

1 CORINTHIANS 14:21 – PAUL’S REFLECTION ON ΓΛΩΣΣΑ

PETER NAGEL
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

ABSTRACT

Paul’s reflection on ‘*speaking in tongues*’ has been widely discussed and debated both in the public and academic domain. Adequate attention has not been given to the explicit citation presented in 1 Corinthians 14:21 (Isa. 28:11–13a) in general, and the term ἑτερόγλωσσος together with the phrase λέγει κύριος in particular in addressing the issue of γλῶσσα. The aim of this article is to revisit the issue of γλῶσσα in 1 Corinthians 14 through the lens of 1 Corinthians 14:21. This will entail meticulous analyses of ἑτερόγλωσσος together with the phrase λέγει κύριος. The ultimate objective is to come to a better understanding of Paul’s reflection, hence his conception of γλῶσσα, in terms of 1 Corinthians 14:21. To achieve these objectives it would be necessary to first discuss the concept underlying 1 Corinthians 14:21 in terms of the immediate literary context. Second, the literary context of this source text should be determined, evaluated and discussed. Third, the impact of ἑτερόγλωσσος and λέγει κύριος in terms of γλῶσσα should be determined and explained. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn regarding Paul’s reflection on γλῶσσα.

Keywords: glossolalia, tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:21, language, utterances

1 INTRODUCTION

The public debate on the subject of *speaking in tongues* is concerned with oral sounds uttered by a believer that is linguistically ‘unknown’, a ‘supernatural’ and ‘divine’ ability not granted to all believers. The academic discussions revolve around the issue of why



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speaking in tongues is for unbelievers, while prophecy is for believers (1 Cor. 14:20–25).¹ Others in turn focus their attention on *speaking in tongues* and how it relates to women and their silencing within such gatherings (1 Cor. 14:35–36).² Scholars have also drawn parallels between unintelligible *glossolalia* in 1 Corinthians 14 and Hellenistic ecstatic speech,³ Greek oracular cultic practises⁴ and Jewish prophecy.⁵ In Hiu's concluding remarks he states that the data he investigated does not support Hellenistic influence, both in terms of Hellenistic ecstatic behaviour as a way of verifying the divine origin of an utterance as well as Hellenistic prophecy.⁶ Hiu does, however, suggest Jewish influence in terms of prophecy and argues that, unintelligible speech as a means to communicate with a deity did not exist outside of Christianity.⁷ The *γλῶσσα* issue⁸ as presented in 1 Corinthians 14, has clearly triggered the imagination of many. The essence and objective

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- 1 Representatives of this of approach are W. A. Grudem, '1 Corinthians 14.20–25: Prophecy and Tongues As Signs of God's Attitude,' *WTJ* 41/2 (1979): 381–396; B. C. Johanson, 'Tongues, a Sign for Unbelievers? A Structural and Exegetical Study of I Corinthians XIV.20–25,' *NTS* 25/2 (1979): 180–203; P. Roberts, 'A Sign – Christian or Pagan?' *ExpTim* 90/7 (1979): 199–203; K. O. Sandnes, 'Prophecy – A Sign for Believers (1 Cor. 14, 20–25),' *Bib* 77/1 (1996): 1–15.
 - 2 See for example N. M. Flanagan, 'Did Paul Put Down Woman in 1 Cor 14:34–36?' *BTB* 11/1 (1981): 10–12; D. W. Odell-Scott, 'Let the Women Speak in Church: An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b–36,' *BTB* 13/3 (1983): 90–93; R. W. Allison, 'Let Women Be Silent in the Churches (1 Cor. 14.33b–36): What Did Paul Really Say, and What Did It Mean?' *JSNT* 32 (1988): 27–60; A. J. Rowe, 'Silence and the Christian Women of Corinth,' *Communio viatorum* 33/1–2 (1990): 41; L. A. Jervis, '1 Corinthians 14.34–35: A Reconsideration of Paul's Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women,' *JSNT* 58 (1995): 51–74; C. Niccum, 'The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Cor 14.34–5,' *NTS* 43/2 (1997): 242–255; A. Eriksson, "'Women Tongue Speakers, Be Silent": A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric,' *BibInt* 6/1 (1998): 80–104; N. Kontzi-Méresse, 'Le silence des femmes dans l'assemblée: réflexion autour de 1 Corinthiens 14, 34–35,' *ETR* 80/2 (2005): 273–278; J. Greenbury, '1 Corinthians 14:34–35: Evaluation of Prophecy Revisited,' *JETS* 51/4 (2008): 721–731.
 - 3 See E. Hiu, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26–40* (London: T & T Clark, 2010).
 - 4 Hiu, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 1.
 - 5 Hiu, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 1.
 - 6 Hiu, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 17 and 38.
 - 7 Hiu, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 38. Hiu has convincingly argued, based on literary data, which the Hellenistic influence in terms of glossolalia and prophecy are minimal, if at all; and that Jewish prophecy should be considered the primary force underlying New Testament prophecy (2–37).
 - 8 W. E. Mills, 'Early Ecstatic Utterances and Glossolalia,' *PRSt* 24/1 (1997): 29 propose that certain aspects of these phenomena should be associated with the ancient practise of ecstasism; cf. H. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEKNT 5/11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 285; see also V. S. Poythress, 'The Nature of Corinthian Glossolali: Possible Options,' *WTJ* 40/1 (1978): 130, who suggests at least five parameters of classification to deal with these phenomena.



of this article, though, is captured by Johannes Weiss' formulation in his reflection on 1 Corinthians 14:21: 'die Hörer der ἑτερογλώσσοις hätten eigentlich auf den so zu ihnen redenden Gott hören müssen, und es sei erstaunlich, dass sie es nicht getan haben...Es bleibt nur übrig, dass Paulus dies Reden ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις als ein ganz unerhörtes Wunder, als ein ganz besonders deutliche Offenbarung Gottes ansieht.'⁹ Stephen Chester suggests that the solution to the problem of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 is to focus on the reaction to hearing tongues of 'the outsider' described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:23.¹⁰ According to Chester, if one accepts that μαίνεσθε should not be interpreted as a pejorative reaction, but rather a categorisation by 'the outsiders' of *speaking in tongues* as parallel to the phenomenon of divinely gifted madness within Greco-Roman religion; then a positive evaluation by 'the outsiders' (cf. 1 Cor. 14:20–25) becomes evident.¹¹ Chester's contribution is valuable in the sense that he places, and rightfully so I maintain, μαίνεσθε (be mad or crazy) against a reasonable Greco-Roman backdrop.¹² He also offers a plausible explanation of how Paul uses the citation taken from Isaiah 28:11–12 in 1 Corinthians 14:21.¹³ Wayne Grudem states that the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21 is a reminder that unknown tongues are not God's response to a believing congregation, but rather God's rebuke to an unbelieving one.¹⁴ This study's aim is to contribute to the ongoing discussions while building on the work of Chester, Grudem and Johanson in particular. The primary objective is thus twofold, first the focus will fall on ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις and λέγει κύριος as part of the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21. Second, the impact of these phrases and/or words will be determined. The projected outcome is to come to a better understanding of γλῶσσα within its literary context.¹⁵

9 J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEKNT 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 332.

10 C. J. Stephen, 'Divine Madness? Speaking in Tongues in 1 Cor. 14:23,' *JSNT* 27/4 (2005): 418–419.

11 Chester, 'Divine Madness,' 419.

12 Chester, 'Divine Madness,' 421–429.

13 Chester, 'Divine Madness,' 438–445.

14 Grudem, 'Prophecy and Tongues,' 387. Conzelmann, *Korinther*, 285–286 remarks that Paul argued in the previous verses that *speaking in tongues* 'could' not be understood, while in 1 Corinthians 14:21 it is not a matter of cannot, but will not. For Conzelmann, the word order in 1 Corinthians 14:22 suggests Rhetoric that is driven to the extreme.

15 Central to Grudem's approach is to consider the MT as the literary source context (Isa. 28:9–13) against which 1 Corinthians 14:21 should be interpreted on the one hand, (cf. Grudem, 'Prophecy and Tongues,' 382–386) while interpreting the term σημεῖον as an indication of God's attitude as per the LXX on the other hand (389–395). Grudem thus appears to be of the opinion that concepts from both the MT and Greek OT influenced Paul's train of thought in 1 Corinthians 14:20–25. The question raised by such an approach is, whether Paul could be influenced by both the MT and the Greek OT. D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986); C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture – Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); as well as F. Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,

2 THE CITATION

The citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21 (Isa. 28:11–13a^{LXX}) has been altered and adapted to a great extent.¹⁶ The essential concept conveyed in the Massoretic Text is that YHWH speaks intelligibly to the drunken priests and prophets in a ‘foreign tongue’ (Isa. 28:11–12). The result is that they (the priests and prophets) did not listen. This in turn had the effect that the words of YHWH became unintelligible (Isa. 28:13). The Septuaginta presents a slightly different twist to the events. It is the drunken priests and prophets who appears to be speaking to the remnant of the lord’s people (Isa. 28:11–12) with little or no effect, which resulted in the oracle of the lord being directed to them (Isa. 28:13). Literary conceptually speaking Paul appears to be closer to the MT in terms of the one speaking.¹⁷ It does, however, seem plausible to surmise that Paul also adopted the concept that the priests and prophets were the ones speaking in a ‘foreign tongue’. Paul was thus primarily influenced by the Greek concept of events (Isa. 28:1–13),¹⁸ while emphasising that ‘the lord’ initiated these events. Stated differently, Paul understood the priests and prophets as those responsible for speaking but he wanted to emphasise the one that intended to speak ‘through’ these subjects. The latter emphasis might suggest that Paul followed the MT text, but it would not be unusual for Paul to adapt his text to suit his own theological agenda.

In both cases, it is intelligible words that are spoken by ‘God’ (MT) and people (LXX). Making a distinction between the Massoretic T and Septuaginta as literary spheres of influence might seem superfluous, opting for one of these respective sources would have an opposing interpretative effect on 1 Corinthians 14:21. Based on the

1998) have shown independently and with that convincingly, that the Greek OT should be considered the primary text that influenced Paul’s use of scripture.

- 16 Cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 64; Stanley, *Language of Scripture*, 198–199 is of the opinion that the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21 is one of the greatest challenges in the entire corpus of Pauline citations. He argues that 1 Corinthians 14:21 could be traced to ‘Hebraizing’ revision of the LXX. For Koch, *Schrift*, 65 λέγει κύριος is to be considered a Pauline addition. Conzelmann, *Korinther*, 285 in turn, is of the opinion that the citation is sourced from a translation different from what is presented by the LXX and MT, cf. also Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 332. Koch, *Schrift*, 65–66 concludes that Paul clearly moves away from the MT visible in his alterations of Isaiah 28:11ff in 1 Corinthians 14:21; this does not exclude the fact that the Greek *Vorlage* is notably closer to the MT than the LXX.
- 17 Cf. Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign,’ 182. These words are considered to be a judgement claim, see also Grudem. ‘Prophecy and Tongues,’ 382–382. Chester, ‘Divine Madness,’ 438–440 does not make it clear if Paul was influenced by the MT or LXX text. Chester does, however, say that to take ‘tongues’ as a negative sign of divine judgement is not the most satisfactory available solution. It appears as if he opts for MT influence; cf. Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1120–1122 and Hui, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 66–67.
- 18 Cf. Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign,’ 182.

evidence offered by the eclectic text additions supported by sound arguments offered by Koch, Stanley and Wilk, among others, the literary conceptual context presented by the Septuaginta (Isa. 28:7–13) is opted for as the most plausible literary conceptual source that influenced Paul's use of 1 Corinthians 14:21, even though it is plausible to assume a Greek *Vorlage* that read differently from the Septuaginta.¹⁹ An argument supporting the latter, is the notion that λέγει κύριος (1 Cor. 14:21) is a 'dynamic' representation of Isaiah 28:13a (τὸ λόγιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ θλιψίς). The text critical data presented by the various eclectic text editions,²⁰ suggest that λέγει κύριος should not be interpreted as evidence pointing to a possible *Vorlage* attesting to λέγει κύριος. The presumption that the phrase τὸ λόγιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ θλιψίς (Isa. 28:13a) has been reworked by Paul to read λέγει κύριος (1 Cor. 14:21c) should be adopted.²¹ The suggestion is made that Paul's rendition of Isa 28:11–13 appears to be 'closer' to the Massoretic Text,²² with the reading of Isaiah 28:13a^{LXX} noticeably closer to its Hebrew counterpart. The fact that Paul 'added' λέγει κύριος to the cited text in Romans 12:19 (Deut. 32:35a) strengthens the plausibility for a Pauline 'addition' of λέγει κύριος in 1 Corinthians 14:21 and should thus be considered a key in interpreting 1 Corinthians 14:21 in terms of γλῶσσα.²³ The aim of this section of the article is not to discuss the discrepancies that exist between the eclectic text versions, nor to discuss how the cited text is reconstructed, the focus will fall on how Paul interpreted and deployed the citation in relation to γλῶσσα.²⁴ For the sake of clarity, a table is included below that compares the various text versions with one another.

19 Cf. Chester, 'Divine Madness,' 438–445; contra Grudem. 'Prophecy and Tongues,' 383.

20 Some Greek OT manuscript traditions, omit κυρίου (*C'* – 566), while others 'omit' τοῦ θεοῦ (*O' L''* – 233–456 301 403' 449' 534); these include some Church fathers, such as Eusebius, Theodoretus and Hieronymus. The *apparatus criticus* presented by NA²⁷ and BHS⁵ do not offer any other alternatives.

21 Cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 65; contra Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 332.

22 Cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 63–66; Stanley, *Language and Scripture*, 198.

23 Grudem, 'Prophecy and Tongues,' 385 reiterates, based on the MT, that the 'Lord' will speak (future tense) unclear words as punishment. Chester, 'Divine Madness,' 440 in turn, comments that 'God' speaking in MT and the Assyrians in LXX, does not appear in Paul's rendition of the text (1 Cor. 14:21). According to him, the addition of λέγει κύριος alters the notion from the spoken, intelligible message to which people refuse to listen in MT and LXX, to unintelligible strange tongues to which people will not listen; cf. Johanson, 'Tongues, a Sign,' 182.

24 Koch, *Schrift*, 63–66, discussed this very issue in great detail.

Literary comparison (1 Cor. 14:21 and Isa. 28:11–13a)		
NA ²⁷ (1 Cor. 14:21)	LXX ^{Gött} (Isa. 28:11–13a)	MT ^{BHS} (Isa. 28:11–13a)
ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι		
ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις	διὰ φαυλισμὸν χειλέων	הַפִּי שֶׁלְכָב יָב □
καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρων	διὰ γλώσσης ἐτέρας,	הַחֵהָא וְשִׁלְבו
λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ	ὅτι λαλήσουσιν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ	הִנֵּה מַעֲהָלָא רַבָּדִי
	λέγοντες αὐτῷ Τοῦτο	תְּאֵזוּ מִהַיְלָא כְּמֵא רַבָּא □
	τὸ ἀνάπαυμα τῷ πεινῶντι	רַב־עַל חֵיהָ הַחֵהָא
	καὶ τοῦτο τὸ σύντριμμα,	הַעֲרַמְהָ תְּאֵזוּ
καὶ οὐδ' οὕτως	καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν ἀκούειν.	עֲוֹמָא שֶׁלְכָב אֵלָן □
εἰσακούσονται μου,		מִהַיְלָ הַיְלָן □
	καὶ ἔσται αὐτοῖς	בַּעַל הַיְהִי רַבָּד
λέγει κύριος	τὸ λόγιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ θλιψις	

As suggested by the above-mentioned table, the reconstructed Greek Old Testament text is significantly and consciously adapted by Paul. The severity of the alterations made to the Greek text (as is the case of Isa. 28:11–13a) demands a highly competent scribe. Not only that, the author or scribe should have had extremely good knowledge of the text. Both the latter two characteristics would fit Paul's profile. One could thus infer, with a reasonable amount of certainty, that the 'key' in understanding 1 Corinthians 14:21 in relation to 1 Corinthians 14 and the issue of γλῶσσα relies on determining the inter-relatedness of ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται, ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις, λέγει κύριος and ultimately γλῶσσα. Stated differently, one should determine what Paul is *quoting* in relation to what was *written*, in terms of what was *uttered* and how these are words *spoken* by κύριος in addressing the issue of what is *uttered* (γλῶσσα). It is sufficed to say that Paul relied on a Greek text as *Vorlage*, which is conceptually represented by the Septuaginta reconstruction, when he cited scripture in 1 Corinthians 14:21. Second, Paul

adapted the Greek text for the main purpose of serving his argument regarding γλῶσσα. Grudem's suggestion that Paul's rendition of Isaiah 28:11–13a, be it the Massoretic Text or Septuaginta, is considered to be utterances directed to outsiders. I propose that the literary conceptual context of Isaiah 28 be regarded as the source context influencing the mind of Paul.

Paul considered the ineffectiveness of the prophets and priests, being the religious leaders of their time (Isa. 28:1–12) as a legitimate theological conceptual backdrop against which he dealt with those 'religious leaders' in Corinth speaking in γλῶσσα.

3 THE CONCEPTS

Fundamental conceptual elements are introduced in 1 Corinthians 14:21. The first is that the cited text (Isa. 28:11–13) are words spoken by κύριος and second that the words spoken by κύριος are considered to be ἑτερόγλωσσος. These concepts have been captured and represented by literature cited by Paul to address the issue of γλῶσσα. Most dictionaries and lexicons would describe γλῶσσα to mean 'tongue' or 'language'.²⁵ Literally, γλῶσσα is the organ of speech and figuratively, as a means of verbal communication.²⁶ The term refers to any language spoken by a specific *people*.²⁷ For Dautzenberg ἑτερόγλωσσος presupposes γλῶσσα with the meaning 'language'.²⁸ The term γλῶσσα 1 Corinthians 14:9, thus, is not understood in the sense of the technical term, *glossolalia*, but rather, an analogy to the comparisons with flutes, zithers, and trumpets as the organ of speech, through which one can articulate clear speech.²⁹ The term also suggests an expression of speech or manner of speech that is strange and requires explanation.³⁰ According to Poythress, the conceptual undertone of the term γλῶσσα should not be regarded as singular in nature, but rather a multitude of interpolated possibilities.³¹ He suggests

25 See for example J. Strong, '1100. γλῶσσα,' *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* 1:20; J. Swanson, '1185 γλῶσσα,' *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*; W. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, F. W. Danker and W. Bauer, 'γλῶσσα,' *BAGD* 162; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, 'γλῶσσα,' *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed., 1: 96.

26 T. Friberg, B. Friberg and N. F. Miller 'γλῶσσα,' *ALGNT* 4: 99–100.

27 G. Dautzenberg, 'γλῶσσα, tongue; language,' *EDNT* 1: 251–255.

28 Dautzenberg, *EDNT* 1: 251.

29 Dautzenberg, *EDNT* 1: 251; after Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 336.

30 J. Behm, 'γλῶσσα, ἑτερόγλωσσος,' *TDNT* 1: 720.

31 For Poythress, 'The Nature,' 130–133 scientific classifications of utterances is not only valid, but these classifications are valuable for grasping Paul's concept of γλῶσσα.

that Paul classified ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση as language-like ‘understood’ by ‘God’ (1 Cor. 14:2).³² It is, however, not necessary to interpret the phrase ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ, that those speaking in a ‘non-specific’ language can ‘only’ be ‘understood’ by θεός. It could merely imply that such utterances, when and if the followers of Christ assembled in Corinth speaks in such a manner, that it is considered to be ‘directed’ to ‘God’.

Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 14:18 confirms that γλῶσσα implies more than mere ‘incomprehensive’ ‘out-of-control’ utterances. This being said, one is inclined for the sake of perspective, to draw a distinction between διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων (cf. Acts 2:6) and the concept underlying γλῶσσα in 1 Corinthians 14.³³ The former ‘tongue’ or ‘language’ for that matter, could indeed be linguistically identified and classified, whereas the latter appears more complex, more spiritual or mystical in nature (cf. 1 Cor. 14:1).³⁴ Second, it is reasonable to position ἑτερόγλωσσος and γλῶσσα on the same level of conception. It seems plausible to assume that Paul intended to relate ἑτερόγλωσσος literary-conceptually with γλῶσσα and with that levelling the conceptual playing field. Zerhusen, suggests that it is indeed problematic to describe γλῶσσα as ‘non-cognitive’, ‘non-language utterance’, hence ‘ecstatic utterance’. He rightfully argues that: a) the emotional or mental state of the tongue-speaker is not mentioned once in 1 Corinthians 14. The problem is thus not ‘speaking in tongues’, but not interpreting it; b) The term ἑκστατικός does not appear in the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 14; c) In 1 Corinthians 12:10, Paul mentions that there exists ‘kinds’ of tongues, after which Zerhusen asks how can there be kinds if such utterances when speech of this nature is not cognitively structured;³⁵ d) The citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21 would confirm that Paul is not referring to ‘non-cognitive’, ‘non-language utterance’ but to a language.³⁶ Zerhusen concludes that γλῶσσα refers to some form of language. The term ἑτερόγλωσσος suggests a meaning of ‘foreign’ or ‘alien’ tongue or language.³⁷

32 Poythress, ‘The Nature,’ 133.

33 See Hiu, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 45–73 with regard to Acts (43–45); and in terms of 1 Corinthians 14. See also the detailed comparison between Acts and 1 Corinthians 14’s concept of language in B. Zerhusen, ‘The Problem Tongues in 1 Cor 14: A Reexamination,’ *BTB* 27 (1997): 139–151, 150. Mills, ‘Early Ecstatic,’ 101 assumes that the practice of *glossolalia* (1 Corinthians 14) is in no way identical with or even proximate to the practise referred to in Acts 2.

34 Cf. Poythress, ‘The Nature,’ 133.

35 Hiu, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 73 concludes, while agreeing with Thiselton, that ‘kinds of tongues’ can refer to different kinds of functions of language, e.g. prayer, thanksgiving and praise, as well as different kinds of languages that do not need to be limited to human languages.

36 Zerhusen. ‘The Problem Tongues,’ 141; contra Mills, ‘Early Ecstatic Utterances,’ 139. Mills, does agree with Zerhusen, in that the issue in 1 Corinthians 14 is not so much the speech, but rather not interpreting it.

37 Cf. J. Behm, ‘ἑτερόγλωσσος,’ *TDNT* 1: 762–727; Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, and Bauer, ‘ἑτερόγλωσσος,’ *BAGD* 314.



Finally and equally important is the question, if Paul had the same entity in mind; the one (θεός) being spoken to when speaking ‘in tongues’ (1 Cor. 14:2),³⁸ and the other (κύριος) speaking in a ‘foreign’ language (1 Cor. 14:21)? Stated differently, is the θεός in 1 Corinthians 14:2 the same entity as the κύριος in 1 Corinthians 14:21?³⁹ The question should be asked: when κύριος speaks in ἑτερογλώσσοις is he also speaking in γλῶσσα? If the latter is indeed the case, what is the concept underlying these terms? Furthermore, is θεός, the one that gives, understands and listens to γλῶσσα utterances the same entity as the one (κύριος) speaking in ἑτερόγλωσσος. These are pertinent questions that requires due attention. In summary, the concepts and the problems and solutions they might invoke could be formulated as

The term γλῶσσα suggests words uttered with a low frequency of linguistic resonance and therefore an even lower congregational relevance. Such utterances are considered to be directed to θεός, while κύριος is not effective when speaking to the people in a ἑτερόγλωσσος (‘foreign’ language). With concept underlying γλῶσσα and ἑτερόγλωσσος are considered to be on a par made possible with the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21.

4 PAUL’S REFLECTION ON ΓΛΩΣΣΑ

If the literary conceptual context of Isaiah 28^{LXX} is taken as the most plausible literary source context influencing Paul, then it is plausible to deduce that κύριος σαβαωθ (Isa. 28:5), τὸ λόγιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ θλίψις (Isa. 28:13) or τοῦτο ἀκούσατε λόγον κυρίου (Isa. 28:14) might have influenced Paul’s concept that the cited text in 1 Corinthians 14:21 is the words spoken by κύριος. It might not have been a case of either, or, but rather that the dominating use of the term κύριος in Isaiah 28 influenced Paul to such an extent that he reworked Isaiah 28:13a into λέγει κύριος. The assumption that γλῶσσα implies utterances which are linguistically ‘un-sound’ and that Paul assigned the cited content in 1 Corinthians 14:21 not only as words spoken by κύριος, but also ἑτερόγλωσσος words, are significant. It is thus re-affirmed here that the latter is considered key in

38 Cf. A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1086.

39 In my recently completed doctoral thesis, ‘The Explicit Κύριος and Θεός Citations by Paul: An Attempt at Understanding Paul’s Deity Concepts’ (Ph.D. diss., Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2012), I investigated Paul’s concept of both the term κύριος and θεός specifically related to the explicit κύριος and θεός citations. See also the work of D. B. Capes, *Paul’s use of Old Testament Yahweh-Texts and its Implications for his Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr).



determining the extent of the impact of 1 Corinthians 14:21 on the issue of γλῶσσα.⁴⁰
The theological-conceptual frame of reference is from where Paul addresses this issue:

ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις	he who speaks in tongues does not speak to humans (1 Cor. 14:2a)
λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ	but he speaks to <i>theos</i> (1 Cor. 14:2b)
θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μείζων δὲ ὁ προφητεῦων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεῦη, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομηῖν λάβῃ	it is my (Paul's) wish that you all can speak in tongues, but even more that you should prophesy; the one that prophecy is of greater value than he, who speaks in tongues, except if it is interpreted, so that the congregation can be built (1 Cor. 14:5)
ἐὰν [γὰρ] προσεύχωμαι γλώσση, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν.	Because if I pray in tongues, the spirit is praying, but my mental state is inactive (1 Cor. 14:13)
Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ,	I (Paul) thank <i>theos</i> (1 Cor. 14:18a)
πάντων ὑμῶν μᾶλλον γλώσσαις λαλῶ	that I can speak more tongues than all of you (1 Cor. 14:18b)

Paul makes it clear that speaking in 'tongues', be that a language in the linguistic sense of the word or an utterance of sounds unknown to linguistic paradigms, that θεός is the one that not only grasps such a type of language, but that θεός is also granting one the ability to speak such a language. Paul continues with his train of thought in 1 Corinthians 14:21:

ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται	it is written in the law
ὅτι ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις	that in a foreign language
καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρων λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ	and on the lips of others I will speak to these people
καὶ οὐδ' οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου,	but even then they will not listen to me
λέγει κύριος	says <i>kyrios</i>

The implication of Paul's train of thought is that it does not limit his critique against

40 Grudem, 'Prophecy and Tongues,' 382 would concur with such an approach, even though he formulated his approach to the issue by posing three fundamental questions: 1) What was the meaning of 'other tongues' in Isaiah 28:11? 2) How does Paul's use of the OT passage relate to the original meaning? and 3) In what sense are prophecies and tongues signs? The approach in this paper in addressing the issue related to the term γλῶσσα compared to Grudem, is the focus on the 'role' of the 'divine' subjects θεός and κύριος in relation to γλῶσσα and ἑτερόγλωσσοις.

speaking in a language only known by θεός, to the addressees, but he includes himself (cf. 1 Cor. 14:18–19), as well as κύριος (cf. 1 Cor. 14:21). The idea is that the addressees, including Paul, would not achieve anything productive within the congregation when speaking in a ‘foreign’ language; nor will κύριος when speaking to the people in ‘such a’ language. Paul evened-out the frequent distinction between γλῶσσα’s low frequency of linguistic resonance and the high frequency of linguistic quality of ἑτερόγλωσσος through 1 Corinthians 14:21.⁴¹ The literary source context of Isaiah 28, in which the term ἑτερόγλωσσος has been deployed, should be clearly understood.

The author of Isaiah 28 appears to be critical towards the prophets and priests, this is evident from Isaiah 28:7 – οἷτοι γὰρ οἶνω πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν, ἐπλανήθησαν διὰ τὸ σικερα· ἱερεὺς καὶ προφήτης ἐξέστησαν διὰ τὸν οἶνον – because they are led astray by wine, they have been led astray by *sikera*; Priests and prophets are confused due to the consumption of wine (cf. Isa. 28:1 and Isa. 28:4). The author of the Isaiah text then uses the first person plural saying: ‘to whom did we report evil and to whom did we report a message, those weaned from their mother’s milk, ripped away from her breast?’ (Isa. 28:9). It seems as if the author(s) distances themselves from the priest and prophets who are being criticised in Isa 28:7 and Isa 28:8. The crux of the matter, which appears particularly relevant for what Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 14, is presented in Isaiah 28:11 – διὰ φαυλισμὸν χειλέων διὰ γλώσσης ἑτέρας, ὅτι λαλήσουσιν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ – through contemned lips, through the language of others, because they will speak to this nation ... (Isa. 28:12) – καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν ἀκούειν – and they have willed not to listen. The sequence of thought is thus:

Subjects: Priest and Prophets

- They are being led astray
- They report about affliction of the people
- They speak with contempt lips in a foreign language
- They will experience affliction upon affliction

Subject: Author(s)

- Not the ones reporting
- They are reporting the oracle of *kyrios theos*

Subject: People

- They willed not to listen

41 Grudem, ‘Prophecy and Tongues,’ 387 is of the opinion that Paul knew very well that when ‘God’ speaks to people in a language they cannot understand, it is a form of punishment.

For the authors or translators of the Septuaginta, the critique is not directed against those who opted not to listen, but it is directed towards the ones, the priests and prophets, ‘ruling’ over those people (Isa. 28:14). The priests and prophets spoke with contemned lips, in a ‘foreign’ language and for that reason the people decided not to listen. The oracle of κύριος ὁ θεός, as opposed to what they (the priests and prophets) might have communicated to the people, is thus directed to the priest and prophets, not towards the people (cf. Isa. 28:13ff). At first glance it appears as if Paul reworked and re-interpreted Isaiah 28:11 to such an extent for it to sound as if ‘the people’ are criticised and that it is the words spoken by κύριος. Paul does however direct the content of 1 Corinthians 14:21, in a similar fashion in terms of the addressees. The critique is directed to the ones speaking in tongues, teaching and prophesying in the Corinthian congregation.⁴² Directing the content of the cited content towards those implies that 1) They would have been considered to be the leaders (priests and prophets) of the congregation (cf. Isa. 28:7–13) and 2) They are speaking in a ‘foreign’ language. Moreover, just as Isaiah 28:1–12 is the literary backdrop for the ‘oracle’ of κύριος ὁ θεός in Isaiah 28:13ff, so also 1 Corinthians 14:1–19 is the backdrop for Paul’s ‘oracle’ in 1 Corinthians 14:21ff.⁴³ Paul, however, introduces his ‘oracle’ (1 Cor. 14:22–40) with the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21 (words assigned to κύριος), which in turn introduces the ‘oracle’ of κύριος ὁ θεός. Paul’s ‘oracle’ is followed by the qualification and evaluation of an ‘oracle about delivering an oracle’ in 1 Corinthians 14:20–21. He expands his critique against ‘speaking in tongues’ far beyond the lack of interpretation or explanation of such utterances. Regarding his critique against *speaking in tongues*, Paul achieved the following:

- a) With the introduction of ἑτερόγλωσσοι, γλῶσσα is or ‘became’ more than mere unintelligible sounds uttered, if it was ever only understood in this way; it became something ‘foreign’, be that linguistically, ‘strange’ religious practises or unfamiliar with what is said or the manner in which it is uttered.
- b) The ‘oracle’ of the priests and prophets were transformed to be the ‘oracle’ of κύριος, who were just as ineffective when speaking to people in words or ways that appeared to be ‘foreign’.

Speaking in a foreign language, and in the lips of others is dubbed not to be effective when speaking to the people (1 Cor. 14:21).⁴⁴ According to Paul this is written in the law and

42 Cf. Chester, ‘Divine Madness,’ 443 and Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign,’ 184.

43 See also Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign,’ 190.

44 Grudem. ‘Prophecy and Tongues,’ 386 interprets ἐτέρων λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ (1 Cor. 14:21b) as Paul aligning himself with the MT. This is clearly also the view of Hui, *Tongues and Prophecy*, 67; contra Koch, *Schrift*, 65.

considered to be an insufficient method of communicating, even by κύριος. Therefore, αἱ γλῶσσαι εἰς σημεῖον εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἡ δὲ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν – the tongues are not a sign for those who believe, but for the unbeliever.⁴⁵ On the other hand, prophecy is not for unbelievers, but for believers (1 Cor. 14:22). The concept of γλῶσσα being a negative ‘sign’ and prophecy being more positive in nature should be understood against the literary backdrop of the cited source text, in this case Isa. 28:1–12^{LXX}. The ‘foreignness’ and incomprehensible nature of the words uttered, testifies to the possible influence of a) the ‘other religions’ b) the lack of structure given the possible socio-religious context against which one should interpret Isaiah 28:1–12. The ‘foreignness’ concept is deduced from Paul’s *Vorlage* and therefore not necessarily what he conceptualised. His *Vorlage*, however, might have given Paul enough interpretive scope to take γλῶσσα to mean something ‘strange’ or ‘unfamiliar’. What Paul does conceptualise with certainty is when a prophecy is announced, it has the potential to allow an unbeliever to reconsider everything (1 Cor. 14:24) after which he will bow down before θεός (1 Cor. 14:25). By prophecy Paul meant structured, well-thought through ideas that speaks of wisdom, while γλῶσσα could imply ‘strange’, ‘unfamiliar’, ‘unknown’ or ‘not well structured’ words.⁴⁶

With the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul has placed the concept underlying γλῶσσα on a par with the underlying concept of ἑτερόγλωσσος. If the concept of the former is related to sounds that do not make linguistic sense (unintelligible utterances), the latter would imply a language linguistically sound, so to speak, with which one is unfamiliar. A third concept could also be inferred from Isaiah 28:11: διὰ φαυλισμὸν χειλέων διὰ γλώσσης ἑτέρας, which seemingly indicates that the translator(s) understood φαυλισμὸν χειλέων and γλώσσης ἑτέρας as words uttered which does not project wisdom, well-thought ideas, ignorant and hear-say information.⁴⁷ What Paul thus accomplished, and what I argue was his persuasive intention, when he cited Isaiah 28:11–13a in 1 Corinthians 14:21, was to culminate the concepts underlying these terms into one single idea represented by ἑτερόγλωσσος, which holds the conceptual possibilities of a) γλῶσσα (linguistic unsound), b) ἑτερόγλωσσος (linguistic sound, not familiar) and c) φαυλισμὸν χειλέων and γλώσσης ἑτέρας (linguistic sound, familiar but

45 For Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign,’ 188 his first illustration would contradict the claim the tongues are intended as a positive sign for unbelievers (191). He goes further stating that the citation could be taken as support for the latter assertion (being positively viewed), if the λαός is understood as referring to the πιστεύοντες (191). Roberts, ‘A Sign,’ 201 presupposes that the tongues are the proof of divine activity for which non-Christians look, ‘proves’ that the spirit is at work.

46 Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign,’ 190 rightly observes, that the relation of tongues in the quotation and of both tongues and prophecy in the illustrations to the hearers is expressed in terms of *effect* (italics is his).

47 Cf. Hosea 7:16^{LXX} which speaks of ἀπαιδευσίαν γλώσσης – incontrollable, undisciplined, ignorant tongue.

not structured well – not legitimate). The legitimacy of his attempt, at least from the perspective of his readers, would have been undisputed. This is due to the fact he has bracketed the idea in between ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι and λέγει κύριος. Paul’s ‘oracle’ (prophecy) so to speak, on how to deliver an ‘oracle’ is constituted and summarised by the ‘outcome’ of κύριος ‘oracle’ in 1 Corinthians 14:21. Paul’s concept, that an ‘oracle’ or prophecy, for that matter, should be well structured utterances, is emphasised in 1 Corinthians 14:23–25. In these verses he explains the impact of prophecy, understood as linguistic sound, well-structured and familiar to both believer and unbeliever. If γλῶσσα was considered to be a term referring to a ‘heavenly’ language, understood only by θεός and if Paul shared such an understanding, it is clear that he divorced or rather broadened this understanding with the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21.⁴⁸

Another ‘citational key’ at understanding the γλῶσσα issue is λέγει κύριος. According to 1 Cor 14:23–25, both the unbeliever as well as the believer will fall down and worship θεός and announce that θεός is in their midst when a prophecy is delivered (1 Cor. 14:25); whether Paul had the Hebrew deity in mind when he used the term κύριος in 1 Corinthians 14:21, remains uncertain. What seems to be probable is that Paul was influenced by his *Vorlage* which might have been dominated by the term κύριος. This is not to say that he shared the concept that the latter term was the Greek representation of the Tetragram. There appears to be a clear distinction between the term κύριος in 1 Corinthians 14:21, which refers to the one willing to speak in a foreign language, in another tongue as opposed to the term θεός, referring to the one to whom one should speak to when using γλῶσσα. The term θεός also refers to the one to whom Paul expresses gratitude for the ‘gift’ and ability to be able to speak using γλῶσσα. It is plausible though that Paul deliberately intended to be ambiguous with the deployment of λέγει κύριος. The term κύριος could have called the ‘God’ of the written law to mind, or Jesus as the κύριος, who spoke intelligibly without the desired effect (cf. Mark 6:1–6; Matt. 13:53–58; Luke 4:16–28). The point of relevance though, even though it is the priest and prophets that are speaking in a ‘foreign language’ (Isa. 28), Paul altered the text to place the emphasis on κύριος as the one speaking in such a language. This implies that those speaking in ‘tongues’ and the effect thereof, are placed on a par with κύριος and his ineffectiveness. The term κύριος could either refer to Jesus as the κύριος or the personal Hebrew deity, יהוה. Nevertheless, according to Paul κύριος speaking in ἐτερόγλωσσοις has the same effect on the listeners as any other person in the Corinthian congregation speaking in γλῶσσα.

Finally, the phrases ἐν τῷ νόμῳ (1 Cor. 14:21) and ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή (1 Cor. 14:37) not only ensures the authoritative nature of Paul’s arguments, but it also conceptually links the term κύριος in these two verses with one another. The question, however, remains does this conceptual link confirm, deny or suggest that the term κύριος refers to Jesus as the κύριος or to the Tetragram? Making a final conclusion in

48 Cf. W. Robertson, ‘Liturgical Order and Glossolalia in 1 Corinthians 14.26c–33a,’ *NTS* 32/1 (1986): 144.

this regard is extremely difficult, especially when it is evident that Paul grappled with this issue himself. It would indeed be reasonable to concur that the referent, Paul had in mind when he used the term κύριος in 1 Cor. 14:21 as well as 1 Cor. 14:37, is none other than Jesus as the χριστός and κύριος although the ambiguous character of the term κύριος remains intact.

5 CONCLUSION

To truly appreciate the manner in which Paul addressed the γλῶσσα issue, and grasp its complexity, it is imperative to consider the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21. Moreover, the term ἑτερόγλωσσος and the phrase λέγει κύριος are considered key elements for a reasonable understanding of this matter. Without the citation in 1 Corinthians 14:21, the conceptual nature and quality of the γλῶσσα issue would have offered different outcomes. The term γλῶσσα did not refer to utterances that were linguistically unsound, nor did these utterances or ‘tongues’ refer to any ‘supernatural’ occurrence within a religious context. Such utterances were not considered directed to θεός because of its supernatural character, but it is directed to θεός because it is spiritual in its essence, mystical in nature. The latter does not necessitate that γλῶσσα is to be interpreted as being ‘only’ spiritual. The term γλῶσσα refers to sounds uttered that are linguistically sound (although with a low frequency), and that were ‘more’ spiritual or mystical in nature. It should be re-iterated that with spiritual is not meant supernatural or inevitably divine, but as the phrase suggests: πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια it calls a certain mystical event into being. Furthermore, this does not mean that one cannot interpret γλῶσσα as ‘being’ divine, but it would require qualification on what is implied by the term ‘divine’.

Second, if one interprets γλῶσσα as a term designating a supernatural and uniquely divine event, the term ἑτερόγλωσσος introduced in 1 Corinthians 14:21 would forcefully reject such an interpretation. The term ἑτερόγλωσσος calls a ‘foreignness’ into mind, utterances, or an ‘oracle’ if you will, that is considered to be confusing. It refers to thoughts that are not well thought through and not well formulated. As with the term γλῶσσα, ἑτερόγλωσσος this/it does not merely possess a singular, one-dimensional meaning that of a ‘foreign’ language in the linguistic sense of the word. The term opens the possibility of anything foreign or strange. Finally, if the term ἑτερόγλωσσος did not suffice in criticising a ‘supernatural’ or ‘uniquely divine’ view of γλῶσσα, then λέγει κύριος in combination with ἑτερόγλωσσος would have been more than sufficient. Even if κύριος delivered an ‘oracle’ in a ‘foreign’ manner or used ‘foreign’ words, it would not have had the desired impact. Stated differently, if κύριος would have spoken in γλῶσσα in the spiritual sense of the word, the outcome would have been no different than those *speaking in tongues* in the Corinthian congregation. Paul’s reflection on γλῶσσα through the lens of 1 Corinthians 14:21 goes far beyond a mere reflection on unsound words uttered. Paul reflects on the effect of an ‘oracle’ through the critique on how one should not deliver an ‘oracle’. This is to ensure a positive impact if and when an attempt is made at an ‘oracle’ be it a prophecy or in γλῶσσα.

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