

# What Has Aeneas to Do with Paul?

## Gender, Head Coverings, and Ancient Appeals to Origin Stories

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For better or worse, 2016 is another year for a United States presidential election. Beyond featuring the ever-increasing polarization in American politics, the election year also highlights how politicians will do just about anything to present themselves as the best candidate. One of the more common rhetorical appeals during election season is the appeal to the founding fathers. For example, Marco Rubio, formerly a contender for the Republican presidential nomination, when asked what limits he would place around the second amendment, said the following: “As few as possible. The Second Amendment, as I’ve said before, is not a suggestion. It is the constitutional right of every American to protect themselves and their families. . . . It is right after the defense of the freedom of speech for a reason, for *clearly the founders of our nation understood and the framers of the Constitution understood that you cannot have life and you cannot have liberty and cannot pursue happiness if you are not safe.*”<sup>1</sup>

Candidates from both parties make such appeals, but regardless of who does it, such appeals make an important point: the founding fathers are a source of authority; what they did and how they envisaged the United States is somehow significant to many Americans today. Politicians invoke the founders in support of big government and in opposition to big government; they invoke the founders in support of the separation of church and state and in opposition to it; and the list could go on. The founding fathers are made to support whatever side of an issue the invoker is on. Why? Because many Americans believe that the founding of our country has bearing on today’s beliefs and practices.<sup>2</sup>

Like modern America and many other societies in today’s world, ancient societies’ founding stories both shaped and reflected the identity of their people. Ancient people groups appealed to their founding myths as a way of explaining or justifying many realities and ideals, including their religious practices and beliefs.<sup>3</sup> Here I am interested in ancient appeals to origin stories as a way of explaining or justifying religious practices, particularly in relation to head coverings. Such a study illuminates the reasoning behind and larger aim of a notoriously difficult NT passage: 1 Cor 11:2–16. In this text, Paul appeals to Gen 1–3 in a variety of ways as support for his command that men pray and prophesy with their heads uncovered and women with theirs covered. Scholars have researched how Paul’s appeals to the creation story are similar to and different from the appeals of his Jewish contemporaries,<sup>4</sup> but no one has compared his appeals about head coverings to his contemporaries in the non-Jewish sectors of the Greco-Roman world. Several valuable studies discuss the background of head coverings in the Greco-Roman world (e.g., the different types of head coverings that were worn),<sup>5</sup> but a study on Greco-Roman appeals to origins to justify head-coverings is lacking. Since Paul’s mission was to the Gentile world, his exegetical and argumentative techniques in 1 Cor 11 can and should be illuminated by comparisons with Greco-Roman<sup>6</sup> literature contemporary to Paul.

This study is divided into three parts. First, I analyze portions of three non-Jewish texts that date within less than a century of 1 Corinthians: Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus’s *Roman Antiquities*, and Plutarch’s *The Roman Questions*. I argue that all three of these texts—though differing in genre, language, and purpose—appeal to Aeneas as the originator of the Roman religious practice of covering the head in order to distinguish Roman identity from Greek identity. The appeal to origins to justify or explain current religious practice across these various authors suggests that such an appeal was authoritative and effective. Second, I analyze the appeal to the Christian origin story in 1 Cor 11 and how Paul uses it to justify his instructions on head coverings in worship. Finally, I compare and contrast the appeals of Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch with that of Paul and discuss the implications of these comparisons for interpreting 1 Cor 11.

### Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch

#### Virgil

The first text under consideration here is Virgil’s *Aeneid*. To say that the *Aeneid* was an important literary work in the Roman world would be quite the understatement. Commissioned by the emperor, Virgil (70–19 BC) wrote for the Romans this epic that rivaled Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>7</sup> Karl Galinsky describes the *Aeneid* as “the poetic construction of Roman cultural memory,”<sup>8</sup> and Yasmin Syed adds that it articulated its Roman readers’ identity as Romans (both personal and collective) through “the reader’s identification with and differentiation from its fictional characters.”<sup>9</sup>

Part of the *Aeneid*’s greatness comes from its nature as a story of origins. It chronicles the exploits of its protagonist Aeneas, the Trojan hero, as he journeys from fallen Troy to Latium, battling with gods, Cyclopes, Italian natives, and his own will along the way. Aeneas overcomes these obstacles and ultimately accomplishes his mission of founding Rome. Through these stories Virgil provides the ancestral roots for Rome’s founder, Aeneas, and for Rome itself.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the ancient Romans read the *Aeneid* as a story of how they came into existence.

Throughout the work, Virgil uses the *Aeneid* to explain both Roman political and religious practices, the latter of which interest us here.<sup>11</sup> Several passages shed light on how ancient Romans would have understood Aeneas as the founder of their *religious* traditions. First, in the book’s proem, Virgil explains that Aeneas’s ultimate aim is to “build a city and bring his gods to Latium” (1.5–6).<sup>12</sup> Thus, from the outset, the reader knows that one dimension of Aeneas’s mission is related to religion. This notion is reinforced in the final book of the poem when Aeneas and Turnus agree to settle the war through a duel. Aeneas explains that, if he wins, he will “let both nations [the Italians and the Trojans], unconquered, enter upon an everlasting compact” (12.190–91). Aeneas then says, “I will give gods and their rites”—a phrase in which Aeneas claims to be the founder of the Roman cult.<sup>13</sup> This inclusio between book 1 and book 12 casts Aeneas as the founder of Roman religion.

Another place where Aeneas is specifically portrayed as the founder of Roman religious practices is in book 3, where Virgil provides the etiology of the Roman religious head covering as he recounts his voyage to Carthage. On the way to Carthage, Aeneas reunites with Helenus, one of the sons of Priam, who is a seer. Helenus foretells much of what is to come for Aeneas and provides instructions on how to sacrifice once they arrive in Italy, their final destination. Helenus explains, “[W]hen your ships have crossed the seas and anchored, and when you then raise altars and pay vows on the shore, *veil your hair* with the covering of a purple robe, that in the worship of the gods no hostile face may intrude amid the holy fires and mar the omens. Hold to this mode of sacrifice,<sup>14</sup> you and your company; let your children’s children in purity stand fast” (3.403–9, italics added). A few lines later Aeneas recounts to the Carthaginians that, once they landed on the coast of Italy, they prayed to Pallas and “before the altar veil[ed] our heads in Phrygian robe, and following the urgent charge in which Helenus had given, duly offer[ed] to Argive Juno the prescribed sacrifice” (3.543–47).<sup>15</sup>

Of particular importance to this study is Helenus’s instructions not only to veil their hair when sacrificing (as a way of protecting the purity of the omens), but also to continue with this mode of sacrifice in later generations. The instructions were not only for Aeneas and his crew, but also for their children’s children. Thus, by having Helenus instruct Aeneas and future generations to cover their heads when sacrificing, Virgil provides the etiology of a practice current in his own day. Covering the head during religious activities was a custom practiced by the Romans that distinguished them from the Greeks, who did not cover their heads when worshipping.<sup>16</sup> Nicholas Horsfall points out that it is at this point in the story—when the Romans sacrifice with their heads covered—that the Romans “begin to behave specifically like Romans.”<sup>17</sup> By tying this practice to the readers’ ancestors, Virgil helps define their ethnic identity.<sup>18</sup>

Of the works surveyed in this essay, the *Aeneid* is unique in that it specifically connects Aeneas’s religious practice with prophetic origins. Unlike Dionysius and Plutarch, discussed below, Virgil narrates that Aeneas received the instructions on head coverings from a seer. Thus, they are of divine origin. But Virgil, through Helenus, also gives a practical reason for the institution of this practice: Aeneas needed to cover his head when sacrificing to protect himself from seeing a bad omen, which would invalidate the sacrifice.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, then, the divine command has practical significance as well as prophetic origins.

In sum, we see that Virgil casts Aeneas as a founder of Roman religion generally, and as the originator of the practice of wearing head coverings when worshipping the gods specifically. He connects the practice with prophetic origins—which includes a command for Aeneas’s descendants to continue the practice—and also gives a practical reason for why they cover their heads. In doing these things, Virgil constructs the Roman religious memory. Those readers who cover their heads in worship relate that practice to their Roman identity and now see that the practice originates with the founding of their nation.

### ***Dionysius of Halicarnassus***

The next work under consideration is Dionysius of Halicarnassus’s *Roman Antiquities*, a twenty-volume history of the Rome from its

earliest legendary days until the first Punic War. Dionysius, both a historian and a rhetorician, wrote this Roman history in Greek ca. 7 BC<sup>20</sup> with a two-fold purpose: (1) “to reconcile his fellow Greeks to Rome’s supremacy,” and (2) to flatter the Romans by connecting them with Greece’s heroic age.<sup>21</sup> Thus, this Greek writer had both Greeks and Romans in mind as he wrote this work.<sup>22</sup>

While there were many Roman histories circulating in the ancient world, Dionysius is of particular interest here because he, like Virgil, explicitly connects Aeneas’s head covering with religious observances in the first century. The pertinent section is from book 12:

They say that Aeneas, the son of Anchises and Venus, when he had landed in Italy, was intending to sacrifice to some one or other of the gods, and after praying was about to begin the sacrifice of the animal that had been prepared for the rite, when he caught sight of one of the Achaeans approaching from a distance—either Ulysses, when he was about to consult the oracle near Lake Avernus, or Diomed, when he came as an ally to Daunus. And being vexed at the coincidence and wishing to avert as an evil omen the sight of an enemy that had appeared at the time of a sacrifice, *he veiled himself* and turned his back; then, after the departure of the enemy, he washed his hands again and finished the sacrifice. When the sacrifices turned out rather favourably, he was pleased at the coincidence and observed the same practice on the occasion of every prayer; and his posterity keep this also as one of the customary observances in connexion with their sacrifices. (12.16.22, italics added)

Here Dionysius narrates a story similar to Virgil’s story in the third book of the *Aeneid* (3.403–9, 543–47).<sup>23</sup> Both tell of Aeneas preparing to make a sacrifice upon his landing in Italy, and both narrate that Aeneas covers his head to avert a bad omen. Dionysius, however, does not include the prophetic instructions from Helenus. Rather, Aeneas simply covers his head for practical reasons: he saw one of the Achaeans—an enemy—approaching, so he turned his back and veiled himself to prevent the sight of an enemy from ruining his sacrifice. Thus, in Virgil’s account, Aeneas covers his head from the outset upon the advice of Helenus, whereas in Dionysius’s account, he begins the sacrifice without his head covered, then covers it mid-sacrifice. Dionysius, like Virgil, also narrates that Aeneas’s descendants adopted his practice while sacrificing. Once again, however, Dionysius excludes the prophetic element and attributes the adoption to practical reasons: Aeneas continued to offer sacrifices in the same way (i.e., veiled) because “the sacrifices turned out favourably,” so his posterity followed in his footsteps.

Virgil and Dionysius present different traditions of a similar story, but still have the same point: the Romans cover their heads in worship because their founder, Aeneas, did so for protection from bad omens. While Dionysius is not constructing Roman identity in the same way as Virgil, the nature of his work—with its attempts to explain Roman practice by tracing it to its roots—is nonetheless related to Roman identity. Quite simply, Dionysius is explaining to Greeks why Romans cover their heads when they

worship since this religious practice distinguished the Romans from the Greeks. Dionysius's answer, like Virgil's, is that their religious practice is rooted in their founding story. Part of what made Romans Romans was their distinct religious practices.

### Plutarch

The final writing under consideration here is Plutarch's *The Roman Questions*. Likely written sometime after AD 96, the work is "an attempt to explain one hundred and thirteen Roman customs, the majority of which deal with religious matters."<sup>24</sup> *The Roman Questions*, like its companion volume *The Greek Questions*,<sup>25</sup> was written for Greek audiences.<sup>26</sup> It seeks to show the Greeks that the Romans are civilized and have a reputable past in order to make Roman rule more bearable for the Greeks.<sup>27</sup> It appears that Plutarch used Dionysius's *Roman Antiquities*, but not the *Aeneid*, as a source.<sup>28</sup>

Plutarch refers to Aeneas several times in *The Roman Questions*,<sup>29</sup> two of which relate specifically to head coverings:

Why is it that when they [the Romans] worship the gods, they cover their heads, but when they meet any of their fellow-men worthy of honour, if they happen to have the toga over the head, they uncover? This second fact seems to intensify the difficulty of the first. If, then, the tale told of Aeneas is true, that, when Diomedes passed by, he *covered his head* and completed the sacrifice, it is reasonable and consistent with the covering of one's head in the presence of an enemy that men who meet good men and their friends should uncover. In fact, the behaviour in regard to the gods is not properly related to this custom, but accidentally resembles it; and its observance has persisted since the days of Aeneas. (266C, italics added)

Why do they sacrifice to Saturn with the head uncovered? Is it because Aeneas instituted the custom of *covering the head*, and the sacrifice to Saturn dates from long before that time? (266E, italics added)<sup>30</sup>

Not surprisingly, since Dionysius is one of his sources, Plutarch's account of Aeneas covering his head when sacrificing is similar to Dionysius: both tell of the approach of Diomed(es) as prompting the head covering, suggesting that Aeneas did not begin the sacrifice with a covered head, but covered himself during the sacrifice. For Plutarch as well, then, the head covering had a practical purpose at its origin. Furthermore, both tell of the observance continuing with Aeneas's descendants. Because of the question that Plutarch poses, we see an explanation given here that was not in Virgil or Dionysius: Aeneas's covering his head while sacrificing not only served as the basis for the Romans' covering their heads during worship, but also for their uncovering it when passing those of high honor.<sup>31</sup> Plutarch's second question deals with a case where Romans deviate from their usual practice of covering their head while sacrificing. For Plutarch, Aeneas's actions are the norm, but sacrifices to Saturn differ because Saturn predates Aeneas. Thus, similar to Virgil and Dionysius, Plutarch relates the origin of religious head coverings (among other things) to Rome's founder, Aeneas.

### Observations

These three works share the common thread of connecting current Roman religious practice—here, in particular, covering the head when sacrificing—with Aeneas and the origins of Rome. All three explicitly mention that Aeneas's posterity have observed this practice since the days of Aeneas.<sup>32</sup> Both Virgil and Dionysius give practical reasons for Aeneas's head covering (i.e., protection from a bad omen), while only Virgil connects the practice to prophetic origins by the command from Helenus.

All three works show a concern for identity formation: the *Aeneid* because it was written as the founding story of the Roman people and *Roman Antiquities* and *The Roman Questions* because they seek to provide a reputable past for the Romans (thus making the Roman identity more palatable for Greeks). That each of these works discusses Aeneas as the originator of the Roman head covering during sacrifices highlights the importance of connecting religious practice to the origin of their people. A key part of the Roman identity, then, was that their religious customs were distinct from the Greeks. Their identity as Romans was tied to how they worshipped.<sup>33</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 11 and the Christian Origin Story

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in the mid-AD 50s to address several problems within the Christian community at Corinth. Within Paul's instructions on worship (chs. 11–14), he gives specific directives about head coverings in 11:2–16. When men pray and prophesy they *should not* have their heads covered, and when women pray and prophesy they *should* have their heads covered. The Corinthian women<sup>34</sup> seem to have been praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered—a problem in Paul's mind—so Paul issues a series of arguments on why women ought to have their heads veiled.<sup>35</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer places these arguments into five categories:

1. Biblically, the order of creation found in the Genesis story reveals that the woman has been created "for man," to be his companion and helper; hence as "the glory of man," she should cover her head (vv. 7–12).
2. Theologically, the ordered headship of God, Christ, man, and woman calls for it (v. 3).
3. Sociologically, convention, based on "nature" itself, considers a woman's uncovered head in such a situation as shameful and a disgrace (vv. 6, 13–15).<sup>36</sup>
4. As a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, "the churches of God" have no such custom as uncovered heads of women at prayer in a cultic assembly (v. 16).
5. "Because of the angels" (v. 10).<sup>37</sup>

Here we are concerned with the first category—Paul's appeals to creation (i.e., Gen 1–3—the origin story that Christianity inherited from Judaism). In vv. 7–12, Paul appeals to Gen 1–3 in six different ways to make three different arguments.

Thus, for Paul, the way that God ordered events at creation and the relationship between men and women articulated in the origin stories of Gen 1–3 have bearing on religious practices of his own day. Men and women have different regulations for head coverings in the Christian community because of the unique qualities of

	Paul's Argument	Paul's Justification	Relation to Creation
1	Man should not cover his head (v. 7).	Man ( <i>anēr</i> ) is “the image and glory of God” ( <i>eikōn kai doxa theou</i> ) (v. 7).	Gen 1:27: Humans ( <i>anthrōpos</i> ) are created in God's image ( <i>kat' eikona theou</i> ).
2	Women should have authority over their heads ( <i>opheilei hē gunē exousian echein epi tēs kephalēs</i> ) (v. 10).	The woman originates from the man ( <i>gunē ex andros</i> ) (v. 8).	Gen 2:23b: Woman is created from man's rib ( <i>ek tou andros autēs elēmphthē hautē</i> ).
		Women were created for the sake of men ( <i>dia ton andra</i> ) (v. 9).	Gen 2:18: “It is not good for man to be alone. Let us make for him a helper suitable for him.” <sup>38</sup>
3	Men and women are not independent of one another (v. 11).	Woman is from man (11:12a) ( <i>hē gunē ek tou andros</i> ).	Gen 2:23b: Woman is created from man's rib ( <i>ek tou andros autēs elēmphthē hautē</i> ).
		Man is through woman ( <i>ho anēr dia tēs gunaikos</i> ) (11:12b).	Gen 3:16: Women are the ones who bear children.
		All things are from God ( <i>ek tou theou</i> ) (v. 12c).	Gen 1:31: God made all things.

men (the man is the “glory of God”<sup>39</sup> and is “through the woman”) and the unique qualities of women (the woman is “from the man” and was created “for the sake of man”). That women cover their heads and that men do not distinguishes the Christians from both the Romans and the Greeks, whose regulations about head coverings were not gender-specific. Thus we see that the Christian identity, which Paul connects with the Christian origin story, has implications for worship in the Corinthian community.

### Connecting the Dots: What Has Aeneas to Do with Paul?

While Pauline scholars have sought to understand what the practice of head coverings in worship looked like in the ancient world, they have not analyzed *appeals* in Greco-Roman literature that are similar to Paul's (i.e., the appeal to an origin story to explain or justify religious practice).<sup>40</sup> The previous section of this study provides such an analysis.

When one compares Paul with the other authors, there are at least two ways that Paul's appeals are different from those of Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch. First of all, Paul's appeals are prescriptive rather than descriptive. Paul commands the Corinthians to worship in a certain way, while the others explain how Romans worship and why. This difference should be expected since we are dealing with different genres and different aims. Second, Paul's argument is less direct than those of Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch. The Roman appeal could be summarized as “Aeneas covered his head, so modern Romans do, too,” but Paul's argument is not, “Adam did not cover his head, but Eve did, so men should not cover their heads, but women should.” Paul's argument has less to do with what Adam and Eve did, and more to do with how God acted in the creation of men and women, the relationships that God set up between them, and how both of those—as part of the Christian origin narrative—should shape religious practice. He moves from religious principle (reasons for creation, etc.) to current religious practice, whereas Dionysius and Plutarch move from ancestral religious practice to current religious practice. Virgil

falls somewhere in between, moving from religious principle (in the form of prophecy) *and* ancestral religious practice to current religious practice.

These differences, however, do not diminish the value of using Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch to understand Paul's letter to the Corinthians since in all four cases the community's founding story carried implications for later religious practice. Even though head coverings (or the lack thereof) are not present in the Christian origin story like they are in the Roman ones, the Christian origin story still carried significance for head coverings in first-century Christian churches.

This analysis of Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch teaches us at least two things that are significant for the study of 1 Corinthians. First, appeals to origins to explain head coverings in worship were present and persuasive among both Greek and Roman writers. The presence of these appeals across languages and in close temporal proximity to 1 Corinthians suggests that such an appeal was viewed as convincing during Paul's lifetime. While the Jewish backgrounds to Paul's appeals are very important—particularly for our understanding of Paul's use of scripture—the Greco-Roman background is also important since Paul was writing to Greeks in a Roman province.<sup>41</sup> I am in no way trying to divorce Paul from his Jewish context by reading him against the background of non-Jewish authors. Rather, as a Jew from Tarsus who spent much of his adult life evangelizing Gentiles, it is safe to assume that Paul was well versed in connecting with a multi-cultural audience. Galinsky's description of Paul as “cosmopolitan” is apt here.<sup>42</sup> Paul was rooted in the scriptures and traditions of Israel, but he became accustomed to adapting those traditions to the conventions of the larger Greco-Roman world to increase his effectiveness as an evangelist.<sup>43</sup> Thus, while Paul's appeal to the creation stories to convince the Corinthian women to wear head coverings would have been authoritative because it was based in their scriptures, in light of the appeals that we have seen in Virgil, Dionysius, and Plutarch, we now recognize that Paul's appeal would have also

been authoritative and effective to the Corinthians *simply because it was an appeal to an origin story*. As such, this study—which argues that an appeal to Gen 1–3 would have been authoritative not simply as scripture, but also as an origin story—adds yet another weapon to Paul’s rhetorical arsenal.

Second, we have also learned that a key part of the Roman identity was that they wore head coverings in worship. The *Aeneid* connects this current practice with Rome’s founder as a way of defining who the Romans are and why they do what they do. What the Romans do in worship makes them distinct from other groups. Similarly, Dionysius and Plutarch, in response to questions about why the Romans have certain religious practices distinct from the Greeks, answer that their practice is rooted in their founder. All three of these writers provide the etiology for this current practice as a way of highlighting the distinctiveness of the Roman identity. Thus, when Paul appeals to the Christian origin story to justify the Corinthians’ head-covering practice in worship, we can suspect that his concern is—at least in part—with their Christian identity. Put simply, what Christians do in worship is part of what distinguishes them from other religions. Who they are is intimately related to what they do in worship.

### Significance

My hope is that this article prompts the church to think more deeply about not only what Paul asks of his congregations, but also why he asks the things he does in the ways that he does. Paul was motivated by the needs of his congregations first and foremost, but he and his audiences were also shaped by what was persuasive in their own cultural contexts. When we attempt to determine the width of the chasm between the ancient world and our own world, in some places the chasm appears wide. For example, most twenty-first century US churches do not regard long hair on males as disgraceful, and few women cover their heads when praying or prophesying. Such a difficult distance requires a long bridge from our world to Paul’s. But in other places, the chasm between the ancient world and our own is perhaps narrower. For example, not unlike ancient Greeks and Romans, appeals to origin stories are persuasive in American political rhetoric, as illustrated at the beginning of the article. Or, even closer to home, some of the key arguments over gender in the church hinge on Paul’s appeals to creation narratives. The relative narrowness of this particular chasm has led some to believe that little work is required for modern day application. One of the most cited texts in those discussions is 1 Tim 2:11–14, where a woman (or wife) is instructed to learn quietly and submissively and is not permitted to teach or exercise authority over a man, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (NRSV). For some, this appeal to creation “seals the deal” in establishing roles for both men and women in church. That is, Paul’s beckoning of the creation narrative functions as a conversation stopper. The logic is that, if something is rooted in creation, it cannot have cultural elements and thus must be a rule for all time that requires little interpretation for application today.

However, this study on Paul’s appeals to creation narratives in relation to 1 Cor 11 demonstrates that appeals to creation, or

appeals to a founding narrative, are not immune from cultural influence. In fact, the persuasiveness of such an appeal was a cultural phenomenon in Paul’s day, which is no doubt one reason he used it! As we interpret these difficult passages on Paul’s instructions about gender, may we recognize the complexity, not only in how gender norms are different between the first and twenty-first centuries, but also in how Paul’s persuasive appeals themselves are culturally bound in some way. Even if we find those appeals similarly persuasive today, we cannot blindly apply them without the hard work of cultural and rhetorical exegesis. Thus, rather than appeals to creation being conversation stoppers, my hope is that we can see them as conversation starters.

### Notes

1. For the full transcript of the debate, see “The Fox News GOP debate transcript, annotated,” n.p. [cited 23 March 2016]. Online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/03/03/the-fox-news-gop-debate-transcript-annotated/>. Emphasis added.

2. The power of such appeals is evident in the fact that several presidents and presidential hopefuls have quoted *fake* or inaccurate quotations from founding fathers or other historic figures to bolster an argument. Satirist John Oliver shows clips of Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, Scott Walker, Rand Paul, Barack Obama, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton doing so. See “Episode 55.” *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. HBO. 18 October 2015. Television. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk8XHcAsGf4>.

3. For example, Gen 1–3 served as the ancient Jews’ account of the origin of the world, and the stories of the patriarchs told of the origins of Israel. Both the Hebrew scriptures (e.g., Exod 20:8–11) and other Jewish works (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 11.5), point to part of the Jews’ founding story (Gen 2:2–3) to explain that they, unlike all their non-Jewish neighbors, refrained from work on the seventh day because the Lord rested on the seventh day.

4. See, e.g., Mary Rose D’Angelo, “The Garden: Once and Not Again: Traditional Interpretations of Genesis 1:26–27 in 1 Corinthians 11:7–12,” in *Genesis 1–3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in The Garden*, ed. Gregory A Robbins; *Studies in Women and Religion* 27 (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1988), 1–41.

5. I find the evidence most compelling that Paul is talking about head coverings as opposed to bound hair. See note 40 for some of these studies making this case. Even if one disagreed with this point, however, the larger thesis of the article does not rest on a one-to-one correspondence between Greco-Roman and Christians’ use of head coverings but rather draws on the larger notion of how origin stories relate to identity construction and specific practices (e.g., how one covers or wears hair) in worship.

6. Throughout this paper, I use the term “Greco-Roman” as short hand for anything that is non-Jewish. I recognize that that such a tidy line cannot be drawn between “Jewish” and “Greco-Roman,” but for the sake of simplicity have employed the distinction here.

7. Yasmin Syed, *Vergil’s Aeneid and the Roman Self: Subject and Nation in Literary Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 13–17. The *Aeneid* was one of the most studied texts by Roman students and influenced western literature (both ancient and modern) like few works have. Reciting the *Aeneid* “was a central and often repeated experience in a Roman boy’s education. It was therefore not uncommon to know Vergil’s works by heart in their entirety.” This influence extended even into the Greek-speaking provinces where it conferred a sense of

Roman identity onto non-Roman students. She explains, “Scholars have suggested that in the provinces the Roman educational system served the Roman state not only by supplying it with educated administrators, but also by bestowing on its pupils a sense of Roman identity.”

8. Karl Galinsky, “Approaches to Roman Memory: Theory and Practice” (lecture given at the National University of Athens, 7 December 2010), n.p.

9. Syed, *Vergil’s Aeneid and the Roman Self*, 2–3.

10. Pierre Grimal, “Aeneas,” in *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, trans. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 20.

11. On political etiologies in the *Aeneid*, see 7.601–22 (cf. 1.292–93) where King Latinus’s refusal to open the gates of war prompts Juno to open them herself. This custom of opening and closing the gates for war was still practiced in Rome during Virgil’s time and thus functioned as an etiology for the first-century Roman practice. See C. J. Fordyce, *Virgil: Aeneid VII–VIII (P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos, Libri VII–VIII)* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1990), 211. Cf. Syed, *Vergil’s Aeneid and the Roman Self*, 217.

Elsewhere Virgil connects events in Rome’s history with events in the *Aeneid*. In 10.6–15 Jupiter announces to the council of gods, “There shall come—do not hasten it—a lawful time for battle, where fierce Carthage shall one day let loose upon the heights of Rome mighty destruction, and open upon her the Alps.” This appears to be a reference to Hannibal’s invasion of Italy in 218 BC. Translations of Virgil are from Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough; 2 vols.; LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

12. Though she does not specifically connect this passage to Aeneas as a founder of Roman religion, Syed discusses this passage as key for defining the purpose of the *Aeneid*. Syed, *Vergil’s Aeneid and the Roman Self*, 205–6.

13. Markus Schauer, *Aeneas Dux in Vergils Aeneis: Eine Literarische Fiktion in Augusteischer Zeit*, Zetemata 128 (München: C. H. Beck, 2007), 227.

14. What H. Rushton Fairclough translates as “mode of sacrifice” (*morem sacroum*), Christine Perkell translates as “ritual custom.” Christine G. Perkell, *Vergil: Aeneid 3* (Newburyport: Focus, 2008), 70.

15. Danielle Porte, *Les Donneurs De Sacré: Le Prêtre à Rome*, Collection Realia (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989), 82, points out that the specification of a purple robe (3.405) refers to the purple band that was part of the priestly *toga praetexta*. The second passage (3.543–47) mentions a Phrygian robe, rather than a purple robe. Nicholas Horsfall, *Virgil, Aeneid 3: A Commentary*, Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 382, suggests that they cover their heads with Phrygian robes “because, since they are not yet Romans, they do not have the *toga praetexta*.”

16. R. D. Williams, ed., *Virgil: Aeneid III* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1990), 142; Perkell, *Vergil*, 69; John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 31–34; Elaine Fantham, “Covering the Head at Rome: Ritual and Gender,” in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, ed. J. C. Edmondson and Alison Keith; Studies in Greek and Roman Social History 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 158–71. Fantham not only points to literary evidence of the Roman head covering in worship in Livy and Virgil, but also to material evidence at the Ara Pacis Augustae (“Altar of Augustan Peace”), which was consecrated in 9 BC to celebrate the peace established by Augustus. At the Ara Pacis there are statues of Augustus and Agrippa officiating with their togas covering their heads. Interestingly, Aeneas also made his way into the artwork at the Ara Pacis. Galinsky explains: “In one of the relief slabs of this altar Aeneas is

shown performing a sacrifice. . . . The relief decorations of that altar . . . center around the sacrifice of Augustus. The emperor’s sacrifice to Pax is the theme which unites the reliefs, and the sacrifice by Aeneas after his arrival in Italy is purposely related to it. The sacrifice brought by Aeneas *pro reditu suo* is the loftiest precedent for Augustus’ sacrifice. . . . In the relief of the Augustan altar, however, [Aeneas] is indisputably represented as *pious*: with veiled head, *capite velato*, he participates in a sacred action. As on the Antonine sestertius, Aeneas is not meant to be the center of our attention. His *pietas* is subordinated to that of the emperor, which it helps to underscore.” Karl Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome*, Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology 40 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 10. For images of the artwork at Ara Pacis, see his appendix.

17. Horsfall, *Virgil, Aeneid 3*, 306.

18. Syed, *Vergil’s Aeneid and the Roman Self*, 194.

19. Perkell, *Vergil*, 70; Williams, *Virgil: Aeneid III*, 142.

20. The preface of the work is dated to 7 BC. Later in 7.70.2 Dionysius notes that book 1 had already been published. One cannot say for certain when the other books were released, but most scholars believe it was shortly thereafter. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, trans. Earnest Cary; LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), vii. Books 1–11 exist in their entirety but only excerpts from books 12–20 are extant. All quotations from *Roman Antiquities* are Cary’s translation.

21. Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, xxi. Cf. Hill, “Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Origins of Rome,” 88.

22. For more on the audience of *Roman Antiquities*, see Hill, “Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Origins of Rome,” 88.

23. Whether Dionysius used the *Aeneid* as a source for his writing is debated. Hill, “Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Origins of Rome,” 93, points to at least three passages in Dionysius where he “may have been alluding directly to the *Aeneid*.” As one of the literary elite in Rome, it is very possible that he knew the *Aeneid*, either in written or oral form. At the same time, despite that fact that Dionysius mentions several of his sources, he does not list Virgil among them. In his introduction to the Loeb volumes, Cary follows Dionysius in not listing the *Aeneid* as one of Dionysius’s sources. It would have been possible chronologically (the *Aeneid* was released about 12 years before Dionysius released his *Roman History*), but Dionysius had already begun working on his history before the *Aeneid* was completed. Whether Dionysius (or Plutarch) knew of or used the *Aeneid* does not impact my thesis.

24. Plutarch, *The Roman Questions*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt; LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 2. All translations from Plutarch are Babbitt’s.

25. A third work in the series, *The Barbarian Questions*, is lost.

26. See, e.g., Jacques Boulogne, “Le Sens de Questions Romaines de Plutarque,” *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 2 (1987): 472; Rebecca Preston, “Roman Questions, Greek Answers: Plutarch and the Construction of Identity,” in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 96–97. They note that in *The Roman Questions*, Plutarch refers to Romans as “they” or “the Romans,” he transliterates and translates Roman words, he explains Roman offices and institutions, and he identifies historical figures. Plutarch does not do the same in *The Greek Questions*. Furthermore, about two-thirds of the questions in *The Roman Questions* have more than one answer, whereas nearly all the questions in *The Greek Questions* have only one answer. Preston suggests that the differences between these two works “implies that there is an intrinsic difficulty in explaining Roman culture. . . . It is a

Greek reader, then, who is supposed to infer from the pervasive device of tentative alternatives in the *Roman Questions* that the Roman culture is difficult and strange. The certainty of the Greek questions, by comparison, strengthens the sense of a ‘natural’ and explicable culture, shared by writer and reader. The difference in form, then, tends to construct Greek as Self and Romans as Other.”

27. Boulogne, “Le Sens de *Questions Romaines* de Plutarque,” 472–73.

28. H. J. Rose, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch: A New Translation with Introductory Essays & A Running Commentary*, Ancient Religion and Mythology (New York: Arno, 1975), 4.

29. Aeneas’s actions are proposed as reasons “their ancient coinage ha[s] stamped on one side a double-faced likeness of Janus, on the other the stern or the prow of a ship” (274E), why “on the festival of the Veneralia . . . they pour out a great quantity of wine from the temple of Venus” (275E), and why the bird called “left-hand” is a bird of good omen (282E). All the answers relate to actions done by Aeneas.

30. For both of these questions, Plutarch gives more answers than I quote here. I have chosen only to list these since the others are not relevant to my thesis.

31. For details on what this looked like in everyday practice, see Fantham, “Covering the Head at Rome: Ritual and Gender,” 160–68.

32. “Hold to this mode of sacrifice, you and your company; let your children’s children in purity stand fast” (*Aen.* 3.408–9); “And his posterity keep this also as one of the customary observances in connexion with their sacrifices” (*Ant. rom.* 12.16.22); “Its observance has persisted since the days of Aeneas . . .” (*Quaest. rom.* 266C).

33. John Scheid explains the crucial role these identity markers were in ancient religion: “But one thing made the difference between the religions of the world: the governing rules, those small details, choices, and postures which gave each system its originality, on occasion its perversion. Some individuals or people were qualified as superstitious, not because they venerated the wrong gods or celebrated ridiculous ceremonies, but because they performed their cult in the wrong way.” John Scheid, “*Graeco Ritu: A Typically Roman Way of Honoring the Gods*,” *HSCP* 97 (1995): 18.

34. See, e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 405.

35. Here I am not particularly concerned with whether this refers to a physical veil or bound hair or many of the other exegetical conundrums of this passage (e.g., what exactly does Paul mean by “because of the angels?”). For one of the more thorough discussions on these issues, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 799–849.

36. Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd C. Penner, *Contextualizing Gender in Early Christian Discourse: Thinking Beyond Thecla* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 206–7, show similar arguments about nature distinguishing between male and female by length of hair in Epictetus (*Discourses* 1.16.9–12, 14; 3.1.27–31) and Plutarch (*Quaest. rom.* 267A–B).

37. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 407.

38. Admittedly, the use of the term *ezer / boëthos* suggests that more is going on in Genesis than God creating women simply “for the sake of men.” On the theological richness of the term *ezer*, see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 68; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 213–14.

39. I do not include man’s being made in God’s image here, though Paul does, because Gen 1:27 indicates that both men and women were created in

God’s image, thus not making it a *unique* quality of men. On Paul’s selective use of Gen 1:27, see Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 515.

40. See, e.g., David W. J. Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *TynBul* 41 (1990): 245–60; Richard Oster, “When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11.4,” *NTS* 11 (1988): 481–505; Cynthia L. Thompson, “Hairstyles, Head-Coverings, and St. Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth,” *BA* 51 (1988): 99–115. Also, several commentators mention the Plutarch passages discussed above, but this is done mainly as a way of showing that Romans covered their heads in worship. See, e.g., Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, rev. ed.; Reading the New Testament (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 87. The most extensive discussion on any of the texts from part 2 is Oster’s brief (i.e., one paragraph) summary of the etiological legend relating Aeneas to head coverings. He cites all three of the passages discussed above in a footnote. The only points Oster makes with these texts are that they are evidence that Romans covered their heads when they worshipped, and that ancients—uncertain of how this practice originated—traced it back to Aeneas. He then points out that texts, monuments, coins, and statues attest to this Roman practice (496–97).

41. In case someone is concerned about the relevancy of Roman identity for Greek Corinth, I point to the observations of Nguyen: “As a Roman colony, Corinth would have had a distinct Roman cultural identity in the East, and a strong resemblance to the city of Rome in almost every facet, including its architecture, laws, and social practices. Gellius states that Roman colonies, which he considers small copies and representations (*effigies parvae simulacraque*) of the city of Rome, ‘do not come into citizenship from without, nor grow from roots of their own, but they are as it were transplanted from the State and have all the laws and institutions of the Roman people, not those of their own choice’ (*Noct. att.* 16.13). . . . The Romanness of the colony is also evinced by the fact that the official language was Latin up until the reign of Hadrian.” He points out that 101 of the 104 inscriptions in Corinth prior to Hadrian’s reign were in Latin. See V. Henry T. Nguyen, *Christian Identity in Corinth: A Comparative Study of 2 Corinthians, Epictetus, and Valerius Maximus*, WUNT 2.243 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 122. Oster also provides evidence that the Roman practice of covering heads during worship was widespread throughout the empire: “In addition to numerous literary references, this Roman pietistic practice [i.e., covering the head] is attested archaeologically not only in Italy, but also in Corinth and Asia Minor from the time of the Roman Republic well into the later Roman Empire. See Oster, “When Men Wore Veils to Worship,” 496.

42. Karl Galinsky, “Why God Chose the Time of Augustus for the Birth of Christ” (lecture given at Baylor University on 30 Jan 2012).

43. Such an adaptation is evident in 1 Cor 9:24–27, for example, where Paul draws on imagery from the Greek games as a metaphor for the Christian life.



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