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TRANSFORMATION NECESSARY TO INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 COR 15:50-57

1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 15 of the First Pauline Letter to the Corinthians certainly belongs to the most commented passages of the Scripture. We are finding ourselves in the midst of the elaborated and skillfully carried rhetorical argumentation which has as its subject a fundamental for the Christian faith, yet questioned by the Corinthians, issue of resurrection. While the scholars dedicated a lot of effort to examine thoroughly the passage of 1 Cor 15:1-49, one cannot avoid an impression that the concluding verses 50-57 have been neglected for many years of research[1]. Moreover, the profile of the analyses focused on the socio-historical background of the Corinthian controversy resulted in the meaning and development of the Pauline thought in 1 Cor 15:50-57 remaining still unearthed. Here are some of the questions still waiting to be answered:

1) Why does Paul, after having argued for a long time for ill-suitability of the dead for the realm of resurrection and having arrived to some solution in 1 Cor 15:49, turn again to the same problem articulated even in a sharper, more uncompromising way in v.50?

2) Why does the Apostle introduce in v.56 the topic of sin and law that seems to be extraneous to the argumentation in vv.50-57 and to the 1 Corinthians in general?

3) And finally, how is the idea of the victory over death linked to the preceding topic of transformation and why does Paul finish the whole chapter on to the resurrection with such an image?

In our opinion applying a rhetorico-literary approach to 1 Cor 15:50-57 may help us in answering the above questions and open the way for a new understanding of the analyzed passage[2].

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[1] Among recent publications focused on 1 Cor 15:50-57, see J.R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15: A Study of Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Resurrection* [HUT 42], Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000; M.C. DE BOER, *The Defeat of Death*: *Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* [JSNTSup 22], Sheffield: Academic Press, 1988; J.-B. MATAND BULEMBAT, *Noyau et enjeux de l'eschatologie paulinienne*: *De l'apocalyptique juive et de l'eschatologie hellénistique dans quelques argumentations de l'apôtre Paul: Etudes rhétorico-exégétique de 1 Co 15,35-58; 2 Co 5,1-10 et Rm 8,18-30* [BZNW 84], Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1997.

[2] On rhetorical studies on 1 Cor 15, see especially M. BÜNKER, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984; M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation. An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* [HUT 28], Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991; S. M. POGOLOFF, *Logos and Sophia*: *The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* [SBL.DS], Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1992; A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*: *Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* [ConBNT 29], Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1998; B. WITHERINGTON, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995; I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*: *An analysis utilizing the theories of classical rhetoric*, Lewiston,

2. CONTEXT

2.1 DELIMITATION OF THE TEXT

Delimitation of the rhetorical unit[3] will be the first preliminary step in our analysis of 1 Cor 15:50-57. It should prove the coherence of the passage in question on the morphological, syntactical, literary and rhetorical level.

2.1.1 THE SUPERIOR LIMIT

Getting to 1 Cor 15:50, one can easily recognize the presence of a distinct subunit marked by different vocabulary, style and topic. The question that intrigues some scholars is the position of the v.50, which seems to fit both: section 51-57 and 42-49[4]. The commentators opting for the latter solution, although being in minority, present some reasonable arguments for it. Firstly, they point to a thematic similarity between v.42 and v.50, which bespeaks the concluding function of the latter one. Secondly, the *Einleitungformel* may be noticed in v.51, where the solemn formula ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω begins a new thought and breaks the series of antitheses running from v.42[5].

Following more detailed scrutiny, however, both the above-mentioned arguments could be easily undermined. The thematic inclusion argued for the vv.42 and 50 falters when we notice that the same expressions φθορά and ἀφθαρσία reappear, in a slightly different form, in vv.53.54. In addition, the chain of antitheses is not interrupted with v.50, but it continues further on, being given a new important value in the overall structure. It brings us closer to far more solid positive arguments for the unity of the vv.50-57[6].

On the morphological level, one might observe a shift from the Adam-Christ typology, dominating in 15:44b-49, to the vocabulary describing an eschatological transformation and the final victory over death. A clear *caesura* after v.49 is marked by the adversative

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NY: Mellen, 1995; J.R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*; J. MATAND BULEMBAT, *Noyau et enjeux de l'eschatologie paulinienne*.

[3] On this rhetorical operation, see G.A. KENNEDY, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Chapel Hill: University of NC Press, 1984, p. 33-38.

[4] Cf. H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians. A commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Philadelphia: Hermeneia, 1975, s. 289; W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther. 1 Kor 15,1 – 16,24* [EKKNT VII/4], Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001, p. 361-362; A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC], Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000, p. 1290; A. LINDEMANN, *Der Erste Korintherbrief* [HNT 9/1], Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000, p. 364; CH. WOLFF, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Zweiter Teil: Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16* [THKNT VII/2], Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982, p. 205.

[5] Cf. A. SAND, *Der Begriff Fleisch in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen* [BU 2], Regensburg: Pustet, 1967, p. 152; E. SCHWEIZER, «σαρξ», *TDNT* VII, p. 218-219; B.A. PEARSON, *The pneumatikos-psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians* [SBL.DS 12]; Missoula: SBL–Scholars Press, 1973, p. 15; K.E. BAILEY, «The Structure of 1 Corinthians and Paul's Theological Method with Special Reference to 4:17», *NovT* 25:1983, p. 156; G. SELLIN, *Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986, p. 74; M.J. HARRIS, *Raised immortal. Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament*, London–Grand Rapids: Marshall, Morgan and Scott/Eerdmans, 1986², p. 115.

[6] Even if the commentators pay some attention to the particular role of v.50, the fact that it belongs to the vv.50-57 is often taken for granted. More substantial treatment of the question can be found in M. TEANI, *Corporeità e risurrezione: L'interpretazione di 1 Corinti 15,35-49 nel Novecento* [Aloisiana 24], Roma: Gregorian University, 1994, p. 61-66; W. STENGER, «Beobachtungen zur Argumentationsstruktur von 1 Kor 15», *LB* 45:1979, p. 100f.

δέ[7] accompanied by the vocative ἀδελφοί, and by a shift from the 3rd p. singular to the 2nd and 3rd p. plural in verbal forms. Another important confirmation of the introductory character of v.50 comes from a chiastic structure A B A' formed in vv.50-53, in which v.50 (A) corresponds to v.53 (A'). Finally, passing to the rhetorical level, τοῦτο δέ φημι, similarly as in 1 Cor 7:21, marks a new unit in which the familiar antithesis φθορά / ἀφθαρσία will be remodeled into a problem concerning inheriting the kingdom of God. Even if one can agree for a transitional role of v.50[8], it is obvious that it begins a new section.

2.1.2 THE INFERIOR LIMIT

The inferior limit of the section in question is also easy to recognize. Verse 58 picks up some expressions from the preceding unit, like the appellatives ἀδελφοί (vv.50.58) and κύριος (vv. 57.58), but its vocabulary turns from apocalyptic imagery to the description of moral behavior in general. The verbal mood that gives the tone to the new unit is imperative (γίνεσθε) accompanied by the circumstantial participles. Finally, the thematic inclusion can be found between the "vanity" (κενός) of the labor in the Lord (v.58) and the faith in vain (εἰκῇ, vv.1-2) which tie the entire chapter together[9]. From the rhetorical point of view one can also easily recognize the *paraenetic* character of v. 58, introduced by the particle ὥστε[10]. Taking into account its general closing tenor and the correspondences with the beginning of the chapter, one can define it as a short *peroratio* to the entire chapter 15[11]. It proves that the verse does not belong to the argumentative subunit of vv. 50-57, thus marking its inferior limit.

2.2 COR 15:50-57 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LETTER

In the framework of 1 Cor 15, the section vv.50-57 falls within the major part vv.35-58 of Paul's resurrection chapter[12]. Beginning from the v.35, the theme of resurrection, dominating in vv.12-34, is being developed from a diverse perspective. The attention focused so far on the *facticity* of the resurrection, now shifts toward its *modality* to respond the question "How are the dead raised?" (v.35a) [13]. One can easily recognize the

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[7] Cf. D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15», in: *Rhetoric and the New Testament. Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, eds. S.E. Porter, T.H. Olbricht, [JSNTSup 90], Sheffield: Academic Press, 1993, p. 247, n.53.

[8] The transitional role of v.50 is emphasized by: PEARSON, *The Pneumatikos-psychikos Terminology,* p. 15; E.-B. ALLO, *Saint Paul: Première épître aux Corinthiens* [EB], Paris: Gabalda, 1934, p. 426; A.T. ROBERTSON, A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* [ICC], Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1911, p. 375; F. LANG, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* [NTD 7]; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994², p. 238.

[9] Cf. A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 808.

[10] Cf. K. MÜLLER, «Die Lieblichkeit des Heils. 1 Kor 15,35-58», in: *Résurrection du Christ et des chrétiens (1 Co 15)*, ed. L. DE LORENZI, Roma: Abbaye de S. Paul, 1985, p. 242 ; CH. WOLFF, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, p. 210-211. Similarly, the concluding *paraenesis* is found in 1 Cor 10:12, 11:33, 14:39, 15:32-34, and Phil 4:1.

[11] Cf. G. BARBAGLIO, *La prima lettera ai Corinzi. Introduzione, versione, commento* [SOCr 7], Bologna: EDB, 1996, p. 793; LINDEMANN, *Der Erste Korintherbrief*, p. 371-372.

[12] There is a widespread agreement among the exegetes concerning the *caesura* between v.34 and v.35. Cf. M. BÜNKER, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition*, p. 60; TEANI, *Corporeità e risurrezione*, p. 57.

[13] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 59; K. USAMI, «How Are the Dead Raised?», *Bib* 57:1976, p. 473.

change in style that begins to resemble the Cynic-Stoic diatribe[14]. The series of syntactic, stylistic and semantic features clearly mark two coherent unities: vv.12-34 and vv. 35-58. The last one constitutes a direct context in which vv.50-57 shall be examined.

3. COMPOSITION

In the opinion of most scholars 1 Cor 15:50-57 belongs to the body of the letter and constitutes a part of the argumentative *dispositio* of chapter 15. Now, three overlapping models can be found in the multifarious structure of the letter: oral (*concentric*, *chiastic*, or *alternate*), epistolary (*letter opening*, *letter body*, and *letter closing*) and discursive (rhetorical *dispositio* with the *exordium, thesis, probatio and peroratio*). Each of them employs its own formal devices which are helpful to disclose the Pauline argumentation. Although the three models can be contemporaneously present in the letter, the question to be answered is which of them prevails and thus explains the best way the flow of Pauline thought. Since in our opinion the epistolary model does not play a great role in 1Cor 15, we will rather focus on oral and discursive features present in 1 Cor 15:50-57.

3.1 ORAL MODELS

One of the exegetes who constantly stressed in his commentaries the importance of rhetorical features present in the Pauline epistles was a German scholar Johannes Weiss. In his opinion, the letters of Paul, designed to be read in public, must be approached as a spoken material with a lively style embodying its own symmetry and rhythm[15]. His claim was further substantiated in the works of Lund[16] and Welch[17] who individuated more examples of oral patterning in 1 Corinthians than in any other book of the New Testament. Welch proposed even an outline of the letter in which the oral patterning plays a key role[18]:

> A. Introduction 1:1-9
>   B. Divisions in the church regarding leadership 1:10-2:5
>   C. Man is led by the Spirit of God 2:6-4:21
>   D. Sexual problems within the Church 5:1-7:40
>   D'. Idolatry within the Church 8:1-11:34
>   C'. Man is led by the Spirit 12:1-14:40
>   B'. Divisions in the church regarding Resurrection 15:1-58
> A'. Conclusion 16:1-24

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[14] Cf. R. PENNA, «Cristologia adamica e ottimismo antropologico in 1 Cor 15:45-49», in: *L'uomo nella Bibbia e nelle culture ad essa contemporanee. Atti del Simposio per XXV del A.B.I.*, ed. L. Alfonsi, Brescia: Paideia, 1975, p. 100.

[15] Cf. A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 46.

[16] Cf. N.W. LUND, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*: *a study in Formgeschichte*, Chapel Hill: University of NC Press, 1942, on 1 Corinthians p. 145-196. Unfortunately none of these pages is dedicated to the chapter 15.

[17] Cf. J.W. WELCH, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*: *Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981.

[18] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 216-217. Each of the major sections is further concentrically structured according to the aba' pattern. The only exception is part B with a sequence abcdc'b'a' and chapters 15 and 16 where no internal oral model is indicated.

A similar overall concentric arrangement was also tempted by Segalla[19], who bound together 1:10-17 and 15:1-58 (b-b') on the thematic basis of kerygma and baptism. Evaluating briefly the above-mentioned proposals, one must conclude that the thematic correspondences concerning chapter 15 are rather far-fetched and do not respect properly semantic fields or the shifts of literary topics[20]. In fact, in our opinion the oral patterning does not satisfactory explain the overall-structure of the letter and should rather be applied to smaller sections[21].

Now, let us have a closer look at the arrangement of 1 Cor 15 with a special regard to the vv.35-57, constituting the direct context of the analyzed subunit. One of the best-known proposals concerning the above was formulated by Jeremias[22], who recognized in v.35 two questions: a) about the modality of the resurrection, and b) about the nature of the resurrection body. The former one is answered in vv.50-58, while the latter in 15:36-49, which creates a chiastic inversive model:

$$a \text{ (v.35a)}$$
$$b \text{ (v.35b)}$$
$$B' \text{ (vv.36-49)}$$
$$A' \text{ (vv.50-58)}.$$

The Jeremias' arrangement suffers the same weaknesses as the models presented before, lacking thematic and vocabulary grounding. Yet another, more satisfactory proposal concerning the composition of 1 Cor 15:35-57 was made by S. Brodeur[23]. According to him, Paul's argument takes a concentric form, in which vv.36-44a (A) and vv.50-57 (A') correspond to each other and embrace the Adam-Christ typology in its central part, vv.44b-49 (B). The arrangement proposed by Brodeur, especially the correspondences

[19] Cf. G. SEGALLA, «Struttura filologica e letteraria della prima lettera ai Corinti», in: *Testimonium Christi*: *scritti in onore di Jacques Dupont*, eds. M.G. Angelici et al., Brescia: Paideia, 1985, p. 468.

[20] In fact, the main argument of Welch is not of semantic but rather of ideological order. He claims that 1:10 –2:5 and 15:1-58 are the only portions of the letter that deal with the divisions over points of doctrine, and that 5:1 – 11:34 addresses the two issues outlined in the Jerusalem Decree which "define the central message of the Gospel as it was taken to the Gentiles". Cf. WELCH, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, p. 219. See the critic of the Welch's proposal by J. D. HARVEY, *Listening to the Text. Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*, Grand Rapids, MI–Leicester: Baker Books/Apollos, 1998, p. 176-177.

[21] According to R.F. Collins, Paul uses chiasm rather to structure some epistolary units than the entire letter: 1:10 – 3:23; 5 – 7; 8 – 10; 12 – 14. Cf. *First Corinthians* [SacPag 7], Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999, p. 14-15. See also I.H. THOMSON, *Chiasmus in Pauline Letters* [JSNTSup 111], Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995, p. 34-36. On the other hand, Aletti rightly states that the Pauline use of chiasm is dependent on his rhetoric and reflects the technique of "prise de distance". Paul, while carrying his argumentation, sometimes leaves apart the main threat to have a broader look and to define the foundations of his rationale. Cf. J.-N. ALETTI, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes. Propositions de méthode», *NTS* 38:1992, p. 399, n. 37.

[22] See J. JEREMIAS, «'Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God' (I Cor. XV.50)», *NTS* 2:1955/56, p. 151-159. See its critical evaluation by J.D. HARVEY, *Listening to the Text*, p. 192.

[23] *The Holy Spirit's Agency in the Resurrection of the Dead*: *An Exegetico-Theological Study of 1 Corinthians 15, 44b-49 and Romans 8,9-13* [Tesi Gregoriana 14], Rome: Gregorian University, 1996, p. 20-21.

between his A and A', are absolutely tenable and will constitute a point of reference for our analysis of vv.50-57.

Passing to a closer examination of section vv.50-57, we shall begin with a model proposed by Harvey. The author rightly notices the introductory character of v.50, the image of transformation permeating vv.51-52, repetitions appearing in vv.53-54 and the theme of victory unifying the part of vv.55-57. His observations result in a following scheme[24]:

15:50 σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ <u>κληρονομῆσαι</u> οὐ δύναται
οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν <u>κληρονομεῖ</u>.

15:51 ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω·
πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ <u>ἀλλαγησόμεθα</u>,
15:52 ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ <u>σάλπιγγι</u>·
<u>σαλπίσει</u> γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι
καὶ ἡμεῖς <u>ἀλλαγησόμεθα</u>.

15:53	δεῖ	γὰρ	τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο	ἐνδύσασθαι	ἀφθαρσίαν
	καὶ		τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο	ἐνδύσασθαι	ἀθανασίαν.
15:54	ὅταν δὲ		τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο	ἐνδύσηται	ἀφθαρσίαν
	καὶ		τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο	ἐνδύσηται	ἀθανασίαν,

τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος,
          Κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς <u>νῖκος</u>.
15:55   ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ <u>νῖκος</u>;
          ποῦ σου, θάνατε, <u>τὸ κέντρον</u>;
15:56   <u>τὸ δὲ κέντρον</u> τοῦ θανάτου <u>ἡ ἁμαρτία</u>,
ἡ δὲ δύναμις <u>τῆς ἁμαρτίας</u> ὁ νόμος·
15:57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν <u>τὸ νῖκος</u> διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Notwithstanding the merits of Harvey's model, its attentive examination gives rise to a number of questions. Why is a semantic link between vv.50 and 53 neglected? What is the reason for splitting in two v.54, introducing a new theme of fulfillment of the Scripture, while vv.55-57 are piled up in a chaotic and little saying cluster of repetitions? The model seems to overlook the thematic, grammatical and structural inclusion between vv.50 and 53. It also places a premature *caesura* in v.54 and binds up v.57 to a clearly distinct part of vv.55-56. More satisfactory arrangements were proposed by R. Morisette[25], J. Gillman[26] and recently by the already mentioned Brodeur[27]. Though differing in

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[24] See J.D. HARVEY, *Listening to the Text*, p. 175.

[25] Cf. «La chair et le sang ne peuvent hériter du Règne du Dieu (1Cor. XV, 50)», *ScEs* 26:1974, p. 39-68.

[26] Cf. «Transformation in 1 Corinthians 15,50-53», *ETL* 58:1982, p. 309-333.

[27] Cf. S. BRODEUR, *The Holy Spirit's Agency*, p. 21. The author proposes a chiastic arrangement ABB'A' for both units vv.50-53 and 54-57: 1. Necessary Change into Eschatological Life: A (v. 50), B (v. 51-52a), B' (v.52b), A' (v. 53); 2. Divine Victory Over Death: A (v.54), B (v.55), B' (v. 56), A' (v.57).

details, they essentially arrive at the same outline exemplified in the clearest way by Gillman[28].

The author initially follows Morisette, who delineated in 1 Cor 15:50-57 two sub-sections, i.e. vv. 50-53 and vv. 54-57, structured according to the A B A' pattern. The introducing v.50 (A) is a negative assertion that poses a problem which is in turn resolved by a positive affirmation in v.53 (A'). The correspondence between them is further confirmed by the fact that the principles contained both in A and A' are expressed in the 3rd p. singular (contrast to the 1st p. plural in 51-52) and they take up the corruptible / incorruptible opposition (vv.50b. 53a). The point at which the two scholars begin to differ is the patterning of section B containing the motif of transformation. Gillman, drawing on the shifts in person, living/dead distinction, and the apocalyptic imagery, rightly arranged it according to the chiastic pattern: *a* (v.51bc), *b* (v.52a), *b'* (v.52b), *a'* (v.52cd)[29]. At the end, the following A' (v.53) marks a progression– the transformation described in part B is now specified as putting on a robe of incorruptibility and immortality, and it comprises both the living and the dead.

Still following Gillman, the second part (vv.54-57) is strictly connected with the first one (vv.50-53) by means of repetition (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀθανασίαν) and also demonstrates the A B A' pattern. What marks a *caesura* between them is the future tense and the new topic of victory over death announced by the Scriptures in v.54 (A). In the B member we find a question (v.55) and a concise midrash giving an answer to it (v.56). Finally, in A' (v.57) the motif of victory is taken up once again but with a new meaning – the victory bears an ethical-religious character and is granted by God[30].

Accepting in general the remarks of Gillman on the first part, let us propose a slightly different division for the vv.54-57. Since v.54a-c literally repeats v.53 and introduces a scriptural citation, it can be made apart as a fairly independent *transitional* and *introductory formula*. The two following quotations v.54d (A) and v.55 (B) are intentionally bound together by Paul by means of the word νῖκος. The next v.56 picks up κέντρον from v.55 and, giving a comment on the second biblical text, creates a segment that corresponds to it (B'). Finally A' (v.57) harks back to v.54d (A) developing the ethical--religious meaning of νῖκος. Thus, our model could be presented in the following way:

DIVISION I: TRANSFORMATION INTO FUTURE LIFE (15:50-53)

50a	A		Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί,
50b			ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομῆσαι οὐ δύναται
50c			οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.
51°	B		ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω·
51b		a	πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα,

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[28] Cf. J. GILLMAN, «Transformation in 1 Corinthians 15,50-53», p. 321.

[29] In section B Morisette proposes a chiastic structure: a (v.51b), b (v.51c), c (v.52a), c' (v.52b), b' (v.52c), a' (v.52d). See R. MORISETTE, «La chair et le sang», p. 43; For the other proposals concerning vv.50-53 and 54-57, see W. STENGER, "Beobachtungen zur Argumentationsstruktur von 1 Kor 15", *LB* 45:1979, p. 121-128.

[30] Cf. J. GILLMAN, «Transformation in 1 Corinthians 15,50-53», p. 321-322.

51c   πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα,
52a   b   ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι·
52b   b'   σαλπίσει γὰρ
52c   a'   καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι
52d   καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα.

53a   A'   δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν
53b   καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο   ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

DIVISION II: VICTORY OVER DEATH (15:54-57)

54a INTRO ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀφθαρσίαν
54b   καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀθανασίαν,
54c   τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος,

54d   A   Κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῖκος.

55a   B   ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νῖκος;
55b   ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;
56a   B'   τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία,
56b   ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·

57   A'   τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νῖκος
               διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

At the end, one should stress the prolific use of various figures of speech in the passage in question[31]. One of its striking features is a widespread presence of *repetitions*: πάντες (v.51bc), ἐν (v.52a), καί (v.52d), ποῦ (v.55) φθορά / φθαρτός and ἀφθαρσία (vv.50c.53a.54a), κληρονομέω (v.50ab), ἀλλάσσω (v.51c.52d), θνητός / ἀθανασία (vv.53b.54b), ἐνδύω (vv.53.54ab), θάνατος (vv. 54d.55.56a), νῖκος (vv. 54d.55a.57), κέντρον (vv. 55b.56a), ἁμαρτία (v.56). They are organized in parallel structures and further strengthened by a frequent use of *antitheses*[32] (vv.50-54), which intensify the discourse and are surely designed to catch up the attention of the audience. The *anaphora*[33] present in vv.51bc.52.55 makes the Pauline thought pass fluently from one stage to another. Paul also knows how to change the rhythm of the discourse, and employing *asyndeton*[34] in v.52a he gives a lot of dynamism to the image of the final transformation. His language in the second part (vv.54-57) becomes more pictorial as he introduces *personification* of the death armed with the *metaphorical* "sting" (vv.55-56) to which he directs half-derisory *interrogatio* (v.55). If we add the examples of *paronomasia*[35] in v.54, *isocolon* and

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[31] See the study by I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 243-270.
[32] On the oppositions (antithesis or anthonyms) see B. MORTARA GARAVELLI, *Manuale di retorica* [SBom 94], Milano: Bompiani, 2003³, p. 241-243.
[33] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 198-200.
[34] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 226-227.
[35] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 206-208.

parisosis[36] in v.56, we have a pretty impressive image of the Paul's oratory workshop in the section vv.50-57.

Ultimately, the question remains whether the oral and literary features furnish us with an adequate tool to read the overall arrangement of the passage in question. The problems with the patterning of the second part (vv.54-57) and the multiplicity of patterns proposed by the scholars could indeed raise some doubts. Nonetheless, we cannot fully answer this question without the examination of the remaining discursive models.

3.2 DISCURSIVE MODELS

Chapter 15 of the 1 Corinthians was called by Bünker an excellent example of Pauline skill in rhetorical disposition[37]. Many exegetes attempted to disclose its discursive structure proposing a number of outlines. Among them Mitchell merits a special attention, since she places 1 Cor 15 within a broader rhetorical structure applied to the whole of the epistolary body. Her rhetorical *dispositio* comprises the *prothesis* (1:10), *diegesis* (1:11-17), *epilogos* (15:58) and *pisteis* structured in four sections[38]:

I. 1:18–4:21 Censure of Corinthian Factionalism and the Need for Paul's Advice.
II. 5:1–11:1 The Integrity of the Corinthian Community Against Outside Defilement.
III. 11:2–14:40 Manifestations of Corinthian Factionalism when "Coming Together".
IV. 15:1-57 The Resurrection and the Final Goal. Unity in the *paradoseis*.

The point of departure for Mitchell's structure is the assumption that the letter can have only one rhetorical *dispositio* embracing the entire content and reflecting its main problem (in case of 1 Corinthians the factions within the community)[39]. This mono-themacity seems to be suspicious in front of what Hurd[40] calls "an embarrassment of thematic riches" in 1 Corinthians. Mitchell simply forces some parts of the letter to fit the scheme. The reason for it is also a misinterpretation of 1 Cor 1:10 called by her the *prothesis* to the entire letter. First, the *thesis* should rather be identified with 1 Cor 1:18 and referred to the section 1 Cor 1:18 – 4:21. Secondly, Paul's rhetorical strategy consists in developing some thought in smaller units that usually comprise several chapters[41].

In fact, most of the scholars do not see any problem to inquire on the plural rhetorical *dispositiones* applied to various sections of the letter. Consequently, the structures proposed for chapter 15 can be presented schematically in the table below:

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[36] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 230-231.

[37] Cf. M. BÜNKER, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition*, p. 59.

[38] Cf. M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p. 184-186.

[39] Cf. *Ibid.,* 187-188. Followed by J.D.G. DUNN, *1 Corinthians* [NTG], Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995, p. 22-23.25.

[40] See J.C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, London: SPCK, 1965, p. 50.

[41] Against only one *dispositio*, see W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, p. 78, n. 274. For an excellent presentation of the Pauline argumentative strategy developed in smaller subunits, see J.-N. ALETTI, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes», p. 399; *ibid.,* «La rhétorique paulinienne: Construction et communication d'une pensée», in: *Paul, une théologie en construction*, eds. A. DETWILLER, J.-D. KAESTLI, D. MARGUERAT, Genève: Labor et Fides 2004, p. 47-66 esp.60-66.

1 COR 15:	EXORDIUM	NARRATIO	PROBATIO I	PERORATIO I	PROBATIO II	PERORATIO II
Bünker[42]	15: 1-3a	15:3b-11	15:12-28	15:29-34	15:35-49	15:50-58
Mack[43]	15:1-2	15:3-20	15:21-50			15:51-58
Probst[44]	15:1-3a	15:3b-11	15:12-34			15:35-58
Verburg[45]	15:1-11	15:12	15:13-32	15:33-34	15:35-49	15:50-58
Merklein[46]		15:1-11	15:12-34		15:35-49	15:50-58
Eriksson[47]	15:1-2	15:3-11	15:12-34		15:35-57	15:58
Watson[48]	15:1-2	15:3-11	15:12-28	15:29-34	15:35-57	15:58

The above brief survey also demonstrates how much the exegetes differ in their classification of the various strata of 1 Cor 15. Most of them rightly recognizes the opening part of the speech, the *exordium*, in vv.1-2, where Paul appeals to the audience's attention, receptivity and goodwill. Here also the Apostle indicates the topic that will be developed in the *probatio* – the gospel of the risen Christ preached by him and accepted by the Corinthians[49]. The succeeding *narratio,* limited to 15:3-11, provides the evidence basis for the argumentation and refers to the commonly shared knowledge of the resurrection of the Lord[50].

The first argumentative part, the *Probatio I* (vv.12-34)*,* begins with the *prothesis* in v.12, which takes the form of rhetorical question: "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?"[51]. It primarily deals with the *facticity* of the resurrection of the dead and shows the dramatic consequences of its rejection[52]. The commentators often divide vv.12-34 in the *refutatio,*

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[42] See M. BÜNKER, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition*, p. 62-72. Followed by R. PESCH, *Paulus ringt um die Lebensform der Kirche. Vier Briefe an die Gemeinde Gottes in Korinth*, Freiburg: Herderbücherei, 1986, p. 170-190.

[43] See B.L. MACK, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, Minneapolis: GBS 1990, p. 55-56.

[44] See H. PROBST, *Paulus und der Brief. Die Rhetorik des antiken Briefes als Form des paulinischen Korintherkorrispondenz (1 Kor 8–10)* [WUNT 45], Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991, p. 334-335.

[45] See W. VERBURG, *Endzeit und Entschlafene. Syntaktisch-sigmatische, semantische und pragmatische Analyse von 1 Kor 15* [FB 78], Würzburg: Echter, 1996.

[46] See H. MERKLEIN, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [ÖTBK 7/3], Gütersloh: Mohn, 2000, p. 248; Similarly I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 223-226.

[47] See A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, 248-251. Similarly R.F. COLLINS, *First Corinthians*, p. 526-528.

[48] See D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy», p. 248.

[49] On the *exordium,* see ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.*, 3.14.1; H. LAUSBERG, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik. Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaften*, München: Hüber, 1960, § 263-288.

[50] Cf. A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 1177; G.D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT]; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987, p. 714; D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy», p. 236-238; R.A. HORSLEY, *1 Corinthians* [ANTC], Nashville: Abingdon, 1998, p. 197-220; H.-J. KLAUCK, *1. Korintherbrief* [NEB.NT 7], Würzburg: Echter, 1984, p. 107-123; R.A. HARRISVILLE, *1 Corinthians* [ACNT], Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1987, p. 247.284; CH. WOLFF, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, p. 349-426. On the *narratio* in the Pauline letters, see J.-N. ALETTI, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes», p. 394-397.

[51] Cf. *Ibid.*, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes», p. 396-398; R.F. COLLINS, *First Corinthians*, p. 526. I. SAW (*Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 223) wrongly defines 1 Cor 15:12 as the *partitio.*

[52] Cf. A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1177; R.A. HORSLEY, *1 Corinthians*, p. 22. Eriksson affirms: "Paul puts some stress on the facticity or the certainty of the Christian's

used to disprove or weaken the argumentation of the opponents (vv.12-19), and the *confirmatio* (vv.20-28), which lends credit to and supports Paul's case[53]. However, there is rather a three-partite division here and three arguments shifting from the *refutatio* (A) (vv.12-19) to the *confirmatio* (B) (vv.20-28) and to the *refutatio* again (A') (vv.29-32)[54]. In A and A' Paul demonstrates the disastrous consequences of the denial of the resurrection of the dead, which discredits the preaching of the apostles and the life of Christians. The central part B presents the resurrection of Christ as a prelude to the final resurrection of all humanity. Additionally, vv.32-34 should be set apart as the *peroratio,* the exhortative style of which summarizes this part of argumentation[55].

Let us now have a look at the second *probatio* (vv.35-57) which constitutes a direct context of the section vv.50-57. It begins in v.35 with a double question: 1) "How" and 2) "with what kind of body" are the dead raised? While it is generally admitted that in the second part Paul is dealing with the *modality* of the resurrection[56], the nature of the opening question is still being debated. Jeremias[57] differentiated in v.35 two questions which are then answered inversely: "how" (v.35a → vv. 50-58) and "with what kind of body" (v.35b → vv.36-49) are the dead raised? Watson argues for the presence of anticipation, "a figure of thought in which the orator anticipates and forestalls the objection of opponents"[58]. For other scholars πῶς from v.35 has a skeptical pitch, demonstrating a kind of disbelief from the part of Corinthians: "Is it possible that the dead will rise?"[59].

One of the most original interpretations has recently been proposed by Asher. The author binds together vv.35-36a and qualifies it as a dialectical question, which leads the discussion in a desired direction – that is the issue of transformation[60]. Asher's innovative view on rhetorical strategy in this passage deserves a brief comment. According to him, Paul's argument in vv.35-49 is designed to accommodate the main objection of the

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bodily resurrection, but Paul is not trying to prove a general doctrine of resurrection or the resurrection of Christ (…) The conjectural element in the first finite question is not dominant. The issue is rather what is meant by the resurrection." Cf. *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, p. 243-244.

[53] Cf. A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1177-1178; A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, p. 248-251. On the binomy *confirmatio-refutatio,* see H. LAUSBERG, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, § 348-430.

[54] Cf. R.F. COLLINS, *First Corinthians*, p. 527.

[55] Cf. J.-N. ALETTI, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes», p. 396. See also G. BARBAGLIO, *La prima lettera ai Corinzi*, p. 790; I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 223-226.

[56] Cf. A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1178; S. BRODEUR, *The Holy Spirit's Agency*, p. 17-18; G.D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 714; R.A. HORSLEY, *1 Corinthians*, p. 22.

[57] Cf. J. JEREMIAS, «Flesh and Blood», p. 151-159. Followed by A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, p. 267.

[58] See D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy», p. 244. Cf. also I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15,* 223-226. On the anticipation, see H. LAUSBERG, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, § 854-855.

[59] Cf. B. SPÖRLEIN, *Die Leugnung der Auferstehung. Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung zu 1 Kor 15* [BU 7], Regensburg: Pustet, 1971, p. 98-99; R.J. SIDER, «The Pauline Conception of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians XV:35-54», *NTS* 21:1975, p. 429.

[60] Cf. J.R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 67-77. According to the author, v.35a formulates the objection, v.35b amplifies it and v.36b dismisses the imaginary interlocutor. Paul uses the *maieutic* method of Socrates. Asher claims the major part of the scholars to be wrong interpreting v.35b as seeking information.

Corinthians, namely the premise of polarity, which precludes any resurrection of terre-
strial human body. Paul accepts this point of view and corrects it, stressing that the tran-
sition between bodies is the product of the will and activity of God in his creative work.
Consequently, the section of vv.50-54 constitutes the climax of Pauline argumentation
and furnishes a response to the question of how the transition can aver – God is able to
overcome the metaphysical obstacle through the principle of change [61].

Certain details of Asher's interpretation deserve to be picked up, not uncritically,
however. One can assume that v.35 constitutes the *propositio* in which Paul does not
reveal his way of thinking but limits himself to posing the question to be discussed[62].
The notion of difference developed subsequently seems not to be a position of the Corin-
thians, as Asher wants, but rather of Paul himself, who in this manner corrects the sim-
plistic, influenced with Jewish thinking view of the resurrection body, which is raised in
the same form in which it was put into grave (vv.36-38)[63]. The issue at stake is indeed
the subject of transformation, where all the treads of argumentation converge.

Consequently, the second *probatio* develops in three parts framed in a chiasm: A
(vv.36-44a), B (vv.44b-49) and A' (vv.50-57)[64]. Paul begins with the argument on abso-
lute diversity and discrepancy between various kinds of bodies (vv.36-41), which is then
applied to the resurrection (vv.42-44a). Playing on the images of seed and various kinds
of terrestrial and astral bodies (vv.36-41) he illustrates the resurrection of the dead as a
passage from "corruptible", "dishonored", "weak" and "physical" to "incorruptible",
"glorious", "strong" and "spiritual" (vv.42-44). The second unit, B (vv.44b-49), trans-
poses the argumentation to a Christological and scriptural level. If anyone objects that
the images used by Paul are at best metaphorical, because no one has ever seen the
earthly body pass to the heavenly perfection, the Adam-Christ typology demonstrates
that the passage is not only possible but also guaranteed by the Lord. As we have borne
the corruptible, mortal image of the first Adam, we will also bear the glorious image of
Christ (v.49). Finally, the stream of Pauline thought brings us to the section A' (vv.50-57)
where, instead of conclusion, we are facing a highly problematic assertion: "What I am
saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,
nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (v.50).

Asher is right claiming that in v.50 Paul presents a real problem. The difference
stressed so far in vv.36-49 now becomes a major obstacle that hinders inheriting the
kingdom of God. The question is why Paul, after having proved that in Christ the dead
would receive their new spiritual body, comes back to the argument on human unsui-
tability for the future life. The most satisfying, rhetorically-based explanation of this
puzzle was given by Matand[65]. Even if his rhetorical disposition of the section vv.35-58
seems to be problematic, the main thesis presented by the author is by all means

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[61] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 79-89.

[62] Cf. J.-N. ALETTI, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes», p. 397.

[63] Cf. A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, p. 244; D.B. MARTIN, *The Corinthian Body*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 129.

[64] Cf. J. GILLMAN, «Transformation in 1 Corinthians 15,50-53», p. 309-310; S. BRODEUR, *The Holy Spirit's Agency*, p. 20-21.

[65] See J. MATAND BULEMBAT, *Noyau et enjeux*, p. 77-130.

tenable[66]. Paul, after having proved the resurrection of the dead, in the last part of his rationale turns to the living to answer the question: if the dead rise with the spiritual body, what is going to happen with those who, being alive at the time of Parousia, bear the image of the first Adam?[67] Even if the topic of the resurrection of the dead does not disappear completely in this part (see v. 52c) it serves rather as a point of departure and illustration for the notion of transformation of the living.

Thus, v.50 constitutes the *subpropositio* which announces once again, this time with a reference to the living, that the qualitative discrepancy between the present and the future life makes the realm of God inaccessible to those who now share in corruptible condition[68]. The aptly structured final argument on the resurrection develops according to the chiastic ABA' pattern [69]. The negative statement in v.50 (A), which places all discourse in a stalemate, receives its solution in vv.51-52 (B), where the notion of "transformation" is introduced. It constitutes the *probatio* of this section since it provides a real answer to the problem posed at the beginning[70]. Its importance is stressed by the solemn formula: ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω (v.51a). "The mystery" comprises two messages: "we will not all die" (v.51b) and "we will all be changed" (v.51c).

Contrary to De Boer[71], neither the death nor being alive seem to be of primary concern for Paul who at this point focuses on the transformation. It is the second element of "the mystery" which assumes a central position in the Pauline argumentation, while the death is described merely as an accompanying condition (cf. also vv.36-38). Subsequent v.53 (A') seems to be the *expolitio*[72] of the *subpropositio* from v.50. It develops the thesis in a positive way adding the notion of "necessity" of the change and describing it in terms of a new "robe of incorruptibility and immortality".

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[66] It is hard to agree above all with the rhetorical disposition presented by Matand Bulembat who divided vv. 36-58 into three arguments: A 36-44a; B 44b-49; and A' 50-53. Consequently, the part vv.54-58 should be left apart as the *peroratio* to the entire chapter 15. Cf. *Noyau et enjeux*, p. 127-128.

[67] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 78-79.85.

[68] Additional confirmation of the shift to the problem of the living in 1 Cor 15:50 comes from the analysis of vocabulary. The expressions σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα and its counterpart φθορά refer mostly to the corruptibility and fragility of the living. Cf. Exod 18:18; Wis 14:12.25; Sir 14:18; 17:31; Rom 8:21).

[69] Cf. D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy», p. 247.

[70] Matand Bulembat proposes far more complicated rhetorical arrangement in which only v.50b serves as the *subpropositio*, while vv.51-52aβ formulate the *ratio,* defining the *subpropositio*. Further, v.52bα-γ is the *confirmatio* of the preceding *ratio* and v.53 picks up and positively reinstates the *subpropositio* from v.50. This disposition draws much on the exegetical conclusions of the author, especially on the debatable distinction between the living and the dead assumed in v.50. See *Noyau et enjeux*, p. 98.

[71] De Boer sees the climax of the Pauline argumentation in vv.54-57, which are concerned primarily with the "Defeat of Death". See *The Defeat of Death*, p. 95.105. He is followed by J.D.G. DUNN, *1 Corinthians*, p. 86. Even if the question of death plays an important role in the outline of the entire chapter 15, it is definitely not the central point of the unit vv.50-57, in which the second part (vv.54-57) clearly develops the idea of transformation. The point is also missed by MÜLLER («Die Lieblichkeit des Heils», p. 171-176), who considers the carnal aspect of the resurrection as a leading idea of the Paul's rationale in 15:35-58.

[72] On the *expolitio,* see MORTARA GARAVELLI, *Manuale di retorica*, p. 236. 234-238.267

The second part of the argumentation (vv.54-57) is closely bound to the first one, and it shows a similar ABB'A' pattern. Watson[73] qualifies it as *exornatio* which confirms the argument once it is established. However, the second part not only reinstates what Paul said above but also develops its argument by placing it in the context of the victory over death. Thus, we should rather mark it as the *amplificatio,* which draws on the v.53.

The entire section of vv.54-57 bears the characteristics of the midrash in which Paul binds together and comments two passages of the Scripture[74]. Numerous vocabulary resonances between them betray the presence of the rabbinic technique of *gezerah shawah,* according to which Paul combines two passages[75]:

w. 54d	κατεπόθη	ὁ **θάνατος**	εἰς **νῖκος**.	Isa 25:8a
w.55	*ποῦ σου,*	**θάνατε,**	τὸ **νῖκος**;	Hos 13:14
	ποῦ σου,	**θάνατε,**	τὸ κέντρον;	

The Apostle quotes first the text from Isa 25:7-8 announcing that on the last day God "will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations" (v.7). That day he will also "swallow up death forever" (v.8a). The idiomatic expression εἰς νῖκος [76] applied by Paul stresses the irremediable and irrevocable aspect of the destruction of death and can be translated adverbially: "completely" or "forever"[77], as well as "to the victory" or "victoriously"[78]. It creates the point of contact with the next quotation from Hos 13:14 where the death is addressed with a taunting question: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"[79]. The scriptural passages are so

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[73] See D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy», p. 247.

[74] Cf. M. GERTNER, «Midrashim in the NT», *JSS* 7:1962, p. 267-272. The author claimed that 1 Cor 15:55-56 belongs to the group of the only three NT passages that have a form proper for a biblical midrash. It is an applied commentary on a specific passage of the Scripture. The Paul's use of midrashic technique in 1 Corinthians also comprises 1 Cor 1:18-2:16; 10:1-13 and 15:20-28.

[75] On the technique of *gezerah shawah*, its development and function at the time of Paul and in later Judaism, see P. BASTA, *Gezerah Shawah*: storia, forme e metodi dell'analogia biblica [SB 26], Roma: PIB, 2006.

[76] In some manuscripts one can find the secondary form εἰς νεῖκος qualified as an itacism. Cf. 𝔓⁴⁶, B, D*, 088 and several other manuscripts, plus partially Tertullian and Cyprian. On the early Hellenistic form τὸ νῖκος as a remodeling of νίκη see A.T. ROBERTSON, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*: London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919³, p. 258-259.

[77] "Forever" prevails in various instances where the LXX translates the Hebrew לנצח: εἰς τέλος (Ps 9:7.19. 32; 43:24; 51:7; 67:17; 73:1.10.19; 76:9; 78:5; 88:47; 102:9; Job 14:20; 20:7; 23:7; Hab 1:4); εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον (Isa 13:20; 33:20); εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Isa 28:28; 57:16); εἰς χρόνον πολύν (Isa 34:10) or διὰ παντὸς (Isa 57:16).

[78] See Job 36:7 ("the righteous are set at the throne with the kings εἰς νεῖκος"), 2 Sam 2:26 ("the sword should devour εἰς νῖκος") or Matt 12:20 ("to bring justice εἰς νῖκος").

[79] In the case of the quotation from Isa 25:8, Paul seems to follow TM and his reading is practically identical with Theodotion (Uncial Q: κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῖκος). However, as Heil rightly notices, it may be a later assimilation to 1 Cor 15:54b, since it occurs as a marginal gloss and the Syrohexapla reading has the active form κατέπιεν. See J.P. HEIL, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* [SBL.SBL 15], Leiden: Brill, 2005, p. 249. The quotation from Hos 13:14 appears more problematic since here Paul differs both from TM and the LXX, putting "victory" (τὸ νῖκος) instead of the LXX's δίκη ("punishment"), and θάνατε instead of the cognate

strictly bound to each other by the word pair θάνατος and νῖκος that they seem to form one single quotation. They constitute a powerful *argument from authority* which confirms that the transformation is necessary and determined in God's plans as the way to destroy the death[80]. This last is depicted being not only deprived of her booty, the control over mortals, but even neutralized and rendered harmless (see the *proleptic* aorist κατεπόθη).

The statement might have raised some questions among the Corinthians who, in spite of Pauline assurance, still experienced the deathly, mortal sting[81]. That is where the place for v.56 (B') opens, in which Paul explains that the pervading and scandalous presence of the death is due to the Law and sin, which are still in action. In the logical *chain argument*, death – sin – law, death receives its ethical qualification and prepares a place for the final statement from v.57 (A')[82]. There, in the thanksgiving period, the divine victory mentioned in A (v.54d) is equated with the victory over sin. It is at work "now" thanks to the work of Jesus and it is dispensed by God himself[83]. The present time used by Paul in v.57 is very telling. Paul stresses that the Corinthians not only *already* participate in the universal victory of Christ but also with every victory over sin they bring the kingdom of God closer. That is how the transformation of the final day is being prepared in everyday lives of the believers.

Ultimately, we should pay attention to the close rhetorical link between v.54-57 and the section 1 Cor 15:20-28, where death is also presented as the last enemy to be defeated by God. The fact that at the end of chapter 15 Paul turns once again to this image deserves our consideration. The topic must have been important to the community and surely as such could be the source of bitter arguments questioning the resurrection and the final victory of Christ. If death operates continually among the Christians, where is

ᾅδη. The most comprehensive study of the problems connected with 1 Cor 15,54-55 is offered by J.P. HEIL, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture*, p. 247-253; MORISETTE, «Un midrash sur la mort», 161-188 esp. 166-176; W. HARRELSON, «Death and Victory In 1 Corinthians 15:51-57: The Transformation of a Prophetic Theme», in: *Faith and History*: *Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer*, ed. J.T. Caroll et al., Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990, p. 147-159; A. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1298-1301; CH.D. STANLEY, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*: *Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* [SNTS.MS 74], Cambridge: University Press, 1992, p. 209-215. In our opinion, there is no need to recur to the sophisticated reconstructions of the sources quoted by Paul. First of all, we do not know which texts the Apostle might have had at his disposal. Secondly, one of the marks of the oral culture is orator's freedom in modifying the quotations in order to embed them in the context of his speech.

[80] The authority accredited to the Gospel is a distinctive trait of the early Christian rhetoric. Kennedy speaks of a special form of rhetoric, called by him the "radical Christian rhetoric", in which the message is not couched in enthymemes but proclaimed directly. The radical Christian rhetoric is prophetic in the sense that the preacher regarded himself, as it was also with the Old Testament Prophets, as a "vehicle" of God's will. See KENNEDY, *New Testament Interpretation*, p. 7. See also MORTARA GARAVELLI, *Manuale di retorica*, p. 77.99.

[81] Cf. J. MATAND BULEMBAT, *Noyau et enjeux*, p. 104.130.

[82] For v.56 as an example of the common in the Hellenistic world "chain argument", see D.-A. KOCH, *Die Shrifft als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* [BHT 69], Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986, p. 230.

[83] Cf. J. GILLMAN, «Transformation in 1 Corinthians 15,50-53», p. 322. S. Schneider constructs his original understanding of the Paul's argument in chapter 15 on the tension between the present and the future life. According to him, the Apostle tries to convince the Corinthians to the present aspect of the victory over death. Cf. *Auferstehen*: *Eine neue Deutung von 1 Kor 15* [FB 105], Würzburg: Echter, 2005, p. 22.

the victory of life brought by the resurrection of Jesus? In this light, v.57 constitutes an important Christological climax confirming the absolute rule of the Lord over the power of death. As the last enemy, it will be swept away at the end of time.

No wonder that such a strong dose of *pathos* and *ethos*, appeal to the divine authority and the emotions of hearers, made some scholars think that vv.50-58 constitute a *peroratio* of chapter 15[84]. Yet they are wrong, overlooking the argumentative characteristics of this section. Only here the issue of transformation emerges as a solution to the problem of discrepancy between our present, corruptible and the future incorruptible existence. This is the climax of the Pauline thought, which, in coherence with the preceding argumentation, introduces a category having ethical implications – most suitable for the imminent conclusion of the entire chapter.

3.3 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Concluding this part of our survey, we see that 1 Cor 15,50-57 is profoundly shaped by the presence of both oral and discursive models. The oral patterning, characteristic for a lively discourse, helps to identify the subunits, thematic shifts and various semantic fields in the text under analysis. It draws our attention to the chiastic models: ABA' dominating in vv.50-53 and ABB'A' in 54-57, and is very useful in tracing the correspondences between vv.50-57 and the sections vv.20-28 and 36-44a.

The presence of the epistolary style-markers is of marginal importance and does not convey any information about the structure of the passage in question. In fact, vv.50-57 are characterized by the decisive prevalence of discursive models. The analyzed text constitutes the climax of the Pauline argumentation on the resurrection and abounds in rhetorical features with its own *subpropositio* in v.50, *expolitio* in v.53, proof from the Scripture and implicit *gezerah shawah* in v.54. It brings us to the conclusion that the discursive models are the most appropriate tool to read the argumentative structure of 1 Cor 15:50-57 and to organize various oral and epistolary features present within the text[85]. The examination of the Pauline rationale out of the general scheme of rhetorical *dispositio* not only discloses the meaning of the text but also confirms its coherence. There is no need to separate 1 Cor 15:56 as extraneous to the passage of 1 Cor 15:50-57 when we notice that it functions as midrashic commentary on the combined scriptural quotation in 1 Cor 15:54-55. In the light of rhetorical analysis, the topic of the victory over death (vv.54-57) expands and develops the crucial statements from vv.50 and 53. Finally, the greatest advantage of rhetorical approach consists is individuating the main thesis in v.50 according to which the Pauline rationale proceeds. It helps to organize various repetitions present in the passage in question and points at the importance of the transformation emerging as the central topic of 1 Cor 15:50-57. In the end, the combination of oral and discursive features in our text results in the following outline:

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[84] See the authors mentioned above in notes 42-46. Merklein defines it enigmatically as "prophetische Zuspruch" with the function of *peroratio*. See *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, III, p. 247-248. Cf. also I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 238.

[85] One has to agree with Aletti claiming that chiastic structure appears often due to well known rhetorical principles, according to which a concrete problem is first presented and discussed (A), then elaborated through comparison (B), to come back in a definitive solution (A'). See J.-N. ALETTI, «La rhétorique paulinienne», p. 52-55.

DIVISION I: TRANSFORMATION INTO FUTURE LIFE (15:50-53)

50a	A		Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί,	*SUBPROPOSITIO*
50b			ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ <u>κληρονομῆσαι</u> οὐ δύναται	*(NEGATIVE)*
50c			οὐδὲ ἡ <u>φθορὰ</u> τὴν <u>ἀφθαρσίαν</u> <u>κληρονομεῖ</u>.	*parallel, antithesis*

51a	B		ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω·	*ARGUMENTATIO*
51b		a	πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα,	*TRANSFORMATION*
51c			πάντες δὲ <u>ἀλλαγησόμεθα</u>,	*SOLUTION TO V.50*
52a		b	ἐν ἀτόμῳ,	*anaphora, asyndeton*
			ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ,	
			ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ <u>σάλπιγγι</u>·	
52b		b'	<u>σαλπίσει</u> γὰρ	
52c		a'	καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι	
52d			καὶ ἡμεῖς <u>ἀλλαγησόμεθα</u>.	

53a	A'		δεῖ γὰρ <u>τὸ φθαρτὸν</u> τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι <u>ἀφθαρσίαν</u>	*antithesis EXPOLITIO*
53b			καὶ <u>τὸ θνητὸν</u> τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι <u>ἀθανασίαν</u>.	*(POSITIVE)*

DIVISION II: VICTORY OVER DEATH (15:54-57)

AMPLIFICATIO
(THE NECESSITY OF THE VICTORY OVER DEATH - TO V.53)

54a	INTRO		ὅταν δὲ <u>τὸ φθαρτὸν</u> τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται <u>ἀφθαρσίαν</u>	
54b			καὶ <u>τὸ θνητὸν</u> τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται <u>ἀθανασίαν</u>,	*antithesis*
54c			τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος,	*FROM THE SCRIPTURE*

54d	A		Κατεπόθη ὁ <u>θάνατος</u> εἰς <u>νῖκος</u>.	*GEZERAH SHAWAH*

55a	B		ποῦ σου, <u>θάνατε</u>, τὸ <u>νῖκος</u>;	*personification, anaphora, isocolon*
55b			ποῦ σου, <u>θάνατε</u>, τὸ κέντρον;	
56a	B'		τὸ δὲ κέντρον <u>τοῦ θανάτου</u> ἡ ἁμαρτία,	*EXPLANATION (TO V.55)*
56b			ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·	

57	A'		τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν <u>τὸ νῖκος</u>	*thanksgiving*
			διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.	

3.4 EPISTOLARY TYPOS AND RHETORICAL GENRE

The last step undertaken in the analysis of 1 Cor 15:50-57 will consist in defining the epistolary and rhetorical genre of our text. Although the task is of much importance for the proper understanding of the analyzed passage, it also entails many problems. Even if conventional literary formulae make it easier to recognize 1 Corinthians as a coherent

letter, they shed little light on the letter body[86]. The famous distinction of Deissmann[87], according to which the Pauline writings belong to the category of "the real letters", dealing with the actual problems of their addressees , seems not to be of great help. Similarly vague definition was coined by Berger[88] who called Pauline letters the "Apostelbriefe" and by Belleville[89] for whom 1 Corinthians is an example of a Hellenistic private "request letter". On the other hand, Merklein[90] stressed a didactic tone of the Corinthian correspondence, which comes to voice especially in chapter 15, while Asher[91] spoke here about the Pauline use of the didactic formula of accommodation and correction.

Although 1 Corinthians abounds in instructions and apostolic teaching, its pragmatic character should rather restrain us from calling it a purely dogmatic "Lehrbrief"[92]. In the same way the above-mentioned definitions are too generic and do not contribute to the understanding neither of the letter as a whole nor the passage 1 Cor 15:50-57 in detail. The rhetorical approach invites us rather to look for a proper specification of our text on the ground of the ancient epistolary forms[93]. Stowers systematized them into six types: 1. letters of friendship, 2. family letters, 3. letters of praise and blame, 4. hortatory letters (with seven subtypes, among them: paraenetic letters, protreptic letters, letters of advice) 5. letters of recommendation, 6. accusing, apologetic and accounting letters[94].

1 Corinthians as a "friendship letter" of encouragement and prayer was fervently argued by Lührmann[95]. His proposal was criticized by Mitchell[96], who pointed that such an idea could fit any of the Pauline letters, and by Stowers[97], who argued for the dominance of family ethos in Paul. In fact, most of the scholars, including the two mentioned above, place 1 Corinthians in the fourth category pointing at its *paraenetical* and advisory

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[86] Cf. J.D.G. DUNN, *1 Corinthians*, p. 22. On the epistolary markers in 1 Corinthians, see H. MERKLEIN, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [ÖTBK 7/1], Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1992, p. 43-46.

[87] See A. DEISSMANN, *Licht vom Osten*: *das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1923⁴, p. 195.

[88] See K. BERGER, «Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament», *ANRW* II, p. 1333-1340. Cf. also J.L. WHITE, «Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition», *CBQ* 45:1983, p. 433-444.

[89] See L.L. BELLEVILLE, «Continuity or Discontinuity: A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians in the Light of First Century Epistolary Forms and Conventions», *EvQ* 59:1987, p. 22.

[90] See H. MERKLEIN, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, I, p. 43-44. Similarly on chapter 15, J.D.G. DUNN, *1 Corinthians*, p. 84-85.

[91] See J.R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 48.

[92] Cf. G. BARBAGLIO, *La prima lettera ai Corinzi*, p. 50; SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther,* I, p. 88.

[93] Among the most important ancient treaties on the epistolary theory Aune mentions *On Style* 4.223-235 (ca. first century B.C., incorrectly ascribed to Demetrius of Phalerum), *Epistolary Styles* (fourth or sixth century A.D. erroneously ascribed to Proclus or Libanius), and Pseudo-Demetrius' *Epistolary Types* (first century B.C. and an appendix entitled "On letter Writing" in the *Rhetorical Arts* of Julius Victor, fourth century A.D.). Cf. D.E. AUNE, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* [LEC 8], Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989, p. 158. On the 21 τύποι ἐπιστολικοι enumerated by Pseudo-Demetrius, see J.L. WHITE, *Light from Ancient Letters*, Philadelphia: Ffac, 1986, p. 203.

[94] See S.K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

[95] Cf. D. LÜHRMANN, «Freundschaftsbrief trotz Spannungen. Zu Gattung und Aufbau des Erster Korintherbriefs», in: *Studien zum Text und zur Ethik des Neuen Testaments. Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von H. Greeven* [BZNW 47], ed. W. Schrage, Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1986, p. 298-314.

[96] See M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p. 15, n.50.

[97] See S.K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing*, p. 42-43. 60.

(*symbouleutikos*) tone. The real problem in proper defining the genre of the letter is the multiplicity of themes found within it. Besides the *symbouleutikos* type, Schrage[98] notices the elements of the *nouthetètikos* (4:14) *epitimètikos* or *psektikos* (3:1-4; 5:1-8; 6:1-11; 11:17-34) or *apologètikos* letter (1 Cor 1 – 4). Consequently, some scholars classify 1 Corinthians as a type of "mixed letter", stressing its multifunctional character and arguing a the separate analysis of its different parts[99].

Considering the qualification "mixed letter" too vague, let us turn to the opinion presented by the majority of the scholars, who define 1 Corinthians as a complex combination of *paraenesis* and advice. These two types were generally not distinguished in antiquity, and one often used them interchangeably. However, following Stowers[100], it is possible to differentiate between them and say that advice would concern specific, occasional matters while *paraenesis* would rather refer to more general, universal issues. The content exposed by the orator in the *paraenetic* genre cannot be objected because it "honors the divine", presents the patterns of behavior sanctioned by honor and shame and recommends habits and actions that conform to a certain model of character[101]. According to Stowers, Paul skillfully mixes general exhortation and specific advice in 1 Corinthians 1–4; 6:12-20; 10:23–11:1; 7–8 and 10–14 but the first model prevails in chapters 13 and 15.

The conclusion goes against the majority of the scholars who classify 1 Cor 15 as a *symbouleutikos* letter, a discussion focused on the practical issue of dissents in Corinth. However, there are good reasons to claim that the chapter on the resurrection is not so much an advice or correction of the rifts in Corinth but rather a coherent theological and ethical discourse[102]. If Paul is deliberating with some opponents there is no hint in his reasoning that could help us to decipher their positions[103]. The Apostle does not indulge in theological discussions with dissenters but rather focuses on the resurrection of the dead presenting its Christological foundations, necessity and practical implications for the Christian life. Consequently, one can speak of the Pauline strategy designed to arouse the Corinthians' adherence to the gospel, the part of which is teaching on the resurrection of the dead. Besides, the theses opening the two argumentative sections in 1 Cor 15:12 and 35 do not have to be necessarily taken as the positions of the opponents and may as well reflect the questions directed to Paul by the Corinthians themselves. Summing up, since none of the ancient categories do justice to the specific character of the content and argument of chapter 15 we prefer to qualify it generally as *paraenetical*.

With this conclusion, we have practically entered the discussion on the rhetorical genre of 1 Corinthians with a special reference to chapter 15. Ancient rhetoric distinguishes between three types of oratory: forensic (the speaker seeks to accuse or defend and make a judgment about events that occurred in the past); deliberative (the speaker persuades or dissuades, advises the audience to take some action in the future); and epideictic (praise

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[98] See W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, I, p. 86.

[99] Cf. D.E. AUNE, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, p. 203; W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, I, p. 86.

[100] See S.K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing*, p. 93. His differentiation is also accepted by M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p. 50-60, esp.52-53.

[101] Cf. S.K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing*, p. 94-96.

[102] Cf. J.D.G. DUNN, *1 Corinthians*, p. 84-85.

[103] Cf. J.-N. ALETTI, «L'argumentation de Paul et la position des Corinthiens: 1 Co 15,12-34», *Résurrection du Christ et des chrétiens*, p. 79-81.

or blame concerning the existing condition of things in the present)[104]. Each of the three categories or some part thereof has at times been proposed for 1 Corinthians.

According to Dahl, 1 Cor 1 – 4 are best understood as the apology by means of which Paul seeks to reestablish his apostolic authority of the founder and spiritual father of the church in Corinth[105]. In a similar vein, Bünker[106] showed that both 1:10 – 4:21 and 15 have the rhetorical structure of forensic discourse addressed to the Corinthians of the higher status. The critical evaluation of Bünker's analysis concerning 1 Cor 15 made by some scholars pointed to the arbitrary use of rhetorical tools and demonstrated sufficiently that rhetorical situation in 1 Cor is not that of contestation of Paul's authority[107].

On the other hand though, the majority of scholars saw a deliberative genre as the most appropriate for 1 Corinthians[108]. The best representative of this group is Mitchell with her influential work *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*. Mitchell argues for a unified disposition of the entire letter in which each of the topics is subsumed under a discussion of the seminal problem at Corinth – factionalism[109]. The true advantage of Mitchell's work is a broad base of ancient texts on which she constructs her argumentation, pointing at a number of deliberative features in 1 Corinthians: the future time frame, an appeal to advantage, and the use and function of examples[110].

However, the impressive work of Mitchell raises also justified doubts. First of all, her bias to see the "factions" as the unifying theme of the letter evidently violates many parts of the letter, especially chapter 15, where this topic is almost absolutely absent. Second, her claim for only one genre seems not to take into consideration the variegated character of the Pauline letter and thus misunderstands his rhetorical strategy[111]. Other formal elements mentioned by Mitchell, which serve as a linchpin for all the supporters of the deliberative strategy in 1 Corinthians 15, are likewise tenuous and convertible. Firstly, it is hard to see any particular course of action to which Paul could persuade his audience in chapter 15. The matter concerning the resurrection of the dead does not demand any particular decision or activity. The only expected reaction is the understanding of the mystery of Christ and adhering to it. Secondly, if we look at the presumably dominant future time frame in 1 Cor 15 we find only 13 future forms (6 in the section vv.50-57) against the 112 verbs in present (13 in the section vv.50-57). The future is found mainly in the

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[104] Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.,* 1.3.3-7.1358a-1359a.

[105] See N.A. DAHL, *Studies in Paul. Theology for the Early Christian Mission*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977, p. 329.

[106] See M. BÜNKER, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition,* 48-76. Cf. also G. THEISSEN, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*: *essays on Corinth*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982, p. 56.

[107] Cf. E. SCHLÜSSER-FIORENZA, "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians", *NTS* 33:1987, p. 392. 396-398; HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 111.

[108] With reference to the entire letter see: KENNEDY*, New Testament Interpretation*, p. 87.144; E. SCHLÜSSER-FIORENZA, «Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians», p. 393; M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*; SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, I, p. 80; MERKLEIN, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, I, p. 45. With reference to the chapter 15: D.F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy», p. 233-235; I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 183-198; A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, p. 244; J.R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 59.

[109] See M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p. 1-2.

[110] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 20-64.

[111] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 13 n.44.

sections vv.20-28 and vv.50-57 and does not refer to the result of the solicited human action, but God's powerful manifestation in the victory over the death.

Further, there are rather tenuous evidences for the presence of the deliberative appeal to advantage (σύμφορον) in 1 Cor 15. The expressions ὄφελος in 15:32 and κενός in 15:58 (also in vv.2.10.14.17) can be interpreted in many ways, but in their primary sense they do not stress any future advantage but rather disastrous consequences of the denial of the resurrection of the dead for the present life. If we want to search at any price the appeal to advantage we arrive to some far-fetched statements like that of Saw, who concludes that in 1 Cor 15:2.16-17.50-53 Paul speaks of the advantages the Corinthians shall enjoy when they will be raised imperishable[112]. Finally, the use of examples, here with a purely descriptive and argumentative function, cannot be limited only to the deliberative rhetoric, since, as Mitchell herself admits, it depends rather on a particular rhetorical strategy and can be found also in forensic and epideictic genre[113].

With this conclusion, let us now pass to the examination of the last rhetorical genre proposed for 1 Corinthians – the epideictic one. In fact, when we think about the general situation in the letter, which provides the answer to various questions raised by the Corinthians, it is far more natural to label it as epideictic rhetoric. That is exactly the point of view of Wuellner[114], who stresses the demonstrative character of 1 Corinthians, intended, first and foremost, to educate. Wuellner saw the proof of epideictic style in three digressions: 1:19 – 3:21; 9:1 – 10:13 and 13:1-13 and interpreted the Pauline appeals to imitate him as the element strengthening the Corinthians' adherence to the proclaimed values[115].

The critics of the Wuellner's approach accuse him of relying more on "The New Rhetoric" of Perelman than on the ancient materials[116]. In Perelman's[117] definition, the discourse of the *genus demostrativum* is designed to strengthen the adherence to what is already accepted and not to change or modify beliefs. On the other hand, Lausberg[118] claims that in antiquity demonstrative rhetoric was not concerned with the content or with the topic of discourse, but with the art of presentation and with the rhetorical skills of the speaker exhibited to praise a person or action. Firstly, one should be careful with

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[112] Cf. I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 197.

[113] Cf. M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p. 42. See also A. LUMPE, «Exemplum», *RAC* 6:1966, p. 1229-1257.

[114] See W. WUELLNER, «Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation», in: *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*: *In Honorem Robert M. Grant* [TH 54], eds. W.R. SCHOEDEL, R.L. WILKEN, Paris: Beauchesne, 1979, p. 185-188. See also *ibid.*, «Paul as a Pastor. The Function of Rhetorical Questions in First Corinthians», in: *L'apôtre Paul. Personalité, style et conception du ministère* [BETL 73], ed. A. Vanhoye, Leuven: University Press, 1986, p. 49-77.

[115] Cf. *Ibid.*, «Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation», p. 184. Similarly, J. MATAND BU-LEMBAT, *Noyau et enjeux*, p. 254.

[116] Cf. M.M. MITCHELL, *Paul and Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p. 7, n.23; A. ERIKSSON, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, E. SCHLÜSSER-FIORENZA, «Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction», p. 391; I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15*, p. 186-187.

[117] The author argues that the epideictic discourse "sets out to increase the intensity of the audience's adherence to certain values which might not be contested when considered on their own but may nevertheless not prevail against other values that might come into the conflict with them. In epideictic oratory the speaker turn educator". See CH. PERELMAN, L. OLBRECHTS-TYTECA, *The New Rhetoric*: *A Treatise on Argumentation*, Notre Dame, IN: University Press, 1969, p. 51.

[118] H. LAUSBERG, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, p. 55.

relying a-critically on the Lausberg's assessments. In the *Ars Rhetorica* by Aristotle[119] we find proofs that *eulogies* were not only meant as an eloquent *tour de force* of the orator, while Pernot in his excellent monograph on the issue demonstrated how *encomia* flourished at the time of Paul, finding its use at many occasions of social and political life[120]. Secondly, the epideictic discourse adequately embraces the variety of topics, literary features and epistolary styles found in 1 Corinthians and in 1 Cor 15. In the chapter in question, we have the profuse use of *amplificatio*, a formal feature characteristic for the *encomiastic* speech[121]. Finally, although *epideictic rhetoric* recommended using a highly elaborated and ornate style, at the imperial epoch it became secondary, serving rather the purpose of the speech[122].

In the end, focusing on 1 Cor 15:50-57, we see how the epidictic character of the Pauline discourse emerges here in the teaching on the vexing issue that cannot be found in the Scripture, namely the sort of the living at the Parousia of Christ. There is no sign of controversy here. Paul reveals the mystery of transformation operated by God, which gives a solution to the existential drama of men unable to reach the realm of God. The necessity of change underscored in vv.50.53 involves not only the divine agent but also resounds with a powerful call for human cooperation. That is the sense of the images comprised in the second part vv.54-57, in which Paul depicts death, sin and law defeated by God's power. Who wants to be changed at the last day must take an active part in God's victory over death, fighting its poisonous sting – sin. The present outline of the Pauline rationale in vv.50-57 and its stark *paraenetic* character exploding in v.57 makes it a perfect closing for the epidictic argument of chapter 15.

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[119] See ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.*1.9.36-39: "Accordingly, if you desire to praise, look what you would suggest; if you desire to suggest, look what you would praise". Also *ibid*., 3.17.11-12: "Epideictic speeches should be varied with laudatory episodes, after the manner of Isocrates, who is always bringing somebody in (...). If you have proofs, then your language must be both ethical and demonstrative; if you have no enthymemes, ethical only. In fact, it is more fitting that a virtuous man show himself good than that his speech should be painfully exact". Against the dogmatic labeling of the rhetorical genres, see also [CICERO], *Rhet. Her.* 3.4.7; QUINTILIAN, *Inst.* 3.4.15-16.

[120] The *encomium* becomes more and more popular especially in the Hellenistic and imperial epochs. It enters public life, becoming the matter of official contests, as well as makes a part of discourses on socio-political issues. Cf. L. PERNOT, La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain (Paris 1993) I, p. 19-116. On its use in Cicero's and Pliny's letters, or Augustus' Res Gestae, see M. LOWRIE, «Making an Exemplum of Yourself: Cicero and Augustus», in: *Classical Constructions. Papers in Memory of Don Fowler, Classicist and Epicurean*, eds. S. J. Heyworth and others, Oxford: University Press, 2007, p. 91-112; R.K. GIBSON, «Pliny and the Art of (In)offensive Self-praise», *Arethusa* 36:2003, p. 235-254.

[121] On the *amplificatio*, see ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.* 3.17.3 – "in epideictic speeches, amplification is employed, as a rule, to prove that things are honorable or useful". Cf. also J.F.M. SMIT, «Epideictic Rhetoric in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1–4», *Bib* 84:2003, p. 184-201.

[122] Cf. PERNOT, *La rhétorique*, p. 338.

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STRESZCZENIE

PRZEMIANA WARUNKIEM KONIECZNYM DO ODZIEDZICZENIA KRÓLESTWA BOŻEGO. ANALIZA RETORYCZNA ARGUMENTACJI ŚW. PAWŁA W 1 KOR 15,50-57

Analizowany fragment 1 Kor 15,50-57 to wyraźnie określona jednostka retoryczna zamykająca Pawłową argumentację na temat zmartwychwstania umarłych w 1 Kor 15. Powracająca w 1 Kor 15,50 kwestia niezdatność śmiertelników do przyszłego, niezniszczalnego życia nie ma charakteru zbędnego dodatku ani powtórzenia, ponieważ w odróżnieniu od poprzedzających części, w 1 Kor 15,50-57 Apostoł mówi o przemianie żyjących na końcu czasów. Tekst składa się z dwóch jednostek (w. 50-53 i w. 54-57), powiązanych ze sobą poprzez w. 54a-c. Pierwsza z nich przedstawia ludzką egzystencję rozdartą pomiędzy „zniszczalną" teraźniejszością i „niezniszczalną" przyszłością (w. 50-53). Część druga opisuje ostateczne zwycięstwo Boga nad śmiercią (w. 54-57). Widoczne w tekście powtórzenia i struktury chiastyczne wyraźnie wskazują na recytatywny charakter tekstu przeznaczonego do publicznego odczytania wobec wspólnoty. Najskuteczniejszym narzędziem pozwalającym uchwycić Pawłową argumentację w 1 Kor 15,50-57 jest jednak antyczny model *dispositio* retorycznego. Pozwala on wyróżnić w analizowanym fragmencie główną tezę, *subpropositio* (w. 50), po której następuje krótkie *probatio* (w. 51-52) i powrót do tezy w pozytywnej formie w *expolitio* w w. 53. W. 54-57 stanowią *amplificatio*, w którym główny temat przemiany zostaje przepracowany w świetle idei zwycięstwa Boga nad śmiercią. Silnie edukacyjne i etyczne zabarwienie Pawłowej argumentacji w obydwu omawianych częściach sprawia, że pasują one doskonale do *parenetycznego* charakteru listu i epideiktycznego gatunku retorycznego.

KEYWORDS:
Rhetorical approach, oral models, dispositio, resurrection, transformation.

SŁOWA KLUCZE:
Podejście retoryczne, modele oralne, dispositio, zmartwychwstanie, przemiana.