

# THE MEANING OF κεφαλή (“HEAD”): AN EVALUATION OF NEW EVIDENCE, REAL AND ALLEGED<sup>1</sup>

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The purpose of this article is to examine recent treatments of the meaning of the word κεφαλή (“head”) as it pertains to certain passages in the New Testament,<sup>2</sup> focusing especially on new evidence cited by Catherine Kroeger in her article “Head” in the widely used *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*.<sup>3</sup> Concerns will be raised about the level of care and accuracy with which evidence has been quoted in this reference book. In addition, some new patristic evidence on κεφαλή will be presented. Finally, the article will also cite new evaluations of the entry on κεφαλή in the Liddell-Scott lexicon from the editor of the *Supplement* to this lexicon and from another lexicographer who worked on this *Supplement*.

<sup>1</sup>This chapter is identical to the article by the same title that I published in *JETS* 44/1 (March 2001), 25-65, with the exception of the added interaction with Anthony Thiselton’s recent commentary on 1 Corinthians in section VIII below (pp. 194-199).

<sup>2</sup>The meaning of κεφαλή has attracted much interest because of its use in Ephesians 5:23, “The husband is the *head* (κεφαλή) of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church,” and in 1 Corinthians 11:3, “the *head* of every man is Christ, the *head* of a wife is her husband, and the *head* of Christ is God.” I previously wrote about the meaning of κεφαλή in 1985 and 1990: Wayne Grudem, “Does *kephalē* (“Head”) Mean “Source” or “Authority over” in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples” (*Trinity Journal* 6 NS [1985], 38-59), and then, answering objections and arguing this in more detail, “The Meaning of *kephalē*: A Response to Recent Studies” (*Trinity Journal* 11 NS [1990], 3-72; reprinted as an appendix to *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991], 425-468). The 1990 article has references to several other studies of this word, and significant studies published after 1990 are mentioned near the end of this present article.

<sup>3</sup>Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1993), 375-377.

## I. THE STRIKING QUOTATION FROM CHRYSOSTOM

When Dr. Kroeger's article appeared in 1993, it offered citations of a number of new references for the term κεφαλή and argued from these that κεφαλή primarily meant "source," not "authority over," and that it had that meaning not only at the time of the New Testament but also in the preceding classical period and in the subsequent patristic period in Greek literature. The most striking quotation in Dr. Kroeger's article was a statement from John Chrysostom (A.D. 344/354-407) that, if accurate, would appear to settle any dispute over whether κεφαλή meant "source" or "authority over," at least in the Christian world of the fourth century. Kroeger writes:

In view of Scripture ascribing coequality of Christ with the Father (Jn. 1:1-3; 10:30; 14:9, 11; 16:15; 17:11, 21), John Chrysostom declared that only a heretic would understand Paul's use of "head" to mean "chief" or "authority over." Rather one should understand the term as implying "absolute oneness and cause and primal source" (PG 61.214, 216). (p. 377)

But is this what Chrysostom said? Kroeger claims (1) that Chrysostom is making a statement about the meaning of κεφαλή, (2) that Chrysostom denies that κεφαλή can mean "chief" or "authority over," and (3) that Chrysostom says that only a heretic would understand the word in that way.

Here is the quotation from Chrysostom:

"But the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Here the heretics rush upon us with a certain declaration of inferiority, which out of these words they contrive against the Son. But they stumble against themselves. For if "the man be the head of the woman," and the head be of the same substance with the body, and "the head of Christ is God," the Son is of the same substance with the Father.<sup>4</sup> (Κεφαλή δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος· κεφαλή δὲ Χριστοῦ ὁ Θεός. Ἐνταῦθα ἐπιπηδῶσιν ἡμῖν οἱ αἰρετικοὶ

<sup>4</sup>Chrysostom, Homily 26 on 1 Corinthians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 12, p. 150.) The Greek text is from TLG Work 156, 61.214.18 to 61.214.23.

Where available, English quotations in this article have been taken from the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series (ANF) and the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* series (NPNF) (reprint edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969). Where no English translation was available, the English translations are mine, as indicated in each case. Greek citations have been taken from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), Disk E, except where no TLG reference is given, in which case I have cited the source of the Greek citation at each point.

ἐλάττωσίν τινα ἐκ των εἰρημένων ἐπινοοῦντες τῷ Υἱῷ· ἀλλ’  
ἐαυτοῖς περιπίπτουσιν. Εἰ γὰρ κεφαλή γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ,  
ὁμοούσιος δὲ ἡ κεφαλή τῷ σώματι, κεφαλή δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
ὁ Θεὸς, ὁμοούσιος ὁ Υἱὸς τῷ Πατρὶ.)

This is not a statement about the meaning of κεφαλή. Chrysostom is opposing the views of the Arians, who denied the deity of Christ. They did this by pointing to the statement, “the head of Christ is God” (in 1 Cor. 11:3) and saying that therefore the Son is a lesser being, not fully divine and not equal to the Father in essence. Chrysostom counters their claim, but in doing so he does not say anything about the meaning of the word κεφαλή or say that only a “heretic” would take it to mean “chief” or “authority over” as Kroeger claims. Rather, from the idea that a head is “of the same substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the body,” he affirms that the Son is “of the same substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father.” There is no statement here saying that he disagrees with the Arians over the meaning of κεφαλή.

What comes next? In the following lines, Chrysostom says the “heretics” will counter by saying that the Son is subject to the Father and is therefore a lesser being:

“Nay,” say they, “it is not His being of another substance which we intend to show from hence, but that He is under subjection.”  
(‘Ἄλλ’ οὐ τὸ ἕτεροούσιον ἐντεῦθεν ἀποδείξαι βουλόμεθα,  
ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἄρχεται, φησί.)<sup>5</sup>

If Chrysostom had ever wanted to say that “head” could not mean “one in authority,” here was the perfect opportunity. He could have answered these “heretics” by saying, as Dr. Kroeger apparently would like him to say, that κεφαλή did not mean “one in authority” and that “only a heretic” would understand Paul’s use of “head” to mean “chief” or “authority over.” But he does not say this at all. Rather, he assumes that κεφαλή *does* mean “authority over,” because he *agrees* that the Son is obedient to the Father, and then he goes on to show that His obedience is not servile, like a slave, but free, like that of a wife who is equal in honor. Here are his words:

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., lines 23-25.

For what if the wife be under subjection (ὑποτάσσω) to us? It is as a wife, as free, as equal in honor. And the Son also, though He did become obedient to the Father, it was as the Son of God, it was as God. For as the obedience of the Son to the Father is greater than we find in men towards the authors of their being, so also his liberty is greater . . . we ought to admire the Father also, that He begat such a son, not as a slave under command, but as free, yielding obedience and giving counsel. For the counselor is no slave. . . . For with us indeed the woman is reasonably subjected (ὑποτάσσω) to the man.<sup>6</sup>

So is there any statement here about the meaning of κεφαλή? No, except the implication in the context that the Father is the “head” of the Son, and the Son is obedient to the Father. Chrysostom here does not deny that “head” means “one in authority” but assumes that “head” *does* mean this and explains what kind of authority that is with respect to the husband and with respect to God the Father.

Does Chrysostom differ with “the heretics” over the meaning of κεφαλή? No, he agrees with them. But they were saying that “the *head* of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3) implied that the Son was a lesser being than the Father, that He was not equal in deity. Chrysostom says that the Son is *equal* in deity and is *also subject* to the Father.

Interestingly, “the heretics” in this passage were reasoning in the same way that egalitarians such as Dr. Kroeger reason today—they were saying that subordination to authority *necessarily implies* inferiority in a person’s very being. They were saying that it is impossible for the Son to be equal to the Father in being (that is, equal in deity) and also subordinate in role. They used this reasoning as an argument to deny the deity of the Son. Egalitarians today use it as an argument to deny the unique, eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. But in both cases the fundamental assumption is that the Son cannot be *both* equal in deity and subordinate in role.

Chrysostom replies, however, that *both* are true. The Son is *equal* in deity (he, the “body,” is ὁμοούσιος, of the same substance, as the “head”), and He also is *subordinate* to the authority of the

<sup>6</sup>English translation from NPNF, Series 1, Vol. 12, p. 150. Greek text in TLG, Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Work 156, 61.214.56 to 61.215.18.

head, and yet His submission is not forced (as a slave) but is voluntary, as a Son, and is similar to the submission of a wife to her husband.

Is there in this entire context any statement by Chrysostom that only heretics understand κεφαλή to mean “chief” or “authority over”? No. The quotation does not exist.<sup>7</sup> In this entire section Chrysostom himself understands κεφαλή to mean “chief”<sup>8</sup> or “authority over.”<sup>9</sup>

## II. OTHER EVIDENCE FROM CHRYSOSTOM ON THE MEANING OF κεφαλή (“HEAD”)

Further evidence that Chrysostom did not in fact use κεφαλή to mean “source” and did not say that only heretics would use it to mean “authority over” is seen in the way he uses κεφαλή to mean “authority over” or “ruler” in the following examples:

1. *Homily 26 on 1 Corinthians* (NPNF series 1, Vol. 12, p. 156; TLG Work 156, 61.222.49 to 61.222.54): *Husband as head and ruler.*

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<sup>7</sup>I thought perhaps this reference in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* was a mistake. So I wrote to Dr. Kroeger saying that I could not find her quotation in that section of Chrysostom. She replied by sending me a printout (in Greek) of the exact passage that I cited at the beginning of this section. But the statement about only heretics using “head” to mean “chief” or “authority over” simply is not there. Chrysostom in fact said no such thing.

<sup>8</sup>I myself would prefer not to translate κεφαλή as “chief,” which too narrowly implies tribal relationships, but I am here using Kroeger’s terminology.

<sup>9</sup>It would have been nearly impossible for most readers of *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* to discover that the striking quotation from Chrysostom did not exist. The only indication of the source of the quotation that Dr. Kroeger gave was “PG 61.214.” This indicates a location in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, which took a considerable amount of time to locate and coordinate with an existing English translation (the standard English translation has a different numbering system). It is doubtful whether even 1 percent of the readers of *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* would have enough ability to read patristic Greek to be able to find and understand this paragraph from Chrysostom. (Only very specialized research libraries have a complete set of the Migne collection of Greek and Latin texts of the writings of the church fathers. The set was published by Jacques Paul Migne in France in the mid-nineteenth century. *Patrologia Latina* (PL) was published in 221 volumes in Latin (1844–1864), and *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) was published in 162 volumes in Greek with Latin translation (1857–1866).)

Of course, if no published English translation had existed, citing Migne alone would have been the only thing that could be done. But this material from Chrysostom exists in English translation in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* series, which is widely available (the whole set is now in the public domain and is frequently reprinted). It is not clear to me why Dr. Kroeger did not give the reference for the English translation of this passage. If the citation had been given as “Chrysostom, *Homily 26 on 1 Corinthians* (NPNF 1:12, 150); Greek text in PG 61.214,” it would have taken only a few minutes for a reader to locate it in almost any library. In a reference work intended for a general as well as an academic audience (as this volume is), it would seem appropriate to cite references in a way that enables others to look them up and evaluate them. Several other references in the article were much more difficult to locate than this one (see below).

Consider nevertheless that she is a woman, the weaker vessel, whereas *thou art a man. For therefore wert thou ordained to be ruler; and wert assigned to her in place of a head*<sup>10</sup> (Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ ἄρχων ἐχειροτονήθης, καὶ ἐν τάξει κεφαλῆς ἐδόθης), that thou mightest bear with the weakness of her that is set under thee. Make then thy rule glorious. And glorious it will be when the subject of it meets with no dishonor from thee.

2. *Homily 5 on 1—2 Thessalonians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 397; TLG Work 163, 62.499.34 to 62.500.14): Husband as head to rule the rest of the body.*

For how is it not absurd, in other things to think thyself worthy of the preeminence, and *to occupy the place of the head* (τὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς χώραν ἐπέχειν), but in teaching to quit thy station. The ruler ought not to excel the ruled in honors, so much as in virtues. For this is the duty of a ruler, for the other is the part of the ruled, but this is the achievement of the ruler himself. If thou enjoyest much honor, it is nothing to thee, for thou receivedst it from others. If thou shinest in much virtue, this is all thine own.

*Thou art the head of the woman, let then the head regulate the rest of the body* (Κεφαλή τῆς γυναικὸς εἶ· οὐκοῦν ῥυθμιζέτω τὸ σῶμα τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ κεφαλῇ). Dost thou not see that it is not so much above the rest of the body in situation, as in forethought, directing like a steersman the whole of it? For in the head are the eyes both of the body, and of the soul. Hence flows to them both the faculty of seeing, and the power of directing. *And the rest of the body is appointed for service, but this is set to command* (Καὶ τὸ μὲν λοιπὸν τάττεται εἰς διακονίαν, αὐτὴ δὲ εἰς τὸ ἐπιτάττειν κέϊται). All the senses have thence their origin and their source (Πᾶσαι αἱ αἰσθήσεις ἐκέϊθεν ἔχουσι τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὴν πηγὴν).<sup>11</sup> Thence are sent

<sup>10</sup>In this and several subsequent citations from ancient literature, I have added italics to enable readers to see more quickly the relevant section of the quotation.

Many of these patristic quotes contain expressions about the husband being “ruler” over his wife. I wish to make it clear that I am citing but not endorsing these statements. While many statements in the church fathers exhibit wonderful respect for women, at other points their language fails to show full understanding of the biblical teaching of men’s and women’s equality in value before God. Thus, rather than seeing the husband’s authority as exhibiting itself in godly, loving leadership, they speak in harsher terms of “ruling” over one’s wife. But my goal in this article is to report their language accurately, not to evaluate it.

<sup>11</sup>It is significant here that when Chrysostom does want to speak of a “source,” he does not use the word κεφαλή, “head,” nor does he use the term ἀρχή, “beginning, origin,” but he rather uses the ordinary Greek word for “source,” namely, πηγὴ. If Chrysostom or any other writer had wanted to say clearly, “head, which is source,” he could easily have used πηγὴ to do so. But I did not find any place in Chrysostom or any other author where κεφαλή is defined as meaning πηγὴ, “source.”

forth the organs of speech, the power of seeing, and of smelling, and all touch. For thence is derived the root of the nerves and of the bones. Seest thou not that it is superior in forethought more than in honor? So let us rule the women; let us surpass them, not by seeking greater honor from them, but by their being more benefited by us.

3. *Homily 3 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 62; TLG Work 159, 62.26.22 to 62.26.46): Christ as head of the body, ruling over it, and head of all things.*

“Which is His Body.” In order then that when you hear of the *Head* you may not conceive the notion of *supremacy* (ἀρχή)<sup>12</sup> only, but also of consolidation, and that you may behold Him not as *supreme Ruler* only, but as *Head of a body*. “The fulness of Him that filleth all in all” he says. . . . Let us reverence our *Head*, let us reflect of what a *Head* we are the *body*, — a *Head, to whom all things are put in subjection* (ἢ πάντα ὑποτέτακται).

4. *Homily 13 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 116; TLG Work 159, 62.99.22 to 62.99.29): Husbands as head ordained to rule over wives.*

But now it is the very contrary; women outstrip and eclipse us [that is, in virtue]. How contemptible! What a shame is this! *We hold the place of the head*, and are surpassed by the *body*. *We are ordained to rule over them*; not merely that we may rule, but that we may rule in goodness also (Ἄρχειν αὐτῶν ἐτάχθημεν, οὐχ ἵνα μόνον ἄρχωμεν, ἀλλ’ ἵνα καὶ ἐν ἀρετῇ ἄρχωμεν); for he that ruleth, ought especially to rule in this respect, by excelling in virtue; whereas if he is surpassed, he is no longer ruler.

5. *Homily 20 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 144; TLG Work 159, 62.136.33 to 62.136.51): Husband as head with authority; wife as body with submission.*

Let us take as our fundamental position then, that *the husband occupies the place of the “head,” and the wife the place of the “body.”* Ver. 23, 24. Then, he proceeds with arguments and says that “the husband

<sup>12</sup>Note here the word ἀρχή used in Chrysostom not to mean “source” but “supremacy,” understood by the NPNF translator to imply rulership, since he translates the cognate term ἄρχων (ἄρχοντα) as “supreme Ruler” in the parallel expression in the next clause.

is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, being Himself the Saviour of the body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.” Then after saying, “The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is of the Church,” he further adds, “and He is the Saviour of the body.” For indeed the head is the saving health of the body. He had already laid down beforehand for man and wife, the ground and provision of their love, *assigning to each their proper place, to the one that of authority and forethought, to the other that of submission* (ἐκάστω τὴν προσήκουσαν ἀπονέμων χώραν, τοῦτω μὲν τὴν ἀρχικὴν καὶ προνοητικὴν, ἐκέλευε δὲ τὴν ὑποτακτικὴν). As then “the Church,” that is, both husbands and wives, “is subject unto Christ, so also ye wives submit yourselves to your husbands, as unto God.”

6. *Homily 20 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, pp. 146-147; TLG Work 159, 62.140.51 to 62.141.13): Wife as body is subject to husband as head.*

*The wife is a second authority* (Ἀρχὴ δευτέρα ἐστὶν ἡ γυνή);<sup>13</sup> let not her then demand equality, for *she is under the head*; nor let him despise her as being in subjection, for she is the body; and if the head despise the body, it will itself also perish. But let him bring in love on his part as a counterpoise to obedience on her part. . . . Hence *he places the one in subjection, and the other in authority, that there may be peace; for where there is equal authority there can never be peace*; neither where a house is a democracy, nor where all are rulers; but the *ruling power*<sup>14</sup> must of necessity be one. And this is universally the case with matters referring to the body, inasmuch as when men are spiritual, there will be peace.

7. *Homily 20 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 149; Greek portion in TLG Work 159, 62.144.45 to 62.144.47): Wife as body is to obey the husband as head.*

Neither let a wife say to her husband, “Unmanly coward that thou art, full of sluggishness and dullness, and fast asleep! here is such a one, a low man, and of low parentage, who runs his risks, and

<sup>13</sup>Note here the use of the term ἀρχή in Chrysostom to mean “authority, person in authority,” not “source.” With respect to governance of the household, Chrysostom says the wife is a second authority, under the authority of her husband.

<sup>14</sup>Here also Chrysostom uses ἀρχή in the sense of “ruling power, authority.”



makes his voyages, and has made a good fortune; and his wife wears her jewels, and goes out with her pair of milk-white mules; she rides about everywhere, she has troops of slaves, and a swarm of eunuchs, but thou hast cowered down and livest to no purpose.” Let not a wife say these things, nor anything like them. *For she is the body, not to dictate to the head, but to submit herself and obey* (σῶμα γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐχ ἵνα διατάττη τῇ κεφαλῇ, ἀλλ’ ἵνα πείθῃται καὶ ὑπακούῃ).

8. *Homily 6 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 78; TLG Work 159, 62.47.55 to 62.47.59): Church rulers as head of church.* In this passage, the “rulers” in the church are called the “head” of the church.

(for hear what he says writing to Timothy, (I Tim. 5:20) “Them that sin, reprove in the sight of all;”) it is that the *rulers* are in a sickly state; for if the *head* (κεφαλή) be not sound, how can the rest of the body maintain its vigor? But mark how great is the present disorder.

9. *Homily 15 on Ephesians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, p. 124; Greek portion in TLG Work 159, 62.110.21 to 62.110.25): A woman as head of her maidservant.* This is the only passage I found in Chrysostom—in fact, the only passage I have ever seen—where a woman is called the “head.” This instance gives strong confirmation to the meaning “authority over, ruler,” for here Chrysostom says that a woman is “head” of her maidservant, over whom she has authority.

“But,” say ye, “the whole tribe of slaves is intolerable if it meet with indulgence.” True, I know it myself. But then, as I was saying, correct them in some other way, not by the scourge only, and by terror, but even by flattering them, and by acts of kindness. If she is a believer, she is thy sister. Consider that thou art her mistress, and that she ministers unto thee. If she be intemperate, cut off the occasions of drunkenness; call thy husband, and admonish her. . . . Yea, be she drunkard, or railer, or gossip, or evil-eyed, or extravagant, and a squanderer of thy substance, thou hast her for the partner of thy life. Train and restrain her. Necessity is upon thee. *It is for this thou art the head. Regulate her therefore, do thy own part* (διὰ τοῦτο κεφαλή εἶ σύ. Οὐκοῦν ῥύθμιζε, τὸ σαυτοῦ ποίει). Yea, and if she remain incorrigible,

yea, though she steal, take care of thy goods, and do not punish her so much.

10. *The claim that ἀρχή means “source” in Chrysostom’s Homily 26 on 1 Corinthians (NPNF series 1, Vol. 12, p. 151; TLG Work 156, 61.216.1 to 61.216.10).*

There is one more sentence to consider in Kroeger’s claims about Chrysostom. Here again is the quotation from *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* with which we began:

In view of Scripture ascribing coequality of Christ with the Father (Jn. 1:1-3; 10:30; 14:9, 11; 16:15; 17:11, 21), John Chrysostom declared that only a heretic would understand Paul’s use of “head” to mean “chief” or “authority over.” Rather one should understand the term as implying “absolute oneness and cause and primal source” (PG 61.214, 216).<sup>15</sup>

In the last sentence, Kroeger claims that Chrysostom said we should understand κεφαλή as implying “absolute oneness and cause and primal source.” She bases this idea on the second reference, PG 61.216, which reads as follows in the NPNF translation:

Christ is called “the Head of the Church” . . . We should . . . accept the notion of a perfect union and the *first principle*, and not even these ideas absolutely, but here also we must form a notion . . . of that which is too high for us and suitable to the Godhead: for both the union is surer and the beginning more honorable. (NPNF Series 1, Vol. 12, p. 151)

κεφαλή τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὁ Χριστός· . . . Ἀφεῖναι μὲν ταῦτα ἃ εἶπον, λαβεῖν δὲ ἔνωσιν ἀκριβῆ, [καὶ αἰτίαν] καὶ ἀρχὴν τὴν πρώτην· καὶ οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἀπλῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὸ μείζον οἴκοθεν ἐπινοεῖν καὶ Θεῷ πρόπεον· καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἔνωσις ἀσφαλεστέρα, καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τιμιωτέρα.<sup>16</sup>

The expression that the NPNF translator rendered “perfect union” Kroeger translated “absolute oneness,” which is similar in meaning. Next Kroeger says “and cause,” which accurately repre-

<sup>15</sup>Kroeger, “Head,” 377.

<sup>16</sup>TLG, Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Work 156, 61.216.1 to 61.216.10. I have added the brackets to show the textual variant that is not translated by the NPNF translator.

sents the words καὶ αἰτίαν, a textual variant that was not translated in the NPNF edition. But then where did she get the phrase “and primal source”? This was her translation of καὶ ἀρχὴν τὴν πρώτην, which was translated “first principle” in the NPNF translation (with no idea of “source”). Later in the same sentence the NPNF translation renders the word ἀρχή as “beginning,” and the context shows that this refers back to the same word earlier in the sentence.

What Kroeger has done here (as elsewhere) is take one possible sense of ἀρχή—namely, the sense “source”—and not tell her readers that other senses of ἀρχή are possible. Nor has she mentioned that the commonly used English translation in the NPNF series translates this example not as “source” but as “principle” and then “beginning.”

It is true that Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* lists “origin, source” as one of several possible senses for ἀρχή.<sup>17</sup> But the meanings “beginning,” “principle,” “foundation,” “cause,” “First Cause,” and “Creator” are also listed, as well as “rule, authority,” “rulers, magistrates,” “ecclesiastical authority,” and “spiritual powers.”<sup>18</sup>

It is difficult to understand why Kroeger took *one possible sense* of ἀρχή, one that the lexicons do not specifically use to apply to Christ, and did not tell the reader that this was a disputed translation unique to herself. Her writing sounds as if Chrysostom had defined κεφαλή as “source,” whereas he had only used the term ἀρχή to explain how the head-body metaphor could apply both to the Father and the Son, and also to Christ and the church. He said it applied in a sense “suitable to the Godhead,” in which the metaphor implied both the “perfect union” between the Father and Son and also that the Father is the

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<sup>17</sup>P. 234. Note here, however, that we are now talking about ἀρχή, not about κεφαλή, for which the meaning “source” is not given in Lampe. As commonly happens with two different words, some of the senses of ἀρχή are shared with κεφαλή, and some are not.

An example from English may clarify this. I might say, “George Washington was the first head (that is, the first ruler) of the United States.” Here “ruler” means “one who governs.” But the term “ruler” has another meaning in American English, namely, “a straight-edged strip, as of wood or metal, for drawing straight lines and measuring lengths.” The word “head” does not share that sense of “ruler” (I would not say, “I measured the margins of the page with my wooden head”). Similarly, the word “head” refers to a part of the human body, and the word “ruler” does not share that sense (I would not say, “I bumped my ruler on the door this morning”).

Kroeger is making a methodological error to think that she can import all the senses of ἀρχή into the meaning of κεφαλή. Those specific meanings that she claims need first to be demonstrated for κεφαλή with clear evidence from lexicons and supported by persuasive citations from ancient literature where such meanings are required.

<sup>18</sup>Lampe, 234-236.

“first principle” in the Trinity.<sup>19</sup> Chrysostom did not say that the Father was the “primal source” of the Son, and if he had said so he could be accused of Arianism, the heresy that said the Son was created by the Father. As with many other examples of Chrysostom’s use of κεφαλή, no example of the metaphor “head” meaning “source” can be found here.

#### 11. *Conclusion on Chrysostom’s use of κεφαλή.*

Chrysostom uses κεφαλή to say that one person is the “head” of another in at least six different relationships: (1) God is the “head” of Christ; (2) Christ is the “head” of the church; (3) the husband is the “head” of the wife; (4) Christ is the “head” of all things; (5) church leaders are the “head” of the church; and (6) a woman is the “head” of her maidservant. In all six cases he uses language of rulership and authority to explain the role of the “head” and uses language of submission and obedience to describe the role of the “body.”<sup>20</sup> Far from claiming that “only a heretic” would use κεφαλή to mean “authority over,” Chrysostom repeatedly uses it that way himself.

I admit, of course, that fourth-century usage of a word by Chrysostom does not prove that word had the same sense in the first century; so this is not conclusive evidence for New Testament meanings. But since Dr. Kroeger appealed to patristic usage to argue for “source,” it seemed appropriate to investigate this patristic evidence directly. This material is certainly of some value for New Testament studies, because the meanings of many words continued to be understood quite precisely by the church fathers, especially by those whose first language was Greek. If their date is clearly indicated, these new examples of κεφαλή in the sense “authority over” may be added to the more than forty examples cited in my 1990 article,<sup>21</sup> and they do show

<sup>19</sup>The meaning “authority” is also legitimate for ἀρχή; so this passage could also be translated, “the notion of a perfect union, and the *first authority*.” In fact, in light of Chrysostom’s calling the wife a “second authority” elsewhere (see citation 6 above from his “Homily 20 on Ephesians,” for example), the meaning “first authority” would be appropriate here, and the parallel would be that the Son is a “second authority” after the Father. Moreover, this is in the same sermon as the very first quotation from Chrysostom that I listed in this article (NPNF 1:12, p. 150; TLG 156, 61.214), where he sees the husband’s role as “head” implying that the wife is “reasonably subjected” to him, and where he sees the Father’s role as “head” as one in which the Son freely yields obedience to him.

<sup>20</sup>This usage is so frequent in the passages I examined in Chrysostom, and receives so much emphasis, that I expect further examples could be found if one were to do an exhaustive examination of all his uses of κεφαλή, which I did not attempt.

<sup>21</sup>Grudem, “Meaning of *kephalē*” (see footnote 1 above).

that the sense “authority over” continued to attach to κεφαλή at least until the end of the fourth century. But they also show an absence of the meaning “source” in this one church father, for Chrysostom does not use κεφαλή to mean “source” in any of the texts I found.

What then shall we make of Kroeger’s statement that “John Chrysostom declared that only a heretic would understand Paul’s use of ‘head’ to mean ‘chief’ or ‘authority over’”? It is simply false.

### III. KROEGER’S CITATIONS FROM OTHER CHURCH FATHERS

1. *Nine other patristic references.* Chrysostom is not the only church father whom Kroeger cites. In attempting to establish that the sense “chief” or “master” was “rarely” the sense “of the Greek *kephalē* in NT times,” she writes:

The contemporary desire to find in 1 Corinthians 11:3 a basis for the subordination of the Son to the Father has ancient roots. In response to such subordinationism, church fathers argued vehemently that for Paul *head* had meant “source.” Athanasius (*Syn. Armin.* 26.3.35; *Anathema* 26. Migne PG 26, 740B), Cyril of Alexandria (*De Recte Fide ad Pulch.* 2.3, 268; *De Recte Fide ad Arcadium* 1.1.5.5(2).63.), Basil (PG 30.80.23), Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Ecl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3; 2.7.1) and even Eusebius, *Ecl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3; 2.7.1) were quick to recognize the danger of an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 which could place Christ in a subordinate position relative to the Father.<sup>22</sup>

The first thing to note about this statement is the inaccurate equation of “the subordination of the Son to the Father” with “subordinationism” (which, in this context, Kroeger uses as a reference to a heresy the church rejected). The heresy commonly called “subordinationism” (emphasis added) is a denial that Christ is fully divine, a denial that He is “of the same substance” as the Father. The Arians whom Chrysostom was opposing in the citations quoted above would hold to subordinationism. But this is not the same as to say that 1 Corinthians 11:3 teaches the “subordination of the Son to the Father,” for that language is an orthodox description of how the Son relates to the Father—He is *subject* to the Father, who creates the world *through* Him and sends Him into the world to die for our sins. To say that the Son is *subject* to the Father,

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<sup>22</sup>Kroeger, “Head,” 377.

or that He is *subordinate* in His relationship to the Father, has been orthodox teaching according to Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant theology through the whole history of the church at least since the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, and Kroeger is simply mistaken to apply the name of the heresy “subordinationism” to it. But to say that the Son is not fully divine and thus to deny the deity of Christ would be subordinationism, and that the early fathers do not do.<sup>23</sup>

We can now examine these texts to see if they actually establish the idea that “church fathers argued vehemently that for Paul *head* had meant ‘source,’” and if they show that these church fathers “were quick to recognize the danger” of understanding 1 Corinthians 11:3 to mean that Christ has a “subordinate position relative to the Father.” The texts are given by Kroeger as follows:

<sup>23</sup>Historian Philip Schaff, though he uses the term “subordinationism” in two senses, directly contradicts Kroeger’s statement when he says, “The Nicene fathers still teach, like their predecessors, a certain *subordinationism*, which seems to conflict with the doctrine of consubstantiality. But we must distinguish between a subordinationism of essence (*οὐσία*) and a *subordinationism of hypostasis, of order and dignity*. The former was denied, the latter affirmed.” *History of the Christian Church* (3rd edition; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971-72, reprinted from 1910 edition), Vol. 3, 680-681.

Several evangelical theologians speak of the subordination of the Son to the Father. For example, Charles Hodge says, “Notwithstanding that the Father, Son, and Spirit are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory, it is no less true, according to the Scriptures, (a) That the Father is first, the Son second, and the Spirit third. (b.) The Son is of the Father (*ἐκ θεοῦ, the λόγος, εἰκὼν, ἀπαύγασμα τοῦ θεοῦ*); and the Spirit is of the Father and of the Son. (c.) The Father sends, and the Father and Son send the Spirit. (d.) The Father operates through the Son, and the Father and Son operate through the Spirit. *The converse of these statements is never found. The Son is never said to send the Father, nor to operate through Him; nor is the Spirit ever said to send the Father, or the Son, or to operate through Them.* The facts contained in this paragraph are summed up in the proposition: *In the Holy Trinity there is a subordination of the Persons as to the mode of subsistence and operation.*” Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (three volumes; reprint edition; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970; first published 1871-73), Vol. 1, 444-445. (Italics for emphasis added in this and the other quotations in this footnote.)

Hodge continues later: “On this subject the Nicene doctrine includes, —1. The principle of the *subordination of the Son to the Father, and of the Spirit to the Father and the Son. But this subordination does not imply inferiority*” (*ibid.*, 460). “The creeds [Nicea and Constantinople] are nothing more than a well-ordered arrangement of the facts of Scripture which concern the doctrine of the Trinity. They assert the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit; their mutual relation as expressed by those terms; their absolute unity as to substance or essence, and their consequent perfect equality; and *the subordination of the Son to the Father, and of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, as to the mode of subsistence and operation. These are Scriptural facts to which the creeds in question add nothing; and it is in this sense they have been accepted by the Church universal*” (*ibid.*, 462).

See also B. B. Warfield: “There is, of course, no question that in ‘modes of operation,’ . . . *the principle of subordination is clearly expressed*” (*Works*, Vol. 2 [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991; reprint of 1929 edition], 165); similarly, A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 342, with references to other writers; also Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4th edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939), 88-89.

These statements, together with the patristic evidence cited in the following material, indicate that Kroeger’s claim that church fathers denied the subordination of the Son to the Father is incorrect.

1. Athanasius, *Syn. Armin.* 26.3.35
2. Athanasius, *Anathema* 26, MPG 26, 740B
3. Cyril of Alexandria, *De Recte Fide ad Pulch.* 2.3, 268.
4. Cyril of Alexandria, *De Recte Fide ad Arcadium* 1.1.5.5(2).63.
5. Basil, PG 30.80.23
6. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Eccl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3
7. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Eccl. Theol.* 2.7.1
8. Eusebius, *Eccl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3
9. Eusebius, *Eccl. Theol.* 2.7.1

2. *The ambiguity of quotations that explain κεφαλή as ἀρχή.* The first thing to notice is that five of these nine references (numbers 2, 3, 4, and apparently 6 and 7 when corrected)<sup>24</sup> are found in one paragraph on page 749 of Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, II.B. 4, a paragraph that gives examples of κεφαλή used “as equivalent of ἀρχή.” But ἀρχή is itself an ambiguous word and can mean “beginning” or “authority,” as was indicated above, or in some cases “source.”<sup>25</sup>

The distinction between the senses “source” and “beginning” is an important distinction because the beginning of something is not always the source of something. (For example, my oldest son is the “beginning” or “first” of my sons, but he is not the “source” of my other sons.) In the Bible itself we find several examples of ἀρχή used as “beginning” where the idea of “source” would not fit:

*Genesis 1:1: In the beginning (ἀρχή), God created the heavens and the earth.*

We could not say, “In the *source* God created the heavens and the earth.”

*Matthew 19:4: He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning (ἀρχή) made them male and female . . . ?”*

We could not say, “He who made them from the *source* made them male and female.” The same reasoning applies to other examples:

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<sup>24</sup>The references to Theodore of Mopsuestia are incorrect; see discussion below.

<sup>25</sup>Note that Lampe’s *Lexicon* does not translate ἀρχή when it is used to explain κεφαλή in discussions of 1 Corinthians 11:3 but just says “as equivalent of ἀρχή.” The difficulty of translation is partly due to the fact that both words can mean “ruler, authority,” and both words can mean “beginning.” But ἀρχή has several other possible meanings as well (see the above discussion in II.10, especially n.18 and 19).

*Mark 1:1: The beginning (ἀρχή) of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [υἱοῦ θεοῦ].*

This verse is not the “source” of the rest of Mark, but it is the starting point or “beginning” of Mark, the first in a series of many statements to follow.

*John 1:1: In the beginning (ἀρχή) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*John 2:11 This, the first (ἀρχή) of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.*

*Colossians 1:18: He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning (ἀρχή), the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

Here Christ is said to be the “beginning” or “first in a series” of the people who would be raised from the dead. He is the first; others will follow.

*Revelation 22:13: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning (ἀρχή) and the end.”*

The idea “source” would not fit any of these examples. Nor is it the correct meaning in any other New Testament example. The BAGD *Lexicon* (pp. 111-112) does not list “source” as a possible meaning for ἀρχή in the New Testament or early Christian literature. It sometimes means “beginning.” It sometimes means “authority” or “ruler,” as in citations 3 and 6 from Chrysostom in the previous section of this paper. Therefore, to find examples of κεφαλή used as equivalent of ἀρχή does not prove that “church fathers argued vehemently that for Paul *head* had meant ‘source.’” It would be just as legitimate on the basis of ἀρχή alone to say that they argued vehemently that for Paul *head* had meant “ruler” or *head* had meant “beginning.”

#### IV. THE ACTUAL PATRISTIC CITATIONS

We can now look at these nine references cited by Kroeger, in which she says the church fathers “argued vehemently that for Paul *head* had meant ‘source’” and denied that Christ is subordinate to the Father.



1. *Athanasius* (ca. A.D. 296-373), *Syn. Armin.* 26.3.35. This is not actually a statement by a church father. This quotation is from an Arian creed, the “Macrostich” or 5th Confession of A.D. 344, which Athanasius quotes, along with several other Arian creeds, in order to show that they cannot even agree among themselves on what they teach. It is surprising that Kroeger cites this as evidence of what the “church fathers” taught, for Arianism was rejected as a heresy by the orthodox church, and this Arian creed does not represent what the recognized church fathers taught.

The quotation is as follows:

Yet we must not consider the Son to be co-unbegun and co-ingenerate with the Father. . . . But we acknowledge that the Father who alone is Unbegun and Ingenerate, hath generated inconceivably and incomprehensibly to all; and that the Son hath been generated before ages, and in no wise to be ingenerate Himself like the Father, but to have the Father who generated Him as His *beginning* (ἀρχή); for “the Head of Christ is God.”<sup>26</sup>

Here ἀρχή is used in the sense “beginning,” according to the NPNF translator. In any case, the quotation of an Arian creed, with no subsequent comment on this word or phrase by Athanasius himself, is not reliable evidence on which to decide anything about the way κεφαλή was understood by Athanasius or other church fathers, as Kroeger claims. Nor does it provide any evidence that church fathers argued against the subordination of the Son to the Father.

2. *Athanasius* (ca. A.D. 296-373), *Anathema* 26, *MPG* 26, 740B. This quotation is not actually from an orthodox church father either. It is from another Arian creed, which Athanasius also quotes to show how the Arians cannot agree among themselves.

Whosoever shall say that the Son is without beginning and ingenerate, as if speaking of two unbegun and two ingenerate, and making two Gods, be he anathema. For the Son is the Head, namely the beginning (ἀρχή) of all: and God is the *Head*, namely the beginning (ἀρχή) of Christ; for thus to one unbegun begin-

<sup>26</sup>The Greek text is in TLG Athanasius, *De synodis Arimini*, Work 010, 26,3.3. The English translation is from NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 4, 463, with extensive notes on the Arian theology represented here.

ning (ἀρχή) of the universe do we religiously refer all things through the Son.<sup>27</sup>

Here again ἀρχή is used by the Arians in the sense of “beginning” to explain κεφαλή. But it does not show us how κεφαλή was understood by Athanasius or other church fathers, as Kroeger’s article claimed.

In fact, Athanasius himself did not “argue vehemently” that for Paul, *head* meant “source,” nor did he deny that κεφαλή could mean “authority over,” for he refers to “the bishops of illustrious cities,” for example, as “the *heads* of great churches” (κεφαλαὶ τοσοῦτων ἐκκλησιῶν).<sup>28</sup>

3. *Cyril of Alexandria (died A.D. 444), De Recte Fide ad Pulch. 2.3, 268.*

. . . the one of the earth and dust has become (γέγονεν) to us the first head of the race, that is ruler (ἀρχή) but since the second Adam has been named Christ, he was placed as head (κεφαλή), that is ruler (τουτέστιν ἀρχή) of those who through him are being transformed unto him into incorruption through sanctification by the Spirit. Therefore he on the one hand is our ruler (ἀρχή), that is head, in so far as he has appeared as a man; indeed, he, being by nature God, has a head, the Father in heaven. For, being by nature God the Word, he has been begotten from Him. But that the head signifies the ruler (ἀρχή), the fact that the husband is said to be the head of the wife confirms the sense for the truth of doubters: for she has been taken from him (ἐλήφθη γὰρ ἐξ αὐτοῦ). Therefore one Christ and Son and Lord, the one having as head the Father in heaven, being God by nature, became for us a “head” accordingly because of his kinship according to the flesh.<sup>29</sup>

In this quotation, κεφαλή is explained by ἀρχή, probably in the sense of “ruler,” but the ambiguity of ἀρχή confronts us here, and the sense “beginning” or the sense “origin or source” for ἀρχή would also fit.

In 1990 I responded to Kroeger’s citation of this passage<sup>30</sup> and said that even if the sense “source” were understood here, this is still not an

<sup>27</sup>The Greek text is in TLG, Athanasius, *De synodis Arimini*, Work 010, 27.3,26 to 27.3,27. The English translation is from NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 4, p. 465.

<sup>28</sup>The Greek text is in TLG, Athanasius, Work 005, 89.2.3. The English translation is in NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 4, p. 147. This text is also quoted by Joseph Fitzmyer, “*kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3,” *Interpretation* 47 (1993), 56, as evidence of the meaning “leader, ruler” for κεφαλή.

<sup>29</sup>The Greek text is found in Eduard Schwartz, ed., *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927), 1.1.5, p. 28. The English translation is mine.

<sup>30</sup>Grudem, “Meaning of *kephalē*,” 464–465.

instance of “source” apart from authority, for God and Christ and the husband are all in positions of authority.<sup>31</sup> Of course, if we took this passage in an isolated way, apart from its context in patristic writings and ancient Trinitarian controversies, and apart from previously established meanings for κεφαλή, there would be no strong objection to thinking that the meaning “source” would fit this passage as well, even though it would not be necessary for the sense of the passage. And it must also be recognized that it is an elementary fact of life that we receive our nourishment through our mouths, and thus in a sense through our heads, and this idea was plain to the ancient world as well; therefore, the idea that a metaphor would occur in which “head” meant “source” is not impossible.<sup>32</sup> But even if that sense were accepted here, it would scarcely be decisive for Pauline usage, since this passage comes four hundred years *after* Paul wrote.<sup>33</sup>

Yet several factors make me hesitate to jump to the meaning “source” here:

(1) First, a very similar connection between the man’s headship and the woman’s being taken from the man is made by an earlier Alexandrian writer, Clement of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 155-ca. 220), in *The Stromata* 4:8 (ANF 2, 420):

“For I would have you know,” says the apostle, “that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man: for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man (οὐ γὰρ ἐστιν ἀνήρ ἐκ γυναικὸς, ἀλλὰ γυνή ἐξ ἀνδρός).”<sup>34</sup>

Such an explicit connection between man’s headship and woman’s being taken out of man might lead us to think that Clement of Alexandria would understand “head” to mean “source, origin” here,

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<sup>31</sup>Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), says that in analyzing this passage from Cyril of Alexandria, Grudem “suggests (rightly) that even here the term κεφαλή retains the sense of authority, and that a passage like this needs to be read in its historical context (the Trinitarian controversies of the early church)” (p. 128). However, Dawes differs with my hesitancy to see the meaning “source” as the most likely one here, saying that “different (metaphorical) senses of a word are possible in different contexts.” He thinks that authority is present in the passage, but that it may be related to the idea of origin.

<sup>32</sup>This is the point made by Dawes, as mentioned in the previous footnote.

<sup>33</sup>Note the caution that was expressed above about the merely moderate relevance of the quotations from Chrysostom, who wrote over three hundred years after Paul.

<sup>34</sup>The English translation in both quotations is that of the ANF series (2, 420). The Greek text is in the TLG, Clement of Alexandria, Work 4, 4.8.60.2.

just as we might in the statement from Cyril of Alexandria. But this is not so, for later on the same page Clement explains:

*The ruling power is therefore the head* (κεφαλὴ τοῖνυν τὸ ἡγεμονικόν). And if “the Lord is head of the man, and the man is head of the woman,” the man, “being the image and glory of God, is lord of the woman.” Wherefore also in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is written, “Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife. . . .”<sup>35</sup>

This means that Clement of Alexandria’s first statement should be understood in the sense: the man has ruling authority over the woman *because* she was taken from him. Clement of Alexandria is simply connecting 1 Corinthians 11:3 with 1 Corinthians 11:8 and sees one as the reason supporting the other.

This means that a similar manner of reasoning would not be inappropriate for Cyril of Alexandria, writing later and coming from the same city: the man is the head of (that is, has ruling authority over) the woman *because* she was taken from him.

And there are several other factors that argue against the meaning “source” in Cyril of Alexandria, such as the following: (2) the way that a third writer, Theodore of Mopsuestia, who is contemporary with Cyril, so clearly connects the wife’s obedience to her husband to the idea that she was taken from him in 1 Corinthians 11:7-8;<sup>36</sup> (3) the way other patristic writers so clearly understand κεφαλὴ to mean “authority over” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 and connect it to ἀρχή meaning “authority over”;<sup>37</sup> (4) the fact that it says Adam “has become” (γέγονεν) first head of the race, which would be a strange notion for “source” (for a source is there from the beginning, and one does not later become a source, nor does one become a “first” source); and (5) the fact that “authority over” is a commonly under-

<sup>35</sup>ANF 2, 420; TLG, Work 4, 4.8.63.5 to 4.8.64.1.

<sup>36</sup>See the material from Theodore of Mopsuestia below, in patristic citation 7a (section III.3.7a).

<sup>37</sup>See the quotations from Chrysostom, above, and from Basil and Eusebius, below. For example, Joseph Fitzmyer speaks of “the many places in patristic literature where comments are made on 1 Corinthians 11:3. . . . In these places the sense of *kephalē* as ‘leader, ruler, one having authority over’ is clear” (“*kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3”).

stood and established meaning for κεφαλή, while “source” has yet to be demonstrated by anything other than ambiguous passages.

A factor related to (5) is (6) the absence of support from the lexicons for the meaning “source.” This meaning is not given in Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, the standard lexicon for this material, in the entry for κεφαλή, nor is it given in BAGD, the standard lexicon for New Testament Greek.<sup>38</sup> At this point sound lexicography should cause us to be cautious about adopting a new meaning for a word based on one difficult passage, or one passage where it “could” have that meaning. This point was emphasized by John Chadwick in reflecting on his many years of work on the editorial team for the *Liddell-Scott Lexicon*:

A constant problem to guard against is the proliferation of meanings. . . . It is often tempting to create a new sense to accommodate a difficult example, but we must always ask first, if there is any other way of taking the word which would allow us to assign the example to an already established sense. . . . As I have remarked in several of my notes, there may be no reason why a proposed sense should not exist, but is there any reason why it must exist?<sup>39</sup>

For these reasons, it seems to me that the established sense, “ruler, authority,” best fits this passage in Cyril of Alexandria. By weighing these considerations on this and other passages, readers will have to form their own conclusions.

Yet one more point needs to be made. Cyril of Alexandria clearly did not deny the subordination of the Son to the Father, nor does his material support Kroeger’s claim that these writers “were quick to recognize the danger of an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 which could place Christ in a subordinate position relative to the Father,” for no denial of the Father’s authority over the Son is found here. In fact, in his *Dialogues on the Trinity* Cyril of Alexandria has an extensive discussion of the subordination of the Son to the Father, explaining that it is a voluntary submission, like that of Isaac to Abraham, or like that of Jesus to His earthly parents, and that it does not show Him to be a

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<sup>38</sup>The meaning “source” in the way Kroeger understands it is not given in the *Liddell-Scott Lexicon* either; see the discussion in section E below.

<sup>39</sup>John Chadwick, *Lexicographica Graeca: Contributions to the Lexicography of Ancient Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 23–24.

lesser being but is consistent with His being of the same nature with His Father and thus fully God.<sup>40</sup>

4. *Cyril of Alexandria (died A.D. 444), De Recte Fide ad Arcadium 1.1.5.5(2).63.*

“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of a woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” The blessed Luke, composing for us the genealogy of Christ, begins (ἀρχεται) from Joseph, then he comes to Adam, soon speaking of God, placing as the beginning (ἀρχή) of man the God who made him. Thus we say Christ is the head of every man: for man was made through him and he was brought to birth, the Son not creating him in a servile way, but more divinely, as in the nature of a workman. “But the head of a woman is the man,” for she was taken out of his flesh, and she has him even as (her) beginning (ἀρχή). And similarly, “the head of Christ is God,” for he is from him according to nature: for the Word was begotten out of God the Father. Then how is Christ not God, the one of whom the Father, according to (his) nature, has been placed as head? Whenever I might say Christ appeared in the form of man, I understand the Word of God.<sup>41</sup>

This text gives an understanding of κεφαλή as ἀρχή, probably in the sense of “beginning,” namely, the point from which something started. In both of these quotes from Cyril, someone might argue for the sense “source, origin,” but the sense “authority” would fit as well (it seemed to be the sense in the earlier quote; however, here he could be making a different point). Yet “beginning” fits better than “source,” because Cyril could have thought that “woman” had one man (Adam) as the starting point from which women began, but he would not have thought that any other women had subsequent men as their “source,” for no woman since Eve has been taken out of a man. Cyril is tracing

<sup>40</sup>See Cyril of Alexandria, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, ed. and trans. Georges Matthieu de Durand (Sources Chrétiennes 237; Paris: Cerf, 1977), 2:372-379 (with Greek text and French translation). Cyril’s concern in this section is to show that submission does not negate the Son’s deity, and so he emphasizes that, though the Son does submit to the Father, He remains equal with Him in “being” (οὐσία). He says it does not disturb the traits of the “substance” (τῆς οὐσίας) to give obedience “as a son to a father” (ὡς ἐξ υἱοῦ πρὸς πατέρα) (Durand, 374; 582.28-30). (I am grateful to my pastor Stephen E. Farish for saving me much time by quickly providing me with an English translation of many pages of the French translation of Cyril’s intricate argumentation on the Trinity.)

<sup>41</sup>The Greek text is found in Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 1.1.5, p. 76. The English translation is mine.

back a genealogy to its starting point and comes to Adam. “Beginning, starting point” therefore seems to fit this context. But the ambiguity of ἀρχή makes it difficult to decide.

5. Basil (the Great, of Caesarea, c. 329-379,) In Psalmum 28 (homilia 2), MPG 30:80 (TLG 53.30.80.23).

“And the beloved is as a son of unicorns” [LXX Ps. 28:6b]. After the opposing powers are raised up, then love for the Lord will appear plainly, and his strength will become evident, when no one casts a shadow over those in his presence. Therefore he says, after the [statement about] beating: “the beloved will be as the son of unicorns.” But a unicorn is a *royal* (ἀρχικὸς, “royal, fit for rule”) animal, *not made subject* to man, his strength *unconquerable* (ἀνυπότακτον ἀνθρώπων, τὴν ἰσχὺν ἀκαταμάχητον) always living in desert places, trusting in his one horn. Therefore the *unconquerable* nature of the Lord (ἡ ἀκαταγώνιστος τοῦ Κυρίου φύσις) is likened to a unicorn, both because of his *rule* (ἀρχή) upon everything, and because he has one *ruler* (ἀρχή) of himself, the Father: for “the head (κεφαλή) of Christ is God.”<sup>42</sup>

This passage is significant, even though Basil’s discussion is based on the Septuagint mistranslation of Psalm 28:6, “And the beloved is as a son of unicorns.” But Basil uses this text as an opportunity to comment on the unconquerable nature of a unicorn and likens this to the supreme rule of Christ over everything. Then he adds that the Son has one ruler over himself, namely, God the Father. For our purposes, it is significant that for Basil “the head of Christ is God” meant “the ruler over Christ is God,” and the word ἀρχή meant “ruler” when it was used as a synonym for κεφαλή.

6. Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428 AD), *Ecl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3, and  
7. Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428 AD), *Ecl. Theol.* 2.7.1.

These two references do not exist.<sup>43</sup> The numbers were apparently copied by mistake from the Eusebius references below them (Eusebius, *Ecl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3 and 2.7.1). However, perhaps Kroeger intended to copy the reference to Theodore of Mopsuestia in the entry for κεφαλή in Lampe’s *Lexicon*. That reference is as follows:

<sup>42</sup>The Greek text is in TLG Basil, In Psalmum 28 (homilia 2), Work 053, 30.80.12 to 30.80.23. The English translation is mine.

<sup>43</sup>Theodore of Mopsuestia has no work with the title or abbreviation *Ecl. Theol.* (see Lampe, *Lexicon*, xli).

7a. *Theodore of Mopsuestia, 1 Cor. 11:3 (p. 187.12ff; M.66.888c):*

This he wishes to say: that, on the one hand, we move forward from Christ to God (ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν χωροῦμεν), out of whom he is, but on the other hand from man to Christ (ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐπὶ τὸν Χριστόν): for we are out of him according to the second form of existence. . . . For on the one hand, being subject to suffering, we consider Adam to be head (κεφαλή), from whom we have taken existence. But on the other hand, not being subject to suffering, we consider Christ to be head (κεφαλή), from whom we have an unsuffering existence. Similarly, he says, also from woman to man (καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐπὶ τὸν ἄνδρα), since she has taken existence from him.<sup>44</sup>

This text at first seems ambiguous regarding the meaning of κεφαλή, perhaps because Theodore's commentaries exist only in fragments, and we may not have all that he wrote on this verse. The idea of "head" as "leader, ruler" seems possible, especially since he says we "advance" or "move forward" (χωρέω ἀπὸ [person B] ἐπὶ [person A]), in each case to the one who is "head," suggesting higher rank. But the idea of "beginning" (that is, the first one to exist in the condition specified) is also possible.

But Theodore's subsequent comments seem to tip the issue toward κεφαλή meaning "leader, authority over." This is because in 1 Corinthians 11:3 he connects man's headship with woman's being created from man, an idea that Theodore then explains when he comments on 1 Corinthians 11:7-8. These verses read as follows in the New Testament:

*For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.) (RSV)*

When Theodore comments on this passage, he sees a woman's "glory" as consisting in her obedience to her husband:

He calls the woman "glory" but surely not "image," because it applied faintly, since "glory" looks at obedience (εἰς τὴν ὑπακοήν), but "image" looks at rulership (εἰς τὸ ἀρχικόν).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup>The Greek text is found in Karl Staab, ed., *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), 187. The English translation is mine.

<sup>45</sup>Greek text in Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 188. The English translation is mine.



These subsequent remarks, coming just a few lines after his comment on 1 Corinthians 11:3, make the sense “authority over” most likely for κεφαλή in the 11:3 comment above. Theodore thinks that man is the authority over woman, since she was taken from him, and he says that this means she is his “glory” and should obey him, “since ‘glory’ looks at obedience, but ‘image’ looks at rulership.”

8. Eusebius (ca. A.D. 265-ca. 339), *Eccl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3.

And the great apostle teaches that the head of the Son himself is God, but (the head) of the church is the Son. How is he saying, on the one hand, “the head of Christ is God,” but on the other hand saying concerning the Son, “and he gave him to be head over all things for the church, which is his body”? Is it not therefore that he may be *leader* (ἀρχηγός) and *head* (κεφαλή) of the church, but of him (the head) is the Father: Thus there is one God the Father of the only Son, and there is *one head*, even of Christ himself. But if there is one *ruler* (ἀρχή) and head, how then could there be two Gods? Is he not one alone, the one above whom no one is higher, neither does he claim any other cause of himself, but he has acquired the familial, unbegun, unbegotten deity from the *monarchial authority* (τῆς μοναρχικῆς ἐξουσίας),<sup>46</sup> and he has given to the Son his own divinity and life; who through him caused all things to exist, *who sends him, who appoints him, who commands, who teaches, who commits all things to him, who glorifies him, who exalts (him), who declares him king of all, who has committed all judgment to him.* . . .<sup>47</sup>

Far from demonstrating that the church fathers “were quick to recognize the danger of an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 which could place Christ in a subordinate position relative to the Father” (as Kroeger claims), this quotation from Eusebius shows that the Father as “head” has supreme authority, and that His authority over the Son is seen in many actions: He sends the Son, He appoints Him, He commands Him, He teaches Him, He commits all judgment to Him, and so forth. The Father’s headship here means that He is the one in “authority over” the Son, and the Son’s headship over the church means that He is the leader or ruler of the church.

9. Eusebius (ca. A.D. 265-ca. 339), *Eccl. Theol.* 2.7.1.

<sup>46</sup>The Father’s deity is said to come from His own supreme authority, His “monarchial authority.”

<sup>47</sup>The Greek text is found in TLG, Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, Work 009, 1.11.2.4 to 1.11.3.11. The English translation is mine.

. . . but fear, O man, lest having confessed two substances, you would bring in two rulers (ἀρχή)<sup>48</sup> and would fall from the *monarchical* deity? Learn then thus, since there is one unbegun and unbegotten God, and since the Son has been begotten from him, there will be one ruler (ἀρχή), and one *monarchy and kingdom*, since even the Son himself claims his Father as ruler (ἀρχή). “For the head of Christ is God,” according to the apostle.<sup>49</sup>

Again, Eusebius explains “the head of Christ is God” to imply that God the Father has supreme authority, and the Son is not another authority equal to Him.

*Conclusion on patristic citations.* Kroeger gave nine patristic references (in addition to the two from Chrysostom) to support her claims that “church fathers argued vehemently that for Paul *head* had meant ‘source,’” and that they “were quick to recognize the danger” of understanding 1 Corinthians 11:3 to mean that Christ has a “subordinate position relative to the Father.” Two of the citations (1, 2) were not statements of any church father but statements from heretical Arian creeds. Two more (6, 7) did not exist but may have been intended as a reference to Theodore of Mopsuestia in a commentary on 1 Corinthians 11 that relates the headship of the husband to his rulership and the wife’s obedience. Three others (5, 8, 9) assumed that to be “head” of someone else implied having a position of authority or rule and thus supported the meaning “authority over.” Two references from Cyril of Alexandria (3, 4) were ambiguous, due to ambiguity in the meaning of ἀρχή, since the meanings “authority,” “beginning,” or “origin” would all make sense in the contexts.

In none of the references did any church father “argue vehemently” that “for Paul *head* had meant ‘source.’” And none of the references argued against an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 that placed Christ in a “subordinate position relative to the Father”; indeed, some of the references specify that Christ is obedient to the Father and that the Father rules over Him. In light of this evidence, it seems that Kroeger’s assertion that church fathers “were quick to recognize the danger” of understanding 1 Corinthians 11:3 to

<sup>48</sup>Here I have translated ἀρχή as “ruler,” which is consistent with the previous Eusebius quotation from this same document, where this sense seems necessary.

<sup>49</sup>The Greek text is found in TLG, Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, Work 009, 2.7.1.1 to 2.7.2.1. The English translation is mine.

mean that Christ has a “subordinate position relative to the Father” is also false.<sup>50</sup>

A failure to mention the way Lampe defines and does not define κεφαλή. Kroeger’s apparent use of page 749 of Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* to find four of her actual eight patristic references is puzzling for two other reasons. First, she fails to mention that the meaning “source,” which she claims was “vehemently” defended by the church fathers, is nowhere mentioned as a meaning for κεφαλή in this standard lexicon for patristic Greek. If the meaning “source” was “vehemently” defended by the church fathers, it is surprising that the editorial team of this definitive lexicon did not discover this fact as they worked through the writings of the church fathers for fifty-five years, from 1906 to 1961 (see *Preface*, iii). And it is inexcusable in a popular reference work to claim that a meaning was “vehemently” defended by the church fathers and fail to mention that that meaning simply is not listed in the standard Greek lexicon of the church fathers.

Second, it is troubling to see that Kroeger claims a nonexistent quote from Chrysostom to deny the meaning “chief” or “authority over” for the patristic period, but she does not mention that this is the essential meaning of the first five metaphorical definitions for κεφαλή (as applied to persons) that are given on the same page in Lampe’s *Lexicon* (p. 749) from which she took several of her examples:

**B.** of persons; **1.** head of the house, Herm.sim. 7.3; **2.** chief, head-man . . . **3.** religious superior . . . **4.** of bishops, κεφαλαὶ ἐκκλησιῶν [other examples include “of the bishop of the city of Rome, being head of all the churches”] . . . **5.** κεφαλή εἶναι c. genit. [to be head, with genitive] take precedence of

All five of these categories include leadership and authority attaching to the term κεφαλή. They show that κεφαλή meant “chief” and “authority over,” according to the standard lexicon for patristic Greek. Since Kroeger’s article depended so heavily on patristic evidence, and in fact (apparently) on this very page in this lexicon, these definitions from this standard patristic lexicon should have been mentioned. It is difficult to understand how she could claim that Chrysostom said that

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<sup>50</sup>In direct contrast to Kroeger’s claim, Joseph Fitzmyer mentions “the many places in patristic literature where comments are made on I Corinthians 11:3 or use of it is made. In these places the sense of *kephalē* as ‘leader, ruler, one having authority over’ is clear” (“*kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3,” 56).

“only a heretic” would use this meaning when the standard lexicon for patristic Greek lists five different categories with this meaning in their entry on κεφαλή.

#### V. EVIDENCE FROM CLASSICAL LITERATURE

One other section from Kroeger’s article deserves comment. In a section called “The Classical View of Head as Source,” Kroeger attempts to demonstrate that *kephalē* meant “source” because it was equated with *archē*, which meant “source.” She writes:

By the time of Plato, adherents of Orphic religion were using *kephalē* with *archē* (“source” or “beginning”). (p. 375).

For support she gives the following references (with no quotations, no dates, and no further information).

1. Kern, *Orph. Fr.* 2. nos. 21 a.2., 168
2. Plato, *Leg.* IV.715E and sch
3. Proclus, *In Tim.* II 95.48 (V.322)
4. Pseudo-Aristides *World* 7
5. Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 3.9
6. Deveni Papyrus, col. 13, line 12
7. Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1.23
8. Plutarch, *Def. Orac.* 436D
9. Achilles Tatius, fr. 81.29
10. Isaiah 9:14-15 (LXX)
11. Irenaeus, PG 7.496.
12. Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.8
13. Philo, *Congr.* 61.
14. Photius, *Comm. 1 Cor. 11:3*, ed. Staab 567.1

This looks like an impressive set of references to demonstrate “the classical concept of head as source.” In fact, one review of *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* pointed to C. Kroeger’s article on “head” as one of the outstanding articles in the volume because it has “excellent Graeco-Roman material,” deals with “the classical view of head as source,” and “cites many primary references.”<sup>51</sup> But do these fourteen references

<sup>51</sup>Aida Besançon Spencer, review of *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* in *Themelios* 20:2 (Jan.. 1995), 27-28. The review quotes as noteworthy Kroeger’s quotation of John Chrysostom: “only a heretic would understand Paul’s use of ‘head’ to mean ‘chief’ or ‘authority over.’”

demonstrate that “head” meant “source,” as Kroeger claims? Do they show examples of κεφαλή used with ἀρχή as “source” or “beginning” and so demonstrate the meaning “source” for κεφαλή? The first one is familiar to anyone following the previous discussions of κεφαλή:

1. Kern, *Orph. Fr. 2.nos. 21 a.2.*, 168 (5th cent. B.C.).

Zeus was first, Zeus is last with white, vivid lightning;

Zeus the head (κεφαλή, but with ἀρχή as a variant reading) ,  
Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom all things are perfected

(Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται;  
*Orphic Fragments 21a*).<sup>52</sup>

The sense “beginning, first one” seems most likely for either κεφαλή or ἀρχή here, because of (1) the similarity to the idea of “first” and “last” in the previous line, and (2) the contrast with “middle” and the mention of perfection, giving the sense, “Zeus is the beginning, Zeus is the middle, Zeus is the one who completes all things.” The *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, in discussing the basic tenets of Orphic religion, mentions a “common myth” in which “Zeus was praised as the beginning, the middle, and the end of all”<sup>53</sup> and so supports the sense “beginning” in this and similar texts. In any case, the meaning “source” cannot be established for κεφαλή from this passage.

2. Plato (ca. 429-347 B.C.), *Leg. IV:715E and sch.*

O men, that God who, as old tradition tells, holds the *beginning* (ἀρχή), the end, and the centre of all things that exist, completes his circuit by nature’s ordinance in straight, unswerving course.  
(Plato, *Laws IV:715E*, LCL translation)

This text does not even contain κεφαλή; so it is not helpful for our inquiry. The term ἀρχή is here translated as “beginning” (not “source”) by the LCL edition. It could not mean “source,” because Plato would not say that God “holds” the source of all things. The best meaning would be “beginning,” with the sense that God holds the beginning, the end, and the middle of all things that exist.

<sup>52</sup>The Greek text is found in Otto Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), 91; TLG, Orphica, Work 010, 6.13-14. The English is my translation.

<sup>53</sup>*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd edition, eds. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 759.

Moreover, Kroeger claims that these texts show that κεφαλή was used *with* ἀρχή. But if κεφαλή does not even occur in this quotation, it cannot show that Plato was using κεφαλή *with* ἀρχή. In the absence of the term κεφαλή, this reference cannot be used as evidence for the meaning of that term.

3. *Proclus (A.D. 410-485), In Tim. II 95.48 (V.322)*. This may be an incorrect reference, because Proclus *In Tim.* 2.95 ends at line 31, and line 48 does not exist.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps Kroeger meant to cite *In Tim.* 1.313.21, which has the same quote again about Zeus, this time in the form,

Zeus the head, Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom comes all that is  
(Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται).<sup>55</sup>

This reference gives no more support to the meaning “source” than the earlier passage in *Orphic Fragments*. It is difficult to understand why Kroeger includes this reference in a section on “The Classical View of Head as Source,” since the classical period in Greek was prior to the time of the New Testament (the classical period in Greek literature is generally thought of as the period prior to 325 B.C.),<sup>56</sup> while Proclus was a Neoplatonist philosopher who lived from A.D. 410 to 485.

4. *Pseudo-Aristides World 7 (4<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.?)*. This is an incorrect reference, because there is no work called *World* written by Aristides or Pseudo-Aristides.<sup>57</sup>

However, the following quotation does appear in Aristotle (or Pseudo-Aristotle), *de Mundo* (“*On the Cosmos*” or “*On the World*”), section 7 (401a.29-30):<sup>58</sup>

Zeus is the head, Zeus the centre; from Zeus comes all that is  
(Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται).

Perhaps Kroeger found a reference to Ps-Arist., *World 7* and understood Arist. to refer to Aristides rather than Aristotle. In any case, this

<sup>54</sup>However, it is possible that Dr. Kroeger is citing some edition of Proclus with a numbering system different from that used in the standard text in the TLG database.

<sup>55</sup>Proclus, in *Platonis Timaeum commentarii*, ed. E. Diehl, 3 vols, Leipzig (T.) 1903, 1904, 1906 (TLG, Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.313.21-22). The English is my translation in this and all subsequent citations of this sentence about Zeus, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>56</sup>*The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, comp. Paul Harvey (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), 106.

<sup>57</sup>See LSJ, xix.

<sup>58</sup>The text is found in the Loeb Classical Library edition of Aristotle, Vol. 3, 406.

is another quotation of the same sentence and adds no new evidence for the meaning of κεφαλή.

5. Eusebius (ca. A.D. 265-ca. 339), *Praep. Ev.* 3.9.

This text quotes followers of Orphic religion as saying,

Zeus the head, Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom comes all that is

(Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται).<sup>59</sup>

This is a repetition of the same sentence again, with no additional evidence. Eusebius is also wrongly placed in this discussion of “The Classical Concept of Head,” since he was a Christian historian who lived approximately A.D. 265-339.

6. *Deveni Papyrus*, col. 13, line 12 (4<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.). This is a misspelled reference, and as a result it turned out to be very difficult to locate. It should read, *Derveni Papyrus*, col. 13, line 12.<sup>60</sup> It is from the late fourth century B.C. The text says:

Zeus the head, Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom comes all that is

(Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσσ]α, Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται]).<sup>61</sup>

This is a repetition of the same sentence. It provides no additional evidence.

7. Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1.23 (5<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.).

This text also quotes followers of Orphic religion as saying,

Zeus the head, Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom comes

(τέτυκται) all that is

(Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται).<sup>62</sup>

This is a repetition of the same sentence once again, with no additional evidence. Stobaeus is also wrongly placed in this discussion of “The Classical Concept of Head,” since he lived in the fifth century A.D.

<sup>59</sup>TLG, Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 3.9.2.2.

<sup>60</sup>The text was published in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 47 (1982), appendix, 8. Because of the misspelling of the name, I was unable to locate this until I received help from David Chapman, who was (in 1997) a graduate student at the University of Cambridge.

<sup>61</sup>TLG, Orphica, *Fragmenta* (P. Derveni), Work 013, col 12.

<sup>62</sup>TLG Joannes Stobaeus Anthologus, Work 001, 1.1.23.2-6.

8. *Plutarch (ca. A.D. 46- ca. 120), Def. Orac. 436D.* This text says:

Zeus the beginning, Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom all things  
come about

(Ζεὺς ἀρχὴ Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα πέλονται).<sup>63</sup>

This text does not use κεφαλή but uses ἀρχή and therefore is wrongly included in this list. Plutarch is also incorrectly placed in this discussion of “The Classical Concept of Head,” since he lived approximately A.D. 46-120.

9. *Achilles Tatius, fr. 81.29 (3<sup>rd</sup> cent. A.D.).* This is an incomplete reference, and it turned out to be very difficult to locate. The Loeb Classical Library edition of Achilles Tatius has only eight chapters. No such document as “fr.” (presumably “fragment”) from Achilles Tatius is listed in the preface to Liddell and Scott.

However, this turns out to be a reference not to the better known Greek romantic writer Achilles Tatius (2nd century A.D.) found in the Loeb Classical Library series, but to another Achilles Tatius, a 3rd-century A.D. author with one surviving work, a commentary on the writings of Aratus. The citation of line 29 is not quite accurate, for the term κεφαλή does not occur in line 29. However, just three lines later, in lines 32-33, the text does contain ἀρχή in the following quotation:

Zeus the beginning, Zeus the middle, Zeus from whom all things  
are perfected

(Ζεὺς ἀρχὴ, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται).<sup>64</sup>

The word κεφαλή does not occur in this text; so it should not be included in this list. Nor is a third century A.D. author useful evidence for the “classical” period in Greek.

10. *Isaiah 9:14-15 (LXX verses 13-14) (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C. Greek translation).*

So the LORD cut off from Israel *head* (κεφαλή) and tail, palm branch and reed in one day—the elder and honored man is the head (ἀρχή, “ruler”), and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail.

<sup>63</sup>TLG, Plutarch, Work 92, 436D.8-9.

<sup>64</sup>The text is found in Ernest Maass, *Commentariorum in Aratum reliquiae* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1898), 81, lines 32-33.



Far from establishing the meaning "source" for *kephalē*, this shows the sense "leader, one in authority," for it is the elder who is said to be "head."

11. *Irenaeus, PG 7.496 (ca. A.D. 175-ca. 195)*. In describing the teaching of the Gnostics, Irenaeus reports this:

They go on to say that the Demiurge imagined that he created all these things of himself, while in reality he made them in conjunction with the productive power of Achamoth. . . . They further affirm that his mother originated this opinion in his mind, because she desired to bring him forth possessed of such a character that he should be the head and source of his own essence (κεφαλήν μὲν καὶ ἀρχὴν τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας), and the absolute ruler (κύριος) over every kind of operation [that was afterwards attempted]. This mother they call Ogdoad, Sophia, Terra. . . . (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.3 [ANF 1, 322-323])

Here the ambiguity about the meaning of ἀρχή confronts us again. The translator of the Ante-Nicene Fathers series rendered it "source," which is possible, but "ruler" or "beginning" are also possible. In any case, the text does not equate "head" with "source/ruler/beginning" but lists them as two items. So even if ἀρχή is translated "source," the phrase would still mean, "the head and source of his own being," with "head" in the sense of "ruler." The text is ambiguous and does not provide convincing evidence of "head" meaning "source." Since Irenaeus wrote between about A.D. 175 and 195, this text should not be counted as evidence of a classical understanding of κεφαλή.

12. *Tertullian, Marc. 5.8 (ca. A.D. 160- ca. 220)*.

"The head of every man is Christ." What Christ, if he is not the author of man? The *head* here he has put for *authority*; now "authority" will accrue to none else than the "author." (*The Five Books Against Marcion*, book 5, chap. 8; ANF vol. 3, p. 445)

This text is translated from Latin, not Greek; so it is of little help in determining the meaning of *kephalē*, for the word does not occur here. If the text is counted as evidence, it supports not the idea of "source" but the idea of "head" as "ruler, one in authority." Since Tertullian lived ca. A.D. 160/170 to ca. 215/220 and wrote in Latin, this quotation is not from classical Greek but from patristic Latin.

13. *Philo* (ca. 30 B.C. -A.D. 45), *Congr.* 61. This quotation says:

And of all the members of the clan here described Esau is the progenitor, the head as it were of the whole creature. (LCL, Vol. 4, 489; κεφαλὴ δὲ ὡς ζώου πάντων τῶν λεχθέντων μερῶν ὁ γενάρχης ἐστὶν Ἡσαῦ.)

Kroeger translates this “the progenitor” but fails to note that the ambiguity attaching to *archē* also attaches to *genarchēs*. The Liddell-Scott *Lexicon* gives two definitions for *genarchēs*: (1) “founder or first ancestor of a family,” and (2) “ruler of created beings.”<sup>65</sup> The quotation is ambiguous, and Philo, as is his custom, is constructing an allegory. In any case, it does not demonstrate any absence of the idea of authority from the “head,” for Esau was surely the ruler of the clan descended from him.<sup>66</sup>

14. *Photius, Comm. 1 Cor. 11:3, ed. Staab 567.1* (9<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.). Finally, Kroeger adds a citation from Photius, not connecting κεφαλὴ with ἀρχή but saying “*kephalē* was considered by Photius to be a synonym for *procreator* or *progenitor* (*Photius, Comm. 1 Cor. 11:3, ed. Staab 567.1*.)” This is the most egregious disregard of dating in all the citations that give the appearance of support for an early, “classical” view of head as source, because Photius is far from being a pre-New Testament writer. He died in A.D. 891. This also makes him a highly dubious source for determining the New Testament meaning for κεφαλὴ. But Kroeger gives readers no indication of dates for any of what she claims as “classical” sources, thus leading the vast majority of readers (who have never heard of the ninth century A.D. author

<sup>65</sup>LSJ, 342.

<sup>66</sup>This text is not new but has been considered previously in studies of κεφαλὴ. As I wrote in my 1990 article: “The sense of ‘head’ here is difficult to determine. Payne suggests the meaning ‘source of life’ for head, a specific kind of ‘source’ that has never before been given in any lexicon. Yet it is possible that Philo thought of the physical head of an animal as in some sense energizing or giving life to the animal—this would then be a simile in which Esau (a representative of stubborn disobedience in this context) gives life to a whole list of other sins that Philo has been describing as a ‘family’ in this allegory. On the other hand, the word translated above as progenitor (*genarchēs*) also can mean ‘ruler of created beings’ (LSJ, 342). In that case the text would read: ‘And Esau is the ruler of all the clan here described, the head as of a living animal.’ Here the meaning would be that Esau is the ruler over the rest of the sinful clan and head would mean ‘ruler, authority over.’ It seems impossible from the context that we have to decide clearly for one meaning or the other in this text” (Grudem, “Meaning of *kephalē*,” 454-455).

Finally, Philo should not be cited as evidence for the “classical” view of a word, since he wrote in the first century A.D.

Photius) to think that she has given evidence of an established meaning for κεφαλή prior to the time of the New Testament.

In any case, we can examine the Photius quotation, which says:

On the one hand, the head of us who believe is Christ, as we are members of the same body and fellow partakers with him, having been begotten through the fellowship of his body and blood: for through him we all, having been called “one body,” have him as head. “But the head of Christ is God” even the Father, as a begetter and originator and one of the same nature as him.<sup>67</sup> “And the head of the woman is the man,” for he also exists as her begetter and originator and one of the same nature as her. The analogy is suitable and fits together. But if you might understand the “of every man” [1 Cor. 11:3] also to mean over the unbelievers, according to the word of the creation this (meaning) only is allowed: For having yielded to the man<sup>68</sup> to reign over the others, *he allowed him to remain under his own unique authority and rule* (αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῆν ἰδίαν μόνον εἶασε μένειν ἐχουσίαν καὶ ἀρχήν) not having established over him another ruler and supreme authority.<sup>69</sup>

Kroeger is correct to say that the ideas of “procreator” and “progenitor” are contained in this ninth century A.D. text, but it is not clear that these terms are used to *define* “head,” any more than it would be to say that “head” *means* “of the same nature” (ὁμοούσιος), which is the third term used in this explanation. In all three terms (begetter, originator, of the same nature), Photius is using classical Trinitarian language to explain the Father’s role as “head,” saying it is “as” one who is begetter, originator, and of the same nature. This is standard Trinitarian language, and in dealing with 1 Corinthians 11:3, “the head of Christ is God,” Photius maintains the orthodox definitions of the Father as the one who eternally begets the Son and eternally sends forth the Holy Spirit.

But this Trinitarian language does not establish Kroeger’s claim in

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<sup>67</sup>Photius is using language from prior Trinitarian controversies here. He says that the Father is “begetter and originator and of the same nature” as the Son. “Begetter” (γεννήτωρ) refers to the Father’s eternal relationship to the Son, in what was called the “eternal generation of the Son.” “Originator” (προβολεύς), according to Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, was used in Trinitarian discussion particularly to refer to the Father’s role with respect to the procession of the Holy Spirit (1140). And “of the same nature” (ὁμοούσιος) was the term used from the Nicene Creed onward to affirm the full deity of the Son.

<sup>68</sup>Here “the man” refers to Christ as man.

<sup>69</sup>The English translation is mine. The Greek text is from Karl Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1933), 567; TLG Photius, *Fragmenta in epistulam 1 ad Corinthias*, Work 15, 567.1-567.11.

this section that there was a “classical” meaning of “source” for κεφαλή. Instead, the passage once again indicates that Photius understands “head” to mean “authority over.” This is evident from the last two sentences in the citation, where we see how he relates “the head of every man is Christ” to “the head of Christ is God.” Photius explains “the head of every man is Christ” to mean that Christ is appointed by the Father “to reign” even over unbelievers. This is consistent with the idea that the head of Christ is God, since Christ remains under God the Father’s “own unique authority and rule.” Once again, to be “head” is seen to mean that one is in the role of “authority over” another.

In any case, this obscure text from the ninth century A.D. is hardly relevant for Kroeger’s section, “The Classical View of Head as Source,” and hardly relevant for understanding the New Testament meaning of κεφαλή, since it came 800 years later.

*Conclusion on Kroeger’s section on “The Classical View of Head as Source.”* Of the fourteen references given by Kroeger in her section on “The Classical View of Head as Source,” four (2, 8, 9, 12) did not contain the term κεφαλή and are not relevant for understanding the meaning of the term. Of the remaining ten, only three (1, 4, 6) were from the pre-New Testament “classical” period in Greek. All three of those were repeating the same sentence about Zeus, which means that the fourteen references in this section boil down to one piece of evidence. In that sentence, the meaning “source” is not proven, for the sense “beginning” best fits the context and follows the translation of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. This means that of the fourteen references in this section, none turned out to support the idea that classical Greek had a meaning “source” for κεφαλή.

If examples from all dates are included, however, then of the ten that contained κεφαλή, two (10, 14) clearly use κεφαλή to mean “authority over,” and two others (11, 13) are ambiguous, since both the meaning “beginning” and the meaning “authority over” are possible. The remaining six (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) use κεφαλή in the sense “beginning,” all in the same sentence about Zeus. Once again, not one of the fourteen references turned out to support the meaning “source” for κεφαλή.

One more characteristic of these references should be noted. Kroeger’s goal is to show that “source” is often the sense of κεφαλή in the New Testament *instead of* the meaning “authority over.” She

says at one point, “By the Byzantine era *kephalē* had acquired the sense of ‘chief ‘ or ‘master’ . . . this was rarely true of the Greek *kephalē* in NT times.”<sup>70</sup> In order to appreciate Kroeger’s statement, we must realize that the Byzantine Age in Greek literature lasted from A.D. 529 to 1453,<sup>71</sup> and Greek usage during that time is of very little relevance for New Testament study. Thus Kroeger is implying, if not asserting, that “source” was a common and well-established sense for κεφαλή at the time of the New Testament, while “authority over” was a rare sense until about five hundred years after the New Testament.

But do any of her references prove this? It is significant to notice what kind of persons are called “head” in these quotations, both from patristic texts and from others:

1. husband (head of wife)
2. God (head of Christ)
3. Christ (head of every man)
4. church leaders (head of church)
5. a woman (head of her maidservant)
6. Christ (head of the church)
7. Adam (head of human race)
8. Zeus (head of all things)
9. elders (head of Israel)
10. Gnostic Demiurge (head of his own being)
11. Esau (head of his clan)

In every case, ancient readers would have readily understood that the person called “head” was in a position of authority or rule over the person or group thought of as the “body” in the metaphor. Even in those cases where the sense “beginning” is appropriate, there is no idea of “beginning” without authority; rather, the person who is the “head” is always the one in authority. Therefore, it seems inevitable that the sense “authority” attaches to the metaphor when one person is called “head” (κεφαλή) of another person or group. The sense “authority over” for κεφαλή is firmly established.

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<sup>70</sup>Kroeger, “Head,” 377.

<sup>71</sup>*The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, comp. Paul Harvey (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), 83.

## VI. DR. KROEGER'S RESPONSE

I read an earlier version of this article as a paper at the 1997 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Santa Clara, California.<sup>72</sup> Then at the 1998 meeting of the ETS in Orlando, Dr. Kroeger read a four-page response to my paper, entitled "The Use of Classical Disciplines in Biblical Research." In this response, she makes the following points:

(1) Although Photius wrote in the ninth century A.D., his work as a lexicographer remains valuable to us, for he studied Greek literature from earlier centuries (p. 1).

(2) In the statements about "Zeus the head, Zeus the middle . . ." etc., the interchange of κεφαλή with ἀρχή as the quotation appears in various authors shows that "in the writers' minds they have the same semantic value and may be freely exchanged" (p. 2).

(3) Regarding erroneous citations in her article, she says, "Here my own effort to condense [sic] the lengthy citations led to the scrambling of a couple of references, although the majority were accurate" (pp. 2-3).

(4) The citation that I had been unable to locate (Achilles Tatius, fr. 81.29) was not from the commonly known Achilles Tatius (second century A.D.) but from a lesser known Achilles Tatius (third century A.D.), fragments of whose commentary on Aratus are published in Maass, *Commentariorum in Aratum reliquiae* (1898, repr. 1958). Dr. Kroeger says that my difficulty in finding this was because I "failed to recognize that in classical antiquity more than one writer might bear the same name" (p. 3).

(5) With respect to my critique of her article, she says that I "failed to differentiate between *archōn*, meaning ruler or commander, and the cognate *archē* meaning beginning, first principle or source. To be sure, *archē* can also indicate authority, rule, realm or magistracy. Almost never, however, does *archē* denote the person ruling. That sense is supplied by the cognate, *archōn*" (p. 3).

(6) Chrysostom held to the "commonly held anatomical views of antiquity, that the head was the source of the body's existence," and this led Chrysostom to "conventional metaphorical uses" for κεφαλή (by this she means the metaphor of "head" as "source") (p. 3).

<sup>72</sup>The paper contained all the substantive points of this present article except the survey of commentaries and journal articles in the last section, and the paper was distributed to all interested attendees at the conference. Dr. Kroeger was present and also received a copy of the paper.

(7) In Chrysostom's view, "as applied to the Trinity, *kephalē* must imply 'perfect oneness and primal cause and source.'" She concludes, "Indubitably he viewed one of the meanings of 'head' to be 'source' or 'origin' and deemed it theologically important" (p. 4).

In response to these seven items, the following points may be made:

(1) *Photius*: I agree that Photius' ninth-century A.D. lexicon has some value for scholarly work, but the fact remains that citing his commentary on 1 Corinthians (not his lexicon) in a section on "The Classical View of Head as Source" without giving readers any indication that he wrote eight hundred years after the New Testament or that he uses κεφαλή to mean "authority over" is misleading.

(2) *Statements about Zeus*: The fact that κεφαλή is used in some of the statements about Zeus and ἀρχή in others does not show that the words "have the same semantic value and may be freely exchanged," but only that they shared the one sense that fits that context, namely, "beginning, first in a series." In fact, one word (κεφαλή) signifies this meaning by means of a metaphor (the "head" as the end point, furthest extremity), and the other word (ἀρχή) means it literally. Therefore these quotes still fail to provide proof that κεφαλή could mean source. They just show what everyone has recognized all along, that κεφαλή in a metaphorical sense could mean "beginning, first in a series, extremity, end-point."

(3) *Accuracy*: To say that she scrambled "a couple of references" is a rather low estimate. Of twenty-four key references to ancient literature, fourteen were accurate, but ten were not: Four did not contain κεφαλή, two had the wrong author listed, three had the wrong reference listed, and the one from Chrysostom did not exist at all. I agree with her that "the majority were accurate," since fourteen of twenty-four key references is more than half. But the standard of accuracy in scholarly works is not to get the "majority" of one's references right. They should all be right. This article fell far short of the standard of accuracy required for academic work.

(4) *Achilles Tatius*: I was glad at last to learn from Dr. Kroeger of the reference to the obscure Achilles Tatius, but to give a reference simply as "fr. 81.29," when the standard reference works (the preface to LSJ and the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*) do not list *any* work by *any* Achilles Tatius as "fr." is simply to consign all readers to the same kind of frus-

trating search of libraries that I experienced.<sup>73</sup> I was also surprised to find, when I finally did consult the work, that it did not contain the term κεφαλή at all but used ἀρχή though that fact had not been mentioned in Dr. Kroeger's 1998 response when she named the volume in which the text had been published.

(5) *The term ἀρχή*: I do not think it is correct that ἀρχή “almost never” denotes the person ruling. See the citations from Chrysostom (above) where the wife is a “second authority,”<sup>74</sup> or from Basil and Eusebius, where the Father is the “ruler” of the Son;<sup>75</sup> see also BAGD, meaning 3, “ruler, authority” (p. 112).

(6) *Chrysostom on the function of the head in the body*: I agree that Chrysostom thought that the senses had their origin in the head. But that is not the issue. He also thought that the head ruled the body.<sup>76</sup> The question is not what meaning he *could have* given to “head” when used in a metaphorical sense, but what meaning he *actually did* give. The nine citations given earlier where the “head” is specified as the ruling part or the person in authority make clear that Chrysostom used κεφαλή with the sense “authority over” (which Kroeger still did not acknowledge).

Her citation from Chrysostom is interesting, however, in what it omits. Here is her exact statement and the quotation that she gave from Chrysostom in her response (p. 3):

One of the points of disagreement between my colleague and my own work was over the treatment of the term by John Chrysostom, one of the earliest exegetes, a fourth century scholar whose first language was Greek. The commonly held anatomical views of antiquity, that the head was the source of the body's exis-

<sup>73</sup>In this case I had also received help from David Chapman, a former student who was in Ph.D. studies at the University of Cambridge. He spent most of a day checking all the critical editions of Achilles Tatius, as well as papyrus fragments, but still found no work that could be identified as “fr. 81.29.” We did not check the lesser-known Achilles Tatius because no reference work identified any work of his as “fr.” I mention this only because the issue here is whether evangelical academic works should make it easy or hard for readers to check for themselves the sources quoted in an article.

<sup>74</sup>Citation (6) from Chrysostom, above.

<sup>75</sup>Patristic citations (5) and (8) above.

<sup>76</sup>Clinton E. Arnold, “Jesus Christ: ‘Head’ of the Church (Colossians and Ephesians),” *In Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1994), 346–366 shows that in the ancient world the head was commonly understood to be both the ruling part and the source of nourishment for the body. Similar conclusions are reached in an extensive study by Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Meaning and Metaphor in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21–33* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 122–149.



tence, led him to conventional metaphorical uses. From the head, he said, the senses “have their source and fount.”

In the head are the eyes both of the body, and of the soul. . . . All the senses have thence their origin and their source. Thence are sent forth the organs of speech, the power of seeing, and of smelling, and all touch. For thence is derived the root of the nerves and of the bones. [*Commentary on I Thessalonians V:5*, p. 513]

This is one of the sections from Chrysostom that I quoted in the beginning of this paper—section B, citation (2) above. What is most interesting here is the material represented by the ellipsis in Dr. Kroeger’s quotation of Chrysostom, as well as the two sentences immediately preceding this quotation and the two sentences immediately following it. This is highly relevant material that Dr. Kroeger omitted from this quotation in her attempt to argue that κεφαλή meant “source” and not “authority over.” Here is the whole quotation, cited from the NPNF translation, with the words that Dr. Kroeger omitted underlined:

*Thou art the head of the woman, let then the head regulate the rest of the body. Dost thou not see that it is not so much above the rest of the body in situation, as in forethought, directing like a steersman the whole of it? For in the head are the eyes both of the body, and of the soul. Hence flows to them both the faculty of seeing, and the power of directing. And the rest of the body is appointed for service, but this is set to command.* All the senses have thence their origin and their source. Thence are sent forth the organs of speech, the power of seeing, and of smelling, and all touch. For thence is derived the root of the nerves and of the bones. *Seest thou not that it is superior in forethought more than in honor? So let us rule the women; let us surpass them, not by seeking greater honor from them, but by their being more benefited by us.*<sup>77</sup>

The words missing from her quotation disprove the point she is trying to make, for they show the head regulating the body, directing it, and commanding it. Both at the beginning and the end of this quotation Chrysostom makes explicit the parallel with the husband’s governing role as “head” meaning “one in authority.” When the words that one leaves out of a quotation do not change the sense, no reader will

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<sup>77</sup>Chrysostom, *Homily 5 on 1-2 Thessalonians* (NPNF series 1, Vol. 13, 397). The relevant Greek portions are quoted at the beginning of this article in section II, citation (2).

object. But when the words that one leaves out are found to disprove the very point one is trying to make, readers will rightly conclude that one has not been truthful in handling the evidence.

(7) *Did Chrysostom understand κεφαλή as “source”?* Kroeger gives no further analysis of the quotation I listed above as Chrysostom (10), from Homily 26 on 1 Corinthians (TLG Work 156, 61.216.1-10). She simply repeats her translation of this section, except she changes “cause and primal source” to “primal cause and source.” To put the matter plainly, this is assertion without argument, pure and simple. To reassert one’s own idiosyncratic translation of a passage without further argument, and without giving reasons why it should be preferred to the commonly used NPNF translation of ἀρχή as “first principle” and also as “beginning” in this very passage, and without acknowledging that one’s personal translation is a speculative one, hardly provides a reason for readers to be persuaded that she is correct.

(8) *What was not said:* What is interesting about this response is what was not said. No new evidence for κεφαλή as “source” was introduced. No objections were raised to my nine new citations of passages from Chrysostom where the meaning “authority over” was clear for κεφαλή. No answer was given for why she claimed a nonexistent quotation from Chrysostom to say that “only a heretic” would understand κεφαλή to mean “authority over.” No explanation was given for why she said that the fathers vehemently argued for the meaning “source” when no reference she gave yielded any such vehement argument. No explanation was given for why she said the church fathers denied that Christ could be in a subordinate position relative to the Father when that very idea was seen several times in the actual references that she mentioned. No explanation was given for why she implied that the meaning “ruler, authority over” did not exist in the church fathers but failed to mention that Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon* gave just this sense in its first five definitions of the metaphor as applied to persons. And no response was given to the important new letter from the editor of the Liddell-Scott *Lexicon: Supplement*, to which we now turn.

## VII. RECENT LEXICOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING κεφαλή

1. *The letter from the editor of the Liddell-Scott Lexicon.* There have been some other recent developments regarding the meaning of κεφαλή. Of

considerable interest is a letter from the current editor of the *Supplement to the Liddell-Scott Lexicon*.

Most readers of this article will know that for several years a number of egalitarians have reinterpreted the verse, “for the husband is the head (κεφαλή) of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church” (Eph. 5:23). They were not inclined to agree that the husband’s role as “head” meant he had authority to lead in the marriage. As an alternative interpretation that removed the idea of authority, they have said that “head” really means “source,” because (they claimed) that is what the Greek word κεφαλή (“head”) meant in ancient Greek literature. They went on to say that if the word “head” means “source,” then there is no unique male authority in marriage and no male headship (in the commonly understood sense) taught in this verse or in the similar expression in 1 Corinthians 11:3.

A number of people did not find this explanation of “head” to be persuasive for Ephesians 5:23, because husbands are not the “source” of their wives in any ordinary sense of “source.” But egalitarians continued to make this claim nonetheless and have said “source” was a common sense for κεφαλή in Greek.

The one piece of supporting evidence in Greek-English lexicons was claimed from the *Greek-English Lexicon* edited by H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott and revised by Henry Stuart Jones (ninth edition; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968, 945). This was important because this lexicon has been the standard lexicon for all of ancient Greek for over 150 years. Part of the entry for κεφαλή in the Liddell-Scott-Jones *Lexicon* (LSJ) or simply Liddell-Scott) has the following headings:

II. 1. Of things, extremity

- a. In Botany
- b. In Anatomy
- c. Generally, *top*, *brim* of a vessel . . . *capital* of a column
- d. In plural, *source* of a river, Herodotus 4.91 (but singular, *mouth*); generally, *source*, *origin*, *Orphic Fragments* 21a; *starting point* [examples: the head of time; the head of a month].

Even this entry did not prove the egalitarian claim that a *person* could be called the “source” of someone else by using κεφαλή, because the major category for this lexicon entry had to do with the end-point of “things,” not with persons (but persons are in view in Ephesians 5:23, with Christ and a husband being called “head”).

In an article written in 1985, I argued that the reason κεφαλή could be applied to either the *source* or the *mouth* of a river was that in these cases κεφαλή was used in a fairly common sense to mean the end-point of something. In this way, the top of a column in a building was called the “head,” and the ends of the poles used to carry the Ark of the Covenant are called the “heads” of the poles in the Septuagint translation of 1 Kings 8:8. This is a natural and understandable extension of the word *head* since our heads are at the top or end of our bodies. In fact, this is what the editors of Liddell-Scott-Jones intended, for they placed the river examples as a subcategory under the general category, “of things, extremity.” In 1990 I wrote on this again and attempted to answer objections that had been brought against my 1985 article by several authors.<sup>78</sup>

In early 1997 I sent a copy of my 1990 article on κεφαλή to the editor of the Liddell-Scott lexicon in Oxford, England, so that their editorial team might at least consider the evidence and arguments in it. The *Lexicon* itself is not undergoing revision, but a Supplement is published from time to time. The current editor of the Liddell-Scott *Lexicon: Supplement*, P. G. W. Glare, responded in a personal letter dated April 14, 1997, which I quote here with his permission (*italics used for emphasis have been added*):

Dear Professor Grudem,

Thank you for sending me the copy of your article on κεφαλή. The entry under this word in LSJ is not very satisfactory. Perhaps I could draw your attention to a section of *Lexicographica Graeca* by Dr John Chadwick (OUP 1996), though he does not deal in detail with the Septuagint and NT material. I was unable to revise the longer articles in LSJ when I was preparing the latest Supplement, since I did not have the financial resources to carry out a full-scale revision.

I have no time at the moment to discuss all your examples individually and in any case *I am in broad agreement with your conclusions*. I might just make one or two generalizations. κεφαλή is the word normally used to translate the Hebrew **רֹאשׁ**, and this *does seem frequently to denote leader or chief* without much reference to its original anatomical sense, and here it *seems perverse to deny authority*. *The supposed sense ‘source’ of course does not exist* and it was at least unwise of

<sup>78</sup>Grudem, “Does *kephalē* (‘Head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature?” 43-44; and Grudem, “Meaning of *kephalē*,” 425-426, 432-433.

Liddell and Scott to mention the word. At the most they should have said ‘applied to the source of a river in respect of its position in its (the river’s) course’.

By NT times the Septuagint had been well established and one would only expect that a usage found frequently in it would come easily to such a writer as St. Paul. Where I would agree with Cervin is that in many of the examples, and I think all the Plutarch ones, we are dealing with similes or comparisons and the word itself is used in a literal sense. Here we are faced with the inadequacies of LSJ. If they had clearly distinguished between, for example, ‘the head as the seat of the intellect and emotions’ (and therefore the director of the body’s actions) and ‘the head as the extremity of the human or animal body’ and so on, these figurative examples would naturally be attached to the end of the section they belong to and the author’s intention would be clear. I hasten to add that in most cases the sense of the head as being the controlling agent is the one required and that *the idea of preeminence seems to me to be quite unsuitable*, and that there are still cases where κεφαλή can be understood, as in the Septuagint, in its transferred sense of head or leader.

Once again, thank you for sending me the article. I shall file it in the hope that one day we will be able to embark on a more thorough revision of the lexicon.

YOURS SINCERELY,  
PETER GLARE<sup>79</sup>

This must be counted a significant statement because it comes from someone who, because of his position and scholarly reputation, could rightly be called the preeminent Greek lexicographer in the world.

2. *Other recent evidence.* The book to which Glare refers also provides evidence for the meaning “end point” and not “source” for κεφαλή—namely, John Chadwick’s *Lexicographica Graeca: Contributions to the Lexicography of Ancient Greek*.<sup>80</sup> Chadwick, who before his recent death was a member of the Faculty of Classics at the University of Cambridge, says that his book “arose from working on the new supplement to Liddell and Scott as a member of the British Academy’s Committee appointed to supervise the project” (p. v). He says, “*kephalē* can mean simply *either extremity of a linear object*” (p. 181) and then quotes the two examples where it can refer to either end of a river (what we

<sup>79</sup>Personal letter from P. G. W. Glare to Wayne Grudem, April 14, 1997. Quoted by permission.

<sup>80</sup>Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

would call its “source” or its “mouth”). He then says the same variety of usage is found with Greek *archē*, which can mean either “beginning” or “end.” He explains, “in English a rope has two ends, in Greek two *archai*” (p. 181). Returning to *kephalē*, he mentions the quotation about Zeus from the *Orphic Fragments* 21a and says, “On the same principle as the rivers, it may also mean the *starting point*.”<sup>81</sup>

This analysis from Chadwick is consistent with the methodological warning that I cited from him early in this article, a warning that is relevant for the few examples where the sense of *κεφαλή* is unclear from the immediate context. It may be tempting to allow the meaning “source” in such examples, even though the context does not require it, but Chadwick says:

A constant problem to guard against is the proliferation of meanings. . . . It is often tempting to create a new sense to accommodate a difficult example, but we must always ask first, if there is any other way of taking the word which would allow us to assign the example to an already established sense. . . . As I have remarked in several of my notes, there may be no reason why a proposed sense should not exist, but is there any reason why it must exist?<sup>82</sup>

This does not mean that it is impossible that some persuasive examples of *κεφαλή* meaning “source” when used metaphorically of a person could turn up sometime in the future. If someone turns up new examples in the future, we will have to examine them at that point, to ask first whether they really mean “source,” and second, whether they mean “source” with no sense of authority (which would be necessary for the egalitarian understanding of Ephesians 5:23). But Chadwick’s warning does mean that our wisest course with a few ambiguous examples at the present time is to assign to them already established meanings if it is possible to do so without doing violence to the text in question. In the case of *κεφαλή*, the meanings “authority over” and “beginning” will fit *all* the ambiguous texts where “source” has been claimed as a meaning, and therefore (according to Chadwick’s principle) we should not claim the meaning “source” when it is not necessary in any text and not an “already established sense.”

<sup>81</sup>Chadwick, *Lexicographica Graeca*, 183, with reference to *Orphic Fragments* 21a; he also quotes in this regard *Placita*, 2.32.2.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 23–24.

Another analysis of κεφαλή from the perspective of modern linguistic principles is found in Max Turner, "Modern Linguistics and the New Testament," in *Hearing the New Testament*.<sup>83</sup> Turner, who is Director of Research and Senior Lecturer in New Testament at London Bible College, analyzes the texts where the meaning "source" has been claimed and shows that other, established senses are preferable in each case. He says that the meaning "source," as claimed by some, "is not recognized by the lexicons, and *we should consider it linguistically unsound*" (p. 167, italics added).

Finally, the primary lexicon for New Testament Greek, the Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*,<sup>84</sup> has now been replaced by a new, completely revised third edition, based on the sixth German edition. Due to the extensive work of Frederick W. Danker, this third edition is known as the Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich *Lexicon*, as announced at the 1999 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Boston. In that new lexicon the entry for κεφαλή includes these meanings: "a being of high status, *head*, fig. 2a. In the case of living beings, to denote superior rank. . . . 2b. Of things, *the uppermost part, extremity, end point*." (p. 542). No mention is made of the meaning "source."

3. *Is there any dispute in the lexicons about the meaning of κεφαλή?* Where does this leave us with regard to the dispute over κεφαλή in the ancient world? Up to this time, Liddell-Scott was the only Greek-English lexicon that even mentioned the possibility of the meaning "source" for κεφαλή.<sup>85</sup> All the other standard Greek-English lexicons for the New Testament gave meanings such as "leader, ruler, person in authority" and made no mention of the meaning "source" (see BAGD,

<sup>83</sup>Joel Green, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, and Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1995), 165-172.

<sup>84</sup>2nd edition; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979. This is a translation based on the fifth German edition of Bauer's *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1958).

<sup>85</sup>Professor Al Wolters has pointed out to me in private correspondence (December 7, 1997), however, that the recognition that Herodotus 4:91 gives to the "sources" of the Tearus River with the plural of κεφαλή is rather standard in Greek lexicons in other languages than English. I agree that κεφαλή is applied to the sources of the river in the Herodotus passage, but I would also agree with the analyses of Glare and Chadwick that this is simply an *application* of the word to the geographical end-points of a river and fits the common sense "extremity, end-point" for κεφαλή and should not be counted as an example of a new meaning, "source." (Wolters himself thinks the Herodotus reference is a result of semantic borrowing from Persian and so has a rather un-Greek character. This is certainly possible and would not be inconsistent with my understanding of κεφαλή.)

430; Louw-Nida, 1:739; also the older lexicons by Thayer, 345, and Craemer, 354; also TDNT, 3:363-372; as well as the sixth German edition of Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*,<sup>86</sup> 874-875; and most recently *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, edited by J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie,<sup>87</sup> 254; similarly, for the patristic period see Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 749, as cited above).

But now the editor of the only lexicon that mentioned the meaning “source” in any connection says that κεφαλή “does seem frequently to denote leader or chief . . . and here it seems perverse to deny authority” and that “The supposed sense ‘source’ of course does not exist.”

These recent developments therefore seem to indicate that there is no “battle of the lexicons” over the meaning of κεφαλή, but that the authors and editors of all the English lexicons for ancient Greek now agree (1) that the meaning “leader, chief, person in authority” clearly exists for κεφαλή, and (2) that the meaning “source” simply does not exist.

#### VIII. OTHER RECENT AUTHORS ON κεφαλή

At the end of this treatment of κεφαλή, it is appropriate to mention some recent discussions in commentaries and articles. Among the commentaries, most recent writers have agreed that the meaning “authority over” is the correct sense of κεφαλή when used in a metaphorical way to refer to one person as the “head” of another or of others.<sup>88</sup>

Among articles published since my 1990 analysis of κεφαλή, four in particular deserve mention. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “*kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3,”<sup>89</sup> thinks that the meaning “source” is appropriate in some extra-biblical passages, but he sees the meaning “leader, ruler,

<sup>86</sup>Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1988.

<sup>87</sup>Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996.

<sup>88</sup>Since I completed my 1990 article, the following commentaries have advocated the meaning “authority over” (or its equivalent) for κεφαλή in I Corinthians 11:3 or Ephesians 5:23: Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1990), 368-369 (“leader or ruler” in Eph. 1:22 and 5:23); Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 365-367; Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 208-209; and Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary; Cambridge: Apollos, and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 413-415. All of these commentators except O’Brien also say that the meaning “source” is a possible sense for κεφαλή but choose “leader, authority over” mainly from the force of the context in these passages. (Blomberg also notes that “authority” was the understanding of the vast majority of the church throughout history.) On the other hand, Walt Liefeld, *Ephesians* (IVP New Testament Commentary; Downers Grove, IL and Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 110, 144-145 is undecided among meanings “source,” “ruler,” and “prominent one,” all of which he sees as possible.

<sup>89</sup>*kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3,” 52-59.



person in authority” as more frequent and thinks this is clearly the sense in 1 Corinthians 11:3. After citing significant patristic testimony to the meaning “leader, ruler” in this verse, Fitzmyer says,

Given such a traditional interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3, one will have to marshal cogent and convincing arguments to say that Paul intended *kephalē* in that verse to mean “source” and not “one having authority over.” Those who have claimed that “source” is the meaning intended by Paul have offered no other argument than their claim that *kephalē* would not have meant “ruler, leader, one having authority over” in Paul’s day. The evidence brought forth above shows that it was certainly possible for a Hellenistic Jewish writer such as Paul to use the word in that sense. Hence, their argument has collapsed, and the traditional understanding has to be retained.<sup>90</sup>

Clinton E. Arnold, “Jesus Christ: ‘Head’ of the Church (Colossians and Ephesians),”<sup>91</sup> argues from first-century medical understanding that “the medical writers describe the head not only as the ruling part of the body, but also as the supply center of the body,”<sup>92</sup> which makes sense of the idea of the body being nourished through the head (as in Eph. 4:16) but in general supports the idea of “head” as “authority.”

Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Meaning and Metaphor in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33*,<sup>93</sup> has an entire chapter on “The ‘Head’ (κεφαλή) Metaphor” (122-149), in which he concludes that in Ephesians 1:22 and 5:22-24, the metaphor has the sense of “authority over.” But in Ephesians 4:15 he thinks it conveys the sense of “source of the body’s life and growth.”<sup>94</sup> (He does not think the idea of authority is absent from that usage either.) He thinks the metaphor in which a person is spoken of as “head” is a live metaphor, and the sense has to be determined from what first-century readers would normally have

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>91</sup>In *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1994), 346-366.

<sup>92</sup>Arnold, *ibid.*, 366.

<sup>93</sup>Leiden: Brill, 1998.

<sup>94</sup>He says that a live metaphor can take such a meaning in this context, “even if this sense is unusual” (147). Dawes says several times that one of the characteristics of a live metaphor is that it can take senses other than known, established senses, and in that way authors create new meaning.

understood as the function of a literal head in relation to the body. He thinks the idea of leadership and control was clearly understood, and the idea of nourishment and provision was also understood.

Andrew Perriman, “The Head of a Woman: The Meaning of κεφαλή in 1 Cor. 11:3,”<sup>95</sup> argues that the meaning is “that which is most prominent, foremost, uppermost, preeminent.” He raises several helpful objections against the meaning “source,” but is less successful in removing the sense of authority from several passages in which he wants to see only “prominence,” a sense that is not attested in the lexicons and not really required in any of the cases we have examined.

Anthony Thiselton,<sup>96</sup> in his massive and erudite recent commentary, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*,<sup>97</sup> deals with κεφαλή in his treatment of 1 Corinthians 11:3. After an extensive review of the literature and the comment that “The translation of this verse has caused more personal agony and difficulty than any other in the epistle” (p. 811), he rejects both the translation “source” and the translation “head” (which, he says, has inevitable connotations of authority in current English). He says, “In the end we are convinced by advocates of a third view, even if barely” (p. 811)—namely, the idea of Perriman and Cervin that the main idea is that of “synecdoche and preeminence, foremost, topmost serving interactively as a metaphor drawn from the physiological head” (p. 816).<sup>98</sup> So Thiselton translates 1 Corinthians 11:3:

*However, I want you to understand that while Christ is preeminent (or head? source?) in relation to man, man is foremost (or head? source) [sic] in relation to woman, and God is preeminent (or head? source?) in relation to Christ. (p. 800).*

His argument is that “head” (κεφαλή) is a “live metaphor” for Paul’s readers, and therefore it refers to a “polymorphous concept,” and that the word here has “multiple meanings” (p. 811). Since the actual

<sup>95</sup>*JETS* 45:2 (1994), 602-622.

<sup>96</sup>The following material interacting with Thiselton’s view has been added to this article since I first published it in *JETS* 44/1 (March 2001), 25-65.

<sup>97</sup>Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, and Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 2000), 800-822.

<sup>98</sup>He also claims Dawes, *The Body in Question: Meaning and Metaphor in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33* in support of this view, but he minimizes the conclusion of Dawes (cited above) that the idea of rule or authority is present in all the relevant metaphorical uses that Dawes examines in Ephesians, which is the focus of his study. Thiselton, in contrast to Dawes, is seeking for a translation that does not include the idea of rule or authority.

physical head of a person is what is most prominent or recognizable about a person, the metaphor of "head," Thiselton thinks, would convey "the notion of *prominence*; i.e., the most conspicuous or *topmost* manifestation of that for which the term also functions as *synecdoche for the whole*" (p. 821).

What is surprising, even remarkable, about Thiselton's treatment is that after his extensive reporting of material on κεφαλή in articles and lexicons, in the end he (like Cervin and Perriman before him) advocates a meaning for κεφαλή that is found in no Greek lexicon at all. Surely everyone would agree that in ordinary human experience a person's head is one prominent and visible part of the person (though one might argue that one's "face" is more prominent than the head generally); but in any case that does not prove that the word κεφαλή would have been used as a metaphor for "prominent part" in ancient Greek. Surely if such a meaning were evident in any ancient texts, we could expect some major lexicons to list it as a recognized meaning. Or else we should expect Thiselton to produce some ancient texts where the sense of "prominence" *absent any idea of authority* is clearly demonstrated. But we find neither.

And we suspect that there is something strange about a translation that cannot translate a simple noun meaning "head" with another noun (like "authority over" or even "source") but must resort to the convoluted and rather vague adjectival phrases, "prominent in relation to" and then "foremost in relation to."<sup>99</sup> Such phrases do not allow readers to notice the fact that even if Thiselton tried to translate the noun κεφαλή with a noun phrase representing his idea (for example, an expression like "prominent part"), it would produce the nonsensical statements, "Christ is the prominent part of man," "the man is the prominent part of the woman," and "God is the prominent part of Christ." Once we render Thiselton's idea in this bare-faced way, parallel to the way we would say that "the head is the prominent part of the body," the supposed connection with our physical heads and bodies falls apart, for while the head is a part of our physical body, a man is surely not a "part of a woman," nor is God a "part of Christ."

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<sup>99</sup>I realize there are times when a word used as a metaphor in another language simply cannot be translated directly into English without significant loss of meaning and significant addition of incorrect meaning, such as Philippians 1:8, where the RSV's "I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus" is necessary instead of the KJV's literal "I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." But even here, some roughly equivalent noun ("affection," or in Philemon 7, "hearts") is able to provide the necessary substitute.

Moreover, while Thiselton rightly notes that metaphors usually carry multiple layers of meaning in any language, that is not true of his translation. The Greek text contains a metaphor of the head in relation to the body. But Thiselton “translates” not the mere word but the metaphor itself in a way that renders only one component of meaning (or what he claims is one component of meaning), yet he himself had said that the metaphor has “multiple meanings.” In his rendering, there is no metaphor left for English readers, and no opportunity even to consider multiple meanings. But he says he cannot translate it simply as “head” because “in English-speaking contexts ‘the head’ almost always implies leadership and authority” (p. 817).

In fact, Thiselton’s translation “preeminent” creates more problems than it solves, because it imports a wrongful kind of male superiority into the text. To be “preeminent” means to be “superior to or notable above all others; outstanding” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 1997 edition, 1427). Does the Bible really teach that the man is “superior to” the woman? Or “notable above the woman”? Or “outstanding in comparison to the woman”? All of these senses carry objectionable connotations of male superiority, connotations that deny our equality in the image of God. And, when applied to the Father and the Son in the Trinity, they carry wrongful implications of the inferiority of the Son to the Father.

Perhaps a realization of the objectionable connotations of male superiority in the word “preeminent” made Thiselton unable even to use it consistently in translating κεφαλή in his rendering of 1 Corinthians 11:3:

However, I want you to understand that while Christ is preeminent (or *head? source?*) in relation to man, man is foremost (or *head? source?*) [sic] in relation to woman, and God is preeminent (or *head? source?*) in relation to Christ. (800)

But now what is gained by substituting the word “foremost”? Paul certainly cannot be speaking of location (as if a man always stands in front of a woman), for that would make no sense in this context. That leaves the sense “ahead of all others, especially in position or rank” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 711). But if it means “the man is ahead of the woman in position or rank,” then how has Thiselton avoided the

sense of authority, except by cautious circumlocution that confuses more than clarifies?

Perhaps most telling of all is the fact that the one idea that Thiselton labors so long to avoid, the idea of one person having authority over another, is the one idea that is present in *every* ancient example of the construction that takes the form “Person A is the head of person or persons B.” No counterexamples have ever been produced, so far as I am aware. It may be useful at this point to remind ourselves of what the ancient evidence actually says. Here are several examples:

1. David as King of Israel is called the “head” of the people he conquered (2 Sam. 22:44 [LXX 2 Kings 22:44]: “You shall keep me as the *head* of the Gentiles; a people which I knew not served me”; similarly, Psalm 18:43 [LXX 17:43]).

2. The leaders of the tribes of Israel are called “heads” of the tribes (1 Kings [LXX 3 Kings] 8:1 (Alexandrinus text): “Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the *heads* of the tribes” (similar statements in Aquila, Deut. 5:23; 29:9(10); 1 Kings [LXX 3 Kings] 8:1).

3. Jephthah becomes the “head” of the people of Gilead (Judg. 11:11, “the people made him *head* and leader over them”; also stated in 10:18; 11:8-9).

4. Pekah the son of Remaliah is the head of Samaria (Isa. 7:9, “the *head* of Samaria is the son of Remaliah”).

5. The father is the head of the family (Hermas, *Similitudes* 7.3; the man is called “the *head* of the house”).

6. The husband is the “head” of the wife (Eph. 5:23, “the husband is *head* of the wife even as Christ is *head* of the church”; compare similar statements found several times in Chrysostom as quoted above).

7. Christ is the “head” of the church (Col. 1:18, “He is the *head* of the body, the church”; also in Eph. 5:23).

8. Christ is the “head” of all things (Eph. 1:22, “He put all things under his feet and gave him as *head* over all things to the church”).

9. God the Father is the “head” of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3, “the *head* of Christ is God”).

In related statements using not metaphors but closely related similes, (1) the general of an army is said to be “like the head”: Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 2.1.3: In an army, “the light-armed troops are like the hands,

the cavalry like the feet, the line of men-at-arms itself like chest and breastplate, and the general is like the *head*.” Similarly, (2) the Roman Emperor is called the “head” of the people in Plutarch, *Galba* 4.3: “Vindix . . . wrote to Galba inviting him to assume the imperial power, and thus to serve what was a vigorous body in need of a *head*” (compare a related statement in Plutarch, *Cicero* 14.4). And (3) the King of Egypt is called “head” of the nation in Philo, *Moses* 2.30: “As the *head* is the ruling place in the living body, so Ptolemy became among kings.”

Then there are the additional citations from Chrysostom quoted earlier in this article, where (1) God is the “head” of Christ; (2) Christ is the “head” of the church; (3) the husband is the “head” of the wife; (4) Christ is the “head” of all things; (5) church leaders are the “head” of the church; and (6) a woman is the “head” of her maidservant. In all six of these cases, as we noted, he uses language of rulership and authority to explain the role of the “head” and uses language of submission and obedience to describe the role of the “body.”<sup>100</sup>

In addition, there are several statements from various authors indicating a common understanding that the physical head functioned as the “ruling” part of the body: (1) Plato says that the head “reigns over all the parts within us” (*Timaeus* 44.D). (2) Philo says, “the *head* is the ruling place in the living body” (*Moses* 2:30), and “the mind is *head* and ruler of the sense-faculty in us” (*Moses* 2.82), and “‘*Head*’ we interpret allegorically to mean the ruling part of the soul” (*On Dreams* 2.207), and “Nature conferred the sovereignty of the body on the *head*” (*The Special Laws* 184). (3) Plutarch says, “We affectionately call a person ‘soul’ or ‘*head*’ from his ruling parts” (*Table Talk* 7.7 [692.e.1]). Clint Arnold and Gregory Dawes, in the studies mentioned above, adduce other examples of the physical head seen as ruling or controlling the body in ancient literature. Though they find examples where the head or the brain are seen as the source of something as well, they do not claim that these examples can be understood to deny a simultaneous ruling or governing function to the physical head. If the physical head was seen as a source of something like nourishment, it also surely was seen to have control and governance over the physical body.

Regarding “head” as applied metaphorically to persons, to my knowledge no one has yet produced one text in ancient Greek litera-

<sup>100</sup>See my two previous articles on κεφαλή, mentioned at the beginning of this article, for additional references like the ones cited here.

ture (from the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.) where a person is called the κεφαλή ("head") of another person or group *and that person is not the one in authority over that other person or group*. The alleged meaning "prominent without authority," like the meaning "source without authority," now sixteen years after the publication of my 1985 study of 2,336 examples of κεφαλή, has still not been supported with *any* citation of *any* text in ancient Greek literature. Over fifty examples of κεφαλή meaning "ruler, authority over" have been found, but no examples of the meaning of "source without authority."

Of course, I would agree with Thiselton that in all of these cases the person who is "head" is also "prominent" in some sense. That is because some sense of prominence accompanies the existence of leadership or authority. And that overtone or connotation is not lost in English if we translate κεφαλή as "head," for in English the "head coach" or the "head of the company" or the "head of the household" has some prominence as well. But why must we try to *avoid* the one meaning that is represented in all the lexicons and is unmistakably present in every instance of this kind of construction, the idea of authority? One cannot *prove* that this great effort to avoid the idea of authority is due to the fact that male authority in marriage is immensely unpopular in much of modern culture, but we cannot help but note that it is in this current historical context that such efforts repeatedly occur.

In short, Thiselton has advocated a meaning that is unattested in any lexicon and unproven by any new evidence. It fails fundamentally in explaining the metaphor because it avoids the idea of authority, the one component of meaning that is present in every ancient example of κεφαλή that takes the form, "person A is the head of person(s) B."

Finally, some treatments of κεφαλή in egalitarian literature deserve mention. Several treatments have been remarkably one-sided, particularly in their habit of failing even to mention significant literature on another side of this question.<sup>101</sup> Grace Ying May and Hyunhye Pokrifka Joe in a 1997 article, "Setting the Record Straight," say, "the word translated 'head' in Corinthians and Ephesians does not suggest male authority over women. . . . Paul . . . defines 'head' (*kephalē* in

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<sup>101</sup>Kroeger herself is one example of this. Though she does cite my 1985 article in her bibliography, along with Richard Cervin's 1989 response to that study, she surprisingly does not mention my much longer 1990 study, which includes a lengthy response to Cervin, though the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* was published in 1993.

Greek) as the ‘origin’ of beings.”<sup>102</sup> More remarkable is an article by Judy Brown, professor of church ministries at Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri. Writing in the fall of 1999, Brown says of Ephesians 5:23, “the only thing that matters is the meaning of ‘head’ in first-century Greek, the language of Paul’s letter. The evidence is overwhelming that the word meant ‘source, supply’ as in the ‘fountainhead or headwaters of a stream or river.’”<sup>103</sup> Rebecca Groothuis in *Good News for Women* ignores the most significant opposing literature in the same way.<sup>104</sup> However, not all egalitarian treatments have been one-sided in the literature they mention. For example, Craig Keener, *Paul, Women, Wives*,<sup>105</sup> quotes significant treatments from both sides and says that “authority” is a possible sense for κεφαλή and thinks that would have been the acceptable sense in the culture to which Paul wrote.<sup>106</sup>

We may hope that articles and commentaries written in the future will take into account an increasing consensus in the major lexicons that the meaning “authority over” is firmly established for κεφαλή, and that the meaning “source,” as Peter Glare says, “does not exist.”

#### IX. A NOTE ON ACCURACY IN ACADEMIC WORK

One final comment should be made about the widely influential article on “head” with which we began. This article by Catherine Kroeger in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, a major reference work, should be troubling to those who care about accuracy in scholarly work. The article is peppered with references to extra-biblical literature and therefore gives the appearance of careful scholarship. But only someone with

<sup>102</sup>*Priscilla Papers* 11/1 (Winter 1997), 3. In their footnotes on p. 9, only articles on κεφαλή representing the “source” interpretation are even mentioned, in spite of the fact that this 1997 article was published long after my 1985 and 1990 articles, and after Fitzmyer’s 1993 article. When a writer gives readers access to only one side of the argument, it does not suggest confidence that one’s position would be more persuasive if readers knew about arguments on both sides.

<sup>103</sup>Judy Brown, “I Now Pronounce You Adam and Eve,” *Priscilla Papers* 13/4 (Fall 1999), 2-3. In the next sentence she refers readers to the literature on this question, but mentions only writings by Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen (1986), Gilbert Bilezikian (1985), Gordon Fee (1987), and herself (1996). It is difficult to explain how Brown, as a college professor, could either be unaware of major studies on the other side of this question or else be aware of them and intentionally fail to mention them at all, and yet say that the evidence is “overwhelming” in favor of the meaning “source.”

<sup>104</sup>Rebecca Groothuis, *Good News for Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997) favors the meaning “source” (151) but does not even mention my studies or those of Fitzmyer in her endnotes (252-254, n. 13). Such oversight, whether intentional or accidental, does not inspire confidence that Groothuis’s consideration of the matter has been thorough or careful.

<sup>105</sup>Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 34.



access to a major research library, the ability to translate extensive passages from untranslated ancient Greek literature, and many days free for such research could ever have discovered that this is not careful scholarship. In fact, in several sections its disregard of facts is so egregious that it fails even to meet fundamental requirements of truthfulness.

With respect to patristic material, the striking new quotation that she said was from Chrysostom does not exist. Her claims for the meaning of κεφαλή in Chrysostom are proven false by numerous statements in Chrysostom's writings. The other patristic references that she cites either give clear support to the meaning "leader, authority over" or else are ambiguous. She fails to mention that Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, on the page on which several of her references are found, does not give the meaning "source," which she claims for κεφαλή. She also fails to mention that the meaning "chief, superior" or its equivalent occurs five times on that same page as the primary metaphorical meaning that attaches to κεφαλή when it is used of persons.

With respect to classical Greek material, of the fourteen sources she cites to prove "the classical view of head as source," four do not even contain the term κεφαλή. Of the remaining ten, only three are from the pre-New Testament "classical" period in Greek. No dates were provided for any references, some of which came from the third, fifth, and even ninth century A.D. Several references were cited in such obscure ways that they took literally days to locate. Six of the references repeat the same sentence about Zeus, in which Zeus is seen as the "beginning" or "first in a series," but not as the "source." Two of the references actually speak of "head" as "leader, one in authority." Several of the sentences use κεφαλή with ἀρχή, but the ambiguity of ἀρχή makes them inconclusive as evidence, and the clear use of ἀρχή in Chrysostom and others to mean "ruler" suggests this as a possible meaning in the ambiguous texts as well. In sum, no evidence clearly demonstrated the meaning "source," and several pieces of evidence argued against it.

In terms of accuracy with sources, only fourteen of the twenty-four references cited were both accurate citations and contained the word κεφαλή, "head."

Then in her 1998 response to all of these concerns about accuracy, rather than correcting these errors, Dr. Kroeger gave yet another citation from Chrysostom that, when checked, showed that she had omitted contrary evidence that was at the beginning, middle, and end of the

very passage she cited. Sadly, this is not the first time concerns have been raised about the trustworthiness of materials written by this author.<sup>107</sup>

People who read reference books have a right to expect that they will be basically trustworthy, and that where evidence is cited it will, if checked, provide clear support for the points being claimed. When one does check the evidence in an article and it turns out to be unreliable, that undermines confidence in the trustworthiness of the author, editors, and publisher who have produced the work. Because this topic has been so controversial, one would expect that those responsible for the volume would have taken particular care to ensure accuracy. But did anyone check any of this evidence? Did any editor at IVP?<sup>108</sup>

Yet the primary responsibility for this article rests with Dr. Kroeger, and the article is troubling at its core, not only for what it claims, but for the model of scholarly work that it puts forth. The scholarly task is an exciting one, especially in the area of biblical studies. But it is too large for any one person, and scholarship can be advanced in a helpful way when we are able to read and benefit from one another's work. Even when we disagree with the conclusions of an article, we should be able to expect that the citations of evidence are fundamentally reliable.

But the lack of care in the use of evidence as manifested in this article, if followed by others, would throw the scholarly process into decline. We would wonder if we could trust anything that was claimed by anyone else unless we checked the original data for ourselves. For most topics there would never be time to do this, and thus all the gains of scholarship in our major reference books would no longer be useful, for neither scholars nor laypersons would know if any reference works could be trusted.

Such a threat to the trustworthiness of facts cited in academic articles and reference books is a far more serious matter than the meaning of an individual Greek word, even a word as important as *κεφαλή*. We may differ for our whole lives on the *interpretation* of facts, for that is the nature of the scholarly task. But if our citations of the facts themselves cannot be trusted, then the foundations are destroyed.

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<sup>107</sup>See Albert Wolters's review of Catherine and Richard Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992) in *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): "... their book is precisely the sort of thing that has too often given evangelical scholarship a bad name. . . . there is a host of subordinate detail that is misleading or downright false" (209-210). See also Stephen Baugh's review of the same book in *WTJ* 56 (1994), 153-171, in which he says that the book "wanders widely from the facts" (155), is "wildly anachronistic" (163), and "contains outright errors of fact" (165).

<sup>108</sup>The editorial work for this volume was done by InterVarsity Press in the United States. The volume was also published (but not edited) by Inter-Varsity Press in the United Kingdom (IVP-UK), a separate company.