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Stichometric Analysis of 1 Corinthians

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1 Corinthians is characterized by fierce disputes on the one hand and, on the other, by a surprisingly balanced composition, as can be seen from the stichometric analysis. The starting point is a content-related structuring of the individual main parts down to paragraph level, followed by a look at the proportions. The result is summarized in a table at the end.

Assuming that the letter has been handed down as Paul conceived it,¹ five main parts can be distinguished. The first and the last deal with the self-understanding of the congregation: the relationship to Christ as foundation (1:10–4:21) and the belief in the resurrection as constitutive (15:1–58). The middle three deal with the behavior of the congregation: outward behavior, specifically in matters of sexual morality (5:1–7:40), eating meat sacrificed to idols (8:1–11:1), and inward behavior in congregational meetings (11:2–14:40). In scholarly commentaries these main parts are divided or summarized in varying ways. For example, the topic of fornication (5:1–6:20) is usually separated from the topic of marriage (7:1–40), although it also serves as an argument in a prominent place there (7:2). Often the questions of head covering and communion practice (11:2–34) are taken together as a separate main part, beside the question of charismata (12:1–14:40).² Conversely, some parts from 7:1 on are seen together as answers to questions from the congregation, whether up to 11:1, 14:40, 15:58, or 16:4.³ If one presumes five main parts,⁴ each dealing with a separate point of conflict, it does not matter whether they are prompted by formal questions or by information Paul received by other means. The second and fourth main parts, i.e. the questions of sexual ethics and the congregational

¹ Cf. M.M. Mitchell, “Corinthians”, *RGG⁴* 4 (2001) 1688–1694, here 1689.

² Cf. W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKK 7/1; Zurich / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1991) 90; D. Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 5; Göttingen 2010) 48; W. Klaiber, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (BotschaftNT; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2011) 98, 191.

³ Cf. F. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7, 16th ed.; Göttingen 1986) 381: to 11:1; H. Merklein, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, vol. 2 (ÖTK 7/2; Gütersloh / Würzburg 2000) 10: to 14:40; H. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 5, 11th ed.; Göttingen 1969) 6: to 15:58; C.K. Barrett, *Der 1. Brief an die Korinther* (transl. L. Richford; Darmstadt 1985) 45: to 16:4.

⁴ So also A. Lindemann, *Der Erste Korintherbrief* (HNT 9/1; Tübingen 2000) 8.

meetings, are somewhat loosely structured with their subtopics, while the other three main parts clearly concentrate on one topic each.

Already in the two-part beginning (1:1-9) a correspondence of content and size can be observed. The praescript (1:1-3) is greatly expanded in designation of sender and address in comparison to most other Pauline letters, measuring exactly 8:00 stichoi of 15 syllables each. The following proem (1:4-9), with its praise of the wealth of knowledge and gifts of grace in Corinth, has exactly 12:01 stichoi (= 12 stichoi plus 1 remaining syllable). When rounded up to 13 stichoi, as was apparently customary in the writing of literary works, we arrive at 21 stichoi for the entire beginning. The numerical sequence 8, 13, 21 is a section of the so-called Fibonacci series. Coincidence or intention? In the further analysis it will be shown that apparently also the total composition is arranged with a modulus of 21 and single parts with a partial modulus of 8 stichoi.

1. Conflict about factions: 1:10–4:21

The first main part is clearly structured by the fourfold address “brothers” (1:10; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6).⁵ In addition, the change of the image for the congregation from “God’s field” to “God’s building” (from 3:10) marks another caesura; both images are explicitly placed next to each other in 3:9. This results in a total of five sub-parts. Except for the middle section (3:1-9), they each consist of three paragraphs.

Paul begins the main part by naming his chief grievance, the factions in Corinth (1:10-31), which each refer to their founding figures: Paul, Apollos or Cephas. Paul narratively reminds them of the beginnings of the congregation, of his preaching of the cross (vv. 10-17) – immediately explained in a kind of excursus (vv. 18-25) – and of the fact that it was rather members of the lower class who tended to join the congregation (vv. 26-31).

If one understands this first main part as a speech in itself, its first part functions as an *exordium*, followed in accord with the rules of rhetoric by the *argumentatio*, here in three parts.⁶ In each case Paul refers narratively to his early days in Corinth (2:1; 3:1; 4:7) in order to then argue in principle. First (2:1-16) he returns to his preaching. He did not proclaim the mystery of the Crucified according to human wisdom (vv. 1-5) but as God’s wisdom, hidden from the world (vv. 6-9) but revealed to us by God’s Spirit (vv. 10-16). Then in the middle section (3:1-9) he defines his and Apollos’ function as servants of believers and co-workers with God. Finally (3:10–4:5) he turns to the authoritative judgment. The standard is what remains of the congregation’s edifice on the day of judgment (3:10-15). As the temple of God, they should not

⁵ The additional ἀδελφοί in 1:26 is connected to the preceding by γάρ, so does not denote a comparably large caesura.

⁶ Cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Munich 1973) § 262.

boast of any person (vv. 16-23), just as Paul knows himself placed before the judgment of the Lord (4:1-5).

The conclusion (4:6-21) is, rhetorically speaking, a *peroratio* that seeks to win over the hearers through personal appeal. Paul rebukes their arrogance (vv. 6-8) and contrasts it with his own existence, despised by the world (vv. 9-13), calling them at the end to imitate his example (vv. 14-21).

Overall a ring composition can be observed. Admonishing imperatives are found only in the first and last parts (1:10; 4:16); further, the fact that he baptized only a few corresponds to his self-understanding as father of the congregation (1:14-17; 4:15), just as the calling of the unpretentious in Corinth does to the apostle despised before the world (1:26-28; 4:9-13).

The first main part has a size of $189 = 9 \times 21$ *stichoi*. Compared to the UBS edition of the Greek New Testament, two additional paragraph breaks are set and one paragraph is transposed.⁷ Altogether there are 13 paragraphs, whose incomplete last lines were generally rounded up to full lines. In 4:5 a 16th syllable is tolerated at the end of the paragraph. Counted exactly, that is, without rounding up or down, there are 184:04 *stichoi*. Of the five parts, the fourth with $42 = 2 \times 21$ *stichoi* is directly attributable to the modulus 21.⁸ The first and last parts with together $51 + 40 = 91$ *stichoi* stand in relation to the second and third parts with together $38 + 18 = 56$ *stichoi* in the ratio 7×13 to 7×8 . This as the ratio of two adjacent Fibonacci numbers corresponds approximately to the golden ratio; together they number 7×21 *stichoi*.⁹

2. Conflict about sexual ethics: 5:1–7:40

In the second main section, the first of the two larger units is divided into two. The case of the brother who lives with his stepmother (5:1-13) is followed by the extension to conflicts between brothers in which they invoke pagan courts (6:1-20). In each case, Paul's point is that the congregation itself is responsible for the holiness of its members and peace among brethren. The second larger unit concerns marriage, and is best divided into three parts. First Paul deals fundamentally with the question of sexuality in marriage (7:1-9), then with questions of divorce (7:10-24), finally with questions of marriage (7:25-40), each differentiated in itself, which is why more than three parts are often found in the commentaries.

On the first topic (5:1-13) Paul first abruptly calls for the excommunication of the person in question (vv. 1-5), then justifies this with the sharp contrast of old yeast and unleavened new dough (vv. 6-8), and finally lays upon the

⁷ New paragraphs before 2:10; 3:16; 4:9; no paragraph before 3:18.

⁸ Exact numbers of the three paragraphs: $13:12 + 15:09 + 12:01 = 41:07$ *stichoi*.

⁹ Exact numbers: $(18:06 + 17:09 + 13:09) + (9:03 + 12:10 + 16:08) = 49:09 + 38:06 = 88:00$ and $(9:11 + 10:13 + 16:12) + 17:06 = 37:06 + 17:06 = 54:12$ *stichoi*, respectively; sum of main section: 184:04 *stichoi*.

congregation a general responsibility toward profligate members (vv. 9-13). In the second theme (6:1-20) he also starts from the concrete occasion of a legal dispute between brothers and highlights the congregation's judicial competence (vv. 1-8). This is followed by the principle that the unrighteous and the profligate will not inherit the kingdom of God (vv. 9-11), indeed that fornication and belonging to Christ contradict each other (vv. 12-20). The question of the legal dispute is thus woven back into the overarching sexual ethical theme.

In discussing marriage issues the first paragraph, on sex in marriage (7:1-9), is concentrically framed by the principle that marriage is better than fornication (vv. 1-2.8-9). On divorce (7:10-24) Paul first invokes a Jesus word rejecting divorce, thinking of marriage among Christians (vv. 10-11). This is followed by a deliberative statement on intermarriage with unbelieving partners (vv. 12-16) and finally the basic instruction, extended to circumcision and slavery, to remain as one was called (vv. 17-24). In the final part (7:25-40) Paul counsels the unmarried against marriage in view of the afflictions Christians face and calls in any case for freedom from worldly ties (vv. 25-31). He suggests that concern for one's spouse may interfere with one's relationship with the Lord, without therefore prescribing celibacy (vv. 32-35). At the end he deals (presumably) with the special case of a spiritual betrothal¹⁰ and the remarriage of widows (vv. 36-40). The last part also seems to be built concentrically: Paul explicates his own "opinion" (vv. 25, 40) concerning "virgins" (vv. 25-28, 36-38); the paragraph on worrying is thus central (vv. 32-35).

The second main part has a total of $176 = 22 \times 8$ *stichoi* and can thus be traced back to the partial modulus with 8 *stichoi*. In our reconstruction, it also consists of 13 paragraphs of which one has been moved, four newly inserted, and one deleted compared to the UBS edition.¹¹ The two times three paragraphs of the first two parts, with $32 = 4 \times 8$ and $48 = 6 \times 8$ *stichoi*, stand to each other in the ratio 2:3. The other three parts (the last two with three paragraphs each) have together $20 + 34 + 42 = 96$ *stichoi*; to these the first two stand in the ratio of $80:96 = 5:6$.¹² It is also remarkable that first and fourth part number together $32 + 34 = 66$ or 22×3 *stichoi*, the three others together $48 + 20 + 42 = 110$ or 22×5 , which results in a ratio of Fibonacci numbers.

3. Conflict about meat sacrificed to idols: 8:1–11:1

The third main part begins with the topic "meat sacrificed to idols", to which Paul basically contrasts "knowledge" and "love" (8:1-3). This has the character of a programmatic heading over the chapters following and insofar *exordium*

¹⁰ Cf. Klaiber, *ICor*, 120.

¹¹ New paragraph before 5:6; 6:9; 7:10, 12, 32; no paragraph before 7:8, 39.

¹² Exact numbers: $(12:11 + 7:03 + 10:13) + (17:00 + 9:08 + 20:13) = 30:12 + 47:06 = 78:03$ and $19:06 + (4:05 + 13:09 + 15:00) + (15:14 + 10:09 + 14:11) = 19:06 + 32:14 + 41:04 = 93:09$, respectively; together 171:12 *stichoi*.

character. In the four parts that follow the first specifies the theme: it is about “eating meat sacrificed to idols” (8:4-13). But only the last one (10:23–11:1) gives instructions on this in imperative form.¹³ Therefore the three parts before it, including Paul’s positive example (9:1-27) and the negative example of the “fathers” in the Exodus (10:1-22), can be understood as *argumentatio*, as in the first main part, and the last part as *peroratio*.¹⁴

The part about eating (8:4-13) consists of three paragraphs. It begins with the insight that there are no gods except the one God and the one Lord (vv. 4-6). The problem is church members who do not yet have this insight (vv. 7-8). Therefore, Paul recommends that all rather abstain from eating so as not to unsettle the weak brother in his faith (vv. 9-13). The part in which Paul presents himself as an example (9:1-27) has five paragraphs. In the introduction, he calls what follows his apologia (vv. 1-3). On the one hand, as an apostle he would have the right to be alimented by the congregation (vv. 4-12a). On the other hand, he voluntarily renounces it because of his understanding of the gospel (vv. 12b-18). For he has made himself a slave to all in order to win as many as possible for the faith (vv. 19-23). This leads to the call to likewise voluntarily renunciation in view of the goal (vv. 24-27). The following part, the example of the fathers (10:1-22), also seems to have five parts. It begins with an allegorical interpretation of the Exodus story as pointing to Christ (vv. 1-5). Its individual features are meant to warn us against becoming idolaters (vv. 6-11); from this follows the admonition to stand firm in temptation (vv. 12-13). The call to flee idolatry is grounded in the fact that the cup and bread of the Lord’s Supper establish fellowship with Christ (vv. 14-18) and that this excludes fellowship with demons (vv. 19-22).

The emphatic conclusion (10:23–11:1) is a paragraph in itself. It gives differentiated answers to questions about eating meat, framed by statements that tie the freedom of Christians to what serves the other (vv. 23-24) and that are committed to Paul’s example so as to avoid offense (10:32–11:1). The keyword “seek” (vv. 24, 33) shows that the paragraph forms a ring composition. This is also true of the whole main section with the key words “love builds up” and “not everything builds up” in the opening and closing parts (8:1; 10:23), thus counterbalancing those who insist on their knowledge and freedom. Likewise the second and fourth parts where the existence of idols is denied, correspond (8:4-5; 10:19).

The third main part has a total of 168 *stichoi* in 15 paragraphs, which resolve as the product of two Fibonacci numbers, as 8×21 .¹⁵ Of these, the middle and

¹³ In 10:23–11:1 a total of seven imperatives concerning eating or acting, but in 8:4-13 only one imperative (βλέπετε 8:9), which aims at an insight, not an act.

¹⁴ Cf. Schrage, *IKor* (EKK 7/2, Solothurn / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995), 214–215: Rhetorical categories for structuring already since Heinrici (KEK, ⁸1896), but in different delimitation and naming.

¹⁵ New paragraph compared to UBS before 8:4, 9; 9:4; 10:6, 12, 19; no paragraph before 9:3.

last parts together have $66 + 22 = 88$ *stichoi* or 11×8 , if one allows a small text-critical change,¹⁶ and the other parts together have $5 + 27 + 48 = 80$ *stichoi* or 10×8 .¹⁷ The opening and closing parts together are as large as the second part: $5 + 22 = 27$ *stichoi*.

4. Conflicts about congregational gatherings: 11:2–14:40

Various individual issues are summarized under this heading. This begins with the head covering of women (11:2-16) followed by the celebration of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34). It concerns the meaning of charismata (12:1-31a) and love (12:31b–13:13), then finally gives details about speaking in tongues (14,1-40).

The first theme (11:2-16) is dealt with in three paragraphs: The principle that the man is superior to the woman (vv. 2-3) is followed by application to the problem of head coverings (vv. 4-12), and finally by an appeal to customs in Paul's congregations (vv. 13-16). On the subject of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34) the focus is on the words of institution (vv. 23-26), framed by Paul's criticism of the unworthy way they gather for the meal in Corinth (vv. 20-22, 27-32). At the beginning he criticizes how this reveals the divisions in the congregation (vv. 17-19). At the end, after a new address, he recommends a common celebration, which should not serve to satisfy the hunger of individuals (vv. 33-34).

On the subject of charismata (12:1-31a) there are five paragraphs. First, Paul identifies confessing Jesus as Lord as the criterion by which descent from the Holy Spirit is to be recognized (vv. 1-3). Then he lists the manifold gifts that are due to the one Spirit (vv. 4-11). To illustrate unity, he uses the image of the body with many members (vv. 12-21), which he interprets in terms of mutual appreciation and sympathy (vv. 22-26). Finally, he lists the various ministries given to each one (vv. 27-31a). Then to these he contrasts love as the superior way, first by comparing it with other spiritual gifts, worthless without love (12:31b–13:3), then by describing what love does (13:4-7); finally, it is superior because, unlike other charismata, it never ceases (vv. 8-13).

The final part on speaking in tongues (14:1-40) again consists of five paragraphs, each marked by the salutation ἀδελφοί (vv. 6, 20, 26, 39). Paul's starting point is the thesis that prophetic speech is preferable to speaking in tongues (vv. 1-5). The next two parts serve to justify this, first (vv. 6-19) with regard to the congregation, which is edified by prophetic speech, then (vv. 20-25) with regard to unbelievers, who can come to faith only through intelligible

¹⁶ In 9:7, ἦ is erased with B C² D F G latt against \mathfrak{P}^{46} & A C* 33, thus paragraph 9:4-12a has exactly 18:00 *stichoi*; in the series τίς ... τίς ... τίς the rounding ἦ is inserted rather than omitted at the 3rd member.

¹⁷ Exact numbers: $(6:07 + 18:00 + 19:02 + 11:05 + 9:00) + 22:00 = 63:14 + 22:00 = 85:14$ and $4:11 + (7:09 + 5:14 + 12:01) + (9:12 + 13:10 + 5:00 + 9:10 + 8:01) = 4:11 + 25:09 + 46:03 = 76:08$ *stichoi*, respectively; sum of the main part: 162:07.

speech. In the fourth paragraph (vv. 26-38) Paul gives detailed instructions on order in the congregational gatherings, on speaking in tongues, on prophetic speech, and on women speaking, then affirming in a last small paragraph (vv. 39-40) the right of both kinds of speech: “Be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.”

Hotly disputed is whether in the sub-paragraph on women (14:33b-36) the core belongs to the original Pauline letter or was interpolated later. The issue is the content: that “women should be silent in the churches”. The textual tradition is also ambivalent: major witnesses of the so-called Western text place vv. 34-35 (without v.33b) at the end of the chapter.¹⁸ In more recent commentaries it is usually assumed that a later marginal gloss, formulated after 1 Tim 2:11-12, has come secondarily into the text, once after v.33, once after v.40. Problematic, however, is the assignment of v.33b: “As in all the churches of the saints” does not fit well with God, who is not a “God of disorder but of peace”, overall and not only among the saints (v.33a), and furthermore v.36 contains two complete sentences with rhetorical questions for which the comparison with other congregations makes little sense.¹⁹ In any case, v. 34 follows very well upon by v.33b. But the way out, also in regard to v.33b as interpolated (and possibly even v.36), has no support in the textual tradition and burdens the interpolation hypothesis with another hypothesis.²⁰

Also the text, which is handed down in by far most text witnesses, makes good sense in the context. One must differentiate between “speaking in the congregation”, which women are not allowed to do according to 14:34, and “praying and speaking prophetically”, which is assumed to be unproblematic for women in 11:5. Commentators who hold to the traditional text like to understand the former as “asking in between” or “speaking out of turn”, at least not as “women speaking in the Spirit”.²¹ But in the context of 14:26-40 it is explicitly about orderly speaking, concerning tongues (vv. 27-28) as well as prophetic speaking (vv. 29-33a). When the congregation gathers there is to be a list of speakers, for two to three persons, one after the other. Paul wants to exclude women from this, unlike the Corinthians, whom he sharply rebukes for this (v.36).²² In 11:5 it would then be informal praying and speaking, before,

¹⁸ Codices D F G and part of the Old Latin text tradition.

¹⁹ Different, but not comprehensible: Schrage, *IKor* (EKK 7/3, Zürich / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999) 483.

²⁰ Cf. Klaiber, *IKor*, 233: cautiously agreeing with the interpolation hypothesis, but “the only difficult thing is where 33b originally belonged.”

²¹ C. Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Zweiter Teil* (ThHK 7/2; Berlin 1982) 142–143 with note 384 (corresponding evidence in other exegetes).

²² Differently, e.g., Lang, *1-2Kor*, 199: the (interpolated) text expresses “ein uneingeschränktes Rede- und Gebetsverbot für Frauen im Gottesdienst” that concerns “das Reden generell”.

after or between the speeches to which the men are called by the leader of the assembly.²³

If we leave the women's passage in the letter, the beginning and the end of the fourth main part refer to each other, both with regard to the topic of women in worship and with regard to the reasoning – so also here a ring composition. First Paul argues using the creation story, probably Gen 3:16 (11:3, 7-9),²⁴ and to this the remark “as also the law says” (14:34), presumably refers back, which would explain the lack of a scriptural reference as scriptural proof in this single passage.²⁵ Next he appeals to the sense of propriety, to what is considered *πρέπον* or *αἰσχρόν*, “seemly” or “shameful” (11:13; 14:35), moreover to custom in the congregations (11:16; 14:33b). In both places he ultimately plays up his apostolic authority: “we” do it this way, and “it is the Lord's commandment what I write to you” (11:16; 14:37). Whether this reasoning convinced the women in Corinth? In the meantime, at any rate, the custom has become a different one, both in the head covering and in the right of women to speak in worship.

The two disputed verses have 6:02 *stichoi* after all, which is why the discussion on this directly serves the stichometric analysis. With vv. 34-35 the fourth main part has $256 = 32 \times 8$ (or $16 \times 16!$) *stichoi*, 251:02 with exact counting. This assumes 19 paragraphs,²⁶ and also tolerates a 16th syllable three times in the last line,²⁷ and a text-critical shortening of 1 syllable twice.²⁸ It is noteworthy that the first part has a length of 32 *stichoi*, the third of 64, so one-eighth and one-fourth of the whole main part,²⁹ together $96 = 12 \times 8$ *stichoi*. The second and fourth parts add up to $42 + 30 = 72$ or 9×8 *stichoi*,³⁰ together with the $88 = 11 \times 8$

²³ Cf. from the older interpretation – according to Schrage, *IKor*, 3/501 and 3/496 – for example, Thomas Aquinas: In the *manifestatio* of their prophecy “(komme) den Frauen nur die *privata* und nicht die *publica annuntiatio* zu”; N.L. von Zinzendorf: “Nur von dem ordentlichen und allgemeinen Lehren ist hier die Rede, wann die ganze Gemeinde beysammen” [in contrast to 11:5].

²⁴ Although the term “head” is missing in Gen 3:16, the man is clearly superior: “He shall be your lord” (LXX: κυριεύσει).

²⁵ Not so, e.g., Schrage, *IKor*, 3/484: “a citation formula completely singular in Paul.”

²⁶ New paragraph vs. UBS before 11:4, 13; 11:20, 33; 12:22; 14:39; no paragraph before 11:23, 27 (otherwise 43 instead of 42 *stichoi* for 11:17-34); 14:33b, 37.

²⁷ In 11:16; 13:13; 14:25 (on which see the following note).

²⁸ In 12,26 [ἐν] is erased with \mathfrak{P}^{46} \aleph^* A B and Nestle²⁵ (with Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, Weiß!) against \aleph^2 C D F G etc; thus the paragraph 12:22-26 has exactly 12:00 *stichoi*. – In 14:25 ὁ before θεός is erased with \aleph^* D* F G etc against \aleph^2 A B D¹ etc (in the quotation probably aligned with Isa 45:14 LXX); 14:20-25 thereby 17:01 (= 17 *stichoi*!).

²⁹ Exact numbers: $5:00 + 18:04 + 8:01 = 31:05$ and $6:10 + 14:12 + 19:09 + 12:00 + 9:12 = 62:13$ *stichoi*.

³⁰ Exact numbers: $6:00 + 31:05 + 3:11 = 41:01$ and $9:13 + 6:09 + 13:01 = 29:08$ *stichoi*.

stichoi of the last part³¹ make $160 = 20 \times 8$. The ratio of $12 \times 8 / 20 \times 8$ is 3:5, which is a Fibonacci ratio. Likewise, without the last part, the ratio between the middle part and the other three parts is $64 : 104 = 8:13$.

5. Conflict about resurrection: 15:1-58

The fifth main part is the shortest and also consists of five parts. From a rhetorical point of view, it is structured similarly to the first: a *narratio* is followed by three parts of *argumentatio*, and the last part can be called a *peroratio*. However, the controversial issue was introduced immediately in the first main part (1:10) and here only at the beginning of the second part (15:12).

First (15:1-11), Paul narratively recalls the gospel formula he preached, which contains the Christ story, and includes himself among the resurrection witnesses. He then (15:12-28) argues against the deniers of the resurrection of the dead in three steps: first polemically, by leading the denial of the general resurrection ad absurdum on the basis of the confession of Christ's resurrection (vv. 12-19), then positively, by defining Christ's resurrection as the beginning of the future resurrection of the dead (vv. 20-24), resulting in an intermediate realm of Christ's kingdom, which in the end, derived from Ps 110:1, aims at the kingdom of God (vv. 25-28). The following part (15:29-34) brings further arguments for this – vicarious baptism in Corinth and the apostle's defying death – which produce a strong rebuke. The fourth part (15:35-49) answers the question of the nature of the resurrection body, first by examples of different kinds of corporeality in nature (vv. 35-41), then by defining it as a "spiritual body" (vv. 42-45), and finally by contrasting earthly and heavenly existence (vv. 46-49). The last part (15:50-58) forms the emotional conclusion with prospect of the future imperishability in the Kingdom of God, combined with the triumph over death and the conciliatory admonition to be "always excelling in the work of the Lord" – whereby the certainty of working "not in vain" concentrically refers back to Paul's experience (v. 10).

The fifth main part then measures $126 = 6 \times 21$ *stichoi* (exactly 121:06) in 9 paragraphs.³² The first part measures $24 = 6 \times 4$ *stichoi*, half the size of the next two together: $35 + 13 = 48$ or 6×8 *stichoi*.³³ The last two parts number $32 + 22 = 54$ or 6×9 *stichoi*.³⁴ The ratio of the second and third parts to the remaining three is thus $6 \times 8 / 6 \times 13$ – again a Fibonacci ratio.

³¹ Exact numbers: 11:03 + 30:07 + 17:01 24:14 + 2:10 = 86:05 *stichoi*.

³² New paragraphs compared to UBS: before 15:25, 46.

³³ Exact numbers: 23:07 and 33:12 + 12:04 = 46:01 *stichoi*.

³⁴ Exact numbers: 30:01 + 21:12 = 51:13 *stichoi*.

6. Epistle conclusion: 16:1-24

The conclusion of 1 Corinthians is much shorter than that of Romans, but more extensive than in the other Pauline epistles. It consists of three parts: instructions on Paul's collection for Jerusalem (16:1-4), communications concerning Paul and his co-workers, especially their travel plans (16:5-18), and greetings (16:19-24). The middle section is divided into five paragraphs, four of them on Paul (vv. 5-9), Timothy (vv. 10-11), Apollos (v. 12), and Stephanas (vv. 15-18), interspersed with a call to faith and love (vv. 13-14). There are seven paragraphs in all.³⁵ First and last parts number 10 and 9 *stichoi*,³⁶ the middle one sums up the paragraphs with $10 + 6 + 4 + 2 + 10 = 32$ *stichoi*.³⁷ The sum is then $51 = 6 \times 8 + 1 \times 3$ *stichoi*. In the formal structure, the three small paragraphs are in the middle, surrounded by two each of the larger ones.

7. Stichometry of 1 Corinthians: Summary

For the letter's beginning, main parts and conclusion, the total stichometry is: $21 + (189 + 176 + 168 + 256 + 126) + 51 = 987$ *stichoi*, which can be resolved as 47×21 . The exact number is 959:03 *stichoi*. Now it is interesting that the total number remains just below 1000; 48×21 would already result in 1008. In contrast, Romans, analyzed on the basis of an appropriate content outline, has a total (without 16:25-27, of course) of $30 \times 34 = 1020$ *stichoi*.³⁸ Thus the total number remains just above 1000; 29×34 would be 986 *stichoi*. So both letters have a size of about 1000 *stichoi*, but the somewhat longer letter to the Romans is disposed with a modulus of 34 *stichoi*, the somewhat smaller 1 Corinthians with the modulus of 21 *stichoi*.

For the writings of the New Testament this is apparently not an accidental result. The seven writings with more than 1000 *stichoi* – in addition the four gospels, Acts and Revelation – are all to be structured with a modulus of 34 *stichoi*, while the writings from $252 = 12 \times 21$ to 1000 *stichoi* seem to consistently use the modulus of 21 *stichoi*. Whether this observation inductively gained from the texts can also be verified in non-biblical classical writings would have to be clarified in corresponding analyses.

As for the disposition of the individual main parts, the author has worked with two different moduli. First, third and fifth main parts are directly attributable to the modulus 21, which is obviously set at the letter's beginning. The partial sum is $189 + 168 + 126 = 483$ *stichoi* or $9 \times 21 + 8 \times 21 + 6 \times 21 = 23 \times 21$. This concerns the three main parts, which also belong together in that they each treat

³⁵ Compared with UBS, no paragraph before 16:21.

³⁶ Exact numbers: 9:10 and 8:11 *stichoi*.

³⁷ Exact numbers: $9:04 + 5:02 + 3:11 + 2:00 + 9:07 = 29:09$ *stichoi*.

³⁸ Cf. F.G. Lang, "Adam – Where to Put You? The Place of Romans 5 in the Letter's Composition". In: M.C.A. Korpel, P. Sanders (eds.), *Textual Boundaries in the Bible* (Pericope 9, Leuven 2017) 189–218, here 208.

a single topic and each, as we have seen, in the form of a rhetorically designed treatise. The other two main parts, each having several subthemes, stand together with the epistolary conclusion for the modulus 8. They add up to a partial sum which – this is surprising – is exactly the same size as that of the other main parts: $176 + 256 + 51 = 483$ *stichoi* or $22 \times 8 + 32 \times 8 + (6 \times 8 + 1 \times 3) = 60 \times 8 + 1 \times 3$ or 23×21 .³⁹ Both partial sums add up to $2 \times 23 \times 21 = 46 \times 21$, together with the beginning 47×21 *stichoi*. Given the care with which the disposition is carried out this does not seem to be a coincidence. Incidentally, the stichometric result also confirms the demarcation of the second and fourth main part that we made in the content analysis.

Furthermore, the proportions shown prove that the Fibonacci sequence was used. Apart from the two part sums, which prove the ratio 1:1, the ratio 2:3 is found between the fifth and first main part ($6 \times 21 / 9 \times 21$ *stichoi*), the ratio 3:5 in the second main part between the sum of parts 1 + 4 and the remaining parts, and also in the fourth main part, between the sum of parts 1 + 3 and the remaining parts. The ratio 8:13 we have documented in the first main part between the sums of parts 2 + 3 and parts 1 + 5, in the fourth main part between part 3 and the sum of parts 1 + 2 + 4, and in the fifth main part between the sums of parts 2 + 3 and the remaining parts. The two modulus numbers 8 and 21 also come from this sequence.

Such sometimes intricate proportions can only result from a very thorough preparation of the manuscript. In rhetoric, a separate methodological step is provided for this, the *dispositio*, which is to be distinguished factually from the collection of material, the *inventio*; however, the two work phases are temporally “nicht um ein klar getrenntes Nacheinander” (not a clearly separated succession).⁴⁰ Therefore, it is hardly likely that Paul dictated the letter freely. In that case, the exact proportions shown would be impossible to realize. Rather, he might have worked out the manuscript in writing, probably supported by the co-author Sosthenes mentioned in verse 1:1.

³⁹ The exact numbers are also very close: 468:02 and 471:00 *stichoi*, respectively.

⁴⁰ Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 444.

Appendix: Outline of 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians		<i>sti- choi</i>
Chapter	Parts Content	
1:1-9	0. Epistle beginning	21
1:1-3	0.1 Praescript: Greeting to the Corinthians and to all Christians	8
1:4-9	0.2 <i>Prooemium</i> : Thanking God for the gifts of grace in Corinth	13
1:10–4:21	1. Conflict about factions: Warning against arrogance	189
1:10-31	1.1 <i>Exordium</i> : Conflicts in Corinth as questioning the Word of the Cross	51
2:1-16	1.2 <i>Argumentatio</i> I: Word of the Cross – conceivable only through God’s Spirit	38
3:1-9	1.3 <i>Argumentatio</i> II: Paul and Apollos – nothing but co-workers of God	18
3:10–4:5	1.4 <i>Argumentatio</i> III: Judgment on Paul – ultimately by God’s judgment	42
4:6-21	1.5 <i>Peroratio</i> : Appeal against puffed-up arrogance	40
5:1–7:40	2. Conflict about sexual ethics: Warning against fornication	176
5:1-13	2.1 Problem: Church member with sexual relationship with stepmother	32
6:1-20	2.2 General problem: Relationship of Christians to unbelievers	48
7:1-9	2.3 Marriage: Principle of avoiding fornication	20
7:10-24	2.4 Divorce issue: If possible, remain as before	34
7:25-40	2.5 Marriage: Yes to marriage, but preference for being single	42
8:1–11:1	3. Conflict about meat sacrificed to idols: Admonition to be considerate	168
8:1-3	3.1 Topic of sacrificed meat: Conflict between knowledge and love	5
8:4-13	3.2 <i>Argumentatio</i> : Freedom of the strong as disturbing for the weak	27
9:1-27	3.3 Example of the apostle: Voluntary renunciation of freedom	66
10:1-22	3.4 Example of the fathers: Warning against idolatry as in Israel’s desert time	48
10:23–11:1	3.5 <i>Peroratio</i> : Principle of freedom, differentiated advice on eating	22
11:2–14:40	4. Conflict about congregation gatherings: Call to order and love	256
11:2-16	4.1 Topic head covering: Recommendation for women in worship	32
11:17-34	4.2 Topic Lord’s Supper: Rebuke of a celebration without fellowship	42
12:1-31a	4.3 Topic Spiritual gifts/charismata: Diversity of gifts – unity in the Spirit	64
12:31b–13:13	4.4 Topic love: Praise of the charism surpassing all others	30
14:1-40	4.5 Topic speaking in tongues: Relationship to prophetic speech	88
15:1-58	5. Conflict about resurrection: Reminder of Christ’s victory	126
15:1-11	5.1 <i>Narratio</i> : Paul and the gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection	24
15:12-28	5.2 <i>Argumentatio</i> I: Christians’ hope for the resurrection of the dead	35
15:29-34	5.3 <i>Argumentatio</i> II: Vicarious baptism, Paul’s courage in face of death	13
15:35-49	5.4 <i>Argumentatio</i> III: Nature of the resurrection body as a spiritual body	32
15:50-58	5.5 <i>Peroratio</i> : Future imperishability, triumph over death, admonition	22
16:1-24	6. Epistle conclusion	51
16:1-4	6.1 Instructions: Realization of the collection for Jerusalem	10
16:5-18	6.2 Information: Travels of Paul and his co-workers	32
16:19-24	6.3 Greetings: From the congregations in Asia, handwritten by Paul	9
1:1–16:24	0.–6. 1 Corinthians: Paul’s responses to conflicts in Corinth	987