


Was Not the Woman Created in the Likeness of God? Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 1–3 in 1 Cor 11:7–12

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ABSTRACT: To demonstrate his claim in 1 Cor 11:2–16 about how a Christian man and woman should wear their hair during liturgical worship, Paul uses several types of arguments, including Scripture (vv. 7–12). In v. 7, he states that “A man should not cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God, but a woman is the glory of man” (NAB). Most readers today, question the soundness of such an argument and may accuse Paul of misogyny. Does he not, contrary to what Gen 1:26–27 asserts, contend that the woman was not created in the image of God? The present study argues that Paul’s position can be better understood only if one, on the one hand, highlights the points of his argumentation and, on the other hand, considers the techniques of the Jewish theory of interpretation of the Scriptures in practice at the time of the Apostle. Paul is doing a Midrashic reading of Gen 1–3 narratives about the creation of human beings to assert the importance of both man and woman to behavior during Christian liturgical worship in such manner that they respect their specific dignities. At the end, Paul seems to be more “philogynist” than people use to appreciate.

KEYWORDS: 1 Cor 11:7–12, specific dignity of women, Holy Scriptures, Gen 2–3, Midrashic reading, rhetorical analysis

1 Cor 11:2–16 is considered by many readers as speaking about how women should be seen in communal worship.¹ And it is one of the Pauline texts where the Apostle is accused of being a male chauvinist, negating the parity between men and women restored by Jesus in

¹ According to Wolfgang Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther [1 Kor 6,12–11,16]* [EKKNT 7/2; Solothurn – Düsseldorf: Benziger – Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1995] 485), this text is “über die rechte Haartracht für Frauen im Gottesdienst.” The different titles given to this literary unit in some biblical editions or translations say the same: “Über das Verhalten der Frau im Gottesdienst” (*Die Bibel. Einheitsübersetzung* [Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 1980]); “Il velo delle donne nelle assemblee” (*La Bibbia. Nuovissima versione dai testi originali* [Roma: Paoline 1983]); “Le voile des femmes” (*La Bible des communautés chrétiennes* [Kinshasa: Médiaspaul 2001]); “Mudi bakaji mua kuikala diba dia disambila” (*Mukanda wa Mvidi Mukulu* [Kinshasa: Verbum Bible 2004]); “Mwaan-mukaj avwaal ciit ku mut ha kulomb Mawej” (*Mukand’a Mawej* [Kinshasa: Alliance biblique 2006]). See also S. Brown, “The Dialectic of Relationship: Paul and the Veiling of Women in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *Salesianum* 67/3 (2005) 461. On his part, H.R. Holmyard III, “Does 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Refer to Women Praying and Prophesying in Church?,” *BSac* 154 (1997) 461, thinks that: “On the basis of 1 Timothy 2:11–12 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–35 many evangelicals are convinced that women should not speak in local church gatherings. Yet 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 gives instructions for the behavior

the Jewish milieu.² Paul would keep women as inferior to men by requiring them to cover their heads in a liturgical assembly, to honor men, even though he recognizes the possibility of women praying or being prophetesses. The supremacy of the man over the woman is made clear by the fact that he, in v. 3, says that the man is the “head” of the woman: “I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and a husband the head of his wife, and God the head of Christ.”³ NAB). Saying so, the woman is the head of nobody.⁴

Apart from questions arising about the meaning of some terms and expressions used in the whole unit, like the words κεφαλή, δόξα, εἰκόν, κατακαλύπτω τὴν κεφαλὴν, etc., the greatest concern is the scriptural argument used by Paul in vv. 7–12, which seems to discriminate between human beings on gender. By saying, in v. 7, that “a man should not cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God, but a woman is the glory of man,” is he not implying that a woman is not the image and glory of God?⁵ The author of the present study is convinced of the importance of the rhetorical model for an efficient analysis of the whole vv. 2–16.⁶ Using this model and knowing the difference between the principal statement of a rhetorical discussion and the other statements, which are its confirmations, he focuses his analysis on how the echoed Creation Narratives of Gen 2–3 in vv. 7–12 are intended by Paul as proofs of his main statement, which is in vv. 4c–5. The article is thus developed in four points: 1) What does Paul say in 1 Cor 11:7–12 according to Scholars?; 2) the Pauline Midrashic Reading of the Creation Narratives in vv. 7–10; 3) the Pauline Midrashic Reading of the Creation Narratives in vv. 11–12; and 4) as Conclusion, Paul’s position and message.

of women when they pray or prophesy. The traditional view is that 1 Corinthians 11 as a whole pertains to the corporate worship of the church. However, several components of 1 Corinthians either allow for or press the conclusion that 11:2–16 does *not* address congregational settings. Thus if 11:2–16 pertains to nonchurch settings, it does not conflict with 14:33b–35. The former instructs women to wear headcoverings when they pray or prophesy in nonchurch gatherings, and the latter instructs them to remain silent in local-church gatherings.” Italics in the text. See also on page 472.

2 See C. Militello, “In dialogo con Jerome Murphy-O’Connor,” J. Murphy-O’Connor – C. Militello – M.-L. Rigato, *Paolo e le donne* (Orizzonti biblici; Assisi: Cittadella 2006) 94–95.

3 If not stated otherwise, all the Bible quotations in English are from *The New American Bible* (NAB), Revised Edition 2011.

4 See E. Schüssler Fiorenza, “Le rôle des femmes dans le mouvement chrétien primitif,” *Concilium* 111 (1975) 24.

5 The translation of *The New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) speaks even of the woman being ‘the reflection of man’s glory’: “But for a man it is not right to have his head covered, since he is the image of God and reflects God’s glory; but woman is the reflection of man’s glory.”

6 See also J.-B. Matand Bulembat, “Est-il convenable qu’une femme prie Dieu la tête en désordre ?” (1 Co 11,13). De la misogynie paulienne dans l’argumentation rhétorique de 1 Co 11,2–16,” *Revue Africaine des Sciences de la Mission* 19 (2003) 7–41; J.-B. Matand Bulembat, “L’homme est l’image et la gloire de Dieu; et la femme, la gloire de l’homme” (1 Co 11,7). De l’interprétation de la tradition scripturaire d’Israël au sein de l’Eglise primitive,” *Epistémologie et théologie. Enjeux du dialogue foi – science – éthique pour l’avenir de l’humanité. Mélanges Monseigneur Tharcisse Tshibangu pour ses 70 ans d’âge et 35 ans d’épiscopat* (eds. L. Santedi Kinkupu – M. Malu Nyimi) (Kinshasa: FCK 2006) 43–68.

1. What does Paul Say in 1 Cor 11:7–12 According to Scholars?

1 Cor 11:2–16 is one of the much discussed pericope about its object and occasion.⁷ Inside of it, more than one NT scholars have considered vv. 7–12 to be Deutero-Pauline. Paul – they say –, who supported the equality of man and woman in Christ (cf. Gal 3:28), could not be inconsistent with himself in asserting what is found here. It must be a late interpolation. This is the case of W.O. Walker and Lamar Cope.⁸ Nowadays there is no convincing arguments to sustain the inauthenticity of these verses. That is why some, like Charles Perrot and Gerhard Dautzenberg, have believed that Paul has a very negative view of women, especially in vv. 7–10. And having himself discovered the risk of giving a bad image of women by insisting on their inferiority to men, Paul had to rectify his position in vv. 11–12 by using the particle *πλὴν*.⁹ In this way, there would be two different theologies or anthropologies in these vv. 7–12.¹⁰ For Giancarlo Biguzzi, Paul did not even manage to make such a correction: “Tutto dice che Paolo è alla disperata ricerca di motivazioni, così che quelle che di fatto poi trova ed espone, rivelano di essere strumentali, più che pertinenti e convincenti.”¹¹

For other exegetes, one of whose tenors is Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Paul is not only addressing women in this text; men are also the target of his speech. His problem is with the dress that both men and women adopt at Christian prayer meetings. In the Greek society of the time, these exegetes let observe, short hair for a woman or long hair for a man indicated that the person in question was flaunting his homosexual tendencies. Now some Corinthian Christians were already claiming to be full of the Spirit and to have reached perfection (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; also 1:5; 2:6; 3:1), to the extent that they considered that everything was permitted (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23), even in sexual matters. In the name of the liberation and freedom acquired in Christ, they relativized all moral restrictions. Some of them did not hesitate to come to the prayer meetings dressed in a manner considered “indecent”

⁷ See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 491–497.

⁸ See W.O. Walker, “1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul’s Views Regarding Women,” *JBL* 94 (1975) 94–110 and L. Cope, “1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further,” *JBL* 98 (1978) 430, both quoted by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (“Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *CBQ* 42 [1980] 482).

⁹ See C. Perrot, “Une étrange lecture de l’écriture: 1 Co 11,7–9,” *La vie de la Parole. De l’Ancien au Nouveau Testament. Etudes d’exégèse et d’herméneutique bibliques offertes à Pierre Grelot* (Paris: Desclée 1987) 263. See also J. Murphy-O'Connor, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (eds. R.E. Brown – J.A. Fitzmyer – R.E. Murphy) (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 1990) 809. See also J.-M. Aubert, *L’exil féminin. Antisémisme et christianisme* (Paris: Cerf 1988) 95; S. Tunc, *Brève histoire des femmes chrétiennes* (Paris: Cerf 1989) 52; N. Baumert, *Antifeminismus bei Paulus? Einzelstudien* (FB 68; Würzburg: Echter 1992) 88.

¹⁰ “...unser Abschnitt zwei unterschiedlichen Theologien oder Anthropologien Raum gibt... Die theologische Unausgeglichenheit der Argumentation lässt sich nicht harmonisieren... Das Nebeneinander unterschiedlicher Argumentationslinien zeigt, dass es Paulus nicht gelungen ist, eine einheitliche theologische Konzeption zum Thema der Gleichwertigkeit von Mann und Frau zu werfen und durchzuhalten” (G. Dautzenberg, “Zur Stellung der Frauen in den paulinischen Gemeinden”; quoted by Giancarlo Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio. Paolo e la donna in 1 Cor 11,2–16 e 14,33b–36* [SupRivB 37; Bologna: Dehoniane 2001] 29, n. 42).

¹¹ See Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio*, 27.

by the surrounding environment. Paul, in writing to them, draws their attention to this point and urges them to respect, each according to his or her sex, what society holds to be the proper way for each sex to appear in public. The Pauline problem is not, in this case, a problem of the veil.¹²

Other scholars also point to the way women and men conducted themselves at times of public acts among the Greeks, Romans and Jews. Greek and Jew Women had to keep distance from “foreign” men and one way to express it was to put on a veil on the head. It is then argued that Paul was repressing the boldness with which some Christian women, even though they came from among the Jews or Greeks, lacked restraint even towards men who were not their husbands or family members, because of their ability to participate and even speak at liturgical celebrations. In this case, it is indeed a question of the veil. Therefore, the Pauline discussion is not about all women, but about those who were married.¹³

I would sustain that the best explanation of this Pauline discussion in 1 Cor 11:2–16 is mainly through the best interpretation of the adjective *ἀκατακάλυπτος*, used in relation to a woman (cf. vv. 5.13). Careful study of this lexeme shows that it refers to the idea of a person whose dress is disorderly, careless, and disrespectful of social propriety. This adjective refers to someone who, as in the Deuteronomistic society of Israel, was considered unclean because of the disorder introduced by leprosy into their physical and interpersonal relationships (cf. Lev 13–14, and parallels; mostly Lev 13:40–46). It thus refers to the person who, in such a state of appearance, has lost something that would give him respectability.¹⁴ By applying this concept of *ἀκατακάλυπτος* to the hair of someone who prays or prophesies, Paul would be arguing that such a person, man or woman, should do so with a well-groomed head.

Now in matters of care, it is, as the Old Testament texts relating to the adjective *ἀκατακάλυπτος* show, the society in which the Christian finds himself, that defines its customs particularly those of dress. Thus, according to social arrangements, men and women may not style their hair in the same way when in a public assembly. The cosmetics that are appropriate for women can require that they have long and well-groomed hair. For this,

12 See Murphy-O'Connor, “Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” 482–500; A. Padgett, “Paul on Women in the Church. The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16,” *JSNT* 20 (1984) 69–86; J. Murphy-O'Connor, “1 Corinthians 11:2–16. Once Again,” *CBQ* 50 (1988) 265–274; K.-K. Yeo, “Differentiation and Mutuality of Male-Female Relations in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *BR* 43 (1998) 7–21; J. Murphy-O'Connor, “Paolo e le donne,” J. Murphy-O'Connor – C. Militello – M.-L. Rigato, *Paolo e le donne* (Orizzonti biblici; Assisi: Cittadella 2006) 25–29; K.R. MacGregor, “Is 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 a Prohibition of Homosexuality,” *BSac* 166 (2009) 201–216; P.T. Massey, “Gender versus Marital Concerns: Does 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Address the Issues of Male/Female or Husband/Wife?,” *TynBul* 64 (2013) 239–256.

13 See D.W.J. Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *TynBul* 41 (1990) 245–260; D.B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press 1995) 235–239, 248–249; D.E. Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 through Archeological and Moral-Rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen 1997); M. Finney, “Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2–16 in its Social Context,” *JSNT* 33 (2010) 31–58.

14 See Matand Bulembat, “Est-il convenable?,” 30–37. See also Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 507.

even a cap (veil) would be necessary if it hides some disorder of her hair. On the other hand, the cosmetics that are suitable for men can require that they have short hair, so that they do not have messy hair. For this, even a completely shaved head would be necessary if it hides some disorder of his hair. The argument emerges from cultural anthropology.¹⁵

To reach this position, I consider that 1 Cor 11:2–16 is developed as a rhetorical argumentation, where the sequence of ideas passes through stages that can be identified according to the rhetorical model.¹⁶ Through the identification of the main statement (the *thesis* or *problema*) that Paul supports in this text through arguments (*pisteis* or *probatio*).¹⁷ According to J. Murphy-O'Connor, the programmatic statement is the v. 3, followed by a description and condemnation of Corinthian practices (vv. 4–6). Then comes the first argument against the Corinthians based on the difference between man and woman in Gen 2:18–23 (vv. 7–10), with a parenthesis excluding a false interpretation of Gen 2:18–23 (vv. 11–12). In vv. 13–15, there is the second argument against the Corinthians based on natural law, and in v. 16, the third argument against the Corinthians based on the practice of the churches.¹⁸ In my analysis, it looks that the v. 3 cannot be the *propositio* because it is not immediately sustained by arguments that are its *probatio*. For me, vv. 4–5c are the ones to play the role of the *propositio*, which is sustained in vv. 6–12 (cf. γὰρ).¹⁹ Paul states that

- 15 Applying also an intertextual analysis, Maria-Luisa Rigato sustains that the OT text that can best help here is Num 6:7–21 on the rites of the Nazirites. For her, “non si trattava per Paolo di *conservare il simbolismo dei ruoli sessuali* di donna e uomo derivante dai capelli corti o lunghi. E’ questa la tesi di molti commentatori moderni. Se la mia ipotesi è esatta, Paolo non vuole come oranti e profetanti dei nazirei o che ne abbiano anche solo la *parvenza*” (M.-L. Rigato, “Paolo imita Gesù nella promozione della donna,” J. Murphy-O’Connor – C. Militello – M.-L. Rigato, *Paolo e le donne* [Orizzonti biblici; Assisi: Cittadella 2006] 141). Italics in the text.
- 16 See also J.E. Marshall, “Uncovering Traditions in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *NoviT* 61 (2019) 70–89. For the characteristics of an optimal use of the rhetorical criticism and its importance in the study of Pauline texts, see J.-N. Aletti, “La *dispositio* rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes. Propositions de méthode,” *NTS* 38 (1992) 385–401. See also A. Pitta, *Disposizione e messaggio della Lettera ai Galati. Analisi retorico-letteraria* (AnBib 131; Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute 1992); W. Wuellner, “Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation,” *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition. In Honorem Robert M. Grant* (eds. W.R. Schoedel – R.L. Wilken) (ThH 54; Paris: Beauchesne 1979) 177–188.
- 17 See Aristote, *Rhétorique*, 3 ed. (eds., trans. M. Dufour – A. Wärtelle; annot. A. Wärtelle) (Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1989) III, 3.13.1414a.
- 18 See Murphy-O’Connor, “Paolo e le donne,” 27–29. See also Sherri Brown (“The Dialectic of Relationship,” 465) who considers v. 3 as the theological statement (*theologoumenon*) bracketed by Christ, statement which “introduces the thesis to Paul’s argument not as the subjugation of woman and her conduct to man, but as the dialectic of relationships in life in Christ. All relationships and conduct are bound and held accountable therein.”
- 19 See Matand Bulembat, “Est-il convenable?,” 45–46. In this article the author sustains rightly that v. 2 can be considered as the *exordium* where the *captatio benevolentiae* is remarkable. Verse 3 can be considered as a small *narratio* where the orator exposes the facts as they are, not needing to be demonstrated; they appear to be a kind of “accepted ideas,” as Aristote (*Topiques*. I. *Liures I–IV* [ed., trans. J. Brunschwig] [Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1967] 100 b 21–23) and Quintilien (*Institution oratoire* [ed., trans. J. Cousin] [Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1978] V, 10, 11–12) do speak about the nature and function of a *narratio*. For me, the v. 16 plays surely the rhetorical role of an *exitus/peroratio* where Paul asks the audience to adhere to his view. Before this *peroratio*, Paul has resumed the main *propositio* in v. 13 and sustained it with a subsidiary *probatio* in vv. 14–15.

it is convenient that a man or a woman may be allowed to address his/her prayers to God or to prophesize, but with hair well-groomed according to the parameters of civility in the society.²⁰

However, in vv. 7–12 the Apostle presents to the Christians the order of creation and procreation, as told in the narratives of Gen 1–3, as the strongest argument for his thesis towards the argument from culture. Now, since they are not introduced by a citation formula, the biblical texts to which Paul refers can only be identified by a listener/reader accustomed to the Scriptures.²¹ The interpreter is then obliged not only to identify them, but above all to see how the Apostle has used them to support his main thesis of vv. 4–5c. The following hermeneutical questions are therefore pertinent: How does Paul manage this argument? What does this argument point out in line with his principal idea and to which extent can it be considered as relevant for believers in Christ? At the end, do not the echoed biblical texts and the Pauline interpretation undermine the parity between woman and man restored by Christ? In sum, what does Paul say in 1 Cor 11:7–12 through his midrashic reading?

2. Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 1–2 in vv. 7–10

In Paul's days, as we know, the reading and commentary of biblical texts were done according to precise principles of interpretation.²² These rules were based on a fundamental con-

In a paper presented in June 2021 in Minneapolis Marcin Kowalski ("Changing Gender Roles and the Unchanging Message of 1 Cor 11:2–16," *Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture, Quinn Conference, The Saint Paul Seminary, Minneapolis, MN* [forthcoming]) argues that v. 3 is the thesis of 1 Cor 11:2–16. For him, the fundamental and unchanging message of this literary unit is the necessity and purpose of the distinction between man and woman, and of their mutual interaction. Since the manifestation of this distinction may vary from time to time, v. 3 affirms the unchanging truth that the relationship between man and woman is to imitate the relationship between the Father and the Son, where equality and diversity of participants are important. About the *dispositio* of 1 Cor 11:2–16, see also Jill E. Marshall ("Uncovering Tradition," 75) who proposes another structure.

20 See also R.E. Ciampa – B.S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans – Cambridge, UK: Apollos 2010) 522–537.

21 This is a case of intertextuality in which "[l]es textes bibliques parlent entre eux, mais c'est à voix basse pour la plupart du temps ; il faut prêter l'oreille pour les entendre. Les deux Testaments aussi, à condition de ne pas être sourd. Un texte n'est pas vraiment compréhensible si l'on n'entend pas le système d'échos qu'il entretient avec d'autres ; si l'on ne perçoit pas que le sens est ce qui circule non seulement à l'intérieur d'un texte, entre les lignes, mais aussi entre les textes et entre les livres du corpus biblique, comme le sang dans le corps" (R. Meyner, *Traité de rhétorique biblique* [Rhétorique sémitique 4; Paris: Lethielleux 2007] 376).

22 See C.K. Stockhausen, "Paul the Exegete," *TBT* 28 (1990) 196–202; C.K. Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant. The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor: 3,1–4,6* (AnBib 116; Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute 1989); M. Collin – P. Leenhardt, *La Torah orale des Pharisiens. Textes de la tradition d'Israël* (CaESup 37; Paris: Cerf 1990); D. Banon, *La lecture infinie. Les voies de l'interprétation midrashique* (Paris: Seuil 1987). On the rules of biblical hermeneutics used in Jewish rabbinism, see among others H.L. Strack – G. Stemmerger, *Introduction au Talmud et au Midrash* (French trans. M.-R. Hayoun) (Patrimoines; Judaïsme;

viction that “the Bible is considered as a unity by the authors of the readings,”²³ even if these rules could sometimes appear contradictory. In such a context, even the simple reversal of the order of the words in a verse in order to derive a teaching was not a problem.²⁴ In this way, rabbinic exegesis could even modify a text, but these modifications were not conceived as “manipulating a text to say what it does not say for the sake of the argument.”²⁵

In view of this, the use of Scripture was clearly a relative rereading of the texts, since the context of the rereading and the purpose of the rereading were decisive. The interpreters were therefore convinced that the biblical text was of plural interpretation.²⁶ It was, after all, contextualizations that made the old text alive forever.²⁷ What is most constant, however, as Frédéric Manns points it out, is the fact that during the rereading, the meaning of a text came out from its immediate literary context.²⁸

2.1. Literary Composition of vv. 7–10

Let us remember that Rhetoricians teach that the development of the different parts of the *dispositio* proceeds through small units that often have multiple forms of relationships between them, thanks to figures of style or thought, notably simple chiasms, concentric chiasms, synonymic or antithetical parallelisms, sometimes at a long distance. Each argumentative unit can therefore be formally composed in its own way. The pericope under consideration is indeed composed of two small units: vv. 7–10 and vv. 11–12, which are developed, one in the form of a concentric chiasm, and the other in the form of a synonymic parallelism.

Paris: Cerf 1986); J.-L. Ska, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque. Clés pour l'interprétation des cinq premiers livres de la Bible* (Italian trans. F. Vermorel) (Le livre et le rouleau 5; Bruxelles: Lessius 2000) 236–252.

23 F. Manns, *Le Midrash. Approche et commentaire de l'Écriture* (SBFA 56; Jérusalem: Franciscan Printing Press 2001) 14.

24 This principle applies even to the juxtaposition of texts: “Pour l’interprète de l’Écriture la juxtaposition des textes est importante. Elle n’est pas due au hasard. Le contexte immédiat a une répercussion sur l’intelligence du texte. C’est dans cette proximité que le texte prend son sens” (Manns, *Le Midrash*, 12).

25 M. Taradach, *Le Midrash. Introduction à la littérature rabbinique (Drs dans la Bible, les Targumim, les Midrasim)* (MdB 22; Genève: Labor et Fides 1991) 47. For Herman L. Strack and Günter Stemberger (*Introduction au Talmud*, 37), “L’usage rabbinique de la Bible peut maintes fois paraître arbitraire ; il n’en demeure pas moins tenu par des règles (middot).”

26 The rabbis have always said that “*Shiv'im panim la-Torah*” in the sense that – as Jean-Louis Ska translates – each verse of the Torah (Pentateuch) has seventy meanings. See J.-L. Ska, “Le Pentateuque – Une Cantate à plusieurs voix,” *Carrefour des Exégètes. Mélanges en hommage à Monsieur le Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya à l'occasion de ses 80 ans (1939–2019)* (ed. P. Béré) (Kitabu na Neno – Livre & Parole 1; Abidjan – Rome: PITCJ – GBP 2020) 105. This is, according to Alan Padgett (“Wealthy Women at Ephesus,” *Int* 41/1 [1987] 25), the reason of the existence of a variety of Jewish forms of Scripture reading.

27 As L. Ann Jervis (“But I want you to know...: Paul’s Midrashic Intertextual Response to the Corinthian Worshippers [1 Cor 11:2–16],” *JBL* 112/2 [1993] 233) points out: “The hermeneutical practice of the rabbis was a continuation of the interpretative strategies of the biblical writers, that is, the expression of ‘new teachings by means of strategic revisions of earlier traditions’ made in light of ‘a practical crisis of some sort.’ While scripture was considered to stand in dialectical tension with the historical moment, this did not exclude the interpreter in this mode from considering that scripture’s original meaning had been understood.”

28 “Pour l’interprète de l’Écriture la juxtaposition des textes est importante. Elle n’est pas due au hasard. Le contexte immédiat a une répercussion sur l’intelligence du texte. C’est dans cette proximité que le texte prend son sens” (Manns, *Le Midrash*, 12).

1 Cor 11:7–10 can indeed be divided into three minimal units: v. 7a-b, vv. 7c-9 and v. 10. The relations between the sentences in these units can allow a formal structure of concentric chiasm ABA' where the external assertions become clear thanks to what is stated in the center.

- A { Ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν
εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων.
- B { ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν.
οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός.
καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.
- A' { διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς
διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.

Verse 7 and verse 10 seem visibly arranged in parallelism, mainly because of the use of the verb ὀφείλει in both sentences. But this verb is negated in v. 7 (οὐκ ὀφείλει) while it is not in v. 10, and their subjects are different (ἀνὴρ in v. 7, and γυνή in v. 10), as well as their complements are also not similar (κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν in v. 7 and ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς in v. 10). At the end of each verse, there is a phrase justifying why the subject ought not / ought to do what is said in their complements (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων in v. 7b, and διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους in v. 10). The parallelism is in fact not synonymic because of the opposition of their subjects, as the use of μὲν ... δὲ in v. 7a and v. 7c makes it clear. This parallelism helps to see that the sentence ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς cannot say the same thing with κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν, and to see whether the phrase διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους (v. 10) has any contact with the sentence εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων (v. 7b).

In the middle of the unit, verse 7c (ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν) stands as the opposition of verse 7b: while man is image and glory of God, the woman is the glory of man. Paul realizes that this affirmation (7c) must be justified. The two verses 8–9 do play this function of explanation of v. 7c. From this feature, one can understand that the sentence εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων was rhetorically not difficult to be understood by the original addressees. This was not the case with what is asserted in v. 7c. That is why Paul does the rereading of the biblical texts that speak about the creation of man and woman.

There are two major problems of understanding in v. 7. The first relates to the statements ἀνὴρ μὲν ... εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν. Is Paul here asserting that only the man (ἀνὴρ) is the image of God, while the woman is not?²⁹ Did he

29 See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 509–510.

minimize the woman?³⁰ The second problem is, what the term δόξα means in this context? These are problems of Pauline interpretation of the Scriptures.

2.2. The Man Is the Image of God (v. 7bα)

Regarding the first problem, there is reason to believe that by virtue of the hermeneutical principle of *gezerah shawah*, Paul must have brought Gen 1:27 closer to Gen 2:7–23.³¹ Indeed, Gen 1:27 asserts that the human being was created “in the image of God” (κατ’ εικόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν). Only Paul makes two ‘modifications’: 1° he moves from the idea of conformity, expressed by the preposition κατὰ (ᾗ), to identity itself. “The image of God” is no longer a modality for the human being, but his attribute: man is the image of God. For this reason, G. Biguzzi thinks that Gen 1:27 is not the basis for this Pauline conception of man as the image of God.³² 2° Paul reserves this fact of creation for the ἀνὴρ alone, whereas the Greek text (LXX) of Gen 1:27 doesn’t use the term ἀνὴρ, but ἄνθρωπος, making it immediately clear that it must be understood for both male and female (ἄρσεν και θήλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς). Each of them is created at the image of God. Both of them should be the image of God, as it is said in Wis 2:23, “ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ’ ἀφθαρσίᾳ και εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν.”

Thanks to the *gezerah shawah* however a restrictive interpretation to the male was possible. The lexical ambiguity of the Greek term ἄνθρωπος could allow the use of it with the meaning of ‘human being’ in general or ‘male being.’ The translator of Gen 2:18–23 in the LXX has indeed equivalently used the terms Ἀδάμ, ἄνθρωπος and ἀνὴρ to denote the male man.³³ Paul himself has used the term ἄνθρωπος instead of ἀνὴρ in 1 Cor 7:1 as the immediate literary context indicates. Now, when one reads Gen 2:7–23, it becomes possible to understand in virtue of the hermeneutical principle of precedence, that Paul, in line with what he has already asserted in v. 3, holds that the man is “the head” of the woman i.e. he is the origin of the woman; the woman came from him, as he says more clearly in

³⁰ According to M.-L. Rigato (“Paolo imita Gesù,” 145–147), the phrase εἰκὼν και δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων is said of Christ himself, and not of the man.

³¹ The *gezerah shawah* consisted in bringing together passages of the Scripture which had “common points in vocabulary, syntax or general content” in order to derive a rational interpretation. See E. Ketterer – M. Renaud (eds.), *Le midrash. Textes choisis, traduits et présentés* (CaESup 82; Paris: Cerf 1992) 36. It was “une règle régissant les associations verbales. L’expression signifie littéralement ‘principe équivalent’. C’est l’une des règles juives (attribuées à Hillel) d’interprétation de l’Ecriture. On raisonne sur des analogies : deux passages différents des Ecritures (initialement, le principe valait seulement pour deux passages de la Torah, mais il a été étendu aux Prophètes et aux Ecrits) ayant un ou plusieurs termes en commun peuvent être interprétés l’un par l’autre. Autrement dit, sur la base d’une similarité verbale entre deux textes, ce qui est dit de l’un peut être dit de l’autre” (J.-N. Aletti et al., *Vocabulaire raisonné de l’exégèse biblique. Les mots, les approches, les auteurs* [Paris: Cerf 2005] 105).

³² See Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio*, 23–26. Apparently, this way of reading was not strange or new at the time of the Apostle. According to L.A. Jervis (“But I want you to know,” 235–238), it is also found in Philo of Alexandria. See once more Wis 2:23, which doesn’t use the preposition κατὰ before εἰκόνα: “ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ’ ἀφθαρσίᾳ και εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν.”

³³ See Pontificia Commissione Biblica, “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (Sal 8,5). *Un itinerario di antropologia biblica* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2019) n. 152.

v. 12a.³⁴ According to the Yahwist version of the creation of human beings, in fact, Adam “was fashioned” from dust taken from the ground long before all the animals (Gen 2:7), whereas the woman was created from man long afterwards, when Adam, *scilicet* the man, had not found a being similar to him among the animals (Gen 2:22). According to this narrative, the woman has her source in the man (cf. 1 Tim 2:13).

This being the case, Paul does not argue in v. 7 for the inferiority of the woman in relation to the man. In fact, while pointing out that the origin of woman is man, Gen 2:18–23 emphasizes above all the resemblance between man and woman. This pericope indicates only that God had resolved to create the woman (“this one shall be called *γυνή*”: Gen 2:23) as a human being, of the same nature as the man (*Ἀδὰμ*, *ἄνθρωπος*, *άνήρ*), so that the latter might find a being who was like himself (*τῷ δὲ Ἀδὰμ οὐχ εὐρέθη βοηθὸς ὅμοιος αὐτῷ* [*αὐτῷ* referring to *τῷ Ἀδὰμ*]). Between Adam and woman there is a similarity that makes woman different from all other non-human creatures.³⁵

In conclusion, people should, in view of all these scriptural elements, exclude from their thinking that Paul was holding that woman is not the image of God. The novelty he introduces is the assertion, on the one hand (*μὲν*), that “man is the glory of God” and, on the other hand (*δὲ*), that “woman is the glory of man.” Thus, one comes to the second problem. How are we to understand here the term *δόξα* which Paul used?³⁶

2.3. The Man Is the Glory of God (v. 7bβ)

We note that the term occurs with various meanings at least 160 times in the NT, 75 of them in the Pauline corpus. It is used 3 times in 1 Cor 11:2–16 out of the 12 times in 1 Cor. It is often contrasted with the term *ἀτιμία* (cf. 1 Cor 11:15 and 15:43) and refers to the contrary of sordid, disgusting appearance of someone’s outfit, i.e. to the splendid, proper, honorable appearance. In this case, *δόξα* is used with a dative. In 1 Cor 11:7, it is used in the same way as in 2 Cor 8:23; Eph 3:13 and 1 Thess 2:20. Here, it employed with the genitive of the person related. In these texts it is said that someone is the glory of someone to say that he is his honor, his pride, wherever he is: one cannot be ashamed of him, complain about him, but rather boast about him. Man is thus the glory of God in the sense that his being at the moment of the creation of the universe constituted an honor for God. The reason is that according to Gen 1 Adam was, of all living beings, created in

34 According to the hermeneutical principle of priority/precedence/anteriority, there is a chronological order between two texts or two words in Scripture: the fulfilment of the first conditions the fulfilment of the second. However, this principle could be contradicted by the one according to which “there is neither before nor after in the Torah,” *Sifré sur les Nombres*, § 64, H. 61; *Pesachim* 61 b, quoted by Günter Stemberger (*Midrasch. Von Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel. Einführung – Texte – Erläuterung* [München: Beck 1989] 25). See also Ska, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque*, 236–252.

35 See Brown, “The Dialectic of Relationship,” 469–470.

36 See A. Feuillet, “L’homme ‘la gloire de Dieu’ et la femme ‘gloire de l’homme’ (1 Cor., XI, 7^b),” *RB* 81 (1974) 161–182.

the image of God, in His likeness (κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν: Gen 1:26).³⁷ Therefore, Adam is the glory, the pride of God among all the living beings. Having already made the identification between ἄνθρωπος and ἄνθρω, Paul adapts his speech to the cause he is defending.

2.4. The Woman Is the Glory of Man (vv. 7c-9)

In this logic, we understand that Paul also says that “woman is the glory of man” (7c). This is in the sense that her being at creation constituted an honor for man. The reason is that according to Gen 2 she was, among all the living things, created at the likeness of Adam (ὁμοίος αὐτῷ: Gen 2:20), in addition to having been created, according to Gen 1, as a copy of God. She gives honor to the man from whom she was taken. Δόξα here in no way signifies that the woman would reflect the man's glory, as does translate the NJB, nor that man would have supremacy over her.³⁸ It seems to mean only that the woman is a reason for the pride of man before the spectators.

The two arguments Paul juxtaposes in vv. 8–9 make clear this reading: “For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; nor was man created for woman, but woman for man” (NAB). Once again Gen 2:18–23 is echoed. Indeed, in v. 8, the Pauline affirmation γυνή ἐξ ἀνδρός is a verbatim repetition of the explanation that the narrator provides in Gen 2:23 (ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς). And this diegetic explanation summarizes the words Adam spoke out as he saw the woman for the first time: τοῦτο νῦν ὁστοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὁστέων μου καὶ σὰρξ τῆς σαρκὸς μου αὕτη κληθήσεται γυνή. For Paul, Gen 2:23 shows that “woman comes from man” and, according to the exegetical rule of priority, it highlights the chronological precedence of man over woman. For Paul Gen 2:23 means that “man did not come from woman” (οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρω ἐκ γυναικὸς).³⁹

In v. 9, Paul echoes Gen 2:18 as he says that “man was not created for woman, but woman for man.” He is speaking about the purpose of the creation as the use of διὰ + accusative makes it clear.⁴⁰ Indeed, according to the text of Gen 2:18, the purpose for the creation of the woman was that man would not be alone (οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον). The woman was conceived and made by God to remedy the loneliness in which man found himself after the creation of all living beings (εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον) and which was not good (οὐ καλὸν). Man needed a helper who was like him, made according to him (ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κατ' αὐτόν), i.e. different from beasts, birds, reptiles. It is noteworthy that in its

37 As the Pontificia Commissione Biblica (*Che cosa è l'uomo?*, n. 43–44) points out, the phrase καθ' ὁμοίωσιν (תְּהִי כְּצֶלְמִי), specifies that of κατ' εἰκόνα (צֶלֶם: Gen 1:26.27) to say that Adam was created in the very likeness of God. He is practically a copy of God.

38 As L.A. Jervis (“But I want you to know,” 242) puts it so well: “the introduction of the word ‘glory’ provides for a midrashic retextualizing of the two creation stories, for it allows Paul to avoid saying that woman is the image of man while pointing to the good and divinely ordained contrast between male and female in the second creation story.”

39 Let us note that according to the same principle of anteriority, man could be recognized prior to woman in Gen 1:27 since the word “male” occupies the first position.

40 See Rigato, “Paolo imita Gesù,” 148.

many occurrences,⁴¹ the term “help” (βοηθός) emphasizes a support that someone lends to another, to sustain him in what he is not capable of. It reveals the situation of weakness or necessity in which the one in need of assistance finds himself, at the same time as it highlights the power of the helper, a power he has in the area in which he helps. And Paul stresses that such a help for man at the creation is the woman, i.e. *not even another man*. André Feuillet puts it in a better way: “In this second account of creation, woman is truly the glory of man in the precise sense that she honors him, that she is his joy and his pride because of the irreplaceable complementarity she brings him.”⁴²

At this point, it becomes clear why Paul doesn’t say that the woman is the image of the man. Indeed, always bringing together Gen 1:27 (where male and female are created in the image of God) with Gen 2:18 (where woman is created from man), two expressions seem similar, but are not equivalent: κατ’ εικόνα θεοῦ (Gen 1:27) and κατ’ αὐτόν (Gen 2:18). According to Gen 2:18, the woman is not created “in the image” (κατ’ εικόνα) of man. Κατ’ αὐτόν means ὁμοιος to stress the equality between them given that the term εικὼν implicates a distance that exists between a copy and its original.⁴³ But both man and woman have been created in the image of God, as it is repeated in Gen 5:1.⁴⁴

That said, verses 8–9 clarify Paul’s thought in v. 7c (cf. γάρ). Woman is the glory of man because she constitutes the pride of man in a twofold way: because of her origin (she is of human origin, similar in all things to man: γυνή ἐξ ἀνδρός) and because of its raison d’être (she is the only one capable of filling man’s loneliness and accomplishing what himself and other creatures cannot: γυνή διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα). There is therefore nothing contemptuous of woman in this Pauline interpretation. He is not discussing to prove the inferiority of woman to man. Rereading Gen 1:26–27 in the light of Gen 2:7–23, it comes out that woman has the same dignity as man, given that she comes from him. At the same time, she is an honor for man, given that she was created to be the unique irreplaceable helper for him. This singularity constitutes her dignity in front of man, which Paul doesn’t deny in this argumentation, but expresses in other words.⁴⁵

41 See Ps 19:3; 34:2; 117:7; Matt 15:25; Mark 9:22.24; Acts 16:9; 27:7.

42 Feuillet, “L’homme ‘gloire de Dieu,’” 177.

43 See H. Kleinknecht, “L’uso greco di εἰκών,” *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento* (eds. G. Kittel – G. Friedrich) (Brescia: Paideia 1967) III, 160–164.

44 Only their children are, according to Gen 5:3, created in the image of Adam (κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ), the latter understood as male and female.

45 See Murphy-O’Connor, “Paolo e le donne,” 30: “L’offesa che il suo riassunto piuttosto inetto reca alle donne è grandemente ridotta se si presta molta attenzione a quello che Paolo sta facendo. La sua preoccupazione è di mettere in rilievo l’importanza della differenza tra maschio e femmina. Pertanto egli argomenta che, se Dio avesse inteso che non ci fossero differenze tra i sessi, avrebbe creato l’uomo e la donna allo stesso modo. Ma in realtà li ha creati in modi diversi. Di conseguenza, la distinzione tra maschio e femmina è importante perché è voluta da Dio e deve essere mantenuta.”

2.5. What Does It Mean ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς? (v. 10)

If the parallelism recognized above between v. 7 and v. 10 was synonymic, one would find in v. 10 a sentence like this: διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν (therefore the woman must cover her head).⁴⁶ But Paul says: “διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς.” How to understand the phrase ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς?⁴⁷ The difficulty of interpretation was so great that some early manuscripts corrected the term ἐξουσία by replacing it with κάλυμμα (veil). This aberrant lesson, however, does not stand up to either external or internal criticism. It is an “explanatory gloss,”⁴⁸ that is not defensible, because v. 10 is understandable as the result of the Midrashic reading of Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:7–23.

This rereading, as just demonstrated, has stressed the singular power and dignity the woman has in front of man, dignity which is an honor for man. We think this is what Paul says further using the expression ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν. Recurring five times in 1 Cor (7:37; 9:4,5, and here), this locution has, in all cases, nothing to do with subordination. Instead, it denotes autonomy, independence, and freedom from others (7:37); it also denotes the right, the power to do something in accordance with one’s own dignity, i.e. the power to feel oneself and to be responsible for one’s choices (9:4).⁴⁹ Following our explanation of the Midrashic reading, this means that Paul recommends to the woman, in coherence with v. 7, to which v. 10 is parallel, to conduct according to her specific dignity, to respect what manifests her dignity as woman, to be proud of her femininity, of her female humanity. In relation with the main thesis (vv. 4–5c), Paul asserts in v. 15, that this uniqueness of the woman is expressed by “nature” in her long hair (γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται αὐτῇ). For this reason, the woman must keep this dignity on her head (ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς) and not cut it off or keep it in disorder, because “it is a shameful thing for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved off” (v. 6). Verse 10a-b shows therefore that it is not the veil that is Paul’s main concern,⁵⁰ but rather the dignity of the woman in what is specific to her when she is in a liturgical act of prayer or prophecy.⁵¹ She must take this dignity in consideration “because of the angels” (v. 10c).

⁴⁶ Or like this: “woman should *cover her head*” (ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχειν [cf. v. 4]) or also “woman should not *uncover her head*” (οὐκ ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἀκατακαλύπτῳ τῇ κεφαλῇ εἶναι [cf. v. 5]). See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 513, der sagt: “Eine besondere *crux* [für V. 10] ist die Interpretation von ἐξουσία und von διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.”

⁴⁷ See M. Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ. The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1987) 96–102.

⁴⁸ B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies 1971; 2 ed. 2002) 562.

⁴⁹ See H. Nyekumbo Dangbe, *Du droit à la charité. Analyse exégétique de 1 Co 8* (AnBib 221; Rome: GBP 2018) 157–162. Noteworthy here is also what Sir 17:2 says about the power of human beings over everything, [The Lord] “granted them [cf. *human beings* in v. 1] authority over everything on earth (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς [cf. ἀνθρώπων in v. 1] ἐξουσίαν τῶν ἐπ’ αὐτῆς [cf. γῆς in v. 1]).”

⁵⁰ See Murphy-O’Connor, “Paolo e le donne,” 29; Rigato, “Paolo imita Gesù,” 149.

⁵¹ See another way of argumentation by S. Brown (“The Dialectic of Relationship,” 471).

The angels (ἄγγελοι) it is about are not, in my opinion, as J. Murphy-O'Connor suggests, the messengers who might have come from other churches, specifically from Chloe (1 Cor 1:11) who were scandalized by what they observed in the community of Corinth.⁵² I don't think either that they are, as Maria-Luisa Rigato asserts, the angels who announced the news of the resurrection of Jesus to the women.⁵³ The following elements induce to think that the angels could be the persons mentioned in v. 3 as being between God and the woman. (i) In the Bible, angels are mainly presented as indispensable intermediaries between God and humanity. Among their various roles, the common one is the fact that they are God's messengers, mediators of a revelation. In this way, the term can even refer to a human being who represent God bringing a divine message to other human beings (cf. in the LXX: Num 20:14; Judg 7:24; 11:12–19; 1 Macc 1:44; in the NT: Luke 7:24–27; 9:52.54; Gal 4:14). (ii) Ps 8:5–6 reminds that, at the creation, the human being (ἄνθρωπος) was created a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and majesty (ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχὺ τι παρ' ἁγγέλους δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν). The parallelism mentioned above between the final phrases of v. 7b (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ) and v. 10 (διὰ τοὺς ἁγγέλους) sounds at the ears of a reader/listener as echoes of this Psalm in 1 Cor 11:7–10. (iii) In the present argumentation, Paul informs, in v. 3, about the existence of a series of intermediaries between God and the woman, i.e. the man and Christ.

It is because of them, that the woman should respect her specific dignity and behavior consequently in respect with her hair.⁵⁴ It is necessary (ὀφείλει) that she have on her head, not the mark of her subjection, but that of her dignity. In all cultures, it is considered very appropriate that in a public celebration each participant respects his or her dignity respectively to his echelon and may be recognized by the insignia of that echelon, especially if all echelons are present. The insignia of each level are not a mark of subjection, but of honor. And in the Greek and Jewish culture of Pauline addressees, the mark of feminine dignity was, as regards the hair on the head, not to keep it disheveled or cut off, but to keep it well groomed. In short, Paul exhorts the woman, not to submit, but to honor her own rank, and avoid any confusion of grade. This is so significant for him that in vv. 11–12 he comes back to the Scriptures for a complement of arguments.

52 See Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 809; Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," 31.

53 See Rigato, "Paolo imita Gesù," 154–157. See also the other suggestions as reported by Wolfgang Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 515–517). Following the hypothesis of Joseph A. Fitzmyer based on Qumran literature, S. Brown ("The Dialectic of Relationship," 472) thinks that it is about "angels [which] were understood to be present in the assemblies of worship."

54 I even believe that Paul could easily use the expression διὰ τὸν Χριστόν instead of διὰ τοὺς ἁγγέλους, given that in v. 3 it is – as already said in 1 Cor 8:6 – Christ who plays the role of a direct intermediary between God and man (see also Gal 4:14). But given that it is not only Christ who, in v. 3, is the intermediary between God and the woman, the plural ἁγγέλους is understandable here.

3. Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 2–3 in vv. 11–12

As well known, many exegetes attribute to the particle *πλὴν* used at the beginning of v. 11 the function of introducing a correction to what is said in vv. 7–10.⁵⁵ Paul would have amended his position because of his Christian faith (cf. *ἐν κυρίῳ*), and so confessed that between woman and man there is full equality and reciprocity. Now, if the above demonstration is correct, and that Paul doesn't deny in vv. 7–10 the equality between man and woman, why should he correct his position? For me, the problem lies in the meaning of the particle *πλὴν*.

3.1. The Semantic Extent of the Particle *πλὴν*

In dictionaries of the Greek language, *πλὴν* is globally used in two ways: either as a preposition (+ genitive) or as an adverb. It is translated in most cases as “except,” “only,” “however,” “nevertheless,” “yet,” “it remains that.” In this case, it is the idea of opposition to what has just been said that is highlighted. There is a restriction, a correction. It is in this way that in 1 Cor 11:11 is translated, where it is used as an adverb.⁵⁶ Now in Luke 22:21, where it is also used as an adverb, the meaning of restriction cannot be the expected one.

In this Lucan text, indeed, the particle *πλὴν* does not imply any idea of a restriction that Jesus makes to what he has just said in v. 20. Rather, it introduces another statement that goes in the same direction as what is asserted in this verse. It reveals another reality (the hand of the traitor) which confirms the unmistakable death of Jesus and the certitude of the shedding of his blood. In this case, the new element would be better introduced thanks to the adverb “elsewhere,” “on the other hand” than by “however.” It is not a correction, but an addition, a supplementary element. So it looks like in 1 Cor 11:11.⁵⁷ Paul adds new arguments to those in vv. 8–9.⁵⁸ And what is supplementary is the fact that, playing on the meaning of the prepositions *ἐκ*, *χωρίς*, *ἐν* and *διὰ* (+ genitive), he now takes in

⁵⁵ “Die meisten nehmen an, Paulus beuge jetzt einer falschen Konsequenz vor, die man aus V. 3.8f ziehen könnte” (Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 517).

⁵⁶ “However, in the Lord, though woman is nothing without man, man is nothing without woman; and though woman came from man, so does every man come from a woman, and everything comes from God.” (NJB). “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.” (NIV). “*Pourtant, la femme est inséparable de l'homme et l'homme de la femme, devant le Seigneur. Car si la femme a été tirée de l'homme, l'homme naît de la femme et tout vient de Dieu.*” (TOB). “*Doch im Herrn gibt es weder die Frau ohne den Mann noch den Mann ohne die Frau. Denn wie die Frau vom Mann stammt, so kommt der Mann durch die Frau zur Welt; alles aber stammt von Gott.*” (EIN).

⁵⁷ See Matand Bulembat, “L'homme est l'image,” 59–60.

⁵⁸ For see also Brown, “The Dialectic of Relationship,” 473, “Verses 11–12 depict the same truths from creation first postulated in w. 7–9, but the nature of the relationship between man and woman is now fully articulated in light of the two other participants of the *theologoumenon* of relationships with which Paul opened this discussion (v. 3).” We agree with this interpretation, except when it understands the syntagm *ἐν κυρίῳ* as meaning *in Christ*.

consideration the order of procreation besides that of creation, as does reveal the literary composition of 1 Cor 11:11–12.

3.2. Literary Composition of vv. 11–12

This micro-unit can be subdivided into two smaller units (v. 11 and v. 12), which can be arranged in the form of a synonymic parallelism (a, b, c, a', b', c'), in which a' clarifies a, b' explains b and c' enlightens c.

v. 11	{	(a)	no woman without (χωρίς) man	order of creation
		(b)	no man without (χωρίς) woman	order of procreation
		(c)	in (ἐν) the Lord	God's disposition
v. 12	{	(a')	woman (comes) from (ἐκ) man	order of creation
		(b')	man (comes) through (διὰ) woman	order of procreation
		(c')	everything (comes) from (ἐκ) God	God's disposition

3.3. Man and Woman in the Order of Procreation

One can see that the idea of the creation of the woman, contained in v. 8a-b, and underlining the precedence of man at the moment of creation, is resumed in v. 11a and v. 12a. “No woman without man” (v. 11a) means “woman comes from man” (v. 12a). The equality of man and woman in nature (woman doesn’t come from an animal) doesn’t annul the fact that man came before woman; man is at the beginning of woman, he is her origin, her head. The Midrashic analysis of vv. 7–10 revealed this male prerogative.

On the other side, in v. 11b, Paul takes in consideration the fact of man’s procreation originating from woman and emphasizes the female prerogative. This idea is resumed in v. 12b. “No man without woman” (v. 11b) means “man comes through woman” (v. 12b). This is most probably an interpretation of Gen 3:20. In this text Adam, who in Gen 2:23 had said that the being drawn from him would be called “woman” (αὕτη κληθήσεται γυνή), gives her now another name: “Ζωή” i.e. the “Living One” (ἐκάλεσεν Ἀδὰμ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ Ζωή). The reason given for this naming in Gen 3:20 is the fact that “she is the mother of all living” (ὅτι αὕτη μήτηρ πάντων τῶν ζώντων).

Thus, verses 11 and 12 of 1 Cor 11 bring Gen 2:7–23 close to Gen 3:20, and synthesize: chronologically, at the beginning of creation, man came before woman, and she from him, even if diachronically, through ages, man also is brought to life through woman. Paul thus completes the order of creation with that of procreation, without reducing the former to nothing. For in his view the whole disposition comes from God (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ:

v. 12), who is Lord (ἐν κυρίῳ: v. 11). The understanding of these two sentences is therefore important.

3.4. The Synonymic Parallelism of ἐν κυρίῳ and τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

The syntagm ἐν κυρίῳ is what prompts scholars to see in vv. 11–12 a correction by Paul based on the newness introduced by Christ in male-female relations.⁵⁹ The question anyway is whether the term κύριος refers to Christ Jesus. Lucien Cerfaux and A. Feuillet have clearly shown that this term refers here to God, the Creator.⁶⁰ Indeed, whenever Paul resorts to the argument of creation, he is aware that the initiative belongs only to God the Creator. This should be the case here in an argumentation where he calls upon the creation narratives to justify his position.

Moreover, the formal parallelism already noted between the expression ἐν κυρίῳ and the statement τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ may indeed authorize giving an instrumental value to the preposition ἐν + dative to indicate the order established by the person who took the initiative of an act. This stands in Greek lexicons.⁶¹ In the text we are reading ἐν κυρίῳ can thus refer to the order established by the Lord God at the creation of man and woman. The expression can be translated as “according to the Lord’s provision.” In this case, the Pauline argument is theological, and not christological.

The statement τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ is along the same lines and sheds more light on the place of the male being in the creative process. Because if Paul wanted to emphasize the equality between woman and man, he should have said here οἱ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. Instead, he speaks of τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, which normally refers to the creation of the whole universe. In this way, this statement also highlights the fact that the work of God is an order that should be respected. Even procreation, where the prerogative of woman is emphasized, remains a work of God’s creation. At this point, one understands that Paul has sustained his principal idea that everyone, man and woman, should fulfill his/her responsibilities according to God’s provision, while praying or prophesying in a Christian assembly.⁶²

⁵⁹ According to Charles Perrot (“Une étrange lecture de l’écriture,” 263) “Paul fait de l’exégèse à rebours; il se sert de Moïse comme d’un réactif à l’aide d’une Loi qui découvre surtout le péché, sans plus être désormais la norme dernière. La Torah montre la faille, et c’est dans le Christ que la femme chrétienne trouvera sa valeur nouvelle et son autorité entière.” See also N. Baumert, *Frau und Mann bei Paulus. Überwindung eines Mißverständnisses* (Würzburg: Echter 1992) 173–174, whose interpretation even seems to me to be a case of *eis-egesis*!

⁶⁰ See L. Cerfaux, “Kyrios’ dans les citations pauliniennes de l’Ancien Testament,” *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux. Etudes d’Exégèse et d’Histoire Religieuse de Monseigneur Cerfaux réunies à l’occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire* (eds. R. Aubert et al.) (BETL 6–7; Gembloux: Duculot 1954) 176, 187; Feuillet, “L’homme ‘gloire de Dieu,’” 163, n. 23.

⁶¹ See BAGD, 260–261; A. Bailly, *Dictionnaire Grec-Français* (Paris: Hachette 1950) 665, to the word ἐν used as a preposition + dative: A.III.9.

⁶² See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 517–518, where he rightly rejects certain assumptions that are, about vv. 10–12, difficult to be understood in the internal logic of the pericope. However, in the light of our analysis, his following assertion is also questionable: “V. 11a betont vielmehr zunächst, dass die der Frau zukommende ἐξουσία keine völlige Unabhängigkeit vom Mann bedeutet, ist also eher eine Einschränkung der ἐξουσία der Frau. Gleich wohl setzt V. 11f zugleich eine Gegengewicht, wie schon der Rückbezug von V. 12a auf V. 8a

4. Paul's Position and Message of the Pericope

Considering the above analysis, it is clear that 1 Cor 11:7–12 is not a text in which Paul has tried to justify with Scripture his alleged anti-feminist position.⁶³ Moreover, Paul does not blow hot and cold, supporting on the one hand the superiority of man over woman (vv. 7–10), and on the other hand correcting this position in a Christian way by speaking of their parity before the Lord (vv. 11–12). What he is arguing is that a Christian man or woman can pray or prophesy in a liturgical service, as long as each of them respects his/her dignity in the way she wears his/her hair. His message can be formulated this way: “Let not the hair of either man or woman outrage what the surrounding society holds as decent for his/her gender, because in matters of gender even God at the creation of the world did not dissolve differences. He created them both in His image and of the same human nature. But at the same time distinct, male and female, avoiding any process of confusion.”

In 1 Cor 11:7–12 Paul does not support an ontological inferiority or inhuman subjugation of women to men. The vv. 3.5d-12.14–15 are not his main idea; they contain accepted logical ideas, i.e. not to be discussed – of course, in this argument and for this cause – and which provided him with the elements of what constitutes the specific dignity of every man and every woman, dignity which Paul would like to see respected at the time of liturgical acts. How can then Paul be considered as misogynistic with such a position? The analysis undertaken here shows that he is rather a *philogynist*!

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ergibt. Auch der Mann ist nicht unabhängig von der Frau (V 11b), d.h. trotz der bleibenden schöpferischen Unterschiede geht es um die Zusammengehörigkeit und das Aufeinander-Verwiesensein von Mann und Frau, weil «im Herrn» zwar nicht Uniformität herrscht, wohl aber Interdependenz und Gemeinsamkeit, z.B. in der Partizipation an den Charismen (V 5).”

63 As Murphy-O'Connor, “Paolo e le donne,” 27, states: “In realtà, il maschilista non è Paolo, ma i suoi interpreti, che hanno introdotto nel testo le loro vedute misogine.”

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