

# The Election of Officers in the Corinthian Christ-Group\*

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Paul's language in 1 Cor 11.19 suggests that the Corinthians elected rotating officers to serve as administrative leaders with control over food distribution at the Lord's Supper. Interpreters overlook this verse's technical terminology despite the fact that doing so results in unusual and confusing translations. In addition to making sense out of the otherwise obscure sentence of v. 19, the existence of a 'flat hierarchy' of temporary and rotating officers in the Corinthian group helps to explain several aspects involved in the Corinthians' banquet problems.

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## 1. Corinthian Hierarchy

Were there officers in the Corinthian church? On the whole, past scholarship has found no evidence for such<sup>1</sup> and some pivotal works have argued directly against the possibility that the community elected temporary, rotating magistrates as did the *thiasoi* and *collegia*.<sup>2</sup> Before the 1970s, scholars such as J. Weiss,

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1 Some interpreters have briefly considered the possibility of officers in 1 Cor 12.27–28. See B. H. McLean, 'The Agrippinilla Inscription: Religious Associations and Early Church Formation', *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd* (ed. B. H. McLean; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 239–70 at 259; and R. M. McRae, 'Eating with Honor: The Corinthian Lord's Supper in Light of Voluntary Association Meal Practices', *JBL* 130 (2011) 165–81, esp. 172–3, 181.

2 Hatch found many parallels between early Christian and Greco-Roman forms of organization, but nonetheless argued that there was relatively little structure in Pauline Christ-groups: 'The distinctions which St. Paul makes between Christians are based not upon office, but upon

E. Hatch, and E. Schweizer contrasted the Corinthians' supposed ecclesiastical egalitarianism with the associations' flat hierarchies of elected and appointed magistrates. The 'egalitarianism theory' gave way in the following years when G. Theissen showed that egalitarianism as a concept did not adequately account for the dominance of leadership roles enjoyed by a minority of socially powerful Corinthians.<sup>3</sup> Although Theissen finds hierarchy among the Corinthians, he distinguishes its form from what he observes in associations. Theissen describes the Christ-group's order in the following way: '[w]hen, by contrast [to the associations], everything is left to the free sway of the "Spirit" [as it is in the Corinthian group], those who are of privileged status are much more likely to

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varieties of spiritual power... Now while this sense of the diffusion of spiritual gifts was so vivid, it was impossible that there should be the same sense of distinction between officers and non-officers which afterwards came to exist. Organization was a less important fact that it afterwards became'; see E. Hatch, *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches: Eight Lectures Delivered before the University of Oxford in the Year 1880 on the Foundation of the Late John Bampton* (London: Rivingtons, 1881) 119-20. For similar conclusions in comparisons with synagogues and association see J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) xxiv-xxvi, 386. In addition to these explicit contrasts, scholars have routinely characterized the Corinthians as entirely egalitarian thanks to the presence and equalizing effect of the spirit. R. Sohm was the first to describe the structure of the early churches as 'charismatische Organisation'—a designation inspired by 1 Cor 12.4. See *Kirchenrecht* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1892-1923) 1.26. See also Sohm, 'Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus' *Abhandlungen der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 27 (1909) 333-90, esp. 384. A. von Harnack argued that the first-century Corinthian church, unlike the Macedonian churches, had 'no organization whatsoever...for a decade, or even longer. The brethren submitted to a control of "the Spirit"', in *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (2 vols.; New York: Putnam's Sons, 1904-5) 2.51 n. 1. In 1969 H. Conzelmann stated that '[t]here is no organization of the whole church, but only minimal beginnings of organization in the individual communities... There is no hierarchy of ministries, no priestly state...no separation of clergy and laity, no firm regulating of the cult, but only the occasional instruction when the "management" threatens to get out of control,' in *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 2nd ed. 1969) 267-8, cf. 303. H. von Campenhausen argued that '[i]t is love which is the true organising and unifying force within the Church, and which creates in her a paradoxical form of order diametrically opposed to all natural systems of organization', in *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (London: A. & C. Black, 1969) 46. E. Schweizer posited, '[there existed] no fundamental organization of superior or subordinate ranks, because the gift of the Spirit is adapted to every Church member...the enumerations of the different kinds of gifts are quite unsystematic, with no sort of hierarchical character', in *Church Order in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1961) 99-100.

3 I refer here to Theissen's five articles published between 1974 and 1975 and now collected in *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1982).

have things their way'.<sup>4</sup> More recent works by B. Holmberg, W. Meeks, T. Schmeller, and many others, follow Theissen in acknowledging social hierarchy while simultaneously insisting that the Corinthians' organizational structure was less defined than what is found in the *collegia*.<sup>5</sup>

Whether scholars favour the thesis of Corinthian egalitarianism with diverse permanent gifts or hierarchical order based on social status, they agree that leadership roles in the Christ-group did not have annual or monthly expiry dates. In other words, once a leader (i.e. a teacher, a prophet, one of the socially strong) always one. The most commonly cited validation of the *communis opinio* is Paul's supposed silence on hierarchical features of typical Greek private cultic groups: he fails to mention titles held by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus when he recognizes them (1 Cor 16.17-18); he remains silent on Gaius's title when he tells the Romans about the householder's generous act of

4 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 155.

5 Meeks observes, 'Acts and the Pauline letters make no mention of formal offices in the early Pauline congregations. This fact is striking when we compare these groups with the typical Greek or Roman private association', in *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1983) 134. Holmberg, like R. Bultmann and others before him, is open to the existence of offices in Pauline churches. Like others, though, he downplays the significance of officers: '[t]he general impression we get when reading Paul's letters is that the local offices were rather unimportant'. For Holmberg, this was apparently especially true in Corinth, since Paul is here able to intervene regularly to establish disciplinary guidelines. See *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 113-17, cf. 205. In 1995, T. Schmeller (*Hierarchie und Egalität: eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine* [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995]) set out to compare the Corinthians with voluntary associations in order to answer the question: 'Gibt es nur hier (auf der christlichen Seite) Egalität und nur dort (auf der nichtchristlichen Seite) Hierarchie?' (9-10). He finds that both the associations and Corinthians have a bit of both egalitarianism and hierarchy. Regarding hierarchy in the Christ-group, he contends that it existed in the form of patrons, but a leadership structure between patrons and general membership was absent. He ultimately concludes that 'Alles in allem war die Struktur paulinischer Gemeinden vage' (77) and draws a popular conclusion: 'Es existierte in den Paulusgemeinden zwischen Patronen und einfachen Mitgliedern keine klar definierte Schicht von Amtsträgern...die den Gegebenheiten in Vereinen auch nur in etwa entsprach' (78). For Schmeller, this lack of local structure is due to Paul's dominant role as the founder, the first preacher of the gospel to the Corinthians, and a central contributor to disciplinary matters (77). For other recent comparative works on the Corinthians and associations that provide valuable insights but continue to reject the idea that officers existed in the Christ-group, see B. Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1995) 243-7, 453-8; S. J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003) 227-66, esp. 240; and E. Ebel, *Die Attraktivität früher christlicher Gemeinden: die Gemeinde von Korinth im Spiegel griechisch-römischer Vereine* (WUNT 2/178; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

hospitality in Corinth (Rom 16.23); and he says nothing about formal honours conferred upon group leaders.<sup>6</sup>

The present study contends that, despite silences here and there, Paul provides good evidence of the group's practice of electing officers in 1 Cor 11.19. In this verse, Paul employs two terms commonly found in formulaic descriptions of civic and association elections: αἰρέσεις and οἱ δόκιμοι. The existence of a flat hierarchy of temporary and rotating magistrates in the Corinthian group<sup>7</sup> helps to clarify the otherwise awkward sentence in 11.19, which interpreters have yet to explain adequately, and to illuminate issues behind the σχίσματα in 11.18.

## 2. The Problem of 'Factions' (αἰρέσεις) in 1 Corinthians 11.19

First Corinthians 11.19 is traditionally rendered in a way that defies logic and obscures Paul's technical terminology. The full verse reads as follows: δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν. A common translation is, approximately, 'It is necessary for there to be factions (αἰρέσεις) among you, for only so will it become (γένωνται) manifest who among you are genuine (οἱ δόκιμοι)'. Denoting αἰρέσεις as 'factions' or 'Parteien' remains nearly unanimous in standard Bible translations,<sup>8</sup> commentaries,<sup>9</sup> and

6 Meeks argues that an association would 'reward its patron with encomiastic inscriptions, honorary titles, [and] wreaths' but 'the Christian congregation was quite different, and the patrons [of early churches] may have had reason to feel somewhat slighted. Paul even admonishes the Corinthians to show a little more respect for such people such as Stephanas' (*First Urban*, 78). Other social-historical studies share this sentiment. For example, see W. L. Countryman, 'Patrons and Officers in Club and Church', *SBL 1977 Seminar Papers* (ed. Paul J. Achtemeier; SBLASP 11; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977) 135-43; Schmeller, *Hierarchie und Egalität*, 73-4; and A. Thiselton, who notes that in the Corinthian church 'often loyal hard work is simply taken for granted rather than publicly and consciously recognized', in *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 1342.

7 A flat hierarchy refers to an organizational structure where most leadership positions are, in theory, open to all members and rotated on a regular basis. This style of order did not preclude the influence of wealth or the presence of fixed patrons but it led to more democratic practices than traditional depictions of hierarchy in the Corinthian group. For more, see J. S. Kloppenborg, ed., with R. S. Ascough, *Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Thrace* (vol. 1 of *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary*; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2011) 11.

8 For example, 'heresies' in KJV; 'factions' in NRSV, RSV, ESV and NASB95; and 'differences' in NIV.

9 See Weiss, *Der erste*, 279-80; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: A. & C. Black, 2nd ed. 1971) 261; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 194; G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 538; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 859; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (4 vols.; EKKNT 7; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991-2001) 3.21-22; J. Héring, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1962) 113; R. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998) 158-9; J. A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (AYB 32; New Haven and London: Yale University, 2008) 433.

social-historical studies.<sup>10</sup> While ‘factions’ represents a possible interpretation for αἱρέσεις, it requires interpreters to ask basic and difficult questions about the meaning of the verse. For example, how can factions make clear who is genuine among the Corinthians? R. A. Campbell has spoken of the ‘enormous psychological difficulty’ of the standard interpretation.<sup>11</sup> Strategies for salvaging the αἱρέσεις-as-factions translation have been nearly identical for over a century: the verse apparently makes sense once it is assumed that Paul was alluding to a well-known Jesus saying about αἱρέσεις at the end of the age.<sup>12</sup> While Jewish apocalyptic literature widely attests to the idea that hardships accompanied the coming of the *eschaton*,<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor 11.19 shares neither the language nor the eschatological tone of these texts. For this reason, scholars have searched for closer analogies from Jesus tradition that might be able to clarify the meaning of the verse.

The search for a Jesus parallel has been unsuccessful. To be sure, scholars do observe that Q records a possibly authentic saying where Jesus claims that he will be responsible for inter-generational familial disruption (Matt 10.34-39 = Luke 12.51-53, 14.25-27; cf. Mic 7.6). But the problem is that none of the key terminology from 1 Cor 11.18-19 shows up (e.g. σχίσματα, αἱρέσεις, δεῖ, οἱ δόκιμοι, φανεροί) in the Q saying. In fact, the words used by the gospel writers for ‘divisions’ are διχάζω (Matt 10.35) and διαμερισμός/διαμερίζω (Luke 12.51-53) whereas Paul uses σχίσματα (1 Cor 11.18) and αἱρέσεις (11.19) to supposedly mean ‘divisions’ and ‘factions’. There are also no ideas in common between the two texts unless the prior decision is made to translate αἱρέσεις in 11.19 as ‘factions’. Even with this allowance there stands only one common element

10 Meeks, *First Urban*, 67; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 168; D. E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 197; Chester, *Conversion*, 218; K. E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Madison: InterVarsity, 2011) 318; D. G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996) 150-1; M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992) 80; P. Lampe, ‘Das Korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenistisch-römischer Mahlpraxis und paulinischer Theologia Crucis (1 Kor 11.17-34)’, *ZNW* 82 (1991) 183-213, esp. 211 n. 78. The only exception of which I am aware is R. A. Campbell, ‘Does Paul Acquiesce in Divisions at the Lord’s Supper?’, *NovT* 33 (1991) 61-70. Campbell’s translation is ‘choices’. It is odd that he does not consider ‘elections’ since he admits that his ‘choices’ rendering makes for an ‘unusual use of αἱρέσεις’. See ‘Acquiesce’, 66.

11 Campbell, ‘Acquiesce’, 70.

12 See J. Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 2nd ed. 1964) 76-7; Weiss, *Der erste*, 279-80; H. Paulsen, ‘Schisma und Häresie. Untersuchungen zu 1 Kor 11.18, 19’, *ZTK* 79 (1982) 180-211; Witherington III, *Conflict and Community*, 248; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 858-9; Fee, *First Epistle*, 537-9; Barrett, *First Epistle*, 261-2.

13 See W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 8-18* (ICC; vol. 2 of *The Gospel According to Matthew*; London and New York: T&T Clark, 1991) 217-24.

between Q and Paul: strife between people who already know each other. Q neither describes factions as necessary nor as phenomena that will generate knowledge of genuineness, while 1 Cor 11.19 lacks Q's eschatological content.

Matthew 24.9-13 (cf. Mark 13.13; Luke 21.17-18) is also sometimes cited as a parallel. Here there is mention of betrayal (παράδωσυσιν), false prophets (ψευδοπροφήται), lawlessness (ἀνομία), and salvation for the ones who endure this hardship. Relating this text to 1 Cor 11.18-19 raises all the same problems outlined above concerning the supposed parallel in Q.<sup>14</sup>

Approximately one hundred years after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, Justin records Jesus to have predicted σχίσματα and αἱρέσεις (*Dial.* 35.3), but αἱρέσεις is used by the apologist to mean heresies, which represents a later development of the word's usage.<sup>15</sup> Further, the search for a genealogical relationship between the αἱρέσεις in 1 Cor 11.19 and Justin's *Dial.* 35.3 is fruitless; as G. Fee and R. A. Campbell have already pointed out to varying degrees, it is difficult to make sense of 1 Cor 11.19 even if Paul did borrow from Justin's much later attested saying.

The most serious problem with the 'factions' translation, though, is not the difficulty in explaining how factions make clear who among the Corinthians are genuine. Rather, the primary difficulty is explaining why Paul would tell the Corinthians that 'factions are necessary' anywhere in the Corinthian correspondence—and especially in 11.17-34 where he combats the problem of divisions that have destroyed the Lord's Supper. To date there is no satisfying explanation.<sup>16</sup> Fee, like many others who translate αἱρέσεις as 'factions', is

14 For an excellent analysis of this text see D. C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996) 160-9.

15 In Justin, the Jesus saying appears in a conversation where Trypho observes that many Christians believed that they could eat idol meat and still be true Christians. Moreover, Trypho continues, they are regarded by others as being real Christians despite their lax dietary code (*Dial.* 35.1). Justin proceeds to explain that true Christians, when they witness heretics eating idol meat, actually have their faith strengthened. This is because Jesus predicted that false believers would appear. Witnessing a Jesus prediction come true, Justin continues, even if it is disturbing, is actually a good thing for true Christians. He lists some of Jesus' predictions that have come true as follows: 'Indeed, he [Jesus] foretold, "Many shall come in my name, clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves". And "There shall be schisms and heresies" (Ἔσονται σχίσματα καὶ αἱρέσεις). And "Beware of false prophets who come to you in clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves". And "There shall arise many false Christs and false apostles, and they shall deceive many of the faithful"' (*Dial.* 35.3). Translation from T. B. Falls, *St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho* (vol. 3 of *Selections from the Fathers of the Church*; Washington: Catholic University of America, 2003) 54 (my italics). cf. Syriac *Didascalia* 6.5.2; and Clement *Hom.* 16.21.4.

16 H. Lietzmann argued that 'v.19 ist entweder resigniert oder ironisch gemeint', in *An die Korinther I/II* (HNT 9; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 5th ed. 1969) 56. Lietzmann's theory, that Paul did not mean what he said in 11.19 literally, is offered prematurely. While I agree with

astounded by the verse. For him, 1 Cor 11.19 is ‘one of the true puzzles in the letter. How can he who earlier argued so strongly against “divisions among you” (1.10-17; 3.1-23) now affirm a kind of divine necessity to “divisions?”’<sup>17</sup> J. D. G. Dunn rightly observes that factional strife was a serious source of disorder in the congregation: Paul speaks of quarrels (1.11), jealousy (3.3), arrogant members (4.19), boastfulness (5.6), legal proceedings between two affiliates (6.1), and disorder (14.33).<sup>18</sup> To this list we might add divisions at the Lord’s Supper (11.18) and drunkenness (11.21). In 1 Cor 11.17-34 Paul attempts to provide solutions for divisions not reasons for the Corinthians to accept them as necessary.

### 3. Σχίσματα in 1 Corinthians 11.18

A better strategy for interpreting 1 Cor 11.19 is to follow the lead of scholarship on 11.18. In this verse, Paul describes divisions at the Lord’s Supper with the word *σχίσματα*. C. Roberts, T. C. Skeat, and A. D. Nock’s 1926 study shows that an Egyptian Zeus association used this word (which the guild misspelled as *σχίματα*) to refer to its own divisions (*P. Lond VII 2193.13 = AGRW 295*, Philadelphia, Egypt; 69–58 BCE).<sup>19</sup> This papyrus provides few details concerning the nature of its *σχίματα* but strikingly its officers are indicted. The text clarifies that factions are prohibited (line 13), and charges the leader (*ἡγουμένως*) and his assistant (*ὑπηρέτης*) with responsibility over the behavior of members during the feast: ‘all are to obey’ the officers in all matters pertaining to the association (lines 10-11).<sup>20</sup> When factions (*σχίσματα*) occur, therefore, they signal poor leadership—either the president and assistant pushed ahead with unpopular policies regarding banquet proceedings or they were unable to fulfill the duties of their

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Lietzmann that Paul could not have possibly endorsed factions, his theory will only be a viable option after all attempts at reading 11.19 plainly have failed. Even then his historically untestable suggestion will not be preferred: why did Paul treat with irony an issue (communal factions) addressed straight-forwardly in all other small group settings across the Mediterranean? Thiselton, alternatively, suggests that Paul quotes a Corinthian saying rather than create it himself. This would involve accepting that the saying existed about a century before Justin first attests to it and that there is a genealogical relationship between Justin’s and Paul’s text, which is impossible to prove. See Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 858-9.

17 Fee, *First Epistle*, 538.

18 See J. D. G. Dunn, *1 Corinthians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 27; cf. Chester, *Conversion*, 218.

19 C. Roberts, T. C. Skeat, and A. D. Nock, ‘The Gild of Zeus Hypsistos’, *HTR* 29 (1936) 39-88. *AGRW* refers to R. S. Ascough, P. A. Harland, and J. S. Kloppenborg, eds., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, TX.: Baylor University, 2012).

20 The Greek reads: ὑπακούσειν δὲ πάντα τοῦ τε ἡγουμένου καὶ τ[οῦ] τούτου ὑπηρετοῦ ἐν τε τοῖς ἀνήκουσι τῷ κοινῷ.

offices by preventing *σχίσματα* in the first place. Evidence from other cultic groups suggests the former was more common; but both possibilities reflect negatively on the officers.

It was not irregular for leaders to be physically or verbally abused due to their management or etiquette at banquets. For example, in a papyrus from Tebtynis (*P. PragueDem.* 1; 137 BCE), factious behavior involving officers is explicitly referenced. Here, it is agreed that fines will result for officers who strike members, for members who hit officers, for officers who threaten members, for anybody who threatens officers, and for anybody who insults officers. The fee for striking an officer is twice as high (100 deben) as the fee for striking a regular member (50 deben).<sup>21</sup> The Lanuvium inscription (*CIL* XIV 2112 = *AGRW* 310; Italy, 136 CE) also alludes to magistrate involvement in factiousness. As in the Egyptian associations, this society's leaders performed administrative duties at the banquet and its *quinquennalis* received a double portion at the meal (lines 2.17-19, 29-31).<sup>22</sup> This group specified that '[i]f anyone reproaches or says an insult to a *quinquennalis* at the banquets, he shall pay twenty sesterces' (lines 2.27-28)—a bylaw possibly attesting to officers' tendencies to become involved in factiousness. Similar problems of misbehavior disrupted the banquets of associations in Greece.<sup>23</sup> Like their Egyptian and Italian counterparts, these cults charged officers with responsibilities for facilitating banquets and meetings in orderly fashions.

That officers would be targets and perpetrators of ill-will at Egyptian, Italian, and Greek banquets is partially a manifestation of heightened status concerns that accompany association common meals. At these events, participants were visibly ranked and officers enjoyed status distinctions in the form of bigger food portions, better places in the banquet room, and control over proceedings.<sup>24</sup> Given the authority and pretension of some officers, it is not surprising to find them participating in, and sometimes even to blame for, factious behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

21 See A. Monson, 'The Ethics and Economics of Ptolemaic Religious Associations', *Ancient Society* 36 (2006) 221-36. For another association bylaw that explicitly distinguishes between offense against officers and offenses against regular members, see *P. LilleDem.* 29; Qus; 223 BCE.

22 It was very common for officers to enjoy control over cult banquet proceedings and receive more food than regular members. See, for example, *SEG* 31.122 = *GRA* I 50, Attica, early II CE; *P.Lond* VII 2193.8, 11-12 = *AGRW* 295, Philadelphia, Egypt, 69-58 BCE; *P.Mich* VIII 511, unknown location in Egypt, early III CE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1368 = *GRA* I 51, Athens, 165/4 CE.

23 For example, *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1368 = *GRA* I 51, Athens, 164/5 CE; *IG* IX/1<sup>2</sup> 670 = *GRA* I 61, Physkos, mid II CE.

24 K. Verboven, 'The Associative Order, Status and Ethos of Roman Businessmen in Late Republic and Early Empire', *Athenaeum* 95 (2007) 861-93, esp. 885.

25 Factions formed around, against, and as a result of officers not only at banquets. Disgruntled members sometimes tried to prevent voted honours (e.g. olive wreaths, honorific inscriptions) from being rewarded to magistrates. This explains the necessity some associations felt for



The Corinthian banquet encountered the type of *σχίσματα* characteristic of meetings of *thiasoi* and *collegia*.<sup>26</sup> When Paul moves from *σχίσματα* in 1 Cor 11.18 to elections in 11.19 (see below) his line of thought remains entirely continuous.<sup>27</sup> Elections represent, in Paul's mind, the solution to banquet *σχίσματα*, which amounts to an accusation that the current leaders<sup>28</sup> with

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assuring officers that their voted honours would be announced in front of their peers even if their enemies plotted against them. *AM* 66 228 no.4.18-20 = *GRA* I 39, Athens, 138/7 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1273AB.22-23 = *GRA* I 18, Piraeus, Attica, 265/4 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1292.16-17 = *GRA* I 26, Attica, 215/4 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1297.17-18 = *GRA* I 24, Athens, 236/5 BCE. See also J. S. Kloppenborg, 'Greco-Roman Thiasoi, the Ekklesia at Corinth, and Conflict Management', *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (ed. R. Cameron and M. P. Miller; SBL Early Christianity and its Literature 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 187-218, esp. 209-13. We also have fines for disgruntled members who snub officers by means of intentional absenteeism when magistrates were awarded gifts of honour or displayed status in other ways. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1339.7-8 = *GRA* I 46, Athens, 57/6 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1368.96-99 = *GRA* I 51, Athens, 164/5 CE; *IG* IX/1<sup>2</sup> 670.13-15 = *GRA* I 61, Physkos, Central Greece, mid II CE. See also J. S. Kloppenborg, 'Membership Practices in Pauline Christ Groups', *Early Christianity* 4 (2013) forthcoming; and Verboven, 'The Associative Order', 885.

26 This conclusion is drawn by several scholars. See, for example, D. E. Smith and H. E. Taussig, *Many Tables: The Eucharist in the New Testament and Liturgy Today* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990) 32; Mitchell, *Paul*, 72; Chester, *Conversion*, 245-5; Smith, *Symposium*, 198.

27 Commentators regularly observe that the γόρ in v. 19 expresses continuity of thought from the previous verse (e.g. Barrett, *First Epistle*, 261; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 858; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 3.21). Fee remarks that γόρ καί gives a reason for why Paul trusts his informant's report of *σχίσματα* (*First Epistle*, 538 n. 33; cf. n. 32). Here, on my reading, Paul argues that reports of factions at the common meal are believable in part because he does not regard the current leadership's competency highly. Order at association meetings was largely the responsibility of officials, as has been seen. One might object that elections will cause greater disorder and therefore Paul would not have recommended them. However, in a community where leaders are elected, problems are often solved at the conclusion of bad leaders' terms. For example, an association from Delos stipulates that its *archithiasitēs* will be prosecuted (if applicable) for misdeeds only upon conclusion of his office (*IDelos* 1520.88-9 = *AGRW* 224, Delos, Asia Minor, 153/2 CE). There are several examples of associations withholding honours for officials until the end of their terms, at which point they are scrutinized for the honesty with which they handled communal funds (*SEG* 2.9.5-6 = *GRA* I 21, Salamis, Attica, 243/2 BCE; *SEG* 2.10.6-7, Salamis, Attica, 248/7 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1282.4-14, Athens, 262/1 BCE) and for overall performance of duties (*SEG* 44.60.3-7, Salamis, Attica, 248/7 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1284.21-8 = *GRA* I 22, 241/0 BCE; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1329.3-19 = *GRA* I 37, Piraeus, Attica, 175/4 BCE; *IByzantion* 31 = *GRA* I 90, Rhégion, Thrace, 85-96 CE). When officers steal money, create policies leading to disorder, or allow misbehavior to ensue, associations solve the problem by punishing them at the end of their term. The subsequent (elected or appointed) magistrates must perform their duties more successfully if they wish to receive honorific rewards upon completion of their terms.

28 See section 6 for data indicating the Corinthians were already in the practice of electing their officers. The evidence for Corinthian elections (section 4) does not suggest that Paul *initiated* this mechanism of ordination within the group but, rather, that Paul referenced a procedure

responsibilities over food distribution (11.20) are at fault for the *σχίσματα*.<sup>29</sup> Given the involvement of officers in factious behaviour throughout ancient Mediterranean association banquets, it is not surprising to find them involved in the Corinthian *σχίσματα*, and at fault, in Paul's mind. With new elections, Paul believes, the Christ-group will have competent and balanced officers managing the common meal, who will steer the community with sensitivity to the needs of all members. As has been shown, the dominant theory that Paul endorses 'factions' does not work within the context of v. 19 or with Paul's advice against factions throughout the letter. Endorsing elections, on the other hand, is comprehensible. The following section of this article provides data in support of this new reading of 11.19 that avoids all the problems associated with the older translations of *αἰρέσεις* as 'factions'.

#### 4. Elections among the Corinthians

*Αἰρέσις* functioned as a technical term in antiquity that, along with its cognates, was commonly used in civic and association sources to describe the election of a magistrate. The noun derives from *αἰρέω*, which, when in middle and passive forms, refers to elections of officers. For example, the Iobacchoi of Athens elected their treasurer every two years: *ταμίαν δὲ αἰρείσθωσαν οἱ ἰόβακχοι ψήφῳ εἰς διετίαν* (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.146-7 = GRA I 51*, Athens, 164/5 CE). Likewise, an association of *thiasōtai* honour their elected secretary: 'Demetrios, who was elected (*αἰρεθείς*) secretary by the *thiasōtai*: ...took care of all of the affairs of the association honorably and justly' (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 1263 = GRA I 11*, Piraeus, Attica, 300/299 BCE).<sup>30</sup> In another Greek association, a certain Mēnis was elected (*αἰρεθείς*) to become the group's treasurer (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 127 = GRA I 13*, Attica, 299/8 BCE). Sometimes members were elected to complete special tasks. The *thiasōtai* of Bendis in Salamis (Attica) elected a writing team:

[T]he association should elect (*ἐλέσθαι*) three men who, after receiving the money set aside [for this purpose], will set up a stele in the temple and engrave the decree and name of each of those who have been thus crowned. The ones elected (*οἱ αἰρεθέντες*) [to do this] should render an account of the money that was set aside for the stele. The following were elected

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already part of the group's structure. Greeks had been holding private and public elections for hundreds of years before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians.

29 This conclusion counters that of Schweizer (*Church Order*, 187): 'This ministry [of the Lord's Supper] never appears as a special gift of grace, nor as an office. In 1 Cor 11.17ff. Paul cannot appeal to anyone who is responsible for the proper conduct of the Lord's Supper.'

30 English translations of *GRA I* inscriptions are from Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Attica*. Emphasis on the middle and passive meaning of *αἰρέω* as 'elect' is my own.

(εἰρέθησαν): Batrachos, Dokimos and Krates. (*SEG* 2.9, Salamis, Attica, 243/2 BCE; my translation)

We also hear of ones ‘additionally elected’ such as in *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1282 (Athens, 262/1 BCE), where an unstated number of members were elected to help the supervisor perform a building task: ‘the ones additionally elected (οἱ προ[σ]αρε[θ]έντες) with the supervisor Aphrodisios for the building additions to the temple of Ammon’.<sup>31</sup> Ancient historians commonly draw attention to the frequency with which αἰρέομαι is used to denote the act of electing a magistrate.<sup>32</sup>

While the verb αἰρέομαι refers to the act of electing, the cognate noun used by Paul refers to the actual election itself. Liddell and Scott<sup>33</sup> list ‘choice or election of magistrates’ as one of the translations of αἴρεσις. We encounter this meaning well before Paul’s composition of 1 Corinthians. In the fifth century BCE, Thucydides writes about an important difference between being defeated in a democracy and being denied promotion in an oligarchy: ἐκ δὲ δημοκρατίας αἰρέσεως γιγνομένης ῥῶον τὰ ἀποβαίνοντα ὡς οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐλασσούμενός τις φέρει (8.89).<sup>34</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle speaks frequently about the αἰρέσεις of various officials in Athens’ democratic institutions.<sup>35</sup> For example, in one instance he speaks about the social-economic elites (elected archons) who were members of the Areopagus: ἡ γὰρ αἴρεσις τῶν ἀρχόντων ἀριστίνδην καὶ πλουτίνδην ἦν, ἐξ ὧν οἱ Ἀρεοπαγῖται καθίσταντο (*Ath. Pol.* 3.37).<sup>36</sup> The word continued to be used in such a manner in the initial centuries of the common era. A third-century CE report of proceedings of the senate from Egypt (*P. Oxy.* 1414.17-23; 270–75 CE) demonstrates this quite well. In this text αἰρέομαι and αἰρέσις are used interchangeably two lines apart to refer to elections of public servants:

31 See also *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1258.12-13 where three men are elected (ἐλέσθαι) to assist a certain Polyxenos in a legal matter.

32 For example, see I. N. Arnaoutoglou, *Thusias Heneka Kai Sunousias: Private Religious Associations in Hellenistic Athens* (Yearbook of the Research Centre for the History of Greek Law 37/4; Athens: Academy of Athens, 2003) 104; and A. H. M. Jones, ‘The Election of the Metropolitan Magistrates in Egypt’, *JEA* 24 (1938) 65-72 at 71.

33 H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (revised edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) 41.

34 ‘[W]hereas under a democracy an election is held and every man acquiesces more readily in the result because he feels that those to whom he owes his defeat are not his equals’ (Loeb translation [C. Forster Smith]). The accompanying LCL note clarifies how Thucydides could speak of democratic election candidates as ‘unequal’: ‘in an oligarchy all are of the same class, and the promotion of one is a slight upon the rest; but in a democracy the defeated candidate may claim that the electors were ignorant or prejudiced, that he was not beaten on his merits, and so pass the matter over’ (352).

35 For example, Ps.-Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 26.14 (ἀρχόντων αἴρεσιν); 31.9-10, 44.4 (αἴρεσιν/ἀρχαιρεσίας τῶν στρατηγῶν).

36 ‘For there was an election of archons according to birth and wealth, from which the ones of the Areopagus were appointed’.

A communication from Terentius Arius, strategus, having been read, concerning the election (αἰρεθῆναι) of...it was decided to postpone the matter until the next meeting. A communication from the stategus having been read, concerning the election (αἰρέσεως) of other convoyers of animals, after the reading the prytanis said, '...especially the convoyers of the animals transported...I collected some senators who were present and nominated one, Sarapion...in order that there should not be (any delay)...' The senators said, 'Invaluable prytanis; save yourself for us, prytanis; excellent is your rule; excellent...' The prytanis said... 'is in the counting-house'. The senators said, 'The prytanis has done right'. (trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt)

Sometimes Greeks employed the synonymous verb, χειροτονεῖν, to refer to elections or appointments.<sup>37</sup> The usage of this word in several first- and second-century Christian sources suggests that standard Greek and Roman ordination practices were known and used within the Christ-groups.<sup>38</sup> The Athenian orator, Demosthenes, who quite consistently prefers χειροτονεῖν over αἰρεθῆναι, provides us with a parallel to Paul's 'elections among you' (αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν) construction: 'But have you not been electing from among yourselves ten brigadiers and ten generals and ten squadron-leaders and a couple of cavalry-commanders?' (Demosthenes 1-4 *Philippic* 1.26 (Loeb translation [J. H. Vince]).<sup>39</sup>

Election is not the sole manner of ordination in Greco-Roman associations. Often, individuals are appointed (καθίστημι) to their office.<sup>40</sup> At other times, an affiliate achieved office through allotment (λαχοῦσα), a method generally

37 Associations: *IRhannous* II 59 = *GRA* I 27 (Rhamnous, Attica, after 216/15 BCE). Literary works: Ps.-Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 54.5; 61. 4, 5, 7; Demosthenes *Against Meidias* 15; and Demosthenes *Against Boeotus* II, 34.

38 2 Cor 8.19; Acts 14.23; *Did.* 15.1; *Ign. Phld.* 10. The reference to ἐπίσκοποι καὶ διάκονοι in Phil 1.1 also indirectly implies elections or appointments to temporary positions. Notably, these titles were not, as far as Paul's description indicates, διὰ βίου ('for life'), the standard designation for permanent offices in associations. Rather, they rotated anywhere from every five years to every month (we cannot be more precise). For διὰ βίου offices, see *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1326.36 = *GRA* I 36 (ἱερεωσύνην...διὰ βίου); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1328 = *GRA* I 34 (διὰ βίου ζάκορον τεῖ θεῶι); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1368.7 = *GRA* I 51 (see Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Attica*, 254); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 2361.10, 68 = *GRA* I 52 (ἱερεὺς διὰ βίου); Jaccottet no. 7. 5-6 = *GRA* I 60 (διὰ βίου ἱερέα). For more references to elections in early Christian literature, see E. Hatch, 'Ordination', *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities: Comprising the History, Institutions, and Antiquities of the Christian Church from the Time of the Apostles to the Age of Charlemagne* (ed. W. Smith and S. Cheetham; 2 vols.; London: J. Murray, 1908) 2.1501-20, esp. 1501.

39 οὐκ ἐχειροτονεῖτε δ' ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν δέκα ταξιάρχους καὶ στρατηγούς καὶ φυλάρχους καὶ ἰπάρχους δύο;

40 *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1278.6 = *GRA* I 17 (Attica, 272/1 BCE); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1277.5 = *GRA* I 15 (Athens, 278/7 BCE); *SEG* 2.10.4 (Salamis, Attica, mid III BCE); Acts 6.4; Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 2.1; cf. Ps.-Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 3.37.

reserved for sacerdotal positions.<sup>41</sup> In still other cases, our inscriptions give us less information about the origins of the assignment. Commonly, an individual is said to have simply ‘become’ (γενόμενος) an officer with few other details about how they obtained their title.<sup>42</sup> Sometimes, a member is not even said to have ‘become’ an officer—they are simply mentioned as a magistrate who earned commendation, supposedly at the end of their term.<sup>43</sup> When the words αἰρέομαι/αἰρέσις are employed, they refer specifically to the election method of selecting a magistrate.

A second term from 1 Cor 11.19 that is found in formulaic descriptions of Greek elections is οἱ δόκιμοι. This substantive is unlikely to refer to divine eschatological testing since the verse is otherwise devoid of apocalyptic terminology and, moreover, οἱ δόκιμοι fits well with the sentence’s other election term and the allusion in v. 18 to character deficiencies often found in officers of private cultic groups.<sup>44</sup> In 11.19, the adjective describes the status of elected Corinthians set to take up offices. Civic institutions used this language to denote a scrutiny of elected or appointed officers of the *boulē* and other public officials.<sup>45</sup> This procedure, called the δοκιμασία (‘scrutiny’), occurred between the time when an officer was appointed (through election or sortition) and the time of their actual assumption of the office, and was therefore a post-election procedure. The scrutiny consisted of an examination of the candidate’s full life to determine if the individual was a ‘good and patriotic citizen’.<sup>46</sup> G. Adeleye summarizes, ‘[i]t was a comprehensive examination which took into consideration a candidate’s legal qualifications, both as a citizen and for the office in question,

41 *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1263.39 = GRA I 11* (Piraeus, Attica, 300/299 BCE); *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1273A.13 = GRA I 18* (Piraeus, Attica, 265/4 BCE); *SEG 2.9.5 = GRA I 29* (Piraeus, Attica, 211/0 BCE).

42 For usage of the term in the context of association elections, see *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1261A.4 = GRA I 9* (Piraeus, Attica, 302/1 BCE); *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1297.12 = GRA I 24* (Athens, 236/5 BCE); *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1298.14 = GRA I 20* (Athens, 248/7 BCE). This is a very common verb appearing in a range of contexts. Paul uses it (γένωνται) in 11.19 to describe the transformation from regular member to officer, acknowledging that it is through elections (αἰρέσεις) that this process happens in the Christ-group.

43 For example, see *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1291 = GRA I 19* (Piraeus? Attica, mid III BCE); and *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1298 = GRA I 20* (Athens, Attica, 248/7 BCE).

44 Interpreters almost unanimously read this term to have an eschatological meaning. See, for example, J. Munck, ‘The Church without Factions: Studies in 1 Corinthians’, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM, 1959) 135-67; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 3.21-2; F. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen and Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994) 148; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 858-9; Barrett, *First Epistle*, 261-2; Héring, *First Epistle*, 113; Witherington III, *Conflict and Community*, 248.

45 G. Adeleye, ‘The Purpose of the *Dokimasia*’, *GRBS* 24 (1983) 295-306, esp. 295.

46 D. M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1978) 168. The thorough nature of the δοκιμασία is treated in a forthcoming paper by J. S. Kloppenborg entitled, ‘The Moralizing of Discourse in Graeco-Roman Associations’.

and the probity of his life and past political activities'.<sup>47</sup> The related term, δοκιμάζειν, is very frequently used to mean 'to approve after scrutiny as fit for a civic office'.<sup>48</sup> Paul's reference to 'the approved ones' (οἱ δόκιμοι) probably betrays a vetting practice adopted by the Corinthians in the manner of the civic institution. Before or after a Corinthian is elected they must undergo scrutiny prior to the start of their term. This would amount to a similar usage of the adjective as we find in Philo (*Joseph* 201) when he references certain high-standing Egyptians who were possibly elected officers: συνεξιστιῶντο δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις δοκίμων.<sup>49</sup>

The scrutiny to which the Corinthians submitted their officers finds an analogy in Greek civic organizations, but were individuals regularly scrutinized by associations as 1 Cor 11.19 indicates was done in the Christ-group? J. S. Kloppenborg shows that some associations vetted incoming members before allowing them to become official members.<sup>50</sup> These texts are important for showing that the δοκιμασία was used not only in civic institutions but also in *thiasoi* and *collegia*. The references to scrutiny by the Athenian Iobacchoi are particularly helpful since they document the same key components of the Corinthians' ordination procedure. For example, in the following lines it is stipulated that a new member in the cult group must be approved through an election in order to join the group: 'If a brother of an Iobacchoi should join, having been approved by a vote, he shall pay fifty denarii' (lines 53-55).<sup>51</sup> The Iobacchoi's scrutiny happens prior to the election, which is likely closer to the procedure in 1 Cor 11.19 than the post-election scrutiny in larger civic groups.

### 5. Corinthian Officers as φανεροί

S. R. Joshel recently analyzed Roman artisans' and tradespeoples' habit of listing formerly held association titles in funerary epitaphs. She showed that *collegiati* included this information as a way to fashion their line of work as prestigious rather than socially embarrassing. If they were freedmen, Joshel continues, title-inclusion re-directed emphasis from a socially demeaning legal status to a 'prestige symbol' earned in associative life.<sup>52</sup> A few years earlier H. L.

47 Gabriel, 'Purpose', 305.

48 Lysias *For Mantitheus* 15.6; Plato *Laws* 759d; Ps.-Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 45.3. Acts records an election process that includes all the components of a standard election: the seven were elected by the general assembly and then 'appointed', and therefore approved, by the apostles thereafter (Acts 6.3-5).

49 'Other Egyptian dignitaries feasted with them' (Loeb translation [trans. F. H. Colson]).

50 This is from the forthcoming paper, 'Moralizing of Discourse'.

51 ἐάν δὲ ἰοβάκχου ἀδελφὸς ἰσέρχηται ψήφῳ δοκιμασθεὶς, διδότην δηνάριον ν'.

52 S. R. Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992) 114-5, 118.

Royden even suggested that opportunities to hold valued office-titles attracted disproportionately high numbers of recruits from servile backgrounds to associative life, a theory especially worthy of consideration when studying attractors to cultic groups from Roman Corinth.<sup>53</sup> Given the social capital of office-holding, Paul's construction ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωται ἐν ὑμῖν makes most sense as: 'in order that the approved ones become persons of distinction'. Rendering φανεροί as 'persons of distinction' fits well within the adjective's range of meanings in antiquity.<sup>54</sup> Several NT authors use this word elsewhere as a marker for a notable object or person. For example, Luke speaks of a 'notable sign' (σημεῖον...φανερὸν) in Acts 4.16; while Paul speaks of his imprisonment as something notable by agents who spread the gospel (φανερῶς... ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, Phil 1.13).<sup>55</sup> As well, the notion that approved Corinthians would become 'persons of distinction' after being elected matches ancient behavior suggestive that holding a private office could provide social enhancement if performed honorably.

## 6. Institutionalism in the Corinthian Group

The language in 1 Cor 11.19 is what we should expect when reading about real elections within an ancient Greek institution. Traditional translations seemingly fall under the influence of a strong consensus denying the Christ-group structural sophistication even though unsolvable issues result from rendering αἰρέσεις as anything other than 'elections'. A less problematic translation of the entire verse reads approximately: 'There need to be elections among you in order that the approved ones become persons of distinction'.

53 H. L. Royden, *The Magistrates of the Roman Professional Collegia in Italy: From the First to the Third Century A.D.* (Bibliotheca di studi antichi 61; Pisa: Giardini, 1988). Many of Royden's sources are from Ostia, Rome. J. Liu recently called Royden's percentages into question: '[i]t is often emphasized that freedmen were more likely to advertise their affiliation than others. However, a large fraction of the persons mentioned in our inscriptions never specified their legal status. In fact, identifying members of freedmen status proves to be no easy task.' Later Liu arrives at an adapted version of Royden's theory: '[t]he membership composition of the *collegia centonariorum* varied in different regions. As far as we can tell from the evidence, the percentage of freedmen members was perhaps higher in Rome, Lugdunum, and perhaps Sassina than in cities elsewhere, especially those in the frontier provinces, such as Pannonia and Noricum', *Collegia Centonariorum: The Guilds of Textile Dealers in the Roman West* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 34; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009) 172 and 208 respectively.

54 See, for example, Thucydides (*War* 1.17), who speaks of 'being held back from achieving something notable' (κατεῖχετο...φανερὸν...κατεργάζεσθαι); and Philostratus (*Vit. Apoll.* 2.20) who comments on persons with social capital, or 'persons of distinction' (τοὺς φανερωτέρους).

55 The word carries similar implications in Matt 12.16; Mark 3.12, and 6.14.

Paul does not feel the need to spend more than a few words on the topic, which suggests that the Corinthians did not require lessons on how to elect their officers. Greeks had been electing magistrates into civic and associative orders for hundreds of years before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians so we should not suspect that Paul would need to convince them to adopt the practice, either. We can also be relatively sure that the Corinthians respected the process of electing and scrutinizing communal servants since Paul tells them in 2 Cor 8.16-24, in an attempt to garner their trust, that the transfer of the Jerusalem collection will be done by elected and scrutinized dignitaries. One of the emissaries was elected (χειροτονηθείς) by the congregations for administrative purposes and the other was scrutinized (ἐδοκιμάσαμεν). Apparently Paul thought this process was valued by the Corinthians.<sup>56</sup>

In 1 Cor 11.18-19 Paul suggests to the group that the real answer to their banquet problems (i.e. σχίσματα) is elections when the terms of the current officers expire. In other words, he explicitly lays responsibility for the banquet issues on the shoulders of the current magistrates responsible for banquet accommodations, food distribution, and the overall structure of the meal. Elections are necessary because elected and scrutinized officers, incidentally not social elites (though there would have been some overlap), ran the banquet.<sup>57</sup>

### 7. Re-visiting the Problems at the Corinthian Banquet

For the past four decades, the majority of social-historical interpretations of the letter contend that the Christ-group's hierarchy was established on the basis of social status. That is, the authority figures were fixed leaders and no mechanisms existed to democratize leadership through annual elections or through other means of choosing rotating leaders. First Corinthians 11.17-34 represents a primary location for demonstrating the interpretive power of the fixed hierarchy theory. For example, Theissen famously suggested, 'the *wealthy Christians* not only ate by themselves and began before the regular Lord's Supper, but also had more to eat';<sup>58</sup> Thiselton recently posited that the divisions were mostly between 'first-class and second-class guests at dinner';<sup>59</sup> Fee contended that the divisions result from the wealthy 'acting merely as the rich

56 Hatch ('Ordination', 1501-20) has assembled a vast amount of data showing consistency between civic modes of ordination and those found within the early Christian literature. His article is predictably light on Christian data from the first-century and unfortunately neglects the usage of ἀιρέσις/ἀιρέομαι in public ordinations, but its proposal that Christians ordained leaders in the same way as did Greeks and Romans is very effectively supported with much data.

57 For officers assuming roles of authority at cultic banquets, see section 3.

58 Theissen, *Social Status*, 155 (my italics).

59 Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 858.



would always act with poorer guests in their homes';<sup>60</sup> and J. Murphy O'Connor proposed

It became imperative for the host to divide his guests into two categories: the first class believers were invited into the triclinium while the rest stayed outside. Even a slight knowledge of human nature indicates the criterion used. The host must have been a wealthy member of the community and so he invited into the triclinium his closest friends among the believers, who would have been of the same social class. The rest could take their places in the atrium, where conditions were greatly inferior.<sup>61</sup>

To be sure, economic resources were important for candidates of an ancient democratic hierarchy<sup>62</sup>—and scholars have illuminated well how issues of wealth probably impacted the scandal surrounding the incestuous man,<sup>63</sup> and Corinthian attitudes towards the body<sup>64</sup> and meat consumption.<sup>65</sup> However, Paul describes the administrative leaders of the Christ-group as temporarily elected magistrates. Such a democratization of power is key in Thucydides' comparison between democracies and oligarchies (8.89). In *thiasoi* and *collegia*, and this Christ-group, a flat hierarchy would in theory ensure that all members temporarily enjoyed administrative positions of authority, not just the most wealthy.<sup>66</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

The dominant theory concerning Corinthian hierarchy fails to account for 1 Cor 11.19. Paul's language in this verse becomes comprehensible when understood alongside formulaic descriptions of Greek elections in Hellenistic and Roman epigraphic and literary documents. The verse provides evidence that the Corinthian group elected administrative officers whose responsibilities involved managerial duties at the Lord's Supper. Since this form of organizational structure differs from the ones that anchor previous reconstructions of the proceedings and problems at the Christ group's banquet, interpretations of 1 Cor 11.17-34 may need to begin anew.

60 Fee, *First Epistle*, 539.

61 J. Murphy O'Connor, *St Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983) 159. While Murphy-O'Connor's thesis remains influential, D. Horrell provides a convincing alternative in 'Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre', *NTS* 50 (2004) 349-69.

62 See Verboven, 'The Associative Order', 861-93.

63 A. D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 74-88.

64 D. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University, 1995).

65 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 121-43.

66 For the democratic nature of public offices in Athens see Adeleye, 'Purpose', 295. For the structure of leadership in Greek associations see Arnaoutoglou, *Thusias*, 89-118.