so many of our readers to a nice new term: envisioning the conventional epistolary opening, the topic begins with a prooemial section containing practical advice; then the letter ends with more epistolary conventions. I Corinthians has the conventional epistolary opening and closing, but the body of the letter lets quite different from the typical Pauline epistle. Rather than the two-fold division outlined above, I Corinthians contains a series of discourses on topics which often seem quite unrelated. It may appear at first to the reader that Paul was following a "stream of consciousness" order, simply discussing items as they came to his mind. The reader may see the topics discussed as a hodge-podge of items. An in-depth analysis of the patterns in this discourse, however, reveals that I Corinthians shows much more structure than may be apparent on an initial reading.

The historical background to I Corinthians

The apostle Paul came to the city of Corinth on his second missionary journey, probably in the spring of A.D. 50 (Barrett 1968:5). Acts 18:1-18 records how Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, working with them as tentmakers during the week and preaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath days. When Silas and Timothy finally arrived from Macedonia, he devoted himself to preaching and teaching all the time. Opposition arose from the Jews and Paul moved his preaching to the house of Titus Justus, a God-fearer who lived next door to the synagogue. Cephas, the ruler of the synagogue, was converted, along with many of the Corinthians. In all, Paul stayed about a year and a half, probably until the fall of A.D. 51 (Barrett 1968:8). It was during this time that the Jews dragged Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio, the Roman proconsul. Their effort to stop his preaching by legal means failed, but it aids us in dating the event. An inscription found at Delphi places Gallio in Corinth between January 25th and August 1st in A.D. 52. It is therefore likely that he became procurator in the spring of A.D. 51. This may date be a year too early, but the chronology is close if not exact (Conzelmann 1975:12-13).

After Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla left Corinth for Ephesus, Apollos came to Corinth (Acts 18:27-19:1). Perhaps Peter also visited the city, for we find a Cephas party mentioned in I Cor. 1:2.

When Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he began correspondence with the church at Corinth that included probably four letters from him and at least one letter from them. In I Cor. 5:9-11 Paul refers to a previous letter he had written them (unless, of course, the word "wrote" be taken as an epistolary address referring to I Corinthians). Some have identified this previous letter with II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, but it is more likely that this letter has been lost (Guthrie 1970:425-426).

In reply, they sent a letter to Paul asking questions (I Cor. 7:1), perhaps carried by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17). Several sections begin with the words "who?" "now concerning" (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12); these are usually taken as referring to the Corinthians' questions in their letter (cf. Morris 1958:115, 124, 237, 242). If this is correct, the letter read something like the following reconstruction (this was composed using I Cor. 1:2, 14; 7:1, 25; 8:1, 4, 10:23; 11:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12, 17; Rom. 16:23; III John 2; I Clement 1:1; Morgan-Wyne 1983:7, 10-11; Bruce 1971:102; Barrett 1968:4; and Doty 1973:2, 4-5, 30-31):

The church of God which is at Corinth to Paul. Rejoice.

We pray that you may be in health, even as we are. We thank God for you, remembering you in our prayers.

There have been some matters of discussion among us, and knowing your wisdom, we are writing for your decision in these matters.

Is it a good thing for a man not to touch a woman? If so, does a man do well if he should give his virgin in marriage?

Should we eat things sacrificed to idols? Some say that we all have knowledge that no idol is anything in the world and that there is no God but one. And we know that all things are lawful.

Now we remember you in everything and maintain the traditions even as you have delivered them to us. But as to spiritual gifts, is it better to speak in tongues or to prophesy in church?

How should we take up the collection for the saints in Jerusalem?

Some among us would like Apollos to return. Send him back to us soon.

This letter is sent by the hand of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus whom you know to be faithful in the Lord. They will tell you more than what we have written.


Paul's answer to them was the letter we call I Corinthians.

In the opening, Paul associates Sosthenes, a Christian brother, with himself. Some have connected him with the Sosthenes mentioned in Acts 18:17 (Barrett 1968:31). But it is more likely that the opening was probably "someone well known to the Corinthian church" who was with Paul in Ephesus at the time of writing (Bruce 1971:30). But Conzelmann is right in noting that "the fellow-writer is not a fellow-author" (1975:20). Paul uses the singular Greek pronoun for "I" eighty-six times in the letter (Aland, Bachmann, and Slaby 1978:82).

The Structure of the Letter

The body of the letter of I Corinthians is composed of ten discourses, whose main topics are division (1-4), fornication (5-6), marriage (7), food offered to idols (8-10), head coverings (11), the Lord's Supper (11), and resurrection from the dead (15), the contribution for the saints (16), and the coming of Apollos (16). The discourses on marriage, meat offered to idols, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection seem to have arisen from reports brought by some members of Chloe's household (1:11) and by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17). There are indications of oral reports also in 5:1, 11:18, and 15:12, although there is no indication of the source of this information.

The discourse on marriage actually seems to be in answer to two questions (7:1, 25). However, the responses to both are similar, and it seems best to treat this as one discourse.

The motivation for the order in which the subjects are addressed is not entirely evident. Presumably the subjects that are introduced by "he?" "now concerning" are in the same order as in the Corinthians' letter, although even this is not certain. The sections on fornication and marriage are found together, probably because both have to do with sexual issues. In the same way, the worship concerns of head coverings, the Lord's Supper, and use of spiritual gifts are grouped together, even though the first two interrupt what would have been a continuous reply to the Corinthians' letter. Perhaps the lengthy treatment given the subject of division, the back reference to that subject in 11:18, and the primary place accorded it indicate that it was foremost in Paul's mind. In the same way, the ordering of the discourse on the resurrection as the last major discussion may indicate its importance, although it is possible that the contribution received only four verses of attention due to constraints imposed by the size of the scroll on which the letter was written (note that the merit sections two chapters in II Corinthians). But Paul may have seen the end of the scroll coming and decided to address the question of the resurrection before he ran out of room.

This study takes the position that only those sections that are introduced by "he?" "now concerning" are in fact Paul's answers to the Corinthians' letter. All other sections are in response to oral reports which Paul received from various sources. Not everyone has always taken this position; for example, Hurd (1983) has argued that some of the sections which do not begin with "now concerning" are also answers to questions in the Corinthians' letter. It is beyond the scope of this article to address this question, but interested readers can consult the justification for the position this paper takes in Terry (1995:39-42).

When only those sections which are introduced by "he?" "now concerning" are treated as replies to questions in the Corinthians' letter and the other sections are treated as responses to oral information which Paul had received, the letter divides nicely into a cyclical structure of ABAB'CB, where A is a response to oral reports and B is a response to the Corinthians' letter. This is shown clearly in Table 1. First, two subjects are covered in response to oral reports; then there are two subjects in response to their letter. This is followed by a two-one-two pattern of two responses to oral reports, one to the letter, one to an oral report, and two to the letter. The motivation for this pattern is not clear, although it may provide groupings of related topics (discourses 2 and 3 on sex; 4, 5, and 6 on pagan worship forms; and 6 and 7 on the Christian assembly). In addition, Paul's travel plans are found both between the first two discourses and the last two discourses. If the division defended below and indicated in Table 1 is correct, these travel plans are found at the beginning of the second discourse and the end of the next to last discourse, showing an even greater balance in the overall structure of the book.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Response to Oral Report</th>
<th>Response to Letter</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>A Wisdom and Deism (3:16-25)</td>
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<td>B Lawsuits (6:1-8)</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>B Love (13)</td>
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The Macrostructures of the Discourses brings to a close the discourse on eating meat offered to idols in 11:1 and the idea of the practice of all the churches in 4:17 closes the discourse on head coverings in 11:16. Therefore it seems best to take the first the arrogant with a whip (cf. Bailey 1983, 162; and Barrett 1968, 117). And finally, verses 16 and 17 contain similar ideas to those found in other verses that end discourses. The idea of imitating Paul in verse 16 also and διὰ τοῦτο 'because of this' (v. 17). Fifth, commentators have noted the difference in tone between 4:14, where Paul is admonishing the Corinthians as children, and 4:21, where Paul is threatening to come against them with a verse containing the conjunctive particle de 'now'. In addition, they all end with verses that contain a transitional particle, either de 'but' (7:40; 11:16; 11:34; 14:40; 16:12), ἀλλὰ 'but' (11:33; 14:39), ἀλλάζειν 'to change' (10:31), or ἵνα . . . δέ 'for ... but' (6:20; 16:11). But neither 5:1 nor 4:21 contain inter-colon transitional conjunctions (4:21 does contain ἀλλὰ 'or' and 5:1 contains ἀλλά 'and', but both connect clauses within a colon).

*Discourses 7 and 8 are peak sections foreshadowed by the thanksgiving in 1:4-9.

Paul's Use of Chiasmus in Major Sections

Several of the discourses in 1 Corinthians show chiasmus of major sections in the form ABCA. The B section in these discourses has often been mistakenly identified as a digression or excursus (Guthrie 1970:425; Feins, Behm, and Kümmel 1966:198-199; and Morgan-Wyne 1983:7). For the moment skipping the discourse in chapters 1 through 4, we find this feature in the discourses in 4:18-6:20 (fornication, lawsuits, fornication), 7:1-40 (marriage, circumcision and slavery, marriage), 8:1-1:11 (eating meat offered to idols, right of the teacher to receive pay, eating meat offered to idols), and 12:1-14:40 (spiritual gifts, love, spiritual gifts) (Turner 1976:97).

The chiasmus may be charted in the following way:


When this is done, the structure of the first discourse shows the double chiasmus form of ABA' C(A''/B').

The Endings of Two Discourses

In a couple of places it is questionable whether chapter beginnings actually mark the beginnings of the major embedded discourses. It is generally agreed that 11:1 is the last statement of the discourse on meat offered to idols rather than on the subject of head coverings (Cf. Morris 1958:150). In the same way, there is some difficulty in knowing whether to assign the transitional verses 4:18-21 to the first or second discourse.

It is traditional among commentators to carry the discussion of the first discourse through 4:21 and begin the new discourse on fornication with 5:1. This view is not without its problems. Some commentators who take this view note that 5:1 begins abruptly (Findlay 1979:907 and Morris 1958:86) or medias in res (Lenski 1946:205) or as a "sudden bursting of the storm" (Edwards 1885:118; cf. also Robertson and Plummer 1914:95). A few note either that the discourse should begin with 4:21 (Calvin 1948:177), or that 4:21 ties the two discourses together (Alford reprinted 1983:1000). Fee (1987:194) notes that there are verbal "ties" between 4:18-20 and 5:6, and Hurd (1983:99) lists 4:18-21 as a transitional passage. Several ancient manuscripts marked 4:21 as beginning kephalaion 2 (an ancient system of chapters) while manuscript Vaticanus (V) contains the next following as beginning with 4:16. Various manuscripts also began paragraphs either at 4:16, 17, or 18 as well as at 4:14 and 5:1 (Nettie, Nestle, and Aland 1957:392; Nestle et al. 1979:447).

In the same way the first discourse shows a form of chiasmus with the topics of precision and wisdom, although the form is not the simple ABCA. These topics are combined with the topic of servanthood (introduced in 3:5) to form a double chiasmus. The chiasmus may be charted in the following way:

First Set: division, wisdom, division (1:10-3:4)
Second Set: servanthood, wisdom and division, servanthood (3:5-4:17).

When this is done, the structure of the first discourse shows the double chiasmic form of ABCA' 'B/C'.

The Macrostructures of the Discourses

When one examines the arguments in summary form and the key ideas of 1 Corinthians, a macrostructure can be abstracted for each of the ten discourses and the conclusion in 1 Corinthians. They are as follows:

Discourse 1 (1:1-10:4:17):
I appeal to you to avoid division and strife due to following men (Paul, Apollos, and Cephas), for such boasting is due to the wisdom of men, but in God's wisdom they are servants of Christ.

Discourse 2 (4:18-6:20):
Flee fornication and lawsuits with one another, and deliver an incestuous fornicator to Satan.

Discourse 3 (7:1-49):
Let everyone remain in the marital status in which he was when called, but it is not so to get married if an unmarried person cannot control his passions.

Discourse 4 (8:1-11:1):
Do not eat meat offered to idols in an idol's temple, for this is not a right but idolatry and can lead a weak brother into sin; but eat meat bought at the meat market or at a friend's dinner without asking any questions.

Discourse 5 (11:2-16):
A man ought not cover his head when he prays or prophesies, but a woman should.

Discourse 6 (11:17-34):
When you meet to eat the Lord's Supper, wait for one another and remember the body and blood of the Lord.

Discourse 7 (12:1-14:40):
Seek spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, which builds up the church, but above all, show love.

Discourse 8 (15:1-58):
Just as Christ was raised from the dead, so you should believe that Christians will be raised at His coming with a spiritual body.

Discourse 9 (16:1-11):
Every Sunday let each of you put something aside and store it up for the contribution for the saints at Jerusalem. I will come after Pentecost, and Timothy will come now.

Discourse 10 (16:12):
Apollos will not come now.

Conclusion (16:13-18):
The question may be asked as to whether the discourse macrostructures given above can be further combined into one overall macrostructure. Some of them seem to have little in common with others. Yet there are two themes which run throughout the whole book. First, every problem which Paul discusses has its roots in Greek culture. And second, almost every argument appeals to Christ in some way.

If a unifying theme is sought, it is found first in the conflict of Christianity with the cultural background of Corinth. As Conzelmann has noted, "We have here to do with people who have only recently become Christian; they are the people whom they brought with them into the community" (1975:155). Most, if not all, of the problems which Paul discusses in I Corinthians can be attributed to the influence of the Corinthian cultural setting on the Christians there. It is generally accepted that the equalization of wisdom, the eating of meat offered to idols, and the denial of a bodily resurrection were aspects of Greek culture. In addition, ecstatic utterances may have been found in some Pythian and Dionysiac relgions (Bruce 1971:21), although the "speaking in tongues" in I Corinthians should not be viewed as a part of pagan religion. But Greek religion may have had repercussions in other contexts in Paul's thought. One of the problems which Paul deals with are moral problems, such as fornication, drunkenness, the desire of greed and for revenge that accompany lawsuits. But even these problems are culturally based, for Greek society did not place as strong a condemnation on them.

Perhaps the most misunderstand cultural influence in modern days is the Greek attitude toward women wearing head coverings. Regarding this, Guthrie writes, "Paul urges Christian women to respect the social customs of their time, in spite of their new-found freedom" (1970:445). But in fact, Greek women were under no necessity to wear a covering on their head in Greek society, especially when they were at worship (cf. Kittel 1965:358, 562; Conzelmann 1975:185; Terry 1995:26:31). Rather than Paul pleading for respect of social customs, in I Corinthians 11 he is arguing for the maintenance of the Christian tradition (11:2). Some women were being influenced more by what society allowed than by what Christianity taught.

**The Centrality of Christ**

Although the cultural influences behind the problems at Corinth stand out, the word "culture" is not found in the text. Rather the key concept in I Corinthians is the Lord Jesus Christ. The term "Christ" is found 64 times in I Corinthians. This is second in frequency in usage only to Romans (which has the word 66 times) among the New Testament books. The term "Lord" is found 66 times, and Jesus 26 times (Aland, Bachmann, and Slaby 1978:2:304).

The arguments that Paul advances in trying to solve the various problems are rooted in Christ. Paul's argument about divisions in chapter 1 begins with an appeal in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:10). He implies that the division is not a matter of "the ideas they brought with them into the community" (1:13:15). For Paul, Christ is the crucified One, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God (2:23:24). He is the foundation of the church (3:11). In discussing fornication, Paul notes that Christ is our Passover lamb (5:7); therefore, we should cleanse out the old leaven of sin from our lives. He argues that for a Christian to commit fornication is to join Christ to a prostitute (6:15). He refers to the command of the Lord in the instructions about marriage (1:11). In discussing food offered to idols, Paul states that Christians have one Lord, Jesus Christ. When we eat the Lord's Supper, we share in the body and blood of Christ (10:16). Paul exhorts the Christians to imitate him, as he imitates Christ (11:1). In discussing head coverings, he argues that Christ is the head of every man (11:3). In the discussion on the Lord's Supper, he recites the words of Jesus on the night that He was betrayed (11:23:25). In the discourse on spiritual gifts, he calls Christians the body of Christ (12:27). And he grounds his discussion of the resurrection in the resurrection of Christ (15:23).

**A Unified Macrostructure**

With these two concepts in mind, the following tentative macrostructure could be suggested. Whether this was in fact the motivating idea which was in Paul's mind when he produced I Corinthians is highly questionable, but it can be said to fairly represent a summary of the text which he produced. It reads as follows:

(14) Obey Christ rather than following social customs, such as boasting about men, committing fornication and suing one another, getting a divorce, eating meat offered to an idol, having women pray bareheaded, getting drunk, valuing ecstatic utterances, and subdividing, and spending all your money on yourself.

**Themes as Meta-Structures**

Now the question remains: is this in fact a mental concept which Paul had in mind before beginning I Corinthians or not? While it does represent a general generalization that fairly summarizes the whole book, it is open to some criticisms. For one thing, this suggested macrostructure is so general that it could generate any number of given texts. For another, it introduces the terms "Christ" and "social customs" from the theme, but such terms do not appear in most of the sectional macrostructures. The term "Christ" does appear in the discourses as they are worked out by Paul, and various social customs are dealt with in I Corinthians. But such terms are not a part of a recurrent theme rather than a part of a macrostructure. Finally, this suggested macrostructure would make the macrostructures of the component discourses of less importance than the theme, although an over-all macrostructure ought to be discoverable out of the macrostructures of the constituent discourses.

Now a recurrent theme in a discourse is not necessarily a part of its macrostructure. This is not to say that it is not a controlling mental concept, just that it is not necessarily a part of the central idea. Such a theme does play a part in structuring the discourse. But it is woven into the fabric of the text, appearing, disappearing, and reappearing. As such, the mental structure that embodies the theme may be referred to as a "meta-structure" because it occurs throughout the text. Thus, it seems best not to take the tentative macrostructure suggested above as an actual macrostructure that existed in the mind of Paul.

I Corinthians is one of these complex discourses that requires more than a simple statement of a single macrostructure to account for its final form. Ten macrostructures of component discourses have been isolated together with a "meta-structure" that takes the form "Obey Christ rather than following social customs." These conceptual structures are mapped onto a mixture of rhetorical patterns that include a cyclical (ABA'B') treatment of response to oral information and response to the Corinthians letter. Several of the component discourses take the form of a simple chiastic structure (ABA'). The discourse is laid out with balance in mind as regards the number of discourses per cyclical unit, forming a pattern (2-2-2-1-1-2). Balance is seen in the location of the transitional paragraphs about Paul's travel plans: between the first two discourses and also between the last two of all. These all last two of all. These are all needed to explain the high level organization of the complex book of I Corinthians.

**Types of Grammatical and Conceptual Patterns**

Not only is the high level structure of I Corinthians complex, the lower level structures are as well. Before looking at the specifics, it is necessary to review the kinds of patterns that are found in I Corinthians.

Where a paragraph structure is made up of two elements, there are two possible patterns: AA and AB. The AA pattern is a parallelism structure. The two elements, whether sentences or paragraphs, are either conceptually or grammatically parallel to one another or parallel in both ways.

Now the simple pattern ABA' can be either a reduced form of chiasmus, a defective cycle, or a simple case of inclusio.

As noted earlier in this study, several of the discourses show a form of ABA' chiasmus. But chiasmus is present, not only on the macroparagragraph level, but also on the microparapragraph and intermediate levels. The major studies of chiasmus in I Corinthians have been by Lund (1942; reprinted 1992) and Bailey (1983). If there is a fault in their work, it is that they tend to find chiasmus throughout the book, even in locations where other rhetorical strategies seem to be used. Lund is better than Bailey about identifying alternate rhetorical schemes, but even he takes the use of chiasmus to an extreme. But there are many clear cases of chiasmus in this letter, and several of these are discussed below.

It is important to note that three kinds of chiasmus exist in I Corinthians: lexical, in which words are repeated in a chiastic pattern; grammatical, in which grammatical structures are repeated in a chiastic manner; and conceptual, in which concepts are repeated chasically. Some patterns have only a single one of these types, but others show a combination of them.

Now Bailey (1983:177) identifies 3:1-23 as showing an ABB'A'' scheme found in (16).

---

(16) A Paul and Apollos (3:1-4)
B   The illustration of the field (3:5-9b)
X    The use of the circulating wind (3:10-15a)
B'  The closing of the discussion (3:16-17)
B"  The leading up to the next discourse (3:18-23)

---

Now the simple pattern ABA' can be either a reduced form of chiasmus, a defective cycle, or a simple case of inclusio. The exact rhetorical scheme is impossible to tell since all three of these cases show the same pattern. In this study, however, such a pattern is analyzed as chiasmus since it is so pervasive throughout I Corinthians.

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Chiasmus on the Paragraph Level

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Certainly this pattern exists, but the problem with it is that it omits the passages about the Corinthians being God's temple (3:16-17) and about the wisdom of men (3:18-20). A pattern without such breaks can be found in 3:21-4:7 as shown in (17).

But this pattern as well as Bailey's suggested pattern has a difficulty. They both cut across the chiastic macroparagraph structure of the first discourse as given in (18) and shown also in Table 1.

This major structure also exists. Bailey's pattern shown in (16) has taken the elements of A'CD in this analysis and made them ABA'. The problem is that his analysis here is too small. But the analysis in (17) also is legitimate, and it too cuts across the boundary lines of the analysis given in (18).

The A, B, and C elements are all conceptually and lexically connected.

The second discourse also shows evidence of chiasmus on a smaller scale. The passage in 6:13-14 (noted by Fee 1987:253-254) shows a complex pattern of two lexical chiasms embedded within a cyclical XYXY pattern as shown in (20), another example of multiple patterns.

The third discourse begins with several examples of lexical chiasmus as noted by Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:151-152), who has noted that 7:2-5 form a chiasmus as shown in (22).

Fee (1987:257) also notes that the next verses contain a lexical and conceptual chiasmus as shown in (21).
and 

A' ?? ?? 

that not 

d? ?? 

The chiasmus is conceptual, with fornication equaling a lack of self-control having a person being the same as not defrauding and being together, and giving due equaling not having grammatical structure of verses 2-4 is a series of parallel units: AA' BB' CC' DD', where the last three primed elements omit the predicate. Again, there exists an overlay of patterns, not merely a single structure.

Once again note that the lexical chiasmus is embedded within a different grammatical pattern--this time a couple of parallelisms: AB is parallel to CD and D'C' is parallel to B'A'.

Further, 9:16 contains a lexical and structural chiasmus as shown in (25).

But the most obvious example of chiasmus in the fourth discourse found in 9:19-22 as shown in (26). It has been noted by Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:147), Bailey (1983:167), Yo

Each of the six elements ends with a purpose clause beginning with ?? ?? in order to. The chiasmus is conceptually defective in the B' element, although Bailey (1983:167) and Youngman (1987:189) have noted that there is a chiastic pattern in 9:4-12 as shown in (24).

Another example of chiasmus in the fourth discourse is noted by Youngman (1987:202) in 10:7-10 as shown in (27). This chiasm is grammatical rather than conceptual.
A fifth example of chiasmus in the fourth discourse is found in 10:16-21 as shown in (28). Both Bailey (1983:169) and Youngman (1987:208) have previously noted this example.

The B and B' colons contain first person subjunctive verbs in their independent clauses, sandwiched between second person imperative verbs in the main clauses of the A and A' colons are not.

The fifth discourse has an example of embedded chiasmus in 11:8-12 as shown in (29).

The first two elements have the chiastic order "man-woman-woman-man," while the last two have the order "woman-man-man-woman." Once again, multiple overlaid patterns exist.

The whole sixth discourse can be divided into an ABA' chiastic pattern as shown in (30).

The B element at the center is marked by narrative textype.

The seventh discourse is the most chiastic of all the discourses, showing several levels of embedded chiasmus. In this regard, it seems significant that this discourse is within the peak of the letter (Terry 1995:119-125).

Bailey (1983:178) has pointed out that what is here called the X element (12:1-31) can be itself interpreted as a chiastic pattern. Strictly speaking, the chiasm runs from 12:4-30 rather than over the whole twelfth chapter.

In the same way the Y element (13:1-13) also contains a chiastic pattern, as shown in (33).

This has been noted by Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:175-176) and Osburn (1976:150-152) among others.

Both Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:184) and Bailey (1983:178) have noted that the first part of the Y element (chapter 14) is chiastic in structure, although they have differed over its enough depth (forming merely an RSR' chiasm) and his S element could be labeled as saying the same thing as the R and R' elements. Bailey labels the R (14:1b-5) and R' (14:11b-12). The problem is that the point of the central S element is also that prophecy is better than tongues. It just is that in these verses Paul is arguing by analogy. The chiasm should be more specific than what Bailey proposes.

The fourth discourse is in 13:4-7 as shown in (34).

The B' and B' colons are not.

The chiasm runs from 12:4-30 rather than over the whole twelfth chapter.

The second discourse is in 11:1-7 as shown in (31).

The seventh discourse is the most chiastic of all the discourses, showing several levels of embedded chiasmus. In this regard, it seems significant that this discourse is within the peak of the letter (Terry 1995:119-125).

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The T and T' elements of this chiasm contain an ABA'B' cyclical structure of question-illustration. Again there are multiple overlaid patterns. Besides these intermediate levels of chiasmus in the seventh discourse, there are several examples of low level chiasmus in chapters twelve through fourteen also. For example, there is a lexical chiasm in 12:3 as shown in (35).

B ?e ?e?, ??a 'âµa ?'s???,
says 'cursed Jesus'
B' ?? ?? ??de? ?? d? 'âa? e'?pe???, ??? ??? ?'s???,
and no one can say 'Lord Jesus'
A' e?? y? e?? p?e?µa? a???,
except by Spirit Holy

This has previously been noted by Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:164).

In the same way, Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:165) has also noted a lexical and conceptual chiasm in 12:12, as shown in (36).

(36) A ????? ?a?? ?? t?? s??µa e? ?? e? 
B ?a?? ?? ?? p??µ?? e'? 'e?,
and members many has
B' pa 'ta de ta ?? ?? t?? s?µat?? p??? ??
all and the members of the body many being
A' e?? st?? s?µa, ??? ?a?? ?'

one is body also the Christ.

But perhaps the best example of embedded chiasmus is found in 13:8-13, as shown in (37). It has been noted by Lund (1942; reprinted 1992:176) and Osburn (1976:151-152).

(37) A ??a?? ?? ?? t?? s??µa e? ?? e? 
just as for the body one is
B ?a?? ?? ?? p??µ?? e'? 'e?,
and members many has
B' pa 'ta de ta ?? ?? t?? s?µat?? p??? ??
all and the members of the body many being
A' e?? e? s?µa, ??? ?a?? ?'

one is body also the Christ.

This chiasm forms the S' element of the intermediate level chiasm in (33) which is the Y element of the high level chiasm in (31). The corresponding elements are not only conceptually parallel, but to a certain extent grammatically as well.

A further example of chiasmus in the seventh discourse is found in 14:33b-36, as shown in (38).

(38) A ?? ?e?? ?? t?? ?a?? a??? ?? ?? e??????s t? ??? a??? ??
As in all the churches of the saints,
B a?? ?? ?? e?? ta?? ??
the women in the churches let them keep silent
C a . . . a?? ?? t??? ??e??? ??a? ta?? .
but let them be subordinate
C' . . . e?? ?? t?? ?? ??? ?? ?? e?? ??
at home their own husbands
shameful for it is for a woman to speak
A' ?? ?? ?? ?? ??? t??? ??e??? ?? ???
or from you the word of God came out

This chiasm is purely conceptual. The point presented in a phrase at the beginning (the A element) is repeated at the end in the A' element with a compound...
The ninth and tenth discourses in chapter 16 are very short and do not seem to contain examples of chiasmus. The examples listed here are not exhaustive. Both Lund (1942; reprinted 1992) and Bailey (1983) list other examples, although the correspondences for some of them seem rather strained; only the most obvious have been listed above. But these are enough examples to show that Paul made ample use of the rhetorical device of chiasm at all levels of the text.

Constraints Imposed by Discourse Structure

The letter of I Corinthians is thus seen to be a highly structured piece of literature, not a hodgepodge of thought that simply follows "stream of consciousness." It shows patterning at both higher and lower levels of discourse. This structuring constrains the way in which this letter should be understood because every author, including Paul, is constrained in the way in which he or she can intelligibly present his or her material by the grammar of discourse.

Among other things, an author is constrained by the idea or ideas which may be described as macrostructures (or theses) and meta-structures (or themes). A text which is continually cluttered with extraneous ideas will not be easily understood; it will lack the coherence that the audience expects. There are many ways in which these central ideas can be presented, but there is a finite number of rhetorical patterns that can be used to arrange them. It is this finite number of patterns that constrains the presentation and ordering of material in a discourse. These patterns are to a certain extent culturally determined. While chiasmus may be perfectly acceptable in a given society, such as it was in the ancient Hebrew and Greek worlds, it may not be a pattern which is readily used in other societies. This helps to explain why some passages are misunderstood in the modern western world where the average reader does not expect to find chiasmus in ancient documents and probably does not recognize it when it is encountered. It also helps to explain why western readers, expecting a linearly organized text, often miss the cyclic and chiastic patterns of organization in 1 Corinthians, such as those shown earlier in Table 1.

Thus constrained by the grammar of Greek discourse, the apostle Paul fashioned his letter to the Corinthian church known as I Corinthians according to a definite pattern of structure.

References


I Corinthians has the conventional epistolary opening and closing, but the body of the letter is quite different from the typical Pauline epistle. Rather than the two-fold division outlined above, I Corinthians contains a series of discourses on topics which often seem quite unrelated. It may appear at first to the reader that Paul was following a "stream of consciousness" order, simply discussing items as they came to his mind. The reader may see the topics discussed as a hodge-podge of items. An in-depth analysis of the patterns in this discourse, however, reveals that I Corinthian...