HE BATTLE OVER WOMEN LEADERS AND THE CHURCH CONTINUES TO RAGE UNABATED IN EVANGELICAL circles. At the center of the tempest sits 1 Tim. 2:11-15. Despite a broad spectrum of biblical and extra-biblical texts that highlight female leaders, 1 Tim. 2:11-15 continues to be perceived and treated as the great divide in the debate. Indeed for some, how one interprets this passage has become a litmus test for the label “evangelical” and even for salvation.¹

The complexities of 1 Tim. 2:11-15 are many. There is barely a word or phrase that has not been keenly scrutinized and hotly debated. But with the advent of computer technology, we now have access to a wide array of tools and databases that can shed light on what all concede to be truly knotty aspects of the passage. In this brief treatment, the focus will be on four key exegetical fallacies: contextual/historical, lexical (silently, authentein), grammatical (the Greek infinitive and correlative), and cultural (Artemis).

**Contextual/historical fallacies**

The first step in getting a handle on 1 Tim. 2:12 is to be clear about where the verse sits in the letter as a whole. Paul begins by instructing his stand-in, Timothy, to stay put in Ephesus so he can command certain persons not to teach “any different doctrine” (1:3). False teaching is Paul’s overriding concern, which can be seen from the fact that he bypasses normal letter-writing conventions, such as a thanksgiving and greetings, and gets right down to business. It is also obvious because Paul devotes roughly fifty percent of the letter’s contents to the topic of false teaching.

Some believe that false teaching is a minor concern in 1 Timothy compared to “church order.” To be sure, Paul does remind Timothy about “how one ought to behave in the household of God” (3:15). It is critical mass, however, that determines the overriding concern.² Also, a lack of details about leadership roles and an absence of offices steer us away from viewing church order as the primary matter in 1 Timothy. Paul’s posture throughout is corrective, rather than didactic. For example, we learn very little about what various leaders do, and what we do learn, we learn incidentally. Yet there is quite a bit about how not to choose church leaders (1 Tim. 5:21-22) and what to do with those who stumble (vv. 19-20). There is also little interest in the professional qualifications of church leaders.³ Instead we find a concern for character, family life, and commitment to sound teaching (3:1-13). This is perfectly understandable against a background of false teaching. Then there are the explicit statements. Two church leaders have been expelled (1:20). Some elders need to be publicly rebuked due to continuing sin, while the rest take note (5:20).⁴ There is malicious talk, malevolent suspicions, and constant friction (6:4-5). Some, Paul says, had in fact wandered from the faith (5:15; 6:20-21).

Were women specifically involved? Women receive a great deal of attention in 1 Timothy. Indeed, there is no other NT letter in which they figure so prominently. Paul is concerned with behavior befitting women in worship (2:10-15), qualifications for women deacons (3:11), appropriate pastoral behavior toward older and younger women (5:2), support of widows in church service (5:9-10), correction of younger widows (5:11-15), and familial responsibilities toward destitute widows (5:3-8, 16). Moreover, Paul speaks of widows, who were going from house to house speaking things they ought not (5:13). The fact that something more than nosiness or gossiping is involved is clear from Paul’s evaluation that “some have already turned away to follow Satan” (v. 15).

Some are quick to point out that there are no explicit examples of female false teachers in 1 Timothy, and they are correct. No women (teachers or otherwise) are specifically named. Yet this overlooks the standard principles that come into play when interpreting the genre of “letters.” The occasional nature of Paul’s letters always demands reconstruction of one sort or another and this from only one-half of a conversation.

The cumulative picture, then, becomes that which meets the burden of proof. All told, Paul’s attention to false teaching and women occupies about sixty percent of the letter. It would therefore be very foolish (not to mention misleading) to neglect considering 1 Timothy 2 against this backdrop. “They [the false teachers] forbid marriage” (1 Tim. 4:3) alone goes a long way toward explaining Paul’s otherwise obscure comment, “She will be saved [or the NIV 1973 edition’s “kept safe”] through childbearing” (1 Tim. 2:15), and his command in 1 Tim. 5:14 that younger widows marry and raise a family, which is contrary to his teaching in 1 Cor. 7:39-40.

The grammar and language of 1 Timothy 2 also dictate
such a backdrop. The opening “I exhort, therefore” (NASB) ties what follows in chapter 2 with the false teaching of the previous chapter and its divisive influence (1:3-7; 18-20). The subsequent “therefore I want” (NASB) eight verses later does the same (2:8). Congregational contention is the keynote of chapter 2. A command for peace (instead of disputing) is found four times in the space of fifteen verses. Prayers for governing authorities are urged “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life” (v. 2). The men of the church are enjoined to lift up hands that are “without anger or argument” (v. 8). The women are commanded to show “sound judgment” (2:9, 15), to learn in a peaceful (not quarrelsome) fashion (v. 11; see below), and to avoid Eve’s example of deception and transgression (vv. 13-14). The language of deception, in particular, calls to mind the activities of the false teachers. A similar warning is given to the Corinthian congregation. “I am afraid,” Paul says, “that just as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

Lexical fallacies

Quietly/Silently

In Corinth’s case, the false teaching involved preaching a Jesus, Spirit, and gospel different from that which Paul had preached (2 Cor. 11:4-5). What was it in the Ephesian case? One pointer is Paul’s command that women learn “quietly” (v. 11) and behave “quietly” (v. 12; Phillips, NEB, REB, NLT). Some translations render the Greek phrase en ἕσυχα as “in silence” and understand Paul to be setting forth public protocols for women. In public, women are to learn “in silence” and “be silent” (KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, CEV, NIV, JB; compare “be quiet” BBE, NAB, NJB, TNIV, “remain quiet” NASB, NASU, ESV, NET, “not to speak” JB, and “keep quiet” TEV). But does this make sense? Silence is not compatible with the socratic dialogical approach to learning in Paul’s day. Also, Paul does not use the Greek term ἕσχυον this way nine verses earlier: “I urge . . . that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made . . . for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and ἕσχυον life, in all godliness and dignity” (2:2).

Yet, all too often it is assumed that Paul is commanding women not to speak or teach in a congregational setting as a sign of “full submission” to their husbands (2:11). On what grounds, though? “Let a woman learn . . .” does not suggest anything of the sort (v. 11). In a learning context, it is logical to think in terms of submission either to teachers or to oneself (i.e., self-control; compare 1 Cor. 14:32). Submission to a teacher well suits a learning context, but so does self-control. A calm, submissive spirit was a necessary prerequisite for learning back then (as now too).

Some translations have sought a way out by narrowing “women” and “men” to “wives” and “husbands” (e.g., Luther’s Bible [1545, 1912, 1984], Young’s Literal Translation [1898], Charles B. Williams’ Translation [1937]). Lexically, this is certainly possible. Γυνὴ can mean either “woman” or “wife” and ἀνὴρ can mean “man” or “husband” (see BDAG s.v.). “I permit no wife to teach or to have authority over her husband.” Yet, context determines usage, and “husband” and “wife” do not fit. “I want the men to pray . . .”, (NASB, 1 Tim: 2:8) and “I also want women . . .” (NIV, vv. 9-10) simply cannot be limited to husbands and wives. Nor can the verses that follow be read in this way. Paul does refer to Adam and Eve in verses 13-14; but it is to Adam and Eve as the prototypical male and female, not as a married couple (“formed first,” “deceived and became a transgressor”).

Paul’s commands for peaceable and submissive behavior suggest that women were disrupting worship. The men were too. They were praying in an angry and contentious way (v. 8). Since Paul targets women who teach men (v. 12) and uses the example of Adam and Eve as a corrective, it would be a fair assumption that there was a bit of a battle of the sexes going on in the congregation.

Authentein

Without a doubt, the most difficult piece to unpack is verse 12 — although the average person in the pew might not know it. English translations stemming from the 1940s to the early 1980s tend to gloss over the difficulties. A hierarchical, non-inclusive understanding of leadership is partly to blame. Women aren’t supposed to be leaders, so the language of leadership, where women are involved, tends to be manipulated. One of the primary places where this sort of bias surfaces is 1 Tim, 2:12. Post-World War II translations routinely render the clause didaskein de gynaiki ouk epitreţō, oude authentein andros: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have [or exercise] authority over a man” (e.g., RSV, NRSV, NAB, NAB Revised, TEV, NASB, NASU, NJB, JB, NKJV, NCV, God’s Word, NLT, Holman Christian Standard, ESV, TNIV)—although some, such as the BBE, qualify it with “in my [Paul’s] opinion.”

Earlier translations were not so quick to do so. This was largely owing to dependence on ancient Greek lexicographers and grammarians. In fact, there is a virtually unbroken tradition, stemming from the oldest version and running down to recent times, that translates authentein as “to dominate” and not “to exercise authority over”.

Old Latin (2d-4th A.D.): “I permit not a woman to teach, neither to dominate a man (neque dominari viro).”

Vulgate (4th-5th A.D.): “I permit not a woman to teach, neither to domineer over a man (neque dominari in virum),”

Geneva (1560 edition): “I permit not a woman to teache, neither to usurpe authoritie over the man.”

RV9 (Casiodoro de Reina, 1560-61): “I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to seize authority over the man (ni tomar autoridad sobre el hombre).”

Bishops (1589): “I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to usurpe authoritie over the man.”

KJV (1611): “I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over a man.”

A wide-range of moderns follow the same tradition.

L. Segond (1910): “I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to seize authority over the man (Je ne permet pas a la femme d’enseigner, ni de prendre autorite sur l’homme).”

Goodspeed (1923): “I do not allow women to teach or to domineer over men.”

La Sainte (1938): “I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to seize authority over the man (Je ne permet pas a
During the Hellenistic period, the primary meaning of the noun authentēs was still “murderer,” but the semantic range widened to include “perpetrator,” “sponsor,” and “master” of a crime or act of violence. This is the case, regardless of geographical location, ethnicity, or religious orientation. For instance, Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaks of the author of a poisonous draught (BJ 1.582; 2.240). Diodorus of Sicily uses it of (1) the sponsors of some daring plans (Bibliotheca Historica 35.25.1), (2) the perpetrators of a sacrilege (Hist. 16.61), and (3) the master-mind of a crime (Hist. 17.5.4.5). By the first century A.D., lexicographers defined authentēs as the perpetrator of a murder committed by others (and not as the actual murderer of himself or herself).

Was there a meaning that approached anything like the NIV’s “have authority over”? “Master” can be found, but it is in the sense of the “mastermind” of a crime, rather than one who exercises authority over another. For example, in the first- and second-centuries B.C., the historians used authentēs to describe those who masterminded and carried out such exploits as the massacre of the Thracians at Maronea and the robbing of the sacred shrine at Delphi.

A search of the non-literary databases produces quite different results. While authentē words appear quite regularly in Greek literature from the sixth century B.C. on, they first appear in non-literary materials in the first century B.C. The popular form is the impersonal noun authentikos (from which we derive our English word “authentic” or “genuine”) and not authentēs (“murderer”). Numerous examples of authentikos can be found in Greek inscriptions and papyri of the Hellenistic period. By contrast, verb forms contemporary with or prior to Paul (including the Greek verbal noun [the infinitive] and the Greek verbal adjective [the participle]) are rare to nonexistent in Greek literary and non-literary materials. There are a mere handful of uses in the Thesaurus Linguae Graeca (TLG) and Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) databases. It is these that are of critical importance for shedding light on the verbal noun authentēin in 1 Tim. 2:12.

The first is found in the fifth to first centuries B.C. Scholia (or explanatory remarks) on a passage from Aeschylus’ tragedy Eumenides: “His [Orestes’] hands were dripping with blood; he held a sword just drawn [from avenging the death of his father by killing his mother] . . .” (42). The commentator uses the perfect participle form of authenteō to capture the intentional character of the deed: “Were dripping” is explained as: “The murderer who just now has committed an act of violence (authentekota) . . .”

The second use of authentē is found in the first century B.C. grammarian Aristonicus. In commenting on a portion of Homer’s Iliad, he states, “It [five lines of verse] does not appear here. For it customarily appears, where the author (ho authention tou logou) has produced something outstanding. But how is he [the author] able to speak for Odysseus, who discloses the things said by Achilles?”—a daunting task and hence the silence.26

The third use of authentē is found in a 27/26 B.C. letter in which Tryphon recounts to his brother Asklepiades the resolution of a dispute between himself and another individual regarding the amount to be paid the ferryman for shipping a load of cattle: “And I had my way with him
(authenteōkotos pros auton) and he agreed to provide Calatytis the boatman with the full fare within the hour” (BGU IV 1208).

Evangelical scholarship has been largely dependent for its understanding of the verbal noun authentein on George Knight III’s 1984 study and his translation of authenteōkotos pros auton as, “I exercised authority over him.” Yet, this hardly fits the mundane details of the text (i.e., payment of a boat fare). Nor can the phrase pros auton be understood as “over him.” The preposition plus the accusative does not bear this sense in Greek. “To/towards,” “against,” and “with” (and less frequently “at”, “for”, “with reference to,” “on” and “on account of”) are the range of possible meanings. Here, it likely means something like “I had my way with him,” or perhaps, “I took a firm stand with him.” This certainly fits what we know of the Asklepiades archive. As John White notes, BGU IV 1203-9 is a series of seven letters written among family members—three brothers, Asklepiades, Paniskos, and Tryphon, and a sister, Isidora. Although various business matters are discussed in the correspondence, it is evident that these are private letters, written, for the most part, by Isidora, who is representing her family’s interests abroad.

The fourth use of authenteō occurs in the work of Philodemus, the first-century B.C. Greek poet and Epicurean philosopher from Gadara, Syria. Philodemus wrote against the rhetoricians of his day and their penetration into Epicurean circles. Rhetors were the villains; philosophers were the heroes of the Roman republic. He states, “Rhetors harm a great number of people in many ways—those ‘shot through with dreadful desires’; they [rhetors] fight every chance they get with prominent people—‘with powerful dignitaries’ (syn authent(ou)sin anaxin . . .) Philosophers, on the other hand, gain the favor of public figures . . . not having them as enemies but friends . . . on account of their endearing qualities . . . “ (Rhetorica II Fragmenta Libri [V] fr. IV line 14).

In regard to translating Philodemus’ work, once again, Knight’s analysis falls short. He claims to be quoting a paraphrase by Yale classicist Harry Hubbell. He states that “the key term is authent(ou)sin” and the rendition offered by Hubbell is “they [orators] are men who incur the enmity of those in authority.” But Hubbell actually renders authent(ou)sin rightly as an adjective meaning “powerful” and modifying the noun “rulers”: “To tell the truth the rhetors do a great deal of harm to many people and incur the enmity of powerful rulers.”

The fifth use of authenteō is found in the influential late first/early second-century astrological poet, Dorotheus. He states that “if Jupiter aspects the Moon from trine . . . it makes them [the natives] leaders or chiefs, some of civilians and others of soldiers, especially if the Moon is increasing; but if the Moon decreases, it does not make them dominant (authentas) but subservient” (Hyperetoumenous; 346). Along similar lines, second-century mathematician, Ptolemy, states: “Therefore, if Saturn alone takes planetary control of the soul and dominates (authentesas) Mercury and the Moon [who govern the soul and] if Saturn has an honorable position toward both the solar system and its angles (ta kentra), then he [Saturn] makes [them] lovers of the body” (Tetrabiblos III.13 [#157]).

Although Dorotheus and Ptolemy post-date Paul, they nonetheless provide an important witness to the continuing use of the verb authenteō to mean “to hold sway over,” “to dominate” and to the developing meaning of “leader,” “chief” in the post-apostolic period.

Ancient Greek grammarians and lexicographers suggest that the meaning “to dominate,” “hold sway” finds its origin in first-century popular (versus literary) usage. That is why second-century lexicographer, Moeris, states that Attic (literary Greek) autodikēn “to have independent jurisdiction,” “self-determination” is to be preferred to the Hellenistic (common/non-literary Greek) authentiēn. Modern lexicographers agree. Those who have studied the Hellenistic letters argue that the verb authenteō originated in the popular Greek vocabulary as a synonym for “to dominate someone” (kratein tinos).

Biblical lexicographers Louw and Nida put authenteō into the semantic domain “to control, restrain, dominate” and define the verb as “to control in a domineering manner”: “I do not allow women . . . to dominate men” (1 Tim. 2:12). Other meanings do not appear until well into the A.D. third and fourth centuries. So there is no first-century warrant for translating the Greek infinitive authentein as ‘to exercise authority.’

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**Grammatical fallacies:**

The Greek infinitive/correlative

So how did “to have authority over” find its way into the majority of modern translations of 1 Tim. 2:12? Andreas Köstenberger claims that it is the correlative that forces translators in this direction. He argues that the Greek correlative pairs synonyms or parallel words and not antonyms. Since “to teach” is positive, authentein must also be positive. To demonstrate his point, Köstenberger analyzes “neither” + [verb 1] + nor + [verb 2] constructions in biblical and extra-biblical literature.

Yet, there is a grammatical flaw intrinsic to this approach. It limits itself to formally equivalent constructions, excluding functionally equivalent ones, and so the investigation only includes correlated verbs. Thus it overlooks the fact that the infinitives are functioning as nouns in the sentence structure (as one would expect a verbal noun to do), and not as verbs. The Greek infinitive
may have tense and voice like a verb but it functions predominantly as a noun or adjective. The verb in verse 12 is actually “I permit.” “Neither to teach nor authentein” modifies the noun, “a woman,” which makes authentein the second of two direct objects. Use of the infinitive as a direct object after a verb that already has an object has been amply demonstrated by biblical and extra-biblical grammarians. In such cases the infinitive restricts the already present object. Following this paradigm, the 1 Tim. 2:12 correlative “neither to teach nor authentein” functions as a noun that restricts the direct object “a woman” (gynaikit).

It behooves us, therefore, to correlate nouns and noun substitutes in addition to verbs. This greatly expands the possibilities. “Neither-nor” constructions in the New Testament are then found to pair synonyms (e.g. “neither despised nor scorned,” Gal. 4:14), closely related ideas (e.g. “neither of the night nor of the dark,” 1 Thess. 5:5) and antonyms (e.g. “neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free,” Gal. 3:28). They also function to move from the general to the particular (e.g. “knowledge neither of this age nor of the rulers of this age,” 1 Cor. 2:6), to define a natural progression of related ideas (e.g. “they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns,” Matt. 6:26), and to define a related purpose or a goal (e.g. “where thieves neither break in nor steal” [i.e. break in to steal], Matt. 6:20).

Of the options listed above, it is clear that “teach” and “dominate” are not synonyms, closely related ideas, or antonyms. If authentein did mean “to exercise authority,” we might have a movement from general to particular. But we would expect the word order to be the reverse of what we have in 1 Tim. 2:12, that is, “neither to exercise authority [general] nor to teach [particular].” They do not form a natural progression of related ideas either (“first teach, then dominate”). On the other hand, to define a purpose or goal actually provides a good fit: “I do not permit a woman to teach so as to gain mastery over a man” or “I do not permit a woman to teach with a view to dominating a man.” It also fits the contrast with verse 12b: “I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a dominating way but to have a quiet demeanor (literally, “to be in calmness”).

Cultural fallacies:
The Ephesian cult of Artemis

Why were the Ephesian women doing this? One explanation is that they were influenced by the cult of Artemis, where the female was exalted and considered superior to the male. Its importance to the citizens of Ephesus in Paul’s day is evident from Luke’s record of the two-hour-long chant, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:28-37). It was believed that Artemis was the child of Zeus and Leto and the sister of Apollo. Instead of seeking fellowship among her own kind, she sought the company of a human male consort. This made Artemis and all her female adherents superior to men.

The influence of Artemis would help to explain Paul’s correctives in 1 Tim. 2:13-14. While some may have believed that Artemis appeared first and then her male consort, the true story was just the opposite. For Adam was formed first, then Eve (v. 13). And Eve was deceived to boot (v. 14)—hardly a basis on which to claim superiority. It would also shed light on Paul’s statement that “women will be saved [or the 1973 NIV edition’s ‘kept safe’] through childbirth” (v. 15); for Artemis was the protector of women. Women turned to her for safe travel through the childbearing process.

The impact of the cults on the female population of Ephesus and its environs has recently been challenged by S. M. Baugh, who contends that the lack of any first-century Ephesian high priestess runs counter to the belief that Artemis impacted the church. Although Baugh is correct in saying that urban Ephesus lacked a high priestess during Paul’s day, he overlooks the fact that suburban Ephesus did have a high priestess. While Paul was planting the Ephesian church, Iuliane served as high priestess of the imperial cult in Magnesia, a city fifteen miles southeast of Ephesus. She is honored in a decree of the mid-first century (L.Magn. 158). There were others as well. Inscriptions dating from the first century until the mid-third century place women as high priestesses in Ephesus, Cyzicus, Thyatira, Aphrodisias, Magnesia, and elsewhere.

Baugh also argues that female high priestesses of Asia did not serve in and of their own right. They were simply riding on the coattails of a husband, male relative, or wealthy male patron. This simply was not true. Many inscriptions naming women as high priestesses do not name a husband, father, or male patron. In the case of those that do, prestige was attached to being a relative of a high priestess and not vice versa. Iuliane’s position, for example, was hardly honorary. While it is true that her husband served as a high priest of the imperial cult, Iuliane held this position long before her husband did. Nor was her position nominal. Priests and priestesses were responsible for the sanctuary’s maintenance, its rituals and ceremonies, and the protection of its treasures and gifts. Liturgical functions included ritual sacrifice, pronouncing the invocation, and presiding at the festivals of the deity.

Baugh further maintains that Asian high priestesses were young girls, whose position was analogous to the private priestesses of Hellenistic queens. Theirs was a nominal position of no real substance, given to the daughters and wives of the municipal elite. This too runs counter to Greco-Roman evidence. The majority of women who served as high priestesses were hardly young girls. Vestal virgins were the exception. Delphic priestesses, on the other hand, were required to be at least fifty years old, came from all social classes, and served a male god and his adherents.

The primary flaw of Baugh’s study is that it is not broad-based enough to accurately reflect the religious and civic roles of first-century women in either Asia or in the Greco-Roman empire as a whole. Because Roman religion and government were inseparable, to lead in one arena was often to lead in the other. Mendora, for example, served at one time or another during Paul’s tenure as magistrate, priestess, and chief financial officer of Sillery, a town in Pisidia, Asia.
Doctrinal fallacies

What about the prohibition in I Tim. 2:12: “I do not permit a woman to teach . . .”? There are several aspects of verse 12 that make the plain sense difficult to determine. The exact wording of Paul’s restriction needs careful scrutiny. What kind of teaching is Paul prohibiting at this point? Some are quick to assume a teaching office or other position of authority. But teaching in the NT period was an activity and not an office (Matt. 28:19-20), and it was a gift and not a position of authority (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; 14:26; Eph. 4:11).

There is also the assumption that authority resides in the act of teaching (or in the person who teaches). In point of fact, it resides in the deposit of truth—“the truths of the faith” (1 Tim. 3:9; 4:6), “the faith” (1 Tim. 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 12, 21), and “the trust” (1 Tim. 6:20) that Jesus passed on to his disciples and that they in turn passed on to their disciples (2 Tim. 2:2). Teaching is subject to evaluation just like any other ministry role. This is why Paul instructed Timothy to “publicly rebuke” (1 Tim. 5:20) anyone who departed from “the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:3).

It is often countered that teaching in 1 Timothy takes on the more official sense of doctrine and that teaching doctrine is something women can’t do. Yet doctrine as a system of thought (i.e., dogma) is foreign to 1 Timothy. Traditions, yes; doctrines, no. While Paul urged Timothy to “command and teach these things” (1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2), these “things” are not strictly doctrines. They included matters like avoiding godless myths and old wives’ tales (4:7), godly training (4:7-8), God as the Savior of all (4:9-10), and slaves treating their masters with full respect (6:1-2). The flaw therefore lies in translating the Greek phrase τῆς ἀγιασμένης διδασκαλίας as “sound doctrine” instead of “sound teaching” (1:10; 4:6; compare 1 Tim. 6:1, 3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).

What about Paul naming Adam as “first” in the creation process? Isn’t Paul saying something thereby about male leadership: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve” (1 Tim. 2:13)? Yet, if one looks closely at the immediate context, “first-then” (πρῶτος . . . εἰτα) language does nothing more than define a sequence of events or ideas. Ten verses later Paul states, “Deacons must be tested first (πρῶτον) and then (εἰτα) let them serve” (author’s translation, 1 Tim. 3:10). This, in fact, is the case throughout Paul’s letters (and the NT, for that matter). “First-then” defines a temporal sequence, without implying either ontological or functional priority. “The dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air” is a case in point (1 Thess. 4:16-17). “The dead in Christ” gain neither personal nor functional advantage over the living as a result of being raised “first” (cf. Mark 4:28, 1 Cor. 15:46; James 3:17).

But doesn’t gar at the start of verse 13 introduce a creation order dictum? Women must not teach men because God created men to lead (following the creation order of male, then female). Eve’s proneness to deception while taking the lead demonstrates this. This reading of the text is problematic for a number of reasons. First, there is nothing in the context to support it. Paul simply does not identify Eve’s transgression as taking the lead in the relationship or Adam’s fault as abdicating that leadership. Second, the conjunction gar typically introduces an explanation (“for”) what precedes, not a cause. If the sense of verse 12 is that women are not permitted to teach men in a domineering fashion, then verse 13 would provide the explanation, namely, that Eve was created as Adam’s “partner” (NRSV Gen 2:24) and not his boss. By contrast, effect (“women are not permitted to teach men in a domineering fashion”) and cause (“Adam was created to be Eve’s boss” [i.e., first]) surely make no sense. Third, those who argue for creation-fall dictums in verses 13-14 stop short of including “women will be saved (or kept safe) through childbearing” in verse 15. To do so, though, is to lack hermeneutical integrity. Either all three statements are normative or all three are not.

What about Eve’s seniority in transgression? Isn’t Paul using Eve as an example of what can go wrong when women usurp the male’s created leadership role, “And Adam was not the one deceived and became a sinner” (2:14). But this is without scriptural support. Eve was not deceived by the serpent into taking the lead in the male-female relationship. She was deceived into disobeying a command of God, namely, not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She listened to the voice of false teaching and was deceived by it. Paul’s warning to the Corinthian congregation confirms this: “I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

The language of deception calls to mind the activities of the false teachers at Ephesus. If the Ephesian women were being encouraged as the superior sex to assume the role of teacher over men, this would go a long way toward explaining verses 13-14. The relationship between the sexes was not intended to be one of female domination and male subordination. But neither was it intended to be one of male domination and female subordination. Such thinking is native to a fallen creation order (Gen. 3:16).

The sum of the matter

A reasonable reconstruction of 1 Tim. 2:11-15 would be as follows: The women at Ephesus (perhaps encouraged by the false teachers) were trying to gain an advantage over the men in the congregation by teaching in a dictatorial fashion. The men in response became angry and disputed what the women were doing.

This interpretation fits the broader context of 1 Tim. 2:8-15, where Paul aims to correct inappropriate behavior on the part of both men and women (vv. 8, 11). It also fits the grammatical flow of verses 11-12: “Let a woman learn in a quiet and submissive fashion. I do not however permit her
to teach with the intent to dominate a man. She must be gentle in her demeanor.” Paul would then be prohibiting teaching that tries to get the upper hand and not teaching per se.

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Notes

1. A case in point is Andreas Köstenberger’s rationale in Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15. He argues that a hierarchical view of men and women is necessary for “a world estranged from God” to “believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995, pp. 11-12).

2. For further discussion, see Gordon Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988) 20-23.

3. Qualifications for leaders are listed in 3:1-13 and 5:9-10, but there is little indication about who they are or what they do.

4. The NIV’s translation of 1 Tim. 5:20, “Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly so that the others may take warning,” is misleading. The tense and mood are present, indicative. So Paul is not treating a hypothetical possibility but a present reality. The NRSV is closer to the mark: “As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear.”

5. Nor does Paul use the term ἰσχία to mean “silence” elsewhere. When he has absence of speech in mind, he uses σιγάο (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:28, 30, 34). When he has “calmness” in view, he uses ἰσχία (and its cognate forms; 1 Thess. 4:11, 2 Thess. 3:12, 1 Tim. 2:2). This is also the case for the other NT authors. See σιγάο in Luke 9:36; 18:39; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12, 13) and σίγη in Acts 21:40 and Revelation 8:1. For ἰσχία (and related forms) meaning “calm” or “restful,” see Luke 23:56; Acts 11:18, 21:14; 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:12; 1 Peter 3:4. For the sense “not speak,” see Luke 14:4 and perhaps Acts 22:2.

6. There are two notable exceptions:

   Martin Luther (1522): “Einem Weibe aber gestatte ich, ni ejercer domino über” (“neither to exercise dominion over a man.”)

   20. E.g., Diodorus, Histor. 17.5.4.5. (first-century B.C.).

7. Techniques, vir in Latin and weibe in German (as γυνὴ in Greek) can mean either “woman” or “wife.” Consequently some translations opt for “wife.” See for example, Charles B. Williams’ 1937 translation, “I do not permit a married woman to practice teaching or domining over a husband.”


9. Laographia (“registration”) is a rare word found in the Greek papyri from Egypt with reference to the registration of the lower classes and slaves. See, ibid.

10. R. H. Charles, “they shall also be registered according to their former restricted status” does not fit the lexical range of possibilities for authentia (The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2 vols., London, 1913).


14. Antiphon [6x], Tetr. 23.4.6; 23.11.4; 24.4.3; 24.9.7; 24.10.1; Caed Her 11.6; Lysias [1x], Orat. 36.348.13.

15. Thucydidès [1x], Hist. 3.58.5-4.4; Herodotus [1x], Hist. 1.117.12; Apollonius [2x], Arg. 2.754; 4.479.

16. Appian [5x], Mith. 90.1; BC 1.7.61.7; 1.13.115.17; 3.2.16.13; 4.17.340.14; Philo [1x], Quod Est 78.7.

17. Josephus [1x], BJ 1.582.1; Diodorus [1x] 1.16.61.1.3.

18. Posidonius [1x], Phil. 165.7 (Diodorus Bibliotheca Historica 3.34 35.25.1.4).

19. Compare Josephus [1x], BJ 2.240.4; Diodorus [1x], 17.5.

20. E.g., Diodorus, Hist. 17.5.4.5.

21. See, for example, Harpocration Lexicon 66.7 (A.D. 1st century): “Authentai—those who commit murder (tous phonous) through others. For the perpetrator (ho authentai) always makes evident the one whose hand committed the deed.”


23. Diodorus of Sicily 17.5.4.5 (first-century B.C.).

In the patristic writers, the noun authentai does not appear until the mid-to-late second century A.D. and then in Origen in the third century—far too late to provide a linguistic context for Paul. Predominant usage is still “murderer” (Clement [3x]), but one also finds divine “authority” (Irenaeus [3x]; Clement [2x]; Origen [1x]); and “master” (Hermas [1x]). (For the second-century dating of the Shepherd of Hermas 5.82, see Michael Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992], p. 331). The rest (the vast majority) are uses of the adjective authentikes (“authentic,” “genuine”). The verb does not occur until well into the A.D. third century (Hippolytus, T5erEcl. [Short Exegetical and Homiletical Writings] 29.7.5).
24. See the Duke papyri, ostraca, tablets, and inscriptions published by the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI). Noun forms of authent- appear only six times in first century A.D. inscriptions, ostraca, and tablets: (1) authenteia authentia ("power," "sway," "mastery"; 1PE 12[25]; Mlyl 10), (2) authentikos (Myl 2, 6), and (3) authentetos (TAMV23; Eph 109). Noun forms surface in the first-century B.C. papyri only once (see above). They pick up steam in the first-century A.D. papyri, but virtually all are the adjective authentikos ("genuine," "authentic," 22x).
25. See, for example, P.Oxy II. 260.20 (A.D. 59); "I, Theon, son of Onophrion, assistant, have checked this authentic (authenticbei) bond."
26. Aristonicus Gramm. 9.694 (1st c. B.C.) hotan ho authent\[ou\] tou logou kataplektika tina prooren\[en\]ta ("When the author of the word has produced something outstanding . . . ").
29. See, Friedrich Preisigke, Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusrucken Berlin, 1925, s.v.: "fest auftreten" (to stand firm).
32. Knight, AYENTEQE, 145.
33. Knight also overlooks the fact that syn authent[ou]sin anaxin is actually a quote from an unknown source (and not Philodemus’ own words). Fallacies have the tendency to perpetuate themselves. See, for example, Scott Baldwin, who cites George Knight’s inaccuracy (instead of checking the primary sources first hand; "Appendix 2: autheteo in Ancient Greek Literature," in Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, eds. A. Köstenberger, T. Schreiner, and H.S. Baldwin [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995], p. 275).
34. Knight misreads (or perhaps mistypes) F. E. Robbins’ (transl., Loeb Classical Library) “angles” as “angels” (AYENTEQE, 145). H. Scott Baldwin once again cites Knight’s inaccuracy, rather than doing a fresh analysis as the book’s title claims (Appendix 2: autheteo, p. 275).
37. Louw and Nida also note that “to control in a domineering manner” is often expressed idiomatically as “to shout orders at,” “to act like a chief toward,” or “to bark at.” The use of the verb in 1 Tim. 2:12 comes quite naturally out of the word “master,” “autocrat” (Greek-English Lexicon, p. 91); compare Walter Bauer, William Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and Frederick Danker (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd edition [Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000] s.v.), which defines autheteo as “to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to.”
38. The noun authentet used of an “owner” or “master” appears a bit earlier. See, for example, the A.D., 2d century The Shepherd of Hermes 9.5.6, “Let us go to the tower, for the owner of the tower is coming to inspect it.”
Daniel Wallace (Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996], pp. 192-89) identifies authentein as a verb complement ("I do not permit to teach . . . ") instead of the direct object complement that it is (ibid., pp. 598-99). It is not that Paul does not permit to teach a woman, but that he does not permit a woman to teach. Compare Rom. 3:28; 6:11; 14:14; 2 Cor. 11:5; 1 Cor. 12:23; Phil. 3:8.
43. Other examples include: (1) Synonyms: “neither labors nor spins” (Matt. 6:28), “neither quarreled nor cried out” (Matt. 12:19); “neither abandoned nor given up” (Acts 2:27), “neither leave nor forsake” (Heb. 13:5); “neither run in vain nor labor in vain” (Phil. 2:16). (2) Closely related ideas: “neither the desire nor the effort” (Rom. 9:16); “neither the sun nor the moon” (Rev. 21:23). (3) Antonyms: “neither a good tree . . . nor a bad tree” (Matt. 7:18); “neither the one who did harm nor the one who was harmed” (2 Cor. 7:12). (4) General to particular: “you know neither the day nor the hour” (Matt 25:13); “I neither consulted with flesh and blood nor went up to Jerusalem . . . ” (Gal. 1:16-17). (5) A natural progression of closely related ideas: “born neither of blood, nor of the human will, nor of the will of man” (John 1:13); “neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet: “ (John 1:25) “neither from man nor through man” (Gal. 1:1). And (6) Goal or purpose: “neither hears nor understands” (i.e., hearing with the intent to understand; Matt. 13:13); “neither dwells in temples made with human hands nor is served by human hands” (i.e., dwells with a view to being served; Acts 17:24). See Linda Belleville, Women Leaders and the Church, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) pp. 176-177.
44. Compare Philip Payne ("ou" & 1 Timothy 2:12;); Evangelical Theological Society, November 21, 1986). His own position is that “neither-nor” in this verse joins two closely associated couplets (e.g., "hit n’run," “teach n’domineer”).
46. As the Mother-Goddess, Artemis was the source of life, the one who nourished all creatures, and the power of fertility in nature. Maidens turned to her as the protector of their virginity, barren women sought her aid, and women in labor turned to her for help. See ibid.
S. M. Baugh takes issue with the premise that Artemis worship

47. See S. M. Baugh, "A Foreign World," pp. 43-44.
53. Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes III, 800-902.
54. The principal Greek causal conjunction is hòti (or dioti). See BDF #456.

CORRECTION
Regarding "Tracing the Trajectory of the Spirit" printed in the Spring 2003 issue (p.13 n. 9), Glen Scorgie notes that Linda Belleville does not claim to support a hierarchical interpretation of 1 Cor. 11:3. In this verse, Linda Belleville argues for interpreting the Greek word kephale as "prominent/preeminent" rather than as "rule/exercise authority." Belleville argues that to interpret kephale as "prominent/preeminent" excludes the notion of hierarchy because it has to do with what gets the attention of the reader or onlooker, such as the "peak" of a mountain or the "outstanding beauty" in a pageant. The nuances of this position were not reflected in Scorgie’s article. For more details on Belleville’s scholarship regarding interpreting 1 Cor. 11:3, see her book Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions (Baker, 2000) pp. 123-31.