



Towards A better first-century CE understanding of the term “kyrios”: contributions from Philo and Paul

Peter Nagel

To cite this article: Peter Nagel (2017) Towards A better first-century CE understanding of the term “kyrios”: contributions from Philo and Paul, Journal of Early Christian History, 7:1, 89-107

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2222582X.2017.1319251>



Published online: 26 Jun 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

TOWARDS A BETTER FIRST-CENTURY CE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM “KYRIOS”: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PHILO AND PAUL

Peter Nagel

University of the Free State
admin@peternagel.co.za

ABSTRACT

The term κύριος is one of the, if not *the*, most significant “title” assigned to Jesus of Nazareth. The most “obvious” tendency is to understand and interpret such a term against a first-century CE socio-cultural and religious-political backdrop, and rightfully so. The aim of this article, however, is to investigate the term κύριος against a Jewish-Hellenistic backdrop as represented by the writings of Paul and Philo, while determining the concept underlying such a term. Special attention will first be given where the term κύριος is used within the confines of an explicit citation. Secondly, due focused reflection will be given where the essence and nature of the term κύριος is under discussion. This article will thus a) present a Philonian concept of the term κύριος, followed by b) a Pauline concept, after which c) some insights and the implications of these concepts will be presented.

Keywords: kyrios; Philo; Paul; Hebrew deity; God

INTRODUCTION¹

There seems to be a generally accepted assumption in New Testament scholarship that the term κύριος as a title used for Jesus of Nazareth is a title that is informed by the

1 This study elaborates on a section on Philo extracted from my doctoral thesis, Peter Nagel, “The Explicit KYPIOS and ΘΕΟΣ Citations by Paul: An Attempt at Understanding Paul’s Deity Concepts” (PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 2012).

Hellenistic frame for reference.² The views, ideas and arguments relating to the term κύριος (“lord”) as presented in the pioneering work done by scholars such as Wilhelm Bousset³ and Ferdinand Hahn⁴ are widely accepted. The aim of this study is not to refute their findings, but to investigate the possibility of a first-century Jewish concept underlying the term κύριος. A valid question is why I decided on the works of Philo and the letters of Paul, to represent a reasonable first-century Jewish-Hellenistic concept of the term κύριος.⁵ In the first instance, it is because of my interest in the conceptual understanding of the term κύριος in the first-century; both Philo and Paul use this term within a first-century context. In the second instance, Philo explicitly discusses the term κύριος and the concept underlying it. His philosophical approach as a diaspora Jew living and working in Alexandria offers valuable theological insights. Moreover, in some instances, Philo also cites Scripture while explaining how the term κύριος ought to be understood. Philo’s contribution in this regard can hardly be disputed. Paul, on the other hand, offers a theological perspective when citing Scripture that contains the term κύριος. Paul does not conceptually discuss the term and how it should be interpreted, but since the term κύριος is assigned as title to Jesus as the Χριστός (“Christ”), in combination with the possibility that the term is a reproduction of YHWH, the explicit κύριος citations possess a philosophical or conceptual potential. Both the work of Philo and the letters of Paul offer a wealth of philosophical information with theological value. This being said, this study will focus on extracts of their respective works. My working theory for this study is that for Philo the term κύριος designates, in essence, an “epithet proper” of the Hebrew deity, the latter referenced using the term θεός. How one references the Hebrew deity, according to Philo, reveals one’s level of virtue.

-
- 2 C. Perret, “Kyrios/Herr,” in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, accessed March 15, 2017, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-8262_rgg4_COM_12537, points out that the term κύριος in the Greek context was never used for a deity so as to avoid human contamination. During the Hellenistic era, referring to a deity using the term κύριος had progressed so far that in Ephesus, for example, Artemis was called κυρία (“lady” or “mistress”). This title was also used for the Roman emperors, refused by Tiberius but accepted by Claudius and claimed in particular by Caligula and Nero. Domitian adopted the title “Lord and God.” Gottfried Quell and Werner Foerster, “Κύριος, Κυρία, Κυριακός, Κυριότης, Κυριεύω, Κατακυριεύω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel and trans Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 3: 1085, in turn argue that in later Judaism the lordship of God is important in two respects: 1.) God is Lord and ruler of the world and 2.) He is Lord and Judge of the individual.
 - 3 Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1913).
 - 4 Ferdinand Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel: Ihre Geschichte im Christentum* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1964)
 - 5 Cf. David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1993), 63, who puts forward two reasons why it is appropriate to discuss the New Testament in relation to Philo. The New Testament as a collection represents the oldest surviving documents of Christianity, and it is contemporary to Philo. Secondly, the Hebrew Bible of Judaism, together with its Alexandrian Greek translation, was added to the Christian New Testament. For the Church and the Fathers, all three became Scripture.

Paul’s use of the term κύριος, on the other hand, signifies at least two entities; one is Jesus as the κύριος, and the other is κύριος as a reference to the Hebrew deity. This study will therefore consist of three main sections: Philo’s concept of the term κύριος; Paul’s concept of the term κύριος, and concluding remarks. It will only investigate four passages from the works of Philo (those passages that explicitly deal with the term κύριος) and two from Paul’s letters (two explicit citations using the term κύριος in such an ambiguous way that they demand special focus). The insights that will be gathered from Philo and Paul will contribute to a better understanding of the term κύριος during the first century.

PHILO’S CONCEPT OF THE TERM KYPIOS

Introduction

Dahl and Segal’s view is that the Rabbis thought that the two Hebrew words, אלהים, “God” and יהוה, “lord,”⁶ are not synonyms but symbolise the different aspects of “God.” YHWH is used when “God” is emphasised as the merciful one, while Elohim should call “God’s” righteous actions to mind.⁷ Philo interpreted and used these terms in the opposite manner to that of the Rabbis,⁸ which highlights the importance of Philo’s view within second-temple Judaism. A reasonable inference is that for Philo the term θεός refers to the one responsible for the act of creating, which includes all related processes.⁹ Philo’s concept of the term θεός is best explained in *De opificio mundi* (*Opif.*), chapter 69.¹⁰ In this chapter, Philo calls for caution not to interpret τὸν ἀνθρωπὸν φησι γεγενῆσθαι, κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν,¹¹ “the human being was created, according to the image and likeness of God,” using the physical body as category. He explains that θεός is not in human form (οὔτε γὰρ ἀνθρωπόμορφος ὁ θεός), neither is a human being’s body θεός-like (οὔτε θεοειδὲς τὸ ἀνθρώπειον σῶμα).¹² Philo cautions against a “God-concept” in the material (physical or bodily) sense of the concept. The term εἰκόνα “form” according to Philo, should be understood in terms of the νοῦς, “mind,” as a mind of the universe, an archetype, which is in accordance with “the sovereign rule of the soul” (τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόνα νοῦν).¹³ To be created in the

6 The translations of the two Hebrew words is approximate.

7 N. A. Dahl and Alan F. Segal, “Philo and the Rabbis on the Name of God,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 9, no. 1 (1978): 1.

8 Dahl and Segal, “Philo and the Rabbis,” 1. The shortcomings of Dahl and Segal’s study is that they unconditional accept the fact that the term θεός is the Greek equivalent for אלהים while the term κύριος is used as translated term for יהוה; this assumption is not without discrepancies and other difficulties.

9 Cf. *Opif. Leg.* 1: 1–18.

10 *Philo of Alexandria*. Translated by F. H. Colson et al. 12 vols. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 1: 54.

11 *Philo of Alexandria*, 1: 54. Philo quotes from Gen. 1:26 in this instance.

12 *Opif.* 69; See also *Opif.* 100 and 102.

13 *Philo of Alexandria*, 1: 54.

“image” of θεός should be understood as a photocopied version of the patterns of the single or original mind. This “image” or “original-mind-pattern” therefore occupies a position within the human being. It is a point of reference from which to comprehend the “great ruler in the world.” The space occupied by the “original-mind-patterns” becomes a god to the one who carries it as an object of reverence.¹⁴ The term θεός for Philo is therefore a universal archetypal mind, the ruler of this world. The pertinent question is how Philo understood and conceptualised the term κύριος. Philo’s *Legum allegoria* (*Allegorical Interpretation*) is the first of his works to be investigated.

*Legum Allegoria*¹⁵

In *Legum allegoria* (*Leg.*), Philo offers an allegorical interpretation of the events presented in Gen. 2. In Book One of Philo’s interpretation, he reiterates that the man θεός made (referring to the image of God in Gen. 1:26) is different to the one who was moulded. The one who was moulded is more material in nature, but the human being θεός made is less material and has a constitution of a purer and clearer kind.¹⁶ “Adam,” the one who is called “earth,” is the moulded one, a perishable mind; ὥστε ὅταν ἀκούης Ἀδάμ, γήινον καὶ φθαρτὸν νοῦν εἶναι νόμιζε· ὁ γὰρ κατ’ εἰκόνα οὐ γήινος, ἀλλ’ οὐράνιος, “therefore when you hear the word ‘Adam,’ you must make your mind; that is the earthly and perishable mind for the mind was made after the image is not earthly but heavenly.”¹⁷ Philo continues by saying that “Adam” (the Mind), not the one “after his image” (the original idea), was instructed to name all living things, but that he did not name himself. He explains this by saying that he, Adam, was ignorant of himself and his own nature.¹⁸

Philo then goes on to explain the difference between πρόσταξις, “ordinance,” ἀπαγόρευσις, “prohibition,” and ἐντολή, “instruction” accompanied by παραίνεσις, “exhortation.”¹⁹ Instruction is (for a person with a balanced character) neither good nor bad.²⁰ Prohibition is directed at bad persons, while recommendation is aimed at good persons to prevent evil and to pursue that which is good.²¹ He adds that the earthly mind is neither good nor evil, but equally balanced, in the middle.²² Receiving advice is therefore made possible by calling on two names, κύριος and θεός,²³ after which Philo uses the literary construct κύριος ὁ θεός, “lord, the God,” to refer to the one who

14 *Opif.* 69.

15 *Philo of Alexandria*, 1: 140.

16 *Leg.* 1: 88.

17 *Philo of Alexandria*, 1: 206.

18 *Leg.* 1: 92.

19 *Leg.* 1: 93.

20 *Leg.* 1: 93.1–5.

21 *Leg.* 1: 93–94.

22 *Leg.* 1: 95.1–2.

23 *Leg.* 1: 95.3–4.

instructs, and says that whoever pays serious attention to his advice could consider himself worthy of the blessing bestowed upon him by θεός.²⁴ The one that rejects the advice of κύριος ὁ θεός will in turn be dismissed by κύριος, who is his δεσπότης, and who has authority over such a person.²⁵ In this instance, Philo conceptually differentiates between the terms δεσπότης (“master”) and κύριος (“lord”). The former refers to an earthly master, whereas the latter implies something more. What the “more” implies is not clear at this point. Philo elaborates on his point by citing Gen. 3:23 καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτὸν κύριος ὁ θεός ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήμφθη, “lord, the God drove him out of paradise of happiness to work the earth,”²⁶ followed by his interpretation of the citation. Philo comments on the citation by saying that κύριος as δεσπότης (“master”) and ὁ θεός (“the God”) as εὐεργέτης (“benefactor”) will both punish the one that disobeyed his instruction.²⁷ It is clear that Philo uses both the κύριος ὁ θεός and θεός constructs when he refers to the Hebrew deity proper.

Conceptually, the term κύριος designates a certain function; κύριος ὁ θεός is considered an authoritative, ruling-master function while the term θεός is considered a benefactor. It is almost as if the two constructs highlight the two facets of the Hebrew deity. The construct κύριος ὁ θεός is used primarily when the Hebrew deity in his authoritative, wise rule is called to mind. The latter inference is confirmed by Philo’s use of πάλιν ὡς ἀμφοτέρω, “again like one or the other.” On the one hand, Philo is suggesting with this phrase that the θεός and κύριος characteristics of κύριος ὁ θεός do not oppose each other, while on the other hand and more specifically, both these terms refer to the one who will punish the subject that disobeyed the commandment. Philo argues that both κύριος as δεσποτής (“master”) and ὁ θεός as εὐεργέτης (“benefactor”) respectively refer to the same entity responsible for handing down punishment. It is therefore safe to say that for Philo the terms κύριος and δεσποτής refer to epithets, in his (Philo’s) attempt to discern how θεός is involved in human reality.

The aforementioned κύριος concept is confirmed in *Leg.* 2: 51.4; here Philo quotes from Deut. 10:9b, reading: κύριος γὰρ αὐτὸς κληρὸς αὐτῷ, “because κύριος himself is his inheritance.” Philo argues that a Levite leaves his “earthly” belongings, but inherits the one and only θεός. He then alludes to Deut. 10:9b in support of his argument that κύριος becomes the Levite’s inheritance.²⁸ On a synchronic level, it appears as if Philo regards the constructs τὸν ἕνα θεόν, “the one God,” and κύριος γὰρ αὐτὸς κληρὸς αὐτῷ, “because κύριος himself is his inheritance,” (Deut. 10:9) as referring to the same entity. The reason for this is that Philo either gave preference to his *Vorlage*, while being lenient towards his own concept supporting both the terms θεός and κύριος, or that he

24 *Leg.* 1: 95.5.

25 *Leg.* 1: 95.6.

26 *Leg.* 1: 96.1–3; *Philo of Alexandria*, 1: 210

27 *Leg.* 1: 96.5–6.

28 The Greek translator(s) of Deuteronomy do not alternate between the term θεός and κύριος as Philo does.

decided on a text that dealt with inheritance and the text by chance simply suited Philo’s concept. It remains uncertain whether or not this was a conscious decision on the part of Philo. If one considers the phrase δεσπότης ὁ κύριος²⁹ “master, the Lord” in the context of κύριος ὁ θεός (taken from Gen. 3:23). The possibility that Philo was simply lenient towards his how concept does not seem to hold water. Philo’s own concept of these terms overrides what might have been presented in a *Vorlage*. The term θεός remains the primary term when reference is made to the Hebrew deity, but terms such as κύριος and δεσποτής have functional, epithetic value. So, when one of the latter terms is used to reference the Hebrew deity, it is to highlight a characteristic of such an entity, not to call the existential essence of that Hebrew deity to mind.

Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit

In *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* (*Her.*), Philo’s aim was to write about who the heir of the things divine (θεῖος) is. The work is a commentary on Gen. 15:2–18, with a few digressions. The backdrop against which *Her.* 22 is to be understood is the oracle initiated by Abram introduced in *Her.* 2. Philo cites Gen. 15:1c: ὁ μισθός σου πολὺς ἔσται σφόδρα, “your reward is exceedingly greater,” followed by the question resembling Gen. 15:2a: δέσποτα, τί μοι δώσεις, “O Master, what will you give me?” Philo believes that boldness and freedom of speech are admirable virtues. He poses the question: πότε οὖν ἄγει παρρησίαν οἰκέτης πρὸς δεσπότην, “when then can a house slave bring freedom of speech to his master?”³⁰ According to Philo the “freedom of speech” should be to advance his owner. The same applies to the slave of θεός who is the τοῦ παντός ἡγεμόνα καὶ δεσπότην, “the ruler and master of the whole world.”³¹ Philo continues with a statement that the ignorant ones should rather remain silent, but for those yearning for knowledge, based on love for their δεσπότης, freedom of speech is a necessary possession.³² Moses and the Israelites are put forward as examples of those who are ignorant. In support of Philo’s criticism against the Israelites, he quotes Exod. 14:14–15: κύριος πολεμήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, καὶ ὑμεῖς σιγήσετε, “κύριος will fight for us, and we will be silent,” followed by καὶ εἶπε κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν· τί βοᾷς πρὸς μέ, “and κύριος said to Moses: ‘Why do you call unto me?’”³³ It would appear as if Philo differentiates between ἡγεμόνα “ruler,” δεσπότην, “master,”³⁴ and the term κύριος, “lord,” used in the cited content. Based on Philo’s handling of the cited content, especially the term κύριος, he was aware of the caution not to “translate” the Tetragram with the term κύριος.

29 *Leg.* 1 96.

30 *Her.* 6. *Philo of Alexandria*, 4: 286.

31 *Her.* 7.2. The term δεσπότης seems to belong to a similar semantic category as ἡγεμόνων (*Opif.* 83), for example the role of “master” (*Opif.* 85).

32 *Her.* 14.

33 *Her.* 14.4–5; *Philo of Alexandria*, 4: 290.

34 *Her.* 7.2.

Philo’s critical stance toward the Israelites is further emphasised in chapter 19. He mentions that the wise act upon θεός as teacher and instructor, while quoting from Exod. 20:19: λάλησον σὺ ἡμῖν, καὶ μὴ λαλείτω πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός, μὴ ποτε ἀποθάνωμεν, “do not let θεός speak to us, but let you speak to us, otherwise we will die.” Philo then repeats the citation taken from Gen. 15:2,³⁵ through which he poses the question: “What shall you give me?” This for Philo shows confidence, but the addition “O Master” (δεσπότης) speaks of prudent confidence (Gen. 15:2).³⁶ He goes on to say that a habit exists to use two appellations when referring to the cause of the created things (εἰωθὼς δὲ χρῆσθαι μάλιστα διτταῖς ἐπὶ τοῦ αἰτίου προσήρῃσει, τῇ θεός καὶ τῇ κύριος), namely θεός and κύριος.³⁷ He continues by saying that the person, Abram, who uttered δεσπότης, used neither of the terms (οὐδετέραν νῦν παρείληφεν). What Philo means is that the person who calls the Hebrew deity by the name of δεσπότης, thereby speaks with caution and reservation. Philo’s explanation is significant in that it suggests that the term δεσπότης is the suitable “sensitive” Greek term used when “calling on” the Hebrew deity. Philo, however, is explicit about the fact that the terms δεσπότης and κύριος are regarded as similar in “status,” but that they differ in meaning.³⁸ He then goes on to explain the meaning of the two terms and in so doing explicitly reveals how he conceptualises these terms.

According to Philo, κύριος and δεσπότης refer to “the same” (εἶναι λέγεται) entity, but underlying these terms are different concepts (εἰ καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἓν καὶ ταῦτόν ἐστιν, ἐπινοίας αἰ κλήσεις διαφέρουσι). Philo explains that the term κύριος derives from κύρος (that which is firm), while δεσπότης is formed from the word δεσμόν (fear). So, when one calls someone or something “Master” (δεσπότης) it implies that such a person respects the sovereignty of such an entity.³⁹ For Philo knowing the meaning of the “root” of the Greek word is imperative for the understanding of the terms κύριος and δεσποτής. It was obviously not necessary for him to explain what is meant by or how one should understand the term θεός, presumably because the risk of misunderstanding or misinterpretation was far lesser than with the terms κύριος and δεσποτής. Philo’s discussion on the matter of Abram’s oracle (the freedom of speech) suggests that conceptually for him both θεός and κύριος refer to the creator and that if one calls upon such an entity using δεσπότης, the term δεσπότης would imply everything the terms θεός and κύριος stand for. Philo even went as far as to say that δεσπότης does not refer to any being other than the one who created, the “Master” of the universe (τὸ κράτος

35 Cf. *Her.* 22.2.

36 The reference made to Gen. 15 relating to the term δεσποτής is of significance here. Both Gen. 15:2 and Gen. 15:8 attest to the use of the term δεσποτής, and together with Josh. 5:14, are the only references to the δεσποτής term in the entire constructed Greek Old Testament text offered by LXX^{G01}. This is a strong indicator that both Philo and the Greek translators used a similar *Vorlage*. It could also be a case of interdependence.

37 *Her.* 22.2; *Philo of Alexandria*, 4: 294.

38 *Her.* 22.5.

39 *Her.* 24.

ἀνημμένον ἀπάντων); δεσπότης is also κύριος (ὥστε τὸν δεσπότην κύριον εἶναι).⁴⁰ Philo therefore clearly differentiates, in this case at least, between the following:

- the referent (the entity itself);
- the terms used when referring to such an entity;
- the concepts that are being called to mind when these terms are used.

Inferred from this, the term θεός would have been the most suitable Greek term to use when referring to the entity “proper,” the Hebrew deity. The terms κύριος and δεσποτής, in turn, are used to refer to the same entity without embodying its essence, while transmitting a particular characteristic or functionality thereof.

De Sobrietate

Philo attempts to explain the “curses” caused by sin in *De sobrietate* (*Sobr.*) 51. As an introduction to the discussion, he cites Gen. 9:25–26, of which Gen. 9:26 is of special importance: εὐλογητός κύριος ὁ θεός Σήμ, καὶ ἔσται Χαναάν δοῦλος αὐτοῖς, “blessed be the κύριος, θεός of Shem, and Kanaan will be a servant to them”⁴¹ Philo then raises the issue of prayer by asking how a good man would think about prayer. An example is a man such as Shem (whose name in Hebrew means “good”) says that: τὸν γὰρ κύριον καὶ θεὸν τοῦ τε κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πάντων ἰδίᾳ θεὸν κατ’ ἐξάαιρετον χάριν τοῦ Σήμ ἀνακαλεῖ, “he calls upon κύριος and θεός of the cosmos and all things in it, uniquely according to the private thanks to the θεός of Shem.” He then exploits the meaning of Shem’s name in terms of the created cosmos, followed by a rhetorical question.⁴² In *Sobr.* 55 Philo makes a distinction between the δεσπότης, “master,” and εὐεργέτης, “benefactor” of this world who is called by these two appellations: κύριος and θεός. The “good” (most probably referring to Shem) is merely called the σωτήρ, “saviour” and εὐεργέτης, “benefactor,” not δεσπότης “master.” The referent of the κύριος and θεός terms, in the mind of Philo, differs from the referent called to mind by the terms σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης. The latter refers to those doing “good,” appreciated for their intellect, while the former terms, κύριος and θεός (including δεσπότης), refer to the benefactor of the world. The functional distinction between the terms κύριος and θεός is portrayed by the terms δεσπότης and εὐεργέτης, but is not limited to these terms.

The terms δεσπότης and εὐεργέτης should be understood as epithets of the Hebrew deity, a deity that is called upon using the terms κύριος and θεός. Philo is certain that the epithet εὐεργέτης could be ascribed to a mortal “good” person. Such a person should and would not be called κύριος or θεός. This is a clear indication that Philo reserved κύριος and θεός as terms that should be exclusively used to refer to the Hebrew deity.

40 *Her.* 24.

41 *Sobr.* 51; *Philo of Alexandria*, 3: 470

42 *Sobr.* 52–55; *Philo of Alexandria*, 3: 470–472

This is not to say that Philo would necessarily equate the concepts underlying these terms with one another. Philo is clear that both terms, κύριος and θεός, are appellations (names, titles or designations) used for the Hebrew deity. The term κύριος, however, does not seem to encapsulate the essence of the Hebrew deity in its entirety. The term θεός, on the other hand, seems to have been the term opted for when referring to the “overall” essence of such a deity.

De Mutatione Nominum

It is interesting to note that in *De mutatione nominum* (*Mut.*) Philo does not approve of the idea that the true and living θεός be assigned the name κύριος.⁴³ He supports his argument with a citation taken from Exod. 3:14: ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν, “I am he who is.”⁴⁴ Philo is of the view that the existential nature of θεός stipulates that the entity referenced cannot be named.⁴⁵ Moreover, for Philo, θεός allows one to use the term κύριος as name,⁴⁶ as the best possible term to refer to such an entity because his proper name was not revealed. Philo explains how one should understand Gen. 17:1, which reads: ὤφθη κύριος τῷ Ἀβραάμ, “The lord was seen of Abraham.” According to him it is not to say that Abraham saw the cause of all created things, but that he was surrounded by kingly power, because the appellation κύριος belongs to authority and sovereignty.⁴⁷ Therefore, θεός can be called κύριος and δεσποτῆς of bad men, but θεός for those in a state of advancement and development.⁴⁸ For those who are deemed to be most perfect, θεός is at once θεός and κύριος.⁴⁹ The distinction Philo draws between the various terms used to reference θεός is based on positivistic existentialism, with an emphasis on virtue. For the one using these terms, the referent becomes a κύριος, δεσποτῆς or θεός.

Philo continues with this line of thought by quoting various Old Testament texts: τὰδε λέγει κύριος, “this the lord says” (Exod. 7:17), ἐλάλησε κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν λέγων· ἐγώ κύριος, λάλησον Φαραῶ βασιλεῖ Αἰγύπτου, ὅσα ἐγώ λαλῶ πρὸς σε, “the lord saying to Moses, said: ‘I am the Lord,’ Go and speak to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and say to him what I say to you” (Exod. 6:29), by which he emphasises the dominance of the rule of κύριος.⁵⁰ Philo goes on to say that the term κύριος which is used to address such a being is not generally uttered, but it is used to affirm that κύριος is the δεσποτῆς of all things.⁵¹ Philo explains that no-one created is a κύριος, but that the uncreated one

43 *Mut.* 146.1–2.

44 *Mut.* 11.3.

45 *Mut.* 11.4.

46 *Mut.* 12.3–4.

47 *Mut.* 15.6–8.

48 *Mut.* 19.

49 *Mut.* 19.3–5.

50 *Mut.* 20; *Philo of Alexandria*, 5: 152

51 Philo cites a few texts to strengthen his argument (Gen. 7:1; 17:1; Exod. 7:17; 6:29; 9:29; 20:2; Deut. 4:1).

is the only true ruler. For those who despise θεός, he (θεός) is the κύριος of the foolish, because he holds over them the sovereign terrors.⁵² Philo identifies another group, those who have a desire to improve, for whom he is called θεός. This argument is supported by Gen. 35:11, reading: ἐγώ εἰμι θεός σός ἐγώ <ὁ> θεός σου, ἀξάνου καὶ πληθύνου, “I am your God, I, God, am yours, be fruitful and multiply.” For those who are perfect, θεός is both κύριος and θεός. To further support his argument, Philo quotes from Exod. 20:2: ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεός σου, “I am the Lord your God,” and Deut. 4:1: κύριος ὁ θεός τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν, “The Lord God of your fathers.” The evidence shows that on the one hand, the term θεός refers to only living deity, the Hebrew deity. On the other hand, the term κύριος could be used either negatively or positively depending on the one using the term. For the immoral person, the foolish, and those yet to comprehend θεός, θεός could be κύριος and δεσποτής in the generic sense of the word since θεός rules and is master over all. If one is thus in a “perfect” state, θεός becomes κύριος and θεός at once. Finally, the term κύριος is not the proper name of θεός, but it is the generally accepted term used to refer to θεός.

Summary

According to Philo, the term θεός is the most suitable Greek term when reference is made to the Hebrew deity “proper.” One can also use the terms κύριος and δεσποτής to refer to the same entity, but the conceptual meaning underlying them will be different. The terms κύριος and δεσποτής have functional, epithetical value transmitting a particular characteristic of the Hebrew deity, without embodying the essence of the deity. Using the terms δεσπότης, κύριος, and θεός reveals more about the one uttering them than about the one who is referenced. The use of these terms in referencing the Hebrew deity exposes one’s moral character. It is in no way suggested that for Philo the term κύριος is the “name” used for the Hebrew deity, even though the term implies more, compared to the term δεσπότης, in that it is used as a suitable equivalent for the Tetragram (YHWH).

PAUL’S CONCEPT OF THE TERM KYRIOS

The concept underlying Paul’s use of the term κύριος remains uncertain. Bousset comes to the conclusion that the κύριος title was assigned to Jesus under Hellenistic influence and because of the Hellenistic environment.⁵³ He argues that the “absolute” use of κύριος, as it is found in John and Paul’s writings, should be ascribed to Hellenised influence.⁵⁴ He also points out that Jesus was only called κύριος in the secular sense of the word.⁵⁵ Cullmann disagrees with Bousset in the sense that he (Cullmann) is

52 *Mut. 22–23; Philo of Alexandria, 5: 154.*

53 Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 94.

54 C. Perret, “Kyrios/Herr.”

55 Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*.

certain of Jewish influence⁵⁶ during the conceptualizing process of the early Christian writers, such as Paul.⁵⁷ Hahn points to both the Hellenistic and Jewish influences of the term κύριος assigned to Jesus in the early church.⁵⁸ He, in turn, points to a Palestinian tradition as backdrop for the title.⁵⁹ Goppelt follows a similar line of argument when he deals with the “KYRIOS-Confession” in the Hellenistic Church⁶⁰ and the origin and content of the Hellenistic “KYRIOS-Concept.”⁶¹ What is however certain is the fact that the term κύριος is primarily used in correlation with Ἰησοῦς Χριστός with reference, in most cases, to Ἰησοῦς Χριστός as the κύριος. The aim with this part of the study is not to present a systemised account of the term κύριος in Pauline thought, a *kyrio-logie* if you will. Rather, the aim is to analyse whether the explicit κύριος citations in the Pauline literature introduce a “new” κύριος concept, a Tetragram concept, so to speak. An overview of the term κύριος found in the Pauline letters, confined to the explicit citations, will be helpful.

The first explicit κύριος citation is found in Rom. 4:8 (citing Ps. 31:2a).⁶² In this instance the term κύριος refers to the one responsible for reckoning, a responsibility also assigned to θεός in Rom. 4:3 and Rom. 4:6. Another two citations are presented in Rom. 9:28 and Rom. 9:29. From a thematic point of view, the term κύριος in both these cases appears to refer to Jesus as the κύριος, but from a structural-logical viewpoint. These two κύριος terms could refer to none other than θεός in Rom. 9:6, 8. It would, however, not be too difficult to relate the term κύριος in both Rom. 10:13 (Joel 3:5a) and Rom. 10:16 (Isa. 53:1a) to Jesus (cf. Rom. 10:9). This observation is supported by the use of the term κύριος in the remainder of the passage. The same could be said for the κύριος citation in Rom. 11:3 (3 Kgdms 19:10) if Paul considered the κύριος featured in Rom. 11:3 and Rom. 10:16 as referring to the same entity, namely Jesus. The term κύριος in Rom. 11:34 (Isa. 40:13a–b1), however, conceptually shares the same referent as the term θεός in Rom. 11:33. The term κύριος in Rom. 12:11 is not difficult to relate to the term Χριστός in Rom. 12:5. The latter confirms the unity in Χριστός which requires service, directed to κύριος (Rom. 12:5). In both cases, Jesus as the Χριστός and κύριος seems to be implied. The reference to κύριος in Rom. 12:19 is a Pauline creation. Paul ascribes the words cited from Deut. 32:35a as words spoken by κύριος (λέγει κύριος). It therefore seems reasonable that Paul had the same entity in mind with the use of the term κύριος in Rom. 12:11.⁶³ The combination of the terms κύριος and θεός in Rom. 14:11 suggests the “rule of thumb” that יהוה is the Hebrew concept underlying the term

56 Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 199–203.

57 Cullman, *The Christology*, 203–237.

58 Hahn, *Hoheitstitel*.

59 Hahn, *Hoheitstitel*, 74–82.

60 Leonhardt Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 1: 79–81.

61 Goppelt, *Theology*, 81–86.

62 With κύριος citation is meant those citations that attest to a κύριος term.

63 Cf. 1 Cor. 14:21.

κύριος in Rom. 14:11a, and יהוה as the Hebrew concept underlying the term θεός in Rom. 14:11b. How these terms relate to the remaining κύριος-θεός thought structure will prove to be significant.

It is not as obvious who the term κύριος refers to in Rom. 15:9. At first glance it appears as if the term κύριος is used as a title for Jesus, but a closer reading already indicates that the clause expresses the opposite. In 1 Cor. 1:31 and 2 Cor. 10:17, both of which cite Jer. 9:23a, the term κύριος refers to Jesus as the Χριστός. Another intriguing case is the term κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:16 (Isa 40:13a and Isa 40:13c) interpreted in relation to the term Χριστός in 1 Cor. 2:16b, and the term θεός in 1 Cor. 2:14. Text critical consideration of the term Χριστός in 1 Cor. 2:16b adds to the complexity of interpreting this particular κύριος citation.⁶⁴ In the final two κύριος citations, 1 Cor. 10:26 (Ps 23:1b) and 2 Cor. 3:16 (Exod. 34:34a), the term κύριος refers again to Jesus in the latter case and to יהוה in the former. It would be beyond the scope of this study to reflect on all the citations, therefore a close and in-depth reading will be done of 1 Cor. 2:16 and Rom. 14:11.

1 Cor. 2:16 (Isa. 40:13A)

The term θεός dominates the thought-structure in 1 Cor. 2, used in eight verses, of which one forms part of a cited text, 1 Cor. 2:9. The term κύριος is used in two verses, one of which is found in 1 Cor. 2:8 in combination with τῆς δόξης. The second occurrence is in 1 Cor. 2:16, a citation taken from Isa. 40:13a. The term Χριστός is used only twice; once in 1 Cor. 2:2 referring to Jesus and the other in 1 Cor. 2:16. There should be little doubt that the term Χριστός conceptually refers to none other than Jesus, as is the case in chapter 1 of the letter. The integrity of the Χριστός reading in 1 Cor. 2:16b is questioned; text witnesses B D* F G 81, among others, propose reading the term κύριος, while the eclectic text is supported by witnesses such as P⁴⁶ & A C D¹ Ψ. In an attempt to understand the reasoning behind the scribes' decision, one has to consider the alternative within the thought-structure of the phrase, τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν.

The scribes' understanding results in the interpretation that one could share the mind of either Χριστός or κύριος. The scribes of codices B D* and F preferred reading the term in 1 Cor. 2:16b presumably because the term κύριος is used in 1 Cor. 2:16a. A second possibility, although speculative, is that the scribes wanted to avoid the use of the term κύριος as equivalent for the Tetragram, and thus the personal Hebrew deity, because they knew that 1 Cor. 2:16a was taken from a Greek Old Testament source.⁶⁵ A

⁶⁴ A similar κύριος concept is visible in 1 Cor. 3:20 (Psalm 93:11).

⁶⁵ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 482, comments that the original text appears to be Χριστοῦ (strongly supported by P⁴⁶ & A C Ψ 048 *al*), which was assimilated in other witnesses to the preceding κυρίου. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (New

third possibility is that the scribes had access to a Greek manuscript that read the term κύριος at this particular point. There is, however, no data available that would suggest such a manuscript. The preferred solution, due to its simplicity, is that the scribes suggested to read the term κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:16b to conform to the term used in 1 Cor. 2:16a. The possibility of having access to a Greek text that read the κύριος term when the scribes constructed the codices, should not be ruled out. The question remains: What would the implications be if the reading is accepted as is, or if the reading proposed by codex B and others is allowed? If the reading as proposed by the eclectic text is accepted as the preferred one, it would in effect mean that the referent of the term κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:16a and the term Χριστός in 1 Cor. 2:16b appear to be the same entity. This would logically imply that the term Χριστός and its referent, which is Jesus, are positioned to be equal to the personal Hebrew deity. Adopting the alternative reading has syntactical consequences. At first glance, it would make more sense to answer the question of knowing the mind of κύριος with an affirmation that the mind of κύριος has been received. It is the opinion held here that Paul strictly followed his *Vorlage* when he quoted from Isa. 40:13 which read κύριος. He did not, however, adopt the concept underlying the term κύριος, that is to say understanding the term κύριος as being a Greek equivalent for the Tetragram. Paul conceptualised the term κύριος in this instance as a title or epithet used for Jesus, and therefore would not have had any difficulty relating such term with Χριστός in 1 Cor. 2:16b.

To support this reading, one may consider the cited text in 1 Cor. 2:9 in combination with 1 Cor. 2:8, as both feature the term κύριος. The term κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:8 is sandwiched between the term θεός in 1 Cor. 2:7b and the term θεός in 1 Cor. 2:9. The predestination of θεός comes into play in 1 Cor. 2:7b; the glory of the followers of Christ had been predestined by θεός. Paul argues that none of the rulers of this world knew this, because, if they did, they would not have crucified the κύριος of glory. Evidently, the one that predestined glory cannot be the predestined one, covered in glory. The term θεός thus refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, the only being capable of predestining, while the term κύριος refers to Jesus as the crucified one through which he became the glorified κύριος. The term θεός appears to be an equivalent for the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים, if, of course, one accepts that this is a cited text taken from Isa. 64:3, which features the term θεός translated from the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים. The question is: Who does the third person pronoun αὐτόν 1 Cor. 2:9 refer to? Is it pointing back to ὁ θεός or alternatively to τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης in 1 Cor. 2:8? The proposed source text, Isa. 64:3, uses the

International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 275, comments that Schrage indicated the importance of the change from “of the Lord” (κύριος) to “of Christ” (Χριστοῦ). Dieter Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 144, mentions that Paul interpreted the construct νοῦν κυρίου as the “mind of Christ;” to understand the salvation plan of God through the cross. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (trans. James W. Leitch; Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 69, remarks that the νοῦν is synonymous with πνεῦμα.

second person, which ultimately refers to the term θεός in the same verse. There is no obvious reason why one would not regard the third person pronoun αὐτόν in 1 Cor. 2:9 as referring to θεός.

It is thus a plausible inference that in 1 Cor. 2:7–9 two distinct terms are used as referents to two distinct entities. The first is the term κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:8, which clearly refers to Jesus as the crucified one. The second is the term θεός in 1 Cor. 2:9 as well as elsewhere in chapter 2 (e.g. v. 1, 5, 7, 10–12 etc.), which refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, and in particular to אלהים as the Hebrew deity. The cited text in 1 Cor. 2:9 (Isa. 64:3) and 1 Cor. 2:16 (Isa. 40:13a) indicates, at least in this case, that what the Jewish Scriptures read was of primary importance. There is no evidence that the explicit citation caused any confusion, particularly with regard to the terms θεός and κύριος. The only discrepancies are the text-critical considerations relating to the citation. The term θεός in 1 Cor. 2:9 is clearly a distinct reference to an entity different from the κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:7 and 1 Cor. 2:8, while the term κύριος in 1 Cor. 2:16a, in turn, refers to the same entity as the term Χριστός in 1 Cor. 2:16b. In support for the latter, the answer to the question posed in 1 Cor. 2:16a is given by 1 Cor. 2:16b: the mind of κύριος can be known by those who do have the mind of Χριστός. This should be a clear indication that Paul made a clear distinction between the referents of the terms θεός and κύριος based on the cited Old Testament content; the term θεός remains the primary Greek equivalent for the monotheistic Hebrew deity, while the term κύριος could be a representation of the Tetragram or simply of Jesus as the κύριος. It is also obvious that the concept underlying the cited term θεός was easily adopted with little or no resistance, which indicates a general acceptance of this term as an equivalent for the Hebrew deity. The concept underlying the cited term κύριος was much more complex, with the potential for various theological and profane interpretive possibilities.

Rom. 14:11A (Isa. 49:18D) and Rom. 14:11B (Isa. 45:22C, 23D)⁶⁶

Paul does not make a clear distinction between the term θεός and κύριος in Rom. 14. Moreover, both terms are also used with a greater frequency here than anywhere else in the letter, with the term Χριστός also used in three instances. Paul’s thoughts may be structured as follows:

66 Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 6; 3rd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1987), 411, considers this verse as a critical, eschatological perspective, a promise made by “God” himself; cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (Word Biblical Commentary 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988), 809. E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, Neuauslegungen 4; 15th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 375, points out that the interpretation of Isa. 45:23 goes back to the ancestral Christianity, cited in Phil. 2:6–11, also referred to in an early Christian hymn (Hymn).

3a	ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο	θεός, the one choosing
4b	τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ στήκει ἢ πίπτει	in κύριος he (the servant) stands or falls
4c	ὁ κύριος στήσαι αὐτόν	The κύριος will make him to stand
6a	ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ	He who determines the day as special, does so in κύριος.
6b	καὶ ὁ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ ἐσθίει	he who eats does so in κύριος
6c	εὐχαριστεῖ γὰρ τῷ θεῷ	because he is thankful to θεός
6d	ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐσθίει	he who does not eat does so in κύριος
6e	καὶ εὐχαριστεῖ τῷ θεῷ	he is thankful to θεός
8a	ἐάν τε γὰρ ζῶμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ζῶμεν	if we live, we live in κύριος
8b	ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκωμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ	if we are mortal, then in κύριος
8d	ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκωμεν, τοῦ κυρίου ἐσμέν	if we are mortal, we are of κύριος
9a	εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν	for that, Χριστός was mortal
10c	πάντες γὰρ παραστησόμεθα τῷ βήματι τοῦ θεοῦ	all will stand before the tribunal of θεός
11a	ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος	I am the living, says κύριος
11b	καὶ πάντα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ	every tongue will confess to θεός
12	ἐαυτοῦ λόγον δώσει [τῷ θεῷ]	give account before θεός
14a	οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ	knowledge to be in κύριος Jesus
15d	ἀπόλλυε ὑπὲρ οὗ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν	Χριστός, the one who died
17a	οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρώσις	the kingdom of θεός
18a	ὁ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ	servant in Χριστός
18b	εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ	acceptable for θεός
20a	τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ	work of θεός
22b	ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ	before θεός

The nature and role imposed on the entity, who is referred to using the term θεός, remains intact; this could also be said for the Corinthian correspondence as a whole. The term refers to the one that holds the authority to choose (Rom. 14:3). Appreciation is

directed to θεός (Rom. 14:6c and Rom. 14:6e). This entity will head the eschatological tribunal (Rom. 14:10c), which is also referenced by Rom. 14:12 and Rom. 14:18b, and to a lesser degree by Rom. 14:22b. The term θεός refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Rom. 14:11b), whose work should not be made undone through the dispute over food (Rom. 14:20a). The concept underlying the term κύριος, on the other hand, seems to fluctuate. In Rom. 14:4b the term κύριος refers to a “Master” in the slave-owner sense of the word, while the term κύριος in Rom. 14:4c seems to refer to an entity who appears to be superior to the entity(ies) to whom the κύριος term in Rom. 14:4b refers. The distinction between the concepts underlying the two terms is made possible by the definite article applied to the term κύριος in Rom. 14:4c. The intent with the definite article is to make a clear distinction between “a” κύριος in the socio-cultural sense of the word, a generic profane concept assigned to the term κύριος in Rom. 14:4b,⁶⁷ and “the” κύριος which is also “a” “Master,” but corporative in nature.

This concept or idea is further developed in Rom. 14:8 and Rom. 14:9. In Rom. 14:8, to live life as a mortal being is to live for κύριος. The socio-cultural concept of slave-benefactor or slave-master remains the construct Paul is working with as introduced in Rom. 14:4; but for Paul being a servant of “the” κύριος demands a moral-existential loyalty that affects one’s life and death as a mortal. The social construct that a servant belonged to his “Master” until his death would not have been alien to those addressed by Paul. The key to understanding Paul’s theologically loaded concept is not only to account for the definite article accompanying the term κύριος in Rom. 14:4c, but also to consider the term Χριστός in Rom. 14:9. For Paul, Χριστός died and was raised to be κυριεύση (the ruler/the κύριος) of both the living and the dead. The term Χριστός in Rom. 14:9 refers to the same entity as κύριος in Rom. 14:4c, 6 and Rom. 14:8. Rom 14:15d enforces the idea that one is a servant of Χριστός and that Χριστός died. Who then is this κύριος? Who is the Χριστός that would become the κύριος for all? As indicated before, the phrase ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος is either cited from a Greek text which resembled the reconstructed Isa. 49:18c text, or it refers to the words spoken by Jesus as the κύριος. If this is the case, and the reconstructed Masoretic text represents a possible Hebrew *Vorlage* used by the Greek translators, then the term κύριος in Rom. 14:11a would refer indirectly to יהוה. If the cited text is interpreted as a rendering of Isa. 45:22b, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεός, then it would suggest that the term κύριος indirectly refers to יהוה and that the terms θεός and κύριος were used interchangeably by Paul when referring to such an entity, the monotheistic Hebrew deity, as is evident from Rom. 14:11. What seems to be more probable is that Paul did quote from Isa. 49:18c, but that the concept underlying the term κύριος in Isa. 49:18c was not transmitted, at least so it seems, into his conceptual frame of reference. Paul argues that the concept underlying the term κύριος

67 A synonymous term, δεσποτής, designating a generic-profane meaning of the term is utilised in only eight instances in the NT text (1 Tim. 6:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4 and Rev. 6:10).

in Rom. 14:11a, and the entity it refers to, is none other than the referent of the term κύριος in Rom. 14:8. The concept and referent underlying the term θεός in Rom. 14:11b remains the monotheistic Hebrew deity יהוה or אלהים ; the one heading the eschatological tribunal in Rom. 14:10 and to whom everyone will be held accountable (Rom. 14:12). The phrase in Rom. 14:11b confirms this, *καὶ πάντα γλῶσσαι ἐξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ* (Isa. 45:23d) – every tongue would confess before θεός.

To summarise, chapter 14 produces three distinct references to entities:

1. κύριος as a socio-cultural construct referring to the generic-profane “master” (Rom. 14: 4b);
2. “the” κύριος in Rom. 14:4c; the Χριστός in Rom. 14:9, 15 and Rom. 14:18, both of which refer to the same entity κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ (Rom. 14:14). The term κύριος in Rom. 14:11a should also be considered as referring to the same entity as does the others; and
3. finally, the term θεός, which is the term used by Paul when referring to the monotheistic Hebrew deity.

The referent of the term κύριος in Rom. 14:4b is subordinate to the referent of the term κύριος in the remainder of chapter 14. The referent of the term κύριος in Rom. 14:4c, 6, 8, 11a and Rom 14:14 should be considered as the same entity inferred from the term Χριστός in Rom. 14:9, 15 and Rom. 14:18. The evidence seems to suggest that the terms κύριος and Χριστός refer to an entity that is qualitatively inferior to the entity referenced by the term θεός.

Summary

there should be no doubt that the term θεός refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, the only being capable of predestining. The term θεός appears to be an equivalent for the Hebrew term יהוה . The term θεός remains the most suitable Greek term to use when reference is made to the Hebrew deity. The term κύριος, on the other hand, could be a representation of the Tetragram, refer to Jesus as the κύριος, or reference a generic-profane “master.” The concept underlying the cited term κύριος was far more complex because it possessed various theological and secular possibilities. The referent of the terms κύριος and Χριστός is subordinate to the referent of the term θεός.

CONCLUSION

Both Philo and Paul testify to a Hellenistic conceptualisation of the term κύριος. They consider κύριος as a term that designates “master,” “ruler” and “an authoritative person.” It is a term which demands respect; a term that implies more than the term δεσποτής. On the other hand, Philo and Paul each project a unique conceptualisation the term κύριος. Philo’s κύριος concept:

- designates authority, utmost respect;
- is a synonym of δεσποτής implying caution and reservation in reference to θεός.
- is a term which, together with the terms θεός and δεσποτής, equally call θεός as the creator to mind, but
- for those who are deemed to be most perfect θεός is at once θεός and κύριος.
- It is also possible, although highly unlikely, that the term κύριος could also call יהוה to mind.

Paul’s κύριος concept:

- designates authority, and
- is a title assigned to Jesus as the Χριστός.
- It is likely, but still uncertain, that the term κύριος could also call יהוה to mind.

There is no reason to reject or deny that the Hellenistic environment influenced how the term κύριος was understood. That being said, the preceding analysis reveals that using the term κύριος was a complex matter, especially within second-temple Judaism. In considering the letters of Paul, it is restricting and illegitimate to focus only on the Hellenistic conceptualisation of the term κύριος, at the expense or exclusion of its Jewish background and conceptualisation. The term κύριος, like many other terms, translated a Hebrew word from sacred Scripture. It is obvious that the use of the term within Hellenistic Judaism suggested a great deal of sensitivity. Both Philo’s predominantly philosophical use of the term and Paul’s predominantly theological use of the term produce a deeper understanding of κύριος and its uses in the first-century.

REFERENCES

- Bousset, Wilhelm. *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1913.
- Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians*. Translated by James W. Leitch. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *The Christology of the New Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- Dahl, N. A., and Alan F. Segal. “Philo and the Rabbis on the Name of God.” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 9, no. 1 (1978): 1–28.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 9–16*. Word Biblical Commentary 38b. Dallas: Word, 1988.
- Goppelt, Leonhardt. *Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Hahn, Ferdinand. *Christologische Hoheitstitel: Ihre Geschichte im Christentum*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1964.
- Lohse, Eduard. *Der Brief an die Römer*. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, Neuauslegungen 4. 15th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994.
- Nagel, Peter. “The Explicit KYPIOS and ΘEOΣ Citations by Paul: An Attempt at Understanding Paul’s Deity Concepts.” PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 2012.

- Perrot, C. “Kyrios/Herr.” In *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Accessed March 15, 2017. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-8262_rgg4_COM_12537
- Philo of Alexandria*. Translated by F. H. Colson et al. 12 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929–1962.
- Quell, Gottfried, and Werner Foerster. “κύριος, κυρία, κυριακός, κυριότης, κυριεύω, κατακυριεύω.” In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Vol. 3*, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 1039–1098. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- Runia, David T. *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*. Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1993.
- Schlier, Heinrich. *Der Römerbrief*. Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 6. 3rd ed. Freiburg: Herder, 1987.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Zeller, Dieter. *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.