

**A Critique of P. T. Massey’s “The Meaning of κατακαλύπτω and  
κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16,” NTS 53 (2007) 502-523**

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Abstract:

Each of P. T. Massey’s five conclusions attempting to exclude reference to hair are refuted by evidence he cites.

Keywords: 1 Cor 11:2-16, hair, effeminate, κεφαλή, κατακαλύπτω, ἀκατακάλυπτος, ἀντί, τοιοῦτος, κομάω, homosexuality, shame, woman, פָּרַע

**Assessing P. T. Massey’s Conclusions**

P. T. Massey’s study of κατακαλύπτω helpfully documents many kinds of coverings, both material and figurative, used with the various forms of this verb. This study will show, however, that in each of his five conclusions, one regarding κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων and four regarding κατακαλύπτω, Massey makes statements that are refuted by some of the evidence he cites. Although Massey concludes that these expressions do not refer to hair, this study shows that he has not demonstrated this. To the

contrary, the present writer has argued that hair as a covering makes the best sense of 1 Cor 11:2-16.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this study will identify various statements in this passage that Massey interprets in ways that are not natural to Greek or their contexts. A crucial part of the analysis of individual words in a passage is whether that analysis fits the context seamlessly. It is precisely this integration of insights into word usage with 1 Cor 11:2-16 is woefully lacking in Massey's study.

### **Massey's Conclusion regarding κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων**

Massey states "a final conclusion" regarding "the expression κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων as used in 1 Cor 11:4. This idiomatic phrase...always implies some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head."<sup>2</sup> Idiomatic phrases are set phrases with established meanings. None of the sixteen references cited<sup>3</sup> to support this statement, however, exactly matches the expression κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων, yet it is just such exact matches that are necessary to establish phrases as idiomatic expressions. Three of Massey's

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<sup>1</sup> P. B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009), 109-215 and P. B. Payne, "Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Priscilla Papers* 20 (2006): 9-18, available for free download at [www.linguistsoftware.com/payneessays.htm](http://www.linguistsoftware.com/payneessays.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 522.

<sup>3</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 522 n. 71.

examples refer to high terrain, not human heads.<sup>4</sup> Only four even contain the verb ἔχω, and one of these four does not contain κατά.<sup>5</sup> Since each of those four identifies what the covering is,<sup>6</sup> none of the examples Massey cites uses κατά κεφαλῆς ἔχων as an idiomatic phrase that by itself implies a garment. In spite of not providing a single such instance, Massey asserts, “κατά κεφαλῆς ἔχων [is]...common vernacular language conveying the sense of a veil or headdress.”<sup>7</sup> In introducing his sixteen examples he states, “besides the other references already cited,”<sup>8</sup> but “κατά κεφαλῆς ἔχων” occurs in no additional references in the article. Perhaps the most relevant additional reference he does cite<sup>9</sup> is Jos. *Ant.* VII.267 describing David meeting Saul’s grandson Memphibosthos “having hair long and unkempt,” τὴν κόμην βαθεῖαν καὶ κατημελημένην ἔχων. This example from a prolific author in Greek refutes Massey’s implication in the same footnote 73 that ἔχω is not an “appropriate verb...to describe loosened hair.”

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<sup>4</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities* VI.3.3; XI.26.4; and XIX.8.3.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *The Roman Questions* 266C.

<sup>6</sup> Τὴν περιβολήν in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities* III.71.2 or τὸ ἱμάτιον in Plutarch, *Pompey* XL.4; *Sayings of the Romans* 200F; and *The Roman Questions* 266C.

<sup>7</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 523.

<sup>8</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 522 n. 71.

<sup>9</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 522 n. 73.

### **Massey's First Conclusion regarding κατακαλύπτω**

Massey states in his first major conclusion regarding κατακαλύπτω that he found no instance where “the verb κατακαλύπτω can suggest a head covering other than an artificial material of some kind. No exceptions to this were found.”<sup>10</sup> As part of the evidence for this Massey states regarding the LXX, “There are three references with the affect-loaded sense of ‘to veil the face’ or ‘cover the head’,”<sup>11</sup> but he excludes two references that he did find:<sup>12</sup> Jer 28:51, “Disgrace has covered (κατεκάλυψεν) our faces,” and Isa 6:2, seraphim “with two wings covered (κατεκάλυπτον) their faces.” Neither “disgrace” nor “wings” is an artificial material, so both disprove Massey’s first conclusion.

### **Massey's Second Conclusion regarding κατακαλύπτω**

Massey states as his second major conclusion, “when a text discussing the loosening or unbinding of hair is mentioned, the adjective ἀκατακάλυπτος is not used.”<sup>13</sup> He states this in spite of the LXX translation of Lev 13:45, where

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<sup>10</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 523.

<sup>11</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 514.

<sup>12</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 510 n. 34 cites both of these.

<sup>13</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 523.

ἀκατακάλυπτος corresponds to the Hebrew expression וראשו יהיה פרוע. Massey acknowledges that “the more accurate understanding of this expression...[means] do not go about with your hair disheveled, or flowing free and in disorder.... [This judgment] has not been overturned by OT scholars.”<sup>14</sup> Massey provides no support from any citation of Lev 13:45 that even hints it might refer to anything other than long hair. Even though he elsewhere treats the LXX as a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures,<sup>15</sup> he attempts to dismiss the evidence of Lev 13:45 by proposing that “the translators of the LXX do not understand the Hebrew verb פרצ [sic.] in the modern sense of ‘to let the hair hang loose’.”<sup>16</sup> “Hair hanging loose” is, however, by scholarly consensus<sup>17</sup> and Massey’s own acknowledgement just cited, its ancient sense. Furthermore, both LXX Num 6:5 and LXX Ezek 44:20 prove that their translators did understand פרע to refer to long hair.<sup>18</sup> There is

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<sup>14</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 513 and n. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 512 n. 39, “The translators of the LXX understood the Hebrew ראשו פרוע as meaning κατὰ κεφαλῆς or κατακαλύπτειν.”

<sup>16</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 520.

<sup>17</sup> HALOT 970; cf. KBL 779 “let the hair of the head go loose”; BDB 828 “*unbind* (hair).” פרע is regularly used to indicate long hair hanging down loose or disheveled, e.g. Lev 10:6; 13:45; 21:10; Num 5:18; 6:5; Ezk 44:20; *m. Ketub.* 2:1; 7:6, “with her hair unbound”; *b. Ta’an.* 17b.

<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 520 n. 65 writes, “The KJV (1611) contains the older translation of פרצ ראש [sic.] as ‘to uncover the head’ or ‘to have a bare head’...they

ample evidence that פֶּרַע continued to refer to hair even long after Paul, e.g. *b. Ta'an.* 17b, “The following [priests] incur the penalty of death, those who are intoxicated with wine and those whose hair has grown long.”<sup>19</sup> Massey acknowledges in a footnote that he leans against the view that the LXX translators misunderstood the Hebrew.<sup>20</sup>

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misunderstood the Hebrew.” This misrepresents the KJV 1611 text. The KJV did translate this expression as referring to hair in both Num 6:5 and Ezek 44:20. Num 6:5 in the 1611 KJV states, “there shall no rasour [=razor] come upon his head: untill the dayes bee fulfilled, in the which hee separateth himselfe unto the LORD, he shall be holy, *and* shall let the locks of the haire [פֶּרַע] of his head grow.” Ezek 44:20 in the 1611 KJV states, “Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks [פֶּרַע] to grow long.” Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 512 n. 38 also mistakenly states that Hatch and Redpath “list the testimony of A B and S for κατακαλυμμένος” in Esth 6:12. Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Setuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (including the Apocryphal Books)* Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1975), 2:733 list only S<sup>2</sup> for this reading and distinguish this reading from “[A B and S<sup>1</sup> *al.*].”

<sup>19</sup> J. Rabbinowitz, *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud* (I. Epstein, ed.; London: Soncino, 1984).

<sup>20</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 520 n. 65 writes that, instead, “I lean toward the view that Jewish translators were simply making the legal prescription applicable to their own times.” Massey provides no evidence, however, that a garment covering had replaced the

Not only does Massey provide no evidence from the time of the LXX translators, centuries before Paul, that garment customs had replaced hair let down customs, he omits evidence that פרע continued to identify hair let loose well beyond Paul's time. *M. Soṭah* 1:5 states "A priest lays hold on her garments.... Moreover he loosens her hair.... if her hair was comely he did not loosen it."<sup>21</sup> *B. Soṭah* 8a, 9a states, "what is the object of the text [of Num 5:18] declaring, 'and let the hair of her head go loose?'"<sup>22</sup> It teaches that the priest tears down her hair.... She plaited her hair for him; therefore the priest tears down her hair." Although Massey describes his study as, in part, "an attempt...to explore the precise meaning of this Hebrew expression,"<sup>23</sup> his article misspells each of the three Hebrew words it cites from Lev 13:45 and gets their Hebrew word order backwards, representing פרוע יהיה פרוע as וראשו יהיה ראשו.<sup>24</sup> The article misspells פרע as פרצ in each of its twenty-three occurrences.<sup>25</sup>

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hair let down custom in the time of the LXX translators centuries before Paul. The continuation of the hair let down custom is confirmed in *m. Soṭah* 1:5 and even as late as *b. Soṭah* 8a, 9a; *b. Ta'an.* 17b; and *Pesiq. Rab.* 26.

<sup>21</sup> H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: OUP, 1933), 293-4.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. also *b. Ta'an.* 17b and *Pesiq. Rab.* 26.

<sup>23</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 506.

<sup>24</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 513.

<sup>25</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 505, 506, 513, 514, 520, 521.

Massey presents his argument as a refutation of Isaksson’s position, who (he says) “claims that the verb κατακαλύπτω means ‘to cover the head with long hair.’”<sup>26</sup> This statement, however, misrepresents Isaksson’s position. Massey omits Isaksson’s specification, “Here also,” which identifies the meaning of κατακαλύπτω in this particular verse. Isaksson’s immediately preceding sentence translates 1 Cor 11:7, “For a man ought not to cover his head (with long hair),” making it clear by the parentheses that he understands the verb κατακαλύπτω to mean simply “to cover,” but that its context supports understanding the covering to be “with long hair.” Isaksson does not claim that the verb κατακαλύπτω inherently means “to cover the head with long hair” or that this meaning should be listed in lexicons.

### **Massey’s Third Conclusion regarding κατακαλύπτω**

Massey’s third major conclusion is: “when a construction such as κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν is found, the notion of a textile covering inheres within the verb.”<sup>27</sup> Two passages Massey cites on page 510 note 34 disprove his third conclusion since neither “disgrace” nor “wings” is a textile covering:

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<sup>26</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 505, citing A. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the Temple: A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19:3-12 and 1 Cor. 11:3-16* (ASNU 24; trans. N. Tomkinson *et al.*; Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1965), 173.

<sup>27</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 523, cf. 502, “the verb will permit a translation only of textile head coverings.”

Jer 28:51, “Disgrace has covered (κατεκάλυψεν) our faces.”

Isa 6:2, “[Seraphim] with two wings covered (κατεκάλυπτον) their faces.”

#### **Massey’s Fourth Conclusion regarding κατακαλύπτω**

As the vast majority of Massey’s examples of κατακαλύπτω show and as he concludes for each period and specifically states regarding the LXX, “The most frequent meaning is simply ‘to cover’.”<sup>28</sup> Κατακαλύπτω does not in itself specify what the covering is or what is covered. Instead, readers are dependent on the content of each passage to determine what covers what. This is why LSJ 893 does not list as a meaning of κατακαλύπτω what Massey’s fourth and final major conclusion alleges is “the basic lexical meaning of κατακαλύπτω as signifying a veil or fabric covering for the hair.”<sup>29</sup> Massey errs in insisting on “the precise meanings”<sup>30</sup> of words that are general terms for “cover.” Massey presents an either/or choice between “head coverings” and “hairstyles”<sup>31</sup> as though hair could not be a covering, but he never demonstrates this. Nor does he give a

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<sup>28</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 514, cf. 510 for the Classical and Hellenistic periods and 514 for the Imperial period.

<sup>29</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 523.

<sup>30</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 506.

<sup>31</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 502.

credible reconciliation of this conclusion with Lev 13:45's translation of ראשו יהיה פרוע with ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ ἀκατακάλυπτος, "his head uncovered" referring to hair.

Massey states, "There are no references in the literature of classical Greek that support ἀκατακάλυπτος as describing hair that has been unbound or let loose. It follows...that the IH [Isaksson-Hurley] theory lacks linguistic support from classical Greek literature."<sup>32</sup> Massey's deduction is misleading since, as he points out, "In fact, the verb ἀκατακαλύπτω may not exist in ancient Greek. It is not listed in LSJ...[etc.]"<sup>33</sup> The first occurrence of the adjective ἀκατακάλυπτος listed by LSJ or Massey is LXX Lev 13:45, translating, "let the hair of his head be disheveled" (NRSV). Although Massey gives the impression of overwhelming support for his thesis from classical Greek, his section on the classical Greek period does not quote a single instance where κεφαλὴ is the object of κατακαλύπτω.

Perhaps a greater weakness than his unwarranted conclusions is that Massey's article does not integrate his conclusions into a coherent understanding of the argument of 1 Cor 11:3-16. Indeed, his suggestions regarding v. 10 and v. 15 require meanings for

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<sup>32</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 509.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 509 n. 27.

ἐξουσία and ἀντί not found in lexicons.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, he dismisses the most natural reading of Paul’s affirmation in v. 15 that woman is given hair “as a covering.”<sup>35</sup>

### **What “hanging down from the head” was disgraceful for men?**

The best starting point for understanding 1 Cor 11:2-16 is to acknowledge that what Paul was prohibiting was disgraceful (11:4, 5, 6, 14). The kind of shame expressed in all Massey’s examples, however, does not fit a worship setting.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, it was not disgraceful in the Roman cultural context of Corinth or in Jewish culture for a man to drape a garment over his head in a worship setting.<sup>37</sup> Corinth was a Roman colony, and the *capite velato*<sup>38</sup> custom of pulling a toga over one’s head in Roman religious contexts

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<sup>34</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 515-16.

<sup>35</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 515-16 and n. 52.

<sup>36</sup> Massey, 509 n. 29 acknowledges that 1 Cor 11:2-16 is a “worship setting,” not about grieving.

<sup>37</sup> Jewish custom and the Hebrew Scriptures approved head-covering garments for men leading in worship, e.g. Exod 28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Lev 8:9; 16:4; Ezek 24:17; 44:18; Zech 3:5.

<sup>38</sup> R. Gordon, “The Veil of Power: emperors, sacrifices and benefactors,” pp. 201-31 in *Pagan Priests. Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, eds. M. Beard and J. North (London: Duckworth, 1990), 211. On p. 212 he cites about 20 statues of Augustus with his toga over his head as sacrificant. Cf. K. Vierneisel and P. Zanker, *Die Bildnisse des*

symbolized devotion and piety, not disgrace. Thankfully, Paul identifies in v. 15 what causes disgrace: “if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him.” Paul here provides an historically-confirmable answer to the question, What “hanging down from the head” would cause a man disgrace in the Corinth of Paul’s day?

### **What uncovering of the head was disgraceful for women?**

Similarly, some women in Corinthian worship services were doing something so widely recognized as shameful that it would cause shame to “every woman” (11:5). Shame is an emotion caused when social conventions are broken. What about having ones head “uncovered” would cause shame to a woman leading in worship in the cultural setting of Corinth? Although Massey cites Callimachus’s prohibition of women “with hair unbound” in *Hymn to Demeter* VI.5, he makes no mention of the relevance to the

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*Augustus* (Munich: Glyptothek, 1979), 58-60; S. Walker and A. Burnett, *The Image of Augustus* (London: British Museum, 1981), Maps 1-2; D. W. J. Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” *TynBul* 44, 2 (Nov. 1993): 245-60, 247; C. L. Thompson, “Hairstyles, Head-coverings, and St. Paul. Portraits from Roman Corinth,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 51, 2 (June, 1988): 99-115, 101. While it is probably true in general that only leaders in the community would adopt this pose, since only they would be in a position to preside over a sacrifice, the symbolism of the head covering was primarily one of piety and religious devotion, not status seeking. Such a posture of devotion, if adopted in Christian prayer would logically imply devotion to Christ.

exegesis of 1 Cor 11:5-16 of the convention that respectable women wore their hair up and the wealth of evidence that women's hair let loose was shameful. Extensive evidence from portraiture, frescoes, sculptures, and vase paintings in Greek and Roman cities of Paul's day almost universally depicts respectable women with their hair done up.<sup>39</sup> The iconography of hair let down loose was of "undisciplined sexuality."<sup>40</sup> Women in everyday public settings are almost never depicted with their hair hanging loose over their shoulders. Furthermore, they are only rarely depicted wearing a veil or other

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<sup>39</sup> Exemplary hairstyles are illustrated in R. Hurschmann, "Hairstyle," in *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 5:1099-103 and D. R. Edwards, "Dress and Ornamentation," *ABD* 2:237. The one exception mentioned by G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 510 n. 76, depicted in E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period. Volume Eleven: Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue: Illustrations* (New York: Pantheon, 1964), XI, fig 99, is not really an exception because their hair is neatly curled over their entire head, so that even the ringlets that fall behind their necks are not "hanging loose." Furthermore, S. K. Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 60, and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 227, note that this was a distinctive hairstyle of devotees of Isis, "with a band around the forehead and curls falling on the shoulder."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. C. R. Hallpike, "Social Hair," *Man* n.s. 4 (1969): 256-64.

garment over their heads. Professor E. A. Judge showed this author the huge collection of plaster cast copies of Greek and Roman statues in the Cambridge University Department of Classics.<sup>41</sup> Almost invariably, respectable women are depicted with their hair done up.<sup>42</sup> It only makes sense that the women being portrayed wanted their statues to depict them in a respectable light.

### **Cultural Weaknesses in the Women's Head Covering as a Garment View**

Concerning Greek customs A. Oepke observes, "It used to be asserted by theologians that Paul was simply endorsing the unwritten law of Hellenic and Hellenistic feeling for what was proper. But this view is untenable.... It is quite wrong that Greek women were under some kind of compulsion to wear a veil in public.... Passages to the contrary are so numerous and unequivocal that they cannot be offset."<sup>43</sup> Hurschmann states that indoors, "Greek women only gathered their hair with the *kekryphalos* [partial hair net], the *sakkos* [hair net], or ribbons."<sup>44</sup> Since most worship was indoors, hair done up would be expected. Hurley notes further that, "Grecian pottery provides abundant

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<sup>41</sup> In September, 1991.

<sup>42</sup> The only exceptions were at specific occasions, notably for agonized mourning (unrelated to the Corinthian issue) and weddings (where the sexual implications of hair let down are blessed). Cf. Thompson, "Hairstyles," 112.

<sup>43</sup> A. Oepke, "κατακαλύπτω," *TDNT* 3:562.

<sup>44</sup> R. Hurschmann, "Headgear," in *Brill's New Pauly* (2005), 6:19-20 with illustrations.

information concerning elegant hair styles and an absence of head-coverings among the Greeks from a very early period.”<sup>45</sup> He concludes that, “Graeco-Roman practice of the day, as evidenced by art and literature, did not include mandatory veiling of any sort.... Whether or not women pulled their garments (*palla*, Latin; *himation* or *peribolaion*, Greek) over their heads was a matter of indifference.”<sup>46</sup> Jews referred to Gentile women as though they typically wore no veil.<sup>47</sup> R. B. Hays makes the crucial point, “It was not the normal custom for women 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. For women to have loose hair in public, however, *was* conventionally seen as shameful, a sign associated either with prostitutes or—perhaps worse from Paul’s point

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<sup>45</sup> James Bassett Hurley, “Man and Woman in 1 Corinthians: Some Exegetical Studies in Pauline Theology and Ethics” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge, 1973), 44; cf. E. Pottier, M. Albert, and E. Saglio, “Coma,” in *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* (ed. C. Daremburg and E. Saglio; Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1887) 1,2 pp. 1367-71.

<sup>46</sup> James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 269, cf. 67, 257.

<sup>47</sup> *Num. Rab.* 9 on 5:18; Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols.; München: Beck, 1922-1961) 3:429; Oepke, “κατακαλύπτω,” *TDNT* 3:562.

of view—with women caught up in the ecstatic worship practices of the cults associated with Dionysius, Cybele, and Isis.”<sup>48</sup>

Long hair is identified “as a covering” in 1 Cor 11:15, namely as equivalent to or to function as a covering. The point is not, as Massey ridicules, that “περιβόλαιον means hair wrapped around the head,”<sup>49</sup> but that hair is given to function as a περιβόλαιον, namely a covering or a wrap around. Given either of the standard meanings of ἀντί that could fit this context, Paul’s statement that a woman’s “long hair is given to her as/instead of a covering” would be incongruous as the conclusion of an argument that a woman must wear a garment head covering. Furthermore, if Paul’s point is that a woman should cover her head with a garment, why would he also state in his conclusion that a woman’s hair is her “glory” (11:15)? Both statements fits perfectly, however, if Paul is arguing that women should wear their hair done up as a modest covering.

“Uncovered” (ἀκατακάλυπτος) is explained twice in vv. 5-6 using “for” (γάρ). Both reasons explain the uncovering as equivalent to hair being clipped or shaved. This associates the covering with hair and fits most naturally if “uncovered” refers to a woman with her hair let down.

In Greek literature, the word for “hair” was typically omitted in contexts involving the verb “shave” or “cut,” and “head” often implied “hair.” In many such instances where English usage would demand that hair be identified, the word “hair” is

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<sup>48</sup> R. B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 1997), 185-86.

<sup>49</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 516 n. 52.

omitted in Greek. For instance, using this same verb, Num 6:9 states [with words that in Greek are not stated in brackets], “But if a man dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his dedicated head [of hair], then he shall shave his head [of hair] on the day when he becomes clean.” In this case, it is clear that “head” substitutes for “hair” because it is followed by “shave his head.” Num 6:18-19 states, “The Nazirite shall then shave his dedicated head [of hair]...and shall take the dedicated hair of his head and put it on the fire...after he has shaved his dedicated [hair]...” Both the LXX and MT omit the word “hair” twice. “Hair” is also omitted as the object of the verb for “to cut” in LXX Jer 7:28-9, “This is the nation that has not obeyed the Lord its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips. Cut off [the hair of] your head and throw it away; take up a lament.” “Cut off your head” would have a very different meaning in English. MT Jer 7:29 has a feminine imperative and suffix, “cut off her hair.” Hair is omitted after *κείρω* in the LXX and also the MT of 2 Sam 14:26, “He cut [the hair of] his head...he used to cut [his hair]...he cut [his hair], and he would weigh the hair of his head.” In Mic 1:16 hair is also omitted after “shave” (*ξυράω*). Callimachus *Hymn to Demeter* VI.125 uses “head” to convey “hair”: ὡς πόδας, ὡς κεφαλὰς παναπηρέας, meaning “unsandaled with hair unbound”.

In Paul’s day, an accused adulteress had her hair let down, and shaving was the penalty of a convicted adulteress.<sup>50</sup> By letting her hair down in public a woman placed on

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<sup>50</sup> The tractate *Soṭah* (“The Suspected Adulteress”) of the Tosefta, Mishna, Babylonian Talmud, and Jerusalem Talmud is devoted to the Num 5 “bitter water” ordeal in which a

herself the accusation of adultery. This explains why an uncovered woman is the same as a woman with shorn hair. Paul's statement of equivalence makes clear sense only if "uncovered" refers to hair let down. In contrast, there is no such logical or moral relationship between the removal of a head-covering garment and being shorn.

Paul's use of ἀκατακάλυπτος, "uncovered," referring to hair has precedence in the one text he cited the most, the LXX. In fact, the only occurrence in the LXX of ἀκατακάλυπτος, in Lev 13:45, translates פְּרִיט, which Hebrew scholars agree means "to let the hair on the head hang loosely."<sup>51</sup> Lev 13:45 is the earliest instance of a derivative of the word "cover" (κατακαλύπτω) occurring with "head" in the TLG database.<sup>52</sup> Its phrase, "his head uncovered," (καὶ ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ ἀκατακάλυπτος) parallels 1 Cor 11:5, "her head uncovered" (ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ). This interpretation of 1 Cor

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priest lets down the hair of an accused adulteress. This custom is paralleled in non-Jewish customs cited by Tacitus *Germania* 19; Aristophanes 3, 204-7; and Dio Chrysostom *Discourses* 64.2-3. On the punishment of shaving, cf. A. Büchler, "Das Schneiden des Haares als Strafe der Ekebrecker bei den Semiten," *WZKM* 19 (1905): 91-138; Hurley, "Man and Woman in 1 Corinthians," 50; Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 82-83; J. Wettstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Amsterdam: Dommerian, 1752/ Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 1962) *ad. loc.*

<sup>51</sup> Cf. above, pages 4-7.

<sup>52</sup> CD-ROM C.

11:2-16 consistently identifies the head covering for both men and women as the same thing (hair), as one would expect from Paul's use of parallel terminology to convey opposites: women's heads should be covered (11:5-6), but men's should not (11:7).

The second earliest instance of a derivative of the word "cover" (κατακαλύπτω) occurring with "head" in the TLG database is Philo *The Special Laws*, III.60, referring to the custom described in Num 5:18, "the woman is to come forward with her head uncovered (ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ)."<sup>53</sup> Massey asserts that the ἐπίκρανον removed from an accused adulteress in Philo *The Special Laws*, III.56 "literally is something artificial (a cloth or garment) that covers the head."<sup>54</sup> In fact, ἐπίκρανον literally means simply "upon head," and LSJ 640 first lists the meaning "that which is put on the head." It then gives as examples, "head-dress, cap." Philo's wording in III.56 is entirely appropriate for describing a woman with her hair let down according to the instructions in Num 5:18, the passage Philo is describing, and also its description in *m. Soṭah* 1:5. Philo writes literally, "The priest...taking away that which is put on the head, in order that she may be judged bear-headed, stripped of the symbol of modesty customarily used [χρησθαι, not 'worn'] by women who are wholly innocent." Since a woman's hair done up symbolized marital faithfulness, when her hair is let down, she is stripped of her symbol of modesty. Without her hair done up, her head is naked, exposed to shame as sexually loose. If Oepke is correct that "Philo describes the headband

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<sup>53</sup> Colson, LCL *Philo* 7.512-13.

<sup>54</sup> Massey, "κατακαλύπτω," 519.

(ἐπίκρανον),”<sup>55</sup> then because it ties the hair up, when it is taken away (ἀφαιρέω), the woman is stripped of the symbol of her modesty, namely her hair done up.

Massey asserts, “Josephus clearly does not understand Num 5:18 as a text dealing with the loosening of hair.”<sup>56</sup> It is true that there is one passage in Josephus (*Ant.* III.270) that mentions removal of a ἱμάτιον in the bitter water ordeal, but Josephus’s account is just three sentences long, far more abbreviated than Num 5:11-31, and most of those three sentences address issues not in the Numbers account. Only Josephus’s words καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς parallel LXX Num 5:18 καὶ...τὴν κεφαλὴν. Nor does Josephus even use the word ἀκατακαλύπτω, so his text is very weak evidence that ἀκατακαλύπτω in translations from Num 6:5 would not refer to hair. Furthermore, Josephus wrote after Paul so could not have influenced what Paul meant by ἀκατακαλύπτω in 1 Cor 11:4. Josephus’s lack of reference to the woman’s hair being loosened, like his omission of most of the details of Num 5:11-31, should not be assumed to negate it. As the custom of secluding women, especially among the upper classes in Jerusalem, became associated with veiling, the removal of a garment head covering might have to precede letting the hair down.

Demanding a garment cover would not fit Paul’s message of freedom in Christ from Jewish law, his usual strong opposition to legalism, or his principle of becoming all things to all people (1 Cor 10:33), especially since Hellenistic women probably

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<sup>55</sup> Oepke, “κατακαλύπτω,” *TDNT* 3:562

<sup>56</sup> Massey, “κατακαλύπτω,” 519-20.

constituted the majority of the church and since it was contrary to Hellenistic custom to pray in public with a garment over one's head. Furthermore, it would be inconsistent for Paul to demand that women follow a Jewish head-covering custom, but prohibit men from following a Jewish head-covering custom.

### **Conclusion**

The very data that Massey cites disproves each of his five conclusions. Contextual and cultural factors make it probable, contrary to Massey's stated conclusions, that the head coverings Paul prohibits for worship leaders in 1 Cor 11:2-16 refer to hair, not a garment. Men ought not depict themselves as women by wearing long effeminate hair, and women ought not symbolize sexual looseness by letting their hair down so it hangs loosely over their shoulders. Paul prohibits these acts because in the Corinthian cultural context at that time, they undermined Christian marriage and morality. In contemporary western culture, men with long manly hair do not symbolize effeminacy and women's hair hanging down over their shoulders does not symbolize sexual freedom, and neither is shameful, so Paul's argument does not apply against these modern hairstyles.