

Matt Solomon, "The Subordination of Apphia: An Orthoprax Corruption of Scripture"

In his letter to Philemon, Paul greeted Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church in the first two verses. He provided a descriptor for each person in his greeting: Paul the prisoner, Timothy the brother, Philemon the brother and fellow worker, Apphia the sister, Archippus the fellow soldier, and the church that meets in Philemon's house. In the entire Greek tradition, however, most later manuscripts (MSS) read "beloved" for Apphia while the earliest and best witnesses read "sister" for Apphia. While the change could be assimilation to Philemon's descriptor, this paper will argue that the shift from "sister" to "beloved" was a conscious change in order to diminish somehow Apphia's role that was made during a time when women were losing authority in early Christianity. Further, the paper also will argue that the change is not the result of a difference in orthodoxy but rather a difference in orthopraxy, highlighting an underexplored category of textual variation among NT MSS.