

ALESJA LAVRINOVIČA

# Mulier taceat

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

651

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Aļesja Lavrinoviča

# Mulier taceat

A Study of 1 Cor 14:34–35

Mohr Siebeck

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## Preface

This book is the result of my doctoral thesis with a slight editorial reworking.

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## Abbreviations

<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AJPS</i>	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
<i>ANF</i>	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
<i>APF</i>	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCEL	Christian Classics Ethereal Library
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSGNTSBL	Cascadia Syntax Graphs of the New Testament: SBL Edition
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>EgT</i>	<i>Eglise et theologie</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GNT	Greek New Testament
GThF	Greifswalder theologische Forschungen
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HTA	Historisch-Theologische Auslegung
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie

ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Int J Semiot Law</i>	<i>International Journal for the Semiotics of Law</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
KNT	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LS	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
LSGNT-SBL	Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament: SBL Edition
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NA <sup>28</sup>	Nestle-Aland, <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 28th ed.
NAC	New American Commentary
NBC	New Bible Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NET	New English Translation
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRSVUE	New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RBén</i>	<i>Revue bénédictine</i>
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SBAB	Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLGNT	The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SC	Sources Chrésiennes
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series

SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPAW	Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum / Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity
STT	<i>Studiën. Theologisch tijdschrift</i>
TEH	Theologische Existenz heute
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TSK	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
TW	Theologie und Wirklichkeit
UBS <sup>5</sup>	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , United Bible Societies, 5th ed.
v/vv	verse or following verse(s)
VRNGG.NS	Verhandelingen bakende de Natuurlijke en geopenbaarde godsdienst, Nieuwe Serie
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>



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## Introduction

“All new is a well-forgotten old.”  
/a proverb/

The passage “women should be silent in the churches” (= the *mulier taceat* pericope) has been one of the most effective passages for silencing women in churches and excluding them from church ministry. The NRSV (1989–2021) used to read the *mulier taceat* pericope as follows:

(As in all the churches of the saints, <sup>34</sup>women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. <sup>35</sup>If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. <sup>36</sup>Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?)<sup>1</sup>

The text of 1 Cor 14:34–35, which is found in one of the authentic Pauline Epistles – Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, is still used to restrict the participation of women in many Christian communities. Especially in Protestant traditions where all teaching has to be proved from the Scriptures, particularly in conservative Evangelicalism and Lutheranism, this passage is one of the most often cited reasons for refusing the teaching ministry and ordination to women.

I, myself, come from Latvia, a country in which the ordination of women was discontinued in 1993. Based on the interpretation of the *mulier taceat* pericope, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia changed its Constitution in 2016 to accept only male candidates for ordination. I will mention a couple of historical moments to provide some background clarification on such a turn. The ordination of women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (hereafter ELCL) was established in 1975 when the first three women were ordained. The sudden death of Archbishop Kārlis Gailītis in 1993 necessitated a new election. Pastor Jānis Vanags was elected as the new archbishop, even though he declared that he would not ordain women. The same year, the Executive Board of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (formerly called the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile, due to the emigration of the church leadership

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<sup>1</sup> NRSV = New Revised Standard Version. The NRSV used to place 1 Cor 14:33b–36 in parentheses. I am aware of the updated version of the NRSV translation. This element shall be discussed later.

abroad during the Soviet occupation, and now called the Latvian Lutheran Evangelical Church Worldwide or LELCW), expressed its desire to continue to work toward the unification of the separated Latvian Lutheran Church.

Before that could happen, the Church “in Exile” wanted to reach agreement on the issue of women ordination since the LELCW continues to ordain women. Thirty years passed. The Latvian Lutheran Church has never united. The ELCL, led by Archbishop Vanags, upholds that it interprets the Scriptures faithfully, and women should remain silent in the churches – they cannot be pastors or deacons. When asked by journalists to justify his position on the ordination of women, Archbishop Vanags published an article in the news, in which he quoted 1 Cor 14:33b–35, 37–38.<sup>2</sup> In many congregations, women are not even allowed to read passages from the Bible or lead prayers during church services. Such a custom does not exist even in the Roman Catholic Church in Latvia. No woman has been ordained in the ELCL in the thirty years since the election of Vanags. Female theologians, evangelists, deacons, and pastors were forced to change their occupations or emigrate. In 2016 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia formally abandoned the ordination of women. The Church has its own Academy to train male candidates for ordination. Only one interpretation of 1 Cor 14:34–35 and 1 Tim 2:12 exists, and it is that women can have no voice in the church.

The debate about this “Pauline” passage is therefore of significant political, social, and ecclesial relevance, not only in Latvia but also in Christianity worldwide.

My own interest in the history of the scholarly interpretation of this passage occurred in seminary, as I opened the monograph of the late Pentecostal scholar and renowned textual critic Gordon D. Fee entitled *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. I was attending the seminary of the largest Scandinavian Charismatic megachurch in Sweden. The policy of the church was that women can sing and pray but cannot be pastors or preachers because the Bible does not permit it. Fee’s commentary on 1 Corinthians stood on the shelf of the seminary among the books written by Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers. Fee was “one of us” due to his Pentecostal background. He was “safe” to read. And yet we had to be cautious because of Fee’s departure from orthodox Pentecostal convictions, particularly in his interpretation of the book of Revelation and healing ministry. Fee’s expertise in textual criticism and his advocacy for the interpolation hypothesis of 1 Cor 14:34–35 greatly sparked my interest. And yet a question lurked in my mind concerning the inerrancy of the Bible as I was always taught: How could it be possible that something in a Pauline epistle was not written by

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<sup>2</sup> Jānis Vanags, “Jānis Vanags: Kā ar sieviešu ordinēšanu mācītāja amatā?” Published 19/02/2014, Delfi web portal, <https://www.delfi.lv/898102/versijas/44229423/janis-vanags-ka-ar-sieviesu-ordinesanu-macitaja-amata>.

him? The scholarly reputation of Fee and his logical, clear writing made me want to find out what textual criticism is about and whether Fee's claims concerning the interpolation of 1 Cor 14:34–35 could be verified. This scholar, whom I never met, has had an enormous impact on my initial interest in biblical research through his scholarship and faith. I decided that it will be safe to trust Fee's views and to study the *mulier taceat* pericope.

I have surveyed a great portion of the literature devoted to the *mulier taceat* pericope and the debate surrounding its authenticity, and my study has resulted in two Masters' theses: "1 Cor 14:34–35: interpolācija?" at the University of Latvia (2012) and "The Syntactic Place of 1 Cor 14:33b (a text-critical and exegetical analysis)" at KU Leuven (2015).

In my initial Master's thesis (University of Latvia) I wrote about the *Status Quaestionis* and the authenticity of the *mulier taceat* pericope. Half of my work consisted of the theoretical description and explanation of what textual criticism is since this discipline is undeveloped in Latvia. While focusing on vv. 34–35 and their context, one question surfaced: What is v. 33b ("as in all the church of the saints") and what is its relation to the "passage on women"? I noticed that the place of v. 33b in the manuscripts is different from its place in modern Bibles, but I tried to convince myself that I had promised to study only vv. 34 and 35 to answer the question whether this block is an interpolation.

In my Advanced Master's thesis (KU Leuven), I chose to study exclusively v. 33b, its context and syntax. I identified and described v. 33b as problematic material, which did not introduce the *mulier taceat* pericope in the oldest extant manuscripts because it had been strictly left by the scribes with the previous context, contra NA<sup>28</sup> and UBS<sup>5</sup> that introduce the *mulier taceat* pericope with v. 33b. In my study, I verified for myself Fee's claim that no ancient manuscript reads 1 Cor 14:33b together with the *mulier taceat* pericope. The exegetical question of v. 33b remained largely unanswered.

### 1. Why Another Study on 1 Cor 14:34–35?

The process of research took an unexpected turn as I was working on my second Master's thesis about the syntax of v. 33b before the *mulier taceat* pericope – the results of external and internal criteria were impossible to reconcile.<sup>3</sup> In a few lines below I will explain what I mean and what the issue was.

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<sup>3</sup> The editors of the NA<sup>28</sup> define the terms concerned as follows:

(1) "The internal criteria are based on the intrinsic coherence of the text, its grammatical structure and its stylistic, linguistic and theological features. These cannot be applied without giving full weight to exegetical insights and studies;"

(2) "The external criteria are related to the quality and reliability of the witnesses supporting a variant. They are derived from the text-historical place and the transcriptional character of

In textual criticism, external evidence consists of the information that directly derives from the manuscript texts and is related to their historical development. Internal evidence involves contextual, stylistic, linguistic, and scribal factors.<sup>4</sup> Internal evidence is further divided in two areas: transcriptional and intrinsic. In the case of my research, the results of the internal evidence appeared to conflict; transcriptional probability (what the scribe copied or wrote) could not be confirmed by the intrinsic probability (what the author most likely had written).

External and internal evidence (in part) in my study demonstrated that v. 33b had been written together with v. 33a, apart from vv. 34–35, but syntactic analysis revealed that v. 33b could be affixed just about anywhere in the text of 1 Corinthians due to its elastic form and universal formulation. The flexible nature of v. 33b made me doubt that the interpolation consists strictly of v. 34 and v. 35 as proposed by Fee and others who draw attention to the alternative place of the passage at the end of the chapter in some manuscripts. The idea of a marginal gloss or a note that accidentally came to be copied in two different places started to seem lacking because the design of v. 33b seemed to parallel ideologically the subordination of women expressed by the *mulier taceat pericope*.

Faced with this complex question – what is the function of v. 33b in the text? – I had to broaden the scope of my research to include the possibility of editorial activity during the collection and codification of the *Corpus Paulinum*, which may have taken place at the end of the 1st century or in the beginning of the 2nd century. If v. 33b was written consciously to introduce vv. 34–35 into Paul’s epistle, we can no longer speak of 1 Cor 14:34–35 being a marginal gloss; in other words, connecting v. 33b to vv. 34–35 makes the text larger than the one that appears at the end of the chapter in some manuscripts of the so-called Western tradition. We also can no longer speak of the incidental placement of the *mulier taceat* by the hands of the scribes in two places for the same reason; v. 33b ideologically attaches itself to vv. 34–35. An intentional, ideologically, and ecclesiastically driven interpolation needs to be considered, or, more precisely, reconsidered, and not viewed as a gloss. A basic difference between the two is explained by William Walker: “Unlike a gloss, an interpolation is foreign material inserted deliberately and directly into the text of a document.”<sup>5</sup> Intru-

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single witnesses and groups of witnesses.” See “The Text of the Edition,” in *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 54.

<sup>4</sup> Eldon Jay Epp, “The Eclectic Method: Solution or Symptom,” in *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays, 1962–2004*, NovTSup 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 157. In this entry Epp explains that external and internal considerations can at times conflict. Epp, however, discusses the text that is extant in the manuscripts.

<sup>5</sup> William O. Walker Jr., *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, JSNTSup 213 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 23.

sion into the coherence of the text takes place also when the gloss is inserted by the scribe into the texture of the discourse, but the extent of the *mulier taceat* that may go beyond the two verses does not qualify as a mere accidental gloss that made its way into 1 Cor 14. Due to the presence of v. 33b as an introduction to the main message of the interpolator in the text of vv. 34–35, we need to speak of an interpolation that may have been intentionally crafted by the Pauline editor for the discourse of 1 Cor 14. That entails the possibility of the presence of the editorial text around the interpolation and textual, syntactical issues above and below the pericope on women.

The following agricultural illustration given by may appeal to those who are best able to process theoretical concepts visually: “Interpolation is like pushing a shovel in the ground, separating two portions of soil, inserting something, and removing the shovel; evidence is left, but the breaks are reasonably clean and contained.”<sup>6</sup> If 1 Cor 14:34–35 is an interpolation, or 1 Cor 14:33b–36 is an interpolation, this metaphor applies to describe the phenomenon of the interpolation. I suspect, however, that things are more complicated than that because the copying process itself may have naturally involved attempts to make the text more readable for the liturgy and minimize incongruities by smoothing the expressions or providing bridges between the topics addressed. Lovering has yet another metaphor from nature to describe a redaction: “Redaction, on the other hand, much more closely resembles a plant which has grown in the ground; in pulling it up, the roots come too, and it is unclear where the redaction ends.”<sup>7</sup> The reader will have to decide whether the *mulier taceat* pericope is an interpolation or a redaction. I shall employ “interpolation” as the *terminus technicus* in this study to be able to participate in an ongoing scholarly discussion that speaks of interpolation.

Taking into account the aforementioned, in the present study I attempt to answer the main research question as formulated here:

What can observation and examination of the text-critical data, supplemented by the insights from the field of linguistics, tell us about the coherence, function, placement, and origin of the *mulier taceat* pericope when we take into account the activity of the editor during the collection process of the Pauline Epistles, which ultimately led to the unified *Corpus Paulinum* intended for the instruction of the universal church?

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<sup>6</sup> Eugene H. Lovering Jr., “The Collection, Redaction, and Early Circulation of the Corpus Paulinum” (PhD diss., Southern Methodist University, 1988), 105. This reference is mentioned in Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 23. Despite not citing Walker as often as he deserves to be cited, I acknowledge the influence of his works during the first steps of writing my Master’s thesis as I was trying to find my way into the methodology of biblical studies. Our university lecturer handed me Walker’s book with the caution that Walker’s approach is not that of the mainstream scholarship, but there is no single method for approaching the text of the Bible. Since that moment, I have dearly valued academic freedom.

<sup>7</sup> Lovering, “The Collection, Redaction, and Early Circulation of the Corpus Paulinum,” 105.

In line with the interpolation theory, I support the argument that the *mulier taceat* pericope entered the text of 1 Corinthians during the editing process of the *Corpus Paulinum* together with the “ecumenical” frame that vv. 33b and 36 create around the pericope.

## 2. The Object of the Study

This work focuses exclusively on the text of 1 Cor 14:34–35, its content and its context, including v. 33b and v. 36 as a possible editorial material. The problem of the delimitation of the pericope becomes evident when one opens different translations of the New Testament.

Modern Bible translations seem to struggle to identify the beginning of the *mulier taceat* pericope and continue the struggle of the Greek New Testament critical editions on the interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b. The NRSV used to read 1 Cor 14:33b–36 as a single paragraph enclosed by parentheses. It is interesting to note, however, that no explanation to a lay reader has been provided as to what the text in parentheses signified.<sup>8</sup> Doesn’t the very use of parentheses point to the syntactic and semantic discontinuity between vv. 33b–36 and its context? In 2021, the NRSV edition was substantially updated and is now referred to as the NRSVUE. The parentheses were removed from around vv. 33b–36 and placed around vv. 32–33a following the reading proposed by Westcott and Hort in their *New Testament in the Original Greek* (1881)<sup>9</sup> and already adopted by the Greek New Testament: SBL Edition (SBLGNT). The text of the *mulier taceat* pericope now runs from v. 34 to v. 36 in the NRSVUE:

<sup>34</sup>Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak but should be subordinate, as the law also says. <sup>35</sup>If there is something they want to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. <sup>36</sup>Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?

The paragraph of the Tyndale House Greek New Testament (THGNT) published in 2017 is similar to that of SBLGNT. Both read 1 Cor 14:34–36 as a single paragraph.

Alternatively, the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28<sup>th</sup> edition (NA<sup>28</sup>) and the Greek New Testament issued by the United Bible Societies, fifth revised edition (GNT UBS<sup>5</sup>) both read as follows:

Ἦς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων <sup>34</sup> αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλ’ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νό-

<sup>8</sup> The footnotes only state that “other ancient authorities put verses 34–35 after verse 40.”

<sup>9</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Text* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1881).

μος λέγει. <sup>35</sup> εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοῦς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν· αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ. <sup>36</sup> ἡ ἀφ' ὧμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν, ἥ εἰς ὕμᾶς μόνους κατήντησεν.

The ease with which v. 33b is added and removed from the paragraph of the *mulier taceat* pericope is surprising and suspicious, even to an ordinary reader of the Bible. This phenomenon needs to be addressed seriously and will be dealt with in this study.

### 3. Explication of the Research Question

My own approach to the study of biblical texts, and this passage in particular, is informed by my professional experience of reviewing and amending modern legislative and administrative documents. My undergraduate studies in Law that primarily involved the reading and interpretation techniques of legal texts, combined with my experience participating in drafting political texts and international agreements have formed the way I see and engage with the text. For that reason, I would like to clarify the prism through which I see the text of the collection called *Corpus Paulinum*.

I spent some years working as a civil servant in government administration, making use of my first degree in Public Law; before and after my study of theology, I worked in the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs of the Republic of Latvia and in the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia. Along with my other duties that involved international cooperation, I worked as an EU coordinator in both ministries, which required active participation in the review process of the various Draft Conclusions and other documents to be adopted by the Council of the European Union. Let me briefly explain the cycle of the Draft Conclusion from its idea to its adoption.

Any Draft produced by the Council undergoes several stages of preparation. Meticulous efforts are invested in drafting a text that will be as ambitious as it can possibly be, on the one hand, and as oriented toward the “common goal” of the European Union – as much as it realistically can be – on the other hand. Before every such Draft Conclusion or other document reaches the EU coordinator in a respective EU member state, it passes through an editorial finalization in Brussels (even if it is prepared by the Presidency – a Member State that chairs the Council meetings for six months). After receiving the Draft, each Member State has the opportunity to suggest a revision to the Draft document according to its national interests. Working with the Draft documents when several parties are involved is a complicated and a long process. It should have, first of all, one particular way of expression, i. e., a specific rigid terminology of the EU institutions, and it should follow a particular ideational or even ideological and political direction. Most of the new Drafts build on the

previous documents that have been adopted. After discussion on the national level (in each country), EU coordinators assemble in Brussels to bargain for the interests of their countries. The wording gets changed, deleted, reformulated, clarified, specified, or generalized. It takes months to discuss one Draft because the civil servants do not have the mandate to agree on important amendments. Finally, the Draft documents that have been agreed upon are adopted on a higher level, by the government ministers who meet at the Council of the EU. This is how the European political machine moves forward – slowly, due to the many parties involved. The final documents, which are adopted by the Member States and translated into the respective languages, sometimes contain paragraphs that are odd and incoherent, and some expressions appear almost nonsensical.

The nature of my position led me to training at the European School of Administration in Brussels. The processes behind the scenes of one of the greatest bureaucracies in the world were explained and demonstrated for us, a small group of aspiring young civil servants gathered together from the EU Member States. At the School of Administration, we were given an explanation of the phenomenon of incoherence in documents. These are places in the text where the sternest debate over the wording took place, and each party advocated for its own interests. Behind the wording stand the particular political or economic interests of entire countries, oftentimes even lobbied for by large organizations at the highest diplomatic level. A convoluted and at times nonsensical sentence, statement, or paragraph that stands outside its context in a certain EU document is the result of a compromise. Such statements might have changed an initially proposed idea considerably after the lengthy and often boring debates. They disclose a lack of cohesion and coherence. The staff of the Council of the EU who drafted the primary version of the document can no longer influence the outcome of the process, that is, the content of final document that more or less now satisfies the interests of each Member State who wants its interests explicitly stated therein.

Given the processes behind a single adopted Council Conclusion, one can imagine that in supra-national organizations like the institutions of the European Union, editorial activity in the legislation is a natural process on the way to the consensus of several countries. All national legislation undergoes a very similar process of drafting, revision, editing, consultation, and repeated editing until a single law is passed. Because I have been involved in the work with initial drafts, different interests of the national institutions and experts, discussions in Brussels and the opinions of the different countries, the life of a text no longer presents any awe of mystery to me. Each text has a beginning and a final form. A text written by a single author, like a poet or a novelist, presents us with a much higher degree of coherence than a political or a legal text that has been discussed by several people and agreed on through compromise after specific

interests have been respected and worked into it. More than one voice produces more than one thought. It is obvious.

When it comes to the discussion of editorial activity in the Pauline Epistles, some theologians seem to feel threatened by the thought that someone other than Paul may have affected the letters and may have disturbed their pristine, untouched form. Against the background of the textual criticism of the Old Testament and the New Testament synoptic problem, the authentic Pauline Epistles stand as a last bastion. It seems enough that the Pastorals are torn away from the *Corpus Paulinum*. It satisfies some that P<sup>46</sup> and the Codex Vaticanus do not contain them. There are still different opinions concerning the Pauline authorship of Colossians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians. But nothing in my opinion compares to the *mulier taceat* pericope, which is a battleground of opinions and interests because 1 Cor 14:34–35 appears in the first epistle to the Corinthians, an absolutely genuine Pauline letter! Faced with the dilemma that the same epistle might contain both an authentic text written by Paul and inauthentic material written by someone else, exegetical and hermeneutical studies at times exhibit unprecedented creativity, often fashioned and colored by the particular confessional background of the theologian. Generally speaking, theological contradictions that run through the letters and even within the same epistle are brushed away as instances of Paul's creativity, rhetorical style, peculiarity, clumsiness, theological and anthropological maneuvers of his complex personality, education, mission, etc.

For many biblical scholars, study of the Bible is informed by a priori theological commitments. Many scholars come from traditions that consider the Bible divinely inspired and thus without error. Some, e. g., Wayne Grudem and Philip B. Payne, consider it to be divinely inspired, word-for-word.<sup>10</sup> First Corinthians 14:34–35 is interpreted as para-cultural and timeless revelation and instruction of God. Scholars who confess the inerrancy of Scripture, take into consideration the historical context of the formation of the *Corpus Paulinum* to a limited degree. On the basis of the resulting exegesis, people who are not engaged with theology and history, naturally form an opinion about the nature, origin, and transmission of the biblical texts as exceptionally nonhistorical, above and out of this world.

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<sup>10</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000); Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009). In the introduction to their monographs, both Grudem and Payne mention that they agree with "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy." Grudem emphasizes that he personally holds to the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible and its ultimate truth in every question, and desires that others would turn back to the same conservative evangelical position. Whilst Grudem believes that the *mulier taceat* pericope is authentic, Payne considers 1 Cor 14:34–35 to be a later interpolation.

Pauline exegesis continues to go around in circles because what we know about Paul and his theology needs to be extracted from the various writings attributed to Paul. The scholarly literature categorizes them into the undisputed seven letters of Paul, Deutero-Pauline, and Trito-Pauline. But what do we know about the authentic writings and their history? When a text within the Pauline epistle runs against the context, the fault is (just as Luther taught several centuries ago) with the reader and not with the text of Scripture. Is there a way out of this circle of apologetics?

Is not the task of Pauline scholarship to ask basic questions such as: How can we account for the contradictions encountered in New Testament documents attributed to a single author? How many voices speak in a given text?

What we know about Paul might well turn out to be something quite different from the final, codified form of the *Corpus Paulinum* once the questions of cohesion and coherence are asked. These issues belong to the domain of the internal criteria of the text. The questions were, in fact, asked by several brilliant Dutch and German theologians of the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>11</sup> They proposed the conjectural emendation of any texts that displayed incoherence and betrayed differences in their wording or placement within the manuscripts. The questions asked and the conjectures proposed were so bold that they led the Alands and Bruce Metzger to safeguard the text of the New Testament from the influence of any possible conjectural emendation, and to limit the discipline of textual criticism to external evidence alone,<sup>12</sup> in the best traditions of Tregelles and his belief exclusively in external evidence.<sup>13</sup> The rationale is set: If the text of the so-called undisputed epistles of Paul is found in the papyri, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. In other words, the most outstanding textual critics of the last century, i. e., Metzger and the Alands, contributed to the abatement of textual criticism and redaction criticism of the New Testament texts. This led to a certain “sacralization” of the New Testament, particularly the undisputed epistles of Paul. Meanwhile, the textual criticism of the Old Testament did not experience such a slowdown due to its lesser dogmatic value for Christian theology. The call of Eldon J. Epp over the years to balance external and

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<sup>11</sup> Bart L. F. Kamphuis has written an extensive monograph, in which he describes the history of conjectural emendation by the Dutch scholars in the last quarter of the 19th century. The first conjecture, according to Kamphuis, was proposed by Jan Hendrik Holwerda as early as in 1830. *New Testament Conjectural Emendation in the Nineteenth Century: Jan Hendrik Holwerda as a Pioneer of Method* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 230.

<sup>13</sup> “The ancient MSS. should be the authorities for every word; ‘the ancient authorities should be allowed a primary place;’ ‘the general principle in the formation of the text is that of following [external] evidence.’” This text of Tregelles is cited in Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 156n.21.

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