

# WHAT EVE DID, WHAT WOMEN SHOULDN'T DO: THE MEANING OF ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ IN 1 TIMOTHY 2:12

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## Summary

*1 Timothy 2:12, for obvious reasons, has suffered considerable scholarly buffeting in recent years. Careful lexicological investigations have undermined the traditional interpretation of αὐθεντέω as 'to have authority over' and brought to light various shades of meaning, without, however, clearly demonstrating their relevance to the passage. Thorough research into the religious environment of Ephesus has also suggested alternative perspectives, but again with doubtful exegetical validity. The argument of this paper is that if closer attention is paid to the structural and figurative character of the passage, a reading emerges which takes into account both the proper sense of αὐθεντέω and the particular circumstances under which Paul's injunction was given.*

In the debate over the position of women within the church one of the hardest exegetical nuts to crack has been the meaning of αὐθεντεῖν in 1 Timothy 2:12, where Paul says that he does not permit a woman to teach, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός. A considerable amount of effort and technical expertise has gone into the task of amassing and analysing the lexicological evidence available, but the results have been inconclusive. The traditional interpretation, 'to have authority over', has been called into question, but none of the alternatives proposed has proved entirely convincing. This failure, I would suggest, is attributable to two particular oversights, one lexicological, the other to do with the literary character of the passage. Once these have been corrected, it becomes possible to give a quite precise explanation of why Paul used this word at this point, and by that to determine the scope of its application.

## I. The Literary Structure of verses 11-15

In order to grasp the development of thought in 11-15, I suggest that we need to take note of two important, but hitherto unremarked, structural features. The first is the parenthetical character of 12. Grammatically the verse is awkward and elliptical: ἐπιτρέπω, for example, is not the proper governing antecedent for εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχία, which requires something like

παρακαλῶ or βούλομαι (*cf.* 1, 8). Nor does it follow on naturally from 11, particularly with the change from an imperative (μανθανέτω) to an indicative (ἐπιτρέπω). The emphatic position of διδάσκειν may point in the same direction;<sup>1</sup> and the repetition of ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ would also be more easily explained if the verse were something of an afterthought, a rather hurriedly constructed interpolation. More significant, however, is the fact that the discussion of Adam and Eve (13-14) relates not—at least not overtly—to the woman teaching but to the woman *learning*: the emphasis is not on what Eve said or did but on the fact that she was deceived. Paul requires that women, by contrast, should learn in such a way that they are *not* deceived. The γὰρ of 13, therefore, refers back quite naturally to 11, supporting not the injunction against teaching but μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ.

This is important because under such an interpretation it can no longer be said that Paul adduces direct scriptural support for the restrictions imposed on women in 12. Moreover, οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω now appears more clearly to constitute a practical and contingent ruling in conformity with its use elsewhere in the New Testament. Apart from its occurrence here and in 1 Corinthians 14:34 the sense in which the word is consistently used is that of giving someone leave or permission to do something. It is in every case related to a specific and limited set of circumstances (even the permission to divorce granted by Moses, Mt. 19:8; Mk. 10:12, which comes closest to being the imposition of a theological principle, is implicitly restricted to the period of the law), and authority is clearly located in an individual not in a body of absolute truth. It seems reasonable to argue, therefore, that the use of ἐπιτρέπω here makes the restriction a matter of church governance, of practical rather than of theological authority.<sup>2</sup>

The second structural feature in 11-15, which appears once 12 has been marked as parenthetical, is a chiasmus:

<sup>1</sup>Note the parenthetical use of δε described in F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R.W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1961) §447 (7).

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* R.C. and C.C. Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman* (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House 1992) 82-83.

- A 11 Let a woman in quietness learn in all submission. . .  
 B 13 For Adam was formed first,  
 C then Eve,  
 B' 14 and Adam was not deceived.  
 A' But the woman, having been deceived, has come into transgression.

The correspondence between lines A and A' is evident in the return to 'the woman' as the subject in A' despite the fact that Eve is named in line C, in the contrast between the woman learning in quietness and the woman being deceived, and in the antithetical relationship between ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ and ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν. The contrast in this context between submission and transgression suggests that ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ should be understood as obedience to the teaching—or to the teaching authority—rather than as subordination to male authority (just as it is the *word of God* that the serpent distorts, not the authority of Adam).<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere in Paul παράβασις refers invariably and explicitly to transgression against the law;<sup>4</sup> Eve's mistake was not that she usurped Adam's authority but that, misled by the serpent's deception, she disregarded what she had been taught. Such an emphasis also allows for a more substantial distinction to emerge between ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ and ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ, between the manner in which the learning is undertaken and the response to it; otherwise these two expressions would be practically synonymous. The outer parallelism of the chiasmus may also be taken to account for the perfect tense of γέγονεν in line A', inasmuch as the statement about Eve is also a return to the situation of women in the contemporary church. The inner parallelism is quite clear: Ἀδὰμ. . . ἐπλάσθη / Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη. It might be argued, of course, that lines B'-A' are logically parallel to B-C, but this does not explain the reversion to 'the woman' and is probably best understood as a secondary structure underlying the allusion to Scripture. Verse 15 should be regarded as an addendum to the chiasmus intended to compensate for the negative impression left by line A'.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. A. Padgett, 'Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:8-15 in Social Context', *Interpretation* 41 (1987) 24; P.W. Barnett, 'Wives and Women's Ministry (1 Tim. 2:11-15)', *EQ* 61 (1989) 230. The assumption that Paul is speaking of submission to *men* has been shaped by an erroneous interpretation of αἰθενταῖν, which in any case belongs to a parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 2:23; 4:15; 5:14; Gal. 3:19 (cf. also Heb. 2:2; 9:15).

## II. The Meaning of ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ

With this much said we can now turn to the debate over the meaning of ἀυθεντεῖν. The traditional interpretation of the word in this context as 'to have authority over' has been challenged from two directions. On the one hand, it has been argued that ἀυθεντέω can have the more negative sense of 'to usurp authority' or 'domineer', so that what Paul objects to is supposedly the *misuse* of authority by women.<sup>5</sup> Such a nuance, however, is barely, if at all, warranted by the lexicological evidence.<sup>6</sup> It would also require us to think that Paul conceived of a legitimate authority over men that was somehow *not* in conflict with the injunction against teaching. Used absolutely in this way διδάσκειν certainly cannot be restricted to false teaching. On the other hand, C.C. and R.C. Kroeger have recently argued, first, that the primary sense of ἀυθεντέω is one of originating or being responsible for something, 'to take something in hand or to take the initiative in a given situation', and secondly, that a valid distinction can be made between 'being an originator and professing to be one'.<sup>7</sup> So, they believe, Paul is saying, 'I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man'.<sup>8</sup> This is then to be understood in the context of an incipient Gnosticism that taught the precedence of Eve over Adam and specifically encouraged women teachers; the statement in 13 that 'Adam was formed first, then Eve' is seen as a direct rebuttal of such claims.

We need not concern ourselves here with the precise details of the false teaching that Paul urged Timothy to combat at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3-7); it is quite possible that there were

<sup>5</sup>Cf. D.M. Scholer, '1 Timothy 2:9-15 & the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry', in A. Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Marshall Pickering 1986) 205; and K. Giles in M.A. Franklin (ed.), *The Force of the Feminine* (London, Allen and Unwin 1986) 44.

<sup>6</sup>See G.W. Knight III, 'ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2.12', *NTS* 30 (1984) 150-151. The Kroegers refer to certain instances of ἀυθεντέω in the Egyptian legal papyri (*op. cit.*, 88-9), but it is difficult to see how the definition given by F. Preisigke ('verfügungsberechtigt sein', 'to have right of disposal') can mean 'usurp authority over'.

<sup>7</sup>R.C. & C.C. Kroeger, *op. cit.*, 101-3; also C.C. Kroeger, '1 Timothy 2:12—A Classicist's View', in Mickelsen, *op. cit.*, 231.

<sup>8</sup>R.C. & C.C. Kroeger, *op. cit.*, 103; cf. C.C. Kroeger, *op. cit.*, 232. Cf. B. Barron, 'Putting Women in their Place: 1 Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership', *JETS* 33 (1990) 454-455.

Gnostic elements in it and that women played a prominent part in its dissemination (cf. 1 Tim. 5:11-15; 2 Tim. 3:6-7). The question is whether it can really be claimed that ἀϋθεντέω here means 'to profess oneself to be the originator of someone', for it is by this thread that the Kroegers' whole argument hangs.

1. Much is made of the fact that in the Latin lexicons (e.g. *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, Scapula's *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*) 'praebeo me auctorem' is given as a definition of ἀϋθεντέω. The Kroegers translate this as 'to declare oneself the author or source of anything', but this is misleading. The basic meaning of 'praebeo' is not 'to declare', but 'to put forward, present, offer, show'; according to Lewis and Short, the reflexive form means 'to show, approve, behave one's self in a certain manner' (cf. the Oxford Latin Dictionary: 'to put oneself forward [in a given role]' or 'to behave [as]'). Two interpretations of the phrase seem possible. The first is 'I show myself to be an author', which is of no use to the Kroegers' argument since it would entail the implicit recognition that woman really is the originator of man.<sup>9</sup> The second is to suppose that we have here simply a means of converting 'auctor' into a verbal form for want of a direct equivalent for ἀϋθεντέω (just as in English we might say 'to act as author' rather than 'to author').

2. The textual support adduced for this interpretation appears on investigation to be illusory. In *Epistle* 51.1 Basil asks the question: 'Was I following others, or myself originating (κατάρχων) and ἀϋθεντῶν the bold deed?' The 'bold deed' (τολμήματος) of which he has been accused is the slandering and anathematizing of his friend Dianius. The basic structure of his question is provided by the contrast between two hypothetical interpretations of the accusation: are they saying that he simply repeated what others had said, or is he supposed to have been directly responsible for the deed himself? The point is not whether he *professed* to have instigated it, but whether he actually did instigate it. This is clearly the sense of the Latin version in the *Patrologia Graeca*: 'ipse incoeptor et auctor facinoris' ('was I myself the instigator and author of the deed?'). Here there is nothing at all of the idea of 'professing oneself origina-

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Cicero, *Sest.* 50, 107: '. . . Pompeius, qui se non solum auctorem meae salutis, sed etiam supplicem praebeuit populo Romano'; Tacitus, *Hist.* 3:12: 'Tum progressus Lucilius auctorem se palam praebet'.

tor'. The same is true for the two other passages, which the Kroegers only briefly paraphrase. The words τῆς δὲ κρίσεως αὐθεντεῖ ὁ ὑπιστος Θεός in the edict of Constantine are translated in Latin as *'improbitali autem dijudicandae ac puniendae praeest Deus altissimus'*; the meaning of the Greek is 'the highest God is the author of judgment'. The phrase διχόνοιάν τινα. . . Εὐτυχοῦς αὐθεντοῦντος γεγενῆσθαι from the letter of Pope Leo is rendered in Latin *'dissensionem quamdam. . . Eutyche auctore generatam'*, and in English roughly 'a certain disagreement came about with Eutychus being the originator or author'. In neither case—again this is evident from the Latin versions—is there any need to introduce the idea of 'professing oneself to be. . .'.<sup>10</sup>

3. The Kroegers overlook one important feature of the usage of αὐθεντέω with the sense 'instigate, originate', which is evident from all the instances cited, including those in which the word is reckoned to have the meaning 'to declare oneself to be the origin of something'. This is that the object of the verb is always an action or a state of affairs.<sup>11</sup> You do not instigate or perpetrate a physical object, such as a man, so this makes no sense as the basis for an interpretation of αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12.

The Kroegers' have attempted to solve the problem of αὐθεντέω by means of a highly idiosyncratic definition that cannot be sustained. What is needed is a less eccentric explanation, one that stays within the bounds of normative usage. But what is the normative usage?

L.E. Wilshire's survey of more than three hundred occurrences of the αὐθεντέω-αὐθέντης-αὐθεντία word group from Homer to the Byzantine period comes to the rather unsatisfactory conclusion that at the time of Paul the word αὐθεντέω had 'a multiplicity of meanings'.<sup>12</sup> The drift of his analysis,

<sup>10</sup>All three passages are cited in G.W.H. Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1961) *s.v.* αὐθεντέω under the sense 'be primarily responsible for, instigate; authorize'.

<sup>11</sup>When used with reference to murder αὐθεντέω means 'to commit, be responsible for, a murder' rather than 'to murder (someone)', though αὐθέντης may take a genitive of the person murdered.

<sup>12</sup>L.E. Wilshire, 'The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12', *NTS* 32 (1988) 124. Wilshire's analysis is based largely on the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae computer database of the University of California, Irvine.

however, notwithstanding certain reservations, is towards the view that the sense most appropriate to 1 Timothy 2:12 relates to the idea of exercising authority, and in this he is essentially in agreement with the findings of G.W. Knight's briefer investigation based on the citations given in the Blass-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker lexicon.<sup>13</sup> But there are still difficulties. What, for example, is the relationship between διδάσκειν and ἀυθεντεῖν? If Paul was thinking simply of women being in positions of authority (as presbyters, for example), would it not have been more logical to have placed that prohibition first, rather than the emphatic injunction against teaching? Does not the order of the sentence suggest that ἀυθεντεῖν is logically subordinate to, or consequent upon, διδάσκειν? And why does Paul use this word and not the more usual ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν or ἐξουσιάζειν? The novelty of it must surely have given the reader pause.

In fact two aspects of the lexicological evidence are not properly brought to bear on the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12 in Wilshire's conclusions. The first oversight is particularly surprising, since Wilshire himself makes it clear that prior to and during the New Testament period the predominant meaning of the ἀυθεντέω word group related to the committing of murder or the perpetration of a crime; it is only really with the Greek Church Fathers that the idea of 'having authority' comes to the fore.<sup>14</sup> To recite just two of the examples given: Wisdom 12:6 speaks of 'murderous parents of helpless souls' (ἀυθέντας γονεῖς ψυχῶν ἀβοηθήτων); and the historian Diodorus

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<sup>13</sup>Knight, *op. cit.* In a more recent article (L.E. Wilshire, '1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris', *EQ* 65 (1993) 48-50) Wilshire protests that the conclusions he reached in his *NTS* paper are not the same as Knight's; but since in the earlier article he appears not to entertain the possibility that ἀυθεντεῖν in 1 Tim. 2:12 might connote criminal or murderous behaviour, one is certainly left with the impression that he thinks 'to have authority over' to be the most appropriate meaning.

<sup>14</sup>Wilshire, 'The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12', 131, summarizes the development of the word in this way: 'Sometime during the spread of koine, the word ἀυθεντέω went beyond the predominant Attic meaning connecting it with murder and suicide and into the broader concept of criminal behaviour. It also began to take on the additional meanings of "to exercise authority/power/ rights" which became firmly established in the Greek Patristic writers to mean "to exercise authority".'

Siculus (c. 60 BC - c. AD 20) said of Gracchus that he had in his followers not merely supporters 'but, as it were, sponsors of his own daring plans' (ἀλλὰ καθάπερ αὐθέντας εἶχε τούτους ὑπὲρ τῆς ἰδίας τόλμης).<sup>15</sup>

In fairness to Wilshire we should point out that he has recently modified his interpretation of αὐθεντεῖν in 1 Timothy 2:12 in favour of the idea of 'instigating violence', suggesting that Paul has in mind a particularly unpleasant incident in the life of the community at Ephesus, provoked perhaps by the influence of false teachers on the women.<sup>16</sup> Such an explanation, however, while it acknowledges the importance of this aspect of the usage of αὐθεντεῖν, makes little sense in context. What possible connection, for example, is there with the prohibition against teaching? Would Paul have opposed such obviously unacceptable behaviour with the words 'I do not permit'? Why should he specify violence *against a man*? What has this to do with Eve's transgression, which was not one of violence towards Adam? The interpretation is also linguistically doubtful in that the association of the word group with the idea of murder depends almost entirely on the use of the noun αὐθέντης to denote the person who has committed a murder, the 'perpetrator of the deed'. This does not necessarily mean that the verb can be used with a person as the object to mean 'to murder' or 'to act violently against': in fact, there appears to be no evidence for such a construction.<sup>17</sup>

The second oversight has to do with a distinction that emerges between having authority as status or office and the assumption or implementation of authority as an action.<sup>18</sup> This is readily demonstrated by considering the sub-group of citations that Knight associates most closely with 1 Timothy 2:12. First, the translation of κάμοῦ αὐθεντηκότος πρὸς αὐτὸν in papyrus number 1208 (1 BC) attributed to J.R. Werner already

<sup>15</sup>Photian fragment, 35.25.1.

<sup>16</sup>Wilshire, '1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited'.

<sup>17</sup>In Schol. Aesch. *Eum.* 42, which is cited as an instance of the use of the word to mean 'murder', the participle is used absolutely (τοῦτο νεωστὶ αὐθεντηκότα παρίστωσι) and need only mean 'having committed the deed'.

<sup>18</sup>The point of this distinction is missed by those commentators who resort to the unevicenced sense 'domineer' as the only alternative to the traditional interpretation; see, e.g., B. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge, CUP 1988) 121.

suggests something more active than simply having or being in a position of authority: 'I exercised authority over him. . .'.<sup>19</sup> The sentence continues, '...and he consented to provide for Calatytis the Boatman on terms of the full fare, within the hour', which makes it clear that ἀθηντηκότος refers to a specific act of persuasion or command. Then, the translation of ἀθηντοῦσα in the *de Magistratibus populi Romani* of Johannes Laurentius Lydus (AD 6) as 'of its own initiative' points to a certain emphasis on the active taking or exercising of authority rather than the passive condition of having authority: the construction of the passage indicates that ἀθηντοῦσα refers to the specific application of authority by the magistracy, the taking of initiative in lightening the tribute and making grants.<sup>20</sup> This leaves only the phrase ἀθην[οῦ]σιν ἄν[αξι]ν in the obscure fragment from the *Rhetorica* of Philodemus (1 BC) as meaning something like 'those in authority' (the paraphrase accepted by Knight) or 'authorized rulers' (the translation offered by Wilshire).<sup>21</sup>

While it would be hazardous to speculate on the exact course of the term's semantic evolution, this sense of 'acting authoritatively' must at least be considered as an available and significant nuance alongside those of 'perpetrating a crime' and 'having authority'. In fact, to introduce the idea of 'authority' into the definition at all may be misleading if it is taken to mean a derived or ordained authority: it is 'authorship', not 'authority', that is at the heart of the meaning of ἀθηντέω. This distinction is crucial. The idea of authority comes into play only when the object of the verb is not an action or state of affairs but a person: one cannot 'author' a person, but one can exercise an *ad hoc* authority over a person in such a way that he or she becomes instrumental in bringing about an action or state of affairs. We might also draw attention to the association both in Diodorus and Basil, *Epistle* 51.1 of the ἀθέντης and τόλμα word groups. If it were the case that τόλμα is a particularly appropri-

<sup>19</sup>Knight, *op. cit.* 145.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 144-145; Wilshire, 'The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12', 134 n.5. The distinction is evident also in the Christian papyrus Number 103 (AD 6/7), *BGU* Vol. I, 122: 'if you will assume authority over the matter (ἀθηντήσης τὸ πρᾶγμα). . .', referring to the active taking of initiative in the particular instance.

ate object for ἀθεντέω, then this would give added support to the claim that the verb means something like 'to perpetrate', 'to initiate', 'to take authoritative action'. This agrees with the basic sense that Chantraine attributes to ἀθέντης, that of 'auteur responsable'.<sup>22</sup>

I would suggest, therefore, that two closely related meanings mark out the usage of the verb ἀθεντέω at the time of Paul: the first is the more specific one of instigating or perpetrating a crime, the second relates to the active wielding of influence (with respect to a person) or the initiation of an action, possibly shading into the passive idea of having authority, though on the whole this appears to be a later development.<sup>23</sup> The question now needs to be asked, what relevance does this have to the use of the word in 1 Timothy 2:12? It is at this point that we must return to the literary structure of the passage.

### III. The Trouble with Eve

It is a telling observation that when Wilshire sets out the exceptions to the normal procedure for determining the meaning of a word in the New Testament, he makes no allowance for figurative deviation. The debate over the meaning of ἀθεντέω has been carried out almost exclusively on lexicological grounds, with virtually no consideration given to the contextual rhetorical function of the word. (There is a form of positivism at work here: few studies appear to have allowed for a *literary* dimension to the text.) The normal practice, according to Wilshire, is to assume that Paul's meaning lies somewhere within the range of meanings derived from the lexicological survey. The two exceptions to this procedure are: (i) cases in which a word acquires a sense unique to the NT; and (ii) the possibility that a word carries an idiomatic or 'regional' sense not attested elsewhere. On the basis of current evidence neither of these exceptions applies in the present case. But what about

<sup>22</sup>P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grèque* (Paris, 1968). Cf. Kroeger, *op. cit.*, 229-230.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. R.C. & C.C. Kroeger, *op. cit.*, 90. Quite possibly we should think of the idea of crime or murder not as being intrinsic to the proper denotation of the word but as a prominent area of association, perhaps even as belonging to an idiomatic or euphemistic usage, in which case there is barely any difference between these two meanings.

the possibility that Paul is deliberately misusing the word—as one does, say, in metaphor—for rhetorical purposes? Or, to approach the question from the opposite direction, might there not be something in the literary structure of the passage that would account for the unusualness of the usage?

If it is the case that 12 is a parenthetical insertion into a coherent unit of discourse dealing primarily with women learning, then the immediate rhetorical context can be supposed to be established in Paul's appeal to the Genesis story. Two particular emphases need to be pointed out. First, his main argument is not that Eve transgressed but that she was *deceived*, as it is this which distinguishes her from Adam. Secondly, Paul is interested not in the subjective aspect of the deception (he is not imputing gullibility to women)<sup>24</sup> but in the objective activity of the serpent in deceiving Eve. This is evident from the statement that 'Adam was not deceived'—not because he was able to see through the deception but because the serpent did not attempt to deceive him. The point is that transgression came about *through deception*, through the activity of the serpent in persuading Eve to believe something that was not true. So Paul appeals to the creation story for a specific reason: he fears that through the fallacious arguments of heretical teachers women, because of their ignorance (remember that Eve knew of the commandment not to eat of the tree of knowledge only second hand), will again be deceived and fall into transgression and in turn lead the men astray.<sup>25</sup>

This emphasis on the active role of Satan already places a considerable restriction on how we understand Paul's use of the Genesis story, because it shifts attention away from that which is intrinsic to created human nature; but the point can be taken further. The chiasmic structure of verses 11, 13-14, as we have seen, has produced a rather exact and marked parallel between 'Αδάμ. . . πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη and 'Αδάμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη. It is difficult at first sight to see what the *logical* connection between the two statements might be. But is Paul's argument simply

<sup>24</sup>As assumed, e.g., by J.N.D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London, A. & C. Black 1963) 68.

<sup>25</sup>There is a close parallel with 2 Cor. 11:3-4, where the deception of Eve by the serpent is presented as an analogy for the church's deception by someone who 'preaches another Jesus than the one we preached'. Cf. Padgett, *op. cit.*, 26.

that according to the temporal order of creation the woman is more likely to be deceived? If we allow that 12 is parenthetical and that 13-14 give primarily the grounds for a woman learning obediently, then any appeal to an ontological relationship ordained at creation seems misplaced. In the light of this there is much to be said for Padgett's argument that Paul makes use of the Genesis story typologically.<sup>26</sup> The close connection between ἐπλάσθη and οὐκ ἠπατήθη can now be seen to have been determined not so much by the Old Testament narrative as by the contemporary situation, in which the men are educationally or spiritually more mature and therefore less susceptible to deception: 'Ἀδὰμ. . . πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη is a figure for this maturity.<sup>27</sup> The Old Testament narrative has been subtly reshaped precisely to encompass this figurative function. We might almost go as far as to suggest that 13-14 are not strictly statements about a state of affairs established at creation that has prevailed to the time of writing; rather they are statements about the situation in Ephesus in language *borrowed* from the Genesis story.

This interpretation has further advantages. It accounts both for the trouble taken over the chiasmic structure and for the confusion or intermingling of the two 'narratives': the borrowing is not seamless, the contemporary narrative shows through in places (the reversion to 'the woman', for example, in 14). It also provides the basis for what appears to be the most satisfactory interpretation of 15: ἡ τεκνογονία is at one level an allusion to, and has been determined by, the judgment of Genesis 3:17 LXX (ἐν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα), but as a figure for the contemporary situation it stands as a synecdoche for a whole set of domestic activities, which are alluded to as 'good works' in 10 and set

<sup>26</sup>Padgett, *op. cit.*, 26-27. 'Typology' is a difficult category to deal with in Paul's letters (see A.C. Perriman, 'Typology in Paul', *Theology* 90 (1987) 200-6) and its use here misleading if taken to suggest a prefigurative relationship. To speak, as Padgett does, of a 'cautionary typology' is more accurate, but in some respects it may be better to describe the application of the Genesis story as 'figurative'.

<sup>27</sup>It is, of course, no objection that πλάσσω is nowhere used in this figurative sense in the LXX or NT. However, there are instances in classical usage where the verb is used in this way, perhaps most strikingly in Plato, *Rep.* 377c, where both a physical and an intellectual shaping is denoted: πλάττειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν τοῖς μύθοις πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ σώματα ταῖς χερσίν.

out in greater detail in 5:9-10 (child-rearing, hospitality to strangers, washing the feet of the saints, helping the afflicted); 'saved' must be understood in the sense of enduring to the end, persevering in the faith, not straying after Satan (5:15). Finally—and here we return to our main theme—the typological or figurative interpretation of the relationship between Paul's reconstruction of the Genesis story and the circumstances in Ephesus best accounts for the choice of ἀθηνεῖν in 12.

That Eve took the initiative or 'acted authoritatively' in causing Adam also to sin is only implicit in 13-14, since the chiasmus is concerned primarily with the deception of Eve through the specious insinuations of an intruder. Nevertheless, it is plausible to argue that this thought both prompted the insertion of 12 and shaped its language to some extent. So when Paul wrote, οὐδὲ ἀθηνεῖν ἀνδρός, he was thinking specifically of what Eve did to Adam; and Eve did not *have* authority, but *in her action became* responsible for—became the cause of—Adam's transgression. In the light of these associations the connotation of 'perpetrating a crime' is fully appropriate. In the overlapping of the two contexts—that of the scriptural 'type' and that of the current circumstances at Ephesus—ἀθηνεῖν refers both to what Eve once did and to what women now should not do.

Such an interpretation also accounts for two other peculiarities. The first is the order of 12—the precedence given to διδάσκειν over ἀθηνεῖν—since it is through teaching that the woman is likely to lead men astray.<sup>28</sup> Given that οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω has a contingent character and that οὐδὲ ἀθηνεῖν ἀνδρός appears to have a quite specific, local reference, it does not seem necessary to regard the prohibition against teaching as an absolute and universal ruling.<sup>29</sup> The verse is certainly not

<sup>28</sup>This argument would not suffer greatly if διδάσκειν were taken to be absolute, as strictly it should be, and οὐδὲ ἀθηνεῖν ἀνδρός itself something of a parenthesis: ἀθηνεῖν would still presuppose διδάσκειν.

<sup>29</sup>Inasmuch as the ruling is to be explained by reference to the Genesis narrative, I would suggest that it is implicitly dependent upon what was perceived by Paul and others to be a woman's fundamental inability—as a result of circumstances of cultural and educational inferiority under which she lived, through no fault of her own—to handle the truth reliably. When such circumstances no longer prevail, then there must be scope for revision.

meant to bar women from positions of *ordained* authority over men: this was not within the purview of the local situation at Ephesus. The second peculiarity is the fact that 'man' is spoken of in the singular (one would expect the sort of authority at issue to be one over 'men'), which is, like ἀθεντεῖν, a product of the typological or figurative function of Eve's influence over Adam.

Neither the passage as a whole nor the curious word ἀθεντεῖν can be properly understood without taking into account the literary structure, the style and development of argumentation, the associative interplay of ideas. If this is done, then both the 'criminal' aspect of the verb and the idea of authoritative or instigative action can be intelligibly brought into the picture. The verb anticipates—presupposing the general typological convergence of language—the malign influence that Eve, having been deceived, had over Adam. But just as this active influence lies beneath the surface in 13-14, so also 12 constitutes not the immediate but a parenthetical concern in a passage intended primarily to stress the need for women to learn with all obedience. Such an assessment suggests that the prohibition οὐδὲ ἀθεντεῖν ἀνδρός is directed quite specifically to the practical issue of curbing the spread of false teaching.