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Hair

Michael Cameron

University of Portland, cameronm@up.edu

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Hair

I Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Choon-Leong Seow

Different attitudes towards human hair – including head-hair (see “Baldness”; “Headdress”; “Shaving”), facial hair (see “Beard”; “Shaving”), and body hair – are found in the HB/OT and elsewhere in the ANE. Styles varied with different cultures and changed over time. They also signified different things in different contexts, often marking a person’s status, social function, identity, and even character (Tiedemann: 1–67; Niditch).

1. Ancient Egypt

Iconographical evidence with regard to hairstyles in ancient Egypt is abundant, much of which corroborated by archaeological finds of hair on mummies, locks of hair, hair extensions, wigs, hair implements, and concoctions for hair care (Fletcher 1994: 73–75; 2000: 495–501; Green: 73–76). Young boys and girls had shaved heads or cut their hair short, probably to keep out vermin. Royal children and those of the nobility had their hair shorn except for a single thick tress grown from the right side of the head. This “side tress of youth” was braided usually and, for royal children, often adorned elaborately (Robins: figs. 12, 173, 182, 240). The god Horus was so depicted, probably to signify his legitimacy as heir to Osiris, to indicate his youth, and perhaps to suggest the possibility of rejuvenation (ANEP, no. 566).

Men generally kept their heads shaved or their hair cut extremely short and groomed (Robins: fig. 17). They might also wear wigs of various types, depending on their status. Older and more distinguished men wore shoulder length hair or wigs that were occasionally curled or otherwise styled (Robins: figs. 17, 63, 69, 70). Younger men and various professionals had close-cropped hair or donned wigs with short hair. Men of the lower classes are depicted with uncovered bald heads (ANEP, nos. 113, 115) or unkempt hair (ANEP, no. 156). In any case, well-groomed hair was regarded as a mark of culture and standing, and it was seen as the Egyptian ideal. By contrast, wild and loose hair indicated low standing and otherness; hence, foreigners are often so represented (ANEP, no. 319).

Younger adolescent girls had pigtailed, while the older ones and young adults wore their hair – sometimes braided – down past the shoulder (ANEP, nos. 208, 209, 638). Wealthy women perfumed their hair, often adorning it with combs and pins. They had hairdressers, employed special tools for braiding and curling, used tints and dyes to hide graying, wigs to cover bald spots, and wax or animal fat to sculpt their coiffure (ANEP, nos. 76, 77).

A woman’s hair was often considered a feature of her beauty. In a love song, for example, a young man praises his beloved’s hair as “true lapis lazuli” (AEL II, 191). The “Tale of Two Brothers” tells that the lock of a woman from a distant land found its way to Egypt, where it became entangled in the pharaoh’s laundry. The still-present scent of the hair so excited the passion of the pharaoh that he immediately launched an international search for her. When it turned out that she was married, he had her husband murdered so that he could have her (AEL II, 297–98). A woman’s hair could be that alluring! Indeed, Egyptian love poems speak of the captivating effect of a woman’s hair: “with her hair she lassoes me” (COS 1:129).

Natural baldness was uncommon in Egypt, as elsewhere in the ANE. Even though men often shaved their heads, a naturally balding head was regarded as shameful for both men and women, and they avoided appearing in public bald or with thinning hair (Gazpaz-Felle: 80). By contrast, a full head of dark hair was a point of pride. Hence, aristocrats are rarely shown with gray hair in iconography; only members of the lower classes were so represented.

From the New Kingdom onwards, priests shaved their heads and removed their body hair by various means as part of a ritual of purification. Herodotus reported that they did so to keep their bodies clean from lice and other impurities so that they may properly engage in divine service (Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.37).

2. Mesopotamia

Much is known about hairstyles in Mesopotamia from archaeological finds, notably sculptures, reliefs, monuments, and cylinder seals (Spycket: 1954, 1955;

Börker-Klähn: 1–12). A long-held assumption is that it was typical for Sumerian men to have shaved heads; indeed, there are many examples of this in iconography. Yet there are also plenty of examples of men depicted with long hair (so, e.g., Frankfort: plates 7–12, 14–15). The difference may be due to difference in status and/or function. Certainly kings were often depicted as sporting long hair. Scribes, priests, and slaves typically had their heads shaved. Wealthy women had waist- or shoulder-length hair that was braided and left to hang down, tied in a knot at their napes, or held in place by a ribbon or a scarf or piled on top of their head, held by a net. Their hair might be adorned further with combs, pins, and jewelry (for a particularly elaborate example see Strommenger: plate XVIII). Common women, who had to attend to daily chores, wore shorter hairstyles.

The elaborate hairstyles of women soon also influenced men's fashion. Men started to grow their hair long as well and had them waved, curled, braided, and tied in a large bun at the nape of the neck, or held together by band, fillets, or hair nets (Börker-Klähn, figs. 8–12).

Of all the peoples of Mesopotamia, the Assyrians were the most attentive to hair care and fashion, elaborately trimming, curling, dying, tinting, and layering their hair, which was held together by bands and hairnets (ANEP, nos. 441–47, 604, 617). Women cut and arranged their hair in geometrical shapes and patterns and curled them with the help of slaves using fire-heated curling bars. Assyrian hairstyles were admired and copied by their neighbors.

Throughout Mesopotamia, men and women in certain professions sported distinctive hairdos that identified them as such. From the earlier period onwards, slaves were identified by a distinctive slave lock, known in Sumerian as GĀR and Akkadian as *abuttu* (see CAD A/II, 48–50). We do not know what this slave lock looked like, but it was sometimes long enough that it was held by a metal clasp. The law codes stipulated that this marker of slave status must not be removed (shaved), except by the master (see the *Laws of Eshnunna*, Sections 51–52; *Code of Hammurabi*, 146.56; 226.38). This slave lock was allowed to be removed only upon manumission, in an official shaving ceremony (*gallābūtu*).

Priests and other temple functionaries had shaved heads and bodies, a symbol of purification. Indeed in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, the verb *gullubu*, “to shave,” came to mean also “to consecrate” (CAD G, 130), and the complete shaving of the body became a ritual in various cultic ceremonies. Apart from such instances, some amount of body hair on men was normal and likely viewed as a sign of manliness. Hence, the shaving of half of the hair on a man was a common form of punishment (see, e.g., the *Code of Hammurabi*, 127.34), probably an act of humiliation, a public undermining of the offender's manhood.

Just as the shaving of the body represented cleansing and purification, excessive hairiness of a body was considered a sign of wildness, even subhuman character (Mobley: 220–26). Hair is also personal and, as such, may be removed to represent a person. Thus, in the Mari letters, a sample of a person's hair may be used with the fringe of a garment as personal identification – to assure the veracity of a message and establish personal commitment (so ARM 10, 81:16, 20; 7:24; 50:29). Similarly, a sample of a person's hair may be used in various symbolic and ritual acts, such as the throwing of hair into a river or weighing it on a balance (see Farber: 138: 203; 187:61; 57:18; 58:32; see CAD, Š/II, 127; S, 324).

3. Syria and Palestine

The men of Syria and Palestine, known to the Egyptians as “Asiatics,” were typically portrayed in Egyptian iconography as having thick heads of hair (ANEP, nos. 3), often grown to shoulder length, bunched at the nape, and tied with a fillet (ANEP, nos. 2, 5, 6, 53, 55). Captives were sometimes portrayed as bald (ANEP, nos. 2, 5, 51), either because that is one of their styles or because their heads were shaved in humiliation – contrary to their own cultural norms. These Egyptian depictions, as well as those by the Assyrians, are propagandistic and inevitably colored by local cultural perspectives and biases. They do not necessarily reflect historical realities (Niditch: 25–62). Yet Israelite portrayals of themselves are exceedingly rare, difficult to interpret, and certainly cannot be generalized. So most of what we know about hair in Israel comes from the Bible.

4. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

As in Egyptian literature, so too in the HB/OT, a woman's hair may be rhapsodized in love poems: “like a flock of goats that stream down from Mount Gilead” (Song 4:1; 6:5), suggesting long hair, probably an allusion to wavy or curly hair. A woman's flowing tresses can be so alluring that a king may be held captive by it (Song 7:6 [5]). The hair of a man, too, can be a mark of his attractiveness. Thus, a love poem praises a young man's head as a highly-valued commodity (“finest gold”), his locks being black as raven (Song 5:11). Absalom, reputed for his good looks, had such luxuriant hair that when he had his annual hair cut, “the hair of his head weighted two hundred shekels by the royal weight” (about 5 pounds, see 2 Sam 14:26). This long hair was, however, also his undoing, for he was killed when riding a mule under a terebinth and getting his hair entangled in the branches as the animal kept on going (2 Sam 18:9).

Like Absalom, Samson had exceptionally long hair, preserved because he was a Nazirite – that is, belonging to a group of men who were not allowed shave their heads for the period of their vows, their uncut hair being a distinctive mark of their consecration (Num 6:5–19). In fact, Samson had “seven locks” on his head, which Delilah was able to weave into a web and pinned, apparently to a loom (Judg 16:13–14). This long hair was apparently the explanation for his exceptional strength, which he lost when it was cut but regained when it grew long again (Judg 16:15–22).

Long hair was the norm for both men and women, though they regularly cut and trimmed it. Only in certain circumstances did they shear or shave their heads (see “Shaving”). This was true even for priests, who, unlike their bald counterparts in Egypt and Mesopotamia, were not allowed to shave their heads (Lev 21:5). Nor were they allowed to trim the side-growth of their heads (Lev 19:27). There is no indication however, that they were forbidden to otherwise trim their head hair (cf. Ezek 44:20).

Since natural balding was relatively uncommon, people had their hair till old age and death. Unlike the men and women of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Israelites did not try to slow or hide the grey hair that came with age. In fact, gray hair was regarded as the splendor of the elderly (Prov 20:29) and “a crown of glory” attained by those who abode by a way of righteousness (Prov 16:31).

As in Mesopotamia, Israel used hair in certain symbolic actions. Thus, Jeremiah commanded his people to shear their hair and throw it away (Jer 7:29). Ezekiel performed a sign-act to symbolize the impending doom of his people. He cut his hair and apparently weighed it on a scale (an action reminiscent of a symbolic act in Babylonian texts), and then divided it into three equal portions, one portion cast into fire, another struck with sword, and yet another scattered to the wind (Ezek 5:1–17).

As elsewhere in the ANE, bodily hairiness may suggest an uncouth nature, as in the designation of Esau as a “hairy man” (Gen 25:25; 27:11, 23); or strangeness, as in the description of Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8); or animalistic and subhuman, as in Nebuchadnezzar's condition when he was deprived of normal human faculties (Dan 4:33).

Finally, hair on the head may be a metaphor signifying innumerable abundance (Ps 40:13 [12]; 69:22 [21]) – a metaphor known as well in Akkadian. Conversely, a single strand of hair may be a figure for the tiniest possibility (Judg 20:16; 1 Sam 14:45; 2 Sam 14:26; 1 Kgs 1:52), a figure also attested in

Akkadian.

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II New Testament

Dale C. Allison, Jr.

With the exception of Matt 3:4 par. Mark 1:6, hair in the NT always refers to human hair.

1. John the Baptist

Two synoptic gospels report that John the Baptist "was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist" (Mark 1:6; cf. Matt 3:4). The language is designed not only to depict John as ascetical but also to recall 2 Kgs 1:8 LXX, which reports that Elijah was a hairy man who wore a leather girdle round his waist. This supports the NT typology of John as the returning Elijah (cf. Matt 11:14; 17:13; Luke 1:17; etc.).

2. Women with Ointment

In Luke 7:36–50, an unnamed woman, characterized vaguely as a "sinner," brings an alabaster flask of ointment, wets Jesus' feet with her tears, wipes them with the hair of head, kisses his feet, then anoints them with ointment. Interpreters often construe her actions and her unbound hair as immodest or even sexually suggestive. It is more likely that her loose hair is a sign of grief (cf. Xenophon, *Ath.* 3.5; Plutarch, *Mor.* 267a) or supplication (cf. Chariton, *Chaer.* 2.2.7) or gratitude (cf. Chariton, *Chaer.* 8.8.15; see Cosgrove). In the parallel story in John 12:1–8, where Mary of Bethany anoints the feet of Jesus and wipes his feet with her hair, the act appears to be one of religious devotion and service; it foreshadows Jesus washing and drying the feet of his disciples in 13:5.

3. Paul's Vow

According to Acts 18:18, at Cenchreae Paul "had his hair cut, for he was under a vow." Luke fails to explain the nature of the vow, or why Paul took it. (A few think that Aquila is the subject as his name is the closest antecedent.) A vow could be either an act of thanksgiving or a petition for divine protection. Many commentators presume that, if the notice is historical, Paul took a Nazirite vow, which involved shaving the head (Num 6:9, 18; cf. Acts 21:24). But why he would take such a vow before a voyage is unclear. Maybe then the act marked the end of a vow. Juvenal (*Satire* 12:81–82) refers to sailors shaving their heads after being saved from a shipwreck.

4. Worship and Head Coverings

In 1 Cor 11, in making his case that women but not men should be veiled in worship, Paul, being sarcastic, writes that, if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair, but that if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved (cf. 11:5; *T. Job* 24:10), she should wear a veil (11:6). He also states that, whereas nature teaches that men should not have long hair, the long hair of a woman is her glory (11:14–15). Paul seems to presuppose the custom in Roman colonies: women tended to have long hair, men short hair. He also seems to presuppose that "nature" lies behind culture.

5. Sapiential Sayings

In Luke 21:18, Jesus promises his disciples that, during the tribulation to come, "not a hair of your head will perish." In Acts 27:34, Paul assures his companions that, despite perils at sea, "none of you will lose a hair from your heads." These two lines take up a traditional, poetic way of referring to divine protection or deliverance from evil (1 Sam 14:45; 2 Sam 14:11; 1 Kgs 1:52; *bbb* 16a.1).

The saying of Jesus in Matt 10:30 par. Luke 12:7 is different (cf. Allison). It affirms that "the hairs of head are all counted." This is not a promise of protection but instead a way of underlining divine omniscience over against human ignorance, this being one way of coming to terms with evil; it is thus akin to Job 38:37 ("Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?") and *Apoc. Sedr.* 8:6 ("Since I created everything, how many people have been born, and how many have died and how many shall die and how many hairs do they have?").

6. Modest Dress

First Timothy 2:9 and 1 Pet 3:3 admonish Christian women not to braid their hair. These calls for unelaborate hairstyling, which are so similar to each other and which share similar contexts, probably reflect a common Christian tradition. They derive ultimately, however, from secular critiques of female ostentation, critiques which held up simplicity and modest style as the ideal (Winter). Inner adornment is what matters.

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III Judaism

A Second Temple, Hellenistic and Rabbinic Judaism

Joshua Schwartz

1. General Considerations

Hair grows almost everywhere on the human body. *Second Enoch* 30:10 states that the hair of Adam was created by God from the grass of the earth and the rabbis considered each and every hair a wondrous creation of God (*bBB* 16a). A full head of healthy, curly hair was considered a mark of beauty (*bNed* 9b). Maintaining healthy hair required constant care and treatment for both men and women and included delousing, washing, anointing with oil, and combing (*bBB* 58a, *mNaz* 6:1-2). Two-sided combs, one side for regular combing and the other for delousing, have been found in such sites as Masada and Qumran and head lice and their eggs have been discovered at archaeological sites in the Judean Desert. Sometimes white or yellow hair on the head or the body was a sign of scale disease (*mNeg* passim). Hair and beards might be dyed (*bBM* 60b) as Herod was wont to do at times, although this was not popular (Josephus, *J. W.* 1.490). Paying too much attention to hair, such as sprinkling gold dust on one's hair to make it shine, was considered foppish and could lead to serious consequences (*tNaz* 4:7; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.45; cf. *Ant.* 8.185). Lack of a row of hair going around from ear to ear made one bald (*mBekh* 7:2). A number of prominent sages were known for their baldness (*bBekh* 58a). Hair also took on metaphorical meaning and hearing someone's excessive cursing and swearing might cause one's hair to stand on end (*Sir* 27:14; cf. *Matt* 5:36).

2. Men's Hair

Unkempt long hair was frowned upon for boys and men (Pseudo-Phocylides, *Sententiae* 212; cf. 1 Cor 11:14) and deemed appropriate only when in mourning or for a Nazirite (*mNaz* 1:1-2), although life-long Nazirites might trim their hair. Men in Palestine did not usually cover their hair, in keeping with common practice in the Greco-Roman world. In Babylonia, they occasionally covered their hair (*bNed* 30b), in keeping with non-Jewish custom there. Hair was covered on special occasions such as during mourning (*bMQ* 24a), reciting blessings (*bBer* 51a) or greeting an important person (*bQid* 8a, 29b). On festive occasions men might cover their hair with garlands (*Jdt* 15:13) and in mourning, or out of despair and frustration they might tear out their hair just as women were wont to do under such circumstances (2 *Esd* 1:8). Traditions mention sages wearing a headcovering on a more regular basis and some sages never appeared in public bare-headed (*bQid* 31a), as they considered covering one's hair to be a sign of humility before God (*bShab* 156b).

The Bible forbade the marring of the corners of the beard (*Lev* 19:27). This was interpreted by the rabbis as shaving with a (razor) blade against the skin and the five points of the beard (*bMak* 201b), although there were differences of opinion as to what these points were. Eventually shaving the entire beard and mustache with a blade was prohibited.

3. Priestly Hair

Other hair issues had halakhic repercussions. A bald priest could not officiate in the Temple service (see *Lev* 21:4), nor could he officiate if he had no eye-brows, only one eye-brow, or eye-brows that hung over the eyes (*mBekh* 7:2; understanding *gibben* in *Lev* 21:20 as referring to the eyebrows).

4. Women's Hair

Women devoted more time to their hair than men (*bShab* 112a), growing it quite long, making them look voluptuous (Pseudo-Phocylides, *Sententiae* 212). While women occasionally wore their hair loose (*Apoc. Zeph.* Sahidic fragment; Akhimic text 8), it was usually braided or dressed and not kept loose (*mShab* 10:6). Even Eve supposedly wore her hair in braids (*bBer* 60a). However it was worn, a woman's hair should be soft and supple (*Ap. Gen.* [1QapGen=1Q20], col. 20:3). A woman who cut off all her hair was considered ugly (*mNaz* 4:5), although poor women were sometimes forced to do so to survive or support their families (*T. Job* 24:10; *yShab* 6:1, 7d). It was considered disgraceful for women to cut off or shave their hair in public (*T. Job*, 23:7-11, 24:9-11, 25:2-7, 24:10). Women might also wear a wig or a fall (*mShab* 6:5).

For women, covering one's hair marked the transition from girlhood to womanhood. Adult women were expected to cover their hair in public, although some traditions relate that a virgin might leave her hair uncovered (*Jos. Asen.* 15:1). Covering one's hair was firstly an issue of modesty as a woman's hair was considered sexually arousing (*bBer* 24a). Some traditions relate that it was a matter of shame on account of the sin of Eve (*BerR* 17:8). Covering one's hair was also an indication that the woman "belonged" to one man and was no longer available to others. A married woman might forfeit her *ketubbah* (marriage contract) if she went outdoors with her hair uncovered (*mKet* 7:6) and a married woman forced to uncover her hair in public would consider it a sexual disgrace (*T. Job* 23:7-9). Whoever uncovered a woman's hair in public had to pay "shame" damages (*mBQ* 8:6). Women covered their hair with woolen hairnets (*ševakhah*), caps (*kippah*) (*mKel* 24:16; 28:9-10), fillets, diadems, veils (*Jos. and Asen.* 3:11; 10:16; 14:17; 15:1) and with the corners of their mantle or with headscarves, similar to common practice in the Greco-Roman world. Upper class women might also wear a tiara or a crown (*Jos. Asen.* 3:11; 18:5; *Jdt* 10:3; 16:8). On festive occasions they might crown themselves with olive wreaths (*Jdt* 15:13). While mourning, and in privacy, they might cover their hair with ashes and dung or even tear out their hair (*Add Esth* 14:2).

5. Cutting/Trimming Hair

Priests had to trim their hair before going up to Jerusalem on rotation (*mTaan* 2:7). The rich trimmed their hair on a regular basis (*bSan* 22b). Hair had to be neat and presentable before the Sabbath or festivals (*mShab* 1:2). Hair could be trimmed with a sheath, scissors, or razor, or plucked or removed by rubbing with minerals (*mNaz* 6:3). The Bible, however, forbade the shaving of the corners of the head (Lev 19:27) and the rabbis interpreted this as cutting the hair at the temples so that the hairline was a straight line from behind the ears to the forehead (*mMak* 3:5; *bMak* 20b); therefore sidelocks were retained. Nazirites, however, shaved their heads upon the completion of their term in the Chamber of Nazirites on the Temple or before if they became defiled (*mNaz* 7:4). Their hair was burned under the peace offering or buried if it became defiled. Apparently, there was no particular Jewish hair style; ancient non-Jewish authors do not comment on the hair and beards of the Jews and apparently saw nothing unusual about them.

There were restrictions on growing hair and cutting it based on the prohibition against growing the fringe (*tsitsit*) or cutting the hair *qomei* (κόμη; = Greco-Roman style) (*Sifra Aḥarei mot* 13:9; *tShab* 6:1; *DevR* [ed. Vilna] 2:18). This might have involved cutting the front of the hair (*tsitsit* or *blorit* [*mAZ* 1:3]) and growing the back long in accordance with the pagan practice of growing the hair long, cutting it off and offering it to the gods. Or these prohibitions might relate not to pagan worship, but to pagan elite cultural practice, since the rabbis permitted cutting the hair *qomei* for those “close to the kingdom” who had to be in professional contact with the Roman authorities (*bbQ* 83a). Cutting hair *komei* in this case refers to Roman hairstyles in general.

Both men and women often needed help in trimming or dressing their hair. Rabbinic literature mentions the barber who might have cut the hair of both men and women (*mShab* 1:2; *tQid* 5:14), although the latter activity by men barbers was frowned upon by the rabbis. For women, women hairdressers were preferred. In general, the barbershop was considered to be a disreputable place. The rabbis did have some knowledge of the equipment used by these hairdressers (*mKeI* 15:3). In spite of the fact that sharp implements were used in the cutting or dressing of hair, the rabbis allowed the hair of a Jew to be cut by a non-Jew if there was Jewish supervision (*mAZ* 2:2). A Jew could cut the hair of a non-Jew if he or she refrained from cutting the parts of the hair associated with pagan hair-cutting rituals (*tAZ* 3:6). Not all hair cutting was done in a formal manner and “scalping” – tearing hair and skin from the head – was a common form of torture during periods of oppression (2 Macc 7:4, 7-9).

The rabbis were aware of some “hair rituals” in the Greco-Roman world. Business transactions between Jews and non-Jews were forbidden on the festival of the ritual first shaving of the beard and on the festival in which the forelock (*blorit*) was cut and dedicated to the gods upon reaching puberty (*mAZ* 1:3; cf. *bAZ* 11b).

6. Hair Color

Black hair on one’s head was a sign of youth and white or grey hair of old age (4 Macc 7:15; *bbQ* 60b) and wisdom (Wis 4:9). Angels had white hair the color of snow (*Apoc. Ab.* 11:3) and miraculously, baby Noah was born with hair as white as wool (1 En. 106: 3, 10). Worry and despair, however, might turn hair white (*mSot* 9:15), and even the hair of infants might turn white during times of transgression against God and as a result of punishment (*Jub.* 23:25).

The rabbis were also aware of attitudes to certain hair colors in the Roman world. Red was considered a hair color appropriate for slaves and therefore both Josephus and Philo avoid stating that Esau’s hair was red in their renditions of the biblical account (*Ant.* 1.258; *PhiloQG* 4.160). Red hair also symbolized the shedding of blood. The rabbis, aware of this, had no problem attributing this quality to the ruddy Esau but sought to downplay David’s red hair (*BerR* 63:8; *MidShem* 19:6). Amazingly, the author of a fragment from the DSS, not upset by David’s red hair, stated that the messiah’s hair will be this color (4QmessAr=4Q534, col.1).

7. Pubic Hair

Pubic hair (“lower sign,” “lower beard”), along with other secondary sexual characteristics, was associated with physical and legal status. Girls remained minors until the age of twelve and the appearance of two pubic hairs (*mNid* 5:9; 6:1; 6:11–12). For boys, the age was thirteen and two pubic hairs (*mNid* 6:11). Most healthy adolescents would have had pubic hair by these ages. The appearance of pubic hair, however, before these ages did not mark one as an adult (*tNid* 6:2), and a woman who reached the age of twenty (or eighteen according to another view) and did not produce pubic hair was considered incapable of reproducing (*mNid* 5:9).

Under most circumstances there would have been no need for any intrusive physical examination for pubic hair. If such an examination was necessary, girls would have been examined only by women (*tNid* 6:8–9) and if the rabbis needed first-hand knowledge, they undertook other means to acquire information such as in the case of Samuel who paid a slave girl to let him examine her (*bNid* 47a). No mention was made of who examined boys, but this would not have been a problem for the rabbis. Roman law knew of similar physical examinations (*indagatio corporis*).

The attitude towards pubic hair, underarm hair, and other body hair was not the same for men and women. The idea of beauty for the Jewish woman required the removal of such hair (*bSan* 21a). In addition to the aesthetics involved, there seemed to have been a feeling that a woman’s pubic hair might be dangerous for her male partner during sex (*ibid.*). Depilation was identified with women, since men were forbidden from shaving pubic or underarm hair and those that did were guilty of the transgression of “dressing like a woman” (*bNaz* 59a; Deut 22:5).

8. Samson and Absalom

Nazirites take upon themselves to refrain from cutting their hair for a period of thirty days (*mNaz* 1:3; cf. Num 6:5). Samson, however, did not take a Nazirite vow upon himself; rather, his parents were instructed by an angel that “no razor shall come upon his head” for their son Samson “would be a Nazirite unto God from the womb until the day of his death” (Judg 13:5) and they dedicated him as a Nazirite. He was forbidden to cut or trim his hair at all for his entire life. Samson’s strength apparently derived from maintaining this status of Nazirite and thus not cutting his hair (Judg 16:17).

The rabbis were not concerned with the connection between Samson’s hair and his strength, but rather with the particulars of his status as a Nazirite who could never cut or trim his hair, unlike other Nazirites (*mNaz* 1:2). The rabbis stated that Samson “went after his eyes,” i.e., was attracted to the beauty of non-Jewish women such as the Philistine Delilah, and was punished by having his eyes gouged out (*mSot* 1:8; cf. Judg 16:21). The cutting of Samson’s hair by Delilah, a common motif in Western culture and art, made no impression on the rabbis.

The rabbis were more interested in Absalom’s long hair (2 Sam 14:26) and because Absalom “gloried” in his hair and for this “sin” he was suspended by it (2 Sam 18:9), which enabled his enemies to kill him (*mSot* 1:8). How could he grow his hair so long and could it have been just vanity? One sage considered Absalom a short-term Nazirite (*nezir yamim*) who would shave his hair off every thirty days. Another sage, more in keeping with the Bible, stated that Absalom was a Nazirite “forever” (*nezir ’olam*), who would shave his hair after a year. A third sage had Absalom trim his hair every Friday afternoon as was the practice of princes (*MekhY Be-shalah, De-shirah* 2).

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B Medieval Judaism

Geoffrey Dennis

1. Law and Custom

Medieval halakhists (e.g., Maimonides, *MishT, Issurei bi'rah* 21:17; Karo, *ShA, EH* 21:2), using Num 5:18 as a proof text, argue that it is customary modesty for married women (but not children or unmarried girls) to cover their hair in some fashion. Based on an arboreal-human analogy drawn from the biblical law prohibiting the gathering of fruit from a tree until it is three years old (Lev 19:23; cf. Deut 20:19), the custom arose of refraining from cutting a male child's hair (*halaqah*) until the spring holiday of Lag Ba-Omer in his third year. While probably older, this practice was popularized by the 16th-century mystic, Isaac Luria. According to the Zohar 2:70b–72b, human hair can be used in the diagnosis of personality and disposition using the art of physiognomy. Hair also appears as an ingredient in Hebrew magic formulae and apotropaic defense (*Sefer ha-Razim* ; *bGit* 69a, *bShab* 110a; Trachtenberg: 119, 197).

2. Mysticism

The "hair" of God is a recurrent trope in medieval Jewish mysticism, usually based on allegorical renderings of the idealized lover described in Song 5, specifically v. 11. Late mystics also speak of the "mystery of the (divine) beard." The Zohar (5:127a–b) uses the bearded cosmic figure of Dan 7:9 to declare the human body a microcosmic representation of the divine order. In 3:131a–32b it also uses the same verse to speak of the "thirteen curls" of God's beard, this being an idiom for the thirteen attributes of God revealed to Moses (Exod 34:6–7) that link the earthly and celestial spheres and activate *tiqqun* (cosmic healing) (cf. *Sha'arei orah* 1:31–33). Female hair, as described in Song 4:1, signifies the *Shekhinah*, the feminine, immanent aspect of God. The erotic intimacy of this symbol is understood to be ritually expressed in the leather straps of the phylacteries wrapped around the arm, which entangle the worshipper in the "tresses" of divine presence (Zohar 1:14a).

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C Modern Judaism

Sima Zalberg

In Orthodox Judaism today, there are a number of biblical laws and distinctive practices that govern how hair is worn. Most of these practices are not observed by contemporary non-Orthodox Jews, and they constitute one of the most visible signs of Orthodox Judaism.

1. Orthodox Women

Most Orthodox women cover their hair after they are married, as part of a larger system of modest dress. Most Orthodox halakhists regard this as a biblical rule (*midde'oraita*), based on Num 5:18 (see *bKet* 72a). Support for the practice is also based on the rabbinic statement in *bBer* 24a, "A woman's hair is like her nakedness." Hair thus symbolizes sexuality, eroticism, and fertility.

The manner in which women cover their hair differs among Orthodox groups. Many "modern Orthodox" women actually do not cover their hair at all, and there is a lenient halakhic opinion that permits this. Some merely wear a symbolic hair band. Others wear a scarf or hat that permits some of their hair to be seen, and some cover all their hair with a scarf, hat, or wig, as Haredi women do. Among Haredim, although a woman's natural hair is never permitted to be visible, there are a variety of different customs. Women of some groups (e.g., Habad Hasidim and many yeshivah communities) generally wear wigs. In other groups (e.g., Belz and Satmar Hasidim), women typically wear a wig covered by a hat, or a wig covered with a scarf. Some groups specifically wear black scarves (e.g., Toldos Aharon and Toldos Avrohom Yitschok Hasidim).

In some Haredi groups, such as Satmar, Toldos Aharon, and Vizhnitz Hasidim, married women are expected to shave their heads before covering them with a wig or scarf. The shaving is usually done initially by the bride's mother, generally on the day after the wedding, but sometimes immediately before the wedding. The woman then typically shaves her own head once a month, just before she takes her ritual bath. Hair thus expresses identity and changes in identity among Orthodox women, particularly the change from an unmarried to a married woman.

Many modern scholars interpret these stringent norms as stemming from a fear of women, who are seen as threats to male virtue and spirituality. However, studies of the self-perception of Orthodox women show that they perceive many other aspects of the practices in addition to that one. Some

women feel pain and perceive the covering of their hair as marring their appearance. Other women affirm the religious value of modesty, and some attribute religious power (such as bringing closer the messianic redemption) to the act of covering their hair. Some women also see covering the hair within an alternative code of fashion and beauty, and as an expression of distinctive identity within an elite group.

2. Orthodox Men

Hair also symbolizes identity and changes of identity for Orthodox men. Most Orthodox men wear hats and skullcaps that do not cover their entire hair. Many Orthodox men wear a beard, to fulfill the commandment, “You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard” (Lev 19:27). The biblical prohibition is sometimes interpreted to forbid only shaving with a straight razor. Some authorities even permit the use of electric razors or depilatories. Nevertheless, many Orthodox men grow long beards.

Orthodox men generally keep their hair short; long hair is sometimes interpreted as a violation of the biblical prohibition against dressing as a woman (Deut 22:5). In fact, many Haredi men keep their hair practically shaven, except for their beards and sidelocks.

Haredi men, and particularly Hasidim, grow sidelocks (Heb. *pe’ot*, from Lev 19:27) that reach down to the bottom of their earlobes. To fulfill the same commandment from Leviticus “Modern Orthodox” men usually have very short sidelocks that are not noticeable. In the last twenty years, however, Israeli boys of the Orthodox nationalist religious groups have also begun wearing long *pe’ot*. Different Hasidic groups have specific customs for wearing *pe’ot*: curled, wrapped around the ears, tucked under a skullcap, or in other styles.

Many Orthodox Jews, especially Hasidim, also observe the custom of not cutting a boy’s hair until he is three years old. The first haircut is then performed in a ceremony called a *ḥalāqah* (or in Yiddish, *opshern*). In Israel, it is often done on Lag ba-Omer, often at the grave of Simeon bar Yoḥai in Meron. The *pe’ot* are left uncut, initiating the boy into that *mitsvah* as well.

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IV Christianity

A Greek and Latin Patristics

Michael Cameron

Early Christian writers drew widely on biblical laws and narratives about hair to instruct about Christian self-presentation to – and distinction from – the world, and about practices of the advanced spiritual life. These can be usefully approached according to the categories of literal and spiritual exegesis.

Literal readings on hair show how seriously early Christian thinkers took the biblical texts, even when only reinforcing cultural habits. Several Fathers invoke 1 Tim 2:9–10 and 1 Pet 3:3–4 to chide elaborate hair arrangement as inappropriate for Christian women (Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.11; Cyprian, *Hab. virg.* 8–9; John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 26.6). For Clement, women who dress their hair imitate the pagans; obsessing over visible appearances ignores Paul’s teaching that “what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal” (2 Cor 4:18) (*Paed.* 3.2). He criticizes the vanity of plucking hair, citing Matt 10:30, “the very hairs of your head are numbered”; one should pluck, he writes, not hairs but passions (*Paed.* 3.3; cf. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 30.6). Dying one’s hair not only rejects Sirach’s counsel to honor a gray head as a “crown of rich experience” (Sir 25:6); it also dishonors the Ancient of Days whom the prophet Daniel describes as having white hair like wool (Dan 7:9), and the teaching of Jesus that we cannot make even one hair white or black (Matt 5:36) (*Paed.* 3.3). Cyprian adds that dying one’s hair mocks the book of Revelation’s vision of Christ’s hoary white head (1:14); that act of deception violates the command to practice sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:7) (*Hab. virg.* 16).

Tertullian embellishes Deut 8:4’s reminder of God’s miraculous care for Israel in the wilderness with a Christian midrash that the wandering people’s hair and nails stopped growing; he seems to see this as a harbinger of future resurrection (*Res.* 58.6). Jerome echoes his imagery two centuries later (*Jo. Hier.* 32). Elsewhere Jerome uses the literal sense of Ezek 44:20 to argue for a priest’s close-cropped hair (*Comm. Ezech.* 13.44). Paulinus of Milan remarks that

it was no wonder that the exhumed martyr Nazarius was found intact, complete with hair and beard, in view of the Lord's promise, "not a hair of your head shall perish" (Luke 21:18) (*Vit. Ambrosii* 32). Augustine repeatedly invokes the same Luke 21 text to suggest the continuity between mortal and resurrected bodies (*Civ.* 22.12-21).

But the preeminent text about hair is 1 Cor 11:2-16, the instruction of Paul on women's veils that affirms the "teaching of nature" that long hair betokens female glory and male "disgrace." Tertullian (*Virg.* 7), Ambrose (*Ep.* 69.6-7), Jerome (*Ep.* 22.28), Epiphanius of Salamis (*Pan.* bks 2 and 3, *passim*), and John Chrysostom (*Hom.* 1 Cor 26.2) all read this as a commandment about hair length. Augustine argues the spiritual logistics of the command against certain Cynic-type monks who wore long hair as a spiritual sign, like Samson and Samuel (Num 6:5; Judg 13:5; 1 Sam 1:11). Long hair, he explains, has a changing role in salvation history. In prophetic times it was a "sacrament" that signified holiness, but was also a sort of protecting "veil" that shielded Israel from God's blazing glory, as Moses' veil did (Exod 34:33-35). The reason that Paul calls male long hair a "disgrace" is that in the time of the gospel, "the veil has been removed" (2 Cor 3:16) (*Op. mon.* 39-40; cf. *Ep.* 245.1).

Turning to spiritual interpretations, Origen comments that the goat hair given for the altar (Exod 35:23), being "a dead, bloodless, soulless form," signifies the worshiper's deadness to sin (*Hom. Exod.* 13.5). For John Chrysostom the modest gift of goat hair anticipates the tiny sum given by the widow whom Jesus praised (Luke 21:1-4) (*Hom. Heb.* 32.8). Origen reads the command that priests should cut their hair (Lev 14:9), and that Nazirites should let it grow (Num 6:5; 1 Sam 1:11), as spiritual direction about the "acts, words, and thoughts" that grow out of one's head. Sinful thoughts must be cut off, but good thoughts and deeds must be allowed to grow before the Lord, who counts them all as he counts all our hairs (Matt 10:30) (*Hom. Lev.* 8.4). Gregory the Great reads Ezek 44:20's command to restrain hair growth in a spiritual sense. Wayward thoughts grow unconsciously like hair; spiritual people constantly cut them back to prevent overgrowth (*Liber Regulae Pastoralis* 2.7). For Augustine, the deceit of an evil man is like a razor (Ps 52:2), but it merely cuts a believer's "hair," i.e. only superfluous things; the source of life is secure in the One who numbers all our hairs (Matt 10:30) and allows not a single hair to perish (Luke 21:18) (*Serm.* 62.14-15). Jerome quiets guilt over his attraction to pagan wisdom by the way he reads the command in Deut 21:10-13 that captive foreign women must be sheared before they become marriageable. By cutting off pagan thinking's errors of idolatry and lust, he claims, one can join it to Christian teaching (*Ep.* 70.2)

Also important is Luke's account of the penitent woman bathing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying them with her hair (Luke 7:38). Ambrose thinks she undid her hair as a sign of laying aside worldly pomp in order to seek pardon (*Paen.* 8.69). All hair is superfluous, like the growth of earthly riches; but if one uses it to feed and cleanse the poor, then wealth truly wipes the feet of Christ (*Ep.* 41.16). For Augustine also the woman's hair signifies the superfluous possessions that believers use to perform works of generosity and kindness (*Serm.* 99.13).

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B Medieval Times and Reformation Era

Jessica Cheetham

Hair represented an important locus of devotion in the Middle Ages, for both men and women, of all social classes. Female hair was a particularly potent symbol; it represented femininity and attractiveness (as demonstrated biblically in Song 4:1; 5:11, etc.) and was an asset to families wishing to make a suitable match for their daughters. As such, many holy women in this era were able to exploit this symbol to avoid marriage and to assert ownership over their bodies and sexuality. A good example of this is Catherine of Siena (1347-1380). When her parents were planning an advantageous marriage for her, Catherine cut off her long blond hair. She did this as a sign of her refusal to comply with her parents' wishes and to make herself physically undesirable (Raymond of Capua: col. 865C). Catherine of Siena's act of defiance is an inverse act of dedication to that demonstrated by the Nazirites in Num 6 where, as a sign of their sacred commitment, the men grew their hair long. Both these manipulations of the cultural symbolism of hair are designed to communicate "set-apartness" and a devotion to the sacred. Furthermore, just like women, medieval men also were expected to wear their hair in a particular manner. With increasing religious and cultural pressure for men to have short hair, men gradually fell into line with the biblical injunction from 1 Cor 11:4 instructing them to keep their hair short (Bartlett: 51-52).

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C Modern Europe and America

Steven M. Nolt

Practices stemming from 1 Cor 11:4-16 have included prohibitions on women cutting their hair or requirements that women wear a head covering or veil over their uncut hair. In some traditions, these practices are tied to notions of women's submission to God and to men; in other traditions the emphasis has been on plain appearance and customary dress.

Traditional European costume long included hats or bonnet for women, and until the French Revolution, headdress might be enforced with sumptuary law. Roman Catholic churches, until very recent times, required women to wear a hat or head covering during worship. The garb of women in religious orders typically included a coif and veil that obscured the hair completely.

In colonial North America bonnets were universal among women, but were rarely explicit expressions of religious values except among plain Quakers, Shakers, and (later) some Holiness groups. Among conservative Amish, Mennonites, Hutterites, and Brethren distinctive styles of women's head coverings have persisted to the present. In 2010, some 125,000 adult women members of these groups in North America wore head coverings of some kind.

During the early and mid-20th century Protestant Fundamentalist leaders denounced short hair for women. John R. Rice's widely-distributed booklet argued that women rebel against God when they cut their hair. By the early 21st century, few Fundamentalists advocated uncut hair for women, though some

traditionalist Holiness and Pentecostal churches did so.

Biblical references to men's hair have received relatively little comment. The mid-19th-century fashion for beards was not based on biblical reference. During the 1960s men who were part of the Christian youth counterculture, such as the Jesus People, justified their long hair by pointing to the examples of Jesus and John the Baptist.

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V Visual Arts

Katherine Marsengill

Hair has been significant to stories from both the HB/OT and the NT, and for men and women alike. In the HB/OT, there is the story of David's usurping son, Absalom, whose hair was caught by the limbs of an oak tree making it possible for Joab to kill him. The dramatic scene illuminated manuscripts and illustrated Bibles. The abundance of Absalom's hair is particularly striking in the image found in *opus sectile* on the floor of Siena's cathedral (13th cent.). Albert Weisgerber's *Absalom* (1914, Hamburger Kunsthalle) shows the figure from behind, hanging by his long white hair. Also from the HB/OT, images of Samson, whose power and strength derived from his hair, depict the Herculean figure with shoulder-length hair and beard. More popular have been the images of him and Delilah. Jan Steen painted the scene by giving Samson much longer hair than was the norm (1668, Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

Symbolic meaning for hair is different for women, and long tresses worn unbound and uncovered are traditionally and historically associated with young maidens and virgins. Thus, images of pure saints who died as virgins will show them with beautiful hair (e.g., Lucas Cranach the Elder, *St Catherine of Alexandria and St Barbara*, first half of the 16th cent., Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp), although this is less characteristic of Eastern Orthodox art, where, though youthful, the hair of such saints is frequently kept up or covered. Youthful beauty, including abundant hair, is a common attribute for female saints with the exception of a few. Mary of Egypt is characteristically – though not always – shown as an old, hoary saint, who has left her white hair uncut and even her body hair sometimes is shown grown long and furry (e.g., "Burial of Mary of Egypt," *Decretals* of Gregory IX with *glossa ordinaria*, 13th/14th cent., London, British Library MS Royal 10 E IV, fol. 288r). Saint Agnes, too, had hair that miraculously grew to her feet to cover her nakedness. Pietro Cavallini's mural fresco cycle of the life of St. Agnes includes the scene of her being led to the brothel, her hair protectively enclosing her body (1307-20, Santa Donnaregina Vecchia in Naples) and her iconic image (e.g., a 14th-cent. sculpture of St. Agnes [?], Collegiate Church of Écouis, Eure, France; see fig. 28). In most images of Mary Magdalene, her long hair serves as her identifying attribute and is indicative of her status as a former prostitute. Her sainthood rose in popularity in the Latin West when the story of her relics at Vézelay in Burgundy circulated during the 11th and 12th centuries (the subsequent invention of her relics followed in 1265, then refuted with a new discovery in 1279 in Provence), and she took the features of St. Agnes in her venerated portraits of the era (Maisch: 48). Her asceticism is certainly imparted by her covering her body with her hair, yet it is as much symbol of her former profession as a prostitute as her latter-day isolation as a hermit, for she is rarely shown old and sometimes her nudity is yet apparent (e.g., Dürer's woodcut of Mary Magdalene, ca. 1505; Titian's portrait of the Magdalene, 1531, Hermitage, St. Petersburg). Donatello famously sculpted an unusually unsexualized version of Mary Magdalene, with the haggard, emaciated appearance of an elder, female ascetic (1450s, Baptistery Museum, Florence). Images of her penitence also usually show her with her hair down, referring to her sins, since unbound hair in women signified easy virtue. Caravaggio's *Penitent Magdalene* depicts the saint as a contemporary courtesan with all the trappings of her status, her luxurious clothes, her pearls scattered around her as she sits with bent head, red hair cascading around her (ca. 1594-95, Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome).

Hermitic tradition tells us that hair is left unkempt and haggard, for example, in images of John the Baptist, not only pictured with his wild, long hair, but wearing a hair shirt or animal skin. The Baptist takes as his precedent the HB/OT image of Elijah, who also served as a type for John. Anchorites of the desert might be shown with long hair and beards, like Onuphrius and more rarely, Jerome and Anthony, who, although long bearded, usually are presented in visual art with their hair short. Despite the appearances of these desert monks, monastic orders tonsured the hair of monks and nuns in order to demonstrate the renunciation of the world. For men in Western Europe, tonsure meant shaving the pate, and this characteristic is prominently displayed in portraits of monastic saints like Francis of Assisi and Anthony of Padua. For women, tonsuring involved cutting hair. Thus, St. Francis cuts the glorious hair of St. Claire before she takes her orders as a nun (e.g., Paolo Veneziano's polyptych for her church in Venice, 1350, now in the Accademia, Venice).

In the NT there are two stories of the women wiping Jesus' feet with her hair. In Luke 7:37-50, during the feast in the house of Simon (also known as Jesus in the house of the Pharisees), a sinner woman washes Jesus' feet with her tears of repentance then wipes them dry with her hair and anoints them. The sinner's identity has been conflated with that of Mary Magdalene (e.g., Veronese, *Meal at the House of Simon*, c.1560, painted for the convent of San Nazaro and Celso at Verona, now in Galleria Sabauda, Turin). In John 11:2; 12:1-8, Lazarus' sister, Mary of Bethany, anoints Jesus' feet, then wipes them with her hair. Orthodox icons show Mary of Bethany with the jar, and her hair, though covered with a veil, is visibly long.

Images of the disciple, Andrew, traditionally show him with unkempt, windswept hair, indicating he was a fisherman (e.g., his image in mosaic on the apsidal arch, 6th cent., Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai).

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VI Film

Mary Ann Beavis

The biblical imagery of hair is multifaceted. It can signify health, vigor and beauty, youth or age, religious devotion, ritual purity, strength, betrayal, vanity and sensuality. The words to the theme song of the iconic cinema musical *Hair* (dir. Milos Forman, 1979, US) refer to

My toga made of blond

brilliantined, biblical hair

My hair like Jesus wore it

Hallelujah, I adore it

Hallelujah, Mary loved her son.

In *Jesus Christ Superstar* (dir. Norman Jewison, 1973, US), Judas sings his complaint that Jesus lets Mary Magdalene kiss him and stroke his hair, when the poor and starving need his attention: "They matter more than your feet and hair" (cf. John 12:1-8; Mark 14:3-9; Matt 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50).

The most famous hair-related biblical story to be made, and remade, in filmic form is *Samson and Delilah* (Judg 16:1-31), whose definitive iteration is the Cecil B. DeMille epic starring Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr (1949, US). Samson, whose uncut hair evidences his lifelong Nazirite vow (Num 6:1-21), can be subdued by the Philistines only after he reveals to Delilah that the secret of his strength is in his hair, which is subsequently shaved off as he sleeps (Judg 16:15-22). In the DeMille film, Samson's "seven locks" (Judg 16:19) are reduced to one, and his face is beardless; the 1996 made-for-TV version (*Samson and Delilah*, dir. Nicolas Roeg, DE/IT/US) portrays the hero with long, luxuriant tresses and a well-kept beard.

In the Australian film *Samson and Delilah* (dir. Warwick Thornton, 2009, AU), the two leads are teenage Aboriginal runaways, and Delilah is the stronger of the two. An homage to the biblical story occurs when Samson cuts his hair off as a sign of respect for the injured Delilah, imitating the girl's act of mourning for her grandmother earlier in the film. All the major characters in the comedy *American Hustle* (dir. David O. Russell, 2013, US) sport striking hairdos, especially the men: the cop Richie wears a tightly curled perm; the crooked mayor, Carmine Polito, has a pompadour. The film begins with a scene of the con man, Irving Rosenfeld, painstakingly arranging his toupée; in another scene, his female accomplice Sydney warns Richie that Irving does not like his hair touched. A nightclub scene accompanied by the Tom Jones hit "Delilah" underscores the biblical connection.

A biblical story with a scene reminiscent of the hair-cutting episode in the Samson story is the tale of Judith and Holofernes, but the gender roles are reversed: the woman is an Israelite hero, and the man is an Assyrian general about to invade Israel. In the biblical story, Judith is clever and resolute in her plan to decapitate Holofernes. In the silent *Judith of Bethulia* (dir. D. W. Griffith, 1914, US), rather than grasping the unconscious general's hair and cutting off his head (Jdt 13:7-8), the trembling Judith tenderly caresses his beard, and the execution discreetly takes place off-camera.

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Figures



Fig. 28 Saint Agnes (?) covered by her hair: statue (14th cent.), Collégiale Notre-Dame, Ecois/France ©akg-images/Erich Lessing.

See also

- Baldness
- Beard
- Headdress
- Shaving

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