36 is the only exception, none of the 46 instances of ‘or’ (ἢ) in 1 Corinthians contradicts the immediately preceding statement or indicates a change of speaker. Qqq

Every other one follows and reinforces a statement by Paul.

No Church Father ever indicates that these verses are a Corinthian view.

Seven external (manuscript) evidences this is a later addition:

1. Transcriptional Probability
2. The oldest Bible in Greek, *Vaticanus*, marks it as a later addition.
3. Bishop Victor of Capua, a manuscript expert, in one of the oldest Bibles in Latin, *Fuldensis* rewrites 1 Cor 14:34–40 in the margin omitting these verses.
4. In non-‘Western’ Greek MS 88, verse 14:33 is immediately followed by 36.
5. If Clement of Alexandria’s text had contained these verses, it is unlikely he would have written, ‘Woman *and man* are to go to church decently attired, with natural step, **embracing silence** ... fit to pray to God ... in the church.’ *Paedagogus* 3:11
6. The Apostolic Fathers give no sign of awareness of these verses.
7. 34–35 contain unusually many textual variants, which is typical of later additions.

Nine internal evidences these verses are a later addition are:

1. They contradict Paul’s many encouragements to women to speak in church.
2. They break Paul’s otherwise consistent chiastic literary structure and separate ‘all the churches of the saints’ (33) from its counterpart: ‘or are you the only ones?’ (36)
3. They make alien use of vocabulary from the chapter.
4. They conflict with the goal of instruction in church.
5. ‘Just as the Law says’ does not fit Paul’s theology or style. The Law doesn’t say this.
6. Paul champions women and the weak, but vv. 34–35 subordinate a weak social group.
7. The vocabulary of these verses appears to mimic 1 Timothy 2:11–15.
8. 14:35 addresses a command to women ‘in the churches’. Every other command in 1–2 Corinthians is addressed to the Corinthian church.
9. 34–35 fits an obvious motive for addition, to fit the common cultural wisdom of the day.

Transcriptional Probability: what best explains the surviving manuscripts, some with 34–35 after 33, others after 40? 3 original location options: after v. 33, after v. 40, or in the margin.

A thirty-six- to forty-word transposition five verses away with no obvious reason is

unprecedented in any Pauline manuscript, if not any NT manuscript.

It was **conventional**, however, for scribes to copy text in the margin, including reader comments, into the body text. Ulrich Schmid, ‘Conceptualizing “Scribal” Performances: Reader’s Notes’, *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research* (ed. K. Wachtel and M. Holmes; Atlanta: SBL, 2011) 49–64, at 58.

A text can be present in virtually all manuscripts and still be a later addition. For instance, an imperative ‘submit’ is in every surviving text of Eph 5:22 from the time of Codex Sinaiticus (ca. 350–360) on. Yet critical editions of the Greek NT and text-critical scholars almost universally agree that ‘submit’ was not in the original text, even when the only known NT manuscript without ‘submit’ was *Vaticanus*, supported by Clement of Alexandria & Jerome. *Vaticanus* and Clement of Alexandria support the absence of ‘submit’ in Eph 5:22 and the absence of 1 Cor 14:34–35, as do many other evidences. In both, conventional wisdom about women probably contributed to the rapid universal adoption of these textual additions.

The most crucial evidences are unique to this passage, so do not undermine any other passage.

Vaticanus free downloads of my NTS Oct. 2017 article from ‘New Testament Studies’ website Approximately 765 two-dot **distigme** symbols in the oldest Bible in Greek, *Vaticanus* mark the location of textual variants. 51 distigmai match the original ink color of the manuscript.

The original scribe B of the entire *Vaticanus* New Testament used the **obelos** symbol 121 times in the LXX Prophets to mark where words were added that were not in the Hebrew Text, three times explaining in the margin of Isaiah that ‘the obelized text is not in the Hebrew.’

Even though marking text as spurious, scribe B consistently copied the exemplars’ added text into *Vaticanus*. Scribe B did not even add full stops at the ends of sentences to the Gospels’ exemplars. The eleven original-ink marginal comments, οὐ κ’ π’ εἶπ’ (‘is not in the Hebrew’), where there are no obeloi in the prophetic books show that scribe B did not even add obeloi to the exemplar’s text, not even when identifying them with the same explanation scribe B gave for obeloi! **Accurate reproduction of the exemplar text was of paramount importance to scribe B, including the exemplar’s added text.**

Scribe B combined a **distigme**, an **obelos**, and a **gap** in the text **15 times** to mark the exact location of a particular type of textual variant, a multi-word block of non-original, added text.

Two new evidences that **the text of all four Gospels in *Vaticanus* is extraordinarily early.**

1. There are virtually no full stops at the ends of sentences in the *Vaticanus* Gospels even though there are full stops throughout every *Vaticanus* epistle. This shows that its text was copied from an exemplar from so early in the stream of the text that it had virtually no full stops.

1 Cor 14:34–35 p. 3

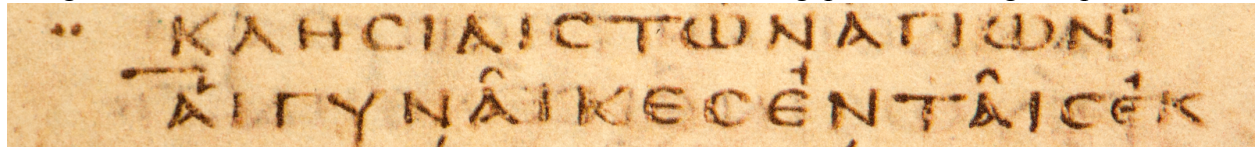
ⲡ⁷⁵, which Metzger dated ca. 175–225, has full stops throughout. This means that the text of Gospels in *Vaticanus* is even earlier than ⲡ⁷⁵, at least in this respect.

2. None of the 13 blocks of added text marked by the distigme-obelos symbol in the Gospels are in *Vaticanus*. This shows that the Vaticanus Gospels came from a point so early in the stream of the text that it was not corrupted by any of the thirteen early additions known to scribe B.

Only the original scribe could leave a gap in the text. If the distigme-obelos symbols were penned by anyone other than the original scribe, it is extraordinarily unlikely that every one of these fifteen gaps would be at the exact point where a block of text was added.

- 3 of the 16 distigmai show **original-apricot-colour ink**: 1241B, 1279C, 1332C + 1 obelos, 1243A
- There is significant evidence paragraphoi were not part of the original text of the *Vaticanus* NT. Since distigmai occupy the usual obelos position, scribe B evidently put the obelos below and to the right of its distigme to indicate the kind of variant these distigmai signal: added text.

distigme-obelos at the interface of 1 Cor 14:33 and 34 with a gap after 33's high stop at line end:



For the distigme at the end of 14:33 to indicate a transposition to the ‘Western’ location, there should also have been a distigme after v. 40 to indicate its corresponding variant—but there is no distigme after v. 40. Furthermore, no other distigme-obelos symbol marks transposition.

Scribe B's judgment should be respected first since virtually all NT textual scholars, like NA²⁸, agree that each of the other textual additions marked by distigme-obelos symbols were not in the original text of the NT. Thus, scribe B was a reliable judge of the manuscript evidence.

Second, the broad range of manuscripts with variants marked by these symbols shows that scribe B had access to far more pre-*Vaticanus* text of the NT than survives today. So, it would be irresponsible to dismiss scribe B's judgment of the manuscript evidence in this case.

Third, there is no other multi-word addition with any manuscript evidence at this gap following v. 33's full stop. Since multiple surviving manuscripts confirm blocks of added text at every other distigme-obelos location, one should not expect no evidence to have survived here, especially since so much evidence has survived that these verses are a later addition.

Variant readings with at least four words of added text have survived at the location marked by all sixteen distigme-obelos symbols even though most of these blocks of added text were in only a limited part of the textual stream that is known through only a small portion of the manuscript evidence. This indicates that **surviving manuscripts preserved early major textual variants remarkably well**. This supports the expectation that evidence for the original, publicly distributed text has survived for the vast majority of NT passages.