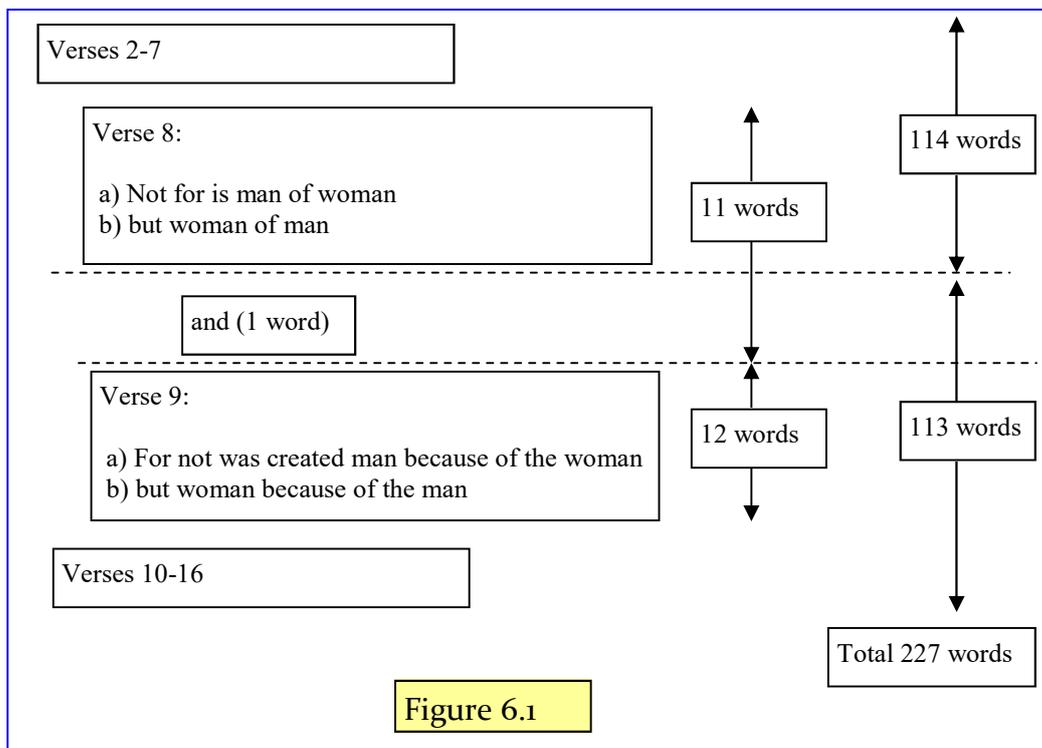


- 6-

## *An Introduction to the Chiastic Structure of the Passage—Part 1*

In this chapter, I will primarily be attempting to introduce the structure of 1 Cor. 11:2-16. This will both reflect and guide the interpretation of the passage.

The passage from v. 2 to v. 16 is 227 words long, and the centre of the passage by word count (as opposed to, for example, by thematic analysis) is the junction between verses 8 and 9. These verses have their own “parallel” structure and also matching word count. These points are illustrated below (Figure 6.1):

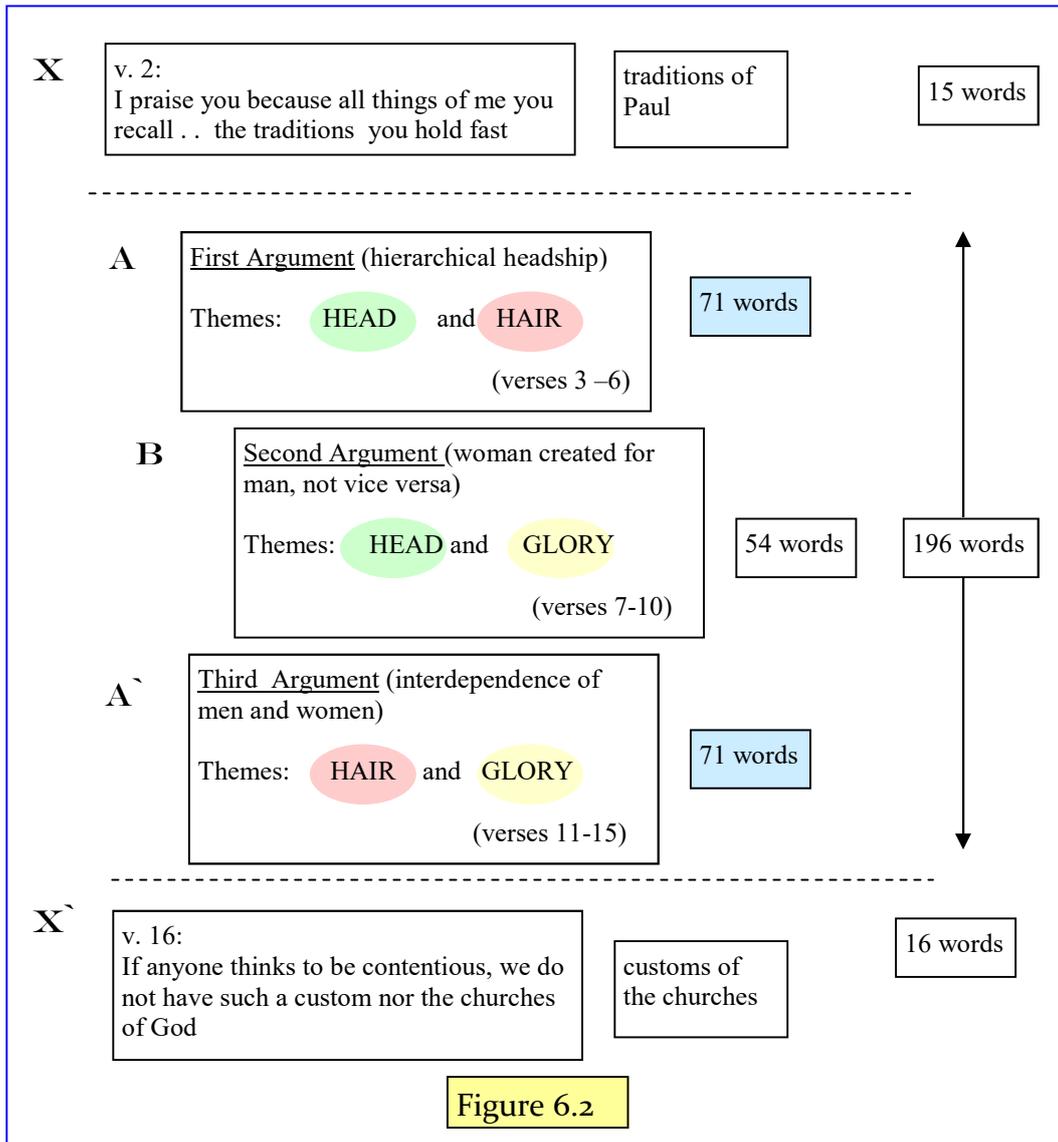


From this “overall” word count perspective, then, verses 8 and 9 which describe an “asymmetry”, based on the created order, in the relations between men and women is a key idea which undergirds much of the teaching of the passage.

We can also note that the expressions “I praise you” at the start of v. 2 and “I praise you not” (which occurs in v. 17 near the start of the next sec-

tion which discusses the failure of the Corinthians to eat supper together in a way that befits the Lord) together comprise an *inclusio* for the teaching of our passage, although I have not included any of v. 17 in the above word count.

Let us now look at an initial attempt at a chiasmic analysis of the passage as a whole. This is shown in summarised form in Figure 6.2 below:



Notes:

1) X and X' are "bookends" to the passage, and they correspond both by word count and by theme—the theme being the roles of traditions and customs within the Christian community. Although X and X' are balanced

by word count, I will be arguing in Chapter 9 that the first five words of v. 17 should perhaps be included within X' - and this upsets the numerical scheme.

2) Paul puts forward three arguments. These have been labelled A, B and A' to indicate that the first and third arguments match by word count (71 words each) as well as in other ways to be discussed and are separated by a middle argument of 54 words making a total of 196 words.

3) This is not quite the whole story however. The first two arguments, A and B are really two parts of a single argument based on the asymmetrical and hierarchical aspects of the relationship between men and women, whereas the argument labelled A' is a separate argument based on the interdependence of men and women under God. Again we see that the word count structure exists and is important, but Paul is free to let his arguments sometimes “flow across” word count structures.

4) There are also connections between A and A' (involving hair) and between B and A' (involving glory).

5) For now, let us continue to regard A, B and A' as three basically separate arguments. In attempting to do a structural analysis, it is not always clear to me how to start, and in this case, I tried to find sub-components of each argument which shared common factors (however such common factors might be understood!) When I tried to do this for our three arguments, I was pleased to notice what appeared to me to be just such sub-components. There were four of them, and all four sub-components were common to each of the first and third arguments (i.e. arguments A and A'). The same four sub-components were found in the second argument, (i.e. B) also, with the difference that two of the sub-units were combined, thus making three distinct sub-units. This seemed like it might be a promising approach, especially given the word count aspects. (A and A' have the same word count, and B has fewer words—curiously B has basically three-quarters the word count of A and A'.)

The four “sub-components” are:

**I)** a “theological”/biblical statement which gives the relationship between men and women and, in the case of sub-components A and A' also includes Christ and God within the relational order.

**II)** two contrasting statements about the head or hair covering behaviour of men and women—statements which are nevertheless structurally

parallel with each other.

**III)** a clause which “comments upon” one of the contrasting statements about the woman in **II)** above as well as commenting on the statement in **IV** below.

**IV)** A statement encouraging a decision in favour of an appropriate head covering behaviour. In A and A', the headcovering behaviour concerns women's hair (or lack of it!) in terms of (negatively) avoiding shame or “un-fittingness” - which then points to the appropriate headcovering behaviour when praying (or prophesying); in B, headcovering behaviours for men and women are described in negative and positive terms respectively and include references to God and angels respectively

Although the *order of presentation* of these three or four components in each argument varies, this variation occurs in a logically and structurally consistent way.

6) We will also see that whilst arguments A and B should certainly be considered together, we can also consider B and A' together and also A and A' (e.g. point 7) below):

7) We also note a pattern of “themes” in the three arguments relating to the topics of head, hair and glory. “Head” occurs in A and B, “hair” occurs in A and A' and “glory” in B and A'. This will be an important aspect of the analysis in later chapters.

Let us now go on to analyse the structure of each argument, and in particular its three/four components.

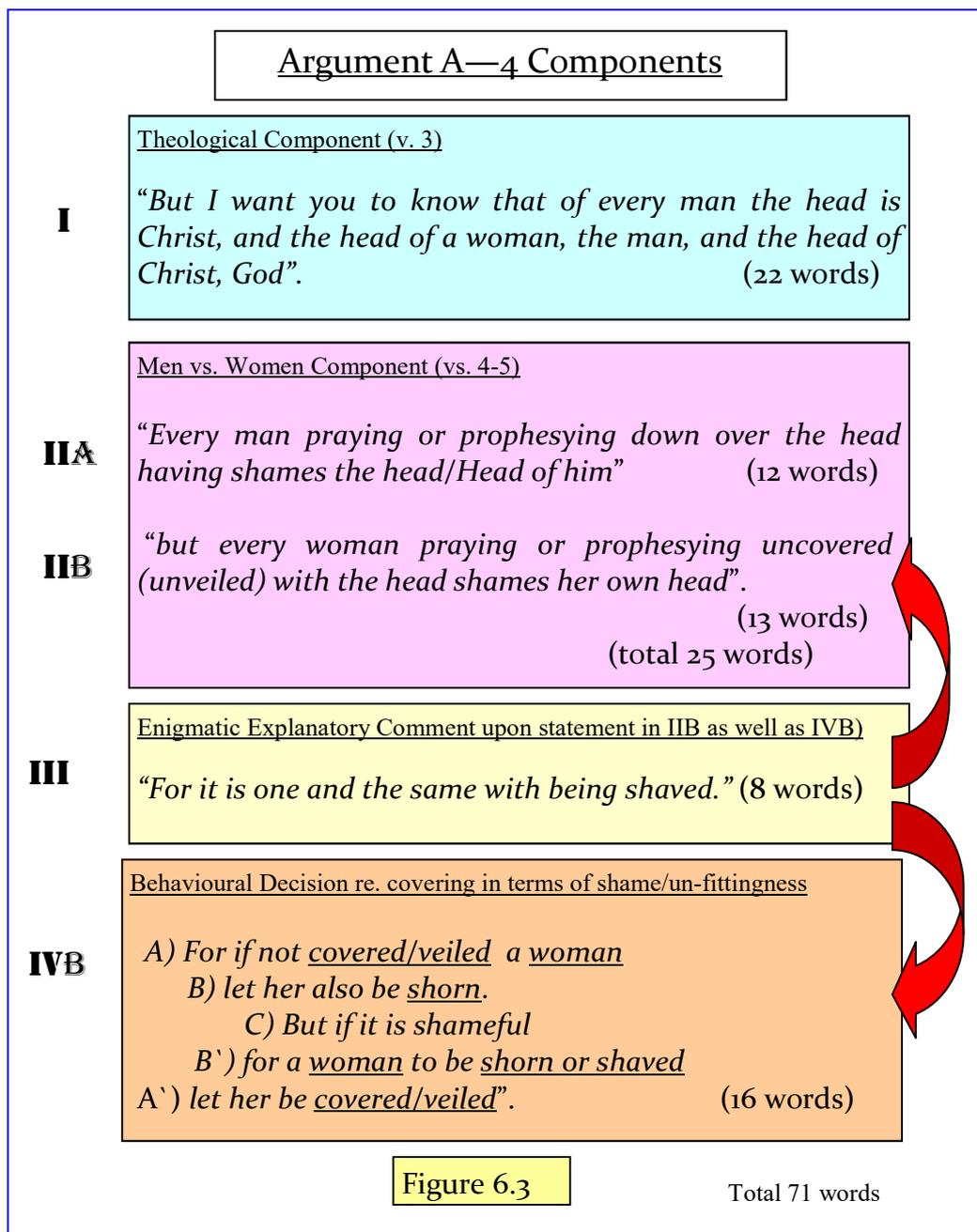
## The Four Components of Argument A

As noted, each of the three arguments has itself three or four components which will first be illustrated with reference to Argument A (i.e. section A of Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.3 on the next page shows the four components of the first argument (Argument A).

### I) The First Component (Theological)

The first component is “theological”. It is also “ontological” - describing “how things are” from a theological/biblical perspective—as opposed for



example to describing specific worthy or unworthy behaviours. In the case of the First Argument (i.e. Argument A in Figure 6.2), this is found in v. 3:

*“But I want you to know that of every man the head is Christ, and the head of a woman, the man, and the head of Christ, God”.*

Here, a hierarchical structure is established.

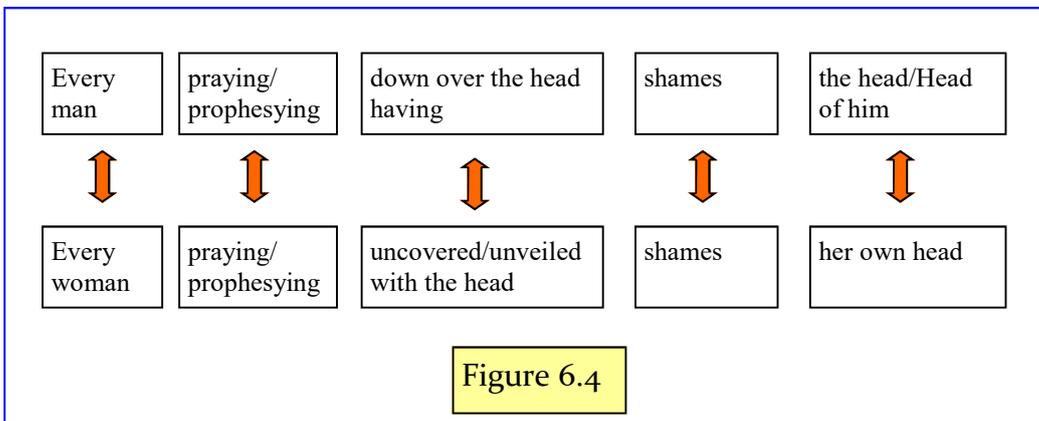
## II) The Second Component (Men vs. Women)

The second component consists of two “balanced” statements—one concerning men and a contrasting one concerning women. Both statements concern appropriate/inappropriate behaviour with regard to the head or the hair. In the case of Argument A these statements are about the head.

*“Every man praying or prophesying down over the head having shames the head/Head of him”*

*“but every woman praying or prophesying uncovered (unveiled) with the head shames her own head”.*

There are a number of exegetical issues here, but for now we just note the closely parallel structure as well as the contrasting situations of men and women in these verses. This is shown in Figure 6.4 below:



## III) The Third Component (Enigmatic Explanatory Material)

The third component consists of enigmatic explanatory information concerning the “woman” half of the second component (as indicated by the upper red arrow in Figure 6.3) and the behavioural decision concerning the woman in the fourth component (lower red arrow in Fig. 6.3).

*“For it is one and the same with being shaved.”*

This is a rather surprising statement, since it is not, on a purely “literal” level true! Paul presumably intends, amongst other things, to arouse curiosity in his hearers/readers!

## IV) The Fourth Component (Shame/Unfittingness Covering)

This fourth component involves making a behavioural decision in favour of covering in terms of shame/“unfittingness” or heavenly realities (shame here in Argument A). The “hair” illustration is here used as a “stepping stone” to the correct haircovering behaviour when a woman is praying/prophesying.

- A) For if not covered/veiled a woman  
 B) let her also be shorn.  
 C) But if it is shameful  
 B') for a woman to be shorn or shaved  
 A') let her be covered/veiled".

## A Discussion of Argument A

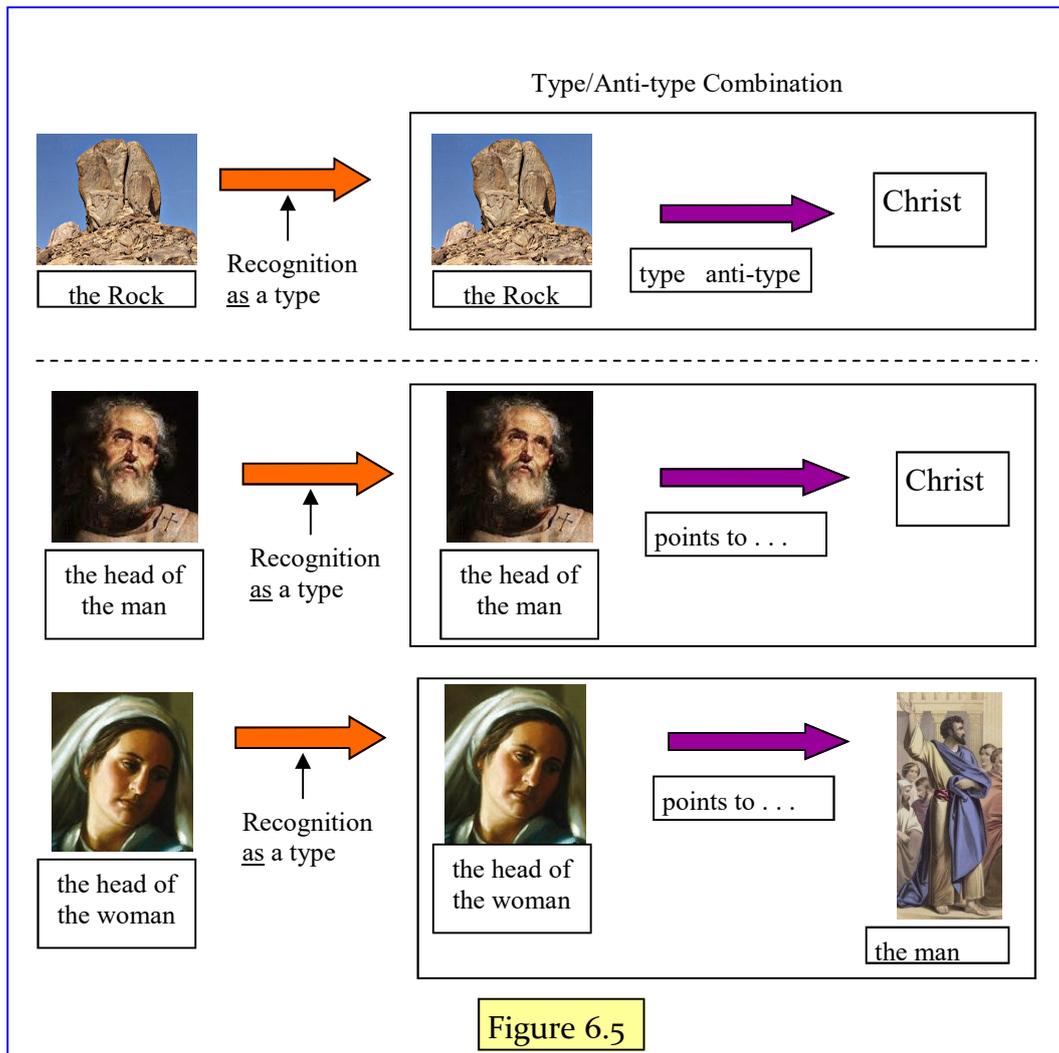
First of all, I think that Argument A is not “self-contained” - it is supplemented by Argument B, and together these form a “complete” argument. The reason for this is that Argument A relies on two “cryptic propositions” (one regarding men’s shame and one regarding women’s shame). These are given as statements but not “proved”. The situation for women is partly explained by the hair illustration in sections **III** and **IV** of Argument A, but necessary explanatory information is provided, both for men and for women, again somewhat cryptically, in Argument B. I suggest that, with the explanatory information, we, as hearers and readers, can figure out Paul’s underlying argument, provided we “put our thinking caps on”: Paul has indicated the solution, but we still have to “join the dots”!

Before we start to look at how Argument A “works” - with particular reference to the case of the woman who is praying and prophesying, I would like to discuss briefly one aspect of what Paul means when, in v. 3, he says, “the head of the man *is* Christ” and “the head of the woman *is* the man”. I think this is typological language, and is thus in the same category as other Scriptural types. Thus, for example, in 1 Cor. 10:4, Paul says, “The Rock *was* Christ” (referring to the Rock that accompanied the Children of Israel in the wilderness) and in 2 Sam. 12:7 Nathan the prophet says, “You *are* the man!”, when he presents King David with a parabolic representation of his errant behaviour. In both these cases, the “equality” refers to the parabolic or typological relationship.

## Brief Excursus on Analogies and Types

In the previous paragraph, it was pointed out that the Rock in 1 Cor. 10:4

is a type of Christ who is the anti-type. In the same way, I suggest that in our passage, the head of the man is a type of Christ, and the head of the woman is a type of the man. This is illustrated in Figure 6.5 below:



Now, at the risk of making this discussion more complicated, I wish to propose a somewhat more *precise* view regarding typology.

We have seen that a physical object can be identified in Scripture as a type, and that that act of identification then establishes a relation between the physical object and the “spiritual” person or thing to which it “points”, namely the anti-type, and to which in various respects it can be compared (or sometimes contrasted in the case of “inverse types”. (For example, Adam is a type of Christ in Romans Ch. 5 but here the type includes the fact that Adam sinned but Christ didn’t).

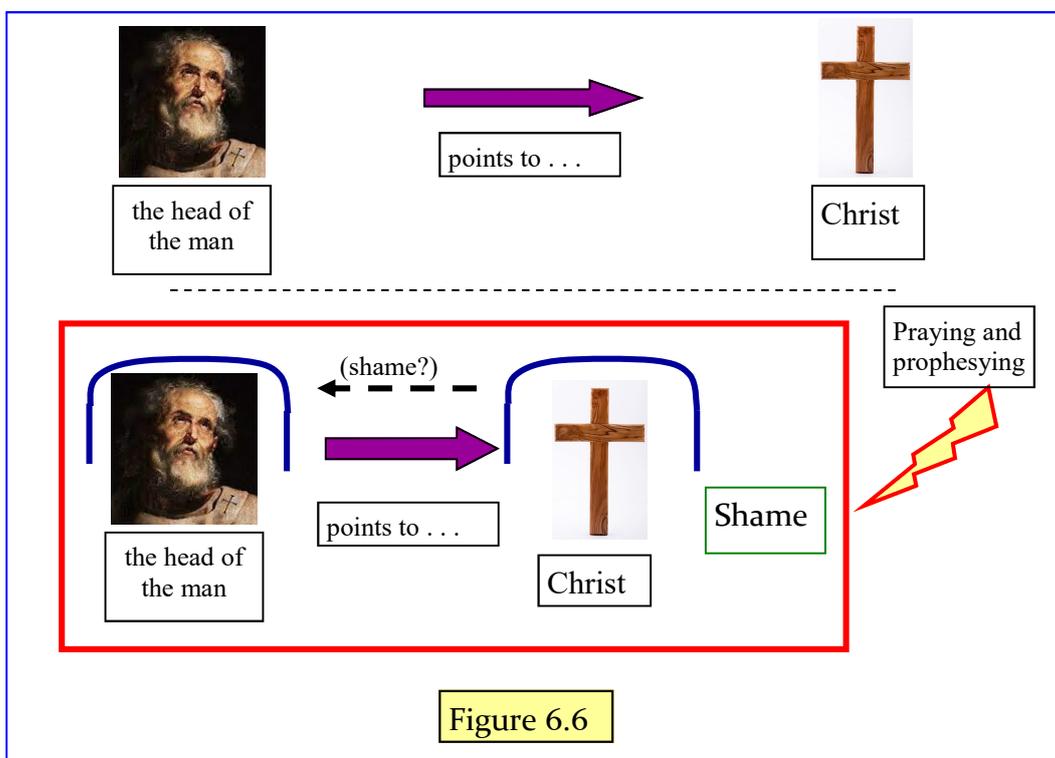
It is here that I wish to introduce a “complication” and that is to suggest that the very act of identifying an object as a type actually makes a difference in what we might call the “ontological status” of the object: it is no longer an object in isolation, rather it is now part of a moiety consisting of a type/anti-type combination. Thus when Paul says “the Rock was Christ”, the “physical” rock now has two identities—it is a physical rock “by itself” and it is also a physical rock in a type/anti-type relationship with Christ. I’ve tried to indicate this in Figure 6.5.

End of Brief Excursus

Now, let us return to our earlier discussion.

The Head of the Man is Christ

Although our main focus in this book is women’s headcoverings, the situation for the man is both important in its own right, and as part of the argument regarding women. In introducing the topic of metaphorical, typological heads in v. 3, Paul presents the head of the man as a type of Christ. This is represented in the upper part Figure 6.6 (below) by a purple arrow.



In the lower part of Figure 6.6, we have the particular situation of a man

“Every man who prays or prophesies having something down on his head shames his head”. It is this action, I presume, which somehow “charges” the “general” situation making it a matter of shame for Christ as the metaphorical head. (I base this view on the assumption that a man can have his head covered in other circumstances, and even engage in private prayer whilst uncovered without shaming his head). I have also indicated (by the black dashed arrow) that this shame may also “work backwards” to the man’s physical head (but this will be demonstrated in Argument B).

Thus, I am suggesting that the “head” that is shamed is both the man’s physical head and his “metaphorical” head (i.e. Christ) - so that the physical and metaphorical heads “sink or swim together”. We have also assumed (though we can always revise this assessment) that the shame for the physical head is a result of the shame for the metaphorical head, rather than vice versa or by some other mechanism.

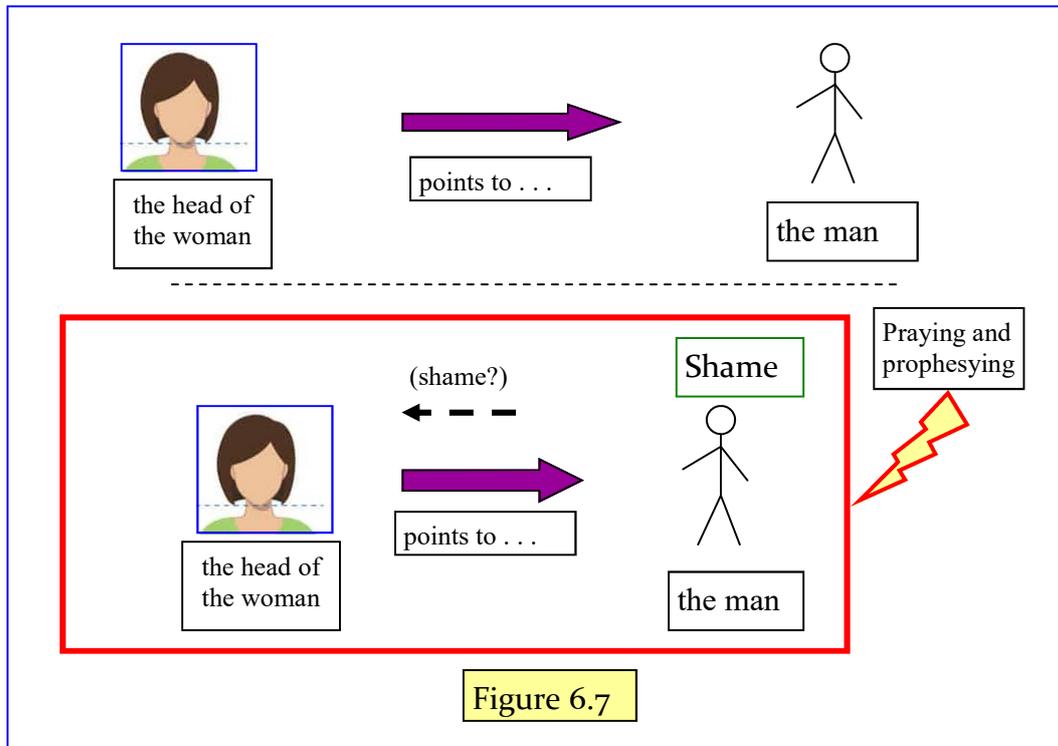
Argument A does not provide us, at this point, an explanation for the shame of the man who prays or prophesies with something on his head, although at this point we might nevertheless be able to see the likely direction of Paul’s argument: if the man’s head represents Christ, and the head is covered or there is something on top of it, then Christ is in some (metaphorical) sense covered and that is a bad thing—especially at times of prayer and prophesying when communication with Christ and God is at its most direct and public. This argument will be continued in Argument B.

### The Head of the Woman is the Man

Then, in v. 5, Paul having established the “pattern” using the example of the man, gives us a parallel, but contrasting statement regarding the covering of the woman’s head. (The verb for “to cover”, *katakalupto*, here is more specific than in v. 4— it is (presumably) related to the noun *kalumma*, a veil. The idea of concealment is present in this noun, whereas in v. 4 the man is described less specifically as having something “down upon the head”.)

The contrast in v. 5 is that the *woman* praying or prophesying with her head *uncovered* shames her head. Well, the woman’s metaphorical head is the man (v. 3) and so if we are to follow the pattern of v. 4 we will conclude that this action by the woman when praying or prophesying shames the man (the metaphorical head)—though we are not told how this shaming occurs. Likewise we should perhaps also conclude that a shaming of the

woman’s metaphorical head, the man, is also at the same time a shaming of her physical head which *represents* the metaphorical head. (Verse 6 will indeed teach that the woman’s physical head is being shamed). This is illustrated in Figure 6.7 below:



#### Notes on Figure 6.7

- 1) The diagram is again in two parts. In the upper part we have a diagrammatic representation of part of v. 3 showing the “general” situation that the physical head of the woman represents (forwards purple arrow) the man, the “metaphorical” head.
- 2) In the lower part, we have the particular situation of a woman praying or prophesying (in public) whilst uncovered. This action, I presume, somehow “charges” the “general” situation making it a matter of shame for the woman’s metaphorical head. I have also indicated the previously discussed inference (shown by the black dashed arrow) that this shame “works backwards” to the woman’s physical head (but this will be demonstrated in Argument B).
- 3) A key difference between Paul’s account of men and women in Argument A is that Paul now goes on, at the end of v. 5 and in v. 6 to give an explanation (of sorts!) for the shame that occurs when a woman prays or prophesies uncovered. This contrasts with the situation for men (in v. 4)

where no explanation is offered. The explanation is rather enigmatic though, since at this point Paul explains that the shame, or the situation giving rise to the shame corresponds in some way to the woman (the same woman?!) being shaved.

### “It is One and the Same with Being Shaved” (v. 6)

There is also a translational matter to consider in Argument A. At the end of v. 5, Paul says,

ἐν γάρ ἐστιν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυοημένη  
 one for it is and the same with (the) her having been shaved

A translational ambiguity arises (following C. K. Barrett who refers to F. Blass’s *New Testament Greek Grammar*, tr. R. W. Funk) because *estin* above could also be translated as “she is” giving the literal translation,

“for she is one and the same thing with her that has been shaved”.

The difference is small: either Paul is equating the *case* of the woman who prays or prophesied uncovered with the (implied) *case* of her (or another woman) having been shaved, or the uncovered woman *herself* is equated with her (or some other woman) being in a “having been shaved” state. The latter would appear to be the more direct meaning, but the former I think equally well fits the grammar and the context.

Another translation issue here (as noted above) is whether Paul intends us to understand the (hypothetical) woman in v. 6 who has been shaved to be one of the praying or prophesying women in v. 5, or whether she constitutes a separate example. Both understandings seem to me to be possible, but in support of the “different woman” translations, we note that Paul speaks of a woman in v. 6. However, the “same woman” translations, which “equate” the shaved woman with the praying/prophesying women would have had a more dramatic effect for the Corinthian audience!

A final possibility for this translation might be (but I am very, very open to being roundly and thoroughly corrected on this!!) that, since the Greek word for head, *kephale* is feminine, Paul might actually be equating the uncovered head of the woman with her shaved head:

“for it (the head of the woman) is one and the same thing with it (i.e. the head!) having been shaved.”

Although these are interesting possibilities, (though only one of these appears in biblical translations), I think the basic meaning, although surprising and perhaps even provocative on Paul's part, is the same for each possibility. Paul here is explaining why or how (hence the introductory conjunction, *gar* meaning "for") the woman who prays or prophesies uncovered shames her head, and he goes on in v. 6 to amplify this explanation.

But is this really an explanation?! What exactly does Paul mean by "one and the same thing"? Well, clearly Paul cannot not mean that the uncovered praying/prophesying woman is the same *in every respect* as if she had been shaved, but rather, that this second situation corresponds to the first in respect of shame, (and also of being uncovered)—as Paul (possibly with a certain amount of sarcasm as some commentators have suggested) points out in v. 6.

### A More Complete Explanation is Given in Argument B

Paul will go on, in Argument B to explain (somewhat cryptically!) how the shame "operates" in the case of the woman who prays and prophesies unveiled: the word *gar* meaning "for" occurs near the start of Argument B, which begins in v. 7, and this indicates that an explanation for what has been stated previously is now to be expected. (Paul uses this favourite word six times in our passage).

### How Does the Partial Explanation in v. 6 "Work"?

Paul can without contradiction affirm the shame for a woman when her head is shaved or shorn. (I take it that when Paul says in v. 5 that the woman shames the head of herself that this is equivalent to the woman herself being shamed—the implied locus of that shame being the head.)

Paul doesn't specifically refer to the (hypothetical) shaved woman as praying or prophesying. This raises the question whether he is equating the uncovered woman praying or prophesying with her praying or prophesying whilst having had her head shaved (and also uncovered) or whether he is equating the uncovered woman praying or prophesying with her in an unshaved condition at any and all times. (I suggest the latter is the case, but "any and all times" would include times of praying and prophesying. In order to clarify the illustration, i.e. the analogous situation of the shaved woman, and to distinguish it clearly from the "main topic", i.e. the woman who prays/prophesies unveiled, I will be treating the shaved woman's "location" as that of "everyday life in a pub-

lic context”, though I think that the above distinction is not necessary in order to make sense of the passage.)

(The same potential ambiguity actually applies to Argument A`. Here Paul appeals to the (converse) case of a woman with *long* hair without specifically indicating whether she is praying in church whilst having long hair! There is less cause to include the church situation in the “location” of the woman who has long hair since Paul does not indicate that the woman with long hair is the same woman as the one praying! (presumably because, unlike shaving, growing long hair takes a long time, and if the praying woman in v. 13 doesn’t happen to have long hair, she can’t instantly grow it in order to be the woman in v. 15!) I will be assuming an “everyday life in a public context” for the long haired woman of v. 15, and we will discuss this interesting illustration in Argument A` again later, but for now I just wish to note the similarity and symmetry in this respect of “potential ambiguity” between Arguments A and A`!)

The case of a woman having been shaved is not, I suggest, intrinsically shameful—shame is primarily a social category, and shame only occurs when there are “appropriate others” before whom one can be shamed. However, I think that any “public” appearance whilst shaved would be seen as deeply shameful for a woman, (including when she is “in the spot-light” when praying or prophesying). Private situations would not give rise to shame for the woman (where shame is understood in this “public” way, and nor would shame be considered to occur when the shaved woman is veiled since the lack of hair is concealed).

The case of the woman having been shorn or shaved at the end of v. 5 and in v. 6 is, as already suggested, “hypothetical” - it is designed to show how seriously shameful Paul considers it for her to pray or prophesy whilst uncovered. However, the teaching here leaves some unanswered questions including i) is it “OK” for a woman to be unveiled in church provided she does not publicly pray or prophesy? ii) if the answer to i) is “yes”, then what hair length or lengths would avoid shame? Clearly, from v. 6, being shaved or shorn are shameful, and, as we will see from v. 15, long hair, far from being shameful is a “glory” for a woman. This leaves a wide range of hair lengths somewhere in the middle for which no guidance appears to be provided.

It is sometimes claimed that the reason that it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved is that she is attempting to be like or to look like, or to show her equality with a man. Whether or not this is true either generally or in individual cases, it is not an argument that Paul makes here. I sug-

gest that modern commentators who make this claim have had their focus narrowed by the modern “obsession” with gender differences. According to this perspective, it seems that if a woman behaves in an unwomanly way, she must therefore be behaving like a man! This assumption underpins almost the entire contents of some modern commentaries on this passage! The ancients had a much wider code included within which there are “unwomanly” ways of behaving that are intrinsic to womanhood without reference to men or to manly behaviour (and vice versa.)

I note that there is a textual variant in v. 5 between the Received Text and NA27. In v. 5, where we read that every woman praying or prophesying uncovered, “shames the head of herself”, the Received Text has the word *eautes* for “herself”, whereas NA27 has *autes*. (Also, the corresponding verse, v. 4, has *autou* not *eaudou* so Paul’s choice of *eautes* in v. 5 seems deliberate). There is a difference here since *eautes* would be translated “her own head” whereas *autes* would be translated “her head”. In the Received Text, which we will be using here, the emphasis would perhaps thus appear to be more on the woman’s own (physical) head, rather than on her metaphorical head (the man). My best suggestion for this at the moment is that, in fact, both the physical and metaphorical heads are intended, and both are shamed—just as was the case for the man in v. 4—but this emphasis on the physical head by the use of *eautes* in v. 5 serves to introduce Paul’s “illustration” about being shaved in v. 6—which is unequivocally about the physical head! Perhaps however, it is simply the case that Paul’s use of *eautes* rather than *autes* is simply “part and parcel” of the contrast in v. 5 with the situation of the man in v. 4. I would welcome help on this question however!

### Veiling Corrects the “Shaved Head” and the “Praying/Prophesying” Situations

Thus (with specific reference to the previous paragraph above) I assume that both metaphorical and physical heads are shamed in v. 5, as indicated in Figure 6.7. However, in the case of the woman, Paul goes on, in verse 6, to offer a partial explanation based on the analogy of the praying/prophesying situation with being shaved or shorn. This takes the form of a “conundrum” in which Paul surprisingly announces that the woman’s shamed head when praying or prophesying unveiled is “one and the same” with her being shaved (and unveiled), and he goes on to explain the conundrum that being shaved or shorn also shames a woman and the remedy for this is veiling (though in practice, most women would probably avoid being shaved or shorn in the first place—but Paul’s (hypothetical!) argument has considerable humour and irony!!) Paul’s

analogy thus points to the same remedy when a woman is praying or prophesying unveiled—i. e. veiling.

Paul’s “shocking” announcement that praying/prophesying unveiled is “one and the same” with being shaved (which it subsequently appears means being both shaved and unveiled) is clearly not true in the absolute literal sense—at least not for a woman with hair of normal length! Now it is certainly true that Paul intends to represent the two situations as alike in respect of shame or the lack of it. But is this *all* that Paul intends? I suggest that he intends more than this. After all, both situations involve shame in connection with a woman’s head, but if Paul had simply intended to present us with another example of a woman’s shame he could have chosen something unconnected with her head—for example if she had been publicly insulted.

I conclude from this that Paul is drawing an analogy—a sort of mini-parable—between a woman’s unveiled head at the particular, special time when she is praying or prophesying, and a woman’s (unveiled) and shaved head at all times. When Paul says that “this is one and the same”, I take this to mean that Paul is saying that these two situations correspond in a “parabolic” or typological sense.

Before proceeding, I also need to remind myself that in this first part of 1 Cor. 11:2-16, Paul is presenting us, as already noted, with a hierarchical view of the relationship between men and women in relation to Christ and God, and that this contrasts with the Apostle’s presentation of the complementary view, towards the end of the passage, of the complete equality of men and women as they stand before God. The hierarchical relationship is thus part of, and not the whole, story.

I recognise that there is another, but different, “double meaning” - a slight “ambivalence” - in Paul’s use of the word head in this section: does the head include the hair?! Well, this ambivalence is built into the meaning of the word head since the same word is used in general to describe a head with hair on it (“the hairs of your head are numbered”), or without hair, (since when Paul shaved his head in Acts 18:18, it did not thereby cease to be a head!!)

Well, let us provisionally accept that Paul is making an analogy showing that appropriate covering (veiling) for a head which has been shaved (i. e. a head which excludes the hair, but nevertheless a head!) in everyday life can act as an analogy for appropriate covering (veiling) for the head (including the hair!) when praying/prophesying and that this analogy in-

volves the avoidance of shame by the use of the appropriate covering in both cases, and that the location of the shame that would otherwise ensue is the woman's head, again in both cases. Thus the woman's head in everyday life (or rather in the somewhat unlikely event in "everyday life" of a woman who has shaved her head!) itself acts as a sort of parable or object lesson for the correct headcovering behaviour when a woman is praying or prophesying.

I would therefore cautiously suggest that that Paul might, in v. 6 be saying something like:

*"A) For if not covered/veiled a woman [when praying or prophesying]*

*B) let her also be shorn [in "everyday life"]*

(Paul is here arguing from the greater to the lesser. Being shorn is actually a lesser level of shame than shame when praying/prophesying uncovered before God, so, on the "shame scale", the lesser level of shame is actually in a way included within the greater shame. With some humour and irony, Paul is pointing out that if a woman can tolerate the high level of shame involved in praying/prophesying unveiled, she should easily tolerate the lesser shame of being shorn and unveiled!)

*C) But if it is shameful*

*B') for a woman to be shorn or shaved [in everyday life]*

*A') let her be covered/veiled" [when praying/prophesying]*

Paul's aim here is to encourage a woman to consider the shame she would feel to be shorn or shaved, and then see this as a motivation for avoiding the greater shame of being uncovered before God when praying/prophesying.

Paul is thus encouraging his hearers/readers to get things in the correct proportion by seeing them from a heavenly perspective!

(I wish to point out however that the general view regarding women's head coverings presented in this book does not depend upon the correctness or otherwise of this somewhat ambitious and speculative attempted reconstruction which continues below!)

Now, whilst it is a matter of common consent that a woman whose head

has been shaved or sheared experiences shame centred on her head, and that this shame can be alleviated by veiling, Paul has so far only provided us with the above “analogous object lesson” to indicate that an unveiled head when praying or prophesying is a cause of shame, again alleviated by veiling, and we may wonder why Paul is so confident that his analogy “holds good”. Argument B offers a more “argued” rationale (though still somewhat cryptic!) for the view that an unveiled head whilst praying or prophesying shames the woman’s head. In Argument B, an instructive contrast with the situation for the man is also, once again, provided.

Well, that was probably enough for one chapter! Let’s continue the discussion in the next chapter by looking at Arguments B and A`.

