

WOMEN, TALKING AND SILENCE: 1 CORINTHIANS 11.5 AND 14.34-35
IN THE LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE

Preston T. Massey

Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN, USA

Introduction: The Status Questionis

The two texts of 1 Cor. 11.5 and 14.34-35 have resulted in clashing conclusions among scholars. In the former text women are permitted to pray and prophesy, if properly attired; in the latter text women are enjoined to maintain silence with no exceptions or conditions attached. Compounding this seeming contradiction is the additional notion of shame. In the former text women are advised to properly attire themselves in order to avoid shaming their head; in the latter text women are admonished to remain silent in order not to bring shame into the assembly. Some scholars see one or both texts as interpolations; others see the texts as containing convoluted and confusing arguments offering little hope of resolution; yet others see the texts as contradicting one another. This present study offers the alternate view that both texts can be understood as compatible when placed against the background of Greco-Roman culture.

Since this study engages an alleged contradiction between 1 Cor. 11.5 and 14.34-35 from the perspective of Greco-Roman cultural realities, the focus of this paper will be upon social backgrounds. Thus, this study investigates the background and nature of the issue of a woman's talking: why are women permitted to speak in one text while prohibited from speaking in the other?

These two texts have generated considerable scholarly response. I briefly acknowledge three principal interpretations that are often cited as possible solutions: (1) an attempt to focus on the nature of the alleged offense solely as speaking in tongues;¹ (2) the effort to label the text as

1. See Anders Eriksson, "'Women Tongue Speakers, Be Silent': A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric", *BibInt* 6.1 (1998), pp. 80-104.

discriminatory against women, especially when viewed against the background of the modern feminist movement,² and (3) the following variations: the attempt to eliminate the text altogether as an interpolation,³ the identification of its conflict with 1 Cor. 11.5-6⁴ or the

2. Marlene Crüsemann, 'Irredeemably Hostile to Women: Anti-Jewish Elements in the Exegesis of the Dispute about Women's Right to Speak (1 Cor. 14.34-35)', *JSNT* 79 (2000), pp. 19-36. This is a translation of 'Unrettbar frauenfeindlich: Der Kampf um das Wort von Frauen in I Kor 14,(33b),34-35 im Spiegel anti-judaistischer Elemente der Auslegung', in Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker (eds.), *Von der Wurzel Getragen: Christlich-feministische Exegese in Auseinandersetzung mit Antijudaismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 199-226. For a more sympathetic treatment, see Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 121; and David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), pp. 664-67.

3. See, for example, Eduard Schweizer, 'The Service of Worship: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 14', *Int* 13 (1959), pp. 400-408: 'But it seems to me quite clear that these verses are a later addition. Besides other difficulties, they clearly contradict the statement of 11.5' (p. 402). Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia; trans. James W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 246: 'This self-contained section upsets the context: it interrupts the theme of prophecy and spoils the flow of thought. In content, it is in contradiction to 11:2ff, where the active participation of women in the church is presupposed ... The section is accordingly to be regarded as an interpolation.' A more recent leading advocate of the interpolation theory is Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), who, after stating his case for interpolation (pp. 699-701), then states, 'Of even greater difficulty is the fact that these verses stand in obvious contradiction to 11:2-16' (p. 702). See also Winsome Munro, 'Interpolation in the Epistles: Weighing Probability', *NTS* 36 (1990), pp. 431-43; Philip B. Payne, 'Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus, and 1 Cor 14.34-5', *NTS* 41 (1995), pp. 240-62. More recently, see Richard B. Hays, 'Paul on the Relation between Men and Women', in Amy-Jill Levine (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Paul* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 137-47, esp. p. 146; see also Adela Yarbro Collins, 'The Female Body as Social Space in 1 Timothy', *NTS* 57.2 (2011), pp. 155-75, esp. p. 157, who takes a mediating position between the text of 1 Cor. 14.34-35 as either an interpolation or a contradiction of the earlier statement in 11.5. Cf. Nathan Barnes, *Reading 1 Corinthians with Philosophically Educated Women* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), p. 165, who is not persuaded by arguments that defend the authenticity of the text. Most recently, see Cynthia Long Westfall, *Paul and Gender* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), p. 228 n. 63, who is persuaded that Philip B. Payne has 'convincingly argued' that the text is an interpolation.

4. For this view, see Mary Rose D'Angelo, 'Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels', in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger (eds.), *Off with*

claim that it is too confusing to make sense.⁵ Since there are substantial arguments defending the integrity of the text as authentic,⁶ I will treat the text as it now stands in both the *Greek New Testament* published by the American Bible Society in 1968 and *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* of 1982. Leaving aside these aforementioned issues, this investigation will now pursue another interpretive path. The thesis of this study is that the injunction contained in 1 Cor. 14.34-35, when placed within the general context of the first-century Greco-Roman world, makes sense from that point of view. If this orientation is accepted, it makes it possible to understand how and why both 1 Cor. 11.5 and 14.34-35 can be justifiably explained in terms of the male expectations of that social world. At the same time, this study will

her Head: The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 131-64: 'It is specifically when the women pray and prophesy in the assembly that Paul requires a head-covering. 1 Cor. 14.34-35 does indeed command women to be silent in the assembly. But the provenance of this passage is uncertain, and while the textual evidence of interpolation is not strong, the conflict with 1Cor. 11.4-6 is nearly insuperable' (p. 138).

5. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1983): 'We no longer are able to decide with certainty which behavior Paul criticizes ... In a very convoluted argument, which can no longer be unraveled completely, Paul addresses several points for "this custom" or hair fashion' (pp. 227-28).

6. For a defense of the integrity and authenticity of the text, see Curt Niccum, 'The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Cor 14.34-5', *NTS* 43 (1997), pp. 242-55; J. Edward Miller, 'Some Observations on the Text-Critical Function of the Umlauts in Vaticanus, with Special Attention to 1 Corinthians 14.34-35', *JSNT* 26.2 (2003), pp. 217-36; most recently, see Jennifer Shack, 'A Text without 1 Corinthians 14.34-35? Not According to the Manuscript Evidence', *JGRChJ* 10 (2014), pp. 90-112, who devotes her study to the refutation of Philip B. Payne's conclusions. For a further defense of the text as a genuine Pauline statement, see E. Earle Ellis, 'The Silenced Wives of Corinth (I Cor. 14:34-5)', in Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee (eds.), *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 213-20; Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), pp. 230-31. See also Caroline Vander Stichele, 'Is Silence Golden? Paul and Women's Speech in Corinth', *Louvain Studies* 20 (1995), pp. 241-53, esp. p. 250, who defends the text as authentic on five grounds: (1) 1 Cor. 11.2-16 and 14.34-35 both presuppose a similar situation; (2) both texts show Paul restricting women's activity; (3) both texts demonstrate a concern for what is proper or not; (4) in both texts Paul uses a theological argument; and (5) both texts mention other Christian communities.

provide a possible way to understand why these women did not conform to male expectations.

I begin by insisting that women in Roman Corinth and during the wider period of ancient Greece were often encouraged, advised and even ordered to keep silent or be quiet. The male admonition for women to remain silent, however, needs to be carefully qualified. The cardinal point to consider is what is meant by the word ‘silent’ as applied to women. There can be no doubt that Grecian women talked, and that they were enjoined to remain silent—an order that would make no sense unless talking is implied. Hence, the literary and inscriptional records show that women could be very vocal in certain situations.

In this study evidence will be presented that in the period of Roman Corinth there are essentially four ways females expressed themselves that upset their men. These categories may be identified under the following four rubrics. (1) Talking is viewed as uninvited, unwelcome and meddlesome, all of which can occur when it interferes with a man’s planned course of action.⁷ This kind of talking may or may not be of a public nature.⁸ If of a private nature, this perceived meddling or interfering in a husband’s life can be construed as deceptive, if, in the end, the man feels taken advantage of. This is especially the case if the man perceives his wife has used sex with an ulterior motive, or if he feels that he has lost control. (2) Talking is unacceptable for a woman when her expressions are of a scolding, complaining or berating nature, and they thus create feelings of embarrassment before male peers or simply

7. Aristotle (384–322 BCE), in discussing the Spartan constitution in *Pol.* 1269b.22/2.6.5, describes legislation’s effect upon the women, and he says of the women: ζῶσι γὰρ ἀκολάστως πρὸς ἅπασαν κολασίαν καὶ τρυφερῶς (‘they live dissolutely in respect of every sort of dissoluteness, and luxuriously’). Aristotle does not stop there; he continues on to bring up the military campaign of the Theban invasion of Sparta and how the constitution affected women’s behavior. He says (1269b.39): θόρυβον δὲ παρεῖχον πλείω τῶν πολεμίων (‘they [the women] caused more confusion than the enemy’). Most likely what Aristotle has in mind is not necessarily sexual distraction, but meddling in the affairs of their men. However, sexual distraction cannot be ruled out.

8. Plutarch (*Aem.* 5.2–4) shares the anecdote of the Roman who, upon divorcing his wife, is questioned by his friends as to why. They ask: ‘Is she not discreet, is she not beautiful, is she not fruitful?’ Holding up his shoe before them, his simple reply is: ‘Is this not handsome? Is this not new? But no one can tell me where it pinches my foot!’ I cite this anecdote in the same way that Plutarch employs it: not all domestic unhappiness was visible to the public eye.

disrupt and destroy the harmony in the marriage.⁹ This has possible repercussions for understanding 1 Cor. 14.34-35. (3) Another prohibition is that of a woman talking privately with a man who is not her husband. This concern, too, may be connected to the intention of 1 Cor. 14.34-35. Talking of this nature may also involve the breaking of a confidence.¹⁰ This occurs, at least according to such a moralist as Plutarch, when a wife divulges personal information about herself to another man. This concern, it will be argued, also lurks in the background of 1 Cor. 14.34-35. (4) The final prohibition involves women talking openly in public. Verbal expressions of this nature clearly overlap with the injunction in 1 Cor. 14.34-35.

The primary terms for conveying unacceptable speech are the basic words *πολυπραγμοσύνη*, *περιεργία*, *διαφορά*, *λαλία*, *λαλεῖν* and *ὀμιλία*. There is one exception to this collection of expressions, and that is the favorable cultic activity of *προφητεία*. Inasmuch as prophecy is a public event, female prophetic speech thus becomes an anomaly when men and women are gathered together. At the end of this article, I will analyze the role female prophetesses played in ancient Greece and also explain why such prophetic activities enjoyed a favored status. I will also conclude with a possible application to the particular situation of Roman Corinth. The post-classical period from the death of Alexander down through the life of Athenaeus presents a consistent and coherent literary picture of the effect of a woman's voice on male behavior. Many of the same concerns expressed in the classical period can be seen repeating

9. In his *Frat. amor.* 486E, Plutarch mentions wives who challenge their husbands in front of other male guests. He tells his addressees, Nigrinus and Quietus, to be on guard against such expressions. See Ernestine Friedl, 'The Position of Women: Appearance and Reality', *Anthropological Quarterly* 40 (1967), pp. 97-108, for a report of field work in the modern Greek village of Vasilika that accentuates the role of scolding from the women and a reciprocal response of lecturing from the men.

10. Plutarch (*Garr.* 507B) provides an amusing anecdote about the Roman official who is pestered by his wife to share senatorial secrets. In order to teach his wife that she cannot handle such confidential information, he concocts a fiction and then tells his wife the ludicrous story of the lark who had been seen flying about with a golden helmet. The Roman then departs for a meeting at the Senate. But before he reaches the Senate, news comes that a lark has been seen flying around with a golden helmet. This proves Plutarch's point that it is best not to share some things with a wife. Plutarch makes his position very clear: the woman in question is discreet in every other way except one. Plutarch pinpoints what he considers to be a stereotypical feminine weakness.

themselves again in the Hellenistic/Imperial ages.¹¹ L. Ann Jervis stakes out two preliminary points in her introduction which require brief attention: (1) Paul was not addressing wives in particular but women in general;¹² and (2) Paul diagnosed the problem as the kind of speaking that the women were engaging in, rather than that it was the women who were doing the speaking.¹³ As to the former, I have already addressed this issue elsewhere with my belief that it was the wives that Paul was admonishing.¹⁴ To the latter, I turn now.

Meddling, Interfering, Being a Busybody

The perceptions of human behavior involving meddling and interfering (πολυπραγμοσύνη) and busybody or nosiness (περιεργία) have a long history in Greek culture.¹⁵ These words suggest or convey the act of meddling or interfering in the affairs of men. This is patently a classical ideal passed down to subsequent generations. This ideal may be summed up in a play (dated 430 BCE) by Euripides:¹⁶

ξένοι, θράσος μοι μηδὲν ἐξόδοις ἐμαῖς
προσθήτε πρῶτον γὰρ τόδ' ἐξαιτήσομαι

11. E.A. Barber, 'Hellenistic Poetry', in Maurice Platnauer (ed.), *Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), pp. 267-85, points out that in classical circles J.G. Droysen was the first person to use the term *Hellenismus* instead of 'Alexandrian' to describe the period from Alexander the Great (323 BCE) to Augustus Caesar (30 BCE). This present study also includes the next 200 years as well. Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* (Schloss Laupheim: Ulrich Steiner, 1950), p. 13, writes, 'Der Name Alexander bezeichnet das Ende einer Weltepoche, den Anfang einer neuen'. This is the very first sentence in Droysen's book.

12. L. Ann Jervis, '1 Corinthians 14.34-35: A Reconsideration of Paul's Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women', *JSNT* 58 (1995), pp. 51-74 (p. 51 n. 3). See also Walter A. Maier, 'An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-38', *CTQ* 55 (1991), pp. 81-104, esp. p. 84.

13. Jervis, '1 Corinthians 14.34-35', p. 52.

14. Preston T. Massey, 'Gender versus Marital Concerns: Does 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 Address the Issues of Male/Female or Husband/Wife?' *TynBul* 64.2 (2013), pp. 239-56.

15. Herodotus 3.15 uses it in the sense of 'to mind one's own business'. In Aristophanes *Pl.* 913 it is contrasted with being a benefactor.

16. Euripides, *Her.* 474-477.

γυναικὶ γὰρ τε καὶ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
 κάλλιστον εἶσω θ' ἤσυχον μένειν δόμων.

Strangers, do not think me bold for coming outside.
 For this is the first request I make from you.
 For a woman, silence and modesty
 are fairest of all, and remaining quietly inside the house.

From the house of Heracles, Macaria has stepped outside her front door in order to make an appeal on behalf of her family. She makes it plain that she is fully aware that this step into the public eye is cause for social criticism. However, she asks for a suspension of judgment in order not to be faulted for being *θράσος*. The noun *θράσος* conveys the notion of arrogance, rashness or reckless boldness.¹⁷ Depending on the context, the word can suggest something close to social disorder.¹⁸ From the male perspective, the presence of a female voice can be the occasion for social disruption. Macaria shows that she is aware of how such a public perception could potentially incriminate her for having crossed a significant social boundary. Her interest is not to bring shame on her house but to do the very opposite—to protect the good name of the family. This can only be done by an intervention on her part. In order to facilitate a desirable outcome, she takes the risk of speaking publicly. We pause here for a question concerning her behavior: are Macaria's actions in speech justified at the end of the play? Is she exonerated or further faulted? This introduces us to a classical ideal for a discreet woman: do not give offense by the risky public behavior of talking unless invited. Unless by invitation of the male, a married woman oversteps her bounds when trying to come to his aid.

Plutarch in *Pompey* 55.2 introduces the good qualities of Cornelia, the wife of Pompey. He has several good things to say of her: she has more than just beauty to commend her; in addition to being educated in literature and skilled in playing the lyre, she is also *ἀηδίας καὶ περιεργίας καθαρὸν, ἃ δὴ νέαις προτρίβεται γυναιξὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα μαθήματα* ('free from that unpleasant officiousness, which such accomplishments are apt to impart to young women'). Plutarch sets Cornelia apart because she is not prone to *περιεργία* which he feels accrues to young women. First of all,

17. BDAG, p. 458.

18. For example, Plutarch (*Quaes. Gr.* 302E) uses the expression *διὰ θράσος καὶ ἀταξίαν* ('on account of rashness and lack of discipline').

Plutarch is critiquing women of the Roman court.¹⁹ Secondly, he is also analyzing young women who have some measure of learning or *μαθήματα*. If one follows how Plutarch uses *περιεργία*, it becomes apparent that this word has associations with an affected behavior in order to obtain a desired end.²⁰ The word also has strong connections with *λαλία* ('talking')²¹ or immoderate display.²² A cognate of this word is found in 1 Tim. 5.13: ἅμα δὲ ἄργαι μανθάνουσιν περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἄργαι ἀλλὰ καὶ φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, λαλοῦσαι τὰ μὴ δέοντα. Here the cognate *περίεργοι* (perhaps, 'busybody') and *λαλοῦσαι* are connected. Indeed, being a meddler and being quiet are often contrasted.²³ The talking in this context is that of being 'idle' or a 'busybody' (*ἀργαί ... περιερχόμεναι*), perhaps going from house to house. The exercise of the prophetic gift does not cohere well in this context.²⁴ A further note may be added to how the verb *πολυπραγμανέω* can be employed. Cassius Dio (c. 155–230 CE) in *Historiae Romanae* 55.16 records suspicions of an epidemic of adultery among elite women. While some were pressing for consequences to be administered, Augustus, after punishing his own daughter, blocked any further prying (*πολυπραγμανέω*) into these matters. Thus, the word has insinuations of snooping, probing or poking one's nose uninvited into areas of human conduct. Although this word can imply an innocent and healthy curiosity,²⁵ the tendency of this word is to keep company with questionable behavior.

19. For an illustration of how this behavior can be difficult to interpret, see Suetonius (70–130 CE), *Tib.* 40.3, where the historian records the efforts of Tiberius to limit the influence of his mother Livia. She was not to meddle in affairs unbecoming of a woman: *sed et frequenter admonuit, maioribus nec feminae convenientibus negotiis abstineret.*

20. As, for example, Plutarch, *Demetr.* 12.5.

21. Plutarch, *Galb.* 1.2.

22. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 145A.

23. For this contrast, see Jeannine K. Brown, 'Just a Busybody? A Look at the Greco-Roman Topos of Meddling for Defining ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος in 1 Peter 4:14', *JBL* 125.3 (2006), pp. 549-68, who defines a key element of this word as 'transgressing social boundaries' (p. 549). See also Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Gossip and Gender: Othering of Speech in the Pastoral Epistles* (BZBW, 164; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2009), p. 164.

24. A. Oepke, 'γυνή', *TDNT* 1 (1964), pp. 776-89 (p. 788), inclines towards the prophetic as a possibility.

25. Polybius (200–118 BCE) at 9.1.4 uses *πολυπράγμονα* in the sense of 'curious'.

On a positive note, an interesting anecdote is the case of Poppaea Sabina, the eventual wife of Nero, who intervenes on behalf of a Jewish embassy. The case is narrated by Josephus, who recounts that this embassy,²⁶ dispatched from Jerusalem to Rome, was sent to present an appeal to Nero for protection from King Agrippa's spying on Temple activities. Josephus narrates that Nero was favorably disposed to their appeal: 'In this, he showed favor to his wife Poppaea, who was a worshipper of God and who pleaded on behalf of the Jews' (τῇ γυναιξὶ Ποππαία, θεοσεβῆς γὰρ ἦν, ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἰουδαίων δεηθείση χαριζόμενος). Obviously, the successful outcome of this embassy visit to Rome depended upon the intervention of Poppaea. Nero's sensitivity to the embassy was really a concession to her. Thus, she may have succeeded on two fronts—first, by obtaining an audience with the emperor and, secondly, by gaining a favorable decision. Naturally, Josephus casts her in a positive light owing to her intervention on behalf of the Jewish people.

The key to understanding words such as *πολυπραγμοσύνη* and *περιεργία* is to focus upon whether such activity is done for the benefit of others. If there is helpful intervention on behalf of others, is there also a counter view expressing displeasure at such help? A similar anecdote provides a juxtaposition of two conflicting views. Josephus records how Livia, wife of Augustus, intervened to soften relations between Salome and King Herod.²⁷ However, Tacitus (c. 56–118 CE) refers to her as a deceitful schemer.²⁸ In fact, whenever he can, Tacitus does not shrink from an opportunity to fault Livia for meddling or interfering in human affairs.²⁹ Yet, from another perspective, there is a sense of relief for the help thus secured. Tacitus faulted Livia for going too far in the use of her womanly influence; the eastern provinces, for their part, were thankful for her interventions. Thus, the text in 1 Tim. 5.13 has less to do with intervening on behalf of some legitimate need than it has to do with being a busybody. The term 'busybody' conveys notions of prying into the affairs of others without justifiable and legitimate reason, possibly for the

26. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.189-196; *Life* 16.

27. Josephus, *Ant.* 17.10.

28. Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.3; 1.5.

29. For a completely different interpretation of Livia, see Susan S. Wood, *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC–AD 68* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 82-87.

purpose of spreading gossip in order to hurt someone or to gain unhealthy attention for oneself.

This conflict of interpretations underscores the very nature of *πολυπραγμοσύνη* and *περιεργία*: the perception of meddling and poking one's nose into a matter without an invitation creates an impression of overstepping boundaries and causing harm to some party. From the Roman cultural side, there had been a long-standing criticism of married woman faulted for this very behavior. In a rather famous senatorial speech dated to 195 BCE, Marcus Porcius Cato, who judges women for leaving their homes and coming to the forum to interfere in public matters, appealed to ancestral ways in which women were not allowed such unrestrained behavior.³⁰ In a rather dramatic gesture, Cato shares his offended sensitivities by divulging what he would have liked to say to these women had not modesty restrained him: *qui hic mos est in publicum procurrendi et obsidendi vias et viros alienos appellandi?* ('What sort of behavior is this: running out into the open, blocking the streets, and appealing to other women's husbands?').

Jack Winkler expressed the following view: 'When women are active, they are trouble.'³¹ Winkler's statement, if taken solely by itself, is problematic. In my judgment, it is a case of overstatement and, therefore, it needs to be qualified and defined. It is more accurate to say (of this alleged perception) that, when women are acting in their own interests and independent of male wishes, they can be trouble. Perhaps it would be well to state this positively: when women act on behalf of the larger community, they bring about good and avoid criticism.³² R.A. Kearsley has assembled a collage of five inscriptions on the person of Iunia

30. Livy (59 BCE–17 CE) at 34.2.11 states: *maiores nostri nullam, ne privatam quidem rem agere feminas sine tutore auctore voluertunt, in manu esse parentium, fratrum, virorum ... iam etiam rem publicam capessere eas patimur.*

31. J.J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 8.

32. I note the comment by Jorunn Økland, "'In Publicum Procurrendi': Women in the Public Space of Roman Greece', in Lena Larsson Lovén and Agneta Strömberg (eds.), *Aspects of Women in Antiquity* (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology and Literature, 153; Jonsered: Paul Åströms, 1998), pp. 127-41: 'Through festivals and other religious tasks, women of all ranks were seen as exercising their powers for the well-being of the whole city: i.e., they performed important public functions' (p. 137).

Theodora.³³ In none of the five inscriptions is either her husband or father mentioned. Apparently, she is a single lady with the financial means to benefit substantially the lives of others. She is continually praised for such notable qualities as εὐνοος (being well-disposed or kindly toward others, mentioned some eight times in the five inscriptions), σωφρόνως (acting modestly, mentioned once) and her hospitality for οἰκᾶ δεχομένη (receiving others into her own house, mentioned twice). Although others from these various communities do enter her house, there is no suspicion attached to such visitations. These inscriptions, coming from Lycia, Myra and Patara, and being voted by male magistrates, all attest to one woman's intervening helpful influence in the affairs of others. She is clearly praised as a good woman.

Quarreling

Hellenistic/Imperial men agree with their classical counterparts that women should keep silent and avoid quarreling. There are three words that express such marital conflict and tension: διαφορά, ὄνειδος and λοιδορος. This is clearly still a definite male expectation. Plutarch is very aware of the emotional dynamics of conflict in marriage, for he shows everywhere an awareness that couples quarrel.³⁴ Plutarch himself is especially aware of the issues at stake in contentious talking. He constantly explores the destructive effects of both anger and silence, while at the same time imploring and pleading for calm, rational and intimate conversation among husbands and wives. Plutarch does not hesitate to report that notable men can be censured by their wives.³⁵ He

33. R.A. Kearsley, 'Women in Public Life in the Roman East: Iunia Theodora, Claudia Metrodora and Phoebe, Benefactress of Paul', *TynBul* 50.2 (1999), pp. 189-211, esp. pp. 204-208.

34. Plutarch is acutely aware of a woman's anger. See, for example, Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 461D, in which Plutarch relays the anecdote about Xanthippê scolding Socrates. In a rather amusing comment (463E), Plutarch says that a man, upon being exasperated by one's wife, should simply say, 'I knew that my wife was a woman.' See also *Inim. util.* 87C; 90DE; *Conj. praec.* 138E; and *Tranq. an.* 471B. In his *Amat.* 753C, he refers to wives who are 'always' angry with their husbands as deserving of the nickname 'Furies'.

35. Plutarch, *Lyc.* 7.2. See also *Cohib. ira* 461D, where Plutarch cites Xanthippê's railing against Socrates and a guest. Plutarch approaches the incident from the point of view of how to turn an embarrassing situation into a manageable one.

most certainly assumes that husbands and wives talk. He advises the new bride that in order to ‘get the greatest hold on her husband’ (ἐν οἷς ἄπτεται μάλιστα τοῦ ἀνδρός), she should employ ὁμιλία (‘conversation’).³⁶ And he counsels husbands and wives to *talk out* their differences through persuasion, rather than fighting, competing and quarreling.³⁷ Plutarch believes that the place for this kind of conjugal conversation is the privileged private space of the home. But this conversation should take place within limits. He strongly recommends that couples learn to resolve conflict through persuasion rather than rancor and quarreling.³⁸ Resolving marital conflict through rational conversation is clearly a classical ideal which Plutarch endorses.³⁹

There are extremes in the application. From one side, Publius Aristides (117–81 CE) says that a husband ought to do *all* the talking and so teach his wife; his wife, in turn, is to be content with whatever she hears.⁴⁰ On the other side, Dio Chrysostom (40–120 CE) mentions women who scold, revile or berate their husbands.⁴¹ Once again, we may be dealing with male expectations, which did not always come true for the men. Women did speak publicly with embarrassing putdowns of their husbands.⁴² But it is clear from the evidence that a woman who was in the habit of verbally abusing her husband was in violation of her marriage vows and going against the grain of her culture.

Conversely, this does not mean women could not represent their own point of view. Plutarch’s essay *Pyrrhus* (27.2) contains the anecdote of a woman named Archidamia representing the women of Sparta. Upon learning that the Spartan senate has resolved to send their women away to Crete to protect them from danger, the women oppose the decree

36. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 141A.

37. Plutarch’s word for ‘competing’ (φιλονεικεῖν) is found also in 1 Cor. 11.16, where it has the sense of to ‘quarrel’ or ‘dispute’. Literally, it describes one who loves to conquer, which, when applied to a conversation or an argument, depicts the person who has to have the last word.

38. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 138D.

39. Cf. Homer, *Il.* 14.198-210.

40. Aristides, *Def. or.* 1289. For Aristides, talking all the time is a sign of male leadership, and contentment in silence is a sign of wifely obedience and submission.

41. Dio Chrysostom, *Ven.* 50; *Troj.* 20.

42. Plutarch, for example, seems to be either speaking from the personal experience of having his own wife zing him with a public stinger in front of relatives or watching the wife of his brother do the same when he mentions these as embarrassments to avoid (*Frat. amor.* 486E).

(ἀντέστησαν). Thereupon, Archidamia, armed with a sword, gains entrance into the senate and upbraids the men (ἐγκαλοῦσα) for their decision. The women have a good reason for their objection: it would not be right to go on living if their husbands perish in war.⁴³ This appeal makes sense to the senate without in any way dishonoring them. Consequently, the senate backs off from their original decision and allows the women to remain in the city. As a result, the women actually end up assisting in the war effort. Plutarch is quick to point out that the women returned to their homes when their work was no longer necessary.⁴⁴

The question may then be raised: how does a young bride, trained and brought up to be quiet and submissive, turn into an assertive and expressive woman? Plutarch hints at the answer: early sexual experiences with her husband empowers a wife to voice her complaints.⁴⁵ Plutarch also believes in the power of marital sex to wipe out complaints or ‘differences’ (διαφοραί) so as to prevent alienation in the marriage.⁴⁶ Sex, therefore, empowers a wife to give voice to her frustrations, and sexual intimacy enables the couple to deal with marital discord.

Talking, Chattering

Words such as λαλέω, λαλία and ὁμιλία will be a factor in this rubric. We come now to the controversial text of 1 Cor. 14.34-35. Kenneth Bailey has recently proposed, based partially upon his own personal experience of preaching in the Middle East, that the issue is one of the women ‘chatting’ while a worship leader was endeavoring to conduct worship.⁴⁷ This chatting, Bailey suggests, is perhaps due to distraction, a short attention span and loss of concentration on the part of the women. Bailey then sums up his argument: ‘Multiple factors must be considered. Attention-span problems, limited knowledge of Greek, accent issues,

43. Actually, Plutarch says, ‘if Sparta perishes’.

44. Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 26.9.

45. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 138E. Plutarch advises the young groom not to abandon the honeycomb after being stung by the bee. Plutarch refers to these first experiences simply as τὰ πρῶτα.

46. Plutarch, *Sol.* 20.3.

47. Kenneth Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), p. 413. For a similar approach as Bailey’s, see Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, pp. 239-40.

language levels of Greek in use, lack of amplification for the speakers, along with chatting as a methodology for learning are all involved.⁴⁸ Of these multiple considerations, ‘chatting’ must be given pride of place, as I count some seven uses of the word in a span of five pages from Bailey’s book. This suggestion is possible, but not likely, however. I do not believe that this proposal zeroes in on the exact issue. The reason for my hesitation in accepting the premise of chatting is that such chatting may be a nuisance, but it is not likely to cause shame. Furthermore, as Michel Gourgues says, ‘Si aux v. 33-36, le verbe *lalein* ne renvoyait qu’à de simples bavardages—pourquoi donc les femmes seraient-elles les seules incriminées.’⁴⁹ I agree with James Moffatt who wrote: ‘Keep quiet means even more than a prohibition of chattering.’⁵⁰ The text of 1 Cor. 14.35 uses the word *αἰσχρόν* (‘shame’) to describe the kind of female speech under consideration. The presence of shame in the text hints at behavior that exceeds impolite, discourteous or rude female chattering, such as questions and interruptions.⁵¹ In the overall context of 1 Corinthians 11–14, I would interpret, furthermore, that the emotion of *αἰσχρόν* has a negative implication for the husband/wife relationship. An addition, however, is the issue of Greco-Roman culture and the social background behind the text which discourages or even forbids a married woman from talking with men outside of her family circle.

The issue is worthy of further scrutiny and a deeper probe. Bailey anchors his comments to observations made in the milieu of modern Middle Eastern culture. He does not provide supporting evidence for his view from the ancient cultural world. Probing into the culture of the Greco-Roman world may also contribute to understanding Paul’s exhortation. For example, Menander warns men to observe the greatest caution in selecting a wife lest they end up marrying one that is a *λάλον* (‘a talker’).⁵² Also, a house where the wife has the last or final word will

48. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes*, p. 416.

49. Michel Gourgues, *Ni homme ni femme’: L’attitude du premier christianisme à l’égard de la femme* (Paris: Cerf, 2013), pp. 89-126, esp. p. 119.

50. James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p. 233.

51. Jervis, ‘1 Corinthians 14.34-35’, p. 60: ‘One thing can quite firmly be advanced: when “the women” spoke they were asking questions and seeking to learn.’

52. Menander, *Frag.* 532K.

ultimately collapse.⁵³ Among the Pythagorean texts, there is this surviving document: ‘And if her husband thinks something is sweet she will think so, too; or if he thinks something bitter, she will agree with him. Otherwise, she will be out of tune with her whole universe.’⁵⁴ Plutarch, who seems himself to subscribe to this Pythagorean teaching, or at least a form of it, is at the same time acutely and objectively aware that in everyday life such male fantasies are not a reality.⁵⁵

Greek males of this time sought ways to reinforce their own wishes and force their expectations on women. They made use of nicknames for women who enjoyed public visibility or occupied positions of public responsibility. These nicknames serve the purpose of expressing male ideology.⁵⁶ Another tool for reinforcing the male view is animal analogies to illustrate and press home their point. Two animal analogies are current—the turtle and the female cicada. What the queen bee

53. Menander, *Frag.* 484K.

54. English translation is by Flora Levin, but cited in Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 136. The Greek text can be found in Holger Thesleff, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965), pp. 142-45. CBS cameras once recorded Jacqueline Kennedy expressing the following personal viewpoint regarding her husband, President Kennedy: ‘Whatever Jack believes, I believe also.’ I am not in a position to evaluate the truthfulness of her statement. Was it tongue-in-cheek or spoken sincerely? What I find most interesting is that she expressed such sentiments at all.

55. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 140A, can make this statement: οὕτω τὴν γυναῖκα μηδὲν ἴδιον πάθος ἔχειν (‘So a wife should have no feelings of her own’). This, of course, if carried out literally, makes a wife into the proverbial doormat. On this score, Plutarch is open to the charge of engaging in unrealistic male fantasy. At 140E and 141E Plutarch encourages husbands to enter into the feelings of their wives and be sympathetic with them. Of course, one way of reconciling this apparent contradiction is to make the initiative rest solely with the man. *If* he will take the lead and enter into his wife’s feelings, then she will not need to express them aggressively. Plutarch cannot mean that a wife should *not* have feelings. This would constitute being a ‘nothing’, which he does not support. What he has in mind is the suffocation of her feelings without becoming understood. To be understood she must have the freedom to talk. It is not a case of whether she talks, but how.

56. Plutarch, *Pyth. or.* 403B mentions the priestess of Athena who was called Ἡσυχία or ‘Quiet’. See also his *Nic.* 13.4 where her name has a different application.

illustrates for classical men,⁵⁷ the lowly turtle does now for Imperial men. The turtle stays in its shell and does not talk.⁵⁸ In the hands of Imperial Greek men, the female cicada is also a useful animal metaphor because she has no voice. For example, Athenaeus (c. 200 CE), after comparing the mute female cicada with marriage, says, ‘are not the male cicada a happy lot? For their females have no voice.’⁵⁹ Aelian (165–230 CE) also compares the voiceless female to the silence of a modest and proper newly wedded bride.⁶⁰ There appears to be an additional sensitivity here in this text, as the groom might not be expecting his bride to say much, if anything at all. From Homer’s *Iliad* (3.151), we find a different application for the cicada. He is speaking of the *male* who has a beautiful voice! However, Aristotle observes that neither male nor female cicada has a voice.⁶¹ Therefore, if a Greek mentions that only the female has no voice, there is more involved than a supposed scientific observation.

A text from the Roman Cornelius Nepos (99–24 BCE) in his *Excellentibus ducibus* testifies to potential Greek anxieties. In his *Praefatio* (vv. 6-7), Nepos contrasts the Roman custom with the Greek. He mentions that married Greek women do not attend ‘dinner-parties’ (*convivium*), ‘unless relatives are present’ (*nisi propinquorum*); ‘she sits only in the interior part of the house’ (*neque sedet nisi in interiore parte aedium*), ‘in which no one has access except for relatives’ (*quo nemo accedit nisi propinqua cognatione coniunctus*). If we accept this description as a relatively safe generalization, we are given a social context for understanding the Corinthian misunderstandings. Nepos mentions twice the off-limits security of a typical Greek home. The only people allowed to see the lady of the house are relatives. Dinner-parties are excluded, ‘unless’ (*nisi*) relatives are present. Guests are not admitted to inner quarters, ‘unless’ or ‘except’ (*nisi*) a relative. Obviously, the lady

57. For a helpful commentary on Xenophon’s reference to his wife as a queen bee, see Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 276-80.

58. See Plutarch’s *Is. Os.* (380F-381F) where he, discussing the useful symbols of animals, mentions that Pheidias placed beside the statue of Aphrodite in Elis the replica of a turtle to symbolize that married women should stay home and be silent. In *Conj. praec.* 142D he commends this same sculpture illustration for their consideration. See also Pausanias 6.25.1 where he closes his description of Aphrodite with one foot upon the turtle in a very amusing way.

59. Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 559a.

60. Aelian, *Nat. an.* 1.20; see also 11.26.

61. Aristotle, *Hist. an.* 532b.

of a typical Greek family will not come out of the interior of the house except to receive relatives. If we transfer this cultural model to the church at Corinth, a dynamic presents itself which could possibly confuse married women in the assembly.⁶² The church, in a married woman's mind, has become her extended family. In other words, since these women are now among relatives of a kind, the women may have felt safe enough in the environment to remove their veils. The men, on the contrary, do not have the same sense of security. The answer is for the women to wear their veils and to refrain from talking.

The situation was apparently similar regarding Roman women. Ramsey MacMullen, after examining titular offices such as high priestess, *stephanephoros*, *prytaneus*, *epimeletes* and *strategos* from the numismatic evidence (giving dates to each year), finally says, 'It is correctly noticed, nevertheless, that women are rarely found in roles like that of grammateus which would require their speaking in public. They are to be seen, then, but not heard.'⁶³

Men of the Hellenistic and Imperial periods have definite views and certain expectations about female speech. Up until now I have focused on how a wife is admonished to talk or not talk with her husband. But there is another category yet to be explored. Inside this category there are three levels: (1) no talking directly with males outside the family;⁶⁴ (2)

62. One of the very first to develop this argument was Stephen C. Barton, 'Paul's Sense of Space: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth', *NTS* 32 (1986), pp. 225-46: 'Here again, Paul wants to distinguish *ekklesia* from *oikos*. The Corinthians, on the other hand, seem intent on collapsing the two spheres together' (p. 234). Rather than the word 'collapsing', perhaps the women have simply confused the two spheres.

63. Ramsey MacMullen, 'Women in Public in the Roman Empire', *Historia* 29.2 (1980), pp. 208-18 (216). For a similar observation and conclusion, see Augusto Fraschetti, 'Introduction', in Augusto Fraschetti (ed.), *Roman Women* (trans. Linda Lappin; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 1-21: 'Every woman's life was surrounded by a thick silence imposed upon her by the outer world and by the woman herself. It was considered unseemly for outsiders to praise a woman's virtues, for her talents and abilities could find expression only within her home. No one but her closest relatives could know anything of her merits, and the members of her family were the only persons permitted to speak of her to others' (p. 2). See also p. 13: 'In Rome a woman's life was to be clothed in silence from birth to death.'

64. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 142D. Conversely, men are encouraged not to talk about the qualities of their wives to other men: Plutarch, *Apophth. lac.* 220D: ὄλως περὶ γυναικείας φύσεως παρὰ τοῖς ἔξω λόγον εἶναι οὐδένα δεῖ ('in regard to a wife's qualities there should be no talk among outsiders'). See also 217F where, once again,

no talking publicly while in the presence of other men;⁶⁵ and (3) no talking at home that would embarrass a husband before other male family members. Additionally, there is this male-to-male advice: no talking with other men about the qualities of your wife.⁶⁶ Plutarch records Areus, a Spartan king who died just outside of Corinth around 265 BCE, as believing it wrong for a husband to praise his wife's finer qualities to anyone outside the immediate family. Plutarch says:

Ἄρευς, ἐπαινούντων τινῶν οὐκ ἰδίας ἀλλὰ τινὰς τῶν ἀλλοτρίων γυναικῶν, Μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς, εἶπε, περὶ τῶν καλῶν κάγαθῶν γυναικῶν οὐδένα δεῖ λόγον εἰκῆ λέγεσθαι, ἀγνοεῖσθαι δ' αὐτὰς τὸ παράπαν ὅποια τυγχάνουσι, πλὴν μόνοις τοῖς συμβιοῦσι.

Areus, when some men commended, not their own wives, but some wives of other men, said, 'By Heaven, there ought to be no random talk about beautiful and good women, and their characters ought to be completely unknown save only to their family.'⁶⁷

This principle of shielding a wife's personality from public scrutiny can be further detected by observing the reticence to mention a married woman's name. Pierre Brulé has noted that we do not know the name of Pericles' wife: 'Neither Plutarch nor others tell us the name of the woman

men are advising men not to talk about their wives—except to members of their own families (πλὴν μόνοις τοῖς συμβιοῦσι). This is the sentiment of Roman men as well. Livy (34.2.10) records Marcus Porcius Cato making a speech that faults women for speaking with men who are not their husbands (*Qui hic mos est in publicum procurrendi et obsidendi vias et viros alienos appellandi?*).

65. Plutarch in *Reg. imp. apophth.* (173F) mentions Artaxerxes Mnemon, who, while traveling by carriage with his wife, would stop and talk with crowds as well as allow the people to talk with his wife. This situation is obviously a safe one and appears to be an exception to the general rule.

66. Plutarch in *Mulier. virt.* (252B) inserts the line: εἰ μὲν ἦς ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος, οὐκ ἂν διελέγου γυναιξὶ περὶ ἀνδρῶν ('if you were a wise man, you would not be talking to women about men').

67. Plutarch, *Apophth. lac.* 217F. Translation is by F.C. Babbitt in the LCL. Plutarch quotes Areus as saying that the characters of good and noble women are to be completely unknown. At 220D Plutarch quotes a Euboedas as holding the very same conviction. Plutarch, in his *Marcus Cato* (17.7), argues, through the voice of Cato, that it is improper to embrace or kiss one's wife in public. This would have been a violation of their relationship in the eyes of Plutarch.

who married the most famous man of his time and had two sons by him. Is this by chance? No. It is a tacit rule.⁶⁸

Plutarch is consistent in his personal view. Whether writing the *Moralia* or the *Lives*, he is not hesitant to openly share his view on how a woman ought to conduct herself in regard to talking. In his *Conj. praec* (142C/31) he offers this advice:

Theano, in putting her cloak about her, exposed her arm. Somebody exclaimed, ‘a lovely arm’. But she said, ‘Not for the public’. Not only the arm of the virtuous woman, but her *speech* (τὸν λόγον) as well, ought to be not for the public, and she ought to be modest and guarded about *saying* (τὴν φωνήν) anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself; for in her *talk* (λαλούσης) can be seen her feelings, character, and disposition.

Clearly, a married woman’s reputation for being modest hinges not only upon the way she dresses but also upon her not talking with men outside her family circle.

I transition now to a reverse situation; this situation involves a man talking with a woman not his wife. Why would a man want to talk with a woman under the social conditions of Hellenistic/Roman Greece? Plutarch in *Quaestiones Romanae* (271A) asks why a city wall (τείχος) is inviolable and sacred (ἀβέβηλον καὶ ἱερόν). He argues that anyone crossing such a barrier invites a fight to the death. Pausanias (fl. c. 150 CE) describes a herdsman who approached the wife of one of the Messenians, and he constructs the scene so that this woman lives outside the city wall.⁶⁹ Upon seeing her, the herdsman became impassioned, dared to speak with this married woman (διαλεχθῆναι τε τόλμησε), and then gave her gifts. Adultery became the end result. Consequently, a progression of passion may be observed: first, the man sees the woman; next, the man talks with the woman; and finally, passion is consummated. Greek males perceive in a woman’s voice the power to entice. This seductive quality then forms the basis of male suspicion and the tangential coloration of shame. Euripides in his play *Electra* says at line 344: γυναικὶ τοῖ αἰσχρὸν μετ’ ἀνδρῶν ἑστάναι νεανιῶν (‘it is a disgrace for

68. Pierre Brulé, *Women of Ancient Greece* (trans. Antonia Nevill; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 115.

69. Pausanias, *Descr.* 4.20.6.

a woman to stand [and talk with] a young man’).⁷⁰ This kind of talking has definite sexual overtones.

One further step is necessary for this rubric. Ben Witherington has built a case that the trouble is the likelihood of women interrogating, with disrespectful questions, the prophets or their husbands who may have been prophets. Witherington says, ‘It may be the case that wives were asking questions in such a manner as to stand in judgment over the prophets or, even more likely, that they thought themselves to be prophetesses with the gift of interpretation or weighing of prophecy.’⁷¹

Asking questions or perhaps even interrogating in a disrespectful manner cannot be discounted. However, I would suggest that there is more involved than a rude or disrespectful question. My point is that a woman’s voice, when heard in the assembly in a non-prophetic or non-prayerful context, becomes a potential source of sexual arousal. If we keep in mind that a woman’s voice was a source of sexual attraction, this could provide a reason why both Paul and, presumably, the Corinthian men would be nervous or concerned about shameful behavior, if coming from their own wives. Paul says in 1 Cor. 14.35: εἰ δὲ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερώτασαν, αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (‘If they [the women] wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at *home*, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in church’). This is the second reference to αἰσχρὸν. The first reference occurs at 1 Cor. 11.6. The first reference appears vis-à-vis a married woman appearing at worship without a head covering. The second connects to a context that describes talking. Therefore, the two contexts are connected by virtue of similar concerns regarding shame; both

70. See also, Euripides, *Iph. aul.* 830 (dated c. 405 BCE): ‘It is disgraceful for me to be speaking to a woman’ (αἰσχρὸν δέ μοι γυναιξὶ συμβάλλειν λόγους).

71. See Ben Witherington, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 175. See also p. 176: ‘If women were judging their husband’s prophecy and, by implication, questioning the veracity of their own husbands or other men in regard to prophesying, then they were creating a situation where the Corinthian worship service might become a family feud.’ Finally, we find at p. 177: ‘The scenario we envision is as follows: during the time of the weighing of the prophet’s utterances, some of the wives, who themselves may have been prophetesses and entitled to “weigh” verbally what was said, were asking questions that were disrupting the worship service. The questions themselves may have been disrespectful or they may have been asked in a disrespectful manner. The result in any case was chaos.’

contexts involve women, and both contexts involve women's participation in public worship.

Indeed, Paul's use of the word ἀσχημονέω points in this very direction. In 1 Cor. 7.36, Paul says, εἰ δέ τις ἀσχημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει ('Now if anyone thinks he is not acting properly toward his betrothed'). It is not likely that ἀσχημονεῖν means 'acting rudely'; it is more likely that the behavior in question involves acting inappropriately in a sexual manner.⁷² Indeed, the noun ἀσχημοσύνη is used in the New Testament with obvious negative sexual connotations.⁷³ At 1 Cor. 14.40 Paul caps off this pericope with this final admonition: πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν ('But all things [should be done] decently and in order').⁷⁴ I take the word εὐσχημόνως to refer to something that is the opposite of risqué or ribald. I believe that the domestic issues of the husband/wife relationship are in view. In a different text, but in a similar manner, Plutarch adds this personal commentary:

Her speech as well, ought not to be for the public, and she ought to be modest and guarded against saying anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself, for in her talk can be seen her feelings, character and disposition. For a wife ought to do her talking either to her

72. This is a disputed issue. Some see Paul advising fathers not to block their virgins from getting married. For this view, see the recent work by William Loader, *The New Testament on Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), pp. 214-18. I am more inclined to the view that this text describes the relationship between an engaged couple, not a father/daughter relationship. It is difficult to reduce ἀσχημονεῖν to the level of a father's inconsideration for not allowing the daughter the freedom to marry. Furthermore, the end of v. 36 climaxes the point with the verb γαμείτωσαν ('let them marry'). In this context, the verse would suggest: if a young man is having difficulty curbing his sexual desire toward his betrothed, let them marry. It is no sin to marry.

73. Rom. 1.27; Rev. 16.15.

74. Hans-Josef Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief* (NTAbh, 15; Münster: Aschendorff, 1982): 'Der abschließende Wunsch des Paulus, in der Versammlung möge alles "in gutter Sitte (εὐσχημόνως) und Ordnung (κατὰ τάξιν) geschehen" (14.40), hat eine fast wörtliche Parallele in der Mysterieninschrift aus Andania (vgl. 23b), wo es Z. 42 heißt: εὐσχημόνως καὶ εὐτάκτως ... πάντα γίνηται' (p. 350). Klauck's citation of this parallel passage from the mystery cult of Andania is intriguing. If Paul's statement is actually borrowed and a familiar language from a pagan cult, this would perhaps suggest that a woman's sexual attraction was a widespread concern, whether in cult or out. The admonition that it be subdued as much as possible was likely a commonplace *topos*.

husband or through her husband (δεῖ γὰρ ἢ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα λαλεῖν ἢ διὰ τοῦ ἀνδρός).⁷⁵

This language mirrors the language and thought of 1 Cor. 14.35: εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν, αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (‘Now if they wish to learn anything, they should ask their own husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in church’). From this text, the following may be concluded: for many Greek men, it would have been unthinkable and intolerable for them to have their wives be known personally in public as modern women are viewed today.⁷⁶ Both the physical appearance and the inner personality of their wives (as revealed in talking) are strictly confined to the intimacy of the family circle and are off-limits to the larger public community. To some Greek men, speaking in public would constitute a violation of marital trust and privacy. Such a breach could then result in shame. If this observation is correct, the injunction is designed to curb the impulse of married women from talking with non-family males. This implies, among other things, that these married women are not to address a question to men other than their husbands. The implication of this is that this would, on the one hand, be felt as an offensive slight or putdown by their own husbands, thus potentially engendering one kind of shame, and, on the other hand, be sending a

75. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 142D. Plutarch concludes his thought by comparing a wife to a flute player. That is, a woman does not have her own voice, but rather is heard through her husband just as a player’s voice is heard through the flute. So, in a sense then, the husband is the instrument through which a wife communicates with the outside world. This, however, is only in a limited manner, for her feelings (πάθος), her character (ἦθος), and her disposition (διάθεσις) are not to be shared with those outside the family. Suffice it to say again, the exposure (ἀπογύμνοσις) of a wife’s inner self is an affront to many Greek men and would probably constitute a violation of the intimacy of their marriage. For the classical view that a wife should speak or act through her husband, see Euripides, *Suppl.* 40-41, which says: πάντα γὰρ δι’ ἀρσένων γυναιξὶ πράσσειν εἰκὸς αἴτινες σοφαί (‘it is proper for women who are wise to do everything through their husbands’).

76. Averil Cameron, “Neither Male Nor Female”, *Greece & Rome* 27 (1980), pp. 60-68, uses the term ‘repressive’ to describe the attitude of Paul toward women in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 (p. 64). A better explanation is to see Paul’s admonitions in the light of his own culture rather than our own. See, for example, Craig S. Keener, ‘Women’s Education and Public Speech in Antiquity’, *JETS* 50.4 (2007), pp. 747-59, who attempts to place the limitations of women’s freedom on their lack of opportunities for education.

flirtatious overture on their part, thereby engendering another kind of shame or impropriety. In either case, those in attendance would sense a measure of awkwardness. The argument that 1 Cor. 14.34-35 contradicts 1 Cor. 11.2-16 is not only unconvincing but unnecessary. A Greek male living in Roman Corinth would have no difficulty understanding the rationale behind both texts. It is clear though that Paul needs to instruct the women; otherwise, the admonition would make no sense.

1 Corinthians 14.34-35 is not describing the exercise of charismatic gifts (speaking in tongues and prophecy) but the conversational act of asking a question. The Corinthian married women are likely engaging in normal household behavior that conforms to everyday etiquette. Although the verb *λαλεῖν* in 1 Corinthians 14 applies principally to speaking in tongues, I take this occurrence as a reference to conversation.⁷⁷ Indeed, the other two verbs in the sentence (*μαθεῖν θέλουσιν ... ἐπερωτάτωσαν*) indicate that speaking in the normal sense of conversation is in mind—not speaking in tongues. What is not clear, however, is the flow or direction of the conversation. Were the alleged women speaking to *other* men or to their own husbands? What is clear is that their normal voice is heard in the assembly. The text from 1 Cor. 14.34-35 indicates that these Corinthian women are taking liberties in speaking that belong properly to the domain of their personal homes.⁷⁸

77. Jannes Reiling, ‘Mann und Frau im Gottesdienst: Versuch einer Exegese von 1 Korinther 11,2–16’, in Edwin Brandt, Paul S. Fiddes and Joachim Molthagen (eds.), *Gemeinschaft am Evangelium: Festschrift für Wiard Popkes zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: Evangelische-Verlagsanstalt, 1996), pp. 197-210: ‘Und er geht weiter: wenn eine Frau ihr Haupt nicht bedeckt, wohl nicht im allgemeinen, aber beim Beten und Prophezeien, dann soll sie sich die Haare abschneiden lassen’ (p. 202). One of his principal contentions is that the text is speaking of literal head coverings, but he then adds that the women were required to wear them only *while* they were praying or prophesying. This argument misses an important connection with 1 Cor. 14.34-35. A woman may pray and prophesy, but she is also to remain silent. Although this appears to be a contradiction in terms, the ambiguity is removed when it is understood that a veil imposes silence on a woman—except for prayer and prophecy. The underlying assumption of 1 Cor. 14.34-35 is the culturally valid custom of a woman veiling herself in public. The wearing of a veil prohibits talking of a public nature but does not forbid prophesying for the benefit of the community.

78. Strengthening the case for a ‘husband/wife’ interpretation is Terence Paige, ‘The Social Matrix of Women’s Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36’, *BBR* 12.2 (2002), pp. 217-42 (p. 224), who has correctly supplied an additional line of evidence for the husband/wife pair: the emphatic use of *τοὺς ἰδίου ἀνδρας* (‘their own husbands’) indicates that the

Behavior that was acceptable in private had spilled over to unacceptable public behavior. This was a case not so much of the blurring of the sexes, but a blurring of spheres and spaces. This male expectancy apparently was not atypical of normal Mediterranean expectation as Philo in his *De specialibus legibus* (3.169-173) echoes similar thoughts.

Male ideology is not lacking from the Roman period. Plutarch clearly indicates that it was talking with Cleopatra that had ensnared Anthony. In his *Antonius* (25.1), Plutarch begins to describe the manner in which Anthony was ‘captured’ by Cleopatra (ἀλίσκεται δὲ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον). There is, to be sure, her physical beauty (25.3; 27.1), but Plutarch pays special attention to her ὁμιλία or her *conversation*. He mentions four qualities of her voice (27.2): ἄφυκτον (‘irresistible’), πιθανότητος (‘persuasive’), τι κέντρον (‘somewhat stimulating’) and ἡδονή (‘sweet’ or ‘pleasurable’).

In his *Comparatio* between Lycurgus and Numa (3.5) in their respective treatment of women, Plutarch must defer to the Roman Numa as being wiser. Numa is considered superior in wisdom for respecting ancient tradition in that he taught the women regarding ‘great modesty’ (αἰδῶ δὲ πολλήν). This instruction in modesty took the form of admonishing the women in not ‘meddling’ (πολυπραγμοσύνην), in abstaining from wine completely (οἴνου μὲν ἀπεχομένας τὸ πάμπαν), in ‘observing customary silence’ (καὶ σιωπᾶν εἴθισεν) and in ‘not speaking unless her husband is present’ (λόγῳ δὲ μηδὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἀνδρὸς ἄνευ χρωμένας). This cautionary narrative must be placed in its rightful context; it is best understood as having to do with modesty while out in public, not harmony in the home. Women are allowed to speak publicly only when their husbands are present—surely a protective measure to safeguard the marriage relationship. This can be seen from the contrast with which he begins his narrative with a μέν ... δέ construction. Earlier, Spartan women took great liberties when out in public (δημοσίοις πράγμασι), but Numa limited this freedom with the above proscriptions. However, this talk has definite limitations. Plutarch uses the common New Testament word λόγος to describe her speech. This word is a cognate of λαλεῖν which is used at 1 Cor. 14.35. This kind of speech which 1 Cor. 14.35 discourages for a married woman is not to be equated with prayer or prophecy as permitted in 1 Cor. 11.5. This information,

text is addressing married women. For the counter-argument that γυνή is a generic term including even virgins, see Geoffrey D. Dunn, ‘Rhetoric and Tertullian’s *De Virginibus Velandis*’, *VC* 59 (2005), pp. 1-30, esp. p. 16.

however, does involve a conflict in cultural sensitivities. Numa's prohibition—at least as understood and transmitted by Plutarch—contains a concession: a married woman is not allowed to speak in public *unless* her husband is present. At Corinth, however, the presence of a husband seems a safe assumption. How do we resolve this discrepancy? It is possible that the boundary line laid down by Paul is precautionary, possibly based upon the particular situation and the desire to avoid giving offense. A further comment upon this text regarding the injunctions by Numa is the reference to drinking wine. It is clear that some writers, Plutarch included, view the drinking of *any* wine for a woman to be a violation of modesty. So, while Paul's prohibition against talking is similar to Plutarch's, participation in the cup would be more relaxed. Although we do not have a perfect match, this comparison does suggest corresponding or overlapping concerns. But to return to the salient point, because of mutual inadequacies or vulnerabilities, whenever a man is seen talking with a woman, *he* automatically comes under suspicion;⁷⁹ whenever a woman is seen talking with a man, the same is equally true—if not more so for a woman: *she* generates suspicions of adultery.

In Plutarch's *Crassus* (1.2), there is this description: *καὶ διὰ τοῦτο προσκείμενος αἰεὶ τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ θεραπεύων, εἰς τὴν ὑπόψιαν ἐκείνην ἐνέπεσε* ('And it was for this reason that he was forever hovering about the woman and paying his court to her, until he fell under the abominable suspicion').⁸⁰ The *διὰ τοῦτο* in this narrative is avarice or greed (he wanted the estate of Licinia). Here is a case in which sex is involved but is actually used as a pretext for obtaining a villa. The point is that paying attention to a woman gives rise to a cloud of suspicion. Plutarch calls it *τὴν ὑπόψιαν ἐκείνην* ('that suspicion'). Plutarch, however, in his *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* (89E) further elaborates that Crassus did not actually have sex with the woman; it only appeared so. This only underscores the overall point: conversing with a woman leads to incrimination. In the same context (89F), Plutarch mentions a Postumia who was actually tried for unchastity because of her coarse talking with men. I include also the report in his *Pericles* (13.9) in which Pheidias, out of envy, slanders Pericles as taking advantage of women who came to inspect the construction of the Acropolis. Plutarch finds it difficult to

79. Plutarch in *Mulier. virt.* 252B inserts the line: *εἰ μὲν ἦς φρόνιμος, οὐκ ἂν διελέγου γυναιξὶ περὶ ἀνδρῶν* ('if you were a wise man, you would not be talking to women about husbands/men').

80. Translation by Bernadotte Perrin in the LCL edition.

get to the real truth of this report and eventually dismisses it as without factual foundation. Pheidias's alleged slander, however, does illustrate the inherent difficulties of women being around men.

Babrius (second century CE) continues the tradition of fables created by Aesop. He has some advice to give about love affairs and loose women. One such fable (22.1-15) tells of two mistresses, one young and one old, who pulled out the hair of a middle-aged man. Babrius then concludes: 'Αισόπος οὖν τὸν μῦθον εἶπε δηλώσας ἔλεεινὸς ὅστις εἰς γυναῖκας ἐμπίπτει ὡσπερ θάλασσα πρὸς γελῶσ' ἀποπνίγει ('Aesop told this fable/tale in order to show how pitiable a man is who falls into the hands of women [who are like] the smiling sea which then snuffs them out'). In fable 71, a farmer, upon observing a ship full of seamen struggling against the waves, laments, 'O sea ... you are an enemy to man.' The text then reads:

ἤκουσε δ' ἡ θάλασσα, καὶ γυναικείην λαβοῦσα φωνὴν εἶπε, μή με βλασφήμει, ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμῖν οὐδὲνα ἰτίη τούτων, ἄνεμοι δὲ χειμάζοντες, ὧ μέση κείμαι τούτων δὲ χωρὶς ἦν ἴδης με καὶ πλεύσης, ἐρεῖς με τῆς σῆς ἠπιωτέρεην γαίης.

Hearing this, the sea assumed a woman's voice and said, 'Speak not ill of me. I'm not the one that causes men these woes. It is the winds, to which I am exposed. They make me turbulent. If, when these are absent, you shall look on me and sail, you will declare I'm gentler even than the land on which you live.'⁸¹

Familiar elements which connect easily to the classical tradition are the following: the sea is a metaphor for a woman's turbulent nature, (Babrius likes to compare women to the sea); and riding or sailing the sea is a metaphor for sex.⁸² Babrius introduces an excuse for the woman in mind: the sea, in and of itself, is not naturally unstable; it is the wind that causes the emotional turbulence. What is the point? Of course, there are days at sea when all is calm and the water at rest. From a seaman's point of view, these are not necessarily the best days for sailing. Some wind is necessary in order to make progress. The fable, therefore, appears underdeveloped. The reader is left hanging as to the moral punch line, unless Babrius is saying, 'timing is everything'. What should not go unnoticed is that the sea assumes a woman's voice.

81. Translation by Ben Edwin Perry in the LCL edition.

82. See also Cercidas (fl. 225 BCE), *Meliamb* (3.115) for the sea as a metaphor for sex.

What was true for classical times would be equally true for Greco-Roman culture of the first century.⁸³ The homogeneous character of Greek, Roman and even Jewish male sentiments,⁸⁴ spanning hundreds of years, is consistent. Each successive generation seems to stand on the shoulders of the previous one, thereby building up a long-standing tradition on the subject of male expectations regarding a woman's talking. This tradition perhaps reaches its zenith in Plutarch (cited over eighty times in this investigation) whose life overlapped that of the apostle Paul and who lived less than 45 miles from Corinth.

The term νόμος cannot be bypassed in this discussion. Two critical and crucial questions must now be faced: what did Paul mean by this reference to ὁ νόμος, and how would the Corinthians interpret his words? First of all, ὁ νόμος is used in three other places in 1 Cor. 9.8-9, 14.21 and 15.56. At 9.8-9 it is clear that the Law of Moses is explicitly in mind. At 14.21 this reference is immediately followed by a citation from Isa. 28.11-12, leaving no doubt that the Old Testament is the cited source. At 15.56 there is no tag to specifically identify the referent; it is likely, however, that the Law of Moses or the broader Old Testament is in mind. Where does that leave the text of 1 Cor. 14.34-35? On balance, the weight of these usages would tilt in favor of the Law of Moses. That is to say, it is likely that Paul has in mind some unspecified text from the Old Testament, perhaps Gen. 3.16 or some other text from the Torah.⁸⁵ However, this is not to suggest that Paul is trying to bring the Corinthians under the authority of the Law of Moses. At 9.13 he refers to those 'who

83. I see no compelling reason to exclude Roman Corinth, as Corinth was not encased in a social silo. The assumption that Roman Corinth is somewhat an isolated city, a cultural island all to itself, is unlikely. For the difficulties of separating Corinth from its larger Greek milieu, see, for example, the collection of essays in Steven J. Friesen, Daniel N. Schowalter and James C. Walters (eds.) *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (NovTSup, 134; Leiden: Brill, 2010); and the essays in Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (eds.), *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

84. Jn 4.27 shows the disciples even surprised at the sight of Jesus talking (ἐλάλει ... λαλεῖς) with a woman. For the Jewish view that the Old Testament may not be the source, see Philo, *Spec.* III 169-172, who uses three key concepts that factor in this study: μηδὲν ... πολυπραγμονεῖτω γυνή ('let not a woman be a busybody') ... ἀναίσχυντον ('reprehensible') ... ἐδικαίωσεν ὁ νόμος ('as the law has decreed'). Philo, like Paul, does not specify what law he has in mind.

85. See S. Aalen, 'A Rabbinic Formula in I Cor. 14,34', *SE* 3 (1961), pp. 513-25, for the argument that Paul has the Torah in mind.

work in the temple'. This reference—whether to a Greek temple or the Jewish Temple—is not intended as an endorsement of temple service; it is only an example drawn from the common pool of cultural life of what is a social norm. This is likely the intended appeal to the Law of Moses.⁸⁶ Thus, there is no attempt to impose the Law of Moses upon the Corinthians as an authoritative binding force.

It is not clear, however, how they would view this particular reference to *ὁ νόμος*. Where would they look? Where do we look 2000 years later? If the Law of Moses is the basis of this statement, they certainly would be left with questions. Eran Lupu offers another solution to this issue: 'the accumulation of practices, customs, usages, rules, all of which, as has been pointed out above, are entailed in the term *νόμος*. This is the primary source for and substance of cult regulations, standing behind what the documents may (*inter alia*) refer to as *τὰ πάτρια* or *τὰ νομιζόμενα*.'⁸⁷ This is certainly the common usage of *νόμος*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 57–55 BCE) records the following action from the Roman Camillus: *τοῖς πατρικοῖς ὁ Κάμιλλος νόμοις ἐπειδὴ τὴν εὐχὴν ἐποίησατο καὶ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς εἴλκυσε τὸ ἱμάτιον ἐβούλετο μὲν στραφῆναι* ('It was in accordance with the traditional usages, then, that Camillus, after making his prayer and drawing his garment down over his head, wished to turn his back').⁸⁸

Their only recourse would be to inquire from Paul himself. Yet I must add the following: in the final analysis, perhaps it does not matter. In either case, whether the law in question is Greco-Roman in nature or an Old Testament prescription, the Corinthian males would most likely support Paul at this point. Indeed, it is likely that they would support either authority. Yet the question remains: why would it be permissible for women to pray and prophesy in one text but be prohibited to speak in another?

Valerius Maximus (fl. 14–29 CE), writing during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, reports the *horridum* ('harsh' or perhaps 'shocking') reaction of Sulpicius Gallus who divorced his wife because she left the house with

86. See Harm W. Hollander, 'The Meaning of the Term "Law" (ΝΟΜΟΣ) in 1 Corinthians', *NovT* 40.2 (1998), pp. 117-35, for his view that the Greek word *νόμος* need not apply to the Law of Moses as an authority.

87. Eran Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents* (RGRW; Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 111.

88. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 12.16.4.

her head uncovered (*capite aperto*).⁸⁹ Apparently, Gallus was deeply offended as he moved swiftly to terminate the marriage.⁹⁰ Perhaps justifying both the harshness and hastiness of the decision, Valerius even records the alleged reason: *lex enim, inquit, tibi meos tantum praefinit oculos* ('the law, he says, limits you to my eyes alone'). What law? He does not say. Paul does not specify the law either. The expression *lex enim, inquit* is nearly equal in strength to the statement in 1 Cor. 14.34: *καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει*. A further note may be mentioned with some profit: the date of composition is perhaps just before the year 30 CE.⁹¹ I mention this in order to situate its place in the Roman East and in the former times of harsher treatment of women.

89. Valerius Maximus 6.3.10. This varies from the information as reported by Plutarch, *Quaes. rom.* 267C. Plutarch begins the pericope by referring to the non-use of head coverings among Roman women (*οὐδ' ... ἐπικαλύπτεσθαι*). Plutarch then follows up this introductory statement by citing three cases of divorce among Roman women. This is clearly a *non sequitur*. To compound the confusion, Plutarch may be mistaken. He says that Sulpicius Gallus divorced his wife because she wore a veil. This makes no sense—not even in the context of Plutarch's own description of events. If Plutarch has based his information on Valerius Maximus (6.3.10), he has misunderstood the Latin. Valerius actually reports the opposite! Sulpicius Gallus divorced his wife because she was not veiled (*capite aperto* can only mean 'with head uncovered').

90. Valerius devotes an entire chapter to this subject that he entitles *De Severitate* ('On Severity'). His rubric prompts a question: what is his attitude toward *severitas*, and to what does he intend the application? Does he infer that it is harsh to impose upon a wife the obligation to wear a veil, or is it severe only to sever the relationship in divorce? Valerius appends the point that, although the decision to divorce was without delay, 'nevertheless, there was a reason behind it' (*sed tamen aliquae ratione mota*). Valerius does not place in doubt the custom of veiling; his subjective comment applies only to the uncompromising decision to dissolve the marriage. This stern measure is the *severitas*. This reason or *ratio*, it should be noted, takes us into the quintessential value attached to Mediterranean veiling practices: the veil is a sign of modesty. Allegedly, the deliberate removal of the veil signaled such a strong notion of immodesty or modesty disdained that Gallus was shamed to a hardened point of refusing reconciliation. His use of the word *lex* suggests a rather inflexible custom covering a long period of time.

91. At 6.1.1, he mentions Livia (*Julia*) as still alive.

Prophecy

There is one exception to the male expectations above: women play a very active and public part in the religious life of Greece. In a religious and social context in which men are exceptionally present, women may exercise the gift of prophecy (προφητεία). Here a woman is able to leave her home without fear of reprisal and break through the barrier of male-imposed silence with approval. For one small moment in time this is her Camelot.⁹² Marja-Leena Hänninen observes, ‘Public life put women to the test, as it was not usually proper for a Roman woman to attract public attention. Religion meant an exception in women’s life, since mainly religious occasions drew women out of their homes.’⁹³ Richter points to the Parthenon’s *Panathenic Frieze* as the decisive evidence that women participated in all religious festivals.⁹⁴ Carroll points out that a woman has the option of engaging in cultic events or activities in about 80 different festivals per year.⁹⁵ A.J. Graham says, ‘It is easy to show (as has been stated) that ‘religion in Greece was suffused with women from top to bottom’.⁹⁶ There is no doubt that Greek women could participate

92. Léonie J. Archer, ‘The Role of Jewish Women in the Religion, Ritual and Cult of Graeco-Roman Palestine’, in Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 273-87, interprets Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 14.34 as compelling a woman to be a ‘passive onlooker rather than an active participant’ (p. 282). However, 1 Cor. 11.5 indicates that Christian women in Corinth were also allowed to pray and prophesy—forms of expression that were also permitted to women in general.

93. Marja-Leena Hänninen, ‘Conflicting Descriptions of Women’s Religious Activity in Mid-Republican Rome: Augustan Narratives about the Arrival of Cybele and the Bacchanalia Scandal’, in Lena Larsson Lovén and Agneta Strömberg (eds.), *Aspects of Women in Antiquity* (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology and Literature, 153; Jonsared: Paul Åströms, 1998), pp. 111-26, esp. p. 112. See also Anne B. Blampied, ‘Paul and Silence for “The Women” in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35’, *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 13 (1983), pp. 143-65: ‘Paul wishes to redirect the expression of the desire but not squelch the desire. In light of Greek culture of the day his suggestion was radical in two respects—he encouraged women to learn and he encouraged husbands and wives to discuss religious matters together at home’ (p. 158).

94. Donald Richter, ‘The Position of Women in Classical Athens’, *CJ* 67 (1971), pp. 1-8, esp. p. 7.

95. Mitchell Carroll, *Greek Women* (Philadelphia: Rittenhouse, 1908), p. 278.

96. A.J. Graham, ‘The *Odyssey*, History, and Women’, in Beth Cohen (ed.), *The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer’s Odyssey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 3-16, esp. p. 13.

in cult with dignity and respect. Greek women march in processions,⁹⁷ offer sacrifices⁹⁸ and occupy prophetic offices.⁹⁹ The word ‘prophetess’ (προφήτης) is a household term in ancient Greece. Plato mentions how female prophetic activity brings many good things to the public benefit.¹⁰⁰ Given this public support of women by men, the observation by Gould is probably correct: the role of women was to reinforce the official male morality.¹⁰¹ Joan Breton Connelly has recently argued that ‘Two important developments in scholarly thinking have made conditions ripe for a seasoned and comprehensive review of the evidence for Greek priestesses. One is a reassessment of the alleged seclusion of women in classical Athens and the implications of this for our understanding of their public roles.’¹⁰² Connelly then cites several scholars who have come to the rescue of the secluded Athenian woman: David Cohen, Edward Harris, Lisa Nevette, Josine Blok and others. Inasmuch as I have discussed these scholarly contributions elsewhere, I need not go over old ground. However, even after lining up on the side of a more comprehensive and expansive view of Athenian women, Connelly says, ‘Even those who persist in maintaining an “invisibility” for Athenian women recognize that cult worship offered the single stage on which women could enjoy some measure of prominence.’¹⁰³ With this

97. As the Parthenon’s *Panathenic Frieze* shows.

98. Pseudo-Demosthenes (c. 339 BCE), *Ad. Nea*. 59.73-74. This speech alludes to how important it was for the Athenian queen to offer sacrifices on behalf of the city.

99. Plato, *Phaedr.* 244b.

100. Plato, *Phaedr.* 244b. Plato does stipulate, however, that in order for female prophecy to be beneficial the prophetess must lay aside her *sophrosyne* and enter into a condition of ‘madness’. According to Aristides (*Def. or.* 15d/52), the only rule is that this madness has to be experienced by the community as a θεία ... δόσει (‘a divine ... gift’).

101. John Gould, ‘Law, Custom, and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens’, *JHS* 100 (1980), pp. 38-59, esp. p. 51.

102. J.B. Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 3.

103. Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess*, 4. See also Mark Golden, ‘Introduction’, in Mark Golden and Peter Toohey (eds.), *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece & Rome* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), who makes a similar observation: ‘Yet the gods and their worship pervaded the ancient city; Athens had some 150 festival days a year. And women were inseparable from Greek religion, not just as participants (as in the Panathaea, where their domestic arts of cooking, weaving, cleaning were shown to serve the *polis*’s patron deity), but in central roles, as priestesses’ (p. 15).

statement, I completely agree. A notable example of female prophetic activity is the role that Cassandra plays in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (c. 458 BCE). In a long speech sustained for nearly 250 lines (1072-1330), Aeschylus presents Cassandra alternating back and forth in a dialogue with the chorus. A key moment of particular interest is the line at 1178 in which Cassandra indicates that she will 'no longer' (οὐκέτ') prophesy behind a veil. In other words, the prophetic gift is normally sanctioned and legitimized when a woman is veiled. Pausanias mentions women prophets in the context of community function and service;¹⁰⁴ Plutarch states that it was a normal occurrence for the prophetess to function alongside the male prophet;¹⁰⁵ and Dio Chrysostom mentions the female prophetess with respect.¹⁰⁶ Greek women occupied the esteemed place of prophetess at the most sacred and revered religious place in all of Greece—Delphi.¹⁰⁷ Zinserling provides this inscription from the tomb of a priestess at Miletus: 'The signpost of this town gives your greetings to the holy priestess. Such honor befits a diligent woman.'¹⁰⁸ Prophecy is the only means in ancient Greek religion that offered direct access to the divine world.¹⁰⁹

Prophetic activity is a sanctioned province of Greek women. Strabo (63 BCE–21 CE) presents an interesting profile of the *προφῆτις* both in terms of the standards set for her and some of her limitations.¹¹⁰ In this text Strabo describes both the Pelasgians and Boeotians as going to Thrace to consult a prophetess. The Boeotians, perceiving that her oracle

104. See Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.23.1, where he mentions the civic role of a prophetess performing her oracular duties once a month.

105. Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 414B.

106. Dio Chrysostom, *1 Regn.* 1.56. He contrasts this particular woman, who is self-controlled and in possession of *sophrosyne*, with women who whirl their head about and terrify onlookers.

107. Plutarch, *Quaes. Gr.* 293CE. In *Def. orac.* 414B, Plutarch expresses his own personal admiration for Delphi. See also Oepke, 'γυνή', p. 786 ('Outstanding endowment assures women for prophetic rank as sybils. The best known specific instance is the Pythia at Delphia').

108. Virginia Zinserling, *Women in Greece and Rome* (New York: Abner Schram, 1972), p. 30. She gives as her reference photograph 178 from the Peek Collection.

109. Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What Is *Polis* Religion?', in Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (eds.), *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 295-323 (303).

110. Strabo, *Geogr.* 9.2.4.

is biased in favor of the Pelasgians, seize the woman and put her to death. Although Strabo does not label her actions as devious, her misuse of the prophetic gift was construed as meddling. What happens next in the narrative is instructive. The men who put the woman to death are arrested and brought to trial—a trial that involves the two remaining priestesses as witnesses (the dead woman being one of three total priestesses). Yet these two priestesses are not allowed to testify. The Greek is similar to 1 Cor. 14.35: ὡς οὐδαμοῦ νόμος εἶη δικάζειν γυναῖκας (‘It is nowhere lawful for women to preside as judges’). In other words, these priestesses could function publicly in the role of a prophetess, assuming that they did not meddle in the affairs of men; however, they could not assume the role of a witness and testify against men.¹¹¹

Everywhere Plutarch refers to the work of women in the religious life of his people. Their role as prophetesses in the life of Greece is indispensable. Their value is never questioned. The primary topic for debate is not their relevance but whether a prophecy spoken in prose rather than in verse is still a prophecy.¹¹² Dio Chrysostom in his *Trojana* (11.56) describes Cassandra as θεοφορουμένη (‘divinely inspired’).¹¹³ The 1000-year classical tradition on Cassandra is secure. She is always presented as an inspired prophetess, always held in respect and never faulted for any shortcoming. In Greek thought, there is no contradiction between a woman speaking in the role of a prophetess for the benefit of the community and her domestic role to keep silent for the benefit of her husband.¹¹⁴ Raymond F. Collins, after a survey of the various scholarly proposals, reaches his final conclusion: ‘Gender is not a qualification for the gift of prophecy.’¹¹⁵ Robert W. Allison concludes on an equally

111. A similar view is mentioned by Josephus, *Ant.* 4.219: γυναικῶν δὲ μὴ ἔστω μαρτυρία διὰ κουφότητα καὶ θράσος τοῦ γένους αὐτῶν (‘let there be no testimony from among the women on account of the levity and rashness of their sex’). The couplet κουφότητα καὶ θράσος appears to be a polar opposite or extremes as viewed through the eyes of Josephus.

112. See Plutarch, *Pyth. orac.* 397D: τὰς πάλαι προφήτιδας (‘the prophetic priestesses of old’).

113. See also Dio Chrysostom, *Exil.* 13.2, which contains the lines: ὅποιον λεγόμενον ἔστι τὴν μαντείαν τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς (‘of which we are told happens in connection with the divinations of the women in the sacred places’).

114. Plutarch, *Pyth. orac.* 403B describes a priestess of Athena at Erythrae who was named “Quiet” (Ἡσυχία).

115. Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP, 7; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), p. 515.

affirmative note: ‘No one has an exclusive claim on the mediating work of the Holy Spirit.’¹¹⁶

Conclusion

Connecting the above cultural perspectives to the biblical texts of 1 Cor. 11.2-16 and 14.34-35 may result in four conclusions. First, these two biblical texts do not collide headlong, but they represent, as it were, two sides of the same coin. In other words, they do not cancel out each other but work together; they are not in conflict. Secondly, these two texts do not deal with women in general, but more specifically, they are directed at married women in particular. I take the two texts as evidence of a concern for the marriage relationship and associated social proprieties. Thirdly, 1 Cor. 14.34-35 need not describe the charismatic gift of speaking in tongues but the less complicated and even less controversial act of asking a question and, therefore, the Corinthian married women are simply engaging in normal behavior that conforms to everyday household etiquette. Fourthly, these two texts do not attempt to impose upon the Corinthian understanding of corporate worship a requirement that is extraneous to their cultural experience of social relationships in the wider social realities of Roman Corinth. In other words, Paul is not endeavoring to import into the Corinthian church a practice that is based upon the rituals characteristic of Jewish sanctuary space.¹¹⁷

116. Robert W. Allison, ‘Let Women Be Silent in the Churches (1 Cor. 14.33b-36): What Did Paul Really Say, and What Did it Mean?’ *JSNT* 32 (1988) pp. 27-60 (48).

117. For this argument, see Jorunn Økland, *Women in their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (JSNTSup, 269; London: T. & T. Clark).