

THE HEAD OF A WOMAN: THE MEANING OF ΚΕΦΑΛΗ IN 1 COR. 11: 3

THE metaphorical use of κεφαλή in the Pauline texts has provoked vigorous investigation in recent years owing chiefly to the significance of such passages as 1 Cor. 11: 3 and Eph. 5: 23 for the debate over the status and role of women in family and church. Two leading positions have been taken. The more traditional, conservative one has claimed for κεφαλή the sense of 'ruler, leader, chief', designating someone who has authority over others. More congenial to a liberal or 'feminist' standpoint (the terms are not meant disparagingly) has been the view that the proper metaphorical sense gives something like 'source' or 'source of life'. Both arguments have been constructed largely on the basis of lexicological evidence. Neither, on inspection, appears to be quite satisfactory, despite the considerable effort that has been expended, particularly in the pages of the *Trinity Journal*.¹

The aim of this essay is not to review every cut and thrust of scholarly swordplay: indeed, a measure of detachment from what has become an extremely complex debate may well be desirable. While we can hardly proceed without a careful reconsideration of the various passages that have been marshalled as evidence for one interpretation or the other, there does appear reason to hope that a fresh perspective may expose the inadequacy of the interpretative dichotomy that has, with few exceptions, determined the shape and conclusions of the discussion. This will enable us to outline the appropriateness of a more natural and consistent metaphorical sense for the interpretation of 1 Cor. 11: 3. While it is obviously important that Eph. 5: 23 should also be examined in the same light, the direct analogical dependence of the description of the husband as head of the wife on that of Christ as head of the church would necessitate a thorough study of the Christological motif in Ephesians and Colossians, which cannot be undertaken here.

I

The instances of the use of κεφαλή outside the New Testament put forward by J. A. Fitzmyer and W. Grudem as evidence for

¹ See W. Grudem, 'Does κεφαλή ("Head") Mean "Source" or "Authority" in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples', *TrinJ* 6 (1985), 38–59, R. S. Cervin, 'Does Κεφαλή Mean "Source" or "Authority Over" in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal', *TrinJ* 10 (1989), W. Grudem, 'The Meaning of κεφαλή ("head") a response to recent studies', *TrinJ* 11 (1990), 3–72

the idea of authority or leadership are drawn mostly from the LXX, Philo and Plutarch.²

1. The fact that the Alexandrian text of Judg. 10: 18; 11: 8, 9 translates שׂרָא with κεφαλὴ whereas the Vatican text has ἄρχων suggests for this immediate context a semantic coincidence of some sort. But in the light of subsequent findings it may be difficult to accept this as anything better than an obscure and transient association or scribal idiosyncrasy.³ It cannot be assumed, in any case, that the relationship between the two texts at this point is explicable only in terms of synonymy; and it should be asked—again presupposing subsequent evidence—whether the use of κεφαλὴ in the A text and in both versions of 11: 11 is not in fact meant to suggest prominence or precedence rather than the exercise of authority. What the people of Israel needed at that moment was not a ruler so much as someone to *represent* them before the king of Ammon (11: 12) and if necessary to lead them to battle, someone to ‘begin to fight (ἄρξεται πολεμήσαι) against the sons of Ammon’ (10: 18; cf. 11: 8). This may be reflected in the fact that in 10: 18 and 11: 8–9 κεφαλὴ is followed by the dative (‘for all the inhabitants of Gilead’) not ἐπὶ (‘over all the inhabitants of Gilead’). The preposition is found in 11: 11 but in this case in both texts κεφαλὴ is in immediate apposition to a word meaning ‘ruler’ or ‘leader’: κατέστησαν αὐτὸν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν εἰς κεφαλὴν εἰς ἡγούμενον (Alexandrian); ἔθηκαν αὐτὸν ὁ λαὸς ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς εἰς κεφαλὴν καὶ εἰς ἄρχηγόν (Vatican). This apposition, moreover, is found in the Hebrew text and in itself neither accounts for the unexpected use of κεφαλὴ nor elicits from it the sense of ‘one who has authority over’.

It also needs to be explained why it is only in the story of Jephtha that the translators chose to use κεφαλὴ in a manner quite characteristic for שׂרָא, to describe the status of one man in direct relation to a group.⁴ Two observations may be pertinent. First, it may account for the exceptional translation that in the Hebrew text of Judges it is only in this story that שׂרָא is used with this metaphorical sense. Secondly, as we have seen, κεφαλὴ is first used to describe the one who will ‘begin to fight against the sons of Ammon’ and it may be that this association has

² J. A. Fitzmyer, ‘Another Look at ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Corinthians 11:3’, *NTS* 35:4 (1989), 506–510, and a perfunctory review of the material in ‘*Kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3’, *Interpretation* 47:1 (1993), 52–59.

³ Cf. P. B. Payne, ‘Response’ in A. Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1986), 123; Cervin, ‘Κεφαλὴ’, 96.

⁴ Theodotion also has κεφαλὴ here. In all the other relevant instances usage diverges from the conventional Hebrew pattern.

coloured subsequent usage. But however we explain these things, it would clearly be unwise to assume on the basis of these verses that κεφαλή properly designates one who exercises authority over others.

2. 3 Kgdms. 8: 1 LXX A (Swete) has πάσας κεφαλὰς τῶν ῥάβδων as a translation of כָּל רֹאשֵׁי הַמִּטָּה (‘all the heads of the tribes’), with respect to which Grudem comments, ‘The heads of these tribes are of course the leaders of the tribes.’⁵ The Hebrew word מִטָּה can mean both ‘staff’ and ‘tribe’, and it seems likely that ῥάβδος (‘rod, staff’) is intended to have the same double sense. However, this is the only place in the LXX where ῥάβδος is used in this way, and although it would be wrong to follow Cervin and argue that κεφαλή is meant quite literally here,⁶ it does seem necessary to admit the influence of the pun on its use. The word ῥάβδος does not mean ‘tribe’ (Grudem’s translation ‘staff of office’ takes us no closer) and the association with מִטָּה in that sense could hardly have been strong; the use of κεφαλή, therefore, probably has as much to do with the normal meaning of ῥάβδος (thus ‘heads of the staffs’) as with רֹאשֵׁי which it translates.

3. There is nothing in the context of Isa. 7: 8 to indicate that ‘head’ means ‘leader’ in the statement ‘the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus Rasim’. The significance of the verse is not entirely clear, but the point seems rather to be one of representation by virtue of primacy or prominence: Aram is summed up in Damascus, Damascus in Rasim.⁷ A similar statement is made about Ephraim in v. 9; but the preceding warning that ‘the kingdom of Ephraim shall cease from being a people’ suggests that it is not the sovereignty of the head that is at issue but the contrast between the presumptuousness of the head and the fate of the people. Fitzmyer’s assumption that רֹאשׁ in the Hebrew text here means ‘chief’ is in any case not easily sustained, since nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is a man said to be head of a city or a city head of a country: רֹאשׁ always refers to the status of individuals with regard to groups of people—families, tribes, armies, priests, etc. This gives further grounds for doubting that the conventional metaphorical sense of רֹאשׁ (‘leader, chief’) is appropriate.

⁵ Grudem, ‘Meaning’, 29.

⁶ Cervin, ‘Κεφαλή’, 97. It seems unlikely that the translator would have misunderstood the sense of the Hebrew, since מִטָּה is translated with φυλή in 7: 14 and ‘heads of staffs’ is nonsensical in the context.

⁷ With this idea of summation we might compare Eph. 1: 10 ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ;

4. The returning 'remnant of Israel' (τὸ κατάλοιπον τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) is described as κεφαλὴ ἐθνῶν in Jer. 38: 7 LXX, but under the circumstances ideas of authority and leadership are hardly appropriate: the sense must again be something like 'foremost' or 'pre-eminent nation' in that Israel was God's chosen people (cf. v.9: 'for I became a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born').⁸ It is the special redemption and blessing of Israel that is proclaimed to the nations and islands (vv. 10-14), not Israel's authority over them.

5. The statement 'they set up Naboth as head of the people' (1 Kings 21: 12 Heb; 3 Kgdms. 20: 12 LXX A) is misleadingly translated and taken out of context by Fitzmyer. The reference is to the prominent position that Naboth was made to take during the fast in order that he might be publicly accused;⁹ the verb used in both Hebrew and Greek means 'they made (him) sit' (הִשְׁבּוּ, ἐκάθισαν) and clearly has only a local reference. The verse is omitted from Fitzmyer's later article.

6. The expression κεφαλὴ ἐθνῶν is also found at (2 Kgdms. 22: 44 LXX, and in the parallel text in Ps. 17: 44 LXX): 'you shall keep me as head of the nations'. The context here—David's song of victory 'in the day in which the Lord rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul' (v.1)—makes the idea of leadership and rule not entirely inappropriate, but it is by no means required. A distinction should still be maintained between the idea of prominence or primacy and that of leadership. nothing in the psalm suggests that David expected to exercise authority over the nations. Fitzmyer's appeal to the succeeding words ('a people whom I knew not served me') is misplaced. In the LXX—the reading diverges somewhat from the Hebrew text—these words do not constitute an explanation of κεφαλὴν ἐθνῶν, as the change from the future to the aorist makes clear; they belong rather with the subsequent aorist clauses, which appear to describe a situation prior to David's victory: 'Alien children feigned obedience (ἐψεύσαντό) to me, at the hearing of the ear they heard me.' The use of ψεύδομαι, moreover, indicates that the subservience of the people was a sham, a state of affairs quite at odds with the present expectation of being kept as 'head of the nations'.

7. Those verses that speak of the 'head' and 'tail' of Israel also prove, on closer inspection, to be of little value to Fitzmyer's argument. In the first place, κεφαλὴ as a translation of שָׂרֵף is

⁸ Cervin, 'Κεφαλὴ', 108, though for the most part ill-disposed towards Fitzmyer's analysis, appears to agree with him here

⁹ The Alexandrian codex has ἐν κεφαλῇ τοῦ λαοῦ, the Vatican ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ λαοῦ

manifestly required by the metaphorical pairing, and so there must be an immediate presumption that whatever metaphorical sense the word appears to have in the context cannot be safely treated as normative. But it is not evident that in such instances κεφαλή means 'leader, chief'.¹⁰ In Deut. 28. 13, 44 the significance of the metaphor lies in the contrast between two extremes, between prominence and prosperity on the one hand and subjection and humiliation on the other. The spatial aspect of the metaphor is made clear in v. 13: 'and you shall then be above, and you shall not be below'.¹¹ Contrary to what H. Schlier maintains, vv. 43–44 are concerned not with the idea of 'headship over' but with a relative distinction between head and tail understood essentially in commercial terms: 'He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him'.¹² In Isa. 9: 13–14 the 'head' of Israel is interpreted as the 'elder and those who respect persons' (πρεσβύτεν, καὶ τοὺς τὰ πρόσωπα θαυμάζοντας) and is designated further as ἡ ἀρχή, whereas the 'tail' is the 'prophet teaching unlawful things'; the contrast is also characterized as one between 'great and small' (μέγαν καὶ μικρόν). It seems clear that the 'head' is distinguished from the 'tail' by virtue of its prominence or excellence or social standing, not because it has sovereignty or authority: the tail is not that which is ruled but that which is disreputable. The association with ἀρχή must be understood in the same way: it refers to those who are foremost in Israel.¹³ The singular form of ἀρχή here can hardly mean 'ruler' since it is predicated of a group, not of an individual; nor, since the reference is to people, does it make any sense to translate it as 'office' or 'authority'.

8. Fitzmyer adduces a number of passages in Philo as further grounds for attributing the sense 'leader' or 'ruler' to κεφαλή, but again they require a more cautious appraisal. On occasion, the head is said to be the ruling part of the body or soul (ψυχῆς τὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν, *Som.* 2 207; τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἡγεμονίαν, *Spec.*

¹⁰ The formula appears in Jub. 1 16, where nothing suggests that 'head' implies a position of authority: the reference is to Israel's favoured status, juxtaposed is the antithesis between blessing and curse. Cf. also 1 Enoch 103 11.

¹¹ It is true that v. 12 has 'you shall rule over many nations, and they shall not rule over you' which, curiously, is not in the Hebrew text. But against taking this as interpretative of the head–tail metaphor is the fact that this statement belongs with v. 12 rather than with v. 13. This appears from the parallelism between v. 12 and v. 13 (Ἀνοίξαι σοὶ Κύριος . . . Καταστήσαι σε Κύριος) and the parallelism between this statement and that which immediately precedes it ('you shall lend to many nations, and you shall not be lent to').

¹² *TDNT* III, 675. Cf. Lam. 1 5 'Those afflicting her have become the head, and her enemies have prospered.'

¹³ Κεφαλή and ἀρχή are also apposed in Isa. 19 15.

Leg. 3.184). But there are difficulties here. First, the fact that Philo explicitly defines his method of interpretation in *Som.* 2.207 as 'allegorical' should probably be taken as evidence that the association with ἡγεμών was not familiar or conventional. Allowance should be made generally for the fact that the meaning of κεφαλὴ in these passages is to a large extent determined by the particular philosophical framework of Philo's thought; it cannot safely be assumed that connotations arising through association with the ἡγεμών word group in a context of sophisticated allegorical interpretation are equally appropriate in other contexts.

In *Spec. Leg.* 3.184, secondly, the point of the analogy is that the head owes its ἡγεμονία to its elevated position. the head is the hill-top citadel (ἄκρα) to which the mind is conducted on high (ἄνω), the body is set under it like the pedestal beneath a statue.¹⁴ In a footnote Fitzmyer also mentions, but does not discuss, two other passages. In *Vit. Mos.* 2.82 the mind is said to be 'head and ruler of the sense-faculty in us' (τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν αἰσθήσεως κεφαλὴ μὲν καὶ ἡγεμονικόν). But since this belongs to an allegorical interpretation of the pillars of the temple, it seems likely that the use of κεφαλὴ here has been determined principally by the common use of the word to denote the top of a pillar: that which is perceived (τὸ αἰσθητόν), correspondingly, is the extremity and, as it were, the base (ἐσχατιὰ δὲ καὶ ὥσανει βάσις). In *Vit. Mos.* 2.290 the story of Moses' death is said to be the head of the whole Law: the point is not that this story has authority over the rest of the Law, but that it is the most wonderful (θαυμασιώτατον) part.

Thirdly, no instance is provided in which κεφαλὴ is used metaphorically to denote the authority or sovereignty of one man or of men over others. When it is said of Ptolemy II Philadelphus that he was in some sense the 'head' of the other Ptolemies 'as the head is the leading part in a living body' (γενόμενος καθάπερ ἐν ζῳῳ τὸ ἡγεμονεῖον κεφαλὴ τρόπον τινὰ τῶν βασιλέων, *Vit. Mos.* 2.30), the point is evidently not that he ruled over them but that he was outstanding or preeminent among them. This idea is anticipated in the preceding sentence, where it is said that 'as the house of the Ptolemies flourished above the other dynasties (διαφερόντως παρὰ τὰς ἄλλας βασιλείας ἤκμασεν), so did Philadelphus above the Ptolemies'. In *Praem.* 114 an analogy is drawn between the superiority of one man over a city, or of a city over the surrounding region, or of one nation over other nations, and the superiority of the head over the body. The basis of the comparison, however, is not a relationship of authority but the

¹⁴ Cf. Cervin, 'Κεφαλὴ', 109.

conspicuousness (τοῦ περιφαίνεσθαι χάριν) of that which is superior. The benefit to those around is not that they are governed, but that gazing 'continuously upon noble models imprints their likeness in souls which are not entirely hardened and stony' (Loeb translation)

9. Philo's description of the head as the ruling part of the body or soul may be classed with a number of similar passages in which the *literal* head is attributed a ruling function. Plato, for example, says that the head 'is the most divine part and the one that reigns over (δεσποτοῦν) all the parts within us' (*Timaeus* 44D), from which the inference has been made 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'.¹⁵ Two considerations, however, raise doubts about the validity of this inference at least for the study of Pauline language. The first is that these examples represent a quite clearly defined and circumscribed pattern of usage. The second is that in all likelihood the language of 'ruling' derives, if only implicitly, from a figurative conception of the human body as a state or similar collective entity—in other words, an inversion of the normal metaphor. Plato's use of the verb δεσπόζω unmistakably evokes the rule of a human leader rather than any more literal notion of mental control. The same is true of Plutarch's statement in *Table Talk* 6.7 (692 E) that we 'call a person "soul" or "head" from his ruling part (ἀπὸ τῶν κυριωτάτων)'.¹⁶ It is even clearer in Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.184, where the head is said to have been conducted by nature to the summit (ἄκρον) as the place most suitable for a king. The words ἡγεμών and ἡγεμονία, used by Philo to denote the head's sovereignty, also belong to the realm of human affairs and are applied to the head only figuratively. While it may be true that the governing function of the head is expressed through the analogy with a human ruler, can we necessarily make the reverse inference, that the governing function of a person is expressed through the analogy with the head, particularly when in most cases the vocabulary of ruling is absent?

10. A number of other passages are cited by Grudem and by Fitzmyer in his later article which appear to represent a recurrent,

¹⁵ Grudem, 'Κεφαλή', 54

¹⁶ Grudem also treats *Table Talk* 3.1 (647 C) as evidence for the meaning 'authority over', giving the translation as 'For pure wine, when it attacks the head and severs the body from the control of the mind, distresses a man' ('Meaning', 28) But the Greek does not, in fact, afford an equation of the head with the controlling mind. The words τὰς τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀρχάς do not mean 'the control of the mind' but 'the beginnings of the senses'

though minor, theme in Greek writings. Herodotus records the advice of the Delphic oracle to the Argives: 'protect the head; and the head will safeguard the body' (καὶ κεφαλὴν πεφύλαξο· κάρη δὲ τὸ σῶμα σώσει, 7.148.3). In Plutarch, *Cicero* 14.5 Catiline addresses a riddle to Cicero in which he compares the people to a headless (ἄκεφάλου) body for which he proposes to become the head. In similar manner Plutarch describes the provinces of Gaul as 'a strong body in need of a head' (ἰσχυρῷ σώματι ζητοῦντι κεφαλὴν, *Galba* 4.3), and a general as the head of a body whose hands are the lightly armed troops, whose feet the cavalry, etc. (*Pelopidas* 2.1) Libanius (fourth century AD) employs κεφαλὴ in a double sense—according to the Scholiast, at least—when he says of certain rioters that, having failed to break down the governor's house, they 'heaped upon their heads insults' (*Or* 20.3, Loeb translation).

These passages undoubtedly illustrate a certain association of κεφαλὴ with the figure of a ruler or leader. Yet we still cannot uncritically assume that the same association lies behind the Pauline texts. In the first place, the metaphor of the 'head' in each instance presupposes, at least implicitly, not only the larger metaphor of the *collective* 'body' but also a distinct literary tradition,¹⁷ neither of which is apparent in Paul's description of the man as head of the woman. Secondly, the commonplace association does not necessarily imply a commonplace equivalence of meaning. It has been suggested that the passages from *Cicero* and *Galba* may reflect the recognized Latin use of *caput* to mean leader.¹⁸ More significantly, however, the point of the analogy in both instances is only that a vacant position at the top of the collective body needs to be filled, not that the Roman people or the Gallic provinces need to have authority exercised over them. The context in *Pelopidas* suggests that the head is that which safeguards the life of the body in that, if the head is cut off, the body dies: in taking undue risks the general endangers not only himself but all, for 'their safety depends on him, and their destruction too'. The same idea may lie behind the passage from Herodotus, though the precise application of the oracle is by no means easy to ascertain.¹⁹ Otherwise, generally speaking, nothing in these citations requires

¹⁷ Libanius' pun apparently conflates the idiomatic use of κεφαλὴ to mean 'person' with the body metaphor

¹⁸ Cervin, 'Κεφαλὴ', 102–103. Cf., for example, Livy, V 46 5

¹⁹ Grudem cites the interpretation of 'head' supplied by the Loeb editor: 'those with full citizenship, the nucleus of the population' ('Meaning', 27). This may be correct, but it surely suggests that 'head' stands for 'that which is prominent, illustrious' rather than 'that which rules'

κεφαλὴ to be taken to mean 'one who has authority over' rather than simply 'one who is foremost or preeminent'.²⁰

11. Two final instances are proposed by Fitzmyer. First, Josephus describes Jerusalem as τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους (*War* IV.261), but the context and the close association with πρόσωπον indicate that the idea behind κεφαλὴν is one not of authority but of prominence: Josephus is speaking of the affront caused by the activities of terrorists in a place which is 'revered by the world and honoured by aliens from the ends of the earth who have heard its fame' (Loeb translation).²¹ With this we might compare *War* III.54, where Jerusalem is said to stand out above (προανίσχουσα)—not rule—the surrounding area 'as the head does the body'. Secondly, when Hermas is described as the 'head of the household' (ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ οἴκου, *Hermas Sim.* 7.3), nothing is found in the context to suggest that the expression denotes his authority rather than simply his *position* sociologically defined. It is something more like a representative function that is at issue: Hermas is the most prominent figure in the household and, if he were to escape punishment, the affliction of his family would be to no avail. It is the participation of the family in the experience of the head, and vice versa, that accounts for the state of affairs, not the authority of the head over the family. There is also the likelihood, of course, that the phrase is dependent on Pauline usage.²²

II

Perhaps the first thing to notice as we turn to the alternative metaphorical translation commonly proposed for κεφαλὴ—that it means 'source' or 'beginning'—is that it has virtually no support in the LXX. Reference is frequently made to S. Bedale's article

²⁰ Plutarch's fable of the serpent whose tail rebels against the head and takes the lead with disastrous consequences (*Agis* 2.3) is interpreted in terms of the head's ability to see and hear, and therefore to lead: the multitude, the tail, can only wander at random (εἰκὴ). Within the special interpretative context of the fable the head is the one who is equipped to go first, not the one who has authority over the tail.

²¹ Note Appian, *Hist. Ill.* IV 19, where the town of Metulus is described as ἡ τῶν Ἰαπύδων... κεφαλὴ, this does not mean 'governing city' but 'largest, most prominent town'.

²² Grudem ('Κεφαλὴ', 56) cites Gregory of Nazianzus (fourth century AD), *Greek Anthology* 8 19, as evidence for the meaning 'ruler' or 'authority over': 'I am the scion of no holy root, but head of a pious wife and three children.' Again Pauline influence may be presupposed, but the idea of 'authority over' is in any case quite irrelevant: the word denotes only his *position* within the family, as the contrast with 'scion of no holy root' makes clear.

on 'The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles',²³ but the case presented here is surprisingly flimsy. Since שׂרָר in the sense of 'chief' or 'ruler' is translated in the LXX sometimes by κεφαλή and sometimes by ἀρχή, Bedale concludes that the two terms 'at least tended to become interchangeable as renderings of שׂרָר'.²⁴ More concrete support for this claim is supposed to emerge from the apparent equation of κεφαλή and ἀρχή in Isa. 9: 14–15. But since the head–tail motif is dominant in this context, it seems more appropriate to allow that κεφαλή has determined the interpretation of ἀρχή than vice versa. In any case, 'source' is no more suitable as a translation of κεφαλή here than is 'ruler'. The prominent people in Israel—the elder and those who respect persons—cannot be considered as the source or origin of the others; they are, as we have said, simply those who are foremost in society.

There appear to be, therefore, two fundamental difficulties with Bedale's argument. The first is that unless more decisive instances can be brought forward to show that κεφαλή in the LXX can mean 'source' or 'beginning', the argument from the association of the two terms with שׂרָר carries little weight. After all, the common use of שׂרָר in the Hebrew text to mean 'chief' or 'ruler' is barely, if at all, reflected in the use of κεφαλή in the LXX despite the consistent correspondence at the level of literal usage, as commentators who support the 'source' interpretation would be the first to point out. We should be wary of assuming, therefore, that translational associations constitute evidence for semantic determination. The second difficulty is that it is by no means clear that 'beginning' must imply 'source'. There is an important distinction to be made between the idea of precedence or commencement and that of the source from which something is generated.²⁵ A racing driver in 'poll' position is not the 'source' or the 'source

²³ *JTS* NS 5 (1954), 211–215, the same argument is found in S. Bedale, 'The Theology of the Church' in F. L. Cross (ed.), *Studies in Ephesians* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1956), 70. See also J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11: 2–16', *CBQ* 42 (1980), 492. Also pertinent to the discussion are R. Scroggs, 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman', *JAAAR* 40 (1972), 298 n. 41, and 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman Revisited', *JAAAR* 42 (1974), 534 n. 8, K. Kroeger, 'The Classical Concept of "Head" or "Source"', in G. Gaebelmeier Hull (ed.), *Serving Together: A Biblical Study of Human Relationships* (New York, 1987).

²⁴ Paradoxically, Schlier also notes that κεφαλή and ἀρχή are interchangeable but takes this as evidence for the interpretation of κεφαλή as 'ruler' (*TDNT* III, 675).

²⁵ Note G. Delling, *TDNT* I, 481: in the LXX ἀρχή 'usually denotes temporal beginning'. Liddell and Scott offer only one instance of ἀρχή meaning 'source' (of an action), and even here the attribution is difficult to account for (ἄνθρωπος) ἔχει ἀρχὴν ἄλλην ἐλευθερίαν (Plot. III 3.4).

of life' of the other drivers; nor, for that matter, does he have authority over them.

Better support for the thesis might be found in extra-biblical sources, but even here it is by no means unambiguous.

1. It is at least arguable, for example, that when Philo describes Esau as γενάρχης of all the parts of the tribe, the 'head as it were of the living creature' (*Congr.* 61), he has in mind no more than his priority and historical prominence. The significance of Esau within the rather complex allegorical argument in progress here is that he is the foremost embodiment of certain characteristics, not that he is the source of that which is summed up in him. Whereas in the Greek text γενάρχης is the subject and Esau the predicate (ὁ γενάρχης ἐστὶν Ἡσαῦ), in the Loeb translation the order of predication is reversed ('Esau is the progenitor, the head as it were..'), encouraging the idea that the two terms are semantically equivalent. The sentence should read: 'Head—as of a living creature—of all the parts described here, the progenitor is Esau.' Now it is not so easy to treat 'head' and 'progenitor' as synonymous: rather, through the apposition, 'head' is predicated of 'progenitor' and therefore should be understood as saying something that is not already inherent in the term.²⁶

2. Less convincing still is the citation from Philo *Praem.* 125: 'the zealous one (τὸν σπουδαῖον), whether one man or a people, will be the head of the human race, and all the others like the parts of a body animated (ψυχούμενα) by the forces in the head at the top'.²⁷ Clearly the zealous individual or nation is not meant to be understood as the 'source' of the human race; the most that can be said is that the 'head' is the source of its vitality, but even this is to be understood in a motivational sense with the emphasis on the active influence of the 'head'. This point has been masked by the Loeb translation, which renders τὸν σπουδαῖον doubtfully as 'the vituous one' (the primary meaning is 'hasty, energetic, earnest') and ψυχούμενα as an active verb more appropriate to the body metaphor than to social relations ('draw their life'). Philo does not mean that the human race depends on τὸν σπουδαῖον for its life but that such an individual or nation, by virtue of its

²⁶ Grudem's suggestion that γενάρχης means 'ruler' in this context is preposterous ('Meaning', 51): Esau was not ruler over the tribe that descended from him. In the Corpus Hermeticum and Orphic Hymns the word is used as a technical appellation (γενάρχης τῆς γενεσιουργίας, *Corp. Herm.* 13 21, cf. *Orph. Hym.* 13 8; 82 3) which neither clearly means 'ruler' nor constitutes an appropriate parallel to Philo's usage.

²⁷ See Payne, 'Response', 124; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids Michigan, 1987), 503 n 45, Cervin, 'Κεφαλὴ', 100–101; *TDNT* III, 676

prominence and excellence, is able to motivate and inspire others. Again, much confusion has been generated by commentators taking the verse out of context. The analogy sets the head of an animal, which is 'first and most noble' (πρῶτον καὶ ἄριστον), in contrast to the tail, which is good for little more than swatting flies. This contrast in itself is enough to disqualify the meaning 'source' for κεφαλὴ. the inferiority of the tail lies not in the fact that it is not the source, but in the ignobility of its function. But it should also be noted that the analogy is prompted by a probable allusion in *Praem.* 124 ('it was not dragged down tailwards but lifted up to the head', Loeb translation) to Deut. 28: 13 which, as we have seen already, had to do with the contrast between prominence and humiliation.

3. C. K. Barrett argues that Herodotus uses κεφαλαί for the source of a river (Τεάρου ποταμοῦ κεφαλαί ὕδωρ ἄριστόν τε καὶ κάλλιστον παρέχονται πάντων ποταμῶν, iv.91), but we must ask, first, whether 'source' is a direct or a derivative connotation.²⁸ It does not necessarily mean that κεφαλαί denotes 'source'; it is at least as likely that the word denotes only the highest or furthest point of the river, the 'head waters' (note the use of ἀρχάς for מַשְׁאֵה in Gen. 2: 10 LXX). Metaphor is a form of speech that is particularly sensitive to context, and while it is the case that when the reference is to a river, the idea of 'source' may emerge quite naturally as a secondary connotation, there is no reason to suppose that the same connotation is relevant when the metaphor is applied to some quite different subject. The error is akin to a species of linguistic sloppiness that J. Barr calls 'illegitimate totality transfer', only it is not the totality of meaning that is unthinkingly transferred but a particular, contextually dependent connotation.²⁹ While Cervin astutely comments that reference is made earlier to the 38 'sources' (πηγαί, iv.90) of the river which flow from the same rock, he wrongly infers therefrom that κεφαλαί and πηγαί are synonymous.³⁰ Secondly, we should point out that the verb used, παρέχονται ('give up, offer, grant'), does not require 'source' as its subject—a reference to the furthest point of the river suits just as well.³¹ Even more telling, thirdly, is the fact that κεφαλὴ may also be used for the mouth of a river (Callim.

²⁸ C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London A & C Black, 1968, 1971), 248

²⁹ J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London. SCM, 1961), 218

³⁰ Cervin, 'Κεφαλὴ', 89–90

³¹ The sentence is properly translated, 'The heads of the river Tearus provide the best and finest water of all rivers' not, as in the Loeb translation, 'From the sources flow'

Aetia, P Oxy., XVII, 2080, 48), which is consistent with the idea that the word denotes that which is prominent or extreme, but sits ill with the notion of 'source'.

4. Certain passages from Artemidorus (second century AD) are sometimes cited. In *Oneir.* 1.2 there is a story of a man who dreamed he was beheaded: 'In real life, the father of this man, too, died; for just as the head is the source (αἴτιος) of life and light for the whole body, he was responsible for the dreamer's life and light.' And in 1.35 it is said that 'the head resembles parents in that it is the cause (αἰτίαν) of one's living' (3.66 also pursues the motif).³² In both cases, however, the ground of the analogical relation is set out in the explicit equation of 'head' with αἴτιος, and one is inclined to infer from this, as with Philo's 'allegorical' interpretation of 'head', that 'source' does not belong to the natural metaphorical sense of κεφαλή but derives from the special application of the figure. Artemidorus has established at the outset (1.2) a rather elaborate system of correspondences between parts of the body and members of the household, according to which dreams may be interpreted.³³ The translation of αἴτιος as 'source' is also questionable. The meaning is not given in Liddell and Scott: the idea is rather the active one of 'responsible (often culpable) cause', as parents are responsible for the life of their children. This active, causative interpretation of κεφαλή would be quite inappropriate for the Pauline texts. Allowance should also be made for the possibility that the form of the analogy has been at least partly determined by factors other than the intrinsic suitability of the 'head' metaphor, such as the circumstances of the story—the need in particular to interpret the dream of beheading in relation to the father's death; and the presence in the background of the general image of the father as head of the family.

5. The use of κεφαλή in Orphic fragment 21a (Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα· Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τελεῖται) is probably better under-

³² See Payne, 'Response', 124–125, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 503 n 45. Payne makes use of the translation of R. J. White, which in one important respect misrepresents the analogy. In the Greek text the head is said to be not the source of the 'life and light' of the whole body but simply the cause of the whole body τὸν πατέρα δὲ καὶ τοῦ ζῆν καὶ τοῦ φωτός αἴτιος ἦν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ κεφαλή τοῦ παντός σώματος.

³³ Cf. Cervin, 'Κεφαλή', 92–93. Grudem's objection to the source interpretation (that if 'head' means 'source', it must also mean 'house', 'monetary capital', 'master of a slave', etc., because it is compared to all of these) is flawed ('Meaning', 52–53). Artemidorus does not liken the head to a source but to parents, *on the grounds that* both are the cause of one's living. Nevertheless, the sheer variety of functions attributed to the head in this work (including authority over the body) makes it impossible to promote any one to the level of common metaphorical denotation of κεφαλή.

stood to mean 'beginning' or 'creator' than 'source'.³⁴ For if κεφαλή carried the implication that all things derived from Zeus, the statement that 'Zeus is the middle' would appear to be redundant; and the proper antithesis to the completion of all things is the act of their creation, not their source. This is perhaps a rather fine argument, but it does bring the interpretation of κεφαλή in line with the general pattern of usage, and it is difficult to see what could be said conversely in favour of the 'source' interpretation. That ἀρχή is found in some MSS in place of κεφαλή would seem to confirm this view, and certainly does not serve as unambiguous evidence that κεφαλή can mean 'source'. Fitzmyer has subsequently noted the scholion on Fragment 21 (which has ἀρχή for κεφαλή) and argued that this supports the 'source' interpretation: καὶ ἀρχὴ μὲν οὗτος ὡς ποιητικὸν αἴτιον... ('he is "beginning" as productive cause').³⁵ But two thoughts count against this. First, as we have seen, αἴτιος denotes active and creative responsibility, not source: Zeus as ἀρχή is interpreted as a creative power. Secondly, the statement made by the Scholiast is not a semantic definition of the form 'ἀρχή means ποιητικὸν αἴτιον'. If this were the case, we would have to conclude either that the comment is redundant or that 'productive cause' (ποιητικὸν αἴτιον) was not at all an obvious interpretation of 'head'. The statement is rather an explanation of why the poem attributes to Zeus the status of ἀρχή: the one who is the cause of everything is the beginning of everything, but 'beginning' does not mean 'cause'.

6. Finally, two closely related passages from the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha need to be considered. In *Life of Adam* (Apoc.) 19.3 we find in Eve's account of her trespass the statement, 'desire is the head of every sin' (ἐπιθυμία γὰρ ἐστὶ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἁμαρτίας); MS C has 'root and beginning' instead of 'head'.³⁶ The

³⁴ Against Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 248, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 503 n 45. Fragment 168 has τέτυκται for τελεῖται.

³⁵ Fitzmyer, 'Kephale', 54. Cervin ('Κεφαλή', 91) also concedes that in this instance the 'idea of "source" is clear'.

³⁶ It is difficult to say whether 'root and beginning' should be taken as synonymous with 'head' or a correction of a too literal translation. If, as is likely, the Greek text is a translation from a Hebrew original (see J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The OT Pseudepigrapha* II (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 251), then we must also reckon with the possibility that שֹׁרֶשׁ, which does not normally mean 'source', was used for the sake of a play on its two denotations—'head' and a type of poisonous plant—since the 'desire' that the serpent sprinkles on the fruit is described as 'his evil poison'. A similar idea is found in Apoc. Abr. 24.9: 'And I saw there desire, and in her hand (was) the head of every kind of lawlessness, and her torment and her dispersal destined to destruction' (Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* I, 701). Here too 'beginning' is a more appropriate translation than 'source'. Philo says that the 'head of our deeds is their end' (κεφαλή δὲ

original text is dated by M. D. Johnson between 100 BC and AD 200, the Greek translation prior to AD 400.³⁷ The idea here is most probably only that 'desire' comes first. The context makes nothing of the idea that every sin *derives from* desire. Only the temporal aspect is required: desire is the poison sprinkled by Satan on the fruit from which Eve ate, and is thus the beginning of every sin. In *Test. Reub.* 2:2 (second century BC) the seven spirits of deceit established against mankind are said to be 'the head of the deeds of youth' (αὐτὰ εἰσι κεφαλὴ τῶν ἔργων τοῦ νεωτερισμοῦ). The best interpretation to be drawn from the context (see 3: 2-8) is that 'head' conveys the idea of 'instigation', that is, the spirits exert an active, controlling influence, they are the beginning of the deeds of youth: cf., among 'seven other spirits' given to man at creation, the 'spirit of procreation and intercourse' which 'leads the young person like a blind man into a ditch' (2: 9, Johnson's translation). However, another consideration presents itself in relation to both passages, which is that a particular metaphorical application of 'head' may lie in the background, that the metaphor has been mediated through a more familiar but suppressed image, such as 'head of a river' or 'head of a group of people (e.g. family)'. If this is the case, then it would still be a mistake to assign 'source' to κεφαλὴ as a standard and transferable metaphorical sense.

III

These analyses have demonstrated that neither the 'authority over' nor the 'source' interpretation of κεφαλὴ is as well established lexicologically as their proponents would like to think.

In the case of the texts cited in favour of the traditional view it has been shown either that the idea of 'ruler, chief' is quite out of place when the passage is properly understood, or that the more natural metaphorical sense of 'that which is prominent, foremost, first, representative' is at least as suitable.³⁸ To be 'head' of a group of people simply means *to occupy the position at the top or front*. While the sort of prominence denoted by 'head' will in many instances also entail authority and leadership, it seems mistaken to include this as part of the common denotation of the term. That is, the metaphorical use of κεφαλὴ cannot be thought

πραγμάτων ἐστὶ τὸ τέλος αὐτῶν) and that if you cut off their head, they die (*Sacr* 115)

³⁷ Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* II, 252

³⁸ Cf B and A Mickelsen, 'What does KEPHALÊ Mean in the New Testament?', in A Mickelsen (ed.), *Women*, 104

to introduce in any *a priori* or necessary manner ideas of authority or sovereignty into the text. In very few, if any, of the passages considered does the argument depend on κεφαλή having such a meaning. In none is the word directly linked with ideas of obedience or submission or authority. Arguably—though this is beyond the purview of this paper—this is as true for שׂרָא as it is for κεφαλή despite the tendency of the LXX to translate שׂרָא in such contexts by ἄρχων and ἀρχηγός. Bedale records the comment of Brown, Driver and Briggs on the meaning of שׂרָא as ‘chief ... apparently combined with the idea of first in a series’, and then applies it to the phrase ‘head of the family’: ‘No doubt the idea of authority is implicit in that phrase: but then a father’s or a chieftain’s authority in social relationships is largely dependent upon his “priority” in the order of being’³⁹

The argument that, when used metaphorically in Paul, κεφαλή means ‘source’ is greatly weakened by the lack of support in the LXX. It is weakened still further if we recognize that the evidence adduced from extra-biblical sources is less persuasive than some have claimed. The basic problem is that while it is possible to bring forward a few instances where ‘source’ can quite coherently be substituted for ‘head’, it has not by that been demonstrated that ‘source’ should be taken as a standard and familiar sense of κεφαλή.⁴⁰ The word may be used to *refer* to that which functions as a source, but that need not be even its metaphorical denotation. It should be stressed that the trade in metaphors is not a precise or systematic business: meanings emerge, overlap and disappear according to context, without necessarily impinging on conventional usage. Arbitrary appeal to texts that either belong to a very different religious or philosophical tradition or have reference to some quite different object, whether or not they have been correctly interpreted, hardly constitutes sound exegetical method. The only safe approach is to determine as precisely as possible the conventional metaphorical usage as Paul would have understood it, and then to consider what adjustments need to be made within the context of interpretation. To introduce connotations of an eccentric and questionable character uninvited by the text can ruin good exegesis.

It would seem that the debate over κεφαλή has been distorted by the force of polemical interests. The traditional view has been inspired perhaps partly by anachronistic physiological notions and

³⁹ In Cross, *Studies*, 70.

⁴⁰ It is surely significant, as a general point, that no instances have been brought forward in which κεφαλή has displaced or has been displaced by πηγή, the more obvious word for ‘source’ (see, for example, Pr. 13.14. Νόμος σοφοῦ πηγὴ ζωῆς)

partly by certain deep-seated presuppositions about social relations. The 'source' interpretation, on the other hand, has been accepted rather uncritically by those seeking to excise from Pauline thought what is seen as the canker of sexual prejudice. It has proved a useful stone to throw at the traditional interpretation, but the aim has not been quite accurate.

In all the uproar the most obvious metaphorical sense—one which in effect underlies both these misconstructions—has been largely neglected: 'that which is most prominent, foremost, uppermost, pre-eminent'.⁴¹ I would suggest, therefore, that the common metaphorical application of κεφαλή embraces a coherent range of meanings that can be mapped as follows, and that it is within this compass that we should expect to find the proper background to Paul's use of the word. i) the physical top or extremity of an object, such as a mountain or river; ii) more abstractly, that which is first, extreme (temporally or spatially); iii) that which is prominent or outstanding; and iv) that which is determinative or representative by virtue of its prominence. Here, moreover, we remain in sight of the commonest figurative usage of κεφαλή in the LXX, by which the head, representative of the whole person by synecdoche, serves as the locus of a wide range of moral and religious experiences. Blessings, mischief, blood, recompense, reproach and judgment all come upon the head, typically from the hand of God (e.g. Gen. 49: 26; 1 Kgdms. 25: 39; 2 Kgdms. 1: 16; Neh. 4: 4; Ezek. 9: 10; Judith 9: 9); a vow is made upon the head (Num. 6: 7); transgressions abound over the head (Ezra 9: 6; Ps. 37: 5); joy and praise are over the head (Isa. 35: 10; 51: 11; 61: 7); shame and dishonour are closely associated with the head (Num. 5: 18; Deut. 21: 12; Jer 14: 4; Ep. Jer. 31).

It is a moot point, finally, whether we can properly make use of evidence from the New Testament generally in attempting to define the metaphorical sense of κεφαλή in 1 Cor. 11: 3.⁴² The problem is not just that the most interesting texts—those in Colossians and Ephesians—are later, but that they appear to draw, in a way that 1 Cor. 11: 3 does not, on an established and determinative theological conception of Christ as 'head'. It would not be surprising, under such special circumstances, if certain connota-

⁴¹ Cervin ('Κεφαλή') moves some way towards this, but a failure to distinguish between normative metaphorical meaning and secondary, contextually dependent connotations renders his analysis inconsistent. Grudem objects that 'prominent part' is not attested in the lexicons ('Meaning', 37–38).

⁴² Grudem argues vigorously that we do not have to suspend judgment on the NT examples and that they provide strong support for the 'authority over' interpretation ('Meaning', 6).

tions had accrued to κεφαλή that are not evident elsewhere. In view both of this and of the considerable space needed in order to present an adequate exegesis of these passages it seems better to postpone the undertaking, though this is not to say that the stalemate over the interpretation of κεφαλή cannot be resolved along similar lines.

IV

1 Cor. 11: 3-16 is a notoriously difficult passage to interpret and caution must be exercised in seeking to establish in what sense Paul uses the word κεφαλή in the schematic prefatory statement: 'I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is the man, the head of Christ is God.' Still, I would suggest that we can with some confidence determine at least where this curious verse stands in relation to the preceding lexicological analysis.

Something needs to be said first about the derivation of the ideas found in 1 Cor. 11: 3. The verse indicates no certain source or interpretative context for the use of κεφαλή in any of the three relationships listed. Nor is there any apparent basis for determining which relationship has conceptual priority—in contrast to Eph. 5: 23, where the established representation of Christ as head of the church is the model for a new understanding of the husband's relationship to his wife. In all probability, therefore, the source of the metaphor in 1 Cor. 11: 3 is not so much any prior pattern of usage as the immediate paraenetic topic: Paul uses κεφαλή to define the various relationships because it is suited both literally and symbolically to the matter in hand, which is why the verse cannot be pressed for exact theological import.⁴³ This would appear to be confirmed by the observation that κεφαλή is very rarely used to describe the relationship of one individual to another.⁴⁴ Among the passages cited in this paper only Artemidorus, *Oneir.* 1:2 and 3:66 use the metaphor in anything like this way, and these belong, as we have seen, to a special figurative application. This suggests that it is primarily the one-to-one relationship between man and woman and the issue of head-coverings that has determined the formulation in v.3. If this is the case, the description of man as head should be reckoned

⁴³ The hierarchical pattern may well echo a philosophical tradition, but the use of κεφαλή in such a way appears to be unprecedented (cf H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969, 1975), 183 and n 20).

⁴⁴ Grudem sees in this a difficulty with the interpretation 'prominent part' ('Meaning', 57), but it is no less logical for one individual to be more prominent than another than for one to have authority over another.

determinative for the other two relationships. It is difficult otherwise to know how the idea that Christ is head of each individual might have arisen.

The passage has little or nothing to do with the issue of the man's authority over the woman.⁴⁵ What mars the headship relationship, whether between man and woman or between Christ and man, is dishonour, not disobedience: so the woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered 'dishonours her head' (v.5). The question of authority is irrelevant to a discussion of the proper manner in which men and women should pray and prophesy; nor is it a valid deduction from the idea that man has authority over the woman that she should veil herself in worship, an activity directed not towards the man but towards God. While there is reference in v.10 to the ἐξουσία that a woman should have over (ἐπὶ) her head, this cannot simply be taken to mean that the veil is a symbol of her submission to the man's authority.⁴⁶ For we would then have to suppose, if we are to be consistent, that the man's obligation *not* to cover his head (v.7) signifies, conversely, his exemption from divine authority. What v.7 makes clear, in fact, is that the wearing of a veil by a woman draws its significance from the relationship indicated by the expression 'glory of a man', and there is no reason to interpret this in terms of obedience or submission.⁴⁷ The difference, therefore, is that whereas in the context of worship it is appropriate for the 'image and glory of God' to be seen, the 'glory of man' should be concealed. There is some force, too, to the observation that the phrase ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν nowhere has the passive sense 'to have another's authority over oneself', though given the linguistic peculiarity of the verse and the likely symbolic influence of the idea of the head-covering on the form of expression this is perhaps not as persuasive an argument as is sometimes thought.⁴⁸ Finally, whatever may be meant exactly by the curious phrase 'because of the angels' in

⁴⁵ Against, for example, Fitzmyer, 'Another Look', 510-511.

⁴⁶ Cf M D. Hooker, 'Authority on her Head: An Examination of I Cor xi.10' *NTS* 10 (1963/64), 414-416

⁴⁷ The idea that woman brings glory to man is found in Prov 11:16 and 1 Esdr 4:17. In neither passage is glory linked to obedience to the man. On the contrary, in the latter the point is made in the context of a speech asserting the authority of women over men: τίς οὖν ὁ δεσπότης αὐτῶν, ἢ τίς ὁ κυριεύων αὐτῶν, οὐχ αἱ γυναῖκες, (1 Esdr 4:14). In Prov 11:16 it is a gracious and righteous wife who brings glory to her husband.

⁴⁸ See J A. Fitzmyer, 'A Feature of Qumrân Angelology and the Angels of I Cor xi.10', *NTS* 4 (1957-58), 50-51, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 519, D R. Hall, 'A Problem of Authority', *Exp Times* 102 (1990), 40

v.10, it does not point to any relationship of authority as the explanation for the injunction.

At the same time it is difficult to make much sense of the view that man as head is the source of woman or of her life. G. D. Fee remarks that the only other place in the passage where the relationship between men and women is picked up is vv.8–9, where it is said that ‘woman is from man’.⁴⁹ Yet this is counterbalanced, first, by the assertion in v.12 that man is ‘through the woman’, which must undermine the argument of v.3 if the question of origin is really at issue; and secondly, by the fact that vv.8–9 constitute a subordinate argument (beginning with γάρ) intended to support the claim in v.7 that ‘woman is the glory of man’. The primary theme in the passage concerns the shame that attaches to a woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered. It is to this theme that v.3 must relate, not to the subordinate argument of vv.8–9. The argument of the passage effectively rules out a ‘historical’ interpretation of the concept of headship: the idea of dishonouring the head hardly makes sense in creational terms, but rather necessitates a synchronal perspective in which ‘head’ denotes the current relation—particularly as it is expressed in the concrete context of worship—between Christ and man, man and woman, God and Christ. The Genesis narrative is introduced not because κεφαλή denotes man’s creational priority but because it is this which gives the passage its ontological grounding.⁵⁰ It is worth observing, finally, that in none of the passages where κεφαλή is supposed to mean ‘source’ do we find anything like the idea of material origin that ‘source’ must imply in this context (woman created out of the body of man).

At issue between the man and the woman in this passage is neither authority nor origin, but the question of whether the woman’s behaviour in worship brings glory or dishonour on the man. The point seems to be, therefore, that the behaviour of the woman reflects upon the man who as her head is representative of her, the prominent partner in the relationship, or that the woman’s status and value is summed up in the man. We might almost say that ‘man is the head of woman’ and ‘woman is the

⁴⁹ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 503, cf. Murphy-O’Connor, ‘Sex and Logic’, 492–493, Payne, ‘Response’, 126

⁵⁰ The fact that there is no mention of Christ in vv. 7–9 makes it unlikely that the statement ‘Christ is the head of every man’ is to be understood in creational terms (cf. C. Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt Berlin, 1982), 70). Nor, for reasons already given, can we understand the headship of Christ as presenting him specifically as ‘source’ of the new creation (as Fee, *First Corinthians*, 504–505).

glory of man' are reciprocal statements. This, moreover, is in keeping with the fundamental emphasis in the passage on the *appearance* of the man and the woman: image and glory, unlike the abstract ideas of authority and source, are visual categories and appropriately embodied in the forms of personal attire.

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