

MS. 88 AS EVIDENCE FOR A TEXT WITHOUT 1 COR 14.34–5

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This critical note explains the most likely origin of the dislocated text at the end of 1 Corinthians 14 in the Greek twelfth century AD minuscule 88.¹ There are four distinctive features of this passage in ms. 88.

1) 1 Cor 14.36 follows immediately after 14.33.

2) 1 Cor 14.34–5 follows 14.40.

3) 1 Cor 14.34–5 is a distinct unit separated from v. 40 by a double slash on the base line in the space normally occupied by letters. The words on each side of this double slash are much farther apart than any other adjacent words on this page, so the original scribe must have inserted the double slash before writing vv. 34–5. (See line 15 of the enlarged photograph, p. 158). The end of v. 35 coincides with the end of a line. (See line 22 of the enlarged photograph.) Nothing follows on this line after its closing punctuation dot,² even though each of the remaining three lines on this page extends one or two more letters beyond this dot. The next line, which begins chapter 15, is the only line on this page to be indented.³

4) There is a corresponding but smaller double slash above the last letter of 14.33.⁴ (See line 6 of the enlarged photograph.) It is placed at a sharper angle than the double slash before vv. 34–5 to help it fit between the lines of text. Another larger double slash, at the same level as the Greek letters on the last line of v. 33, is in the right margin where it is easy to see.

The normal position for double slashes indicating displaced text is on the base line, where they occur both before vv. 34–5 and in the margin after v. 33. In their normal position, double slashes break the flow of the text and make the reader aware of the displacement. The scribe, however, squeezed the double slash in between the lines of text at the end of v. 33. The obvious reason why he⁵ did this was because there was no room for it on the base line since he had already begun to write v. 36. This shows that he did not realize that 14.34–5 was missing until after he started to write v. 36.

¹ The full-page and close-up photographs of 1 Corinthians 14 in ms. 88 at the end of this article are from the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III in Naples, Italy, reproduced here with permission.

² Most of the dots marking punctuation in ms. 88 are highlighted with red ink. The larger red spots coincide with major punctuation breaks. The highlighting around the dot at the end of 14.35 is the largest red spot on this page. This highlights that 14.35 ends a logical unit and helps set 14.34–5 apart as a distinct unit.

³ The indentation is about the width of a typical epsilon.

⁴ Both here and after v. 40 the double slash precedes a punctuation dot.

⁵ Eusebius, H.E. 6.23.2 records the employment of women stenographers in Origen's scriptorium at Caesarea. Since most scribes were male, 'he' is used throughout this study where a pronoun is used to identify a scribe, but 'he' is used generically without intent to specify either a male or a female scribe.

The scribe believed vv. 34–5 should be read after v. 33.⁶ The position of the double slashes on the base line before vv. 34–5 demonstrates that he was intentionally setting vv. 34–5 apart when he wrote it. The large double slash in the margin after v. 33 clearly identifies the line where he believed vv. 34–5 should be inserted. The small raised double slash at the end of v. 33 marks the specific point on that line where he wanted vv. 34–5 to be inserted. Thus, he marked the line and the point on that line after v. 33 where he wanted vv. 34–5 to be inserted.

Why, then, did he write v. 36 after v. 33? There are only five possible sources for this: inadvertent displacement of vv. 34–5, intentional displacement of vv. 34–5, derivation from a Western manuscript, derivation from a non-Western manuscript with vv. 34–5 displaced, or derivation from a non-Western manuscript without vv. 34–5.

It does not make sense that the scribe inadvertently skipped over vv. 34–5 and only later noticed his error. A tired scribe may skip a single word or a single line, but there is no plausible explanation why a scribe would skip over this much text.⁷ 1 Cor 14.34–5 takes over 7 lines in \mathfrak{P}^{46} and ms. 88, over 9 lines in codex Alexandrinus, over 11 lines in codex Vaticanus, and over 16 lines in codex Sinaiticus. For a copyist accidentally to skip over that much text is unprecedented in the NT manuscript tradition.

It does not make sense that the scribe intentionally skipped over vv. 34–5, either. Such intentional rearrangement of Paul's argument does not fit what is known of scribal practice. There is no comparable passage in any of the surviving manuscripts where a scribe changed the order of Paul's argument.⁸ Even if a scribe had wanted to improve the logic of this passage by putting vv. 34–5 after v. 40, he certainly would not have undermined his own improvement by adding the double slashes indicating that vv. 34–5 should follow v. 33.

Since it does not make sense that the scribe inadvertently or intentionally skipped vv. 34–5, the only other possibility is that he copied this order from a

⁶ Cf. also Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 151: 'the scribe...immediately recognized the error in its earlier omission and inscribes two short slashes on the line of writing to signify a necessary reversal of order before writing the words about the women. The scribe then puts similar marks some lines before to show where the words on the women belong, but these slashes must be squeezed in above the line.'

⁷ Wire's attempt on p. 150 of *Corinthian Women Prophets* to defend the possibility that ms. 88 resulted from accidental scribal haplography entails too many speculative assumptions about the particular manuscript being copied to be credible, including the following six: 1. It had the variant 'churches' in the plural. This variant is so rare that it is not noted in either the Nestle–Aland or the UBS NT text. 2. The word 'churches' in both v. 33 and 35 was the last word in its line. 3. Even though the skipped text was one contiguous unit, the corrector split it into two parts, putting 'of the saints' in the right hand margin after 'churches' in v. 33, but putting vv. 34–5 in the lower margin. 4. 'Of the saints' was put in the right margin at the end of v. 33 in such a way as to obscure the sign marking where vv. 34–5 should be inserted. No scribe could be expected to obscure his own insertion sign. 5. 1 Cor 14.34–5 is put in the lower margin without any mark to alert future copyists that it is out of place. 6. The last line above the lower margin coincided with the end of the chapter, namely the end of v. 40.

⁸ Cf. G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 700, 'displacements of this kind do not occur elsewhere in the NT'.

manuscript with v. 36 after v. 33 before realizing that this was not the usual order of the text.⁹ Only this adequately explains why ms. 88 has this order even though its double slashes show that its scribe believed that vv. 34–5 should follow v. 33.

Could this order have been copied from a Western text? V. 36 follows after v. 33 in all copies of the Western text.¹⁰ Ms. 88, however, is not a Western text and does not exhibit the usual pattern of readings of a Western text. Therefore, it can not have been copied from a Western text.

Nor does it make sense that the scribe, although he was copying from a non-Western text, introduced his reading of 1 Cor 14.34–5 based on another text that was Western. Since the time Jerome (c. AD 345 – c. AD 419) translated the Latin Vulgate from Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, the old Latin Western text gradually fell out of favor and was regarded as an inferior text. The last Western texts, F and G, were written in the ninth century,¹¹ three hundred years before ms. 88. There is no Greek manuscript written after the ninth century besides 88 that has 1 Cor 14.34–5 after verse 40. Consequently, there is only a remote possibility that the scribe of ms. 88 had access to a Western text. If any scholars at that time knew about the Western text and its position for 1 Cor 14.34–5 after v. 40 they would probably have regarded this reading as inferior and so would not have introduced it.¹² The decisive evidence against this possibility, however, is that the scribe clearly marked that vv. 34–5, not v. 36, should follow v. 33. It does not make sense that he would reverse and so undermine this Western reading if he were trying to preserve it.

It does not make sense that this portion of ms. 88 was copied from a Western text or was based on awareness of a Western text. Thus, it must have been copied from a non-Western text. Yet the verse order of ms. 88 and the double slashes demand that it was copied from a text with v. 33 followed immediately by v. 36, contrary to the normal non-Western verse order in which v. 33 is followed by vv. 34–5. Two logical possibilities could explain why ms. 88 has v. 33 followed by v. 36 and was also copied from a non-Western text: 1) that ms. 88 was copied from a non-Western manuscript with vv. 34–5 after v. 40 or 2) that ms. 88 was copied from a non-Western manuscript without vv. 34–5. Ms. 88 diverges from either of these possible antecedent manuscripts since it introduces a double slash on the base line after v. 40. Either of these two possible antecedent manuscripts could explain each of the distinctive features of ms. 88 listed at the beginning of this short study:

1) A scribe copying a text without 14.34–5 after v. 33 would begin copying 14.36 before realizing that vv. 34–5 did not follow v. 33. This is why v. 36 follows immediately after v. 33 with no intervening marks on the base line of ms. 88.

2) The scribe added 1 Cor 14.34–5 after 14.40. This makes sense in either case because it is the least disruptive place to add these verses. To have inserted vv.

⁹Wire, *Corinthian Woman Prophets*, 151, acknowledges this, apparently realizing that her suggestion critiqued in footnote 7 is not realistic.

¹⁰ Cf. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 699 n. 1, ‘the entire Western tradition’ has vv. 34–5 after v. 40.

¹¹ UBS *Greek NT* 4th rev. ed., 10*.

¹² Furthermore, if, unexpectedly, the scribe had a Western text and deliberately preserved this reading even though he noted that it was wrong, it would be surprising that he ignored so many other distinctively Western readings.

34–5 in the middle of 14.36–40 would have interrupted Paul’s conclusions about tongues and prophecy.

3) The scribe clearly marked 14.34–5 as a distinct unit because he believed that these verses should be after verse 33. This explains why he put the double slash on the base line before v. 34 and why he indented the following line of text. Some time during the copying of vv. 36–40, the scribe realized the manuscript he was copying did not contain vv. 34–5 after v. 33. So he inserted vv. 34–5 at the next logical break in the text and deliberately set vv. 34–5 apart as a separate unit.

4) The scribe wanted to insert vv. 34–5 after v. 33 since all other Greek manuscripts of this passage surviving from this period put them there. By the time the scribe noticed that vv. 34–5 did not follow v. 33 in the manuscript he was copying, he had already started to write v. 36, so it was too late to insert vv. 34–5 after v. 33. The scribe squeezed the double slash into the space between the lines above the last letter of v. 33 because there was not room for it on the base line. He marked the line into which vv. 34–5 should be inserted with a larger double slash in the adjacent right margin, where it could most easily be seen.

Is it likely that the scribe was copying a non-Western Greek manuscript which had vv. 34–5 after v. 40? No non-Western Greek manuscript supporting this position is known. Not even ms. 88 supports this reading, since the double slashes on the base line before vv. 34–5 and their corresponding double slashes after v. 33 show that its scribe intended these verses to be read after v. 33. Wire writes that ‘a review of the ms. 88 text of 1 Corinthians shows that it seldom parallels “Western” readings except where they also appear in the eighth-to-ninth-century manuscript Ψ and go on to become the majority reading.’¹³ Vv. 34–5 do not follow v. 40 in either the stream of text tradition from which ms. 88 arose, represented by the closely related ms. Ψ, or in any continuation of that stream. There is no evidence from any other manuscript that a non-Western Greek manuscript ever existed with vv. 34–5 after v. 40. Therefore, it does not make sense to expect that the scribe of 88 had a non-Western Greek manuscript with vv. 34–5 after v. 40.

There is, however, substantial evidence for the existence of a text that omitted 1 Cor 14.34–5. It has been widely argued on internal grounds and on transcriptional probability¹⁴ that 14.34–5 was not in the original text of 1 Corinthians. In AD 546 or 547 Bishop Victor of Capua had the end of 1 Corinthians 14 rewritten in the bottom margin of codex Fuldensis omitting vv. 34–5.¹⁵ Clement of Alexandria († pre AD 215) cites 1 Cor 14.6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 20 yet calls both men and women without distinction to silence in church, indicating that 1 Cor 14.34–5 was not in his text of 1 Corinthians.¹⁶ Further evidence of a text of 1 Corinthians 14 without vv. 34–5 is that none of the Apostolic Fathers or

¹³ Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 151. Ms. 88 also seems to follow Ψ and to be followed by ℞ in its reading of *επιτετραπται* and *υποτασσεσθαι* in 1 Cor 14.34.

¹⁴ Most clearly argued by Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 699–710.

¹⁵ This is argued by the present writer in ‘Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus, and 1 Cor 14.34–5’, *NTS* 41 (1995) 240–50.

¹⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.11, cf. *Strom.* 4.19; cf. Payne, ‘Fuldensis’, 247–8.

the next generation of church fathers gives any indication of awareness of 1 Cor 14.34–5.¹⁷

The most logical explanation of the features of ms. 88 is that it was copied from a Greek manuscript without 1 Cor 14.34–5. All of the other explanations require an implausible assumption such as inadvertent displacement, intentional displacement later reversed, or derivation from a Western manuscript. The one other possibility, derivation from a non-Western manuscript with vv. 34–5 after v. 40, requires the existence of a reading which no surviving non-Western Greek manuscript supports. The explanation that 88 was copied from a manuscript without vv. 34–5 does not depend on the scribe of 88 having access either to a Western manuscript¹⁸ or a non-Western manuscript with a reading totally out of keeping with its textual tradition. On this explanation, the source from which the scribe of ms. 88 copied vv. 34–5 presents no difficulty, since it could have come from any Greek text containing 1 Cor 14.34–5. The evidence that ms. 88 was copied from a text of 1 Corinthians 14 without vv. 34–5 provides additional external support for the thesis that vv. 34–5 were not in the original text of 1 Corinthians 14.

On November 20, 1997 P. B. Payne submitted corrections to this 1998 article, but Ella Harris, the Cambridge University Press Journal Editor wrote him, “this issue has already been printed.” For the record, Payne intended these corrections:

page 3, ¶ 3, line 7 replace:

“There is no Greek manuscript written after the ninth century besides 88 that has 1 Cor 14.34–5 after verse 40.” with

“Ms. 88 is the only known Greek manuscript written from the ninth century through the twelfth century that has 1 Cor 14.34-5 after verse 40.”

page 4, replace ¶ 3 with:

Is it likely that the scribe was copying a non-Western Greek manuscript that had vv. 34–5 after v. 40? There is no known non-Western Greek manuscript prior to ms. 88 supporting this position. Not even the scribe of ms. 88 intended to support this reading, since the double slashes on the base line before vv. 34–5 and their corresponding double slashes after v. 33 show that its scribe intended these verses to be read after v. 33. Wire writes that ‘a review of the ms. 88 text of 1 Corinthians shows that it seldom parallels “Western” readings except where they also appear in the eighth-to-ninth-century manuscript Ψ and go on to become the majority reading.’¹³ Neither fits this reading in ms. 88. Vv. 34–5 do not follow v. 40 in the stream of text tradition from which ms. 88 arose, represented by the closely related ms. Ψ, nor does this become the majority

¹⁷ Cf. Payne, ‘Fuldensis’, 247–8 and a detailed discussion of evidence for an original text without 1 Cor 14.34–5 in Payne’s forthcoming *Man & Woman, One in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997).

¹⁸ If, improbably, he had been aware of the Western placement, this would simply confirm his choice that the end of v. 40 is the most natural break in the text after v. 36 to insert vv. 34–5 that were missing from the manuscript he was copying.

¹³ Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 151. Ms. 88 also seems to follow Ψ and to be followed by ℵ in its reading of επιτετραπται and υποτασσεσθαι in 1 Cor 14.34.

reading. To summarize, there is no non-Western Greek manuscript evidence prior to ms. 88 to support the view that the scribe of ms. 88 had a non-Western Greek manuscript with vv. 34–5 after v. 40.

page 5, ¶ 2, line 6 replace:

“which no surviving non-Western Greek manuscript supports.” with
 “which no known non-Western Greek manuscript through the twelfth century supports.”

Furthermore, due to clipping of the top of the photograph on p. 158 of the printed article in *New Testament Studies* the following line number should change:

page 1, line 10 change:

“(See line 15 of the enlarged photograph, p. 158).” to
 “(See line 14 of the enlarged photograph, p. 158).”

page 1, line 11 change:

“(See line 22 of the enlarged photograph.)” to
 “(See line 21 of the enlarged photograph.)”

page 1, ¶ 4) line 12 change:

“(See line 6 of the enlarged photograph.)” to
 “(See line 5 of the enlarged photograph.)”