

Does the Bible Oppose Women in Leadership?

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Early in my Ph.D. studies at the University of Cambridge a lecturer said, “No passage in the New Testament properly understood in its original context limits the ministry of women.” I almost stood up and shouted, “**That’s not true!**” This talk distills my last 50 years of research that changed my mind regarding **four** key objections to women in leadership.

* **Objection 1:** The Bible teaches “**male headship**”

In other words, only men should be leaders in the church and the home. This idea is based on English translations of 1 Corinthians 11:3, “**man is the head of woman.**” In English the word “head” often implies *authority over*. But its context shows that Paul meant, “man is the **source** of woman,” referring to Adam. Head meaning *source* is commonly listed in Greek dictionaries since the 12th century.¹ * *Authority*, however, was **not** an established meaning of *head* in Greek. The most exhaustive Greek dictionary lists forty-nine figurative meanings for this word. None of them convey *authority*. * Most dictionaries of ancient secular Greek don’t cite **any** example of this word meaning *authority*.² The **earliest** citation meaning *authority* I have seen in any secular Greek dictionary is from the fourth century AD. Greek dictionaries identify *head* meaning *authority* as Byzantine or medieval, long after Paul wrote. So it’s unlikely that Paul intended *head* to convey *authority*.

* The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures widely used in Paul’s day confirms that *authority* was **not** an established meaning of this word. It almost **always** translates Hebrew references to a physical head with this word but almost **never** when *head* means *leader*.

It uses this word clearly as a metaphor meaning “leader” to translate **only one** of the 180 cases where the Hebrew word for *head* means “leader.”³ * All other **alleged** cases of *head* meaning “leader” were added by Origen in the 3rd century, are explained in context to mean something other than “leader,” or are translated “as head,”⁴ which Greek readers could understand to mean “like a head” rather than “is head.”⁵ * **None** of Paul’s 12 *head* metaphors requires the meaning *authority*. **Ten** naturally convey *source*, and the other two, *apex*.⁶

* Exclusion of women from church leadership is incompatible with the Bible’s **many** affirmations of women leaders. Seven of the ten people Paul names as colleagues in ministry in Romans 16 are women, including **Phoebe**, “deacon of the church of Cenchreae” and “leader⁷ of many, including myself” and **Junia**, who, like her husband, was “outstanding among the

apostles.”⁸

In summary: secular Greek dictionaries, the Greek Bible, Paul’s usage and Paul’s affirmations of women in church leadership show that Paul did not intend “head” to mean “authority.” Nowhere does the Bible teaches male headship.⁹

*** Objection 2:** 1 Timothy 2:12 teaches: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.” Taking this as a universal prohibition ignores that the **only** people 1 Timothy identifies as deceived by the false teachers are women and that this letter addresses a specific **local** problem.¹⁰ Furthermore, this translation is dubious for **four** reasons.

***** First, the Greek word the old NIV translated “to have authority”¹¹ is best translated “**to seize authority.**” This word’s **first** occurrence clearly meaning “exercise authority” is **three centuries** later.¹² The New Testament uses a different word for “exercise authority.” In Paul’s day this word could mean either “to dominate” or, more commonly, 21 times, “to assume authority by seizing it.”

The King James translation, “usurp authority,” is therefore more accurate. The standard New Testament Dictionary defines this word “to **assume** a stance of independent authority.” The 2011 NIV **corrected** its translation to, “to **assume** authority.”

Second, Paul typically uses the conjunction that links “to teach” with “to seize authority” to convey a **single** idea.¹³ Consequently, it **only** prohibits women **seizing authority to teach.** It does not restrict women with recognized authority to teach, like Priscilla, who instructed Apollos in this same city. Paul greets her in Second Timothy.

Third, “I **do not** permit” is a misleading translation because this verb in Greek normally refers to something **limited** in time, **not** permanent. Furthermore, its grammatical form here **rarely** conveys a permanent prohibition. It usually focuses on a presently **ongoing** permission or prohibition, so **should** be translated, “I **am not** permitting,” referring to the ongoing crisis in Ephesus rather than to a universal prohibition.

***** Fourth, if this verse **permanently** prohibits women from teaching, it **contradicts** the Bible’s **many** affirmations of women teaching.

***** God revealed even key portions of inspired **Scripture** through women including the songs of Miriam and Deborah, Hannah’s prayer, Abigail’s prophecy, the “*inspired utterance*” of King Lemuel’s mother, Elizabeth’s blessing, and Mary’s Magnificat, the first Christian **exposition of Scripture.**¹⁴

***** Thus, 1 Timothy 2:12 addresses a specific problem of deceived women in the church

in Ephesus conveying false doctrine. It prohibits women in that church from **seizing** authority to teach a man. Women teaching with recognized teaching authority, like Priscilla, would not be seizing authority. Paul does **not** prohibit women everywhere or at all times from teaching or having authority over men.

*** Objection 3:** women must not be **elders, overseers, or pastors** of local churches, because the Bible identifies only men, never women, in local church leadership.

In fact, apart from **Christ**, the New Testament doesn't name **anyone**, man or woman, as an **overseer** or **pastor**. * John "the elder" and Peter "the fellow-elder" do not specify a local church and may refer to their being elders of the whole church, being **apostolic eyewitnesses**.

* The Bible gives **only** one person a specific **local** church leadership title: "Phoebe deacon of the church of Cenchreae." It's "virtually **certain** that Phoebe is being described as 'a (or possibly 'the') deacon' of the church."¹⁵

* Paul encourages all believers to aspire to be overseers by stating, "**Whoever** aspires to the office of overseer desires a noble task."¹⁶ * The subject of the qualifications for elders in Titus 1 is also "**anyone**." In the original Greek, there's not a **single** "he, him, or his" or **any other** limitation to men in either list, contrary to most English translations.

* Some think that "**man of one woman**" excludes women, but even leading advocates of patriarchy, Moo and Schreiner, acknowledge that this does **not** exclude women.¹⁷ Funeral inscriptions show that "man of one woman" was an idiomatic **phrase** for fidelity in marriage.¹⁸ It is wrong to treat one word of an idiomatic phrase as a **separate** requirement.¹⁹ Furthermore, since Phoebe was a deacon and the qualifications for **women** are included in the qualifications for **deacons** in 1 Timothy 3:11, "men of one woman" in the very next verse must **not** exclude women. * Even the fourth century advocate of patriarchy, John Chrysostom, wrote, " 'men of one woman' **also applies to women** deacons."²⁰ He understood that Greek masculine forms do **not** exclude women. There are between 7500 and 8000 masculine forms in the New Testament that either must or could include women, roughly one per verse.²¹ As Gordon Hugenberger has shown, it's common for biblical requirements for men also to apply to **women**.²²

*** Objection 4:** Paul commands three times, "Let women be **silent** in the churches" in 1 Corinthians 14:34 to 35.

Although early manuscripts of the Qur'an contain significant textual variants, Islam has widely taught that the text of the Qur'an has never changed. In contrast, since the time of

Origen, the church has always acknowledged textual variants in manuscripts. The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy Article X affirms “that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.” The scientific principles of textual criticism permit reconstruction of the original text of the New Testament with remarkable fidelity from thousands of surviving manuscripts. The earliest manuscripts of Mark do not include the long ending (Mark 16:9–20), and there is compelling evidence that it was not in the original text of Mark. The long ending assures believers in verse 18 that “they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all.” Because it was not in the original text, it is not God’s authoritative message for the church. Similarly, **only** if 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 were in Paul’s original letter, would it have authority. **Seven** reasons from manuscripts and **nine** reasons from the words in these verses convince me and many others that they were not in Paul’s original letter but were added later.²³ I’ll now summarize just three.

* First, the obvious meaning of these verses contradicts statements throughout this chapter that “**all**” may teach and prophesy and chapter 11’s rules for women prophesying.

* Second, no other passage nearly this long occurs in manuscripts of Paul’s letters in two separate locations this far apart without an obvious reason.

Third, the oldest Bible marks these verses as a spurious later addition.²⁴

I’ll now comment on these points. **First**, these verses contradict many other statements in this chapter. * To avoid contradiction, many say that Paul silences *only disruptive chatter* or, first proposed in 1962,²⁵ *only judging* prophecies. But these narrow interpretations don’t fit this passage’s unqualified demands for silence repeated three times for maximum emphasis. Furthermore, if verse 34 prohibits **only** judging prophecies, v. 34 **permits** speech that verse 35 **prohibits**. After all, asking questions out of a desire to learn is totally unlike judging prophecies and is rarely disruptive. These interpretations make Paul contradict what he had just written.

* **Second**, these verses follow verse 40 in every “Western” Greek manuscript, but in most other manuscripts they follow verse 33. * Here’s the famous 6th century “western” Codex D. This image’s first full paragraph is the end of chapter 14. Its next paragraph is verses 34 to 35. Its last paragraph begins chapter 15.

The two locations of verses 34 to 35 strongly suggest that someone wrote them in the margin and later copyists inserted them either after verse 33 or 40. Let me explain:

* The **fundamental** principle in determining the **original** text of Scripture is: “the text that best explains the emergence of **all** other texts is most likely original.”

* No manuscript of any letter by Paul moves **any** other large block of text **nearly** this far without an obvious reason and no early reader criticized this text's location.²⁶ But it was **common** for scribes to copy text in the margin **into** the main text.

* For example, the fourth century Codex Vaticanus, has 20 instances of old text in the margins of Matthew. All but 3 are in the main text of virtually every subsequent manuscript.

* Greeks believed strongly that women should be silent in public congregations.²⁷ So it's hardly surprising that a reader sometime before AD 200 added in the margin the "conventional wisdom" these verses express. * The **only** explanation of these verses' two locations that fits known scribal conventions is that someone first wrote these two verses in the margin of a manuscript, and later copyists inserted them either after verse 33 or verse 40.

Common sense demands that something **customary**—inserting text from the margin into the main text—is more likely to occur than something so **extraordinary** that no other instance is known—moving so much text so far away with no obvious reason.²⁸

* **Third**, our oldest Bible, Codex Vaticanus, widely praised for its accuracy, marks these verses silencing women in church as a **spurious** interruption. The red triangle in the upper image shows the **gap** where Matthew 18:11—which is not in most recent Bibles²⁹—interrupted the original text. The red triangle in the lower image marks where 1 Corinthians 14:34 to 35 interrupted the original text. * 15 times in Vaticanus, two dots and a bar like these underlined in red identify lines with a **gap** precisely where the original text was interrupted.

* Other manuscripts preserve interruptions of at least **four** words at **all 15** gaps. Such long interruptions occur on average only once in **83.5** lines of Vaticanus text.

If these symbols were **unrelated** to spurious interruptions and 15 random Vaticanus lines were selected every second nonstop for 100 trillion **years**, the odds that all 15 lines would coincide with a four-or-more-word interruption **even once** is less than one in two thousand.³⁰

Furthermore, these long interruptions occur not just somewhere on these lines, but precisely **at a gap** at **all 15** of the original scribes' two-dot-plus-bar symbols.

* **This scribe explained** three times in Isaiah that horizontal bars mark added text, and in all three, just like the fifteen in the New Testament, left a **gap** in the text precisely where added text interrupts the original text. **Only** the original scribe could leave gaps in the text.

* This scribe's judgment that "let women be silent" is spurious text should not be dismissed for two reasons. First, both standard editions of the Greek New Testament agree with this scribe that the blocks of text inserted at **every other** two-dot plus bar symbol are spurious additions. Second, the variety of manuscripts containing these additions shows that this scribe

had access to **far more** pre-Vaticanus New Testament text than we have today.

Some object that the presence of these verses somewhere in every surviving manuscript of this part of 1 Corinthians requires an extraordinarily early insertion. * But the **rapid** universal adoption of “submit” to Ephesians 5:22 shows that the addition of these verses even well into the second century could **easily** explain their presence somewhere in each of these manuscripts.³¹

* Many leading textual experts conclude that Paul did not write these verses.³² David Bentley Hart’s new Greek Orthodox translation rejects these verses as “almost certainly spurious.” The German Bible Society’s new Bible states that these verses, “contradict what Paul says in chapter 11” and are “probably a later insertion.”³³

If we have time in the Q&A period, I’ll explain how Vaticanus’s textual symbols confirm the reliability of the transmission of the entire New Testament, especially the Gospels.³⁴

* Now, let’s recap what the Bible really teaches about these four objections:

1. Men and women should **share** leadership.
2. Women may **teach** in church.
3. Paul encourages **all** believers to aspire to the office of **overseer**.
4. The Bible encourages women to **speak**, even prophesy, in church.

A close examination of these four reasons that I **thought** restricted authority to men reveals that the Bible teaches, instead, that women and men are equally free to lead as God gifts and guides them.

* The problem with these four objections to including women in leadership is not just that none of the texts they appeal to actually affirm this. Their crucial problem is that so many foundational **principles** of the Bible directly **oppose** this, including each the following theological axioms from Paul that man and woman are **equally**:

created in **God’s image**,
 given **dominion** over the earth,
 given the creation **blessing**,
 given the creation **mandate**,
 and are equally **in Christ**.

* **Mutual** submission in the **church** entails the equality of men and women, as does **mutual** submission in **marriage**,
 the **oneness** of Christ’s body,

the priesthood of **all** believers,
liberty in Christ,
the **new creation**,
and **inaugurated** eschatology.

* The Spirit gifts **all** believers for ministry.

The nature of church leadership as **service** applies **equally** to men and women.

Paul introduces his conclusion to how men and women should lead worship in prayer and prophecy in 1 Corinthians 11:11 with the word he consistently uses to break off a discussion and emphasize what is **important**.³⁵ “The important point, however, is that woman is not separate from man, nor is man separate from woman in the Lord.” Galatians 3:28 similarly affirms, “there is no male-female division in Christ.” * Paul’s wording and parallel passages show that this describes the church. He had just rebuked Peter for withdrawing from table fellowship with gentiles as contrary to the gospel. To exclude all women from church leadership is surely even more contrary to the gospel and to our unity in Christ.

¹ LSJ⁹ 801; D. Dhimitrakou, *Μεγα Λεξικόν Όλης της Ελληνικής Γλώσσης* (9 vols.; Athens: Oikos Dhimitrakou, 1933–1950) 5:3880 [using the OdysseaUBSU font from <https://www.linguistsoftware.com/lgku.htm>].

² Moulton and Milligan, Friedrich Preisigke, Pierre Chantraine, S. C. Woodhouse, the LSJ supplements by E. A. Barber, R. Renehan, and P. G. W. Glare and the thirteen additional lexicons cited by Richard S. Cerv in, “Does *Kephalē* mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal,” *Trinity Journal* 10 NS (1989) 85–112, at 86–87.

³ Referring to the best-attested Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, as found in Rahlfs and the Göttingen editions of the Septuagint, a.k.a. LXX. Our English Bibles translate most of them “head,” e.g. NASB 116 times and ASV 115 times, because *leader* is an established meaning of *head* in English.

⁴ *eis kephalēn* [using the TranslitLSU font from <https://www.linguistsoftware.com/stu.htm>].

⁵ For example, the addition of “as ruler over them” following “as head” in Judges 11:11 provided a meaning for “as head” that otherwise would not have been obvious to Greek readers.

⁶ “the head (κεφαλή), from whom ἐξ οὗ the whole body ... grows” in Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 4:15–16. Colossians 1:18 explains, “He is the head [αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλή] of the body, the church, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ ἀρχή, who “is the source [‘origin’ (NEB)] of the body’s life” (TEV/GNT). 1:16–17: “for in him all things were created ... all things were created through him ... and in him all things hold together” ... “through the blood of the cross” (1:20) Christ “reconciled you in his fleshly body through death” (1:22). 1 Corinthians 11:3abc, 4b, 5b. Note the spatial references in Ephesians 1:20–22: “in the heavenly places, far above ... under ... gave him, *apex* over all things, to the church [τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ].” Colossians 2:9–10, “For in him [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to the fullness of life in him, who is the apex of all rule authority.”

⁷ Every related NT word refers to leadership; cf. Philip B. Payne, “What About Headship? From Hierarchy to Equality,” in *Mutual by Design: A Better Model of Christian Marriage* (ed. E. Beyer; Minneapolis, MN: CBE 2017) 150–152.

⁸ Cf. especially Eldon J. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) 110–21 and Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 165–186.

⁹ The word *headship* never occurs in the Bible.

¹⁰ This explains why Paul specifically prohibited women in Ephesus from seizing authority to teach a man and why this passage has one imperative, “let the women learn” (1 Timothy 2:11).

¹¹ *authentēin*.

¹² Circa AD 370, Saint Basil, *The Letters* 69, line 45: “he [the bishop of Rome] may himself exercise full authority [αὐθεντήσαι] in this matter, selecting men capable of enduring the hardships of a journey.” Roy J. Deferrari, trans., *Saint Basil* 2:40–43 (LCL).

¹³ Philip B. Payne, “1 Tim 2.12 and the Use of οὐδέ to Combine Two Elements to Express a Single Idea,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 235–53 examines every use of οὐδέ by Paul. Philip B. Payne, “Οὐδέ [*oude*] Combining Two Elements to Convey a

Single Idea and 1 Timothy 2:12,” in *Missing Voices: Broadening the Discussion on Men, Women, and Ministry*, ed. Hilary Ritchie (Minneapolis: CBE International, 2014), 24–34 answers objections and illustrates this use of οὐδέ in Greek literature.

¹⁴ Exodus 15:21; Judges 5:2–31; 1 Samuel 2:1–10; 25:24–31; Proverbs 31 (31:1 “an inspired utterance his [King Lemuel’s] mother taught him” NIV) and Luke 1:25, 42–45, 46–55, Proverbs 31,

¹⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979) 2:781.

¹⁶ This encourages all believers to desire the office of overseer.

¹⁷ Douglas J. Moo, “The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder,” *Trinity Journal* 2 NS (1981) 198–222, at 211; Thomas R. Schreiner, “Philip Payne on Familiar Ground: A Review of Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters*” *JBMW* (Spring 2010) 33–46, at 35.

¹⁸ It is evident from funeral inscriptions that this idiom conveys fidelity.

¹⁹ Therefore, any claim that a single word of it also functions as a separate requirement misuses the idiom and requires a double meaning. It’s wrong to isolate a single word of an idiomatic phrase and interpret that word as a separate requirement.

²⁰ Chrysostom wrote, “Some have thought that v. 11 is said of women generally, but it is not so, for why should he introduce anything about women to interfere with his subject? He is speaking of those who hold the rank of Deaconesses.” *NPNF*¹ 13:763; *NPNF*¹ 13:116.

²¹ Tim Friberg, co-author of *The Analytical Greek New Testament*, provided these numbers based on two counts through the entire Greek NT.

²² G. H. Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Timothy 2:8-15” *JETS* 35/3 (1992) 341–60, at 360 n. 78, “norms that utilize male-oriented terminology ought to be construed in general as including both sexes.”

²³ Note that I believe that all the Bible affirms is true. For years I tried to defend interpretations of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 as limited to particular kinds of speech. But I discovered that no early commentator understood them like this, nor would early Greek readers. I also discovered that no early manuscript supports linking 1 Corinthians 14:33b with 14:34.

²⁴ Codex Vaticanus B, which is widely regarded as the most reliable New Testament Greek manuscript.

²⁵ W. Klein, “The Church and the Prophets,” *ATR* 44 (1962) 8.

²⁶ Ulrich Schmid, “Conceptualizing ‘Scribal’ Performances: Reader’s Notes,” in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research*, ed. Klaus Wachtel and Michael Holmes (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 49–64, at 62, 50, 58: Readers . . . react[ed] to what they read by adding comments in the margin. . . . Some of these notes could have been copied into the text by scribes who had to copy such an ‘embellished’ [manuscript]. . . . 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.”

²⁷ E.g. Plutarch, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Sophocles, Democritus, Aelius Aristides, and many rabbis.

²⁸ This is called “transcriptional probability.” This is unique case. The key reason we recognize it as marginal text does not undermine the reliability of any other text.

²⁹ E.g. NIV, ESV, CEV, DLNT, ERV, GNT, Phillips, CJB, NABRE, NIVUK, NRSV, RSV, TLV, and in brackets in AMP, HCSB, ICB, LSB, NASB, NCV, NIRV, Voice.

³⁰ If the bars and dots were unrelated to insertions, the odds of this happening somewhere on all 15 lines are one in 83.5¹⁵. This is less than one in 6.6880134 x 10²⁸ (10²⁸ = 100 trillion times 100 trillion). There are 31,536,000 seconds in a year.

³¹ As virtually all Greek editions show, the earliest manuscripts of Ephesians 5:22 have no verb *submit*. Jerome’s commentary states that in Greek manuscripts, verse 22 never repeats the verb *submit* from verse 21. The UBS text states that it is “almost certain” that *submit* was added later. The first manuscript with any form of “submit” somewhere in verse 22, Codex Sinaiticus, was written about AD 360. But after it, every surviving manuscript includes “submit.” Since no later manuscript removed *submit*, it is not plausible that *submit* was removed from all the earliest manuscripts. Paul actually wrote, “submitting one to another out of reverence for Christ, wives to your own husbands . . .” Consequently, the wife’s submission depends for its verb on “submitting to one another.” The reciprocal pronoun requires reciprocating submission. It cannot, therefore, refer to submission to superior rank. Rather, *submit* here refers to “submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love,” BDAG 1042. Colossians 3:18 specifies that a wife should submit “in all ways that are appropriate in the Lord.” The reason the Bible gives for a wife’s submission is not a divinely-instituted gender hierarchy, but “in order that God’s Word not be blasphemed” [Titus 2:5], to act in ways that do not offend cultural norms. Cf. “so that, even if some of their husbands do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct. . . . Husbands in the same way [submit yourselves to your own wives], dwelling together wisely, recognizing her as a weaker feminine [BDAG 208, *gynaikeios*, “feminine.”] precious vessel, and assign them the honor they deserve as coheirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that your prayers won’t be hindered” [1 Peter 3:1, 7].

³² Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009) 226–227 identifies fifty-five studies that conclude this. These include the most famous evangelical textual scholar, Gordon Fee, and recently, Richard Fellows. The leading Roman Catholic scholar, Joseph Fitzmyer noted that “the majority of commentators today” conclude they are a later addition. The textual scholar Kim Haines-Eitzen states this of “[n]early all scholars now.”

³³ *BasisBibel* p. 1788, “Frauen: Die Verse 34-35 widersprechen dem, was Paulus in 1. Korinther 11,2-16 über die Rolle

von Frauen in der Gemeinde sagt. Hier handelt es sich vermutlich um einen späteren Einschub.”

³⁴ Abundant evidence shows that the original scribe of Vaticanus took great care to copy its exemplar manuscripts’ text, punctuation, and, in the Prophets, hexaplaric “bar” symbols and their associated textual additions inserted by Origen, without changing or adding to them. Vaticanus’s Gospel’s text is extraordinarily early, so early that it has virtually no periods at the end of sentences. But there are periods after every sentence in every Vaticanus epistle. The Vaticanus Gospel’s exemplar manuscript was so early that it did not include any of the blocks of spurious text the Vaticanus Gospel’s thirteen two-dot plus bar symbols mark. In many respects, including its lack of periods at the end of sentences, spellings, and much smaller set of nomina sacra abbreviations, the Vaticanus Gospels text is even earlier than Papyrus 75, which Bruce Metzger dated between 175 and 225.

Vaticanus’s scribe also faithfully copied a later manuscript of the epistles, written after the addition of periods, that included “let women be silent,” but marked it as spurious later-added text. Similarly, this scribe faithfully copied 121 bars in the Vaticanus Prophetic books marking where Origen added to the Septuagint text to make it match the Hebrew Scriptures’. As at 1 Corinthians 14:34–35, Vaticanus’s scribe did not remove any of those additions even though marking them as added text.

This explains why the only instance of the two-dot plus bar symbol in Vaticanus’s epistles includes the spurious text, but none of the thirteen blocks of added text marked by the two-dot plus bar symbol are in the Vaticanus Gospels. The Vaticanus Gospels were copied from a manuscript that was so early that it was not corrupted by any of the thirteen blocks of added text known to Vaticanus’s original scribe, but the Vaticanus epistles were copied from a later manuscript that included 1 Corinthians 14:34–35. Vaticanus’s original scribe faithfully preserved the added text of Vaticanus’s exemplar manuscripts, but marked those additions as spurious.

The two-dot plus bar symbols also support the truth of Scripture by showing that 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 was not in Paul’s original letter, so originally was not Scripture. This resolves what, otherwise, would be a contradiction within Scripture.

³⁵ BDAG 826, “breaking off a discussion and emphasizing what is important”; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), 1187, citing Blass, “to single out the main point.” BDF§449 (p. 234) “in Paul, used to conclude a discussion and emphasize that is essential.”