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Is 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 a Marginal Comment or a Quotation? A Response to Kirk MacGregor



by Philip B. Payne | April 25, 2019

Introducing Kirk MacGregor’s article, *Priscilla Papers* editor Jeff Miller affirms “a central purpose of academic journals—to foster scholarly discussion and thereby move toward the truth of important and difficult matters.”¹ First Corinthians 14 contains the only passage in the Bible that at face value silences women or restricts their ministry in the churches. It

is important for all who believe what Scripture teaches to understand the truth about this passage.

Neither the position I advocate, that 14:34–35 is a reader-added marginal comment (“gloss”), nor MacGregor’s position, that 14:33b–35 quotes the Corinthian men’s position that Paul then refutes, attributes the silencing of women to Paul. This does not mean, however, that either position should be accepted without adequate evidence.

To keep this response focused on that article’s statements, all references to it shall simply begin, for example, “Page 23 states. . . .” This response first identifies inaccurate or exaggerated claims that 1 Cor 14:33b–38 is clearly a quotation-refutation device. It then corrects that article’s most crucial misunderstandings of my position. In addition, the section on the fourth-century manuscript Codex Vaticanus identifies important new discoveries supporting that 14:34–35 is a gloss.

Is 1 Corinthians 14:33b–38 a Quotation-Refutation Device?

Page 26 states, “The linguistic evidence, then, permits no doubt that 14:33b–38 is a *QRD* [Quotation-Refutation Device].” Page 25 correctly lists all nine widely-recognized quotation-refutation devices in 1 Corinthians. Each displays three easily-recognizable features. First, Paul quotes a short, memorable Corinthian slogan with questionable content. Second, he follows that slogan with a disjunctive word meaning “but.” Third, “but” introduces a specific objection to the content of that slogan:

6:12a “Everything is permissible for me”—but (*all*) not everything is beneficial.

6:12b “Everything is permissible for me”—but (*all*) I will not be mastered by anything.

6:13ab “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but (*de*) God will destroy them both. But (*de*) the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but (*alla*) for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

7:1 Now concerning what you wrote about, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” But (*de*) since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

8:1 Now concerning meat sacrificed to idols: We know that “we all possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but (*de*) love builds up.

8:8 (two quotations) “But food does not commend us to God.” “We are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.” 9 But (*de*) be careful that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

10:23a “Everything is permissible for me”—but (*all*) not everything is beneficial.

10:23b “Everything is permissible for me”—but (*all*) not everything is constructive.

First Corinthians 14:33b–35, however, is not a short memorable slogan. It is a long series of assertions, argumentation, and application. Nor is it followed by a disjunctive word meaning “but.” Nor is “but” followed by Paul’s objection to the specific content of that saying. Nothing in 14:36–38 refutes any of the content of 33b–35. Since 14:33b–38 does not share any of the features common to the nine widely-acknowledged quotation-refutation devices, it should not be called a quotation-refutation device.

Does “as” Mark a Break in Thought, a Change of Speaker, or a New Paragraph?

Page 25 states, “the quotation-refutation device begins in v. 33b rather than v. 34 because of the break in thought marked by ‘As’ (*hōs*) which begins v. 33b.” Saying “As” marks a break, however, is contrary to:

1. Paul’s normal use of “as” in 1 Corinthians,
2. the judgment of virtually every scribe of any manuscript containing these verses,
3. early church fathers’ commentary,
4. all Paul’s other appeals to “all the churches,” since they all *conclude* their section,
5. the distinctive content of vv. 33b–35, which Paul says is *contrary* to church practice,
6. Paul’s Greek style, since this break entails highly awkward redundancy, and
7. the proper focus of v. 33’s conclusion on what is appropriate *in church worship*.

1. Of the thirty-five times “as” (Greek *hōs*) occurs in 1 Corinthians, only three occurrences could plausibly be at the beginning of a sentence. Unless this is the only exception, “as” does not mark a change of speaker or introduce a Corinthian statement in any of these thirty-five instances.

2. Every readable early manuscript shows a break both before 14:34 and after 14:35.² “Western” manuscripts move only vv. 34–35 to follow v. 40.³ Gordon Fee correctly notes, “The idea that v. 33b goes with v. 34 seems to be a modern phenomenon altogether.”⁴

3. Early commentary associated 14:33a with 33b, such as that by Chrysostom (*Hom. in ep. 1 ad Cor 36–37*). No early Christian author supports a change of speaker at v. 33b.⁵

4. In every other instance in 1 Corinthians where Paul appeals to the practice of “all the churches,” he uses it to conclude its section:

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1 Cor 4:17, 7:17, and implied in 11:16.⁶ This favors linking v. 33b with v. 33a, especially since v. 33 clearly concludes its section on rules regarding speaking in tongues and prophecy in Christian worship.

5. Verse 36 identifies what the Corinthians were doing as contrary to the other churches. Yet according to p. 25, Corinthian men proposed, “As in all the assemblies of the saints, the women should keep silent in the assemblies.” It is improbable that Corinthian men asserted that all the churches silence women since anyone who had been in other churches could refute this. Nor is it likely that Paul would abruptly begin a false command with, “As in all the churches of the saints,” since this would set up his readers to think that what follows *is* practiced in all the churches and so should be followed by them as well.⁷ If Paul intended to convey that vv. 34–35 quote his opponents, he failed, for every surviving comment on them until recent times treats them as Paul’s restriction on women’s speech.

6. Connecting v. 33b to v. 34 results in a highly redundant sentence “altogether unlike Paul.”⁸ Paul’s tendency is to abbreviate his expressions, not to be redundant. For instance, the previous “For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace” literally states only, “For God is not confusion, but peace.” “As in all the churches of the saints, let women be silent in the churches” is so awkward that most versions linking 33b to 34 translate the second identical “the churches” differently from the first.⁹

7. Breaking the text at v. 33b removes the proper focus of Paul’s conclusion on what is appropriate *in church worship*. With this break, Paul’s concluding argument is merely that God is a God of peace in

general. If 33b is linked to 33a, Paul affirms this, “as in all the churches of the saints,” focusing on how the character of God should be reflected in worship, namely without confusion. Uniting v. 33 also adds to Paul’s argument that all the churches of the saints worship this way, implying that if you are saints, you will too.

Does “or” Mark a Shift Back to Paul’s Counsel?

Page 25 alleges that “or” marks a shift back to Paul’s counsel in 14:36. There are forty-six instances of “or” in 1 Corinthians.¹⁰ Unless 14:36 is the only exception, not a single one responds to an immediately preceding Corinthian statement, or contradicts the immediately preceding statement, or indicates a change of speaker. Every other one follows a statement by Paul.

Page 25 states, “Paul introduces both rhetorical questions in v. 36 with ‘or’ . . . which he does six times elsewhere in 1 Corinthians to argue against the Corinthians’ position . . . and five times to express disapproval of a Corinthian practice. . . .” Yet most of this letter argues against the Corinthians’ position or practice. More relevant is that each of these “or” statements reinforces the immediately prior statement by Paul; none opposes it.

In spite of this, p. 25 states: “This twofold rhetorical question . . . indicates in no uncertain terms that Paul disagrees sharply with the preceding thought-unit or paragraph.” No compelling reason is given why v. 36 must be directed specifically against vv. 33b–35. Verses 36–38 make no mention of 33b–35’s content. Its “you only” far more naturally contrasts with “all the churches” (v. 33). This contrast supports an original text with v. 33 followed immediately by v. 36.¹¹

Does “you only” in 14:36 Mean “you men only”?

Page 25 states that “only [people]” in 14:36 refers to men only, “since this alone furnishes a coherent grammatical contrast between the women concerned in 14:33b–35 and the men rebuked in v. 36.” This statement assumes both that only men are rebuked in v. 36 and that Paul intended to contrast Corinthian men (v. 36) to women in the churches (33b–35). Even if 33b–35 expresses a Corinthian position, nothing in it requires that it was embraced only by men or by all the men in this notoriously divided church.

The normal scholarly presumption is that masculine plural references in Paul’s letters to churches are to the entire church unless specified otherwise.¹² Timothy Friberg’s Greek NT spreadsheet “shows something between 7500–8000” grammatically masculine forms that can refer to women and men.¹³ I have seen no commentary in the first 1900 years of the church indicating that this masculine plural refers only to a group of men.¹⁴ Paul could have done this by adding “from you *men* only” and/or “to you *men* only,” but he did not.

Page 25 refers to “the Corinthian men who proposed” 14:33b–35 and are “censured in v. 36.” Verse 36, however, states, “the word of God went forth” and “came to you [plural] only.” This is the language of prophesy to gathered believers and naturally refers to all who heard prophetic messages, hence the whole church. These prophetic expressions are inappropriate simply for a group of men who “proposed” something. Verses 29–33 are explicitly about prophesy, and prophecy is the dominant concern of this entire chapter.

Consequently, some who say Paul repudiated 14:34–35 regard it as a false Corinthian prophecy. Since prophetic messages come from individuals (14:30–32), they regard vv. 34–35 as a Corinthian false

prophet's command, alluded to in v. 37's "if anyone thinks he is a prophet . . . what I write to you is the Lord's command." If Paul had intended v. 36 to refer to a man who prophesied in 34–35, however, 36 should have had singulars, not plurals, or vv. 34–35 should have been adjacent to v. 37 and been introduced with a negation and followed by "God forbid!" as 1 Cor 6:15 does. Since no scribe ever placed 34–35 before or after v. 37 or framed it as a false prophecy, the "false prophecy" view is also doubtful.

Unsubstantiated Claim of Support from Apostolic Fathers

Page 24 states:

Clement and the Apostolic Fathers before him knew that 1 Cor 14:34–35 was not Paul's position but was a quotation of the Corinthians' position that Paul proceeded to refute. So of course they did not cite 1 Cor 14:34–35 as authoritative. This explanation is supported by the fact that Tertullian (c. AD 200), writing at about the same time as Clement, cites 1 Cor 14:34–35, as do the Greek church leaders Origen (AD 253–254), Chrysostom (AD 407), and Theodoret (AD 466).

However, no church father citing 34–35 identifies it as a quotation of the Corinthians' position. They all cite it as Paul's position.

Verses 34–35 would have been the ideal text to cite, had it been in their texts, during the early debates regarding the ministry of women in the NT.¹⁵ First Corinthians was the most quoted

epistle by Christian writers in the second century.¹⁶ If Clement of Alexandria's text of 1 Corinthians had contained 34–35, it is unlikely he would have written, “Woman *and man* [p. 24 omits this] are to go to church decently attired, with natural step, *embracing silence* . . . fit to pray to God . . . in the church . . .” (*Paedagogus* 3:11). The quotation-refutation view does not explain why the apostolic fathers never mention 14:34–35, but a marginal note that was later copied into the text as a gloss does explain it, since if 14:34–35 is such a gloss, the earliest manuscripts would not have included it. Apostolic fathers refer to at least nine things 1 Corinthians renounces, including the Corinthian quotation in 1 Cor 8:1 and Paul's refutation of it, “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”¹⁷

Conclusion Regarding the Quotation-Refutation-Device Thesis

Since 14:33b–35 does not follow the pattern exhibited by all nine of Paul's widely-acknowledged quotations of a short slogan/“but”/Paul's specific objection to the slogan, it should not be called a quotation-refutation device. There is not a single Greek manuscript that clearly supports the view that “as” in v. 33b is linked to v. 34. Unless 14:36 is the only exception, none of the forty-six instances of “or” in 1 Corinthians contradicts the immediately preceding statement or indicates a change of speaker. Every other one follows and reinforces a statement by Paul. Translating “you only” as “you men only” is contrary to virtually all versions of the Bible and virtually all commentary on this passage. None of the apostolic fathers or other early Christian authors ever indicate that 14:33b–35 is refuted by 14:36–38. This quotation-refutation-device thesis depends on multiple improbabilities being true, making it exponentially improbable.

Misunderstandings of My Position that 1 Cor 14:34–35 is a Gloss

Pages 23–24 display an incomplete understanding of textual criticism, of scribal conventions, and of my own arguments. 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 mid-fourth century on. Yet editions of the Greek NT and textual scholars almost universally agree that “submit” was not in the original text.¹⁸ Just like the addition of “submit” separated 5:22 from its original context of mutual submission and reinforced conventional wisdom that wives must submit to their husbands, so the addition of 1 Cor 14:34–35 separated “you only” in 36 from “all the churches” in 33 and reinforced conventional wisdom that women should be silent in public assemblies. In both cases, conventional wisdom about women probably contributed to the rapid universal adoption of these textual additions.¹⁹

Page 23 states, “The interpolation hypothesis is perhaps most persuasively articulated by Philip Payne.” I explained in my *New Testament Studies* article that “interpolation” is *not* the best word to describe this: “‘Gloss’, however, avoids misunderstanding since some writers define ‘interpolation’ as deliberate polishing of the body text, but a ‘gloss’ is text written in the margin and later inserted into the text by copyists, as seems more likely here.”²⁰ “Interpolation” has negative overtones since it suggests deliberate adding to the text, contrary to a scribe’s fundamental task. A gloss, however, is simply a note in the margin, typically by a reader. Its insertion into the text was an accidental mistake by a scribe simply following scribal convention. Page 24 properly quotes my use of “gloss.”

Page 23 states, “Contrary to Payne’s assertion that an interpolated 1 Cor 14:34–35 ‘does not undermine the reliability of any other passage,’ the most troubling aspect of the interpolation hypothesis is that one could

use the same type of logic to falsely threaten the reliability of numerous recognizably sound NT passages contained in the earliest relevant witnesses but omitted from later witnesses.” It would have been clear that my logic does not threaten any other passage if p. 23 had not removed my logic from the sentence it quotes: “much of the crucial evidence . . . is unique to this passage and so does not undermine the reliability of any other passage.” My following six pages explain that there is no other passage this large that was ever moved this far in any other manuscript of any of Paul’s letters without an obvious reason.²¹ The key reasons I conclude 14:34–35 is a gloss do not apply to any of the passages p. 24 says my view “threatens.” None occurs at two separate locations, is marked by early textual scholars as a later addition, or contradicts nearby statements.

Pages 23 and 28, n. 19, state without evidence or specifics regarding my logic: “This is the maneuver made . . . in arguing for the superiority of the ‘Majority Text’ over the ‘critical text,’ a maneuver rightly rejected by virtually the entire guild of textual critics.” Ironically, the standard NA28 Greek NT brackets as “dubious” the majority of the passages p. 24 says my view threatens. All of these bracketed words except “Jesus” in Matt 27:16–17 are in the Majority Text.²² By calling these bracketed texts “recognizably sound,” it is p. 23, not my findings, that resembles Majority Text adherents’ warnings and conclusions. Indeed, my findings defend the reliability of the Gospels’ text, including every non-NA28-bracketed passage that p. 24 says my view threatens, by giving evidences that the Vaticanus Gospels’ text is remarkably early.

Page 24 gives special weight to Papyrus 46 (P46), stating that it “likely dates between AD 126–138,” but this date is too early.²³ Page 23 mistakenly states that P46 “contains the beginning of v. 34.” P46 is totally worn away where the opening two words of v. 34 (“the women”) would have been, and no text below the first line of v. 34 remains on that page. Philip Comfort and David Barrett’s reconstruction of that page, assuming the text of 34 from later manuscripts, adds two lines, bringing

the total number of lines on that page to twenty-seven. According to Comfort and Barrett's reconstruction, however, the two pages of P46 prior to this page, including the opposite side of this page, both have twenty-eight lines, as do the following two pages.²⁴ Consequently, p. 23's statement that there is "damaged papyrus of precisely the space needed for the middle of v. 34" is not warranted. Page 23 omits the crucial fact that P46 has a clear break at the end of v. 33, undermining its view that 33b introduces 34.

Page 23 states, "it should be emphasized that the presence of 1 Cor 14:34–35 in P46, P123, and Sinaiticus, even if (contrary to fact) absent from Vaticanus and all subsequent manuscripts, would be deemed by most scholars sufficient to establish 1 Cor 14:34–35

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as almost certainly belonging to the original composition." In this statement, "34–35 in P46, P123" is misleading. Only parts of three words of 14:33 and none of 34 are readable in P123, and 14:34 is largely unreadable in P46, though the end of 34 and 35 are complete.²⁵

Codex Vaticanus

Throughout Vaticanus the general symbol marking the location of any kind of textual variant is a distigme (two dots) in the margin. It occurs about 765 times in the Vaticanus NT. Sixteen distigme lines also have the standard Greek obelos (bar, horizontal line) symbol for spurious text to specify that these textual variants add non-original text. The obelos has "a rather unequivocal meaning," so the reader knows that an obelized "line is considered spurious, and this is an unambiguous piece of information."²⁶ Fifteen distigme-obelos lines have a gap in the text that only the original scribe could leave. Each occurs precisely where four-or-more-word additions interrupt the original text.²⁷ The distigme-

obelos at the interface of 1 Cor 14:33 and 34 is followed by a gap after the period at the end of v. 33 (see Figure 1). The only multi-word addition with manuscript evidence here is vv. 34–35.

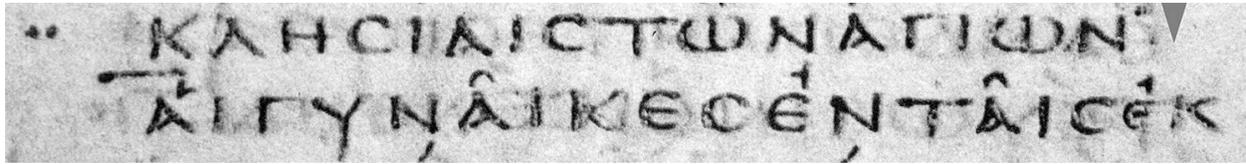


Figure 1: Interface of 1 Cor 14:33 and 34. 1474 A. Note the distigme in the left margin and the gray triangle in the upper right corner pointing at the gap. Image by author.

Pages 23–24 include many statements that expose misunderstanding both of what symbol occurs here in Vaticanus and what it means.

Page 23 states, “Vaticanus . . . notes through a symbol in the margin adjacent to 14:33 the existence of a variant reading.” That is what a distigme does, not a distigme-obelos.

Page 24 describes the distigme-obelos as “indicating that something should be in the text.” No distigme-obelos does this. Each marks the precise starting point of four-or-more-word additions that were not in the original text.

Page 24 states, “the symbol at v. 33 is all we should expect from the scribe’s knowledge of the ‘Western’ placement.” Since no other distigme-obelos symbol is at the location of a known transposition, why should anyone expect this symbol to mark a transposition?

Page 23 states that the “Western” text location of vv. 34–35 after v. 40, “was precisely the textual variant known to the scribe of Vaticanus.” If the “Western” transposition were being noted, scribe B (more than one

scribe worked on Vaticanus) would not have used the specific symbol for *added* text here, but rather distigmai marking the corresponding variants at the ends of both v. 33 and v. 40.²⁸ There is, however, no distigme at the end of v. 40.

Page 23 states, “Whatever the variant known to the original scribe of Vaticanus, the scribe still placed 14:34–35 in the text, a placement the scribe did not give to readings he or she deemed unreliable.” This is not true. Scribe B includes known Septuagint additions to the Hebrew text approximately 121 times in the prophetic books, accurately preserving the additions marked with an obelos. Scribe B’s explanations that obeloi mark the locations of added text show that scribe B did not remove text from Vaticanus’s source manuscripts, even though marking it as added.²⁹

Why did scribe B include 14:34–35? To fulfill the scribe’s primary task, to copy the source manuscript. There is conclusive evidence that scribe B copied manuscripts with notable accuracy.³⁰ It is this accurate preservation of text from an extraordinarily early Gospels manuscript that engenders great confidence that the Vaticanus Gospels’ text is remarkably early.³¹

The reason Vaticanus has 14:34–35 in the text is not because scribe B deemed it reliable, but because 34–35 was in the manuscript scribe B faithfully copied. Just so, scribe B preserved the source manuscript’s text by the 121 obeloi and the 12 additional passages in the prophets marked as “not in the Hebrew.” Page 23 correctly cites the distigma-obelos symbols at Luke 14:24 and John 7:52 as marking the location where text was added. Pages 23–24 inconsistently do not attribute this same meaning for the same symbol followed by a gap after the end of 1 Cor 14:33.

The Vaticanus Gospels contain none of the thirteen blocks of at least four words of later-added text at the exact location of a gap in the text following a distigma-obelos.³² The reason for this is not as p. 23 states,

“because the scribe judged [them] to be an interpolation.” That would contradict all the evidence that scribe B accurately copied manuscripts, including their spurious additions. These additions are absent from Vaticanus because its Gospels source manuscript was so early it was not corrupted by any of them and because scribe B accurately copied that source manuscript without them.

Scribe B had access to far more early manuscript text than we do today.³³ Eldon Epp writes, “Vaticanus would be regarded by all as the most valuable uncial [manuscript] of the NT, and by many as the most important of all NT [manuscripts], due to the combination of its early date, its broad coverage of the NT, and the excellent quality of its text.”³⁴ Page 23’s assertion that Vaticanus’s qualification renders “1 Cor 14:34–35 more plausibly authentic to the original composition than inauthentic,” shows either ignorance of what this symbol means or rejection of the trustworthiness of scribe B’s testimony.

The majority of commentators and textual scholars today agree with scribe B’s judgment at every distigme-obelos.³⁵ Yet p. 24 states, “the hypothetical pre-Vaticanus manuscript inferred by Payne did not exist.” If scribe B were not basing these judgments on actual manuscripts, why are scribe B’s judgments so reliable? All scribe B’s obeloi and distigme-obelos symbols reflect actual manuscripts. Since multiple manuscripts that attest added text marked by all sixteen distigme-obelos symbols in Vaticanus have survived, it is highly unlikely that no manuscript survived with the added text this distigme-obelos marks. Yet that would have to be the case if the added text were not vv. 34–35 since no other addition occurs in any manuscript at this gap.

Codex Fuldensis, a Latin Manuscript from AD 541–544

Page 24 states, “Victor [bishop of Capua, Italy], who, as a careful textual critic, likely recognized on stylistic and contextual grounds that vv. 34–35 could not have been Paul’s sentiment, felt on this basis alone that it must be an interpolation, ignorant of any other option of accounting for these verses.” This seems to acknowledge that at least this manuscript’s correction supports a text without vv. 34–35. There are major problems, however, with p. 24’s conjecture that Victor did this without manuscript evidence. First, in every case where Victor edited the text, including this

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one, manuscripts survive supporting his judgment. Second, contrary to all the other corresponding symbols in the side margin of Fuldensis sending readers to Victor’s replacement text in the lower margin, only this one goes against Victor’s preference for the Latin Vulgate’s form of the text. Only manuscript evidence adequately explains why Victor chose a reading omitting 34–35 against his normal Vulgate preference. Third, to say that Victor was ignorant of any other option to account for these verses is to ignore the various options church fathers gave for these verses. Fourth, it assumes Victor had a mind-set foreign to his era, when the silencing of women in public gatherings was the cultural norm. Most of all, its assumption that Victor had such a cavalier attitude to correcting the text without manuscript evidence belies his deep engagement with and respect for NT manuscripts. Fuldensis itself preserves the conflated *Diatessaron* form of the four Gospels that had been suppressed for centuries, proving that Victor preserved unusually early manuscript text.

Page 23 states, “Codex Fuldensis . . . was corrected by Bishop Victor of Capua, Italy, either to delete vv. 34–35 or alter the wording of vv. 36–40.” The marginal symbol would have to follow v. 35, not v. 33 (its actual location) if it were only altering the wording of vv. 36–40.

Page 23 states regarding Codex Fuldensis, “even if the manuscript’s corrector believed that 1 Cor 14:34–35 was inauthentic, it is a standard principle of textual criticism to prefer a manuscript’s original reading over a correction proposed by a later corrector.” This principle does not apply when the corrector is contemporaneous, is the most renowned expert on manuscripts of his time, and is having his scribe rewrite the text, as in this case.³⁶

Transcriptional Probability

Transcriptional probability asks what best explains the surviving manuscripts, some with vv. 34–35 after v. 33, others after v. 40. The three possibilities are that vv. 34–35 were first placed after v. 33, after v. 40, or in the margin. The most detailed attempt to find long transpositions in “Western” manuscripts identifies only three instances. The longest moves a seven-or-eleven-word benediction three verses forward for the obvious reason, to make “an apt conclusion to the letter.”³⁷ Moving a thirty-six-to forty-word transposition five verses away with no obvious reason is unprecedented in any Pauline manuscript. It was conventional, however, for scribes to copy text from the margin, including reader comments, into the body text.³⁸ One early copyist apparently inserted vv. 34–35 from the margin into the text after v. 40, which gave rise to their “Western” location. Another early copyist apparently inserted vv. 34–35 after v. 33, which gave rise to their usual location. This is the only explanation of this text’s two locations congruent with common scribal practice. A marginal gloss far better explains both locations of vv. 34–35 than does an unprecedented transposition for no obvious reason.³⁹

Even some scholars who believe Paul wrote vv. 34–35 argue that manuscript evidence shows that they were first added in the margin, including Earle Ellis, S. C. Barton, and Daniel B. Wallace.⁴⁰ This explains its two locations and why it breaks this passage’s consistent

literary structure. There is not, however, enough room in a papyrus margin for this much text in Paul’s “large hand” (Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 3:17). Nor does this explain 34–35’s contradiction of Paul’s affirmations of women prophesying or various other internal evidences that vv. 34–35 are a later gloss added to a manuscript, explained below.

Page 23 states, “at some point in the history of the ‘Western’ textual tradition, a scribe observed that these verses stuck out like a proverbial sore thumb in Paul’s argument, interrupting its chiastic flow . . . the scribe moved them to the place in the chapter where they would make logical sense.” Page 27, n. 12, attributes this to Bruce Metzger, but Metzger does not state or imply that after v. 40 “they would make logical sense.” Fee comments, “It is simply a 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 never speak to its placement as a difficulty.”⁴¹ Fee argues a transposition is “altogether 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 at either of these places.”⁴² Virtually all textual scholars regard the only close parallel, John 7:53–8:11, as not original. It, too, is added at different places (not transposed), has a distigme-obelos accompanied by a gap exactly where it would begin in Vaticanus (see Figure 2), and shares many other features with 1 Cor 14:34–35.⁴³ Additions of similar length also occur at John 5:3b–4 and 1 John 5:7–8.

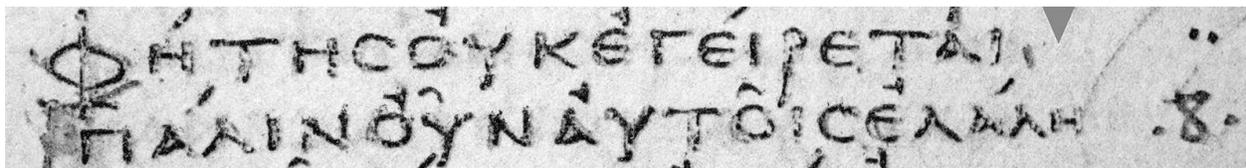


Figure 2: Distigme-obelos between John 7:52 & 8:12. 1361 C. Note the distigme in the right margin and the gray triangle pointing at the gap. Image by author.

Summary Regarding Manuscript Evidence

Page 23 states, “Taken by themselves, even these three qualifications render the content of 1 Cor 14:34–35 more plausibly authentic to the original composition than inauthentic. . . . the unanimity of the manuscript evidence, including manuscripts with qualifications, in favor of the authenticity of 1 Cor 14:34–35 makes the probability of this conclusion overwhelmingly high.” This requires that a Vaticanus symbol that in all fifteen other

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cases marks the location of later-added text does not do so here. It entails that Victor removed vv. 34–35 without manuscript evidence, contrary to all his other Fuldensis corrections. It chooses something unprecedented to explain the two locations of vv. 34–35 over common convention. All three of pp. 23–24’s explanations strain credibility.

Internal Evidence

Page 23 states, “The internal evidence only demonstrates the non-Pauline origin of 1 Cor 14:34–35. . . . Hence the internal evidence cannot be used to decide between these two hypotheses.” Five internal evidences, however, do favor this was a later gloss. First, p. 23 acknowledges that these verses interrupt the chiasmic flow of this passage, which is an internal issue. Not only are vv. 34–35 out of place in the logical development of this passage, they break its otherwise consistent literary structure.⁴⁴ Second, nothing in 34–35 relates to this passage’s topic, the exercise of gifts of the Spirit.⁴⁵ Third, this gloss appropriates words and phrases from this chapter, but uses them in ways that are alien to its context.⁴⁶ Fourth, its vocabulary appears to mimic that of 1 Tim 2:11–15.

Richard B. Hays writes, “The similarity of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 to 1 Timothy 2:11–12 is striking. Both command women to ‘learn’ in silence and submission.”⁴⁷ Both use the verb “permit.”⁴⁸ Fifth, it addresses women “in the churches.” Every other statement in Corinthians addresses that specific church, as would a Corinthian prophecy. A gloss explains all five; the quotation view explains none of these.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that in NT manuscripts, 14:34–35 is a discrete unit and 33b should be linked to 33a, not to 34. It has also demonstrated that all nine widely-recognized quotation-refutation devices in 1 Corinthians share three features. First Corinthians 14:33b–38 shares none of them, so it cannot legitimately be called a quotation-refutation device. The only adequate explanation for both locations of vv. 34–35 is that they were originally written in the margin of a manuscript sometime in the first two centuries and were later inserted into the body text in accordance with scribal convention. Comments added by readers normally do not include insertion instructions, so different copyists chose different insertion points. Its insertion after v. 33 interrupts the obvious contrast between “all the churches” in v. 33 and “only you” in v. 36.

Popular resolutions of the apparent contradiction between Paul’s encouraging “all” to prophesy and 14:34–35’s demand for silence limit “silence” only to disruptive chatter or, recently contrived, only to judging prophecies. These resolutions should be rejected since they permit speech that v. 35 prohibits, namely asking questions from a “desire to learn,” which does not characterize either disruptive or judgmental speech.⁴⁹ Only the gloss view explains all the external and internal data, preserves the chiasmic structure and integrity of Paul’s argument, and avoids conflict with Paul’s other teachings.

Notes

1. Kirk R. MacGregor, “1 Corinthians 14:33b–38 as a Pauline Quotation-Refutation Device,” *Priscilla Papers* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2018). MacGregor’s article is on pp. 23–28; the above quotation is from Miller’s editorial on p. 2; see <http://cbeinternational.org/resource/journal/priscilla-papers/volume32/i...>
2. Including P46 B* Origen, & A Dp 33 223 876 1175 1739 1780 and 1881, Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 223–24, 40% off at <http://pbpayne.com>.
3. “Western” manuscripts include those which are Latin or bilingual (Latin/Greek). Because many manuscripts written in Syriac (hence eastern) are also included in this family of texts, the title “Western” is typically placed in quotation marks.
4. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 772. The NA28 and UBS5 (the most widely-used editions of the Greek NT) paragraph break in the middle of v. 33, therefore, is not where virtually any early scribe understood it should be. In contrast, v. 33 is a single sentence in the Greek NTs of Bengel, Alford, Souter, Westcott and Hort, Robinson and Pierpont, and the 2017 edition produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge; see Philip B. Payne, “Vaticanus Distigme-obelos Symbols Marking Added Text, Including 1 Corinthians 14.34–5,” *NTS* 63 (2017): 619; Aļesja Lavrinoviča, “1.Kor.14:34,35 –Interpolācija?” (Master’s Thesis, University of Latvia, 2012) and *idem*, “1 Cor 14.34–5 without ‘in All the Churches of the Saints’: External Evidence,” *NTS* 63 (2017): 370–89, 370.

5. Including Origen, Chrysostom, Ephrem the Syrian, Ambrosiaster, Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodoret, and the *Montanist Oracles*, cited in Gerald Bray, ed., *1–2 Corinthians*, ACCS NT 7 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 146–47; Judith L. Kovacs, *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 239–41.

6. So, also, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 772.

7. Just as Chrysostom explains it, quoted in Kovacs, *1 Corinthians*, 240–41.

8. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 772.

9. E.g., NIV, JB, NAB, NEB, REB, TEV, CEB, CEV, Moffatt, Beck, TNT (Taylor).

10. Moulton & Geden, *Concordance*, 424.

11. As argued by Fee, *First Corinthians*, 776, and by David Bentley Hart, *The New Testament* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 345–46.

12. E.g., Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 720; D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 128.

13. Quoted from Friberg’s Jan 28, 2017, email to the author.

14. Chrysostom, Ambrosiaster, and the *Montanist Oracles* explain “you” as the church in Corinth. Bray, *1–2 Corinthians*, 146–47.

15. Consider Thecla's preaching and Priscilla's and Maximilla's prophesying. Later, Tertullian does use vv. 34–35 against Priscilla and Maximilla.

16. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 219.

17. *The Epistle to Diognetus* 12:5 cited from Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann/Macmillan, 1912–13), 2:378–79; *1 Clement* 47:1–7 (1 Cor 1:10 divisions); Ignatius, *Ephesians* 18:1 (1 Cor 1:20, 29 boasting); *1 Clement* 13:1 (1 Cor 1:29, 31 boasting); Ignatius, *Trallians* 5:1 (1 Cor 3:1–2 immature); Ignatius, *Magnesians* 10:2 (1 Cor 5:7 evil leaven); Polycarp, *Philippians* 11:2 (1 Cor 6:2 avarice); Ignatius, *Ephesians* 16:1–2 (1 Cor 6:9–10 corrupt); Didache 10:6 (1 Cor 16:22 unholy).

18. This was true even when the only known NT manuscript without “submit” was Vaticanus, supported by comments by Clement of Alexandria and Jerome. Later, P46 confirmed “submit” was added; see Payne, *Man and Woman*, 278–79.

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19. Just as Vaticanus and Clement of Alexandria support the absence of “submit” in Eph 5:22, they also support the absence of 1 Cor 14:34–35. Bishop Victor's corrective work on the mid-sixth-century Codex Fuldensis, transcriptional probability, and many other external and internal evidences support the absence of 1 Cor 14:34–35; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 217–67.

20. Payne “Distigme-obelos,” 615 n. 37. I have asked Zondervan to replace “interpolation” with “gloss” throughout *Man and Woman*.

21. Payne, *Man and Woman*, 227–32. If transposition happened here, it is unprecedented, which Fee, *First Corinthians*, 780, asserts for any NT manuscript in any language.

22. At Matt 21:44; Mark 1:1, 10:7; Luke 17:24; and John 13:32.

23. Page 27, n. 3, attributes this dating to Comfort and Barrett, but their 2001 “corrected” edition dates it to “perhaps the middle of the second century”; Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2001), 206. NA28 and Bruce M. Metzger date P⁴⁶ to ca. 200: NA28, 794; Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford, 1992), 28.

24. Comfort and Barrett, *The Text*, 274–78.

25. Furthermore, Joseph Fitzmyer notes that “the majority of commentators today” regard vv. 34–35 as a later addition; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, AB (New Haven: Yale, 2008), 530, citing twenty scholars, including, Cope, Delling, Fuller, Keck, and Roetzel. Kim Haines-Eitzen affirms this of “nearly all scholars now”; Haines-Eitzen, *The Gendered Palimpsest: Women, Writing, and Representation in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62.

26. F. Schironi, “The Ambiguity of Signs: Critical ΣΗΜΕΙΑ from Zenodotus to Origen,” in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, ed. M. Niehoff (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 103.

27. Payne, “Distigme-obelos,” 610–18 identifies seven of these fifteen plus one with no gap (Acts 6:10 at 1390A). The others are at Matt 6:13 (1241 B), Matt 7:21 (1243 A), Mark 3:5 (1280 C), Mark 6:11 (1285 B), and with the distigme in the right margin: Matt 8:13 (1243 C), Mark 2:16 (1279 C), John 7:52/8:12 (1361 C), John 14:1 (1371 C). W f 13 124

add *eidotes hoti apethanen* to the NA28-noted words added to Mark 5:40.

28. Cf. Payne, “Distigme-obelos,” 615. Page 24, referring to this, twice incorrectly states or implies that I note “the absence of a distigme-obelos adjacent to v. 40.”

29. Payne, “Distigme-obelos,” 608–9.

30. In twelve cases where there is no obelos, scribe B wrote in the margin the same explanation used for obeloi (Payne, “Distigme-obelos,” 608–9: 1033 B21, 37; 1034 B31; 1035 C8; 1038 B15; 1045 C2, 38; 1046 A40; 1054 C16; 1066 C29; 1073 C36; 1074 B17). This shows that scribe B did not even add obeloi to or remove added text from the Vaticanus source manuscript of the prophetic books, even when explaining that this text was not in the Hebrew Scriptures. Similarly, scribe B accurately preserved the virtually complete absence of periods ending sentences from its primitive Gospels source manuscript and preserved periods throughout the Vaticanus epistles from its later source manuscript.

31. Even earlier than $\mathfrak{P}75$ (dated by Metzger to AD 175–225) since $\mathfrak{P}75$ has periods throughout; Bruce Metzger, “Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament,” in *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian*, NTTS 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 157–58; Payne, “Distigme-Obelos,” 621–23.

32. Matt 6:13, 7:21, 8:13, 13:51, 18:11/13; Mark 2:16, 3:5, 5:40, 6:11; Luke 1:28, 14:24/25; John 7:52/8:12, 14:1; cf. n. 33.

33. As evident in its primitive Gospels’ text and the broad range of manuscripts containing the additions marked by distigme-obelos symbols and textual variants marked by original-ink distigmai. Scribe

B's awareness of a text that was so early that it did not include 1 Cor 14:34–35, hence earlier than P⁴⁶, confirms scribe B's access to early manuscripts.

34. Eldon Jay Epp, "Textual Criticism," *ABD* 6:412–35, at 421.

35. If the judgments of Fitzmyer and Haines-Eitzen cited in n. 25 are correct.

36. At the AAR/SBL Annual Meetings in 1991 and 1992, after reading my evidence, Metzger agreed that Bishop Victor commanded this replacement text, beginning at the end of v. 33 and omitting vv. 34–35, and that this most naturally supports a text without 34–35.

37. J. J. Kloha, "A Textual Commentary on Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians" (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2006), 549.

38. U. Schmid, "Conceptualizing 'Scribal' Performances: Reader's Notes," in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research*, ed. K. Wachtel and M. Holmes (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 58, "The inclination of scribes, at least in the view of the ancients, seems to have been toward the inclusion of marginal material into the main text."

39. Payne, "Distigme-obelos," 616.

40. E. Earle Ellis, "The Silenced Wives of Corinth (I Cor. 14:34–5)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism, Its Significance for Exegesis: Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 213–20; S. C. Barton, "Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth," *NTS* 32 (1986): 229–30; Daniel B. Wallace, "The Textual

Problem of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35” (2004)

at <https://bible.org/article/textual-problem-1-corinthians-1434-35>.

41. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 783. E.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. in ep. 1 ad Corinthians* 36 and 37, Theodoret, Ps-Oecumenius, and John of Damascus.

42. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 783.

43. Added at John 7:36, 44, 52; 21:25 and Luke 21:38; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 233–35.

44. Payne, *Man and Woman*, 254–56.

45. Cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 785.

46. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 785; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 256–57.

47. Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 247, though 1 Tim 2:12 has “in quietness”; 245–49 argues 34–35 is a gloss; 247 calls quotation-refutation the “least plausible” solution. I, however, regard the view that 34–35 is Paul’s command even less plausible since it has more problems, some of them more serious.

48. Both uses of “permit” (*epitrepō*) are present indicative. The only other occurrence of this verb in Paul’s letters (1 Cor 16:7) is aorist subjunctive.

49. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 118, observes that Paul “refers specifically to ‘learning,’ a term that appears in the context only for those hearing prophesy (14:31; not judging it, as in 14:29). Cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 787.