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*Through One Lord Only*



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## Through One Lord Only: Theological Interpretation of the Meaning of διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6

One of the striking elements of 1 Cor 8,6<sup>1</sup> is the usage of a “cluster of prepositions”<sup>2</sup>. Paul uses ἐκ and εἰς with respect to God the Father and two times διὰ (with the genitive) with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. These prepositions characterize God’s and the Lord’s relations with τὰ πάντα and ἡμεῖς, but also (implicitly) the relationship between one God and one Lord. The present study attempts to clarify the link between the meaning of διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6 and Paul’s understanding of the relationship between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The traditional understanding of this relationship expressed in the verse could be rendered by H. Conzelmann’s words that “the interpretation of κύριος, ‘Lord’ — despite the formal parallelism [of the verse] — is deliberately set in contrast to that of the concept θεός, ‘God’: (a) by choosing the preposition διὰ, ‘through’; (b) by using the same preposition twice”<sup>3</sup>. One can, however, pose some questions: What kind of a “contrast” between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is indicated by διὰ? What is the theological implication of this “through”? Can the analysis of the “formal parallelism” of the verse and of the difference between its prepositions say something more about the relationship between θεός and κύριος?

Having in mind these questions I proceed in this study in three steps. In the beginning I briefly survey some hypotheses which discuss the position of Jesus Christ in his relationship with God, primarily in 1 Cor 8,6. In the second part I analyze the structure of 1 Cor 8,6 (described by Conzelmann as “the formal parallelism”) and particularly

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<sup>1</sup> According to NA<sup>28</sup>:

(8:6a) ἀλλ’ ἡμῖν εἰς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν,

(8:6b) καὶ εἰς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ

I use the NRSV for the English translation of the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> So P. RAINBOW, *Monotheism and Christology in I Corinthians 8.4-6* (DPhil thesis; Oxford University 1987) 41.

<sup>3</sup> H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians*. A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (trans. J.W. LEITCH) (Philadelphia, PA 1975) 144.

the meaning of its prepositions. In the third part I discuss the application of διὰ with respect to God (the Father) and its possible correlation with διὰ used with respect to Jesus Christ.

### I. The relationship between God and Jesus Christ according to some recent studies

In recent NT scholarship the relationship between God and Jesus Christ is interpreted in different ways. For instance, E.L. Allen considers New Testament Christology as “representative-Christology”. According to him, Jesus Christ is God’s representative in accordance with the old Jewish formula: “A man’s representative is as the man himself”<sup>4</sup>. In turn C.A. Wanamaker understands Paul’s Christology as “agency Christology”; he defines an agent as “anyone who takes over the function of his principal under the principal’s direction”<sup>5</sup>. In other words, in these hypotheses Jesus Christ is presented as the one who exercises (temporarily) God’s functions.

R. Horsley understands the position of Jesus Christ in his relationship with God differently<sup>6</sup>. Horsley draws an explicit parallel between the usage of the prepositions (including διὰ) in 1 Cor 8,6 and Platonic and later Philonic ideas of causes. In the Platonic tradition there is a clear distinction between the instrumental cause and the first creative cause. Horsley finds an illustrative example of this distinction in Philo’s *Cher.* 125-127 where Philo uses different prepositions in reference to each of the four (Platonic) causes<sup>7</sup>. In Philo’s conception, according to Horsley, “God is the cause, and not the instrument”, and that which comes into being is brought into being “through an instrument” [δι’ ὀργάνου] but “by [ὑπό] a cause” (namely, God)<sup>8</sup>. The role of the instrument in Philo’s

<sup>4</sup> See E.L. ALLEN, “Representative Christology in the New Testament”, *HTR* 46.3 (1953) 162.

<sup>5</sup> See C.A. WANAMAKER, “Christ as Divine Agent in Paul”, *SJT* 39.4 (1986) 519.

<sup>6</sup> R.A. HORSLEY, “The Background of the Confessional Formula in 1 Cor 8,6”, *ZNW* 69 (1978) 130-135.

<sup>7</sup> See especially *Cher.* 125: τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ, τὸ ἐξ οὗ, τὸ δι’ οὗ, τὸ δι’ ὃ (PHILO, *Works* [LOEB Classical Library] [English trans. F.H. COLSON; London 1949-1954] 10 [+2] vols).

<sup>8</sup> HORSLEY, “The Background”, 133.

scheme belongs to *Logos* (or sometimes *Sophia*). Horsley assumes that the formula in 1 Cor 8,6 is “a Christian adaptation of Hellenistic Jewish forms of predication regarding the respective creative and soteriological roles of God and Sophia/Logos, which in turn was an adaptation of a Platonic philosophical formula concerning the primal principle of the universe”<sup>9</sup>. Thus, Jesus Christ, according to Horsley, plays the role of God’s instrument in creation and salvation.

The idea of a philosophical background for 1 Cor 8,6 is developed by G.E. Sterling<sup>10</sup>, although he suggests a scheme slightly different from the scheme of Horsley. Sterling also finds in some NT texts (including 1 Cor 8,6) the influence of those Greek philosophical teachings in which each cause was indicated by the corresponding preposition. He draws the conclusion that the prepositions in these NT texts are used as devices for the separation of different causes. Unlike Horsley, however, Sterling recognizes in these texts not only the elements of Platonic tradition but also the influence of Stoicism.

Sterling uses 1 Cor 8,6 as one of the examples for his thesis. In his view, “the text appears to make a distinction between the Father and the Lord through the use of different prepositional phrases (ἐξ οὗ versus δι’ οὗ)”<sup>11</sup>. He opines that the reference to God looks like a Stoic cosmological formulation, not a Platonic one<sup>12</sup>; on the other hand, the latter part of the verse is “balanced [...] with a Platonic formula for Christ”<sup>13</sup>. In other words, δι’ οὗ designates Platonic “instrumental cause”. The same instrumental cause Sterling recognizes also in Heb 1,2.

J.D.G. Dunn finds in 1 Cor 8,6 not so much the presence of Greek philosophy or of Philo’s Logos but the use of the (Hellenistic-) Jewish concept of *Sophia*; in some important points his “Wisdom Christology” differs from the hypotheses of Horsley and Sterling. According to Dunn, in 1 Cor 8,6 “the creator God was himself acting in and through Christ”<sup>14</sup>. This means that neither Jesus Christ

<sup>9</sup> HORSLEY, “The Background”, 135.

<sup>10</sup> G.E. STERLING, “Prepositional Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christian Liturgical texts”, *The Studia Philonica Annual – Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* IX (1997) 219-238.

<sup>11</sup> STERLING, “Prepositional Metaphysics”, 235.

<sup>12</sup> Sterling does not find in Platonism the use of ἐκ as a characteristic of the first cause.

<sup>13</sup> STERLING, “Prepositional Metaphysics”, 236.

<sup>14</sup> J.D.G. DUNN, *Christology in the Making. An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London 1980) 195. Recently Dunn reaf-

nor Jewish Wisdom play any independent role in the processes described in 1 Cor 8,6: “When Paul attributes Wisdom’s role in creation to Christ in 1 Cor 8,6... he must mean that the creative and redemptive role of Sophia-Christ is nothing other than the creative and redemptive activity of this one God. That is to say, insofar as we can speak of the pre-existence of Christ, the deity of Christ at this point, it is the pre-existence and deity of the one God”<sup>15</sup>. One can draw a conclusion that Jesus Christ is merely the visible form of God’s action; God seems to have no need of any particular instrument. That is, both parts of 1 Cor 8,6 point to God’s self-activity; it is God alone who acts: “Paul’s Wisdom Christology is wholly consistent with the continued confession of God’s oneness (1 Cor 8,6)”<sup>16</sup>.

One can make some general observations on the ideas just presented. Some of them regard Jesus Christ as temporarily exercising the functions of God as God’s representative or agent. According to the others, Jesus Christ does not function himself; it is rather God who functions while Jesus Christ is presented as God’s instrument. In fact the elements of both approaches can be found in each hypothesis that I have just examined. These hypotheses (and the suggested descriptions of Christ’s role) are not free from inner inconsistencies; they will be discussed in the second section below.

One of the best established terms which describes Jesus’ position in his relations with God the Father and with the world is “mediator”<sup>17</sup>. The term as such, however, does not say too much. As some recent studies clearly demonstrate, it has very different connotations<sup>18</sup>, and therefore it is not sufficient to specify the role of Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 8,6. Yet, as D.R. de Lacey notes, “to focus on

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firms his views on Wisdom Christology in “Epilogue”, *Paul and Judaism. Crosscurrents in Pauline Exegesis and the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations* (eds. R. BIERINGER – D. POLLEFEYT) (LNTS 463; London – New York 2012) 219.

<sup>15</sup> J.D.G. DUNN, “Was Christianity a Monotheistic Faith?”, *SJT* 35.4 (1982) 330.

<sup>16</sup> J.D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh 1998) 275.

<sup>17</sup> According to BDAG, *διά* with the genitive of persons denotes the personal agent or intermediary, and therefore the first *διά* in 1 Cor 8,6 points to Christ as to an “intermediary in the creation of the world”, 178.

<sup>18</sup> In recent decades a significant number of studies were devoted to the analysis of various types of Jewish mediatory figures and their influence on the early Christian representation of Jesus Christ as mediator; one can conclude that there is no single definition of the term. See, for instance, D.R. DE

mediation is, clearly, to focus on a function”<sup>19</sup>. This seems to be a key for the whole problem: understanding (and defining) the role of Jesus Christ is possible through the analysis of what he is thought to do and how it corresponds with what God is thought to do. In my view, the analysis of the functions of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 8,6 can shed some light on their relationship as Paul understands it.

## II. The Structure of 1 Cor 8,6

The structure of 1 Cor 8,6 seems to be a primary key for understanding both the meaning of the particular elements of the verse and its meaning as a whole. In the few words of the verse Paul has managed to present a picture of his cosmological beliefs within which the idea of soteriology finds its proper place.

In v. 6a<sup>20</sup> Paul writes about God the Father in his relations with τὰ πάντα and ἡμεῖς. In order to describe these relations Paul uses the prepositions ἐκ and εἰς correspondingly. As P. Rainbow maintains, “the ἐκ-phrase [...] and the εἰς-phrase mutually define one another in such a way as to comprehend the course of history from origin to goal”<sup>21</sup>. Having started the verse with the indication of the initial act of history, that is, creation, Paul logically completes it with the indication of the final act, that is, eschatological salvation. In other words, the prepositions point to God as the Creator of “all things” and as the final goal for “us”<sup>22</sup>.

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LACEY, “Jesus as Mediator”, *JSNT* 29 (1987) 101-121; A.F. SEGAL, “The Risen Christ and the Angelic Mediator Figure in Light of Qumran”, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J.H. CHARLESWORTH) (New York 1993) 302-328; P.G. DAVIS, “Divine Agents, Mediators, and New Testament Christology”, *JTS* 45.2 (1994) 479-503.

<sup>19</sup> DE LACEY, “Jesus as Mediator”, 103.

<sup>20</sup> For the text of the verse and its division into two lines see n. 1.

<sup>21</sup> RAINBOW, *Monotheism and Christology*, 152.

<sup>22</sup> That ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν should be better interpreted as “our” move towards God as the eschatological goal is acknowledged today by many scholars. The translation of the phrase as “we exist for God” with the stress only on the current state of being was strongly challenged by Sagnard; see F.M.M. SAGNARD, “À propos de 1 Cor viii, 6”, *ETL* 26 (1950) 54-58. To understand the phrase as merely “existing for God” means to question the salvific element of the verse rooted in the act of creation.

This description of the universal course of history from origin to goal, however, does not seem to be sufficient for Paul. In 8,6b he adds the figure of Jesus Christ who is described as “one Lord”. It is worth noting that Paul does not merely add Jesus Christ as a complement within the statement about God; Paul forms a new statement. The content of v. 6b is parallel to the content of v. 6a, for Paul describes the relations between Jesus Christ and “all things”/“we” in a manner similar to what he says about God. Also grammatically, v. 6b has the same structure as v. 6a; the only distinction is the use of the different preposition, namely *διὰ*. In other words, v. 6b is an independent unit of the verse, and this makes it an equal part of the phrase as a whole.

It seems that Paul’s concern is to stress the significance of the actions of both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; what is said about them has equal importance. This impression is strengthened when one notes that the two units (v. 6a and v. 6b) are connected with *καί*. The meaning of this conjunction can be illuminated if one takes a look at v. 6 in its context. In v. 5 Paul writes about “many gods and many lords” in opposition to “one God... and one Lord” in v. 6. This, on the one hand, places God and Jesus Christ on the same side against other “gods and lords”, but on the other hand, it implies the independent significance of one Lord along with one God. However one understands the correlation between “gods” and “lords” in the Hellenistic beliefs in Paul’s time, one cannot deny that these “lords” were understood as independent entities distinct from “gods”<sup>23</sup>. Thus, by placing *καί* between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 8,6 Paul explicitly underlines the distinctiveness of both. The content of the verse is about God the Father and Jesus Christ, not about God the Father only.

Since the two statements of the verse have an equal importance, they also indicate equally important but still different actions. Using one statement for God the Father and the other for Jesus Christ, Paul underlines the difference in their interactions with “all things”/“we”. The functions of Jesus Christ described in v. 6b can-

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<sup>23</sup> The religious significance of the Hellenistic “lords” in comparison with “gods” is discussed, for instance, in B.W. WINTER, “Theological and Ethical Responses to Religious Pluralism – 1 Corinthians 8–10”, *TynBull* 41.2 (1990) 209–226. According to Winter, “The two terms here [1 Cor 8,5] are synonymous”, 214.

not be the same as the functions of God the Father described in v. 6a; otherwise, there is no need for Paul to form two different statements. Thus, v. 6b points to the Lord's distinctive functions, and this distinctiveness is also articulated through the use of the different preposition, that is, *διὰ*.

This difference in functions in 1 Cor 8,6 places in question some of the hypotheses mentioned in the first part of the study. The suggestion to consider Jesus Christ as God's representative and Jesus Christ's work as "on behalf of the principal" contradicts Paul's affirmation that Jesus Christ has his own functions. Also an understanding of Jesus Christ as God's instrument finds no support in the text; according to 1 Cor 8,6 Jesus Christ is not used by God, for he acts himself.

But the difference in functions expressed in 1 Cor 8,6 is balanced by their unity. The verse may be divided not only into two parallel lines (one with respect to God and the other with respect to Jesus Christ) but also on the ground of the acts described here. The act of creation is described as *ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα* and *δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα*<sup>24</sup>; both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are said to take part in this act. The same can be said about the salvific act; it is presented as *ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν* and *ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ*. Thus the acts expressed through the use of the double *διὰ* serve as an indispensable complement to the acts expressed through the use of *ἐκ* and *εἰς*, and the meaning of *διὰ* in the whole verse can be understood only if it is properly placed within the general scheme *ἐκ – διὰ – διὰ – εἰς*<sup>25</sup>. The use of the four prepositions allows Paul to depict a single

<sup>24</sup> MURPHY-O'CONNOR ("1 Cor VIII,6") rejected the presence of the cosmological motif in the verse. This view was questioned by the majority of scholars and was later rescinded by the author; in his postscript to the article republished in his book, *Keys To First Corinthians*. Revisiting the Major Issues (Oxford 2009) 58-75, he recognizes the co-existence of cosmology and soteriology in the verse with regard to God the Father; however, the absence of the cosmological motif with regard to Jesus Christ is preserved. The highly parallel structure of the verse excludes, in my view, such an interpretation.

<sup>25</sup> It seems very important to stress the double use of *διὰ* in the verse. The scheme is sometimes interpreted as "from... through... to" (see, for instance, A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. A Commentary on the Greek Text [NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI 2000] 637); it implies (probably, unconsciously) the instrumental meaning of *διὰ*. But if one follows the text, namely that two acts ("from-through" and "through-to") form the single process, then the meaning of *διὰ* becomes much more nuanced.

and complete cosmological process in which God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ participate as two individual but nonetheless co-working persons.

In order to better characterize the dialectical tension between the unity and differences in the functions of God the Father and Jesus Christ, Paul depicts the nature of these functions. The key element here seems to be εἷς which is surprisingly used two times to qualify both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, Paul's use of εἷς stands in opposition to πολλοί in v. 5 ("many gods and many lords"). It therefore strengthens the unity of God and the Lord in their relations with the created world against the "deities" of the Hellenistic world mentioned in v. 5. But this unity is remarkably balanced by the distinction: not "one God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ", but separately "one God the Father" and "one Lord Jesus Christ". This combination of two uses of εἷς excludes any possibility of fusing the two persons mentioned in v. 6 or of overlooking the significance of each of them.

The opposition between εἷς and πολλοί points to the unique character of the activity of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's concern in 1 Cor 8,5-6a is to argue that in fact there is one God, not many. Paul does not, however, merely proclaim that God is one (which is said in v. 4; this will be discussed below); he justifies God's oneness through the description of God's functions. God the Father is the God (in contrast with the "so-called gods" in v. 5) because he executes the functions expressed in v. 6a. The other "gods" are able neither to create, nor to save. In v. 6a εἷς means "only"; God the Father is unique because he alone stands in certain relations with τὰ πάντα and ἡμεῖς. In other words, Paul uses ἐκ- and εἰς- prepositional phrases in order to indicate that God the Father is the only true God <sup>26</sup>.

The parallelism of the verse allows one to draw the same conclusion concerning Jesus Christ. He is opposed to the many "lords" of v. 5 as εἷς κύριος, and Paul justifies this oneness in the same way as he just did it for God the Father. Jesus Christ is the one Lord because

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<sup>26</sup> "The uniqueness of God is thus manifested in his role in creation and salvation": A. DENAUX, "Theology and Christology in 1 Cor 8,4-6", *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. BIERINGER) (BETL 125; Leuven 1996) 601. See also G.D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1987) 374.

of his specific functions (expressed by means of *διὰ*); no other “lord” has this sort of relation with *τὰ πάντα* and *ἡμεῖς*. And as the oneness of God the Father means that he is the only God because of his functions expressed through the prepositions *ἐκ* and *εἰς*, similarly the oneness of the Lord Jesus Christ means that he is the only Lord because of his functions expressed through the preposition *διὰ*. In other words, God is the only God because only from him and only to him; and Jesus Christ is the only Lord because only through him. The two functions of the Lord expressed in the verse need to be examined in more detail.

### *1. The first διὰ*

The first *διὰ* determines Jesus Christ’s role in creation. In the majority of “Wisdom-Christological” studies, the focus is on the idea of Christ’s “pre-existence”; as Wisdom was understood in the Hebrew Scriptures as pre-existent<sup>27</sup>, the same, according to these studies, can be said about Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 8,6<sup>28</sup>. This focus, however, seems to me slightly misleading; it overlooks the significance of the first *διὰ* in 1 Cor 8,6 as an indication of Jesus Christ’s function. Paul’s concern is not merely the form of (pre-)existence of Jesus Christ but rather Christ’s acting, which makes this particular person a unique and indispensable participant in the act of creation. If one feels the necessity to find a parallel to the role of Jesus Christ in the act of creation expressed in 1 Cor 8,6, one needs to look not for pre-existent figures but for figures with the same functions.

As G. Fee once noted, “not a single text in the Wisdom tradition uses the preposition *διὰ* regarding Wisdom’s presence at creation”<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> As far as it can be understood from such passages as Prov 8,22-26; Sir 1,4a; 24,9a.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, H. WINDISCH, “Die göttliche Weisheit der Juden und die paulinische Christologie”, *Neutestamentliche Studien*. Georg Heinrici zu seinem 70. Geburtstag (ed. A. DEISSMANN) (Leipzig 1914) 220-234; A. FEUILLET, *Le Christ Sagesse de Dieu d’après les Épîtres pauliniennes* (ÉB; Paris 1966); R.G. HAMERTON-KELLY, *Pre-existence, Wisdom and the Son of Man. A Study of the Idea of Pre-Existence in the New Testament* (Cambridge 1973) and several recent commentaries where the idea of “pre-existence” plays a primary role in the discussion of Paul’s Christology in 1 Cor 8,6.

<sup>29</sup> G. FEE, *Pauline Christology. An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA 2007) 93.

Indeed, when Wisdom is mentioned in regard to creation the corresponding texts use either the preposition ἐν (like Ps 104,24; cf. Jer 28,15 LXX) or the so-called *Dativus Instrumenti* (as in Prov 3,19; Wis 9,2). In both cases Wisdom is depicted as God's instrument. In contrast, what is said in 1 Cor 8,6b about Jesus Christ points to his specific and individual function in creation as the only one "through whom"; as far as I know this has no parallel in Jewish Wisdom literature.

Also the parallel with Philo's Logos proposed by Horsley seems questionable. First of all, the prepositional phrase used in *Cher.* 125 is identical only with 1 Cor 8,6b (that is, with what is said about Jesus Christ). The prepositions used for God are different in the two texts. While Philo uses ὑπό, Paul uses ἐκ; in fact, ἐκ in Middle Platonism was traditionally used to designate the material cause (that is, the matter, the object of God's creative activity) which is also clear from *Cher.* 125 itself<sup>30</sup>. That Paul's use of ἐκ with respect to God in 1 Cor 8,6 is not accidental is evident, for the same preposition is also found in Rom 11,36. If Paul has in mind (as Horsley suggests) the prepositional distinction between God and the Lord as they are presented in Philo's distinction between God and the Logos, why does he ascribe to God the preposition which is used in Philo for a different cause? And as far as there is a difference between Philo and Paul in the use of prepositions with respect to God, how can one be sure that the same prepositions with respect to the Logos and to Jesus Christ have the same meaning? Moreover, I assume that Philo's stress in *Cher.* 125-127 on the particular meaning of διὰ as a direct indication of the form of instrumentality was rather contextual and served his particular goals in his particular argument. He does not hesitate, for instance, in *Leg.* 1.41 to use διὰ to describe God's action (along with ὑπό). Does it mean that Philo is not consistent in his use of the prepositions? Or, possibly, when he attributes διὰ to the Logos does he realize that he in fact attributes it to God himself?

This latter question points to the other significant problem for both Horsley's assumption and the Wisdom-Christology hypothesis, namely, how should the very nature of Logos/Wisdom be understood. If Philo was dependent on (Middle) Platonism, he was aware of the fact that the instrumental cause was often used there to delineate merely an idea or *logos*/word of God (like his *phantasia*),

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<sup>30</sup> See the text in n. 7 above.

that is, the speculative pattern of God's activity<sup>31</sup>. As Sterling notes, "the distinction between agent and instrument [in Middle Platonism] has been obscured by the close relationship between νοῦς and λόγος in Middle Platonic thought"<sup>32</sup>. This poses a question: who or what is Philo's Logos or Jewish Sophia? Is he/she an independent entity who is used (like a real tool) by God? Or is the Logos/Sophia another form of the description of God himself, i.e. God's self-realization which is called "Logos" or "Sophia" in order to stress God's deliberate action in the world? Philo's texts do not provide an immediate answer. Indeed, in *Cher.* 126 Philo makes a parallel between God's creation and the building of a house or a city; the instrument here looks like a physical tool of the builder. But in *Opif.* 24-25 (and *Fug.* 101) God's Logos is compared with an idea of God, a thinkable phenomenon. In this case Philo's Logos recalls Varro's *exemplum*, "the pattern according to which (*secundum quod*) something came to be"<sup>33</sup>. Horsley calls Logos "the instrumental principle"<sup>34</sup> and seemingly through this lofty formula tries to avoid a discussion of the nature of Logos; this formula, however, does not clarify the question of how the "principle" correlates with the concrete person Jesus Christ, who in 1 Cor 8,6 is clearly distinguished from God<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> In fact, the instrumental cause seems to be a speculative invention of Middle Platonists (as an addition to a standard Aristotelian system of causes) and may be characterized as "the idea"; see J. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists*. 80 B.C. to 220 A.D. (Ithaca, NY 1996) 140-143.

<sup>32</sup> STERLING, "Prepositional Metaphysics", 231.

<sup>33</sup> See, R. COX, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 145; Berlin – New York 2007) 43-44.

<sup>34</sup> HORSLEY, "The Background", 134.

<sup>35</sup> The discussion concerning the nature of Philo's Logos is endless indeed. See, for instance, D. BOYARIN, "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John", *HTR* 94.3 (2001) 243-284, where he questions the influence of Middle Platonism on the formation of Philo's idea of Logos and recognizes in it "a doctrine of a *deuteros theos*" which, however, did not preclude monotheism. Although the possible influence of Platonism (in any of its forms) on Philo is a question for further research, the attempts to present Philo's Logos as an independent entity (not to say another God) are not convincing, in my judgment. According to Philo, all things possess certain kinds of *logos* (see, for instance, *Opif.* 43; cf. *Opif.* 69 where God's Logos is

The same can be said about Jewish Wisdom. Dunn acknowledges that “within Judaism, the figure of divine Wisdom is not a divine being independent of God”. His analysis of the Jewish Wisdom literature leads him to conclude that Wisdom is a personification of God’s attribute, and the passages which describe Wisdom as an independent entity should be understood “metaphorically”. Thus, “The Wisdom of God is not something other than God, but God’s wisdom, God in his wisdom” <sup>36</sup>. But in 1 Cor 8,6 Paul explicitly points to the complementary functions of two persons; Jesus Christ is presented as the Lord, not as an idea <sup>37</sup>.

It should be noted that the use of the designation “Lord” is an important aspect of Paul’s argument which is unfortunately almost completely disregarded in recent scholarship. It is overlooked that neither Jewish Wisdom nor Philo’s Logos are ever called “lady” or “lord”; this designation in the Wisdom literature and in Philo was reserved for God only <sup>38</sup>. In contrast, Paul surprisingly uses κύριος in 1 Cor 8,6 to designate a person other than God the Father (see below more detailed discussion on this). That this designation is not merely a formal address of devotion is clear from the indication of the functions ascribed to Jesus Christ in the verse. All these factors, in my view, question the attempts to find the parallels between Jesus Christ as he presented in 1 Cor 8,6 and contemporary (Hellenistic-) Jewish concepts.

Also the attempt to explain the meaning of 1 Cor 8,6 through the parallels with two different philosophical traditions (as Sterling, for instance, suggests) is not convincing. The combination of the

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compared with the similar phenomenon in the human mind). Having similar *logoi* the Creator and the creatures are able to interact. I argue that Philo uses the Logos to demonstrate how God communicates with the world (including the act of creation) and not to reveal who God’s agent is in this communication.

<sup>36</sup> DUNN, *Theology*, 35, 271.

<sup>37</sup> “Since Christ is a person, his personal pre-existence is clearly assumed in this text [1 Cor 8,6]”: D.J. MOO, “The Christology of the Early Pauline Letters”, *The Contours of Christology in the New Testament* (ed. R.N. LONGENECKER) (McMaster New Testament Studies 7; Grand Rapids, MI 2005) 178-179. Similarly J. BALCHIN, “Paul, Wisdom and Christ”, *Christ the Lord. Studies in Christology presented to Donald Guthrie* (ed. H.H. ROWDON) (Leicester 1982) 212.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Prov 8,22. On Philo’s understanding of κύριος as one of the characteristics of the Jewish God, see N.A. DAHL – A.F. SEGAL, “Philo and Rabbis on the Names of God”, *JSJ* 9.1 (1978) 1-28, particularly 2-10.

elements of Stoicism and Middle Platonism in one single verse in the letter which is generally free from philosophical speculations and demonstrates Paul's fidelity to the Jewish traditions looks rather artificial and far-fetched. What, however, challenges this hypothesis even more is that there are no exact parallels to 1 Cor 8,6 in contemporary philosophy. One of the most illustrative Stoic formulas which uses the prepositions is the passage from Ps-Aristotle's *De mundo* 397b (considered as a Stoic writing): "All things are from God (ἐκ θεοῦ) and through God (διὰ θεοῦ) hold together for us" <sup>39</sup>. It is striking enough that here both ἐκ and διὰ are present. As mentioned above, Sterling does not find in Platonism examples where ἐκ is used to designate the first (divine) cause. Thus, if one follows Sterling's logic, one has to assume that in 1 Cor 8,6 the ἐκ-phrase is taken from the source (Stoicism) where διὰ is used in reference to God and the διὰ-phrase is taken from the other source (Platonism) in which ἐκ is never used for God. Some other difficulties of Sterling's hypothesis will be discussed in section 3 <sup>40</sup>.

In other words, neither the Jewish Wisdom speculations nor the use of metaphysical prepositions in contemporary philosophical doctrines (including Philo's scheme) can be regarded as the source for Paul's description of the cosmological function of Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 8,6b. Jesus Christ has no parallels in contemporary thought. The substantiation of his uniqueness through the description of his functions makes him the indispensable participant in the act of creation and the co-worker of God the Father. And therefore not just through Jesus Christ did all things come into being from God but only through him.

<sup>39</sup> See Sterling's reference to it, "Prepositional Metaphysics", 223.

<sup>40</sup> There is another famous Stoic formula which is sometimes used to prove the influence of Stoic cosmological thought on Paul, namely Marcus Aurelius' praise of nature in *Meditations* 4:23: ὧ φύσις· ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σέ πάντα. Sterling considers this formula as the "closest parallel" to Rom 11,36 ("Prepositional Metaphysics", 233). It is not, however, relevant to the present discussion for the preposition διὰ is not present there. In fact there are many reasons to question any possible correlation between the Emperor's formula and Paul's words in 1 Cor 8,6; the main reason seems to be the presence of one Lord in Paul's outlook.

## 2. *The second διὰ*

It is logical to assume that in accordance with the parallelism of the clauses in 1 Cor 8,6 the meaning of the second διὰ should be interpreted in the same way as the meaning of the first διὰ. As far as the meaning of the first διὰ indicates the Lord's personal participation in creation (as God's co-worker), one can expect that the second διὰ indicates the similar role of the Lord in the act of final salvation. There are, however, some translations of the verse in which the significance of Christ's role in salvation is reduced (intentionally or unintentionally). For instance, H. Lietzmann interprets the verse as "Gott ist letzter Urgrund und Zweck, Christus Vermittler des Weltgeschehens wie des Christenlebens"<sup>41</sup>. Also C.K. Barrett translates the part with the Lord as "one Lord Jesus Christ, through... whom all things, including ourselves, come into being", that is, without any reference to his role in coming events<sup>42</sup>. If we continue these interpretations logically, the final act of salvation appears to involve the relationship between ἡμεῖς and God only. Through Christ, then, "we" have merely been created, whereas the mission of Christ in "our" final attainment of God is of secondary importance, if any.

This reduction of the Lord's eschatological role not only contradicts the meaning of the wording of 1 Cor 8,6 but also finds no support in Paul's eschatological scheme depicted in some other places of the letter. The eschatological significance of Jesus Christ is stressed from the very beginning till the very end of 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 1,8 Paul uses the formula "the day of the Lord" applying it to Jesus Christ; this is an explicit allusion to the Jewish theme of God's judgment expressed in the OT<sup>43</sup>. The importance of this day for the Corinthians is that they are expected to be "blameless" (ἀνέγκλητοι); in other words, they will be somehow tested in this eschatological "day". Paul uses in 1,8 τὸ τέλος as an indication of the eschatological motif; the same word is used in 15,24-28 where the eschatological relations between Jesus Christ

<sup>41</sup> H. LIETZMANN, *An die Korinther I/II* (HNT 9; Tübingen<sup>5</sup>1969) 37.

<sup>42</sup> C.K. BARRETT, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Black's New Testament Commentaries; London 1968) 192.

<sup>43</sup> See the direct references to the "day of the Lord" as the act of God's judgment in Isa 2,12-13; 13,6-7; Joel 2,31-32; Amos 5,18-19; Zeph 1,18.

and God are described. Vv. 24-25 demonstrate that in the end Christ will destroy the enemies and put them under God's feet. The "sequence of events" is worth noting; Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father after "the destruction has already occurred"<sup>44</sup>. The destruction is rendered through the active voice of καταργέω; it will be Jesus Christ who will destroy his enemies. It is interesting to note that in v. 25 Paul explicitly alludes to Ps 110,1; in the text of the psalm one Lord (rendered as YHWH) addresses the other Lord (Adonai)<sup>45</sup>. This reference to Ps 110,1 is generally recognized. In my view, however, the focus should be not only on the first verse of the psalm but on the content of the psalm as a whole. In vv. 5-7 the author depicts some functions of the "minor" Lord (Adonai) which are comparable with the destruction of the enemies in 1 Cor 15,24-25. In Ps 110,5 Adonai is expected to execute judgment; whether the author of the psalm means the eschatological judgment is not so clear. But in my view it is probable that in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul has in mind not merely the first verse of the psalm but its whole content, and therefore he refers not so much to the status of Jesus as the enthroned person (as in Ps 110,1) but rather to his action as the Judge.

The combination of 1,8 and 15,24-25 draws a picture of the eschatological events in which Jesus Christ is presented as the one who will find some as "blameless" and others as deserving to be "destroyed". This picture is complemented with some other passages in 1 Corinthians. "The Day" (evidently, the day of the Lord Jesus Christ of 1,8) is mentioned in 3,13-15. In 4,4 Paul writes about the Lord who judges; in order to stress the eschatological meaning of the judgment Paul adds in v. 5 the words concerning the future (expressed through the aorist) coming of the Lord "who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart"<sup>46</sup>. After this "each one will receive commendation from God".

Also the words at the very end of the letter (*maranatha*, 16,22) focus on the coming of the Lord as the eschatological Judge. It goes

<sup>44</sup> J. LAMBRECHT, "Structure and Line of Thought in 1 Cor. 15:23-28", *NovT* 32.2 (1990) 149.

<sup>45</sup> "The Lord says to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool'".

<sup>46</sup> Fee recognizes the parallel between 1 Cor 4,4-5 and Dan 2,20-23; he points out, that "Christ himself will be the judge", and "this action being an exclusively divine prerogative... assigned to Christ as Lord": FEE, *Christology*, 138.

beyond the scope of this study to reproduce the long discussion concerning the meaning of *maranatha*. The parallels (in terms of either wording or content) with Phil 4,5 (ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς), Rev 22,20 (ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ), and Jude 14 as a reference to *1 En.* 1,9 (ἦλθεν κύριος; here the *perfectum futuri* is used) indicate that *maranatha* is to be best understood as the eschatological coming of the Lord<sup>47</sup>. In 1 Cor 16,22 this coming is linked with the notions of love and curse. As A. Eriksson has shown, for Paul the Lord's return gives a reason "for the judgment that will come upon those who do not love the Lord" and also gives a reason "for blessings on those who do love the Lord". In other words, the Lord will be both the Judge and the Saviour in his second coming<sup>48</sup>.

This consistency in Paul's understanding of the character of the eschatological events in 1 Corinthians allows us to better interpret the meaning of the second διὰ in 8,6 and especially the link between ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ and ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν. Firstly, there is no reason to deny the future-oriented meaning of the second διὰ. Secondly, the analogy with the first διὰ indicates that Jesus Christ's participation in the eschatological events will be an active participation. It is Jesus Christ who, according to some passages in 1 Corinthians, first brings into action the eschatological scenario and then places its results in front of God the Father. In the course of the letter Jesus Christ is presented as the eschatological Judge and therefore as the one who will determine who will attain God the Father as the ultimate goal. This makes Jesus Christ the unique eschatological mediator: no one has a chance to come back to God while bypassing the Lord's final judgment. The act of final salvation is the co-working of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father and the "creational διὰ" is complemented with the "salvific διὰ". "We" are saved not just through him but only through him.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, M. BLACK, "The Maranatha Invocation and Jude 14, 15 (*1 Enoch* 1:9)", *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*. In Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule (eds. B. LINDARS – C.F.D. MOULE) (London 1973) 189-196.

<sup>48</sup> See A. ERIKSSON, "Maranatha in the Letter's Peroratio", *Idem, Traditions as Rhetorical Proof. Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* (Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 29; Stockholm 1998) 294.

### III. διὰ of God contra διὰ of the Lord?

The most striking problem concerning the meaning of διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6 is its correlation with the meaning of διὰ (also with the genitive) used by Paul in Rom 11,36a<sup>49</sup> where according to modern commentators Paul has God in mind. The problem is complicated by the repetition of all the prepositions in both phrases. The possible correlation between the phrases, however, is usually disregarded in the interpretations of 1 Cor 8,6. Sterling is one of the few scholars who have made an attempt to find an explanation.

As it was already mentioned, in 1 Cor 8,6 Sterling finds the influence of two philosophical doctrines, namely of Stoicism in the part devoted to God the Father and of Platonism (with its instrumental διὰ) in the part devoted to Jesus Christ. But when διὰ refers to God the Father, according to Sterling, its source is purely Stoic; therefore in Rom 11,36 (and in Heb 2,10) Sterling finds the Stoic understanding of divine acting (that is, the Stoic διὰ)<sup>50</sup> in contrast to Platonic διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6 (and in Heb 1,2). From this it follows that Paul has in mind two different meanings of διὰ: the first one (in 1 Cor 8,6b) denotes instrumentality, while the second one (in Rom 11,36) reflects the act of the only active cause, i.e. of God himself. One may ask, however, what is the actual difference between Stoic διὰ and Platonic διὰ in terms of implied functions (especially in light of the Platonic understanding of instrumental cause as the manifestation of God's own mind)? And therefore, does Paul imply any difference in functions when he uses "Stoic" διὰ in Rom 11,36 and "Platonic" διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6? Is it indeed Paul's intention to use in these two similar phrases the same preposition but with different meanings?

The prepositional parallel between 1 Cor 8,6 and Rom 11,36 is discussed by Basil the Great in chapter 5 of his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*<sup>51</sup>. Concerning 1 Cor 8,6 Basil points out that the difference

<sup>49</sup> Rom 11,36a reads as follows: ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα.

<sup>50</sup> See STERLING, "Prepositional Metaphysics", 233, 236.

<sup>51</sup> The Greek text and the German translation are presented in: BASILIUS CAESARIENSIS, *De spiritu sancto (Über den Heiligen Geist)* (ed. and Germ. trans. H.-J. SIEBEN) (Fontes Christiani 12; Freiburg 1993); Basil's discussion of 1 Cor 8,6 and Rom 11,36 is on pp. 90-93.

in prepositional phrases here does not serve as an indication of an opposition between the Father and the Son; he justifies this by the reference to Rom 11,36. Basil opines that Rom 11,36 should be read in light of v. 34 where Paul uses a quotation from Is 40,13 LXX (τίς [γάρ] ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου). κύριος here, according to Basil, designates God the Son (or God Logos), and therefore all three prepositions in Rom 11,36 (including ἐκ and εἰς) are applied to God the Son. If, nonetheless, Rom 11,36 refers to God the Father, then it means (as Basil asserts) that “through whom” can be properly used for God. In other words, according to Basil, all three prepositions can be equally applied both to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ; all three prepositions (including διὰ) delineate the single divine act, and therefore διὰ in both passages has the same meaning regardless of whose (God’s or Jesus Christ’s) act it denotes.

What seems to make Basil’s assumption concerning Christ as the referent in Rom 11,36 more plausible is the parallel between Rom 11,34 and 1 Cor 2,16a where Paul uses the same quotation from Is 40,13<sup>52</sup>. In 1 Corinthians the quotation is followed by ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν, and therefore κύριος in v. 16a and Χριστός in v. 16b can be understood as either synonyms or as references to different persons (namely to God the Father and to Christ). Each of these possibilities has its supporters among scholars<sup>53</sup>. In my view, in 1 Cor 2,6-16 Paul builds his argument upon the contraposition of two groups (“spiritual” and “unspiritual”) and their oppo-

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<sup>52</sup> I am aware of the hypothesis according to which 1 Cor 2,2-16 is an interpolation in Paul’s text. See M. WIDMANN, “1 Kor 2 6-16: Ein Einspruch gegen Paulus”, *ZNW* 70 (1979) 44-53, and W.O. WALKER Jr., *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 213; London – New York 2001) 127-146. The counter-arguments, however, seem to be more convincing to me (see J. MURPHY-O’CONNOR, “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,” *CBQ* 48 [1986] 81-94; FITZMYER, *First Corinthians*, 169-170).

<sup>53</sup> For instance, Bultmann, Fee and R. Collins understand κύριος in 1 Cor 2,16 as Jesus Christ (R. BULTMANN, *Theology of the New Testament* [London 1970] I, 124; R. COLLINS, *First Corinthians* [Sacra Pagina 7; Collegeville, MN 2000] 137; FEE, *First Corinthians*, 119, n. 87) while Barrett and Fitzmyer as God (BARRETT, *A Commentary*, 78; FITZMYER, *First Corinthians*, 185; Fitzmyer substantiates his position by referring to the text in Rom 11,34). According to Jewett, “The function of this citation [from Is 40,13 in Rom 11,34] is [...] quite different from Paul’s citation of the same verse in 1 Cor 2,16”: R. JEWETT, *Romans. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2007) 719; but one can ask: does this difference consist in the referents only?

site relations with various manifestations of the divine reality. Paul firstly indicates how the “unspiritual” misunderstand the meaning of a certain reality, and then how the “spiritual” properly respond to the same reality. The repetition of *δέ* helps us to comprehend the whole scheme of opposition <sup>54</sup>; in this manner v. 10 correlates with v. 8 (in terms of the relations of the two groups to God’s Wisdom), v. 12 with v. 11 (God’s Spirit), and v. 15 with v. 12 (things which come from God’s Spirit). The same *δέ* is used to separate the two groups in v. 16. One can understand the quotation from Isaiah as the reference to the “unspiritual” with their relations to *νοῦς κυρίου*, while the second half of the verse as about the opposing group (*ἡμεῖς*) in their relations to *νοῦς Χριστοῦ*. If, as in the whole passage, Paul here depicts the two groups in their relationship with the same reality, then it would be logical to assume that *κύριος* in v. 16a and *Χριστός* in v. 16b designate the same person. And consequently, if Paul refers in his quotation from Isaiah in 1 Cor 2,16a to Jesus Christ, is it possible to assume that in Rom 11,34 he has in mind God the Father when he writes the same words? In this regard, a further question may be asked. Is it Paul’s primary concern who precisely is understood by his audience when he refers to *κύριος* in the OT quotation: whether it is God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ <sup>55</sup>?

It should be noted that the context of Is 40,13 (Isaiah 40-41) establishes God’s uniqueness as the Creator of everything (40,26.28; 41,20), the Redeemer (41,14) and the Judge (cf. 41,1). The comparison of God with an idol is inadmissible (40,18-20). The author of Isaiah 40-41 does not just proclaim the oneness of God but depicts God as the only one to whom the fundamental divine functions belong. He uses different ways to designate God, including the traditional rendering YHWH but also in 40,10 *Adonai* (both translated in the LXX as *κύριος*). All the designations seem to be interchangeable

<sup>54</sup> Cf. FEE: “Gk. *δέ* [in 1 Cor 2,6-16] clearly adversative here and thus rightly translated ‘however’ (cf. ‘yet’ in RSV, GNB, NAB)”; *First Corinthians*, 101, n. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Heil concerning 1 Cor 10,26: “It does not matter whether Paul’s audience understands ‘to the Lord’ in the scriptural quote in 10:26 to refer to Jesus Christ or to God. Because of their roles in creation both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (and not the idols and the demons) have absolute dominion over ‘the earth and its fullness’”; J.P. HEIL, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* (SBL 15; Atlanta, GA 2005) 171.

and to point to the single reality of the one who creates, intervenes in the life of the world, and ultimately saves.

Similar ideas can be found in the *4 Ezra* 6:6 which is very likely a Jewish writing contemporary with Paul <sup>56</sup>. There God represents himself as “the one and only Creator” through whom the world is made. The Latin text (which is the oldest extant text of the book) renders the manner of creation using the preposition *per* <sup>57</sup>; the same preposition is used to describe the coming of the eschatological events: “the end shall come through (*per*) me” <sup>58</sup>. Thus according to the author, it is appropriate to ascribe the action “through” to God. Moreover, no one else can replace God in this action; in other words, it is through God alone that all things come into being and come to their end. The impressive picture of the eschatological events and the reference to the group which will be saved (“whoever remains after all that”) form, in my view, the strongest parallel with 1 Cor 8,6 in terms of content, except for the figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose functions, however, do not contradict the functions of God in Ezra. It is also worth noting that “Domine” (or “Dominator Domine”) is the normal form by which Ezra addresses God.

Should we not consider these Jewish ideas (rather than propositional metaphysics) as a much more plausible source for Paul’s cosmological statements? Do not the prepositions which are used by Paul both in Rom 11,36 and in 1 Cor 8,6 stress the uniqueness of God and the Lord in a manner similar to Jewish thought, i.e. through the description of their universal functions?

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<sup>56</sup> The analysis of the textual and theological issues of the text as well as the English translation are made by B.M. METZGER, “The Fourth Book of Ezra”, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J.H. CHARLESWORTH) (Peabody, MA 2009) I, 517-524 (the introduction) and 525-559 (the translation). According to Metzger, traditionally chs. 1–2 and 15–16 are considered as a “Christian framework” (517), whereas the remainder of the text should be attributed to the Hebrew author and be dated around A.D. 100 (520).

<sup>57</sup> “Facta sunt haec [these things – in fact ‘all things’ as they are described in 6,1-6; cf. ‘creaturam tuam’ 5,56] per me solum et non per alium, ut et finis per me et non per alium” (the Latin text was consulted on the website of ‘The Online Critical Pseudepigrapha’ <http://ocp.tyndale.ca/4-ezra#6-6> last access 07.06.2014); *per* is the preposition used in the *Vulgata* to render δὲ both in Rom 11,36 and 1 Cor 8,6.

<sup>58</sup> According to Metzger, these words point to God as the “Judge at the final judgment”; METZGER, “4<sup>th</sup> Ezra”, 521.

Basil's assumption that in 1 Cor 8,6 "the phrases are not opposed to one another" seems to be the key for understanding the distinction between the referents of the prepositions in Paul. If one assumes that it is not Paul's intention to stress the contrast between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in his theological scheme, then one is better able not only to reconcile the meaning of *διὰ* in 1 Cor 8,6 and Rom 11,36<sup>59</sup> but also to solve the problem concerning the exact referents in some related passages (like Rom 11,34 and 1 Cor 2,16). If Paul does not indeed care who — God or Christ — will be understood by his audience as *κύριος* (like in Rom 11,34 and therefore 11,36), then in some places he can use the concepts "God", "Lord", "Christ" interchangeably. If so, there is no reason to regard the functions implied by *διὰ* in 1 Cor 8,6b as different from the functions implied by *διὰ* in Rom 11,36 (and by *per* in 4 *Ezdra*) especially taking into account that it is used in the same framework of *ἐκ* and *εἰς*. This function can be exercised only by one who is *κύριος*.

The question remains, however, why Paul exploits in 1 Cor 8,6 the phrase where both God and the Lord are mentioned but not the wording which he uses in Rom 11,36? In my view, this question can be answered if one considers the content of 1 Cor 8,6 not only as in opposition to v. 5 (where many "gods" and "lords" are mentioned) but also as a correction of the content of v. 4 where "one God" is proclaimed. There are good reasons to regard v. 4 as Paul's quotation from the Corinthians' letter to him<sup>60</sup>. As in the case of 8,1, so here Paul corrects the self-confidence of the Corinthians (*οἶδαμεν ὅτι...*). The Corinthians' statement that *οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ* and *οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς* seems to be self-evident, but Paul elaborates it in two ways: firstly, he points to God's functions as the ground of the substantiation of the oneness of God; and secondly, he adds to the Corinthians' formula the figure of the Lord (*εἷς κύριος*). It seems that in some respects the Corinthians (or

<sup>59</sup> As, also, probably the meaning of *διὰ* in Heb 1,2 (with respect to the Son) and in Heb 2,10 (with respect to God).

<sup>60</sup> The list of scholars who defend the Corinthians' authorship of v. 4 is impressive indeed. It is sufficient to mention here A. Robertson, A. Plummer, C.K. Barrett, J.C. Hurd, G. Fee, and J. Fitzmyer. The detailed analysis of their arguments will be too extensive for the present study; for me, however, they are definitively convincing.

some of them) disregard the significance of Jesus Christ as the Lord <sup>61</sup>, and this is one of Paul's concerns throughout the whole letter. According to Paul, the Corinthians should not forget or ignore Jesus Christ in the basic expression of their faith. 1 Cor 8,4 is apparently derived from the Jewish *Shema* (Deut 6,4: κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν) as the fundamental principle of Jewish monotheism. Paul in response offers the Corinthians the Christianized *Shema* <sup>62</sup>. In the verse in which God himself is present, Paul nevertheless designates Jesus Christ as εἷς κύριος making it clear that Jesus Christ as the only Lord should be included within the *Shema* <sup>63</sup>. In other words, "the Lord our God one Lord" from Deut 6,4 corresponds to both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As Fee points out, Paul in v 6 "offers a... 'correction' to their [the Corinthians'] 'theology'" expressed in v. 4 and "insists that their understanding of the 'one God' must now include Christ as well" <sup>64</sup>. Through the description of Jesus Christ as God the Father's co-worker Paul stresses the similar uniqueness of the Lord, that is, οὐδεὶς κύριος εἰ μὴ εἷς. According to 1 Cor 8,6 Christ's lordship lasts from the moment of his participation in the collaborative (with God the Father) act of creating all things till the end of the final judgment after which he "hands over the kingdom to God the Father" (1 Cor 15,24). Jesus Christ, in other words, is the true operating Lord. This is what the Corinthians should never forget in order to "be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1,8).

To stress this is, apparently, not so necessary for Paul's argument in Romans. The phrase in Rom 11,36 refers to θεός and κύριος from Rom 11,33.34. Paul's phrases in Rom 11,36 and 1 Cor 8,6 mean the same although they are presented differently in different contexts. Also the prepositions in these formulas mean the same and therefore do not indicate the inseparable contrast between God

<sup>61</sup> Fee calls it "an early crisis in Christology" characterized by "a diminished view of who Christ is"; see FEE, *Pauline Christology*, 84, 86.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. de Lacey who follows F.F. Bruce when he acknowledges that "Paul presents [in 1 Cor 8:6] a 'Christianizing' of the *shema*"; D.R. DE LACEY, "'One Lord' in Pauline Christology", *Christ the Lord. Studies in Christology* presented to Donald Guthrie (ed. H.H. ROWDON) (Leicester 1982) 200.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. T. WRIGHT, "Monotheism, Christology and Ethics: 1 Corinthians 8", Id., *Climax of the Covenant. Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, MN 1992) 129.

<sup>64</sup> See FEE, *Christology*, 88-89.

the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather ἐκ, εἰς, and διὰ designate the unique functions of the one true Godhead within which God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are co-workers.

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There are several points which should be recalled here and which can serve as concluding remarks.

1. Although the meaning of διὰ with the genitive seems at first sight to be evident (“through”), the nuances ascribed to it by different authors and in different contexts demand close investigation. It seems that the attempt to burden particular prepositions with limited theological meaning is misleading. Concerning the prepositions A.T. Robertson once pointed out that “the usual way of expressing the agent in the N.T. is ὑπό for the direct agent and διὰ for the intermediate agent as in Mt. 1,22”; but, he added, “the usage [of prepositions] varies greatly in the course of the centuries and in different regions, not to say in the vernacular and in the literary style. Besides, each preposition has its own history and every writer his own idiosyncrasies”<sup>65</sup>.

2. The traditional rendering of διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6 as an indication of instrumentality contradicts the content of the verse and its context (v. 5). Paul depicts the Lord’s functions as different from those of God the Father, which makes Jesus Christ a distinct figure. Jesus Christ’s opposition to other “lords” is shown in the same manner as the opposition of God the Father to other “gods”. In other words, according to v. 6 the universal process (both creation and salvation) should be understood as the work of εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ καὶ [!] εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. One God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ are both the agents of this process.

3. The attempts to find in 1 Cor 8,6 an influence of philosophical prepositional metaphysics fail. There are no exact textual parallels

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<sup>65</sup> A.T. ROBERTSON, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN 1934) 534, 569. Cf. Waaler: “There is a thin line between the interpretation of διὰ as mediation or agency” (E. WAALER, *The Shema and the First Commandment in First Corinthians. An Intertextual Approach to Paul’s Re-reading of Deuteronomy* [WUNT II 253; Tübingen 2008] 417).

in the philosophical writings of antiquity. Also Paul seems to have felt no need to follow philosophical formulas. Paul uses the prepositions in 1 Cor 8,6 in order to demonstrate that the universal functions of creation and salvation make God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ unique (εἰς) in comparison with other “gods” and “lords”; this idea is rooted in the Jewish idea of the unique God.

4. But even in prepositional metaphysics the meaning of διὰ should not be understood simplistically. In fact the instrumental cause turns out to be the form of the activity of the first cause. Generally speaking, God’s instrument is God’s own *phantasia*, νοῦς, *Sophia*, *Logos*, etc. and existed only as a specific form of God’s self-manifestation. This use of διὰ in the metaphysical writings of Paul’s time points to the same reality as ὑπό or ἐκ.

5. This explains also why Philo’s formula in *Cher.* 125 cannot clarify the meaning of διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6. Philo’s Logos here in fact means the way of God’s acting; the “instrumentality” is used as the device to explain how God creates the world; it is not an indication of a specific reality distinct from God. Philo does not hesitate to use διὰ with God himself in his other writings (like *Leg.* 1.41). Also Jewish “Wisdom” seems to be an inappropriate source for 1 Cor 8,6b; the Jewish Wisdom literature does not indicate Wisdom’s specific functions; moreover, Wisdom is apparently not an independent phenomenon but rather, like Philo’s Logos, the way of God’s communication with the world. In contrast, Paul ascribes διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6 to a concrete person, Jesus Christ, who has his own functions and who is designated as κύριος, that is, through the term which was preserved in Philo and Wisdom literature for God alone.

6. The distinctiveness of the person of the Lord in 1 Cor 8,6 should not overshadow the unity of the acting of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ as co-workers. Taking into account Paul’s use of the same prepositions with a single referent in Rom 11,36, one can conclude that the functions depicted in both passages belong to the single Godhead within which God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ exercise their particular functions. Paul’s implicit inclusion of Jesus Christ in the *Shema* in 1 Cor 8,4.6 simply points to his understanding of the uniqueness (oneness) of both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Thus, διὰ in 1 Cor 8,6 designates both the difference and the unity between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The first διὰ indicates the Lord’s co-working in creation and the second διὰ

points to his function in the eschatological judgment as part of the universal eschatological scenario. Nothing goes from God the Father apart from the Lord's participation, and no one can find the way back bypassing the Lord. In other words, to the Lord Jesus Christ belongs the specific role in the universal process which can be exercised only by him and which makes him indispensable to all things, to "us"... and to God the Father.

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#### SUMMARY

The present study attempts to clarify the theological meaning of *διὰ* in 1 Cor 8,6. Traditionally the preposition is understood as an indication of a contrast between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' role is described as either instrumental or analogous to the role of Jewish Wisdom. The present study questions these interpretations on the basis of the analysis of the structure of the verse. In this author's opinion, *διὰ* here indicates the unique functions of Jesus Christ which make him the co-worker of God the Father in both creation and salvation.