

THE MEANING OF ὑποτάσσω IN EPHESIANS 5.21-33:
A LINGUISTIC APPROACH

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Introduction

The primary purpose of this essay is to examine, with the aid of modern linguistic research, the often-debated *Haustafeln* (or household codes) found in Eph. 5.21-33. Since there are countless books and articles that focus on this and similar issues in biblical scholarship, further justification for taking up this text may be required.¹ Perhaps the most significant justification is that it remains prominent in academic and church

1. The following is a sample of the more recent literature: James P. Hering, *The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln in Theological Context: An Analysis of Their Origins, Relationship, and Message* (AUS, 7.260; New York: Peter Lang, 2007); Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, “Asking the Other Question”: An Intersectional Approach to Galatians 3:28 and the Colossian Household Codes’, *BibInt* 18 (2010), pp. 364-89; Jack J. Gibson, ‘Ephesians 5:21-33 and the Lack of Marital Unity in the Roman Empire’, *BSac* 168 (2011), pp. 162-77; Margaret Y. MacDonald, ‘Reading the New Testament Household Codes in Light of New Research on Children and Childhood in the Roman World’, *SR* 41 (2012), pp. 376-87; Michelle Lee-Barnewall, ‘Turning Κεφαλή on Its Head: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Ephesians 5:21-33’, in Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (eds.), *Early Christianity in its Hellenistic Context. I. Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (TENTS, 9; Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 599-614; *idem*, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2016); Elna Mouton, ‘Reimagining Ancient Household Ethos? On the Implied Rhetorical Effect of Ephesians 5:21-33’, *Neot* 48 (2014), pp. 163-85; Jill E. Marshall, ‘Community is a Body: Sex, Marriage, and Metaphor in 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:7 and Ephesians 5:21-33’, *JBL* 134 (2015), pp. 833-47; Cynthia Long Westfall, *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle’s Vision for Men and Women in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016).

conversation, as the voluminous literature confirms.² Secondly, although the issue has benefitted from various scholarly approaches, there has been, to my knowledge, no methodological approach that primarily considers the Ephesian household codes using modern linguistic methodological innovations. These innovations, particularly in the areas of grammar and syntax, present a significant opportunity to move this heated discussion forward in fresh and creative ways.³

Methodology

This essay aims to capture the linguistic significance of the Ephesian author's decision to not only employ specific words but specific grammatical features with respect to the tense, aspect, mood and voice of specific verbs in Eph. 5.21-33. The approach to this passage is decidedly synchronic while being careful to present the grammatical *form* of each word as distinct from its *function*—namely, how that form is used in context.⁴ In addition, the discussion will consider the existing web of clausal relationships as well as the vocabulary and forms of the household codes found elsewhere in the New Testament and also those found in contemporary Greco-Roman literature.⁵

A key methodological principle in this approach is the linguistic notion of choice. According to Halliday, from the notion of choice comes

2. The traditional and more recent approaches range from lexical studies to discourse analyses as well as comparative studies that explore the socio-historical roots of the *Haustafeln*. This essay will incorporate research on verbal aspect and other grammatical issues. Cf. Andrew D. Naselli, 'A Brief Introduction to Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek', *DBSJ* 12 (2007), pp. 17-28 (17); Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), p. 45.

3. See Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, 'New Testament Greek Language and Linguistics in Recent Research', *CBR* 6 (2008), pp. 214-55 (214-15); David L. Mathewson and Elodie Ballantine Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar: Syntax for Students of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), p. xv.

4. Cf. Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Biblical Languages: Greek, 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2nd edn, 1994), p. 15.

5. On the origins and development of this genre, see David L. Balch, 'Household Codes', in David E. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* (SBLSCM, 21; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 25-50; James E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 37-56, 74-83, 147.

‘the description of a sentence, clause or other item’ which reflects the decision of the speaker.⁶ Regarding Eph. 5.21-33, part of this choice includes the aspect, mood and voice of the passage’s verbs in the context of the larger grammatical relationships of the pericope’s clausal structure.⁷

The primary verb in question is ὑποτάσσω (Eph. 5.21, 24), which carries the general meaning of the process of submission.⁸ At least two key questions relate to the choice of this verb: (1) ‘What does the form of ὑποτάσσω in relation to the elements of the pericope say about its meaning?’; and (2) ‘What are the implications of the author’s choice of ὑποτάσσω instead of ἄρχω (“to rule or govern”) which is more prevalent in contemporary Greco-Roman *Haustafeln*?’⁹

6. Cf. M.A.K. Halliday, *System and Function in Language* (ed. G.R. Kress; London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 4; Kenneth L. McKay, ‘Aspect in Imperatival Constructions in New Testament Greek’, *NovT* 27 (1985), pp. 201-26 (202); Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (SBG, 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. xi, 1. On the substantial agreement between McKay and Porter, see Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek*, pp. 43 and 111 respectively.

7. My approach draws from verbal aspect theory, specifically in light of the imperatival constructions in Pauline ethical injunctions. See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*; McKay, ‘Aspect in Imperatival Constructions’, pp. 201-26; James L. Boyer, ‘A Classification of Imperatives: A Statistical Study’, *GTJ* 8 (1987), pp. 35-54; and Dave Mathewson, ‘Verbal Aspect in Imperatival Constructions in Pauline Ethical Injunctions’, *FN* 9 (1996), pp. 21-35. My framework (especially regarding clausal structure) draws from the principles in Matthew B. O’Donnell, Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, ‘OpenText.org and the Problems and Prospects of Working with Ancient Discourse’, in Andrew Wilson, Paul Rayson and Anthony M. McEnery (eds.), *A Rainbow of Corpora: Corpus Linguistics and the Languages of the World* (LE, 40; Munich: Lincom, 2003), pp. 109-21 (113-14); Matthew B. O’Donnell, ‘Introducing the OpenText.org Syntactically Analyzed Greek New Testament’, no pages. Online: <http://www.opentext.org/resources/articles/a8.html>; *idem*, *Corpus Linguistics and the Greek of the New Testament* (NTM, 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005).

8. Cf. BDAG’s entry for ὑποτάσσω (1β), ‘subject oneself, be subjected’.

9. See Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1259b. ἄρχω means ‘to rule or govern, with the implication of preeminent position and status—to rule, to govern’. Cf. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), Domain 37.54. Aristotle employs the passive participle form of ἄρχω (‘one who is ruled’) to describe the relationship of the wife to her husband (cf. *Pol.* 1.1254b, 1.1259b). He also uses ἄρχω to describe the relationship of a slave to their master (*Pol.* 1.1254a-

Word Studies Versus Word Relationships

When it comes to the Ephesian *Haustafel*, the quest for its meaning and correct interpretation in the church and academy is paramount.¹⁰ What is often lacking in this quest is a consideration of the inter-relationships of the words found in the context of Eph. 5.21-33. From what can be observed in the literature on the Ephesian household code there is a tendency to assert that a word in the code, like ὑποτάσσω or κεφαλή, must mean exactly what it means in other passages or texts—while ignoring contextual factors, issues of metaphor, verbal aspect and other critical points of grammar. Grudem's essays are perhaps the paragon of this approach. At first glance his position, that κεφαλή always denotes a sense of authority, appears convincing.¹¹ However, there are many examples where this is not the case. In fact, a variety of contextually sensitive meanings for this word can be found.¹²

1.1255a, 1.1259b and 1.1260a) and a child to their parents (*Pol.* 1.1259b, 1.1278b). In addition to the verb, he employs the noun ἄρχων ('one who rules') to describe the role of the husband (cf. *Pol.* 1.1259b). Similarly, Didymus considers the male as superior, describing him as having the rule (ἄρχει) of the household, being intellectually superior to women, children and slaves, and being naturally disposed to the work of household management, including the role of master (δεσποτικόν). Cf. Curtius Wachsmuth and Otto Hense (eds.), *Ioannis Strobaei Anthologii*. II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1884), p. 149. For an English translation, see Balch, 'Household Codes', pp. 41-42. Likewise, Xenophon, writing in the mid-fourth century BCE in his *Oeconomicus* explains how the husband has authority over his wife (3.11, 14; 7.4, 7, 9, 23-26; 9.16). At the same time, where the noun ἄρχων is employed to denote rule in the New Testament (Mt. 9.18; Lk. 8.41; 18.18; Jn 3.1; 12.31; 14.30; 16.11; Rev. 1.5), it is never used in reference to a household or family relationship. Similarly, while ἄρχων is used in the LXX to refer to the head or ruler of a household (e.g. Num. 3.24; 1 Chron. 5.14-15), the majority of the occurrences refer to a tribal, civil or military leader (Gen. 34.2; 42.6; 49.10; Lev. 4.22, etc.).

10. A more basic discussion is the 'meaning of meaning' in current lexical theory. See Eugene A. Nida and Johannes P. Louw, *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament: A Supplement to the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (SBLRBS, 25; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 1; Stanley E. Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), pp. 47-59.

11. Cf. Wayne Grudem, 'The Meaning of *Kephalē*: A Response to Recent Studies', *TJ* 11 (1990), pp. 3-72.

12. The noun κεφαλή simply does not have a one-size-fits-all range of meaning; it varies based on context—granted the word does mean 'head' in many instances (e.g. Gen. 28.11; Exod. 12.9; Josh. 7.6; 3 Kgdms 19.6; 1 Esd. 4.30; Jdt. 13.6-10;

This kind of error—assuming one contextualized meaning is always present in every occurrence of a word—was pointed out decades ago by James Barr.¹³ The problem occurs when one imposes a meaning which is valid in one context onto the same word in an entirely different context.¹⁴ A better way forward is to see meaning as ‘the *sum* of what the speaker wants the hearer to understand’.¹⁵ Hence, the meaning of ὑποτάσσω should be based not only on its form, but also its context with its underlying themes and metaphors.¹⁶ On the other hand, since words do carry some basic sense of meaning, there is a need to offer a general ‘meaning’ of ὑποτάσσω and its use in the LXX and New Testament especially.¹⁷

Occurrences of ὑποτάσσω in the LXX and New Testament

According to Louw and Nida’s lexicon, ὑποτάσσω is under Domain 37 ‘Control, Rule’ and the subdomain ‘Control, Restrain’ (37.1–37.32). They suggest it means ‘to bring something under the firm control of

Mt. 5.36; Jn 13.9), but it can also mean a person’s hair (e.g. Lev. 14.9; Num. 6.9; Judg. 16.19; Acts 18.18). Sometimes the context is metaphorical (e.g. 1 Kgdms 25.39; 3 Kgdms 2.32-33; 2 Chron. 6.23; 2 Esd. 13.36; Sir. 7.23; and Acts 18.6). Based on the Greco-Roman codes, the use of κεφαλή in Ephesians has a unique sense when it collocates with σῶμα (Eph. 5.28) and σάρξ (v. 29) and includes the reference to the one-flesh union in Gen. 2.24 (v. 31).

13. James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

14. For a discussion on the errors of etymologizing, confusion of word and concept as well as the problem of ‘illegitimate totality transfer’, which involves transferring onto a word (such as κεφαλή) all of its known meanings, see Barr, *Semantics*, pp. 210-14, 218 and 222.

15. Geoff Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar* (London: Hodder Education, 2nd edn, 1996), p. 7 (emphasis added); cf. M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Arnold, 1985), pp. 39-61.

16. Thiselton observes that words are not simple ‘carriers of meaning’ to the neglect of the remaining sentence. See Anthony C. Thiselton, ‘Semantics and New Testament Interpretation’, in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 75-104 (78).

17. The quest for a general meaning should be sufficiently abstract but allow variance for ‘situational usage’ depending on the ‘cotextual and contextual factors’ that are unique to this passage. See Porter, *Linguistic Analysis*, p. 54.

someone—to subject to, to bring under control'.¹⁸ The definition in BDAG states that ὑποτάσσω in Eph. 5.21 means to ‘subject oneself, be subjected or subordinate’. Additionally, BDAG further explains how ὑποτάσσω involves ‘submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love’ (cf. 1 Cor. 1.16; Eph. 5.21; 1 Pet. 5.5b; *I Clem.* 38.1). Delling notes that in Hellenic literature the active form of ὑποτάσσω means to ‘place under’, while the passive means ‘to be subject’ and the middle means ‘to subject oneself’.¹⁹

Beyond any simple word definition, a review of the occurrences of ὑποτάσσω in the LXX and New Testament further suggests that the larger semantic context of the passage is vital to determining which meaning category applies.²⁰ For example, the following inflections of ὑποτάσσω are used in the sense of ‘placing someone or something under the authority of another’: ὑπέταξας (Ps. 8.7; 17.48); ὑπέταξεν (Ps. 46.4); ὑποτάσσων (Ps. 143.2); ὑποταγήσεται (Dan. 11.37); ὑποταγέντων (1 Pet. 3.22); and ὑποτάξαντι (1 Cor. 15.28). Next, the meaning of ‘being subject to another’ appears to be present when the following forms are employed: ὑπετάγη (1 Chron. 22.18); ὑπετάγησαν (Ps. 59.10; 107.10); ὑποταγήσεται (1 Cor. 15.28); ὑποταγησόμεθα (Heb. 12.9); and ὑποτάσσεται (Lk. 10.17, 20; 1 Cor. 14.32).

Furthermore, the following inflected forms are used to denote the ‘submission of oneself to another’: ὑπετάγησαν (1 Chron. 29.24); ὑποτάγηθι (Ps. 36.7; 61.6); ὑποταγήσεται (Ps. 61.2); ὑποτασσόμενος (Lk. 2.51); ὑποτάσσεται (Rom. 8.7; Eph. 5.24); ὑποτασσέσθω (Rom. 13.1); ὑποτασσέσθωσαν (1 Cor. 14.34); ὑποτασσόμενοι (Eph. 5.21; 1 Pet. 2.18); ὑποτασσομένας (Tit. 2.5); and ὑποτασσόμεναι (1 Pet. 3.1, 5). In general, the way ὑποτάσσω is employed in the New Testament within the context of a household relationship suggests a *voluntary* act, that is, yielding oneself to another—as indicated by the collocation of ἀλλήλοις (Eph. 5.21), τοῖς ἀνδράσιν (Eph. 5.24) and τοῖς ἴδιοις ἀνδράσιν (1 Pet. 3.1, 5).

In the secondary literature, Sampley, followed by Park, Whang and more recently Osiek, contends that ὑποτάσσω speaks of a *voluntary* act

18. Louw and Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon*, Domain 37.31.

19. Refer to ὑποτάσσω in TDNT, VIII, pp. 39-40.

20. Porter observes how ‘semantic choices’ may be ‘defined in terms of what is not chosen ... The concept of meaning as choice also serves to bridge the gap between *form* and *function*’. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, p. 13 (emphasis added).

of submission in which one complies with the wishes of another.²¹ Likewise, Richards makes the case that whenever ὑποτάσσω appears in the middle voice, as it does in Eph. 5.21 and 24, it describes a *voluntary* act of submission to another person; the archetype of this voluntary submission is found in Christ's act of self-humiliation (Phil. 2.7-8).²² The mutuality and voluntary nature intensify when we consider the author's selection of κεφαλή instead of ἄρχων, δεσπότης or κύριος, since these authoritative and patriarchal words prevail within contemporary Greco-Roman household codes.²³ According to Mutter, this passage exhibits 'the language of care, service and sacrifice' for the 'roles of Christ and husbands'.²⁴ Indeed, despite attempts to align κεφαλή with the concept of authority, the language of service that is used in Eph. 5.21-33 is not congruent with the idea of superior social status.

So far, reviewing the primary and secondary literature, paired with a study of ὑποτάσσω within the LXX and the New Testament, suggests the verb connotes a voluntary, permissive action. But before engaging the neglected issues of clausal structure, tense, mood and aspect, it seems appropriate to briefly consider how metaphor plays a vital, interpretive role in the passage.

21. Cf. J. Paul Sampley, '*And the Two Shall Become One Flesh*: A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33 (SNTSMS, 16; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 117; David M. Park, 'The Structure of Authority in Marriage: An Examination of *Hupotasso* and *Kephale* in Ephesians 5:21-33', *EvQ* 59 (1987), pp. 117-18; Y.C. Whang, 'Cohabitation or Conflict: Greek Household Management and Christian *Haustafeln*', in Michael A. Hayes, Wendy Porter and David Tombs (eds.), *Religion and Sexuality* (Studies in Theology and Sexuality, 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 85-100 (97-99); Carolyn Osiek, 'The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33): A Problematic Wedding', *BTB* 32 (2002), p. 32.

22. Refer to W. Larry Richards, "Υποταγήσεται in 1 Corinthians 15:28b", *AUSS* 38 (2000), pp. 203-206, and Eph. 5.25 which parallels Christ's self-humiliation for humanity with the husband's giving of himself for his wife; 'and gave himself up for her' (καὶ ἔαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς). See also Whang, 'Cohabitation or Conflict', pp. 97-99.

23. In his recent study, Mutter claims that 'against the backdrop of the NT canon, the decision to use κεφαλή in Eph. 5.23 instead of ἄρχοντος, δεσπότης, or κύριος appears to be significant'. See forthcoming (exact pagination may change), Kelvin F. Mutter, 'Ephesians 5:21-33 as Christian Alternative Discourse', *TJ* 39 (2018), pp. 1-29 (16).

24. Mutter, 'Christian Alternative Discourse', p. 19.

‘Ὑποτάσσω and the Body Metaphor’

In our quest for this verb’s meaning, we need to also factor in the author’s choice of *κεφαλή* (‘head’, v. 23) in relation to *σῶμα* (‘body’, v. 28) and *σάρξ* (‘flesh’, v. 29).²⁵ This relational metaphor strongly implies that *κεφαλή* and *σῶμα* are symbiotic. The instruction is that the husbands should ‘love their wives’ (*ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἔαυτῶν γυναικας*) ‘as their own bodies’ (*ὡς τὰ ἔαυτῶν σώματα*, v. 28). With respect to the husband and wife metaphor, the connection between body and head (with the implication that neither can function without the other) is further cemented by the reference to Gen. 2.24 where husband and wife become ‘one flesh’ (*σάρκα μίαν*). Even here in the ancient context of Genesis the language resonates with the value of equality.

Next, the author employs the commands *ἀγαπάω* (for the husband) and curiously *φοβέομαι* (for the wife) instead of *ὑποτάσσω* in Eph. 5.33. The section begins with *ὑποτάσσω* but ends with *φοβέομαι*—why? This is arguably a critical difference in the choice of verb. It would seem that if one-sided submission were implicit here in v. 33 (whereas in v. 21 the sense is mutual), then *ὑποτάσσω* would have been the expected choice for v. 33. Instead, the passage commands love and respect.

Whereas *ἀγαπάω* is in the imperative, *φοβέομαι* is a subjunctive. And yet, both verbs here share the same aspect, and hence, as McKay explains, *φοβέομαι* even as a subjunctive, corresponds ‘to the imperative it represents’.²⁶ He further claims that this particular *ἴνα* clause (*ἢ δέ γυνή ἴνα φοβήται*) is used here ‘independently ... which balances *ἔκαστος* ... *ἀγαπάτω*’.²⁷

Consequently, it seems that *ἴνα* is expressing an ‘ideal’ state of the relationship between the subjects (husband and wife). English translations (i.e. NRSV, NIV, ESV, esp. NASB) seem to be missing this

25. There are several studies that examine this metaphor in greater detail. See, for example, Lee-Barnewall, ‘Turning *κεφαλή* on Its Head’, pp. 599-614; Kartzow, ‘Asking the Other Question’, pp. 364-89; Mouton, ‘Reimagining Ancient Household Ethos?’, pp. 163-85; and most recently, Marshall, ‘Community is a Body’, pp. 833-47.

26. McKay, ‘Aspect in Imperatival Constructions’, p. 223.

27. McKay, ‘Aspect in Imperatival Constructions’, p. 223. See also Porter, *Idioms*, p. 224 and his section on subjunctives in *Verbal Aspect*, pp. 323-35 and especially p. 331 where he similarly remarks how the ‘present Imperative and Subjunctive parallel’.

grammatical point in v. 33—the more specific command is for the husband to love his wife (as himself), and the wife (*ἥ δὲ γυνὴ*), *so that* she *might* respect her husband (*ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἀνδρα*).²⁸ There is a reciprocity and dependency between subjects here—if the husband fails with his task, she just might *not* respect her husband.

Clausal Analysis of Ephesians 5.21-33

Are there other aspects of this passage that support a sense of mutuality and reciprocity? A linguistically informed understanding of the clausal relationships in Ephesians points to a solution that should weigh into any interpretation of the household code. While recognizing there is a ‘divided opinion’ about whether the code starts in v. 21 or v. 22, the greater issue at stake in this essay is how each clause in the code relates to those clauses previously introduced in ch. 5 and arguably as early as 4.1.²⁹ There are several reasons to understand the household code as being syntactically dependent on its larger context.

First, Eph. 5.21-33 rests within a larger discourse that extends forward to 6.9 and addresses the relationship between parents and children, masters and slaves. Each of these relationships is re-orientated towards the central subjects who permeate the entire letter (*κύριος*, *Χριστός* or *θεός*, 6.1-9). Likewise, 5.21–6.9 belongs to a much larger section that extends back to 4.1. The practical outworking of the Christian faith discussed in the first three chapters begins with a call in 4.1 ‘to walk in a worthy manner’ (*ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι*) while ‘bearing one another in love’ (*ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ*) in v. 2.

Secondly, a further instruction is to ‘eagerly keep the unity of the Spirit’ (*σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος*) in 4.3 with a closing admonition in 4.30 to ‘not grieve the Holy Spirit of God’ (*μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον τοῦ θεοῦ*). Here the author’s reasoned choice to emphasize the ongoing need to preserve the spiritual unity within the

28. Porter, *Idioms*, pp. 238-39; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, p. 331. Consider the force of the NASB: ‘and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband’.

29. For this clausal analysis, it makes no difference whether one wishes to insist on an airtight boundary for the code beginning with 5.22 or 5.21. The fifty-fourth clause in ch. 5 found in 5.22 (*αἱ γυναικες τοῖς ἴδιοις ἀνδράσιν*) is functionally dependent upon the 48th (*ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι*). Additionally, *ὑποτάσσω* is found in v. 21 (clause fifty-three), thus providing an obvious grammatical link with v. 22.

church is a foundational theme that extends forward to the household code in 5.21–33.³⁰ In 4.4 there is ‘one body and one Spirit’ (ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἐν πνεῦμα). Subsequently, 4.15 states that ‘the head is Christ’ (ἔστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ Χριστός), while implicitly the church is the body (ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα, v. 16) and in v. 25 ‘we are members of one another’ (ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη). This spiritual unity further reinforces the mutual and reciprocal nature of the Ephesian household code. Since the ‘body’ is the church (5.30), this spiritual unity in ch. 4 further undergirds the relationship between a husband and wife (5.1–2, 8, 15, 18, 21, 25), parents and children (6.1–4) and masters and slaves (6.5–9).

Thirdly, the repeated emphasis on *περιπατέω* in 4.1, 17 appears again in 5.2, 8 and 15 thus providing a link with 5.18 and ultimately vv. 21–22, 25. The practical outworking of one’s vertical relationship with God (introduced in ch. 1) not only resonates horizontally within the broader community of faith, but also between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and slaves (5.21–6.9). The link between the call to ‘walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us’ in 5.2 and the exhortation in v. 25 is unmistakable: ‘Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.’³¹ This practical exhortation in 5.2 paves the way for the call in v. 8 ‘to walk as children of the light’ (ώς τέκνα φωτὸς περιπατεῖτε) and in v. 15 to ‘walk ... as wise’ (περιπατεῖτε ως σοφοί). This theme of walking in the way of love and wisdom continues in v. 17 with a call for ‘understanding what [is] the will of the Lord’ (συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου). To summarize so far, my argument has been to propose that the household code has its roots in the previous section on Christian behavior that began in 4.1.

Whereas the household code can be seen as an extension of community behavior—a chain of paraenetic exhortations—a fourth line of reasoning is that a syntactical link in this paraenetic chain exists between *ὑποτάσσω* in 5.21 and *πληρόω* in 5.18. This supposition is strongly supported by a study of the interdependent relationships between the clauses while also examining the ‘relations of the clauses at

30. Note that *σπουδάζω*, *τηρέω* and *λυπέω* are imperfective in aspect. Cf. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 21 and below.

31. Compare Eph. 5.2 (*περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἡγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἔαυτὸν ὑπέρ ἡμῶν*) with 5.25 (*Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἡγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἔαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπέρ αὐτῆς*).

the paragraph level'.³² The fifty-third clause (in 5.21) has already been identified as a ‘participial structure dependent upon the verb “be filled” in 5.18, as are similar participles in vv. 19-20’.³³ Porter asserts that a ‘possible way forward is to consider the household code as part of the previous section on Christian behavior, including being filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is exemplified in a variety of behaviors, including mutual respect among husbands and wives’.³⁴ Based on the clausal structure outlined below, this proposition appears to be linguistically defensible, given the reality of the secondary clauses that are functionally dependent upon the primary clause ($\text{ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι}$) in v. 18.

According to OpenText.org, dependency is reflected semantically by a direct clausal relationship between the clause Eph.c5_54 in v. 22 ($\text{αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν}$) and the primary clause Eph.c5_48 in v. 18 ($\text{ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι}$).³⁵ The primary clause in v. 18 contains five secondary embedded clauses Eph.c5_49 through to Eph.c5_53 (vv. 19-21) which are functionally dependent, along with Eph.c5_54 (v. 22) on Eph.c5_48 (v. 18). Hence, linguistically speaking, one simply cannot isolate the meaning of $\text{αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν}$ (Eph.c5_54) from $\text{ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ}$ (Eph.c5_53) and the

32. O'Donnell, Porter and Reed, 'Problems and Prospects', pp. 113-14. The four primary elements in a clausal analysis are: (1) Subject, (2) Predicator (main verb), (3) Complement (objects and other words that 'complete' the verb) and (4) Adjunct (adverbs, adverbial clauses, prepositional phrases modifying the verb). O' Donnell, 'Introducing OpenText.org' and cf. *idem*, *Corpus Linguistics*, pp. 190-201 where O'Donnell explains the higher pericope, discourse and context levels of analysis.

33. Stanley E. Porter, 'Paul, Virtues, Vices and Household Codes', in J. Paul Sampley (ed.), *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*. II (London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2016), pp. 369-90 (382). I appreciate Huffman's criticism of the traditional *Aktionsart* approach to understanding this verse. Cf. Douglas S. Huffman, *Verbal Aspect Theory and the Prohibitions in the Greek New Testament* (SBG, 16; New York, Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 18, 34, 37, 106 and 156. On the shortcomings of the *Aktionsart* view see pp. 31-56 and also Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, pp. 17-65.

34. Porter, 'Paul, Virtues, Vices', p. 382. Wallace makes a similar connection between 'purpose and result' (Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], p. 279).

35. For an overview of the principles of annotation used for OpenText.org, refer to O'Donnell, Porter and Reed, 'Problems and Prospects', pp. 109-21 and O'Donnell, 'Introducing OpenText.org'.

earlier, primary clause ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι (Eph.c5_48). Given this data, it seems a case can be made that the Ephesian household code functions in dependency upon the predicator in v. 18, *πληρώω*.

Finally, it is worth recalling at this juncture the earlier discussion in 4.3-6, 16, 25, 30 and 32 that emphasizes the unity of body and Spirit. It seems reasonable to suggest that the Ephesian household code not only is linked with ‘being filled with the Spirit’ in 5.18 but is also an extension of the Spirit’s activity in the church community described earlier in ch. 4. This activity stems from the call in 4.1 ‘to walk in a worthy manner’ (*ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι*) that repeats in 4.17; 5.2, 8 and 15. All of this exhortation to spiritual unity not only undergirds the behavior of Christians in a community, but is also the foundation for the meaning, and the sense of the word, as a call for mutual submission between husbands and wives in 5.21-33.

The Grammatical Formulation of ὑποτάσσω

In our quest to understand the function of *ὑποτάσσω* in Eph. 5.21 (and also v. 24), it is necessary to consider key elements of its form, starting with its (middle) voice.³⁶ Allan remarks how the middle voice in recent decades ‘has become the object of increased interest in typological research’.³⁷ At the same time, the many uses of the middle voice make it difficult to establish a one-size-fits-all usage.³⁸ With Allan’s caution in mind, it will be argued here that *ὑποτάσσω* is in the middle voice which expresses ‘more direct participation, specific involvement, or even some form of benefit of the subject doing the action’.³⁹ More specifically, it will be reasoned below that the semantic category of the ‘reciprocal middle’ (not to be confused with a simple ‘reflexive sense’), continues to be a useful guide for understanding this middle

36. Although the middle/passive form could be passive in function, the immediate context strongly suggests the verb is functioning in the middle voice—especially as it appears with the reciprocal pronoun *ἀλλήλων* (in v. 21).

37. Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy* (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology, 11; Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 3.

38. Allan, *Middle Voice*, p. 30.

39. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 67; cf. Mathewson and Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 148, who consider the same principle.

participle.⁴⁰ This is consistent with Allan's more recent and repeated emphasis of the 'subject-affectedness' for the middle voice as the predominant semantic feature.⁴¹

Before such a category can be justifiably employed, it is necessary to briefly consider the extensive history (and debate) when it comes to understanding the Greek middle voice.⁴² Moule, for example, explains how the middle voice is not 'primarily reflexive' with regards to 'N.T. usage'.⁴³ Furthermore, most grammarians seem to agree that a 'reflexive middle sense ... is *not* the predominant one in the Hellenistic period'.⁴⁴ Although it cannot be definitively proven, it seems justifiable in the context of Eph. 5.21 that $\dot{\nu}\pi\sigma\tau\acute{a}\sigma\sigma\omega$ in the middle voice does, in fact, reveal a 'heightened involvement of the subject[s] in the event'.⁴⁵ There are several reasons to justify this claim.

First, a consideration of agency suggests participation and mutuality of the subjects. A middle verb with a plural Subject represents an exchange where the functional emphasis is on the 'more direct participation' and 'specific involvement' of the subjects.⁴⁶ More specifically, $\dot{\nu}\pi\sigma\tau\acute{a}\sigma\sigma\omega$ can best be understood as a reciprocal middle, especially

40. Stanley E. Porter, Jeffrey T. Reed and Matthew B. O'Donnell, *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), pp. 121-22.

41. Cf. Allan, *Middle Voice*, pp. 28, 205, 246.

42. See especially, Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek*, Chapter 4 for a detailed overview. Campbell is right to observe the need to go beyond 'reflexive and reciprocal functions' (§4.28).

43. C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1959), p. 24. 'It is safer to say', according to Moule, 'that the Middle ... calls attention to the whole subject being concerned in the action'.

44. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 67. The reflexive use is possible in 'some contexts' (p. 67). More recently, Mathewson and Emig (*Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 148) allow for the use of the 'direct middle', although it should be avoided 'unless context clearly warrants it'. See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), p. 416 and Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman & Holmann, 1994), p. 134.

45. Mathewson and Emig warn that translating in a 'reflexive sense should generally be avoided' unless the context 'clearly warrants it'. Mathewson and Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 148; cf. pp. 148-51.

46. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 64; cf. Mathewson and Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 148.

when considering its Complement in this verse, the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλων.⁴⁷ The pairing is significant because ἀλλήλων is found only in the plural and used only ‘when a mutual relationship is to be expressed between or among elements in a group’.⁴⁸ Likewise, Mathewson and Emig, while commenting on ἀλλήλων as a reciprocal pronoun, relay how it ‘expresses a mutual relationship or interchange of action between or among two or more members of a group’.⁴⁹ Thus, the mutuality of the ‘action’ of the verb ὑποτάσσω in the middle voice evinces an unfolding, ongoing, reciprocal activity between subjects. And in this context, such activity includes husband *and* wife.

Aside from this understanding of the Greek middle voice, we see that Eph. 5.21-33 begins with the phrase, ‘submitting to one another in reverence for Christ’ (ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ). Verbal aspect theory contends that the ‘action’ of this present (i.e. imperfective aspect) participle is ‘conceived of by the user as *being in progress*. In other words, its internal structure is unfolding.’⁵⁰ Therefore, the imperfective aspect (marked by the present tense form) along with ἀλλήλων, invites being interpreted as a continuous process of mutual submission. The grammatical and (by implication) aspectual force of this verb extends to v. 22, continuing the sense of reciprocity and mutuality: ‘wives to your own husbands as to the Lord’ (αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἴδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ).

In Eph. 5.24 the Predator ὑποτάσσω (present middle indicative) has a different Complement than previously found in v. 21, ‘but as the

47. Although it may be difficult to argue for an airtight category for the middle voice of ὑποτάσσω, the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλων reinforces a definably ‘reciprocal’ construction (or ‘event situation’ as Kemmer suggests) for the meaning of the verb. See Suzanne Kemmer, *The Middle Voice* (Typological Studies in Language, 23; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993), p. 17. ‘Ὑποτάσσω could be placed within a reciprocal domain to either ‘a) Prototypical Reciprocal (“the girls looked at each other”)’ or ‘(b) Chaining Reciprocal (“The graduates followed each other onto the stage”)’ (p. 268). For her insights on the reciprocal semantic domain and reciprocal situation types as a semantic category see her Chapter 4 and pp. 95-97, 102-103.

48. Cf. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 132; Porter, Reed and O’Donnell, *Fundamentals*, p. 122. Cf. Col. 3.13. For other examples in the New Testament see Jn 4.33; Acts 7.26; Gal. 5.13; and Rev. 6.4.

49. See Mathewson and Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 46.

50. Cf. Porter, *Idioms*, here p. 21 and cf. pp. 20-25; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, pp. 1, 91.

church submits to Christ' (ἀλλ' ὡς ή ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ [Eph.c5_59]). Where the previous call (in v. 21, clause fifty-three) is to ‘submit to one another’ (Predicator and Complement) ‘in the fear of Christ’ (Adjunct), this time ‘the church’ (as the Subject) ‘submits’ (Predicator) ‘to Christ’ (Complement). This clause (59) relates forward to the subsequent clause (60) in functional dependency, ‘so also wives to their husbands in everything’ (οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντὶ, Eph.c5_60).

Consequently, instead of isolating the meaning of the latter clause in Eph. 5.24, it can be demonstrated that this primary clause (Eph.c5_60) is functionally dependent upon the earlier clause (48) back in v. 18, ‘instead, be filled with the Spirit’ (ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι [Eph.c5_48]). Meanwhile, the next clause in v. 25 (οἱ ἀνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας [Eph.c5_61]) is also dependent upon Eph.c5_60 and ultimately relates to ‘being filled with the Spirit’ (v. 18). In the Ephesian code, ὑποτάσσω expresses Paul’s desired mutuality between husbands *and* wives, as Paul’s structuring of the larger paragraph indicates.

Ὑποτάσσω: Aspect and Imperatives

Linguistic research has shown that verbal aspect is also critical in understanding the imperatival network, much in the same way as it is found to be in other Greek moods. McKay claims that aspectual usage is

very closely dependent on *context* ... so in the search for an objective explanation the observer must be careful not to expect to find a system so mechanically organized that all its operations are entirely predictable, especially as in reading ancient texts we have to deduce from the text itself much of the context which the writer would have taken for granted in making his choice.⁵¹

This claim reinforces the importance of aspectual choice in Ephesians, along with a relational and contextual understanding of ὑποτάσσω.

More recently, Mathewson has shown that, in contrast with commands in the perfective aspect (aorist tense form), ‘the present imperative is the more-heavily marked instruction and is used to treat the action as a process with regard to its internal makeup and to draw

51. Cf. McKay, ‘Aspect in Imperatival Constructions’, p. 202, emphasis added.

attention to the command'.⁵² Subsequently, the command for husbands to love their wives ‘as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her’ (v. 25) and the call to ‘love their wives as their own bodies’ (v. 28) confer a message that resonates with the call to mutual submission found in v. 21, but also specifies it in ways that would have been surprising to the original readers.⁵³ The imperative of ἀγαπάω (v. 25) highlights a command specific to husbands (as compared with ὑποτάσσω, which, coupled with ἀλλήλων implies a call for bilateral action between both parties). While ὑποτάσσω in v. 21 demands reciprocity, ἀγαπάω does not, though elsewhere all believers are commanded to love one another. Paul interestingly addresses this command only to the husbands within the specific context of the household codes, perhaps indicating the priority of the husband’s obedience regardless of the wife’s response.

Aristotle’s Politics, Ephesians and Philippians

The reciprocal tone of this passage (Eph. 5.21-33) as it flows from and is functionally dependent upon clause forty-eight in 5.18, instructs one to voluntarily yield his or her will first to Christ and subsequently to one another (vv. 21-22, 24). Although the source of the New Testament *Haustafeln* has its roots in Greco-Roman writers, especially Aristotle, the Ephesian code is unequivocally different (as argued above and discussed below).⁵⁴ In Aristotle’s *Politics*, the purpose of the many ‘rules’ (ἀρχαί), is for the establishment of the ‘city’ (πόλις) and ‘concern humanity and the community in life’ (περὶ ἀνθρωπὸν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς ζωῆς).⁵⁵ In Ephesians, the purpose of the codes is the

52. Cf. Mathewson, ‘Verbal Aspect in Imperatival Constructions’, pp. 22-23; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, pp. 335-61; and McKay, ‘Aspect in Imperatival Constructions’, pp. 201-26.

53. The reflexive pronoun ἔαυτοῦ, here in the genitive plural, indicates possession, ὡς τὰ ἔαυτῶν σώματα (‘as their own bodies’). Mathewson and Emig (*Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 46) explain that this pronoun is, in contrast to the middle voice, the more common means of signaling a reflexive notion.

54. David L. Balch, ‘Early Christian Criticism of Patriarchal Authority: 1 Peter 2:11-3:12’, *USQR* 39 (1984), pp. 161-73 (161). Some Jewish writers address the codes as well (i.e. Josephus, Philo, Sirach and Tobit). See Crouch, *Origin*, pp. 74-83.

55. Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.1278b.15.

well-being of the church as an extension of its Spirit-filled relationship with Christ.

While the Ephesian code exhibits the language of love, sacrifice, reciprocity and mutuality, Aristotle's *Politics* depicts the marital relationship as a unilateral act of subjection (*ἀρχω*); where the wife (as a person with lesser power and status) is placed in subjection to her husband (a person with greater power).⁵⁶

Rule (*ἀρχή*) over children (*τέκνων*) and wife (*γυναικός*) and the household as a whole (*τῆς οἰκίας πάσης*), which we call household management (*οἰκονομικήν*), is either for the sake of the ruled (*τῶν ἀρχομένων*) or for the sake of something common to both—in itself it is for the sake of the ruled (*τῶν ἀρχόμενων*), as we see in the case of the other arts such as medicine and gymnastics, but accidentally it may be for the sake of the rulers themselves (*κατὰ συμβεβηκός δὲ καν αὐτῶν εἴεν*).⁵⁷

The fact that Eph. 5.21 uses the Complement *ἀλλήλων* ('one another') in conjunction with the Predicator *ὑποτάσσω* not only heightens the reciprocal focus of the Ephesian *Haustafel*, but further sets it apart from the hierarchical models of the surrounding Greco-Roman culture.

Although Aristotle understood that the act of ruling needed to serve the interests of those who are ruled, he did *not* go so far as to suggest that both husband and wife are to 'submit to one another' (Eph. 5.21). Thus, the employment of *ἀλλήλων* demonstrates the profoundly different nature of what the author of Ephesians has to say. In this way, the Ephesian *Haustafel* differentiates the power dynamics of Christian marriage from the socially preferred power dynamics of the era. To argue otherwise and claim that the act of submission is only one way, besides being grammatically untenable, may be evidence of a traditionalist bias.

Rather than adopt the subordinating discourse of the surrounding Greco-Roman culture (i.e. that rulership is exercised by those with power for the benefit of the ruled),⁵⁸ Ephesians advances a distinctly Christian discourse with the same central theme of self-sacrifice found in Philippians 2 and also in Christ's instruction to his disciples that

56. Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.1278b.38-39.

57. Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.1278b.38–1279a.1. English translation from Aristotle, *Politics* (trans. Carnes Lord; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 2013), p. 72.

58. Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.1278b-1279a.

their love for each other is to emulate his love for them (Jn 15.9-14). This parallelism is further exemplified in that the themes of ‘mutual submission’ (Ephesians) and ‘emulating the example of Christ’ (Philippians) stand in parallel to each other. This parallel serves to reinforce the self-sacrificing behavior of the husband (with Christ as the exemplar) that is intended solely for the benefit and well-being of his wife. The greater command rests upon the husband in the choice of ἀγαπάω (as a present active imperative) in v. 25. This focus on the husband’s obligation to love sacrificially stands in contrast to contemporary Greco-Roman household codes.

Therefore, it is proposed that the author, in an effort to combat the reigning hierarchical social norms, employed a message that was not only counter-cultural, but also a distinctly Christian perspective in contradistinction to the perspective of existing Hellenistic family codes and structures.

A Distinctly Christian Phrase: ἐν Φόβῳ Χριστοῦ

The Ephesian household code appears even more counter-cultural when we consider the small but weighty Adjunct prepositional phrase, *ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ*. The injunction of ongoing, mutual submission is qualified by and set apart from a purely Hellenistic background. The spherical use of the preposition *ἐν* in connection with *Χριστός* plays a key grammatical function in understanding the relationship of someone ‘in Christ’.⁵⁹ Mutual submission within the broader *ἐκκλησία* must be characterized by the fear of Christ. Porter describes the spherical function of the preposition *ἐν* as indicating something or someone who ‘may be located within the sphere of influence, control or domain of another or larger group (“in”), the same way that one object or person may be within the confines of another’.⁶⁰

While the spherical use is ‘a direct extension of the locative sense’, the special case of *ἐν Χριστῷ* may suggest a ‘corporate mystical union

59. See the dedicated study on this subject in Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

60. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 157.

between the believer and Christ'.⁶¹ A simple explanation of the author's use of the preposition ('in' or 'with' Christ) is that 'one is in the sphere of Christ's control'.⁶² Hence, from start to finish, the purpose of this Christian household code is narrated specifically with and in relation to Christ as *xύριος* of the household. At the same time, the Ephesian code rests firmly upon 'being filled with the Spirit' (clause forty-eight of 5.18).

Conclusion

In this ancient text, the author of Eph. 5.21-33 presents a uniquely Christian and 'Spirit-filled' vision of how husbands and wives should ideally interact with each other in marriage. I have argued that the metaphor is specifically sacrificial, perhaps influenced directly by Christ's example and built directly on the statement in Genesis of one-flesh equality (Gen. 2.24). Furthermore, a consideration of the verbal aspect, voice, mood and agency of *ὑποτάσσω* in Eph. 5.21 suggests a voluntary, mutual interchange and direct participation of both husbands and wives in relation to the verb. Mutuality is further reinforced with the pairing of the 'reciprocal' middle *ὑποτάσσω* with the reciprocal pronoun *ἀλλήλων* (in v. 21) 'in the fear of Christ'—in contradistinction to the Greco-Roman codes where the husband is the ruler of the house.⁶³

In further contradistinction to contemporary society, I have argued that Paul's command for husbands to love their wives sacrificially is more specific than the command to mutual submission that implies bilateral action, and so the husband's obligation stands out in the codes as being required regardless of the wife's behaviour. At the same time,

61. Porter, *Idioms*, pp. 157, 159 respectively. Similarly, Young says the expression denotes a 'close, personal, life-enhancing relationship or union with Christ'. Cf. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek*, p. 96.

62. Porter, *Idioms*, p. 159. Mathewson and Emig (*Intermediate Greek Grammar*, p. 101) support this spherical understanding of *ἐν Χριστῷ*.

63. Meeks refers to the prevailing hierarchical *oἶκος* and what he describes as 'certain countervailing modes and centers of authority in the Christian movement that ran contrary to the power of the *paterfamilias*, and certain egalitarian beliefs and attitudes that conflicted with the hierarchical structure'. See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 2nd edn, 2003), p. 76 (see also his relevant insights on pp. 77, 101-106, 127, 203 n. 87, 219 n. 80).

the choice of $\phi\iota\beta\acute{e}oμai$ (instead of $\dot{\nu}\pi\sigma\tau\acute{a}σσ\omega$) in the subjunctive form in v. 33 increases the sense of reciprocity and dependency between husband and wife. As a result, the quest for the meaning of $\dot{\nu}\pi\sigma\tau\acute{a}σσ\omega$ within the Ephesian *Haustafel* has led to the conclusion that the choice of this lexeme along with its inflected properties is part of a message that not only points to a sense of mutuality, but also presents a radical departure from contemporary Greco-Roman codes.