

THE MEANING OF ἀϋθεντέω IN 1 TIMOTHY 2.12\*

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*Introduction*

Catherine Kroeger's article in 1979 titled 'Ancient Heresies and a Strange Verb' opened a dialogue on the verb ἀϋθεντέω that since has occupied center stage in the debate concerning women and leadership in the church.<sup>1</sup> The dialogue has undergone considerable development and transition since that time.<sup>2</sup> The discussion concerning the basic

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1. This paper is dedicated to Catherine C. Kroeger, who passed away 14 February 2011. She has joined the cloud of faithful witnesses that surround us (Heb. 12.1), and therefore perhaps she will continue to show an interest from the stands in how we run this race. Her initial work was 'Ancient Heresies and a Strange Greek Verb', *Reformed Journal* 29 (1979), pp. 12-15.

2. A chronological overview of published studies intended to contribute to the understanding of ἀϋθεντέω subsequent to Kroeger's article includes: Armin J. Panning, 'Authentein—A Word Study', *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 78 (1981), pp. 185-91; Carroll D. Osburn, 'ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ (1 Timothy 2:12)', *Reformation Quarterly* 25 (1982), pp. 1-12; George W. Knight, 'ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2.12', *NTS* 30 (1984), pp. 143-57; Catherine Clark Kroeger, '1 Timothy 2.12: A Classicist's View', in Alvera Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), pp. 225-44; Leland Edward Wilshire, 'The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12', *NTS* 34 (1988), pp. 120-34; Paul W. Barnett, 'Wives and Women's Ministry (1 Timothy 2:11-15)', *EvQ* 61 (1989), pp. 225-38; Kevin Giles, 'Response', in A. Nichols (ed.), *The Bible and Women's Ministry* (Canberra: Acorn, 1990), pp. 65-87; Timothy J. Harris, 'Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P.W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2', *EvQ*

semantic content or ‘meaning’ of the verb and how it should be translated or glossed has revolved around certain key questions including:

- (1) What is the relationship of the verb to the exercise of authority?
- (2) Is the verb pejorative, neutral or positive?
- (3) What is the relationship of the verb to its cognates?

62 (1990), pp. 335-52; Gloria N. Redekop, ‘Let the Women Learn: 1 Timothy 2.8-15 Reconsidered’, *SR* 19 (1990), pp. 235-45; D.P. Kuske, ‘An Exegetical Brief on 1 Timothy 2.12 (οὐδὲ ἀθεντεῖν ἀνδρός)’, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 88 (1991), pp. 64-67; Leland Edward Wilshire, ‘1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris’, *EvQ* 65 (1993), pp. 43-55; Ronald W. Pierce, ‘Evangelicals and Gender Roles in the 1990s: 1 Tim 2.8-15 a Test Case’, *JETS* 36 (1993), pp. 343-55; Andrew C. Perriman, ‘What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn’t Do: The Meaning of ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ’, *TynBul* 44 (1993), pp. 129-42; Paul W. Barnett, ‘Authentein Once More: A Response to L.E. Wilshire’, *EvQ* 66 (1994), pp. 159-62; Steve Motyer, ‘Expounding 1 Timothy 2.8-15’, *Vox Evangelica* 24 (1994), pp. 91-102; H. Scott Baldwin, ‘A Difficult Word: ἀθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12’, in Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin (eds.), *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1st edn, 1995), pp. 65-80, and Baldwin, ‘Appendix 2’, in the same volume, pp. 269-305; Catherine Kroeger and Richard Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2.11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); Linda L. Belleville, ‘Women in Ministry: The Egalitarian Perspective’, in James Beck (ed.), *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 19-103; Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000); Al Wolters, ‘A Semantic Study of ἀθέντης and its Derivatives’, *JGRChJ* 1 (2000), pp. 145-75; Kevin Giles, ‘Women in the Church: A Rejoinder to Andreas Köstenberger’, *EvQ* 73 (2001), pp. 225-43; David K. Huttar, ‘ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΙΝ in the Aeschylus Scholium’, *JETS* 44 (2001), pp. 615-25; Linda L. Belleville, ‘Teaching and Usurping Authority’, in R. Pierce and R. Groothuis (eds.), *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), pp. 205-23; Robert W. Wall, ‘1 Timothy 2.9-15 Reconsidered (Again)’, *BBR* 14 (2004), pp. 81-103; H. Scott Baldwin, ‘An Important Word: ἀθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12’, in Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner (eds.), *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2nd edn, 2005), pp. 39-51; Philip B. Payne, ‘1 Tim 2.12 and the Use of οὐδέ to Combine Two Elements to Express a Single Idea’, *NTS* 54 (2008), pp. 235-53; Philip B. Payne, ‘1 Timothy 2:12: Part III: Does ἀθεντέω Mean “Assume Authority”?’ in Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), pp. 361-97. Commentaries are excluded from this list, and it is acknowledged that papers delivered at various conferences have also played a key role in the discussion.

Most of the arguments are directed toward reducing the meaning of the Greek to a single English word or phrase meant to be used in translation as a gloss that could be used in translating 1 Tim. 2.12.<sup>3</sup> There are two identifiable groups that take part in the dialogue: one that translates *αὐθεντέω* with a positive or neutral sense of ‘exercise authority’ or ‘master’, and one that translates it with a negative or pejorative sense including ‘usurp’, ‘domineer’, ‘control’ or ‘initiate violence’.

The discussion will benefit greatly from the recognition of the different kinds of meanings of a word, which concerns the linguistic field of semantics. The task is determining what a word signals when it is used in various contexts.<sup>4</sup> A word has a single basic semantic concept that accounts for extended, peripheral or marginal meanings.<sup>5</sup> A word’s basic semantic concept is its primary or literary meaning, which is usually defined in neutral and abstract terms that should be more complex than a single word. The neutral language of the definition tends not to convey the emotional associations of a word, which are often described as the positive or negative (pejorative) meaning (sometimes referred to as connotation). This meaning is based on the fact that a word can carry a strong value judgment, but also that a word may be positive in some contexts and negative in others. The meaning of a word in a given text also includes the action that is being referred to in the context or situation in which the action takes place (reference). This study will attempt to look at the meaning of *αὐθεντέω* in

3. ‘Gloss’ is the word or phrase selected to translate *αὐθεντέω* in a specific text. This indicates that there is a tendency on the part of both groups to confuse the semantic concept of the ‘meaning’ of the verb with the lexical choice in English that is used to translate the word in 1 Tim. 2.12.

4. As Nida and Louw state, this is ‘the crucial fact of semantics, namely that meanings are defined by contexts and not by mere formal resemblances’ (Eugene A. Nida and Johannes P. Louw, *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], p. 19). For patterns of words, see for example James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 53.

5. This is ‘monosemy’ as opposed to the theory that words have many meanings (polysemy). Nida and Louw, who appear to support multiple meanings in their lexicon (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* [2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988]), distinguish between a central and an extended, peripheral or marginal meaning (Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, pp. 11-12).

terms of its definition, emotional associations and the actions referred to in context by tracing patterns in the way the word is used.

I am most interested in evaluating and building on the approach and work of Leland Wilshire's two articles with the verb and cognates in the TLG data base in 1988 and 1993, and Scott Baldwin's subsequent formal attempt to discover the meaning of the word in his article and appendix in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* in 1995 and his article in the second edition in 2005.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this paper is to present an explicit methodology and procedures in the study of this word based on current suggestions and procedures in lexicography and informed by linguistic theory.

#### *A Review of Wilshire and Baldwin*

In 2003, John Lee published a key work titled *A History of New Testament Lexicography*. After surveying the lexicons from 8 BCE to the Bauer series, Lee declares that, with the arrival of texts in electronic form, 'All previous collections have been rendered obsolete'.<sup>7</sup> There have been gaps in the previous lexicons, but now a three minute search may yield what used to take three months—'Gaps, if any in the existing collection are instantly revealed; so is the full and sometimes astonishing scope of the attestation of a given word... For advanced study of any Greek word it is now not only possible, but necessary to conduct a search and ensure that no useful evidence has been overlooked.'<sup>8</sup>

Wilshire was the first to publish results of an electronic search of ἀθεντέω and its cognates utilizing the data base of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*—which has been in the process of collecting and tagging Greek literature and papyri that span from Homer through the Byzantine period. Leland found 329 instances of the word and its cognates. Most studies since his publication have stood on his shoulders. Currently, because the data base has grown, there are 317

6. Baldwin's article in the first edition of *Women in the Church* includes an appendix ('Appendix 2') of 82 occurrences of the word with immediate co-texts in Greek and in translation, which is omitted from the second edition, but the article in the second edition is updated.

7. John A.L. Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography* (Studies in Biblical Greek, 8; New York: Peter Lang, 2003), p. 124.

8. Lee, *Lexicography*, p. 124.

hits on the *TLG* with the verb alone, which is still a manageable size for thorough analysis.

Scott Baldwin selected 82 occurrences of *ἀυθεντέω* as ‘sufficient to give an adequate understanding of the meaning of the verb’.<sup>9</sup> The appendix in the first edition represents a remarkable effort because he provides the Greek as well as translations of the occurrence of the word together with some of the immediate surrounding co-text. Sometimes the translations are the work of others, but often he offers his own translations of passages that had not been translated before. Furthermore, he italicizes the words or phrases that translate *ἀυθεντέω*, which allows the average reader to evaluate how he renders the verb. In doing this, he reveals the data on which he bases his conclusions, offering more primary evidence than any other study. With some exceptions, many studies simply state what the word means in a given occurrence, and we must trust the renderings on which they base their argument and conclusions, or we must access the Greek and work through the surrounding context to evaluate the basis of their argument.

However, both of these studies fall short of the rigorous requirements of an advanced study informed by lexicography and linguistic theory, due to a combination of flaws in their methodology or, even more to the point, due to both unstated and underdeveloped methodologies that are uninformed by the advancement of methods and procedures of recent lexicography and linguistics. In his first article, Wilshire presented his renderings of occurrences of the verb and cognates together in primarily chronological order according to genre, attempting to demonstrate that ‘the word’ had a significantly wide range of meaning, falsifying the assertions of scholars such as George Knight that the verb means ‘to have authority’. However, his examination and analysis of the data failed to demonstrate the articulation and application of convincing rigor, methodology or procedure—he simply labeled and categorized the occurrences and his organization of his findings was unhelpful. Paul Barnett even suggests that his research demonstrates that he reached the same conclusion as Knight, and that he actually showed that the verb means ‘have authority over’.<sup>10</sup> In a second article, Wilshire briefly reviewed the linguistic background of

9. Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, p. 45. However, there is some confusion in the first edition, where he claims that he summarizes every known occurrence of the word, which does not appear to be the case (Baldwin, ‘Difficult Word’, p. 69).

10. Barnett, ‘Wives and Women’s Ministry’, p. 232.

ἀθεντέω and its cognates and clarified that his conclusion was that the meaning ‘may not be “exercising authority” or even “holding sway or using power, or being dominant”’. The issue may be (compressing a complex meaning into two words) “instigating violence”.<sup>11</sup> Wilshire’s wide reading in the database led him to certain convictions, but his analysis and presentation of the evidence was not effective in producing a similar conviction in others.

On the other hand, Baldwin attempts to articulate a methodology, but his only stated methodology is that he would separate the study of the cognates from the verb and focus on the verb. However, this specifies the focus of his work rather than articulating his methodology.<sup>12</sup> In practice, he excludes the evidence of the meanings of the cognates that was given as evidence of the meaning of the word by Wilshire. However, it is not the practice of lexicographers to exclude the cognates from their study, but rather to recognize and study the relationships between the words, even though there is not always a complete semantic overlap.<sup>13</sup> More importantly for this study, there is no clear articulation of Baldwin’s theory or procedure as to how or why he selected the data (the 82 occurrences of the verb), or how he would evaluate the data.<sup>14</sup>

11. Wilshire, ‘1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited’, p. 48.

12. He states, ‘First, there are numerous examples in Greek where the verbal form does not correspond to all the meanings of the noun. We cannot uncritically assume ἀθεντέω is exactly equivalent to “be an ἀθέντης” in every one of its senses... Second, this methodology (separating verb and noun) is the same methodology employed by all recent lexicographers. Third, we have precedent to separate verb and noun forms—particularly in the case of ἀθεντέω—from the ancient lexicographer Hesychius’ (Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, p. 45).

13. In *Lexical Semantics* Nida and Louw’s procedure is to first treat the word and then the cognates. Nida and Louw write that they note ‘what significant insights can be gained from seeing the way in which derived terms shed light on the meanings’ of a word ‘and from noting the differences between the limited range of meanings of a word and its derivatives’ (Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, p. 62). To repeat, meanings are defined by contexts and not by mere formal resemblances (p. 19). Furthermore, in any dictionary organized in terms of semantic domains ‘it is only logical that the derivative meanings should be treated following the underlying forms’ (Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, p. 22).

14. Some of his assumptions about theory and procedure may be gleaned from his footnotes, however.

It can be gleaned from Baldwin's chapter that he brings forward the range of glosses and meanings from eight lexicons (Sophocles, Preisige, Lampe, Moulton and Milligan, LSJ, Mayser, BDAG, Louw and Nida and *Diccionario Griego–Español*).<sup>15</sup> He combines them and organizes them hierarchically. In translating each passage, he then restricts himself when possible to using the words and phrases from those lexicons in his translations of the word in the 82 passages.<sup>16</sup> He starts with the 'purely neutral sense' of the most widely understood meaning (having authority/authority) and uses it in the translation if it makes sense.<sup>17</sup> He organizes the data and concludes that the one

15. Baldwin's use of the lexicons as authoritative raises the question: Do the lexicons provide authoritative boundaries for the meaning and glosses of *αὐθεντέω* in the various contexts? Lee, Nida and Louw are agreed that the answer is 'no', not only for *αὐθεντέω*, but in general. Lee asserts, 'The body of attestations accumulated in the lexicons has reached its greatest extent yet. But because of the ways it has been gathered there is an inherent unreliability' (Lee, *Lexicography*, p. 124). Nida and Louw write: 'We must not assume that the English glosses in a Greek–English lexicon can provide accurate information about the designative and associative meanings of a Greek term' (Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, p. 59).

16. Baldwin treats the glosses and meanings from the lexicons as a closed word bank and attempts to control through precedence which meaning can be selected from that bank in translation in a given passage—in both cases he argues against postulating 'a new meaning'. Sometimes it is difficult to determine which practice he is criticizing. He insists that 'there is not sufficient warrant to postulate "a new meaning" such as "tyrannize" or "coerce"' in his description of a category of occurrences under the general category of 'to control, to dominate' (Baldwin, 'Important Word', p. 46). However, Baldwin lists 'compel', 'domineer', and 'play the tyrant' as meanings for *αὐθεντέω* within that category, which are very close synonyms to the words that he claims are new meanings (p. 45). Then, he himself uses 'tyrannize' in his description of the use of the verb in John Chrysostom, *Hom. Col. 27-31* (p. 47). The question should be, when we look at the range of how a word is used, what English word(s) do we commonly use for this action in a given context? As Lee, Louw and Nida indicate, the examination of the range of meaning of the verb is anything but a closed issue. But in addition, we need to distinguish between what is a 'new meaning' and what is a suitable gloss in English in a given context.

17. Baldwin's reference to a 'purely neutral sense' (Baldwin, 'Important Word', p. 200 n. 31) illustrates his use of an abstract neutral literal definition as his first choice in translation even when wooden or confusing. Baldwin's statement clarifies the differences in approach: 'The meaning "to exercise authority over; to control" is not negative, but the whole phrase "a woman to exercise authority over a man" is seen as something undesirable by Paul' (p. 202 n. 47). His methodology treats the

unifying concept is ‘authority’.<sup>18</sup> While both his summary and extensive data contain significant examples in which Baldwin uses ‘authority’ in his wording of the definitions or his translations, some of his definitions for the verb and many of the actions referred to by the verb lie outside of the legitimate exercise of authority. These actions include the phrases ‘to act independently’, ‘to assume authority over’ (which Baldwin often translates as ‘to act on one’s own authority’ when the actor has no authorization or right) and most significantly, ‘to flout the authority of’. In some cases, the actor has the authority (status, position, office, legal right or authorization) that is commensurate with the action but in other occurrences the actor does not have authority to do the action. Therefore, one may conclude from a critical reading of Baldwin’s data that the legal or positional authority of the actor and other participants is a *variable*, and therefore ‘to exercise authority’, in the sense of ‘legitimately hold office or exercise power’, cannot be the basic semantic concept that accounts for all of the occurrences of the verb.<sup>19</sup> While ‘authority’ has a larger range of meaning in English, for the purposes of this study, ‘authority’ will consistently be used to refer to having the appropriate status, position, office, legal right or authorization to do the action. This will result in more precision and explanatory power and less potential confusion, particularly since we are attempting to determine positive and/or negative evaluation in the context, which will predictably be linked to whether someone has the right to do something or not.

Baldwin’s study raises some important issues of theory and procedure. In this study, I focus on patterns that emerge from an analysis of 60 out of the 82 verbs that Baldwin selected, which occur before the seventh century, though I will include some of the chronologically later verbs as examples in the discussion. He did much commendable ground work in collecting and translating these examples and they will

word as having an independent abstract meaning rather than having a situated meaning in the context. Therefore, he believes that the meaning of the word can be ‘purely neutral’ in pejorative contexts such as prohibitions or lawsuits.

18. Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, p. 46.

19. However, Baldwin claims: ‘The data available...provide clear indication that the widely understood meanings of ἀυθεντέω were based on the idea of the possession or exercise of authority’ (Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, p. 49). However, the actor/subject’s ‘exercise of authority’ cannot be the basic semantic concept that is non-cancellable, that is, applicable to every occurrence.



provide a helpful contrast in how different methods and procedures based on sound theories of how language works can arrive at different outcomes from the same data.<sup>20</sup> However, while I support his treatment of the verbs as a group as a starting point, I do not support an elimination of cognates from a final analysis. Modern lexicographers do not support a methodology that excludes the cognates in determining the meaning of a word.<sup>21</sup>

The study will attempt to locate a single basic (but complex) semantic concept that could account for the diachronic occurrences of the verb and extended, peripheral or marginal meanings. This will be done by an attempt to map patterns of how the word was used.<sup>22</sup> However, it must be noted that in translation theory and practice, suitable glosses are distinct from the basic semantic concept. Glosses should not be treated as a closed system, and should not be confined to a single word or phrase.<sup>23</sup> Our starting point is a suggested range of meaning that

20. Contra Baldwin's expectation: 'It is difficult to see how any impartial reader of the data of the appendix 2 of the first edition would conclude, after reading the eighty-two extant usages from the ancient world found there, that the "purely neutral sense" is not the basic and normal sense of the word *αὐθεντέω*' (Baldwin, 'Important Word', p. 200 n. 31). The issue is that Baldwin's readings and conclusion are based on certain theories about the meaning of words that lead to his conclusions that are different from the assumptions in this paper. When these are read with a different set of theoretical and methodological presuppositions, it is difficult to see how any impartial reader of the data could accept Baldwin's conclusions. His data seem to clearly contradict his conclusions.

21. As Wolters, 'Semantic Study,' argues, the verb is most likely derived from the noun, and his attempt to analyze *αὐθέντης* and its derivatives moves toward an important corrective, though it appears that there are now far more occurrences of the word family available in the data base, and this may necessitate a revision of his conclusions.

22. In fact, as argued below, the range of metaphorical or abstract meanings could all have been derived directly from the noun, since the verb continued to have similar semantic associations of independent initiative and force that could be lethal in some contexts. Some may note that chronology is not a category. In practice, the occurrences were analyzed in chronological order in my first chart, but there appeared to be few clear detectable patterns or semantic developments in the use of the word at this stage of the analysis.

23. If we wish to translate a given passage into idiomatic English, there could be a variety of suitable glosses that an English speaker would use in given contexts to translate *αὐθεντέω* or any other Greek word that reflects both the basic semantic

includes meanings such as power, authority, originating an action or deed, compulsion, independent action, seizure of independent power and giving orders (controlling or dominating).<sup>24</sup> Can we test this suggested range and can we find patterns in the occurrences that shed light on how the word was used that assist us in finding a single basic semantic concept that accounts for this range of meanings?

### *Methodology*

We will primarily look at one stage in determining the meaning of αὐθεντέω. It is described by Nida and Louw:

Once a specific, fairly large, and illustrative set of occurrences of a term in any language has been put onto separate slips of paper and the slips sorted into piles of seemingly related sets of meanings, one must then ask the question, ‘What do the meanings of the slips in any one pile have in common, and what distinguishes them from meaning in the other piles?’... After setting up a tentative system of classification of different meanings, one must test the system by seeing how readily and how well the rest of the occurrences of the term fit the classification.<sup>25</sup>

My study in systemic functional linguistics and discourse analysis has given me a number of tools that have helped me in sorting αὐθεντέω into piles or categories, based on the patterns and semantic meanings that I detect in an overview of the data. The tools I am using are transitivity, field, tenor, mode, register, alternate models of experience, appraisal and collocation. I will not go thoroughly into the technical theory behind the terms, but I will break each concept down into simple questions or terms that reflect the theories, but can be understood and utilized by those without a background in linguistics.

concept and English in use in a given context. The range of glosses might be comparable to what we would find in a thesaurus entry.

24. See E.A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1900), p. 276; BDAG, p. 150. BDAG’s definition is ‘to assume a stance of independent authority’, as well as ‘give orders to, dictate to’. This first definition combines the concepts of initiative and power: to take upon oneself power (authority) that is not subject to another authority (independent). See Baldwin’s table of definitions of modern lexicographers, and his outline of meanings (Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, pp. 41, 45).

25. Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, p. 39.

*Transitivity*

The heart of the methodology that everything else builds on comes from the theory of transitivity.<sup>26</sup> It looks at an occurrence and asks the question ‘Who is doing what to whom?’ The answer suggests some of the related sets of meanings with which we can study the verb. In the occurrence of a finite active transitive verb, the subject of the verb is the actor, and the recipient of the action is the goal.

The first step is to chart the relevant information from the phrase, sentence and particularly the context of each occurrence to determine the identity of the actor. The actor could be the nominative subject of the verb, a noun in an oblique case or governed by a preposition in a passive construction, the accusative ‘subject’ of an infinitive, or the one who does the action in a participle. How is the actor described in the context? Among other things, this study is interested in whether the basic semantic content of the verb is ‘to exercise authority’. For the purposes of this study, ‘authority’ will be defined as the legitimate exercise of power, which necessitates an analysis of the status of the actor: is the actor in a position of authority, and what is the extent of the authority?

The ‘what’ is the action that is the referent of *αὐθεντέω* in a given context: What is happening? What is the actor doing in the near context that may further identify or define the action in the occurrence of the verb? This leads to the next step of identifying the action in determining whether the basic semantic concept is ‘to exercise authority’: Is the action within the jurisdiction of the actor’s authority?

‘Whom’ or ‘what’ is the goal of the action, which is often the ‘direct object’ in the accusative; however, *αὐθεντέω* usually takes a genitive complement, and often *αὐθεντέω* is intransitive so that the goal must be supplied from the context if there is a goal. Also, in this study the goal will be understood to include the goal of the referent action, so that even when the verb is intransitive, if it is used to describe or evaluate a (referent) action in the context that is directed toward a goal, that goal will be noted.<sup>27</sup> What is the identity of the goal? The status of the goal is as important as the status of the actor given the question of authority.

26. See a description of transitivity in M.A.K. Halliday and C.M.I.M. Matthiessen, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Hodder Arnold, 3rd edn, 2004), pp. 168-305.

27. Goals that are not formal but are supplied by the context will be placed in brackets.

An additional aspect of the goal's identity that became a category as the analysis progressed was whether the participants (actor and goal) were personal/animate or impersonal/inanimate, because the data suggested that there was a significant semantic pattern. Finally, what is the effect or impact of the action on the goal?<sup>28</sup> The impact of the action may be in the sentence or, probably more often, in the context.

### *Field, Tenor, Mode and Register*

Nida and Louw write: 'In this process of sorting and classifying meanings, we are essentially classifying the contexts in which such lexical elements occur. This involves recognizing bundles of contexts and determining what a particular lexeme contributes to the meanings of such contexts.'<sup>29</sup> Field, tenor, mode and register are concepts that help us classify the general context in which the act of communication took place.<sup>30</sup> Field asks: 'What is going on?' Tenor asks: 'Who is taking part?' And Mode asks: 'What is the role that language is assigned?'

Register summarizes the data that is categorized in field, tenor and mode to indicate the type of situation in which language is used. Linguists recognize that specific language patterns and meanings are associated with stereotypical situations or contexts that are called registers.<sup>31</sup> The verb ἀθεντέω occurs in legal registers such as lawsuits, wills and the enactment of law, as well as in highly specialized registers such as astrology, philosophy and political action. It is inadvisable to uncritically apply or transfer the meaning of ἀθεντέω from one register to another register such as from the register of

28. It is important to repeat that quite often ἀθεντέω is intransitive. Therefore, we can look at semantic associations of the intransitive use of the verb, but also see if we can supply who or what is the target or affected by the referent action from the context.

29. Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, p. 43.

30. For a description of these categories, see M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan, *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective* (Geelong, Australia: Deakon University, 1985), p. 40.

31. For a definition of register, see S.E. Porter, 'Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory', in M.D. Carroll R. (ed.), *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 299; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 190-208; S.E. Porter, 'Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Application with Reference to Mark's Gospel', in Carroll (ed.), *Rethinking Contexts*, pp. 209-29.

astrology to the register of church leadership.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, it is important to study the occurrences of ἀθεντέω within the occurrences of the register of Christian leadership in the church, since that has been a particular area of interest in the history of the interpretation of 1 Tim. 2.12. Therefore, register should play a significant role in sorting occurrences into piles.

### *The Relationship between the Actor and Goal*

As noted in the discussion of actor and goal, given the apparent semantic range and discussion of ἀθεντέω, the status of the participants in the action as they relate to each other and the culture is particularly important to determine when analyzing the dynamics of power involved. While the status of each participant provides two important categories in terms of the variable of authority, the specific power relationship between the participants in a given text should have its own category as well.

32. Contra Wolters and Baldwin. Wolters has called for attention to be given to the significance of the astrological text *Methodus mystica* because he makes a case that it is most likely the closest synchronic occurrence. Baldwin suggests that the meaning from a seventh-century Byzantine government document of law enactment from a legal register in Chronicon Paschale must indicate that ἀθεντέω in the middle voice means ‘to be in force, to have legal authority over’ in a Christian prophecy about the brutal abuse of slaves by masters in a household register in the fourth century (Pseudo-Hippolytus, *De consummatione mundi* 7.5; see Baldwin, ‘Appendix 2’, pp. 278-79, 299-300). There is a problem in cross registers, a problem of anachronism and a problem in overextending a specialized meaning of the grammar. The default assumption should be that the middle voice contributes a basic semantic component in its occurrences—the use of the middle voice is not rare in Koine. Furthermore, the law enactments are present infinitive complements of ἐκελεύσθη. The infinitive is middle/passive, but the construction would indicate that ἀθεντεῖσθαι is probably passively rendered: a law is ‘ordered to be put in force’ (ἐκελεύσθη ἀθεντεῖσθαι), contra Sophocles, *Lexicon*, p. 276. This is not to say that the meanings in registers such as astrology, law enactment, the household and church leadership are not related or associated with the same basic meaning, but that we have no confidence that they would belong to the same semantic domain (indeed the opposite) and we should certainly predict that they could be glossed differently in English.

*Alternate Models of Experience*

It is very common to have alternate models of experience that are descriptions of the same experience in the context.<sup>33</sup> Are there parallel phrases or clauses in the near context that represent the same experience? This is the tool that further identifies the referent of the action in a given text, and that is particularly relevant in recognizing the patterns of word usage in a way that abstract definitions are not. This proved to be very important in the analysis of ἀφεντέω, because the word often occurs with many other parallel descriptions of what the actor is doing; in some cases the experience described by ἀφεντέω is the topic. One of the interesting debates concerning ἀφεντέω is whether it ‘means’ (i.e. should be glossed as) ‘murder’. This study takes the position that it is relevant to the meaning of a verb if the action or experience that the verb refers to is a murder, not only whether the word should be glossed in translation as ‘murder’.<sup>34</sup> Clearly, the primary meaning of ἀφεντέω will not be ‘murder’, because it does not sufficiently account for all occurrences. However, if there is a pattern of references to or associations with murder or killing, that would be significant in terms of both the meaning of the verb and its relationship to its cognates.

*Appraisal*

One of the more important aspects of the discussion is whether the word is negative, neutral or positive, which are included in the emotional associations of the word. The study of a word’s emotional

33. For a description of alternate models of experience, see Halliday and Matthiessen, *Functional Grammar*, p. 173.

34. Contra Huttar’s approach to the text in ‘ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΙΝ’. Among other issues, this work is a very good example of where a neutral abstract definition of ἀφεντέω is carefully isolated and differentiated from the referent action and emotional associations in the text and commentary (*scholia*). Huttar suggests that the text is amended so that the word in the critical edition means ‘murder’. He argues that the original occurrence of ἀφεντέω, which describes the action of the man standing with a sword who had just violently murdered his mother, could possibly mean ‘initiate, instigate’ rather than ‘murder’. However, the perpetration of a murder (note the more appropriate pejorative word selection) is the referent action no matter what the amendment, which Huttar acknowledges. In this study, we ask ‘Who is doing what to whom?’. This contributes to answering our greater question, which is: What is the non-cancellable meaning of the word that would account for that meaning in that specific context?

associations and evaluation needs careful definition and criteria so that at least it is understood what counts for evidence in a given study. The Appraisal framework is a relatively recent development in the linguistics on which this study draws.<sup>35</sup>

The main question of interest is: What does the author feel about the action and participants and what does he or she want the reader to feel towards the action and the participants? Appraisal is expressed both explicitly and by reference to events or states that are prized or rejected by the culture.<sup>36</sup> Explicit appraisal expresses feelings, actions and states that are construed as negative or positive (happy/sad).<sup>37</sup> The realizations can occur in various forms including adjectives, adverbs and verbs and describe mental, behavioral or relational processes:

a happy boy  
 the boy was happy  
 the boy played happily  
 the present pleased the boy  
 the boy smiled  
 happily, he had a long nap<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the expression of emotion, appraisal also includes judgment and appreciation.

The author's evaluation of both the actor and the goal are relevant to the evaluation of the action. The identity and evaluation of the actor is crucial in determining the evaluation of the action. If the actor receives a positive or negative evaluation, the action will tend to receive a

35. The best source for the Appraisal framework, 'the language of attitude, arguability and interpersonal positioning', is the Appraisal Homepage at <http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/index.html>. The web site has this description: 'The Appraisal framework is an extension of the linguistic theories of M.A.K. Halliday and his colleagues (Systemic Functional Linguistics) and has emerged over a period of almost 15 years as a result of work conducted by a group of researchers led by Professor James Martin of the Linguistics Department of the University of Sydney'.

36. Explicit appraisal is 'inscribed appraisal' and reference to events or states that are prized or rejected by the culture is 'evoked appraisal' (J.R. Martin, 'Beyond Exchange: Appraisal Systems in English', in Susan Hunston and Geoff Thompson [eds.], *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], pp. 142-75 [142]).

37. While we would say that the appraisals of these feelings, actions or states are based on what is popularly construed by the culture, they are distinguished from what is evoked in the culture.

38. Examples taken from Martin, 'Appraisal Systems in English', p. 149.

similar evaluation. In the occurrences of ἀθεντέω, if the actor is carrying out his or her legitimate responsibilities, the action will tend to have a positive or possibly neutral judgment/evaluation. On the other hand, if the actor does not have the legitimate power or position for the exercise of authority, power or force involved in an action, how would the author and readers in the Greco-Roman culture evaluate the action? This question is key to the analysis, for unlike the American culture with its enthusiastic support of upward mobility and Rambo,<sup>39</sup> in the Greco-Roman culture, honor came in knowing one's place or identity (birth, social class and status, wealth and patronage), conforming to society's expectations and essential values consistent with one's place and competing for honor with one's social peers.<sup>40</sup> If the actor does not have the legitimate power or position to exercise the referent power, the independent or self-willed exercise of force would tend to receive a negative judgment/appraisal. That is not to say that there could not be extenuating circumstances that could justify such an action. The positive, negative or neutral evaluation of the goal is similarly important in evaluation.

Appraisal is particularly clear in view of the verb's impact or effect on the goal that receives the action (e.g. direct object of a finite verb), particularly if the goal is a person. If the person is appraised positively and benefits from the action, the action would tend to have a positive evaluation. If the person is harmed by the action, it would tend to have a negative evaluation unless justice or some other value was served by the goal being harmed, such as an execution—in which case the goal might have been viewed negatively, and the action would most likely receive a positive or neutral evaluation.

Prohibitions and negations involve a negative evaluation of the action by definition. Prohibitions are intended to prevent the action from occurring. Negations of an action in propositional statements in-

39. Rambo is a well-known character played by Sylvester Stallone in a series of four movies (1982–2008). In the first movie he is a vigilante Viet Nam war veteran who kills a sheriff, destroys a town and single-handedly defeats the National Guard. He is meant to receive a positive (or sympathetic) appraisal from the American audience.

40. See my discussion in Cynthia Long Westfall, 'Running the Gamut: The Varied Responses to Empire in Jewish Christianity', in S.E. Porter and C.L. Westfall (eds.), *Empire in the New Testament* (McMaster New Testament Studies; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 230-58 (238).



volve denials such as ‘I didn’t pull the head off my sister’s Barbie doll’. These negations indicate that according to the author, it would be negative if the actor had committed the action, and it is positive that they did not do this action.

Finally, some contexts, registers and topics will be associated by nature with a certain attitude towards people or actions. For example, in a lawsuit, the plaintiff’s complaint will involve a negative evaluation of the defendant’s action.<sup>41</sup> In early Christian literature, it should be a given that actions by God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit will receive a positive evaluation by Christian authors.

These guidelines more clearly substantiate why an occurrence of *αὐθεντέω* is positive, negative or neutral in a given context, as well as the complexities involved in evaluation. It was assumed or predicted that all three evaluations occur in the samples. The question is whether there are patterns in addition to those outlined above that are associated with the evaluations of *αὐθεντέω* that further clarify the meaning and use of the word.

### *Collocation*

In the above discussion one repeated theme was the objective to detect further patterns in the way that *αὐθεντέω* functions in context once the occurrences are placed in categories. Such patterns are called collocation.<sup>42</sup> Words tend to follow certain patterns: they occur with certain other words and they tend to be used in certain ways in certain contexts. Does this word typically keep company with certain words, contexts or other features? The patterns of collocation may reveal important information about the meaning and semantic range of the word.

41. See the example of the word describing or contributing to the plaintiff’s complaint in a lawsuit in *P.Lond.* 1708.

42. See M. Hoey, *Lexical Priming: A New Theory of Words and Language* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 1-15, for a definition and description of the pervasiveness of collocation.

*Mapping the Analysis*

A chart was developed to record these features—charting is my way of putting the words in piles.

Field				
Tenor				
Mode				
Register				
	Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstances
	Status		Status	
	Relationship between Actor and Goal (or other participants)			
			Change	
Appraisal				
Constraints & Equivalents				
Evaluation				

*Procedure*

The procedure may be summarized as follows

1. Identify the occurrence
2. Identify the field, tenor, mode and register of the communication
3. Specify the register
4. Identify the transitivity patterns:
  - a. Who is doing what to whom under what circumstance?
    - (i) Actor (the nominative in the active voice)
    - (ii) Process (verb)
    - (iii) Goal (genitive recipient of the action) and the
    - (iv) Circumstances (adjunct phrases, setting)
  - b. Identify interpersonal relationship between the participants:

- (i) Classify the Actor and Goal as animate or inanimate
- (ii) Identify the Status of Actor and Goal when animate
- c. Identify the change that the action makes to the Goal
- 5. Identify the alternate models of experience
- 6. Identify any positive or negative appraisal of the participants or process
- 7. Evaluate insights gleaned from the passage
- 8. Collect the data, identify patterns, identify the most relevant categories, sort the data into charts
- 9. Summarize the way the word was used utilizing the patterns in the categories.
  - a. Summarize the word's basic semantic content
  - b. Suggest a range of glosses that are suitable to the basic semantic content in context

### *Findings*

In reporting my findings, three things must be mentioned. First, as part of the process I have located the full text and done my own translation. In some significant cases, I differ from others such as Baldwin and Knight in my analysis of some of the features in the text, such as the status of the participants, and particularly in what determines the meaning of the verb. I often differ in the determination of what glosses may be legitimately used for *αὐθεντέω*. Secondly, this study proposes a meaning or model of the domain of *αὐθεντέω* that may be tested by ongoing study. I have done enough work to set up the model by analyzing and sorting approximately 60 verbs that occurred through the sixth century.<sup>43</sup> Additional occurrences can be added to test the model and the findings. Thirdly, when I began this study I was anticipating certain outcomes; i.e. that *αὐθεντέω* was a 'vulgar' term, close to a 'four letter word', which meant roughly 'to screw over'. However, I set up

43. This is where Baldwin made a break, perhaps artificially. The omission of the occurrences following the sixth century from the charts was not because the patterns of word use shift significantly, but rather because they do not undergo significant development, with perhaps the exception of the word's application to law enactment (which is included in the discussion at points). References to some of the later occurrences will still be made, but not included in the summaries of the patterns. The reader may find it fruitful to chart the later occurrences to test the model.

and applied the methodology so that it tested my own initial thesis and expectations as well as Baldwin's, Wilshire's and those of other studies. Therefore, the model and the outcomes are not exactly those that I anticipated when I began the analysis, though my predictions improved as I further developed my methodology. The findings suggest patterns in the occurrences of ἀϑεντέω according to categories such as registers, participants, situations and/or certain forms of the verb.

The categories that were most relevant to patterns that I detected include:

Actors with High(est) Status (18x)

Actors Who Exercise Full Authority within a Sphere/Jurisdiction (4x)

Impersonal/Inanimate Actors (4x)

Personal/Animate Actors and Personal/Animate Goals (13x)

Personal/Animate Actors and Impersonal/Inanimate Goals (13x)

Intransitive Occurrences of the Verb (19x)

Finally, I collect the occurrences of the verb that occur in the register of 'Church Office/Leadership'. Some of the occurrences were placed in more than one category, most often because a goal could be supplied from the context for an intransitive verb, but also the actors with the highest status all were placed in other categories.

I charted the verbs in each category, according to 'who', 'does what', 'to whom' and summarized the 'appraisals' that I had located in the analysis. I placed these elements in a summary chart in order to visualize them more easily as in the following example:

#### Personal Actors/Impersonal Goals

	Who	Does what	To whom	Appraisal
<i>P.Lond.</i> 1708 Lawsuit	Psates Defendant	(mis)appropriated (seized for his own use)	[the ancestral home] <sup>44</sup>	Who: negative What: negative Goal: ancestral home

44. Brackets are used to indicate that the verb is intransitive, and the goal is supplied from the context, technically the object of ἐκμισθώσα[ντα], where 'leasing out' is taken to be the alternate model of experience for ἀϑεντέω. It is the referent action that constituted the complaint—in the action of leasing the home, Psates seized it for his own use and exceeded his authority.

<i>P.Masp.</i> 67151 Will	Wife	is prohibited from (mis)appropriating	the property of husband	What: negative
<i>BGU</i> 103 Letter about a lawsuit	You (bishop)	preside over/take control of	the matter/case	Who: Overtly positive What: Overtly positive

### *Actors with High(est) Status*

The actors with the highest status that were the subjects of the verb *ἀθηντέω* included those that can be characterized as absolute rulers, including God, the members of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and supreme authorities such as Pope Leo I. All of these participants are depicted as exercising absolute authority, virtually without restrictions and with independence or a lack of accountability that tended to be stressed.<sup>45</sup> God and the members of the Trinity were all given a positive appraisal when *ἀθηντέω* referred to their sovereign rule and power—true omnipotence.<sup>46</sup> This word seems to have been useful to some to affirm the equal power and authority of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the Father as the doctrine of the Trinity developed, though there were sometimes distinctions.<sup>47</sup> Pope Leo I was the pope that extended the supremacy of Rome in matters of faith and discipline

45. Therefore, Philodemus of Gadara, *Rhet.* 133.14, was included in this category, though it may be arguably omitted from the samples because the papyrus is damaged: *ἀθηντε[οῦ]σιν*—tagging it as a verb is a text-critical decision, but it could be a noun or have a prefixed preposition. If it is a verb, it is a participle that refers to those who are depicted as having power over the people (‘powerful rulers’ in Baldwin, ‘Appendix 2’, p. 275), who are dangerous and liable to harm an entire population in retribution for the actions or protest of a few dissenters (rhetors). Whatever their identity and position, from the standpoint of the people they appear to have unilateral control that allows them to punish the entire population. However, the rulers did not receive a negative appraisal for exercising that power to punish an entire population for the actions of a few people. In effect, such rule or control over the people is a fact of life, and the dissenters (the rhetors) were the ones who were held to be at fault by the author. On the other hand, the rulers are hardly ‘those who rule and in a positive and commendable sense’ as Knight attempts to argue (Knight, ‘AYΘENTEΩ’, p. 145).

46. Eg. Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 2.48.1.8.

47. E.g. Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.5.22.1 for the father; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 224.1-5 for the son; and John Chrysostom, *Pent.* 50.464.39-45 for the Holy Spirit.

over the Eastern as well as the Western Roman Empires, and this word is applied positively to his authorization of the Council of Chalcedon in the East by the Eastern Emperor and Empress—the very point where his power shifted.<sup>48</sup> It is possible that the range of this word may have altered slightly when it was applied to the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity and the development of the papal authority as it became catholic in its extension over the Eastern Empire. ‘Rule’, ‘sovereignty’ and ‘authority’ are appropriate glosses for this category—this word represents unrestricted power in this context.

*Actors Exercising Full Power within a Sphere/Jurisdiction*

There are four occurrences in the sample of actors exercising or having the right to exercise full power within a given sphere or jurisdiction. This includes an abbot presiding over an ecclesial court case, the bishop of Rome’s response to a request to authorize a team to investigate a problem in the East, and Peter taking charge of affairs in Acts 1.<sup>49</sup> There is also an interesting assertion that the disciples at Antioch had full authority, but they thought that however ‘small’ the matter of circumcision, it called for consultation (ζητημάτων) with Jerusalem to be sure that the Law was fulfilled.<sup>50</sup> The actors are carrying out legitimate responsibilities. All of the goals are impersonal/inanimate (πράγμα in three of the four cases)<sup>51</sup> and the evaluation is positive.<sup>52</sup>

48. See *Concilium universal Chalcedonense anno 451* (2.1.1-2) (this is published in E. Schwarz, ed. [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1933; reprint 1962]) for the request to Leo to authorize the Council of Chalcedon, and Emperor Marcianus, *Ep. ad Leonem*, vol. I (54.900 B) for the result of Leo’s authority concerning the Council of Chalcedon. Thomas Greenwood says Leo’s authority was implicitly accepted by the Emperor Valentinian III, his empress Eudoxia, and his mother Placidia. He quotes Leo’s statement about himself in a description of his ‘naked absolutism’, when Leo said that his authority ‘could neither be shaken, nor even controverted by any person or power upon earth’ (Thomas Greenwood and Cathedra Petri, *A Political History of the Great Latin Patriarchate* [London: C.J. Stewart, 1856], p. 378). But also see Bronwen Neil, *Leo the Great* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), pp. 4-11, for a description of how Leo replaced the Western emperor as a civic leader.

49. *P.Masp.* 67151; Basil, *Ep.* 69.45; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 60.37.

50. Ammonius of Alexandria, *Fragmenta Acti* 85.1524.

51. Note a correction to Baldwin’s ‘Appendix 2’, p. 285, regarding John Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 60.37.13. Baldwin’s translation is Peter ‘having been put in charge of them’ (the understood referent to ‘them’ in the translation would be the hundred and twenty gathered), but the correct translation is ‘having been put in

The glosses ‘exercise full authority’, ‘authorize’, ‘preside’ and ‘take charge’ could legitimately be used in the translation of these passages, because they reflect the basic semantic content of the verb within the context of the passages: the actors have legitimate authority to take appropriate initiative in the exercise of action or use power over matters within their jurisdiction.

### *Impersonal Actors*

The occurrence of the verb with impersonal actors and sometimes impersonal goals is typified by specific registers that involve stereotypical language including astrology, law enactment (in the Byzantine period) and philosophy. There has been some attempt to establish the meaning of *αὐθεντέω* in 1 Tim. 2.12 and other more relevant passages with these occurrences. However, it would be best to consider these as less relevant registers in regards to the passage in view in terms of form and semantics, though glosses that include ‘dominate’, ‘put in force’, ‘execute’, or ‘master’ are consistent extensions of a basic semantic concept of certain forms of unrestricted force in view in these contexts over matters that are in legitimate jurisdictions.

### *Personal Actors/Personal Goals*

First Timothy 2.12 belongs to the category in which there is an animate/personal actor with an animate/personal goal (a person); a woman is prohibited from doing this action to a man. Interestingly, every other occurrence in this category involves a negative evaluation, probably because of the outcome of the action on the goal. The recipients of this action are abused and unloved, harmed, coerced, brutalized, destroyed, disrespected/dishonored, killed and arrested. If the actor has absolute authority, or the goal had behaved in such a way

charge of matters/affairs (*πράγματος*); cf. John H. Parker, trans., *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Acts of the Apostles: Translated with Notes and Indices* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, F & J. Rivington, 1851). This is an important distinction for this analysis.

52. At least the evaluations are positive on the surface. There is some question about this in *P.Masp.* 67151, which is a correspondence between church authorities in two different cities concerning a lawsuit—there could be warnings couched in diplomatic language, and there could be some question about the legality of the jurisdiction conceded to the bishop who received the letter, since the writer also had a clear claim to the jurisdiction. There is also a clear concern the writer verbalizes about a donation (bribe) influencing the bishop in his decision.

that the action was deemed necessary, then the actor and the action could receive a positive appraisal.<sup>53</sup> However, the execution of this action is always ‘bad’ from the perspective of the individual as a goal; it commonly involves an application of force that causes damage or at least is contrary to the will and usually the welfare of an animate/personal goal.<sup>54</sup> Some have said that the word cannot be pejorative because God does it. It is true that God does it and receives a positive evaluation, but the goal does not—God does it when he ‘executes’ judgment on those who display vice (the wicked) and on Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>55</sup> You would not want to be on the receiving

53. See *BGU* 1208, which is a notoriously difficult and fragmentary papyrus, but widely discussed. I believe that there is enough text to reconstruct that it is an account of how Antiochus was forced against his will by the author of the letter (presumed to be Tryphon) to pay a fare to the ferryman Calatytis. Tryphon is writing to his brother and devotes a great deal of explanation as to how it happened. Antiochus behaved in an arrogant and embarrassing way. Tryphon is making a defense of his own actions to his brother, saying in effect, ‘He was being such a jerk I had to make him do it’, justifying the use of force against his traveling companion. Baldwin follows George Knight in asserting that Antiochus was under Tryphon’s authority (a slave?) and he simply ‘exercised his authority’ over him. Either way, Antiochus was forced to do what he had refused to do, but neither Baldwin nor Knight translates the text himself or reads the sentence in the context of what is available in terms of the entire text (Baldwin, ‘Appendix 2’, p. 276; Knight, ‘ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ’, p. 145; see Payne’s criticism in ‘1 Timothy 2.12: Part III’, pp. 365-70). If Antiochus was the author’s slave or employee, it is hard to understand how or why the author allowed Antiochus to get out of control and become arrogant, why he would be required to pay his own fare in the first place, and why Tryphon would devote so much of his letter to defending his action—his own actions would reveal weakness and dishonor because he was out of control of his servant or slave and he would be personally responsible for the insult to Calatytis.

54. Therefore, cases where both the actor and goal are animate validate Wilshire’s observations and conclusion that ‘the preponderant number of citations from this compilation have to do with self-willed violence, criminal action, or murder or with the person who does these actions’ (Wilshire, ‘1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited’, p. 47).

55. See Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 2.48.1.8 for God’s reward for virtue in contrast with (μὲν...δέ) his execution of judgment on those who display vice. See also Athanasius, *De synodis* 27.3.18 for authorizing the descent of rain and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah—it may be a stretch to call cities personal goals, but the destruction of people is in view. These two occurrences with personal goals are in contrast with the majority of occurrences where members of the Trinity are the



end of this action, *especially* if God is doing it. Therefore, in this category, someone—either the actor or the goal—is somehow at fault. Therefore, I call this the ‘somebody done somebody wrong’ word.

Besides passages that provide a direct commentary and repetition of the phrase in 1 Tim. 2.12, the closest parallel passage is in Chrysostom’s commentary on Colossians, where he commands husbands not to do this to their wives.<sup>56</sup> Chrysostom says that the husband’s role is to love and the wife’s role is to obey. He then says, ‘Therefore, don’t *be abusive* because your wife is submissive to you’ (Μὴ τοίνυν, ἐπειδὴ ὑποτέτακται ἡ γυνή, αὐθέντει).<sup>57</sup> The referent to the action cannot be the husband’s exercise of domestic legal authority—Chrysostom compares the ideal husband to a loving ἄρχων (leader/ruler) in the passage. The referent action would have the sense of going beyond benign authority or control, outside of the sphere of love. Therefore, the prohibited action would share the range of harmful unloving application of force/authority that should be characterized as forms of

actors of αὐθεντέω. In most cases the verb is intransitive or the goal is the absolute control of benefits such as grace or the spiritual gifts.

56. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Col.* 27-31. It is worth noting that this prohibition fits well in the pattern of animate actor/animate goal and the household example of the master’s ‘brutal abuse of slaves in a prophecy’ (Pseudo-Hippolytus, *De consummatione mundi* 7.5), and, most importantly, it demonstrates intertextuality with 1 Tim. 2.12. However, Baldwin labels this as a ‘unique usage’ because, he says, ‘This is the sole unambiguous instance I have found where αὐθεντέω is plainly intended to convey the negative denotation “tyrannize”’ (Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, p. 47). He adds that in 1 Tim. 2.12, “to play the tyrant”, could only correspond to Chrysostom’s unique usage if the context could be shown to intend the same clear use of hyperbole, and the context does not seem to do that. Of the possible choices, this would definitely be the least probable’ (Baldwin, ‘Important Word’, p. 51). Two responses: First, this appears to be unique to Baldwin because the context prevented him from reading it as ‘exercise authority’, and he could only read it as exceeding authority, and it must therefore be taken as ‘tyrannize’ from his bank of word choices, yet there are many other examples of the referent action exceeding authority, so it is not unique in that sense. Secondly, his claim that this is hyperbole appears to be circular, based on his assumptions about the basic meaning of the word and on the use of the word alone. I cannot locate clear hyperbolic elements in the context.

57. Note that this is not a grammatical parallel for many reasons. The verb αὐθέντει is intransitive, but it is clear that the goal is the wife. It is worth noting that Chrysostom believed that a wife’s submission could provide a context in which she was in danger of abuse.

abuse including domination, or other emotional, mental or physical abuse, which was legally sanctioned and widespread in practice in the Greco-Roman world, though not necessarily approved of in Greco-Roman household codes. This word could conceivably be glossed as ‘domineer’ or ‘act like a tyrant’, but, given the range of action of the verb that emerged in the pattern, it is better understood and glossed more generally as ‘abuse’. Though this kind of spousal abuse by a husband was legal and the honor killing of a wife was considered legitimate or even sometimes necessary in the culture, here it receives a negative evaluation and restriction from the Christian sub-culture. This is highly significant in terms of the context of the passage and the nature of the action, because the application is placed in a domestic register between a husband and wife, rather the context of church order or leadership.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Chrysostom explicitly describes it as the opposite of loving one’s wife. The fact that the wife or a woman is prohibited from doing this action to a man is not taken by Chrysostom to indicate that the man is entitled to do it to a woman, as many seem to assume. Since the action is characterized as the opposite of love, one may infer that Chrysostom would similarly find it inconsistent with pastoral ministry.

#### *Personal Actors/Impersonal Goals*

In cases where the actor is personal and the goal is impersonal, there was negative appraisal of the action in 9 out of 13 occurrences in the sample. The negative appraisal may tend to be softer, though not in all cases. The idea of exercising force on or control over a ‘thing’ or a ‘matter’ is far different than exercising force on a person. An author could use this construction to convey dealing forcefully with a problem or an issue either positively or negatively, but the action still tends to receive a negative appraisal. In five of the cases, the authors negated the action ἀυθεντέω to express a positive appraisal:

My enemies will not *prevail* over divine intervention<sup>59</sup>

Jesus doesn’t do all things as *one acting independently*<sup>60</sup>

58. This suggests that the register in 1 Tim. 2.12 could be domestic rather than ecclesial, which fits the intertextuality with Genesis 2–3 and references to childbirth better.

59. Didymus, *Comm. Job* 285.1-4.

We will not *invent* [theological confessions about Mary]<sup>61</sup>

Paul doesn't want the soul *to be autonomous*<sup>62</sup>

Those people were not the ones who *instigated/perpetrated* heresy.<sup>63</sup>

In each of these cases, the verb represented an undesirable outcome that was avoided. In this category, there was a will and a lawsuit where the plaintiff used *αὐθεντέω* to describe the misappropriation of property by the accused. Therefore, even when the goal is impersonal, the word tends to have a negative association unless the actor has a high status such as God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

### *Intransitive Use of the Verb*

The intransitive use of the verb is positive in approximately 50 per cent of its occurrences in the sample. This is probably because when there is no goal present to receive the force of the action, it can represent more abstract potential power without the application of violence or destruction to a goal. However, prohibitions, negated actions and negative appraisals still occur with the intransitive verb, as noted above, and often a goal can be identified by the context (text and register), adjectives, nouns, qualifying prepositional phrases and the status of the actor in relationship to the status of other participants. Destruction may not be in view when the verb is intransitive and there is no goal in the context—then it has the sense of possession of power.

### *The Use of the Verb in the Register of Church Office or Leadership in the Church*

The verb *αὐθεντέω* is currently understood by many lay people as a technical term for the function of a senior pastor—and, therefore, it is believed that women are clearly prohibited from holding that office in 1 Tim. 2.12. That is the pragmatic effect of the translation of the verb as 'to have authority' and the placement of the subtitle 'Christian

60. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 57.239.45-54. In this case the participle unambiguously has the same goal as its finite verb: *Καὶ οὕτε πάντα ὡς αὐθεντῶν ἐργάζεται.*

61. Leontius Hierosolymitanus, *Adversus Nestorianos* 5.86.1720D. Or, alternatively, 'As for us, we will not *presume* to call Jesus' mother *theotokos*' (Al Wolters, private correspondence, 3 March 2011).

62. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 60.525.33-41.

63. Athanasius, *Ep. Ruf.* 78.8.

worship' in 1 Tim. 2.9-15.<sup>64</sup> However, in the 82 occurrences of the verb that Baldwin used to support this position, there is not an example of a male doing this to another person (singular animate goal) or a group of people (plural animate goal) with a positive evaluation in a ministry or leadership context.<sup>65</sup>

In the positive occurrences in the register of church leadership, a church official or leader does this to a *πράγματος*, a thing, a matter or a case of law, or the verb is intransitive. A bishop presides over a case of law, the bishop of Rome exercises full authority in the matter of selecting capable papal representatives and Peter takes charge of affairs. The verb was intransitive where the disciples at Antioch were said to have full authority as a group, but the goal in the context restricts this authority to the issue of circumcision.

However, the passages that receive a negative evaluation are more illuminating. In the fifth century, Eusebius of Alexandria gave instructions that deacons should follow rules, carry out the commands and intentions of the elder and meet the needs of the people, and he prohibits them from doing the action of this verb to the people (*εἰς τὸν λαὸν δέ μὴ ἀυθεντεῖν*). If the elder/presbyter is present, they are also restricted (*οὐδέ*) from banishing/excommunicating 'or doing the like'.<sup>66</sup> The prohibitions indicate a restriction on the power of the lower church officials, particularly in terms of autonomy and disciplinary actions of compulsion (of which excommunication/banishment was an extreme

64. But historically, this prohibition has been widely interpreted as excluding women from any form of leadership and sometimes even from speaking in the church when men are present (interpreting 1 Tim. 2.12 with 1 Cor. 14.34).

65. See n. 51 concerning the mistranslation of John Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 60.37 in Baldwin and in Parker.

66. Eusebius of Alexandria, *Sermones* 5.86.348. Baldwin translates *ἀυθεντεῖν* as 'to exercise authority', thus indicating that deacons are prohibited from having any authority in regard to (*εἰς*) the people (Baldwin, 'Appendix 2', p. 294). However, this fits neither the context, the nature of the appointment to office, nor what we know of the history of the office. Rather, this indicates a restriction in power, prohibiting autonomy and the use of force and power to compel, as in the practice of excommunication/banishment. At this time, it can be shown that excommunication could even involve deportation. Deacons are authorities under authority and they are to use their authority to serve the people, not to control or compel. Note that the fact that the word is used in a prohibition does not mean that it would be the word of choice to positively describe the disciplinary action of a Christian by a bishop.

example), at a time when the secular power of the church was extending far beyond the function or power of church leaders and pastors today in secular cultures.<sup>67</sup> Ammonius of Alexandria claims that it was not necessary for Peter in Acts 10.17 to act independently (*αὐθεντεῖν*) where the referent action that was not necessary was acting on his own initiative or making innovations in reaching out to the Gentiles.<sup>68</sup> This word was used by Leo I in an accusation against Eutyches where the referent action was instigation of a dispute in the church.<sup>69</sup> This word was used by Basil in a vehement denial where the referent action was originating and perpetrating the anathematization of Dianius.<sup>70</sup> But the passage that is particularly relevant to the relationship of *αὐθεντέω* to exercising the authority of a senior pastor is the complaint by Bassianos at the Council of Chalcedon where he claims that he was made bishop by an illegitimate procedure:

I was appointed as a bishop by violence! The canons are clearly the authority. The Fathers would say, ‘If there is a preferred procedure, it is for holding an election for office, and to not resign’... I urge you to listen to me! When this reckless deed was done, they *used force* and broke into my room and grabbed me. And then we looked to join the priesthood. But they looked for violence.<sup>71</sup>

In this case, the referent action of *αὐθεντέω* was unambiguously the direct opposite of the legitimate appointment and exercise of leadership.

#### *The Basic Semantic Meaning of αὐθεντέω*

My analysis suggests the basic semantic concept of the word *αὐθεντέω* can be described as *the autonomous use or possession of unrestricted*

67. By the fifth century, bishops and other church officials were beginning to have political power and options that are far beyond the scope of the authority and role of a senior pastor, particularly given the power structure of most Protestant church governments. But contemporary high church officials do not have the similar power to excommunicate/banish people ‘and the like’.

68. Ammonius of Alexandria, *Fragmenta Acti* 85.1537B.

69. Leo the Great, *Ep.* 30.54.788A.

70. Basil, *Ep.* 51.1.17.

71. *Concilium universal Chalcedonense anno 451* 2.1.3.48.12.

*force*.<sup>72</sup> ‘Autonomous’ indicates the range of initiation, self-will, origination, independent and sovereign action without reference to legitimacy or appointment. The actor takes matters into his or her own hands. The qualifier ‘use or possession’ allows for the intransitive occurrences without a goal that indicate potential or attributes, though the majority of occurrences involved applied force. ‘Unrestricted’ indicates that the force is without boundaries (at least within a given domain provided by the context), and sufficient in power and force to carry out the will of the actor against any resistance. It is without boundaries because within its jurisdiction, there is no higher authority or control to which it answers. However, outside of absolute authority or full power within a jurisdiction, it will tend to violate laws or social boundaries, rules, commands, or prohibitions. ‘Force’ has a suitable semantic range that includes many of the specific aspects of the use and possession of power in the occurrences: any authority involved, the capacity to do work or cause change, strength and power, as well as the sense of compulsion and the operation against resistance. However, ‘authority’ overextends the meaning because it appears to convey the sense of legitimacy and position that cannot account for many of the occurrences and excludes the sense of boundary violations that is a common pattern in the occurrences.<sup>73</sup> ‘Violence’ does not account for the full range of occurrences either, though it captures the harm to animate goals and brings out the lethal potential of the force.

This basic semantic concept together with the constraints of context can account for the meaning of the verb in the various contexts and its metaphorical extensions in others, as well as the negative and positive evaluations. The categories reveal some of the patterns in the way the word was used. Within the cultural worldview, it is the responsibility or privilege of absolute authorities to take initiative and exercise absolute power that is unrestricted in their given domain, so that this verb came to be used positively for divine sovereignty, dominion, and sovereign acts as the doctrine of the Trinity was clarified and the

72. This is not far from the semantics discussed in Payne’s etymology of ἀθεντέω in ‘1 Timothy 2:12: Part III’, 363-65.

73. Therefore, ‘assume authority’ may be a possible gloss in some occurrences, but the use of the word ‘authority’ is confusing and contradictory if it does not refer to legitimate and recognized power and position and therefore should be avoided in phrasing the basic semantic concept.

papacy's broad authority 'in spiritual matters' developed.<sup>74</sup> However, when humans are the goal of this force and the actors are rulers or divinity, they are harmed or destroyed, as in judgment or civil action. Lower level authorities who have full unrestricted power to take the initiative and deal with a matter, lawsuit or situation are similarly exercising the responsibility of their position, which is restricted to a given domain in the context, and will tend to receive a positive evaluation.<sup>75</sup>

However, most actors do not have this kind of absolute power (either sovereignty or over a domain). The majority of referent actions in the occurrences involve cases where there are restrictions and boundaries, even if the actor has a position of authority, so that the word often has a sense of 'exceeding authority'. Therefore, the word has the tendency to be negative or pejorative in the majority of cases that do not involve an absolute ruler or someone who has total control of a given domain. The exception is when the actor is inanimate and the goal is inanimate, when the word is often translated 'dominate' or 'execute', but does not convey a sense of exceeding boundaries or harm to the goal. In the cases where the actor and goal are animate/personal, the goal is harmed or at least forced against his or her will (compelled) in 100 per cent of the twelve occurrences in the sample because the action involves the

74. As Payne argues, 'Not even one instance of the later ecclesiastical use of *αὐθεντέω* with the meaning "to have authority over" or "to exercise authority" has been established before or near the time of Paul' (Payne, '1 Timothy 2:12: Part III', p. 373). Unfortunately, there is a paucity of any other established instances at the time of Paul, but the use of the verb in the Trinitarian discussion and the power of church officials (starting in 370 CE) accounts for nearly all of the positive uses, which is significant. The argument may be that God (and his representatives) can be the ultimate dictator or tyrant without the otherwise inevitable pejorative sense. It is likely that in our democratic culture, we would hesitate to apply to God a verb that collocates strongly with absolute dictatorship, force and destruction.

75. This category should most likely include the referent action of the execution of a Greek or Roman political enemy or criminal by an executioner or indirectly by the person in charge. However, in the case of assassinations or political executions of local rulers by Roman military leaders or Roman officials, there is a certain ambiguity as to whether they have the authority or not (consistent with the use of the verb and noun throughout). If it is an ad hoc decision, the emperor may call it murder and choose to punish the military leader for political reasons. See *Chronographia* 416.14; and Olympiodorus, *Ex historia Olympiodori excerpta, in Dexippi, Eunapii, Petri Patricii, Prisci, Malchi, et al.* 456.3 (edited by B.G. Niebuhr *et al.* [Bonn: Weber, 1829]).

imposition of the actor's will over a person against their own will. The harm done to the goal ranges from dishonor to death. The goal is killed in two of the twelve occurrences, but the potential of death was present in three other occurrences (civil action, spousal abuse, and the brutal abuse of slaves by masters).<sup>76</sup>

This may disambiguate how the verb is derived from the noun and how they are associated. The noun can have an 'executioner' or 'murderer' as its referent. In both cases, unrestricted force is applied to the life of an individual, but the executioner has the authority to take a life, whereas when a murderer takes a life, it is illegal and ethically reprehensible—the context determines which, and sometimes 'murder' is in the eye of the beholder.<sup>77</sup>

However, the pattern is that the actor and the action, or the goal, receive a negative evaluation, depending on the status of the individuals and the placement of blame. Context (textual and register), adjectives, nouns and prepositional phrases must weigh most heavily in determining the evaluation of occurrences where an actor 'forces' or controls an inanimate goal or the verb is intransitive (look for qualifiers such as 'against the law' and inappropriate relationships of authority and power for negative evaluations).

A comparable English word to ἀθεντέω is 'eradicate'. It can be positive when there is an inanimate target, but tends to be negative or pejorative when it has a personal/animate target such as any benign organism or a human. It means to 'put an end to' or 'destroy', with an etymological meaning of 'to tear out by the roots'. We often use this in contexts where the action receives positive evaluation, such as 'We plan to eradicate illiteracy'. If it is applied to a personal object, it means death. 'Eradication' is most often used in a context of positive evaluation in the extermination of pests and infectious diseases. But when applied to a personal animate group target, 'eradication' means

76. Note that the sample omits one celebrated occurrence where the referent action is murder: *Scholia vertera on Aeschylus's Eumenides* (42a), and there are several more examples of murder in the Byzantine occurrences that were omitted from these samples.

77. These examples also are suggestive of the likely process in which the meaning of the verb was metaphorically extended to be used for the enactment of law in the Byzantine period in the seventh century: *Chronicon paschale* 619:9; 634.1. We use similar metaphors for the enactment of law: we execute a law and we put a law in force.



genocide, and it is overwhelmingly associated with a negative evaluation of both the action and the agent. In other words, we like to eradicate illiteracy, but we should not want to eradicate illiterates.

With the evidence that we have, Wolters' argument that the verb *αὐθεντέω* is derived from the noun is convincing. The noun is summarized in meaning by Wolters as 'doer', 'murderer', 'master'.<sup>78</sup> The noun appears in earlier material and is used much more extensively than the verb.<sup>79</sup> Wolters argues that these three meanings belong to different registers and that the first two meanings were not colloquial in the first century, but I would suggest that the three meanings have a basic shared semantic meaning of an 'autonomous user or possessor of unrestricted force/power' with similar qualifiers as the verb, and this is not far from the meaning of 'master', but accounts for occurrences in which the referent does not have legal legitimate authority or position. This basic meaning can also account for the noun's additional referents such as an executioner or a murderer. Not surprisingly, the verb appears to have undergone some development in the centuries following its use in 1 Tim. 2.12 (notably the theological discussion on the Trinity and the use in law enforcement), but these extensions of meaning did not depart significantly from the basic semantic meaning of the noun or early occurrences of the verb, and many of the patterns of usage of the verb are quite consistent even through the Byzantine period.

78. Wolters argues that the verb is derived from the noun and that the noun had three meanings: 'doer', 'murderer', and 'master'. However, he argues that 'doer' and 'murderer' were not colloquial Greek by the first century (Wolters, 'Semantic Study', pp. 146, 153). He concludes, 'It is clear that all these examples illustrate the verb *αὐθεντέω* in the sense "to be an *αὐθέντης*", and are semantically dependent on the meaning "master" (or its variant "doer")' (p. 160). He goes on to say that the verb is not 'understood in a negative sense'. However, if the meaning 'to be a master' is given, if the actor does not have the status of a master, but acts like a master, then the action would tend to receive a negative evaluation in that context, as we have seen in the majority of occurrences since the first century.

79. Though Baldwin argues against finding a correspondence between the verb and noun, his example from Hesychius actually demonstrates significant correspondences between the verb *αὐθεντέω* and the noun *αὐθέντης* in the entries, which shed light on the verb as well as the differences between the verb and noun.

*Conclusion*

A basic semantic concept that accounts for the occurrences of ἀθεντέω in the data base of 60 verbs is: *the autonomous use or possession of unrestricted force*. There are at least 250 additional occurrences in the TLG alone with which both the model and this central basic concept (versus extended, peripheral or marginal meanings) may be tested with two caveats. First, it is not enough to dig through the occurrences and offer a collection that makes a case for a given meaning (a circular methodology), but rather we must locate patterns in the corpus and test the occurrences available. The second caveat is that the results are based on certain semantic theories concerning the meaning of words in context including their relationship to the referent action. If these theories are not shared, or assumed for the sake of argument, the methodology will seem flawed and the conclusions will fail to convince.

The most important conclusion of this paper is that, according to the 60 samples in the data base, when ἀθεντέω occurs with a personal/animate actor and a personal/animate goal, a negative evaluation is given unless the actor has a divine or ultimate authority. This appears to be because it has a destructive force when applied to an animate goal, and it is an inappropriate action for those who do not have the authority of life and death. There were no examples in the sample occurrences where a man did this to another person in a positive way in the register of church leadership. Forcing a person against their will in a destructive way is inconsistent with pastoral ministry as practiced in the first century or as practiced in the twenty-first century.<sup>80</sup> No person should take this kind of action against another person within a church context, because no one should have the power to harm or force another person in the church, and exercising that sort of power would be abusive by virtually any standards.

80. An individual's application of the actions represented in the church register or the animate actor/animate goal category against another individual would be inconsistent with Christian office and pastoral ministry during the time the New Testament was written and as reflected in 1 Timothy. However, power in Christian office gradually developed to where the office of bishop increased in its sphere of authority and power, and papal authority, where a bishop had the authority to take complete control of legal matters, sometimes used physical and political force, and might anathematize another bishop (functions of the entire early church), and the papal authority developed to be absolute.

On the basis of the patterns associated with the word in the register of church leadership and office in this sample of occurrences, this verb should not be used to exclude women from appointment or election to any aspect of church ministry or leadership, because that class of action is never in view in the occurrences of the word.<sup>81</sup> The use of the gloss ‘to exercise authority’ in 1 Tim. 2.15 either misrepresents or over-extends the meaning of *αὐθεντέω* beyond what has been found in the register of church leadership or in comparable grammatical constructions.<sup>82</sup> If this passage is, in fact, in the context of Christian worship, this prohibition could command a woman not to ‘abuse’ a man in some way in either speech or action in the course of a worship service. The prevention of abuse is far more likely than a general neutral prohibition of ‘having the authority’ of a master or ‘assuming authority’. It is likely that a woman, particularly a wealthy widow, would be present in an Ephesian house church with at least one male, who might be a slave if she was not accompanied by a husband or male family member.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the worship services were most likely held in the largest homes available, and women who owned such homes (such as Lydia) would be the masters of male slaves who would be under their direction in serving the agape meal—and this would even be the case with women in their husband’s homes, because men were not involved in the overseeing of this kind of domestic arrangement.

On the other hand, there is a serious question as to whether the prohibition in 1 Tim. 2.12 actually belongs in the register of church worship/leadership as opposed to a domestic register concerning a

81. This conclusion assumes that we share the view that the pastorate and other forms of ministry should be characterized by servanthood and loving constructive care, with appropriate restrictions on the power of any individual in office by the law of the land, other church officials and, in most cases, the congregation. The autonomous use of force against the will of a group or a church member should be prohibited.

82. The suggested alternative translation of ‘assume authority’ in terms of a self-appointment or seizure of a church office together in a semantically transitive construction with a single animate goal that receives the action does not reflect a common pattern in terms of the grammar, the register or the animate actor/animate goal pattern. For a description of overextension of a word in language acquisition, see Gee, *Discourse Analysis*, pp. 58-62.

83. Male slaves would accompany any moderately wealthy women who came without husbands to meetings (especially widows), and it is generally agreed that wealthy women were part of the issue in the church in 1 Timothy.

wife's 'abuse' of her husband through disrespectful or abusive treatment, which fits the allusions to Genesis 2–3, and the reference to childbirth. There were a number of ways that a woman could 'abuse' a man according to Greco-Roman culture. It was an honor culture in which gender roles played an important part. If a woman 'acted like the master' of her husband by controlling him, it was seen as a destructive challenge to the entire hierarchy of the Roman Empire and the patronage system. Violations of such conventions were taken seriously and potentially could destroy the reputation of the church—the behavior of women was fodder for polemical attacks on the early church and other sectarian religious movements.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, in 1 Tim. 2.12, a woman may be prohibited from all potential forms of abuse of a man that are within her power, which could range from dishonoring a man to turning him in to the Roman authorities. However, it is most likely that the referent action is a specific form of abuse by the women occurring in the Christian community that Paul was addressing, consistent with the gender issues that are addressed in the letter, which occurred in the domestic sphere apart from the worship service.

84. See MacDonald's discussion of the attacks by Celsus on Christianity, focusing on the behavior of the women, in Margaret E. MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion: The Power of the Hysterical Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 110-11, and see also MacDonald's general argument.