



Protestant Theological University

Unavoidable Haireseis in the Church

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Published in:
Troubling texts in the New Testament

Published: 01/01/2022

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for pulished version (APA):
Roukema, R. (2022). Unavoidable Haireseis in the Church: 1 Corinthians 11:19 in patristic reception between 350 and 450 AD. In M. Klinker-De Klerck, A. den Heijer, & J. van Nes (Eds.), *Troubling texts in the New Testament: essays in honour of Rob van Houwelingen* (pp. 199-216). (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology; Vol. 113). Peeters Publishers.

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UNAVOIDABLE *HAIRESEIS* IN THE CHURCH: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:19 IN PATRISTIC RECEPTION BETWEEN 350 AND 450 AD

Riemer ROUKEMA

Abstract

In 1 Corinthians 11:19 Paul says that there have to be dissensions (αἰρέσεις) among the Corinthian Christians so that the genuine may stand out. This chapter explores how this text was read between 350 and 450 AD, in relation to the belief in the unity of the Church. In this period Paul's statement is quoted rarely in the extant works of the Greek-speaking Church Fathers, but John Chrysostom's lengthy homilies on it have been preserved. He interprets the αἰρέσεις as the social divisions between the rich and the poor in the Corinthian assembly, without rejecting the popular view that the apostle referred to doctrinal heresies. The Latin Church of the same period has preserved far more quotations of this text. There *haereses* are generally interpreted as heresies whose adherents are contrasted with the genuine Catholic believers. Augustine holds that heretics forced the Catholic Church to formulate its doctrines more precisely. None of the patristic authors considers the possibility of an ironical understanding of Paul's words about αἰρέσεις, as some modern commentators have proposed.

Introduction

Paul's observation on the Corinthian Christians that "there have to be dissensions (αἰρέσεις) among you" (1 Cor 11:19a) may be considered a troubling text, especially if it is read not only as a serious statement about one of the early Christian assemblies but also as a scriptural, and therefore consequential, assertion that may be applied to Christianity in general.¹

¹ Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 596: "a sentence that is one of the true puzzles in the letter."

Therefore my esteemed colleague Rob van Houwelingen discussed this text in the book about inconvenient texts in Paul that he co-edited.² The subject of my contribution to the present volume is how these Pauline words were received and interpreted between ca 350 and 450 AD. Before starting this investigation, I first make a detour by way of introduction.

The Unity of the Catholic Church

One of the additions of the Constantinopolitan creed of 381 AD to the Nicene creed of 325 AD reads, “[We believe] in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church” (Πιστεύομεν ... εἰς μίαν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν).³ In the first characteristic of the Church, that of unity, several New Testament texts resonate, e.g. Ephesians 4:4–6, which addresses the Christian audience as “one body” and speaks about “one Spirit,” “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” Without the numeral “one” Paul expresses the same idea in 1 Corinthians 1:10, “Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions (σχίσματα) among you, but that you should be united (or ‘restored’, ‘established’, κατηρτισμένοι) in the same mind and the same purpose” (NRSV). It is true that New Testament texts about unity usually address a local church, probably with the exception of Ephesians 4:4–6.⁴ However, the unity of the universal Church was underlined long before

² Rob van Houwelingen, “Een verdeelde gemeente onder het oordeel?” in *Ongemakkelijke teksten van Paulus*, ed. Rob van Houwelingen and Reinier Sonneveld (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2012), 119–24.

³ E.g. in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils I: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, ed. Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 24. It is commented on by Reinhart Staats, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis von Nizäa-Konstantinopel. Historische und theologische Grundlagen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996), 264–70.

⁴ Other NT texts about the unity of local churches are Acts 4:32; 1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12–13; Galatians 3:28; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 3:15. For Ephesians 4:4–6 see Joachim Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 4th ed., HThKNT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1971), 199–201; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 287–88. In ecumenical contacts, Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20–21 (“that they may be one”) is often applied to the communion of the various churches in the sense of denominations, but exegetes do not confirm that this was the intention of these words. See, e.g., P.H.R. van Houwelingen, *Johannes: Het evangelie van het Woord*, Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament, derde serie (Kampen: Kok, 1997), 341–44. Staats, *Glaubensbekenntnis*, 264, interprets John 17:11, 20–23 in terms of the unity of the Christians and thus of the Church.

the Constantinopolitan creed, as for example Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian of Carthage testify.⁵

In our day, the tenet of one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church sometimes gives the romantic impression that in the first centuries of Christianity the Church was still undivided, contrary to the last millennium, in which the Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church have lived and developed apart since their mutual anathemas of 1054, and many Protestant denominations have been established outside the Roman Catholic Church. However, even in the second to fifth centuries there was not one Church, but there were various churches, if we may use this term for the assemblies of, for example, Ebionites, Marcionites, Valentinians, Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Manichaeans, Arians, and Nestorians. This implies that the “one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church” was an Orthodox, Catholic article of faith, and that from an Orthodox point of view the other communities or sects that also believed in Christ – though in their own way – did not belong to it. Nevertheless, given, for example, Basil of Caesarea’s conciliating attitude toward the Novatians, Augustine’s relentless efforts to reunite the Donatists with the Catholic Church, and Theodoret of Cyrus’ successful attempt to integrate eight Marcionite villages into his diocese, we see that there were Catholic bishops who acknowledged the Christian character of such schismatic or even heretical dissenters and strove to incorporate them into their own Church.⁶

In reality, from the very beginning there was diversity and dissension in Christianity. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul urged them to live in agreement with one another and warned them that there should be no divisions among them, precisely because he had heard about such divisions. Well-known are the Corinthian factions that appealed to Paul himself, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ (1 Cor 1:10–12, 3:4). Later on, the apostle comes back to the divisions and dissensions in this church, yet without referring explicitly to the factions he had mentioned at the beginning of his epistle. Then, in his instructions on “the Lord’s supper”

⁵ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* I, 10, 1–2 (SC 264); Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* VII, 106–07 (SC 428); Cyprian of Carthage, *The Unity of the Catholic Church* 4 (textus receptus); 23 (CCSL 3); *Epistles* 43, 5, 2; 66, 8, 3 (CCSL 3B–3C).

⁶ Martin Wallraff, “Geschichte des Novatianismus seit dem vierten Jahrhundert im Osten,” *ZAC* 1 (1997): 251–79 (260–62); Paul van Geest, “*Quid dicam de vindicando vel non vindicando?* (Ep. 95, 3): Augustine’s Legitimation of Coercion in the Light of His Roles of Mediator, Judge, Teacher and Mystagogue,” in *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators*, ed. Albert C. Geljon and Riemer Roukema (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 151–84; for Theodoret of Cyrus see his *Epistles* 81 (SC 98, 196–97).

(1 Cor 11:20), he writes, “I hear that, when you come together as a church (ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ), there are divisions (σχίσματα) among you; and to some extent I believe it. For there have to be even dissensions among you, so that the genuine may stand out among you” (δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν, 1 Cor 11:18–19).⁷ In this context Paul criticizes the split between those who eat and drink first so that they get drunk and others who remain hungry. He means that “those who have nothing” are humiliated by the wealthy members who do not have patience to wait for their poor brothers and sisters (1 Cor 11:21–22, 33).⁸

It has been surmised that Paul’s argument, “For there have to be even dissensions among you,” alludes to an ancient saying attributed to Jesus, “There will be divisions and dissensions” (ἔσονται σχίσματα καὶ αἰρέσεις), which – in this view – was quoted by part of the Corinthians who thus called into question the principle of eucharistic unity.⁹ If the words, “There have to be even dissensions among you,” represent Paul’s own opinion, he may still have been alluding to this *agraphon*. This tradition may also have existed in the alternative wording that we find in Paul.¹⁰ Furthermore, some modern commentators hold that Paul used these words in an ironical sense.¹¹ In the conclusions I will come back to this view.

⁷ My translation is inspired by NRSV, NIV, and C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed., BNTC (London: A&C Black, 1971), 259. The first καὶ in 1 Corinthians 11:19 is often neglected in translations, for “even” seems too strong, although Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1Kor 11,17-14,40)*, EKK 7/3 (Zürich; Düsseldorf: Benzinger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1999), 20, considers that it expresses “eine gewisse Steigerung” regarding the σχίσματα of 1 Corinthians 11:18. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 596, interprets it as “an additional reason” to what had already been said. I have not included and translated the second καὶ that is printed between square brackets in Nestle-Aland’s 28th edition of the New Testament (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

⁸ The last phrase, “wait for one another” (ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε, 1 Cor 11:33) is sometimes translated as “welcome each other;” thus e.g., Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 627–28; but Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 898–99, argues that the lexicographical evidence of this interpretation is not strong and that “wait for one another” is entirely correct.

⁹ Henning Paulsen, “Schisma und Häresie: Untersuchungen zu 1Kor 11, 18. 19,” *ZThK* 79 (1982): 180–211. The first testimony to this *agraphon* is found in Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 35, 3 (ed. Goodspeed). Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 858–59 suggests that “the educated and sophisticated *strong* at Corinth” took up this saying.

¹⁰ Paulsen, “Schisma und Häresie,” 193–94, 200.

¹¹ Thus Paulsen, “Schisma und Häresie,” 192; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 539; R. Dean Anderson, *1 Korintiërs: Orde op zaken in een jonge stadskerk*, Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament, derde serie

As I announced above, my aim is to discuss the reception and interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:19 in ancient Christianity, for which I initially wanted to restrict the investigation to the fourth and fifth centuries.¹² This is the period in which the Orthodox, Catholic Church gradually received and acquired the means to dominate, marginalize, persecute or integrate all other communities that believed in Jesus Christ, as far as they were situated within the Roman empire. However, finding that the relevant texts about 1 Corinthians 11:19 in these two centuries stem from ca 350 to 450, I limit my focus to these ten decades for this practical reason.

The reasons for my interest in the reception and interpretation of Paul's statement are threefold. First, in general it is relevant to investigate the history of the reception and interpretation of the Bible, since for the Church it has functioned as Holy Scripture, which has had tremendous historical, theological, societal, and cultural corollaries.¹³ Second, in particular I am preparing the volume, or rather volumes, on 1 Corinthians for the series *Novum Testamentum Patristicum*, so that I prefer to write articles whose results I can integrate into this research.¹⁴ Third, Rob van Houwelingen and I belong to two different Reformed denominations. Reformed Christians might perceive both the tenet of "one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church" and Paul's words, "There have to be dissensions among you," differently from those who belong to the Roman Catholic or an Orthodox Church.¹⁵ Although orthodox Protestants generally assent to the Constantinopolitan creed, they might feel some uneasiness about the phrase regarding the Church. This uneasiness might raise interest

(Kampen: Kok, 2008), 159. In his chapter on 1 Corinthians 11:19 (see footnote 2) van Houwelingen does not consider the possibility that Paul's words are to be understood ironically.

¹² I discussed the reception of 1 Corinthians 11:19 in the second and third centuries in *De uitleg en receptie van Paulus' eerste brief aan de Corinthiërs in de tweede en derde eeuw* (Kampen: Kok, 1996), 173–75.

¹³ See Régis Burnet, *Exegesis and History of Reception: Reading the New Testament Today with the Readers of the Past*, WUNT 455 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021).

¹⁴ Edited by Andreas Merkt, Tobias Nicklas, and Joseph Verheyden, published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.

¹⁵ Remarkably, an influential Dutch, Protestant translation of 1 Corinthians 11:19 dating from 1939 translated ἀρρέσεις as "scissions" ("scheuringen") in *Het Nieuwe Testament. Nieuwe vertaling* (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1939), included in *Bijbel: Nieuwe Vertaling* (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1951). This seems to allow room for schisms and was sometimes invoked in church conflicts.

in the ancient interpretation of Paul's words about unavoidable ἀἰρέσεις.¹⁶

These considerations lead me to the following research question: How did Church Fathers between ca 350 and 450 interpret 1 Corinthians 11:19, and did their views display any explicit or implicit relationship with the principle of the Church's unity?¹⁷

Greek-speaking Church Fathers

A search for quotations of Paul's statement that "there have to be even dissensions among you" or allusions to it in Greek-speaking authors of the fourth and fifth centuries leads to a strikingly meagre outcome.¹⁸ In the very numerous Greek works that have been preserved from these two centuries, only John Chrysostom pays detailed attention to this text. For the rest, only three references to it have been preserved, and a work attributed to Didymus of Alexandria contains the *agraphon* "There will be divisions and dissensions."¹⁹ This scarcity is striking, given the vast reception of 1 Corinthians in the Greek-speaking Church of this period. To give one example: including partial quotations, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:10 about agreement, the absence of divisions, and having the same mind and purpose are found in the extant works of Eusebius of Caesarea, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, Didymus of Alexandria (circa 15 times), Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrus, and moreover

¹⁶ See Friedrich Stegmüller, "Oporet Haereses Esse: I Cor. 11, 19 in der Auslegung der Reformationszeit," in *Reformata Reformanda: Festgabe für H. Jedin*, ed. Erwin Iserloh and Konrad Repgen (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), 2:330–64 (335), who also pays some attention to the patristic interpretation of this text (331–34).

¹⁷ Fourth- or fifth-century interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11:19 by non-Catholic, non-Orthodox authors have not been preserved; we only have a quotation by the Donatist Tyconius in his *Comm. Apoc.* I, 30 (CCSL 107A; from 370–380), where he comments on Apoc. 2:24, which addresses believers in Thyatira who did not adhere to the despicable doctrine followed by others.

¹⁸ I used the digital *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, ed. Maria C. Pantelia *et al.* (Irvine, CA: University of California) and checked J. Allenbach *et al.*, eds., *Biblia Patristica*, vols. 4, 5, and 7 (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987–2000), which comprise the works of Eusebius of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, Amphilochius of Iconium, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Didymus of Alexandria, including spurious works attributed to some of these authors, and Robert A. Krupp, *Saint John Chrysostom: A Scripture Index* (New York; London: Lanham, 1984).

¹⁹ Pseudo-Didymus, *On the Trinity* III, 22 (PG 39, 920). The reference to Epiphanius of Salamis' quotation of 1 Corinthians 11:19 in Allenbach *et al.*, eds., *Biblia Patristica*, vol. 4, concerns only 1 Corinthians 11:19b.

in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Pseudo-Ignatius, Pseudo-Athanasius, and Pseudo-Basil. This contrast suggests that most Greek-speaking authors of this period considered 1 Corinthians 11:19 a troubling text that they preferred to ignore. Yet an exception must be made for those who wrote a commentary on 1 Corinthians that has been preserved only fragmentarily in the catenae, in which the interpretation of 11:19 is lacking. This holds for Didymus of Alexandria, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria, and Gennadius of Constantinople.²⁰ If their commentaries were complete, they must have paid attention to 1 Corinthians 11:19, and it was due to the catenists that this text was passed over.

Fortunately, to an important extent John Chrysostom makes up for this deficiency. The twenty-seventh of his 41 *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* (from 386–398, in Antioch) deals with 1 Corinthians 11:17–27, expounding 1 Corinthians 11:19 in 46 lines in Migne’s edition. Moreover, either in Antioch or in Constantinople (398–404) he gave another, particular homily on this text, amounting to 473 lines.²¹ Not all of the latter sermon needs to be analysed here, but because of its length I will use it as my starting point for Chrysostom’s interpretation.

We have to be aware that the connotation of ἀῖρεσις in 1 Corinthians 11:19a, which I translated above as “dissension” and also meant “choice,” “preference” or a philosophical, religious, or medical “school” in Paul’s time, received yet another meaning among mainstream Christians from the second century onward. They usually (though not exclusively) conceived ἀῖρεσις as a doctrinal “heresy.”²² At the beginning of his sermon on 1 Corinthians 11:19, Chrysostom seemingly aligns himself with the popular, uninformed understanding of Paul’s text and first discusses the meaning of δεῖ, “there have to.” He says that if Paul meant to formulate his advice (συμβουλευέων), those who introduce heresies would be blameless (ἀναίτιοι). However, he immediately denies that this

²⁰ See *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, ed. Karl Staab, 2nd ed. (Münster: Aschendorf, 1984) and Konrad F. Zawadzki, *Der Kommentar Cyrills von Alexandria zum 1. Korintherbrief: Einleitung, kritischer Text, Übersetzung, Einzelanalyse*, *Traditio Exegetica Graeca* 16 (Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

²¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Cor.* 27, PG 61, 223–32 (226, l. 37 – 227, l. 16 about 1 Cor 11:19); *On Paul’s Statement, There have to be dissensions*, PG 51, 251–60.

²² Heinrich Schlier, “ἀῖρέομαι, κτλ.” *TWNT* 1:179–84 (ἀῖρεσις, 180–83); G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 51; Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e – III^e siècles*, 2 vols. (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985); Norbert Brox, “Häresie,” *RAC* 13:248–97; Franco Montanari et al., *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 55.

was what the apostle meant by δεῖ. He explains that instead of an advice Paul's words are a prediction of what was due to happen in the future, as a physician can predict a fever, and as a farmer or pilot can predict the weather. In addition, that the apostle does not recommend heresies is proven by his statement, "If an angel should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be accursed" (cf. Gal 1:8).

Next, Chrysostom discusses the meaning of ἵνα, which might be understood in its final sense, "in order that." In that case Paul would be saying that there shall necessarily be heresies "*in order that* the genuine may stand out among you." In that case the unavoidable heresies would be the cause (αἰτία) that should effectuate the manifestation of the genuine, approved believers. Yet Chrysostom argues (though without using the grammatical terms) that ἵνα should not be understood in its final sense but in the consecutive sense of "so that." For this use of ἵνα he refers to John 9:39, "I [Jesus] came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind" (NRSV), and to Romans 5:20, "the law came in so that the trespass might increase" (NRSV/NIV), although – in his view – this was not the purpose of the Mosaic law. Likewise, Chrysostom concludes, in 1 Corinthians 11:19 ἵνα only designates the outcome (ἔκβασις). With reference to the parable of the weeds (Matt 13:24–25) he adds that the real cause of heresies is that people have fallen asleep and negligent, whereas those who are rooted in the true faith are not overcome by the attacks of heresies, since the heresies make them stronger.

After an exposition on the devil as the origin of evil, who yet cannot harm those who remain vigilant, Chrysostom discusses the real meaning of αἱρέσεις. So far, he has strategically sided with his audience that generally understood the term in the sense of "heresies." He says that even if Paul's statement were to deal with heresies, it would not be problematic. Now he explains, however, "that the present text does not deal with doctrines (δόγματα) but with poor and rich, with eating and not eating, with the prodigality and greed of the wealthy and their neglect of the poor."²³ Chrysostom clarifies that, after the worship gathering (σύναξις) of the Corinthian church, there were banquets and symposia at which the wealthy ate by themselves without paying attention to the poor and without waiting for them if they were late, although originally the former had shared their food with the latter.

²³ John Chrysostom, *On Paul's Statement, There have to be dissensions* 1–2 (PG 51, 251–56; quotation 256, 34–38).

From his discussion of the context of 1 Corinthians 11:19 Chrysostom concludes that αἰρέσεις in this text refers to the division (διχονοία) at the tables, but interestingly his attention then shifts from the communal meal after the worship to the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20) which, earlier in his homily, he had called the μυστήρια as part of the σύναξις that preceded the subsequent banquet and symposium. He does not account for this shift, but he says that the meal at which, in Paul's words, one person was hungry and another was drunk, was not really the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20–21) – which implies that this was what Chrysostom had in mind. In other words, he infers that the αἰρέσεις consisted of the destruction of equality (ἰσότης) in the church.²⁴

In his Antiochene twenty-seventh *Homily on 1 Corinthians*, Chrysostom gives the same explanation. He says there that in 11:19 Paul does not mean αἰρέσεις in the sense of heretical doctrines, but with regard to the divisions (σχίσματα) mentioned in 11:18. On this text he comments that if Paul had meant doctrinal divisions, he would not have spoken so gently (ἡμέρωσ) as he does here, but far more fiercely, as in Galatians 1:8 and on other occasions.²⁵

For the latter and perhaps for the former homily as well, we should take into account that at that time there were at least four church factions at Antioch, viz. two Nicene groups – a strict and a moderate one –, the Arian Anomoeans, and Apollinarists.²⁶ These factions had different doctrinal views of Christ and the Trinity. If Chrysostom gave the homily that I discussed first at Constantinople, it is noteworthy that there, too, the church was divided, for besides the Nicene community there were Novatians, Arians, and other factions.²⁷ However this may be, we see that in these two homilies about αἰρέσεις Chrysostom did not apply 1 Corinthians 11:19 to the divisions in his own context. He interpreted the passage in relation to the early Corinthian church and subsequently applied it to

²⁴ John Chrysostom, *On Paul's Statement, There have to be dissensions* 3–4 (PG 51, 257–58; μυστήρια in 257, 12; 259, 12. 33); the final inference again in § 5, PG 51, 260, 13–16.

²⁵ John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor. 27, 2* (PG 61, 225–27). The other texts quoted by Chrysostom in which Paul expresses himself far more fiercely are Galatians 5:4; Philippians 3:2; 1 Timothy 4:2; 2 Corinthians 11:14–15.

²⁶ See e.g. Pierre Maraval, "Antioche et l'Orient," in *Naissance d'une chrétienté (250–430): Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*, ed. Charles and Luce Pietri (Paris: Desclée, 1995), 2:903–20 (906–907); J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 10–13, 60–62, who ignores the Apollinarists, however.

²⁷ Pierre Maraval, "Constantinople, l'Illyricum et l'Asie Mineure," in *Naissance d'une chrétienté*, 921–36 (922–24); Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 125–26, 134, 137–38.

his audience, in the sense that they had to take care of the poor and hungry.²⁸ Yet he did not fight the popular understanding that the text dealt with heresies, but clarified that the rise of heresies was not what Paul recommended, since the apostle rather meant that it was the unavoidable consequence of the lack of vigilance in matters of the faith.

Two other references to 1 Corinthians 11:19 are found in Chrysostom's tract *To those who were scandalized by misfortunes*, written from his exile from Constantinople to Armenia in 405–406. Most Nicene believers in Constantinople were shocked by the decision of Emperor Arcadius and his wife Eudoxia to banish their bishop for the second time because of his criticism of the imperial court. From his exile he writes that the Church was dispersed (σκορπισθεῖσα).²⁹ In this context he discusses, among other questions, why the αἰρέσεις were permitted, i.e. by God. He refers to God's incomprehensible wisdom and quotes 1 Corinthians 11:19, explaining that this was not meant as an order or law, but as a prediction that was to avail the vigilant Christians.³⁰ Later on, he quotes 1 Corinthians 11:19 again as a testimony to the separation of the wolves in sheep's clothing from the true sheep, and to an oven that melts the lead coins and sorts the copper ones from them; thus the effect of the αἰρέσεις was the manifestation of the genuine, approved believers.³¹ Here Chrysostom relates the αἰρέσεις to the scission in the Constantinopolitan church, which had not arisen because of heretical doctrines but was due – in his view – to the machinations of the imperial court.

The first of the other Greek testimonies to 1 Corinthians 11:19 in the fourth and fifth centuries is a very short catena fragment of Severian of Gabala, one of Chrysostom's eventual opponents in Constantinople.³² Yet in exegetical matters he often followed Chrysostom, as we see in his line about Paul's text, which reads, "[Paul] says αἰρέσεις, not with regard to the doctrines but concerning habits and rites (ἐν ἔθεσι καὶ τύποις)."³³ Second, in the mid-440s Theodoret of Cyrus briefly comments,

²⁸ John Chrysostom, *On Paul's Statement, There have to be dissensions* 5 (PG 51, 260); *Hom. 1 Cor.* 27, 4–5 (PG 61, 230–32).

²⁹ See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 237–71; he translates σκορπισθεῖσα as "rent asunder" (270). It is found in John Chrysostom, *To those who were scandalized* 9, 6 (SC 79). A.M. Malingrey, the editor of this work in the series Sources Chrétiennes, gave it another title, *Sur la Providence de Dieu*.

³⁰ John Chrysostom, *To those who were scandalized* 12, 1–4 (SC 79).

³¹ John Chrysostom, *To those who were scandalized* 19, 14 (SC 79).

³² Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 173, 181–90, 218–27.

³³ Severian of Gabala, *Fragm. 1 Cor.* 11, 19, in *Pauluskommentare*, ed. Staab, 262. For τύπος in the sense of "rite" see Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* 29, 74, l. 29 (SC

in Chrysostom's wake, that by ἀιρέσεις Paul meant disputes (φιλονεικία), not different doctrines, and that he foresaw these disputes, without saying that they were intended to arise.³⁴ Third, in the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus of 430–431, Pope Celestine of Rome quotes 1 Corinthians 11:19 in a critical letter to Nestorius, the then bishop of Constantinople whose Christology was under fire.³⁵ Celestine meant that Nestorius' view of Christ's distinct divine and human natures and his preference for calling the Virgin "Mother of Christ" (Χριστοτόκος) rather than "Mother of God" (Θεοτόκος) were to be ranged among the heresies announced by the apostle.

Latin Church Fathers

In the Latin Church of the fourth and fifth centuries, the reception of 1 Corinthians 11:19 differs considerably from its Greek counterpart. We do not get the impression that it was considered a troubling text that Greek-speaking authors preferred to ignore. Setting aside the Latin translations of Origen's works, we find 34 extant Latin quotations of this text, 17 of which stem from Augustine of Hippo.³⁶ Although there is no elaborate interpretation of it in Latin works of these centuries, as in John Chrysostom's homilies, it is briefly explained in three commentaries. An important difference from the Greek-language Church is that Latin authors generally conceived the term ἀιρεσις, transliterated as *haeresis*, as a doctrinal "heresy," although originally, even before the Christian era, the Latin term was used, as in Greek, for "a philosophical school or sect," and this meaning was not completely forgotten later on.³⁷

The first Latin *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* was written by an unknown Roman author dubbed Ambrosiaster (from 370–380). He

17^{bis}), mentioned by Montanari, *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, 2167. The translation of ἐν ἔθεσι καὶ τύποις as "about moral failures" by Gerald Bray, *1–2 Corinthians*, ACCS NT 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 111, is far too free.

³⁴ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Comm. 1 Cor.* 11, 19 (PG 82, 316A).

³⁵ *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. Eduardus Schwartz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1927), 1.1.1:79.

³⁶ I used the digital *Library of Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols) and checked J. Allenbach et al., *Biblia Patristica*, vol. 6 (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1995), for Ambrosiaster, Ambrose of Milan, Hilary of Poitiers, Pseudo-Ambrose, and Pseudo-Hilary. I will not refer to all of the 34 references to this text, since in various works it is only quoted but not interpreted.

³⁷ P.G.W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 784; Albert Blaise and Henri Chirat, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), 386.

explains that Paul said, “for there have to be even heresies” (*oportet enim et haereses esse*), because the apostle knew about some whose thinking had been corrupted by the devil; he did not wish that heresies should arise, but he knew that this would happen. In agreement with the “Western” text, his *Vetus Latina* version of 11:19a does not translate ἐν ὑμῖν (“among you”), but this omission does not lead him to interpret Paul’s word as a general maxim. He still applies it to the apostle’s original addressees, although he does not relate it to the division between the rich and the poor at the communal meals. Ambrosiaster interprets “that those who are approved may stand out among you” (*ut et qui probati sunt manifesti fiant inter vos*) with regard to those who hold fast to the tradition and the discipline of the gospel, to the condemnation of others who appealed either to Christ or to Paul or to Apollo (1 Cor 1:12).³⁸

The following Latin *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* is anonymous as well; it stems from the region of Aquileia and dates from ca 400.³⁹ It reads that “the apostle does not say so because there must (*debent*) be heresies, but because they had scissions (*scissuras*) among themselves. Therefore he says: *Oportet*, that is, it is necessary that there are even *hereses*.” The author interprets these *hereses* in terms of the Corinthians’ “bad habit” of division between rich and poor. He explains that the rich were drunk and the poor hungry (cf. 1 Cor 11:21) when, after the common meal, the Eucharist was celebrated.⁴⁰

Pelagius, who wrote his *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* between 406 and 410 (and thus before his clash with Augustine), paraphrases, “Since you [pl.] have such dissensions (*dissensiones*), you necessarily also (*etiam*) attain to heresies,” and adds, “as when you [sg.] say, someone who drinks so much necessarily gets drunk.”⁴¹

We see that Ambrosiaster and Pelagius do not discuss the meaning of the term *haereses*, apparently because they take it for granted. The Aquileian author, however, understood that in Paul’s context *h[a]ereses* did not mean “heresies” but referred to the social scissions in the Corinthian church.

³⁸ Ambrosiaster, *Comm. 1 Cor.* 11, 19 (CSEL 81, 2, 125).

³⁹ Theodore S. De Bruyn, “Constantius the Tractator,” in *JThS* 43 (1992), 38–54, argues that it may be authored by the anti-Pelagian Constantius the Tractator of Rome.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, *Comm. 1 Cor.* 52H–53A, in *Ein neuer Paulustext und Kommentar. Band II: Die Texte*, ed. Hermann Josef Frede, AGLB 8 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1974), 144. In quoting *hereses* instead of *haereses* I follow this edition.

⁴¹ Pelagius, *Expos. of Thirteen Ep. of St Paul*, ed. Alexander Souter, 2nd ed., TS 9/2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 190.

With regard to 1 Corinthians 11:19, Jerome also demonstrates his awareness of this meaning of αἵρεσις and its transliteration. He cites this text five times in his own works. In his *Commentary on Titus* (from 386–390) he quotes it after the lemma of Titus 3:10–11, which refers to a *haereticum hominem* who should be shunned after one or two admonitions. His free quotation of 1 Corinthians 11:19 reads, *Oportet enim et haereses in vobis esse ut probati quique manifesti fiant*, “For there have to be even heresies among you, so that all those who are approved may stand out.” He notes that in Galatians 5:19–21 *haereses* are counted among the “works of the flesh,” and that in Acts 28:22 the Jews already called “our faith in Christ and the ecclesiastical teaching” a *haeresis*. He explains that αἵρεσις means “choice” and is used for philosophical schools and for the doctrines of teachers like Marcion, Valentinus, Apelles, Ebion, Montanus, Mani, Arius, and Eunomius. Jerome distinguishes between *haeresis* and *schisma*; the former involves a distorted doctrine, whereas the latter is a separation from the Church because of a conflict with its bishop, which he considers sometimes partly understandable.⁴² In his *Commentary on Titus*, Jerome does not pay any attention to the meaning of 1 Corinthians 11:19 in its context. In his four references to this text in two other works, he only quotes it with regard to heresies in general, without further explanations.⁴³

This last observation on Jerome’s quotations of 1 Corinthians 11:19 holds for other Latin authors of the fourth and fifth centuries as well.⁴⁴

⁴² Jerome, *Comm. Titus* 3, 10–11 (CCSL 77C). Discussed by Benoît Jeanjean, *Saint Jérôme et l’hérésie*, Collection des Études augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 161 (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 1999), 125–35, 277–78. The beginning of Jerome’s comments resembles a fragment of Origen’s *Comm. Titus* 3, 10–11, preserved in Pamphilus of Caesarea, *Apology for Origen* 30–31 (SC 464), which demonstrates that, as almost always in Jerome’s scriptural interpretations, he was greatly inspired by the Alexandrian. His mention of Ebion as the founder of the Ebionites is incorrect; their name derives from the Hebrew אֲבִיּוֹנִים, the poor.

⁴³ Jerome, *Comm. Ezek.* V, 16; XI, 38; XI, 39 (CCSL 75); *59 Treatises on the Psalms* 67, 31 (CCSL 78). – In the Bible translation known as the *Vulgata* since the sixteenth century, which is traditionally ascribed to Jerome, the revision of the Pauline epistles on the basis of the *Vetus Latina* is probably the work of Rufinus the Syrian, from ca 400. 1 Corinthians 11:19 reads there, *nam oportet et hereses esse ut et qui probati sunt manifesti fiant in vobis* (*Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robertus Weber [Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969], 2:1781). See Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, “The Latin Bible,” in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From the beginnings to 600*, ed. James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1:505–26 (517–18) and Adam Kamesar, “Jerome,” *ibidem*, 653–75 (660).

⁴⁴ E.g. Ambrose of Milan, *Expl. Apostolic Creed* 4 (SC 25^{bis}); *Expos. Luke* IV, 77 (SC 45^{bis}).

Some of them quote it in view of its second part, “so that the approved may stand out among you.” This implies that God permitted the existence of heresies so that the true, elect, Catholic believers might stand out. This applies to Fortunatianus of Aquileia’s comment on Matthew 20:16b, “for many are called but few are chosen” (ca 350), to Hilary of Poitiers’ pamphlet against the Arian emperor Constantius (360), to Filastrius of Brescia’s discussion of heresies (380–390), and to Vincent of Lérins’ *Commonitorium*, subtitled *Treatise for the antiquity and universality of the Catholic faith against the impious novelties of all heretics* (434).⁴⁵

Augustine regularly quotes 1 Corinthians 11:19 in his argument that the rise of heresies is due to God’s providence, so that the Christians of the Catholic Church wake up from their somnolence and better understand the Scriptures.⁴⁶ In his view, it was due to Sabellius and the Arians that the Church reached a better understanding of the Trinity, due to the Novatians that it improved its doctrine of repentance, due to Photinus of Sirmium that it proved that Christ is God, and due to Mani that Christ is human.⁴⁷

Given the common Latin understanding of *haereses* in 1 Corinthians 11:19 in the sense of doctrinal heresies, we can also range Pope Celestine of Rome’s use of this text in his letter to Nestorius under this Latin, Western interpretation. As noted above, this letter was preserved in the Greek proceedings of the Council of Ephesus (430–431), so that it was included in the section of Greek-speaking authors, but since Celestine’s daily language was Latin, we see that his perception of αἱρέσεις aligned with most of the Latin authors, and, in addition, with the popular understanding among John Chrysostom’s audience, for that matter.

⁴⁵ Fortunatianus of Aquileia, *Comm. Gospels* 93 (CSEL 103, 200); Hilary of Poitiers, *Against Emperor Constantius* 1 (SC 334); Filastrius of Brescia, *Book about Various Heresies* 153, 2 [125, 2] (CCSL 9); Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* 20 [48] (CCSL 64).

⁴⁶ Augustine of Hippo, *Expos. Psalms* 7, 15; 67, 39 (CCSL 38–39); and e.g. *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans* I, 1, 2; II, 25, 38 (CSEL 91); *The True Religion* 8, 15 (CCSL 32, 197); *Epistles* 185, 2; 264, 1 (CSEL 57); *The City of God* XVI, 2 (CCSL 48); *The Christian Doctrine* III, 33, 46 (CCSL 32); *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin* II, 22, 25 (CSEL 42, 184).

⁴⁷ Augustine of Hippo, *Expos. Psalms* 54, 22; 67, 39 (CCSL 39); *Confessions* VII, 19, 25 (CCSL 27); *Sermons* 51, 7, 11 (CCSL 41Aa); *Against Faustus the Manichaean* XII, 24; XV, 2 (CSEL 25).

Conclusions

The extant patristic reception and interpretation of the unavoidability of αἵρεσεις according to 1 Corinthians 11:19, in the period from 350 to 450, can be summarized as follows.

- In the extant works of Greek-speaking Church Fathers, 1 Corinthians 11:19 is quoted rarely, which suggests that most of them considered this a troubling text. However, John Chrysostom’s lengthy interpretation clarified that this text did not deal with doctrinal heresies but with the social divisions between the rich and the poor in the early Corinthian church. This interpretation was adopted by Severian and Theodoret, and probably by more authors whose comments were not preserved, since – as we may assume – Chrysostom’s interpretation was considered convincing and sufficient for the Greek-speaking Church.
- At the same time, Chrysostom testifies to the popular view of 1 Corinthians 11:19 as a statement about doctrinal heresies. He did not fully reject this understanding because he could use it for his argument that heresies had a positive effect, in that they could fortify the vigilant believers. He explained that the apostle did not recommend heresies but only predicted them. In Greek-language works of the period under discussion, only the Roman Pope Celestine invoked this text as an argument that heresies inevitably had to emerge.
- Because of Chrysostom’s dominant interpretation of the αἵρεσεις in 1 Corinthians 11:19 with regard to social divisions in a local church, a relationship with the tenet of the unity of the “holy, catholic, and apostolic Church” is not found in the extant Greek patristic literature of the period.
- In the Latin Church of the period under discussion 1 Corinthians 11:19 was quoted far more often than in the Greek-speaking Church, which suggests that in the Western Church this was not considered a troubling text. In general, the transcription *haereses* was understood as referring to doctrinal heresies which God allowed to arise.
- Among the Latin authors only Jerome and the Anonymous of Aquileia explain that 1 Corinthians 11:19 originally dealt with social divisions in the Corinthian church.
- In the Latin Church, Fortunatianus, Hilary, Ambrosiaster, Filastrius, Augustine, and Vincent contrasted the doctrinal heresies that would unavoidably arise with the genuine, approved believers of the Catholic Church that they identified in 1 Corinthians 11:19b. Here we see an

implicit relationship between this text and the unity of the Catholic Church.

- Augustine held that heretics forced the Catholic Church to formulate its doctrines more precisely, based on a better understanding of the Scriptures. This point resembles Chrysostom's view of the positive effect of heresies.
- In whatever sense, all patristic authors read 1 Corinthians 11:19 as Paul's real view, which implies that they did not consider the possibility of an ironical understanding of his words about ἀίρέσεις, as some modern commentators have proposed.

To conclude, Protestant readers might wonder, consciously or unconsciously, where they would see themselves in the reception of 1 Corinthians 11:19 between 350 and 450. If they basically agree with its Western, Catholic interpretation and with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, some of them might be puzzled about their position outside the Roman Catholic Church, which they might consider the embodiment of the one, universal Church, so that Protestant Churches would be either heretical or schismatic at best.⁴⁸ Others will hold that the ancient Church was restored in the sixteenth-century Reformation, that the unity of the Church does not imply one centralized organization, and that schisms and dissensions are unavoidable.⁴⁹ However, those who align themselves with John Chrysostom's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:19 will see that this text does not concern the various scissions and heresies over against the one, universal Church, but the social divisions between rich and poor in local churches – divisions that Paul sought to overcome.

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⁴⁸ E.g. Cornelia J. de Vogel, *Ecclesia Catholica: Redelijke verantwoording van een persoonlijke keuze* (Utrecht; Brussel: Spectrum, 1947); Andreas Theurer, *Warum werden wir nicht katholisch? Denkanstöße eines evangelisch-lutherischen Pfarrers*, 6th ed. (Augsburg: Dominus-Verlag, 2014).

⁴⁹ E.g. K. Deddens, *Herstel kwam uit Straatsburg* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1986).

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