

Church Fathers Explain “Head” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 as “Source”

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* = advance PowerPoint slide

* The meaning of κεφαλή (head) in 1 Corinthians 11:3 has crucial implications for male-female relationships and trinitarian theology. This workshop will demonstrate that church fathers overwhelmingly explain that “head” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 means “source.” These include Cyril of Alexandria, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Athanasius, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, Eusebius, Photius, Chrysostom and “Ambrosiaster.”

I will then show how *head* meaning *source* makes sense of the entire passage but that *head* meaning *leader* or *preeminence* does not.

I will then examine the six reasons most often given to refute that *head* means *source*.

* Church fathers overwhelmingly explain that all three instances of κεφαλή (the Greek word for “head”) in 1 Corinthians 11:3 mean *source*, not *authority*, even though they teach elsewhere that women are inferior to and subordinate to men.¹ They interpret κεφαλή either actively as the “ultimate source, first cause, Creator” (PGL 234–35 ἀρχή I.C.7 and I.D.1) or simply “a place, person, or thing from whom something comes”² (PGL 234 ἀρχή I.C.3).

* Cyril of Alexandria (died 444), *de recta fide ad Arcadium et Marinam* 1.1.5.5(2).63 writes:

¹ E.g., Chrysostom, “woman’s inferiority,” *NPNF*¹ 12:151.4: “We are ordained to rule over them [women],” *NPNF*¹ 13:116; “The wife is a second authority. Let not her then demand equality for she is under the head” *NPNF*¹ 13:146; Irenaeus, “subordinate,” *ANF* 1:573.

² Oxford Languages, languages.oup.com.

the source (ἀρχή) of man [is] the Creator God (τὸν ποιήσαντα Θεόν). Thus we say that “the head (κεφαλή) of every man is Christ,” for man was made (πεποίηται) through him and brought into existence (παρήχθη πρὸς γένεσιν) ... “And the head (κεφαλή) of woman is the man,” because she was taken out of his flesh and so indeed has him as her source (ἀρχή). Similarly, “the head (κεφαλή) of Christ is God,” because he is from (ἐκ) him according to nature: for the Word was begotten out of God the Father.³

Cyril’s apposition, “the ἀρχή of man, the Creator God,” requires that ἀρχή means “source” and that God as Creator is the source of man. The immediately following, “Thus we say that ‘the κεφαλή of every man is Christ,’ for man was made through him and brought into existence” also makes it unmistakable that κεφαλή means “source.” Similarly, Cyril specifies that both κεφαλή and ἀρχή mean “source” in, “‘And the κεφαλή of woman is the man,’ because she was taken out of his flesh and so indeed has him as her ἀρχήν.” Cyril clarifies that κεφαλή also means “source” in the third pair by the immediately following, “Similarly, ‘the κεφαλή of Christ is God,’ because He is from Him according to nature: **for** the Word was begotten out of God the Father.”

* Cyril of Alexandria, in another work, *de recta fide ad Pulcheriam et Eudociam* 5².131D repeatedly identifies “head” κεφαλή with ἀρχή and explains that both mean *source*:

Of our race he became the first head (κεφαλή), which is source (τουτέστιν ἀρχή),... Christ ... has been appointed head (κεφαλή), which is source (τουτέστιν ἀρχή), of those who through him are being formed anew ... he himself our source (ἀρχή), which is head (τουτέστιν κεφαλή) ... For the Word, by nature God, was begotten from him. Because the head κεφαλή means the source (ἡ κεφαλή

³ ACO 1.1.5, 76, lines 20 ff.; J. Aubert, *Cyrilli Opera* (6 vols.; Paris: Magna Navis, 1638), 5².63E. Translations are by this author unless otherwise noted.

σημαίνει τὴν ἀρχήν) ... [T]he man is said to be the head (κεφαλή) of woman, for she was taken out of (ἐκ) him.⁴

Cyril explains “was begotten from Him. Because the head means the source (τὴν ἀρχήν) ...” This explains “head” κεφαλή as ἀρχή in the sense of the source from whom the Word was begotten. Similarly, Cyril explains, “the man is said to be the ‘head’ κεφαλή of woman, for she was taken out of him.” This clarifies that “head” κεφαλή means the “source” from whom woman was taken.

* Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* 11:3 writes:

we regard Adam head (κεφαλή), from (ἐκ) whom we have received existence ... we regard Christ head (κεφαλή), from (ἐκ) whom we have existence free from suffering. He speaks similarly of the woman from the man, since she has received existence from him.⁵

Theodore’s three repetitions of the phrases “from whom” and “received existence” explain each instance of “head” κεφαλή to mean the *source* of existence.

* Athanasius (ca. 296–373) quotes an Arian document, *Symb. Sirm. 1 anath.* 26 (PG 26:740B):

For the head (κεφαλή), which is the source (ἀρχή) of all things, is the Son; and the head (κεφαλή), which is the source (ἀρχή) of Christ is God; for thus we reverently lift up all things to the One without beginning, the source (ἀρχή) of everything that exists through the Son [1 Cor 8:6].

* Athanasius, *Syn. Armin.* 26.3.35 quotes an “Macrostich” Arian Confession (344 CE) declaring:

⁴ ACO 1.1.5, 28, lines 17 ff.; Aubert, *Cyrolli* 5².131D.

⁵ K. Staab, ed., *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben: Fragmenta commentarii in Rom–2 Cor. (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 15; Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), 544–83, at 567.1–2; PG 66.888C.*

“the Son to have 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 source (ἀρχή)— ‘The head (κεφαλή) of Christ is God.’”⁶

This statement’s “generated him as his source (ἀρχή)” specifies the sense of “source.” Because God created all things through Christ (1 Cor. 8:6), they together are the source of everything that exists.

* Cosmas Indicopleustes, (sixth century) *Topographia Christiana* 5.209 (PG 88:224A) writes similarly:

For just as Adam is head (κεφαλή) of all people in this world, *because* he is their cause (αἴτιος) and father, in this way also is the Lord Christ according to the flesh head (κεφαλή) of the church and the father of the age to come.

Cosmas Indicopleustes’s explanation that “Adam is head (κεφαλή) of all people in this world, *because* he is their cause (αἴτιος)” makes it clear that he intended “head” κεφαλή here to mean “the source of their existence.” “In this way also” clarifies that similarly, Christ is “head,” κεφαλή, namely the *source* of the church.

* This isn’t just my interpretation. *The Patristic Greek Lexicon PGL* 749 II.C.4 confirms that the meaning of κεφαλή in five of the passages I just cited is the “equivalent of ἀρχή.” *PGL* 235 lists ἀρχή in the first Athanasius passage I cited under ‘*First Cause, Creator,*’ a subheading under “*beginning, source, principle.*”

* This subheading also quotes both Cyrilus Hierosolymitanus (died 386), *catech.* 11.14, “Neither is the source (ἀρχή) two. But the Father is head (κεφαλή)

⁶ Hans-Georg Opitz, ed., *Athanasius Werke: Die Apologien* (Auftrage der Kirchenväter-Kommission der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1940), 2,1:254–56.

of the Son, the source (ἀρχή) is one.” It also cites here Eusebius (ca. 265–339), *Eccl. Theol.* 1.11.2–3:

The great apostle teaches that God is head of the Son himself, and the Son of the church, in one place saying, “God is the head of Christ,” and in another saying concerning the Son, “and he gave him, head over all things, to the church, which is his body.” Therefore, he [the Son] would be the originator (ἀρχηγός) and head (κεφαλή) of the church, and the Father of him [the Son]. Thus, the one God is Father of the only begotten Son, and the one head (κεφαλή) even of Christ himself. Since there is one source (ἀρχή) and head (κεφαλή), how could there be two gods? Is not that one alone, the one above whom no one is higher? Neither does he [the Son] claim any other cause (αἴτιος) of himself, but he has acquired the familial, unbegun, unbegotten deity from the monarchical authority, and he [God] has given to the Son his own divinity and life; who through him caused all things to exist.

* Eusebius explains that Christ is “the originator (ἀρχηγός) and head (κεφαλή) of the church, and the Father of him.” Eusebius confirms that he is using κεφαλή to mean *creative source* in several ways. He calls the Son the *originator* and *head* of the church. He draws the clear parallel between “the Son being the originator and head of the church and the Father of the Son.” He explains this “since there is one source (ἀρχή) and head (κεφαλή).” He states that the Father is the “cause (αἴτιος)” of Christ. Eusebius continued this focus on creative source by affirming, “who through him [the Son] caused all things to exist.”

* Photius (ninth century) sums up explanations by earlier Greek fathers that “head” κεφαλή in 1 Cor 11:3 means *source*:

“For Christ is the head (κεφαλή) of us who believe ... being made by him ... But the head (κεφαλή) of Christ is the Father, as begetter (γεννητής) and originator (προβολεύς) and of like substance with him. And the head

(κεφαλή) of the woman is the man because he is her begetter (γεννητήης) and originator (προβολεύς) and of like substance with her.”⁷

* Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theophylact criticize Arian misuse of 1 Cor 11:3 to subordinate the present or eternal Christ to the Father. Chrysostom (died 407), *Hom. in ep. 1 ad Cor.* 26β (PG 61:214; *NPNF*¹ 12:150–51) argues against heretics who read from this passage “that He [Christ] is under subjection.”

Chrysostom explains that the heretics interpret this passage as though it argues:

[A]s the man governs the wife ... so also the Father, Christ.” Chrysostom replies, “And who could ever admit this?... Consider to what meanness thou wilt bring Him [the Son] ... And who will endure this?... For had Paul meant to speak of rule and subjection, as thou sayest, he would not have brought forward the instance of a wife, but rather of a slave and a master.

Chrysostom identifies three source relationships in 1 Cor 11:3. He writes of the relationship of men to both God and Christ as “toward the authors of their being,” of the Father to the Son as “the Father ... begat such a Son, not as a slave under command, but as free,” and of woman to the man as “her having been made **out of him**,” affirming “that she was made as she was out of him.”

* Chrysostom explains that man being the head κεφαλή of woman means *source* without authority:

“Wherefore, you see, she [Eve] was not subjected as soon as she was made; nor, when He brought her to the man, did either she hear any such thing from God, nor did the man say any such word to her: he said indeed that she was ‘bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh’ (Gen ii. 23); but of rule or subjection he no where [*sic*] made mention unto her.”⁸

⁷ Translation from Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Appendix III: The Classical Concept of *Head* as ‘Source’,” in Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, *Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1987), 267–83, at 278–79.

⁸ *NPNF*¹ 12:150–51.

Chrysostom highlights that woman was not subject to man prior to the fall.

Unfortunately, Joseph Fitzmyer deleted from Chrysostom's statement, "And who could ever admit this?"—replacing it with an ellipsis symbol.⁹ Fitzmyer wrote that Chrysostom "understood 'head' to mean 'having authority over'"¹⁰ and so attributed to Chrysostom the heretics' interpretation that Chrysostom was emphatically opposing.

* Actually, Chrysostom refutes the heretical interpretation that "head" in "God is the head of Christ" means *governs*. In section 26γ of this passage, Chrysostom explains the metaphorical reference to Christ as "head" of the church as their "perfect oneness (ἔνωσιν ἀριβῆ), and [Christ being] the cause (αἰτίαν) and the first source (ἀρχὴν τὴν πρῶτην)." Chrysostom then comments, "[T]he source ἀρχὴ is more honorable (καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τιμιωτέρα)." ¹¹

* In spite of the Latin word for "head," *caput*, often meaning *leader*, unlike κεφαλή in Greek, Latin fathers like "Ambrosiaster" (ca. 375) also interpreted head in 1 Cor 11:3 as *source*:

God is the head of Christ because he begat him; Christ is the head of the man because he created him, and the man is the head of the woman because she was taken from his side. ¹²

⁹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Kephale in I Corinthians 11:3," *Int* 47 (1993): 52–59, at 57.

¹⁰ Fitzmyer, "Kephale," 57.

¹¹ Translation by this author. *NPNF*¹ 12:151 omits αἰτίαν from its translation. Chrysostom interprets "every man" as Christian believers (*NPNF*¹ 12:150). This, however, imports something foreign to 1 Cor 11:3, namely "Christ head of the church," which elsewhere Chrysostom explains hierarchically (e.g., *NPNF*¹ 13:144). When discussing marriage, Chrysostom often affirms rule by the husband using head-body language (*NPNF*¹ 12:153, 156; 13:62, 116, 144 quoting Eph 5:23, 146–47 "for she is under the head," 397 quoting Eph 5:23). Chrysostom's references to "in place of the head" are not metaphors.

¹² Ambrosiaster in CSEL 81.120–21. Translation from Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VII 1–2 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 104.

All these church fathers clearly explain head in 11:3 to mean *source*.

* But does this understanding by the church fathers that “head” means “source” fit the actual text of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 better than “authority”? Yes, it does. This passage repeatedly asserts that man is the source of woman: verse 8, “For man is not made from woman, but woman from man,” verse 12, “For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all this is from the Godhead.” Furthermore, 1 Cor 8:6 affirms that God created all things “through” Christ. “All things” includes “every man.” If this passage were about man’s authority, one would expect it to mention man’s authority. In fact, however, the only reference to “authority” in this passage is to woman’s authority. Verse 10 asserts, “woman ought to have authority over her head.” Furthermore, interpreting “head” as “authority” contradicts what Paul identifies in verse 11 as especially important regarding men and women leading worship in prayer and prophecy: “Woman is not separate from man, nor is man separate from woman in the Lord.”

* If, as I argue, “head” (κεφαλή) means *source*, 11:3 identifies three events in chronological order: the creation of man, the creation of woman, and the incarnation, Christ coming from the Godhead.¹³ They are not, however, listed in their order by either authority or preeminence. In addition, unlike interpretations that κεφαλή means *authority* or *preeminence*, if κεφαλή means *source*, it does not conflict with Pauline or orthodox trinitarian theology.

¹³ “The God” with an article typically refers to the Godhead understood broadly rather than restricted to the Father throughout the latter half of 1 Corinthians. For example, in light of 1 Cor 8:6’s affirmation that God created all things “through” Christ, 1 Cor 11:12’s reference to “the God” τοῦ θεοῦ as the creative source of woman coming from man and man coming through woman, cannot exclude Christ. Therefore, “the God” (ὁ θεός) probably doesn’t exclude Christ in 1 Cor 11:3 either, but refers to Christ coming from the Godhead in the incarnation.

* Verse 3 lays the foundation for this paragraph. Men should respect Christ as their creative source, and women should respect men because woman was created from man. Consequently, men should not disrespect their head-source, Christ, by wearing effeminate hairstyles that we know from contemporary literature solicited homosexual hook-ups. Similarly, women should not disrespect their head-source, man, by letting their hair down loose while praying or prophesying since that symbolized “undisciplined sexuality” and was grounds for divorce.

Let’s now examine the six reasons most often given to refute that *head* means *source*.

* First, isn’t it obvious that “head” means “authority”? Who’s the head of a company if not the person in authority over it? This is true regarding English, but we will see powerful evidence that it was not true regarding the Greek of Paul’s day. It should be the goal of all Bible translation to convey the meaning of the original language. It is precisely because “head” conveys authority so often in English that “head” is a misleading translation when it causes English readers to think that “head” means “authority” when in Greek it did not mean “authority.”

* Second, people assume that Paul regarded the brain as the control center of the body, so he must have thought that “head” means “authority.” But Paul never refers to the brain (ἐγκέφαλος). Instead, he uses *heart* (καρδία as in cardiology) fifty-two times for functions now attributed to the brain (for example, 1 Cor 2:9). Classicist Michael Wigodsky of Stanford is probably correct that many, even of the doctors with the most advanced anatomical understanding of the brain, did not really believe that the brain exerted more control over the body than the heart.

* Such a notion seemed to contradict the nearly universal belief that, since the life is in the blood, the heart must be the center of life. In *De rerum natura* 3.138–145 Lucretius (ca. 97–54 BC) argues for the Epicurean distinction wrote:

“the rational power, which we call the mind and the intellect ... has its fixed place in the central area of the breast, because this is where fear and dread surge up, this is the vicinity in which joys caress us; here therefore is the mind and the intellect.”

Paul’s statements about the heart indicate that he did not regard the head as the body’s command center. So it is unlikely that Paul used “head” to mean “authority.”

* Third, Wayne Gruden has repeatedly asserted that

Liddell-Scott was the only Greek-English lexicon that even mentioned the possibility of the meaning ‘source’ for κεφαλή.” “All ... lexicons ... for ancient Greek, or their editors ... give *kephalē* the meaning ‘person in authority over.’”¹⁴

Neither assertion is true. Both grossly distort the truth.

* In fact, many lexicons cite κεφαλή meaning “source.” The ninth-century lexicographer Photius explained κεφαλή in 1 Cor 11:3 as “begetter” (γεννήτωρ) and “originator” (προβολεύς).¹⁵ The twelfth-century Johannes Zonaras *Lexicon*, the sixteenth-century lexicons by Petrina, Estienne, and Budé, Tusanus, Gesner and Junius, and later lexicons by Passow, Pape, Schenkl, Woodhouse, Bailly, Böltig, Rost, Feyerabend, Montanari, and Banks also list the meaning “source” for κεφαλή. The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* states

¹⁴ Wayne Grudem, “Appendix 4: The Meaning of κεφαλή (“Head”): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” in Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 552–99, at 590; Grudem, *Truth*, 206.

¹⁵ Staab, *Pauluskommentare* 567.1–2 regarding 1 Cor 11:3.

that in 1 Cor 11:3 “head is probably to be understood not as ‘chief’ or ‘ruler’ but as ‘source’ or ‘origin’.”

* It is also blatantly false that “All ... lexicons ... for ancient Greek, or their editors ... give *kephalē* the meaning ‘person in authority over.’” Dhimitrakou’s 9-volume dictionary lists the meaning “leader” as medieval.¹⁶ Liddell and Scott’s seventh and eighth editions identify the meaning “chief” as “Byzantine.”¹⁷

* Its latest edition, LSJ, lists forty-nine figurative meanings for *κεφαλή*, including various examples meaning “source.” It does not, however, list “leader,” “authority” or anything related to them as a meaning for *κεφαλή*. None of its supplements, by Barber, Renehan, and Glare, nor the lexicons by Moulton and Milligan, F. Preisigke, P. Chantraine, or S. C. Woodhouse, nor the twelve additional Greek lexicons cited by Richard S. Cervin,¹⁸ give even one example near Paul’s time where *κεφαλή* means *leader* or *authority*.

* Heinrich Schlier in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 3:674 states, “[I]n secular usage *κεφαλή* is not employed for the head of a society. This is first found in the sphere of the Gk. OT.” Apart from New Testament lexicons, the vast majority of Greek lexicons list no meaning related to *leader*. The only two citations in secular Greek meaning *leader* I have found in secular Greek lexicons are citations from the fourth century AD.

* A fourth reason given to refute that *head* means *source* is that it’s obvious from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that “head” means “leader.” It is true that when the Hebrew word for “head,” *ראש*, means a physical head, Greek versions of the Hebrew Scriptures almost always translate it “head” using the

¹⁶ Δ. Δημητράκου, *Μεγά Λεξικόν Ολης της Ελληνικης Γλωσσης* (9 vols.; Athens: Oikos Dhimitrakou, 1933–1950), 5:3880.

¹⁷ LSJ 801. LSJ’s ninth edition excludes Byzantine literature (p. x).

¹⁸ “Does *Κεφαλή* mean “Source” or “Authority Over” in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal,” *Trinity Journal* 10 NS (1989), 85–112, at 86–87.

Greek word for “head,” κεφαλή. There are 180 times when the Hebrew Scriptures use this same word for “head,” שׂאֵר meaning “leader,” such as “the heads of the tribes of Israel.” English versions translate most of these “head.” For example the NASB does this 116 times and the ASV 115 times. They didn’t do this always because expressions like “head priest” don’t sound as natural in English as “chief priest.”

Head clearly communicates *leader* in languages that commonly use *head* as a metaphor meaning *leader*, including English, Latin, and German. If *leader* had been an established metaphorical meaning of κεφαλή, translators of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, like English translators, probably would have translated most of these 180 שׂאֵר meaning *leader* κεφαλή. But in fact, they translate most of them with the Greek word for “ruler,” ἄρχων. The best attested LXX text, which was current in Paul’s day, translates only one of these 180 instances where the Hebrew word for “head” שׂאֵר means “leader” with κεφαλή as a metaphor clearly meaning “leader.”

* All other alleged LXX metaphorical instances of “head” meaning “leader” fit into one of three categories. Some were added by Origen after AD 200 in order to make the LXX correspond more closely to the wording of the Hebrew Scriptures. Others are explained in their context to mean something different from “leader.” All other alleged instances of “head” conveying “leader” in the LXX state εἰς κεφαλὴν.

שׂאֵר occurs nineteen times in the MT meaning *leader*. *Eight are translated εἰς κεφαλὴν in at least one manuscript.*¹⁹ Eight εἰς κεφαλὴν translations out of

¹⁹ They are Deut 28:13 (where the LXX explains εἰς κεφαλὴν to mean ἐπάνω *above*); Judg 10:18; 11:8, 9, 11; 2 Sam 22:44; Ps 17:44 (MT 18:44, English 18:43); and Lam 1:5. Three of these occur in Alexandrinus only: Judg 10:18; 11:8, 9. The earlier Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (ending at 11:2) have ἄρχων, not κεφαλή. So probably neither Paul nor his readers read κεφαλή in these three.

nineteen שׂרָל occurrences contrasts sharply with one of 180 where שׂרָ meaning *leader* is translated simply κεφαλή. Why did the LXX translators translate שׂרָל meaning “as leader” εἰς κεφαλὴν 8 out of 19 times שׂרָ without ל prefix meaning *leader* κεφαλή only 1 of 161 times? In light of the analysis of secular Greek lexicons, the answer should be obvious. The LXX translators recognized that κεφαλή is not an appropriate metaphor to convey the meaning “leader.”

Greek readers probably understood εἰς κεφαλὴν as a simile, “as head,” not a metaphor, “is head.” The almost universal avoidance of κεφαλή without εἰς to translate “head” when it meant “leader” shows how foreign to Greek it was to use κεφαλή as a metaphor for “leader.”

* The one case where κεφαλή clearly is a metaphor for “leader” is: “the head of Samaria, the son of Remaliah” (Isa 7:9b).

Grudem writes that κεφαλή means “ruler” here in the “LXX”²⁰ “used ... by the New Testament authors.”²¹ But the LXX has no κεφαλή ... ῥασεῖν. Origen (ca. 185–254) added it, as the asterisk symbols (※) in Q and 48 show.²²

Grudem asserts that *heads* means “leaders” in 3 Kgdms (1 Kings) 8:1 (Alexandrinus only), “LXX ... ‘with all the *heads* of the tribes.’ (2nd cent. BC).”²³ Again, Origen added it.²⁴ Furthermore, κεφαλᾶς here means *tops*, not *leaders*: “Solomon assembled all the elders of Israel with all the tops [κεφαλᾶς] of the

²⁰ Wayne Grudem, “Appendix 3: Over Fifty Examples of *Kephalē* (“Head”) Meaning “Authority over/Ruler” in Ancient Literature,” in *Evangelical Feminism*, 545; “Survey,” 72–73.

²¹ Wayne Grudem, “Appendix 1: The Meaning of *Kephalē* (“Head”): A Response to Recent Studies,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 428, 438.

²² Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Isaias* (3rd ed.; Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 25, 148; Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1949), 2:574.

²³ Grudem, “Fifty,” 545; <https://waynegrudem.com/meaning-of-kephale-after-30-years> accessed 22 Oct. 2022; Grudem, “Response,” 441–42.

²⁴ Rahlfs 1:646.

staffs of the fathers of the sons of Israel lifted up before King Solomon.” Here *ῥάβδος* means *staff of office* (LSJ 1562). Grudem translates *ῥάβδος* “tribe,” a meaning apparently in no Greek lexicon. It is irrelevant that *טִבַּעַם* can mean either tribe or staff (BDB 641), because when *טִבַּעַם* means tribe, the LXX translates it *φυλή* 158 times (HRCS), never elsewhere *ῥάβδος*. All fifty-one times the LXX translates *טִבַּעַם ῥάβδος*, the meaning *staff* or *rod* fits the context.

Third Kingdoms 20:12 (= MT/English 1 Kgs 21:12) has the doubtful reading *κεφαλή* in Alexandrinus only.²⁵ In any event, its most natural meaning is, “seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people” (1 Kgs 21:9, 12 NIV).²⁶

In Isa 7:8–9 *κεφαλή* twice means *capital city*, but cities are not leaders.

The LXX explains three references to *head-tail* imagery to mean things other than *leader* by repeating the same idea with a pair of words equivalent in meaning to *head and tail*: “above and below” (Deut 28:13), “high and low” (Deut 28:43–44), and “great and small” (Isa 9:13). In Isa 9:13 LXX “great and small” replaces MT, “palm branch and reed.” Isaiah 9:13’s apposition explains that *κεφαλή* means *great*, not *leader*. Furthermore, v. 14 explains that “the old man and flatterers [showing respect to the face, *πρόσωπα θαυμάζοντας*]” are “the beginning” (*ἀρχή*—the LXX does not translate *שָׂרָא* *κεφαλή* here) of those “the Lord took away from Israel.”²⁷ Isaiah 9:14 LXX states regarding the one clear leadership position: “the prophet teaching unlawful things, he is the tail [taking up the rear, whom the Lord will also take away from Israel].”

²⁵ Rahlfs 1:XVI † = “änliche Lesarten,” 1:684.

²⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Another Look at ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Corinthians 11.3,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 503–11, at 508. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “*Kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3,” *Int* 47 (1993): 52–59, at 54 removed this reference.

²⁷ Fitzmyer, “ΚΕΦΑΛΗ,” 507 notes that *שָׂרָא* meaning “‘beginning, source’ is usually rendered by *ἀρχή*”; e.g., Gen 1:1; Judg 7:19 (B); 1 Chron 16:7; Prov 8:22; Isa 19:15; 40:21; 41:4, 26; 48:16; Lam 2:19; Ezek 21:24, 26; 42:12.

The context of Jeremiah 31:7 (MT/English; LXX 38:7) says nothing about Israel’s authority over the nations. Nevertheless, Fitzmyer asserts, “in the LXX ... the notion of supremacy or authority is surely present, and expressed by κεφαλή.”²⁸ Here, κεφαλὴν ἔθνῶν more naturally conveys the *top* or *crown* of the nations because of God’s love for the remnant of his people.

Grudem cites four passages from Aquila’s second-century C.E. Greek translation of the MT where κεφαλή means *leader*.²⁹ These, however, are useless for establishing Greek usage since, as Rahlfs states, Aquila “rendered every detail of the sacred Text as precisely as possible into Greek, and he did not shrink from perpetrating the most appalling outrages to the whole essence of the Greek language.”³⁰ H. B. Swete describes Aquila’s “slavish adherence to the letter.”³¹

The “Greek in the LXX Isaiah was not exempt from interferences of Semitic languages (Hebrew & Aramaic) in its vocabulary, syntax, and style.”³² “The book of Isaiah shows obvious signs of incompetence ... entire sentences are unintelligible ... [containing] Greek with little regard for ... the requirements of the Greek tongue.”³³ Many LXX specialists, some of whom I will now quote, have concluded that there was a strong tendency in the LXX for “Greek words to

²⁸ Fitzmyer, “ΚΕΦΑΛΗ,” 508; similarly Grudem, “Fifty,” 546.

²⁹ Grudem, “Fifty,” 547.

³⁰ Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, 1:XXIV, cf. also XXV–XXVII.

³¹ Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (rev. R. Ottley; New York: KTAV, 1968), 325.

³² Abi T. Ngunga and J. Schaper, “Isaiah,” in *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (ed. James K. Aitken; London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 456–68, at 459, referencing other supporting studies. See also Emanuel Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 109–28 on “Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings”; H. St. J. Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint. I. Orthography and Accidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 25–55, 244; David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (SNTSMS 5; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

³³ Swete, *Introduction*, 299, 324.

extend their range of meaning in an un-Greek way after the Hebrew word they render.”³⁴

* The “language of the LXX is plainly not normal Greek in many places.”³⁵ “Hebraisms have been recognized in the LXX from the early days of the critical study of the Greek Bible.”³⁶ Consequently, this one exception is best accounted for as a “Hebraism,” an idiomatic Hebrew meaning that is not native to its Greek translation, *κεφαλή*. Out of 180 passages where the Hebrew word for “head” meant “leader,” the best-attested LXX text translates only **one** with *κεφαλή* clearly used as a metaphor for “leader.” This shows how foreign to Greek it was to use *κεφαλή* as a metaphor for “leader.”

* A fifth reason given to refute that *head* means *source* is to assert, like Grudem does, that “source” was not a meaning of “head” in Greek, or that “head” meaning “source” is so rare that it’s unlikely Paul intended “head” to mean “source,” or that if it does mean “source” it also implies authority. If we had time, I could cite 70 instances where “head” conveys “source.”

In each of the following eleven examples from Greek literature, “head” clearly means “source” with no implication of authority:

Philo, *De congressu quaerendae eruditionis Gratia* 12 #61, “of all the members of the clan here described Esau is the progenitor (ὁ γενάρχης ἐστὶν Ἐσαῦ), the head (*κεφαλή*) as it were of the whole creature.”

³⁴ Peter Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint: Its Corruptions and Their Emendations* (ed. D. W. Gooding; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 143.

³⁵ J. A. L. Lee, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch* (Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1983), 1.

³⁶ Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 83, with extensive bibliography.

Philo, *De praemiis et poenis* 125 affirms that:

“the virtuous one, whether single man or people, will be the head of the human race, κεφαλήν μὲν τοῦ ἀνθρωπειοῦ γένους ἔσεσθαι and all the others like the limbs of a body which draw their life from the forces in the head (κεφαλή) and at the top.”

The editor explains “head” as “the source of spiritual life.”

* The *Apocalypse of Moses* 19.3 calls “lust the head (κεφαλή [MSS A and B]) of every sin” (trans. M. D. Johnson (*Life of Adam and Eve*)). The standard edition translates κεφαλή “origin” (*OTP* 2:279). MS C’s “root and beginning/first cause” confirms the meaning “source/origin.”

The Testament of Reuben 2.2 states: “For seven spirits are established against mankind, and they are the sources (αἱ κεφαλαί) of the deeds of youth.” Two manuscripts A^a and S have κεφαλή, singular.

The medical writers, Hippocrates, *Coac.* 498 (5th century BC) and Galen, *de Usu Partim* 7.14 (4.565 d, 2nd century AD) both used κεφαλή metaphorically to identify the “origins” of muscles τῶν μυῶν αἱ κεφαλαί.

* Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 6.3.21.4 also wrote:

The greater is source of the smaller, just as the spring is greater than the channels into which it is divided. ... No river that comes from a single spring is smaller at its head, singular κεφαλή, than it is thereafter.

Galen, *De locis affectis* 3.12 notes that whirlpools in a river “arise when they are warmed by the sun or its source (singular τὴν κεφαλήν) is heated in some other way.”

* Joannes Philoponus, *De Generatione Animalium* 14.3.1 notes that “a river, when it rushed upon a rock, might divide and become two streams, even though it had but a single source (κεφαλή).”³⁷

Herodotus, *History* 4.90 states: “From the sources (κεφαλαί) of the river Tearus flow the best and fairest of all river waters.”

The Greek Anthology Epigram 9.703.2 states, “The sources (κεφαλαί) of the river Tearus supply the best ... water.”

In all eleven of these passages, κεφαλή means “source” with no contextual association with authority.

* The most commonly cited saying using “head” as a metaphor is *Orphic fragment* 21a:

he is himself the cause (αἴτιος) of all things. Wherefore it is well said in the Orphic Hymns,

Zeus was born first, Zeus the last with bright vivid lightning,

Zeus the head (κεφαλή), Zeus the middle, Zeus through whom all things are fulfilled (τελεῖται).”

The introduction, “he is himself the cause (αἴτιος) of all things” explicitly identifies Zeus as the source of all things. This makes the established meaning “source” the most natural meaning of κεφαλή in this context. The final verb τελεῖται, “are fulfilled” requires that κεφαλή means “source” to preserve the saying’s symmetry. This triad is the primary context for determining the meaning of κεφαλή here, but there is also a natural logical progression from Zeus being

³⁷ Michael Hayduck, ed., *Ioannis Philoponi (Michaelis Ephesii) in libros de generatione animalium commentaria* (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 14,3; Berlin: Reimer, 1903).

first in the preceding statement to Zeus being the source. The myriad references to Zeus as the source through whom things come into existence support understanding κεφαλή in this saying to mean “source.” These include Acts 17:28’s, “τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν quotation from Aratus, *Phaen.* 5a, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμὲν, “for we are his offspring.” Luke’s introductory “as even some of your poets have said,” highlights this quotation as widely known.

* *Orphic fragment* 168 and both the Loeb Classical Library and Johan C. Thom editions of Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos* 7 p. 401 a 27–30 repeat this saying using the same words, except substituting τέτυκται for τελεῖται. This line therefore ends, “from Zeus all things exist,” instead of “are fulfilled.” The standard classical Greek dictionary (LSJ 1784) defines the final verb τέτυκται (from τεύχω), “cause, bring to pass ... of Zeus ... τέτυκται there exists.” Consequently, this substitution identifies Zeus as the maker from whom all things come into existence. With this substitution, “Zeus the head (κεφαλή), Zeus the middle, from Zeus all things exist” explicitly associates “head” with “source.”

* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 3.9.2, citing Porphyry, quotes the Orphic hymn to “Zeus the head” introduced with “he created all things” and followed by “Zeus alone first cause of all” and “[Zeus] is the mind from which he brings forth all things, and by his thoughts creates them” (Edwin Hamilton Gifford, trans., *Eusebius: Preparation for the Gospel* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981) 1:100–1).

Both Stobaeus, *Eclog.* 1.23.2 and Proclus, *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus* [28C] 1:313 line 21, 23b, and 23.6 quote, Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ’ ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται and explain, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀπάντων ἀρχιγένεθλος· “Zeus himself first author of everything.”³⁸

³⁸ LSJ 252, “ἀρχιγένεθλος ‘= ἀρχέγονος’,” LSJ 251, ἀρχέγονος “first author or origin.”

* Many citations of this well-attested saying replace κεφαλή with ἀρχή—which in context most naturally means “source.” These confirm that “Zeus the head” means “Zeus the source.”

Removing any doubt that ἀρχή means source, a scholion quotes: Ζεὺς ἀρχή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ’ ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται (“Zeus the source, Zeus the middle, Zeus through whom all things are fulfilled”) and then explains:

And he is the source (ἀρχή), as the producing cause (ὡς ποιητικὸν αἴτιον), and he is the end as the final cause, and he is the middle, as being present in everything equally, and everything partakes of him in a variety of ways.

Ἀρχή, which explains κεφαλή, is itself explained “as the producing cause.” This makes it clear that ἀρχή means the active cause or “source,” not merely “beginning.”

* All these citations demonstrate that “Zeus the head ...” is by far the most commonly cited metaphorical use of κεφαλή near Paul’s time and that κεφαλή in this saying means “source.” W. C. Van Unnik³⁹ writes that this saying “was extremely well known in Late Antiquity and the New-Platonist Proclus in particular made extensive use of it.”

* A sixth reason given to refute that *head* means *source* is that the standard New Testament dictionary, known as BDAG, from the first letter in its primary editors’ names, Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, states that “head” is not used to mean “source,” but “in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank.” BDAG’s entry deserves careful analysis because of its profound influence on New Testament translations and interpretation. Despite the paucity of references to κεφαλή meaning *leader* in the LXX and secular Greek lexicons, BDAG 542

³⁹ W. C. Van Unnik, *Sparsa colleca: Part 2. 1 Peter, Canon, Corpus Hellenisticum, Generalia* (NovTSup 30; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 192.

κεφαλή 2a cites three passages in secular Greek as meaning “in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank.”

None of these, however, in fact denotes superior rank. First, Artemidorus, *Onir.* 4.24, states, “A man who dreamt that his father was sick got pains in his head. You already know from the first book that the head symbolizes the father.”⁴⁰ Artemidorus, *Onir.* 4.24 does not state that head symbolizes superior rank. Artemidorus’s first book explains, instead: “the head (κεφαλή) is the source (αἴτιος) of life and light for the whole body”⁴¹ and “the head (κεφαλή) resembles parents in that it is the cause (αἰτία) of one’s living.”⁴²

* Second, BDAG cites “Zosimus of Ashkelon [500 AD] hailing Demosthenes as his master: ὦ θεία κεφαλή.” Zosimus’s expression, however, means “O noble one!”⁴³ Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.) could not have been Zosimus’s master since Demosthenes had died over 800 years earlier. BDAG’s other reference, “Ps.-Aristot. *De Mundo* 6, 4,” does not even use the word κεφαλή. Although BDAG’s “cp.” does not require its use, this citation adds to the false impression that superior rank was an established meaning of κεφαλή.

BDAG, under the heading, “a being of high status, *head*, fig.” cites three more passages, but none clearly means “a being of high status.”

* The first is “Asclepius IG II², 4514, 6,” but its μάκαρ ὦ πεποθημένε, θεία κεφαλά, like the similar wording attributed to Zosimus, means, “O blessed longed-for god *most noble*.”⁴⁴ BDAG’s other two citations for this meaning, by

⁴⁰ Robert J. White, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Park Ridge, N.J.: Noyes, 1975), 197. Roger A. Pack, *Artemidori Daldiani Onirocriticon Libri V* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963), 260.

⁴¹ *Onir.* 1.2, White, *Dreams*, 16; Pack, *Onirocriticon*, 7.

⁴² *Onir.* 1.35, White, *Dreams*, 34; Pack, *Onirocriticon*, 43.

⁴³ LSJ 945 κεφαλή 2. identifies similar salutations in Homer, *Il.* and Julian Emperor, *Or.* meaning “the noblest part.”

⁴⁴ See n. 43.

“Iren[aeus]. 1, 5, 3” and “Hippol[ytus]., *Ref.* 7, 23, 3” almost certainly mean *source*. Irenaeus writes:

“that the Demiurge imagined that he created all these things of himself ... 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 (κεφαλή) and source (ἀρχή) of his own essence.”⁴⁵

Irenaeus by apposition explains head as *source*, and *authority* does not fit “of his own essence.”

* Hippolytus repeatedly describes the Demiurge as the source of the cosmos, including the Son who is “higher in rank” (κρείττων 5 cf. BDAG 566) than the Demiurge. Consequently, the Demiurge being “κεφαλή of the cosmos” cannot mean *authority*. The meaning *source*, however, fits this context naturally.

* BDAG 542 κεφαλή 1 (b) “in imagery” cites “S[tephen] Bedale, *JTS* 5, ’54, 211–15,” who identified κεφαλή meaning *source* and wrote that *leader* was not a native Greek meaning of κεφαλή.

Nevertheless, BDAG concludes, “not ‘source’” citing J[oseph] Fitzmyer, *NTS* 35, ’89, 503–11.) S. mng. 2a.” Fitzmyer’s *NTS* article, however, states on p. 509, “Philo uses κεφαλή in the sense of ‘source’, when he speaks of Esau ‘as the head of the living body, the progenitor of all the members mentioned’ (*De cong. erud. causa* 12 #61).”

* For the meaning “superior rank” BDAG κεφαλή 2. a. “superior rank” appeals to another article by “JFitzmyer, *Int* 47, “93, 52–59” even though it cites **ten** passages where κεφαλή means *source*.⁴⁶ Fitzmyer contradicts the very thing for which BDAG cites him, that κεφαλή does not mean *source*.

⁴⁵ *ANF* 1:322–23 (PG 7:496); cf. Guilelmus Quandt, *Orphei Hymni* (Zürich: Weidmann, 1973), 15.

⁴⁶ Fitzmyer, “*Kephalē*,” 53–54.

* Surprisingly, BDAG categorizes the meaning of κεφαλή in Col 2:19 as 1 (b) “in imagery” but Eph 4:15 as 2 (a) “superior rank,” even though both identify with virtually identical terminology Christ (Χριστός) as “the head” (ἡ κεφαλή) “from whom the whole body” (ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα) “grows” (αὕξει τὴν αὕξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ, Col 2:19, τὴν αὕξησιν ... ποιεῖται, Eph 4:15–16). BDAG errs in omitting the meaning *source* for these and other NT passages.

* BDAG 542 κεφαλή 1 (b) even changes the Greek word order of a text to give the false impression that Galba is called *head*: “Plut., Galba 1054 [4, 3] G. as κ. ἰσχυρῶ σώματι, namely of the Galatian territories.” In fact, Vindex wrote to Galba encouraging him to accept the imperial power “and to hand over to himself a strong body seeking a head” (καὶ παρασχεῖν ἑαυτὸν ἰσχυρῶ σώματι ζητοῦντι κεφαλὴν). Cervin notes that Plutarch “is not calling Galba ‘the head.’”⁴⁷ P. W. G. Glare writes that Vindex’s body-head argument uses “κεφαλή ... in a literal sense.”⁴⁸

So you see, none of the six main reasons given to reject the church father’s understanding of “head” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 as “source” is valid.

* First, it is not the English meaning of “head,” but the Greek meaning evident in how Paul uses this word that determines its meaning in each context.

Second, Paul, like most Greeks, wrote of the heart as the control center of the body, so we should not assume that he thought that “head” means “authority.”

Third, secular Greek dictionaries support the meaning “source” but not “authority” up to and well beyond Paul’s day.

* Fourth, the LXX translation of the Hebrew Scriptures shows that its translators almost always avoided translating “head” κεφαλή when it meant

⁴⁷ Cervin, “Rebuttal,” 102.

⁴⁸ In Grudem, “Real and Alleged,” 587–88.

“leader.” This shows that they recognized that κεφαλή is not an appropriate word to translate “head” when “head” in Hebrew means “leader.”

Fifth, we have seen many examples where “head” means “source,” including the most commonly cited metaphorical use of “head” in Greek literature, “Zeus the head,” meaning source.

Sixth, BDAG’s κεφαλή entry makes false claims. It fails to establish that “head” was used metaphorically to mean “person in rank before.” It errs in denying the meaning “source.” In some of the passages BDAG cites, “head” clearly does mean “source.”

* I conclude, therefore, that church fathers overwhelmingly explain that “head” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 means “source.” “Head” meaning “source” also makes the best sense of this passage. Many church fathers also explain that interpreting “head” in verse 3 to mean “authority” conflicts with orthodox trinitarian theology. None of the six reasons given against “head” meaning “source” is valid. None of the six reasons given against “head” meaning “source” is valid. They all in fact favor “head” meaning “source” here. The translation, “man is the head of woman,” conveys to most English readers a hierarchy of authority of man over woman that does not faithfully convey the original meaning or its understanding by church fathers. In fact, interpreting “head” as “authority” contradicts what Paul identifies as especially important regarding leadership in worship in verse 11: “Woman is not separate from man, nor is man separate from woman in the Lord.” Therefore, I recommend that each occurrence of “head” in 1 Cor 11:3 be translated “source” as follows:

“I want you to know that Christ is the source of every man, and the man [Adam] is the source of woman, and the Godhead is the source of Christ.”

* To “Want to dig deeper?” slide