

Witherington & Massey *versus* Chrysostom & Epiphanius:
Long Hair Prohibited as Covering in 1 Cor 11:4, 7¹

Bible Faculty Leadership Summit
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πᾶς ἄνθρωπος προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. ...
Ἄνθρωπος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων.
(1 Cor 11:4, 7)

A survey of extant church fathers' interpretations of 1 Cor 11:4 and 7 exposes two significant interpreters, Chrysostom and Epiphanius, who diverged from the standard "the-covering-is-a-veil" consensus² into closer alignment with an emerging modern consensus: the covering is hair.³ Two recent surveys of extra-biblical Hellenistic data by Ben Witherington III

¹ This essay is an expanded version of a forthcoming article "Chrysostom & Epiphanius: Long Hair Prohibited as Covering in 1 Cor 11:4, 7," *BBR* 22.3 (2012).

² Church fathers whose available comments on 1 Cor 11:2-16 indicate that they understood the covering to be a veil of some sort include: Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Basil the Great, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Pelagius, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ambrosiaster.

³ Francis Watson commented in 2000 that the understanding that 1 Cor 11:2-16 is addressing hair and not veils is beginning to acquire the status of "a broad consensus in recent scholarship." "The Authority of the Voice: A Theological Reading of 1 Cor 11.2-16," *NTS* 46 (2000): 534 n. 20. Whether the consensus is "broad" is open for debate, but its growth is easily documented. Examples of interpreters holding this position include: Kirk R. MacGregor, "Is 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 a Prohibition of Homosexuality?" *BibSac* 166 (2009): 201-16; Philip B. Payne, "Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 3 (2006): 9-18; Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians* (IVPNTCS; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004); Giancarlo Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio. Paolo e la donna in 1Cor 11,2-16 e 14,33b-36* (SupplRivBib 37; Bologna, 2001); Marlis Gielen, "Beten und Prophezeien mit unverhülltem Kopf? Die Kontroverse zwischen Paulus und der korinthischen Gemeinde um die Wahrung der Geschlechtsrollensymbolik in 1 Kor 11,2-16," *ZNW* 90 (1999): 220-49; Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians* (Sacra Pagina Series 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999); J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 590-91; Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998): 153-54; David E. Blattenberger III, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 through Archaeological and Moral-Rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1997); Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Study in Paul's Theological Method," in *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche: Festschrift für Peter Stuhlmacher zum 65. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 6,12-11,16)* (EKKNT 7/2; Zürich/Braunschweig: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991), 491-94; Alan Padgett, "The Significance of ἀντί in 1 Corinthians 11:15," *TynB* 45 (1994): 181-7; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 265-74; "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482-500; J. Keir Howard, "Neither Male nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament," *EQ* 55 (1983): 31-42; Stephen A. Reynolds, "Colloquium," *WTJ* 36 (1973): 90-1; James B. Hurley, "Did Paul require Veils or the Silence of Women: A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 190-220; William J. Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (F. F. Bruce Festschrift; ed. W. W. Gasque; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 231-41. For others holding this view, see Jason David BeDuhn, "'Because of the Angels': Unveiling Paul's Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11," *JBL* 118 (1999): 296 n. 7.

and Preston Massey claim that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in 1 Cor 11:4 necessarily refers to the wearing of a material head covering.⁴ The first section of this essay argues 1) that these surveys misread the extra-biblical data,⁵ 2) that examples of *κόμη* as the object of *ἔχω* highlight the viability of taking *κόμη* as the implied object of *ἔχων* in 1 Cor 11:4, 3) that two significant church fathers understood the covering to which Paul refers to be or include *κόμη*, and 4) that data in the context of 1 Cor 11:2-16 better supports understanding *κόμη* as the covering Paul has in mind. The second section 1) provides lexical evidence from hellenistic literature that both *κομάω* and *κόμη* may refer to uncut hair, 2) demonstrates that all extant evidence from the church fathers indicates that they understood these terms in 1 Cor. 11 to refer to uncut hair, and 3) concludes by offering an explanation for how why almost all the church fathers understood Paul to be addressing veils and not hair in 1 Cor. 11:4-12.

An Analysis of *κατὰ [τῆς] κεφαλῆς* in Extra-Biblical Literature

Ben Witherington III and Preston Massey have each argued separately from extra-biblical linguistic evidence that Paul's language in 1 Cor 11:4-7 cannot refer to anything other than a material head-covering. The following section of this essay addresses the question does the phrase in v. 4 *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* necessarily refer to a material head-covering?

The phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* reads literally "on/down (the) head having." This phrase occurs nowhere else in the NT or the Septuagint. A search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*⁶ and the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri⁷ reveals that the exact construction *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* occurs nowhere else in extant Greek literature.⁸ This lack of evidence makes it difficult to discern Paul's meaning.

⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 233-34; Preston T. Massey, "The Meaning of *κατακαλύπτω* and *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16," *NTS* 53 (2007): 502-23.

⁵ The significance of this misreading is highlighted by the fact that Massey's work has already been quoted as demonstrating, along with others, that veils not hair are under consideration in the passage. Mark Finney, "Honour, Head-Coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 in Its Social Context," *JSNT* 33 (2010): 31.

⁶ Online: <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/> [accessed June 23, 2012]. This database catalogs most extant literary texts written in Greek from Homer to the fall of Byzantium in A.D. 1453.

⁷ Online: <http://papyri.info/> [accessed June 23, 2012]. This site allows users to search simultaneously the Advanced Papyrological Information System (APIS), the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (DDbDP) and the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens (HGV).

⁸ Specifically, the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* without an explicit direct object for *ἔχων* occurs in no (electronically available) extant Greek literature from the 8th c. B.C. to the 3rd c. A.D., unless in church fathers who are quoting this passage. This is true regardless of whether *κεφαλῆς* is anarthrous or not. A search of the *Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri* at Papyri.Info yielded only three instances of *κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς*, all of which were dated after A.D. 200. Further, in none of these cases did the phrase refer to covering the head but to the head as the location of a blow or wound. In *Les Papyrus Fouad I* 29.11, (A.D. 224), a father complains of his son's head being wounded by someone throwing a stone (*ρίψαντος ἐξ αὐτῶν τινος λίθου, τραυματαίσιος ὁ υἱός μου, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἐστηκώς, ἐγένετο κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς*). *P.Oxy.* 33.2672dupl (A.D. 218), lines 15-18, also registers a complaint regarding someone being struck on the head with a stone (*καὶ λίθῳ με ἐνετίναξεν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς*). *P.Oxy.* 16.1885 (c. A.D. 509), line 8 speaks of someone being struck repeatedly on the head and receiving a mortal wound (*κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς κόψας ἀφειδῶς καὶ θανατηφόρον ἐπενεγκῶν*).

Data Advanced by Ben Witherington

In 1995 Ben Witherington stated in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, “the discussions by Murphy-O’Connor, Hurley, Padgett, and others of hair and hairstyles are quite beside the point. The issue is headcoverings. . . . Plutarch uses the same phrase that Paul does, *kata kephales*, to refer to something resting on the head, not hair and much less long, flowing hair (*Regum* 200F; *Aitia Romana* 267C; *Vitae Decem Oratorae* 842B; *Pyrrhus* 399B; *Pompeius* 640C; *Caesar* 739D).”⁹

The extended list of citations Witherington offers from Plutarch¹⁰ gives the impression of a substantial array of evidence for the material-covering position. There are, however, several problems with this evidence.

The first problem is that two of the cited sources are irrelevant: *Vitae Decem Oratorae* 842B and *Pyrrhus* 399B. In both of these texts the phrase *κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς* occurs in the context of someone being struck on the head, in the first with a staff and the second with a sword.¹¹ Neither have anything to do with something resting on the head.

Second, although the rest of the texts cited from Plutarch do provide partial parallels to Paul’s construction, each of them has one significant difference.

(1) Plutarch’s *Moralia*, “Sayings of Romans” 200F, provides the closest parallel to 1 Cor 11:4. Recounting Scipio the Younger’s arrival in Alexandria to inspect it for the Roman Senate, Plutarch says, “after disembarking, he was walking with his toga covering his head.”¹² Although this statement has been often cited as confirmation that Paul was referring to a material head covering,¹³ most commentators ignore the fact that Plutarch supplies an explicit object *ἱμάτιον* (“toga”) for *ἔχων* (“covering”), whereas Paul does not. In other words, Plutarch explicitly states that a garment was covering Scipio’s head.

(2) In his Lives, *Pompey* 640C, Plutarch describes Demetrius as: “that fellow would be already reclining at table in great state, having the hood of his toga drawn down behind his

⁹ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community*, 233. As the following discussion will demonstrate, Witherington is certainly correct that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* by itself does not refer to hair or long, flowing hair.

¹⁰ Plutarch (c. A.D. 46-120), a contemporary of the Apostle Paul and Josephus, was among other things a Greek historian and biographer, best known for his works *Parallel Lives* and *Customs (Moralia)*.

¹¹ *Vitae Decem Oratorum* 842B: ἀπαντήσας ῥάβδῳ τε κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ τελώνου κατήνεγκε; “he struck the officer on the head with his staff.” *Plutarch’s Morals* (trans. W. W. Goodwin; Little, Brown, and Co., 1874), 5.39; *Pyrrhus* 24.3: καὶ φθάσας τὸν βάρβαρον ἐπληξεν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τῷ ξίφει πληγὴν; “and before the Barbarian could strike, struck him such a blow on the head with his sword...” *Plutarch’s Lives* (LCL; trans. B. Perrin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 9.426-27.

¹² *Regnum* 200F: ἀποβὰς ἐβάδιζε κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔχων τὸ ἱμάτιον. *Plutarch’s Moralia* (LCL; trans. F. C. Babbitt; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 3.190-91.

¹³ For example, David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 517; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 87; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 506-7.

ears.”¹⁴ Again, in contrast with Paul’s language, the verbal ἔχων (“having”) has τὸ ἱμάτιον (“toga”) as its explicit direct object.

(3) In his *Lives*, *Caesar* 739D, Plutarch describes Caesar’s reaction when he realized Brutus was against him: “but when he saw Brutus with his sword drawn in his hand, then he pulled his garment over his head, and made no more resistance.”¹⁵ In this instance, the verb ἐφειλκύσατο (“pulled”) has τὸ ἱμάτιον (“garment”) as its explicit direct object.

(4) In his *Roman Questions* 267C, Plutarch recounts the supposed reasons why the first three divorces in Roman history took place: “the second was Sulpicius Gallus, because he saw his wife pull her cloak over her head.”¹⁶ As in the previous example, τὸ ἱμάτιον (“cloak”) is the explicit direct object of ἐφελκυσσάμενην (“pull”).

In each of the four examples above, the construction κατὰ κεφαλῆς is not used by itself to indicate something resting on the head as was claimed.¹⁷ Rather it is used to indicate where the person’s ἱμάτιον was being worn. In every case the verbs ἔχω (“to have”) and ἐφέλω (“to draw”) have ἱμάτιον (“toga, garment”) as their explicit direct object which identified what was being worn on or drawn over the head (κατὰ κεφαλῆς).

Third, Witherington does not inform his reader that the phrase κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς by itself has a wide range of syntagmatic usages, many of them having nothing to do with material head coverings or even “something resting on the head.”¹⁸ For example, it may mean “at the head” as in—“he killed his brother in a match by throwing a discus at his head.”¹⁹ It may mean “headlong, head first” as in—“[Gaius] might be cast down headlong.”²⁰ Or, it may mean “on the head” as in—“I would take pickle sauce and go [and] pour it on his head.”²¹ The fact that κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς is used in a broad variety of contexts is significant because it undermines the claim that this phrase transparently refers to a material head-covering.

¹⁴ *Pompeius* 640C: ἐκεῖνος ἤδη κατέκειτο σοβαρός, ἔχων δι’ ὤτων κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον. Translation adapted from Pompey 40.4.6-7 in *Plutarch’s Lives* (LCL; trans. B. Perrin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 5.218-19.

¹⁵ *Caesar* 739D: ὅτε Βροῦτον εἶδεν ἐσπασμένον τὸ ξίφος, ἐφειλκύσατο κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ παρήκεν ἑαυτόν. *Caesar* 66.7.1 in *Plutarch’s Lives* (LCL; trans. B. Perrin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 7.598-99.

¹⁶ *Aitia Romana* 267C: δεύτερος δὲ Σουλπίκιος Γάλλος ἐφελκυσσάμενην ἰδὼν κατὰ κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον. *Plutarch’s Moralia* (LCL; trans. F. C. Babbitt; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 4.26-27.

¹⁷ Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 233.

¹⁸ *Conflict & Community*, 233. Witherington’s assertion, “the discussions by Murpy-O’Connor, Hurley, Padgett, and others of hair and hairstyles are quite beside the point. The issue is headcoverings,” appears to reflect his personal certainty more than it does the nature of the available evidence.

¹⁹ Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 3.160.3: συγγυμαζόμενον αὐτὸν βαλὼν δίσκῳ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς κτείνει. R. Wagner, *Apollodori bibliotheca* (Mythographi Graeci I; Leipzig: Teubner, 1894).

²⁰ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 19.71: διαρριπτοῦντα ὄσαι κατὰ κεφαλῆς.

²¹ Epictetus, *Discourse*, 2.20.29: ἔβαλον ἂν γάριον καὶ ἀπελθὼν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦς κατέχεον. For other uses of this phrase, see Josephus who uses phrase κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς three times to refer to something happening to someone’s head and none of them have anything to do with veils or hair (*Antiquities*, 1.50.4; 2.252.2; 13.117.5).

Finally, it is particularly noteworthy that when Plutarch discusses why Romans cover their heads when worshipping²² and why Roman sons cover their heads but daughter go with uncovered heads when escorting their dead parents to the grave,²³ the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* with or without *ἔχων* (“having”) is entirely absent.²⁴ In these contexts, to denote a covered head, Plutarch uses terms for being covered or veiled: *συγκεκαλυμμένοι* (“veil completely”), *ἐπικαλύπτεσθαι* (“cover over, shroud”), *ἐγκεκαλύμμεναις* (“veil, wrap up”), or the expression “pulling the toga up to the ears” (*ἄχρι τῶν ὠτων ἀνελάμβανον τὸ ἱμάτιον*). To denote an uncovered head he uses the following terms: *γυμναῖς* (“naked”), *ἀκαλύπτοις*, *ἀπαρακαλύπτω* (“uncovered”), or *ἀποκαλύπτονται* (“to uncover”). Strikingly, none of this specific vocabulary occurs in 1 Cor 11. In other words, in the very context in which it would be most natural for Plutarch to use *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* if it normally referred to a head covered with something material, he does not use the phrase.

Data Advanced by Preston Massey

In his 2007 article, under the section “The Meaning of *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων*,” Preston Massey asserts that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* “though generally used with an object (but understood without the object), always implies some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head.”²⁵ He then footnotes (n. 71) the following statement:

Besides the references already cited, *κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον* (a covering down from the head) may be found in the following texts: Dionysius of Halicarnassus *The Roman Antiquities* III.71, VI.3.3, XI.26.4, XII.16.4, XV.9.7, XIX.8.3; Plutarch *Pompey* XL.4; *Caesar* LXVI.12 The Sayings of the Romans 200F; The Roman Questions 266C and 267C; Fortune of the Romans 319C (which has the similar *ἀφείλεν ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον*; and Josephus, *Ant.* III.270.²⁶

Contrary to Massey’s claim, the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* does not occur in the extant literature unless it has an explicit direct object. It is, therefore, illegitimate to claim that it is “understood without the object” to always imply “some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head.” Nonetheless, Massey’s footnote appears to be an impressive list of citations supporting his conclusion that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* refers to a material covering.

Upon inspection, however, two major problems appear. First, of the six references to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, three do not contain the phrase *κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον* as was claimed. In fact, they have nothing to do with head coverings. Specifically, in *Roman Antiquities*, 6.3.3, Dionysius refers to Postumius “setting up camp high above” (lit. on the head of; *κατὰ κεφαλῆς*) his enemies; *Roman Antiquities*, 11.26.4, line 6, describes how Siccus’ enemies got

²² *Moralia* 266C-E.

²³ *Moralia* 267A-B.

²⁴ As noted before, the phrase does occur in *Moralia* 267C in his parenthetical remark about divorce, but that has no direct bearing on why Roman sons escort their parents to their grave bare headed.

²⁵ Massey, “The Meaning of *κατακαλύπτω* and *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16,” 522. This article developed from Massey’s dissertation, “The Veil and the Voice: A Study of Female Beauty and Male Attraction in Ancient Greece” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2006).

²⁶ Massey, “The Meaning of *κατακαλύπτω* and *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16,” 522.

above him (κατὰ κεφαλῆς) and rolled stones on him, killing him; and *Roman Antiquities*, 19.8.3, line 6, describes Meton being thrown out of the theater head first (κατὰ κεφαλῆς).²⁷

The second problem is that citing texts that contain terms such as ἱμάτιον (“toga”) or περιβολὴν (“garment, mantle”) does nothing to prove that the phrase κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων, which does not contain such terms, refers to a material covering. That is similar to saying that since the phrase “with a hat on his head” occurs frequently in English literature, the blank in the phrase “with _____ on his head” must refer to a hat.

Less significant, but still noteworthy, the other texts Massey cites do not contain the exact phrase κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἱμάτιον but use language similar to that found in the Plutarch examples previously discussed.²⁸

(5) In *Roman Antiquities* 3.71.5, Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes a statue as: “This statue ... was shorter than a man of average stature, having a mantle over the head.”²⁹ Here “mantle” (περιβολὴν), a cognate of the term “covering” used in 1 Cor 11:15 (περιβόλαιον), is used rather than “toga” (ἱμάτιον). Note that Dionysius supplied an explicit direct object for “having” (ἔχουσα), indicating what was on the head of the statue.

(6) In *Roman Antiquities* 12.16.4, Dionysius describes Camillos preparing to depart after praying: “Camillos ... since he had prayed and had drawn his garment over his head, desired to turn”³⁰ Here the verb “had drawn” (εἴλκυσε) has “garment” (ἱμάτιον) as its explicit direct object and “over the head” (κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς) indicates where Camillos drew his garment.

(7) In *Roman Antiquities* 15.9.7, Dionysius describes a Roman praying: “When he was about to depart, he both drew his garment over his head and held up his hands to the sky, as the custom is, and made prayer to the gods.”³¹ Once again the direct object “garment” (περιβολὴν) of the verb “drew” (εἴλκυσε) is explicit.

From all the foregoing evidence, it should be clear that κατὰ κεφαλῆς is the natural phrase that would be used to describe where a person would wear a veil or mantle—“on the head.” On the other hand, where else but κατὰ κεφαλῆς (“on the head”) would one wear hair?

²⁷ This is not simply a case of citing the wrong references in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, since a TLG search of Dionysius’ works turns up no other instances of this phrase.

²⁸ Plutarch’s *The Roman Questions* 266C reads “having a toga on their head” (ἐπὶ [not κατὰ] τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔχοντες τὸ ἱμάτιον), a similar phrase but one in which, as has been noted in all the previous examples, the direct object of ἔχοντες is explicit unlike the situation in 1 Cor 11:4.

²⁹ εἰκόνα ... ἐλάττων ἀνδρὸς μετρίου τὴν περιβολὴν ἔχουσα κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς. Author’s translation. Cf. *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, (LCL; trans. E. Cary; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 2.254-55.

³⁰ ὁ Κάμιλλος ... ἐπειδὴ τὴν εὐχὴν ἐποίησατο καὶ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς εἴλκυσε τὸ ἱμάτιον, ἐβούλετο μὲν στραφῆναι ... *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, (LCL; trans. E. Cary; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 7.236-37.

³¹ Μέλλων δ’ ἀπιέναι τὴν τε περιβολὴν κατὰ κεφαλῆς εἴλκυσε καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἀνασχῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ὡς ἔθος ἐστίν, ἀρὰς ἐποίησατο τοῖς θεοῖς. Author’s translation. Cf. *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, (LCL; trans. E. Cary; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 7.310-11.

The fact that Hellenistic writers regularly make use of this phrase in non-veiling contexts,³² without any qualification to indicate that a material covering is not in view, provides solid evidence that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* does not normally denote or connote a condition of having the head covered with anything. Massey’s assertion that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* “always implies some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head” is incorrect.³³

Κατὰ κεφαλῆς in the LXX

There is one occurrence of the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* as a description of a covered head in the Septuagint. In Esther 6:12, Haman is described as hurrying home mourning, with his head covered. The LXX translates the Hebrew phrase *וְשָׂרַף יָפְתִּי* “head being covered” with *κατὰ κεφαλῆς*.

Several items are noteworthy here. First, the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* was not used with the verb *ἔχω* as in 1 Cor 11:4. Second, the fact that Sinaiticus has a scribal correction which corrects *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* to *κατακεκαλύμμενος κεφαλῆν* (“having an covered head”) suggests that at least one Greek scribe felt that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* was too ambiguous a rendering and changed it to a more explicit construction. In other words, Esth. 6:12 suggests that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* may be used to refer to “a covered head.” However, in light of all the preceding evidence, “a covered head” is neither the necessary meaning nor the normal usage of this phrase. Further, it is illegitimate to isolate the investigation of *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* from its syntagmic relationship to the verb *ἔχω*.³⁴

Conclusion regarding *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων*

What should we conclude from the foregoing analysis? First, it is clear that the precise phrase Paul used is unusual.³⁵ Second, as Esther 6:12 shows, the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς* without the verb *ἔχω* could be used to refer to a covered head. However, since Paul does not use this phrase by itself, the parallel while suggestive is not conclusive. Third, in regard to the examples found in Plutarch and Dionysius, in each case where *ἔχω*, *ἔλκω*, or *ἐφέλκω* occur with *κατὰ κεφαλῆς*, they invariably have an explicit object. Paul, on the other hand, does not supply an explicit object for *ἔχων*.

Κόμη as the Direct Object of *ἔχω*

In both Classical and Hellenistic Greek the verb *ἔχω* takes *κόμην* (“hair, long hair”) as a direct object to describe a person who has let their hair grow long. For example, in his play *Birds* Aristophanes writes: “Since then you are a slave, [how is that] you have long hair (*κόμην*)

³² Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, VI.3.3; XI.26.4, line 6; XIX.8.3, line 6; Plutarch, *Vitae Decem Oratorae* 842B; *Pyrrhus* 399B; *Les Papyrus Fouad I* 29.11; *P.Oxy.* 33.2672dupl, lines 15-18; Josephus, *Ant.*, 1.50.4; 2.252.2; 13.117.5.

³³ For a similar, independent evaluation of Massey’s *NTS* article, see the unpublished critique by Philip Payne which he references in his *Man and Woman: One in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 167 n. 104: http://www.pbpayne.com/wp-admin/Massey_critique.pdf [accessed June 23, 2012].

³⁴ For an explanation of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships of words or phrases within the context of a sentence, see Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), 155-61, 188-89.

³⁵ For a similar conclusion, see Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, 36.

ἔχεις)?”³⁶ In another play by Aristophanes, *Clouds*, a father laments that he is being ruined by his son who “has long hair (κόμην ἔχων) [and] races horses and chariots.”³⁷ In “Proverbs which Alexandreus Used,” Plutarch includes the following description: “Concerning the long-haired one in Samos: A certain Samian was a boxer, who being mocked as weak by his opponents since he had long hair (κόμας εἶχεν), having entered the competition, overcame them.”³⁸ A commentator on Aristotle from the 1-2 c. B.C. describes a group of people whose men had long hair (κόμην ἔχουσι) down to their knees and below.³⁹ These examples demonstrate that it is not impossible or even unlikely that ἔχων (“having”) in the phrase κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων (“having on his head”) could be understood as having κόμην (“long hair”) as its unstated object, especially in light of Paul’s use of this term in vv. 14-15. The previous examples lead us to consider two early church interpreters who understood the covering Paul was forbidding to men to include or to be long hair.

John Chrysostom on 1 Corinthians 11:4

John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) was an elder at the church in Antioch where he earned a reputation as a “golden-mouthed” preacher. He was later appointed, against his will, archbishop of Constantinople. During his time in Antioch he preached a series of expository sermons through 1 Corinthians and devoted an entire sermon to 1 Cor 11:2-16. In reference to verse four, Chrysostom understood Paul to be addressing men who were wearing long hair and were covering their heads with a material covering when praying: “the men went so far as to wear long hair as having spent their time in philosophy, and covered their heads when praying and prophesying, each of which was a Grecian custom.”⁴⁰

Chrysostom argues that Paul is forbidding men from wearing anything on their heads, including long hair:

Now regarding the man, it is no longer about a covering but about wearing long hair, that [Paul] forms his discourse. To be covered then [Paul] only forbids, when a man is praying; but wearing long hair he discourages at all times. ... For this reason also [Paul] said at the beginning, “Every man praying or prophesying, having any thing on his head, dishonoreth his head.” He did not say,

³⁶ Author’s translation. Aristophanes, *Birds*, line 911: ἔπειτα δῆτα δοῦλος ὦν κόμην ἔχεις; Aristophanes lived c. 446–386 B.C. and was a comic playwright in ancient Athens.

³⁷ Author’s translation. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, line 14: ... διὰ τουτονὶ τὸν υἱόν. ὁ δὲ κόμην ἔχων ἱππάζεται τε καὶ ξυνωρικεύεται.

³⁸ Author’s translation. Centuria 2.8.2: Τὸν ἐν Σάμῳ κομήτην: Σάμιός τις ἐγένετο πύκτης, ὃς ἐπὶ μαλακίᾳ σκωπτόμενος, ἐπειδὴ κόμας εἶχεν, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνταγωνιστῶν, συμβαλὼν αὐτοὺς ἐνίκησεν. F. G. Schneidewin and E. L. von Leutsch, eds., *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1839; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 1.337.

³⁹ ἐπειδὴν δὲ νεανίσκοι γένωνται, κομῶσι, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πάντες Πυγμαῖοι κόμην ἔχουσι μακροτάτην μέχρι ἐπὶ τὰ γόνατα καὶ ἔτι κατωτέρω καὶ πώγωνα μέγιστον πάντων ἀνθρώπων, ὥστε ἔλκεσθαι φασιν αὐτοὺς πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ἅτε μικρῶν ὄντων, τοὺς πώγωνας, ἐξόπισθεν δὲ τὴν κόμην εἶναι πολὺ κάτωθεν τῶν γονάτων. S. P. Lampros, *Excerptorum Constantini de natura animalium libri duo. Aristophanis historiae animalium epitome in Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* suppl. 1.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1885), ch. 2.67, line 7.

⁴⁰ *Homily 26* (11.2-16), under verse 2 (*NPNF*¹ 12.149). οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες καὶ ἐκόμων, ἅτε ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατρίψαντες, καὶ περιεβάλλοντο τὰς κεφαλὰς εὐχόμενοι καὶ προφητεύοντες· ὅπερ ἐκάτερον Ἑλληνικοῦ νόμου ἦν. *Epistulam i ad Corinthios* (PG 61.213).

“covered,” but “having any thing on his head;” signifying that even if a man should pray with a bare head, yet if he have long hair, he is like one who is covered [with a material covering]. “For the hair,” says [Paul], “is given for a covering.”⁴¹

Three aspects of Chrysostom’s explanation of verse four are particularly noteworthy. First, He contrasts the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* with *κεκαλυμμένος* (“being covered”)—a verb that he uses repeatedly in the sermon to refer to being veiled⁴²—and he explicitly denies that *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* means *κεκαλυμμένος* (“being covered” [with a material veil]).

Second, he affirms that Paul used the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in order to show that even if a man prays with a bare head, but has long hair, it is the same as if his head were covered. In other words, Chrysostom understands Paul to mean something like “a man may not pray or prophesy with anything on his head,” excluding both long hair and a material covering.

Third, Chrysostom uses the phrase *κόμην ἔχει* (“may have long hair”), implying that he regards *κόμην* (“long hair”) as a legitimate implicit object of *ἔχων* (“having”) in the phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in verse four.

Epiphanius of Salamis on 1 Corinthians 11:7

Epiphanius (c. A.D. 315-403), Bishop of Salamis and Metropolitan of the Church of Cyprus, stands out from other ancient Christian writers because he understood the covering forbidden to men to be wearing long hair. He cites 1 Cor 11:7 in five different contexts in his polemical work *Panarion*. In each case, he cites the verse as: “A man ought not to wear long hair [*κομᾶν*] because he is the image and glory of God.”⁴³ For example, he cites 1 Cor 11:7 in addressing Manicheanism’s misunderstanding of the value of the body:

And once more, the same apostle says in another passage, “A man ought not to have long hair forasmuch as he is the glory and image of God.” And you see how he called hair the glory of God, though it is grown on the body and not in the soul.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Translation adapted from *Homily 26* (11.2-16), under verse 4, (*NPNF*¹ 12:152). ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς οὐκέτι τὸν τοῦ καλύμματος, ἀλλὰ τὸν τῆς κόμης οὕτω γυμνάζει λόγον· καλύπτεσθαι μὲν γὰρ τότε μόνον κωλύει, ὅταν εὐχῆται, κομᾶν δὲ αἰεὶ ἀποτρέπει. ... οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς, ὅτι «ἐὰν κομᾶ, ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν». οὐκ εἶπεν, ἐὰν καλύπτηται, ἀλλ’ «ἐὰν κομᾶ». διὸ καὶ ἀρχόμενος ἔλεγε· «πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων, κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων». οὐκ εἶπε, κεκαλυμμένος, ἀλλὰ, «κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων», δεικνύς ὅτι κἂν γυμνῇ εὐχῆται τῇ κεφαλῇ, κόμην δὲ ἔχει, ἴσος ἐστὶ τῷ κεκαλυμμένῳ. ἢ γὰρ «κόμη», φησὶν, «ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται». *Epistulam i ad Corinthios* (PG 61.217).

⁴² Chrysostom uses forms of *καλύπτω* at least 15 times throughout his sermon to refer to a veiled head.

⁴³ ἀνὴρ, γὰρ φησιν, οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων. Karl Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion* in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922, 1933), 2.122, 167; 3.91, 236, 492. Epiphanius also quotes this verse in the same way in his letter to John of Jerusalem. However, the Greek text of Epiphanius’s letter is fragmentary and does not contain this excerpt. P. Maas, “Die ikonoklastische Episode in dem Brief des Epiphanius an Johannes,” *ByzZ* 30 (1929-1930): 281-83. Fortunately, Epiphanius asked Jerome to translate the letter into Latin, and we have a copy of the entire letter through Jerome. “Letter LI. From Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, to John, Bishop of Jerusalem” (*NPNF*² 6:88).

⁴⁴ Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Books II and III (Sects 47-80, De Fide)* (Nag Hammadi Studies 36; trans. F. Williams; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 271. ὁ αὐτὸς ἀπόστολος «ἀνὴρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, δόξα καὶ εἰκῶν θεοῦ ὑπάρχων». καὶ ὁρᾷς ὡς δόξαν θεοῦ ἔφη τὴν κόμην, ἐπὶ σώματος φερομένην καὶ οὐκ ἐν ψυχῇ; ... καὶ μάτην οὗτος κομποποιεῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ χλεύην ὑφίσταται παρὰ τοῖς τὴν τελείαν φρόνησιν κεκτημένοις. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, 3.91.

There is no NT manuscript or versional evidence for the rendering of verse seven cited by Epiphanius.⁴⁵ It seems most likely, therefore, that it reflects Epiphanius’s understanding that *κατακαλύπτεσθαι* (“to be covered”) refers to “having long hair” (*κομᾶν*). This relatively early interpretation is noteworthy because it calls into question the argument advanced by Massey that “a study of the verb *κατακαλύπτω* will permit a translation only of textile head coverings.”⁴⁶

Commenting on the practice of some “esteemed brethren” in the cloisters of Mesopotamia, Epiphanius notes that they:

have been detected in another form [of error], that of deliberately having their hair long like a woman’s and wearing sackcloth openly. ... Visible sackcloth is out of place in the catholic church, as is uncut hair, because of the apostle’s injunction, “A man ought not to have long hair, inasmuch as he is the image of God.”⁴⁷

Epiphanius continues his argument by addressing the issue of the Nazirites’ long hair.⁴⁸ He argues that “long hair was proper only for Nazirites” and that it is a shame for Christian men to wear long hair, citing 1 Cor 11:14.⁴⁹ Since the ascetics were appealing to the OT Nazirite vow,

⁴⁵ Reuben J. Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: 1 Corinthians* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2003), 165. So also B. Aland and K. Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

⁴⁶ Massey, 502. It is beyond doubt that *κατακαλύπτω* and *ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ* are used with reference to a material covering. That they necessarily have such reference, however, does not follow. A survey of *κατακαλύπτω* in the LXX and other Hellenistic literature shows that the object used to cover is often not a veil or similar item. For example, it may be the fat of sacrificial animals (Exod. 29:22), water (Ezek. 26:19), wings (Isa. 6:2) or even an abstract concept such as dishonor (Jer. 28:51). When persons were the object of *κατακαλύπτω*, the items used for covering include another human person (Josephus, *J.W.* 6:208), a cloth covering a corpse (Plut. *Agis et Cleomenes*. 20.4.4), an awning over a carriage (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6.11), or metaphorically an argument (Plato. *Letters* 340A) or arrows (Josephus, *J.W.* 2:547). Further, in three instances in which the word is used without an explicit object, it involves disguising or covering oneself so completely that the face is either not visible or recognizable (Gen 38:15; 2 Chr 18:29; Sus 1:32). With regard to *ἀκατακαλύπτω*, while Philo (*Special Laws* 3:56-60) and Polybius (15.27.2) use the term with reference to a head uncovered by a material veil, it is also used by Philo in the phrase, “and so we become enslaved, and yield ourselves up to unconcealed impurity” (*δεδουλώμεθα καὶ ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ ἀκαθαρσία χρώμεθα*; *Allegorical Interpretation*, 2.29), where a material covering is not in view. The nature of the covering, therefore, is not immediately clear simply from the use of these terms.

⁴⁷ Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 634. οἱ κατὰ Μεσοποταμίαν ἐν μοναστηρίοις ὑπάρχοντες εἶπουν μάνδραις καλουμέναις, κόμαις γυναικικαῖς <χρῆσθαι> προβαλλόμενοι καὶ σάκκῳ προφανεῖ ἐπερειδόμενοι. ... ἀλλότριον γάρ ἐστι τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας σάκκος προφανῆς καὶ κόμη <μὴ> ἐκτεμνομένη ἀπὸ τοῦ κηρύγματος τῶν ἀποστόλων· «ἀνὴρ, γὰρ φησιν, οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων». Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, 3.492.

⁴⁸ Apparently certain ascetics extended this appeal claiming that Jesus was a Nazirite. In a work we possess only in fragmentary form, Epiphanius refutes the claim that Jesus was a Nazirite and thus wore long hair: “For they write that the savior had long hair based on the hypothesis that he was called a Nazoraion since the Nazirites have long hair. But they err who attempt to identify him as a Nazirite, for the savior drank wine which the Nazirites did not drink” (author’s translation). *κόμην γὰρ ἔχοντα τὸν σωτῆρα γράφουσιν ἐξ ὑπονοίας διὰ τὸ Ναζωραῖον αὐτὸν καλεῖσθαι, ἐπεὶ περ οἱ Ναζιραῖοι κόμας ἔχουσιν. σφάλλονται δὲ οἱ τοὺς τύπους αὐτῷ συνάπτειν πειρώμενοι· οἶνον γὰρ ἔπινεν ὁ σωτῆρ, ὃν οἱ Ναζιραῖοι οὐκ ἔπινον.* “Epistula ad Theodosium imperatorem” (fragment 24) in Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1928; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 2.361.

⁴⁹ Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 635.

it is clear that they were allowing their hair to grow uncut. This means Epiphanius' use of *κομᾶν* ("to have long hair") necessarily refers to wearing uncut hair.⁵⁰

Although there do not appear to be any extant comments by Epiphanius on 1 Cor 11:5-6, precisely the same verb that occurs in verse seven (*κατακαλύπτεσθαι*) also occurs twice in verse six (*κατακαλύπτεται* and *κατακαλυπτέσθω*). If, as appears likely, Epiphanius understood *κατακαλύπτεσθαι* ("to be covered") in verse seven to mean *κομᾶν* ("to wear uncut hair"), then it is most likely that he would have understood the same verb in verse six to have that meaning as well. Given that understanding verse six would read, "If a woman does not have uncut hair, then let her shear the rest off; but since it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her allow her hair to grow uncut."⁵¹

The purpose of looking at Chrysostom and Epiphanius is not to appeal to their exegesis as authoritative. Rather, the purpose is to note that two well-educated, native Greek speakers 250 years after Paul did not understand *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* or *κατακαλύπτω* to be necessarily referring to a material head-covering. Rather, Chrysostom took *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* as a generic phrase meaning "having anything on his head" which primarily had long hair in view, though it included a veil as well. Epiphanius understood the verb *κατακαλύπτω* in 1 Cor 11:7 to be referring to having relatively long, uncut hair.

Contextual Reasons to Read *κόμη* as the Object of *ἔχω*

Since the ultimate arbiter of textual meaning is always context, the interpreter of 1 Cor 11:2-16 should seek for the implied object of *ἔχων* in the context. If nothing in the context argued for a covering other than a garment as the object of *ἔχων*, this would be a natural inference to draw from the evidence. However, several significant contextual reasons support the conclusion that Paul intends the Corinthians to identify the implicit object of *ἔχων* as *κόμην* and not a material covering.

First, as I have argued here before,⁵² Paul's argument from man's created status as the glory of God (11:7) implies that whatever practice dishonors man's head (Christ) has always dishonored his head. Although the *imago dei* in man was defaced in the fall (Col 3:10), it was not erased (Gen 9:6; Jam 3:9). In the same way, while man falls short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23), his role as the glory of God was not eliminated.⁵³ Given the persistence of man's status as the glory of God and the necessity of honoring his head that his status entails, the OT requirements for priests to wear a material head-covering become relevant for determining the nature of the covering.⁵⁴ It is improbable that God would require OT priests to do something that would

⁵⁰ Epiphanius, 635. His citation of 1 Cor 11:14 in the context of discussing the Nazirites' uncut hair demonstrates that *κομάω* could refer to uncut hair, an observation that bears on how he would have understood *κόμη*.

⁵¹ εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται [=κομᾶ] γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω [=κομάτω].

⁵² "Εἰκὼν καὶ Δόξα Θεοῦ: An Interpretive Key to 1 Cor. 11:2-16" presented at the 2003 BFLS.

⁵³ Although it is not the purpose of this essay to explore the relationship of the *imago dei* in both men and women, I understand Paul to be teaching that while both men and women bear the *imago dei*, men function as the *gloria dei* and women function as the glory of men (*gloria viri*).

⁵⁴ The divinely specified attire for the High Priest included a linen turban (תַּבִּיטָה; Exod 28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Lev 8:9; 16:4). Regular priests, on the other hand, wore "bonnets" or "caps" (הַבְּבִיטָה; Exod 28:40;

dishonor him, i.e., wear a material head-covering when performing their mediatorial office. It is unlikely, therefore, that Paul has wearing material head-coverings in view.

Second, the connections created between Paul's glory-shame motif⁵⁵ and his terminology for being covered/uncovered support the conclusion that the covering he has in mind is κόμη. Specifically with regard to men, a man shames his "head" when he prays or prophesies κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων (v. 4). This phrase refers to the state created when a man covers (κατακαλύπτει) his head (v. 7). In verse 14, Paul identifies 'wearing long/uncut hair' (κομᾶ) as dishonoring (ἀτιμία). In view of the thematic connection between vv. 4 and 14, it is reasonable to conclude that, since wearing κόμη is a shame to a man (v. 14), it is the implied object of ἔχων in verse four: "when a man prays or prophesies having [long/uncut hair] down from his head, he shames his head." With regard to woman, the same word (ἀκατακαλύπτως) occurs in vv. 5 and 13 describing the state Paul regards as shameful for a woman when praying. The following discussion of κόμη as a woman's glory in v. 15 provides conceptual linkage between κόμη and his uncovered=shame / covered=glory theme. Given the use of κατακαλύπτω in verses 6 and 7, if long/uncut hair is indeed the covering forbidden to men (οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι; v. 7), then it the natural inference would be that it is also the covering women are commanded to have (κατακαλυπτέσθω; v. 6).

Third, since Paul grounds his argument in a headship relationship reflective of the economic Trinity (v. 3), in the order and purpose of Creation (v. 8-9), in what the created order (φύσις) suggests is fitting (vv. 13-14), and concludes with an appeal to the universal practice of the early church (v. 16), it is likely that he has in view a covering which is transcultural, not limited by time or place, and thus universally applicable. Κόμη is such a covering.

Κομάω and κόμη in Hellenistic Literature and the Church Fathers

In order to answer the question whether Paul's language supports the conclusion that he intends "uncut hair" as the referent for κόμη, I investigated Hellenistic literature for the use of the two key terms κομάω and κόμη as well as the terminology used for cutting hair. I also considered and the church father's understanding of κομάω and κόμη in this passage.

29:9; 39:28; Lev 8:13). Cf. Alan D. Ingalls, "Headcoverings in the Old Testament," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4.2 (2000): 41-52. Although praying was clearly a component of the OT priests' duties (Num 6:22-24; 2 Chr 30:27), the OT does not expressly state that prophecy was a priestly function. However, Isaiah and Jeremiah both functioned as priests and prophets (Isa 6:1; Jer 1:1). Further, since "prophesy," in Paul's language, involves speaking to men for "edification, exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor 14:3), it seems appropriate to describe the priestly duty of teaching the people the law as "prophesy" (cf. Deut 17:9-11; 33:8-10).

⁵⁵ The following terms for shame occur in this passage: αἰσχύνω (11:4, 5); αἰσχρός (11:6); and ἀτιμία (11:14). Glory (δόξα) occurs three times: twice in v. 7 and once in v. 15. The distribution of these key terms does not, however, exhaust the development of this motif, since verses 8-9 also contribute to the motif by explaining why woman is the glory of man. Paul's concern for glory/shame in worship flows naturally from his argument that all things should be done for God's glory (1 Cor 10:31) and extends into his discussion of the Lord's Table (1 Cor 11:22). Paul's concern for God's glory in these contexts indicates that he is not appealing primarily to 1st c. honor-shame social conventions but to a theological principle that transcends cultural norms. For a helpful discussion of the role honor-shame conventions played in the Greco-Roman world, see Mark Finney,

Κομάω — “To have long hair”

The verb *κομάω* “wear/have long hair,” occurs in the NT only in 1 Corinthians 11:13-14. It does not occur in the Septuagint. It occurs only once in Josephus where he is describing the practice of Nazirites who “allow their hair to grow long.”⁵⁶ It occurs once in Pseudo-Phocylides: “Long hair is not proper for boys, but for youthful women.”⁵⁷ Philo uses *κομάω* metaphorically with the sense “plume oneself, give oneself airs”⁵⁸ and appears to be making something of a play on words since he quotes a phrase from Num. 6:5 in the LXX “nourishes the hair of his head” (τρέφοντα κόμην τρίχα κεφαλῆς) and then interprets it to indicate that “he is holy who promotes the growth in the principal portion of himself of the principal shoots of the doctrines of virtue, and who in a manner prides himself [*κομῶντα*] and takes delight in these doctrines.”⁵⁹

Plutarch uses the verb *κομάω* to describe the following:⁶⁰ the practice of the Spartans who wore their hair and beards long (*Sayings of the Spartans* 230B⁶¹ 232D⁶²); allowing the hair of the beard to grow long enough to be seen by its wearer (232E.4⁶³); the practice of Greek men letting their hair grow long when misfortune comes (such as a death), in contrast to the women who cut off their hair in such situations (267B⁶⁴); the customary practice of women to grow long hair as opposed to men who normally have their hair cut (267B⁶⁵); wearing long hair as the special function of a Roman archon (*Roman and Greek Questions* 274B⁶⁶); the Parthian practice of

⁵⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.72: ναζιραῖοι δὲ οὗτοι καλοῦνται κομῶντες.

⁵⁷ Pseudo-Phocylides, line 212: ἄρσεσιν οὐκ ἐπέοικε κομᾶν, χλιδαναῖς δὲ γυναιξίν. This is an apocryphal work that appears to have been written between 100 BC – AD 100. Pieter van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978).

⁵⁸ LSJM, s.v. *κομάω*, sense 2.

⁵⁹ Philo, *Quod deus sit immutabilis* 1.88. *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854-55), 4 vols. A similar metaphorical usage occurs in *Sibylline Oracle* 11:82.

⁶⁰ Most of the following English translations are taken from or adapted from *Plutarch's Moralia*, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), vols. 1-15.

⁶¹ The Latin title for *Sayings of the Spartans* is *Aprophthegmata Laconica*. “Why do [the Spartans] wear long hair and grow long beards?” διὰ τί κομῶσι καὶ πώγωνοτροφοῦσιν. See also *Life of Lysander* 1.1: “a statue of Lysander, wearing his hair and beard long, in the ancient fashion” Λυσάνδρου δὲ ἐστὶν εἰκονικός, εὖ μάλα κομῶντος ἔθει τῷ παλαιῷ καὶ πώγωνα καθειμένου γενναῖον.

⁶² “Why do they wear their hair long? He said because this is the (most) natural and inexpensive of ornaments.” διὰ τί κομῶσιν εἶπεν ὅτι τῶν κόσμων ὁ φυσικὸς καὶ ἀδάπανος οὗτός ἐστι. See also Plutarch, *Sayings of the King* 189F.

⁶³ “A Spartan, being asked why he grew the hair of his beard so very long, said, ‘So that I may see my grey hairs and do nothing unworthy of them.’” Λάκων ἐρωτηθεὶς, δι’ ἣν αἰτίαν τὰς τοῦ πώγωνος τρίχας ἐπὶ πολὺ κομᾷ, εἶπεν ἵνα βλέπων τὰς πολιὰς μηδὲν ἀνάξιον αὐτῶν πράττω.

⁶⁴ “So in Greece, whenever any misfortune comes, the women cut off their hair and the men let it grow” καὶ γὰρ παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν ὅταν δυστυχία τις γένηται, κείρονται μὲν αἱ γυναῖκες κομῶσι δ’ οἱ ἄνδρες.

⁶⁵ “...for it is usual for men to have their hair cut and for women to let it grow.” ὅτι τοῖς μὲν τὸ κείρεσθαι ταῖς δὲ τὸ κομᾶν σύνηθές ἐστιν.

⁶⁶ “Therefore also with us ... to wear long hair ... is the special function of an archon.” διὸ καὶ παρ’ ἡμῶν τὸ μὲν ... κομᾶν ... ἴδια λειτουργήματα τοῦ ἀρχοντός ἐστι (Latin title: *Aetia Romana et Graeca*)

wearing long bushy hair to make themselves appear more formidable (*Life of Crassus* 24.2⁶⁷); Caius Marius wearing long hair from the day of his exile until his return at the age of more than 70 years (*Life of Caius Marius* 41.6⁶⁸); a man having a head of much long curly hair (*Life of Cimon* 5.2⁶⁹); male show-offs who wore long hair and talked big (*De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1038C⁷⁰); of a Greek despot, Lykurgus, who made boys wear long hair and girls cut their hair and wear boy's clothes (*Virtues of Women* 261F⁷¹); of Greek youths who wore their hair long because they were not yet men (*Virtues of Women* 261E⁷²); of Greek young men who let their hair grow long after the age of puberty (*Lycurgus* 22⁷³); of an army of young men who escort Cicero with their hair let loose as a sign of their distress and desire to entreat mercy (*Cicero* 31⁷⁴).

Although κομάω can be used with various metaphorical senses (e.g., to have loose, unkempt hair, or putting on airs), the normal meaning of the word throughout Koine literature is “to allow the hair to grow long by not cutting it, wear long hair.”

Κόμη — “Long/Uncut hair”

Κόμη occurs in the NT only in 1 Cor. 11:15. It occurs eleven times in the Septuagint. Of those 11x, it refers to uncut hair twice (nazirite vow—Num. 6:5; regulations for priests' hair—Eze 44:20).⁷⁵ In Lev. 19:27 Israelite men are prohibited from making “a round cutting of the hair” of their head.⁷⁶ Job 1:20 describes Job as rising and shaving “the hair of his head” (ἐκείρατο τὴν

⁶⁷ “...the rest of the Parthians, still keeping to the Scythian fashion, wore their hair long and bushy to make themselves more formidable.” τῶν ἄλλων Πάρθων ἔτι Σκυθικῶς ἐπὶ τὸ φοβερὸν τῷ ἀνασίλλῳ κομώντων. See also Plutarch, *Sayings of the King* 189E.

⁶⁸ “[Marius] with his hair uncut from the day that he had been an exile, and now above seventy years of age” κομῶν ἀφ’ ἧς ἔφυγεν ἡμέρας, ὑπὲρ ἑβδομήκοντα γεγονῶς ἔτη

⁶⁹ “He was not an ill-looking man, as Ion the poet says, but tall, and with a thick curly head of hair.” ἦν δὲ καὶ τὴν ιδέαν οὐ μεμπτός, ὡς Ἴων ὁ ποιητῆς φησιν, ἀλλὰ μέγας, οὖλη καὶ πολλὴ τριχὶ κομῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν.

⁷⁰ ὑψαυχενεῖν καὶ κομᾶν καὶ μεγαληγορεῖν. See also Plutarch, *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1036C.

⁷¹ Latin title: *Mulierum virtutes*. “In fact it is recorded in history that he imposed on the boys the custom of wearing long hair and golden ornaments, and the girls he compelled to cut their hair and to wear boys' clothes and the short undergarment.” ἱστόρηται γάρ, ὅτι τοὺς μὲν ἄρρενας παῖδας ἤσκει κομᾶν καὶ χρυσοφορεῖν, τὰς δὲ θηλείας ἠνάγκαζε περιτρόχαλα κείρεσθαι καὶ φορεῖν ἐφηβικὰς χλαμύδας κατὰ τῶν ἀνακῶλων χιτωνίσκων. See also *Life of Lysander* 1.1-2.

⁷² “when he was a mere youth with others of his age who were still wearing their hair long (whom they called ‘harassers,’ from their long hair presumably)” ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀντίπαις, ὅτι μειράκιον ὦν παντάπασι μετὰ τῶν ἡλικίων ἔτι κομώντων (οὗς κορωνιστὰς ὡς ἔοικεν ἀπὸ τῆς κόμης ὠνόμαζον)

⁷³ “For this reason, although they all let their hair grow long after the age of puberty” διὸ κομώντες εὐθύς ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἐφήβων ἡλικίας

⁷⁴ “as many as twenty thousand young men escorted him with their hair untrimmed and joined in his suppliant entreaties to the people.” καὶ δισμυρίων οὐκ ἐλάττους νέων παρηκολούθουν κομώντες καὶ συνικετεύοντες

⁷⁵ In both of these references it translates the word עָרַף (HALOT: “loosely hanging and unplaited hair on the head”). Both these contexts make it explicitly clear that the hair is uncut by prohibiting a razor from touch the hair (Num. 6:5) or by forbidding the hair to be uncut and requiring it to be cut (Ezek. 44:20).

⁷⁶ Here the Hebrew reads “do not round off the corner of your head” (כַּדְּשָׁרָא תִּשָּׂרְפוּ אֶת־כַּרְנֵי־רִאשְׁיִי).

κόμην τῆς κεφαλῆς).⁷⁷ The remaining canonical occurrences are metaphorical uses (Job 16:12; 38:32) or mistranslations (Ezek. 24:23). Four occurrences are found in apocryphal books, two of which refer to men’s hair (Jdt. 13:7; Bel. 1:36) and two to women’s hair (3 Ma. 1:18; 4:6).

Κόμη occurs 19 times in Josephus, 18 times reference to hair, and once in reference to hyssop bunches. Josephus uses κόμη to denote Samson’s hair which was not to be cut as a Nazirite (*Ant.* 5.278, 311-14). After Samson’s hair was shaved, Josephus notes that “in the process of time Samson’s κόμη grew again (*Ant.* 5.314). According to Josephus, the prophet Samuel was a Nazirite whose hair was permitted to grow long (κόμη τε οὖν ἀπὸ ἀνείτο; *Ant.* 5.347). Absalom’s κόμη supposedly grew at such a rapid rate that, according to Josephus, it needed to be cut every 8th day (*Ant.* 7.189, 239).⁷⁸ While David was fleeing Absalom, Mephibosheth didn’t cut his κόμη (*Ant.* 7.267).

This survey of the uses of κόμη in Koine literature indicates that κόμη does not necessarily denote uncut hair, though it may if the context makes it clear. It may refer to the hair of men or women and is typically used to denote long or feminine-length hair, or hair arranged like a woman’s.

Paul’s Terminology for Cutting Hair⁷⁹

The terms used by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:5-6 for cutting, ξυρώ and κείρω, mean “shave” and “shear, cut short” respectively. Although the verb κείρω may refer to a range of degrees of cutting,⁸⁰ it is most commonly used in the context of cutting something short, e.g., shearing sheep, harvesting grain.⁸¹ It appears that the standard term for cutting that did not involve the

⁷⁷ Here the Hebrew reads “and he shaved his head” and does not have a word for “hair” (וַיִּגַּז אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ).

⁷⁸ Contrast this to the biblical account in 2 Sam. 14:26 where Absalom cut his hair once a year.

⁷⁹ My best efforts, which are admittedly limited, to turn up any discussion in Classical or Koine literature in which a distinction is made between cutting and trimming hair have failed. For example, in Musonius Rufus’ essay “On Cutting the Hair,” in which he discusses what legitimates men cutting their hair, no lexical or semantic distinction between cutting and trimming is made. Cora E. Lutz, *Musonius Rufus, “The Roman Socrates”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947). My review of all the cognate forms of κείρω in LSJM (απο-, περι-, κατα-, αμφι-, κτλ) found none of them having the sense of cut a small amount of hair, equivalent to our “trim.” The noun κουρά, which refers to “cropping of the hair,” does not denote anything more specific than cutting, without reference to the amount cut. A search from 8th c. BC to 2nd c. AD yielded 11 collocations of τέμνω and κόμη, and nine collocations of κόπτω and κόμη, none of which yielded any insight on this question. This is an area where more research is needed. Specifically, corpus-wide searches for the κόπτω and τέμνω word groups should be conducted to ascertain how they interact with the other Greek vocabulary in the semantic domain of hair. My current conclusion then is that there is no basis to believe that Paul would have distinguished between cutting and trimming as is often done in English.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Plutarch, *Regum* 177A; Philo, *Contempl.* 1:51; *T. Jos.* 23:9; 24:10.

⁸¹ Gen 31:19; 38:12-13; Deut 15:19; 1 Sam 25:2, 4, 7, 11; 2 Sam 13:23-24; Cant 4:2; 6:6; Isa 53:7; Acts 8:32. There are four clear OT instances in which κείρω is used with reference to human hair. In 2 Sam. 14:26 Absalom cuts his hair once a year. Here κείρω translates לָבַל “to shave.” In Job 1:20 it translates תָּלַל, the standard Hebrew term for shearing a sheep. In Micah 1:16 it functions in parallel with ξυρώ (“to shave”) and again translates תָּלַל. It is also used metaphorically in Jer. 7:29 of Jerusalem, as a woman, cutting off her hair in mourning (תָּלַל). In the light of this pattern of usage, when Paul cut his hair in Acts 18:18, it is probable that he shaved or cut his hair rather short.

removal of a large quantity of hair was ἀποκείρω,⁸² though κείρω could also be used.⁸³ For example, in Plato’s *Phaedo*, Socrates strokes the hair (τρίχας) at the back of Phaedo’s neck and says, “Tomorrow, perhaps, Phaedo, you will cut off [ἀποκερῆ] this beautiful hair.”⁸⁴ In Josephus’s account of the Samson narrative, the angel tells his mother “not to cut his hair” (τὰς κόμας αὐτῷ μὴ ἀποκείρειν; *Ant.* 5.278; cf. *Ant.* 5.312). According to Josephus, Absalom’s hair was so thick and fast-growing that his hair (κόμη) had to be cut (ἀποκείρειν) every 8 days! Philo describes young male slaves who “have very long hair, being either completely unshorn (μὴ κειρόμενοι), or else having only the hair on their foreheads evened at the end so as to make them of an equal length all round.”⁸⁵

Paul’s comparison of being “uncovered” (ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ) to two degrees of cutting the hair in verse six (τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι) supports the conclusion that he has in mind a lesser degree of the same state, i.e., cut hair. Taking ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ to refer being uncovered due to having cut hair and κόμη to refer to uncut hair yields a coherent reading of verses 5-6, as the following paraphrase suggests:

⁵ But every woman praying or prophesying with an uncovered head [due to having cut hair] shames her head, for such a state is one and the same [in terms of its shame] as the woman whose head is shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered [with uncut hair], then let her cut it off short, but if it is a shame for a woman to have her hair shaved off or cut short, let her be being covered [by letting her hair grow without cutting it].

The Early Church’s Interpretation of Paul’s use of κόμη and κομάω

The early church’s interpretation regarding Paul’s use of *komáo* (κομάω) and *kóme* (κόμη) is remarkably uniform. In no case are these words taken to refer to hair that is long and yet cut. The consistent understanding that emerges from the extant record is that men are not to have uncut hair and women are to have uncut hair. Examples of this understanding include:

The Synod of Gangra: “If any woman from pretended asceticism shall cut off her hair, which God gave her as the reminder of her subjection, thus annulling as it were the ordinance of subjection, let her be anathema.”⁸⁶

⁸² ἀποκείρω does not occur in the NT or the LXX.

⁸³ For example, in Plutarch’s *Moralia*, “Sayings of Kings,” 177: A barber asks how shall I cut your hair? (πῶς σε κείρω). *Plutarch’s Moralia*, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), vol. 3. p. 38-39. In Plutarch, “Bravery of Women, 261F: Aristodemos forced boys to wear long hair (κομᾶν) and girls to cut (κείρεσθαι) their hair. *Ibid.*, p. 573-74.

⁸⁴ Αὔριον δὴ, ἔφη, ἴσως, ὦ Φαίδων, τὰς καλὰς ταύτας κόμας ἀποκερῆ. J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1 (repr. 1967; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900): 89, section b, line 5.

⁸⁵ Philo, *The Contemplative Life*, 1.51: βαθυχαῖται γὰρ εἰσιν ἢ μὴ κειρόμενοι τὸ παράπαν ἢ τὰς προμετωπίδους αὐτὸ μόνον ἐξ ἄκρων εἰς ἐπανίσωσιν καὶ γραμμῆς κυκλοτεροῦς ἠκριβωμένον σχῆμα. L. Cohn and S. Reiter, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 6. (repr. De Gruyter, 1962; Berlin: Reimer, 1915).

⁸⁶ “Canon XVII” in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 14, p. 99. Greek text: εἴ τις γυναικῶν διὰ νομιζομένην ἄσκησιν ἀποκείροιτο τὰς κόμας, ἃς ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς ὑπόμνησιν τῆς ὑποταγῆς, ὡς παραλούουσα τὸ πρόσταγμα τῆς ὑποταγῆς, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. <http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0340-

Severian of Gabala: And although the men who wore long hair in ancient times cut off part of it, [they still] wore it longer than was necessary; however, it was always forbidden for a woman to shear her hair”⁸⁷

Augustine, in *Of the Work of Monks*, who argues that Paul prohibits men from having long hair: “For the same Apostle saith, that long hair is also instead of a veil: by whose authority these men are hard pressed. Seeing he saith openly, “If a man wear long hair, it is a disgrace to him.” “The very disgrace,” say they, “we take upon us, for desert of our sins:” holding out a screen of simulated humility, to the end that under cover of it they may carry on their trade of self-importance.”⁸⁸

Conclusion

Contemporary logic argues, “Paul said it was a shame for a woman to shave or shear her hair. He didn’t say she couldn’t trim it. Since trimming hair is cutting off less hair than shaving or shearing or “cutting,” it is not prohibited by this passage.” This argument stands if (1) it is true that Koine Greek supports a distinction between cutting hair and trimming it, and (2) Paul intended to make this distinction in 1 Cor. 11. Since I can find no such distinction in Koine literature, in the early church’s understanding of this passage, or in Paul, I conclude that the argument is not legitimate. Paul’s expectation was that women would have uncut hair that grows however long nature has determined, and that men would have cut hair that did not “cover” their heads and thus is distinctly masculine.⁸⁹

0340_Concilium_Gangrene_Canones_GR.pdf.html> Accessed online 10/8/2011. So also Karl Joseph von Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church, from the Original Documents* (T. & T. Clark, 1876), 333-34.

⁸⁷ (author’s translation). Greek text: ...ἐπειδὴ καὶ γυναῖκες προεφήτευον ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου. τοῦ δὲ πνεύματος ἐνεργοῦντος πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τοὺς λειτουργοὺς ἀγγέλους παρῆναι, καὶ δεῖ διὰ τοῦτο κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν γυναῖκα. Οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἔθους ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατ’ αὐτοὺς ἐδοκίμασε τοῦτο. καὶ οἱ κομῶντες τὸ παλαιὸν ἐκ μέρους ἀποκείροντες ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἢ ἔδει κομῶντες, γυναικὶ δὲ αἰεὶ τὸ κείρεσθαι ἀπεδοκιμάσθη. “Fragmenta in epistulam i ad Corinthios” in K. Staab, *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), p. 262.

⁸⁸ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 3, p. 522-23.

⁸⁹ Precisely what constitutes “masculine” hair length seems to be a function of culture. As long as culture makes a distinction, Scripture provides no specific guidelines for masculine hair length other than indicating it should not cover the head.