WING YI AU

# Paul's Designations of God in Romans

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Mohr Siebeck

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Mohr Siebeck

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To Ka Fai and Alethea

# Preface

This book is a lightly revised version of my doctoral dissertation, which was completed at the University of Edinburgh and China Graduate School of Theology in 2021.

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Feb 2021 Wing Yi, Grace Au
China Graduate School of Theology
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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AB | Anchor Bible |
| ANRW | *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* |
| *ATR* | *Anglican Theological Review* |
| BECNT | Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament |
| BDAG | *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Edited by W. Bauer and F. W. Danker. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago, 1979). |
| *BNZW* | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| *BSac* | *Bibliotheca Sacra* |
| *BThZ* | Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift |
| *CBQ* | *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* |
| CBQMS | Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series |
| *DNTB* | *Dictionary of New Testament Background* |
| *DPL* | *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993). |
| *ExpT* | *Expository Times* |
| HNTC | Harper's New Testament Commentaries |
| *HTR* | *Harvard Theological Review* |
| *ICC* | *International Critical Commentary* |
| *JBL* | *Journal of Biblical Literature* |
| *JECS* | *Journal of Early Christian Studies* |
| *JETS* | *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* |
| *JETS* | *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* |
| *JSNT* | *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* |
| JSNTSup | Journal for the Study of the New Testament–Supplement Series |
| JSOTSup | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament–Supplement Series |
| JSJSup | Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism |
| *JTI* | *Journal of Theological Interpretation* |
| *JTS* | *Journal of Theological Studies* |
| LCL | Loeb Classical Library |
| LNTS | Library of New Testament Studies |
| LSTS | Library of Second Temple Studies |
| *Neot* | *Neotestamentica* |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NICOT | New International Commentary on the Old Testament |
| *NovT* | *Novum Testamentum* |
| NovTSup | Novum Testamentum: Supplements Series |

| | |
|---|---|
| NTL | New Testament Library |
| *NTS* | *New Testament Studies* |
| OTL | Old Testament Library |
| *SBL* | *Society of Biblical Literature* |
| SBLMS | Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series |
| *SBLSP* | *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* |
| *SBTh* | *Studia Biblica et Theologica* |
| *SEG* | *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* |
| SNTSMS | Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series |
| *SJT* | *Scottish Journal of Theology* |
| SPS | Sacra Pagina Series |
| *ST* | *Studia Theologica* |
| SVTP | Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha |
| *TDNT* | *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 volumes. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–1976). |
| *TDOT* | *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J.T. Willis, G.W. Bromiley, and D.E. Green. 8 volumes. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–2006). |
| *TynBul* | *Tyndale Bulletin* |
| *VT* | *Vetus Testamentum* |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament |
| *ZNW* | *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* |

*Bible Versions and Translations*

| | |
|---|---|
| ESV | English Standard Version |
| KJV | The King James Version |
| LXX | The Septuagint |
| MT | Masoretic text |
| NA28 | Nestle-Aland, 28th edition |
| NAB | The New American Bible |
| NIV | New International Version |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version |
| REB | Revised English Bible |

Chapter 1

# Introduction

> "I am [in your world].' said Aslan. 'But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name."
>
> C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*[1]

Paul's understanding of God is one of the aspects of his theology that is always "taken-for-granted" because of a "preconceived general understanding".[2] Accordingly, there is nothing noteworthy or distinctive in Paul's presentation of God; in short, it is suggested that Paul's God is "Jewish through and through".[3]

For more than a generation, direct references to God in the NT are overlooked by a majority of New Testament scholars. What is more, detailed and comprehensive investigations of statements about God in the NT are in the same way neglected. Whereas a number of major works and monographs deal with Christology (or ecclesiology, eschatology, etc.) of the NT, it is hard to find any comprehensive or penetrating study of the theme "God in the NT".[4]

Although written more than four decades ago, Dahl's statement is still valid and not over exaggerated as far as Paul's divine designations in Romans are concerned. Despite the proposed assumption, how "Jewish" are Paul's ways of designating God? In his letters, nowhere does Paul refer to God in some of the conventional ways in the LXX, such as "the God of Israel" (e.g., Matt 15:31; Luke 1:68), or the "God of Abraham" or the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (e.g., Mark 12:26; Acts 3:13; 7:32) or the "God of our fathers" (e.g., Act3:13; 7:32).[5] What is more, how "ordinary" it is when God is characterised

---

[1] Lewis (1987: 216).

[2] Lindemann (1979: 358) summarises the tendency of presuppositions about God in New Testament scholarship, "the idea that one cannot in the end provide a distinctively Christian understanding of God, but that Christian language about God must, basically, be concentrated on inscribing specifically Christian features on to a preconceived general understanding of God."

[3] Dunn (1998: 29).

[4] Dahl (1991: 154).

[5] Gaventa (2010: 256 n. 9) makes this perceptive observation and gives a list of references from the LXX illustrating the frequent designation of "God of Israel" and other related epithets. God of Israel appears frequently in the LXX (e.g., Exod 24:10; Josh 7:13; Ezra 1:3; Jud 4:12; 6:21; 10:1; Tob 13:17; 2 Macc 9:5; Sir 47:18; Isa 41:17; 45:3; Jer 16:9; Bar 2:11) and also in early Jewish and Christian texts (e.g., 4Q502 610; 4Q512 16 XII, 2; 1QM VI, 6; XV, 13; 4Q491

as τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ "the one justifying the ungodly" in Rom 4:5 and τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν "the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" in Rom 4:24? Besides, abstract nouns which are seldom associated with God in the LXX such as ἀγάπη, ἐλπίς, and εἰρήνη are used repeatedly by Paul as genitive modifiers characterising θεός in Romans. For instance, in the letter's concluding sections, ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης "the God of peace" (Rom 15:33; 16:20; cf. Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23) and ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος "the God of hope" (Rom 15:15; cf. 2 Cor 13:11) are used. Thus, hardly are Paul's enticing divine designations "nothing special". Instead of starting with an assumption that Paul's concept of God is conventional, this study specifically looks into Paul's divine designations with the following guiding questions in mind. What are the function and purpose of these designations in Romans? Are these designations Paul's innovations or his appropriations? How do Paul's designations for God align with or divert from his Jewish and pagan contemporaries?

The following introduction provides an overview of the subject under investigation and clarifies methodological considerations. This study attempts to fill the lacuna of a neglected aspect of Paul's theo-logy, namely, Paul's divine designations in his letter to the Romans. First, the science of onomastics will be briefly explained to pave the way for further discussion. It will be clarified that Paul's divine designations will be studied as linguistic phenomenon rather than theological concepts. The methodology employed is generally historical-critical, with a particular focus on philology and sociolinguistics. A modern sociolinguistic insight from Jay Lemke's intertextual thematic theory will then be introduced and used in complementary to traditional biblical exegesis. The thematic meaning of Paul's designations in Romans will be studied with reference to the intertextual background of recurring linguistic pattern of similar divine designations in Jewish and pagan texts. Also, the purpose and function of Paul's designations will be discussed. This study attempts to contribute to the discussion of Gentile problem by examining the connections between Paul's divine designations and the themes of salvation-historical or eschatological fulfilment, and the inclusion of Gentiles. An outline of this research will conclude the chapter.

---

810 I, 2; 4Q492 1 I, 12; Prot. Jas. 6.2; 14.2; 16.2; 4 Bar. 6.20; *JosAs*. 7.5.2). God of Abraham (or God of Jacob or of Isaac) also appears regularly in the LXX (e.g., Gen 28:13; 32:10; Ps 23:6; 45:7, 12; 74:10; 83:9; Isa 2:3).

## 1.1 Preliminary Considerations

> "What is in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet…"
>
> Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, act. II, sc. ii[6]

In the famous Shakespeare play about two young lovers caught in between their feuding families, the Capulets and the Montagues, Juliet reflects on the absurdity of names – a rose retains the same aroma regardless of how it is named, and so does Romeo. Although Juliet renders the connection between a verbal designation and its corresponding reality inconsequential in the romance, what the lovers dismissed is retained and greatly valued in antiquity regarding the names of deities.

### 1.1.1 Onomastics and Divine Designations

Onomastic science has pursued the psychology of naming from expected areas such as family-names, ethnonyms, toponyms to the unexpected like naming of pleasure boats, pharmacies, and race-horses.[7] From the anthropological perceptive, names communicate ideas of the self and the relationship between self and others.[8] For instance, the naming of newborns and children ensures "their very existence as well as their identity".[9] A name was not merely "any convenient collocation of sounds would function as well as any other to identify a person, place or thing", rather in the Bible, names often carry enormous significance. Names can provide insights into a person's character, social location, or future, or the way in which other perceive the person, in short, they "connote" the very essence of a person.[10] The profound connection between the name and personality of its bearer is exemplified in the tales of Nabal (1 Sam 25:25), Esau and Jacob (Gen 27:36, 32:28), the many names of Jesus' disciple Simon, Bar Yonah, Peter, Cephas (e.g., Mark 3:18; 6:3; cf. 14:3; 15:21, etc).[11] The same applies to divine names.[12]

The question of the meaning of "names" has also been a long standing philosophical and linguistic problem. In Plato's dialogue *Cratylus*, naming functions as a craft comparable to cutting or weaving, where "things" are divided

---

[6] Shakespeare (1993: act. II, sc. ii).

[7] E.g., Hough and Izdebska (2016).

[8] Goodenough (1965: 275).

[9] Sawyer (2006: 2672).

[10] Bohmbach (2000: 33); Byrne (2009: 334–49). For instance, in the OT, the name "Isaiah" would have been fully understandable to Israelites as "the Lord saves." Therefore, examination of the linguistic derivation and etymology is well founded.

[11] Bockmuehl (2004: 58–80).

[12] Mettinger (1988: 11–13).

according to their natures (388b-c). Plato's Socrates goes on to elaborate on etymology[13] by various examples such as the names of Greek gods. For example, "Hermes" is an appropriate and beautified name originates from "Eiremes". It means a god "who contrived speech εἴρειν ἐμήσατο" because εἴρειν denotes "the use of speech" and ἐμήσατο means "contrive".[14] Philo likewise applies Plato's theory in his description of Adam's naming the creatures in the Garden of Eden.[15] Adam's appellations are "correct" as they bring out "clearly the traits of the creatures who bore them" corresponding to God's ideas for them. The name giving narrative illustrates the interrelatedness between naming and reality in ancient Semitic culture. It is futher complicated regarding names of God. Plato's Socrates expresses the difficulty of "naming the unnameable":

> By Zeus, Hermogenes, we, if we are sensible, must recognize that there is one most excellent kind, since of the gods we know nothing, neither of them nor of their names, whatever they may be, by which they call themselves, for it is clear that they use the true names.[16]

It is apparently beyond the scope of this study to discuss the epistemological issue of knowing God, yet investigation of divine designations is not impeded.

### 1.1.2 *Gottesbild* and *Gottesvorstellung*

Although God-language is a common term in constructive theology and philosophical discourse,[17] it is less frequently used in biblical studies.[18] It is thus important to first clarify a fundamental issue in this study, what does it mean to study the "God-language" contained in Paul's writings? Tryggve Mettinger, who investigates divine names and epithets in the OT philologically and historically, begins his discussion with the following statement: "the study of the *Gottesbild* of Ancient Israel or of the Old Testament is a more difficult undertaking than is often realised".[19] According to Mettinger, *inter alia*, the difficulty could be attributed to a conglomeration between *Gottesvorstellung*

---

[13] The Etymology of the *Cratylus* is distinct from etymology in the modern sense which offers non-evaluative, largely evolutionary accounts of the origins of words. See commentary of Sedley (2003: 3, 68). Ancient etymology in the *Cratylus* evidently amounted to a proof of the correctness of a name (Barney, 2001: 49).

[14] Plato, *Cratylus*, 408A–B.

[15] Philo, *De opificio mundi,* 149, "So Moses says that God brought all the animals to Adam, wishing to see what appellation he would assign to them…".

[16] Plato, *Cratylus*, 400D.

[17] E.g., Gilkey (1969).

[18] Although Richardson (1994) uses the term "God-language" in the title, the term itself is not clearly defined. Probably, the word "language" is chosen because of his grammatical and linguistic approach.

[19] Mettinger (1989: 135).

and *Gottesbild*.[20] Borrowing these terms from Tord Olsson, a scholar of comparative religion, Mettinger draws a distinction between *Gottesvorstellung* – the mental concept, what was thought about the deity, and *Gottesbild* – the express form in which the concept is communicated in texts (language), rites (gesture and body language), and iconography (art).[21] The latter (*Gottesbild*) is a more concrete object for a philological study whereas the former (*Gottesvorstellung*) involves a higher level of abstraction looking into one's various conceptions of God. As a result, to study the *Gottesbild* rather than the *Gottesvorstellung* is to study the concrete form and language of a text, which represents individual's attempt to communicate one's ideas and thoughts of God, or to achieve and construct new experience of God. Paul's *Gottesbild*, here limited to the God-language of divine names and epithets in the letter of Romans, is the subject of this study.

This distinction between the actual text and the conceptions of God is helpful and necessary for this study.[22] "The divine names are symbols" communicating God in terms of categories drawn from the world of human experience.[23] Following Mittinger's lead, this study looks into the text's own formulation of each name instead of imposing theological abstractions and categorisations upon the text. On top of that, the broad, historical, cultural system of commonplaces linked with each designation will be studied.

"Theology is God-language, and within this special territory of language vocabulary has a function, his names have their peculiar connotations and interpretive power".[24] In this thesis, the way Paul names God is chosen as a vantage point from which we make our observations. It should be noted that the exclusivity of divine designations is not assumed. Rather, it is supplementary to other perspectives in view of a comprehensive Pauline theology. However, by exploring the basic but indispensable question of Paul's designations of God, this study dedicates to an aspect of Paul's "*theo*-logy" in his God-

[20] Olsson (1985: 42–63); Mettinger (1988: xi, 204) explains his epistemological assumption. It is likened to a two-story house. The first floor consists of what was understood by the original tradents (historical grammatical study of texts), and the second floor consists of God's overarching intentions, which conceivably go beyond what the original prophet intended in the historical situation. His study resides on the first floor. Studying God's divine name is Mettinger's way to seek to know who God is.

[21] Mettinger (1989: 135–36).

[22] Although Klingbeil (1999: 23–24) also uses Mettinger's categories in his study about God's warrior imagery, he cautiously raised a concern about whether the relationship between *Gottesbild* and *Gottesvorstellung* is so clear-cut and whether it is possible to understand the *Gottesbild* without activating the *Gottesvorstellung.*

[23] Mettinger (1988: 1–2).

[24] Macquarrie (1974: 90), "Theologie ist Gott-Rede, und innerhalb dieses besonderen Gebiets der Rede hat das theologische Vokabular eine Funktion, haben seine Namen ihre eigentümlichen Konnotationen und interpretative Kraft."

language. With the help of a focused and comprehensive analysis of Paul's divine designations, our grasp of Paul's understanding of God in Romans could be sharpened.

### 1.1.3 A Social Dialect of Early Christianity

"Let us inquire what thought men had in giving them their names; for in that there is no impiety".[25] In spite of the unknowability of God and the epistemological limit of human understanding, the possibility of studying divine designations is affirmed. As Socrates continues the conversation in *Cratylus*, but there is a second kind of correctness, that we call them, as is customary in prayers, by whatever names and patronymics are pleasing to them, since we know no other (400e). The ways of invoking God in the customs of prayers is not only epistemological or philosophical, it belongs to the "social dialect"[26] or "shared repertoire"[27] of language of a group.

The divine names are indeed symbols. The inventory of symbols changed from time to time in continuous dialogue with the challenges of experience and early Christians' social existence.[28] The ways of invoking God's names in the custom of prayers is one aspect of this shared repertoire. Language in the sociolinguistic sense not only expresses beliefs, it plays a critical role in shaping and constituting the picture of reality which the group inhabited.[29] These sociolinguistic concepts have been applied to the NT in recent years to argue that early Christian communities created and developed a social dialect:

> The very earliest Christians developed their own "in-house" language patterns, partly on the basis of Scripture, especially the Septuagint, partly in the light of their distinctive Christian convictions, but partly by way of modifying contemporary "street" language. In this way they developed their own "social dialect", and in turn this was very influential on their self-understanding and their worldview. They did not, however, develop a wholly new language. If they had done so, obviously evangelism would have been impossible.[30]

Stanton succinctly summarises the linguistic innovation of early Christian "in-house" language in his study of the term τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (e.g., Phil 1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27) and its "shorthand" terms such as ὁ λόγος (e.g., 1 Thess 1:6, 8; 2:13),

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[25] Plato, *Cratylus*, 400 d–e.

[26] A social dialect is a dialect – a configuration of phonetic, phonological, grammatical and lexical features – that is associated with, and stands as a symbol for, some more roles objectively definable social group (Halliday, 1978: 159).

[27] Wenger (1998: 82) explicates the concept with the example of medical terms for claim processing in insurance groups, "the repertoire includes routines, words, tools, ways of login things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice."

[28] Mettinger (1988: 203–4) suggestes that the situation of exilic captivity no doubt contributed to the prophet of Consolation's choice of "the Redeemer."

[29] Halliday (1978: 1, 154–92).

[30] Stanton (2002: 51–52); Mitchell (1994: 63–88); Barclay (2011: 205–15).

ἡ ἀγγελία (e.g., 1 John 1:5). The peculiarity is less the coining of neologism, but more frequently examples of unusual grammar, strange idioms, or novel ways in the use of standard terms. A new "convert" entering into the Christian community would then need to learn the language, because some familiar words are used in different or perhaps puzzling ways shaping one's worldview.[31]

Meeks likewise notes "the language of belonging" for Pauline churches was inherited from Judaism and the "translate Greek" of the Septuagint, but that very quickly the Pauline Christians developed their own slogans and patterns of speech that distinguished them from other Jewish groups as well as from the general environment.[32] Meeks acknowledges not just the shared *context* of beliefs "but also shared *forms* by which the beliefs are expressed are important in promoting cohesiveness".[33] Once again, the importance of the textual form (*Gottesbild*) is underscored from the perspective of sociolinguistic repertoire of early Christianity. Pursuing the interests of Stanton and Meek's interests in early Christian language, one limited but important dimension of this social dialect will be investigated, namely, Paul's designations of God in the letter of Romans. What are the meanings and functions of different designations in Paul's argument in Romans? Drawing upon the sociolinguistic inventory of divine epithets, how does Paul adopt or adapt the tradition or background in response to his situation and purpose? How do Paul's divine designations shape or being shaped by the conceptual worlds of Jewish and pagan religions?

### 1.1.4 Designations of God: a Working Definition

While a range of terminologies can be used regarding this subject, for instances, "names", "designations", "characterisations", "epithets", "references" etc., it is necessary to first clarify the subject matter and working definition before analysing.

Despite the wide range of designations Paul used, all designations selected for our discussion are mono-referential,[34] in other words, they are descriptions

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[31] Decades ago, in Betz's (1979: 27–28) commentary on Galatians, he identifies thirty-five phrases, mostly prepositional phrases, as "theological abbreviations". For instance, compact phrases like as κατὰ ἄνθρωπον (Gal 1:11; 3:15), ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10) and ἐν χάριτι (Gal 1:6) need some explanation could be seen as part of Pauline Christianity's social dialect. See also Trebilco (2011: 11).

[32] Meeks (1983: 94).

[33] Meeks (1983: 93).

[34] The disputed reference in Rom 9:5 ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεός will be excluded from our selection. Thus, this study is situated at a different field from other studies about divine designations shared by God and Jesus Christ in Paul's writings. See Capes (1992) for an analysis of Paul's quotation of scriptures about YHWH texts with reference to Jesus Christ in Rom 10:13; 1 Cor 1:31; 10:21, 22, (26); 2 Cor 3:16; 3:18; 10:17.

of "the Jewish/Christian God". However, the phenomenon of divine designations at least in the letter to the Romans and that of human proper names are poles apart. The central term θεός is a generic term and the majority of divine designations are collocations or compounds that carry meaning through juxtaposition. Crépin described these collocations as "galactic" systems:

> Therefore, references to God are not confined to a few substantives; rather, they are centres of galactic systems. The centre may concentrate the semantic load of a whole clause; it may attract important notions, and these notions, in their turn, may form new centres.[35]

Linguistic insights on person reference might explicate our definition of Paul's "designations of God". Searle explains how *names* work differently from *descriptions*. He says,

> Suppose we ask, "Why do we have proper names at all?" Obviously, to refer to individuals. "Yes, but descriptions could do that for us". But only at the cost of specifying identity conditions every time reference is made.[36]

A functional difference is drawn between *names* and *descriptions* by Sacks and Schegloff.[37] Simply put, *names* are a relatively "absolute" frame of reference because once it is given, whether they connote particular attributes of the individual or not, they are stable and they are generally taken to be doing nothing other than "referring". On the contrary, *descriptions* are "relative" frame of reference.

> When speakers make use of a novel description (e.g., the girl who wears orange) or identify the individual through a possessed kin relation (e.g., my aunt) or other sort of triangulation (e.g., Roger's lawyer), they are openly choosing some attributes to pick out, or one of the possible attributes or kin relations to explicitly associate the individual with.[38]

The category of *descriptions*, instead of *names*, are our concern.

Regarding person or participant reference, the linguistic phenomenon of *descriptions* is not uncommon in the NT. Runge refers to them as overspecifications (e.g., Eph 3:9 "God who created all things" τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι, Matt 6:6 "the father of you who [is] in secret and the father of you who sees in secret" τῷ πατρί σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ· καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ).[39] Overspecifications go beyond just trying to identify "who is doing what to whom". It attempts to provide more information than it is needed for identification. Reiterating this known information moves the reader to think about the particular participant in a particular way at that particular point in the

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[35] Crépin (1992: 107).

[36] Searle (1963: 154–61).

[37] Schegloff (1996: 439).

[38] Stivers, Enfield, and Levinson (2007: 17).

[39] Runge (2010: 256) further identifies some examples of overspecifications from other Greek texts like 1 Clement in the Apostolic Fathers (1 Clement 59:3; 64:1).

discourse.[40] The question of why these overspecified designations are formulated in such ways should not be neglected. Although a range of lexical terms are involved in Paul's divine designations in Roman, it does not aim at discovering the meaning of the generic term θεός nor looking into all possible lexical meanings of the words Paul used in his designations. Instead, Paul's reasons for characterising God at certain point of his argument will be the focus. In other words, what does Paul contend with the designations?

The meaning of a word or designation does not come from something inherent in itself, but from its relation to other words surrounding it and its sociolinguistic environment.[41] It is this linguistic co-text that determines how that word is being used.[42] Therefore, understanding the "context" then includes not just investigating a particular passage in which a term is used, but also the ways in which such a term is currently understood by both the author, the author's and the addressees' community or communities.[43] Thus, both the immediate context in the letter and the wider co-text of Paul's sociolinguistic convention of designating God will be studied. Research will be limited to linguistic resources from the first century or earlier to avoid anachronistic findings. By surveying different ways of designating God or deities, one can compare and contrast the semantic specificities (Paul's ways of divine designations in Romans) with the wider patterns of thought and praxis (divine designations of Paul's contemporaries): *l'histoire des mentalités*.

## 1.2 Methodologies

This study addresses three questions, simply put,

1) What do Paul's designations mean?
2) How special or conventional are Paul's ways of characterising God?
3) What theological outlook is Paul presenting with his designations in Romans?

The approach adopted in this study is rather conventional to the disciplines of biblical studies and Jewish studies. It will be historical-critical, philological, and literary with particular linguistic concern, namely, the linguistic phenomenon of divine designations. Contrary to other similar treatments of our subject, it should be underscored that our perspective belongs to the category of Paul's God-language instead of Pauline theology. The study of individual titles or

[40] Runge (2010: 254).
[41] Hasan and Cloran (1990: 66–99).
[42] Louw and Nida (1989: xvii); Dyer (2017: 64).
[43] Morgan (2015: 31–34).

Paul's overall "ideas" or theology are familiar to students of Paul, the linguistic phenomenon of divine designations, however, is generally neglected.[44]

Indebted to nineteenth-century German idealism, *inter alia*, the fact that Paul's God-language as linguistic phenomenon is widely missed by interpreters.[45] For example, many have engaged in the complex discussion of "monotheism", with reference to all "monotheistic" statements in the NT,[46] however, a careful analysis of the ancient linguistic pattern of the predicate construction εἷς ὁ θεός (Rom 3:30) remains an unfulfilled task. Also, instead of tracing the grand concept of divine fatherhood, the linguistic pattern of modifying ὁ θεός with the appositional title πατήρ (Rom 1:7; 6:4; 8:15; 15:6) has not been analysed. Likewise, numerous proposals have been suggested for meta-concepts of the Pauline doctrine of δικαιοσύνη,[47] but an investigation of the linguistic pattern of δικαιόω τινά "God justifying someone" (Rom 4:5) has not been undertaken.

We are taking methodological cue from a number of scholars in related subfields. Our particular interest in the linguistic pattern used to characterise (ὁ) θεός, and the "intertextual" nature of our subject matter demand a method with more linguistic inputs.[48] The linguistic phenomenon of divine designations will be situated within the sociolinguistic orientation of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). A useful insight from a modern systemic functional linguist, namely, Jay Lemke's sociolinguistic analysis will be used as a guiding principle in addition to historical critical exegetical methods commonly used in the discipline of biblical studies.

Lemke's model of intertextual thematic analysis has been used recently in NT biblical studies and generated productively results,[49] nevertheless, given our subject of investigation, several concepts instead of the entire model will be employed. First, the concept of "thematic meaning" is useful. For Lemke, no utterance, no text means in isolation: all meaning is intertextual. Intertextuality is defined as "the recurrent discourse and activity patterns of the community and how they are constituted by, instanced in, and interconnected or disjoined through particular texts".[50] Thus, as he explains, "lexical choices are

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[44] See chapter 2.

[45] See further (Novenson, 2012: 12–33). Although Novenson's subject is Christ language, the influence of German idealism in biblical studies is indeed sweeping (Frei, 1980: 202–32).

[46] E.g. Nicholson (2011); Klumbies (1992); Hays (2005: 36–37); Hofius (1989: 177–80); Hurtado (1988: 97); idem (2003: 114); McGrath (2009: 38–44).

[47] See chapter 4.

[48] See below for Lemke's (1995: 85–114) broader definition of "intertextuality". To anticipate the conclusion, Lemke's theory has a different concern than the analysis of linear adoption of one text in another nor the post-modern concept of intertextuality, which are commonly found recently in New Testament studies (Xue, 2015: 26–40).

[49] Xue (2015: 25–45); idem (2016: 277–308).

[50] Lemke (1995a: 86).

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