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Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 in its Social Context

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Abstract
A significant yet missing dimension of scholarly engagement with 1 Cor. 11.2-16 is the consideration of honour-shame and its critical importance in ancient cultures. As this section of Paul's letter abounds in honour-shame terminology, analysis of the text within such a framework will allow a profitable exploration of the reasons why the Corinthians are changing their attire (for purposes of this paper, their head-coverings), in a way that appears to be contrary to what may be considered the Pauline norm. The argument offered here is that notions of honour come to the fore and higher-status male Corinthians are employing modes of head attire to maintain distinctions of status. At the same time, Paul insists upon female head-coverings to safeguard the honour of the community within a context of the potential presence of non-believers in a communal service of worship.

Keywords
Honour, shame, head-coverings, elite(s), authority

Introduction[1]

The consensual view of this section of Paul's letter is that it is so enigmatic that its original meaning may be beyond recovery, and this has led

1. For reasons of space this section will deal only with the issue of veils/head-coverings and not hair styles/hair length. The arguments pointing towards the former are more cogent, see Balsdon 1960; Oster 1988: 485-86; Fee 1987: 496, 506-507, 528-29; Keener 2000; Massey 2007. Those who see the issue here to be one of veils/head-coverings include Theissen 1987; Engberg-Pedersen 1991; Dunn 1995; Martin 1995; Witherington 1995; Horrell 1996; and Watson 2000a. The Church Fathers almost unanimously took Paul's words here to refer to veiling and unveiling: Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.8.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.11; Tertullian, *Cor.* ch. 14; *Or.* chs. 21–22; *Marc.* 5.9; *Cult. fem.* 2.7; *Virg.*; Augustine, *Ep.* CCXLV; Jerome, *Ep.* CXL VII.5. On the debate, see esp. Thiselton 2000: 823-26.

to a proliferation of theories and suggested backgrounds.[2] Indeed, as Anthony Thiselton rightly points out, there are 'multilayered metaphorical and cultural nuances which exclude any understanding of language in these verses in terms of lexicography alone'.[3] Certainly, the logic of Paul's directives relies upon unspoken and undefended assumptions about particular aspects of first-century culture, and one such assumption, which will be the focus of this article, is the vital role of honour and shame within ancient life. Over recent decades, both classicists and biblical scholars have fruitfully explored the social scenarios of ancient texts with an eye to considerations of honour and shame,[4] yet little has been examined of this section of Paul's letter within such a purview despite the fact that it is replete with honour-shame terminology.[5] The semantics of honour would include notions of praise (ἐπαινέω, v. 2) and glory (δόξα, vv. 7, 15), whilst shame (αἰσχρόν) occurs at v. 6 and also falls within the categories of 'disgrace' (καταισχύνω, vv. 4, 5) and 'dishonour' (ἀτιμία, v. 14).[6]

Initial considerations of this text must also engage with an additional intriguing component: the question of why, following Paul's departure from Corinth, members of the community began to make changes to their appearance that ran *contrary* to Paul's expectations. Here, I am in disagreement with a number of scholars who consider that, at this point, Paul is modifying or correcting his previous teaching (so Engberg-Pedersen 1991: 681; Horrell 1996: 169), or that he now seeks to impose an innovation in head attire (so Watson 2000a: 526; 2000b: 42). For the wider social context of this passage must begin with the fact that Paul not only established the community at Corinth, and certainly the core understanding of its central belief system, but also remained part of the community for some long time. According to Acts, this was some 18 months (Acts 18.11); a figure which is widely accepted and which fits well into what is known of Pauline chronology.[7] Presumably, then, Paul would have taken a central and pivotal role in the nascent community's

2. See the bibliographies of Schrage 1995: 487-89 and Thiselton 2000: 806-809.

3. Thiselton 2000: 801.

4. Lendon 1997; C.A. Barton 2001, Malina 2001.

5. In the recent work of Malina and Pilch, for example, the context of honour in 1 Cor. 11.2-16 is mentioned only briefly, and only in relation to 1 Cor. 11.3 (2006: 106). Indeed, the authors devote only a little over a page-and-a-half of text to the entire section.

6. See the lexicography of New Testament honour–shame terminology in Neyrey 1991: 46.

7. Jewett 1979: 22, 55, 58, 97; Alexander 1993: 115-23; Thiselton 2000: 29-32.

liturgical experiences, and would have done so over the long tenure of his stay there.

As there is no indication in the text either that Paul is presenting new information on the subject (as he does on another topic in 1 Cor. 5.9-11) or demonstrating a change of mind, it is unlikely that Paul's insistence upon appropriate head-coverings is an assertion originally made within the confines of this letter. Indeed, Paul begins this section with a note of praise for the Corinthians, reminding them that they have remembered and are holding firmly to the traditions passed on by him: Ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε (11.2).[8] At many other points in the letter it is clear that at least some of the Corinthians have ignored or misunderstood his previous teaching, and Paul deals with such problems by addressing the community as a whole.[9] This section is no different. Paul's praise for adherence to certain traditions (which are left unspecified) can be taken as *including* the subject of head-coverings,[10] and the statement is best construed as a rhetorical ploy: Paul's praise is for only those in the community employing the correct head attire.[11] That this is the only point in the letter where Paul specifically offers praise (in stark contrast, it must be noted, to the following section, 11.17-34, wherein he categorically states that he is unable to do so) possibly indicates that it is only *some* who are acting against Paul's expectations of head attire.[12]

In this way, Paul's apparent positive opening response disguises a forthcoming sharp critique of the behaviour of certain members of the community beginning in 11.3 (Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι … κτλ), and what

8. On the transmission of traditions, see Wegenast 1962; Schrage 1995: 500; Thiselton 2000: 809-11.

9. Paul's commendations of the whole community (1 Cor. 1.4-9; 8.1b; 10.14a; 12.27-28; 14.1-4, 26; 15.1) disguise an unfolding critique on a number of disparate topics (e.g., 1.10-17; chs. 6, 7, 8–10, 14, 15). It is also evident in places that his criticisms are aimed at only a sub-section of the church (3.18; 4.18; 6.1; 8.2, 7-12; 10.27-29; 11.27; 14.13, 27; 15.12, 29). Paul can also castigate the entire community (5.1; 11.17-34) despite his later commendation of the household of Stephanus and his urging that the church submit to such men (16.16).

10. In which case, such a commendation would discount Watson's view that this is a Pauline innovation.

11. See Fee 1987: 500; Schrage 1995: 499.

12. Paul's praise could be taken as an ironically disarming device allowing him to offer theological clarification as well as insistence on correct attire to the *whole* community (see Thiselton 2000: 810, and the literature cited there). But his sharp criticisms elsewhere when he considers the entire church to have gone astray (e.g., 1 Cor. 5; 11.17-34) make it unlikely that praise would be offered in this instance unless at least some were correctly attired (though numbers are uncertain).

follows is theological reflection and justification for what he considers appropriate attire. That Paul here does not intend modification or correction of his previous teaching (contra Engberg-Pedersen and Horrell) is demonstrated by the wider social context of 11.13-16 where his logic simply assumes that his injunctions are entirely congruent with what is 'fitting' or 'proper' (πρέπω), and what is evident by nature (φύσις[13]). His closing remark in 11.16 asserts simply and unequivocally, 'we have no (other) practice, nor have the churches of God'.[14] One would surely expect more extensive critical dialogue if this were a Pauline *volte-face* and perhaps a very different type of dialogue if a Pauline innovation.

Hence, the proper attire expected by Paul in worship is likely to have been formulated during his time there, perhaps even as an initial expectation of liturgical dress at the founding of the community. So, we may presume that the norm over the period of Paul's tenure in Corinth during a time of worship was for men to have been unveiled and for women to have been veiled.[15] However, the question remains that if this was the normal expectation of Paul (and one may assume that he would have given adequate justification for any divergence from normative cultural practice, which will be explored below), then why, following his departure, have certain men and women of the community decided to do the direct opposite of what the apostle obviously considered this norm?

This article will bring together a multiplicity of questions surrounding these verses and will attempt to show how and in what way(s), the covering/uncovering of the male and female head, together with the sartorial changes made by certain members of the community in Paul's absence, impinge directly upon notions of honour and shame. Hopefully, this may present a productive way forward in explicating the complexities of Paul's injunctions. A useful starting point will be an examination of the relevant Greco-Roman and Jewish social contexts, where the focus will be upon the head attire of men and women in both public and private liturgical settings.[16]

13. On φύσις, see Thiselton 2000: 844-46.

14. Wolff 1982: 255. This is the third occasion that Paul makes pointed reference to his teaching of customs and practices in other churches: 4.17 ('just as I teach everywhere in every church'); 7.17 ('This is my rule [διατάσσω] in all the churches").

15. Interestingly, there is both literary and numismatic evidence for the use of female head-coverings in Tarsus (Oepke, 1967: 562), so if this is the city of Paul's birth, then he grew up with the custom of women wearing head-coverings in public.

16. On the limitations of archaeological and literary evidence, Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 6-7; Laurence 1997: 9-10, 13-14; on the problems of distinguishing private and public space, Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 10-12; Berry 1997; George 1997; and esp. Grahame 1997.

The Greco-Roman Context

The wearing of suitable apparel by men and women within Greco-Roman first-century CE culture was wholly immersed within considerations of honour and status, and so was of prime import to most. Indeed, one's attire often gave the clearest and most highly visible indication of social rank (Oster 1988: 493; Gill 1990: 248, 250). It appears that in a public (non-liturgical) setting, there was an element of freedom in male head attire. For some, irrespective of status, the convention was to draw the upper part of the garment or toga over the head until it approached or covered the ears, but this was by no means strictly adhered to. A simple aside by Plutarch in his discussion of male public head-coverings ('if they *happen* to have the toga over the head ...') demonstrates that there was some choice (*Mor.* 266C-E, italics mine), although he later asserts that it was more usual for men to go uncovered (*Mor.* 267A-B).

As for women, it would appear that when venturing outside the home[17] they would normally wear a head-covering and a veil.[18] Valerius Maximus describes how Sulpicius Gallus (consul in 166 BCE) divorced his wife due to her appearing uncovered in public (6.3.10),[19] and Plutarch maintains that it is 'more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered' (*Mor.* 267A-B). This is confirmed by Dio Chrysostom who writes of 'the convention regarding feminine attire, a convention which prescribes that women should be so arrayed and should so deport themselves when in the street that nobody could see any part of them, neither of the face nor of the rest of the body ... they have their faces covered as they walk' (*Or.* 33.48-49). Even in the second century CE, Pliny was said to be glad that his wife came to hear him give public recitations of his works, 'with an eager ear hidden behind a curtain' (*Ep.* 4.19), and Clement draws attention to the (mis)use of purple veils that attracted rather than deflected the gaze of strangers

17. Women were typically restricted to the home, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 3.21.2; 8.39.1; Livy, *Hist.* 34.1.5; 34.2.9-10; 34.3.1-3; 34.4.18; 34.5.7-10; Plutarch, *Bride* 9, *Mor.* 139C; 30-32, *Mor.* 142CD; Galt 1931; Gould 1980: 47; Dover 1984: 145; Keener 2000: 443; Kroeger 2000.

18. See Chariton, *Chaer.* 1.13.11; Petronius, *Sat.* 14, 16; Lucian, *Imag.*; MacMullen 1980: 209, esp. n. 4; 1990: 144; Rouselle 1992: 315; Keener 2000. Some statues do show unveiled women (Keener 1993: 585), but locating the social setting of which they purport to demonstrate is fraught with difficulty. On the dangers of using art as a guide to normative head attire, see Massey 2007: 16-17; on veils, see esp. Homer, *Od.* 1.332-33; 16.416; 18.210; 21.65.

19. Cf. Sallust, *Hist.* 13.45.

(*Paed.* 2.114.4).[20] In the romances, a groom was said to be the first man to gaze on a modest virgin's face (Chariton, *Chaer*. 1.1.4-6; cf. *Jos. and Asen.* 15.1-2; 18.6). For women to have an uncovered head in public was conventionally seen as a sign of public shaming and humiliation. It was a symbol associated with masculinity, lesbianism, adultery or prostitution.[21] In short, the wearing of the veil/head-covering said something explicit about a woman's position in society.

Considerations of normative *male* head-coverings within a *liturgical setting* are quite different, for here the archaeological and literary evidence is unmistakably clear. For those elite or high-status men taking a central role in sacrifices or worship, the Roman ethos was one in which the head was always covered.[22] Such attire was seen as an aid to religious devotion and piety—a point confirmed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus when he states that a suitable head-covering was the custom 'on the occasion of every prayer' (*Ant. Rom.* 12.16.3; 15.9.2).[23] The archaeological evidence detailed in the works of Richard Oster (1988, 1992), Catherine Thompson (1988) and David Gill (1990) demonstrates not only the widespread use of male liturgical head coverings

20. A primary reason for female head-coverings in the ancient Mediterranean world may have been because of male lust; Apuleius, *Met*. 2.8-9; Sus. 13.32; *Sifre* Num. 11.2.3; Keener 1993: 585; 2000: 445-46 (and texts cited there); Watson 2000b: 40-89.

21. On masculinity, Lucian, *Fug.* 27; Apuleius, *Met.* 6; on lesbianism, Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* 290-291; on adultery, Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 64.3; on prostitution, Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 64.3; Philo, *Spec.* 3.51; cf. the Gospel tradition associating uncovered long hair with an adulteress/prostitute, Lk. 7.36-50; Jn 11.2; 12.3.

22. Contra Murphy-O'Connor (1988: 267), who claims that in a liturgical setting some men may have been uncovered. He writes, 'Greeks and Romans differed in their attitude toward attire at prayer, as may be inferred from Plutarch's question, "Why is it that when they [the Romans] worship the gods, they cover their heads?" The question would be meaningless unless the Greeks prayed bareheaded, and this is confirmed by Apuleius' description of the Isis ceremony at Cenchreae: "The women had their hair anointed and their heads covered with light linen, but the men had their crowns shaven and shining bright."' However, Murphy-O'Connor's exegesis is doubtful. Firstly, he quotes only the first half of Plutarch's question. Had he quoted the full text (*Mor.* 266C) one would see that Plutarch is simply asking the question as to why Romans do not cover the head in certain social situations—he is making no distinction between Romans and Greeks at this point. Secondly, the Apuleius text (*Met.* 11.10) refers to a particular ceremony of *initiates* of the Isis cult. It can tell us little of normative use of head-coverings within the cult, nor of how this may have a bearing on Greco-Roman worship.

23. Ovid, *Met*. 3.198; Keener 2000: 444.

in Rome, throughout Italy and in numerous cities in the Roman East, but also that this Roman custom can be documented for several generations before and after the advent of Christ-followers in Corinth. Some of the finest archaeological examples are those of the emperors themselves. The sculpture of Augustus in Corinth, the magnificent Augustan monument *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome, the fragmentary statue of Nero in Corinth and the Column of Trajan all incorporate the pious gesture of the covered head.[24] Neither are these unique. About 20 similar statues have been discovered of Augustus alone, each depicting him with suitable head-covering sacrificing to the gods, and similar images are found on Roman coins of the period (Oster 1988: 504). Hence, it should come as no surprise to discover that within the excavations of Corinth several images of men have been discovered each incorporating this same liturgical head-covering (Gill 1990: 246). Oster writes, 'This evidence of the material culture patently demonstrates that the practice of men covering their heads in the context of prayer and prophecy was a common pattern of Roman piety and widespread during the late Republic and early Empire' (1992: 69).

For the purposes of this article, the *Ara Pacis* is particularly illuminating. For whilst it has friezes showing covered elites who appear to be playing a central role in the sacrificial service (the priests, *flamines*, the attendant lictor, the magistrate Agrippa, a number of women, possibly Vestal Virgins and, naturally, Augustus, together with his wife Livia), other friezes show a number of men and women wearing wreaths or without head-coverings. In this context it may be reasonable to conclude that the *capite velato* is specific to those taking a central and active role in the service and, as such, stands as an unmistakeable sign of status and honour.[25]

The literary evidence supports the above view of the male sacrificant wearing a head-covering. In addition to the quotation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus cited above, Livy, Plutarch and Lucretius all make reference to male public head-coverings in liturgical settings.[26] Of particular interest is a passage in the *Aeneid* where Virgil details the instructions given by the prophet Helenus regarding devotional acts for Roman seafaring adventurers:

> Moreover, when the ships have crossed the seas and anchored, and when now thou raisest altars and payest vows on the shore, veil thy hair

24. Ridgeway 1981: 432f.; Gill 1990; Oster 1992.
25. See Winter 2001: 122.
26. Livy 10.7.10; Plutarch, *Mor.* 266C; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 5.1198-1200.

> with coverings of purple robe, that in the worship of the gods no hostile face may intrude amid the holy fires and mar the omens. This mode of sacrifice do thou keep, thou and thy company; by this observance let thy children's children in purity stand fast (3.403-409).[27]

Plainly, in the opinion of Virgil the veil was a matter of *lex sacra* for pious Romans and could only be ignored at the expense of offending the Roman gods. Indeed, the *flamen dialis*, a Roman sacerdotal official, was not even allowed out of his home without a suitable head-covering.[28]

For *women* in the context of *liturgical head-coverings*, the ancient data is more ambiguous. A head-covering may have been customary at religious functions,[29] and they were certainly expected of those women involved in any sacerdotal functions.[30] The Vestal Virgins for example were typically covered (Oster 1988: 496), and this was also the case for any noble women involved in sacrifice (Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.390-92). But, as noted above, certain friezes of the *Ara Pacis*, whilst depicting a number of veiled women fulfilling some kind of religious role, also depict many other women who were clearly uncovered (see Gill 1990: 252). So, in certain liturgical settings head-coverings may have been optional for women. The deciding factor may have been the kin-relations of those present. A public ceremony may have necessitated a covered female head, whilst other situations, such as that depicted on the *Ara Pacis* (i.e., a scene of inter-related/governing elites) may have allowed an element of choice. There were, of course, certain occasions when specific head attire was expected: special head-coverings were required of Roman brides, for example—marriage being an overtly religious ceremony (Thompson 1988). And, conversely, women uncovered their heads publicly when in mourning (the typical mourning rite for Roman women was to unbind the hair, while for Greek women it was to cut the hair short). This is described by Plutarch:

> Why do they [Roman males] cover their heads when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound? Is it because fathers should be honoured as gods by their male offspring, but mourned as dead by their daughters, that custom has

27. Cf. *Aen.* 3.543-7; 1.385.

28. So, Aulius Gellius, *Noct. Att.*10.15.16f., who points out that it is only recently that the *dialis* was allowed to be uncovered *inside* his own home.

29. See Ovid, *Met.* 1.398; Plutarch, *Rom.* 10, *Mor.* 266C; Keener 2000: 444.

30. Varro, *Ling.* 5.29.130; Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 10.15.26-30.

> assigned to each sex its proper part and has produced a fitting result from both? Or is it that the unusual is proper in mourning, and it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered? (*Mor.* 267A-B)[31]

An additional liturgical setting is that of household worship, for the main religious activity in antiquity centred on the home.[32] The hearth was the focal point for the domestic cult, and small daily food offerings and prayers were made there to a variety of deities (typically Hestia for the Greeks, Vesta for the Romans, but a number of other gods too).[33] The hearth was also the place to offer a libation, a formal ceremony of wine poured out in honour of the gods (Hesiod, *Op.* 722-24). By way of such acts the family afforded itself of the protection and prosperity of the gods and hence the domestic cult was, in many ways, distinct in focus from public and state cults. Other gods of the household, particularly the *Lares* (most likely deified spirits of dead ancestors), were worshipped, and these were represented by small statues or paintings (see Horace, *Odes* 3.22). Archaeological research has uncovered numerous household shrines to the *Lares* in niches in dining-rooms or kitchens, or as separate shrines in the atria or gardens.[34] The male head of the household, the *paterfamilias*, functioned as a priest for the family, and the cult was intimately linked to his own honour and prosperity.[35] As such, the *paterfamilias*, as priest of the domestic cult, would have employed a head-covering. This would have distinguished him socially and religiously and denoted a sense of social importance and superiority. Conversely, the wife may well have remained uncovered amongst kin within the home during times of domestic worship, wearing a veil only if there were outsiders (i.e., non-kin) present.[36]

For the man, what we have yet to ascertain is the specific reason for head-coverings in particular settings, but this is provided for us by Plutarch:

31. See also Euripides, *Phoen.* 322-23; Thompson 1988: 104, 112; Keener 2000: 443-44.

32. Cicero, *Dom.* 109; *Off.* 1.54-55; Sandnes 1997.

33. Plutarch, *Mor.* 703D; Theophrastus, *In Porph. Abst.* 2.20; Plautus, *Aul.* 1-27; *Merc.* 830-37; Horace, *Carm.* 3.23; Prudentius, *Ad Symmachum* 1.197-211; Barclay 1997; Aune 2000.

34. Orr 1978 (illustrated); Gooch 1993: 29-38; J.R. Clarke 1991.

35. So Barclay 1997: 67; on the role and function of the *paterfamilias*, Lassen 1997.

36. Winter 2001: 128.

> Why is it that when they [Romans] worship the gods, they cover their heads, but when they meet any of their fellow-men worthy of honour, if they happen to have the toga over the head, they uncover? ... For they uncover their heads in the presence of men more influential than they: it is not to invest these men with additional honour, but rather to avert from them the jealousy[37] of the gods, that these men may not seem to demand the same honour as the gods, nor to tolerate an attention like that bestowed on the gods, nor to rejoice therein. But they thus worshipped the gods, either humbling themselves by concealing the head, or rather by pulling the toga over their ears as a precaution lest any ill-omened and baleful sound from without should reach them while they were praying. Or, as Castor states ... the Spirit within us entreats and supplicates the gods without, and thus he symbolizes by the covering of the head the covering and concealment of the soul by the body (*Mor.* 266C-E).

The issue is one of honour. The man's head-covering is a sign of self-abasement, of humble concealment before his god, and of appropriate deference toward a deity of superlative honour. It also acts as a necessary safeguard when in prayer—a suitable aid in maintaining a singularity of focus. It stands, therefore, as a visible symbol of reverence, tribute and respect to one's god, all of which falls within the matrix of honour-shame. To wear this same symbol of honour before one's social superior would be to bring dishonour to the god for whom it is designed, and the consequence may be to provoke a measure of divine jealousy (even a degree of divine wrath) upon the other party. The uncovering *acknowledges* the presence of other people worthy of honour but places this within a hierarchical system wherein the honour of the god(s) is paramount. Here, one observes that the covering or uncovering of the head, in both a public and liturgical setting, is an action made wholly within the social constraints of honour-shame and that these are of vital import even in the minutiae of everyday life.

These same constraints act, albeit with different manifestations, on the attire of women. The work of Caroline Galt (1931), Aline Rousselle (1992) and Dale Martin (1995) demonstrates that for the reputable Roman woman the head-covering served to protect her dignity and status, signifying a woman not to be propositioned. Rousselle, in particular, claims that in the case of respected and respectable women, 'although the veil was a symbol of subjection, it was also the badge of honour, of sexual reserve, and hence of mastery of the self. A veil or hood constituted

37. φθονός LSJ *sv*, ill-will, envy, jealousy.

a warning: it signified that the wearer was a respectable woman and that no man dare approach without risking ... penalties' (1992: 315).[38] Hence, the attire of the woman had an impact on the honour of the men to whom she was related.

In summarizing the above, it would appear that, with respect to *public non-liturgical* head-coverings, the available evidence relating to men is that they had the option of whether to be covered or not, but if covered would uncover on meeting an acquaintance. For women the expectation was that, outside the home, they would be accompanied (by a husband, male kin, servant etc.) and would have a head covering, and possibly a veil. With respect to *liturgical* head-coverings for men, the weight of evidence points more certainly to the fact that they were expected to be covered if playing a central role in worship, but for women there may have been an element of choice depending on the presence or absence of non-kin men.[39]

The Jewish Context

Unlike the New Testament, the Old Testament has no single focused discussion of male and female head-coverings, although there are enough relevant scattered texts to grant us an informed picture. Certainly, for the Levitical priesthood, the Old Testament delivers numerous explicit stipulations regarding head-coverings, and there are also a small number of texts that refer to the general head-coverings of both men and women.[40] The head-coverings required of the priesthood are unambiguous: every priest was expected to wear a headdress of fine linen—and the high priest was to wear his head-covering continually.[41] (The Mishnah appears to embody this same tradition in its own description of priestly attire, *m. Yom.* 7.5.) There were only exceptional circumstances in which a priest or high priest would uncover his own head, such as disaster or bereavement.[42]

38. Cf. Martin 1995: 229-49.

39. Contra Gundry-Volf 1997: 151, n. 1. All of the available evidence runs against Hays's claim (1997: 186), 'It was not the normal custom in Greek and Roman cultures to be veiled; thus, it is hard to see how their being unveiled in worship could be regarded as controversial or shameful.'

40. See esp. Keener 2000; Stansell 2002.

41. Exod. 28.4, 37-38; 39.28; Lev. 16.4; 21.10 LXX; Ezek. 44.18; Zech. 3.5.

42. Lev. 10.6; 21.10 LXX; Ezek. 24.17 LXX (the divine command in both of these circumstance to *not* uncover the head may presuppose that the norm was to do so; certainly this is the case with normal vestments, Gen. 37.29; 2 Sam. 3.31; Job 18.4; Jer. 36.24; Ezek. 13.21).

With regard to head-coverings for non-priestly men, the Old Testament details, albeit at only a few points, the presence of a male head-covering. The Levitical command that the hair of a leper's head is to be uncovered (ἀκατακάλυπτος) presupposes a male head-covering (Lev. 10.6; 13.45 LXX), and the book of Daniel informs us that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace still wearing their head-coverings (τιάραι, Dan. 3.21). Elsewhere, righteousness and justice are spoken of, poetically, as being clothed in a robe and a head-covering (the assumption being that such ethical qualities and sartorial attire are presupposed for the people of Israel[43]). At the same time, however, other texts speak of a male *putting* on a head-covering, particularly in times of distress: King David does so after hearing of the death of Absalom (2 Sam. 19.4),[44] and Haman returns home from his defeat by Mordecai, grieving and κατὰ κεφαλῆς (Est. 6.12 LXX).[45] The picture, then, is similar to the Greco-Roman context observed above; that is, a head-covering is a pre-requisite priestly vestment, and although the non-priestly male would normally adopt a head-covering in public, there may be an element of choice in such apparel.

Women, in general, were expected to be seen in public as little as possible.[46] A young unmarried girl may be allowed out without a head-covering, but typically a father would attempt to keep an unmarried daughter secluded from men as a safeguard against the danger of promiscuity.[47] The normal attire for married women in public (i.e., in situations where the woman may encounter male strangers) was the wearing of a head-covering and a veil.[48] As in the Greco-Roman context, it is a likely assumption that women did not wear a veil at home amongst kin. Christian Wolff appeals to images within the synagogue discovered

43. Job 29.14; cf. Ezek 23.13 LXX.

44. The LXX notes only that, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔκρυψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ; it is Josephus who reads this as a head-covering (κατακάλυπτω, *Ant.* 7.254).

45. See Watson 2000b: 44. On the later rabbinic texts noting the lack of a male head-covering, see Tomson 1990: 133.

46. Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.169-72; Heinemann 1962.

47. *4 Macc.* 18.7-8; *Pseud.-Phoc.* 215-16; Sir. 26.10; 42.11-12; Philo, *Spec. Leg*. 3.169; *Flacc*. 89

48. Gen. 24.65; 38.14, 19; Song 4.1, 3; 6.7; Sus. 1.32; *m. Ket.* 7.6; Tomson 1990: 133; Stansell 2002: 6; Massey 2007.10, n. 26. Contra Murphy-O'Connor (1980: 488) who writes, 'Both men and women wore a turban which, when unwound, uncovered the head.' Murphy-O'Connor presents no evidence of women wearing turbans. The status of widows is uncertain. In certain circumstances they may not have been expected to wear a veil (Jdt. 8.2-7; 10.7; 11.21).

at Dura Europos to claim that a woman's head-covering would have covered only the head and not the face as well.[49] There is certainly an impressive fresco at Dura Europos of seven women standing by a river, each wearing a head-covering, and each being unveiled. But how normative such an image may be for real-life social (and public) scenarios is difficult to ascertain, as it is to know whether such images from Jewish life in mid-third-century CE Mesopotamia can be easily retrojected back into first-century life in Corinth. Even the image itself presents problems of social locale, for there is no male presence in the fresco (as might be expected, for the foreground image is of a *naked* woman standing in the river bathing an infant). One may surmise that, here, the absence of the veil is entirely consistent within a social context of a group of women socializing alone, and, hence, that care is needed in attempting to employ Wolff's statement uncritically to public scenarios of everyday Corinthian life.

In a Jewish context, the public removal of the woman's veil was done for particular situations involving scandal (or the suggestion of scandal), and such an action would have brought shame both upon the woman and her family.[50] In Isa. 47.1-3, for example, the virgin daughter of Babylon is commanded to perform acts of indignity and self-humiliation, which not only include the removal of the robe and uncovering of the legs to reveal her nakedness, but also to remove the veil (ἀποκάλυψαι τὸ κατακάλυμμά σου). Such acts are said to directly expose the woman to shame (ἀνακαλυφθήσεται ἡ αἰσχύνη σου) and disgrace (ὀνειδισμός). Similarly, the wicked accusers of Susanna, who is veiled, demand that the veil be removed (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτήν ἦν γὰρ κατακεκαλυμμένη), so that they may 'feast their eyes on her beauty'. The result of Susanna's unveiling is that she, those with her and all who see the act are reduced to weeping (Sus. 31-35).

49. Wolff 1982: 67 ('Paulus spricht nicht von einer Verhullung des Gesichtes, sondern vom Bedecken des Kopfes').

50. Num. 5.18 LXX; Isa. 3.19; 47.2; Ezek. 13.21; Sus. 32. Thompson (1988: 104) is misleading when she writes, 'Paul, with his Jewish background, would have experienced no conflict at men's bareheadedness in prayer; the custom of head-covering by Jewish men, seen in its minimal form in the yarmulke (skull cap) worn by men of the modern orthodox faith, did not develop until long after Paul's time'. She presents no evidence for such an assertion and simply maintains that because the yarmulke was a later tradition, the Judeans of Paul's day would have been bareheaded. Her evidence takes no account of texts in the Old Testament or the Mishnah. Gill (1990: 251) employs Thompson's statements uncritically.

In particular circumstances the hair may also have been shaved, and this was a cause of extreme public disgrace; indeed, a shaven woman was so repugnant that she could be peremptorily divorced.[51] A woman having unbound hair was considered to demonstrate a lack of good breeding, if not low conduct, and later rabbis warned that a woman uncovering her head could lead to a man's seduction and that a priest must be cautious when loosening the hair of a suspected adulteress.[52] The physical act of someone uncovering a woman's hair publicly was considered an act of violence against her and subject to a fine.[53] That said, a husband may remove a wife's head covering when she was suspected of adultery.[54] In Num. 5 a woman who is suspected by her husband of unfaithfulness or of whom he is jealous is subjected to a priestly ritual. The woman is made to stand before the lord, and the priest then uncovers the woman's head (ἀποκαλύψει τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς γυναικός, 5.18 LXX; hence, presupposing that it was covered), before placing the woman under oath and ministering the bitter water as a potential curse.

In summary, the categories of hair and the covering of the hair/head/face in a variety of contexts certainly has a sexual differentiating function, but also has a social function which informs issues of symbolic power within a framework of male honour. Any crossover of sexual identity would have been an abomination for an Israelite according to Deut. 22.5. Like the Greco-Roman background noted above, the Jewish context says something explicit about the roles and appearances of men and (particularly) women in ancient societies, and demonstrates the significant overlap of a shared cultural grammar.

1 Corinthians 11.2-16 and the Priority of Honour

The above sections have demonstrated the vital importance attached to public appearance and particularly the use of head-coverings in the first-century world. But they have also shown the disparity in the use and

51. See *T. Job* 23–25 (esp. 24.10); Ilan 1997: 156-57; Tomson 1990: 135; *m. Naz.* 4.5; *t. Nez*. 3.12-14.

52. *Abot R. Nath.* 14.35; cf. *Num. Rab.* 18.20.; *Sifre Num.* 11.2.1-3; *y. Sanh.* 6.4.1.

53. *m. B.K.* 8.6; *m. B. Qam.* 8.6; *Abot R. Nath.* 3A; Montefiore and Loewe 1938: 108. Diaspora Jews portrayed female demons as having dishevelled hair (*T. Sol.* 13.1).

54. Num. 5.18; Josephus, *Ant*. 3.11.6 §270; *Num. Rab*. 9.16; *Pes. Rab.* 26.1/2.

function of such attire between men and women.[55] For both, head-coverings existed as a powerful semiotic system generating symbols of status, wealth, style and self-promotion; but, for women, there was an additional component that such attire was also linked to notions of modesty, hiddenness, self-respect and exclusivity. Certainly, within an honour-shame context, the head and face stood as a symbolic replication of the social value of honour and dishonour and were displayed as such when the head was crowned, anointed, touched, covered/uncovered, struck, slapped or even severed from the body.[56]

There are also two additional dimensions to take into consideration relevant to this section. Firstly, Paul's concluding injunction over idol food just a few verses earlier can be seen to have a direct bearing upon his stipulations here (and, indeed, may have warranted the juxtaposition of the two topics). In 10.19-33, the apostle makes clear that behind idols, that is, the Greco-Roman pantheon, lay demons, and that sacrifices to (i.e., worship of) such demons negates the honour due solely to God and provokes a degree of divine jealousy,

> I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? (1 Cor. 11.20-22a, NRSV)

Here, notions of honour-shame are seen to have a spiritual dimension reaching into the heavenly realm whereby honouring demons dishonours God. In 1 Cor. 10, Paul speaks of the social context of worship to one's deity in relation to food, here in 11.2-16 it relates to head-coverings. In short, if the male covers his head to honour idols, behind which lay demons, and by which God is dishonoured and provoked to jealousy, then, it is easy to perceive how Paul deemed that a radical alternative was necessary.[57]

55. Oster (1988) rightly critiques Fee's remarkable assertion that there is 'almost no evidence (paintings, reliefs, statuary, etc.) that men in any of the cultures (Greek, Roman, Jew) covered their heads ... In the final analysis ... we simply have to admit that we do not know, in any case, it is hypothetical whatever it was' (1987: 505-508).

56. Hanson and Oakman 1998: 70; cf. C.A. Barton 2001: 56-58, 74, 79-80.

57. On this section, Fee 1987: 469-75; Martin 1995: 179-97 (on the pollution of the body in this context); Newton 1998; Thiselton 2000: 767-79.

Secondly, Paul's conceptual ideology of 'church' is that of the fictive kinship of believers drawn together as the new household of God.[58] The gospel proclamation goes out to and is embraced by individuals who are bound together in a new and distinct metaphorical family; they are ἀδελφοί in Christ, and so children of God.[59] Paul can even envisage himself in a paternal role and refers to the Corinthian believers as his 'beloved children' and to himself as their father (1 Cor. 4.14-15; cf. 2 Cor. 12.14-15). Certainly, Jesus' call to radical discipleship as outlined in the Gospel traditions explicitly sanctioned the relativization of kinship and household ties,[60] so that allegiance to Christ and God superseded those of family or other kin-groups. In this context, Paul can encourage Christ-followers to take the necessary step of considering that their commitment to Christ and the demands of his mission might require them both to forego family commitments and to forge alternative 'kinship' relations with fellow believers outside the family circle.[61] Here, the use of family imagery to create a new and distinct identity for his congregations creates a clear boundary from that of the dominant groups outside.[62]

But herein lay a potential problem for Paul in his guidance of the young community on the question of head-coverings: how to mitigate visible indices of status differentiation and instead assert the homogeneity of believers as ἀδελφοί in Christ? If, as shown, the norm for higher-status men in a liturgical setting was to cover the head (not only as an indicator of that status but also as a visible sign of devotion, piety and the *lex sacra*), then problems would undoubtedly accrue if one of the higher-status men strove to dominate proceedings or attempted to take on the function of *paterfamilias*.[63] And if a *number* of men strove to fulfil this role then, aside from negating Paul's conceptual understanding of the community as ἀδελφοί, this would potentially result in resentment, rivalry and perhaps conflicting groups. On the reading here, Paul has already mitigated such

58. See Joubert 1995; Barclay 1997.

59. Aasgaard 1997. 1 Corinthians has by far the highest number of references to believers as ἀδελφοί in the genuine Pauline corpus (39×; compared to 19× in Romans, 12× in 2 Corinthians, 11× in Galatians, 9× in Philippians, 19× in 1 Thessalonians).

60. S.C. Barton 1997.

61. See S.C. Barton 1997; Barclay 1997; Esler 1997; cf. Eph. 3.14-15; 1 Tim. 3.15.

62. Although, as the case of Onesimus (Philemon) demonstrates, it did not necessarily follow that all of the members of a household were Christ-followers.

63. I leave aside here the debate over the status location of key figures within the community, for the issue may be one of high status *relative* to others. See, most recently, Longenecker 2009 and the literature cited there.

potentialities during his time in Corinth by insisting that all of the men eschew a head-covering. That is, a demonstrable change in worship attire was necessary in order to take the radical step of accommodating all of the male members of the nascent Christ movement *equally* into the new community in Christ. Here, status distinctions are left behind; the higher status men are to forego visible demarcations of status by remaining uncovered.

The problem for Paul appears to be that, at the time of writing, a number of men were now employing the pagan norm of covering the head. But how can this be so if Pauline praxis was the opposite during his time with the church? A fitting scenario would be that at some point following Paul's departure, Greco-Roman male neophytes who traditionally covered the head in a liturgical setting entered the community and persisted with such attire. As the male head-covering was a vital (and highly visible) part of the ethos of Roman piety and devotion which had stood for generations, and with Paul absent, such men may have encountered little objection.[64] For these neophytes, any insistence on worshipping with uncovered head, clearly a radical departure to cultural norms and expectations, was perhaps a step too far in terms of their acculturization of a new Christ-centred paradigm.[65]

So, too, these men, especially those traditionally functioning as *patresfamilias* may have wanted to continue to assert some kind of social superiority and importance within the community and hence remained with covered head.[66] Such an attitude may have encouraged others to do likewise. The significant point here is that in traditional Roman thinking the male head-covering was worn to venerate one's god, and it should be of little surprise that some (or many) of the men in the community began to return to this particular pietistic gesture. As noted above, the potential for such action to result in antagonism, hostility and conflicting groups is one that has now clearly occurred within the community. Hence, in 1 Cor. 11, Paul offers clarification of his earlier teaching, Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν (11.3, emphasizing the homogeneity of male life in Christ [παντὸς ἀνδρὸς]) ... πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αυτοῦ (that is, Christ,[67] 11.4). In the context of the above study, this is a startling proposal, for the Greco-Roman and Jewish norm would

64. Oster 1988: 494; Witherington 1995: 238.

65. On acculturization and what has been termed 'dissonance' (or 'status-dissonance'), see Elliot 1986; Neyrey 1990; Malina 1993; Malina and Neyrey 1996.

66. Gill 1990: 250.

67. So, Barrett 1971: 250; Moxnes 1988; Thiselton 2000: 827.

be that the opposite is the case: God is disgraced by an *uncovered* male head. That Paul can offer such a proposal so briefly and assuredly, and *without* further elucidation, suggests that this is not an assertion originally made here. Paul's injunction then asserts that *a man* (or the *every man* of 11.3) is the image and glory of God and hence should reflect that glory by remaining uncovered, Ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων (11.7).

The matrix of honour-shame may be beneficially used to elucidate a number of key points within the social context of Paul's injunctions.[68] The wearing of the traditional Roman head-covering brought honour to the gods; in Paul's teaching it is now the absence of that head-covering which, in asserting the brotherhood of believers, brings honour (glory) to God and reflects something of his image. The question for the neophyte may well have been formulated around the debate of which option was most suitable in honouring one's deity. If so, the traditional view of deference and humble concealment behind a head-covering may have been considered more appropriate—firmly entrenched traditions are often difficult to change, especially, as here, when the new expectations are the very opposite of those earlier traditions (and more so when the traditional proffering of honour to one's god was immersed in the very stability of the *pax Romana*).[69]

Further, if rival members, or groups, were attempting to foster an ambition to dominate proceedings by use of such attire, then this would undoubtedly cause rivalry and discord. And if the community could be easily dishonoured through any of its members acting improperly, it would be particularly shameful for the members themselves to demonstrate antipathy towards each other.[70] Paul's reasoning is that *in Christ* there should be no sense of superiority, therefore all of the men should be unveiled (they are *all* ἀδελφοί in Christ), a scenario which removes any sense of social superiority. The new symbol of presenting honour to Christ alone, and so shunning the worship of idols/demons and distinctions of social superiority, was to be the uncovered head.

That Paul is only now giving *theological* justification for his views perhaps demonstrates that during his time in Corinth his theological reflection upon the uncovered head of the man may not have been fully formed or elucidated, or perhaps that he was misunderstood (or that his

68. See esp. Malina 2001; Gundry-Volf 1997.
69. See Moxnes 1988.
70. Esler 1997: 124.

thinking lacked cogency).[71] But now he wishes them to recognize the basis of his injunctions in 11.7, where the language of glory is conjoined to that of honour. The man is not only created in the image of God, but in some way mirrors an inherent aspect of God's own glory which the man is designed to reflect through the uncovered head. The (uncovered) glory of the uncovered man is intended to bring honour to God.[72] The covering-up of that God-given glory within a context of prayerful or prophetic communion with God is an action that now brings shame upon both the man himself (upon his own head[73]) and upon his metaphorical head, Christ.[74]

For women, however, the central social constraints within an honour-shame culture were very different.[75] In a liturgical setting a woman may have had the option of wearing a head-covering or not, depending on her role, and particularly at home the wife may well have been uncovered whilst engaged in aspects of the domestic cult (provided only male-kin were present). In Paul's absence, neophyte women entering the community may have wished to mirror conventions at home and remain uncovered amongst kin (asserting the homogeneity of the new kinship group), whilst others may have recognized that if there was to be a change in male head-coverings, then they, too, could make changes. And if the uncovered male head in some way gave greater glory and honour to God, then perhaps a number of the women sought to bring such honour to God by emulating the men and removing the head-covering.[76] But in the

71. As noted above, both Engberg-Pedersen and Horrell maintain that Paul is here simply modifying or correcting his previous teaching. This is too simplistic and ignores the fact that Paul was part of the worshipping community for a year-and-a-half. The text was not written in a literary vacuum, and answers need to be formulated as to why *both* the men and women of the community are now behaving contrary to what were surely Pauline expectations. After all, the issue of wearing a head-covering is rather clear: either you wear one or you do not.

72. Legitimated by the Israelite notion of human beings created in the image of God, 1 Cor. 11.7.

73. The debate over the meaning of κεφαλή is well documented in the major commentaries (see esp. Thiselton 2000: 812-22). Its precise meaning makes little difference to my argument here.

74. On the uncovered head bringing shame to both the man *and* Christ, see Fee 1987: 506; Jervis 1992: 241f.; Engberg-Pedersen 1991: 682.

75. Paul's instructions at this point are likely to include all of the women at Corinth; cf. Hays 1997: 185.

76. Cf. Wire (1990: 123), '[it is] likely that the women who prophesied uncovered chose to do so for some purpose with social consequences and theological justification'.

context of communal meetings, either in a house-group setting or that of a larger meeting of the whole community, the presence, or potential presence, of non Christ-followers (e.g., friends, acquaintances, Godfearers or even strangers) would necessitate appropriate *public* attire—which was to keep the head covered.[77]

In this respect, then, Paul's ideological concept of the homogeneity of life in Christ begins to break down, and for all of the radicality of his injunctions for male worshippers, Paul asserts, and maintains, a clear cultural distinction between men and women at worship. Indeed, it is intriguing to note that, unlike Gal. 3.28 where Paul can assert, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus', in 1 Cor. 12.13 this tripartite assertion is abbreviated to omit the oneness of male and female. So, despite the clear linguistic overlap,

> Gal. 3.28, πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ [ἐβαπτίσθητε, v. 27]
>
> 1 Cor. 12.13, γὰρ…ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν,[78]

and despite Paul's clear ideological assertion in 1 Cor. 12 of the homogeneity of disparate body parts into the one body of Christ, Paul declines to assert an equality between male and female on the question of head-coverings.[79] But why is this? The answer, again, appears to be focused upon the social context of honour-shame whereby, for women, the Christ-movement at worship was to remain sensitive to cultural norms regarding presence of non-kin.

The woman brought respect and honour to her literal male kin (if believers) and to her fictive kin (the male members of her new family *in Christ*) by the wearing of a suitable head-covering. A woman participating in a setting of worship with her head uncovered had the potential to bring shame to herself, and to the men with whom she was associated (certainly, any believing husband, father, brother or son may well have felt extreme

77. See Winter 2001: 136-38 on the potential presence of non Christ-followers.

78. On the parallels, see esp. Dunn 1970: 109-31.

79. Interestingly, Thiselton writes that Paul's language in 1 Cor. 12.13, '*constitutes a direct onslaught against categorization or elitism within the church*' (2000: 998, italics his). But while he also mentions the Gal. 3.28 parallel, he fails to engage either with the relevance of his statement for 11.2-16 or with Paul's omission of equality between male and female.

humiliation by such action[80]). That an uncovered woman was anathema in this context is drawn by Paul's wider cultural parallel, 'it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair: but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil' (11.6). The cultural certitude of the shame brought by a shaved head appears to be obvious in Pauline thought; and, equally, an uncovered female head within a context of the appearance of strangers appears to be no different. The woman's uncovered head is considered shameful. Once again, that Paul perhaps deems it necessary in the letter to present clarity of thought means that there was an element of vagueness and ambiguity in his previous teaching.

In terms of headship, Paul's directives appear to run parallel with notions of honour: the woman is to bring honour to her metaphorical head, the man; the man is to bring honour to Christ, and Christ to God. Although the position of the woman is one step displaced from Christ vis-à-vis the man, she still has a vital role to play in the structural balance of honour. For a man dishonoured and discredited by the action of female-kin can bring no honour upon those to whom he is responsible (an employer, patron, slave owner etc.); indeed, such people would be dishonoured by the man. It remains so within the Christ-movement. A discredited and humiliated male can bring little honour to his god in the eyes of the first-century world. Conversely, a woman, correctly attired, brings honour to a man—in such a social setting the woman represents the *glory* of the man (11.7)—who, in the context of 1 Cor. 11.2-16, is then able to bring honour to Christ.[81]

This may well point to the notion of the woman's ἐξουσία in 1 Cor. 11.10. Traditionally, this verse is understood either in the sense that the head-covering is a sign or symbol of a woman's authority to pray or

80. Contra Watson, who maintains, 'In failing to cover her head, she brings dishonour upon her head, that is, upon *herself* ... Her uncovered head is clearly *her own* shame: there is no reference at all to a *man*, woman's figurative head, who is put to shame by her conduct' (2000: 529; italics his). Rather, the evidence of honour-shame cultures suggests that the male-kin (not necessarily a husband, if the woman was unmarried) would be shamed also. See MacDonald 1988: 117; Gundry-Volf 1997: 154-55; Hays 1997: 184-85.

81. Contra Watson, who writes, 'Paul will similarly claim that woman's long hair is "glory *to her,*" not to her husband—if she has one' (2000a: 530; italics his). Watson again misses the context of honour-shame. The Jerusalem Talmud (*y. Ket.* 11.3) contains an anecdote of one Rabbi Jose the Galilean who was advised to divorce his wife because, it was said, 'she is not your glory'.

prophesy within the worshipping community,[82] or that a woman should exercise control, power or freedom over her head.[83] The latter view appears to make more sense, not least because Paul's admonition points specifically towards the prepositional clause διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, rather than to thoughts of prayer and prophecy. But the definition requires nuance. By maintaining the appropriate head-covering, the woman maintains the structural balance of honour appropriate within the worshipping community, and it is precisely the presence of the head-covering which is a fitting symbol of her *ability* or *capability* (ἐξουσία) to do so. Such ability brings honour and respect to the community as a whole. Conversely, the woman also has ἐξουσία (in a wider sense, of freedom of choice together with an element of power) to bring dishonour upon the man, upon Christ and upon the community.[84] The head-covering in effect becomes a fitting symbol of the honour, self-control and orderliness that Paul desires for the entire community.[85]

This then makes sense with regard to οἱ ἄγγελοι. For whether these are visiting human messengers,[86] fallen 'lusting' angels[87] or, most likely, 'good' angels present as guardians of order,[88] the priority of maintaining the honour of the community by the women is vital. The head-covering means that the woman's own honour is safeguarded from the sexual desire of heavenly beings (or indeed the sexual temptations of other men[89]), and, equally, that she maintains the natural order fitting for a worshipping community (whether in the presence of angelic beings or outsiders), which then brings honour to the community. It also means that a woman's hair, as *her* glory (11.15), is covered so as not to detract from God's glory in worship.

82. See Hooker 1963–64: 413, cf. 416; Barrett 1971: 254-55; cf. Fee 1987: 519-21.

83. Cf. Fee 1987: 520-21; Engberg-Pedersen 1991: 682, n. 13.

84. Paul's previous use of ἐξουσία in 1 Corinthians (7.37; 8.9; 9.4-6, 12, 18) demonstrates that it refers to a right which can be relinquished.

85. On the relevance of honour, see esp. Feuillet 1973, 1974.

86. So Padgett 1984: 81-82; Murphy-O'Connor 1988: 271; Thompson 1988: 112.

87. So Theissen 1987: 171-72; Martin 1995: 242-46.

88. So Hooker 1963–64: 412-13; Hall 1990: 39; Wire 1990: 121; Jervis 1992: 243f.; Gundry-Volf 1997: 164; Hays 1997: 188. Paul sees angels as observers of the created order (1 Cor. 4.9); elsewhere, the New Testament has angels as watchers of believers (1 Tim. 5.21) and even churches have angels (Rev. 1.20). The Old Testament also notes the presence of angels in worship (Ps. 138.1).

89. Jaubert 1971–72; Watson 2000a, 2000b.

Conclusion

The matrix of honour-shame, which permeated the culture of Roman Corinth in the first century CE, fruitfully supplies the social context of 1 Cor. 11.2-16. In honour-shame societies there is a strong emphasis upon clearly defined gender roles, a blurring or rejection of which brings shame—not only upon the individuals directly involved, but also upon one's husband or wife, one's family, one's wider community of friends and associates, and in a religious context upon one's deity. Paul's argument here is one based on distinctive and suitable gender roles for a worshipping community under God. On the issue of head-coverings, then, Paul has established a new norm for men: the lack of a head-covering is insisted upon in order to undermine any indicators of male status as the community worshipped together. At the same time, in light of the potential presence of visitors, the women are to *maintain* certain boundary markers by wearing a head-covering. Paul insists that transgression of the conventional boundary for the women or transgression of the new boundary for the man has the potential to bring shame, and implies the loss of honour. In short, he is attempting to establish a radical new perspective for male worshippers yet demand a traditional one for women. Both, however, are deeply grounded in his theological understanding of the created being within a context of honour and shame, and how they are most suitably manifest in worship.

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