

The meanings of *kephalē* (“head”) and *hypotassō* (“submit to”):
After 30 years of controversy, where are we?
Wayne Grudem

Note: will not discuss *hypotassō* (entire time on *kephalē*)

Introduction:

1. This word “head” is crucial for understanding Eph. 5:22-23: “Wives, *submit* to your own husbands . . . For the husband is the *head* of the wife”
2. Also important for 1 Cor. 11:3: “the *head* of a wife is her husband, and the *head* of Christ is God.”

Q: does *kephalē* “head” mean “authority over” or “source” or (more recently) “prominent, preeminent”

A. 30 years ago: my 1985 article

1. W. Grudem, “Does *kephalē* (“head”) Mean “Source” or “Authority Over” in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *Trinity Journal* 6 NS (Spring 1985), 38-59.

2. Resulting controversy over *kephalē* at 1986 ETS annual meeting (Atlanta)

[+ plenary debate at ETS Atlanta 1986: WG, G Bilezikian, C. Kroeger, A Spencer, David Scholer, Walter Liefeld]

3. Later papers

“The Meaning of *kephalē* (“Head”): A Response to Recent Studies,” *Trinity Journal* 11NS (Spring, 1990), 3-72.

[reprinted in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 425-68.]

“The Meaning of *kephalē*, (“head”): An Analysis of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” *JETS* 44/1 (March, 2001), 25-65. [read paper at ETS, Santa Clara, CA, 1997]

- several responses to these articles

Conclusion of this paper:

7 of 7 Gk lexicons now give “authority over, ruler” as a meaning of *kephalē*

0 of 7 now give “source” as a meaning of *kephalē* (w/ correction from ed. of LS)

0 of 7 have ever given “prominent, preeminent” as meaning of *kephalē*

In all of ancient Greek literature, in every example that takes the form, “Person A is the *kephalē* of Person or Group B,” Person A has authority over Person or Group B.

56 examples have been discovered showing *kephalē* w/ meaning of “authority over, leader, ruler”

0 examples have ever been discovered where the sense “source without governing authority” would fit the context.

0 examples have ever been discovered where the sense “prominent or preeminent person without governing authority” would fit the context.

0.

No one has yet produced one text in ancient Greek literature (from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD) where a person is called the *kephalē* (“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 30 years after the publication of my 1985 study of 2,336 examples of *kephalē*, has still not been supported with *any* citation of *any* text in ancient Greek literature. Over 50 examples of *kephalē* meaning “ruler, authority over” have been found, but no examples of the meaning of “source without authority” or “prominent person w/o authority”

In spite of this overwhelming weight of evidence, several commentaries and reference works continue to argue for “source” or “preeminent person” instead of “authority over” in key texts on marriage, including esp.:

111 Cor 11:3: “I want you to know that the *head* of every man is Christ, and the *head* of the woman is the man, and the *head* of Christ is God.” (1st cent. A.D.).

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph 5:22-24 ESV)

4. Now:: 30 years after my first article on *kephalē*: Where do we stand?

B. Greek lexicons

1. BDAG (2000), 542:

2. A being of high status, *head* (a) in the case of living beings, to denote superior rankOf the father as head of the family.... Of the husband in relation to his wife.... Of Christ in relation to the Christian community.... But Christ is the head... Of the universe as a whole... And of every cosmic power (b) of things *the uppermost part, extremity, end, point*

“source” not mentioned. “prominent” not mentioned

(The sixth edition of Walter Bauer’s *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1988), on pages 874-875, lists for *kephalē* no such meaning as “source” but does give the meaning “Oberhaupt” (“chief, leader”) (p. 874-875).

2. Frederick Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 200: (b) in transferred sense of (a) [an anatomical term], as directing agent within a ranking system 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18

3. Louw-Nida: Johannes P. Louw and Eugene E. Nida, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988): “one who is of supreme or pre-eminent status, in view of authority to order or command—’one who is the head of, one who is superior to, one who is supreme over” Ephesians 4:15... 1 Corinthians 11:3 (vol. 1, p. 739)

4. Lust, J., E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996), 254: “head, leader”

5. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (1961), page 749:

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

6. T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), “he who or that which plays a leading role: in a societal group (?)” 396

7. Liddell-Scott: *Greek-English Lexicon* edited by H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, and revised by Henry Stuart Jones (ninth edition; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968; revision of 9th edition of 1940), p. 945:

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 *kephalē*, 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 *kephalē* could be applied to either the *source* or the *mouth* of a river was that in these cases *kephalē* 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 sub-category 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.⁷⁷

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):

[short form of letter:]

“1The entry under this word in LSJ is not very satisfactory. . . . 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 *rosh* 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*.” (From a personal letter from P. G. W. Glare to Wayne Grudem, April 14, 1997. Italics added. Quoted by permission.)

⁷⁷Grudem, "Does *kephalē* ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature?" 43-44, and Grudem, "Meaning of *kephalē*," 425-426, 432-433.

[Longer form of letter:]

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 *Var*, 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 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

8. Summary of lexicons:

“authority over, ruler, leader”: 6 of 7, but w/ P. Glare letter: 7 of 7

“source”: 1 of 7 (LS) but under heading, “of things, extremity”
applied to source of river in plural, but applied to mouth of river in singular
person as “source”: 0
now w/ P. Glare letter: “source” 0 of 7

“pre-eminent, prominent”: 0 of 7

C. Actual citations from ancient literature

I. Literal “head” said to rule over body

(1) Although Plato does not use the word κεφαλή explicitly to refer to a human ruler or leader, he does say (in the text quoted earlier), that “the head . . . is the most divine part and the one that reigns over all the parts within us” (*Timaeus* 44D). This sentence does speak of the head as the ruling part of the body and therefore indicates that a metaphor that spoke of the leader or ruler of a group of people as its “head” would not have been unintelligible to Plato or his hearers (5th/4th cent. B.C.).

(2) Philo, *On Dreams* 2.207: “‘Head’ we interpret allegorically to mean the ruling (≡γεμόνα) part of the soul” (1st cent. A.D.).

(3) Philo, *Moses* 2.82: “The mind is head and ruler (≡γεμόνικον) of the sense-faculty in us” (1st cent. A.D.).

(4) 1Philo, *The Special Laws* 184: “Nature conferred the sovereignty of the body on the head” (1st cent. A.D.).

(5-6) Plutarch, *Table Talk* 6.7 (692.E.1): “We affectionately call a person ‘soul’ or ‘head’ from his ruling parts.” Here the metaphor of the head ruling the body is clear, as is the fact that the head controls the body in *Table Talk* 3.1 (647.C): “For pure wine, when it attacks the *head* and severs the body from the control of the mind, distresses a man” (1st/2nd cent. A.D.).

II. “Head” as a simile for leader

(1) Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 2.1.3: In an army, “The light-armed troops are like the hands, the cavalry like the feet, the line of 1men-at-arms itself like chest and breastplate, and the general is like the *head*” (1st/2nd cent. A.D.).

III. Examples of *kephalē* meaning “authority over / ruler” (where a person in authority is metaphorically called the *head* of others under his authority)

(56 exx in EFBT, Appx)

(6) Judges 11:11, LXX: “So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and all the people made him *head* and leader over them” (2nd cent. B.C.).

(7) 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 22:44, LXX: David says to God, “You shall keep me as the *head* of the Gentiles: a people which I knew not served me” (2nd cent. B.C.).

(8) 3 Kings (1 Kings) 8:1 (A), LXX: “Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel with all the *heads* of the tribes” (2nd cent. B.C.).

(9) Psalm 17 (18):43, LXX: David says to God, “You will make me *head* of the Gentiles: a people whom I knew not served me” (2nd cent. B.C.).

(16) Lamentations 1:5, LXX: [of Jerusalem] “Her foes have become the *head*, her enemies prosper, because the Lord has made her suffer for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe” (2nd cent. B.C.).

(17-19) 11 Cor 11:3: “I want you to know that the *head* of every man is Christ, and the *head* of the woman is the man, and the *head* of Christ is God.” (1st cent. A.D.).

(20) Eph 1:22: “He has put all things under his feet and has made him the *head* over all things for the church” (1st cent. A.D.).

(22-23) Eph 5:22–24: “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the *head* of the wife as Christ is the *head* of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands” (1st cent. A.D.).

Q: (21) Eph 4:15: “We are to grow up in every way into him who is the *head*, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love” (1st cent. A.D.).

ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, ¹⁶ ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφ᾽ ἧς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ. (Eph 4:15 BGT)

Q: does kephalē mean “source” here?

A: If so, why not propose another new meaning, “recipient”? (we “grow up into him”)

→ we aren’t free to invent a new def. for a term when it is not necess. to understand the sentence

→ something functioning as a source does not imply the word “head” means “source”

Put “ruler” here:

“We are to grow up in every way into him who is the ruler, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love”

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?³⁸

(25) Col 2:10: “And you have come to fullness of life in him, who is the *head* of all rule and authority” (1st cent. A.D.).

(26) Col 2:18–19: “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the *Head*, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God” (1st cent. A.D.).

(27) Josephus, *War* 4.261: Jerusalem is the “*head* of the whole nation” (1st cent. A.D.).

(28) 1Philo, *Moses* 2.30: “As the *head* is the ruling place in the living body, so Ptolemy [Ptolemy Philadelphos] became among kings” (1st cent. A.D.).

(29-30) 1Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments* 125: “The virtuous one, whether single man or people, will be the *head* of the human race and all the others will be like the parts of the body which are animated by the powers in and above the *head*” (1st cent. A.D.).

(33) 1Plutarch, *Galba* 4.3: “Vindex ... wrote to Galba inviting him to assume the imperial power, and thus to serve what was a vigorous body in need of a *head*” (1st/2nd cent. A.D.).

(34) 1Hermas, *Similitudes* 7.3: The man is told that his family “cannot be punished in any other way than if you, the *head* of the house, be afflicted” (2nd cent. A.D.).

(40) 1Athanasius, *Work 005*, 89.2.3 (NPNF series 2, vol. 4, p. 147; 1TLG, Athanasius, *Work 005*, 89.2.3.): He refers to “the bishops of illustrious cities,” as “the *heads* of great churches” (4th cent. A.D.).

(41) Chrysostom, *1Homily 26 on 1 Corinthians* (NPNF series 1, vol. 12, p. 156; 1TLG *Work 156*, 61.222.49 to 61.222.54): “1Consider 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*, 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” (4th cent. A.D.).

(53) Chrysostom, *1Homily 20 on Ephesians* (NPNF series 1, vol. 13, pp. 146-147; 1TLG *Work 159*, 62.140.51 to 62.141.13): “1The wife is a second authority 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 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.” [second example not counted because it refers to physical head in the body] (4th cent. A.D.)

³⁸John Chadwick, *Lexicographica Graeca: Contributions to the Lexicography of Ancient Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 23-24.

(56) Chrysostom, *1 Homily 15 on Ephesians* (NPNF series 1, vol. 13, p. 12; 1TLG Work 159, 62.110.21 to 62.110.25): “1‘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. Yea, and if she remain incorrigible, yea, though she steal, take care of thy goods, and do not punish her so much.” [a woman is called the *head* of her maidservant] (4th cent. A.D.).

D. The meanings

1. “authority over” is clearly established by over 50 examples
 2. person as “source”: No lexicon includes this meaning b/c no example in any period of Greek requires it.
 3. “prominent, preeminent, foremost” “one who is preeminent”: No lexicon includes this meaning b/c no example in any period of Greek requires it.
- Q: → where is one example where a person is called “head” of a person or group and that person is not in a position of authority over the other person or group?

E. Commentaries

1. Eph. 5:23: 11 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph 5:22-24 ESV)

- a. Authority over, leader: - nearly all the major commentaries since 1990: 9
Lincoln, 1990
Bruce, 1995
O’Brien, 1999
Hoehner, 2002
Klein, 2006
Witherington, 2007
Larkin, 2009
Chapell, 2009
Arnold, 2010
Thielman, 2010
- b. “Source”: 0
- c. “Prominence”: Liefeld (IVPNTC), 1997 (p. 144)

2. 1 Cor. 11:3: But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

- a. Authority over: 5
Kistemaker, 1993
Barnett, Paul, 2000

Fitzmyer (AB), 2008 (mildly, w/ ref. to other views)
Ciampa and Rosner (PNTC), 2010
Taylor, Mark (NAC), 2014 (mildly; reports other views)

b. "Source": 1

Fee (NIC), 1987

Fee, Discov. Bibl. Equality, 2004: source/ ground

c. "Prominent, preeminent, honored member": 7

Blomberg, 1995 "honored or prominent part" (92)

Thiselton (NIGTC), 2000 "preeminent, foremost" (811-823)

Garland (BECNT), 2003 "one who is preeminent" (516)

Marshall, I. H., Disc. Bib. Equality, 2004: hard to classify:

"prominent, preeminent, ground of being" (198), but then says in first century context submission is appropriate (199, 201), though explains why it is not appropriate for all time in all cultures; the meaning "source" is not persuasive (198)

Johnson, Alan (IVPNTC), 2004 "honored member, honored source of the pair" (191)

Keener, 2005 "honored part" (92)

Silva, NIDNTTE, 2014 "a person having priority or preeminence"

"source/origin" is not supported by lexical graphical evidence, but "ruler" is used of ruler over groups, seems odd to speak of head over individual person (2:672)

→ but: not odd: many patristic examples, several unambig. NT exx (Eph 5:23 compares Ct as head of church to husband as head of wife – shows not odd for Paul)

F. Objections to the meaning "prominent or honored part, honored member"

1. Found in no lexicon (therefore apparently required by no ancient text)
2. Removes the one component of meaning that is found in every single ancient example where person A is head of person or group B:
person A is in authority over B
3. Involves linguistic sleight-of-hand: changes known to adjective, then supplies noun
"the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God"

the "leader of/authority over" of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

if: head means prominent, preeminent, honored"

but: these are adjectives: "the preeminent of a wife is her husband" ??

Therefore supply noun: "member"

The "preeminent member of a wife is her husband" -- doesn't work: husband is not a member of his wife

The "honored member of a wife is her husband" – doesn't work: husband is not a member of his wife

perhaps this is why no lexicon includes this meaning. It's not how lexicography works.

4. More detailed analysis of Thiselton, 1 Cor. (2000):

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). 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).

What is surprising, even remarkable, about Thiselton’s treatment is that after his extensive reporting of material on $\delta\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ in articles and lexicons, in the end he advocates a meaning for $\delta\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ which 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, and “nose” is the most prominent part of the face), but in any case that does not prove that the word $\delta\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ 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.” Such phrases do not allow readers to notice the fact that even if Thiselton tried to translate the noun $\delta\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ 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,” and “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.”

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 it no longer a metaphor but an explanation of only one possible component of meaning - “man is foremost in relation to woman,” 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.

Why did he make this move? He says he cannot translate it simply as “head” because “in English-speaking contexts ‘the head’ almost always implies leadership and authority” (p. 817).

So he is removing the one component of meaning (leadership and authority) that is present in every single example of person A being the “head” of person or group B.

Regarding “head” as applied metaphorically to persons, to my knowledge no one has yet produced one text in ancient Greek literature (from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD) where a person is called the *kephalē* (“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 30 years after the publication of my 1985 study of 2,336 examples of *kephalē*, has still not been supported with *any* citation of *any* text in ancient Greek literature. Over 50 examples of *kephalē* 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 *kephalē* as “head,” for also in English the “head coach” or the “head of the company” or the “head of the household” has some prominence as well.

→ 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?

G. Dictionary of Paul and His Letters:

1. C. Kroeger article, “Head” (1993, Kindle 2009)
 - a. Head = “source”

“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).”

“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, *Eccl. Theol.* 1.11.2-3; 2.7.1) and even Eusebius, *Eccl. 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.”

- b. I analyzed extensively in 2001 article in JETS, and Appendix in 2001 EFBT.
 - numerous examples of erroneous citations, references that on inspection do not even contain the term *kephalē*, deceptive omissions of crucial information, and outright false statements
 - unfortunately, this article in DPL, a standard reference work, has never been corrected by IVP

H. Significance for theology and ethics

1. Ethics: Is there an authority that belongs to husbands and not to wives in marriage? (Eph. 5:23)
Yes, according to Eph. 5:23 and 1 Cor. 11:3

2. Theology: Is there an authority that belongs to the Father and not to the Son in the Trinity? (1 Cor. 11:3)

Yes, according to 1 Cor. 11:3