

## ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ (1 Timothy 2:12)

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A crucial text for understanding the biblical role of men and women is 1 Timothy 2:12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." In contemporary discussion of the changing roles of women in the church and society, the traditional understanding of the verb ἀυθεντέω, "to have authority," has been seriously challenged. The term was rendered into Greek-Latin lexicons as *autoritatem usurpo in aliquem*,<sup>1</sup> which then found its way into the English versions as "to usurp authority." M.R. Vincent<sup>2</sup> observes correctly that the "usurpation" aspect of KJV is a mistake. "To exercise authority" of Tyndale, Rheims, RV, NIV, and NASV is more appropriate, reflecting the Old Latin and Vulgate *dominari*. Recently, however, it has been suggested that the traditional translations which understand the term as "to exercise authority" may be incorrect. Catherine C. Kroeger, a classics student at the University of Minnesota, has advocated in a recent article<sup>3</sup> that ἀυθεντέω is actually an erotic term best rendered as "to engage in fertility practices." Obviously if such a meaning could be substantiated, then Paul's statement to Timothy must necessarily acquire a radically different connotation from that which it has been customarily accorded. A careful examination of Kroeger's article, though, discloses several factors which militate against her argument and which render her proposal more curious than substantive.

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<sup>1</sup>See Georgii Pisoris, *Manuale Novi Testamenti* (Amsterdam: J. Someren, 1683): p. 97; Benjamin Hederici, *Lexicon* (Lipsiae: F. Gleditschii, 1722): col. 362; and Corneli Schrevelii, *Lexicon Manuale* (Edinburgh: C. Stewart, 1805): col. 217.

<sup>2</sup>*Word Studies in the New Testament*, IV (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1887), p. 225.

<sup>3</sup>"Ancient Heresies And a Strange Greek Verb," *The Reformed Journal*, 29 (1979): 12-15.

## I

Kroeger's thesis that ἀθέντιω has a sexual connotation has been challenged by A.J. Panning,<sup>4</sup> who argues that the various Greek texts cited by Kroeger do not require or support an erotic meaning to the term. For instance, her attempt to locate the inception of a sexual tinge to the word in Euripides<sup>5</sup> involves Andromache, the widow of Hector, who has been enslaved by and made the concubine of Neoptolemus and who is subsequently berated by his wife, Hermione, "You wretch, who dare to sleep with the son of the man who killed your husband and bear children to the ἀθέντιος!" Panning correctly counters that there are obvious sexual overtones in this text in the explicit expressions "to sleep with" and "to bear children," but that the noun ἀθέντιος need only refer to Neoptolemus, her master, as a murderer. No sexual connotation is warranted in this text of Euripides.

In her second example of ἀθέντιος from Euripides, Kroeger advances this: "The word also occurs in a homosexual sense in a speech by Theseus, king of Athens, where love of young boys was considered a virtue rather than a vice" (p. 13). Panning again counters that Kroeger has misinterpreted Euripides' text. When the victorious Theban tyrant refuses to allow a decent burial for the slain "seven against Thebes," Theseus, Athenian king and staunch advocate of democracy, arrives to take up the cause of the suppliant Argonaut mothers. In his reply to the Theban herald he says:

There's nothing more sinister for a city than tyrants  
 Where first of all there are not any laws in common;  
 There one man, keeping laws unwritten, holds the rule  
 Himself unto himself, and power is not equal.  
 But where the laws are written down both weak and strong,  
 Both rich and poor have equal power and equal right.  
 . . . . . What's more fair than this?  
 And truly where the people run the government  
 They are rejoiced by good young citizens coming up.<sup>6</sup>

Kroeger's discussion centers on the last two lines. Panning correctly notes that (1) the text actually says "where the populace is ἀθέντιος," thus establishing a fifth century BC usage of the term meaning "to exer-

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"ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΙΝ - A Word Study," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 78 (1981): 185-191.

<sup>4</sup>Though Kroeger does not cite the passage, Panning posits that her reference must be to *Andromache*, line 172. See L. R. Lind, *Ten Greek Plays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 297.

<sup>6</sup>She has reference to Euripides, *Suppliants*. See Lind, *Ten Greek Plays*, p. 268.

cise authority,” thus destroying Kroeger’s assertion that such a meaning does not arise until well after the NT era, and (2) that while homosexual love of young boys was a vice in ancient Athens, this particular text hinges exclusively upon a debate over the relative merits of two forms of government. To take the phrase ἡδεται νεανίας, “rejoices in young men,” as homosexual behavior is to overlook the vital antithesis between tyranny and democracy, which is the literary focus of the passage. Panning’s criticism of Kroeger’s misreading of the text is confirmed by the lines in Euripides which follow immediately upon the statement of democracy’s pleasure in good young citizens:

The absolute king regards this as a dangerous state;  
He kills the best men who he thinks have minds they use;  
He is afraid his tyranny will not endure.

The context here is plainly political, not sexual.

Yet another instance of the term purported to support the sexual meaning is Wisdom of Solomon 12:6, where the expression αὐθέντας γονεῖς is rendered by Kroeger as “‘parents engendering helpless souls,’ in the midst of a discussion of the abominable fertility and mystery rites of the Canaanites” (p. 13). The actual context is as follows:

Those who dwelt of old in thy holy land  
Thou didst hate for their detestable practices,  
Their works of sorcery and unholy rites,  
Their merciless slaughter of children,  
And their sacrificial feasting on human flesh and blood.  
These initiates from the midst of a heathen cult,  
These parents who *murder helpless lives*,  
Thou didst will to destroy by the hands of our fathers,  
That the land most precious of all to Thee  
Might receive a worthy colony of the servants of God.  
But even these thou didst spare,  
Since they were but men,  
And didst send wasps as forerunners of thy army,  
To destroy them little by little,  
Though thou wast not unable to give the ungodly into  
the hands of the righteous in battle,  
Or to destroy them at one blow by dread wild beasts or  
thy stern word.  
But judging them little by little, Thou gavest them a  
chance to repent.<sup>7</sup>

While Canaanite culture was permeated with detestable sexual practices, Panning rightly notes that the point in this context is not sexual aber-

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<sup>7</sup>B. Metzger, *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 115, 116.

rance but that God does not move in haste, even against those who surely deserve it. The text under consideration in verse 6 is regularly and correctly taken as “murder helpless children,” as in the preceding verse. Neither verse 11, below, nor 3:10-4:6, above, cited by Kroeger, warrants 12:6 being rendered “procreation” as in “pregnancy as a result of pagan orgies.”<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, this writer is led to conclude with Panning<sup>9</sup> that “the various passages cited by Catherine Kroeger do not require or support the sexual connotation that she suggests for the forms of ἀθνετεῖν, but that the two anciently attested meanings of ‘to murder’ or ‘to dominate’ fit very well in all instances.”

## II

It has been clear enough since the work of Kretschmer<sup>10</sup> that ἀθνήτης, “murderer,” is by haplology for ἀυτοθνήτης, from θείνω, and occurs with that meaning in Aeschylus, Euripides, Herodotus, and Thucydides. With the meaning “master,” the term was common in Koine Greek and by the time of Polybius, XXIII, xiv, 2, and Diodorus XVI, 61, it had also acquired the connotation of “perpetrator, instigator.” However, the verb form ἀθνετέω, a *hapax legomenon* in the NT at 1 Timothy 2:12, is rarely used prior to patristic literature and attempts to arrive at its precise meaning have been forced to rely primarily upon etymology, a hazardous undertaking at best.

Unfortunately, Thayer’s<sup>11</sup> remark that ἀθνετέω is “a biblical and ecclesiastical word” erroneously implies that the term is of Christian provenance. Nageli<sup>12</sup> has presented evidence that the verb originated in popular Greek vocabulary as a synonym of κρατεῖν τινος, “to dominate someone,” and subsequent research confirms the nonbiblical origin of the verb. In fact, Nageli’s reference to ἀθνετέω being the Koine term for the Attic αυτοσικειν according to the second century lexicographer

<sup>8</sup>Kroeger, *The Reformed Journal* (1979): 13.

<sup>9</sup>Panning, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (1981): 186,187.

<sup>10</sup>P. Kretschmer, “ἀθνήτης,” *Glotta*, 3 (1912): 289-293. See also A. Dihle, “Αθνήτης,” *Glotta*, 39 (1961): 77-83.

<sup>11</sup>J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (4th ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), p. 84.

<sup>12</sup>Theodor Nageli, *Der Wortschatz des Apostels Paulus* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905), pp. 49,50.

Moeris<sup>13</sup> and Moulton's<sup>14</sup> confirmation of this usage in Thomas Magister<sup>15</sup> led Deissmann<sup>16</sup> to conjecture that "it is therefore probably a mere statistical accident that ἀθηνεῖω has not been met with earlier than the New Testament; any day may bring us an ancient 'profane' quotation." Happily, since the second fascicle of the ninth edition of Liddell and Scott in 1926,<sup>17</sup> it has been common knowledge that the verb occurs in a Berlin papyrus fragment from the first century BC with the unmistakable meaning "to exercise authority over someone." The text reads ἀθηνετηκότος πρὸς αὐτόν<sup>18</sup> in the sense of "domineer." Also from the first century BC, Philodemus<sup>19</sup> observes that certain ones "fight even with dominating masters." Now Kroeger<sup>20</sup> posits in this regard that "The charred fragments of a scroll excavated from the ruins of Herculaneum demonstrate the use of *authenthein* in a parallel position to 'those wounded by the terrible shafts of Eros.' The lines were penned by the rhetorician and obscene epigrammatist Philodemus, who was nicknamed 'Lascivus.'" The fragment actually says that certain orators hinder many, including those "being shot through with passion." The following clause specifies that these orators διαμάχονται καὶ "σὺν αὐθεντοῦσιν ἀναξίν," i.e., "fight even with dominating masters." The parallel,

<sup>13</sup>J. Piersonus, Μοιριδος Αττικιστου λεγεις απικων και ελληνων κατα στοιχειον (Ludguni Batavonorum: 1759), p. 58.

<sup>14</sup>J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, "Lexical Notes from the Papyri," *The Expositor*, 7th ser., 6 (1908): 374. See Friderici Ritschelii, *Thomae Magistri sive Theoduli Monachi ecloga vocum Atticarum* (Halis Saxonum: in Libraria Orphanotrophei, 1832), p.18.

<sup>15</sup>Kroeger's (p. 13) assertion that "Moeris, also in the second century, advised his students to use another word, *autodikein*, as it was less coarse than *authenthein*. The Byzantine Thomas Magister, who reiterates the warning against using this objectionable term," overlooks the salient fact that Moeris was an Atticist committed to restoring the elegant Greek usages formerly enjoyed in ancient Athens. His synonyms in parallel columns indicate that *autodikein* is Attic, but that *authenthein* should be discarded as Hellenistic. Thomas Magister follows the same procedure, observing, "say *autodikein*, not *authenthein*, for the latter is Koine." There is no implication in either Moeris or Magister that ἀθηνεῖω has sexual or indecent connotations. See Panning, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (1981): 188f., and J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p. 91.

<sup>16</sup>Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; New York: G.H. Doran, 1927), p. 89.

<sup>17</sup>H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (rev. by H.S. Jones and R. McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 275. See also W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1952), p. 120.

<sup>18</sup>*Agyptische Urkunden aus den koniglichen Museen zu Berlin: Griechische Urkunden* (Berlin: 1895-1937): No. 1208.

<sup>19</sup>S. Sudhaus, *Philodemi: Volumina Rhetorica* (Lipsiae: B.G. Teubner, 1896), p. 133.

<sup>20</sup>Kroeger, *The Reformed Journal* (1979): 13.

which Kroeger misunderstands to be eroticism, is actually in the two verbs βλάπτουσι, “hinder,” and διαμάχονται, “fight,” as the remainder of the fragment clearly evidences. No such parallel can be demonstrated between “being shot through with passion” and the present participle of ἀμβεντέω, used here in its normal sense of “domineer.”

So the two earliest extant occurrences of this verb, both from the first century BC, provide us with clear evidence of the meaning “to exercise authority, dominate” in pre-Christian common vocabulary.

Bypassing for the moment the singular occurrence of ἀμβεντέω in literature of the first century AD, we proceed to second-century texts. Interestingly, the term is used in an astrological treatise by Claudius Ptolemaeus<sup>21</sup> to denote the “dominance” of the planet Saturn over Mercury and the moon. Yet another second-century astrological treatise<sup>22</sup> uses the participial form ἀμβεντοῦντα with respect to the sign of Saturn which results in one “becoming masterful or dominant in cunning and theft.” Also Phrynichus<sup>23</sup> explained the term ἀμβέντης etymologically from αὐτός, “self” and ἀφίημι, “to send out from one’s self,” specifying “murder by one’s own hand.” Kroeger’s<sup>24</sup> statement that the sword was considered a phallic symbol in ancient Greece is hardly appropriate to a scholarly investigation. Phrynichus, in fact, specifies that Sophocles, for instance, spoke of “murder,” αὐτοέντης, but that ἀμβέντης was more suited to common usage in the second century AD. Further, an early scholion on Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 42,<sup>25</sup> indicates the phrase “hands dripping with blood” could be equally rendered ἀμβεντηκότα, “having killed.” In addition to the lexicographer Moeris, who notes ἀμβεντέω to be the Koine equivalent to αὐτοδικεῖν, “to be independent,”<sup>26</sup> there is now another second-century usage in the Aberdeen papyri, in which village clerks are called αμβένται.<sup>27</sup> Whether they were private officials (e.g.,

<sup>21</sup>F. Boll and A. Boer, *Claudii Ptolemaei*, III, 1 (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1958), p.158.

<sup>22</sup>F. Cumont, *Codicum Parisinorum in Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, VIII, 1 (Brussels: A.M. Lamertin, 1929), p. 177.

<sup>23</sup>J. de Borries, ΘΡΥΝΙΧΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΑΒΙΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΠΡΟΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ (Lipsiae: B.G. Teubner, 1911), p. 24.

<sup>24</sup>Kroeger, *The Reformed Journal* (1979): 13.

<sup>25</sup>Dindorf, *Aeschylus: Tragoediae Superstites et Deperditarum Fragmenta*, III (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1962) p. 131. See also p. 511, where ἀμβέντης is equal to φονευτής “murderer,” and Dindorf, *Aeschylus*, I (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1851), pp. 145, 191, for similar instances.

<sup>26</sup>See fn. 13, above.

<sup>27</sup>E. G. Turner, *Catalogue of Greek and Latin Papyri and Ostraca in the Possession of the University of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen: the University Press, 1939), p. 23.

guild secretaries) or agents of the central authority is not certain. Nevertheless they do “exercise authority” in the sense of superintending the business aspects of a group of workers who are to transport grain from the villages to the ships in the harbor.

In the sixth century Johannes Lydus<sup>28</sup> uses ἀὐθεντοῦσα with reference to the “exercising of authority” by the ruler to compel cities to contribute benevolently to the state. Yet another Berlin papyrus, a sixth-century nonliterary fragment from the Fayyum,<sup>29</sup> uses the verb twice in the sense of “have authority, domineer.” In fact, it was this fragment which led Moulton and Milligan to postulate the verb’s provenance in the popular vocabulary, a conjecture now confirmed by Berlin papyrus 1208 from the first century BC.

There is an occurrence of ἀὐθεντέω in the twelfth-century Byzantine historiographer Michael Glycas,<sup>30</sup> cited by Kroeger (p.13), which might appear to support a sexual connotation to the verb, but, as Panning (pp. 190f.) concludes, “the use by Michael Glycas seems rather to be a total parallel to Paul’s use of the term.” Kroeger asserts that Glycas describes women “who *make sexual advances* to men and fornicate as much as they please.” But, as she is accustomed to do, Kroeger fails to consider the context. In speaking of the sexual mores of various tribes, Glycas mentions the reversal of roles. The literal translation of his text reads:

Among the Agilaeans the women ἀὐθεντοῦσι the men/their husbands and fornicate as much as they please without being resented by the men/their husbands, and they carry on farming, build houses, and pursue all masculine activities.<sup>31</sup>

The context makes clear that it is not just “fornicate” which is a commentary on ἀὐθεντοῦσι, but farming, building houses, and other traditionally masculine activities as well. As Panning (p. 191) notes, “The basic concept set forth is that of role reversal.” The Agilaeans women are dominating the men, a role reversal which evidences itself in their sexual behavior, their occupations, and various other social and domestic pursuits. The context, far from necessitating a sexual connotation, actually requires the traditional understanding of ἀὐθεντέω here as “to dominate.”

<sup>28</sup>R. Wuensch, *Joannus Lydi* (Lipsiae: B.G. Teubner, 1903), p. 131.

<sup>29</sup>*Ägyptische Urkunden aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin: Griechische Urkunden* (Berlin: 1895-1937): No. 103.

<sup>30</sup>Michaelis Glycas, *Annalium Pars II* (I. Bekker, 1836), p. 270.

<sup>31</sup>Panning, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (1981): 191.

To summarize, the occurrences of the verb form in extant literature are few, but it is certain that to the ancient meaning of "to murder" was added, at least from the first century BC, the meaning "to exercise authority, dominate." From as early as the second century AD, the intended meaning "to be independent" was in currency. That Moeris considers this latter meaning well established in second-century Koine is ample basis for postulating its existence well within the first century. There is no basis for Kroeger's postulation of a sexual connotation to the verb and her article must be taken *cum grano salis*.

### III

Mentioning the female heretic who taught people to fornicate (Rev. 2:20), false teachers who "led captive silly women laden with sins" (2 Tim. 3:6f.), the admonition in 1 Timothy 2:9, 10 for the women in the Ephesian church to dress modestly, and the well-known temple prostitutes in Ephesus, Kroeger (p. 14) proceeds to return to fifth-century Athens to postulate as the background of 1 Timothy 2:12 the ancient female teachers (ἐταίραι) who offered sex to their students after class. Since there is no instance of ἀθηνεύω being used to denote sexual behavior, it must be questioned whether the problem in the Ephesian church is that of female teachers who offer sexual favors to their students as Kroeger posits.

Central to Paul's directive are certain heterodox teachers in the Ephesian church. Various attempts to identify these false teachers with specific groups, such as Hellenistic Jews,<sup>32</sup> second-century Gnostics,<sup>33</sup> and proto-Montanists<sup>34</sup> have failed to gain acceptance, and rarely have these persons been assessed in terms of the remainder of the epistle.

Now in 1:3-7 those who "teach other things," such as myths and genealogies, do not promulgate normative Christian doctrine. Having deviated from bona fide Christian qualities, these persons deliver what is in reality only meaningless discourse. While wishing to be "teachers of the law," they do not possess accurate information and actually lead listeners to concentrate on tangential or irrelevant matters (see also 4:1-5). However, instead of launching into a detailed rebuttal of their instruction, Paul centers his attention upon the unfortunate results of their work in the Christian community.

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<sup>32</sup>F.H. Colson, "Myths and Genealogies: A Note on the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 19 (1917-18): 265-271.

<sup>33</sup>B.S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 112, 113.

<sup>34</sup>J. Massingbyrd Ford, "Proto-Montanism in the Pastoral Epistles," *New Testament Studies*, 17 (1971): 338-346.

The "law" in 1:8-11 has been viewed traditionally as the Mosaic law,<sup>35</sup> but the use of the article with the noun does not necessitate such a view.<sup>36</sup> It may be suggested that here Paul is not stressing the Mosaic decalogue, but that these "would-be teachers of the law" have an inadequate base from which to purport to instruct others and that the congregation in Ephesus needs to move beyond their pedantic obstruction into the "healthy teaching which conforms to the gospel" (vss. 10,11). The vice list in verses 9 and 10 does not specify that the teachers themselves are guilty of these things<sup>37</sup> but that misinformed teaching surely results in such aberrance. Hence the necessity of a valid instruction which promotes godly conduct. In order to counter this sinister influence of the heterodox teachers, Timothy (4:6-6:21), the leaders (3:1-13; 5:17f.), and the entire congregation (2:1-15) are admonished to concern themselves with teaching which surely results in lives of integrity among Christians.

Although 1 Timothy 1:12-17 is often considered to be merely a digression,<sup>38</sup> it certainly points back to the preceding verses about false teachers,<sup>39</sup> and there is substance to the observation that these verses provide impetus to the charge to be given to Timothy in verses 18 and 19.<sup>40</sup> Grammatically there is no break between verses 11 and 12.<sup>41</sup> While the heterodox teachers are not in primary focus, the standard of healthy teaching comes to the forefront of discussion. This thanksgiving at the opening of an epistle is common,<sup>42</sup> here following the urgent observation

<sup>35</sup>See N.J. McEleney, "The Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 36 (1974): 204, and E.K. Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954), p. 30.

<sup>36</sup>E.D. Burton, "Redemption from the Curse of the Law," *American Journal of Theology*, 11 (1907): 630; C.E.B. Cranfield, "St. Paul and the Law," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 17 (1964): 55.

<sup>37</sup>Against R.J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 90 (1973): 553.

<sup>38</sup>E.F. Brown, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Methuen, 1917), pp. 9-11; Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 32, 37.

<sup>39</sup>J.N.D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: A. & C. Black, 1963), p. 52.

<sup>40</sup>Patrick Fairbairn, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, repr. of 1874 ed.), p. 91.

<sup>41</sup>E.H., Askwith, "On Two Points in I Tim. 1," *The Expositor*, 8th ser., 7 (1914): 377, 378, upbraids Souter for not making the proper connection between these verses.

<sup>42</sup>Paul Schubert, *The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving* (BZNW, 20; Berlin: A. Topelmann, 1939): p. 4, observes these thanksgivings as transitions between the greeting and body opening of the letter.

in verses 3-11. The misinformed years in Paul's own past are recalled specifically to add impetus to the observation that the thrust of Christianity is to save sinners. In so doing, he offers his personal experience as a model for the Ephesian Christians in coming out of the misinformed posture of the heterodox teachers into a realistic salvation of positive dimensions.

The introduction to the epistle then concludes in verses 18-20 with a firm admonition to Timothy to undertake a responsible ministry, "to fight the good fight of faith."<sup>43</sup> Much more than merely a derogatory picture of the heterodox teachers, these verses succinctly drive home the intent of the introduction and set out the literary thrust of the epistle, which concludes in this vein in 6:3ff. The appeal to Timothy's "conscience"<sup>44</sup> provides the dynamic for Paul's admonition.

The body of the epistle then commences in 2:1 and consists of two parts with three aspects: 2:1ff. (the responsibilities of the congregation, including the leaders) and 4:1ff. (the responsibilities of Timothy himself). Though 1 Timothy 2:1ff. is often taken to be series of regulations on public worship, Murphy-O'Connor<sup>45</sup> is entirely correct in detecting in these verses an outline of "the apostolic value of a Christian community in a minority situation." Opening with the discourse marker παρακαλῶ,<sup>46</sup> Paul encourages prayer for all men, including civil authorities. The impact of the wholesome attitude behind such prayers would be influential in making the Ephesian citizenry and government feel less threatened or offended (see Acts 19) by knowing of this benevolent spirit within the church. The outcome of these prayers was to produce a social atmosphere within which the church could practice the sort of life-style which would be concomitant with the Christian calling.<sup>47</sup> "This" in verse 3 is taken by many to refer to public prayers, but this does injustice to the ἵνα clause in verse 2. Lock<sup>48</sup> mentions the possibility that it could

<sup>43</sup>See J.T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 81 (1962): 343-361.

<sup>44</sup>B.F. Harris, "ΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΙΣ in the Pauline Writings," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 24 (1962): 183.

<sup>45</sup>Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Community and Apostolate," *The Bible Today*, 11 (1973): 1260-1266.

<sup>46</sup>T.Y. Mullins, "Petition as a Literary Form," *Novum Testamentum*, 5 (1962): 46-54.

<sup>47</sup>See W. Foerster, "εὐσέβεια in den Pastoralbriefen," *New Testament Studies*, 5 (1959): 213-218.

<sup>48</sup>W. Lock, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), p. 27.

refer to “such a life,” and Murphy-O’Connor<sup>49</sup> argues cogently that this is the case. The entire context, then, treats the matter of genuine Christian life-style in a pagan environment. Outreach into the Ephesian society is not to be by prayer alone, but by demonstration of godly lives. Prayer can demonstrate that the church is not antagonistic either to government or society; yet the kerygmatic value of a truly Christian life must not be overlooked.

So, while the epistle is framed with reference to a group of heterodox teachers (1:3ff. and 6:3ff.), Paul does not instruct Timothy with regard to refutation of misinformation. Rather, clear admonition is given to the congregation, its leaders, and the evangelist to strive for excellence in Christian living. In the face of unhealthy teaching, Paul stresses “godliness.” It is in this context of imprecise life-style, resultant in part from misinformation supplied by “would-be teachers of the law,” that the admonitions to the congregation occur in 2:8-15. Growing out of the practical insight given in 2:8-10, verses 11 and 12 center upon the advisability of Christian women leading lives of submission and quietude, especially with regard to teaching and relationships with men.

To conclude: What is the situation among the Ephesian women which evoked such an admonition? Initially, it is vital to observe that Kroeger’s hypothesis that the women teachers were offering sexual favors to their students has not a shred of evidence in its favor, either from ancient word usage or from the epistle itself. The “modesty” Paul advocates in verse 9 has to do with a problem of overdressing rather than underdressing (as the modifier *κοσμίως* and the emphasis upon not dressing lavishly clearly denote; see also 1 Pet. 3:1-5).<sup>50</sup> Apparently, then, some Ephesian Christian women had overstepped traditional roles, and this fundamental attitudinal shift evidenced itself in their dress and in forsaking domestic roles such as raising children in order to assume such prominent roles in congregational life — as teaching. The domineering assertive behavior of the women was hardly conducive to a positive image of the church in Ephesus, and Paul’s directive in verse 12 in that submission and quietude constitute the desired Christian perspective.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Murphy-O’Connor, *The Bible Today* (1973): 1262.

<sup>50</sup>See C. Spain, *The Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus* (Austin, Tex.: R. B. Sweet, 1970), p. 47.

<sup>51</sup>See N.J. Holmes, “Let Women Be Silent in Church . . .” *Calvin Journal of Theology*, 4 (1969): 5-22.

Hence, the context fully warrants the rendering of αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12 as “to domineer.” The conclusion in 6:3-12 certainly drives in the wedge regarding vital Christian information which results in generally acceptable behavior consistent with religious commitment. Christian women are not to repudiate normal roles such as marriage, childbearing, family life, and the many “noble works” accomplished well within the traditional role of women (Acts 9:36-43). For the Agilaean women of Glycas’ concern, overturning traditional roles resulted in their domineering stance over the men in sexual freedom, as well as in doing the farming, building houses, and other traditionally masculine pursuits. For the women of the Ephesian church, it involved “domineering over the men,” as well, in a kind of free-spirited independence and assertiveness. Paul’s admonition not to “domineer” over the men of the congregation is directed toward the general mind set among some of the women in which the respected gentle and quiet spirit had given way to an unhealthy assertiveness. In order that they might know how they “ought to behave in . . . the church of the living God” (3:14-16), αὐθεντέω is employed in 2:12 with specific intent to denigrate that assertiveness.



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